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The Persian policies of Alexander the Great: from 330-323 BC

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**THE PERSIAN POLICIES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT:
FROM 330-323 BC**

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

in

The Department of History

**by
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B.A., Louisiana State University, 2001
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Abstract

Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and sought to create a unique realm, where all people Greek and non-Greek would be able to live in relative autonomy under the monarch. Scholars have debated Alexander's intent for the last century and still cannot find consensus. This thesis will approach the intent by focusing on the question of how Alexander governed the empire he conquered. Specifically, did he intend for the people of the conquered landmass to become a new type of integrated culture led by him and his progeny? If it is possible to answer this question, it may give some indication of whether or not Alexander was anything more than a "mere" conqueror. Refusing to be bound by xenophobic tradition, Alexander ruled with the assistance of foreign nobles serving as administrators. He took on a more recognizable and palatable appearance for the newly conquered and then finally acted to unify the top tier of the Persians with his friends and commanders. This study concludes that pragmatism and foresight allowed Alexander to accept all of Persia's inhabitants as subjects, regardless of ethnicity, and meld them in a way that would ultimately contribute to a more stable empire.

Introduction

Who was Alexander the Great? Was he (as appears in some of the less flattering sources) a Macedonian who “went native,” captivated by, and obsessed with Persian “oriental” barbarities? Was the establishment of his own vast empire a result of hubristic self-aggrandizement? Or was it the seemingly natural progression of an ambitious but basically pragmatic military leader’s career? The question of what ultimately drove Alexander is a provocative one, and has been debated at length over the years — it was called the “biggest question of them all” in a recent biography.¹ This thesis will approach it by focusing on the question of how Alexander governed the empire he conquered. Specifically, did he intend for the people of the conquered landmass to become a new type of integrated culture led by him and his progeny? If it is possible to answer this question, it may give some indication of whether or not Alexander was anything more than a “mere” conqueror.

A comparison of the conqueror’s initial foray into Asia Minor and the Troad to the later years of Alexander’s campaign shows that Alexander maintained a pragmatic restraint in the conquest of the eastern Mediterranean, and pragmatic choices for governance within Persia. Rather than pursue the Persian king into the heart of his empire, Alexander chose to complete the strategically important seizure of all the coastal zones. In this eastern Mediterranean phase of the campaign Alexander followed along a course that most likely had been plotted by his father Philip II of Macedon.² Later in the campaign, Alexander chose to incorporate Persian leaders

¹ Cartledge, Paul, Alexander the Great (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 192.

² See Chapter 2 for an analysis of Philip’s intentions.

and customs into the newly formed kingdom, which represented a shift in his governance policies. These choices were not always popular with segments of his forces, but Alexander chose to maintain these policies despite the objections of the troops. Alexander must have believed that utilizing preexisting governmental structures within the Persian Empire would foster acceptance from the populace, and thus these policies are illustrations of a pragmatic understanding of the way to rule a conquered, foreign culture.

Alexander was not always so pragmatic. Source material identifies Alexander as a deeply religious and ideological individual who, at great personal risk, took time to visit famous holy sites during the campaign; for example, he diverted to Ilium and later to Gordium, neither of which held strategic significance. Forays into holy sites typically seem not to be altogether necessary, but even here there is method to the madness: these visits occurred for symbolic reasons. However, it should be understood that Alexander's flexibility during the campaign and originality at rule represent the main complementary elements of his pragmatism. These elements allowed him to maintain control over the vast land mass and to administer his new realm.

This thesis illustrates Alexander's pragmatism by focusing on the period during the second phase of the campaign when a shift in policy took place. With Persia proper in hand, the Macedonian King began to acculturate the Persian populace. Some suggest that Alexander, during this period showed a predilection toward the Persian culture. Alexander's first contact with the Persian culture occurred in Pella, Macedonia where a young Alexander questioned visiting Persian envoys.³ This question of Alexander's supposed predisposition will be weighed against the literary evidence in order to see if Alexander may have been inclined toward Persian "extravagance." The primary conclusion is that after the death of the final Achaemenid king,

³ Plut. Alex. 5.1

Darius III, in 330 BC, Alexander used a carefully crafted propaganda campaign of image building to cement his place as King of Asia. This guise served as a device whereby he could garner support from both the Persian aristocrat and commoner.⁴

While constructing aspects of the Persian image, Alexander went further by adopting non-Greek administered satrapal governments. Of prime significance to this study is the way in which Alexander utilized non-Greek native administrators within his new realm. These men were a link between the Macedonian king and his foreign subjects. The lives of rural and city dwelling Persians were virtually unaffected under the rule of Alexander and his satraps. Taxes were collected as before and residents were able to worship in their customary manner. These satraps were employed in further attempts to minimize any disruption to daily life. That is not to say that Alexander was incapable of quashing uprisings militarily, for the Macedonian military machine was unopposed in open, organized combat by 330; rather his actions validate the main focus of this thesis: Alexander did not desire simply to loot the Persian landscape but preferred to consolidate these lands and incorporate them into his own realm.

It appears that Alexander sought to preserve the Persians willing to accept his dicta. He viewed those as his own subjects after the fall of Darius. Those who demonstrated worthiness were eventually taken as loyal allies and incorporated into the military units. Although Macedonian garrisons were placed in every major urban center of the former Persian Empire, Alexander did not promote force as a first choice to resolve conflicts. He recognized the value of the systems that had existed in Persia before his conquest and did not fear using them.

The third and final component revealing Alexander's plan for a peaceful, unified, and prolonged kingdom was the adoption of a policy of political marriage previously employed by his father. The primary difference between Alexander and Philip is Alexander's inclusion of his

⁴ Arr. VII.29.3

most trusted advisors and friends in a mass marriage ceremony at Susa. This represents an attempt at making political relationships at the highest levels of social hierarchy through marriage. Even before the marriage at Susa Alexander allowed his common soldiers to marry any foreign women with whom they had been cohabiting. This served Alexander in two ways; to placate his troops and form the base for his new, eastern cities. Marriage further served Alexander as a bridge between policy and culture.

Alexander's policies and decisions had profound consequences for the Greek and Persian worlds. Unfortunately the record is at best incomplete and secondhand. Source analysis will attempt to unravel the reliability of the historiography of the Alexander sources. After analyzing the sources, this study will reconstruct the cultural and political milieu from which Alexander emerged. Studying Alexander's tutelage and early military experience are beneficial for creating a more accurate assessment of his military and political policies.

This study is not a complete biography of Alexander the Great, nor does it hope to disprove the conclusions or the emphases scholars have placed upon Alexander's life and actions; rather its purpose is to discern the motives behind his choices. Once motive has been established it may be possible to remove the excess romanticism that permeates early scholarship and the pessimism promoted by some modern scholars. A new characterization will be constructed for Alexander of Macedon: the Pragmatic Alexander stripped of all the partiality for either a negative or positive image mentioned above.

Modern Scholars: Tarn and Bosworth

Before attempting to unravel the classical traditions, it will be useful to introduce the historiography and debate in modern scholarship over Alexander's self-conception and how he thought of his subjects. To oversimplify greatly, one side argues that Alexander strove to be a

benevolent patriarch, while the opposing viewpoint suggests that Alexander was a conqueror with little regard for permanence.

The greatest proponent of the “noble Alexander” concept was William W. Tarn. Tarn wrote in the early twentieth century and called Alexander’s policy one of “universalism.” Possibly the most prolific modern opponent of this idea is A.B. Bosworth. Both Tarn and Bosworth recognized the importance the Asian campaigns had on the governmental structure of Alexander’s empire for Alexander developed his policies as he achieved more success. Tarn argued Alexander sought to conquer Asia for the good of its people and Bosworth contended that Alexander conquered for his sole benefit. Tarn focused mainly on Alexander’s intentions while Bosworth almost exclusively emphasized the military aspects of the campaign.

W.W. Tarn uses the term universalism to summarize the Macedonian king’s actions in Persia. Tarn’s thoughts on universalism derive from his interpretation of the Greek term *homonoia*, which he attributed to the Athenian rhetorician Isocrates.⁵ Isocrates used this term in his treatise The Panegyricus to describe the community of all Greek speakers. To simplify Isocrates’ thoughts, speaking Greek separated an individual from the rest of the world. *Homonoia* further signified Greek unity. Tarn defined *homonoia* as “a being of one mind together.”⁶ As Tarn observes, *homonoia* was to be promoted among the Greeks to strengthen their stance against the Persian king and his people. The Persians represent the “barbarian” whom Isocrates viewed as a threat that continually loomed over Greece. Isocrates employed the term *homonoia* when he sent correspondence to convince Philip of Macedon to lead the Greeks to a victory over the Persian enemy.⁷ Alexander would later, argued Tarn, expand upon this

⁵ For more on Isocrates see below p., 40.

⁶ Discussed at length by William Tarn, Alexander the Great (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 400-403.

⁷ Isoc.5.16.

concept to include the *barbarian* as a member of a universal family. If in this sense Alexander's homonoia would have been anathema to Isocrates, there are good reasons to expand the definition. Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* states that homonoia can also mean "unity and concord."⁸ This definition of homonoia without Tarn's romanticism is an acceptable label for Alexander's attempts at rule because it indicates cooperation. Tarn may have misused the term because he follows Isocrates' usage, and as will be revealed later, Alexander clearly did not follow Isocrates' proposals in the late campaign. Tarn's scholarship, while immense in scope, falls prey to hero worship at times and at other times makes frequent inferences into the thoughts of Alexander that, at best, stretch the imagination, but does at least set the stage for exploring Alexander's intent.

On the other side of the debate, Bosworth does not share in Tarn's depiction of Alexander as the benevolent father figure. Rather, Bosworth portrays Alexander – in his role as king of Asia – as having no thoughts other than exacting tribute from conquered peoples and expanding his own reputation.⁹ Bosworth focuses on the military aspects of the campaign with particular emphasis on any battle or massacre that occurred. He also makes Alexander seem driven to exact revenge upon his opponents for the earlier Persian invasion of Greece in 490 BC.¹⁰ This notion of a war of revenge may have been an early device applied by Alexander to encourage Greek support for the campaign, but it is not an adequate argument. Bosworth identifies an end to this phase,¹¹ but does not provide adequate explanation for why the campaign continued. Alexander's behavior does not change, according to Bosworth, which suggests that there is no distinction between events before 330 and those that came after it. If Alexander, in fact, did not

⁸ *Greek – English Lexicon*. 7th ed., s.v. "homonoia."

⁹ Bosworth, Albert Brian. *Conquest and Empire*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 87, 241.

¹⁰ Bosworth cites Plutarch as a source for this characterization. See Plut. *Alex.* 34.1-4.

¹¹ Bosworth, 85.

make any changes during the campaign, how could there be an end to the “war of revenge”? Bosworth’s analysis of Alexander can be summed up in one word, conquest.

Tarn and Bosworth contribute much to the base of knowledge concerning the actual events and impacts of Alexander’s campaign. However, their conclusions, while useful, ultimately differ when interpreting the motivations and decisions of Alexander. Modern scholars spend much time debating Tarn’s interpretation versus Bosworth’s. For the purpose of this thesis one must ask: does Tarn’s glorification of Alexander weaken our faith in his conclusions on Alexander’s ideal of universalism? Tarn, while creating a heroic persona for Alexander in his narrative, does not venture into unsubstantiated speculation when analyzing the sources. His analysis is concise and critical but perhaps too hopeful in its attempt to paint a picture of the noble Alexander. For example, Tarn glosses over many massacres that occurred during Alexander’s campaign. But if Tarn dismisses these atrocities, Bosworth dwells too heavily on them. Bosworth focuses on battles, troop dissent and the overall effectiveness of Alexander’s conquest of the Persian Empire. By ignoring Alexander’s intent, Bosworth’s history is at best incomplete or too one-sided. These historians are nevertheless useful because they represent the stark divide that has surfaced within the modern debate.

Other modern scholars weigh in on the issue as well. Notable names include: Charles Robinson, N.G.L. Hammond, Ernst Badian, Eugene Borza, as well as Janos Harmatta and A. Shapur Shahbazi coming from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, who offer a new perspective of Alexander’s eastern campaign not often seen in western scholarship.¹² Harmatta’s and

¹² Robinson, Charles. “The Extraordinary Ideas of Alexander the Great”. *The American Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (1957): 326-344.; Hammond N.G.L., *Three Historians of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.; Badian, Ernst. “The Administration of the Empire.” *Greece and Rome*, 2d ser., 12, no.2 (1965): 166-182.; Borza, Eugene. *In the Shadow of Olympus “The Emergence of Macedon.”* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.; Harmatta, Janos. “Alexander the Great in Central Asia,” *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 39, no. ¼ (1999): 129-136.; Shahbazi, A. Shapur. “Irano-Hellenic Notes 3: Iranians and Alexander”. *American Journal of Ancient History* 2, no.1 (2003): 5-38.

Shahbazi's contributions will be explained in the discussion of Alexander and the far-eastern inhabitants of the Persian Empire.

Robinson, a late contemporary of Tarn, began writing about Alexander in the mid twentieth century and continued to be a strong proponent of the benevolent or "humanitarian"¹³ Alexander. He in some way advanced Tarn's legacy, but made several attempts to clear away the romanticism through comparative studies of the sources. Both Hammond and Badian try to strike a balance between the Tarn and Bosworth traditions. Badian seems sympathetic with the harried figure of Darius but does not allow this to affect his analysis of Alexander's actions. Hammond seems much attached to the tradition of Tarn, and offers a fresh look at the importance of Tarn's primary sources, Plutarch and Arrian. Borza's scholarship is at times provocative and very critical of any action taken by Alexander that was not grounded in Macedonian tradition. Each of these scholars contributes to the patchwork of Alexander's life and is indicative of the varying interpretations of the limited sources available.

During the years that Greco-Macedonian forces marched within the Persian Empire, a shift in Alexander's policies occurred. In the beginning of the invasion Alexander acted to secure the eastern Mediterranean from maritime threats. The Greek mainland's security as well as that of the Ionian cities was secured from Persian naval forces in this first phase of Alexander's campaign. Although Alexander held the coastal zones and Egypt firmly in hand, thus signifying an end to the threat of the Persian navy, he marched on Persia proper. Why would he do this?

At first glance this looks far from pragmatic on Alexander's part, but further consideration of his situation will shed light on this decision. After the Battle of Issus in 333 BC,

¹³ Robinson, 326.

Alexander had, in his hands, the royal family of Darius. This prompted the Persian king to offer settlement of all Persian lands west of the Euphrates River to Alexander in an attempt to regain his relatives. It may seem wholly acceptable for a king simply meaning to secure control of the coast to accept this offer. Alexander, ever the military thinker saw the danger in such an offer. Badian assists saying Alexander “could not consider such terms. Once he gave up his hostages, Darius would be free to prepare for an attack, which would come at any time. Whatever boundary Alexander accepted, he would have to hold it... against the inevitable attack.”¹⁴ Alexander did not possess enough men to provide a sufficient defense over such a large area, and he could not begin to consider that Darius would simply abandon his holdings along the eastern Mediterranean. The threat of Darius would not go away and Alexander had to deal with it, but he would go on his own terms not those of Darius. Badian concludes this reasoning with “[Alexander’s] very success had made it impossible for him to stop.”¹⁵

By 330 BC Alexander had acquired control over two of the empire’s largest cities, Babylon and Susa.¹⁶ From this point he began to employ three major policies to strengthen his position within Persia in order to establish and maintain a new realm. This thesis explores these policies and how they were used to rule the newly subjugated peoples. The historical traditions which preserved Alexander’s life and deeds will be examined as well. Alexander’s pragmatism at rule is exemplified in this second phase of the conflict. Alexander maintained his policies to ingratiate himself, both politically and ethnically, with the populace, and as a result this policy he established cities to secure the eastern fringes of the empire, and he further made alliances with neighboring kingdoms within India to increase his border security. Some ancient sources and

¹⁴ Badian, Ernst, 257-258. “Darius III”. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol.100 (2000): 241-267.

