

First Lyell lecture 2024: The transmission of Caesar's *Civil War*
Stephen Oakley (spo23@cam.ac.uk)

Some bibliography on the transmission of Caesar's *Civil War*:—

- C. H. Beeson, 'The text history of the *Corpus Caesarianum*', *Classical Philology* 35 (1940), 113–25.
G. Billanovich, 'Nella tradizione dei *Commentarii* di Cesare. Roma, Petrarca, i Visconti', *Studi petrarcheschi* 7 (1990), 263–318.
V. Brown, *The textual tradition of Caesar's Civil War* (Leiden, 1972).
—— 'Latin Manuscripts of Caesar's "Gallic War"', *Studi Giulio Battelli* (1979), i, 105–57
—— 'Portraits of Julius Caesar in Latin manuscripts of the *Commentaries*', *Viator* 12 (1981), 319–53.
—— 'Caesar, Gaius Julius', in F. E. Cranz and P. O. Kristeller (eds), *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum*, iii (Washington, D.C., 1976), 87–139.
C. Damon, *C Iuli Caesaris commentariorum libri III de bello civili* (Oxford, 2015).
—— *Studies on the text of Caesar's Bellum civile* (Oxford, 2015).
P. P. Donato, 'Pier Candido Decembrio editore di Cesare', *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 59 (2018), 165–91.
W. Hering, *Die Recensio der Caesarhandschriften* (Berlin, 1963).
O. Pecere, *Il testo dopo il testo* (Florence, 2023), 183–232.
M. Winterbottom in L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and transmission* (Oxford, 1983), 35–6.

1. Hirtius, *De bello Gallico* 8.1.1–2 and 8:

Coactus adsiduis tuis uocibus, Balbe, cum cotidiana mea recusatio non difficultatis excusationem, sed inertiae uideretur deprecationem habere, difficillimam rem suscepi. (2) Caesaris nostri commentarios rerum gestarum Galliae, non comparantibus superioribus atque insequentibus eius scriptis, contextui nouissimumque imperfectum ab rebus gestis Alexandriae confeci usque ad exitum non quidem ciuilibus dissensionis, cuius finem nullum uidemus, sed uitae Caesaris . . . (8) mihi ne illud quidem accidit, ut Alexandrino atque Africano bello interesset. Quae bella quamquam ex parte nobis Caesaris sermone sunt nota, tamen aliter audimus ea, quae rerum nouitate aut admiratione nos capiunt, aliter quae pro testimonio sumus dicturi.

'Since my daily refusal might seem to have as an excuse the difficulty of the enterprise but rather the unwillingness that comes from inertia, I have been forced by your insistent remarks, Balbus, to undertake a most difficult enterprise. (2) Because our Caesar's earlier and later writings were not in harmony, I have made his reports on his campaigns in Gaul part of a continuous whole, and I have completed his most recent and unfinished work, taking it from his campaign at Alexandria to the close not of our civil discord (of which we see no end) but of his life . . . (8). As for me, I did not even have the chance to take part in either the Alexandrian or African War. Although I know something of what happened in these wars from conversation with Caesar, yet we hear in one way those things which grip our attention because they are novel or remarkable, in another way what we are about to recount as part of a record.'

2. Suetonius, *Diuus Julius* 56.1:

Reliquit et rerum suarum commentarios Gallici ciuilibusque belli Pompeiani. Nam Alexandrini Africique et Hispaniensis incertus auctor est: alii Oppium putant, alii Hirtium, qui etiam Gallici belli nouissimum imperfectumque librum suppleuerit. 'He also left memoirs of his own exploits in the Gallic War and the Civil War against Pompey. Yet who was the author of the *Alexandrian War*, the *African War*, and the *Spanish War* is unclear: some think Oppius, others Hirtius, who also provided a supplement to the last and unfinished book of the *Gallic War*.'

3. Subscription to book 2: IULIUS CELSVS CONSTANTINUS V(IR) C(LARISSIMUS) LEGI. FLAUIUS LICERIUS FIRMINUS LUPERCINUS LEGI. LIB(ER) SECUNDUS EXPLICIT

'I, Julius Celsus Constantinus, a man of the highest rank, have read <this>. I Flavius Licorius Firminus Lupercinus have read <this>. Book Two finishes.'

