

X. Some Reflections on the Battle of Pharsalus

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I

The account of Pharsalus given in Caesar's *Bellum Civile* (3.82–99) has cast into shade the accounts in Plutarch's lives of Caesar (42–47) and Pompey (67–72) and in Appian's *Civil Wars* (2.65–82). Yet Caesar's account is far from complete, as the uncertainty over the topography of the battle indicates. Recourse must be had to the other narratives and partial accounts for the details which fill in the picture. At best our knowledge is still not completely satisfactory, even if the main outline will always be that contained in Caesar.

One variation in detail, surprisingly, has barely been noticed and its significance has been overlooked. This is that Caesar gives an account of the position of Pompey's commanders which is just the reverse of that given by Plutarch in the two lives, and also by Appian. Caesar (3.88) says that Pompey was on the left wing, and Scipio in the center, but fails to name the commander on the right, though from subsequent references it is not hard to see that he had Domitius Ahenobarbus in mind.¹ On the contrary, Plutarch's *Caesar* (44) places Pompey on the right, Scipio in the center, Domitius on the left; Plutarch's *Pompey* (69) does the same, and Appian (2.76) the same, with the variation that Lentulus is in command on the right, with Pompey and Afranius guarding the camp.

This divergence from Caesar cannot be dismissed as mere error, for whatever their deficiencies these authors were following good sources. Plutarch mentions Asinius Pollio (*Pomp.* 72; *Caes.* 46.1–2) and Livy (*Caes.* 47), and Appian (2.70.82) claims the use of various authorities as well as Pollio. The high probability is that either these late authors themselves or at least their ultimate sources were extremely cautious in recording such an important variation from the account current under the name of the victor. Mere accident or bungling does not seem a likely explanation of the discrepancy. A close examination of Caesar's narrative may show how it arose.

¹ *B.C.* 3.99.5 narrates his death, clearly because he was the only leading commander who died on the field.

It is in a special setting that the *Bellum Civile* gives the distribution of Pompey's commanders and forces. Caesar says that he noticed the arrangement when he approached the Pompeian camp: Caesar, cum Pompei castris appropinquasset, ad hunc modum aciem eius instructam animum advertit (3.88). This means that the source of the section is some statement of Caesar's on the field, and perhaps a written memorandum; from this Caesar or his editorial assistant later worked up the account which we have today in the *Bellum Civile*. If we assume that the memorandum read in its original form: Pompey to the left, Scipio in the center, Domitius to the right, we see that if Caesar meant to his own left or his own right the memorandum was describing exactly the line of battle that Plutarch and Appian have handed down to us.² But in the transformation of memorandum into text of the *Bellum Civile* a simple expression for "on the left" became *in sinistro cornu*; "in the center" became *mediam aciem*; "on the right" became *in dextro cornu*. But to insert *cornu*, of course, reverses the entire order, for the reference now is to the left or right of Pompey, not of Caesar.

That Caesar did not catch the error involved need not surprise us, for Asinius Pollio made a very famous criticism of Caesar, as reported by Suetonius (*Div. Iul.* 56), alluding to the carelessness and inaccuracy of his composition even concerning operations in which he personally took part. And Asinius Pollio was present at Pharsalus, included the battle in his history,³ and, as we have seen, is quoted as one of the sources by the authors who put Pompey on Pompey's right, and Domitius on Pompey's left. It would appear not unreasonable, therefore, to say that Caesar as a memorandum writer was correct, but Caesar as a writer is wrong, and that the order of battle given in the *Bellum Civile* is in error.

This conclusion becomes more persuasive if we consider the forces under the respective Pompeian commanders. All the authorities agree as to the relative positions of the Caesarian commanders, and put Caesar on the right wing, with his tenth legion stationed there.⁴ This was his strongest point, and the decisive action of the

² The original notation may have been in Greek, with *dexios* and *ep' aristera* the short key words. Caesar was using Greek upon occasion in this campaign; he uttered his famous judgment over his fallen foes on the field of Pharsalus in Latin, but shortly thereafter wrote it down in Greek. (Plut. *Caes.* 46, on the authority of Pollio; the Latin version appears in Suet. *Div. Iul.* 30.)

³ Appian 2.82; Suet. *Div. Iul.* 30. On Asinius Pollio, see Coulter, C., "Pollio's History of the Civil War," *CW* 46 (1952) 33-36.

⁴ *B.C.* 3.89.1; Plut. *Caes.* 44.1; *Pomp.* 69.1-2; Appian 2.76.

battle occurred here. It would seem most natural for Pompey's strongest forces to be massed against the tenth legion. And when we look at Caesar's description of Pompey's forces we find the distinct statement that Pompey adjudged his best force the Cilician legion and the Spanish cohorts he had taken over from Afranius (*B.C.* 3.88.3-4). The text of Caesar puts these on Pompey's right wing, but if Caesar's memorandum put them on Caesar's right as he approached Pompey's line, and under the command of Domitius, we have Pompey's strongest forces matching Caesar's strongest.

