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PREFACE

This volume examines various aspects of contemporary historiography in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. The term 'contemporary historiography' (Jacoby's *Zeitgeschichte*) is usually applied to historical works that cover, in whole or in part, the periods of time through which the historians themselves lived. These works are typically valued for their proximity to the events they narrate, though they are not without their problems of interpretation. Through various devices, authors might attempt to give the impression of eyewitness status even when they themselves were not present; contemporary events could shift authors' point of view and compel them to provide unrealistic or biased accounts; and memories of eyewitnesses were not always sharp. The papers in this volume examine how we might read and understand histories of this type. They demonstrate how contemporary historiography was practiced across time and how it was a constantly evolving part of the Greco-Roman historiographic tradition.

The papers on Herodotus and Thucydides, Julius Caesar, Cassius Dio, and Herodian originated in a session held at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies in San Diego in 2019. To the original four papers presented there have been added chapters on Ptolemy I Soter, Sallust, and Tacitus.

My thanks go to the contributors to this supplement, for their dedication and persistence, and to John Marincola, for his help and patience in bringing this work to publication. I also thank the anonymous reviewers, who offered many criticisms and suggestions for the improvement of this volume as a whole.

A.G.S.
Philadelphia, November 2022

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CHRISTOPHER BARON is Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Notre Dame. He specialises in Greek and Roman historiography and Greek history, especially in the Hellenistic and Imperial ages. His publications include *Timaeus of Tauromenium and Hellenistic Historiography* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); *Cassius Dio and the Late Roman Republic*, co-edited with Josiah Osgood (Brill, 2019); *The Herodotus Encyclopedia* (Wiley, 2021); and numerous articles and book chapters. Among his current projects is a monograph on *Greek Historians under the Roman Empire*.

JENNIFER GERRISH is Associate Professor of Classics at the College of Charleston. Her research focuses primarily on Latin historiography, with particular interest in allusion and intertextuality in the ancient historians and conceptions of civil war. Her publications include *Sallust's* Histories *and Triumviral Historiography* (Routledge, 2019) and a translation and commentary of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* Books 5–6 for the Aris and Phillips series (2022). She is currently working on a translation and commentary of *Gallic Wars* 1–2 as well as a monograph on literary allusion in Caesar's commentaries.

ADAM M. KEMEZIS is Associate Professor in the Department of History, Classics, and Religion at the University of Alberta. He is the author of *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and co-editor (with Colin Bailey and Beatrice Poletti) of *The Intellectual Climate of Cassius Dio: Greek and Roman Pasts* (Brill, 2022). He has published numerous articles on Roman imperial historiography and history, as well as the Greek culture of the Roman Empire.

JESPER MAJBOM MADSEN is Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern Denmark. He is co-editor (with Carsten H. Lange) of Brill's 'Historiography of Rome and Its Empire' series. His books include

Eager to be Roman: Greek Response to Roman Rule in Pontus and Bithynia (Duckworth, 2009) and *From Trophy Towns to City-States: Urban Civilization and Cultural Identities in Roman Pontus* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), as well as the co-edited volume (with Roger Rees) *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing: Double Vision* (Brill, 2014). Apart from the co-edited volume (with C. H. Lange) *Cassius Dio: Greek Intellectual and Roman Politician* (Brill, 2016) he has published extensively on Cassius Dio including 'Cassius Dio and the Cult of Iulius and Roma at Ephesus and Nicaea (51.20.6–8)' (*Classical Quarterly*, 2016) and *Cassius Dio* (Bloomsbury, 2020).

FRANCES POWNALL is Professor of Classics in the Department of History, Classics, and Religion at the University of Alberta. She has published widely on Greek history and historiography, and has contributed extensively to *Brill's New Jacoby*. Recent publications include *Ancient Macedonians in the Greek and Roman Sources* (co-edited with T. Howe, Classical Press of Wales, 2018), *Lexicon of Argead Macedonia* (co-edited with W. Heckel, J. Heinrichs, and S. Müller, Frank and Timme, 2020), *Affective Relations & Personal Bonds in Hellenistic Antiquity* (co-edited with E. M. Anson and M. D'Agostini, Oxbow, 2020), and *The Courts of Philip II and Alexander the Great: Monarchy and Power in Ancient Macedonia* (co-edited with S. Asirvatham and S. Müller, De Gruyter, 2022).

ANDREW G. SCOTT is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at Villanova University. He is the author of *Emperors and Usurpers: an historical commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History, Books 79(78)–80(80) (217–229 CE)* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and *An Age of Iron and Rust: Cassius Dio and the History of His Time* (Brill, 2023). He is also co-editor (with C. H. Lange) of *Cassius Dio: The Impact of Violence, War, and Civil War* (Brill, 2020) and (with Jesper Majbom Madsen) of *Brill's Companion to Cassius Dio* (Brill, 2023).

LYDIA SPIELBERG is Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her primary areas of research are Roman historiography, ancient rhetoric and rhetorical education, and speech representation. She is currently working on a monograph on quoted speech in the Roman historians.

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CAESAR'S TALKATIVE CENTURIONS: ANECDOTAL SPEECH, SOLDIERLY *FIDES*, AND CONTEMPORARY HISTORY*

Lydia Spielberg

Abstract: Caesar purports to quote brief utterances by his centurions at dramatic moments in the *commentarii*, who provide testimony 'from the ranks'. These speakers demonstrate Caesar's bond with his men and offer readers in Rome interpretations of contested events that might be indecorous for Caesar to make in his own voice, but which have persuasive power from notionally independent and unrhetorical soldiers. For non-contemporary readers these specifics were inapposite or irrelevant, however, and later writers such as Appian and Plutarch give Caesarian centurions only stock declarations of loyalty.

Keywords: *Bellum Civile*, *Bellum Gallicum*, Julius Caesar, centurions, direct discourse, *ipsa verba*, speech

Caesar praises his legates and tribunes sparingly in his commentaries, but he makes centurions and standard-bearers the stars of miniature dramas of *uirtus* such as the self-sacrifice of the centurion Petronius to save his men at Gergovia (*BG* 7.50.4–6) or the standard-bearer at Dyrrachium who uses his dying breath to exhort his comrades to save their

* This paper was first presented on the *Contemporary Historiography* panel at the SCS 2019 annual meeting; I am grateful to the organisers, the other panel members, and the audiences there and at CSULA, for their questions and suggestions. I particularly thank Andrew Scott, Virginia Closs, and Cynthia Damon, as well as the two anonymous readers for *Histos*, whose comments and criticisms greatly improved the paper. All the errors and infelicities that remain are, of course, mine.

Unless otherwise noted, I cite *Bellum Gallicum* (*BG*) from the edition of Hering (1987), *Bellum Civile* (*BC*) from Damon (2015a) and *Bellum Africum* (*BAfr.*) from Klotz (1966). Suetonius is cited from the text of Kaster (2016), Plutarch from Ziegler (1960–73), and Appian from McGing (2019–20). Translations are my own.

legion's eagle from capture (*BC* 3.64.3). These anecdotes have drawn attention as evidence for Caesar's *inventio*, glaring examples of a dramatic, even 'tragic' historiographical sensibility emerging from Caesar's 'practical prose' or a willingness to exaggerate the facts to his benefit.[1] In contrast to these approaches to the narrative technique of Caesar *qua* elite *littérateur* and canny politician, recent articles on the first audiences of *Bellum Gallicum* have emphasised the ideological value of such episodes, which would have been particularly welcome to popular and non-elite (or at least less elite) audiences in Rome and Italy.[2]

I build on these approaches in this paper to examine an issue pertinent both to studies of historiographical *inventio* and the reception of (especially) contemporary historiography: the credibility of Caesar's centurions as speakers. The utterances Caesar attributes to his centurions and standard-bearers account for a significant proportion of the direct discourse in the *commentarii* where, in Kraus' words, they 'serve as the stylized representatives of his legions, who through their leaders speak in (largely) ultra-brave, ultra-Roman, ultra-loyal voices'.[3] The words of centurions and standard-bearers, I argue, are presented so as to separate them from the narrator and forestall scepticism about whether the anecdotes in which they star 'actually happened'. Caesar needs his centurion speakers to be taken as voices distinct from his own, moreover, because they tend to speak with special power and to specific contemporary concerns.[4] Writing about deeds in which he played a chief role, and about events in which he had a direct and immediate personal stake, for a Roman audience that would also be receiving versions of the same events from his enemies, Caesar avoids the appearance of bias *qua* narrator of his own deeds by largely separating his role as general within the action from his role as reporter of it. The narrator of the *commentarii* rarely makes explicit judgments or generalisations, and these judgments almost never touch on Caesar himself.[5] The voices from the ranks that Caesar the

[1] Rasmussen (1963). Rambaud (1966) 172–80; Pascucci (1973) 610–2.

[2] Wiseman (1998); Gerrish (2018); Langlands (2018).

[3] Kraus (2010) 56.

[4] I refer to the works generally as *commentarii* or 'commentaries', and use the abbreviations *BG* and *BC* for the Gallic war and civil war commentaries respectively. On these titles see Riggsby (2006) 143–4 with references.

[5] Ancient assessments of Caesar's prose style: Cic. *Brut.* 262; Hirt. *Ad Balbum* 4–7; see also Kraus (2005). For Caesar's narrative technique: Damon (1993); narrator's persona: Batstone (2017); Grillo (2011). On the charge of historiographical bias: Woodman (1988) 16–24; Luce (1989).

narrator purports to quote, however, provide seemingly independent testimony to the virtues of Caesar the general from representatives of the Roman people, for so Caesar presents his legions, although most of his soldiers came from the colonies and municipia of Northern Italy and Cisalpine Gaul.[6]

First, I show that the figure of the centurion, an experienced soldier who is stereotypically loyal but unsophisticated and who speaks from spontaneous emotion rather than rhetorical practice, makes a particularly credible speaker. In addition, the tradition of *dicta* whose memory-worthiness elevates incidental utterances by ordinary individuals to the status of historical event gives the short, direct-discourse speeches of centurions and standard-bearers the air of real utterances reported verbatim by one who either heard them himself or received them from an eyewitness, and Caesar's distribution of speech enhances this assumption. Centurions' expressions of loyalty to their commander press Caesarian ideological claims and interpretations of events—from the potential import of Caesar's expedition to Britain to his mantle as defender of the rights of the Roman people against a tyrannical faction—that were hotly contested in the 50s and 40s BCE. Caesar himself can stand aloof and let these facts, too, rest on the perceived reliability of a brave centurion. Finally, I show that the contemporary relevance of such anecdotes and utterances from 'ordinary' soldiers also emerges from their rewriting by later historians. While the anecdote about Crastinus' promise of valour before Pharsalus remained, elements of his speech that proved too specific to the politics of the early 40s BCE or were falsified by later events disappeared.

