

XXII.—The Non-Political Nature of Caesar's *Commentaries*

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This paper is summarized in the last paragraph.

Two assumptions have been part of the literature related to Caesar's *Commentarii Rerum Gestarum Galliae* since Mommsen's day.¹ The first is that the *Commentaries*² were written at one sitting, so to speak, in the late autumn of 52 B.C. or the early winter of 52–51 B.C.³ The second assumption is that Caesar's work was designed primarily to advance the writer's political interests. It is my intention here to examine the probability that the political aspects of the *Commentaries* have been grossly exaggerated.

A review of the critical literature will show, I believe, that the assumptions mentioned above are related and are, in fact, inter-dependent. This is to say, if the *Commentaries* are primarily what is loosely called "propaganda," it is reasonable to suppose that they were written at one more or less continuous draft in the late autumn of 52 or the early winter of 52–51. Naturally (according to the argument) this was just the moment when Caesar should have been writing propaganda. He had successfully completed a great military venture and, always the keen politician, he was looking ahead toward the political issues that resulted in the crisis of 50–49 B.C. The next step in the argument is to conclude that Caesar did write an account of his conquest of Gaul to reassure his friends and to warn his enemies, i.e. the *Commentaries*. Or, as some would have it, he intended to justify a series of military moves that might otherwise have seemed illegal, if not actually treasonable. Now, on the other hand, if the *Commentaries* were written in 52–51, it is reasonable to suppose that Caesar's motives were primarily political,

¹ Cf. Th. Mommsen, *History of Rome* (Scribner, 1900) 5.499.

² In this paper the term *Commentaries* will designate Books I–VII of the work known variously as *Bellum Gallicum*, *de Bello Gallico*, etc., regardless of the fact that the entire *Corpus Caesarium* is in the form of *commentarii*.

³ The literature on this question is so voluminous, and the amount of space necessary for the conventional exhaustive references would be so great, that I have taken the liberty of omitting all citations that can readily be found in Kalinka's comprehensive summaries in Bursian, *Jahresbericht* 224 (1929) and 264 (1939). But see note 43 below.

i.e., he was writing at a time when any acute politician would naturally write propaganda. This is peculiar logic: two suppositions depend upon one another for confirmation, and because they do confirm one another, both become facts. However, it is acceptable logic to the extent that it suggests a method for the present discussion: if we lessen the probability that the *Commentaries* were propaganda, we lessen the probability that they were written at one draft in 52-51, and vice versa.

No scholar (so far as I have been able to determine) has offered systematic proof of the supposition that the *Commentaries* were written with contemporary political ends in view. The surprising thing about the question under discussion is the unanimous willingness of scholars to believe that Caesar must have had an ulterior motive in writing the *Commentaries*. The belief as to Caesar's ulterior purposes arises, I suspect, out of a concept of political activity that cannot envision statesmanship dissociated from journalism. Moreover, it has seemed, to European critics in particular, that Caesar could not have engaged in literary activities that did not reflect political designs.⁴ The journalist-statesman tradition has naturally appealed to students who tend to interpret ancient publicizing excessively in terms of their own times, thus straining on occasion the definition of propaganda. What some observers patly call propaganda (literature designed to influence contemporary public opinion) in ancient times is often more properly to be regarded as literary material designed to ensure personal fame in posterity, the kind of immortality that Cicero called "gloria."⁵

⁴ E.g. A. Klotz, *Cäsarstudien* (Teubner, 1910) 25-26. "Denn Cäsar ist in erster Linie Staatsmann, nicht Schriftsteller. Dass der Zweck der *Commentarii* gewesen sei, Geschichte zu schreiben, versichern uns zwar Hirtius und Cicero: glauben wir es ihnen? Ist das ein wirkliches Zeugnis?" One of the most extreme statements is that of Ferrero, *The Life of Caesar* (Putnam, 1933) 364-5: "In the last months of 52, in spite of innumerable distractions and anxieties, he found time to write his *De Bello Gallico*, a popular work written with consummate art. . . . In short, the book was intended to be a military and political essay for the benefit of outsiders, and all the seductions of its style, the lucidity and quickness of the narrative, the simplicity of the diction, were only devised to delude a credulous public."