¹⁵ Ibid. 258.

¹⁶ See chapter 2 below for a discussion of the motivations for the initial forays by Philip II into Persian lands. Alexander would follow his father’s lead in the beginning but it is unclear where Philip would have stopped and Alexander continued on.

modern scholars view Alexander being acculturated by his success. His change in appearance and deference to non-Greeks was seen in a negative light as a symptom of a form of “hubris.”

One thing is plain: Alexander refused to be bound by convention. Arguably, he was only seeking the most practical way to bring the Hellenic and Eastern cultures together under one rule.

Chapter 1

Classical Sources

The extant knowledge of Alexander the Great is derived from five classical secondary sources: Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Plutarch, and Quintus Curtius Rufus. It should be noted that none of the classical secondary authors was a contemporary of Alexander. To properly understand Alexander the Great it is necessary to extrapolate from the sources a sense of where they gathered their information. Uncovering the origins of Alexander scholarship will give insight into the quality of the sources we possess.

Thus the classical sources can be grouped into two or (counting Plutarch as a unique case) three categories. Lucius Flavius Arrianus,¹⁷ probably writing his history early in the second century AD, represents the tradition of Ptolemy and Aristobulus and therefore, the work of Callisthenes, who served Alexander as the official historian of the Asian campaign. Callisthenes' history will be discussed in detail below. To modern historians, Arrian is arguably the most important of the Alexander-historians. Arrian utilized a very analytical approach in an attempt to produce a historically accurate depiction of the life of Alexander thus; Arrian's benefit to modern historians is easily seen since he clearly identified his sources and assessed the significance of each.¹⁸

¹⁷ "Arrian of Nikomedeia (Lucius Flavius Arrianos Xenophon, c. AD 80-160), a Greek from Bithynia who held office under the Romans..." from Graham Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 6f.

¹⁸ Arrian was not unwilling to diverge from his use of Aristobulus and Ptolemy, however. He clarifies, "I have also recorded some statements made in other accounts not entirely untrustworthy, but only of tales told of Alexander." Arr. Anab.1.

W.W. Tarn places Plutarch of Chaeronea -- born circa AD 50 — while a biographer not a historian, in his own category.¹⁹ Tarn argued that Plutarch's greatest benefit to understanding Alexander's life is:

the personal part, Alexander himself and his character it is this part which constitutes the claim of Plutarch's *Life* to be something better than just another 'vulgate' document. Much of this part is found nowhere else, and a good deal is extremely valuable, though there are stories which are both untrue and silly.²⁰

Plutarch, though at times convoluted, utilized similar sources to Arrian and provides a detailed retelling of those events. His verbose descriptions of the events create a vivid image for readers, and though entertaining, must be viewed with a critical eye. Plutarch's writing mirrors Arrian's history closely as a result of a correlation of quite a few events²¹ that are not seen in the so called "vulgate" tradition.

Curtius, Justin, and Diodorus do not adhere to the tradition followed by Arrian, nor do they follow the compelling character-driven biographical work of Plutarch. The vulgate tradition, as we will now call the work of these authors, is filled with long, eloquent speeches and social commentary that modern historians identify as problematic. The vulgate is not altogether useless and suggests another line of sources, but these are not well known and should be viewed cautiously. It must be noted that Justin, unlike the others, wrote an epitome of a completed history. This was taken from the work of Pompeius Trogus — this history no longer exists and is linked to this vulgate tradition due to its strong similarity to the works of Curtius and Diodorus.

Whether one should follow the first tradition or the vulgate is a widely debated topic, and this thesis does not desire to refute or prove the validity of either tradition, but simply to

¹⁹ "Plutarch's *Life* [of Alexander] cannot be classed either with the 'good' tradition or with any of the traditions which go to make up the so-called vulgate; it stands by itself." Tarn, 297.

²⁰ Tarn, 297.

²¹ For a nice comparative layout of related events of Alexander's Asian campaign as recorded by the classical, secondary sources see Charles Alexander Robinson, Jr., The Ephemerides of Alexander's Expedition (Providence: Brown University, 1932), 15-68.

introduce the aspects of each tradition that are most helpful in assessing the policies and ideas of Alexander. If one tradition must be named as more accurate than another the Ptolemaic and Aristobulian traditions as reported by Arrian would have to be considered the best. It should be admitted that neither Arrian's nor any of the Alexander historians can be taken at face value as being wholly factual. However, to qualify this statement, it should be noted that Arrian seems to have had at his disposal these first-hand accounts, which on some level must be considered more reliable than the others. More will be said on these and the other sources below.

Fragmentary Primary Sources

The earliest known historical compilations concerning the Asian expedition have been traced back to the very beginning of the Persian campaign. One was essentially a daily journal of the events unfolding during the campaign; the other was a historical narrative constructed from this daily log. Alexander employed official recorders during his conquest of Asia. Their assignment was to create a record of Alexander's accomplishments for posterity. Charles Robinson Jr. identified this official compilation as:

a record of the day's events, called the *Ephemerides*, [which] was under the supervision of Eumenes of Cardia and Diodotus of Erythrae. The other was a finished history, based on the *Ephemerides*, compiled by Callisthenes of Olynthus.²²

Both the official history and *Ephemerides* were compiled during the campaign itself. These were not the only primary sources, however; other unofficial accounts will be briefly mentioned later.

Callisthenes is noted several times in Arrian as well as Plutarch. It is therefore reasonable to assume that, in the least, both Arrian and Plutarch had access to the primary source material.

²² Robinson Jr., Charles Alexander. *The Ephemerides of Alexander's Expedition* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1932), p11.

Undoubtedly the most pressing concern of scholarship with regards to Alexander the Great is determining the validity of these ancient sources. None of Alexander's primary sources has survived. When considering authors such as Callisthenes, Eumenes, and Diodotus one can make relatively safe assumptions on their authority. These works were the eyewitness accounts recorded as events unfurled. It could be argued that these official reports may have contained omissions in favor of the Macedonian king, of perhaps those events or deeds that could have damaged his reputation, but it is impossible to judge the extent to which this may have occurred.

Unfortunately these primary sources only exist as fragmentary remains and quotations in later works. By critically examining extant fragments one may arrive at a relatively safe assessment of their worth. The primary significance of these authors is found in what one would assume to be very detailed accounts of the daily actions of Alexander, whether they were military actions, religious duties, or political decrees.

Callisthenes

Evidence suggests that Callisthenes is the most important of the Alexander sources. His official history must assuredly have provided the main source material for the later histories written by Ptolemy and Aristobulus.²³ While the works of Callisthenes have not survived, their importance cannot be denied. It is unclear whether or not Arrian had a copy of the official history in his possession but when referring to Callisthenes, Arrian, attributed his information almost exclusively to Ptolemy and Aristobulus, thus creating a connection between those sources and the work of Callisthenes.

The following quotation from Arrian introduces Callisthenes and also gives readers an illustration of his somewhat outspoken character:

²³ Robinson, 11.

Callisthenes of Olynthus, a past pupil of Aristotle, and with something of a boor in his character, did not approve of this²⁴, and here I myself agree with Callisthenes; on the other hand I think Callisthenes went beyond reason, if the record is true, in declaring that Alexander and his exploits depended on him and his history; it was not he who had come to win fame from Alexander, but it would be his work to make Alexander renowned among men; and again, that Alexander's share in divinity did not depend on Olympias' invention about his birth, but on the account he would write and publish in Alexander's interest.²⁵

The value of such a character assessment can help to produce an understanding of the relationship between Alexander and Callisthenes. It could be surmised that Callisthenes wrote a fairly accurate history due in part to the daily journal of events he had to consult. Furthermore, there is no mention by sources that Alexander had any direct input or influence on the official history. Therefore it is probable that the history that Callisthenes constructed was indeed accurate, but it is useful further to explore the relationship between him and Alexander to get a better sense of his abilities as a writer and to substantiate the claim to his accuracy.

It should be noted that Arrian is not the sole source for information concerning Callisthenes. Other valuable sources contain a small amount of information on Alexander's relationship with Callisthenes, primarily in the context of the events that led to the latter's death. These sources offer support to Arrian's earlier assessment of Callisthenes²⁶ and also serve to introduce new aspects of his character.

Plutarch gives a similar characterization to that found in Arrian. During a formal banquet, Alexander requested a speech from Callisthenes praising the Macedonians. Callisthenes responded "so eloquently that the guests rose to applaud and threw their garlands at

²⁴ Arrian is referring to Callisthenes' chagrin at Alexander's favor of Persian and Median styles of dress.

²⁵ Arr. *Anab.* IV.10.1-3.

²⁶ See the passage referred to in footnote 25 for Arrian's assessment of Callisthenes' actions.

him.”²⁷ After such a favorable response, Alexander asked Callisthenes to list the shortcomings of the Macedonians:

Callisthenes then turned to the other side of the picture and delivered a long list of home truths about the Macedonians, pointing out that the rise of Philip’s power had been brought about by the divisions of the Greeks, and quoting the verse ‘Once civil strife has begun, even scoundrels may find themselves honoured.’ This speech earned him the implacable hatred of the Macedonians, and Alexander remarked that it was not his eloquence that Callisthenes had demonstrated, but his ill will towards them.²⁸

Plutarch’s account correlates with Arrian fairly well in this case.

The remaining classical sources present differing depictions of Callisthenes from those of Arrian and Plutarch. This divergence of views seems to indicate the application of other sources. Their divergent source material will be discussed later. It is useful to compare the image of Callisthenes found within these sources to better determine if their sources were common or if their conclusions were of their own construction.

Justin’s depiction of Callisthenes is useful for it illustrates the transformation of the relationship between Alexander and Callisthenes. Callisthenes is credited for convincing Alexander to stop fasting due to his grief over the murder of one of his most trusted companions, Cleitus, and return to his troops.

The entreaties of the philosopher Callisthenes proved especially effective; he was on intimate terms with Alexander because they had both been pupils of Aristotle, and he had also been invited by the king to be the author of the latter’s chronicles.²⁹

This is a more amicable relationship than recorded in other sources.³⁰ However, it can be seen simply as an earlier depiction of a relationship that was not immune to change.

²⁷ Plut. *Alex.* 53.

²⁸ Ibid. 53.

²⁹ Alexander fasted for four days, and only returned to normalcy at the behest of Callisthenes and the troops. Justin *The Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* 12.6.15-17.

³⁰ Plutarch records this event in a much more unfavorable light than Justin, Plut. *Alex.* LIL.4.; Arrian does not give the implication that Callisthenes went to offer succor to Alexander at all, but rather Anaxarchus the sophist, Arr.IV.9.5-9.

Callisthenes is ultimately put to death for his candor as seen in other sources: “The most outspoken of the objectors³¹ was Callisthenes, and this spelled death for him and many prominent Macedonians, who were all executed, ostensibly for treason.”³² Thus Justin presents a relationship that rested on Alexander’s favor and that ultimately ended when Callisthenes fell from it.

Quintus Curtius Rufus probably wrote his history during the first or second century of the Roman Empire. He is yet another classical source who acknowledged Callisthenes and his role in the camp of Alexander. Curtius provided a detailed diatribe supposedly delivered by Callisthenes, wherein he disavows the prospect of Alexander’s transition to godhood.³³ The speech that Callisthenes gave, if it is recorded as it actually occurred, illustrates his influence and skill as a rhetorician.³⁴ Curtius’ use of speeches is problematic and indicative of the vulgate tradition’s tendency to compose complex rhetorical passages that are impossible to verify.

What is most beneficial about Curtius’ inclusion of Callisthenes in his history of Alexander is the description of the events that led to Callisthenes’ death and the indication that he too probably utilized a different source. Callisthenes, as portrayed by Curtius, is not so much a traitor but rather an outspoken proponent of traditional Greek customs whose rhetoric swayed the troops to dissension.

Callisthenes was heard with approval as the champion of public freedom. He had extracted not only silent agreement from his audience but vocal support as well, especially from the older men who were offended by the substitution of foreign customs for their established traditions.³⁵

³¹ These were Macedonians objecting to the implementation of showing obeisance to Alexander. Just. 12.7.1.

³² Ibid. 12.7.2.

³³ Quintus Curtius Rufus *The History of Alexander* 8.5.13-20.

³⁴ This being said, it is highly unlikely that a verbatim text of the speech would have survived to the time of Curtius. It can be assumed that this was a construct of Curtius used to emphasize the confrontational meetings between Alexander and Callisthenes.

³⁵ Curt. 8.5.20.

Curtius depicts Callisthenes as neither the arrogant egotist portrayed by Arrian, nor the too-critical speaker shown by Plutarch, nor is he the friend turned hapless victim as observed in Justin; he appears to be an official who, by maintaining traditional Greek principles, finds himself out of Alexander's favor. One item of further consideration, when discussing Curtius' distinctly different depiction of Callisthenes, is that he probably did not use Ptolemy and Aristobulus as sources, indicating his possible use of a differing source.

Diodorus Siculus wrote a universal history within which the death of Callisthenes was included, but unfortunately this section has not survived. The only record that we have of this is found in the table of contents of his universal history.³⁶ While it is not known what Diodorus wrote in regards to Callisthenes one can speculate that he may have shared a similar source to Curtius. It is safe to make such a claim because neither Curtius nor Diodorus cites or makes any direct reference to Ptolemy and Aristobulus.

Eumenes of Cardia

Regrettably, in contrast to Callisthenes there exists no record of the actual contribution by Eumenes of Cardia and Diodotus of Erythrae. Both authors, mentioned previously, were responsible for the compilation of the daily journal of events titled Ephemerides. Diodotus, in fact, receives almost no mention in the sources at all. It is only through later historical exploration that the contribution of Diodotus is even mentioned.³⁷

Eumenes had a much more illustrious career³⁸ and no one source gives as much attention to Eumenes as does Plutarch.³⁹ Plutarch's account, reminiscent of nearly every other classical

³⁶ Diod.Sic. XVII.111.

³⁷ Even when he is mentioned it is always in the context of his collaboration with Eumenes of Cardia.

³⁸ His exploits and appointments are mentioned in: Plutarch; Curtius; Diodorus; Arrian; Justin.

³⁹ See: Plut. Eum.

source, makes small mention of Eumenes' function as a royal secretary;⁴⁰ rather, Eumenes' later military exploits garner nearly the entire focus. Plutarch pursued Eumenes in two ways.

Similarly to Arrian's detailed depiction of Callisthenes' relationship to Alexander, Plutarch illustrated the conflicts between the two men, but he also included the way in which Alexander honored Eumenes. It is because of Eumenes' contribution to the daily journal which ultimately served Callisthenes' official history that he becomes important for this study.

