

SCHNEIDER'S CONJECTURE ON BELLUM ALEXANDRINUM 13.5*

Keywords: Caesar, *Bellum Alexandrinum*, Lycia, ships

*Caesar Rhodias naues VIII habebat – nam decem missis una in cursu
litore Aegyptio defecerat –, Ponticas VIII, Lycias V, ex Asia XII.*

Lycias mss. : Syrias ... Cilicias Schneider

In this enumeration at B. Alex. 13.5 of the naval forces that Caesar commanded at the beginning of the Eunostos harbor battle in 47 B. C. the manuscripts read *Lycias*. In his 1888 edition of the text Rudolf Schneider proposed the emendation *Cilicias*, with the addition of some unknown number of *Syrias naues*, citing as evidence B. Alex. 1.1: *Caesar Rhodo atque ex Syria Ciliciaque omnem classem arcessit*.¹ Schneider's conjecture has proved popular with subsequent editors.²

Schneider's argument should immediately arouse suspicion, since even with the conjecture the list at B. Alex. 1.1 does not correspond to that at B. Alex. 13.5: in the former, Caesar calls for ships from Rhodes, Syria, and Cilicia, while in the latter, the ships are from Rhodes, Pontus, and Asia, along with whatever the lemma in question represents. This would suggest we are dealing with two different sets.

We should take note of the report at Caes. Civ. 3.106.1 that Caesar *cum ... navibus longis Rhodiis X et Asiaticis paucis Alexandriam pervenit*. If Caesar arrived in Alexandria with these ten Rhodian ships, then summoned more from Rhodes as indicated in B. Alex. 1.1, at the time of the harbor battle he would have had more than the nine Rhodian ships – one of the original ten having foundered – reported in B. Alex. 13.5. Barwick adduced this discrepancy as evidence against the analytical interpretation of the *Bellum Alexandrinum*;³ Rice Holmes supposed that the author had simply written 1.1 as “a mistake.”⁴

Gaertner and Hausburg offer a much more plausible reading, understanding B. Alex. 1.1 as referring to reinforcements that had been ordered but had not yet arrived by the onset of the harbor battle; the *decem missis* of B. Alex. 13.5 thus refers

*) I would like to thank Cynthia Damon, in whose seminar on Latin textual criticism this note originated.

1) R. Schneider, *Bellum Alexandrinum* (Berlin 1888) 10 n. 5.

2) This conjecture was accepted by B. Kübler, *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii Vol. III* (Leipzig 1896); A. Klotz, *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii Vol. III* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1993); J. Andrieu, *Pseudo-César: Geurre d'Alexandrie* (Paris 2002); and G. Townend, *Caesar's War in Alexandria* (Bristol 1988).

3) K. Barwick, *Caesars Commentarii und das Corpus Caesarianum* (Leipzig 1938) 180 n. 1.

4) T. Rice Holmes, *The Roman Republic and the Founder of the Empire Vol. III* (Oxford 1923) 484 n. 7.

to the ten Rhodian ships said to have come with Caesar at Caes. Civ. 3.106.1.⁵ This would explain the discrepancy between the respective sets of B. Alex. 1.1 and B. Alex. 13.5 and provide grounds for rejecting Schneider's attempt to conflate the two.

The case thus far for maintaining the reading of the *paradosis* is a strong one. There remains one objection to answer, namely whether there is anything inherently implausible in Caesar commanding a contingent of ships from Lycia. Lycia, granted, is nowhere else mentioned in the Caesarean corpus, and Townend, for one, finds the reading *Lycias* objectionable "since Lycia was not a Roman province at this time."⁶ That however does not preclude the possibility of raising ships from Lycia; according to Cic. Att. 9.9.2, to cite but one example, Lycia was one of the sources for Pompey's fleet just a few years earlier. Moreover, a recently published Greek inscription on bronze records that Caesar presided over the negotiation of a generous treaty with the Lycians in 46 B.C., which several historians have interpreted as a reward for the contingent of ships that Lycia sent to Egypt (apparently giving no thought to Schneider's conjecture).⁷

In sum, it appears that the reasoning behind Schneider's conjecture is flawed, and that the reading of the *paradosis*, far from being historically objectionable, serves to explicate Roman relations with Lycia in the time of Caesar. Schneider's conjecture should therefore be firmly rejected.

North Royalton, Ohio

Thomas Vozar

5) See J.F. Gaertner / B. Hausburg, *Caesar and the Bellum Alexandrinum* (Göttingen 2013) 51–52, citing also P. Graindor, *La guerre d'Alexandrie* (Cairo 1931) 29–30, 101 and Andrieu (n.2 above) lviii–lix.

6) Townend (n.2 above) 44.

7) *Editio princeps* and discussion in S. Mitchell, *The Treaty between Rome and Lycia of 46 BC* (MS2070), in: R. Pintaudi (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Schøyen* (P. Schøyen I), Florence 2005, 161–259, with reference to the position of Lycia and the ships sent to Egypt at 234–237; P. Sánchez, *La convention judiciaire dans le traité conclu entre Rome et les Lyciens* (P. Schøyen I 25), *Chiron* 37, 2007, 363–381 at 364 and I. Arrayás Morales, *Diplomacy in the Greek Poleis of Asia Minor: Mytilene's Embassy to Tarraco*, *C&M* 61, 2010, 127–149 at 133 n. 19 also point to the Lycian ships in connection with the treaty.