

# **Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries**

Book 2

# Table of Contents

<u>Julius Caesar's War Commentaries</u> .....	1
<u>Book 2</u> .....	1

# Julius Caesar's War Commentaries

## Book 2

Translated by W. A. McDevitte and W. S. Bohn

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

Book 2 – (49 B.C.)

[2.1]While these things were going forward in Spain, Caius Trebonius, Caesar's lieutenant, who had been left to conduct the assault of Massilia, began to raise a mound, vineae, and turrets against the town, on two sides; one of which was next the harbor and docks, the other on that part where there is a passage from Gaul and Spain to that sea which forces itself up the mouth of the Rhone. For Massilia is washed almost on three sides by the sea, the remaining fourth part is the only side which has access by land. A part even of this space, which reaches to the fortress, being fortified by the nature of the country, and a very deep valley, required a long and difficult siege. To accomplish these works, Caius Trebonius sends for a great quantity of carriages and men from the whole Province, and orders hurdles and materials to be furnished. These things being provided, he raised a mound eighty feet in height.

[2.2]But so great a store of every thing necessary for a war had been a long time before laid up in the town, and so great a number of engines, that no vineae made of hurdles could withstand their force. For poles twelve feet in length, pointed with iron, and these too shot from very large engines, sank into the ground through four rows of hurdles. Therefore the arches of the vineae were covered over with beams a foot thick, fastened together, and under this the materials of the agger were handed from one to another. Before this was carried a testudo sixty feet long, for leveling the ground, made also of very strong timber, and covered over with every thing that was capable of protecting it against the fire and stones thrown by the enemy. But the greatness of the works, the height of the wall and towers, and the multitude of engines retarded the progress of our works. Besides, frequent sallies were made from the town by the Albici, and fire was thrown on our mound and turrets. These our men easily repulsed, and, doing considerable damage to those who sallied, beat them back into the town.

[2.3]In the mean time, Lucius Nasidius, being sent by Cneius Pompey with a fleet of sixteen sail, a few of which had beaks of brass, to the assistance of Lucius Domitius and the Massilians, passed the straits of Sicily without the knowledge or expectation of Curio, and, putting with his fleet into Messana, and making the nobles and senate take flight with the sudden terror, carried off one of their ships out of dock. Having joined this to his other ships, he made good his voyage to Massilia, and having sent in a galley privately, acquaints Domitius and the Massilians of his arrival, and earnestly encourages them to hazard another battle with Brutus's fleet with the addition of his aid.

[2.4]The Massilians, since their former loss, had brought the same number of old ships from the docks, and had repaired and fitted them out with great industry: they had a large supply of seamen and pilots. They had got several fishing-smacks, and covered them over, that the seamen might be secure against darts: these they filled with archers and engines. With a fleet thus appointed, encouraged by the entreaties and tears of all the old men, matrons, and virgins to succor the state in this hour of distress, they went on board with no less spirit and confidence than they had fought before. For it happens, from a common infirmity of human nature, that we are more flushed with confidence, or more vehemently al of all the old men, matrons, and virgins to succor the state in this hour of distress, they went on board with no less spirit and confidence than they had fought before. For it

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

happens, from a common infirmity of human nature, that we are more flushed with confidence, or more vehemently alarmed at things unseen, concealed, and unknown, as was the case then. For the arrival of Lucius Nasidius had filled the state with the most sanguine hopes and wishes. Having got a fair wind, they sailed out of port and went to Nasidius to Taurois, which is a fort belonging to the Massilians, and there ranged their fleet and again encouraged each other to engage and communicated their plan of operation. The command of the right division was given to the Massilians, that of the left to Nasidius.

[2.5] Brutus sailed to the same place with an augmented fleet; for to those made by Caesar at Arelas were added six ships taken from the Massilians, which he had refitted since the last battle and had furnished with every necessary. Accordingly, having encouraged his men to despise a vanquished people whom they had conquered when yet unbroken, he advanced against them full of confidence and spirit. From Trebonius's camp and all the higher grounds it was easy to see into the town – how all the youth which remained in it, and all persons of more advanced years, with their wives and children, and the public guards, were either extending their hands from the wall to the heavens, or were repairing to the temples of the immortal gods, and prostrating themselves before their images, were entreating them to grant them victory. Nor was there a single person who did not imagine that his future fortune depended on the issue of that day; for the choice of their youth and the most respectable of every age, being expressly invited and solicited, had gone on board the fleet, that if any adverse fate should befall them they might see that nothing was left for them to attempt, and, if they proved victorious, they might have hopes of preserving the city, either by their internal resources or by foreign assistance.

[2.6] When the battle was begun, no effort of valor was wanting to the Massilians, but, mindful of the instructions which they had a little before received from their friends, they fought with such spirit as if they supposed that they would never have another opportunity to attempt a defense, and as if they believed that those whose lives should be endangered in the battle would not long precede the fate of the rest of the citizens, who, if the city was taken, must undergo the same fortune of war. Our ships being at some distance from each other, room was allowed both for the skill of their pilots and the maneuvering of their ships; and if at any time ours, gaining an advantage by casting the iron hooks on board their ships, grappled with them, from all parts they assisted those who were distressed. Nor, after being joined by the Albici, did they decline coming to close engagement, nor were they much inferior to our men in valor. At the same time, showers of darts, thrown from a distance from the lesser ships, suddenly inflicted several wounds on our men when off their guard and otherwise engaged; and two of their three-decked galleys; having descried the ship of Decimus Brutus, which could be easily distinguished by its flag, rowed up against him with great violence from opposite sides: but Brutus, seeing into their designs, by the swiftness of his ship extricated himself with such address as to get clear, though only by a moment. From the velocity of their motion they struck against each other with such violence that they were both excessively injured by the shock; the beak, indeed, of one of them being broken off, the whole ship was ready to founder, which circumstance being observed, the ships of Brutus's fleet, which were nearest that station, attack them when in this disorder and sink them both.

