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THEMES OF CAESAR'S *GALLIC WAR*¹

Julius Caesar so composed his *Gallic War* that his Roman readers might "in imagination live through" the difficulties and the heroic deeds of Caesar and his men;² and even today for the reader "who will think and analyze . . . there is suspense and drama."³ I have found that the action of individual portions of the *Gallic War* is defined by appropriate abstract themes;⁴ that for some portions there are single themes; for others, combinations of themes. Caesar often overmatches a quality of the Gauls with one of his own: "In Caesar all counteraction and action stem from the will of the commander and governor alone. . . . The enemy's plan, Caesar's perception of it, energetic and adequate countermeasures—are all one . . ."⁵ I follow this outline: "Books 1-3: rapid preliminary conquest; Book 4: probing expeditions into neighboring regions; Books 5-7: final pacification."⁶

I

In Caesar's account in Book I of how, in the year 58 B.C., he thwarted the migration of the Helvetii, the main theme is *persuasio*.⁷ The mood of wily dealing is sustained by examples of *calliditas*, "shrewdness, guile."⁸ Meet the

¹Essentially the presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, April 12, 1974, in New Orleans.

²Matthias Gelzer, *Caesar: Politician and Statesman*, trans. P. Needham (Cambridge, Mass. 1960), p. 172.

³John B. Titchener, "Caesar and the Teaching of Literature," *CJ*, XLVI (1951), 236.

⁴Designations of the campaigns: Helvetii (1.2-29), Ariovistus (1.31-54), Belgae (2.1-33), Galba (3.1-6), Veneti (3.9-10, 12-16), Sabinus vs. Unelli (3.17-19), Crassus (3.20-27), Morini (3.28-29), Usipetes (4.6-9, 11-15), 1st Britain (4.20-36), 2nd Britain (5.2, 5; 8-11; 15-23), Sabinus and Cotta (5.26-37), Q. Cicero (5.39-45, 52), Labienus vs. Indutiomarus (5.55-58). Caesar's precautions (6.1-6), Labienus vs. Treveri (6.7-8), Ambiorix (6.29.4-44), Last revolt begins (7.1-5), Caesar's counter measures (7.6-13), Avaricum (7.14-28), Aeduan revolt (7.37-40, 42-43, 54-55), Gergovia (7.36, 41, 44-53), Labienus among Parisii (7.57-62), Caesar's German cavalry (7.64-67), Alesia (7.68-89).

⁵Karl Büchner, *Römische Literaturgeschichte: Ihre Grundzüge in interpretierender Darstellung*, 3rd. ed. (Stuttgart 1963), p. 205. My trans.

⁶B. Mansperger, "Commentarii de bello Gallico," *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon*, III (Zurich 1971), 2104. My trans.

I cannot tell whether Caesar completed a book of his *commentarii* after each year's campaigning or composed and published the work as a whole after finishing his campaigns. But it seems likely that he for each year wrote at least a preliminary draft like the newer type of *commentarius*, having touches of human interest, rather than the older type, cold facts.

⁷The ll. of text are those of the Teubner ed. of Otto Seel (Leipzig 1968), from which all textual quotations are also taken.

Only *persuadere* (*persuasio*, *suadere* not found; *dissuadere*, 7.15.6): Helv., 7 exx.:496 ll. = 1/71 (chs. 2-9, 7 exx.:133 ll. = 1/19); Sab. vs. Un., 1 ex.:61 ll.; Lab. vs. Ind., 1 ex.:68 ll.; Galba, 1 ex.:95 ll.; Alesia, 0 ex.:390 ll. That *persuasio* is very important in the background of the Helv. migration is est. by E. Wyss, *Stilistische Untersuchungen zur Darstellung von Ereignissen in Caesars bellum Gallicum* (diss. Bern 1930), pp. 13-14.

⁸For the affinity of *persuasio* for *calliditas* see below p. 235.

