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The Best of the Macedonians:

Alexander as Achilles in Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Classics

by

Justin Grant Vorhis

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Best of the Macedonians:

Alexander as Achilles in Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch

by

Justin Grant Vorhis

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Kathryn Anne Morgan, Chair

This dissertation concerns the connection between Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), the famous Macedonian king, and Achilles, the preeminent Greek hero of the Trojan War. As scholars have long recognized, Alexander's connection to Achilles represents both a historical and a literary phenomenon: Alexander not only portrayed himself as a second Achilles, but was also portrayed as such by those who wrote about him. While scholars have traditionally concentrated on the connection's historical dimension, I concentrate in this study on its literary dimension (the Achilles motif), taking Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch, the three extant Alexander historians with the most developed literary agendas, as the focus of my study. With each historian, I ask two fundamental questions: First, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in the specific passages of each historian's work in which it appears? Second, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in each historian's work overall?

This dissertation consists of three chapters, the first on Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* (*Histories of Alexander the Great*), the second on Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, and the third on Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander*. In Chapter 1, I argue that Curtius uses the Achilles motif to highlight Alexander's moral decline over the course of the work, his transformation, in effect, from the good *rex* ("king") of the first pentad to the corrupt *tyrannus* ("tyrant") of the second. In Chapter 2, I contend that Plutarch employs the Achilles motif, by and large, to characterize Alexander as a "spirited" man (θυμοειδής), as a man of heroism and ambition, but also passion and emotion. In Chapter 3, I argue that Arrian deploys the Achilles motif as a means of reinforcing his complex portrait of Alexander, a portrait simultaneously encomiastic and Stoic. Based on these three chapters, I draw two main conclusions: first, that the Achilles motif represents a remarkably flexible literary device; and second, that the extant Alexander historians should, in accordance with recent scholarship, be viewed not as mere compilers of the lost Alexander historians, but as sophisticated artists in their own right.

The dissertation of Justin Grant Vorhis is approved.

Robert A. Gurval

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University of California, Los Angeles

DEDICATION

For my dad,

who sparked my passion for Alexander all those years ago

For my mom,

who provided me the love and support with which to pursue this passion

and

For Celsiana,

who has been my best friend and truest partner through the ordeal of graduate school,

the Achilles to my Patroclus, the Alexander to my Hephaestion

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Primary Sources¹

Ael.		Aelian
	<i>V.H.</i>	<i>Historical Miscellany</i>
Aeschin.		Aeschines
	<i>In Ctes.</i>	<i>Against Ctesiphon</i>
	<i>In Tim.</i>	<i>Against Timarchus</i>
App.		Appian
	<i>B.Civ.</i>	<i>Civil Wars</i>
Arr.		Arrian
	<i>Anab.</i>	<i>Anabasis of Alexander</i>
	<i>Ind.</i>	<i>Indica</i>
Ath.		Athenaeus
Cic.		Cicero
	<i>Pro Arch.</i>	<i>Pro Archia</i>
Curt.		Curtius
Dio Cass.		Dio Cassius
Dio Chrys.		Dio Chrysostom
	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
Diod.		Diodorus Siculus
Dion. Hal.		Dionysius of Halicarnassus
	<i>Ant. Rom.</i>	<i>Roman Antiquities</i>
	<i>Comp.</i>	<i>On the Arrangement of Words</i>
Eur.		Euripides
	<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Andromache</i>
	<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Trojan Women</i>
	<i>Fg. Sabb.</i>	<i>Fragmentum Sabbaiticum</i>
Harp.		Harpocration
Hdt.		Herodotus
Hom.		Homer
	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
Hor.		Horace
	<i>Ars P.</i>	<i>Ars poetica</i>
	<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i>
	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Isoc.		Isocrates
	<i>Phil.</i>	<i>To Philip</i>
	<i>It. Alex.</i>	<i>Itinerarium Alexandri</i>
Joseph.		Josephus
	<i>A.J.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>

¹ With Greek works, I give abbreviations in Latin, but titles in English, unless the work is known primarily by its Latin title (e.g., *Indica*). With Latin works, I give both abbreviations and titles in Latin, except in the case of the *Metz Epitome*.

Jul. Val.	Julius Valerius
Just.	Justin
Long.	Longinus
<i>Subl.</i>	<i>On the Sublime</i>
M.E.	<i>Metz Epitome</i>
Ov.	Ovid
<i>Am.</i>	<i>Amores</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Heroides</i>
Pind.	Pindar
<i>Nem.</i>	<i>Nemean Odes</i>
Plat.	Plato
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
Plut.	Plutarch
<i>Ad princ. inerud.</i>	<i>To an Uneducated Ruler</i>
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Life of Alexander</i>
<i>Ap. reg.</i>	<i>Sayings of Kings and Commanders</i>
<i>Caes.</i>	<i>Life of Caesar</i>
<i>Cim.</i>	<i>Life of Cimon</i>
<i>Cons. ad uxor.</i>	<i>Consolation to His Wife</i>
<i>De Alex. fort.</i>	<i>On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander</i>
<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Life of Demosthenes</i>
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
<i>Pel.</i>	<i>Life of Pelopidas</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Life of Pericles</i>
<i>Quaest. conv.</i>	<i>Table Talk</i>
<i>Quomodo adul.</i>	<i>How a Young Man Should Listen to Poetry</i>
<i>Quomodo adult.</i>	<i>How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Life of Romulus</i>
Polyb.	Polybius
Porphyr.	Pomponius Porphyrio
<i>In Hor. Ars P.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Q. Horatium Flaccum, Artem poeticam</i>
Prop.	Propertius
Ps.-Call.	Pseudo-Callisthenes
Sen. Mai.	Seneca the Elder
<i>Suas.</i>	<i>Suasoriae</i>
Sen. Min.	Seneca the Younger
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troades</i>
Simon.	Simonides
Strab.	Strabo
Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Div. Iul.</i>	<i>Divus Iulius</i>
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus
Verg.	Vergil
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
Xen.	Xenophon

Hell.

Hellenica

Secondary Sources

AC	<i>L'Antiquité classique</i>
AClass	<i>Acta Classica: Proceedings of the Classical Association of South Africa</i>
AHB	<i>The Ancient History Bulletin</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology: The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i>
AncW	<i>The Ancient World: A Scholarly Journal for the Study of Antiquity</i>
ANRW	H. Temporini and W. Haase, eds. 1972- . <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Berlin: De Gruyter.
ArchN	<i>Archaeological News</i>
Athenaeum	<i>Athenaeum: Studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'antichità</i>
AUMLA	<i>AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association</i>
BSL	<i>Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris</i>
Chiron	<i>Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology: A Journal Dedicated to Research in Classical Antiquity</i>
CQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
FgrH	F. Jacoby, ed. 1923-1958. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin: Weidmann (vols. 1-2); Leiden: Brill (vol. 3).
Gnomon	<i>Gnomon: Kritische Zeitschrift für die gesamte klassische Altertumswissenschaft</i>
G&R	<i>Greece & Rome</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
Hermes	<i>Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie</i>
Historia	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte</i>
Histos	<i>Histos: The On-line Journal of Ancient Historiography</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
JAAC	<i>The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>
JDAI	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
JHS	<i>The Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
Latomus	<i>Latomus: Revue d'études latines</i>
LEC	<i>Les Études classiques</i>
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, eds. 1940. <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9 th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
OLD	P. G. W. Glare, ed. 1982. <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<i>PACA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the African Classical Associations</i>
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>Philologus</i>	<i>Philologus: Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix</i>
<i>RE</i>	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus, and K. Ziegler, eds. 1894-1980. <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart: Metzler.
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>RFC</i>	<i>Rivista di filologia classica</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
<i>RSA</i>	<i>Rivista storica dell'antichità</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>Tekmeria</i>	<i>Tekmeria: Contributions to the History of the Greek and Roman World</i>
<i>TLG</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
<i>WJA</i>	<i>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie, Patristik, und lateinische Tradition</i>

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I would also like to thank my aunt and godmother, Annie Breitenbucher, for her tremendous help with the final formatting of the dissertation.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Justin Vorhis received a B.A. in Classics from The Ohio State University in 2010, graduating *summa cum laude* with research distinction in Classics. Following his graduation from OSU, Justin entered the Classics Ph.D. program at UCLA, where he planned to focus on Homer and epic poetry. Half way through the program, however, Justin fell back under the spell of Alexander the Great, the origin of his interest in Classics, and consequently resolved to write a dissertation that combined these two interests. While Justin has been grateful for the opportunity to study Alexander and Homer in such depth, he has become aware, particularly in the final years of graduate school, that it is not research, but teaching, that truly speaks to him. Thus, after completing his Ph.D. in 2017, Justin intends to move home to Minneapolis and look for Latin teaching positions at the high school level.

INTRODUCTION

*In the life of Alexander myth becomes history only to become myth again...*¹

In the spring of 334 B.C., at the start of the campaign that would change the face of the ancient world, Alexander III of Macedon, the future Alexander the Great, conducted a pilgrimage to the fabled city of Troy. While taking in the hallowed sites he had read and heard of for so long, the Macedonian king, together with a select group of companions, made a special visit to the tomb of Achilles.² There, as the sources agree, the best of the Macedonians paid tribute to the best of the Achaeans. According to some, this tribute took the simple form of sacrifices to the hero;³ according to others, however, the tribute was more complex in nature.⁴ Beyond sacrificing to the hero, Alexander, on several accounts, performed a series of actions suggestive not only of his respect for, but of his identification with, Achilles, from crowning the hero's tomb with a wreath, just as Hephaestion crowned that of Patroclus, to declaring the hero blessed to have had Patroclus as a friend in life and Homer as a herald of his fame in death.⁵

This dissertation centers on the facet of Alexander historiography most famously encapsulated by the Macedonian king's pilgrimage to Troy: Alexander's connection to Achilles. Since the beginning of Alexander studies in the early nineteenth century, this connection has been a regular subject of scholarly debate. Traditionally, the debate has focused on the historicity

¹ Edmunds 1971: 391.

² On Achilles, King 1987, who charts the hero's role in Western literature from Homer to the Middle Ages, remains fundamental.

³ Diod. 17.17.3; Just. 11.5.12.

⁴ Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.7-9; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; Cic. *Pro Arch.* 24 = *FgrH* 153 T1.

⁵ Alexander's crowning of Achilles' tomb: Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; Hephaestion's crowning of Patroclus' tomb: Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; Alexander's blessing of Achilles: Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Cic. *Pro Arch.* 24 = *FgrH* 153 T1.

of the Alexander-Achilles connection, and, more specifically, the degree to which this connection, as seen in the surviving sources, reflects historical fact versus literary fiction. Despite scholars' persistent disagreement on the historicity of the Alexander-Achilles connection in specific episodes of the Alexander tradition, a general consensus now prevails that this connection represents a mix of historical fact and literary fiction, that, in other words, both Alexander and those who wrote about him played a part in the development of this phenomenon. Why, then, a new treatment of the subject? The reason is simple. While the traditional question concerning the Alexander-Achilles connection has been satisfactorily answered, there remains another question that, to the best of my knowledge, has never been systematically considered, much less satisfactorily answered. The question is this: Since scholarly consensus holds that the Alexander-Achilles connection is both historical *and* literary in nature, how do the Alexander historians employ this connection, both in specific passages and throughout their works, for their own literary ends? This is the question this dissertation seeks to answer.

The remainder of the Introduction consists of three parts. In the first part, I present the case for the historicity of the Alexander-Achilles connection, reviewing, in the process, the majority of previous scholarship on the subject. In the second part, I present the case for the connection's literary dimension, thereby paving the way for the present project. Finally, in the third part, I lay out the aims and methodology of this dissertation, concluding with a synopsis of each chapter.

I. The Alexander-Achilles Connection: The Historical Dimension

While this dissertation focuses on the Alexander-Achilles connection's literary dimension, its historical dimension, the traditional focus of scholarship, deserves to be considered at this point as a means of contextualizing the present project. Current scholarly

consensus, as noted above, holds that the Alexander-Achilles connection represents, at least in part, historical fact. What is the basis of this view? As W. Ameling has shown in his fairly comprehensive survey of the Alexander-Achilles connection,⁶ its historicity rests on a substantial body of evidence that, taken as a whole, makes the Macedonian king's preoccupation with the Homeric hero reasonably certain.

The natural place to begin is with Alexander's ancestry. According to all five of the extant Alexander historians, Alexander traced his descent on his mother Olympias' side from Achilles (Arr. *Anab.* 1.11.7, 4.11.6; Curt. 4.6.29, 8.4.26; Diod. 17.1.5; Just. 11.3.1, 12.15.1; Plut. *Alex.* 2.1). By Alexander's day, Olympias' family, the Molossian royal house, had long claimed descent from Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles,⁷ and continued to be called the Aeacids, a reference to Aeacus, the grandfather of Achilles. Despite the highly dubious nature of the this, or any other, Greco-Roman claim to heroic or divine ancestry, Alexander, like his contemporaries, seems to have believed it without hesitation. "In general," as P. A. Brunt has remarked, "the Greek world did not distinguish legend from history, and there is no reason to think that such genealogies...were not believed. Almost certainly, to Al[exander], Heracles, Perseus and Achilles were real persons and his actual ancestors."⁸

While Alexander's ancestry was thus, in all probability, the foundation of his connection to Achilles, the Greco-Macedonian cultural milieu in which he was born and raised likely reinforced this connection as well. To begin with the Macedonian side of this cultural milieu, Alexander's homeland, as scholars have shown, remained a distinctly Homeric place well into

⁶ Ameling 1988, followed by Stewart 1993: 78-86; *contra* Heckel 2015, on which see below.

⁷ According to Carney 2006: 5, the Molossian royal house may have claimed Aeacid descent as early as the late sixth century B.C., but was certainly doing so by the late fifth century B.C.

⁸ Brunt 1976: 464.

the fourth century B.C.⁹ Politically, Macedon, like the Greek polities of the Homeric poems, was a kingdom comprised, in effect, of three estates: first, a hereditary king, ruling by custom more than by law, and the royal house to which he belonged (the Argeads); second, a tribal aristocracy that served the king as advisers in council and companions in battle; and third, a peasantry that both constituted a military assembly and provided a national levy in times of war. Culturally, too, Macedon evoked the world of Homer. In Alexander's Macedon, the heroic ethos presented in the Homeric poems remained alive and well, with valor, glory, and honor, fighting and hunting, feasting and drinking, all continuing to be central to royal and aristocratic life. Thus, while we cannot hope to trace this quasi-Homeric world's specific influence on Alexander's connection to Achilles, we may be confident that its influence was not inconsiderable; for Alexander, after all, Achilles' world was still, in some sense, his own.

Greek culture's role in the development of Alexander's connection to Achilles was probably of equal significance to that of Macedonian society. By Alexander's day, Macedon was, despite Greek claims to the contrary,¹⁰ a by and large Hellenized kingdom, especially at the royal and aristocratic level.¹¹ Consequently, from a young age, Alexander would have been deeply familiar not only with the Homeric poems, which, as the ancient sources agree, proved among the great passions of his life,¹² but also with the Greek tradition of heroic imitation and

⁹ On Macedonian society's Homeric dimension, see Lane Fox 1973: 63-65; Ameling 1988: 658-660; and Cohen 1995: 487-498.

¹⁰ On the notorious question of the Macedonians' ethnicity, see the classic treatment of Badian 1982 [2012: 282-310].

¹¹ While Macedon shows signs of Hellenization from her earliest history, the kingdom seems to have become considerably more Hellenized beginning with Archelaus (413-399 B.C.), the Macedonian king who famously pursued a range of Philhellenic policies, notably the summoning of Greek poets, artists, and philosophers to the new Macedonian capital of Pella. For Archelaus' Philhellenic program, see Borza 1990: 171-177.

¹² Alexander's passion for the Homeric poems is a recurring theme in the ancient sources. Supposedly, for example, Alexander possessed a special copy of the *Iliad*, prepared for him by Aristotle, called the "Recension of the Casket" (Plut. *Alex.* 8.2 = Onesicritus *FgrH* 134 F38; Strab. 13.1.27); referred to the *Iliad* as the ἐφόδιον, "means" or

comparison. By this tradition, Greeks frequently, and in a range of contexts including war and diplomacy,¹³ sought either to imitate the heroes of the past, or to compare themselves and others to the same. On the one hand, the Spartan king Agesilaus, for example, patently imitated Agamemnon when, prior to his Asian campaign, he staged a sacrifice at Aulis (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.3-4), the Greek army's supposed point of departure at the time of the Trojan War. On the other hand, the poet Simonides, for instance, seems, based on a commonly accepted reconstruction of the *Plataea Ode* (Simon. fr. 11),¹⁴ not only to have compared the Greeks who fought at Plataea to Homeric heroes, but also to have compared himself to Homer, in his capacity as the dispenser of *kleos*, "glory" or "fame," to his poetic subjects.¹⁵ Similarly, in Alexander's own day, Isocrates, the Athenian pamphleteer, sought to convince Philip II, Alexander's father, to conduct a campaign against Persia by appealing to Hercules (Isoc. *Phil.* 5.109-115 and *passim*), Philip's mythical ancestor as king of Macedon. What specific effect these aspects of Greek culture had on Alexander's connection to Achilles cannot, of course, be known, but that they had some effect, perhaps suggesting to Alexander a way of expressing his sense of connection to Achilles, seems overwhelmingly likely.

Moving on to the direct evidence for the Alexander-Achilles connection's historicity, we may begin with a famous passage from Arrian's *Anabasis*. In Book 7, while describing

"equipment," of military virtue (Plut. *Alex.* 8.2; cf. Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 1.4 = *Mor.* 327E); and even knew the entire *Iliad* and much of the *Odyssey* by heart (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.39). While Alexander's passion for the Homeric poems is, of course, a separate phenomenon from his passion for Achilles, his passion for the former makes his passion for the latter more credible.

¹³ For Greek and Macedonian uses of the mythological past for purposes of diplomacy, see Jones 1999: 17-49.

¹⁴ The reconstruction is that of M. L. West, cited, with translation, in Boedeker and Sider 2001: 27-29.

¹⁵ Following M. L. West's reconstruction of the poem, Rutherford 2001: 1992: 38-50 maintains that Simonides probably began with a section on Achilles' death and Homer's role in commemorating him and other heroes of the Trojan War, and then segued into his own Homer-like commemoration of the heroes of Plataea.

Alexander's grief at the death of Hephaestion, Arrian deems credible the king's supposed act of cutting his hair in mourning and placing it on his friend's corpse—and does so for a remarkable reason: καὶ κείρασθαι Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπὶ τῷ νεκρῷ τὴν κόμην τὰ τε ἄλλα οὐκ ἀπεικότα τίθεμαι καὶ κατὰ ζῆλον τὸν Ἀχιλλέως, πρὸς ὄντινα ἐκ παιδὸς φιλοτιμία αὐτῷ ἦν... “and that Alexander also cut his hair upon the corpse I consider not unlikely especially in view of his emulation of Achilles, with whom he had a rivalry since childhood...” (*Anab.* 7.14.4). Here, in the clearest statement on the subject within the surviving Alexander tradition, Arrian effectively confirms the Alexander-Achilles connection's existence by claiming that the Macedonian king felt a sense of emulation (ζῆλον) toward the Homeric hero dating back to his childhood. With a claim like this, from a source like Arrian, the case could well seem closed. However, some scholars have questioned Arrian's claim on the ground that Alexander's rivalry with Achilles is reported within a series of *legomena*,¹⁶ the parts of Arrian's work that, by his own admission (*Anab.* Pref. 3), are based on sources he regards as less trustworthy than his main sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus. Still, while these scholars are right to point out the context in which this claim appears, the claim itself, as N. G. L. Hammond has noted, is actually *not* presented as a *legomenon*, but rather on Arrian's own authority.¹⁷ While this could thus be a case of sloppy methodology on Arrian's part, a case, that is, of Arrian taking an item from his secondary sources and reporting it as if it comes from his primary sources, it is also possible that he took this Achilles detail from his main sources, Ptolemy and/or Aristobulus.¹⁸ Whatever the case, however, Arrian's claim finds support in a variety of places throughout the Alexander tradition.

¹⁶ Brunt 1976: 464 and Heckel 2015: 24.

¹⁷ Hammond 1993: 295

¹⁸ While it would be beneficial to know the source of Arrian's claim, it is worth remembering that even this knowledge would not allow us to say for sure whether the claim is true. As Alexander scholars have increasingly recognized in recent decades, a given claim in an Alexander source ought to be judged not on that source's general

The period of Alexander's childhood and adolescence provides the earliest direct evidence of the Alexander-Achilles connection's historicity. During this period, as A. Cohen has noted, Alexander's education seems to have played a formative role in the prince's developing sense of connection to the Homeric hero.¹⁹ On Plutarch's account, Alexander's childhood tutor, Lysimachus, supposedly played a recurring game of make-believe with his pupil, referring to Alexander as Achilles, Philip as Peleus, and himself as Phoenix (*Alex.* 5.8), while Aristotle, during his time with the crown prince at Mieza, made Alexander an annotated copy of the *Iliad* himself (*Alex.* 8.2). Though Plutarch draws no connection between Aristotle's gift and Alexander's interest in Achilles, it is easy to imagine that this may have been a factor in the philosopher's choice of texts. A final piece of evidence comes in the form of Demosthenes' nickname for the young Alexander. According to several sources, Demosthenes, at some point, took to calling Alexander by the name of Margites, the ridiculous anti-hero of a mock epic poem attributed to Homer (*Aeschin. In Ctes.* 160; *Plut. Dem.* 23.2; *Marsyas of Pella FgrH* 135-136 F3 = *Harp.*, s.v. Μαργίτης). By calling Alexander by this nickname, Demosthenes may have been suggesting that the Macedonian prince' Homeric self-conception was gravely mistaken: far from being a true hero, à la Achilles, Alexander was merely a buffoon, à la Margites.²⁰

The majority of the direct evidence for the Alexander-Achilles connection's historicity, however, derives from the period of Alexander's reign. Throughout this period, the Alexander historians record a number of episodes in which Alexander assumes, in one way or another, the role of Achilles. In many cases, these episodes' historicity is doubtful, and thus, in what follows,

reputation, but on the merits of the claim itself. In other words, "good" sources can be wrong, and "bad" sources can be right.

¹⁹ Cohen 1995: 485.

²⁰ Hamilton 1969: 29, followed by Lane Fox 1973: 61.

I discuss only those generally regarded as historical, or probably historical; the rest I reserve for discussion in the next section.

The first major Achillean episode from the period of Alexander's reign is the king's pilgrimage to Troy,²¹ the episode with which my Introduction began. During this pilgrimage, as seen above, Alexander reportedly performed a considerable number of actions related to the Homeric hero, including: crowning Achilles' tomb (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; cf. Diod. 17.17.3), just as Hephaestion crowned Patroclus' (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7); sacrificing at the hero's tomb (Diod. 17.17.3; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Just. 12.5.12); running naked around the hero's tomb along with his companions (Plut. *Alex.* 15.8); requesting to see Achilles' lyre, rather than Paris' (Plut. *Alex.* 15.9 and *De Alex. fort.* 1.10 = *Mor.* 331D; Ael. *V.H.* 9.38); proclaiming Achilles blessed for having had Patroclus as a friend in life (Plut. *Alex.* 15.8) and Homer as the herald of his fame in death (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.8); and sacrificing to Priam's ghost to avert his wrath from the race of the Aeacids, the family to which both he and Achilles belonged (Arr. *Anab.* 1.11.8). Naturally, scholars have been skeptical of many of these acts, notably Hephaestion's honoring of Patroclus' tomb;²² at the same time, most have regarded Alexander's honoring of Achilles' tomb, whether with a crown, sacrifices, or both, as historical, given its wide attestation in the extant sources.²³ What Alexander meant by this act cannot, of

²¹ On Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, see Instinsky 1949.

²² Perrin 1895: 58, Bosworth 1980: 103-104, and Heckel 2015: 21-22 have all suspected that Hephaestion's crowning of Patroclus' tomb—a gesture suggestive of his role as Patroclus and, by extension, his special relationship with Alexander—may have been fabricated after his death at Ecbatana (324 B.C.) the point at which the Hephaestion-Patroclus parallel would have been most apparent. Personally, I find this suspicion excessive. Based on the surviving sources (Curt. 3.12.16; cf. Ps.-Call. 1.18.5; Jul. Val. 1.18), Hephaestion seems to have been Alexander's best friend going back to his childhood. Thus, if the young Alexander cultivated a connection to Achilles, it seems only too likely that the young Hephaestion would have cultivated a connection to Patroclus.

²³ Radet 1931: 33-35; Edmunds 1971: 372-373; Lane Fox 1973: 112-114; Ameling 1988: 673-678; and Cohen 1995: 484-485.

course, be known for certain, but it seems probable that part of what he meant by it was that he saw himself as, and wished to be seen as, a second Achilles.

The second major Achillean episode from this period is the death of Hephaestion,²⁴ the king's best friend and probable lover.²⁵ Based on the sources for this episode, Alexander seems to have expressed his grief for Hephaestion in a number of consciously Achillean ways. Most conspicuously, Alexander, like Achilles, allegedly placed locks of hair over his friend's corpse, an act that both Arrian and Aelian single out as Achillean (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.4; Ael. *V.H.* 7.8; cf. Hom. *Il.* 23.141-153). Further like Achilles, as scholars have noted, Alexander supposedly wept over his friend's corpse (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.3-4; cf. Hom. *Il.* 19.4-5); abstained from food and drink (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.8; cf. Hom. *Il.* 19.344-346); built his friend a huge and costly funeral pyre (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.8; Diod. 17.110.8; Just. 12.12.12; Plut. *Alex* 72.5; cf. Hom. *Il.* 23.154-225); and even referred to his friend as τὸν ἐταῖρον ὄντινα ἴσον τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ κεφαλῇ ἦγον, "the companion whom I considered equal to my own life" (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.6), a phrase that pointedly recalls Achilles' description of Patroclus as ἐταῖρος | ...τὸν ἐγὼ περὶ πάντων τῶν ἐταίρων, | ἴσον ἐμῇ κεφαλῇ, "the companion...whom I honored above all my companions, equal to my own life" (Hom. *Il.* 18.80-82).²⁶ While scholars have rightly suspected that Alexander's emulation of Achilles following Hephaestion's death is partially the product of literary embellishment,²⁷ scholarly

²⁴ On Hephaestion's life and career, see Berve 1926: 2.169-175 (no. 357); Heckel 1992: 65-90; Reames-Zimmerman 1998; and Heckel 2006: 133-137.

²⁵ For Hephaestion's status as Alexander's lover, see Reames-Zimmerman 1998: 152-179 and 1999, and Chugg 2006: 64-130.

²⁶ Alexander's weeping over Hephaestion's corpse: Chugg 2006: 129; abstention from food and drink: Perrin 1895: 59 and Chugg 2006: 122, 129; building of a funeral pyre: Perrin 1895: 59 and Chugg 2006: 122, 130; reference to his friend as equal his own life: Chugg 2006: 122-123, 130.

²⁷ Heckel 2015: 30; cf. Bosworth 1988a: 64.

consensus holds that, given the multifaceted nature of this emulation, there is probably some historical basis to it.²⁸ Thus, even in his darkest hour, Alexander, it would seem, continued to see himself as—and to wish to be seen as—a second Achilles.

Further evidence from this period comes in the form of Alexander's habit of withdrawing to his tent in moments of crisis vis à vis his army. Throughout his reign, the Macedonian king reportedly engaged in this quintessentially Achillean behavior on three separate occasions: first, following the murder of Cleitus (Arr. *Anab.* 4.9.3-4; Curt. 8.2.11; Plut. *Alex.* 51.10-52.1; cf. Just. 12.6.15-16); second, during the Macedonian mutiny at the Hyphasis River (Arr. *Anab.* 5.28.3; Curt. 9.3.18-19; Plut. *Alex.* 62.5); and third, during the Macedonian mutiny at Opis (Arr. *Anab.* 7.11.1; Curt. 10.3.5; Plut. *Alex.* 71.6-8; cf. Diod. 17.109.2-3 and Just. 12.11.4-12.9). As E. Carney has convincingly argued, given that ancient historians were, as a rule, less likely to invent actions than speeches, Alexander's withdrawals represent, in light of their probable historicity, relatively clear evidence of the king's conscious imitation of Achilles.²⁹

Besides Alexander's specific acts of Achilles imitation, there also exist general similarities between the Macedonian king and the Homeric hero—similarities, we can assume, of which Alexander would have been partly, if not fully, conscious. On the one hand, Alexander, like Achilles, was a warrior *par excellence*, regularly performing *aristeiai* worthy of a Homeric hero. At the battle of the Granicus, for example, Alexander was personally instrumental in securing the Macedonian victory, killing at least one Persian general in single combat and coming within a hair's breadth of being killed by another (Arr. *Anab.* 1.15.7-8; Diod. 17.20-21.3; Plut. *Alex.* 16.8-12; cf. Curt. 8.1.20). On the other hand, Alexander, like Achilles, was also, by all

²⁸ Perrin 1895: 59; Radet 1931: 378-379; Edmunds 1971: 373; Lane Fox 1973: 434; Ameling 1988: 687-689; Cohen 1995: 485 and 500 n. 14; and Chugg 2006: 110-124, 129-130.

²⁹ Carney 2000a: 273-285.

accounts, preeminently concerned with both the central Homeric concept of κλέος, “glory” or “fame,” and its Classical counterpart, δόξα, “reputation.” During childhood, as Plutarch records, Alexander supposedly worried that his father, with his remarkable successes, would deprive him of the chance to achieve anything worthy of note and, by extension, of the fame his heart desired (*Alex.* 5.4). This fixation with κλέος and δόξα continued throughout his adult life, such that, during the course of the campaigns, we repeatedly hear of Alexander’s πόθος or *cupido*, “desire,” or “longing” to perform some noteworthy deed or to visit some noteworthy place.³⁰

Finally, and more speculatively still, there is a single piece of archaeological evidence to be considered. Beginning in 1977, M. Andronicos, the Greek archaeologist, captivated the world with his discovery of three Macedonian royal tombs at the site of ancient Aegae (modern Vergina), the early capital of ancient Macedon.³¹ Almost immediately, Andronicos declared Tomb II to be the final resting place of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, a theory that held—and continues to hold—obvious appeal.³² Since then, however, many scholars have questioned this attribution, proposing, more plausibly, that Philip III Arrhidaeus, Alexander the Great’s half-brother and co-successor with Alexander IV, and Adea Eurydice, Philip III’s wife, are the probable occupants.³³ This second theory has led, in turn, to a fascinating suggestion that bears on Alexander’s historical connection to Achilles. In Tomb II, Andronicos discovered, *inter alia*, a shield that revealed, following extensive restoration, a relatively clear central image: a

³⁰ On *pothos* as an Achillean quality, see Stewart 1993: 84-86.

³¹ For a survey of the archaeological excavations at Vergina, see Andronicos 1984.

³² Andronicos 1984: 218-235, as well as, e.g., Green 1982, Hammond 1982, and Hatzopoulos 2008.

³³ E.g., Adams 1980; Lehmann 1980 and 1982, Borza 1987, and Borza and Palagia 2007.

standing Achilles slaying a kneeling Penthesilea.³⁴ While the natural supposition would be that this shield simply belonged to Philip III, assuming him to be the male occupant of Tomb II, E. N. Borza has suggested that Alexander himself may have been the shield's original owner and that, following his death, it may have passed into the possession of Philip III, only to be buried with him following his murder by Olympias in 317 B.C.³⁵ Ultimately, if Borza is correct (and this is far from certain), this shield would represent the sole piece of concrete evidence for Alexander's historical connection to Achilles to have survived from antiquity.

II. The Alexander-Achilles Connection: The Literary Dimension

Based on current scholarly consensus, the Alexander-Achilles connection's historical dimension is balanced by a corresponding literary dimension. While Alexander seems to have played a role in the development of this connection, so, too, scholars believe, did the historians and poets who wrote about him. In this section, I begin by reviewing the ancient evidence for the Alexander-Achilles connection's literary dimension, first in the fragmentary, and then in the extant, Alexander sources, and conclude by considering the modern scholarship on the subject.

To begin with the fragmentary sources,³⁶ Callisthenes of Olynthus,³⁷ Alexander's court historian, provides the earliest surviving evidence of the Alexander-Achilles connection's

³⁴ So Palagia 2000: 191-192 and Borza and Palagia 2007: 113-117. For a photograph of the shield, see Andronicos 1984: 135, Fig. 93.

³⁵ Borza 1987: 115; *contra* Hammond 1989: 220-221. More recently, Borza and Palagia 2007: 117 have suggested that the shield, even if it did not belong to Alexander, could have been modeled on one that did.

³⁶ For the fragmentary Alexander sources, see, above all, Pearson 1960 and Pédech 1984, but also Baynham 2003 and Zambrini 2007.

³⁷ On Callisthenes' life and work, see Jacoby 1919: 1674-1707; Prentice 1923; Berve 1926: 2.191-199 (no. 408); Brown 1949; Pearson 1960: 22-49; Pédech 1984: 15-69; Prandi 1985; Golon 1988; Devine 1994; and Heckel 2006: 76-77.

literary dimension. As both L. Pearson and P. Pédech have shown, Callisthenes' fragments strongly suggest that a Homeric program was central to the historian's *Deeds of Alexander* (Πράξεις Ἀλεξάνδρου).³⁸ While the nature of this Homeric program remains sketchy, part of it may have involved comparisons of Alexander and his famous Homeric ancestor. According to Strabo, Callisthenes, at an unspecified point in his work, discussed the Homeric cities of Thebe and Lyrnessus:

φασὶ δ' ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ Φασηλίδος καὶ Ἀτταλείας δείκνυσθαι Θήβην τε καὶ Λυρνησσόν, ἐκπεσόντων ἐκ τοῦ Θήβης πεδίου τῶν Τρωικῶν Κιλικῶν εἰς τὴν Παμφυλίαν ἐκ μέρους, ὡς εἶρηκε Καλλισθένης.

They say that between Phaselis and Attaleia are pointed out Thebe and Lyrnessus, since the Trojan Cilicians were banished in part from the plain of Thebe to Pamphylia, as Callisthenes has said. (Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 F32 = Strab. 14.4.1)

As Callisthenes, a noted Homeric authority, surely knew, Thebe, birthplace of Andromache, and Lyrnessus, birthplace of Briseis, were both cities sacked by Achilles during the Trojan War. Thus, by focusing on these two cities in the course of his *Deeds of Alexander*, Callisthenes, as Pédech has argued, may have meant to depict Alexander as following in the footsteps, both literal and figurative, of the best of the Achaeans.³⁹

³⁸ Pearson 1960: 40-46 and Pédech 1984: 45-51. Callisthenes' Homeric program shines through most clearly in a series of fragments concerned with obscure Homeric peoples and locations: the plain of Adrasteia (Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 F28 = Strab. 13.1.13); Thebe and Lyrnessus (Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 F32 = Strab. 14.4.1); and the Arimi and the promontory of Sarpedon (Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 F33 = Strab. 13.4.6).

³⁹ Pédech 1984: 47-48; *contra* Pearson 1960: 41-42 and Heckel 2015: 28, n. 18. While Pédech's argument is plausible in itself, a separate Callisthenes fragment confirms that the historian was capable of presenting Alexander as following in the footsteps of Greek heroes. When describing Alexander's visit to the oracle of Ammon, Callisthenes claimed that the king's motivation for making the visit was that Perseus and Hercules had previously visited the oracle themselves (Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 F14 = Strab. 17.1.43).

Cleitarchus of Alexandria,⁴⁰ a popular Alexander historian of the early Hellenistic period and the putative father of the Vulgate tradition,⁴¹ stands as further proof of the Alexander-Achilles connection's literary dimension. Famous for a certain dramatic, even sensational, quality, Cleitarchus, not surprisingly, seems to have played up Alexander's resemblance to Achilles in his history. According to both Plutarch and Strabo, Cleitarchus, among others, recorded a patently fictional meeting between Alexander and an Amazon queen:⁴²

ἐνταῦθα δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀφικέσθαι τὴν Ἀμαζόνα οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, ὧν καὶ Κλείταρχός ἐστι...

There, many say that the Amazon came to him, including Cleitarchus...⁴³
(Cleitarchus *FgrH* 137 F15 = Plut. *Alex.* 46.1)

τὴν δὲ Θεμισκυραν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν Θερμῶδοντα πεδία καὶ τὰ ὑπερκείμενα ὄρη ἅπαντες Ἀμαζόνων καλοῦσι καὶ φασιν ἐξελαθῆναι αὐτὰς ἐνθένδε. ὅπου δὲ νῦν εἰσιν, ὀλίγοι τε καὶ ἀναποδείκτως καὶ ἀπίστως ἀποφαίνονται, καθάπερ καὶ περὶ Θαληστρίας, ἣν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ συμμῖζαί φασιν ἐν τῇ Ὑρκανίᾳ καὶ συγγενέσθαι τεκνοποιίας χάριν, δυναστεύουσαν τῶν Ἀμαζόνων· οὐ γὰρ ὁμολογεῖται τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ τῶν συγγραφέων τοσοῦτων ὄντων οἱ μάλιστα τῆς ἀληθείας φροντίσαντες οὐκ εἰρήκασιν οὐδ' οἱ πιστευόμενοι μάλιστα οὐδενὸς μέμνηνται τοιούτου οὐδ' οἱ εἰπόντες τὰ αὐτὰ εἰρήκασιν. Κλείταρχος δὲ φησι τὴν Θαληστρίαν ἀπὸ Κασπίων πυλῶν καὶ Θερμῶδοντος ὀρμηθεῖσαν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον· εἰσὶ δ' ἀπὸ Κασπίας εἰς Θερμῶδοντα στάδιοι πλείους ἑξακισχιλίων.

Everyone calls Themiscyra and the plains around the Thermodon and the mountains that lie above the Amazons', and they claim that they were driven out from there. But as for where they are now, few give their opinion, and only without proof and without credence, just as in the case of Thalestria, in fact, who they say had intercourse with Alexander in Hyrcania and consorted with him for the sake of having a child, based on the fact that she was leader of the Amazons. For this is not agreed upon. But of the historians who are so numerous, those who have most regard for the truth have not said this, nor have those

⁴⁰ On Cleitarchus' life and work, see Jacoby 1921; Berve 1926: 2.422-423 (Abschn. 2, n. 40); Tarn 1948: 2.1-55; Brown 1950; Pearson 1960: 212-242; Hamilton 1961; Badian 1965 [2012: 113-119]; Heckel 2006: 86; Prandi 1996; Parker 2009; and Prandi 2012.

⁴¹ The Vulgate tradition refers to a specific group of Alexander historians, Diodorus, Curtius, and Justin, who, based on the similarities of their respective accounts of the Macedonian king's career, are widely believed to share a common source, probably Cleitarchus, among the most popular of the Alexander historians in antiquity.

⁴² On Alexander and the Amazon legend, see Baynham 2001.

⁴³ As Hamilton 1969: 123 notes in his commentary *ad loc.*, Plutarch's ἐνταῦθα is ambiguous, with some taking the biographer to mean Hyrcania, and others the vicinity of the Jaxartes River (so Hamilton).

who are most trusted mentioned any such thing, nor have those who have said so said the same things. Cleitarchus claims that Thalestria came to Alexander after having set out from the Caspian Gates and the Thermodon, though it is more than six thousand stades from the Caspian to the Thermodon. (Cleitarchus *FgrH* 137 F16 = Strab. 11.5.4)

Based on these two fragments, both alone and supplemented by the testimony of the Vulgate tradition,⁴⁴ Cleitarchus told of how Thalestria, an Amazon queen, came to Alexander desirous of having a child by him, and how the king, taken with this warrior woman, gratified her desire by tarrying in Hyrcania for thirteen days. By telling such a story, then, Cleitarchus probably aimed, at least in part, to magnify Alexander's heroic status by connecting him not only to Achilles, but also to Hercules and Theseus, all of whom famously had encounters—and sometimes amorous encounters—with Amazons themselves.⁴⁵

Choerilus of Iasus,⁴⁶ a third-rate epic poet in Alexander's entourage, serves as a third and final example of the tendency to present the king in an Achillean light. While Choerilus' work has been completely lost, Porphyrio, a Latin scholar of the third century A.D., reveals in his commentary to Horace's *Ars poetica* that Choerilus, who figures as the quintessentially bad poet in this Horatian work,⁴⁷ wrote an epic poem in which Alexander was compared to Achilles:

Poeta pessimus fuit Choerilus, qui Alexandrum secutus opera eius descripsit. Huius omnino septem versus laudabantur. Et hi<n>c Alexander dixisse fertur, multum malle se Thersit[h]en iam Homeri esse quam Choerili Achillen.

⁴⁴ By general consensus, the Vulgate accounts of the Amazon queen's visit (Curt. 6.5.24-32; Diod. 17.77.1-3; Just. 12.3.5-7), derive from Cleitarchus, and may, consequently, be used in reconstructing this historian's own account.

⁴⁵ According to the mythological tradition, Achilles met the Amazon Penthesileia; Hercules, the Amazon Hippolyte; and Theseus, an Amazon typically called either Antiope or Hippolyte.

⁴⁶ On Choerilus, see Berve 1926: 2.408-409 (no. 829); Tarn 1948: 2.57-58; and Heckel 2006: 85.

⁴⁷ Hor. *Ars P.* 354-358: *ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque, | quamvis est monitus, venia caret; ut citharoedus | ridetur chorda qui semper oberrat eadem: | sic mihi qui multum cessat fit Choerilus ille, | quem bis terve bonum cum risu miror...* "Just as a copyist, if he continually makes the same mistake although he has been warned, is without excuse, just as a cithara player is laughed at who always messes up the same string, so does that [poet] who is very deficient become, in my view, a Choerilus, a [poet] whom I, with a laugh, admire as good two or three times..." Cf. Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.232-234.

Choerilus, who followed Alexander and recorded his deeds, was a very bad poet. Altogether, only seven of his verses were praised. And for this reason, Alexander is reported to have said that he would surely much prefer to be Homer's Thersites than Choerilus' Achilles. (Porphy. *In Hor. Ars P.* 357 = *FgrH* F153 10a)

What form Choerilus' comparison of Alexander and Achilles took is unclear, but what is clear (if Porphyrio's anecdote can be believed) is the Macedonian king's frosty reception thereof. For Alexander, apparently, not all Achillean comparisons were created equal.

The five extant Alexander historians provide still further evidence of the Alexander-Achilles connection's literary dimension. Since the Achillean episodes found in the extant historians tend to be of a rather ambiguous nature, possibly historical and possibly literary, I discuss two here that stand a decent chance of falling into the latter category.⁴⁸ The first such episode is Alexander's marriage to Roxane as recorded by Curtius.⁴⁹ During a feast in Bactria, Alexander cites Achilles' marriage to Briseis, a barbarian slave-girl, as justification for his spontaneous decision to marry Roxane, the daughter of a barbarian chieftain: *Achillem quoque, a quo genus ipse deduceret, cum captiva coisse*. "Achilles, too, from whom he himself traced his descent, had married a captive woman" (Curt. 8.4.26). Here, as scholars generally agree, the literary invention is fairly clear.⁵⁰ While all but one of the extant Alexander historians gives an account of Alexander's marriage to Roxane, Curtius alone records this reference to Achilles; moreover, this passage, as R. Porod has noted, contains a virtually identical phrase about

⁴⁸ I here omit from discussion Alexander's maltreatment of Betis (Curt. 4.6.26-29), the other major Achillean episode in the surviving Alexander tradition, due to the general disagreement on its historicity versus fictionality. For discussion of this episode, see Chapter 1, Section I.

⁴⁹ For further discussion of Alexander's marriage to Roxane, see Chapter 1, Section II below.

⁵⁰ Tarn 1948: 2.269; Hammond 1983: 146; Rutz 1986: 2345; Heckel 1994: 74 and 2015: 31; and implicitly most biographies of Alexander; *contra* Radet 1931: 254 and Rogers 2004: 172-173.

Alexander's descent from Achilles as found in a previous Curtian passage,⁵¹ thus suggesting that the two passages are meant to be seen as thematically linked. The second such episode is Alexander's "battle" with the Indian rivers as recorded by Diodorus and Curtius.⁵² Following a near-fatal naval debacle at the confluence of the Indus, Hydaspes, and Acesines Rivers, Alexander, on Diodorus' account, sacrifices in thanks for having, like Achilles, successfully contended with a river: Σωθεὶς δὲ παραδόξως τοῖς θεοῖς ἔθυσεν ὡς μεγίστους ἐκπεφυγὸς κινδύνου καὶ πρὸς ποταμὸν ὁμοίως Ἀχιλλεῖ διαγωνισάμενος, "Having been saved unexpectedly, he sacrificed to the gods as if he had escaped the greatest dangers and had, like Achilles, struggled with a river" (17.97.3). Similarly, after giving his own account of the Macedonian naval debacle, Curtius makes what seems to be a subtle allusion to the same Achillean incident: *cum amne bellum fuisse crederes*, "you would have believed there had been a war with a river" (9.4.8-14).⁵³ In both cases, Alexander's Achillean imitation seems to fall, once again, in the realm of literary fiction.⁵⁴ Not only does Arrian, traditionally regarded as the most reliable of the Alexander historians, say nothing of this Achillean imitation in his account of the Macedonian fleet's misfortune on the Indian rivers (*Anab.* 6.4.4-5.4), but Cleitarchus, the probable source for this episode,⁵⁵ is notorious for a sensationalism bordering on mendacity.

⁵¹ Porod 1987: 305. Curtius' present phrase describing Alexander's descent from Achilles, *Achillem quoque, a quo genus ipse deduceret* (8.4.26) finds a close parallel in his phrase describing the Macedonian king's descent from the Homeric hero during the Siege of Gaza: *Achillen, a quo genus ipse deduceret* (4.6.29). On the relationship between these two passages, see Chapter 1, Sections I-II.

⁵² While Alexander's "battle" with the Indian rivers probably derives from Cleitarchus, given the present concordance of Curtius and Diodorus, I treat this episode here for the simple reason that it is not found among Cleitarchus' official fragments.

⁵³ For further discussion of Curtius' account of Alexander's "battle" with the Indian rivers, see Chapter 1, Section III.

⁵⁴ Heckel 2015: 30-31, and implicitly most biographies of Alexander; *contra* Green 1991: 418 and Freeman 2011: 282.

⁵⁵ Schwartz 1901: 1874; Hammond 1983 64-65, 153; and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

Traditionally—and ironically—the scholarship on the Alexander-Achilles connection’s literary dimension has been predominantly historical in nature. Much as with the scholarship on the connection’s historical dimension, the main aim of this scholarship has been to determine the status of a given Achillean episode and, more specifically, whether a given episode represents a case of historical imitation on Alexander’s part or literary comparison on the Alexander historians’ part. Representative of this type of scholarship is W. Heckel’s recent article entitled “Alexander, Achilles, and Heracles: Between Myth and History.”⁵⁶ Based on a careful reexamination of the sources for the Alexander-Achilles connection, Heckel argues that most of the Achillean episodes preserved in the Alexander tradition are “literary fabrications.”⁵⁷ Yet, throughout the entire article, Heckel has almost nothing to say about what these literary fabrications mean; for him, as for most Alexander scholars, it is enough simply to say that they are not historical. My aim in this dissertation, then, as I explain further in the next section, is to answer this question about the Alexander-Achilles connection.

III. Aims and Methodology

Having surveyed the Alexander-Achilles connection in both its historical and literary dimensions, I turn now to a more detailed discussion of this project’s aims and methodology. On the first count, this project aims to consider the Alexander-Achilles connection’s literary dimension, or, as I will refer to it hereafter, the Achilles motif,⁵⁸ in the works of three of the

⁵⁶ Heckel 2015; other scholarship in the same vein includes Perrin 1895, Tarn 1948: 2.57-58, and, to some extent, Maitland 2015.