[2.7] But Nasidius's ships were of no use, and soon left the fight; for the sight of their country, or the entreaties of their relations, did not urge them to run a desperate risk of their lives. Therefore, of the number of the ships not one was lost: of the fleet of the Massilians five were sunk, four taken, and one ran off with Nasidius: all that escaped made the best of their way to Hither Spain, but one of the rest was sent forward to Massilia for the purpose of bearing this intelligence, and when it came near the city, the whole people crowded out to hear the tidings, and, on being informed of the event, were so oppressed with grief, that one would have imagined that the city had been taken by an enemy at the same moment. The Massilians, however, began to make the necessary preparations for the defense of their city with unwearied energy.

[2.8] The legionary soldiers who had the management of the works on the right side, observed, from the frequent sallies of the enemy, that it might prove a great protection to them to build a turret of brick under the wall for a fort and place of refuge, which they at first built low and small, [to guard them] against sudden attacks. To it they retreated, and from it they made defense if any superior force attacked them; and from it they sallied out either to repel or pursue the enemy. It extended thirty feet on every side, and the thickness of the walls was five feet. But afterward, as experience is the best master in every thing on which the wit of man is employed, it was found that it might be of considerable service if it was raised to the usual height of turrets, which was effected in the following manner.

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

[2.9]When the turret was raised to the height for flooring, they laid it on the walls in such a manner that the ends of the joists were covered by the outer face of the wall, that nothing should project to which the enemy's fire might adhere. They, moreover, built over the joists with small bricks as high as the protection of the plutei and vineae permitted them; and on that place they laid two beams across, angle-ways, at a small distance from the outer walls, to support the rafters which were to cover the turret, and on the beams they laid joists across in a direct line, and on these they fastened down planks. These joists they made somewhat longer, to project beyond the outside of the wall, that they might serve to hang a curtain on them to defend and repel all blows while they were building the walls between that and the next floor, and the floor of this story they faced with bricks and mortar, that the enemy's fire might do them no damage; and on this they spread mattresses, lest the weapons thrown from engines should break through the flooring, or stones from catapults should batter the brick work. They, moreover, made three mats of cable ropes, each of them the length of the turret walls, and four feet broad, and, hanging them round the turret on the three sides which faced the enemy, fastened them to the projecting joists. For this was the only sort of defense which, they had learned by experience in other places, could not be pierced by darts or engines. But when that part of the turret which was completed was protected and secured against every attempt of the enemy, they removed the plutei to other works. They began to suspend gradually, and raise by screws from the first-floor, the entire roof of the turret, and then they elevated it as high as the length of the mats allowed. Hid and secured within these coverings, they built up the walls with bricks, and again, by another turn of the screw, cleared a place for themselves to proceed with the building; and, when they thought it time to lay another floor, they laid the ends of the beams, covered in by the outer bricks in like manner as in the first story, and from that story they again raised the uppermost floor and the mat-work. In this manner, securely and without a blow or danger, they raised it six stories high, and in laying the materials left loop-holes in such places as they thought proper for working their engines.

[2.10]When they were confident that they could protect the works which lay around from this turret, they resolved to build a musculus, sixty feet long, of timber, two feet square, and to extend it from the brick tower to the enemy's tower and wall. This was the form of it: first, two beams of equal length were laid on the ground, at the distance of four feet from each other; and in them were fastened small pillars, five feet high, which were joined together by braces, with a gentle slope, on which the timber which they must place to support the roof of the musculus should be laid: upon this were laid beams, two feet square, bound with iron plates and nails. To the upper covering of the musculus and the upper beams, they fastened laths, four fingers square, to support the tiles which were to cover the musculus. The roof being thus sloped and laid over in rows in the same manner as the joists were laid on the braces, the musculus was covered with tiles and mortar, to secure it against fire, which might be thrown from the wall. Over the tiles hides are spread, to prevent the water let in on them by spouts from dissolving the cement of the bricks. Again, the hides were covered over with mattresses, that they might not be destroyed by fire or stones. The soldiers under the protection of the vineae, finish this whole work to the very tower; and suddenly, before the enemy were aware of it, moved it forward by naval machinery, by putting rollers under it, close up to the enemy's turret, so that it even touched the building.

[2.11]The townsmen, affrighted at this unexpected stroke, bring forward with levers the largest stones they can procure, and pitching them from the wall, roll them down on the musculus. The strength of the timber withstood the shock; and whatever fell on it slid off, on account of the sloping roof. When they perceived this, they altered their plan, and set fire to barrels, filled with resin and tar, and rolled them down from the wall on the musculus. As soon as they fell on it, they slid off again, and were removed from its side by long poles and forks. In the mean time, the soldiers, under cover of the musculus, were rooting out with crow-bars the lowest stones of the enemy's turret, with which the foundation was laid. The musculus was defended by darts, thrown from engines by our men from the brick tower, and the enemy were beaten off from the wall and turrets; nor was a fair opportunity of defending the walls given them. At length several stones being picked away from the foundation of that turret next the musculus, part of it fell down suddenly, and the rest, as if following it, leaned forward.

