

Clementia in Caesar's *Comentarii de Bello Gallico*:

The Justification of Clemency as a "Cheaper" Form of Controlling Others

A THESIS

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Classics

The Colorado College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

By

Victor Manuel Torres III

May/2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis advisor Richard Buxton for his guidance and support throughout the time of my thesis research. He continually motivated and encouraged me to be a bolder writer and improve upon my ability to communicate through writing. Without his encouragement and meticulous supervision, this thesis would not have been possible. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents who inspired me to go to college, to achieve my dream of writing a thesis, and to do what impassions me. Thank you to the Colorado College for facilitating my journey and development as a student and human. Also, I would like to give a special thank you to the Classics Department at Colorado College for continuing to support me whether that was offering me a job as a Latin tutor or having a conversation about life. Lastly, I want to thank everyone I have had the pleasure of discussing my thesis with as their questions helped me develop and hone my idea into a successful Thesis.

Mary Beard, the distinguished Classicist, has observed that “what might now appear as Caesar’s best quality was, ironically, the one most flagrantly at odds with the Republican tradition. He made much of *clementia* or mercy.”¹ Julius Caesar is perhaps best known for crossing the Rubicon and becoming dictator for life of the Roman people. Being a dictator, the Romans expected an individual who would be merciless and would do anything to maintain control, fearing that they would have another Sulla on their hands (see Suet. *Julius Caesar* 75). Sulla’s dictatorship, Mary Beard explains, “entailed vast, unchecked powers to make or repeal any laws,” such as the proscription of all enemies that did not agree with Sulla.² However, Caesar proved the complete opposite. When he arrived in Rome during the Civil War, he displayed the utmost mercy to individuals he took as prisoner and allowed his enemies to flee Rome safely. Ronald Syme in the *Roman Revolution* has remarked that “Caesar began [his arrival], invoking clemency, partly to discredit by contrast any memories of Sulla and his Sullan enemies,” and announced “a new style to end the Civil War—clemency and generosity.”³ But mercy was not in fact a new feature of Caesar’s leadership, for in the *Comentarii de Bello Gallico* (henceforth *BG*), set some nine years before the Civil War, Caesar uses narrative structure, simple syntax, and recurring language to orient the reader to believe that the Caesar he portrays in his work is already marked as clement. *BG* not only shows Caesar as clement, but justifies clemency as a “cheaper” form of controlling others than violence, which presumably was Caesar’s motivation for employing it at Rome later too.

To understand Caesar’s use of clemency, or *clementia* in Latin, it is useful to begin with a definition. David Konstan in a recent study of the term cites Donald Earl’s definition of it as “the

¹ Beard (2015) 294.

² *Ibid.* 245.

³ Syme (2002) 159

arbitrary mercy ... shown by a superior to an inferior.”⁴ *Clementia* is understood as an act of mercy or forgiveness from one in a superior role, e.g. master or general, towards an individual in an inferior role, e.g. slave or soldier. Let us consider the relationship between the master and his slave. If a slave were not to perform his duties properly in the household, the master would have the right to punish the slave in any way he sees fit. The master has full control in this situation and thus the punishment can reach extreme severity, such as death, or the master can choose to forgive the slave. If the master punishes his slave, he runs the risk of both the negligent slave and other slaves showing resentment towards him. But if the master were to show *clementia* toward his slave, he is more likely in the longer term to see more positive results: strategically speaking, mercy is a practice that allows a master to co-opt his “enemy,” i.e. he wins hard work born of gratitude for recognizing but letting slide a fault, so that the master does not have to waste time taking the slave out of service or beating him into submission and making him resentful, all reduce the slave’s productivity leading to less output and in a sense less money for the master; it is “cheaper” to be nice. Such, anyhow, is how Columella, a prominent Roman writer on agriculture, understood the advantages of avoiding excess cruelty toward slaves, noting:

tantoque curiosior inquisitio patris familiae debet esse pro tali genere servorum, ne aut in vestiariis aut in ceteris praebitis iniuriose tractentur, quanto et pluribus subiecti, ut vilicis, ut operum magistris, ut ergastulariis, magis obnoxii perpetiendis iniuriis, et rursus saevitia atque avaritia laesi magis timendi sunt.

And the investigation of the head of the family should be more painstaking on behalf of such a sort of slaves, that they may not be treated wrongfully either in clothing or in other allowances, in as much as, both having been subject by more people, such as from the overseers, from the taskmasters, from the jailers, they are more liable to unjust punishment, and again having been hurt from cruelty and greed they must be feared more. (*Res Rustica* 1.8.17).

⁴ Konstan (2005) 338, citing Earl (1976) 60.

Columella creates this opportunity for redress so that he may win favor with his slaves and as well without undermining his role as the master. Through his actions he gains admiration of the slaves and they therefore strive to improve the fields and be in a favorable light with the master.

Another positive result of practicing *clementia* is that the master is recognized publicly as virtuous and can thereby gain supporters both within and outside his household. Konstan notes that “clemency was regarded not as a mark of haughtiness or disdain, but rather as a virtue and the sign of a humane temperament.”⁵ When an individual such as the master is merciful, the people around him will view him as virtuous and thus be more willing to support and favor him. Konstan further notes that “clemency is a habitual trait or disposition ... and as such can be invoked as the basis for public concord.”⁶ The master recognizes that if he is merciful, he is not only able to maintain more control over his household, but also to gain a reputation outside his household for the ability to forgo the temptation to take revenge on those who oppose his power. Thus, he will be viewed as a clement individual who can be trusted and supported, since he errs on the side of forgiveness rather than retribution. The master also allows for the opportunity that his clemency may be called upon if an issue were to arise amongst the populace. As a result, the master’s status is elevated by “acceding” to the pleas of others, elevating himself in the hierarchy, and creating a debt that the populace now owes him for his clemency.

As a virtue, *clementia* presented a superior as merciful to the inferior; however, Roman nobles, who were placed in the inferior role as happened when Caesar won the Civil War, resented becoming the objects of *clementia*, as it implied they were slavish (i.e. dependent) and thus not free (i.e. lack *libertas*). Mary Beard makes the point that “*clementia* ... was the

⁵ *Ibid.* 337

⁶ *Ibid.* 342

antithesis of Republican *libertas*.”⁷ Caesar’s *clementia* after the Civil War threatened to trample Roman ideals of status and reputation (*dignitas*) practiced by the nobility. Roman nobles were accustomed to being the masters of their households and the only ones in power who had freedom in their actions, or *libertas*. Their *libertas* allowed for them to dispense certain favors such as *clementia*. However, when the Roman nobles lost their power, they were placed into the inferior role and as such made dependent on mercy from a superior. Mary Beard points out that their uneasiness “was motivated by self-interest and disgruntlement, driven by their sense of *dignitas*.”⁸ Thus the Roman nobles fear that he would lose his *libertas*, his moral standing or *dignitas* caused him to detest Caesar’s *clementia*. As Maria Wyke in *Caesar: A Life in Western Culture* has noted, “now the dictator was exercising [*clementia*] as an individual towards his fellow citizens, binding them to him in a demanding debt of gratitude (because it could never sufficiently be paid).”⁹ Caesar utilized *clementia* to maintain order and undercut the authority of those who could threaten his power and control. Although Caesar tried to use *clementia* to maintain order by building gratitude from those he spared, *clementia* was a virtue that many Roman nobles ultimately detested as it forced them to acquiesce to any and every one of Caesar’s ambitions, as I will discuss further in this paper’s final section.