⁵ One readily recalls Horace's anticipations of immortality, as well as Catullus' modest "qualecumque quod, o patrona virgo, plus uno maneat perenne saeclo." In past years there has been a tendency, of course, to regard all art as propaganda in the sense, I suppose, that an artist (or an historian) cannot help but reflect the society and the social order to which he belongs. On this basis I should agree that Vergil's *Aeneid* is propaganda; that is, it represents the Augustan social order and a characteristically Roman point of view. But I am inclined to view with some reserve the belief that it was written primarily to publicize the Augustan regime; it was rather dedicated to the

This sharp awareness of posterity was part of the Roman character: a national instinct for imperishable personal records of which the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* provides an imposing series of examples.

Now Caesar was a Roman, and he must have been aware that he was leaving a greater monument of his fame to posterity than any Roman before him, or any Greek save one. The exception was Alexander the Great. I have suggested conjecturally elsewhere that Caesar was acutely conscious of Alexander's gloria and meant to equal it with his own.⁶ The influence of Alexander's career upon ambitious Romans needs no elaboration here. J. Gagé has described one aspect of it in his article, "Hercule-Melqart, Alexandre, et les Romains à Gadès."⁷ Some Roman official before 68 B.C. had set up a statue of Alexander in the shrine of Hercules at Gades: the shrine and the location, according to Gagé, were to the Roman mind a symbol of world conquest and great personal achievement: "la rêve indique," as Gagé aptly puts it. Here, in this intensely suggestive atmosphere, Caesar experienced a profound emotional disturbance when he reflected upon the disparity between his own accomplishments and those of Alexander at the same age. I have suggested that this well-known incident, attested in approximately the same terms by three authorities,⁸ represents the occasion upon which Caesar suddenly saw the direction his ambitions might take: a psychological phenomenon that one might take the liberty of comparing to Saul's experience on the road to Damascus. At any rate, the incident suggests a relation between Caesar and Alexander that might profitably be explored.

Once we appreciate the polarity common in classical thought and language,⁹ i.e., that opposites are mutually suggestive and often inferentially identical, it becomes difficult to avoid certain surprising inferences as to Caesar's emulation of Alexander: that is, unless one is prepared to accept a series of remarkable coincidences. We may note that in general the conquest of Gaul was an imperial design, involving strategy on a continental scale and the subjugation of

gloria of Rome and the Julian line. Similarly, I should regard the testament of Augustus on the *Monumentum Ancyrenum* as an address to posterity rather than to the contemporary public.

⁶ *CW* 36 (1942) 51-53.

⁷ *REA* 42 (1940) 425-438.

⁸ Suet. *Caes.* 7; Dio Cass. 37.52.3; Plu. *Caes.* 11.3.

⁹ Cf. Gagé, *op. cit.* (see note 7 above); DeWitt, *op. cit.* (see note 6 above). The most obvious instance of polarity in Greek is the use of μέν and ἔν.

hereditary national enemies as in the case of Alexander's conquest of Persia. Catullus appears to have sensed the Alexandrian nature of Caesar's exploits in *Carmen* 11: *extremos Indos* (to which *Furius* and *Aurelius* might follow Catullus) suggests Alexander; by polarity *ultimos Britannos* = *extremos Indos*; Caesar = Alexander. One may add that Caesar's conquest of Britain, in spite of his explanations,¹⁰ seems hardly justifiable on strategic grounds. Under Augustus, who was seldom given to romantic thoughts, the official view was that it would be cheaper to collect the customs dues than to conquer the isle.¹¹ But if Caesar was to match Alexander's visit to the eastern limits of the Oecumene and penetrate the unknown in that direction, the expeditions to Britain to obtain at least token sovereignty were in order. We may infer a similar penetration beyond the known world in Caesar's crossing of the Rhine: this matched Alexander's crossing of the corresponding river, the Danube, in the north-east.¹² But Caesar outdid Alexander by building a semi-permanent bridge¹³ which was not only an engineering feat but also a nice symbolic touch. Of course, the building of the bridge and the expedition into Germany were justifiable demonstrations of Roman military strength and engineering skill, but when we remember the extraordinary vitality of the Alexander-legend, we may reasonably infer that the crossing of the Rhine, like the conquest of Britain, fitted into the Alexandrian pattern evolving in Caesar's mind.