All the accounts agree in placing Scipio in the center, and his legions had been raised in Syria.⁵ But where was Pompey stationed?

Caesar assigns to Pompey the two legions, the first and third, transferred to him by Caesar at the beginning of the Civil War (*B.C.* 3.88.2). Personal command of these (or command through a subordinate)⁶ seems most likely, and if Pompey were on Pompey's right, i.e., to the left of Caesar, he would oppose Marc Antony, as Plutarch distinctly says (*Pomp.* 69.1). And Antony's military ability was not unworthy the attention of Pompey himself.

But one other statement relative to Pompey's location demands attention. The *Bellum Civile* (3.89.3) says that Caesar himself took up his position *contra Pompeium*. At first sight this seems to mean across the battle lines, with the line between the two commanders at an approximate right angle to the face of the fighting. But could it not be in a transverse direction? Suppose Pompey conspicuously in sight on one hill, and Caesar conspicuous on another. Would not the conditions be satisfied, no matter what the angle?

In a visit to modern Pharsala in April, 1956,⁷ I was able to locate two hills which to my mind satisfy these conditions, and from this point I become a mild partisan for one of the sites proposed for the battle of Pharsalus. But I think the argument so far is applicable no matter which site may ultimately be accepted as the exact spot of the contest. Pompey's forces, that is, were arranged as Plutarch and Appian give them — Pompey on Pompey's right wing (perhaps with Lentulus in active command there), Scipio in the center, and Domitius Ahenobarbus on Pompey's left wing.

⁵ *B.C.* 3.88.3; Plut. *Caes.* 44.2; *Pomp.* 69.1; Appian 2.76.

⁶ This is the meaning of Lentulus being named as commanding the right in Appian 2.76.

⁷ This visit, as well as personal inspection of the routes in Greece followed by Pompey's and Caesar's armies, was made possible by a grant-in-aid of the American Philosophical Society. For this I am very grateful.

II

Wherever the battle occurred,⁸ it must have been in proximity to both Pharsalus and Palaepharsalus, for Caesar's continuator Hirtius refers to the battle by both names (*Bell. Alex.* 42.3; 48.1). It is well known that Caesar mentions no names, and that the most definite location is that of Appian as between the river Enipeus and Pharsalus (2.75). (See Plate II.)

Pharsalus, it is generally agreed, is modern Pharsala, but critics have placed Palaepharsalus in a variety of places, some at a considerable distance from Pharsala.⁹ So far, however, I believe no investigator of the site of the battle has called attention to the recent excavations of Verdelis on the western outskirts of Pharsala.¹⁰ Quite understandably, major attention has focused upon the prehistoric finds in the tombs which would seem to indicate that we have to do with a cemetery of a settlement of very early times, and lend strength to the theory advanced by Staehlin that in Pharsala was the Phthia of Achilles.¹¹ This may be perhaps the slight hill close by and just within the modern town, once topped by a Turkish mosque, but now occupied by the church of Hagia Paraskeue.¹²

⁸ Excellent bibliographies on this much discussed question will be found in Rambaud, M., *Historia* 3 (1954-5) 346, note 1 and van Ooteghem, R. P., *Pompée le Grand* (Bruxelles, 1954) 623, note 3. Summaries of evidence and previous discussion are in Lucas, F. L., "The Battlefield of Pharsalus," *ABSA* 24 (1919-21) 34-53; Holmes, T. Rice, *The Roman Republic* (1923) 3, 452-457; Bequignon, Y., "Le champ de bataille de Pharsale," *BCH* 52 (1928) 9-44. Maps will be found in *ABSA* 24 (1919-21) Pl. II (reproduced in *BCH* 52, 16); Holmes, *Roman Republic* 3, opposite p. 163; *BCH* 52, Pl. I; *CQ* 2 (1908) opposite p. 292; Kromayer-Veith, *Schlachten-Atlas zur Antiken Kriegsgeschichte, Roemische Abteilung*, Blatt 20; Kromayer, G., *Antike Schlachtfelder* (Berlin, 1907) 2, Karten 11 and 12.

⁹ Lucas, followed by Holmes, places Palaepharsalus upon Koutouri, to the northwest of Pharsala. I suspect the genesis of this identification was the continuance of the place name in modern times. Leake, in an additional note in his *Travels in Northern Greece* 4, 568, referring to his main text in 4, 328, remarks: "The ruins here mentioned are sometimes called Palea Fersala." The modern railroad station nearby proudly bears the name Palaiofarsalos today. It need hardly be remarked that the continuance of place names in modern Greece is scarcely conclusive evidence.

