



## Campaigns of Publius Servilius Vatia

### Summary :

The campaigns of P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus (cons. 79 BC) probably date from the end of 79 BC to early 74 BC. They took place in the Roman province of Cilicia. Two objectives are discernible. Vatia fought the pirates of the coast before penetrating inland to conquer territory which some scholars believe the Romans may have previously held but lost when the First Mithridatic War began.

### Date

79 BC - 74 BC

### Geographical Location

Roman province of Cilicia, Asia Minor

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### 1. P. S. Vatia and his campaigns in Cilicia

The campaigns of P. Servilius Vatia are only imperfectly understood. Thanks to the unsatisfactory nature of our sources there are difficulties with chronology and topography. An outline may, however, be given and that presented here largely follows the plausible reconstruction of historian A. N. Sherwin-White.<sup>1</sup>

Servilius was consul in 79 BC and was assigned the province of [Cilicia](#). At the time this comprised [Pamphylia](#), [Pisidia](#) and [Lycaonia](#) with nearby districts of [Caria](#), [Lycia](#) and [Phrygia](#). Servilius arrived in the province either late in 79 BC or early in 78 BC. His first task was to tackle the [pirates](#) of the southern Aegean who had increased in power since the Romans left the area in 89 BC. Servilius' predecessor as governor Cn. Cornelius Dolabella had moved against them but much remained to be done. The chief pirate was Zenicetes who controlled the ports of eastern Lycia, Corycus, Olympus and Phaselis. Servilius spent the summer of 78/77 BC operating against him and drove him out of Pamphylian waters. He also took [Attaleia](#) and the strongholds of Zenicetes. After this Servilius turned to campaigning by land. He advanced through the mountains of Pisidia and into the upland region of [Isauria](#). To complete his work Servilius built a road along the central route of his campaigns. His successes won him a triumph on his return to Rome in 74 BC.

The campaign against the pirates had no lasting success and the Romans were obliged to move against them some years later. The result of the land campaign however was the re-opening of the direct route to [Cappadocia](#).

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1. Sherwin-White A.N., "Rome, Pamphylia and Cilicia", *JRS* 66 (1976) p. 1–14.

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### Sources

Ammian 14. 8. 4

Cic. *Leg.Ag.* 2.19.50

1 *Verr.* 21. 56 – 57

Eutrop. 6.3

Flor. 1.41

Liv. *Ep.* 93

Oros. 5.2.3

Sall. *Hist.* 2.81, 87M

Strabo 12. 6. 2

Suet. *Div. Jul.* 3

### Quotations

Cicero refers to the campaign of P. Servilius Vatia to the south coast of Asia Minor



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XIX. [51] iubet venire quae Attalensium, quae Phaselitum, quae Olympenorum fuerint, agrumque Aperensem et Oroandicum et Gedusanum. haec P. Servili imperio et victoria, clarissimi viri, vestra facta sunt. adiungit agros Bithyniae regio quibus nunc publicani fruuntur; deinde Attalicos agros in Cherroneso, in Macedonia qui regis Philippi sive Persae fuerunt, qui item a censoribus locati sunt et certissimum vectigal . ascribit eidem auctioni Corinthios agros opimos et fertilis,

M. Tullius Cicero, *De lege agraria oratio secunda*, XIX, 51