

**Gaius Julius Caesar,
Aulus Hirtius, Gaius
Oppius**



The African War

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Titlepage](#)

[Text](#)

1

[Table of Contents](#)

Caesar, advancing by moderate journeys, and continuing his march without intermission, arrived at Lilybaeum, on the 14th day before the calends of January. Designing to embark immediately, though he had only one legion of new levies, and not quite six hundred horse, he ordered his tent to be pitched so near the sea-side that the waves lashed the very foot of it. This he did with a view that none should think he had time to delay, and that his men might be kept in readiness at a day or an hour's warning. Though the wind at that time was contrary, he nevertheless detained the soldiers and mariners on board, that he might lose no opportunity of sailing; the rather, because the forces of the enemy were announced by the inhabitants of the province, to consist of innumerable cavalry not to be numbered; four legions headed by Juba, together with a great body of light-armed troops; ten legions under the command of Scipio; a hundred and twenty elephants, and fleets in abundance. Yet he was not alarmed, nor lost his confident hopes and spirits. Meantime the number of galleys and transports increased daily; the new-levied legions flocked in to him from all parts; among the rest the fifth, a veteran legion, and about two thousand horse.

2

[Table of Contents](#)

Having got together six legions and about two thousand horse, he embarked the legions as fast as they arrived, in the galleys, and the cavalry in the transports. Then sending the greatest part of the fleet before, with orders to sail for the island of Aponiana, not far from Lilybaeum; he himself continued a little longer in Sicily, and exposed to public sale some confiscated estates. Leaving all other affairs to the care of Allienus the praetor, who then commanded in the island; and strictly charging him to use the utmost expedition in embarking the remainder of the troops; he set sail the sixth day before the calends of January, and soon came up with the rest of the fleet. As the wind was favorable, and afforded a quick passage, he arrived the fourth day within sight of Africa, attended by a few galleys: for the transports, being mostly dispersed and scattered by the winds, with the exception of a few were driven different ways. Passing Clupea and Neapolis with the fleet, he continued for some time to coast along the shore, leaving many towns and castles behind him.

3

[Table of Contents](#)

After he came before Adrumetum, where the enemy had a garrison, commanded by C. Considius, and where Cn. Piso appeared upon the shore toward Clupea, with the cavalry of Adrumetum, and about three thousand Moors, he stopped awhile, facing the port, till the rest of the fleet should come up, and then landed his men, though their number at that time did not exceed three thousand foot and a hundred and fifty horse. There, encamping before the town, he continued

quiet, without offering any act of hostility, and restrained all from plunder. Meantime the inhabitants manned the walls, and assembled in great numbers before the gate, to defend themselves, their garrison within amounting to two legions. Caesar, having ridden round the town, and thoroughly examined its situation, returned to his camp. Some blamed his conduct on this occasion, and charged him with a considerable oversight, in not appointing a place of meeting to the pilots and captains of the fleet, or delivering them sealed instructions, according to his usual custom; which being opened at a certain time, might have directed them to assemble at a specified place. But in this Caesar acted not without design; for as he knew of no port in Africa that was clear of the enemy's forces, and where the fleet might rendezvous in security, he chose to rely entirely upon fortune, and land where occasion offered.

4

[Table of Contents](#)

In the mean time, L. Plancus, one of Caesar's lieutenants, desired leave to treat with Considius, and try, if possible, to bring him to reason. Leave being granted accordingly, he wrote him a letter, and sent it into the town by a captive. When the captive arrived, and presented the letter, Considius, before he received it, demanded whence it came, and being told from Caesar, the Roman general, answered, "That he knew no general of the Roman forces but Scipio." Then, commending the messenger to be immediately slain in his presence, he delivered the letter, unread and

unopened, to a trusty partisan, with orders to carry it directly to Scipio.

5

[Table of Contents](#)

Caesar had now continued a day and a night before the town, without receiving any answer from Considius; the rest of the forces were not yet arrived; his cavalry was not considerable; he had not sufficient troops with him to invest the place, and these were new levies: neither did he think it advisable, upon his first landing, to expose the army to wounds and fatigue; more especially, as the town was strongly fortified, and extremely difficult of access, and a great body of horse was said to be upon the point of arrival to succor the inhabitants; he therefore thought it advisable not to remain and besiege the town, lest while he pursued that design, the enemy's cavalry should come behind and surround him.

6

[Table of Contents](#)

But as he was drawing off his men, the garrison made a sudden sally; and the cavalry which had been sent by Juba to receive their pay, happening just then to come up, they took possession of the camp Caesar had left, and began to harass his rear. This being perceived, the legionaries immediately halted; and the cavalry, though few in number, boldly charged the vast multitude of the enemy. An incredible event occurred, that less than thirty Gallic horse