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SUETONIUS, "Caesar"

Lives of the Caesars
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THE DEIFIED JULIUS CAESAR

[1] In the course of his sixteenth year, he lost his father.* In the following consulate, when he was Flamen Dialis elect, he divorced Cossutia,* whose family was of equestrian rank but very wealthy, and to whom he had been betrothed before assuming the toga of manhood. He then married Cornelia, whose father Cinna was four times consul. By her he soon had a daughter, Julia, and he could not be induced to divorce her despite all the efforts of the dictator Sulla. Thus, having been stripped of his priesthood, his wife's dowry, and his family estates, he was even treated as an adherent of the opposing faction, so that he was forced to withdraw from public life and to change his hiding-place each night, though suffering from an increasingly severe case of quartan fever, as well as having to buy off his pursuers, until finally he secured forgiveness, through the intervention of the Vestal Virgins and his relatives, Mamercus Aemilius and Aurelius Cotta. It is well known that Sulla, though he had long held out against the entreaties of his most distinguished close advisers, finally gave in to their persistence, declaring (divinely inspired or through shrewd foresight): 'Have your way—and have your man—but be aware that the man you so desired to save, believing him to be attached to the aristocratic cause for which you have fought alongside me, will be its downfall. For in Caesar there are many Mariuses.'*

[2] For his first military service he was stationed in Asia, among the companions of the governor Marcus Thermus. When Thermus sent him on a mission to Bithynia to summon the fleet he lingered at the court of Nicomedes—and there was a rumour that he had submitted himself to the king's pleasure, a rumour which strengthened when he returned to Bithynia a few days later to obtain money that was allegedly owed to a freedman, one of his clients. He fulfilled the rest of his service with better repute—Thermus awarded him a civic crown for his role in the capture of Mytilene. [3] He also served under Servilius Isauricus in Cilicia but only for a short time. For when news came of Sulla's death, he hurried back to Rome, hoping to take advantage of the unrest caused by Marcus Lepidus' measures.* Yet he declined to attach himself to Lepidus, though major

inducements were offered, distrusting both the man himself and the circumstances, which were less promising than he had hoped.

[4] However, once the civil unrest was quelled, he brought a charge of extortion against Cornelius Dolabella,* an ex-consul who had celebrated a triumph. When Dolabella was acquitted Caesar decided to withdraw to Rhodes, so that the ill-feeling against him might die down and that he might rest and have the leisure to study under Apollonius Molon, the leading teacher of oratory.* As he was crossing over to Rhodes, during the winter season, he was captured near the island of Pharmacussa by pirates, who held him captive for forty days in a state of extreme indignation, with just one doctor and two personal attendants for company; he had immediately dispatched his companions and his other slaves to raise money with which he might be ransomed. Once he was set ashore, having paid out fifty talents, he raised a fleet on the spot without delay and set off in pursuit of the departing pirates. Having got them in his power, he inflicted on them the punishment with which he had often jokingly threatened them.*

Mithridates was laying waste some neighbouring regions, so, lest he should seem to be idle when allies were in danger, he crossed over from Rhodes (which he had finally reached) to Asia. Having secured some auxiliaries and driven the king's prefect from the province, he confirmed alliances with those states which were wavering and undecided.

[5] When he was serving as military tribune, the first office to which he was elected on his return to Rome, he made great efforts to support those who sought to restore the powers of the tribunes of the plebs, which had been weakened by Sulla. Through legislation proposed by Plotius, he also brought about the recall of Lucius Cinna, his wife's brother, and those who, along with him, had supported Lepidus in the civil unrest and had fled to Sertorius, after the consul's death.* He himself gave a speech in favour of the measure.

[6] When he was quaestor, following the deaths of his aunt Julia* and his wife Cornelia, he delivered the customary eulogies of them from the rostra. In the course of the eulogy of his aunt, he made the following comments concerning the origins on both sides of his aunt's and father's family: 'On her mother's side, my aunt Julia was descended from kings, on her father's she was related to gods. For the Marcius Rex family—that was her mother's name—goes back to

Ancus Marcius,* while the Julii, to which our family belongs, go back to Venus. Her family is therefore distinguished by the sanctity of kings, who are mighty amongst men, and by the majesty of the gods, to whom kings themselves are subject.'

In place of Cornelia, he took as wife Pompeia, the daughter of Quintus Pompeius, and granddaughter of Lucius Sulla. Later on he divorced her, on the grounds that she had committed adultery with Publius Clodius, for the rumour that Clodius had approached her, disguised as a woman, in the course of a public religious festival was so persistent that the senate set up an inquiry into the profaning of rituals.*

[7] The province of Further Spain was allotted him as quaestor; making his rounds of the local courts, dispensing justice, in accordance with his praetor's mandate, he came to Gades and, noticing a statue of Alexander the Great at the temple of Hercules, he let out a groan, as though exasperated at his own lack of achievement, for he himself had done nothing memorable at the age when Alexander had already conquered the world.* He at once sought to be released from his duties, in order to seize as soon as possible the greater opportunities on offer in Rome. He was also troubled by a dream on the following night. For he dreamed that he was committing incest with his mother. Even this spurred him on to greater hopes, for dream-interpreters explained it as a portent that he would rule the world, because his mother, whom he had seen subjected to himself, was none other than the earth, which is held to be the mother of all.

[8] Thus having left his province early, he approached some Latin colonies which were agitating to secure full citizenship,* and he might have spurred them to dare action, if the consuls had not kept some legions, raised for Cilicia, there for a while to guard against this. [9] Not long afterwards, he was embarking on more ambitious projects in Rome. Indeed, just a few days before he took up the aedileship, he fell under suspicion of having conspired with the ex-consul Marcus Crassus, as well as Publius Sulla* and Lucius Autronius (who had been convicted of bribery after winning the consular elections*), their plan being to attack the senate on New Year's Day and, after the slaughter of their chosen victims, for Crassus to usurp the dictatorship, while Caesar would be made his Master of Horse; then, when they had organized the state according to their wishes, the consulship would be restored to Sulla and

Autronius. Tanusius Geminus mentions the plot in his history, as does Marcus Bibulus in his edicts and Gaius Curio the elder in his speeches. Cicero, too, seems to be referring to this in a letter to Axius in which he says that in his consulship Caesar brought about the tyranny he had contemplated when he was aedile. Tanusius adds that Crassus, either repenting or fearful, did not appear on the day fixed for the massacre and for this reason Caesar did not give the signal which it had been agreed he was to give. Curio says the arrangement was that he would let his toga slip from his shoulder. Curio is also the source, along with Marcus Actorius Naso, for the story that Caesar had also conspired with the youth Gnaeus Piso, who was given the province of Spain, though it was not his turn and he had not asked for it, because he was suspected of involvement in intrigue at Rome; also, that they had agreed that the two of them would stir up revolution, Piso abroad and Caesar in Rome, by means of the Ambrani and the Transpadanes* but that Piso's death brought their plans to nothing.

[10] When he was aedile, besides the Comitium, Forum, and basilicas, he also decorated the Capitol with arcades built for the occasion, in which part of the equipment for his shows was displayed in great profusion.* He provided wild beast fights and games, both in collaboration with his colleague and on his own account, with the result that what had been paid for jointly was also attributed to him alone. Thus, his colleague Marcus Bibulus did not conceal the fact that he had suffered the same fate as Pollux, for just as the temple in the Forum that was sacred to the twin brothers was simply known as the temple of Castor, so the munificence of himself and Caesar was spoken of simply as Caesar's. In addition to this, Caesar provided a set of gladiatorial games, though with fewer pairs of fighters than he had planned, for the great number of gladiators he had assembled struck such terror into his opponents that a bill was passed limiting the number of gladiators which any individual might keep in the city.

[11] Having won the favour of the people, he made an attempt, through the agency of the tribunes, to have Egypt awarded him as a province by plebiscite, seizing the opportunity to ask for this extraordinary post when the Alexandrians had expelled their king, who had been termed ally and friend by the senate,* and the expulsion was widely condemned. But he was not successful, due to the opposition of the aristocratic faction. Therefore he sought to diminish their authority by every means possible and to this end he restored the

trophies of Gaius Marius (commemorating his victories over Jugurtha and over the Cimbri and Teutones) which had been torn down by Sulla. And, in conducting prosecutions for murder,* he included among the murderers those who, through the proscriptions,* had received money from the treasury for the heads of Roman citizens, although such cases had been exempted by the Cornelian laws. [12] He also bribed someone to bring a charge of treason against Gaius Rabirius* who had been of particular service to the senate some years previously when it was seeking to bring under control the troublesome tribune, Lucius Saturninus. And when he had been selected by lot to pass sentence on the defendant, he condemned him with such eagerness that nothing helped Rabirius in his appeal to the people so much as the harshness of his judge.*

[13] Having put aside his hope of securing a province,* he sought appointment as Pontifex Maximus—not without a considerable amount of bribery. Contemplating the magnitude of his debts, he is said to have announced to his mother, when she kissed him as he was leaving for the assembly on the morning of the election, that he would not come home unless he was Pontifex. And he so decisively beat two formidable rival candidates, in age and rank far his superiors, that he won more votes in their own tribes than either of them secured overall.*

[14] When, after the conspiracy of Catiline had been discovered, the entire senate supported the death penalty for those involved in the crime, as praetor elect he was the only one to advocate separating them to be imprisoned in different towns and confiscating their property. Nevertheless, he inspired such fear in those proposing the harsher penalty, emphasizing how unpopular they would later be with the Roman people, that Decimus Silanus, the consul designate, was not ashamed to suggest a milder interpretation of his own proposal (it would have been a disgrace to change it), alleging that it had been understood as harsher than he had intended.* Thus, Caesar would have prevailed, having persuaded many, including Cicero (the brother of the consul),* to adopt his view, if Marcus Cato's speech had not confirmed the resolution of the wavering senate. Yet even then Caesar continued his attempts to impede the proceedings, until the armed troop of Roman knights, which was standing guard around the place, threatened to kill him as he carried on unabashed, even brandishing their drawn swords at him in such a way that those

closest to him moved away from where he was sitting and it was with difficulty that a few were able to shield him with their arms and their togas. At that point, quite terrified, he desisted and even kept away from the senate for the rest of the year.

