

CAESAR'S STRATEGY IN THE CIVIL WAR

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine Caesar's strategy in the Civil War of Rome, 49 B. C. to 45 B. C.

The Civil War with all its political intrigues has received less attention than the Gallic War but it is in many ways more interesting. Roman is pitted against Roman with an empire as the prize for the victor. Caesar is struggling for his life against forces in Italy and other parts of Europe who do not wish to see Rome ruled by a Dictator. The Civil War rings the death knell of the Republic and heralds the birth of the Empire.

The basic works for this study are the three books of the Civil War (De Bello Civili) written by Caesar himself, the Alexandrine War (De Bello Alexandrino), the African War (De Bello Africo) and the Spanish War (De Bello Hispaniensi), all of doubtful origin but nevertheless important and of great value to the student of military strategy.

I have referred often to the Letters of Cicero, which reveal much information about the military scene at the time of Caesar's march through Italy. Cicero's work is the only contemporary account of Caesar's activities available to the scholar, but I have supplemented this by a study of later historians of Rome. Such writers as Cassius Dio and Appian provide the military historian with data on many of Caesar's movements and clarify his strategy. I have augmented the ancient accounts of Caesar's campaigns in the Civil War by modern studies, as is evident from the Bibliography.

The analysis of all the campaigns of the Civil War produces a definite strategic pattern. The elements of surprise, manoeuvre, anticipation, and a general understanding of an enemy's mind, which are displayed by all skilful military leaders, were also part of Caesar's strategic equipment. Most often through skill but sometimes by luck he applied the above techniques where they were needed and, in all the major conflicts, these elements of strategy provided him with victory.

Though tactics and strategy are closely linked on the battle field, no attempt has been made in this study to give much detail to tactics except where such information is necessary in explaining the strategic movement concerned. The field of tactics is beyond the scope of my study.

Throughout the history of man, certain principles of war have been followed by great military leaders. Caesar was no exception. When Caesar is compared with generals today and his conditions of warfare with those that exist now he displays certain common principles: the selection and maintenance of the aim, the maintenance of morale, concentration of force, flexibility and offensive action. Caesar, in combining the principles of war with sound strategic methods, created for himself a name respected and feared in the annals of history.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Civil War between Caesar and the Republicans was waged intermittently over a period of five years from 49 B.C. to 45 B. C. It was a tumultuous period in Roman history and one which witnessed the downfall of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, and the rise to power of Gaius Julius Caesar. Although the war was a civil struggle, it should be stressed that most of the fighting took place on foreign soil, only the first few battles being waged on Italian ground.

The Civil War produced two important results: the death of the Republic and the birth of the Principate. In 49 B.C. the Republican political system was on the verge of collapse; the senate no longer displayed efficiency and the people could more easily be swayed by the appeal of a powerful military statesman than by the pleading of a servile group of senators controlled by an aristocratic minority.

The purpose of this study is to show how Julius Caesar, during the period of the Civil War, increased his power and prestige through the exercise of military strategy. To understand better Caesar's skill, several points must be made clear about strategy. We should know what it is, how it is applied, and consequently how Caesar used it.

Strategy is as old as mankind. It has evolved as man has developed. As the science of war became more familiar to man, so his knowledge and application of strategy increased. Strategy has been defined in several ways. Let us consider a few of these. Karl von

Clausewitz (1780-1831), defines strategy as: "the use of engagements to attain the object of the war."¹ This definition has been criticized by B. H. Liddell-Hart because "it intrudes on the sphere of policy, or the higher conduct of the war, which must necessarily be the responsibility of the government and not of the military leaders," and because "it narrows the meaning of 'strategy' to the pure utilization of battle, thus conveying the idea that battle is the only means to the strategical end."² We may say then that, according to Von Clausewitz, strategy is a plan of war by which detailed mapping of the proposed campaigns regulates the battles fought in these campaigns.

Count von Moltke (1800-1891), a Prussian field marshal and the greatest strategist of the latter half of the nineteenth century, offers this definition of strategy: "the practical adaptation of the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object in view."³ It is interesting to note the emphasis placed upon the importance of the general's ability in this definition. Finally, B. H. Liddell-Hart defines strategy as: "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy."⁴ This same author is a staunch advocate of the strategy of indirect approach, which he describes as the technique used "to dislocate the enemy's balance in order to produce a decision."⁵ This technique of the indirect

1 K. von Clausewitz, On War, trans. O. J. Matthijs Jolles (New York, 1943), p.62.

2 B. H. Liddell-Hart, Strategy: The Indirect Approach (London, 1954), p.333.

3 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.334.

4 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.335.

5 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.31.

approach of strategy requires some explanation because it is of importance to the study of Caesar's own strategy. As there are two forms of experience, direct and indirect, so there are two approaches to the use of strategy, the direct and the indirect. The direct approach involves immediate contact with the enemy without reference to the element of surprise. Hope of victory is placed on the strength of one's own force and the weakness of the opponent. On the other hand the indirect approach is concerned with the element of surprise, the anticipation of the enemy's moves, the placement of forces. Liddell-Hart presents the case for the indirect approach and he is especially convincing in his treatment of Caesar's application of it. He tries to show how the successful campaigns were won by the indirect approach and the unsuccessful were lost as a result of the direct approach. Further reference to this will be made in a later chapter.

A majority of military writers agree that the skill of the general determines his basis of strategy and that a general, by exploiting the elements of movement and surprise, lessens the opportunity of his opponent to gain a victory. The winning of the war is not necessarily the aim of strategy, which is rather the arrangement of battles so that they are fought under circumstances most advantageous to the general and the army concerned. The victory is gained by the tactics employed in carrying out the strategic plan.

The psychological approach to strategy is just as important as the physical. The strategic skill of a commander is keenly tested when he anticipates correctly his opponent's next move. Of importance to the commander is the dislocation of the enemy (an important aim of

strategy) and this dislocation may be psychologically created by a physical move on the enemy's rear or a flank attack. Thus a shock results rather than the strain which would be produced by a frontal attack. Strategy then is best applied when both physical and psychological forces are utilized by the general.

Since strategy is concerned with the plotting of military engagements, there are certain factors that the strategist must take into consideration when contemplating an engagement. Von Clausewitz considers that these factors exist in the field of moral, physical, mathematical, geographical and statistical analysis.⁶ It is therefore the responsibility of the strategist to see that where possible all the above factors are functional before a military engagement takes place. An engagement should be fought if at all possible in an open plain, for here the talent of the general can best be displayed; "in mountains he has too little command over the separate parts, and the direction of all gets beyond his powers; in open plains it is simple and does not exhaust those powers."⁷

The element of surprise is one of the most rewarding and important aspects of strategy. The ability to detect a weakness in the enemy's line is in itself commendable but to use this weakness, as Pompey did at Dyrrhachium, and to create a further disadvantage for the enemy by an unexpected move is indeed an indication of well-planned strategy. Secrecy and rapidity contribute greatly to the success of a surprise movement. The effect on the opponent can be a loosening of the bond of unity between leader and followers - a form

6 Von Clausewitz, op.cit., p.124.

7 Von Clausewitz, op.cit., p.127.

of psychological warfare if you like - for nothing is so unnerving for a commander on the defensive as the doubt and distrust engendered in himself and his troops by an opposing general who has just completed successfully a surprise move. We must understand that "surprise is psychological in essence and the antidote is equally nebulous."⁸ Surprise then can be a double-edged weapon, for the enemy by counter-surprise may offset any advantage gained. Thus the strategical factor of surprise is, perhaps, the commander's greatest weapon and Caesar did not hesitate to use it to advantage when time and place warranted it.

Herman Foertsch, a colonel of the German general staff, places the element of surprise second to superiority of forces and he stresses the importance of conducting where possible a strategy of annihilation so that the military organization of the enemy can be crushed as quickly as possible. "It is the art of strategy to bring about a battle under the most favorable circumstances possible, both as to the ground and the timing, and to force it on the opponent under conditions that are most unpropitious for him."⁹ Thus within definite strategic limits the goal of strategy is "to break the will of the enemy by military means, that is, to deprive him of his means to fight either permanently or until he submits."¹⁰

Strategy itself has not changed through the ages; the old principles have merely been adapted to new conditions of fighting so

8 E. A. Coolen, "Surprise," Canadian Army Journal, V(1951), p.71.

9 H. Foertsch, The Art of Modern Warfare, trans. T. W. Knauth. (New York, 1940), pp.26-27.

10 Foertsch, op.cit., p.21.

evident in the theatres of war today. Modern writers on strategy still draw lessons from the campaigns of ancient soldiers such as Hannibal and Caesar, who showed the importance in strategy of the objective, the seizing of the offensive, and the efficiency of mobility. The principles of strategy that they followed, e.g., surprise, concentration, team-work, and placement of forces, are still applicable today.

The substance of strategy has been discussed at some length to pave the way for a developed analysis of the method of strategy employed by Caesar to make himself master of the Roman world. We shall see how Caesar won complete victory in the Civil War by scheming, planning and sometimes failing in his strategy. The strategy of overthrowing as well as the technique of wearing down an enemy by quick thrusts or prolonged action was very familiar to, and well utilized by, Caesar. The strategy of the Civil War is decidedly personal, for the opposing forces were in the hands of generals who not only controlled the strategy of their respective campaigns, but also the tactics.

We must realize that "modern warfare finds its roots in the Napoleonic era,"¹¹ not in the classical age; however, in the field of strategy and tactics, and especially strategy, the old ideas have merely been modified to conform with present fighting conditions. It is evident that Caesar used no fixed system of strategy; he instead made great use of unforeseen circumstance. His artifices and contrivances were often well suited to the strategic situation and often they involved the element of surprise. His strategical technique was modified to

11 E. A. Coolen, op.cit., p.62.

suit the conditions under which he fought. Perhaps he was not the greatest strategist of history, but he can be ranked with such outstanding military men as Alexander, Hannibal and Napoleon, and in many phases of military skill (not necessarily strategy) he outranks them.

CHAPTER II

INTRIGUE IN ITALY

In order that we may understand Caesar's reasons for marching against Pompey and the Republicans it will be necessary to review, without excessive detail, the events which took place prior to his crossing of the Rubicon. It should be noted here that in this study the chronology used until the second Spanish Campaign is that of the old calendar and not of Caesar's revision. Therefore the dates mentioned will be approximately two months earlier than those of the solar calendar, a condition which was not rectified (except at times roughly by a form of intercalation adopted by the magistrates) until near the end of Caesar's career.

In the consular elections of 51 B.C., M. Porcius Cato, the Stoic, failed as a candidate. Elected as consuls were Ser. Sulpicius Rufus and M. Claudius Marcellus. Marcellus had incurred Caesar's wrath mainly through the bill he presented to the Senate "that a successor to him should be sent out even before the appointed time."¹ He further reminded the Senate that, "when Pompey proposed a bill touching the privileges of officials, in the clause where he debarred absentees from candidacy for office, he forgot to make a special exception in Caesar's case."² Caesar's proconsulship had been, according to agreement reached at the conference of Luca, extended for a second period of five years, until the end of February, 49 B.C.

1 Dio, Roman History, XL, 59.

2 Suetonius, Julius, 28.

"Caesar's claim was that the law of the Ten Tribunes gave him the right to be a candidate for the consulship in absentia, to which he apparently added as a corollary that he could retain his governorship and his army until he had exercised that right. Such a claim was plausible but it was no more."³

Day by day the power of Pompey increased through the efforts of Cato, who, even though a staunch Republican, realized that, if Caesar were to be suppressed, the help of a warrior equal to him in strength was needed. Allied with Cato in the anti-Caesarian faction were such men as Marcellus, the aforementioned consul, and L. Aemilius Paullus as well as M. Scribonius Curio, C. Caecilius Metellus Scipio, Pompey's father-in-law, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, and even M. Tullius Cicero himself, who took his stand for the sake of the Republic and his friend Pompey.

Caesar intended not to be outwitted by the Roman oligarchy. He was one of the richest men in the Empire, who would not hesitate to use this wealth, if necessary, to win over to his cause men who could be of the utmost value to him. Such a man was M. Scribonius Curio, who had incurred much debt through faulty speculation, and who, at the present moment, was a tribune. It was Caesar's intention to use the tribunician power of veto to prolong his magistracy, and as Curio was a fiery individual and a good speaker Caesar, decided that such a man would be an asset to him. By skilful bribery Caesar cleared him of debt, and so won him over to his cause, that he promised Caesar that by his constitutional use of the veto he would try to prevent any onesided proceeding against him.

3 F. E. Adcock, in Cambridge Ancient History, IX (Cambridge University Press, 1932), p.634.

Caesar had by this time (end of 51) increased the number of legions in Gaul by new levies to eleven. But in Rome M. Marcellus had introduced a motion to the Senate that the provinces administered by Caesar be given on March 1st, 49 to two consulars who were to be provided with governorships for that year. The Caesarians appealed to Pompey to permit their commander to conjoin the consulship with his proconsulship, but he formally rejected this request and suggested that Caesar's veterans apply to the Senate for their discharge. This attempt to destroy Caesar's discipline, combined with the coalition between Pompey and the constitutional party, disturbed Caesar, and, to be ready for any unforeseen move of the Republicans, he transferred one legion from Gaul to North Italy. Caesar realized that Marcellus wished to terminate his command on the basis that the Gallic war was over and the soldiers were ready for their discharge.

The consuls elected for the year 50 were L. Aemilius Paullus and C. Claudius Marcellus. Curio, to safeguard his own position, had at first to dissimulate his allegiance to Caesar, but, at the right moment (when he had come into the disfavour of the aristocrats), he openly suggested Caesar's actions.

In April of 50 B.C. Pompey had commanded Caesar to return to him the legion he had lent him in 54 and one other, that they might be put to service on the Parthian frontier. By the time these legions had reached Rome, the Parthian threat had diminished, so Pompey had sent the soldiers to Capua to await further orders. Caesar now realized that either a great mistake had been made on the part of the senate, or he had succumbed to the treachery of Pompey. He knew that he could not

remain idle, so, having strengthened his position by his levy in Gaul, he travelled from one region to the other, personally exhorting his troops, thereby increasing their faith in him. The aristocrats on the other hand "merely displayed their enmity toward Caesar, and then made no further preparations themselves to strengthen their position, while they had furnished to him a plausible excuse for retaining the legions that were with him."⁴ Curio struck the first blow for Caesar when on December 1st, 50 B.C., he moved "that all persons in arms must lay these down and disband their legions, or else they should not strip Caesar of his weapons and expose him to the forces of his rivals."⁵ So ended the troublesome year of 50 B.C.

L. Cornelius Lentulus and C. Claudius Marcellus, through the popularity of Pompey and the pressure of the aristocrats, were elected consuls for 49 B.C. On the 1st of January, 49, C. Scribonius Curio, now Caesar's senatorial ambassador, informed the Senate that Caesar was willing to give up his office and disband his legions, if Pompey would do likewise. The Senate after a heated debate voted that Caesar but not Pompey, was to surrender his arms. Thereupon an unexpected move was made by the new tribunes for 49, M. Antonius and Q. Cassius Longinus, who vetoed this motion and continued to do so on succeeding days. The Senate's mind was blocked against Caesar, even before Curio presented his compromise and, had not the aforementioned tribunes insisted, the message would never have been read. C. Marcellus urged that any discussion of

4 Dio, XL, 66.

5 Dio, XL, 62.

the problem be postponed until such time as the senate could enforce a decision by military strength, as levies and the recruiting of a new Italian army were now taking place.

Another blow was struck against Caesar when "...Metellus Scipio was allowed to put the deadly motion that Caesar should lay down his command by a date to be fixed, and that if he refused he should be treated as a public enemy."⁶ Antony and Cassius of course objected and were subsequently expelled. "They left Rome, taking with them the one constitutional battle-cry with which they could supply their master, that the rights of the tribunes were being overborne."⁷ The Senate passed the ultimum decretum against Caesar: "Caesar should surrender his office to his successors and dismiss his legions by a given day, or else be considered an enemy for action contrary to the interests of the country."⁸ Caesar now realized that further negotiation was futile, and a final blow was struck by the aristocrats when they won over to their side his resourceful lieutenant, T. Labienus. Pompey knew how to conduct the war, but not how to declare it. To the Catonists he had surrendered the power of commencing hostilities against Caesar when and how he pleased, and they had now ordered him to march against Caesar. His forces at home and abroad were greater than Caesar's. He had a naval support which Caesar did not possess, and his prestige among the powers allied with Rome was much higher. So Caesar on the 9th of January, 49, crossed the Rubicon, "...but as he was accustomed to rely upon the terror caused by the celerity and audacity of his movements, rather than

6 Adcock, op.cit., p.636.

7 Adcock, op.cit., p.637.

8 Dio, XII, 3.

on the magnitude of his preparations, he decided to take the aggressive in this great war with his five thousand men, and to anticipate the enemy by seizing the advantageous positions in Italy."⁹

The constitutional motive which forced Caesar to declare war was the expulsion of the tribunes, but Suetonius elaborates further on this final moment: "he crossed to hither Gaul, ...halted at Ravenna, intending to resort to war if the senate took any drastic action against the tribunes of the commons who interposed vetoes in his behalf. Now this was his excuse for the civil war, but it is believed that he had other motives."¹⁰ These other motives were no doubt personal preservation and increased military prestige. So the civil war had begun and Caesar, after nine years' absence, trod once more the soil of his native land.

Allea iacta erat.

⁹ Appian, The Civil Wars, II, 5, 34.

¹⁰ Suetonius, Julius, 30.

CHAPTER III

THE MARCH THROUGH ITALY

"It may be said that in general the interest of these campaigns lies in strategy rather than in tactics, for when the battle was once joined the issue could generally be foretold."¹

Caesar's strategic ability was not tested to its limit in his conquest of Italy but his march from Ariminum to Brundisium, even though no great challenge after the many perilous exploits of the Gallic war, displayed a knowledge of strategic principles gained from long experience. It is the object of this study to explain as clearly as possible why Caesar moved, not necessarily how he moved, for the latter problem is answered by the study of tactics and not strategy. This chapter will cover the events of the year 49 B.C. from the crossing of the Rubicon (January 11) to the departure of Pompey from Brundisium (March 17), the action which brought the first phase of the Civil War to a close.

What Caesar did, he did through compulsion, for it was in the final analysis either his life or that of the Republic and, once having made a move, it would be fatal for him to turn back. His strategy was such that, although he had no intention of turning back, he did leave a loophole for the negotiation of a peaceful solution to the constitutional problem of his recall. "On arriving at the banks of the river Rubicon, he hesitated for a while, doubtful whether he should sacrifice himself or venture upon the unconstitutional act; he was probably actuated more by the desire to save himself than to rule."²

1 Adcock, Cambridge Ancient History, IX, p.646.

2 B. G. Niebuhr, Lectures on the History of Rome, III (London, 1849), p.54.

Caesar, after receiving the expelled tribunes in Ariminum, had addressed the troops of the Thirteenth legion, informing them of the political and military situation, and had finally encouraged them "to defend from his enemies the reputation and dignity of the commander under whose guidance they have administered the state with unflinching good fortune for nine years, fought many successful battles, and pacified the whole of Gaul and Germany."³ It was necessary for Caesar at this time to convince his troops that he was right, even though he could not convince himself, for there must have been an element of doubt in his mind. Constitutionally, he was at fault and no one knew it any better than he, but he realized that he must make the first move and so we have the first phase of his strategic plans, namely, to convince his troops of his sincerity, that he might create for himself and for them the right psychological situation for fighting. On January 11 Caesar moved across the Rubicon, directly towards Ariminum on the coastal road ten miles distant from the river. The senate did not anticipate so fast a march and Pompey was caught off guard. What Caesar lacked in fighting force, he made up in speed. It was his intention to seize Ariminum by surprise: "Accordingly, he sent forward the centurions with a few of their bravest troops in peaceful garb to go inside the walls of Ariminum and take it by surprise."⁴ There is no doubt that this plan was carried out successfully, Ariminum was infiltrated by Caesar's advance guard and quickly overthrown from within. Upon his approach the townspeople opened their gates to him. Ferrero describes this fifth-column activity as follows: "He communicated the plan to several friends and officers

³ Caesar, Bell. Civ., I, 7.

⁴ Appian, II, 5, 35.

who were to go with him, of whom A. Pollio was one, and concerted skillful arrangements to prevent any report of his intention from reaching Rimini."⁵ By the time the conquest of Ariminum had been completed the report of his advance had reached Rome. "Prayers were offered up in public as was customary in times of danger, and the people, who remembered the evil times of Marius and Sulla, clamoured that both Caesar and Pompey ought to lay down their commands as the only means of averting war. Cicero proposed to send messengers to Caesar in order to come to an arrangement."⁶ Pompey too was confused, for "it was impossible for Pompey to get any true information about the enemy, since many reported to him whatever they happened to hear, and then were vexed if he did not believe them."⁷

Caesar had joined C. Scribonius Curio, M. Caelius Rufus and the fugitive tribunes Antony and Q. Cassius Longinus in Ariminum. His military strength on the 12th of January stood at one legion, the Thirteenth. This legion divided into its respective cohorts was assigned for further duty to Caesar's two most responsible lieutenants, Antony and Curio. To Antony he gave five cohorts and to Curio three,⁸ while keeping two cohorts for his own personal use in Ariminum. Caesar's strategy now became two-fold. He intended to send Antony with his five cohorts to seize Arretium, an inland town on the Via Cassia, while he himself with his cohorts pressed on to secure the three coastal towns of Pisaurum, Fanum and Ancona. But Pompey had not been lax in fortifying his territory. Recruiting officers had been sent throughout the districts

5 G. Ferrero, The Greatness and Decline of Rome, II, trans. A.E. Zimmern (London, 1909), p.223.

6 Appian, II, 36.

7 Plutarch, Pompey, 61 (trans. Perrin).

8 Bell. Civ., I, 11.

of Italy, They were not exceptionally good military men, but, with proper support, they could present a strong defense. Such persons were in charge of the coastal towns in north-east Italy.

Caesar, as was his custom, moved quickly and by January 14 overpowered the towns, little if any resistance being shown: "...he occupies Pisaurum, Fanum and Ancona...."⁹ Perhaps Caesar wishes to show us the ease with which he conquered when he explains the overthrow of these towns by the phrase singulis cohortibus (each with one cohort).

The seizure of these three towns gave Caesar control over the north end of the Via Flaminia "Two highways led at that time from the Romagna to the south, the Aemilio-Cassian which led from Bononia over the Apennines to Arretium and Rome, and the Popillio-Flaminian, which led from Ravenna along the coast of the Adriatic to Fanum and was there divided, one branch running westward through the Furlo pass to Rome, another southward to Ancona and thence onward to Apulia."¹⁰ Mark Antony had followed the former road, Caesar the latter. Although Caesar reports that he sent Antony to Arretium, no mention is made of the latter's success there. We must assume then that he met with little if any resistance and easily brought the interior town under control. Arretium was only 135 miles distant from Rome.

By the seizure of Pisaurum, Fanum and Ancona, Caesar "was merely trying to secure an asset which would enable him to treat for peace on more favourable conditions, and to prove to his enemies that, under provocation, he could answer violence with violence."¹¹ About the

⁹ Bell. Civ., loc. cit.

¹⁰ T. Mommsen, The History of Rome, IV, trans. W.P. Dickson (London and New York, 1930), p.350.

¹¹ Ferrero, op.cit., pp.224-225.

19th of January the envoys L. Roscius and L. Caesar reached Caesar at one of these coastal towns and presented him with a message from Pompey, reminding him of the latest decree of the senate which had urged him to yield for the good of the state. Pompey had stated: "He had always placed the interests of the republic before private claims."¹² Caesar's reply to Roscius was direct and to the point with special emphasis on a meeting between the two: "let Pompeius himself come nearer or allow me to approach him. In this way a conference will settle all disputes."¹³ Caesar had failed to convince the senate that he was not intent upon war. Instead of only alarming them he had terrified them and the reports of his advance were magnified beyond actual fact.

While Caesar was consolidating his position in the conquered coastal towns, Curio was on his way to Iguvium to fulfil the next part of Caesar's plan. Caesar was aware of the threat presented by this town which was under the garrison of five Pompeian cohorts under Menucius Thermus, who had reportedly been recruiting troops in preparation for a northward thrust. At Fanum, as Mommsen points out, the Via Flaminia divided into two roads, one leading to Rome, the other south to Apulia. Iguvium lies approximately sixty miles inland and only eight miles from the Via Flaminia. Caesar early realized that he who controlled Iguvium governed one of the lifelines of Rome. It was part of his strategy to seize this town quickly before the Pompeians could put a strong force there. Curio moved against it with two cohorts from Ariminum and one from Pisaurum. Thermus, informed of Curio's arrival and mistrusting the goodwill of the community, moved his forces from the city and fled. His men, new recruits most of them, were only half-hearted in their

¹² Bell. Civ., I, 8.

¹³ Bell. Civ., I, 9.

support of Pompey and many, when given the opportunity, deserted him and returned to their homes. So Curio entered and took the town in Caesar's name without a struggle.

From the victories of Caesar's legions thus far, we can draw the conclusion that many Roman citizens neither supported the cause of Pompey nor wished to take up arms against Caesar. It seems evident that Caesar realized this and his clemency towards the townsfolk in conquered areas further enhanced his prestige. Most of these rural citizens knew Caesar as the conqueror of Gaul, not as an invader who had violated their constitution.

Now that Arretium and Iguvium were occupied, Caesar was secured against a sudden attack by the enemy, and a march on Rome could now be made by either of the two great roads, the Via Cassia or the Via Flaminia. This march never took place, for his strategic plans were such that he directed his action along the east rather than the west coast of the peninsula. To march on Rome would be too costly and too risky an operation. The strength of Pompey's forces was not completely known and Caesar wished neither to be hemmed in between his province and Rome nor to see his supply lines and forces cut up piecemeal by the Republican troops.

By January 29 Caesar decided that it was time to regroup his forces. He ordered Antony and Curio to unite their legions at Ancona where he already had stationed one cohort. Meanwhile L. Roscius and L. Caesar arrived, bearing from Pompey a reply to Caesar's last message, which requested a conference and other concessions. The consuls demanded: "that Caesar should return to Gaul, quit Ariminum and disband his forces." In return for this, "...Pompeius would go to the Spanish

provinces"; until Caesar agreed, "the consuls and Pompeius would not interrupt their levies."¹⁴ These terms Caesar rejected, realizing that "unless each party could rely upon the good faith of his antagonist it was futile to propose that they should both disarm."¹⁵

Under these conditions the war had to be prolonged, so Caesar then decided that his next strategic step was to move further south. This displacement involved the control of Picenum, an area in which Pompey's influence had been strong for many years. Caesar had secured a foothold in this territory by the capture of Ancona, but should he progress further south the enemy's resistance could be stronger. The important towns against which he intended to direct his attack were Auximum, Cingulum, Firmum, and Asculum. Reports had reached him of a council of war held at Teanum Sidicinum in Campania on January 23rd, wherein Pompey, Labienus, and both consuls had agreed to spurn his offers of reconciliation and instead had recommended that Pompey advance into Picenum and there levy a force after he had taken command of the troops stationed at Luceria in Apulia. This move north Caesar intended to block by a quick southward thrust beginning with the overthrow of Picenum. If he could bring this region under his control, a major step towards the conquest of Italy would be completed.

Auximum, the first of the four Picenian towns mentioned, eleven miles inland from Ancona, was under the jurisdiction of Attius Varus with three Pompeian cohorts. As had been the case in Iguvium so in Auximum the inhabitants were partisan to Caesar and unwilling to take a stand against him. But news had reached Caesar that Varus, after con-

¹⁴ Bell. Civ., I, 10.

