NOT ONE, BUT THREE (ROMAN) ALEXANDERS:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROMAN ACCOUNTS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

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ABBREVIATIONS
Names of journals are abbreviated as in *L'Année Philologique*. Frequently cited ancient authors and works listed below.

*Al.*    *Alexander*
*Ann.*   *Annals*
*App.*   *Appian*
*Arr.*   *Arrian*
*Curt.*  *Curtius*
*DFAM*  *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna Aut Virtute*
*Dio*    *Cassius Dio*
*Diod.*  *Diodorus*
*Hist.*  *Histories*
*Plut.*  *Plutarch*
*Tac.*   *Tacitus*
SPECIAL NOTES

Texts

I have provided both translations and the original language for all quotes. For the sake of continuity I have forgone my own translations in favor of published editions:


Transliteration

Greek names and titles of works are anglicized, but some terms are transliterated, and these will be obvious when they appear.

Dates

All dates, unless noted otherwise, are BCE.
1. Introduction

*Presenting Alexander – The Roman Way*

The life of Alexander the Great is more mythological than historical. The extant sources for his reign were written centuries after his death, and many of the contemporary sources were designed as propaganda or were otherwise embellished. The result is that any true account of his reign is obscured by layers of story. Diana Spencer, in *The Roman Alexander,* has demonstrated the reciprocal relationship between Rome and Alexander.¹ She convincingly argues that the Alexander myth shaped the ways in which Romans conceived their political situations, and that the Roman world permeated the representation of Alexander in the later writers of the Roman period who narrated his reign. In this thesis I argue that there is not one “Roman” Alexander, but three who correspond to the changing Roman political and intellectual world. The first Roman Alexander is that of the Late Republic in the *Bibliotheke* of Diodorus Siculus. This Alexander is an idealized autocrat. The second, in the works of Justin/Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus, is that of the early Principate. This Alexander reflects an uncertain autocracy and a Roman audience that was forced to come to grips with a new reality. The third, in the works of Arrian and Plutarch, reflected the high Roman Empire, the Second Sophistic, and accepted autocracy.

My method in this thesis is to demonstrate the evolution of the Alexander myth in the Roman world. I conduct a close reading of the accounts of each extant source,

balancing individual events and the overall picture of Alexander. Then I juxtapose each writer's history and portrait of Alexander with the contemporary political and intellectual world in which the author wrote, taking particular note of what people, experiences and events could have directly influenced the portrayal Alexander as a monarch. As always, the devil is in the details. The general narrative of Alexander's reign is uniform throughout each account, but, as Spencer demonstrates, the reign of Alexander as portrayed in writers of the first to third centuries CE reflects the Roman world, not Alexander's fourth century BCE world. I further demonstrate that by looking at the narratives as a product of specific and limited periods of Roman history, Alexander in the extant sources clearly reflects the evolution of the Roman world from the first century BCE through the middle of the second century CE.

Alexander the Great (356-323): An Overview

Alexander was the son of Philip II, king of Macedonia, and Olympias of Epirus, and was born in 356. He was Philip's second son, but his older brother Arrhidaeus was mentally handicapped and therefore Alexander was groomed to become king. Most of Alexander's childhood was spent under the tutelage of Leonidas, a relative of his mother. Leonidas taught Alexander to ride a horse, to fight and to march, while later, a second tutor, Aristotle, brought out in him a love of literature, philosophy and medicine (Plut. Al. 8.1). At the age of sixteen (in 340) as regent of Macedonia, Alexander put down a

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2 On Philip II, see Ian Worthington, Philip II of Macedonia (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008); on Olympias, see: E.D. Carney, Olympias: Mother of Alexander (New York: Routledge, 2006).
rebellion by the Maedians (Justin 9.1.8; Plut. Al. 9.1), and at the age of eighteen (in 338) he commanded the Companion Cavalry at Chaeronea, the battle that gave Philip II hegemony over the Greeks (Diod. 16.85.2-86.6).

In 337, a year before he was assassinated, Philip revealed his intention to invade Asia in order to seek revenge for the Persian Wars and to liberate the Greek cities in Asia Minor from Persian rule (Diod. 16.89.2-3; Just. 9.5.1-6). Philip was killed in 336, however, and Alexander succeeded him as king. He immediately reasserted Macedonian control over Greece since many states attempted to break free from the Macedonian hegemony upon hearing the news that Philip was dead. After campaigns in the north and razing Thebes in 335, he invaded Asia in 334. In the Troad he defeated a Persian army at the Granicus River (Diod. 17.7.3; Arr.13.1-15.7; Justin 11.5.12; Plut. Al. 15.7-8.). After the battle, Alexander directed his army south along the coast of Asia Minor, accepting the surrender of Sardis and Ephesus (Arr. 1.17.3-18.2; Curt. 3.1.19-20; Diod. 17.22.4-20.1), and resistance at Miletus and Halicarnassus (Arr. 1.20.3-23.6; Curt. 5.2.5; Diod. 17.23.6-
He turned to the interior of Asia Minor where he reached Gordium in the summer of 333. There he supposedly undid the Gordian knot. Legend had it that whomever untied this knot that bound the yoke to the pole of a wagon would become the lord of Asia
(Arr.2.3.7-8; Plut. Al 18.4). He then marched to confront a Persian army led by Darius III at Issus in 333 (Diod. 17.31; Arr. 2.8-12; Curt. 3.2-13; Justin 11.9; Plut. Al. 18.4). Alexander won the battle, but Darius escaped. After the battle Alexander captured Darius' treasury and family (Arr. 2.12.3-4; Curt. 3.13.12-13).

Alexander proceeded from Issus to the island city of Tyre, where his desire to sacrifice to a local deity whom he associated with Heracles, was rebuffed. In response, Alexander he Tyre for more than six months before he finally captured it (Diod. 17.40.3; Arr. 2.16.1; Curt. 4.2.2; Justin 11.10.10; Plut. Al. 24.2). Next he proceeded to Gaza, which he captured after a four month siege, and then he entered Egypt in 331. The Persian satrap Mazaces surrendered Memphis and the rest of Egypt to Alexander without resisting (Arr. 3.1.2; Curt. 4.1.32). Alexander founded Alexandria in Egypt in 331, as well as visiting the Oasis of Siwah, where there was an Oracle of Zeus-Ammon (Diod. 17.49.2-51.4; Arr. 3.3.1-4.5; Curt. 4.7.1-32; Justin 11.11; Plut. Al. 27.3-6). There Alexander likely choreographed an appropriate reception that confirmed his godhead. It is impossible to know much of what transpired at Siwah, but the sources demonstrate that the visit was one of the points of transition in Alexander's behavior (Curt. 4.7.10-31; Plut.

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7 Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 47-8; Worthington, Alexander, 60-2.


9 Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 71-4; Worthington, Alexander, 86-9.
Alexander openly called himself the son of Zeus upon his return from the oasis.

In 331, Alexander marched to confront Darius again. He crossed the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, and met the Persian army near the village of Gaugamela (Diod. 17.55.3-61.3; Arr. 3.8-15; Curt. 4.12.1-16.33; Just. 11.13.1-14.7; Plut. Al. 31.3-32.7). Alexander was again victorious, and Darius again fled. Alexander proceeded from Gaugamela to Babylon, where he spent five weeks awaiting reinforcements and preparing for the campaign into the Persian homeland. From Babylon he prepared to assault the Persian capitals of Susa, Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Ecbatana. Late in 331, Susa surrendered (Diod 17.65.4; Arr. 3.16.9-17.1; Curt. 5.2.8-16; Justin 11.14.9; Plut. Al. 35-38), and early in 330 Alexander captured Persepolis (Diod. 17.70.1-6; Curt. 5.6.1-8; Plut. Al. 37.3-5), followed in quick succession by Pasargadae and Ecbatana (Arr. 3.18.10-19.2; Curt. 5.6.10).

Alexander departed Ecbatana in 330, pursuing Darius, who was deposed and later killed in Hecatompylus by Satibarzanes, a Persian nobleman, and Barsaentes, the satrap of Drangiana (Arr. 3.21.10). Alexander gave Darius a royal funeral and then pursued Bessus, who had adopted the royal name Artaxerxes V. Spitamenes and Dataphernes, two Sogdianan noblemen, betrayed Bessus in 329, handing him over to Alexander's general Ptolemy (Diod. 17.83.79-80; Arr. 3.28-30.5; Curt. 7.5.38-39; Justin 12.5.11; Plut. Al. 43.3). While Alexander was at Maracanda in 329, though, they caused a revolt in Bactria.

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11 Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 55-64, 91-5; Worthington, Alexander, 100-14.

12 Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, 94-6; Worthington, Alexander, 111-13.
and Sogdiana, which required two years of guerilla warfare to suppress it (Arr. 3.26-27; Curt. 7.6.13-24).^{13}

At Phrada in 330 there was a plot to kill Alexander led by Dimnus, a low ranking companion of the king, and one of the bodyguards, Demetrius (Diod. 17.79-80; Arr. 3.26-27; Curt. 6.7.1-8.2.38; Justin 12.5.1-8; Plut. Al. 48-49).^{14} This event is usually called the Philotas Conspiracy. Dimnus' lover, Nicomachus, informed his brother Cebalinus of the plot, who immediately told Parmenion's son and commander of the Companion Cavalry, Philotas. Cebalinus continued his effort to alert Alexander when Philotas did nothing, and Philotas was then arrest, tried, and executed for his alleged involvement. Under Macedonian law family members were culpable in the case of treason, so after the trial, Alexander sent orders for Parmenion at Ecbatana to be executed. Philotas and Parmenion were two opponents of Alexander's increasing orientalism, and so it is feasible that Alexander used the conspiracy as an excuse to eliminate them.^{15}

While the army was at Maracanda in 328 Alexander designated Cleitus as the Satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana, but at a banquet, Alexander killed him. The accounts of this event vary, but they share the same basic outline: both men had drunk too much, Cleitus praised Philip in such a way that Alexander was offended and, after an altercation,

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Alexander killed Cleitus (Arr. 4.8.8; Curt. 8.1.29-51; Plut. Al. 51.8).\(^{16}\)

In 327, Alexander attempted to introduce the Asian court custom, *proskynesis* (Arr. 4.9-10; Curt. 8.5.5-22; Justin 12.7.1; Plut. Al. 54.3-6).\(^{17}\) Depending on their social station, vassals either had to prostrate themselves before the king (Hdt. 1.134), or bow and blow him a kiss, as demonstrated by the Persepolis Treasury reliefs. Greeks considered the practice blasphemous since it appeared to be the same as prostration before the gods. Alexanders' attempt to institute *proskynesis* did not last long, though, because many prominent members of the court refused to participate, including the court historian Callisthenes. Also in 327 there was the so-called Pages Conspiracy to kill Alexander (Arr. 4.13.4; Curt. 8.6.11; Plut. Al. 55.9).\(^{18}\) Four of the Royal Pages were reportedly planning to kill the king while he slept, but on the night the assassination was planned, Alexander stayed up all night drinking. When the plot came to his attention, he had the conspirators tried and executed. He also implicated Callisthenes in it, despite there being no evidence of his involvement.

That same year, 327, Alexander took his first wife, a Bactrian princess, Roxane (Arr. 4.19.5-6; Curt 8.4.25; Plut. *DFAM* 1, 332E-F, *DFAM* 2, 338D, Al. 47.4). The marriage was probably political, because through his new wife, Alexander received the support of her father, Oxyartes (a previous opponent), to keep Bactria and Sogdiana passive. Alexander fought the last major battle of his reign in 326 after he marched from

\(^{16}\) For how the death of Cleitus was cast in each account, Diodorus, 46-7; Curtius/Justin, 62; Plutarch/Arrian 89. See: E. Carney, "The Death of Clitus," *GRBS* 22 (1981). 149-60.


\(^{18}\) Badian, “Conspiracies,” 71-2, treats this conspiracy at length.
Bactria into India. He defeated the Indian king Porus at the Hydaspes River, but he allowed Porus to continue ruling as a vassal. Alexander intended to continue further into India, but his army refused to cross the Hyphasis River in 326 (Diod. 17.94.4; Arr. 5.25.2-29; Curt. 9.2.10-3.19; Justin 12.8.10; Plut. Al. 62.1-3).\(^\text{19}\) Coenus, one of Alexander's commanders, told the king that his army could not continue to campaign in its current condition. Alexander had to give in, and the army began to march home by a circuitous route.

The Macedonian army marched west to the Indus River and then turned south where it confronted hostile Indian tribes, including the Mallians. Alexander was wounded in the chest by an arrow and nearly died while besieging Malli (Diod. 17.99; Arr. 6.9-11; Curt. 9.5; Plut. Al. 63).\(^\text{20}\) After some time he recovered enough to sail down the Indus while his army continued to march along the banks of the river to the Indian Ocean. He then led part of his army west through the Gedrosian desert, while Craterus led the rest of the army north and west around the outside of the desert (Diod. 17.105.3-4; Arr. 6.23-24; Curt. 9.10.8-10; Plut. Al. 66.6).\(^\text{21}\) The disastrous desert march took sixty days without provisions and with little water and a third of his army and most of the pack animals died. Leaving the desert, Alexander's forces regrouped at Carmania in 324, before marching to Susa. There, in 324, Alexander arranged the marriage of 90 of his men to Persian noblewomen, and himself married Stateira, the daughter of Darius, and Parysatis, the


daughter of Darius' predecessor, Artaxerxes III (Diod. 17.107.6; Arr. 7.4; Curtius 10.3.12; Justin 12.10.9; Plut. Al. 70.2). From Susa, he marched to Opis, where he announced that the Greek and Macedonians veterans and wounded were to return home, and were to be replaced largely by Persians (Diod. 17.109.2-3; Curt. 10.2.8-4.3; Justin 12.11.4-12.6; Plut. Al. 70-71). The result was a second mutiny in which the men also mocked his association with Zeus. When Alexander responded by threatening to give Persian units Macedonian military titles and select Persians military commands, the Greeks and Macedonians quickly begged for forgiveness, which Alexander granted (Arr. 7.11.8).

Alexander then proceeded to Ecbatana, where his closest friend and alleged lover, Hephaestion, fell ill and died following a night of heavy drinking. When Alexander ceased to grieve days later, he sent an embassy to the oracle of Zeus-Ammon at Siwah to gain heroic honors for Hephaestion (Arr. 7.24.4; Plut. Al. 72.3, 75.3). After Hephaestion's funeral, Alexander marched from Ecbatana to Babylon. From there he intended to invade Arabia. However, after a drinking party, he became ill. His health deteriorated and he died on June 10, 323. There was some suspicion after his death that Alexander had been poisoned (Justin 9.14.9), but there was no evidence of this, and he likely died from an illness (Diod. 17.117.1-118.2; Arr. 7.27.1-3; Curt. 10.10.14-19; Plut. Al. 75.5, 77.2-5). Alexander's kingdom immediately began to fall apart as his generals carved it up among themselves, and the mainland Greeks revolted from the Macedonian rule.

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The Sources

Most notable among the contemporary sources for Alexander's reign were Callisthenes, Aristobulus, Cleitarchus and Ptolemy, though other writers, such as Chares and Ephippus, are also attested. These contemporary—or near contemporary—writers are usually referred to as the primary sources.

Callisthenes of Olynthus was the first historian to write about Alexander. Twelve fragments remain that can be confidently ascribed to The Exploits of Alexander. He was a nephew and student of Aristotle and wrote an unknown number of works besides his history of Alexander, though we do know of a Hellenica, a Periplus, and possibly a Persica and an Apophthegmata. He accompanied Alexander to Asia as the court historian, propaganda officer, and tutor of the royal pages. While on the campaign, Callisthenes composed a book probably entitled The Exploits of Alexander, that was likely “the official” biography, but not an actual history. Its purpose was to mold Alexander into a “Hellenic hero who wins godhead by his splendid exploits.”

25 Note that I am only commenting on the sources that apply to Alexander, and omitting those from which the five main sources drew information about other topics. The fragments have been collected in: F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (Berlin and Leiden, 1923-1957), and Ian Worthington (Editor-in-Chief), Brill's New Jacoby (Leiden: Brill, 2005-).


27 Ibid. 25-33.


29 Pearson. Lost Historians, 35.

30 Ibid. 49.
knowledge of this history ends at Gaugamela in 331. Callisthenes may have attempted to continue the narrative, in which case he likely would have had to either transform Alexander into an Oriental monarch.\textsuperscript{31} It seems probable that he attempted to do one of the two, but any judgment is only speculative. What we do know is that Callisthenes remained on the expedition, hence the suggestion that he continued to write. After opposing Alexander's institution of proskynesis in 327, and Alexander implicated him in the conspiracy in the pages and ordered his execution.\textsuperscript{32}

Aristobulus accompanied Alexander as an engineer and architect and sometime after 316 he retired to Cassandrea.\textsuperscript{33} There are sixty-two surviving fragments from his history of Alexander. His place of birth is unknown, though an inscription in Delphi from the mid-third century records a Sophocles, son of Aristobulus, a Phocian living at Cassandrea, who received proxenia at Delphi.\textsuperscript{34} Aristobulus presents a paradox because later commentators had diametrically opposite opinions on his work. Arrian claimed to use Aristobulous' work because he wrote when there was no longer any need for flattery, but Lucian and an anonymous writer on rhetoric called him a flatterer.\textsuperscript{35} Yet, he wrote his history as an old man, sometime after the year 295, and likely after 285, which meant that Aristobulus could no longer receive any benefits from Alexander for flattering the king.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{31} Ibid. 48-9.
\bibitem{32} Heckel. \textit{Who's Who}, 77.
\bibitem{33} Pearson. \textit{Lost Historians}, 151.
\bibitem{34} Lionel Pearson. “Aristobulus the Phocian,” \textit{AJPh} 73 (1952) 71-5.
\bibitem{35} Pearson. \textit{Lost Historians}.150-1.
\end{thebibliography}
Aristobulus was an Alexander apologist.\textsuperscript{37} It seems probable, therefore, that critics who considered Aristobulus too favorable in his account of Alexander accused him of doing so to gain favor with Alexander.\textsuperscript{38} Given the date of composition, an attempt to curry favor with Alexander may be ruled out, but as an apologist, Aristobulus may be considered a flatterer of the king.

Ptolemy, son of Lagus, one of Alexander's companions and later the king of Egypt, wrote an account of the reign of Alexander, of which thirty fragments survive. Ptolemy wrote the history at some point after 305, however the exact date of composition is unknown. One of the primary debates about Ptolemy's work is his portrayal of his rivals.\textsuperscript{39} Errington argues that Ptolemy incorporated his own political bias into his history and that “on Alexander Ptolemy built his kingdom...his publicized view of Alexander and of the careers of his colleagues (and himself) under Alexander is vitally conditioned by this fact.”\textsuperscript{40} Roisman has demonstrated that while Ptolemy does seek to absolve Alexander of wrongdoing, the fragmentary nature of the history defies any understanding of his aims in writing the history, but the fragments suggest that it was not a work of propaganda.\textsuperscript{41} I believe that Ptolemy was influenced by his own present political situation in rendering his history of Alexander, but that does not necessarily mean that it was intended as propaganda. Rather, Ptolemy may have intended to write an accurate account,

\textsuperscript{37} Pearson, \textit{Lost Historians}, 158-60.

\textsuperscript{38} Brunt, “A Note on Aristobulus,” 69.

\textsuperscript{39} Pearson, \textit{Lost Historians}, 188.


but was influenced by his own time in the same way that the later historians of Alexander were influenced by their own times—as the later chapters of this thesis show. Nevertheless this is more supposition than fact since no statements about Ptolemy's method or purpose survive among the fragments. Ptolemy's work was highly detailed, but his veracity was maintained because Arrian did pass judgment on the history, other than to rely upon it. Pearson claims that it was not widely read because it was “not an inspired work of history.”

Cleitarchus is an author from whose work just thirty-six fragments survive, however he was a well known author during the Roman period. The only work we know that he wrote was his history of Alexander. The consensus in the Roman commentators is that he was an orator rather than a historian and Cicero, in particular, did not approve of him as a model for Latin writers (De Legg. 1.7). Cleitarchus' history was distinguished from the other accounts of Alexander by later commentators on the grounds that he did not have any care for truth. Instead Cleitarchus provided a sensational account of Alexander's reign, likely with inconsistent characterization of the king. He was the ultimate source for many of the anecdotes about Alexander's orientalism, such as Alexander's decision to have a harem with “concubines as many in number as the days of the year and of remarkable beauty, since they were picked from all the women in Asia; and each night they paraded round the king's bed, so that he could make his choice of the

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42 Pearson. Lost Historians. 211, 241, but, as he points out, simply labeling a historian favorable or unfavorable is a false distinction.