¹⁰ *Praktika* 1951, 157-163; 1952, 185-198; Orlandos, A., *Ergon tēs Archaiologikēs Etaireias* 1954, 21-22; 1955, 44-47.

¹¹ Staehlin, Fr., *Das Hell. Thessalien* (Stuttgart, 1924) 135-144, especially 136. Burr, V., *Klio Beiheft* 39 (1944), had preferred the site Palaiokastros to the northeast of Pharsala adduced as Phthia by Bequignon, *BCH* 56 (1932) 90-118.

¹² In the reports this hill is referred to by the name of the mosque, Fetich Tzami. It is about one-half mile east of the excavations. It is marked *c* on the map of Pharsala in Staehlin, *Das Hellen. Thessalien* 138. A very old photograph appears in *Praktika* 1910, 177.

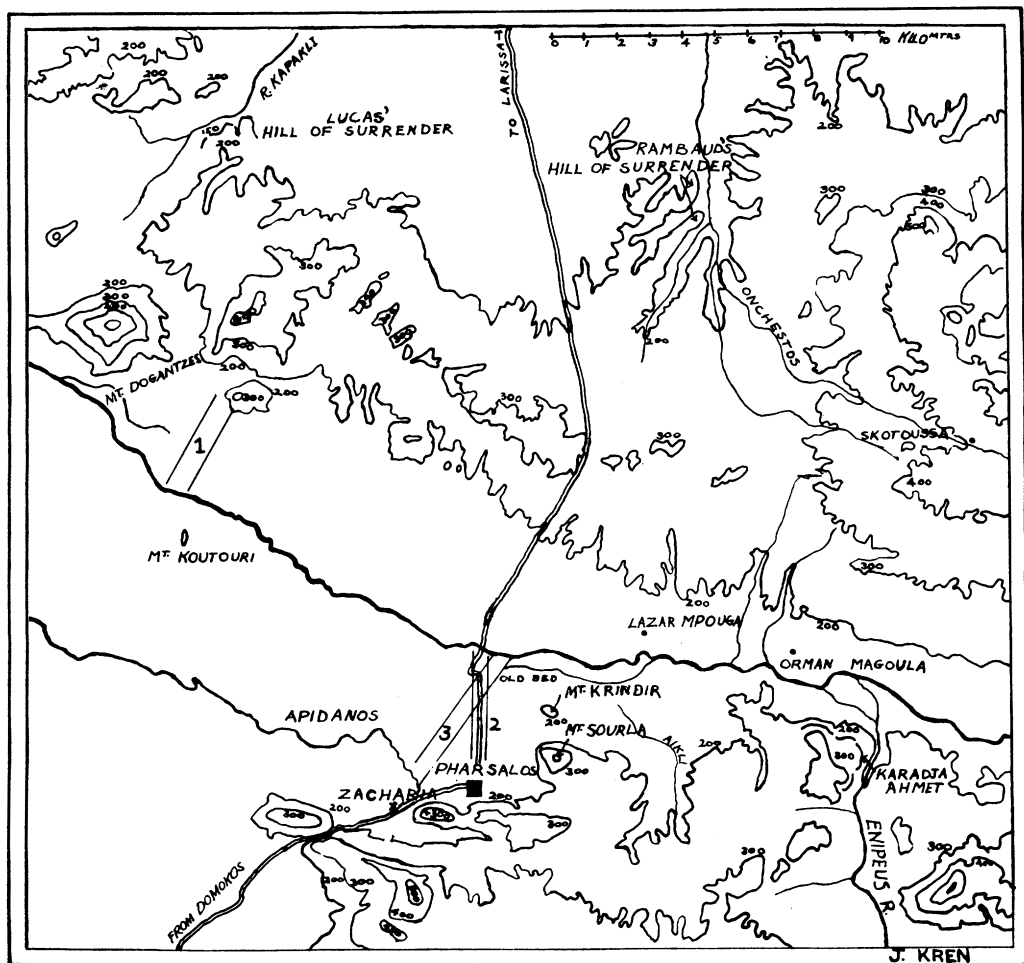


PLATE II. The Battle of Pharsalus.

Adapted from Lucas *ABSA* 24 (1919-21) Plate II.

- 1 = Lines of battle, according to Lucas: Pompeians to left, or west; Caesarians to right, or east.
- 2 = Lines of battle, according to Kromayer: Pompeians to right, or east; Caesarians to left, or west.
- 3 = Lines of battle proposed in this paper: Pompeians to right, or east; Caesarians to left, or west.