Insofar as I am arguing for the immediate contemporary relevance of centurion anecdotes in Caesar's works, I cannot avoid the question of when and how Caesar's *commentarii* were 'published'. Were the books of the *Gallic War* written and disseminated year by year, completed and published in one go, perhaps around 51 or 50 BCE, or published in groups of two or three books? Was any form of the *Civil War* published before Caesar's death in 44 BCE?[7] I cautiously favour the hypothesis of semi-serial publication of the *Gallic War*, as argued by several recent studies of Caesar's allusions and the

[6] Brunt (1971) 202–3, 465–8; for negative stereotypes about Caesar's soldiers, see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 11.7.2, *Phil.* 8.9, 10.22 with Keaveney (2007) 57–8; de Blois (2007).

[7] For an overview of the debate over serial or unitary writing of *BG* see Riggsby (2006) 9–12; Grillo and Krebs (2017a) 3–5. For *BC* see Batstone and Damon (2006) 29–32; Grillo (2012) 178–80.

progression of ethnographic portrayals over the course of the work.[8] One anecdote in *BG*, the speech of the standard-bearer at 4.25, might have had particular point in 54 BCE *before* the events of the next year's campaign.[9] The words of Crastinus in *BC* 3.91.2–3, on the other hand, make the most sense in a work composed not long after Pharsalus. In general, however, the soldier anecdotes in the *commentarii* would have served Caesar's (and the Caesarian faction's) ideological aims in a complete edition disseminated in the 40s as well as in serially published books in the 50s.

Wiseman has gone further, suggesting that Caesar's Gallic commentaries might have been disseminated not only as books traded among Rome's elite, but as texts to be read out to large public audiences not only in Rome but in Italy.[10] This is tempting, but unprovable, speculation. However, parts of the *commentarii* as we have them may be very similar to the official reports Caesar sent regularly to the senate, and which Caesar's supporters in Rome had read out to the people in *contiones*.[11] The earliest diffusion of anecdotal stories about the exploits of individuals, on the other hand, probably came in camp gossip and personal letters from Caesar's officers to friends and kin. Stories very like Caesar's centurion anecdotes would have trickled back as war stories whose protagonists were the relations, neighbours, and *contubernales* of the tellers. Indeed, one such set piece in the *commentarii*, the exploits of two centurions in the besieged camp of Quintus Cicero (*BG* 5.44), could only have come to Caesar's knowledge through a written report or informal conversation with officers who had been present.[12] Tales of individual soldiers' exploits in Caesar's campaigns probably circulated orally throughout the 50s, 40s, and 30s in Rome and in towns throughout Italy as what Rebecca Langlands terms 'floating anecdotes'.[13] Quite plausibly, these stories already bore something of the ideological charge that Caesar gives his *commentarii*.[14] Such anecdotes rarely happen as they are reported, but to

[8] Krebs (2013); Creer (2019); Potter (2020), all arguing for slightly different groupings.

[9] Nice (2003) and Creer (2019) 257–8 offer evidence for *BG* 4's publication before *BG* 5.

[10] Wiseman (1998); (2015) 101–2; cf. Busch (2005) 161–4; Gerrish (2018) 353–5; but see as well the cautions of Riggsby (2006) 14–15.

[11] Dio 39.63.4; cf. Cic. *Fam.* 7.18.4; Morstein-Marx (2004) 9–11, 249–51.

[12] See Koster (1978) 180–4 for an attempt to discern traces of Quintus' relation of the episode; cf. Krebs (2021).

[13] Langlands (2018); O'Neill (2003); Courrier (2017) 151–4. Gelzer (1968) 171 n. 5 collects the evidence for competing accounts promulgated and discussed in the correspondence of Caesar's officers.

[14] Cf. Batstone (2017) 44.

judge from the acceptance of similar stories into popular and even official histories in modern times, they are likely to have been believed by many who told them and retold them.[15]

Centurion Speech and Centurion Persona

Centurion speakers have a triple claim to speaking the 'truth'. In the first place, soldiers' sentiments are frankly expressed, and untainted by the suspicion of duplicitous intent or rhetorical trickery. Next, their speech comes as short *dicta* or exhortations that are often presented as if quotations of words actually said rather than rhetoricised compositions; their words are notionally 'real', not mediated through the *inventio* of the writer. Such small and trivial *dicta* find their way into a historian's narrative because they have some memorable significance or value as, for example, a demonstration of character or a witty summation of a situation. Finally, quoted words of centurions and soldiers tend to be portrayed as truths, whether because they accurately describe reality, because their words prove an unwitting omen, or because they presage interpretations that the future narrative will make explicit.[16]

Caesar's centurions descend historiographically from the military tribunes, generally young aristocrats, commemorated in the historical tradition of the mid-republic.[17] Both Cato the Elder and Claudius Quadrigarius celebrated the military tribune who volunteered for a dangerous mission to save the rest of the Roman army during the first Punic War (Gell. 3.7 = *FRHist* 5 F 76 and 24 F 42), and the annalistic tradition evidently retrojected this *exemplum* onto an earlier period as well (e.g., Liv. 7.34.1–37.3; 22.60.11).[18] Ennius singled out the military tribune Caelius in Book 15 of his *Annales* (Enn. *Ann.* 391–8 Sk.), and it may be significant that the Aetolian War of *Annales* 15 was contemporary history for Ennius' audience, and eyewitness history for

[15] See, e.g., Bartolini (2020); Bloch (1921).

[16] Ripat (2006) 158–62. Most famous is the centurion whose words were taken as a decisive omen not to move from Rome to Veii after the Gallic sack (Liv. 5.55.1–2; Val. Max. 1.5.1).

[17] On the social status of military tribunes: Suolahti (1955) 51–60.

[18] Chassignet (1986) 87; Calboli (1996); Oakley (1998) 333–4; Popov-Reynolds (2010); Cornell ap. *FRHist* III.121–2; Krebs (2006); Rood (2018) 845–6. For military tribune protagonists in early Roman history cf. Liv. 4.19.1–20.11 with Ogilvie (1965) 563-4; Liv. 7.4.3–5.9 with Clark (2016); Quadrigarius, *FRHist* 24 F 6 = Gell. 9.13.7–19.

the poet, who had accompanied the consul Fulvius Nobilior on campaign.[19] Pliny the Elder writes that Ennius' supplement to his completed epic (Books 16–18) was due to his 'amazement' at a certain Titus Caecilius Teucer and his brother (Plin. *HN* 7.101), probably also military tribunes.[20]

The quintessential historiographical traits of these aristocratic junior officers of the mid-republic—competitive bravery and willingness to risk one's life even to the point of recklessness—had migrated to the centurion by the early first century BCE.[21] Sulla commemorated the outstanding *uirtus* of Marcus Ateius, the first man to top the wall during the capture of Athens, in his *hypomnemata* (Plut. *Sull.* 14.3 = *FRHist* 22 F 19).[22] Although Plutarch does not specifically cite Sulla for the insouciant remark by a Roman centurion upon seeing the massed slaves whom Mithridates had armed on his front lines at the battle of Chaeronea—'only at Saturnalia had he seen slaves sharing in freedom' (*ὡς ἐν Κρονίοις μόνον εἰδείη τῆς παρρησίας δούλους μετέχοντας*, *Sull.* 18.4)—Plutarch names Sulla's *hypomnemata* as his source for the rest of the battle narrative (19.8), and it is likely that this anecdote, too, goes back to the dictator's memoirs. Much like the soldier quips that Caesar sometimes records, the Sullan centurion's remark demonstrates the confidence of Sulla's soldiers in the face of the enemy, and thus the competence and excellence of the *imperator*.[23] In having one of his soldiers draw the contrast between (implicitly) the discipline, hierarchy, and thoroughly Roman identity of Sulla's army and the alien laxity and social upheaval of the enemy, Sulla might also have attempted to counter the accusation that he overindulged his men in Eastern luxury (cf. Sall. *Cat.* 11.5-7).

In part, this must reflect the structural changes in the Roman army that had occurred by the late Republic: increasing professionalisation, the

[19] Goldberg (1989) 248–9; Skutsch (1984) 555–9.

[20] See Suerbaum (1968) 146–51; Skutsch (1984) 569–70; Goldberg (2006) 438. In Silius Italicus' *Punica*, Ennius himself receives a miniature *aristeia* during Torquatus' campaign in Sardinia (*Pun.* 12.387–414)—but as a centurion brandishing 'the proud insignia of the Latin vine-staff' (494–5: *Latiaeque superbum | uitis adornabat dextram decus*). A centurion-poet cuts against type (cf. Casali (2006) 581–2 n. 24), but, like Ennius' origins in the 'rough earth' of Calabria (12.395–6), the rank accords with his characterisation by the Augustan poets as 'shaggy' and primitive.

[21] Centurion anecdotes in Livy's third decade may well be influenced by Caesar's precedent: Kraus (2017) 278–82.

[22] Scholz–Walter–Winkl (2013) 83–4, 119. Lewis (1991) 511. On the pre-Sullan memoir tradition, see Flower (2014).

[23] Behr (1993) 77–8; cf. Plut. *Sull.* 27.5 = *FRHist* 22 F 24.

emergence of a 'middle cadre' of career soldiers who had advanced to officer positions, and the smaller role that active military service played in the careers of the senatorial elite at Rome, including significant reduction of the military tribune's role in fighting.[24] By the same token, however, the centurions whose battlefield valour Sulla (and later Caesar) honoured could never be their commander's competitors or enemies on the political scene, as Gaius Marius had been for Metellus and Sulla himself for Marius. Nor would they be perceived to outclass their commander at his own job when he allotted a share of his glory to them.[25] Centurions thus made safer exemplars of Roman *uirtus* than legates or tribunes for *imperatores* writing accounts of their own exploits, while also allowing the general to emphasise the valour of the army that they represented. By honouring the exceptional bravery, competence, and dedication of lower officers from the ranks, moreover, a commander could demonstrate the strength of his bond with his army and, implicitly, with the *populus Romanus*—particularly important for a *popularis* such as Caesar.[26]

As exemplars of *uirtus*, centurions seem to speak without deception or premeditation but from spontaneous and therefore genuine feeling. Although a notch above the brutish soldiers disdained by the Roman elite, they are generally represented as unsophisticated and incapable of higher thought or culture. Although emotions are not a philosophical good, argues Cicero in *Tusculans* 4, they are all right for a centurion or a standard-bearer, 'for those who cannot use reason can profitably use emotion instead' (*utile est enim uti motu animi, qui uti ratione non potest*, *Tusc.* 4.55).[27] Simultaneously, centurions can be representatives of the simple, unspoiled 'common man' of the Italian *municipia*. Already in Lucilius' second book of satires, the orator Scaevola contrasts the Italian centurions Pontius and Tritanius, 'famous men and frontliners, and standard-bearers, too' (*praeclarorum hominum ac primorum signiferumque*, FF 87–90 Warmington) with the Hellenising

[24] Middle Republic: Suolahti (1955) 43–5; Dobson (1978) 3–5; (2000). Late Republic: de Blois (2000); (2007); Lendon (2005) 218–9; Erdkamp (2006) 561–2.