43 Ibid. 212.

44 Ibid. 212-13.
one who was to sleep with him” (Diod. 17.77.7). As Pearson argues, since this sensational story derives from Cleitarchus, then it is probable that the other stories about the Persian luxury also come from him.\(^{45}\) Truthful or not, Cleitarchus was the most popular commentator about Alexander whose work survived into the Roman period.\(^ {46}\)

Chares of Mytilene was Alexander's chamberlain, and wrote ten books known as “Stories of Alexander” (Historiae peri Alexandron), from which nineteen fragments remain.\(^{47}\) This work was probably not a continuous narrative, but a series of anecdotes about Alexander's personal life, and life in the Persian and Macedonian courts, which many later writers likely used.\(^ {48}\) But none of the fragments suggest that he moralized or that he had “any interest in military or political history,”\(^ {49}\) but instead sought to detail certain events.

Ephippus of Olynthus also recorded details of Alexander's court.\(^ {50}\) Unlike Chares, Ephippus seems to be distinctly negative towards the king, and his work provides an example of anti-Alexandrian propaganda.\(^ {51}\) Five fragments remain from his history.

The Major (Secondary) Sources

\(^{45}\) Ibid. 221.

\(^{46}\) Ibid. 242.

\(^{47}\) Ibid. 51.

\(^{48}\) Ibid. 60-1.

\(^{49}\) Ibid. 61.

\(^{50}\) Ibid. 61.

\(^{51}\) Ibid. 64. Pearson suggests that Ephippus had personal reasons for hating Alexander, in addition to the destruction of Olynthus and the death of Callisthenes (also from Olynthus).
The above writers' works are referred to as the primary sources. Our narrative account of Alexander's reign comes from much later writers, who are referred to as the secondary sources: Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus/Justin, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch and Arrian.

_Diodorus:_

Diodorus Siculus, a Greek from Sicily, composed the earliest extant account of Alexander the Great. Between the years 60 and 30, he wrote a world history, the _Bibliotheke_ which largely focused on the events of Greece, Sicily and Italy in forty books.\(^{52}\) Forty, though, is likely an abridgment from his intended length of perhaps forty-two books.\(^{53}\) Books one through five, and ten through twenty, survive in more or less complete form, while fragments from some other books exist. It seems probable that one of his motivations for including Sicily as a distinct region was patriotism, wherein he charted the ways in which Greece and Rome affected the island. The narrative of Alexander's reign comprises Book 17.

Despite the length of Diodorus' extant work, almost no biographical details for the man exist outside of the _Bibliotheke_ itself.\(^{54}\) Diodorus states that he came from the

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52 Peter Green, *Diodorus Siculus, Books 11-12.37.1* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006). 8, also notes that in Book 1-6, the mythological and ethnographic sections, “Diodorus may well still not have had a clear picture of the final shape...Book 1 is entirely devoted to the myths, religious and social customs and the Pharaonic king-lists of Egypt.”


town of Agyrium in Sicily (14.95.2), which had roads to both Morgantina and Panormus (modern Palermo). Evidently the city was at one point large and prosperous (16.82.5, 83.3), but, like much of Sicily during the late Republic, Agyrium fared poorly and went into decline. Cicero, in his speeches against Verres in 70, singled out Agyrium as a notable example of a wealthy city that Verres drove into destitution during his term as governor of the island (2 Verr. 3.27.67). The city suffered, but Diodorus did not. Diodorus and his family must have been prosperous as he traveled to Alexandria around the year 60, where he met with people from the upper strata of society such as a Roman Embassy (3.11.3). He also claimed to travel extensively throughout Asia and Europe (1.4.1), though the only two specific destinations he identifies are Alexandria and Rome. Even more telling about his personal wealth, Diodorus dedicated thirty years to the Bibliotheke (1.4.1), at least half of which he spent in Rome, possibly without either employment or patron. \(^{55}\)

One mystery that envelops Diodorus is his citizenship. Nowhere in the Bibliotheke does Diodorus claim Roman citizenship, nor does he list the formulaic praenomen and nomen that usually accompanied citizenship. There are Roman citizens with the name “Diodorus,” however it is premature to associate our Diodorus with those otherwise unconnected references. \(^{56}\) Regardless of citizenship Diodorus would have received an education commensurate with his status. Diodorus evidently learned Latin

\(^{55}\) Ibid.184-5, notes that Diodorus did not dedicate the Bibliotheke to a patron and as well as the apparent lack of rhetorical embellishment to indicate Diodorus had the requisite skills to tutor; these factors, combined with Diodorus' travel open the possibility that he had his own means, however none of these points offers conclusive evidence either way.

\(^{56}\) Ibid. 165.
through contact with Romans in Sicily (1.4.4) and, although there is some question about his knowledge of Latin,\(^57\) he makes particular note of the Roman written documents he used (1.4.2-4).

**Justin/Trogus:**

Pompeius Trogus, a Romanized Gaul whose grandfather received citizenship from Julius Caesar (Justin 43.5.11), wrote a world history in 44 books sometime in the later reign of Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE).\(^58\) He wrote in Latin, and his world history followed the same structure as that of Diodorus a half century before: it progresses from Asia, to Greece to Rome, as well as having an emphasis on the historical causality of fortune.\(^59\) The history of Pompeius Trogus has not survived; what remains is an epitome compiled by Justin either around the year 200 or the year 390 CE.\(^60\) The question, then, is how closely did Justin follow Pompeius Trogus? Yardley argues that Justin added so extensively to the original text that Pompeius Trogus was fundamentally altered, while Worthington (for one) maintains that Justin faithfully followed Pompeius Trogus' original.\(^61\)

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61 Yardley, *Justin*. 8; contra, e.g. Ian Worthington, ""Worldwide Empire" Versus "Glorious Enterprise": Diodorus and Justin on Philip II and Alexander the Great," in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father...
the capacity for innovation would be foolish. Nevertheless, while Justin may have added in floruits to Pompeius Trogus' original, the core narrative for Alexander, complete with the perception of Alexander, belongs to Trogus. Henceforth, I will consider Justin's epitome essentially a product of the early Principate.

Curtius:

The second author from the early Principate who wrote a historical work on Alexander was Quintus Curtius Rufus. Of the five main secondary sources of the Roman period, Curtius is the most difficult to contextualize. The reason for this is simple: the first two books of Curtius' history are lost, along with any biographical, methodological and temporal information that may have once existed. Instead, a fierce debate rages based on other textual clues such as the terms “Parthians,” “Cataphracts” and “Tyrian prosperity”. This scanty evidence cuts two ways. One way to read the evidence is to establish a potential terminus date of 226/7 with the Sassanid overthrow of the Parthian kingdom, while also allowing for a later date of Persian resurgence when Persian and Parthian were used interchangeably. But Curtius distinguishes between Parthians and Persians, and so it is more likely that “Parthian” was a term in contemporary use when...

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62 For Diodorus' innovation, see 35-6.


Curtius wrote. Other post-Trajanic emperors have also received support, but usually Trajan serves as the terminus date for Curtius' work.

Curtius' date falls, then, between the reign of Augustus and the reign of Trajan. Book 10, with its imperial panegyric (10.9.1-6) and commentary on the absence of a king (civil war), narrows the possible list to Augustus (31 BCE - 14 CE), Claudius (41-54 CE), Vespasian (69-79 CE), or Trajan (98-117 CE). The most popular choice is Claudius. After Caligula's assassination in 41 CE, some members of the Senate wished to restore the Republic, but the Praetorian Guard forced the senators to accept Claudius. The civil war was short lived, but does provide enough basis, as do literary analyses and two individuals named Curtius, one the proconsul of Africa, the other a rhetorician, to make this date believable. Bosworth, however, has suggested that the closest literary parallel is the younger Pliny and thus the date of Curtius is the reign of Trajan. While there is scholarship that argues in favor of an Augustan date, the Vespasianic date matches most

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68 Ibid. 204, Galba is also listed as a possibility, but Baynham, n. 12, eliminates his reign as simply too short to fit.


evidence given for all pre-Trajanic dates. My objective in outlining this controversy as I have done is to merely situate Curtius' history. I accept a first century date for Quintus Curtius Rufus, specifically in the reign of either Vespasian or Claudius. I am swayed somewhat more by the Claudian date, but the work is not necessarily discussing any single emperor, but may be a commentary about multiple emperors; if, as Baynham suggests, the rhetorician Q. Curtius Rufus wrote this text in his old age under Vespasian, then he still reflects the Julio-Claudian education and experience.

Plutarch:

The dates of Plutarch's birth and death are unknown, though approximate dates and a sketch of his life can be established from inscriptions and his extant works. He was born into a wealthy family in the small Boeotian town of Chaeronea in the mid to late 40's CE. His family often appears in his dialogues, but little is actually known about his upbringing. In all likelihood, he received a standard education for a young man of his station, which would have included rhetoric, poetry, and mathematics, and in his teens, a higher education of rhetorical training. Around the age of twenty Plutarch traveled to

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73 Baynham, *Alexander the Great*. 216-19. Dempsie, "A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus Historia Alexandri Book X*. viii-ix goes so far as to suggest that the two historical references to Curtius are two distinct mentions of the same person.


75 Ibid. 2-3.

Athens to study philosophy and mathematics under Ammonius, an Alexandrian and a Platonist.\(^77\) It seems probable that it was this during period in his training that he developed his antipathy toward sophistry, Stoicism and Epicurianism, and was attracted to Platonic and Aristotelian moderation.\(^78\)

Plutarch traveled extensively around the Greek world, notably Smyrna and Alexandria, and he went to Rome at least twice.\(^79\) The first visit was in the 70's CE during the reign of Vespasian, and the second was in the early 90's. During the first visit Plutarch was a visitor and a tourist, but on the second trip he gave lectures in Greek to large audiences. He also had other interactions with Rome, including inclusion on, and eventual individual completion of, an embassy to the proconsul of Achaea on behalf of Chaeroneia.\(^80\) He also was friends with a number of important Romans, including L. Mestrius Florus, a Senator and friend of Vespasian. It was through the patronage of Florus that Plutarch gained citizenship, though no extant works are dedicated to Florus, which suggests that Plutarch was not wholly dependent upon him.\(^81\) Another friend, Arulenus Rusticus, supposedly received a letter from Domitian during one of Plutarch's lectures (Moralia 522D-E), however Rusticus was executed for treason in 93 CE, which may have prompted Plutarch to leave Rome.\(^82\)


\(^78\) Gilley, \textit{Damn with Faint Praise}, 4, 11-12, 128-9.

\(^79\) The narrative follows Gilley, \textit{Damn with Faint Praise}, 5-6.

\(^80\) Ibid. 6.


\(^82\) Gilley, \textit{Damn with Faint Praise}, 7.
Plutarch spent most of his life in Chaeronea, but he also had Athenian citizenship and, as noted above, Roman citizenship. He may have founded a school in his home town. Its foundational date and organization are unknown, though his family may have continued to maintain it after his death.\textsuperscript{83} In addition to his activities in Chaeronea, Rome and Athens, Plutarch became a priest of Apollo at Delphi soon after returning from Rome in 93.\textsuperscript{84} He held this post until his death, sometime between 119 and 125 CE.\textsuperscript{85}

The works Plutarch wrote can be divided into two broad categories: lives (notably the Parallel Lives) and \textit{Moralia}. Both of these were philosophical and moral in nature, with a particular emphasis on living an ethical life. In this regard Plutarch was a biographer and ethicist, not a historian. He claimed that virtue can be learned from the lives of great men (\textit{Alex.} 1.2-3; \textit{Per.} 2). Teaching virtue, not demonstrating Greek superiority was his purpose, and he is repeatedly sympathetic toward Rome in his writing.\textsuperscript{86} It has been suggested that Plutarch wrote the biographies at least in the middle and later years of his life after he had left Rome in 93 CE, though it seems likely that some of the \textit{Moralia} was composed earlier, given that he presented presumably philosophical lectures while in Rome.\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. 8.
\item\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. 9.
\item\textsuperscript{85} Ibid. 9.
\item\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. 10.
\end{footnotes}
**Arrian:**

Lucius Flavius Arrianus (Arrian) came from Nicomedia, the capital of the province Bithynia. He held the consulship in either 129 or 130 CE, and therefore his birth must have been between 85 and 90 CE.\(^8^8\) He considered Bythinia his homeland, wrote in Greek for (presumably) a Greek audience, and labeled Romans as other,\(^8^9\) however he was also Roman. His family may have received Roman citizenship under the Flavian Dynasty (69-96) and was in the highest social stratum of Bithynia. Arrian was also a priest of Demeter and Kore in Bithynia, and among his literary works was a history of his homeland. Arrian would have received a thorough education in accordance with his status, including study in grammar, literature and then rhetoric and possibly philosophy.\(^9^0\)

Rather than conclude his study at one of the traditional schools in Smyrna or Athens, Arrian finished his study with the Stoic philosopher Epictetus in Epirus.\(^9^1\)

In the reign of Hadrian and probably with the emperor's patronage, Arrian became a Senator, Praetor and Consul, though the only post that is datable is his Consulship in 129 or 130 CE. He probably governed Hispania Baetica as a proconsul before his adlection to Consul (c. 125 CE).\(^9^2\) Then in 131 as imperial legate, he governed


\(^8^9\) Ibid. 1.


Cappadocia (with its two legions and accompanying auxiliary troops) for approximately six years. Arrian continued his literary pursuits while in Cappadocia, even while continuing Hadrian’s inspection of the Black Sea (detailed in the *Periplus*) and repelling an invasion by the Alans. Even if Arrian won his consulship based on his literary achievement, the Cappadocian governorship and the accompanying military command are demonstrative of Arrian’s military experience. Having completed his military service, Arrian retired to Athens where he gained citizenship and served as archon.

*The Roman Background*

Between 264 and 242 Rome came into direct conflict with Carthage (and independent Greek *poleis*) over control of Sicily during the First Punic War. The treaty that concluded the war granted Rome the Carthaginian territory in Sardinia and Sicily. In the aftermath, Rome for the first time stationed garrisons in conquered territories and in 227 the Roman political elections included two additional *praetors* who were usually the two commanders sent to Sicily and Sardinia. These islands were the first Roman provinces overseas. The intervening years until Diodorus' birth, perhaps in the 80's, did

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94 As claimed by Photius in the *Suda*.

95 As Stadter points out, Cappadocia was an important border province and “Hadrian was not a romantic when the defense of the frontier was in question.” *Arrian*.14.


not consist of an unbroken period of Roman peace, but neither did Rome lose control of the Sicily. Thus, the island on which Diodorus was born and grew up was within the Roman sphere of influence and, at least for the upper strata of society, could conceivably be considered Roman in culture, despite linguistic and civic differences.

The Roman Republic in the first century experienced a tumultuous transition toward empire.\textsuperscript{98} It was a century in which Rome was largely directed by a series of powerful aristocrats, including Marius, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar. This set up was typical for Republican politics in Rome, where the constitutional rules actually reveal little about political culture because the aristocratic oligarchy held an entrenched position of authority.\textsuperscript{99} The four men listed above were particularly distinguished military commanders, but other than brief and intermittent exceptions (see below), the traditional structures of the Roman Republic remained intact. This meant that the periods of sole rule in the first century were exceptional and more often the “ruler” was whomever could manipulate the Republican structures most effectively. The exceptions were notable and came in two forms: dictatorship and triumvirate. Dictator was a constitutional office in the Roman Republic.\textsuperscript{100} In times of crisis one man, aided by a master of horse, could be chosen by the Senate as dictator (e.g. Fabius Maximus during Hannibal's invasion of Italy in 221 and again in 217). The dictator, with a term of six months, superseded the Consuls


in order to resolve the crisis. But in the first century, Sulla (in 82), and Caesar (in 47) took the dictatorship without term limit. Sulla quit the dictatorship in 79, but Caesar was assassinated while still in office on the now-infamous Ides of March in 44. The other exception to the Roman Republican system was the triumvirate in which three men joined together to further each man's ambitions and collectively rule Rome. The first example of this was in 59, with Crassus, Pompey and Caesar, and the second in 43, with Antony, Octavian and Lepidus in 43. Unlike the dictatorship, the triumvirate was not constitutional in any form, but rather a private alliance to manipulate the state.  

The Roman empire was partitioned throughout the 30's as different groups attempted to take control of it. Octavian won the Battle of Actium in 31 over the forces of Antony and Cleopatra, thereby ending significant opposition to his rule. In 27, Octavian (now Augustus) was given the title of princeps by the Senate. His position was determined partly by his military victory, and partly by the powers granted him by the republic (after 23 there was no annual consulship, but a special imperium with five year terms, and “tribunician power”). The Senate maintained influence within the Principate, but largely achieved this end by upholding the Princeps and decreeing honors to the imperial family. Nero, the last Julio-Claudian emperor, was deposed in 68 CE, and was replaced by four emperors in quick succession, none of whose reigns lasted more than a few months, until Vespasian became emperor in 69 CE. Each of these emperors,

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103 Ibid. 118.
including Vespasian, adopted a Julio-Claudian imperial style and laid claim to the Julio-Claudian property, money, and imperial privileges.

In 94 CE palace servants (perhaps guided by the Praetorian Prefects) killed the last Flavian emperor, Domitian.\textsuperscript{104} Nerva, a senator, was chosen to replace him, and in 98 CE Nerva was succeeded by Trajan, the governor of Upper Germany. In turn, Hadrian came to power in 117 CE. After the tumultuous accession of Nerva that followed the death of Domitian, the next two transitions of power were peaceful. Emperors, even during the Julio-Claudian period, were not bound by the laws since there was no constitutional limit on the Princeps. There were, however, extra-constitutional checks on the power of the emperors, since groups of people incapable of becoming emperor could still play a role in deposing him.\textsuperscript{105}

\textit{Roman Influences on Literature}

The vicissitudes of the Roman political world emerge in Roman literature. The shifting dynamic in balance of power between Rome and the rest of Italy in the first century BCE can be traced in the poetic works of Horace.\textsuperscript{106} Ovid, writing in the reign of Augustus, used his poetic success to rise into the Augustan elite, but was exiled in 8 CE. His career therefore “epitomizes the benefits and costs the Roman principate laid out for


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. 136.

successive generations of its elites.”

Ovid's career continued from the periphery, though, which helped to define Rome as the source of artistic and political legitimization. Livy, a contemporary of Ovid, composed a history of Rome after Octavian stabilized Roman politics in 31, and expressed the contradiction between the stability of an autocrat and the traditional Roman hostility to monarchy.

Imperial censorship of literature served as a deterrent for authors hostile towards the emperors, but it could be not thoroughly enforced because the emperors lacked the appropriate apparatus to completely eliminate hostile writing. Authors were “at the mercy of any malevolent decoder close enough to the emperor to denounce them.” Dissenters did continue to write, though, often escaping imperial censorship through artifice. Since there was no explicit articulation of the Principate as a combination of autocracy with Republican institutions (and Augustus himself claimed to have restored the Republic), discussion of monarchy could clearly not be a critique of the regime. Yet, Lucan, writing in the reign of Nero, was exceptionally hostile towards monarchy and Julio-Claudian tyranny. As a result Nero ordered him to commit suicide in 65 CE.

Tacitus, writing in the late first century and early second century CE, was also influenced by his own contemporary scene. He wrote all of his histories after the

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107 Ibid. 151.
108 Ibid. 153.
111 Ibid. 13.
accession of Trajan and despite emperors advancing his career as he admits at *Histories* 1.1.3, Tacitus demonstrated a tension between the aristocracy and the autocrat.\(^{113}\) This conflict appears most prominently in the Annals, where Tacitus used “Republican historiographical forms” in order to create a structural tension and thereby reveal that “the Republican past that the opponents construct...is unsuccessful because it strikes a discordant note with contemporary imperial reality.”\(^{114}\) Reading Tacitus in light of rhetorical irony reveals that he regarded the Principate as a distinct break from the Republican tradition and, moreover that it stifled liberty.\(^{115}\) “Liberty” was what so-called good emperors would bestow upon the Senate, but Tacitus also implied that such a relationship was a fiction under the Principate. It has also been noted that Tacitus perhaps gives too much emphasis to the Senate when it was an institution in decline, while his younger contemporary Suetonius wrote imperial biographies.\(^{116}\) In another paradox, Tacitus seems to have chosen to prevent himself from critiquing Nerva and Trajan, unless his political opinions had reversed.\(^{117}\) Tacitus was an imperial agent and though he revealed that bad emperors were an institutional problem,\(^{118}\) he likewise offered a critique


\(^{117}\) O’Gorman, *Irony and Misreading*. 182.

of Republican martyrs. Though he was not explicitly pro-imperial, Tacitus accepted the imperial reality and may have been cautiously optimistic about the future after Trajan came to power.

The Bibliotheca of Diodorus reflects an author from Sicily writing in Greek and living under the aegis of Rome. Thus the Alexander of Diodorus is, in a sense, created by this same Roman Republican benchmark. Nevertheless, Diodorus wrote this Roman reflection into his Bibliotheca while still remaining an outsider and therefore more able to reconcile the ideal form of an autocrat than, perhaps, a native Roman. In the Bibliotheca he revealed the advantages of sole rule using Alexander as a template, but also revealed a positive portrayal of men such as the two dictators, Sulla and Caesar. These examples provide insight into Diodorus' political inclination, demonstrating the benefits of sole rule, and, by contrast, the damaging effects of civil war and other forms of government. Alexander, king of Macedonia, is manifested as the ideal dictator.

Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus wrote their histories of Alexander during the first century CE, a time when Rome was adjusting to the idea of autocracy. The transition, however, was not perfectly smooth, and these two authors, Trogus and Curtius were influenced by the uncertainty about monarchy as it emerged in Rome.

Autocracy could provide stability, but the potential for the dangerous aspects of autocracy could provide stability, but the potential for the dangerous aspects of autocracy

119 Ibid. 19-23.
was increasingly real.

Arrian and Plutarch lived under the Roman Empire over a century after it was established. The chance of a poor emperor was a real possibility, but the existence of an emperor was no longer a matter of debate. Thus, these two authors reflect the culmination of the evolution in portraying Alexander in that monarchy was no longer necessarily negative. It is also important to note that despite the apparent acceptance of emperors, it is possible that any positive descriptors were the result of not having any immediate negative parallels, but were still intended to be ironic interpretations. Likewise, it is possible that Arrian, in particular, presented the monarch favorably because of his own personal investment in the imperial state as an acquaintance of Hadrian and provincial governor. In all of these different readings of Plutarch and Arrian's, they were not markedly different from other authors of their contemporary period.

Later Historians' Use of Sources and Historical Tradition

Pompeius Trogus composed his history of Alexander largely using Cleitarchus' account (and certainly not the recent world history of Diodorus). Pompeius Trogus, along with Diodorus and Curtius, traditionally fall into the same basic category of “Vulgate” or “Cleitarchan Vulgate” authors since all three derive from the same core source, over-simplified though it may be. Despite the same basic source for these

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123 Ibid. 1
sources authors, they differ in various ways and did not limit themselves to just Cleitarchus. This means that there was much more leeway for authorial commentary. Trogus chose Cleitarchus, the most popular account of Alexander's exploits in this period of Roman history, and from it provided his commentary on autocracy, particularly retaining most of the fantastic elements that marked Cleitarchus' account. Trogus also used multiple other sources for his work, including Diyllus and more, often unattested, limited works to fill out the narrative.

Like Pompeius Trogus, Quintus Curtius Rufus drew source material from Cleitarchus, but he also drew sections from Hieronymus and other sources. Curtius seems to have both a choosier and less “academic” source selection than other authors in that he changed sources based on the needs of his text rather than abiding by particular sources. As Hammond puts it, “Curtius was an original author.” Curtius also supplies information nowhere else attested to the two sources he names (Cleitarchus, Diyllus) which is another indication that he made use of additional sources. It should also be noted here that Curtius' history is highly rhetorical. This is not surprising. Ancient

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124 Ibid. 2-3.
125 Ibid. 114-15.
126 Ibid. 163.
128 Hammond, Three Historians of Alexander the Great. 162.
129 Baynham, Alexander the Great. 57. That is, unless Curtius simply made things up. This is possible, however since the first two books of Curtius' history have not survived we do not have any information about his method. Let us assume, then, that he intended to write a history with the appropriate scruples of the genre at his time. This is a dangerous assumption, but any other information is merely speculation.
historiography was closely linked to oratory and authors used speeches to elaborate upon the themes in their work. In one pertinent parallel, Fox and Livingstone claim that speeches in Herodotus “gave depth to the *Histories* by exploring character and motivation, displaying, for instance, the unreflecting arrogance of autocrats.” It is plausible, if not probable, that Curtius crafted speeches that fit the text on each level such as at Opis, but that these constructs were inserted at the points in the text where there were speeches. This means that when someone speaks, the speech fits the speaker, and the occasion, and the overall authorial intent, and suggests that at least some of the speeches are infused with Roman values and images.

Both Justin and Curtius are part of the so-called Vulgate tradition along with Diodorus, which means that the bulk of both narratives derives primarily from Cleitarchus (with supplemental material from other authors). These authors do maintain some internal continuity, which led to the early misconception that all three derived from the same source or sources. Nevertheless the idea of a singular Vulgate tradition is too simplistic, as more recent individual and comparative source studies have demonstrated.

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130 Matthew Fox, and Niall Livingstone, "Rhetoric and Historiography," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. Ian Worthington (Malden: Blackwell, 2007). 547. Thucydides (1.22) also provides that his method would be to supply speeches based on what ought to be said (τὰ δεῖοντα), which was the standard for ancient historiography.


Ptolemy and Aristobulous were the two main sources for the historical material in Arrian's history of Alexander. He then supplemented it with secondary material, which either enlarged or counterbalanced the information provided by Ptolemy and Aristobulus. For passages that he was skeptical of, but felt compelled to include anyway, he qualified as rumor or story. Unfortunately it is often impossible to reliably determine the secondary sources unless, as is sometimes the case, that Arrian explicitly remarks that Ptolemy and Aristobulus did not record the event.

Plutarch used more sources than any other extant work for his account of Alexander, citing at least twenty-four sources. Among these, Plutarch primarily used the work of Callisthenes, Aristobulus and Cleitarchus.

Preliminary Conclusions

There were not one, but three distinct Roman Alexanders. This is because the Alexander myth was filtered and perpetuated by the Roman world. The extant sources for Alexander's reign can be divided into three groups that correspond to the Roman political developments in the first centuries BCE and CE. The authors, perhaps unwittingly, wrote


Ibid. 65, provides Arrian 7.13.2-3, the account of Amazons who were introduced to Alexander in Media, as an example of this method.


Ibid. lx-lxvi, also noting the letters written by Alexander.
into their texts commentaries on autocracy, and in doing so brought their contemporary situations to bear in their perception of Alexander. The result was a modification of the Alexander narrative, but, as Bosworth puts it, “not independent, systematic, and self-conscious fiction.” Instead, individual incidents were shaped to show different messages, which, in the Roman sources of Alexander, reflected Roman opinions of autocracy. Thus Diodorus represents a positive opinion of Roman dictatorship in the late Roman Republic before Octavian established the Principate in 27. Justin and Curtius, the two authors from the first century CE, represent the tumultuous transition from republican government to monarch, and Plutarch and Arrian represent the acceptance of Roman monarchy by the early second century CE.

The Roman historians of Alexander were part of the Roman historiographical tradition. Even though they were not writing Roman history, they were simultaneously influenced by their contemporary period. Thus they incorporated many of the same themes, particularly about the nature of autocracy, as the Roman authors writing about Roman historians. Tacitus provides one of the most immediate examples of this in that he both incorporated the tension between the aristocrats and the autocrats, but also assessment about the existence of an autocrat providing a stark contrast to the desired Republic. The discourse on the nature of autocracy appears in both authors on Rome and authors on Alexander, but the individual conclusions were varied based on the individual author.

What, then, is the implications of these three Roman Alexanders for the historical Alexander the Great? These five sources represent the earliest extant narrative sources for

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the reign of Alexander, but the Roman Alexanders represent only one small portion of a larger, multi-cultural, Alexander myth. Since these later sources constructed their histories of Alexander from earlier sources that were similarly influenced by their own contemporary situations, Alexander the man is buried under multiple layers of myth. Contextualizing the narrative accounts of Alexander's in an attempt to isolate and explain what contemporary issues influenced the authors can help to evaluate the individual accounts. All of the accounts of Alexander can, and must, be contextualized in this way, but the fragmentary “lost historians” are difficult to examine because they lack continuous narratives. The problems with source analysis for Alexander's reign means that while we are able to reconstruct a chronology for his reign, reconstructing the historical Alexander may be impossible.
2. Alexander the Dictator

Diodorus Siculus and Republican Rome

The Alexander of the Late Roman Republic served as a warning about the dangers of decadence and power, but more than that, he served as a template for ambitious generals to follow. Thus, “the generalissimos of the late Republic offer a procession of potential Alexanders.” In hindsight the parallel between Roman generals and Alexander is obvious as the Late Roman Republic saw the steady expansion of Roman hegemony. To some extent, though, the parallel is overstated. There were instances when generals seemed to claim successful conquest, even though they actually avoided expanding Roman territory, such as after Sulla refused to annex Egypt in 88 (App. Civil Wars, 1.11.6). Nevertheless, as Badian concludes, the expansion of the Roman Republic was almost wholly dependent upon the ruling class of the Roman Republic. Subsequent scholars, starting with Harris in War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70, built on Badian's conclusions, while arguing that expansion did not depend on conscious decisions of the Roman elite. Instead, expansion was a cultural imperative by which the elite could maintain their status.

Fitting Roman generals into an Alexandrian template and thereby seeing


141 Ernst Badian, Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968). Sulla: 34, 43; Conclusion. 92.

Alexander in Rome is one of the central features of Spencer’s work, and, as she also notes, the parallel was the creation of contemporary Greco-Roman authors. Diodorus Siculus is the first of these surviving Roman authors, and he does not disappoint our expectations. More than simply reflecting the idea that the Roman generals imitated Alexander, Diodorus uses Alexander as an example of rule as it should be, rather than as it was. Alexander, therefore, is a benevolent sole-ruler who behaves in a restrained manner towards his followers, only punishes those who actually commit treason against him and whenever possible uses due process.143

Diodorus began to compose the Bibliotheca in or around the year 46, which is also assumed to be the chronological conclusion of the narrative.144 Sometime prior to completion, however, he revised his project to close with the events of 60, the date he began to compile his research.145 Diodorus published the Bibliotheca in Rome fifteen years after he started writing it, if only because wars between Octavian and Sextus Pompey that ended in 36 devastated Sicily. Octavian would institute a rebuilding program in Sicily, but when the war ended in 36, he punished the inhabitants who opposed him (App. Civil Wars, 5.8.6).146 The question is how long the punishment continued. Stone argues that in some cases the rebuilding program did not begin until 20, while Rubincam suggests that in some of the same cases for which Stone claimed the late date the

143 See below on the the trial of Philotas, 49-50.


145 Ibid. 160.

reconstitution predated 30.\textsuperscript{147} In both situations, though, Sicily suffered for a period and, as Sacks comments: “that was not the environment for the writing and publication of the \textit{Bibliotheke}.”\textsuperscript{148}

Until recently Diodorus was viewed as a scissors and paste historian, a “mere” copyist.\textsuperscript{149} In large part this view stems from his use of a variety of written sources, including many that have not survived in any other place, and his apparent faithfulness to them.\textsuperscript{150} Modern historians (e.g. Hammond, see below) therefore tend to approach Diodorus as a lens through which they can recover those other authors, rather than treating him as a writer in his own right. Diodorus is not unique in this sense, but the prevailing idea that he did not include his own rhetorical or literary adjustments perhaps makes him more susceptible to such deconstruction and dismissal. Further, the claim he makes to use sources faithfully stems from the debate about invention and whether or not invention rendered the historian invalid.\textsuperscript{151} More recently, scholars successfully argued that while Diodrous did rely heavily on other writers, he nevertheless inserted his own perspective into the amalgam of written accounts, although to a dangerous extent.\textsuperscript{152}


\textsuperscript{148} Ibid. 162. For a discussion on the Sicilian franchise, see 208.


\textsuperscript{150} Sacks, \textit{Diodorus Siculus}. 3.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. 111, citing as an example Diod. 13.90.6.

\textsuperscript{152} This debate is best characterized by Sacks, \textit{Diodorus Siculus} 5; Sacks, "Diodorus and His Sources: Conformity and Creativity.”
In *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century*, K. Sacks argues that the *Bibliotheke* is infused with non-narrative material that Diodorus composed and hence injected into it his contemporary political and cultural environment. Further, Sacks suggests that Diodorus chose sources compatible with his own opinions and, as such, the *Bibliotheke* was anything but an arbitrary composition. I also offer that one further editing technique Diodorus employed to shape his presentation was the art of omission. The amount of space that he dedicated to the different events he recorded shaped the narrative and some sections therefore could receive a gloss where other authors such as Plutarch, would use the same event as a philosophical or moral example with a different message. Although I also find it conceivable that Diodorus would have been willing to omit episodes entirely in the case of little known stories, the major events of Alexander's reign were simply too well known to overlook entirely.

In the past century there has been no consensus about which sources Diodorus used to compose Book 17 (the reign of Alexander). Some scholars claim that Diodorus used one source only indirectly, while others claim he used a myriad of sources that he used to form a mosaic. In *Three Historians of Alexander the Great*, N.G.L. Hammond examines the narrative of Book 17 in light of “fullness, accuracy, military and political detail and conception of a single theme,” in order to tease out passages that share

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154 Ibid. 5.


156 Ibid. 12
common elements. These groups that had common elements in the Bibliothèque then ought to correspond to particular authors.\textsuperscript{157} Hammond begins with certain passages that “share definite and peculiar characteristics,”\textsuperscript{158} and then moves on to suggest that the texture revealed by these particular sections can be used to identify which sources Diodorus used in some of the more opaque passages. Hammond concludes that Diodorus (for the most part) followed the narrative of Cleitarchus and Diyllus and was likely influenced by other authors such as Ptolemy.\textsuperscript{159} He also makes the claim that Diodorus' medium, at least for the first half of Book 17 (and all of Book 16, which encompassed the events during the reign of Philip) did not lend itself to causation and color, but implies that in the second half Diodorus took some more liberty with the sources.\textsuperscript{160}

Book 17 of the Bibliothèque is almost entirely dedicated to Alexander's reign, and is one of the few books without any commentary on events in Sicily and Italy that happened at the same time. Diodorus' description of Alexander is entirely formulaic, but is also characterized by some telling points of emphasis and de-emphasis. Thus, through source selection, corresponding commentary and selective emphasis, Diodorus created his model Alexander: an autocrat, true, but a benevolent, moderate autocrat who ruled by persuasion and merit and who only killed those who were treacherous and, when possible, only after a tribunal found the defendant guilty such as in the treason trial of

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid. This is the same method Hammond applied to Diodorus Book 16 in N.G.L. Hammond, "The Sources of Diodorus Siculus XVI," \textit{CQ} 31(1937), and N.G.L. Hammond, "The Sources of Diodorus Siculus XVI," \textit{CQ} 32 (1938).

\textsuperscript{158} Hammond, \textit{Three Historians}. 13.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid. Cleitarchus 26; Diyllus 33; Ptolemy 40. On these histories of these authors, see: 9-13.

\textsuperscript{160} Hammond, \textit{Three Historians}. 46.
Philotas in 330 (17.79-80, see below)—not a tyrant and not a despot, but, perhaps, an idealized dictator.

Diodorus the faithful transcriptionist would not overtly demonstrate a personal opinion about his contemporary society, Diodorus the more intrepid and human historian reveals an opinion that then shades his account of history and Alexander. Sacks argues that in the Bibliotheca he is “moderately critical of Rome” and while “not violently hostile, is uncomfortable with Roman success.”

Diodorus reveals both criticism and praise of Rome, but, according to Sacks, the balance tends towards criticism. As noted above, Diodorus' native Sicily had fared poorly vis à vis Rome in his recent history, which would have provided ample reason for the historian to portray Rome in a negative light. Diodorus' Bibliotheca is not explicitly a part of anti-Roman literature, perhaps because Sicily was part of the Roman sphere of influence for two centuries. However, he repeatedly offers a subtle critique both of Roman superiority and Roman policy by claiming the role of fortune (τύχη) in Rome's victory (26.24.2), praising Roman enemies (e.g. Hamilcar, at 25.10.5), and in remarking the good institutions, cities and

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161 Sacks, Diodorus Siculus. 117.
162 Ibid. 136.
163 “If Hasdrubal had enjoyed the assistance of Fortune as well, it is generally agreed that the Romans could not have carried on the struggle simultaneously against both him and Hannibal.” Ὅτι ὁ Ἀσδρούβας εἰ μὲν καὶ τὴν τύχην ἔξεχε συνεπιλαμβανόμενην, ὁμολογομένως οὐκ ἂν ἑδονήθησαν οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι πρὸς τούτον ἀμα καὶ πρὸς Ἀννίβαν διαγωνίσασθαι.
164 “As for Hamilcar, therefore, although he died many years before our time, let him have from History by way of epitaph the praise that is properly his.” Ἀμίλκας μὲν οὖν, καὶ περὶ πολλοῖς ἔτεσι πρῶτον τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡλικίας τετελευτηκώς, ἐχέτω παρά τῆς ἱστορίας ὑστερος ἐπιτάφιον τὸν ἰδίουν ἐπαινον.
rights Romans did away with (e.g. Corinth, at 32.27.1).  

There was, though, at least one Roman who Diodorus distinctly admired: Julius Caesar (Diod. 32.27.3). Although Diodorus amended the terminus of the *Bibliotheke* date from 46 to 60 and thereby eliminated Julius Caesar's career from it, he nevertheless demonstrated admiration for him, which is most obvious in his eulogy of Caesar in Book 32. The narrative at this point records the Roman destruction of Corinth, but Diodorus concludes this section with Caesar's re-founding the city nearly a century later (32.27.3). Along with the requisite litany of virtues Caesar possessed, Diodorus notes that “for his great deeds was entitled *divus,*” and he was only the second human figure in the *Bibliotheke* to achieve this status. The other, of course, is Alexander the Great. I should also note that Diodorus states that he intended Alexander to demonstrate the limits of conquest (1.55.3), while the sections about Caesar are unprompted praise and Caesar's correction of wrongs, but if Diodorus intended to emphasize the limits of conquest, he does so with a shocking lack of fanfare about Alexander's decision to turn from campaigning in India and returning back toward Macedonia in 326 (17.94.5):

διελθὼν δὲ λόγον πεφρονισμένον περὶ τῆς ἑπὶ τοὺς Γανδαρίδας στρατείας καὶ τῶν Μακεδόνων οὐδαμῶς συγκαταθεμένων ἀπέστη τῆς ἐπιβολῆς.

(Alexander) delivered a carefully prepared speech about the expedition

165 “Even in later times, when they saw the city leveled to the ground, all who looked upon her were moved to pity.” ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὸν οὐστερὸν χρόνον εἰς ἔδαφος κατερρυμένη πολὺν ἐποίει τοῖς ἄει θεωροῦσιν αὐτῆν ἔλεον.

166 “To sum up, this was a man who by his nobility, his power as an orator, his leadership in war, and his indifference to money is entitled to receive our approval…” καθόλου δὲ ὁ ἀνήρ οὗτος εὐγενείᾳ τε καὶ ἀφιλαρξυρίᾳ ἀποδοχῆς δίκαιος ἦστιν ἀξιοῦσθαι...Sacks, Diodorus Siculus. 202-3.

167 ὁ δὲ παρὰς πράξεις ὀνομασθεὶς θεὸς.
against the Gandaridae\textsuperscript{168} but the Macedonians did not accept it, and he gave up the undertaking.

He continued, though (17.95.1-2):

\begin{quote}
Κρίνας δὲ ταύτης τος ρους θέσθαι της στρατείας πρὸ τον μν δώδεκα θεν βωμοὺς πεντήκοντα πηχὼν ψκοδόμησεν, ἐπειτὰ τριπλασίαν τῆς προυπαρχούσης στρατοπεδείαν περιβαόμενος...ἀμα μὲν ἰρωικὴν βουλόμενος ποιῆσασθαι στρατοπεδείαν, ἀμα δὲ τοὺς ἐγχωρίοις ἀπολιπεῖν σημεία μεγάλων ἀνδρῶν, ἀποφαίνοντα ρώμας σωμάτων ὑπερφυεῖς.
\end{quote}

Thinking how best to mark the limits of his campaign to this point, he first erected altars of the twelve gods each fifty cubits high and then traced the circuit of the camp thrice the size of the existing one...His idea in this was to make a camp of heroic proportions and to leave to the natives evidence of men of huge stature, displaying the strength of giants.

Here Diodorus emphasizes the physical memorial that Alexander left behind to mark the physical limit of his conquest, but not the political, social, and military issues that actually caused the limit of conquest.

Instead, the emphases on Alexander are the supreme attributes he possessed, including his generosity and moderation, neither overly swayed by popular sentiment, nor given to petty squabbles that resulted in the devastation of people and places that had no recourse but to suffer. Alexander and Julius Caesar are also linked in the texts by connections between both men and Heracles and Dionysus.\textsuperscript{169} Alexander is not explicitly Caesar in the texts, but Diodorus may have had Caesar in mind when rendering

\footnotetext{168}{An Indian kingdom in the central Punjab.}

\footnotetext{169}{Caesar captured Alesia, a city founded by Heracles (4.19), and invaded Britain, which neither Heracles or Dionysus accomplished (5.21.2), while Alexander traced his descent through Heracles (e.g. 17.1.3), and his good deeds toward Nysa on account of his relationship (listed in contents, but is in a lacuna in the text).}
Alexander, just as Caesar may have consciously modeled his political image after Alexander.170

The world in which Diodorus wrote was Roman. When Diodorus began to research the Bibliothèque, Egypt was not yet a Roman Province, but he recounted a Roman Embassy to Alexandria. Further, Romans had been directly influencing Egyptian affairs for over a century and, by 30, Egypt was a Roman province.171 Rome governed this empire through former magistrates, particularly praetors and consuls, who had imperium, the right by which they commanded troops and dispensed justice. The Senate gave out these appointments nominally for one year, and then withheld the right to renew the tenure annually. By the end of the Republic, though, some appointments lasted for three or five years before the Senate could choose not to extend the duration.172 In most cases the governors also commanded legions assigned to those provinces. This meant that the governor's military command structure also served a bureaucratic function, but other than this, the Roman provincial bureaucracy was, at best, sparse.173 Governors relied on their own household and followers to govern the province. Tax collectors then bid on the rights

170 Diana Spencer, The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth, Exeter Studies in History (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002). 170. Though beyond the scope of my inquiry, Spencer builds on Lucan's description of Caesar as a parallel to Alexander. In this example Lucan constructs both men as negative political figures even as Diodorus constructs the parallel as positive figures.