Helvetian schemer Orgetorix: *regni cupiditate inductus . . . civitati persuasit ut de finibus suis . . . exirent* (2.1). He *facilius iis persuasit* (2.3) because of their narrow bounds. He persuaded (*persuadet*, 3.4) Casticus the Sequanian and (*persuadet*, 3.5) Dumnorix the Aeduan to follow his lead in getting control of their own tribes. Later the Helvetii persuaded (*persuadent*, 5.4) others to join their migration. They hoped that they should persuade the Allobroges to grant them passage (*Allobrogibus sese . . . persuasuros*, 6.3), and that they could then go through the Roman province. But Caesar countered with *calliditas*, temporizing by telling the Helvetii that he would soon answer their request for passage but then blocking their way with works (7.8). Unable to gain passage from the Sequani (*his cum . . . persuadere non possent*, 9.2), the Helvetii used the intriguing (9.3) Dumnorix as a go-between (*deprecator*, 9.2) and went on, only to have Caesar combine *calliditas* with *vis* in routing the Tigurini, who alone of the host had not yet crossed the Saône (12). Then Divico, chief Helvetian envoy to Caesar, scorned this victory on the ground that it was won *dolo . . . insidiis* (13.6) and alluded to his leadership in crushing a Roman army fifty years before. Caesar replied that the Helvetii had won that victory through deceit, and implied that the gods show *calliditas* in allowing the wicked to prosper for a while so that the shock of their fall may be the greater (14.1-5).

When Caesar learned that Dumnorix was guilty of serious breaches of faith (17-18), he was astute in not risking alienation of the Aedui by punishing Dumnorix but in rather discussing the matter with his influential Aeduan friend Diviciacus, Dumnorix' brother. He made Diviciacus think Caesar was sparing Dumnorix for his sake, and let Dumnorix know that he was on his good behavior (19-20). When Publius Censidius deceived himself, he nullified Caesar's *calliditas* (21-22). But then the Romans won a great victory; and when during subsequent parleying the people of one clan made for the Rhine in a pitiful attempt at guile (27), Caesar easily had them brought back.

Timor, "fear," is the theme of the rest of Book 1, the account of the campaign against Ariovistus.⁹ Conferring with Caesar, the Gallic leaders tearfully insisted that their words remain confidential, otherwise *summum in cruciatum se venturos* (31.2). The Sequani, having invited Ariovistus into Gaul, could now not complain lest they suffer *omnes cruciatus* (32.5), for *absentis Ariovisti crudelitatem . . . horrerent* (32.4). Once in the field, Caesar, himself fearless, had to contend with a panic of his army at Besançon: in the twenty-seven lines of one chapter there are seven occurrences of words of fearing (39.1, 3, 5, 6 *ter*, 7). Caesar's story makes the drawing up of wills before battle appear cowardice (39.4). He asked his assembled tribunes and centurions *quid tandem vererentur* (40.4), reproached for presumption any man who tried to hide *suum timorem* (40.10) by a pretence of concern for the grain supply, and said that by moving against the enemy he should test *utrum apud eos pudor atque officium an timor plus valeret* (40.14). His men replied *se neque umquam dubitasse neque timuisse* (41.3). They constructed a camp despite forces sent to frighten them (*quae copiae nostros terrentur*, 49.3). In a

⁹Eighteen words of fear: Ariov., 17:537=1/32 (chs. 39-42, 13:122=1/9); Usip., 8:128=1/16; Lab. vs. Ind., 4:68=1/17; Sab. vs. Un., 3:61=1/20; Amb., 12:270=1/23 (chs. 35-44, 11:125=1/11); Caes. counter., 5:126=1/25; Lab. vs. Trev., 2:56=1/28; Gerg., 5:200=1/40; Lab. among Par., 1:101.

fierce battle, the Germans were hampered by fear of fighting before the new moon (50.4-5), but Caesar's men were fearless (52.5). The terror-stricken Germans, including the braggart Ariovistus, broke and fled to the Rhine (53.1). The Suebi, on the east bank on their way to join Ariovistus, turned back, and the Rhenish tribes, *quos [Suebos] ubi perterritos senserunt, magnum ex his numerum occiderunt* (54.1).

