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GREAT EXPECTATIONS: WORDPLAY AS WARFARE IN CAESAR'S *BELLVM CIVILE**

ABSTRACT

This article argues that Caesar puns on the cognomen of Pompey the Great through his use of the adjective magnus *at least twice in his* Bellum Civile. *In each instance, the wordplay contributes to (1) evoking the memory of Pompey's past triumphs and (2) exploring the gulf between past reputation and present reality. By focussing on this particular wordplay, the article contributes to a wider discussion of Caesarean language and wit as well as to studies of Caesar's art of characterization.*

Keywords: Caesar; Pompey; civil war; wordplay; characterization; memory

When Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus began cultivating the honorific cognomen bestowed on him by others, he simultaneously created opportunities for wordplay aimed at that advertised greatness.[1] Scholars of Latin literature might immediately think of Lucan who characterizes the general as a cultivator of fame who, by the time of the civil war with Caesar, exists as the mere 'shadow of a great name' (*stat magni nominis umbra*, 1.135). With this allusion to Pompey's infamous cognomen, Lucan marks the gulf that separates Pompey the general within the text from the great deeds of Pompey's past for which his cognomen serves as shorthand.[2] But Lucan is hardly the first to use Pompey's great name against him. Rather, the imperial poet inherits a type of nominal wordplay with wide currency in the Republic. In the culture of the Late Republic a cognomen functioned as a marker of character that could subject the name-holder to praise but also to critique, especially if there was any perceived distance between laudatory name and name-holder.[3] Name-related wordplay could become a weapon with which to defend an ally, to attack an enemy, or to convey popular feelings about a political figure.[4] In

* This paper has benefitted from many interlocutors, including at the 2012 meeting of CAMWS in Baton Rouge and at graduate seminars held at the University of Cincinnati (2018) and Duke University (2020). Within the latter group I single out Ben Moon-Black, who unknowingly convinced me to return to this article. I owe special thanks also to Caroline Bishop, Cassandra Casias, Timothy Joseph, Isabel Köster, Darcy Krasne, Leo Landrey, the anonymous reader for *CQ* as well as *CQ*'s Editor.

[1] Pompey's cognomen was conferred, as the story goes, by Sulla (Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 13.4) or by Pompey's troops (13.5) or by his *familiares* (Livy 30.45.6).

[2] On Lucan's *magnus*/Magnus theme, see D.C. Feeney, '*Stat magni nominis umbra*. Lucan on the greatness of Pompeius Magnus', *CQ* 36 (1986), 239–41.

[3] See especially A. Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic* (Princeton, 1996), 74–84.

[4] Name-based wordplay becomes a common feature of Republican political dialogue. See V.J. Matthews, 'Some puns on Roman *cognomina*', *G&R* 20 (1973), 20–4; J.N. Adams, 'Conventions of naming in Cicero', *CQ* 28 (1978), 145–66, at 149–56; J.M. May, 'Cicero and the beasts', *SyllClass* 7 (1996), 143–53; Corbeill (n. 3), 57–98; J. Ingleheart, 'Play on proper names of individuals in the Catullan corpus: wordplay, the iambic tradition, and the Late Republican culture of public abuse', *JRS* 104 (2014), 51–72. For the politics of naming (or not) one's subject, including Pompey, see also C.E.W. Steel, 'Name and shame? Invective against Clodius and others in the post-exile speeches', in J. Booth (ed.), *Cicero on the Attack: Invective and Subversion in the Orations and beyond* (Swansea, 2007), 105–28.

Pompey's case, where the cognomen Magnus was the result of acclimation rather than inheritance, it was too easy to manipulate to such ends as a 'label whose applicability he must continually prove'.[5] Scholars have collected evidence of politically motivated *magnus*-puns across Late Republican literature from the works of Cicero to the poetry of Catullus to contemporary anecdotes preserved by later historians and compilers.[6]

This paper aims to add an important yet overlooked voice to our understanding of the cultural reception of Pompey's great name by looking at the *Bellum Civile* of Julius Caesar. I argue that in a little-studied passage from the Spanish campaign (*BCiv.* 1.61), Caesar embeds a series of marked puns on Pompey's cognomen that contribute to the wider passage's meditation on the power of names as predictors of success. So too at the opening of Book 3 Caesar's catalogue of Pompey's forces (3.3) provides an equally illustrative example of how Caesar can use wordplay in service of demythologizing his adversary. That Caesar would recognize and exploit the power of his enemy's self-aggrandizing name should not come as a surprise. Cynthia Damon has noted that Caesar's *Bellum Civile* is richer in names than any of the histories of the parallel tradition and that 'each of these names was, for Caesar, a convenient abbreviation for the personality, the goals, the achievements and the connections of an individual'.[7] Damon is speaking about Caesar's overt use of proper names but, while Caesar only ever refers to Pompey as Pompeius or Cn. Pompeius in the *Bellum Civile*, I believe this pattern of naming playfully obscures at least two instances of Caesarean wordplay on *magnus*/Magnus that function in much the same way that Damon has suggested.[8] For Caesar, wordplay becomes a subtle form of textual warfare against the reputation that his once great enemy used to enjoy.

We enter Caesar's account of the Spanish campaign as the Pompeian commanders, Afranius and Petreius, are considering whether to move the theatre of war to Celtiberia after a few unexpected setbacks (1.61.1–2). Celtiberia was the site of Pompey's greatest successes in the Sertorian War and Afranius had been right by his side, making this a natural move. As Caesar makes clear in a lengthy aside, the collective memory of that war looms large (1.61.2–4):[9]

itaque constituunt ipsi locis excedere et in Celtiberiam bellum transferre. 3. (huic consilio suffragabatur etiam illa res, quod ex duobus contrariis generibus, quae superiore bello cum Sertorio steterant civitates, victae nomen atque imperium absentis timebant, quae in amicitia manserant Pompei, magnis affectae beneficiis eum diligebant; 4. Caesaris autem erat in barbaris nomen obscurius.) hic magnos equitatus magnaque auxilia exspectabant.

And thus the generals themselves decided to withdraw from this location and to transfer the war to Celtiberia. (Adding support to this decision was also the fact that out of the two opposing

[5] Corbeill (n. 3), 81.