[25] Cf. Sall. *Iug.* 64.1–4; Plut. *Mar.* 7.1–8.7, 10.2–9; *Sull.* 4.2–5.1, with Behr (1993) 114–21.

[26] Welch (1998) 98. For Caesar's attention to individual soldiers see Batstone and Damon (2006) 19, 135–6; Palao Vicente (2009), esp. 192 n. 5 for a comparison of Caesar with other historians. On Caesar's portrayal of soldiers in the collective, see Ash (1999) 5–10. For Caesar's 'populism' see Ash (1999) 22; Busch (2005) 160; Westall (2018); 210–17; Grillo (2012) 131–6. Cf. Behr (1993) 53–76.

[27] Cf. Cic. *Sen.* 33.

pretensions of his opponent Albucius.[28] Elite disdain obscures the reality that by the first century BCE, many centurions were members of the municipal elite and could achieve equestrian census upon retirement; in 49 BCE, Caesar borrowed money from his centurions as well as his military tribunes (*BC* 1.39.3–4).[29] Caesar's *commentarii* do not treat his soldiers or centurions with the scorn of a Lucilius or a Cicero, but his narrative, like his army's discipline, nevertheless relies on the same stereotyped division of *ratio* and *uirtus* and the sorts of speech that accompany each.[30] Brief, spontaneous utterances concerned with valour and confined to the immediate circumstances belong naturally to the soldier, just as the carefully-considered deliberative speech or the extended pre-battle exhortation belongs naturally to the commander and his *consilium*.

Caesar distributes speech carefully in the *commentarii*, giving the impression of a reporter who for the most part transmits the unadorned content of actual speech acts: summaries of speeches and messages and only occasionally, a noteworthy utterance in direct discourse. The 'noteworthiness' of anecdotal speech within a historical narrative, Riggsby observes, 'requires a break in the narrative; they [anecdotes] appear to impose themselves on the author. If they neither explain nor advance the story, then their value lies in their having (supposedly) actually happened'.[31] This is not to say that such short utterances *are* accurate historical transmissions: on the contrary, anecdotes of memorable *facta* and *dicta* are more likely to illustrate exemplary truths than to convey history *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*.[32]

Caesar's presentation of soldier speeches gives them greater credibility as spontaneous utterances that actually happened. Nearly all of the utterances Caesar quotes as coming from soldiers or lower officers are in direct discourse—a rare thing in his *commentarii*.[33] While direct discourse gives the

[28] Dench (1995) 92–4; (2005) 330; Perseyn (2019) 182–4. Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.72–5; Pers. 3.1.77, 5.189.

[29] Syme (1937) 129; Wiseman (1971) 74–7; Dobson (2000) 140. Sallust's and Cicero's depictions of dictators packing the senate with their soldiers exaggerate (e.g., Cic. *Div.* 2.23; Sall. *Cat.* 37.7): Syme (1939) 78–82.

[30] Cf. Liv. 25.21.9–17 for the disastrous results of a centurion giving strategic advice.

[31] Riggsby (2006) 142; Grillo (2012) 132–3.

[32] On the historicity of anecdotes and their easy transformation and reattribution, see Saller (1980); Wehrli (1973); on anecdotes and *inventio*: Roller (1997).

[33] Hyart (1953) 171–200; Grillo (2017) 132–4 with bibliography. Three of the seven instances of *oratio recta* in *BG* and two of the nine in *BC* are given to Caesar's standard-bearers and centurions. On Caesar's use of speech (direct and indirect) in relation to the

experiential illusion of proximity to an 'original' speech-act (or a hypothetical speech-act), it does not, of course, indicate actual transcription. Indeed, in contexts such as historiographical narrative, extended direct speech may imply a greater degree of fictionalisation than indirect speech, because the latter seems to convey a bare report of the contents of the speech act, while the former engages in an understood convention of rewriting and invention.[34] Caesar's consistent use of indirect discourse for most 'historiographical' speech (embassies, deliberations, generals' pre-battle exhortations) gives an impression of a narrator who reports the bare content of important speech acts without pretending to replicate their form or flourishes.[35] By contrast, Caesar regularly notes that the speakers whom he is about to or has just 'quoted' in direct discourse spoke loudly, shouted, or were overheard by numerous bystanders, if not by Caesar himself.[36] This contributes to the impression that these are 'real' things that were 'really' said, were overheard by multiple people (many of them still living at the time that Caesar's *commentarii* were first being read), and could therefore have been verified. This primes the reader or listener to believe that the non-oratorical speaker who interrupts the narrator of the commentaries with direct discourse has some special status of credibility, while Caesar's proximity to the events about which he writes gives plausibility to these quotations of anecdotal speech.

Army Jokes and Camp Discipline

One of the only explicit jokes in Caesar's commentaries, a quip made 'rather humorously' (*non inridicule*) by an anonymous soldier of the 10th Legion, illustrates how soldiers' *dicta* can set up or make explicit ideas that Caesar

genre of *commentarii* see Rasmussen (1963); Riggsby (2006) 142. Rich (2020) examines the surviving evidence for historiographical speech prior to Caesar.

[34] Wilson (1982) 102. Laird (1999) 121–43 argues persuasively that any impression of greater or lesser accuracy in reproducing the 'original' speech act in direct vs indirect discourse is a matter of the historian's rhetoric. Cf. Moore (2002) on early modern depositions; Landert (2015) on modern news media; Eckstein (2018) 105–10 on reconstructing speeches from memory. But it does not therefore follow that all historiographical rhetoric was transparent to ancient audiences, or, indeed, even to the historians who employed it.

[35] A false impression, as Dangel (1995) demonstrates and linguistic studies of quotation affirm: Clark and Gerrig (1990); Wade and Clark (1993).

[36] Adema (2017) 184; Rasmussen (1963) 133.

might not wish to assert so strongly in his own voice.[37] The German king Ariovistus has demanded that when he and Caesar meet, each be accompanied only by a cavalry detachment. Caesar, distrusting the Gallic auxiliaries who constitute his cavalry, reassigns their horses to soldiers from his faithful 10th legion. This occasions a joke from one of his soldiers: *non inridicule quidam ex militibus dixit plus quam pollicitus esset Caesarem facere: pollicitum se in cohortis praetoriae loco decimam legionem habiturum ad equum rescribere* ('A certain soldier said rather humorously that Caesar was doing even more than he had promised: for he had promised to consider the 10th legion his personal guard, but now he was enrolling them in the cavalry',1.42.6). The soldier jokes that by giving his men horses, Caesar has in effect elevated them to the equestrian class.

Unlike in later anecdotes about centurions and standard-bearers, in this episode the speaker is unranked, his words are given in indirect discourse, and the utterance occurs preparatory to a diplomatic confrontation rather than a martial one. It functions, however, in much the same way.[38] The anecdote appears to offer spontaneous testimony from the ranks to Caesar's reputation among his soldiers. Unusual orders in an unusual situation are met with good cheer, and the soldier who speaks is confident in his general and confident that his loyal service will be rewarded.[39] No reader or listener of *BG* 1, or indeed the 'original' audience to the witticism, would really expect Caesar to elevate his legionaries to the equestrian class, but the joke reminds us that Caesar's army depends on him for the advancement of their interests, and that he will reward them even above their expectations. By recording the anonymous soldier's joke, meanwhile, Caesar affirms his close attention to his soldiers and his bond with them.[40] For a moment, the chain of command that usually mediates the interactions between general and common soldier—and so, to some extent, the narrator whose measured voice stands between the reader and the events about which she reads—collapses.

The joke gains a sharper point, however, when considered as the capping epigram to the 'Vesontio Mutiny', an episode in which Caesar restores the

[37] But see Maurach (2002) and Corbeill (2017) for other instances of Caesarian humour.

[38] Hyart (1953) 178. *BG* 1–3 contain no instances of *oratio recta*.

[39] For the rewards Caesar's soldiers could expect on campaign: Westall (2018) 213–6.

[40] Cf. perhaps the *carmina triumphalia*: Suet. *Iul.* 49.4, 51; Plin. *HN* 19.144; Dio 43.20.1–4; noting Caesar's 'indulgence' (πρᾳότης) towards his soldiers' 'license' (παρρησία), with Montlahuc (2019) 136–40; 189–94; Chrissanthos (2004).

proper balance between speech, rank, and authority in his army when exaggerated rumours have brought it close to mutiny (*BG* 1.39–42).[41] The quip represents the soldiers' return to their proper sphere of speech after they have tried to usurp the commander's position as deliberative speaker and strategist. Common soldiers, moreover, become ever more central throughout Caesar's narration of this near-mutiny, while his officers of equestrian and senatorial rank come off very badly, giving a subversive twist to the legionary soldier's *dictum* about Caesar elevating his common soldiers to the rank of *equites*.

The trouble begins when rumours about the size and ferocity of Ariovistus' men create panic and despair throughout Caesar's army. The narrator makes it very clear that the blame lies with Caesar's staff officers: the tribunes, prefects, and other aristocratic hangers-on with little military experience (1.39.2). Their poor morale eventually makes its way even to the experienced soldiers, centurions, and squadron-officers, who invent excuses about supply-lines and rough terrain (1.39.5).

Caesar responds with a lengthy speech delivered to his officers, including the centurions of all cohorts (1.40.1), although usually the staff officers and most senior centurions alone comprise his *consilium*.[42] Even these distinctions between equestrian officers, centurions, and the body of the army appear nowhere in the substantial *oratio obliqua* speech itself, which seems to blur the separation between officers and army. When Caesar is made to ask, in indirect discourse, 'why they had lost faith either in their valour or in his own good management?' (*cur de sua uirtute aut de ipsius diligentia desperarent?*, 1.40.1), it is impossible to know whether the 'they' represents the officers to whom Caesar is speaking or soldiers about whom he is speaking. The important distinction is the one between Caesar and everyone else; all other differences of rank are secondary. While the officers had reported to Caesar that 'the *soldiers* will not obey orders' if told to march toward the enemy (*non fore dicto audientis milites*, 1.39.7), the indirect discourse of Caesar's speech elides such a specific subject when he quotes this claim back, assimilating the officers to the men on whom they are trying to place blame: *quod non fore dicto audientes neque signa laturi dicantur* ('As for the fact that it was said they/you would not obey orders nor advance the standards …', 1.40.12). Caesar thus aims his lecture at the officers and rank and file alike. He threatens to march alone,

[41] For a detailed treatment of this episode, see James (2000); on the perceived threat of non-elite speech to elite social power, see O'Neill (2003); Worley (2018).

