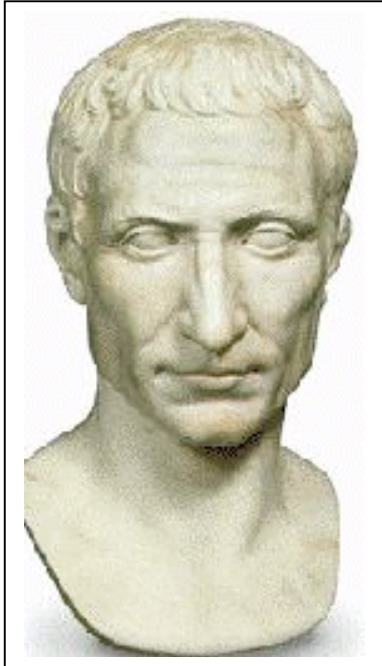


## C. JULIUS CAESAR (100-44 B.C.)



Born of a high patrician family, Caesar became an early supporter of the *populares*. He saw service in the East in 81, studied rhetoric at Rhodes, campaigned against the pirates (75-74), and on his return to Rome favored the extension of citizenship rights and became a supporter of Pompey.

Caesar opposed the execution of the Catilinarians in 63, was elected praetor for 62, and obtained a Further Spain as his province. Upon his return in 60 B.C., he formed the First Triumvirate with Pompey and Crassus. Elected consul for 59, Caesar ruthlessly overrode senatorial opposition, disregarding vetoes, and passed a series of reform measures. He took Transalpine Gaul as his province and from 58 to 50 was engaged in the conquest of all of Gaul up to the Rhine River.

In Rome, Pompey gradually distanced himself from Caesar. The crisis came to a head in 50 B.C., when Caesar was denied permission by the senate to stand for a second consulship for 49 *in absentia*. On January 1, 49 the senate demanded that Caesar lay down his provincial command. On January 10 Caesar crossed the Rubicon (the administrative boundary of Italy) and rapidly overran Italy. Pompey and the majority of the senate fled to Greece while Caesar, in a brilliant campaign, seized the Spanish provinces from Pompey's lieutenants. In 48 Caesar crossed to Greece, brought Pompey to battle at Pharsalus in Thessaly, and won a complete victory (August 9, 48). Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt and, after Pompey's assassination by Ptolemy XIII, proceeded to Asia Minor where he defeated Pharnaces at Zela (*veni, vidi, vici*). He returned to Rome and on December 47 proceeded to Africa, where the Republican opposition had regrouped. He overcame the Pompeian forces under Scipio at Thapsus and put an end to the Civil Wars with a final campaign in Spain against Pompey's sons in 45.

Caesar became dictator in 48, dictator for ten years in 46, and dictator for life in 44. He was offered extraordinary powers and honors, some of which he refused. Nevertheless, his failure to make any attempt to restore the normal functioning of the Republic deeply offended the aristocracy, a large number of whom banded together to assassinate him on March 15, 44.

Caesar was a voluminous writer and we have intact his seven books of *de Bello Gallico* and the three books of the *de Bello Civili*. These commentaries were written in a lucid and compressed style, free from rhetorical flourish, and with a simple and brilliant diction.