On subscriptions, see e.g. O. Jahn 'Über die Subscriptionen in den Handschriften römische Classiker', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft zu Leipzig*, phil.-hist. Classe iii (1851), 327–72, A. Reifferscheid, *De latinorum codicibus subscriptionibus* [Index Scholarum in Litterarum Vratislaviensi per hiemem anni MDCCCLXXII–LXXIII] (Breslau, 1873), J. E. G. Zetzel, *Latin textual criticism* (New York, 1981), [check p. 222], A. Cameron, *The last pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), 421–97, esp. 460–1.

4. Arator, *Epistula ad Parthenium* 39–40): *Caesaris Historias ibi primum te duce legi, | Quas ut ephemeridas condidit ipse sibi.* 'There first I read the *Histories* of Caesar, which he wrote as aide-memoires for himself'

5. Subscription to book 8: JULIUS CELSVS CONSTANTINUS V(IR) C(LARISSIMUS) LEGI TANTU(M) FELICITER. G(AI)I CAESARIS PONT(IFICIS) MAX(IMI) EPHI MERIS RERUM GESTARUM BELLI GALLICI LIBER UIII EXPLICIT

'I, Julius Celsus Constantinus, a man of the highest rank, have merely (?)read. Book 8 of the memoirs [the subscription seems ungrammatical here] of Gaius Caesar, chief priest, finishes.'

6. The manuscripts used by editors of the *Civil War*:

S = Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (henceforth BML), Ashburnham 33, s. x^{med.} [derivative in *Gallic War*]. French.

Derivation from S: S > N = Naples, Biblioteca nazionale IV C 11, s. xi > London, British Library (henceforth BL), Additional 10084, s. xi/xii > BL Add. 17740, s. xii. All French.

M ('big M')= BML 68.8, s. xi. French [derivative in *Gallic War*].

T = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth BnF), lat. 5764, s. xi² [needed in *Gallic War*]. French.

Derived from T: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit 38D, s. xiii, and Paris lat. 5783, s. xv (independent of each other). French.

U = Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Vat. lat. 3324, s. xi/xii [needed in *Gallic War*]. French.

Derived from U: R = Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 541 (via a corrected intermediate MS). French.

V= Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 95, s. xii [needed in *Gallic War*]

7. North European 'contaminated'/hybrid manuscripts:

BAV, Reg. lat. 904 (s. xiv) > Cambridge, UL Nn. 3. 5 (s. xv^{med.}) and Monreale, Bibl. Com. xxv. F. 22 (s. xv^{med.})

BAV, Ottob. lat. 1736 (s. xv)

8. Virginia Brown's classification of the Italian manuscripts of Caesar's *Civil War* (summarised very briefly):—

(i) descendants of N (2 manuscripts)

(ii) copies of M (19 manuscripts: these include Holkham 342 and 343; Paris 5768; Modena, Est. lat. 421 (Guarino); Vatican, Barb. lat. 148)

(iii) copies of U (8 manuscripts)

(iv) contaminated manuscripts of the M-N type containing the omission at 2.17.2 and the transposition at 2.18.5 (34 manuscripts; most seem to derive from Est. lat. 421)

(v) contaminated manuscripts containing only the transposition at 2.18.5 (90–100 manuscripts, which fall into three families).

There are a few manuscripts that came to light after she had published her monograph.

9. The earliest Italian descendants of M: m = Laur. 68.6 and Rome, Bibl. Vallicelliana B45.

10. Omission in B45 that corresponds to a line of m at *Alexandrian War* 7.1:— *reperiebatur. [Quo facto dubitatione sublata tantus incessit timor ut ad extremum casum] periculi*. The omission is line 4 of f. 113v of m.

