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Plus ça change....

Ancient Historians and their Sources

This article addresses the problem of veracity in ancient historiography. It contests some recent views that the criteria of truth in historical writing were comparable to the standards of forensic rhetoric. Against this I contend that the historians of antiquity did follow their sources with commendable fidelity, superimposing a layer of comment but not adding independent material. To illustrate the point I examine the techniques of the Alexander historian, Q. Curtius Rufus, comparing his treatment of events with a range of other sources that reflect the same tradition. The results can be paralleled in early modern historiography, in the dispute between J.G. Droysen and K. W. Krüger on the character of Callisthenes of Olynthus. Both operate with the same material, but give it different “spins” according to their political perspectives. There is error and hyperbole, but no deliberate fiction.

It has become fashionable to question the veracity of the historians of antiquity. The repeated insistence that truth is the first duty of the historian¹ tends to be dismissed as a topos, honored more in the breach than in the observance. At best it is argued that the criteria of truth were different in antiquity, and historical writing approximated most closely the *narratio* of a forensic speech.² Historians at any time felt free to exaggerate and even invent material in the interests of dramatic verisimilitude. In short, the boundary between factual reportage and fiction was

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1. For a rich collection of parallels see Avenarius 1956: 40–46.

2. Fully argued by Woodman 1988: 70–116, attacking the more conventional exposition of Brunt 1993: 181–209 (repr. of Brunt 1980: 311–40). Woodman has repeated his views in Kraus and Woodman 1997: 5–6, and they have almost achieved the status of standard doctrine (cf. Oakley 1997: 7–9).

loose and easily crossed. An extreme example of this mode of interpretation is a recent article by Paul McKechnie, discussing the celebrated account of the aftermath of the death of Alexander the Great that is provided by the Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus. For McKechnie, Curtius' narrative is little more than a travesty, and his conclusion is damning: "Scholars should believe nothing in Curtius book 10 which is not confirmed in another source."³ The allegation is that Curtius is more of a novelist than a historian; his aim is rhetorical entertainment, and he is quite prepared to invent material if it suits his purpose. That purpose is to re-interpret the troubles after Alexander's death in the context of Roman political thought. The Roman context is superimposed upon whatever primary Hellenistic historian Curtius used, and he did not hesitate to add entire episodes of his own invention. If this view is accepted, it has the most serious consequences. The most extensive and detailed source for the so-called Babylon Settlement disappears, and we are left with a handful of truncated epitomes. What is more, if we accept that the addition of bogus "facts" was a standard historical technique, we are left with very little. There are few criteria to distinguish what was the "hard core" of authentic material and what was the superimposed fiction.⁴

INTRODUCTION: HISTORY AND RHETORIC

There can be no doubt that in all periods of antiquity history and rhetorical practice were closely allied.⁵ The same techniques would be used in constructing narrative, and in both genres eulogy and vituperation were standard, recurrent features. The orator and historian likewise profess their *fides* and their factual honesty. The first question now arises. Was the historian's claim to truth no more than a claim to be unbiased, with no compulsion of fear or favor? If so, it left him free to embellish his account almost at will. Provided that he was not writing from *parti pris*, he could add what according to rhetorical practice should have happened, even if it did not.⁶ That is the conclusion reached by A. J. Woodman, who gives a detailed analysis of Cicero's famous prescriptions for the orator approaching history. The *fundamenta* are familiar to everyone: the first

3. McKechnie 1999. The quotation comes on the last page.

4. Cf. Woodman 1988: 91: "the Romans required of the hard core of history to be true and its elaboration to be plausible." If this were so, it leaves the modern interpreter at a loss to distinguish hard core from elaboration. Any detail in any account might be false.

5. Most neatly expressed by Atticus in Cic. *De leg.* 1.5: opus...unum hoc oratorium maxime. Pliny (*Ep.* 5.8.9–10) agrees that history and oratory have much in common. History differs only in the elevated nature of its subject matter and the smooth fluency of its literary style: *oratio* corresponds to Thucydides' ἀγώνισμα, *historia* to his κτῆμα. For his part Cicero (*Brut.* 42–43) can pair the historian Cleitarchus with the orator Stratocles as partners in crime, sensationalizing the death of Themistocles for tragic effect.

6. Quint. 2.17.28: uneducated jurors may have the wool pulled over their eyes to make sure they come to the right verdict. It is close to what Cicero says in the *Brutus*: concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis. Cf. Woodman 1988: 94.

law of history is not to venture to say anything false, the next is to omit nothing that is true, then there should be no suspicion of favor in the writing and finally no partisan hostility.⁷ I totally agree with Woodman that the *fundamenta* are a side issue in the passage. What matters is the superstructure (*exaedificatio*). As regards the subject matter,⁸ it must observe due chronological sequence, describe the topography, explain the political motivation—a conventional list, with strong echoes of Polybius and Sempronius Asellio.⁹ The style too should be appropriate, easy and fluent. Now, the organization of subject matter does indeed correspond to the principles of rhetorical *inventio*,¹⁰ and clearly the historian and the orator will use similar techniques to enliven their exposition. However, the difference is that the historian is constrained by the truth.¹¹ That, to me, is the clear implication of the *fundamenta*. I cannot accept that they comprise two sets of rhetorical questions, *falsum* and *uerum*, explained by *gratia* and *simultas*. Rather there is a series of four separate but related criteria, each marked off by the connective *ne*.¹² The first is a blanket demand for truth, the second the inclusion of all relevant material, the third and fourth the avoidance of prejudice, favorable and unfavorable. All four come under the general heading of veracity, but they are separate aspects. Factual reporting and the avoidance of prejudice are clearly related, but the former is a wider, more inclusive concept.

Theory and practice are, of course, very different things. If we were to believe Polybius, every contemporary history but his was largely fiction, and, in a full-blooded indictment, Seneca accuses the whole confraternity of historians of systematic lying.¹³ They tell incredible tales to keep the attention of their readers.¹⁴ But Seneca is here attacking an astronomical observation of Ephorus, the splitting of the comet of 373 BC into two separate bodies. This comes in the context of a theory Seneca is set on rebutting, that comets occur when two or more planets come into conjunction. Ephorus' report was clearly used by proponents of

7. Cic. *De orat.* 2.62–63: Nam quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? Deinde ne quid veri non audeat? Ne quae suspicio gratiae sit in scribendo? Ne quae simultatis? Haec scilicet fundamenta nota sunt omnibus. Analysis in Woodman 1988: 78–82.

8. This I take to be the sense of *rerum ratio* at *De orat.* 2.63. Similarly Woodman 1988: 80: “the nature of content.”

9. For parallels see Avenarius 1956: 142–49.

10. Woodman 1988: 85–86 gives pertinent examples, notably Cic. *Part. Or.* 31–32.

11. That essentially is the conclusion recently reached by Potter 1999: 138: “The core narrative should be based on the best evidence that can be found, and that evidence should not be distorted.” For all the defects of Potter’s exposition, criticized at length in Woodman’s review (*HISTOS* 2 [May 1998]), this seems to me totally correct.

12. Woodman 1988: 105n39 glosses: “there are only two laws of history, expressed by *prima* and *deinde*.” I do not follow this. *Prima* and *deinde* represent the first two members of a series. They do not subsume the next items in the list (cf. *De off.* 1.42; *De orat.* 1.144; *Pro Planc.* 32; *Pro Sulla* 43; *De nat. deor.* 2.58).

13. Peter Wiseman uses the passage to begin a provocative essay (Wiseman 1993).

14. Sen. *NQ* 7.16.1–2 (*FGrHist* 70 F 212). Compare *De ira* 3.9.1, where the *fabulae* of history are recommended as soothing reading for the hot-tempered mind.

the theory, and Seneca disposes of it in a blistering attack on the discipline of history. But he fails to draw the logical conclusion, which is to reject all evidence supplied by historians. Indeed he uses reports of comets during the Hellenistic period to reject the planetary theory, reports which *prima facie* look as implausible as Ephorus' observation.¹⁵ He also uses Callisthenes' description of the inundation of Helice and Bura because it tallies with his own theory.¹⁶ Historians, it would seem, only lie when their reports are inconvenient.

Seneca's procedure here resembles that of the historians of antiquity. He draws on Callisthenes for factual evidence that he can use for scientific analysis, and has no hesitation in accepting his dramatic account of the inundation of the Achaean cities and the comet which preceded the catastrophe. Other writers had used Ephorus to back conclusions that Seneca contested. His evidence had to be discounted, and Seneca does so. He points out (quite reasonably) that Ephorus' testimony was unique and unsupported by other accounts,¹⁷ but he also assails the whole discipline of history for systematic mendacity. This is clearly overkill: Seneca is sawing off the branch he is sitting on. His whole procedure presupposes that the majority of details in historical accounts are accurately reported, and it is the exceptional item that is aberrant. That is entirely the procedure with history proper, history, that is, which dealt with non-contemporary events that were already documented by previous writers. The details are overwhelmingly accepted at face value, with only the occasional item identified as partisan, exaggerated or plain mistaken. By and large the facts are thought to be established, and the historian's task is seen to be rearrangement and re-interpretation. The Younger Pliny puts it succinctly in the rather superficial letter in which he toys with the idea of writing history: if one attempts to record events of the past already written up by others, the results of the primary enquiry are at hand but the collation is burdensome (*parata inquisitio, sed onerosa collatio*).¹⁸ At a more sophisticated level Polybius illustrates the procedure in his account of the First Punic War. He claims that he is compelled to deal with the subject because of the defects of the primary historians, Fabius Pictor and Philinus, who showed excessive bias for and against Rome and Carthage, blinded like lovers to the defects of the beloved.¹⁹

15. Sen. *NQ* 7.15.1, referring to comets appearing in the reigns of Demetrius II (151 BC) and Attalus III, both so great that they dwarfed the heavens. If these reports are not pure fantasy, they are presumably highly colored descriptions of supernovas.

16. Sen. *NQ* 6.23.2–4, 26.2–3 (*FGrHist* 124 F 19–20), on the causes of earthquakes; *NQ* 7.5.3–5 (*FGrHist* 124 F 21), description of the comet of 373. Seneca approves of Callisthenes on moral grounds, praising his opposition to Alexander, but Callisthenes was a historian in the same category as Ephorus. The two wrote contemporaneously, around 340, and relied on second-hand reports of the cataclysm in Achaea.

17. Sen. *NQ* 7.16.2: ait illum discessisse in duas stellas, quod praeter illum nemo tradidit.

18. Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.12. For the method see Luc. *Hist. Conscr.* 48 with Avenarius 1956: 85–104 and Millar 1964: 32–38.

19. Polyb. 1.14.1–3 (*FGrHist* 174 T 2, 809 T 6). Cf. 1.15.12–13, where Polybius claims that the bias can be traced throughout the works of the two historians. He himself will concentrate on the

Polybius believes that he can produce a more acceptable account of events by critical comparison and interweaving of the two narratives, so that the bias can be eliminated, and his account is based wholly upon the material they provide.²⁰ Once more the underlying assumption is that the factual narrative is correct. Polybius declares that he will illustrate the bias as it arises in the course of his own account, but in practice there is only one explicit criticism of Fabius²¹ and none of Philinus after the initial critique of his description of the siege of Messene.

