Translation of *Bellum Alexandrinum* 1-33

This is a rendering by many hands, so it is stylistically uneven. The objective was to convey the meaning of the Latin syntax.

NEEDS ONE MORE ROUND OF CHECKING AGAINST THE NEW TEXT, PARTICULARLY IN THE LOCI DESPERATI

1 (1) When the Alexandrian War broke out, Caesar summoned his whole fleet from Rhodes, Syria, and Cilicia. He called forth archers from Crete and cavalry from Malchus, king of the Nabataeans. He ordered siege engines to be collected from everywhere, grain to be sent, and reinforcements to be brought. (2) In the meantime his fortifications were being strengthened every day with defensive works and all the parts of the town that seemed to be less stable were furnished with coverings and mantlets. Battering rams were carried from buildings into neighboring buildings through holes, and defenses were brought into all the places that were either cast down in ruins or taken by force. (3) For Alexandria is mostly safe from fire, since the buildings contain no wooden floorboards and are held together by masonry and vaulted structures and are covered with plaster and tiling. (4) Caesar was particularly eager to close off part of the town—the part that a marsh coming in from the south made very narrow—from the rest of the city by employing fortifications and mantlets. (5) He considered this first, that although (?) the city was divided into two parts, his army should be administered by one plan and authority, and then that it should be possible to assist his troops when they were struggling and bring aid from the other part of the town. He was especially mindful that he had to have an abundance of food and water. He had a scanty supply of water and no access to food at all, but the marsh could bountifully supply each item.

2 (1) Nor was there any hesitation or delay for the Alexandrians in conducting their business. For they had sent legates and recruiting officers into every district—throughout the territory of Egypt and the kingdom—for conducting a levy, and they had brought a large number of weapons and siege engines into the town and had gathered a huge multitude. (2) Massive workshops of arms were set up in the city, no less. In addition, they had armed the adult slaves, and the wealthier masters provided them with sustenance and daily pay. (3) The fortifications of the outlying parts of the town were guarded by an arrangement of these force. They kept the veteran cohorts available in the most frequented areas of the city, so that they could be deployed for bringing aid with fresh strength in whichever area there was fighting. (4) They had blocked off all the roads and alleyways with a triple wall—it was built with square stones and was at least forty feet high—and they fortified the lower parts of the city with very tall towers, each with ten stories. (5) In addition, they had erected moveable towers with the same number of stories. These were mounted on wheels and they moved them with ropes and pack animals †attached† on level streets into whichever area of the city they wanted.

3 (1) The city, extremely abundant and well supplied, furnished supplies for all things. The men themselves, so clever and intelligent, replicated with such ingenuity things they had seen made by us that our men seemed to have imitated their works, and they discovered many things of their own accord and could simultaneously attack our fortifications and defend their own. (2) Their leaders, in their councils and assemblies, kept pushing these points: that the Roman people gradually were coming into the habit of occupying the kingdom; that a few years prior Aulus Gabinius was in Egypt with an army; that Pompey withdrew there in his flight; that Caesar had come with his troops but there was no effect of Pompey's death in dissuading Caesar from staying there; (4) that if they did not drive him out, the kingdom would be a province; and that this must be done quickly, since he was shut off by storms because of the time of year and could not receive support from across the sea.

4 (1) Meanwhile a dispute had arisen between Achillas, who was in charge of the veteran army, and Arsinoe, the younger daughter of king Ptolemy, as was indicated above. While each one was plotting against the other and wanting to possess the highest power, Arsinoe struck first through the eunuch Ganymede, her tutor, and killed Achillas. (2) With him dead she began to seize complete power without any partner or guardian, and the army was handed over to Ganymede. When he took up the office he increased the bounty for soldiers; he managed the remaining tasks with equal diligence.

5 (1) There are channels dug out under almost all of Alexandria and it has conduits extending to the Nile, through which water is lead into private homes. The water gradually becomes clear and settles down over time. (2) The owners of buildings and their households are accustomed to use this water: for that which is carried from the Nile River is so muddy and thick that it causes many different diseases. The common people and the masses, on the other hand, must be content with it, since there are no fountains in the entire city. The river, nevertheless was in that part of the city that was controlled by the Alexandrians. (3) Ganymede was reminded by this fact that he was able to cut off the water supply from our men, who were distributed throughout the streets for the purpose of protecting the fortifications and who use water drawn from channels and wells from private buildings.

