A COMPANION TO JULIUS CAESAR

Edited by

Miriam Griffin

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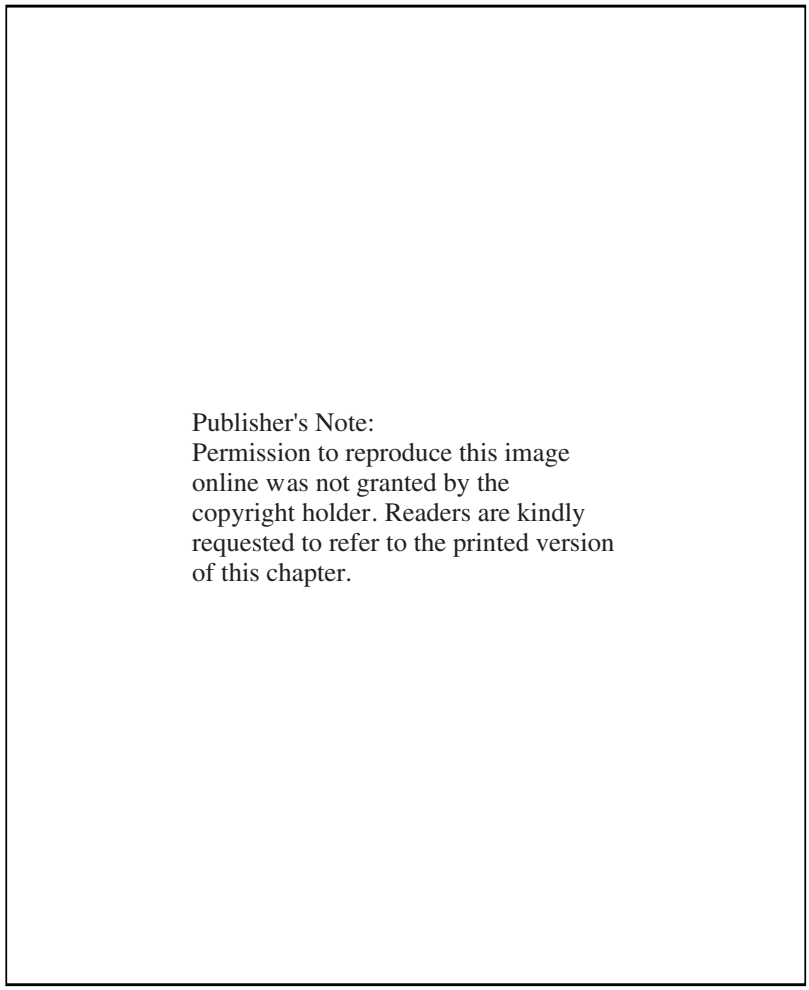

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Carol Clark studied at Somerville College, Oxford and Westfield College, London. She then taught in London, in West Africa and at Glasgow University before being elected to Balliol College, Oxford, where she remained for many years as Fellow and Tutor in Modern Languages. She has published books and articles on Rabelais and Montaigne and translations from Baudelaire, Rostand and Proust.

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Paul Zanker, FBA, studied at the Universities of Munich, Freiburg im Breisgau, and Rome. He was Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Universities of Göttingen (1972–6), then Munich, where he is now Professor Emeritus. From 1996 to 2002 he served as Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Rome. He is now Professor of the History of Art at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Among his many publications are his Jerome Lectures, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1988), and his Sather Lectures, *The Mask of Socrates* (Berkeley, 1995).

Preface

When the idea of editing a *Companion to Julius Caesar* was first mentioned to me some years ago, I asked myself whether or not there was a need for such a book. A little reflection showed me that there was. No recent volume had treated Julius Caesar in the round, first examining him in his historical context as politician, conqueror, writer and intellectual, then treating his writings and the work of his continuators, and finally describing his subsequent reputation, first at Rome and then in European history. All of these areas were being written about, but there was as yet nothing to accommodate a reader, who, given the growing interest in reception, might wish to study Caesar's *Nachleben*, while having to hand the ancient ingredients that went into the mix.[1]

The intention has been to produce a book that, through a series of chapters written by contributors distinguished in their own very diverse areas, would attempt to do justice to Caesar's double reputation as conqueror and author, as well as to the importance of his actions and words to the thinkers and leaders of most subsequent periods of history.