[42] James (2000) 57.

accompanied by only the 10th legion, 'about which he had no doubts, and which would be his personal guard' (*de qua non dubitaret, sibique eam praetoriam cohortem futuram*, 1.40.15). This authoritative exercise of speech, and the final threat, breaks the incipient mutiny; the soldiers apologise to Caesar through their officers, and morale returns.[43] As the envoi to this demonstration of good and bad talk among the ranks, the soldier's joke confirms that the soldiers' morale is back and that their general again has their full trust: now instead of fearing Ariovistus and second-guessing Caesar's strategy, they indulge in a moment of levity.[44] We can also see the joke as a more specific 'reward' for the loyal legion, embodied in the unnamed soldier; by including it, Caesar confirms his special trust in the 10th legion.

But the soldier's joke also takes a step further the narrative's presentation of equestrian and senatorial officers as useless, and indeed, harmful to morale. The anonymous soldier suggests that Caesar himself might have preferred to rely entirely on the soldiers and centurions of his favourite legion, instead of aristocratic prefects and tribunes. Corbeill describes this as an 'insidious' autocratic subtext: the soldier imagines Caesar usurping the censors' role in confirming or altering the census-class of each citizen.[45] This might give the senatorial reader of Caesar pause—especially if he were reading in 50 or 49 BCE.[46] But one may suspect that less elevated audiences and repeaters of the anecdote (if it was not made up of whole cloth, it probably circulated orally as well, as Caesar's account implies) would have enjoyed this fantasy of the social order upended for their benefit. While maintaining some distance from the anti-aristocratic sentiment himself, Caesar thus makes his *popularis* allegiance very clear.[47] If, as Wiseman has proposed, Caesar's *commentarii* were read publicly to a wide popular audience in Rome and in Italy as well as by Rome's statesmen, this lightly subversive, populist joke might have been very appealing indeed.[48]

[43] Caesar's threat to take only the 10th legion became proverbial: Plut. *Caes.* 19.3–5; Frontin. *Strat.* 1.11.3, 4.5.11; Cass. Dio 38.46.3–4.

[44] See Montlahuc (2019) 136–40 for other examples of jokes passed between soldiers and commanders.

[45] Corbeill (2017) 149–50; Montlahuc (2019) 137.

[46] For this proposed dating of a full edition (or re-edition) of *BG* 1–7 see Nipperdey (1847) 1–8; Adcock (1956) 88–9.

[47] Wiseman (1998) 2.

[48] Cf. Wiseman (1998).

BG 4.25: Prayer and Programmatics

In the first invasion of Britain, Caesar's ships find Britons waiting for them on the beaches, while waves and deep shoals draw out and make uncertain the Roman attempt to land men on the shore. Then, the standard bearer of the 10th legion leaps out to impel his comrades to follow, and speaks in the first instance of *oratio recta* in the *commentarii* (*BG* 4.25.3-5):

> at nostris militibus cunctantibus maxime propter altitudinem maris, qui decimae legionis aquilam ferebat, obtestatus deos, ut ea res legioni feliciter eueniret, 'desilite', inquit 'commilitones, nisi uultis aquilam hostibus prodere; ego certe meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium praestitero'. hoc cum uoce magna dixisset, se ex naui proiecit atque aquilam in hostes ferre coepit. tum nostri cohortati inter se, ne tantum dedecus admitteretur, uniuersi ex naui desiluerunt.

> But when our men were hanging back, mostly due to the depth of the water, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion's eagle invoked the gods to give the legion success in their endeavour and said: 'Jump out, comrades, unless you want to hand the eagle to the enemy; I certainly shall fulfil my duty to the Republic and my commander!' When he had said this in a loud voice, he flung himself from the ship and began to bear the eagle against the enemy. Then our men urged each other not to let such a disgrace be incurred, and they all jumped from the ship.

Several features of this speech give it an impression of 'authenticity'. Uttered in a loud voice by an *aquilifer* from the legion that Caesar had taken as his personal guard, this brief exhortation, like the quip of the 10th-legion soldier in *BG* 1, could conceivably have been heard by the commander himself; the loud voice, at any rate, provides a plausible chain of transmission. This first instance of direct discourse in the commentaries flaunts the difference between Caesar's narration and the soldier's outburst. The very first word (*desilite*) is an imperative that could not occur except in direct speech; it is followed—in one branch of the manuscript tradition—by *commilitones*, hapax in *BG* and present in *BC* only in the mouths of others.[49] Although Suetonius

[49] Editors have preferred β hyparchetype's *commilitones* to α's *milites*; in the latter tradition, the prefix *con-* appears to have migrated to the previous sentence, for the impossible *contestatus* (where β reads *obtestatus*); see further Hering (1987) xii–xiii. In *BC* Labienus uses

relates that Caesar was the first general to flatter his soldiers with this address (Suet. *Iul.* 67.2), Caesar never portrays himself, whether as general or as narrator, descending to such a pose of camaraderie. On the level of syntax, meanwhile, the *aquilifer* uses an un-Caesarian and slightly sub-literary future perfect in *officium praestitero*, a form Cicero largely avoids outside his letters, and which appears only here in Caesar's corpus.[50] From a soldier, however, the colloquialism is plausible enough, and it sets the *aquilifer*'s speech off even more distinctly against the narrative background.

Just as his *oratio recta* breaks through the narrative texture, the *aquilifer*'s bold action breaks through his comrades' hesitation to propel the landing forward.[51] The first landing on enemy soil was a bad omen if it did not come off well; a later story about Caesar has him cleverly turn a dire omen into a presage of victory when he reframed stumbling onto land in Africa as 'grasping' the territory (Suet. *Iul.* 59).[52] The *aquilifer*'s exhortation and leap similarly turn a potentially disastrous landing into a victory where 'unimpaired good fortune' is marred only by the fact that the fleeing Britons escape Caesar's cavalry (*hoc unum ad pristinam fortunam Caesari defuit*, 4.26.5).

The *aquilifer*'s prayer and exhortation, after three and a half books where no direct discourse has appeared, may be intended to presage success for the larger endeavour of conquering Britain. With Gaul seemingly pacified and his proconsular command extended for five more years in 56, however, Caesar seems to have hoped to embark on a multi-year campaign that would end with the domination of Britain. For this he needed public support in the winter of 55–54, especially against opponents such as Cato, who had proposed that the senate should hand over Caesar to the Germans as restitution for breaking a truce to attack the Tencteri and Usipetes.[53] Caesar emphasises that his initial expedition to Britain in 55 was short, late in the campaigning season, and perforce tentative.[54] However, Caesar gives this campaign (4.22–36) nearly as much space as he would devote to the much larger and longer (and still more disappointing) campaign the next year (*BG*

commilitones ironically and pointedly when abusing captive Caesarians; the word also seems to have been present in the garbled *sermones* in Curio's camp at *BC* 2.29.3.

[50] Pascucci (1973) 612 n. 20. See also Kühner–Stegmann–Holzweissig (1912) 147–8.

[51] Rasmussen (1963) 20–3. On the cult of the military eagles and standards: Rüpke (1990) 184–6.

[52] Cf. Frontin. *Strat.* 4.39.1–3.

[53] Meier (1995) 281–2.

[54] Richter (1977) 118.

5.8–22).[55] The *aquilifer*'s sequence of prayer, challenge, and charge adds epochal significance to the beginning of what might prove to be a campaign of conquest beyond Ocean.

The scene that Caesar depicts on the British beach—soldiers hanging back, hampered by water, and finally inspired to push forward to a fierce battle with the enemy waiting on the other side—bears some similarity to accounts of Alexander's crossing of the Granicus at the beginning of his campaign against Darius: while his army hesitated, the Macedonian king plunged into the river (Plut. *Alex.* 16.1–17.1).[56] Pompey, who cultivated a comparison with Alexander the Great from adolescence, had cemented that identity with a fabulous triple triumph over the East in 61 BCE, presented as the conquest of the *oikoumenē*.[57] But Alexander had never been able to fulfil his famous desire to cross Ocean.[58] Pompey may have equalled Alexander, but Caesar, with the invasion of Britain, set out to do what neither the Macedonian conqueror nor his Roman epigone had done. In Plutarch's words, he 'was the first to embark upon the western Ocean with a fleet' and in doing so, 'brought Roman dominion beyond the known world' (*πρῶτος γὰρ εἰς τὸν ἑσπέριον Ὠκεανὸν ἐπέβη στόλῳ … προήγαγεν ἔξω τῆς οἰκουμένης τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν*, *Caes.* 23.2–4).

The prayer that Caesar reports just before he quotes the *aquilifer*, *uti feliciter legioni eueniat*, is a version of a standard propitiary formula used at the inception of official enterprises of the Roman state as well as in personal prayers. Livy frequently includes it in solemn prayers made by the Roman people for the success of an upcoming war.[59] Certainly, the *aquilifer*'s prayer has specific relevance to the perilous situation of the soldiers about to attempt a landing on a hostile shore in choppy waters. If one were to look back on this moment of *BG* 4 as the first stage of a grand war of conquest into a land hitherto unknown, however, the prayer takes on yet more significance as an invocation of divine aid for the entire enterprise on which *imperator* and *res publica* embarked together. Caesar does not put himself forward as a new

[55] On differences between the two campaigns see Ke Feng (2001).

[56] Direct evidence for Caesar's own use of Alexander as a model is slender: Green (1978) with prior bibliography.

[57] For Pompey's presentation of his conquests, and association of himself with Alexander cf. Sall. *Hist.* 3.88 M; D.S. 40.4; Plin. *HN.* 7.97; App. *Mith.* 577; Weippert (1972) 56–104; Seager (1979) 77–8.

[58] Romm (1992) 140–1.

[59] Hickson (1993) 63–5, 70–1.

Alexander or a new Scipio—that connection is left to the reader to make—but he provides a resonant set-piece that make it possible to see his British campaign in such a light. The use of a surrogate allows Caesar to pull back, should the enterprise prove less than a glorious conquest, as in fact happened. At the end of *Gallic Wars* 4, Caesar reports that the senate decreed a *supplicatio* of 20 days when his exploits were announced (4.38.5). If his campaigns in Britain had proved more successful the *aquilifer*'s prayer might have had a more emphatic answering echo in a later commentary, in the *imperator*'s triumphal dedication *ob res feliciter gestas*.

BG 7.50: Apportioning Praise and Blame

Suetonius writes that Caesar suffered a reverse 'three times and three times only' (*ter nec amplius*) in the course of his campaigns in Gaul: 'in Britain, when his fleet was nearly destroyed by a violent storm, in Gaul, when a legion was put to flight near Gergovia, and on the German border, when his legates Titurius and Aurunculeius were slaughtered in an ambush' (*in Britannia classe ui tempestatis prope absumpta et in Gallia ad Gergouiam legione fusa et in Germanorum finibus Titurio et Aurunculeio per insidias caesis*, *Iul.* 25.2). Each of the latter episodes, the siege of Gergovia (7.43.5–53.3) and the slaughter of his legates Aurunculeius Cotta and Titurius Sabinus in an ambush set by the Belgian chieftain Ambiorix (5.25.1–37.7), contains or is in proximity to an anecdote about named centurions, as if to compensate for losses with commemorations of Roman valour.[60] The exploits of the centurions Pullo and Vorenus while besieged by Ambiorix, subsequent to the Cotta and Sabinus disaster, have received ample attention in recent as well as older scholarship.[61] I shall discuss only Gergovia, where explicit centurion speech directs blame away from Caesar without requiring him to place it on his soldiers.

