

**AN ASSESSMENT OF ALEXANDER'S MORALITY IN THE ANCIENT WITNESSES AND MODERN
INTERPRETATIONS**

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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An Assessment of Alexander's Morality in the Ancient Witnesses and Modern Interpretations

BY

John Stevens

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree**

Of

Master of Arts

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Abstract

While Alexander the Great was engaged in his conquest of Asia in the latter half of the third century BC, his behaviour became increasingly paranoid and violent toward his own men. Two examples of this are especially noteworthy: in 330, he put to death two important commanders, Philotas and his father, Parmenion, after the former was alleged to have taken part in a plot against Alexander's life. In 328, Alexander murdered a veteran soldier named Cleitus while drunk at a banquet. Two ancient Alexander-biographers, Plutarch and Arrian, included these episodes in works which presented Alexander as an admirable and heroic figure. My intention herein is to present a summary of how several modern scholars of Alexander-history examine the treatment of these episodes by Plutarch and Arrian. Where possible, I have included the opinions of these modern commentators as to what they believe to have happened in these affairs.

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Abbreviations and Editions

Abbreviations

Arr.	Arrian's <i>Anabasis Alexandri</i>
C.	Curtius' <i>Historiae Alexandri Magni</i>
Diod.	Diodorus Siculus' <i>Library of History</i>
Epict. <i>Diss.</i>	Epictetus' <i>Dissertations</i>
Epict. <i>Ench.</i>	Epictetus' <i>Encheiridion</i>
J.	Justin's <i>Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch's <i>Moralia</i>
Plut. <i>Al.</i>	Plutarch's <i>Life of Alexander</i>
Sen. <i>ep.</i>	Seneca's <i>Epistulae Morales</i>

Editions

Arrian: Leipzig Teubner, 1967. Translations E. J. Chinnock, 1893; E. I. Robson, 1929.
 Curtius: Leipzig Teubner, 1908. Translation John C. Rolfe, 1946.
 Diodorus: Leipzig Teubner, 1888. Translation C. H. Oldfather, 1889.
 Epictetus: Leipzig Teubner, 1916. Translation T. W. Higginson, 1890.
 Justin: Wetzel Lipa, 1806. Translations Rev. John Selby Watson, 1853; J. C. Yardley, 1997.
 Plutarch: Sintenis Teubner, 1839. Translation Bernadotte Perrin, 1919.
 Seneca: Leipzig Hermes, 1905. Translation John W. Basore, 1928.

Introduction

My original interest in the area under consideration concerned the general character of Alexander the Great and the forces that shaped his life and adventures. I noticed a line in a book by John Maxwell O'Brien, entitled *Alexander the Great: the Invisible Enemy*, which suggested that some drastic change occurred in Alexander's character at a roughly defined point in his life. I took this as my next path and decided to examine how he differed after this alleged character shift, and I read about the cruelly violent episodes which marked the second half of his story. The scenes involving the killings of Philotas, Parmenion and Cleitus especially caught my interest and they are popularly listed among the "stains" on his reputation. Since I was not going to be able to ascertain anything new concerning the inner mechanisms or the change involved in the life of Alexander himself, I decided to focus on the attitudes of the ancient historians, which have naturally shaped the oldest extant depictions of Alexander. Were they able to admit that he was out of order, even for a monarch living in an age where violence was commonly used to dole out justice? Did they have to cover up certain actions or make excuses for him? Did they condemn him outright? Do their treatments of these particular episodes align with their general attitudes toward him? Are these historians able to align their treatments with their personal moral systems? Are they trying to get to the bottom of exactly what happened in what may appear to be egregious outbursts of unnecessary and uncharacteristic episodes of cruelty? I am examining the stories and the modern commentators' reviews of them to find what the attitudes and verdicts of Plutarch and Arrian are, not in order to catch the historians in error or to blame them for their divergence from an expected path. Where suggested by modern scholarship, I have also

included opinions of what may have actually happened during these episodes, since they still appear so mysterious to us.

In Arrian's case, we might expect a Stoic inclination because of his years of philosophical study with Epictetus. That he has chosen Alexander as a biographical subject already comes as a surprise, since the king's life and attitude contravene many Stoic recommendations. But does Arrian at least dress his history in Stoic garb? Is he reaching for Stoic kernels in Alexander's customs in the best way that he can? He seems not to be doing this. The commentators do not suggest why Arrian has not chosen biographical material more closely related to the teachings of his youth. He does not even appear to attempt to draw many comparisons between Alexander's conduct and Stoicism as he understood it from Epictetus. Perhaps he follows it as a merely theoretical truth, for in his *praefatio* he declares himself too famous to add his name to the work, and he is further glorifying an already φιλοτιμώτατος king. This attitude is the opposite of that taught by Epictetus regarding reputation, as recorded by Arrian himself. The fact that apologies in a very defensive obituary are necessary proves that there is something awry in the shining picture of Alexander or some long-earned reputation which Arrian is anxious to hide or efface. His expectation of criticism for certain aspects of Alexander's behaviour forces him either to accept or to deny responsibility on behalf of his subject. There is nothing which says that Arrian must live a Stoic life or write books solely in the spirit of Stoicism, and we must not keep him restrained to the discipline of his youth. At the same time, there is nothing presumptuous in that expectation, for he held both teacher and philosophy in high enough regard that he recorded both the *Dissertations* and the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus as faithfully as he could remember the very phrases and words.

As Arrian will turn virtue to vice in his summary of Alexander, Plutarch likewise bends his mirror in a manner suitable to his didactic purpose. He has declared that he will give the impression of Alexander rather than a purely historical account of the man. He admits that both good and bad natures struggle together in the whole man (and in all men). If we accept Plutarch's declaration at the outset, that the impression he wants to render is more important to him than strict historical chronology or details, then we might expect some flexibility in his acceptance of negative aspects of Alexander's behaviour. Plutarch's main presentation is one of mimetic virtue. All he needs to do is extract from the man's life sections he wants to explore for imitation or aversion. Despite scholars' opinions that Plutarch is not writing in a proper historical mode, his portraits were meant to be gazed upon by readers of his own time. Whether or not he has missed the point that it was a Macedonian custom to drink heavily at banquets, and therefore has not realised that Alexander does not need to be defended for this, Plutarch's interest is in the man himself and should be accepted so, once he has declared those intentions. Even if he were to distort the historical details of Alexander's life purposely, the reader can still choose to receive the intended lesson, as long as Plutarch succeeds in illustrating this. He is creating a portrait, a figure, a symbol of something. Perhaps that needs little or no historical context if a man in 330 BC has the same forces driving his life as a man two and a half thousand years thence. The external situation is only a local costume for the specific and actual events, and while we use that costume to designate or to understand those specifics, the internal man is duplicated billions of times over throughout history beneath his costume and era.

Chapter One

Alexander's Ethical Conduct: an overview

We can see how the historians find something either to apologize for or to blame Alexander for in the brutal episodes that stick out. His men were constantly trusting him with their lives and he was obviously aware that the responsibilities of leadership would include this. These men acted as his support and felt enough responsibility for him to take care of his welfare and the achievement of his ambition and will. Indeed, on at least two occasions (at the battle of the Granicus and against the Mallians) Alexander's life was snatched from the enemy by the selflessness and bravery of his comrades. If a man is so important to the campaigns of conquest and to the behaviour of tens of thousands of potentially threatening soldiers, he must be able to control at least his own actions and to act as a model for all. He must remain stable and firm in judgment and must learn to expect and then to sanely accept criticism during such stressful times. Alexander's impetuous nature allowed the Macedonians and their allies to win victories and to conquer people to the ultimate point of dominion and wealth, but this trait is ironically the very agent which could undermine his success. If he could not leash it, more than just his enemies were doomed to suffer. We must take for granted that he knew this, not only because he appears to have possessed an exceptionally keen mind for martial necessities, but also because we read of his repentance after his crueller actions. In these respects we cannot quietly accept brutality toward his own men, and especially his closest and longest-serving ones.

On the other hand, although these events do stand out and cast a shadow on the ancient legends of his magnanimity and self-restraint, how can we be surprised by them in

the life of Alexander the Macedonian king? We are told (especially by Plutarch) that he was impetuous and his body's temperature was πολύθερμος...καὶ πυρώδης, "very hot...and feverish."¹ Whether he often drank a little or simply drank too much at the Cleitus banquet, it was a habit with him which could never help to control his anger. Added to his love for wine was his φιλοτιμώτατος nature, and he would never have relinquished his desire to be first in all things. When the constant possibility of his assassination is added to this, coupled with the actual assassination of his father, danger from within was certainly preying on his mind from his accession to his death. Therefore, his need to be the strongest and bravest man would be threatened by the knowledge that his ruling position was always visible and vulnerable. Any threat or offence to his personal goals must be taken seriously if he was not to be dislodged. We cannot blame Alexander for possessing constant suspicion, especially in the milieu of rumours against him (from such intimates as Philotas and Philip of Acarnania). The grumbling of his men, which arose in part from his orientalised nature, bothered him, and the tradition of heavy drinking lowers the odds of extreme self-control in such a man.

Execution may be an effective way to deal with the problem of assassination plots, and (at least) the rumours of torture are deterrent enough to keep the number of plots limited. If Alexander was as impetuous as we are informed, there would be only a slight chance of forethought preceding these executions, and a good chance of painful afterthought. Therefore we cannot reasonably expect a physically strong and hasty man, accustomed to drink and violence, to deal calmly, rationally and slowly when provoked, even if merely by rumour. Suspicion toward one's friends may at first glance be the

¹ Plut. *Al.* 4.3.

simplest type to put to rest and to forgive, considering that these people must be the ones a man wishes the least to hurt. Such was the fortunate case with Philip of Acarnania.² Yet if the stories of treason were true, then the offence from one's closest companions would inflict the deepest scars. A king naturally expects war, and sometimes hatred, from his enemies, a fact which allows him to enter combat with each side knowing what to expect. He can even respect them for fighting fiercely, as Alexander does with King Porus at the battle of the Jhelum. What becomes truly insulting (and perhaps more dangerous) is the loss of genuine trust from a friend, who acts against understood rules of fidelity in order to disrupt and to seize influence or power. This is a more sickening prospect in a military force, because of its unforeseen treachery, than the thought of dying against a hated but perhaps honourable foe, which may be a "good" death. Alexander's suspicions should not shock us and his swift vengeance upon dissenters is not to be explained away as plainly cruel.

The Episodes

The executions of Philotas and Parmenion, along with the murder of Cleitus, stand out as uncharacteristic of Alexander, if we are convinced by the legends of his generosity, even toward his enemies, but especially in contrast to the camaraderie he is supposed to have shared with his men. The modern critics as well as the ancient sources, some of whom admire Alexander, make a point of illustrating these stories in a conspicuous way. They must be blurred or forgiven or used as examples of some kind of degeneration. They cannot be ignored if honesty and historical accuracy are valued. For all the magnanimity claimed for Alexander by his biographers, these two episodes certainly do not reflect his nobility in any way. Rather, they show him to be at the mercy

² See Arr. 2.4.7-2.4.11.

of most unfortunate and greedy influences. At best he appears paranoid, gullible and unrestrained in his force; at worst he seems to place little value on the efforts and lives of men who risked everything they had for his ambition over the course of years.

Although the Callisthenes affair often comes up in discussions of Alexander's cruelty, I have chosen not to concentrate on it for several reasons. This story is not well enough documented. It is given only a few words in Justin, who says that Callisthenes was one of the most outspoken of the critics of Alexander's Orientalisation, and that this was the reason for his death.³ Diodorus' version of this story is lost, which leaves us with the accounts of only three of the five extant vulgate authors. Paul Cartledge illustrates the confusion when he writes that the sources we have list five "mutually inconsistent or incompatible methods and modes of Callisthenes's execution."⁴ He points out Arrian's remark that even the most reliable authors possess conflicting versions of happenings to which they were witnesses.⁵ Through Arrian, Ptolemy tells us that Callisthenes was tortured and hanged; Aristobulus says he was chained up, dying later; and Chares writes of his death from lice infestation after a year of bondage. Fox believes that there may be a case for Callisthenes' guilt and that he was taken into custody as an "instigator" rather than as an active participant.⁶

Plutarch writes that Alexander believed Callisthenes to be innocent, accepting as proof Alexander's saying as much in a letter (which Plutarch believes to be genuine). Yet in another letter by Alexander, Plutarch remarks that the king believed he had justly punished Callisthenes for his involvement in the plot. Plutarch says that there is no

³ 12.7.2.

⁴ Cartledge (2004) 287. See Arr. 4.14.3; Plut. *Al.* 55.5.

⁵ Cartledge (2004) 288. See Arr. 4.14.3.

⁶ Fox (1973) 328.

consensus on the death of the court historian. Hamilton believes that the letter in which Alexander exculpates Callisthenes "is demonstrably genuine."⁷ Tarn believes that the plot did involve Callisthenes, although in what respect he is unsure,⁸ and in any case he believes that "how far the verdict is true will probably never be known."⁹ Baynham points out the range of opinions of the vulgate authors: Plutarch believed the conspiracy to be tyrannicidal, Arrian saw it as direct personal vengeance, Curtius wrote on it as a political movement, while Justin's brief mention of it sets it up as a means for Alexander to rid himself of opponents to his προσκυνήσις policy.¹⁰

The story is in some manner a rehash of the Philotas affair. In both episodes, an associate who has been useful is beginning to annoy Alexander and is then implicated in a conspiracy on the king's life. The man is not implicated by the actual conspirators¹¹ and denies his own involvement. Because of Alexander's impetuosity and the influence which his courtiers hold over him, he executes the accused man. This is given enough attention in the Philotas story. In any case, we seem to have less information concerning Callisthenes and so the Philotas story better exemplifies this type of situation.

In the other episodes, we are given enough information that we can assume Alexander had at least some idea that he was doing the wrong thing if he actually cared about these people. When Philotas dies, we are told that the army has pronounced him guilty, that he was tortured and that none of the real conspirators admitted his knowledge

⁷ Hamilton (1973) 107. See Plut. *Al.* 55.3.

⁸ Tarn (1948) 81.

⁹ Tarn (1948) 82.

¹⁰ Carney (1981) 230.

¹¹ For the most part, Arrian tells us that Ptolemy and Aristobulus report accusations against Callisthenes by the pages (4.14.1). Robinson claims that "we cannot deny the veracity of Ptolemy's statement," although Hammond says, quoting Plutarch's Alexander-letter denying Callisthenes' guilt, that Alexander did indeed believe the man to be innocent (1997, 157). Hammond does omit Plutarch's reference to Alexander's other letter, however.

of the plot. Alexander has no evidence of Philotas' involvement. Likewise, he orders the death of Parmenion secretly and quickly so as not to alarm sympathisers, who would need to see proof of the man's guilt. Since Alexander had no substantial proof of this, we must assume again that he ordered the man killed because of necessity or paranoia and not because of a real suspicion of guilt.

At the death of Cleitus, Alexander shows quite plainly by his actions that he did not believe the killing to be noble or necessary. Both his sulking and possible suicide wish exhibit the fact that anger and rage had clouded his mind, but also prove that he knew where the right action lay. When Callisthenes is bound up in the Pages' plot, however, we find no instance of Alexander's remorse, indicating that to most of our vulgate writers he did not view his deadly actions as wrong. This is in contrast to the aforementioned deaths, which certainly must have appeared less legitimate even to himself. The case is one of uncertainty in its details and conclusions.

Chapter Two

A Review of the Ancient Witnesses to Alexander

Although there are three biographers in addition to Plutarch and Arrian who may help us understand the episodes concerning Philotas, Parmenion and Cleitus more clearly, I have chosen not to use them, except in cases where important comparisons are made between them. Generally, the modern commentators seem to regard Plutarch and Arrian as the more definitive ancient sources for Alexander's life. However, it may be helpful to include their versions of the stories, as well as some information about these members of the group of five Alexander-historians (known collectively as the 'vulgate') in order to place Plutarch and Arrian in their proper context. Curtius is the one vulgate author to whom the modern commentators most frequently make reference in studies of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* and Arrian's *Anabasis*.¹²

Quintus Curtius Rufus

Curtius is chiefly concerned with the fact that Alexander lost his moderation and became a proud and wrathful tyrant. Had the king kept his restraint all his life instead of discarding it, he would have abstained from leaving meals with the blood of his friends on his hands, and other such villainies.¹³ Curtius' own experiences under Roman despots may have tinged his view of Alexander,¹⁴ and this could be a source of exaggeration in the biography.¹⁵ In Book 6 we see Alexander beginning to fall prey to Persian

¹² Alexander's general, Ptolemy, is credited with being one of the traditional eyewitness sources and records of the campaign. However, since he has survived to our time mainly through Arrian, he will be dealt with in Chapter Four and in the sections on commentary regarding Arrian.

¹³ 3.12.19.

¹⁴ Cartledge (2004) 281.

¹⁵ Hamilton (1969) 19.

assimilation, which includes heavy drinking, prostitutes, sumptuous banquets and other "foreign" sins (6.2.1-5).

Unfortunately, the first two books of Curtius' biography (which presumably would contain his *praefatio*) are lost, but Books 3 through 5 show Alexander battling Darius and *Fortuna*, while the next five books portray his development from *dux* to *rex* to *tyrannus*, and the struggle between *regnum* and *libertas*.¹⁶ Beginning in Book 6 the king shows signs of deterioration and is never able to fulfil his potential. After the murder of Cleitus there is no free speech (8.4.30). Hamilton calls this sudden drop in self-control the most striking aspect of Curtius' rendering.¹⁷ Hammond believes that the speeches in the Philotas story are Curtius' inventions but that at least they give us some details on the system of treason trials, with which Curtius would have been familiar in Rome.¹⁸ Baynham agrees¹⁹ that although Curtius exaggerates with this rhetoric, he is generally balanced and has some knowledge of how power corrupts.²⁰ She says that Curtius is less interested in a definitive history of Alexander than in the "literary, rhetorical, and moral prospects his reign presented."²¹ Carney reports that Curtius' narrative of the Cleitus story is uselessly incoherent, but that he has a knowledgeable background.²² Curtius' historical accuracy has been maligned in that he is a "rhetorician rather than historian,"²³ and after Baynham speaks of the criticisms levelled at Curtius, she defends his value, citing Wilcken's comment that every Alexander-historian creates his or her own

¹⁶ Baynham (1998) 12.

¹⁷ Hamilton (1969) 19.

¹⁸ Hammond (1980) 181.

¹⁹ Baynham (1998) 33.

²⁰ Baynham (1998) 13.

²¹ Baynham (1998) 100.

²² Carney (1981) 154.

²³ Rolfe (1946) xxi.

Alexander.²⁴ She adds that each reveals biases, distortions, and inaccuracies, and none of these writers are perfect.²⁵ She joins Bosworth in calling Curtius the "most enigmatic and frustrating" of the Alexander-historians.²⁶ His evident taste for the flamboyant notwithstanding, there is still some historical value in Curtius' report of the Philotas episode.²⁷ One reason is that Curtius has quite considerably more information than Arrian. Badian is not ready to believe the account of the arrest, but if the speeches are fictional, he accepts the story in general as basically accurate.²⁸

Diodorus Siculus

Diodorus is interested in how Fortune works and reverses men's fate.²⁹ He is "piously delighted when sacrilegious men meet their just deserts." Cartledge writes of Diodorus' admiration for humanity's resistance to temptation, especially in the face of grand success and luxury, but that Diodorus has "entirely swallowed" the legitimating myth of Hellenistic kings and "applied it hagiographically" to his subject.³⁰ Hammond says that Diodorus' belief was that successful statesmen were essentially magnanimous and kindly toward their subjects.³¹ Compared to Curtius, who also used Cleitarchus as a main source, Hammond believes that Diodorus was less inclined to borrow from this account because of his "naive admiration" for Alexander.³² Bosworth and Baynham say that Diodorus has "a marked taste for the sensational."³³ Next to Curtius, however,

²⁴ Baynham (1998) 6-7.