¹⁵ T. R. Holmes, The Roman Republic and the Founder of the Empire, III (Oxford, 1923), p.10.

scripting a large force, was intending to march quickly north and attack him. To counteract this impending thrust he regrouped his forces, perhaps at Ancona, and ordered Curio and Antony to evacuate Iguvium and Arretium. Ferrero thinks that this evacuation reveals "that the occupation of Arretium had been merely a piece of bluff."¹⁶ I do not entirely share this opinion for it seems to me poor strategy to send a task force many miles to conquer a town and then recall it when a bluff has been perpetrated. Caesar withdrew it for a reason -- to strengthen his own force in case of a sudden movement by Pompey which he felt might be underway at Auximum. The citizens of the town through their civic officials informed Varus that they did not intend to refuse admittance to so renowned a conqueror: "that neither they nor the rest of their fellow-townsmen can endure that G. Caesar, holding imperial command, having deserved so well of the state and after performing such exploits, should be prevented from entering the walls of the town."¹⁷ So realizing his inability to hold the town with the alien troops he possessed, he forsook it but was shortly overtaken in flight by an advance guard of Caesar's troops. Caesar briefly describes the results of this encounter: "An engagement is fought and Varus is deserted by his followers; some of his men retire to their homes, the rest make their way to Caesar."¹⁸

The unusual feature of the civil struggle to this point is the absence of direct combat. Mainly through a lack of manpower, no Pompeian garrison had yet tested Caesar's strength on the battlefield. Caesar took advantage of this and so developed his strategy that he moved quickly

¹⁶ Ferrero, op.cit., p.232.

¹⁷ Bell. Civ., I, 13.

¹⁸ Bell. Civ., loc.cit.

and regrouped carefully. At Auximum he was informed by diverse sources of the panic in Rome and was visibly upset that he would now be prevented from negotiating an equitable peace and so be responsible for prolonging the war.

With Auximum now under his control, Caesar delayed a few days in that region to gather supplies and rest his troops. Very little time could be lost if he was to block Pompey and force a peace, so he pushed further into Picene territory towards the town of Cingulum, whose benefactor had been T. Labienus, who had framed its municipal charter and who had, through his own expense, seen to the enlargement of the town. Upon his arrival the townsfolk openly welcomed and greeted him as an ally, showing no ill feeling and promising him their assistance: "He requisitions soldiers, they send them."¹⁹

Caesar's military strength was now reinforced by the arrival of Mark Antony from Ancona and the Twelfth legion from Gaul. The latter Caesar had summoned when first reports came to him that Pompey was beginning to arm; a march of two weeks was required for it to reach him. From Cingulum he had received the new recruits he had requested.

Early in February (about the 3rd), after his reinforcements had arrived and his supplies had been satisfactorily arranged, he decided to make his third move in Picenum against Asculum which he would reach by way of the coast town of Firmum. Caesar's intentions reached Lentulus Spinther, the Pompeian legate who had been sent as recruiting officer

¹⁹ Bell. Civ., I, 15.

to the town and held it with ten cohorts. As Caesar moved by the coast road towards Firmum, Lentulus evacuated his troops from Asculum and proceeded south towards Corfinium, where the Pompeian forces were gathering for a defensive action.

Caesar realized that he was losing time in his race to intercept Pompey, who had now deserted Rome and taken refuge in Luceria, intending to proceed from there to Canusium and so on to Brundisium. When Asculum and Firmum fell, Pompey, realizing that his struggle to defend Italy was at an end, sped up operations to enable the consuls, senators, and all his followers to be evacuated from Brundisium to Dyrrhachium in Epirus. By February 6th, Caesar had reached and subdued Castrum Truentinum without a struggle. Now all of northern Italy and most of the south was under his command. He could reach Rome in a short time by several of the roads he controlled but he was determined to push on and intercept Pompey. This was his strategy: to cut off Pompey, if necessary to capture him, and so force a peace.

Caesar realized now that Corfinium was to be the rallying point for the Pompeians and that he had to continue his advance; if for no other reason, his enemies had to be pursued. At Firmum his plan of campaign changed and he decided to "fight a short and sharp campaign in Italy."²⁰ Not anticipating so quick a withdrawal by Pompey, he set out south once more in the direction of Corfinium.

Corfinium was a town of considerable strategic importance. It was Pompey's best fortified and largest stronghold in Central Italy, where he had stationed twelve cohorts mostly raised in the surrounding territory under the direction of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the person appointed

²⁰ Ferrero, op.cit., p.236.

by the senate to succeed Caesar in Gaul. This town had been the first capital of the insurgents in the great Italian war and was the centre of the mountainous district of Abruzzi inhabited by the Vestini, Marsi, Paeligni and other people of Sabellian stock. It was thirty-five miles inland and close to the Aternus river, which flowed through the heart of the district and was bridged three miles from the town. South-east of Corfinium was Sulmo and west of it near Lake Fucinus was Alba, both held by Pompey. "In this district the Pompeians had been busy: both to them and to Caesar it was of first-rate strategic importance."²¹

By February 6, reinforcements from Pompey under the command of Vibullius Rufus, one of his most competent commanders, were on the way to join Domitius. As these troops moved north towards Corfinium they intercepted Lentulus Spinther and part of the retinue left after the fall of Asculum. Rufus took charge of these disillusioned troops and led them with him to Corfinium.

Gathered in Corfinium to make a solid stand if necessary against Caesar were Domitius, Vibullius Rufus, Attius Varus, and eventually Lucilius Hirrus, who had fled to the fortress after abandoning Camerinum in Umbria to Caesar's forces. The latter announced to the assembled defenders the approach of Caesar.

Domitius, on learning of Caesar's sudden arrival, immediately sent a message to Pompey requesting further assistance. Pompey in three letters, preserved for us in Cicero's correspondence, replied to Domitius: "Wherefore, as you had arranged ... to start with your army from Corfinium on the 9th of February and to come to me, I wonder what reason there has

21 W. E. Heitland, The Roman Republic, III (Cambridge, 1909), p.284.

been for your change of plan. The reason mentioned by Vibullius is trivial, namely that you were delayed on hearing that Caesar had left Firmum and arrived at Castrum Truentinum...I entreat and exhort you... to come to Luceria on the first possible day, before the forces which Caesar has begun to collect can concentrate and divide us."²² In a reply to this letter Domitius expressed his intention of watching Caesar and then joining Pompey in Samnium should Caesar march along the coast; but if he lingered around Corfinium, Domitius stated, he would oppose him. Pompey cautioned him: "A man of your judgement ought to bear in mind not only the size of Caesar's present array against you but the number of infantry and cavalry that he will soon collect...Curio is concentrating the garrisons which were in Umbria and Etruria and marching to join Caesar."²³ Pompey was not sure of Caesar's intentions: "though one division may be sent to Alba, and another advance on you, and though Caesar may refrain from the offensive and be content to defend his position, still you will be in a fix, nor will you be able with your following to make sufficient head against such numbers to allow of your sending out foraging parties."²⁴ He closes the letter with a refusal for assistance "I fear I cannot comply with your request for assistance, because I do not put much trust in these legions."²⁵ The situation had indeed become serious when in a reply to a dispatch from Domitius of February 17th Pompey informed him, "What I expected and foretold has happened: he refuses to meet you in the field at present, and he is hemming you in with all his forces concentrated, so that the road may not be clear for

²² Cicero, Ad Atticum, VIII, 12b (trans. Winsted).

²³ Ad Att., VIII, 12c.

²⁴ Loc. cit.

²⁵ Loc. cit.

you to join me and unite your loyal contingent with my legions whose allegiance is questionable....So do your best, if any tactics can extricate you even now, to join me as soon as possible before our enemy can concentrate all his forces."²⁶ A further blow was struck against Domitius when Caesar, who by February 15th had successfully crossed the river Aternus and was encamped outside the walls of Corfinium, received a despatch: "that the inhabitants of Sulmo, a town seven miles distant from Corfinium, were ready to carry out his wishes, but were prevented by the senator Q. Lucretius and by Attius the Pelignian, who were in occupation of the town with a garrison of seven cohorts."²⁷ Mark Antony was immediately sent to relieve the town and this he did without any apparent difficulty even causing the defenders Lucretius and Attius to jump from the wall.²⁸

Let us now assess the comparative strength of the opposing forces at Corfinium. Caesar had been reinforced at Castrum Truentinum by the Eighth legion, twenty-two cohorts and three hundred cavalry loaned to him by the king of Noricum. So his total strength at this time, gathered in the vicinity of Corfinium consisted of three veteran legions (the Eighth, the Twelfth and the Thirteenth), thirty cohorts (mainly recruits) and about three hundred horse. In numbers his accumulated force was approximately forty thousand men.²⁹

The Pompeian force at Corfinium was considerably smaller and less reliable. Domitius had collected about twenty cohorts from surrounding districts and had added thirteen cohorts which Vibullius Rufus

²⁶ Ad Att., VIII, 12d.

²⁷ Bell. Civ., I, 18.

²⁸ Loc. cit.

²⁹ Mommsen, op.cit., p.353.

provided through Pompeian levies. A total strength therefore of about thirty cohorts was all the manpower available. Here the psychological effect of the weight of Caesar's numbers played an important part in the surrender of Corfinium.

So began the siege of Corfinium. The same internal dissension that betrayed the other Pompeian towns plagued this one too. Domitius tried both by deceit and by bribery to retain the support of his men and townsfolk. When he saw that he was accomplishing nothing and that both his commanders and the leaders of the town intended to surrender all to Caesar, he tried to escape by night but, being unsuccessful, he was intercepted and incarcerated.

Caesar, before the capitulation of the town, had met outside the gates with Lentulus Spinther who had been sent as a representative of the Pompeians to talk over terms of submission. Caesar informed him why he had marched in opposition to the decrees of the senate: "he had not quitted his province with any evil intent, but to defend himself from the insults of his foes, to restore to their position the tribunes of the people who at that conjuncture had been expelled from the state, to assert the freedom of himself and the Roman people who had been oppressed by a small faction."³⁰ He then released him with the assurance that no looting would take place if the town surrendered immediately. On February 21st the citizens of Corfinium turned over the city and its contents to Caesar, wondering what retaliation he would take on both the Pompeian commanders and the inhabitants. Caesar, contrary to the Pompeians' expectation, but in accordance with his overall strategic plan, spurned

³⁰ Bell. Civ., I, 22.

any offer of treasure (for there was a greater one awaiting him in Rome), released Domitius, Lentulus, and the other recruiting officers, and even returned to Domitius a large sum of money which the wealthy aristocrat had placed in the city's treasure. Caesar thus impressed the townsfolk and to a certain degree the Pompeians with his beneficence. We are correctly informed when we are told that "The fame of Caesar's clemency preceded him; he was welcomed in every town through which he passed; and his reputation was rising throughout Italy."³¹ The Pompeian garrison at Corfinium consisting of eighteen cohorts was required to swear its allegiance to Caesar, after which it was despatched under Asinius Pollio to Sicily along with the cohorts which had surrendered at Sulmo and Alba.

On February 19 Pompey left Luceria for Canusium and by the 25th had reached Brundisium. It was now his intention to use this port as a muster-station for his galleys and forces. The time that Caesar was detained at Corfinium Pompey used to advantage to assemble his newly recruited levies. We know that he intended to set up a provisional government in Dyrrhachium but what his other plans were once he reached his destination is questionable. We can be sure that his large fleet was to be put to good use and it was no idle report which prompted Cicero, when discussing the evacuation and the results therefrom with Atticus, to say "yet our chiefs will not hesitate to destroy by starvation their country ...All this fleet from Alexandria, Colchis, Tyre, Sidon, Aradus, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Lycia, Rhodes, Chios, Byzantium, Lesbos, Smyrna, Miletus, Cos, is being got ready to cut off the supplies of Italy and to blockade the grain-producing provinces."³² We also have in this same letter a state-

³¹ Holmes, op.cit., p.28.

³² Ad Att., IX, 9.

ment of Cicero's position with reference to the invader and the deserter: "So in my doubt what I ought to do, I am greatly swayed by my good feeling towards Pompey. Without that it were better to perish in my country, than to destroy my country by saving it."³³

While Pompey was evacuating his forces from Brundisium, "Domitius had gone to seize Massilia with seven merchant-vessels which he had requisitioned from private persons at Igilium and in Cosanum, and had manned with his own slaves, freedmen, and tenants..."³⁴ Thus we can see that Pompey and the Republicans had not completely yielded Italy to Caesar and, though they were abandoning it, it was only intended to be a temporary withdrawal and the plans they were formulating for their return were not on too grand a scale to be accomplished.

While Pompey was on his way to Brundisium, Caesar after delaying seven days in Corfinium marched through the territories of the Marrucini, Funtiani and Larinates into Apulia. Captured in one of these operations was Pompey's chief engineer N. Magius Cremona, whom Caesar sent to Pompey with further demands for a conference. Caesar lost some time waiting for a reply from Pompey which Magius was to bring him and which never came. It seems that Pompey had used this delay as a device for gaining time. Caesar not to be outdone in his attempts to secure a satisfactory settlement had sent his lieutenant Caninius Rebilus to L. Scribonius Libo requesting him to exercise his authority in obtaining a conference. Pompey was on the move and when Libo's answer reached Caesar ("...the consuls being absent, negotiations for a settlement cannot be

³³ Ad Att., IX, 9.

³⁴ Bell. Civ., I, 34.

carried on without them."),³⁵ Pompey had the evacuation of Brundisium underway.

By the time Caesar arrived at Brundisium on March 9th with six legions, Pompey's departure-plans were well advanced. His ships had left March 4th on their first trip to Dyrrhachium carrying part of his army, the consuls, Republican senators, and all those of rank who wished to desert Italy. Mommsen informs us that Pompey had twenty-five thousand persons to remove from Brundisium,³⁶ a sizeable number requiring a large number of ships, but, as we know from Cicero, these ships were available.

Caesar immediately began his blockade and Pompey, realizing that his ships would not return for about a week, had all roads and trenches barricaded and fortified, often by sharpened stakes driven into the ground and concealed by earth or other available material. He thus by devious means made all entrances treacherous for oncoming troops. Even ship-towers had been constructed, higher than Caesar's (on the average Caesar's were only two stories, Pompey's three).

Caesar realized that he must control the harbour if he was to thwart Pompey's last move. He thereupon began the construction of piers and moles, pushing them out into the harbour as rapidly as possible. But he did not work fast enough, and on the 17th Pompey's ships returned, bypassed the moles, and docked. If Caesar was to win he must now reach Pompey by land. This could be done only if the Brundisians opened their city to him and this they did. Tired and disgusted after their oppression at the hands of the Pompeians, they sent scouts to Caesar to direct his men to the harbour by a circuitous route, skirting the obstacles Pompey

³⁵ Bell. Civ., I, 26.

³⁶ Mommsen, op.cit., p.354.

had placed in their way. But it was too late; by the time the advance guard reached the dock-area Pompey's fleet was under sail and his evacuation complete. All this was done by March 17th and his only loss was two ships which ran afoul of Caesar's piers. "Except these prisoners, not one Pompeian soldier remained upon Italian soil; and in sixty-five days the conquest of the peninsula had been achieved almost without a blow."³⁷

We have thus traced Caesar's movements from Ariminum to Brundisium. In the course of this activity, he displayed two strategical techniques, speed and surprise. His strategic aim was to intercept Pompey in his flight and so terminate the war quickly. His strategy "was essentially guided by his understanding of Pompey's mind."³⁸ B. H. Liddell-Hart, in support of his theory of the value of the indirect approach to strategy, claims that Caesar's advance by way of the coast road instead of upon Rome was strategically sound but, when he changed his plans upon learning of Pompey's retreat and drove directly against his opponent, this, claims Liddell-Hart, was poor strategy and cost him a quick victory. "Thus an excess of directness and a want of art, in the second phase, robbed Caesar of his chance of ending the war in one campaign, and condemned him to four more years of obstinate warfare all around the Mediterranean basin."³⁹ Though Pompey was not so quick to move as Caesar, when he did march, he had a definite goal in mind - Dyrrhachium - and he intended to put every obstacle possible in Caesar's way and he did. Pompey in this first phase of the war showed to advantage his own type of strategy - that of withdrawal and eventual regrouping.

³⁷ Holmes, op.cit., p.32.

³⁸ Liddell-Hart, Strategy, p.54.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

Caesar planned no immediate pursuit of Pompey for he had first to assemble a fleet. His next step would be to reorganize Italy on a satisfactory military basis and then carry on the war against the Pompeian force in Spain.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST SPANISH CAMPAIGN

"I go to meet an army without a leader, and I shall return to meet a leader without an army."¹

We are not told specifically in the de Bello Civili why Caesar marched into Spain, but certain occurrences prompted him: "...he was unwilling that a veteran army and two Spanish provinces, one of which was under obligation to Pompeius for very great benefits, should be confirmed in their allegiance, that auxiliary forces and cavalry should be provided, that Gaul and Italy should be tampered with, all in his absence."² Dio informs us that: "Affairs at home he now committed to Antony's care, while he himself set out for Spain, which was strongly favouring the side of Pompey and causing Caesar some fear that it might induce the Gauls to revolt."³ And Appian states that: "As he had apprehensions of Pompey's army in Spain, which was large and well disciplined by long service (lest while he was pursuing Pompey it should fall upon his rear), he decided to march to Spain and destroy that army first."⁴

It is evident that before Caesar pursued Pompey to Greece, he wished to leave behind him a consolidated West. Spain, Gaul and Italy must be under control if he was to successfully subdue his enemy. There is a parallel here between Caesar and Alexander who did not wish to march upon Persia until he had the support of Greece and the use of the Athenian fleet. Like Athens against Alexander, Spain within three years rebelled against Caesar's lieutenants and fomented another war.

1 Suetonius, Julius, 34.

2 Bell. Civ., I, 29.

3 Dio, XLI, 18.

4 Appian, II, 6, 40.

We shall see that during this first Spanish campaign it was the strategy of the Pompeians to avoid defeat by engaging in battle only at a great advantage while the technique of Caesar involved the elimination of Pompey's Spanish armies without resorting to a pitched battle that might expose his troops in a disadvantageous position. Caesar's intention was to exhaust the patience of the Pompeians.

The Pompeian strength at the beginning of the Spanish War was controlled by "Afranius and Petreius and Varro, legates of Pompeius, of whom one held hither Spain with three legions, another further Spain from the pass of Castulo to the Anas with two legions, a third the district of the Vettones from the Anas and also Lusitania with an equal number of legions,...."⁵ There were besides "about eighty cohorts, some heavy-armed from the hither province, others light-armed from further Spain, and about five thousand cavalry from each province." Of his own strength he reports: "Caesar had sent forward six legions into Spain, five thousand auxiliary infantry and three thousand cavalry which he had had with him during all his former wars, and an equal number from Gaul."⁶ We therefore see that Caesar entered upon his Spanish expedition numerically inferior to the Pompeians, but in command of veteran soldiers who had survived the rigours of the Gallic campaign and who were willing to test the power of this new force arrayed in the wilds of Spain.

Before proceeding with the strategy of the Spanish Campaign it is necessary to consider a very important aspect of the western theatre of war, the Massilian affair. It should be noted that the invasion of Spain and the siege of Massilia are intimately connected. Had Caesar's

⁵ Bell. Civ., I, 38.

⁶ Bell. Civ., I, 39.

general failed in the siege of Massilia, activities in Spain would have been delayed seriously if not indefinitely postponed; Caesar could not afford to lose even a week.

What was the strategic importance of Massilia? Caesar say very little about it, but Colonel Stoffel comments: "Ces événements avaient d'autant plus de gravité que Massilia n'était pas loin d'Aquae Sextiae (Aix) ou passait la route d'Italie en Espagne, et qu'ainsi la ligne de communication de César se trouvait interceptée. De plus, il était à craindre que d'autres villes ne vinssent à imiter l'exemple donné par une cité importante et ne se déclarassent pour Pompée."⁷

We thus see that a reverse at Massilia could thwart Caesar's plans completely. Caesar arrived at Massilia on April 19th, and there he learned that Vibullius Rufus had been sent to Spain to war Lucius Afranius of the danger of Caesar's presence. He also learned that Domitius Ahenobarbus was on his way towards Massilia by sea. The Massiliotes refused to admit Caesar on the basis that they were non-partisan and did not intend to take sides in a dispute which involved Rome and not themselves. Caesar thought that Massilia must come under his control since, as Stoffel points out, it was strategically placed on the main communication-line between Spain and Italy. So he assigned the siege of this ancient town to C. Trebonius with three legions from North Italy. He placed Decimus Brutus in charge of the twelve ships which he ordered to be constructed on the Rhone. Thus Trebonius was to direct the attack by land, Brutus by sea.

Caesar was now faced with two military contests, one in Spain

⁷ E. G. Stoffel, Histoire de Jules César (Paris, 1887), I, 44.

and another in Gaul. To furnish enough manpower in Spain, he withdrew practically all his troops from Gaul and carried on these two operations simultaneously. On close analysis the removal of all these troops might seem foolhardy but it appears that Caesar was counting upon speed of action and a quick victory. No doubt he was somewhat disturbed by the resistance of Massilia.

Gaius Fabius was wintering near Narbo when he received orders from Caesar to move towards Spain and take control of the main pass through the Pyrenees before the Pompeian forces could unite and seize it. This Fabius did without difficulty with the three legions at his command, shortly to be joined by another three legions left behind by Trebonius at Matisco. Caesar set out for Spain from Massilia on June 5th with an escort of nine hundred cavalry. Afranius had intended to reach the pass first but he neither moved quickly enough nor did he thoroughly realize that Fabius was so close to his territories. With the Pyrenees secure in Caesar's hands, Afranius moved back to his most advantageous position though not the best strategic one, the city of Ilerda. Fabius advanced down the valley of the Sicoris by forced marches in pursuit of Afranius, hoping to intercept him before he could make a stand and consolidate his forces. But Afranius had too great a start and upon reaching Ilerda took up a position southwest of the city on the present day hill of Gardeny, which was separated from the town and the river Sicoria by sections of level ground. Fabius, because Ilerda was in Pompeian hands, took his position up river from the town. Here he waited for the three legions on their way to join him.

The forces of Petreius and Afranius now stationed outside Ilerda

consisted of cavalry and auxiliaries from Lusitania, Celtiberia and the maritime tribes of the northwest. These native levies were composed of five thousand cavalry and thirty cohorts of infantry both heavy- and light-armed. "Including the legions, some of which had had experience of warfare with native tribes, the entire force, besides camp followers, may have numbered about forty thousand men."⁸

Before proceeding further let us consider the general topographic situation of Ilerda. "Ilerda was built on a rock which stands up boldly five hundred feet above the plain, with a plateau of some one hundred and fifty acres on the top. Every side of this rock is practically inaccessible to assault except that on the south. Here, in a sort of ravine, is a slope, up which ran the road to the town, some six hundred yards long from the plain. Near the plain the mouth of the ravine is some three hundred and fifty yards wide; at the town, about a third that width."⁹ Although Ilerda was an excellent position for tactical defence it did not lend itself to such strategic purposes as controlling or protecting central Spain. The river Ebro was the true line of defense but to reach this the Pompeians would have to march through barren and mountainous country.

It is known that Afranius stationed his infantry on the hill of Gardeny and it is assumed that his cavalry and auxiliaries were placed on the low ground adjoining the river where his supplies and extra equipment were located. Fabius' encampment was approximately two miles north of Afranius'. Realizing that he was too weak to strike directly against

⁸ Holmes, The Roman Republic, III, p.52.

⁹ T. A. Dodge, Great Captain: Caesar, II (New York, 1892), p.445.

the more powerful Pompeians, he constructed two bridges over the Sicoris, at a distance of two and four miles above Ilerda. "Over these he kept sending supplies because during the preceding days he had exhausted all that there was this side of the river."¹⁰ Shortly after these crossings were made, the three legions arrived from Matisco.

Ferrero informs us that Fabius had met with such opposition from Afranius and had so insecurely solicited the help of neighbouring tribes that he quickly retreated to his position north of Ilerda. "One is inclined to ask whether the retreat was not a feint to tempt the enemy onwards ...he remained on the defensive awaiting the fall of Marseilles."¹¹ I do not think this was the case. Fabius was merely awaiting the arrival of Caesar for it does not seem possible that Caesar would delay any longer than necessary at Massilia when he had the major force of Pompey's troops to overcome in Spain. He certainly would not entrust the Spanish campaign to a subordinate, especially Fabius, whose experience in military affairs was not comparable to other of his more prominent legates.

The first encounter on Spanish soil took place on the side of the river opposite Ilerda when Fabius's foragers and their protective cavalry were barred from returning to their camp by a washout, during a sudden storm, of their bridge two miles above Ilerda. Afranius detected the severity of the situation from the debris washed downstream and sent four legions and all his cavalry to rout the foragers. The latter were saved by the skill of their commander, Lucius Plancus, who, noticing reinforcements in the distance, so arrayed his forces on a slope that he successfully resisted the Afranians. After a brief skirmish, both the Afranians and Fabius's foragers returned to their camps.

¹⁰ Bell. Civ., I, 40.

¹¹ Ferrero, Greatness and Decline, II, p.253.

Caesar arrived on the 23rd of June with his bodyguard of nine hundred cavalry. His first task was to repair the bridge destroyed in the recent inclement weather. This was done by night and when the camp was restored to comparative quietness he next surveyed the surrounding area, so acquainting himself with the terrain that he could lay plans for his advance against the Pompeians. He eventually decided to move into a new position midway between the hill of Gardeny and Ilerda, on a flat stretch of land which Afranius had neglected to occupy. Caesar noticing that Afranius was refraining from battle, "...determined to pitch his camp at an interval of about four hundred paces from the lowest spurs of the mountain..."¹²

Caesar, keeping in mind the 'esprit de corps' of his men, decided on the best way to safeguard his troops: "...he forbade the erection of a rampart, which could not fail to be prominent and visible from a distance, but ordered a ditch of fifteen feet width to be constructed facing the enemy."¹³ The strategic location of this camp is very evident, and there is no doubt that Caesar had in mind the eventual blockading of Afranius on his hill and the future encirclement of Ilerda. Witnessing these first movements of Caesar's forces, Afranius, not to be outdone by the opposition, shifted his line of defence from the top to half way down the hill of Gardeny and, when he saw that Caesar advanced no closer, he stopped and awaited further developments.

In the construction of his camp, Caesar so placed his forces that two lines served as a defence while a third line worked. A certain element of deceptive strategy is herein displayed, for, when one side of

¹² Bell. Civ., I, 41.

¹³ Loc. cit.

the camp was completed, a legion was left to protect it while a second legion was moved to the other side to protect that one. All this was done without revelation to the enemy. By June 26th, three days after his arrival, a rampart was built up out of the earth and Fabius' detachment with all its baggage was transferred to the new camp. Afranius was not idle while this construction was taking place; he continually sent sorties to the base of the hill to draw out the forces of Caesar, but he met with little success.

Caesar, anxious to force Afranius's hand, after surveying the situation noticed a small eminence midway between the hill of Gardeny and Ilerda. This knoll if occupied by his forces would be of great strategic value to him. "Caesar was confident that if he occupied and fortified this he would cut off his adversaries from the town and the bridge and from all the stores which they had brought into the town."¹⁴ Caesar was determined to seize this position and to carry out the task he sent a corp of antesignani, warriors who were especially selected for this type of fighting. It is not necessary to detail Caesar's tactics in his attempt to reach the hill. It is sufficient to say that he failed to such a degree that this select band turned and retreated quickly when they had come. The reason for this setback Caesar attributes to the utter confusion experienced by his men as a result of the enemy's unorthodox style of combat. As he says, "the method of fighting adopted by the enemy's troops was to charge at first at full speed, boldly seize a position, take no particular trouble to preserve their ranks, but fight singly and in loose order..."¹⁵

14 Bell. Civ., I, 43.

15 Bell. Civ., I, 44.

So we see that Caesar underestimated both the speed of the lightly armed Spaniards and the distance to the hill. When he realized the seriousness of the situation, Caesar sent to their assistance the veteran Ninth legion, which quickly dispersed the Afranians after checking their onrush. The Ninth pursued the Afranians to the gates of Ilerda where they became engaged in a battle that brought them close to annihilation. The site of the battle Caesar describes as "unfavourable both from its confined limits and because they had halted just under the very spurs of the mountain, so that no missile failed to reach them."¹⁶ The battle lasted for five hours and relief could be given only from the rear. Finally, in a state of exhaustion and with all their missiles spent, the Ninth, in a desperate sally, drew their swords and fought with such determination that the Afranians were forced to retreat within the town. This enabled Caesar's cavalry to relieve the weary militia and so permit them to retreat to the safety of their camp. "Caesar had lost the prize for which he fought; and Afranius, now recognizing the value of the knoll, strongly entrenched it and detailed a force for its protection."¹⁷

Caesar's strategy had failed. An analysis of this reveals two points: one, Caesar's inattentiveness in assessing the situation closely, and, two, the impetuosity of his troops. Whether Caesar ordered the Ninth to pursue the retreating Afranius is not known. If he did, it was contrary to his policy, for he did not wish to engage in a pitched battle as the Ninth had served the purpose for which they had been sent. Perhaps the soldiers of this legion were anxious for battle after so long a delay, or perhaps they were imbued with thoughts of victory, as is often the

¹⁶ Bell. Civ., I, 45.