The same principles apply to perhaps the most famous of all methodological statements, the preface to Arrian's *History of Alexander*. This does indeed concede that the work is selective and records material on the basis of narrative interest.²² It has even been argued that "The origin and truth-status of the events—whether they were discovered or invented—is neither here nor there."²³ I fear this is a serious misrepresentation. Arrian repeatedly stresses his respect for truth, and begins the preface with the programmatic statement that he accepts as true every detail described in the same way by his two principal sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus.²⁴ It is only where they disagree that he uses the criterion of narrative attraction: he will choose the version which is more worthy of belief and more worthy of telling.²⁵ What is at issue is the evaluation of variant traditions. Arrian decides on the basis of intrinsic credibility and on moral or entertainment value. These are the criteria also for selecting the relatively few items that he takes from sources other than Ptolemy and Aristobulus.²⁶ They are

facts and give his readers a true perception of the events, observing a strict chronological exposition. This is practically a paraphrase of Antonius' demands in the *De oratore*.

20. So Jacoby, *FGrHist* ii D 598: "direkt benutzt ist Ph(ilinos) von Polybios, der seine darstellung I 13–64 aus ihm und Fabius ziemlich mechanisch zusammenarbeitet." Cf. Walbank 1957: 65: "It is generally agreed that Fabius and Philistus are P.'s exclusive sources... [But] P. is far from mechanical in his interweaving of sources."

21. 1.58.4 (*FGrHist* 809 F 18), a mere variation of emphasis. Somewhat later, at 3.8.1–9.5 (*FGrHist* 809 F 21), he criticizes Fabius' account of the origins of the Second Punic War and urges his readers to exercise their critical facilities and not be overawed by Fabius' status as a contemporary and a senator. But Polybius is confident that readers will ascertain the facts in spite of the bias, and he assumes that Fabius' narrative is largely true. His position as a contemporary and actor in events helped guarantee it. Arrian similarly adduces the authority of Ptolemy as a contemporary and a king.

22. The key word ἀξιόφητος ("worthy of telling") occurs twice in the preface.

23. Wiseman 1993: 136.

24. The first sentence could not be more emphatic. Arrian starts with the names of his two sources and highlights the facts over which they are in agreement. He then resumes emphatically, "these I record as true in every way" (ταῦτα ἐγὼ ὡς πάντη ἀληθῆ ἀναγράφω). Compare the final sentence of the work (7.30.3), where he explains that he was forced against his will to be critical of Alexander ἀληθείας ἕνεκα τῆς ἐμῆς.

25. For a good example of his critical technique see 5.14.3–6, where versions of the same episode in Ptolemy and Aristobulus are juxtaposed and Ptolemy is given preference on grounds of probability (οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰκόσ). Cf. Bosworth 1995: 287–90.

26. On Arrian's use of the secondary tradition (quite different from his use of his main sources) see Stadter 1980: 73–76; Bosworth 1988: 61–93, esp. 91–92: "Arrian uses his secondary material as a counterpoint. It enlarges upon or contrasts with the material from his primary sources and provides a vehicle for literary comment."

intrinsically suspect, because they do not have first-hand authority, and they are used to embellish the narrative. The captured Persian Queen Mother allegedly mistook Alexander for his friend Hephaestion. This episode, Arrian states, was not recorded either by Ptolemy or Aristobulus, and he does not guarantee its truth but concedes its credibility and adds that it is worth recording for the light it sheds on Alexander's character.²⁷ Here what is ill attested is scrupulously separated from the common tradition of Ptolemy and Aristobulus; what is deemed true comes first, to be followed by what is simply credible. There could be no better example of respect for sources, and the truth Arrian aims at is more than mere avoidance of bias. It comes close to Ranke's objective, to describe things as they actually were. One may criticize Arrian's selection of sources and his systematic disregard of the so-called "vulgate" tradition, but one can hardly deny that in his own mind and according to his own protestations he was aiming at the truth. At the least we should accept that he kept strictly to the material in his sources and did not add items of his own invention to improve the vividness of the narrative.

A TEST CASE:

LIVY'S ACCOUNT OF THE LIBERATION OF GREECE

Arrian's accuracy cannot be systematically probed. Ptolemy's history of Alexander is overwhelmingly attested by Arrian himself, and there are only a few instances where his use of Aristobulus can be juxtaposed with the same material in other sources.²⁸ A more revealing test case is Livy, who drew on Polybius and, like Curtius, used Roman terminology and wrote within the political context of his own day. One can delimit the dependency and define his original contribution with an accuracy that is impossible for Alexander historians. Livy's methods have been subjected to intense scrutiny over the last century and a half, and I have no intention of adding to the debate, but it is well worth examining one famous passage where Livy treats his Polybian material with especial care and simultaneously reinterprets it from his own perspective. This is his account of Flamininus' proclamation of the liberation of Greece at the Isthmian Games of 196.²⁹ Polybius' original description of the great event survives, as do other derivative versions in Plutarch, Appian, and Valerius Maximus,³⁰ and we have an exceptionally good illustration of the adaptation of historical material.

27. Arr. 2.12.6–8 (οὐθ' ὡς ἀληθῆ οὔτε ὡς πάντη ἄπιστα ἀνέγραψα). The story was a standard item of the "vulgate" tradition: Diod. 17.37.5–6 and Curt. 3.12.15–17 give exactly the same details as Arrian, and Curtius adds very similar moral comment.

28. For discussion see Bosworth 1988: 40–60.

29. Livy 33.32–33, based on Polyb. 18.46.

30. Plut. *Tit.* 10.; App. *Mac.* 9.4; Val. Max. 4.8.5.

All commentators highlight Livy's accuracy in rendering the substance of Polybius' description.³¹ The text of the proclamation is rendered faithfully.³² Livy also follows the narrative sequence of Polybius, but throughout there is a subtle change of emphasis; the unexpectedness of the Roman proclamation is repeatedly stressed, as is the outpouring of joy from the audience. For instance Polybius (18.46.1–3) summarizes the speculation of the highly placed delegates to the games: some said that the Romans would not be able to vacate certain strategic locations, while others claimed that they would release the sites that seemed important but retain less famous but equally strategic garrison points, which they then listed. This comes over as an informed and sceptical discussion of Roman strategy by the international elite. In contrast Livy is brief and categorical. There is nothing about strategy. Livy says that different views were expressed, but scarcely anyone believed that the Romans would withdraw from the whole of Greece.³³ This is the gist of Polybius' report, but the conclusion is Livy's. It serves to emphasize the surprise which greeted the proclamation. In Polybius the surprise is less evident. He described the great shout that was elicited by the herald's announcement. As a result some did not hear the proclamation, others wished to hear it again. Only then does Polybius note that the majority of the audience disbelieved what it heard and thought it was listening as it were in a dream.³⁴ Again Livy alters the emphasis. As yet there is nothing about the shout of acclamation; instead he brings forward the motif of joy and implies that all heard the herald's announcement; he can then build on the theme of disbelief, repeating Polybius' analogy of dreaming³⁵ and adding the detail that people did not believe their ears and asked their neighbors for confirmation. This is extraneous to Polybius, perhaps conjured up from his later description (46.10) of the excited babble of the crowd, but reshaped to underscore the universal incredulity. Livy is faithful to the general sense and order of his original but he varies detail to give a more consistent general picture.

There is a more elaborate divergence towards the end of the section. After describing the crowd's joyous mobbing of Flamininus, Polybius comments that

31. Nissen 1863: 148; Witte 1910: 282–83, 362–63; Foucault 1968: 210–13 (printing Livy and Polybius in parallel columns); Tränkle 1977: 137–38.

32. Livy 33.32.5. Freedom from garrisons and freedom from tribute are collapsed together under the heading *immunes*, but that is not misleading; nor is the stylistic rearrangement of Polybius' list of communities, interrupting the geographical sequence to give a metrically satisfactory ending. The Phthiotian Achaeans are transferred to the end of the list, and the Euboeans become the island of Euboea; the changes seem made simply in the name of variety and euphony. In contrast Plutarch (*Tit.* 10.5) reproduces Polybius verbatim.

33. Livy 33.32.3: *alii alia non taciti solum opinabantur sed sermonibus etiam ferebant Romanos facturos: uix cuiquam persuadebatur Graecia omni cessuros.*

34. Polyb. 18.46.7: τὸ δὲ πολὺ μέρος τῶν ἀνθρώπων διαπιστούμενον καὶ δοκοῦν ὡς ἂν εἰ καθ' ἕπνον ἀκούειν τῶν λεγομένων. The joy (χαρά) of the crowd is first mentioned some sentences later (46.11), when Polybius describes the mobbing of Flamininus.

35. *uelut ad somni uanam speciem. uanam* is emphatic, once more pointing to the gulf between expectation and reality.

despite its apparent excess the gratitude of the Greeks fell short of the magnitude of the event. It was amazing that Flaminius and the Romans conceived the policy in the first place and incurred expense and peril for the liberation of Greece; it was a great thing to bring to action a force commensurate with the policy, but the greatest thing was that fortune interposed not a single obstacle and everything flowed smoothly to the one great event, the liberation of the Greeks of Europe and Asia.³⁶ Livy has a similar encomium of Rome, but it is expressed differently. It is not his own comment, but placed in the mouths of spectators who continue talking about the proclamation days after the event.³⁷ There is nothing to that effect in Polybius, though it is certainly consistent with his general description of the scene. The encomium itself builds up in a similar way to the same conclusion, but there is a greater emphasis on the altruism of Rome. There did exist a people prepared to wage war for the liberty of others. This is a rewording of the beginning of Polybius' encomium,³⁸ but Livy extends the concept and the eulogy: the Romans did not limit themselves to the welfare of their neighbors but crossed the sea to ensure that there would be no evil empire in the entire world and the rule of law would prevail everywhere.³⁹ The Romans are the enforcers of a new world order based on law, and the consummation of the policy is the single proclamation at the Isthmus. Livy has reached the same conclusion as Polybius but the merits of Rome are subtly exaggerated. The role of fortune is not as yet mentioned, and there is no hint that anything other than Roman initiative and effort is responsible for the liberation of Greece. However, Livy adds a tailpiece, again enlarging on Polybius: to conceive the policy of liberation was the product of boldness, to bring it to completion was the proof of outstanding virtue and fortune.⁴⁰ Livy acknowledges the role of fortune, but it is associated with *virtus*. The two qualities are indispensable for success and for Livy typify Rome at her greatest. But Rome was not the only favorite of fortune. Livy could well have Alexander in his mind, Alexander whose fortune and virtue were the regular pap of the rhetorical schools.⁴¹ In his famous digression on Rome and Alexander he had explicitly

36. Polyb. 46.15: τούτων δὲ μέγιστον ἔτι τὸ μηδὲν ἐκ τῆς τύχης ἀντιπαῖσαι πρὸς τὴν ἐπιβολήν, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς ἅπαντα πρὸς ἓνα καιρὸν ἐκδραμεῖν.