Yet these excavations have disclosed material of the fifth and fourth centuries, and apparently the site thereabout must have been of long occupation.¹³ It may reasonably be suggested, therefore, that Palaeopharsalus was on the hill topped by Hagia Paraskeue, and that the battle was not far from it.¹⁴

Now just across the road from the excavations of Verdelis there rises a small low hill which is called Zacharia. If one mounts it he obtains a view of the entire plain below Pharsala and up to the up-swinging height known as Sourla and the lower spreading rise of land known as Krindir. I think it most probable that during the battle of Pharsalus Caesar took his position on Zacharia and Pompey on the slopes of Krindir. If this be the case I think any observer might well have said in Latin that one was *contra* the other.

Each commander must have been in an elevated position, in view of his troops, and in position to observe the course of the fighting. Caesar's own narrative tells us that the order for the forward movements of the cohorts in reserve on the right wing — the decisive movement of the battle, whose success depended upon exact timing — was given by a visual signal, the hoisting of the *vexillum*, after elaborate orders for close observation (*B.C.* 3.89.5; 93.5; cf. *Plut. Pomp.* 71.4; *Appian* 2.78). Pompey's camp was on a hill (*B.C.* 3.85.1), and his assumed position on Krindir would be just below his camp where Kromayer places it. Caesar relates that Pompey withdrew to his camp after he had seen the defeat of his cavalry (*B.C.* 3.94.5). Plutarch says the same in his life of Caesar (45.4), but in his life of Pompey (71.3; 72.1) says that after he had looked towards other parts of the field for some time he at last saw the dust arising from the plain and inferred defeat from that. He must have been in an elevated position.¹⁵ And it will be seen that since he was close to camp already his withdrawal there involved only a relatively short distance; he did not ride completely across the back of his army.

III

It will have become apparent by now that I subscribe to the location of the battlefield made by Kromayer, namely on the south bank of the Enipeus, and approximately along the line of the

¹³ See the report on the stratification in *Ergon* 1955, 46–47.

¹⁴ Before Verdelis' excavations this had been proposed by Kromayer, *Antike Schlachtfelder* 4, 645–646.

¹⁵ For other indications see *Plut. Pomp.* 68.4; *Appian* 2.81.

modern road which runs from the railroad station into Pharsala. Of course, I would reverse the order of Pompey's troops, as I have indicated above,¹⁶ and a slight change in the direction of the lines of combat will be suggested later.

One reason for this adoption has been stated already, namely the likelihood of Palaepharsalus being near the hillock within modern Pharsala itself.

But a very strong plea has been made for locating the battle north of the Enipeus, and perhaps most English-speaking scholars would place it there, thanks to the persuasive eloquence of Mr. F. L. Lucas¹⁷ and Dr. T. Rice Holmes.¹⁸ One advocating the south bank therefore must state very early the reasons why he rejects the opposing theory.

It is well known that Appian is the only source definitely locating the battle, and he says that the lines were drawn up between the Enipeus and Pharsalus (2.75). Provided a plausible physical site can be discovered, I think that only compelling reasons should lead us to reject his testimony. Frankly it does not seem to me that those advocating the north bank have succeeded in discrediting him.

As I read the literature I seem to see two main points in their thinking. The first is the unlikelihood of Pompey's having moved across the Enipeus before the battle, or the unlikelihood of Caesar's having remained on the south side. I would be inclined to think that we should let these considerations rest until we have exhausted all the possibilities of the narrative before us. The difficulty of crossing has probably been exaggerated. The Enipeus is not a large river,¹⁹ and as Staehlin has remarked²⁰ to cross the river peacefully before and after the battle could be quite different from a charge of cavalry across the stream during combat. I suspect Pompey could have made the crossing, and I do not think it entirely unthinkable that he would make the move. If we assume the utter self-confidence in his camp as correctly reported, the move south of the river may be ascribed to foolhardiness in that it hindered the possi-

¹⁶ In aligning Pompey's forces, Kromayer, *Schlachten-Atlas*, Blatt 20, Karte 5, uses Caesar, *B.C.*, as a guide for the distribution of forces, and Plutarch-Appian for the distribution of commanders. My contention is that Plutarch-Appian is to be preferred over Caesar in the distribution of both forces and commanders.

¹⁷ *ABSA* 24 (1919-1921) 34-53.

¹⁸ *Roman Republic* 3, 452-457.

¹⁹ Pictures in *BCH* 52 (1928) 31.

²⁰ *Philologus* 82 (1927) 118.

bility of retreat if necessary. If we do not think this a correct estimate, we can at least say that a retreat if necessary would not be much more difficult than an advance.

