

Handout

Quintus Titurius Sabinus: A Comparison of Blame and Praise in Books Two, Three, and Five of Caesar's Bellum Gallicum

BOOK TWO

[2.5] Ibi praesidium ponit et in altera parte fluminis Q. Titurium Sabinum legatum cum sex cohortibus relinquit; castra in altitudinem pedum XII vallo fossaque duodeviginti pedum muniri iubet.

There [Caesar] placed a guard and on the other side of the river he stationed the legate Q. Titurius Sabinus with six cohorts; he ordered (him) to fortify a camp with a 12-foot wall and an 18-foot ditch.

[2.9] Ibi vadis repertis partem suarum copiarum traducere conati sunt eo consilio ut, si possent, castellum, cui praeerat Q. Titurius legatus, expugnarent pontemque interscinderent; si minus potuissent, agros Remorum popularentur, qui magno nobis usui ad bellum gerendum erant, commeatuque nostros prohiberent.

There, with shallow places found, they tried to lead a part of their forces across with the plan in order, if they were able, to assault the fortified position, which was commanded by the legate Q. Titurius, and cut down the bridge; (or) if that was impossible, to ravage the lands of the Remi, who had been a great use to us for the purpose of waging war, and to stop our men from coming and going.

[2.10] [Caesar] certior factus ab Titurio omnem equitatum et levis armaturae Numidas, funditores sagittariosque pontem traducit atque ad eos contendit.

Caesar, having been made more certain by Titurius, led all the cavalry and light-armed Numidians, slingers and archers, across the bridge and hastened against them.

BOOK THREE

[3.11] Q. Titurium Sabinum legatum cum legionibus tribus in Venellos, Coriosolites Lexoviosque mittit, qui eam manum distingendam curet. D. Brutum adolescentem classi Gallicisque navibus, quas ex Pictonibus et Santonis reliquisque pacatis regionibus convenire iusserat, praeficit et, cum primum possit, in Venetos proficisci iubet. Ipse eo pedestribus copiis contendit.

[Caesar] sent the legate Quintus Titurius Sabinus with three legions against the Venelli, the Coriosolites, and the Lexovii, to keep that force separated from the rest.

[3.17] Dum haec in Venetis geruntur, Q. Titurius Sabinus cum iis copiis quas a Caesare acceperat in fines Venellorum pervenit. His praeerat Viridovix ac summam imperii tenebat earum omnium civitatum quae defecerant, ex quibus exercitum [magnasque copias] coegerat; atque his paucis diebus Aulerci Ebuovices Lexoviique, senatu suo interfecto quod auctores belli esse nolebant, portas clausurunt seque cum Viridovice coniunxerunt; magnaque praeterea multitudo undique ex Gallia perditorum hominum latronumque convenerat, quos spes praedandi studiumque bellandi ab agri cultura et cotidiano labore revocabat. Sabinus idoneo omnibus rebus loco castris sese tenebat, cum Viridovix contra eum duorum milium spatio consedisset cotidieque productis copiis pugnandi potestatem faceret, ut iam non solum hostibus in contemptionem Sabinus veniret, sed etiam nostrorum militum vocibus nonnihil carperetur; tantamque opinionem timoris praebuit ut iam ad vallum castrorum hostes accedere auderent. Id ea de causa faciebat quod cum tanta multitudine hostium, praesertim eo absente qui summam imperii teneret, nisi aequo loco aut oportunitate aliqua data legato dimicandum non existimabat.

While these things were being done in the territory of the Venetii, Quintus Titurius Sabinus, with those forces which he had received from Caesar, arrived at the borders of the Venelli.

Sabinus, in an appropriate location for all circumstances, remained in camp.

...so that now not only did Sabinus incur contempt from the enemy, but also he was reproached in certain measure by the voices of our own soldiers.

He did do that for this reason, because with so great a number of the enemy, especially with him [Caesar] absent, who should hold the greatest authority, unless with an equal location or some opportunity having been given, he did not think the upcoming fight proper for a legate.

[3.18] Hac confirmata opinione timoris idoneum quendam hominem et callidum deligit, Gallum, ex iis quos auxilii causa secum habebat. Huic magnis praemiis pollicitationibusque persuadet uti ad hostes transeat, et quid fieri velit edocet. Qui ubi pro perfuga ad eos venit, timorem Romanorum proponit, quibus angustiis ipse Caesar a Venetis prematur docet, neque longius abesse quin proxima nocte Sabinus clam ex castris exercitum educat et ad Caesarem auxilii ferendi causa proficiscatur. Quod ubi auditum est, conclamant omnes occasionem negotii bene gerendi amittendam non esse: ad castra iri oportere. Multae res ad hoc consilium Gallos hortabantur: superiorum dierum Sabini cunctatio, perfugae confirmatio, inopia cibariorum, cui rei parum diligenter ab iis erat provisum, spes Venetici belli, et quod fere libenter homines id quod volunt credunt.

With this opinion of fear confirmed...

Many things were urging the Gauls to this plan: by the hesitation of Sabinus of the previous days...

[3.19] Locus erat castrorum editus et paulatim ab imo acclivis circiter passus mille. Huc magno cursu contenderunt, ut quam minimum spatii ad se colligendos armandosque Romanis daretur, exanimatique pervenerunt. Sabinus suos hortatus cupientibus signum dat. Impeditis hostibus propter ea quae ferebant onera subito duabus portis eruptionem fieri iubet. Factum est oportunitate loci, hostium inscientia ac defatigatione, virtute militum et superiorum pugnarum exercitatione, ut ne unum quidem nostrorum impetum ferrent ac statim terga verterent. Quos impeditos integris viribus milites nostri consecuti magnum numerum eorum occiderunt; reliquos equites consecrati paucos, qui ex fuga evaserant, reliquerunt. Sic uno tempore et de navali pugna Sabinus et de Sabini victoria Caesar est certior factus, civitatesque omnes se statim Titurio dediderunt. Nam ut ad bella suscipienda Gallorum alacer ac promptus est animus, sic mollis ac minime resistens ad calamitates ferendas mens eorum est.

The location of the camp was on high ground...

Sabinus, having exhorted his men, gave the signal to HIS men (who) desired (to hear it).

...suddenly he ordered a sortie be made from two gates

And so at one time both Sabinus was made aware of the naval victory, and Caesar about Sabinus' victory, and all the city-states gave themselves at once to Titurius.

BOOK FIVE

[33] Tum demum Titurius, qui **nihil** ante providisset, **trepidare et concursare** cohortesque disponere, haec tamen ipsa **timide** atque ut eum omnia **deficere** viderentur; quod plerumque eis accidere consuevit, qui in ipso negotio consilium capere coguntur.

*Then at last Titurius, who had anticipated **nothing** before (this point), [began] **to shake with fear and run about**, and to arrange the cohorts, nevertheless [he began] these very actions **timidly** and with the result that everything seemed **to fail** him; which is accustomed to happen to those, who are compelled to take council in the action itself.*

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