

JESÚS BURGUEÑO, MONTSE GUERRERO LLADÓS  
Departamento de Geografía y Sociología, Universitat de Lleida

*The maps of the Cuerpo de Estado Mayor (1864-1867)  
referring to the scenes of the battles of Julius Caesar  
in Hispania. A peculiar request from Napoleon III  
to the Queen of Spain Isabel II*

In 1860, the Spanish General Staff (GS) Corps reached topographic technical maturity, fully assumed the language particular to modern mapping, and repeatedly demonstrated its cartographic diligence and expertise in works such as the *Atlas histórico y topográfico de la guerra de África, sostenida por la nación española contra el imperio marroquí en 1859 y 1860*, and the *Mapa itinerario militar de España* (1865), as well as in numerous topographic maps, both of the surroundings of major cities (unpublished) and of battle scenes of the War of Independence (published years later). All of these works endorsed General Narváez's decision to entrust the continued mapping of Spain to the GS Corps (Royal Decree of 21 August 1866), a task that had been undertaken by a civilian organisation until then.

It was within this context that the GS Corps received the singular commission from the Queen of Spain to map the scenes of Julius Caesar's two main battles in Hispania – the Battle of Ilerda (Lleida) and the Battle of Munda (Province of Córdoba) – during the second civil war of the Roman Republic (49-45 BCE). Napoleon III's reign (1852-1870) displayed an intense fascination with Imperial Rome. In 1774, Colonel Guischard published several maps referring to Caesar's campaign in Ilerda, but its topographic basis was very poor. The French Emperor's aim was to improve knowledge of the reality of the terrain in order to hazard more robust hypotheses about the Roman troops' movements.

In 1858, Napoleon III created a "Commission de topographie des Gaules", from whose works came the project to publish a *Histoire de Jules César*. Although it

had obviously been drafted by a team of specialists, the Emperor's name appeared as the sole author of the work. The second volume (1866) ends at the crucial moment of Crossing the Rubicon and, therefore, the account of events in Hispania was not published in Napoleon's lifetime. The plan for the book also considered the creation of an atlas that would illustrate Julius Caesar's life story. What arose from this was Napoleon III's singular petition to the Queen of Spain, Isabella II. The relationships between monarchies were very friendly, partly because of the circumstantial fact that Napoleon III's wife was the Spanish Countess Eugenia de Montijo.

The GS followed, to the letter, "the notes issued by the French Government regarding the scope that the plans should cover in both Catalonia and Andalusia." Although the French were happy with a scale of "1:80,000, and preferably of 1:40,000 if possible", a large part of the survey was done at a scale of 1:20,000, which was later reduced to 1:40,000. The relief was represented by contour lines at intervals of 20 metres in Catalonia and 10 metres in Andalusia, because the terrain was flatter. Until then, the GS Corps had hardly used a metric system; in plans of the outskirts of Barcelona (1865) and of Zaragoza (1866), an interval of 40 feet was used. However, the metric system had to be used because it was a French commission.

In Catalonia, the GS officers who carried out the fieldworks were Commander Rafael Moreno and Captains José Gámir, Vicente Ferreres and Miguel Bosch. In Andalusia, the operation was led by Lieutenant Colonel Hipólito Obregón. Under his orders were Captains José

Sánchez Molero, Narciso Barraquer José Galvis, Luis Marengo, Antonio Carrió and Ernesto Aguirre.

The map library of Spain's Army Geographic Centre conserves the original maps of both campaigns at a scale of 1:20,000, whereas the library of the Royal Palace of Madrid holds a large folder (almost certainly identical to the one delivered to Napoleon III) entitled *Planos para las campañas de Julio César en España*. The work comprises the two large topographic plans at a scale of 1:40,000, bearing the signatures of the Director of the GS Corps Eusebio de Calonje, the Head of the Depósito de la Guerra (a repository of documentation relating to Spain's military campaigns and actions) Francisco Parreño, and the Head of the Topographic Section Juan de Velasco, who painted 12 watercolours of landscapes to illustrate both regions.

The data known to us about the topographic operations have been gleaned from those very maps and from the service sheets of the officers who took part in them, and in particular of Rafael Moreno, which includes documentation on the costs incurred by the Second Commission's work (Catalonia). The military archives apparently do not conserve the reports of the topographic works and calculations. For example, we do not know the extent of troop mobilisation that carrying out a topographic survey of such size entailed.

Operation planning was established by the Royal Order of 4 February 1864. The Second Commission (which operated in Catalonia and Aragon) had a financial package of 18,000 Reales. The triangulation base was measured on plains situated to the south of Llardecans. A total of 90 vertices were used, which afforded considerable accuracy in the calculation of its altitude. In December, the Commission returned to Barcelona and undertook the office-based works, which can be deemed to have been completed on 5 April 1865. The cost and the timeline were undoubtedly similar in Andalusia, where a total of 104 vertices were used to calculate the triangulation, and its base was measured in the west of the city of Córdoba.