As Caesar presents it, he did not intend to make a full assault on the Gallic city of Gergovia in 52 BCE, but only wished to destroy the fortifications and camps the Gauls had placed around the city before moving his army elsewhere (7.43.5–46). Once the fighting starts, however, Caesar's soldiers are carried away by the initial success of their charge and greedy for the

[60] Rambaud (1966) 230–1; Powell (1998) 122–3. The destruction of the fleet Caesar preferred to minimise, emphasising rather the successful transport of his army despite the loss of ships; cf. Osgood (2009) 244–7.

[61] Gerrish (2018); Grillo (2016); Brown (2004); Cipriani (1993); Rambaud (1985); Koster (1978); Rasmussen (1963) 23–8.

rewards that come with successfully taking a town. They ignore orders to fall back and press forward to the gates. The Gauls regroup, auxiliary reinforcements are mistaken for the enemy, and only Caesar's forethought allows the retreat to be covered by the legions that did obey orders (7.47–49.1).[62]

Blame of his army occupies relatively little space both in the *oratio obliqua* speech of Caesar *imperator* and in the narration. Instead, the narrator stresses the soldiers' spirit and confidence on the basis of previous victories (7.47.3), and Caesar's *contio* mixes praise of their concrete achievements with understated and abstracted chastisement: 'he rebuked just as strongly their lack of restraint and their overreaching, in that they thought they knew more than their general did about victory and the outcome of the situation' (*tanto opere licentiam adrogantiamque reprehendere, quod plus se quam imperatorem de uictoria atque exitu rerum sentire existimarent*, 7.52.3).

There is no mention of the consequences of the battle: that the Romans lost their opportunity to extract Vercingetorix from his fortified position and nearly 700 soldiers and 46 centurions died (7.51.2–4). Caesar's aim, as he subsequently explains (7.53.1), is to ensure that his soldiers' spirits are not affected by the defeat (*ne … animo permouerentur*) and that, above all, they do not believe that their defeat was due to the enemy's superior *uirtus*.[63] But lest the reader wonder whether this evidences Caesar's inability to control his soldiers' impulses, centurion speakers take the blame and ascribe it to their own desires for personal glory. They give the particulars that support the assessment delivered by their general.

Caesar reports a boast by the centurion Lucius Fabius, 'generally known to have said among his men that he was inspired by the rewards granted at the siege of Avaricum and would not let anyone to be before him in ascending the wall' (*L. Fabius centurio legionis uiii, quem inter suos eo die dixisse constabat excitari se Auaricensibus praemiis neque commissurum, ut prius quisquam murum ascenderet*, 7.47.7). By emphasising the widespread knowledge (*constabat*) of Fabius' boast, Caesar makes it a piece of evidence that explains and even predetermines Fabius' disastrous disobedience to orders. Fabius does ascend the wall, but he and his men are quickly killed (7.50.3).

[62] On Caesar's account of Gergovia, see Choitz (2011) 136–8; Kraus (2010), Lendon (2005) 218–9.

[63] For this truism in Roman theories of military command, see Lendon (1999).

The centurion Petronius, by contrast, sacrifices himself to save his men, while also admitting that he bears the blame for their endangerment (7.50.4-6):

> Marcus Petronius, eiusdem legionis centurio, cum portas excidere conatus esset, a multitudine oppressus ac sibi desperans multis iam uulneribus acceptis, manipularibus suis, qui illum erant secuti 'quoniam' inquit 'me una uobiscum seruare non possum, uestrae quidem certe uitae prospiciam, quos cupiditate gloriae adductus in periculum deduxi. uos data facultate uobis consulite.' simul in medios hostes inrupit duobusque interfectis reliquos a porta paulum summouit. conantibus auxiliari suis 'frustra' inquit 'meae uitae subuenire conamini, quem iam sanguis uiresque deficiunt. proinde abite, dum est facultas, uosque ad legionem recipite.' ita pugnans post paulo concidit ac suis saluti fuit.

> Marcus Petronius, a centurion of the same legion, had tried to destroy the gates; overwhelmed by numbers and with no hope for himself, since he had already received many wounds, he turned to his squad, who had followed him, and said: 'Since I cannot save myself along with you, I shall at least look out for your lives, since I was the one who was led astray by my own desire for glory and led you into danger. Use the opportunity I provide to see to your own safety!' With that, he rushed into the thick of the enemy and, killing two of them, got the others a little way away from the gate. When his men tried to aid him, he said: 'No point in you trying to save my life; my blood and strength are already failing. Get away, while you have the opportunity! Fall back to your legion!' Within a short while he fell, still fighting, and brought about his men's salvation.

The one man who sacrifices himself to save the rest of his group is an old *topos* of Roman historiography: Petronius' action recalls the elder Cato's tribune, and perhaps even the *devotiones* of the Decii.[64] His success in saving his men is a miniature drama of sacrifice and salvation that counterbalances what is otherwise a narrative of barely controlled disaster.[65] His final order to fall back, moreover, echoes and confirms Caesar's strategy.

[64] See above, p. 69. Kraus (2010) 57 suggests a deliberate allusion to Cato's tribune.

[65] Gerlinger (2008) 222–5.

But with his speech, Petronius also confesses responsibility. If he had obeyed orders, rather than allowing himself to be carried away by the thrill of the battle, there would be no need for his sacrifice. 'Led [*adductus*] by my own desire for glory', he says, 'I led you [*deduxi*] into danger'. Rasmussen points out that the polyptoton of *adductus* and *deduxi* draws attention to the glaring absence—unusual for a speech by a soldier—of any reference to his general, the proper leader, here displaced by Petronius' *cupiditas*.[66] Similarly, as the narrator of his own actions in direct discourse, Petronius in some sense 'usurps' the narrator-function of Caesar the author, just as he previously usurped the command from Caesar the *imperator* when he led his soldiers to the gate. In a judgement that runs directly from the battlefield to the reader's ear, Petronius confesses that by his rashness, he endangered not only his soldiers but the collectivities of the army and, ultimately, the Roman people: 'I led you into danger.' The short-form direct discourse, Adema argues, 'allows the narrator to withdraw himself from the process. The responsibility for the speech and thus, for Marcus [Petronius] admitting his mistake, is completely handed over to Marcus'.[67] Caesar's narrative subsequently confirms the truth of Petronius' words when the general Caesar chastises his army in similar terms, admonishing them for 'recklessness and greed, for taking it upon themselves to judge how far was good to proceed or what they should do' (*temeritatem militum cupiditatemque reprehendit, quod sibi ipsi iudicauissent, quo procedendum aut quid agendum uideretur*, 7.52.1).

Trustworthy Speech in the *Bellum Ciuile*

Bellum Ciuile, written up probably in 48–47 (that is, after the defeat of Pompey and in the early stages of the war in Alexandria) but left unfinished and apparently only published after Caesar's death, has a political message for its projected contemporary readers still more urgent than that of the *Bellum Gallicum*.[68] Consequently, the words Caesar attributes to soldiers take on greater weight as contemporary speech and testimony to the interpretation of Caesar's recent victory. Caesar assimilates his soldiers to the Roman people, of whose rights and privileges he paints himself the defender, and they, in the utterances he reports, express their loyalties explicitly. Much as the *aquilifer*'s prayer in *BG* 4 set up a future conquest, centurion speakers in

[66] Rasmussen (1963) 46. See also Gerlinger (2008) 230–1.

[67] Adema (2017) 210. Cf. Görler (1977) 314–5.

[68] Batstone and Damon (2006) 31–3, 171.

BC prepare for Caesar's future victory and restoration of the Roman state. In this case, the victory would come to pass, but with consequences that would vitiate the earnest optimism Caesar ascribes to his soldiers, and—probably—cause him to abandon *BC* as a 'failed' contemporary history.

When Caesar's army was starving at Dyrrachium in the summer of 48 BCE, he writes, his soldiers were 'frequently heard to say during watches and conversations that they would eat tree-bark before letting Pompey escape their grasp' (*crebraeque uoces militum in uigiliis coloquiisque audiebantur: prius se cortice ex arboribus uicturos quam Pompeium e manibus dimissuros*, 3.49.1). Caesar has spent several chapters detailing the hardships that his army endured at Dyrrachium, where, paradoxically, the besiegers had insufficient food, while the besieged could maintain a supply chain by sea (3.47.3–4). The set-piece of Caesarian endurance shows at every turn the complete unity of army and commander. Caesar's soldiers recall without prompting (*recordabantur, meminerant*) that they suffered similar *inopia* during the Gallic campaigns, and that tremendous victories followed (3.48.5).[69] When Pompeians mock their lack of food, they throw down at them their ad-hoc bread, made from the local root they have been reduced to eating.[70] This is not, however, merely a gesture of defiance, but calculated, again apparently *en masse* (*uulgo*) and *sua sponte*, 'to diminish the enemy's hope' that Caesar's men would give up the siege from hunger (*ut spem eorum minuerent*, 3.48.2). The Caesarians, by contrast, gain hope from the sight of the grain beginning to mature in the fields, and this *spes* hardens them to endure their present *inopia*. All of these calculated and reasoned responses happen without instruction from above: Caesar is entirely absent from this section of the text.[71] The frequency of the utterance (*crebrae uoces*) complements this presentation of unity of intention, demonstrating that Caesar's soldiers not only think like him in matters of strategy and discipline, but share—and perhaps even exceed—his desire for victory. There can be no question about whether men who would live on tree bark before abandoning a chance to capture Pompey are willing soldiers in Caesar's civil war.[72]

[69] Reminding the army of past victories is a typical *topos* of the battle exhortation: Albertus (1908) 52–4; Iglesias-Zoido (2007) 155–6.

[70] Cf. Plut. *Caes.* 39.1 where the anecdote about the bread is the occasion for the brave speech. For botanical discussion see Pelling (2011) 350–1.

[71] Except of course as narrator; cf. Batstone and Damon (2006) 151–2.

[72] Westall (2018) 226 points out that in reality the situation was more doubtful: detachments of Gallic cavalry did desert to Pompey's camp (3.59–61).

In the eventual battle at Dyrrachium, which Caesar portrays as the near-annihilation of his army (3.70.1), another exemplary *aquilifer*, the historiographical descendent of the one who leapt from the ship in *BG* 4, uses his dying breath to exhort his cohort not to abandon an eagle-standard (*BC* 3.64.3):

> in eo proelio cum graui uulnere esset adfectus aquilifer et a uiribus deficeretur conspicatus equites nostros, 'hanc ego' inquit 'et uiuus multos per annos magna diligentia defendi et nunc moriens eadem fide Caesari restituo. nolite, obsecro, committere—quod ante in exercitu Caesaris non accidit—ut rei militaris dedecus admittatur, incolumemque ad eum deferte.' hoc casu aquila conseruatur omnibus primae cohortis centurionibus interfectis praeter principem priorem.