⁵⁷ Heckel 2015: 22. In my view, Heckel’s argument, while salutary as a reminder of the Alexander-Achilles connection’s relatively neglected literary dimension, ultimately goes too far. Based on the totality of the evidence for the Alexander-Achilles connection, several pieces of which Heckel never discusses, much less disproves, I find it impossible to believe that this connection has no, or virtually no, basis in fact.

⁵⁸ I borrow this term from Heckel 1994: 73-74.

extant Alexander historians: Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch. In the case of each historian, this project seeks to answer two main questions: First, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in the specific passages of each historian's work in which it appears? Second, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in each historian's work overall?

The rationale for focusing on Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch in this project is twofold. First, and more generally, while all five of the extant Alexander historians are now recognized as creative artists, at least to some extent, Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch can fairly be said, I think, to have more developed literary agendas than either Diodorus or Justin.⁵⁹ Second, and more specifically, Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch, I believe, make greater use of the Achilles motif than either Diodorus or Justin. Where Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch each tend to use the Achilles motif in essential ways, in ways that connect with the broader themes of their works, Diodorus and Justin tend to use it in more incidental ways. This difference comes through most clearly in the historians' various accounts of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy.⁶⁰ On the one hand, both Arrian and Plutarch make Alexander's visit to Achilles' tomb the centerpiece of their accounts of this episode.⁶¹ In Arrian's case, this famous visit serves as a springboard for the historian's own "Second Preface" (*Anab.* 1.12.1-5), while in Plutarch's, it fulfills a complex characterizing function as the biographer's hero begins his own epic campaign to the East (*Alex.* 15.7-9).⁶²

⁵⁹ On Diodorus' literary agenda, see Sacks 1990; on Justin's, see Heckel and Yardley 1997: 8-19, 337-343.

⁶⁰ Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy represents the best point of comparison for the different uses of the Achilles motif because four of the five extant Alexander historians deploy the motif here, the most of any episode in the surviving Alexander tradition.

⁶¹ Curtius' account of Alexander's visit to Troy is missing due to the loss of the first two books of his work. However, based on his use of the Achilles motif elsewhere, I suspect his use of the motif in this episode would more closely have resembled that of Arrian and Plutarch than Diodorus and Justin.

⁶² For further discussion of Arrian's account of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, see Chapter 3, Section I; for further discussion of Plutarch's account of the same episode, see Chapter 2, Section II.

Diodorus and Justin, on the other hand, place no particular emphasis on Alexander's visit to Achilles' tomb in their accounts of this episode, with Diodorus merely noting that Alexander sacrificed to Achilles, Ajax, and the other heroes of the Trojan War (17.17.3), and Justin making the same point, but without even mentioning Achilles by name (11.5.12). In sum, compared to Diodorus and Justin, Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch represent more suitable material for the sort of analysis I plan to carry out in this dissertation.

As for methodology, this project analyzes the Achilles motif in terms of literary allusions. Following the philosopher W. Irwin, I define allusion as a reference that depends on three criteria: authorial intent, the possibility of detection by a reader, and associations that go beyond the substitution of a referent.⁶³ The first and second criteria should be self-explanatory; the third, however, could probably use further explanation. Based on this criterion, an allusion requires the reader to do more than simply recognize the text that is being referred to; it requires him to consider how the text that is being referred to affects the text that is doing the referring. For example, when Arrian describes Alexander's stand on the Mallian battlements by stressing his shining appearance, terrifying effect on the enemy, and special shield from Troy (*Anab.* 6.9.2-5), a reader would, ideally, not only recognize that the historian is referring to Achilles' appearance at the Greek trench in *Iliad* 18, but consider how this Homeric passage enriches the meaning of the Arrianic passage. Throughout this dissertation, therefore, my methodology will consist of two basic steps: first, I will demonstrate the presence of the Achilles motif by recourse to an Achillean allusion in the passage at hand; and second, I will consider the Achilles motif's thematic significance within the same passage.

⁶³ Irwin 2001: 293-294.

Throughout this project, I distinguish between two types of allusion, what I term “specific” and “general” allusions. By “specific” allusions, I mean cases where the Alexander historians allude to the Achilles of a particular author, either Homer or Vergil, and often, but not always, to a specific scene or book from that author’s work; by “general” allusions, on the other hand, I mean cases where the Alexander historians allude not to the Achilles of a particular author, but to the Achilles of the mythological tradition as a whole. As an example of a specific allusion, I would point to Plutarch’s account of the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5), a passage in which Alexander, in his grief for his friend, comes to resemble the Homeric Achilles in his grief for Patroclus. An example of a general allusion, on the other hand, would be a case such as Plutarch’s description of Alexander’s childhood game of Achillean role-playing (*Alex.* 5.8); here, the Achilles Plutarch is comparing Alexander to is not so much that of a specific author but of the mythological tradition itself. This second example brings me to another distinction I make in regard to allusions in this dissertation. While allusions tend to be covert, they can in fact take either covert or overt form. Thus, when a historian alludes to Achilles by name, as Curtius does when he claims that Alexander dragged Betis behind his chariot on the model of Achilles’ dragging of Hector (4.6.29), I term this an “explicit” allusion; when a historian, by contrast, alludes to Achilles in a more indirect way, as Curtius does when he makes Alexander speak of his preference for a short life of glory over a long life of obscurity (9.6.18-19), I term this an “implicit” allusion.

In this project, I set myself apart from previous scholarship on the Achilles motif by treating *every* Achillean episode, regardless of its historicity, from a literary perspective. My justification for this approach is that, in a fundamental sense, each of the Alexander historians was free to choose what to include and not to include in his work. Thus, even if an Achillean

episode is ultimately deemed to be historical, the fact that this episode appears in the work of an Alexander historian makes it, by definition, literary as well.

This dissertation consists of three chronologically arranged chapters, each of which considers the Achilles motif's thematic significance in the work of a particular Alexander historian. While concerned with the same theme, these three chapters are, in effect, stand-alone studies, and may be read as such.

Chapter 1 focuses on Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* (*Histories of Alexander the Great*), the highly rhetorical Latin history of Alexander's career dating, most likely, to the first century A.D.⁶⁴ For the majority of the twentieth century, scholars viewed Curtius' deployments of the Achilles motif as a mechanical feature of his work, claiming that Curtius' choice to include the motif in any given passage was less his own than that of his source(s). Toward the end of the century, however, W. Rutz and Heckel suggested that Curtius, at least in certain cases, was responsible for the motif himself,⁶⁵ thereby paving the way for J. Maitland, in a recent article, to suggest that Curtius, like the Vulgate tradition generally, used the Achilles motif to highlight Alexander's dark side, and, in particular, his anger.⁶⁶ In this chapter, I take Maitland's suggestion a step further, arguing that Curtius uses the Achilles motif as a way of reinforcing a central theme of his work: Alexander's moral decline over the course of his reign.

Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* (early second century A.D.), the sole biography of the Macedonian king to survive from antiquity, forms the subject of Chapter 2. This chapter takes as its starting point the work of J. Mossman⁶⁷, who has argued that the Achilles motif, and epic

⁶⁴ For Curtius' date, see Chapter 1, n. 2.

⁶⁵ Rutz 1986: 2345 and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

⁶⁶ Maitland 2015.

⁶⁷ Mossman 1988.

motifs generally, serve to highlight the positive side of Alexander's character, whereas tragic motifs serve to highlight the opposite. While Mossman's theory is attractive at first glance, it fails, on closer inspection, to account for all of the passages in which the Achilles motif appears in Plutarch's work, notably the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5). In this chapter, then, seeking to improve upon Mossman's theory, I argue that the motif serves, in general, to highlight Alexander's "spiritedness" (τὸ θυμοειδέες), a key quality of his according to Plutarch, and several qualities related to it, such as ambition, passion, and heroism.

Chapter 3 considers Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* (early to mid-second century A.D.), traditionally regarded as the most reliable source for Alexander's life and reign. While scholars have previously noted several passages in which Arrian deploys the Achilles motif, they have, as a rule, refrained from considering the motif's thematic significance. The single exception to this rule has been Arrian's deployment of the Achilles motif in the context of Alexander's visit to Troy (*Anab.* 1.12.1). Here, as P. A. Stadter has shown,⁶⁸ Arrian deploys the Achilles motif as a way of highlighting his own role as Homer, and, by extension, his claim to literary preeminence. Throughout this chapter, then, I conduct a similar analysis of the Achilles motif in the additional passages in which it appears. Ultimately, I argue that Arrian uses the Achilles motif to reinforce his complex portrait of Alexander, a portrait at once encomiastic and quasi-Stoic.

Finally, in the conclusion, I consider the Achilles motif's significance for Alexander historiography as a whole. Based on the findings of the three central chapters, I draw two conclusions: first, that the Achilles motif remained, much as it had for centuries, a remarkably flexible literary device, capable of serving a variety of thematic purposes according to the vision of the Alexander historian; and second, that the motif, precisely because the Alexander historians

⁶⁸ Stadter 1980: 60-66, followed by Marincola 1989: 188; cf. Moles 1985: 165.

used it in such varied ways, may be seen as bolstering the case for regarding these historians as authors with their own complex literary agendas, rather than mere copyists of the lost Alexander historians.

CHAPTER 1

Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni*

Introduction

While Quintus Curtius Rufus' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* (*Histories of Alexander the Great*)¹ has traditionally been studied, by and large, from a historical perspective, with the majority of scholarship concerned with the historian's date² and sources,³ this chapter, following more recent trends in Curtian studies, considers Curtius' work from a literary perspective.⁴ In 1967, E. I. McQueen, in the first predominantly literary study of the *Historiae*, considered Curtius in a variety of literary roles, and concluded that he alone of the surviving Alexander historians had written "a literary work worthy of the greatness of his subject."⁵ Following

¹ The title of Curtius' work is variously recorded as *Historiae*, *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, and *Historiae Magni Macedonis Alexandri*. Following Atkinson 1980 and 1994, I opt for *Historiae Alexandri Magni*.

² Curtius' date is the single most highly debated subject in Curtian scholarship. Due to the lack of definite testimony on Curtius' life and the loss of Curtius' preface, we have very little firm evidence by which to date the work. What evidence we do have suggests that it was written (i) during the reign of a *princeps* who either prevented or ended a civil war (10.9.1-6); (ii) while the Parthian empire was still in existence (4.12.11; 5.7.9; 5.8.1; 6.2.12); and (iii) when Tyre was prospering under Roman rule (4.4.21). Thus, the two most popular dates for Curtius' work, as reckoned by Roman emperors, have been Claudius (Dosson 1886: 18-54; Herrmann 1929; Bardon 1947a; Lana 1949; Sumner 1961; Devine 1979; Atkinson 1980: 19-57; Bödefeld 1982; Hamilton 1988; Atkinson 1994: 26-28; and Atkinson and Yardley 2009: 2-9) and Vespasian (Stroux 1929; Instinsky 1962; Sceda 1969; Vogel-Weidmann 1970; Grassl 1974; Fugmann 1995; Baynham 1998: 201-219); less popular dates have included Augustus (Tarn 1948: 2.111-115; Korzeniewski 1959), Caligula (Zimmerman 1930), Nero (Verdière 1966), Galba (Milns 1966), and Alexander Severus (Steele 1915). Like most scholars, I favor either Claudius or Vespasian, and thus a date in the first century A.D.

³ Curtius' sources have been another subject of considerable debate. Scholarly consensus holds that Cleitarchus, the famous Greek author of a popular history of Alexander dating to the early Hellenistic period, was probably a—if not *the*—principal source. Beyond Cleitarchus, however, there is no general agreement. Further suggestions have included, among others, Ptolemy (Dosson 1886: 140-145; Bardon 1947b: 126-127; Tarn 1948: 2.107; Atkinson 1980: 61-64 and Atkinson and Yardley 2009: 21-23), Diyllus (Tarn 1948: 2.115; Hammond 1983), and Trogus (Dosson 1886: 146-147; Atkinson 1980: 59-61 and 2009: 23-24).

⁴ Precursors to this Curtian literary scholarship include: Dosson 1886: 197-298; Kroll 1924: 331-351; Bardon 1947c; and Rutz 1965.

⁵ McQueen 1967: 39. While McQueen's claim applies, strictly speaking, only to Curtius' superiority over Arrian and Diodorus (and not Plutarch and Justin), it was still significant given Curtius' traditionally subpar reputation as a writer (cf., e.g., Schwartz 1901: 1872, who famously described Curtius as *keine litterarische Grösse*).

McQueen's work, the next three decades witnessed a flowering of such scholarship. Throughout the 1980s, W. Rutz, for example, repeatedly highlighted Curtius' artistic debt to a range of Latin authors, from Livy and Caesar to Vergil and Lucan.⁶ In 1987, R. Porod, in a dissertation on Curtius' narrative technique, argued that the historian's primary focus is the individual episode, rather than the narrative as a whole;⁷ and, in 1995, P. Moore, in a wide-ranging dissertation on Curtius' literary qualities, stressed, among other things, the complexity of Curtius' relationship to his literary models, especially Livy and Vergil, and the essential consistency of his portrait of Alexander.⁸ Most recently, in 1998, E. Baynham, in the the first monograph on Curtius to appear in over a century, demonstrated the centrality of two themes, *regnum* and *fortuna*, to the work as a whole.⁹ With this scholarship, and more besides,¹⁰ having thus shown the viability—and profitability—of studying Curtius' work from a literary perspective, this chapter aims to focus on a single, relatively neglected, facet of the historian's literary design: the Achilles motif.

For the majority of the twentieth century, Curtius' use of the Achilles motif was explained in simple *Quellenforschung* terms. In 1947, H. Bardon, for example, suggested in passing that Curtius most likely borrowed the motif from Callisthenes and Cleitarchus,¹¹ while

⁶ Rutz 1981, demonstrates Curtius' debt to Caesar for his account of Alexander's crossing of the Tigris; Rutz 1983, his debt to Livy for his account of the Macedonian mutiny at Opis; Rutz 1984, his debt to Livy, Lucan, and Roman rhetoric for his tragic portrait of Darius. Rutz 1986, a valuable conspectus of Curtian literary scholarship, treats Curtius' literary models, compositional technique, geographical descriptions, characterization, rhetoric, and *color Romanus*.

⁷ Porod 1987.

⁸ Moore 1995.

⁹ Baynham 1998: 101-200.

¹⁰ Further Curtian scholarship with a literary focus includes: Balzer 1971, a survey of Curtius' debt to Vergil; Gunderson 1982, who argues that Curtius' portraits of certain minor characters (e.g., Bagoas) are rhetorically designed to emphasize Alexander's moral decline; Currie 1990, who highlights Curtius' affinity to the genre of the ancient novel; and Spencer 2002: *passim*, who provides a series of close readings of Curtian passages as part of her broader project of analyzing the Roman Alexander.

¹¹ Bardon 1947b: 122.

N. G. L. Hammond, in 1983, argued that Curtius borrowed it solely from Cleitarchus.¹² For both Bardon and Hammond, the motif was simply a mechanical feature of Curtius' work: Curtius' source(s) included the motif, and thus so did Curtius. Toward the end of the century, however, this mechanical explanation gave way to a different sort of explanation. In 1986, Rutz tentatively suggested that Curtius, at least in certain cases, was responsible for the motif himself,¹³ and W. Heckel, in 1994, seconded this view, citing certain Roman touches as further evidence.¹⁴ By suggesting that Curtius may sometimes have introduced the motif of his own accord, rather than simply including it because his source(s) had included it, both scholars effectively paved the way for treating the Achilles motif as a literary device, as a small but significant part of Curtius' overall literary design. While Rutz and Heckel basically left the matter there,¹⁵ J. Maitland has recently taken the next step of considering the way in which Curtius uses the Achilles motif for his own literary ends.¹⁶ According to Maitland, Curtius, like the Vulgate tradition generally, uses the motif as a means of highlighting Alexander's dark side, especially his anger.¹⁷ On the whole, as a survey of Curtius' deployments of the Achilles motif shows, Maitland's argument is convincing.¹⁸ However, it is not the end of the story. Throughout the *Historiae*, as I argue in this

¹² Hammond 1983: 124-128, 146, 153.

¹³ Rutz 1986: 2345 suggests as much for both the Betis (Curt. 4.6.29) and Roxane episodes (Curt. 8.4.26).

¹⁴ Heckel 1994: 73-74; cf. Heckel 2015: 31. In the Roxane episode, Heckel notes Curtius' distinctly Roman view of (i) Alexander's marriage to Roxane, which is likened to a master-slave relationship; and (ii) Alexander's relations with the Macedonians, who, in their fear of speaking freely to their king, resemble Roman senators under the Principate.

¹⁵ While Heckel has since returned to the subject of the Achilles motif (Heckel 2015), his recent article is concerned with the motif's function in the Alexander tradition as a whole rather than in Curtius in particular.

¹⁶ Maitland 2015.

¹⁷ Maitland 2015: 17-20.

¹⁸ The part of Maitland's argument that is less convincing is her claim about the Vulgate tradition. Diodorus is commonly regarded as the purest representative of this tradition, and yet his two explicit deployments of the Achilles motif seem, if anything, to cast Alexander in a purely heroic light (17.17.3; 17.97.3).

chapter, Curtius uses the Achilles motif in a more specific way than Maitland has proposed: to highlight Alexander's moral decline over the course of the work, his transformation, in effect, from the noble *rex* of the first pentad to the corrupt *tyrannus* of the second.¹⁹

To make this argument, I examine the major passages in which the Achilles motif appears in the *Historiae*,²⁰ showing how each, in its own way, reinforces the theme of Alexander's moral decline. In the first half of the chapter, I focus on four passages in which scholars have previously detected the Achilles motif: Alexander's maltreatment of Betis (4.6.26-29);²¹ Alexander's marriage to Roxane (8.4.22-26);²² Alexander's battle with the Indian rivers (9.4.8-14);²³ and Alexander's speech on the life of glory (9.6.16-26).²⁴ In the second half of the chapter, I turn to four passages that I believe also feature the Achilles motif, but have previously gone unnoticed: the three diplomatic exchanges between Alexander and Darius (4.1.7-14; 4.5.1-8; 4.11.1-10, 16-21), and the death of Statira (4.10.18-24). Finally, in the conclusion, I consider Curtius' use of the Achilles motif in relation to his probable historical context (first cent. A.D.),²⁵

¹⁹ On Alexander's characterization in Curtius' first and second pentads, see Dosson 1886: 255-257; Tarn 1948: 2.97-99; McQueen 1967: 35-36; and Rutz 1986: 2346. While Atkinson 1980: 70 and Baynham 1998: 129 have drawn attention to the greater complexity of this characterization, Rutz 1986: 2346 rightly observes that Alexander's virtues are still more prominent in the first pentad, his vices still more prominent in the second.

²⁰ Because Curtius' work survives in incomplete form (the first two books are lost, and the fifth, sixth, and tenth lacunose), the Achilles motif may have figured even more prominently in the work's original form—a possibility made more likely by the fact that missing portions of the text would undoubtedly have covered two of the most famous Homeric episodes in the Alexander saga: Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy and Hephaestion's death.

²¹ Perrin 1895: 62-64; Kroll 1924: 336; Tarn 1948: 2.267-270; Atkinson 1980: 341-343; Hammond 1983: 124-128; Rutz 1986: 2345; Porod 1987: 305; Cohen 1995: 485; and Baynham 1998: 159.

²² Kroll 1924: 336; Tarn 1948: 2.269; Hammond 1983: 146; Rutz 1986: 2345; Porod 1987: 305; Heckel 1994: 74; and Cohen 1995: 485.

²³ Hammond 1983: 153; Rutz 1986: 2345; and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

²⁴ Porod 1987: 305; Ameling 1988: 671; and Spencer 2002: 146.

²⁵ On Curtius' date, see n. 2.

exploring how this motif—and its associated themes of moral decline, kingship, and tyranny—may connect to Julio-Claudian or Flavian political realities.

I. The Punishment of Betis (4.6.26-29)

<...> *qu<o> ad<d>ucto, insolenti gaudio iuvenis elatus, alias virtutis etiam in hoste mirator: “Non, ut voluisti,” inquit, “morieris, sed, quidquid in captivum inveniri potest, passurum esse te cogita.” [27] Ille non interrito modo, sed contumaci quoque vultu intuens regem nullam ad minas eius reddidit vocem. [28] Tum Alexander: “Videtisne obstinatum ad tacendum?” inquit, “Num genu posuit? Num vocem supplicem misit? Vincam tamen silentium et, si nihil aliud, certe gemitu interpellabo.” [29] Ira[m] deinde vertit in rabiem, iam tum peregrinos ritus nova subiciente fortuna. Per talos enim spirantis lora traiecta sunt, religatumque ad currum traxere circa urbem equi, gloriante rege Achillen, a quo genus ipse deduceret, imitatum se esse poena in hostem capienda.*

When he [Betis] had been brought to the king, the young man, on other occasions an admirer of courage in an enemy, said, having been overcome by his insolent joy: “You will not die as you wished, but know that you will suffer whatever can be devised for use against a captive.” [27] That man, gazing at the king not only with an undaunted, but even a haughty expression, made no response to his threats. [28] Then Alexander said: “Do you see how set he is on remaining silent? He has not bent the knee, has he? He has not uttered a word of entreaty, has he? Still, I will conquer his silence and, if nothing else, I will put an end to it with groans.” [29] Then his anger turned to frenzy, his new fortune already at that time hinting at foreign customs. For, while Betis still breathed, thongs were driven through his ankles, and, when he had been tied to a chariot, horses dragged him round the city, while the king gloried in the fact that he had imitated Achilles, from whom he himself traced his descent, in exacting punishment on an enemy.

This passage, which contains Curtius’ most famous deployment of the Achilles motif, describes Alexander’s notorious treatment of Betis, the Gazan commander,²⁶ at the siege of Gaza. During the final moments of the siege, Betis, having made a heroic but doomed last stand, is captured and brought before Alexander. The king, furious at the two wounds he has received in the course of the siege, threatens his captured opponent with a correspondingly excruciating death. When Betis remains defiantly silent, Alexander flies into a frenzy and gives the command

²⁶ The Gazan commander’s name is variously given as “Betis” (Curt. 4.6.7-29), “Batis” (Arr. *Anab.* 2.25.4), “Baitis” (Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5 = Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18), and “Babemasis” (Joseph. *A.J.* 11.8.3). While “Batis” is the most common rendering of his name, I use “Betis” throughout this section for the sake of consistency.

for Betis to be tied to the back of a chariot and dragged round the city to his death. Finally, as the horrific act is being carried out, Alexander revels in the fact that he is imitating his ancestor Achilles (*gloriante...Achillen...imitatum...esse*), and, more specifically, Achilles' dragging of Hector following their climactic duel.²⁷

Traditionally, the major question surrounding this passage has been the historicity of Alexander's punishment of Betis. For over a century, scholars have been fiercely divided on this question, with some rejecting the story as fictional, and others, particularly in recent years, accepting it as historical.²⁸ On both sides, various arguments have been advanced. Against the episode's historicity, some have stressed not only Alexander's characteristic respect for brave adversaries,²⁹ but the omission of the episode by Arrian (*Anab.* 2.25.4-27.7), Diodorus (17.49.1) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 25.4-8), the three other extant Alexander historians who record, or at least mention, the siege of Gaza;³⁰ in favor of its historicity, others have pointed to Alexander's equally characteristic reliance on shock and awe tactics to deter resistance,³¹ as well as the pro-Alexander bias that may account for the episode's omission in some of the extant Alexander historians.³² Yet, as intriguing as this question is, it is also, in the final analysis, unanswerable.

²⁷ While Alexander sees himself as imitating Achilles in this episode, there is also a sense in which he is outdoing him: whereas Achilles drags Hector after he is dead, Alexander drags Betis while he is still alive.

²⁸ Fictional: Perrin 1895; Berve 1926: 2.105 (no. 209); Tarn 1948: 2.265-270; Pearson 1960: 247-248; Renault 1975: 117-118; and Hammond 1997: 96. Historical: Radet 1931: 104-106; Lane Fox: 1973: 193; Schachermeyr 1973: 220, n. 242; Bosworth 1988a: 68; Green 1991: 267; Cartledge 2004: 147-150; Worthington 2004: 112; and Freeman 2011: 141.

²⁹ Renault 1975: 117-118; Hammond 1997: 96.

³⁰ Pearson 1960: 247-248; cf. Tarn 1948: 2.268. Justin, the fifth extant Alexander historian, omits the siege of Gaza altogether; three other ancient authors (Joseph. *A.J.* 11.8.3-4; Polyb. 16.22a.5; *It. Alex.* 45-47) also give accounts of the siege, but each omits Alexander's punishment of Betis.

³¹ Bosworth 1988a: 68; Cartledge 2004: 147-150; and Worthington 2004: 112.

³² Bosworth 1988a: 68.

Based on the scanty evidence for this episode—Curtius’ account, as well as a short account by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18 = Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5), the historian and rhetorician of the first century B.C., and a longer one by Hegesias (Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5 = Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18), a rhetorician of the early Hellenistic period—we cannot say whether it is historical or not. What we can say, however, is that Curtius’ choice to include the Alexander-Betis episode is, in itself, significant. As Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus, and Justin all show, Curtius was not, *qua* Alexander historian, bound to include this episode, the way he certainly was for, say, the battle of Gaugamela. Moreover, as both Hegesias and Dionysius show, Curtius was not even bound to write the episode in the specific way he did; this episode, like virtually every episode in the Alexander tradition, allowed for different emphases and interpretations. How, then, does Curtius’ version of the Alexander-Betis episode compare to those of Dionysius and Hegesias?

On the whole, Curtius’ version shows substantial agreement with those of Dionysius and Hegesias. In Dionysius’ account, Curtius’ story appears in condensed form:

Ἀλέξανδρος πολιορκῶν Γάζαν χωρίον τι τῆς Συρίας πάνυ ἐχυρὸν τραυματίας τε γίνεται κατὰ τὴν προσβολὴν καὶ τὸ χωρίον αἰρεῖ χρόνῳ. φερόμενος δ’ ὑπ’ ὀργῆς τοὺς τ’ ἐγκαταληφθέντας ἀποσφάττει πάντας, ἐπιτρέψας τοῖς Μακεδόσι τὸν ἐντυχόντα κτείνειν, καὶ τὸν ἡγεμόνα αὐτῶν αἰχμάλωτον λαβὼν, ἄνδρα ἐν ἀξιώματι καὶ τύχης καὶ εἶδους, ἐξ ἄρματι δίφρου δῆσαι κελεύσας ζῶντα καὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἐλαύνειν ἀνὰ κράτος ἐν τῇ πάντων ὄψει διαφθείρει.

While besieging Gaza, a very strong place in Syria, Alexander is wounded during the assault and captures the place in time. As he is carried away by anger, he slaughters all those who are captured, permitting the Macedonians to kill whomever they meet; and, having captured their commander [Betis], a man of distinction for his luck and beauty, he kills him by giving the order to bind him to a chariot alive and to drive the horses at full speed in sight of everyone. (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18 = Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5)

Conversely, in Hegesias' account, which Dionysius cites, apparently verbatim,³³ as an example of bad prose rhythm, Curtius' story appears in highly embellished—and grotesque—form:

ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἔχων τὸ σύνταγμα προηγεῖτο. καὶ πῶς ἐβεβούλευτο τῶν πολεμίων τοῖς ἀρίστοις, ἀπαντᾶν ἐπιόντι· τοῦτο γὰρ ἔγνωστο κρατήσασιν ἐνὸς συνεκβαλεῖν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος. ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐλπίς αὕτη συνέδραμεν εἰς τὸ τολμᾶν, ὥστ' Ἀλέξανδρον μηδέποτε κινδυνεῦσαι πρότερον οὕτως. ἀνὴρ γὰρ τῶν πολεμίων εἰς γόνατα συγκαμφθεὶς ἔδοξεν τοῦτ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῆς ἰκετείας ἔνεκα πρᾶξαι. προσέμενος δ' ἐγγὺς μικρὸν ἐκνεύει τὸ ξίφος ἐνέγκαντος ἐπὶ τὰ πτερύγια τοῦ θώρακος, ὥστε γενέσθαι τὴν πληγὴν οὐ καιριωτάτην. ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν αὐτὸς ἀπώλεσεν κατὰ κεφαλῆς τύπτων τῇ μαχαίρᾳ, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ὀργῇ πρόσφατος ἐπίμπρα. οὕτως ἄρα ἐκάστου τὸν ἔλεον ἐξέστησεν ἢ τοῦ τολμήσαντος ἀπόνοια τῶν μὲν ἰδόντων, τῶν δ' ἀκουσάντων, ὥσθ' ἐξακισχιλίους ὑπὸ τῆν σάλπιγγα ἐκείνην τῶν βαρβάρων κατακοπῆναι. τὸν μέντοι Βαῖτιν αὐτὸν ἀνήγαγον ζῶντα Λεοννάτος καὶ Φιλώτας. ἰδὼν δὲ πολὺσαρκον καὶ μέγαν καὶ <τὸ εἶδος> βλοσυρώτατον—μέλας γὰρ ἦν καὶ τὸ χρῶμα—μισήσας ἐφ' οἷς ἐβεβούλευτο [καὶ τὸ εἶδος] ἐκέλευσεν διὰ τῶν ποδῶν χαλκοῦν ψάλιον διεύραντας ἔλκειν κύκλωι γυμνόν. πιλούμενος δὲ κακοῖς περιπολλὰς τραχύτητας ἔκραζεν. αὐτὸ δ' ἦν, ὃ λέγω, τὸ συνάγον ἀνθρώπους. ἐπέτεινε μὲν γὰρ ὁ πόνος, βάρβαρον δ' ἐβόα, δεσπότην καθικετεύων· γελᾶν δ' ὁ σολοικισμὸς ἐποίει. τὸ δὲ στέαρ καὶ τὸ κύτος τῆς σαρκὸς ἀνέφαινε Βαβυλώνιον ζῶον ἕτερον ἀδρόν. ὁ μὲν οὖν ὄχλος ἐνέπαιζε, στρατιωτικὴν ὕβριν ὑβρίζων εἰδεχθῆ καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ σκαιὸν ἐχθρόν.

The king [Alexander] led the way with his contingent. And the bravest of the enemy had resolved to meet him as he approached by any means; for this was their judgment, that by overcoming one man, they would cast out the whole lot of them as well. Now then, this hope ran hand in hand with daring, such that Alexander was never before in such danger. For one of the enemy, having bent to his knees, seemed to Alexander to have done this for the sake of supplication. Having allowed him closer, he narrowly dodges the sword as the man strikes at the flaps of his cuirass,³⁴ so that the blow did not prove fatal. But he himself slew the man by cutting off his head with his dagger, and anger inflamed the others. Thus, as it turned out, the foolishness of the man who dared the deed removed pity from each of those who saw it and heard it, such that six thousand of the barbarians were cut down by that trumpet call. But Leonnatus and Philotas, however, brought Betis back alive. Seeing the big, corpulent man (for he was also of black skin-color) and hating him for the plots against his life, he gave the order for men to draw a bronze chain through his feet and to drag him in a circle, naked. Hard-pressed by pains, he began to scream around many rough patches of ground. This detail which I mention was the very thing which brought people together. For the pain racked him, and he shouted barbarically, supplicating him as master, and his mispronunciation made them laugh. But his fatness and the hollowness of his flesh gave the appearance of another creature, a full-

³³ Thus Jacoby (Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5), who prints Hegesias' version of the episode as a direct quote.

³⁴ I translate ἐνέγκαντος ἐπὶ τὰ πτερύγια τοῦ θώρακος as “striking at the flaps of his [Alexander’s] cuirass” (lit., “carrying at the flaps of the cuirass”) rather than “carrying under the flaps of his own [the Gazan soldier’s] cuirass,” as previous translators have essentially done (e.g., Robinson 1953: 255).

grown Babylonian animal. So then the crowd made fun of him, insulting with the insults of soldiers an enemy who was hideous and clumsy. (Hegesias *FgrH* 142 F5 = Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18)

Despite the general similarities between these three accounts—Alexander’s wounding or attempted wounding, Betis’ capture and presentation before the king, and Alexander’s decision to punish Betis by dragging him to his death—Curtius’ account stands apart in at least one significant way: the Achilles motif.³⁵ Whereas Curtius makes the motif explicit (4.6.29: *gloriantē rege Achillen... imitatum se esse*), Dionysius³⁶ and Hegesias,³⁷ by contrast, leave it implicit, preferring to allow the Homeric allusion to speak for itself. What Curtius’ choice suggests, then, is that, regardless of the historicity of Alexander’s Achilles-like act, this Achillean parallel should be taken as central to the episode’s thematic significance.

Before considering the Achilles motif’s present thematic significance, however, it is necessary to determine the Achilles to which Curtius means to compare Alexander in this passage. On the surface, the Homeric Achilles, and, in particular, the Achilles of *Iliad* 22, may seem the natural choice. From Alexander’s bestial rage (*rabiem*) to his savage punishment of his enemy by means of a chariot, the Homeric parallels are indeed pronounced. Closer inspection, however, suggests a different Achilles. Based on a series of Vergilian allusions in this passage,³⁸

³⁵ Perrin 1895: 62; Tarn 1948: 2.269; and Atkinson 1980: 341.

³⁶ Tarn 1948: 269 maintains that Dionysius was unaware of the Homeric allusion, but he is plainly contradicted by Dionysius’ question about the Betis episode following his quotation from Hegesias: ἄρα γε ὅμοια ταῦτ’ ἐστὶ τοῖς Ὀμηρικοῖς ἐκείνοις, ἐν οἷς Ἀχιλλεύς ἐστὶν αἰκίζόμενος Ἑκτορα μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν; “Is this not like that Homeric scene in which Achilles is defiling Hector after his death?” (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 18).

³⁷ Professor Morgan suggests to me that Hegesias may not have understood the Homeric allusion at all, given that his account omits the chariot, turns the binding agent into a bronze chain, and represents Betis as fat and ugly. While this is possible, I personally think it more likely that Hegesias, who, as a rhetorician, would have had a solid command of the Homeric poems, did recognize the allusion, but chose to strain the Alexander-Achilles parallels as a way of putting his subject in a bad light.

³⁸ For Vergilian allusions in Curtius, see Balzer 1971 and Moore 1995: 140-226. Neither scholar, however, discusses the Vergilian allusions listed below.

Curtius seems, in fact, to be comparing Alexander to the Vergilian, rather than Homeric, Achilles. First, as a number of scholars have noted, Curtius' description of Alexander's piercing of Betis' heels closely parallels Vergil's description of Achilles' piercing of Hector's feet:³⁹

Per talos enim spirantis lora traiecta sunt...

For while he still breathed thongs were driven through his ankles... (Curt. 4.6.29)

perque pedes traiectus lora tumentis...

having been pierced by thongs through his swelling feet... (Verg. *Aen.* 2.273)

The triple concordance of *per*, *lora*, and *traiectus/traiecta*, is particularly striking; less striking, but still significant, is the fact that *per* takes a word for feet (*pedes*), or something close to it (*talos*), in both cases. Second, as scholars have also observed, Curtius' mention of Alexander's dragging of Betis⁴⁰ *circa urbem*, "around the city" (Curt. 4.6.29), recalls Vergil's mention of Achilles' dragging of Hector *circum Iliacos...muros*, "around the walls of Troy" (Verg. *Aen.* 1.483)⁴¹—a detail found in Vergil, but not in Homer.⁴² Finally, as I suggest here for the first time, Curtius' present deployment of Achilles' name subtly echoes Vergil's deployment of the hero's name in Priam's speech to Neoptolemus in *Aeneid* 2:⁴³

Achillen, a quo genus ipse deduceret

³⁹ Pearson 1960: 248, n. 28; Austin 1964: 130; Atkinson 1980: 342; Rutz 1986: 2337; Hamilton 1988: 446; and Horsfall 2008: 240.

⁴⁰ Some scholars (e.g., Tarn 1948: 2.269) have drawn attention to Curtius' lack of specificity concerning the driver of the chariot, but the natural inference, as Atkinson 1980: 342-343 observes, is that Alexander performed this task.

⁴¹ Perrin 1895: 63-64; Atkinson 1980: 342.

⁴² Austin 1971: 162.

⁴³ This suggestion finds support in the fact that Curtius alludes elsewhere to this same Vergilian passage. As Dosson 1886: 289, Balzer 1971: 102-103, and Heckel 1994: 74 have all noted, Alexander's brutal words to the mortally wounded Cleitus, "*I nunc,*" *inquit, "ad Philippum et Parmenionem et Attalum,*" "'Go now,' he said, 'to Philip and Parmenion and Attalus'" (Curt. 8.1.52), appear to be modeled on Neoptolemus' words to the mortally wounded Priam, *referes ergo haec et nuntius ibis / Pelidae genitori*, "You will report these things, then, and go as a messenger to my father, the son of Peleus" (Verg. *Aen.* 2.547-548).

Achilles, from whom he himself traced his descent (Curt. 4.6.29)

at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles

But not that Achilles, from whom you lyingly claim to be born (Verg. *Aen.* 2.540)

In both cases, not only does Achilles stand as the antecedent of a relative clause introduced by *quo*, but the relative clause itself describes an Achilles imitator (Alexander, Neoptolemus) who traces his descent from the best of the Achaeans. Thus, if, as seems likely, Curtius means to compare Alexander to the Vergilian, rather than Homeric, Achilles, what, we may ask, does this comparison mean?

Broadly speaking, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Vergilian Achilles serves, I would argue, to highlight the king's dark side within the *Historiae*. First of all, this comparison neatly captures Alexander's *ira*, "anger," and *vis*, "violence," two of the king's most prominent negative qualities in Curtius' work. Whereas the Homeric Achilles is a highly complex character, capable of a wide range of emotions, the Vergilian Achilles, as K. C. King has shown, is a far simpler character, a character, indeed, who practically embodies *ira* and *vis*.⁴⁴ "From first to last," King writes, "Vergil's Achilles is the killer of Trojans, destroyer of Troy...Linked as warriors against Troy, Juno and Achilles are also linked as representatives of the uncontrolled passion that is both the cause and effect of war and that it will be the special mission of the Roman state to curb."⁴⁵ By comparing Alexander to this Achilles, then, Curtius stresses the king's destructive, almost demonic, nature in killing Betis.

Second, and more broadly, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Vergilian Achilles foreshadows the king's moral decline in the second pentad. As Curtian scholars have long

⁴⁴ King 1987: 121-128.

⁴⁵ King 1987: 126.

recognized, Curtius' Alexander represents something of a Jekyll and Hyde figure.⁴⁶ Throughout the first pentad, Alexander is, on the whole, a good *rex*, the epitome of nobility, bravery, and restraint; starting in the second pentad, however, the good *rex*, corrupted by excessive good fortune (*fortuna*), rapidly devolves into a classic *tyrannus*, the Greco-Roman figure of *ira* and *vis par excellence*.⁴⁷ By comparing Alexander, then, to the Vergilian Achilles in Book 4, the heart of the first pentad, Curtius effectively presages the king's transformation in the second: Alexander *qua* Vergilian Achilles looks forward to Alexander *qua tyrannus*, and, more specifically, Alexander *qua* Great King, the preeminent *tyrannus* of the Classical period.⁴⁸

Finally, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Vergilian Achilles suggests a second comparison, a comparison between Alexander and the Vergilian Neoptolemus, which, in turn, further reflects the king's demonic quality. Through the act of killing Betis by dragging him behind his chariot, Alexander claims to play the role of Achilles, his famous heroic ancestor. Yet, by describing Alexander's Achillean imitation in language that echoes Priam's address to Neoptolemus in *Aeneid* 2, Curtius powerfully, if subtly, undermines this very claim. Rather than playing the role of Achilles, Alexander, the historian implies, plays the role of Neoptolemus instead. On this reading, Alexander's execution of Betis finds its model not in Achilles' slaying of Hector, but in Neoptolemus' butchering of Priam, the former an act of heroism *and* savagery, the latter an act of savagery alone. Thus, far from a true reincarnation of his heroic ancestor, Alexander, Curtius insinuates, is merely a debased version thereof.

⁴⁶ Dosson 1886: 255-257; Tarn 1948: 2.97-99; McQueen 1967: 35-36; and Rutz 1986: 2346.

⁴⁷ According to Dunkle 1967: 168, *vis* ranks as one of the four most common vices of the *tyrannus* in Latin literature. While *ira* does not make this list, it is clearly connected with a second common vice, *crudelitas*.

⁴⁸ Cf. Baynham 1998: 159: "Curtius' thematic emphasis is clear. Alexander is already displaying the negative aspects of kingship associated with Darius. His success ensures that these are given full rein as the absolutism of his power increases."

II. The Marriage of Alexander and Roxane (8.4.22-26)

[22] *Satrapes etiam eo, qui penes ipsum relinquebatur, tradito, barbara opulentia convivium, quo regem accipiebat, instruxerat. [23] Id cum multa comitate celebraret, introduci XXX nobiles virgines iussit. Inter quas erat filia ipsius, Roxane nomine, eximia corporis specie et decore habitus in barbaris raro. [24] Quae quamquam inter electas processerat, omnium tamen oculos convertit in se, maxime regis minus iam cupiditatibus suis imperantis inter obsequia fortunae, contra quam non satis cauta mortalitas est. [25] Itaque ille, qui uxorem Darei, qui duas filias virgines, quibus forma praeter Roxanen comparari nulla potuerat, haud alio animo quam parentis aspexerat, tunc in amorem virgunculae, si regiae stirpi compararetur, ignobilis, ita effusus est, ut diceret ad stabiliendum regnum pertinere Persas et Macedones conubio iungi: hoc uno modo et pudorem victis et superbiam victoribus detrahi posse. [26] Achillem quoque, a quo genus ipse deduceret, cum captiva coisse. Ne inferri nefas arbitrentur, †ita† matrimonii iure velle iungi.*

[22] The satrap, having handed over even the son who was being left with him, had prepared a feast of barbarian splendor at which he received the king. [23] While he was celebrating this feast with great courtesy, he ordered thirty noble maidens to be brought in. Among these was his own daughter, Roxane, a girl of distinguished beauty and a grace of style rare among barbarians. [24] Though she had come forth among specially chosen women, nevertheless she caused the eyes of all to turn to her, most of all the king's, who was now less in control of his passions amidst the indulgences of fortune, against whom mortals cannot be careful enough. [25] And so he who had gazed at Darius' wife, who had gazed at Darius' two maiden daughters (to whom no woman could be compared for beauty except Roxane) with no mind besides that of a father, that man then fell so in love with the little maiden, who was ignoble if compared with royal stock, that he said that for Persians and Macedonians to be joined in wedlock was connected with his effort to stabilize the empire; that in this one way shame could be taken away from the conquered, haughtiness from the conquerors. [26] Achilles, too, from whom he himself traced his descent, had married a captive woman; lest the conquered should think that a wrong was being inflicted on them, he †so† wanted to be joined in lawful matrimony with her.

This passage, which contains Curtius' second explicit deployment of the Achilles motif, centers on Alexander's famous marriage to Roxane (327 B.C.).⁴⁹ When Alexander receives the submission of Oxyartes, the Bactrian nobleman treats Alexander and the Macedonians to a feast of oriental splendor. At this feast, Alexander falls in love with Roxane, the beautiful daughter of Oxyartes, and decides, then and there, to marry her. The king's rationale, as Curtius reports, is twofold: first, his desire to reconcile Macedonians and Persians and thereby solidify his empire;

⁴⁹ On Alexander's marriage to Roxane, see Renard and Servais 1955.

and second—and more significant in the present context—his claim that Achilles, too, had married a captive woman (*Achillem...cum captiva coiise*).

Whereas scholars have traditionally been divided on the Achilles motif's historicity in Curtius' account of the death of Betis, they have been in general agreement on the motif's fictionality in his account of Alexander's marriage to Roxane.⁵⁰ In the first place, Curtius' two-part epic comparison, between Alexander and Achilles on the one hand, and between Roxane and Briseis on the other, is unique to the Roman historian; Plutarch (*Alex.* 47.7-8; *De Alex. fort.* 1.11 = *Mor.* 332E and *De Alex. fort.* 2.6 = *Mor.* 338D), Arrian (*Anab.* 4.19.5), and the *Metz Epitome* (§29-31) make no such comparison in their respective accounts of the marriage, and with Diodorus, whose account of the marriage survives only in summary form, we cannot tell.⁵¹ Second, and more significantly, Curtius, as Porod has recognized, signals the Achilles motif with virtually the same formula in both the Betis and Roxane episodes: *Achillen, a quo genus ipse deduceret* (4.6.29) ~ *Achillem quoque, a quo genus ipse deduceret* (8.4.26), "Achilles (too), from whom he himself traced his descent."⁵² While scholars may disagree on which historian first developed this particular Alexander-Achilles comparison, with Hammond favoring Cleitarchus,⁵³ and W. W. Tarn, Rutz, and Heckel favoring Curtius,⁵⁴ the crucial point is that Curtius chose to include it at all. As Arrian, Plutarch, and the *Metz Epitome* all show, Curtius

⁵⁰ Tarn 1948: 2.269, Hammond 1983: 146, Rutz 1986: 2345, Heckel 1994: 74 and 2015: 31, and implicitly almost all biographies of Alexander; *contra* Radet 1931: 254 and Rogers 2004: 172-173.

⁵¹ Diodorus' account of Alexander's marriage to Roxane is missing due to the major lacuna in Book 17, though the ancient table of contents to this book confirms that the event was covered. Justin, once again, omits the episode altogether.

⁵² Porod 1987: 305.

⁵³ Hammond 1983: 146.

⁵⁴ Tarn 1948: 2.269, Rutz 1986: 2345, and Heckel 1994: 74 and 2015: 31.

could easily have followed a different tradition in which the Achilles motif was not a factor; that the historian did not do so, however, suggests, that we may, as in the previous passage, confidently treat the Achilles motif in this passage as thematically significant.

To determine the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in this passage, we must begin by considering two questions: First, to which Achilles does Curtius mean to compare Alexander, and second, to which Briseis does he mean to compare Roxane? With Alexander, the Homeric Achilles may, once again, seem the logical answer, given that Homer provides the most famous treatment of Achilles' relationship with Briseis in ancient literature. Yet, the way in which Curtius introduces the Achilles motif in this passage poses a problem for this view. By setting up the Achilles motif with virtually the same formula as in the previous passage (8.4.26 ~ 4.6.29), Curtius seems, by extension, to allude to the same *Aeneid* 2 verse as in the previous passage:

Achillem quoque, a quo genus ipse deduceret

Achilles, too, from whom he himself traced his descent (Curt. 8.4.26)

at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles

But not that Achilles, from whom you lyingly claim to be born (Verg. *Aen.* 2.540)

With these Curtian and Vergilian phrases, we find, of course, the same similarities as noted above: first, Achilles functioning as the antecedent of a relative clause introduced by *quo*, and second, a relative clause concerned with someone tracing his descent from the Greek hero.

Consequently, I suggest that Curtius means to cast Alexander here, once again, in the role of the Vergilian, rather than Homeric, Achilles.⁵⁵ In the case of Roxane, the question of the specific

⁵⁵ More generally, Balzer 1971: 68-82 has shown that Curtius' descriptions of feasts, such as that for Alexander and Roxane's wedding, are heavily indebted to Vergil's descriptions of the same, singling out, in this case (73), Curtius' use of Vergilian *instruo* (Curt. 8.4.22: *Satrapes...convivium...instruxerat*, "The satrap had prepared a feast"; cf.

Briseis she is meant to play is even more difficult to answer. While Briseis appears in a number of ancient works, from Homer to Roman elegy, her characterization remains relatively minimal and generally consistent. Whether in Homer (*Il.* 9.334-345, 19.287-300) or in Ovid (*Amor.* 1.9.33-34 and *Her.* 3), Briseis is, above all, Achilles' captive and lover. For present purposes, therefore, treating Curtius' Roxane-Briseis comparison as a general, non-specific, comparison will, I think, be sufficient. With these preliminary considerations in mind, how, then, should we understand the Achilles motif's thematic significance within this passage?

