

JULIUS CAESAR AND HIS TIMES

Unit 7 – Before the Rubicon



CLAH7002

Seeking (popular) support

“[H]e neglected nothing in the way of lavish expenditure or of favours to anyone, either in his public capacity or privately. He began a forum with the proceeds of his spoils, the ground for which cost more than a 150 million sesterces. He announced a combat of gladiators and a feast for the people in memory of his daughter, a thing quite without precedent... He doubled the pay of the legions... Whenever grain was plentiful, he distributed it to them without stint or measure, and now and then gave each man a slave from among the captives... When he had put all Pompey's friends under obligation, as well as the greater part of the senate, through loans made without interest or at a low rate, he lavished gifts on men of all other classes... including even freedmen and slaves who were special favourites of their masters or patrons. In short, he was the sole and ever ready help of all who were in legal difficulties or in debt and of young spendthrifts, excepting only those whose burden of guilt or poverty was so heavy, or who were so given up to riotous living, that even he could not save them...” – Suet. *Div. Caes.* 26-27.

Caesar's Precarious Position

- Law passed by all ten tribunes to allow Caesar to stand for consulship *in absentia* – Pompey passes the *de iure magistratum* (52 BC).
- Dangers of prosecution for Caesar when he ceases to hold *imperium*.
- *Lex de provinciis* – requirement of 5 year gap between holding an office in Rome and the holding of a provincial governorship – previous requirement that provinces had to be designated prior to consular elections.
- Pompey has his proconsular powers extended for a further 5 years.

The Crucial Vote

- ❑ Curio blocks Pompey's proposal that Caesar leaves his province by 13th November 50 BC.
- ❑ Request by Senate for a legion each from Pompey and Caesar over fears of the Parthians (May 50 BC).
- ❑ Motion by Curio (1st December 50 BC) for both Caesar and Pompey to dismiss their armies – 370 supporters vs. 22 naysayers.



Caesar's Speech to his Soldiers

“When this was known Caesar addresses his troops. He relates all the wrongs that his enemies had ever done him, and complains that Pompeius had been led astray and corrupted... He complains that a new precedent had been introduced into the state whereby the right of tribunicial intervention, which in earlier years had been restored by arms, was now being branded with ignominy and crushed by arms. Sulla, he said, though stripping the tribunicial power of everything, had nevertheless left its right of intervention free, while Pompeius, who had the credit of having restored the privileges that were lost, had taken away even those that they had before... He exhorts them to defend from his enemies the reputation and dignity of the commander under whose guidance they have administered the state with unfailing good fortune for nine years, fought many successful battles, and pacified the whole of Gaul and Germany. Thereupon the men of the Thirteenth Legion, which was present... [exclaimed] that they are ready to repel the wrongs of their commander and of the tribunes.” – **Caesar BC 1.7.**