[6] E.g. Cic. *Leg. agr*. 2.53, *Att*. 1.16.11–12, 1.20.5, 2.13.2, 2.19.3, 6.1.22, *Arch*. 10.24; Val. Max. 6.2.9; Vell. Pat. 2.33.4. See also Catull. 11 with C. Krebs, '*Magni viri*: Caesar, Alexander, and Pompey in Cat. 11', *Philologus* 152 (2008), 223–9, at 224. Pompey's sons mint posthumous coins which celebrate their father's cognomen (which they inherited), showing how important it remained in the cultural memory of Pompey in the 40s. See S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), 104. For the wider posthumous literary reception of Pompey's cognomen, see especially the discussion in C. Rubincam, 'A tale of two *Magni*: Justin/Trogus on Alexander and Pompey', *Historia* 54 (2005), 265–74.

[7] C. Damon, 'Caesar's practical prose', *CJ* 89 (1994), 183–95, at 185–8.

[8] For nominal wordplay as a tool in Caesar's historiographical predecessors: J. Moles, 'Narrative and speech problems in Thucydides Book 1', in C.S. Kraus, J. Marincola and C. Pelling (edd.), *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts: Studies in Honour of A.J. Woodman* (Oxford, 2010), 15–39.

[9] The text of Caesar used throughout is C. Damon, *C. Iuli Caesaris Commentariorum libri III de bello civili* (Oxford, 2015).

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groups of peoples those communities that in the earlier war had stood with Sertorius had been conquered and continued to fear the name and might of the absent man, but those communities which had remained in alliance with Pompey had been won over by great benefits and continued to esteem him; Caesar's name, however, was more obscure among the uncivilized.) Here in this place they were expecting a great number of cavalry and a great number of auxiliary troops.

As so often in Caesar's *Commentarii*, he expects his reader to do a lot of the interpretative work.[10] He provides simply the name, Sertorius, and a basic outline of events (*superiore bello*; *civitates victae*). It is up to the reader to fill in the details of the earlier war and to use those details to understand the logic of Afranius' and Petreius' proposed strategic move.

Caesar can be confident in his readers' familiarity with these events in part because of Pompey's own celebration of his victory and the significance of that victory for his subsequent career. Pompey's earlier success in Spain and the extraordinary honours given to him to complete his mission seem to have awakened Pompey's drive to shape the narrative that would be told about him.[11] As he returned to Rome for his second triumph, he erected an unusually permanent trophy complex in celebration of his conquest over 876 Spanish communities on the crests of the Pyrenees that had a long afterlife in the Roman cultural memory of Pompey's conquest.[12] Moreover, it was in the wake of his Spanish triumph that he began adopting and regularly using the cognomen Magnus which had been awarded to him earlier.[13] In other words, Pompey tied the emerging legend about his greatness to the geography of Spain.

As a result, the Spanish landscape of the conflict of 49 offers Caesar a prime opportunity to confront the lingering power of Pompey's cognomen and the great expectations engendered by that nominal power in his old stomping grounds. Though embedded within an aside, the memory of the Sertorian War contributes to Caesar's characterization of his absent opponent. Caesar asks the reader to pause and consider the past glory of Pompey in Spain, the memories of those events held by various Spanish communities and by his Roman readers, and the expectations of future success to which

[10] Damon (n. 7), 185.

[11] For Pompey's career-long obsession with fashioning the triumphal narratives told about him, see F.J. Vervaet, '*Si neque leges neque mores cogunt*. Beyond the spectacle of Pompeius Magnus' public triumphs', in C.H. Lange and F.J. Vervaet (edd.), *The Republican Triumph: Beyond the Spectacle* (Rome, 2014), 181–93; J. Clarke, 'Winning too well: Pompey's victories as urban disasters', in V. Closs and E. Keitel (edd.), *Urban Disasters and the Roman Imagination* (Berlin, 2020), 93–115.

[12] The *tropaea* commemorating Pompey's Spanish opponents omitted Sertorius: Sall. fr. 3.63 R / 3.89 M; Plin. *HN* 7.96 and 37.14–16; Flor. 2.10.9. For the role of *tropaea* as marking provincial topography, see Strabo 3.4.7–9, 4.1.3. Sallust seems to see this monumental impulse as part of Pompey's rivalry with Alexander the Great: editions of the fragments of Sallust's *Histories* place Pompey's *tropaea* (3.63 R / 3.89 M) in sequence with his emulation of Alexander the Great (3.62 R / 3.88 M), suggesting that Sallust's account of the Sertorian War offered a biting psychological portrait of Pompeian self-fashioning. Pompey's emulation of Alexander has been well studied even by those sceptical of a wider Roman *imitatio Alexandri*. See P. Green, 'Caesar and Alexander: *aemulatio*, *imitatio*, *comparatio*', *AJAH* 3 (1978), 1–26; E.S. Gruen, 'Rome and the myth of Alexander', in T.W. Hillard et al. (edd.), *Ancient History in a Modern University* (Cambridge, 1998), 178–91; D. Spencer, 'Roman Alexanders: epistemology and identity', in W. Heckel and L.A. Tritle (edd.), *Alexander the Great: A New History* (Oxford, 2009), 251–74; K. Welch and H. Mitchell, 'Revisiting the Roman Alexander', *Antichthon* 47 (2015), 80–100. On Pompey as rival historian more broadly within Sallust's *Histories*, see also J. Gerrish, *Sallust's* Histories *and Triumviral Historiography: Confronting the End of History* (London, 2019), 82–8.

[13] Plut. *Pomp*. 13.5.

those memories might give rise. Within this context, Caesar offers an unusual comment on the power of names (*nomen … absentis*, 1.61.3; *Caesaris … nomen obscurius*, 1.61.4) that, I suggest, introduces an important yet not noted play on Pompey's cognomen.

To appreciate how the discussion of *nomina* is complemented by the adjective *magnus* within this aside, we must take a closer look at the passage. Afranius and Petreius are relying on the vivid yet divided memories of the local populations of Celtiberia. Their assumption is that the impression Pompey left on those communities will ensure they will provide the army with reinforcements. In other words, within Celtiberia there exist two memorial communities with very different perspectives on Pompey's earlier campaign. Caesar's description of each makes use of carefully mirrored syntax (*quae … quae*) that juxtaposes each group's earlier experience of Pompey with the emotions he arouses in them in the present because of those experiences.