The contributors have all approached the project with enthusiasm, as was demonstrated at a meeting in July 2006 of those that could attend. Many came from overseas, and the philosophy of the volume and the division of labour were discussed. Even more important was the process of collaboration between contributors that began there and has continued. We were all grateful for the support, financial and otherwise, that was offered for that meeting by Blackwell, by Somerville College, and by the Jowett Copyright Trustees of Balliol College, Oxford.

The editor of the series Al Bertrand, who was present at the meeting to answer questions, has been encouraging and helpful throughout, showing considerable

[1] Since then there has appeared M. Wyke's *Julius Caesar: A Life in Western Culture* (2007), which treats a selection of key incidents in Caesar's life: the ancient evidence and their later reception up to the present.

flexibility when faced with a rather self-willed editor. Barbara Duke, who handled the illustrations and other practical matters, has worked with great speed and good will as has Glynis Baguley, who edited the copy. The contributors have demonstrated persistent good humour and efficiency in responding to corrections and comments. I owe debts of gratitude to my husband Jasper, who translated Paul Zanker's German, to Martin McLaughlin, who saved me from several misinterpretations in the translation of Luciano Canfora's Italian, and to Julia Griffin, who gave welcome assistance with the meeting and with the preparation of the material for publication.

Reference Works: Abbreviated Titles

AClass	*Acta Classica*
AFLM	*Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
Anc.Soc	*Ancient Society*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.* Berlin, 1972–
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*
CA	*Classical Antiquity*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CR	*Classical Review*
CW	*Classical World*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.* 1923–
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
ILLRP	A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae*, 2 vols., 2nd edn, Florence, 1963–5
ILS	H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
LCM	*Liverpool Classical Monthly*

LTUR	M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* I–VI, Rome, 1993–2000
Mattingly	H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. III, London, 1936
MD	*Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
MRR	T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*. 3 vols. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1951–2, 1986
OCD	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn., Oxford, 1996
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Leipzig, 1903–5.
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
ORF	Enrica Malcovati, *Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta*. In aedibus I.B. Paraviae: Aug. Taurinorum, Mediolani, Patavii, 1976.
PACA	*Proceedings of the African Classical Association*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PP	*La parola del passato*
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll, *Realencyclopädie des classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. 1893–
REA	*Revue des études anciennes*
REL	*Revue des études latines*
Rh.Mus.	*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
RIC	H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage*
RRC	M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1974.
RS	M. H. Crawford (ed.). *Roman Statutes*, vol. 1. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996.
SP	*Studies in Philology*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
TLRR	M. Alexander, *Trials in the Late Roman Republic, 149 BC to 50 B.C.* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Miriam Griffin

In recent years the direction of scholarship in ancient history has largely shifted away from an emphasis on great rulers and generals, even from a concentration on the governing class, towards the population of the city of Rome and its subject peoples, towards the social structures and the cultural attitudes current in the Roman Empire. Yet Julius Caesar is still perceived, as he always has been, as an extraordinary individual, not just another Roman consul, proconsul, imperator, or even dictator. His name has been used in various local forms – Kaiser, Czar, Tsar – as the highest title for rulers far from Rome in place and time; his account of his campaigns has been read, not only by historians and students of literature, but by rulers and generals like the Emperor Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent, King Louis XIV, and both Napoleons, for their own instruction (Canfora, chapter 29, p. 431; Nicolet, chapter 27, pp. 411–12; 416). Biographies, of varying degrees of seriousness, still continue to be written and published, with ever-increasing frequency.

There are individuals whose lives burn through the mists of history like the path of a comet. They have, in most cases, already impressed their contemporaries as exceptional, and they have also been fortunate enough to have that strong impression transmitted by readable contemporary authors to later writers of talent. Powerful visual images, created in the lifetime of such people by gifted artists, help to establish an enduring familiarity not only with their looks but, if the artists are skillful enough, with their personalities too: one thinks of the head, immediately recognizable, of Alexander or of Nero. Such individuals often generate mysteries and controversies connected with their motives and intentions, which contribute to their enduring fascination. Finally, a violent or premature death can enhance, if not create, a haunting historical presence.

