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The Rhetorical Use of Maxims in Caesar*

Summary – Caesar’s *Commentarii de bello civili* show a significantly higher occurrence of γνῶμαι than his books on the Gallic war. I argue that this difference in style is due to the different goals of the two works: in *De bello civili* Caesar has to convince the reader that he was loyal to Roman values while Pompey was not, therefore maxims have, as Aristotle prescribes (Rh. 2,21,16), the function of creating a moral “common ground” with the reader and to show that the author is “a man of good character”.

Caesar’s two historical works differ in their propagandistic goals: although both want to sell the idea that Caesar is fighting a “just war”, the legitimacy question can be interpreted almost formalistically in the Gallic *Commentarii*,¹ while it becomes substantial in the books on the civil war, where Caesar aims to show that, of the two Roman armies, his is, both morally and legally, the only legitimate one.² To fulfill this purpose, he uses many instruments of propaganda to portray himself as morally superior to Pompey.³ There is in particular one means of persuasion, considered of great importance by ancient rhetorical theory, that has been understudied from this point of view: the strategic use of maxims.⁴

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¹ Riggsby, Caesar, 213, after examining ancient evidence on *bellum iustum*, concludes that “the existence of a border creates a danger (as discussed above [= pp. 157–189]) that provokes conquest that results in – another border.”

² See esp. Collins, Caesar, and Batstone – Damon, Caesar. Cf. also Krebs, *Style of Choice*, with a discussion on previous bibliography.

³ As shown by Collins, Caesar, 933.

⁴ It is surprising that, although their outstanding relevance in the text, proverbial and sapiential expressions in Caesar have been hitherto almost completely disregarded, not only by modern commentaries on the *Commentarii* – focused more on historical issues than on literary style – but, astonishingly, also by the modern collections of ancient γνῶμαι, like August Otto’s *Sprichwörter* and Renzo Tosi’s *Dizionario*.

The only work devoted to Caesar's maxims prior to this paper was published by Rudolph Preiswerk in 1945.⁵ Preiswerk interprets maxims⁶ as a tool of objectification Caesar uses to look at things with detachment, which would be a sign of the "coldness" of his nature ("Kälte seines Wesens").⁷ Although Preiswerk includes the relevant passages from Aristotle and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, he does not take into account that Caesar's reason for the use of maxims could be the one suggested by those theories, that is, as a rhetorical means of persuasion.⁸

Caesar, as Batstone and Damon point out, uses "generalizations" like maxims to create a moral "common ground" with the audience, inspiring "a sense of intimacy with his reader by assuming that the reader and he have things in common".⁹ As we will see, very similar concepts were expressed in ancient rhetorical treatises, like Aristotle's or the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (see next chapter), which circulated and were accessible in Rome at Caesar's time. If this is the main function of maxims, it is clear why in the BG¹⁰ Caesar uses ethical statements only sporadically: against the barbarians, he needs to demonstrate that he is working in the interest of Rome, not that he is the legitimate representative of the Republic in the Province.¹¹ In the BC, on the contrary, he needs to convince the reader that he represents both "constitutional" legitimacy¹² and traditional Roman values, as opposed to Pompey, who represents sedition and "un-Romanness". Caesar, aware that his party had raised more than one eyebrow in Rome, due to the low origin and shabby past of some of his supporters,¹³ insinuates that of the two armies – whose composition we have

⁵ Before that, two inventories of maxims in the *Commentarii* (Craig, *General Reflection*, and Oppermann, *Caesar*, 108f.) had appeared: they contained however nothing more than mere lists of *loci*, without any attempt at detailed analysis.

⁶ Henceforth, "maxim" will be equivalent to the Greek γνῶμη, as Aristotle (see below) defines it. "Adage" will correspond to Greek παροιμία, signifying a popularly transmitted proverb.

⁷ Preiswerk, *Sententiae*, 226.

⁸ See next chapter. Preiswerk, *Sententiae*, 219, does mention the persuasive force of maxims in speeches, but does not see any implication of it in interpreting Caesar.

⁹ Batstone – Damon, *Caesar*, 119–122.

¹⁰ Henceforth BG = *Commentarii de bello Gallico*; BC = *Commentarii de bello civili*. All other abbreviations of ancient authors and works will follow the OCD⁴.

¹¹ See below, chapter 4.

¹² For Caesar's claims of "republicanness", see Barwick, *Bellum civile*, 30–36; Collins, *Caesar*, 942–949; Batstone – Damon, *Caesar*, 41f.; Grillo, *The Art*, 37 with n. 2. For the continuity of Caesar's actions with the republican tradition and the aristocratic mentality, cf. Batstone, *Caesar's Republican Rhetoric*.

¹³ Cic. *Att.* 9,10 calls them a *colluvies*; cf. also Syme, *Caesar*, 12 n. 49.

no reason to doubt was identical to his – Pompey’s is less “Roman” than his own.¹⁴

A confirmation that maxims fulfill different functions in the two series of *Commentarii* lies in their uneven distribution in his writings: if we calculate an average out of Preiswerk’s counts,¹⁵ the BC has 5,7 maxims per book, against 1,4 of the BG; according to my count, there are 14 maxims in the three books in the BC (4,7 per book, ca. 1 every 14 pages in Klotz’s edition) and six in the seven books of the BG (on average less than one per book, ca. 1 every 42 pages in Klotz).¹⁶ In order to demonstrate that this stylistic disproportion is not accidental, but dictated by the different propagandistic function that the latter series of *Commentarii* has, I shall concentrate my analysis mainly on the BC, using the BG as a term of comparison.

1. Maxims in Ancient Rhetorical Theory

The oldest definition of “maxim” is given by the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetoric* to Alexander (1430a, 1f.):

γνώμη δ’ ἐστὶ μὲν ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ καθ’ ὅλων τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματος ἰδίου δήλωσις.

“A maxim is basically a demonstration of one’s opinion on a particular case, by referring to the generality of situations.”¹⁷

A stricter definition is given by Aristotle (*Rh.* 2,21,2 = 1394a, 21–26):

ἔστι δὲ γνώμη ἀπόφανσις, οὐ μέντοι περὶ τῶν καθ’ ἕκαστον, οἷον ποιός τις Ἰφικράτης, ἀλλὰ καθόλου· καὶ οὐ περὶ πάντων καθόλου, οἷον ὅτι τὸ εὐθὺ τῷ καμπύλῳ ἐναντίον, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὅσων αἱ πράξεις εἰσὶ, καὶ αἰρετὰ ἢ φευκτὰ ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸ πράττειν.

“A maxim is a statement, not on specific cases, like ‘what person Iphicrates is’, but general: and not general statements about anything, like ‘straight is the opposite of curved’, but those on what human actions are about, and what is appropriate or inappropriate to do.”