This parallelism in syntax foregrounds several contrasts in content. The first group are those whom Pompey had violently conquered for standing with Sertorius against him (*victae*). Their perpetual attitude to Pompey is imagined to be fear (*timebant*), an appropriate assumption given the brutality to which Pompey and Afranius had subjected these communities.[14] Here, however, the target of this fear is not the man himself but rather his *nomen* and his *imperium*, nouns that suggest a lasting terror at the reputation of Pompey even when the commander is absent. In other words, the Celtiberians' fear of Pompey is imagined to be so great that it need not require the presence of the general to activate it; a mere whisper of his name is enough to make these people fall in line with whatever Afranius and Petreius may demand. The second group are those who remained loyal to Pompey during the conflict (*in amicitia manserant*). As a result of Pompey's good treatment, we see a subject population so influenced by Pompey's *beneficia* that they are imagined to all but worship him from afar (*diligebant*). They too, in the eyes of the Pompeian commanders, will go to any lengths to support their ally.

Caesar caps his reflection on Pompey's reputation and on the role of his name in activating his influence by comparing it to his own (*Caesaris autem erat in barbaris nomen obscurius*, 1.61.4). According to Caesar, Pompey's *nomen* can achieve success broadly across both groups of Celtiberians precisely because Caesar's name is comparatively unknown in these parts and thus less effective in inspiring the same sort of fear or loyalty. Through his use of the imperfect (*erat*) and the comparative (*obscurius*), Caesar subtly draws attention to the potential distance between name-driven reputation and human actor. It is not that Caesar is weaker than Pompey at the present moment, but rather that his name has yet to have achieved the great power of his rival's within this geography.[15] The Celtiberians who fear Pompey's *nomen* have yet to experience Caesar's and the ones who cherish Pompey's 'generosity' have yet to see what Caesar can do for his allies. This use of names to create a comparison between the reputation of Caesar and Pompey is unusual and worth noting. While the *Bellum Civile* is interested in the reputation and authority which individuals and communities

[14] Surviving accounts of the Sertorian War foreground the violence against the rebel Celtiberian communities (e.g. Val. Max. 7.6.3; Flor. 2.10.8–9; Oros. 5.23.14). See Clarke (n. 11), 101–2.

[15] Lucan does something similar when he introduces Caesar as *non in Caesare tantum | nomen erat* (Luc. 1.143–4), which can be translated as 'nor in Caesar was there such a great name' or 'nor in Caesar was there only a name'. Feeney (n. 2), 239 argues that Lucan means both: his epic stages the world of Caesar eclipsing the world of Pompey until the only name that matters is Caesar.

can derive from a *nomen* or title,[16] nowhere else are two names put in competition in this way.[17]

Within this context, Caesar deploys the adjective *magnus* three times in swift succession, once within the aside and twice as the narrative resumes in order to flag the perceived strategic importance of those war memories to the Pompeians within the present moment in the narrative. In light of the contest over names and the reputation they signify, I suggest that Caesar uses the adjective *magnus* to create a wordplay with Pompey's famous *cognomen* that advances the core themes of the passage. In doing so, Caesar weaves into his Sertorian aside a series of implicit questions about how names come to be significant conveyors of reputation and also whether that reputation continues to be warranted in the face of new historical circumstances.

We begin with Caesar's description of the great benefits (*magnis beneficiis*, 1.61.3) which have won over Pompey's Spanish allies, a phrase which is artfully nested between two clauses focussed on the idea of Pompey's impressive and illustrious *nomen*. Word order is also significant. Pompey's actual name does not appear in the clause describing Celtiberian fear (*victae nomen atque imperium absentis timebant*). Instead, it is withheld until the following description of Pompey's loyal allies (*in amicitia manserant Pompei*), somewhat displaced from the noun *amicitia* on which it depends. This omission of the name in the first clause and the hyperbaton of the name in the second have bothered a number of Caesar's modern editors; some have gone so far as to move the genitive *Pompei* to the first clause and delete it from the second (for example *nomen atque imperium absentis Pompei*) to eliminate any question about whom *absentis* is imagined to designate.[18]

Damon breaks with this editorial tradition in her recent Oxford Classical Texts edition by electing to preserve the manuscript word order and, in doing so, exposes several examples of Caesarean wit. First, this word order restores the suggestive omission of Pompey's name within the *nomen absentis* clause; as Damon notes, 'surely the untethered *absentis* is meant to reflect Pompey's absence'.[19] But that very untethered *absentis* likewise invites the reader to conjure whatever name they imagine when they recall the conqueror of Celtiberia, perhaps even Magnus. This word order also restores an equally suggestive juxtaposition between the syntactically disconnected name of Pompey and the adjective *magnis* (*quae in amicitia* ***Pompei, magnis*** *affectae beneficiis eum diligebant*, 1.61.3). Through this modest use of hyperbaton, Caesar artfully puts the name Pompeius right next to the cognomen by which he preferred to be recognized within a clause dedicated to the man's deliberate cultivation of a great name among subject populations.

[16] See *BCiv.* 2.32.14, 3.71.3, 3.109.6, 3.110.2.

[17] This comparison, however, plays into a larger rhetorical strategy of implicit comparison between the two generals through pointed verbal juxtapositions (e.g. *rem ad arma deduci studebat*, 1.4.5; *si qua hominum aequitate res ad otium deduci posset*, 1.5.5). I am grateful to the anonymous reader for suggesting this wider comparison.

[18] Editors who print *nomen atque imperium absentis Pompei* over *in amicitia manserant Pompei* include J. Davies (ed.), *C. Iulii Caesaris et Auli Hirti quae extant omnia* (Cambridge, 1727); R. Du Pontet (ed.), *C. Iuli Caesaris Commentariorum pars posterior* (Oxford, 1900); F. Kraner and F. Hofmann (edd.), *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii de bello civili*, 12th edn. (Berlin, 1906); A. Klotz (ed.), *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii. Vol. II: Commentarii belli civilis* (Leipzig, 1926); P. Fabre (ed.), *César, Guerre civile*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1936).

[19] C. Damon, *Studies on the Text of Caesar's* Bellum Civile (Oxford, 2015), 114 n. 27. On the rhetorical politics of suppressing a name easily supplied or delaying a name to make a point, see also Steel (n. 4), 109–11.