> In this battle, the *aquilifer*, although he had been badly wounded and found his strength failing him, caught sight of our cavalry. 'This standard', he said, 'I defended in life for many years and with great care, and now in death I return it to Caesar in the same trust. I beg you, don't let a military disgrace occur—something that has not before happened in Caesar's army—but bring it safely back to him.' By this chance the eagle was saved, although all the centurions of the first cohort were killed, excepting the first of the first rank.

This standard-bearer's exhortation, 'don't let this military disgrace occur (*ut rei militaris dedecus admittatur*)—something that has not before happened in Caesar's army' echoes precisely the soldiers' reaction to the eagle-bearer's leap in *BG* 4.25.5, after which they urge each other 'not to let so great a disgrace occur' (*ne tantum dedecus admitteretur*) and act accordingly.[73] There is slight evidence for the phrase's oral flavour, which might give an additional measure of verisimilitude to these scenes.[74] But this verbal echo—if indeed it would be audible—matters less than the repetition of the *topos*, whose past iterations are explicitly invoked. This *aquilifer* instructs us to recall previous instances, seemingly innumerable, where Caesar's soldiers kept the standards from disgrace and preserved their military oaths. The back-

[73] On the type-scene see Pascucci (1973) 606. On historiographical self-imitation, see Woodman (1979).

[74] *Dedecus admitti* (and indeed the word *dedecus*) occurs only in these passages in Caesar, although the phrase occurs a handful of times in Cicero (the majority in letters) and in single instances in Livy (within a speech); *TLL s.v.* 'dedecus', V.1.253.45–7.

reference to events of the *Bellum Gallicum* has a meta-function as well. The *aquilifer* reminds the audience of this work that Caesar and his men are the same commander and army who represented the interests of Rome so consistently and profitably in Gaul. Phrases like *per multos annos*, *magna diligentia* and *eadem fide* stress the continuity of Caesar's army and its virtues into Caesar's cause in the present.[75]

The eagle-bearer provides a note that turns the tide of the first stage of the fighting at Dyrrachium, and which carries through to mitigate Caesar's eventual reverse. Antony arrives to rescue the Caesarian line (3.65.1), and Caesar himself leads a surprise attack on Pompey's camp that initially succeeds (3.66.1–6). But *fortuna* intervenes (3.68.1). Cavalry lose their way, Pompey sends reinforcements, and Caesar's soldiers, in danger of being trapped between earthworks, are routed. Even when Caesar grabs the standards and tries to order his men to stand their ground (*cum Caesar signa fugientium manu prenderet et consistere iuberet*, 3.69.4), it is no use, and some of the standard-bearers even abandon their standards as they flee (*ut … alii ex metu etiam signa dimitterent*). The military disgrace the *aquilifer* wished to avoid has finally happened in Caesar's army. As at Gergovia, to which the character Caesar explicitly compares the defeat (*BC* 3.73.6), Caesar as author must establish his own blamelessness for the disaster without appearing to be self-servingly shifting the blame to his army. Caesar portrays himself in solidarity with the best part of his men when, at the end of the battle he 'takes up' both the station and the motif of desperate battlefield exhortation as if carrying on the exemplum set by the *aquilifer*. There is a pathos-laden movement of the *signum* between these two scenes: the standard-bearer prays that his standard will be handed back to Caesar, and Caesar does indeed take standards in his hand.[76] In the last of image of the battle, we see Caesar *imperator*, like his loyal *aquilifer*, apparently willing to die rather than abandon the standards.

Direct speech, Rasmussen points out, stands on an equivalent level with the narrator's voice; insofar as Caesar-narrator is 'speaking to' the reader, so too, is any inset speaker: 'The elevated diction of the [*aquilifer*'s] importunate

[75] See Grillo (2012) 58–72 on loyalty and military oaths in *BC*; Batstone and Damon (2006) 138–40 on Caesar's own *fides*. On *diligentia* in Caesar see Ramage (2003) 334.

[76] Although Caesar the general has no direct speech here, Caesar the narrator becomes unusually overt in the very next paragraph, offering his opinion as to the reasons Pompey did not follow up on his victory and destroy Caesar's army (*credo*, 3.70.1), along with a sententious conclusion: 'So small things made a great difference on either side' (*ita paruae res magnum in utramque partem momentum habuerunt*).

prayer formula is powerful: *nolite, obsecro, committere* … These are Caesar's own words, by which he addresses the reader of this passage. The author seeks to include the reader in the shared bond that exists between *Imperator* and *aquilifer'*.[77] But Caesar insists that these are not *his* 'own words'. Caesar-narrator cedes his place as direct speaker, but the soldier who occupies it uses that privileged position to attest to the shared bond of *fides* that Caesar-*imperator*'s exemplary generalship has constituted. The extremity of the situation, the exemplary bravery of the *aquilifer* who counts his own death less than the collective disgrace of losing a standard, and the speaker's anonymity (quite literally, this speaker is 'no one of name') all give the impression of spontaneous testimony.

In a habitual use of parallel speeches for enhanced irony, the standard-bearer's exhortation, which testifies to the virtues of Caesar's soldiers and their trust in his leadership, has a counterpart in some reported words of Pompey early in the standoff at Dyrrachium, when the Pompeians trap Caesar's ninth legion as its soldiers are trying to fortify a strategic point across two hills.[78] Caesar reports a boast that Pompey is said to have made: *dicitur eo tempore glorians apud suos Pompeius dixisse non recusare se quin nullius usus imperator existimaretur si sine maximo detrimento legiones Caesaris sese recipissent inde quo temere essent progressae* ('At this juncture Pompey is said to have boasted to his friends that he didn't protest being judged an utter rookie of a commander, if Caesar's legions managed to retreat whence they had rashly advanced without severe losses', 3.45.6). Needless to say, Caesar manages to extricate his legion and they fall back in perfect order, having lost only five men in all (*u omnino suorum amissis quietissime receperunt*, 3.46.6). What estimation should we then make of Pompey? In addition to attesting to his eagerness to kill fellow citizens, which contrasts with Caesar's famed leniency, these words convict Pompey of incompetence out of his own mouth. By attributing the story of this quotation to common report (*dicitur* … *dixisse*), Caesar pre-empts the accusation of having invented this boast so that history and his narrative could upend it.[79]

[77] Rasmussen (1963) 118: 'Wirkungsvoll ist die gehobene Diktion der beschwörenden Deprekationsformel: "nolite, obsecro, committere"… Dies sind Caesars eigene Worte mit denen er sich an den Leser dieser Stelle wendet. Der Autor möchte den Leser einbeziehen in die Gemeinschaft, die zwischen Imperator und aquilifer besteht'.

[78] On Caesar's predilection for ironic quotation, see von Albrecht (2009) 231–6; Rasmussen (1963) 105–6.

[79] The non-Caesarian tradition, by contrast, quotes not Pompey's boast manqué at the beginning of the siege, but Caesar's witticism on Pompey at its end: 'He doesn't know how

BC 3.91: Words and Deeds at Pharsalus

Caesar's final quotation of centurion speech, which occurs just before the battle of Pharsalus, makes the most of soldier-quotation to convey honestly felt truths in a notionally independent narrative voice. There are five moments of *oratio recta* in Caesar's account of Pharsalus. Caesar's brief and factual statement to his men upon realising that the opportunity for battle is at hand (3.85.4) contrasts with lengthier, self-aggrandising speeches from Pompey (3.86.2–4) and Labienus (3.87.1–4). The speech of the Caesarian centurion Crastinus, a veteran 'of exceptional valour', as he rallies his men (3.91.1–5) corresponds to a false promise made by Pompey when he flees back to his camp (3.94.5).[80]

Caesar's direct speech—the only time that he gives himself direct speech in the *commentarii*—avoids any ideological or political expression, or even any first-person singular (3.85.4): *'differendum est', inquit 'iter in praesentia nobis et de proelio cogitandum, sicut semper depoposicimus. animo sumus ad dimicandum parati. non facile occasionem postea reperiemus'* ('"We must put off our march for the moment", he said, "and make plans for battle, just as we always wished. We are ready in our hearts to fight it out, and we shall not easily find another opportunity"').[81] Even at the moment when the voice of his character inside the narrative merges with his voice as narrator, Caesar maintains the narrator's habitually factual tone and 'Caesarian' diction.[82] Instead of justifications or slogans, or anything that might betray the particular involvement of Caesar *imperator* in what is about to come to pass, there are simple statements about reality. The plural *nos* shows the unity of the general and his army. Caesar speaks on behalf of his soldiers whom, in *BC* as in *BG*, he refers to as *nostri*, 'our men', in implicit contrast to the Pompeians.[83] Here,

to win' (*negauit eum uincere scire*, Suet. *Iul.* 36.1, cf. App. *BC* 2.260; Eutr. 6.20.3; Plut. *Apophthegmata* 206D); '"Victory would have been with our enemies, if they possessed a victor"' ('Σήμερον ἂν ἡ νίκη παρὰ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἦν, εἰ τὸν νικῶντα εἶχον', Plut. *Caes.* 39.8; *Pomp.* 65.5; cf. Pelling (2011) 251). There might be an echo here of the resigned warning of Maharbal upon Hannibal's hesitation after Cannae: '*uincere scis, Hannibal, uictoria uti nescis*' (Liv. 22.51.4; Florus 22.19; Plut. *Fab.* 17.2).

[80] See Rasmussen (1963) 119–29 on the use of speech in this episode.

[81] On Caesar's speech, see Nordling (2005).

[82] On the distinction between Caesar-narrator and Caesar-*imperator* in *BG* see Riggsby (2006) 150–5; the 'I' of the narrator has far greater presence in *BC* than in *BG*: Batstone and Damon (2006) 129–31; Grillo (2011).

[83] Rambaud (1966) 212–14; Grillo (2012) 110–130; Rossi (2000).

however, the plural *nos* recalls the authorial plural used by Caesar-narrator, who thereby pulls the reader into this community as well.

The speeches of Pompey and Labienus, by contrast, demonstrate their arrogance and delusions of an easy victory the night before the battle. Caesar even notes that a vow was taken in Pompey's camp not to return unless victorious (3.87.5–6). These Pompeian speeches and speech-acts presage ironic reversals; the Pompeian officers will return to their camp—but in flight, and only to abandon it.[84] Pompey's final piece of *oratio recta* comes as his army begins to turn and flee; he gives orders to the centurions standing guard to defend the camp, promising that he himself will look to the other gates and guard posts. This is said 'in a loud voice, such that the soldiers heard' (*clare ut milites exaudirent*, 3.94.5). But Pompey then goes to his tent, belying what he has just said. The presence of a large audience and the specification that the orders were given loudly offer an implicit verification of the anecdote's truthfulness as well as showing the extreme of Pompey's hypocrisy.[85] Caesar pre-empts the sceptical reader who might be inclined to think he has invented words for Pompey that cast him in the worst light possible.