37. Cf. Luce 1977: 220 ("he has transferred Polybius' remarks on the importance and nature of the event to the words and thoughts of the crowd that witnessed it"). This focalization on the Greeks gives the eulogy extra force. This is not self-praise by Flaminius or an authorial statement by Livy. The beneficiaries themselves extol the benefaction in terms of unalloyed joy and acknowledge the unique altruism of Roman policy.

38. ὑπομεῖναι δαπάνην καὶ πάντα κίνδυνον χάριν τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐλευθερίας (Polyb. 46.14); quae sua impensa, suo labore ac periculo bella gerat pro libertate aliorum (Livy 33.5).

39. Livy (33.7) could not be more categorical: ubique ius fas lex potentissima sint.

40. ad effectum adducere et virtutis et fortunae ingentis: Livy 33.8.

41. Livy gives a figure for Flaminius' age, "almost 33" (33.2), a year older than Polybius' narrative would lead us to believe (Polyb. 18.12.5, not more than 30 years old when he crossed to Greece in 198; cf. Badian 1971: 107–108 with n. 35 and Briscoe 1973: 312 commenting on Livy 33.33.2). But the figure recalls Alexander, who died at 33; Livy may imply that Flaminius was roughly the same age at the time of the proclamation.

compared the Macedonian king unfavorably with the dictators and consuls of the republic whose virtue and fortune could not be faulted.⁴² Now he could be placing Rome and Flamininus on the same pedestal of fortune and achievement as Alexander.

Livy reworks Polybius remarkably closely. He occasionally adds an explanatory note such as the age of Flamininus or the popularity of the Isthmian games (where he seems to echo Thucydides)⁴³ but he is remarkably faithful to his source, following the narrative sequence and including practically every detail. Only rarely does he go beyond Polybius and even then he keeps to the framework. The difference lies in the greater stress on the altruism of Rome. Fortune is not the dominating power, directing the flow of events and working directly for Greek liberation; the outcome depends entirely on Rome and Rome's decision to commit herself to the cause of Greece. After that it was Rome's fortune that supported her *virtus* to bring about the liberation. Livy has used the material in Polybius to highlight the Roman commitment to *virtus* that he believes is the foundation of her success,⁴⁴ but he preserves the detail, sometimes verbatim.⁴⁵

THE HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES OF CURTIUS

Nothing could be further from Livy's procedure here than McKechnie's view of the methods of Curtius Rufus. The Roman historian is represented as creating a literary narrative based more on invention than source tradition. His work does indeed correspond to the *narratio* of a forensic speech, where (if he could get away with it) the orator had no hesitation in adding colorful fiction for its impact on

42. Livy 9.18.12: quot Romanos duces nominem quibus nunquam aduersa fortuna pugnae fuit? paginas in annalibus magistratumque fastis percurrere licet consulum dictatorumque quorum nec uirtutis nec fortunae ullo die populum Romanum paenituit.

43. propter opportunitatem loci per duo diuersa maria omnium rerum usus ministrantis humano generi: Livy 32.2, almost a paraphrase of Thuc. 1.13.5.

44. Compare *Praef.* 9, where Livy exhorts his readers to reflect on the moral qualities of early Rome which acquired and expanded the empire. His treatment of Flamininus' declaration of freedom is an example of the salutary effect of Roman altruism, unpolluted by the later moral decline.

45. There is a measure of agreement that Livy treated Polybius with more respect than he did other sources (see Luce 1977: 221), but with Polybius we have the advantage of access to considerable extracts of the original. It is very seldom that we can document Livy's adaptation of his material. Even then there can be problems. It seems beyond doubt that he worked with Claudius Quadrigarius' account of the single combat between T. Manlius Torquatus and the Gallic champion (Livy 7.9.6–10.14: cf. Gell. 9.13.7–19 = Peter *HRR* F 10b). However, there are significant differences, particularly in the matter of the decapitation of the Gaul, stated by Claudius but implicitly denied by Livy. One might perhaps ascribe this colorful additional material to Livy's own imagination (Luce 225), but it more probably derives from his other sources. Livy was well aware of the divergences in his primary sources, which differed significantly on the date of the episode (Livy 6.42.5–6) and he explicitly follows the consensus (pluribus auctoribus magis adducor). When he later related the episode in the better-attested year it was only reasonable to draw upon those sources, blending in elements from the famous passage of Quadrigarius which mightily excited the sagacious Favorinus (Gell. 9.13.5). See the exhaustive commentary in Oakley 1998: 113–23.

the audience. McKechnie explicitly reverts to Tarn's bitterly dismissive verdict: Curtius entirely lacked any "historical principle," and wrote, as Wilamowitz had claimed, "merely for entertainment" (*lediglich als Unterhaltungslektüre*). What history of antiquity, one could ask, was not intended (among other things) to entertain? It is the addition of "merely" that is damning. We are encouraged to believe that Curtius had no serious purpose and operated as a historical novelist.

Both Tarn and McKechnie refer approvingly to Wilamowitz, and it is worth examining the context of his remark. It comes in a textbook survey of Greek and Latin literature,⁴⁶ where Wilamowitz does in passing refer to Curtius. But the focus of discussion is the work of Curtius' presumed source, Cleitarchus of Alexandria, whom Wilamowitz treated in a highly deprecatory fashion. Cleitarchus was the follower of the romantic tradition of Ctesias and aimed to impress and entertain, writing up the heroism of Alexander and the wonders of the expedition in the most vivid colors. According to Wilamowitz, the work of Cleitarchus had no underpinning of research, no serious passion for truth, no concern for pragmatic and psychological accuracy or probability. What mattered was richness of detail (*Stoffreichtum*), variety, and "Ionic color." Cleitarchus' approach lent itself to generalizing themes like the corrupting effect of success. That was why Curtius took the material as the basis of his book, which was written solely as a piece of entertainment. Curtius is here mentioned as the conduit to Cleitarchus, who provided him with the material he needed for his work of entertainment. There was no need for fiction; it was already provided for him.⁴⁷ The implication is that Curtius' work is not a free composition but a relatively faithful version of Cleitarchus, as close as Livy has been seen to Polybius.

Wilamowitz, it must be said, was here himself a conduit, epitomizing the views Eduard Schwartz had propounded in an immensely influential series of lectures delivered in Berlin ten years previously.⁴⁸ The characterization of Cleitarchus is exactly that propounded by Schwartz: his work belonged to an Ionic backlash which aimed to restore the romance and color of Ctesias by the creation of stress, color and rapidity. Such artistic aims, Schwartz felt, typified the generation "whose blood Alexander had forced through its veins at double speed." Curtius is represented as the end product of this tradition. He was the recipient of a Hellenistic *Unterhaltungsliteratur* which he presented in a form corresponding to the tastes of his day. Schwartz goes further. His dominant vision of Cleitarchus may be that of a tissue of romantic exaggerations, but at least he gives him credit for accuracy in his topographical de-

46. Wilamowitz et al. 1905: 1.104. Tarn 1948: 2.91 uncharacteristically appeals to authority, and McKechnie 1999: 48 likewise uses Wilamowitz to bludgeon the opposition.

47. "Inhaltlich gehört es ganz in die spätere hellenistische Zeit; formell eigentlich auch."

48. Schwartz 1943, esp. 88–92. The same picture recurs in his Pauly article on Curtius (*RE* iv [1901] 1883 = Schwartz 1959: 174). For a recent, negative view of Schwartz's work on the novel see Bowersock 1994: 14–15.

scriptions. They are true masterpieces, so well crafted that even in the late transformation and abbreviation that they suffered at the hands of a geographically ignorant Roman (take your bow, Quintus!), they still retain their fresh charm.⁴⁹ Schwartz then gives four extracts from Curtius' travel narrative in Central Asia, ending with his picture of the winter landscape between Kandahar and Kabul. Such a description, he exclaims, can only have come from a person who had seen the things for himself.⁵⁰ So Curtius is praised for his faithfulness to his original; he may be ignorant and careless but he can reproduce enough of his original to convey the impression of autopsy. Entertainer he may be, but his success is in recognizing good material and remaining true to it. This is the polar opposite of McKechnie's view of Curtius the casual purveyor of historical fiction.⁵¹

What, then, can be said for Curtius? To a large degree he cannot speak for himself. We have lost the first two books, where he may have addressed questions of method and at least stated his intentions, and of subsequent books, Book 10 is certainly the most lacunose and corrupt. All the events of Alexander's last year from Opis onwards are lost, and the narrative resumes with Alexander on his death bed and moves directly to the turbulent events at Babylon. The narrative of the king's final weeks might have helped our understanding of his description of the sequel. We have to rely on the few methodological statements that Curtius provides in the extant text. There is little to go on, but that little tells in the opposite direction to the views of Schmidt, Tarn, and McKechnie. He does admittedly state that he conveys more information than he believes, and will not affirm what he doubts or suppress what has come to him.⁵² This, however, is a statement of method borrowed directly from Herodotus, who recorded the various conflicting

49. Schwartz 1943: 104–106, quoting in translation Curt. 5.4.6–8, 7.4. 27–28, 7.5.2–7 and 7.3.8–11. Schwartz's verdict is essentially repeated by Krause 1923: 171, quoted approvingly by Rutz 1986: 2341–43.

50. "So schildert nur einer, der die Dinge selbst gesehen hat."

51. The issues raised by Tarn and McKechnie are hardly new. When Droysen published the second volume of his history of the Hellenistic age in 1836, it received an immensely long review at the hands of a certain Dr. W. Adolph Schmidt (Schmidt 1837, esp. 23–28). The general tone was favorable, but Schmidt sharply criticized Droysen's exploitation of material from Book 10 of Curtius. Just as McKechnie refers back to Tarn, so Schmidt went to the previous generation, to the influential work of Ste. Croix, which had appeared fifty years previously. In more measured language Ste. Croix passed exactly the same strictures as Tarn did in 1948, and Schmidt expanded the verdict with heady rhetoric: Curtius' work is nothing but an edifice of blinding brilliance, full of exaggerations, lies and patent absurdities, all raised on a few pebbles of truth ("Die Schilderung bei Curtius. . . ist nun aber in der That, seinem Ingenium gemäss, nichts Anderes als ein auf wenigen Steinchen der Wahrheit aufgeführtes immenses Gebäude von blendendem Glanze, voll von rhetorischen Ausschmückungen, Uebertreibungen, Lügen und offenbaren Widersinnigkeiten"). Compare Tarn 1948: 2.92 ("Pearls in a pig trough"), favorably quoted by McKechnie 1999: 45, 60.