As if to reinforce this nominal wordplay, Caesar uses *magnus* twice more in quick succession as he returns to the present and to the Pompeians' strategic decision. Within the larger architecture of the passage, Pompey's Sertorian past provides the logic behind Afranius' and Petreius' proposed move in the present. Owing to Pompey's past conquests and the resulting unequal weight of both generals' names in those regions, Afranius and Petreius expect the Celtiberians to furnish them with a **great** number of cavalry and with a **great** number of auxiliary troops (***magnos*** *equitatos* ***magna****que auxilia expectabant*, 1.61.4). Batstone and Damon have noted that throughout Caesar's *Bellum Civile* even a simple adjective such as *magnus* can become rhetorically pointed through repetition that deviates from the norm; in fact, as they caution, within the plain style of Caesar, adjectives often carry the argument.[20] The pleonastic repetition of *magnus* here is relatively rare within the *Bellum Civile*.[21] The fact that it follows so swiftly on the earlier use of *magnus* makes the repetition rarer still and marks the adjectival cluster as unusual and perhaps pointed.[22] The juxtaposition of these two instances of *magnus* with the immediately preceding clause seems to invite the reader to recognize an opportunity for wordplay: the obscurity (*obscurius*) of Caesar's name when compared with Pompey's leads the Pompeian generals to have *great* expectations (*expectabant*) of future success.

Unfortunately for the Pompeians, they are never able to capitalize on the lingering power of Pompey's name or on the obscurity of Caesar's by testing their luck in Celtiberia. Caesarean tactics quickly render such a move impossible. One might ask, then, why Caesar the narrator indulged in this comparatively lengthy aside with its multilayered historical allusion if the strategy motivated by those past events remained unrealized. In other words, if Pompey's lingering reputation in Celtiberia never contributed decisively one way or the other to the present conflict in Spain, why raise the spectre of Sertorius at this point in the narrative? The reason, I suggest, is the opportunity created by geography and by the memory of the Sertorian War to interrogate the idea of Pompeian greatness, the expectations which Pompeius Magnus engendered owing to his past accomplishments, and the great name given to him in recognition of those accomplishments.

But as Caesar uses the memory of Sertorius to evoke the idea of Pompeian greatness just out of reach in Celtiberia, the wider context undercuts readerly faith in Pompey's ability to relive his past glory. The structural patterns of Book 1 characterize Pompey as an *imperator absens* who is never where he needs to be.[23] One of the places where Pompey's absence is acutely felt is Spain. In 49, Spain was his allotted province and the location of his veteran armies; the expectation would have been that the general would capitalize on his strength there to strike a blow to Caesar's stronghold in Gaul. Pompey's absence from Spain seems to have become something of a joke to Caesar who, according to Suetonius, announced that he was setting off to Spain to confront

[20] W. Batstone and C. Damon, *Caesar's* Civil War (Oxford, 2006), 156.
[21] See *BCiv.* 1.56.2, 2.17.4, 2.18.7, 3.3.1–2, 3.19.5.
[22] Groups of three or more uses of *magnus* occur only here and at 3.3.3, discussed below.
[23] See Peer's discussion of Pompey and the *imperator absens* theme in Book 1: A. Peer, *Julius Caesar's* Bellum Civile *and the Composition of a New Reality* (London, 2016), 20–6. Pompey's absence contrasts with Caesar's thematizing of his own presence throughout the *Commentarii*: 'the Caesar of the *Commentarii* is almost always in the right place at the right time, his presence contributing massively to the army's success. His behaviour represents the ideal of how a Roman commander should behave', A. Goldsworthy, 'Instinctive genius: the depiction of Caesar the general', in K. Welch and A. Powell (edd.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* (Swansea, 1998), 193–219, at 210.

an army without a general (*ire se ad exercitum sine duce*, *Iul.* 34.2). While this biting formulation does not appear in Caesar's more restrained narrative of these events, the sentiment is implied. When Caesar narrates how he sent a message to Pompey suggesting a plan for mutual de-escalation, one of his proposed terms is that Pompey should set out for his provinces, that is, Spain, where he belongs (*proficiscatur Pompeius in suas provincias*, 1.9.5).[24] This does not happen. Later in Book 1, Caesar becomes concerned because he has heard rumours that Pompey was marching through Mauritania and would soon be present in Spain (*Pompeium … confestimque esse venturum*, 1.39.3). But once those rumours are extinguished (*exstinctis rumoribus*, 1.60.5) and it becomes clear that no aid is coming from Pompey to help those Spanish communities who had remained loyal to him, they begin to turn away from Afranius and Petreius in pursuit of Caesar's *amicitia*, just as the communities of northern Italy did earlier in the book out of similar disappointment (1.12–15).[25] Indeed, this is a major reason why the Pompeian commanders consider a strategic move: Pompey's marked absence has turned once loyal Spanish communities against their cause.

This context has important bearing on our passage. When Caesar characterizes *Pompeius* as *absens* (1.61.3) but asserts that his name alone will engender unwavering support, his description of Celtiberia is focalized through Pompey's generals who imagine a subservient population cowed by Pompey's reputation. But the adjective *absens* simultaneously activates a wider 'net of memory', to borrow Damon's oft-quoted imagery, which introduces doubt about that present reputation and about the value of a *nomen* whose 'great' holder repeatedly fails to live up to his allies' expectations.[26] This confluence of a contextually unnecessary allusion to Pompey's past victories, an unusual interrogation of the power of names to inspire allegiance, and an equally unusual cluster of uses of the adjective *magnus* invites the reader to see within the passage an allusion to Pompey's cognomen. This wordplay, in turn, advances a larger message about the great expectations which the Roman world had of Pompey and about the current ineffectual leadership of *Pompeius absens* within Caesar's text. Caesar's pun contains a double meaning: he harnesses the memory of a great Pompey while showing the extent to which the man falls short of the standard set by the name. Pompey Magnus' celebrated past becomes not insurance for future loyalty but rather a subtle indictment of an absent commander who has outlived his former claims to greatness.

Nor is this the only passage where the adjective *magnus* is put to cutting use. Near the opening of Book 3, Caesar pauses his narrative to survey Pompey's troops. This is a big moment as it reintroduces Pompey after a book-long absence. Caesar notes that absence rather tendentiously when he paints Pompey as having enjoyed a year of leisure away from the troubles of war. This time away from the fray, in turn, allowed his antagonist to amass an army of enormous size (3.3.1):

[24] I thank the anonymous reader for suggesting the addition of this passage.

[25] Caesar's narrative of Corfinium (1.16–24) is the classic example of Pompey's absence leading to a decisive loss within the geography of communities once loyal to Pompey. It is preceded by a longer series of Pompeian commanders abandoning their men and of those communities seeking Caesar's *amicitia* (e.g. 1.12–15). For Book 1's pattern of 'structure as argument', see Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 33–88.

[26] See Damon (n. 7), 185. Caesar echoes the formulation ***imperium absentis*** … ***Pompei*** in Petreius' pathetic plea shortly before the Pompeians surrender (*neu se neu* ***Pompeium absentem imperatorem*** *suum adversariis supplicium tradant obsecrat*, 1.76.1) and thereby intratextually demonstrates that Pompey's absence was a major factor in his defeat.

