

**Jan Felix GAERTNER, Bianca C. HAUSBURG, *Caesar and the Bellum Alexandrinum: An Analysis of Style, Narrative Technique, and the Reception of Greek Historiography***, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013 (Hypomnemata 192), 372 pp., ISBN 978-35-252-5300-7, €89.99.

For centuries Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* and *De Bello Civili* were the most popular and useable texts for those learning elementary Latin, a fact which seems to have influenced, to a certain extent, how scholars approached them. They focused more on the grammatical and syntactical phenomena to be found in the texts, as well as on their historical content. As a result, aspects of their literary value and their contribution to the development of Roman historiography were not studied sufficiently. From that perspective, the remaining works that make up the *Corpus Caesarianum* were studied even less.

This omission is successfully remedied by the present multifaceted study by Jan Felix GAERTNER and Bianca C. HAUSBURG [= G&H], which focuses on the language and historiographical technique of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and investigates the crucial question of its authorship, while also shedding light on numerous aspects of the entire *Corpus Caesarianum*, as well as on matters relating to narrative technique and genre development.

After a very brief Introduction (pp. 13 f.) that presents the scope and gives a general outline of the book, in Chapter 2: "The *Bellum Alexandrinum* and the *Corpus Caesarianum*" (pp. 15–30) G&H discuss in depth the ancient testimonia regarding both the publication of the *Corpus Caesarianum* and the relation between pseudo-Caesarian and authentic Caesarian works. Special emphasis is given to Aulus Hirtius' famous *Epistula ad Balbum*, which precedes the eighth book of the *Bellum Gallicum* and has so far puzzled scholars. Having reviewed the relevant evidence and meticulously scrutinised all the previous hypotheses, suggestions and interpretations, G&H adopt the view of a posthumous publication of Caesar's *De Bello Civili* and give plausible interpretations as regards Hirtius' project to continue the Caesarian *Commentarii* (endorsing in many respects here [pp. 27–29] SEEL's relevant suggestions, although they reach quite different conclusions in the end).

The next two chapters constitute the core of the present study. The discussion of the language and style of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* that dominates Chapter 3 (pp. 31–73) is inevitably connected to the question of authorship. Based largely on linguistic evidence, G&H, by means of sound arguments, first reject both the traditional attribution of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* to Hirtius and the hypothesis of the anonymous dilettante and then advocate an analytical approach; this leads to the conclusion that the work is a heterogeneous text with a Caesarian core in *B.Alex.* 1–21. Not only do G&H scrutinise and successfully invalidate the various objections to this approach (relating both to the language and to the contents of the work), but they also add new linguistic evidence that corroborates the view of the highly heterogeneous character of the *Bellum Alexandrinum*. In particular, they identify further Caesarian expressions in *B.Alex.* 1–21 (collected in appendices E.2 and I.1), which reinforce the thesis of a Caesarian core in this part of the work, while, by analysing the differences in vocabulary and diction as well as the multiple stylistic discrepancies within the *Bellum Alexandrinum* (as regards e.g. the use of relative clauses and connective relatives, sentence-initial ablative absolutes, sentence-initial verbs, connective adverbs and particles, conjunctions), they persuasively demonstrate that the stylistic variation of the work (especially between chapters 1–21 and 22–78) contradicts the attribution of the whole *Bellum Alexandrinum* to a single author and thus that it is "rather an assemblage of two (or more) different reports" (p. 73). As a result, G&H renew the previous discussions on which they have built their case and the question of authorship seems to take a decisive turn.

