

# JULIUS CAESAR AND HIS TIMES

Unit 8 – In the thick of the Civil War



CLAH7002

# Crossing the Rubicon

- ❑ Crossing took place on night of 10-11<sup>th</sup> January – attack an act of treason.
- ❑ Pompey persuades much of the Senate to leave Rome for Greece.
- ❑ Attempts by Caesar to engage in talks and offers of mutual disarmament.

“...uttering the phrase with which men usually prelude their plunge into desperate and daring fortunes, "Let the die be cast," he hastened to cross the river...” –  
**Plut. *Caes.* 32.8.**



# Caesar's Clemency

- ▣ Central message of *BC* – restoration of *dignitas* and offering of *clementia*.
- ▣ Support for Caesar in Picenum.
- ▣ Sparing of elite and people of Corfinium - Lucius Domitius, Publius Lentulus Spinther, Lucius Vibullius Rufus, Sextus Quintilius Varus and Lucius Rubrius (*BC* 1.23).

“However, he was afraid that the entry of his troops into the town [Corfinium], in the mood of licence engendered by night, might lead to looting; on receipt of the message, therefore, he commended those that had brought it and sent them back to the town, with orders that careful guard was to be kept on the walls and gates.” – Caesar *BC* 1.21.

# Dictatorship vs. Consulship

- ▣ Seizure of *aerarium sanctius* in temple of Saturn.
- ▣ Caesar not able to have himself elected consul for 48 – thus the praetor M. Lepidus had to nominate a dictator.
- ▣ Powers of dictator not necessarily absolute (e.g. deposing of tribunes Caesetius and Marullus by another tribune C. Helvius Cinna – 44 BC).
- ▣ Caesar power in years of civil war resting on military power and loyalty.
- ▣ Value of “Master of the Horse” – Caesar absent for much of the time between 49-45 BC.
- ▣ Dictatorship for 49 BC – 11 days spent in Rome, elected to consulship for 48 BC.
- ▣ Caesar nominated dictator in latter part of 48 BC – held for a full year (late 47).
- ▣ Third dictatorship several months into 46 BC – to be held for 10 years – Caesar also consul for 46 BC.
- ▣ Fourth dictatorship for 45 BC and also sole consul (abdicates later in October).
- ▣ Consul in 44 BC – and made perpetual dictator in February.

# The Campaign in Spain

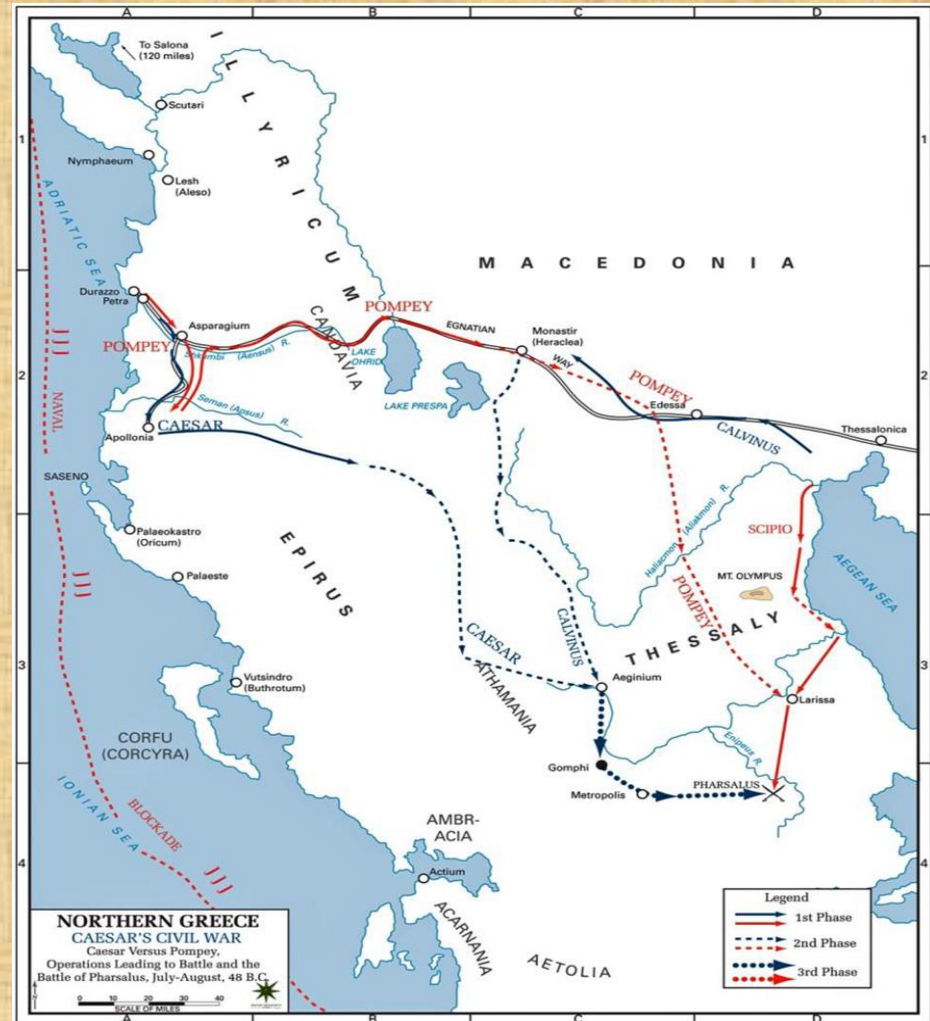
- ▣ In about 40 days the legions of Afranius, Petreius and Varro defeated by Caesar.

So he made an expedition into Spain, having resolved first to drive out from there Afranius and Varro, Pompey's legates, and bring their forces there and the provinces into his power, and then to march against Pompey, leaving not an enemy in his rear. And though his life was often in peril from ambuscades, and his army most of all from hunger, he did not cease from pursuing, challenging, and besieging the men until he had made himself by main force master of their camps and their forces. The leaders, however, made their escape to Pompey.” – **Plutarch *Caesar* 36.**

“He made Quintus Cassius governor of the province, and assigned him four legions.” – **Caesar *BC* 2.21.**

# Caesar crosses into Greece

- Attempt by Pompeian fleet to prevent Caesar's forces from landing.
- Failed siege of Dyrrachium (48 BC).
- Pompey compelled by his senatorial allies to offer battle at Pharsalus (August 48 BC).



# Size of the Forces

## CAESAR'S ARMY

- ▣ Caesar states that he had 22,000 men form 80 cohorts.
- ▣ Each cohort must have been roughly 275 men (out of a notional 500).
- ▣ 2,750 men per legion – issues of attrition from many campaigns.
- ▣ C. 1,000 cavalry.

## POMPEY'S ARMY

- ▣ Pompey's army is reported to have consisted of 110 cohorts (equivalent to 11 legions).
- ▣ A paper army strength of 45,000, plus an additional 2,000 *beneficarii* (recalled veterans).
- ▣ Pompey left 22 cohorts on detached garrison duty.
- ▣ 7,000 cavalry.

# Caesar's Tactics

- ▣ *Triplex acies* formations.
  - ▣ Pompey orders his cohorts to deploy ten deep and to await the enemy charge.
  - ▣ Caesar cohorts perhaps four to six ranks deep.
  - ▣ Caesar takes one cohort from the third line of six of his legions and formed a fourth line to protect his right flank; concealed behind his cavalry.
- Pompey lost 15,000 men in the battle in contrast to Caesar's army where only 200 men were lost (according to Caesar).
  - Another 24,000 troops from Pompey's army surrender and are incorporated into Caesar's army, creating four new legions.