171 A dramatic example of this influence appears in Livy (4.5.10-12) among other texts, wherein several low ranking Roman ambassadors turned back a Seleucid invasion under Antiochus IV Epiphenes within sight of Alexandria simply by informing the invaders that an attack on Egypt was an attack on Rome.


173 This meant that the local magistrates continued to provide important services to this Roman establishment. G.P. Burton, "The Imperial State and Its Impact on the Role and Status of Local Magistrates and Councillors in the Provinces of the Empire," in Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Politics in the Roman Empire, ed. Lukas Du Bois (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2001). 202-3.
to squeeze money from the local populations and communities largely governed themselves.\(^{174}\)

In Rome itself, elected magistrates and voting assemblies split official power, while the wealthiest and most privileged members of society informally influenced decisions.\(^{175}\) The most obvious division of power between magistrate and assembly is that of the Roman Senate and the Consuls. The Senate, a group of 300 or more aristocrats, debated (but did not pass) policy, which it could then pass down to popular assemblies for approval, as well as approving governorships, advising magistrates and receiving embassies.\(^{176}\) Likewise, Senators could go on embassies as official representatives of the Roman state. At some level, though, Consuls had the Senate at their whim. Perhaps most important, the Consuls generally dictated when the Senate would meet.\(^{177}\) Consuls also could command troops if necessary and could hope to receive provinces upon conclusion of their term in office. Beyond balancing assemblies and magistrates, the Roman political system attempted a balance inherent to the magistracies.\(^{178}\) At the highest rank, two Consuls served each year in order that neither one would be able to seize sole power over Rome.\(^{179}\) There was, however, the provision that in time of crisis a Dictator could take

\(^{174}\) This is one of the civilian contracts that E. Badian examines in *Publicans and Sinners* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972). 15.


\(^{177}\) Ibid. 75.

\(^{178}\) Ibid. 94.

\(^{179}\) Ibid. 104-9.
sole power (nominally) for a period of six months in order to resolve that particular crisis. Even when the Dictator was not successful, the term limit remained, though, as in the case of Fabius Maximus in 221 and 217, it was possible that people could become dictator more than once.\footnote{Fabius became dictator twice, in 221 and again in 217 in order to combat Hannibal. On the Dictatorship, see: Lintott. \textit{Constitution of the Roman Republic}. 109-113.}

Of course the sketch above is an idealized outline of the top layer of the Roman political system during the Republic. For reasons that are not important here, the fundamental structure of the Roman Republic dissolved during Diodorus' life and by the time he published of the \textit{Bibliotheke} the Roman world was on the cusp of the imperial system known as the \textit{Principate}. Perhaps the most famous and (overly) dramatized episode of this disintegration is that of Julius Caesar contemplating his momentous action on the northern bank of the Rubicon River in 49.\footnote{It is notable that Caesar's commentaries do not mention the Rubicon, but Plutarch (\textit{Caesar} 32.4-5) and Suetonius (\textit{Caesar} 30-2) do. For a narrative, see: Adrian Goldsworthy, \textit{Caesar: Life of a Colossus} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). 374-9.} That was not the first time that an ambitious Roman general marched on \textit{Urbs Roma}. In 88 the popular assembly stripped Sulla of an appointed command against Mithridates of Pontus, and Sulla responded by marching on and capturing the city (App. \textit{Civil Wars} 1.7.1; Plut. \textit{Sulla} 6.9).\footnote{C.F. Konrad, “From the Gracchi to the First Civil War (133-70),” in: \textit{A Companion to the Roman Republic}. ed. R. Morstein-Marx and N. Rosenstein (Malden: Blackwell, 2006). 179-80.} He did so again in 82, at that time becoming dictator without a term limit (App. \textit{Civil Wars} 1.1.3, 1.11.4; Plut. \textit{Sulla} 33.1). Sulla surrendered the dictatorship in 79 (App. \textit{Civil Wars} 1.12.1-3), but the next man to hold it, Caesar, would die in office in 44, stabbed by Cassius and Brutus, who were supposedly attempting to restore the Republic(Suetonius...}
I can only begin to speculate why Diodorus admired Julius Caesar, but from the fragmentary remains of Books 38 and 39, he was also favorable towards Sulla, recalling that “on becoming dictator, he assumed the name of Epaphroditus, a boast in which he was not belied, since he was victorious in war and died a natural death” (38/9.15.1).

Naturally this is speculation, but had Diodorus written after Octavian became Princeps, he would have positively presented Octavian/Augustus, while an earlier treatment could have reflected the destruction of civil war. Octavian, had only just taken power after Actium when Diodorus published the Bibliothèque, which suggests that he too would have received positive treatment if Diodorus had written only a few years later. It is possible that Diodorus harbored a grudge against Octavian, since he dealt harshly with Sicily while Sextus Pompey ruled the island. Yet, it is equally possible that Diodorus would have ascribed the devastation either to Sextus Pompey or to the lack of a sole ruler and rather to the continuation of destructive Roman behavior, thereby absolving Octavian of blame. Absent other confirmation these suppositions cannot be proven, but the scenarios are consistent with Diodorus' perception of the benefits of a sole ruler that he also brings out in his account of Alexander's reign.

If Diodorus was subtly critical of his contemporary Roman society, but positive towards the dictators, what are the implications of this for his treatment of Alexander? Alexander is one of Diodorus' exemplars of how to behave with good fortune, a

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183 Lintott, Constitution of the Roman Republic. 113.

benevolent autocrat with no direct parallels to Rome. His decision not to include Sicily and Italy in his account of Alexander's reign further establishes the contrast between Rome and Alexander. At the next level Alexander, a world-ruler like Rome, provides a counter to Rome because Diodorus records parallel events in remarkably dissimilar terms. One notable example of this parallelism is in the accounts Diodorus transmits about Alexander's destruction of Thebes and Rome's destruction of Corinth. In both cases the conquerors completely destroyed the cities, but where Rome enslaved the Corinthians, deprived the city of liberty, and caused such destruction that everyone who saw the city was moved by the sight (32.26.2-27.1), Thebes provoked Alexander (17.9.4). Alexander was prepared to spare Thebes if the city relented in its opposition to his rule (17.9.2), but when it was apparent that the Thebans looked down on him and would not relent, he destroyed the city as a way of discouraging any further opposition (17.9.4). Thus, rather than attributing the destruction of noble virtues to the conqueror, Diodorus puts the blame on the Thebans. He also records that it is the Dictator, Julius Caesar who restored Corinth after earlier Romans had destroyed the city. In this way Diodorus first reflects his contemporary society on his history of Alexander not based on the actuality of life at the end of the Roman Republic. Instead, Diodorus identifies in Alexander his ideal world; in Rome before the foundation of the Principate this world was realized in the form of the dictatorship.

Book 17 is one of the fifteen extant books from the entire Bibliotheca.186

185 Note that Polybius (Histories 9.34.2) and Plutarch (Al. 11.4) are like Diodorus.

186 Yarrow, Historiography at the End of the Republic, 88.
Nevertheless, in textual studies even “complete texts” contain so-called lacunae.\textsuperscript{187} Unfortunately for our knowledge of how Diodorus perceived Alexander, some of the major events in Alexander's reign are in a lacuna in the text. They include events such as the deaths of Cleitus in 328 and Callisthenes in 327, the Sogdianan Campaigns in 327, and Alexander's marriage to Roxane in 327.\textsuperscript{188} It is possible to reconstruct the narrative portion of these events based on the extant texts of the other Vulgate authors, Curtius and Justin, but isolating Diodorus' influence on the Alexander narrative would be impossible.\textsuperscript{189} The only remaining clues, then, rest in the contents portion of Book 17 wherein Diodorus laid out what he would cover, but is impossible to know the level of detail Diodorus included and how long the chapters were. The lacuna includes:

\begin{quote}
Βήσσου τοῦ ἀνελόντος Δαρεῖον θάνατος.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς Ἀλέξανδρος διὰ τῆς ἀνύδρου πορευθεῖς πολλοὺς ἀπέβαλε τῶν στρατιωτῶν.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς τοὺς Βραγχίδας τὸ παλαιὸν ὑπὸ Περσῶν μετοικισθέντας εἰς ἔσχατα τῆς βασιλείας ὡς προδότας τῶν Ελλήνων ἀνεῖλεν Ἀλέξανδρος.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ Σογδιανοὺς καὶ Σκύθας ἐστράτευσεν.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς οἱ πρωτεύοντες Σογδιανῶν ἀπαγόμενοι πρὸς τὸν θάνατον παραδόξως ἐσώθησαν.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς Ἀλέξανδρος ἀποστάντας τοὺς Σογδιανοὺς κατεπολέμησε καὶ κατέσφαξεν αὐτῶν πλείους τῶν δώδεκα μυρίάδων.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὅς Βακτριανοὺς ἐκόλασε καὶ Σογδιανοὺς τὸ δεύτερον ἐχειρώσατο.}
\end{quote}
\end{quote}
\end{quote}
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\end{quote}
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{For lacunae in the author historical texts about Alexander, particularly the absence of the first two books of Curtius, see: 16.}

\footnote{There are determinations that could be made about Alexander's kingship from the later two passages, but since Diodorus does not include clues from the contents the way he does about the two deaths, I will abstain from arguing based on what Diodorus might have said.}

\footnote{These three authors are known as “The Vulgate” because of a supposed common source, Cleitarchus. The idea of a single source has long since fallen from favor, but Curtius, Diodorus, Justin still represent a common group of texts that historians contrast with Arrian and Plutarch. See, for instance, Hammond, \textit{Three Historians}. 1-3.}
\end{footnotes}
καὶ πόλεις ἐκτίσεν εὐκαίρως πρὸς τὰς τῶν ἀφισταμένων κολάσεις.
Ἀπόστασις τρίτη Σογδιανῶν καὶ ἀλώσις τῶν εἰς τὴν Πέτραν καταφυγόντων.
Περί τοῦ ἐν Βασίστοις κυνηγίου καὶ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἐν αὐτῶ θηρίων.
Περί τῆς εἰς τῶν Δίονυσου ἅμαρτίας καὶ τῆς παρὰ τὸν πότον ἀναιρέσεως Κλείτου.
Περί τῆς Καλλισθέους τελευτής.
Στρατεία τοῦ Βασιλέως εἰς τοὺς καλουμένους Ναύτακας καὶ φθορά τῆς δυνάμεως ὑπὸ πολλῆς χιόνος.
Ὡς Ἀλέξανδρος ἔρασθεις Ἡρώνης τῆς Ὀξυρίτου ἐγημὲν αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν φίλων πολλοὺς ἐπεισε γῆμαι τὰς τῶν ἐπισήμων βαρβάρων δυνατέρας.
Παρασκευὴ τῆς ἐπὶ Ἰνδοῦς στρατείας.
Ἐμβολὴ εἰς τὴν Ἰνδικὴν καὶ ἀναίρεσις ἄρδην τοῦ πρῶτου ἔθνους πρὸς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἄλλων.
Ὡς τὴν Νυσίαν ὁμοαξομένην πόλιν εὐεργετῆσαι διὰ τὴν ἀπὸ Διονύσου συγγένειαν.
Ὡς Μάσσακα πόλιν ὅχυραν ἐκπορθησάς τοὺς μισθοφόρους ἄπαντας λαμπρῶς ἀγωνισμένους κατέκοψεν.

The death of Bessus, the murderer of Darius (17.83)
How Alexander marched through the desert and lost many of his men
How the Branchidae, who of old had been settled by the Persians on the borders of their kingdom were slaughtered by Alexander as traitors against the Greeks
How the king led his troops against the Sogdiani and Scythians.
How the chieftains of the Sogdiani, who were being led off to execution, were unexpectedly saved.
How Alexander defeated the Sogdiani who had revolted and slew more than one hundred and twenty thousand of them.
How he punished the Bactriani and subdued the Sogdiani a second time and founded cities in suitable places to restrain any who rebelled.
The third rebellion of the Sogdiani and capture of those who took refuge in the “Rock.”
Concerning the hunt in Basista and the abundance of game there.
Concerning the sin against Dionysus and the slaying of Cleitus at the drinking bout.
Concerning the death of Callisthenes.
The campaign of the king against the people called Nautaces and the destruction of the army in heavy snow.
How Alexander, enamoured of Roxane, daughter of Oxyartes, married her
and persuaded numbers of his friends to marry the daughters of prominent Iranians.
Preparation for the campaign against the Indians.
Invasion of India and complete annihilation of the first nation in order to overawe the rest.
How he benefited the city named Nysia because of his relationship to it through Dionysus.
How, after plundering the stronghold of Massaca, he cut down all the mercenaries although they fought magnificently. (17.84)

It is possible (though not probable) that each event listed may correspond to just one sentence, in which case Diodorus resorted simply to cataloguing the events rather than highlighting any of them. More likely, however, is that each of these items in the contents would have corresponded with an extended section of the narrative—the Battle of Arbela (Gaugamela) in 331, for instance, one item in the contents, corresponds to chapters 53-61. Diodorus plausibly would have used these narrative sections to either condemn or absolve Alexander for his actions. Since the text does not exist this is impossible to know for certain, but some extrapolations are possible based on the tone of the contents.

As noted above, the destruction (ἀναιρέσεως) of Cleitus in 328 and the death (τελευτής) of Callisthenes in 327 are absent from Book 17. The prevailing perception of both events is that Alexander was at fault in both cases. Alexander killed Cleitus, one of the commanders of the Companion Cavalry, in a drunken rage while at a banquet commemorating Cleitus' promotion to Satrap of Bactria in 328 (Arr. 4.8.2-3; Curt. 8.1.49; Plut. Al. 51.8). The next year Alexander ordered Callisthenes, the court historian, killed for supposed participation in a conspiracy after Callisthenes criticized Alexander for demanding proskynesis from his followers (Arr. 4.12.7, 4.14.3; Curt. 8.5.13-20; Plut. Al.

190 For how this even played out in Curtius and Justin, see 66-7, Plutarch and Arrian, see 85-9. For modern commentary on Cleitus, see: E.D. Carney, "The Death of Clitus," GRBS 22 (1981). 149-60.
In the contents Diodorus does not provide any evidence to suggest that that is how he would present the situations and in neither synopsis does Alexander feature. Diodorus does imply that he would be critical of Alexander for killing Cleitus, but not necessarily for “murder” or for killing a faultless follower: rather, Diodorus introduces the death of Cleitus in the contents with the phrase “concerning the crime against Dionysus” (Περί τόυ εις τόν Διόνυσον ἁμαρτία, see above), suggesting that there may have been some discussion about the dangers of imbibing excessive wine (which then caused other evils), but not giving a discourse about Alexander's relationship with his followers.  

This suggestion is even more evident with what Diodorus presages about Callisthenes. While there is no mention of a plot against Alexander which would inherently indict Callisthenes, neither is there mention of Alexander's growing orientalism or proskynesis, both of which are prominent themes in the other sources. It is possible, then, that Diodorus mentioned Callisthenes' death without lingering to either explain in any great detail or to place a moral judgment. In such a situation he only noted this event because leaving out such a well-known event would have raised questions about the account as a whole. If, however, Diodorus dedicated more space to Callisthenes, then the contents suggest that Callisthenes caused his own death and it was his unjustifiable reaction to Alexander's legitimate, if not reasonable, behavior.

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192 Diodorus was not the only author to feature this discussion. Plutarch, particularly in his On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander the Great also discusses this topos. See: 85-7, 89.

193 Curt. 8.5.5-24; Plut. Al. 53-4; Arr. 4.10.1.

194 For the account of Curtius and Justin, see 62.
To the greatest extent possible Diodorus reveals a picture of Alexander in which there was no conflict between Alexander and his aristocracy and minimizing the conflicts between Alexander and the Macedonian army (e.g. the mutiny at the Hyphasis in 326, see below).\textsuperscript{195} The chronology of Alexander's reign makes this difficult, but the absence of rhetorical flourish minimized that difficulty. Other Roman authors used these points of conflict in order to provide a dialogue that reveals causes and blame, where Diodorus simply provides accounts of the events. This is a feature of the two events during Alexander's reign in which the king did kill his aristocrats. In both instances Diodorus largely exonerates Alexander. In the first event Alexander orders the death of Cleopatra's relative Attalus (17.2.3-4).\textsuperscript{196} In the contents this is described as Alexander settling his kingdom, and then the narrative draws out the sequence of events, which include ruthless, if acceptable, actions. Alexander sent an agent with “orders to bring back Attalus alive if he could, but if not, to assassinate him as quickly as possible” (17.2.5),\textsuperscript{197} and only when “Attalus actually set his hand to revolt...Hecataus, following the instruction of the king literally, had him killed by treachery” (17.5.1-2).\textsuperscript{198} In a situation where Alexander


\textsuperscript{196} At different points Diodorus refers to Attalus as both Cleopatra's brother (17.2.3) and nephew (16.93.9). He was actually her uncle; I have opted to remain as true as possible to the particulars of the text in question.

\textsuperscript{197} ἐξαπέστειλεν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν...δόως ἐντολὰς μάλιστα μὲν ἀγαγεῖν ζῶντα τὸν Ἀτταλον, ἐὰν δὲ τούτο μὴ δύνηται κατεργάσασθαι, δολοφονήσαι τὸν ἄνδρα τὴν ταχίστην.

\textsuperscript{198} Ἀτταλος τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐπεχείρει νεωτερίζειν...τοῦ δ᾿ Ἐκαταίου κατὰ τὰς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐντολὰς δολοφονήσαντος τὸν Ἀτταλον.
unabashedly conducted a purge of any potential or actual rivals for power, Diodorus omitted the death of Philip's last wife (and Attalus' niece) Cleopatra and the daughter she had with Philip in 336. In fact, he only actually mentions Cleopatra in Book 17 in relation to Attalus, who Diodorus portrayed not just a rival to Alexander, but a rival in open rebellion. Much in the same way that Diodorus had Alexander present an opportunity for Thebes to repent when the city went into open rebellion, Alexander attempted to bring Attalus back to Macedonia, presumably so that Attalus would have the chance to swear fealty, or, at the very least, undergo an actual trial. Only as a last resort does Alexander's agent kill Attalus in 336.

The second point of conflict between Alexander and the nobility in the extant text is the trial of Philotas. Again, the account Diodorus shares is presaged in the contents, namely that there was a conspiracy and the most eminent conspirators were Parmenion and Philotas. Diodorus' narrative (17.79-80) does not condemn the father and son in as blunt terms, but neither does it stand in opposition to the summary. The narrative about Philotas and Parmenion is more compact than the narrative about Attalus, and this time the defendant came before a judicial body. Philotas, was allegedly party to a conspiracy against Alexander, but (17.79.5):

τοῦ δὲ Φιλώτου ῥαθυμίαν μὲν ἕαυτῷ προσομολογήσαντος, τὴν κρίσιν ύπὲρ τούτου τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ἐτέτρψεν.

While acknowledging his carelessness, nevertheless denied that he had any part in the plot and agreed to leave judgment concerning him to the Macedonians.

199 See for Plutarch and Arrian 67-9; Curtius and Justin 86-7.
The Macedonians found Philotas guilty, put him to death and then Alexander ordered the death of Parmenion. At the same time the Macedonian army assembly conducted the trial of Alexander the Lyncestian who had been arrested several years previous and to that point held. The soldiers found him guilty, too. Diodorus' opinion of this event is revealed in the contents where he lists Parmenion and Philotas among the conspirators:

Ἐπιβολὴ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ κόλασις τῶν ἐπιθεμένων, ὅν οἱ ἐπιφανέστατοι Παρμενίων καὶ Φιλώτας.

The conspiracy against the king and the punishment of the conspirators, most distinguished among them being Parmenion and Philotas.

He then reaffirms the legality of Alexander the Great's actions in the narrative by taking the actual decision out of Alexander's hands.