52. Curt. 9.1.34: *equidem plura transcribo quam credo; nam nec affirmare sustineo de quibus dubito, nec subducere quae accepi.* (Cf. 10.10.11: *traditum magis quam creditum refero.*) On this Tarn (1948: 2.92) commented, "One may search the histories of the world in vain for any similar pronouncement; cynicism can go no further."

logoi which he gathered without committing himself to their truth or falsity.⁵³ It was almost a cliché in Curtius' day. Even Pausanias was to make the same claim in much the same words, and he quite deliberately echoes Herodotus.⁵⁴ A topos it may have become, but the point of the topos was to assure the readers that the author was scrupulous in retailing the tradition, even material which he found dubious. In this case, moreover, Curtius was describing the tenacity and endurance of the Indian hunting dogs, and repeats the details which we find at slightly greater length in Diodorus and Strabo, both of whom clearly draw upon Cleitarchus.⁵⁵ The comparison shows that he is indeed faithful to his source material,⁵⁶ as somewhat earlier he claims to be when presenting verbatim the speech which a Saca noble allegedly delivered before Alexander.⁵⁷ Again his phraseology is Herodotean, and it would be sheer perversity on his part to claim that he was giving an accurate rendition of his sources if in fact he was indulging in free composition.⁵⁸

Nobody doubts that Curtius imposes a Roman atmosphere on his source material—the inevitable result of writing in Latin—or that he is keen to illustrate general themes like the influence of fortune and the problems of empire.⁵⁹ The question is whether he bases his interpretation solely on material from his sources or deliberately adds material and distorts the sources to fit his general picture. For McKechnie there is little doubt. The long debate on the succession is shaped to reflect the Herodotean debate on the three constitutions and reflects the Roman doctrine of the imperial people.⁶⁰ For me it requires considerable suspension of

53. See the detailed discussion by Baynham 1998: 86–90. The influence of Herodotus had already been noted by Eduard Schwartz (*RE* iv. 1875 = Schwartz 1959: 162 [Darius and Charidemus recall Xerxes and Demaratus]).

54. Paus. 2.17.4: τοῦτον τὸν λόγον καὶ ὅσα εὐκλότα εἴρηται περὶ θεῶν οὐκ ἀποδεχόμενος γράφω, γράφω δὲ οὐδὲν ἥσσον. Cf. 6.3.8: ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν λέγειν μὲν τὰ ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων λεγόμενα ἀνάγκη, πείθεσθαι δὲ πᾶσιν οὐκέτι ἀνάγκη. This is a blatant pastiche of Hdt. 7.152. Cf. Habicht 1985: 146–47.

55. Diod. 17.92; Strabo 15.1.31 (700); see also Metz *Epitome* 66–67.

56. There is little rhetoric in Curtius here, only an observation (fully justified) about the dogs' inbred instinct to hunt. The one addition to Diodorus and Strabo is the statement that after the amputation of the leg the handler started on another limb, and that may well have appeared in his source.

57. Curt. 7.8.11: sed, ut possit oratio eorum sperni, tamen fides nostra non debet; quae utcumque sunt tradita incorrupta proferemus. Compare Hdt. 2.123: ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἐκάστων ἀκοῆ γράφω.

58. Herodotus himself has, of course, been indicted for systematic falsification, since at least the time of Plutarch. So Fehling 1989, unleashing a storm of controversy (at its most intemperate in Pritchett 1993). For a brief survey see S. Hornblower 1994: 18–19, noting pertinently: “it is not likely, nor has it been demonstrated that Herodotus is merely an ingenious teller of lies and fairy tales.” I may add that it is most likely that Curtius took Herodotus seriously and considered that he was faithfully retailing the material in his sources, just as Herodotus claimed to do with the *logoi* which came his way. He was not allusively presenting himself as the son of the father of lies.

59. On this see Baynham 1998, esp. chs. 4–6, and, on a smaller canvas, Holzberg 1988.

60. McKechnie 1999: 54: “The debate is the old debate on the three constitutions, known since the days of Herodotus.” 53: “The idea of the imperial race, for instance, comes out in Ptolemy's

disbelief to see any trace of the Herodotean constitutions. In Curtius there is no advocacy of oligarchy or democracy against kingship. Like Justin he sets the debate firmly in the historical context of Babylon, where the alternatives were either to appoint one of the marshals king,⁶¹ to have a token king with one or more guardians,⁶² or to have a governing committee of marshals.⁶³ It was the inevitable problem which arose when a hereditary king died without successors, or was succeeded by a child or an invalid, and the debate is conducted entirely in that framework. Even Meleager, who appeals directly to the troops, is no democrat. He may have encouraged his men to plunder the treasury (10.6.23–24), but that was to strengthen his own influence. Within a page he is portrayed supporting the elevation of Arrhidaeus, and the *popularis* becomes the chief supporter of the new king (*novi regis satelles*: 10.7.14). There is no suggestion throughout Curtius' debate that anything other than the immediate problems of the succession were at issue; I cannot find a single hint of alternative constitutions. As for the imperial race there can surely be no argument that the Macedonians saw themselves as the proper rulers of the territory they had conquered. The concept of "spear-won land," so important in the generation after Alexander, presupposes that the Macedonians thought it natural that they were entitled to the territory they had conquered; Seleucus could argue that he was entitled to Babylonia because of his services to the Macedonians in Alexander's lifetime.⁶⁴

As for the objection to being ruled by a half Persian, it mirrors the grievances of the Macedonians at Opis, replaced by the Epigoni and full of resentment at the mixed marriages at Susa.⁶⁵ Ptolemy could well have objected to being ruled by the son of a captive (which is how Arrian describes Rhoxane). It is irrelevant that in 311 the Stele of the Satrap describes him as viceroy and presents the young Alexander IV as pharaoh in traditional terms. The peace between Antigonos and Ptolemy, concluded in that very year, defined the regimes of the contracting

speech to the Macedonians commending rejection of Nearchus' suggestion that Heracles son of Barsine should become king. . . . No other source ascribes these views to Ptolemy." In fact Justin (13.2.7) has Meleager propose Barsine's son as a king along with Arrhidaeus. His proposal is strongly contested by Ptolemy (without explicit reference to Heracles). It seems clear that Justin is following a tradition distinct from that in Curtius, in which the candidacy of Heracles was promoted and rejected. It is certainly not a Romanizing invention by Curtius. The case is argued more extensively in Bosworth 2002: 38–43.

61. Perdikkas, on the proposal of Aristonous (Curt. 10.6.16–18; not in Justin).

62. The recurrent theme: first, to await the birth of Rhoxane's child with a governing committee of four marshals (Curt. 10.7.8–9; Justin 13.2.13–14), then Arrhidaeus, either alone (Arr. *Succ.* F 1a.3; cf. Curt. 10.7.7) or in conjunction with the unborn child (Justin 13.4.2).

63. Ptolemy's proposal in both Curtius (10.6.15) and Justin. The fact that Justin has the same proposal but taken from a patently different source surely invalidates McKechnie's premature suggestion (1999: 55 with n. 54) that the whole deliberative meeting is invented.

64. Diod. 18.55.3. On this episode see Bosworth 2002: 212–15.

65. Arr. 7.6.2–3, cf. 8.2. For more indirect evidence of the Macedonians' resentment of the marriage to Rhoxane see Bosworth 1996: 143–44.

parties in terms of the kingship of Alexander,⁶⁶ and it is not surprising that the satrap acknowledges the situation *de iure*. Ptolemy may have objected to the succession of Rhoaxane's child in 323, but that did not prevent him acknowledging his suzerainty twelve years later and in fact making political capital out of it while the supposed king was interned at Amphipolis as the captive of Cassander.

McKechnie's argument gradually centers on the most eccentric feature of Curtius' presentation, the portrait of Philip Arrhidaeus. Unlike other writers Curtius portrays the new king as capable of rational action, and gives him an emotional speech dissuading the soldiery from open war against the Macedonian cavalry and its commanders.⁶⁷ There has been an almost irresistible tendency to view this picture in a Roman context, as a disguised sermon on the dangers of the succession, with Perdikkas almost playing the role of Tiberius in his feigned reluctance to take up Alexander's ring. For McKechnie Arrhidaeus is more a republican, a *popularis* working towards consensus within the framework of the Macedonian army. Admittedly Arrhidaeus plays on the concept of *civitas*. That is almost inevitable when he is working in the context of threatened civil war. One can hardly claim that it hits a uniquely Roman chord.⁶⁸

It is fatally easy to beg the question. One may admit that Curtius' picture of Arrhidaeus is aberrant, but that does not entail that he is responsible for the aberrancy. One needs to ask whether the picture can be explained within the political context of the period of the Successors. Was there any plausible reason for, say, Cleitarchus to have portrayed Arrhidaeus as saner than he actually was? If the answer is negative, then one may look for some form of allegory relevant to Curtius' own day, whenever that day was. Otherwise the presumption must surely be that Curtius' account of Arrhidaeus' behavior is based ultimately on his source, and, if that source was Cleitarchus, one would expect it to be favorably slanted towards Ptolemy. Cleitarchus resided in Alexandria and, it seems, wrote around 310 BC, at a time and a place where it would have been difficult for him to ignore his ruler's interests. The dynastic catastrophe of 317, for instance, is surely

66. Diod. 19.105.1. On the political background see the literature cited by Seibert 1983: 123–27 with Billows 1990: 131–36; and Bosworth 2002: 239–45.

67. Curt. 10.9.16–21. On this eccentric picture of the rational Arrhidaeus and its possible relationship to Claudius see Atkinson 1980: 36–38; 2000: 321–24; Martin 1983. McKechnie 1999: 49–50 is rightly sceptical of attempts to view Curtius' work as a kind of *roman à clef* (very similar remarks in Holzberg 1988: 188–89), but regards the portrait of Arrhidaeus as equally fictitious, representing a political type rather than a specific caricature.

68. McKechnie himself superimposes a false political terminology when he translates *spem gratiae*. . . *abrupere* (10.8.17) as “to cut off a fellow-citizen's prospect of gaining influence.” This produces a confused and chaotic sequence of thought worthy of the traditional Arrhidaeus. In fact, as all the standard translators of Curtius have seen, *gratia* is used as a synonym of *amicitia* (TLL vi. 2.2209), and the phrase looks back to 10.8.12 (*aut reconciliandam cum Perdicca gratiam aut armis certandum*); Arrhidaeus is simply saying “being precipitate in breaking off hope of reconciliation is the mark of people set on civil war.” It is a cliché totally appropriate in the mouth of anyone, Roman or Macedonian, whose object was to avoid civil conflict. McKechnie also misses the force of *ad praestanda iusta* (10.9.18): not “to do the right thing” but “to perform obsequies.”

pertinent. During the struggle between Cassander and Polyperchon the two kings were annexed by the rival sides; the young Alexander IV remained in the hands of the regent and queen mother while Arrhidaeus was manipulated by his ambitious wife to support the cause of Cassander.⁶⁹ Those who owed their legitimacy to Arrhidaeus had an interest in presenting him as something other than a mental defective. Most of all Cassander, who was to honor him with a state funeral.⁷⁰

But Cassander was not the only dynast to owe legitimacy to the king. Ptolemy received Egypt only after Alexander's death, first at the hands of Perdiccas⁷¹ and then, at Triparadeisus, as the gift of Antipater. Neither was a particularly respectable authority; Perdiccas was posthumously damned by the Macedonians at the instigation of Ptolemy himself, while Antipater was unpopular with the Macedonian troops in his lifetime,⁷² challenged by Eurydice from the start of his regency and tarnished by the rumors that he had plotted to poison Alexander. By contrast Antigonos could claim that he had received his original satrapy at the hands of Alexander himself and expanded it at the expense of usurpers of doubtful legitimacy—such as Ptolemy in Syria. It was certainly in Ptolemy's interest to portray Arrhidaeus as something more than a cipher. He had the good sense to confirm his appointment at Babylon and at Triparadeisus, and the more rational Arrhidaeus was made to appear, the stronger would be the claims of those who were appointed in his name. Ptolemy, Seleucus, and Lysimachus all had an interest in portraying Arrhidaeus as a perceptive and independent actor in events, not simply the tool of his minders. Curtius' Arrhidaeus, who intervenes at a crucial moment, opposing the wishes of his "protector" Meleager, and proves to be the chief broker of reconciliation, fulfils exactly that role. We may safely attribute the portrayal of Arrhidaeus to Curtius' source without any need to invoke the political context of the Roman imperial period.