Caesar includes the Pompeian speeches as a damning record of words that go far beyond reality and stand in utter contrast to deeds. The Caesarian centurion Crastinus provides a counterweight to Pompeian posturing with a speech that his deeds prove to be sincere and correct (3.91.1):[86]

> erat Crastinus euocatus in exercitu Caeasaris, qui superiore anno apud eum primum pilum in legione decima duxerat, uir singulari uirtute. hic signo dato 'sequimini me', inquit, 'manipulares mei qui fuistis, et uestro imperatori quam constituistis operam date. unum hoc proelium superest. quo confecto et ille suam dignitatem et nos nostram libertatem recuperabimus.' simul respiciens Caesarem 'faciam', inquit, 'hodie, imperator, ut aut uiuo mihi aut mortuo gratias agas.' haec cum dixisset primus ex dextro cornu procucurrit atque eum electi milites circiter CXX uoluntarii sunt prosecuti.

[84] Cf. Henderson (1996) 264–5.

[85] Cf. *BG* 5.30.1–3 where the narrator also stresses the audibility of speech that reflects badly on its speaker.

[86] Rasmussen (1963) 125.

> There was a certain Crastinus in Caesar's army, a recalled veteran who had served under him as chief centurion in the 10th Legion the previous year, and a man of uncommon valour. When the signal was given, this Crastinus said, 'Follow me, all you who were my squad, and give your commander the help you've promised! This battle is all that's left: when it's finished, he will recover his rank and we our freedom!' And looking back toward Caesar, he said, 'Today, Commander, I'll make you thank me, whether I live or die.' With this, he ran forward, the first man from the right wing, and select soldiers—about 120 volunteer enlistees—followed him.

As previous centurion speakers did, Crastinus exhorts other soldiers to do their duty with words that emphasise the continuity of service and the *fides* that exists between Caesar and his soldiers. His utterance also provides a piece of the *cohortatio* that Caesar omitted in his own speech. Caesar writes that he himself spoke 'in standard military fashion' (*militari more*, 90.1) and that he exhorted the army and reminded them of his many efforts on their behalf, but the particular points of the speech that he records in *oratio obliqua* are singularly odd for a pre-battle exhortation (3.90.1–2):

> testibus se militibus uti posse quanto studio pacem petisset, quae per Vatinium in colloquiis, quae per Aulum Clodium cum Scipione egisset, quibus modis ad Oricum cum Libone de mittendis legatis contendisset; neque se umquam abuti militum sanguine neque rem publicam alterutro exercitu priuare uoluisse.

> He could call on his soldiers to testify to how zealously he had sought peace, the negotiations he had conducted in conferences through Vatinius and with Scipio through Aulus Clodius, how he had striven with Libo at Oricum to send ambassadors; he had never wanted to waste soldiers' blood, nor to deprive the state of either army.

These statements seem directed at the audience of the *commentarii* rather than the internal audience. The commander's reluctance to fight is not inspirational before a battle, but it is a final reminder of Caesar's claim that he never wanted a war. Crastinus gives the part of the exhortation Caesar does not want to put into his own mouth: his soldiers are experienced veterans; now is the time for them to prove their valour once and for all; they are fighting the final battle not just for their general, but for their own freedom

as Roman citizens.[87] Caesar calls upon his soldiers as witnesses, but Crastinus' testimony goes beyond what he is called on to provide.

Although it is hardly implausible that Caesar's officers would propagate a Caesarian position, Crastinus' words, like the apparently spontaneous charge by volunteer veterans that he musters, have seemed too perfect to be true.[88] But Caesar tries to give the impression that they occurred spontaneously. Crastinus speaks about *dignitas* and *libertas* as he exhorts fellow-soldiers; only then does he make his personal promise to Caesar, almost as if only then noticing that the general is in view—and, implicitly, in earshot. Moreover, Caesar shows that Crastinus is an authentic speaker and a truthful one. His deeds match his words: Crastinus does lead his soldiers to victory and he earns special honours when he dies fighting, culminating in the memorial that Caesar gives him in the text (3.99.2–3):

> interfectus est etiam fortissime pugnans Crastinus, cuius mentionem supra fecimus, gladio in os adversum coniecto. neque id fuit falsum, quod ille in pugnam proficiscens dixerat. sic enim Caesar existimabat eo proelio excellentissimam uirtutem Crastini fuisse optimeque eum de se meritum iudicabat.

> Also killed fighting with the utmost bravery was Crastinus, whom we mentioned above. A sword was found thrust right into his face. Nor did his speech on entering battle prove false. For Caesar could thus judge that Crastinus' valour in the battle had been the most outstanding and that he had earned his highest gratitude.

Caesar the general passes judgment on Crastinus' valour, and this provides evidence (*enim*) for Caesar's assertion as author that 'what Crastinus said when he entered battle' was not false. After the narrator has declared his speech truthful, to doubt the authenticity of Crastinus' words is to put oneself as a reader directly in opposition to the author's statement of fact. But it is difficult to take *quod ille in pugnam proficiscens dixerat* only in reference to Crastinus' promise, and not also to his exhortation and prediction of victory, reported in exactly the same way and same form.

Crastinus fills in an ideological gap that Caesar does not want to stress in his own words just before the critical battle, but he also states openly the

[87] For these *topoi* see Keitel (1987) 154.

[88] Carter (1993) 213; on these *uoluntarii* see Damon (2015b) 294; Brown (1999) 350–52.

message of Caesar's *commentarii*: Caesar's *dignitas* and the *libertas* of the Roman people are inseparably linked.[89] Caesar distributes explicit concern for his *dignitas* as carefully as he does direct speech, reminding the reader of his willingness to accept injuries to his own *dignitas* for the sake of peace, despite how highly he values it (1.9.2), and presenting himself as a defender of the *dignitas* of the tribunes of plebs and Roman people as a whole. In his first address to his army in *BC* 1.7, however, he speaks first of the injuries done to the tribunes of the plebs and by extension to the Roman people, and, after reminding his soldiers what they have achieved for the Roman state under his leadership, asks them 'to defend their general's standing and rank from his enemies' (*ut eius existimationem dignitatemque ab inimicis defendant*, 1.7.7). Caesar reports his army's acclamation in response: *conclamant … sese paratos esse imperatoris sui tribunorumque plebis iniurias defendere* ('They shouted that they were ready to avenge the injuries done to their commander and the tribunes of the plebs', 1.7.8). At Pharsalus, Crastinus reiterates this inseparability of Caesar, his army, his *dignitas*, and the interests of *populus Romanus*, in exactly the terms that united Caesar and his army at the beginning of the work and the war.

Caesar's Centurions after Caesar: Crastinus in Plutarch and Appian

When Caesar composed the account of Pharsalus, it is possible he hoped that it would indeed be, as Crastinus declared, the last battle of war, and that he could shape a new consensus in which military charisma, aristocratic friendship ties, and republican institutions could all be smoothly reintegrated around his own person. When the *Bellum Civile* (as well as the *bellum ciuile*) ended, Crastinus' predictions should have become concretely true. Shortly, however, this framing of the war and its aftermath would become increasingly untenable, as would Crastinus' optimistic prediction. Caesar did not finish the *Bellum Civile*.[90]

For those writing or reading about Caesar's civil war when it was old history, not recent, anecdotes about centurions continued to testify to the

[89] 'He says that he is doing it all for the sake of his *dignitas*,' wrote Cicero to Atticus in 49, 'But where is there *dignitas* except where there is *honestas*?' (*Att.* 7.11.1). On *dignitas* as a watchword for both Caesar and Pompey, see Syme (1939) 47–8; Raaflaub (1974) 149–52; Morstein-Marx (2009); Krebs (2017) 37–8.

[90] Batstone and Damon (2006) 170–1; Henderson (1996) 274–5; Raditsa (1973) 434.

loyalty of Caesar's army, but the particular words uttered by a centurion at a critical moment were no longer meaningful in the same way. In Plutarch (*Caes.* 44.9–10; *Pomp.* 71.1–3) and Appian (*BC* 2.347–8), who drew on sources written after Caesar's triumph and death, Crastinus gives a brief exhortation before Pharsalus, but it lacks the prediction that victory will bring peace, rank, and freedom.[91]

This version has Caesar see a centurion called Crassinius 'exhorting his men and rousing them to compete in valour' (*ἐπιθαρσύνοντα τοὺς ὑφ' αὑτῷ καὶ προκαλούμενον εἰς ἅμιλλαν ἀλκῆς*, Plut. *Caes.* 44.9), whereupon Caesar asks him how he thinks the battle will go: '*τί ἐλπίζομεν' εἶπεν 'ὦ Γάϊε Κρασσίνιε, καὶ πῶς [τι] θάρσους ἔχομεν;*' ('"So what are our hopes Gaius Crassinius? What kind of confidence do we have?"', 44.10). Crassinius responds in a loud voice (*μέγα βοήσας*, Plut. *Caes.* 44.10; *λαμπρῶς ἀνεβόησε*, App. *BC* 2.347).[92] This time, however, he only predicts victory and promises to earn Caesar's gratitude: '"We shall win a splendid victory, Caesar! And you will praise me whether I live today or die!"' ('*νικήσομεν' ἔφη 'λαμπρῶς ὦ Καῖσαρ ἐμὲ δ' ἢ ζῶντα τήμερον ἢ τεθνηκότα ἐπαινέσεις*', Plut. *Caes.* 44.10); '"We will win, Caesar, and today you will honour me either living or as a corpse!"' ('*νικήσομεν, ὦ Καῖσαρ, κἀμὲ τήμερον ἢ ζῶντα ἢ νεκρὸν ἀποδέξῃ*', App. *BC* 2.347).[93] The dialogue form of the anecdote, which shows even more vividly than in Caesar's version the close bond between the general and his soldiers, may go back to the source-tradition used by both Plutarch and Appian for their Caesarian narratives, believed to originate in the histories of Asinius Pollio.[94] Conspicuously absent, however, is the first half of Crastinus' speech in Caesar. Where the Caesarian Crastinus predicted that this battle would vindicate Caesar and restore popular freedom, echoing

[91] In Lucan's account of Pharsalus, Crastinus is the first to hurl his spear (7.470–4); Bern Scholia cite Livy for this detail (*Schol. Bern.* ad 7.470, p. 240 Usener (1869)); cf. Florus 2.13.175. This tradition makes Crastinus a villainous figure, emblematic of the crimes of civil war, whose eagerness to fight ironically contrasts with his name.