¹⁴ Caesar, as Raaflaub, *Caesar*, 26, puts it, represents his enemies as “an exclusive minority, pursu[ing] divisive policies and fight[ing] for the state in word, but in fact for personal enmities, privileges, and power, demonstrating blatantly un-Roman attitudes.” Maxims, even when not referring directly to the Pompeians, are one of the main devices to reinforce this depiction in the reader’s mind.

¹⁵ Preiswerk, *Sententiae*, 213.

¹⁶ I will explain the reasons why I did exclude some maxims included by Preiswerk (and included one he did not count) below.

¹⁷ All translations from Greek and Latin are mine, unless specified.

Aristotle suggests that maxims should be used by people of a certain age, because they are more experienced (Arist. Rh. 2,21,9 = 1935a, 3), and to express complaint and exaggeration (σχετλιασμῶ καὶ δεινώσει, Arist. Rh. 2,21,10); when necessary, they can be in contradiction to well-known adages (παρὰ τὰ δεδημοσιευμένα, Arist. Rh. 2,21,13 = 1934a, 22). He also has important opinions about the main advantage of using maxims (Arist. Rh. 2,21,16 = 1395b, 13):

[τὸ γνωμολογεῖν] ἠθικοὺς γὰρ ποιεῖ τοὺς λόγους. ἦθος δ' ἔχουσιν οἱ λόγοι, ἐν ὅσοις δῆλη ἢ προαίρεσις. αἱ δὲ γνωμαὶ πᾶσαι τοῦτο ποιοῦσι διὰ τὸ ἀποφαίνεσθαι τὸν τὴν γνώμην λέγοντα καθόλου περὶ τῶν προαιρετῶν, ὥστ' ἂν χρησταὶ ὧσιν αἱ γνωμαὶ, καὶ χρηστοθήθη φαίνεσθαι ποιοῦσι τὸν λέγοντα.

“[Using maxims] makes speeches moral. Speeches in which the values are clear have a morality. All maxims have this effect, since he who employs them in a general manner declares his moral preferences, so that, if the maxims are moral, they make the speaker appear moral as well.”

On the Latin side, the earliest extant definition is preserved in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4,24):

sententia est oratio sumpta de vita quae aut quid sit aut quid esse oporteat in vita breviter ostendit.

“A maxim is a sentence taken from life, which shows in few words what really happens or what should happen in life.”

The anonymous author suggests (4,25) that we insert maxims only sporadically, in order not to look like teachers of morals (*vivendi praeceptores*), instead of like orators who are pleading for a cause (*rei actores*).¹⁸ Another advantage (Rhet. Her. 4,25) is that:

neesse est animi conprobet eam tacitus auditor cum ad causam videat adcommodari rem certam ex vita et moribus sumptam.

“When an auditor sees that a certain thing taken from life and morals applies to a cause, he has to give his tacit assent.”¹⁹

Quintilian identifies the Greek γνώμη with the *antiquissima sententia*, which he defines as follows (Quint. inst. 8,5,3):

est autem haec vox universalis, quae etiam citra complexum causae possit esse laudabilis, interim ad rem tantum relata, ut ‘nihil est tam populare quam

¹⁸ For the positioning of this passage in ancient rhetorical theory, see Calboli, *Rhetorica*, ad loc.

¹⁹ For a more detailed analysis of the function of *sententiae* in the *Rhet. ad Herennium*, cf. Sinclair, *The sententia*.

bonitas: *interim ad personam, quale est Afri Domiti: 'princeps qui vult omnia scire necesse habet multa ignoscere'.*

“[A maxim] is a universal statement, which should be commendable beyond the context of the particular case, sometimes referring only to things, like ‘nothing is as popular as being good’, sometimes to a person, like this one by Domitius Afer: ‘the emperor who wants to know everything must be prepared to forgive much.’”

Throughout these treatises, we can see a general agreement on the basic definition of what a maxim is: a general statement applied to a particular case. It is Aristotle, however, who gives the most exact criterion to recognize a maxim: not all universal statements are maxims, but only those pertaining to human behavior and its appropriateness. This distinction will be at the base of my research, as a decisive standard in order to establish whether a sentence is or is not a maxim.²⁰

As for maxims’ rhetorical function, both Aristotle and the anonymous author ad Herennium give us good insight: maxims make the speaker appear moral and convince the audience of the goodness of a cause by pandering to their own moral values, if not to universal ones. This persuasion technique is not different from what Batstone and Damon,²¹ while analyzing the BC, identify as the creation of a moral “common ground” in order to make the audience identify with the point of view of the narrator by making them identify him with the values contained in the maxims. I intend to expand on their observations by showing that Caesar’s practice has roots in ancient rhetorical theory, as exposed by the authorities quoted above, and also by more deeply analyzing the values Caesar intends to share with his reader, showing how comparison with his enemies’ behavior is implicit in these enunciations.

Unlike a speaker delivering a speech, the author of a written work cannot extemporaneously try to understand somehow his audience’s ideology in order to pander to them (as Aristotle Rh. 2,21,16 notes, everyone likes to hear general opinions which they already hold). On the other hand, he can still decide to what type of readers his work is mainly addressed, and create a common ground by gratifying their values, or, as in this case, he can choose which set of values he wants to be identified with and choose his maxims accordingly.²²

²⁰ See below, chapter 2.

²¹ See previous chapter.

²² I agree with Riggsby, Caesar, 14, that while “it is possible that Caesar had in mind a universal, or even a strictly non-elite audience ... it seems best to retain the assumption that Caesar is aiming at the top of Roman society.” For the opposite opinion, see Wiseman, Publication. For the political stance of Caesar’s implied audience, see Batstone – Damon, Caesar, 90–95,

2. Maxims in the BC

Following the definitions given by ancient rhetoricians (especially Aristotle), I counted 14 maxims in the BC:

1) 1,21,1 (*Quod saepe in bello parvis momentis magni casus intercederent*). “Often in war big consequences proceed from small events.” This maxim is used to explain Caesar’s haste to take control of the city of Corfinium after the population surrendered, lest they change their minds due to bribes, to renewed self-confidence, or to misinformation.

2) 1,44,2 *ferè fit, quibus quisque in locis miles inveteraverit, ut multum earum regionum consuetudine moveatur*. “It often happens that a soldier is largely conditioned by the habits of those regions in which he served for a long time.” This maxim comments on the fact that the Pompeian troops who have resided a long time in Lusitania have acquired a barbarian style of combat.

3) 1,67,3 (*nocturnaque proelia esse vitanda quod*) *perterritus miles in civili dissensione timori magis quam religioni consulere consuerit*. “(Night battles are to be avoided because) frightened soldiers in a civil conflict normally act more out of fear than of loyalty.” This maxim reports the Pompeian generals’ reason to avoid night battles.