Alexander's relationship with his secretary could have colored the content of Eumenes' writing, so it becomes necessary to explore the relationship further. The way in which Alexander honored those he favored is evident in 324 BC at Susa where he gave in marriage, to each of his most loyal troops, the hand of a Persian princess. "In the distribution of the Persian ladies amongst his captains, Alexander gave Apame, one of his sisters, to Ptolemy, and another, also called Barsine, to Eumenes."⁴¹ Plutarch further extolled the virtue of Eumenes' character with a detailed comparison to the character of the Roman general Sertorius.⁴²

Eumenes is also reported by Plutarch to have been in conflict with Alexander's dearest friend, Hephaestion. In the following passage Plutarch gives some sense of the ingenuity of Eumenes when he distracted Alexander from punishing him:

But Hephaestion dying soon after, the king, in his grief, presuming all those that differed with Hephaestion in his lifetime were now rejoicing at his death, showed such harshness and severity in his behaviour with them, especially towards Eumenes, whom he often upbraided with his quarrels and ill language to Hephaestion. But he[Eumenes], being a wise and dextrous courtier, made advantage of what had done him prejudice, and struck in with the king's passion for glorifying his friend's memory, suggesting various plans to do him honour, and contributing largely and readily towards erecting his[Hephaestion's] monument.⁴³

⁴⁰ It was in this capacity that Eumenes noted the daily events of Alexander's command.

⁴¹ Plut. *Eum.* I.3.

⁴² This comparison showcases the sheer creativity exhibited by Plutarch when describing his characters; it however does little else to warrant further exploration.

⁴³ Plut. *Eum.* II.5.

This passage has multiple benefits; it provides a sense of the cunning character of Eumenes, his relationship to the king and a sense of the temperament of Alexander.

Similar accounts of Eumenes are found in each of the five major classical sources. Since these versions generally agree we can infer that Eumenes had a very intimate knowledge of the campaign, and this inference gives weight to his contribution to, and consequently the validity of, the Ephemerides.

The time at which Eumenes' duties as chronicler were superseded by his role as military campaigner is unknown. However we do know that he was given command of three hundred cavalry as early as 326 BC.⁴⁴ One could speculate that when Eumenes was unable to write due to military actions, Diodotus may have taken up the pen. This may be speculation; however, one must assume that a daily itinerary would have been very difficult for Eumenes to produce amidst the many military actions in which he participated. Therefore, it is not an unsafe proposition to assume that Diodotus served to record events for that very reason.

There is at present no way to tell which parts of the journal were composed by Eumenes and which by Diodotus. What is important is not the act of compilation but the end result of this collaboration; what would later become the official history of Alexander's expedition: a history taken and compiled by Callisthenes.

Ptolemy I and Aristobulus

In the decades following Alexander's death, two significant historical works came into being. Aristobulus, who served with Alexander, created the first account, according to W.W. Tarn.⁴⁵ King Ptolemy I later wrote⁴⁶ a memoir of the time he spent in the service of Alexander. Each figure was present during Alexander's Persian expedition but did not write until much later.

⁴⁴ Arr. Anab. V.24.6-8.

⁴⁵ "It hardly admits of doubt, therefore, that Aristobulus' book appeared in the period 294-288[BC]..." Tarn, 42.

⁴⁶ Tarn speculates that Ptolemy "published his book somewhere between 288 and his death in 283-282" Ibid.43.

In all probability both referred to Callisthenes' history as a source. Both histories have been lost and are only discernible through the direct references made by three of the five extant sources. Although Aristobulus is thought to have produced his history before Ptolemy, he is of secondary importance next to the Egyptian King. The greater frequency with which the classical secondary sources cite Ptolemy as compared to Aristobulus indicates one of two things: either they did not have easy access to Aristobulus' history, or they did not find his history to be as reliable a resource as that of Ptolemy.

Arrian cites Ptolemy many times. One such citation concerns the Battle of Issus late in the year 333 BC. "So that Ptolemy son of Lagos, who was then with Alexander, says that the pursuers of Darius meeting a deep gully in the pursuit crossed it over bodies of the dead."⁴⁷

Arrian makes several more references to Ptolemy indicating that he (Ptolemy) was an authoritative source, at least in Arrian's estimation.

Key sources such as Plutarch and Quintus Curtius Rufus attest to the importance of Ptolemy as a primary source. The following excerpt from Plutarch indicates that he had at least consulted a version of Ptolemy's memoir: "But King Ptolemy puts them at thirty thousand foot and five thousand horse..."⁴⁸ While not a lengthy citation, this serves to reinforce the general argument above.

Curtius cites Ptolemy's correction to Cleitarchus' and Timagenes'⁴⁹ depiction of his attendance at the battle of Sudraceae:

According to Cleitarchus and Timagenes, Ptolemy (who was subsequently a king) took part in this battle. Ptolemy himself, however, certainly from no desire to detract from his own reputation, records that he was not there, since he had been sent on an expedition.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Arr. *Anab.* II.11.8.

⁴⁸ Plut. *Moralia*. IV. "On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander" 1.E.

⁴⁹ Timagenes is an obscure source. Virtually nothing is known concerning him and any work he produced. Henceforth he will be disregarded as a significant source of information.

⁵⁰ Curt. 9.5.21.

Both Plutarch and Curtius⁵¹ include many examples of Ptolemy's exploits in their histories.

It is unclear to what extent the sources, when they mention Ptolemy, are relying on the official histories written by Callisthenes. A certain number, it may be assumed, used the later memoirs of Ptolemy for information. As mentioned, Ptolemy wrote these memoirs several decades following Alexander's Asian expedition and is thought to have utilized Callisthenes' official history to assist in this writing. It is not unreasonable to assume that Ptolemy may have overstated his role in certain events. Even so, however, this does not detract from his importance as a source. Although both Justin and Diodorus included Ptolemy in their histories, neither identifies him as a source,⁵² which suggests the use of another source.⁵³

The other historian contemporaneous to Alexander is Aristobulus. Aristobulus wrote an official history, sanctioned by Alexander, which, like Ptolemy, may have relied on the works of Callisthenes as a definitive reference. Unfortunately, the only evidence of his writing is fragmentary. Aristobulus is cited many times in Arrian, and Plutarch uses him as well.

Arrian's citations impart a sense that Aristobulus was present and actually witnessed the events. The following excerpt concerning the famous Gordian knot incident is attributed directly to Aristobulus: "Some say he struck it with his sword, cut the knot, and said it was now untied—but Aristobulus says that he took out the pole-pin, a bolt driven right through the pole, holding the knot together, and so removed the yoke from the pole."⁵⁴ Arrian cited Aristobulus several times in his Anabasis and even stated in the preface that he would weigh the validity of

⁵¹ It must be noted that Curtius rarely mentioned Ptolemy as a source but simply mentions events in which Ptolemy participated.

⁵² In reality Justin depended upon one source, the history of Pompeius Trogus whose history may have been influenced by the writings of Cleitarchus.

⁵³ This source is more than likely Cleitarchus, on whom see page 24 below.

⁵⁴ Arr. Anab. II.3.7-8.

his sources⁵⁵ against one another. Hereby Arrian reveals his critical approach to constructing his history. In the preface of the Anabasis he writes:

Wherever Ptolemy son of Lagus and Aristobulus son of Aristobulus have both given the same accounts of Alexander son of Philip, it is my practice to record what they say as completely true, but where they differ, to select the version I regard as more trustworthy and also better worth telling.⁵⁶

The latter portion of this passage is a bit disconcerting. Arrian gives no qualification for the method he employs to determine what source is more trustworthy. Without the source material utilized by Arrian we must rely on his judgment as to the value of each.

Plutarch, while utilizing Aristobulus as a source, does not employ him to the same extent as Arrian. In fact Plutarch only cites Aristobulus in passing in two instances. Here Plutarch gives a brief description of Alexander's ambition: "relying only on the thirty thousand foot and four thousand cavalry which were his; for, according to Aristobulus, that was the full extent of their number."⁵⁷ Plutarch's further reference to Aristobulus is even more scant. What these citations do indicate, however, is that Plutarch may have possessed a copy of Aristobulus' history to consult even if he did not make thorough use of it.

The exclusion of direct citations of Ptolemy and Aristobulus by both Diodorus and Curtius presents an interesting dilemma: if they did not have access to copies of Ptolemy's or Aristobulus' histories, upon whom or what did they draw? They must have had another source, which would indicate that Eumenes, Diodotus, Callisthenes, Aristobulus and Ptolemy were not the only primary sources for Alexander's life and military career. Who were the remaining sources, what was their significance, and what role, if any, did they play?

⁵⁵ Ptolemy and Aristobulus. See preface of Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* vol.1.

⁵⁶ Arr. Anab. I.Preface.

⁵⁷ Plut. Moralia. IV. "On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander" I. E.

The Sources of the Vulgate

The remaining sources represent what is known as the *vulgate tradition*. The so-called *vulgate* sources wrote using primarily the works of Cleitarchus and Diyllus.⁵⁸ N.G.L. Hammond argued that Diodorus and Curtius utilized Diyllus as the main source for the events occurring in mainland Greece found in their histories.⁵⁹ It would seem that Curtius, Justin (Trogus), and Diodorus then employed Cleitarchus as their primary source for those events in Asia wherein Alexander was prominent. Cleitarchus may have been the major source but he was not used exclusively.

C. Bradford Welles indicates that “Diodorus ‘follows’ one or another of the contemporaneous historians of Alexander.”⁶⁰ Among these are Callisthenes, Aristobulus, Cleitarchus, and Onesicritus. It is unlikely that Diodorus had direct access to the work of Callisthenes and Aristobulus since he does not cite them directly. If he did possess these sources he may have not had much faith in their authenticity or relevance, however this is purely speculation. He probably followed the “other” sources, Cleitarchus and Onesicritus.

Other historians that may have also contributed to this “vulgate” tended to be obscure⁶¹ and held little significance to the Alexander history and therefore will not be mentioned. The validity of the “vulgate” sources Onesicritus and Cleitarchus will be discussed further⁶², however, when using the *vulgate* sources as evidence in the study of Alexander one must proceed with caution.

⁵⁸ The work of Diyllus did not concern itself with the life of Alexander but rather with the Greek archipelago and mainland and as a result will not be a factor in this argument.

⁵⁹ N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 160.

⁶⁰ C.B. Welles’ introduction to *Diodorus Siculus*, Volume VIII. Pgs. 8-10.

⁶¹ The exception to these being the small use of Aristobulus by Curtius.

⁶² See the discussion on Cleitarchus found on pages 25-26.

The only evidence of these “other” sources is found within the literary tradition of the classical sources. These somewhat unreliable Alexander-historians were: Onesicritus, Nearchus, and Cleitarchus.⁶³ Classical sources only cite Nearchus and Onesicritus very briefly. For the purpose of our paper, these sources will not be discussed at great length.⁶⁴ Nearchus and Onesicritus were contemporaries in the service of Alexander, while Cleitarchus probably wrote decades after Alexander’s death.⁶⁵ However it must be noted that their histories have been discounted either for being full of falsehoods,⁶⁶ or too anecdotal.

Waldemar Heckel postulated on the validity of Cleitarchus in the following excerpt from his introduction to *The History of Alexander*:

Cleitarchus probably read and used the accounts of Onesicritus and Nearchus for information on India [and] Cleitarchus supplemented these contemporary Alexander-historians with the eye-witness reports of Macedonians and Greeks, many of the latter having served as mercenaries of the Great King.⁶⁷

W.W. Tarn in his groundbreaking second volume of Alexander the Great made the following assessment of Cleitarchus: “Cleitarchus had a taste for inventing, or adopting inventions of, massacres...”⁶⁸ This reference to Cleitarchus is important because it indicates a school of thought doubting the validity of Cleitarchus’ usefulness as a source.

The primary importance of Cleitarchus seems to be in the widespread Roman audience that had access to his work. For the Roman influence during the time of the vulgate writers is

⁶³ This is not an all-inclusive list but sources not mentioned are of little to no consequence due in part to the lack of surviving copies or in-depth citation and exploration by classical sources.

⁶⁴ These are not explored due in part to the fact that Onesicritus is viewed by most as being too unreliable and as Heckel states, “Cleitarchus was prone to exaggerate Alexander’s vices, to credit the incredible, to sacrifice historical accuracy for rhetorical effect.” Curt. The History of Alexander (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 5f.

⁶⁵ “Cleitarchus could not have written before 280, and to reach even that year strains the evidence; and we have to allow for a possibility that may take us to c. 260. The right way to put it, evidently, is that he probably wrote in the decade 280-270, with the decade 270-260 possible.” Tarn, 127.

⁶⁶ Arrian on Onesicritus: “the steersman of Alexander’s own vessel was Onesicritus, who in the history he wrote of Alexander told this falsehood among others...” Arr. Anab. VI.2.3.

⁶⁷ See Heckel’s introduction in Quintus Curtius Rufus: The History of Alexander (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 5f.

⁶⁸ Tarn, 127.

undeniable. This is revealed in Marcus Tullius Cicero's letter to Marcus Caelius Rufus in 51 B.C. Cicero was on campaign at the time and had just crossed the Issus River when he composed the letter. In it he mentions to Rufus his victory at the Issus and that he wrote from "the place where, according to the story given you, as you have so often told me, by Cl[e]itarchus, Darius was defeated by Alexander."⁶⁹ This information provided by Cicero seems to indicate that the writings of Cleitarchus were in fairly wide circulation; or at least in the case of Marcus Rufus, who was an aedile,⁷⁰ the work seemed to be easily accessible. Cicero's letter shows either an ease at procuring this work by an aedile or that Marcus Rufus was a connoisseur of rare books. Consequently this is telling of the vulgate tradition that seems to place so much emphasis on the writings of Cleitarchus. One may assume that the vulgate sources made so much use of Cleitarchus' material simply because it was not difficult to find.

The final contemporaneous historical source of Alexander to be mentioned is Nearchus. Nearchus is cited briefly by Arrian and very briefly in Justin's *Epitome*.⁷¹ Through Arrian we learn that Nearchus served as a commander of a contingent of Alexander's troops.⁷² Plutarch and Curtius mention Nearchus briefly.⁷³ While Curtius and Plutarch refer to Nearchus in their respective works neither cites him as a source.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Cic. *Epistulea ad Familiares*. II.X.3.

⁷⁰ Aediles were public officials within Rome, usually ambitious, young men rising up in the senatorial ranks. Rufus' access to the writing of Cleitarchus does not seem to be the result of his office but rather suggests a widespread readership of the works of Cleitarchus.

⁷¹ Just. 13.4.15.

⁷² Arr. *Anab.* IV.30.5f.

⁷³ Plut. *Alex.* 73. Curt. 9.10.3., 10.1.10, 10.6.10-12.

⁷⁴ The extent to which he wrote is unknown and only exists through the citations listed in footnote 63.

There remains fragmentary evidence suggesting that still other writers of Alexander existed. The importance of these “other” writers is minute and they do not contribute to the material to be discussed in this thesis;⁷⁵ consequently, those sources will not be mentioned.