²⁵ Baynham (1998) 12.

²⁶ Bosworth (2000) 8.

²⁷ Bosworth (2000) 11.

²⁸ Badian, in Bosworth and Baynham (2000) 64.

²⁹ Welles (1963) xi. And see Diod. 16.72.2.

³⁰ Cartledge (2004) 281.

³¹ Hammond (1997) 18.

³² Hammond (1983) 162.

³³ Bosworth and Baynham (2000) 8.

Diodorus' work comes across as "essentially sober history little coloured by rhetoric."³⁴ After the burning of Persepolis³⁵ he offers no comments on Alexander's conduct, nor does he offer anything when Parmenion is murdered and Alexander puts all the sympathisers into one squad.³⁶ The only opinion he issues on the Philotas affair comes at the beginning of the story, when he tells us how Alexander's behaviour here was not up to his usual standards of kindness. Unfortunately, he lists no sources (although Cleitarchus is traditionally ascribed to being one) and the sections including his Cleitus and Callisthenes stories are lost.

Justin

The biography of Alexander handed down to us by Justin is the epitome of a work by Pompeius Trogus, and Hammond says that Justin is "ruthless and careless, omitting much and muddling names."³⁷ Heckel notes that he left out what he did not consider to be pleasurable reading.³⁸ In the Justin/Trogus version, Alexander has both Philotas and Parmenion tortured before their killings and taunts the corpse of Cleitus, behaviour which is followed by repentance. A reign of terror noticeably emerged at the time of Philotas' execution and it continued until Alexander's death. Not only do we hear of these horrors, but we are also told (in the third Appendix to the work) that the king often left a friend's meal after shedding blood.³⁹ Hamilton states that although Justin/Trogus is just as critical of Alexander's actions as Curtius is, he is less moralistic, and perhaps this is due to the fact that this work is an epitome.⁴⁰ Cartledge holds that the history presents Alexander as

³⁴ Welles (1963) 17.

³⁵ 17.

³⁶ 80.

³⁷ Hammond (1983) 86.

³⁸ Heckel (1997) 9.

³⁹ 9.8.16.

⁴⁰ Hamilton (1973) 21.

a "bloodstained tyrant perverted by his conquests" because Justin was opposed to aggressive imperialism.⁴¹ Alexander originally had restraint, but he began to let it slip at Siwa and never regained it. The episode is quite brief and there is no comment on the innocence of any of Alexander's victims.

The Modern Commentators

I have decided to concentrate my research on modern scholarship which deals with the ancient treatments of these episodes, referring to critics of the ancient Alexander-biographers, critics who wrote (chiefly) since W. W. Tarn in the middle of the twentieth century. However, I have included several earlier commentators, such as R. B. Steele and C. A. Robinson, whose insight may illuminate the problem further, and whose works may be a part of the basis of the more modern views.

Tarn's biography of Alexander was issued in book form in 1948, based on his original version in the *Cambridge Ancient History* of 1926. His influence on Alexander-scholarship in English peaked immediately after the Second World War, but was damaged after criticism by scholars such as Ernst Badian a decade later. Tarn's Alexander was exposed, as Baynham puts it, as "a reflection of Tarn's own class ethics and Victorian idealism....driven by an almost Christian vision of the 'Brotherhood of Man.'"⁴² Although she also notes his prose to be "thrilling" and "seductive," she does not omit the "insidious" nature of his "faulty methodology," quoting his description of Alexander as the emissary of *Homonoia* to the rest of the world, who "crystallised it in the metaphor of a loving-cup."⁴³ Nevertheless, both his approach and the critics it has drawn attract further inquiry into the nature of Alexander the Great and his biographers

⁴¹ Cartledge (2004) 281.

⁴² Baynham (1998) 64.

⁴³ Baynham (1998) 64-65.

and their methods. Any kind of “faulty methodology” should have the natural reaction of sharpening the wits and methods of those who make it their life’s work to investigate the subject, and who hope to penetrate the mystery further by a comparison with the critics with whose conclusions they disagree.

Cartledge says that A. B. Bosworth is generally deemed the “most authoritative scholar currently working on matters Alexandrine,” in part because of his “definitive” commentary on Arrian.⁴⁴ He ranks the Alexander-biographies by Ulrich Wilcken (1967) and J. R. Hamilton (1973) as the “most soberly reliable introductions” to Alexander in the biographical flood. Ernst Badian has written many articles on Alexander since his initial criticism of Tarn in 1958. Philip Stadter is the author of numerous books and articles about Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*. N. G. L. Hammond has written extensively on both Alexander himself and on the five vulgate sources from which we draw much of our portrait.

The Modern Commentators’ Criticism of the Ancient Sources

Curtius has a reputation for being unreliable among some Alexander-historians. Robinson calls him a “lover of rhetorical bombast” when he notes that the dragging of Batis is found only in this source.⁴⁵ Hammond calls Curtius’ version of the Callisthenes matter “clearly fictitious,” and claims that it was composed in order to please his contemporary readers by giving them material on the theme of liberty and tyranny.⁴⁶ Borza claims that Curtius’ *History of Alexander the Great* is “riddled with impossible speeches...and contains a well-defined unflattering tradition,” and that if his main source is Cleitarchus, as is widely thought, then his own rendition deserves to be viewed with

⁴⁴ Cartledge (2004) 328.

⁴⁵ Robinson (1952) 170.

⁴⁶ Hammond (1997) 156.

suspicion.⁴⁷ Baynham writes that the Roman audience of Curtius was listening more closely to the literary style than for an accurate historical rendering.⁴⁸

Borza writes that Diodorus is "generally colourless, frequently confused on questions of chronology and geography, and lacking in the recognition of any great theme or motive in Alexander's life beyond the role of Fortune" in his destiny.⁴⁹ Welles notes that Diodorus is well-known for "unevenness," and in the Philip portion of his *Library of History*, "indulges in vague generalities," "often [failing] to get things right."⁵⁰ The work is also referred to as "an uncritical compilation."⁵¹ Borza calls him "notorious" among Alexander-historians for his common sloppiness, inconsistency, and for being "derivative without intelligence."⁵² Cartledge calls him "far from wholly reliable."⁵³ Hornblower remarks that the selections of information made by Diodorus "are on the simplest view [his] own and may therefore be unusually erratic," adding that the author "was on the lookout for colour so that what we have may not represent the original [of his sources] specially fairly."⁵⁴

Eugene Borza, in his introduction to Wilcken's biography of Alexander, says that "Justin may be dismissed," and quotes Wilcken's comment on the *Epitome* of Pompeius Trogus as a "wretched excerpt."⁵⁵ Heckel says that Justin's account of the Philotas

⁴⁷ Borza in Wilcken (1967) xxvii.

⁴⁸ Baynham (1998) 67.

⁴⁹ Borza, in Wilcken (1967) xxvi.

⁵⁰ Welles (1963) 5.

⁵¹ Howatson and Chilvers (1993) 181.

⁵² Borza (1972) 240.

⁵³ Cartledge (2004) 220.

⁵⁴ Hornblower (1994) 41.

⁵⁵ Borza, in Wilcken (1967) xxvi.

episode is “very compressed,” and that we can learn what happened “only from other sources.”⁵⁶

Regarding Arrian, A. B. Bosworth writes that he is “universally regarded as the most authoritative historian of Alexander.”⁵⁷ Cartledge says that Arrian’s history “is today regarded almost universally as the best surviving ancient work on Alexander.”⁵⁸ He cites Arrian’s painstaking and detailed rendering as well as his technical vocabulary and his attention to administrative affairs during the reign of Alexander. Truesdell S. Brown claims there is almost no doubt that Arrian is the most trustworthy source for Alexander’s life story, adding that the “so-called vulgate, underlying Diodorus Siculus, Justin, and Curtius Rufus, is definitely inferior.”⁵⁹ He says that the value of Arrian lies in his eyewitness sources, but concedes that these men are to be completely trusted in matters of historical accuracy. Borza agrees concerning Arrian’s use of contemporary sources, both as to their witnessing the actual events, and to their fallibility.⁶⁰

While Baynham records the view that Arrian is selective in his inclusion of material, as are all historians, she nonetheless affirms that he is not merely the mouthpiece of his two main sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus. She calls the *Anabasis* “a sophisticated blending of [Arrian’s] own source selection, arrangement, and literary structures.”⁶¹ Andrew Stewart calls Arrian’s work the “subtlest and traditionally most appealing.”⁶²

Given these opinions from notable Alexander-historians concerning four of the

⁵⁶ Heckel (1997) 210.

⁵⁷ Bosworth (1980) v-vi. He does admit, however, that “the *unqualified* acceptance of Arrian...has been the worst evil of Alexander scholarship.” The italics are my own.

⁵⁸ Cartledge (2004) 328.

⁵⁹ Brown (1949) 235.

⁶⁰ Borza, in Wilcken (1967) xxv.

⁶¹ Baynham (1998) 68.

⁶² Stewart (1993) 20.

five vulgate authors, as well as my own interest in Plutarch's claim of portrait-drawing (which was one of the original inspirations), I chose to focus my study, in the main, on Plutarch and Arrian.

Chapter 3

Plutarch

These texts of Plutarch and those of Arrian are quoted at length in order to assist the reader in understanding the two episodes to which I make reference in the body of this thesis.

Plutarch's Philotas/Parmenion (49)

[49] Ὁ μὲν οὖν Φιλώτας ἐπιβουλευόμενος οὕτως ἡγνόμενος καὶ συνῆν τῇ Ἀντιγόνη, πολλὰ καὶ πρὸς ὀργὴν καὶ μεγαλαυχίαν κατὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ῥήματα καὶ λόγους ἀνεπιτηδείους προϊέμενος. ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος, καίπερ καρτερᾶς ἐνδείξεως κατὰ τοῦ Φιλώτου προσπεσούσης, ἐκαρτέρησε σιωπῇ καὶ κατέσχευεν, εἴτε θαρρῶν τῇ Παρμενίωνος εὐνοίᾳ πρὸς αὐτόν, εἴτε δεδιώς τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν.

Ἐν δὲ τῷ τότε χρόνῳ Μακεδῶν ὄνομα Λίμνος ἐκ Χαλαίστρας {χαλεπῶς} ἐπιβουλεύων Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, Νικόμαχόν τινα τῶν νέων, πρὸς ὃν αὐτὸς ἐρωτικῶς εἶχεν, ἐπὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς πράξεως παρεκάλει. τοῦ δὲ μὴ δεξαμένου, φράσαντος δὲ τὰδελφῷ Κεβαλίνῳ τὴν πεῖραν, ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνος πρὸς Φιλώταν ἐκέλευσεν εἰσάγειν αὐτοὺς πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον, ὡς περὶ ἀναγκαίων ἔχοντας ἐντυχεῖν καὶ μεγάλων. ὁ δὲ Φιλώτας, ὅτι δὴ παθὼν (ἄδηλον γὰρ ἐστίν), οὐ παρήγεν αὐτούς, ὡς πρὸς ἄλλοις μείζοσι γινομένου τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τοῦτο δις ἐποίησεν. οἱ δὲ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἤδη τοῦ Φιλώτου τραπόμενοι πρὸς ἕτερον καὶ δι' ἐκείνου τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ προσαχθέντες, πρῶτον μὲν τὰ τοῦ Λίμνου κατεῖπον, ἔπειτα παρεδήλωσαν ἡσυχῇ τὸν Φιλώταν ὡς ἀμελήσειεν αὐτῶν δις ἐντυχόντων. καὶ τοῦτο δὴ σφόδρα παρώξυνε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, καὶ τοῦ πεμφθέντος ἐπὶ τὸν Λίμνον, ὡς ἡμύνετο συλλαμβανόμενος, ἀποκτείναντος αὐτόν, ἔτι μᾶλλον διεταράχθη, τὸν ἔλεγχον ἐκπεφευγέναι τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς νομίζων, καὶ πικρῶς ἔχων πρὸς τὸν Φιλώταν ἐπεσπάσατο τοὺς πάλαι μισοῦντας αὐτόν, ἤδη φανερῶς λέγοντας, ὡς ῥαθυμία τοῦ βασιλέως εἶη Λίμνον οἰομένου Χαλαιοστραῖον ἄνθρωπον ἐπιχειρῆσαι τολμήματι τοσούτῳ καθ' αὐτόν· ἀλλὰ τοῦτον μὲν ὑπερέτην εἶναι, μᾶλλον δ' ὄργανον ἀπὸ μείζονος ἀρχῆς ἀφιέμενον, ἐν ἐκείνοις δὲ τὴν ἐπιβουλήν ζητητέον οἷς μάλιστα

ταῦτα λανθάνειν συνέφερε. τοιούτοις λόγοις καὶ ὑπονοίαις ἀναπετάσαντος τὰ ὦτα τοῦ βασιλέως, ἐπῆγον ἤδη μυρίας κατὰ τοῦ Φιλώτου διαβολάς. ἐκ τούτου δὲ συλληφθεὶς ἀνεκρίνετο, τῶν ἐταίρων ἐφεστώτων ταῖς βασάνοις, Ἀλεξάνδρου δὲ κατακούοντος ἔξωθεν αὐλαίας παρατεταμένης· ὅτε δὴ καὶ φασιν αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν, οἰκτρὰς καὶ ταπεινὰς τοῦ Φιλώτου φωνὰς καὶ δεήσεις τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἡφαιστίωνα προσφέροντος· "οὕτω δὴ μαλακὸς ὢν ὃ Φιλῶτα καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐπεχείρεις πράγμασι τηλικούτοις;"

Ἀποθανόντος δὲ τοῦ Φιλώτου, καὶ Παρμενίωνα πέμψας εὐθύς εἰς Μηδίαν ἀνεῖλεν, ἄνδρα πολλὰ μὲν Φιλίππῳ συγκατεργασάμενον, μόνον δ' ἢ μάλιστα τῶν πρεσβυτέρων φίλων Ἀλέξανδρον εἰς Ἀσίαν ἐξορμήσαντα διαβῆναι, τριῶν δ' υἱῶν οὓς ἔσχεν ἐπὶ τῆς στρατιᾶς δύο μὲν ἐπιδόντα πρότερον ἀποθανόντας, τῷ δὲ τρίτῳ συναναιρεθέντα.

Ταῦτα πραχθέντα πολλοῖς τῶν φίλων φοβερὸν ἐποίησε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, μάλιστα δ' Ἀντιπάτρῳ, καὶ πρὸς Αἰτωλοὺς ἔπεμψε κρύφα, πίστεις διδοὺς καὶ λαμβάνων. ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ Ἀλέξανδρον Αἰτωλοὶ διὰ τὴν Οἰνιάδων ἀνάστασιν, ἣν πυθόμενος οὐκ Οἰνιάδων ἔφη παῖδας, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐπιθήσειν δίκην Αἰτωλοῖς.

Translation of Plutarch's Philotas/Parmenion⁶³

49 Now, Philotas was ignorant of the plot thus laid against him, and in his frequent interviews with Antigone would utter many angry and boastful speeches and many improper words against the king. But Alexander, although strong testimony against Philotas came to his ears, endured in silence and restrained himself, either because he had confidence in Parmenio's good will towards him, or because he feared the reputation and power of father and son. Meanwhile, however, a Macedonian named Limnus, from Chalaestra, conspired against Alexander's life, and invited Nicomachus, one of the young men, whose lover he was, to take part with him in the undertaking. Nicomachus would not accept the invitation, but told his brother Cebalinus of the attempt, and he, going to Philotas, ordered him to conduct them into the presence of Alexander, on the ground that there were matters of great importance about which they must see him. But Philotas, for whatever reason (and the reason is not known), would not conduct them in, alleging that the

⁶³ This and all subsequent translations of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* are by Bernadotte Perrin, 1919, from the Sintonis Teubner edition of 1839.

king was engaged on other matters of more importance. And he refused their request twice. ¶They now became suspicious of Philotas and applied to someone else, by whom they were brought before Alexander. In the first place they told him about the plot of Limnus, and then threw out veiled insinuations against Philotas, on the ground that he had neglected their petitions on two occasions. ¶This greatly incensed Alexander; and when he found that Limnus had defended himself against arrest and had therefore been killed by the man sent to fetch him, he was still more disturbed in mind, thinking that the proof of the plot had escaped him. And since he felt bitter towards Philotas he drew to himself those who had long hated the man, and they now said openly that the king took things too easily when he supposed that Limnus, a man of Chalaestra, had set his hand to a deed of so great daring on his own account; ¶nay, they said, he was only an assistant, or rather an instrument sent forth by a higher power, and enquiry into the plot should be made in those quarters where there was most interest in having it concealed. ¶After the king had once given ear to such speeches and suspicions, the enemies of Philotas brought up countless accusations against him. ¶Consequently he was arrested and put to the question, the companions of the king standing by at the torture, while Alexander himself listened behind a stretch of tapestry. ¶Here, as we are told, on hearing Philotas beset Hephaestion with abject cries and supplications, he said: "So faint-hearted thou art, Philotas, and so unmanly, couldst thou have set hand to so great an undertaking?" ¶After Philotas had been put to death, Alexander sent at once into Media and dispatched Parmenio also, a man whose achievements with Philip had been many, and who was the only one of Alexander's older friends, or the principal one, to urge his crossing into Asia, and who, of the three sons that were his, had seen two killed on the expedition before this, and was now put to death along with the third.

These actions made Alexander an object of fear to many of his friends, and particularly to Antipater, who sent secretly to the Aetolians and entered into an alliance with them. ¶For the Aetolians also were in fear of Alexander, because they had destroyed the city of the Oeniadae, and because Alexander, on learning of it, had said that it would not be the sons of the Oeniadae, but he himself who would punish the Aetolians.