4) 1,72,2 (*praesertim cum*) *non minus esset imperatoris consilio superare quam gladio*. “(Furthermore because) it is no less appropriate for a general to win with intelligence than with the sword.” These words explain Caesar’s hope of winning without bloodshed.

5) 1,85,4 (*accidisse igitur his quod*) *plerisque hominum nimia pertinacia atque arrogantia accidere solet, uti eo recurrant et id cupidissime petant quod paulo ante contempserint*. “(It happened to them what) happens to most excessively stubborn and arrogant people, to go after and strongly desire what they used to despise a moment before.” This maxim comments on Afranius’ and Petreius’ request for Caesar’s leniency.

6) 2,4,4 *communi enim fit vitio naturae ut invisis atque incognitis rebus magis confidamus*. “For it happens, because of a common natural flaw, that we most trust what we don’t see or know.” These words comment on the Massilians’ enthusiasm for the arrival of Nasidius’ fleet.

7) 2,8,3 *est rerum omnium magister usus*. “Practice is the teacher of everything.” This maxim comments on how Caesar’s soldiers learned that they needed to build a taller tower.

and Grillo, *The Art*, 55–57, both of whom insist on the different “implied audiences” of the BG and the BC; cf. also Raaflaub, *Caesar*, 21f.

8) 2,27,2 *nam quae volumus, et credimus libenter, et quae sentimus ipsi reliquos sentire speramus*. “For we gladly believe what we want, and we hope that others share our opinion.” This maxim explains Varus’ willingness to believe Marsian runaways.

9) 2,39,4 *de suis homines laudibus libenter praedicant*. “People like to praise themselves.” Caesar uses these words to comment on his cavalry’s excessive boasting after the victory against the Numidians.

10) 3,36,1 *plerumque in novitate <rem> fama antecedit*. “Often the fame of something new outstrips reality.” These words are used to comment on the excessive clamor about Domitius’ presence in Macedonia.

11) 3,51,4 *aliae enim sunt legati partes atque imperatoris. alter omnia agere ad praescriptum, alter libere ad summam rerum consulere debet*. “For *legatus* and *imperator* have different roles: the former has to do everything according to orders, the latter has to decide at his discretion considering the general situation.” These words are used to justify Sulla’s lack of initiative in Caesar’s absence.

12) 3,68,1 *Fortuna, quae plurimum potest cum in reliquis rebus tum praecipue in bello, parvis momentis magnas rerum commutationes efficit*. “Luck, who has the highest power on everything – but particularly in war – makes big changes out of small causes.” Caesar uses these words to blame the fact that his cohorts were forced to a flight on bad luck.

13) 3,92,4 *est quaedam animi incitatio atque alacritas naturaliter innata omnibus quae studio pugnae incenditur. hanc non reprimere sed augere imperatores debent*. “There is a form of excitation and fervor, naturally innate in everyone, which is kindled by passion for war. Generals don’t have to restrain it, but rather to encourage it.” This maxim is used to blame Pompey’s defeat on the fact that he curbed his soldiers’ enthusiasm.

14) 3,104,1 *plerumque in calamitate ex amicis inimici existunt*. “In difficult predicaments, friends often become enemies.” This maxim is a commentary on the Egyptian king’s betrayal of his former friend Pompey.

All these maxims were in Preiswerk’s list, with the exception of No. 11, whose status as a maxim he doubts, and No. 3, which Preiswerk must have ignored because it represents the Pompeians’ point of view, not the narrator’s. Since it still contributes, however, to the same function of other maxims (it characterizes the mentality of the Pompeians in order to prompt an implicit comparison with Caesar), it will be useful for our analysis.

On the other hand, the following five, which were counted by Preiswerk as maxims, I decided to exclude (only for these maxims I borrow the translation from Cynthia Damon’s Loeb edition):

1) 1,52,1 *his tamen omnibus annona crevit. Quae fere res non solum inopia praesentis sed etiam futuri temporis timore ingravescere consuevit.* “Nevertheless, with all this the price of grain went up. (The grain price generally appreciates not only with a shortage of the moment but also with fear about the future.)”

2) 2,41,8 *hi de sua salute desperantes, ut extremo vitae tempore homines facere consuerunt, aut suam mortem miserabantur aut parentes suos commendabant si quos ex eo periculo Fortuna servare potuisset.* “As people generally do in their final moments, so these men, despairing of safety, either bewailed their own deaths or commended their relatives to anyone whom Fortune could save from the present danger.”

3) 3,1,3 *hoc et ad timorem novarum tabularum tollendum minuendumque, qui fere bella et civiles dissensiones sequi consuevit.* “He thought that this would be the most suitable measure both for removing and reducing people’s fear of a cancellation of debts (something that is apt to follow warfare and civil strife).”

4) 3,28,4 *his cognosci licuit quantum esset hominibus praesidi in animi firmitudine.* “From these it was possible to learn how much protection men derive from sturdy morale.”

5) 3,32,5 *accedebant ad haec gravissimae usurae, quod in bello plerumque accidere consuevit universis imperatis pecuniis.* “On top of these things the interest rate was utterly extortionate, as generally tends to happen in wartime when funds are requisitioned from everyone.”

I excluded these five statements because they are not formally stated as maxims.²³ Moreover, none of them fits Aristotle’s definition of maxim as a general statement “on what human actions are about, and what is appropriate or inappropriate to do,”²⁴ and consequently we cannot attribute to them the rhetorical function Aristotle assigns to maxims, which I intend to demonstrate is the same that maxims have in the BC.

Since, as Grillo puts it,²⁵ “consistently with its ideology, the BC refuses to see a dichotomy between military and civic *virtus*”, I included some maxims of military knowledge, whose status may seem borderline by my own criteria,

²³ Other recent studies on maxims (like Sinclair, Tacitus) rely on less formalistic definitions, including different kinds of statements with a moralistic value. The fact that distinction between what can and what cannot be considered a maxim can be seen as arbitrary does not undermine my argument about the function of apparently universal, moral statements in Caesar’s *Commentarii*.

²⁴ Arist. Rh. 2,21,1, see previous chapter.

²⁵ Grillo, *The Art*, 55.

but I have left out the exclusively tactical-strategic ones.²⁶ On the other hand, I kept those about the duties of soldiers, generals and officers; Caesar tends to identify the good citizen with the good soldier (we will see in the fifth of the “implications” listed below, that a victorious army is not a good army if it does not safeguard the *mos maiorum*).