In Book 2, in the year 57 B.C., *furor*, "madness," is the theme.¹⁰ The Belgae, joining to avert Roman rule, were carried away by *furor* (3.5). From the definition of *furor* in the Laws of the Twelve Tables as *mentis ad omnia caecitatem* (Cic. *Tusc.* 3.11) and from Livy's description of attackers of city walls, *velut repentino icti furore improvidi* (5.21.7), one sees *furor* in the Belgae who in attack ignored showers of missiles and trod on their fallen (10.3). In continued *furor* ". . . the poor . . . Belgians fall into inextricable confusion. They agree to go home, each to his own country, and from thence to proceed to the defence of any tribe which Caesar might attack (10.4)."¹¹ Livy thus describes the blind terror of girls fleeing death: *quae alienata mente simul luctu metuque velut captae furore . . . se proripuerunt* (24.26.12). Just so the Belgae, *castris egressi nullo certo ordine neque imperio* (11.1), were so driven by the blind terror of *furor* that they brought no help to their fellows at the rear of the column as the Romans cut them down, and *exaudito clamore perturbatis ordinibus omnes in fuga sibi praesidium ponerent* (11.5).

Caesar's friends had reported that the Remi were considered *maxime ferri* (4.8), and now, about to face this tribe, he heard them *esse homines feros magnaue virtutis* (15.5). Though *ferus*, "wild," is not etymologically related to *furor*, their relation in meaning is confirmed by association in literature.¹² In their battle with the Romans the Nervii even stood on their own fallen, earning Caesar's praise of their *virtus* (27.3-5). But the Atuatuca displayed misjudgment, stupidity, and deception in their fighting (30-33). ". . . the Belgians were in a notably lower state of culture than the Gauls . . . Indeed modern law can profitably turn to Caesar's practice in this campaign for illustrations of moderation as well as severity in dealing with hordes of undisciplinable barbarians."¹³ Caesar showed *iustitia*, "justice," in giving to each surrendered tribe its due, as Vergil was to recommend: *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*.¹⁴

Book 3 includes both the operations of Servius Galba near the end of 57 B.C. in trying to keep the Great St. Bernard Pass free of intruders and the campaigns

Eighteen words of fear: Ariov., 17:537=1/32 (chs. 39-42, 13:122=1/9); Usip., 8:128=1/16; Lab. vs. Ind., 4:68=1/17; Sab. vs. Un., 3:61=1/20; Amb., 12:270=1/23 (chs. 35-44, 11:125=1/11); Caes. counter., 5:126=1/25; Lab. vs. Trev., 2:56=1/28; Gerg., 5:200=1/40; Lab. among Par., 1:101.

¹⁰*Amentia, dementia, ferus, furor*: Belg., 3:540=1/180; Ariov., 5:537=1/107; Usip., 1:128; Aed. rev., 1:160; Alesia, 0:390.

¹¹Anthony Trollope, *The Commentaries of Caesar* (Philadelphia, n.d.), p. 47.

¹²Luc. 1.327, *utique ferae tigres numquam posuere furorem*; sim. Val. Fl. 6.516. Catullus w. *furor* links *ferox < ferus* (63.78-79).

¹³M. Radin, "The International Law of the Gallic Campaigns," *CJ*, XIII (1916), 23.

¹⁴W. Warde Fowler, *Julius Caesar and the Foundation of the Roman Imperial System*, 2nd ed. (New York and London 1903), p. 174.

of the year 56 B.C.¹⁵ Its main theme is *difficultas Romana*, "difficulty suffered by the Romans."¹⁶ "His [Galba's] circumstances were extremely difficult."¹⁷ Caesar twice makes a point of Galba's small force (he had only one weak legion and some cavalry: 2.3, 4.4) and also twice mentions the great number of the enemy (2.1, 3.2). Eventually Galba suffered from a lack of supplies (6.4). While the Romans looked up at the large force menacing from the heights, it was *prope iam desperata salute* that they took counsel about their strategy (3.3). They finally cut their way out to safety, and Galba led them to safe quarters. Throughout there is much suddenness and speed.¹⁸ Galba *subito certior factus est* of the host on the mountains (2.1), for the mountaineers had *subito* decided to resume fighting (2.2). Galba was aghast at *tantum repentini periculi* (3.2). The Romans escaped their trap *subito* (6.1). Then the little army *in provinciam reverti contendit* (6.5). True, Caesar probably aimed to palliate the failure of Galba's campaign by not including it among the glorious events of Book 2.¹⁹ But as to *difficultas* the story of Galba's narrow escape belongs where it is.