¹⁷ Holmes, op.cit., p.57.

case with the pursuer. Why they made the move we shall never know but this error in command cost Caesar unnecessary casualties and placed him and his men in a position of psychological stress which was to be made worse by the events of the next few weeks.

Caesar's position was now crucial and to add to the tribulation came the report that a sudden flood had washed out both the bridges constructed under Fabius' order. This occurred within two days of his recent setback at the hands of Afranius. Now that he had no means of crossing the river, he was restricted to a smaller field of operations. Friendly states could not supply provisions, foragers who happened to be on the other side of the river could not return; huge supplies on the way from Italy and Gaul could not reach his camp; he had little corn in winter stores as the crops were not yet ripe and Afranius had transported most of the grain to Ilerda before Caesar's arrival; what little had been left in wayside granaries, Caesar's forces had consumed. A final blow occurred when neighbouring tribes moved their cattle (which could be used as a reserve by Caesar) some distance from the theatre of war.

In direct contrast to Caesar's privations was Afranius' abundance of grain and the support he received from neighbouring tribes. Because Afranius still commanded the stone bridge at Ilerda, Caesar was prevented from rebuilding his washed out bridges both by the Afranians, who, having access to the east side of the Sicoris, harassed the workers, and by the high water. A further calamity occurred when the Gallic convoy bringing help to Caesar was forced to halt down river because of the rough terrain and high water. Here were approximately six thousand men consisting of infantry, archers, and cavalry, all their supplies, and

even their families. This task force was soon attacked by Afranius, who used three legions and all his cavalry, but, by clever manoeuvring on the part of their commander, the Gauls were able to take to the hills (an action with which they were very familiar) where they found safety and from which they were successful in turning back Afranius' troops with a reported loss of only two hundred archers, a few horsemen and a small number of camp followers and beasts of burden. "So completely had the situation been reversed in a few days, and such had been the shifting of the balance of fortune, that our men were being oppressed by a serious deficiency of necessaries, while the enemy had abundance of everything and were in an acknowledged position of superiority."¹⁸

Caesar may have been dejected but he was not defeated and, to counteract this sudden change of fortune, he had coracles constructed on the British style and these he ordered to be transported twenty-two miles above his camp at Ilerda. At this point the river was evidently not too swift and permitted operations to be carried on with reasonable safety. This movement up river was a forced operation. Caesar had to act quickly. He could venture down river only with difficulty and at great disadvantage for this area was under Afranius' control; thus the logical move was upstream beyond the washed out bridges. By means of the coracles he was able, in a reasonable length of time, to transport a legion across the river, and so begin construction of a new bridge. This bridge was finished in two days and its completion provided Caesar with two strategic advantages: "he recovers in safety the stores and the men who had gone out on the foraging expedition, and begins to settle the difficulties of his

¹⁸ Bell. Civ., I, 52.

food supply."¹⁹ By July 10 Caesar had control of the eastern bank of the river and his foragers now moved more freely; his cavalry was able to surprise and capture many of Afranius' foragers with their cavalry support.

Caesar at this point pauses in his narrative of the Spanish campaign and turns to a description of the naval battle at Massilia between his own legate Decimus Brutus and Pompey's general Lucius Domitius. Domitius had the advantage of numbers while Brutus had the use of the iron claw which, when an enemy ship was successfully grappled, exposed the opposing force to the full might of Caesar's veterans. Brutus was successful in this naval battle: "and after slaying a large number of the Albici and the herdsmen, they sink some of the ships, take others with their crews, and drive the rest into port. On that day nine ships of the Massilians are lost, including those that were captured."²⁰ This successful naval engagement considerable affected Caesar's strategic position. The native tribes were informed immediately of the Pompeian setback and therefore transferred their allegiance to Caesar. We can agree to a point with Dio when he says of this naval success: "But for this nothing would have prevented Caesar's projects from being ruined."²¹

Caesar's star was now in the ascendancy. Six tribes between the Pyrenees and the Ebro and even one Afranian cohort of the Illurgavonenses pledged their allegiance to him. Caesar considered this welcome news as a great change of fortune, and he was not far wrong, for, by this time, the Afranians were ill at ease and giving much thought to a retreat from Ilerda to a more favourable position. "Finally, they made up their

¹⁹ Bell. Civ., I, 54.

²⁰ Bell. Civ., I, 58.

²¹ Dio, XLI, 21.

mind to stay action for several days, and, contrary to the general custom, to forage by night."²² Such was their plight.

So far we can consider the battle a stalemate. Victories had been won and lost by both sides but gradually the tide of war began to turn in Caesar's favour. Caesar realized that the war must be terminated as quickly as possible and that, as Afranius could not be compelled to fight a decisive battle, he must be starved into surrender. To do this he would require closer contact with the Afranian forces. This would necessitate the elimination of the great distance he had to send his cavalry upstream in order that they might cross the Sicoris. A change in strategy demanded a change in tactics, and to overcome the vexing problem of distance Caesar decided to construct an artificial ford one and a half miles above Ilerda. T. A. Dodge considers this enterprise to be "as remarkable by its simplicity as by its ingenuity."²³ By this ford Caesar intended to divert some part of the Sicoris and so lower the water to a level which would enable his infantry and cavalry to cross safely.

The exact purpose of this ford was "...to prevent the need of always sending the cavalry over the bridge by a long circuitous route..."²⁴ This work continued night and day, for Caesar was spurred on by reports of Afranius's activities which involved the construction of a bridge at Octogesa, on the Ebro, thirty miles south of Ilerda. This bridge was to be made by coupling ships together and laying a crosswalk over them, so permitting several legions to cross. Also, as Octogesa is in the territory of Celtiberia where the natives were friendly to Pompey, Afranius

²² Bell. Civ., I, 59.

²³ Dodge, op.cit., p.445.

²⁴ Bell. Civ., I, 61.

would find reinforcements there and so be able to prolong the war into the winter.

Afranius and Petreius, realizing that foraging had become impossible on the East bank and that their position in Ilerda would eventually become untenable, decided, now that their pontoon bridge was under construction, to desert Ilerda and march by the most convenient route to Octogesa on the Ebro. "Nevertheless about one and the same time the bridge over the Ebro was announced to be nearly finished and a ford was being found in the Sicoris."²⁵

So began the abandonment of Ilerda. Afranius left behind two auxiliary cohorts to garrison the city, and led the rest of his force (Caesar is not sure of the exact number) to join the two legions which he had sent across to the other side of the bridge on the previous day. This exodus took place during the early hours of July 25th. Caesar, learning of Afranius' sudden withdrawal, rushed the diversion of the Sicoris and so lessened the volume of water that his infantry were able to cross, though at times only their heads were above water. A line of cavalry was placed a short distance downstream to retrieve any soldier who unfortunately lost his footing and was washed downstream. This operation was carried through successfully with no loss of either infantry or cavalry.

The pursuit of Afranius was not carried out immediately, "for Caesar did not think it safe in the darkness and with men ignorant of the country to follow up an enemy that was well acquainted with it."²⁶ His strategy was now restricted: "The only course left for Caesar was to

²⁵ Bell. Civ., I, 61.

²⁶ Dio, XLI, 22.

annoy and harass the enemy's line of march with his cavalry..."²⁷ So, with his forces safely arrayed on the east bank of the Sicoris, he organized his troops and sent his horsemen in pursuit of the enemy's rearguard.

The road Afranius had decided to follow was almost waterless, but it had the advantage of providing many places for quick defence. Caesar knew that the enemy could reach the Ebro before him by this shorter route, his own involving a wide circuit via the bridge just constructed or the ford. So to effect as much speed as possible he led forth his men (the cavalry contingent exempted) in a three-line formation (triplex acies). Caesar's enforced speed combined with the eagerness of his men soon brought them within easy distance of the enemy who were already being harassed by Caesar's cavalry. "And there was such zeal in the soldiery that, though a circuit of six miles was added to their route and a long delay was interposed at the ford, they overtook by the ninth hour of the day those who had gone out at the third watch."²⁸

Afranius and his troops were so unnerved by the cavalry charges and the sight of Caesar's soldiers that they took up a position on rising ground about two miles southwest of the small inland town of Sarroca and there formed lines of battle. His men were worn out by fighting and the toil of their march. It must have grieved Afranius immensely to stop at this point for he had but five miles to travel to reach the narrow defiles of the mountain range which would carry him to the Ebro. This defile was to play an important part in the events of the following days.

Caesar took up his position on the plains and when he noticed that the Pompeians showed no signs of attacking he encamped upon the

²⁷ Bell. Civ., I, 63.

²⁸ Bell. Civ., I, 64.

nearest hill not far north of Afranius. Reconnoitring showed that there was relatively flat land between Afranius's camp and the mountains and Caesar realized that he must reach the defile first if he was to bar the enemy's advance to the Ebro. Afranius' camp was so situated that he had access to, and could easily defend, all routes leading to this defile. Caesar, wary of this, decided that his next strategic move was: "to cut off the foe from the Ebro and prevent him from foraging."²⁹ This involved for him a dangerous detour over rugged land but if he could outdistance Afranius in a final dash for the defile he would command an important strategic position which would have great bearing on turning the struggle in his favour.

Caesar at dawn began a withdrawal which at first appeared to the Afranians to be a retreat but which actually was a rotation to the right that produced an outflanking movement. When the enemy saw these first manoeuvres of Caesar's troops they were overjoyed for they thought they had outlasted their opponents and that a shortage of supplies combined with other circumstances unknown to them had produced this unexpected withdrawal. To their amazement they suddenly realized that Caesar had turned and had drawn parallel with them. They now took up arms and began their march on a straight course to the Ebro. Caesar gives an account of this withdrawal, the obstacles met, and the subsequent result: "the whole contest turned on speed - which of the two would first seize the defiles and the hills - but the difficulties of the roads delayed Caesar's army, while Caesar's pursuing cavalry hindered the forces of Afranius."³⁰ Caesar reached the defiles first and came to a halt. He had outflanked Afranius

²⁹ Bell. Civ., I, 68.

³⁰ Bell. Civ., I, 70.

and with the cavalry behind and Caesar's troops in front controlling all routes to the various defiles, the Afranians took refuge on a nearby hill.

Caesar now waited for Afranius to make the next move. After assessing the situation closely Afranius noticed that approximately two miles from his encampment was a mountain which, if controlled, would give the holder access to a ridge that would permit an easy route to the confluence of the Sicoris and Ebro rivers. It was Afranius' intention to capture this hill and so by a change of route arrive at Octogesa. It is sufficient to say that he failed in his attempt and the force he despatched was cut to pieces by Caesar's cavalry. Thus the last vestige of hope was rapidly disappearing for the Pompeians.

Caesar had been successful in the accomplishment of his strategic purpose. He had pursued Afranius successfully from Ilerda; he had reached the passes before him, and he had slaughtered before the eyes of all a portion of the enemy's troops. The initiative lay with Caesar. Should he attack and annihilate his opponents or should he wait and starve them out? Since Afranius would not engage in open battle, Caesar was unwilling to expose his men to the rigours of an uphill attack, and resorted instead to a strategy of waiting combined with tactics so applied as to prevent the Afranians from securing water. "Caesar had entertained the hope that, having cut off his adversaries from their food supply, he would be able to finish the business without exposing his men to fighting or bloodshed."³¹ Caesar took the time available to consolidate his forces while Afranius and Petreius returned to their camp only to find that the various routes leading to the Ebro had been closed off by outposts strategically placed

³¹ Bell. Civ., I, 72.

by Caesar.

By July 28, Afranius and Petreius, after several days of isolation, were hard pressed for water. Their scouts had discovered a small reservoir but constant action by Caesar's cavalry had prevented the water-gatherers from returning with any sizeable quantity of water. To counteract this situation, the Pompeian commanders decided to strengthen this supply line. Before this was done the problem of their next move had come before the council of the Pompeians and a decision had to be made on one of two alternatives: to try to return to Ilerda where they had a small amount of grain stored or to try to reach Tarraco, only a short distance away along a circuitous and somewhat dangerous road.

Caesar kept his distance, attacking spasmodically and only when necessary. "For he did not wish to come to close quarters with the enemy, partly because he was afraid that they might become desperate and carry out some rash undertaking, and partly because he hoped to win them over anyway without a conflict."³²

After a brief period of fraternization between the two camps, which was carried on while Afranius and Petreius were away supervising the safeguarding of their water supply, the Afranians decide to return to Ilerda and their reserve grain store. So their retreat began, but before it was long underway many of their Spanish auxiliaries deserted them and either took to the hills or transferred their allegiance to Caesar. As Afranius moved so did Caesar; and his cavalry kept in constant touch with Afranius' rearguard. No movement uphill or down could be made by the Afranians without receiving some sort of setback at the hands of the

32 Dio, XLI, 22.

cavalry whether from the spears hurled at them as they proceeded downhill or from the general weariness they sustained in beating back the attacks of the cavalry as they advanced upwards.

We must not, even at this dismal period for the Afranians, underestimate their leaders' ability in counteracting the charges of the cavalry. In proceeding downhill they of course were not completely at Caesar's mercy, for, when a new decline was reached, Afranius' rear column would take a stand at the hill's topmost approach and there hold the cavalry in abeyance until such time as their companions had nearly reached the bottom of the hill and then, their job finished, carry on their retreat. So this method of retreat and pursuit was extended for four miles until the Afranians, completely exhausted both by the ruggedness of the route and the inconvenience caused by the cavalry, took up a position on a lofty hill and there proceeded to encamp without unloading their baggage animals and with only one line of defence facing Caesar. This hill was in a very disadvantageous position far from a reservoir and some distance from Ilerda.

Caesar in his accustomed manner stopped and, when the enemy showed no signs of moving on, ordered his foragers to their tasks. This was the moment the Afranians had awaited and, as soon as they noticed the foragers move away, they set out again, hoping that Caesar would be too preoccupied with making a camp to follow them. But they were mistaken and Caesar, though a short time was lost in regrouping, returned to his former plan of harassing the Afranian rearguard. This time not only were the Afranians troubled by the spasmodic sorties of Caesar's cavalry, but they also were threatened by his main force which was moving forwards ever anxious for a pitched battle. But Caesar's strategy of forced

exhaustion did not change. "Caesar preferred that they should be harassed by such sufferings and submit to a compulsory surrender rather than fight a pitched battle."³³

How he further carried this out we shall soon see. The Afranians again were compelled to halt even though in a very unfavourable location. Here under cover of night they pushed forward entrenchments that their camp might be changed to another position. Caesar noticed their movements and began to surround them by rampart and ditch circumscribing the enemy's trenchwork. The Afranians, short of water and food, killed their baggage animals; sustained by this food only a short time, Petreius in sheer desperation led out his legions and took a position on the plain opposite Caesar's camp. A distance of only seven hundred yards separated the two camps and Caesar drew up his line accordingly. What Caesar had planned was nearing accomplishment. The Afranians were gradually weakening. His technique of causing mental and physical deterioration was well displayed here. "If battle were joined, the propinquity of the camps afforded the conquered a speedy retreat in their flight. For this reason he had made up his mind to resist them if they advanced their colours, but not to be the first to attack."³⁴

Caesar's defense works were near completion and one more day would be sufficient to finish them. The Afranians knew this and they hoped by a sudden show of arms to hinder Caesar in his workings. This they did but Caesar by refusing to engage in battle remained the master of the situation. So, at sunset, without an engagement, the two armies retreated to their camps, Caesar to complete the defense works and the

33 Bell. Civ., I, 81.

34 Bell. Civ., I, 82.

Afranians to try another avenue of escape, the river Sicoris. In one last valiant effort Afranius tried to ford the river, but Caesar quickly dispatched his cavalry to the opposite bank so frustrating the attempt. The Afranians withdrew to their camp. "At last blockaded in every way, their baggage animals now kept without fodder for four days, through their want of water, firewood, and forage, they beg for a conference,...."³⁵

So the struggle was now over. Caesar consented to a conference on his own terms and therein set forth his conditions of surrender. They were accepted and according to the terms stated the army of Pompey in Spain was disbanded at the river Varus. No opponent of Caesar was required to take an oath of allegiance to him nor was any property lost by the enemy's soldiers and in the hands of his men kept from the original owners. The peace was settled fairly. Afranius and Petreius were released unharmed and with their departure the Pompeian threat in Spain disappeared. Two more phases of activity yet remained to be settled, one at Massilia and the other in further Spain where the legate of Pompey, M. Terentius Varro, was in control with a levied force of two legions and thirty auxiliary cohorts.

The contest with Varro was an anticlimax to Caesar's previous activities in Spain. His opponent in the Further Province was first and foremost a scholar not a skillful military man. It is not necessary to go into detail over this campaign for it was no effort for Caesar to consolidate himself in Varro's province, but it was important that he control this part of Spain. "Caesar, though many urgent affairs were summoning him back to Italy, had nevertheless determined to abandon no

35 Bell. Civ., I, 84.

section of the war in the two Spains, because he knew how great were the benefactions of Pompeius and what large bodies of retainers he had in the hither province."³⁶ We know then why Caesar decided to bring all Spain under his control. Through a meeting called by him and held at Corduba, the Spanish communities were informed of his intentions and his demands. In a short time most cities previously friendly to Pompey changed their allegiance to Caesar and closed their gates against Varro. A surrender quickly followed. Caesar now controlled all of Spain after a campaign that lasted no longer than six weeks.

The siege of Massilia is beyond the scope of this study. It was carried out successfully by land and sea and the Massiliotes, skilled in the use of war machines, prolonged the siege and taxed to capacity the military skill of the Romans.

³⁶ Bell. Civ., II, 18.

CHAPTER V

FROM DYRRHACHIUM TO PHARSALIA

While Caesar was conducting operations in Spain, he had not neglected to consider his position in Italy in the event of a Pompeian attack, and had ready a plan for the deployment of his troops. The state itself was placed under the propraetorian power of Mark Antony. Under his direction the south-eastern ports of Brundisium and Tarentum were garrisoned with three legions. Q. Hortensius cruised the Tyrrhene Sea; P. Dolabella patrolled the Adriatic. M. Crassus was responsible for Cisalpine Gaul; Illyricum was under the control of G. Antonius, Mark Antony's brother.

Although Caesar was ruler at Rome, Pompey controlled the sea, and the events which preceded Caesar's departure from Brundisium illustrated this. One of Caesar's naval lieutenants, P. Dolabella, suffered a disaster in the Adriatic at the hands of Scribonius Libo and M. Octavius. G. Antonius, who came to assist him, was compelled by a superior enemy to flee to Corcyra Nigra, where he was forced to surrender his fifteen cohorts of recruits. In the above incidents Caesar lost forty ships of war and several thousand men. Although Caesar suffered these disasters by sea, a greater one took place by land. G. Curio, after successfully winning Sicily from Cato, was especially commissioned by Caesar to proceed to Africa to meet and conquer the forces of Pompey gathered under Attius Varus. But because Caesar was forced to keep his best troops for the Spanish war, he had been compelled to form the Sicilian-African force mainly from the legions taken over from the enemy at Corfinium. This force was defeated by Juba, King of Mauretania, and Curio died in the fight.

Curio's defeat, which can be traced to an error of judgement as well as to over-eagerness, seriously affected Caesar and permitted the Pompeians so to arrange affairs in Africa that they were able to present a firm front to him later. Though Curio was now lost to Caesar, his capture of Sicily had frustrated Pompey's plan to starve out the peninsula. Undoubtedly Caesar regretted Curio's death, for it was a personal loss, and he knew the African defeat would encourage the opposition and produce consequences unfavourable to him. "Thus Curio died after rendering most valuable assistance to Caesar and inspiring in him many hopes."¹

While Caesar campaigned in Spain, Pompey centred his forces around his training camp at Berrhoea. All the military equipment which was not required was stored at Dyrrhachium, the arsenal which Caesar hoped eventually to capture. By the time Caesar had completed the Spanish war, Pompey was moving towards Macedonia. Caesar remained eleven days in Rome, then resigned his dictatorship, and, although he had not formally entered upon his consulship, set out in mid December for Brundisium while Pompey marched by the Egnatian Way towards Candavia. "Caesar ...hastened to Brundisium about the winter solstice, intending to strike terror into his enemies by taking them by surprise."² Here is the essence of Caesar's strategy and Appian adds: "...the most potent thing in war is unexpectedness."³

Caesar had learned of Pompey's intentions through divers sources: "He had made up his mind to winter at Dyrrachium, Apollonia, and all the coast towns, so as to prevent Caesar from crossing the sea, and for that

1 Dio, XII, 42.

2 Appian, II, 8, 52.

3 Appian, II, 8, 53.

reason had distributed his fleet all along the sea-coast."⁴

A year short of a few days since he crossed the Rubicon, Caesar left Brundisium for Epirus. "Pompeius was at that time in Candavia, and was on his way from Macedonia to Apollonia and Dyrrachium to winter quarters."⁵ As he set sail and contemplated his next move no doubt the thought came to his mind that Pompey at the beginning of navigation in early spring might land at Brundisium or some point along the coast within easy reach of Epirus and undertake the recovery of Italy. This thought spurred him on.

By January 5th of 48 B.C., Caesar had reached Palaeste on the coast of Epirus, a port which provided a good landing place and prevented molestation by enemy ships. When disembarkation was complete, Caesar's immediate purpose was to seize Oricum, a town about twenty-five miles north and slightly west, and from there move north again to Apollonia, a Pompeian stronghold. Caesar had now begun the fulfilment of a twofold policy of conciliation and aggression. Both towns, recognising his consular authority, surrendered without a struggle and were followed by the surrounding communities of Byllis and Amantia. Thus with little trouble, Caesar had established a foothold in Epirus. He had employed a strategic policy of surprise and rapid movement, combined with the use of his consular authority. This authority was a very impressive weapon as he was the official representative of Rome and what he did was thought to be done for the good of the state.

By the time Pompey reached Scampa on the Egnatian Way, a report had reached him of the fall of Oricum and Apollonia. The psychological

⁴ Bell. Civ., III, 5.

⁵ Bell. Civ., III, 11.

effect of this news upon his men was alarming. Many panicked while others deserted. He rallied those he could restrain and made his way quickly towards the coast: "But Pompeius, when he learnt of what had happened at Oricum and Apollonia, fearing for Dyrrachium, hurried there, marching night and day."⁶

The news of Pompey's rapid approach disturbed Caesar. Without proceeding further, he drew up his line at Fieri on the river Apsus. Pompey, upon securing his supply route from Dyrrhachium, reached a point on the northern side of the Apsus opposite Caesar. Here the two forces were destined to stay, neither commander promoting an engagement. Although Caesar would have wished to force Pompey to fight, the small size of his army prevented him from doing so until reinforcements under the command of Mark Antony could reach him. Pompey, however, with his larger force, intended to contain Caesar in a limited territory and gradually to starve him out. To ensure this, a message had gone out to Metellus Scipio in Macedonia to join him as quickly as possible.

In recapitulating, we find that Caesar had established a position in Epirus, strategically unsound, for Pompey's blockade of the coast had cost him the thirty ships used to transport his troops across the Adriatic. Bibulus, Pompey's naval commander, nourishing an intense hatred of Caesar and everything for which he stood, had destroyed both men and ships. His move against Pompey in Epirus shows us that "Caesar decided on what appeared to be the impossible not because the operation he had determined upon was strategically sound, but because it is the seemingly impossible which of all things surprises most."⁷ Pompey, as his actions

⁶ Bell. Civ., III, 13.

⁷ J. F. C. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World and Their Influence Upon History (London, 1954), p.185.

proved, was definitely caught off guard. It is reasonable to assume that he was biding his time in the hope that when an engagement with Caesar did take place, he could overwhelm him by mere weight of numbers. Caesar realized this and so resorted to the strategy of surprise.

The question has often been raised why Caesar who controlled the coast of Illyricum did not take the land route to Greece. The holding of Illyricum proved in time to be more a source of anxiety than of strength to Caesar, for the longer Pompey was left unassailed, the stronger the latter became, and the more dangerous appeared the possibility of his using Illyricum as a route to Italy. Many feel that Caesar should have chosen the land route. Among such advocates is B. H. Liddell-Hart, who claims that "In strategy, the longest way round is often the shortest way home."⁸ A sharp criticism of Caesar's movements comes from this supporter of indirect strategy when he points out that "Instead of advancing into Greece by the indirect land route through Illyricum, Caesar decided on the direct sea route. Thereby he gained time initially but lost it ultimately."⁹ I do not completely concur with Liddell-Hart. The land trip to Epirus in mid-winter would be a hazardous undertaking, for his troops would be exposed to the uncertain mercy of the elements and would emerge into Epirus an impoverished army ready to fall into the grip of Pompey who would certainly have had time to regroup his forces and present a strong if not insurmountable barrier to their advance. One need only consider the disastrous attempt of Aulus Gabinius to march through Illyricum and its consequences. He lost forty-one officers, over two thousand men,

⁸ Liddell-Hart, Strategy, p.25.

⁹ Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.55.

disease finally claiming him shortly after. This occurred in October of 48 B. C. after Caesar had won at Pharsalia and Pompey was dead. The Pompeian fugitives had done their job well. We cannot overlook the massive power of Pompey both on land and sea.

By mid-March Caesar's position was perilous. A stalemate of two months had brought no reinforcements either to him or to Pompey, and the latter had a sufficiently large force without the help of Scipio. There was a feeling in Caesar's camp that Antony was showing excessive caution in not sailing with reinforcements, for it was generally understood that at any time of the year some risk must be incurred when travelling by sea. Pompey's blockade was more than harmful to Caesar; it was disastrous. Winter was well advanced and though Bibulus was dead, his successors never once relinquished their control of the sea. "And the further this period of time extended the more keen were the officers of the enemy's fleet in their vigilance, and the greater confidence they had of stopping him."¹⁰

By frequent messages Caesar urged Antony to set sail on the next favourable wind for the coast near Apollonia and Scodra. These two places were specifically stressed because they were of definite strategic importance: "...at neither of these places were they likely to encounter hostile cruisers, for the enemy were afraid to venture far from their principal stations, Corcyra and Dyrrachium."¹¹ Caesar had previously arranged that Aulus Gabinius and fifteen cohorts were to come by land through Dalmatia and join him in Albania, while Q. Calenus and Antony were to come by sea.

¹⁰ Bell. Civ., III, 25.

¹¹ Holmes, The Roman Republic, III, p.129.

Towards the end of March, Antony's fleet put to sea and, since it was too stormy to land at Apollonia, he sailed north for Scodra. As he passed Dyrrhachium, G. Coponius and his Rhodian fleet gave chase forcing him to bypass Scodra and continue further north. Nymphaeum was the closest harbour available and for this port Antony sailed, reaching its protection with Coponius close behind. A favourable breeze carried Antony safely to shore but, unfortunately for Coponius, the wind suddenly changed dashing his ships upon the rocks and destroying all but one or two. Now that he was safe, Antony sent messages to Caesar revealing his strength and position.