Plutarch's Cleitus (50-52)

[50] Οὐ πολλῶ δ' ὕστερον συνηνέχθη καὶ τὰ περὶ Κλεῖτον, οὕτω μὲν ἀπλῶς πυθομένοις τῶν κατὰ Φιλώταν ἀγριώτερα· λόγῳ μέντοι συντιθέντες ἅμα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τὸν καιρὸν, οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης, ἀλλὰ δυστυχία τινὶ ταῦθ' εὐρίσκομεν πεπραγμένα τοῦ βασιλέως, ὀργὴν καὶ μέθην πρόφασιν τῷ Κλεῖτου δαίμονι παρασχόντος. ἐπράχθη δ' οὕτως. ἤκόν τινες ὁπώραν Ἑλληνικὴν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης τῷ βασιλεῖ κομίζοντες. ὁ δὲ θαυμάσας τὴν ἀκμὴν καὶ τὸ κάλλος, ἐκάλει τὸν Κλεῖτον, ἐπιδεῖξαι καὶ μεταδοῦναι βουλόμενος. ὁ δὲ θύων μὲν ἐτύγχανεν, ἀφείς δὲ τὴν θυσίαν ἐβάδιζε, καὶ τρία τῶν κατεσπεισμένων προβάτων ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ. πυθόμενος δ' ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀνεκοινοῦτο τοῖς μάντεσιν Ἀριστάνδρῳ καὶ Κλεομένει τῷ Λάκωνι· φησάντων δὲ πονηρὸν εἶναι τὸ σημεῖον, ἐκέλευσεν ἐκθύσασθαι κατὰ τάχος ὑπὲρ τοῦ Κλεῖτου· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἡμέρα τρίτη κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους ἰδεῖν ὄψιν ἄτοπον· δόξαι γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸν Κλεῖτον μετὰ τῶν Παρμενίωνος υἱῶν ἐν μέλασιν ἱματίοις καθέζεσθαι, τεθνηκότων ἀπάντων. οὐ μὲν ἔφθασεν ὁ Κλεῖτος ἐκθυσάμενος, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἦκε, τεθυκότος τοῦ βασιλέως Διοσκούροις. πότου δὲ νεανικοῦ συρραγέντος, ἦδετο ποιήματα Πραρίχου τινός, ὡς δὲ φασιν ἔνιοι Πιερίωνος, εἰς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς πεποιημένα τοὺς ἔναγχος ἡττημένους ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἐπ' αἰσχύνῃ καὶ γέλῳτι. τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων δυσχεραίνοντων καὶ λοιδορούντων τὸν τε ποιητὴν καὶ τὸν ἄδοντα, τοῦ δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἡδέως ἀκροωμένων καὶ λέγειν κελεύοντων, ὁ Κλεῖτος ἤδη μεθύων, καὶ φύσει τραχὺς ὢν πρὸς ὀργὴν καὶ αὐθάδης, ἡγανάκτει μάλιστα, φάσκων οὐ καλῶς ἐν βαρβάροις καὶ πολεμίοις ὑβρίζεσθαι Μακεδόνας, πολὺ βελτίονας τῶν γελώντων, εἰ καὶ δυστυχία κέχρηται. φήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου τὸν Κλεῖτον αὐτῷ συνηγορεῖν, δυστυχίαν ἀποφαίνοντα τὴν δειλίαν, ἐπαναστὰς ὁ Κλεῖτος "αὕτη μέντοι ς'" εἶπεν "ἡ δειλία τὸν ἐκ θεῶν, ἥδη τῷ Σπιθριδάτου ξίφει τὸν νῶτον ἐπιτρέποντα, περιεποίησε, καὶ τῷ Μακεδόνων αἵματι καὶ τοῖς τραύμασι τούτοις ἐγένου τηλικούτος, ὥστ' Ἀμμωνι σαυτὸν εἰσποιεῖν, ἀπειπάμενος Φίλιππον".

[51] Παροξυνθεὶς οὖν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος "ἢ ταῦτ'" εἶπεν "ὦ κακὴ κεφαλὴ σὺ περὶ ἡμῶν ἐκάστοτε λέγων καὶ διαστασιάζων

Μακεδόνας χαιρήσειν νομίζεις;" "ἀλλ' οὐδὲ νῦν" ἔφη "χαίρομεν Ἀλέξανδρε, τοιαῦτα τέλη τῶν πόνων κομιζόμενοι, μακαρίζομεν δὲ τοὺς ἤδη τεθνηκότας, πρὶν ἐπιθεῖν Μηδικαῖς ῥάβδοις ξαινομένους Μακεδόνας, καὶ Περσῶν δεομένους ἵνα τῷ βασιλεῖ προσέλθωμεν". τοιαῦτα τοῦ Κλείτου παρρησιαζομένου, καὶ τῶν περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον ἀντανισταμένων καὶ λοιδορούντων αὐτόν, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι κατέχειν ἐπειρῶντο τὸν θόρυβον. ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος ἀποστραφεὶς πρὸς Ξενόδοχον τὸν Καρδιανὸν καὶ τὸν Κολοφώνιον Ἀρτέμιον, "οὐ δοκοῦσιν" εἶπεν "ὑμῖν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐν τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ὥσπερ ἐν θηρίοις ἡμίθεοι περιπατεῖν;" τοῦ δὲ Κλείτου μὴ εἰκοντος, ἀλλ' εἰς μέσον ἔαν ἃ βούλεται λέγειν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον κελεύοντος, ἢ μὴ καλεῖν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἄνδρας ἐλευθέρους καὶ παρρησίαν ἔχοντας, ἀλλὰ μετὰ βαρβάρων ζῆν καὶ ἀνδραπόδων, οἱ τὴν Περσικὴν ζώνην καὶ τὸν διάλευκον αὐτοῦ χιτῶνα προσκυνήσουσιν, οὐκέτι φέρων τὴν ὀργὴν Ἀλέξανδρος, μῆλων παρακειμένων ἐνὶ βαλῶν ἔπαισεν αὐτόν καὶ τὸ ἐγχειρίδιον ἐζήτει. τῶν δὲ σωματοφυλάκων ἑνὸς Ἀριστοφάνους φθάσαντος ὑφελέσθαι, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περιεχόντων καὶ δεομένων, ἀναπηδήσας ἀνεβόα Μακεδονιστὶ καλῶν τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς· τοῦτο δ' ἦν σύμβολον θορύβου μεγάλου· καὶ τὸν σαλπικτὴν ἐκέλευσε σημαίνειν καὶ πύξ ἔπαισεν ὥς διατρίβοντα καὶ μὴ βουλόμενον. οὗτος μὲν οὖν ὕστερον εὐδοκίμησεν, ὥς τοῦ μὴ συνταραχθῆναι τὸ στρατόπεδον αἰτιώτατος γενόμενος. τὸν δὲ Κλεῖτον οὐχ ὑφίεμενον οἱ φίλοι μόλις ἐξέωσαν τοῦ ἀνδρῶνος· ὁ δὲ κατ' ἄλλας θύρας αὐθις εἰσῆει, μάλ' ὀλιγώρως καὶ θρασέως Εὐριπίδου τὰ ἐξ Ἀνδρομάχης ἱαμβεῖα ταῦτα περαίνων·

οἷμοι, καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ὥς κακῶς νομίζεται.

Οὕτω δὴ λαβὼν παρὰ τινος τῶν δορυφόρων Ἀλέξανδρος αἰχμὴν, ἀπαντῶντα τὸν Κλεῖτον αὐτῷ καὶ παράγοντα τὸ πρὸ τῆς θύρας παρακάλυμμα διελαύνει. πεσόντος δὲ μετὰ στεναγμοῦ καὶ βρυχήματος, εὐθὺς ἀφῆκεν ὁ θυμὸς αὐτόν, καὶ γενόμενος παρ' ἑαυτῷ, καὶ τοὺς φίλους ἰδὼν ἀφώνους ἐστῶτας, ἐλκύσασθαι μὲν ἐκ τοῦ νεκροῦ τὴν αἰχμὴν ἔφθασε, παῖσαι δ' ἑαυτὸν ὀρμήσας παρὰ τὸν τράχηλον ἐπεσχέθη, τῶν σωματοφυλάκων τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ λαβόντων καὶ τὸ σῶμα βίᾳ παρενεγκόντων εἰς τὸν θάλαμον.

[52] Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν τε νύκτα κακῶς κλαίων διήνεγκε, καὶ τὴν ἐπιοῦσαν ἡμέραν ἤδη τῷ βοᾷν καὶ θρηνεῖν ἀπειρηκῶς ἀναυδος ἔκειτο, βαρεῖς ἀναφέρων στεναγμούς, δέισαντες οἱ φίλοι τὴν ἀποσιώπησιν εἰσῆλθον βίᾳ. καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων οὐ προσίετο τοὺς λόγους, Ἀριστάνδρου δὲ τοῦ μάντεως ὑπομιμνήσκοντος αὐτὸν τὴν τ' ὄψιν ἣν εἶδε περὶ τοῦ Κλείτου καὶ τὸ σημεῖον, ὥς δὴ πάλαι καθειμαρμένων τούτων, ἔδοξεν ἐνδιδόναι.

Διὸ Καλλισθένην τε τὸν φιλόσοφον παρεισήγαγον, Ἀριστοτέλους οἰκεῖον ὄντα, καὶ τὸν Ἀβδηρίτην Ἀνάξαρχον. ὧν Καλλισθένης μὲν ἠθικῶς ἐπειρᾶτο καὶ πράως ὑποδυόμενος τῷ λόγῳ καὶ περιῶν ἀλύπως λαβέσθαι τοῦ πάθους, ὁ δ' Ἀνάξαρχος ἰδίαν τινὰ πορευόμενος ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὁδὸν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ, καὶ δόξαν εἰληφῶς ὑπεροψίας καὶ ὀλιγωρίας τῶν συνήθων, εὐθύς εἰσελθὼν ἀνεβόησεν "οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀλέξανδρος, εἰς ὃν ἡ οἰκουμένη νῦν ἀποβλέπει ὁ δ' ἔρριπται κλαίων ὥσπερ ἀνδράποδον, ἀνθρώπων νόμον καὶ ψόγον δεδοικώς, οἷς αὐτὸν προσήκει νόμον εἶναι καὶ ὄρον τῶν δικαίων, ἐπεὶ περ ἄρχειν καὶ κρατεῖν νενίκηκεν, ἀλλὰ μὴ δουλεύειν ὑπὸ κενῆς δόξης κεκρατημένον". "οὐκ οἶσθ'" εἶπεν "ὅτι τὴν Δίκην ἔχει πάρεδρον ὁ Ζεὺς καὶ τὴν Θέμιν, ἵνα πᾶν τὸ πραχθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ κρατοῦντος θεμιτὸν ᾖ καὶ δίκαιον;" τοιούτοις τισὶ λόγοις χρησάμενος ὁ Ἀνάξαρχος, τὸ μὲν πάθος ἐκούφισε τοῦ βασιλέως, τὸ δ' ἦθος εἰς πολλὰ χαυνότερον καὶ παρανομώτερον ἐποίησεν, αὐτὸν δὲ δαιμονίως ἐνήρμοσε, καὶ τοῦ Καλλισθένους τὴν ὁμιλίαν, οὐδ' ἄλλως ἐπίχαριν διὰ τὸ αὐστηρὸν οὔσαν, προσδιέβαλε.

Λέγεται δὲ ποτε παρὰ δεῖπνον ὑπὲρ ὥρων καὶ κράσεως τοῦ περιέχοντος λόγων ὄντων τὸν Καλλισθένην, μετέχοντα δόξης τοῖς {δὲ} λέγουσι τάκεϊ μᾶλλον εἶναι ψυχρὰ καὶ δυσχείμερα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν, ἐναντιουμένου τοῦ Ἀναάρχου καὶ φιλονικοῦντος, εἰπεῖν "ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀνάγκη σοὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων ὁμολογεῖν εἶναι ψυχρότερα· σὺ γὰρ ἐκεῖ μὲν ἐν τρίβωνι διεχείμαζες, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τρεῖς ἐπιβεβλημένος δάπιδας κατὰκεισαι". τὸν μὲν οὖν Ἀνάξαρχον καὶ τοῦτο προσπαρώξυνε.

Translation of Plutarch's Cleitus

50 Not long afterwards came the affair of Cleitus, which those who simply learn the immediate circumstances will think more savage than that

of Philotas; if we take into consideration, however, alike the cause and the time, we find that it did not happen of set purpose, but through some misfortune of the king, whose anger and intoxication furnished occasion for the evil genius of Cleitus. It happened on this wise. Some people came bringing Greek fruit to the king from the sea-board. He admired its perfection and beauty and called Cleitus, wishing to show it to him and share it with him. It chanced that Cleitus was sacrificing, but he gave up the sacrifice and came; and three of the sheep on which libations had already been poured came following after him. When the king learned of this circumstance, he imparted it to his soothsayers, Aristander and Cleomantis the Lacedaemonian. Then, on their telling him that the omen was bad, he ordered them to sacrifice in all haste for the safety of Cleitus. For he himself, two days before this, had seen a strange vision in his sleep; he thought he saw Cleitus sitting with the sons of Parmenio in black robes, and all were dead. However, Cleitus did not finish his sacrifice, but came at once to the supper of the king, who had sacrificed to the Dioscuri. After boisterous drinking was under way, verses were sung which had been composed by a certain Pranichus, or, as some say, Pierio, to shame and ridicule the generals who had lately been defeated by the Barbarians. The older guests were annoyed at this and railed at both the poet and the singer, but Alexander and those about him listened with delight and bade the singer go on. Then Cleitus, who was already drunk and naturally of a harsh temper and wilful, was more than ever vexed, and insisted that it was not well done, when among Barbarians and enemies, to insult Macedonians who were far better men than those who laughed at them, even though they had met with misfortune. And when Alexander declared that Cleitus was pleading his own cause when he gave cowardice the name of misfortune, Cleitus sprang to his feet and said: "It was this cowardice of mine, however, that saved thy life, god-born as thou art, when thou wast already turning thy back upon the spear of Spithridates; and it is by the blood of Macedonians, and by these wounds, that thou art become so great as to disown Philip and make thyself son to Ammon."

51 Thoroughly incensed, then, Alexander said: "Base fellow, dost thou think to speak thus of me at all times, and to raise faction among Macedonians, with impunity?" "Nay," said Cleitus, "not even now do we enjoy impunity, since such are the rewards we get for our toils; and we pronounce those happy who are already dead, and did not live to see us Macedonians thrashed with Median rods, or begging Persians in order to get audience with our king." So spake Cleitus in all boldness, and those about Alexander sprang up to confront him and reviled him, while the elder men tried to quell the tumult. Then Alexander, turning to Xenodochus of Cardia and Artemus of Colophon, said: "Do not the Greeks appear to you to walk about among Macedonians like demi-gods among wild beasts?" Cleitus, however, would not yield, but called on Alexander to speak out freely what he wished to say, or else not to invite

to supper men who were free and spoke their minds, but to live with Barbarians and slaves, who would do obeisance to his white tunic and Persian girdle. Then 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. ¶But one of his body-guards, Aristophanes, conveyed it away before he could lay his hands on it, and the rest surrounded him and begged him to desist, whereupon he sprang to his feet and called out in Macedonian speech a summons to his corps of guards (and this was a sign of great disturbance), and ordered the trumpeter to sound, and smote him with his fist because he hesitated and was unwilling to do so. ¶This man, then, was afterwards held in high esteem on the ground that it was due to him more than to anyone else that the camp was not thrown into commotion. ¶But Cleitus would not give in, and with much ado his friends pushed him out of the banquet-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. ¶No sooner had Cleitus fallen with a roar and a groan than the king's anger departed from him. ¶And when he was come to himself and beheld his friends standing speechless, he drew the spear from the dead body and would have dashed it into his own throat, had not his body-guards prevented this by seizing his hands and carrying him by force to his chamber.

52 Here he spent the night and the following day in bitter lamentations, and at last lay speechless, worn out with his cries and wailing, heaving deep groans. Then his friends, alarmed at his silence, forced their way in. ¶To what the others said he would pay no attention, but when Aristander the seer reminded him of the vision he had seen concerning Cleitus, and of the omen, assuring him that all this had long ago been decreed by fate, he seemed to be less obdurate. ¶Therefore they brought in to him Callisthenes the philosopher, who was a relative of Aristotle, and Anaxarchus of Abdera. Of these, Callisthenes tried by considerate and gentle methods to alleviate the king's suffering, employing insinuation and circumlocution so as to avoid giving pain; but Anaxarchus, who had always taken a path of his own in philosophy, and had acquired a reputation for despising and slighting his associates, shouted out as soon as he came in: ¶"Here is Alexander, to whom the whole world is now looking; but he lies on the floor weeping like a slave, in fear of the law and the censure of men, unto whom he himself should be

a law and a measure of justice, since he has conquered the right to rule and mastery, instead of submitting like a slave to the mastery of a vain opinion. "Knowest thou not," said he, "that Zeus had Justice and Law seated beside him, in order that everything that is done by the master of the world may be lawful and just?" By using some such arguments as these Anaxarchus succeeded in lightening the suffering of the king, it is true, but rendered his disposition in many ways more vainglorious and lawless; he also made himself wonderfully liked by the king, and brought the intercourse of Callisthenes with him, which had always been unpleasant because of the man's austerity, into additional disfavour.

It is said that once at supper the conversation turned upon seasons and weather, and that Callisthenes, who held with those who maintain that it is more cold and wintry there than in Greece, was stoutly opposed by Anaxarchus, whereupon he said: "You surely must admit that it is colder here than there; for there you used to go about in winter in a cloak merely, but here you recline at table with three rugs thrown over you." Of course this also added to the irritation of Anaxarchus.

Plutarch's Life and Works

Plutarch was born around the year 46 A D in Chaeronaea. He was known as a philosophy teacher of an eclectic or syncretic kind,⁶⁴ but was most closely identified with Platonism, which he studied in Athens with the Egyptian Platonist philosopher Ammonius. Born into a wealthy family, he travelled widely and possessed a large library. He was made consul and he later attained the post of procurator of Achaëa, possibly under Hadrian. He lived in Rome from 75 to 90. In approximately 95, he was made priest of Delphi, a post he evidently held until his death, around 120. Russell calls Delphi the "main sphere of Plutarch's practical achievement."⁶⁵ Most of his writings were produced during or after the middle of his life.

Most famous as the author of the *Parallel Lives* and a series of moral essays, Plutarch "forged and thoroughly controlled a remarkably facile and rich linguistic instrument," which was a "mode of expression exactly tuned to his attitudes to the world."⁶⁶ Included in his biographies and moral essays are displays of his knowledge of physics, zoology, botany, grammar and mathematics. Russell says that Plutarch's main audience were those who had an education, a good imagination and the leisure to read such tracts.⁶⁷

Plutarch's *Moralia*

There are seventy-eight extant *Moralia*, one group dealing with moral philosophy and another being rhetorical. They treat such topics as the education of children, moral virtue, the ills of flattery, quelling habitual anger, how to read poetry and the defence of

⁶⁴ Babbitt (1960) xiv; Barrow (1967) 58, 72; Hamilton (1969) xix.

⁶⁵ Russell (1973) 3.

⁶⁶ Russell (1973) 20.

⁶⁷ Russell (1973) 43.

traditional beliefs. Teaching his readers how to become better people is the broadest subject of these essays. Nearly a third of Plutarch's non-biographical works are concerned directly with ethical issues.

He took a reverent view toward all of humanity in the belief that at the base of all things was goodness. This may indeed influence his portrait of Alexander, convinced that the man was only at times erratic in his behaviour, and was sincerely dedicated to forming a cohesive government among nations. Studying the great figures of history will give one a model for behaviour, and by learning and putting the knowledge to virtuous use, one can act without becoming a victim to one's own mistakes or to circumstances. Brenk, referring to Hamilton's description of the *Moralia* as "epideictic display pieces devoid of any serious purpose,"⁶⁸ writes that this complaint is excessive.⁶⁹ Russell claims that there is a tendency for Plutarch to become irrelevant and structurally loose in the *Moralia*.⁷⁰

Plutarch's *Lives* and the *Life of Alexander*

Russell states that the central focus of Plutarch's philosophical interest was ethics.⁷¹ His main purpose in biography was not to advance the plot but rather to describe and evaluate character.⁷² As a moral writer he was concerned with how his works could influence his readers' everyday virtue (Babbitt calls him a man who strove "to be a physician of the mind"⁷³), and he wanted to explore how men who are famous for some exploit have successfully lived their lives, or how they have destroyed

⁶⁸ Brenk (1977) 156, n. 12.