Prior to crossing the Rubicon however, Caesar’s yearning for power surfaced in the early years of his life as he served in many powerful roles throughout his career such as quaestor in 69 B.C., pontifex maximus in 63 B.C., and consul in 59 B.C. Yet, arguably the most significant role was governor of Roman Gaul starting in 58 B.C., which provided the opportunity for him to conquer a significant amount of Gaul’s territory. Caesar memorialized these campaigns by

⁷ Beard (2015) 295.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Wyke (2008) 148

writing *BG* providing a record the terrain of Gaul and his encounters with various Gallic tribes. Wyke states that this is “the only surviving narrative by a participant in a large-scale Roman war abroad and, furthermore, one written by the commander-in-chief.”¹⁰ From his countless interactions with many Gallic people, Caesar showcased stories about his battles and his behavior towards them. Caesar’s account is primarily written in the third person in order to suggest objectivity to the reader with regards of his narrative of the events that took place during his command. Nevertheless, Beard remarks that “it is not exactly a neutral document. Caesar had a shrewd eye for his public image and the *Commentaries* is a carefully contrived justification of his conduct and parade of his military skills.”¹¹ Caesar’s focus was not to be objective, but to seem objective, shaping the facts into an account that fixed him at the center of Gaul’s known history and helped him secure power back at Rome by creating an image of him as a leader. Each book of the *BG* was broken up to narrate each year that Caesar governed Gaul. As T.P. Wiseman in *The Publications of De Bello Gallico* explains, “history had been written to be read aloud” and “if a popular audience could enjoy Pliny’s *Natural History*, the narrative swiftness of Caesar’s *Commentaries* would surely have held it spellbound.”¹² The Roman people were eager to hear *BG* and Caesar in turn was keen to use it to sell an image of himself as a great leader. A major and consistent attribute in *BG* that Caesar the author presents is the main protagonist’s *clementia*. In fact, as we will see the first time Caesar faces a serious problem in *BG*, he chooses to be clement rather than harsh and violent. This representation of him as a leader employing clemency suggested to the people in Rome exactly the type of leader he would turn out to be during and after the Civil Wars.

¹⁰ Wyke (2008) 42

¹¹ Beard (2015) 283

¹² Wiseman (1998) 4-5

As mentioned Caesar cunningly constructed his perceived identity through his rhetoric. His *clementia* was a serious part of his character and he intentionally advertised himself as clement not only in *BG*, but also in his career. Melissa Barden Dowling in *Clemency & Cruelty in the Roman World* mentions that “Caesar initially employs both the vocabulary and the practice of clemency in traditional ways, but during the increasing civil unrest and exacerbating tensions with Pompey, he adapts *clementia* vocabulary for new conditions.”¹³ Caesar, traditionally, employed *clementia* to restrain anger and extend his quality to the guilty rather than the innocent. Coming a generation after Sulla tensions were high, and Caesar recognized that *clementia* could be used as a tool to soothe the fears of commoners and aristocrats. As a result, he won the common folk, but his *clementia* as seen ended up having a negative effect with the nobility. Zvi Yavetz in *Julius Caesar and His Public Image* pointed out that “*Clementia* soon became a watchword. It was taken to mean that Caesar put aside political rivalries in order to simulate a god-like benevolence that enveloped all his subjects.”¹⁴ Caesar was so closely associated with *clementia* that a temple was consecrated at Rome to *Clementia Caesaris*. *Clementia* was his greatest strength and allowed for Caesar to manipulate the people around him whether that was through his actions, speeches, or prose.

Even if the type of leader Caesar aimed to be was one who embraced *clementia*, he was no stranger to killing people when he believed it necessary, especially in Gaul (see *BG* 2.33.1-5). However, as Yavetz argues: “the moment [the idea] occurred to him that *clementia* was the most rewarding path, because hearts could be won by taking it, he never changed course.”¹⁵ Caesar’s actions made him popular in Gaul and later potentially at Rome, and he must have known that

¹³ Dowling (2006) 20

¹⁴ Yavetz (1983) 175

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

when you forgive an enemy you secure several other allies at little to no cost. Indeed, Cicero seems to have also understood how *clementia* could benefit Caesar, noting:

Sed videsne in quem inciderit res publica, quam acutum, quam vigilantem, quam paratum? Si me hercule neminem occiderit nec cuiquam quicquam ademerit ab, iis qui eum maxime timuerant maxime diligetur.

But do you see onto whom the Republic has fallen, how keen, how vigilant, how prepared? Indeed, if he does not kill anybody nor take anything from anybody, he will be most esteemed by those who had feared him most (Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 8.13.1)¹⁶

Cicero recognizes that Caesar's *clementia* is part of a larger strategy to lull his enemies into a false sense of safety and security. Yet, Caesar once wrote in a letter to Cicero, *recte auguraris de me (bene enim tibi cognitus sum) nihil a me abesse longius crudelitate* ("You rightly surmise about me (for I am well known to you) that nothing is more distant from me than cruelty" Cicero, *Ibid.* 9.16.2). Caesar in this letter claims that he applies *clementia* because he dislikes harshness. This brings to light the possibility that Caesar was genuinely compassionate. Yavetz accordingly posits that "In reality Caesar pardoned some of his former enemies for boldly political reasons but at other times pardoned other people quite simply because he was good-natured."¹⁷ He suggests that Caesar could be strategic in how he used *clementia*, yet he really wanted to make situations easier for himself and those around him, so he forgave others on account of his benevolence. Thus, Caesar's *clementia*, however pragmatic at times, can also be perceived as essential to Caesar's character; he would rather be clement than cruel.

What is a *Clementia* Type Scene

¹⁶ I am grateful to Cornelia Coulter and Zwi Yavetz for bringing to my attention the sections of Cicero's *Ad Atticum* that I discuss here

¹⁷ Yavetz (1983) 174

Turning to clemency in *BG*, Caesar the author depicts Caesar the main protagonist as clement primarily via a type scene with three set elements, whose recurrence throughout the *BG* helps establish Caesar as a leader defined by this virtue long before it became associated with him after the Civil War. Step one begins with a person begging Caesar for forgiveness on behalf of another person for the latter's transgressions. Step two is that Caesar accepts the apology and forgives the person or people through either explicitly saying he forgives the person for their wrongdoing or implicitly forgiving the person by adjudicating a fit exchange for the trouble that the person has inflicted on Caesar. Step three is where he often decides the fit exchange that is required for his forgiveness. This last step is key as Caesar's fit exchange displays to the reader that he is not a fool. Clemency, as clever of a strategy as it is, may appear as foolish to some because the victor is letting their enemy live without answering with any consequences such as death or servitude. Caesar sets himself apart because he is keen to keep a close eye on those individuals who decide to challenge Roman control over Gaul. Caesar's exchange mandates some set number of hostages to welcome people into his protection and forgiveness. Caesar, in the event of a potential problem, may then choose to establish a failsafe to protect himself and minimize harm to his army and Rome.