Antony now moved inland not by the direct road which led from Nymphaeum to Dyrrhachium, which would expose him to an attack by Pompey's forces, but by the only other route available, one which led from Nymphaeum to Lissus; from there to Bassania on the river Wati; thence south-east to Scampa on the Egnatian Way. Antony's arrival had not gone unnoticed by Pompey or Caesar, for both had witnessed the sea chase as the ships passed Dyrrhachium. Their plans quickly changed. "And when they had found this out they each adopted different plans, Caesar to unite himself as quickly as possible with Antonius, Pompeius to confront the approaching enemy on their march, in case he might be able to attack them unawares from an ambushade;..."¹²

Antony, informed by natives of Pompey's approach, moved no further and awaited Caesar's arrival. Caesar, to avoid Pompey and reach Antony, had to cross the Apsus by ford far up river and then procede by a circuitous mountain route. Pompey moved on Antony by forced marches

¹² Bell. Civ., III, 30.

and waited in ambush. When he realized that Antony was aware of his plan and that Caesar was near, he changed his tactics: "...to escape being shut in by two armies, he quits that spot and with all his forces arrives at Asparagium, a town of the Dyrrachians, and there pitches his camp in a suitable place."¹³

By the time Pompey had withdrawn, Antony, after a four days' march, had joined up with Caesar on the south side of the Graba Balkan pass just beyond the north bank of the Apsus. Now that the two commanders had joined forces, Caesar was better able to arrange the expansion of his operational area and to establish his influence further inland. It was his intention to contain Pompey by using the bulk of his force while flying columns were to be sent into the interior to win the friendship of the Greeks and keep the two Syrian legions of Pompey under Scipio at bay, in his own words: "...to try to win over the provinces and to make a further advance...."¹⁴ Domitius Calvinus was sent to intercept Scipio who was marching with two legions through Macedonia to join Pompey; L. Cassius moved into Thessaly and Calvisius Sabinus into Aetolia, both to procure grain. Caesar moved his combined force to a position opposite Pompey who occupied Asparagium on the river Genusus, which ran parallel to the Apsus.

As on the river Apsus, so on the Genusus, Pompey followed a wait-and-watch policy. Caesar, on the other hand, considerably strengthened by Antony's force, tried unsuccessfully to lure his adversary into a pitched battle. "He then determined to manoeuvre his opponent out of

¹³ Bell. Civ., III, 30.

¹⁴ Bell. Civ., III, 34.

his position by striking at Dyrrhachium."¹⁵ Dyrrhachium was Pompey's arsenal, and according to Caesar's plan, one of the strategic points to be captured. "So on the next day he set out in full force for Dyrrhachium, taking a wide circuit by a difficult and narrow route, in the hope that Pompeius could be either driven to Dyrrhachium or cut off from it,...."¹⁶ Caesar had left Pompey at Asparagium and moved eastward towards the hills as though scouting for supplies. Suddenly, by a sharp turn to the north, he had covered the forty-five miles to Dyrrhachium within one day and night. "Success depended on Caesar's keeping Pompey in ignorance of his intentions during a whole day, and on his making the march in not much over twenty-four hours;...."¹⁷ Thus the deadlock was broken in one swift stroke by Caesar in his forced march over difficult terrain to invest Pompey's arsenal. "Once more Caesar's supreme speed and energy in taking on offensive form of initiative startled and disconcerted the elderly strategist."¹⁸

In cutting Pompey off from Dyrrhachium by land, Caesar had won the first round. Pompey took up a position on the rock of Petra, a high point on the coast near Dyrrhachium, separated from his opponent's forces by the valley of Shimmihl. Caesar intended to exploit his early advantage by confining Pompey's large and well supplied force to the narrow coast land around Petra, using only a smaller army less well supplied.

Although Caesar had cut off his land route to Dyrrhachium, Pompey kept supply lines open by sea. Gradually Caesar's forces began to

15 Adcock, Cambridge Ancient History, IX, p.659.

16 Bell. Civ., III, 41.

17 Dodge, Caesar, II, p.511.

18 E. G. Sihler, Annals of Caesar (New York, 1911), p.206.

feel the pressure of a famine. Pompey's strategy was undoubtedly a defensive one. For final success he intended to concentrate on his power of starving out Caesar, by elimination of his supply route by sea. The sea had given Pompey the strategic advantage and this, combined with his superiority of numbers and equipment, placed Caesar in a very perilous position. "Inaction was to Caesar of all things the most unbearable, but he had now to pay the penalty for his own magnificent audacity."¹⁹ Caesar's great attempt to blockade his enemy by land had begun. After reconnoitring, he decided to construct a series of redoubts linked by entrenchments along the higher ridges above and around Dyrrhachium. It was his object to confine Pompey within the narrowest possible limits. Pompey in retaliation did the same but followed a line closer to the sea. Caesar's contravallation enclosed about twenty square miles, Pompey's approximately sixteen. Caesar followed the furthest inland curve of a three-fold chain of hills around Pompey's camp. This gave him access to all water courses and land routes. So began "...the most wonderful piece of spade-work in the wars of the ancient world."²⁰ Caesar gives us the reasons for this great undertaking, later destined to failure: "...first, that...he might be able to bring in for his army corn and stores from any direction at less risk; and also that he might prevent Pompeius from foraging and might make his cavalry useless for active operations; and, thirdly, that he might diminish the moral influence on which Pompeius seemed chiefly to rely among foreign nations, when the report should have spread throughout the world that he was being beleaguered by Caesar and

¹⁹ W. W. Fowler, Julius Caesar and The Foundation of The Roman Imperial System (New York, 1908), p.285.

²⁰ C. Oman, Seven Roman Statesmen of the Later Republic (London, 1921), p.329.

did not dare to fight a pitched battle."²¹ Briefly, Caesar's purpose was to ease supply for himself and hinder it for Pompey, but first and foremost, to achieve a moral advantage by showing the ancient world that Pompey was afraid to fight.

We must admit that Caesar's reasons for the contravallation were sound but, considering his manpower, they appear foolhardy. "Caesar ...took the original but singularly profitless course of constructing extensive lines of investment round an army which was not only stronger than his own but could supply itself easily, or move away, by sea, whenever it wished."²² Now that Caesar had revealed his strategy, Pompey showed that his objective was to seize as many hills as possible and force his opponent to enlarge his perimeter to the point where the containing forces were so thinly spread that they would be vulnerable to attack.

We cannot help but admire Pompey's strategy, reminiscent of Fabius Maximus' delaying tactics which so hindered Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Caesar realized that Pompey was carrying out a strategic plan of attrition and he was, to a great extent, powerless to prevent it. While Caesar tried to confine Pompey the latter struggled to force the former outward. "Caesar...ventured upon an extremely difficult and chimerical task; that is, to carry a line of circumvallation around the whole of Pompey's positions from sea to sea, thinking that even if he should fail he would acquire great renown from the boldness of the enterprise."²³ Pompey refused to fight a pitched battle. This left only one outlet

²¹ Bell. Civ., III, 43.

²² Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.56.

²³ Appian, II, 61.

for him: "...to adopt a desperate method of warfare by occupying as many hills as possible, by holding with garrisons the widest extent of land possible, and by keeping Caesar's forces as far extended as he could;"²⁴ The strategy of the opposing commanders is briefly summarized by Caesar: "...Caesar to confine Pompeius within the narrowest limits, Pompeius to occupy as many hills as he could in the widest possible circuit;...."²⁵ Caesar hoped to extend his contravallation to the sea and so terminate the unwieldy expanse of line it was now becoming. To do this he would have to control an important hill called Paliamas. His Ninth legion was sent to accomplish this, but Pompey, foreseeing this, occupied a hill to the northwest by a quick attack and forced Caesar's troops to abandon their position and so forfeit the attempt. "Caesar was constrained to fall back upon the line from which he had diverged, and thus ultimately to give his contravallation an extension nearly twice as great as that which he had designed."²⁶ While Caesar kept to the ridges of his contravallation he could not be dislodged but when he left their protection, Pompey's mass of manpower was too great an obstacle to overcome. If Caesar had won possession of this hill, besides reaching the sea, he could have cut Pompey off from an important water supply and restrict his forces to rather narrow bounds. The loss of the hill was the first blow of the many Caesar was to receive around Dyrrhachium.

Caesar, in an effort to break the deadlock journeyed to Dyrrhachium, hopeful that the town would be betrayed to him. His trip was in vain; the town would not yield. Some authorities suspect that he was

²⁴ Bell. Civ., III, 44.

²⁵ Bell. Civ., III, 45.

²⁶ Holmes, op.cit., p.140.

enticed thither by a stratagem of Pompey for while he was there "...Pompey took courage and planned a night assault upon the enclosing wall; and attacking it unexpectedly, he captured a portion of it by storm and caused great slaughter among the men encamped near it."²⁷ It was Sulla who eventually repulsed this attack and who was severely criticized for not carrying out the pursuit of the opposing forces. Had he done so, some think the war would have been concluded. But Sulla, true to his position as an officer carried out Caesar's orders to the letter and then awaited the arrival of his general. Had Pompey succeeded with this sortie, he would have dominated an entire ridge of the contravallation. His withdrawal while under Sulla's fire was strategically sound.

Meanwhile Caesar's blockade by land gradually began to produce results. Pompey's cattle were threatened with starvation and his water supply was all but cut off. The supplying of foodstuffs by sea was proving to be a very onerous task. Nevertheless he still waited patiently for an opportunity to break through Caesar's line and to attack him in the rear. He did not have to wait long. Caesar's movements were restricted because he had to reach the sea soon or give up his contravallation. In a last determined effort he descended from the ridge he now occupied and constructed the last phase of his parallel entrenchments across the plain south of the Lesnikia river. Pompey, following Caesar's line, had extended his defence to the sea and in addition had secured an abandoned camp of Caesar's a short distance from the shore and about a half mile from his opponents interior perimeter. Having enlarged this camp, from one corner of it he drew an entrenchment to the Lesnikia to secure a water supply,

27 Dio, XLI, 50.

while continually watching Caesar's movements. "He now intended to attack Caesar's inner parallel in overwhelming strength before he could complete his works, and to land a force which should simultaneously assault the outer line;...."²⁸

An unforeseen incident gave Pompey the strategic advantage. Two Gallic officers under charge of treachery by Caesar deserted to Pompey. To the latter they conveyed a wealth of important information about all phases of Caesar's line, especially the left flank.

Pompey now directed his attack against the southern extension of Caesar's line by both land and sea, catching the Ninth legion and Lentulus Marcellinus (encamped two miles inland) completely unawares. The advance forces of Pompey penetrated through a gap on the unfinished transverse trench and, filling the area between the two parallel lines, forced the troops in the rear line to flee. Those Pompeians not engaged in this action were constructing a camp near the sea just behind Caesar's lines from which their cavalry might safely forage and to which their ships could come.

Pompey's attack on Caesar "...was excellently planned, stoutly given, and was a complete surprise."²⁹ It is beyond the scope of this study to explain the various engagements which took place in the latter phase of the siege. What is more important is the fact that Caesar was defeated at his own game. He made one last attempt to reinforce a camp near Pompey's sea base. In an engagement at this southern extremity of his line, Caesar's men panicked and fled. Pompey, seeing them in flight,

²⁸ Holmes, op.cit., p.147.

²⁹ Dodge, op.cit., p.532.

hesitated to pursue lest he might fall into a trap. Through this hesitation many of Caesar's troops were saved. Now that the siege of Dyrrhachium was broken, Caesar was in a discouraging position. His entrenchments of four months preparation were lost and the sea was closed to him. Cn. Pompeius the younger had sacked, burned or captured most of his vessels around Oricum and Lissus. "Caesar was entirely beaten not merely in tactics but also in strategy, and it seemed as if he could neither maintain himself in his present position or judiciously change it."³⁰

Caesar in his Commentaries does not hesitate to state the reasons for his defeat: "...the cause of their success had been the small number of our troops, the unfavourable conditions of the site and the narrow space, when they had forestalled us in the occupation of the camp; the twofold panic, within and without the fortifications; the severance of the army into two parts, one being unable to bear aid to the other."³¹

It is easy to condemn Caesar's defeat at Dyrrhachium: "The position of Caesar at Dyrrachium was a false one, brought on by conduct rash rather than judicious; ...it must be distinctly condemned as unsound military policy."³² The question of what he should have done is difficult to answer. Throughout his military career Caesar made very few mistakes. This was one of them. He was inferior in troops and equipment. Should he have marched against Scipio in the east, or should he have waited for Pompey to make the first move? Perhaps he would have been wise to wait until spring to launch his attack against Pompey in Epirus. Whatever questions may be asked, whatever answers may be given, the important factor

³⁰ Mommsen, The History of Rome, IV, p.386.

³¹ Bell. Civ., III, 72.

³² Dodge, op.cit., p.573.

is that Caesar lost the strategic advantage only temporarily and the way in which he regained it has won the admiration and respect of the military world. Dodge is severe in his criticism of Caesar's strategy at Dyrrhachium. In the light of the result - Pharsalia - his defeat should not be overemphasized.

Now that Caesar was withdrawing, Pompey had three possible moves. He could assail and if necessary pursue the defeated army. This would mean that he must march against Domitius Calvinus and would necessitate abandoning his stores at Dyrrhachium. This move would result in a union with the legions of Scipio, doubly strengthening his army. Secondly, he could leave Caesar in Greece and cross with his army to invade Italy, but this would give Caesar the opportunity of marching through Illyricum. Finally he could try to recover Apollonia and Oricum and so exclude Caesar from the coast; but Caesar could then move against Scipio in the East and so force Pompey to send help. His decision to pursue Caesar was brought about partly by the prompting of the aristocrats; partly through his kinship to Scipio.

"Caesar, driven from his former plans, came to the conclusion that he must alter his whole method of campaign."³³ Caesar's forces regrouped a short distance from Dyrrhachium and he confessed to his men "...that he had made a mistake in encamping before Dyrrachium where Pompey had abundance of supplies, whereas he ought to have drawn him to some place where he would be subject to the same scarcity as themselves."³⁴ His men, infuriated with themselves for panicking, pleaded with him for

³³ Bell. Civ., III, 73.

³⁴ Appian, II, 10, 64.

permission to renew the struggle at Dyrrhachium, but Caesar was too wise a commander and knew that such a move would be strategically unsound.

"...Caesar had not sufficient confidence in his panic-stricken troops and thought that an interval should be allowed to restore their spirits..."³⁵

So relieved was Caesar at Pompey's inactivity after his victory, that he is reported to have said: "To-day victory had been with the enemy, if they had had a victor in command."³⁶

The task now before Caesar was to withdraw from a triumphant enemy over two bridgeless rivers, the Genusus and Apsus, with rapid waters and steep banks. His plan was to move his wounded to Apollonia, where he could pay his army, bolster the morale of his allies in that vicinity, and put garrisons in unfriendly towns. So swift was Caesar's retreat that Pompey was unable to hamper him but for a small rearguard action. Apollonia was reached on the fourth day, three days after Pompey had given up the pursuit. To Caesar's credit is the fact that he avoided a fatal disaster in the aftermath of Dyrrhachium. This could be considered one of his greatest military achievements for even in defeat he was indirectly master of the situation. The success of Caesar's retreat stemmed from the superior energy and discipline of his troops and his knowledge of the enemy's weaknesses and how to benefit from them. G. P. Baker calls the retreat from Dyrrhachium "a masterpiece of sympathetic psychology."³⁷ Caesar was definitely sympathetic to both the existing situation and the needs of his men while psychology was certainly used in outmanoeuvring Pompey.

³⁵ Bell. Civ., III, 74.

³⁶ Plutarch, Caesar, 39, 5.

³⁷ G. P. Baker, Twelve Centuries of Rome (London, 1934), p.345.

Pompey's inertia having saved him, Caesar now resorted to a strategy of indirect approach, by which he forced his opponent, though superior in strength to follow him. "Caesar's indirect approach had been made to restore the strategic balance, and a further one was needed to upset Pompey's balance."³⁸

Somewhere along the Egnatian Way Pompey held a council of war. His strategy was developed to match that of Caesar who had decided to march to the aid of Cn. Domitius Calvinus "fearing for Domitius, lest he should be taken unawares by the arrival of Pompeius, Caesar hastened to him with all speed and urgent encouragement."³⁹ Pompey of course was not sure of this move so he planned that "...he should go to the aid of Scipio, ..." if Caesar marched east or "...should himself attack Domitius in full force." if Caesar waited at the coast for further reinforcements.⁴⁰ He finally decided to march along the Egnatian Way to help Scipio who had been hard pressed by the Caesarian forces. As he marched, Pompey learned that Domitius was between him and Scipio on the Egnatian Way, supposedly at Heracles. Moving quickly to this spot he discovered that Domitius, warned of his approach by some itinerant Gauls, had fled south to Thessaly to join Caesar.

Caesar now revealed his new strategy. He intended "...to transfer the struggle from the coast away into the interior, with the view of getting beyond the reach of the enemy's fleet - the ultimate cause of the failure of his previous exertions."⁴¹ Leaving three cohorts at Oricum, one at Lissus and four at Apollonia, he marched up the valley of the Dryno

38 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.56.

39 Bell. Civ., III, 78.

40 Loc. cit.

41 Mommsen, op.cit., p.387.

hoping to reach Thessaly by the pass of Metzovo. On July 29th, 48 B.C. he joined forces with Domitius at Aeginium, a town which lies over against Thessaly. According to T. A. Dodge, a "quadrilateral of importance"⁴² now faced Caesar, viz. the towns of Pelinaeum, Triea, Gomphi, and Metropolis. Gomphi was stormed and taken by the new army. An example was made of it and the surrounding towns surrendered without a struggle. From Metropolis Caesar moved eastward across the Apidamus at Pyrgo, thence into level country coming to a halt near Pharsalus on the north bank of the Enipeus. "Finding a suitable place in the country district where the crops were now nearly ripe, he determined there to await the arrival of Pompeius and to transfer thither all his military operations."⁴³ Pompey had now joined forces with Scipio at Larissa. He knew the position of Caesar's troops at Pharsalus but rather than risk all in a single battle he felt: "that it would be easier and safer to reduce them by want as they controlled no fertile territory, and could get nothing by sea, and had no ships for rapid flight. So on the most prudent calculation he decided to protract the war and drive the enemy from famine to plague,...."⁴⁴ This strategic move would force Caesar to wander about Greece until he was bereft of supplies and his army weakened by continuous marches.

Caesar had gained control of the fertile western plain of the Peneus by various means, but we are not informed of the manoeuvres which brought the armies together. He had now no great worry about supplies. His men could forage where they pleased and a pitched battle in such a place would be to their liking.

⁴² Dodge, op.cit., p.548.

⁴³ Bell. Civ., III, 81.

⁴⁴ Appian, II, 10, 66.

When Pompey reached Pharsalus he entrenched his camp on the slope of Mount Dogondzis, three miles north-west of Caesar. Caesar took up his position in the plain. Daily he formed a line of battle in front of Pompey's camp but Pompey, true to his strategy, could not be enticed to fight. When Caesar saw that his opponent had no intention of fighting a pitched battle, he decided to move on from Pharsalus, and, if Pompey pursued, create a new opportunity to fight.

All was not well in Pompey's camp. While Pompey and other prominent persons wished to decimate Caesar's force in a prolonged war, the senators and others of rank demanded an immediate engagement on the open plain. Evidently Pompey was not sufficiently master of the situation to refuse their demand. Much against his better judgement he decided to meet Caesar in a pitched battle, and changed his plans accordingly.

"And in Pompey's camp men pray for Pharsalia."⁴⁵

The site of the battle of Pharsalia has provoked much discussion. Caesar is far from specific in identifying its location. He states that the battle took place in Thessaly in "...a suitable place in the country district where the crops were now nearly ripe,...."⁴⁶ We must depend upon later writers and mostly those of our own day for a closer identification of the battle ground. T. Rice Holmes gives an excellent account of the sites suggested by ancient and modern authors.⁴⁷ This author along with several others including G. Long and Napier claims the battle was fought on the north bank of the Enipeus. Summarizing the positions advocated: Rice Holmes, F. L. Lucas, J. P. Postgate, G. Long suggest the north bank

45 Lucan, de Bello Civili, VII, 61.

46 Bell. Civ., III, 81.

47 Holmes, op.cit., pp. 452-468.

while W. M. Leake, Mommsen, Heusey, Stoffel and Kromayer claim a site on the south bank. The reasons for supposing that the battle was fought on the north bank are more convincing in light of present day investigation and I have followed Holmes in placing the site on the north bank.⁴⁸ Pompey's camp has been placed on Mount Dogondzis by both Holmes and Lucas while Caesar's, according to Postgate, was "...in the neighbourhood of Kontouri which Heuzey and Mr. Lucas identify with Old Pharsalus or Palaepharsalus."⁴⁹

When Pompey did not offer battle, it was Caesar's plan to march northeast to Scotussa just south of Cynoscephalae, thereby threatening Pompey's communications with Larissa and perhaps forcing him to give up his present position. "Caesar, thinking that Pompeius could by no means be enticed out to a battle, judged that his most convenient plan of campaign was to move his camp from that place, and to be always on the march, with the view of getting his supplies more conveniently by moving camp and visiting various places, and at the same time of meeting with some opportunity of fighting on the route, and of wearing out the army of Pompeius, which was unaccustomed to hard work, by daily marches."⁵⁰ As he moved off on the morning of August 9th, Pompey's army, in a surprise move, took up a position at the foot of the hill (Mount Dogondzis). Caesar drew up his troops in line of battle and observed the enemy's tactics closely. Pompey, while addressing his men, reveals his strategy: "I have induced my cavalry ...as soon as the two armies have drawn nearer, to attack Caesar's right wing on his open flank, and by surrounding his column from

48 Further information is contained in The Decline of The Roman Republic, by G. Long, Chapter XVII, and J. P. Postgate, "The Site of the Battle of Pharsalia," Journal of Roman Studies, XII (1922), pp.187-191.

49 Postgate, op.cit., p.189.

50 Bell. Civ., III, 85.

the rear to drive his army in confused rout before a weapon is cast at the foe by us."⁵¹ Pompey had stationed on the right wing under P. Cornelius Lentulus his Cilician and Spanish cohorts, protected by a force of six hundred cavalry from Pontus. On the left wing, the ground was held by the First and Third legions which were sent to Rome by Caesar in 49 B.C. These were under the control of Domitius Ahenobarbus. At the centre Scipio stood on guard with two Syrian legions. "Caesar...had posted his Tenth legion on the right wing, and his Ninth on the left...To this legion he added the Eighth...He had eighty cohorts posted in his lines making a total of twenty-two thousand men...He had placed Antonius in command on the left wing, P. Sulla on the right, and Cn. Domitius in the centre."⁵² From close scrutiny of his opponents line, Caesar observed that Pompey planned to use his infantry defensively so that when the cavalry had scattered Caesar's horse and foot, the infantry would move in and, by its mass, overwhelm any opposition. To counteract this Caesar placed eight cohorts obliquely as a fourth line and concealed it by the right wing.

Pompey made the first move by ordering his men to march towards the enemy. When they had reached a certain point, he brought them to a halt and here they waited for Caesar to attack, their spears at the ready. "Here...Pompey made a mistake, not knowing that the initial clash with all the impetus of running adds force to the blows and fires the courage, which everything then conspires to fan."⁵³ Caesar's troops, on approaching slowly, became suspicious of the enemy's delaying tactics. Thinking that the Pompeians hesitated through fear, the Caesarians stopped to regroup

⁵¹ Bell. Civ., III, 86.

⁵² Bell. Civ., III, 89.

⁵³ Plutarch, Caesar, 44.

and, when their lines were consolidated, they charged the enemy. Caesar knew the moral and physical value of impetus. He was also aware that his men on the attack were better prepared psychologically, if they thought that Pompey's forces were afraid of them.

As the lines clashed, Pompey's weight of cavalry forced back Caesar's right. On a given signal, Caesar's oblique line, thus far concealed by the right wing, was brought into action. "No circumstances contributed more than this to Caesar's victory on that day; for as soon as Pompey's cavalry poured forth, these cohorts routed it by an unexpected onset and delivered it up to the rest of the troops for slaughter."⁵⁴ The third line, which was held back by Caesar for such a time as this was now introduced and so effective was its power that it routed the already unnerved forces of Pompey. Caesar was once again victorious.

It is certainly evident that Pharsalia, a complete disaster for Pompey, revealed Caesar as the superior tactician in equal battle. However, for Pompey it must be said that his troops were of inferior quality when compared with Caesar's highly trained cohorts. "This splendid victory was won by Caesar's admirable dispositions, the lack of vigor of Pompey's soldiers, and the want of steadfastness of Pompey's cavalry."⁵⁵ The battle was over, and Pompey fled to Larissa. Caesar followed but was unable to intercept him. After gathering his wife and family, the downcast commander sought refuge at the court of Ptolemy Auletes and, as he was being welcomed ashore, was ignominiously stabbed in the back by a soldier formerly under his command. So he died on the sands of

⁵⁴ Frontinus, Strategemata, 2, 3, 22.

⁵⁵ Dodge, op.cit., p.568.

Egypt; even Caesar mourned his passing.

The first phase of the Civil War closed with Pharsalia, a battle among battles. "We may call it the military expression of the coming political change...The psychological strategy of Caesar in this campaign was based on a thorough understanding of his rival's embarrassments."⁵⁶ The war was not yet over for the aristocrats were to assemble in Africa and provide for Caesar further battles and more complex situations.

"...Caesar was accustomed to stake his fortune upon desperate measures, and glad to put it to the proof in utmost risks...."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Heitland, The Roman Republic, III, p.308.

⁵⁷ Lucan, V, 301-302.

CHAPTER VI

THE AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

Now that Pharsalia was over, the Pompeians scattered; Labienus hastened to Dyrrhachium where he "pretended that the fortune of the two sides had been equalized in consequence of a severe wound received by Caesar. By this pretence he created confidence in the other followers of Pompey's party."¹ Cato with fifteen cohorts travelled to Corcyra, where he was joined later by Scipio and Afranius. Headed by Scipio and Afranius, the rebels, inspired by Labienus's news, deserted the island stronghold for Africa. After landing at Utica, they joined forces with Juba and Attius Varus and quickly began recruiting a new army.

Corcyra was an important base for Pompeian operations and one of the vital military links between Pharsalus and Africa: "Les fuyards de Pharsale n'avaient donc touché leur place d'armes que pour l'évacuer en désordre, et refluer sur Corcyre avec la garnison de quinze cohortes que Caton avait su maintenir intacte, et les seize cents cavaliers que Labienus avait sauvés de Thessalie."²

After Pharsalia M. Octavius, one of Pompey's generals, who had assembled a few troops in Macedonia, moved from there into Illyria, whence he was compelled to flee by two of Caesar's lieutenants, P. Vatinius and Q. Cornuficius. He gathered a fleet and was able to take it to Africa. After the union of this fleet with the rebels and the only Pompeian army that could boast of a victory, rumours reached Italy, and eventually Caesar, that Octavius was gathering an army out of available forces in Africa, and

1. Frontinus, Strategemata, II, 7, 13.

2 J. Carcopino, César, II (Paris, 1950), p.927.

with his fleet intended to invade Italy. These naval squadrons continually troubled Sicily and Sardinia, plundering their towns. The remnants of Pharsalus could not benefit from surrender, but they did have a chance in a partisan war - a war which was to be carried on not by the forces of Pompey, but by those of the aristocrats. What the allies lacked in strength, they gained in fanaticism.