As for the syntactical embedding of maxims in the text, the ratio between maxims uttered as main clauses (including historical/reported speech infinitives) and subordinate clauses is similar to what Kirchner finds for Tacitus,²⁷ the latter representing 64% of the occurrences (56% in Tacitus).²⁸ Main clauses are always linked with what precedes through a connector and they either follow the particular case to which they are applied, or, when they precede it, *ut tum accidit* connects them.²⁹ Among the subordinate clauses, causal sentences are obviously preponderant (7 of 9, the other two being relative clauses; surprisingly enough, Kirchner³⁰ finds out that in Tacitus there is no significant difference in the occurrences of the two categories). The only exceptions are two maxims introduced by a neutral relative pronoun which is proleptic to *fit ut/ accidit ut*. As noticed by Preiswerk,³¹ a significant difference between Caesar and Cicero is that the latter often uses maxims in independent clauses, without any formal connection with the narration. I do not think that this is due to the fact that the *Commentarii* are not speeches, as supposed by Preiswerk; rather, I am under the impression that, in his limpid, “analogical” style, Caesar prefers to maintain symmetry and to make all logical connections clear, avoiding too much variation in syntactical patterns.³²

²⁶ E.g. 3,47,2 *causa autem obsidionis haec fere esse consuevit ut frumento hostes prohiberent* “the purpose of a blockade is usually to prevent the enemy from getting provisions.”

²⁷ Kirchner, *Sententiae*, 49–99. I use him as a comparison because he is the only one who offers complete data and statistics for a Latin prose author. Note that Kirchner uses a different definition of *sententia* than mine, including in his analysis statements that I do not see as universal. Same for Sinclair, Tacitus.

²⁸ Kirchner, *Sententiae*, 51.

²⁹ E.g. BC 3,68,1 *sed Fortuna, quae plurimum potest cum in reliquis rebus tum praecipue in bello, parvis momentis magnas rerum commutationes efficit, ut tum accidit* (for the meaning and implication of this maxim, see below).

³⁰ Kirchner, *Sententiae*, 51.

³¹ Preiswerk, *Sententiae*, 221.

³² For various hypotheses on a possible ideological basis of his analogism, see Sinclair, *Political Declensions* (who discerns a “populistic” end); Hall, *Ratio* (who links Caesar’s analogism with a “nationalist” ideology); Willi, *Campaigning* (who speaks of “Epicurean language and style”); and Schiesaro, *Caesar*, 245f. (who underlines the continuity with his work of “systematization” of the Roman institutions; this last hypothesis seems to be the most plausible).

3. The Function of Maxims in the BC

Talking of Tacitus, Sinclair notices that “more than any other rhetorical device in Latin oratory and literature, the *sententia* is the supreme expression of the self-image of Rome during its imperial period, the principate.”³³ As Sinclair himself shows in his paper on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, maxims had a similar role in republican times. A logical consequence is that, if we want to know what the core moral values a narrator (especially one artfully neutral like we have here)³⁴ wants to communicate with his public, the maxims will be the first element to look at.

Most of the maxims are used in order to suggest to the reader an implicit comparison between Caesar and his men on one side and Pompey and the Pompeians on the other, based on the behaviors from both sides reported in the rest of the text, which patently follow (in the case of Caesar) or contradict (in the case of Pompey) those moral principles.

For clarity I decided to explain the moral “common ground” Caesar tries to share with his intended audience through nine implications. Like all schematizations, this one could seem at times forced, unnatural, or oversimplifying; however, I find it useful to show the system of values which is implied throughout the work and that the γνῶμαι are intended to reinforce.

Since the implicit comparison between Caesar and Pompey (and also between their factions and their armies) underlies the three books of the BC as a *continuum*, I will not hesitate to presuppose an “implicit comparison” between behaviors described in passages distant from one another in the text.

3.1. Implication 1: Pompey is too confident in his luck; Caesar knows that in war things are unpredictable

The idea of continuous uncertainty and instability of things in war is expressed by maxims 1 (*saepe in bello parvis momentis magni casus intercederent*) and 12 (*Fortuna, quae plurimum potest cum in reliquis rebus tum praecipue in bello, parvis momentis magnas rerum commutationes efficit*), and has a parallel in BG 6,30,2 (*multum cum in omnibus rebus, tum in re militari potest Fortuna*). A similar concept is attributed to Hannibal by Livy (30,30,20 *nusquam minus quam in bello eventus respondent* “Nowhere less than in war are events predictable”), and it is in continuity with the recurring maxim πολλὰ τὰ

³³ Sinclair, Tacitus, 1.

³⁴ For the nature of the third person narrator of the BC, see the “conclusions” below.

κενὰ (v.l. καινὰ) τοῦ πολέμου “Many things are illogical (v.l. unexpected) in war.”³⁵

Caesar is probably expecting the reader to contrast these statements with Pompey’s continuous propaganda on his alleged luck,³⁶ a tendency attested already in 66 B.C.E., when Cicero (*De imperio Cn. Pompei* 49), in his pleading for Pompey as commander in the war against Mithridates, cites the *egregia fortuna* among the qualities that would make of him a good general. Caesar will not miss the opportunity of noting sarcastically the fact that Pompey’s alleged luck did not protect him from assassination in BC 3,104,1, where the Egyptians kill him *despecta eius fortuna*.³⁷

3.2. Implication 2: Caesar, unlike Pompey, supports and motivates his men

Maxim No. 13 is used to criticize Pompey because he, on tactical grounds, restrains his soldiers’ enthusiasm instead of encouraging it. In saying that Pompey lost the battle because he did not know how to motivate his men, Caesar is also telling us that he won because he does the opposite. Grillo notices that one of the implications of this statement is that tactical theories were regarded as more “Hellenistic” than Roman:³⁸ “Through this long and rare authorial intrusion into the text the narrator reminds everyone of his military competence. Perhaps he also advances the implicit judgment that the Pompeians’ ‘Eastern theories’³⁹ were powerless against Caesar’s Roman experience.”

3.3. Implication 3: Caesar spares Roman blood whenever possible, even at his own risk. The Pompeians have no scruples about killing citizens

Caesar uses maxim No. 4 (*non minus esset imperatoris consilio superare quam gladio*) to comment on his choice of avoiding bloodshed whenever possible on both sides of the civil conflict. Grillo⁴⁰ sees in this conception an expression of his “assimilating viewpoint”: throughout the BC Caesar stresses that, while Pompey and his lieutenants see Caesar and his men as enemies, he acknowledges both sides as Roman citizens whom he wants to reconcile. It

³⁵ For this maxim (already in Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1116b,5; Polyb. 29,16 etc.), see Tosi, *Dizionario*, §1577.

³⁶ For Pompey’s propaganda on luck, Grillo, *The Art*, 155f.; Miano, *Fortuna*, 137–147.

³⁷ The critique of Pompey for relying on his past luck, instead of making efforts to be stronger than his enemy recurs in Lucan (1,134f.).