[2.12]Hereupon, the enemy distressed at the sudden fall of the turret, surprised at the unforeseen calamity, awed by the wrath of the gods, and dreading the pillage of their city, rush all together out of the gate unarmed, with their temples bound with fillets, and suppliantly stretch out their hands to the officers and the army. At this uncommon occurrence, the whole progress of the war was stopped, and the soldiers, turning away from the battle, ran eagerly to hear and listen to them. When the enemy came up to the commanders and the army, they all fell

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

down at their feet, and besought them "to wait till Caesar's arrival; they saw that their city was taken, our works completed, and their tower undermined, therefore they desisted from a defense; that no obstacle could arise, to prevent their being instantly plundered at a beck, as soon as he arrived, if they refused to submit to his orders." They inform them that, "if the turret had entirely fallen down, the soldiers could not be withheld from forcing into the town and sacking it, in hopes of getting spoil." These and several other arguments to the same effect were delivered, as they were a people of great learning, with great pathos and lamentations.

[2.13]The lieutenants moved with compassion, draw off the soldiers from the work, desist from the assault, and leave sentinels on the works. A sort of truce having been made through compassion for the besieged, the arrival of Caesar is anxiously awaited; not a dart was thrown from the walls or by our men, but all remit their care and diligence, as if the business was at an end. For Caesar had given Trebonius strict charge not to suffer the town to be taken by storm, lest the soldiers, too much irritated both by abhorrence of their revolt, by the contempt shown to them, and by their long labor, should put to the sword all the grown up inhabitants, as they threatened to do. And it was with difficulty that they were then restrained from breaking into the town, and they were much displeased, because they imagined that they were prevented by Trebonius from taking possession of it.

[2.14]But the enemy, destitute of all honor, only waited a time and opportunity for fraud and treachery. And after an interval of some days, when our men were careless and negligent, on a sudden, at noon, when some were dispersed, and others indulging themselves in rest on the very works, after the fatigue of the day, and their arms were all laid by and covered up, they sallied out from the gates, and, the wind being high and favorable to them, they set fire to our works; and the wind spread it in such a manner that, in the same instant, the agger, plutei, testudo, tower, and engines all caught the flames and were consumed before we could conceive how it had occurred. Our men, alarmed at such an unexpected turn of fortune, lay hold on such arms as they could find. Some rush from the camp; an attack is made on the enemy: but they were prevented, by arrows and engines from the walls; from pursuing them when they fled. They retired to their walls, and there, without fear, set the musculus and brick tower on fire. Thus, by the perfidy of the enemy and the violence of the storm, the labor of many months was destroyed in a moment. The Massilians made the same attempt the next day, having got such another storm. They sallied out against the other tower and agger, and fought with more confidence. But as our men had on the former occasion given up all thoughts of a contest, so, warned by the event of the preceding day, they had made every preparation for a defense. Accordingly, they slew several, and forced the rest to retreat into the town without effecting their design.

[2.15]Trebonius began to provide and repair what had been destroyed, with much greater zeal on the part of the soldiers; for when they saw that their extraordinary pains and preparations had an unfortunate issue, they were fired with indignation that, in consequence of the impious violation of the truce, their valor should be held in derision. There was no place left them from which the materials for their mound could be fetched, in consequence of all the timber, far and wide, in the territories of the Massilians, having been cut down and carried away; they began therefore to make an agger of a new construction, never heard of before, of two walls of brick, each six feet thick, and to lay floors over them of almost the same breadth with the agger, made of timber. But wherever the space between the walls, or the weakness of the timber, seemed to require it, pillars were placed underneath and traversed beams laid on to strengthen the work, and the space which was floored was covered over with hurdles, and the hurdles plastered over with mortar. The soldiers, covered over head by the floor, on the right and left by the wall, and in the front by the mantlets, carried whatever materials were necessary for the building without danger: the business was soon finished – the loss of their laborious work was soon repaired by the dexterity and fortitude of the soldiers. Gates for making sallies were left in the wall in such places as they thought proper.

[2.16]But when the enemy perceived that those works, which they had hoped could not be replaced without a great length of time, were put into so thorough repair by a few day's labor and diligence, that there was no room for perfidy or sallies, and that no means were left them by which they could either hurt the men by resistance or the works by fire, and when they found by former examples that their town could be surrounded with a wall and turrets on every part by which it was accessible by land, in such a manner that they could not have room to stand on their own fortifications, because our works were built almost on the top of their walls by our army, and darts could be thrown from our hands, and when they perceived that all advantage arising from their engines, on which they had built great hopes, was totally lost, and that though they had an opportunity of fighting with us on equal terms from walls and turrets, they could perceive that they were not equal to our men in bravery, they had

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

recourse to the same proposals of surrender as before.

[2.17]In Further Spain, Marcus Varro, in the beginning of the disturbances, when he heard of the circumstances which took place in Italy, being diffident of Pompey's success, used to speak in a very friendly manner of Caesar. That though, being pre-engaged to Cneius Pompey in quality of lieutenant, he was bound in honor to him, that, nevertheless, there existed a very intimate tie between him and Caesar; that he was not ignorant of what was the duty of a lieutenant, who bore an office of trust; nor of his own strength, nor of the disposition of the whole province to Caesar. These sentiments he constantly expressed in his ordinary conversation, and did not attach himself to either party. But afterward, when he found that Caesar was detained before Massilia, that the forces of Petreius had effected a junction with the army of Afranius, that considerable reinforcements had come to their assistance, that there were great hopes and expectations, and heard that the whole Hither province had entered into a confederacy, and of the difficulties to which Caesar was reduced afterward at Ilerda for want of provisions, and Afranius wrote to him a fuller and more exaggerated account of these matters, he began to regulate his movements by those of fortune.