The main conclusion of Chapter 3 is significantly reinforced by the observations in Chapter 4: "Literary technique and historiographical method" (pp. 74–154). As G&H make evident here, the discrepancies that exist within the *Bellum Alexandrinum* are not restricted to matters of language

and style, but extend to several levels. In this framework, they efficiently demonstrate that the density and quality of the historical information varies considerably, since there are sections which are based on firsthand knowledge of the topography or the events described, and which seem to be the memories of an eye-witness, while other sections are marked by a different degree of historiographical precision and noteworthy differences in focus. This is also the case with the presentation and evaluation of historical events, as the seemingly objective presentation of the historical facts in *B.Alex.* 1–21 does not continue in the later chapters, which are pregnant with political and ethical comments and are characterised by a greater emphasis on emotions. The way Caesar, his troops and his enemies are presented is aptly regarded as indicative of the above. The next inconsistency noted by G&H concerns the underlying concepts of historical change and, by extension, the relation of human and divine agency: although in *B.Alex.* 1–21 the historical events are presented as causally determined and the approach to history is rational, in the later chapters the favour of the immortal gods and the influence of Fortune appear as decisive factors in the course of events. In the next section of Chapter 4 it is demonstrated that *B.Alex.* 1–21 and some later sections also differ in the temporal perspective of the narrative: while in *B.Alex.* 1–21 the events are presented in chronological order and the outcome of the war appears to be still open, in some later sections the events are described from a retrospective vantage point. This fact, as G&H rightly conclude, “lends further support to the view that the *Bellum Alexandrinum* consists of several narratives that were originally composed independently and by different authors” (p. 122). In the final section of Chapter 4 (which could constitute a new Chapter) G&H examine how the *Bellum Alexandrinum* relates to earlier Greek and Roman historiography and consider the implications thereof for the question of authorship. As they correctly observe, this is another level on which chapters 1–21 and 22–78 differ remarkably, since the former follow the Thucydidean literary tradition (also adopted by Caesar in his authentic *Commentarii*), while in the latter the influence of Hellenistic historiography (probably through earlier Roman historiography), which indulges in “tragic” elements, prevails. Without doubt, Chapter 4 in its entirety is a very significant and original contribution to the study of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and efficiently illuminates many aspects of its composition.

In Chapter 5: “The publication of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and its historical context” (pp. 155–163) one comes across a number of interesting speculations with regard to the end of Caesar’s *Bellum Civile* at *Civ.* III 112, 3, biographical information that supports the analysis in the previous chapters and comments on the possible political purpose and early reception of the *Corpus Caesarianum*. The main conclusions of the whole study are succinctly gathered in pp. 164 f.

Almost half of the book consists of a plethora of appendices (pp. 167–305). They deal with a variety of topics relating to the discussions in the main part of the study and corroborate the arguments presented there. G&H have here undertaken a painstaking task and have brought it to a successful conclusion. The Appendices are followed by an extensive Bibliography (pp. 306–329) and elegant Indexes (pp. 330–372).

As we are informed in the Preface (p. 5), this book is the product of longstanding research (beginning in 2005). This labour is implicitly reflected in the high quality of this meticulous study. The authors are well versed in the texts they explore and exhibit excellent knowledge of the relevant bibliography. They combine both traditional and modern perspectives and enrich previous discussions with fresh ideas and evidence. As a rule, the arguments are clear and compelling, allowing the authors to reach safe conclusions, while the different views are fiercely challenged.

I have noted some insignificant errors, typos and inconsistencies, which by no means diminish the value of the study. Cf., for instance, p. 98, line 7: “bad been manned”, instead of “had been manned”, p. 309 (in DAVIDSON’S article): “Polybios”, instead of “Polybius”. On p. 327 (regarding WALBANK’S first article) we read “*Journal of Hellenistic Studies*”, instead of “*Journal of Hellenic Studies*”, while the correct volume is 58, not 55. Vergil’s *Aeneid* is inconsistently abbreviated: p. 128, n. 206: *Verg. A.* 3.260–2, but p. 337: *Aen.* 6.1–2. On p. 137 it is implied that the “focus on emotions” is a characteristic of the early chapters of the *Bellum Alexandrinum*, but cf. p. 93: “the later chapters put greater emphasis on emotions”.

To conclude, G&H have produced a rich, well-researched and insightful book which offers sound and fruitful observations about many complex issues concerning the *Bellum Alexandrinum*. It is expected to determine our views and interpretations of the work and thus its authors deserve to be congratulated for this outstanding study.

*Spyridon Tzounakas*  
*University of Cyprus*