All these factors have contributed to Caesar's posthumous fame. Another crucial ingredient is his own literary work, for Caesar did not leave his immortality to chance. He was unusual among men of action whose fame endures, in being also a brilliant writer, the author of one of the few extensive accounts by a commander of his own

campaigns. Ever since they first appeared, these accounts of his campaigns in Gaul and of the civil war against Pompey have been admired, even by those who have deplored Caesar's ambition and his autocracy (Clark, chapter 24; Biskup, chapter 26). Experienced generals, like Napoleon I, have always been able to criticize his military decisions (Canfora, p. 434); scholars have discovered in his version of events some misrepresentation and even mendacity. But his style, an essential element in his glory, has remained invulnerable and immortal.

Before we explore these factors further, however, it is important to acknowledge that the setting of Caesar's life in time and place also helps to explain the vitality of his reputation. Caesar may have said, as he journeyed through a small Alpine village, "I would rather be first here than second in Rome" (Plut. *Caes.* 11), but the fact is that he was first in Rome, the most powerful nation on earth, at a time when her domains and her influence were expanding at a furious pace. Rome left her permanent mark on world history, and Caesar helped her do it, paying with his life and reaping the reward of eternal fame.

The Scheme of the Volume

Though this volume is not intended to provide a history of the Late Roman Republic, the biographical chapters, narrative in Part I and thematic in Part II, will of necessity recount some very important historical events. After all, the earliest extant biographers of Caesar, Plutarch and Suetonius, acknowledged the necessity of narrating his wars, however briefly (Plut. *Alex.* 1; Suet. *Iul.* 25), and the same was true of his legislation and of his political alliances (Pelling, chapter 18, pp. 254–5; 259). But the focus of these two Parts will be on the difference which this one individual can be seen to have made to that history.

Part III forms a bridge between Caesar's life and his afterlife, discussing his own writings and their continuations by others. In these works Caesar presented to his contemporaries, and left for later readers, not only a record of his actions but also a carefully constructed portrait of himself. As Kraus (chapter 12) and Raaflaub (chapter 13) show, his intention to produce a self-standing literary work, not a mere sketch for later historians to elaborate, and his skill in putting himself in a good light, without actually lying, are now increasingly appreciated. His continuators fill out the story of his campaigns, and also – no less importantly – bear witness to the powerful influence he exercised over his officers and his men (Cluett, chapter 14, pp. 199–202).

Part IV explores Caesar's posthumous reputation among the Romans themselves, as reflected both in literature of various genres and in visual representations. Part V explores Caesar's image at certain key points in history – of necessity, a sample only. The importance of Caesar's example, as ruler and as general, continued across Europe in the early Middle Ages when his works were little read and his reputation largely depended on the popularity of Lucan's epic poem on the civil war (Suerbaum, chapter 22). From the fifteenth century on, editions and translations proliferated, giving solidity to the fascination with him as a general: in Italy his works were used to

teach geography and as guides to military strategy, tactics, and technology (McLaughlin, chapter 23, pp. 350–5). At all times, approval and disapproval of Caesar could reflect contemporary political debates, not only Republicanism vs. monarchy, but also traditional vs. enlightened or reforming monarchy (Biskup, chapter 26; Nicolet, chapter 27; Cole, chapter 28). The effect of Caesar's conquests on his provincial subjects was variously estimated by the descendants of those subjects, in Germany, France, and Britain (Suerbaum, chapter 22; Clark, chapter 24; Biskup, chapter 26). Finally, the continued use of Julius Caesar and Rome in political thought and rhetoric is exemplified by the twinned analogies of the Roman empire and Julius Caesar with the United States and the American president, analogies used both by the right as a boast and by the left as a condemnation (Wyke, chapter 30).