[2.18]He made levies throughout the province; and, having completed his two legions, he added to them about thirty auxiliary cohorts; he collected a large quantity of corn to send partly to the Masilians, partly to Afranius and Petreius. He commanded the inhabitants of Gades to build ten ships of war; besides, he took care that several others should be built in Spain. He removed all the money and ornaments from the temple of Hercules to the town of Gades, and sent six cohorts thither from the province to guard them, and gave the command of the town of Gades to Caius Gallonius, a Roman knight, and friend of Domitius, who had come thither sent by Domitius to recover an estate for him; and he deposited all the arms, both public and private, in Gallonius's house. He himself [Varro] made severe harangues against Caesar. He often pronounced from his tribunal that Caesar had fought several unsuccessful battles, and that a great number of his men had deserted to Afranius. That he had these accounts from undoubted messengers, and authority on which he could rely. By these means he terrified the Roman citizens of that province, and obliged them to promise him for the service of the state one hundred and ninety thousand sesterces, twenty thousand pounds weight of silver, and a hundred and twenty thousand bushels of wheat. He laid heavier burdens on those states which he thought were friendly disposed to Caesar, and billeted troops on them; he passed judgment against some private persons, and condemned to confiscation the properties of those who had spoken or made orations against the republic, and forced the whole province to take an oath of allegiance to him and Pompey. Being informed of all that happened in Hither Spain, he prepared for war. This was his plan of operations. He was to retire with his two legions to Gades, and to lay up all the shipping and provisions there. For he had been informed that the whole province was inclined to favor Caesar's party. He thought that the war might be easily protracted in an island, if he was provided with corn and shipping. Caesar, although called back to Italy by many and important matters, yet had determined to leave no dregs of war behind him in Spain, because he knew that Pompey had many dependents and clients in the hither province.

[2.19]Having therefore sent two legions into Further Spain under the command of Quintus Cassius, tribune of the people; he himself advances with six hundred horse by forced marches, and issues a proclamation, appointing a day on which the magistrates and nobility of all the states should attend him at Corduba. This proclamation being published through the whole province, there was not a state that did not send a part of their senate to Corduba, at the appointed time; and not a Roman citizen of any note but appeared that day. At the same time the senate at Corduba shut the gates of their own accord against Varro, and posted guards and sentinels on the wall and in the turrets, and detained two cohorts (called *Colonicae*, which had come there accidentally), for the defense of the town. About the same time the people of Carmona, which is by far the strongest state in the whole province, of themselves drove out of the town the cohorts, and shut the gates against them, although three cohorts had been detached by Varro to garrison the citadel.

[2.20]But Varro was in greater haste on this account to reach Gades with his legion as soon as possible, lest he should be stopped either on his march or on crossing over to the island. The affection of the province to Caesar proved so great and so favorable, that he received a letter from Gades, before he was far advanced on his march: that as soon as the nobility of Gades heard of Caesar's proclamation, they had combined with the tribune of the cohorts, which were in garrison there, to drive Gallonius out of the town, and to secure the city and island for Caesar. That having agreed on the design they had sent notice to Gallonius, to quit Gades of his own accord while he could do it with safety; if he did not, they would take measures for themselves; that for fear of this Gallonius

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

had been induced to quit the town. When this was known, one of Varro's two legions, which was called Vernacula, carried off the colors from Varro's camp, he himself standing by and looking on, and retired to Hispalis, and took post in the market and public places without doing any injury, and the Roman citizens residing there approved so highly of this act, that every one most earnestly offered to entertain them in their houses. When Varro, terrified at these things, having altered his route, proposed going to Italica, he was informed by his friends that the gates were shut against him. Then indeed, when intercepted from every road, he sends word to Caesar, that he was ready to deliver up the legion which he commanded. He sends to him Sextus Caesar, and orders him to deliver it up to him. Varro, having delivered up the legion, went to Caesar to Corduba, and having laid before him the public accounts, handed over to him most faithfully whatever money he had, and told him what quantity of corn and shipping he had, and where.

[2.21]Caesar made a public oration at Corduba, in which he returned thanks to all severally: to the Roman citizens, because they had been zealous to keep the town in their own power; to the Spaniards, for having driven out the garrison; to the Gaditani, for having defeated the attempts of his enemies, and asserted their own liberty; to the Tribunes and Centurions who had gone there as a guard, for having by their valor confirmed them in their purpose. He remitted the tax which the Roman citizens had promised to Varro for the public use: he restored their goods to those who he was informed had incurred that penalty by speaking too freely, having given public and private rewards to some he filled the rest with flattering hopes of his future intentions; and having staid two days at Corduba, he set out for Gades; he ordered the money and ornaments which had been carried away from the temple of Hercules, and lodged in the houses of private persons, to be replaced in the temple. He made Quintus Cassius governor of the province, and assigned him four legions. He himself, with those ships which Marcus Varro had built, and others which the Gaditani had built by Varro's orders, arrived in a few days at Tarraco, where ambassadors from the greatest part of the nearer province waited his arrival. Having in the same manner conferred marks of honor both publicly and privately on some states, he left Tarraco, and went thence by land to Narbo, and thence to Massilia. There he was informed that a law was passed for creating a dictator, and that he had been nominated dictator by Marcus Lepidus the praetor.

[2.22]The Massilians, wearied out by misfortunes of every sort, reduced to the lowest ebb for want of corn, conquered in two engagements at sea, defeated in their frequent sallies, and struggling moreover with a fatal pestilence, from their long confinement and change of victuals (for they all subsisted on old millet and damaged barley, which they had formerly provided and laid up in the public stores against an emergency of this kind), their turret being demolished, a great part of their wall having given way, and despairing of any aid, either from the provinces or their armies, for these they had heard had fallen into Caesar's power, resolved to surrender now without dissimulation. But a few days before, Lucius Domitius, having discovered the intention of the Massilians, and having procured three ships, two of which he gave up to his friends, went on board the third himself, having got a brisk wind, put out to sea. Some ships, which by Brutus's orders were constantly cruising near the port, having espied him, weighed anchor, and pursued him. But of these, the ship on board of which he was, persevered itself, and continuing its flight, and by the aid of the wind got out of sight: the other two, affrighted by the approach of our galleys put back again into the harbor. The Massilians conveyed their arms and engines out of the town, as they were ordered: brought their ships out of the port and docks, and delivered up the money in their treasury. When these affairs were dispatched, Caesar, sparing the town more out of regard to their renown and antiquity than to any claim they could lay to his favor, left two legions in garrison there, sent the rest to Italy, and set out himself for Rome.

