

Plut. Ant. 65,2-66,3

Text Übersetzung:
(Bernadotte Perrin)

[2] Caesar posted Agrippa on the left, and reserved the right wing for himself. Of the land forces, that of Antony was commanded by Canidius, that of Caesar by Taurus, who drew them up along the sea and remained quiet. As for the leaders themselves, Antony visited all his ships in a row-boat, exhorting the soldiers, owing to the weight of their ships, to fight without changing their position, as if they were on land; [3] he also ordered the masters of the ships to receive the attacks of the enemy as if their ships were lying quietly at anchor, and to maintain their position at the mouth of the gulf, which was narrow and difficult. Caesar, we are told, who had left his tent while it was yet dark and was going round to visit his ships, was met by a man driving an ass. Caesar asked the man his name, and he, recognizing Caesar, replied: 'My name is Prosper, and my ass's name is Victor.' Therefore, when Caesar afterwards decorated the place with the beaks of ships, he set up bronze figures of an ass and a man. [4] After surveying the rest of his line of battle, he was carried in a small boat to his right wing, and there was astonished to see the enemy lying motionless in the narrows; indeed, their ships had the appearance of riding at anchor. For a long time he was convinced that this was really the case, and kept his own ships at a distance of about eight furlongs from the enemy. But it was now the sixth hour, and since a wind was rising from the sea, the soldiers of Antony became impatient at the delay, and, relying on the height and size of their own ships as making them unassailable, they put their left wing in motion. [5] When Caesar saw this he was delighted, and ordered his right wing to row backwards, wishing to draw the enemy still farther out from the gulf and the narrows, and then to surround them with his own agile vessels and come to close quarters with ships which, owing to their great size and the smallness of their crews, were slow and ineffective. Though the struggle was beginning to be at close range, the ships did not ram or crush one another at all, since Antony's, owing to their weight, had no impetus, which chiefly gives effect to the blows of the beaks, while Caesar's not only avoided dashing front to front against rough and hard bronze armour, but did not even venture to ram the enemy's ships in the side. [2] For their beaks would easily have been broken off by impact against vessels constructed of huge square timbers fastened together with iron. The struggle was therefore like a land battle; or, to speak more truly, like the storming of a walled town. For three or four of Caesar's vessels were engaged at the

same time about one of Antony's, and the crews fought with wicker shields and spears and punting-poles and fiery missiles; the soldiers of Antony also shot with catapults from wooden towers. [3] And now, as Agrippa was extending the left wing with a view to encircling the enemy, Publicola was forced to advance against him, and so was separated from the centre. The centre falling into confusion and engaging with Arruntius, although the sea-fight was still undecided and equally favourable to both sides, suddenly the sixty ships of Cleopatra were seen hoisting their sails for flight and making off through the midst of the combatants; for they had been posted in the rear of the large vessels, and threw them into confusion as they plunged through.