Finally, we recall the extraordinary gallantry with which Alexander and Caesar treated distinguished enemies who had been honorably defeated. In both cases there was no doubt some concern for the political effects of clemency, but there is reason to believe that there was a wider policy, even a philosophical doctrine, in the background. Recent scholarship has suggested that Alexander had anticipated, if he did not actually suggest, the Stoic doctrine of world-brotherhood.¹⁴ Now Caesar's liberality in the

¹⁰ BG 4.20.1. An army friend of mine has referred to Caesar's first expedition to Britain as "a reconnaissance in force."

¹¹ Str. 4.5.3.

¹² Arrian, *Anab.* 1.3.4.

¹³ BG 4.17.

¹⁴ Cf. O. W. Reinmuth, "Alexander and the World State," *The Greek Political Experience* (Studies in Honor of William Kelly Prentice; Princeton, 1941) 109-124; W. W. Tarn, "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind," *Proc. Brit. Acad.* 19 (1933). For a criticism of the latter, see M. H. Fisch, "Alexander and the Stoics," *AJPh* 58 (1937) 59-82, 129-151.

extension of Roman citizenship was notorious. There was of course a precedent for it in the practices of such administrators as Marius and Pompey, but Caesar was far ahead of his contemporaries in seeing the need of a wider and more liberal community to meet the circumstances of expanding empire.¹⁵ Caesar's greatest accomplishment was in turning the face of Mediterranean city-culture toward western continental Europe and the future. In this he ranks with, or above, Alexander, who turned Hellenic civilization toward Asia and the past. I should infer that Caesar was great enough to understand and be influenced by the deeper as well as by the apparent counsels of the great Macedonian. In no sense was he a sedulous imitator like the unimaginative Pompey "the Great";¹⁶ he translated the Alexander-legend into great achievement in terms of his own personality, the times, and the best traditions of Rome.

In view of Caesar's awareness of Alexander's career, it is significant that he should have left the record of his accomplishments in a form that was definitely suggestive of his great predecessor. He undoubtedly knew that Alexander's conquests were placed on record by the official *Ephemerides* and later authentically described in such documents as the *Hypomnemata* of Ptolemy—both of which terms were to be translated by the Latin *commentarii*. The *genre* of the *commentarii* was the one form precisely adapted to the preservation of Caesar's name in the pages of history with intimations of Alexandrian achievement.¹⁷

The importance of *genre* in general, and that of the *commentarii* in particular, has been unduly neglected in estimating Caesar's motives. As we all know, Caesar's *Commentaries* were written with brilliant fidelity to the canons of the prescribed *genre*: they were a source for future historians—"potential history," as Oppermann puts it.¹⁸ Thus Cicero described Caesar's motives in the

¹⁵ Cf. N. J. DeWitt, *The Romanization of Gaul* (Lancaster, 1940) 41–66.

¹⁶ For example, Pompey reversed the itinerary of Hercules and Hannibal from Spain to Italy via the Pyrenees, southern Gaul, and the Alps. In so doing he was associating himself with the Hercules-Alexander conquering-hero legend. The tone of his report to the senate suggests that his crossing the Alps was a feat equal to that of Hannibal (who had followed the route of Hercules). Cf. Sall. *Ep. Cn. Pompei* 4; also Gagé (note 7 above), DeWitt (note 6 above) and "Rome and the Road of Hercules," *TAPhA* 72 (1941) 59–69.

¹⁷ Cf. W. W. Tarn, "Alexander's 'Τροικήματα' and the 'World-Kingdom,'" *JHS* 41 (1921) 1–17; Klotz, *op. cit.* (note 4 above); also notes 18, 22, below.