The Contemporary Impression and its Preservation

The way in which the impression made by Caesar in life was transmitted and received in all its vividness, by later generations, is well illustrated by a passage of the Elder Pliny, writing under the Emperor Vespasian, a century after Caesar's death. In his great encyclopedia, the *Natural History*, Pliny writes:

> The most outstanding example of innate mental vigour, in my view, was Caesar the Dictator. I am not now thinking of moral excellence or steadfastness nor of a breadth of knowledge encompassing everything under the sun, but of innate mental agility and quickness, moving like fire. We are told that he used to read or write while at the same time dictating or listening, and that he would dictate to his secretaries four letters on important matters at the same time. (*HN* 7.91)

These vignettes, like the story in Suetonius (*Iul.* 56) that he composed the two volumes of his grammatical work *On Analogy* while crossing the Alps from Italy to Gaul, emanate from eyewitnesses. Indeed, Plutarch actually ascribes to Caesar's close associate Oppius his picture of the commander dictating letters on horseback, keeping at least two scribes busy at once (*Caes.* 17). There also survives, in addition to contemporary flattery, his loyal officer Hirtius' posthumous testimony to the speed with which he wrote his *commentarii* (*BG* 8. *pref.*). Suetonius claims that Caesar himself, in his Pontic triumph , displayed the words "Veni, vidi, vici," rather than the usual names of the places he had conquered, to emphasize the speed of his victory (*Iul.* 37, cf. Plut. *Caes.* 50).

The reservations of the Elder Pliny about Caesar's scholarship reflect not only the encyclopedist's admiration of Caesar's contemporary, the great scholar Terentius Varro, but also the downside of Caesar's speed and spread of interests, remarked already by contemporaries. Thus Caesar himself admitted that his style would not bear comparison with that of Cicero, who had the time to cultivate his natural talent, while Plutarch comments that Caesar was a talented political orator but came second, not first (*Caes.* 3.2–4; Pelling, chapter 18, p. 255). His contemporary, Asinius Pollio, is

said to have seen signs of carelessness and inaccuracy in the *commentarii,* born both of the failure to check reports that came in and of disingenuousness, or possibly forgetfulness, in describing his own actions, and to have believed that Caesar intended to rewrite and correct them (Suet. *Iul.* 56.4). The copious and unqualified praise in Cicero's *Brutus* (261–2) of Caesar's style of oratory and of writing, so different from Cicero's own, was perhaps inspired by the Dictator's generous tribute to Cicero as the "winner of a greater laurel wreath than that of any triumph, it being a greater thing to have advanced so far the frontiers of the Roman genius than those of the Roman Empire" (Plin. *HN* 7.117; cf. Cic. *Brutus* 254).

It is important to note that this willingness to praise was a vital ingredient of Caesar's great charm and also of his ability to make people feel liked and appreciated. If his soldiers adored him for his personal attention to their deeds and their hardships, even his social equals were disarmed by his courtesy and generosity (Paterson, chapter 10, pp. 138, 139). Thus Asinius Pollio wrote, just a year after Caesar's death, "I loved him in all duty and loyalty, because in his greatness he treated me, a recent acquaintance, as though I had been one of his oldest intimates" (Cic. *Fam.* 10.31); while Cicero, who had been pardoned by Caesar in the civil war yet was allowed to resist his request for active support as Dictator, admitted after his death that, if the Republic turned out to be doomed, he would have at least enjoyed favor with Caesar, "who was not a master to run away from" (*Att.* 15.4.3). Cassius too, a year before he joined the conspirators, said "I would rather have the old easy-going master than try a new cruel one" (Cic. *Fam.* 15.19: he meant Pompey's elder son Gnaeus). Yet Cassius stabbed Caesar, and Cicero rejoiced in the result.

