

JULIUS CAESAR AND HIS TIMES

Unit 4 – Caesar in Gaul



CLAH7002

Caesar takes Command

- ▣ Tribune P. Vatinius proposes bill for Caesar to receive 5 year command in Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum.
- ▣ Transalpine Gaul added after death of Q. Metellus Celer.
- ▣ Helvetii to gather on 28th of March.
- ▣ Caesar recruits two new legions – now 6.

“...he was assigned Gallia Comata [long-haired] as well by the senate, since the members feared that even if they should refuse it, the people would give him this also...” – *Suet. Div. Jul. 22.*



Initial Successes

- ▣ Defeat of Helvetii (58 BC).
- ▣ Defeat of Suebi and Ariovistus (58 BC).
- ▣ Caesar has eight legions by 57 BC.
- ▣ Campaigns against the Belgae (May-June) and Nervii (July) – 57.

“...it came to pass that the Germans were called in for hire by the Arverni and the Sequani. That about 15,000 of them [i.e. of the Germans] had at first crossed the Rhine: but after that these wild and savage men had become enamoured of the lands and the refinement and the abundance of the Gauls, more were brought over, that there were now as many as 120,000 of them in Gaul: that with these the Aedui and their dependents had repeatedly struggled in arms...” – **Caesar *The Gallic War* 1.31.**

- ▣ Rebellion of the Veneti (56 BC).
- ▣ Initial foray into Britain in late summer of 55 BC – fleet wrecked in storm.
- ▣ Second expedition in 54 BC – defeats coalition of Cassivellaunus – uprising in Gaul.
- ▣ Lose of 15 cohorts (= a legion and a half) to the Ebrones late 54 BC.

“During the short part of summer which remained, Caesar, although in these countries, as all Gaul lies toward the north, the winters are early, nevertheless resolved to proceed into Britain, because he discovered that in almost all the wars with the Gauls help had been furnished to our enemy from that country...” - *Caesar Gallic War 4.20.*

The Last Major Stand

- ❑ Widespread rebellion under the leadership of Vercingetorix.
- ❑ Defeat of Caesar at Gergovia.
- Circumvallation to besiege enemy – contravallation to protect Caesar's forces.
- Fall of rebel strong hold of Alesia in autumn of 52 BC.