³⁸ Grillo, *The Art*, 115.

³⁹ Here Grillo, *The Art*, 115, n. 35, adds: “One can only speculate about what prompted Pompey’s decision, but it remains the case that, as Goldsworthy writes (1996: 144), ‘In a civil war, there could clearly have been a political advantage in allowing the enemy to start fighting.’”

⁴⁰ Grillo, *The Art*, 163f.

was not his choice to divide the Roman citizens into factions, and he wants to prevent them from killing one another unnecessarily.⁴¹ Among the Pompeians, however, while Pompeian troops praise Caesar's leniency policy (1,74,7), those in charge not only do not hesitate, but seem to enjoy the unnecessary killing of fellow Romans, like Petreius in 1,75,2–4.

3.4. Implication 4: Caesar's men are loyal to the *mos maiorum*. Pompeians are barbarized

Caesar has to justify a humiliating retreat to which Pompeian provincial troops have forced his army in Lusitania. He blames it on the original combat style the rival army has learned from local people – a style every true Roman would have found ignominious (*turpe existimarent*). In blaming this barbarization exclusively on the leaders, he justifies the Pompeian soldiers' adaptation to foreign customs with maxim No. 2 (1,44,2 *ferē fit, quibus quisque in locis miles inveteraverit, ut multum earum regionum consuetudine moveatur*). The implicit comparison is with Caesar's legions themselves, who have been many years abroad (and are largely formed by barbarians), but do not betray the successful Roman style; it is, on the contrary, the non-Romans in his legions who have learned how to master Roman discipline and sense of honor.⁴²

Afranius' and Petreius' temporary success is for the narrator not a merit, but rather a source of shame, being only due to the fact that the legitimate Roman army was not expecting to find them so corrupted. In Grillo's words: "Having been exposed to barbarians, the Afraniani became barbarians themselves: they learned to fight without ranks and to turn their back to the enemy ... That is, they lost their sense of Roman discipline and shame."⁴³ Moreover, the Lusitani were not, in the Romans' eye, random non-citizens, but, as Grillo ex-

⁴¹ For Caesar's self-representation as a champion of leniency, Raaflaub, Caesar, 22–24, with previous bibliography.

⁴² For the superiority of Roman discipline as basis of martial virtue and its role in militarily "improving" the Gauls in the BG, cf. Riggsby, Caesar, 96–98. Gruen, Rethinking the Other, 147–158, argues that Caesar's contempt of barbarian *mores* is limited to some tribes, and that in the general view of the Commentarii barbarians are unspoiled and virtuous, originally superior, and corrupted, not civilized, by the contact with Rome. However, although some passages of the BG are apparently not immune to something similar to the myth of the *bon sauvage*, whose primordial virility has not been spoiled by the commodities of urbanization (but against the dangers of this misconceptions see Riggsby, Caesar, 85f. and 121–126), the arguments reported above from Grillo and the ones that I expose in this paper unequivocally show that Caesar never doubts the superiority of *Romanitas*.

⁴³ Grillo, The Art, 119f.

poses,⁴⁴ the most ferocious and uncivilized Hispanic tribe, barbarians among the barbarians, the most far away from Romanness that one could possibly go. By saying “Lusitani and other barbarians” instead of enumerating the other tribes which adopted this method, or instead of simply talking of “barbarians”, Caesar wants to suggest that the Afranians have fallen as low as a Roman army could possibly fall.⁴⁵

3.5. Implication 5: Pompey and his men suffer because they, unlike Caesar, are closed to dialogue

Caesar comments on Afranius’ and Petreius’ final surrender with maxim No. 5 (*plerisque hominum nimia pertinacia atque arrogantia accidere solet, uti eo recurrant et id cupidissime petant quod paulo ante contempserint*), attributing to their arrogance and stubbornness that they refused peace before, when they could have obtained it with less suffering and humiliation. The reader is induced to make a comparison between the arrogance of the Pompeians and Caesar, who throughout the war is available to make concessions in order to obtain peace, as long as his *dignitas* is preserved.⁴⁶

3.6. Implication 6: Caesar’s men are not reluctant to engage in manual labor, as opposed to the Pompeians

Maxim No. 7 (*est rerum omnium magister usus*) was probably taken from a popular adage⁴⁷ corresponding to the English “Practice makes perfect”, which is attested also in Greek (cf. Euripides’ *Andromache* 683f. ἡ δ’ ὁμίλια / πάντων βροτοῖσι γίγνεται διδάσκαλος. “Practice is the teacher of everything to the mortals”).⁴⁸ This concept recurs often in Cicero,⁴⁹ who normally uses this idea to praise people who can learn from experience, as Caesar is doing in this passage, praising his soldiers, who, besieging Marseilles in his absence, understand how to improve their towers. The Pompeians, on the contrary, are *cotidianis laboribus insuetos operum* (“unaccustomed to do daily chores”, BC 3,49,2) nor are they willing to learn those skills.

⁴⁴ Grillo, *The Art*, 119 with n. 45.

⁴⁵ Caesar seems to imply that Pompeians disregard tradition and *mos maiorum* already at the beginning of BC, see Peer, *Julius Caesar*, 17.

⁴⁶ For the contrast between the “pacifist” Caesar and the Pompeian warmongers see Collins, *Caesar*, 950–963; Batstone – Damon, *Caesar*, 43–56.

⁴⁷ Preiswerk, *Sententiae*, 217, unnecessarily supposes that it comes from the *milieu* of manual workers, but it could just be a popular adage on the general importance of practice.

⁴⁸ For *homilia* = *usus* cf. Hippoc. *Art.* 10 and LSJ, s.v.

⁴⁹ Cic. *Rab. Post.* 9,6; *de or.* 1,15; 3,74, etc.

3.7. Implication 7: Pompey has no real friends. Caesar knows the value of *amicitia*

With maxim No. 14 (*plerumque in calamitate ex amicis inimici existunt*) Caesar comments on the betrayal of Pompey by the Egyptian king Ptolemy, who, once his friend, decides nonetheless to kill him in order to avoid having his country involved in the Roman civil war and devastated by Roman troops of both sides. The idea that only real friends remain such in moments of trouble is recurrent in ancient literature.⁵⁰ We find it the first time in Eur. Hec. 1226f. ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς γὰρ ἀγαθοὶ σαφέστατοι φίλοι. “It is in bad predicaments that good friends are mostly assured.” In Latin it is first attested in Enn. tragoedia incerta 351 Jocelyn *amicus certus in re incerta cernitur* “you recognize sure friends when your situation is unsure.”