The poet Catullus, who was forgiven for his insulting poems when he apologized (Suet. *Iul.* 73; Steel, chapter 9, p. 118), declared in another poem his total indifference whether Caesar was "a white man or a black" (93.2). Others were more distressed by Caesar's alarming and unfathomable nature. Pliny, as we saw, was to distinguish Caesar's remarkable qualities from his moral excellence, and Pliny's description goes on to mention – not to Caesar's credit – the number of human beings he killed in battle. Yet he balances that against Caesar's eventually self-destructive clemency, and he sets against Caesar's luxurious spending on public works and games the true generosity he showed in destroying the letters from his enemies which were captured in the civil war (*HN* 7.93–4). Like his tracing of Caesar's death to his clemency (*Att.* 14.22.1), Pliny's juxtaposition of Caesar's undoubted moral qualities with his less admirable character traits goes back to assessments by Caesar's contemporaries. Cicero, comparing his political opponents, Caesar and Mark Antony, to the advantage of the former, gives this description of the dead Caesar:

> In him there was innate ability, skill in reasoning, a good memory, literary talent, industry, intelligence, and a capacity for hard work. His deeds in war, although disastrous for the commonwealth, were nonetheless great achievements. Having for many years aimed at kingship, he achieved his goal by making great efforts and taking great risks. By his shows, buildings, largesse, and banquets, he conciliated the gullible masses; his own followers he bound to himself by rewards; his enemies, by a show of clemency. (*Phil.* 2.116)

Then again, the historian Sallust, whom Caesar had appointed governor of Africa in 46 BC, singled out as the two men of outstanding character within his own memory Caesar and his enemy Cato. The qualities he picks out in Caesar are similar to those stressed by Cicero: his generosity, accessibility, willingness to forgive, and concern for others, combined with a taste for hard work and an ambition for sweeping commands in which he could win military glory (*Cat.* 53–4). Sallust's comparison, however, casts a shadow on Caesar, for the antithetical virtues of the austere and self-controlled Cato, with his unshowy integrity, suggest at the very least that certain admirable traits were missing from Caesar's character (Toher, chapter 16, pp. 225–7).

Enduring Problems in Fathoming Caesar

The difficulty of understanding that character, which was a practical problem for many of his contemporaries, contributes to the fascination which Caesar continues to exercise as a historical figure. The mystery of his intentions, and the controversies generated by that mystery, run through the essays in this volume and give them a thematic unity. But the contributors have also taken seriously the aim of Blackwell's Companions to encourage readers to enter into the debate themselves, by making liberal use of source material and by indicating areas of contention. Readers will be exposed to some very different points of view: some old, some new.

Were Caesar's early ambitions just the ordinary ones to be expected in a Roman aristocrat and member of the governing class (Badian, chapter 2; Gruen, chapter 3)? Or was he always, as Lucan, Plutarch, and Dio tend to see him (Leigh, chapter 17; Pelling, chapter 18; Pitcher, chapter 19), determined "not to bear an equal"? If so, in which direction did his ambition point – to be the equal of Alexander as a conqueror, or to be the ruler of Rome and its empire? (See Zanker, chapter 21, pp. 289–96 on the different visual representations.) As a politician, did Caesar cultivate a consistently *popularis* image down to the Dictatorship, being anti-Sullan in constitutional matters and ideologically committed to increasing the power and amenities of the people (Badian, chapter 2; Steel, chapter 9), or was he, more pragmatically, concerned to heal the wounds of civil conflict in the eighties and to prevent discontent among the subjects of Rome (Gruen, chapter 3)?

Did his charm and warmth go with a serious commitment to his friends, or was his conception of friendship a matter of opportunistic political alliances (Steel, chapter 9)? How do his intellectual projects, his interest in language, in ethnography, and in systematization in general, fit with his ambitions (Fantham, chapter 11)? Was his clemency to his opponents in the civil war a matter of opportunistic calculation, pragmatic policy, or genuine softness of heart (Paterson, chapter 10)?

