

p. 63 Caesar had the habit, it would seem, of deciding what was the best word for this and that, and then never admitting any other.

p. 64 The precision in the use of words, the pura et inlustris brevitatis which Cicero praises in Caesar's writing is a constant phenomenon. But as the Commentaries proceed, they exhibit some difference of style. It has often been observed how the First Book of the Gallia War is more formal in the commentarius manner than the Second, and that after the Second the style becomes slightly more informal in the next four books. The Seventh Book has more movement still and, as it were, flows faster, and the same is true of the books of the Civil War. The constructions and run of sentences become freer, and there are changes of a kind which suggest a change of habit rather than a reasoned change of preference in the search for the right word. Such a change of habit is hard to understand if Caesar composed the first seven books of the Gallia War in one continuous literary activity within a short space of time. It is in fact a strong, perhaps the most cogent, argument for the view that the Gallia War was written in stages over a number of years. If this is so, it may have been quite natural for Caesar to become less concerned to preserve the stylistic effect that belongs to the commentarius form. There appears, indeed, ~~xxxx~~ in the First Book of the Gallia War to be deliberate avoidance of literary polish. Thus in the third chapter two successive sentences begin with the phrase 'ad eas res conficiendas'. In neither sentence can the phrase be merely struck out as an interpolation without harming the sense, and it is hard to suppose that the repetition is due to hasty writing. It appears rather to be a deliberate roughening of the style.

p. 74 p. 73 Thus the study of Caesar's style may be revealing for the study of Caesar's mind and will, especially at moments of crisis. When he is describing the doings of his lieutenants the style is, in general, less emphatic, less vigorous, though even in these, as in the account of Curio's campaign or, again, in that of the disaster to the army of Sabinus and Cotta and the events that led to it, there is a more dramatic treatment of the situation. It becomes more personal as Caesar's imagination of what must have happened is engaged. On the whole, though, the operations of the legati are described so that the military quality of their actions, their consilia, so far as these are their own and not Caesar's at one remove, can be appraised, but that is all.

p. 74 None the less, a close study of those parts of Caesar's narrative ~~xx~~ which rest on the reports of his lieutenants may reveal stylistic touches which are taken over in a kind of submerged quotation. Thus in the account of the siege of Massilia the texture of the narrative appears to show three strands, the matter-of-fact technical siegecraft of Trebonius, a livelier tone in the report of naval operations which would be supplied by the admiral Decimus Brutus, and the occasional comment of Caesar himself.

There is a habit of Caesar which may reflect more than one stylistic motive. When he is describing actions or the springs of action he invariably refers to himself in the third person by his name Caesar.