[15] On the first day of his praetorship,* he summoned Quintus Catulus to a people's inquiry concerning the restoration of the Capitoline,* proposing a bill to transfer the responsibility to someone else.* But he was no match for the united actions of the aristocrats and abandoned the proposal when he perceived that they had at once left off their attendance on the new consuls and had hurried together in groups determined to offer resistance to his measures.* [16] However, he showed himself the most stalwart backer and defender of Caecilius Metellus, tribune of the plebs, who was attempting to introduce highly disruptive measures in spite of his colleagues' veto, until eventually both of them were suspended from the exercise of public office by a decree of the senate.* Nevertheless, Caesar had the audacity to continue to exercise his office and to dispense justice. Then, learning that there were those who were prepared to contain him through armed force, he sent away his lictors, threw aside his magistrate's toga, and hid himself away at home, planning to keep a low profile, given the current circumstances. And on the following day a rather unruly mob flocked to him spontaneously and of their own accord, offering him their help in reasserting his position; when he restrained them, quite contrary to expectations, the senate (which had been hastily summoned to deal with the same crowd) made him a vote of thanks through its leading men, and then, having summoned him to the senate house, praised him in the highest terms and restored him to his former position, cancelling the earlier decree.

[17] However, he encountered further trouble when he was named as one of the associates of Catiline, both by the informer Lucius Vettius, at a hearing conducted by the quaestor Novius Nigrus, and in the senate house by Quintus Curius, to whom a sum of money had been publicly voted, since he was the first to unveil the plans of the conspirators. Curius maintained he had his information from Catiline, while Vettius even promised a document in Caesar's handwriting that had been given to Catiline. Caesar, however, could in no way tolerate this and, having demonstrated, invoking Cicero as witness, that he himself had of his own accord reported information

about the conspiracy to Cicero, he ensured that Curius did not receive his reward. As for Vettius, his bond was declared forfeit, his goods were seized, and he was severely fined and almost torn apart in a public assembly before the rostra. Caesar then committed him to prison, inflicting the same treatment on the quaestor Novius, because he had allowed a magistrate with powers superior to his own to be summoned to his court.

[18] Having been allotted Further Spain as his province, following his praetorship, Caesar disposed of his creditors, who sought to prevent him leaving, by means of guarantees and set off before the provinces had been officially provided for—though this was contrary to precedent and to law. It is unclear whether he was afraid of a suit which was being prepared to be brought against him once he was out of office,* or whether he wanted to bring help to the allies who were begging for aid as soon as possible. Once his province was brought to order, not waiting for his successor, he left for Rome with equal rapidity, to procure both a triumph and the consulship. However, since the elections had already been announced and no account could be taken of his candidacy unless he entered the city as a private citizen, and since his intrigues to secure exemption from the laws were provoking widespread criticism, he was obliged to give up the triumph, to avoid being excluded from the consulship.* [19] Of the two rival candidates for the consulship, Lucius Lucceius and Marcus Bibulus, he allied himself with Lucceius, having made an agreement with him that, since Lucceius was less popular but had greater financial resources, he should promise the electors money from his own funds in both their names. When the aristocrats discovered this, they were seized with fear that Caesar as consul would stop at nothing, if he had a colleague who went along with him and shared his views, so they authorized Bibulus to promise the same amount, many of them contributing money. Even Cato could not deny that such gifts were for the good of the state.*

Thus it was with Bibulus that he was elected consul. And with the same motive, the aristocrats went to some trouble to ensure that the provinces stipulated for the consuls elect were those of the least moment, that is, woodland and pastures.* Severely goaded by this insult, he sought with all manner of services to attach himself to Gnaeus Pompey, who was in dispute with the senate because it had been slow to ratify the arrangements he had made after his victory

over King Mithridates. Caesar reconciled Pompey with Marcus Crassus, who had been his enemy since they had been constantly at odds with one another as consuls. Caesar entered into an agreement with each of them, that no action should be taken in public which was contrary to the wishes of any one of the three.

[20] His very first act once consul was to ensure that the proceedings, both of the senate and of the people, should be compiled and published on a daily basis. He even reinstated the ancient practice by which, in the months when he did not hold the fasces, he would be preceded by an orderly, while the lictors would follow behind him.* However, after the promulgation of the agrarian law, he had his colleague forcibly expelled from the Forum, when the latter announced adverse omens.* On the following day Bibulus complained in the senate, but no one could be found who dared to give an opinion or offer any censure in response to this piece of arrogance—though such decrees were frequent in much less serious cases. Bibulus was thus reduced to such despair that he hid himself away at home until his time as consul came to an end, and did nothing but issue proclamations announcing adverse omens.* From that time on Caesar alone administered all public business and dispensed all justice, so that some city-dwellers, putting their seals as witnesses to a document, jokingly put as the date, not the consulship of Caesar and Bibulus but the consulship of Julius and Caesar (thus referring twice to the same man, once with his name, once with his *cognomen*). Soon the following lines were in common circulation:

It happened when Caesar was consul—not Bibulus,
For nothing happened, as I recall, when Bibulus was consul.

The plain of Stellas, which had been consecrated by our ancestors, and the Campanian territory, which had been left as a source of revenue for the state, he divided up into plots for twenty thousand citizens, chosen without a ballot, each of whom had at least three children. In response to a request from the tax-collectors he agreed that they should be allowed to reduce their payment to the state by a third but gave them a public warning against making reckless bids for future tax-collecting contracts.* His other grants, however generous, no one dared oppose—or if they did, they were frightened off. When Marcus Cato tried to use his veto,* Caesar gave orders that he should be dragged out of the senate house by a lictor and taken off to

prison. When Lucius Lucullus stood up to him too openly, Caesar filled him with such fear lest false charges be brought against him that, of his own accord, Lucullus fell on his knees before him. And when Cicero, during the course of a court case, lamented the current state of affairs, Caesar at once arranged for Cicero's enemy, Publius Clodius, to be transferred at the ninth hour of the same day* from the patricians to the plebeians, something Clodius had long been striving for in vain. Finally, in a move to counter all his opponents at once, he bribed an informer to confess (according to an agreed plan) that he had been incited to murder Pompey by certain individuals and, when brought before the rostra, to name the culprits. However, after the informer named one or two to no effect and had aroused suspicions that he was a fraud, Caesar abandoned hope that this hastily arranged plan would come off, and is thought to have had the informer poisoned.

[21] At around the same time he took as his wife Calpurnia, daughter of Lucius Piso who was to succeed him as consul, while his own daughter Julia he gave away in marriage to Gnaeus Pompey, after she had broken her engagement to Servilius Caepio (even though Caepio had only recently been of great service to Caesar in his conflict with Bibulus). Once this new link was forged, he began always to ask Pompey his opinion first, although it had been his practice to begin with Crassus—and it was customary for the consul to observe throughout the year the same order which he had established on the first of January.

[22] Thus with the support of his father-in-law and of his son-in-law, he chose Gaul over all the other provinces, since it offered both profits and the potential for winning triumphs. Initially, indeed, he received only Cisalpine Gaul with the addition of Illyria, in accordance with the Vatinian law, but was soon granted 'long-haired' Gaul also,* as the senators feared that if they refused him this the people would give it to him. Elated by the pleasure of this success, he had no qualms, a few days later, in boasting to a packed meeting of the senate that he had got what he wanted in spite of the opposition and laments of his enemies, and that from that time forth, he would be mounting on their heads.* And when someone insultingly observed that such an action would be difficult for any woman, he replied, taking up the joke, that Semiramis had reigned in Assyria and the Amazons had controlled a large part of Asia.*

[23] When his consulship had come to an end and the praetors

Gaius Memmius and Lucius Domitius embarked on an inquiry into his actions during the preceding year, he referred the matter to the senate. And when they did not take it up and three days had been spent in fruitless argument, he left for his province. One of his quaestors was at once arraigned on a number of charges, as a preliminary to proceedings against Caesar himself. Soon, he, too, was summoned to court by Lucius Antistius, tribune of the plebs. However, by appealing to the college of tribunes as a whole, he managed to ensure that he did not stand trial, on the grounds that he was absent on state business. Thus, in order to guarantee his security for the future he took great pains always to put the annual magistrates in his debt, and he would not help any candidates or allow them to be elected unless they undertook to defend him when he was away. Against this purpose he had no hesitation in demanding oaths and even bonds from some people. [24] However, when Lucius Domitius, who was a candidate for the consulship,* openly threatened to do as consul what he had been unable to do as praetor and take control of Caesar's armies, Caesar obliged Crassus and Pompey to come to Luca, a town in his province, where he induced them to stand for the consulship again in order to keep Domitius out. He also contrived through their influence to have his own provincial command extended by five years. Emboldened by this he added to the legions which had been granted him by the state other legions paid for from his own resources. One of these was actually raised in Transalpine Gaul and had a Gallic name—it was known as the *Alauda*.* This he trained with Roman discipline and decked out with Roman equipment. Later on he gave the entire legion Roman citizenship. After that he did not pass up any opportunity for waging war, no matter how unjustified or how perilous, attacking without provocation allies, as well as enemies and barbarous peoples,* so that at one point the senate sent legates to report on the state of the Gallic provinces and several took the view that Caesar ought to be handed over to the enemy.* But when matters turned out well, he requested and received days of supplication* more frequently and in greater numbers than anyone had ever done before.