The case of Dumnorix, a Gaul who betrays Caesar, is the first occasion for a type scene of Caesar dispensing *clementia* in *BG* (1.18-20), and thus a logical passage to analyze first in order to establish the elements of the work's *clementia* type scene. Before turning to the Dumnorix episode, let me provide some necessary background for understanding it: Caesar enters Southern Gaul since the Helvetii, a nomadic Gallic tribe set on emigrating south, are making the southern Gauls anxious and he is going to face off against them to remove this anxiety. Then, suddenly, the Sequani, an allied tribe of Gauls, are persuaded to allow the Helvetii

to cross the Sequani's lands. Caesar is dumbfounded by why the Sequani give the Helvetii permission to pass through territory forbidden them. He calls a meeting of all the leaders of the tribes that reside within Southern Gaul, the Aedui, to ascertain how the Helvetii entered prohibited territory.

After giving a scathing speech to the Aeduan leaders, Caesar then discovers from one of them, Liscus, that their people fear not only Caesar but also the Helvetii, and that consequently Dumnorix, another leader at this meeting, persuaded the Sequani to grant permission to the Helvetii to travel through the forbidden territory. Dumnorix, Caesar learns, resents the Roman military for subjugating the Gauls, and has allied with the Helvetii because his wife is Helvetian, and he has many family members who have married into the Helvetii. After learning this information, Caesar calls in Dumnorix's brother Diviciacus, who, unlike his brother, has proven loyal and trustworthy, for the counsel he may offer in this situation. Diviciacus tells Caesar all he knows concerning his brother's situation. It is in their meeting where Caesar first enacts *clementia*.

When implementing *clementia*, Caesar, the author, presents Caesar, the protagonist, following the three-point process mentioned earlier with the first step being a person begging for forgiveness, on behalf of another, from Caesar. In chapter 20, *Diviciacus multis cum lacrimis Caesarem complexus obsecrare coepit ne quid gravius in fratrem statueret* ("Diviciacus, having embraced Caesar with many tears, begins to implore him that he may not pass anything more severe on his brother" BG 1.20.1). The main verb, *obsecrare coepit*, is a peculiar word choice, as the author Caesar could have used a simpler verb, such as *implore*, to beg Caesar to spare his brother's life. Instead, he used one with a marked meaning, namely *obsecrare coepit*, which,

according to *obsecrare*'s definition, is usually used for a deity.¹⁸ Here Caesar is that direct object and is in a way depicted as a deity who is prayed to for favor. The author's specific vocabulary exhibits Diviciacus's understanding of the gravity of the situation his brother is in: by praying to Caesar to spare Dumnorix from death, Diviciacus has now left his brother's life in the hands of a god so to speak. This is relevant in aiding Caesar's self-presentation as one who is superior and in command despite an apparent challenge to his authority. Diviciacus reasserts the "divine" control that Dumnorix challenged.

In the next stage of the *clementia* type scene, Caesar accepts the apology and forgives the person (or people) and optionally adjudicates a fit exchange for the trouble that the person (or people) has inflicted on Caesar. Caesar thus listens and responds to Diviciacus's plea as follows: *tanti eius apud se gratiam esse ostendit uti et rei publicae iniuriam et suum dolorem eius voluntati ac precibus condonet* ("[Caesar] showed that Diviciacus' friendship among them was of such worth that Caesar forgives both the injury of the Republic and his own pain from Diviciacus' good will and prayers" *BG* 1.20.5). As the author, Caesar paints a picture for the reader of a protagonist willing to put aside the injuries Dumnorix has inflicted so that he can display his appreciation to Diviciacus. *Clementia* thereby builds gratitude in Caesar's favor similar to the master gaining favor from his slave and is thus a shrewd strategy. By forgiving Dumnorix, Caesar assuages the begging and "prayers." Moreover, this use of the word *precibus* (from prayers) plays into the god complex that Caesar, the author, has constructed about Caesar, the protagonist, due to Diviciacus's verb choice of *obsecrare coepit*. With this word choice, Caesar, in his first act of *clementia* in the *BG*, is revealed as a unique individual because he is beseeched not as a man but rather as a god. With this unprecedented style, Caesar stands out in

¹⁸ Oxford Latin Dictionary (1968) 1220

his story as a clement god for he is the only one who can grant mercy and pardon all of their transgressions.

Still following the three-point structure of the *clementia* type scene, Caesar decides to excuse Dumnorix's actions but establish safety measures to ensure that this individual will no longer harm him:

Dumnorigem ad se vocat, fratrem adhibet; quae in eo reprehendat ostendit; quae ipse intellegat, quae civitas queratur proponit; monet ut in reliquum tempus omnes suspiciones vitet; praeterita se Diviciaco fratri condonare dicit. Dumnorigi custodes ponit, ut quae agat, quibuscum loquatur scire possit.

He calls Dumnorix to himself, he invites his brother; he points out those things which he blames on him; he himself puts forward what he himself understands, what the state complains about; he warns that he avoid all suspicion in the future; he says that he forgives the past events for his brother Diviciacus. He stations spies on Dumnorix, so that he may be able to know the things which he does, and with whom he speaks. (*BG* 1.20.6)

Caesar forgives Dumnorix, but only because of his brother; if his brother had not said anything or was not respected by Caesar, Dumnorix would have died. Even though Caesar does forgive Dumnorix, Caesar still places spies on him as a safeguard in case Dumnorix does betray him again. Caesar is not naïve and recognizes the danger in leaving an enemy to his own deeds. He therefore takes a precaution and attempts to anticipate any possible future turmoil that may arise.

The begging from Diviciacus on behalf of Dumnorix, the forgiveness Caesar extends to Dumnorix, and the demands and safeguard Caesar sets up are the structure for what *clementia* in *BG* looks like. Through means of this well-organized structure, a reader can now more clearly locate the work's many other examples of *clementia* and recognize the pattern in which Caesar writes *clementia* episodes. Together, this pattern and its recurrence show that Caesar is intentionally foregrounding *clementia* as an inherent element of his leadership. As a result, one

can plausibly claim that much of his focus in this work is on creating an image of himself as clement.

Examples of *clementia* in *BG*

Now let us look at an episode within book 2 involving the Belgae, where Caesar forgives the Bellovaci for causing turmoil within Gaul using the set pattern we have just outlined. The sequence begins when Caesar learns that the Belgae, another tribe from Northern Gaul, are colluding against him. He gathers information concerning them and his army begins to have minor skirmishes with their forces. The Romans then repel them and slaughter many of the Belgae in battle. Some surrender as Caesar moves into Belgian territory to pulverize them into submission, such as Galba, the king of the Suessiones, a subset of the Belgae. After accepting the Suessiones' surrender, hostages, and weapons, Caesar begins to advance upon the Bellovaci, another tribe within the Belgae. Diviciacus, who has been marching with Caesar this entire time, is urged by Caesar to mobilize his men to face off against this new threat.