[2.23]About the same time Caius Curio, having sailed from Sicily to Africa, and from the first despising the forces of Publius Attius Varus, transported only two of the four legions which he had received from Caesar, and five hundred horse, and having spent two days and three nights on the voyage, arrived at a place called Aquilaria, which is about twenty-two miles distant from Clupea, and in the summer season has a convenient harbor, and is inclosed by two projecting promontories. Lucius Caesar the son, who was waiting his arrival near Clupea with ten ships which had been taken near Utica in a war with the pirates, and which Publius Attius had had repaired for this war, frightened at the number of our ships, fled the sea, and running his three-decked covered galley on the nearest shore, left her there and made his escape by land to Adrumetum. Caius Considius Longus, with a garrison of one legion, guarded this town. The rest of Caesar's fleet, after his flight, retired to Adrumetum. Marcus Rufus, the quaestor, pursued him with twelve ships, which Curio had brought from Sicily as convoy to the merchantmen,



## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

and seeing a ship left on the shore, he brought her off by a towing rope, and returned with his fleet to Curio.

[2.24]Curio detached Marcus before with the fleet to Utica, and marched thither with his army. Having advanced two days, he came to the river Bagrada, and there left Caius Caninius Rebilus, the lieutenant, with the legions; and went forward himself with the horse to view the Cornelian camp, because that was reckoned a very eligible position for encamping. It is a straight ridge, projecting into the sea, steep and rough on both sides, but the ascent is more gentle on that part which lies opposite Utica. It is not more than a mile distant from Utica in a direct line. But on this road there is a spring, to which the sea comes up, and overflows; an extensive morass is thereby formed; and if a person would avoid it, he must make a circuit of six miles to reach the town.

[2.25]Having examined this place, Curio got a view of Varus's camp, joining the wall and town, at the gate called Bellica, well fortified by its natural situation, on one side by the town itself, on the other by a theater which is before the town, the approaches to the town being rendered difficult and narrow by the very extensive out-buildings of that structure. At the same time he observed the roads very full of carriages and cattle, which they were conveying from the country into the town on the sudden alarm. He sent his cavalry after them to plunder them and get the spoil. And at the same time Varus had detached as a guard for them six hundred Numidian horse, and four hundred foot, which king Juba had sent to Utica as auxiliaries a few days before. There was a friendship subsisting between his [Juba's] father and Pompey, and a feud between him and Curio, because he, when a tribune of the people, had proposed a law, in which he endeavored to make public property of the kingdom of Juba. The horse engaged; but the Numidians were not able to stand our first charge; but a hundred and twenty being killed, the rest retreated into their camp near the town. In the mean time, on the arrival of his men of war, Curio ordered proclamation to be made to the merchant ships, which lay at anchor before Utica, in number about two hundred, that he would treat as enemies all that did not set sail immediately for the Cornelian camp. As soon as the proclamation was made, in an instant they all weighed anchor and left Utica, and repaired to the place commanded them. This circumstance furnished the army with plenty of every thing.

[2.26]After these transactions, Curio returned to his camp to Bragada; and by a general shout of the whole army was saluted imperator. The next day he led his army to Utica, and encamped near the town. Before the works of the camp were finished, the horse upon guard brought him word that a large supply of horse and foot sent by king Juba were on their march to Utica, and at the same time a cloud of dust was observed, and in a moment the front of the line was in sight. Curio, surprised at the suddenness of the affair, sent on the horse to receive their first charge, and detain them. He immediately called off his legions from the work, and put them in battle array. The horse began the battle: and before the legions could be completely marshaled and take their ground, the king's entire forces being thrown into disorder and confusion, because they had marched without any order, and were under no apprehensions, betake themselves to flight: almost all the enemy's horse being safe, because they made a speedy retreat into the town along the shore, Caesar's soldiers slay a great number of their infantry.

[2.27]The next night two Marsian centurions with twenty-two men belonging to the companies, deserted from Curio's camp to Attius Varus. They, whether they uttered the sentiments which they really entertained, or wished to gratify Varus (for what we wish we readily give credit to, and what we think ourselves, we hope is the opinion of other men), assured him, that the minds of the whole army were disaffected to Curio, that it was very expedient that the armies should be brought in view of each other, and an opportunity of a conference be given. Induced by their opinion, Varus the next day led his troops out of the camp: Curio did so in like manner, and with only one small valley between them, each drew up his forces.

[2.28]In Varus's army there was one Sextus Quintilius Varus who, as we have mentioned before, was at Corfinium. When Caesar gave him his liberty, he went over to Africa; now, Curio had transported to Africa those legions which Caesar had received under his command a short time before at Corfinium; so that the officers and companies were still the same, excepting the change of a few centurions. Quintilius, making this a pretext for addressing them, began to go round Curio's lines, and to entreat the soldiers "not to lose all recollection of the oath which they took first to Domitius and to him their quaestor, nor bear arms against those who had shared the same fortune, and endured the same hardships in a siege, nor fight for those by whom they had been opprobriously called deserters." To this he added a few words by way of encouragement, what they might expect from his own liberality, if they should follow him and Attius. On the delivery of this speech, no intimation of their future conduct is given by Curio's army, and thus both generals led back their troops to their camp.