This remark here, at the end of Pompey’s vicissitudes, reinforces an idea many times expressed throughout the three books: Pompey has no real friends. There may be a reference to the words which were believed to have been pronounced by Tarquinius the Proud after his exile, as Cicero reports a few years later (Cic. amic. XV = 53f.):

quod si forte, ut fit plerumque, ceciderint, tum intellegitur quam fuerint inopes amicorum. quod Tarquinium dixisse ferunt exultantem, tum se intellexisse, quos fidos amicos habuisset, quos infidos, cum iam neutris gratiam referre posset. quamquam miror, illa superbia et importunitate, si quemquam amicum habere potuit. ... non enim solum ipsa fortuna caeca est, sed eos etiam plerumque efficit caecos, quos complexa est; itaque efferuntur fere fastidio et contumacia, nec quicquam insipiente fortunato intolerabilius fieri potest.

“For if perchance, as often happens, they [tyrants] fall, then it becomes clear how poor they were of friends. They report that Tarquinius, going into exile, said to have known which of his friends were trustworthy and which were not, when he was not able anymore to give retribution to either of them; although I wonder if, with that arrogance and rudeness, he could have any friends at all. Luck is not only blind, but she also blinds those whom she embraces; in fact they are coarsened by smugness and aloofness, nor is there anything more unbearable than a lucky imbecile.”

If we replace “Tarquinius” with “Pompey” we will obtain a perfect description of how Caesar characterizes his rival: blinded by fortune (he built his propaganda on how lucky he is), arrogant, and surrounded by false friends. This anecdote must have been widely known (*ferunt*), and an implicit comparison

⁵⁰ For the history of this maxim, see Tosi, Dizionario, § 1705.

between the two traitors of the fatherland, hated by everyone and followed only out of fear or convenience, may have been suggested by Caesar.

The idea that no one follows Pompey because he likes him is suggested by Caesar throughout the three books: in 1,4 we learn that, of his three most influential political supporters, Cato follows him only because of old rivalry and petty jealousy of Caesar's (BC 1,4,1 *veteres inimicitiae Caesaris ... et dolor repulsae*), L. Lentulus Frugi out of greed dictated by his debt and personal advantage (BC 1,4,2 *aeris alieni magnitudine et spe exercitus ac provinciarum et regum appellandorum largitionibus*), Metellus Scipio because of similar reasons, with the additional hope that Pompey would feel obligated (*pro necessitudine* BC 1,4).⁵¹

As for Afranius and Petreius, we will see in the next "implication" that they were perfectly aware that their soldiers were not persuaded by the cause, and that their *religio* can be dismissed even by simple fear. Their assumption is confirmed as soon as they turn their back: their soldiers make peace with Caesar (under the promise that their two commanders will not be executed), *de facto* recognizing him as the legitimate military and political authority (BC 1,74–77).

Their leaders also prove not to have the same faithfulness to Pompey that Caesarian generals have to Caesar, as we can see in Afranius' speech of capitulation to Caesar (BC 1,84,3):

non esse aut ipsis aut militibus suscensendum quod fidem imperatorem suum Cn. Pompeium conservare voluerint; sed satis iam fecisse officio satisque supplicii tulisse perpressos omnium rerum inopiam.

"[Afranius said] that neither they [sc. Afranius and Petreius] nor the soldiers were to blame, if they wanted to be loyal to their *imperator* Cn. Pompey; but they already satisfied that duty and suffered enough punishment when beaten by the privation of everything."

It was only *officium* ("sense of duty") that kept them faithful to Pompey. No shared ideal, no devotion; not even a real *officium* – Caesar seems to imply – but rather one to which they stay faithful as long as they think they are going to win.⁵² A comparison with Caesar's legates comes naturally, especially with Curio, who refuses salvation and marches towards a sure death in order not to betray his faith.⁵³

⁵¹ For the possible deceptiveness of Caesar's words against Metellus Scipio, cf. Grillo, *The Art*, 42.

⁵² For the tension between *officium* and *timor*, see Grillo, *The Art*, 49f.

⁵³ BC 2,42. For Afranius' and Petreius' distorted sense of *pudor*, cf. Grillo, *The Art*, 46–49.

Caesar, on the contrary, wants to be associated with the traditionally Roman idea of friendship. Throughout the BC *amicitia* is mentioned many times, but always (as shown by Grillo)⁵⁴ in relationship to Caesar. It is to Caesar's *amicitia* that the enemy commander Lentulus pleads when captured in 1,22,3 (although he can mention only favors he received from Caesar, but none he did for him), knowing how sacred friendship is to him.

In commenting so on Pompey's end, Caesar wants to remind us that he knows and cultivates the Roman value of *amicitia*, while Pompey does not know it.⁵⁵

3.8. Implication 8: Caesar, unlike his enemies, can count on his soldiers' loyalty

Maxim No. 3 (*perterritus miles in civili dissensione timori magis quam religioni consulere consuerit*) is the only one which does not reflect the point of view of the narrator, but reports Afranius' and Petreius' reasons for avoiding night-time initiatives, and is therefore ignored by Preiswerk. It is however useful for the present analysis, since, by highlighting his enemies' point of view, Caesar still wants to suggest a contrast between them and himself.

Although Afranius and Petreius express this thought as a general statement, it is true only for their side: the devotion of Caesar's men is above any reasonable doubt, in a civil conflict as well as in a regular one. This is shown throughout the war: in 1,6,2 Pompey reveals to the Senate that "Caesar's soldiers are alienated from him, and they cannot be persuaded to defend, or even to follow him" but we will soon discover that it is the Pompeian leaders who, throughout the war, are easily abandoned by their soldiers (like the praetor Thermus at 1,12,2), when they do not flee themselves at the first risk (like Varus at 1,13,2, whom we see abandoned by his men when forced to fight at 1,13,4, or Domitius at 1,19,2).

In 1,21,2 Caesar shows that he is also aware that night can relax the soldiers' discipline, but he never thinks that his men's fear can overcome their *religio*, nor that the fact that it is a "civil" war would, *per se*, affect their discipline. On the contrary, Caesar reports his soldiers' enthusiasm many times (e.g. in 1,7,8, and 3,6,1), and, as a contrast, he underlines on every possible occasion that his enemies augmented their legions through forced conscriptions, most times of non-Romans, the most memorable examples being Attius Varus in Africa in BC 1,31,2, Afranius in the province of Spain in BC 2,28,1 and in

⁵⁴ Grillo, *The Art*, 146.

⁵⁵ For the rhetoric of friendship in the BC, cf. Schuller, *Freund und Feind*; Grillo, *The Art*, 143–149.

BC 1,24,2 even slaves are enrolled by Roman citizens to fight against Roman citizens. Caesar, on the contrary, tends to trust his soldiers and listens to their opinion, although he can take decisions which are unpopular among the troops. In the most symbolic example, he wants us to know that he listens to them before engaging in the civil war: in 1,8,1 Caesar crosses the Rubicon after consulting with his soldiers (*cognita militum voluntate*).