Cato did not join the rebels immediately, as news of Pompey's death had not yet reached him. Instead, hoping to recover Achaia, he moved into the Peloponnese, and on the march was informed that Calenus was on the way to intercept him. Cato withdrew and decided to go to Egypt where he could join forces with Pompey but, informed of the latter's death, he changed his plans and made his way to Africa. "The great majority of the republicans, as of the Pompeians, betook themselves to Africa, where alone an honourable and constitutional warfare might still be waged against the usurper."³ Cato's moderating influence was needed in Africa, as the choice of a leader troubled all in the Pompeian camp. Scipio and Varus contested the leadership. The ordinary soldiers and statesmen wished Cato to command, but the Stoic refused the position, for he was not a military man at heart, and Scipio became commander-in-chief, Cato receiving the governorship of Utica.

On or about 24 September 47, Caesar arrived in Rome and, after giving considerable attention to the immediate problems facing him, made preparations to suppress the unruly forces in Africa. Two months later he left the city, and, on 17 December 47, reached Lilybaeum in Sicily,

3 Mommsen, The History of Rome, IV, p.410.

where he pitched his tent near the shore: "This he did with a view that none should think he had time to delay, and that his men might be kept in readiness at a day or an hour's warning."⁴ There was much comment on his impatience to be off, as it seemed foolhardy to set sail now with so few troops available, while Scipio, who was nearing the height of his power, had amassed not only ten legions augmented by auxiliaries but also a larger fleet than Caesar's. Caesar's mobilization was slow, one legion and six hundred cavalry being all that he could muster. The men were ordered to take with them a minimum of baggage and no slaves, for the shortage of ships and a scarcity of food and water precluded the contrary.

It is interesting to consider why Caesar took such a small force to combat so powerful an enemy - it does not seem to be akin to his general pattern of strategy. Possibly he thought that the enemy fleet would again be in winter quarters; if such was the case he would be afforded a crossing to Africa as easy as that to Epirus. Perhaps Caesar felt that if his weary legions knew he were in danger, they would be aroused to greater than human efforts in his behalf - such was the admiration he inspired in his men. At the time of his departure for Africa, the Pompeian forces were somewhat scattered. There were squadrons of ships at Utica and along the coast. Scipio with most of his forces was encamped at Utica, while Labienus with his cavalry and auxiliaries was on the watch near Leptis Minor.

Caesar set sail for the promontory of Mercury (Cape Bon), intending to land some distance south of Scipio, whom he knew to be stationed at Utica. Realizing that Utica was exceptionally well fortified and protected, Caesar decided to establish a bridgehead south of Cape Bon and

⁴ Caesar, de Bello Africo, 1.

work inland from there. "The theatre of the campaign upon which Caesar was about to enter extends southward some thirty-five miles from the seaport of Sousse, embraces Monastir, Lemta, Cape Dimasse, Mahedia, and El Aalia and reaches its southermost point at El Djem...."⁵ Although the sky was clear when he sailed, a storm suddenly arose and scattered his fleet. As no definite destination had been assigned to the captains, each directed his ship as best he could. Caesar landed with his small force near Hadrumetum and encamped there. Dodge considers it a reprehensible oversight on Caesar's part not to have given his captains instructions where to assemble in case of an unexpected turn of events. That no rendezvous had been definitely assigned was a flaw in his strategy, but the fact that the weather and the position of the enemy were both indeterminable factors perhaps vindicates Caesar somewhat. "But in this Caesar acted not without design; for as he knew of no port in Africa that was clear of the enemy's forces, and where the fleet might rendezvous in security, he chose to rely entirely upon fortune, and land where occasion offered."⁶

At Hadrumetum, all overtures for a peaceful surrender were spurned by Considius Longus, who was in charge of the town, and who had for his garrison two legions and seven hundred horse. Caesar had at first intended to raze the town, but, after considering its strength and the smallness of his forces, "...thought it advisable not to remain and besiege the town, lest, while he pursued that design, the enemy's cavalry should come behind and surround him."⁷

⁵ Holmes, The Roman Republic, III, p.237.

⁶ Bell. Afr., 1.

⁷ Bell. Afr., 5.

Caesar's next move was down coast to a point where he could assemble his scattered fleet. It was his desire to find a town or towns whose people, dissatisfied with Pompeian rule, would be willing to defect to his side. He found the inhabitants of Leptis Minor and Ruspina amenable towards him. At Leptis he stopped and proceeded to construct landing facilities. It is possible that advance scouts had secured this port for Caesar as well as the neighbouring harbour of Ruspina, for, on leaving Hadrumetum, his rear was harassed by Numidian cavalry who slowed down his march and caused his men endless trouble. By a sound manoeuvre Caesar gained protection for his forces, and eventually reached Ruspina. Caesar fortified the harbours of Ruspina and Leptis. The former he used as his centre of operations because of its topographical advantages while the latter was to be his anchorage; "...by keeping possession of the maritime cities, and providing them with garrisons, he might secure a retreat for his fleet."⁸ Caesar's first camp was at Ruspina but a move to Leptis, which was a poor place for defence as it was located on a flat section of the seashore, convinced him that the former afforded more protection. About January 3, a report reached him that most of his ships were in sight and steering for Utica. Caesar must have thought here that his hesitation to assign a rendezvous for his ships was transferring them into the hands of his enemies. As he was about to take ship in an attempt to retrieve his lost fleet, by a stroke of luck, the ships suddenly turned, made for Leptis, and came safe to land in a short time. Caesar's "luck" had not changed. Who else ever benefitted in such a way from so elusive a goddess?

Through negotiation with the natives of the area, Caesar

8 Bell. Afr., 9.

guaranteed a grain supply of sorts for his troops. This source of supply proved to be of great help to him even after his missing transports arrived bearing more men and supplies. Throughout this campaign Caesar suffered from continual shortage of grain. Scipio had wisely gathered all known quantities of wheat into his numerous granaries, leaving little for Caesar. Though one lot of reinforcements had arrived, the army of Caesar was not yet strong enough to begin offensive operations, and would not be so until a satisfactory grain supply was available.

Upon Caesar's arrival at Hadrumetum, a strong enemy force under Labienus had set out to intercept him. This army met Caesar's troops as they were returning from a foraging expedition on the plain of Ruspina. Labienus's force was made up predominantly of Numidian cavalry sprinkled with Gallic and German troopers, whose ability Caesar well knew. Caesar was definitely caught off guard in this surprise move of his former lieutenant, who had marched against him with such skill that the great general nearly met defeat. Labienus had trapped Caesar on level ground, and intended to use against his adversary the same tactics by which the Parthians overcame Crassus, and Juba annihilated Curio. Caesar was completely surrounded by Numidians, but he knew what course he had to follow. "As both sides stood in expectation of the signal, Caesar would not stir from his post, as he saw that with such few troops against so great a force he must depend more on stratagem than strength...."⁹ Caesar's strategy was to draw his cohorts out into a long line stationing the archers in front and the cavalry on the wings. As Labienus attacked, and his cavalry gradually enclosed Caesar's troops in an enveloping movement, Caesar's

⁹ Bell. Afr., 14.

men extended their line, each alternate cohort facing about and taking up a position behind the cohort next to it, and so fighting back to back. "Caesar had never found himself in such straits since he had fought in the ranks against the Nervii on the heights above the Sambre."¹⁰ Labienus had so mingled the horse and foot in this long line, that Caesar thought he was encountering only infantry, but the two fronts which he presented to the enemy created a formidable barrier which the Numidians were unable to penetrate. Labienus's forces, which were caught off guard, gradually gave way and eventually fled. The arrival of Petreius rejuvenated the Pompeians, who quickly regrouped and renewed the attack. Caesar was definitely in dire straits "...and had Ruspina not been so near, the Moorish javelin would perhaps have accomplished the same result here as the Parthian bow at Carrhae."¹¹ One last thrust from all points within Caesar's lines provided the impetus needed to upset Labienus's troops. Unwilling to engage in close combat, the Numidians were driven from the plain, and Caesar reached Ruspina safely.

The battle lasted from the fifth hour after sunrise until sunset. That day, January 4, Labienus's attempt to crush Caesar by numbers had failed, not because the renegade lacked the ability to carry out his plan, but because his opponent was more skilful. The question has often been asked whether Caesar could have sent to his camp for help. He might have done this, but a quick assessment of the perilous situation indicated that he must depend more upon his skill of stratagem and his application of tactics than military strength. It is interesting to note that in this encounter near Ruspina, the tactics used by Labienus's Numidians were the

¹⁰ Holmes, op.cit., p.243.

¹¹ Mommsen, op.cit., p.416.

same as those used by Hannibal's Numidian force which so frequently outmanoeuvred and outfought the legions of Rome in the Second Punic War. Caesar's men wanted to engage the Numidians in close combat with their swords, but were prevented from doing so by the charge and retreat tactics of their elusive enemy.

One of Caesar's greatest problems in this battle was that produced by his recruits. He knew that it would only be a matter of time until their courage would collapse. Fortunately the enemy's circle was broken at its two extremes before this happened. His opponents were divided and soon became disillusioned. Caesar's men gradually regained their composure and turned back their opponents with a concentrated attack which forced the Numidians to scatter. "The surprise of the whole manoeuvre, particularly by troops which Labienus thought were all but defeated, was what gave it its success."¹² Labienus failed because he put his faith in numbers rather than in discipline. He had misjudged Caesar's ability to extricate himself from an awkward situation when hard pressed.

After Labienus's near-successful cavalry attack, Caesar was dispirited, "for he was not yet able to carry through the war to a satisfactory conclusion; and he saw that to stay in the same place was difficult because of the lack of subsistence, even if the foe should leave his troops alone, and that to retire was impossible, with the enemy pressing upon him both by land and by sea."¹³ He had learned a hard lesson. No longer would he take the offensive or encourage attack. Instead he decided to follow a policy of 'watch and wait' until further reinforcements arrived. He so fortified his camp that his forces received from the coast what food

¹² Dodge, Caesar, II, p.636.

¹³ Dio, XLIII, 2.

could be provided. "The question of subsistence taxed him to the utmost. The motif of the entire African campaign may be said to be the lack of victual in Caesar's camp."¹⁴ At Leptis he had created a safe harbour for his fleet and an arsenal for his engines of war. These he gradually moved to Ruspina, and, that they might satisfactorily be accommodated, he constructed earthworks from both town and camp to the sea. These entrenchments were more quickly attended to, when, two days after the battle, news was received that Scipio, after marching with eight legions and three thousand cavalry from Utica, was near a junction with Labienus. "Meantime Caesar fortified his camp with much greater care, reinforced the guards, and threw up two entrenchments; one from Ruspina quite to the sea, the other from his camp to the sea likewise, to secure the communication, and receive supplies without danger."¹⁵ When reinforcements did not arrive, Caesar transferred archers, sailors, and even oarsmen from ship to camp. He had decided to train them to fight alongside his cavalry and so counterbalance Labienus's light-armed foot. Caesar's "only hope of safety was in making his defences at Ruspina so strong that they could not be taken by assault, and in waiting for fresh troops and supplies from Sicily."¹⁶

Labienus had established a partial blockade of Ruspina by posting cavalry battalions on surrounding hills. Although this blockade greatly restricted Caesar's movements, the roads south of Ruspina were still open, and these he used to send messages of encouragement to the outside tribes. "Pendant tout janvier sa position était fort critique et il n'a du son

¹⁴ Dodge, *op.cit.*, p.637.

¹⁵ Bell. Afr., 20.

¹⁶ Long, The Decline of the Roman Republic, V, p.325.

salut qu'aux fortifications de son camp et à l'impuissance des armes offensives anciennes pour forcer des retranchemens, ressources que n'aurait pas un général moderne."¹⁷ Caesar had at his disposal much equipment and an amount of food sufficient for survival. He was well equipped to hold out against his enemy. "All this preparation had been made on account of the smallness of his numbers and the want of experience in his men, and not because of the strength of the enemy and because he was afraid of them; he was well content they should think that he was frightened."¹⁸ The Pompeians had encamped about three miles south of Caesar's position and, although they failed to lure Caesar into battle, through their superiority of cavalry and their ability to intercept foragers, they did force him to exercise great caution. Caesar was firmly entrenched at Ruspina and, though he might soon be short of victuals, the Pompeians could not move him. The corn he received from nearby farmers permitted him to issue a subsistence ration to his forces.

Throughout this period Caesar had sent his warships to patrol the seas in search of the vessels carrying further reinforcements. Some of these troop ships had been captured by the Pompeians and burned, while others were helplessly wandering about, their captains hoping they would find a safe anchorage. "Caesar, being informed of this, stationed his fleet along the coast and islands for the security of his convoys."¹⁹ But for an occasional skirmish between the two camps, there was little activity on the battlefield. Scipio's forces had joined up with those of Petreius and Labienus, thus increasing Caesar's discomfort. "Their

17 Napoléon, Précis des Guerres de César (Paris, 1836), p.195.

18 Long, op.cit., p.330.

19 Bell. Afr., 21.

cavalry made continual excursions to our very works, and intercepted those who ventured too far in quest of wood or water, and obliged us to keep within our entrenchments."²⁰ The enemy waited for Caesar to move, but existing conditions prevented him from doing so. No supplies had yet arrived from Sicily and Sardinia; the season was too dangerous for navigation; six miles in each direction from his camp was all the land Caesar possessed in Africa, while lack of forage caused much distress among his troops.

News had reached Caesar that his arrival in the province had been received with skepticism by the natives, who thought that rather than come in person, he had sent his lieutenants to do battle with Scipio. To nullify this misconception he sent messages by courier to all the surrounding states to inform them that it was actually Caesar who had arrived.

Scipio, drawing his line right up to his opponent's entrenchments, offered Caesar battle on three successive days, only to have it declined. Caesar had given strict orders that a pitched battle was not to be fought yet. "He very well knew, that whatever confidence the enemy might have in their numbers, they would yet never dare to attack the camp of a general who had so often repulsed, terrified, and put them to flight; who had frequently pardoned and granted them their lives; and whose very name had weight and authority enough to intimidate their army."²¹ The historian of the African War further explains that Caesar's delaying policy was not one of cowardice as "...he thought that it would disgrace him, if, after so many noble exploits, and defeating such powerful armies, and after gaining so many glorious victories, he should appear to have

20 Bell. Afr., 24.

21 Bell. Afr., 31.

gained a bloody victory over the remnants who had rallied after their flight."²²

Here Caesar's strategy, unlike that at Dyrrhachium, was sound, and provided him with the opportunity for a concerted attack later. Scipio had failed in his attempt to attack Caesar before he became firmly entrenched at Ruspina. Intending to shut Caesar in, he had garrisoned both Hadrumetum and Thapsus; but Cato had warned him against this and suggested instead that he move inland, thus luring Caesar away from the coast and rendering it difficult for him to provide food for his troops.

Scipio had benefited by Pompey's fate, for he had learned to become cautious and to avoid battle whenever possible. It is a point of interest whether Scipio would have openly engaged Caesar's forces had the dictator accepted the challenge when the Pompeian's troops were arrayed before Ruspina. Caesar's delaying tactics had an unnerving effect upon Scipio and his associates: "Scipio and the other generals were greatly surprised at this conduct, and could not conceive why Caesar, who had always been forward and active in war, should all of a sudden change his measures; which they therefore suspected must proceed from some very powerful reasons."²³

Caesar gained as an ally one of the most interesting personalities of the African campaign, P. Sittius of Nuceria, a Roman adventurer who had won to his cause a regiment of freebooters. He was the last of the Catilinarians who sold himself and his legionnaires to the highest bidder regardless of the task. At the present moment he and his followers were serving under King Bogud of Mauretania, who had become Caesar's

²² Bell. Afr., 31.

²³ Bell. Afr., 35.

partisan in a series of attacks against Juba. Already Cirta and other villages in Juba's realm had fallen to these allies of Caesar. Juba at the time was on his way to join Scipio, but this unexpected attack on his territories had forced him to return and to send only a small detachment under Saburra to join Scipio. These victories over Juba were claimed in Caesar's name and greatly facilitated Caesar's work. Juba's change of mind in his decision to return to Mauretania lightened the load Caesar had to bear. Had the Numidian king's forces been added to those of the Pompeians at Ruspina, Caesar's strategy could have been disrupted. "Caesar's constrained position was due to his own overeager act in attacking the African problem with insufficient means."²⁴

As well as obtaining the service of P. Sittius, Caesar had won over many of the Gaetulian pastoral tribes, who cherished the kindnesses bestowed upon their ancestors by Marius and Sulla. They were only too willing to assist the nephew of Marius. Many Numidians and Gaetulians from Scipio's army had deserted to Caesar. Such deserters Caesar used by sending them back to their own country with letters to their tribal chiefs suggesting that they rebel against the harsh rule of Juba. "It was beginning to be evident that the native population sympathized with the general who was known to respect the rights of non-combatants, and whose prestige, notwithstanding his temporary weakness, seemed to make his ultimate victory certain.

By the end of January 47, as Caesar was on the verge of a famine, ships bearing corn, troopers, archers and slingers reached Ruspina from the island of Cercina, which G. Sallustius Crispus had captured, and along

²⁴ Dodge, op.cit., p.641.

²⁵ Holmes, op.cit., p.249.

with it the enemy's grain stockade. Caesar's army was now strengthened and the morale of his troops increased. "Thus he experienced a double pleasure on this occasion, receiving at one and the same time both a supply of provisions and a reinforcement of troops, which animated the soldiers, and delivered them from the apprehensions of want."²⁶ This new force was still weak in cavalry and auxiliary troops, but Caesar, aware of this, trained what troops he had to fight in the most efficient manner under the most arduous conditions.

The plain of Ruspina was about twelve miles long and surrounded by a ridge of low hills beginning at the coast and forming into a semi-circular theatre. It was Caesar's plan to seize these hills and confine his operations to them until he was strong enough to engage Scipio in the open plain. "...it was the business of Caesar to control the entire plateau, and not to allow his enemy to fortify the slopes which descended on the west and the south-west to the plain, lest they should prevent him from advancing inland...."²⁷ A further advantage in controlling this hilly region lay in the provision of security for the harbours of Ruspina and Leptis, should they be threatened by Scipio. Control of the surrounding hills was the first step towards control of the plain south of Ruspina. When he felt ready to move, Caesar planned to attack Scipio from the eastern side of the plain, where the hills would conceal his approach. There were five ridges in all, the last of which Scipio had fortified, for he was forced by lack of water to move to these hills which lay just west of the important town of Uzita, whence he procured water and other conveniences for his army. Uzita was situated in the plain south of Ruspina.

²⁶ Bell. Afr., 34.

²⁷ Holmes, op.cit., p.517.

As Scipio sought the shelter of the hills, so Caesar followed, but, fearful of the Numidian cavalry, he avoided crossing the plain and exposing his force by using a seashore route.

It seems that at this point Caesar was feeling his opponent out, and waiting for the right moment to involve him in an engagement advantageous only to Caesar. As he had planned, Caesar safely reached the hills on the eastern side of the plain, the first three ridges of which he seized without difficulty, the few Pompeians stationed thereon being put to flight. The fourth hill, which was close by Scipio's camp, he invested by constructing an earthwork between the summit and the plain, his cavalry protecting the workers. This sudden movement surprised Scipio and Labienus, who quickly deployed their troops to give themselves the necessary protection. "Caesar, knowing that Scipio had received all the supplies he expected, and judging he would no longer decline coming to an engagement, began to advance along the ridge with his forces, extend his lines, secure them with redoubts, and possess himself of the eminences between him and Scipio."²⁸ Caesar's new foothold in the plain of Ruspina gave him a moral advantage over Scipio. He had repulsed a cavalry attack of Labienus, while entrenching the hill. Never could it be said of the latter that he ever let Caesar rest. His desire to overthrow his former commander was as strong now as ever, and the longer Caesar outwitted him the greater the enmity became. Now that Caesar controlled this strategic range of hills, he was afforded a view of Ruspina, Leptis, and the other areas which had proffered him supplies. Added to this was a close view of the enemy's operations, so important in a time of war.

²⁸ Bell. Afr., 49.

Mopping up operations soon took place throughout the various hills seized. "The cavalry having thus cleared the mountain, Caesar resolved to entrench himself there, and distributed the work to the legions."²⁹ Caesar, ever anxious to test Scipio's strength, formed his infantry in battle line at the foot of the hills just won. Scipio took up arms and met him; the opposing forces assumed positions facing each other. There was a trial of strength, but neither side showed any inclination to fight and at dusk the opposing forces retired to their camps. But for odd skirmishes, there was no sharp fighting for several weeks.

All was not well in Caesar's camp. The heavy seasonal rains had made the men miserable as well as uncomfortable. They had little baggage and were kept constantly on the move in the restricted area of their camp. An even greater discomfort than that caused by the weather existed in the troops' reaction to things unknown. This was especially evident when the news reached them that Juba was on the way to join Scipio. It must be remembered that Caesar had as yet not won a stirring victory. If at all, he had barely beaten back Labienus at Ruspina and was unable to force Scipio into a conclusive battle. "Caesar's army began to be alarmed, and a tumult broke out among them on account of the disaster they had already experienced, and of the reputation of the forces advancing against them, and especially of the numbers and bravery of the Numidian cavalry. War with elephants, to which they were unaccustomed, also frightened them."³⁰ These men could not forget Curio's disaster at the hands of so formidable a foe and Juba's arrival caused more terror in Caesar's camp than was necessary. To counteract this growing fear, Caesar kept his men busy,

²⁹ Bell. Afr., 51.

³⁰ Appian, II, 14, 96.

especially the new recruits. They were constantly on the move, shifting baggage, working on entrenchments and carrying out the general duties of the camp. So occupied there was little time left for them to worry about the growing strength of the enemy.

Scipio and Juba joined forces. Labienus was settled in a separate camp some distance to the south of Caesar and close to his left flank. Before Caesar could make another move, he knew that this flank must be strengthened, for Labienus was too unpredictable a foe. While Caesar was busy strengthening this section of his line, Scipio seized the opportunity to reinforce the piquets on a hill still under his control. In the middle of this operation, Caesar's cavalry force suddenly attacked, outmanoeuvred and routed Scipio's band and, when the skirmish was over, seized the hill for their commander. Labienus, to check Caesar's rapid movement along the ridges, established a strong guard on a hill adjoining the one just captured, and was determined to hold it against anything Caesar threw at him. This hill was separated from the previous one by a deep depression, its sides indented with a thick olive tree grove. Knowing that an open engagement would profit him little he decided to thwart Caesar by stratagem, i.e., by posting small bands of cavalry and light infantry in the grove to surprise and outmanoeuvre Caesar's troops as they passed through. Through deserters, Caesar learned of Labienus's trickery and so bided his time. When he thought the opposing force was unready and perhaps scattered, he ordered his troops to move. The Pompeians, unable to regain their proper stations, became unnerved and quickly fled. In a short time this position fell to Caesar.

In recapitulating, we find that Caesar had placed his hopes in

a pitched battle wherein the enemy would be divided and so possess little advantage of position. Ruspina could not easily be supplied and Caesar was now in somewhat the same position as Pompey had been at Dyrrhachium, especially with respect to fodder. If Scipio would not carry the war to him, then he must move against Scipio. He could not afford to fight a war of attrition. Caesar's move to the hills about six miles south of Ruspina extended his operational area and facilitated the gathering of supplies; but it did not accomplish what he had intended, namely, to draw Scipio into the open.

Now that the hills surrounding the plain and close to Uzita were under Caesar's control, he could rid himself of the enemy's cavalry outposts which interfered with his water-carriers; he could secure his left flank against attack; he could disrupt any offensive manoeuvre on the part of the enemy and possibly bring about an engagement under his own terms. The strategy involved in seizing the hills surrounding the plain was sound, even though Scipio remained firmly entrenched in his camp. Slowly but surely Caesar was consolidating his position around Uzita; it was only left for him to move towards the town. It must be remembered that Scipio had moved from Ruspina to Uzita, his magazine, for stronger protection and a guarantee of supplies; and that Caesar had followed him only to bide his time until he could strike against the fortress or draw out Scipio. "It was not perhaps so much the capture of Uzita at which Caesar was aiming, as the chance in some manner of placing Scipio at a disadvantage so as to lead up to his defeat in a decisive engagement without too much risk."³¹

Now that he was in a strong position to attack Uzita, Caesar

³¹ Dodge, op.cit., p.655.

ordered earthworks constructed, one from the left corner and one from the right corner of his camp, dug in such a direction that they met severally at the left and right angles of the town. "His design in this work was, that when he approached the town with his troops, and began to attack it, these lines might secure his flanks, and hinder the enemy's horse from surrounding him, and compelling him to abandon the siege. It likewise gave his men more frequent opportunities of conversing with the enemy, and facilitated the means of desertion...He wanted also by drawing nearer the enemy, to see if they really intended to come to an action...."³² One cannot help but be amazed at Caesar's ability to construct and occupy such extensive camps and lines without providing an opportunity for his enemy to penetrate them at any one point especially when they were unfinished.

While the work of entrenchment was underway, Caesar's second lot of reinforcements arrived. To facilitate their arrival, he was forced to engage in a naval exploit with the enemy which displayed his audacity, bold decision and inveterate skill. "In almost all Caesar's battles, unless forced on him, he was slow in attack. In strategic initiative, on the contrary, Caesar was admirable. It was one constant, never-ceasing push."³³ The Pompeians were not idle while Caesar prolonged his entrenchments. They displayed their strength by arraying their troops on gently rising ground south of Uzita and not far from Caesar's camp. Labienus stationed his Numidian cavalry and light infantry about one mile from the right wing, near the foot of a ridge, so that "...when the two armies should engage, his cavalry at the commencement of the action should take a longer sweep, enclose Caesar's army and throw them into confusion by

³² Bell. Afr., 51.

³³ Dodge, op.cit., p.665.

their darts."³⁴ Caesar, expecting the combined force to attack him, was unwilling to call a charge since, "...the enemy having a strong garrison in Uzita, which was opposite to his right wing, he could not advance beyond that place without exposing his flank to a sally from the town." And too "...the ground before Scipio's army was very rough, and he thought it likely to disorder his men in the charge."³⁵ Caesar, to counteract the threatening movements of the enemy, strengthened his left wing and utilized the power of the Fifth legion: "...as his right wing was defended by the works, he found it necessary to make his left stronger, that it might be a match for the numerous cavalry of the enemy; for which reason he had placed all his horse there, intermixed with light-armed foot; and as he could not rely much upon them, had sent the fifth legion to assist them."³⁶ So the armies stood, and but for a small cavalry skirmish in which the Pompeians triumphed, nothing came of the elaborate movements. At dusk both armies retired to their camps.

Juba was informed that Cirta, the capital of Numidia, had fallen to P. Sittius. The Gaetuli, who nursed much hatred in their hearts against Pompey for subjecting them to Numidian rule, had risen in Sittius's favour, and Juba was now opposed by three forces: Caesar, Sittius, and the rebellious Gaetulians. "Juba, having thus three wars to sustain, was compelled to detach six cohorts from the army destined to act against Caesar, and send them to defend the frontiers of his kingdom against the Gaetulians."³⁷ Juba's independent strategy was continually a matter of concern for the

34 Bell. Afr., 59.

35 Bell. Afr., 58.

36 Bell. Afr., 60.

37 Bell. Afr., 55.

Pompeians gathered in Africa. His insolence and aloofness stirred even Cato, who was the only aristocrat capable of quelling Juba's overweening pride. Though Juba's reinforcements were of great assistance to the Pompeian cause, the allied army possessed no consistency, for it was made up largely of slaves, freedmen, and peasants whose farms had been burned, and property confiscated. There was no will to fight in these men. Both the Gaetulian uprising and the increase in his forces permitted Caesar to adopt a more aggressive strategy. His prestige, too, had a great effect on the natives of the surrounding districts and brought many over to his side.

As he pushed forward his entrenchments towards Uzita, Caesar noticed that Scipio, besides strengthening his hold on the hills back of the city, was drawing a line in front of the town and opposite to Caesar's trenchworks. This was done "lest Caesar should cut off his communication with the mountain."³⁸ The mountain specified was in the range behind Uzita. Small concerted enemy attacks on various parts of his line disturbed Caesar, so he daily kept his men at labour on the works, "...carrying a ditch and rampart quite across the plain, to prevent the incursions of the enemy."³⁹ As Caesar in the plain before Uzita extended his ramparts and ditch across the plain to stop the enemy moving in that area, Scipio also laboured in the same way to keep Caesar from cutting him off from the hills.