¹⁸ Hans Oppermann, *Caesar der Schriftsteller und Sein Werk* (Neue Wege zur Antike: II Reihe: Interpretationen / Heft 2: Teubner, 1933) 3.

well-known passage in the *Brutus*: "sed dum voluit alios habere parata unde sumerent qui vellent scribere historiam. . . ." ¹⁹ A few years later Hirtius stated with equal precision that the *Commentaries* were intended to be a source for future historians: "qui (sc. commentarii) sunt editi ne scientia tantarum rerum scriptoribus deesset." ²⁰ Hirtius was close to Caesar and should have known his intentions; if the *Commentaries* were subtly written for contemporary political purposes, the fact seems to have escaped Hirtius, who otherwise need not have troubled to fill out the record of the Gallic wars years later. The same comment may be made of other sections of the *Corpus Caesarianum*. Curiously enough, very little has been said about the propaganda values of the *Bellum Civile*, yet if the *Bellum Gallicum* is propaganda, certainly the sequel should be. If the sequel is propaganda, in what direction and with what political end in view was it intended to influence its readers? In both works Caesar is at some pains to justify his course of action. Was such justification necessary long after the event (assuming that the *Bellum Gallicum* was written in 52 B.C.)? Were there not other and more effective means by which Caesar might have vindicated himself before contemporary public opinion? More will be said of such means later; here we may reaffirm the previously stated principle, that much of Roman publicizing that appears to us to be propaganda is in fact aimed primarily at posterity; consequently an unprejudiced critic, without excessive distrust of Cicero and Hirtius, and under no constraint to find an ulterior motive, would naturally conclude that Caesar's *primary* motive was precisely what he implied in the literary form he adopted and what Cicero and Hirtius quite reasonably inferred: ne scientia tantarum rerum scriptoribus deesset. ²¹

The genre of the *commentarii* is, in fact, a curiously oblique medium for propaganda purposes. The name and nature of the *genre* indicates that the material written in this form was for private circulation, "notes," and "memoranda" or "directives," as it were. ²² When Caesar was writing his *Commentaries*, the *genre* had only recently been established as a form with literary pretensions. ²³

¹⁹ 262.

²⁰ *BG* 8.1.5.

²¹ See note 20.

²² Cf. Oppermann, *op. cit.* (note 18 above); Premerstein, *RE* s.v. "Commentarii"; U. Wilcken, "Τρομνηματισμοί," *Ph* 53 (N.F. 7; 1894) 80-126, esp. 97-120.

²³ Oppermann, *op. cit.* (see note 18 above) 4; Klotz, *op. cit.* (see note 4 above) 2.

Although Cicero wrote *commentarii* on his consulship and turned the work over to the publishers, the principal motive (apart from gentlemanly exercise in *belles-lettres*) appears to have been to provide Posidonius with "copy" upon which he might base the formally embellished history and thus perpetuate Cicero's fame.²⁴ Those who stress the propaganda aspects of Caesar's *Commentaries* appear to have in mind a reading public of modern dimensions. It is altogether likely that Caesar's work was circulated only among a select group. Cicero would have certainly have been sent a copy, or copies as they appeared, but there is nothing to indicate that the work was widely circulated; in fact, such evidence as we possess is against the probability of wide circulation. Such circulation, it is worth noting, would be created only by widespread popular demand, and every indication is against the conclusion that Caesar's *Commentaries* were written with a view to popular appeal.

Needless to say, the attention given to the *Commentaries* in modern times is out of all proportion to their importance at the time of composition or in the living tradition of Latin prose. Cicero and Hirtius provide us with our only contemporary references.²⁵ Cicero gives us the impression that he felt he *ought* to say something pleasant about Caesar's work; the reference is a courteous digression, and the complimentary remarks could scarcely have reflected his true opinion as Caesar's prime antagonist in the current stylistic controversies.²⁶ Hirtius was a partisan. The *Commentaries* are important in modern times because Caesar wrote them, because they constitute a manual of Latin syntax, and because they are a valuable historical source. They were popular during the Renaissance because Caesar was being redefined as an historical character, because he provided a manual of strategy at a time when the arts of war were being studied anew, and because he aroused nationalistic interest among French and English readers.²⁷ But no such interests existed in ancient times. If we accept the judgment

²⁴ *Att.* 1.19.10; 2.1.1; 2.1.2.