Caesar, the author, again depicts Caesar, the protagonist, following the three steps of the *clementia* type scene. Diviciacus dismisses his army from the battlefield to prevent any fighting and allow him to beseech Caesar on behalf of the Bellovaci. Then comes the first step:

pro his Diviciacus ... facit verba: bellovacos omni tempore in fide atque amicitia civitatis Haeduae fuisse; impulsos ab suis principibus, qui dicerent Haeduos a Caesare in servitutem redactos. omnes indignitates contumeliasque perferre, et ab Haeduis defecisse et populo Romano bellum intulisse... petere non solum Bellovacos, sed etiam pro his Haeduos, ut sua clementia ac mansuetudine in eos utatur

For these people Diviciacus ... makes excuses: that the Bellovaci were at all times in the loyalty and friendship of the Aeduan state; that they were compelled by their leaders who were saying that the Aedui had been led back to slavery by Caesar. They revolted from the Aedui and made war on the Roman people, and were suffering every indignity and insult ... that not only the Bellovaci, but also

the Aedui, seeks from Caesar on behalf of them that he use his clemency and gentleness on them. (*BG* 2.14.1-5)

The important novelty here is that Caesar has become known for his *clementia* in Gaul and he is being importuned by the same individual as before. Caesar, the protagonist, showed *clementia* to Diviciacus, who, from this, learned to characterize Caesar, the protagonist, as clement. He is asked by Diviciacus to use this virtue when deciding the fate of the Bellovaci. Diviciacus does not ask for forgiveness explicitly here; however, Caesar infers from the indirect command Diviciacus attributes to the Bellovaci and Aedui that Diviciacus himself is requesting this *clementia*.

However, Caesar, the author, is careful to portray the protagonist as not being naïve in his grant of clemency. Weak excuses for rebellious behavior will continue be a feature in *clementia* type scenes and Caesar the author will as here show that Caesar grants favors but not recklessly. Because Caesar, the protagonist, is moving quickly through this *clementia* episode, the author condenses steps two and three into one. Accordingly, after Diviciacus's request:

Caesar honoris Diviciaci atque Haeduorum causa sese eos in fidem recepturum et conservaturum dixit; et quod erat civitas magna inter Belgas auctoritate atque hominum multitudine praestabat, sescentos obsides poposcit.

Caesar for the sake of the honor of Diviciacus and the Aeduans said that he would take them back and spare them in good faith; and because the [Bellovaic's] state was great among the Belgae by their authority and was outstanding with the multitude of its people, he demanded 600 hostages. (*BG* 2.14.1)

The main verbs are *dixit* and *poposcit*, which are both verbs of dictating, meaning that Caesar is resolute in his decision and knows what he is doing. *Poposcit* (demanded) signals an important element that Caesar the author recognizes in the central actor of the narrative. Caesar the author wants the reader to see that the main protagonist is making the right choice, and the author presents Caesar the protagonist's logic regarding the Belgae leading to *poposcit*, thus allowing the reader to discern that the protagonist is not naïve in his decision. Caesar implies that he will

be merciful toward the Bellovaci because of his respect for Diviciacus and the Aeduans. Caesar is in part forgiving but also doing this clement act as a favor because he is aware that this favor places Diviciacus in a debt of gratitude that he will later need to requite. However, Caesar also recognizes the necessity to take a precaution on account of the large population of the Belgae and therefore mandates a substantial number of hostages. Caesar in creating the request for 600 hostages accordingly gains an easy win and can more efficiently assert his control over the Bellovaci.

As Caesar continues his campaign in book 2, he subdues the Nervii, a tribe that resides in Northern Gaul. The Atuatuaci, a tribe residing to the East of the Nervii settlement, having heard of this news, return to their home and fortify themselves inside of their strongly secured town. The Romans, upon approaching the town, observe a towering circumvallation and begin to build a siege machine to surmount the wall. The Atuatuaci at first mock the machine for its weight and immobility; however, they quickly change their tune when they see the machine move with great speed, even coming to believe that it represents a divine intervention (see *BG* 2.31.1).

Here Caesar, the author, begins a third type scene by depicting Caesar, the protagonist, as strategic when it comes to avoiding combat by means *clementia*. The first step for the *clementia* type scene comes as a result of the fear that overtakes the Atuatuaci have because the Romans waged war with “divine” siege engines; .1

*legatos ad Caesarem de pace miserunt ... se suaque omnia eorum potestati
permittere dixerunt. Unum petere ac deprecari: si forte pro sua clementia ac
mansuetudine, quam ipsi ab aliis audirent, statuisset Atuatuacos esse
conservandos, ne se armis despoliaret*

They sent emissaries to Caesar concerning peace ... They said that they relinquish themselves and all their things to the power [of the Romans.] That they beg and ask for one thing: if perchance on behalf of his clemency and gentleness, the

kinds of qualities they themselves heard of from others, he had decided that the Atuatuca must be spared, that he not strip them of their arms. (*BG* 2.31.1-5)

This first step is peculiar as the ambassadors representing the Atuatuca do not beg for Caesar to forgive them, rather they merely submit as if they are familiar with his methods. Caesar, the author, makes it clear here that news of his *clementia* has traveled throughout Gaul in a manner which suggests that Caesar, the protagonist, is known to offer *clementia* if whoever is fighting him surrenders unconditionally. An interesting point can be made here with the fact that Caesar's *clementia ac mansuetudine* is phrased similarly to 2.14.1-5, suggesting that Caesar, the author, wants to emphasize that his *clementia* has indeed traveled swiftly from the Belgae in the South to the Atuatuca in the North.

However, the author is again careful to write the episode so that the main protagonist appears supportive, but not naïve. The Atuatuca willingly cede themselves to the superior power; however, they take their surrender a step further by begging and asking that Caesar not strip them of their weapons. This is unusual as typically when someone is conquered, they are stripped of their possessions and the victor has all the power to decide the fate of those who have been conquered.¹⁹ The loser does not normally have the ability nor the bravery to make such a request. However, the Atuatuca say their weapons are necessary to aid in the defense of their city from other tribes in the neighboring areas.

Caesar, the protagonist, following his *clementia* type scene, transitions to the second step: *ad haec Caesar respondit: se magis consuetudine sua quam merito eorum civitatem conservaturum, si prius quam murum aries attigisset se dedidissent* ("To these things Caesar responded: that he would spare their state more by his custom rather than by their merits, if they

¹⁹ Beard (2015) 217

would have surrendered themselves before the battering ram would have touched their wall” *BG* 2.32.1). Caesar, the author, makes clear his capacity to dominate them and his recognition that they have clearly acted in a manner deserving punishment. Caesar, the protagonist, understands that word of his *clementia* has spread fast, and as such this event is crucial to display to Gaul that he is benevolent, but not naïve, and the Gallic tribes need to recognize the importance of knowing their place.

Caesar further shows that he is not to be taken advantage of in step 3:

sed deditiois nullam esse condicionem nisi armis traditis. Se id quod in Nervii fecisset facturum finitimisque imperaturum ne quam dediticiis populi Romani iniuriam inferrent.

But there was no agreement unless their arms had surrendered. That he would do [for them] that which he had done in the case of the Nervii and he would command to the neighboring peoples that they not inflict any injury against those who have surrendered to the Roman people. (*BG* 2.32.1-2)

Caesar states very clearly that the relinquishment of the Atuatici’s weapons are necessary in exchange for peace with the Romans, but he also offers to assuage their fears by speaking with the neighboring people to not harm them. Caesar here thus knowingly trusts the power of his previous victories and reputation to compel surrounding tribes in Gaul to obey his commands; Caesar’s control over Gaul was expanding and thus he had greater scope to persuade other tribes not to strive against the Romans. Caesar, the protagonist, decides to not allow the Atuatici to weasel their way out of unconditional submission, rather he uses the threat of force against Atuatici’s enemies to intimidate the Atuatici themselves into disarming. According to Kurt Raaflaub, “submission before the use of violence is necessary to make leniency possible; violation of these terms once they are accepted, will prompt brutal punishment.” In other words, Caesar will not stand for any foolishness.