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

[2.29]However, a great and general fear spread through Curio's camp, for it is soon increased by the various discourses of men. For every one formed an opinion of his own; and to what he had heard from others, added his own apprehensions. When this had spread from a single author to several persons, and was handed from one another, there appeared to be many authors for such sentiments as these: "That it was a civil war; that they were men; and therefore that it was lawful for them to act freely, and follow which party they pleased." These were the legions which a short time before had belonged to the enemy; for the custom of offering free towns to those who joined the opposite party had changed Caesar's kindness. For the harshest expressions of the soldiers in general did not proceed from the Marsi and Peligni, as those which passed in the tents the night before; and some of their fellow soldiers heard them with displeasure. Some additions were also made to them by those who wished to be thought more zealous in their duty.

[2.30]For these reasons, having called a council, Curio began to deliberate on the general welfare. There were some opinions, which advised by all means an attempt to be made, and an attack on Varus's camp; for when such sentiments prevailed among the soldiers, they thought idleness was improper. In short, they said "that it was better bravely to try the hazard of war in a battle, than to be deserted and surrounded by their own troops, and forced to submit to the greatest cruelties." There were some who gave their opinion, that they ought to withdraw at the third watch to the Cornelian camp; that by a longer interval of time the soldiers might be brought to a proper way of thinking; and also, that if any misfortune should befall them, they might have a safer and readier retreat to Sicily, from the great number of their ships.

[2.31]Curio, censuring both measures, said, "that the one was as deficient in spirit, as the other exceeded in it: that the latter advised a shameful flight, and the former recommended us to engage at a great disadvantage. For on what, says he, can we rely that we can storm a camp, fortified both by nature and art? Or, indeed, what advantage do we gain if we give over the assault, after having suffered considerable loss; as if success did not acquire for a general the affection of his army, and misfortune their hatred? But what does a change of camp imply but a shameful flight and universal despair, and the alienation of the army? For neither ought the obedient to suspect that they are distrusted, nor the insolent to know that we fear them; because our fears augment the licentiousness of the latter, and diminish the zeal of the former. But if, says he, we were convinced of the truth of the reports of the disaffection of the army (which I indeed am confident are either altogether groundless, or at least less than they are supposed to be), how much better to conceal and hide our suspicions of it, than by our conduct confirm it? Ought not the defects of an army to be as carefully concealed as the wounds in our bodies, lest we should increase the enemy's hopes? but they moreover advise us to set out at midnight, in order, I suppose, that those who attempt to do wrong may have a fairer opportunity; for conduct of this kind is restrained either by shame or fear, to the display of which the night is most averse. Wherefore, I am neither so rash as to give my opinion that we ought to attack their camp without hopes of succeeding; nor so influenced by fear as to despond: and I imagine that every expedient ought first to be tried; and I am in a great degree confident that I shall form the same opinions as yourselves on this matter."

[2.32]Having broken up the council, he called the soldiers together, and reminded them "what advantage Caesar had derived from their zeal at Corfinium; how by their good offices and influence he had brought over a great part of Italy to his interest. For, says he, all the municipal towns afterward imitated you and your conduct; nor was it without reason that Caesar judged so favorably, and the enemy so harshly of you. For Pompey, though beaten in no engagement, yet was obliged to shift his ground, and leave Italy, from the precedent established by your conduct. Caesar committed me, whom he considered his dearest friend, and the provinces of Sicily and Africa, without which he was not able to protect Rome or Italy, to your protection. There are some here present who encourage you to revolt from us; for what can they wish for more, than at once to ruin us, and to involve you in a heinous crime? or what baser opinions could they in their resentment entertain of you, than that you would betray those who acknowledged themselves indebted to you for every thing, and put yourselves in the power of those who think they have been ruined by you? Have you not heard of Caesar's exploits in Spain? that he routed two armies, conquered two generals, recovered two provinces, and effected all this within forty days after he came in sight of the enemy? Can those who were not able to stand against him while they were uninjured, resist him when they are ruined? Will you, who took part with Caesar while victory was uncertain, take part with the conquered enemy when the fortune of the war is decided, and when you ought to reap the reward of your services? For they say that they have been deserted and betrayed by you, and remind you of a former oath. But did

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

you desert Lucius Domitius, or did Lucius Domitius desert you? Did he not, when you were ready to submit to the greatest difficulties, cast you off? Did he not, without your privacy, endeavor to effect his own escape? When you were betrayed by him, were you not preserved by Caesar's generosity? And how could he think you bound by your oath to him, when, after having thrown up the ensigns of power, and abdicated his government, he became a private person, and a captive in another's power? A new obligation is left upon you, that you should disregard the oath, by which you are at present bound; and have respect only to that which was invalidated by the surrender of your general, and his diminution of rank. But I suppose, although you are pleased with Caesar, you are offended with me; however, I shall not boast of my services to you, which still are inferior to my own wishes or your expectations. But, however, soldiers have ever looked for the rewards of labor at the conclusion of a war; and what the issue of it is likely to be, not even you can doubt. But why should I omit to mention my own diligence and good fortune, and to what a happy crisis affairs are now arrived? Are you sorry that I transported the army safe and entire, without the loss of a single ship? That on my arrival, in the very first attack, I routed the enemy's fleet? That twice in two days I defeated the enemy's horse? That I carried out of the very harbor and bay two hundred of the enemy's victualers, and reduced them to that situation that they can receive no supplies either by land or sea? Will you divorce yourselves from this fortune and these generals; and prefer the disgrace of Corfinium, the defeat of Italy, the surrender of both Spains, and the prestige of the African war? I, for my part, wished to be called a soldier of Caesar's; you honored me with the title of Imperator. If you repent your bounty, I give it back to you; restore to me my former name that you may not appear to have conferred the honor on me as a reproach."