A TEST CASE: ABDALONYMUS IN SIDON

Curtius' treatment of events in Babylon is a particularly bad passage to choose for the analysis of his methods. Other sources are extremely thin and uninformative, and there is no control on Curtius—he is the sole representative of the tradition he elects to follow. The bulk of his narrative is quite different; we usually have the same material transmitted by other sources, notably the so-called

69. Justin 14.5.1–5; Diod. 19.11.1–3. Cf. Hammond and Walbank 1988: 139–42, and on the chronological ramifications see Bosworth 1992: 62–64, 71–73.

70. Diod. 19.52.5; Diyllus, *FGrHist* 73 F 1 = Athen. 4.155A.

71. Arr. *Succ.* F 1.5 is explicit that the appointments were made in Arrhidaeus' name (ὡς Ἀρριδαίου κελεύοντος).

72. As appears clearly from the troops' starkly different reactions to himself and Craterus (Arr. *Succ.* F 19 = Suda s.v. Κράτερος). See also the new Göteborg palimpsest f. 73v 3–11, 72v 10–14, most conveniently consulted in Agostinetti 1993: 126–27 or Dreyer 1999: 57–58. The riots at Triparadeisus, in which Antipater nearly lost his life, are also relevant (Arr. *Succ.* F 1.33; Polyæn. 4.6.4).

“vulgate” tradition. That does permit a degree of cross comparison, and I should like to examine an episode that is described in very similar terms by Curtius, Diodorus, Justin, and Plutarch, namely the appointment of Abdalonymus as king of Sidon. There is a fair degree of consistency in the sources. The reigning king of Sidon, Straton II, was deposed by Alexander because of his sympathies for Darius, and Alexander gave his friend Hephaestion the pleasant task of choosing a new king. The dignitaries who were first approached refused the kingship because they were not related to the royal house, and informed Hephaestion that there was a poor relation of the dynasty named Abdalonymus, who was making a wretched living as a gardener but had a reputation for probity. Hephaestion accepted their nominee, and Abdalonymus was taken from his garden, changed his shoddy dress for royal robes, and was proclaimed king. It is a classic rags to riches story, and the facts are generally agreed. Abdalonymus was indeed king of Sidon, as Curtius and Justin state.⁷³ A recently discovered bilingual inscription of Cos attests his son making a votive dedication to Aphrodite (Astarte in the Phoenician) for the sake of seafarers everywhere.⁷⁴ The father is named Abdalonymus in both Greek and Phoenician versions, and described explicitly as king of the Sidonians.⁷⁵ His humble position as a gardener is attested in all versions of the story, and was clearly emphasized in the common source. It has often been pointed out that the story is reminiscent of a consistent tradition in the Near East in which gardeners rise to kings. Sargon I claimed to have been reared by Akki, the drawer of water,⁷⁶ and in the second millennium the “substitute king” Enlil-bani was a gardener who was elevated to royal status when the king for whom he substituted himself died.⁷⁷ We have evidence that these stories entered Greek literature during the Hellenistic period,⁷⁸ but there is no need to invoke such remote and elaborate myth making. Abdalonymus probably was a gardener. Whether he was as impoverished as the story depicts him is another matter. What is amply attested in the Achaemenid period is the importance of royal gardens, where a staggering variety of flora was cultivated, sometimes in very hostile conditions. The officials in charge of such *paradeisoi* could be important individuals in their own right; the Book of Nehemiah (2.8)

73. Curt. 4.1.16, 26; Just. 11.10.8–9.

74. See the articles by Kantzia 1980 and Sznycer 1980. The Greek text (*SEG* 36.758; cf. *BCH* 111 [1987] 568, 570) reads: [Αφρ]οδίτῃ ἰδρύσατο / . . . τιμος Ἀβδαλωνύμου / [Σιδ]ῶνος βασιλέως / [ὕπ]ερ τῶν πλεόντων. The Phoenician text (transcribed and translated by Sznycer 1980: 29) is slightly longer but more illegible; frustratingly it does not preserve the name of the dedicant, but confirms that he is “son of king Abdalanim, king of the Sidonians.”

75. This torpedoed the theory that Abdalonymus took on the Greek name Apollodorus and his son was the Philocles son of Apollodorus who is attested as King of Sidon under Ptolemy in the years following 286 (Merker 1970: 143; Atkinson 1980: 281).

76. Kuhrt 1995: 48–49. Cf. Lewis 1980.

77. Grayson 1975: Chron. 20. A 31–39, p. 155

78. According to Bion and Alexander Polyhistor (*FGrHist* 89 F 1; 273 F 81) a gardener named Beletaras became king of Assyria after the line of Semiramis ended. If Jacoby is correct (*FGrHist* iiiia [Kommentar] 289), the story was transmitted by the Hellenized Babylonian priest, Berossus.

introduces us to an Asaph, the administrator of a royal *paradeisos* in Syria, who is instructed by King Artaxerxes I to supply timber for the temple at Jerusalem.⁷⁹ It is possible that Abdalonymus was the supervisor of the royal *paradeisos* in Sidon which had been desolated in the Sidonian revolt against Persia over a decade before.⁸⁰ He might also have followed the Persian custom of working in the cultivated areas with his own hands, just as the Younger Cyrus had done each day in his *paradeisos*.⁸¹ In that case he was a relatively high placed functionary, in Persian service but still retaining popularity in Sidon. The Greek informants of Cleitarchus perhaps downgraded him to a suburban gardener so that the contrast between his former state and his elevation to the kingship would be all the more striking. However that may be, Abdalonymus' poverty is the common theme in the tradition and was certainly a prominent feature of the story in the common source.

Curtius' is the most discursive of the accounts of the rise of Abdalonymus, and his narrative closely parallels the facts as they are given in other sources. He notes that the previous king Straton had held power thanks to support from Darius and only surrendered to Alexander under pressure from the populace.⁸² That corresponds with Arrian's brief note (2.15.6) that Alexander was invited into Sidon at the request of the Sidonians themselves. It also agrees with Diodorus' statement that Straton was deposed because of his friendship with Darius, but Diodorus mistakenly sets the episode in Tyre, while Curtius (and Justin) have the right location. Curtius also adds unique and credible detail about Alexander's benefactions to Abdalonymus, including the donation of territories adjacent to Sidon. This again is only too likely, given Alexander's forthcoming campaign against Sidon's ancestral enemy Tyre, and there is explicit evidence (albeit nearly two centuries earlier) of Sidon's territorial claims. This concerns the enclave south of Tyre between Joppa and Dor, which the ruler of Sidon, Eshmunazar II, boasts that he received as the gift of the King of Kings.⁸³ Sidon presumably lost this territory after her revolt, and probably other lands too. The donation recorded

79. Cf. Briant 1996: 507–508, drawing the parallel with Darius' famous letter to Gadates (ML 12), who is praised for his diligence in transplanting plants from Mesopotamia into Asia Minor and may well have been the superintendent of one or more royal *paradeisoi*. Darius famously terms Gadates his "slave" (δοῦλος), and if Abdalonymus was similarly described, it might have reinforced the Greek observers' impression of his humble, dependent status. Compare the descriptions of Beletaras (above, n. 78): he was a gardener (φυτουργός) and caretaker and superintendent (μελεθωνός καὶ ἐπιστάτης) of the gardens in the royal palaces.

80. Diod. 16.41.5. On the background see Bondi 1974; Briant 1996: 877, 1075.

81. Xen. *Oec.* 4.21–24 with Pomeroy 1994 ad loc. Compare Plutarch's story (*Artox.* 25.1–2) that Artaxerxes II personally took an axe and felled the tallest tree in a desert *paradeisos* when his troops were reluctant to touch the timber.

82. Curt. 4.1.16: magis popularium quam sua sponte. The pressure may genuinely have come from popular leaders (cf. Bondi 1974: 159); Curtius need not be imposing Roman terminology for its own sake.

83. Gibson 1982: 105–14, no. 28, line 19; Bondi 1974: 154–56; Kelly 1987; Lemaire 1990: 56–59; Briant 1996: 506.

by Curtius concerns the region close to the city,⁸⁴ and may be the first stage of the city's recovery from the disaster of the 340s. Within this framework of fact Curtius follows what seems the standard narrative. Alexander deposes Straton and delegates the choice of the new ruler to Hephaestion. Hephaestion is first inclined to bestow the kingship on one of his aristocratic hosts, but they declare that only a scion of the royal line is acceptable, and propose the virtuous but impoverished Abdalonymus who ekes out a living as a gardener. Hephaestion's hosts then approach Abdalonymus, who is appropriately at work gardening, and confer the royal robes on him. He is subsequently interviewed by Alexander, who confirms him as king and adds material gifts.

Other sources are much briefer. Justin correctly locates the episode at Sidon and adds that Abdalonymus worked at watering gardens, but he seems unaware of Abdalonymus' royal lineage: men of the nobility were passed over, so that the appointment would not seem due to birth. Plutarch too mentions Abdalonymus' obscurity and says nothing of his connections with the royal house. It is Diodorus who gives the most expansive version outside Curtius, and he follows Curtius closely. Hephaestion nominates one of his guest friends, but he is not one of a family group as it appears is the case in Curtius. That is hardly serious; Curtius could be emphasizing the freedom of choice—Hephaestion allows the family which entertained him to select the king from its number, whereas Diodorus simplifies the process, implying that a specific king had actually been selected by Hephaestion. Otherwise the narrative follows Curtius. There is the insistence on royal descent, the nomination of Abdalonymus, the conferment of the royal robes while Abdalonymus is at work. Again there is a minor variation of detail: in Diodorus (and Plutarch) Abdalonymus is drawing water, while in Curtius he is weeding. Once more it is likely that the original source accommodated both. Abdalonymus' normal function was to draw water (crucial for a garden in the Levant), but on this occasion he was occupied in the equally lowly task of weeding.⁸⁵ Finally Diodorus mentions the proclamation in the agora and general enthusiasm. Curtius has the new king conducted straight to the palace, and adds that there was opposition among the nobility, who complained to Alexander's friends. Once more we should consider the wider picture of the common source. Cleitarchus may well have mentioned a salutation by the populace on the way to the palace and gone on to mention the subsequent objections by the nobility which Alexander overruled. Diodorus at any rate is reaching the end of his narrative and, as he often does, contracts his exposition in a misleading way. What is important is the overall consistency; the narrative sequence of the common source is followed closely with a slightly different selection of detail.