[25] His actions during the nine years* for which he held the command were essentially as follows. All of that part of Gaul which is bounded by the pastures of the Pyrenees, the Alps, and Mount Cebenna,* and by the rivers Rhine and Rhône, and whose circum-

ference is around three thousand two hundred miles, he made a province of the empire (with the exception of some allied states which had been of service), imposing on this territory a tribute of forty million sesterces per year. He was the first of the Romans to construct a bridge and attack the Germans who live beyond the Rhine, inflicting devastating defeats on them. He also attacked the Britons, a people previously unfamiliar, and after defeating them demanded tribute and hostages. Amongst all these successes, he experienced setbacks on only three occasions. During the British campaign, his fleet was virtually destroyed due to a violent storm. In Gaul, a legion was routed at Gergovia, and Titurius and Aurunculus, his legates, were killed in an ambush on the borders of Germany.

[26] During the same period he lost first his mother, then his daughter, and not much later his grandchild also. Also during this time, when the state was in chaos following the murder of Publius Clodius,* the senate had voted that there should be a single consul only, naming Gnaeus Pompey. Though the tribunes of the plebs wanted to make Caesar Pompey's colleague, he persuaded them rather to propose to the people that he should be permitted to stand for a second consulship when his provincial command was drawing to an end, while absent from Rome, so that he would not be obliged for that purpose to leave the province too soon, before the campaign was rounded off.* Once he had secured this, he developed more ambitious plans, and, full of expectation, let slip no opportunity to offer anyone any kind of largesse or assistance, publicly or privately. With his war spoils, he embarked on the construction of a forum, the land for which cost more than a hundred million sesterces.* He offered the people gladiatorial games and a public banquet in memory of his daughter—something which no one had ever done before.* In order to arouse people's expectations to the highest degree, he had some of the preparations for the banquet carried out in his own house—although he had given a contract to the markets, too. He gave orders that, whenever famous gladiators fought and were unpopular with the people, they should be forcibly removed and kept for him.* The new recruits he had trained not in the gladiatorial school or by professional trainers but by Roman knights in their own homes and even by senators experienced in warfare, exhorting them with entreaties, as is shown by his letters, to take the greatest care in the training of individuals and to direct their exercises in person. He doubled the

legions' pay in perpetuity.* Since corn was plentiful, he had it doled out without limit or measure and on occasion gave each man a slave from among the captives.

[27] In order to retain his connection with Pompey, however, and Pompey's good will, he offered him as wife Octavia, his sister's granddaughter,* although she was married to Gaius Marcellus, and himself asked to marry Pompey's daughter, though she was engaged to Faustus Sulla. When he had put all Pompey's associates and a large part of the senate under obligation to himself through loans made with low interest or none at all, he wooed with the most lavish generosity both those whom he selected from all the remaining orders and those who made requests to him of their own accord, even including freedmen and slaves who were particularly favoured by their patrons or masters. Indeed, he was the only recourse—and a most willing one—for those who were accused of crimes, those who were in debt and spendthrift young people, making exceptions only in the case of those who were so weighed down by accusations or poverty or who were so much in thrall to luxury that even he could not rescue them. To these he would say clearly and openly that what they needed was a civil war.

[28] He took no less trouble to win over kings and provinces throughout the world, offering thousands of prisoners as a gift to some, and to others auxiliary troops, beyond what was authorized by the senate and people, whenever and wherever they required them. Besides this he enhanced the foremost cities of Italy, of the Gallic provinces and the Iberian, as well as those of Asia and Greece, with the most splendid public works. By this time everyone was astonished by his actions and wondered what their object might be. The consul Marcus Claudius Marcellus proclaimed in an edict his intention to take action on a matter of greatest importance to the state and proposed to the senate that Caesar's command should be concluded early, since the campaign was completed, peace prevailed, and the victorious army ought to be disbanded. Nor should his candidacy in the elections be admitted, if he remained absent from Rome, since Pompey, despite his subsequent action, had not annulled the plebiscite. For it had happened that when Pompey drew up the law concerning the rules governing magistracies, he had forgotten to make an exception of Caesar's case in the section which debarred those absent from Rome from standing for election, and it was only

when the law was already inscribed on bronze and lodged in the treasury that he corrected the error. Nor was Marcellus satisfied with snatching from Caesar his provinces and his exceptional privilege, but he even proposed that the colonists, whom Caesar had settled in Novum Comum according to the bill of Vatinius, should be deprived of their citizenship, on the grounds that it had been given them to serve Caesar's own plans and was not authorized by law. [29] Caesar, disturbed by these events and thinking (as they say he was often heard to observe) that it was more difficult to force him down now, when he was leader of the state, from first into second place, than it would be to force him from second place to last, resisted with all his resources, working partly through the vetoes of the tribunes and partly through Servius Sulpicius, the other consul. In the following year, when Gaius Marcellus (who had succeeded his first cousin Marcus as consul) continued the same tactics, Caesar engaged as his defenders by means of extensive bribery Gaius' consular colleague, Aemilius Paulus, and Gaius Curio, the most turbulent of the tribunes. However, when he saw that nothing was going his way and that even the consuls elect were opposed to him, he sent letters begging the senate not to deprive him of the privilege the people had granted him, or else to make the other generals give up their armies also. For he was confident, it is thought, that he would more easily be able to summon his veterans together when he wanted them than Pompey would his new recruits. Besides this he proposed to his opponents that, while giving up eight legions as well as Transalpine Gaul, he should be allowed to retain two legions and the province of Cisalpine Gaul or at least one legion and Illyricum, until he should enter his consulship.

[30] However, when the senate would not intervene and his opponents asserted they would make no bargains concerning the welfare of the state, he crossed into Nearer Gaul and, after completing all the local court hearings, stopped at Ravenna, intending to assert his claim through war, if the senate took any oppressive action in response to intervention on his behalf by the tribunes of the plebs.* And this was Caesar's excuse for civil war. However, people think that there were other reasons too. Gnaeus Pompey used to say that because, with the resources of a private citizen, Caesar could not complete the enterprises he had begun, and could not satisfy the expectations he had aroused among the people regarding his return

to Rome, he wanted to turn everything upside down and bring chaos. Others say that he was afraid of being forced to give an account of the actions he had undertaken in contravention of auspices, laws, and tribunician vetoes during his first consulship.* For Marcus Cato repeatedly declared, even swearing it on oath, that he would impeach Caesar as soon as he had disbanded his army. And it was commonly predicted that, if he returned as a private citizen, he would answer the charges surrounded by armed men, on the precedent of Milo.* Asinius Pollio's account* makes this seem more likely, for he records that when, on the field of Pharsalus, Caesar looked out over his slaughtered and scattered enemies, he uttered the following words: 'It was they who wanted this; for I, Gaius Caesar, would have been found guilty, despite all my achievements, if I had not turned to my army for aid.' There are some who think that he had come to love the habit of command, that, having weighed up the relative strengths of his own and his opponents' resources, he grasped the opportunity to seize the power which he had coveted from his earliest youth. Indeed, it seems that this was the view of Cicero who writes in the third book of his 'On Duties',* that Caesar was always quoting some lines of Euripides, which Cicero himself translates:

If the law is to be broken, let it be broken
That power may be gained; otherwise, respect it.

[31] And so when the news came that the tribunician veto had been overridden and that the tribunes themselves had left Rome, Caesar quickly sent ahead his cohorts under cover. Meanwhile, so that suspicion would not be aroused, he concealed his intentions by himself attending some public spectacles, inspecting plans for the school for gladiators he was planning to build, and later, as was his usual way, throwing himself into the entertainment of numerous guests. Then, after the sun had set, he had mules from the neighbouring bakery harnessed to a carriage and embarked on his journey in the greatest secrecy with a small number of companions. His lights went out and he lost his way, wandering for some time until, at dawn, he located a guide and found the route on foot, following narrow paths. He caught up with his cohorts at the River Rubicon, which was the boundary of his province, where he paused for a while, thinking over the magnitude of what he was planning, then, turning to his closest companions, he said: 'Even now we can still turn back. But once we

have crossed that little bridge, everything must be decided by arms.' [32] As he paused, the following portent occurred. A being of splendid size and beauty suddenly appeared, sitting close by, and playing music on a reed. A large number of shepherds hurried to listen to him and even some of the soldiers left their posts to come, trumpeters among them. From one of these, the apparition seized a trumpet, leapt down to the river, and with a huge blast sounded the call to arms and crossed over to the other bank. Then said Caesar: 'Let us go where the gods have shown us the way and the injustice of our enemies calls us. The die is cast.' [33] And so the army crossed over and welcomed the tribunes of the plebs who had come over to them, having been expelled from Rome. Caesar addressed the soldiers, appealing to their loyalty, with tears, and ripping the garments from his breast. It was even thought that he promised equestrian status to each of them but this view is unfounded. For during the course of his speech as he urged them on, he would often point to the finger of his left hand, emphasizing that to give satisfaction to all those who were going to help him defend his dignity, he would happily tear the ring from his own finger. Those on the edge of the assembly could see better than they could hear and conjectured the meaning of his speech on the basis of his gestures. Thus the rumour spread that he had made a promise of the equestrian ring and four hundred thousand sesterces.*

[34] His subsequent actions may be summed up in order as follows. He occupied Picenum, Umbria, and Etruria and, having defeated Lucius Domitius (who had been nominated his successor now that Italy was at war and was in control of Corfinium* with a garrison) then let him go free, he set off along the Adriatic coast for Brundisium.* It was there that the consuls and Pompey had taken refuge, hoping to make the crossing as soon as possible. Having attempted in vain to impede their escape with all manner of stratagems, he returned to Rome, where, having summoned a meeting of the senate to discuss public business, he started out against Pompey's strongest forces, which were in Spain under the command of three of his legates, Marcus Petreius, Lucius Afranius, and Marcus Varro, declaring to his associates beforehand that he would go to the general-less army and then turn to the army-less general. And despite having to lay siege to Massilia, a city along his route which closed its doors to him; and delays caused by a severe

shortage of corn rations, he rapidly brought everything under his control.