⁶⁹ Brenk (1977) xxxi.

⁷⁰ Russell (1973) 100.

⁷¹ Russell (1973) 69.

⁷² Russell (1973) 115.

⁷³ Babbitt (1960) xv.

themselves in their attempts at glory. In the introduction to the *Life of Alexander* (1.2-3), he says specifically for this *Life*⁷⁴:

οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἥθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. ὥστερ οὖν οἱ ζῳγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἥθος ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἐκάστου βίον, ἑάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας.

I am not writing history but biography, and the most outstanding exploits do not always have the property of revealing the goodness or badness of the agent; often in fact, a casual action, the odd phrase, or a jest reveals character better than battles involving the loss of thousands upon thousands of lives, huge troop movements, and whole cities besieged. And so, just as a painter reproduces his subject's likeness by concentrating on the face and the expression of the eyes, by means of which character is revealed, and pays hardly any attention to the rest of the body, I must be allowed to devote more time to those aspects which indicate a person's mind and to use these to portray the life of each of my subjects.

Plutarch "is not and does not want to be an original thinker," says Wilamowitz-Möllerndorf.⁷⁵ Wardman says that Plutarch's *Lives* are mainly concerned with virtues.⁷⁶ He is not interested in fame, which is not a virtue to him. He is a teacher who wants us to improve our lives with the help of our native powers of reason. These portraits are of individuals and their grand successes and occasionally grand failures; the influence on contemporary issues is not at the forefront of the *Lives*. Grant writes that Plutarch's

⁷⁴ Duff (1999, 21) believes that this information is meant for the Alexander/Caesar *Lives* only, and cannot be taken as the universal Plutarchean rule. See also Wardman (1977) 260.

⁷⁵ Von Wilamowitz-Möllerndorf (1995) 56.

⁷⁶ Wardman (1974) 44.

moral inclination in the *Lives* shows him to be an essayist rather than a biographer, by our understanding of the terms.⁷⁷ Plutarch's *Lives* have a general form, being comprised of the subject's nature and early influences, his career in politics and the zenith of his fortune and finally his death and the conclusion. We find that the anecdotal information is sometimes taken out of its chronological context in order to make a point.

Plutarch knew that presenting the life of a historical character necessitated revealing both the good and bad in that man. All lives are made of both good and bad, and to represent only the good was a distortion of the truth.⁷⁸ His *Life of Demetrius* explains that where there is a great nature which produces great virtue, there is also room and potential for great vice. In order to propagate the desired virtue, a biographer must take all character facets into consideration in order to select what should be imitated and what should be avoided.⁷⁹ While the men in his *Lives* can generally be held up as moral *exempla*, there are a few, such as Demetrius and Antony, who are to be studied as negative models; the unfavourable moments in an otherwise great man's life can also be used as moral lessons in their own right. When Plutarch presents us with a character we are given the chance to observe and imitate; arousal of the reader to action on the basis of these portraits is his intention. Where we find things he would not want us to imitate, we are warned off by a vice such as immoderation which deserves and receives punishment.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Hamilton believes that Plutarch is "unduly charitable" regarding Alexander's killings of his intimates.⁸¹ Grant says that Plutarch is too willing to see virtue where it

⁷⁷ Grant (1970) 316.

⁷⁸ Barrow (1967) 55.

⁷⁹ 1.7.

⁸⁰ Gianakaris (1970a) 68.

⁸¹ Hamilton (1969) lxii.

sometimes is not present.⁸²

Grant claims that Plutarch barely provides a historical background for his subjects, and with the local trappings stripped away, the characters are more accessible to us. At the same time, however, he has almost removed them from the actual climate which formed their essence. He "possessed little real understanding of the past" and interprets his subjects in terms of his own historical milieu.⁸³ Hamilton agrees, saying that Plutarch did not succeed in studying Alexander against the correct historical background, and was incapable of thinking himself back into that context, as in the case of the Macedonian custom of heavy drinking, which was not taken into consideration.⁸⁴ On the other hand, by recording his *Lives* so long after his characters have passed on, Plutarch has the opportunity of concentrating on each man as an individual with faults and virtues, and not as the culmination of history in a specific time and place. His audience can find more properly historical material if they want that instead or in addition.⁸⁵ Grant further complains that Plutarch's method allows for no dynamic biography, since the character is set from birth or youth and is therefore fulfilled along those lines; Plutarch begins with his conclusions and then proceeds to prove them. Although Hamilton claims that Plutarch "imposes his own interpretation of his hero's character on the narrative at the expense of the facts," he also trusts that he is neither "credulous" nor "uncritical."⁸⁶

The value of the *Life of Alexander* is increased due to loss of older sources as well as the holes in the other vulgate information; Curtius' first two books are lost and the tenth is lacunose, Justin's *Epitome* is a very short rendition of the expedition, Diodorus is

⁸² Grant (1970) 316.

⁸³ Grant (1970) 323.

⁸⁴ Hamilton (1965) 124.

⁸⁵ Grant (1970) 315.

⁸⁶ Hamilton (1969) xlvi.

missing several key stories, and there appears to be a “substantial *lacuna*” in Arrian’s last book.⁸⁷ A good deal of Plutarch’s information on Alexander’s early days is found only in the *Life*, although this also means that its accuracy cannot be verified elsewhere. Stadter says that this *Life*’s value as a piece of written history is to be found in the stories’ variety.⁸⁸

Hamilton calls this work generally apologetic,⁸⁹ but also comments that the character drawn herein is more than one-sided. Contrary to Plutarch’s portrayal of Alexander’s moral deterioration, Hamilton says that there was less degeneration than is suggested; the destruction of all potential rivals at his accession should give us a clear idea of Alexander’s cruelty from the beginning. Hamilton says that the information found in chapters 48 through 55 is Plutarch’s greatest gift to the Alexander-tradition, since we are indebted to him here for the lifelike images of Philotas and Cleitus, along with the dissent, jealousy and enmity present in the king’s retinue.⁹⁰ There is a “keen sense of dramatic effect” present in the scenes involving Philip of Acarnania and the taming of Bucephalas. However, Plutarch has not restrained himself regarding brevity, which he admired in other writers, since he is “discursive by nature.”⁹¹ Hamilton states that Plutarch’s style, which tended toward expansion, is best displayed by passages such as the Cleitus episode, in which it is allowed to flower.⁹²

⁸⁷ Hamilton (1969) lxiv.

⁸⁸ Stadter, in Waterfield (1998) 310.

⁸⁹ Hamilton (1969) lxii.

⁹⁰ Hamilton (1969) lxvi.

⁹¹ Hamilton (1969) lxviii.

⁹² Hamilton (1969) lxix.

Plutarch on Character

Plutarch believes that we need passions but that φρόνησις (defined by Hamilton as “practical reason”⁹³) must steer these passions if one is to behave according to a healthy mean. Plutarch’s purpose is to investigate and then to suggest the proper governing of emotions between excesses and defects in character.⁹⁴ The control of anger is true bravery, and this is a virtue that Alexander is forced to find within himself, since his most destructive passion is θυμός. Though a man may lose himself in the midst of his native failings, which he should be consciously trying to moderate, it is better to do wrong in that respect than by forethought (προαίρεσις).⁹⁵ If one of Plutarch’s heroes commits a moral error, it is commonly due to some lack of moderation or reason.⁹⁶ If a man is rational, he has the ability to act according to objectivity or known principles, and not simply with a mindless, automatic response to some new situation.⁹⁷ A man’s character is shown by his action, which he himself initiates, whether for its own purpose or in reaction to the actions of another.⁹⁸ Since we are not just thoughtless mechanisms, Plutarch believes, we are endowed with reasonable sensitivity to the circumstances of humanity. He was aware of this complex working of morality and therefore knew that he could not declare a man to be wholly good or wholly bad.⁹⁹ There are degrees of quality in behaviour and general character, as well as mitigating circumstances. For example, a man such as Coriolanus may be excused for acting against Rome, for if an action lacking in virtue takes place in the heat of emotion, it can be more easily forgiven than if it were

⁹³ Hamilton (1969) xxi.

⁹⁴ Russell (1973) 85.

⁹⁵ Wardman (1974) 113.

⁹⁶ Gianakaris (1970a) 122.

⁹⁷ Gianakaris (1970a) xvii.

⁹⁸ Barrow (1967) 57-58.

⁹⁹ Gianakaris (1970a) xviii.

to be performed with devious calculation.¹⁰⁰ This sentiment should be kept in mind when reading the *Life of Alexander*, and especially the Cleitus episode.

Ἀρετή is a conscious and rational choice,¹⁰¹ and a man who is ἀριστός could not choose to be κακός at the same time.¹⁰² Philosophy must teach a man how to prepare his nature for meetings with anger and other passions.¹⁰³ Φύσις is a man's innate character while his ἔθος is formed by habituation.¹⁰⁴ The φύσις is shaped by age, as well as education, which can also diminish or conceal it, but not change its foundation or efface it, in most cases.¹⁰⁵ While the φύσις can degenerate, the ἔθος can be mutated on the basis of external influences,¹⁰⁶ while the ἔξις is a permanent and irrational state of the soul.¹⁰⁷ The φύσις can help to make predictions for later behaviour patterns, as Alexander's θυμός will show itself in his impetuosity and murderous rage.

Plutarch's Alexander

Since Alexander is basically portrayed by Plutarch as a heroic figure, he must either defend Alexander's faults or acknowledge them as faults, while defending Alexander in general. Most notable among the reported crimes of Alexander, of course, are the killings of Philotas, Parmenion and Cleitus. Plutarch would be presenting us with a murderer as his hero if he were to place full responsibility for these deaths on the king, so he puts much of the blame on courtiers who seek to influence Alexander by means of

¹⁰⁰ Wardman (1974) 113.

¹⁰¹ Gill (1983) 479.

¹⁰² Gill (1983) 480.

¹⁰³ Hamilton (1969) xxi.

¹⁰⁴ Swain (1989b) 63.

¹⁰⁵ Russell (1966) 144.

¹⁰⁶ Russell (1966) 147.

¹⁰⁷ Swain (1989b) 63.

flattery. Their wicked presence blinds him to right action and he cannot then shoulder the full burden of three murders.

Plutarch faces difficulty when he is presented with Alexander's magnificent prosperity and attachment to wine.¹⁰⁸ The king had to be shown as the victim of the tensions within himself (4.1-8). Unfortunately, the dryness and heat of his nature gives him no choice but to drink,¹⁰⁹ which does not serve him well as far as rational judgment is concerned. This defect in his φύσις presents Alexander with the heroic challenge of attempting to keep a firm hold on his own temper. If he can do this well, he is displaying strength and moral restraint. And he must succeed most of the time, for we are told by Plutarch that Alexander is a model of self-restraint. He is swayed neither by monetary wealth nor rich food nor the pleasures of the flesh, whether male or female. We are provided with a shadow character, his horse Bucephalas, who is as difficult to restrain and coerce as Alexander, but as easy to persuade.¹¹⁰ Plutarch has high respect for this Macedonian youth because evidently both biographer and subject believe that the ability to conquer oneself is superior to the conquest of other men.¹¹¹ Mossman points out that θυμός, which is a vice in Plutarch's essay "On the Control of Anger", is used more ambiguously in the *Life of Alexander*.¹¹² Although being θυμοειδής may have harmful consequences, and therefore may be a characteristic to be consciously insulated against, there is a need to possess this trait if one is a man of action.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Gill (1983) 480.

¹⁰⁹ Sansone (1980) 73. See also Plut. *Al.* 4.3-4.

¹¹⁰ 6.1; 7.1.

¹¹¹ 21.4.

¹¹² Mossman (1988) 85.

¹¹³ Wardman (1955) 107.

Tragedy as a Theme in the *Life of Alexander*

Of course if the reader can empathise with the biographical subject, perhaps his actions will seem more understandable and less deserving of condemnation. Duff suggests that the subject's dark side is shown with tragic associations; either the man or his fortune changes for the worse.¹¹⁴ Mossman writes that we feel pity and fear when we contemplate that inevitable change or doom which will envelop a character. In the case of Alexander, we hear precautions from his seers, the display of dramatic grief, followed by an attempt at suicide. Mossman believes that it is unusual to come across tragic allusions in an encomiastic biography, as they normally imply "adverse moral judgement and censure."¹¹⁵ Grant suggests that Plutarch has set up his characters and their lives in terms of a play in an enormous theatre.¹¹⁶ Hornblower, referring to Mossman, says that Plutarch turned the story of Alexander into a tragedy, or more precisely, that epic (for the positive aspects) and tragic techniques (for the negative) were blended.¹¹⁷ Barrow says that it almost appears as though Plutarch views his own work as "dramatic writing."¹¹⁸

Flattery as a Dangerous Practice

Plutarch speaks of the insidious influence of flatterers in his moral essay, "How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend." Flattery enters the picture because it is allowed to make an entrance.¹¹⁹ Plutarch thinks that it is no unnatural craving to desire virtues, which means that if people who gather around some individual are insisting that he does, in fact, possess them, he is apt to believe these words. Furthermore, this type of desire is not

¹¹⁴ Duff (1999) 65.

¹¹⁵ Mossman (1988) 84.

¹¹⁶ Grant (1970) 319.

¹¹⁷ Hornblower (1994) 44-45.

¹¹⁸ Barrow (1967) 58.

¹¹⁹ *Mor.* 48F.

unexpectedly found in individuals who are involved in grand achievements.¹²⁰ Since friendship is the most pleasing thing which can engage a man, we cannot really blame this man, who is, in fact, a victim for not recognizing that flatterers are unconcerned for his well-being, but are vastly interested in the inflation of his self-image and their own rewards.¹²¹

Once a man becomes the plaything of flatterers, he is likely to exhibit worse *πικρία*, *ἀκροχιλία* and *ἀπιστία* than men who have not been tainted by flattery.¹²² We see Alexander demonstrate his identification with all of these. Tellingly, Plutarch also mentions that one must be on guard when under the harmful influence of alcohol, which combines with flattery to destroy a man's reason. He warns that bad timing and *παρρησία* can be suicide for the unwary.¹²³ Cleitus, therefore, has little chance of getting away with his cutting opinions in such circumstances, and Alexander has equally slight odds of being able to control himself. A man's anger is roused by drink, and so the combination of frankness, alcohol and potential rage will probably be deadly.

¹²⁰ *Mor.* 49B.

¹²¹ *Mor.* 51B.

¹²² *Mor.* 53E.

¹²³ *Mor.* 68D.

Chapter 4

Arrian

Arrian's Philotas/Parmenion (3.26.1-3.26.4)

3.26.1 Ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὴν Φιλῶτα ἐπιβουλὴν τοῦ Παρμενίωνος ἔμαθεν Ἀλέξανδρος, καὶ λέγει Πτολεμαῖος καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος, ὅτι προσηγγελμένη <μὲν ἦν> ἤδη οἱ καὶ πρότερον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, οὐ μέντοι πιστὴ γε ἐφάνη τῆς τε φιλίας τῆς πάλαι ἔνεκα καὶ τῆς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐς Παρμενίωνά τε τὸν πατέρα τὸν Φιλῶτα τιμῆς καὶ ἐς αὐτὸν Φιλῶταν πίστεως. Πτολεμαῖος δὲ ὁ Λάγου λέγει εἰσαχθῆναι εἰς Μακεδόνας Φιλῶταν καὶ κατηγορῆσαι μὲν αὐτοῦ ἰσχυρῶς Ἀλέξανδρον, ἀπολογήσασθαι δὲ αὐτὸν Φιλῶταν· καὶ τοὺς ἐπιμηνυτὰς τοῦ ἔργου παρελθόντας ἐξελέγξαι Φιλῶταν τε καὶ τοὺς ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἄλλοις τε ἐλέγχοις οὐκ ἀφανέσι καὶ μάλιστα δὴ ὅτι αὐτὸς Φιλῶτας πεπύσθαι μὲν ἐπιβουλὴν τινὰ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ παρασκευαζομένην συνέφη, ἐξηλέγχετο δὲ κατασιωπήσας ταύτην πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον, καίτοι δις ἐπὶ τὴν σκηνὴν ὁσημέραι τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου φοιτῶν. καὶ Φιλῶταν μένκατακοντισθῆναι πρὸς τῶν Μακεδόνων καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοιμετέσχον αὐτῷ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ἐπὶ Παρμενίωνα δὲ σταλῆναι Πολυδάμαντα, ἓνα τῶν ἐταίρων, γράμματα σταλῆναι Πολυδάμαντα, ἓνα τῶν ἐταίρων, γράμματα φέροντα παρ' Ἀλεξάνδρου πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγούς τοὺς ἐν Μηδίᾳ, Κλέανδρον τε καὶ Σιτάλκην καὶ Μεν[ν]ίδαν· οὗτοι γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς στρατιᾶς, ἥς Παρμενίων ἦρχε, τεταγμένοι ἦσαν· καὶ πρὸς τούτων ἀποθανεῖν Παρμενίωνα, τυχὸν μὲν ὅτι οὐ πιστὸν ἐδόκει εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρος Φιλῶτα ἐπιβουλεύοντος μὴ ξυμμετασχεῖν Παρμενίωνα τῷ παιδί τοῦ βουλευματος, τυχὸν δὲ ὅτι, εἰ καὶ μὴ ξυμμετέσχε, σφαλερὸς ἦδη ἦν περιῶν Παρμενίων τοῦ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ ἀνηρημένου, ἐν τοσαύτῃ ὧν ἀξιῶσει παρὰ τε αὐτῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ ἐς τὸ ἄλλο στράτευμα, μὴ ὅτι τὸ Μακεδονικόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ξένων, ὧν πολλάκις καὶ ἐν μέρει καὶ παρὰ τὸ μέρος κατὰ πρόσταξιν τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου ξὺν χάριτι ἐξηγεῖτο.

Translation of Arrian's Philotas/ Parmenion¹²⁴

3.26.1 HERE also Alexander discovered the conspiracy of Philotas, son of Parmenio. Ptolemy and Aristobulus say that it had already been reported to him before in Egypt; but that it did not appear to him credible, both on account of the long-existing friendship between them, the honour which he publicly conferred upon his father Parmenio, and the confidence he reposed in Philotas himself. Ptolemy, son of Lagus, says that Philotas was brought before the Macedonians, that Alexander vehemently accused him, and that he defended himself from the charges. He says also that the divulgers of the plot came forward and convicted him and his accomplices both by other clear proofs and especially because Philotas himself confessed that he had heard of a certain conspiracy which was being formed against Alexander. He was convicted of having said nothing to the king about this plot, though he visited the royal tent twice a day. He and all the others who had taken part with him in the conspiracy were killed by the Macedonians with their javelins; and Polydamas, one of the Companions, was despatched to Parmenio, carrying letters from Alexander to the generals in Media, Cleander, Sitalces, and Menidas, who had been placed over the army commanded by Parmenio. By these men Parmenio was put to death, perhaps because Alexander deemed it incredible that Philotas should conspire against him and Parmenio not participate in his son's plan; or perhaps, he thought that even if he had had no share in it, he would now be a dangerous man if he survived, after his son had been violently removed, being held in such great respect as he was both by Alexander himself and by all the army, not only the Macedonian, but also that of the Grecian auxiliaries as well, whom he often used to command in accordance with Alexander's order, both in his own turn and out of his turn, with his sovereign's approbation and satisfaction.