Diodorus brought up the treason trials of 330 once more in his discussion of Alexander's death in 323. One of the rumors that circulated after his death of was that it was not natural, but the result poisoning. The most commonly rumored plot was that the regent of Macedonia, Antipater, poisoned Alexander.\(^\text{200}\) Other theories suggest that Alexander died because of an indeterminable sudden illness.\(^\text{201}\) Diodorus begins his account by lending doubt to the report that Antipater had poisoned Alexander, while admitting that according to this account “the murder of Parmenion and Philotas struck terror into (Antipater)” (17.118.1).\(^\text{202}\) In this way Diodorus subtly admits that there was a tradition in which Philotas was innocent, Alexander and the aristocracy were at odds and


\(^{201}\) E.g. one illness theory is that Alexander contracted Malaria: Donald Engels, “A Note on Alexander's Death,” CPh 73 (1978). 228.

\(^{202}\) πρὸς δὲ τούτων τῆς Παρμενίωνος καὶ Φιλώτου σφαγῆς φρίκην ἐμποιοῦσθη...
Alexander was violating traditional social relations.

Diodorus again reveals a disconnect between the contents and the narrative in the account of the mutiny at the Hyphasis in 326. He states in the contents that the Macedonians refused to listen when Alexander wanted to advance further into India, but in the narrative it only says that Alexander was prepared to continue (17.94.4). Once again Diodorus provides the narrative without lengthy dialogue between Alexander and the army, but simply states that Alexander sought to raise spirits of the troops (17.94.4):

he allowed to ravage the enemy’s country, which was full of every good thing....to the wives he undertook to give a monthly ration, to the children he distributed a service bonus in proportion to the military records of their fathers...he gave delivered a carefully crafted speech

When the army still refused to advance into India, Alexander gave up, marked the limit of his campaign and began the long march home. The narrative account of the mutiny maintains the contrast between the energetic king and the worn down soldiers, but Diodorus does not emphasize the confrontation. Instead he again emphasizes that Alexander understands the suffering of the soldiers and the rigors of the campaign to come and that this marks the furthest point he will reach. Like the case of Philotas and Parmenion, Diodorus returns to and in some ways elaborates on the theme of mutiny after Alexander returns from India.

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203 For the confrontation between Alexander and his army at the Hyphasis in Curtius and Justin, 59.
In his discussion of a second mutiny, this time at Opis in 324, Diodorus explicitly states in the contents that the Macedonians “were becoming insubordinate, and when he called them to an assembly, they interrupted him by shouting” (17.109.2). The king grabbed the ringleaders and “appointed generals from specially selected Persians and advanced them into positions of responsibility” (17.109.2). The accompanying narrative section keeps the blame directed at the Macedonians rather than at Alexander. The episodes concludes by saying that the Macedonians, “weeping, they urgently petitioned Alexander to forgive them” (17.109.3).

The account of Alexander that Diodorus presents contextualizes him in world history. The course of this history is very much ascribed to Fortune: Alexander demonstrates how to behave with good fortune, all the while revealing ruling his subjects well and demonstrating to a Roman audience the positive aspects to a sole ruler. At almost no point does Diodorus blame Alexander for behaving badly and the outline of Book 17 and the corresponding narrative work hand in hand to present an overwhelmingly positive image of Alexander. Thus, Diodorus' opinion of the Macedonian king is comparable to his opinion on the Roman Dictators of the first century. He favored the stability of a monarch over the uncertainty and destruction of aristocratic republicanism, even though the former threatened liberty. It is possible that

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204 Τῶν δ᾿ ἀπολειπομένων Μακεδόνων ἀπειθοῦντων καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καταβοῦντων παροξυνθεὶς κατηγόρησεν αὐτῶν τεθαρρηκτῶς.

205 ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς ἐκ τῶν ἐκλεγμένων Περσῶν ἠγεμόνας κατέστησε καὶ τούτους προῆγεν ἐπὶ τὸ πρωτεῖον.

206 πολλὰ μετὰ δακρύων δεηθέντες μόγις ἔπαισαν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον αὐτοῖς διαλλαγῆναι.
his opinion was crystallized because, though he was from an upper class family in Sicily, Diodorus was not a part of the Roman oligarchy. This impression is reinforced by a fortunate lacuna that could otherwise reveal Diodorus to be more critical of Alexander than the extant text suggests. However the balance of the text suggests that such a deviation would be out of place. In sum, Diodorus' decisions about what elements of Alexander's story to emphasize and what elements to overlook make Alexander into the model for the Roman Dictators who he admired.
3. Alexander Princeps

Justin/Pompeius Trogus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Understanding Autocracy in the First Century CE

Octavian defeated Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31. He then followed up his victory by capturing Alexandria and asserting his rule over all of the Roman Empire (Dio 51.16-17). This ended the Ptolemaic dynasty, the last Diadochic kingdom. Antony, his bid for the control of Rome crushed, committed suicide. Actium, then, marked the end of more than a decade of civil strife in the Roman World. Like Julius Caesar before him, Octavian avoided kingship, but he also deviated from the model of sole Roman rulers in the first century by also avoiding the office of dictator without term limit. Instead he took the title Imperator Caesar divi filius and acted as consul. Octavian was not a constitutional dictator, but a military dictator holding power by right of conquest. In 27 he found a constitutional right to rule, the result of which was the Principate. At first Augustus (as Octavian was renamed by the Senate in 27) had a permanent consulship, but in 25 he gave the post up in favor of the position of proconsul. If the balance of the first century saw the dissolution of the Republican political, flirtation with autocracy and

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208 Plutarch, in the life of Antony (76-77) recalls Antony's tragic (and dramatic) death in Cleopatra's palace. See also, Dio 51.9-10.


211 Dio. 53.16.

212 Eck, Age of Augustus. 56.
civil war, Octavian began something new: actual, lasting autocracy. During Augustus' reign and much of the rest of the first century CE, Romans had to adapt to this autocracy, which manifested itself in the writing of Roman authors such as Livy, Virgil, and, of course, Roman commentators on Alexander. As seems common in Roman thought, Alexander served as a convenient means for confronting the political reality through history and literature. Thus in the histories of Alexander, namely Justin/Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus, two early imperial authors of the Vulgate tradition, this newly-developed autocracy manifested in the form of a dialogue on kingship, including both the benefits of such a ruler, and the risks.

One of the most problematic yet singularly attractive features of the narratives surrounding Alexander for philosophy is that while his reign has fixed dates, the narrative about his empire (specifically the administration and bureaucracy) is largely left open ended. Alexander's reign consisted of the military, or, as Spencer terms it, introductory phase. When Alexander died at almost 33 years old, he left behind the myth of the youthful conqueror—though it is plausible to assume that he would have continued to

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214 The Vulgate indicates that both used Cleitarchus for the bulk of their narrative. N. G. L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great: The So-Called Vulgate Authors, Diodorus, Justin, and Curtius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).1. For the source tradition and extended biography, see 28-31.

215 Dempsie, "A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus *Historia Alexandri* Book X." 39, forms the framework for this section.
campaign until his body gave out, regardless of age. Alexander's youthful death, combined with the rumors of his plans to invade Arabia and perhaps Carthage afterward,\textsuperscript{216} provides an inviting platform from which to speculate about empire and kingship.\textsuperscript{217} But even without engaging in contrafactual speculation, Alexander's reign provided multiple opportunities to explore the \textit{topoi} of autocracy such as degeneracy, liberty, freedom of speech, flattery and justice, while his death provided the opportunity to contemplate the lack of a king.

Octavian took sole control of the Roman state in 31, officially declared the civil war over in 28, and in 27 he officially returned constitutional government to the Senate and people of Rome in return for the title \textit{Princeps}, a large number of provinces and a variety of official powers (in part based on a succession of consulships).\textsuperscript{218} After 27 he took the name Augustus (Dio 53.16). The central aspect of establishing the Principate was that Augustus officially renounced previous seizures of power under the triumvirates as illegal; rather than dissolving the existing Roman state or violating the constitution by forming a monarchy or an unlimited dictatorship, he accepted the Principate from the state.\textsuperscript{219} Yet Augustus simply took whatever steps necessary in order to remain in power: first man in name, Augustus initiated official autocracy. he also continued Roman


\textsuperscript{217} Spencer, \textit{The Roman Alexander}. 39.


imperialism, which years of civil war had temporarily curbed. Despite his supposed opposition to expansion (Tac. Ann. 1.11), Roman conquests continued.

At the start of the Principate the Senate continued to function with the pretense of autonomy. Under both Augustus and Tiberius it continued to govern in ways that included censure of the emperor, provided it could not actually threaten the emperor. The emperor held all real power, but by allowing the Senate to make decisions and advise him, he was able to claim that he was merely a minister. Nevertheless Augustus also established an advisory consilium that guided senatorial agenda, thereby marginalizing the Senate (Suetonius, Augustus 35.3; Dio 53.15.7). Between 18 and 13 Augustus instituted changes that set the census rating and requirements for entry into the Senate (Suetonius, Augustus 54.17). Emperors also held considerable power over appointing people who held office and were thereby eligible to enter the Senate and thereby shaped the overall composition of the body. One of the more outlandish accounts of such appointments is that of Caligula preparing to appoint his favorite horse Incitatus to consul (Dio 59.14.7; Suetonius Caligula 55.3), which (if he did not independently appoint him


to the Senate) would have made the horse eligible to be a senator. In addition to serving on the *consilium*, senators governed provinces and otherwise provided the administrative backbone of the Roman state. As time wore on, what powers the Senate retained were because of its prestige and because the Emperor chose not to interfere.

The Julio-Claudian dynasty ended in 68 CE with the death of Nero. In rumor and reality the emperors had become increasingly erratic and opulent since the reign of Augustus. In 64 Rome burned and Nero took the opportunity to construct his massive palace, the Domus Aurea (Pliny, *Natural History* 36.111; Suetonius, *Nero* 31), testament to the increasing power of the emperors. In 68 the Senate and Spanish legions rebelled against Nero, declaring Galba Emperor and Nero an enemy of the state. The next year 69 is commonly referred to as the year of the four emperors as multiple claimants competed for power (Tac. *Hist.* 1-3; Suetonius, *Galba, Otho, Vitellius*). In 70 Vespasian, who had been putting down a revolt in Judea, became emperor and began the Flavian Dynasty (Tac. *Hist.* 4; Suetonius, *Vespasian*).

This is a bare sketch of Roman political chronology in the Principate. Throughout this period martial supremacy remained a central feature of the Roman ideology. Field commands tended to fall to relatives and adherents of the emperor such as Germanicus

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226 I am deliberately avoiding speculation about particular incidents and attempting for the moment to avoid value laden English terms such as degenerate and decadent. In all of this the rumors are as telling about the rulers as the truth itself.

227 Greg Rowe, “The Emergence of Monarchy,” 121.


229 For a biography of Vespasian, see: Barbara Levick, *Vespasian* (London: Routledge, 2005).
(Augustus and Tiberius), Agrippa (Augustus), and Agricola (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian), but all conquests belonged to him alone. While the Emperor ultimately commanded the entire military apparatus, governors and officers held direct command over the legions. This meant that there was always the potential for revolt and civil war. This ideology was simultaneously matched by increasingly noticeable displays of wealth and power and corruption. Autocracy still held the potential for peace and prosperity with the balance of reciprocal duties, but since Rome was ruled by autocrats, the dangers of an autocrat were no longer topoi explored by authors, but actual events.

In this Rome of reconstituted autocracy Alexander was both Roman and un-Roman in that he represented both desirable traits and all traits that were not Roman. This is in large part because in the struggle between Octavian and Antony, Antony took on the role of Alexander and, through his relationship with Cleopatra, Hellenistic Monarchy, even naming their son Alexander (Plut. Ant. 54.4). Antony's assumption of the role is a clear imitation of Julius Caesar and an attempt to claim the positive Alexander, but (aided by his eventual victory), Octavian tipped that image to eastern decadence and degeneracy. After Actium and the formation of the Principate Augustus rehabilitated the image of Alexander, either as an example to follow or at least an actual precursor. There is a school of scholarship that emphasizes Augustus' antipathy towards the memory of Alexander, but it discounts the possibility that Alexander served for both positive and

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230 Ibid. 116, points out that the last triumph celebrated outside of the imperial family was that of Balbus in 19.

231 See Roller, Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio Claudian Rome. 129-212, his chapter on “The Emperor's Authority.”

negative exempla.

Spencer suggests several possible readings of the Augustus-Alexander relationship, including both intentional and circumstantial imitation.

Two further *topoi* connected to Alexander that Roman authors employed to provide their own political commentary were military victory and mutiny. For obvious reasons Alexander is the paragon of the victorious conqueror. Since emperors received credit for military conquest they were inherently Alexanders in some sense, but there was also the concern that a successful general could outdo the emperor. Perhaps the most notable example of this concern is that of Corbulo, Nero's charismatic and successful general whose most notable victory was over the Parthian Empire in Armenia between 58 and 63 CE, while Nero himself did not have military experience.

Emperors, particularly those who did not personally lead troops, required charismatic and successful generals to boost their position, but generals who were too charismatic and too successful would (at least potentially) throw off the imperial balance by simply taking the place of the reigning emperor. The case of Corbulo was particularly problematic for Nero because the general conducted his campaign in western Asia Minor and Armenia, and if the parallel was not immediately evident, Tacitus used Alexander's campaign to reference Corbulo's campaign (Tac. *Ann.* 13.5-14.26).

Mutinies and the successful dissipation of mutinies are striking features of the

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Alexander narratives.\textsuperscript{236} Mutinies were also a recurring event in the early years of the
*Principate*. One example was when Augustus died in 14 CE. The Rhine Legions that
followed Germanicus, Tiberius' adopted son, mutinied in an attempt to make him
Emperor (Tac. *Ann.* 1.34.1). Germanicus, like Alexander at Opis in 324 (Arr. 7.8-9, 11),
gave a speech to his mutinous troops:

\begin{quote}
tunc a veneratione Augusti orsus flexit ad victorias triumphosque Tiberii,
praecipius laudibus celerans quae apud Germanias illis cum legionibus
pulcherrima fecisset. Italiae inde consensum, Galliarum fidem extollit; nil
usquam turbidum aut discors.
\end{quote}

beginning with a reverent mention of Augustus, he passed on to the
victories and triumphs of Tiberius, dwelling with especial praise on his
glorious achievements with those legions in Germany. Next, he extolled
the unity of Italy, the loyalty of Gaul, the entire absence of turbulence or
strife.

Germanicus' speech, like Alexander's, was of no avail, but when the Prince threatened
bodily harm against himself (in this case suicide) the troops relented. As Spencer
demonstrates, even without explicitly invoking Alexander, the *topoi* of the Early Empire,
both in terms of problems and in the solutions, reflect Alexander.\textsuperscript{237}

Justin dedicates Books 11 and 12 of his epitome to the reign of Alexander, but it
is important to recall that, as a universal history, this account did not exist in a vacuum.
Alexander is just one episode in a larger history that contextualizes Alexander in light of
both his father and his successors. So, for example, in Book 9 Justin remarks that Philip
made Alexander's achievement possible, saying that “with such qualities did the father

\textsuperscript{236} The following discussion focuses on Curtius and Justin, for the account of Diodorus, see 51.

lay the basis for a worldwide empire and the son bring to completion the glorious enterprise.”

Although Justin clearly elevates Philip over Alexander, the traditional analysis is that Alexander was greater than Philip. Alexander as portrayed by Justin is more extreme than his father, pushing the bounds of the restrained kingship of Philip. Justin provides a negative portrait of Philip in that he was a cruel, violent, shameless person, but to merely accept Justin's comments that Philip was treacherous and duplicitous (9.8.7-8) is too simplistic. In fact Justin is drawing a contrast between the characters of Philip and Alexander, so while Philip possesses a host of negative characteristics, he also possesses the moderation and restraint that allows for the formation of a worldwide empire; Alexander possesses the same characteristics, but without the restraint and without the balance of his father, thus leaving the inheritance of Philip unfulfilled (hence enterprise instead of empire). At the other end of Alexander's reign, Justin juxtaposes Alexander's reign by commenting that Alexander's followers did not mourn his death, but rejoiced as they would for an enemy (13.1.4). More than simply putting Philip's legacy to waste, Alexander even turned their own subjects into opponents.

Between these two bookends Justin discusses Alexander. The king's reign begins well as he immediately faced uncertainty and revolt, but when given the opportunity he showed magnanimity. Even in the account of Alexander at Thebes in 335, the first great example of Alexander's capacity for terror, Justin reveals that Alexander intended to

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238 Quibus artibus orbis imperii fundamenta pater iecit, operis totius filius consummauit (9.8.21). As Worthington, ""Worldwide Empire" Versus "Glorious Enterprise". 165, points out that this phrase is critical of Alexander and the Juxtaposition of Philip and Alexander ultimately mitigates any negative portrait of Philip on account of the behavior of Alexander.

239 Ibid. 167.
forgive the Thebans should they repent. When they resisted, and upon the advice of the League of Corinth, Alexander destroyed the city (11.3-4). As with most other authors of Alexander, Justin characterizes this earliest part of Alexander's reign as a period of generally good rule, in this instance balanced by the hatred (ira) of his allies. This is the phase wherein Alexander behaves with some level of restraint and moderation, clemency and benefaction. Further, Justin states that on account of their age his officers resembled a Senate (11.6.4). In Egypt all of this began to change as Alexander's rule increasingly reflected that of an oriental despot.

Justin's account of Alexander in Egypt (11.11) centers on his trip to the Oracle of Zeus-Ammon at the Oasis of Siwah and his parentage. Clearly Justin did not accept the notion that Alexander's true father was Ammon and in fact states that Alexander sent messengers to choreograph the entire encounter (11.11):

Igitus Alexander cupiens originem divinitatis adquirere, simul et matrem infamia liberare, per praemissos subornat artistites, quid sibi responderi velit.

So it was that, wishing both to claim divine birth and also to clear his mother of infamy, Alexander sent men ahead to bribe the priests to give the responses he wanted.

Alexander's intention was to confirm his divine parentage, absolve himself of any guilt for Philip's death and prophesy all his successes. The trip to Siwah for Justin marks a transition where he put aside his Greekness and his upbringing, and taking up the mantle of divine despot. Some of “the old” Alexander remained, though, and instead Justin's text

240 “This, they said, had made Thebes an abomination to all the Greek peoples, which was obvious from the fact that the Greeks had one and all taken a solemn oath to destroy the city once the Persians were defeated.” Quamobrem odium eos omnium populorum esse: quod vel ex eo manifestari, quod jurejurando se omnes obstrinxerint, ut victis Persis Thebas diruerent. (11.3.10).
suggests that the Siwah visit in 331 precipitated the decline. In clear instances of this, Justin claims that Alexander threw himself into the thickest fighting at Gaugamela in order that he bear the risk of combat and not his soldiers (11.14), and that when Darius made the deathbed wishes that his family be well treated and his body buried, Alexander “ordered that the body be given a royal burial and his remains laid in the tombs of his ancestors” (11.15).

In Book 12 Justin expanded on the themes he introduced in Egypt. In particular Alexander adopted the dress and behavior of those who he had conquered (12.3), and began to behave violently (as though an enemy) towards his own men (Parmenion: 12.5; Cleitus: 12.6; Callisthenes: 12.7). Justin attributes the death of Callisthenes to the court historian's refusal to cooperate with Alexander's demand to adopt proskynesis in 328, but does not suggest that by doing so Callisthenes behaved wrongly (12.7):

Acerrimus inter recusantes Callisthenes fuit. Quae res et illi, et multis principibus Macedonum exitio fuit; siquidem sub specie insidiarum omnes interfeci.

The most outspoken of the objectors was Callisthenes, and this spelled death for him and many prominent Macedonians, who were all executed, ostensibly for treason.

Callisthenes, according to Justin, behaved properly, but in doing so upset Alexander to the point that the king manufactured evidence of a conspiracy so that he would have pretense to execute the men disobeying him. Here the message is clear: an autocrat need not have just cause to execute his subjects and though behaving correctly is good, to do so could be fatal. Cleitus had suffered the same fate as Callisthenes, but at the

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241 Corpusque regio more sepeliri, et reliquias eius maiorum tumulis inferri iussit.
hands of a drunken Alexander, having provoked the king using the memory of Philip (12.6.2-4):²⁴²

praeferre se patri ipse, rerumque suaram magnitudinem extollere coelo tenus coepit....itaque, quum unus e senibus Clitus, fiducia amicitiae regiae, cuius palmam tenebat, memoriam Philippi tueretur, laudaretque eius res gestas; adeo regem offendit, ut, telo a satellite rapto, eundem in convivio trucidaverit. Que caede exultans...

Alexander began to set himself above his father and to praise his own magnificent exploits to the skies...Cleitus, confident of his position in the first rank of the king's friends, began to defend Philip's memory and to praise his achievements, which so annoyed the king that he grabbed a spear and murdered Cleitus at the table. Revelling in the bloodshed he proceeded to taunt the dead Cleitus...

In the first instance of Alexander's vindictiveness that Justin reveals, Alexander had Parmenion and Philotas killed, neither of whom had committed any crime (12.5):


Alexander began to terrorize his men with an animosity characteristic of an enemy, not one's own king. He was particularly incensed at being criticized in their gossip for having repudiated the ways of his father, Philip and of his country. It was such charges that led to the execution of the elderly Parmenion...along with his son, Philotas...This aroused general rancour...the men being moved to pity for the fate of the innocent old man and his son...