It does not seem to me unreasonable to suppose that Caesar would choose to keep south of the river. Once he was over the Pindus his course of march from Kalabaka to Gomphoi to Metropolis shows him following the foothills surrounding the Thessalian plain, a not unreasonable action in view of shattered morale and inferior forces. His communications with supporting forces behind him were over the pass at Metsovo; he had a force in Boeotia under Fufius Calenus (*B.C.* 3.55), and troops in Aetolia, Acarnania, and Amphilochia under L. Cassius Longinus and Calvisius Sabinus (*B.C.* 3.55). Plutarch (*Caes.* 43.1) represents him as asking the soldiers whether they should not wait for reinforcements from Illyricum and Greece; I doubt the historicity of that account, but whoever wrote it first, whether Plutarch or his source, I suspect had a true sense of the military necessities, which would involve Caesar's keeping the lines open to Dokimos and Lamia, and hence to Boeotia, as well as the pass leading to Ambracia which was controlled by Gomphoi.²¹

A second point concerns the flight from Pharsalus. Both Pompey himself and his defeated troops are said to have moved in a direction towards Larisa. A Pompeian camp on the north side of the Enipeus and mountain ridges running toward the northeast on the north side of the river undeniably provide a very convenient fulfilment of this necessity, other things being equal. But if other factors indicate the south bank, I cannot see an insuperable difficulty. *Larisam versus* (*B.C.* 3.97.2) means only that the ultimate objective of the troops in flight was Larisa, where the last camp of the combined Pompeian armies had been. In the escapes of individuals such as Pompey, who is said to have fled from a rear gate, and Brutus (*B.C.* 3.96.3; *Plut. Brut.* 6.1) all that is meant is that they could not escape out of the front gate; and this is rather self-evident.

Somewhere, approximately six Roman miles from the battlefield, was a *mons* at whose foot flowed what Caesar calls a *flumen*. Here the Pompeians surrendered, after Caesar, following a forced march, had cut them off from their water supply (*B.C.* 3.97-98). Where was this place of surrender?

²¹ For the passes over the Pindus see Hammond, N. G. L., *ABSA* 32 (1931-32) 139-147.

North of the Enipeus two localities have been proposed, but neither has a stream of sufficient size flowing around it. I have seen from the railway at least three times the Kapakli, which is Lucas' river around his hill of surrender,²² and to my mind hardly any reporting officer would have described it as a *flumen*, because of its small size. I have photographed another stream both at the hill of surrender favored very recently by Rambaud,²³ and also some miles down stream, and at neither place does it seem large enough for designation as a *flumen*. The only site possible, I think, is the hill of Karadja Ahmet, south of the Enipeus, which flows around its base with sufficient volume. Staehlin is certainly right in suggesting that only the Enipeus is large enough to supply water for 24,000 escaping men.²⁴

Geographically, Karadja Ahmet lies east of Kromayer's proposed battlesite, while Larisa is northeast. Is there in this a conflict with the requirement that those escaping from the battle must be moving *Larisam versus*? I think not, for from Karadja Ahmet it would be possible to turn northward, and after crossing the Enipeus to reach Larisa by marching over the hills in the neighborhood of Scotussa. In fact, in arguing for another battlesite Stoffel represents the Pompeians as moving southward originally from Larisa along such a route.^{24a}

The latest article to treat of the site places the battle on the north bank, but to the eastward of the hill of Dogantzes, below which Lucas had located it. Rambaud²⁵ takes as historical the lines of Lucan (7.214–216) describing the descent of the Pompeians into the plain of Pharsalus:

Miles, ut adverso Phoebi radiatus ab ictu
descendens totos perfudit lumine colles,
non temere inmissus campis.

²² *ABSA* 24 (1919–1921) 34–53. It should be noted here that the map of the neighborhood of Pharsalus in the 1932 edition of the *Guide Bleu* of Greece is in error on page 283 in placing the railway to Larissa south of the hills northwest of Pharsala near which Lucas would locate the battle. The line runs north of these hills, as the more exact maps indicate. On the smallness of the stream, see also Bequignon, *BCH* 52 (1928) 31–32.

²³ *Historia* 3 (1954–55) 373. The name seems to vary. In 1956 it was referred to locally as the Almatzek. On the maps I have found the names Kousbasaniotikos and Mauros Riak, as well as Onchestos.

²⁴ *Philologus* 82 (1927) 118.

^{24a} Cf. the map in Holmes, *Roman Republic* 3, opposite page 163.

²⁵ Rambaud, M., "Le Soleil de Pharsale," *Historia* 3 (1954–55) 346–378.

The sun, that is, in the early morning from the east glitters upon the spears of the soldiers, and the reflection bathes all the plain with light. This idea had been advanced by Postgate in 1922²⁶ after the appearance of Lucas' theory of a site on the north bank, which has the Pompeians facing east, as it must of necessity, since their right wing, as will be seen below, must be very close to the Enipeus. Postgate earlier had viewed Lucan's lines as a mere flight of poetry without topographical or historical significance. I am inclined still to hold them as just that and nothing more.