6 (1) When this plan was approved, he set about a great and difficult task. When he blocked off all the channels and closed off all the areas of the city that were occupied by him, he strove to draw a huge amount of water from the sea with wheeled mechanisms; this he constantly poured from higher locations into Caesar's territory. (2) On account of this, the water drawn from nearby buildings was a little saltier than usual, and why this occurred was a source of great puzzlement for people. They did not trust themselves enough when those in lower areas said that they used water of the same kind and flavor as they were accustomed to before, and they were discussing amongst themselves in public and they recognized how much the waters differed by tasting them. (3) Indeed shortly thereafter the water that was closer was wholly undrinkable, and the water further off was found to be more spoiled and saltier than before.

7 (1) And when, with this development, uncertainty was removed, so great a fear invaded that all felt themselves to have been brought to the brink of danger and some said that Caesar ?was in no hurry? to give the order to embark, and others were much more seriously alarmed about their plight because (as they thought) it was not going to be possible to keep the Alexandrians ignorant while making preparations for a withdrawal, since they were separated from themselves by so little distance, nor was taking refuge on the ships going to be an option with the Alexandrians nearby and in pursuit. (2) Moreover, there was a large crowd of townspeople in Caesar's district, whom he had not removed from their homes because they made an open show of being loyal to our men and seemed to have cut their ties with their own side. †Supposing I had to defend the Alexandrians, and they were neither deceitful nor impetuous, and a lot of words were to be spent to no purpose,† (3) but when one considers their community and character simultaneously, no one can doubt that this race is perfectly equipped for treachery.

8 (1) With reasoning and encouragement, Caesar alleviated the fear of his men. He declared that sweet water could be found in wells and trenches, as all shores naturally possess veins of sweet water. (2) Even if the nature of the Egyptian shore was different from all the rest, since they had free rein of the sea and their enemies did not have a fleet, they could not be prevented from seeking water on their ships, daily, either from Paratonium on the left or from the island on the right. Voyages in either direction could never be hindered by adverse winds at one and the same time. (3) There was certainly no consideration of a retreat, not only for those who held the first rank, but also, indeed, for those who thought of nothing other than their own lives. (4) Only with great difficulty would they sustain frontal attacks of the enemy from their fortifications. Once the fortifications were abandoned, they could not equal the enemy in position or number. (5) Moreover, boarding the ships involves a long delay and great difficulty, especially from skiffs. The Alexandrians, by contrast, were possessed of the greatest mobility and knowledge of the grounds and the buildings. (6) These people, particularly insolent in the face of victory, would run ahead of us and gain possession of both the higher grounds and the buildings, such that they would prevent our men from fleeing in the ships. Accordingly, they should forget the idea and consider that, by all accounts, they must win.

9 (1) When he had made this speech to his men and all their spirits were roused, he gave his centurions the task that, putting their other responsibilities aside, they should devote their attention to the digging of wells, nor should they cease in their efforts for any time of night. (2) When this business was undertaken and the spirits of all were spurred on to this work, in a single night a great quantity of sweet water was discovered. Hence, the laborious schemes and extreme efforts of the Alexandrians were counteracted by quick work. (3) In the next two days, the thirty-seventh legion, taken from the surrendered troops of Pompey, having embarked from Domitius Calvinus with grain, arms, spears and engines, was carried down to the shore of Africa, somewhat beyond Alexandria. (4) These ships were prevented from reaching the harbor by the East wind, which had been blowing for continuously for many days, though the areas all throughout that region are excellent for holding anchors. Since they were detained in that place for a long time and oppressed by a shortage of water, they made Caesar aware of their plight by means of a swift ship.

10 (1) Caesar, that he might take consideration for himself, as to what seemed best to be done, boarded a ship and ordered the whole fleet to follow him, though he did not put any of the troops on board since, as he was going away for a rather long time, he did not want the fortifications to be exposed. (2) When they had approached that place, which is called Chersonensus, and they had set the oarsmen on shore in order to fetch water, not a few of those among them, when they had advanced too far from the ships for the sake of plunder, were captured by the cavalry of the enemy. (3) From these men, the enemy learned that Caesar himself had come with his fleet and that he did not have any soldiers on his ships. Once they were aware of this, they came to believe that Fortune had bestowed upon them an opportunity for accomplishing a great success. (4) Thus, they equipped all the seaworthy ships they possessed with soldiers and fell in with Caesar as he was returning with his fleet. (5) Caesar did not want to fight on that day for two reasons: first, there were no soldiers on his ships and then, this was going on after the tenth hour of the day and, since night was about to come on, it seemed to him that this would bring greater assurance to those who trusted in their knowledge of the land. Furthermore, he would be bereft of the benefit of encouraging his troops, since no exhortation was sufficiently apt which was able to comment neither upon courage, nor on slackness. (6) For these reasons, Caesar led back towards the land those ships that he could, to a place where he did not anticipate they would be followed.