First of all, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Vergilian serves here, I would argue, to highlight Alexander's increasingly tyrannical nature in the second pentad. As Baynham has shown, Curtius, in contrast to Arrian and Plutarch, shapes his account of Alexander's marriage to Roxane in such a way as to emphasize the king's current status as *tyrannus*.⁵⁶ To begin with, Curtius strongly implies that Alexander's motive for marrying Roxane is neither political concord nor racial reconciliation, as the king himself makes out (8.4.25); instead, by placing the king's seemingly high-minded motives within the result clause dependent on *in amorem virgunculae...ita effusus est*, "he fell so in love with the little maiden" (8.4.25), the historian suggests that his true motive was *cupido*,⁵⁷ a near synonym of *libido*, another of the four stock vices of the Greco-Roman *tyrannus*.⁵⁸ Curtius further reinforces Alexander's status as

Verg. *Aen.* 1.637-638: *at domus...| instruitur*, "but the house is prepared"; and Verg. *Aen.* 3.231: *instruimus mensas*, "we prepare the tables").

⁵⁶ Baynham 1998: 191-192.

⁵⁷ Cf. Baynham 1998: 192 and Moore 1995: 95. Curtius mentions *cupiditas*, a synonym of *cupido*, twice in this passage, the first time to stress that Alexander was no longer in control of his passions (8.4.24: *cupiditatibus*), the second to describe the passionate haste of Alexander's decision to marry Roxane (8.4.27: *in medio cupiditatis ardore*, "in the midst of the fire of his passion").

⁵⁸ Dunkle 1967: 168-169. According to Dunkle, *libido* "refers to a despotic caprice which characterizes rule according to the desire of one man. This rule by whim also includes a capricious sexual dominion of the ruler over his subjects" (168).

tyrannus with his description of the way in which the king's Macedonian friends react to the royal marriage:⁵⁹

Pudebat amicos super vinum et epulas socerum ex deditis esse delectum, sed, post Cliti caedem libertate sublata, vultu, qui maxime servit, adsentiebantur.

His friends were ashamed that a father-in-law had been chosen amidst wine and feasts, but after the death of Cleitus, with freedom of speech having been taken away, they agreed to it with a facial expression that is most slavish. (8.4.30)

Faced with Alexander's marriage to a barbarian girl, the king's companions play the role of servile subjects akin to Roman senators under the Principate.⁶⁰ Rather than practicing freedom of speech (*libertate*), they keep their thoughts to themselves; rather than acting as true advisers, they let their king do as he pleases. The king's moral transformation, in short, is now complete: far from the noble *rex* of the first pentad, Alexander stands, at this point, as the unequivocal *tyrannus* of the second. This, then, is where the Achilles motif comes in. Whereas Alexander's Achillean role served in the previous passage to foreshadow the king's moral transformation, it serves here, I suggest, to mark its fulfillment. Like Vergil's Achilles, the Alexander of the second pentad is not only a figure of greater *ira* and *vis*; he is also, as seen in the present passage, a figure of greater passion, another quality closely associated with the Vergilian Achilles.⁶¹ In contrast to the Alexander of the first pentad, who famously manages, as Curtius here pointedly recalls, to contain his passion in the presence of Darius' wife and daughters, reputedly among the most beautiful women in Asia (8.4.25), the Alexander of the second proves unable to do the same in the presence of the equally beautiful Roxane. Ultimately, while Alexander's passion

⁵⁹ Baynham 1998: 192.

⁶⁰ Heckel 1994: 74.

⁶¹ King 1987 notes that the Vergilian Achilles is representative of "the uncontrolled passion that is both the cause and effect of war" (126) and, by extension, "the irrationality that constantly threatens to destroy human peace, human civilization" (128).

may manifest itself differently from that of the Vergilian Achilles, both share a certain inherently destructive quality.

Second, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Vergilian Achilles suggests, once again, an additional comparison—that between Alexander and the Vergilian Neoptolemus—a comparison that further underscores the king's moral decline in the second pentad. In this passage, Curtius presents Alexander as reenacting a specific part of Achilles' story: just as Achilles once married Briseis, a barbarian captive,⁶² so is Alexander now marrying Roxane (8.4.26), the daughter of a barbarian warlord. Yet, by describing Alexander's Achillean reenactment with a phrase reminiscent of Priam's appeal to Neoptolemus in *Aeneid* 2 (Curt. 8.4.26 ~ Verg. *Aen.* 2.540), Curtius also hints at a parallel between Alexander and Neoptolemus. Here, as in the previous passage, this secondary comparison is thematically apt. Despite Alexander's claim to be following in Achilles' footsteps with his marriage to Roxane, he is, in a certain sense, more closely following in those of Neoptolemus. While both Achilles and Neoptolemus have relationships with barbarian woman, Briseis in the former's case and Andromache in the latter's, only Neoptolemus is ever depicted as actually marrying his barbarian partner.⁶³ What this Alexander-Neoptolemus comparison suggests, then, I believe, is that Alexander, in marrying Roxane, is behaving not in a heroic way, but in an anti-heroic, even debased, way. Much as in the previous passage, in other words, Alexander fails to live up to his

⁶² On Achilles' relationship with Briseis, see King 1987: 172-174 and Fantuzzi 2012: 99-185.

⁶³ Verg. *Aen.* 3.294-343 and Eur. *Tro.* 1136-1142; cf. Eur. *Andr.* 1-31 and Sen. *Min. Tro.* 975-976, however, where Andromache is depicted as Neoptolemus' concubine. While never presented as a true marriage, Achilles' relationship with Briseis is regularly characterized as either a dalliance (e.g., Hor. *Carm.* 2.4.1-4; Prop. 2.22.29—34; Ov. *Amor.* 1.9.33-34 and *Her.* 3) or a quasi-marriage (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 9.334-345, 19.287-300; Prop. 2.8.29-40, 2.9.9-18).

self-proclaimed heroic model:⁶⁴ rather than treating Roxane as something similar to but not quite a wife, à la Achilles, Alexander treats her as a full wife, à la Neoptolemus, thereby breaking with Greco-Roman cultural norms and aligning himself, from a Greco-Roman moralizing perspective, with the decadent and corrupting East.⁶⁵

Finally, within this same role-playing context, Roxane's role as Briseis can be seen to further reflect Alexander's tyrannical status in the second pentad. Particularly in Homer, but also in other authors, Briseis functions as the catalyst for the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon and, ultimately, for the breach between Achilles and the Greek army. By comparing Roxane to Briseis, therefore, Curtius, I suggest, hints at Roxane's potential, and that of the broader Orientalizing policy she represents, to create a schism between Alexander and the Macedonians. In the event, such a schism is not long in coming. Right after his marriage to Roxane, Alexander, on Curtius' account, decides to seek divine honors for himself, a decision that not only further alienates the Macedonians, but contributes, in short order, to a conspiracy against his life. Thus, by playing the role of Briseis, Roxane effectively foreshadows the ever more troubled relationship between her husband and his subjects, or, in moralizing terms, an Orientalizing *tyrannus* and his nobly traditionalist subjects.

III. The Battle between Alexander and the Indian Rivers (9.4.8-14)

Quippe III flumina tota India praeter Gangem maxima munimento arcis adplicant undas: a septentrione Indus adluit, a meridie [h]Acesines Hydaspi confunditur. [9] Ceterum amnium

⁶⁴ Professor Morgan suggests that Alexander may also be consciously manipulating the Achilles paradigm for his own ends in this passage. If this is the case, then Alexander's dark side becomes even more pronounced: not only does Alexander fail to live up to Achilles' amatory example, but he cynically reframes the Achilles-Briseis relationship as a full-fledged marriage in order to justify his own troubling amatory decision.

⁶⁵ Curtius, like a number of ancient authors, views the marriage as a dangerous inversion of Greco-Roman cultural norms: *Hoc modo rex Asiae et Europae introductam inter convivales ludos matrimonio sibi adiunxit, ex captiva geniturus, qui victoribus imperaret*, "In this way, the king of Asia and Europe married a woman brought in amidst festive games, intending to sire a son from the captive woman who would rule the victors." (8.4.29).

coetus maritimis similes fluctus movet, multoque ac turbido limo, quod aquarum concursu subinde turbatur, iter, qua meat<ur> navigiis, in tenuem alveum cogitur. [10] Itaque, cum crebri fluctus se inveherent et navium hinc proras, hinc latera pulsarent, subducere nautae vela coeperunt. Sed ministeria eorum hinc aestu, hinc praerapida celeritate fluminum occupantur. [11] In oculis omnium duo maiora navigia submersa sunt; leviora, cum et ipsa nequirent regi, in ripam tamen innoxia expulsa sunt. Ipse rex in rapidissimos vertices incidit, quibus intorta navis obliqua et gubernaculi inpatiens agebatur. [12] Iam vestem detraxerat corpori proiecturus semet in flumen, amicique, ut exciperent eum, haud procul nabant, adparebatque anceps periculum tam nataturi quam navigare perseverantis. [13] Ergo ingenti certamine concitant remos, quantaque vis humana esse poterat admota est, ut fluctus, qui se invehebant, everberarentur. [14] Findi crederes undas et retro gurgites cedere. Quibus tandem navis erepta non tamen ripae adplicatur, sed in proximum vadum inlidunt: cum amne bellum fuisse crederes. Ergo, aris pro numero fluminum positus sacrificioque facto, XXX stadia processit.

For the three greatest rivers in all India apart from the Ganges bring their waters into contact with the walls of the citadel: from the north the Indus washes it, and from the south the Acesines joins with the Hydaspes. [9] Moreover, the meeting of the rivers produces waves like ocean waves, and, because of the great deal of turbid mud that is stirred up from time to time due to the joining of the waters, the route by which ships move is forced into a shallow bed. [10] Therefore, when frequent waves hurled themselves against the prows of the ships from one side, and beat their sides from the other, the sailors began to lower the sails. But their efforts were forestalled, partly by the surge, partly the swift speed of the river. [11] In sight of all two of the larger ships sank; the light vessels, though they themselves were also unable to be steered, were nevertheless driven up onto the shore unharmed. The king himself happened upon the swiftest eddies, in which his ship was turned sideways and was driven on, unable to bear its helm. [12] By now, he had removed the clothes from his body with the intention of hurling himself into the river, and his friends, in order to get him out, were swimming not far off, and it seemed to be equally dangerous, as much for the man intending to swim as for the man who persisted in sailing. [13] Therefore, they plied their oars with a great struggle and made as much progress as human strength is capable of, such that the waves which hurled themselves at them were beaten back. [14] You would have believed that the waves were split and that the waters withdrew. When the ship was finally snatched out of these, it was not set on the bank, but was dashed into the nearest shallows. You would have believed there had been a war with the river. Therefore, when he had set up altars to match the number of rivers and had performed a sacrifice, he proceeded thirty stades.

In this passage, Curtius tells the tale of Alexander's near shipwreck during the final part of the Indian campaign. During his voyage to the Indian Ocean, Alexander narrowly avoids disaster at the treacherous confluence of the Indus, Hydaspes, and Acesines Rivers. Though Alexander's lighter ships fare fine, not only do two of his heavier ships sink, but the royal flagship itself nearly capsizes, threatening to hurl the king to a watery—and ignominious—death.

With characteristic good luck, however, Alexander survives the ordeal, and, after reaching shore, sacrifices to the rivers in thanks for his and his army's salvation. While this passage may thus appear to be nothing more than a factual report of a rare blunder on Alexander's part, Curtius' final remark, *cum amne bellum fuisse crederes*, "you would have believed there had been a war with a river" (9.4.14), suggests that there may be more to the passage than first meets the eye. With this remark, as several scholars have noted, Curtius seems to cast Alexander in the role of Achilles, the hero who famously fights the Scamander (*Il.* 21.211-382), and, in so doing, to reframe this relatively minor setback as a quasi-Homeric exploit: Alexander, the historian appears to suggest, can also claim to have done battle with a river.⁶⁶

While Curtius' supposed deployment of the Achilles motif in this passage is plausible in itself, it becomes virtually certain when we compare Curtius' account of the episode with that of Diodorus.⁶⁷ Not only does Diodorus' account closely resemble Curtius';⁶⁸ it also—and more significantly—makes the Homeric allusion explicit: Σωθεις δὲ παραδόξως τοῖς θεοῖς ἔθυσεν ὡς μεγίστους ἐκπεφευγῶς κινδύνους καὶ πρὸς ποταμὸν ὁμοίως Ἀχιλλεῖ διαγωνισάμενος, "Having been saved unexpectedly, he sacrificed to the gods as if he had escaped the greatest dangers and had, like Achilles, struggled with a river" (17.97.3).⁶⁹ Given that the two historians probably

⁶⁶ Hammond 1983: 153; Rutz 1986: 2345; and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

⁶⁷ Comparison between Curtius' account and those of the three remaining Alexander historians is less conclusive in this case: Plutarch and Justin make no mention of the naval debacle, while Arrian, who does, suppresses the Homeric allusion by focusing on the fate of the fleet rather than Alexander (*Anab.* 6.4.4-5.4). What the comparison does suggest, however, is that this particular Homeric allusion was not a universal feature of Alexander historiography, a fact that makes Curtius' decision to include it that much more significant.

⁶⁸ As Hammond 1983: 153 shows, Diodorus' account resembles Curtius' in several ways: (i) the mistaken description of the three Indian rivers as converging at the same point, though two of them (Hydaspes and Acesines) actually converge north of the third (Indus); (ii) the sinking of two Macedonian vessels; (iii) Alexander's great peril aboard the royal flagship; (iv) Alexander's friends' swimming beside the royal flagship; and (v) Alexander's sacrifice in thanks for his salvation. The differences between the two accounts are minimal (e.g., Alexander leaps into the river in Diodorus, but only prepares to do so in Curtius), and none are, strictly speaking, incompatible.

⁶⁹ Hammond 1983: 153 and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

relied on a common source for this episode (Cleitararchus),⁷⁰ we can safely assume not only that the Achilles motif featured in this common source, but also that Curtius' remark, *cum amne bellum fuisse crederes*, is indeed a Homeric allusion. Further support for this contention, if further support be needed, comes from the context of the passage in question. On a considerably larger scale than either of the two previous passages, this passage forms part of a network of epic allusions: closely preceding the present passage is Alexander's Achilles-esque withdrawal to his tent during the mutiny at the Hyphasis (9.3.18-19); and closely succeeding it, both his Homeric *aristeia* at the Sudrae town (9.4.26-5.21)⁷¹ and his speech to his generals presenting his Achillean preference for a short life of glory rather than a long life of obscurity (9.6.16-26).⁷² Thus, on both of these grounds, we are entitled to ask what the Homeric allusion's thematic significance is, both on its own and within Curtius' work overall?

Before we can answer either question, though, we must recall the significance of Achilles' battle with the Scamander in the *Iliad* itself. When Achilles fights the river during his *aristeia*, the hero takes part in a relatively rare sort of Homeric battle: a battle between a mortal and an immortal. Throughout the poem, Homer narrates six such battles, or near battles,⁷³ and stresses, in each case, their essentially transgressive nature. During Diomedes' *aristeia*, for

⁷⁰ Schwartz 1901: 1874; Hammond 1983 64-65, 153; and Heckel 1994: 73-74.

⁷¹ Whereas Curtius claims that Alexander's *aristeia* took place among the Sudrae (9.4.26), Arrian (*Anab.* 6.11.3) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 63.1), followed by all modern scholars, insist that it took place among the Mallians. For the sake of consistency, I follow each historian's terminology in their respective chapters.

⁷² This network of Homeric allusions becomes more significant when we compare Curtius' account of the Indian campaign with those of the other Alexander historians: while each of these historians includes some of these Homeric allusions, Curtius alone includes all four. As I will show in Sections V and VI below, a similar network of Homeric allusions can be found in Curtius' account of the Persian campaign between the battles of Issus and Gaugamela.

⁷³ Diomedes versus Aphrodite (*Il.* 5.311-351), Diomedes versus Apollo (*Il.* 5.431-446), Diomedes versus Ares (*Il.* 5.846-863), Patroclus versus Apollo (*Il.* 16.698-711), Achilles versus Scamander (*Il.* 21.211-382), and Achilles versus Apollo (*Il.* 22.6-20).

example, Apollo famously characterizes the hero's desire to contend with the gods as both foolish and presumptuous: φράζεο, Τυδεΐδη, καὶ χάζεο, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν | ἴσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποτε φῦλον ὅμοιον | ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων, "Take thought, son of Tydeus, and give way, and do not wish to think things equal to the gods, since never was the race of immortal gods and men who walk the earth alike" (*Il.* 5.440-442). In the Homeric world, as this passage makes clear, gods and men always have been, and always will be, races apart: whereas the gods are deathless and care-free, men are death-bound and care-torn.⁷⁴ Considered from this perspective, then, the significance of Achilles' battle with the Scamander begins to come into focus. Far from just another martial exploit, Achilles' battle with the river, as S. Schein has shown, represents a symbolic challenge to the Homeric cosmic order: Achilles, the best of the Greek heroes but a mortal nonetheless, here transgresses the clear dividing line between mortal and immortal.⁷⁵ What, then, does it mean for Curtius to compare Alexander to the Achilles of *Iliad* 21?

To begin with, Curtius' comparison highlights, I suggest, Alexander's own increasingly transgressive behavior in the second pentad. While Alexander's transgressions are numerous in this part of the work, chief among them, in Curtius' eyes, is the king's decision to seek divine honors:⁷⁶

Iamque omnibus praeparatis <ratus>, quod olim prava mente conceperat, tunc esse maturum, quonam modo caelestes honores usurparet, coepit agitare. Iovis filium non dici tantum se, sed etiam credi volebat, tamquam perinde animis imperare posset ac linguis,

⁷⁴ Cf. Griffin 1980: 82-83.

⁷⁵ Schein 1984: 35; *contra* King 1987: 113.

⁷⁶ For Alexander's deification, see Balsdon 1950, Habicht 1970: 17-36, 245-252 and Badian 1981 [2012: 244-281] and 1996 [2012: 365-385]. Curtius' obituary of Alexander confirms his disdain for the king's request for divine honors. When Curtius enumerates Alexander's bad qualities, the first three he cites are all connected with this aspect of the king's reign: (i) seeking divine honors and trying to be the equal of the gods; (ii) trusting in oracles that advised such conduct; and (iii) showing anger toward those who refused to worship him (10.5.33).

iussitque more Persarum Macedonas venerabundos ipsum salutare prosternentes humi corpora.

And thinking that now, when everything had been prepared [for the Indian campaign], the time was ripe for what he had once conceived in his perverse mind, he began to consider how he might attain divine honors. He wished not only to be called, but also to be believed to be, the son of Jupiter, as if he were able to control mens' minds as well as their tongues, and he ordered that the Macedonians greet him reverentially by prostrating their bodies on the ground in accordance with Persian custom.⁷⁷ (8.5.5-6)

With this decision, Curtius' Alexander challenges, in effect, the religious norms of both his own society and that of his Roman historian. From a contemporary Greco-Macedonian perspective, Alexander's decision would have called into question a basic tenet of Greco-Macedonian thought, namely that, with few exceptions,⁷⁸ men were fundamentally distinct from gods. Yet, even from Curtius' Roman perspective, from the perspective, that is, of a society in which such divine honors had become institutionalized in the form of ruler cult,⁷⁹ Alexander's decision would have retained a transgressive element. While Roman emperors customarily received divine honors after death, to seek them in life was viewed as a sign of hubris and megalomania. Thus, by stressing Alexander's desire for present, rather than posthumous, divine honors, Curtius implicitly compares the Macedonian king to Roman emperors such as Caligula,⁸⁰ an emperor

⁷⁷ The scholarly term for this sort of ritual prostration is *proskynesis*. As Bosworth 1988a: 284 among others has shown, *proskynesis* carried different connotations for Persians than for Greeks and Macedonians: for Persians, the ritual was a secular act, performed by someone of lower social standing toward someone of higher social standing; for Greeks and Macedonians, however, the ritual suggested a religious act, since prostration was, as a rule, reserved for the gods.

⁷⁸ Prior to Alexander, Greco-Macedonian figures who challenged this mortal-immortal dichotomy include Hercules and the Dioscurii on the mythological side, and Lysander, Dion, Amyntas III, and Philip II on the historical side. For discussion of the historical cases, see Habicht 1970: 3-16, 243-245; *contra* Badian 1981: 33-44 [2012: 247-255].

⁷⁹ On the Roman imperial cult, see Price 1984 and Fishwick 1987.

⁸⁰ Lana 1949: 63-69; cf. Sumner 1961: 33-34, who argues that Curtius' Alexander is, in general, a negative caricature of Caligula. *Contra* Devine 1979: 158, who argues, mistakenly, that the similarity between Curtius' Alexander and Caligula in the matter of divine honors breaks down because Alexander wanted recognition merely as the son of a god (Jupiter), whereas Caligula wanted recognition as a god in his own right; in fact, Curtius' Alexander also wants recognition as a god in his own right, as Callisthenes explicitly suggests during the *proskynesis* debate (8.5.15-16) and Curtius strongly implies in his obituary of the king (10.5.33).

who not only sought divine honors in his lifetime but whose reign Curtius most likely witnessed.⁸¹

While Alexander's desire for divine honors represents, on Curtius' view, the king's transgressive act *par excellence*, his ambition for world conquest is cut from much the same cloth. Shortly before Alexander's near disaster at the confluence of the Indian rivers, Curtius contrasts the king's thoughts with those of his soldiers regarding the prospect of continuing the Indian campaign to the Ganges and beyond:

Non idem sibi et militibus animi esse; <se> totius orbis imperium mente complexum adhuc in operum suorum primordio stare, militem labore defetigatum proximum quemque fructum, finito tandem periculo, expetere.

His thoughts and those of the soldiers were not the same: having embraced the rule of the whole world in his mind, he stood still at the beginning of his efforts, while his soldiers, having been worn out from labor, each sought the enjoyment which was nearest at hand, since danger had at last been brought to an end. (9.2.11)

In Curtius' view, Alexander and his soldiers are, figuratively speaking, miles apart by the time of the Indian campaign: where Alexander has his heart set on conquering the whole world—a further transgressive, even megalomaniacal, goal—his soldiers want nothing more than to settle down and enjoy the fruits of their nearly decade-long campaign. When the Macedonians reach the Hyphasis River, the last major river before the Ganges, this tension rapidly comes to a head. Giving in to what Curtius describes as *cupido* rather than *ratio* (9.2.12), Alexander delivers a passionate speech designed to persuade his soldiers to press on to the eastern Ocean. For the first time in the campaign, however, the conqueror's words fail to inspire. The Macedonians, tired and homesick, refuse to go on, and Alexander, in true Achillean fashion, withdraws to his tent in

⁸¹ For Curtius' probable date in first century A.D., see n. 2 above.

anger (*ira*) (9.3.18-19).⁸² Yet, where Achilles' withdrawal produces the hero's desired outcome, Alexander's has precisely the opposite effect.⁸³ The soldiers persist in their opposition, and the king, his bluff called and his power compromised, finally gives the command to turn back. However, even in relenting the king's transgressive streak remains on full display. To compensate for his loss of face, Alexander, as Curtius records, orders a fake camp of larger-than-life dimensions to be built on the banks of the Hyphasis as *posteritati fallax miraculum*, "a false monument to posterity" (9.3.19).⁸⁴ If Alexander cannot conquer the whole east, Curtius implies, he can at least give the impression of having done so. Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 21 is, once again, symbolically apt.

Yet, if Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 21 highlights Alexander's transgressive, even megalomaniacal, nature, it also underscores his mortality. While Alexander may regard himself, in some sense, as divine, may even seek formal recognition of this status, Curtius' allusion gives the lie to the king's exalted self-conception. Despite his supposedly divine nature, Alexander, like Achilles, barely survives his struggle with the rivers, as his ship nearly capsizes and he comes within an ace of having to swim for his life. Moreover, where Achilles' salvation comes from two gods, Hera and Hephaestus (*Il.* 21.328-382), Alexander's comes, if anything, from his own crewmen (Curt. 9.4.13). Depending on how far we want to push this discrepancy, Curtius may possibly be suggesting that the king has, in some

⁸² Alexander's withdrawal to his tent at the Hyphasis is also found in Arrian (*Anab.* 5.28.3), and Plutarch (*Alex.* 62.5), but omitted by Diodorus and Justin. The reason for Diodorus' omission, as Carney 2000a: 282, n. 53 suggests, may have to do with the fact that he was writing a universal history and was, consequently, compelled to compress the narrative; the same may well apply to Justin, too.

⁸³ Carney 2000a: 281-283 argues that Alexander's Achilles-esque behavior at the Hyphasis was historical, but that the Macedonians refused to see their king's behavior in this instance as anything other than selfishness.

⁸⁴ Diodorus (17.95.1-2), Justin (12.8.16-17), Plutarch (*Alex.* 62.6-7), and the *Metz Epitome* (§69) all agree with Curtius on this point; Arrian (*Anab.* 5.29.1) does not.

sense, been abandoned by the gods. Whether this is correct or not, the allusion's more basic message—Alexander's mortality—proves highly prophetic. In the same chapter as the allusion itself, Alexander begins his notorious assault against the Sudrae town (9.4.26-5.21). During this assault, the king receives a near-fatal arrow wound to the lung and is saved only through the heroism of a few of his companions. In the context of the work as a whole, the allusion is also prophetic: at this point in the narrative, Alexander's death in Babylon is a mere book away (10.5.1-6). Thus, as Curtius' comparison reminds, Alexander is, like Achilles, all too temporary.

IV. Alexander's Apologia to the Macedonian Generals (9.6.16-26)

[16] *Grata erat regi pietas amicorum; itaque, singulos familiarius amplexus, considerare iubet,*
 [17] *altiusque sermone repetito: "Vobis quidem," inquit, "o fidissimi piissimique civium atque amicorum, grates ago habeoque non solum [m]eo nomine, quod hodie salutem meam vestrae praeponitis, sed quod a primordiis belli nullum erga me benivolentiae pignus atque indicium omisistis, adeo ut confitendum sit numquam mihi vitam meam fuisse tam caram, quam esse coepit <...> ut vobis diu frui possim.* [18] *Ceterum non eadem est cogitatio eorum, qui pro me mori optant, et mea, qui quidem hanc benivolentiam vestram virtute meruisse me iudico. Vos enim diuturnum fructum ex me, forsitan etiam perpetuum percipere cupiatis: ego me metior non aetatis spatium, sed gloriae.* [19] *Licuit paternis opibus contento intra Macedoniae terminos per otium corporis expectare obscuram et ignobilem senectutem; quamquam ne pigri quidem sibi fata disponunt, sed unicum bonum diuturnam vitam existimantes saepe acerba mors occupat. Verum ego, qui non annos meos, sed victorias numero, si munera fortunae bene conputo, diu vixi.* [20] *Orsus a Macedonia imperium Graeciae teneo, Thraciam et Illyrios subegi, Triballis Maedisque imperito, Asiam, qua Hellesponto, qua Rubro mari subluitur, possideo. Iamque haud procul absum fine mundi, quem egressus aliam naturam, alium orbem aperire mihi statui.* [21] *Ex Asia in Europae terminos momento unius horae transivi. Victor utriusque regionis post nonum regni mei, post vicesimum atque octavum annum <vitae> videor ne vobis in excolenda gloria, cui me uni devovi, posse cessare? Ego vero non deero et, ubicumque pugnabo, in theatro terrarum orbis esse me credam.* [22] *Dabo nobilitatem ignobilibus locis, aperiam cunctis gentibus terras, quas natura longe submoverat. In his operibus extingui mihi, si fors ita feret, pulchrum est: ea stirpe sum genitus, ut multa<m> prius quam longam vitam debeam optare.* [23] *Obsecro vos, cogitate nos pervenisse in terras, quibus feminae ob virtutem celeberrimum nomen est. Quas urbes Samiramis condidit! Quas gentis redegit in potestatem! Quanta opera molita est! Nondum feminam aequavimus gloria et iam nos laudis satietas cepit?* [24] *Di faveant, maiora adhuc restant. Sed ita nostra erunt, quae nondum adiimus, si nihil parvum duxerimus, in quo magnae gloriae locus est. Vos modo me ab intestina fraude et domesticorum insidiis praestate securum: belli Martisque discrimen inpavidus subibo.* [25] *Philippus in acie tutior quam in theatro fuit: hostium manus saepe vitavit, suorum effugere non valuit. Aliorum quoque regum exitus si reputaveritis, plures a suis quam ab hoste interemptos numerabitis.* [26]

Ceterum, quoniam olim rei agitatae in animo meo nunc promendae occasio oblata est, mihi maximus laborum atque operum meorum erit fructus, si Olympias mater immortalitati consecretur, quandoque excesserit vita. Hoc, si licuerit, ipse praestabo; hoc, si me praeceperit fatum, vos mandasse <me> mementote."

[16] His friends' devotion was pleasing to the king. Thus, having embraced each one by one with special fondness, he told them to be seated, [17] and, beginning his speech on a lofty note, said: "To you indeed, most faithful and dutiful citizens and friends, I give and hold out my thanks, not only on the ground that today you put my safety before your own, but because, from the very beginning of the war, you have forgotten no pledge and proof of your goodwill toward me, so much so that I must confess that never has my life been as dear to me as it is beginning to be now so that, for a long time, I may still be able to enjoy your company. [18] But not the same is the thought of those who wish to die in my stead and my own thought, I who reckon in fact that I earned this goodwill of yours through my courage. For you perhaps want to find that the long enjoyment you have derived from me will last forever; I measure myself not by the span of my life, but by the span of my glory. [19] Content with my father's wealth, I could have awaited an obscure and ignoble old-age within the borders of Macedonia through bodily relaxation. Although not even idle men arrange their own fates, still bitter death often seizes on those who reckon that the one and only good is a long life. But I who count not my years but my victories have lived a long life if I carefully reckon fortune's gifts. [20] Having begun from Macedonia, I hold dominion over Greece, I have subdued Thrace and the Illyrians, I rule the Triballians and the Maedi, and I possess Asia, where it is washed by the Hellespont and where it is washed by the Red Sea. And now I am hardly far distant from the end of the world, having passed beyond which I have resolved to open for myself another natural realm, another world. [21] From Asia to the borders of Europe I have crossed in the space of a single hour. As the conqueror of each continent, do I seem to you able, after the ninth year of my reign and the twenty-eighth of my life, to cease in perfecting my glory, to which alone I have devoted myself? But in fact, I will not fail and, wherever I fight, I will believe myself to be in the theater of the world. [22] I will give renown to unrenowned places, I will open to all peoples lands that nature had kept far away. Amidst these deeds, it is a fine thing for me to perish, if chance will have it so: I was born from such stock that I ought sooner to choose a full life than a long life. [23] Consider, I beseech you, that we have reached lands whose name is most famous because of the excellence of a woman. What cities did Semiramis found! What peoples did she reduce to her power! What great deeds did she perform! Have we not yet equaled a woman in glory and has satiety of praise already taken hold of us? [24] Should the gods be propitious, greater things still await. But in this way will those things that we have not yet taken possession of be ours if we consider nothing insignificant in which there is room for great glory. Simply keep me safe from internal deceit and the plots of my own household; I will undergo the hazard of war and Mars without fear. [25] Philip was safer in the the line of battle than in the theater; often he avoided the hands of his enemies, but he was not able to escape those of his own people. If you reflect, too, upon the deaths of other kings, you will count more who have been killed by their own people than by an enemy. [26] However, since the occasion has now presented itself of revealing a matter I have previously gone over in my mind, the greatest reward of my labors and deeds will be for me if my mother Olympias should be consecrated to immortality when she departs from life. If I may, I will take care of this myself; if fate anticipates me, remember that I have entrusted this to you."

During Alexander's recovery from his near-fatal wound at the Sudrae town, Curtius describes a private meeting between Alexander and his generals. At this meeting, Craterus, the king's best general,⁸⁵ gives a speech in which he delicately criticizes Alexander for risking his life in such a reckless way and sensibly urges him to be more careful in the future (9.6.6-14). In response, Alexander, far from taking Craterus' concern to heart, delivers a forceful *apologia* of his heroic way of life (9.6.16-26) that, as several scholars have noted, radiates Achilles.⁸⁶ First and foremost, Alexander, like Achilles, reveals his preference for a short life of glory over a long life of obscurity.⁸⁷ Throughout the king's speech, this quintessentially Achillean sentiment manifests itself four times: first, Alexander states that he measures himself by the span of his glory rather than the span of his life (9.6.18); second, that he feels he has actually lived a long life, since what he counts are his victories, not his years (9.6.19); third, that glory is the sole ideal to which he has devoted his life (9.6.21) ; and fourth, that, based on his ancestry, which of course includes Achilles, he is bound to want a full life rather than a long one (9.6.22).⁸⁸

Yet, while Alexander's preference for a short life of glory is without doubt the clearest Achillean element in this passage, two further such elements can also be detected. First, Alexander's description of his hypothetical life of obscurity in Macedonia recalls Achilles' most prominent description of his own hypothetical life of obscurity in Phthia. For both heroes, the focus is not only on their ancestral wealth, but on the pleasure and leisure that would come with

⁸⁵ For Craterus' life and career, see Berve 2.220-227 (no. 446); Heckel 1992: 107-133 and 2006: 95-99.

⁸⁶ Porod 1987: 305; Ameling 1988: 671; Bosworth 1996: 59; Spencer 2002: 146.

⁸⁷ While Achilles never directly states his preference for a short life of glory over a long life of obscurity in the *Iliad*, his very presence at Troy is a clear sign that, at an earlier time in his life at least, he did prefer the former to the latter.

⁸⁸ Spencer 2002: 146 regards this claim as "certainly a nod to the choice of Achilles"; cf. Curt. 4.26.29 and 8.4.26, both discussed above (Sections I and II), where Alexander explicitly refers to Achilles as his ancestor.

this wealth.⁸⁹ Second, Alexander’s seemingly incongruous closing remarks about his father and mother can also be seen, on closer inspection, to conjure up Achilles.⁹⁰ By contrasting Philip’s mortality and Olympias’ impending immortality, Alexander seems to recreate, ever so subtly, Achilles’ own parental situation (9.6.25-27): like Homer’s hero, he, too, will have a mortal father (Philip ~ Peleus) and an immortal mother (Olympias ~ Thetis). Thus, while Curtius is clearly portraying Alexander as Achilles in this passage, the crucial question, once again, is which Achilles. Does Curtius mean to compare Alexander to a specific Achilles, as in the three passages considered above, or to a general Achilles?

While Curtius may seem to be portraying Alexander as a general Achilles based on the rather general nature of the Alexander-Achilles parallels noted above, I suggest that a specific Achilles, namely the Achilles of *Iliad* 9, is nevertheless what the historian has in mind. In the first place, Achilles’ famous description of his choice between a short life of glory and a long life of obscurity—the basis for the major Alexander-Achilles parallel noted above—comes from *Iliad* 9.⁹¹ In the second place, the Macedonian generals’ meeting with Alexander resembles, albeit in contracted form, the Greek embassy to Achilles, the centerpiece of *Iliad* 9. Concerned that their best warrior’s extreme conduct threatens to ruin not only himself but his whole

⁸⁹ With Alexander’s *paternis opibus*, “with ancestral wealth,” (Curt. 9.6.19) and *per otium corporis*, “through bodily relaxation,” (Curt. 9.6.19), cf. Achilles’ κτήμασι τέρπεσθαι τὰ γέρων ἐκτήσατο Πηλεΰς, “to enjoy the possessions which the old man Peleus acquired” (*Il.* 9.400).

⁹⁰ Cf. Moore 1995: 117, who also notes the seeming incongruity of Alexander’s closing remarks.

⁹¹ Hom. *Il.* 9.410-416: μήτηρ γάρ τέ μέ φησι θεά Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα | διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλοσδε. | εἰ μὲν κ’ αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι, | ὄλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται· | εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ’ ἴκωμι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν, | ὄλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν | ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ’ ὄκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη. “For my mother, Thetis of the silver feet, says that twin dooms bear me to the end of death. If I remain here and fight around the city of the Trojans, my return is lost, but my glory will be undying; but if I come home to my dear ancestral land, my noble fame is lost, but my life will be long, nor would the end of death soon come upon me.”

community,⁹² the Macedonian generals, like the Greek commanders in *Iliad* 9, decide to speak with the warrior through a spokesman in the hope of convincing him to change his ways; moreover, Alexander, like the Achilles of *Iliad* 9, flatly rejects his friends' appeals and firmly resolves to stay his heroic course. Thus, like the Greek embassy to Achilles, the Macedonian generals' meeting with Alexander proves a failure: the hero remains entrenched in his position, with potentially fatal consequences for both himself and his community. On both of these grounds, then, we can reasonably assume that Curtius is indeed casting Alexander as a specific, rather than general, Achilles.⁹³ What we must consider now, then, is what Curtius' comparison of Alexander with the Achilles of *Iliad* 9 means in thematic terms.

To answer this question, we must first review Achilles' relationship to Homeric heroism as expressed in his famous speeches in *Iliad* 9. When the three Greek envoys, Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax, deliver their speeches to Achilles during the embassy, each relies on a similar argument: that Achilles should give up his wrath (μῆνις) because Agamemnon has promised him numerous gifts, including Briseis, in compensation for his public humiliation in *Iliad* 1. These three speeches, and this argument in particular, are predicated on the Homeric heroes' common set of values, what modern scholars sometimes refer to as the "heroic code."⁹⁴ According to this code, a Homeric hero seeks two primary things in life, honor (τίμη) and glory (κλέος), and

⁹² As Professor Morgan astutely notes, the two heroes' conduct is extreme for diametrically opposed reasons: whereas Achilles' conduct is extreme because he refuses to fight at all, Alexander's is extreme because he refuses to set any limits to his fighting.

⁹³ A comparison between Curtius' account of this episode and those of the four remaining Alexander historians is no impediment to this view. Through comparison with these four historians, who give either a very short account of the episode (Arr. *Anab.* 6.13.4-5 = Nearchus *FgrH* 133 F2) or no account at all (Diodorus, Justin, Plutarch), Curtius may reasonably be thought, following Hammond 1983: 154, to have embellished this episode for his own literary ends. Needless to say, a Homeric allusion such as proposed above would be in perfect accordance with this theory.

⁹⁴ E.g., Schein 1984: 105.

attains both, at least in part, through the accumulation of prizes (γέρα), both animate (e.g., women, slaves) and inanimate (e.g., weapons, armor).⁹⁵ From the envoys' perspective, then, this material argument seems sure to succeed: by promising to give Achilles gifts, Agamemnon, they believe, will restore the hero's wounded τίμη and κλέος and thereby remove the sole impediment to his return. Yet, to the surprise of all, Achilles firmly and repeatedly rejects this argument. As Achilles tells Odysseus:

ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι, καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι·
ἐν δὲ ἱῆ τιμῇ ἡμὲν κακὸς ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός·
κάθθαν' ὁμῶς ὃ τ' ἀεργὸς ἀνήρ ὃ τε πολλὰ ἐοργώς.

There is the same lot for the man who stays behind, and if someone should fight very much; in a single honor (τιμῇ) are both the coward and the brave: both the man who does nothing and the man who accomplishes many things die alike." (*Il.* 9.318-320).

For Achilles, both τίμη and κλέος, at least as traditionally understood, have ceased to be meaningful concepts by the time of the embassy: as both Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis in *Iliad* 1 and offer of compensation in *Iliad* 9 show, τίμη—and, by extension κλέος—is not permanent, but conditional, not merit-based, but power-based. Ultimately, while Achilles may struggle during the embassy to articulate a new way of understanding these concepts, to formulate, as it were, a new heroic code, from this point forward he is firmly convinced of the bankruptcy of the traditional heroic code.⁹⁶

With this Homeric context in mind, let us consider now the way in which Homer's Achilles may map on to Curtius' Alexander. While Curtius' comparison of Alexander and Achilles may seem, *prima facie*, to be a means of spotlighting the Macedonian's martial *aretē*, even his thoroughly Homeric heroism, the preceding review of Achilles' relationship to the

⁹⁵ On Homeric τίμη and κλέος, see Redfield 1975: 31-35; Schein 1984: 67-72; and King 1987: 28-37.

⁹⁶ Parry 1956; Whitman 1958: 187-194; Schein 1984: 104-116; King 1987: 30-35; and Zanker 1994:79-92.

heroic code should caution against such a straightforward reading. Far from supporting, much less representing, this heroic code, the Achilles of *Iliad* 9 decisively rejects it. For Curtius to compare Alexander to this Achilles, therefore, is not only ironic; it is subversive. In the same passage in which Curtius has Alexander present his heroic credo,⁹⁷ the historian also inserts an allusion that subtly challenges this very credo: whereas Alexander regards *gloria*—a Latin word that encapsulates both Homeric τίμη and κλέος⁹⁸—as the *summum bonum*,⁹⁹ the specter of Achilles suggests that this concept, and the heroic code based upon it, is fundamentally flawed.

Support for this somewhat counter-intuitive reading can be found in two separate passages. The first is Craterus' speech directly preceding Alexander's (9.6.6-14). In this passage, as mentioned above, the Macedonian general gently points up several of the negative aspects of Alexander's heroism, thereby doing overtly what I contend the Homeric hero is doing covertly. The second, and perhaps more significant, passage is Curtius' obituary of Alexander (10.5.26-37). Here, in his final appraisal of Alexander, the historian betrays his own misgivings about his subject's heroism, commenting that, while his desire (*cupido*) for glory (*gloriae*) and praise (*laudisque*) was, on the whole, a positive trait, it was also greater than was appropriate (*iusto maior*).¹⁰⁰ What these two passages suggest, then, is the basic plausibility of this reading of the Homeric allusion, inasmuch as they, too, contain a complex, even somewhat subversive, view of Alexander's heroism. In the remainder of this section, therefore, let us turn to the following

⁹⁷ Cf. Moore 1995: 118, who emphasizes the speech's "definite air of summing up and finality."

⁹⁸ *OLD*, s.v., *gloria* (1), which gives both "glory" and "honor" as possible translations of the word.

⁹⁹ Alexander's supreme regard for *gloria* is reflected by his four mentions of the word within the span of his relatively short speech (9.6.18, 9.6.21, 9.6.23, and 9.6.24).

¹⁰⁰ Curtius further concedes that Alexander's love of glory and honor were partly to be forgiven based on his extreme youth.

question: What specific flaws with Alexander's heroism does Curtius mean to highlight by means of this comparison between Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 9.

In the first place, Curtius' comparison highlights, I believe, the naïveté of Alexander's heroism. By *Iliad* 9, as discussed above, Achilles' view of heroism has become significantly more complex than it was in the beginning of the poem. Though a staunch proponent of the heroic code as the poem begins, and even more so when the war began, Achilles comes to question this same code by *Iliad* 9, tentatively sketching, in the process, the contours of a new heroic code whereby a hero's honor and glory are based not on material possessions, but something more absolute and permanent.¹⁰¹ In Curtius' work, by contrast, Alexander's view of heroism remains, as late as Book 9, the second to last book of the work, simplistic. For Alexander, now as ever, the heroic code represents the one true faith, *gloria* the one true prize.¹⁰² Though heroic naïveté may seem a minor flaw in the grand scheme of things, it bespeaks, in fact, a deeper foolishness on the king's part. By failing, like Achilles, to properly interrogate the concept of *gloria*, Alexander, Curtius suggests, is fated to go through life assuming that *gloria* is always worthwhile, that *gloria* should, indeed, be sought at all times and in all places. For Curtius, the preposterousness of this proposition is manifest. As the historian has Craterus say in the conclusion of his speech to Alexander: *Cito gloria obsolescit in sordidis hostibus nec quicquam indignius est quam consumi eam, ubi non possit ostendi*. "Glory quickly fades among base enemies, nor is anything more unworthy than for it to be wasted where it cannot be displayed" (9.6.14). In Craterus' view, as in Achilles', not all glory is created equal; the hero

¹⁰¹ Cf. Parry 1956 and Whitman 1958: 187-194.

¹⁰² Later in this same speech, Alexander says of glory: *videorne vobis in excolenda gloria, cui me uni devovi, posse cessare?*, "do I seem to you able to cease from perfecting my glory, to which alone I have devoted myself?" (Curt. 9.6.21).

must distinguish, in other words, between true glory and false glory, and recognize that only the former is actually worth dying for. By failing to comprehend this basic distinction, therefore, Alexander, both Craterus and the specter of Achilles suggest, is as much a fool as he is a hero.

Second, Curtius' comparison of Alexander and Achilles also underscores, I contend, the fundamental destructiveness of the king's heroism. In *Iliad* 9, Achilles' heroism, or, more precisely, his vehement questioning of the heroic code, spells disaster for both the hero and his fellow Greeks. As a direct result of Achilles' decision to remain out of the fighting in the wake of the Greek embassy, not only does Patroclus meet his death—a death that, as numerous scholars have noted, symbolically prefigures Achilles' own¹⁰³—but the Greeks, too, suffer terribly in battle. When we turn to Curtius, we find that Alexander's heroism contains a similarly destructive quality. On the one hand, Alexander's heroism, like Achilles', carries with it a pronounced self-destructive potential: time after time, Alexander's extreme heroism, his rashness and recklessness in battle, comes close to costing him his life.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the Macedonian's heroism, like the Homeric hero's, exhibits a corresponding potential for communal destruction. As Craterus argues in his speech, the king's extreme heroism puts not only his own life at risk; it puts the lives of all his soldiers at risk, too:

Sed quis deorum hoc Macedoniae columen ac sidus diuturnum fore polliceri potest, cum tam avide manifestis periculis offeras corpus, oblitus tot civium animas trahere te in casum? Quis enim tibi superstes aut optat esse aut potest? Eo pervenimus auspiciam atque imperium secuti tuum, unde, nisi te reduce, nulli ad penates suos iter est.

¹⁰³ E.g., Whitman 1958: 202-203; Griffin 1980: 27-28; and Schein 1984: 129.

¹⁰⁴ According to Curtius, Alexander sustained eight wounds in battle: (i) a sword wound in the thigh at the battle of Issus (3.11.10); (ii) an arrow wound in the shoulder and (iii) a stone wound in the leg at the siege of Gaza (4.6.17-20, 23-24); (iv) a stone wound in the neck at the siege of the Memaceni (7.6.22-23); (v) an arrow wound in the leg in the vicinity of the Tanais river (7.6.3-4); (vi) an arrow wound somewhere in India (8.10.6); (vii) an arrow wound in the leg at the siege of Massaga (8.10.27-29); (viii) and an arrow wound in the lung in the assault on the Mallian town (9.5.9-10). In Book 1 or 2, Curtius would almost certainly have also recorded Alexander's sword wound to the head at the battle of the Granicus, a wound which most of the other extant Alexander historians record (Arr. *Anab.* 1.15.7-8; Diod. 17.20.6; Plut. *Alex.* 16.9-10, *De Alex. fort.* 2.9 = *Mor.* 341B).

But which of the gods can promise that this peak and star of Macedonia will be long-lasting, when you offer your body so eagerly to clear dangers, having forgotten that you drag the souls of many citizens into danger? Who, indeed, wishes to be, or can be, your survivor? Having followed your auspices and command, we have reached this point from which, unless you lead us back, there is no path home for anyone (9.6.8-9)

By this point in the campaign, as Craterus makes clear, the Macedonian army has become dangerously dependent on Alexander; without their king, the Macedonians' hope of surviving the present campaign, much less reaching home, is all but vain. Yet, despite the army's dependence on him—and even after both the Sudrae assault and the meeting with his generals—Alexander holds fast to his heroic way of life. For Alexander, personal glory remains paramount, his own and everyone else's life be damned. Ultimately, while this heroic worldview may just be acceptable in an Achilles, a warrior first and foremost, it is far less acceptable, Curtius suggests, in an Agamemnon, a ruler as much as a warrior.¹⁰⁵

V. The Diplomatic Exchanges between Alexander and Darius¹⁰⁶

Between the battle of Issus and the battle of Gaugamela, Curtius records a series of diplomatic exchanges between Alexander and Darius, the Persian King.¹⁰⁷ With his family having fallen into Macedonian custody after the battle of Issus, Darius sends Alexander three successive messages designed to persuade his royal counterpart to return the Persian royal family

¹⁰⁵ Compared with his Achillean similarities, Alexander's Agamemnonian similarities are rarely considered. Lane Fox 1973: 65, however, makes the incisive observation that "...part, therefore, of his [Alexander's] career is the story of an Achilles who tried, not always happily, to face the problems of an Agamemnon." Incidentally, Alexander's favorite Homeric verse was supposedly ἀμφοτέρων βασιλεύς τ' ἀγαθὸς κρατερός τ' αἰχμητής, "both a noble king and a mighty warrior" (*Il.* 3.179), a verse describing Agamemnon (Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 1.10 = *Mor.* 331C).