[2.33]The soldiers, being affected by this oration, frequently attempted to interrupt him while he was speaking, so that they appeared to bear with excessive anguish the suspicion of treachery, and when he was leaving the assembly they unanimously besought him to be of good spirits, and not hesitate to engage the enemy and put their fidelity and courage to a trial. As the wishes and opinions of all were changed by this act, Curio, with the general consent, determined, whenever opportunity offered, to hazard a battle. The next day he led out his forces and ranged them in order of battle on the same ground where they had been posted the preceding day; nor did Attius Varus hesitate to draw out his men, that, if any occasion should offer, either to tamper with our men or to engage on equal terms he might not miss the opportunity.

[2.34]There lay between the two armies a valley, as already mentioned, not very deep, but of a difficult and steep ascent. Each was waiting till the enemy's forces should attempt to pass it, that they might engage with the advantage of the ground. At the same time on the left wing, the entire cavalry of Publius Attius, and several light-armed infantry intermixed with them, were perceived descending into the valley. Against them Curio detached his cavalry and two cohorts of the Marrucini, whose first charge the enemy's horse were unable to stand, but, setting spurs to their horses, fled back to their friends: the light-infantry being deserted by those who had come out along with them, were surrounded and cut to pieces by our men. Varus's whole army, facing that way, saw their men flee and cut down. Upon which Rebilus, one of Caesar's lieutenants, whom Curio had brought with him from Sicily knowing that he had great experience in military matters, cried out, "You see the enemy are daunted, Curio! why do you hesitate to take advantage of the opportunity?" Curio, having merely "expressed this, that the soldiers should keep in mind the professions which they had made to him the day before," then ordered them to follow him, and ran far before them all. The valley was so difficult of ascent that the foremost men could not struggle up it unless assisted by those behind. But the minds of Attius's soldiers being prepossessed with fear and the flight and slaughter of their men, never thought of opposing us; and they all imagined that they were already surrounded by our horse, and, therefore, before a dart could be thrown, or our men come near them, Varus's whole army turned their backs and retreated to their camp.

[2.35]In this flight one Fabius, a Pelignian common soldier in Curio's army, pursuing the enemy's rear, with a loud voice shouted to Varus by his name, and often called him, so that he seemed to be one of his soldiers, who wished to speak to him and give him advice. When Varus, after been repeatedly called, stopped and looked at him, and inquired who he was and what he wanted, he made a blow with his sword at his naked shoulder and was very near killing Varus, but he escaped the danger by raising his shield to ward off the blow. Fabius was surrounded by the soldiers near him and cut to pieces; and by the multitude and crowds of those that fled, the gates of the camps were thronged and the passage stopped, and a greater number perished in that place without a stroke than in the battle and flight. Nor were we far from driving them from this camp; and some of them ran

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

straightway to the town without halting. But both the nature of the ground and the strength of the fortifications prevented our access to the camp; for Curio's soldiers, marching out to battle, were without those things which were requisite for storming a camp. Curio, therefore, led his army back to the camp, with all his troops safe except Fabius. Of the enemy about six hundred were killed and a thousand wounded, all of whom, after Curio's return, and several more, under pretext of their wounds, but in fact through fear, withdrew from the camp into the town, which Varus perceiving and knowing the terror of his army, leaving a trumpeter in his camp and a few tents for show, at the third watch led back his army quietly into the town.

[2.36]The next day Curio resolved to besiege Utica, and to draw lines about it. In the town there was a multitude of people, ignorant of war, owing to the length of the peace; some of them Uticans, very well inclined to Caesar, for his favors to them; the Roman population was composed of persons differing widely in their sentiments. The terror occasioned by former battles was very great; and therefore, they openly talked of surrendering, and argued with Attius that he should not suffer the fortune of them all to be ruined by his obstinacy. While these things were in agitation, couriers, who had been sent forward, arrived from king Juba, with the intelligence that he was on his march, with considerable forces, and encouraged them to protect and defend their city, a circumstance which greatly comforted their desponding hearts.

[2.37]The same intelligence was brought to Curio; but for some time he could not give credit to it, because he had so great confidence in his own good fortune. And at this time Caesar's success in Spain was announced in Africa by messages and letters. Being elated by all these things, he imagined that the king would not dare to attempt any thing against him. But when he found out, from undoubted authority, that his forces were less than twenty miles distant from Utica, abandoning his works, he retired to the Cornelian camp. Here he began to lay in corn and wood, and to fortify his camp, and immediately dispatched orders to Sicily, that his two legions and the remainder of his cavalry should be sent to him. His camp was well adapted for protracting a war, from the nature and strength of the situation, from its proximity to the sea, and the abundance of water and salt, of which a great quantity had been stored up from the neighboring salt-pits. Timber could not fail him from the number of trees, nor corn, with which the lands abounded. Wherefore, with the general consent, Curio determined to wait for the rest of his forces, and protract the war.

[2.38]This plan being settled, and his conduct approved of, he is informed by some deserters from the town that Juba had staid behind in his own kingdom, being called home by a neighboring war, and a dispute with the people of Leptis; and that Sabura, his commander-in-chief, who had been sent with a small force, was drawing near to Utica. Curio rashly believing this information, altered his design, and resolved to hazard a battle. His youth, his spirits, his former good fortune and confidence of success, contributed much to confirm this resolution. Induced by these motives, early in the night he sent all his cavalry to the enemy's camp near the river Bagrada, of which Sabura, of whom we have already spoken, was the commander. But the king was coming after them with all his forces, and was posted at a distance of six miles behind Sabura. The horse that were sent perform their march that night, and attack the enemy unawares and unexpectedly; for the Numidians, after the usual barbarous custom, encamped here and there without any regularity. The cavalry having attacked them, when sunk in sleep and dispersed, killed a great number of them; many were frightened and ran away. After which the horse returned to Curio, and brought some, prisoners with them.