I have studied Rambaud's graphical representation of the battle and its sequel, and I am inclined to think that when his diagram presents the line leading from the site of the battle to Larisa as a straight north-south one he has merely guessed at the position of the former. If the hill of surrender he proposes were possible, his strongest point would be simply that he gets the battlesite within approximately six miles from it. Leake had the same general locality in mind, and he put the case succinctly in 1835:²⁷ "The mountain toward Larisa into which the Pompeians retired when Caesar encamped opposite to the foot of it, was probably near Scotussa; for there alone is any mountain to be found with a river at the foot of it." I suspect, however, that he gave undue weight to the word *mons* which occurs in Caesar's account. The absence of any very high prominence rising above a stream in the immediate vicinity of Pharsala indicates that *mons* designates a hill rather than a high mountain.

I have not explored all the hills around Scotussa, but I have been to the modern village, inquired about possible large streams, and was informed of none. Some miles downstream I photographed the only sizeable stream coming down from those parts, and in my opinion even after being augmented it could hardly be described as a *flumen*.

How much the size of streams may have decreased since 48 B.C. it is, of course, impossible to say. Deforestation and consequent erosion would tend to silt up larger beds. But a counteracting factor would be the increased run-off of water, which would tend to keep the channels open. My general impression is that the streams north of the Enipeus proposed by Lucas and Rambaud in all likelihood were not very large even when the hills were forested. But

²⁶ *JRS* 12 (1922) 190-191.

²⁷ *Travels in Northern Greece* 4, 482-3.

even if large enough to be designated *flumina*, they cannot, in my opinion, have supplied water for the number of Pompeians who attempted escape.

IV

The *Bellum Civile* tells us that Pompey's right wing was protected by a *rivus quidam impeditis ripis*, in a context where the use of *dextrum cornu eius* indicates that Caesar or his editorial assistant was not now confusing right and left but was working from a map, or at any rate had Pompey's right and not Caesar's in mind. This right wing was therefore unprotected by cavalry, all of which was massed on the left, where the victory was expected (*B.C.* 3.88.6).

The identity of this *rivus* has caused interminable discussion. Most critics have taken it to be the Enipeus, and then the problem is to explain why this stream would be designated merely as a *rivus*. Holmes thought that the *rivus* meant merely the trickle of water to be expected in a Thessalian stream at the time of year.²⁸ But there was an account which placed a minimum number of horsemen on Pompey's right. Frontinus (*Strat.* 2.3.22) gives this most exactly: *Dextro latere DC equites propter flumen Enipea, qui et alveo suo et alluvie regionem impediatur . . . locavit.* Caesar, we must presume, counted this force of six hundred Pompeians as insignificant and failed to mention it. But it may give a clue.

Impeditis ripis suggests a stream with eroded banks. The region south of the Enipeus at Pharsala has been swampy a long, long time. The cause is the brook called the Aikli, which appears on all the maps. I began to wonder whether this stream in its meanderings might not have left some marks of eroded channels somewhere in proximity to the Enipeus. When I investigated in 1956 I discovered that from the bridge on the road running east from Pharsala between Krindir and Sourla the Aikli has been superseded by a large drainage ditch running straight to the Enipeus in a northerly and slightly westerly direction. Above the bridge there were plentiful signs of eroded banks, and where the drainage ditch begins there are signs of a previous channel which would fulfill the condition of a *rivus impeditis ripis*. But this is some miles distant from the Enipeus, and from information from a farmer of the neighborhood as well as from subsequent study of detailed maps I learned that the Aikli originally fanned out over the plain and seemingly did not flow

²⁸ *Roman Republic* 3, 460.

in recognizable channels. That is, the Aikli explains the marsh and swamp on the left of Caesar's line (Frontinus, *Strat.* 2.3.22) and also the swamp in which Brutus had to hide after his escape from Pompey's camp (Plutarch, *Brutus* 6.1), but it probably does not explain the *rivus impeditis ripis*.

From the Topographical Service of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works I was able to obtain very detailed maps of this region made before the drainage ditch was dug,²⁹ and on the 1:5000 scale map I discovered that there was one spot where a former channel of the Enipeus was unmistakably shown. Just south of the Enipeus and a little more than one kilometer upstream from the bridge over that stream is a mound called Palavomito. At that point an old channel of the Enipeus which has left the present streambed about five kilometers upstream approaches the present bed of the Enipeus. It does not come all the way to it, but leaves a gap of about one-fourth of a kilometer. The depth today, as I discovered on a second visit, is perhaps two or three feet, making the course hardly discoverable when crops are growing.