84. Curt. 4.1.26: *regionem quoque urbi adpositam dicioni eius adiecit*. Cf. Lemaire 1990: 59: "À l'arrivée d'Alexandre, Sidon ne semble plus contrôler qu'un territoire limité."

85. This was allegedly part of the education of boys of the Persian nobility, to tend plants and cut roots (Strabo 15.3.18 [734]: *φυτουργεῖν καὶ ῥιζοτομεῖν*).

However, when it comes to the overall interpretation there is a striking difference. For Diodorus the story is important because it is a notable example of *peripeteia* which he cannot bear to pass over. There is the same emphasis in Plutarch. The story is an instance of the vagaries of fortune. Interestingly Plutarch knows little of the background, only the basic rags to kingship scenario, and he wrongly relates it to the royal house of Cypriot Paphos. It was a standard illustration of the wheel of fortune, and Plutarch adduces it automatically when he raises the theme of kings who owe their kingship to chance. Curtius does mention Abdalonymus' stupefaction and the general surprise at his elevation, but it is not the dominant theme. Instead he centers on the two examples of moderation in the face of empowerment. First Hephaestion's hosts turn down the offer of kingship, to be commended by Hephaestion himself as a living example of renunciation ("how much greater a thing it is to spurn kingship than accept it").⁸⁶ The same sentiment occurs in Abdalonymus' interview with Alexander. The new king almost regrets his former poverty, when he had nothing but lacked nothing. Now he is less certain that he can exercise regal power with the same equanimity. This sentiment may already have been expressed by Cleitarchus, but Curtius emphasizes it in his three ventures into direct speech. Hephaestion praises his hosts for their "*gran rifiuto*"; the hosts themselves warn Abdalonymus to retain the *continentia* he has learned in poverty; and finally Abdalonymus himself expounds the virtues of poverty. Curtius underlines the message that kingship is not to be pursued at all cost, and hardship and rigor might be the best qualification for holders of supreme power—a message that might be music to the ears of an emperor who, like Vespasian, had experienced comparative deprivation before his elevation. Like Livy, Curtius has taken a theme from his source and developed it into a motif that allows him to point a moral and craft short, sharp pieces of rhetoric.⁸⁷ It has been argued that there is Cynic thought underlying the passage, which may derive ultimately from Onesicritus,⁸⁸ but the sentiments are common in Latin rhetoric. One need only refer to Valerius Maximus' section *De abstinentia et continentia*, which gives a series of examples of the virtuous rejection of the lures of sex and money by holders of high office, and prefaces the list with an authorial observation that the eternity of any regime depends on those in power restraining their tendencies toward sexual desire and avarice by *consilium* and *ratio*.⁸⁹

86. One calls to mind Velleius' commendation of Tiberius (2.124.2: *paene diutius recusare principatum quam ut occuparent eum alii armis pugnauerant*). Readers of the early second century might recall the epitaph of Verginius Rufus—*imperium adseruit non sibi sed patriae* (Pliny *Ep.* 6.10.4; 9.19.1).

87. Elizabeth Baynham has drawn my attention to 3.12.18–22: Curtius praises Alexander for his *continentia* with respect to the Persian royal ladies, but adds that he failed to live up to his promise. Abdalonymus provides a parallel model of virtue—but the preceding critique of Alexander instills a hint of doubt that he will fulfil his proud professions.

88. Schachermeier 1973: 214; Brown 1949: 49; Atkinson 1980: 283; Prandi 1996: 103.

89. Val. Max. 4.3 *praef.* The examples include Scipio's chivalrous behavior to a Celtiberian lady (4.3.1: on this theme compare Livy 30.16.5–6); the scrupulous behavior of the elder and younger

In this episode Curtius can be seen in close dialogue with his source, and the same is the case elsewhere. Even the long and rhetorical direct speeches owe much to the existing tradition, which gave him a core on which to operate. As we have seen, he claims to be following the account of his sources, and, as has often been noted, the long speech he puts in the mouth of Hermolaus follows closely the list of themes that Arrian digests from his subsidiary tradition.⁹⁰ I might also mention the short speech in Book 10 where Alexander addresses the Persians at Opis (through an interpreter, Curtius is careful to note).⁹¹ Here Curtius' narrative runs parallel to that of Justin, who is unusually expansive in dealing with events at Opis and gives a paraphrase (in Trojan indirect speech) of Alexander's address to the Persians.⁹² The same themes are developed in direct speech by Curtius. Little is added,⁹³ and at first the Roman color is relatively imperceptible; at least there is nothing that is incompatible with the sentiments in Justin. The speech builds up to a climax which allows Curtius to express his rhetorical mastery. "*Inveteravi peregrinam novitatem*," declares Alexander in the terms of Roman ideology,⁹⁴ familiar from Cicero's *Pro Sulla* and much else. For Alexander the Persians are now on the same level as his Macedonians, the nobility, as it were, of the world; but he treats them as though they were born to empire. They are new to his ranks but he has made it seem that they are long established. The following clause reinforces the message, "you are both my citizens and soldiers." Again it is Roman terminology, but it is hard to see how else Curtius could express Macedonian nationality; Diodorus, it should be noted, refers to Macedonian troops as *πολιῖται*, the Greek equivalent of *cives*.⁹⁵ The thought is straightforward, corresponding to the digest of Cleitarchus that we find in Justin, but it is presented as the climax of a rhetorical display piece.

A MODERN PARALLEL: DROYSEN AND KRÜGER AT LOGGERHEADS

Curtius cannot easily be convicted of deliberate fiction. Like Livy he works closely with the subject matter provided by his sources. What differs is the

Cato (4.3.2, 11), and the frugal virtue of Fabricius Luscinus, who is praised in terms reminiscent of Abdalonymus (4.3.7: *locupletem illum faciebat non multa possidere sed modica desiderare*).

90. Curt. 8.7.1–15; cf. Arr. 4.14.2–3 with Rutz 1986: 2349; Bosworth 1995: 98–99; Baynham 1998: 50–52 (with further material on Curtius' use of speeches).

91. Curt. 10.3.6–14. The speech is incomplete, thanks to a lacuna in the text.

92. Just. 12.12.1–3. Yardley and Heckel 1997: 274–75 point out some of the similarities.

93. The principal addition is Alexander's original mistaken belief that the Persians were slaves to luxury (Curt. 10.3.9). This, however, is a natural pendant to Alexander's preceding observation that he was impressed by the Persians' *invicta pietas* to their kings; and here he patently echoes Justin (12.12.2: *laudat perpetuam illorum tum in se tum in pristinos reges fidem*).

94. Curt. 10.3.13; cf. Cic. *Pro Sulla* 24: *Ac si tibi nos peregrini videmur, quorum iam et nomen et honos inveteravit et urbi huic et hominum famae ac sermonibus, quam tibi illos competitores tuos peregrinos videri necesse erit?*

95. Diod. 18.12.2: *ἐσπάνιζε γὰρ ἡ Μακεδονία στρατιωτῶν πολιτικῶν*. Cf. 19.106.2; 20.10.5; 29.6.1 (citizen troops, as opposed to mercenaries, at Carthage).

interpretation of events. He gives the material a new spin, bringing to the foreground details which were less prominent in the sources, and he imparts his own counterpoint of rhetoric. The exemplary, moral value of the historical episodes is stressed, and it is at this interpretative level that the distortion occurs. But such interpretation is a necessity if history is not to be reduced to a simple regurgitation of source material, and historians of any age are rarely as objective as they would have their readers believe. The early nineteenth century is on the surface a period of transition. The older moralizing interpretation of history clashed with the new demands of positivism to represent the “facts” with strict accuracy. This was the period in which the young Leopold von Ranke was criticized by Heinrich Leo for embroidering the sources he used for his first major work, his *Histories of the Latin and German Peoples*. The text contained things quite different from the material in the citations,⁹⁶ and on every page one found a distorted (*verdrehtes*), meaningless, or careless reference. Inaccuracy was proven, but at the same time von Ranke went beyond the bare statements of his sources and subjected them to his own interpretation, for all the world like a secondary historian of antiquity.

Even more pertinent for our purposes is a history of Alexander the Great that was published five years later, in 1833, by Johann Gustav Droysen. This was the work that was to be the foundation of his monumental *Geschichte des Hellenismus*.⁹⁷ Written before the advent of serious archaeology, it was necessarily based on the extant literary sources, and Droysen produced what was largely a collage, in which Arrian predominated. The historical narrative comes close to a transcription, and Droysen, like the Alexander historians of antiquity, rarely referred to his sources directly. There are very few citations, and many of them are inaccurate. But, even so, the selection of sources was of prime importance. For Droysen, who had an ardent passion for the Macedonian conqueror, Arrian was as important to him as Ptolemy had been for Arrian. Arrian was intent on displaying Alexander’s achievements in the best of lights and chose the authors who best served that purpose. Droysen accordingly needed to do little more than paraphrase Arrian, interspersing material from other sources and adding his own youthful rhetoric, which intensified the favorable picture of Alexander that he found ready-made in Arrian. What emerged was later described as a literary *proskynesis*.

The book received a mixed reception. Droysen had the misfortune to be attacked by the immensely learned Hellenist Karl Wilhelm Krüger, one of the most powerful and venomous reviewers of his day.⁹⁸ Krüger was the polar opposite of

96. See the interesting discussion, with documentation, by Grafton 1997: 65–67.

97. *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* (Berlin, 1833). In 1931 it was reprinted in Leipzig with an introduction by Helmut Berve. I refer to the work by the pagination of this later edition.

98. First published in *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik* 15 (1835) 172–97; reprinted in Krüger 1851. I refer to the review in this more accessible version.

Droysen, embittered by failure and frustration. In 1835, when he published his review, he was, as he later admitted, at the nadir of his life. As a young man he had fought in the *Freiheitskrieg*, but despite official guarantees he was not given preference in university appointments, in large part because of his radical political opinions and his difficult personality. From 1821 he served in a number of teaching positions in the Prussian Gymnasia, ending with a ten-year stint in Berlin. He was to resign in 1838 after predictable disagreements with his colleagues.⁹⁹ Misery at work was exacerbated by a personal tragedy: he lost his wife and three children to cholera in 1831.¹⁰⁰ By contrast Droysen must have seemed blessed by fortune. The son of Blücher's chaplain, he was able to attend the University of Berlin thanks to a fund established by his father's friends. He became the favorite pupil of the great August Böckh and was an intimate of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn.¹⁰¹ His huge history of Alexander, produced at the tender age of twenty-five, was an unashamed panegyric of the conqueror, whom he saw as the embodiment of heroic excellence, beyond any critique based on conventional morality. That could only be anathema to an old campaigner in the Napoleonic Wars. But Krüger's attack is based on Droysen's use of the sources: they are misrepresented through ignorance and even distorted by malice. His conclusion is "to consider everything that the author asserts as dubious until it is confirmed elsewhere by independent research."¹⁰² That is exactly what McKechnie says of Curtius, and the verdict is equally ungrounded.