3.9. Implication 9: in war it is unwise to trust in rumors or fame

The concept that one should not easily trust in something he does not know for sure, and that everyone should be especially beware of the dangers of what is now called “wishful thinking” or “confirmation bias”, that is, the human tendency to give more weight to the evidence that confirms what we already believe, is expressed by Caesar in three different maxims, No. 6 (*communi fit vitio naturae ut invisit atque incognitis rebus magis confidamus*), No. 8 (*quae volumus, et credimus libenter, et quae sentimus ipsi reliquos sentire speramus*), and No. 10 (*plerumque in novitate <rem> fama antecedit*).

The first, said of the Massilians, who count on the Pompeians’ help without knowing them, is a case of a maxim “in contradiction with well-known adages”,⁵⁶ the contrary statement being well attested in Latin literature, most famously in Ov. ars 3,397 *ignoti nulla cupido* “no one desires the unknown”, which became proverbial in the middle ages.⁵⁷ The gnomic nature of this sentence is so clear, that it moved some interpolator – in the tradition preceding our archetype ω – to complete the $\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\mu\eta$ in a margin, with *vehementiusque exterreamur* (a reflection of the scholiast, possibly based on the BG maxim or a quotation from a known popular adage?), a gloss which entered the text and pervaded the tradition, though being evidently incompatible with the following *ita tum accidit*. The function of this maxim is made clear in the immediately following: Caesar wants to imply that the only reason someone can expect anything good from Nasidius and his fleet is because he does not know them. The Massilians are here expecting “real” Roman soldiers, like Caesar describes his own, but they will soon realize that the Nasidians are cowards who run away at the first occasion.

⁵⁶ Arist. Rh. 2,21 (see above, “1. Maxims in Ancient Rhetorical Theory”). Caesar himself uses a maxim about the fear of the unknown in BG 7,83,5.

⁵⁷ For the history of this adage, see Tosi, *Dizionario*, § 1097.

4. Do Maxims in the BG have Similar Implications?

There are only six maxims in the BG:

1) 1,14 *consuesse enim deos immortales, quo gravius homines ex commutatione rerum doleant, quos pro scelere eorum ulcisci velint, his secundoiores interdum res et diuturniorem impunitatem concedere*. “For often the immortal gods, the heavier they intend to punish men for their crimes, the greater prosperity and the longer impunity they grant them in the meantime.”

2) 3,10 *omnes autem homines natura libertati studere et condicionem servitutis odisse*. “All men naturally desire freedom and hate being in a condition of slavery.”

3) 3,18 *quod fere libenter homines id, quod volunt, credunt*. “For it often happens that men believe what they want.”

4) 6,14 *quod fere plerisque accidit, ut praesidio litterarum diligentiam in perdiscendo ac memoriam remittant*. “For it usually happens that the assistance of writing tends to relax the diligence of the student and the exercise of the memory.”

5) 6,30 *multum cum in omnibus rebus tum in re militari potest fortuna*. “Luck is powerful in all circumstances, but especially in war.”

6) 7,26 *quod plerumque in summo periculo timor misericordiam non recipit*. “In extreme dangers fear often admits no sense of pity.”

Do these maxims have the same function as the ones in the BC? Of course, some ethic continuity between the two works is to be expected: No. 3 and No. 5 convey a message similar to No. 8 and 12 in the BC, but they do not appear to have the same function in the context. No. 2 and No. 6 are from the point of view of Caesar’s enemies; the former to prevent their moves, the latter to almost justify their ruthlessness. No. 4 shows the advantages of the Gallic over the Roman education.

No. 1 seems to be the only one with a propagandistic function: at the beginning of the work, Caesar seems to attribute his victory to a divine intervention and predestination, which has no parallel in his *Commentarii*. Rüpke attributes this choice to the intention of not crediting his subordinate Labienus (who, as we know from App. Gall. 1,3 and Plut. vit. Caes. 18,2 leads the battle) for the victory.⁵⁸ Whatever the reason, the theme of “providence” does not appear elsewhere in the commentaries, replaced by the less deterministic *Fortuna*.

As a whole, those maxims are not there to show Caesar’s moral superiority or to provide a justification for his action, nor does this seem to be the goal of the first series of *Commentarii*. While in a war against Roman citizens Caesar

⁵⁸ Rüpke, *Priesthoods*, 62.

has to demonstrate that every of his interventions is duly motivated, in his ANRW essay, John Collins documents with overwhelming proofs that this is not true for the Gallic War.⁵⁹ He summarizes that “while Caesar does not baldly say that he went to Gaul hoping for war, and that, once there, he made war at his own good pleasure, everyone understood it, and the fact was no disgrace ... We misread Roman ethical attitudes if we hold that a successful war against the Barbarians had to be justified in a White Paper.”⁶⁰ He also notices that “how little the ‘Bellum Gallicum’ contains of propaganda to make the war out as forced upon Caesar may be seen most impressively by comparing it with the ‘Bellum Civile’. In the latter work the *Kriegsschuldfrage* is as prominent as in the former it is insignificant. ... Accordingly in the Bellum Civile we find every device of propaganda.”⁶¹

It is not surprising that, among the devices of propaganda that he uses, in addition to those listed by Collins, we can include the skillful use of maxims, which, being sporadic and almost casual in the BG, it becomes a systematic means of conditioning the reader in the BC, in perfect accordance with what was prescribed by ancient rhetorical manuals.⁶²

5. Conclusions: Function of Maxims in De bello civili

In order to establish how Caesar defends his point of view through the third-person narrator, it is convenient to define clearly its nature. I agree with Grillo⁶³ that he is an “omnipresent, omniscient, and unobtrusive” voice which is aware of everything that happens and of people’s thoughts, their unspoken motivations, even what options they are considering, and “does not try to persuade; rather, facts and his judgments on them are recorded with the same matter-of-fact tone.”

Such an ostensibly objective and omniscient voice needs to accredit itself as trustworthy to the reader, without explicitly discussing moral points of views (we saw that it is not in its nature to persuade, but only to express its “truth”). As the ancient authorities that we saw above well knew, maxims are a good tool for that, since they do not discuss their moral truth, they just state it as universal.

⁵⁹ As Riggsby, Caesar, 213, points out: “Roman imperialist ideology not only justified individual expansion, but also guaranteed the re-creation of the conditions for further ‘legitimate’ expansion.”

⁶⁰ Collins, Caesar, 932.

⁶¹ Collins, Caesar, 932f.

⁶² Collins, Caesar, 933.

⁶³ Grillo, The Personality, 244–246.