11 (1) One Rhodian ship in Caesar's right wing was positioned far from the rest. When the enemies saw this ship, they did not restrain themselves and, with great force, four covered ships and several open ships advanced against it. (2) Caesar was compelled to give aid to the ship, so as to avoid incurring a foul insult in the sight of the enemy, although he judged that they would deserve it if it ended badly for them. (3) The battle was waged with great exertion on the part of the Rhodians who, while they excelled in both wisdom and courage in all engagements, particularly in that moment, they did not shrink from bearing the entire burden, so that it not seem that any defeat was suffered by the fault of their men. (4) Hence, a most successful battle was brought to completion. One of the enemy's quadremes was captured, another was sunk and two were stripped of all their soldiers. Furthermore, a great multitude of fighters in the remaining ships were slain. (5) Had night not split up the battle, Caesar would have become master of the entire enemy fleet. (6) While the enemies were thoroughly frightened by this injury, Caesar, with a tow-rope, led the merchant ships to Alexandria with his victorious ships, as a gentle adverse wind was blowing.

12 (1) The Alexandrians were so crushed by this defeat, since they now saw themselves conquered not by the courage of the fighters, but by the skill of the mariners, \*\*\* by which and by the higher places they were supported, so that they could be defended from the buildings and have all the masonry as a barrier, as they feared an attack by our fleet even on land. (2) After Ganymede assured them in council that he would both restore those that had been lost and increase their number, with great hope and confidence they began to repair the old ships and more diligently take care of and pay attention to this matter. (3) And although they had lost more than a hundred and ten long ships in the port and docks, nevertheless they did not put away the thought of repairing the fleet. (4) For they saw that reinforcements could not be brought to Caesar, nor supplies, if they themselves prevailed with their fleet; in addition, the naval men, of a maritime city and region and trained in daily practice from boyhood, wanted to return to that natural and familiar advantage and considered about how much they had accomplished with only very small ships; and so they took to preparing the fleet with all zeal.

13 (1) Guards had been set up at all the mouths of the Nile for the sake of collecting customs; there were old ships in the hidden docks of the court, which they had not used for sailing for many years: these they restored, the others they recalled to Alexandria. (2) Oars were lacking: they took the roofs off porticos, gymnasia, public buildings, and made use of the beams as oars; their natural resourcefulness supplied one thing, the abundance of the city another. (3) Finally they were not preparing for a long voyage but serving the need of the present time and saw that the battle would be fought in the port itself. (4) And so in a few days, against the opinion of all, they made twenty-two quadriremes, five quinqueremes; to these they added smaller ones, open and many, and once these were tested as what each of them could do by rowing them in the harbor, they put suitable soldiers on them and prepared them for fighting in all forms. (5) Caesar had nine Rhodian ships—for, ten having been sent, one of them en route sank off the Egyptian coast—eight Pontic ships, five Lycian ships, and twelve from Asia. Of these there were ten quinqueremes and quadriremes, the rest smaller than this size and many of them open. (6) Nevertheless, convinced of the courage of his soldiers, and knowing the forces of the enemy, he prepared to do battle.

14 (1) When the time came that both of them were confident in their own strength, Caesar went around Pharos with his fleet and set his ships opposite the enemy: on the right wing he placed the Rhodians, on the left the Pontics. Between them he left a space of four hundred paces, which seemed to be enough for deploying up the ships. (2) After this arrangement he apportioned the remaining ships as a reserve; he decided and ordered which should follow which and which should come to aid which. (3) Without hesitation the Alexandrians brought out their fleet and positioned it: in the front they put 22 ships; they set up the rest as reserves in a second line. (4) They also brought out a great number of smaller ships and skiffs with darts and fires, to see whether their number itself and noise and flame could bring anything of terror to our men. (5) Between the two fleets in a narrow passage were shallows that extend toward the region of Africa—for this is what they say, that half of Alexandria is part of Asia—among which a beginning of crossing by both was awaited for quite a long time, since it seemed that those who entered, if a worse fate should befall them, would be more impeded from deploying their ships and from retreating.