¹²⁴ This and the following translation of Arrian are by E. J. Chinnock, 1893, from the Leipzig Teubner edition of 1867.

Arrian's Cleitus (4.8.1-4.9.6)

4.8.1 Ἐνθα δὴ καὶ τὸ Κλείτου τοῦ Δρωπίδου πάθημα καὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐπ' αὐτῷ ξυμφορὰν, εἰ καὶ ὀλίγον ὕστερον ἐπράχθη, οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ καιροῦ ἀφηγήσομαι. εἶναι μὲν γὰρ ἡμέραν ἱερὰν τοῦ Διονύσου Μακεδόσι καὶ θύειν Διονύσῳ ὅσα ἔτη ἐν αὐτῇ Ἀλέξανδρον· τὸν δὲ τοῦ Διονύσου μὲν ἐν τῷ τότε ἀμελήσαι λέγουσι, Διοσκούροιν δὲ θῦσαι, ἐξ ὅτου δὴ ἐπιφρασθέντα τοῖν Διοσκούροιν τὴν θυσίαν· πόρρω δὲ τοῦ πότου προϊόντος (καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῶν πότων ἤδη Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐς τὸ βαρβαρικώτερον νενεωτέριστο) ἀλλ' ἐν γε τῷ πότῳ τότε ὑπὲρ τοῖν Διοσκούροιν λόγους γίνεσθαι, ὅπως ἐς Δία ἀνηνέχθη αὐτοῖν ἡ γένεσις ἀφαιρεθεῖσα Τυνδάρεω. καὶ τινὰς τῶν παρόντων κολακεία τῇ Ἀλεξάνδρου, οἷοι δὴ ἄνδρες διέφθειράν τε αἰεὶ καὶ οὐποτε παύσονται ἐπιτρίβοντες τὰ τῶν αἰεὶ βασιλέων πράγματα, παύσονται ἐπιτρίβοντες τὰ τῶν αἰεὶ βασιλέων πράγματα, κατ' οὐδὲν ἀξιοῦν συμβάλλειν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τε καὶ τοῖς Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργοις τὸν Πολυδεύκην καὶ τὸν Κάστορα. οἱ δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἀπείχοντο ἐν τῷ πότῳ· ἀλλὰ τὸν φθόνον γὰρ ἐμποδῶν ἴστασθαι τοῖς ζῶσι τὸ μὴ οὐ τὰς δικαίας τιμὰς αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ξυνόντων γίνεσθαι. Κλεῖτον δὲ δήλον μὲν εἶναι πάλαι ἤδη ἀχθόμενον τοῦ τε Ἀλεξάνδρου τῇ ἐς τὸ βαρβαρικώτερον μετακινήσει καὶ τῶν κολακευόντων αὐτὸν τοῖς λόγοις· τότε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν πρὸς τοῦ οἴνου παροξυνόμενον οὐκ ἔαν οὔτε ἐς τὸ θεῖον ὑβρίζειν, οὔτε [ἐς] τὰ τῶν πάλαι ἡρώων ἔργα ἐκφαυλίζοντας χάριν ταύτην ἄχαριν προστιθέναι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ. εἶναι γὰρ οὖν οὐδὲ τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου οὕτω τι μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ ὥς ἐκεῖνοι ἐπαίρουσιν· οὐκ οὐκ μόνον καταπρᾶξαι αὐτὰ, ἀλλὰ τὸ πολὺ γὰρ μέρος Μακεδόνων εἶναι τὰ ἔργα. καὶ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἀνιᾶσαι Ἀλέξανδρον λεχθέντα. οὐδὲ ἐγὼ ἐπαινῶ τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ ἱκανὸν γὰρ εἶναι τίθεμαι ἐν τοιαύτῃ παροινίᾳ τὸ καθ' αὐτὸν σιγῶντα ἔχειν μηδὲ τὰ αὐτὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐς κολακείαν πλημμελεῖν. ὥς δὲ καὶ τῶν Φιλίππου τινὲς ἔργων, ὅτι οὐ μεγάλα οὐδὲ θαυμαστὰ Φιλίππῳ κατεπράχθη, οὐδεμιᾶ ξὺν δίκῃ ἐπεμνήσθησαν, χαριζόμενοι καὶ οὗτοι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, τὸν Κλεῖτον ἤδη οὐκέτι ἐν ἑαυτοῦ ὄντα πρεσβεύειν μὲν τὰ τοῦ Φιλίππου, καταβάλλειν δὲ Ἀλέξανδρόν τε καὶ τὰ τούτου ἔργα, παροينوῦντα ἤδη τὸν Κλεῖτον, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ πολὺν εἶναι ἐξονειδίζοντα Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρα ἐσώθη, ὅποτε ἡ ἵππομαχία ἢ ἐπὶ Γρανίκῳ ξυνειστήκει πρὸς Πέρσας· καὶ δὴ καὶ

τὴν δεξιὰν τὴν αὐτοῦ σοβαρῶς ἀνατείναντα, αὕτη σε ἡ χεὶρ, φάναι, ὦ Ἀλέξανδρε, ἐν τῷ τότε ἔσωσε. καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον ὦ Ἀλέξανδρε, ἐν τῷ τότε ἔσωσε. Καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον οὐκέτι φέρειν τοῦ Κλεΐτου τὴν παροινίαν τε καὶ ὕβριν, ἀλλὰ ἀναπηδᾶν γὰρ ξὺν ὀργῇ ἐπ' αὐτόν, κατέχεσθαι δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ξυμπινόντων. Κλεῖτον δὲ οὐκ ἀνιέναι ὑβρίζοντα. Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐβόα ἄρα καλῶν τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς· οὐδενὸς δὲ ὑπακούοντος ἐς ταῦτα ἔφη καθεστηκέναι Δαρείῳ, ὅποτε πρὸς Βῆσσου τε καὶ τῶν ἀμφὶ Βῆσσον ξυλληφθεὶς ἤγετο οὐδὲν ἄλλο ὅτι μὴ ὄνομα ὦν βασιλέως. οὐκ οἶον εἶναι κατέχειν αὐτόν τοὺς ἐταίρους, ἀλλ' ἀναπηδήσαντα γὰρ οἱ μὲν λόγχην ἀρπάσαι λέγουσι τῶν σωματοφυλάκων τινὸς καὶ ταύτην παίσαντα Κλεῖτον ἀποκτείνειν, οἱ δὲ σάρισσαν παρὰ τῶν φυλάκων τινὸς καὶ ταύτην. Ἀριστόβουλος δὲ ὅθεν μὲν ἡ παροιμία ὠρμήθη οὐ λέγει, Κλεῖτου δὲ γενέσθαι μόνου τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, ὃν γε ὠργισμένου Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ ἀναπηδήσαντος ἐπ' αὐτόν ὡς διαχρησομένου ἀπαχθῆναι μὲν διὰ θυρῶν ἔξω ὑπὲρ τὸ τεῖχος τε καὶ τὴν τάφρον τῆς ἄκρας, ἵνα ἐγίνετο, πρὸς Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Λάγου τοῦ σωματοφύλακος· οὐ καρτερήσαντα δὲ ἀναστρέψαι αὐθις καὶ περιπετῇ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ γενέσθαι Κλεῖτον ἀνακαλοῦντι, καὶ φάναι ὅτι· οὗτός τοι ἐγὼ ὁ Κλεῖτος, ὦ Ἀλέξανδρε· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πληγέντα τῇ σαρίσσει ἀποθανεῖν.

4.9.1 Καὶ ἐγὼ Κλεῖτον μὲν τῆς ὕβρεως τῆς ἐς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν αὐτοῦ μεγαλωστὶ μέμφομαι· Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ τῆς συμφορᾶς οἰκτεῖρω, ὅτι δυοῖν κακοῖν ἐν τῷ τότε ἡττημένον ἐπέδειξεν αὐτόν, ὑφ' ὧν καὶ τοῦ ἐτέρου οὐκ ἐπέουκεν ἄνδρα σωφρονοῦντα ἐξητᾶσθαι, ὀργῆς τε καὶ παροινίας. ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε αὖ ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὅτι παραυτίκα ἔγνω σχέτλιον ἔργον ἐργασάμενος. καὶ λέγουσιν εἰσὶν οἱ [τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου] ὅτι ἐρείσας τὴν σάρισσαν πρὸς τὸν τοῖχον δρου] ὅτι ἐρείσας τὴν σάρισσαν πρὸς τὸν τοῖχον ἐπιπίπτειν ἐγνώκει αὐτῇ, ὥς οὐ καλὸν αὐτῷ ζῆν ἀποκτείναντι φίλον αὐτοῦ ἐν οἴῳ. οἱ πολλοὶ δὲ συγγραφεῖς τοῦτο μὲν οὐ λέγουσιν, ἀπελθόντα δὲ ἐς τὴν εὐνὴν κεῖσθαι ὀδυρόμενον, αὐτόν τε τὸν Κλεῖτον ὀνομαστὶ ἀνακαλοῦντα καὶ τὴν Κλεῖτου μὲν ἀδελφήν, αὐτόν δὲ ἀναθρεψαμένην, Λανίην τὴν Δρωπίδου παῖδα, ὡς καλὰ ἄρα αὐτῇ τροφεῖα ἀποτετικῶς εἴη ἀνδρωθεὶς, ἢ γε τοὺς μὲν παῖδας τοὺς ἑαυτῆς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ μαχομένους ἐπέιδεν ἀποθανόντας, τὸν

ἀδελφὸν δὲ αὐτῆς αὐτὸς αὐτοχειρίᾳ ἔκτεινε· φονέα τε τῶν φίλων οὐ διαλείπειν αὐτὸν ἀνακαλοῦντα, ἄσιτόν τε καὶ ἄποτον καρτερεῖν ἔστε ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, οὐδέ τινα ἄλλην θεραπείαν θεραπεῦσαι τὸ σῶμα.

Καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τῶν μάντεων τινες μῆνιν ἐκ Διονύσου ἦδον, ὅτι ἡ θυσία ἐξελείφθη Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἢ τοῦ Διονύσου. καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος μόγισ πρὸς τῶν ἐταίρων πεισθεὶς σίτου τε ἤψατο καὶ τὸ σῶμα κακῶς ἐθεράπευσε· καὶ τῷ Διονύσῳ τὴν θυσίαν ἀπέδωκεν, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ αὐτῷ ἄκοντι ἦν ἐς μῆνιν τοῦ θεοῦ μᾶλλον τι ἢ τὴν αὐτοῦ κακότητα ἀναφέρεσθαι τὴν συμφορὰν. ταῦτα μεγαλωστὶ ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, τὸ μήτε ἀπαυθαδιάσασθαι ἐπὶ κακῷ, μήτε προστάτην τε καὶ ξυνήγορον κακίονα ἔτι γενέσθαι τοῦ ἀμαρτηθέντος, ἀλλὰ συμφῆσαι γὰρ ἐπταικέναι ἄνθρωπόν γε ὄντα.

Translation of Arrian's Cleitus

4.8.1 HERE then I shall give an account of the tragic fate of Clitus, son of Dropidas, and of Alexander's mishap in regard to it. Though it occurred a little while after this, it will not be out of place here. The Macedonians kept a day sacred to Dionysus, and on that day Alexander used to offer sacrifice to him every year. But they say that on this occasion he was neglectful of Dionysus, and sacrificed to the Dioscouri instead; for he had resolved to offer sacrifice to those deities for some reason or other. When the drinking-party on this occasion had already gone on too long (for Alexander had now made innovations even in regard to drinking, by imitating too much the custom of foreigners), and in the midst of the carouse a discussion had arisen about the Dioscouri, how their procreation had been taken away from Tyndareus and ascribed to Zeus, some of those present, in order to flatter Alexander, maintained that Polydeuces and Castor were in no way worthy to compare with him and his exploits. Such men have always destroyed and will never cease to ruin the interests of those who happen to be reigning.' In their carousal they did not even abstain from (comparing him with) Heracles saying that envy stood in the way of the living receiving the honours due to them from their associates. It was well known that Clitus had long been vexed at Alexander for the change in his style of living in excessive imitation of foreign customs, and at those who flattered him with their speech. At that time also, being heated with wine, he would not permit them either to insult the deity or, by depreciating the deeds of the ancient heroes, to confer upon Alexander this gratification which deserved no thanks. He affirmed Alexander's deeds

were neither in fact at all so great or marvellous as they represented in their laudation; nor had he achieved them by himself, but for the most part they were the deeds of the Macedonians. The delivery of this speech annoyed Alexander; and I do not commend it, for I think, in such a drunken bout, it would have been sufficient if, so far as he was personally concerned, he had kept silence, and not committed the error of indulging in the same flattery as the others. But when some even mentioned Philip's actions without exercising a just judgment, declaring that he had performed nothing great or marvellous, they herein gratified Alexander; but Clitus being then no longer able to contain himself, began to put Philip's achievements in the first rank, and to depreciate Alexander and his performances. Clitus being now quite intoxicated made other depreciatory remarks and even vehemently reviled him, because forsooth he had saved his life, when the cavalry battle had been fought with the Persians at the Granicus. Then indeed, arrogantly stretching out his right hand, he said:—"This hand, O Alexander, preserved thee on that occasion." Alexander could now no longer endure the drunken insolence of Clitus; but jumped up against him in a great rage. He was however restrained by his boon companions. As Clitus did not desist from his insulting remarks, Alexander shouted out a summons for his shield-bearing guards to attend him; but when no one obeyed him, he said that he was reduced to the same position as Darius, when he was led about under arrest by Bessus and his adherents, and that he now possessed the mere name of king. Then his companions were no longer able to restrain him; for according to some he leaped up and snatched a javelin from one of his confidential body-guards; according to others, a long pike from one of his ordinary guards, with which he struck Clitus and killed him. Aristobulus does not say whence the drunken quarrel originated, but asserts that the fault was entirely on the side of Clitus, who, when Alexander had got so enraged with him as to jump up against him with the intention of making an end of him, was led away by Ptolemy, son of Lagus. The confidential body-guard led him through the gateway, beyond the wall and ditch of the citadel where the quarrel occurred. He adds that Clitus could not control himself, but went back again, and falling in with Alexander who was calling out for Clitus, he exclaimed :—"Alexander, here am I, Clitus!" Thereupon he was struck with a long pike and killed.

I THINK Clitus deserving of severe censure for his insolent behaviour to his king, while at the same time I pity Alexander for his mishap, because on that occasion he showed himself the slave of two vices, anger and drunkenness, by neither of which is it seemly for a prudent man to be enslaved. But then on the other hand I think his subsequent behaviour worthy of praise, because directly after he had done the deed he recognized that it was a horrible one. Some of his biographers even say that he propped the pike against the wall with the intention of falling upon it himself, thinking that it was not proper for him to live who

had killed his friend when under the influence of wine. Most historians do not mention this, but say that he went off to bed and lay there lamenting, calling Clitus himself by name, and his sister Lanice, daughter of Dropidas, who had been his nurse. He exclaimed that having reached man's estate he had forsooth bestowed on her a noble reward for her care in rearing him, as she had lived to see her own sons die fighting on his behalf, and he himself had slain her brother with his own hand. He did not cease calling himself the murderer of his friends; and for three days rigidly abstained from food and drink, and paid no attention whatever to his personal appearance.

Some of the soothsayers revealed that the avenging wrath of Dionysus had been the cause of his conduct, because he had omitted the sacrifice to that deity. At last with great difficulty he was induced by his companions to touch food and to pay proper attention to his person. He then paid to Dionysus the sacrifice due to him, since he was not at all unwilling that the fatality should be attributed rather to the avenging wrath of the deity than to his own depravity. I think Alexander deserves great praise for this, that he did not obstinately persevere in evil, or still worse become a defender and advocate of the others, but that he confessed to having erred since he was but a man.

Arrian's Life and Works

Arrian was born in Nicomedia, Bithynia, as Lucius Flavius Arrianus, about 85-90 A.D. His family was Greek and a part of the social elite. He was a student of the Stoic ex-slave Epictetus at Nicopolis for about three years, beginning around 108. Bosworth says Arrian performed military duties (from a reference in the *Cynegeticus*), and that he may have met Hadrian (a fellow Stoic and a philhellene) while studying with Epictetus. Arrian held the priesthood of Demeter and Kore and was most likely also ἄρχων, and was later a senator and then consul in 129 or 130. Immediately after this he became the consular governor of Cappadocia for seven years. He then retired to Athens after a "notably successful tenure" as governor.¹²⁵ He died after 146.

Apart from his Alexander-history, works which still exist include three on philosophy: the *Dissertations*, or *Diatribes*, of Epictetus (four of eight books survive), an *Encheiridion* of Epictetan Stoicism, and six fragments of *Meteorologica*. Apart from the *Anabasis Alexandri* and the *Indica* (the book which follows the seven of the *Anabasis*), there are five works of history which are lost to us: a pair of monographs on Dion and Timoleon, the *Bithyniaca*, the *Parthica* and τὰ μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρου. Miscellaneous books include the *Cynegeticus*, as well as three other (fragmentary) works, the *Periplus of the Black Sea*, an essay on tactics and a description of Arrian's battle against the Alani. The *Anabasis* was composed in his thirties, and with its release, Arrian became famous as a new Xenophon. He adopted the name as a pseudonym, and appears to have imitated Xenophon's retirement at Scillus. Although the titles of their works are the same and Arrian took his predecessor's name, Bosworth notes that Xenophon's literary influence is

¹²⁵ Bosworth (1980) 4.

“less obtrusive” in Arrian’s *Anabasis* than in his other works, such as the *Cynegeticus*.¹²⁶ Photius (who is the main source of our knowledge for Arrian’s lost material) wrote that some of Arrian’s works were lost by his day (c. 820-891), and that they may have included more philosophical tracts.¹²⁷ Bosworth writes that Arrian holds views compatible with the morals of an Antonine senator, and that he is “certainly no unthinking disciple of Epictetus.”

Arrian’s *Anabasis*

Stadter describes the framework of the *Anabasis* as a series of marches intermingled with action.¹²⁸ This structure allows Arrian to include any part of his story to be contained within the space between treks, and the entire work is integrated by Arrian’s announcements of each stage. Each book concerns itself with conquests along Alexander’s path eastward, and the length of each book is governed by these narratives, rather than by a predetermined number of pages or duration of years. In general, the first three (of seven) books tell of Alexander’s ascendancy to power, while the fourth comments on the forces which challenge this path, and the last three examine the struggles of Alexander against the boundaries of heroic achievement. Bosworth feels that Arrian’s narrative in Books 4 and 5 is generally fuller and contains more information than Curtius’ version, although Arrian is “still at the mercy of his sources, which are encomiastic and occasionally tainted.”¹²⁹

Bosworth writes that stock renditions of Alexander were caricatures, but each was “designed to serve as an *exemplum*.” He sees the Cleitus episode as a “stock negative

¹²⁶ Bosworth (1980) 7.

¹²⁷ Bosworth (1980) 6.

¹²⁸ Stadter (1980) 77.

¹²⁹ Bosworth (1995) v.

exemplum.”¹³⁰ The type of *exemplum* which Arrian was proposing over the length of the *Anabasis* was meant to portray Alexander as the “defender and emulator of the ideal Homeric kingship.”¹³¹ The *Anabasis* is generally a story of victories, with a verdict in Alexander’s favour woven into the plot.