This episode is further complicated because the Atuatuci had submitted yet did not completely commit to Caesar's terms of surrender. The Atuatuci tossed their weapons over the wall:

et tamen circiter parte tertia celata atque in oppido retenta, portis patefactis eo die pace sunt usi. Sub vesperum Caesar portas claudi militesque ex oppido exire iussit, ne quam noctu oppidani a militibus iniuriam acciperent ... tertia vigilia, qua minime arduus ad nostras munitiones accensus videbatur, omnibus copiis repente ex oppido eruptionem fecerunt. Celeriter, ut ante Caesar imperaverat, ignibus significatione facta, ex proximis castellis eo concursum est ... Occisis ad hominum milibus IIII reliqui in oppidum reiecti sunt.

And nevertheless, around a third part [of their arms] were concealed and restrained in the town, when the gates opened they enjoyed peace for that day. Until the evening, Caesar ordered the gates to be closed and the soldiers to leave from the town, lest at night the townspeople may receive any injury from the soldiers. From the third watch, from which the ascent to our fortifications seemed least steep, suddenly [the Atuatuci] made a sortie from the town with all their forces. Swiftly, as Caesar had ordered earlier, with the signal having been made from fires, he rallied from his [forces] out of the nearest forts ... About four thousand [Atuatuci] men were killed, the rest of them had been pushed back into the town. (BG 2.33.1-5)

In an interesting variation, Caesar the author inserts an episode to deflect misunderstanding his *clementia* to the Atuatuci as naïve and instead display the protagonist's clever mindset. The Atuatuci placed a lot of their hope in taking advantage of Caesar's *clementia* and defeating him and his forces with a surprise ambush. However, this backfired as Caesar was steps ahead of the Atuatuci and was able to quell the revolt without any major disaster occurring for Rome besides the deaths of four thousand Atuatuci. The fact that signal fires were lit, and troops rallied at breaking speeds to meet Caesar showcases the power and control he had over his men and this situation. For violating Caesar's offer, the Atuatuci have lost any claim to mercy and as a result the 53,000 who remain alive are sold to slave traders. Caesar's victory here had an impressive impact upon many tribes within Gaul and even intimidated many other tribes to offer their submission in fear of what Caesar might do to them (see BG 2.35.1). Book 2 of Caesar's *BG*

ends with this account and results in the Senate decreeing a period of thanksgiving *dierum XV* (“of 15 days” *BG* 2.35.4), which had never been done for any other person before. The Senate, by honoring Caesar for his great achievements, legitimized Caesar’s actions in Gaul.

Clementia is an important virtue that Caesar outlines in nearly all the books of *BG*; however, there are no acts of *clementia* in book 3. This lack of *clementia* is a result of the fact that the Gallic people kidnap Roman envoys. Since this is a very serious case, *clementia* is out of Caesar’s hands. War begins to break out along the Atlantic, and as a result the Veneti seize Roman envoys and demand an exchange for hostages. Caesar meets with Crassus and Pompey to fortify his alliance and secure the necessary men for the upcoming naval fight. Caesar tries to face off against the Veneti, but the high tide and their superior craftsmanship in ships makes it extremely difficult to win. Then at one point during the battle, the Romans cut the Veneti’s yardarm, immobilize them, and force them into a position where they have to surrender. Caesar the author then explains what happens to the Veneti:

Quo proelio bellum Venetorum totiusque orae maritimae confectum est. Nam cum omnis iuventus, omnes etiam gravioris aetatis in quibus aliquid consilii aut dignitatis fuit eo convenerant, tum navium quod ubique fuerat in unum locum coegerant; quibus amissis reliqui neque quo se reciperent neque quem ad modum oppida defenderent habebant. Itaque se suaque omnia Caesari dediderunt. In quos eo gravius Caesar vindicandum statuit quo diligentius in reliquum tempus a barbaris ius legatorum conservaretur. Itaque omni senatu necato reliquos sub corona vendidit.

From this battle the war of the Veneti and of the entire maritime coast has been completed. For when all the youth, and also all men in the burdensome age in whom there was something of purpose or rank, had come together from them, then they gathered together into one place whatever naval places which had been anywhere; and when they had lost these things the surviving men had neither a place by which they recover themselves nor the means that they defend their towns. Therefore, they surrendered themselves and all their arms to Caesar. On them Caesar decided upon a more severe punishment all by which in the rest of the time the right of the envoys may be preserved by the barbarians more diligently. Therefore, with their entire council having been put to death he sold the remaining men as slaves. (*BG* 3.16.1-4)

Prior to book 3, the author has consistently presented the protagonist as a clement leader, but this passage shows a shift in his ability to dispense *clementia*. Caesar the author sets this event up in such a way that the reader expects a *clementia* type scene. Caesar has crippled the Veneti's naval power and almost nearly eliminated their ability to defend themselves from enemies. As a result, these people had chosen *dediderunt* (to surrender) to Caesar. These people expected Caesar to display his *clementia*; however, because the Roman envoys had been kidnapped, *clementia* was no longer one of his choices. Caesar therefore kills or enslaves them all. Caesar does not act without having the protection of Rome and its citizens in his mind. This is the first and only time the reader hears of the kidnapping of Roman envoys in *BG*, therefore meaning Caesar's actions impact the tribes within Gaul and teach them a lesson: do not challenge Caesar's control. Caesar the author places this event right after two acts of *clementia* referring to books 1 and 2 to show the reader that Caesar the protagonist is clement and merciful; however, he is not a fool nor naïve. When the Veneti or any tribe push Rome or Caesar's buttons by kidnapping envoys, Caesar is swift to deal harsh punishments as this matter is of great importance. By showing the protagonist acting swiftly, Caesar the author convinces the reader that the protagonist is loyal to Rome and will support its people to the full extent of his ability.

At the end of book 3, Caesar had attempted to pacify all of Gaul. Upon advancing to the northeastern-most tip of Gaul, he faces off against the Morini, a tribe believed to be one of the most formidable in all of Gaul. Caesar defeats their army and presses them into the deep woods that surround the Morini's land. Unfortunately, bad weather forces Caesar to end his campaign and send his men to their winter camps. After the winter season, book 4 discusses the inception of Caesar's campaign to invade Britain. Caesar orders ships to be built and sends one of his trusted men, Commius, to take a ship and crew to Britain and survey its lands. Caesar's fleet

attempts to cross to Britain by means of the shortest route possible which goes through the Morini's land.

The Morini, seeing the Romans so close to their territory, fear the development of another battle. As a result, a *clementia* type scene occurs when the Morini send envoys to Caesar. The first step of the type scene begins:

Dum in his locis Caesar navium parandarum causa moratur, ex magna parte Morinorum ad eum legati venerunt, qui se de superioris temporis consilio excusarent, quod homines barbari et nostrae consuetudinis imperiti bellum populo Romano fecissent, seque ea quae imperasset facturos pollicerentur.

