

Caes. Bell. Civ. III, 88-94

Text Übersetzung:
(William Duncan)

When Caesar approached Pompey's camp, he found his army drawn up in this manner: In the left wing were the two legions delivered by Caesar, at the beginning of the quarrel, in consequence of a decree of the senate; one of which was called the first, the other the third legion: and here Pompey commanded in person. Scipio was in the centre, with the legions he had brought out of Syria. The Cilician legion, joined to the Spanish cohorts, brought over by Afranius, formed the right wing. These Pompey esteemed his best troops, distributing the less expert between the wings and the main body. He had in all a hundred and ten cohorts, amounting to five and forty thousand; besides two cohorts of volunteers, who had served under him in former wars; and who, out of affection to their old general, though their legal time was expired, flocked to his standard on this occasion, and were dispersed amongst the whole army. His other seven cohorts were left to guard the camp and the adjoining forts. As the Enipeus, a river with very steep banks, covered his right wing, he placed all his horse, slingers, and archers in the left. Caesar observing his ancient custom, placed the tenth legion in the right, and the ninth in the left wing. As this last had been considerably weakened by the general actions at Dyrrhachium, he joined the eighth to it in such manner, that they formed as it were but one legion, and had orders mutually to relieve each other. His whole army amounted to fourscore cohorts, making in all twenty-two thousand men; besides two cohorts left to guard the camp. Domitius Calvinus was in the centre, Mark Antony on the left, and P. Sylla on the right. Caesar took his post opposite to Pompey, at the head of the tenth legion. And as he had observed the disposition of the enemy contrived to out-flank his right wing, to obviate that inconvenience, he made a draught of six cohorts from his rear line, formed them into a separate body, and opposed them to Pompey's horse; instructing them in the part they were to act; and admonishing them, that the success of that day would depend chiefly on their courage. At the same time, he charged the whole army, and in particular the third line, not to advance to battle without orders; which, when he saw it proper, he would give, by making the usual signal.

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Caesar's soldiers entirely defeated Pompey's hopes, by their good discipline and experience. For, perceiving the enemy did not stir, they halted, of their own accord, in the midst of their career; and having taken a moment's breath, put themselves, a second time, in motion; marched up in good order, flung their javelins, and then betook themselves to their swords. Nor did Pompey's men act with less presence of mind: for they sustained our attack, kept their ranks, bore the discharge of our darts: and having launched their own, immediately had recourse to their swords. At this instant, Pompey's horse, accompanied by the archers and slingers, attacked Caesar's; and having compelled them to give ground, began to extend themselves to the left, in order to flank the infantry. Whereupon Caesar gave the appointed signal to the six cohorts, who fell on the enemy's horse with such fury, that they not only drove them from the field of battle, but even compelled them to seek refuge in the highest mountains. The archers and slingers, deprived of their protection, were soon after cut to pieces. Meanwhile the six cohorts, not content with this success, wheeled round upon the enemy's left wing, and began to charge it in the rear: whereupon Caesar, perceiving the victory so far advanced, to complete it, brought up his third line, which till then had not engaged. Pompey's infantry being thus doubly attacked, in front by fresh troops, and in rear, by the victorious cohorts, could no longer resist, but fled to their camp. Nor was Caesar mistaken in his conjecture, when, in exhorting his men, he declared that victory would depend chiefly on the six cohorts, which formed the body of reserve, and were stationed to oppose the enemy's horse; for by them were their cavalry defeated, their archers and slingers cut to pieces, and their left wing surrounded and forced to fly.

Pompey seeing his cavalry routed, and that part of the army on which he chiefly depended put into disorder, despaired of being able to restore the battle, and quitted the field. Repairing immediately to his camp, he said aloud, to the centurions, who guarded the pretorian gate, so as all the soldiers might hear him: "Take care of the camp, and defend it vigorously in case of an attack. I go to visit the other gates, and give orders for their defence." This said, he retired to his tent, despairing of success, yet waiting the event.