Pompeius annuum spatium ad comparandas copias nactus, quod vacuum a bello atque ab hoste otiosum fuerat, **magnam** ex Asia Cycladibusque insulis, Corcyra, Athenis, Ponto, Bithynia, Syria, Cilicia, Phoenice, Aegypto classem coegerat, **magnam** omnibus locis aedificandam curaverat; **magnam** imperatam Asiae, Syriae regibusque omnibus et dynastis et tetrarchis et liberis Achaiae populis pecuniam exegerat, **magnam** societates earum provinciarum, quas ipse obtinebat, sibi numerare coegerat.

Pompey had a full year which was empty of war and full of leisure away from the enemy to acquire his forces; **great** was the fleet he collected from Asia, the Cyclades, Corcyra, Athens, Pontus, Bithynia, Syria, Cilicia, Phoenicia, Egypt, **great** was the fleet he organized to be built in all these places, **great** was the tribute he exacted from Asia, Syria, from all the kings and dynasts and tetrarchs and the free peoples of Achaia, **great** was the sum he forced the tax collectors of the provinces he controlled to pay out to him.

Scholars have noted how Caesar positions himself as a David against a Pompeian Goliath.[27] By rhetorically expanding his account of the catalogue to take up three full chapters with no comparable accounting of his own forces in such a manner, Caesar makes Pompey appear almost unstoppable as his narrative brings the two together for their final confrontation. Scholars have also noted that Caesar focusses his catalogue on Pompey's eastern forces, a move which would recall for his readers both Pompey's legendary victories in the East as well as his ostentatious celebration of those victories in Rome in 61 and beyond.[28]

Within this context, Caesar's fourfold use of *magnus* seems marked and important. Beyond the sheer number of uses of *magnus* within a small expanse of text, Caesar also marks the adjective through anaphora: it appears as the first word of the clause in each instance and, even more strikingly, in the same form, *magnam*.[29] I am not the first to see here a wordplay aimed at Pompey, even if such a discussion has been relegated to the margins of comments on this passage. In a note appended to their discussion of this catalogue, Batstone and Damon recall that Fantham suggested in private correspondence that *magnus* 'may be a jab' at Pompey's cognomen.[30] Tronson has also noted in passing that this passage must contain an 'ironic play' on the general's name.[31] But I suggest that reducing the pun to a glancing jab or ironic joke undersells the adjective's contribution to both of the analytical threads mentioned above. Rather, for those who recognize a pun on Pompey's cognomen, the repetition of *magnus* contributes to the

[27] J.M. Carter, *Caesar: The Civil War. Books I & II* (Liverpool, 1991), 144; A. Rossi, 'The camp of Pompey: strategy of representation in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*', *CJ* 95 (2000), 239–56, at 248; A. Tronson, 'Pompey the barbarian: Caesar's presentation of "the other" in *Bellum Civile* 3', in M. Joyal (ed.), *In Altum: Seventy-Five Years of Classical Studies in Newfoundland* (St. Johns, 2001), 73–104; Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 156 with n. 22; R. Westall, *Caesar's* Civil War*: Historical Reality and Fabrication* (Leiden, 2017), 205 n. 22; J. Osgood, 'Caesar, civil war, and *Civil War*', in C.H. Lange and F.J. Vervaet (edd.), *The Historiography of Late Republican Civil War* (Leiden, 2020), 137–59, at 141–2, 149.

[28] See especially Rossi (n. 27), 248–9. On the triumph of 61 and its promotion of Pompeian greatness as world-conqueror, see M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 7–14, 36–41; I. Ostenberg, 'Triumph and spectacle. Victory celebrations in the Late Republican civil wars', in C.H. Lange and F.J. Vervaet (edd.), *The Republican Triumph: Beyond the Spectacle* (Rome, 2014), 181–93; Vervaet (n. 11); Clarke (n. 11).

[29] On the anaphora here, responding to the chiasmus of the opening clause, see P.T. Eden, 'Caesar's style: inheritance vs. intelligence', *Glotta* 40 (1962), 74–117, at 108; Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 157.

[30] Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 197.

[31] Tronson (n. 27), 91.

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wider dismantling of Pompey's legacy which many have recognized as the core of the narrative structure of Book 3.[32]

Once more Caesar's pun looks beyond his own text to Pompey's past accomplishments, to Pompey's self-aggrandizing as a great man, and to the reception of that self-fashioning by contemporaries. The lead-up to the war with Mithridates and the aftermath of that victory in the 60s and 50s sees a marked engagement with Pompey's cognomen. Cicero provides a contemporary example when he calls Pompey *noster hic Magnus* ('our Magnus here', *Arch*. 10.24) in the context of an emulative comparison with Alexander the Great, conqueror of the East (*Magnus ille Alexander*, *Arch*. 10.24).[33] According to Livy (*Per*. 103.12), Pompey was publicly acclaimed again as 'Magnus' at his third triumph, re-signifying his earlier name in connection with his victory over the East.[34] Pompey himself had an *aureus* minted with the legend MAGNVS on the obverse, along with a figure in elephant headdress and PRO COS on the reverse along with a *triumphator* in a chariot.[35] When seen in the light of the other Alexandrian allusions of Pompey's triumph and its reception,[36] the coin is one more instrument through which Pompey operationalized his honorific cognomen to promote himself as one who surpassed the deeds of Magnus Alexander.

But while Pompey's greatness was widely advertised in the aftermath of his eastern victories, the same decades saw his cognomen increasingly used for invective punchlines. The most notorious example took place on stage in front of all of Rome. In 59, the actor Diphilus turned one of his lines into political commentary by putting special emphasis on

[32] See especially G. Mader, 'Myth-making and myth-breaking: Cicero, Caesar, and the deconstruction of Pompey in *Bellum Civile* 3', in V. Oberparleiter et al. (edd.), *Bezugsfelder. Festschrift für Gerhard Petersmann zum 65 Geburtstag* (Salzburg, 2007), 70–82; Rossi (n. 27); Tronson (n. 27).

[33] See also Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.53. On possible *magnus*-wordplay within Cicero's *De imperio Cn. Pompeii*, see I. Gildenhard, L. Hodgson et al., *Cicero,* On Pompey's Command (De Imperio)*, 27–49: Latin Text, Study Aids with Vocabulary, Commentary, and Translation* (Cambridge, 2014), 84. See also P. Spranger, 'Der Große. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des historischen Beinamens in der Antike', *Saeculum* 9 (1958), 22–58, at 26–33; J. Gruber, 'Cicero und das hellenistische Herrscherideal: Überlegungen zur Rede *De imperio Cn. Pompei*', *WS* 101 (1988), 243–58, at 247–8.