While Caesar remains in these places for the reason of procuring ships, envoys came to him from a large part of the Morini, who were pleading their excuse for their actions from the last occasion, because [they were] uncivilized men and ignorant of our custom, they had waged war with the Roman people. (BG 4.22.1)

Caesar did not make any movements in book 4 to conquer or control the Morini. Britain was on his mind and it just so happened that his presence had instigated the necessity for the Morini to submit to Caesar's authority. Caesar listens to their request and has come to understand that the Morini were unaware of *nostrae consuetudinis* ("our custom"), which refers to Caesar's policy of accepting voluntary submission and offering protection after the agreement has commenced. The fact that his *clementia* is realized after the fact emphasizes the influence he has on tribes who are unaware of his customs and further solidifies the point that Caesar's capacity to conquer all is a fearful yet courageous tool that allows him to gain what he wants with ease and less bloodshed.

Caesar, eager to start his campaign to conquer Britain, listens to this request with delight. As a result, Caesar in a rush consolidates the second and third steps of the *clementia* type scene to the following:

hoc sibi Caesar satis opportune accidisse arbitratus, quod neque post tergum hostem relinquere volebat neque belli gerendi propter anni tempus facultatem habebat neque has tantularum rerum occupationes Britanniae anteponeudas

iudicabat, magnum iis numerum obsidum imperat. quibus adductis eos in fidem recipit.

Caesar having thought that this happened for him quite favorably, because he was not wanting to leave an enemy behind his back and because of the time of year he was not having the ability to wage war nor was he justifying this employment of so trifling a matter having to be set before Britain, he orders a large number of hostages from them. When these were brought to him, he accepts them into his protection. (BG 4.22.2-3)

Caesar had not yet gained any official authority or control over the Morini. As a result of his failure to subdue them, he directs his focus on being the first Roman general to dominate Britain. By Caesar the author introducing this situation for the main protagonist, the reader realizes that Caesar the protagonist can conduct his affairs abroad without any worry of threats from the Morini. Caesar presents his usual benevolence to this tribe further emphasizing that Caesar's policy of accepting voluntary submission has not diminished.

After accepting the Moroni into his protection, Caesar sails to Britain, where he finds himself in front of steep cliffs (white cliffs of Dover) with armed troops posted on top. Caesar with his army then sail to a wide beach, face difficulty in landing, and struggle to battle against Briton fighters. Caesar utilizes his warships in an effort to bombard the enemy with various missiles. Also, he witnesses the eagle-bearer of the 10th legion run into battle and encourage his fellow soldiers to persevere and press on in their fight. As a result, the Romans recover from their dire situation and are able to repel their enemy.

After Caesar had gained a solid footing on land, he was able to chase after his enemy only for a short time which prevented his full success. This *clementia* type scene follows its usual fashion with the first step of envoys being sent to Caesar. However, Commius, who was mentioned earlier, was captured by these Britons without the knowledge of Caesar. Caesar, the author, writes:

Hostes proelio superati simul atque se ex fuga receperunt, statim ad Caesarem legatos de pace miserunt; obsides daturos quaeque imperasset sese facturos polliciti sunt. una cum his legatis Commius Atrebas venit, quem supra demonstraveram a Caesare in Britanniam praemissum. hunc illi e navi egressum, cum ad eos oratoris modo Caesaris mandata deferret, comprehenderant atque in vincula coniecerant. tum proelio facto remiserunt et in petenda pace eius rei culpam in multitudinem contulerunt et propter imprudentiam ut ignosceretur petiverunt.

The enemy having been defeated from the battle, once they recovered from their escape, immediately sent envoys to Caesar concerning peace. They promised to give him hostages and perform what he should command. Together with these ambassadors came Commius the Atrebatan whom I pointed out before had been sent ahead by Caesar into Britain. They had seized him and thrown him into chains; then when the battle was done they sent him back and in asking for peace they blamed the offense of this action on the mob and asked [Caesar] to be forgiving on account of their ignorance. (BG 4.27.1-5)

When recalling book 3, the Veneti kidnap a Roman envoy, lose the battle, surrender their hostage and ask for forgiveness, and are all killed or enslaved for their misdeeds. However, Commius is not Roman and is in fact Gallic. This fact is emphasized by Caesar, the author, writing briefly in the first person within this passage. A break from the usual third person occurs in the text suggesting that Caesar, the author, is interjecting as to draw the reader's attention to the specific details and circumstances of the ambassador Commius. This one peculiar factor suggests that although Caesar valued and supported all people under the Roman banner including the newly incorporated Gauls, he primarily prioritized Roman officials.

Caesar continues with the *clementia* type scene and again combines the second and third steps into one swift point. However, Caesar has more to say on account of the fact that an envoy has been taken. He follows with *Caesar questus quod, cum ultro in continentem legatis missis pacem ab se petissent, bellum sine causa intulissent, ignoscere se imprudentiae dixit obsidesque imperavit* ("Caesar having complained because, when he sent ambassadors into the continent, they had asked for peace from him, after they had made war on him without a reason, he said he would forgive them because of their ignorance and ordered hostages" BG 4.27.5). Caesar berated

the Britons for being rather confusing in their behavior and actions. The ability to dispense *clementia* was well within his power and privileges. Caesar, the author, did not convey that the main protagonist was concerned about Commius indicating that Caesar prioritized *clementia* over vindictiveness. Instead he was more focused on pacifying Britain so that he may deliver a report for the Senate that would display his ability to not only be the first to cross the sea to Britain, but to also be the first to subdue its peoples. Caesar returns to Rome and enjoys another celebration in recognition of his exploits.

Caesar, the author, writes yet another *clementia* type scene in book 5. Caesar intended to travel further into Britain and ordered his men to build ships over the winter season. Before Caesar could return home, he had to handle a minor dispute in a small town to the northeast that was disrupting order in neighboring towns. When he arrived in that town, he had to handle a dispute amongst two leaders, Indutiomarus and Cingetorix, who were vying for control over their people, the Treveri, a tribe that inhabits northeastern Gaul. Caesar called for these men to meet him at his camp and Cingetorix met with Caesar, but Indutiomarus did not because he was fearful that the Treveri were going to desert him.

Step one of the *clementia* type scene occurs below with Indutiomarus asking for forgiveness on behalf of his people. Caesar, currently preparing to leave for Britain, must deal with a possible insurgency from Indutiomarus who fails to meet with Caesar and thus Indutiomarus sends a messenger to clarify the situation and ask for forgiveness. Caesar receives word that:

Indutiomarus veritus ne ab omnibus desereretur, legatos ad Caesarem mittit: sese idcirco ab suis discedere atque ad eum venire noluisse, quo facilius civitatem in officio contineret, ne omnis nobilitatis discessu plebs propter imprudentiam laberetur.

Indutiomarus having dreaded that he may be deserted by all people sends messengers to Caesar: that he withdrew himself from his countrymen, and that he did not wish to come to him, for the purpose that he more easily contain the states in allegiance [to Rome], in order that the people because of ignorance might revolt with the departure of all nobility. (BG 5.3.6)

Indutiomarus sends word as to persuade Caesar of what might happen if he were to leave the town unattended. Indutiomarus then assures Caesar that he will support him in anyway i.e. if Caesar wants him at his military encampment he is more than willing to come at his beck and call. This is a half-baked apology. Essentially, Indutiomarus is making an excuse and believes that he can rely on Caesar's *clementia* to allow him to remain in control as to keep the state more easily in allegiance to Rome. That is a valid point; however, when Caesar calls anyone to a meeting, that person must meet on Caesar's terms.