²⁵ See notes 19, 20, above.

²⁶ Cicero's complimentary remarks were not original ("sanos quidem homines a scribendo deterruit," *Brut.* 262). When Cicero sent his own *commentarii* to Posidonius in 60 B.C. in the hope that the latter would base the final "more ornate" history upon them, the tactful Greek replied: se (*orat. obl.*) . . . non modo non excitatum esse ad scribendum, sed etiam plane perterritum," *Att.* 2.1.2.

²⁷ Cf. E. Owen, "Caesar in American Schools Prior to 1860," *CJ* 31 (1935-6) 212-222; N. J. DeWitt, "Commentarii de Commentariis Caesaris," *Class. Bull.* 18 (1941), 9-10.

of the grammarians represented in Keil, the *Commentaries* are not to be regarded as acceptable Latin on stylistic grounds, for the ancient scholars referred to other authors (notably Vergil and Cicero) as against Caesar in a ratio of about 8100 to 2.²⁸ The manuscript tradition is slim.²⁹ We do not know who wrote the minor parts of the *Corpus Caesarianum*; neither did Suetonius.³⁰ On the other hand, Orosius attributed the entire *Corpus* to Suetonius, and so does one family of manuscripts.³¹ Political considerations aside, the ancient neglect of the *Commentaries* was of course due to the style. In composing his work, Caesar deliberately avoided all of the rhetorical elements designed to please and to persuade.

As we have intimated, the scholars who see in Caesar the super-statesman and journalist find it impossible to believe that he could have written for other than political reasons.³² Yet he was, in fact, one of the leading Latin grammarians and had much to do with casting the language in the mould in which we know it today. He carried on a running controversy with Cicero on the subject of grammar, and he was seldom far from Cicero's thoughts when the latter composed his *De Oratore*, *Brutus*, and *Orator*.³³ Yet no one argues that Caesar had a political motive in writing *De Analogia* and dedicating it to Cicero.

The *Commentaries* bespeak throughout the stylist and grammarian: one notes the inflexible regularity of morphology and syntax; the studied avoidance of direct quotation and its cognate dramatic qualities (hence the frequent accusative and infinitive); the seemingly perverse use of the third person which is also an avoidance of drama and puts the narrative in the grammatical person that the adaptor will use. There is no rhetorical elaboration, no philosophical interpretation of events, no dramatic scheme, no

²⁸ This is based on figures cited by E. G. Sihler, *The Writings of Caesar* (Stechert, 1911) 265.

²⁹ Cf. C. H. Beeson, "The Text History of the *Corpus Caesarianum*," *CPh* 35 (1940) 113-125.

³⁰ Suet. *Caes.* 56.

³¹ Cf. F. W. Kelsey, "The Title of Caesar's Work," *TAPhA* 36 (1905) 211-238.

³² See above, note 4, and text. Students of Caesar's political career should not overlook the literature on his grammatical work, e.g. G. L. Hendrickson, "The *De Analogia* of Julius Caesar; its Occasion, Nature, and Date, with additional Fragments," *CPh* 1 (1906) 97-120; W. A. Oldfather and Gladys Bloom, "Caesar's Grammatical Theories and his own Practise," *CJ* 22 (1926-7) 584-602.

³³ Cf. Hendrickson, *op. cit.* (note 32 above).

evaluation of larger historical issues. The entire critical background, the *genre*, and the history of the *Commentaries* suggest that they were regarded by their author and his contemporaries as a minor work, a literary exercise, and at the same time a gentlemanly bid for the attention of posterity.