[34] J.P.V.D. Balsdon, 'Review of Gelzer, *Pompeius*', *Historia* 1 (1950), 296–300, at 298–9. Dio's meditation on Pompey's names during his account of the third triumph may support the *Periochae* in suggesting a renewed focus on the cognomen Magnus in connection with those events (37.21.3). Appian, however, may be conflating this tradition when he specifically ties the origin of Magnus' cognomen to the Mithridatic Wars (*Mith*. 17.118 and 17.121). Diodorus (40.4) claims to preserve the language of a triumphal inscription which forms something of a *Res Gestae* of Pompey's eastern triumph, in which the first words name the general as Pompey the Great. The inscription with which, according to Pliny (*HN* 7.97–8), Pompey dedicated spoils to the temple of Minerva likewise begins with Pompey's full name including his *cognomen*.

[35] RRC 402/1a and b. The coin is likely a donative, but its precise date is unsettled. Some date it to 71 and the Spanish triumph: M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (London, 1974), 412–13; C. Battenberg, *Pompeius und Caesar. Persönlichkeit und Programm in ihrer Münzpropaganda* (Marburg, 1980), 7–8; L.M. Yarrow, *The Roman Republic to 49 BCE: Using Coins as Sources* (Cambridge, 2021), 155–7. Others date it to 61 upon Pompey's return from the East: H.A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum* (London, 1970; prepr. 1910), 464–6; E.A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic* (London, 1952), 171; E. Valverde, 'El áureo de Cn. Pompeyo Magno (*RRC* 402/1)', *Espacio, tiempo y forma, serie II, Historia Antigua, t. 23* (2001), 205–16; B. Marshal, 'An *aureus* of Pompeius Magnus', *Antichthon* 50 (2016), 107–33. On the Hellenistic and Alexandrian precedents for the elephant skullcap, see also A.F. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley, 1993), 233–5; J.A. Maritz, 'The image of Africa: the evidence of the coinage', *AClass* 44 (2001), 105–25; Valverde (this note). Either date supports the arguments within this paper about the relevance of Pompey's *cognomen* to Caesar's narrative project.

[36] E.g. Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 46.1; App. *Mith.* 12.17.

the adjective *magnus* ('you are **great** at the expense of our misery', *nostra miseria tu es **magnus***, Cic. *Att*. 2.19.3 = SB 39.3) within a tragic lament about a man whom 'neither law nor customs contain' (*si neque leges neque mores cogunt*, Cic. *Att*. 2.19.3 = SB 39.3). Similar themes colour Valerius Maximus' account of the incident: Diphilus 'vehemently accused Pompey of excessive and intolerable tyranny through his gesture' (*nimiae illum et intolerabilis potentiae reum gestu perseveranter egit*, Val. Max. 6.2.9). The Roman people demanded encores as a way of demonstrating that they saw the man's present behaviour as at odds with his concern for Rome and the cognomen he received by their favour. There are other such examples from the 50s through which we can see how the name Magnus became part of a wider criticism of Pompey's pomposity and, according to some, unhealthy attitude towards the structures of Republican government.[37] They cumulatively speak to an era in which the name Magnus was simultaneously an advertisement of success and an index of potential failure owing to self-serving behaviour.[38]

Both the positive and the negative associations of Magnus are important for understanding the rhetorical significance of Caesar's wordplay and how his readers might be inclined to interpret it. On the one hand, Caesar's dense catalogue interweaves the adjective *magnus* with a geographic tour of Pompey's eastern victories as the general gathers apparently limitless resources from Asia, the Cyclades, Corcyra, Athens, Pontus, Bithynia, Syria, Cilicia, Phoenicia and Egypt (3.3.1). By harnessing the mnemonic power of *magnus*/Magnus in describing Pompey's army, Caesar points to something greater than the man himself as he is now in the 40s by evoking the memory of the man as he was over a decade earlier, at a time when Pompey seemed essentially unstoppable.

But as Caesar's catalogue and its wordplay look to Pompey's erstwhile reputation, they also conjure the image of Pompey, king of kings, the would-be tyrant alive in the political rhetoric of the day.[39] Once more, word order does important work. Caesar's repetition of *magnam* in first position creates a syntactic parallelism that focusses the readers' attention on the *greatness* of each community's contribution to Pompey's cause over the materiality of that contribution. Another way to read the anaphora and the hyperbaton that takes into account the force implied by the verbs would be to say that Pompey *exacts* greatness from the East as he requisitions ships (*coegerat*), forces tribute to be paid (*exegerat*), and compels local tax syndicates to add further funds (*coegerat* again).[40] So too the catalogue jumbles communities of various standing together into one vision of a subject population; provinces old and new, client kingdoms, and the so-called free peoples of Achaia all along with their

[37] Cicero plays on Pompey's cognomen elsewhere when he notes the dip in popularity of his once great friend: *quanto in odio noster amicus Magnus* (Cic. *Att*. 2.13.2); see also Matthews (n. 4), 24. For Catullus' dig at Pompey's faded greatness (Catull. 11), see Krebs (n. 6). Catullus' contemporary Calvus uses the name Magnus to land a biting insult against the man who terrifies everyone but who is, none the less, *mollis* in his sexual appetites (*Magnus, quem metuunt omnes, digito caput uno | scalpit; quid credis hunc sibi velle? virum*, fr. 18 Courtney). Pliny the Elder, likely using a Late Republican source, suggests that the cognomen would never have taken hold if Pompey had exhibited such Eastern extravagance at the start of his career (*HN* 37.14–16).

[38] Corbeill (n. 3), 74–84. Adams (n. 4), 149, 160–1 notes that Cicero rarely used Pompey's cognomen after 59, perhaps an index of changing perspectives on the man and his name.

[39] Cicero, for example, refers to Pompey by a variety of nicknames which poke fun at the general's Eastern pretentions in the wake of his victories: see J. Nicholson, 'Delivery and confidentiality of Cicero's letters', *CJ* 90 (1994), 33–63, at 50. Plutarch reports that Domitius Ahenobarbus called Pompey 'king of kings' as if he were a Persian king (*Vit. Pomp.* 67.3).