15 (1) Euphranor was in charge of the Rhodian ships, a man to be compared in his greatness of heart and his virtue more with our men than with the Greeks. (2) He, on account of his very familiar knowledge and greatness of heart, was selected by the Rhodians to be in charge of the fleet. (3) When he noticed the delay of Caesar he said “you seem to me, Caesar, to be afraid that if you enter the shallows with your boats first, you will be forced to fight before you can set out the rest of the fleet. Entrust the matter to us. (4) We will endure the brunt of the battle—we will not deceive your trust—until the others can follow us. It is a source of great disgrace and pain for us that they boast greatly for any longer in our sight.” (5) Caesar encouraged him and presenting him with all praises gave the signal for battle. When they had gone forth beyond the shallows, the Alexandrians surrounded the four Rhodian ships and made an attack on them. (6) They endured and by skill and cunning deployed themselves; and their training had so much power that in the unequal number none was exposed sideways to the enemy, the oars of no ship were stripped off, but continually went against those coming against them. (7) Meanwhile the others followed. Then they necessarily departed from skill on account of the narrowness of the place and the whole struggle stood on virtue. (8) Indeed there was no one in Alexandria, of our men or of the townspeople, except those who occupied their mind in work or battle, who did not seek the highest roofs and from every viewpoint take a place for the spectacle and demand victory for their own side from the immortal gods with prayers and offerings.

16 (1) But the issue of contention of the battle was not at all equal. For if our men were beaten back escape was given neither by land nor sea to us if we were defeated, and if we were victorious all things were going to be uncertain, since the enemy, if they were going to have the advantage with their ships, would have power over everything, but if they were weaker, they would test another fortune. (2) At the same time it seemed serious and wretched that a few people were fighting about the greatest of matters and about the safety of everyone and that if any one of them abandoned mind or virtue, the rest, who had no opportunity of fighting for themselves, would have to look out. (3) In the previous days Caesar had explained these things to his men repeatedly, that they should fight with greater spirit because they saw that the safety of all was entrusted to them. (4) By the same argument each man, accompanying a messmate, friend, or companion, implored that he not deceive his opinion or that of everyone else, since their judgement was responsible for his being chosen and setting out to fight. (5) And so they fought in such a frame of mind that skill and cunning brought no help to the Alexandrians, though they were sailors and seafarers, and the large number did not benefit those with a greater number of ships, and men chosen for their virtue from so great a multitude of men could not equal the virtue of our men. (6) One quinquereme was taken in this battle and a bireme, with their fighters and rowers, and three were sunk, while all of ours were unharmed. (7) The rest took flight to the nearby town; the (townspeople) protected them from the ramparts and overhanging buildings and prevented our men from going closer.

17 (1) So that this could not happen to him repeatedly, Caesar thought that he ought to try by every means possible to bring the island and the jetty extending to the island back into his power. (2) For since he had mostly completed his works in the town, he was confident that an attempt could be made on both the island and the city at the same time. (3) Having adopted this plan, he placed in small ships and skiffs 10 cohorts and the picked men belonging to his light-armed force, and whichever of the Gallic horsemen he deemed suitable, and attacked the other side of the island with decked ships in order to divide the (enemy) forces, with great rewards offered to whoever seized the island first. (4) At first they held back the attack of our men evenly, for at the same moment they were both fighting back from the roofs of the buildings and mounting an armed defense of the shore—where on account of the difficulty of the location an easy entrance was not given to our men—and nimbly and skillfully patrolling the location's tight quarters with their skiffs and five long ships. (5) But as soon as few of our men set foot on the shore, after getting to know the terrain and testing the shallows, and others followed these, and they made a resolute attack upon those who had taken a position on the level shore, all the men of Pharos turned their backs. (6) With these men beaten back, \*\*\* and with the guard of the port abandoned, they steered the ships toward the shore and the village and rushed forth from the ships to defend the buildings.