¹⁰⁶ Because Curtius records three separate diplomatic exchanges between Alexander and Darius, I consider each as a separate passage below.

¹⁰⁷ On Alexander's diplomatic exchanges with Darius, see Kaiser 1956; Welles 1963a: 228-229, n. 1; Griffith 1968; Hamilton 1969: 76-78; Mikrojanakis 1970; Atkinson 1980: 271-278, 319-324, 395-399; Bosworth 1980: 227-233, 256-257; Bernhardt 1988; Bloedow 1995; and Heckel and Yardley 1997: 157-163.

and make peace with the Persian Empire. On each occasion, however, Alexander firmly rejects Darius' overtures, thereby precipitating, eventually, the battle of Gaugamela. While such diplomatic correspondence is common to all five extant Alexander historians, and several other authors besides, Curtius' account differs in a basic way from most of them. Whereas Curtius, like Justin, records three diplomatic exchanges,¹⁰⁸ Arrian, Diodorus, and the *Itinerarium Alexandri* record two,¹⁰⁹ and Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, and the *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum* record only one.¹¹⁰ The key question, therefore, is how to explain Curtius' three exchanges versus the other authors' one or two. While a common explanation is that Curtius was simply, even mechanically, following a source that happened to record three exchanges,¹¹¹ a better explanation, I believe, is that Curtius consciously chose such a source, and did so, at least in part, for his own literary ends. In particular, by choosing to follow a source that recorded three exchanges, Curtius, I will argue, sought to shape his account of the diplomatic correspondence on the model, once again, of the Greek embassy to Achilles,¹¹² with Alexander in the role of Achilles, and Darius in the role

¹⁰⁸ Curtius records one diplomatic exchange during Alexander's stay at Marathus (4.1.7-14), a second following the siege of Tyre (4.5.1-8), and a third before the battle of Gaugamela (4.11.1-21); Justin, one following Darius' return to Babylon after the battle of Issus (11.12.1-2), a second at an unspecified time (11.12.3-4), and a third before the battle of Gaugamela (11.12.9-16).

¹⁰⁹ Arrian records one diplomatic exchange during Alexander's stay at Marathus (*Anab.* 2.14), and a second during the siege of Tyre (*Anab.* 2.25.1-3); Diodorus, one following Darius' return to Babylon after the battle of Issus (17.39.1-3), and a second before the battle of Gaugamela (17.54.1-6); the *Itinerarium Alexandri*, one in Phoenicia (§39-40), and a second during the siege of Tyre (§43-44).

¹¹⁰ Plutarch records one diplomatic exchange upon Alexander's return to Tyre from Egypt (*Alex.* 29.7-9); Valerius Maximus, one at an unspecified time (6.4.ext.3); and the *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum*, one after the battle of Issus (*FgrH* 151 F §5).

¹¹¹ Curtius' source for the diplomatic exchanges is generally thought to have been either Cleitarchus (Hammond 1983: 122) or Trogus (Heckel and Yardley 1997: 158; cf. Atkinson 1980: 278).

¹¹² See Section IV above, where I argue that Alexander's *apologia* to his generals (9.6.16-26) represents another allusion to the Greek embassy to Achilles. As Balzer 1971 has shown, Curtius tends to reuse certain Vergilian passages throughout his work (e.g., the duel of Dares and Entellus). Based on this and the previous section, I suggest that the same may be true for Homeric passages as well.

of three composite figures: Agamemnon-Odysseus in the first exchange, Agamemnon-Phoenix in the second, and Agamemnon-Ajax in the third.

While the major evidence for this argument is to be found, as will be seen shortly, in Curtius' account of the diplomatic exchanges themselves, two general points lend it a certain plausibility. On the one hand, Curtius' speeches,¹¹³ the genre to which the diplomatic exchanges belong, rank among the most literary parts of his work.¹¹⁴ Like most ancient historians, Curtius not only embellishes speeches for artistic effect; he also invents speeches whole cloth for the same purpose.¹¹⁵ The notion, therefore, that Curtius might shape the diplomatic exchanges in conformity with a major literary model seems, *a priori*, well within the realm of possibility. On the other, as we know from two papyri, fictitious collections of Alexander's correspondence, including his diplomatic correspondence with Darius, existed in antiquity;¹¹⁶ moreover, this diplomatic correspondence may even have served as a subject for rhetorical exercises.¹¹⁷ Thus, if Curtius aimed, as I suggest, to rework the diplomatic exchanges for artistic effect, he would have

¹¹³ On Curtius' speeches, see Helmreich 1927 and, more recently, Baynham 1998: 46-56.

¹¹⁴ Baynham 1998: 46-56, who writes that "the purpose of the history's speeches is artistic: they are outward, dramatic manifestations of political and literary themes" (54).

¹¹⁵ Baynham 1998: 48-54.

¹¹⁶ Pearson 1955: 448-449 and 1960: 258-259. The first papyrus (Hamburg), which dates possibly to the first century B.C., contains three letters from Darius to Alexander; the second (Florence), which dates to the second century A.D., two letters from Darius to Alexander, and two from Alexander to Darius.

¹¹⁷ Atkinson 1980: 278. Unfortunately, Atkinson provides no evidence for this claim; if anything, he seems to deduce this idea from the fact that the diplomatic exchanges were a popular theme in the collections of Alexander's fictitious correspondence. Still, even if solid evidence for this claim is lacking, it is certainly not implausible; we know, in fact, that other Alexandrine episodes featured as subjects for rhetorical exercises, such as Alexander's sickness at Tarsus (Val. Max. 3.8.ext.6) and Alexander's deliberations on sailing the Indian ocean (Sen. Mai. *Suas.* 1.1).

had a clear precedent for such an undertaking, certainly in these letter collections and possibly from his training in the rhetorical schools.¹¹⁸

With these general points in mind, let us turn now to Curtius' account of the diplomatic exchanges themselves. As I argue in this section, the Curtian embassy's Homeric program rests, above all, on a series of thematic parallels between Alexander's three speeches and those of Achilles on the one hand, and between Darius' three speeches and those of Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax on the other. These thematic parallels may be summarized as follows. In Darius' case, the central arguments of his three speeches closely correspond to those of the three Greek ambassadors' speeches in *Iliad* 9, with his first speech, like Odysseus', centering around profit and self-interest, his second, like Phoenix's, prudence and the vagaries of fortune, and his third, like Ajax's, friendship and common humanity. Similarly, Alexander's three speeches follow the same trajectory as those of Achilles in *Iliad* 9: a vehement rejection of his rival's offer in the first speech, a calm and confident rejection in the second, and a hesitant, but ultimately resolute, rejection in the third. Thus, in the three sub-sections below, I begin by demonstrating the Curtian embassy's thematic parallels to the Homeric embassy, focusing, in each sub-section, on a single part of the Curtian embassy; then, having demonstrated the presence of this extended Homeric allusion, I conclude by considering its thematic significance for the historian's protagonist and work as a whole.

i. The First Diplomatic Exchange (4.1.7-14)¹¹⁹

[7] *Ibi illi litterae a Dareo redduntur, quibus ut superbe scriptis vehementer offensus est: praecipue eum movit, quod Dareus sibi regis titulum nec eundem Alexandri nomini adscriperat.*

¹¹⁸ While Curtius nowhere claims to have been trained in the rhetorical schools, his work betrays numerous signs of such training. For Curtius as rhetorician, see Dosson 1886: 217-246; McQueen 1967: 31-32; Rutz 1986: 2352-2353; Baynham 1998: 25-30.

¹¹⁹ For a rhetorical analysis of the first diplomatic exchange, see Helmreich 1927: 95-99.

[8] *Postulabat autem magis quam petebat, ut accepta pecunia, quantamcumque tota Macedonia caperet, matrem sibi et coniugem liberosque restitueret: de regno aequo, si vellet, Marte contenderet.* [9] *Si saniora consilia tandem pati potuisset, contentus patrio cederet alieni imperii finibus, socius amicusque esset. In ea se fidem et dare paratum et accipere.* [10] *Contra Alexander in hunc maxime modum rescripsit: “Rex Alexander Dareo S. Cuius nomen sumpsisti, Dareus Graecos, qui oram Hellesponti tenent, coloniasque Graecorum Ionias omni clade vastavit, cum magno deinde exercitu mare traiecit, inlato Macedoniae et Graeciae bello.* [11] *Rursus Xerxes, gentis eiusdem, ad oppugnandos nos cum inmanium barbarorum copiis venit; qui, navali proelio victus, Mardonium tamen reliquit in Graecia, ut absens quoque popularetur urbes, agros ureret.* [12] *Philippum vero, parentem meum, quis ignorat ab iis interfectum esse, quos ingentis pecuniae spe sollicitaverant vestri? Inpia enim bella suscipitis et, cum habeatis arma, licemini hostium capita, sicut tu proxime talentis mille, tanti exercitus rex, percussorem in me emere voluisti.* [13] *Repello igitur bellum, non infero. Et di quoque pro meliore stant[es] causa: magnam partem Asiae in dicionem redegi meam, te ipsum acie vici. Quem etsi nihil a me inpetrare oportebat, utpote qui ne belli quidem in me iura servaveris, tamen, si veneris supplex, et matrem et coniugem et liberos sine pretio recepturum esse promitto.* [14] *Et vincere et consulere victis scio. Quodsi te committere nobis times, dabimus fidem inpune venturum. De cetero, cum mihi scribes, memento non solum regi te, sed etiam tuo scribere.”*

[7] There a letter from Darius was delivered to him that strongly offended him considering that it was written in an arrogant way. What especially vexed him was that Darius had added the title of king to himself and had not added the same to the name of Alexander. [8] Moreover, he demanded, rather than asked, that, having accepted as much money as Macedonia could hold, he restore to him his mother, wife, and children, and, as for the sovereignty, that he might contend in fair and open war if he so wished. [9] Finally, if he could tolerate sounder councils, he would withdraw from the territory of a foreign power, content in his inheritance, and would be an ally and friend. In this he was prepared to give and accept his word. [10] For his part, Alexander wrote back to him in much the following way: “Alexander the king sends greetings to Darius. Darius, whose name you have assumed, devastated with wholesale slaughter the Greeks who inhabit the coast of the Hellespont and the Ionian colonies of the Greeks, then crossed the sea with a great army, inflicting war on Macedonia and Greece. [11] Next, Xerxes, who was of the same race, came to attack us with armies of savage barbarians. Though he was defeated in a naval engagement, he still left Mardonius in Greece, so that, even though he was gone, he might plunder the cities and set fire to the countryside. [12] As for my father Philip, who does not know that he was killed by those whom your men incited with the hope of a great sum of money? You undertake unholy wars and, when you have arms, you set a price on the heads of your enemies, just as recently with a thousand talents you, you the king of so great an army, wanted to buy an assassin to kill me. [13] Therefore, I am waging a war of defense, not of aggression. And the gods, too, support the better cause. I have brought a great part of Asia under my control; you yourself I conquered in battle. Though you ought to have asked nothing of me, since you did not observe the laws of war with me, still, if you come as a suppliant, I promise that you will receive your mother, wife, and children back without charge. [14] I know both how to conquer and how to take measures for the conquered. But if you fear to put yourself in my hands, I will give my word that you will come here unmolested. For the future, when you write to me, remember that you are writing not only to a king, but also to *your* king.”

Following his victory at the battle of Issus, Alexander marches south to the Phoenician city of Marathus where, as Curtius reports, he receives Darius' first message seeking a diplomatic resolution to the conflict between Persia and Macedon. In this message, while refusing to address Alexander with the royal title, Darius demands the return of his captured family members in exchange for a vast ransom, and exhorts Alexander to become his friend (*amicus*) and ally (*socius*) by withdrawing from Persian territory. Furious at Darius' haughty tone, Alexander rejects the letter *tout court*, stressing the righteous nature of his cause in light of the crimes of Darius and his ancestors against the Greeks and Macedonians. In response to Darius' request to return the Persian royal family, Alexander promises to return them for free, provided the Persian king come to him as a suppliant. Finally, in response to his rival's titular insult, Alexander tells Darius to write to him in future not just as *a* king, but as *his* king.

Within the Curtian embassy, Darius' first message corresponds, I suggest, to Odysseus' speech during (*Il.* 9.225-306)—and Agamemnon's speech before (*Il.* 9.115-161)—the Greek embassy.¹²⁰ When Darius writes to Alexander for the first time, his position, strangely enough, resembles Agamemnon's in *Iliad* 9. Despite his royal preeminence, Darius, like Agamemnon, finds himself not only defeated by a younger, more talented rival, but having to plead with this rival for aid. Furthermore, in making this plea, Darius, again like Agamemnon (and Odysseus), relies primarily on a profit-based argument,¹²¹ promising his rival both vast wealth and some form of alliance in exchange for the requested aid. Thus, just as Agamemnon promises Achilles ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα, "a limitless ransom" (*Il.* 9.120), consisting of seven tripods, ten talents of gold,

¹²⁰ Darius' first speech may be thought of as corresponding to both Odysseus' and Agamemnon's speeches inasmuch as the former reproduces the latter almost verbatim.

¹²¹ Cf. Whitman 1958: 281, who suggests that κέρδος, "profit," is the central argument of Odysseus' speech.

twenty cauldons, twelve horses, seven women, Briseis, and a promise of further spoils should the Greeks sack Troy (*Il.* 9.122-140), so does Darius promise Alexander a comparably limitless *pecunia, quantamcumque tota Macedonia caperet*, “so much money as Macedonia could hold” (4.1.8).¹²² Similarly, much as Agamemnon presents Achilles with the prospect of a familial connection as his γαμβρός, “son-in-law” (*Il.* 9.142), so does Darius present Alexander with the prospect of friendship and alliance as his *amicus*, “friend,” and *socius*, “ally” (4.1.9). Finally, and perhaps most revealingly, Darius, like Agamemnon, delivers his message to his rival in a spirit of unrepentant arrogance.¹²³ Though Agamemnon succeeds in concealing his feeling of superiority over Achilles for most of his speech, his concluding remark, καί μοι ὑποστήτω, ὅσσον βασιλεύτερός εἰμι | ἢδ’ ὅσσον γενεῇ προγενέστερος εὔχομαι εἶναι, “And let him [Achilles] submit to me, by as much as I am kinglier and by as much as I claim to be his elder in age” (*Il.* 9.160-161),¹²⁴ puts this feeling squarely in the open.¹²⁵ In Darius’ case, however, this spirit of arrogance is plain to see from the beginning. While Darius’ letter is described as *superbe scriptis*, “arrogantly written” (4.1.7), Darius himself demands, rather than asks for, the release of his family (4.1.8), and, more tellingly still, refuses Alexander the courtesy of the *regis titulum*,

¹²² While several extant Alexander historians mention Darius’ offer of a vast sum of money in the context of the first diplomatic exchange (Diod. 17.39.1; Just. 11.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 29.7), Curtius is unique in emphasizing the virtually limitless nature of this offer.

¹²³ Curtius alone of the extant Alexander historians stresses the arrogant tone of Darius’ first message; the other historians, by contrast, seem to suggest that its tone was, if anything, rather humble (Arr. *Anab.* 2.14.1-3; Diod. 17.39.1; Just. 11.12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 29.7-9).

¹²⁴ On βασιλεύτερός and its meaning for Agamemnon’s relationship with Achilles, see Hainsworth 1993: 79-80.

¹²⁵ Odysseus wisely omits these lines when he repeats Agamemnon’s speech during the Greek embassy.

“the title of king”¹²⁶ (4.1.7), thereby recalling Agamemnon’s claim to be βασιλεύτερός than Achilles.¹²⁷

From this same Homeric perspective, Alexander’s first message corresponds to Achilles’ first speech in the Greek embassy (*Il.* 9.308-429). When Alexander receives Darius’ first message, his initial reaction, like Achilles’ following Odysseus’ speech, is outrage.¹²⁸ Where Curtius describes Alexander as *vehementer offensus*, “strongly offended” (4.1.7), Homer presents Achilles as comparably offended with the famous preamble to the hero’s speech: ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἄϊδαο πύλησιν | ὅς γ’ ἕτερον μὲν κεύθη ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπη, “For hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his chest, and says another” (*Il.* 9.312-313). For Alexander, the source of this outrage is his rival’s regal arrogance, symbolized by both the Persian king’s haughty tone (4.1.7: *superbe scriptis*) and petulant refusal to grant his Macedonian counterpart the royal title (4.1.7). The regal arrogance of a rival is equally central to Achilles’ sense of outrage. Indeed, as C. Whitman has argued, Achilles’ gates of Hades remark may be taken as a subtle recognition on the hero’s part of the true nature of Agamemnon’s offer.¹²⁹ Despite Odysseus’ tactful omission of Agamemnon’s claim to be kinglier than Achilles (*Il.* 9.160) in his recounting of the former’s speech, Achilles perceives that this is the spirit in which Agamemnon’s offer is being made; that Agamemnon, far from humbled, remains not only

¹²⁶ Curtius, once again, is alone among the extant Alexander historians in claiming that Darius refused Alexander the courtesy of the royal title. While Plutarch, Diodorus, and Justin are silent on the matter, Arrian reports that Darius, far from refusing Alexander the royal title, presented his appeal to him in terms of βασιλεύς παρὰ βασιλέως, “king from king” (*Anab.* 2.14.3).

¹²⁷ Based on Curtius’ emphasis on Darius’ discourtesy regarding the royal title, Atkinson 1980: 272 concludes that the historian “appears to have used the point to aid in the characterization of Darius and Alexander.”

¹²⁸ Curtius is the only extant Alexander historian to refer to the king’s outrage explicitly, though it can be detected in both the Curtian and Arrianic versions of Alexander’s first message to Darius as well.

¹²⁹ Whitman 1958: 192.

convinced of his superiority, but intent on proving it. Based on this feeling of outrage, Alexander, like Achilles, proceeds to issue an insulting rejection of his rival's offer. In his message, Alexander not only chastises Darius for making any requests of him at all (4.1.13), but begins by giving himself, but not Darius, the royal title (4.1.8)¹³⁰ and ends by demanding that, in the future, his rival regard him as not just a king, but as his own king (4.1.14).¹³¹ More pronounced still is the insulting quality of Achilles' message. Besides calling Agamemnon's gifts ἔχθρα, "hateful," to him (*Il.* 9.378), and stressing that no number of gifts could win him over (*Il.* 9.379-387), Achilles declares, in effect, that Agamemnon can go to hell: ἀλλὰ ἔκμηλος | ἐπέτω, "But let him perish without hindrance." (*Il.* 9.376-377). Finally, both Alexander and Achilles base their rejections of their rivals' respective offers on a keen sense of wrongs, both personal and communal, suffered at the hands of their rivals. On the personal level, where Achilles cites Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis (*Il.* 9.367-369), Alexander cites not only Darius' alleged murder of Philip, but his attempt to murder Alexander himself (4.1.12); and, on the communal level, where Achilles points to Agamemnon's unjust war at Troy (*Il.* 9. 337-341), Alexander points to the equally unjust Persian Wars of Darius' ancestors, Darius the Great, Xerxes, and Mardonius (4.1.10-11).¹³²

¹³⁰ Atkinson 1980: 273 notes that Alexander probably did not style himself king (*basileus*) here, since his normal practice was to use his name alone—a fact that suggests that Curtius, or his source(s), may have reworked this episode for his own literary ends.

¹³¹ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 2.14.9, who represents Alexander as issuing a similar demand to Darius regarding his royal title: καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ ὅταν πέμπης παρ' ἐμέ, ὡς πρὸς βασιλέα τῆς Ἀσίας πέμπε..., "And when you sent to me in the future, send as to the king of Asia..."

¹³² Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 2.14.4-6, who has Alexander give a similar list of grievances with Darius to those found in Curtius.

ii. The Second Diplomatic Exchange (4.5.1-8)¹³³

[1] *Isdem ferme diebus Darei litterae adlatae sunt, tandem ut regi scriptae. Petebat uti filiam suam (Statirae erat nomen) nuptiis Alexander sibi adiungeret: dotem offere omnem regionem inter Hellespontum et Halyn amnem sitam, inde orientem spectantibus terris contentum. [2] Si forte dubitaret, quod offerretur, accipere, numquam diu eodem vestigio stare fortunam, semperque homines, quantamcumque felicitatem habeant, invidiam tamen sentire maiorem. [3] Vereri se, ne avium modo, quas naturalis levitas ageret ad sidera, inani ac puerili mente se efferret: nihil difficilius esse quam in illa aetate tantam capere fortunam. [4] Multas se adhuc reliquias habere nec semper inter angustias posse deprehendi: transeundum esse Alexandro Euphraten Tigrimque et Araxen et Choaspen, magna munimenta regni sui; veniendum in campos, ubi paucitate suorum erubescendum sit; iam Mediam, Hyrcaniam, Bactra [5] et Indos, Oceani accolas, quando aditurum, ne Sogdianos et Arachosios nominem ceterasque gentes ad Caucasum et Tanain pertinentes? Senescendum fore tantum terrarum vel sine proelio obeunti. [6] Se vero ad ipsum vocare desineret: namque illius exitio se esse venturum. [7] Alexander iis, qui litteras attulerant, respondit Dareum sibi aliena promittere et, quod totum amiserit, velle partiri. Doti sibi dari Lydiam, Ionas, Aeolidem, Hellesponti oram, victoriae suae praemia. Leges autem a victoribus dici, accipi a victis: in utro statu ambo essent, si solus ignoraret, quam primum Marte decerneret. [8] Se quidem, cum transiret mare, non Ciliciam aut Lydiam (quippe tanti belli exiguam hanc esse mercedem) sed Persepolim, caput regni eius, Bactra deinde et Ecbatana ultimique Orientis oram imperio destinasse. Quocumque ille fugere potuisset, ipsum sequi posse: desineret terrere fluminibus, quem sciret maria transisse.*

[1] Around the same time, a letter from Darius was brought to him written, at last, as to a king. He asked that Alexander wed his daughter, whose name was Statira; he was offering as a dowry the whole region which lay between the Hellespont and the Halys river, and he, Darius, would be content with the lands which face toward the east. [2] If perhaps he should hesitate to accept what was being offered, never does Fortune remain long in the same place, and always men, however much happiness they have, feel still greater envy. [3] He feared that Alexander, like birds whose natural lightness drives them to the stars, might carry himself off in a vain and childish spirit; nothing is more difficult than at that age to contain such great fortune. [4] He, Darius, still had many reserves, and he could not always be caught between narrow defiles. Alexander would have to cross the Euphrates and Tigris, the Araxes and Choaspes, the great defenses of his, Darius', empire, and would have to enter the plains, where he would have to blush because of the puniness of his forces. When, now, would he make his way to Media, Hyrcania, Bactra [5] and the Indians, the neighbors of the Ocean, not to mention the Sogdians and Arachosians and the rest of the races which extend to the Caucasus and the Tanais? He would have to grow old in traversing so great a tract of lands, even without fighting. [6] Alexander should cease to summon him to come to him; for he would come to his enemy's destruction. [7] Alexander responded to those who brought him the letter that Darius was promising what was not his and wished to share out what he had completely lost. Lydia, Ionia, Aeolia, the shore of the Hellespont were being offered to him as a dowry, the prizes of his own victory. Furthermore, laws are proclaimed by the victors and accepted by the conquered. If he were unsure what the status of each was, Mars would decide the matter as soon as possible. [8]

¹³³ For a rhetorical analysis of the second diplomatic exchange, see Helmreich 1927: 99-104.

Indeed, when he, Alexander, was crossing the sea, he had fixed not Cilicia or Lydia as the limit of his empire—since this would be a small recompense for so great a war—but Persepolis, the capitol of Darius’ kingdom, then Bactra, Ecbatana, and the shore of the farthest East. Wherever Darius could flee, he himself could follow; let him stop trying to frighten with rivers one who he knew had crossed seas.

Following the siege of Tyre, Alexander receives a second message from Darius seeking peace and the return of his family. Taking a more conciliatory approach, Darius offers Alexander his own daughter, Statira, in marriage, and the rule of all the territory between the Halys and the Hellespont. As a means of convincing Alexander to accept his offer, Darius cautions his rival on the fundamental instability of fortune, and suggests that conquering the whole Persian empire is more than any man can feasibly hope to achieve. Confident in his own position, however, Alexander firmly rejects Darius’ offer. This time, the Macedonian king begins by arguing that his Persian counterpart is simply offering him what already belongs to him, continues by challenging his rival to face him in battle, and concludes by threatening to pursue him wherever he goes.

Within Curtius’ Homeric embassy, Darius’ second message corresponds to Phoenix’s speech to Achilles, the middle speech of the Greek embassy (*Il.* 9.434-605). Having failed to move his rival with a profit-based argument in his first speech, Darius, like Phoenix, seeks to do so with a primarily prudence-based argument in his second.¹³⁴ Following his recapitulation—and amplification—of the concessions he is willing to make in exchange for a reconciliation with his rival, Darius begins by arguing that Alexander would be wise to accept his offer because of the well-known fickleness of fortune (4.5.2).¹³⁵ Shortly thereafter, and in the same prudential vein,

¹³⁴ Cf. Whitman 1958: 280-281, who suggests that σωφροσύνη, “moderation,” is the central theme of Phoenix’s speech.

¹³⁵ Cf. Diod. 17.39.1, who presents Darius exhorting Alexander ἀνθρωπίνως φέρειν τὴν εὐτυχίαν, “to bear his good fortune in a humane way” in the context of his first message during the diplomatic exchanges.

Darius continues by arguing that the Persian Empire's vast resources and massive size should give Alexander pause as he considers whether to continue his campaign farther east (4.5.4-5).

While Phoenix's speech is far longer and more complex than Darius', this prudence-based argument pervades the former as well as the latter. In Phoenix's case, this argument shines through most clearly in the conclusion of his speech. Here, much as Darius encourages Alexander to accept his offer based on the fickleness of fortune, so does Phoenix encourage Achilles to accept Agamemnon's offer based on the possibility that this very offer may not always be on the table, a variation on the fickleness-of-fortune argument:

ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ μοι ταῦτα νόει φρεσὶ, μηδέ σε δαίμων
ἐνταῦθα τρέψειε, φίλος· κάκιον δέ κεν εἶη
νηυσὶν καιομένησιν ἀμυνέμεν· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ δῶρων
ἔρχεο· ἴσον γάρ σε θεῶ τείσουσιν Ἀχαιοί.
εἰ δέ κ' ἄτερ δῶρων πόλεμον φθισήνορα δύης,
οὐκέθ' ὁμῶς τιμῆς ἔσσει πόλεμόν περ ἀλαλκῶν.

But do not think these things in your mind, and may your spirit not turn you in that direction, my friend; it would be worse to defend the ships when they are already burning. But go forth on the condition of gifts promised. For the Achaeans will honor you like a god. Yet, if you enter the man-slaying war without gifts, you will no longer be of similar honor, though you have staved off the war. (*Il.* 9.600-605)

Within Curtius' embassy, Alexander's second message corresponds, in turn, with Achilles' response to Phoenix's speech (*Il.* 9.607-619). Having considered his rival's second message, Alexander follows in Achilles' footsteps by once again rejecting the offer contained therein. However, in delivering this rejection, Alexander, like Achilles, adopts a far different tone from that of his first response: rather than indignant and insulting, his tone is calm and confident. Moreover, Alexander, again like Achilles, bases his rejection on the essential futility of his rival's offer. As both heroes argue, their rivals' respective offers are futile precisely because they, Alexander and Achilles, already possess that which their rivals are offering

them.¹³⁶ In the Curtian embassy, Alexander asserts that Darius is simply offering him territory which he already controls, namely Lydia, Ionia, Aeolia, and the Hellespontine shore (4.5.7). In the Homeric embassy, Achilles likewise tells Phoenix that he has no need of Agamemnon's offer, since he already possesses the honor (τιμή) which Agamemnon's gifts symbolically represent: “Φοῖνιξ, ἄττα γεραιέ, διοτρεφές, οὐ τί με ταύτης | χρεὼ τιμῆς· φρονέω δὲ τετιμῆσθαι Διὸς αἴση, “Dear old Phoenix, nurtured by Zeus, I have no need of that honor; I think I am honored by the dispensation of Zeus” (*Il.* 9.607-608).

iii. The Third Diplomatic Exchange (4.11.1-10, 16-21)¹³⁷

[1] *Itaque, quamquam frustra pace bis petita omnia in bellum consilia converterat, victus tamen continentia hostis, ad novas pacis condiciones ferendas X legatos, cognatorum principes, misit; quos Alexander, consilio advocato, introduci iussit.* [2] *E quibus maximus natu: “Dareum,” inquit, “ut pacem a te iam hoc tertio peteret, nulla vis subegit, sed iustitia et continentia expressit.* [3] *Matrem, coniugem, liberos eius, nisi quod sine illo sunt, captos esse non sensimus: pudicitiae earum, quae supersunt, curam haud secus quam parens agens reginas appellas, speciem pristinae fortunae retinere pateris.* [4] *Vultum tuum video, qualis Darei fuit, cum dimitteremur ab eo; et ille tamen uxorem, tu hostem luges. Iam in acie stares, nisi cura te sepulturae eius moraretur. Ecquid mirum est, si tam ab amico animo pacem petit? Quid opus est armis, inter quos odia sublata sunt?* [5] *Antea imperio tuo finem destinabat Halym amnem, qui Lydiam terminat; nunc, quidquid inter Hellespontum et Euphraten est, in dotem filiae offert, quam tibi tradit.* [6] *Ochum filium, quem habes, pacis et fidei obsidem retine, matrem et duas virgines filias redde: pro tribus corporibus XXX milia talentum auri precatur accipias.* [7] *Nisi moderationem animi tui notam haberem, non dicerem hoc esse tempus, quo pacem non dare solum, sed etiam occupare deberes.* [8] *Respice, quantum post te reliqueris; intuere, quantum petas. Periculosum est praegrave imperium; difficile est enim continere, quod capere non possis. Videsne, ut navigia, quae modum excedunt, regi nequeant? Nescio an Dareus ideo tam multa amiserit, quia nimiae opes magnae iacturae locum faciunt.* [9] *Facilius quaedam vincere quam tueri: quam, hercule, expeditius manus nostrae rapiunt, quam continent! Ipsa mors uxoris Darei admonere te potest minus iam misericordiae tuae licere quam licuit.”* [10] *Alexander, legatis excedere tabernaculo iussis, quid placeret, ad consilium refert. Diu nemo, quid sentiret, ausus est dicere incerta regis voluntate. ...* [16] *Introductis deinde legatis, ad hunc modum respondit: “Nuntiate Dareo me, quae fecerim clementer et liberaliter, non amicitiae eius tribuisse, sed naturae meae.* [17] *Bellum cum captivis et feminis gerere non soleo: armatus sit oportet, quem oderim.* [18] *Quodsi saltem pacem bona fide peteret, deliberarem forsitan, an darem; verum*

¹³⁶ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 2.25.3 and Just. 11.12.4, both of whom also present Alexander rejecting Darius' second offer on the grounds that he already possesses that which his rival is offering.

¹³⁷ For a rhetorical analysis of the third diplomatic exchange, see Helmreich 1927: 104-110.

enimvero, cum modo milites meos litteris ad prodicionem, modo amicos ad perniciem meam pecunia sollicitet, ad internecionem mihi persequendus est, non ut iustus hostis, sed ut percussor veneficus. Condiciones vero pacis, quas adfertis, si accepero, victorem eum faciunt. [19] Quae post Euphraten sunt, liberaliter donat. Ubi igitur me adeatis, [nempe] obliti estis: nempe ultra Euphraten sum. Liberalissimum ergo dotis, quam promittit, terminum castra mea transeunt. Hinc me depellite, ut sciam vestrum esse, quo ceditis. [20] Eadem liberalitate dat mihi filiam suam: nempe quam scio alicui servorum eius nupturam. Multum vero mihi praestat, si me Maz<a>eo generum praeponit! [21] Ite, nuntiate regi vestro et quae amisit et quae adhuc habet, praemia esse belli: hoc regente utriusque terminos regni, id quemque habiturum, quod proximae lucis adsignatura fortuna est.”

[1] Thus, although he had turned all his counsels to war since he had twice sought peace in vain, he, having been won over by the continence of his foe, sent ten emissaries, the foremost of his kinsmen, to present new terms of peace. Having summoned a council, Alexander ordered these men to be brought in. [2] The eldest of them said: “No violence has compelled Darius to seek peace from you this third time now; your justice and continence have driven him to. [3] We have not felt that his mother, wife, and children were captives, except for the fact that they are without him; taking care of the chastity of those who still live like a father, you call them queens and allow them to retain the semblance of their former fortune. [4] I see your face is such as Darius’ when we were dispatched by him; he mourns for a wife, you for an enemy. By now you would have stood in the line of battle, had not concern for her burial detained you. What is surprising if he seeks peace from so friendly a soul? What need is there for arms between those whose enmity has been destroyed? [5] Previously, he set the Halys river which bounds Lydia as the border of your kingdom; now, whatever lies between the Hellespont and the Euphrates he offers as a dowry for his daughter whom he passes on to you. [6] As for his son Ochius whom you have, keep him as a hostage of peace and good faith, but return his mother and maiden daughters; he prays that you receive thirty thousand talents of gold for their three persons. [7] If I did not consider your moderation of spirit noteworthy, I would not be saying that this is the time in which you ought not only to grant peace, but even to seize it. [8] Reconsider how much you are leaving behind you; see how much you are seeking. An unwieldy empire is a dangerous thing; for it is difficult to hold on to what you cannot take. Do you see how ships which surpass their limit cannot be controlled? I do not know whether Darius lost so many things because excessive wealth creates an opportunity for great loss. [9] It is easier to conquer certain things than to look after them; how much more readily, by Hercules, our hands seize something than hold on to it! The very death of Darius’ wife can remind you that your compassion has less scope now than it did.” [10] Having ordered the emissaries to depart from the tent, Alexander turned the matter over to the council. For a long time, no one dared to say what he felt, since the king’s wishes were unclear. ... [16] When the emissaries had been brought back in, he replied to them in the following way: “Announce to Darius that I attributed what I have done in kind and generous fashion not to his friendship, but to my nature. [17] I am not accustomed to wage war with prisoners and women; the man whom I hate ought to be armed. [18] But if he were seeking peace in good faith at least, I would perhaps deliberate whether to grant it. But as a matter of fact, when one moment he incites my soldiers with letters to betray me, another moment my friends with money to kill me, I must pursue him to his annihilation, not as a proper enemy, but as an assassin who deals in poisons. [19] Truly, if I accept the conditions of peace which you all offer, they make him the victor. He generously gives what is beyond the Euphrates. You have forgotten,

therefore, where it is you are meeting me. I am, of course, beyond the Euphrates—my camp is already across the most generous boundary of the dowry which he promises. Drive me back from here, so that I may know that this land is yours, which you cede to me. [20] With the same generosity does he give me his daughter, his daughter who, I know, was surely going to marry one of his slaves. Truly it is much better for me if he prefers me as a son-in-law to Mazaeus! [21] Go, announce to your king that both what he has lost and what he still has are prizes of war; that, since this rules the boundaries of both kingdoms, each will have that which the fortune of the coming day will assign.”

While marching to meet Darius’ grand army in Mesopotamia, Alexander receives, as Curtius records, a third and final message from the Persian king. Hearing that his wife, Statira,¹³⁸ has died in the Macedonian camp and that Alexander has given her an honorable funeral,¹³⁹ Darius begins his letter by praising Alexander for his magnanimity. In a similarly magnanimous spirit, Darius then proposes peace between the two nations, this time on terms still more favorable to Alexander. Beyond his previous concessions, Darius offers Alexander his son, Ochius, as a hostage, territory from the Euphrates to the Hellespont, and 30,000 talents for the return of his remaining female relatives. Following the offer itself, Darius concludes by admonishing Alexander to take the path of moderation and to desist from his vain hopes of total conquest. Faced with Darius’ message, Alexander hesitates for the first time in his correspondence with Darius and refers the matter to his council. Before long, however, he decides to reject the offer, first because Darius, he claims, is writing in bad faith, and second because he already possesses what Darius is offering him. Finally, Alexander challenges Darius to face him in battle to decide the fate of the empire.

From a Homeric standpoint, Darius’ third message corresponds to Ajax’s concluding speech in the Greek embassy (*Il.* 9.624-642). With his first two messages having met with

¹³⁸ Darius’ wife Statira is not to be confused with Darius’ daughter Statira, whom the Persian king offers Alexander as a wife in his second and third messages.

¹³⁹ Curtius’ account of the death of Statira is considered in Section VI below.

rejection, Darius, like Ajax, makes a third and final appeal to his rival based on a radically different argument from those of his first two messages: friendship.¹⁴⁰ Deeply moved by Alexander’s chivalrous treatment of his captured family, Darius (or, in this case, his emissary) begins by presenting Alexander in the role of friend (4.11.4: *amico animo*, “friendly spirit”), even relative, of the Persian royal family (4.11.2-4).¹⁴¹ By presenting Alexander in this paradoxical role, Darius not only seeks to flatter his rival; he also, and more crucially, seeks to pressure him into accepting his final offer. Having met with no success by treating his rival as an enemy in both of the previous diplomatic exchanges, Darius now hopes that by treating him as a friend, his rival will reciprocate with a friendly response, there being, of course, no need for hostility between friends (4.11.4). In the Homeric embassy, Ajax similarly begins by noting the Greeks’ friendship with Achilles, φιλότητος ἐταίρων | τῆς ἧ μιν παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτίομεν ἔξοχον ἄλλων, “the friendship of his companions, that by which we honored him above all beside the ships” (*Il.* 9.630-631), and concludes by beseeching the hero to reconsider his position in light of this friendship:

σὺ δ’ ἴλαον ἔνθεο θυμόν,
αἰδεσσαι δὲ μέλαθρον· ὑπώροφιοι δὲ τοί εἰμεν
πληθύος ἐκ Δαναῶν, μέμαμεν δὲ τοι ἔξοχον ἄλλων
κῆδιστοί τ’ ἔμεναι καὶ φίλτατοι, ὅσσοι Ἀχαιοί.

But make the heart within you propitious, and have respect for the rules of hospitality. We are beneath your roof, from among the multitude of the Danaans, and we are eager beyond all other men to be both dearest and most beloved (φίλτατοι) to you of all the Achaeans. (*Il.* 9.639-642)

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Whitman 1958: 280-281, who argues that αἰδώς, or, more broadly, the “claims of others,” represents the central theme of Ajax’s speech in the Homeric embassy.

¹⁴¹ Curtius is alone among the extant Alexander historians in stressing the theme of friendship in Darius’ third message; cf. Just. 11.12.9, who writes that Darius *gratias agit, quod nihil in suos hostile fecerit*, “thanked [Alexander] because he had done nothing hostile against his own family.”

Thus, both figures conclude the embassy with an emotional, rather than logical, appeal to their rivals.

Finally, within the same Homeric framework, Alexander's third message corresponds to Achilles' speech to Ajax in the Homeric embassy (*Il.* 9.644-655). Following his rival's third, friendship-based appeal, Alexander, like Achilles, has a surprising initial reaction: hesitation. Where Alexander responds to Darius' previous messages with decisiveness, he responds to this message only after a period of internal deliberation, with his advisers choosing to remain silent throughout the process (4.11.10).¹⁴² Similarly, Achilles, rather than rejecting Ajax's appeal right away, tells Ajax that, πάντα τί μοι κατὰ θυμὸν εἰσαο μυθήσασθαι, "you seemed in some way to speak everything according to my heart" (*Il.* 9.645). While neither figure gives an explanation for his hesitation, both seem, at least in part, to hesitate based on their respective rival's simple, but powerful, appeal to friendship. However, in neither case does this initial hesitation result in acceptance of the offer at hand; instead, each rejects his rival's offer by reverting to thoughts of that rival's hateful character. In the Homeric embassy, Achilles rejects the Greeks' appeal for the final time based on his recollection of Agamemnon and the wrongs the Greek commander has done to him:

ἀλλά μοι οἰδάνεται κραδίη χόλω, ὅππότε κείνων
μνήσομαι, ὥς μ' ἀσύφηλον ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἔρεξεν
Ἄτρεΐδης, ὡς εἴ τιν' ἀτίμητον μετανάστην.

But my heart swells with anger whenever I recall those things, how the son of Atreus treated me shamefully among the Argives, as if I were some dishonored vagabond (*Il.* 9.646-648).

¹⁴² Cf. Diod. 17.54.4, who notes that Τῶν μὲν οὖν ἄλλων οὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα συμβουλευσαι διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ὑποκειμένης ζητήσεως, "None of the others dared to give advice on account of the importance of the topic in question." Despite Diodorus' similarity to Curtius in this passage, the former differs from the latter in two significant ways: first, Diodorus presents the Macedonian generals as hesitating to speak based on the topic at hand, rather than on Alexander's uncertain wishes; and second, and more significantly, Diodorus includes this episode in the second, rather than third, diplomatic exchange between Darius and Alexander.

Likewise, in the Curtian embassy, Alexander rejects Darius' offer for the third and final time by focusing on his rival's faithlessness, and, in particular, his rival's attempts to eliminate him by bribing his friends and soldiers (4.11.18). Thus, for both Alexander and Achilles, their third rejections are gradual but, once resolved upon, unwavering. There can be, as they see it, no compromise with scoundrels.

This and the previous two subsections have sought to demonstrate the Homeric dimension of Curtius' account of the three diplomatic exchanges between Darius and Alexander. While the specific details of the three diplomatic exchanges do not all point in a Homeric direction, the thematic progression of both sets of messages, those of Darius and Alexander, makes an extended Homeric allusion not only plausible, but probable. On the one hand, Darius' progression from domineering profit-based message, to cautionary prudence-based message, to conciliatory friendship-based message closely resembles that of the Greek emissaries' speeches in *Iliad* 9; on the other hand, Alexander's progression from vehement and insulting rejection, to calm and confident rejection, to hesitant yet principled rejection similarly resembles that of Achilles' speeches in the same book. What, then, if this argument is correct, is the thematic significance of Curtius' extended Homeric allusion?

The best way to answer this question, as usual, is to consider the significance of the Homeric episode on which Curtius is drawing. In *Iliad* 9, the Greek embassy is a complete victory, at least initially, for Achilles: Agamemnon, his chief rival, is publically humiliated, and, for the next six books, Achilles watches as his wish to have his honor multiplied at Agamemnon's expense is fully realized. This victory, though, breeds tragedy. As a result of Achilles' refusal to reconcile with Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9, Patroclus, of course, is killed in *Iliad*

16. Thus, with hindsight, the Greek embassy represents a major—if not *the* major—turning point for Achilles in the *Iliad*. With this sequence of events in mind, Curtius’ purpose in modeling his account of the diplomatic exchange after the Homeric embassy begins to come into view. By casting Alexander in the role of the Achilles of *Iliad* 9, Curtius, I submit, subtly foreshadows the course of Alexander’s subsequent career. With his rejection of Darius’ three offers, Alexander, like Achilles, wins for himself a temporary victory. By refusing all negotiation, Alexander is able to continue his campaign and, shortly after the third diplomatic exchange, to defeat Darius for the second and final time at Gaugamela, thereby becoming *de facto* ruler of the Persian Empire. Yet, as the Homeric parallel hints, this victory is not to last. By becoming Great King, Alexander will lose something no less precious than Patroclus is to Achilles: his very self.¹⁴³ Faced with the decadence of the East, the good *rex* of the first pentad soon becomes the corrupt *tyrannus* of the second. In the final analysis, then, for Alexander to be the Achilles of *Iliad* 9 is to pay a terrible moral price.

VI. The Death of Statira (4.10.18-24)

[18] *Iter facienti spado e captivis, qui Darei uxorem comitabantur, deficere eam nuntiat et vix spiritum ducere.* [19] *Itineris continui labore animique aegritudine fatigata inter socrus et virginum filiarum manus collapsa erat, deinde et exstincta:* [20] *id ipsum nuntians alius supervenit. Et rex, haud secus quam si parentis mors nuntiata esset, crebros edidit gemitus lacrimisque obortis, qualis Dareus profudisset, in tabernaculum, in quo mater erat Darei defuncto adsidens corpori, venit.* [21] *Hic vero renovatus est maeror, ut prostratam humi vidit. Recenti malo priorum quoque admonita receperat in gremium adultas virgines, magna quidem mutui doloris solacia, sed quibus deberet esse solacio.* [22] *In conspectu erat nepos parvulus, ob id ipsum miserabilis, quod nondum sentiebat calamitatem ex maxima parte ad ipsum redundantem.* [23] *Crederes Alexandrum inter suas necessitudines flere et solacia non adhibere, sed quaerere. Cibo certe abstinuit omnemque honorem funeri patrio Persarum more servavit, dignus, hercule, qui nunc quoque tantae et mansuetudinis et continentiae ferat fructum.* [24]

¹⁴³ While Alexander will also lose Hephaestion, the Patroclus of the Alexander tradition, shortly before his own death, I am reluctant to say that Curtius means to foreshadow this event here, not only because Curtius’ account of Hephaestion’s death has been lost in a lacuna in Book 10, but also because the causal link between Alexander’s rejection of the Persian embassy and the death of Hephaestion is far weaker than that between Achilles’ rejection of the Greek embassy and the death of Patroclus.

Semel omnino eam viderat [quo die capta est, ne ut ipsam, sed ut Darei matrem videret] eximiamque pulchritudinem formae eius non libidinis habuerat invitamentum sed gloriae.

[18] While he was marching a eunuch from among the captives who were accompanying Darius' wife announced that she was failing and that she was barely breathing. [19] Worn out by the constant toil of marching and personal sorrow, she had collapsed in the arms of her mother-in-law and maiden daughters and then died. [20] Another man came announcing the very same news. And the king, just as if the death of his own parent had been announced, gave forth many moans and, having shed many tears such as Darius would have wept, he came into the tent in which Darius' s mother was sitting next to the deceased. [21] Here indeed his lamentation was renewed, when he saw her [i.e., Darius' mother] prostrate on the ground. She, having been reminded of her previous misfortunes by her recent misfortune, had taken the grown-up girls to her breast. They were a great source of consolation in their shared grief, though she herself should have been a source of consolation for them. [22] Her little grandson was there before her eyes, pitiable because he was not yet aware of the calamity which primarily flowed toward him. [23] You would have thought that Alexander was weeping among his own kinsmen and that he was not giving, but seeking, consolation. Without a doubt, he held back from food and observed every honor in tending to her funeral in accordance with the ancestral customs of the Persians. By Hercules, worthy was he now to carry off the fruit of such great compassion and continence! [24] He had seen her only once, on the day when she was captured, and he had considered her exquisite beauty not an incentive to lust, but to glory.

