

Titurius Sabinus, Quintus Cicero, and Caesar's Self-presentation in Book Five
of the *Bellum Gallicum*

In Book Five of his *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar provides two parallel narrations of Roman encampments that Gallic forces attack – one under the failed command of Titurius Sabinus and Lucius Cotta and the other under the successful command of Quintus Cicero. When describing the conditions under which the Gauls attacked each camp, Caesar highlights the similarities of both events through a variety of intratextual links, inviting his reader to compare why Cicero succeeds and why Sabinus and Cotta do not.

By reading the two events together and highlighting their similarities and differences, I will argue that Caesar portrays his subordinate officers and their actions in such a way that he can pass judgment on how they respond to certain types of military crises. This judgment provides the reader with not only a standard with which he or she might evaluate Caesar's own actions in response to a siege in the *BG*, but also reinforces Caesar's role in the *BG* as an arbiter of correct military conduct. When Caesar approves of an officer's actions, the officer is shown to be successful on the field, thereby validating Caesar's approval of the actions and the officer's decision to follow the Caesar-approved program. Moreover, Caesar narrates multiple instances of similar events, which presents an opportunity for his reader to discern patterns of successful action (although I will be restricting myself to only two instances of a similar event in this paper). It is through this near circularity of approval and success that the narrative voice (of Caesar) and the actions of Caesar the character implicitly support the political and social standing of Caesar the politician and author. It is natural that the glory Caesar receives as a character in the *BG* and the glory he derives from his successful subordinate officers should

reflect upon Caesar himself. In order to demonstrate this point, I will engage with critical work on narrative voice (e.g. Pelling 2013 and Genette 1980).

I also hope to develop further some of the arguments made by Riggsby 2006 and Grillo 2012, both of whom apply traditional techniques of literary evaluation to Caesar. Through an investigation of just a few pages of text, it is possible to see that Caesar's work is ripe for narratological approaches that illuminate how Caesar constructs his place in the competitive scene of Roman politics and how his seemingly simple style actually simmered with persuasive potential.

Bibliography

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