[35] From here he returned to Rome, then crossed over to Macedonia where he blockaded Pompey for almost four months behind vast ramparts, before finally defeating him at the battle of Pharsalus* and pursuing him, when he fled to Alexandria. Learning that Pompey had been killed, he waged war against King Ptolemy (for he perceived that the king meant to take him, too, unawares). This was under the most difficult circumstances, as both terrain and timing were against him, for it was the winter season and he was fighting within the city walls of an enemy who was both numerous and very shrewd, while he himself lacked all resources and was quite unprepared. When he won nevertheless, he handed over the kingdom of Egypt to Cleopatra and her younger brother, for he feared to make it into a province lest it should at some point offer a power-hungry governor the means to stir up revolution. From Alexandria he crossed over to Syria and then to Pontus, spurred on by the news that Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates the Great, was taking advantage of the troubled times to make war and was now most formidable after numerous victories. Within five days of his arrival and within four hours of laying eyes on the king, Caesar scattered his forces in a single encounter, often noting the good fortune of Pompey who had secured his greatest military reputation through defeating such a feeble enemy. After that he defeated Scipio and Juba who were stirring up what remained of their adherents in Africa, and the sons of Pompey* in Spain.

[36] During the entire course of the civil wars, Caesar suffered no major setbacks, except through his legates. Of these, Gaius Curio died in Africa, while in Illyricum Gaius Antonius* was taken prisoner by the enemy. Publius Dolabella lost his fleet, also off Illyricum, and Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus lost his army in Pontus. Caesar himself always had the greatest good fortune and his victories always seemed assured, except on two occasions, once at Dyrrhachium, when Pompey repulsed him but did not follow up his advantage—Caesar remarked that Pompey did not know how to conquer him—and again in the final battle in the Spanish campaign, when things looked so bad he even contemplated taking his own life.

[37] When the campaigns were finished, he held triumphs on five occasions, four times in the same month,* after the defeat of Scipio

(though not on succeeding days), and one further time, after the defeat of the sons of Pompey.* His first and most splendid triumph was celebrated over Gaul, the next over Alexandria, then Pontus, after that Africa, and finally Spain, on each occasion with different equipment and displays. On the day of the triumph over Gaul, when he was travelling through the Velabrum, he was almost thrown from his chariot when the axle broke. He climbed the Capitol by torchlight, with forty elephants bearing lamps to the right and to the left. In his triumph over Pontus, one of the the carts in the processions had on the front of it a placard with the words 'I came, I saw, I conquered', not detailing the events of the campaign, as was the case with the others, but emphasizing the speed with which it was completed.*

[38] To every one of the foot soldiers of his veteran legionaries he gave as booty (besides the two thousand which he had paid each at the beginning of the civil conflict) twenty-four thousand sesterces. He also gave them plots of land, though not all together, so as to avoid displacing any property holders. To each man of the people he gave, besides two modii of wheat and two pounds of oil, the three hundred sesterces he had once promised, along with an extra hundred to make up for the delay. He also remitted a year's rent to those in Rome who paid up to two thousand sesterces and in Italy up to five hundred. He added a banquet and a distribution of meat and, after the Spanish victory, two dinners. For when he decided that the first had been rather mean and not served with his customary liberality, five days later he provided another one which was most lavish.

[39] He sponsored spectacles of various kinds: a gladiatorial contest, plays in all regions of the city, and performed by actors in every language, as well as circus performances, athletic contests, and a sea-battle. In a gladiatorial fight in the Forum, Furius Leptinius, a man of praetorian family, and Quintus Calpenus, who had once been a senator and legal advocate, fought to the finish.* The children of the princes of Asia and Bithynia performed a Pyrrhic dance.* During the plays, the Roman knight Decimus Laberius performed in a mime he himself had written and, when he was given five hundred thousand sesterces and a golden ring,* he left the stage and crossed the orchestra to take his seat in the fourteen rows.* For the circus races, the area of the circus itself was extended at either end, with a broad canal surrounding the circuit. Here the most noble young men made

displays with four-horse and two-horse chariots and by jumping between pairs of horses. Two squadrons, one of older and one of younger boys, performed the Troy game.* Five days of animal fights were provided. For the final one, two battle lines were drawn up, with five hundred foot soldiers, twenty elephants, and three hundred knights assigned to each side. And so that there would be more space for the encounter, the central barriers were removed and in their place two camps were set up, one facing the other. In a temporary stadium constructed in an area of the Campus Martius, athletes competed for three days. In the sea-battle, which took place on a lake excavated in the lesser Codeta,* ships with two, three, and four banks of oars from the Tyrian and Egyptian fleets engaged, manned by a huge number of fighters. Drawn by all these spectacles, a vast number of people flooded into Rome from every region, so that many of the visitors had to lodge in tents put up in the streets or along the roads. And the crowds were so great on a number of occasions that many people were crushed to death, even including two senators.

[40] After this Caesar turned to the reorganization of the state, reforming the calendar which had been so disrupted through the negligence of the *pontifices* and their arbitrary use of intercalation over a long period of time* that the harvest festivals no longer fell in the summer and those celebrating the vintage no longer fell in the autumn. Caesar adjusted the calendar to the course of the sun, so that there were three hundred and sixty-five days and, abolishing the intercalary month, he instituted an extra day to be added to every fourth year. However, in order to make the arrangement work from the following first of January, he added two extra months between November and December. Thus that year, since it also had an intercalary month according to the old practice, lasted fifteen months.

[41] He increased the membership of the senate* and made new appointments to the ranks of the patricians,* as well as adding to the number of praetors, aediles, quaestors, and also minor magistrates.* He restored to the senate those who had been expelled as a result of a decision of the censors* or had been condemned by the court for electoral corruption.* He shared the choice of higher magistrates with the popular assemblies so that, except in the case of candidates for the consulship, half the posts were filled by those chosen by the people, the rest by those whom he himself selected. He would also

circulate brief written statements to the voting tribes: 'The dictator Caesar to this tribe. I commend to you this man and that man, so that they may hold their positions with the support of your votes.' He also allowed the sons of the proscribed to compete for office.* He reduced the number of categories of judges to two, the equestrian and the senatorial, abolishing that of the paymasters which had been the third.*

He held a census of the people, not in the traditional manner or place, but proceeding street by street, getting information through the landlords of housing blocks. He reduced the number receiving the public corn-dole from 300,000 to 150,000. And, to avoid the convening of further assemblies for enrolment purposes, he arranged that the places of those who died should be filled each year by the praetors from among those not on the list, chosen by ballot.

[42] Having sent out eighty thousand citizens to settle in colonies overseas, he prescribed—in order to maintain the population of the now depleted city—that no citizen older than twenty and younger than forty,* unless he was on military service, should be absent from Italy for more than three years at a time, that no senator's son should travel abroad unless serving as an officer or accompanying a magistrate, and also that cattle farmers should have youths of free birth as no less than a third of their herdsmen. He conferred citizenship on all who practised medicine or taught liberal arts in Rome, so that they would more willingly continue to live in the city and that others, too, might join them. In order to dispel the hope that debts might be abolished—for which there was frequent pressure—he finally decreed concerning money lent at interest that debtors should satisfy their creditors by means of property handed over in accordance with its purchase value before the civil war, deducting from the principal whatever interest had been paid or pledged. This measure reduced the amount of debt by around a quarter. He dissolved all guilds, apart from those of ancient foundation.* He increased the penalties for crimes and, since the wealthy were more ready to become involved in crime because they were merely exiled without loss of property, he prescribed, according to Cicero,* that those guilty of murdering a close relative should forfeit all their possessions, while those guilty of other crimes should forfeit half.

[43] He administered justice most conscientiously and strictly. He even expelled from the senate those condemned of extortion. He

dissolved the marriage of a man of praetorian rank on the grounds that he married his wife just two days after her previous husband had divorced her, although there was no suspicion of adultery. He imposed customs duties on imported merchandise. He banned the use of litters, and the wearing of purple-dyed garments and of pearls, except in the case of those of a particular position and age and on set days. He particularly enforced sumptuary legislation, stationing inspectors all around the meat-market who were to confiscate and bring to him any forbidden delicacies which were put out for sale, and sometimes he sent out lictors and soldiers who were even to remove dishes from dining-tables which had escaped the scrutiny of the inspectors.

[44] Day by day he developed more numerous and more ambitious plans both for the enhancement and improved organization of the city and for the security and expansion of the empire. First, he planned to construct a temple to Mars of unprecedented size, having filled in and made level the lake where he had staged the sea-battle, and also a theatre of enormous magnitude, to be located just by the Tarpeian rock.* He also intended to reduce the body of civil law and reorganize the best and most useful elements of that vast and amorphous collection into the smallest possible number of books. He planned to open libraries of works in Greek and Latin to the most extensive possible public, putting Marcus Varro* in charge of equipping and managing them; also to drain the Pontine marshes, to empty the Fucine lake, to make a road from the Adriatic sea, along the ridge of the Apennines, as far as the Tiber, to cut a canal through the Isthmus, to contain the Dacians who were overrunning Pontus and Thrace; and then to make war on the Parthians, through lesser Armenia, engaging in battle with them, however, only if he had first tested their forces.*

As he was contemplating and setting about these projects death cut him short. But before I give an account of that, it will not be inappropriate to set out in summary form the details of his appearance, comportment, dress and conduct, as well as matters relating to his governmental and military undertakings.

[45] It is said that he was of lofty stature and fair complexion, with well-formed limbs, rather a full face, and keen, dark eyes. His health was good, although towards the end of his life he used to faint all of a sudden and even had nightmares. On two occasions, also, he suffered

an epileptic fit while engaged in public business. He was most particular in the care of his person—not only did he have his hair cut and face shaved scrupulously but he also had his body hair plucked out—as some have alleged with disapproval.* He regretted most bitterly the loss of his looks through baldness and was often the butt of jokes on the subject from his detractors. For this reason he was in the habit of combing his thinning hair upwards from his crown and, out of all the honours decreed to him by the senate and people, he accepted and took advantage of none so willingly as the right to wear his laurel wreath in perpetuity.