18 (1) But they were unable to maintain themselves for very long by operating from this defensive position, even though the type of buildings was not dissimilar to those in Alexandria (to compare smaller things to greater), and lofty connecting tower blocks took the place of the wall, nor did our men come prepared with ladders or wicker covers or anything else for for making an assault. (2) But fear seizes the mind and judgment from men and weakens their limbs; so it happened then. (3) The same men who were confident that on a fair and level plain they were our equals, terrified by the flight of their men and the death of a few, did not dare make a stand in buildings with a height of 30 feet, and they threw themselves into the sea along the jetty and they swam the 800 pace distance to the town. (4) Nonetheless, many of these men were captured and killed; in fact, the number of captives was 6,000 altogether.

19 (1) Letting the soldiers take the plunder, Caesar commanded that the buildings be ransacked, and he fortified a stronghold near the bridge closer to Pharos and placed a guard there. (2) The men of Pharos had abandoned the bridge; the other, which was narrower and closer to town, was being guarded by the Alexandrians. But on the next day Caesar attacked it for a similar reason, because he saw that, with these two occupied, the effect would be to deprive (the enemy) utterly of naval sorties and sudden raids. (3) Now with catapults and missiles from his ships, he had already expelled those who were holding the place in the garrison, driven them back into the town, and landed the equivalent of three cohorts, for the tight quarters permitted no more to make a stand; the rest of his troops held their positions on the ships. (4) He commanded that the bridge be fortified against the enemy and that, where the ships had a way out—there was an arched structure supporting the bridge—the area be filled with rocks and blocked. (5) With the one of these tasks completed, such that no skiff at all would be able to get out, and with the other task begun, all the ranks of the Alexandrians rushed out from the town and took a position in a rather wide area against our bridge fortifications, and at the same time they drew up the ships, which they had been in the habit of sending out under the bridges, near the jetty to burn our transports. (6) We were fighting from the bridge and the jetty; they were fighting from the flat area facing the bridge and the ships against the jetty.

20 (1) With Caesar occupied in these matters and exhorting the troops, a great number of oarsmen and marines disembarked from our long ships onto the jetty. (2) Part of them were carried by an eagerness to watch, part even by a desire to fight. At first these repelled the ships of the enemy from the jetty with stones and slings, and they seemed to be accomplishing much by the multitude of the missiles. (3) But after a few Alexandrians dared to disembark from the ships beyond that point, by their open flank, (our men), just as they had advanced without standards and fixed ranks, and without order, in like manner they began to retreat rashly into the ships. (4) More Alexandrians, having been excited by the flight of those men, were disembarking from the ships and were more fiercely pursuing our troubled men. At the same time, those who had remained in the long ships were hurrying to seize the ladders and to repel the ships from land, lest the enemy should capture the ships. (5) Having been disturbed by all these events, our troops of the three cohorts that were stationed on the bridge and the first part of the jetty, when they heard the clamor behind them, saw the flight of theirown men, and sustained a great force of frontal missiles, and fearing lest they be surrounded in the rear and be cut off from all retreat by the departure of the ships, they abandoned the defenses begun on the bridge and moving fast they hastened to the ships in a great run. (6) Part of them, obtaining the nearest ships, had been sunk by the multitude and burden of men, some pausing and hesitating over what plan should be taken were killed by the Alexandrians; some with a more fortunate outcome reached the unencumbered ships at anchor and escaped unharmed; a few, raising their shields and relying on an enterprising spirit, swam to the nearby ships.

21 (1) As long as Caesar was able by exhortation to keep his men at the bridge and defenses, he was in the same danger; after he noticed that everyone was retreating, he withdrew himself into his own ship. (2) And when a great number of men following him there swarmed in, and no opportunity either of navigating or putting out from land was given, suspecting that what did happen would happen, he threw himself from the ship and swam to the ships that were stationed further off. (3) From there, sending skiffs for help to his laboring men, he saved some. His vessel, in fact, weighed down by the great number of men, perished together with the men. (4) In this battle around 400 were lost from the number of the legionary troops and a slightly greater number of oarsmen and marines. (5) The Alexandrians fortified a stronghold there with great entrenchments and many siege engines, and after removing the rocks from the water they used the place freely afterwards for sending out ships.

22 (1) Our men were so far from being disturbed by this defeat that, roused and excited, they made great progress in attacking the enemy's works. (2) In daily battles, with the Alexandrians advancing and sallying whenever the chance came their way, \*\*\* to seize a large band \*\*\* the works greatly and the burning eagerness of the soldiers. Nor was Caesar's widespread exhortation able to reach the level of the legions' effort or desire for fighting, so that they had to be deterred and restrained from exceptionally dangerous fights rather than exhorted towards fighting.