In the winter of 1864/65, Lieutenant Colonel Juan de Velasco was posted to the lands where a survey for the plans of Julius Caesar's campaigns was being carried out, "in order to take views and be able to give a graphic representation of the true physiognomy of the terrain." His panoramic views, with some traditional figures and details, accompanied the topographic plans so as to make the entire work more aesthetically pleasing. Some of the 12 views – mainly the Andalusian ones – are adorned with traditional scenes of zero interest to the story of Julius Caesar's battles. These scenes may have

been produced with thoughts inclined more towards Empress Eugenia de Montijo's enthusiasm for bullfighting since Granada was her native city.

The topographic maps were redrawn at the Depósito de la Guerra, where a beautiful and expressive relief shading effect was applied to them, mainly by the repository's draughtsman Ángel Rodríguez Tejero.

The Queen and the Government's satisfaction with the successful result obtained from carrying out the French monarch's exacting commission led to all those taking part in the topographic operation being decorated, from the GS officers to the Depósito de la Guerra's draughtsmen. In June 1865, Velasco was sent to Paris to "present to His Majesty the Emperor of the French the topographic works verified by the GS Corps to clarify the study of Julius Caesar's campaigns."

The maps created by the GS fully satisfied Napoleon III's petition but, in 1867, a simple matter of layout led to the territory included in both surveys being extended. The perimeter of the initial study was irregular, which seemed a little strange when the maps were reduced to the size of an atlas plate. The Emperor, therefore, asked for the topographic works to be extended to the entire rectangular zone that was intended to be represented.

In this second phase of topographic works, the scale directly used was 1:40,000. As a result of this extension, the surface area finally represented in Catalonia and Aragon reached 1,947 km<sup>2</sup>, whereas in Córdoba it was 2,690 km<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the service sheets of the authors, we know that the works started at the end of July and finished in December 1867. In Catalonia, the extension of the survey was entrusted to four officers, two of whom had already taken part in the first operation: GS Captains José Gámir and Miguel Bosch. Completing the Commission were Captain Luis J. de Miquel and Lieutenant José de Bascaran. The authorship of the final maps of Andalusia was not stated, so we can only glean it from the service sheets of the officers who had already taken part in the initial phase. It is very likely that four officers were nominated for the operation, among whom it is certain that José Galbis, Luis Marengo and José Sánchez took part.

Napoleon III did not manage to see the completed *Histoire de Jules César* that he had backed. Political events took over on both sides of the Pyrenees. Firstly on the Spanish side, with the 1868 Revolution, which forced Isabella II to take exile in Paris, where she was welcomed by the Emperor and his wife. In the cartographic sphere, the political change in Spain led to the demilitarisation of the national map enterprise and the creation of the Geo-

graphic Institute in 1870. A period of Napoleon's gradual political weakening (in parallel to that of his health) had also begun in France, which culminated in a humiliating military defeat against Prussia in the Battle of Sedan. The Third French Republic was proclaimed just two years after the fall of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain. Napoleon III died in exile in England in January 1873.

The book that had given rise to the Spanish GS's peculiar cartographic work was not completed until two decades later, by the person who had been the Emperor's collaborator, Colonel Eugène Stoffel. In 1887, the Imprimerie Nationale, the official printing works of the French Government, published the two volumes of the *Histoire de Jules César. Guerre civile* by Colonel Stoffel, both complemented by a luxurious colour atlas. The book makes no mention whatsoever of the provenance of the images contained in the 26 plates, but four of them were certainly the product of the works carried out on the ground some 20 years earlier by the Spanish officers of the GS:

- “Carte des environs d'Ilerda” at a scale of 1:40,000 (plate 5).
- “Carte du pays entre le Segre et l'Ebre” at a scale of 1:140,000 (plate 6).

- “Vues de Lérida et de Mequinenza” (plate 7), a monochrome photographic copy of two of the watercolours painted by Velasco.
- “Carte du pays au sud de Cordoue” at a scale of 1:160,000 (plate 24).

This atlas does not appear to have had a very wide circulation. It was a somewhat paltry end to the huge amount of fast and effective work undertaken by the GS Corps' cartographers between 1864 and 1867. That excellent cartography had hardly any use other than satisfying the vanity and individual interests of two monarchs, just a few short years before the collapse of their respective regimes. No thought was ever given to making the most of such topographic works and giving them a public use. In reality, nearly all of the Army's cartographic output had a very restricted use because it was deemed strategic and confidential information. Moreover, this specific case (the production of two costly maps on a foreign monarch's whim) is an example of the diversion of scarce public resources for individual interest. However, this entire episode may also be understood as a diplomatic operation within the context of good entente between the Queen of Spain and the French Emperor.