Caesar writes explicitly of the difficulties of the Romans in their conflict with the Veneti—moving and supplying troops in a terrain cut up by inlets as well as sailing in harborless, unfamiliar waters (*hae difficultates belli gerendi*, 10.1). The enemy's towns, on the tips of tongues of land, were inaccessible both to men on foot at high tide and to ships grounded on shoals at low tide (12.1-2). Great was the *difficultas navigandi* in the open sea (12.5). At last especially built Roman ships sailed out to battle, and their complements of troops cut the rigging of the huge galleys of the Veneti with sickle-like hooks attached to long poles. Then Roman boarders outfought the enemy (14.5-8). *Virtus plus ratio pugnae* (14.3) had prevailed: ". . . one of the very finest achievements recorded of even a Roman army. . . bringing to battle a fleet manned by seafaring people in their own home waters . . ."²⁰

In command of three legions among the Unelli, Titurius Sabinus had the difficulty of being greatly outnumbered: against him Viridovis *magnas copias coegerat* (17.2): *magnaque . . . multitudo undique ex Gallia perditorum hominum latronumque convenerat* (17.4). So he did not think he ought to fight *cum tanta multitudinē hostium* (17.7) until he had the advantage of position. Once he had it, he used *calliditas*, "guile," to meet his difficulty: *hominem . . . callidum delegit Gallum . . . huic . . . persuadet uti ad hostes transeat et quid fieri velit edocet* (18.1-2). The Gaul persuaded the enemy to attack and the brave Romans routed them (18.3-19.3).

¹⁵That Caesar used his own point of view in adapting the reports of his lieutenants is shown by W. Ehrenfried, *Qua ratione Caesar in commentariis legatorum relationes adhibuerit* (diss. Würzburg 1888), pp. 14-18; and affirmed by G. Perotta, "Cesare Scrittore," *Maia*, I (1948), 8.

¹⁶Thirteen words of Roman difficulty: Bk. 3, 7:483=1/69; Bk. 7, 29:1595=1/55 (see n. 42: in Bk. 7 Caesar often cites Roman triumph over hardship to counteract Gallic striving for *libertas*); Bk. 2, 8:557=1/70; Bk. 1, 3:1074=1/358.

¹⁷T. Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford 1911), p. 84.

¹⁸Fifty-nine words and expressions of swiftness and quickness: Galba, 12:95=1/8; Mor., 6:30=1/5; Caes. prec. (where, too, *celeritas* is the theme), 12:87=1/7; Sab. vs. Un., 8:61=1/8; 1st Brit., 21:265=1/13; Caes. Germ. cav., 1:81.

¹⁹Friedrich Münzer, "Ser. Sulpicius Galba," *RE*, 2. Reihe, IV.1 (1931), 770.

²⁰W. E. Heitland, *The Roman Republic*, III (Cambridge, Eng. 1919), p. 192-193.

Publius Crassus, sent by Caesar into Aquitania, might well have found it difficult to face up to his task, for within the memory of middle-aged people two Roman commanders had been defeated there. But Crassus averted difficulties: first, he saw that he must employ *diligentia*, “carefulness” (20.1);²¹ next, his personal character made veterans, *virī fortes*, willing to re-enlist under him (20.2). In their first battle, a victory, his men showed what they could do *adulescentulo duce* (21.1), and their second victory ended the war (23-27). Importantly, Crassus had real *humanitas*, “amiability.”²²

Expecting a brief and successful campaign, Caesar at the end of summer marched into the lands of the Morini and Menapii, who had defied him. But they took to the swamps and forests and then fell upon the Romans while they were busy constructing a camp. And after the Romans had begun cutting down forests to make huge breastworks, fierce storms made it impossible for civilized men to live in the open. Caesar had to give up for the time being, forcibly reminding that some difficulties are insurmountable.

II

Book 4 constitutes the second main section of the *Gallic War*, which tells of probing expeditions into neighboring territory made in 55 B.C., the first of which was the crossing of the Rhine into Germany. But first, the theme of Caesar’s defeating the Usipetes and Tenctheri in Gaul is *perfidia*, “faithlessness.”²³ Caesar writes that the Germans attacked the Roman cavalry during a truce (12) and accuses their envoys of acting *eadem et perfidia et simulatione* (13.4); but modern historians agree in holding it to be his most flagrant violation of the *ius belli*—absolute *perfidia*—that he destroyed the Germans, including their women and children, after arresting their leaders who had come to negotiate (13-15). “The admission of previous intent—the essence of the crime in modern law—is the clause *huc postero die quam frequentissimi convenirent, ut de eorum postulatis cognosceret*, 11.5. This is the one specific act of Caesar in Gaul that we know was criticized at Rome”²⁴ Cato of Utica proposed handing Caesar over to the Germans.²⁵