This final passage, which is closely connected to the third diplomatic exchange, recounts the death of Statira, Darius' wife, within the Macedonian camp.¹⁴⁴ While marching to face Darius at Gaugamela, Alexander receives word that the Persian queen, whose health has been failing due to grief and the hardship of constant travel, has died. Deeply saddened at this news, Alexander pays a visit to the Persian royal family. There, together with Statira's family, the Macedonian king weeps for the Persian queen and grants her a magnificent funeral in accordance with Persian custom. Through this noble act, Alexander's virtue stands out for all to see, particularly Darius, who, upon hearing of Alexander's chivalrous treatment of his wife, decides to make his third diplomatic overture to the Macedonian king. While Statira's death is thus connected to the third diplomatic exchange in a simple causal sense, with the former acting as the catalyst for the latter, it is also, I believe, connected to this passage in a deeper sense. In

¹⁴⁴ For Statira's life, see Berve 1926: 2.362-363 (no. 721); Carney 2000b: 94-96; and Heckel 2006: 255-256.

particular, and as I will argue in this section, Curtius' account of the death of Statira is modeled, like his account of the third diplomatic exchange, on a famous Homeric passage, in this case, Achilles' meeting with Priam in *Iliad* 24, a passage that casts Alexander, once more, in the role of the best of the Achaeans.¹⁴⁵

While Curtius suggests a connection between Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 24 in several ways throughout this passage, the most prominent is his description of Alexander's grief for Statira's death. Within the Alexander tradition, Curtius is far from unique in describing the king's grief for the Persian queen; Plutarch (*Alex.* 30.1, *De Alex. fort.* 2.6 = *Mor.* 338E-F) and Justin (11.12.6) both describe this grief explicitly, and Diodorus does so implicitly (17.54.7).¹⁴⁶ Yet, if Curtius is not alone in describing Alexander's grief for Statira's death, he is alone in presenting it in a distinctly Achillean way. First of all, Curtius presents Alexander as reacting, like Achilles, to the news of his ostensible enemy's suffering with thoughts of his own parent's suffering. Much as Achilles thinks of Peleus following Priam's moving appeal to return Hector's body (*Il.* 24.507), so, too, does Alexander think of Olympias upon hearing of Statira's death: *Et rex, haud secus quam si parentis mors nuntiata esset, crebros edidit gemitus*, "And the king, just as if the death of his own parent had been announced, gave forth many moans..." (4.10.20).¹⁴⁷ Second, Curtius describes Alexander as grieving, à la Achilles, with his ostensible enemy's

¹⁴⁵ As a parallel to Curtius' proposed double Homeric allusion, we may point to his commonly recognized cluster of Homeric allusions during Alexander's Indian campaign, all discussed above (Sections III and IV).

¹⁴⁶ Arrian alone of the main extant Alexander historians omits the story of Statira's death, though he reports the king's respectful treatment of Statira in the context of his marriage to Roxane (*Anab.* 4.20.1-3).

¹⁴⁷ Technically, Curtius' *parentis* is ambiguous, and could refer to either Philip or Olympias. However, since Philip had been dead for several years by the time of Statira's death, it seems far more natural to take this as referring to Olympias, as Atkinson 1980: 392-393 does without hesitation.

family.¹⁴⁸ Where Achilles famously weeps with Priam, the father of his greatest enemy (*Il.* 24.509-512), Alexander weeps with Statira's mother and three children: *in quo mater erat Darei defuncto adsidens corpori, venit. Hic vero renovatus est maeror, ut prostratam humi vidit.* "he came into the tent in which Darius's mother was sitting next to the deceased. Here indeed his lamentation was renewed, when he saw her prostrate on the ground." (4.10.20-21). Third, and perhaps most significantly, Curtius' Alexander, like Homer's Achilles, seems, in this moment, to recognize the basic universality of suffering. While Achilles conveys his recognition of this truth through the parable of the two jars (*Il.* 24.518-551), Alexander does so through his apparent equation of his own suffering with that of others: *Crederes Alexandrum inter suas necessitudines flere et solacia non adhibere, sed quaerere.* "You would have thought that Alexander was weeping among his own kinsmen and that he was not giving, but seeking, consolation" (4.10.23). Ultimately, through this equation of his own suffering with that of others, Curtius' Alexander comes to radiate the same sort of moral sublimity as Achilles does in *Iliad* 24.

Beyond Alexander's grief for Statira, Curtius also suggests a connection between Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 24 with two minor details. First, Curtius describes Alexander as abstaining from food in the midst of his grief: *Cibo certe abstinuit...*, "Without a doubt, he held back from food..." (4.10.23). While Achilles, admittedly, encourages Priam to eat during their meeting (*Il.* 24.601, 616-617), he himself is described as abstaining from food shortly before this meeting (*Il.* 24.128-130; cf. *Il.* 24.1-8). Second, Curtius presents Alexander, much as Homer does Achilles, as the generous caretaker of his ostensible enemy's funeral. Where Achilles serves as a sort of ghost-sponsor of Hector's funeral, promising to hold the Greek army back from the fighting for as many days as Priam needs to carry out his son's last rites (*Il.*

¹⁴⁸ Diodorus (17.54.7), Justin (11.12.6), and Plutarch (*Alex.* 30.1), by contrast, give no indication of where or with whom Alexander grieved for the Persian queen.

24.656-658), Alexander, for his part, serves as the direct organizer of Statira's funeral (4.10.23), and, as Curtius reveals in the third letter exchange, does so when he could have been marching to meet Darius in battle (4.11.4). While Curtius is not alone in emphasizing Alexander's generosity in the matter of Statira's funeral,¹⁴⁹ the specific detail of Alexander carrying out her funeral in accord with Persian custom—a detail unique to the historian—may be another nod toward Homer's Achilles, who also, of course, permits Hector to be buried according to Trojan custom.

A final detail suggestive of Curtius' artistic reworking of the death of Statira is his explanation of the Persian queen's death. Within the surviving Alexander tradition, five accounts of Statira's death survive, one each by Curtius, Diodorus (17.54.7), and Justin, (11.12.6-7) and two by Plutarch (*Alex.* 30.1; *De Alex. fort.* 2.6 = *Mor.* 338E), all of which probably derive from Cleitarchus.¹⁵⁰ While these five accounts naturally show agreement, or at least compatibility, on several key points,¹⁵¹ they reveal a puzzling disagreement on the cause of Statira's death: where Curtius has Statira dying of a combination of sorrow and travel fatigue (4.10.19), Justin (11.12.6) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 30.1) have her dying in childbirth.¹⁵² How are we to explain this discrepancy? Based on the agreement of Justin and Plutarch on this point, we may reasonably assume, first, that Cleitarchus also gave childbirth as the cause of death; and, second, that Curtius

¹⁴⁹ Diodorus records that Alexander buried Statira μεγαλοπρεπῶς, "magnificently" (17.54.7); Justin, *benigne*, "liberally" (11.12.6); and Plutarch, βασιλικῶς, "royally" (*De Alex. fort.* 2.6 = *Mor.* 338E) and οὐδεμιᾶς πολυτελείας φειδόμενος, "sparing no extravagance" (*Alex.* 30.1).

¹⁵⁰ Hammond 1983: 45, 99-100, 122; cf. Heckel and Yardley 1997: 160.

¹⁵¹ The surviving accounts all agree that Statira died shortly before the battle of Gaugamela and that Alexander then gave her a magnificent funeral; moreover, most of the surviving accounts agree that Darius, having received word of Alexander's chivalrous treatment of his wife, praised his enemy fulsomely (Curt. 4.10.25-34; Just. 11.12.7-9; Plut. *Alex.* 30.2-14 and *De Alex. fort.* 2.6 = *Mor.* 338E-F).

¹⁵² Diodorus (17.54.7) is silent on the cause of Statira's death, a fact not surprising given the brevity of his account of the Persian queen's death.

was responsible for changing the cause of death from childbirth to travel fatigue himself.¹⁵³ What reason could he have had to do so? As several scholars have pointed out, the presumed Cleitarchan version of Statira's death poses a major, if easily overlooked, problem for Alexander's famous chivalry: if Statira died in childbirth at the point at which Justin and Plutarch allege, namely well over a year since she last saw Darius, the baby can, in all probability, have been only one person's—Alexander's.¹⁵⁴ As J. E. Atkinson has posited, therefore, Curtius' reason for making this change may have been “to save Alexander's reputation and to remove an inconsistency from the story.”¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, while Curtius' presumed change to this episode proves nothing about his comparison of Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 24, it does suggest that the historian was not above reworking this episode for his own artistic purposes.

Much as in previous sections, the final question to consider is what Curtius' comparison of Alexander and the Achilles of *Iliad* 24 means in thematic terms. On a basic level, this comparison serves to highlight, I suggest, the sublimity of Alexander's behavior in this passage: by sympathizing with his enemy's misfortune—by showing, indeed, something of an awareness of the universality of human suffering—Alexander, like Achilles, reaches, in effect, a moral peak as a character. At the same time, however, this comparison seems to point in a more troubling direction. When Achilles achieves his moral peak in *Iliad* 24, this achievement proves tragically short-lived; not only does the hero meet his end shortly after his meeting with Priam, but so, too,

¹⁵³ Cf. Atkinson 1980: 392, who notes that this change “was probably made by Curtius himself, for Trogus, who made the same close connection between the death of Stateira and the third diplomatic exchange between Darius and Alexander, still gave childbirth as the cause of Stateira's death.”

¹⁵⁴ Welles 1963a: 275-277, n. 3; Atkinson 1980: 392; Bosworth 1980: 221; Heckel and Yardley 1997: 160-161; Carney 2000b: 94-96; and Briant 2015: 337.

¹⁵⁵ Atkinson 1980: 392.

does the common humanity forged in the two men's meeting. For Curtius to compare Alexander to this Achilles, then, is to hint, I believe, at the transience of the Macedonian's own moral exemplarity. While Alexander may be a paragon of moral excellence in this passage, this very status, as Curtius implies, both here and in the three diplomatic exchanges to which this passage is closely connected, cannot and will not last: the noble *rex* of the first pentad will, as seen above, soon give way to the corrupt *tyrannus* of the second.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the Achilles motif serves to highlight Alexander's moral decline over the course his reign, a central theme of Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni*. Based on the preceding case studies, the Achilles motif fulfills this function in one of two different ways depending on the pentad in which it appears. When Curtius deploys the Achilles motif in the first pentad, as, for example, in the Betis episode (4.6.26-29), it generally presages Alexander's royal degeneration upon becoming Great King,¹⁵⁶ his transformation, in effect, from *rex* to *tyrannus*; conversely, when the historian deploys the motif in the second pentad, as, for instance, in the Roxane episode (8.4.22-26), it consistently confirms this royal degeneration, and shows what this transformation means for the king and his subjects. By way of conclusion, then, I would like to consider how the Achilles motif—and its associated themes of moral decline, kingship, and tyranny—may relate to Curtius' probable historical context.

While Curtius' date is a notorious crux of Alexander scholarship, scholarly consensus holds that the historian wrote in the first century A.D., probably under either Claudius (41-54

¹⁵⁶ The Statira episode represents a partial exception to this rule, inasmuch as the Achilles motif highlights Alexander's moral exemplarity in response to the Persian queen's death. However, as argued above, Curtius simultaneously undercuts Alexander's moral exemplarity by hinting at its transient quality, such that even this episode contains a darker significance for the Macedonian king.

A.D.) or Vespasian (69-79 A.D.).¹⁵⁷ If this consensus is correct, as I believe it is, Curtius' use of the Achilles motif would seem to have as much significance for the Rome of the historian's own day as for Alexander. During the first century A.D., Rome was ruled, of course, by the Principate, the monarchy established by Augustus and carried on by successive dynasties, including the Julio-Claudians (31 B.C.-68 A.D.) and the Flavians (69-96 A.D.). Like most monarchies, the Principate produced rulers of varying quality, with some emperors, such as Augustus, fully meriting the title of *princeps*, and others, such as Caligula and Nero, proving, over time, more deserving of the label of *tyrannus*. Writing in this historical context, then, Curtius would almost certainly have seen Alexander, the most famous monarch of antiquity, as a topical figure, a figure who could be used not only to reflect, but perhaps even comment on, the regime under which he lived. When Curtius depicts Alexander via the Achilles motif as a *rex-turned-tyrannus*, therefore, it is hard not to see this depiction as mirroring—and critiquing—some of the Roman emperors of his own day.¹⁵⁸ Ultimately, for Curtius, Alexander's story, like those of a Caligula or a Nero, fully confirms Lord Acton's famous maxim: power does indeed corrupt, and absolute power does indeed corrupt absolutely.

¹⁵⁷ For bibliography on Curtius' date, see n. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Baynham 1998: 216 convincingly argues against reading Curtius' Alexander as an allegory for a particular Roman emperor. In her view, "Curtius' interest lies in *regnum* itself, in the concept of absolute power and its effect on the *rex* and followers. Thus it is possible to see echoes of many *principes* within the *Historiae*, without the work being confined to only one emperor."

CHAPTER 2

Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*

Introduction

Within the Alexander tradition, Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* stands apart in respect to genre. Where Arrian, Curtius, Diodorus, and Justin write history, Plutarch, as he famously declares in the preface to the *Alexander* (*Alex* 1.2), writes biography (βίους).¹ Partly as a result of the work's biographical classification, the scholarship on the *Alexander* has also stood apart somewhat from the scholarship on the other Alexander sources. While many scholars have, of course, studied the *Alexander* from a historical perspective, with a focus on Plutarch's sources² and his historical aims and methods,³ many scholars, going back decades, have also studied the work from a literary perspective, paying particular attention to characterization and structure. In 1955, for example, A. E. Wardman, in considering Plutarch's characterization of Alexander, suggested that τὸ θυμοειδές, "spiritedness" is the hero's key trait, the trait from which all the rest may be explained (e.g., anger, ambition).⁴ In 1980, D. Sansone, building on Wardman's work, showed that Plutarch's seemingly random digression on naptha (*Alex.* 35) is symbolically

¹ Plutarch's preface ranks among the most famous and debated passages in the *Life of Alexander*. While some scholars take this as a mission statement for Plutarchan biography as a whole (Barrow 1967: 53-54; Gossage 1967: 53; Hamilton 1969: xlv), others take it as mission statement solely for the *Alexander* and *Caesar* (Duff 1999: 14-22). Throughout the Alexander historians' works, the boundary between history and biography is frequently blurred, in part because Alexander's life had such an outsized influence on the course of history, and in part because his character, equally charismatic and enigmatic, made him arguably the most fascinating figure of his time.

² Plutarch's sources have been a major topic within the historical scholarship on the *Alexander*. While Powell 1939 argued that Plutarch used two sources alone—a *variorum* sourcebook and Alexander's letters—most scholars now believe that Plutarch used numerous sources, including Callisthenes, Chares, Onesicritus, Cleitarchus, Aristobulus, and Alexander's letters (Hamilton 1969: lv-lxviii; Hammond 1993: 5-187; cf. Tarn 1948: 2.296-309).

³ Though Plutarch is commonly regarded as a biographer first and foremost, Stadter 1965 and Badian 2003 [2012: 479-495] have drawn attention to his historian-like qualities.

⁴ Wardman 1955: 102-107; *contra* Hamilton 1969: lxix-lxx.

connected with Plutarch's characterization of Alexander, the hero of τὸ θυμοειδές.⁵ In 1996, P. A. Stadter, in an article on anecdotes in the *Alexander*, demonstrated how such anecdotes are skillfully arranged so as to reinforce Plutarch's characterization of Alexander.⁶ In 2002, T. Whitmarsh, in a challenging article on the cultural complexities behind the *Alexander*, contended that Plutarch's portrait of his hero is highly ambivalent, with Alexander representing both a champion of Hellenism and an embodiment of the Dionysiac.⁷ Most recently, in 2012, J. Beneker, in a chapter on the *Alexander-Caesar* in his book on *erōs* in the *Parallel Lives*, argued that, for both Alexander and Caesar, *erōs* is directed not so much toward other people as toward glory and power.⁸

Following in this tradition of Plutarchan scholarship, I focus in this chapter on a single aspect of the *Alexander*'s literary design: the Achilles motif. Despite this device's centrality to the *Alexander*,⁹ J. Mossman, in her article "Tragedy and Epic in Plutarch's *Alexander*," has been virtually alone in considering its thematic function within the *Life*.¹⁰ According to Mossman, epic motifs, like the Achilles motif, serve to highlight the positive side of Alexander's character, whereas tragic motifs serve to highlight the reverse.¹¹ While Mossman's theory is appealing on

⁵ Sansone 1980.

⁶ Stadter 1996.

⁷ Whitmarsh 2002.

⁸ Beneker 2012: 103-152.

⁹ Stewart 1993: 83 has stated that "[Achilles] is the hidden center of the *Life*. He is its unmoved mover, and its ultimate court of appeal."

¹⁰ Mossman 1988, followed by Mossman 1992, which traces the epic motifs in both Plutarch's *Alexander* and *Pyrrhus*.

¹¹ Mossman 1988: 83-91; cf. Cohen 1995: 486, who notes that "[t]he parallelism is for [Plutarch] positive throughout, honest and innocent," and Maitland 2015: 1, 17-18, 20, who regards Plutarch's use of the Achilles motif as essentially "romantic" and "sentimental."

first glance, the final example of the Achilles motif considered in her article, Alexander's grief at the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5), seriously undermines its validity. In this passage, as Mossman herself concedes, the Achilles motif seems to work in precisely the opposite way it is supposed to: rather than presenting Alexander in a positive light, the motif presents him in a distinctly negative light, inasmuch as it suggests that Alexander's grief for Hephaestion, like Achilles' grief for Patroclus, is excessive and self-destructive. Recognizing the problem this passage poses for her theory, Mossman tries to account for this anomaly in two ways: first, by suggesting that Achilles' grief for Patroclus is itself "the most tragic part of epic,"¹² and thus, per her theory, more of a "tragic" than an "epic" episode; and second, by playing down Plutarch's negative characterization of Alexander in his account of the death of Hephaestion. Neither counter argument, however, carries conviction. Mossman's first counter argument, in fact, reveals a key methodological problem with her article, namely the difficulty of distinguishing an "epic" from a "tragic" motif, given the common subject matter of both genres,¹³ while the second, as will be seen below, falls apart on a close reading of the text.¹⁴ If Mossman's theory, then, is insufficient to explain the Achilles motif's function in the *Alexander*, how else can its function be explained? In this chapter, I present a new theory to explain the motif's function. For Plutarch, I argue, the Achilles motif serves to highlight, above all, Alexander's "spiritedness" (τὸ

¹² Mossman 1988: 91.

¹³ While Mossman 1988: 85-86 acknowledges this methodological problem, she maintains that "theatrical imagery or a tragic quotation or an obvious reminiscence or quotation from Homer will usually be sufficient to pin down a passage firmly as "epic" or "tragic" (86). While this may be true in most cases, the passage concerning Hephaestion's death (*Alex.* 72.1-5) shows that it is not true in all cases.

¹⁴ See Section V below.

θυμοειδής),¹⁵ a quality the biographer regards as central to his subject's character (*Alex.* 4.7),¹⁶ as well as a nexus of qualities closely related to it, such as ambition, passion, and heroism.¹⁷

Throughout this chapter, I support this theory with close readings of the major passages in which the Achilles motif appears in the *Alexander*. To begin with, I consider the two explicit deployments of the Achilles motif, Alexander's tutelage under Lysimachus (*Alex.* 5.7-8) and his pilgrimage to Troy (*Alex.* 15.7-9); from there, I proceed to examine three implicit deployments of the motif, Alexander's arming scene prior to the battle of Gaugamela (*Alex.* 32.8-11),¹⁸ his *aristeia* at the Mallian town (*Alex.* 63.2-10), and his reaction to the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5). Finally, in the conclusion, I reconsider Wardman's argument on Alexander's τὸ θυμοειδές, the argument that this is the hero's key trait in the *Life*, in light of the findings of this chapter.

I. The Tutelage of Lysimachus (*Alex.* 5.7-8)

[7] Πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ὡς εἰκὸς ἦσαν αὐτοῦ τροφεῖς καὶ παιδαγωγοὶ καὶ διδάσκαλοι λεγόμενοι, πᾶσι δ' ἐφειστήκει Λεωνίδα, ἀνὴρ τὸ τ' ἦθος αὐστηρὸς καὶ συγγενῆς Ὀλυμπιάδος, αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ φεύγων τὸ τῆς παιδαγωγίας ὄνομα, καλὸν ἔργον ἐχούσης καὶ λαμπρὸν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων διὰ τὸ ἀξίωμα καὶ τὴν οἰκειότητα τροφεὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ καθηγητὴς καλούμενος. [8] ὁ δὲ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ καὶ τὴν προσηγορίαν ὑποποιούμενος ἦν Λυσίμαχος, τὸ γένος Ἀκαρνάν, ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν ἔχων ἀστεῖον, ὅτι δ' ἑαυτὸν μὲν ὠνόμαζε Φοίνικα, τὸν δ' Ἀλέξανδρον Ἀχιλλέα, Πηλέα δὲ τὸν Φίλιππον, ἠγαπᾶτο καὶ δευτέραν εἶχε χώραν.

¹⁵ *LSJ*, s.v. θυμοειδής, defines the term as, *inter alia*, "high-spirited," "courageous," "passionate."

¹⁶ Ἀλέξανδρον δ' ἡ θερμότης τοῦ σώματος ὡς ἔοικε καὶ ποτικὸν καὶ θυμοειδῆ παρεῖχεν. "The heat of his body, it seems, made Alexander both fond of drink and spirited" (*Alex.* 4.7).

¹⁷ For the relation between τὸ θυμοειδές and ambition, see Wardman 1955: 103; the relation between τὸ θυμοειδές and the other two qualities, passion and heroism, should be fairly self-evident given the definition of the Greek word (see n. 15).

¹⁸ Mossman 1988: 88 regards this as a case of a generic epic motif rather than the Achilles motif itself. As I argue in Section III, however, I think there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Plutarch had Achilles, rather than some generic Homeric hero, in mind in this passage.

[7] Now then, there were, as was probable, many who were called his tutors, attendants, and teachers, and in charge of all of them was Leonidas, a man of stern character and a relative of Olympias. He himself, while not avoiding the title of attendant (*paidagōgos*), as it brought with it fine and distinguished work, was called by all Alexander's tutor (*tropheus*) and teacher (*kathēgētēs*) on account of his reputation and kinship. [8] But the man who assumed the role and title of attendant (*paidagōgos*) was Lysimachus, an Acarnanian by descent, who had nothing else refined about him, but because he called himself Phoenix, Alexander Achilles, and Philip Peleus, was regarded with affection and held second place.

In this passage, while describing Alexander's second main childhood tutor, Lysimachus of Acarnania,¹⁹ Plutarch deploys the Achilles motif for the first time in the *Life of Alexander*.²⁰ Based on Plutarch's description, Lysimachus, despite a basic lack of cultural refinement, wins the favor of the young prince by devising a Homeric game of make-believe wherein Alexander plays the part of Achilles, Philip that of Peleus, and Lysimachus himself that of Phoenix, Achilles' childhood tutor. Traditionally, as with many deployments of the Achilles motif throughout the Alexander tradition, scholars have approached this particular deployment from a strictly historical perspective, concluding, invariably, that Lysimachus' game of Homeric make-believe constitutes crucial evidence of Alexander's early passion for the Homeric poems in general and Achilles in particular.²¹ While this historical reading of Lysimachus' game is, on balance, compelling,²² I suggest that there is a second way of reading it as well. As I will argue in this section, Lysimachus' game, when viewed from a literary, rather than historical,

¹⁹ For Lysimachus' life, see Berve 1926: 2.241 (no. 481) and Heckel 2006: 153.

²⁰ Plutarch's reference to Alexander's Aeacid descent at the beginning of the *Life (Alex. 2.1)* could be considered an explicit deployment of the Achilles motif, but, given the biographer's focus there on Aeacus and Neoptolemus, rather than Achilles, I would argue that the present passage, where Achilles stands front and center, is the first real deployment of the motif.

²¹ Lane Fox 1973: 59; O'Brien 1992: 21; and Cartledge 2004: 226.

²² This historical reading is compelling based on both its inherent plausibility and the totality of the evidence for Alexander's preoccupation with Achilles and the Homeric poems as discussed in the Introduction. On the other hand, Chares of Mytilene, the probable source for Plutarch's description of Lysimachus and his Homeric game (Hamilton 1969: 14), is far from a completely trustworthy authority.

perspective, plays into a central theme of the early chapters of the *Life of Alexander*: Alexander's relationship with Philip.

To comprehend the thematic significance of Lysimachus' game, we must begin by considering the way in which Plutarch presents this famous father-son relationship in the *Alexander*. On Plutarch's account, Alexander's relationship with Philip is characterized, above all, by a deep sense of rivalry.²³ While this rivalry figures in several episodes throughout the *Alexander*, it stands on most prominent display in Plutarch's description of the young Alexander's reaction to news of his father's victories:

ὄσάκις γοῦν ἀπαγγελθείη Φίλιππος ἢ πόλιν ἔνδοξον ἤρηκῶς ἢ μάχην τινὰ περιβόητον νενικηκῶς, οὐ πάνυ φαιδρὸς ἦν ἀκούων, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἡλικιώτας ἔλεγεν· “ὦ παῖδες, πάντα προλήψεται ὁ πατήρ, ἐμοὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἀπολείψει μεθ' ὑμῶν ἔργον ἀποδείξασθαι μέγα καὶ λαμπρόν.”

At all events, as many times as it was announced that Philip had captured a famous city or won a much talked-about battle, he [Alexander] was none too happy to hear it, but would tell his peers: “Boys, my father will anticipate me in everything and will leave me no great and illustrious deed to show forth with your help.” (*Alex.* 5.4)

On Plutarch's description, Alexander, even as a boy, views his relationship with Philip in essentially zero-sum terms. Devoted to the heroic concepts of glory and honor, finite commodities each, the young prince sees in his father, a man of great glory and honor himself, not a friend or ally, but a competitor; whatever heroic deeds Philip accomplishes now, Alexander believes, are heroic deeds that he, Alexander, cannot accomplish in the future. For Plutarch, then, Philip serves, in effect, as a benchmark of Alexander's success: Will Alexander, Plutarch seems to ask, surpass his father, or fall short of him?

Within this context, Lysimachus' Homeric game of make-believe takes on something of a prophetic role. Located in the same chapter as the preceding passage on Alexander's rivalry with

²³ On Alexander's historical rivalry with Philip, see Fredricksmeier 1990.

Philip (*Alex.* 5), the tutor's game hints, I would argue, at the eventual resolution of this rivalry: while both father and son may be worthy of heroic comparison, it is Alexander, not Philip, who will prove the greater man, the Achilles to his father's Peleus.²⁴ This reading of Lysimachus' game, and the Homeric roles he assigns father and son, finds support in the one other episode in which the prince's tutor makes a definite appearance in the *Life of Alexander*.²⁵ During the siege of Tyre, Lysimachus, by now an old man, insists on accompanying Alexander on a minor campaign against the Arabs of the Antilebanon because, in his words, τοῦ Φοίνικος οὐκ εἶναι χείρων οὐδὲ πρεσβύτερος, "he is neither weaker nor older than Phoenix." (*Alex.* 24.10). By recalling his own Homeric role from his pupil's childhood, Lysimachus, of course, also recalls Alexander's Homeric role, a role that now takes on an aspect of spellbinding reality. During the march into Arab territory, when Lysimachus fails to keep up with the main force, Alexander heroically risks all to protect his former tutor.²⁶ With night falling and cold setting in, Alexander single-handedly raids an enemy encampment, kills two enemy soldiers, and returns to his beleaguered tutor with a brand with which to start a fire and pass the rest of the night in peace (*Alex.* 24.). While Alexander's raid finds no specific parallel with any Achillean action in the

²⁴ Cf. Beneker 2012: 110.

²⁵ While Plutarch also refers to a Lysimachus as slandering Callisthenes in the context of the Conspiracy of the Pages (*Alex.* 55.2), scholars are divided as to which Lysimachus is meant in this case: Berve 1926: 2.241 (no. 481), Hamilton 1969: 153-154, and Heckel 2006: 154 maintain that the reference is to the present Lysimachus; Pearson 1960: 57, on the other hand, holds that the reference is to the more famous Lysimachus, Alexander's bodyguard and the future ruler of Thrace. The former view is more likely, particularly since, as Berve points out, Lysimachus the bodyguard is said to have been Callisthenes' student (Just. 15.3.6), making him a rather unlikely candidate to have slandered the court historian.

²⁶ Cf. Lane Fox 1973: 186, who also notes Alexander's Achillean behavior in this episode, but treats it from a historical rather than literary perspective: "...it was only proper that the new Achilles should have risked himself in the manner of his hero for the tutor who had first given him his Homeric nickname."

Iliad,²⁷ Plutarch’s characterization of his hero as not only superhumanly brave and daring, but almost parentally concerned for and protective of his comrades,²⁸ is quintessentially Achillean. Thus, when read in conjunction with Lysimachus’ game, Alexander’s raid serves as the symbolic fulfillment of the tutor’s early prophecy for his pupil: as Plutarch suggests, Alexander, by this point, has not only taken on the mantle of Achilles, but has, in so doing, definitively answered the burning question of his childhood—Who will be the greater man, Philip or Alexander?

While Lysimachus’ game thus plays a symbolic role in connection with Alexander’s rivalry with Philip, it plays an equally symbolic role in connection with Alexander’s education, something in which Philip is depicted as being actively involved.²⁹ In the *Alexander*, Plutarch describes his hero’s education in two separate phases: first, his early tutoring by Leonidas and Lysimachus (*Alex.* 5.7-8); and second, his more famous tutoring by Aristotle (*Alex.* 7-8). As Stadter has argued, these two phases of Alexander’s education are thematically linked by Alexander’s taming of Bucephalas (*Alex.* 6), the anecdote that comes between them.³⁰ According to Stadter, the Bucephalas anecdote serves, *inter alia*,³¹ as a metaphor for Alexander’s education

²⁷ While Alexander’s raid could be compared to the *Doloneia*, the two episodes show considerable difference in terms of tone and emphasis: whereas Homer depicts Odysseus’ and Diomedes’s raid as an act of cunning and deceit, Plutarch presents Alexander’s as more an act of bravery and nobility.

²⁸ On Achilles’ parental care, see Mills 2000. Plutarch’s comment that Alexander τῷ πονεῖν αὐτὸς ἀεὶ παραμυθούμενος τὴν ἀπορίαν τῶν Μακεδόνων, “was himself always consoling the Macedonians’ perplexity through his own toils” (*Alex.* 24.12) recalls, albeit subtly, Achilles’ description of himself during the Embassy: ὡς δ’ ὄρνις ἀπτήσι νεοσσοῖσι προφέρησι | μάστακ’, ἐπεὶ κε λάβησι, κακῶς δ’ ἄρα οἱ πέλει αὐτῆ, | ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ πολλὰς μὲν αὐπνοὺς νύκτας ἴαυον, | ἤματα δ’ αἱματόεντα διέπρησσον πολεμίζων, | ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενος ὄρων ἔνεκα σφετεράων, “As a bird presents a morsel to her unfledged chicks whenever she gets one, but it turns out badly for herself, just so did I, too, used to pass many sleepless nights and spend bloody days waging war, fighting men for the sake of others’ wives” (*Il.* 9.323-327).

²⁹ Plutarch stresses Philip’s choice of Aristotle as Alexander’s tutor (*Alex.* 7.1-4), though he is silent on Philip’s responsibility, if any, for choosing Leonidas and Lysimachus for the same role.

³⁰ Stadter 1996: 293-294, followed by Whitmarsh 2002: 180.

³¹ Stadter 1996: 291-295 suggests that the Bucephalas anecdote also highlights, in one way or another, Alexander’s brashness, his rivalry with Philip, his resemblance to Greek heroes, and his spirited (θυμοειδής) nature.

as a whole: Alexander, like Bucephalas, “required a great trainer...Leonidas, Lysimachus, and the others were like the inexperienced and weak handlers of Bucephalas, who were not up to their task; only an Aristotle could handle an Alexander, as only an Alexander could handle a Bucephalas.”³² More to the point, the Bucephalas anecdote, as Stadter suggests, reveals the Platonic undercurrent in Plutarch’s account of Alexander’s education:

Bucephalas, the spirited horse, recalls the noble horse of Platos [sic] *Phaedrus* (246A), which needed the guiding hand of reason to follow the right path...When Alexander points Bucephalas toward the sun, he enacts on a physical plane what Aristotle must attempt to do spiritually: turn Alexander toward the good, and the light of philosophy.³³

While Stadter is certainly right to stress the Platonic aspect of the second part of Alexander’s education, his tutoring by Aristotle, I would suggest in the remainder of this section that the first part of Alexander’s education, his tutoring by Leonidas and Lysimachus, plays a complementary role in this Platonic design.

Key to the role Leonidas and Lysimachus play in this Platonic design is Plato’s theory of the soul as presented in the *Republic*. In the *Republic*, Plato posits that the soul, like the ideal state, consists of three parts (*Resp.* 440e-441c), first the desiring part (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), second the spirited part (τὸ θυμοειδές),³⁴ and third the reasoning part (τὸ λογιστικόν). From there, the philosopher argues that the soul, again like the ideal city, is just when and only when its three constituent parts work in harmony together, when the reasoning part of the soul, that is, rules over the other two parts (*Resp.* 441e). When read with Plato’s theory of the soul in mind, Plutarch’s account of Alexander’s education takes on the appearance of a Platonic allegory. For

³² Stadter 1996: 294.

³³ Stadter 1996: 294. Stadter also notes that Alexander’s gesture of turning Bucephalas toward the sun “recalls the philosopher’s route up from [the] cave in the *Republic*”; cf. Whitmarsh 2002: 180-181.

³⁴ For Alexander’s connection to τὸ θυμοειδές, see Wardman 1955: 102-107 and Sansone 1980: 66-68.

Plutarch, Alexander's education is, in a sense, a Platonic struggle for his hero's soul, with each of Alexander's tutors symbolically presiding over one of the three parts of the Platonic soul.³⁵ While Aristotle clearly presides over the reasoning part of the soul (τὸ λογιστικόν), as Plutarch's description of him as τῶν φιλοσόφων τὸν ἐνδοξότατον καὶ λογιώτατον, "the most famous and learned of the philosophers" indicates (*Alex.* 7.2), Leonidas and Lysimachus preside, I submit, over the desiring (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) and spirited (τὸ θυμοειδές) parts of the soul respectively.

Let us begin with Leonidas's connection to the desiring part of Alexander's soul.

Described as "a man of stern character" in the passage in which he is introduced (*Alex.* 5.7: ἀνὴρ τὸ τ' ἦθος ἀσθηρὸς), Leonidas plays the role of disciplinarian in both of the anecdotes in which he subsequently appears in the *Alexander*. In the first such anecdote, when the Carian queen Ada takes to sending Alexander culinary gifts, the king gently turns them down, telling the queen that, as a child, he had learned the virtue of abstemiousness from his tutor Leonidas (*Alex.* 22.7-10). In the second Leonidas anecdote, Alexander, following the siege of Gaza, sends his tutor a vast quantity of frankincense and myrrh in wry remembrance of an episode from his childhood when his tutor had reproached him for being unnecessarily lavish with incense during a sacrifice (*Alex.* 25.6-8). With both of these anecdotes may be detected a pattern: whenever the young Alexander is tempted by desire, Leonidas is there to check that desire.³⁶ From a Platonic perspective, then, Leonidas performs his tutorial role to a tee; in the philosophical struggle that is Alexander's education, Leonidas ensures that the desiring part of his pupil's soul, by

³⁵ Cf. Stadter 1996: 294 n. 10., who suggests that the Bucephalas anecdote may also be read from the perspective of Plato's theory of the soul.

³⁶ Though Alexander's choice to send Leonidas a huge amount of frankincense and myrrh after the siege of Gaza complicates this reading, inasmuch as the pupil here gives in to precisely the sort of desire of which his tutor disapproves, I believe this choice can be explained as part of Alexander's general decline over the course of Plutarch's work (cf. Hamilton 1969: lxix). On this view, while Alexander keeps his desires more or less in check throughout the first half of the *Life*, he begins to succumb to them more and more in the second half (cf. Section V below on Alexander's grief at the death of Hephaestion).

remaining firmly under control, is in a position to work in harmony with the other parts of his soul.

We come now to Lysimachus' connection to the spirited part (τὸ θυμοειδές) of Alexander's soul. When describing Lysimachus' role in Alexander's education, Plutarch focuses, as seen above, on the tutor's Homeric game of make-believe and, in particular, his pupil's role as Achilles. From a Platonic perspective, this Homeric role is significant. Based on his most familiar characteristics, Achilles stands, I submit, as a veritable embodiment of τὸ θυμοειδές—the part of the soul concerned, in Plato's view, with courage and honor, anger and passion. By comparing Alexander to Achilles, therefore, Lysimachus encourages, in symbolic terms, the spirited part of his pupil's soul. Platonically speaking, however, such encouragement is problematic. As T. E. Duff has shown, for Plutarch, as for Plato, education must aim “to train the ‘spirited’ part of the soul (τὸ θυμοειδές) to be obedient to reason,”³⁷ With his game of Homeric make-believe, then, Lysimachus symbolically threatens to destabilize his pupil's philosophical wellbeing, to prioritize the emotional over the rational part of his pupil's soul. Ultimately, while Aristotle, the representative of the reasoning part of the soul, is subsequently summoned to rectify this situation,³⁸ Lysimachus' symbolic influence continues to be felt:³⁹ for all of Aristotle's influence on him,⁴⁰ Plutarch's Alexander remains preeminently a man of τὸ

³⁷ Duff 1999: 76.

³⁸ Cf. Stadter 1996: 294.

³⁹ Cf. Sansone 1980, who argues that Alexander, as suggested in Plutarch's peculiar digression on *naphtha* (*Alex.* 35), struggles to keep his spirited, *naphtha*-like nature under control throughout the *Life*.

⁴⁰ According to Plutarch, Aristotle's influence on Alexander was considerable. Plutarch reports, for example, that Aristotle was responsible for instilling in Alexander his love of philosophy (*Alex.* 7.5-9) and medicine (*Alex.* 8.1); and that Alexander held Aristotle, for a time, in even higher regard than Philip, on the grounds that, while he owed his life to his father, he owed his knowledge of how to live a good life to the philosopher (*Alex.* 8.4). Modern scholars, however, are deeply divided on the question of Aristotle's influence on Alexander, with some, like Plutarch, regarding it as considerable (e.g., Wilcken 1967: 54-58; Hamilton 1973: 32-34; Green 1991: 54-62), and others as far less so (e.g., Ehrenberg 1938: 62-102; Bosworth 1988a: 20-21).

θυμοειδής, a man who, for all of his philosophical traits, forever falls short of that highest of all Platonic goals: the philosopher king.⁴¹

II. The Pilgrimage to Troy (Alex. 15.7-9)⁴²

ἀναβὰς δ' εἰς Ἴλιον, ἔθυσσε τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ καὶ τοῖς ἥρωσιν ἔσπεισε. [8] τὴν δ' Ἀχιλλέως στήλην ἀλειψάμενος λίπα, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἐταίρων συναναδραμὼν γυμνὸς ὥσπερ ἔθος ἐστίν, ἐστεφάνωσε, μακαρίσας αὐτὸν ὅτι καὶ ζῶν φίλου πιστοῦ καὶ τελευτήσας μεγάλου κήρυκος ἔτυχεν. [9] ἐν δὲ τῷ περιιέναι καὶ θεᾶσθαι τὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐρομένου τινὸς αὐτόν, εἰ βούλεται τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου λύραν ἰδεῖν, ἐλάχιστα φροντίζειν ἐκείνης ἔφη, τὴν δ' Ἀχιλλέως ζητεῖν, ἧ τὰ κλέα καὶ τὰς πράξεις ὕμνει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκεῖνος.

When he had gone up to Troy, he sacrificed to Athena and poured libations to the heroes; [8] and, after having anointed himself with oil and, as is the custom, run naked with his companions, he crowned the tomb of Achilles, deeming him blessed inasmuch as he had found both a faithful friend while he was alive and a great herald after he died. [9] When someone asked him during his site-seeing tour of the city whether he wished to see the lyre of Alexander, he said that he cared very little for that, but that he was seeking after the lyre of Achilles, by which he used to sing the famous deeds of noble men.

This passage, the second of Plutarch's two explicit deployments of the Achilles motif, records Alexander's famous pilgrimage to Troy at the start of the great Panhellenic campaign. Throughout this pilgrimage, Alexander's connection to Achilles is on full display, first with his crowning of the hero's tomb, next with his blessing of the hero for having had both Patroclus as his friend and Homer as his commemorator, and finally with his wish to see only Achilles' lyre, not Paris'.⁴³ On first glance, this connection's meaning may seem fairly transparent. Through the act of honoring Achilles above all other Homeric heroes, scholars have argued that Alexander

⁴¹ Whitmarsh 2002: 179-181 notes that, while the Alexander of the *Life* is not presented in the mold of a philosopher king, the Alexander of the *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* is; cf. Wardman 1955: 97-103 and Hamilton 1969: xxxv-xxxix.

⁴² For Arrian's account of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, see Chapter 3, Section I.

⁴³ Plutarch's account of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy is paralleled by various other sources: Alexander's crowning of Achilles' tomb (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1; Diod. 17.17.3; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; cf. Just. 11.5.12); Alexander's blessing of Achilles (Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.1); and Alexander's wish to see Achilles' lyre rather than Paris' (Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 1.10 = *Mor.* 331D; Ael. *V.H.* 9.38).

effectively takes on the role of Achilles, a role which, in turn, highlights certain key aspects of Alexander’s character.⁴⁴ First and foremost, as Mossman has noted, this role conveys Alexander’s supreme heroism, his bravery and martial valor: “The parallelism with Achilles is very strong here...Coming at the very beginning of the expedition, this acts as a declaration of Alexander’s heroic intentions...This Alexander will be as completely different from the mythological one [i.e., Alexander/Paris] as Achilles was: his preoccupations will be with glory and conquest; he will shun the pleasures of the palace and the bedroom with which Paris is particularly associated in Homer.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, as Duff has suggested, this Homeric role underscores Alexander’s “semi-divine status and his Greekness,”⁴⁶ inasmuch as Achilles is not only the son of a goddess, but also the preeminent champion of the Greek cause at Troy. Yet, while both Mossman and Duff are correct in their assessments of the Achilles motif’s meaning in this passage, the motif possesses, I will argue, at least two further layers of meaning, the first revolving around Achilles’ lyre and the second around that of Paris.

While Achilles’ lyre has traditionally been read as a straightforward symbol of Achillean heroism, I suggest that it may also be read as a Homeric allusion. With Alexander’s remark that Achilles, on his lyre, τὰ κλέα καὶ τὰς πράξεις ὕμνει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκεῖνος, “used to sing the famous deeds of noble men” (*Alex.* 15.9), Plutarch patently alludes to Homer’s famous description of the Greek hero playing the lyre in *Iliad* 9:⁴⁷

Μυρμιδόνων δ’ ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην,
τὸν δ’ εὖρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείη,
καλῆ δαιδαλέη, ἐπὶ δ’ ἀργύρεον ζυγὸν ἦεν,

⁴⁴ Mossman 1988: 87; Bréchet 2008: 98 and Scott-Kilvert 2011: 590.

⁴⁵ Mossman 1988: 87.

⁴⁶ Scott-Kilvert 2011: 590.

⁴⁷ While Hamilton 1969: 38, Bréchet 2008: 98, and Scott-Kilvert 2011: 590 have all noted this allusion, none has considered its thematic significance for the present Plutarch passage, as I do below.

τὴν ἄρετ' ἐξ ἐνάρων πόλιν Ἡετίωνος ὀλέσσασ·
τῆ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν.

The two of them⁴⁸ reached the huts and ships of the Myrmidons, and they found him [Achilles] enjoying himself in his heart with a clear-sounding, fine, and well-crafted lyre (and there was a silver cross-bar upon it), which he had won from the spoils after having sacked the city of Eetion. With this he was delighting his heart and singing the famous deeds of men. (*Il.* 9.185-189)

The first aspect of this passage that has a bearing on Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy is the genealogy, as it were, of Achilles' lyre. According to Homer, Achilles' lyre originally belonged to a certain Eetion. While Homer gives only the barest description of Eetion here, he elsewhere reveals that Eetion was not only the ruler of Cilician Thebes (*Il.* 1.366), a town allied to Troy, but the father of Andromache herself (*Il.* 6.414-419). Based on Alexander's own genealogy, this connection between Greek and Trojan, between Achilles' lyre and Andromache's family, is, I suggest, significant. Though Alexander most famously claimed descent from Achilles and Hercules, he also counted Andromache among his ancestors, as she, together with Achilles' son Neoptolemus, was the traditional progenitor of the Molossian royal house, the family to which Alexander belonged on his mother's side.⁴⁹ From this perspective, then, Alexander's wish to see the lyre of Achilles is more than a testament of his heroic nature; it is also a testament of his ambitious nature, a declaration, in effect, of his grand imperial designs. Like most of the Alexander historians, Plutarch repeatedly emphasizes the theme of the king's destiny to rule the world. While this theme emerges most clearly in episodes such as Alexander's solving of the

⁴⁸ This passage, with its notorious dual *ικέσθην* and several other dual forms in the surrounding lines, is a famous crux of Homeric scholarship. The basic problem is that, while Homer names five Greek as taking part in the embassy to Achilles (Odysseus, Ajax, Phoenix, Odios, and Eurybates) prior to this passage (*Il.* 9.168-170), he refers to the embassy, both here and elsewhere, with verb forms that suggest it comprises only two members. On this problem, and its potential implications for Homeric composition, see Hainsworth 1993: 84-87.

⁴⁹ According to Carney 2006: 5, this tradition was certainly current by the 420's, when Euripides wrote his *Andromache* (1243-1249), but may date back to the time of Pindar, two of whose *Odes* refer to Neoptolemus (though not Andromache) in connection with Molossia (*Nem.* 4.51-53, 7.33-40).

Gordion Knot (*Alex.* 18.1-4) and sojourn to the oracle of Ammon (*Alex.* 27.5-9), the present episode, I would argue, showcases the same theme, albeit in a subtler way. By declaring his wish to see the lyre of Achilles, the possession of first a Trojan, then a Greek, Alexander not only asserts his mixed Greek and Trojan ancestry, but presents himself, through this very ancestry, as the rightful ruler of both West and East.⁵⁰ Thus, from the beginning, Alexander seeks, the lyre hints, not only to conquer the Persian Empire, but to establish a combined Macedonian-Persian empire in its place.

Likewise significant for Plutarch's Alexander is the story of Achilles' sacking of Cilician Thebes, the context of his acquisition of Eetion's lyre. Though this story is alluded to at various points throughout the poem,⁵¹ Andromache alone recounts it in full during her celebrated reunion with Hector in *Iliad* 6:

οὐδέ μοι ἔστι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ.
 ἦτοι γὰρ πατέρ' ἀμὸν ἀπέκτανε δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,
 ἐκ δὲ πόλιν πέρσεν Κιλικῶν εὖ ναιετάουσαν,
 Θήβην ὑψίπυλον· κατὰ δ' ἔκτανεν Ἡετίωνα,
 οὐδέ μιν ἐξενάριξε, σεβάσσατο γὰρ τό γε θυμῷ,
 ἀλλ' ἄρα μιν κατέκρη σὺν ἔντεσι δαιδαλέοισιν
 ἠδ' ἐπὶ σῆμ' ἔχεεν· περὶ δὲ πτελέας ἐφύτευσαν
 νύμφαι ὄρεστιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.
 οἱ δέ μοι ἑπτὰ κασίγνητοι ἔσαν ἐν μεγάροισιν,
 οἱ μὲν πάντες ἰῶ κίον ἤματι Ἄϊδος εἶσω·
 πάντας γὰρ κατέπεφνε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς
 βουσὶν ἐπ' εἰλιπόδεσσι καὶ ἀργεννῆς ὄϊεσσι.
 μητέρα δ', ἧ βασιλευεν ὑπὸ Πλάκῳ ὕληεσση,
 τὴν ἐπεὶ ἄρ' δεῦρ' ἤγαγ' ἄμ' ἄλλοισι κτεάτεσσιν,
 ἄψ' ὃ γε τὴν ἀπέλυσε λαβὼν ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα,
 πατρὸς δ' ἐν μεγάροισι βάλ' Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα.