"Two months passed in marches and campings without any result in the narrow space enclosed between the towns of Leptis, Ruspina, Achilla, and Agar, which Caesar held, and Hadrumetum, Thapsus, Uzita, and Thysdrus,

³⁸ Bell. Afr., 61.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

occupied by Scipio."⁴⁰ Caesar saw no results from this state of relative inactivity. He was still suffering from a shortage of supplies and, even though he had taken advantage of the grain deposited in vaults, according to African custom, he still had an insufficient amount to supply his enlarged army. This meant that he must either meet the enemy at a disadvantage, or abandon his present position and move south in search of a more plentiful food supply. This required a revision of strategy. Caesar was thwarted in his attempt to blockade Uzita by the skilfull use of the terrain by his adversaries.

It was a great error on Scipio's part when he decided to defend Uzita and so carry on the war in the coastal region. Further inland, Caesar would have been greatly handicapped both through lack of contact with the coast and insufficient means to provide for food. As Caesar's forces increased, Scipio and Juba showed less incentive to engage him in a pitched battle, and during the two months of skirmishing, Caesar, by rigid routine, gradually accustomed his men to the foreign mode of fighting. Caesar now realized that to bring about a decisive battle he must adopt a strategy of manoeuvre, i.e., he must bring Scipio out into the open by forcing him to move. This could best be done by garrisoning Achilla, Leptis and Ruspina and moving south against another of Scipio's magazines, Agar, which lay twenty miles to the southeast over relatively flat land, and "...about two kilometres north of Ksour es Saf, which is fifteen Roman miles, in a straight line, south of Thapsus...."⁴¹

Abandoning the siege of Uzita as a waste of time and yielding

⁴⁰ V. Duruy, History of Rome and the Roman People, from its Origin to the Establishment of the Christian Empire, III (London, 1884), p.349.

⁴¹ Holmes, op.cit., p.525.

no results, Caesar ordered the blockade of the harbours of Hadrumetum and Thapsus, and the burning of his present camp. These activities brought to a close the second period of the African campaign, and Caesar moved to Agar. "Scipio meanwhile, hearing of Caesar's departure, followed him along the hills with all his forces, and posted himself about six miles off in three different camps."⁴² Scipio of course was accompanied by Afranius and Juba. These three stationed their forces in separate camps. Caesar's new camp was approximately two miles southwest of Agar, but closer to the sea than that of Scipio. It is interesting to note the position which Scipio assumed when he halted his movements against Caesar. He was so stationed that, without too much difficulty, he could cut off his enemy's foraging lines to the interior. Fortunately for Caesar, Scipio did not have time to carry this out, so quickly did the former move.

Close to Agar and near Scipio's camp lay the town of Zeta, placed by Veith at Beni Hassen, ten miles northwest of Tegea and a little less from Scipio's encampment.⁴³ Scipio had continuous communication with this town and had there placed his centre of operations for this theatre of war. When he was firmly established at Agar, Caesar decided to raid Zeta in an attempt to capture it, for here was Scipio's grain stockade. To accomplish this, Caesar would have to make a flank march past Scipio's camp, besiege the town, and return to Agar by the same route. It is possible that famine and the inability to counteract it, drove Caesar to this bold and somewhat foolhardy venture. It is sufficient to say that the manoeuvre was successful. Zeta and all its possessions fell to Caesar and a garrison under a reliable lieutenant was placed there.

⁴² Bell. Afr., 67.

⁴³ Holmes, op.cit., p.525.

To do this in the eyes of the enemy, Caesar showed the scorn with which he regarded his opponent. Perhaps Caesar's sudden attack was perpetrated to dislodge by surprise some of Scipio's cohorts, but, except for a light skirmish in which a few men fell, no outright engagement took place.

On his return to Agar from Zeta, Caesar was once more troubled by his greatest antagonist of the African campaign, Labienus, "...who lay in ambush among the nearest hills, with...cavalry and light-armed infantry...."⁴⁴ This enemy force attacked Caesar's rear and caused much confusion within the conqueror's ranks. "...Caesar plainly saw that their whole aim was to oblige him to encamp in that place, where no water was to be had; that his soldiers...might perish with hunger, and the cattle with thirst."⁴⁵ Labienus's Numidian host had so troubled the horses by their rearguard action that Caesar was compelled to shift them to the centre of his line, thus slowing down the advance of his army. "In Gaul, Caesar's troops had met a frank, courageous enemy who came out and fought hand to hand on the field; here they had to resist the devices of a crafty foe who relied upon artifice, not courage."⁴⁶ But Caesar's fortune once again won the day for him. The Numidians, thinking they might surround the opposing force, took to the hills intending to move to the plain further along Caesar's line. As they were carrying out this manoeuvre, Caesar was given time to regroup and strengthen his weak sections so that when the next Numidian thrust came he was able to repulse it. "Thus Caesar, at one time marching forward, at another halting, and going on but slowly, reached the camp safe, about seven that evening, having only ten men wounded."⁴⁷

44 Bell. Afr., 69.

45 Loc. cit.

46 Dodge, op.cit., p.674.

47 Bell. Afr., 70.

The Numidians who had intended to head off the force farther down the valley committed a tactical mistake, for their pressure was removed from the rearguard and transferred to the van -- Caesar's strongest section of line. Caesar's most serious loss was in horses, and, though he narrowly evaded disaster, this awkward situation might have been avoided completely had he possessed a sufficiently strong cavalry force. This move against Zeta left Caesar's camp garrisoned by a negligible force open to attack, but once again fortune was on Caesar's side and Scipio hesitated to attack. Scipio, through the great name he bore, was expected to be as victorious in Africa as was his famed predecessor, Scipio Africanus. "...mais Scipion était sans talent et n'avait pour lui qu'un nom illustre."⁴⁸

Perhaps we should not criticize his strategy too harshly, for his technique was spasmodically Fabian. He hoped that famine would do the work of victories, such as had been Pompey's plan at Pharsalus, until the senators persuaded him otherwise. Scipio's incompetence at anything Fabian was shown by the lack of decision and plan which accompanies his movements. Had he been a bold and skilful general, he should have attacked Caesar on his return from Zeta. His hesitance to engage Caesar, and his willingness to let Labienus do most of the fighting, indicates that either he was afraid to meet Caesar even on terms disadvantageous to the dictator or, such was the confusion within his own camp, he hesitated to attack. It has been shown thus far throughout the African campaign that Caesar's cavalry without their infantry support was not equal to Scipio's cavalry. "The war was confined to a small tract of country between Ruspina and Thapsus, but circumstances made it to Caesar one of the most difficult

⁴⁸ Napoléon, op.cit., p.183.

and dangerous of all his military enterprises, and gave him the opportunity of displaying his great abilities and his generous temper."⁴⁹ Scipio cannot be considered a worthy opponent; Labienus alone bore the weight of combat for most of the campaign. "For there are good grounds to suppose that...the skill which so long foiled Caesar and twice brought him within an ace of defeat, was the skill of Labienus."⁵⁰

When some citizens of Vaga, a town near Zeta, appealed to Caesar for protection, Juba sacked the town and butchered everyone in it. "The incident furnished an additional proof that the allies by their insensate cruelties had made enemies of the African people."⁵¹ This event shows how determined and fanatical the Pompeians were. They knew that if they lost the war they would forfeit their lives as well. Caesar, in no small way, took advantage of this gross error on the part of the Pompeians. He won the natives to his cause, while Scipio forced them to yield to his.

On 22 March 46 Caesar offered battle in front of Scipio's camp, but Scipio refused combat. This convinced Caesar that the only way to move his enemy was to force his hand. Strategic points of attack which attracted Caesar's attention were those within a day or two's march of Agar. Such towns were Sarsura, Thisdra, and Thapsus. Sarsura was Scipio's supply town, garrisoned by a small force, and about a day's march west of Agar. It was Caesar's design to march against this important town, using the same tactics that had been so successful at Zeta. He "...directed his march towards Sarsura, where Scipio had a garrison of Numidians, and a magazine of corn."⁵² Labienus, anticipating Caesar's moves, sent his

49 Long, op.cit., p.367.

50 Adcock, Cambridge Ancient History, IX, p.681.

51 Holmes, op.cit., p.264.

52 Bell. Afr., 75.

cavalry to harass his opponent 's infantry. Having profited by the long period of inactivity and his several engagements with Labienus, Caesar "...was very anxious, and proceeded with more slowness and circumspection than usual, slackening somewhat in his accustomed speed and activity."⁵³ He had habituated his soldiers to the devices and skills of a cunning enemy, and he had taught them when to pursue and when to hold back; such was the determination of Caesar to conclude this costly campaign. "Caesar, arriving before Sarsura, took it in the presence of the enemy, who dared not to advance to its relief; ...he marched next day to Tisdra...and being deterred from besieging it by want of corn, set out immediately, and after a march of four miles, encamped near a river. He marched from it on the fourth day, and then returned to his former camp at Agar."⁵⁴ He was now ready to meet Labienus on more equal terms. As Caesar moved against Labienus, the latter's cavalry did not approach close enough for direct combat, and so were unable to prevent the fall of Sarsura, the massacre of its garrison, and the seizure of its stores. The turning point of the war had come, for now Labienus was looking on passively, hesitant to attack. The morale of the allies was gradually disintegrating. Scipio followed Caesar in this circuit of towns, but kept at a distance all the way and finally returned to his former camp at Agar, coincident with Caesar. Upon arrival at Agar, Caesar was informed that the final reinforcements had arrived. Caesar had been patiently waiting for the right opportunity to fight the battle which would end the struggle, and now it was in sight. "Hitherto strategical prudence and tactical resource had

⁵³ Bell. Afr., 73.

⁵⁴ Bell. Afr., 76.

baffled Caesar's skill."⁵⁵ Caesar felt that his strong force could not be used to advantage until Scipio had found a battle-ground to his liking.

The dictator was sure that this time would not be far distant, as his opponent's prestige was slowly but significantly diminishing, not only in the eyes of his own men, but in those of his allies as well. He realized that he must meet Caesar soon, or be cast from his position through the anger of his own comrades. Caesar's force was now at full strength. To test Scipio's manpower "...he advanced into a plain eight miles distant from his own camp, and four from that of Scipio, where he awaited the enemy in order of battle."⁵⁶ A brief skirmish took place upon the arrival of Scipio's cavalry. Though the nearby town of Tegea was not taken by Caesar (for it contained a strong enemy garrison), Scipio did receive a serious setback which further aggravated his already demoralized force. With this brief but important encounter the third period of the African campaign came to an end.

Caesar was becoming more and more conscious of the time he was wasting trying to force Scipio into an open engagement. He firmly realized that "only in a pitched battle on equal ground with a limited front could the fighting power of his infantry overcome the superior numbers of the enemy and neutralize the effect of their cavalry."⁵⁷ North of Agar lay Thapsus, another garrison town of Scipio, whose governor G. Vergilius and garrison had been continually faithful to the allies. Should Caesar besiege this town, Scipio would be "...reduced to the necessity of fighting, to avoid the disgrace of abandoning Virgilius and the Thapsitani, who had

⁵⁵ Adcock, op.cit., p.686.

⁵⁶ Bell. Afr., 77.

⁵⁷ Adcock, loc. cit.

all along remained firm to his party...."⁵⁸ Caesar was being forced into such a decision because "...he found that he could not by any means induce the enemy to come down to the plain and make trial of the legions. and that he could not encamp nearer them for want of water...."⁵⁹

When news of Caesar's contemplated move reached Scipio and Juba, they realized that to avoid a direct engagement now, they would be compelled to follow Caesar but not attack him. When their destination was reached they would hem him in with as little fighting as possible, defend the town and starve him into submission. "Accordingly when Caesar perceived that because of the nature of the land he could not force them to engage in conflict unless they chose, he set out for Thapsus, in order that he might either engage them, if they came to the help of the city, or might at least capture the place, if they left it to its fate."⁶⁰ This took place on 4 April 46. Caesar's encampment was on the southwest side of the heavily garrisoned town. Upon arrival, siege-equipment was brought up and a contravallation was begun which Caesar had planned to stretch from sea to sea with piquets stationed at strategic points. Scipio, not to be outdone, led off in pursuit of Caesar, but to avoid an engagement on unfavourable ground, kept to the hills. As for Pompey at Dyrrhachium, so for Scipio at Agar, three choices were open: he could stay firmly entrenched at Agar and lose prestige; he could advance to his former position near Uzita and try to sever Caesar's supply route before Thapsus fell, or he could move his forces to Thapsus and so interrupt the siege. This he and Juba agreed to do, even though they realized it might produce an open

⁵⁸ Bell. Afr., 79.

⁵⁹ Loc. cit.

⁶⁰ Dio, XLIII, 7.

engagement. The two allied generals decided that upon arrival at Thapsus they would divide their troops, and, with as much speed as possible, would fortify one the north and one the south side of the town and so hem in Caesar's army. "Evidently the purpose of the two leaders was to imprison Caesar in the isthmus and to starve him into surrender...."⁶¹ Both generals realized that they would have to rely upon each other for assistance should Caesar break through either of their lines. Juba alone would not be able to hold the opposing veteran force now that it was at full strength and Scipio, whose troops, so different in character from the Numidians, were on the verge of rebellion and desertion, would not dare to trust his men in too involved a campaign without a bolstering force, available in the person of Juba. Little is said of Labienus's movements at this point. It was unfortunate for the allies that he was not used more in their movements. Scipio hoped to occupy the strip lying between the present day lake of Sebke di Moknine and the town of Thapsus itself. Caesar, on learning of his arrival, withdrew his trench-digging troops and sent part of his fleet close inshore to threaten his opponent's rear. Scipio, noticing the movements of the enemy, decided that it was too late to carry out his first plan of attack, i.e., to reach and fortify a side of the town, so, turning north and advancing around the lake, he took up a position near Thapsus. "...there were some salt-pits, between which and the sea was a narrow pass of about fifteen hundred paces, by which Scipio endeavoured to penetrate and bring help to the inhabitants of Thapsus. But, Caesar anticipating that this might happen, had...raised a very strong fort at the entrance of it...Scipio...advanced within a

61 Holmes, op.cit., p.267.

small distance of the last mentioned camp and fort, where he began to entrench himself about fifteen hundred paces from the sea."⁶² From this point he could cut off Caesar from his supply towns of Leptis and Ruspina and at the same time carry on operations against Caesar's invading force. Caesar realized the seriousness of the situation but, much to his surprise and pleasure, he "...observed the enemy about the camp very uneasy, hurrying from place to place, at one time retiring behind the rampart, another coming out again in great tumult and confusion."⁶³ This was a totally unexpected occurrence, for in some way Scipio's alternate plan had met with unexpected obstacles. "When Scipio committed the fatal blunder of placing his stockade upon a narrow strip of land, about one and a half miles wide, between the sea and the salt marshes, the keen eye of the great captain saw promptly that the time and the hour were at hand."⁶⁴ Scipio was now at a great disadvantage. He was restricted to the narrowest part of the neck of land between the sea and the lake, too close to both Caesar and the sea to retreat to safety.

Leaving two newly raised legions to defend his camp, Caesar moved slowly towards the flat land before Scipio's partially completed entrenchments. Scipio, caught only half prepared, moved his forces to within striking distance of the enemy. Caesar's men were eager for battle and ready to strike, but the general held them back as though the time was not yet right. The bulk of his infantry formed in two lines with the two veteran legions on the right wing, two others on the left, and one or two of the newly recruited legions in the centre. Somewhere

⁶² Bell. Afr., 80.

⁶³ Bell. Afr., 82.

⁶⁴ Sihler, Annals of Caesar, p.227.

a bugler sounded the advance, and the troops, eager for the fight, burst forth unmindful of their commander's orders. "Caesar, perceiving that the ardour of his soldiers would admit of no restraint, giving 'good fortune' for the word, spurred on his horse, and charged the enemy's front."⁶⁵ The two lines met, but the disorganized forces of Scipio were no match for Caesar's experienced veterans. Juba's elephants were turned back upon their own forces, and the Numidians, when they saw their allies fighting a losing struggle, as was their custom, quickly turned and fled, leaving Labienus and a small detachment to fight alone. So ended the threat of Caesar's greatest foe in the African campaign. No mercy was shown by the Caesarians, for they could not forget the past. These men "...were taking their revenge for the restraint that had been so long placed on them, a restraint which had probably been one cause of their recent mutiny. Caesar's humanity had tried their patience too hard, and he now had to learn that there was a limit to his power over them."⁶⁶ So speaks the classical scholar. The military man on the other hand considers this unordered charge "...one of the most extraordinary instances of slack discipline in all history."⁶⁷

It would be interesting to know what was in Caesar's mind when this breach of discipline took place. It is possible that here the tired warrior erred. He had driven his men to the point of victory so many times and then drawn them back that now, when the enemy was within their grasp, they were not going to lose this, perhaps their last opportunity of wreaking revenge. "There was therefore no difference in the fields

65 Bell. Afr., 83.

66 Fowler, Julius Caesar, p.320.

67 Dodge, op.cit., p.685.

of Pharsalia and Thapsus, except that the efforts of the Caesarians were greater and more vigorous, as being indignant that the war should have grown up after the death of Pompey."⁶⁸ Caesar's victory was complete. Some consider this battle the crowning glory of his many campaigns, for it was a convincing win. "Thus in a brief portion of one day he made himself master of three camps and slew fifty thousand of the enemy, without losing as many as fifty of his own men."⁶⁹

Thapsus was bitterly fought by both sides for a short time, but when the Pompeians broke and fled, the veterans were resolute in their pursuit. All who came within range of sword or javelin were slain; not one whit of mercy being shown, so great was the vehemence and loathing of the Caesarians. Though Scipio was beaten, Thapsus was still defiant. Leaving Caninius Rebilus and three legions to blockade the town, Caesar set out for Utica to join the cavalry which he had dispatched earlier. Marching rapidly northward, he seized Uzita and Hadrumetum, pardoning those Pompeians who pleaded for pity and agreed to conform with his policies. Utica opened its gates to him several days later. There was little to challenge Caesar's ability in the post-Thapsus operations, as the town-folk, hearing that Scipio had been defeated, quickly succumbed to his demands. "The strategy by which Caesar had brought off the battle of Thapsus was his crowning masterpiece. The campaign was over; in three weeks all Roman Africa was in his hands."⁷⁰

It is interesting to note how Caesar used the art of manoeuvre in the African campaign. It seemed to be his ultimate desire to manipulate

68 Florus, Epitome of Roman History, IV, 2, 66.

69 Plutarch, Caesar, 80.

70 Adcock, op.cit., p.688.

his enemy into an awkward position and then attack and if possible annihilate him. This he had done with Scipio. One must not forget that Caesar was at a numerical disadvantage for most of the African campaign. Manoeuvre then compensated for this, and Scipio could not out-manoeuvre him.

"...it seemed that it was through the bad generalship of the commanders who, as in Thessaly, neglected their opportunity to wear out Caesar by delay until his supplies were exhausted, in this foreign land, and in like manner failed to reap the fruits of their first victory, that this war was also foreshortened and thus sharply brought to a finish."⁷¹ So the African campaign ended with Caesar more victorious than ever over a bitter, disillusioned and sadistic enemy. "...it was a merciless struggle which the Pompeians waged by atrocities."⁷²

Perhaps the African war might never have been fought if Caesar had not become entangled in unnecessary political manoeuvring and questionable personal labours in Egypt. The time he spent in Alexandria might well have been used to pursue immediately the remnants of Pharsalus and prevent them from regrouping. Caesar's strategy in this campaign involved manoeuvre, as shown in the several encounters in which he outwitted both Labienus and Scipio, surprise, whereby he upset the plans of the Pompeians who had not anticipated an attack in early winter, and pacification, wherein he won over to his side Bogud, Sittius and the main pastoral tribes not only in the immediate vicinity of operations, but also in the land of Mauretania. Of all Caesar's victories, the African campaign displayed most the conqueror's ability to adapt himself and his troops to new methods of fighting, a changeable climate, and a vicious enemy.

⁷¹ Appian, II, 14, 97.

⁷² Duruy, op.cit., p.352.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND SPANISH CAMPAIGN

"...Let Pharsalia fill her ruthless plains, and let the shades of the Carthaginians be sated with blood; let the hosts meet for the last time at tearful Munda."¹

The second Spanish campaign was necessitated principally by the mismanagement of affairs by Q. Cassius Longinus, whom Caesar appointed governor of the further province in 49 B.C. From the time of his appointment until the year 47, Cassius became involved in acts of extortion which not only embittered the populace but also stirred up dissension within his own forces. "But during the time that Caesar besieged Pompey at Drrhachium, triumphed at Old Pharsalia, and carried on the war, with so much danger, at Alexandria, Cassius Longinus, who had been left in Spain as proprætor of the farther province, either through his natural disposition, or out of a hatred he had contracted to the province, on account of a wound he had treacherously received when quaestor, drew upon himself the general dislike of the people."² Though Cassius lacked the qualifications of a good ambassador, he did possess a sound knowledge of the country under his control and the people who inhabited it. The provincials detested him for his excesses and corruption and everyone was familiar with the manner in which he bribed the troops for their loyalty which "... seemed, for the present, to increase the good-will of the army, but tended gradually and imperceptibly to the relaxation of military discipline."³ Thus, from the time of Ilerda, the goodwill of the Roman inhabitants of

1 Lucan, de Bello Civili, I, 40.

2 Caesar, de Bello Alexandrino, 48.

3 Loc. cit.

Spain, as well as that of the natives, had been alienated by Cassius. Caesar, too preoccupied with affairs of state and war, had given little attention to the growing dissension within the further province and so serious had the situation become that, "...when Longinus as proconsul did those same things which he had done as quaestor, the provincials formed similar conspiracies against his life. Even his own dependants concurred in the general hatred; who, though the ministers of his rapine, yet hated the man by whose authority they committed those crimes."⁴

Cassius luckily survived an attempt to assassinate him, but upon recovery from his wounds, he found his forces divided into two armed camps, those who supported him and those who had gathered at Corduba under the banner of M. Claudius Marcellus. These rival factions now took up arms to determine the ruling force of further Spain, but M. Aemilius Lepidus, appointed by Caesar to the governorship of hither Spain, intervened on the side of Marcellus, restored order and put Cassius to flight. Retiring to the coast, and realizing that to remain in Spain was unwise, he took ship at Malacca and, while off the mouth of the Ebro, was caught in a storm and subsequently drowned.

Though Cassius was dead, his tyrannical rule of two years had done irreparable damage. At the request of the natives and provincials for a successor to Cassius, Caesar appointed to the position G. Trebonius, the conqueror of Massilia. Trebonius was unable to cope with the strained situation, especially among the soldiery. A restless peace was established, but it was soon broken by the army when representatives were sent by various factions to Scipio in Africa, expressing a desire to transfer the allegiance

⁴ Bell. Alex., 50.

of the rebellious Spanish forces to him. To satisfy them until he could personally come to their assistance, he decided to send Gnaeus Pompeius the Younger, with full power to instigate a rebellion against the authority of Rome. Until the new leader arrived, Scipio suggested that the insurgents carry on a guerrilla type of warfare. This was done, and once more an appeal went out to Rome for relief. Gaius Didius, a naval commander as well as a land fighter, was sent by Caesar in the hope that his presence might quell any attempts at open rebellion. Didius's arrival added further salt to the rebels' wounds and, when news reached the insurgents that Caesar had conquered at Thapsus and Scipio was now dead, "...putting at their head Titus Quintius Scapula and Quintus Aponius, both knights, they drove out Trebonius and led the whole Baetic nation to revolt at the same time."⁵

Early in the African campaign Gnaeus, the deceased Pompey's eldest son, scarce twenty-four years of age, left Utica with a small force and made an unsuccessful attempt to seize Mauretania. Crossing to the Balearic islands, he easily brought them under his control and so secured his stepping stones to Spain, where he would join the partisans and encourage the levies which were going on against Caesar. Unexpectedly detained in the islands by a severe illness, Gnaeus was compelled to postpone this expedition to Spain and leave preparations for a full scale rebellion to Scapula and Aponius.

When Pompey landed in Spain in possession of an army of fair size, he was elected commander-in-chief of the insurgent forces, Scapula willingly surrendering his position to a man who bore so distinguished a

5 Dio, XLIII, 29.

name. It should not be forgotten that Scipio, who was now dead, had also borne a distinguished name, but it had perished with him after Thapsus, and he had not enjoyed the renown attained by the conqueror of Hannibal. Gnaeus was a strong-willed youth who was proud of his father's achievements.

Gradually the Pompeian leaders who had survived Thapsus began to arrive; Labienus and Varus were joined by the troops who had mutinied in the further province. Varus was given control of a fleet and sent to operate against the threat posed by Gaius Didius. The southern and western districts of Spain were seething with rebels and malcontents, many of whom were anxious to join Pompey's cause. These people were organized under other leaders as they arrived to join the insurgents. "Elated, therefore, by the multitude of his army and by its zeal, he proceeded fearlessly through the country, gaining some cities of their own accord, and others against their will, and seemed to surpass even his father in power."⁶

Of the many towns which readily joined Pompey, few even of the same province could agree upon the course to follow, a course which had been so clearly defined in the time of Sertorius; this absence of unity was to paralyse Pompey in Spain as it had done the Pompeian officers in Africa and the elder Pompey in his conflict with Caesar. Besides the many tribesmen who joined Pompey, allied under the rebel banner in Baetica were Gnaeus's brother Sextus, Labienus, Varus and other fugitives from Africa. The latter had joined with those veterans who had served under Afranius and whom Caesar had permitted to settle in Spain. Caesar, considering this rebel uprising of little importance and just another outbreak to be suppressed, sent troops from Sardinia under two men who he thought could

6 Dio, XLIII, 29.

handle this affair expeditiously, Q. Pedius and Fabius Maximus.

Varus was the first of the new Spanish insurgents to suffer defeat. This occurred in a naval encounter with Gaius Didius at Crantia (possibly Carteia) on the southern coast. Though the sea was made safer for Caesar's ships, all was not well inland. Maximus and Pedius, unable to stem the rising tide of rebel opposition, urgently appealed to Caesar for further help. Forwarded with this plea for assistance was an account of Pompey's extensive land gains. These appeals for help had come not only from his lieutenants; even the tribes opposed to Gnaeus requested his assistance: "...those states which were opposed to Pompey, by continual messages despatched to Italy, sought protection for themselves."⁷ These appeals pointed out to him the present and potential threat in Pompey so he decided to postpone operations no longer, and set out personally for the field of war, "...when he ascertained that Pompey was gaining great headway and that the men he sent were not sufficient to fight against him."⁸ It was definitely disadvantageous for Caesar to set out for Spain at this precise time as it meant that work begun on reform would have to be postponed and preparations for the great war against Parthia set aside. There would, too, be a feeling engendered among the populace that the great Caesar had not yet carried out his promise of a lasting peace.

Leaving Lepidus in charge of the affairs at Rome, Caesar, riding quickly in advance of his troops and accompanied by his usual bodyguard, reached Obulco, thirty-five miles east of Corduba, in twenty-seven days after setting out from Rome. His date of departure was at the end of the

7 Caesar, de Bello Hispaniensi, 1.

8 Dio, XLIII, 28.

year 708 A.U.C. (about 26 November, 46 B.C.). Caesar had requested Peditus and Maximus to send to him all the cavalry they could muster but, "... having already proceeded many marches into Spain with prompt despatch, ...he came up with them much sooner than they expected, and had not the protection of the cavalry, according to his desire."⁹ Once again Caesar had displayed the promptness of action which had made him so dangerous an enemy in previous engagements. This time he caught not only the rebels off guard, but also his own expeditionary force.