The historiography of Alexander is formed from a complex amalgamation of source fragments and conjecture. While one should not dismiss the vulgate sources as useless it should be noted that for our purpose the works of Arrian are most beneficial. Cleitarchus and Diyllus compose the bulk of the vulgate tradition and it has been shown that their numerous problems override their value. The vulgate sources therefore will serve only briefly, as a qualitative and comparative tool alongside the work of Arrian and Plutarch. The information derived from Ptolemy I of Egypt seems to be of the greatest importance and those sources who utilize him the most, Arrian and Plutarch, provide perhaps the most accurate depiction of Alexander’s life. This detailed discussion of the sources will become more relevant later when the ancient works are used and sometimes misinterpreted by modern scholars.

⁷⁵ For a complete study of the surviving fragments of the Alexander-historians see Charles Alexander Robinson Jr., The History of Alexander the Great, 2 vols. Providence: Brown University, 1953-1963.

Chapter 2

Philip of Macedon: The Establishment of Power and the Tutelage of Alexander

Alexander's larger than life image often overshadows the critical contributions made by his father Philip II. Philip set the stage for Alexander's rise to prominence and thus deserves thorough exploration. Without Philip there would be no Alexander. Macedonia, before the kingship of Philip II, was a fairly disjointed and insignificant collection of small villages and minor urban centers. No strong centralized government existed although previous Macedonian kings had minted coinage in attempts to consolidate power. The most significant fact concerning Macedon is its strategic location on the Aegean and the material resources it contained. Any land force going from Greece to Persia or vice versa had to travel through southern Macedon. As advantageous as the manpower and natural resources of Macedon could be to others, it was not until Philip that these resources were fully utilized for a Macedonian government.

Philip ascended the Macedonian throne in the tumult that followed the death of his father Amyntas III in 370 BC. Philip's two older brothers Alexander II and Perdiccas III were both made king and subsequently killed before Philip took his place as king of Macedon in 359.

The onset of Philip's dominance over Macedonian government brought many changes. He moved the rural land dwellers into civic centers and created new coinage. Hammond states that this new currency was a marked divergence from the old silver and bronze coins minted by the previous Macedonian kings. By manufacturing new coins the king increased his power exponentially because "Philip and Alexander owned all deposits of gold, silver, copper, iron, and

other minerals.”⁷⁶ Consequently Philip could extract profit and control the supply of material from his own land holdings.

In order to buttress his position as king, Philip set about eliminating the many rival tribes and minor kings surrounding the Macedonian frontier. This was Philip’s first diplomatic test. He was so successful that “six months later all rivals for the throne had been dismissed from the field and apart from the Illyrians all Philip’s dangerous neighbors had been conciliated.”⁷⁷ Philip’s skill as a statesman is evident early on in his career and would be emulated by his son, Alexander III, years later.

The military innovations imposed by Philip were essential for the emergence of the Macedonian army as a power. In Macedon, before Philip, there existed no professional army but merely a ragtag assembly of undisciplined fighters. The new king would change the old system by creating a professionally trained army in the service of the king of Macedon.

Philip introduced a new type of rapid warfare to the Greeks. The Macedonian combat force consisted of a combination of phalanx units in the center and cavalry units on either side. Cavalry emphasis on disrupting and flanking enemy ranks remained a key component of Philip’s battle tactics.

Indisputably the Macedonians’ speed in battle allowed for the advances made over the Greek forces in the early years of Philip’s rule. In addition the Macedonian infantry and cavalry now employed the sarissa, a long thrusting weapon probably adapted from the spears found in the Theban phalanx. At over five meters in length, the sarissa gave unprecedented reach and killing power to the phalanx and cavalry. This added a new dimension to the combined use of

⁷⁶ Hammond, N.G.L.. The Macedonian State: “Origins, Institutions, and History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, 179.

⁷⁷ Errington, R. Malcolm. A History of Macedonia, Translated By Catherine Errington. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, 39.

infantry and cavalry units. The foot soldiers were able to penetrate and delay the approaching enemy phalanx with more destructive force, clearing the way for the horsemen.

In his study on Macedonian arms, Minor Markle suggests, “Philip’s combination of the use of the cavalry lance [sarissa] with the wedge formation was specifically designed to cut through a phalanx of Greek hoplites.”⁷⁸ This appears to be an adaptation of an earlier Theban tactic applied at the battle of Leuctra.⁷⁹ Charles D. Hamilton’s description of the battle indicates that the Theban cavalry charged through an opening in the front line of the Spartans and wreaked havoc among the infantrymen.⁸⁰ Philip would later be a political hostage in Thebes⁸¹ and in all probability became acquainted with the Thebans’ military tactics.

The consolidation of Macedonia under one ruler was of primary importance for the new king. Philip utilized the combined forces of cavalry and hoplite infantry and swiftly conquered those areas of Macedonia not under his control. At this time Macedonia was separated into two distinct geographic regions: the highlands and lowlands. Traditionally the highland tribesman had been very independent and not influenced strongly by Macedonian control. The lowlands were the center of Macedonian urbanism and much more inclined to central rule.

After putting down any significant military resistance in the highland region Philip set out to place his governmental structures in his newly subdued territories. Philip endeavored to “integrate the western principalities, above all Lynkestis, Pelagonia, Orestis and Tymphaia, much more closely than ever before into the Macedonian state.”⁸²

⁷⁸ Markle, Minor. “The Macedonian Sarissa, Spear, and Related Armor”. *American Journal of Archaeology*. Vol.81. no. 3. 1977. p.339.

⁷⁹ See: Xen. Hell. 6.4.4; Diod.Sic. XV.55-56

⁸⁰ For a detailed description of the battle of Leuctra see Hamilton, Charles D. *Agesilaus and the Failure of Spartan Hegemony*, 205-210.

⁸¹ Diod.Sic. XV.67.4

⁸² Errington, 41.

Not wholly satisfied with what must have been a negative image seen by the conquered tribes on the Macedonian periphery, Philip entered into the first of many marriage alliances. This was an act of ingenuity that would be employed by, and have major ramifications for, his son Alexander later. The marriage pact acted as a bridge between culture and ideology. Philip attempted to quell opposition to his new position of power by forming a union with women from prominent families. In one such joining he married “Audata, the daughter of an Illyrian noble.”⁸³ This alliance however, did not have the desired outcome, for hostilities with Illyrians persisted throughout Philip’s reign and into Alexander’s. Although this incident had a negative result and he later forcibly restrained the Illyrians, Philip was not dissuaded and entered into several more political marriages. This suggests a deep-seated faith in the merits of this policy.

Philip’s military and political ambitions were evident. Continual forays into Greece clearly showed his desire for capturing new territory for Macedonia. He was not entirely successful, being soundly defeated in two deadly encounters with the Phocian strategos Onomarchus in 354 BC.⁸⁴ Philip would rebound, however, at the Battle of the Crocus Field in 352 BC showing his military force would prove to be a juggernaut unable to be stopped. During the course of the Third Sacred War Philip destroyed Phocis and later the city of Olynthus in 348 BC.

He would consolidate his power base over the next decade to the sorrow of his enemies. Philip’s acquisition of lands and power has been treated in full by many historians and is not necessary to discuss here. It is sufficient to mention the end result: in a show of utter superiority, Philip rode triumphantly from the plain of Chaeronea in August 338 BC. The victory over the combined might of the Theban and Athenian contingent firmly cemented

⁸³ Ibid.41.

⁸⁴ Diod.Sic. XVI.35.2

Philip's claim to total lordship over the Greek world. Later that same year, Philip officially became hegemon of the Greeks and head of the League of Corinth.

Philip's purpose in forming the Corinthian League was to assure acquiescence from the conquered Greek city-states. The result of the synedrion (meeting) was the limited autonomy of the Greek cities in exchange for an oath of allegiance to Philip. During an address to the League Philip announced his plans to invade Persia. This may have been the result of Philip's correspondence with the Greek sophist Isocrates.

Isocrates had been flattering to Philip through a number of letters urging him to take up the mantle of hegemon and destroy the Persians. Isocrates saw in Philip the strength necessary to unite the Greeks militarily and create the *homonoia* or concord necessary to defeat the "barbarians" he so hated. Isocrates believed that there was no greater achievement for Philip than defeating the Persians and continued the political flattery, "for then will naught be left for you [Philip] except to become a god."⁸⁵ Later, Philip held a pan-Hellenic festival to celebrate the marriage of his daughter, Cleopatra to "Alexander, king of the Molossians... [with] a lavish parade including ostentatiously adorned statues of the twelve gods, along with a thirteenth – likewise suitable for a god – of Philip himself."⁸⁶

One should not assume that Isocrates' statement was the strongest factor behind such an action but it does indicate that Philip had prepared to change his image radically among the Macedonians and the Greeks. Here it is necessary to draw a distinction that many scholars have failed to make. The tradition that Bosworth represents accuses Alexander of having the same ambitions at godhead as those seemingly held by Philip. Alexander's journey to the oracle of Zeus-Ammon at the oasis of Siwah in 331 BC is the foundation for their stance. Cleitarchus

⁸⁵ Isoc. To Philip.II.5.

⁸⁶ Borza, 249. Adapted from Diod.Sic. 16.92.5.

indicates that Alexander was proclaimed the son of Zeus-Ammon at Siwah. It is impossible to say whether or not Alexander was actually named son of a god at Siwah for no person was with Alexander within the shrine. The main difference here, whether or not Alexander was proclaimed or believed he was the son of a god, was that Philip presented himself as new god among the pantheon of old. It could be argued that Philip was on the cusp of declaring his own godhood as his new iconography suggested. As will be seen in a later chapter, however, Alexander's cooption of the Persian "god-king" imagery served not so much his own ego but assured a better relationship with his Persian subjects. Alexander adopted a previous, and common, Persian court policy which perhaps gave a sense of godhood; but unlike his father he never overtly presented himself as Alexander the God to his Persian subjects: he was simply the king.

It seems that Philip, having secured the Greek mainland, now sought to bring under his control the only significant threat to his power, the Persian Empire. The Persians had consistently sought to gain influence and power within Greek affairs. The noted Greek orator Demosthenes entreated the Persian king for aid against Philip. Philip recognized the influence and wealth that could be brought to bear against him and "in the spring of 336 BC, Philip had asked [the Delphic oracle] 'whether he would conquer the King of the Persians.'"⁸⁷

The fame and wealth that would come from a successful invasion of Persia is easily recognized. Such an invasion served Philip twofold; it provided a common ancestral enemy of the Greeks, which could alleviate anti-Macedonian sentiment; furthermore the booty acquired would be useful for the maintenance of his large armies. E. F. Bloedow speculates that the invasion was both a war of revenge and a war of conquest simply because, "the war would by its

⁸⁷ Ernst, Fredricksmeyer. "Alexander, Zeus Ammon, and the Conquest of Asia." Transactions of the American Philological Association, 121 (1991) p.202. Fredricksmeyer is quoting from Diod.16.9.2-3.

very nature become a war of conquest, for it would scarcely be possible to punish the Persians for the wrongs of 480 without conquering them.”⁸⁸

There may have been other reasons for Philip’s desire to invade Persia: easy spoils and security. F. W. Walbank lists as a contributing factor a passage from Polybius reasoning that Philip’s plan to invade Persia resulted from “the retreat of the Greeks under Xenophon from the upper satrapies in which, though they traversed the whole of Asia, a hostile country, none of the barbarians ventured to face them.”⁸⁹ The perception of Persia as a weak or weak willed empire was not new; Polybius simply promoted a tradition begun by the historian Herodotus. The need for secure borders surely weighed heavily upon Philip. Persian forays into the Greek mainland were not a distant memory and Philip could not stand for the potential threat. Only a decade before the Persian king, Artaxerxes, had sought to interfere in Greek affairs. In 351 BC Artaxerxes sent a large sum of silver to the Thebans to assist in their war with the Phocians.⁹⁰ This was only a monetary contribution but, added to the various hostile moves against their neighbors by the Persians, it appeared sinister. At this time Artaxerxes was attempting to capture Egypt, Phoenicia and Cyprus. Philip sent his general, Parmenio, with a small exploratory force into Asia Minor. Such a sortie would provide the necessary intelligence needed to judge the capability of Persian resistance to an invasion.

It is unclear whether or not Philip would have attempted as did Alexander to subjugate the entire Persian Empire, but it seems reasonable to suggest that an invasion led by Philip would mirror Alexander’s early eastern Mediterranean campaign. P.A. Brunt disagrees: “the Macedonians were not a maritime or commercial people, and it was natural for their king to

⁸⁸ E.F. Bloedow. “Why Did Philip and Alexander Launch a War Against the Persian Empire,” *L’Antiquite Classique*, 72 (2003) p. 273. In this article Bloedow points out that there is no consensus on the reasoning due to inadequate sources and modern speculation.

⁸⁹ Walbank, F.W. *The Hellenistic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. p. 13; from Polyb.iii.6,10.

⁹⁰ Diod. XVI.40.1

entertain continental ambitions.”⁹¹ Brunt is correct in his assessment of Macedonian naval strength but does not take into account the fact that the Macedonians could secure the seaboard without naval means. The siege techniques of Philip could surely have subdued the coastal port cities of Asian Minor and the Levant. Unfortunately, Philip could not make good on his plan for an invasion. In 336, only one year after assuming the title of hegemon, Philip of Macedon was assassinated at the very celebration that signaled his ascent to godhood.

The importance of Philip is unquestionable with regard to the life and upbringing of Alexander. His innovations permeated all aspects of Macedonian life. Philip helped to urbanize the Macedonian people, and brought Macedonia to the fore militarily. It goes without saying that Alexander owed a debt of gratitude to Philip. Philip was responsible for the most critical aspects of Alexander’s young life. Education, both philosophical and martial, was one of the key components in Alexander’s youth and Philip was instrumental in securing the best teachers for his son. Later, Philip himself became Alexander’s teacher in the way of cavalry warfare. Without Philip there would have been no Alexander; thus Alexander’s debt to his father is clear.

Alexander’s Early Years

Alexander was born on July 20, 356 BC to Philip of the house of Amyntas and Olympias of Epirus. Little is known about the early years of Alexander’s life; however, Plutarch’s account of the young Alexander provides some pertinent background indicating an intelligent and inquisitive character. One such description from Plutarch relates an encounter with a visiting Persian envoy.

He talked freely with them and... did not trouble them with any childish or trivial inquiries, but questioned them about the distances they had traveled by road, the nature of the journey into the interior of Persia, the character of the king, his experience in war, and the military strength and prowess of the Persians.⁹²

⁹¹ Brunt, “The Aims of Alexander” *Greece and Rome* 2d ser., 12, no. 2 (1965): 207.

⁹² Plut. *Alex.* 5.1

If only a fraction of Plutarch's writing can be believed, Alexander was an exceptionally gifted youth. To better recognize Alexander's acuity one needs to understand the structure of the young prince's early education.

As crown prince to the Macedonian throne, Alexander received his education through various tutors appointed by his father, Philip. As his schooling will indicate, Alexander may have been ethnically Macedonian but his formal education, aside from military training, was exclusively Greek. It appears that the most influential of these tutors was Aristotle. From roughly 343/2-340 BC, Aristotle mentored the young Alexander on such diverse topics as philosophy, rhetoric, literature, and the natural sciences.