Nor do I have a father and mother. For truly godlike Achilles killed my father and completely sacked Thebe of the high-gates, the well-inhabited city of the

⁵⁰ Cf. Pearson 1960: 41, who argues that Callisthenes, too, emphasized Alexander's descent from Andromache and used this Trojan descent to suggest that the king's Asian conquests represented "the recovery of his ancestral kingdom—the kingdom of Troy..."

⁵¹ *Il.* 1.366-367, 9.186-188, 16.152-154, 23.826-829.

Cilicians. He cut down Eetion, nor did he despoil him, for he felt in his heart a sense of reverential dread at the act, but he burned him, as a matter of fact, together with his cunningly wrought arms, and he heaped a tomb over him; and around it the mountain nymphs, the daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, planted elm trees. As for the seven brothers I had in the halls, they all went down to Hades on a single day, for swift-footed godlike Achilles slew them all among the shambling cattle and white sheep. As for my mother, who ruled beneath wooded Placus, after he led her here along with the rest of the possessions, he released her after receiving a countless ransom, but Artemis who pours out arrows struck her in the halls of my father. (*Il.* 6.413-428)

From this story, the picture of Achilles that emerges is complex, almost chiaroscuro-like. On the one hand, Achilles appears here in a particularly harsh light. By killing Andromache's father and all seven of her brothers, and in a single day at that, the hero makes clear his frightful capacity for death and destruction. At the same time, though, the best of the Achaeans displays, in the wake of this killing, a countervailing magnanimity unique in the *Iliad*.⁵² Based on a feeling of awe or reverence (σεβάσσαιτο), Achilles both pays Eetion the respect of a funeral after refraining from despoiling his corpse, and sets Eetion's wife free upon receipt of a ransom. The hero's humanity, in short, shines through in spite of his savagery. From this perspective, Achilles' lyre, or, more specifically, the lyre's backstory, resonates with Alexander's own story as told in Plutarch's *Life*. Like this pre-quarrel Achilles, Plutarch's Alexander proves himself not only a devastatingly proficient warrior, as capable of slaying an enemy champion as he is of toppling an empire, but also a remarkably magnanimous victor, as witnessed most famously in the king's treatment of the Persian royal family after the battle of Issus (*Alex.* 21). Thus, for Alexander to show interest in Achilles' lyre, symbol, we might say, of the Homeric hero's complex heroism, is to align himself with this same type of heroism. Alexander may be a conqueror, but, for Plutarch, he is, in essence, a benevolent one.

⁵² Of all the heroes in the *Iliad*, Achilles, for example, is alone in showing mercy to a suppliant (Priam: *Il.* 24.507-570) and honor to a defeated foe (Eetion: *Il.* 6.418-420; and Hector: *Il.* 24.656-670). For a compelling analysis of Achilles' magnanimity, see Zanker 1994: 127-154.

Much as Achilles' lyre is more meaningful than previously realized, so, too, I would argue, is Paris'. The starting point of this argument is Plutarch's way of referring to the Trojan hero in this passage. Here, in this version of the lyre story—and in contrast to the version of the story told in the *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* (*De Alex. fort.* 1.10 = *Mor.* 331D)—Plutarch refers to the Trojan hero as Alexander rather than Paris (*Alex.* 15.9). Why? Part of the reason, as Mossman and others have argued, is that calling the Trojan hero by this name allows Plutarch to emphasize the ironic nature of Alexander's choice of Achilles' lyre over Paris': despite what his name might suggest, Plutarch's hero is very much a martial hero, not an amorous one.⁵³ There is, however, a second, complementary way to read Plutarch's choice of name for the Trojan hero. By referring to the Trojan hero as Alexander rather than Paris, Plutarch invites readers to see Alexander as symbolically rejecting not the Trojan's lyre, but his own.

To make sense of this suggestion, a survey of the tradition concerning Alexander's lyre playing, and more specifically, his *kithara* playing,⁵⁴ is in order. While Alexander's musical side is completely ignored in all five of the major extant sources, it receives attention from three separate, and quite disparate, sources. The first—and most remarkable—is Aeschines' *Against Timarchus*. Toward the end of this speech, in a passage that represents Alexander's first recorded appearance in contemporary history,⁵⁵ Aeschines describes how he and his fellow Athenian envoys to Philip's court, Demosthenes and Philocrates, were treated to a musical performance by the nine-year-old Macedonian prince during the course of a banquet in their honor: ὡς ἔν τῳ πόντῳ [ἡμῶν] καθαρίζοι καὶ λέγοι ῥήσεις τινὰς καὶ ἀντικρούσεις πρὸς ἕτερον παῖδα, “how he

⁵³ Mossman 1988: 87 and Scott-Kilvert 2011: 590.

⁵⁴ *LSJ* defines *kithara* simply as “lyre,” but it is really a *type* of lyre. As will be seen below, this is the type of lyre Alexander is supposed to have played.

⁵⁵ Lane Fox 1973: 46.

[Alexander] was playing the *kithara* (κιθαρίζοι) and reciting speeches and arguments (ἀντικρούσεις)⁵⁶ against another boy at the drinking party” (Aeschin. *In Timarch.* 168).⁵⁷ This contemporary testimony finds support from two later sources as well. In the *Life of Pericles*, Plutarch recounts an anecdote concerning Alexander’s skill as a lyre player, and Philip’s consequent displeasure, as part of his preface:

ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἐπιτερπῶς ἔν τινι πότῳ ψήλαντα καὶ τεχνικῶς εἶπεν· “οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ καλῶς οὕτω ψάλλον;” ἀρκεῖ γάρ, ἂν βασιλεὺς ἀκροᾶσθαι ψαλλόντων σχολάζῃ, καὶ πολὺ νέμει ταῖς Μούσαις ἐτέρων ἀγωνιζομένων τὰ τοιαῦτα θεατῆς γιγνόμενος.

Philip said to his son as he was playing the lyre (ψήλαντα)⁵⁸ pleasantly and skillfully at some drinking party: “Are you not ashamed to be playing so well?” For it is enough if a king takes the time to listen to those playing, and he grants much to the Muses by being a spectator when others are competing in such matters. (Plut. *Per.* 1.6)⁵⁹

Finally, in the third book of his *Historical Miscellany*, Aelian tells a story of Alexander’s flippant questioning of his music teacher on the right way to play a lyre:

Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Φιλίππου, παῖς ὄν οὕπῳ πρόσηβος, ἐμάνθανε κιθαρίζειν. τοῦ δὲ διδάσκοντος κρούσαι κελεύσαντος χορδὴν τινα σὺν μέλει καὶ ἦν ἀπήτει τὰ κιθαρίσματα, “καὶ τί διοίσει” ἔφη “ἐὰν ταύτην κρούσω;” ἐτέραν δεῖξας. ὁ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔφη διαφέρειν τῷ μέλλοντι βασιλεύσειν ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐπὶ τέχνῃ κιθαρίσειν μέλλοντι.

Alexander the son of Philip, when he was not yet near manhood, was learning to play the *kithara* (κιθαρίζειν). When his teacher bade him strike a certain string in tune to the

⁵⁶ In his commentary to *Against Timarchus*, Fisher 2001: 313 notes that the meaning of ἀντικρούσεις is unclear. While he suggests “sallies” as a translation, this effectively requires the insertion of another verb (e.g., πράττοι, ποιοῖ) in addition to λέγοι; thus, I have translated ἀντικρούσεις instead as “arguments,” which, like ῥήσεις, can more easily be translated with λέγοι.

⁵⁷ As Aeschines makes clear in the lead-up to this quotation, Demosthenes had also testified to the Athenian council on Alexander’s lyre playing.

⁵⁸ According to *LSJ*, ψάλλω means literally “to pluck, pull, twitch,” but it also has a secondary meaning of “to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and not with the *plectron*.” While this secondary meaning would seem to imply that Alexander is playing a harp rather than a lyre in this passage, since harps were played with the fingers and lyres with a *plectron* (Maas and Snyder 1989: 68, 148-149), Power 2010: 88 suggests that Plutarch chose this term as a way of “underlining the inappropriate excess of Alexander’s lyre playing by assimilating it to the harp, which was not as a rule played by aristocratic male amateurs in Greece.”

⁵⁹ Ameling 1988: 665-666 fancifully suggests that the context for Philip’s rebuke of Alexander’s lyre playing may have been the very banquet at which Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Philocrates were present. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to support this suggestion.

music and the string which the pieces of music demanded, “What difference will it make,” he said, pointing to another, “if I strike this one?” This makes no difference at all, the teacher said, for one who is going to be king, but it does make a difference to one who is going to play the *kithara* with skill. (Ael. *V.H.* 3.32)

Two general points emerge from these passages. First, Alexander’s lyre playing is associated exclusively with his childhood. Despite Alexander’s habit of holding music competitions throughout his reign,⁶⁰ his own musical career appears to have ended well before he came to the throne.⁶¹ Second, and more to the point, Alexander’s lyre playing is connected, both directly and indirectly, to adult ridicule. While this connection is clearest in the anecdotes of Plutarch and Aelian, where Alexander is chided, respectively, by his father for practicing a skill uncondusive to kingship and by his music teacher for presuming to question him on how to play the lyre, it is also detectable in Aeschines’ speech. Before commenting on Alexander’s lyre performance at the royal banquet, Aeschines reveals that Demosthenes slandered the young prince upon his return from the Athenian embassy to Philip’s court (Aeschin. *In Tim.* 167). Neither here nor elsewhere does Aeschines give the substance of this slander, but the speaker’s term for this slander, αἰσχρὰς ὑποψίας, “shameful suspicions” (Aeschin. *In Tim.* 167) suggests that it was at least partly sexual in nature. As N. Fisher notes: “The story presumably was that rather tasteless jokes were made at Alexander’s expense, or perhaps double entendres discovered in his remarks directed at the other boy.”⁶² This supposition finds further support in Aeschines’ closing remarks on the banquet, where the orator not only claims to have had no conversation

⁶⁰ Alexander’s music competitions: Soli, 333 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 2.5.8); Memphis, 332 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 3.1.4); Memphis, 331 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 3.5.2); Tyre, 331 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 3.6.1; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 29.1); Carmania, 325 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 6.28.3; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 67.7; Diod. 17.106.4); Ecbatana, 324 B.C. (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.1; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 72.1; Diod. 17.110.7); for a survey of the artists and athletes in Alexander’s entourage, see Tritle 2009: 122-129.

⁶¹ Renault 1975: 33 speculates that Alexander stopped playing the lyre because he had “a rather high-toned voice,” but I have been unable to find any such statement in Aelian, her professed (and un-cited) source for this speculation.

⁶² Fisher 2001: 314.

with Alexander, but denies having flattered or paid court to (ἐκθεραπεύων) the prince (Aeschin. *In Tim.* 169). In Fisher's view, these remarks seem "to hint at another, more serious, albeit more implausible allegation against Aeschines, of making secret sexual overtures to Alexander."⁶³ Thus, if Fisher is correct, Demosthenes was presumably ridiculing Alexander, the charming lyre player, as an effeminate pretty-boy, as the *eromenos*, in contemporary Athenian terms, to Aeschines' *erastēs*.⁶⁴

This putative charge of effeminacy brings us back, in turn, to Plutarch's anecdote about Alexander's lyre playing. While Philip's displeasure with his son's lyre playing is ostensibly due to its superfluous quality, its ability to distract from the more important task of ruling, M. Renault has also connected his displeasure to the activity's contemporary associations with effeminacy.⁶⁵ By the fourth century B.C., as T. Power has shown, Greeks commonly viewed lyre players as "soft, effeminate, vaguely immoral, given over to excessive luxury, notionally, if not actually, 'foreign.'"⁶⁶ While the Macedonian view of lyre playing is harder to assess in light of the near-total lack of relevant evidence,⁶⁷ it is unlikely, considering the more primitive, even Homeric, nature of Macedonian society, to have been significantly more positive than the Greek

⁶³ Fisher 2001: 314; cf. Lane Fox 1973: 46.

⁶⁴ For the classic study of Greek homosexuality, see Dover 1978; for Macedonian homosexuality, see more recently Reames-Zimmerman 1998: 152-179 and 1999, who rightly, in my opinion, questions the applicability of Dover's model of homosexuality for Macedonian society.

⁶⁵ Renault 1975: 33; cf. Lane Fox 1973: 46-47. Franklin 2011 suggests that the *kithara*'s effeminate associations are detectable as far back as Homer (*Il.* 3.54, 13.730-734; cf. *Il.* 2.600).

⁶⁶ Power 2010: 85.

⁶⁷ Besides the three anecdotes dealing with Alexander's lyre playing cited above, I am aware of only two other pieces of evidence that bear on Macedonian lyre playing: first, the anecdote of Philip's failed attempt to win an argument with a professional lyre player about the art of lyre playing (Plut. *Quomodo adult.* 27 = *Mor.* 67F-68A; *Ap. reg.* 29 = *Mor.* 179B; *De Alex. fort.* 2.1 = *Mor.* 334C-D; *Quaest. conv.* 2.12 = *Mor.* 634C-D); and second, the anecdote of the professional lyre player Stratonicus' criticism of his inept Macedonian student (Ath. 8.351B). While these anecdotes seem to speak to a Greek stereotype of Macedonians as musically—and, culturally—unrefined, none of them constitutes evidence of how the Macedonians themselves viewed lyre playing.

view.⁶⁸ If, then, Renault is correct, as seems likely, Philip's displeasure at Alexander's lyre playing stands comparison with Demosthenes' mockery of the same: for both, the prince's musical predilection is a sign not of cultural sophistication, but of personal effeminess.

While these anecdotes of Alexander's lyre playing may thus seem strangely discordant with the generally positive tradition surrounding his youth, they stand in close relation to a pair of anecdotes set during his transition from youth to adulthood.⁶⁹ Following Philip's assassination, Demosthenes, we are told, pointedly resumed his campaign of ridicule against Alexander begun a decade earlier in the wake of the prince's musical performance for the Athenian embassy. According to Plutarch, the orator mocked the newly crowned king's maturity, comparing him to a *παῖδα*, "boy," during his Illyrian campaign, and to a *μειράκιον*, "young man," upon his march into Thessaly (Plut. *Alex.* 11.6). More contemptuously still, Demosthenes, as several sources report, took to referring to Alexander by the nickname of Margites (Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 160, Plut. *Dem.* 23.2, and Marsyas of Pella *FgrH* 135-136 F3 = Harp., s.v. Μαργίτης). As the anti-hero of an eponymous mock-epic poem, Margites served Demosthenes' derisive purpose well. "By calling Alexander the new Margites," R. Lane Fox has noted, "Demosthenes meant that so far from being an Achilles, he was nothing but a Homeric buffoon,"⁷⁰ a suggestion which, as Fisher has argued, simultaneously mocked the new king's "pretensions, aptitudes, and capacity for full-scale masculinity."⁷¹ What Demosthenes saw in Alexander at the time of his accession, in short, was not so much a potential world conqueror, but the same lyre-playing boy he had met all those years ago, a pretentious and effeminate nonentity.

⁶⁸ Cf. Lane Fox 1973: 46-47, who notes in passing lyre playing's rather un-Macedonian nature.

⁶⁹ Cf. Fisher 2001: 314.

⁷⁰ Lane Fox 1973: 61.

⁷¹ Fisher 2001: 314.

With this tradition of Alexander's lyre playing in mind, we may return now to Plutarch's anecdote about Alexander's wish to see the lyre of Achilles rather than that of Paris. While the traditional way to read this anecdote is to say that Alexander proclaims, by means of this wish, his affinity for Achilles-esque heroism over Paris-esque hedonism, Plutarch's choice to refer to Paris as "Alexander" hints at a further, and rather less obvious, way of reading this anecdote: in addition to choosing between Achilles' lyre and that of Paris, Alexander is also choosing between Achilles' lyre and his own. If this suggestion is correct, what might Alexander's secondary choice mean in symbolic terms? Based on the tradition of Alexander's lyre playing surveyed above, two answers naturally suggest themselves. First, if Alexander's lyre is closely associated with effeminacy, or at least charges thereof, his rejection of this lyre serves, I would suggest, as a symbolic assertion of his masculinity. While reading this lyre as Alexander of Macedon's here yields much the same meaning as if it were Alexander of Troy's (heroic masculinity over un-heroic effeminacy), such is not always the case. When we recall that Alexander's lyre is also closely associated with his childhood, the king's rejection of this lyre becomes, I believe, as much a declaration of his own maturity as it is of his masculinity. Despite Demosthenes' belittling words, Alexander, on this reading, is no longer a *παῖς*, "boy," or a *μειράκιον*, "young man"; instead, and in fulfillment of his stated wish to disprove the Athenian orator,⁷² he is now a full-fledged man, a worthy successor not only of his father, Philip, but of his heroic exemplar, Achilles.

⁷² According to Plutarch (*Alex.* 11.6), Alexander "wishes to appear to Demosthenes as a man before the walls of Athens" (*Δημοσθένει...βούλεται πρὸς τοῖς Ἀθηναίων τείχεσιν ἀνὴρ φανῆναι*).

III. Alexander's Arming Scene at the Battle of Gaugamela (Alex. 32.8-11)

[8] Ταῦτ' ἐπιστείλας Παρμενίωνι, τὸ κράνος περιέθετο, τὸν δ' ἄλλον ὄπλισμόν εὐθὺς ἀπὸ σκηνῆς εἶχεν, ὑπένδυμα τῶν Σικελικῶν ζωστόν, ἐπὶ δὲ τούτῳ θώρακα διπλοῦν λινοῦν ἐκ τῶν ληφθέντων ἐν Ἴσσω. [9] τὸ δὲ κράνος ἦν μὲν σιδηροῦν, ἔστιλβε δ' ὡσπερ ἄργυρος καθαρὸς, ἔργον Θεοφίλου· συνήρμοστο δ' αὐτῷ περιτραχήλιον ὁμοίως σιδηροῦν, λιθοκόλλητον· [10] μάχαιραν δὲ θαυμαστὴν βαφῆ καὶ κουφότητι, δωρησαμένου τοῦ Κιτιέων βασιλέως, [ἦν] εἶχεν, ἡσκημένος τὰ πολλὰ χρῆσθαι μάχαιρα παρὰ τὰς μάχας. [11] ἐπιτόρυμα δ' ἐφόρει τῇ μὲν ἐργασία σοβαρώτερον ἢ κατὰ τὸν ἄλλον ὄπλισμόν· ἦν γὰρ ἔργον Ἑλικῶνος τοῦ παλαιοῦ, τιμὴ δὲ τῆς Ῥοδίων πόλεως, ὑφ' ἧς ἐδόθη δῶρον· ἐχρήτο δὲ καὶ τούτῳ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας.

[8] Having sent this message to Parmenion, he put on his helmet, but the rest of his armor he had on straight as he came from his tent: a girdled undergarment, and over this a double linen corselet from the spoils at Issus. [9] His helmet was made of iron, and it shone like pure silver, a work of Theophilus; and attached to it was a neckpiece, likewise made of iron, and set with precious stones; [10] he also had a sword, marvelous in its temper and lightness (the king of the Citeans having given it to him), since he had trained himself to use a sword in battle for the most part. [11] He also wore a cloak more elaborate in its workmanship than the rest of his armor; for it was the work of Helicon, the ancient, and a mark of honor from the city of the Rhodes, by which the gift had been given. He used this, too, in battle.

In this passage, Plutarch gives a description of Alexander's panoply at Gaugamela, the king's third and final set-piece battle against the Persians (331 B.C.). Though Plutarch describes Alexander's panoply elsewhere,⁷³ this passage represents the most prominent and detailed such description in the *Life*. With good reason, therefore, Mossman has compared this passage to a Homeric arming scene: "[t]he 'arming-scene' at 32.8-11 before Gaugamela certainly owes something to those in the *Iliad*, with its careful description of armour and weapons, who made them and who gave them to the wearer..."⁷⁴ Yet, for all of this passage's similarity to Homeric arming scenes, the nature of this similarity is harder to pin down. Where Mossman has suggested that this passage is based on Homeric arming scenes in general, A. B. Bosworth, W. Ameling, and A. Stewart have seen it as specifically recalling Achilles' own arming scene in *Iliad* 19.⁷⁵

⁷³ Battle of the Granicus (*Alex.* 16.7); cf. Alexander's assault on the Mallian town (*Alex.* 63.2-4).

⁷⁴ Mossman 1988: 88; cf. Baynham 2015: 58-59.

⁷⁵ Bosworth 1977: 59-60; Ameling 1988: 685; and Stewart 1993: 82.

Though these two positions are not mutually exclusive, I will argue that Alexander’s arming scene⁷⁶ can well be seen, following Bosworth, Ameling, and Stewart, as a specific allusion to Achilles’ arming scene. As in previous sections, I will begin by presenting the relevant pieces of evidence to support this argument—something that none of the Achilles-motif proponents have really done in this case⁷⁷—and, from there, will proceed to consider the allusion’s meaning within this passage and the *Life* as a whole.

Despite this passage’s similarities to Homeric arming scenes in general, three factors suggest a specific connection with Achilles’ arming scene in *Iliad* 19. First is the context of both arming scenes. When Alexander dons his arms at Gaugamela, he, like Achilles—and Achilles alone of the four Homeric heroes who receive arming scenes⁷⁸—stands on the threshold not only of a final confrontation with his main antagonist,⁷⁹ but of a confrontation that he is destined to win.⁸⁰ Much as Achilles will slay Hector before the gates of Troy, so will Alexander defeat Darius on the plains of Gaugamela. A second factor is Bucephalas’ appearance in close proximity to this arming scene. Right after describing Alexander’s arms and armor, Plutarch presents the king mounting his beloved horse in the lead-up to the Macedonian attack:

ἄχρι μὲν οὖν συντάττων τι τῆς φάλαγγος ἢ παρακελευόμενος ἢ διδάσκων ἢ ἐφορῶν παρεξήλαυνεν, ἄλλον ἵππον εἶχε, τοῦ Βουκεφάλα φειδόμενος, ἥδη παρήλικος ὄντος· χωροῦντι δὲ πρὸς ἔργον ἐκεῖνος προσήγετο, καὶ μεταβάς εὐθὺς ἤρχεν ἐφόδου.

⁷⁶ While the term “quasi-arming scene” may be more accurate, inasmuch as Alexander is shown wearing, rather than putting on, his arms and armor in this passage, I use the term “arming scene” throughout this section for the sake of simplicity.

⁷⁷ Bosworth 1977: 59-60 cites as evidence Alexander’s heroic behavior and relationship to a god, though both of these details strike me as more generally Homeric than specifically Achillean in nature; Ameling 1988: 685 and Stewart 1993: 82, for their part, provide no evidence whatsoever.

⁷⁸ The four Iliadic arming scenes belong to Paris (*Il.* 3.328-338), Agamemnon (*Il.* 11.17-43), Patroclus (*Il.* 16.130-144), and Achilles (*Il.* 367-391).

⁷⁹ Cf. Stewart 1993: 82.

⁸⁰ In contrast to Achilles, Paris, Agamemnon, and Patroclus, the three other heroes who have arming scenes, are either wounded or killed following these scenes.

As long as he was riding along arranging some part of the phalanx, or exhorting, instructing, or reviewing his men, he had another horse, since he was trying to spare Bucephalus, who was by now past his prime; but he [Bucephalus] would be led out to him as he was heading into action, and he [Alexander], after having exchanged horses, would immediately begin the attack. (*Alex.* 32.12)

Despite Alexander's apparent habit of riding Bucephalus into battle, Plutarch is the only surviving Alexander historian to mention the horse at Gaugamela. While Bucephalus' unique appearance in this context has previously been explained in simple *Quellenforschung* terms,⁸¹ this explanation raises a larger question: Why would Plutarch, who clearly worked from multiple sources,⁸² choose to follow a source(s) here that reported Bucephalus' appearance at Gaugamela when the rest of the Alexander historians did not? Though there can be no definitive answer to this question, I would suggest that Plutarch may have chosen to follow such a source here as a way of further reinforcing the parallel between Alexander's arming scene and that of Achilles. In this way, just as Achilles meets Xanthus and Balius, his famous horses, directly after his arming scene (*Il.* 19.392-423), so does Plutarch's Alexander meet his famous horse directly after his.⁸³

The third factor that suggests a connection between the two arming scenes is Alexander's pre-battle speech following his meeting with Bucephalus. According to Plutarch, Alexander's speech is delivered neither to his officers nor the army as a whole, as the rest of the Alexander historians report, but to the Thessalians and the rest of the Greeks in particular:⁸⁴

⁸¹ Hammond 1993: 41-42, for example, explains Plutarch's mention of Bucephalus in this context by suggesting that the biographer was following Chares, Alexander's chamberlain, who is known to have mentioned the horse elsewhere.

⁸² Hamilton 1969: lv-lxviii; Hammond 1993: 5-187.

⁸³ Mossman 1988: 86 suggests a connection between Bucephalus and Xanthus and Balius, but in the context of Alexander's taming of Bucephalus rather than his preparations prior to Gaugamela.

⁸⁴ According to Arrian (*Anab.* 3.9.5-8) and Diodorus (17.56.4), Alexander addresses his officers; Justin (11.13.6-11), the army as a whole; and Curtius (4.13.38-14.7), some of his officers and part of the army.

Τότε δὲ τοῖς Θετταλοῖς πλεῖστα διαλεχθεὶς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλησιν, ὡς ἐπέρωσαν αὐτὸν βοῶντες ἄγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους, τὸ ξυστὸν εἰς τὴν ἀριστερὰν μεταλαβὼν, τῇ δεξιᾷ παρεκάλει τοὺς θεοὺς, ὡς Καλλισθένης φησὶν, ἐπευχόμενος, εἶπερ ὄντως Διόθεν ἐστὶ γεγονώς, ἀμῦναι καὶ συνεπιρρῶσαι τοὺς Ἑλληνας.

Then he [Alexander], after having spoken at length to the Thessalians and the rest of the Greeks, shifted his spear to his left hand as they encouraged him with shouts to lead them against the barbarians and called upon the gods with his right hand, as Callisthenes says, praying, if he was in fact truly born from Zeus, that they defend and help to strengthen the Greeks. (*Alex.* 33.1)

While Plutarch's choice with regard to Alexander's addressees has also tended to be explained in *Quellenforschung* terms, in this case, as the result of the biographer's dependence on Callisthenes, who is explicitly named in this passage, this sort of explanation raises the same question as in the Bucephalas passage: Why would Plutarch choose to follow Callisthenes' account of this speech when the other surviving Alexander historians did not? If Plutarch's Philhellenism is probably part of the reason, another reason, I would suggest, is the Homeric allusion we have been tracing throughout this section. When Alexander speaks to the Thessalians, after all, he is not only speaking to the best cavalrymen in the army;⁸⁵ he is also speaking to those traditionally regarded as the descendants of Achilles and the Myrmidons.⁸⁶ From this perspective, then, Plutarch's choice for this speech's addressees further reinforces the parallelism between the Macedonian king and the Homeric hero; just as Achilles would address the Myrmidons, so does Alexander, the new Achilles, address the Thessalians, the hero's descendants.⁸⁷ Providing some measure of support to this suggestion is Plutarch's presumed

⁸⁵ While the Companions were the Macedonian corps d'elite, the Thessalians were reportedly the superior horsemen (Diod. 17.33.2).

⁸⁶ Homer gives Achilles' home as Phthia (*Il.* 1.169-170; cf. *Il.* 1.155, 2.683-685, 9.252-253, 9.363), which is probably historical Pharsalus (Heckel and Yardley 1997: 90).

⁸⁷ For another instance of an Alexander historian making the connection between Alexander and Achilles through the Thessalians, cf. Just. 11.3.1, who has Alexander seeking to win over the Thessalians at the beginning of his reign with a reminder of their common Aeacid lineage.

source for this speech, Callisthenes. Since Callisthenes seems to have presented Alexander in a Homeric light throughout his work, Plutarch's proposed Homeric allusion here becomes that much more plausible; rather than creating this allusion whole cloth, Plutarch may instead have done so by taking his cue from Callisthenes.⁸⁸

If Alexander's arming scene, then, does represent an allusion to Achilles' arming scene in *Iliad* 19, what is the significance of this allusion? When Achilles dons his arms in preparation for returning to battle, his motivation is straightforward: revenge. Devastated by the death of Patroclus, Achilles returns to battle to kill Hector for his killing of Patroclus in *Iliad* 16. In this resolve, the hero, of course, proves only too successful. By the end of *Iliad* 22, Achilles has not only killed Hector, but has even begun defiling his body. From a narrative perspective, then, Achilles' arming scene, we can say, marks the first stage of the hero's quest for vengeance, the final movement of the *Iliad* itself.

With this context in mind, the significance of Plutarch's allusion begins to come into focus. By comparing Alexander to the Achilles of *Iliad* 19, Plutarch, I would suggest, aims to highlight the king's own role as avenger, and, more specifically, Panhellenic avenger. Throughout roughly the first half of his Asian campaign, Alexander, of course, sets as his goal the requital of the Persians for their invasions of Greece a century and a half before. In this spirit, the king repeatedly frames his victories over the Persians as Panhellenic, rather than strictly Macedonian. Following the battle of the Granicus, for example, Alexander sends a symbolically

⁸⁸ Cf. Bosworth 1977: 59-60.

significant 300 shields⁸⁹ back to Greece with an inscription purposefully designed to emphasize the Greeks' role in the recent victory:⁹⁰

κοινούμενος δὲ τὴν νίκην τοῖς Ἑλλησιν, ἰδίᾳ μὲν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἔπεμψε τῶν αἰχμαλώτων τριακοσίας ἀσπίδας, κοινῇ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις λαφύροις ἐκέλευσεν ἐπιγράψαι φιλοτιμοτάτην ἐπιγραφὴν· “Ἀλέξανδρος [ὁ] Φιλίππου καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες πλὴν Λακεδαιμονίων ἀπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων τῶν τὴν Ἀσίαν κατοικούντων.”

Wishing to share the victory with the Greeks, he sent to the Athenians in particular three hundred shields from the booty, while he ordered the rest of the spoils to be inscribed in common with a most ambitious inscription: “Alexander, the son of Philip, and the Greeks apart from the Spartans, from the barbarians who dwell in Asia” (*Alex.* 16.17-18).

Similarly, following the battle of Gaugamela, Alexander takes on the role of Panhellenic avenger still more clearly through a series of symbolic gifts and promises to Greek city-states that played a role in the Persian Wars:

φιλοτιμούμενος δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἔγραψε τὰς τυραννίδας πάσας καταλυθῆναι καὶ πολιτεύειν αὐτονόμους, ἰδίᾳ δὲ Πλαταιεῦσι τὴν πόλιν ἀνοικοδομεῖν, ὅτι τὴν χώραν οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν ἐναγωνίσασθαι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας παρέσχον. ἔπεμψε δὲ καὶ Κροτωνιάταις εἰς Ἰταλίαν μέρος τῶν λαφύρων, τὴν Φαῦλλου τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ τιμῶν προθυμίαν καὶ ἀρετὴν, ὃς περὶ τὰ Μηδικά, τῶν ἄλλων Ἰταλιωτῶν ἀπεγνωκότων τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἰδιόστολον ἔχων ναῦν ἐπλευσεν εἰς Σαλαμίνα, τοῦ κινδύνου συμμεθέξων.

In seeking after honor among the Greeks, he [Alexander] wrote that all tyrannies had been destroyed and that they were free to conduct their own political affairs, and to the Plataeans in particular that he would rebuild their city since their fathers had provided the Greeks with their country to fight on behalf of freedom. He also sent part of the spoils to the Crotoniates in Italy to honor the zeal and valor of the athlete Phayllus, who, when the rest of the Italiotes had given up on the Greeks, had sailed to Salamis with a ship fitted out by himself to take part in the danger. (*Alex.* 34.2-3)

⁸⁹ These shields provide a rare and fascinating glimpse into the workings of the historical Alexander's mind. The king's sending of precisely 300 shields, combined with his singling out of the Spartans in the shields' inscription, is almost certainly meant to recall the famous Spartan 300, the heroes of the battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.). What Alexander suggests via this allusion, I would argue, is that the contemporary Spartans are failing to live up to their heroic past. Whereas the Spartans of old fought *against* the Persians, the Spartans of the present, by refusing to take part in Alexander's grand Panhellenic crusade, are, in effect, fighting *for* the Persians. Spartan heroism, in short, is dead and gone.

⁹⁰ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 1.16.7, who records the same inscription—and in identical language—but claims that it was attached to the shields sent to Athens, rather than to the other *poleis*.

With Alexander's Achillean arming scene, then, Plutarch, I would argue, seeks to present the king's final battle against the Persians as part of this same Panhellenic narrative. Much as Achilles' duel with Hector marks the fulfillment of the Greek hero's vengeance against the Trojan hero, so will Alexander's battle with Darius, the biographer suggests, mark the fulfillment of the Greek's vengeance against the Persians.

By casting Alexander in the role of the Achilles of *Iliad* 19, and, by extension, the role of Panhellenic avenger, Plutarch also emphasizes a central characteristic of his subject: ambition (φιλοτιμία). For Plutarch, as Wardman has shown, Alexander's role as Panhellenic avenger is a clear mark of ambition, and a positive type of ambition at that.⁹¹ While Plutarch is generally critical of ambition directed against other Greeks, he is favorably disposed toward ambition directed against non-Greeks. In Plutarch's view, therefore, Alexander's ambition, directed, as it is, against Persia, "results in benefits to Greece," and "is a kind of public service performed by a foreigner for the benefit of a whole community."⁹²

Finally, and more broadly, Alexander's role as the Achilles of *Iliad* 19—and his associated role as Panhellenic avenger—reflects his status as a paragon of Hellenism. Throughout the *Life*, and especially the first half, Plutarch's Alexander embodies, as several scholars have shown, a number of core Greek values.⁹³ For example, in his celebrated treatment of the Persian women after Issus (*Alex.* 21), Alexander shows himself to be a man of σωφροσύνη, "moderation," while in his love of Homer (*Alex.* 8.2), a man of παιδεία, "learning,"

⁹¹ Wardman 1955: 106.

⁹² Wardman 1955: 106.

⁹³ Humbert 1991; Whitmarsh 2002; and Beneker 2012: 105-139.

or “culture.”⁹⁴ For Plutarch, then, Alexander is not so much a Macedonian king leading a combined force of Macedonians, Greeks, and other Balkan peoples, as was in fact the case; rather, he is, to a large extent, a Greek king leading a Greek crusade for the greater glory of Greece.

IV. Alexander’s *Aristeia* at the Mallian Town (*Alex.* 63.2-10)⁹⁵

πρὸς δὲ τοῖς καλουμένοις Μαλλοῖς, οὓς φασιν Ἰνδῶν μαχιμωτάτους γενέσθαι, μικρὸν ἐδέησε κατακοπῆναι. [3] τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀνθρώπους βέλεσιν ἀπὸ τῶν τειχῶν ἀπεσκέδασε, πρῶτος δὲ διὰ κλίμακος τεθείσης ἀναβάς ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος, ὡς ἢ τε κλίμαξ συνετρίβη καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ὑφισταμένων παρὰ τὸ τεῖχος ἐλάμβανε πληγὰς κάτωθεν, ὀλιγοστὸς ὢν συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν εἰς μέσους ἀφῆκε τοὺς πολεμίους, καὶ κατὰ τύχην ὀρθὸς ἔστη. [4] τιναξαμένου δὲ τοῖς ὅπλοις ἔδοξαν οἱ βάρβαροι σέλας τι καὶ φάσμα πρὸ τοῦ σώματος φέρεσθαι. διὸ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἔφυγον καὶ διεσκεδάσθησαν. [5] ὡς δ’ εἶδον αὐτὸν μετὰ δυεῖν ὑπασπιστῶν, ἐπιδραμόντες οἱ μὲν ἐκ χειρὸς ξίφεσι καὶ δόρασι διὰ τῶν ὅπλων συνετίτρωσκον ἀμυνόμενον, [6] εἷς δὲ μικρὸν ἀπωτέρω στάς, ἐφῆκεν ἀπὸ τόξου βέλος οὕτως εὔτονον καὶ βίαιον, ὥστε τὸν θώρακα διακόψαν ἐμπαγῆναι τοῖς περὶ τὸν μασθὸν ὀστέοις. [7] πρὸς δὲ τὴν πληγὴν ἐνδόντος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ σῶμα κάμψαντος, ὁ μὲν βαλὼν ἐπέδραμε, βαρβαρικὴν μάχαιραν σπασάμενος, Πευκέστας δὲ καὶ Λιμναῖος προέστησαν. [8] ὧν πληγέντων ἑκατέρων, ὁ μὲν ἀπέθανε, Πευκέστας δ’ ἀντεῖχε, τὸν δὲ βάρβαρον Ἀλέξανδρος ἀπέκτεινε. [9] αὐτὸς δὲ τραύματα πολλὰ λαβὼν, τέλος δὲ πληγὴς ὑπέρω κατὰ τοῦ τραχήλου, προσήρεισε τῷ τείχει τὸ σῶμα, βλέπων πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους. [10] ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῶν Μακεδόνων περιχυθέντων, ἀρπασθεὶς ἀναίσθητος ἤδη τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ἐκομίζετο.

Among the so-called Mallians, who they say are the most warlike of the Indians, he [Alexander] came within a little of being cut down. [3] He scattered the men from the walls with missiles and was the first to climb up a ladder placed against the wall. When the ladder broke and he began to receive blows from the barbarians standing below along the wall, he collected and hurled himself into the midst of the enemy, despite being accompanied by only a few men, and, luckily, landed on his feet. [4] When he shook his weapons, the barbarians thought that some light and apparition was being carried ahead of his person. And for this reason they at first fled and scattered; [5] yet when they saw him with only two Shield Bearers, some ran up and tried with swords and spears to wound him through his armor in close combat as he defended himself, [6] while one man, having taken up a position a bit farther off, shot an arrow from his bow so strong and forceful that it cut through his corselet and lodged in the bones around his breast. [7] As he succumbed to the wound and bent over, the man who had hit him drew a barbarian knife and charged, while Peucestas and Limnaeus protected him; [8] when each of them was wounded (Limnaeus was killed, but Peucestas held out), Alexander killed the barbarian. [9] Yet he

⁹⁴ On Alexander’s σωφροσύνη, see Humbert 1991: 172-173; Whitmarsh 2002: 181; Beneker 2012: 105-139; on Alexander’s παιδεία, see Humbert 1991: 174-177 and Whitmarsh 2002: 178-181.

⁹⁵ For Arrian’s account of Alexander’s *aristeia* at the Mall

himself, after receiving many wounds and finally being struck in the neck with a club, leaned his body against the wall, facing his enemies. [10] At this point, when the Macedonians had crowded round, he, by now unconscious of what was going on around him, was snatched up and carried to his tent.

In this passage, which N. G. L. Hammond has called, with some hyperbole, “the finest piece of writing in the *Life*,”⁹⁶ Plutarch recounts Alexander’s celebrated *aristeia* at the Mallian town. During his voyage down the Indus, Plutarch’s Alexander carries out the seemingly effortless subjugation of each and every Indian city in his path—until, that is, he reaches an unnamed city of the Mallians, reputedly the most warlike Indian tribe. There, while leading the final assault, the king performs perhaps his most heroic deed of the entire work. Finding himself virtually alone on the Mallian battlements, Alexander jumps not back to safety, but straight into the midst of the enemy. Through this extreme bravado, Alexander temporarily causes the Mallians to flee in terror, yet, upon perceiving his vulnerability, the defenders regroup, press the attack, and deal their assailant several wounds, thereby ending his *aristeia* and, very nearly, his life. This passage, in short, ranks among the most Homeric in the entire *Life*. While this Homeric quality is clearly due to Alexander above all, given the relatively similar accounts of this episode found in all five of the surviving Alexander historians,⁹⁷ Plutarch is also partly responsible for it. In her previously cited article on epic and tragedy in the *Alexander*, Mossman suggested that Plutarch’s account of Alexander’s *aristeia* echoes Homer’s descriptions of Achilles in the final books of the *Iliad*, particularly *Iliad* 19;⁹⁸ since then, this suggestion has found favor with both

⁹⁶ Hammond 1993: 115. Hammond’s verdict is all the stranger given his equally groundless view that this passage is not so much the work of Plutarch himself, but rather of his source(s), which he suggests, in this case, was probably Aristobulus.

⁹⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 6.9-11; Curt. 9.4.26-5.30; Diod. 17.98-99.4; and Just. 12.9.3-13.

⁹⁸ Mossman 1988: 90. Hamilton 1969: 177 has less plausibly compared this passage to Homer’s description of Athena descending from Olympus at *Iliad* 4.75-78.

Stewart and Duff.⁹⁹ While I, too, believe that Mossman is correct to see a connection between Alexander and Achilles in this passage, I aim to build on Mossman’s argument in this section, first by showing that the Homeric parallels point as much to *Iliad* 18 as *Iliad* 19, and second by considering in greater detail what these Homeric parallels mean.

For Mossman, as for Stewart and Duff, the basis of this Homeric allusion is Plutarch’s description of Alexander’s arms at the beginning of the king’s *aristeia*. When Alexander brandishes his weapons upon entering the Mallian town, he reportedly creates a σέλας, a “light” or “flame,” that appears to proceed before his person (*Alex.* 63.4). Significantly, as Mossman notes, this is the same word that Homer repeatedly uses in describing Achilles’s shield during the hero’s arming scene in *Iliad* 19:¹⁰⁰

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε
εἴλετο, τοῦ δ’ ἀπάνευθε σέλας γένετ’ ἠΰτε μήνης.
ὥς δ’ ὄτ’ ἄν ἐκ πόντοιο σέλας ναύτησι φανήη
καιομένοιο πυρός, τό τε καίεται ὑψόθ’ ὄρεσφι
σταθμῶ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ· τοὺς δ’ οὐκ ἐθέλοντας ἄελλαι
πόντον ἐπ’ ἰχθυόεντα φίλων ἀπάνευθε φέρουσιν·
ὥς ἀπ’ Ἀχιλλῆος σάκεος σέλας αἰθέρ’ ἵκανε
καλοῦ δαιδαλέου·

But then he [Achilles] took up his great, stout shield, and from it there came a light (*selas*) as from the moon. Just as when a light (*selas*) appears to sailors across the sea, a light of a burning fire which burns high up in the mountains in a lonely farmstead, and winds carry them over the fishy sea, against their will, far from their friends; just so from Achilles’ fine, skillfully wrought shield did a light (*selas*) reach the upper air. (*Il.* 19.373-380).

In Mossman’s view, therefore, this σέλας parallel serves to connect Alexander not only to the Achilles of *Iliad* 19, but, more generally, to the Achilles of the final books of the poem.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Stewart 1993: 83 and Scott-Kilvert 2011: 597.

¹⁰⁰ Mossman 1988: 90. Mossman notes two uses of σέλας in this passage (*Il.* 18.375, 379), when in fact, a single line before the beginning of her quotation of this passage, the word appears a third time (*Il.* 18.374).

¹⁰¹ In the *Iliad*, the term σέλας is most closely associated with Achilles, and, in particular, the Achilles of the final third of the poem. Of the poem’s nine instances of the word, six occur in connection with Achilles (*Il.* 18.214, 19.17,

While I agree with Mossman on both counts, I suggest that there is another Homeric passage to which Plutarch can just as easily—and perhaps more naturally—be taken to allude: Achilles’ appearance at the Greek trench in *Iliad* 18. In the first place, when Achilles shows himself to the Trojans, we find the same word, σέλας, being used to describe the hero as in *Iliad* 19: ὡς ἀπ’ Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρ’ ἵκανε, “Thus a light (*selas*) reached the upper air from Achilles’ head” (*Il.* 18.214).¹⁰² In the second, while this Plutarch passage’s similarity to Achilles’ arming scene consists primarily of this single word, its similarity to Achilles’ appearance at the Greek trench extends beyond the verbal to the narrative level as well. The relevant portions of both Plutarch’s and Homer’s narratives run as follows:

πρῶτος δὲ διὰ κλίμακος τεθείσης ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος ... ὀλιγοστός ὢν συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν εἰς μέσους ἀφῆκε τοὺς πολεμίους, καὶ κατὰ τύχην ὀρθὸς ἔστη. τιναξαμένου δὲ τοῖς ὅπλοις ἔδοξαν οἱ βάρβαροι σέλας τι καὶ φάσμα πρὸ τοῦ σώματος φέρεσθαι. διὸ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἔφυγον καὶ διεσκεδάσθησαν...

Having been the first to climb up a ladder placed against the wall ... he [Alexander] collected and hurled himself into the midst of the enemy, despite being accompanied by only a few men, and, luckily, landed on his feet. When he shook his weapons, the barbarians thought that some light (*selas*) and apparition was being carried ahead of his person. And for this reason they at first fled and scattered... (*Alex.* 63.3-4)

ὡς ἀπ’ Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρ’ ἵκανε·
 στῆ δ’ ἐπὶ τάφρον ἰὼν ἀπὸ τείχεος, οὐδ’ ἐς Ἀχαιοὺς
 μίσητο...
 οἱ δ’ ὡς οὖν ἄϊον ὅπα χάλκεον Αἰακίδαο,
 πᾶσιν ὀρίνθη θυμός· ἀτὰρ καλλίτριγες ἵπποι
 ἄψ ὄχρα τρόπεον· ὄσσοντο γὰρ ἄλγεα θυμῶ.
 ἠνίοχοι δ’ ἐκπληγεν, ἐπεὶ ἴδον ἀκάματον πῦρ
δεινὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς μεγαθύμου Πηλεΐωνος
δαιόμενον· τὸ δὲ δαΐε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.
 τρις μὲν ὑπὲρ τάφρου μεγάλ’ ἵαχε δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,
 τρις δὲ κυκλήθησαν Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ’ ἐπίκουροι.

19.366, 19.374, 19.375, and 19.379); the remaining three occur in connection with either Zeus (*Il.* 8.76, 15.600) or the Trojans (*Il.* 8.509).

¹⁰² Strangely, Mossman 1988: 90 says nothing specifically about the connection between this Plutarchan passage and *Iliad* 18.

ἔνθα δὲ καὶ τότε ὄλοντο δώδεκα φῶτες ἄριστοι
ἀμφὶ σφοῖς ὀχέεσσι καὶ ἔγχεσιν.

Thus a light (*selas*) reached the upper air from Achilles' head. Leaving the wall, he took a stand at the trench, nor did he mingle with the Achaeans ... Therefore, when they [the Trojans] heard the brazen voice of the son of Aeacus, all their hearts were affrighted, and the fine-maned horses began to turn the chariots around, for they beheld pains in their heart. The charioteers were struck with amazement when they saw the terrible, untiring flame burning above the head of the great-hearted son of Peleus; and this the grey-eyed goddess Athena caused to burn. Three times above the trench godlike Achilles shouted loudly, and three times the Trojans and their renowned allies were panic-stricken. There and then twelve of the best men perished around their chariots and arms (*Il.* 18.214-216, 222-231)

In both narratives, the hero not only shows himself to his enemies in highly dramatic fashion, basically alone and in plain view, but also causes his enemies to flee in terror at his mere sight. While this *Iliad* 18 passage may thus be a closer parallel to the present passage than Mossman's *Iliad* 19 passage, this second Homeric allusion serves as further confirmation of her contention that the Achilles to whom Alexander is being compared is not so much the Achilles of a particular passage, but the Achilles of the final books of the poem.¹⁰³ What, then, does Alexander's Homeric role mean in this context?