At the moment Caesar could field eight legions with eight thousand cavalry and light-armed auxiliaries. Pompey "...had the emblems and standards of thirteen legions, but of those on whom he trusted for support two were natives which had deserted from Trebonius; one was formed out of the Roman colonies in those parts; and a fourth, belonging to Afranius, he had brought with him from Africa; the rest were for the most part made up of fugitives and deserters...."¹⁰ But for the Roman veterans hardened after many years of war, Pompey's army would have been ineffective against Caesar's troops. The liberated slaves and native levies often responded unfavourably to discipline and enjoyed rebellion more for the mere pleasure of fighting and the thought of booty than for the struggle it was meant to be: a fight to the death for control of an empire.

It is enough to say that Caesar was in himself a strong enough leader and a sound object of respect for his men. This was not the case with Gnaeus. He was in command of a motley crowd and only Labienus could give him the support required of an able lieutenant. His brother Sextus,

⁹ Bell. Hisp., 2.

¹⁰ Bell. Hisp., 7.

who was given charge of Corduba, was younger and less experienced in war, but became notorious for his naval actions later in life: "After the death of Caius Caesar he carried on war vigorously and collected a large army, together with ships and money, took islands, became master of the western sea, brought famine upon Italy, and compelled his enemies to make peace on such terms as he chose."¹¹ Of the two sons of Pompey we do know that "these were still young, but had collected an army of amazing numbers and displayed a boldness which justified their claims to leadership, so that they beset Caesar with the greatest peril."¹² Afranius, Varus and others of the Pompeians contributed to the rebels' cause what their ability allowed. We can safely say that the heavy burden of responsibility was borne predominantly by Gnaeus.

The Pompeians in Spain realized that their duty was no longer to resist Caesar in a scattered campaign, but to consolidate their forces under the banner of one man. No better person than Pompey presented himself for that position. The rebellious legionaries had been offered pardon by Caesar but had refused it. "The duty of all Pompeians was now to desist from useless rebellion and to support the head of the state; and no excuse can be imagined for Gnaeus except that he despaired of receiving the pardon which even to him, if he had frankly appealed to the magnanimity of the conqueror, would not have been denied."¹³ The scene of action for much of the Spanish War was confined to present-day Granada and Andalusia with most of the fighting restricted to Granada. "The northern mountains of Granada are nearly impregnable; and it was there that the sons of Pompey

¹¹ Appian, V, 14, 143.

¹² Plutarch, Caesar, 56, 1.

¹³ Holmes, The Roman Republic, III, p.297.

had established themselves."¹⁴ Caesar was familiar with the regions mentioned, for he had previously visited Corduba and other sites in the area, remembering prominent features of the land which could be of assistance to him should a campaign ever be necessary in that territory. He was now required to put this knowledge to use.

Maximus and Pedius considered themselves no match for Pompey and had remained quiet pending Caesar's arrival. Pompey, on the other hand, when informed of Caesar's plans to come personally and conduct the war, "...thinking that he was not strong enough to gain the mastery of all Spain, he did not wait for a reverse before changing his mind, but immediately, before making trial of his adversaries, retired into Baetica."¹⁵ Strategically, this was a good move of Gnaeus's even though it was made through fear and anticipation. By the time Caesar had reached Obulco, Pompey had moved into Baetica and won the support of most of the territory except for the town of Ulia. When entreaty would not produce the surrender of this stronghold, for Caesar had a supporting party here as well as at Corduba, he laid siege to it. News of this operation reached Caesar on his arrival at Obulco. The siege of Ulia was more prolonged than Gnaeus had anticipated, as the inhabitants had shown themselves to be unswervingly true to Caesar. "Notice of Caesar's arrival having been received, messengers having passed Pompey's guards came to him from that town and besought him to send them relief as soon as possible."¹⁶ Caesar moved directly against Ulia and was successful in placing within the town "...eleven cohorts, with a like number of horse, under the command of

14 Niebuhr, Lectures on the History of Rome, III, p.72.

15 Dio, XLIII, 31.

16 Bell. Hisp., 3.

L. Julius Paciecus, a man known in that province, and also well acquainted with it."¹⁷ By stratagem Paciecus had penetrated Pompey's camp, reached the gate of the town and had been admitted. From within the town this able lieutenant carried on sporadic attacks on Gnaeus's camp and siege-works, weakening the siege thereby. When Caesar himself arrived on the scene Pompey did not discontinue his activities, retaining full confidence in his own strength. Caesar had hoped that his presence, and the fact that Ulia had been reinforced by him, would lure Gnaeus from the siege. But this was not the case. Pompey was little disturbed as yet for he considered himself Caesar's equal.

Caesar did not carry out a direct attack on Pompey's camp at Ulia, for he was waiting until his opponent could be manoeuvred into open ground and there be engaged in a pitched battle, but as yet no opportunity for such a move had presented itself. Respectful of Gnaeus's strength, Caesar decided to move from Ulia, which was located on the right bank of the Guadajoz river, and on the same site as the town of Monte Mayor, to Corduba, seventeen miles to the south, where Sextus Pompey with two legions under his command was in control. Corduba was strategically important to Caesar for, not only was it the provincial capital, it was also the chief supply depot for the Pompeian army.

leaving a small task force to harass Gnaeus's work from without the walls and relying on the strength of the residents within the town, Caesar "...set out himself for Corduba, partly, to be sure, in the hope of taking it by betrayal, but chiefly in the expectation of drawing Pompey

¹⁷ Bell. Hisp., 3.

away from Ulia through fear for this place."¹⁸ His departure occurred about 8 January, 45, by which time Ulia had been under siege for about a month and a half. In order to test the strength of the opposing force, Caesar, as his troops approached Corduba, ordered each of the legionaries to mount behind a trooper, and, when the enemy force advanced from the town to meet them, these same foot soldiers at the right moment leaped from the horses to the ground and, after causing much havoc and inflicting many casualties, put the Pompeians to flight. This stratagem had the desired effect: "This so alarmed Sextus Pompey, that he immediately sent letters to his brother, requesting him to come speedily to his relief, lest Caesar should make himself master of Corduba before his arrival."¹⁹ Gnaeus, realizing now that he had underestimated Caesar's ability, regretfully abandoned the siege of Ulia which he had brought to the point of surrendering.

Before Gnaeus could begin his march which would carry him across the Guadajoz River and then south to Corduba, Caesar, according to plan, had taken the first step in laying siege to Corduba by moving his forces to a point on the south bank of the Guadalquivir opposite the town. As the enemy held the north end of the permanent bridge which spanned the river where the width is about one hundred yards, Caesar was compelled to construct a temporary crossing about one mile south of the permanent structure. Much to his regret he was unable to find a fordable spot in the vicinity of the old bridge. By January 10 baskets of stones had been sunk for pier foundations and on the next day the crossing was ready for use. Sextus remained within the town forsaking any opportunity offered

¹⁸ Dio, XLIII, 32.

¹⁹ Bell. Hisp., 4.

to prevent Caesar from completing his work. On receiving news that Gnaeus was approaching, Caesar established a bridgehead at that end of the bridge across-river from the town. At the northern end he had his troops build three strongly fortified camps that he might better invest the town. It should be pointed out here that Corduba lay on the right or north bank of the Guadalquiver while Caesar's first encampment was located on the left or south bank. It appears that Sextus had devoted what men he had to the defence of the permanent bridge; his dearth of troops possibly prevented him from carrying out an attack on Caesar when the latter was hampered with bridge construction.

On reaching Corduba, Gnaeus camped on the Guadalquiver's left bank opposite the town. It was his intention to retain control of the area between Corduba and Ulia while supplying his brother with sufficient reinforcements to hold the town. He hoped, too, to draw on the supplies contained within Corduba; therefore the vital link for the Pompeians was the permanent bridge and this they solidly held. Caesar was possibly too intent on beginning the siege of Corduba to prevent Gnaeus from establishing himself so firmly at the south end of the permanent bridge. No doubt the bridge-construction and camp-entrenchment took up most of his time and men, but we must not overlook the fact that Caesar wished to manoeuvre Pompey into an open area for battle, and his opponent had not yet given him this opportunity.

Gnaeus made no attack on Caesar's position, either at the bridge-head or at the newly entrenched area alongside Corduba, but, instead, waited for Caesar to move against him. This was not long in coming. "Caesar, to cut off his provisions and communication with the town, ran

a line from his camp to the bridge."²⁰ We see in this that it was Caesar's desire to wrest from Pompey's hands the old bridge which he considered to be Corduba's life-line. Pompey, just as determined that Caesar would not force him from the crossing and so discontinue his contact with the garrison in Corduba, tried to secure his communication with the town by constructing a like entrenchment from his own camp to the bridge. It must be remembered that Pompey was stationed on the left bank of the bridge cross-river from Corduba while Caesar was on the right bank near Corduba. Siege operations could not begin in earnest until Gnaeus's threat was eliminated, for the garrison within the town had shown no willingness to surrender. Frequent skirmishes took place on and around the bridge, but neither side could compel the other to yield any great distance.

After several days of conflict, Gnaeus penetrated Caesar's defences, gained a pathway to the bridge and was successful in gaining entrance to Corduba. When Caesar saw that Gnaeus had solidly established communication with Corduba, he tried to lure his opponent on to level ground near the left bank and there engage him in an all-out battle. "... and Caesar for many days used all possible endeavours to bring the enemy to an engagement on equal terms, that he might bring the war to a conclusion as soon as possible."²¹ Gnaeus carefully avoided this for he did not intend to pit his troops against Caesar's veterans until the time was favourable. This unexpected turn of events disturbed Caesar, for he knew that a long siege was inadvisable at this time of year and with the equipment at his disposal.

²⁰ Bell. Hisp., 5.

²¹ Loc. cit.

Caesar did not rush operations at Corduba, and Dio informs us that the dictator fell ill and renewed the siege when additional troops joined him, but the renewal of winter-fighting did not agree with the attacking forces of Caesar "...for being housed in miserable little huts, they were suffering distress and running short of food."²² Here again Caesar was negligent in his preparation for a campaign. He had relied too much on the strategic elements of speed and surprise, and too little attention had been given to the provision of supplies and the severity of weather. "It was the same difficulty that had befallen him in the war against Vercingetorix, in his first campaign in Spain, and during the operations in Albania; but with this difference, that it could now only be set down to the carelessness of the master of the great Mediterranean granaries."²³ The intended siege of Corduba had turned into a stalemate. Caesar could not draw Gnaeus out into open battle and Gnaeus, using to advantage the safety of the town, did not challenge Caesar's position. He too did not wish to commit his troops to the severity of the weather.

As Corduba was too strong a fortress to be taken without a well-planned and lengthy siege, Caesar decided to abandon it temporarily and move against Ategua, "...now Tela la Vieja...situated on a hill overlooking the Guadajoz, about a day's march south-east of Corduba."²⁴ Here, he had been informed, was an abundance of Pompeian grain. "Although it was a strong place, he hoped by the size of his army and the sudden terror of his appearance to alarm the inhabitants and capture it."²⁵

22 Dio, XLIII, 32.

23 Ferrero, Greatness and Decline, II, p.324.

24 Holmes, op.cit., p.301.

25 Dio, XLIII, 33.

Concealing his departure by fires left burning overnight, Caesar reached Ategua the next morning so that, by January 20, he "...began his attack upon Ategua, and carried lines quite round the town."²⁶ So swiftly and secretively did Caesar move that Gnaeus did not know where his opponent had gone until informed by deserters that he was investing Ategua. Pompey, not visibly disturbed over this move of Caesar, did not hurry to defend the town for he felt that the nature of the land and the bitterness of the winter would hinder Caesar. He did not wish to expose unnecessarily his own troops to the rigours of the cold. When word reached him that Caesar had walled off the town after encamping before it, he became worried and moved to its assistance. "Caesar rightly believed that he could make better headway by attacking Pompey's minor strongholds to the south and perhaps seize an opportunity for battle during the operations."²⁷ Gnaeus was at first suspicious of the reports concerning Caesar's movements as he did not think he could persevere in the undertaking of the siege of so formidable a fortress in the middle of winter, but, on reaching Ategua a week after Caesar had begun the siege by contravallation, terrace, and battering ram, he found that what had been reported to him was true.

On many of the hills surrounding the town of Ategua, the natives had constructed towers years before which served both as observation posts and protective barriers against the incursion of hostile tribes. Caesar occupied several of these hills to defend his besiegers from any surprise attack which Gnaeus might perpetrate on his arrival. "In order to guard against his arrival, Caesar possessed himself of many forts; partly to shelter his cavalry, partly to post guards of infantry for the defence of

²⁶ Bell. Hisp., 6.

²⁷ Dodge, Caesar, II, p.703.

his camp."²⁸ Pompey pitched his first camp in the hills west of Caesar but north of the river Salsum (Guadajoz). A heavy fog which pervaded the theatre of the siege permitted Pompey to threaten seriously one of Caesar's outposts and very nearly capture it. About January 28, "...Pompey set fire to his camp, passed the river Salsum, and, marching through the valleys, encamped on a rising ground, between the two towns of Ategua and Ucubis."²⁹ The country in this vicinity is very mountainous, much suited for war and strategic manoeuvre. Pompey's new camp in these mountains was so situated that he was afforded a view of both the besieged fortress and Ucubis, the present-day town of Espejo. It is interesting to note how Pompey continually took advantage of the nature of the country to camp in locations affording him an easy and protracted defense. Such strategy made Caesar's work very difficult. "...Pompey having established his camp between Ategua and Ucubis, ...within view of both towns, Caesar possessed himself of an eminence very conveniently situated, and only about four miles from his own camp, on which he built a fortress."³⁰ Pompey, ever anxious to find a weak spot in Caesar's defences, had watched anxiously while Caesar fortified a new position which was separated from his main camp by the river Salsum. It was Pompey's plan to attack this new fort while screened by the intervening hills and before Caesar could cross the Salsum himself and bring help. He was sure this could be done while Caesar was busy with siege operations. On the night of February 4th, he began his attack. Protecting carefully what enemy point he had taken, Caesar had strengthened the fortress considerably and when word reached him of the struggle within

²⁸ Bell. Hisp., 6.

²⁹ Bell. Hisp., 7.

³⁰ Bell. Hisp., 8.

his new camp, "...he set out with three legions, and when he approached them, many (of the enemy) were killed, owing to their trepidation and flight, and a great number made prisoners."³¹ Here again Caesar had moved quickly, outguessed his opponent, and frustrated his move. This fortified hill, the castra Postumiana, was so placed that it presented a continual threat to Gnaeus and his troops in succeeding days. Caesar knew the importance of strategic placement.

Gnaeus was now faced with the problem of supplies, as Caesar, besides pressing the siege of Ategua, had waylaid several supply trains from Corduba, scattering them and confiscating their freight. On or about February 6th, "...Pompey set fire to his camp, and drew towards Corduba."³² Two reasons can be offered for Pompey's change of strategy: a need for supplies, and fear of Caesar renewing the attack on the provincial capitol. For the first time in the war, Gnaeus was becoming the pursued, and this as a result of Caesar's strategy of manoeuvre.

While Caesar was harassing Pompey's caravan trains, there was much activity within Ategua. A supply line had been so established between Pompey and the forces within the town that Caesar had to give his attention to the elimination of another of Pompey's life-lines. On one occasion his cavalry pursued a party carrying provisions to Pompey from Ategua, nearly to the walls of Corduba. At night the Ateguans wasted no time in raining darts and fire down upon the besiegers and when day came, frequent sallies were made upon those busy at the works, causing much unrest and anxiety among Caesar's troops. "Those who had begun the attack, being vigorously opposed on our side, notwithstanding all the inconveniences we

31 Bell. Hisp., 9.

32 Bell. Hisp., 10.

fought under, were at length obliged to retire into the town, with many wounds."³³ In order that he might give some aid to the townspeople, Pompey "...began a line from the camp to the river Salsum; and a small party of our horse, being attacked by a much larger body of the enemy, were driven from their post, and three of their number slain."³⁴ So the conflict wavered back and forth but Pompey was unable to relieve the siege to the satisfaction of his garrison within Ategua. Tension within the town was increasing as Caesar's prolonged siege was taking effect. Because of Caesar's relentless activity, Gnaeus had been unable to live up to his promises to a garrison which had confidently anticipated that he would make a greater effort to relieve them than he had Gnaeus had succumbed to Caesar's strategy. His supply lines were being continually harrassed; dissension was growing within the town; any attempts he made to relieve the garrison had been frustrated. So serious was the situation within the town and so disheartened were the people becoming that officers were deserting the garrison within the town and many of the townsfolk, whenever the opportunity presented itself, surrendered themselves to the Caesarians, confident that Caesar's clementia would spare them.

It was not Caesar's plan to annihilate Pompey, instead, he interfered little with his actual movements hoping that his opponent would soon resort to open battle through the pressure of public opinion. Pompey was not yet ready to yield. It appears that he felt that he could still outmanoeuvre Caesar. He still possessed his self-confidence: "...Pompey erected a fort on the other side of the Salsum, in which he met with no interruption from our men, and exulted not a little in the idea

³³ Bell. Hisp., 12.

³⁴ Bell. Hisp., 13.

of having possessed himself of a post so near us."³⁵ This move of Pompey enabled him to harass scouts and foraging parties from Caesar's camp but it interfered little with actual siege operations. The garrison within Ategua now resorted to acts of unparalleled barbarity. Caesar retaliates in turn: "wherefore, surrounding the town with our troops, the conflict was for some time maintained with great violence...."³⁶ To establish better communication with Ategua, and after encouraging a small force within the town to make a sally at midnight, Pompey, "...in expectation that they would be able to effect their design, had crossed the Salsum with his army, where he continued all night in order of battle to favour their retreat."³⁷ This latest attempt of Pompey to relieve the town was destined for disaster. "But though our men had no apprehension of this design, their valour enabled them to frustrate the attempt, and repulse the enemy with many wounds."³⁸ Caesar, using the techniques available to a commander for securing information, learned much from deserters as well as slaves from his own camp, one especially who, to help his wife and son imprisoned in the city, had cut his master's throat and had successfully penetrated Pompey's camp, "...whence, by means of a bullet, on which he inscribed his intelligence, Caesar was informed of the preparations made for the defence of the place."³⁹ It appears that most of Pompey's movements were familiar to Caesar and that Caesar's legions occupying outposts were able in his absence to withstand any onslaught Pompey might bring against them. Caesar had strengthened all his

³⁵ Bell. Hisp., 14.

³⁶ Bell. Hisp., 13.

³⁷ Bell. Hisp., 16.

³⁸ Loc. cit.

³⁹ Bell. Hisp., 18.

major and minor camps, and, because there was not the enthusiasm within Ategua that there was at Massilia, the siege was carried out with little interruption. This had been for Caesar a two-fold battle, watching Gnaeus on one side and guarding against sallies from the towns on the other.

Finally realizing that he could not force Caesar to lift the siege, Pompey decided to pursue some other course. Caesar was informed by two Lusitanian brothers who had deserted to him that Pompey in a speech made to his soldiers, had said: "That as he found it impossible to relieve the town, he was resolved to withdraw in the night from the sight of the enemy, and retire towards the sea...."⁴⁰ When news of Pompey's plans reached the garrison within Ategua, all hope was abandoned. A note requesting clemency was sent to Caesar by the garrison commander Lucius Minatius; Caesar granted the request and in return received control of the town. "Thus, having made himself master of the place, on the nineteenth of February he was saluted imperator."⁴¹

Caesar had been compensated for his setback at Corduba. Though the weather and land conditions had been against him, perseverance and the vigour of his troops had given him the victory at Ategua. He had not yet accomplished his design which he was sure would bring an early end to the war, namely, to bring Gnaeus into open battle. This Pompey was cleverly avoiding. The many desertions from Pompey's forces and strongholds can be attributed predominantly to his weak conduct and an inability to fulfil promises. The element of indecision gradually produced in Pompey a lack of confidence which weighed heavily against him throughout the remainder of the Spanish campaign. The fall of Ategua had a beneficial

⁴⁰ Bell. Hisp., 18.

⁴¹ Bell. Hisp., 19.

effect on Caesar's forces, morale, and strategy. "Upon the capture of this city the other tribes also no longer held back, but many of their own accord sent envoys and espoused Caesar's cause, and many received him or his lieutenants on their approach."⁴² Gnaeus fled southward towards Ucubis "...where he began to build redoubts, and secure himself with lines."⁴³ Caesar, observing closely his enemy's movements, followed Gnaeus and took up a position opposite him, but was unable to draw him into battle. "Pompey under the guidance of Labienus, was wisely avoiding open-field work and seeking to reduce Caesar by famine."⁴⁴ Caesar, it must be remembered, was on the opposite bank of the Salsum to Pompey and when he followed him, the river always intervened, therefore for any sortie to take place the river had to be crossed and this alone deterred Caesar from cornering Pompey. It was now left for him to outmanoeuvre Gnaeus. "...Caesar removed his camp nearer to Pompey's, and began to draw a line to the river Salsum."⁴⁵ At this point two cavalry encounters seriously hindered Caesar's legions who were busy at the task of entrenching. "While our men were employed in the work, some of the enemy fell upon us from the higher ground, and as we were in no condition to make resistance, wounded great numbers."⁴⁶ Gnaeus continued his withdrawal, skirmishing as he moved, and with Caesar in pursuit, came to a halt near Soricaria, approximately six miles south-east of Ategua and on the site of the present-day town of Castro del Rio.

About two miles south-east of Soricaria and across the river

42 Dio, XLIII, 35.

43 Bell. Hisp., 20.

44 Dodge, op.cit., p.710.

45 Bell. Hisp., 23.

46 Loc. cit.

from it lay the town of Aspavia. This fort was very important to Gnaeus and enough of an arsenal and supply centre for him to fight in its defence. Caesar was sure that his very presence near it would be sufficient encouragement to bring Pompey into an open battle. Caesar was successful in moving from the outskirts of Soricaria, across the river Salsum and into a position, which when fortified effectively, would cut off Pompey's communication line between Soricaria and Aspavia. Both parties had now withdrawn from Soricaria and Pompey "...observing that our fort had cut off his communication with Aspavia, which is about five miles distant from Ucubis, judged it necessary to come to a battle."⁴⁷ To gain the advantage of higher ground, Pompey attempted to draw up his men on a knoll near Aspavia but Caesar anticipated this and sent a squadron to intercept them. This he was successful in doing; the enemy was forced into the plain and while retreating suffered a heavy loss. "The mountain and their valour protected them; of which advantage, and of all relief, our men, though few in number, would have deprived them had not night intervened."⁴⁸ Gnaeus had saved his forces to fight another day and when they advanced in their usual fashion on Caesar's lines, calling out for battle but unwilling to stand and fight, another skirmish took place, not so severe as the previous one but availing Pompey little. "Repeated failures were so affecting the morale of his army that all the Roman knights were conspiring to desert and were only prevented by a slave who betrayed them."⁴⁹ Pompey was now determined to move from town to town, in the hope of gaining some advantage by prolonging the war. This was the only

⁴⁷ Bell. Hisp., 24.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

⁴⁹ Holmes, op.cit., p.305.

strategy he could employ until such time as he agreed to a pitched battle. "...Pompey decamped, and posted himself in an olive-wood over against Hispalis. Caesar, before he removed, waited till midnight when the moon began to appear."⁵⁰ The relentless pursuit began again. When Pompey set out he abandoned to Caesar the fort of Ucubis, which the dictator ordered to be burned on his departure. "He afterwards laid siege to Ventisponte, which surrendered; and marching thence to Carruca, encamped over against Pompey, who had burned the city, because the garrison refuse to open the gates to him."⁵¹ Ventisponte is the present-day town of Vado Garcia close to modern Casariche and about twenty miles south of Montilla. The site of Corruca is unknown.

Gnaeus, growing tired of the continual chase, had come to realize that he must very soon engage in open conflict with Caesar, or lose all the prestige he possessed. He had tried to bolster his spirits and those of his supporters particularly in the town of Ursao, close by Munda, by sending letters to point out: "That hitherto he had all the success against the enemy he could desire, and would have ended the war much sooner than was expected, could he have brought them to engage him upon equal terms; but he did not think it advisable to venture new-levied troops on a plain; that the enemy, depending on our supplies, as yet protract the war, for they storm city after city, thence supplying themselves with provisions: that he would therefore endeavour to protect the towns of his party, and bring the war to as speedy an issue as possible: that he would send them a reinforcement of some cohorts, and that having deprived them

⁵⁰ Bell. Hisp., 27.

⁵¹ Loc. cit.

of provisions, he would necessitate the enemy to come to an engagement."⁵² This indeed was an amazing piece of propaganda and put to use at a most crucial time. "He could not disguise his retreat, however roundly he might lie. His failures as well as his cruelties were alienating the natives; the more intelligent of his followers were abandoning his cause."⁵³ It seems evident that the inhabitants of Ursao, (the present-day town of Osuna, about six miles east of Pompey's position at Munda and thirty-five miles south-west of Montilla) were slowly losing confidence in their chosen leader after being so faithful to the Pompeian cause. It was important, too, that Pompey retain his prestige among the hillfolk and townspeople, for from them he could gather much information on enemy movements, and could depend upon them for support when campaigning became necessary. Since he became the pursued, he was now losing that support, and he was trying instead to express to them in words what he had hoped to accomplish in deeds; but he had met with only temporary success, and now at Munda he decided to stake all on a pitched battle. With Caesar approaching and aware that Pompey was willing to fight, Ursao was greatly confirmed in its allegiance. "Thus relying on this opinion, he thought he could effect the whole, for he was defended by the nature of his situation, and by the position for defence of the town, where he had his camp: for, as we observed before, this country is full of hills which run in a continued chain, without any plains intervening."⁵⁴ Having selected Munda as the site of battle, Pompey had all the timber within a six mile radius felled and brought within the walls. This was done to prevent Caesar obtaining siege

52 Bell. Hisp., 26.

53 Holmes, op.cit., p.305.

54 Bell. Hisp., 28.

material in case he decided to storm the town. Gnaeus was so preparing the battle ground that Caesar would be fighting at a disadvantage. Pompey was now situated between two strong fortresses with Munda at his back and Ursao six miles distant. Geographically he enjoyed a double defence, for he had the protection of Munda's elevated position and benefitted much from the nature of the country. Separating the two camps was a plain about five miles in extent, through the western end of which ran a rivulet, the Peinado, making the approach to the mountain exceptionally difficult because it had formed a deep morass on the right.

It was Gnaeus's hope that Caesar would hesitate before he attacked troops posted, as the former's would be, in so formidable a position with a fortress at their back and a slope in their favour. He hoped to be afforded the chance to boast that Caesar was really afraid of him, for he was superior in numbers and had the advantage of position, and this might make just the difference between victory and defeat, and the latter he could no longer afford to suffer. "Caesar, still pursuing his march, arrived in the plains of Munda, and pitched his camp opposite to that of Pompey."⁵⁵ The following day Caesar was informed that Pompey had been in line of battle since midnight. This was the 17th of March. When he saw that his opponent had chosen his ground well, that the slope was rugged and difficult to attack but very easy to defend, he moved his men onto the plain and halted. "Caesar had no doubt that the enemy would descend into the plain and come to a battle, when he saw them in array. This appeared evident to all; the rather because the plain would give their cavalry full room to act, and the day was so serene and clear, that the gods

55 Bell. Hisp., 27.

seemed to have sent it on purpose to favour the engagement."⁵⁶ The enemy remained stationary at the top of the hill and watched while Caesar moved his men into position. They did not advance to the field of battle as Caesar had anticipated. His men were now becoming restless and the longer the enemy held back, the greater became the tension. "Our men still continued before them in order of battle; but although the equality of the ground sometimes tempted them to come and dispute the victory, they nevertheless still kept their post on the mountain, in the neighbourhood of the town."⁵⁷ Pompey did not intend to lose the advantage of his position and Caesar, now that Gnaeus was within his grasp, refused to give up this opportunity for open battle after so long a pursuit in so troublesome a terrain.