Here I think we may have the explanation of the puzzling *rivus impeditis ripis* — an old channel of the Enipeus which at one time had worked out a series of gulleys sufficient to provide a real obstacle to charging cavalry or to infantry. Yet since it did not reach the stream bed there was a small gap. As an extra precaution against surprise Pompey assigned this to a small number of cavalrymen. Lucan (7.224–226), who here probably becomes faintly historical, says they were from Cappadocia and Pontus. The real current of course was not running directly into the river but was perhaps aiding the Aikli in providing the morass which protected Caesar's left wing. Since the intervening distance to the river bed was so small, to all appearances it was the Enipeus which protected Pompey's right. Hence in some authors the Enipeus is named. In Caesar's report from which the account of the *Bellum Civile* was drawn up the reporting officer had correctly reported a *rivus*.

In the course of centuries this condition may have changed somewhat. But something of this geographical nature must be the explanation of the problem which has puzzled many, and I suggest

²⁹ For aid in obtaining copies of these maps I am indebted both to the officials of the Topographical Service and to Mr. Harilaos Pattaras of the Food and Agriculture Division of the American Mission in Athens.

that the location of this dry stream bed gives us an approximation of the position of the right wing of Pompey. It is at the slight mound named Palavomito. If the right of Caesar was approximately at the hill of Zacharia, then, and the right of Pompey approximately at Palavomito, we may correct the position of the battle lines as laid out by Kromayer by skewing them approximately thirty or thirty-five degrees. Pompey's camp is to be located somewhere on Krindir, probably in the saddle between it and Sourla, Caesar's camp somewhere in the plain to the west of the battle lines.

V

The decisive action of the battle took place on Pompey's left wing, and Caesar's right. Pompey intended a speedy victory because of his superiority in cavalry (*B.C.* 3.86.3-4; *Plut. Caes.* 44.3). His numbered 7,000 and Caesar's 1,000 (*Plut. Caes.* 42.2; *Appian* 2.70). The operation failed completely (*B.C.* 3.93.3-8), and so unexpectedly that Pompey in his flight exclaimed bitterly that from the result one might well suspect treachery (*B.C.* 3.96.4).

Caesar gives one explanation. He chose six or eight cohorts as a reserve force,³⁰ held them under concealment on the right wing until the critical moment, and then let them attack Pompey's horse. Caesar does not mention the tactics which were much mentioned subsequently, an order for the reserve cohorts to retain their spears, use them as bayonets, and aim at the faces of the horsemen (*Plut. Pomp.* 69.3; *Caes.* 45.1-3; *Frontinus, Strat.* 4.7.32). The repute of the operation was two-fold: it was effective and it was cruel. Rambaud has intimated that Caesar failed to mention it to save his reputation;³¹ I am inclined to view this with some skepticism, feeling that if Caesar were concerned with preserving his reputation at this point he would have made some mention of the equally famous saying which came down in the account of the battle, the order to save those Romans who would stand and fear not.³² But the operation

³⁰ *B.C.* 3.89.4; 93.5-7; similar accounts occur in *Plut. Pomp.* 69.2-3; 71.4-6; *Caes.* 44.2; 45; *Appian* 2.78. *Singulas cohortes* in *B.C.* 3.89.4 may imply one cohort from each legion, and therefore eight cohorts in all. In *B.C.* 3.93.5, *ex cohortium numero* was emended by Ursinus to read *sex cohortium numero*. *Plutarch (Pomp.* 69.2; *Caes.* 44.2) and *Frontinus (Strat.* 2.3.22) give six cohorts as the number.

³¹ *L'Art de la déformation historique dans les Commentaires de César* (Paris, 1955) 207.

³² *Appian* 2.80; *Suet. Div. Iul.* 75.2; *Flor.* 2.13.30.

was successful, and the third line when ordered into battle surrounded the infantry on Pompey's left.³³

One may be permitted to wonder if we have the true explanation of Caesar's success. Aiming spears at the faces of the cavalymen hardly seems to tell the whole story. Pompey's cavalry numbered 7,000, and although Plutarch (*Pomp.* 71.4; cf. Appian 2.76) estimates the number of Caesar's men in the reserve cohorts as 3,000, this figure should probably be reduced to about 2,000.³⁴ In view of Pompey's superiority in numbers I cannot help suspecting that some other factor was at work. I dismiss the description of Pompey's men as cowardly dandies as mere derogatory remarks derived from some inflammatory speech to the troops before the operation was launched.³⁵

One wonders about the role of the stream called the Apidanos in the battle. This ever-flowing stream issues forth from the base of the hillock on which Hagia Paraskeue now stands, and flows northwestward. My informants at Pharsala told me that out in the plain it was about ankle deep. Apparently it cannot be used as the *rivus impeditis ripis*, for its surface seemingly is about on the level with the surrounding ground. According to the disposition of the forces for which I am contending, its course would come just about at the