On a basic level, Alexander's Homeric role clearly highlights the king's superhuman heroism.¹⁰⁴ Much as Achilles is at his most heroic in the final books of the *Iliad*, the point at which the hero renounces his wrath and returns to battle, so, too, is Alexander at his most heroic at the Mallian town. While Alexander's heroism is, of course, prominent in all accounts of this episode, Plutarch, more than either Arrian or Curtius, the historians who provide the fullest accounts of this episode, makes this the salient and unequivocal theme of his account.¹⁰⁵ Before

¹⁰³ Mossman 1988: 90.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Mossman 1988: 90, who notes that "Alexander is never more like Achilles than this, in his magnificent courage..."

¹⁰⁵ Both Arrian and Curtius present a more nuanced view of Alexander's heroism at the Mallian town

Alexander reaches the Mallian town, Plutarch hints at his subject's superhuman heroism by mentioning his seemingly effortless conquest of each and every Indian community he comes in contact with (*Alex.* 63.2). When Alexander reaches the Mallian town, however, Plutarch brings his subject's heroism into full view. Here, beyond recounting the standard heroic feats found in the other Alexander historians—the king's daring leap into the enemy town, his killing, once wounded, of his Indian assailant—Plutarch reworks certain aspects of the story to place further emphasis on the king's heroism. Where Arrian and Curtius, for example, assert that Alexander's motivation for ascending the Mallian walls was frustration with his malingering troops, Plutarch, by contrast, gives the king no motivation for this act whatsoever, thereby suggesting that, for Alexander, heroism requires no excuse or justification; heroism is simply what Alexander lives for. Similarly, where Arrian and Curtius have a Macedonian general reprimanding Alexander for his conduct during the king's convalescence, Plutarch chooses to omit this episode altogether and, in the process, ensures that the king's actions continue to appear more heroic than reckless. Finally, where Arrian and Curtius spend time describing Alexander's recovery process, Plutarch almost immediately portrays the king back in action. Indeed, with a nod to Homer's technique of epic ring composition, Plutarch ends his account as he began it, with Alexander subduing one Indian community after another. What Alexander's Homeric role in this passage suggests, therefore, is that the Pythia's earlier pronouncement to the king was not far off the mark (*Alex.* 14.7): Alexander truly is ἀνίκητος, "invincible," or as close to it as a mortal can come.

These themes of heroism and invincibility also resonate with the surrounding narrative. In the preceding passage recounting the Macedonian mutiny at the Hyphasis (*Alex.* 62), Alexander suffers the first real defeat within the *Life*. Following the grueling battle of the Hydaspes, the Macedonians, after hearing reports of a more formidable Indian army waiting

beyond the Ganges, reasonably beg their king to turn back. Far from seeing the reasonableness of this request, however, Alexander persists in the view that turning back before reaching the Ganges is tantamount to defeat:

τὸ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον ὑπὸ δυσθυμίας καὶ ὀργῆς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν καθεῖρξας ἔκειτο, χάριν οὐδεμίαν εἰδὼς τοῖς διαπεπραγμένοις, εἰ μὴ περάσειε τὸν Γάγγην, ἀλλ' ἐξομολόγησιν ἥττης τιθέμενος τὴν ἀναχώρησιν.

Now then, having at first shut himself up in his tent out of despair and anger, he lay there, feeling no gratitude for his accomplishments unless he should cross the Ganges, but rather considering retreat an admission of defeat. (*Alex.* 62.5)

When Alexander relents and gives the order to turn back, therefore, his fabled invincibility is, in a very real way, compromised; the king who has never suffered defeat at the hands of any enemy ironically suffers defeat at the hands of his own army. By juxtaposing the army's mutiny with the king's *aristeia* in this way, Plutarch further elucidates the connection between Alexander's heroism and his invincibility. At both the Hyphasis and the Mallian town, whereas the Macedonians' heroism has a clear limit, Alexander's is effectively limitless. This reality cuts in two ways, however. At the Hyphasis, Alexander's limitless heroism leads, paradoxically, to the shattering of his invincibility, as the king once again asks the world of his soldiers, only to find that his soldiers are no longer willing to give him the world. At the Mallian town, by contrast, this same heroism leads to precisely the opposite result: far from shattering his invincibility, the king's heroism here redeems it. By playing the role of best of the Macedonians, and, symbolically, best of the Achaeans, Alexander ultimately reclaims his title of ἀνίκητος.

While Alexander's Homeric role most clearly reflects his superhuman heroism and invincibility, it also shines a spotlight on a trait that Plutarch views as central to the king's character: Alexander's fieriness. When Plutarch writes that Alexander produces a σέλας by brandishing his weapons in the Mallian town, we may be tempted at first to take σέλας as simply

“light,” as this would, of course, be the natural effect of such an act. Yet, when this passage is read with the present Homeric allusion in mind, it becomes hard not to take σέλας as “fire” or “flame”: much as Achilles, a character frequently associated with fire in the *Iliad*,¹⁰⁶ has a flame crowning his head when he shows himself to the Trojans, so does Alexander, we may assume, have a flame emanating from his shield when he shows himself to the Mallians.¹⁰⁷ This reading of σέλας, in turn, points back to Plutarch’s description of Alexander’s physical appearance at the beginning of the work (*Alex.* 4.4-7). There, the biographer, drawing on contemporary physiognomic theory,¹⁰⁸ suggests that a fiery temperament (κρᾶσις...πυρώδης) was the cause of two of the king’s most salient characteristics: his spiritedness (θυμοειδῆ) and his fondness for drink (ποτικόν). Yet, for all its physiognomic significance, this fieriness plays an equally great metaphorical role throughout the *Life*. In his thoughtful analysis of Plutarch’s peculiar digression on naphtha (*Alex.* 35), Sansone, for example, has convincingly shown that this fiery substance symbolizes Alexander’s own character: “Both Alexander and naphtha are obviously of a fiery and volatile nature. But the fiery nature of Alexander is two-sided: he is equally susceptible to the destructive flames of anger and to the kindling of ambition.”¹⁰⁹ Something similar can be said, I believe, for σέλας in this passage. While this σέλας clearly reflects Alexander’s heroic brilliance, both here and in general, it also hints at his dangerous potential, his fire-like capacity to destroy both himself and those around him. Ultimately, though Alexander’s fire-like capacity

¹⁰⁶ Whitman 1958: 129-145 and King 1987: 17-19.

¹⁰⁷ This reading finds further support in the second term that Plutarch uses to describe the effect of Alexander’s brandishing of his arms: φάσμα, a “phantom” or “apparition” (*Alex.* 63.4), which also suggests the supernatural nature of the king’s action.

¹⁰⁸ On Plutarch and physiognomy in the *Life of Alexander*, see Sansone 1980: 63-68.

¹⁰⁹ Sansone 1980: 68.

may not prove his end at the Mallian town, it does prove his end before long: following his return to Babylon, the king dies from a fever exacerbated by wine-drinking (*Alex.* 75.6)—or, in physiognomic terms, from his fiery temperament (κρᾶσις...πυρώδης) and the fondness for drink (ποτικόν) to which it gives rise.¹¹⁰

The thematic complexity of this passage becomes still richer when Plutarch's *Caesar*, the *Alexander*'s parallel *Life*, is taken into account. As Plutarchan scholars have grown more aware in recent years, the *Parallel Lives* are meant to be read in pairs rather than individually.¹¹¹ When read in this way, both *Lives* in a given pair take on further meaning, since “the parallel structure,” in Duff's words, “encourages comparison and contrast between paired Lives, a process which itself illuminates and clarifies the moral questions at their core.”¹¹² Yet, while Duff claims that *synkrisis*, the Greek term for such comparison and contrast, is central to all of the *Lives*, C. B. R. Pelling has suggested that it plays a smaller role in some than in others, notably the *Alexander-Caesar*.¹¹³ Besides lacking the formal *Synkrisis* that generally serves as an epilogue to a pair of Plutarchan *Lives*,¹¹⁴ the *Alexander-Caesar*, on Pelling's view, also lacks many of the parallels

¹¹⁰ Cf. Whitmarsh 2002: 188, who comments that “Alexander's death, as we have seen, occurs as a result of the action of wine upon fiery fever (75.6). The seeds of Alexander's degeneration, Plutarch suggests, were implanted in him from the very start: the physiological make-up of his person was such as to self-destruct naturally.”

¹¹¹ Erbse 1956; Pelling 1986; and Duff 1999. Within the past few years, Stadter 2010 has even argued for the need to read a *Life* not only in conjunction with its paired *Life*, but also in conjunction with a wider selection of *Lives*, particularly those dealing with the same historical figures as the *Life* in question. For a recent attempt to read the *Alexander* in this way, see Buszard 2008, which analyzes the *Alexander-Caesar* in conjunction with the *Pyrrhus-Marius*.

¹¹² Duff 1999: 10. The second part of Duff's book, which comprises case studies of four pairs of *Lives* (*Pyrrhus-Marius*, *Phocion-Cato the Younger*, *Lysander-Sulla*, and *Alcibiades-Coriolanus*), shows this principle in action.

¹¹³ Pelling 1986: 83-84.

¹¹⁴ The reason for the *Alexander-Caesar*'s missing *Synkrisis* is unclear. While Erbse 1956: 403-406 thought that Plutarch may have chosen not to write a *Synkrisis* in this case, most scholars believe that problems with the manuscript tradition are to blame—a view that becomes more plausible based on Pelling 1973's argument that both the end of the *Alexander* and the beginning of the *Caesar* are also lost.

that typically link a pair of *Lives* together.¹¹⁵ While this is not the place for a full rejoinder to Pelling,¹¹⁶ I would like to suggest in the remainder of this section that the present passage from the *Alexander*, the storming of the Mallian town, combined with another from the *Caesar*, the battle of Munda (*Caes.* 56), represents not only a compelling parallel between the two *Lives*, but a parallel, more specifically, that serves to complicate the Homeric allusion contained in the *Alexander*.

Though previously unnoticed, the parallelism of these two Plutarchan passages is striking and multifaceted. First of all, both heroes come into extreme danger in these two passages (*Alex.* 63.13: τὸν κίνδυνον; *Caes.* 56.1: κίνδυνον...τὸν ἔσχατον). Where Alexander's danger is spelled out in the course of the narrative, with the hero sustaining wounds to both chest and neck (*Alex.* 63.6-13), Caesar's is summed up in his post-battle apothegm that, while he had previously contended for victory, he had never before contended for his life (*Caes.* 56.4). Second, both heroes face particularly formidable enemies in these two passages, with the Mallians being described as the most warlike of the Indian tribes (*Alex.* 63.2), and the Pompeians as wondrously numerous and remarkably daring (*Caes.* 56.1). Third, the battles in which the two heroes come into their extreme danger mirror each other on both a temporal and spatial level: on the one hand, both battles represent their heroes' last significant military operation as narrated in their respective *Lives*—something that Plutarch explicitly states in the *Caesar* (56.7) and artfully

¹¹⁵ Pelling 1986: 83-84 notes a few parallels between the two *Lives*, notably Caesar's famous encounter with the statue of Alexander (*Caes.* 11.5-6), but maintains that "the comparison is distinctly less emphasized than we might have expected, given Alexander's importance as a model for Roman statesmen, and the importance of the theme of 'monarchy' in explaining Caesar's fall."

¹¹⁶ Duff 1999: 131-204 undermines Pelling's position by showing that, in the case of two pairs of *Lives* signaled out by the latter as examples of pairs in which *synkrisis* is relatively unimportant (*Lysander-Sulla* and *Phocion-Cato the Younger*), this concept does indeed play a vital role. In what follows, I will argue that there is reason to question Pelling's position in the case of the *Alexander-Caesar*, too.

contrives in the *Alexander*; ¹¹⁷ on the other hand, both battles take place at the edges of the known world: India in Alexander's case, Spain in Caesar's. Fourth, both passages serve as turning points toward darker, more Dionysian phases of their respective narratives. In the *Alexander*, as Mossman has argued, while the Mallian town serves as the culmination of a distinctly epic phase of the narrative, what follows is a more tragic phase associated with Dionysus, as seen, for example, in the king's Dionysiac revel through Carmania (*Alex.* 67.1-6). ¹¹⁸ Similarly, in the *Caesar*, the hero's victory at Munda not only segues straight into the final sequence of events that will lead to his assassination, but is itself said to have taken place on the same day as the feast of Dionysus (*Caes.* 56.5), a detail which, as Pelling has argued, "is not inappropriate to the growing note of unease at this stage of the *Life*." ¹¹⁹

Lastly—and most significantly for present purposes—both passages contain allusions to the final books of the *Iliad*. Whereas the *Alexander* casts its hero in the role of the Achilles of *Iliad* 18 and 19, the *Caesar* seems to cast its hero in the role of the Hector of *Iliad* 22. Following the battle of Munda, Caesar, as noted above, remarks that, despite having often struggled for victory, this was the first time he had struggled *περὶ ψυχῆς*, "for his life" (*Caes.* 56.4). ¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ While Plutarch briefly alludes to further military operations of Alexander's, such as his conquest of the remaining Indian tribes along the Indus (*Alex.* 63.14) and the Cossaeans (*Alex.* 72.4), none of these military operations receives nearly the emphasis that the king's assault on the Mallian town does.

¹¹⁸ Mossman 1988: 90.

¹¹⁹ Pelling 2011: 418.

¹²⁰ Appian (*B.Civ.* 2.15.104) gives a virtually identical version of this quote, with the same *περὶ ψυχῆς* as found in Plutarch. The similar phraseology suggests either that Plutarch and Appian followed the same source for the battle of Munda, possibly Asinius Pollio (cf. Pelling 2011: 44-45), or that Appian, who wrote later than Plutarch, followed the biographer's *Life of Caesar* for this episode. However, in either case, we are entitled to see this phrase as Plutarch's own, since, even if he were following Pollio at this point, the Roman historian would almost certainly not have inserted an isolated Greek phrase such as this into his Latin history.

Caesar's phrase, *περὶ ψυχῆς*,¹²¹ coupled with his priamel-esque contrast between what he had previously struggled for (victory) and what he was now struggling for (life), readily recalls

Homer's description of Hector during his fateful duel with Achilles in *Iliad* 22:

πρόσθε μὲν ἐσθλὸς ἔφευγε, δίωκε δὲ μιν μέγ' ἀμείνων
καρπαλίμως, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ἱερότιον οὐδὲ βοεΐην
ἀρνύσθην, ἃ τε ποσσὶν ἀέθλια γίγνεται ἀνδρῶν,
ἀλλὰ περὶ ψυχῆς θεόν Ἴκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο.

In front, a noble man fled, but a much better man pursued him swiftly, since they were not striving after a sacrificial animal nor an ox-hide, which serve as prizes for the feet of men, but were running for the life of Hector the tamer of horses. (*Il.* 22.158-161)

Besides having their life and death struggle described with the same phrase, both Caesar and Hector also have their movement described with nearly identical verbs: where Caesar is said to be *περιθέων*, “running around” (*Caes.* 56.2),¹²² Hector (and Achilles) *θέων*, “were running” (*Il.* 22.161).

While the parallelism of these two Plutarchan passages is thus relatively assured, what remains to be considered is the significance of this parallelism. Key to this significance, I believe, are the Plutarchan heroes' respective Homeric roles, and the way in which these Homeric roles interact with one another. Considered on its own, Alexander's role as Achilles highlights, as seen above, not only his superhuman heroism and invincibility, but also his fiery nature; considered in the same way, Caesar's role as Hector serves, rather obviously, to foreshadow his impending death.¹²³ Like Hector in *Iliad* 22, Caesar is, at this point in the

¹²¹ According to *TLG*, the phrase *περὶ ψυχῆς* occurs eighteen times throughout the Plutarchan corpus. However, the phrase occurs with the meaning of “for (his) life” in only one other passage besides the present one (*Rom.* 7.6); in every other passage, the phrase has its more common meaning of “concerning the soul.”

¹²² According to the apparatus criticus of the Teubner edition of the *Alexander*, Zonaras reads *διαθέων* instead of *περιθέων*, but, either way, the Homeric parallel is still present.

¹²³ Cf. Pelling 2011: 415, who comes to a similar conclusion without recourse to Caesar's Homeric role as Hector: “there is also a particular irony that the apparently closural apophthegm—‘I have often fought to win, never before

narrative, not long for this world; right after the battle of Munda, Caesar becomes dictator for life, thereby setting in motion the chain of events that will ultimately lead to his assassination. On a basic level, then, if Alexander represents Achilles and Caesar Hector, the victor and vanquished of *Iliad* 22 respectively, Plutarch may be taking a position, albeit subtly, on the relative greatness of his two heroes, siding, as Caesar himself is made to do while reading a book about Alexander during his proconsulship in Spain (*Caes.* 11.5-6),¹²⁴ with the Macedonian over the Roman.

Yet, on a subtler level, if Plutarch's Alexander and Caesar can truly be seen to parallel each other in these two passages, each hero's Homeric role can also be seen to have significance for the other. That is to say, Alexander plays the role of Hector as well as Achilles at the Mallian town; and Caesar, the role of Achilles as well as Hector at Munda. What do these additional Homeric roles mean, though? In Alexander's case, this Hectorean role would seem to point in the same direction as in Caesar's: despite his miraculous survival at the Mallian town, Alexander's end, Plutarch implies, is also not far off; Babylon, the site of the king's death, beckons.¹²⁵ In Caesar's case, however, this Achillean role seems to point in a different direction than in Alexander's. Rather than underscoring his heroism and invincibility, Caesar's Achillean role, I believe, serves to underscore his profoundly disturbing behavior following the battle of Munda. Like Achilles, Caesar uncharacteristically maltreats his enemies in the wake of his victory, first by accepting the decapitated head of Gnaeus Pompey (*Caes.* 56.6), and second by

to survive'—presages the real threat to his survival, which will come in Rome, in a milieu where the great general is less at home."

¹²⁴ Both Suetonius (*Div. Iul.* 7.1) and Dio Cassius (37.52.2) report this anecdote, though with slight variations, most notably that Caesar was inspired to make his comment after seeing a statue of Alexander rather than reading a book about him; for modern discussion of these different versions, see Pelling 2011: 183-184.

¹²⁵ The significance of Alexander's role as Hector thus overlaps to some extent with that of his role as Achilles, in that both roles point, albeit in different ways, to the king's impending death.

taking the unprecedented step of celebrating a triumph for his victory over his fellow Romans (*Caes.* 56.7-9). Ultimately, despite his vaunted clemency, Caesar, this Homeric role hints, has a crueler and more merciless side to him.

V. The Death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5)¹²⁶

[1] Ὡς δ' ἦκεν εἰς Ἐκβάτανα τῆς Μηδίας καὶ διώκησε τὰ κατεπείγοντα, πάλιν ἦν ἐν θεάτροις καὶ πανηγύρεσιν, ἅτε δὴ τρισχιλίων αὐτῶ τεχνιτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀφιγμένων. [2] ἔτυχε δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας Ἡφαιστίων πυρέσσων· οἷα δὲ νέος καὶ στρατιωτικὸς οὐ φέρων ἀκριβῆ διαίταν, ἀλλ' <ἄμα> τῶ τὸν ἰατρὸν Γλαῦκον ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ θέατρον περὶ ἄριστον γενόμενος καὶ καταφαγὼν ἀλεκτρυόνα ἐφθόν καὶ ψυκτῆρα μέγαν ἐκπιῶν οἴνου, κακῶς ἔσχε καὶ μικρὸν διαλιπὼν ἀπέθανε. [3] τοῦτ' οὐδενὶ λογισμῶ τὸ πάθος Ἀλέξανδρος ἠνεγκεν, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς μὲν ἵππους τε κείραι πάντας ἐπὶ πένθει καὶ ἡμίονους ἐκέλευσε, καὶ τῶν πέριξ πόλεων ἀφεῖλε τὰς ἐπάλξεις, τὸν δ' ἄθλιον ἰατρὸν ἀνεσταύρωσεν, αὐλοὺς δὲ κατέπαυσε καὶ μουσικὴν πᾶσαν ἐν τῶ στρατοπέδῳ πολὺν χρόνον, ἕως ἐξ Ἄμμωνος ἦλθε μαντεία, τιμᾶν Ἡφαιστίωνα καὶ θύειν ὡς ἥρωϊ παρακελεύουσα. [4] τοῦ δὲ πένθους παρηγορία τῶ πολέμῳ χρώμενος, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ θήραν καὶ κυνηγέσιον ἀνθρώπων ἐξῆλθε καὶ τὸ Κοσσαιῶν ἔθνος κατεστρέφετο, πάντας ἠβηδὼν ἀποσφάττων. τοῦτο δ' Ἡφαιστίονος ἐναγισμὸς ἐκαλεῖτο. [5] τύμβον δὲ καὶ ταφὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν περὶ ταῦτα κόσμον ἀπὸ μυρίων ταλάντων ἐπιτελέσαι διανοούμενος, ὑπερβαλέσθαι δὲ τῶ φιλοτέχνῳ καὶ περιττῶ τῆς κατασκευῆς τὴν δαπάνην, ἐπόθησε μάλιστα τῶν τεχνιτῶν Στασικράτην, μεγαλοουργίαν τινὰ καὶ τόλμαν καὶ κόμπον ἐν ταῖς καινοτομίαις ἐπαγγελλόμενον.

[1] But when he [Alexander] came to Ecbatana in Media and put the pressing matters in order, he was again engaged with theatrical performances and festivals, since three thousand artists had come to him from Greece. [2] Around that time, Hephaestion happened to have a fever. Yet, since he, being a young man and of a soldierly nature, would not tolerate a strict diet, but rather ate up a boiled fowl and drank down a large cooler of wine for breakfast as soon as his doctor Glaucus went off to the theater, he took a turn for the worse and died shortly thereafter. [3] This misfortune Alexander bore with no reason, but straightaway he gave the order to shear all horses and mules in grief, and he removed the battlements of the cities round about, and he crucified the wretched doctor, and he caused pipes and all music in the camp to cease for a long time, until an oracular response came from Ammon giving the order to honor Hephaestion and to sacrifice to him as a hero. [4] Treating war as a consolation for his suffering, he set out, as it were, for the hunting and chasing of men and subdued the tribe of the Cossaeans, slaughtering them all from the youth upwards. This was called Hephaestion's offering. [5] When he was thinking of paying ten thousand talents for a tomb and funeral for him, as well as for the adornment of these things, and of surpassing the expense by the ingenuity and extraordinariness of the construction, he longed for Stasicrates most of all artists, since he promised some magnificence and daring and bombast in his innovations.

¹²⁶ For Arrian's account of the death of Hephaestion, see Chapter 3, Section II.

With this passage on the death of Hephaestion, Plutarch writes the final Achillean chapter of Alexander's life. During a period of festivities at Ecbatana following the Macedonians' return from India (324 B.C.), Hephaestion, the king's favorite, falls ill and dies after breaking the strict regimen set by his doctor. On Plutarch's account, Alexander's consequent grief is not only colossal, but noticeably reminiscent of Achilles' grief for Patroclus. As in previous Alexandrine episodes, while Alexander clearly had a hand in this Homeric parallelism,¹²⁷ Plutarch seems to have played a role as well. Where Plutarch's role emerges most clearly is with Alexander's subjugation of the Cossaeans, a recalcitrant Iranian tribe, during his period of mourning for Hephaestion. While both Arrian (*Anab.* 7.15.1-3) and Diodorus (17.111.4-5) record the king's subjugation of the Cossaeans, Plutarch alone describes it as an ἐναγισμός, "offering,"¹²⁸ for Hephaestion's shade (*Alex.* 72.4). With this word, as Mossman has noted, Plutarch appears to draw a parallel between Alexander and Achilles: just as Achilles sacrifices twelve Trojans to Patroclus' shade (*Il.* 23.175-177), so does Alexander sacrifice the Cossaeans to Hephaestion's.¹²⁹ Convincing as this parallel is, Mossman's treatment of its significance is less so. As discussed in the Introduction, Mossman's thesis regarding Plutarch's allusions in the *Life of Alexander* is twofold: whereas epic allusions regularly serve to highlight Alexander's positive side, tragic allusions regularly serve to highlight the reverse. This passage,

¹²⁷ Perrin 1895: 59; Radet 1931: 378-379; Lane Fox 1973: 434; Ameling 1988: 687-689; Cohen 1995: 500 n. 14; and Heckel 2015: 30.

¹²⁸ Hamilton 1969: 201 claims that the word ἐναγισμός refers to a sacrifice to a hero rather than to a god, which, if true, would further strengthen the parallel between Alexander and Achilles in this passage. However, according to *LSJ*, s.v. ἐναγισμός, the word simply means "offering to the dead," not "offering to a hero."

¹²⁹ Mossman 1988: 91; cf. Hammond 1993: 140, who also believes that Plutarch may be alluding to Achilles' slaughtering of the twelve Trojans, but maintains that Cleitarchus, not Plutarch, was probably the inventor of this allusion. Whether Plutarch or Cleitarchus was the inventor, though, matters little for present purposes; the fact that Plutarch chose to include this allusion when all the other surviving historians did not is sufficient reason for treating this allusion as thematically significant.

however, poses a problem for Mossman's thesis. While Plutarch may make a Homeric—and hence epic—allusion in this passage, this very allusion, as Mossman herself concedes, seems to highlight not Alexander's positive side, as it is supposed to, but his negative side. Faced with this contradiction, Mossman resorts to special pleading, first by suggesting that this Achilles allusion should be considered more a "tragic" than an "epic" allusion, inasmuch as Achilles' mourning for Patroclus is "the most tragic part of epic";¹³⁰ and second by calling the negative nature of the passage itself into question.¹³¹ Neither of these suggestions, put simply, carries conviction. While the first reveals a fundamental problem with Mossman's thesis, namely the difficulty of differentiating between "epic" and "tragic" allusions in light of the common subject matter of both genres (e.g., Achilles' grief for Patroclus),¹³² the second falls apart on a close reading of the text. What, then, is the significance of the Achilles allusion in this passage? Based on a close reading of the text, this Achilles allusion serves, I will argue, to shine a spotlight on the very thing Mossman argued it could not: Alexander's darker side, and, in particular, his increasingly irrational and unphilosophical behavior toward the end of the *Life*.

Before we turn to the Achilles allusion itself, we must consider Plutarch's general assessment of Alexander's reaction to the death of Hephaestion. While the biographer, surprisingly, gives no explicit verdict on his hero's behavior in the present passage, he gives just

¹³⁰ Mossman 1988: 91.

¹³¹ Mossman 1988: 91: "At the same time it is appropriate that the ethos is not purely tragic: for Alexander's mourning for Hephaestion is not part of the self-destructive side of his nature in the same way that the murder of Cleitus is." Cf. Mossman 1992: 98, however, who now seems open to the possibility that this Achilles allusion may highlight Alexander's darker side, though without specifying how or to what effect.

¹³² Besides in the *Iliad*, the subject of Achilles' grief for the death of Patroclus was certainly treated in Aeschylus' lost *Achilleis* trilogy (*Myrmidons*, *Nereids*, and *Phrygians* or *Ransom of Hector*), and probably also in a fair number of the twenty some other lost tragedies in which Achilles is known to have figured. For Achilles in Greek tragedy generally, see Michelakis 2002.

such a verdict toward the end of his *Life of Pelopidas*. There, having presented Pelopidas' funeral as a model of good taste, Plutarch adduces Alexander's funeral for Hephaestion as an example of despotic excess and barbaric pride:

Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ὁ μέγας Ἡφαιστίωνος ἀποθανόντος οὐ μόνον ἵππους ἔκειρε καὶ ἡμιόνους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐπάλξεις ἀφεῖλε τῶν τειχῶν, ὡς ἂν δοκοῖεν αἱ πόλεις πενθεῖν, ἀντὶ τῆς πρόσθεν μορφῆς κούριμον σχῆμα καὶ ἄτιμον ἀναλαμβάνουσαι. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν προστάγματα δεσποτῶν ὄντα, καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς ἀνάγκης περαινόμενα καὶ μετὰ φθόνου τῶν τυχόντων καὶ μίσους τῶν βιαζομένων, οὐδεμιᾶς χάριτος ἦν οὐδὲ τιμῆς, ὄγκου δὲ βαρβαρικοῦ καὶ τρυφῆς καὶ ἀλαζονείας ἐπίδειξις, εἰς κενὰ καὶ ἄζηλα τὴν περιουσίαν διατιθεμένων.

When Hephaestion died, Alexander the Great not only cut the manes of his horses and mules, but also removed the parapets from city walls in order that the cities might seem to be grieving by taking on a shorn and dishonored appearance in place of their former beauty. Now then, these acts, given that they were the commands of despots and were being accomplished with great compulsion and with the envy of those who received them and the hatred of those who were being forced, were a display of no grace or honor, but of barbaric pride, luxury, and boastfulness, which spend superfluous wealth on vain and unenviable things. (*Pel.* 34.2-3)

As J. R. Hamilton has noted in his commentary to the *Alexander*, a similarly negative verdict on Alexander's reaction to Hephaestion's death may be detected in this work as well.¹³³ The first sign of this negative verdict is Plutarch's remark that the king bore his grief for his friend οὐδενὶ λογισμῶ, "with no reason" (*Alex.* 72.3).¹³⁴ As Duff has shown, λογισμός/λογισμοί has a consistently positive connotation in Plutarch, denoting, as it does, "reason and reasoned behavior."¹³⁵ Moreover, a man's ability to retain such λογισμός/λογισμοί, particularly in times of crisis, "is an important moral indicator for Plutarch."¹³⁶ By this standard, then, Alexander's

¹³³ Hamilton 1969: lxix.

¹³⁴ Hamilton 1969: lxix.

¹³⁵ Duff 1999: 80.

¹³⁶ Duff 1999: 79; cf. Beneker 2012: 68.

reaction to Hephaestion's death is especially troubling. Despite his celebrated training with Aristotle, the king, it seems, is no longer acting in accordance with the dictates of reason.

Plutarch's negative verdict on Alexander's reaction to Hephaestion's death also emerges with his description of the Cossaeon campaign.¹³⁷ In the first place, Plutarch presents Alexander's motive for waging this campaign in a disturbing light. Rather than attacking the Cossaeans out of necessity or even strategic advantage, Alexander does so, Plutarch says, simply as τοῦ δὲ πένθους παρηγορία, "a solace for his grief" (*Alex.* 72.4). More significantly, Plutarch alone of the Alexander historians depicts the campaign as a massacre.¹³⁸ Not only does Alexander treat the Cossaeans like animals, attacking them ὥσπερ ἐπὶ θήραν καὶ κυνηγέσιον, "as if for a hunt and chase" (*Alex.* 72.4); he also slaughters them ἠβηδόν, "from the youth up" (*Alex.* 72.4). While Plutarch here, admittedly, refrains from criticism of Alexander, his previous comment on the king's lack of λογισμός obviates the need for such criticism; Alexander, by his transparent λογισμός-less behavior in the Cossaeon campaign, convicts himself.

Final confirmation of Plutarch's negative verdict may be seen in the Stasicrates anecdote that concludes this episode.¹³⁹ As Plutarch tells the story, Stasicrates, a famous architect in Alexander's entourage, comes to the king proposing to carve Mount Athos in his image, but Alexander, for his part, sensibly declines the offer. While Alexander's rationale for declining is here left unclear, Plutarch spells this out when recounting the Stasicrates anecdote in his separate essay, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*:

ταῦτ' ἀκούσας Ἀλέξανδρος τὸ μὲν φρόνημα τοῦ τεχνίτου καὶ τὸ θάρσος ἀγασθεὶς ἐπήνεσεν, "ἔα δὲ κατὰ χώραν," ἔφη "τὸν Ἄθω μένειν· ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἑνὸς βασιλέως

¹³⁷ Hamilton 1969: lxix.

¹³⁸ Hamilton 1969: 201.

¹³⁹ Hamilton 1969: lxix.

ἐνυβρίσαντος εἶναι μνημεῖον· ἐμὲ δ' ὁ Καύκασος δείξει καὶ τὰ Ἡμῶδὰ καὶ Τάναϊς καὶ τὸ Κάσπιον πέλαγος· αὗται τῶν ἐμῶν ἔργων εἰκόνες.”

Having heard these things, he [Alexander] marveled and commended his architect's plan and boldness, but said: “Let Athos remain in place. For it is enough that it be a memorial of one king's arrogance. But the Caucasus, the Emodion range, the Tanais, and the Caspian Sea will mark me out; these will be the images of my deeds.” (*De Alex. fort.* 2.2 = *Mor.* 335E).

Here, in this second version of the Stasicrates anecdote, Alexander refuses the architect's proposal based on its hubristic quality; to have his own image carved in Mount Athos, the king reckons, would be as arrogant as Xerxes' attempt to dig a canal through it. In the *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*, then, this anecdote functions as yet another example of Alexander's ἀρετή over his τύχη: by refusing this extravagant offer, Alexander shows himself still to be the philosopher *par excellence*, a man fully in control of his virtue. In the *Life of Alexander*, however, Plutarch subverts the king's moral exemplarity in refusing Stasicrates' proposal with a final, troubling comment: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν παρητήσατο, πολλῶ δ' ἀτοπώτερα καὶ δαπανηρότερα τούτων σοφίζόμενος τότε καὶ συμμηχανώμενος τοῖς τεχνίταις διέτριβεν. “These things, then, he had refused [i.e., the Mount Athos project], but he [Alexander] spent his time then devising and working with his architects on much stranger and costlier things than these” (*Alex.* 72.8). While Plutarch, once again, refrains from commenting on his hero's newfound cooperation with Stasicrates, it becomes difficult, given his handling of the Stasicrates anecdote in the *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*, not to see in this cooperation a critique on the biographer's part: far from displaying his characteristic ἀρετή, Alexander now, in the wake of Hephaestion's death, gives himself over to the forces of irrationality and extravagance. As his own death draws

near, the king is shown, at heart, to be not so much a philosopher king, but a stereotypical tyrant, passionate and out of control.¹⁴⁰

What role, then, does the Achilles allusion play in this passage? Like the Stasicrates anecdote, the Achilles allusion serves, I would argue, to reinforce Plutarch's negative assessment of Alexander's grief for Hephaestion. Central to this argument is Plutarch's well-known Platonism.¹⁴¹ As a Platonist, Plutarch would undoubtedly have been familiar with the master's verdict on Achilles' grief for Patroclus as laid out in the *Republic*.¹⁴² In *Republic* 3, during his discussion of poetry's proper place in the ideal state, Plato presents Achilles' grief as not only excessive, but dangerous:

Πάλιν δὴ Ὅμηρου τε δεησόμεθα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ποιητῶν μὴ ποιεῖν Ἀχιλλεῖα θεᾶς παῖδα
ἄλλοτ' ἐπὶ πλευρᾶς κατακείμενον, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ὑπτίον, ἄλλοτε δὲ πρηγῆ,
τοτὲ δ' ὀρθὸν ἀναστάντα
πλώζοντ' ἀλύοντ' ἐπὶ θῖν' ἀλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο,¹⁴³
μηδὲ ἀμφοτέραισιν χερσὶν ἐλόντα κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν χευάμενον κὰκ κεφαλῆς, μηδὲ
ἄλλα κλαίοντά τε καὶ ὀδυρόμενον ὅσα καὶ οἷα ἐκεῖνος ἐποίησεν

...
εἰ γάρ, ὦ φίλε Ἀδείμαντε, τὰ τοιαῦτα ἡμῖν οἱ νέοι σπουδῆ ἀκούοιεν, καὶ μὴ καταγελῶεν
ὡς ἀναξίως λεγομένων, σχολῆ ἂν ἑαυτὸν γέ τις ἄνθρωπον ὄντα ἀνάξιον ἠγήσαιτο τούτων
καὶ ἐπιπλήξειεν, εἰ καὶ ἐπίοι αὐτῷ τι τοιοῦτον ἢ λέγειν ἢ ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αἰσχυνόμενος
οὐδὲ καρτερῶν πολλοὺς ἐπὶ μικροῖσιν παθήμασιν θρήνους ἂν ἄδοι καὶ ὀδυρμούς.

We will, again, ask Homer and the other poets not to depict Achilles, the son of a goddess,
one moment lying down on his side, another in turn on his back, another on his front,

¹⁴⁰ Several of Alexander's other actions in this passage may also be taken as proof of Plutarch's negative assessment of the king's reaction to Hephaestion's death, particularly his orders to demolish city battlements and to cut the manes and tails of horses and mules, both of which, as seen above, are adduced as examples of despotic excess in the *Pelopidas*.

¹⁴¹ For Plutarch's Platonism in general, see Russell 1973: 63-83 and Dillon 2013; on Plutarch's debt to Platonic political philosophy, including the idea of philosopher kings, see Boulet 2013 and Pelling 2013.

¹⁴² Lamberton 2001: 16 remarks that, while Plutarch shows a knowledge of all but three of Plato's works throughout his oeuvre, the *Republic*, as well as the *Timaeus* and *Laws*, "get disproportionate attention."

¹⁴³ Plato alludes with these verses to *Il.* 24.10-12, which describe Achilles' ceaseless grief for Patroclus.

and then, having stood up,

drifting distraught over the strand of the barren sea,
nor taking bloody dust in both hands and pouring it down on his head, nor crying and weeping for all the other sorts of things he [Homer] represented him doing

...

For if, my dear Adeimantus, our young men should listen to such things seriously and not ridicule them as unworthily said, hardly would anyone, being a man, believe himself unworthy of these things and rebuke himself, even if it should occur to him to say or do some such thing, but, being ashamed at nothing and unsteadfast, he would sing many dirges and lamentations over small sufferings. (*Resp.* 388a-b, d)

For Plato, Achilles' grief at the death of Patroclus is dangerous for the simple reason that it represents the triumph of *pathē* over *logos*. By behaving with emotion, rather than reason, in this situation, Achilles harms not only himself, Plato suggests, but potentially the youth of the ideal state as well, who may, the philosopher fears, take Achilles' grief as license to behave in the same manner themselves. Thus, on Plato's view, Achilles' grief for Patroclus is a purely negative *exemplum*, embodying, in effect, the antithesis of philosophy and the life of reason.

How closely, then, does Plutarch, as a Platonist, conform with his philosophical master's verdict on Achilles' grief? While Plutarch nowhere explicitly endorses Plato's verdict, selections from his *Consolation to His Wife*, a consolatory letter to his wife, Timoxena, on the death of their young daughter, suggests that he would have been in broad agreement with Plato on the subject. In the beginning of the letter, Plutarch makes his view on grief—and, more specifically, excessive grief à la Achilles—abundantly clear:

Μόνον, ὦ γύναι, τήρει κάμὲ τῷ πάθει καὶ σεαυτὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ καθεστῶτος. ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸ μὲν οἶδα καὶ ὀρίζω τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἡλίκων ἐστίν· ἂν δὲ σε τῷ δυσφορεῖν ὑπερβάλλουσαν εὖρω, τοῦτό μοι μᾶλλον ἐνοχλήσει τοῦ γεγονότος.

In our suffering, my wife, only keep me and yourself in a calm state. For while I know and reckon how serious the very thing which has happened is, yet if I find you behaving in an excessive manner in respect to our misfortune, this will trouble me more than what has happened. (*Cons. ad uxor.* 2 = *Mor.* 608C).

Like Plato, Plutarch shows himself to have precious little patience for excessive grief, even when, as in a case like this, the death of a family member is at issue. From Plutarch's perspective, as from Plato's, such grief is essentially αἰσχρά, "shameful" (*Cons. ad uxor.* 4 = *Mor.* 609B), since it aligns the grieving party, once again, with emotion rather than reason. Yet, for both Plutarch and Plato, reason is, or at least ought to be, the guiding principle of human life. In *How a Young Man Should Listen to Poetry*, for example, Plutarch describes reason as a key component of τῆς ἀρίστης καὶ θειοτάτης ἕξεως ἐν ἡμῖν, "the best and most divine state within us" (*Quomodo adul.* 6 = *Mor.* 24E), while in *To an Uneducated Ruler*, he proclaims that any ruler must himself be ruled by ἔμψυχος...λόγος, "animate reason" (*Ad princ. inerud.* 3 = *Mor.* 780C). Thus, given Plutarch's highly Platonic view of not only grief, but the proper role of reason and emotion in human life, we may reasonably conclude that he, too, most likely regarded Achilles' grief for Patroclus as a negative *exemplum*.

To bring these various strands of argumentation together, then: Plutarch, I suggest, chose to work this Achilles allusion into his account of Alexander's grief for Hephaestion precisely as a way of underscoring the king's moral decline in the wake of his friend's death. Like the Achilles of the final books of the *Iliad*, Alexander here surrenders himself to grief to such an extent that, in Plutarch's view, he fails to live up to his characteristic virtues, σωφροσύνη and ἐγκράτεια, and thus to his generally philosophical nature. As this allusion suggests, the Alexander who once believed it "kinglier to master himself than to conquer his enemies" (*Alex.* 21.7: τοῦ νικᾶν τοὺς πολεμίους τὸ κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλικώτερον ἡγούμενος), is no more; in his place, Plutarch implies, stands a radically different Alexander, a man who may be ruler of the world, but whose passions, paradoxically, prevent him from ruling himself anymore.

Conclusion

While the Achilles motif fulfills a number of functions in the *Alexander*, this chapter has argued that its most essential function is to highlight Alexander's "spiritedness" (τὸ θυμοειδές), a quality that manifests itself in a variety of ways, both positive and negative, throughout the work. On the positive side, in passages such as the pilgrimage to Troy (*Alex.* 15.7-9), Plutarch uses the Achilles motif to underscore both Alexander's complex heroism, simultaneously noble and destructive, and his driving ambition. Conversely, on the negative side, in passages such as the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5), the biographer employs the motif to underscore his subject's adherence to passion over reason (λόγος), and the dangers, from a Platonic perspective, of such adherence. This chapter, therefore, raises the question of whether Wardman's argument about Alexander's spiritedness may be correct after all. According to Wardman, spiritedness, as noted above,¹⁴⁴ stands as the Plutarchan Alexander's key quality, the quality from which all of his others arise.¹⁴⁵ This chapter, which also stresses the importance of spiritedness to Plutarch's characterization of Alexander, may thus be taken as further support for Wardman's argument. However, I do not believe this chapter should be taken in this way. Where Wardman sees spiritedness as *the* key quality of the Plutarchan hero, this chapter, whose scope has, of course, been fairly limited, can claim only to show that it is *a* key quality. Ultimately, if "[t]he Alexander of Plutarch is a many-sided character,"¹⁴⁶ his spiritedness, and the nexus of qualities associated with it, is just one of these sides.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 2, Introduction.

¹⁴⁵ Wardman 1955: 102-107.

¹⁴⁶ Hamilton 1969: lxx.

CHAPTER 3

Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander*

Introduction

From the early nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, Arrian, author of the *Anabasis of Alexander*,¹ held pride of place among the surviving Alexander historians.² The basis of Arrian's special status within Alexander historiography was simple and, on first glance, compelling. By basing his work on two seemingly reliable primary sources³—Ptolemy, the famous Macedonian general and founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty,⁴ and Aristobulus, a Greek technician who took part in Alexander's campaign⁵—and clearly articulating his method in using these sources, Arrian produced, scholars long believed, the best and most reliable account of Alexander's career to survive to the present day. Yet, around 1960, Arrian's special status within Alexander historiography began to come under attack. On the one hand, scholars such as E. Badian critiqued Arrian's choice of sources, arguing that both Ptolemy and Aristobulus were, in their

¹ The title of Arrian's Alexander history is debated. While most scholars accept the title *Anabasis of Alexander*, Bosworth 1980: 7-8 has called this title into question, suggesting, based on discrepancies in the manuscripts, that it should instead be τὰ περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, *vel sim*, which he translates as *History of Alexander*. However, given Arrian's well-established preoccupation with Xenophon (Stadter 1967), as well as the fact that Arrian's work, like Xenophon's *Anabasis*, consists of seven books, I believe the *Anabasis* title should be allowed to stand.

² Throughout this period, Arrian's preeminence as an Alexander historian was a virtual axiom of English (e.g., Robinson 1947, Tarn 1948, Burn 1962) and German (e.g., Schwartz 1895, Strasburger 1934, Kornemann 1935, Wirth 1959, Wilcken 1967) scholarship.

³ Ptolemy was held in particularly high esteem due to the theory, famously propounded by Wilcken 1894 and subsequently reaffirmed by a number of scholars (e.g., Berve 1926: 1.50-51; Robinson 1932; Tarn 1948: *passim*), that his work was based, at least in part, on the *Royal Journal*, the official chronicle of Alexander's reign. While this theory still has a few supporters, notably Hammond 1988, most scholars now believe that the *Royal Journal* was either a literary forgery (Pearson 1955) or a propaganda tool (Samuel 1965, Bosworth 1971 and 1988b: 157-184, and Badian 1988 [2012: 325-337]), and, either way, was not a source for Ptolemy's work.

⁴ For Ptolemy's life, see Berve 1926: 2.329-335 (no. 668); Heckel 1992: 222-227; Ellis 1994; and Heckel 2006: 235-238; for his work, see Pearson 1960: 188-211 and Pédech 1984: 215-329.

⁵ For Aristobulus' life, see Berve 1926: 2.64-66 (no. 121) and Heckel 2006: 46-47; for his work, see Pearson 1960: 150-187 and Pédech 1984: 331-405.

own ways, fundamentally biased and apologetic;⁶ on the other hand, scholars such as A. B. Bosworth challenged Arrian's own competence as a historian, citing numerous mistakes and misunderstandings on the historian's part.⁷ While this revisionist scholarship effectively dethroned Arrian from his position as the preeminent Alexander historian, it also provided an opening for *Anabasis* scholarship of a more literary nature. In 1980, P. A. Stadter, in the first full-length study of Arrian's life and career, devoted two chapters to the *Anabasis*, the first of which dealt with the historian's aims and methods in his history and the second his characterization of Alexander.⁸ In 1988, Bosworth, in a study of Arrian's historical and literary techniques meant to complement his ongoing historical commentary on the *Anabasis*, turned his attention to such subjects as Arrian's handling of his sources and use of speeches.⁹ That same year, H. Tonnet published a major study of Arrian's Atticist writings, including the *Anabasis*, focusing on topics such as Arrian's style, literary models, and debt to the Atticist movement.¹⁰ Lastly, in 2013, B. Burliga, in a study of the *Anabasis* from a philosophical perspective, argued that the work contains a pronounced Stoic dimension,¹¹ reflecting Arrian's training with the Stoic philosopher Epictetus.¹²

⁶ Ptolemy's bias: Badian 1961b: 664-666 [2012: 53-55]; Welles 1963b; Errington 1969; Pédech 1984: 294-308; *contra* Roisman 1984. Aristobulus' bias: Badian 1961b: 664 [2012: 52-53], Pédech 1984: 348-365.

⁷ Bosworth 1976a and 1976b, and, more generally, Bosworth 1980 and 1995, two commentaries on the *Anabasis* covering Books 1-3 and 4-5 respectively.

⁸ Stadter 1980: 60-114.

⁹ Bosworth 1988b: 94-156.

¹⁰ Tonnet 1988: 1.223-421.

¹¹ Burliga 2013; *contra* Brunt 1977.

¹² For Arrian's training with Epictetus, see Stadter 1980: 19-31 and Burliga 2013: 36-37.

This chapter, then, aims to contribute to this relatively small body of Arrianic scholarship of a literary nature by studying the Achilles motif's thematic function within the *Anabasis*. Traditionally, despite the Achilles motif's appearance throughout the *Anabasis*, scholars have focused primarily on its appearance in a single passage: Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy (*Anab.* 1.12.1),¹³ a passage of major significance due to its connection to the famous, and much-discussed, "Second Preface" (*Anab.* 1.12.2-5).¹⁴ In this passage, as a number of scholars have argued, Arrian uses the Achilles motif to highlight his own role as Homer,¹⁵ his own role, in effect, as the supreme commemorator of the Macedonian conqueror. Convincing as this argument is, scholars have, in general, refrained from carrying out similar analyses of other *Anabasis* passages in which the Achilles motif occurs. Consequently, the broader question—the question of the Achilles motif's function within the *Anabasis* as a whole—has, until recently, been ignored. In 2015, however, J. Maitland, in her article on Alexander and the anger of Achilles, proposed an answer to this question. According to Maitland, the Achilles motif serves an essentially "romantic" and "sentimental" function within the *Anabasis*, highlighting Alexander's positive traits at the expense of his negative ones.¹⁶ In this view, Maitland, I believe, is partly, but not entirely, correct. While Arrian does, indeed, frequently deploy the motif to underscore Alexander's positive traits, he does not do so exclusively. Thus, in this chapter, I argue that the Achilles motif plays a more nuanced role in the *Anabasis*, and, more specifically,

¹³ On Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, see Section I below.