It must be noted that the exact matter of Alexander's tutoring sessions is unknown. These were held, with a fair amount of secrecy, in the special precinct of Mieza⁹³ provided by Philip. Little evidence exists on the exact organization of the Aristotle's instruction for Alexander. However, one can reasonably surmise that the environment was not unlike Plato's Academy in Athens. Stewart postulated, "Alexander would have learned of Plato's views on kingship, power and knowledge..."⁹⁴

Aristotle's teachings almost certainly had a profound effect on the youth. Plutarch indicates Alexander formed a bond with Aristotle. They developed a warm relationship, which was closer than that shared by the father and son. Aristotle's teachings will be explored in detail later as a contributing factor in the governmental structure imposed by Alexander upon the Persians.

⁹³ Ibid. 7.3.

⁹⁴ Stewart, Andrew. Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 61.

Alexander's tutoring came to an end in 340 BC when he was required, at the age of sixteen, to serve as Regent of Macedon while Philip was away on campaign. Regency was a testament to the maturity and intelligence Alexander must have possessed in his youth. Plutarch states that Alexander "During this period defeated the Maedi who had risen in revolt, captured their city, drove out its barbarous inhabitants, established a colony of Greeks assembled from various regions, and named it Alexandroupolis."⁹⁵

This marks the beginning of Alexander's military and political career.

Alexander's military successes ultimately led to favor, and later, tension, with his father. After his victory over the Maedi, Alexander assumed a position of command on the left wing of the Macedonian cavalry. As commander of the flank, Alexander was responsible for locating, assessing and finally, exploiting weaknesses in enemy lines. The cavalry unit's "speed against disorganized infantry was devastating, and accounted for the decisive tactics in Macedonian battles... [as seen in] Philip's defeat of Bardylis in 358."⁹⁶

As Alexander's experience in battle increased, so too did his importance to Philip. Alexander later became second in command under Philip and played a key role in deciding the outcome of the Battle of Chaeronea. During the battle Alexander is "said to have been the first to break the line of the Theban Sacred Band."⁹⁷ Under Philip's tutelage Alexander excelled as a cavalry officer and brought about the undoing of their opponents' defensive lines, which led to the ultimate victory.

Battle tactics and skills were not the only training Alexander received serving under Philip. Alexander was the beneficiary of Philip's political abilities as well. Being an astute

⁹⁵ Plut. *Alex.* 9.1

⁹⁶ Borza, Eugene. *In the Shadow of Olympus, The Rise of Macedon.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, p, 205.

⁹⁷ Plut. *Alex.* 9.2

student, Alexander surely made note of the gains such policies produced. Two policies promoted by Philip had definite implications for Alexander's later career. These were the use of political marriage pacts and the administration of conquered lands. Alexander employed these in earnest and they will be discussed in a later chapter.

Upon Philip's death, Alexander assumed the kingship of Macedon and set about establishing his base of power there. Alexander immediately "assembled the Peloponnesian Greeks and requested from them the leadership of the Persian expedition..."⁹⁸ Alexander could not immediately take up his new mantle of hegemon due to unrest in and near Macedon's borders. Before Alexander could turn to his international affairs, i.e. Persia, he had to secure his base of power sufficiently to embark on an invasion.

Alexander would prove his ability as military commander throughout the initial stages of his kingship. Uprisings among the Thracians, Triballians and Illyrians forced Alexander to military action in the spring of 335. The independent-minded Thracians were the first to fall under Alexander's onslaught. Next Alexander encountered and routed the Triballians in ruthless fashion where "three thousand [Triballians] perished in the flight."⁹⁹

Another barbarian tribe became involved in the unrest as well; these were the Getae. The Getae were a Germanic tribe settled in Thrace, in close proximity to the Ister River. Arrian's account states that the Getae had a poorly fortified city and seems to suggest that Alexander saw this as a target of opportunity. The Getae were put to flight and "did not even withstand the first charge of the cavalry."¹⁰⁰ Their city was sacked and all of their possessions confiscated.

Next Alexander laid siege to Pellium, a city that was under the occupation of the Illyrian king, Clitus. Arrian tells us that Clitus was in league with the king of the Taulantians, Glaucias.

⁹⁸ Arr. I.1.2.

⁹⁹ Ibid. I.2.7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. I.4.3.

While besieging the city, Alexander was forced to deal with the army of Glaucias approaching from the rear. The Macedonians beat a small retreat and waited patiently for an appropriate time in which to mount an assault. Alexander ordered a nighttime raid on the combined forces of Clitus and Glaucias and defeated them. Arrian reports that Alexander was denied the booty from Pellium because Clitus “set fire to it and fled to Glaucias among the Taulantians.”¹⁰¹

Errington notes that the speed of the Macedonian military machine made possible the manner in which the Macedonian forces were able to conquer these tribes. Surprise and sheer force were of utmost importance for victory. The first example of Alexander employing such tactics is illustrated by Plutarch’s description of his victory over the Maedi¹⁰² and subsequent imposition of a colony and city on the conquered territory.

With Alexander preoccupied with the uprisings, Theban exiles entered Thebes and killed the administrators Amyntas and Timolaus. This was in an attempt to reclaim the city from Macedonian rule. Arrian suggests that the men “won readier trust from the populace by affirming that Alexander had died in Illyria...”¹⁰³ Upon hearing this news, Alexander, in dramatic fashion, showed the speed of the Macedonian forces. In only thirteen days Alexander stood outside the gates of Thebes. Alexander laid siege to Thebes and brought the city down. The defenders were slaughtered wholesale and the city razed.

Prior to this rumors circulated among the Greek cities suggesting that Alexander had been killed in battle. These rumors helped create the false sense of security that they were now free from the Macedonian yoke. With both Philip and Alexander gone, cities in southern Greece saw this as an opportunity to break from the Corinthian League. News of Thebes’ destruction put an end to the majority of these revolts. Embassies were sent entreating Alexander to forgive

¹⁰¹ Ibid. I.6.11.

¹⁰² See above, note 95.

¹⁰³ Ibid. I.7.3.

their indiscretions. However, not all of the cities immediately yielded, forcing Alexander to march upon them. Alexander throughout his life consistently showed great deference to cities that freely submitted to him and great ferocity with those who mounted resistance. Nevertheless, in nearly all cases of the Greek cities no blood was shed. This was a result of the sheer display of force presented to the dissenters by Alexander and their subsequent surrender.

With the Greek cities sufficiently cowed Alexander became the official hegemon of the Corinthian League. Philip had never made a secret of his plans to attack the Persians and consequently, Alexander must have been very cognizant of these desires. After Philip's death though, the question arises: why did Alexander pursue the Persian invasion? Was it for heroic glory, a trait he so appreciated in Achilles, the main figure of The Iliad, which he studied under his mentor Aristotle, or merely to fulfill his father's aims?

The continued threat of possible Persian interference in Greek affairs may have been enough for Alexander to pursue the invasion. Evidence indicates that Alexander's aim during the first phase of the invasion of Persian soil was mainly to achieve strategic security.

Possible influence of Aristotle and Isocrates

During his youth Alexander learned that barbarians were destined to be ruled by their betters. Aristotle believed that the Greeks were a superior race compared to the Persians. Isocrates, while not contributing directly to Alexander's education, was certainly expressing a common viewpoint when – as in his letters to Philip – he called the Persians a “common enemy.” After 330 BC, Alexander diverged from these influential figures' teachings. However, the influence of both Aristotle and Isocrates appears to have potentially affected the early campaign. Examples of this influence are clear after Alexander entered the Levant from Greek Ionia. He encountered for the first time a more wholly foreign citizenry than in Coastal Asia Minor, one

with alien customs and appearances. By subjugating these totally he appears to be following an agenda of conquest and control.

During the campaign when Alexander made his way through the Levant, Aristotle's influence cannot be ignored. It is not clear whether or not Alexander actually read Aristotle's treatise, The Politics. However, what must be assumed is that Alexander, during his four years studying under Aristotle, probably learned his views on nature and on the nature of rule.

Aristotle's influence is undeniable in one instance: Alexander allowed several biologists and naturalists to accompany the expedition in order to take specimen samples for the philosopher. His actions in the early campaign parallel Aristotle's ideas on ruler and ruled. Aristotle states, "even the art of war will by nature be in a manner an art of acquisition... both against wild animals and against such of mankind as though designed by nature for subjection refuse to submit to it, inasmuch as this warfare is by nature just."¹⁰⁴ This passage presents Aristotle's complex theories on race and nature. Whole groups of people may be born into a state of subjection as dictated by nature. By following these concepts, Alexander was perfectly just in acquiring the lands of lesser peoples through war. These people were by nature slaves and to enslave them was by no means an injustice but rather a mechanism by which to return them to their more natural state.

Alexander's tactics when related to Aristotle's political views are seen as good or noble exploits. [For] "virtue when it obtains resources has in fact very great power to use force, and the stronger party always possesses superiority in something that is good, so that it is thought that force cannot be devoid of goodness..."¹⁰⁵ Aristotle continues this line of reasoning and concludes that the conqueror is just as long as it is natural for him to be, in fact, the conqueror.

¹⁰⁴ Arist. Pol. I.III.8

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. I.II.17

One such instance occurred in the city of Gaza. After conquering the eastern Mediterranean seaboard Alexander brought his troops to bear on this fortified city. Arrian describes Gaza thus, “Gaza was a large city, built on a high mound, with a strong wall round it.”¹⁰⁶ The inhabitants of Gaza refused to admit the army of Alexander into its walls. The men were massacred and all women and children sold into slavery. If Alexander knew of this philosophical argument, he would have felt justified in treating Persian people and cities so harshly.

The missives of Isocrates with Philip before and later with young Alexander highlight another tradition of thought regarding the pursuit of honor, and the Greek view with regards to Persians. Isocrates is a useful source because he indicates a sentiment present in the minds of the Athenians, or at least what Isocrates believed was in the best interest of the Athenians. It is unknown with whom Isocrates spoke concerning the imminent war against the Persians but one is inclined to believe that he did not simply fabricate public opinion. The Greeks agreed that nothing beyond a war with the Persians would be “more glorious [and] more useful to the Greeks.”¹⁰⁷ Isocrates wrote¹⁰⁸ this letter to Philip after Chaeronea and its rhetoric was no different after the death of Philip and the ascension of Alexander. For Isocrates there was nothing more important than a leader to wage war on the Persians regardless of whether the leader was Greek or Macedonian. Alexander’s initial harsh treatment of his enemies in the early campaign and the singularity of his attempts at crushing the strategic operations of the Persians mirror the quest for glory that Isocrates promotes. Although this may mirror Isocrates’ fondest wish it does not indicate Alexander’s acceptance of Isocrates’ idea nor does he continue in this way for long. Isocrates would have been appalled at Alexander’s later policy where inclusion of the Persians, rather than subjugation, was the rule.

¹⁰⁶ Arr. *Anab.* II.26.1.

¹⁰⁷ Isoc. Phil. II.3

¹⁰⁸ Probably around 337 BC.

Chapter 3:

Alexander in Action

Following his entry into the Troad in 334 BC Alexander set events in motion that would result in an expanded Hellenic realm. At the beginning of his campaign it is not clear that Alexander had any long-term goals in mind when considering Persia. The decision to pursue the early campaign appears to be clearly concerned with logistics. Alexander, perhaps staying true to the office of hegemon of the Greeks, set about freeing the Greek cities of Asia Minor from Persian rule.

From a military and logistical standpoint the securing of Asia Minor with its many Greek cities and close coastal proximity to mainland Greece and Macedonia was critical. Any hostile Persian infantry force had to move its troops through Asia Minor and across the Hellespont to threaten Macedonian interests.

The eastern Mediterranean coast served as the base of operations for the Phoenician naval forces which, if left unmolested, could reach the Greek islands with relative ease. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary for the invading Macedonians to keep the Hellespont and the coast secure. The city of Tyre highlights Alexander's need for a secure coastline. In a drawn out siege Alexander continued to call for the surrender of Tyrian defenders. When he was repeatedly rebuffed, Alexander accepted nothing but the utter destruction of the city and its inhabitants. An unrelenting Alexander demonstrated the type of resolve that Isocrates so admired. Alexander

followed this course throughout the Levant and into Egypt with the express purpose of eliminating any maritime threat to Greece and his own Macedonian troops.

Governing Bodies and Procedure of the Early Campaign

One of the most significant policies put forth showcasing the sheer scope of Alexander's enterprise was the appointment of satraps over the various geographical areas of his new kingdom. The sources are clear indicators of Alexander's methodology in ruling a large area that contained so many diverse ethnic groups. Rather than systematically destroying all vestiges of the previous power structure Alexander incorporated a majority of the common practices.

A number of political appointments occurred throughout the newly acquired lands of western Asia. These appointments can be seen as simply the most practical choices to make. By appointing Persian satraps, or in many cases simply leaving them in their previous position of power,¹⁰⁹ Alexander was able to prevent the rise of dissent from the populace. For many "Persians" day to day life did not change. All that changed was the knowledge that leadership had been taken by an outsider.

One could argue that Alexander could have simply insinuated a Macedonian governor in place of local leaders with little ill effect. In the campaign's infancy he in fact did supplant former satraps with Macedonian or Greek replacements. However, after the Battle of the Granicus River in 334 BC, Alexander allowed that "the Sardians and the other Lydians were granted the use of the old Lydian customs, and allowed to be free."¹¹⁰ So, even at this early point, the native peoples were granted their cultural identities and only endured a new governor.

Removing the Persian military presence in Asia Minor, Alexander appointed to his closest allies the task of maintaining the security of the region. Amyntas was assigned the duty

¹⁰⁹ These almost always were accompanied by a Macedonian led garrison.

¹¹⁰ Arr. I.17.4

of securing the city of Sardis, while Asander, the brother of Parmenio, became governor over Lydia for the purpose of holding Lydia secure. Alexander then set out to gain the favor of the people in Asia Minor. He ordered, “Alcimachus... to the Aeolian cities and to any Ionian towns still subject to the barbarians. [And] ordered the oligarchies everywhere to be overthrown and democracies to be established...”¹¹¹

These early actions are significant. They show that Alexander appeared to be not yet interested in incorporating the inland Persian Empire into his own. Alexander was more intent on securing defensive measures for the lands removed from Persian power. While some may argue that by acquiring the lands of the eastern Mediterranean and Ionia Alexander exhibited a desire for a larger empire, it is apparent that he did not yet have any grand stratagem for all of Persia. With the threat of the Persian navy certainly diminished he could have made swift advances deep into the Persian interior but chose not to, and continued with the total acquisition and security of the coastline. With that knowledge we can cast doubt on the idea that through this early foray into Persian territory Alexander had intended to be the ruler of Persia proper.

Some scholars such as N.G.L. Hammond prematurely characterize Alexander’s decisions at this time and those after the fall of Darius in 330BC as being part and parcel of the same strategy. “In the interior of Asia Minor, at last, we get a clue to Alexander’s thinking, for he appointed barbarians, non-Greeks, as satraps of two provinces.”¹¹² This is a hasty estimation. Alexander did indeed make two early ‘barbarian’ satrapal appointments, but these are the exception rather than the rule, and can be explained in terms of these two satrapies’ ethnic make-up and their strategic importance (or lack of it) to the defense of Asia Minor. The majority of the city-dwellers in coastal Asia Minor, being ethnically Greek, had a vested interest in accepting a

¹¹¹ Ibid. I.17.18.1-2.

¹¹² Hammond, 329.

Greco-Macedonian appointed satrap and Alexander showed no inclination to totally subjugate them.