Finding no theme in Caesar’s actions east of the Rhine, we turn to his first invasion of Britain, where the theme is *perturbatio Romana*, “confusion on the part of the Romans.”²⁶ Wading ashore under attack, *magnopere perturbabantur* (26.1). Because their ships were buffeted by a storm, *magna . . . totius exercitus perturbatio facta est* (29.3). The Britons attacked a foraging legion,

²¹*Cura* (= *diligentia*), *diligenter*, *diligentia*, *industrie*, *navare*: Crassus, 3:116=1/39; Lab. among. Par., 2:101=1/51; Helv., 0:496.

²²Friedrich Münzer, “P. Licinius Crassus,” RE, XIII.1 (1926), 293-294. For *humanitas*, “amiability,” see Oscar E. Nybakken, “Humanitas Romana,” TAPA, LXX (1939), 400-402.

²³Twenty words of unfaithfulness and deceit: Usip., 7:128=1/18; Lab. vs. Trev., 2:56=1/28; 2nd Brit., 0:265.

²⁴John H. Collins, *Propaganda, Ethics, and Psychological Assumptions in Caesar’s Writings* (diss. Frankfurt 1952), p. 37.

²⁵Plut. *Caes.* 22.3, Suet. *Iul.* 24.3.

²⁶Nine words of Roman confusion: 1st Brit., 4:265 (*Romans are incl. in a 5th ex.*)*1/66; Sab. & Cotta, 3:199=1/66; Amb., 4:270=1/68; 2nd Brit., 0:234.

killed some men, and *reliquos . . . perturbaverunt* (32.5). The Britons, Caesar explains, with racing war-chariots in their combats *ordines plerumque perturbant* (33.1), and now *quibus rebus perturbatis nostris . . . Caesar auxilium tulit* (34.1). “. . . we do not know how [in Caesar’s report to the Senate] a flagrant double setback was presented as a series of brilliant victories.”²⁷

III

In book 5 we come to the year 54 B.C. and final pacification. During the second invasion of Britain, *fuga Britannorum*, “flight of the Britons,” is the theme,²⁸ implying Roman success. After the Romans had driven the Britons into the forests, Caesar gave orders not to pursue *eos fugientes* (9.8), but the next day he directed pursuit of *eos qui fugerant* (10.1). Another battle so came out *ut nostri . . . eos in silvas collesque compulerint* (15.1) The next day the Roman cavalry *praecipites hostes egerunt* (17.4); then *ex hac fuga* forces from other parts of Britain departed (17.5). The Romans forded the Thames with such élan that the enemy *se fugae mandarent* (18.5). Many Britons were killed *in fuga* (21.6) from their taken stronghold. The final impression is that the second invasion of Britain was a success.²⁹ Florus says of Caesar in Britain: *non enim provinciae, sed nomini studebatur* (1.45.19).

Next, five cohorts under Titurius Sabinus and Aurunculeius Cotta wintering between the Meuse and the Rhine were virtually wiped out by the Eburones through the treachery of their leader, Ambiorix, combined with the gullibility of Sabinus. Here the theme is *mors decora Romana*, “seemly Roman death.”³⁰ The fighting Romans did nothing *quod ipsis esset indignum* (35.5). First *Q. Licanius . . . fortissime pugnans . . . interficitur* (35.7). When Ambiorix proposed a conference, the manly Roman Cotta *se ad armatum hostem iturum negat* (36.3), but in ignoble contrast Sabinus went and was treacherously killed (*interficitur*, 37.2). Cotta *pugnans interficitur cum maxima parte militum* (37.4). *L. Petrosidius aquilifer . . . fortissime pugnans occiditur* (37.5). Finally the surviving Romans *ad unum desperata salute se ipsi interficiunt* (37.6). Caesar has placed the blame on Sabinus; all die nobly but him.

Ambiorix turned in triumph to the legion wintering among the Nervii under Quintus Cicero, crowing *nihil esse negotii subito oppressam legionem . . . interfici* (38.4) But although Cicero was unwell (40.7), he and his men heroically held out; the theme is *virtus*, “courage”:³¹

. . . nothing in Latin prose literature . . . grips the reader’s attention more strongly than the account . . . of the manner in which Cicero held his

²⁷G. Walter, *Caesar, a Biography*, trans. E. Craufurd (New York 1952), p. 231.