If Arrian finds certain passages untrustworthy or unconvincing, he puts them in a λόγος category, meaning that he sometimes uses reported speech (notably the words λεγούσι or λέγεται) or speaks of a story as unconfirmed.¹³² An example of this is his report of Cleitus’ death, which Bosworth calls “hardly congenial to his encomiastic purposes,” noting that Arrian is reluctant to pass it on as unquestionably reliable information.¹³³ He also uses this λόγος notation to indicate some kind of consensus or for the introduction of variant treatments.¹³⁴ Arrian’s two main sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus, provide the main ground on which he finds his support. Bosworth writes that Aristobulus possessed the inclination to make apologies “to exculpate or mitigate aspects of Alexander’s behaviour which were susceptible to criticism,”¹³⁵ and we can expect to find the offspring of this in Arrian’s writing. He adds that Ptolemy was at least somewhat guilty of the same inclination. Brown writes that authors such as Ptolemy and Aristobulus “probably ignored what to them was after all merely a tempest in a teapot,” and so certain details may be missing when Arrian came to rely on them.¹³⁶ His reliance on Ptolemy and Aristobulus as main sources came about because of their favourable renditions of Alexander. Having decided to glorify an already great king, “his verdict

¹³⁰ Bosworth (1980) 22.

¹³¹ Bosworth (1980) 13.

¹³² See 2.12.8; 3.2.1; 7.15.6.

¹³³ Bosworth (1980) 22. See 4.7.2; 4.8.8; 4.9.3,7

¹³⁴ Bosworth (1980) 20.

¹³⁵ Bosworth (1980) 28.

¹³⁶ Brown (1949) 245.

was presupposed," and these writers would be able to support his viewpoint.¹³⁷ At the same time, Arrian was "clearly...aware of the reputation of his sources but he thought the bias justified,"¹³⁸ and Bosworth thinks that he is "no slavish copier of sources, as modern scholars have tended to suppose," but was in actual fact "a very expert and sophisticated stylist in his own right."¹³⁹ Bosworth comments on Arrian's accomplished literary prowess and his vast range of vocabulary, noting "repeated echoes" of Thucydides,¹⁴⁰ and he calls Arrian's style both "artificial" as well as a "re-creation" rather than a "crude borrowing."¹⁴¹ Steele comments that "as a historical work the *Anabasis* is comparative rather than critical."¹⁴² Bosworth says that as long as Arrian receives the agreed testimony of his two main sources "as absolute truth, there is a preponderance of what can only be termed propaganda."¹⁴³

Arrian acts as a filter for the Alexander-historians,¹⁴⁴ and is called a generally muted critic of Alexander.¹⁴⁵ For the most part, the *Anabasis* is a record of triumphs, which stands out when set against the "more chequered record of the vulgate."¹⁴⁶ Although he bestows fluent praise, Arrian has nothing to gain from obsequiousness, since he writes so long after the king's death.¹⁴⁷ However, the first instance of an unfavourable remark by Arrian does not show up until the third of seven books, and it is noticeable by

¹³⁷ Bosworth (1980) 15.

¹³⁸ Bosworth (1980) 29.

¹³⁹ Bosworth (1980) 30.

¹⁴⁰ Bosworth (1980) 35.

¹⁴¹ Bosworth (1980) 36.

¹⁴² Steele (1919) 157.

¹⁴³ Bosworth (1995) 6.

¹⁴⁴ Bosworth (1988) 16.

¹⁴⁵ Bosworth (1980) 15.

¹⁴⁶ Bosworth (1980) 30.

¹⁴⁷ Bosworth (1980) 29.

its isolation.¹⁴⁸ Bosworth also points out the position of Arrian's *excursus* on Alexander's admirable self-restraint,¹⁴⁹ which follows the deaths of Cleitus and Callisthenes and is placed precisely there in order to smooth over that which directly precedes it, immediately renewing Arrian's former tone.¹⁵⁰ The main purpose of his prose is to lessen criticism of Alexander.¹⁵¹

Arrian's Purpose

Arrian explains why he is suited for the task of writing Alexander's history in 1.12.5:

ὅστις δὲ ὦν ταῦτα ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ γινώσκω, τὸ μὲν ὄνομα οὐδὲν
δέομαι ἀναγράφαι, οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ ἄγνωστον ἐς ἀνθρώπους
ἐστίν, οὐδὲ πατρίδα ἣτις μοί ἐστιν οὐδὲ γένος τὸ ἐμὸν, οὐδὲ εἰ δὴ
τινα ἀρχὴν ἐν τῇ ἑμαυτοῦ ἥρξα· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο ἀναγράφω, ὅτι ἐμοὶ
πατρίς τε καὶ γένος καὶ ἀρχαὶ οἶδε οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶ τε καὶ ἀπὸ νέου
ἔτι ἐγένοντο. Καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε οὐκ ἀπαξίω ἑμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν
τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἶπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τῶν ἐν τοῖς
ὀπλοῖς.

This at least – whoever I am – I know in my favour; I need not write my name – it is not unknown among men – nor my country nor my family nor any office I may have held among my own folk; this I do set on paper, that this history is, and was from my boyhood, my country, family and offices. That is why I do not shrink from setting myself alongside of the masters of Greek speech, since my subject was first among the masters of Greek warfare.¹⁵²

Guido Schepens notes that at this point in history, the rewriting of Alexander's life and campaigns "may [have been] regarded as the embodiment of literary archaism."¹⁵³ Schepens says that in Arrian's explanation of his own competence he "binds his own fate, his reputation as a writer, to the fate of Alexander himself, which is related in his

¹⁴⁸ 3.18.12.

¹⁴⁹ 4.19.5-20.31. See also Arr. 7.29.2 for Alexander's remarkable restraint to physical (but presumably not alcoholic) intemperance.

¹⁵⁰ Bosworth (1995) 8.

¹⁵¹ Bosworth (1980) 15.

¹⁵² This translation is by E. Iliff Robson, 1929, from the Leipzig Teubner edition of 1867.

¹⁵³ Schepens, trans. P. Van Dessel (1971) 257.

work.”¹⁵⁴ The fame of Alexander is reliant on Arrian’s product, and Arrian’s own reputation is reliant on Alexander’s importance. This is not at all simply a question of self-importance on Arrian’s part, since the whole game is dependent on how well he composes his work.¹⁵⁵ Interestingly, Schepens is one of the few writers on Arrian’s *Anabasis* who supports the idea that the historian is still influenced by the philosophy he learned from Epictetus. He comments that his becoming a biographer of Alexander “bears the mark of his Stoic outlook on life, wherein divine providence has arranged all in accordance with a definite plan.”¹⁵⁶

The Peroration

At the end of the *Anabasis* (7.28.1-30.3) lies Arrian’s peroration on Alexander the Great, in which he summarises his attitudes to his subject. Bosworth says that this is an example of εὐφημία, which he defines in this case as “the mitigation of a known fault.” Bosworth states that this device is legitimate in an “overtly encomiastic” work, but is hardly appropriate in a historical tract which pleads genuine accuracy.¹⁵⁷ He mentions that although it may be remarkable rhetoric, Epictetus would not have found the lengthy apology worthy of inclusion, as he would have thought all epideictic speech-making to be useless.¹⁵⁸ Bosworth calls parts of this section “strangely defensive,” noting that the apologetic portion is much longer than the list of virtues which begins the description.¹⁵⁹

Bosworth says that Arrian’s depiction of Alexander as sparing in the use of money for his own devices is the most egregious paradox. We are told that Alexander is

¹⁵⁴ Schepens (1971) 262.

¹⁵⁵ Schepens (1971) 263.

¹⁵⁶ Schepens (1971) 267. See Arr. 7.30.3.

¹⁵⁷ Bosworth (1988) 46.

¹⁵⁸ Bosworth (1988) 155.

¹⁵⁹ Bosworth (1988) 135.

great for his φιλοτιμία, but Epictetus (as reported by Arrian) lectured that such a trait is not to be deemed honourable.¹⁶⁰ While Arrian blamed Cleitus for a major share of the responsibility of his own death (because of his frankness of speech), we can find the sentiments of Arrian at variance with this in his letter to Lucius Gellius which serves as the introduction to the *Dissertations*.¹⁶¹ Arrian calls attention to Alexander's reputation as the most reliable man when it came to pacts,¹⁶² and yet we are reminded by Brunt that he has slaughtered a company of Indians who decided to rejoin their countrymen after he had let them live when they asked for (and received) a truce with him.¹⁶³

Faults can be represented as virtues by Arrian if he chooses to concentrate on them as such. In a time of war, when Alexander is compelled to demonstrate massive ambition, he must be praised for being φιλοτιμώτατος, but when this characteristic brings about harm to himself or his colleagues, it becomes a vice.¹⁶⁴ Bosworth concludes that Arrian's attitude in this section shows "a certain inconsistency of purpose." The ideal situation for Arrian would doubtless have been one in which Alexander had accomplished his magnificent ends according to Stoic doctrine, using self-discipline and restraint, but since he did not do this, the achievements must be recorded for their greatness nonetheless. There is no way for a historian who has both chosen his subject as a favourite and affirmed that he will be honest to escape inconsistency in the end.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Arr. 7.28.2; Epict. *Diss.* 2.9.15, 19.32; 3.22.29.

¹⁶¹ Epict. *Diss. Letter to Lucius Gellius*, 2-8. In defence of Arrian, however, he is simultaneously upholding his master's exhortations that a man should know his place in society and respectfully remain there. See Epict. *Ench.* 37. The drunken ὕβρις of Cleitus was shameful and undignified behaviour.

¹⁶² 7.28.3.

¹⁶³ 298, n. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Bosworth writes that "the emphasis and indeed the whole hierarchy of values changes with the context of discussion." (1988) 153.

¹⁶⁵ Bosworth (1988) 152-153. Bosworth does mention that the inconsistencies of Curtius are just as blatant and much more common.

In his 1977 article, "From Epictetus to Arrian," Brunt discusses the divergence Arrian makes from his master's teachings, as far as the *Anabasis* is concerned. Brunt says that it is only natural to assume that Arrian would continue to be deeply dyed with his master's words, yet he begins to doubt whether this is so in the *Anabasis*. His desire to "fill the gap of literary brilliance" is an obvious diversion from his Stoic education.¹⁶⁶ Brunt begins by noting Epictetus' opposition to the quest for fame, as well as his "general tendency to depreciate the worth of riches and honours."¹⁶⁷ Yet Arrian appears to be quite proud of his literary reputation.¹⁶⁸ His letter to Gellius states that Epictetus would not worry about the public reception his works would receive. To Epictetus, "status and ambition were vanities."¹⁶⁹ However, Gray believes that Arrian's closing advice that one should criticize one's own faults before judging Alexander too harshly is supported by the "suppression of his own considerable achievements" to which he makes reference in the *praefatio*.¹⁷⁰

There is no way that Arrian can deny that Alexander has acted in an un-Stoic manner throughout the course of his campaigns when he has the opportunity to demonstrate self-control. For example, according to Brunt, it would make more sense to a disciple of Epictetus for Alexander to have *welcomed* the death of Hephaestion.¹⁷¹ In his peroration, Arrian writes that whatever Alexander's faults may have been, he is superior by reason of his achievements. Brunt flatly calls this "not Stoic," and says that it would be "wrong and foolish" for a Stoic to set worldly achievements higher on a scale

¹⁶⁶ Brunt (1977) 31.

¹⁶⁷ Brunt (1977) 27.

¹⁶⁸ See Arrian's *praefatio* 1.12.4-5.

¹⁶⁹ Brunt (1977) 30.

¹⁷⁰ Gray (1990) 184.

¹⁷¹ For Epictetus' view of handling the death of loved ones, see *Ench.* 3, 7, 11, 14, 15.

of importance than moral uprightness.¹⁷² When we read Arrian's description of Alexander's fidelity in his contracts with others, Brunt reminds us that we must place it against the massacre of Indians which he includes in his biography.¹⁷³ Brunt reckons that Arrian means "unparalleled infamy" when he writes of the fame Alexander possessed, which supposedly excuses other moral failings.¹⁷⁴ Arrian presumably never mentions the reason for Alexander's war travels because this would have led him to only one conclusion, namely the king's overweening ambition for power and glory. This idea "could not be other than reprehensible to Stoics." Arrian, however, has come so far from his philosophical training that he has now placed desire for fame above other things.

Seneca, another Stoic, writes in his *Naturales Quaestiones* that it is a foolish enterprise to record and commemorate the *latrocinia* of kings instead of mending our own deficits (2 *praef.* 5-7). In the face of accusations against the aggrandisement of brutal kings, Brunt feels that Alexander is "narrowly conceived and treated" by Arrian.¹⁷⁵ He says that at the least, it is true that Arrian adopts some kind of moral tone, but that at the most, Arrian was just "vaguely conscious" that Alexander possessed some characteristics which foreshadowed his breakdown (7.8.3). Of course, Alexander was not responsible for all of these characteristics; his fondness for drinking was due to the camaraderie which existed between his friends and himself (7.29.4).¹⁷⁶

Regarding the Cleitus episode, Brunt agrees that perhaps the victim of Alexander's rage was no model of Stoic behaviour,¹⁷⁷ but then there is nothing Stoic in

¹⁷² Brunt (1977) 44.

¹⁷³ As he does in his notes on the *Anabasis*, 298.

¹⁷⁴ Brunt (1977) 45.

¹⁷⁵ Brunt (1977) 36.

¹⁷⁶ Brunt (1977) 37.

¹⁷⁷ Epictetus' opinion on frank speech can be found in the *Dissertations* (1.2.12-24), although when it shows up in his *Anabasis* concerning the Cleitus affair, Arrian holds a different view.

Arrian's celebration of the king's virtues either. The traits celebrated on Arrian's list are simply those which are to be expected of any decent person. There is nothing about remorse in the (extant) works of Epictetus which Arrian has bequeathed to us. This repentance which he finds so admirable is no proof that Alexander will continue his life without such impetuous violence.¹⁷⁸ We see that Seneca is more charitable to Cleitus than Arrian is.¹⁷⁹ He thinks that even Alexander's passionate remorse was excessive behaviour, and that the unrestrained consumption of alcohol provides no excuse for such acts.¹⁸⁰

Although Arrian seems to have chosen the opposite of a Stoic model, he makes it known (if only seldom) that the outer costume of fame and glory cannot make up for internal unhappiness. He further notes that the king was dominated by ambition.¹⁸¹ Brunt allows that Arrian has taken the Stoic mindset here, "only to forget it later when he came to give his final appreciation of the hero."¹⁸² On one hand, we may expect Arrian to write with a Stoic bent, yet on the other, we cannot expect him to deviate too greatly from the sources he has chosen as his main reservoir of information. Brunt says that both Ptolemy and Aristobulus "rejected, concealed or exculpated much that other writers recorded, to [Arrian's] discredit."¹⁸³ Any Stoic writer has to comment on his version as he believes it, but always with the help of his sources. Therefore, if Arrian is taking the words of his main sources to be accurate historical records, we cannot blame him if he likewise sets them down as facts.¹⁸⁴ He cannot attribute sins to Alexander if he has not

¹⁷⁸ Brunt (1977) 38.

¹⁷⁹ See Seneca's *de Ira* 3.17.

¹⁸⁰ Sen. *ep.* 112.29; 83.19.

¹⁸¹ Arr. 4.7.5.; 7.2.2.

¹⁸² Brunt (1977) 41.

¹⁸³ Brunt (1977) 41.

¹⁸⁴ Brunt (1977) 41.

seen them in the font of information he trusts. As Brunt concludes, it is "surely impossible to reconcile" Arrian's selection and his "manifest admiration for Alexander with the supposition that his mind, when he wrote the *Anabasis*, was still saturated with Stoic doctrines, even though here and there their beliefs peep out."

Although this historian is known as the "mouthpiece of Epictetus,"¹⁸⁵ Brown believes that the reader unacquainted with his philosophical education would have no way of knowing he was a Stoic from the *Anabasis*, nor could such a reader expect that he is our main source of knowledge about his teacher.¹⁸⁶ In Brunt's introduction to the *Anabasis*, he writes that the Stoic influence on him must remain doubtful, as there is none evident in the work.¹⁸⁷ Tarn says that Arrian wrote as a "historian and a man," not as a Stoic, noting that his work would have made an "orthodox Stoic" bristle.¹⁸⁸

Arrian's Alexander

There is no way to deny that Arrian must have dealt with genuine tension when he wrote about his subject, since fame (dismissed by Stoics) was Alexander's greatest desire, and was one of the traits which made him outstanding.¹⁸⁹ Arrian admits or suggests that he is not ready to make harsh criticisms.¹⁹⁰ Bosworth believes that these admissions are a suggestion that Arrian knows more than he tells on occasion.¹⁹¹ Arrian has moulded a character as "fictitious" as the man illustrated in Plutarch's "On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander."¹⁹² Philip Stadter writes that in the *Anabasis*, Alexander

¹⁸⁵ Bosworth (1988) 25.

¹⁸⁶ Brown (1973) 131.

¹⁸⁷ Brunt (1976) x.

¹⁸⁸ Tarn (1939) 52.

¹⁸⁹ Stadter (1980) 24.

¹⁹⁰ 4.14.4; 9.2.

¹⁹¹ Bosworth (1988) 16.

¹⁹² Bosworth (1988) 155.

is a subjectively drawn figure and is "very much Arrian's creation."¹⁹³ Instead of allowing the full burden of murder to rest with Alexander, Arrian puts it across that the victims are the main agents of responsibility for their own downfall. Cleitus and Callisthenes are two examples.¹⁹⁴ The bold words of these characters are not the only means to chaos, as Arrian cannot forget the negative influence of flattery, which arose on both occasions. The appearance and effects of detrimental sycophants arouse conflict between Arrian's Stoic training and the reported magnificence of Alexander: if evil and harm can be traced to flattery, Arrian should be ashamed that Alexander allowed himself to be the victim of deceit based on self-image. The king's reputation for bloodshed would not be admirable, especially for a "willing victim of self-deception"¹⁹⁵ such as Alexander.

The fatal flaw of ambition is inserted into Alexander's life story so that despite the rest of the portrait which Arrian paints, he is forced to concede that Alexander can never be truly happy. If Arrian writes with sympathy rather than with condemnation, we can see that he admires rather than criticizes Alexander, and perhaps we will adopt this attitude in the face of the remarkable episodes of violence with which we are presented. This is a device with the same purpose as Plutarch's idea that Alexander was acting in a heroic manner by not giving in to the natural desire for quenching his body's fire with alcohol. Therefore, Alexander deserves some understanding and even pity, in some cases, and the suggestion is made by both of these writers not to judge harshly such an outstanding specimen of human history.

For Arrian, remorse is sufficient as compensation for rash violence, and he does

¹⁹³ Stadter (1980) 89.

¹⁹⁴ Bosworth (1995) 8.

¹⁹⁵ Bosworth (1995) 145.

not seriously expect real improvement in Alexander's character.¹⁹⁶ Alexander is esteemed to be great when viewed in the light of his enormous conquests, a view which compels Arrian to transmute and to raise the characteristic of φιλοτιμία into something admirable. Military might and affairs are likewise now augmented as objects of praise. The context influences the system of values bestowed by the historian.¹⁹⁷ Alexander was sometimes able to understand and act on a sober judgement, although he was at other times corrupted by the need to sustain his reputation above all else. Arrian informs us that the end to which he directed his actions had a single purpose, and was insatiable in acquiring things, whether the gains he made were monetary, geographical, or those involving fame.¹⁹⁸

In Arrian's attempt to portray Alexander as a magnificent leader, he sets up other characters in the drama as contrasts. For example, Parmenion is shown offering advice to the king five times, and Alexander usually does not take heed.¹⁹⁹ By this means, the portrayal of Parmenion is made inferior to Alexander's. The king has both an intellect and plans which are superior to those of his most respected subordinates. Parmenion comes across as a voice of dissent which Alexander must quell during the casting of important decisions. The night attack at the Granicus is the general's suggestion, but a loftier moral code causes Alexander to reject this trickery and win a "fairer" victory which is not only more honourable but also proves his army's strength. Both his martial courage and his personal ethics are alleged to exist on a higher plane than those of even his best men.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Bosworth (1995) 147.

