

**scripta 13.7: Caesar wins the civil war**

The text below is an adapted extract from Julius Caesar's account of the end of the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC. This was the decisive battle of the civil war.

This text focuses on the moment at the very end of the battle when Caesar ordered his soldiers to assault Pompey's camp, probably hoping to capture Pompey and thus end the war. The defenders fought bravely but were overrun by Caesar's men. Realising it was a lost cause, Pompey abandoned his camp to avoid capture. He rode north to the city of Larisa before heading to the coast and boarding a grain ship to escape.

Pompey's soldiers had taken flight and had been driven back inside their rampart; Caesar urged his troops on and ordered them to be the ones to attack the camp. The battle had kept going until midday and, although his men were exhausted by the great heat, nevertheless they were ready in their resolve to face every task and obeyed Caesar's command.

The soldiers on Pompey's side who had fled were shaken to the core and worn out by exhaustion; they threw down their weapons and the military standards and gave more thought to completing their escape than to guarding the camp. The men who had taken a stand on the rampart were not able to withstand the quantity of missiles any longer; wounded and worn out, they abandoned their position. Immediately, they all fled as one to the high mountain range which was near to the camp.

Now that our men had gained entry through the rampart, Pompey dashed out from the camp through the rear gate and - right away - rode off at a gallop for Larisa. He did not linger there, but - at the same speed and without pausing his journey during the night - he reached the sea and boarded a grain ship, crying out repeatedly about the scale of his defeat.

- 1) How does Caesar create the impression of a dramatic end to the Battle of Pharsalus?
- 2) What does Caesar do to create a negative impression of Pompey's army?
- 3) Caesar creates a dramatic image of Pompey's escape: how is Pompey characterised here? Do you think we should take this text as an accurate characterisation of Pompey? Explain your answer.