²⁸Thirty-eight words of flight of the Romans’ enemies: 2nd. Brit., 9:234=1/26; Sab. vs. Un., 3:61=1/20; Caes. Germ. cav., 4:81=1/20; Alesia, 16:390=1/24; Ariov., 8:537=1/67; Q. Cic., 1:146.

²⁹Frank Burr Marsh, *A History of the Roman World from 146 to 30 B.C.*, rev. H. H. Scullard (London 1953), p. 204.

³⁰Twenty four words of Roman death: Sab. & Cotta, 7:199=1/28; Mor., 1:30; Alesia, 0:390.

³¹Nine words of bravery and daring: Q. Cic., 9:146=1/16; Belg., 26:540=1/21; Aed. rev., 1:160.

diminutive camp [*audere*: 43.6; *fortis*: 44.1; *fortiter*: 43.4; *virtus*: 43.4, 44.3, 44.14] . . . and managed to get a despatch through to Caesar, who promptly brought relief. The scene in which the great leader affectionately greeted his weary men after the siege [*virtus*: 52.3,4,6] stands out vividly in this inspiring tale.³²

Titus Labienus, wintering among the Remi, used *consilium*, "planning," to defeat the Treveri:³³ *ne quam occasionem rei bene gerendae dimitteret, cogitabat* (57.1). While Indutiomarus' calvary ranged outside his camp, *Labienus suos intra munitiones continebat* (57.4); and after he had received reinforcements, as before *omnes suos custodiis intra castra continuit*, as if he were fearful (58.1). Finally he hurled his cavalry out of camp; *comprobat hominis consilium Fortuna* (58.6),³⁴ for soon the troopers brought back Indutiomarus' head.

Book 6 and 53 B.C.: when Caesar in the winter of 54-53 B.C. anticipated revolts, the keynote of his actions was *celeritas*, "swiftness,"³⁵ He raised troops in Cisalpine Gaul, and *celeriter confecto per suos delectu . . . et celeritate et copiis docuit quid populi Romani disciplina atque opes possent* (1.4). Besides, *maturius sibi de bello cogitandum putavit* (2.3). First, *de improviso in fines Nerviorum contendit* (3.1). Next, *eo celeriter confecto negotio*, he returned to winter quarters (3.3). Learning that the Senones might join a revolt, *magnis itineribus eo pervenit* (3.6), and accepted their surrender (4.2-3). Then, *celeriter effectis pontibus*, he similarly checkmated the Menapii (6).

Meanwhile Labienus, quartered among the Treveri, was again using *consilium* to defeat them.³⁶ He first negated the *consilium* of the enemy, who had halted some miles from him: *hostium cognito consilio*, he encamped near them (7.4). Planting rumor, *loquitur consulto palam* that he would not remain there to be overwhelmed by superior numbers (7.6). But to his officers *quid sui sit consilii proponit* (7.8). The next morning, by breaking camp with the pretended hubbub of flight, the Romans enticed the Gauls across the river separating the two armies—*quae fore suspicatus Labienus* (8.2)—and then routed them as they stood with their backs to the river.

The theme of Caesar's unsuccessful attempt to catch Ambiorix is *Fortuna*, "Luck,"³⁷ I believe that even if Caesar thought he was sometimes blessed with

³²Walter Dennison, Editorial, *CW*, IX (1916), 81.

³³*Cogitare*, "to plan"; *consilium*, "plan"; *consulto* (adv.); *ratio*, "plan": Lab. vs. Ind., 2:68=1/34; Caes. prec., 5:87=1/17; Lab. vs. Trev., 3:56=1/19 (where, too, *consilium* is the theme); Sab. & Cotta, 5:199=1/40; Ariov., 2:537=1/269.

³⁴As to the prominence of *consilium* here, ". . . the antithesis between human wisdom and an overruling power was a commonplace of Roman thought and was unquestionably in Caesar's mind" (B. O. Foster, "On the Force of *Hominis* in Caesar *B.G.* v.58.6," *CJ*, XIII [1918], 278, w. cit. of Plaut. *Pseud.* 678-679 and Hirtius *B.G.* 8.43.5).

³⁵For statistics, see n. 18.

³⁶For statistics, see n. 33.