Steps two and three of Caesar's *clementia* type scenes are again combined into a single action. It follows that Caesar is focused on going to Britain and does not want to play word games with Indutiomarus. Caesar then sends his demands per his clemency:

Caesar, etsi intellegebat qua de causa ea dicerentur quaeque eum res ab instituto consilio deterreret...Indutiomarus ad se cum CC obsidibus venire iussit. His adductis, in eis filio propinquisque eius omnibus, quos nominatim evocaverat, consolatus Indutiomarus hortatusque est uti in officio maneret

Caesar, although he understood from what reason these things were said and what thing might deter him from his prepared plan ... ordered Indutiomarus to come to him with 200 hostages. When these hostages were brought, among the men all his son and relatives whom he had summon by name, Caesar, having consoled Indutiomarus, encouraged him that he remain in service. (BG 5.4.1-2)

Caesar, having understood Indutiomarus's actions, did not ask or request, rather he *iussit* (ordered) for 200 hostages. He specifically disciplined him by demanding for Indutiomarus's son and relatives as a part of the hostages. To give further injury to insult, Caesar, after already havin taken many of Indutiomarus's loved ones away, *hortatus est* (encouraged) him to remain in service to the Romans. Caesar's response is intentional as to broadcast that no one will abuse

Caesar's *clementia*. As a result, he is able to calm the situation in Gaul to allow for his campaign to move into Britain with little to no worry about possible threats arising.

A peculiarity is placed at the end of this *clementia* type scene. That is that Caesar's further antagonizes Indutiomarus and widens the wound:

*nihilo tamen setius principibus Treverorum ad se convocatis hos singillatim
Cingetorigi conciliavit ... Id tulit factum graviter Indutiomarus, suam gratiam
inter suos minui, et qui iam ante inimico in nos animo fuisset, multo gravius hoc
dolore exarsit*

Yet nevertheless with the chiefs of the Treveri having been gathered he united them one by one to Cingetorix ... Indutiomarus was upset at this act, that his favor was being threatened amongst his men, and he who was already with a hostile mind against us, was enraged from this resentment much more seriously.
(BG 5.4.4)

Because of Caesar's clemency and his actions after receiving the hostages, we see an interesting development in the story. Caesar gains an enemy because of his decision to distribute the hostages to Cingetorix as a means of "good faith" to build their relationship. Indutiomarus's resentment toward Rome grew more and may potentially place Caesar and his forces in a very difficult and serious situation. Caesar furthered the divide between Cingetorix and Indutiomarus between pro- and anti-Roman faction as they rivaled for powers. Caesar's *clementia* in turn further angers Indutiomarus; however, no problematic predicament befalls Caesar and his men.

Reactions to Caesar's *clementia*

Scholars, as we saw in the introduction, have commented upon Caesar's clemency not only as an inherent characteristic, but also as a tool to manipulate. *Clementia* continued to play a significant role in defining the type of leader Caesar would be after he concluded his various campaigns in Gaul. After the Gallic wars, Caesar crossed the Rubicon river, invaded Rome, pardoned the old senate and elected a new senate that would support his actions. Caesar after

taking Rome was well within his rights as the “conqueror” to massacre all individuals who were against his control as Sulla had. However, Mary Beard states that “he made much of *clementia* or mercy. He pardoned rather than punished his enemies, and he made a display of renouncing cruel retribution against fellow Romans, provided they gave up their opposition to him”²⁰. Caesar’s choice to pardon rather than punish is important because it allowed for people to either accept him for who he was and submit, or flee from Rome and attempt to shake the city from Caesar’s hold. This is similar to when Caesar faced off against the Morini in book 4; Caesar demanded they either accept him as their ruler and appeal to his *clementia* or face the wrath of his military.

Ancient audiences fully understood that in Rome and the Civil Wars, Caesar was trying to attribute to himself the same kind of *clementia* he foregrounds in *BG*. For example, his biographer Suetonius sees Caesar as a man who *moderationem uero clementiamque cum in administratione tum in uictoria belli ciuilibus admirabilem exhibuit* (“He certainly exhibited admirable moderation and clemency not only in his administration but also in the victory of the Civil War” *Divus Julius* 75).²¹ Suetonius understood that Caesar was merciful to his enemies and noted that this quality is admirable.

Caesar’s *clementia* is further brought out through Suetonius’ contrast between Caesar and Pompey’s actions in the Civil War. Thus Suetonius explores their leadership styles and explains that *Denuntiante Pompeio pro hostibus se habiturum qui rei publicae defuissent, ipse medios et neutrius partis suorum sibi numero futuros pronuntiavit* (“With Pompey announcing that he will consider them as enemies who had deserted from the republic, [Caesar] himself proclaimed that

²⁰ Beard (2015) 294

²¹ I am grateful to Joseph Gavorse for bringing Suetonius’s *Divus Julius* to my attention

those in the middle and of neutral party would be among his number” *Ibid.* 75).²² Suetonius makes it clear here that Pompey was severe while Caesar was forgiving. This example is analogous to when, after Caesar defeated the rebellious Atuatuci, he offered to respect the neutrality of the other tribes in Gaul who resided along the Rhine river and had been neutral in their affairs. In response to Caesar’s stance, these tribes had given hostages to guarantee Caesar’s *clementia*. Pompey in this general evaluation was a man who was cut and dry and Caesar was a man who was fluid in his resolution of forgiving his enemies. Accordingly, near the climax of the Civil War, Caesar’s victory is certain, and he has the opportunity to eliminate all who oppose him, yet, *acie Pharsalica proclamavit, ut civibus parceretur* (“At the battle of Pharsalus he proclaimed that they spare their fellow citizens” *Ibid.* 75).²³ Suetonius, thus, at several points emphasizes the claim that Caesar was clement to the end of his career.

Plutarch, another biographer of Caesar, who wrote in Greek, also attests to Caesar’s interest in projecting an image of *clementia* during the Civil War. As an author, Plutarch compares the lives of very famous Greek and Roman leaders in an effort to bring out the moral qualities that made up their successful leadership. Therefore, it makes sense that Plutarch is interested in *clementia* because it is a central quality of Caesar’s leadership, as I have shown. Here is an example. Caesar had just crossed the Rubicon and was advancing on Rome in pursuit of Pompey. Fear was rampant in Rome as many people believed that Caesar would kill all men who opposed him. Domitius, a general entrusted by Pompey with the command of defending Corfinium against Caesar, feared that he would die and requested poison to end his life. Plutarch

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

shows that Caesar could have been merciless, but in fact allowed for clemency, which gave way to fruitful results:

[Domitius], despairing of being able to defend the place, asked his doctor, who was a slave of his, to give him poison. He took the dose that was given to him and drank it with the intention of putting an end to his life. Soon afterwards he heard that Caesar was behaving with the most remarkable kindness to his prisoners; he then began to bewail his fate and to reproach himself for having been too hasty in coming to his resolution. His doctor, however, cheered him up by informing him that what he drunk was not poison at all, but only a sleeping draught. Domitius was delighted. He got up and went to Caesar who gave him his right hand to guarantee his pardon. Domitius deserted him, however, and went back to Pompey. When the news of these events reached Rome, people became easier in their minds and some of the fugitives came back to the city. (Plutarch, *Caesar* 34, trans. Warner [2005])

By extending *clementia* to Domitius, Caesar was able to cause the Romans at home to calm their minds now knowing that Caesar would not kill them, encouraging all who had run away from Caesar's advance on the city to return and not fear any retribution as long as they did not oppose him. Suetonius and Plutarch like Mary Beard seem to understand that Caesar's *clementia* was unusual at the time, however this virtue allowed for Caesar to resolve conflict with relative ease at least for a while.