11. Disorder in the leaves of m. In m only three out of eight leaves of the final quaternion (our 22; now its twenty-first) survive, and the first two are in the wrong order. It runs:

F. 171r–v *Hisp. 27.5 contra Pompeium*–31.11 *hos habuit*.

F. 172r–v *Hisp. 22.7 xvii accipere* (which should have begun the gathering)–27.5 *iter fecit in Carrucam*.

F. 173r–v begins with *Hisp. 32.1 ex fuga hac* (which continues from f. 171v end)–38.1 *iter faciunt*.

12. Offspring of Vallicellianus: Bologna, BU 2464 and Madrid, BN 10054.

13. Florence, Laur. 68.11, a 14th century descendant of m without the transpositions.

14. On Riccobaldo of Ferrara see A. T. Hankey, 'Riccobaldo of Ferrara, Boccaccio and Domenico di Bandino', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958), 208–26, *Riccobaldo Ferrariensis Compendium Romanae Historiae* (Rome, 1994), *Riccobaldo of Ferrara: his life, works and influence* (Rome, 1996).

15. Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Banco rari 50, fo. 16r–v:—

[19.6] atingua oppido potitus imperator appellatus est. [20.1] hoc cum Gn. pompeius audisset a profugis castra mouit ucubim uersus. et contra ea loca castella disposuit.** cesar sua castra propius castris illius contulit. [27.5] pompeius oppidum incendit quod contra sua presidia portas clausisset. ~~Cesar sua castra propius castris illius contulit pompeius oppidum incendit.~~ [28.1] Cesar itinere facto in campum uersaensium contra pompeium castra constituit. [28.2] qui eius fautores fuerant. [29.2] In eo plano riuus medius || (fo. 16^v) erat castris. cesar cum difficultate transiuit pugnando. [30.7] prelium atrox commissum est. Cesariani uirtute antecederant aduersarii loco superiore defendebantur. [30.7] decumani suum locum dextrum cornu in acie cesaris tenebant. Sinistrum iii^a et v^a legio et auxilia equitatus. [Florus 2.13(4.2). 77–84] hec lucius florus. Omnium certaminum postremum munda fuit. Anceps diu et triste proelium ut plane uideretur nescioquid deletare [*i.e.* delectare] fortuna. Sane et cesar ante aciem mesior. non exmore siue respectu fragilitatis humane/ siue nimia prosperorum suspecta continuatione. uel eadem timens postquam idem esse ceperat. quod pompeius in ipso prelio. cum diu pari Marte pugnassent. in medio ardore pugne/ subito inter utrosque ingens silentium est factum. hic hominum sensus erat nouissimum illud in usitatum cesaris oculis nephas. post .xiiii. annos probata ueteranorum manus retro gradum dedit. qui si nondum fugerat apparebat tamen pudore magis quam reuerentia resistere. Itaque ablegato equo similis furenti in primam aciem procurrit. ibi prensare fugientes confirmare clamore uolitare / dicitur. in illa perturbatione secum de extremis cogitasse. Et ita manifesto uultu fuisse. quasi occupare mortem manu uellet. nisi quod cohortes hostium per transuersam aciem / acie ['aciem acte' *Florus*] quos labienus periclitantibus castris subsidio miserat spem ['speciem' *Florus*] fuge prebuissent. nec cesar credidit. sed ipse callidus attribuit ['arripuit' *Florus*] in occasionem et quasi fugientem inuectus simu et suorum erexit animos et pertulit ['perculit' *Florus*] hostis. nam hi dum se putant uincere fortius instant. pompeiani dum fugere credunt suos fugere ceperunt. Cum diu acerrime pugnatum esset utrimque pompeiani funduntur et in eum locum regrediuntur unde fuerant egressi. [31.9] In eo prelio ceciderunt hominum .xxx milia. Et quod plus est perit labienus et uarus actius / quibus funus factum est. Inter equites ro. partim ex urbe partim ex prouincia iii. [23.1] cesar castra castris contulit et brachium ad flumen salsum ?? ad opus et leuia prelia fiunt. [26.2] A. bebius et C. fleuius equites romani hastenses argento prope tecti equites ad cesarem transfugerunt. Qui nuntiauerunt equites romani coniurasse omnes qui in castris pompeii essent uti deditionem facerent. Inditio serui omnes in custodiam esse coniectos. [27.3] pompeius castra mouit. et conta yspalin oliueto consedit. Cesar prius eo profectus uisus est [27.4] castris motis ad ucubi ['Vcubim' *Bell. Hisp.*] pompeius presidium quod reliquid iussit incendi et deusto oppido in castra una hora se reciperent. [32.1] Ex fuga hac/ qui oppidum mundam sibi constituisset praesidium/ Cesariani qui cogeantur necessario eos circumuallare ex hostium armis pro cespite cadauera collocabant.