[40] Tronson (n. 27), 92.

kings, their dynasts and their tetrarchs obey Pompey the Great in the same way without distinction (*magnam imperatam Asiae, Syriae regibusque omnibus et dynastis et tetrarchis et liberis Achaiae populis pecuniam exegerat*). When we consider the eastern associations of the word *otiosum* with which Caesar began the sentence and the significance of Herodotus' catalogue of Xerxes' forces (Hdt. 8.61–78) as an often noted intertext for this passage, we can see how Caesar uses the spectre of Pompeian greatness to create a portrait of Pompey as a man whose ambition is fuelled by playing an eastern despot with absolute power.[41]

This larger argument will not be new to readers of Caesar. Over the past decades, scholars have analysed how Caesar's catalogue amplifies the presence of foreign troops in Pompey's army, from the narrative space accorded to non-Roman vs Roman soldiers to the order in which the troops are introduced to the number of names of markedly foreign territories, peoples and leaders, which adds a palpable Othering to the verbal texture of the passage.[42] These features of the catalogue contribute to Caesar's wider barbarization of Pompey in the *Bellum Civile* and turn him into something of an eastern tyrant along the lines of Darius, Xerxes and the great opponents of Alexander.[43] I suggest that the adjective *magnus* can be seen as making an important contribution to this argument as a form of nominal wordplay, particularly when we examine the details of how Caesar portrays Pompey's wielding of power in light of the rhetoric of greatness (and its attendant controversies) alive in the Roman memory of Pompey's past glory. If, as Osgood has recently argued, Caesar's lists are 'a brilliant send-up of the rhetoric of Pompeius' great triumph of 61, a jab at how his opponent was now turning the resources of *imperium* against Romans',[44] the word *magnus* itself has a large part to play in the brilliance of Caesar's prose as Pompey turns the greatness for which the Roman world praised him against those who had so celebrated him in the past.

A third layer rounds out this catalogue's rhetorical engagement with Pompey Magnus. As Caesar's readers would well know, Pompey's faith in his eastern allies will fail him and one of them will see to his murder. At three points in the catalogue, Caesar references Egypt and its young king (3.3.1; 3.4.4; 3.5.1), son of a man who owed his throne to Pompey and from whom Pompey expects unconditional loyalty; Caesar's reference to the *Gabiniani* of Alexandria (3.4.4) would remind the reader of exactly this series of events.[45] Pompey's glorious Egyptian past as well as his ignominious Egyptian future become thereby interlaced throughout all three chapters of the catalogue. As a result, through this subtle telescopic foreshadowing, Pompey Magnus, tyrant of the East and king of kings, can already be seen as overconfident in his present power and as a man who will pay the ultimate price for his belief in his own greatness.[46]

[41] Rossi (n. 27); Tronson (n. 27), 91–2; L. Pitcher, 'Caesar and the Greek historians', in L. Grillo and C. Krebs (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2018), 237–48, at 242–3.

[42] Rossi (n. 27), 248–9; Tronson (n. 27), 91–2; J. Uden, 'Codeswitches in Caesar and Catullus', *Antichthon* 45 (2010), 113–30, at 116–24; Osgood (n. 27), 142.

[43] In Caesar's narrative hands, 'the great conqueror of the East has been conquered by the corruptive influence of the East' (Rossi [n. 27], 253). See also Goldsworthy (n. 23), 211–12 with n. 105; Tronson (n. 27); Mader (n. 32), 80; L. Grillo, *The Art of Caesar's* Bellum Civile*: Literature, Ideology, and Community* (Cambridge, 2012), 121–30; Pitcher (n. 41), 242.

[44] Osgood (n. 27), 142.

[45] *D ex Gabinianis Alexandria—Gallos Germanosque quos ibi A. Gabinius praesidi causa apud regem Ptolomaeum reliquerat—Pompeius filius cum classe adduxerat* (3.4.4).

[46] See also Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 106: 'the man who fails his supporters is in the end betrayed by them'.

We can see several commonalities between these passages from Book 1 and Book 3. Both use names (of individuals and communities) that ask the reader to remember the victories of Pompey's past and the geographies of those victories. Those memories, in turn, engender great expectations for Pompey's success in the present within the same territories. Yet both passages do more than recall a once great Pompey. Rather, they use the memory of that greatness within a context that re-signifies it to serve Caesar's narrative argument about Pompeian behaviour leading time and again to Pompeian failure. Pompey's disengaged absence led to the destruction of his armies in Spain just as Pompey's tyrannical arrogance will lead to his loss in Thessaly and his murder in Alexandria. And as the geographical magnitude of Pompey's sway is diminished both in Roman history and in Caesar's textual representation of that history, so too the grandeur of Pompey's name is diminished alongside it until it becomes nothing but a punchline about a Roman who thought himself great. These readings exist on multiple levels and do not require all readers to recognize the cognominal pun for which I have argued. But for those who pick up on the punning potential of Caesar's uses of *magnus*, this adjective contributes more than a glancing blow to the wider demolition of Pompey's legacy as a man from whom the world should expect great things.

These thematic commonalities can help establish criteria for where else similar wordplay might be lurking within the *Bellum Civile*. One could never argue that every use of *magnus* be read as a pun on Pompey's cognomen, and the two I have highlighted remain the examples that are most convincing to me. First, we need to be able to make a case that Caesar is employing *magnus* in a marked way that would make the otherwise commonplace adjective stand out to the reader; in the two cases examined, it is the excessive piling up of the adjective that makes it stand out. Noteworthy also is that these clusters appear very near the name Pompeius. I examined previously the hyperbaton which caused a suggestive juxtaposition between name and adjective in the Sertorian War passage (*quae in amicitia manserant* ***Pompei, magnis*** *adfectae beneficiis eum diligebant*, 1.61.3). So too Pompeius is the first word of the chapter and the sentence which features the anaphoric four-fold repetition of *magnus* in the catalogue of troops (*Pompeius annuum spatium* …, 3.3.1). In both instances Caesar's naming of Pompey and his marking of the adjective *magnus* help the wordplay stand out. Finally, this confluence of name and cognominal pun occur within a wider context that overtly interrogates Pompeian greatness on multiple levels, including but not limited to the perceived wordplay.