Cicero, who, as we saw, understood well the potential of Caesar's *clementia*, both experienced it firsthand and recognized its importance to Caesar. Caesar faced many foes throughout his career, but one person who stands out is Cicero and a fascinating instance occurs after the Civil War has concluded around 45 B.C., when Caesar not only exhibited his *clementia* to Cicero, but also appointed this man to a senatorial position. Cicero, grateful for Caesar's ability to forgive, wrote an oration titled *Pro Marcello*, in which he not only defends the return of his close friend Marcellus to the senate but also compliments Caesar for his *clementia*:

tantam enim mansuetudinem, tam inusitatam inauditamque clementiam, tantum in summa potestate rerum omnium modum, tam denique incredibilem sapientiam ac paene divinam tacitus praeterire nullo modo possum.

For by no manner was I able to neglect so great a gentleness, so unfamiliar and unheard of clemency, such moderation in the highest power of all things, indeed such incredible and nearly divine wisdom by having been silent. (Cicero *Pro Marcello* 1.1)²⁴

The juxtaposition of *inusitatam inauditamque*, by emphasizing *clementia*'s novelty, brings out Caesar's deviation from the brutal policies of Sulla and Pompey. Cicero chose to give this speech as a means to recognize the power and strategy Caesar had used in order to control Rome.

Although Caesar's *clementia* created the opportunity for Caesar to control Rome, he still had enemies who desired for his demise. As we saw in the introduction, when practiced on Rome's nobility, *clementia* also produced an unforeseen resentment that ironically led to Caesar's murder rather than the consolidation of his power. Caesar was killed in the senate building of Rome by conspirators. Many of the conspirators were his friends and the most notable among them was Brutus. Plutarch in *Parallel Lives* outlines another example of *clementia*, when Caesar approaches Pompey's ramparts:

Most of those who were taken alive Caesar incorporated in his own legions, and he gave a free pardon to a number of prominent people. Among these was Brutus, who afterwards killed him. It is said that Caesar was very distressed when Brutus was not to be found, and that he was particularly delighted when, in the end, he was brought to him alive and well. (Plutarch *Parallel Lives: Caesar* 46)²⁵

It is ironic how caring Caesar is when he cannot ascertain the location of Brutus and feels relief when he is found juxtaposed to when Caesar is killed by the many conspirators and is more harmed by Brutus's presence than anyone other killer. Mary Beard in *SPQR* also states that "Caesar had pardoned several of his future assassins, Brutus among them, after they had fought

²⁴ I am grateful to Harold Gotoff for bringing Cicero's *Pro Marcello* to my attention

²⁵ Warner (2005) 300

on the Pompeian side of the Civil War.”²⁶ Caesar forgave rather than punished, and in turn made a display of forgoing cruel retribution against his fellow Romans. *Clementia* is therefore seen as a way in which Caesar steps on Roman traditions of honor and status. When Caesar spares and forgives an enemy he in turn humiliates the person and their status as I discussed in part one. As per Beard again: “yet it provoked as much opposition as gratitude, for the simple reason that, virtue though it may have been in some respects, it was an entirely monarchical one.”²⁷ Caesar’s actions and attitude foregrounded *clementia*. With *clementia*, Caesar strategically manipulated people to reduce friction so that he could more easily assume control of Rome and its people. To quote Beard yet again, “In many ways, *clementia* was the political slogan of Caesar’s dictatorship.”²⁸

Caesar the author utilized *clementia* type scenes to display the main protagonist as a man who is merciful and forgiving in *BG*. By means of recurring narrative structure, perceptive language, and straightforward Latin, Caesar created a precedent for a unique style of leadership so that when he came into control of Rome, he could embrace the construct he had created nine years earlier in the Gallic Wars. Dowling writes “the development and expansion of *clementia* was not smooth or an uncontested course ... after Caesar’s death, a hiatus occurs in the advertisement of clemency by Rome’s leaders.”²⁹ *Clementia* was an uncomfortable and unpopular word in Rome after his death. Because of the fear of being killed, the nobles and leaders did not choose to display mercy. As a result, Christian Meier in *Caesar: A Biography* observes “Caesar was famed for his clemency and compassion. Finally, Caesar had made it his

²⁶ Beard (2015) 295

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Dowling (2006) 28

principle to be active and vigilant, to be concerned for the affairs of his friends while neglecting his own.”³⁰ Caesar was immortalized as the man who made clemency an important component of his rule. It may be posited that through Caesar’s policy of *clementia* he was so willing to forgive his enemies that he forgot to protect his life and display *clementia* with respect to himself.

³⁰ Meier (1996) 175

Works Cited

- Beard, M. 2015. *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Dowling, M. B. 2006. *Clemency & Cruelty in the Roman World*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- "Gaius Iulius Caesar, De Bello Gallico." *Phi Latin Texts*. Accessed November 28, 2017. <http://latin.packhum.org/loc/448/1/0#0>.
- Glare, P. G. W. 1968. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Konstan, D. 2005. "Clemency as a virtue." *CP* 100 (4): 337-346.
- Meier, C. 1996. *Caesar: A Biography*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Raaflaub, K. A. 2017. *The Landmark Julius Caesar the Complete Works*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Syme, R. 2002. *The Roman Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Warner, R., trans. 2005. *Plutarch Fall of the Roman Republic*. London: Penguin Books.
- Wiseman, T. P. 1998. "The Publication of *De Bello Gallico*." In Powell, A and Welch, K. eds. *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments*. London, UK: Duckworth with the Classical Press of Wales. 1-9.
- Wyke, M. 2008. *Caesar: A Life in Western Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Yavetz, Z. 1983. *Julius Caesar and His Public Image*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Works Consulted

- Albrecht, M. V., trans. Adkin, N. and Cairns, F. 1989. *Masters of Roman Prose from Cato to Apuleius: Interpretive Studies*. Merseyside: Francis Cairns Publications.
- Benario, H. W. 2012. *Caesar's Gallic War*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Clough, A. H., trans. 1905. *Plutarch's Lives: The Translation Called Dryden's*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Coulter, C. C. 1931. "Caesar's Clemency." *CJ* 26 (7): 513-524.
- Edwards, J. H., trans. 1917. *Caesar: The Gallic War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gavorse, J. 1931. *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius: An Unexpurgated English Version*. New York: Modern Library.
- Goldsworthy, A. 2006. *Caesar: Life of A Colossus*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gotoff, H. C. 1993. *Cicero's Caesarian Speeches: A Stylistic Commentary*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lewis, N. and Reinhold, M. eds. 1990. *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings*. 3rd ed., vol. 2. New York: Columbia University Press
- Strauss, B. 2015. "Caesar and the Dangers of Forgiveness." *Octavian Report*. Accessed January 21, 2018. <https://octavianreport.com/article/caesar-and-the-dangers-of-forgiveness/>.