Much of the supposed ignorance is the product of haste. Droysen had written at breakneck speed, producing a volume of 600 pages in hardly more than a year. He must have reproduced his source material in a very impressionistic way, conveying its general content without achieving total accuracy. Krüger, who published a critical edition of Arrian in the year of his review, was ideally equipped to detect the most recondite errors, which he does in abundance. Some are genuine howlers. The cream of his examples, and historically the most serious error, is the treatment of the moving passage in Arrian (5.17.7) where Porus' elephants give up the fight and retire squealing. Droysen misinterpreted the elephants' squeal (*συρτηγμός*) as a trumpet blast, and failed to see that the subject of the sentence

99. Friction seems to have been inevitable in Krüger's dealings with colleagues. He quarreled with his publishers and eventually founded a press dedicated to the publication of his own works, every single book bearing his personal signature.

100. For biographical data I have used the sympathetic article by Halm in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig, 1883) xvii.232–34.

101. On Droysen's early life see the lengthy article by O. Hintze in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, *Nachträge bis 1899* (Leipzig, 1904) xlviii, esp. 82–93; Meineke 1929 esp. 253–65; and Berve's Introduction to Droysen's history of Alexander (Droysen 1931: vii–xxxiv). There is a short appreciation of Droysen's Alexander by the young Arnaldo Momigliano (Momigliano 1955), and a richly documented study by Gerhard Wirth (Wirth 1993: 15–25) addressing the question why Droysen abruptly took leave of Hellenistic history only a decade after the publication of his monograph on Alexander.

102. Krüger 1851: 31: "Alles was der Verf. behauptet so lange bis er es anderweitig durch Nachsuchen oder Nachforschen bestätigt gefunden hat für zweifelhaft zu halten."

was the elephants. Accordingly at the height of the battle he has Alexander give a trumpet signal, and call off his troops. It is not the Indian elephants that retreat but the Macedonian phalanx; and it leaves the field while the battle is in full fury.¹⁰³ So much for the glorious victory of the Hydaspes. This is incompetent, to be sure, and it makes nonsense of the battle, but it is a misunderstanding, not a deliberate distortion, and such gross errors (*pace* Krüger) are relatively rare.¹⁰⁴ They are reminiscent of—and comparable to—Livy's rendering of Polybius with its notorious misunderstandings of the Greek.

Distortion of source material emerges more clearly (on both sides) when Krüger attacks Droysen for his characterization of Callisthenes, Alexander's first historian and the outspoken opponent of *proskynesis*. What Droysen had produced was more a caricature. He took violent exception to Callisthenes' resistance and crafted several pages of invective (320–26) that amount to character assassination. Krüger deals with it witheringly phrase by phrase. What Droysen had done was to extract the very unfavorable verdict which he found in Arrian and intensify it with material added from other sources. Krüger was able to discredit much of the detail and track down its origins. The description (320) of Callisthenes as a man of self-indulgent corpulence could only be an unscrupulous retrojection of Chares' allegation that he became dropsical after seven months in captivity. His final pathological state is turned into a permanent characteristic.¹⁰⁵ But Krüger went much further than simply identifying error. Callisthenes was as much a symbolic figure for him as he was for Droysen. Where the younger scholar saw only insubordination in his opposition to *proskynesis*, Krüger viewed Callisthenes' opposition as brave and salutary, resistance to an increasingly

103. Droysen 1931: 360: "dann ertönte die makedonische Trompete durch das Feld, und langsam zogen sich die Makedonier aus dem Gefecht zurück." The absurd misunderstanding moves Krüger (1851: 7) to his heaviest sarcasm: the Macedonians are admittedly masculine, but they are also beings and can be passed off as neuter; *συριγμός* does not mean *σαλπίζειν*, but it indicates sound; *ἐπὶ πόδα* does not mean "slowly," but slowness is intrinsic to the scene—Droysen has transferred Arrian's description of Porus' elephants to the Macedonians. This leads directly to the damning verdict: "Es dürfte schwer sein in der deutschen Literatur ein historisches Werk aufzufinden das dem Philologen so zahlreiche und so arge Blößen gäbe."

104. Another prime example is the description of the abortive attack on Halicarnassus (Droysen 1931: 131). According to Arrian (1.21.2), the two Macedonians who made a drunken assault on the walls of Halicarnassus killed the enemy troops who came to close quarters and threw missiles at those who kept their distance. For Droysen, however, the troops who kept their distance were not attacked by missiles but "mocked" (*ausgelacht*). It was simple misunderstanding of the term *ἀκροβολίζεσθαι*, and Krüger amuses himself speculating how the error occurred. He observes that the lexicon records a single occurrence of *ἔπεισι ἀκροβολίζεσθαι* in Herodotus (8.64), and a person with Droysen's grasp of Greek might easily infer that *ἀκροβολίζεσθαι* could be used absolutely. "Noch ein Sprung und Hr. D. hat sein ausgelacht."

105. Krüger 1851: 19: "Doch der merkwürdigste Vorwurf kommt jetzt: 'von selbstgefälliger Wohlbeleibtheit.' Rec. sann lange nach woher wohl Hr. D. die seltsame Notiz genommen habe. . . . Endlich sah er sich durch eine Stelle im Plut. Alex. 55 auf die Spur geführt. Dort meldet Chares, Kallisthenes sei, nachdem er sieben Monate lang in Fesseln umher geführt worden, in Indien gestorben *ὑπέρπαχυν γενόμενον καὶ φθειριάσαντα*." On Chares' hostile depiction of Callisthenes see most recently Badian 1981: 49–54; Bosworth 1995: 100.

oppressive autocracy. He lionizes where Droysen demonizes: Callisthenes may be swimming against the current of a new age, but it was an age that deserved to be resisted.

Both scholars, then, develop their view of Callisthenes from the same source material but reach diametrically opposite conclusions. Droysen had depicted him acting out of empty vanity, courting popularity among the young Macedonians and making a show of despising court life. He agreed to offer *proskynesis* but then reneged, and encouraged the Pages in their conspiracy against Alexander (322–23). This, as Krüger implicitly admitted, had some basis in the sources, particularly in Arrian, who thoroughly disapproved of Callisthenes' open opposition. But Droysen omitted the qualifications which are so evident in Arrian. He used Arrian's account of Callisthenes' boasts to Alexander that his participation in divinity rested on what he published in his history rather than the lies Olympias told about his begetting. There is no qualification; Arrian's warning ("if this is truly recorded") is ignored, and Droysen supplements the passage with a reference to the oracles of Ammon and Branchidae that is not in Arrian's text.¹⁰⁶ However, Krüger's critique is equally suspect. He goes beyond Arrian's qualification and argues from his fixed impression of Callisthenes' character. A man of calculating sobriety and honorable bearing could not have uttered anything so inept.¹⁰⁷ However, he might well have said something to the effect that Alexander's fame would not rest upon the stories Olympias told about his rearing but on what true history would report. Such a statement would easily be distorted by court gossip into the form we find in Arrian. In this way a piece of evidence that Arrian presents as an example of thoughtless arrogance becomes an example of Callisthenes' sober moderation and fearless outspokenness.¹⁰⁸

106. Droysen 1931: 320: "noch den Orakeln des Ammon und der Branchiden von Milet, danke es Alexander, dass er als Gott geehrt werde." Here Droysen is superimposing Strabo's report of Callisthenes' description of the visit to Siwah (Strabo 17.1.43 [814] = *FGrHist* 124 F 14a) on the famous passage of Arrian (4.10.1–2) that itemizes the claims Callisthenes allegedly made (ἀπέφαινε) for himself.

107. "Kallisthenes erscheint. . . als ein Mann von berechnender Besonnenheit und würdevoller Haltung: und ein solche Mann hätte ein so unkluge Aeusserung thun können?" Whereas Droysen had taken his characterization from Arrian, Krüger took his from Plutarch (*Alex.* 53.1: διὰ τὸν βίον, εὐταχτον ὄντα καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ αὐτάρκη), as he did the theme of court hostility to Callisthenes (*Alex.* 53.2).

108. Krüger (1851: 21) goes even further when he refers approvingly to Ste. Croix's view that Callisthenes' history was published posthumously with fraudulent additions by courtiers who had an interest in making him contradict himself. That, Krüger asserts, has the highest degree of probability that can be attained in a matter of this kind. In other words the passages on the *proskynesis* of the Pamphylian sea or Alexander's recognition of divine sonship at Gaugamela were inserted simply to discredit Callisthenes' opposition. Krüger (and Ste. Croix) clearly considered the emphasis on divine sonship, which is evident in the preserved fragments of Callisthenes (*FGrHist* 124 F 14, 31, 36), to be inconsistent with his opposition to *proskynesis*. Callisthenes, then, could not have written them. Nothing that Krüger criticizes in Droysen is anything like as wrong-headed as this.

We have two contrasting and irreconcilable pictures of Callisthenes, both anchored in the sources and both projecting their interpretation beyond what the sources state. For Droysen it is a relatively simple exercise. He can build on Arrian's text with its openly expressed outrage at Callisthenes' provocative behavior at the *proskynesis* ceremony—untimely outspokenness and arrogant stupidity.¹⁰⁹ He can sharpen the critique, ignore Arrian's reservations and combine details from different contexts; and what emerges is the vain, self-advertising sophist, who has no hesitation in urging his young acolytes to murder his king and benefactor. Krüger has a more difficult task. He accepts the abruptness and outspokenness, but sees them as desirable qualities, the mark of austere virtue. That involves him in a process of rejection. There was no flattery of Alexander, no discussions of the virtues of tyrannicide; such details stem from hostile court tradition which did everything in its power to discredit Callisthenes. And excessive weight is placed on relatively insignificant details. Callisthenes is attested to have objected to the excessive drinking at Alexander's court, and Plutarch adds that it caused complaints to Alexander: "it is thought that Callisthenes was criticized before Alexander."¹¹⁰ The slight qualification (*δοξεῖ*) in Plutarch is given enormous emphasis; it is not an expression of opinion by Plutarch but an indication of the prevailing view of the sources.¹¹¹ Hence it can be taken as fact that Callisthenes as a man of moderation regularly avoided the bacchanals of Alexander's court and that his attitude alienated the courtiers at large. A rather unlikely mouthpiece, one would have thought, for Macedonian sentiment in the *proskynesis* affair.