Did Caesar cross the Rubicon to defend his *dignitas* and the rights of tribunes, as he says in the *Civil Wars* (1.7), or was he genuinely afraid of prosecution, as his friend Pollio thought (Suet. *Iul.* 30: see Ramsey, chapter 4, p. 48)? How genuine were his conciliatory offers to effect a compromise? Does his legislation in his consulship, and later as Dictator, add up to a coherent vision for Rome? In particular, did he have a

constitutional solution in mind, or was he "stuck," unable to devise one – or at least one that would be acceptable, as his friend Matius thought (Cic. *Att.* 14.1): "If he, with all his genius, could not find a way out, who will find it now?" Did he decide to campaign in Parthia in order to escape the vexations and frustrations of the Roman political scene, or did he hope to return with such power that there would be no more resistance to his monarchic rule? Did he have a plan for the succession? Was his acceptance of divine honors a reluctant concession to sycophantic followers, or a case of entrapment by his enemies, who counted on his hunger for glory (Zanker, chapter 21)? Or was it a way of ensuring his own posthumous deification (Wardle, chapter 8)?

The contrary judgments pronounced on Caesar's murder, and the ambiguous actions taken after his death, show how unresolved these questions about Caesar and his intentions were at the time. Cicero was clearly struggling in *De Officiis* to find a philosophical justification for the questionable act of killing a friend. Antony had the Dictatorship abolished but made sure that Caesar's promises, policies, and memory, were honored. Caesar's grand-nephew Octavian, who ultimately succeeded him as Augustus Caesar, had him deified but still expressed respect for Cicero and Cato: it is not clear what role he thought Caesar's memory should play in the ideology of the new regime (Toher, chapter 16; Levick, chapter 15). It is thus not surprising that, later on, his biographer Suetonius should decide that while, on the one hand, he was "rightly killed," because of his acceptance of excessive honors and his demonstration of contempt for the Republican constitution, yet, on the other, his murder was a crime for which his assassins were rightly punished (*Iul.* 76–9, 89).

Once the new system of the Principate was entrenched, it was easy to think that Caesar's assassins had just been vainly resisting the inevitable direction of history, which Caesar was following. But whenever a Princeps became a tyrant, veneration for Caesar's opponents would surface. Throughout later history, monarchical rulers might either claim him as a forerunner or avoid comparison with him as a potential murder victim. Opponents of rulers might see in him either an inspiring enlightened reformer, or a justly murdered demagogue, usurper, and tyrant (McLaughlin, chapter 23; Biskup, chapter 26; Cole, chapter 28).

The Historical Significance of Caesar

For serious historians, and to a lesser extent for biographers, there is also the bigger question: did Caesar kill the Republic, or was it, in any case, terminally ill? The particular events that led immediately to civil war and to the demise of the Republic were, in themselves, no more inevitable than any other events in history; but were they just a concatenation of unfortunate circumstances, or was that demise explicable: an event with intelligible long-term causes, an event, as Montesquieu thought, waiting to happen at some time? These questions may not have much bearing on Caesar's responsibility for his actions, but they do affect our assessment of his impact on history. The brilliant account by Theodor Mommsen in his youthful *History of Rome* (1854–6), which can be said to mark the beginning of modern historiography on

Caesar in Europe (except in France: Nicolet, chapter 27, p. 416), contained an authoritative answer. Mommsen held that the Republic could not bear the strains of her growing empire, so that – as Caesar saw – some kind of constitutional monarchy was necessary. Mommsen has influenced the views of many subsequent historians, even the sober and scholarly Gelzer, but not all have been convinced, and those that have, like Christian Meier, do not necessarily agree that Caesar had a plan to solve the problem.[1]

The same question, that of the viability of the Republic, affects our political assessment of Caesar's assassins. If the Republic was still vital, then their bungling after the murder can be blamed for its demise; but if it was already doomed, then their act was simply futile. Mommsen showed his contempt for their adherence to the dying Republic by omitting the murder and ending his treatment of Caesar with his program and his vision for Rome as a cosmopolitan state, with citizenship extended to the whole world: a free state ruled by a constitutional monarch. Critics, then and later, have noted the folly of regarding success as necessarily fated or deserved (Badian 1982) and have pointed out that Cato and Brutus have, through the centuries, been inspiring figures (Christ 1994: 153). These, again, are questions for historians.