In neither case does Justin attribute a justification for Alexander's behavior, but merely that they offended him. Upon Alexander's death Justin provides a traditional eulogy (12.16). Alexander was endowed with capacities unlike any other man, but for these

²⁴² For a narrative, see: 6, 47.
glowing praises of Alexander the man, the bulk of Book 12 demonstrates Alexander's increasing isolation from his own men, the murder of the men deemed comparable to Senators and eventual destruction by those men who trusted him. In this account, Justin accounts the father greater than the son because Philip was able to establish an empire while Alexander was only able to win battles.  

Curtius' account is divided into two pentads, the first spanning (presumably) from Alexander's accession until the death of Darius in 330, the second from the death of Darius to the dissolution of Alexander's empire in 323. This is not to imply that Curtius reserved Alexander's negative attributes for the second pentad, because he did not. Each pentad has an overarching structure, but the concerns over Alexander's behavior existed even before that became the specific focus of the narrative. The first pentad is shaped by the contrast between the Darius and Alexander and the commentary about a young, brave, active Greek monarch and the more passive, older oriental king. Alexander proves the superior king to Darius, however both kings demonstrate both virtues and vices. Much like Justin’s account, Alexander's visit to Siwah (4.7.6-32) is a pivotal moment for the relationship between Alexander and his nobles, foreshadowing the thematic transition in the second pentad.

Before his visit to Egypt Alexander demonstrated the capacity for caprice and cruelty, but towards the enemy. That is not to exonerate Alexander for the behavior, since

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243 Worthington, ““Worldwide Empire” versus “Glorious Enterprise.”” 172.

244 This is the structure applied by Baynham, *Alexander the Great*. 132-164, 165-200.

245 Ibid. 132.
Curtius makes it clear that kings, and particularly Alexander, should admire the courage of worthy opponents (4.6.27). Αlexander succumbed to excessive *ira* (which, in the excess became *rabies*) when dealing with the obstinance of Betis, the garrison commander at Gaza, who had resisted Alexander in 332 (4.6.29):

Per talos enim spirantis lora traiecta sunt, religatumque ad currum traxere circa urbem equi, gloriante rege, Achillen a quo genus ipse deduceret, imitatum se esse poena in hostem copienda.

Thongs were passed through Betis' ankles while he still breathed, and he was tied to a chariot. Then Alexander's horses dragged him around the city while the king gloated at having followed the example of his ancestor Achilles in punishing his enemy.

Curtius' message is that beneath the calm facade of autocracy that demonstrates virtues lies the possibility for such savage behavior. But at Siwah the tensions between Alexander and his officers becomes apparent as Alexander once again sought confirmation of divine parentage and his officers received an affirmative answer to the question of granting Alexander divine honors. Curtius relates that at Siwah there was a clear break from the traditional Macedonian norms that had slowly been eroding since Alexander crossed into Asia (4.7.2d-6)

Ac tum quidem regem propius adeutem maximus natu e sacerdotibus filium appellat, hoc nomen illi parentem Iovem reddere affirmans. Ille se vero et accipere ait et agnoscre, humanae sortis oblitus. Consuluit deinde an totius orbis imperium fatis sibi destinaretur. Vates, aequ in adulationem compositus, terrarum omnium rectorem fore ostendit.

At the time we are describing, as the king drew near, the eldest of the priests called him son, declaring that this title was bestowed on him by his

246 “Betis was brought before the young king, who was elated with haughty satisfaction, though he generally admired courage even in an enemy.”

247 Ibid. 162.
father Jupiter. Forgetting his mortal state, Alexander said he accepted and acknowledged the title, and he proceeded to ask whether he was fated to rule over the entire world. The priest, who was as ready as anyone else to flatter him, answered that he was going to rule over all the earth.

Curtius concludes the narrative about Alexander's visit to Siwah with the Macedonian reaction to Alexander's increasing alienation from his army (4.7.31):

Et Macedones, assueti quidem regio imperio, sed in maiore libertatis umbra quam ceteri degentes, immortalitatem affetantem contumacius, quam aut psis expediebat aut regi aversati sunt.

Although it is true that the Macedonians were accustomed to monarchy, they lived in the shadow of liberty more than other races, and so they rejected his pretensions to immortality with greater obstinacy than was good either for themselves or their king.

Kings ruled in Macedonia, but the Macedonians were also accustomed to greater individual freedom than existed in the Asian courts. When Alexander set his sight on immortality, Curtius comments that the Macedonians stubbornly (contumacius) resisted.248

Curtius strips away most of Alexander's virtues, revealing moral decline and increasing autocracy. Two notorious episodes demonstrate these themes: Alexander's drinking and subsequent murder of Cleitus, and the Conspiracy of the Pages and execution of Callisthenes.249 In Book 6 Curtius digresses on this moral decline, saying (6.2.1-3):

Sed ut primum instantibus curis laxatus est animus militarium rerum quam quietis otique patientior, excipere eum voluptates, et quem arma Perasrum non fregerant vitia vicerunt: tempetiva convivia et perpotandi

248 Ibid. 163-4.

249 I am passing over the Trial of Philotas (and murder of Parmenion), and the themes of Book 10 for the moment, as I will address each of those individually below.
pervigilandique insana dulcedo, ludique et greges pelicum. Omnia in externum lapsa morem. Quem ille aemulatus, quasi potiorem suo ita popularium animos oculosque pariter offendit, ut a plerisque amicorum pro hoste haberetur.

But Alexander, as soon as a mind which was better qualified for coping with military toil than with quiet and ease was relieved of pressing cares, gave himself up to pleasures, and one whom the arms of the Persians had not overcome fell victim to their vices: banquets begun early, the mad enjoyment of heavy drinking and being up all night, sport, and troops of harlots. There was a general slipping into foreign habits. By emulating these as if they were preferable to those of his country, he so offended alive the eyes and the minds of his countrymen, that by many of his former friends he was regarded as an enemy.

The dichotomy that Curtius presents between the first and the second pentad is largely rhetorical. Heavy drinking and banqueting were well known in Macedonia, but Curtius only emphasizes Alexander's drinking in the second pentad, which lays the foundation for the death of Cleitus, at a banquet for him in Maracanda in 328 (8.1.20-2.12). Curtius establishes the close relationship between Alexander and Cleitus (8.1.20-21), but after both men had consumed alcohol in excess, Cleitus responds to Alexander, who had been boasting of his own achievements over those of Philip (8.1.23-27). Cleitus' speech (8.1.27-32), in turn, defends Parmenion, Philip and criticizes Alexander's actions.

Alexander attempts to kill Cleitus once, but is prevented by the bystanders (8.1.43-49).

Those same men then force Cleitus from the room, but Alexander gets a spear from a guard and lay in wait for Cleitus (8.1.49-52). According to Curtius, Alexander, enraged

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and eventually repentant, was in control of his actions enough that he deliberately killed Cleitus.\footnote{Baynham, \textit{Alexander the Great}. 188.} In a second example of calculated action, in 327 Alexander ordered the execution of Callisthenes, who Curtius identified as a stubborn defender of liberty (8.6.1).\footnote{Ibid. 194.} Much like the example of Cleitus, Curtius places the blame on Alexander, but acknowledges that this is the nature of autocracy. In both examples Curtius offers a discourse on the nature of power and while he is critical of Alexander, there is the warning that whether or not the king is justified in taking action, there is mortal danger in opposing it too vehemently.

The trial of Philotas is a microcosm of most of the themes of \textit{regnum} of Curtius' history. Curtius demonstrates that it was by chance (\textit{forte}) that Philotas was the last high ranking officer to leave the meeting with Alexander, and therefore it was by chance that he was the one who Cebalinus met (6.7.18). It was because Cebalinus approached him that Philotas was on trial at all, but once the opportunity arose, Curtius also reveals that the other officers urged Alexander to try Philotas. “On account of rivalry for status” (\textit{ob aemulationem dignitatis}), none of the other officers defended Philotas (6.8.2-3), and later even his brother-in-law Coenus bitterly denounced Philotas (6.11.10-12). True to Curtius' method, this danger of autocracy is presented as a rhetorical vice and also a warning about the competition between subordinates to a monarch.\footnote{Ibid. 174-75.}

Once Philotas was on trial, Curtius reveals the trial as a dramatic oratorical
competition. Alexander first charges Philotas as a co-conspirator with Dimnus and then charges Philotas specifically, and his family more generally, of seeking to overthrow him. After presenting the accusation, Alexander exist the court scene. Curtius then constructs a detailed speech for Philotas that systematically deconstructs Alexander's charges to reveal them as inconsistent. In that he it was chance that this fate befell him, and, moreover, that Alexander had already forgiven him for past wrong, so now he is guilty of nothing (6.10.11-12):

Hoc, qualecumque est, confesso mihi, ubicunque es, Alexander, remisisti...si credidisti mihi, absolutus sum, si pepercisti, dimissus: vel iudicium tuum serva. Quid hac proxima nocte, qua digressus sum a mensa tua, feci?

This, such as it is, you, Alexander, wherever you are, pardoned when I confessed it...If you believed me, I was acquitted, if you spared me, I was dismissed; pray abide by your decision. What have I done during this last night since I left your table?

But the defense is hopeless because the judge did not wait to hear the case (6.9.3):

ignoro quomodo et animo meo et tempori paream. Abest quidem optimus causae meae iudex; qui cur me ipse audire noluerit non, mehucule, excogito, cum illi, utrimque cognita causa, tam damnare me liceat quam absolvere, non cognita vero, liberari absenti non possum qui a praesente damnatus sum.

I do not know how to suit what I shall say both to my feelings and to the situation. In fact the best judge of my cause is not present; why he should not wish to hear me himself, I cannot, by Heaven, imagine, since after having heard both sides of the case, he can as readily condemn me as acquit me, but if he has not heard both sides, I cannot be acquitted in his absence since I was condemned by him when he was present.

Thus Curtius reminds audience that despite the trial, Alexander would decide the outcome. After the trial Alexander sent orders to dispatch Parmenion. Curtius' narrative is a commentary on the nature of power because, having executed Philotas, Alexander
cannot allow Parmenion to live, but a brief eulogy for Parmenion also hints at the Imperial theme of a successful monarch and the (potentially) too successful general, since “he had achieved many successes without the king, (but) the king had done no great deed without him” (7.2.33).

Book 10 continues Curtius' discourse about Alexander's decline, and then gives a glimpse of Alexander's legacy. Curtius gives Alexander a poignant deathbed scene between himself and his followers (10.5.1), and puts a great emphasis on how distraught the Macedonian men and Persian women were at his passing. But Curtius' eulogy for Alexander (10.5.27-37) balances Alexander's virtues and vices; Alexander had natural virtues, but succumbed to fortune and youth which outweighed those virtues. Curtius concluded this eulogy saying: “this was the king for whom a successor was sought, but the burden was too great for the shoulder's of one man” (10.5.37). The balance of Book 10 is Curtius' commentary on the first week of the post-Alexandrian era. The message is clear: without the guidance of a sole ruler and with multiple claimants for power, the only possible outcome is civil war. The brevity and foreshadowing rhetoric in this final portion of Curtius' history leads the instant assumption that it is a contemporary political allusion.

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254 Ibid. 183.

255 Multa sine rege prospere, rex sine illo nihil magnae rei gesserat.

256 Huic regi ducique successor quaerebatur, sed maior moles erat quam ut unus subire eam posset.

257 Atkinson, Curtius Rufus: Histories of Alexander the Great Book 10, 207-209; Dempsie, "A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus Historia Alexandri Book X"; McKechnie, Paul, "Manipulation of Themes in Quintus Curtius Rufus Book 10," Historia 48 (1999). 60, even claims “Curtius is a thoroughly bad source...Scholars should believe nothing in Curtius book 10 which is not confirmed in another source.”
The sequence of events in both Justin and Curtius reveals a commentary on the newly established autocratic Principate that is comparable to the Roman authors writing about their own period. Alexander begins with great promise, and impressive natural capabilities and a worthy inheritance from Philip. In both authors Alexander then squanders the inheritance, conquering vast territory, but succumbing to despotic decadence, drink and delusions of divinity. As noted above, Justin makes this progression abundantly evident, while Curtius attempts to mitigate Alexander's failures by claiming that they were the product of his youth. Despite the brief attempt at defending Alexander, Curtius agrees that Alexander's reign was a failure—but suggests that the ensuing dissolution of Alexander's empire was worse. Thus these authors reveal a two part dialogue on autocracy. The first is for the king, demonstrating that the greatest virtue of a monarch is stability, from which benefactions, peace and prosperity stem. In this regard the king must also temper his actions to provide these benefits. For all of the stability, the dark side of autocracy run amok is evident in these histories. The second is for the followers, revealing that while autocracy may be able to provide benefits, it also threatens the balance of power among the followers since now they must scrap for favor. This is perhaps most evident in the histories of Rome in the self-aware laudatory accounts of emperors, such as Lucan's praise of Nero (Pharsalia 1.44-5), and the discordant presentation of proponents of restoring the Republic and imperial reality. Further, Justin and Curtius provide warning for those wishing to exercise virtues like liberty: do so at your own risk. The truth of autocracy is that while there may be laws and proper behaviors, the emperor is not bound by them.
4. Alexander the Emperor

Plutarch, Arrian and the Alexander of the Second Century Roman Empire

By the early second century CE the Romans' perception of Alexander was largely positive.\(^{258}\) The exemplary works on Alexander from this period, Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* and *The Fortune and Virtue of Alexander*, and Arrian's *Anabasis*, all present Alexander in a positive light, apologizing for and explaining entirely indefensible actions he took, such as the destruction of Thebes in 335.\(^{259}\) Plutarch and Arrian wrote very different works about Alexander, particularly in that Arrian wrote a more traditional history, while Plutarch wrote biography and two philosophical orations, but both were part of the Greek intellectual movement known as the Second Sophistic.\(^{260}\) Perhaps more importantly, both men lived in the Roman World (though not Rome itself) at the approximately the same time. Thus, they shared not only the Greek literary tradition, but also a Roman political backdrop for presenting Alexander. Plutarch in particular constructed this backdrop by pairing Alexander with Julius Caesar in his Parallel Lives. These commonalities also caused Plutarch and Arrian to work against existing notions of Alexander and to rehabilitate him in a Roman world of successful and (for the most part)

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\(^{259}\) Though Plutarch's authorship of *The Fortune and Virtue of Alexander* is somewhat suspect, I consider it a part of his corpus for the purposes of this analysis.

accepted autocrats.

This is not to say that the authors overtly modeled Alexander on a particular emperor or even emperors generally. Both Plutarch and Arrian have clear purposes, methods, identifiable source tradition and harken back to the story of a Macedonian king who had a major impact on the Roman consciousness. Plutarch begins his paired lives of Alexander and Caesar by saying (Al. 1.2):

"οὐτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἁρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδία τις ἐμφασὶν ἥθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυρίονεκροί καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων."

It is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase of a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities.

Arrian, by contrast, first declares: “wherever Ptolemy son of Lagus and Aristobulus son of Aristobulus have both give the same accounts of Alexander son of Philip, it is my practice to record what they say as completely true” (1.1.1). There is a discrepancy, though, in Arrian's presentation of the accounts of Alexander's reign. First he states (1.1.3):

"ὅστις δὲ θαυμάσεται ἀνθ' ὦτοι ἐπὶ τοσοῖσδε συγγραφεῖσι καὶ ἐμοὶ νῦν ἔλθεν ώδε ἡ συγγραφή, τά τε ἐκείνων πάντα τις ἀναλεξάμενος καὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς ἡμετέτεροις ἐντυχῶν οὕτω θαυμαζέτω."

Anyone who is surprised that with so many historians already in the field it should have occurred to me to compose this history should express his

261 Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Λάγου καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος ὁ Ἀριστοβούλου ὁσα μὲν ταύτα ἄρμο φερί Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Φιλίππου συνέγραψαν, ταύτα ἐγὼ ός πάντη ἀλήθη ἄναγράφω.
surprise only after perusing all their works and then reading mine.

But later he claims (1.12.2-5):

тα Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα ἡπαξίως, οὕτ' οὐν καταλογάδην, οὕτε τις ἐν μέλει ἰσθθὴ Ἀλέξανδρος, ἐν ὁτῳ Ἴρων τε καὶ Γέλων καὶ Ἱέρων καὶ πολλοὶ ἄλλοι οὐδὲ τι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐπεικότες, ὥστε πολύ μεῖον γιγνώσκεται τα Ἀλεξάνδρου ἢ τα φαυλότατα των πάλαι ἔργων.

Alexander's exploits were never celebrated as they deserved, either in prose or verse; there were not even choral lyrics for Alexander as for Hiero, Gelo, Thero and many others not to be compared with him, so that Alexander's exploits are far less known than the very minor deeds of old times.

The common theme in both claims is that there was a dearth of quality records and, as a master of language, Arrian puts himself forward to fill the gap. The Alexander of Plutarch and Arrian is not meant to be Trajan or Hadrian redux, yet that is exactly what he is. In their selective transmission of sources Arrian and Plutarch reflected their contemporary Roman backdrop onto Alexander.

The Alexander of Plutarch and Arrian is a hero-philosopher king, though this glowing opinion does leave open the possibility that this description was meant as irony. Alexander is the ideal emperor, well versed in Greek learning, successful in war, and mostly in control of his emotions and actions. When he fails in the ideal, Alexander genuinely repents for his actions even though flatterers and disrespectful courtiers were at fault. Arrian and Plutarch also used Alexander with good reason to discuss timeless


263 Gilley, "Damn with Faint Praise" (Phd. Diss. University of Missouri, 2009), particularly 78-88 and Plutarch's use of paradox as a form of irony.
themes in the Greco-Roman philosophical and literary tradition, particularly eastern decadence, corruption of power and adoption of foreign customs—themes that took on a renewed significance at the start of the second century CE with Trajan’s successful campaign against Parthia.\textsuperscript{264} Alexander the Emperor dominates the political narrative. Aristocrats are at best advisors, governors and generals and at worst reduced to flatterers and sycophants. Alexander the Emperor is for better or for worse the arbiter of justice. In sum, Alexander is the Roman Emperor \textit{par excellence}, faults and fears included.

At the end of the first century CE, emperors ruled the Roman Empire without pretense. The Principate, established by Octavian/Augustus, maintained political supremacy and legitimacy, even with the constitutional office of \textit{Princeps}, based on loyalty of the army rather than factional politics within the senate and aristocracy, or popular support.\textsuperscript{265} Emperors certainly could enjoy and looked to curry support among the senate and regional aristocracies, but their legitimacy lay with the army. Concurrently, this absolute power, couched though it was in the guise of \textit{princeps}, caused a reciprocal relationship between the emperor who was the ultimate benefactor and the cities, intellectuals and aristocrats (and even the army) that competed for benefactions.\textsuperscript{266}

My intent here is not to detail the Roman imperial system, but there are certain key elements that surrounded the emperors. First, there was the army, the cornerstone of the imperial apparatus, and one of the main avenues for ambitious and talented young

\textsuperscript{264} Spencer, \textit{The Roman Alexander}. 37.
\textsuperscript{266} Ronald Syme, \textit{The Augustan Aristocracy} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). 2. “Legalized authority enabled the ruler to circumvent rivalry, control the channels of patronage, and ultimately ensure a smooth transmission of the power. ‘Potentia’ now assumed the respectable name ‘auctoritas’.”
aristocrats to gain political success. The senatorial families in the Republic waned in power after the foundation of the Principate but they continued to maintain some influence in society by decreeing honors to the imperial family.\textsuperscript{267} There also remained an ancestral connection to military service so that, while Balbus in 19 was the last man outside of the imperial family to celebrate a triumph (Dio, 54.25.2), aristocrats continued to serve in the military.\textsuperscript{268} Likewise, the new nobility also adopted the traditional senatorial culture and many of the provincial aristocrats appointed to the senate descended from their own military traditions.\textsuperscript{269} The aristocracy and the military connection also extended beyond those men who managed to rise to the senate. The aristocrats were the army officers and political officers despite, or, perhaps because, there was no organized system to train professional officers.\textsuperscript{270} As with Republican system from which the Principate evolved, the aristocracy served as the Roman bureaucratic establishment. Rather than elections for office in the Republican fashion, imperial aristocrats received appointments to office. These appointments often existed without connection to military service—consular legates, men adlected to the consulship later in life, on the other hand tended to command armies first and serve in office later, while young noblemen served as consul earlier in life.\textsuperscript{271}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[268] Campbell, \textit{The Emperor and the Roman Army}. 320-1.
\item[269] Ibid. 321-2.
\item[270] Ibid. 328.
\item[271] Ibid. 328.
\end{footnotes}
The local aristocracy served as a go-between that connected the local populations to the Roman state, often gaining Roman citizenship. Many provincial aristocrats wound up in Roman political offices, senate seats and governorships. They could also, as Arrian did, receive citizenship in other cities and obtain political officers there. Although the aristocracy could rise to prominence through the military and through political appointments, most held local positions within their native communities in addition to or in lieu of Roman positions. Outside Rome, the aristocracy consisted of the local elite, landowners, local officials, and priests. They were the local moneyed class, both recipients and executors of imperial benefactions. If they did not provide military service, this collection of people had to provide other reasons for their promotion. Money was one obvious means, while others, including Arrian, provided diplomatic or literary accomplishment.