[2.39]Curio had set out at the fourth watch with all his forces, except five cohorts which he left to guard the camp. Having advanced six miles, he met the horse, heard what had happened and inquired from the captives who commanded the camp at Bagrada. They replied Sabura. Through eagerness to perform his journey, he neglected to make further inquiries, but looking back to the company next him, "Don't you see, soldiers," says he, "that the answer of the prisoners corresponds with the account of the deserters, that the king is not with him, and that he sent only a small force which was not able to withstand a few horse? Hasten then to spoil, to glory; that we may now begin to think of rewarding you, and returning you thanks." The achievements of the horse were great in themselves, especially if their small number be compared with the vast host of Numidians. However, the account was enlarged by themselves, as men are naturally inclined to boast of their own merit. Besides, many spoils were produced; the men and horses that were taken were brought into their sight, that they might imagine that every moment of time which intervened was a delay to their conquest. By this means the hope of Curio were seconded by the ardor of the soldiers. He ordered the horse to follow him, and hastened his march, that he might attack them as soon as possible, while in consternation after their flight. But the horse, fatigued by the expedition of the

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

preceding night, were not able to keep up with him, but fell behind in different places. Even this did not abate Curio's hopes.

[2.40]Juba, being informed by Sabura of the battle in the night, sent to his relief two thousand Spanish and Gallic horse, which he was accustomed to keep near him to guard his person, and that part of his infantry on which he had the greatest dependence, and he himself followed slowly after with the rest of his forces and forty elephants, suspecting that as Curio had sent his horse before, he himself would follow them. Sabura drew up his army, both horse and foot, and commanded them to give way gradually and retreat through the pretense of fear; that when it was necessary he would give them the signal for battle, and such orders as he found circumstances required. Curio, as his idea of their present behavior was calculated to confirm his former hopes, imagined that the enemy were running away, and led his army from the rising grounds down to the plain.

[2.41]And when he had advanced from this place about sixteen miles, his army being exhausted with the fatigue, he halted. Sabura gave his men the signal, marshaled his army, and began to go around his ranks and encourage them. But he made use of the foot only for show; and sent the horse to the charge: Curio was not deficient in skill, and encouraged his men to rest all their hopes in their valor. Neither were the soldiers, though wearied, nor the horse, though few and exhausted with fatigue, deficient in ardor to engage, and courage: but the latter were in number but two hundred: the rest had dropped behind on the march. Wherever they charged they forced the enemy to give ground, but they were not able to pursue them far when they fled, or to press their horses too severely. Besides, the enemy's cavalry began to surround us on both wings and to trample down our rear. When any cohorts ran forward out of the line, the Numidians, being fresh, by their speed avoided our charge, and surrounded ours when they attempted to return to their post, and cut them off from the main body. So that it did not appear safe either to keep their ground and maintain their ranks, or to issue from the line, and run the risk. The enemy's troops were frequently reinforced by assistance sent from Juba; strength began to fail our men through fatigue; and those who had been wounded could neither quit the field nor retire to a place of safety, because the whole field was surrounded by the enemy's cavalry. Therefore, despairing of their own safety, as men usually do in the last moment of their lives, they either lamented their unhappy deaths, or recommended their parents to the survivors, if fortune should save any from the impending danger. All were full of fear and grief.

[2.42]When Curio perceived that in the general consternation neither his exhortations nor entreaties were attended to, imagining that the only hope of escaping in their deplorable situation was to gain the nearest hills, he ordered the colors to be borne that way. But a party of horse, that had been sent by Sabura, had already got possession of them. Now indeed our men were reduced to extreme despair: and some of them were killed by the cavalry in attempting to escape: some fell to the ground unhurt. Cneius Domitius, commander of the cavalry, standing round Curio with a small party of horse, urged Curio to endeavor to escape by flight, and to hasten to his camp; and assured him that he would not forsake him. But Curio declared that he would never more appear in Caesar's sight, after losing the army which had been committed by Caesar, to his charge, and accordingly fought till he was killed. Very few of the horse escaped from that battle, but those who had staid behind to refresh their horses having perceived at a distance the defeat of the whole army, retired in safety to their camp.

[2.43]The soldiers were all killed to a man. Marcus Rufus, the quaestor, who was left behind in the camp by Curio, having got intelligence of these things, encouraged his men not to be disheartened. They beg and entreat to be transported to Sicily. He consented, and ordered the masters of the ships to have all the boats brought close to the shore early in the evening. But so great was the terror in general, that some said that Juba's forces were marching up, others that Varus was hastening with his legions, and that they already saw the dust raised by their coming; of which not one circumstance had happened: others suspected that the enemy's fleet would immediately be upon them. Therefore in the general consternation, every man consulted his own safety. Those who were on board of the fleet, were in a hurry to set sail, and their flight hastened the masters of the ships of burden. A few small fishing boats attended their duty and his orders. But as the shores were crowded, so great was the struggle to determine who of such a vast number should first get on board, that some of the vessels sank with the weight of the multitude, and the fears of the rest delayed them from coming to the shore.

[2.44]From which circumstances it happened that a few foot and aged men, that could prevail either through interest or pity, or who were able to swim to the ships, were taken on board, and landed safe in Sicily. The rest of the troops sent their centurions as deputies to Varus at night, and surrendered themselves to him. But Juba the next day having spied their cohorts before the town, claimed them as his booty, and ordered great part of them to

## Julius Caesar's Civil War Commentaries

be put to the sword; a few he selected and sent home to his own realm. Although Varus complained that his honor was insulted by Juba, yet he dare not oppose him: Juba rode on horseback into the town, attended by several senators, among whom were Servius Sulpicius and Licinius Damasippus, and in a few days arranged and ordered what he would have done in Utica, and in a few days more returned to his own kingdom, with all his forces.

End of Book 2