³⁷*Casus, fatum, felicitas, feliciter, fors, fortuito, fortuna, fortunatus*: Amb., 14:270=1/19; Last rev. beg., 3:91=1/30; 2nd Brit., 0:234.

luck, he did not rely on good luck but rather worked tremendously hard, realizing that even the most strenuous effort may fail.³⁸ We can here deepen our understanding of Caesar's attitude. Earlier in Book 6 Caesar won victories largely through *celeritas* without a hint of *Fortuna*. Now he sent Minucius Basilus ahead to hunt down Ambiorix: *si quid . . . celeritate . . . proficere possit* (29.4). Still the Gaul barely got away (30), and Caesar concludes: *sic et ad subeundum periculum et ad vitandum multum Fortuna valuit* (30.4). In the end was Ambiorix lucky or Basilus unlucky? Who can say?

Caesar comments on a nearly disastrous incident: *hic quantum in bello Fortuna possit et quantos adferat casus, cognosci potuit* (35.2). When Caesar set out to hunt down Ambiorix, he left Quintus Cicero in command of Atuatuca. Just after Cicero, despairing of Caesar's return on the appointed day, had contrary to instructions sent half his one legion out to forage, the Germanic Sugambri, out for loot, fell upon the fortress, encouraging one another *ne tantam fortunam ex manibus dimittant* (37.10). But discipline and bravery saved the fortress even before Caesar returned. Caesar comments:

Reversus ille, [Caesar] eventus belli non ignorans unum, quod cohortes ex statione et praesidio essent emissae, questus—ne minimo quidem casui locum relinquere debuisset—multum Fortunam in repentino hostium adventu potuisse iudicavit, multo etiam amplius quod paene ab ipso vallo portisque castrorum barbaros avertisset (42.1-2).

But in his remarks on *Fortuna* Caesar is only being considerate of Cicero: for he implies that if Cicero had not sent the troops out to forage, luck would have played a very small part.

Book 7 presents the final united effort, in the year 52 B.C., of many Gallic tribes to drive the Romans from their soil. Caesar matches almost every mention of the Gallic desire for *libertas*, "liberty," the main theme of the book,³⁹ with an instance of Gallic *barbaria*, "barbarity."⁴⁰ Gallic chieftains called for volunteers *qui . . . Galliam in libertatem vindicent* (1.5). It was better to die fighting, they said, than not to recover *veterem belli gloriam libertatemque* (1.8). The Gauls began their revolt by massacring Roman merchants *ducibus desperatis hominibus* (3.1). Young Vercingetorix *habet dilectum egenitium et perditorum* (4.3). Thus the Roman reader felt no sympathy at learning that *hortatur ut communis libertatis causa arma capiant* (4.4). Even less was the

³⁸My view is essentially that of W. Warde Fowler, "Caesar's Concept of Fortune," *CR*, XVII (1903), 155; and *Roman Ideas of Deity in the Last Century before the Christian Era* (London 1914), p. 75; followed by E. Tappan, "Julius Caesar's Luck," *CJ*, XXVII (1931), 14; and by Collins, *Propaganda*, p. 123; in contrast to the view that Caesar's concept of *Fortuna* was tinged with mysticism or superstition: Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest*, 1st edn. (London and New York, 1897), p. 22, 2nd edn., p. 42; and J. Wight Duff, *A Literary History of Rome from the Origins to the Close of the Golden Age*, 3rd edn. ed. J. D. Duff (New York 1953), p. 300.

³⁹*Liber* and *liberare* (w. obj. only persons, not things nor parts of the body), *libertas*: Bk. 7, 12:1,595=1/133; Bk. 5, 7:997=1/142; Bk. 6, 0:741.

⁴⁰That *crudelitas*, *perfidia*, and *temeritas*, exemplified in passages cited, are aspects of Caesar's picture of *barbaria*, is shown by J. Rüger, *Barbarus: Wort und Begriff bei Cicero, Livius, Caesar* (Diss. Göttingen 1966), pp. 89, 117, 118.

so stirred at learning how Vercingetorix enforced discipline—through death by torture and by burning, through lopping off ears and gouging out eyes (4.10).