23 (1) The Alexandrians, when they saw that Romans were reassured both by the successful events and inspired by the troubles, and they did not know any third plight of war by which they could be steadier, as we are able to comprehend by conjecture, either having been warned by friends of the king in Caesar's garrison, or with their previous plan having been approved by the king through secret messengers, they sent envoys to Caesar saying that he should release the king and allow him to cross over to his own people. (2) For the whole multitude, they said, fed up with the girl's offensiveness, with a regent as ruler, and with Ganymedes' extremely cruel dominion, was prepared to do what the king ordered; and if they came into Caesar's trust and friendship by his authority, no danger would cause a fear that would impede the multitude from surrendering.

24 (1) Caesar, although he knew well that the people were deceitful and always thinking something other than what they were pretending, nevertheless he decided that it would be useful to give an indulgence to the petitioners because he believed the king, having been released, would remain loyal if they were somehow sincere in the things they were asking for, but if on the contrary they wanted to have the king as a leader for waging war, which would be a better fit with their nature, it would be more splendid and honorable undertaking for him to wage war against a king rather than against a band of refugees and fugitives. (2) Therefore, after urging the king to consider his paternal kingdom, spare his most brilliant country, which had been disfigured by shameful fires and demolitions, recall his citizens to sanity and then preserve them, and display his loyalty to himself and to the Roman people, since he (Caesar) himself believed in him so much that he sent him to armed enemies, grasping his right hand in his own right hand he began to dismiss the boy already an adult in age. (3) But the royal spirit, trained in the most deceitful disciplines—and so that he would not fall short of the customs of his race—in tears began to beg Caesar instead not to send him away, sayig that to him his very kingdom was not more pleasing than the sight of Caesar. (4) When the boy's tears were suppressed, Caesar himself was moved; he affirmed that he (Caesar) would quickly be with him (Ptolemy) if he felt that way, and dismissed him to his own people. (5) As if having been released from from the starting gate onto an open track, Ptolemy began to wage so vigorous a war against Caesar that he seemed to have shed from joy the tears that he had produced in their meeting. (6) Many legates, friends, officers, and soldiers of Caesar were gladdened that this happened, because, as they thought, his excessive benevolence had been cheated by the deceits of a boy. As if in truth Caesar had done it only having been led by generosity and not by a most prudent plan.

25 (1) When, with a leader taken up, the Alexandrians observed that they were made in no way stronger, or the Romans more sluggish, and when, with the soldiers mocking the age of the king and his weakness, they took great offence and did not see that they were accomplishing anything, and while rumors arose that the great garrisons were being led for Caesar along the land route from Syria and Cilicia, a thing that was not yet heard by Caesar, they decided to seize the provisions that were being shipped for our men by sea. (2) And so, with the unburdened ships placed on watch in suitable places near Canopus, they began to lie in wait for our ships †because of our supplies† . (3) When this was announced to Caesar, he commanded his whole fleet to be unencumbered and deployed. He placed Tiberius Nero in command over this. The Rhodian ships advanced in this fleet, among them Euphranor, without whom no naval battle ever taken place, and none finished inadequately well. (4) But, unlike previous times, fortune, who for the most part keeps those whom she has adorned with many favors for a harsher fall, pursued Euphranor. (5) For when he had reached Canopus and the fleet, set up on all sides, had fought and Euphranor, by his own custom, had first joined in battle and pierced through and sunk a quadrireme of the enemy, he, pursuing the nearest/next ship too far from the remainder [of the fleet], [who were] following not quickly enough, was surrounded by the Alexandrians. (6) No one carried aid to him, whether because they thought that there was enough protection for him because of his valor and luck, or because they were afraid for their lives. So, out of all of them, the one who carried out the matter well in this battle perished alone, with his own quadrireme victorious.