¹⁹⁷ Bosworth (1995) 153.

¹⁹⁸ 7.19.6.

¹⁹⁹ Bosworth (1980) 115.

²⁰⁰ Bosworth (1980) 296.

Ptolemy

The Ptolemy who was Alexander's general is the first in the line of Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt, a position which he assumed after the king died. The son of Lagos and Arsinoe, he lived from approximately 367 until 283 B C, studying under Aristotle, alongside Alexander, at Mieza. He is sometimes suggested to be a half-brother to Alexander (as a son of Philip), and was one of the young heir's friends who shared his exile in Illyria in 336, returning to Macedonia two years later. As a close friend and adviser to the king, Ptolemy became a *σωματοφύλαξ* after Cleitus' murder in 328 and was Alexander's second-in-command by 323.²⁰¹ He is not famous as a historian, but his literary interests found fruition in his probable founding of the Alexandrian Library.²⁰² Stadter writes that the main sections which Arrian took from Ptolemy include military affairs, records of the supernatural, things Ptolemy recounts but says he did not personally witness and the "omission of the fantastical."²⁰³ The history of Alexander written by Ptolemy is known to us almost wholly from Arrian.²⁰⁴ Rubensohn reminds us that Arrian's and Plutarch's bias in their treatments of some episodes of the Alexander-histories are influenced by royal propaganda. We cannot forget that Ptolemy, although he was an eyewitness to most of the events he recorded, profited by the extermination of Philotas and Parmenion, which makes his evidence for these episodes ripe for at least slight skepticism.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Bosworth (1980) 296.

²⁰² Stadter (1980) 67.

²⁰³ Stadter (1980) 68.

²⁰⁴ Bosworth (1980) 22.

²⁰⁵ Rubensohn (1973) 411.

Aristobulus

Aristobulus came along on the Asian expedition with Alexander's company in a non-military capacity, since he is not mentioned in connection with fighting during the expedition. Stadter suggests that he may have held one of many occupations: architect, secretary, botanist, historian, technical officer, engineer or geographer.²⁰⁶ Apologising for Alexander's behaviour was one of the traits Arrian found in Aristobulus and handed down to us²⁰⁷: he shows Cleitus as the blameworthy figure in his own death (4.8.9) and he denies the execution of Callisthenes (4.14.3). Referring to his version of the Callisthenes story, Bosworth notes that Aristobulus was never ready to miss "an opportunity to whitewash."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Stadter (1980) 69.

²⁰⁷ Bosworth (1980) 28.

²⁰⁸ Bosworth (1995) 100.

Chapter Five
Commentary on the Philotas/Parmenion Episode
Plutarch's Version

Ernst Badian

Badian remarks that Plutarch shies away from accusing Alexander directly by showing the killing of Dimnus during his arrest, followed by the king's distress that the solution to the chaos had therefore been eliminated. Plutarch does not believe that Philotas had been aware of any plot against Alexander until his trial. Badian contends that Plutarch was certainly aware of the version he was following, namely that Philotas was innocent and that Alexander knew this.²⁰⁹ Badian adds that there is an accent on Philotas' enemies poisoning the mind of the king; this is absolution of his total guilt. He is quite ready to believe that there is a possibility and even probability that Alexander would have sacrificed a pawn like Dimnus in order to remove Parmenion's family.²¹⁰ To the question of why Philotas and his father were targeted in the first place, Badian argues that Alexander was intent on destroying this family. Parmenion's reputation at Gaugamela was a threat to the king, and one method of removing him was to station him at Ecbatana, where he was assassinated.²¹¹

Badian informs us that "no aspect of the career of Alexander should be more important and constructive to the historian than the series of executions and assassinations by which he partly crushed and partly anticipated the opposition of Macedonian nobles to

²⁰⁹ Badian in Bosworth and Baynham (2000) 67, n. 27.

²¹⁰ Badian in Bosworth and Baynham (2000) 68.

²¹¹ Badian (1960) 329.

his person and policy.”²¹² Regarding Tarn’s argument that Philotas’ silence proved his guilt, Badian says that “on a matter of this sort, [the silence] would not be worth much,” noting that “this does not prove much by itself.”²¹³ Perhaps, says Badian, Philotas did in fact receive a fair trial by the military, although he is too wary to assume that the “perspicacity of simple soldiers” would be great enough to discern his guilt in order to punish Philotas with death even if he deserved it.²¹⁴ Neither Badian nor Tarn believes in the active functioning of the law (at that time) which stated that the relatives of a man accused of treason were compelled to be executed along with him.²¹⁵ In Badian’s view, Parmenion could never have had aspirations to Alexander’s throne in any case, and accordingly, there was no danger to Alexander’s position which required such immediate and brutal punishment. Since the conspiracy of Philotas was fabricated, the murder of his father could not have been “an emergency, knee-jerk reaction,” and he adds that “it must be regarded as an integral part of the same scheme.”²¹⁶

J. R. Hamilton

Hamilton believes in the possibility of Philotas’ enemies playing upon a serendipitous plot against Alexander in order to get at Philotas and to convict him of action against the king.²¹⁷ He does not believe that the plot included Philotas, as is “well demonstrated” by Badian (1960).²¹⁸ If there was an actual plot against Alexander, Philotas’ enemies could have told the king that Dimnus was too insignificant a player to

²¹² Badian (1960) 324.

²¹³ Badian (1960) 331.

²¹⁴ Badian (1960) 332.

²¹⁵ Badian (1960) 332, n. 25.

²¹⁶ Badian (1960) 333.

²¹⁷ Hamilton (1969) 135-136.

²¹⁸ Hamilton (1969) 134.

be its instigator, and that Philotas' inaction proved his involvement.²¹⁹ Hamilton calls the condemnation of Philotas by the army "mere fiction."²²⁰ Notably, neither Philotas as a witness nor Ptolemy as a historical source (for Arrian) ever names Parmenion as a confederate in this plot.

A. B. Bosworth

Bosworth says that the death of Dimnus during his arrest in the *Life of Alexander* is not plausible if we believe the plot was against Philotas. Why, Bosworth asks, would Dimnus not be rewarded if Alexander had planned a false plot against himself in order to capture Philotas? He wonders why Dimnus would die if Alexander had paid the false conspirators to have this entire charade enacted. If this were the case, it was an "uncharacteristically incompetent" setup by Alexander. And if Philotas were in fact guilty, why would he sit there and do nothing when Cebalinus was trying to get the plot exposed?²²¹ Philotas would have wanted the whole affair to remain secret, and therefore would have attempted to silence Cebalinus.²²² His conclusion is that there was a real plot hatched by Dimnus, and that Philotas was innocent of complicity and was telling the truth. He also believes that both Alexander and Craterus capitalised on this fortunate opportunity. Bosworth says there is "no doubt" that Alexander commanded that Philotas die, and without a condemnation to death by the Macedonian army.²²³

²¹⁹ Hamilton (1969) 135.

²²⁰ Hamilton (1969) 137. Cf. Diod. 17.80.1; C. 6.11.39.

²²¹ Bosworth (1980) 360.

²²² Bosworth (1980) 361. Cf. C. 6.10.20.

²²³ Bosworth (1980) 362.

Z. Rubinsohn

Rubinsohn suggests that if Alexander had planned the destruction of Parmenion's family from the beginning, the king "would have made an incredible blunder" by leaving the older man with so much money and so many loyal soldiers.²²⁴ He believes that after Philotas had been tortured, Alexander found himself in a position from which he was compelled to continue his punishing actions and he then found it impossible to save Philotas from death, which suggests that Alexander was quite aware of Philotas' possible innocence.²²⁵

²²⁴ Rubinsohn (1973) 418.

²²⁵ Rubinsohn (1973) 419.

Arrian's Version

A. B. Bosworth

Bosworth calls Arrian's version of the Philotas affair "grossly imbalanced" and says that there is little substance but a "dogmatic statement" of Philotas' responsibility in the conspiracy.²²⁶ The execution of Philotas does not stir any military controversy, which implies that the death sentence was deserved and easily accepted. Both Ptolemy and Aristobulus say that there was actually a conspiracy by Philotas.²²⁷

P.A. Brunt

Brunt argues that Arrian is "too credulous" of a plot by Philotas. While Arrian does not believe that Alexander had any proof of Parmenion's complicity in a supposed conspiracy, this does not preclude his own opinion that Parmenion may have been a part of it. He feels that in any case it was too dangerous to spare Parmenion's life after the trial of Philotas. Brunt states that in this situation, Alexander had no care for justice.²²⁸ Brunt declares that conviction by the army proves no guilt on the part of Philotas.²²⁹ He goes on to say that perhaps Arrian actually believed in Parmenion's innocence, but also feels that by not providing us with the background involving Dimnus, Arrian stands out from three other main sources, who speak of him as a real conspirator when they do mention him.²³⁰

²²⁶ Bosworth (2000) 11.

²²⁷ Bosworth (1980) 359.

²²⁸ Brunt (1977) 41.

²²⁹ Brunt (1976) 519.

²³⁰ C. 6.7.8; Diod. 17.79.1; Plut. *Al.* 49.2

C.A. Robinson

Robinson says that Arrian's version of this episode is the "soundest and most trustworthy of all" renderings, and is the most accurate picture of Alexander we have regarding the Philotas/Parmenion story.²³¹ He compares Arrian with the other three vulgate authors (Justin's version being lost), who "used every kind of material, good and bad." This opinion assumes that both Ptolemy and Aristobulus are mainly both good, or at least that they form a readily solid account when balanced against each other. Robinson calls this a "conspiracy of Philotas" twice,²³² but Philotas is not alleged by him to be a part of it; his enemies are responsible for his demise.

Robinson says that the killing of Parmenion is "the blackest crime, it is universally agreed, in Alexander's life,"²³³ while he also believes that it was a "legal necessity."²³⁴ He posits that Philotas had real reasons for complaint, since the devotion of his family to the king had been paid back with Parmenion's relocation in Ecbatana.²³⁵ Philotas' brother, Nicanor, had died of illness, while another brother had been slain in battle. Robinson believes that the history of Arrian is where "we find the full enormity of Alexander's crime," but he says that it is a crime only if Ptolemy's story is being used. Curtius claims that the Macedonian law of punishment toward the relatives of a man accused of treason was in effect until Alexander caught news of the tumult it was causing.²³⁶ Since Arrian does not mention it, perhaps he was unaware of it; we can assume that if he were to find such a means of exculpating Alexander, he would certainly

²³¹ Robinson (1947) 13.

²³² Robinson (1947) 142, 143.

²³³ Robinson (1945) 422.

²³⁴ Robinson (1952) 169.

²³⁵ Robinson (1945) 422.

²³⁶ C. 6.11.20.

have used it. Ptolemy, however, would have known of it, and so Robinson says that we are therefore forced to assume that it is Arrian who is speaking here rather than Ptolemy.²³⁷ In this case, Arrian's "terrible alternatives" are erased, and the execution of Parmenion, along with that of Philotas, appears to be judicially performed. Robinson wants to clear Alexander of an unjust charge of murder, although he says it is difficult to believe that the king could not have swayed the army, had he wished to save these two lives. They had risked their lives for his victories before, while less important men were acquitted of complicity in the plot. Robinson believes that Alexander was probably trying to break Macedonian opposition to his new ways with these executions.

R. Lane Fox

Fox believes that Philotas' torture before confessing was "probably wrongly" reported by Curtius. He thinks that Ptolemy added no proof of guilt for other historians to draw from him.²³⁸ When Ptolemy reports that there were rumours of plots in Egypt,²³⁹ he suggests to us that Philotas is a plotter and has been one for years. This will obviously sully his name for us in the future. Fox says that Alexander's coercion of Philotas to defend himself in Macedonian rather than in Greek is a detail which is "too unusual perhaps to be only a history's fiction,"²⁴⁰ suggesting its basis in reality. He thinks that Philotas' guilt is "very plausible" but that there is not much evidence to prove it. If he had been involved, the other conspirators could not have known it, because he was informed and was expected to tell Alexander about it, meaning he would have been the last person

²³⁷ Robinson (1945) 423.

²³⁸ Fox (1973) 284.

²³⁹ Fox (1973) 287.

²⁴⁰ Fox (1973) 288.

to find out. Had he known beforehand and been approached in order to have it exposed, he would have gotten rid of those who were trying to air it, an action which would have served as a good opportunity to streamline his plans, with the few who were aware of it out of the way. But he did not do this. Fox says that this fact "strongly suggests he had no part in the conspiracy."²⁴¹

Perhaps Philotas' inaction simply meant that he did not especially care about the suggestion or possibility of an assassination plot, which by itself could have been a criminal act. Fox views this episode in the Alexander story as more of a mystery than a scandal. He says that "nobody believed Philotas was innocent" and that it is ridiculous to turn him into a witness to the ruthlessness of Alexander simply because we are presented with very little historical explanation. If Alexander had wanted to murder innocent men, he had other, subtler ways of doing so, such as exposing them in battle or letting them lose their way on the journey through mountains. Fox argues that a public prosecution in which other defendants found acquittal was a clumsy method of doing away with a guiltless person.²⁴² Of course this does not mean that Alexander could not or would not have killed an innocent man in this manner, but considering the strategic mind which he is purported to have possessed, one can assume he would have found a smoother route to the extermination of his enemies than by way of the trial. He adds that Parmenion's death was an inevitable result of Philotas' execution, and that the king's arrangement of this event is not surprising, seen in the light of "self-defence."²⁴³ Fox says that Alexander's

²⁴¹ Fox (1973) 289.

²⁴² Fox (1973) 289.

²⁴³ For examples of Alexander's opposition to Parmenion's counsel, see Arr. 1.13.3-7 (the battle of the Granicus), 3.10 (the night attack at Gaugamela), 3.18.11 (the burning of Persepolis). Heckel agrees that such stories about Parmenion are almost certainly propaganda and ἀπολογία, and were most likely recorded after his death. See Heckel (1977) 11-12.

victory on the Granicus (against Parmenion's advice) and the burning of Persepolis (again opposed by Parmenion) were "probably re-written against a murdered general."²⁴⁴

Waldemar Heckel

In his article "The Conspiracy *Against* Philotas," Heckel refers to Badian's article from 1960, calling him one of the most sound examiners of the story, although perhaps overly suspicious. While Badian feels that the fictional plot of Dimnus gave Alexander the opportunity of disposing of Philotas and his kinsmen, Heckel disagrees and does not find this satisfactory. He believes that the younger generals of Alexander, like Hephaistion, were important in effecting Philotas' descent, and that the latter mishandled the situation.²⁴⁵ If we believe, with Badian, that Alexander invented the whole scheme in order to do away with Philotas, we still cannot assume that he would know with certainty that Philotas would keep the information secret, and not expose it as soon as he heard it, thereby winning royal favour.²⁴⁶ Heckel feels that Curtius is our best source for this episode, although the reputation of Cleitarchus (one of his main sources, and a figure present on Alexander's expedition), as well as his own, do not help its credibility.²⁴⁷ Curtius' story still possesses the "important ring of verisimilitude."²⁴⁸

Heckel calls the death of Parmenion "outright murder,"²⁴⁹ also noting that Arrian admits the same and says that Alexander was afraid after Philotas was dead.²⁵⁰ He feels that Parmenion's relocation in Ecbatana was not a problem, as he was about seventy years

²⁴⁴ Fox (1973) 290.

²⁴⁵ Heckel (1977) 10.

²⁴⁶ Heckel (1977) 16.

²⁴⁷ Heckel (1977) 17.

²⁴⁸ Heckel (1977) 19.

²⁴⁹ Heckel (1977) 20.

²⁵⁰ Arr. 3.26.4.

old at this point, according to Curtius (6.11.32).²⁵¹ Heckel claims that Badian misleads readers of Plutarch and induces them to believe that the plot had long been in gestation and was a part of the Dimnus-plot. Heckel's idea is that Craterus and Antigone alone, and not Alexander, formed a plot against Philotas, and that it is possible that the plot just came up at that point, without a long development, contrary to what Badian would like us to believe.²⁵² Heckel says that when Plutarch speaks of a conspiracy against Philotas (49.1) he is referring to this one formed by Craterus and Antigone (and seized on by rival principals of the army), not the Dimnus-plot intended by Alexander against the whole of Philotas' family. Heckel does not believe that there was any malicious intention in Alexander toward Philotas, nor a reason to eliminate him, although the younger soldiers present were jealous of the veteran.²⁵³ Evidently his enemies simply seized this chance and exploited it,²⁵⁴ and if anyone possessed the ability to influence Alexander's mind to believe that Philotas was expendable at this point, it was Hephaistion. Alexander's closest companion is noted by Heckel to have led a minimal role in Macedonian combat success before the death of Philotas. Before this episode, there seems to be nothing related to his military acumen which would admit the promotion that followed.

Also implicated in the context of Hephaistion's convenient good fortune after the fate of Philotas is information found around the "suspicious nature" of Arrian's narrative (3.26.2ff.). Ptolemy is also given a higher command. Heckel feels that the processing of Philotas has been "abbreviated to the point of uselessness." He says that the tradition given to us under the Arrian/Ptolemy heading has long been seen as an official ἀπολογία

²⁵¹ Heckel (1977) 13.

²⁵² Heckel (1977) 14.

²⁵³ Heckel (1977) 16.

²⁵⁴ Heckel (1977) 17.

for Alexander himself, but that it should be recognized as a shield for Ptolemy in many instances, as well as for his associates.²⁵⁵ It appears, when viewing the whole story with the court factions kept in mind, that Alexander need not be the key figure in this story. That role may be assigned to the conflicts within the society around him. The personal rivalries certainly had some influence on Alexander's decisions and on the fate of victims like Philotas.²⁵⁶ Heckel views this episode most notably as a struggle for power, and acknowledges that Alexander allowed himself to be led in a certain direction.²⁵⁷ He interprets Arrian's remark in 3.26.4 about Alexander's belief that Philotas could have been a part of a plot with the guidance of Parmenion as "feeble," and says that this could not have had the power of persuasion. While even Ptolemy/Arrian did not try to avoid calling Parmenion's death a murder, Heckel agrees that this act of Alexander was simply one of "fearful desperation."²⁵⁸

J. R. Hamilton

Hamilton points out that Arrian's version of this story is "by no means complete," and states that it is evident from Ptolemy's silence on the matter that Philotas faced no charge.²⁵⁹ He cites Tarn's demonstration that the *mos* of executing a traitor's relatives had been suspended temporarily at this time in history.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ Heckel (1977) 19.

²⁵⁶ Heckel (1977) 20.

²⁵⁷ Heckel (1977) 20.

²⁵⁸ Heckel (1977) 21.

²⁵⁹ Hamilton (1969) 137.

²⁶⁰ Tarn (1950) 270 ff.