Whatever one thinks about the political wisdom of the assassination, however, the moral questions about the act remain. And this question has been the leading inspiration of the dramatic tradition about Julius Caesar. Brutus may have genuinely championed republican liberty, but he also murdered his friend and benefactor (perhaps even, for some playwrights, his father). Caesar may have usurped power and become tyrannical, but he showed clemency and generosity undeserving of such cruelty (see Griffin, chapter 25). Dramatists, like Lucan and Seneca before them, explore other moral questions about Caesar too: was he driven to civil war simply by ruthless ambition? Was his regret at the murder of Pompey by the Egyptians just a pretence (Leigh, chapter 17; Griffin, chapter 25)?

The Great Man in History

We have explored the various factors that have kept the memory of Julius Caesar so vivid and so relevant. But how far was the path of his comet, as it burned its way through the mists of history, really an unusual one? How far was Caesar a man of his time and class, more energetic and more able than most, but not essentially different in aims and vision? Did he become the initiator of a new form of government at Rome, the forerunner or even the first of the Roman emperors, as Suetonius and some others have thought (see Pitcher, chapter 19; Barnes, chapter 20; Levick, chapter 15). If so, was it by accident or by design? As for Caesar as a general and governor, recent studies pinpoint, through Caesar's writings, the preconceptions which he shared with his readers about imperialism and about warfare. Nonetheless, his place in the history of Roman imperialism is as ambiguous as his place in the history of the Roman constitution, for some have thought the enormous expansion brought about by Pompey and Caesar marks them as unusual for their generation

(Eckstein 2006a). Indeed it might be argued, that Caesar, in taking Illyricum as his province, showed that he already saw the need to which Augustus would give high priority, i.e. that Pompey's eastern conquests had now made it imperative for Rome to forge a land route through the Balkans, to facilitate communication between the halves of her sprawling empire.

Ronald Syme, the great scholar of the transition from Republic to Principate, was critical of studies of Caesar that treat him in isolation from his peers. The manuscript entitled *Caesar*, found among his papers when he died, was intended to measure Caesar's career against what might be considered normal or typical in the career of a young Roman aristocrat. Brutus and Cassius, Decimus Brutus and Trebonius, were all to have had chapters in the book And yet, even Syme wanted to write a book about Caesar in particular. First, because he could not escape the fascination of Caesar's personality: he saw him as a dandy in dress, a pedant about language, and a rigorous purist, and remarked, "such persons may be intolerably despotic; he was an expert on religious ritual and loved ceremony – a kind of ancient 'Anglo-Catholic'."[2] But he was also fascinated by Caesar's situation, seeing in him a child of his time who was bewildered and dismayed by the political change he had unwittingly precipitated. Far from having an early ambition to achieve the position of absolute power, which he finally did achieve, Syme believed that Caesar relished the game of Republican politics – at which he excelled – until, by one rash move, he "wrecked the playground" and destroyed all that he most valued. Far from having a grand plan for a new kind of government, he found himself in a position which he deplored and which he decided to escape by fighting a war in the East. Syme's Caesar is a tragic figure, almost looking for assassination.[3]

As Cicero said in 46 BC, addressing the Dictator himself, "Among those yet unborn there will arise, as there has arisen among us, a sharp division of opinion. Some shall laud your achievements to the skies, others will find something missing in them" (*Marcell.* 29). This volume can pose, but it cannot answer, the questions about his place in history: it does not decide between the Mommsen and the Syme approaches to Julius Caesar. Still less does it pass moral judgment, on Caesar or on his opponents. Yet these essays should provide readers with the ancient evidence and the historical context for his life and opinions. It should also acquaint them with the many interpretations that have been placed on them, in history and literature, in art and music, through the more than two thousand years that have elapsed since the Ides of March.

NOTES

1 Strasburger was unusual among German scholars in questioning both the extraordinariness of Caesar and his adherence to any sort of program (see, in particular, Strasburger 1953). But see Yavetz 1971 on the inadequacy of classifying views concerning Julius Caesar on national lines.

2 The manuscript is among the Syme papers deposited by Wolfson college in the Bodleian Library: a table of contents shows that there were to be seventeen chapters, four of them biographical.

3 These ideas had already been aired in Syme 1985 (1988).