No one will argue, of course, that Caesar ignored the common techniques of influencing public opinion. He was a past-master of the devices understood by every clever politician, Roman or otherwise. But it is worth noting that Caesar did not understand, or at least did not use, the one unmistakable propaganda technique known in ancient times: that of the literary staff or court circle.³⁴ Alexander and Hannibal had used this technique very successfully; Augustus imported it to Rome (with qualifications that I have suggested above). If Caesar had been conscious of the values of organized propaganda, or had been in the habit of inspiring or creating such propaganda, we should expect him to have used it more than once—assuming that the *Commentaries* were written with this in mind. The contrary appears to be true. Most of the literature which had Caesar as its subject was uncomplimentary.³⁵

Our argument thus far suggests the following negative conclusions: (1) The generally accepted belief that Caesar's *Commentaries* were written with ulterior political ends in view is the result of a conjecture rendered plausible by modern concepts of political journalism; (2) Apart from the alleged political motivation of the *Commentaries*, Caesar does not appear to have utilized the known ancient techniques of propaganda; (3) Our studies of the *Commentaries* have been led astray by the importance attached to the work in modern times. On the positive side we may say that: (4) The *Commentaries* reflect Caesar's desire to place his military achievements on record in a form readily adaptable to the final rhetorical stage of historical writing, and reflect the ancient concern for the verdict of posterity; (5) They were supplemented and con-

³⁴ For Hannibal's propaganda, see DeWitt, *op. cit.* (note 6 above).

³⁵ John W. Spaeth, Jr., in his study, "Caesar's Friends and Enemies among the Poets," *CJ* 32 (1936-37) 541-556, gives no evidence of a Caesarian literary court. Such efforts as the *Bellum Sequanicum* of Varro Atacinus may have been inspired by Caesar, but we have no evidence of any verse that was written to order. Cicero began to write an epic about Caesar, but we do not know what became of it (*Q. Fr.* 2.13.2, etc.). Hirtius and Oppius wrote under the obligations of friendship. Furius Bibaculus, after a reconciliation with Caesar, wrote *Annales Belli Gallici*, but we may reserve judgment as to its quality, for it was apparently this Furius whom Catullus despised and whom Horace characterized as being full of tripe (*Sat.* 1.10).

tinued by his friends in the same spirit; (6) They were written according to the canons of a sharply defined literary form, and reflect Caesar's interest in style and the grammatical principles of analogy.

To these conclusions may be added the supplementary inference that the *Commentaries* were not necessarily written in 52-51 B.C. since they were not necessarily propaganda. The propaganda theory, in my opinion, is tenable only if the work was written in 52-51 B.C.; if the seven books were written year by year, there is no need whatever to regard them as political literature, since ample publicity for Caesar's acts and intentions was assured by other means.³⁶ (This statement may well be true regardless of any pre-supposition as to date and manner of composition.) We are consequently at liberty to consider the internal evidence as to manner and date of composition without being under any constraint to make out a case one way or the other. Much of the internal evidence is inconclusive, and is significant only when interpreted in the light of, and used to defend, a previous assumption. There are a few inconsistencies as between books; there are also inconsistencies within individual books. Few of these inconsistencies can be regarded as conclusive. However, they do suggest that Caesar himself attached no vital importance to the *Commentaries*, and did, in fact, write them hastily and, as Pollio objected,³⁷ carelessly. Even some of the critics who support the unitary theory admit that there are some inconsistencies that are better explained by the year-to-year composition theory.

The only point to which I should be inclined to attach much importance, so far as internal evidence is concerned, is the subjective conclusion that there is a considerable difference in style and feeling between Book I and the later books, say VII. Book I is more carefully and smoothly written; the indirect discourse is faithfully carried out; Caesar reports one witticism,³⁸ makes two ironical

³⁶ By personal letters, letters from members of his staff to their friends, by the direct political activities of his friends and agents in Rome, and by despatches to the senate. The Roman public, literate or otherwise, could certainly have known all about Caesar's victories in 57 B.C. without reading the *Commentaries*. "Ob easque res ex litteris Caesaris dies xv supplicatio decreta est, quod ante id tempus accidit nulli (BG 2.35.4)." We may add that under these circumstances the legality of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul would scarcely require justification; success tends to legalize the means by which it is achieved.

³⁷ Suet. *Caes.* 56.