It was often *oratione subdola* that chieftains were persuaded to join the revolt (31.2). Even the Romans' friends, the Aedui, now began to go over to Vercingetorix; and a turncoat leader urged his people *ut se liberos et imperio natos meminerint* (37.2). He was obliged to Caesar, but declared *se . . . plus communi libertati tribuere* (37.4). Caesar says of himself: *Haeduum civitati praecipue indulserat* (40.1); and indicts their leaders: *impellit alios avaritia, alios iracundia et temeritas* (42.2).

Vercingetorix urged the Gauls to keep their property from the Romans by burning it to gain *perpetuum imperium libertatemque* (64.3). Caesar reflects: *tanta tamen universae Galliae consensus fuit libertatis vindicandae . . . ut neque beneficiis neque amicitiae memoria moverentur* (76.2). While the inhabitants of besieged Alesia were starving, the chieftain Critognatus barbarously urged eating the flesh of the feeble: *cuius rei si exemplum non haberemus, tamen libertatis causa institui . . . pulcherrimum iudicarem* (77.13). When the cause was hopeless, Vercingetorix told the assembled leaders *id bellum suscepisse se non suarum necessitatum, sed communis libertatis causa*, and offered either to die or to be surrendered to the enemy (89.1-2). Here, at the close, there is no mention of *barbaria*, and *libertas* keeps the dignity it deserves.

Caesar does the Romans justice, too. When Labienus, detached from Caesar, was fighting against odds among the Parisii, *tantis subito difficultatibus obiectis ab animi virtute auxilium petendum videbat* (59.6). Common soldiers earn praise in the contrast, *cum acerrime comminus pugnaretur, hostes loco et numero, nostri virtute confiderent* (50.1) . . . Only the Gergovia campaign has a clear theme apart from *libertas*; it is *moderatio* "control."⁴¹ After his men had learned *continentia*, "self control," the hard way, Caesar told them *non minus se in milite modestiam et continentiam quam animi magnitudinem desiderare* (52.4). Caesar believed the Romans deserved to win.⁴²

Some of the themes of the *Gallic War* have a vividness that would make even a less significant story interesting. Such are *timor*, *furor*, *difficultas*, *perfidia*, *perturbatio*, *fuga*, *Fortuna*, *libertas*, and *barbaria*. Each of several other themes fully or partly expresses one of the four cardinal virtues.⁴³ *Consilium*

⁴¹Fifteen words of restraining oneself or other friendly persons: Gerg., 8:200=1/25; Lab. vs. Ind. (where *moderatio* is a key element of *consilium*, the main theme), 3:68=1/23; Mor., 1:30; Aed. rev., 0:160.

⁴²In Book 7 Caesar 8 times mentions Roman *virtus* or *magnitudo animi* without mentioning corresponding Gallic courage (19.4-5, 22.1, 47.3, 50.1, 52.3, 59.6, 62.2, 86.4), while he mentions these qualities possessed by the Gauls with no mention of matching Roman qualities 4 times (36.4, 59.5, 77.4, 83.4). Once Roman *virtus* is matched with Gallic (80.5). But of the 8 cited passages referring to Roman courage alone, 3 contain praise of actual Roman performance (22.1, 50.1, 86.4), while none of the passages on Gallic courage expresses this kind of specific praise. Besides, there are 7 passages setting forth Roman deeds of endurance, heavy toil, or courage with no explicit mention of a virtue (8.2, 12.6, 17.3-8, 24.1, 41.5, 50.4-6, 51.1) and only 3 such passages about the Gauls (25.2-4, 30.4, 62.7).

⁴³See esp. Pl. *Resp.* 427E-448E, Cic. *Off.* 1.46-58.

and *diligentia* partake of *sapientia*; *continentia*, of *temperantia*. *Virtus*, especially when it leads to *mors decora*, is *fortitudo*. Caesar observed *iustitia* in his treatment of the conquered Belgae. To these themes add the beautiful capstone, *humanitas*.

The *Gallic War*, embodying aspects of human thought, action, and experience, strongly engages the imagination:

From no work of Latin literature, not even from the *Aeneid*, does the voice of eternal Rome roll down the ages so powerfully; one has but to open the *Bellum Gallicum* at random and read three chapters, and the *maiestas populi Romani* will rise before his imagination as the spirit of Caesar is said to have cowed Brutus on the eve of Philippi.⁴⁴

The *Gallic War* is a precious part of the great Western literary tradition.

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⁴⁴Collins, *Propaganda*, p. 123.