Despite Krüger's criticisms he fails to prove that Droysen imposed his own fantasies on the source tradition. What he objects to is the addition of descriptive color, which is to a degree justified by the negative presentation of Arrian. When

109. Arr. 4.12.7: ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαίρῳ τε παρρησίᾳ καὶ ὑπερόγκῳ ἀβελτερίᾳ. For Arrian what he regards as Callisthenes' stupid outspokenness explains and partly justifies the suspicion that he was involved in the Pages' conspiracy. Droysen then takes Arrian's characterization as fact and states as fact (1931: 323) that he incited the pages against Alexander. "So reifte in der Seele des unglücklichen Jünglings der Gedanke der traurigsten Rache."

110. Plut. *Mor.* 623F; cf. 434E; *Alex.* 53.2. Athen. 10.434D attributes the story to Aristobulus (*FGrHist* 139 F 32) and Chares (*FGrHist* 125 F 13), neither friends of Callisthenes, and the anecdote is meant to represent Callisthenes at his most tactless. For Krüger it is more an act of moderation: Callisthenes avoided the excesses of the symposium and that was misinterpreted as moral condemnation on his part ("Der mässige Kallisthenes mied die schwelgerischen Gelage; und was war natürlicher als dass seine Entfernung als bethätigte Missbilligung, als sittenrichterliche Verdammung erschien?"). This neatly omits the nub of the story, Callisthenes' provocative apophthegm (οὐ βούλομαι πῶν ἢ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἢ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δεῖσθαι), which Plutarch insists alienated Alexander. Callisthenes was openly insulting.

111. Krüger 1851: 22: "Wer mag glauben dass der besonnene Plutarch sein *Scheint*, was ganz etwas Anderes besagt als *es scheint mir*, gesetzt haben würde, wenn er die Angabe nicht als herrschende Ansicht, auf Thatsachen gestützt, hätte bezeichnen wollen? Ein Mann wie Kallisthenes, dem Mässigkeit durch Gewohnheit zum Bedürfnis geworden war *musste* sich von den bacchantischen Gelagen Alexanders zurückziehen." My italics represent Krüger's *Sperrdruck*, which almost literally jumps out at the reader.

he describes Callisthenes as “full of mean weaknesses” (320),¹¹² he is concluding a list of faults, each of which has some slight basis in the sources, but he takes his conclusions beyond the strict limits of his evidence. He is not inventing. Droysen was to claim as much in the Preface to the first volume of his *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, which he published in 1836, the year after Krüger’s review. He attacks the tendency of philologists to view historical research as the creation of a mosaic of translated passages from the ancient authors. The historian should use his scholarship as a tool to a higher end, to recognize the thought patterns behind historical developments and subordinate the exposition of detail to the creation of the general picture. One operates as a painter, creating a foreground and a background, and interprets the smallest details from the perspective of the whole. What matters is to grasp and reproduce the leading ideas of the period and to implant them in the minds of one’s readers. Behind this idealism, reminiscent of Ranke’s aspiration to penetrate to the essences of the past by intuitive perception,¹¹³ lies little more than the interpretative subjectivism we have seen at work in Livy. The important thing in Flamininus’ proclamation of liberty was the altruism of the ruling power, and the narrative of the episode is shaped to bring it out to the greatest effect. Droysen did the same with Callisthenes, to make him a misguided, self-important traditionalist.

Forty years later Droysen returned to Callisthenes when he prepared the second edition of his history of Alexander. He corrected every error Krüger had identified so long before, and his portrait of Callisthenes was transformed. The invective totally disappeared, and Droysen responded to every nuance in the sources. Callisthenes’ claims to immortalize Alexander are now based on a careful translation of Arrian, and Arrian’s qualification is duly included (*er soll gesagt haben*). The damning introduction with its indictment for petty vanity is gone. Instead Droysen commends Callisthenes in terms that Krüger himself would have approved: “His elevated culture, his talent for discourse, his measured attitude gave him distinction and influence even in military circles.”¹¹⁴ Now it is Anaxarchus with his doctrine of political absolutism who bears the brunt of Droysen’s critique, as he had of Arrian’s. The grand image of the vainglorious Callisthenes at odds with the spirit of the age has almost totally gone. The only contentious element to remain is the involvement in the Pages’ conspiracy, where Droysen adheres to the version of Ptolemy and Aristobulus, that the conspirators alleged that Callisthenes had encouraged them, without adding that according to Arrian the story was denied by the majority of authorities.¹¹⁵ This is indeed relevant

112. This Krüger took to be the *ne plus ultra* of unscrupulous invention: “Glaubt Hr. D. dass der Geschichtschreiber ohne Scheu seine Träumereien als beglaubigte Wahrheit einschmuggeln dürfe?”

113. For illustrative quotations see Novick 1988: 27–28.

114. Droysen 1877: 88–94; cf. 88 for the characterization of Callisthenes and Anaxarchus and 91 with n. 1 for the careful treatment of the *proskynesis* drama.

115. Droysen 1877: 94 with n. 1 cites the famous letter of Alexander (Plut. *Alex.* 55.6), to which Krüger (1851: 25) had drawn attention, with its explicit statement that nobody was incriminated

to the larger picture, the encomiastic portrait of Alexander, who is exculpated from any suggestion of vindictiveness towards his historian and former friend. However, the characterization of Callisthenes is now a balanced and accurate representation of the extant sources. It is a mosaic, not an artistically contrived picture, and in this case what has emerged is curiously monotone. The negative spin has gone and in its absence Callisthenes is diminished. He has lost the life that Droysen's prejudice instilled in him.¹¹⁶

In its revised form Droysen's exposition has, one might say, lost its color. We have a digest of the ancient sources, predominantly Arrian and Plutarch, and what emerges is an edited pastiche. The material, the hard core, is reproduced selectively, but there is no wider message superimposed. If we had none of the original material, we would not be misled in relation to its content. In its overall effect Droysen's revised account of Callisthenes is not far from the ideal expressed in Arrian's preface. The narrative of the ancient sources is reproduced accurately but selectively. Droysen, like Arrian, picks out the material which he believes does best justice to what he sees as the achievements of Alexander, and he decides between alternative versions (often without citing them explicitly) on the basis of consistency and credibility. What we do not find in this later version is the tendentious over-interpretation that prevails in Droysen's first edition. If the ancient sources were lost and that first exposition alone survived, we would have no means of sifting the original source content from his superimposed authorial statements. Here Krüger takes on the role of Polybius, pointing out factual errors but substituting his own subjective manipulation of the common source material. Once more, if Droysen's work had not survived, we would have little idea of the quality of his work from Krüger's review. We would automatically conclude that he was ignorant, careless, and perversely opinionated—exactly the impression Polybius gives of Timaeus. There would not be the documentary framework to test the critique, and Krüger's own over-interpretation of the source tradition on Callisthenes would in all probability escape challenge.

Does this mean that the derivative histories of antiquity, the works of Livy, Diodorus, Dionysius, and Curtius (to give a very eclectic group!), are fundamentally unusable? Does the rhetorical spin that they clearly give their sources so pollute the narrative that it cannot safely be used as factual material? That would be unduly pessimistic. It is true that the interpretation governs the selection and presentation of material, but it is also true that historians tended to keep scrupulously to the factual narrative of their sources. At the most simple level, if Livy

by the pages (see most recently Badian 2000: 70–72); but he insists that it is outweighed by the explicit statements of Ptolemy and Aristobulus (Arr. 4.14.1). “Aber Aristoboulos und Ptolemaios bezeugen daß sie ausgesagt hätten, von Kallisthenes zu dem Wagniß ermuthigt (ἐπιθραλι) zu sein.”

116. In his Introduction to the reprint of the first edition (Droysen 1931: xxxi–xxxiii) Berve regrets this more moderate, balanced exposition and doubts whether the later version is in fact an improvement. On the strikingly different intellectual atmosphere of the two editions see the observations of Momigliano 1955: 269–72.

states that the herald initiated proceedings at the Isthmus with a trumpet call, we can assume that a similar statement appeared in his source,¹¹⁷ and we can be equally sure that the proclamation of freedom was equally faithful to his original. We can also believe that his source stressed the overwhelming outburst of joy at the proclamation. We can even reassure ourselves that his source represents Flamininus' audience admiring the altruism of Rome.¹¹⁸ It is the wording that is subtly altered to make the virtue of Rome the climax of the admiration and not the consistency of fortune. But even here there is nothing that does not have some counterpart in Polybius.

My argument in this paper is deliberately restricted to the question of rhetorical fiction and directed to historians of the second and later generations. My conclusion is that, when writing up a period already blessed with historical narratives, ancient writers did not add bogus "facts" out of their imagination. The nature of the game was to operate with the material at one's disposal, identifying and criticizing falsehood and bias, combining details from several sources into a composite picture not paralleled in any single source, but not adding invention of one's own. That was unnecessary if the primary material was skillfully manipulated. The techniques and ideals were different from those of the *archegetai*, the contemporary historians who produced the first narratives of their age. We can accept that historians did record the events of their own time with partisan zeal and malice, and could include the most sensational exaggerations which were then accepted by subsequent historians; but we can sheet home those distortions to the originators of the tradition. When, for instance, Diodorus asserts that the invincible Silver Shields, the crack troops of the age of the Successors, were to a man no less than sixty years old, we can be sure (and Plutarch confirms it) that the statement, for all its *prima facie* implausibility, comes from his source, the contemporary Hieronymus of Cardia.¹¹⁹ I am not suggesting that "secondary" historians were copyists. Selection was a part of the creative process. When faced with a multiplicity of sources, a historian would opt for the treatment most conducive to exemplary moralizing, and the same episode could be shaped to convey very different messages. The ancient source tradition on Alexander's marriage to Roxane, for instance, is reasonably consistent in its factual outline and contextual framework, but the incident can be represented negatively as Alexander succumbing to barbarian *mores* or positively as Alexander virtuously waiving

117. Polyb. 18.46.4: προελθὼν ὁ κήρυξ καὶ κατασιωπησάμενος τὰ πλῆθη διὰ τοῦ σαλπικτοῦ. Livy 33.32.4: praeco cum tubicine, ut mos est, in mediam aream . . . processit et tuba silentio facto. Livy's expression is more solemn and the picture more colorful, but every facet of Polybius is reproduced.

118. Polyb. 18.46.14. He begins by stressing the general wonder that the Romans were prepared to undergo every expense and peril for the freedom of the Greeks. This is a theme that Livy echoes almost verbatim, and he develops it, ignoring Polybius' second theme, the favor of fortune.

119. Diod. 19.41.2 (cf. 30.6). Plut. *Eum.* 16.7 gives exactly the same information in the same context, and confirms that it is derived from the common source, Hieronymus (J. Hornblower 1981: 192–93).

the rights of the conqueror.¹²⁰ In both cases the interpretation is clear and easily separable, and, it can be argued, the two views are not mutually exclusive and may themselves go back to opinion contemporaneous with Alexander. This is history as re-interpretation. Reportage and opinion are selected, adapted, and woven together in a new blend with a different emphasis. It is modification certainly, at times transformation: it is not independent, systematic, and self-conscious fiction.

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120. On this see Bosworth 1995: 130–32.

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