The aristocracy during the imperial period filled out the Roman ruling structure. Since the emperor allocated these positions, aristocrats competed for favor of the emperors or, in the extreme cases, simply for clemency. Emperors often claimed that

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274 Ibid. 214.

275 Keith Hopkins, “Elite Mobility in the Roman Empire,” *Past & Present* 32(1965). 19, points to the macabre and probably embellished example of Domitian inviting senators to dine with him only to discover the hall set up like a tomb, their setting a tombstone with their own name engraved and their meal a traditional funerary feast, as an example of tensions between the emperor and senate.
they would not execute aristocrats, but the reality was that all emperors were in a struggle for survival with the aristocrats who sought to gain the purple for themselves.  

Emperors, therefore, could order aristocrats assassinated or their property confiscated (there was, after all, a financial requirement for membership in the senatorial class). More often, though, emperors would deprive senators of their rank, while allowing them to go into exile and retain their property, which Tiberius did to Vibidius Varro, Marius Nepos, Appius Appianus, Cornelius Sulla and Quintus Vitellius in 17 CE (Tac. Ann. 2.48). Since the emperors maintained some control over the makeup of the Senate, they were able to elevate supporters. Thus, provincial elites selected by the emperors joined the Roman aristocracy while the traditional Italian aristocracy waned.

The so-called Second Sophistic was a Greek cultural and literary movement. According to Philostratus, the Athenian Sophist who coined the term in the early third century CE, it spanned the fourth century BCE to the third century CE. The Sophists were professional speakers who combined aspects of teaching, writing and performing—

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276 Ibid. 19-20.

277 Jesper Carlsen, *The Rise and Fall of a Roman Noble Family* (Ondense: University of Southern Denmark, 2006). 95. One million sesterces for the senatorial class, four hundred thousand for the equites.


279 Ibid. 29-38.

holding a position and function in society which was often ambiguous as the word
sophist itself is imprecise.\textsuperscript{281} Even though Philostratus claimed that the Second Sophistic
began at the close of the First Sophistic, namely in the fourth century BCE, his \textit{Lives of
the Sophists} concentrates on the period from the end of the first century CE through the
beginning of the third century: a Greek cultural movement under the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{282}

There are two traditional methods to evaluate the Second Sophistic: an
examination of the relationship between the eastern Greeks and the Roman Empire,\textsuperscript{283} or
an analysis of the movement with literary and intellectual trends, potentially at the
expense of social and political perspective.\textsuperscript{284} A third approach is to attempt to capture the
Second Sophistic, complete with its complexities and perhaps irrevocable ambiguities, by
unifying the two methods. Anderson suggests that the traditional methods are only
artificially opposite one another and that each latches on to one of the two key elements
of the Second Sophistic. Thus, by unifying the literary and intellectual currents with the
relationships Sophists had with the Roman establishment he can provide a fuller, if not
clearer account of the Second Sophistic.\textsuperscript{285}

The Second Sophistic encapsulated the Sophists, as well as historians,

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid. 16.

\textsuperscript{282} Anderson, \textit{The Second Sophistic}. 1-5.

\textsuperscript{283} This is the method taken in: G.W. Bowersock, \textit{Greek Sophists and the Roman Empire} (Oxford:

\textsuperscript{284} E.g. B.P. Reardon, "The Second Sophistic," in \textit{Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals
of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages}, ed. W.E. Treadgold (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984);

\textsuperscript{285} "Much about sophists is complex and ambiguous, and…it is likely to remain so." Anderson, \textit{The
Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire}. 246.
rhetoricians, philosophers and authors. 286 Greek thought in the Second Sophistic tended to archaize and glorify the Greek past, particularly in the twin themes of Alexander as the greatest Greek person and Athens as the greatest Greek city.287 But this archaizing was not an attempt to turn a blind eye towards the Roman present and should not be interpreted as the Greeks being anti-Roman, so much as the attention to the Greek past muted the difficulties of being Greek in the Roman present. 288 Two further features unified the movement. The Sophists and writers were Hellenists, both rooted in the classical past and in a versatility that allowed Hellenism to apply to anyone in the Roman world. 289

The Roman Empire imposed a unity in the Greek World, so the Pax Romana and the broader, more inclusive Greek identity afforded the opportunity for a well-termed Renaissance of Greek literature. The sophists and writers were cultural leaders in addition to performer. They competed with each other for benevolences from the emperor that generally took the form of “chairs” in prominent cities that carried salaries, and exemption from taxes. 290 The chairs had a loose pecking order and emperors took an active interest in the appointments, so imperial favor often meant transfer to a post of more prestige or retention of the same chair at an increased salary. Neither Arrian nor Plutarch was a sophist and therefore in competition for the chairs, but Roman Emperors paid as much attention to other teachers and authors as to the actual sophists.


287 Ibid. 7.

288 Ibid. 40.


290 Ibid. 30-1.
One sophist turned stoic philosopher, Epictetus, was contemporary to and probably influenced both Arrian and Plutarch.\textsuperscript{291} When Arrian and Plutarch had the opportunity to meet Epictetus late in his career he lived and taught in the small town of Nicopolis in Epirus (Aulus Gellius, \textit{Attic Nights} 15.11).\textsuperscript{292} Epictetus was born as a slave in Hierapolis in Phrygia.\textsuperscript{293} It is unknown at what point Epaphroditus, a freedman of the Emperor Nero, acquired Epictetus or when Epictetus attended his master in Rome, but it may have been as early as the reign of Nero, which began in 54, and certainly happened before the accession of the Flavian Dynasty in 69.\textsuperscript{294} Epaphroditus survived the death of his patron Nero, which presumably meant that he continued to own Epictetus, but the latter, who had been accosting people in the streets of Rome in an imitation of Socrates, went into exile in the early 90’s when Domitian ordered the expulsion of all philosophers from Rome (Suetonius, \textit{Domitian}, 10).\textsuperscript{295} Domitian also ordered the execution of Epaphroditus in 95 (Tacitus, \textit{Annals} 15.55; Suetonius \textit{Nero}, 49, and \textit{Domitian} 14), but there is no evidence whether Epictetus went into exile as a slave or had somehow acquired his freedom. From Rome, Epictetus went to Epirus and, as best we can reconstruct his life, he spent the rest of his years teaching students and people passing by along the road from Athens to Rome. The core of Epictetian teaching was moral and physical restraint based on determining which things are within a person’s control and

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{291}] Arrian was the student of Epictetus, see below.
\item[\textsuperscript{292}] Fergus Millar, "Epictetus and the Imperial Court," \textit{JRS} 55 (1965). 141.
\item[\textsuperscript{293}] Ibid. 141.
\item[\textsuperscript{294}] Ibid. 141-2.
\end{itemize}
which things are not. In particular, offices, fortune and reputation were not controllable, and he held aspirations to things that required throwing oneself upon the whims of the emperors and other patrons in particular disdain. Epictetus may have been only a peripheral figure in the overall scheme of the Second Sophistic, but he was a central figure in the creation of the Alexander of Plutarch and Arrian.

Plutarch’s literary production can be generally grouped into two categories, the *Moralia* (dialogues, speeches and sayings), and *Lives* (one set on the Caesars, another set the Parallel Lives). All of these writings and collections are dominated by Plutarch’s philosophical allegiances. Despite a plethora of examples in which Plutarch attacked or refuted Stoic teaching, but in others he accepted them entirely or with only slight modifications. Plutarch in particular amended the Stoic ideal of eradicating passions to one of controlling passions. It is probable, too, that Plutarch came into contact with the Stoic Epictetus when the latter lived in Epirus. It is also possible that Epictetus influenced Plutarch’s philosophy despite the two men sharing very little in terms of class or religion and despite Epictetus launching an attack on “Academics” like Plutarch.

Arrian chose to complete his study with Epictetus around the year 108, rather than to attend the schools of Athens or Asia Minor. Arrian’s stay with the stoic philosopher

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299 Ibid. xxvii.


lasted two or three years, long enough that one of Arrian’s earliest literary works was a collection of *Discourses* of Epictetus, which he modeled after Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*.³⁰²

After completing his education with Epictetus, Arrian chose to pursue a military and bureaucratic career. He probably got his first patron during the reign of Trajan in the person of the influential senator C. Avidius Nigrinus—a man known for interest in Greek literature and philosophy. Notably, Arrian was an advisor to Nigrinus while the senator was *corrector* of Achaea.³⁰³ It is probably, too, that during this period in his life Arrian first went to Athens, at least long enough to receive initiation into the Eleusian Mysteries.³⁰⁴ Later, during Trajan's Parthian campaign in 113, Arrian supposedly caught the attention of first Trajan, then Hadrian, though he may have encountered the latter while studying with Epictetus.³⁰⁵ Unsurprisingly, all three shared an avid interest in hunting, a topic that Arrian would write on, as well as a history of the conflict between Rome and Parthia.³⁰⁶

It has been claimed that nearly all of Arrian’s literary production occurred after he retired to Athens after 137, but theory that his political and literary careers were neatly divided (rather than interwoven) is now outdated,³⁰⁷ and some of Arrian’s works (e.g. the

³⁰² Ibid. 5.

³⁰³ Ibid. 7-8.


³⁰⁵ Ibid. 2.

³⁰⁶ For more details about Arrian's life, see 20-1.

Discourses, Periplus, and several others that directly correspond to Arrian’s governorship of Cappadocia) are confidently dated well before he retired to Athens. For other works, the Anabasis in particular, we do not have a certain date. There are two dominant schools of thought surrounding the date of the Anabasis: that it was a late work written after Arrian served in Cappadocia, perhaps written for Marcus Aurelius before his accession, or that it was a work early in Arrian’s career and was perhaps what convinced Hadrian to adlected Arrian to the position of consul. Neither argument is convincing. Both rely on assumptions and arguments from guesses as to what Arrian was or was not familiar with, but whether the Anabasis reflects Hadrian (in Bosworth’s timetable) or looks forward to the accession of Marcus Aurelius (in Wirth/Stadter’s timetable) does not change the fundamental picture of Alexander modeled as the ideal Roman Emperor.

Plutarch and Arrian reveal an Alexander who was the paragon of their contemporary philosophical schools. Plutarch, for example, described the heat of Alexander’s body (Al. 4.3), a trait that supposedly revealed his passion, but then


311 Ibid. 8-9.

emphasized Alexander’s ability to control those same passions. The most obvious example of this concept is in Alexander’s control over his passions when it came to women. A common story on this theme among all of the authors writing about Alexander not just Plutarch and Arrian is that of Alexander’s actions towards the royal Persian women (Diod. 17.37.4-38.3; Justin 11.9.12-16; Curt. 3.11.24-12.18; Plut. Al. 21; Arr. 112.3-8).

Plutarch dedicates an entire chapter to the episode, praising Alexander for his behavior, while at the same time removing him from the actual presence of the Persian Women (Al. 21.1-2):

As he was betaking himself to supper, someone told him that among the prisoners were the mother, wife, and two unmarried daughters of Darius, and that at sight of his chariot and bow they beat their breasts and lamented, believing that he was dead. Accordingly, after a considerable pause, more affected by their affliction than by his own success, he sent Leonnatus, with orders to tell them that Darius was not dead, and that they need have no fear of Alexander...he gave them permission to bury whom they pleased of the Persians....

Plutarch also connects to this episode the account of Alexander’s relationship with Barsine, saying (21.4):

καλής καὶ γενναίας ἧσανθα γυναικός.

Nor did he know any other before marriage, except Barsine...since she had received a Greek education, and was of an agreeable disposition, and since her father, Artabazus, was son of a king's daughter, Alexander determined (at Parmenion's instigation, as Aristobulus says) to attach himself to a woman of such high birth and beauty.

He uses the account of the Persian women in order to demonstrate Alexander's self-control, and explains the Barsine incident by demonstrating both the influence of his advisors and why Alexander behaved the way he did.

The same episode in Arrian's account follows a similar course, albeit with some differences. Immediately preceding the account of the Persian women Alexander performs his duty as a general and, “despite a sword wound in his thigh, Alexander went round to see the wounded” (2.12.1). Arrian then presents two accounts of the encounter with the Persian Women. In the first, told with skepticism (2.12.3-5):

The very night after his return from the pursuit of Darius he entered Darius' tent, which had been put aside for his own use, and heard a lament and other confused sounds of women's voices near the tent; he enquired what women they were and why they were accommodated so near him;

314 Τῇ δὲ ὑστεραίᾳ, καίπερ τετρωμένος τὸν μηρὸν ἦσει Ἀλέξανδρος, ὁ δὲ τούς τραυματίας ἐπῆλθε. Though it is entirely possible that Alexander was wounded it the battle, it should be noted that wounds also served a rhetorical function to demonstrate the prowess of the wounded person. Following: Gilley, "Damn with Faint Praise"; Alice Swift Riginos, "The Wounding of Philip II of Macedon: Fact and Fabrication," JHS 114 (1994). 103-19.
and was told, 'Sire, it is Darius' mother, wife and children...they are mourning his death;' on hearing this, Alexander sent Leonnatus to them with instructions to tell them that Darius was alive.

The second account is also skeptically presented (2.12.6-8):

αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρον τῇ ὑστεραιᾳ ἐλθεῖν ξῦν Ἄραστιωνι μόνι τῶν ἔταίρων· καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Δαρείου ἀμφιγινοήσασαν ὅστις ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶη αὐτοῖς, ἐστάλη γὰρ ἅμω τῷ αὐτῷ κόσμῳ, τὴν δὲ Ἄραστιωνι προσελθεῖν καὶ προκυνήσαι, ὅτι μεῖζων ἑφάνῃ ἐκεῖνος, ὡς δὲ ὁ Ἄραστιων τῇ ὑπεχώρησε καὶ τὶς τῶν ἃμφ᾿ αὐτὴν, τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον δείξαν, ἐκεῖνον ἡφι εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρον, τὴν μὲν καταδεικνύσαν τῇ διαμαρτίῳ ὑποχωρεῖν, Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ οὐ φανε ἀυτὴν ἁμαρτεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνον εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρον· καὶ ταῦτα ἐγὼ οὕθ᾿ ἀληθὴ οὕτε ὡς πάντῃ ἀπίστα ἀνέγραψα.

The next day Alexander himself visited the tent with Hephaestion and no other Companion; and Darius' mother, not knowing which of the two was the king, as both were dressed alike approached Hephaestion and did him obeisance. Hephaestion drew back, and one of her attendants pointed to Alexander and said he was the king; she drew back in confusion at her mistake, but Alexander remarked that she had made no mistake, for Hephaestion was also an Alexander. I have written this down without asserting its truth or total incredibility.

Alexander and Hephaestion visited the Persian Women on the next day. Unlike the first account, the second does not have Alexander inform the Persian Women that Darius yet lived, but focused only on the parable about the Queen mistaking Hephaestion for Alexander and thus the report is about Alexander’s relationship with Hephaestion.

Alexander’s supposed philosophical personality in this instance is more evident in Plutarch’s account because his purpose more allowed the insertion of “reflective” passages.315 Moreover the corpus of Plutarch includes the two speeches that comprise

315 This is the term used for non-narrative sections in Plutarch by N.G.L. Hammond, Sources for Alexander the Great (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 163.
The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander which are philosophical dialogues about the Macedonian king. Accordingly, Plutarch reveals a man who refuses to look upon beautiful women for the sake of his own self-control, as well as one who would not allow others to speak of them in his presence. Plutarch continues his text with an extended discussion on Alexander’s self-discipline, noting his control over his appetite, and his interest in alcohol, summing up by saying “in the stress of affairs he was not to be detained, as other commanders were, either by wine, or sleep, or any sport, or amour, or spectacle” (Al. 23.1). Likewise, in The Fortune and Virtue of Alexander, Plutarch reports that Alexander had suspicions about Philotas for seven years before he took action, but despite the reports that Alexander was a drunkard and he had a temper, he never revealed his suspicions (339F – 340A). Arrian simply expresses doubt as to the truthfulness of the accounts, but notes that he approves of Alexander’s actions if they took place, but if Alexander was such a person that the historians merely thought that Alexander could have acted in that manner, then Alexander should be approved of on those grounds, too (2.12.8). The political picture of Alexander that Plutarch and Arrian capture in this sequence of events is that of a king physically removed from the army, but who is directly involved in dispensing justice and in the operation of the army. This is possible because of the aristocrats who still had direct access to Alexander are the executors of the king’s will.

After the Battle of Issus, Alexander passed a death sentence on two Macedonian

316 ἐπεὶ πρός γε τὰς πράξεις ὅτι οἶνος ἐκεῖνον, ὡς ὤνος, ὡς παιδία τις, ὡς γάμος, ὡς θέα, καθάπερ ἄλλους στρατηγοὺς, ἐπίσχε.

317 See below for Philotas and Alexander.
soldiers (Plut. Al. 23.2). Plutarch uses this passage to explain further the king's physical restraint and philosophical opposition to morally corrupt actions and so leaves the actual process of any investigation or trial vague. There are two options: either Parmenion himself decided the case as Alexander's proxy or there was a trial before the other Macedonians (as at the trial of Philotas). In both possibilities Alexander remained the person who dispensed justice since this was his role as king, however if the Macedonians received a trial before their peers, then the role Parmenion and, by extension, Alexander played was decidedly more limited, while if Parmenion judged them, then it was because Alexander delegated the immediate responsibility the way that emperors had to do with provincial governors.

The same vagueness arises again in the trial of Parmenion’s son Philotas in 330. Plutarch tells that another aristocrat, Craterus, hatched a plot against Philotas (Al. 48.5). When Philotas allowed news of a plot against Alexander’s life go unheeded, Craterus and his associates brought the charge before Alexander (Al. 49.5) and, after Alexander heard the report of the plot and a myriad of accusations from Philotas’ enemies, Alexander ordered Philotas arrested (Al. 49.6). Philotas then underwent torture and was executed. Nowhere in this account does Plutarch suggest a trial by the Macedonian army assembly or even that there were many witnesses to Alexander’s judgment. The king was the law.

318 For how this event played out in Diodorus, see 49-50, Curtius and Justin, see 67-9. See also: Waldemar Heckel, "The Conspiracy against Philotas," Phoenix 31 (1977).

Arrian only adds to this picture that Philotas’ trial took place before a group of Macedonians (3.26.2). The statement is abbreviated, but does offer a sketch of an actual trial. This, combined with evidence from Diodorus and Curtius, suggests that the Macedonian Army Assembly would have served as jurists for the treason trial, but Arrian does not make specific mention of it and it is therefore possible that the Macedonians served as witnesses. Taken together, Plutarch and Arrian suggest that the king, not any judicial body, was the real judge.

Both Plutarch and Arrian incorporate aspects of Alexander’s increasing degeneracy in their accounts, but both also introduced ameliorating aspects to it. In particular, they emphasize Alexander’s attempts at restraint, but claim he fell victim to provocation and the manipulation of the aristocracy. Likewise, Alexander genuinely repents for his misdeeds, an action that does not atone for his actions, but demonstrates what his intentions were. One example of this aspect of Alexander is the murder of Cleitus (Plut. Al. 50.2-51.6, Arr. 4.8.1-9.1), an event which is noticeably absent in The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander. In both accounts, Alexander stabs Cleitus at a dinner party in Maracanda after the latter, drunk, spoke too harshly to Alexander. Neither Plutarch nor Arrian absolves Alexander for the murder and in both Cleitus spoke out against Alexander’s increasing barbarity; in Arrian, Cleitus was particularly frustrated with the flatterers at court (4.8.4). Cleitus, drunk, then confronted Alexander who struck

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him down. Arrian also says “I myself strongly blame Cleitus for his insolence towards the
king...but for the sequel I commend Alexander, in that he immediately recognized the
savagery of his action” (Arr. 4.9.1-2).322 Both authors conclude the episode with the claim
that Alexander would have committed suicide had his supporters not stepped in to stop
him (Plut. Al. 51.6, Arr. 4.9.2).