** Hereabouts in the margin there is: 'Suetonius tranquillus huic prelio presens fuit et omnibus nisi alexandrino et africano de quibus ut dicit audiuit a cesare'.

16. Holkham Hall MSS of Caesar: nos. 341 (s. xv^{med.}), 342 (s. xiv²), 343 (s. xv^{med.}). Paris lat. 5768 (s. xiv²) may be a descendant.

17. Guarino's MS: Modena, Biblioteca Estense, α.W.1.3 (lat. 421). Descendants include vat. lat. 3322 (s. xv^{med.}) and Oxford, BL, Canon. class. lat. 265 (a. 1454). Oxford, BL, lat. class. d. 2 (Varro, *De re rustica*) is a MS produced in Guarino's circle.

18. D. Canfora, *La controversia di Poggio Bracciolini et Guarino Veronese su cesare e Scipione* (Florence, 2001).

19. Vatican City, BAV, Barb. lat. 148, owned by Gasparino and then Guiniforte Barzizza.

20. For the Barzizzas' annotations see, G. McGrath, 'An Unknown Fourteenth-Century Commentary on Suetonius and Caesar', *Classical Philology* 65 (1970), 182–5 ['commentary' is an exaggeration]

21. Florence, BML, plut. 68.11, fo. 34^v: 'Gai Iulii Cesari belli Gallici a se confecti liber septimus explicit. Iulius Celsus Constantinus vir clarissimus legi. Incipit Octauus de eodem a suetonio tranquillo Cesaris milite scripto' 'This is the end of book 7 of the *Galic War* of Gaius Julius Caesar, finished by Caesar himself. Book 8 on the same subject by Suetonius Tranquillus, a soldier of Caesar's, starts here.'

22. 'Nota hunc scriptorem non fuisse Cesarem. non enim is de se ipso dixisset ut arbitror. gb'. 'N.b. this writer was not Caesar: he would not have said 'as I conjecture' about himself. gb'.

23. Decembrio's manuscript: Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dc 167; Vatican City, Chigi H.V.140 derives from it.

24. F. Petrucci (ed.), *Petri Candidi Decembrii Epistolarum iuuenilium libri octo* (Florence, 2013), 80–1: *At is quidem, quisquis fuit, non litterarum tantum sed omnis quoque humanitatis expers, tam ridicula inscitie nota suggillatus est ut prescribat his primis de Gallicis bellis commentariis Svetonii seu Iulii Celsi, non Cai Iulii Cesaris, nomen; octavum vero, quod ab Hirtio, viro prestantissimo, omnibus editum constat, Svetonio ascribat, idemque subsequentes civilium bellorum simili incuriositatis errore confundat: ait enim dubitare se utrum Tranquillo an Celso Iulio ascribendi.*

'But that man, whoever he was, from whom not only education but all humanity was absent, was signed by so laughable a mark of ignorance that he writes the name of Suetonius or Julius Celsus at the head of these first books of the *Galic War*; that he assigns the eighth (which all agree was written by Hirtius, a very distinguished man) to Suetonius; that he, the same person, messes up the following books of the *Civil War* with the same mistake arising from a similar failure to research—he says that he is doubtful whether they should be assigned to Suetonius or Julius Celsus'

Family tree of most MSS of Caesar's *Civil War* mentioned in the lecture

(That there were three lines of descent from the archetype is uncertain; Cynthia Damon, the latest editor, prefers two lines, making S and TV share one)