In Asia Minor, the first appointment of a non-Macedonian or Greek official was given in 334 to Princess Ada of Halicarnassus.¹¹³ Although not purely Greek by blood, Ada was thoroughly Hellenized. She does not fit Hammond's image of foreign satrap and therefore should not be used as a linkage between Alexander's early and late policies. Alexander may have seen merit in the structure of the satrapy but he did not show any inclination at this time to allow a "true" Persian retention of leadership. His goals were to simply gain strategic control over primarily the coastline. Furthermore, his appointment of Sabictas¹¹⁴ — another non-Greek— was in the strategically empty province of Cappadocia which received almost no attention during the entire campaign. The reason for this neglect was that Cappadocia was a fairly untamed land that did not present a pressing problem to Alexander's plans for security.

After securing Egypt, Alexander made the first real concerted effort to invade the Persian interior. Once there he enacted three key policies to create and maintain his empire: the first in manner of governance; the second in manner of dress and political iconography; the third in political marriage.

His methods were an amalgamation of the previous policies and tactics enacted by Philip II before him and his own rationalism. Philip may have given Alexander the impetus or rather the very idea and tools to invade Persia, but he cannot be credited for the rapidity with which Alexander was able to extend his empire. Alexander's political and military creativeness has to be credited for this accomplishment. The ancient sources provide a scattered account of these events and the approach which Alexander took to hold the conquered at bay.

¹¹³ Arr. I.23; Plut. Alex. 22; Diod.Sic. XVII.24.

¹¹⁴ Arr. II.4.2.

Alexander enacted his three main policies after the final defeat and eventual death of the Persian king Darius III who had been put to death by the order of Bessus, a Persian noble and satrap of Bactria. With the Persian king dead Alexander stood poised to claim his prize and strip the Persian Empire of any and all of its wealth. However, the sources show a pattern of behavior and political cunning, late in the campaign, suggesting that Alexander meant to establish and maintain a long-lasting, secure realm for Greek and barbarian alike.

Chapter 4

Alexander's First Three Persian Satraps and The Road to a New Realm

Alexander abandoned the course of rule promoted by Isocrates and Aristotle that he seemed to have followed in the early campaign. Greeks were freed from the Persian yoke and democracies restored among the Ionian communities of Asia Minor. After 330 BC, however, he demonstrated that their pre-conceptions of government or views of racial superiority were no longer acceptable in his ruling ideology. It is clear that when Alexander recognized the defeat of Darius was inevitable and began to co-opt the existing Persian lands into an empire of his own, he understood that he could not simply consider the subjugated people as mere chattel. The Macedonian military machine alone could not hope to maintain control over the vast land mass that Alexander was now consolidating. Thus, Alexander set about creating a unique system of governance. Alexander's new system allowed Persian satraps to remain in their own administrative capacity provided they continued to remain obedient.

The first of Alexander's Persian Satraps was Mazeus. Mazeus was the former governor of Babylon and a member of the Persian aristocracy. While Darius was in flight, Mazeus surrendered Babylon to Alexander in late 331BC.¹¹⁵ Ernst Badian states, "Mazeus is a living symbol of Alexander's policies in transition."¹¹⁶ Badian strengthens the argument by further speculating that "Babylon was not really friendly to Persian rule, for the Persians had destroyed

¹¹⁵ Arr. III.16.3

¹¹⁶ Badian, "The Administration of the Empire" Greece and Rome, 2d ser., 12, no.2 1965, p.175.

the temple of Bel and failed to respect local religion as Cyrus had done in his day.”¹¹⁷ The importance of Mazeus to Alexander is his connection with the Persian aristocracy. Although the Babylonians may have been less than happy with the Persian power structure as Badian surmises, they accepted it. Alexander in a brilliant move to surmount any tensions between his appointed official and the populace “met the Chaldeans [the administrators of the religious rites], and carried out all their recommendations on the Babylonian temples, and... sacrificed to Baal.”¹¹⁸ In Babylon he was able to secure the loyalty of the influential religious leaders as well as the Persian aristocracy.

Over the land of Susiana, which had surrendered its city, Susa, he left the former satrap Abulites in control in late 331.¹¹⁹ Again Alexander chose to grant some level of clemency toward any who freely surrendered, and showed that he understood that a large urban area would be led most easily by its former administrator. Susa was spared any military action and its treasury was taken to assist in financing the campaign. These actions in Susa, like those in Babylon, serve as precursors to Alexander’s assimilation of the title, King of Persia.

After the loss of Babylon and Susa, Darius was in full flight. The sources agree that Alexander next appointed as satrap Oxydates¹²⁰ who was given the land of Media. Oxdates was a former prisoner of Darius¹²¹ and was allowed to join the forces of Alexander when they freed him in Susa. Therefore it is safe to assume that Alexander trusted his newly appointed satrap, for he left him to his own devices and continued to pursue Darius until learning of his death. The sources disagree whether Alexander’s appointment occurred prior to or following the death of Darius, but the time between the appointment and the death is negligible.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 173.

¹¹⁸ Arr. III.16.5

¹¹⁹ Ibid. III.16.9

¹²⁰ Ibid. III.20.2

¹²¹ Curt. VI.2.11; Arr. III.20.3.

Darius died a victim of betrayal at the direction of one of his own satraps, Bessus. The death of Darius must have been somewhat disappointing for Alexander, but any disappointment was short-lived. Now Alexander was faced with consolidating the wildest reaches of the Persian Empire. He was in Bactria at the time and had to quickly cow any resistance to his ascension to the kingship. Alexander embarked on a new phase of his campaign where he would assume the title and the adapted appearance of the old Achaemenid kings.¹²²

The Persian Realm after Darius

Alexander's pragmatic reasoning behind appointing Persian satraps in the Persian heartland is readily apparent. Alexander and his forces were deep inside foreign territory and needed to maintain security in the western Persian realm. To assist in this Susa and Babylon were now fixed with indebted satraps, owing allegiance for their positions to Alexander, and strong Macedonian led garrisons. In these cities, the garrisons were fortified to withstand any popular uprising if they should occur. In the wild lands of Media an ally was needed to keep the native populations under control.

The inclusion of the garrison is a significant fact often ignored by scholars. It is clear that while Alexander seemed hopeful that newly reappointed Persian governors would remain loyal, he positioned a garrison of trustworthy Macedonians in close proximity. He would not rely on trust and oaths alone to secure his territory. This is not necessarily a sign of doubt but rather a prudent appointment of security forces for the cities. The sources generally provide names of garrison commanders in conjunction with any urban satrapal appointment.

Initially the consolidation sorties were simply an attempt to locate and subdue the remainder of Darius' mercenary force and any remaining Persian units. Pursuit led to encounters with several nomadic eastern peoples and the eventual capture and claim of control over the

¹²² See section titled "Manipulating Perception" below.

entire existing Persian Empire. From the time of Darius' death Alexander followed a logical strategic track to replace or extract oaths of loyalty from the remaining Persian satraps.

In the ensuing years following the death of Darius Alexander allowed a number of former satraps to remain in their previous stations. Alexander made these appointments as he secured the remaining geographical limits of the empire. Each of his new satraps served to maintain security in the newly acquired provinces. It is evident that he only chose to allow leadership roles to those who freely acquiesced and offered no resistance.

The sources indicate only one instance of open rebellion by an appointee. Satibarzanes, newly reappointed satrap of Aria (modern northern Iran), slaughtered the Macedonian garrison and openly led a rebellion against Alexander's rule. The rebellion was quickly crushed by a contingent sent from Alexander's main force.¹²³ Arsaces, a Persian, was placed in the satrapy after this.¹²⁴ Arsaces' appointment as replacement for Satibarzanes is significant. It illustrates the apparent faith Alexander had in a Persian's ability to manage other Persians.

Ironically, Alexander's faith was abused, for Arsaces was removed during the next year, 329, and replaced with a Cypriot Greek, Stasanor.¹²⁵ Alexander's patience was finite and this placement of a Greek in the satrapy appears to highlight an implicit trust that one of his own commanders would not be so unreliable. Badian presents the idea that Alexander probably held more faith in his own men by outlining the makeup of the later empire after Alexander embarked into India. He states, "Bactria-Sogdiana, Aria, and Arachosia – formed a solid layer of provinces strongly held by Greeks or Macedonians, watching over western Iran (in Oriental hands) and guarding Alexander's rear for the Indian campaign."¹²⁶

¹²³ Arr. III.28.3.

¹²⁴ Ibid. III.28.1.

¹²⁵ Ibid. III.29.5.

¹²⁶ Badian, 177.

The number of Persian satrapal appointments during the eastern phase of the campaign is significant. Persians were almost exclusively appointed satrap in this phase of consolidation. Even though the sources mention the various individuals,¹²⁷ those who were allowed to either retain a former position as satrap or who won the title through Alexander's favor, they do little to explain their significance. It is not necessary to mention them in turn, for only brief introductions of the new satraps are provided and all served to fortify Alexander's position in the east. However brief, the mention leads one to assume that Alexander deemed the Persians would have less difficulty with the native populace.

This explanation for the satrapal appointments, the strengthening, protecting and consolidation of the empire in the late campaign, still engenders debate among scholars. A.B. Bosworth viewed these appointments as "determined by relatively short-term considerations."¹²⁸ Bosworth continues to promote his idea that Alexander had no intention to create a unified realm. N.G.L. Hammond counters this claim by citing the many cities that Alexander created and settled with Macedonians, Greeks and native peoples. Hammond credits his assertion to the "ancient evidence that Alexander aimed at coexistence and partnership between Europeans and Asians, which would inevitably result in an interaction between the two civilizations."¹²⁹

The large number of Europeans (Macedonians and Greek mercenaries)¹³⁰ in the eastern regions is a direct result of a policy of newly-constructed cities. Bosworth remains too pessimistic in this case and fails to admit that city building or colonization has an implicit connotation of longevity or permanence.¹³¹ Hammond is surely correct in his analysis but does not go far enough to explain the significance of the interaction, whether positive or negative.

¹²⁷ See appendix.

¹²⁸ Bosworth, 241.

¹²⁹ Hammond, "Alexander's Newly-Founded Cities" Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 39, no.3 (1998), 267.

¹³⁰ Curt. VII.6.27.

¹³¹ Bosworth, 248.

One can accept Bosworth's view of "short-term considerations" but it may be useful to say that the "short-term" equates to the immediate security concerns of Alexander. Once these concerns were met the policies could then be enacted without fear of attack or uprising.

Donald Engels, studying the logistics of the Macedonian army, may have found the most significant reason behind the construction of colonies. Colonies were to serve first as bases of operations because, "Alexander would never commit his entire army for a campaign into a region that had not surrendered to him in advance. [For] the main army remained behind at a base well supplied with provisions."¹³² Such strategic camps were the origins of the eastern colonies. These bases also served as defensive positions against the nomadic tribes that inhabited the eastern reaches of the Persian Empire. Alexander, "tried to defend the Iranian territories, developing agriculture, sedentary culture, and later Greek urbanization partly by military blows, partly by the foundation of *Alexandria Eschate* [to ward against] the predatory invasions of the nomads."¹³³ Alexander's actions seem well placed for a long-term occupation of territory. The land was neither plundered nor razed, it was settled, evidence enough to counter assertions that he did not have such plans.

Alexander consolidated his eastern empire and even attempted to extend its limits into western India. The lands taken within India were acquisitions of opportunity. Before the Macedonians entered India, many rumors circulated among them concerning the savagery and military might of the inhabitants of that strange land. There was reluctance at first to cross into India as a result of these stories but this reluctance was eliminated shortly after entering India. The earliest forays into India and the subsequent battles with native princes proved to be

¹³² Engels, Donald W.. *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, p. 120.

¹³³ Harmatta, Janos. "Alexander the Great in Central Asia." *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol.39, p.132.

relatively one-sided and beneficial for Alexander. Within the interior Alexander appointed, in essence, satraps to govern over large tracts of land. This seems to be an extension of the Persian system that Alexander had adopted and may indicate his acceptance of this as a superior governing structure. King Porus, having won Alexander's admiration for his daring in battle, became the first client king of Alexander. Porus¹³⁴ was allowed to maintain his holdings and rule his realm as he saw fit with a modicum of tribute or tax to be collected and sent to Alexander. The Macedonians saw the benefit to leaving the popular Porus in power as a means to maintain the friendship and control of the native population. This arrangement would be maintained as long as he remained an ally to the Macedonians. The status of client king for Porus basically mirrored the powers imbued to the satraps appointed by Alexander.

The evidence indicates that Alexander did indeed desire a large consolidated realm. His actions after the death of Darius follow a logical track of land acquisition followed by city building which resulted in the successful conquest of the entire Persian land empire. Alexander surely acted on opportunities as they occurred, as Bosworth would agree. However, it is apparent that he was desirous of more, for it was not necessary for him to take up the raiment of Persian kings or adopt components of their court policies to conquer land. This equipage was more for the Persian populaces benefit than his and will be shown below. Alexander viewed the appointing of satraps as necessary to maintain long-term stability in his realm. The Macedonians could hold the conquered peoples at bay, but chose not to simply subjugate them. Satraps served to ease the cultures into a state of shared community and are indicators of Alexander's overall strategy for a stable empire.

¹³⁴ Arr.V.21.5. Porus was actually granted more lands to govern in India in addition to retaining his own.

Chapter 5

Manipulating Perception

In the land of Hyrcania, after Darius' death, Alexander began to present himself in the accoutrements of the Persian aristocracy. The costume was not entirely Persian but very significant because it challenged the Macedonians' image of king and commander. There was loud opposition to this image that he was creating. Even more significant is Alexander's unwavering confidence in the Persian form of dress in the midst of dissent concerning this new policy. Alexander's adoption of foreign dress during his eastern campaign presents the most benign of his new policies toward the conquered. This appears to be an effort to make him more palatable and easily recognizable as ruler over the subjugated. Alexander used many forms of propaganda in conjunction with the attire of Persian kings. One could surmise that Alexander must have felt extremely confident that it was more important to consolidate his realm than to cater to the sensibilities of his troops.

It may have been enough for Alexander to simply bear a remote resemblance to the former kings of Persia to accomplish his aims; but he did not stop with simple dress changes. Persian court practices became employed in the later campaign to complement the image of Great King. Each seems to have been structured for a specific audience. The choice of garments was mainly for the commoners who may have never caught a glimpse of royalty before, but would surely recognize the opulent dress. Then the functional employment of court custom was meant for the Persian aristocracy who were essential to maintain the security of the kingdom.

Arrian saw this public persona as a very deliberate attempt to win over support from the Asian populace. Despite the fact that Arrian pays scant attention to Alexander's well-crafted image campaign, his assessment seems to be less hostile than that seen in the other sources, i.e. Diodorus, Justin, and Quintus Curtius. He suggests Alexander's "adoption of Persian equipage was a device... towards the Persians, so that their King might not appear wholly removed [alien] from them."¹³⁵

Another story from Arrian indicates that taking up the Persian mantle may have not been wholly Alexander's idea. It may have been a reaction. After the death of Darius, his killer Bessus "was wearing his cap upright, dressing in Persian royal garb, calling himself Artaxerxes instead of Bessus, and giving out that he was King of Asia."¹³⁶ Arrian goes on to explain that once Bessus assumed the persona of "King of Asia", he (Bessus) anticipated an influx of support from various groups allied under the rule of Darius.¹³⁷ Though sources do not confirm this, Alexander may have felt the need to take up the Persian image in order to counter Bessus' claim to the throne.