A simple word search for forms of *magnus* in proximity to Pompey's name yields twenty-two results and, when these results are scrutinized according to the above criteria, several additional possibilities appear which invite further attention. When Afranius and Petreius briefly gain the upper hand against Caesar in Spain owing to a chance storm, they overinflate their victory back in Rome, causing the sort of premature celebration that habitually marks overconfidence and imminent failure in Caesar's text (1.53.1).[47] As if to add further snide colour to their arrogance, Caesar notes that, when those in Rome heard the news, 'people rushed in **great** numbers to the Forum and **great** congratulations occurred; many from Italy made their way to Gn. Pompey' (***magni*** *in forum concursus* ***magnae****que gratulationes fiebant, multi ex Italia ad Cn.* ***Pompeium*** *proficiscebantur*, 1.53.2). Later in Book 2, as Caesar is mopping up operations in

[47] For this narrative pattern, see G.O. Rowe, 'Dramatic structures in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*', *TAPhA* 98 (1967), 399–414.

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Spain against Pompey's general Varro, he notes that he is compelled to stay in Spain to see the operation through because he recognized that '**great** were the favours done by Pompey and **great** were the clients he had in nearer Spain' (*quod **magna** esse Pompei beneficia et **magnas** clientelas in citeriore provincia sciebat*, 2.18.7); Caesar's continued authorial acknowledgement of Spain as Pompey's former triumphal landscape keeps it in the mind of the reader even as he goes on to make quick work of Varro and achieve his own Spanish victories. Both instances feature an unnecessary, pleonastic doubling of the adjective *magnus* in proximity to the name Pompeius. Moreover, each contributes in its own way to Caesar's narrative of great expectations soon dashed by present failings. A third example occurs in the notorious scene of Pompey's camp in the aftermath of Pharsalus (3.96). Here in a passage dense with language that various scholars have marked as unusual and thematically important we see *magnus* used to quantify the **great** amount of silver present in the *castris Pompei* (***magnum** argenti pondus expositum*, 3.96.1).[48] Luca Grillo argues that the material, silver, would specifically recall Pompey's eastern triumph and the restaging of that triumph at the dedication of his theatre a few years later, such that 'Pompey's camp mirrors and mocks Pompey's triumph of 61'.[49] Were *magnus* to be read as a pun here, perhaps by a reader who noticed the more marked puns earlier in the catalogue of troops, it would contribute to the passage's lampooning of Pompeian arrogance.

Not all readers will be convinced by the additional examples I just noted. But what should be clear is that, even for readers inclined to see wordplay within a broader range of examples than those on which I focussed my argument, Caesar is quite restrained when it comes to *magnus* puns. In other words, one should not argue for a *consistent* pun that runs throughout the text such as we find, for example, in Lucan's epic. Rather, we should speak of a rhetorically pointed pun used sparingly in contexts in which it can contribute to a wider assault on Pompey's reputation. This is consistent with Caesar's overarching treatment of Pompey. While he does not hold back against Labienus or Scipio, Caesar often has Pompey's own allies voice the most devastating criticisms of their general and otherwise gives the reader the tools to construct a narrative of Pompey's failures out of his seductively bare prose.[50] In doing so, he wages a warfare of words in which wordplay becomes a weapon. While Caesar studiously presents Caesar-the-general as doing everything in his power to avoid armed conflict with Pompey and the Roman citizens on the other side, Caesar-the-author uses his literary and rhetorical wit to wage a different kind of war against his opponent and erstwhile *amicus*.

As Welch notes in the introduction to *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter*, the author of the *Commentarii* was 'embroiled in the language, politics, and difficulties of his

[48] On the language of this passage, with its foreign loanwords and archaisms, see Grillo (n. 43), 122–9.

[49] Grillo (n. 43), 123.

[50] For Caesar's authorial caution regarding Pompey, see J. Collins, 'Caesar as political propagandist', *ANRW* 1.1 (1972), 922–66, at 952–5; M.T. Boatwright, 'Caesar's second consulship and the completion and date of the *Bellum Civile*', *CJ* 84 (1988), 31–40; Peer (n. 23), 19–40. For Caesar's use of internal faction members to voice criticism of Pompey or otherwise flag his weaknesses, see Batstone and Damon (n. 20), 101–6; D. Yates, 'The role of Cato the Younger in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*', *CJ* 104 (2011), 161–74; Grillo (n. 43), 10; Peer (n. 23), 20–5; L. Grillo, 'Speeches in the *Commentarii*', in L. Grillo and C. Krebs (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2018), 131–43, at 135–6.

day … striving beyond all else to outdo his most significant rival, Pompey the Great'.[51] As the study of Caesar's literary artistry has gained prominence in the past few decades, scholars have explicated the nuances of Caesar's lexical choices, word order, rhetorical devices, and structures and, in doing so, have laid bare the art of characterization that lies beneath a surface reading of his text. This includes growing attention to the witticisms embedded in Caesar's *Commentarii* as well as his use of irony.[52] While wordplay has long been recognized as a tool related to these concepts in poetic texts, it seems that the author-general also had a way of harnessing puns and other forms of wordplay that reflect wider common parlance.[53] In the examples explored in this paper, at least, we can recognize Caesar's contribution to Latin literature's fascination with wordplay as powerplay in his weaponizing of *magnus*. To borrow words which Feeney used to explicate Lucan, I suggest that Caesar too uses wordplay to show that 'Pompeius' name "Magnus" is an anachronism, a reproach, a promise which he has outlived and can no longer fulfil'.[54] Long before Lucan wrote his epic civil war, Caesar's textual *bellum civile* subtly encoded how those who had had great expectations of Pompey believed in a name long since emptied of its former promise.

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[51] K. Welch, 'Introduction', in K. Welch and A. Powell (edd.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* (Swansea, 1998), ix.

[52] For wit and irony in Caesar's extant texts, an essential starting place is G. Maurach, 'Caesars Humor', *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 26 (2002), 53–60. See also Grillo (n. 43), *passim*; A. Corbeill, 'Wit and irony', in L. Grillo and C. Krebs (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2018), 144–57.

[53] See, for example, N. DeWitt, 'The non-political nature of Caesar's *Commentaries*', *TAPhA* 73 (1942), 341–52, at 350–1; Corbeill (n. 3), 189 and Corbeill (n. 52), 148–9; J. Henderson, *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), 61; C. Krebs, 'A style of choice', in L. Grillo and C. Krebs (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2018), 110–30, at 121. F. Cairns, 'Caesar Fr. 1 Courtney: the etymologies', *Paideia* 67 (2012), 371–7 has analysed the fragments of Caesar's poetry in light of the type of etymological wordplay long recognized in the works of Catullus and Lucretius, showing that as a literary artist Caesar was very much a man of the time.

[54] Feeney (n. 2), 239–40.

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