N. G. L. Hammond

Hammond believes that where Arrian's version diverges from the others in the matter of Philotas' execution, "his version is to be preferred."²⁶¹ "Supreme folly" is what he would call the actions of Alexander were the king to talk the accusers and six thousand Macedonian soldiers into executing innocent men, lending credence to Philotas' guilt, or at least the idea that Alexander was convinced of that guilt.²⁶² This is compounded by the fact that Philotas was executed before Parmenion, which would be an especially dangerous move, considering how the father had so many loyal men under his command, as well as money and a situation on the communication lines. He continues by saying that if Parmenion had survived unharmed, but with a motive for vengeance and with the army's loyalty, he "could [have] split Macedonia in two and throw[n] the kingdom of Asia into the melting pot,"²⁶³ providing further need for his extermination. Hammond says that Arrian's narrative is not so much concerned with the amount of detail or plot, but rather with Alexander's attitude.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Hammond (1980) 184.

²⁶² Hammond (1980) 185.

²⁶³ Hammond (1980) 186.

²⁶⁴ Hammond (1980) 185.

Chapter Six

Commentary on the Cleitus Episode

Plutarch's Version

“How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend”

In his moral essay, “How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend,” Plutarch speaks of this affair. He notes that Cleitus had a desire to blame Alexander for his Eastern ways in a public setting, and that the fiasco which resulted had more to do with this mistake than the effect of wine on the party.²⁶⁵ Bosworth also notes that there was more publicity in this insult than drunkenness.²⁶⁶ Plutarch states that there is a danger in being too frank: it can injure the object's ego, and this pain needs to be soothed afterwards.²⁶⁷

“On the Control of Anger”

Another of Plutarch's *Moralia*, “On the Control of Anger,” advises retreat when one notices the onset of angry feelings, in order that one may compose oneself before unleashing an inappropriate emotion.²⁶⁸ He says that when a man sits at a symposium and speaks only a little, his silence may irritate the fellow-banqueters, but nevertheless silence remains the most dignified behaviour if anger is imminent.²⁶⁹ He states that the man who is most ready to anger is he whose conceit is met with some maligning comment. Plutarch argues that in this situation the soul fights to defend itself because of

²⁶⁵ *Mor.* 71C.

²⁶⁶ Bosworth (1995) 57.

²⁶⁷ *Mor.* 74E.

²⁶⁸ *Mor.* 455C.

²⁶⁹ *Mor.* 456E.

its weakness.²⁷⁰ He defends Alexander by proposing that this behaviour was not his usual custom; he was harsher than normal at that banquet.²⁷¹ He suggests getting rid of one's angry nature. Although the biographers may attempt to extricate Alexander from a murder charge, claiming that at least the king's remorse shows a genuine possibility of moral improvement, Bosworth reminds us that evil people also have this capacity.²⁷² In fact, one could argue that the most badly behaved or evil individuals, because of their evil, have the greatest capacity for improvement since they have more of it to effect. Plutarch calls this remorseful quality the act of a god, a defence which Bosworth in turn labels "rhetorical sophistry."²⁷³ He says that most would disagree with Plutarch's summation of remorse; Seneca offers the suggestion that those who cannot handle their wine and who fear the petulance and temerity of their own drunkenness should order their companions to take them from the banquet.²⁷⁴ But when was Alexander one to take precaution against his own impetuosity?

Truesdell S. Brown

Brown says that Plutarch's story is convincing in a psychological way,²⁷⁵ while Arrian's is the best source for this episode.²⁷⁶ However accurately Plutarch's account may come across (and Brown says it "rings true"²⁷⁷), "details may be suspected," such as Cleitus' "gift for literary repartee."²⁷⁸ He says that Cleitus forgot his place and spoke up

²⁷⁰ *Mor.* 457B. Cf. *Epict. Diss.* 80.

²⁷¹ *Mor.* 458B.

²⁷² Bosworth (1995) 62.

²⁷³ Bosworth (1995) 63.

²⁷⁴ Seneca, *de Ira*, 3.13.5.

²⁷⁵ Brown (1949) 238.

²⁷⁶ Brown (1949) 235.

²⁷⁷ Brown (1949) 238.

²⁷⁸ Brown (1949) 238, n. 68.

at the wrong time. This attitude leans toward the view that verbal frankness was a restricted freedom and that Cleitus should bear at least some of the blame for the horror that unfolded at the banquet.

J. R. Hamilton

Hamilton says that the version by Plutarch is "preferred by most scholars," especially because of its objectivity and abundance of details.²⁷⁹ He feels that there is "no reason" to disbelieve Plutarch's narration of Cleitus quoting the *Andromache*.²⁸⁰

A. B. Bosworth

Bosworth writes that Plutarch's version of the Cleitus story is "the clear favourite" among modern commentators, but that "there is no solid ground for the preference."²⁸¹ He adds that "modern literature...has not greatly illuminated this sombre episode."²⁸²

Elizabeth Carney on the Cleitus Episode

Plutarch and Curtius come across as somewhat more reliable than Arrian in the rendition of this episode. Their references to court politics as an important ingredient in the death of Cleitus appear more realistic when juxtaposed with Arrian's Ptolemy-borrowed, apologetic version.²⁸³ Carney calls Arrian's version of this story "long and not

²⁷⁹ Hamilton (1969) 139.

²⁸⁰ Hamilton (1969) 144.

²⁸¹ Bosworth (1995) 51.

²⁸² Bosworth (1995) 52.

²⁸³ Carney (1981) 154.

very perceptive.”²⁸⁴

She states that Cleitus' appointment to Bactria around 328 may have been a sign that he and the king were falling out, but that it did not necessarily indicate any disfavour Alexander may have had with Cleitus. It merely suggests that Alexander could do just as well with Cleitus gone.²⁸⁵ She asks why the mocking songs at the banquet which annoyed Cleitus were being sung in the first place. If this were admissible in front of the king, it must have been known at the time that the king and his intimates were not sympathetic to those who had lost their lives in 329.²⁸⁶ She adds that Cleitus' brother-in-law Andronicus may have died in that battle, which would have added a personal enmity to the political annoyances he was already experiencing with Alexander.²⁸⁷

The standards of warfare which readers of Homer's *Iliad* would have recognized as heroic were still very much current attitudes in Alexander's day, Carney argues. Therefore Alexander's violation at the banquet against a guest, and one who had saved his life, was “no negligible crime.” Yet the murder and the violence displayed in the dramatic scene of Alexander's remorseful episode were also “Homeric” in nature.²⁸⁸ This scene of murder makes it clear how expendable the closest and most trustworthy men at the king's command actually were. Interestingly, Carney draws our attention to the irony connected by Cleitus' grievance and Alexander's brutal response: by attempting to break free of Macedonian boundaries and customs in his court, and therefore drawing the ire of veterans who then made some rebuttal against the change, Alexander's murder of Cleitus exactly echoes the violent Macedonian reaction of the drunken Philip in 340

²⁸⁴ Carney (1981) 154.

²⁸⁵ Carney (1981) 151.

²⁸⁶ Carney (1981) 156.

²⁸⁷ Carney (1981) 157.

²⁸⁸ Carney (1981) 158.

(which proved unsuccessful, to Alexander's good fortune).²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Carney (1981) 160.

Arrian's Version

A.B. Bosworth

Bosworth notes that Arrian's rebuke of Alexander's behaviour during the Cleitus affair is "curiously muted."²⁹⁰ He also finds it curious that Arrian regards heavy drinking at such a banquet as something not akin to Macedonian life, and states that this idea came from Arrian himself.²⁹¹ The parallels are "ominously reminiscent" between this episode and that of Parmenion; there is a relocation of a trusted commander, followed by his unexpected murder. Bosworth feels that Cleitus' re-assignment to Bactria gives him a strong reason to be in a foul mood at this banquet, and that Arrian has either missed this or chosen not to regard it.²⁹²

Bosworth notes three different setups for Alexander's provocation: in Plutarch (50.11), Cleitus is accused of cowardice and then speaks of his military achievements in defence; in Curtius (8.1.32), it looks as though Alexander will calm down if Cleitus stops berating him, but this does not happen; notably in Arrian (4.8.6), Cleitus begins the boasting on his own, providing Alexander (and his biographer) with more reason for some type of reaction against Cleitus.²⁹³ Bosworth reasonably points out that whereas Plutarch and Curtius describe how Alexander had a moment of calmness before being re-ignited by his detractor, Arrian does not include this, but probably would have used such

²⁹⁰ Bosworth (1995) 8.

²⁹¹ Bosworth (1995) 54. Stadter notes the strangeness of this comment as well (1980, 106).

²⁹² Bosworth (1995) 56.

²⁹³ Bosworth (1995) 58. Alexander can no longer bear the *παροινία* or the *ὑβρίς* of Cleitus, taking exception to such happenings at a banquet as completely outrageous. Arrian pities Alexander for being the victim of passion and drunkenness, while blaming Cleitus for the same traits, albeit ones not resulting in murder (4.10.1).

a description if he had found it in his sources.²⁹⁴ Most of the sources include this scene, and Bosworth believes it to be historically accurate.²⁹⁵ It is important to remark that the version Arrian takes from Aristobulus shows Cleitus being led further away (by the always well-behaved Ptolemy) with a slightly more elaborate description than in Plutarch, where Cleitus simply leaves the symposium.²⁹⁶ Bosworth calls Arrian's pity for Alexander "totally misplaced," although he does remember Epictetus' exhortations (*Diss.* 1.18.3, 4.6.2) to pity malefactors rather than maligning them, since they are sowing the seeds for their own moral collapse. Immediately preceding his account of the murder of Cleitus, Arrian does mention the incapacity for an intemperate man to achieve true happiness.²⁹⁷

Arrian makes the unfinished sacrifice to Dionysus more important to this episode in comparison to a writer like Curtius (7.2.6), whom we might expect to have expanded its effect on the scene, given his wide reputation for rhetorical exaggeration. Bosworth believes that there were indeed attempts to justify Alexander's crime by his inner circle after the king showed remorse, perhaps similar to the sacrifice theme.²⁹⁸ In the end, Bosworth draws a comparison between two burdens of responsibility: the first is where Arrian requires that Ptolemy tell the truth in all matters, since he is a king, and therefore must be a paragon of virtue and honesty. The second is a burden of similar virtue which Arrian should consequently lay on Alexander and his behaviour as a king.²⁹⁹ Bosworth

²⁹⁴ Bosworth (1995) 59.

²⁹⁵ Bosworth (1995) 60.

²⁹⁶ Bosworth (1995) 61. Plut. *Al.* 51.4; Arr. 4.8.9.

²⁹⁷ Bosworth (1995) 63. Arr. 4.7.5.

²⁹⁸ Bosworth (1995) 64. C. 7.2.6; Arr. 4.8.1-3; 4.9.5-6. Although he does encase the action with the two references to divine wrath, Arrian still shows Alexander taking the responsibility for Cleitus' death himself. However, Bosworth feels that bringing up Dionysus immediately after Alexander's self-reproach ruins the impact of this assumption of personal responsibility.

²⁹⁹ Bosworth (1995) 62.

feels that in this episode, which has a “super-abundant” wealth of source-material, the arrangement and choice of Arrian’s information is “at its most elusive.”³⁰⁰

R. M. Errington

Errington believes that there is only a vague description of restraint by Alexander’s συμπίνοι in Arrian’s version of the Cleitus episode. He feels that Aristobulus is trying to absolve Alexander of some guilt by reporting that he was provoked. Errington thinks that Arrian’s story is drawn from Aristobulus rather than from Ptolemy and that perhaps Ptolemy omitted the restraint description, which would give Arrian less excuse for Alexander’s murderous behaviour. Ptolemy could not name himself as a fellow-drinker (although Curtius says he was part of the company that day), and therefore, Errington argues, he could not name the other men either. He states that it is easy to see that Ptolemy was not proud of his inclusion in such a situation. If he covered his involvement with the words “τῶν συμπινόντων,” Arrian simply absorbed what he was presented with. Errington writes that Ptolemy’s normal method of disguising unfavourable episodes such as this was to “suppress the inconvenient or unpalatable.”³⁰¹

R. Lane Fox

While Ptolemy’s pages of history “seem to have suppressed it,” Aristobulus “was reduced once more to special pleading.” Fox agrees that Alexander’s temper was the first to be lost in his argument with Cleitus, and “set on murder,” he grabbed his sword. He believes that the story of Cleitus’ exit and re-entry is an excuse which assists in

³⁰⁰ Bosworth (1995) 8.

³⁰¹ Errington (1969) 238.

exculpating Alexander. He would prefer to believe that "more plausibly," Cleitus had never left. Fox calls the justification of this murder, blamed on the neglected Dionysian sacrifice, a "lame defence."³⁰²

Truesdell S. Brown

Brown's view is that while Arrian may be the best source for this story,³⁰³ Ptolemy is not critical enough of the proceedings and is "not above altering facts."³⁰⁴ Inevitably this finds its way into an apologetic work like Arrian's *Anabasis*. In the work by Curtius, Cleitus' frustration at current events is "more than justified," and the role of Alexander is filled by the "conventional tyrant of later tradition."³⁰⁵ Brown notes that there is no mention of divine retribution in either Curtius or Justin. He calls the reasons for Cleitus' outburst and Alexander's inhuman rage, as given by Arrian, "most unsatisfactory," and says that the rendition of this episode by Arrian is "wooden and unconvincing."³⁰⁶

W.W. Tarn

In his biography of Alexander, Tarn says that "Cleitus could not be restrained." This is something of a reversal for the general picture of the banquet and its murder, but beyond this he does not comment on the events after describing them.³⁰⁷

³⁰² Fox (1973) 309.

³⁰³ Brown (1949) 235.

³⁰⁴ Brown (1949) 236.

³⁰⁵ Brown (1949) 237.

³⁰⁶ Brown (1949) 237.

³⁰⁷ Tarn (1948) 73.

N. G. L. Hammond

Hammond says that Alexander demanded his bodyguards' attention because he feared for his life. In addition to the wine and the lost tempers, the fear of a conspiracy seemed to become more tangible when these orders were not followed immediately.³⁰⁸ This story, coming from Aristobulus through Arrian, was composed before Ptolemy wrote his memoirs. Had there been any disparity between his two main sources, Hammond argues, Arrian would have made mention of it. He believes that this narrative is "as close to the truth as we are likely to get."³⁰⁹ He says we should not doubt the facts of Arrian's story.³¹⁰ It is notable to Hammond that Arrian does not allow the luxury of free speech to Cleitus. This liberty is not viewed by Arrian with reproach when the gymnosophists exercise it,³¹¹ nor when Coenus exercises it.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Hammond (1980) 197.

³⁰⁹ Hammond (1981) 198.

³¹⁰ Hammond (1981) 184.

³¹¹ See Arr. 7.1.6-2.1.

³¹² 17.18.1. Alexander is more irritated this time, however, and dismisses the assembly for the day.

Conclusion

The modern commentators on the Philotas and Cleitus episodes agree on the basic truth of the versions of Plutarch and Arrian. They take into account the fact that Arrian has mostly deviated from his Stoic education, but they admit that the encomiastic nature of his two main sources has bound him to a story of praise. Since he has declared his personal admiration for Alexander, he probably would not see the limitation inherited from Ptolemy and Aristobulus as a problem. However, the commentators also note that Arrian's repositioning of blame on the victims is an ingredient in his stories which may lead us to believe that he is distorting his picture. His apologies strike many commentators as egregious, and this is a further clue not only that he may have more to tell us (which remains untold), but also that he himself is not convinced by his own knowledge of Alexander's life; some of the virtues on his list may, in fact, be less virtuous than he relates, and he is probably very aware of this.

Plutarch approaches the problem of Alexander from a different angle. While he wishes us to view the man as a hero, he is still willing to shed light on Alexander's faults, in order that we may take heed and divert ourselves from such destructive tendencies. The commentators still recognise that Plutarch is uncomfortable with presenting his hero as a vicious murderer, and understandably so, but mainly they agree that his Alexander is actually a complex character, and that the episodes discussed herein give valuable colouring to our understanding of the tensions and intercourse among Alexander's closest allies. Perhaps as one of a long series of great men, Alexander does not occupy the blinding status of an idol to Plutarch, as he might if his were the only favourable *Life* that had been written.

As I wrote this thesis, the idea slowly came to me that distortion of history may not be a biographical sin after all, depending on the individual case; perhaps this judgement lies in the perception of the reader. The biographer decides to take a certain approach and some allowances can be made if the biography assumes the identity of an artwork, which need never comply with simply one system of execution. Instead of being a list of facts and dates, there may be a character which shows itself in the author and in the work. These are two unexpected personalities which emerged to me, separate from the character of the biographical subject, and they now seem as valid to me as any other characters associated with the narrative.

Several other issues have also begun to develop some interest for me. First, there arose the matter of trying to defend a type of action one believes to be cruel or wrong. It seems at first glance that an action like the killing of Cleitus, for example, would be an immediate object of repulsion even in an admirer. Why does this not happen? The admiring biographer does recognise the need for defence; if he does not find it repulsive at least he knows that his readers probably will. Otherwise he would not bother trying to apologise. There are men, however, whose magnificence in legend will have the weight to drown this type of criticism. I suppose it would be possible to take a view of the lives of certain historical figures such as Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon which sincerely presents them as 'greats' and avoids condemning them for the trails of blood they left behind. Characteristics such as military cunning, ambition, bravery, achievement and penetrating minds can override the results of their destructiveness if these men are not almost solely thought of as butchers. Positive influences on civilisation redeem them and they breed admirers with legitimate reasons for celebrating them.

The second issue that had some eventual significance for me was the context of the killings. Since the biographers isolate them and apologise for them, shifting the blame or telling us that Alexander was not usually this cruel, and since I am studying them specifically without reference to Alexander's life, I believe that they stand out more than they should. If we accept his legendary connection with the *Iliad*, his desire for alcohol, his quick temper and generally impetuous nature, his obvious martial skill, his pride, the possibility of plots and the discomfort this would produce in him, and the history with his father, there should not be much shock that he would eventually express himself violently when he felt threatened. When put against the isolation by the biographers and myself, the long course of Alexander's circumstances changes the point of view for these episodes, making them more forgivable and unsurprising. His life was indeed not of a type with which the general reader is going to identify, and if it was atypical, we cannot fairly expect him to act typically.

Perhaps these violent episodes were very much defining points in his life and his administration, especially where his securest colleagues were concerned, but as all events have inspirations and all outcomes are unavoidable, these episodes are also just events in the stream of his life, events which have clearly recognisable seeds. When I first started reading about possible defences for this behaviour, I could not imagine how that could be taken seriously and what the defences might be. This is because I was recording information in isolation and not studying the reasons for his behaviour in general.

I believe that Plutarch and Arrian are both correct in their judgements of a man. Plutarch tells us that he does not want to be condemned by his reader if he omits an especially famous event, and instead concentrates on a telling moment in Alexander's

life.³¹³ Since a man is the collection of all of his experiences, perhaps we can find the key to his identity in almost any of his actions, all of which are bound to be an expression of his influences. Arrian wants us to reserve hasty critical judgement of Alexander, telling us that we must take all of his actions together before we damn him.³¹⁴ This has more merit than I first realised; it took Alexander a lifetime of experiences to put him into a position whereby he committed the acts we now see as horrendous. We need not accept them as a part of something to be celebrated in his identity, but we must readily accept them in the whole picture of him, if we believe that a man is the crystallisation of the sum of his experiences.

³¹³ Plut. *Al.* 1.1.

³¹⁴ Arr. 7.30.1.

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