Even the manner of his dress was out of the ordinary. For he would wear a broad-striped tunic with fringed sleeves down to his wrists,* and always belted on the outside—though he wore his belt rather loosely.* Indeed, this is what provoked the warning Sulla is supposed to have given the aristocrats on numerous occasions: 'Beware of the boy with the loose belt.'

[46] He first lived in a modest house in the Subura.* Later, however, when he was Pontifex Maximus, he lived on the Sacred Way in the official residence. Many record his great passion for luxuries and refinements: that he had razed to the ground a villa on Lake Nemi, which he had completed from its foundations at vast expense, because he was not completely satisfied with it (even though he was at that time short of funds and in debt); that when he was on campaign, he would take around with him materials for the construction of mosaic and cut-marble floors; [47] that his invasion of Britain was motivated by the hope he would find pearls there and that in estimating their size he would sometimes feel their weight in his own hand; he was a most avid collector of jewels, embossed metalwork, statues, and paintings from earlier times; his fine-looking and well-educated household slaves were purchased at great expense, something of which even he himself was ashamed, so that he would not let the sums be entered in his accounts; [48] he regularly hosted parties throughout the provinces, using two dining-rooms, soldiers and foreigners reclining in one, and respectable Roman civilians with distinguished provincials in the other. He was so strict in the regulation of his household, regarding matters both great and small, that he had his baker put in fetters for serving bread to the guests different from that which was served to himself,* and imposed capital punishment on one of his favourite freedmen because he had

committed adultery with the wife of a Roman knight (even though no complaint was made against him).

[49] There were no stains on his reputation for manliness, apart from his stay with King Nicomedes, which was a constant source of criticism and was mentioned in taunts from every quarter. I shall not discuss* the notorious lines of Licinius Calvus: 'Whatever Bithynia ever owned and Caesar's buggerer'—not to mention the speeches made against him by Dolabella and the elder Curio, in which Curio called Caesar the queen's concubine and the inner partner of the royal litter, while Curio spoke of the whorehouse of Nicomedes and the Bithynian brothel. I am also passing over the edicts of Bibulus in which he decries his colleague as the queen of Bithynia, alleging that the man who was once in love with a king was now in love with a king's power. It was at that time, Marcus Brutus reports, that a certain Octavius, who, being not quite right in the head, was rather outspoken, at a large gathering called Pompey king and greeted Caesar as queen. Gaius Memmius, however, even accuses him of acting as cup-bearer to Nicomedes with the rest of his catamites at a large party, attended by, among others, some Roman traders, whose names Memmius lists. Cicero, however, was not content with having written in certain letters that Caesar had been led by courtiers into the king's chamber where he reclined on a golden bed with purple coverlet, and that the virginity of the man descended from Venus was lost in Bithynia; he once remarked, when Caesar was speaking in the senate in defence of Nysa, the daughter of Nicomedes, and recalling the king's kindness to himself: 'Make no mention of that, I beg you, for it is well known what he gave you and what you gave him.' Finally, in his triumph over Gaul, his men chanted, among the other songs soldiers usually come out with as they march behind the chariot,* the following most notorious lines:

Caesar had his way with Gaul;
 Nicomedes had his way with Caesar:
 Behold now Caesar, conqueror of Gaul, in triumph,
 Not so, Nicomedes, conqueror of Caesar.

[50] Everyone agrees that he was inclined to be unrestrained and extravagant in love-affairs and that he damaged the reputations of a great many women of rank, including Postumia, wife of Servius Sulpicius, Lollia, wife of Aulus Gabinius, Tertulla, wife of Marcus

Crassus, and even Mucia, the wife of Gnaeus Pompey. Certainly Pompey was criticized by the elder and the younger Curios and by many others when, having divorced a wife who had borne him three children because of the man he used to lament as an Aegisthus,* he later took the same man's daughter in marriage* because of his own lust for power. But above all Caesar loved Servilia, the mother of Marcus Brutus, for whom, during his last consulship, he bought a pearl worth six million sesterces and, in the course of the civil war, in addition to other gifts, knocked down to her some extensive estates which were on sale at auction at a very modest price. Indeed many were astonished at the low price and Cicero wittily remarked: 'The price was higher for a third was knocked off.' For it was believed that Servilia was prostituting her daughter, Tertia,* to him. [51] Nor did he refrain from affairs in the provinces, as emerges particularly from this couplet, also declaimed by the soldiers in the Gallic triumph:

Men of Rome, look out for your wives; we're bringing the bald adulterer home.
 In Gaul you fucked your way through a fortune, which you borrowed here in Rome.

[52] He also had love-affairs with queens, among them Eunoe of Mauretania, the wife of Bogud,* to whom and to whose husband Caesar gave many, great gifts, as Naso* records. But most particularly he loved Cleopatra, with whom he often prolonged parties until dawn, and with her, too, he journeyed by royal barge deep into Egypt, and would have reached Ethiopia but his army refused to follow him. Moreover, he welcomed her to Rome* and only let her go home when he had showered her with the greatest honours and gifts. The child born to her he allowed to be called by his name. Indeed, several Greek writers record that he was like Caesar in both appearance and bearing. Mark Antony confirmed to the senate that Caesar had actually acknowledged the child and that Gaius Matius, Gaius Oppius, and others of Caesar's friends were aware of this.* However, Gaius Oppius published a book, as though the matter needed some excuse and defence, alleging that the boy was not, as Cleopatra claimed, the child of Caesar. Helvius Cinna, tribune of the plebs,* confessed to several people that he had had ready the text of a law, which Caesar had instructed should be passed during his own absence, to the effect that he should be permitted to marry

whichever and however many women he pleased for the purpose of having children. And lest there should be any doubt as to his shocking reputation for submitting himself to men and for adultery, the elder Curio, in one of his speeches, termed Caesar 'a man to every woman and a woman to every man'.

[53] Not even his enemies denied that he was very sparing in his consumption of wine. It was Marcus Cato who said: 'Caesar's the only man to have tried to overturn the state when sober.' Indeed, Gaius Oppius records that he was so indifferent to what he consumed that, on one occasion, when his host had served stale oil instead of fresh, and no one else would touch the food, Caesar ate heartily, so that he should not seem to be reproaching his host either for carelessness or for lack of manners.

[54] However, he showed no restraint as a magistrate or general. For as some have borne witness in their memoirs, as governor in Spain* he took money from allies on false pretences in order to pay off his debts, and made hostile raids on some towns of the Lusitani, though they had obeyed his orders and opened their gates when he approached. In Gaul, he despoiled shrines and temples to the gods of their offerings and destroyed cities more often in the hope of booty than because they had committed some offence. It was for this reason that he had so much gold and sold it throughout Italy and the provinces for three thousand sesterces a pound.* During his first consulship, he stole three thousand pounds of gold from the Capitol, replacing it with the same quantity of gilded bronze.* He exchanged alliances and kingdoms at a price, extorting from Ptolemy alone nearly six thousand talents, in his own name and that of Pompey. Later, indeed, he covered the burdensome costs of his civil wars, his triumphs and his public munificence through the most outrageous pillage and sacrilege.

[55] As regards both eloquence and military skills he either equalled or excelled in glory the very best. He was certainly counted among the leading advocates, after his speech against Dolabella.* Indeed, when Cicero, in his 'Brutus', goes through the orators, he says he cannot see to whom Caesar would take second place, describing him as maintaining a style of speech which is elegant, impressive, too, and even splendid and ample.* And to Cornelius Nepos he writes thus on the same subject: 'What then? Who, of all those whose only business is oratory, would you place above him as an orator? Whose

witticisms are sharper or more numerous? Who is more vivid or more elegant in his choice of words?' In his youth he seems to have modelled his style on that of Caesar Strabo,* even using for a proposed speech of his own some phrases from the speech Strabo wrote on behalf of the Sardinians. He is said to have had a high voice when speaking in public, with impassioned movements and gestures, and considerable charm. He left a number of speeches, among them some attributed to him on poor grounds. With some justification, Augustus was of the view that the text of Caesar's 'On Behalf of Metellus' was a version taken down by stenographers who failed to follow accurately what he said, rather than written by himself. For in some texts I find that the title is recorded not as 'On Behalf of Metellus' but rather 'A Speech Written for Metellus', although the words seem to be spoken by Caesar, in defence of Metellus and himself, refuting accusations brought against them both by common opponents.* The authenticity of another speech, 'To the Soldiers in Spain', is also doubted by Augustus, although it survives in two sections, one apparently delivered at the first battle, the other at the second (at which Asinius Pollio says he had no time to give an address, as he suddenly came under attack from the enemy).