26 (1) Around the same time, Mithridates of Pergamum, [a man] of great prestige at home and of wit and valor in war, of loyalty and dignity in his friendship with Caesar, having been sent into Syria and Cilicia at the start of the Alexandrian War for the sake of summoning reinforcements, [and] with a great number of troops (which he had put together quickly with both the most eager desire of the citizens and his own diligence), (2) led [them] to Pelusium by a land route, where Egypt is joined with Syria; and this town, [Pelusium], [was] held by Achillas’ strong garrison because of the location’s convenience—for all Egypt is deemed to be protected, as if with locks, from naval attack by Pharos, from land attack by Pelusium. And on that day [Mithridates of Pergamum], having attacked with his perseverance and steadiness for fighting, brought back under his authority [the town], [which had been] surrounded quickly by a great number of troops in a several-fold garrison [and] stubbornly by the attackers and by the horde of troops (he was substituting those who were safe for the wounded and the weary); and he placed his own garrison there (3) Therefore, with this matter carried off well, he headed toward Alexandria, toward Caesar, and he had pacified all these areas through which he was making his way by the authority that is usually at hand for the victor and had returned [them] into friendship with Caesar.

27 (1) There is a place not far from Alexandria, the most famous place of this region, which is called the Delta. It took its name from its resemblance to the letter, since a certain part of the Nile river is split along two paths, gradually leaving a space in the middle between them, and the paths are very far apart when they join with the sea at the shore. (2) When the king learned that Mithridates was approaching this place and knew he must cross the river, he sent a large force against him. He believed that Mithridates would be conquered or wiped out by the troops, or would at least be able to be contained. (3) Although he desired that Mithridates be conquered in this way, the king considered it sufficient that he hold Mithridates in check, cut off from Caesar. (4) The first troops of his able to cross the river from the Delta and meet Mithridates started a battle, eager to snatch away a common share of victory from those who were following behind. (5) Mithridates endured their attack with great prudence, [deleted text] since his camp was protected in our custom. When he saw them approaching the fortifications recklessly and immoderately, he made a sally in every direction and killed a great number of their men. (6) If the rest had not hidden themselves because of their familiarity with the territory, and if some had not withdrawn into the ships that they used to cross the river, they would have been completely wiped out. (7) When these men had refreshed themselves a little from that scare, they adjoined themselves to those who were following and began to attack Mithridates again.

28 (1) A messenger was sent from Mithridates to Caesar, in order to relate his success. The king learned the same things from his own men. (2) Thus, at nearly the same time, the king set out to crush Mithridates and Caesar, to relieve him. The king used the quicker route via the Nile river (lit: quicker navigation of the Nile river) in which he had a large fleet in readiness. Caesar did not want to use the same route, lest he have to battle with ships in the river, but rather he sailed around that part of the sea that is said to belong to a part of Africa, as I have explained above. Nonetheless, Caesar fell in with the king's forces before he was able to attack Mithridates and restored to himself a victorious Mithridates, with his army intact. (3) The king encamped with his troops in a place with natural fortification, as it was, in itself, higher than the plain that lay beneath him on all sides and was defended on three sides by diverse fortifications. On one side, it was situated near the Nile river, on the other side, it was situated along an extremely lofty place that occupied a part of the camp and on the third side, it was hemmed in by a swamp.

29 (1) Between the camp and Caesar’s route passed a narrow river with particularly high banks, which flowed into the Nile and was around 7000 paces away from the king’s camp. (2) When the king learned that Caesar was coming on that route, he sent his entire cavalry and select light infantrymen to that river in order to prevent Caesar from crossing and, from the banks, to engage in a battle at long-range that would be unequal (for neither did courage make any progress, nor did cowardice meet with danger). (3) This situation inflamed our soldiers and cavalrymen with resentment, that they should have fought with the Alexandrians for so long, without reaching a decisive point. (4) Thus, at the same time that German cavalrymen, dispersed and seeking a ford in the river, crossed it at parts where the banks were lower, the legions, after cutting down huge trees that could touch either bank in their length, having extended these and thrown materials for a bridge hastily upon them, they crossed the river. (5) The enemies were so utterly terrified of their attack that they set their hopes of safety on a retreat, yet this was in vain, for few from that flight made it back to the king, while all the remaining multitude was slain.