[92] Following McGing's punctuation. But in light of Plutarch, perhaps Crassinius' words in Appian should instead be punctuated: *ὁ δὲ 'λαμπρῶς', ἀνεβόησε, 'νικήσομεν, ὦ Καῖσαρ, κἀμὲ τήμερον ἢ ζῶντα ἢ νεκρὸν ἀποδέξῃ*' ('And he shouted back, "We shall win a splendid victory, Caesar …"', etc.).

[93] Plut. *Pomp.* 71.1–3 is almost identical to *Caes.* 44.9–10, except that in the later biography, Crassinius predicts that 'you, Caesar will win' (71.2, *νικήσεις*) rather than 'we'.

[94] Pelling (1979) 84–5; (2011) 44–7, 366; Drummond ap. *FRHist* I.439–4. Note also the change of address from *Imperator* to the more familiar cognomen (Dickey (2002) 100–4), although by the second century, *Caesar* had become a near-equivalent.

and reinforcing Caesar's own language, this 'Crassinius' makes the much simpler prediction of victory.

The Crassinius of Appian and Plutarch's version has none of the specificity of Caesar's centurion, who spoke to the political concerns of Caesar's contemporary audience. The later incarnation of the centurion is a somewhat generic *exemplum*, a soldier whose courage, devotion, and outstanding confidence in his own prowess and his general's gratitude are rewarded by the commemoration of his brave words. In this simplification, we can perhaps see the importance of 'truth' as a criterion for centurion-speech: this tradition drops from Crastinus' boast the optimistic predictions that, even at a distance of five years, proved manifestly false. If this difference originated in Pollio's history, it is tempting to explain it as the intervention of an independent historian—who was also an eyewitness—correcting an ideologically exaggerated account. This is in keeping with the persona Pollio, one of Caesar's officers and supporters who was himself present at Pharsalus, seems to have cultivated: he claimed that Caesar's *commentarii* were 'written neither diligently enough nor with sufficient preservation of the truth' (*Pollio Asinius parum diligenter parumque integra ueritate compositos*, Suet. *Iul.* 56.4 = *FRHist* 56 F 8).[95] But even by the time Pollio was writing, and certainly by the time of Plutarch and Appian, the prediction that Pharsalus would be the last battle of the civil wars and would lead to the restoration of the free republic would be soggy with historical irony. A veteran prepared to die for a general he believes will restore freedom in a battle he thinks can be the last one of a civil war becomes an emblem not of military constancy but of naïveté betrayed by cynical dynasts.[96] To continue to be an archetype of the loyal soldier who could attest to the devotion Caesar inspired in his army, 'Crassinius' could not speak all the words Crastinus had spoken in Caesar. His profession of faith in Caesar as a champion of popular *libertas* had to disappear, leaving merely the centurion's more generic promise of loyalty and (fulfillable) prophecy of victory.

[95] On Pollio's historiographical self-representation see Morgan (2000); Drummond ap. *FRHist* I.441–2, III.528–9.

[96] Thus Peer (2016) 126 on Caesar's Crastinus.

Conclusion: From Caesar's Soldiers to Caesarian Soldiers

Caesar uses deeds and memorable speeches of his soldiers to shore up his authority and persona with his readers, and to draw them into the community that he creates. The reliable voices of soldiers model for the reader how to interpret pivotal episodes: the first invasion of Britain, the defeat at Gergovia, the battle of Pharsalus. The centurion scenes of *Bellum Civile* build on those of *Bellum Gallicum* precisely so that Caesar's civil war campaigns appear to be a continuation—at least as far as his army and his command are concerned—of 'normal' Roman warfare and military hierarchy. When Caesar's soldiers vie to demonstrate their *uirtus* and repay their commander with *fides*, they do so in the battle-line, fighting, at least nominally, on behalf of the Roman people. They constitute a Roman community that can be made into a synecdoche for all Roman citizens, and this fact makes their testimony so useful to Caesar's ideological aims. Caesar's soldiers speak out of both sides of their mouth, as it were, simultaneously attesting to Caesar's promises to his armies and the Roman populace and assuaging conservative fears of revolution.

This was a fine line to walk, and the supplements to Caesar's *commentarii* written by unknown officers or hangers-on in Caesar's army show how the message (and perhaps the audience) of the Caesarian party after Caesar's death had shifted from the message of Caesar in the early 40s. These so-called 'continuators', particularly those who wrote up Caesar's campaigns against Petreius, Scipio Metellus, and Juba I in Africa (*Bellum Africum*) and against the younger Cn. Pompey in Spain (*Bellum Hispaniense*), created partisan narratives unlike Caesar's relatively conciliatory *Bellum Civile*.[97] The narrators take as given that Caesar represents legitimate Roman power; his Roman enemies disgrace themselves explicitly by bowing to their foreign allies or assimilating their barbarity.[98] Centurion speakers, who appear with particular frequency in the *Bellum Africum*, now serve not as representatives of the Roman people, but as members of the smaller collective of Caesar's army, ranged not only against the opposing army, but sometimes even against the elite civilians in Caesar's camp.[99] On more than one occasion,

[97] Gaertner (2017); Cluett (2009); cf. Batstone and Damon (2006) 89–116.

[98] See, e.g., *BAfr.* 54.1–6; 57.2–3; *BHisp.* 42.6; Cluett (2003) 121–4.

[99] E.g., Caesar's banishment of military tribunes who care only for their own comforts at *BAfr.* 54.1–5 (cf. *BG* 1.39.2, above, pp. 75–6); the near-massacre of high-ranking civilians in Caesar's camp at *BAfr.* 85.6–8.

Pompeian commanders try to tempt Caesar's soldiers to desert by suggesting that they have been deceived or coerced, only for their slippery words to be refuted by exemplary Caesarian loyalty and *uirtus*.

In these confrontations with Pompeian officers in *Bellum Africum*, Caesar's soldiers oppose their collective identity as experienced fighters in Caesar's army to Pompeian ideological claims about the Roman people and the *res publica*. When Titus Labienus, Caesar's onetime officer but now a Pompeian general, taunts a Caesarian soldier on the battlefield near Ruspina, asking, '"Why so feisty, trainee solder? Has he [sc. Caesar] hoodwinked you, too, with his fine words?"' ('*quid tu' inquit 'miles tiro, tam feroculus es? uos quoque iste uerbis infatuauit?*', *BAfr.* 16.1), the soldier responds by identifying himself as a veteran of Caesar's 10th legion. When Labienus affects not to know him, the unnamed solider promises that '"you'll soon recognise who I am"' ('*iam me quis sim intelleges*') and '"now you'll know it is a soldier of the 10th who is after you"' ('*Labiene, decumanum militem qui te petit scito esse*', 16.3). Like Caesar's standard-bearers, this soldier proves the truth of his words with a brave gesture. He hurls his spear in a quasi-epic challenge, albeit an only partially successful one, as he wounds Labienus' horse, but not the man himself.[100]

In another episode, the Pompeian general Scipio Metellus captures a ship of Caesarian veterans and recruits near Thapsus. He offers them not only their lives but monetary rewards if they abandon the '"criminal commander"' whose '"instigation and orders have compelled [them] to attack fellow citizens and all worthy men"' (*illius scelerati uestri imperatoris impulsu et imperio coactos ciues et optimum quemque nefarie consectari*) and join him in '"defending the republic alongside all worthy men—as you ought to do"' (*si, id quod facere debetis, rem publicam cum optimo quoque defendetis*, *BAfr.* 44.4). A veteran centurion steps forward and refuses the offer, declaring his loyalty to his commander Caesar and his army (45.2–5).[101] Although subsequent versions of this anecdote make the centurion's response a snappy *dictum*, the *Bellum Africanum* author gives him an extended and elaborate speech, not a *bon mot* but a model response from a model Caesarian partisan that occurs at nearly the exact centre of the work.[102] Although the centurion thanks Scipio with barbed politeness, he rejects any possibility of abandoning his commander and his comrades: '"Am I to stand armed and opposite Caesar my commander, in whose army I made my rank, and against his army, for

[100] Cf. Müller (2001) 160–1.

[101] Cf. Val. Max. 3.8.7–8; Suet. *Iul.* 68.1; Plut. *Caes.* 16.8.

[102] Müller (2001) 303–4.

whose reputation and victory I have fought for more than thirty-six years?"' ('*egone contra Caesarem imperatorem meum apud quem ordinem duxi, eiusque exercitum pro cuius dignitate uictoriaque amplius xxxui annos depugnaui, aduersus armatusque consistam*?', 45.3)

After thirty-six years of service, this soldier has been fighting in his legion longer than Caesar has been its commander, and, indeed, he makes the remarkable claim to fight on behalf of the army's *dignitas et uictoria*.[103] This centurion has no interest in, or simply refuses to engage in, a debate about who fights on behalf of the republic, or whose army constitutes citizens. Rather, he offers to prove the superiority of Caesar's army: '"choose whichever of your cohorts you think the strongest, and array it against me. For my part I shall take no more than ten of my comrades now in your custody. Then you will realise from our valour what you should expect from your armies!"' ('*elige ex tuis cohortem unam quam putas esse firmissimam, et constitue contra me; ego autem ex meis commilitonibus quos nunc in tua tenes potestate, non amplius x sumam. tunc ex uirtute nostra intelleges, quid ex tuis copiis sperare debeas*', 45.5). Scipio has the centurion and the veterans among the captured cohort executed, an act of cruelty that belies his pretence of reconciliation.

This is a different type of exemplary end than that ventured by Caesar's centurions and standard-bearers: not death in action but martyrdom for the cause. This exemplum would become the standard type of soldier-anecdote through the second triumvirate and principate, where loyal soldiers not only refuse to abandon their commanders, but self-immolate to show their loyalty.[104]

The later tradition of absolutely loyal soldiers who confront and challenge Caesar's enemies shows by contrast how carefully Caesar deals with centurion speakers. Although they declare their loyalty to him, they do so in the course of actions that belong to a quasi-apolitical sphere of military valour: fighting at the forefront of the line, enduring hardships without complaint, preventing the disgrace of flight and the loss of the standards. Moreover, Caesar avoids making his soldiers appear to be loyal to him exclusive of loyalty to the Roman republic. When the *aquilifer* promises to do his duty to 'my commander and the *res publica*' or Crastinus declares that after the battle of Pharsalus 'we' will regain 'our' *libertas*, their implicit concerns are the concerns of Roman citizens, which happen to coincide with

[103] Bouvet (2002) 43 n. 69; Müller (2001) 308.

[104] See, e.g., the suicide of Titinius after Philippi (Vell. Pat. 2.70; Val. Max. 9.9.2; Plut. *Brut.* 43.7–9); suicides of Otho's soldiers (Tac. *Hist.* 2.49.4; Suet. *Oth.* 12.2; Plut. *Oth.* 17.10; Dio 64.15).

devotion to their legitimate commander-in-chief. Readers (and listeners) are thus reminded of the extent to which Caesar can call upon his army's loyalty and will uphold his soldiers' interests at Rome, but they are also presented with the argument that loyalty to Caesar will also be loyalty to the *res publica*.

lspielberg@ucla.edu

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