[56] He also left 'Commentaries' on his actions in the Gallic war and the civil war against Pompey, though the authorship of the works on the Alexandrian war, the African war, and the Spanish war is uncertain. Some think it was Oppius, others Hirtius. Certainly it was the latter who completed the final and unfinished book of the Gallic war.* Cicero has the following comments on Caesar's 'Commentaries', again in the 'Brutus': 'The "Commentaries" he wrote are most worthy of praise. They are plain, direct, and elegant, almost naked in their lack of all ornament. Yet though it was his aim that they should serve others as a ready basis on which those who wished might write proper histories, he perhaps encouraged the foolish who want to crimp and curl their material but he deterred sensible men from putting pen to paper.*' On the same 'Commentaries', Hirtius makes the following pronouncement: 'They are so much approved of in the judgement of all, that they seem to have removed rather than provided an opportunity for writers. Yet the admiration I feel is even greater than that felt by others. For while they know how well and purely they are written, I know how easily and quickly he did it.*' Asinius Pollio thought they were written carelessly and inaccurately,

for often Caesar was too ready to credit other people's accounts of their actions and gave a rather faulty version of his own, perhaps on purpose, perhaps even misremembering. It was his plan to rewrite and correct them. He also left a work in two books 'On Analogy'* and the same number of speeches in criticism of Cato,* as well as a poem entitled 'The Journey'. The first of these works he composed during his crossing of the Alps, when he was on his way back from Cisalpine Gaul to join his army after dispensing justice in the local courts, the speeches against Cato during the time after the battle of Munda, and the poem during a journey of twenty-four days from Rome to the further part of Spain. There are also some letters which he wrote to the senate. He seems to have been the first to send these written in columns to form a short book of record, for previously consuls and generals had always written straight across the scroll.* There are also letters to Cicero* and to close friends concerning private matters, in which, if he wanted to communicate something secretly, he would write in code, changing the order of the letters of the alphabet, so that not a word could be made out. To decipher this and read it, one must substitute for each letter the one which comes four places later, thus 'D' for 'A' and so on. There are also some works which he is said to have written in his boyhood and adolescence, including 'The Praises of Hercules' and a tragedy 'Oedipus', as well as a collection of sayings. However, Augustus prohibited the publication of any of these works,* in a short and direct letter which he sent to Pompeius Macrus, who had been given the task of organizing the libraries.

[57] He was most talented in the use of arms and in horse-riding and had astonishing powers of endurance. On the march, he would sometimes precede his men on horseback, more often on foot, his head uncovered, rain or shine. He completed the most lengthy journeys at incredible speed, covering a hundred miles a day, when travelling light in a hired carriage. If rivers were going to cause delay, he would cross them either by swimming or else using inflated skins as floats, so that he often arrived in advance of the messengers sent to announce him.

[58] In the conduct of his expeditions, it is hard to say whether he was more cautious or more daring. He would never take his troops on a route where they might be vulnerable to ambush unless he had first made an inspection of the country, nor did he transport them to

Britain until he had personally organized an investigation of the harbours, the route and points of access to the island. Moreover, when he heard news that his camp was under siege in Germany, he made his way there through the enemy posts, disguised as a Gaul. He crossed from Brundisium to Dyrrhachium in winter, passing among the ships of the enemy and, when his troops hesitated, after he had ordered them to follow, and would not respond when he repeatedly summoned them, finally he himself, with his head covered, secretly embarked on his own into a little boat by night, not revealing his identity nor allowing the captain to yield to the hostile weather, until he was almost capsized by the waves.

[59] He was never induced to abandon or postpone any enterprise through regard for omens.* He did not put off his expedition against Scipio and Juba,* when the victim escaped as he was trying to make a sacrifice.* Even when he fell to the ground on disembarking from his ship he interpreted this as a positive omen: 'I've got you, Africa,' he said. And in order to get around the prophecies which proclaimed that the name of Scipio was fated to be fortunate and invincible in that province, he included in his entourage a very degraded member of the Cornelian family, who was known as Salvito, due to the disreputable life he led.* [60] He would commence battle not just when he had planned to do so but also if opportunities arose, often straight after a march, and sometimes in the most dreadful weather conditions, when his action would be least expected. It was only towards the very end that he was more reluctant to join battle, considering that, the more victories he had won, the less he ought to tempt fate and that a victory could never bring him as much as a defeat could take away. He never routed his enemies without also driving them out of their camp, not letting up even when they were terrified. When the outcome of a battle was uncertain, he would send away the horses, his own among the first, in order to force his men to stay by removing their means of flight. [61] Indeed, his horse was an extraordinary creature, whose feet were almost human, for its hooves were divided so that they looked like toes. When this horse was born on his estate, seers interpreted it as an omen that Caesar would become lord of all the world. He raised it with great care and was himself the first to ride it—it would tolerate no other rider. Later on he even dedicated a statue of it before the temple of Venus Genetrix.

[62] When his army was losing ground, he would often rally his

men single-handed, standing in the way of those who were fleeing, laying hold of each soldier, even grabbing them by the throat and turning them round to face the enemy. Some of them were indeed so terrified that one standard-bearer even threatened Caesar with the point of his standard when Caesar tried to hold him up, while another left him holding the standard, when Caesar stood in his way. [63] His determination was just as great, and even more clearly demonstrated. After the battle of Pharsalus, when he had sent his forces on ahead into Asia and was crossing the straits of the Hellespont by ferry, Lucius Cassius, who was on the enemy side, obstructed his way with ten battleships. But Caesar did not retreat and, as he drew near, encouraged Cassius to give himself up, then took him on board as a suppliant. [64] Engaged in attacking a bridge near Alexandria, he was forced by a sudden enemy onslaught to take to a boat, which many others also rushed to join. He then jumped into the sea and swam two hundred yards to the nearest ship, all the while holding up his left hand so that the papers he was holding would not get wet, and dragging his military cloak* gripped between his teeth so that it would not be taken by the enemy as a trophy.

[65] The value he placed on his soldiers was determined not by their character or station in life but by their prowess alone. He would treat them with strictness and indulgence in equal measure. For he would not impose restraints on them at all times and in all places but only when the enemy was at hand. Then, however, he would impose the very strictest discipline, never announcing beforehand when a march or battle would take place but keeping his men ready and alert at all times, so that he might suddenly lead them forth wherever he wished. On many occasions he would do this even when he had no cause, particularly during rainstorms or on feast days. Issuing frequent warnings that they should watch him closely, he would often slip away by day or by night and go on a longer march in order to tire out those who were lagging behind. [66] When his men were stricken with fear by rumours concerning the enemy's numbers, rather than seeking to play them down or deny them he would instead reinforce them with exaggeration and embellishment. Thus when there was great alarm at the imminent arrival of Juba, he summoned his soldiers to an assembly and declared: 'You should know that in a very few days the king will arrive with ten legions, thirty thousand cavalry, a hundred thousand light infantry and three

hundred elephants. So let people leave off asking any more questions or speculating, and believe what I say, for my information is reliable. Otherwise I shall give orders that they be put in a worn-out boat to be carried away to whatever lands the wind takes them.'

[67] Some offences he would overlook or not punish in accordance with regular discipline. Rather, while he was extremely strict in investigating and punishing desertion or mutiny, he would take little notice of other things. Sometimes, when they had fought a great battle and been victorious, he would let his men off their duties and allow everyone to indulge themselves as they pleased. And he used to boast that his soldiers could fight well even when they were dripping with perfume.* In assemblies he would address them not as 'soldiers' but by the more flattering term 'comrades'* and he so looked after their appearance that he had their weapons polished and decorated with gold and silver, both for show—and so that the men would keep hold of them more determinedly in battle, fearing the cost of replacement. He had such affection for his men that when news came of the Titurian disaster,* he let his hair and beard grow and would not cut them until he had secured vengeance.

[68] By these means he made his men utterly loyal to him and supremely brave as well. When he embarked on civil war, every centurion of every legion offered to supply a horseman from his own funds and all his soldiers offered their service without pay and without rations—for the wealthier ones took care of the needs of those of limited resources. Nor throughout that long period did anyone whatsoever desert his cause. Indeed, many of them, when as captives they were offered their lives on condition that they take up arms against Caesar, refused. So great was their ability to tolerate hunger and other deprivations, not only when they were besieged but even when they themselves laid siege to others, that when Pompey saw among the defence works at Dyrrhachium* some of the bread made from grasses with which they were sustaining themselves, he remarked that he was at war with wild beasts, and gave orders that the bread should be taken away and concealed from everyone, lest knowledge of the enemy's endurance and tenacity should break the spirits of his men.

How bravely they fought is shown by the fact that on the one occasion, at Dyrrhachium, when the fighting went against them and they asked of their own accord for punishment, their leader felt

obliged to console rather than punish them. In other battles, though they were fewer in number, they readily overcame countless enemy troops. Indeed, one cohort of the sixth legion, left in charge of a stronghold, kept four of Pompey's legions at bay for a number of hours, though nearly all of them had been wounded by the enemy's arrows, of which a hundred and thirty thousand* were later found within the palisade. And no wonder if one considers individual cases, such as that of the centurion Cassius Scaeva or the regular soldier Gaius Acilius, not to mention many others. Scaeva had lost an eye and was hit in the thigh and the shoulder, while his shield had received a hundred and twenty strikes, yet he still kept control of the gate into the fortress. During the naval battle at Massilia Acilius had his right hand chopped off when he laid hold of an enemy prow but, imitating the famous example set by the Greek Cynegirus,* leapt into the ship, driving back his assailants with the boss of his shield. [69] During the ten years of the Gallic war, they did not once mutiny. There were a few occasions during the civil wars but they speedily returned to their duties, in response to their general's authority rather than any leniency on his part. For he would never give ground to trouble-makers but always went forth to meet them. Indeed, at Placentia,* though Pompey's forces were still at large, he declared the entire ninth legion dishonourably dismissed, only agreeing to reinstate them after many abject entreaties and when those responsible had been punished. [70] When the men of the tenth legion demanded retirement and bonuses at Rome, threatening serious harm against the city, at a time when the war was raging in Africa, he did not hesitate to go to them, though his friends advised against it, and disband them. But with one word—addressing them as citizens rather than soldiers—he won them over and brought them round, for they at once replied that they were his soldiers and, although he asked them not to, they followed him to Africa of their own accord. Even then he imposed on the most troublesome a fine of a third of the booty and the land which they had been due to receive.*

[71] Even when he was a young man he was unfailing in his care for and loyalty toward his supporters. He defended the young aristocrat Masintha* so stalwartly against King Hiempsal that in the quarrel he pulled the beard of King Juba's son.* When Masintha was declared tributary to the king, Caesar at once snatched him away from those who were trying to arrest him and hid him at his own

house for some time. Soon afterwards, setting out for Spain after his praetorship,* he carried him off concealed in his own litter, which was surrounded by friends paying their respects, as well as the lictors with their fasces.*

[72] He always treated his friends with such consideration and kindness that once, when Gaius Oppius was accompanying him on a journey through woodland and was suddenly taken ill, Caesar let him have the only shelter available, himself sleeping on the ground in the open air. Once he had taken control of the state, however, he promoted to the most elevated positions some who were of very humble origins and, when he was criticized for this, he declared openly that if he had made use of the help of brigands and cut-throats in defending his honour, he would reward even such men with equal favour. [73] On the other hand, he never maintained such serious grudges that he would not readily relinquish them, if the occasion arose. Despite Gaius Memmius' ferocious speeches against him, to which he had replied with equal sharpness, Caesar even gave him his backing when he sought the consulship.* When Gaius Calvus, after writing defamatory epigrams, sent friends to request a reconciliation, Caesar anticipated him, unprompted, with a letter of his own.* As for Valerius Catullus, whose verses about Mamurra had done lasting damage to his reputation* as Caesar did not deny, when he apologized, Caesar invited him to dinner that very day and continued to exchange hospitality with his father, as he was accustomed to do.