Alexander's entire eastern campaign following the death of Darius was one of consolidation, and Bessus posed a serious threat to this aim. Bessus had an ethnic legitimacy that Alexander did not possess. Even though Alexander took up the mantle of the Persian King he did not change his own name. Bessus surely possessed a natural command of the language and customs and was using the familiar dynastic title Artaxerxes. He would have to be dealt with quickly before too many Persian subjects saw and identified with Bessus as the new High King.

¹³⁵ Arr. VII.29.3

¹³⁶ Ibid. III.25.3

¹³⁷ Ibid. III.25.3

Plutarch provides perhaps the most detailed description of Alexander's new dress. In late 330 BC Alexander, "first put on the barbaric dress ... from a desire to adapt himself to the native customs, believing that community of race and custom goes far towards softening the hearts of men."¹³⁸

Plutarch is hypothesizing a methodical political strategy in this instance. Through his narrative he presents the start of a grand strategy by Alexander. Plutarch goes further with a description of a synthesized version of dress used by Alexander:

He did not adopt the famous Median fashion of dress, which was altogether barbaric and strange, nor did he assume trousers, or sleeved vest, or tiara, but carefully devised a fashion which was midway between the Persian and the Median, more modest than the one and more stately than the other.¹³⁹

In other writings Plutarch and the remaining sources speak of this tactic in a much more romantic, and in the case of the vulgate sources, a negative, fashion. The first instance of this by Plutarch shows:

as sovereign of both nations and benevolent king he strove to acquire the good will of the conquered by showing respect for their apparel, so that they might continue constant in loving the Macedonians as rulers, and might not feel hate toward them as enemies.¹⁴⁰

Again this statement, although dripping with Plutarch's romanticism, indicates what would seem to be his sense that the wearing of the Persian garments by Alexander was practical. Plutarch rationalized this action further by questioning the manner in which Alexander's Persian subjects considered this change in dress: "Must they not rather wonder at his wisdom, since by but a slight alteration of his apparel he made himself the popular leader of all Asia, conquering their bodies by his arms, but winning over their souls by his apparel?"¹⁴¹ This is surely too stark a representation of the Persian reaction to Alexander's new appearance. The fact that there was no

¹³⁸ Plut. *Alex.* XLIV.1

¹³⁹ Ibid. XLV.2

¹⁴⁰ Plut. *Moralia*. I.VIII.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. I.VIII.

major uprising may be an indication of Persian acquiescence to the imagery promoted by Alexander. However imagery alone almost certainly was not the sole factor. Under the dominion of Alexander life for most of the Persian citizenry remained unchanged. The Persians were also aware of the Macedonian's military might and speed with which they were able to crush any resistance. Plutarch's recounting is useful because it seems to provide a general sense that the policy was successful while Alexander lived.

The remaining sources tend to borrow from one another and maintain a fairly negative tone throughout their interpretations of Alexander's measures. However negative, significant information can be gleaned from these sources; but each must be viewed cautiously. Quintus Curtius Rufus begins with a fairly benevolent description of Alexander's means of dress. He details this dress stating, "he wore on his head a purple head-band interwoven with white, like the one Darius had once had..."¹⁴² This unambiguous detail belies the inherent prejudice found in Curtius' writing against Alexander.

Curtius marks the implementation of the Persian headdress and cloak as the turning point in Alexander's Asian campaign. He ceases being a "cultured" Greek and slips into the role of foreign despot all too easily, in the eyes of Curtius. Curtius' interpretation appears to be overly critical toward any such policy that Alexander may have been attempting. Curtius conjectures, "His [Alexander's] claim was that he was wearing Persian spoils, but the fact was that with the clothing he had also adopted Persian habits, and a contemptuous demeanor accompanied the ostentatious dress."¹⁴³ Alexander would then order his most loyal and elite troops to take up the Persian dress.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Curt. VI.6.4.

¹⁴³ Ibid. VI.6.5

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. VI.6.7

It is true that Alexander did institute some of the Persian court gestures and procedures once this new mantle was taken up. Curtius suggests an Alexander overcome with hubris and barbarous ideas. An underlying tone of prejudice is detectable in Curtius. He was clearly writing in a manner suggesting a lack of regard for anything associated with the Persians and their kings. A negative tone does not invalidate Curtius as a source, but it leads one to take a much more cautious approach to accepting his conclusions.

Justin's recounting of Alexander's adoption of Persian attire lies in the same vein as Curtius. Although Justin is writing an epitome of the history of Pompeius Trogus, his prejudice colors the epitome with his own ideas of proper decorum. The evidence that Justin presents serves to enrich the other sources. However, he adds what would seem to be his afterthoughts about the motive through which Alexander enacted such changes.

An example of this is can be seen when, "Alexander assumed the dress of the kings of Persia and a diadem [a white cloth headband tied behind the head] something former Macedonian kings had never worn – submitting as it were to the rules of those whom he had defeated."¹⁴⁵ It is true that early Macedonian kings are not recorded as ever wearing the diadem; nevertheless, Justin sets a negative tone in this instance. The end of the above statement is an admonishment against Alexander and only conjecture on Justin's part. Justin fails to provide the necessary historical corroboration to validate his overly negative position.

Similarly to Curtius, Justin briefly mentions Alexander's imposition of the Persian cloak on his Companions. Unlike Curtius however, Justin attempts to provide a reason for this action: "In order to avoid excessive animosity, if he were seen to be alone in adopting such garb, he also instructed his friends [the Companion cavalry and commanding officers] to wear long gold and

¹⁴⁵ Just. 12.3.8

purple robes.”¹⁴⁶ Alexander’s purpose begs justification here. Justin neglects to provide a clear explanation of who would hold animosity against Alexander, the Persians or his own troops.

One could surmise that Alexander may have had more difficulty with some of his more traditional-minded Macedonian compatriots rather than any Persian subject concerning this garb. The uprising at Opis in 324 is evidence of the tension between the king and the Macedonians showing clearly the troop’s objection to Alexander’s deference to the Persians. Thus the conclusion that the Macedonians would object strenuously to the change in attire seems probable. The question remains: what was the purpose of this edict?

A particular line of reasoning can be proposed. Alexander wanted to create the appearance of a familiar leader rather than a foreign conqueror. At this time Alexander had taken control over the dynastic and satrapal holdings of Darius and would need a means of endearing himself and his Companions to his new subjects. Wearing the guise of the Persian king was a simple task. This use of Persian material culture can be seen as an attempt to make the new king more palatable to his new subjects.

Wishing to ingratiate himself with the Persian citizenry further he honored the memory of the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great in 324 by having his tomb and body restored to a place of dignity. This act is intriguing in its complexity. Some of the Persian populace had viewed Darius as a pretender king of questionable blood. Alexander called upon the most basic level of the Persian’s historical identity by honoring Cyrus. He appeared to be claiming a filial bond with a revered Persian figure. One could guess that the act was indicative of what a true successor would deem as necessary. Being the true King of the Persians, Alexander was required to honor his predecessors as Darius had never done.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 12.3.9

Adopting previous Achaemenid attire served as the least obtrusive means to gain public acceptance. According to Justin he wore the diadem as well as the royal purple, marking him as the effective King of Asia. His Companions, now similarly clad, were to resemble the freshly supplanted Persian aristocracy. This seems to be a logical explanation.

Diodorus Siculus provides a fairly detailed description of Alexander and the wearing of Persian dress. Alexander, “put on the Persian diadem and dressed himself in the white robe and the Persian sash and everything else except the trousers and the long sleeved upper garment.”¹⁴⁷ The similarity with the details provided by Plutarch concerning the omission of trousers is unique among the ancient sources and could indicate a common source¹⁴⁸ shared by these two.

The simple manner of dressing the part of Persian king was one component of the complex system that Alexander would employ to endear himself to the Persian citizenry. Although diverging at points, sources agree on the creation of the policy and the general image it created.

Stewart postulates that Alexander did not wear the entire Persian costume because he “never really aspired merely to be Great King”.¹⁴⁹ He alludes to a desire by Alexander to conquer much more than simply the former Persian Empire. At this time Alexander was still consolidating the power base of the old empire. The evidence does not support this statement fully nor is it wise to project future actions on the act of not wearing pieces of the royal garments. Reasons for Alexander’s decision are not discussed definitively in the sources and therefore should be promulgated with extreme caution. Alexander would have been cognizant of the impact such a transformation of image may have had on his own troops, so he incorporated Persian regalia into the dress of his own companions. Although he may have felt

¹⁴⁷ Diod. Sic. XVII.77.5

¹⁴⁸ Plutarch attributes his information to Eratosthenes of Cyrene.

¹⁴⁹ Stewart, 92.

totally secure in his relationship with the Macedonians he felt compelled to include them, thus silencing their objections to the changes. Consequently, a standardized and uniform officer corps would assist in his objective to become more identifiable by the Persian populace and aristocracy.

Proskynesis and the Coming of the Epigonoi

Even as Alexander changed his image and imposed on his troops components of Persian costume he still found it necessary to further strengthen his bond with the Persian nobles. Persians had a very different relationship with their kings compared to that of the Macedonians. The kings of Macedon had always maintained power through a bond of camaraderie with their troop commanders. The companions were trusted friends and advisors not used to formality and pomp. The notion of Persian kingship was very different to the Greeks, consisting of an absolute monarchy with power to rule derived from the gods.¹⁵⁰ Alexander must have been aware of this distinction and went about changing court proceedings to reflect a pageantry or ceremony that was more recognizable by the Persians. He had previously changed his royal accoutrements in order to make himself more recognizable to his new Persian subjects. Why would Alexander be compelled to enact this change? It would seem that Alexander sought now to be functionally the king of Persia through ceremony in conjunction with iconography already being used.

At this stage of the campaign after capturing the Persian pretender Bessus in 329,¹⁵¹ Alexander effectively ended all other claims to the vacant Achaemenid throne. By 328 B.C. the majority of the eastern frontier of the Persian Empire had been brought under control. Alexander in an attempt to further ingratiate the Persians to himself enacted a controversial requirement of proskynesis, or prostration, within the king's presence by all under his command.

¹⁵⁰ This tradition can be traced back to the eighteenth century BC with the Babylonian king Hammurabi who stated his authority was an edict of Bel.

¹⁵¹ Arr. III.30.1-5.

This was a wholly Persian ceremonial device and was met with much dismay by the Macedonians. This was seen as a breach in the bonds of brotherhood shared between the king and his companions. They had never before been required to pay homage to their general and were taken back by what seemed to be an act of hubris. Hubris was viewed by the Greco-Macedonian world as the ultimate sin, a total disregard for the mores of the time for one's own desires.

The Macedonian troops in 324 looked with skepticism on the arrival of a Macedonian styled military unit consisting totally of Persian youths.¹⁵² This was a cause for alarm from many of the general troops as they continued to see Alexander's image change. They may have been concerned that their king was becoming too like the Persian monarchs in thought as well as deed. What they failed to realize was that this was indicative of yet another attempt at engendering confidence and loyalty among his Persian subjects, not a departure from his reliance on them. Often overlooked by scholars is the fact that the Epigonoι were commissioned for training in 330 or 329; this occurred either before or shortly after Alexander assumed Persian accoutrements and definitely before he enacted any Persian political ritual. The Macedonians failed to understand that this unit was a product of foresight by Alexander, not of hubris.

If they had been afraid that their king and his followers were looking "too Persian," then the arrival of 30,000 noble Persian youths equipped with the full array of Macedonian armor and weaponry, marching in an orderly phalanx formation may have done something to alleviate that fear. For the Persians, too, the Macedonian phalanx may have now become a source of pride, rather than of fear. Unfortunately, the traditionally xenophobic Macedonians did not understand the purpose behind this and complained vigorously. The troops felt "as if Alexander was

¹⁵² Arr. VII.6.1.

actually contriving every means of reducing his dependence on Macedonians in [the] future...»¹⁵³

If Mazeus, satrap of Babylon, was symbolic of transition¹⁵⁴ then the Epigonoι were symbols of Alexander's policies achieving fruition. They embodied what Alexander sought to achieve with his propaganda campaign. The Epigonoι personified a crossing of cultures. Shortly before the arrival of the Epigonoι in Susa, Alexander enacted his most personal policy: a political marriage alliance between men at all levels of his most trusted Companions and the Persian aristocracy.

¹⁵³ Ibid. VII.6.2.

¹⁵⁴ See footnote 116 above.

Chapter 6

Marriage Alliance Expanded

Alexander surely inherited some of the political ideas of his father, and Philip II was a firm believer in the usefulness of political marriage. Clearly his motives for such political unions were to quell tensions between the peoples on the fringes of Macedonian territory and Macedon. The case of his marriage to an Illyrian princess serves as a clear indicator. Alexander took this basic concept and shaped one of the most significant policies of his later campaign. Not only did Alexander follow the policy previously employed by his father, he amplified it to include one hundred of his most trusted Companions.

Several hypotheses can be formulated concerning this act. The first sees it simply as a continuation of Philip's matrimonial diplomacy. Alexander expands this not only through other cultures but through his own troops as well. Another viewpoint, probably the most significant, stems from the fusion theory argued by Tarn. It holds that Alexander was attempting to create a common race and culture. Each will be discussed in turn.

The sources are scant with reference to the political machinations of Alexander toward the marriage contract. In some instances it was believed that Alexander arranged the marriage at Susa in 324 BC to cement the bond between himself and his Macedonians. Justin records that Alexander, "presented to the Macedonian noblemen unmarried girls selected from the best families amongst all the conquered peoples, so that any recrimination against the king might be

lessened through their complicity in his action.”¹⁵⁵ Justin appears to oversimplify here. While it seems clear that Alexander’s intent was indeed to strengthen the bond with his troops in this way, Justin’s use of the word “complicity” makes it appear criminal, and is a function of his own prejudice.

The care Alexander showed in selecting brides for his closest friends is evident in Arrian’s account where:

To Hephaestion, he [Alexander] gave Drypetis, another daughter of Darius, sister to his own wife[Barsine](for he desired Hephaestion’s children to be cousins to his own); to Craterus, Amastrine daughter of Oxyartes, Darius’ brother; to Perdikkas, a daughter of Atropates, satrap of Media; to Ptolemy the bodyguard and Eumenes the royal secretary, the daughters of Artabazus[the newly appointed satrap of Bactria], Artacama and Artonis respectively; to Nearchus, the daughter of Barsine and Mentor; to Seleucus the daughter of Spitamenes the Bactrian, and similarly to the other Companions.¹⁵⁶

Arrian’s benefit is without question here, for no other source provides such a detailed register of the pairings. One clearly sees that for Alexander’s officers each bride comes from the house of prominent Persian figures. The pairings are indicative of the broad plans Alexander projected for the empire.