³⁸ I.e. the remark of "quidam ex militibus decimae legionis," and the play on the phrase "ad equum rescribere," BG 1.42.6.

comments,³⁹ and refers with some emotion to the survival of a dear friend.⁴⁰ We receive the impression that Caesar was at ease and in a mood that verged occasionally on the jocular. Book VII is uniformly grim and detached, and one finds it hard to believe that it could have been written at the same time and in the same mood as Book I. We can reasonably say that the internal evidence, viewed impartially, presents a slight bias against the theory that Books I-VII were written at the same time, i.e. within a few weeks.

The arguments advanced above are, of course, stated in the conventional absolute terms of historical and biographical studies. In criticizing the extreme point of view that the *Commentaries* were purely propaganda, I have argued in terms of the opposite extreme, that the *Commentaries* were not propaganda at all in the sense that Caesar's principal motive was that of influencing his contemporaries in his favor. I should not care to argue, however, that Caesar at no time thought of his contemporaries; it would be strange indeed if Cato, for example, did not occasionally come into Caesar's mind as he wrote; to suppose otherwise would reveal a naive conception of human nature. But I doubt, as a friendly critic of this paper has suggested, that when Caesar sat down to write (or to dictate) his *Commentaries* he intended them "to serve as a very subtle means of deceiving a very highly educated and sophisticated audience." Precisely who at Rome would have been thus deceived? I have suggested above that Caesar would have resorted to more direct and more practical means of presenting his case to his contemporaries. Naturally in the *Commentaries* Caesar was careful to make his political and military moves appear just and reasonable, and might even go so far as to pay off an old score as in the case of his hits at Metellus Scipio;⁴¹ but after all, he was writing his memoirs, not confessions.⁴²

³⁹ The story of Considius (qui rei militaris peritissimus habebatur) who reported "quod non vidisset pro viso" (1.22.5); the incident of the young tribunes: volgo totis castris testamenta obsignabantur, 1.39.5.

⁴⁰ The finding of Valerius Proculus safe in the camp of Ariovistus: quae quidem res Caesari non minorem quam ipsa victoria voluptatem attulit, quod hominem honestissimum provinciae Galliae, suum familiarem et hospitem, ereptum e manibus hostium sibi restitutum videbat, neque eius calamitate de tanta voluptate et gratulatione quicquam fortuna diminuerat, 1.53.6.

⁴¹ BC 3.31.1. His temporibus Scipio detrimentis quibusdam circa montem Amanum acceptis imperatorem se appellaverat. I take this merely as proof that Caesar had a rather mean (and typically Roman) sense of humor.

⁴² The following passage, *mutatis mutandis*, might very well be applied to the spirit in which Caesar composed his *Commentaries*: "But Mackenzie King's mind is also on

As I have implied, the nature of the evidence does not permit us to reach conclusions that can be stated in terms other than those of probability. But the argument by probability does, I believe, warrant these conclusions: (1) That the *Commentaries* were *primarily* what their title indicates and what our only contemporary references state: highly stylized material for the use of future historians; (2) That they were written somewhat casually, probably not all at once in 52–51 B.C.; ⁴³ (3) That the commonly accepted view that Caesar's *Commentaries* were propaganda scarcely deserves the enthusiasm with which it is put forward in our school texts, histories, and notes; (4) That we should now inform our students that Caesar's *Commentaries* were written for the use of future historians by a very remarkable man who used a literary style that was peculiarly his own and not representative of the accepted norm in the living tradition of Latin prose.

the future. Everyone in Ottawa knows that he is compiling voluminous memoirs, and that all his utterances and actions are calculated partly for the position they will have in the written record. What he says and does must satisfy the ghost of Sir Wilfred (*sc.* Laurier); it must also satisfy the future historians of our time to whom he is demonstrating, no doubt, that everything he has said and done is of a piece, forming a pattern of flawless consistency and symmetry." E. K. Brown, "Mackenzie King of Canada," *Harpers* Jan. 1943 192–200.

⁴³ I should refer here to P. Barwick's study, "Caesars *Commentarii* und das Corpus Caesarianum," *Ph*, Supplb. 31 (1938) Heft 2, which appeared after Kalinka's survey cited in note 1 above. Barwick's theory (213–216) is that Caesar wrote and issued the books separately, but that he planned a revision and a collection which Hirtius started to carry out after Caesar's death.