[74] Even in taking his revenge he was naturally inclined toward leniency. When he had at his mercy the pirates who had captured him, he had them crucified, since he had earlier sworn that he would do so, but he gave orders that they should be strangled first.* He could never bring himself to harm Cornelius Phagites, who lay in wait for him at night during the time when he was sick and in hiding, so that it was only by handing over a large sum of money that he was able to escape being delivered to Sulla.* When Philemon, his slave-secretary, had promised Caesar's enemies that he would bring about his death through poison, Caesar merely put him to death without further punishment.* When he was summoned as a witness in the case against Publius Clodius, who was accused of adultery with Caesar's wife Pompeia and at the same time of polluting religious rites, he denied that he knew anything of the matter, though his

mother Aurelia and his sister Julia had faithfully told the whole story before the same judges. And when he was asked why, if he knew nothing, he had nevertheless divorced his wife, he replied: 'In my view, my family needs to be as much free of suspicion as free of crime.*'

[75] He certainly showed astonishing moderation and mercy both during the period of his rule and after his victory in the civil war. When Pompey proclaimed that anyone who did not fight for the republic would be deemed an enemy, Caesar declared that he would count among his allies those who were undecided or belonged to neither party. To all those whom he had promoted to the rank of centurion on Pompey's recommendation, he gave permission to go over to Pompey's side. When conditions of surrender were under discussion at Ilerda and, during the frequent comings and goings between the two sides, Afranius and Petreius, suddenly changing their minds, seized some Caesarian agents, who were in their camp and killed them, Caesar could not bring himself to duplicate the act of treachery that had been committed against him.* In the course of the battle of Pharsalus, he proclaimed that citizens were to be spared, and later he allowed each of his men to save any man he chose of the opposite party. And it will be found that, apart from those who died in battle, none of the Pompeians lost their lives, with the exception of Afranius, Faustus, and the young Lucius Caesar.* And even these, it is thought, were not killed through any wish of Caesar's. The first two had rebelled after seeking and obtaining forgiveness, while Lucius Caesar had cruelly put to death Julius' slaves and freedmen with fire and the sword and had also slaughtered the animals which Julius had bought for a public entertainment. Finally, at the conclusion of the war, he gave permission to all those whom he had not already forgiven to return to Italy and to hold magistracies and army commands. He had even restored to their position the statues of Lucius Sulla and of Pompey which had been broken up by the common people.* And thereafter, if anyone planned or said anything threatening against him, he preferred to restrain rather than punish them. He thus took no further action against conspiracies and night-time meetings other than to make clear through edicts that he was aware of them. When people spoke of him critically, he was content to urge in public that they should desist. He bore with good grace the harm to his reputation caused by the most defamatory

book written by Aulus and Caecina and the highly abusive poems of Pitholaus.*

[76] However, other things he did and said outweighed these, so that it is thought he abused his power and was justly killed. Not only did he accept excessive honours—one consulship after another,* the dictatorship in perpetuity, responsibility for morals,* as well as the forename 'Imperator' and the title 'Father of his Fatherland', a statue displayed with those of the kings,* and a raised seat at the theatre—he even allowed privileges to be bestowed on him which were greater than is right for mortals: a golden seat in the senate house and in front of the speaker's platform, a chariot and litter in the procession for the circus games,* temples, altars, statues placed beside those of the gods, a couch,* a priest,* an extra college of Luperici,* and a month of the year named after him.* Indeed, there were no honours which he did not either confer or receive as he willed. His third and fourth consulships he held in name only, contenting himself with the powers of the dictatorship, which had been conferred on him at the same time as the consulships. And in each of these two years, he appointed two consuls in his place for the final three months, in the mean time holding no elections apart from those for tribunes of the plebs and the plebeian aediles. He also appointed prefects, rather than praetors, who were to take care of affairs in the city during his absence.* When one of the consuls suddenly died the day before the Kalends of January, he gave the office to a man who requested it for the few hours it was vacant. And with equal disregard for law and traditional practice, he allocated magistracies for several years in advance, conferred the emblems of consular rank on ten ex-praetors, and admitted to the Senate men who had been given citizenship, some of whom were half-barbarous Gauls. Moreover, he put his own slaves in charge of the mint and the collection of public revenues and delegated the care and command of three legions, which he had left at Alexandria, to Rufio,* the son of his freedman and one of his pretty boys.

[77] His public sayings, as recorded by Titus Ampius,* were characterized by equal arrogance: 'The republic is nothing—just a name, without substance or form,' 'Sulla was a fool when he gave up the dictatorship,' 'Men should now have more consideration in speaking with me and regard what I say as law.' Such was the level of insolence he reached that, when a seer pronounced of a sacrifice

that the entrails were ominous and the heart was missing, Caesar declared that future sacrifices would be better, since such was his wish, nor should it be thought a sign of ill omen, if an animal had no heart.*

[78] However, the extreme and fatal envy he inspired was particularly provoked by the following: when the entire senate came to him, bringing many decrees conferring the highest honours, he received them in front of the temple of Venus Genetrix, without getting up. Some think that he was held back when he tried to rise by Cornelius Balbus. Others believe that he made no attempt to get up and that when Gaius Trebatius actually advised him to rise, he gave him a very hostile look. This action of his seemed the more intolerable, because, when during his triumph he rode past the tribunes' benches, he himself had been so indignant at Pontius Aquila,* one of the tribunes, who had remained seated, that he declared: 'So tribune Aquila, take the republic from me!' And for days afterwards he would make no promises to anyone, except with the condition, 'So long as Pontius Aquila permits.' [79] He added to this insult, showing his contempt for the senate, another deed of even greater insolence. For when, at the time of the Latin festival* he was returning to the city, amid the other excessive and unprecedented demonstrations by the people, one member of the crowd had placed a laurel crown, bound with a white ribbon,* on his statue and the tribunes of the plebs, Epidius Marullus and Caesetius Flavus had given orders that the ribbon should be removed from the crown and that the man should be thrown into chains. Caesar, regretting, perhaps, that the reference to kingship had met with such a poor reception, or else, as he claimed, that he had been robbed of the glory to be had from refusing the honour, took the tribunes severely to task and deprived them of their authority. And after that time he was never able to shake off the rumour that his ambition was to take the title of king, even though, when the common people greeted him as king, he replied that he was not King but Caesar* and when, during the Lupercalia,* the consul Antony several times brought a diadem toward his head as he stood before the rostra, he pushed it away and had it sent to the Capitol to Jupiter Best and Greatest.* Indeed, various rumours were in circulation—that he was planning to move to Alexandria or to Troy, taking with him the riches of the empire, since Italy was now depleted by levies, and leaving the city of Rome

to be looked after by his associates; and that at the next meeting of the senate Lucius Cotta would announce the proposal of the Board of Fifteen* that, since the oracular books stated that the Parthians could not be beaten except by a king, Caesar should be given the title 'king'.*

[80] It was for this reason that the conspirators decided to speed up their planned action, in order to avoid having to give their assent to such a proposal. And so they all brought together the various plans which they had previously pondered separately in groups of two or three. For the people were unhappy at the present state of affairs, making covert—and even public—criticisms of Caesar's tyranny and demanding champions. When foreigners were admitted to the senate, the following placard was set up: 'Well done, those who refuse to show a new senator where the senate house is!' And the following verse was heard everywhere:

Caesar led Gauls in his triumph—and into the senate house;
The Gauls put aside their trousers and put on the broad stripe.*

When Quintus Maximus, who had been made suffect consul for three months, entered the theatre and the lictor gave the usual sign to take note of his arrival, there was a unanimous shout, 'He is no consul!' At the elections, after the tribunes Caesetius and Marullus had been removed from their posts, a number of votes were found proposing them as consuls. Some people wrote on the statue of Lucius Brutus:* 'If only you were living!' and on that of Caesar himself:

Brutus was made first consul, since he threw out the kings,
He, since he's thrown out the consuls, eventually gets to be king.

More than sixty people were involved in the conspiracy against him; the leaders were Gaius Cassius and Marcus and Decimus Brutus. At first they were in doubt as to whether, during the elections in the Campus Martius when he was calling the tribes to vote, they should divide into groups and throw him from the bridge,* then hold him and kill him, or else if they should attack him on the Sacred Way* or at the entrance to the theatre. When it was announced that the senate meeting on the Ides of March would take place in Pompey's Senate Chamber,* they readily chose this time and place instead.