³³ *B.C.* 3.93.6; Plut. *Pomp.* 71.5-6; cf. *Caes.* 45.3; Appian 2.78. The only major commander who perished in the battle was Domitius, and this would seem to indicate that he was in command on the Pompeian left, the scene of the fiercest fighting, as has been contended earlier in this paper. *B.C.* 3.99 says that Domitius was pursued from the camp and then killed by the cavalry. I suspect that in writing this final sentence in narration of the casualties, Caesar or his editorial assistant was referring back to his initial account of the Pompeian line-up of commanders in section 88, where Domitius had been thought of erroneously as on the right of Pompey, and consequently near the camp. The historical fact is probably that the horsemen in pursuit reached Domitius as he fled from his station on Pompey's left. Cicero in the second Philippic (71) accuses Antony of causing his death. Antony being on Caesar's left, opposite to Pompey's right, Cicero may be presumed to have followed Caesar's account in the *Bellum Civile*. But since in the sentence just before Cicero has accused Antony of cowardly abstaining from the civil war, one may doubt whether any accuracy may be attributed to the statement whatever.

³⁴ According to Holmes, *Roman Republic* 3, 469, Meusel criticized the figure of 3,000 as derived from an estimate of 5,000 men to a legion, and therefore 500 to a cohort, a figure undoubtedly too high. Using the average of 275 men to a cohort (*B.C.* 3.89.2) one would estimate the total of the armed infantry let loose in surprise attack as around 1650 or 2200.

³⁵ Plut. *Pomp.* 69.3; 71.5; *Caes.* 45.3; Appian 2.78. See Holmes, *Roman Republic* 3, 470. See also Bruère, R. T., *CP* 50 (1955) 144, note 1, in his review of Rambaud, *L'Art de la déformation historique dans les Commentaires de César*.

point where Pompey's infantry on his left wing was taken over by the cavalry, or perhaps very close to the point in Caesar's line where the cavalry would attack. I cannot help wondering if part of the success of Caesar's astonishing operation may not have been due to a timing which caught Pompey's cavalry in ground near the Apidanos where it was hindered by its lack of familiarity with the watercourse, while Caesar's men were more or less acquainted with the terrain. This is a mere suspicion, and I have nothing to support it. But I throw out the suggestion in the hope that some other detail which I have overlooked may either confirm or disprove it.

Another puzzle is the purpose of Caesar's reported intention to march to Scotussa on the morning on which the battle subsequently developed (Plut. *Pomp.* 68.3; *Caes.* 43.3). The advocates of a site of the battle north of the Enipeus have suggested that the purpose was to cut Pompey off from his base at Larisa.³⁶ If Caesar was on the south bank the purpose is not so apparent. It may be that his intent was simply to cross the Enipeus, march along the road to Larisa and then cut across to Scotussa, more or less the way one would go in an automobile today. The main purpose may have been to reach fresh sources of supplies,³⁷ though this move, if unopposed, would also cut Pompey off from Larisa. If Caesar planned to march up the Enipeus valley and then across the hills to Scotussa he would be carried exactly past the camp of Pompey and almost certainly provoke a battle; to do this was Caesar's chief objective at this stage of the operations. My suspicion at the moment is that the intended move to Scotussa was a feint, well publicized and intended to force Pompey to fight. Proof is slight, or perhaps even non-existent. But I note that the afternoon before the battle Brutus was reading Polybius in his tent in Pompey's camp (Plut. *Brutus* 4.4). And Polybius was the one source available to a Roman officer concerning the military operations of Flamininus and Philip V of Macedon around Scotussa in 197 which developed into the battle of Cynoscephalae (Polybius 18.21–27). Was Brutus preparing for the next day's combat?³⁸ It just could be that the

³⁶ Lucas, *ABSA* 24 (1919–1921) 50, adopted by Holmes, *Roman Republic* 3, 166; 467.

³⁷ The movement of Philip V towards Scotussa was to get supplies, and the counter-movement of Flamininus to destroy the grain there: Polybius 18.20.2–3; Livy 18.6.8.

³⁸ Rambaud, *Historia* 3 (1954–55) 374, has recognized the possibility, but with some doubt.

decision to fight taken previously by the Pompeians³⁹ was based upon their conclusion that what Caesar had in mind was operations in the neighborhood of Scotussa. If they anticipated his major movement in that direction, this may have been the reason for Pompey being stationed on the right wing, as I have contended he was. His would be the task of meeting the major offensive which would develop.

³⁹ *B.C.* 3.86.1. Elsewhere I have argued that this sentence does not mean that Pompey was over-persuaded by his associates. Adcock doubts that he was (*CAH* 9, 664; *Roman Art of War* [Cambridge, 1940] 122).