30 (1) After this most notable success Caesar, since he thought that his sudden approach would strike great terror into the Alexandrians, immediately pushed forward as a victor to the king's camp. (2) But when he observed that this (camp) was entrenched by a great fortification and protected by the nature of its position, and saw the crowded mass of armed men collected at the rampart, he did not want his soldiers, weary with marching and fighting, to advance to attack the camp. Therefore, he pitched camp with no great distance left from the enemy. (3) On the following day, the fort, which the king had built in the nearest village not far distant from his own camps and outworks and linked with defensive work of his camps for holding onto the village, Caesar having attacked it took with all his forces, not for the reason that he thought it would be difficult to acquire it by using a smaller number of soldiers, but in order that, with the Alexandrians thoroughly unnerved by that victory, he might immediately attack the king's camp. (4) And so in their hastening away, in which the soldiers pursued the retreating Alexandrians soldiers from the fort into their camp, (our troops) entered into the fortifications and began to fight at a distance very fiercely. (5) From two sides an approach for attack was given to our men: one, which I have explained had a free approach, the other, which had a moderate-sized space between the camp and the river Nile. (6) The largest and most carefully picked contingent of the Alexandrians was defending the part itself, which afforded the easiest approach; but those men, who were advancing in the area of the river Nile, were having the most success in repelling and wounding our men, for our men were being pierced by various missiles, from the front from the rampart of the camp, and from behind from the river, on which many ships manned with slingers and archers were fighting our men.

31 (1) When Caesar saw that it was not possible for his soldiers to fight more fiercely, and yet that they were not helped much on account of the difficulty of the ground, and when he noted that the highest region of their camp had been abandoned by the Alexandrians, because both it was defensible by itself and, in their eagerness in some cases to fight, in others to look on, the men had rushed down to the region in which they were fighting, he ordered three cohorts to encircle the camps, and to attack the highest region, and he put Carfulenus in command of them, a man outstanding in magnitude of spirit and knowledge of military affairs. (2) When it had come, with few defending the fortifications, with our men fighting violently against the soldiers, having been terrified by different noise and battle, the Alexandrians began to rush about hurrying into all parts of the camps. (3) With whose confusion the spirits of our men were incited to the point that (they attacked) nearly at the same time from all directions, but the first place they took was the highest point of the camp; and from that point our men rushing down killed a great multitude of the enemy in the camp. (4) Because of this danger most of the Alexandrians fleeing hurled themselves en masse from the rampart into the area that was joined to the river. (5) While the first of these were crushed by their great fall in the actual trench of the fortification, the rest had an easier escape. (6) It is established that the king himself fled from the camp and then, after being placed aboard a ship by a large number of his men who were swimming to the nearest ships, he perished when the vessel capsized.

32 (1) Since this matter was managed most speedily and successfully, Caesar with faith in a great victory hastened with his cavalry to Alexandria by the nearest overland route, and entered as a victor by that quarter of the town that was held by the enemy garrison. (2) Nor was he mistaken in his own conclusion that, when that battle was heard (about), the enemy would think nothing now about war (would not think to make war). (3) Arriving he took the worthy fruits of valour and magnanimity; for the entire population of townsfolk after their arms were thrown down and fortifications left behind, with the clothes put on in which suppliants are used to placate rulers with prayers, and with all the sacred emblems brought forth by the sanctity of which they were accustomed to entreat the offended and angry hearts of their kings, they hastened to Caesar (when he was) arriving and surrendered themselves to him. (4) Caesar having consoled those received into his faith, came through the enemy fortifications into his own part of the town with great congratulations from his own men, who were happy that not only the war itself and the fighting, but also that his arrival was such a happy one.

33 (1) Having made himself master of Egypt and Alexandria, Caesar appointed as kings those whom Ptolemaeus had written down in his will and made an appeal to the Roman people that they should not be changed. (2) For since the elder of the two boys, the king, had passed away, Caesar passed over the kingdom to the younger one and to the elder of the two daughters, Cleopatra, who had remained in his faith and protection; the younger daughter, Arsinoe, in whose name, we have shown Ganymedes had ruled immoderately for a long time, he decided to remove from the realm, lest any renewed dissension is born among turbulent men, before the dominion of the rulers be consolidated by the passage of time. (3) With the veteran Sixth taken away with him he left the others legions there, whereby the dominion of these kings would be firmer, who could enjoy neither the affection of their people, because they had remained faithfully in the friendship of Caesar, nor the authority of a long-established reign, having been appointed kings for (only) a few days. (4) At the same time he deemed it relevant to the dignity of our empire and to public expediency that, if the rulers remained in his faith, they should be safe in our protection; if they were ungrateful, they could be held in check by those same protections. Thus with all these things completed and collected, he (Caesar) himself set out by way of land into Syria.