In “Alexander and the Persian Women” Elizabeth Carney mistakenly sees this mass marriage as occurring “only when he had truly changed the base of his power...”¹⁵⁷ She continues: “his marriage to Stateira being part of his rejection of Macedonia and one of the many signs that he had become an Asian ruler.”¹⁵⁸ Although the significance of marrying Stateira, the daughter of Darius, is unquestionable, the inclusion of his troops and commanders should be testament enough that Alexander had not rejected Macedon. Another equally critical view of Alexander’s marriage policies is put forth by Shahbazi. Shahbazi in an attempt to view these

¹⁵⁵ Just. XII.10.9-10

¹⁵⁶ Arr. VII.4.5-6

¹⁵⁷ Carney, Elizabeth. “Alexander and the Persian Women”. *American Journal of Philology* 117, no. 4. (1996): p. 578

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 578.

arrangements from a Persian perspective proposes, “It is often forgotten that while he and his Macedonian officers could take Persian ladies of highest rank in marriage, not a single Persian prince was allowed to marry a Macedonian lady, surely a sign that “sharing” was not sincere at all.”¹⁵⁹ While Shahbazi is correct regarding Persian male-Macedonian female marriage he fails to take into account the make-up of the Macedonian army. By the time Alexander sought to make alliances with Persian nobility through marriage contracts, his troops had already taken captive, foreign (Persian and other) women as brides. The sources give no indication that it was common practice for the Macedonians to allow any notable women on campaign.

The mass marriage at Susa was not however, the first political union forged by Alexander. In 327 BC he “had already taken to wife Roxane, the daughter of Oxyartes the Bactrian.”¹⁶⁰ Plutarch ruminates, “His marriage to Roxana[e]... was a love affair, and yet it was thought to harmonize well with the matters he had in hand. For the Barbarians were encouraged by the partnership into which the marriage brought them...”¹⁶¹ The key distinction is that the marriage with Roxane was in the Macedonian style and the later mass marriage at Susa was “solemnized in the Persian style.”¹⁶² The formalization of the wedding in the Macedonian style seems to indicate something more than a simple political union between Alexander and Roxane. There could have been some truth to the sources’ claims that Alexander felt love at first sight: but whether or not he loved Roxane is irrelevant. More important is the occasion wherein this ceremony took place. Unlike the ceremony later held at Susa, where Alexander had the upper echelon of Persian society as witnesses and participants, the marriage with Roxane had few Persian witnesses. This union did not have far-reaching goals in mind when it was made. This

¹⁵⁹ Shahbazi, A. Shapur, “Irano-Hellenic Notes 3: Iranians and Alexander”. *American Journal of Ancient History* 2, no.1 (2003):24.

¹⁶⁰ Arr. VII.4.4

¹⁶¹ Plut. *Alex.* XLVII.4

¹⁶² Arr. VII.4.7

practical union, whether for love or not, created a strong tie with the father of Roxane, Oxyartes, a powerful leader in the wild countryside.

Sources indicate Alexander's willingness, or rather his express desire, to pursue more Persian-like rituals and rites at Susa. In what must have assuredly been a grand ceremony not held in secret, Alexander had the perfect venue for showing the populace that he was not a terrifying outsider but one who shared and appreciated their own traditions.

The ceremony at Susa was not the first instance of Alexander allowing troops to wed Persian and oriental wives. Shortly after taking up the diadem in 330, in an attempt to quash the desires of his general troops to return homeward he "allowed his soldiers to marry any of the captive women with whom they were cohabitating, for he thought they would be less eager to return home if they had in camp some semblance of a home and domestic setting."¹⁶³ Thus, Justin characterizes Alexander's reason for allowing such a union between conquerors and conquered as pragmatic. The "veterans could be replaced by their sons [from the union with foreign wives], who as young recruits would serve on the ramparts on which they had been born."¹⁶⁴ The progeny of these unions would inherit the colonies and cities formed in the campaign. They would be of both lineages: Greco-Macedonian and Persian. These new citizens may be indicative of Alexander's overall attempt to create stronger links between the Macedonians and Persians.

Following this edict granting marriage to foreign, captive wives, Justin indicates that Alexander founded a city called "Alexandria [whose location was on] the river Tanais."¹⁶⁵ He further shows, "[Alexander] also founded twelve cities in Bactria and Sogdiana, dispersing

¹⁶³ Just. XII.4.2

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. XII.4.5

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. XII.5.12.

amongst them those members of his army whom he regarded as malcontents.”¹⁶⁶ Alexander allowed troops to settle in the new cities and although the sources do not mention fully his intent it is more than likely that these troops functioned as garrisons. It is also unknown to what extent that the new colonists were married to foreign wives. Colonization during the Persian campaign could indeed be interpreted as a pragmatic policy to strengthen the claim to the eastern provinces but the sources provide little information.

Political marriages during the late Persian campaign have been interpreted in ways that seem to range from the almost biological in nature to the purely philosophical. Tarn’s concept, fusion, is directly connected to biology and indicates a desire by Alexander to construct a new mixed race. The brotherhood of man is another concept which suggests that Alexander sought a position as benevolent king or patriarch over the subjects within his realm.

Universalism, Fusion, and the Brotherhood of Man

Modern scholastic traditions concerning Alexander remain entrenched in their persistence to promote aspects of his character or actions. One such emphasis explores events late in the campaign when Alexander further placed upon the Persian aristocracy, i.e. the Persian princesses¹⁶⁷ and the Epigonoi, a requirement to learn Greek. It should be noted that the Epigonoi were not exclusively of the aristocratic class but exhibited physical qualities that distinguished them from common Persian citizens. In the discussion of this edict along with the general intermingling through marriage of both troops and Companions to foreign wives, Alexander’s intention has been widely debated. Did Alexander attempt to create one race as asserted by Tarn? Or did he simply wish there to be easier communication between the newlyweds? Did Alexander desire to extend his realm to all known areas of the world? Was he

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. XII.5.13.

¹⁶⁷ Diod. Sic. XVII.67.1; Curt. V.2.17

the benevolent patriarch over mankind some propose? The questions have been addressed time and time again but continue to stir debate. The debate is linked to the historians choice of a preferred source. By differing on which sources are more accurate or reliable, scholars continue to disagree.

W.W. Tarn, following Plutarch closely, argues that Alexander's intent must have been an attempt to fuse together Greeks and barbarians and eventually create a common culture. Tarn's interpretation of Alexander's intent seems to be too heavily derived from Plutarch's Moralia. This work by Plutarch was much more ideologically charged than the narrative Life of Alexander, and consequently this must be viewed with much caution. It differs dramatically from a historical narrative, and is really a form of social commentary.

The brotherhood of man is a philosophical construct based on Plutarch. This misunderstanding is furthered by Tarn's misuse of Isocrates' homonoia as an indicator for Alexander's future policies, should not be heavily relied on for it is not supported by the sources. The term homonoia was employed by Isocrates much earlier and functions in a much more narrow sense than Plutarch's or Tarn's use. Tarn's hypothesized fusion policy falls short, because he relied more on philosophical analysis rather than source evidence. Language learning or the imposition of language upon a people is not a satisfactory argument for "fusion." One should consider, of course, that the Persian Empire was Hellenized as a result of Alexander's policies. In this sense a form of fusion occurred – but it came as a result of cultural processes, not from a definite policy as Tarn seems to propose.

Alexander's imposition of marriage between his Companions and the Persian aristocracy is indicative of a pragmatic plan of rule. The sources never indicate that Alexander imposed Greek on either the outlying Satraps or native populations. The lands of the eastern empire and

India were allowed to be ethnically the same as before. There were some instances of colonization within these lands, but those cities were bastions for diverse populations -- not limited to Greek custom or language; and the sources do not indicate that Greek was levied on the non-Greeks. If Greek would have been imposed upon the whole of the realm then the fusion argument might have more plausibility. But in fact there was a definite influence on the native peoples living in proximity with the new inhabitants.

Political marriage is not sufficient evidence of a desire for a “brotherhood of man.” This is Plutarch’s construction. The marriage arrangements that were made only appear to serve political purposes. There appears to be only one exception to this, with regard to Alexander’s desire to be connected to his most trusted Companion Hephaestion through a union with the daughters of Darius.¹⁶⁸ Plutarch’s romanticism with regards to the marriage at Susa was accepted and promoted too intensely by Tarn.

Alexander’s actions after the death of Darius show that his ultimate concern was the secure administration of a large realm. Tarn’s conclusions were not altogether incorrect, for the sources do seem to indicate that Alexander was in the process of establishing a “fused” realm -- but not in the sense of one race under Alexander. From this it must be agreed that Tarn’s “fusion” was too reliant on the social commentary of Plutarch and Tarn’s seeming desire to construct a benevolent Alexander figure.

¹⁶⁸ Arr. VII.4.5

Conclusion

Alexander the Great subjugated the Persian Empire and large portions of western India in only eleven years. Scholars have speculated on aspects of Alexander's campaign, some attributing his success to tyche or fortune, others to Alexander's debt to his father, Philip II of Macedon, and still others assert that Alexander held a philosophical belief that he was duty bound to save the barbarians from themselves. He was not at every point of his journey infallible. Alexander the Great committed atrocities, he enslaved large groups of his enemies and he may have been responsible for the deaths of many of his own troops. However, these events are just sidelights to what would become his greatest accomplishment, the consolidation and administration of the largest empire that had yet been seen. The major argument throughout this study shows that after 330 BC, with the fall of the last of the Achaemenids, Alexander focused on acculturation and absorption of the Persian Empire; he was not (as scholars have argued) a servant of tyche or devoid of thought concerning a large, sustained empire.

It is quite clear that Alexander diverged from the common Greco-Macedonian tradition of prejudice and xenophobia. His actions and their consequences remain a testament to his foresight and flexibility. The sources document loud opposition to Alexander's innovative policies, illustrating the concerns felt by his compatriots. Alexander heard consternation and asked for his troops' trust in those matters. Some modern scholars have argued that Alexander could not abandon these provocative policies because he was consumed with self interest. It seems that their conclusions are based upon a comparison with the former kings of Macedon.

Because Alexander did not follow a traditional Greco-Macedonian style of rule it is thought that he must have been unjustified in his actions. That Alexander was different from his predecessors is undeniable; but this does not in itself mean that he was abandoning his heritage. Although he would not be bound too tightly by the traditions of his fathers before him, Alexander throughout the entire campaign strove to maintain strong ties with his companions.

Alexander used three key component policies to form the conquered territory into what he thought would be the most secure realm. He appointed Persian satraps to administer Persian populations. He cemented his bond with the most influential Persians and the lowliest peasants with imagery they could recognize. Finally he had his most important Companions married to the daughters of noteworthy Persian aristocrats. The sources agree on the substance of each of these decisions, if not on the motivation for them.

W.W. Tarn laid the foundation for nearly all acceptable modern scholarship of Alexander. The image of Alexander that Tarn created is one of benevolence, clearly drawn too heavily from Plutarch's *Moralia*. Plutarch's work is more a function of Plutarch's own philosophical thinking about Alexander rather than an image based on careful use of source evidence. Tarn was not altogether incorrect in his findings, but his tendency to magnify the positive attributes of Alexander is unbalanced and in need of scrutiny.

The work of A.B. Bosworth is more inclined to focus on the military aspects of the campaign of Alexander. Bosworth promotes the image of Alexander the conqueror and autocrat, a not wholly incorrect interpretation. Bosworth focuses on the military elements of the campaign and he chooses to rely on the vulgate tradition's projection of the sentiment of the troops, and its emphasis on aversion to or rebellion against Alexander's actions, to construct his image of the Macedonian king. Highlighting this is Bosworth's assertion that Alexander's adoption of

Persian dress was a result of the absence of Parmenio.¹⁶⁹ For Bosworth Parmenio represented the old regime of Philip II: a regime from which Alexander had strayed too far. He portrayed Parmenio as a foil to Alexander who acted to maintain the traditional Macedonian identity. Reliance on that sort of argumentation seems to weaken Bosworth's claims. By sympathizing with Parmenio, Bosworth creates a somewhat negative image of Alexander, blaming him for not acting in the way of previous Macedonian kings. Parmenio becomes a sympathetic character who is used too often to show how off-track Alexander had wandered.

By maintaining that Alexander was not acting as a Macedonian should, Bosworth maintains a close parallel with the vulgate sources, and his focus is such that he seems inclined willingly to ignore the problems with the vulgate sources on which he so heavily relies. These sources, as discussed above, have to be viewed very skeptically.

The source record is at best incomplete, second-hand and prone to a score of problems. What is clear is that there is no one definite source authority in terms of authenticity. However, one can conclude that the historian Arrian seems to make the greatest attempt to maintain the integrity of the information (the works of Ptolemy and Aristobulus) and add little of his own personal opinions to his writing. Therefore if one had to choose a "more reliable" source it seems that Arrian is the safest choice.

Alexander the Great, son of Philip II of Macedon, inherited a rich tradition of military training, planning and governmental administration and utilized it in a manner the world had never seen, to conquer and hold the largest single land mass in western history. Refusing to be bound by xenophobic tradition, Alexander ruled with the assistance of foreign nobles serving as administrators. He took on a more recognizable and palatable appearance for the newly conquered and then finally acted to unify the top tier of the Persians with his friends and

¹⁶⁹ Bosworth, Conquest and Empire, p. 100.

commanders. His pragmatism and foresight allowed Alexander to accept all of Persia's inhabitants as subjects, regardless of ethnicity, and meld them in a way that would ultimately contribute to a more stable empire. That was the practical genius of Alexander.

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Appendix:

Satrapal Appointments in the Persian Mainland and Sources

<u>Satrap</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Source</u>
*Mazeus.....	331.....	Arr.III.16.4. Curt.5.1.44.
*Abulites.....	331.....	Arr.III.16.9. Curt.5.2.17.
*Phrasaortes.....		Curt.5.6.11.
*Oxatheres.....	330.....	Arr.III.19.2.
*Oxydates.....	330.....	Arr.III.20.3. Curt.6.2.11.
*Autophradates.....	330.....	Arr.III.23.7.
*Satibarzanes.....	330.....	Arr.III.25.1. Curt.6.6.13.
*Amminapes.....	330.....	Arr.III.22.1. Curt.6.4.25.
*Arsaces.....	330.....	Arr.III.25.7. Curt.8.3.17.
*Phrataphernes.....	330.....	Arr.III.28.2.

		Curt.8.3.17.
*Proexes.....	329.....	Arr.III.28.4.
Clitus.....		Curt.8.1.19.
Amyntas.....		Curt.8.2.14.
*Artabazus.....	329.....	Arr.III.29.1.
		Curt.7.5.1.
Stasanor.....	329.....	Arr.III.29.5.
		Curt.8.3.17.
Menon.....		Curt.4.8.11.
Stamenes.....	328.....	Arr.IV.18.3.
		Curt.8.3.17.
*Tyriaspes [Tiridates].....	327.....	Arr.IV.22.5.
		Diod.Sic.XVII.81.2.
Nicanor.....	326.....	Arr.IV.28.6.
Philip son of Machatas.....	326.....	Arr.V.8.3.
		Curt.10.1.20.
*Porus.....	326.....	Arr.VI.2.I.
		Just.12.8.7.
		Diod.Sic.XVII.89.6.
*Oxyartes.....	325.....	Arr.VI.15.3.
Peithon.....	325.....	Arr.VI.15.4.
Thoas.....	325.....	Arr.VI.27.1.
*Eudaemon.....	325.....	Curt.10.1.21.

Taxiles.....	325.....	Just.13.4.20.
		Curt.8.12.14.
		Diod.Sic.XVII.86.7.
Peucestas.....	325.....	Arr.VI.28.3.
Atropates.....	324.....	Arr.VII.4.1.

***Indicates Persian and Non-Greco-Macedonian Appointments**

Vita

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