[81] Caesar's murder was, however, foretold by clear portents. A

few months beforehand, some colonists, sent in accordance with the Julian law to the colony of Capua,* were tearing down some ancient tombs, in order to construct villas, and were working all the harder since, looking carefully, they were discovering a number of vessels of ancient workmanship, when they found a bronze tablet, fixed on a tomb, which was said to be that of Capys,* founder of Capua, and bearing a message in Greek words and characters to this effect: 'When the bones of Capys are moved, it shall come to pass that one of his descendants shall be slain at the hands of a kinsman, and soon afterwards avenged—a great disaster for Italy.' The source for this—lest anyone should think it a fiction or fantasy—is Cornelius Balbus, a very close friend of Caesar. And just a few days before, the news came that some herds of horses which Caesar had dedicated to the River Rubicon when he crossed it, letting them wander free without a keeper, were obstinately refusing food and weeping copiously. When Caesar was making a sacrifice the seer Spurinna warned him to look out for danger which would come no later than the Ides of March. The day before the same Ides, when a king's bird* was flying toward Pompey's Senate Chamber, with a laurel sprig in its mouth, other birds of various kinds from a nearby grove attacked it and tore it to pieces in the same Chamber. And that very night which ushered in the fatal day, Caesar himself had a dream, in which he was sometimes flying above the clouds and sometimes joining his right hand with that of Jupiter,* while his wife Calpurnia had a vision in which the pediment* of the house fell in and her husband was run through in her arms. Then suddenly the doors of the bedchamber flew open of their own accord.

Because of these things—and because his health was poor—Caesar long debated whether to stay in and postpone the business he had meant to undertake in the senate. In the end, when Decimus Brutus pressed him not to disappoint the packed meeting which had now been waiting for some time, he made up his mind and set out, when it was almost the fifth hour.* He thrust in amongst the papers he held in his left hand, intending to read them later, the message which someone he met on the way held out to him, giving him warning of the conspiracy. Then, though he could not get favourable omens, despite sacrificing a number of victims, he entered the Senate Chamber, dismissing religious scruple and mocking Spurinna for making false predictions, since the Ides of March had come and

brought him no harm. Spurinna, however, replied that though they had come, they had not yet gone. [82] When he was seated, the conspirators gathered around him, as if to show their respect, and immediately Tillius Cimber, who had taken on the task of initiating the action, came up close to Caesar, as though about to make a request. When Caesar shook his head and waved him away, putting off his business for another time, Cimber grabbed his toga at the shoulders. Caesar then cried out 'But this is force!' and one of the Casca brothers stabbed him from behind, just below the throat. Caesar grabbed Casca's arm and ran him through with a writing implement but, as he tried to leap forward, he was held back by another wound. When he realized that he was being attacked on all sides with drawn daggers, he wrapped his toga around his head, at the same time using his left hand to pull it down over his thighs, so that, with the lower part of his body also covered, his fall would be more decent. And so it was that he was stabbed twenty-three times, saying nothing and letting out merely a single groan, at the first blow—though some people relate that when Marcus Brutus came at him, he said in Greek: 'You, too, my son?' He lay lifeless for some time, after everyone had run off, until three young slaves put him on a litter and carried him home, one arm dangling. Among all those wounds, according to Antistius the doctor, none was fatal with the exception of the second he received, in his breast.

It was the conspirators' intention to drag the dead man's body into the Tiber,* seize his goods and rescind his legislation, but they abandoned this plan through fear of the consul Mark Antony and the Master of Horse, Lepidus. [83] In response to the request of his father-in-law, Lucius Piso, Caesar's will was opened and read out in Antony's house (he had written it on the Ides of September of the previous year* in his villa near Lavicum and given it for safe-keeping to the chief Vestal Virgin). Quintus Tubero records that, from the time of Pompey's first consulship right up to the start of the civil war, he was in the habit of designating Gnaeus Pompey as his heir and this was announced to a gathering of soldiers. But in his final will, he designated as his three heirs his sisters' grandsons, Gaius Octavius to receive three-quarters of the estate, and then Lucius Pinarius and Quintus Pedius to share the rest.* At the end of the document, he even adopted Gaius Octavius into his family and gave him his name. Quite a few of his assailants were nominated as tutors

to his son, in case he should have one, while Decimus Brutus was even among the heirs in the second rank.* To the Roman people he left his gardens on the banks of the Tiber for public use and to each man three hundred sesterces.

[84] When the funeral was announced, a pyre was built on the Campus Martius next to the tomb of Julia* and on the rostra was placed a golden shrine, modelled on the temple of Venus Genetrix.* Within was an ivory couch with gold and purple coverings and at its head stood a pillar hung with the clothes he was wearing when he was killed. Since it seemed there would not be enough time in the day for those making offerings, instructions were given that there should be no procession but that they should make their way by any city streets they chose and bring their gifts to the Campus Martius. As part of the funeral games, some songs were sung which were adapted from Pacuvius' 'Judgement of Arms' to express grief and anger at Caesar's killing:

Did I save these that they should murder me?

as well as comments to similar effect from Atilius' 'Electra'.* In place of the funeral oration, the consul Mark Antony had a herald read out the senate's decisions to vote Caesar all honours both human and divine and also the oath by which they all had bound themselves to ensure his safety. To these statements he added a few brief words of his own. Magistrates and ex-magistrates carried the bier from the rostra down into the forum. While some were urging that he be cremated within the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and others in Pompey's Senate Chamber, all of a sudden two figures appeared, girt with swords and each brandishing two javelins. With blazing torches they set fire to the bier and immediately the crowd of bystanders loaded on dry branches, the judgement seats, and the benches, as well as anything else that could serve as an offering. Then the flute-players and the actors* tore off the clothes which they had taken from among the triumphal finery to wear for the occasion, ripped them up and threw them into the flames, while veteran legionary soldiers threw on the weapons with which they had decked themselves out for the funeral. A considerable number of matrons, too, threw on the jewellery they were wearing, as well as the amulets and togas of their children. At the height of public grief, a crowd of foreigners gathered in groups and lamented Caesar, each in their

own way, in particular the Jews,* who flocked to the funeral pyre night after night. [85] Straight after the funeral the common people made for the houses of Brutus and Cassius armed with torches and were only just held back. Encountering Helvius Cinna* and confusing his name with that of Cornelius Cinna for whom they were searching because the previous day he had spoken out in strong terms against Caesar, they killed him and carried round his head impaled on a spear. Later on they set up a solid pillar of Numidian marble almost twenty feet high in the Forum and inscribed it with the words 'To the Father of the Fatherland'. And for long afterwards they continued to make sacrifices there, undertake vows, and to sort out certain disputes by an oath made in Caesar's name.

[86] Caesar left some of those close to him with the suspicion that he had no wish to live much longer and had taken no precautions, since his health was deteriorating, and that it was for this reason that he took little notice either of portents or of the advice of his friends. There are those who think that he had such faith in the most recent decree of the senate and their oath that he dismissed the armed guard of Spanish troops who had previously attended him. Others take a different view, holding that he preferred to fall victim just once to the plots that threatened him from all sides, rather than be perpetually on guard against them. Some say that he was even in the habit of remarking that his safety was more a matter of concern for the republic than it was for him. After all, he had long ago achieved outstanding powers and honours. However, if anything happened to him, the republic would not remain at peace but, its condition quickly deteriorating, it would soon suffer civil war.

[87] Nearly all authorities agree that his death was of just the kind of which he approved. For once, when he read in Xenophon* that during his last illness Cyrus had sent some instructions concerning his funeral, he expressed contempt for this slow mode of death, preferring a sudden and rapid end. The day before he died, a discussion had arisen over dinner at Marcus Lepidus' house as to what was the best way to finish one's life, in which Caesar voiced his preference for a death which was quick and unexpected.

[88] He died in the fifty-sixth year of his life* and was included in the ranks of the gods, not only by formal decree but also by the conviction of the common people. Indeed, at the first games which were given after his deification by his heir Augustus, a comet shone,

appearing around the eleventh hour* for seven days in succession and it was believed to be the soul of Caesar who had been received into heaven. For this reason, a star is placed on top of the head of his statue.

It was decided that the Senate Chamber, in which he was killed, should be closed off and that senate meetings were never to take place on the Ides of March which should be renamed the Day of Parricide. [89] Of the murderers, virtually none survived more than three years or met a natural end. All were condemned, each meeting a different fate, some by shipwreck, others in battle. A few even took their own lives with the same dagger they had used to make their impious attack on Caesar.

THE DEIFIED AUGUSTUS

[1] That the Octavii were in ancient times the leading family in Velitrae* is affirmed by many indications. An area in the busiest part of town long ago had the name 'Octavian' and an altar was to be seen dedicated by an Octavius. This man, when serving as leader in a war with a neighbouring people, happened to be in the middle of making an offering to Mars when he heard the news that the enemy had suddenly attacked. Snatching the victim's entrails from the fire, he presented them half raw before commencing the battle from which he returned victorious. There was also a decree of the people on record, prescribing that in future, too, the entrails should be offered to Mars in the same way and that the remaining parts of the sacrificial victims should be given to the Octavii.

[2] The family had been enrolled in the senate among the minor families* by King Tarquinius Priscus. Then, soon afterwards, they were included among the patricians by King Servius Tullius. In the course of time they transferred themselves to the plebeians, then, after a long interval, they returned, through the agency of the Deified Julius, to the patriciate.* The first of the family to be elected to a magistracy by the vote of the people was Gaius Rufus. As an ex-quaestor, he fathered two sons, Gnaeus and Gaius, who in turn produced the two branches of the Octavian family. These two branches were very different in their fortunes: Gnaeus and his descendants all held the highest magistracies, while Gaius and his progeny, whether by chance or through their own wishes, remained in the equestrian order down to the time of Augustus' father.

An ancestor of Augustus served as a military tribune in Sicily under the command of Aemilius Papus during the Second Punic War.* Augustus' grandfather, a man of considerable wealth, lived in great tranquillity to a ripe old age, having satisfied his ambitions with service as a municipal magistrate. That story is, however, told by others; Augustus himself writes no more than that he was born into an old-established and prosperous equestrian family, his father being the first in the family to attain senatorial rank. Mark Antony taunts Augustus with having as his great-grandfather an ex-slave who had earned his living as a rope-maker in the neighbourhood of Thurii,