Although Pompey and Caesar were ready to attack, there seemed to be some concern even within Pompey's camp whether the time was right for an engagement, and several within the enemy's ranks had suggested further postponement of open conflict. "Pompeius was misled by this appearance of strength and did not postpone the battle, but engaged Caesar straightway on his arrival, although the older men, who had learned by experience at Pharsalus and Africa, advised him to wear Caesar out by delay and reduce him to want, as he was in hostile country."⁵⁸ Pompey knew that it would be unwise to withdraw, for his men, though fearful of the foe, were hesitant to flee longer and were willing to stake all on a final struggle. It was desperation which forced his followers to face Caesar and they knew the price of defeat. "We doubled our speed to reach

⁵⁶ Bell. Hisp., 29.

⁵⁷ Loc. cit.

⁵⁸ Appian, II, 15, 103.

the rivulet, without their stirring from the place where they stood."⁵⁹ Pompey waited for Caesar to make a move to the slope and "when we reached the extremity of the plain, the real seat of disadvantage, the enemy were awaiting us above, so that it would have been exceedingly dangerous to proceed."⁶⁰ The rivulet had been passed but Caesar, unlike Pharnace at Zela, called a halt at the foot of the slope and there waited, uncertain of his enemy's next move. To fight up this slope would prove to be a great handicap as well as neutralize the training his men had received.

Pompey's force of thirteen legions had been so stationed that "...the cavalry was drawn up upon the wings, with six thousand light-armed infantry and about the same number of auxiliaries."⁶¹ Caesar's army of eight heavy-armed cohorts, and eight thousand horse were drawn up so that "the tenth legion, as usual, was on the right, the third and fifth on the left, with the auxiliary troops and cavalry."⁶² Caesar pointed out to his men the disadvantages of an uphill struggle, but his troops were eager for battle and were willing to move determinedly ahead. These soldiers, through their numbers and experience and from their leader's presence, had reached a high level of courage, and were ready for the decisive battle which Caesar sought. Though these hardy veterans considered the mutinous legionaries of Pompey their inferiors, the Pompeians were a desperate lot and were aware of the fact that should they lose the day, no mercy would be shown them. Some of them had witnessed the battle fields of Pharsalus and Thapsus and the memory of the slaughter which took place there was still fresh in their minds. Caesar was pitting his veteran

⁵⁹ Bell. Hisp., 29.

⁶⁰ Bell. Hisp., 30.

⁶¹ Loc. cit.

⁶² Loc. cit.

force against a bitter, determined and ruthless enemy who expected no quarter and intended to give none. The Gauls who put to flight the legions at Gergovia struggled no more tenaciously than these seasoned warriors. The Caesarians fought with a bitterness and savagery brought about through privation, continual hardship, and prolonged opposition, and were as stimulated through anger as was their enemy through despair. The fact must not be over-looked that the troops of Caesar often became unnecessarily agitated because of the reports received about the numbers, discipline and valour of the enemy.

The delay which followed Caesar's reaching the foot of the hill "...served to enliven the enemy, thinking that Caesar's troops shrank from an encounter through fear: they therefore had the boldness to advance a little way, yet without quitting the advantage of their post, the approach to which was extremely dangerous."⁶³ Caesar's men in their regular order slowly ascended the slope. Appian reports that Gnaeus, from a distance, accused Caesar of cowardice. This spurred the hesitant general into action and "the battle began with a shout."⁶⁴ Caesar's strategy thus far had followed a pattern of watchfulness. There was no element of surprise in the move at Munda, for Gnaeus was aware of every action Caesar made. Manoeuvre had given Caesar the opportunity to engage Pompey, but not on the dictator's own terms. Quickness of pursuit had forced Pompey to abandon plans of reaching the sea, for Caesar had cut him off from the safe crossing of the Guadalquivir which would carry him to the coast and the safety of his ships at Carteia. Munda was Pompey's last stand, and

⁶³ Bell. Hisp., 30.

⁶⁴ Loc. cit.

he was skilful enough to have the battle fought in his favour. He had compelled Caesar to fight at a disadvantage, and now all he needed for victory was a change of luck and a weakening in Caesar's force.

Caesar's men may have been determined and eager when the battle began, but as the fighting progressed their strength began to waver. "But though our men were superior to the enemy in courage, the latter nevertheless defended themselves so well by the advantage of the higher ground, and the shouts were so loud, and the discharge of darts on both sides so great, that we almost began to despair of victory."⁶⁵ The fighting was pursued relentlessly by both forces, and if any side yielded ground it was quickly regained or purchased bitterly by the opposing line. Back and forth the battle swayed so that "neither sound of paeon nor groan was to be heard from any of them, but both sides merely shouted 'Strike! Kill!'. "⁶⁶ It has been reported that Caesar stood in front of his men urging them on to victory, and he became sorely disturbed when many of the newly recruited legionaries turned and showed signs of flight. The Pompeians resisted bravely and it appeared that they would not yield.

Caesar's intention was to turn one or the other of Gnaeus's flanks. So rigorously did his tenth legion bear down on Pompey's left that Gnaeus, fearing he might be outflanked, ordered Labienus to move his legion from the right wing to support of the left. Caesar, seeing his opportunity, ordered Bogud and his Moorish horse to move against the left flank and rear of the enemy. Leading five cohorts to intercept Bogud, who seemed to him to be moving in the direction of his camp, Labienus gave the

⁶⁵ Bell. Hisp., 31.

⁶⁶ Dio, XLIII, 37.

appearance to his fellow Pompeians of one in flight. Thinking their line had been weakened and failing to realize the true intention of Labienus's move, the enemy yielded sufficiently for Caesar's hard pressed legions to break through their wavering line and cut them down from behind. So the enemy was put to flight, and this most bitter struggle came to an end.

"...But though the enemy fought with the utmost vigour, they were obliged to give ground, and retire towards the town. The battle was fought on the feast of Bacchus, and the Pompeians were entirely routed and put to flight; insomuch, that not a man could have escaped, had they not sheltered themselves in the place whence they advanced to the charge."⁶⁷

The ferocity of this battle cannot be underestimated, and to say that Caesar was neither hard pressed nor ever in fear for his life would be a misstatement. We are informed that for much of the battle the outcome was in doubt. "The deified Julius, when his troops gave way at Munda, ordered his horse to be removed from sight, and strode forward as a foot-soldier to the front line. His men, ashamed to desert their commander, thereupon renewed the fight."⁶⁸ Morale was here restored by firmness and, had Caesar not used his talents in such a manner, he could not have overcome the many disadvantages under which he fought. Caesar's strategy which won Munda was developed as the battle progressed. The strengthening of his men's spirits before moving up the slope increased his own willingness to move, for there was undoubtedly some hesitation on his part before he would expose his men to a fight against overwhelming odds. If nothing else, an uphill struggle taxes to capacity a legionaire's

⁶⁷ Bell. Hisp., 31.

⁶⁸ Frontinus, Strategemata, II, 8, 13.

strength, willpower and determination, and that his men weakened halfway up the hill when they realized that the enemy would not yield can be attributed to the unexpected resistance provided by the Pompeians. "Here the contest was not attended with Caesar's previous success, but was long doubtful and threatening, so that Fortune seemed evidently hesitating how to act."⁶⁹

No field of battle more perilous or desperate had Caesar ever entered. His effort was perhaps greater than that of his men, and it is possible that they were brought to their senses more by the effect of shame than courage. "It was reported that he said that he had often fought for victory, but that this time he had fought even for existence."⁷⁰ Labienus, one of Caesar's greatest and cleverest opponents, died in the battle and along with him Varus, who had once been the proud commander of the renegade force in Africa. Both of these warriors received full military honours. Thus did Caesar recognize military prowess even in an enemy. Sextus Pompeius, informed of Caesar's victory at Munda, abandoned Corduba and sought refuge in the mountains of the north, while Gnaeus fled to Carteia, where he was injured while hurriedly boarding a ship. Although for a long time he evaded Caesar's scouts (under Didius), he finally was captured, slain and his head brought to Caesar at Hispalis. How reminiscent of his father's end!

"The remains of Pompey's army retreating to Munda, with the intention of defending themselves in that town, it became necessary to invest it."⁷¹ Caesar's strategy in beginning the siege of Munda lay in terrorizing

69 Florus, Epitome of Roman History, IV, 2, 78.

70 Appian, II, 15, 104.

71 Bell. Hisp., 32.

the enemy encamped within its walls. "The dead bodies of the enemy, heaped together, served as a rampart, and their javelins and darts were fixed up by way of palisades. Upon these we hung their bucklers to supply the place of a breastwork, and fixing the heads of the deceased upon swords and lances, planted them all around the works, to strike the greater terror into the besieged, and keep awake in them a sense of our prowess."⁷² Even such a macabre sight did not bring about the surrender of the besieged and Caesar, when the circumvallation of the town was complete, left Fabius Maximus in charge and marched to Corduba. "Fabius Maximus, whom he had left to continue the siege of Munda, conducted it with great zeal; so that the enemy, seeing themselves shut up on all sides, sallied out, but were repulsed with great loss. Our men seized this opportunity to get possession of the town, and took the rest prisoners, in number about fourteen thousand."⁷³ One might think that the capture of Munda would have terminated activities in the battle-area, but such was not the case. Those who escaped Fabius took refuge in Ursao, and there dug in for another siege; but, when the inhabitants of this town learned too late the uselessness of Gnaeus's promises, they were sorely disturbed, and without a prolonged siege yielded the town to Caesarian hands.

Munda and Ursao fell while Caesar was fulfilling his duties further south. Many of the fugitives from the battle of Munda had fled to Corduba and gained possession of the bridge. On his arrival there, dissension arose within the town between the parties of Caesar and Pompey. Caesar cleverly gained possession of the town by permitting the remnants of Munda to enter when the gates were opened to them by deputies who were

⁷² Bell. Hisp., 32.

⁷³ Bell. Hisp., 31.

on their way to seek aid from Caesar. "Upon this those who had escaped out of the battle set fire to the place, and our men entering at the same time, slew about twenty-two thousand of them, besides those who were slain without the walls; thus Caesar obtained the town."⁷⁴ Once again a strategy of striking at the right time had gained for Caesar the advantage. He might have engaged the enemy outside the walls and tried to secure the bridge from them. Instead he waited and kept his activity to a minimum, possibly storming parts of the city, perhaps skirmishing now and then for a bridge position, but not until the gates were opened to the fugitives did he move in force. Patience and preciseness had aided him.

"Thence Caesar marched to Hispalis, which sent deputies to sue for pardon."⁷⁵ Within this town was a strong group of Pompeians who called on the assistance of one Caecilius Niger, a freebooter who controlled a strong army of Lusitanians. He was successful in gaining entrance to the town, and immediately began to set up a defence. The Lusitanians in their accustomed barbaric ferocity changed what had been a defence to a pillage. Caesar did not press the siege from outside the town lest the renegades within should set fire to it in despair and destroy the walls. "So he made a campaign against them, and by appearing to conduct the siege in a rather careless fashion he gave them some hope of being able to escape. After this he would allow them to come outside the wall, where he would ambush and destroy them; in this way he captured the town, which had been gradually stripped of its men."⁷⁶ Hispalis, Munda, Ursao and finally Asta, a small town thirty miles northwest of Cadiz, had fallen to Caesar. The war was near an end, and Spain, but for minor skirmishes in outlying areas, was

⁷⁴ Bell. Hisp., 34.

⁷⁵ Loc. cit.

⁷⁶ Dio, XLIII, 39.

once again pacified, after a war that might have been avoided had due care and attention been given to the administration of the province upon the conclusion of the first Spanish campaign.

This Spanish war was the most savage of any that Caesar fought. It was one of sieges and marches, surprise manoeuvres, delaying tactics and planned withdrawals, all focused on the one objective of bringing Gnaeus to battle on equal ground. But so skillfully did Gnaeus evade a direct engagement and so well did he use the nature of the land in which he fought that he compelled Caesar to fight the crucial battle at Munda on difficult ground with little hope for retreat. Within the cities of the battle area, massacres had been fomented by rival factions, and, as little as such tactics suited Caesar's nature, they did assist his purpose.

What Caesar had treated as a minor campaign became later a struggle of serious proportions. He had underestimated the strength of his enemy but he quickly adjusted his military machine and his military strategy to this new conflict. As in previous battles, so in this one he displayed a skilful use of surprise, manoeuvre and anticipation. He had provided ill for his forces' comfort, especially at Corduba, but he did seem better equipped with cavalry and this assisted him greatly in turning back the thrust of the Pompeians' horse at Munda. Bogud's support of Moorish horse gave him the advantage in the crucial battle and, whether he or the Mauretanian chief gave the order to advance against Pompey's left or Labienus's camp, the outcome was such that the tide of battle was turned in Caesar's favour. The whole campaign was one of barbarity on both sides and, as Pompey was naturally brutal, Caesar's

strategy was to respond in a similar manner and seek reprisals.

"...Caesar, having ended the civil wars, hastened to Rome honoured and feared as no one had ever been before."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Appian, II, 16, 106.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

"As regards the relation of strategy to tactics, while in execution the borderline is often shadowy, and it is difficult to decide exactly where a strategical movement ends and a tactical movement begins, yet in conception the two are distinct. Tactics lies in and fills the province of fighting. Strategy not only stops on the frontier, but has for its purpose the reduction of fighting to the slenderest possible proportions."¹

Caesar's strategy anticipated the above definition and that of Clausewitz: "strategy is the use of the engagement to attain the object of war."² With a limited supply of troops and an ever-present problem of provisions, Caesar resorted, where possible, to careful planning of strategy before the employment of tactics. When he took the field, his goal was nearly always to force his opponent into a direct engagement.

The two basic elements of strategy are movement and surprise. Movement is determined by the time afforded the general, the topography of the scene of action and the means of transport available to him. Surprise, on the other hand, can result from psychological anticipation. "For a movement which is accelerated or changes its direction inevitably carries with it a degree of surprise even though it be unconcealed; while surprise smooths the path of movement by hindering the enemy's counter-measures and counter-movements."³ Periodically Caesar resorted to a strategy of limited aim which involved a wearing down of the enemy by

1 Liddell-Hart, Strategy, pp. 337-338.

2 Von Clausewitz, On War, p.117.

3 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.337.

inflicting pricks rather than by risking blows. "The essential condition of such a strategy is that the drain on him should be disproportionately greater than on oneself. The object may be sought by raiding his supplies; by local attacks which annihilate or inflict disproportionate loss on parts of his force; by luring him into unprofitable attacks; by causing an excessively wide distribution of his force; and, not least by exhausting his moral and physical energy."⁴

A survey of the campaigns in the Civil War reveals that Caesar used to great advantage the strategical elements of surprise, manoeuvre and limited aim. His seizure of Ariminum in his march through Italy took Pompey by surprise, just as his arrival in Epirus in the dead of winter caught Bibulus in his cups and Pompey unready for immediate action. The decision in Caesar's favour at Thapsus was partially gained by his surprise attack on Scipio's half-completed camp. His sudden arrival at Obulco only twenty-seven days after he set out from Rome upset the plans made by Gnaeus and the insurgents in Spain. A double-edged effect resulted from this move when Caesar's own troops were caught off guard yet nevertheless were pleased by his appearance. The move from Corduba to besiege Ategua occurred so quickly that Gnaeus was forced to alter his plans and to campaign in mid-winter, much against his will. The seizure of Corduba after the battle of Munda combined stratagem with surprise and was very effective. Finally the fall of Hispalis was brought about through the combination of surprise and delaying tactics.

Strategy as exemplified by rapidity of movement or manoeuvre was first displayed by Caesar in the seizure of the Italian coast towns

4 Liddell-Hart, op.cit., p.335.

of Pisaurum, Fanum and Ancona. At Dyrrhachium, Caesar so manoeuvred his troops that he cut off Pompey's land route to the fortress and compelled him to take refuge on the rock of Petra. This manoeuvre of Caesar's was of course nullified by the action of Pompey's fleet, which kept open a supply route between the dock and the port at all times. Perhaps Caesar's greatest manoeuvre in the Civil War was his retreat from Dyrrhachium to Apollonia, during which he was able to outdistance Pompey and safely bring his troops (both the wounded and the unscathed) to their destination. In Apollonia he regrouped his men, assuaged their anger in defeat and encouraged them for a greater campaign ahead. Complete victory had been within Pompey's grasp, but Caesar's skilful manipulation of troops deprived him of it. A good example of manoeuvre in the African campaign was Caesar's abandonment of Uzita in favour of a move against Agar. This forced Scipio to give up his well-established camp near Ruspina and follow his enemy. A brash but successful manoeuvre in this same African campaign was the capture of Zeta by Caesar while the enemy looked on as though powerless to resist. Audacity combined with rapidity of movement gave Caesar the moral advantage and sank Scipio's prestige even lower in the eyes of his men.

The strategy of limited aim was first used by Caesar on a large scale in the campaign after Ilerda. Thwarted in his attempt to reach the Ebro, Afranius was forced to return to Ilerda and eventually succumbed to Caesar's war of attrition. The second Spanish campaign best illustrated Caesar's use of the strategy of limited aim. His move against Corduba withdrew pressure from Ulia and forced Gnaeus not only to give up the siege of the latter town, but also to come to the aid of Sextus, now under

attack by Caesar. The hill near Ategua, the Castra Postumiana, gave Caesar an excellent lookout post and enabled him to keep a continual and accurate watch on most of Gnaeus's movements. To bring Gnaeus to battle, Caesar was forced to adopt a strategy of limited aim, but when his purpose was accomplished he was obliged to fight on the enemy's terms. This strategy of limited aim was then converted to a strategy of manoeuvre.

Throughout the Civil War Caesar displayed certain strategic techniques which can be categorized. He never failed to aim a blow at a vital point. Dyrrhachium, Zeta, Agar and Corduba best display this, and, but for Dyrrhachium, each time he struck the enemy was put off balance. "No critic has detected a moment when he missed his chance. A few times he struck too soon, at Gergovia, Ilerda, Dyrrachium: he never struck too late, and when he struck home, the blow was mortal. No army that he defeated escaped destruction or surrender."⁵

Caesar was often superior in speed and, where possible, like Napoleon in his Italian campaign, kept his troops concentrated while dividing those of the enemy. This afforded him the opportunity to deal with the opposing forces section by section. There was a continual use on Caesar's part of large-scale manoeuvres and blockades to bring the enemy to battle on his own terms. This often involved all-out attacks on magazines and water-supplies, resulting in the removal of any opportunity the enemy might have possessed of using the land in his favour. There are two good examples of such a strategic technique: the first Spanish campaign and the operations around Dyrrhachium. During the latter conflict Pompey was brought close to starvation and saved himself only by piercing Caesar's

5 Adcock, Cambridge Ancient History, IX, p.705.

lines. This leads to another point. Caesar's lines, when hard pressed, were flexible and strong and only at Munda was there any question of their breaking.

"Caesar's courage as a soldier lay rather in the power to push a strategic advantage rather than in the longing to meet and annihilate the enemy."⁶ This strategic advantage was often gained in a moment of crisis by instant decision. Especially applicable here was the use of the diagonal line at Pharsalus and the shifting of Bogud's legion at Munda. Both movements caught the enemy off guard and gave Caesar the victory. The temperament and personality of his opponents were always foremost in Caesar's mind. He felt sure that Pompey would not continue the pursuit after Dyrrhachium. He knew that Scipio would hesitate before attacking him at Zeta. Perhaps his only failing was in underestimating Labienus, who twice nearly brought him to destruction in the African campaign.

This study should not be terminated without a brief discussion of Caesar's interpretations of what we today consider to be the principles of war.⁷ A leader's military ability is determined by the way in which he has used the principles of war to his advantage. Modern military thinking as exemplified by General Montgomery recognizes certain principles of war, some of which are applicable to Caesar. "An intelligent perception of the principles of war will best be gained by an intensive and objective study of the principles and methods of the great leaders of the past."⁸

⁶ Dodge, Caesar, II, p.758.

⁷ The principles of war as stated in the Canadian Army Journal, IV (1950) and V (1951-52).

⁸ H. S. Macklin, as quoted in "Military History and the Principles of War," Canadian Army Journal, IV (1950), p.2.

The selection and maintenance of the aim or object is the first principle of importance. When the aim or object is decided upon, every possible element at a commander's disposal is used to maintain activity until the desired results have been obtained. Concentration of forces and careful selection of opportunities play integral parts in obtaining the object, which is reached by the total destruction of the enemy's armed force. While the object is far-reaching in its scope, the objective consists of those steps taken to accomplish the object.

Caesar followed closely this principle. It was his aim to conquer all Italy in one vast sweep, and trap Pompey by surprise manoeuvres. When a peace could not be engineered, he moved against Pompey and conquered Italy. His object was then achieved; his objectives were the strategic points he captured as he moved down coast. All his objectives culminated in the fall of Brundisium. His object or aim was then accomplished. In the first Spanish campaign Caesar's aim was to avoid a pitched battle, exhaust the patience of the Pompeians and bring them to submission under his own terms. This he was able to do in a period of six weeks. In Greece, where Caesar's aim had been a quick collapse of Pompey's forces, his opponent's victory at Dyrrhachium had prolonged the battle and prevented consummation of the aim until Pharsalus. Underestimation of his enemy's potentialities, a grain shortage and constant trouble with new recruits made Caesar's hope of a quick, decisive battle to end the threat in Africa difficult to maintain. The object was finally accomplished at Thapsus. Faced with a stubborn opposition and a prolonged war, Caesar's object in the Second Spanish Campaign was changed from the "mopping-up" of enemy garrisons to an all-out offensive involving hill battles, sea

encounters and a final struggle at Munda. Caesar observed the principle of selection and maintenance of the aim, modifying his object where necessary but applying continuous pressure until the end of the struggle had been reached.

A second principle of war is the maintenance of morale. A skillful commander maintains morale among his own men while breaking it down in the ranks of the enemy. In early days the morale of an enemy was often destroyed by crude but clever methods, e.g., false signals, simulated attacks. Today such mass media as television, radio and the newspaper, when cleverly utilized, have played an important part in destroying the morale and lessening the resistance of an opposing force. Germany in the early days of World War II rendered Poland, Czechoslovakia and Norway helpless, first by exposing these countries to a propaganda-machine and then by overpowering them with military might. The defence against a morale-breaking mechanism is best represented by the leader who inculcates in his men the ideals of their country and righteousness of the cause for which they are fighting. There must be firmness and resolution on the part of the commander and the degree of morale he instils in his men will vary with the leadership they possess, the training they have received and the administration which has guided them. Immediate compliance with orders, promptness, readiness and a willingness to obey reflect a high standard of morale in a group of fighting men. Throughout the Civil War, Caesar displayed all the attributes of a general skilled in the maintenance of morale. He was closer to his men than many a modern general while his determination and perseverance led many a platoon of new recruits to victory. Where possible, he guided his men personally and always appeared in the thick of the

fighting. There are few factors which contributed more significantly to a high standard of morale. On the field of Pharsalia no army displayed better morale than Caesar's, for deep in the heart of every veteran was a desire to avenge the disaster of Dyrrhachium. At Munda, the Caesarians' morale, which was gradually deteriorating as the battle progressed, was so restored by firmness on Caesar's part that his men went on to win an uphill struggle.

A third principle of war, administration, which is so important to today's military staffs, was no great problem to Caesar. At councils of war he alone presided and directives were issued to his subordinates for the well-being of his men and the favourable progress of his battles. Modern encounters are on a far greater scale and involve much more planning than did those of Caesar. Caesar's lieutenants were capable enough to handle their separate assignments, and, so long as battle were being won, no real administrative problem appeared. Because of the difference in time and technique it is difficult to make a comparison between Caesar's day and ours with respect to administration. It can be said, though, that Caesar knew the value of proper administrative techniques. Today's problems of transportation, supply and size of armies are greater than any Caesar had to face. However, one comparison can be made. In providing for his army, Caesar was able to gain subsistence from the countryside and from plunder of storage-depots; the same cannot be said of the present fighting force, which is supplied by various sources through detailed arrangements on a large scale. Caesar's administrative problems were not so detailed as those of Napoleon, while the latter's problems are not to be compared to the complexity of modern administration.

Concentration of force, a fourth principle, is of a mental and physical nature: mental in the effect it has on the enemy's morale and physical in the results it provides martially. It is not to be confused with mass, which often involves overthrow of the enemy by sheer weight of number. Concentration of force, unlike mass, is more successful when it goes unnoticed. This principle was best displayed by Caesar at Pharsalus where he used his diagonal line to great advantage to unnerve Pompey's forces and eventually to rout them. This diagonal line was a tactic of a mental and physical nature: mental in the jarring effect it had on the morale of Pompey's army, and physical in the turmoil it caused among the enemy troops. Concentration of forces and the object are closely related. Caesar's object at Pharsalus was gained by the use of his diagonal line.

A fifth principle of war, flexibility, best shows itself in manoeuvre, systems of command and types of equipment. It is the antidote to surprise and provides the opportunity for an army "to roll with the punch." Caesar made good use of flexibility in the skirmishes before Dyrrhachium and especially in the movement of troops away from the disaster-area to Apollonia. On the second Spanish campaign, Caesar's relentless pursuit of Gnaeus Pompey and his adjustment to whatever perils Gnaeus created for him showed how Caesar could change his strategy and tactics to suit the existing situation.

The combined operations of maintenance of the aim or object, surprise, flexibility and concentration of force and command provide a sixth principle of war, offensive action. Caesar, like present-day commanders, made use of the above operations where they were applicable to

his style of fighting. When the time was right he took the offensive. The defensive aspect of war sometimes was disregarded by Caesar in the hope that surprise through manoeuvre and flexibility through anticipation would win him the battle. Dyrrhachium stands alone as an example of his unpreparedness.

The main principles of war have received our attention. Two other principles of moderate importance which Caesar observed and which are worthy of mention are mobility and economy of effort. The first, mobility, is linked closely with flexibility and for best results should be restricted to a small, well-controlled radius. When a commander is forced to move, he is at a disadvantage, for he has succumbed to one of two alternatives, either of being unable to reach the enemy, or of the enemy's forcing him to change position. Caesar knew the importance of mobility and its use in reaching the enemy. In Italy, Spain and Africa, for most of the campaigns, he was the pursuer. His movements were controlled and often strengthened by surprise. The battle area, if at all possible, was restricted by Caesar to a small radius. Mobility, then, was an integral part of Caesar's military machine.

The essence of the principle of economy of effort is to achieve success with the employment of as few troops as possible. This is gained by speed and surprise. Application of this principle may be seen throughout all Caesar's campaigns in the Civil War. At no time was he greatly superior in strength to his enemy, in most cases having less men, but he continually outmanoeuvred his opponents by surprise and speed.

In summary, it is clear that the principles of war as we know them today were, with some exceptions, as applicable to Caesar as to a

modern general. The difference of time, equipment, transportation and certain other factors have affected the application of the principles. Each commander adapts himself to the style of fighting common to his own era. The principles of war remain the same and Caesar applied them as they were necessary to the accomplishment of his goal - an Italy answerable only to him.

Caesar's strategic techniques were a result of his own creative genius and they showed his ability to develop his strategy in proportion to the severity of battle. "Caesar's career as a soldier shows to a marked degree how great in war is the factor of personal character. Caesar's art was not a thing he had learned from or could impart to others. It was a product of his vast intellect and bore the seal of his splendid moral force."⁹ Throughout the Civil War, Caesar was pitted against men of varying skill and his power to exploit their weak points while limiting his campaigns against them to such exceptionally short encounters displayed soundly his strategic ability.

This has been a study of the military strategy of Rome's greatest soldier. Often he erred, because it is human to err, but he always regained the strategic advantage, especially when the odds were weighted heavily against him. His accomplishments on the battle field have rarely been equalled. In the words of Cassius:

"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves."¹⁰

⁹ Dodge, op.cit., p.754.

¹⁰ Julius Caesar, I, ii, 134-137.

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