If we divide the maxims into “moral” and “military” then it is patent the “moral” maxims have the functions stated by ancient theorists: to give the narrator an aura of morality and to make Caesar’s cause subconsciously more creditable by using shared values while implicitly pleading for it. Since the narrator thinks that Caesar is right and Pompey is wrong, those maxims end up having the ultimate goal of convincing the audience of Caesar’s moral superiority.

Military maxims, on the other hand, are used to show his – and his men’s – military superiority, which happens to be however also a form of moral superiority: the good soldier is identified with the good citizen. As we saw from the episode of the Lusitani, maintaining Romanness intact is more important than victory at all costs: Caesar wants to win only by shedding the least Roman blood possible, and he finds not honorable a victory obtained by “barbaric” methods, which, however, can work only in the short term.

One maxim (No. 3) is used to report the Pompeian commanders’ point of view that in a civil war soldiers follow their commanders mostly because of loyalty, not because they believe in a cause: this loyalty is very thin, and can easily be dispelled by fear. The reader is supposed to juxtapose them to the Caesarians, motivated by true patriotism, and value the Pompeian as morally inferior. Consequently, he will have another reason to think that Caesar’s part is on moral high ground.

This set of values is constructed to put one thing in the reader’s mind: Caesar did not win because of luck or strategic superiority (though to both of them a role in his success is acknowledged): he won first and foremost because he was morally superior. Nor is he aiming to a generic concept of moral superiority.

Caesar recognizes fellow citizens as such, also when they are not on his side, and spares their blood, aware of the risk they will be fighting against him again, while Pompey and his legates show the blood-thirst typical of barbarians, which culminates with the cruelty attributed to Pompey’s ally Iuba in 2,44,3, who, disregarding all pacts, enslaves Roman citizens of the Caesarian faction.⁶⁴ He and his soldiers maintain Roman values intact: *amicitia*, *religio*, but also knowledge of one’s limits, which is defined negatively, by pointing at the arrogance of his rivals (especially Afranius and Petreius, and implicitly Pompey), which is traditionally considered a typical barbarian trait not only

⁶⁴ For cruelty as a characteristic of barbarians, cf. Cic. Cat. 3,25,10; Planc. 71,10; Phil. 11,6,2; Quint. decl. 339,11,6, etc. For the Greek roots of this preconception, see Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, esp. 158f. Violent “unpredictability” is a characteristic of Gauls already in Greek sources, cf. Riggsby, Caesar, 56f.; for Gallic “cruelty” in the BG, cf. Riggsby, Caesar, 103f. with n. 74.

in the BC (in 3,59,3 *stulta ac barbara arrogantia elati* is said of the two Allobroges who betrayed him), but already in the BG (1,33,5), as well as in Cicero and Tacitus, all of whom use this word to characterize those (mostly foreigners) who despise the authority of Rome.⁶⁵ The main implication of *arrogantia* is a wrong opinion of one's self (*falsa ... de se opinione*, Quint. inst. 11,1,17), which brings to a "lack of *reverentia*";⁶⁶ this is a characteristic common to those barbarians who do not submit to Roman *maiestas*, as well as to Afranius and Petreius, who feel entitled to despise the lives of fellow citizens. The two armies had a similar ethnic composition but, in all those years abroad, Caesar, unlike Pompey, never let his men develop barbarian customs, although human nature is prone to this kind of transformation.

His men are not reluctant to any kind of toil or unaccustomed to using their hands, a sign of delicacy (ἀβροσύνη/ἀβρότης), which a common prejudice depicts as a characteristic of Persians,⁶⁷ and consequently a sign of barbarization, like a sign of Hellenization is Pompey's relying on tacticisms rather than trusting Roman bellic instinct, which, Caesar suggests, is what leads him to be defeated at Pharsalus. Grillo dedicates a chapter to the "Barbarization of the enemy" in Caesar's BC:⁶⁸ while Caesar uses *barbari* to refer to non-Romans in Pompey's army, he always calls his own barbarian soldiers with their proper ethnonym; the Pompeians themselves, as shown by Grillo,⁶⁹ are described with the same vocabulary used for barbarians in the BG. They have not only the characteristics of European barbarian tribes (cruelty and ignorance), but also the main weakness of the Hellenized East: softness, which they express through luxury, excessive trust in their previous luck, but, I add, also through their reluctance to toil. They show a defect common to these two worlds (arrogance), and finally they borrow military techniques from both of them: the scattered asymmetrical fight of the Lusitanians (which gives the Pompeians a temporary advantage, but will eventually succumb against Caesar's legitimate Roman military genius), and the Hellenistic tactical theories, which will make them lose at Pharsalus.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Cf. Mouchova – Hornova, *arrogantia*, 110f. with n. 19.

⁶⁶ Mouchova – Hornova, *arrogantia*, 113.

⁶⁷ Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, esp. 81–83 and 126–129. For the orientalization (which is mostly Persianization) of Pompey and the Pompeians in Caesar's depiction, see Rossi, *Camp of Pompey*.

⁶⁸ Grillo, *The Art*, 106–130. On the same argument cf. also Johnston, *Nostris* and the Others, 91–94.

⁶⁹ Grillo, *The Art*, 111.

⁷⁰ Caesar seems to borrow his (mostly rhetorical) aversion to pure tactics from Xenophon, cf. Lendon, *Rhetoric of Combat*, 290–304. Zecchini, *Cesare*, 147–158, interprets the Commen-

Throughout Greek and Roman cultural history, Sinclair observes, “*sententiae* differentiated ethical viewpoints within society and set these in contrast with foreign *mores*.”⁷¹ In the dispute for who is the representative of the legitimate Roman republic, their role becomes essential. The first seven of the nine implications which, as I showed above, Caesar is trying to subconsciously inculcate through these maxims, all reinforce the dichotomy Roman versus other.

As I mentioned, the propagandistic goal of BC has been common knowledge among modern scholars for a long time. The analysis above demonstrates that Caesar reaches this goal by applying ancient rhetorical theories. Following the advice of Aristotle and of the anonymous ad Herennium, Caesar uses these statements sparingly, but with particular precision. Those apparently decorative sentences (Preiswerk repeatedly calls them “Schmuck”) reinforce the message, delivered all over Caesar’s report of the war, that Caesar represents the “right” and Pompey the “wrong”.

The narrator explicitly portrays Caesar as the foremost legitimate representative of the Republic, working for its safety; but he also wants the reader to understand that he represents traditional Roman values and he was not only the one who safeguarded the “constitutional” integrity of the republic, but also the one who saved the moral integrity of the *populus Romanus* when they were both being threatened by Pompey’s sedition.

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taries as an attempt at reconciliation between Roman virtues and Greek *ἐπιστήμη*, which, for the reasons shown above, seems to be less true for BC.

⁷¹ Sinclair, Tacitus, 1.

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