Wrapped up in this section about Cleitus is a discussion of eastern decadence and
degeneracy as well as the position of courtiers in corrupting a leader, and what
responsibilities the aristocracy had in situations that could provoke the king. Plutarch and
Arrian come down firmly on the side of Alexander. Arrian, who takes this episode out of
chronological order, admits that Alexander’s murder of Cleitus is a tragedy and points out
that Cleitus’ overall grievance was the effect that flatterers had on Alexander, but still
maintained that he behaved with *hubris* towards Alexander and therefore the blame went
to Cleitus. Plutarch does not blame Cleitus in the same direct terms, but the force of the
passage remains the same. As in Arrian, Plutarch’s account has Cleitus rebuke Alexander
on legitimate grounds and then Alexander casts the first piece of fruit (*Al*. 51.3-5):

> οὐκέτι φέρων τὴν ὅργην Ἀλέξανδρος μήλων παρακείμενων ἔνι βαλὼν ἔπαισεν αὐτόν καὶ τὸ ἐγχειρίδιον ἔζητε...τὸν δὲ Κλείτον οὖχ ὑφεμένον οἱ φίλοι μόλις ἐξέσωσαν τοῦ ἀνδρῶνος. ὦ δὲ κατ’ ἄλλας θύρας αὐθίς εἰσήκει, μάλα διεισώρως καὶ θρασείως Εὐριπίδου τὰ ἐξ Ἀνδρομάχης ἱκανεία ταύτα περαίνων: ὦ μοι, καθ’ Ἐλλάδ’ ὡς κακῶς νομίζεται. οὐτὸ δὴ λαβὼν παρὰ τίνος τῶν δορυφόρων Ἀλέξανδρος αἰχμῆν ἀπαντῶντα τὸν Κλείτον αὐτῷ καὶ παράγοντα τὸ πρὸ τῆς θύρας παρακάλυμμα διελαύνει.

Alexander, no longer able to restrain his anger, threw one of the apples
that lay on the table at Cleitus and hit him, and began looking about for his
sword...with much ado (Cleitus’) friends pushed him out of the banquet

322 Καὶ ἐγὼ Κλείτον μὲν τῆς ὑβρεως τῆς ἐς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν αὐτῶν μεγαλωστὶ μέμφομαι... ἄλλα τὰ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπαίνῳ Ἀλέξανδρου, ὃτι παρατίκα ἔγνω σχέτλιον ἐργον ἐργασάμενος.
hall. He tried to come in again, however, by another door, very boldly and contemptuously reciting these iambics from the 'Andromache’ of Euripides: “Alas! In Hellas what an evil government!” And so, at last, Alexander seized a spear from one of his guards, met Cleitus as he was drawing aside the curtain before the door, and ran him through.

In this way, the responsibility for the death of Cleitus still belonged to Cleitus himself because he could have avoided the incident. Plutarch is less direct than Arrian in absolving Alexander, but he left the account of Cleitus' death out of The Fortune and Virtue of Alexander. By omitting one of the most obvious incidents of the dangers of excessive wine in a dialogue that specifically brings up the charges of drunkenness (337F):

\[ \text{This virtue Alexander possessed, whom some accuse of drunkenness and a passion for wine! But he was really a great man, who was always sober in action and never drunk with the pride of his conquests and vast power; while others, intoxicated with the smallest part of his prosperity have ceased to be masters of themselves.} \]

Plutarch at least attempted to present Alexander positively, if only in relation to other men.\(^{323}\)

Plutarch requires the reader to form a judgment on Alexander based on the entirety of his works. Arrian, however, includes (separate from the narrative) a peroration that applies nearly every virtue to Alexander (7.28.1-30.3).\(^{324}\) The peroration suggests that the text includes rhetorical embellishment because it includes idealized traits not present

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\(^{323}\) For how the Cleitus incident happened in other sources: Diodorus 47; Cleitus and Justin: 62..

\(^{324}\) Bosworth, From Arrian to Alexander. 135.
throughout the narrative (e.g. ability to avoid deception), and traits that are explicitly paradoxical (e.g. frugality in spending money for himself).\textsuperscript{325} Arrian used the peroration to combat the character critics who, to his mind, twisted Alexander into a drunken despot, even though this leaves the peroration unsatisfactory in the portrait of Alexander that Arrian had thus far presented. The closest parallel to the peroration in Plutarch is the reflective passages after the Battle of Issus where Plutarch digresses on Alexander’s virtues such as frugality, and endurance, as well as his restraint towards women, recalling:\textsuperscript{326}

\begin{quote}
\begin{greekquote}
έλεγε δὲ μάλιστα συνιέναι θνητὸς ὡν ἐκ τοῦ καθεύδειν καὶ συνουσιάζειν, ὡς ἄπο μίᾶς ἐγγινόμενον ἀσθενείας τῇ φύσει καὶ τὸ πονοῦν καὶ τὸ ἡδόμενον.
\end{greekquote}
\end{quote}

he used to say that sleep and sexual intercourse, more than anything else, made him conscious that he was mortal, implying that both weariness and pleasure arise from one and the same natural weakness.

Both sections suggest that Alexander’s faults are caused by flatterers and poor influences on the king, while praising Alexander for his restraint and moderation—and both include a defense against character critique that the narratives do not actually support.

Plutarch and Arrian inherited an Alexander and a narrative filled with morally untenable actions committed by the king. Yet both authors made claim to accuracy, so they could not simply leave out the ugly episodes in order to present Alexander as the perfect emperor. In addition to the problematic narrative, the two authors inherited a plethora of secondary commentators (including the earlier historians such as Justin and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid. 137.
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{326} Quoted text Plut. Al. 22.3; entire digression 22.3-23.9.
\end{flushright}
Curtius, but authors such as the younger Seneca, Tacitus and Livy), who both directly and indirectly used Alexander as a negative example. In order to account for the negative heritage, the authors rehabilitated Alexander by praising Alexander’s virtues and explaining why the episodes were not actually his fault. Plutarch, in both his Life of Alexander, and The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander, takes the traditional trope of a king as someone who aspires to virtue, but fails, and applies the reverse to Alexander, namely that he achieved virtue in the manner of a philosopher.

There are issues with this statement. Gilley, in particular, presents a convincing argument that The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander is built as a paradoxical oration that reveals contradictions and Whitmarsh points out that Plutarch's texts are bafflingly open-ended. Nevertheless, the paradoxical irony seems to be directed more at the schools of philosophy that used this exemplum than at Alexander himself. It is important still to recognize that Plutarch does unite two divergent character types, the man of action, and the man of philosophy, in Alexander. He reveals the Macedonian king in a positive light while simultaneously using him for a discourse on philosophy. The philosophical aspect to Alexander as revealed by Plutarch and Arrian is the direct outgrowth of the Second Sophistic philosophical tradition, particularly with the emphasis on controlling passions and remorse proving his intentions. However, the exoneration of Alexander was not purely rhetorical or philosophical. Commentators on Roman history who wrote after the

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327 For how these authors constructed Alexander as an example of decadence and luxury, see: Diana Spencer, The Roman Alexander, 83 and following.

328 Bosworth, From Arrian to Alexander 73.

acccession of Nerva in 96 were more laudatory of Roman autocracy. The signal example of this trend is Tacitus, who was critical of earlier emperors, but was also cautiously hopeful for the future. Even if Tacitus was not actually positive towards the emperors, one of his literary accomplishments is to demonstrate the incompatibility of the Republican past with the Imperial present. Plutarch and Arrian reflected the contemporary Roman political situation in the way they detailed how the perfect emperor fell victim to courtiers and flatterers.
5. Conclusion: Not One, but Three Roman Alexanders

The Alexander myth was fundamentally shaped by the Roman world. Each author of the five main narratives of Alexander's reign, Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch and Arrian, lived and wrote in the Roman world and were fundamentally Roman whether writing in Latin or in Greek. Their accounts were presentist in that they were influenced this fact. This means that though the basic narrative for Alexander's reign remained constant, there are subtle shifts in the presentation, causation and blame that reflect the changes in Roman values between the first century BCE and the middle of the second century CE. This evolution is most evident in the portrayal of Alexander and the relationship between autocrat and aristocrat. It is therefore possible to read in the various narratives about Alexander the evolution of Roman politics and Roman ideas about autocracy. This is also a reflection of the individual author, yet another author with different political leanings could equally present another interpretation or opinion about the same political developments. The individual might shape the actual interpretation but each account nonetheless reflects the Roman context.

Spencer demonstrates that the Alexander of the later sources is a product of Roman politics and historiography, and is therefore distinct from the historical king. Hers is a “composite” Alexander appropriated by Roman intellectuals.330 I suggest that this composite Alexander can be further divided into three distinct Roman Alexanders that exist within a progression of Roman political thought. Each of these Alexanders shares

some of the same cultural and narrative features, but is distinct from the others. This evolution stretched from the late Roman Republic (Diodorus in 30) to the High Roman Empire (Arrian in the 120's or 130's CE). Diodorus, writing in the middle of the first century BCE, revealed Alexander as an idealized dictator, and demonstrated the benefits of autocracy as compared to the instability of aristocratic and republican politics in the late Roman Republic. Pompeius Trogus and Curtius Rufus wrote after Octavian/Augustus founded the Principate; Trogus during Augustus' reign (27 BCE – 14 CE), and Curtius probably during the reign of either Claudius (41-54 CE) or Vespasian (69-79 CE). Despite the gap in time between these two authors, both were influenced by the changed relationship in Rome in regards to power. In particular, they reflected the new Roman autocracy and the accompanying attempts to grapple with it. By the end of the first century CE, though, autocracy was expected—and largely accepted—in Rome. Plutarch and Arrian, both of whom composed their works on Alexander in the early part of the second century CE, reflect this expectation and acceptance.

The relationship between the Roman ideas about *regnum* and the Alexander sources are most evident in the text of Curtius. Baynham has divided the text into two pentads that form a Roman commentary on kingship. The same type of analysis may also be applied to other Roman writers and in so doing the pattern emerges. Diodorus represented a strain of thought in the late Republic that favored the stability offered by autocracy. It is plausible that he was in the minority in supporting autocracy. It is also plausible that his favorable outlook towards autocracy was because he was a Sicilian and

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not a Roman citizen, but still fundamentally lived as Roman. Thus the Alexander of
Diodorus and, by extension, the late Roman Republic did not represent an actual reality
of *regnum*, but rather a theoretical dialogue, which demonstrated the dangers and the
benefits of autocracy. The side that Diodorus supported was then a product of who he
was, but the ideas themselves were more widely discussed as Rome made its tumultuous
way towards monarchy. Cicero, for example, wrote in favor of the Republic, and against
men who sought to impose autocracy. Additionally, Diodorus revealed his opinion in
his favorable accounts of the dictators Sulla and Julius Caesar, thereby demonstrating his
approval of dictatorship. Prior to Octavian's victory, this was the Roman form of
autocracy, and in the late Roman Republic there were supporters and opponents of
extending autocracy further.

After Octavian/Augustus founded the Principate in 27, the commentary on
*regnum* was no longer about a theoretical autocracy, but the actual rule of Rome.
Pompeius Trogus (through Justin's epitome) and Curtius provide similar dialogues on
this *regnum*. The potential benefits of autocracy is evident in that Alexander began his
reign with a good inheritance and great natural capabilities, but then Curtius provided a
commentary on the darker side of autocracy in that the emperor is not bound by laws and
proper behavior. Moreover, both narratives demonstrate that the emperor disrupts
relationships between aristocrats because they must vie for his favor. Both Trogus and
Curtius conclude that while Alexander was impressive, his reign was a failure, but that
the so-called funeral games for a king (i.e. civil wars) were worse even than a bad king.

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332 See, for instance, Cicero, *The Second Philippic* against Antony.

333 On transmission of Pompeius Trogus, see 15-16.
The accession of Trajan in 98 CE marked the first in a series of peaceful transitions of power between emperors. By then, emperors had ruled Rome for more than a century and a quarter. These two facts meant that the position of the emperor, topic of debate for much of the first century CE, was an established, expected and accepted institution. This position is what Plutarch and Arrian reflected. Alexander still provided negative exempla about autocracy, but there are subtle shifts in tone about them. First, while the impetus for proper behavior remained on the autocrat in their accounts of Alexander, there was also the necessity for the aristocrats to treat the king with greater deference. It is possible, though, that this overwhelmingly positive account of autocracy was not sincere, but ironic. Yet the difference between irony and sincerity may be easily lost on the audience. Further, this literary irony that is constructed is only possible because of the existing preconceptions about the acceptability of autocracy. For these reasons, the Alexander of the high Roman Empire reflects a (supposedly) legitimized autocracy.

The narrative of Alexander the Great was filtered through the Roman world. By contextualizing the later narratives, we can see that the portrayals of Alexander evolved along with the Roman political thought that influenced the authors. In the late Republic, the discourse about autocracy had only limited reference points in Roman politics, but after the Octavian established the Principate, Romans were forced to grapple with the changed dynamic of the state. By the second century CE the changes were largely accepted.

Two particular events in Alexander's reign may further illustrate this evolution:
the trial of Philotas and the murder of Cleitus. All of the authors agree on the basic narrative of the trial of Philotas in that when he returned to the army in 331 (after conducting the funeral for his brother Nicanor), he was implicated in a conspiracy against Alexander, tried, and executed.\textsuperscript{334} There are differences in the detail, though. Diodorus records that Philotas submitted himself to the judgment of the Macedonian Assembly, which found him guilty (17.79-80).\textsuperscript{335} Curtius provides the most thorough account of the trial of Philotas (particularly 6.9-11).\textsuperscript{336} In this account the Macedonian Assembly still conducted the trial of Philotas, but he remarks that the decision did not rest with the army assembly, but that Alexander was the true judge (6.9.3). Plutarch and Arrian further deemphasized the role of the Macedonian Assembly.\textsuperscript{337} Plutarch says that after Alexander heard the accusations, he had Philotas arrested and questioned (49.6), while Arrian simply says that the trial took place before Macedonians (3.26.2).

Diodorus and Curtius demonstrate that the Assembly was the jury, but Arrian's abbreviation makes no mention of this fact, making it easy for the reader to conclude that the trial was a show, and Alexander the judge. In the transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire, there was a decreasing emphasis placed on the judicial assemblies and an increasing emphasis on an autocrat as the actual judge.

There is a similar change in the accounts of Alexander's murder of Cleitus the

\textsuperscript{334} For the historical background, see: 5.

\textsuperscript{335} See: 49-50.

\textsuperscript{336} See: 67-9.

\textsuperscript{337} See: 86-7.
Black.\textsuperscript{338} The account in Diodorus is not extant, but the outline of Book 17 suggests that he treated the incident as a crime against Dionysus. This would suggest that it was a discussion about the dangers of wine, more than as a conflict between Alexander and the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{339} In the account of Cleitus from the early Principate, the affair clearly demonstrates dangers of autocracy that counterbalance the stability. Justin noted that Alexander behaved as an enemy toward Cleitus (12.6), and Curtius said that Alexander was enraged, but still in control of his actions to the extent that he lay in wait for and deliberately killed him (8.6.1).\textsuperscript{340} Alexander does repent his action afterward, but both Justin and Curtius suggest that the murder was deliberate. Arrian and Plutarch again adjust the causation of Alexander's murder of Cleitus.\textsuperscript{341} Alexander still killed Cleitus at the banquet, but Cleitus caused his own death. He criticized Alexander for his orientalism, and expressed frustration at flatterers (Arr. 4.8.4), thereby provoking Alexander. Moreover, in Plutarch's account, the aristocrats around Alexander forced Cleitus from the room, but he returned and at that point Alexander killed him. Plutarch and Arrian also seem to present Alexander's remorse more sincerely, for they praise Alexander for immediately recognizing the error of his action and claim that he attempted suicide (Plut. \textit{Al.} 51.6; Arr. 4.9.2).

The accounts of the murder of Cleitus demonstrate an inversion of blame in the misdeeds of the autocrat. In Diodorus there was probably only a commentary on the

\textsuperscript{338} For the historical background, see: 6,

\textsuperscript{339} See: 46-7.

\textsuperscript{340} See: 62.

\textsuperscript{341} See: 89.
dangers of alcohol, but in the early Principate, the commentary was about balancing right action with the reality about autocracy. Pompeius Trogus and Curtius both suggest that Alexander did not behave in the right way toward his followers, but the larger issue is that the autocrat is not bound by right action. Plutarch and Arrian invert the causality in order to demonstrate that whether or not Alexander behaved properly, Cleitus was at fault because he provoked the king and put himself in a position to be killed, which thereby absolved Alexander of blame.

There are two primary implications of the roots of the Alexander myth being Roman, one for studies of literature, and one for the study of Alexander. Historical literature, regardless of genre, must be contextualized by the corresponding period, writers, and people involved. This is not a novel concept in and of itself. It is acknowledged, for instance, that the modern Alexander biographers and their corresponding circumstances dictated their interpretations of Alexander.\textsuperscript{342} The same is true of the ancient authors of Alexander's reign, much as it is true for the ancient writers of Roman history. At the same time, claiming any implicit knowledge of authorial intent is problematic at best, particularly when dealing with ancient authors for whom little biographical information exists. What we must do instead is to provide context and otherwise attempt to envision the influences upon the author. This is what I attempted to do in the preceding chapters, but only for a small group of authors and for only a limited selection of their literary works. I believe that the Alexander myth was, and is, particularly susceptible to appropriation because there are so many contradictory

examples and reports about his reign. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that the rest of the literary production from these authors was equally, if not as obviously, shaped by their particular Roman contexts.

The evolution of the dialogue about autocracy that appears in the Roman sources about Alexander is parallel to the Roman accounts of their own history such as Tacitus and Livy. Both historiographical traditions were influenced by the transition from the Roman Republic (and thus absence of autocracy), to the development of autocracy and Augustus' need to solidify his position by curbing the liberty of the aristocracy, and then reality of imperial rule as a disconnect with the attempts to restore the republic. Livy and Tacitus, in particular, sought to explain and grapple with the paradox formed by the creation of an autocracy within a society that was traditionally anti-monarchic.\textsuperscript{343} Some scholars, too, have suggested that though Tacitus expressed reservations about emperors who ruled before the period in which he wrote, he was also cautiously optimistic about the future.\textsuperscript{344} Nevertheless other scholars suggest that Tacitus simply avoided writing about his present political situation rather than critiquing it and therefore his pro-Imperial commentary should be interpreted as irony.\textsuperscript{345} It is also important to note that while the influence of the development in Roman politics is evident in of these historians from the Roman period, direct comparison is tenuous at best because no historian wrote both a history of Alexander and a history of Rome. The shape of the dialogue and the ideas

\textsuperscript{343} On Roman ideas of Liberty, see: Chaim Wirszubski, \textit{Libertas as a Political Ideal in Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), in particular 52, 103-5.

\textsuperscript{344} Birley, “The \textit{Agricola},” 47-8; Woodman, \textit{Tacitus Revisited}. 111.

\textsuperscript{345} O’Gorman. \textit{Irony and Misreading}. 182; Sailor, \textit{Writing and Empire}. 249.
evident in the writings are the same, but there is also variation in presentation and conclusions dependent upon subject matter and the individual author.

The source tradition is the fundamental problem when studying of Alexander the Great. The outgrowth of this problem is a host of source studies and commentaries. Yet, the Alexander that exists in the extant sources is Roman, and even when it is possible to recover the sources that these authors used to build their narratives, there are additional source issues regarding those sources. In particular, it proves even more difficult to contextualize those earlier sources than the extant sources. Furthermore, it is likely that Alexander made sure that the official accounts of his reign while he lived—as put out by Callisthenes, for example—served as propaganda, while others were not much more than gossip. That means that there are multiple generations of historical writing about Alexander that stems from an illusion, rather than an actual person. Thus we are able to deconstruct the influences on the different accounts of Alexander's reign, but an accurate description of Alexander the man is irrecoverably lost.

Although this is where my analysis ends, the cultural appropriation of the Alexander myth did not end with Rome. The myth was extended particularly through the


Alexander Romance. The Romance consisted of popular literature that took Alexander's reported dreams and longings and treated these events as though they actually occurred. Throughout antiquity the Romance was continuously rewritten and adapted to include local folklore in each of the settings that the story took root in. For instance, Alexander entered into the sacred history of the Christian world because (Pseudo-Callisthenes, III. 26A):

Alexander shut in twenty-two kings with their subject nations behind the northern boundaries- behind the gates that he called the Caspian and the mountains known as the Breasts. These are the names of those nations: Goth, Magoth, Anougeis, Aigeis, Exenach, Diphar, Photinaioi, Parizaioi, Zarmatianoi, Chachonioi, Agrimardoi, Anouphagoi, Tharbaioi, Alans, Physiolonikaioi, Saltarioi and the rest...They used to eat worms and foul things that were not real food at all – dogs, flies, snakes, aborted foetuses, dead bodies and unformed human embryos; and they ate not only animals, but the corpses of humans as well. Alexander, seeing all this, was afraid that they would come out and pollute the inhabited world; so he shut them in and went on his way.

Jerome (Epistulae 77.8) was aware of this account that Gog and Magog had been imprisoned behind a wall in the Caucasus by Alexander. These stories of Alexander were carried into the Middle Ages in Western European, Judaic, and Islamic thought. Through the Islamic accounts, the Alexander myth even reached, and took root in,


349 Stoneman, A Life in Legend. 2.


Mongolia.\textsuperscript{353} Through the intellectual tradition of Western Europe the myth was also appropriated by English authors and politicians in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Britain.\textsuperscript{354} These accounts of Alexander's reign take us even further from the historical narrative,\textsuperscript{355} but they also demonstrate the potency and malleability of the Alexander legend.


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