¹⁴ On the Second Preface, see Schepens 1971; Bosworth 1980: 104-107; Stadter 1980: 60-66 and 1981; Brunt 1983: 538-541; Moles 1985; Tonnet 1988: 1.426-429; Marincola 1989; Gray 1990; and Burliga 2013: 65-69, 104-106.

¹⁵ Schepens 1971: 263; Bosworth 1980: 104; Stadter 1980: 62-63; Moles 1985: 163; and Burliga 2013: 105.

¹⁶ Maitland 2015: *passim*.

that it serves to reinforce not only the encomiastic, but also the Stoic, strands of Arrian's portrait of Alexander.

To make this case, I carry out close readings of the major Achilles motif passages in the *Anabasis*. In the first part, I examine the two passages in which Arrian explicitly casts Alexander as Achilles: the pilgrimage to Troy (*Anab.* 1.12.1) and the death of Hephaestion (*Anab.* 7.14, 16.8). From there, I turn to three additional passages in which scholars have previously detected Arrian's deployments of the Achilles motif: the murder of Cleitus (*Anab.* 4.8.1-9.8);¹⁷ the mutiny at the Hyphasis (*Anab.* 5.24.8-29.2);¹⁸ and Alexander's *aristeia* at the Mallian town (*Anab.* 6.9.1-10.4).¹⁹ Finally, in the conclusion, I consider Arrian's use of the Achilles motif in relation to the historian's overall portrait of Alexander, arguing that the former closely mirrors the latter.

I. The Pilgrimage to Troy (*Anab.* 1.12.1)²⁰

[1] Ἀνιόντα δ' αὐτὸν ἐς Ἴλιον Μενοίτιός τε ὁ κυβερνήτης χρυσοῦ στεφάνῳ ἐστεφάνωσε καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ Χάρης ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἐκ Σιγείου ἐλθὼν καὶ τινες καὶ ἄλλοι, οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες, οἱ δὲ ἐπιχώριοι.²¹ ... οἱ δὲ, ὅτι καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέως ἄρα τάφον ἐστεφάνωσεν· Ἡφαιστίωνα δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι τοῦ Πατρόκλου τὸν τάφον ἐστεφάνωσεν· καὶ εὐδαιμόνισεν ἄρα, ὡς λόγος, Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀχιλλέα, ὅτι Ὀμήρου κήρυκος ἐς τὴν ἔπειτα μνήμην ἔτυχε.

[1] When he [Alexander] came up to Ilium, Menoetius the helmsman crowned him with a golden crown and, in addition to him, Chares the Athenian who came from Sigeum as well as some others, too, some Greeks, others locals ... others, that he [Alexander] crowned the tomb of Achilles, while they say that Hephaestion crowned the tomb of Patroclus. Moreover, Alexander deemed Achilles fortunate, as the story goes, because he had acquired Homer as the herald of his memory hereafter.

¹⁷ Bosworth 1995: 64 and Carney 2000a: 279.

¹⁸ Bosworth 1995: 350.

¹⁹ Mossman 1988: 90.

²⁰ For Plutarch's account of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, see Chapter 2, Section II.

²¹ There is a lacuna in the text between ἐπιχώριοι and οἱ δέ. According to Bosworth 1980: 103, the missing text must have recorded further stories of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy.

In *Anabasis* 1, while narrating Alexander’s pilgrimage to Troy, Arrian makes the first and most famous deployment of the Achilles motif in his history of the Macedonian conqueror. Following his description of Alexander’s welcome at Troy, Arrian recounts his subject’s celebrated visit to the tomb of Achilles. During this visit, on Arrian’s account, Alexander not only crowns Achilles’ tomb, just as Hephaestion crowns Patroclus’, but declares Achilles blessed for having had Homer as the herald of his fame.²² Through this account, as scholars have long recognized, Arrian depicts his subject, in effect, as a second Achilles, a hero possessed of both a friend of alter-ego status and a desire for eternal glory.²³ While Arrian’s present depiction of Alexander *qua* Achilles may reflect a degree of historical reality,²⁴ scholars have rightly stressed its corresponding literary dimension.²⁵ On the one hand, as W. Heckel has noted, Arrian retails Alexander’s Achillean acts at Troy²⁶ as *legomena*, “stories,”²⁷ a classification that signals, as the historian makes clear in the Preface, not only their dubious historicity, but also, in his view, their literary value.²⁸

ἔστι δὲ ἅ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλων ξυγγεγραμμένα, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὰ ἀξιαφήγητά τέ μοι ἔδοξε καὶ οὐ πάντη ἄπιστα, ὡς λεγόμενα μόνον ὑπὲρ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀνέγραψα.

²² Arrian’s account of Alexander’s visit to Achilles’ tomb finds parallels in a variety of other sources: Alexander’s crowning of Achilles’ tomb (Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Diod. 17.17.3; Ael. *V.H.* 12.7; cf. Just. 11.5.12); Hephaestion’s crowning of Patroclus’ tomb (Ael. *V.H.* 12.7); Alexander’s blessing of Achilles (Plut. *Alex.* 15.8; Cic. *Pro Arch.* 24 = *FgrH* 153 T1).

²³ Stadter 1980: 61-66 and Bosworth 1988b: 32-35.

²⁴ Radet 1931: 33-35; Edmunds 1971: 372-373; Lane Fox 1973: 112-114; Ameling 1988: 673-678; and Cohen 1995: 484-485.

²⁵ Stadter 1980: 61-66; Bosworth 1988b: 32-35; and Heckel 2015: 21-25.

²⁶ Arrian reports a further, if subtler, Achillean act right before the visit to Achilles’s tomb: Alexander’s sacrifice to Priam in the hopes of averting his wrath from the race of Neoptolemus (*Anab.* 1.11.8).

²⁷ Despite being preceded by a lacuna, the anecdote of Alexander’s crowning of Achilles’ tomb is clearly meant to be introduced by λέγουσι, *vel sim.*, given the current οἱ δὲ, ὅτι..., “others, that...” construction (*Anab.* 1.12.1).

²⁸ Heckel 2015: 21-25.

I have also recorded only as stories (*legomena*) about Alexander some things which have been written by others because they, too, seemed to me both worthy of narration and not completely unbelievable. (*Anab.* Pref. 3)

On the other hand, as Bosworth has pointed out, Arrian's description of Alexander's pilgrimage to Troy, and especially his description of the visit to Achilles' tomb, is purposefully designed as a springboard for the historian's Second Preface.²⁹ Thus, if Arrian's choice to include the Achilles motif here is, at least to some extent, literary in nature, what, we might ask, is its thematic significance?

The Achilles motif's thematic significance manifests itself most clearly in Arrian's Second Preface (*Anab.* 1.12.2-5), the passage in which the historian gives his fullest rationale for writing the *Anabasis*. Following Alexander's blessing of Achilles for having Homer as the herald of his fame, Arrian comments on the paradoxical fittingness of this blessing:

καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτου ἔνεκα εὐδαιμονιστέος Ἀχιλλεύς, ὅτι αὐτῷ γε Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην ἐπιτυχίαν, τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο ἐκλιπές ξυνέβη οὐδὲ ἐξηνέχθη ἐς ἀνθρώπους τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα ἐπαξίως, οὐτ' οὖν καταλογάδην, οὔτε τις ἐν μέτρῳ ἐποίησεν...

And as a matter of fact, Achilles was not least to be deemed fortunate by Alexander for this reason, namely that, for Alexander himself at any rate, contrary to the rest of his good fortune, this subject happened to be overlooked, nor had Alexander's deeds been presented to mankind in a worthy way; no one had done so, either in prose or in poetry... (*Anab.* 1.12.2).

In Arrian's view, for all of his good fortune, Alexander was distinctly *unfortunate* in terms of his literary memorialization. Whereas Achilles had been commemorated in the *Iliad*, the masterpiece of Greek literature, Alexander had, for some four hundred years, been commemorated in nothing but second-rate histories.³⁰ With the *Anabasis*, therefore, Arrian sets himself the goal of

²⁹ Bosworth 1980: 100: "The whole episode is carefully contrived to lead up to the excursus in which Arrian justifies his decision to write a history of Alexander."

³⁰ On the lost Alexander historians' low reputation in antiquity, see Pearson 1960: 4-6 and Bosworth 1980: 104-105. Strabo (15.1.28 = Onesicritus *FgrH* 134 T10), for example, condemns the Alexander historians as a group for their

rectifying Alexander’s literary fortunes, of producing, in other words, a history of Alexander truly worthy of his subject. This, then, as several scholars have argued, is part of what the Achilles motif is meant to signify: by casting Alexander in the role of Achilles, Arrian also—and more importantly—casts himself in the role of Homer.³¹

This second Homeric role carries with it symbolic meaning of its own. In the first place, as scholars have noted, Arrian’s role serves to highlight the historian’s fundamentally encomiastic aim in the *Anabasis*.³² By playing the role of Homer, a poet concerned, like all epic poets, with conferring κλέος on his subjects, Arrian suggests that he will, in Stadter’s words, “celebrate Alexander as Homer had Achilles.”³³ Yet this is not all that Arrian’s role as Homer suggests. In the final section of the Second Preface, Arrian gives his qualifications for writing an Alexander history:

ὅστις δὲ ὦν ταῦτα ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτοῦ γινώσκω, τὸ μὲν ὄνομα οὐδὲν δέομαι ἀναγράψαι, οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ ἄγνωστον ἐς ἀνθρώπους ἐστίν, οὐδὲ πατρίδα ἥτις μοί ἐστιν οὐδὲ γένος τὸ ἐμόν, οὐδὲ εἰ δὴ τινα ἀρχὴν ἐν τῇ ἑμαυτοῦ ἦρξα· ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνο ἀναγράφω, ὅτι ἐμοὶ πατρίς τε καὶ γένος καὶ ἀρχαὶ οἶδε οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶ τε καὶ ἀπὸ νέου ἔτι ἐγένοντο. καὶ ἐπὶ τῶνδε οὐκ ἀπαξιῶ ἑμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἶπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις.

Whoever I am, I know this about myself, that I have no need to record my name, for it is not at all unknown to men, nor what my country is, nor my family, nor if I held some office in my own country (ἐν τῇ ἑμαυτοῦ).³⁴ But this I do record, that these writings (οἶδε

mendacity, while Longinus (*Subl.* 3.2 = Callisthenes *FgrH* 124 T32 = Cleitarchus *FgrH* 137 T9) criticizes Callisthenes and Cleitarchus, probably the most famous of the lost Alexander historians, for their risible styles.

³¹ Schepens 1971: 263; Bosworth 1980: 104; Stadter 1980: 62-63; Moles 1985: 163; and Burliga 2013: 105.

³² Bosworth 1980: 104; Stadter 1980: 62-66; and Moles 1985: 163.

³³ Stadter 1980: 89.

³⁴ The referent of ἐν τῇ ἑμαυτοῦ is a notorious subject of debate, with some suggesting Nicomedia, Arrian’s native city (Bosworth 1980: 106; Moles 1985: 165-166; Burliga 2013: 67-69), others Rome, the political center of Arrian’s world (Stadter 1980: 181 and 212 n. 19; Brunt 1983: 538-539), and still others Athens, Arrian’s home at the time of his retirement (Wirth 1964: 224). On balance, I favor taking the phrase as referring to Nicomedia.

οἱ λόγοι)³⁵ are my country, family, and offices, and have been from the time I was young. For this reason, too, I deem myself not unworthy of the first place in Greek literature, just as I deem Alexander worthy of the first place in war. (*Anab.* 1.12.5)

In this passage, Arrian justifies his decision to write an Alexander history by recourse to one thing, and one thing alone—his own literary preeminence.³⁶ Much as Alexander was supreme in the realm of war, so is Arrian supreme, or so he claims, in the realm of letters. Here, once again, Arrian’s role as Homer comes into play. By casting himself in the role of Homer, the colossus of Greek literature, Arrian hints implicitly at what he claims explicitly: he, too, is a highly talented writer, and he, too, will produce a masterpiece worthy of his subject.³⁷

While the Achilles motif thus possesses considerable thematic significance for Arrian, or, rather, Arrian’s literary persona, it is worth asking a further, and, as far as I can tell, previously unasked, question: What is the Achilles motif’s thematic significance for Alexander and/or Hephaestion? On my reading, its significance is threefold. First, by comparing Alexander to Achilles as the Persian campaign begins, Arrian spotlights both his subject’s supreme *aretē*, “martial valor,” and his animating fixation with *kleos*, “glory”—two Achillean qualities essential to the Macedonian’s remarkable success throughout the *Anabasis*. Second, by casting Alexander and Hephaestion in the dual roles of Achilles and Patroclus, Arrian foreshadows, in effect, the pair’s ultimate fate.³⁸ Like their Homeric models, both Alexander and Hephaestion, the historian

³⁵ While Bosworth 1972: 167-168 (cf. 1980: 107 and 1988b: 32-35) and Stadter 1980: 65 and 212 n. 21 have suggested that οἷδε οἱ λόγοι refers to Arrian’s oeuvre as a whole, I concur with Schepens 1971: 262, Roisman 1983-1984: 256-257, and Moles 1985: 167 in taking it as referring to the *Anabasis* alone.

³⁶ If Arrian’s οἷδε οἱ λόγοι (*Anab.* 1.12.5) refer, as I believe, to the *Anabasis* alone, then the historian’s claim to literary preeminence depends solely on this work (cf. *Anab.* Pref. 3); if, however, this phrase refers to Arrian’s oeuvre in general, then his claim depends on his previous works.

³⁷ Bosworth 1988b: 34-35; cf. Stadter 1980: 65.

³⁸ The notion that Arrian foreshadows Alexander and Hephaestion’s fate by comparing them to the Homeric heroes finds a certain degree of support on a structural level. As Stewart 1993: 83 notes, Arrian’s only two explicit deployments of the Achilles motif occur in the present passage (*Anab.* 1.12.1) and in the passage concerning the

signals, will perish on the grand Panhellenic campaign to the East;³⁹ furthermore, Hephaestion, like Patroclus, will die shortly before his king, and Alexander, like Achilles, will grieve on a monumental scale when this tragedy befalls.

Finally, by comparing the Macedonian duo to Achilles and Patroclus, two figures whose relationship was, from the Classical to the Imperial period, widely understood as homoerotic,⁴⁰ Arrian hints, I would argue, at the equally homoerotic nature of Alexander's relationship to Hephaestion. In making this argument, however, we are immediately faced with a basic question. Where Aelian makes the Alexander-Hephaestion relationship's homoerotic quality explicit in his account of the pilgrimage to Troy (*V.H.* 12.7),⁴¹ Arrian consistently leaves it implicit, both in this passage and in others, such as Alexander's meeting with the Persian royal family (*Anab.* 2.12.6-8) and Hephaestion's death (*Anab.* 7.14; cf. 16.8).⁴² Why? A potential answer to this question, I believe, may be found in Arrian's final assessment of Alexander at the end of the *Anabasis*. Here, Arrian praises his subject for, among other things, his sexual restraint, commenting that he was ἡδονῶν δὲ τῶν μὲν τοῦ σώματος ἐγκρατέστατος, "very much in control of his physical pleasures" (*Anab.* 7.28.2). While this characteristic emerges most clearly in Arrian's description

death of Hephaestion (*Anab.* 7.14; cf. 7.16.8), a fact that suggests that the two passages are meant to be considered together.

³⁹ Cf. Burliga 2013: 110.

⁴⁰ Fantuzzi 2012: 187-265.

⁴¹ Ὅτι Ἀλέξανδρος τὸν Ἀχιλλέως τάφον ἐστεφάνωσε καὶ Ἡφαιστίων τὸν τοῦ Πατρόκλου, αἰνιττόμενος ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἐρώμενος τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὡσπερ Ἀχιλλέως ὁ Πάτροκλος, "That Alexander crowned the tomb of Achilles and Hephaestion that of Patroclus, hinting that he himself was also the beloved of Alexander, just as Patroclus was of Achilles" (Ael. *V.H.* 12.7).

⁴² At the meeting with the Persian royal family, Alexander declares enigmatically that Hephaestion is also an Alexander (*Anab.* 2.12.7), a statement that may be taken to suggest either a romantic relationship or an extremely close friendship. Similarly, following Hephaestion's death, Alexander mourns on such a massive scale (*Anab.* 7.14; cf. 7.16.8) that a romantic relationship seems far and away the most natural explanation. On Alexander's grief at Hephaestion's death, see Section II below.

of Alexander's relationships with the Persian royal family (*Anab.* 2.12.6-8, 4.20-1-3) and Roxane (*Anab.* 4.19.5-6, 20.4), we can also see it, I would suggest, in his relationship with Hephaestion, at least as Arrian presents it. In sum, though Alexander, as Arrian implies, had a relationship with Hephaestion, this relationship was, like all those the king had, strictly moderate and, consequently, no hindrance to the king's still greater desire—eternal glory.

II. The Death of Hephaestion (*Anab.* 7.14.2-8, 16.8)⁴³

[2] Ἐνθα δὴ καὶ ἄλλοι ἄλλα ἀνέγραψαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ πένθους τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου· μέγα μὲν γενέσθαι αὐτῷ τὸ πένθος, πάντες τοῦτο ἀνέγραψαν, τὰ δὲπραχθέντα ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἄλλοι ἄλλα, ὡς ἕκαστος ἢ εὐνοίας πρὸς Ἡφαιστίωνα ἢ φθόνου εἶχεν ἢ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρον. [3] ὧν οἱ τὰ ἀτάσθαλα ἀναγράψαντες οἱ μὲν ἐς κόσμον φέρει<ν> μοι δοκοῦσιν οἰηθῆναι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ὅσα ὑπεραλγῆσας ἔδρασεν ἢ εἶπεν ἐπὶ τῷ πάντων δὴ ἀνθρώπων φιλάτῳ, οἱ δὲ ἐς αἰσχύνην μᾶλλον τι ὡς οὐ πρόποντα οὔτ' οὖν βασιλεῖ οὔτε Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, οἱ μὲν, τὸ πολὺ μέρος τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἐρριμμένον ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ἐταίρου ὀδύρεσθαι οὐδ' ἐθέλειν ἀπαλλαγῆναι, πρὶν γε δὴ πρὸς βίαν ἀπηνέχθη πρὸς τῶν ἐταίρων· [4] οἱ δέ, τὴν τε ἡμέραν ὅλην καὶ τὴν νύκτα ὅλην ἐρριφθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ σώματι· οἱ δὲ καί, τὸν ἰατρὸν Γλαυκίαν ὅτι ἐκρέμασε, καὶ τοῦτο[ν] ὡς ἐπὶ φαρμάκῳ κακῶς δοθέντι, οἱ δέ, ὅτι οἴνου περιεῖδεν ἐμπλησθέντα θεωρῶν αὐτός· καὶ κείρασθαι Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπὶ τῷ νεκρῷ τὴν κόμην τὰ τε ἄλλα οὐκ ἀπεικότα τίθεμαι καὶ κατὰ ζῆλον τὸν Ἀχιλλέως, πρὸς ὄντινα ἐκ παιδὸς φιλοτιμία αὐτῷ ἦν· [5] οἱ δὲ καί, τὸ ἄρμα ἐφ' ὅτῳ τὸ σῶμα ἐφέρετο αὐτὸς ἔστιν ὅτι <ὅτι> ἠνιόχει, τοῦτο οὐδαμῇ πιστὸν ἔμοιγε λέγοντες· ἄλλοι δέ, ὅτι καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ τὸ ἔδος ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις κατασκάψαι ἐκέλευσε, βαρβαρικὸν τοῦτό γε καὶ οὐδαμῇ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πρόσφορον, ἀλλὰ τῇ Ξέρξου μᾶλλον τι ἀτασθαλία τῇ ἐς τὸ θεῖον καὶ ταῖς πέδαις ἃς λέγουσιν ἐς τὸν Ἑλλησποντον καθεῖναι Ξέρξην, τιμωρούμενον δῆθεν τὸν Ἑλλησποντον. [6] ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκεῖνο οὐ πάντῃ ἔξω τοῦ εἰκότος ἀναγεγράφθαι μοι δοκεῖ, ὡς ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνος ἤλαυνεν Ἀλέξανδρος, ἐντυχεῖν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν πολλὰς πρεσβείας ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, εἶναι δὲ δὴ ἐν τούτοις Ἐπιδαυρίων πρέσβει· καὶ τούτους ὧν τε ἐδέοντο ἐξ Ἀλεξάνδρου τυχεῖν καὶ ἀνάθημα δοῦναι αὐτοῖς Ἀλέξανδρον κομίζεῖν τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ, ἐπειπόντα ὅτι· καίπερ οὐκ ἐπεικῶς κέχρηται μοι ὁ Ἀσκληπιός, οὐ σώσας μοι τὸν ἐταῖρον ὄντινα ἴσον τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ κεφαλῇ ἦγον. [7] ἐναγίζειν τε ὅτι αἰεὶ ὡς ἥρωϊ ἐκέλευεν Ἡφαιστίωνι, τοῦτο μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλείστων ἀναγέγραπται· οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι καὶ εἰς Ἄμμωνος ἔπεμψεν ἐρησομένους τὸν θεὸν εἰ καὶ ὡς θεῷ θύειν συγχωρεῖ Ἡφαιστίωνι, τὸν δὲ οὐ συγχωρῆσαι. [8] Ἐκεῖνα δὲ πρὸς πάντων συμφωνούμενα, ἐς τρίτην ἀπὸ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ Ἡφαιστίωνος ἡμέραν μῆτε σίτου γεύσασθαι Ἀλέξανδρον μῆτε τινὰ θεραπείαν ἄλλην θεραπεῦσαι τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ κεῖσθαι γὰρ ἢ ὀδυρόμενον ἢ πενθικῶς σιγῶντα· καὶ πυρὰν κελεῦσαι αὐτῷ ἐτοιμάζεσθαι ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἀπὸ ταλάντων μυρίων, οἱ δὲ καὶ πλειόνων ἀνέγραψαν· καὶ ὅτι πένθος ποιῆσθαι περιηγγέλη κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν χώραν τὴν βάρβαρον·

[8] ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἢ Ἡφαιστίωνος τελευτῇ οὐ σμικρὰ συμφορὰ γεγένητο, ἧς καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος προαπελθεῖν ἂν δοκεῖ μοι ἐθελῆσαι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῶν πειραθῆναι, οὐ μείον ἢ καὶ

⁴³ For Plutarch's account of the death of Hephaestion, see Chapter 2, Section V.

Ἀχιλλέα δοκῶ ἂν ἐλέσθαι προαποθανεῖν Πατρόκλου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῷ τιμωρὸν γενέσθαι.

[2] Here, too, some have recorded one thing about Alexander's grief, others another; that his grief was great, this all have recorded, but what happened in this circumstance some have recorded one way, others a different way, as each was motivated by good will or jealousy toward Hephaestion, or even toward Alexander himself. [3] Some of those who have recorded his presumptuous acts seem to me to have thought that as many things as he did or said in his excessive pain for the man who was dearest to him of all men redounded to Alexander's credit, others that they redounded more to his shame, on the grounds that they were not fitting either for a king or for Alexander, and others that, having thrown himself on the body of his companion, he lamented and refused to depart, until, in fact, he was forcefully carried away by his companions; [4] others, that for the whole day and the whole night he threw himself upon the body; others, too, that he crucified Glaucias, the doctor, and that for a drug maliciously given, but others because he himself [Glaucias], while watching him [Hephaestion], allowed him to fill up on wine; and that Alexander also cut his hair upon the corpse I consider not unlikely especially in view of his emulation of Achilles, with whom he had a rivalry since childhood; [5] others, too, that he himself sometimes drove the chariot upon which the body was carried, though what they say here is not at all credible to me at least; others, that he ordered the temple of Asclepius at Ecbatana to be raised to the ground, a barbarian deed this, and in no way befitting Alexander, but rather Xerxes' presumptuousness against the divine and the fetters which they say Xerxes dropped into the Hellespont, as if were really punishing the Hellespont. [6] But even the following story seems to me to have been recorded not entirely outside the realm of probability, namely that when Alexander was marching toward Babylon many embassies from Greece met him on the road, and that among them in fact were Epidaurian ambassadors; and that these received what they had requested from Alexander and that Alexander gave them a votive offering to bring to Asclepius, adding: Yet Asclepius has not treated me fairly, since he did not save the companion of mine whom I considered equal to my own life. [7] This, too, has been recorded by most, namely that he ordered that sacrifices always be made to Hephaestion as a hero; others say that he sent men to the oracle of Ammon to ask the god whether he also permitted sacrificing to Hephaestion as a god, but that he did not permit it. [8] The following things, however, are agreed upon by all, namely that until the third day after Hephaestion's death he neither tasted food nor took any care of himself, but instead lay there either lamenting or keeping silent with grief; and that he ordered a pyre of ten thousand talents to be prepared for him, though others have recorded that it was worth more. And he proclaimed that mourning be observed throughout the entire barbarian land.

...

[8] For in fact the death of Hephaestion had proved no small misfortune for Alexander himself, and I think that Alexander himself would have wished to depart from life before this rather than experience it while he was alive, no less than I think Achilles, too, would have chosen to die before Patroclus rather than become the avenger of his death.

In *Anabasis* 7, in two closely related passages that, between them, contain the work's final explicit deployments of the Achilles motif, Arrian recounts Hephaestion's death and its

effects on Alexander.⁴⁴ On Arrian's account, like those of all but one of the extant Alexander historians (Diod. 17.110.8; Just. 12.12.11-12; Plut. *Alex.* 72.1-5),⁴⁵ this episode contains a general, and unmistakable, Achillean dimension. In the wake of Hephaestion's death, Alexander, like Achilles with Patroclus, not only mourns his alter ego on a colossal scale,⁴⁶ but meets his own death shortly after him. Where Arrian's account stands apart from those of his fellow historians, however, is in its extensive elaboration of this general Achillean dimension. Throughout his account, as scholars have shown, Arrian repeatedly describes Alexander's actions following Hephaestion's death in ways that evoke Achilles' actions following Patroclus'.⁴⁷ Indeed, by A. M. Chugg's count, Arrian records no fewer than nine such Achillean actions on Alexander's part.⁴⁸ Most conspicuously, Alexander is represented as cutting his hair over his friend's corpse (*Anab.* 7.14.4; cf. *Il.* 23.140-152)—an action Arrian explicitly singles out as Achillean (κατὰ ζῆλον τὸν Ἀχιλλέως)⁴⁹—but he is also represented, *inter alia*, as abstaining from food and drink (*Anab.* 7.14.8; cf. *Il.* 19.305-308, 319-321),⁵⁰ building a huge and

⁴⁴ For a study of the sources for Hephaestion's death, see Reames-Zimmerman 1998: 263-279. The cause of Hephaestion's death is variously reported as illness (Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.1), overdrinking followed by illness (Diod. 17.111.8), and both overdrinking and overeating during illness (Plut. *Alex.* 72.2).

⁴⁵ Curtius' account of the death of Hephaestion has not survived due to a major lacuna in Book 10.

⁴⁶ For a modern psychological perspective on Alexander's grief at Hephaestion's death, see Reames-Zimmerman 1998: 180-235, who argues that the king's grief was not pathological, as many have maintained, but well within the norms of typical bereaved behavior.

⁴⁷ Perrin 1895: 59; Edmunds 1971: 373 n. 46; and Chugg 2006: 113-115, 129-130.

⁴⁸ Chugg 2006: 129-130, who provides a table of Alexander's actions paired with their putative Achillean models. While some of Chugg's Alexander-Achilles parallels are questionable (e.g., Alexander's driving of Hephaestion's funeral chariot (*Anab.* 7.14.5) ~ Achilles' holding of Patroclus' head during his funeral procession (*Il.* 23.136-137)), most are plausible.

⁴⁹ Perrin 1895: 51; Edmunds 1971: 373 n. 46; and Chugg 2006: 115, 129. For further discussion of Arrian's comment that Alexander had a lifelong rivalry with Achilles, and especially its implications for Alexander's historical connection to Achilles, see the Introduction.

⁵⁰ Perrin 1895: 59 and Chugg 2006: 122, 129.

costly pyre for his friend (*Anab.* 7.14.10; cf. *Il.* 23.154-225),⁵¹ and even claiming to have valued his friend's life as much as his own (*Anab.* 7.14.6; cf. *Il.* 18.80-82).⁵² While scholars have historically, and not unreasonably, viewed Arrian's present deployments of the Achilles motif as further proof of the Alexander-Achilles connection's historicity,⁵³ I contend that the motif can, in this case, also be understood from a literary perspective. When considered from this perspective, the Achilles motif, as I will argue in this section, may be seen to reinforce two major themes of the final book of the *Anabasis*: Alexander's mortality and the tragic nature of his life's end.

To begin with, the Achilles motif, I suggest, serves to foreshadow Alexander's death shortly after that of Hephaestion. In the *Iliad*, Achilles' death, of course, is closely linked to that of Patroclus. Not only does Patroclus' death set in motion the events that will lead to Achilles' death; it also symbolically prefigures it. As S. Schein notes, "Homer suggests and foreshadows the death of Achilles by adapting certain mythological motifs, diction, and perhaps specific passages of poetry associated in the poetic tradition with the death of Achilles to the death, lamentation, and burial of Patroklos."⁵⁴ By comparing Alexander to Achilles, then, and specifically the Achilles of the final books of the *Iliad*, Arrian suggests that Alexander's own death is imminent: without his Patroclus, the new Achilles will not be long for this world. Moreover, by combining this Homeric foreshadowing with a series of omens presaging

⁵¹ Perrin 1895: 59 and Chugg 2006: 122, 130.

⁵² Chugg 2006: 122, 130. Alexander describes Hephaestion as τὸν ἐταῖρον ὄντινα ἴσον τῇ ἐμαυτοῦ κεφαλῇ ἦγον, "the companion whom I considered equal to my own life" (*Anab.* 7.14.6), a phrase which pointedly recalls Achilles' description of Patroclus as ἐταῖρος, | ...τὸν ἐγὼ περὶ πάντων τῶν ἐταίρων, | ἴσον ἐμῇ κεφαλῇ, "the companion...whom I honored above all my companions, equal to my own life" (*Il.* 18.80-82).

⁵³ Perrin 1895: 59; Edmunds 1971: 373; Lane Fox 1973: 434; and Chugg 2006: 110-124, 129-130.

⁵⁴ Schein 1984: 129.

Alexander's end,⁵⁵ Arrian gives the impression that his subject's death is not only imminent, but almost preordained, the product of numerous forces working against him.

Second, the Achilles motif serves to highlight Alexander's tragic quality toward the end of the *Anabasis*.⁵⁶ At the beginning of *Anabasis* 7, Arrian digresses from his narrative to consider Alexander's so-called Last Plans (*Anab.* 7.1.2-4).⁵⁷ Following his secondary—and, in his view, less reliable—sources, the historian presents his subject, around the time of his death, as contemplating still further conquest and expansion: the circumnavigation of Arabia and Africa (*Anab.* 7.1.2), the subjugation of Carthage and Libya (*Anab.* 7.1.2), and expeditions to either Scythia or Sicily and Italy (*Anab.* 7.1.3). On these specific plans, Arrian ultimately expresses agnosticism, but he claims with certainty, that, whatever Alexander's plans were, they would have been neither small nor trivial, and that, no matter what he had already achieved, he would always have sought to achieve more, vying with himself in the absence of a rival (*Anab.* 7.1.4). With this claim, Arrian then segues into the heart of his digression: a Stoic appraisal of Alexander's restless ambition.⁵⁸ Through a series of three anecdotes concerning Alexander's meetings with philosophers⁵⁹—the Gymnosophists (*Anab.* 7.1.5-6), Diogenes (*Anab.* 7.2.1), and

⁵⁵ This series of omens includes the Chaldaeans' dire warnings to Alexander about entering Babylon (*Anab.* 7.16.5-17.6); Peithagoras' ominous sacrifices concerning both Alexander and Hephaestion (*Anab.* 7.18.1-4); Calanus' comment before his suicide that he would meet Alexander again in Babylon (*Anab.* 7.18.6); Alexander's loss of the royal diadem while sailing through marshland near Babylon (*Anab.* 7.22.2-5); and an anonymous individual's sitting on the throne while Alexander and the Companions were away (*Anab.* 7.24.1-3).

⁵⁶ By "tragic," I mean "associated with *pathos*" rather than "associated with Greek tragedy."

⁵⁷ On Alexander's Last Plans, see Tarn 1948: 2.378-398, Badian 1968: 183-204 [2012: 174-192], and Bosworth 1988b: 185-211.

⁵⁸ Brunt 1977: 44 and Burliga 2013: 101-103 claim that this part of the digression shows specifically Stoic influence, a claim in keeping with Arrian's training under Epictetus and publication of the *Discourses of Epictetus*.

⁵⁹ While none of these philosophers, of course, were Stoics, Diogenes being a Cynic and Dandamis and the Gymnosophists outside of the Greek philosophical tradition altogether, their views, as presented by Arrian, are broadly compatible with Stoic philosophy.

Dandamis (*Anab.* 7.2.2-4)—Arrian suggests that the king’s ambition, his tireless pursuit of glory and honor, is insufficient for true happiness.⁶⁰ In the first of these meetings, for example, the Indian Gymnosophists, with Arrian’s explicit approval (*Anab.* 7.1.5),⁶¹ argue that, since each man possesses only as much earth as he stands upon, seeking to possess much of the world, as Alexander has done, is not only futile, but harmful, both for the man seeking to do so and for all those who cross his path (*Anab.* 7.1.6). Remarkably, faced with a worldview completely antithetical to his own, Alexander commends, rather than rejects, the Gymnosophists’ argument (*Anab.* 7.2.1). However, as Arrian proceeds to make clear, the Gymnosophists, like Diogenes and Dandamis, have, in the end, precious little effect on the king; for all his admiration for these philosophers and their views, Alexander remains, in the historian’s words, “terribly controlled by his love for glory” (*Anab.* 7.2.2: ἐκ δόξης...δεινῶς ἐκρατεῖτο). What emerges from this digression, then, is a surprisingly tragic portrait of Alexander, a portrait of a king who, from a Stoic perspective, may be ruler of the world, but cannot rule himself.⁶²

When we return to the death of Hephaestion, we find Arrian reinforcing this tragic characterization of Alexander, and doing so, at least in part, by means of the Achilles motif. To begin with, by comparing Alexander to Achilles, a character who, in his stubborn pursuit of honor, becomes an agent not only of Patroclus’ death, but of his own, Arrian, I suggest, hints at Alexander’s own part in both his and Hephaestion’s deaths. With the digression at the beginning of *Anabasis* 7, Arrian depicts Alexander as choosing, or, more precisely, reaffirming his choice

⁶⁰ Bosworth 2007: 451-452 suggests that Arrian, probably writing around the time of Hadrian’s accession, may also have been seeking, via these anecdotes, to register his support for the emperor’s new foreign policy of consolidation in place of conquest and expansion.

⁶¹ Arrian registers his approval with the comment ἐπαινῶ τοὺς σοφιστὰς τῶν Ἰνδῶν, “I commend the sophists of the Indians” (*Anab.* 7.1.5).

⁶² This portrait of Alexander resonates with that seen in the “Great Digression,” on which see Section III below.

of, a life of conquest over a life of quietism. By making this choice—a sort of updated version of the choice of Achilles—Alexander paves the way, albeit indirectly, first to Hephaestion’s, then to his own, premature death in the context of a foreign campaign. Yet, in addition to hinting at Alexander’s tragic part in his and his best friend’s deaths, the Achilles motif also underscores the king’s tragic failure in terms of εὐδαιμονία, “happiness,” and the philosophical wellbeing associated with it. Shortly after the present passage, while describing the king’s ill-omened return to Babylon, Arrian makes the surprising claim that Alexander may have been fortunate in meeting an early death (*Anab.* 7.16.7). The historian’s rationale in making this claim is, in part, that his subject thereby avoided the sort of “human misfortune” (ξυμφορὰν ἀνθρωπίνην) that can, as Solon famously warned Croesus,⁶³ negate a man’s former εὐδαιμονία (*Anab.* 7.16.7). In the very next sentence, however, Arrian concedes that Alexander, even in dying young, had not completely avoided such misfortune:

ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἢ Ἡφαιστίωνος τελευτῇ οὐ μικρὰ ξυμφορὰ γεγένητο, ἧς καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος προαπελθεῖν ἂν δοκεῖ μοι ἐθελῆσαι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῶν πειραθῆναι, οὐ μείον ἢ καὶ Ἀχιλλεῖα δοκῶ ἂν ἐλέσθαι προαποθανεῖν Πατρόκλου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῷ τιμωρὸν γενέσθαι.

For in fact the death of Hephaestion had proved no small misfortune (ξυμφορὰ) for Alexander himself, and I think that Alexander himself would have wished to depart from life before this rather than experience it while he was alive, no less than I think Achilles, too, would have chosen to die before Patroclus rather than become the avenger of his death. (*Anab.* 7.16.8)

With the death of his alter ego, Alexander, like Achilles, suffers a misfortune that, in Arrian’s view, comes close to reducing his εὐδαιμονία to ruins; for the Macedonian king, as for his Homeric model, life without his alter ego is practically a fate worse than death.

At the same time, Alexander’s failure in terms of εὐδαιμονία goes beyond the misfortune he suffers with his best friend’s death. In the *Iliad*, Achilles arguably grows as a character

⁶³ Arrian here alludes to Herodotus’ famous account of Solon’s meeting with Croesus (Hdt. 1.30-33).

through the misfortunes he endures in the course of the poem. By the time Achilles meets Priam in *Iliad* 24, his former passion, the heroic pursuit of *kleos*, holds little or no meaning for him any longer. As Achilles tells Priam: οὐδέ νυ τόν γε | γηράσκοντα κομίζω, ἐπεὶ μάλα τηλόθι πάτρης | ἦμαι ἐνὶ Τροίῃ, σέ τε κήδων ἠδὲ σὰ τέκνα, “Nor do I now take care of him [Peleus] as he gets old, since I sit here at Troy, very far from my fatherland, causing trouble (*kēdōn*) to you and your children” (*Il.* 24.540-542). Through the tragedy of Patroclus’ death, Achilles comes to see his actions at Troy as not so much glorious as pointless: his passion for *kleos* has been replaced by a recognition of its cost, both to his friends and his enemies.⁶⁴ In the *Anabasis*, however, this sort of realization never comes for Alexander. Indeed, as soon as his grief for Hephaestion has passed, the conqueror returns immediately to conquest, wiping out the Cossaeon tribe during a surprise winter campaign (*Anab* 7.15.1-3). Though Arrian, admittedly, refrains from rendering an explicit verdict on the Cossaeon episode,⁶⁵ this verdict is suggested by the words he approvingly puts in the Gymnosophists’ mouth at the beginning of *Anabasis* 7:

βασιλεῦ Ἀλέξανδρε, ἄνθρωπος μὲν ἕκαστος τοσόνδε τῆς γῆς κατέχει ὅσον περ τοῦτο ἔστιν ἐφ’ ὅτῳ βεβήκαμεν· σὺ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ὢν παραπλήσιος τοῖς ἄλλοις, πλήν γε δὴ ὅτι πολυπράγμων καὶ ἀτάσθαλος, ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκειᾶς τοσαύτην γῆν ἐπεξέερχη πράγματα ἔχων τε καὶ παρέχων ἄλλοις.

King Alexander, each man possesses only so much earth as that upon which we stand; but you, though you are a human being like the rest of us (except that you are meddlesome and presumptuous), are traversing so much land away from your own, causing troubles (*pragmata*) to yourself and others. (*Anab.* 7.1.6)

⁶⁴ Cf. Macleod 1982: 134, who notes that Homer’s use of the verb ἦμαι, “to sit,” conveys “how detached Achilles is from his role as the warrior.”

⁶⁵ Cf. Burliga 2013: 110, n. 27, who also interprets Arrian’s verdict on the Cossaeon campaign as negative. On Burliga’s view, Arrian describes the campaign as a “merciless extermination,” and thus an event that highlights Alexander’s loss of self-control. While I agree that this passage may be meant to highlight Alexander’s loss of self-control, Burliga’s characterization of the campaign as a “merciless extermination” strikes me as a slight misreading of Arrian’s account. Throughout this passage, Arrian gives no hint that the Cossaeon campaign was particularly savage (*Anab.* 7.15.1-3; *contra* Plut. *Alex.* 72.4), and elsewhere he even describes it as something of a civilizing mission (*Ind.* 40.6-8).

Here, in a passage that subtly echoes Achilles' speech to Priam quoted above, Arrian, in his role as Stoic philosopher, hints at the cost, even pointlessness, of Alexander's devotion to conquest: in his pursuit of ever-greater glory and power, Alexander, like Achilles, consigns himself to a life of both perpetual absence from home and never-ending troubles for himself and others. Yet, where Achilles harbors doubts about this way of life, at least by poem's end, Alexander remains unwaveringly committed to it right up to the end of his life. Ultimately, then, Alexander's tragedy, as Arrian conceives it, is that, by setting conquest as the guiding star of his life, the king chooses a path that appears to lead to εὐδαιμονία, but actually leads in a different, distinctly un-Stoic, direction.

III. The Murder of Cleitus (*Anab.* 4.9.1-6)

[1] Καὶ ἐγὼ Κλεῖτον μὲν τῆς ὕβρεως τῆς ἐς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν αὐτοῦ μεγαλωστὶ μέμφομαι· Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ τῆς συμφορᾶς οἰκτεῖρω, ὅτι δυοῖν κακοῖν ἐν τῷ τότε ἠττημένον ἐπέδειξεν αὐτόν, ὅφ' ὅτων δὴ καὶ τοῦ ἐτέρου οὐκ ἐπέοικεν ἄνδρα σωφρονοῦντα ἐξητᾶσθαι, ὀργῆς τε καὶ παροινίας. [2] ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε αὖ ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὅτι παραυτίκα ἔγνω σχέτλιον ἔργον ἐργασάμενος. καὶ λέγουσιν εἰσὶν οἱ [τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου] ὅτι ἐρείσας τὴν σάρισσαν πρὸς τὸν τοῖχον ἐπιπίπτειν ἐγνώκει αὐτῆ, ὡς οὐ καλὸν αὐτῷ ζῆν ἀποκτείναντι φίλον αὐτοῦ ἐν οἴνῳ. [3] οἱ πολλοὶ δὲ ξυγγραφεῖς τοῦτο μὲν οὐ λέγουσιν, ἀπελθόντα δὲ ἐς τὴν εὐνὴν κεῖσθαι ὀδυρόμενον, αὐτόν τε τὸν Κλεῖτον ὀνομαστὶ ἀνακαλοῦντα καὶ τὴν Κλεῖτου μὲν ἀδελφὴν, αὐτόν δὲ ἀναθρεψαμένην, Λανίκην τὴν Δρωπίδου παῖδα, ὡς καλὰ ἄρα αὐτῆ τροφεῖα ἀποτετικῶς εἶη ἀνδρωθεῖς, [4] ἢ γὰρ τοὺς μὲν παῖδας τοὺς ἑαυτῆς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ μαχομένους ἐπέιδεν ἀποθανόντας, τὸν ἀδελφὸν δὲ αὐτῆς αὐτὸς αὐτοχειρίᾳ ἔκτεινε· φονέα τε τῶν φίλων οὐ διαλείπειν αὐτὸν ἀνακαλοῦντα, ἄσιτόν τε καὶ ἄποτον καρτερεῖν ἔστε ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, οὐδὲ τινα ἄλλην θεραπείαν θεραπεῦσαι τὸ σῶμα. [5] Καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τῶν μάντεων τινες μῆνιν ἐκ Διονύσου ἦδον, ὅτι ἡ θυσία ἐξελείφθη Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἢ τοῦ Διονύσου. καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος μόγις πρὸς τῶν ἐταίρων πεισθεὶς σίτου τε ἤψατο καὶ τὸ σῶμα κακῶς ἐθεράπευσε· καὶ τῷ Διονύσῳ τὴν θυσίαν ἀπέδωκεν, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ αὐτῷ ἄκοντι ἦν ἐς μῆνιν τοῦ θεοῦ μᾶλλον τι ἢ τὴν αὐτοῦ κακότητα ἀναφέρεσθαι τὴν ξυμφορὰν. [6] ταῦτα μεγαλωστὶ ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, τὸ μῆτε ἀπαυθαδιάσασθαι ἐπὶ κακῷ, μῆτε προστάτην τε καὶ ξυνήγορον κακίονα ἔτι γενέσθαι τοῦ ἀμαρτηθέντος, ἀλλὰ ξυμφῆσαι γὰρ ἐπταικέναι ἄνθρωπὸν γε ὄντα.

[1] And I greatly blame Cleitus for his insolence toward his own king, but I pity Alexander for his misfortune, because he showed himself in that moment conquered by two evils, by even one of which it is not fitting for a man of self-control to be conquered: anger and drunkenness. [2] But I praise Alexander's subsequent behavior, because he immediately recognized that he had performed a savage deed. Some also say that he, having leaned his *sarissa* against the wall,

resolved to fall upon it, on the grounds that it was not noble for him to live after having killed his own friend in his cups. [3] Most historians, however, do not say this, but rather that he went off to his bed and lay there weeping, calling on both Cleitus himself and Cleitus' sister, Lanice, the daughter of Dropides, the woman who had nursed him, on the grounds that he had indeed paid her fine nurturing back now that he had become a man, [4] she who had seen her own sons killed fighting on his behalf, while her own brother he himself killed with his own hand; and he did not cease from calling himself the murderer of his friends, and for three days he persisted without food or drink, nor did he take any other care of his person. [5] And in these circumstances some of the seers began to sing the wrath from Dionysus, because the sacrifice of Dionysus had been omitted by Alexander, and Alexander, after having been barely persuaded by his companions, touched food and took poor care of his own person. To Dionysus, too, he paid sacrifice, since he was not at all averse to the misfortune being attributed somewhat to the wrath of the divinity rather than his own wickedness. [6] For these reasons I greatly praise Alexander, namely that he neither willfully persisted in his wickedness nor became still more wicked by acting as a defender and advocate of his crime, but in fact admitted that he, as a human being, had erred.

Within the so-called "Great Digression" (*Anab.* 4.7.4-14.4),⁶⁶ an excursus on Alexander's supposed moral decline following his conquest of Persia, Arrian recounts the king's notorious—and Homerically resonant—murder of Cleitus, a senior Macedonian general,⁶⁷ in the context of a drunken banquet.⁶⁸ During this banquet, when certain courtiers claim that Alexander has surpassed the deeds of Hercules and the Dioscuri, Cleitus, a staunch traditionalist, denounces this claim as sacrilegious flattery. Shortly thereafter, when the same courtiers extol Alexander's accomplishments at the expense of Philip's, Cleitus, as a representative of the Macedonian Old Guard, rises to the previous king's defense, praising the deeds of the father over those of the son. Faced with this drunken abuse, Alexander manages, for a time, to contain his growing anger. However, when Cleitus proceeds to taunt him with having saved his life at the battle of the

⁶⁶ On the Great Digression, see Brunt 1976: 532-544, Stadter 1980: 103-110, and Bosworth 1995: 45-101. I borrow the term from Bosworth 1995: 45-51.

⁶⁷ For Cleitus' life and career, see Berve 1926: 2.206-208 (no. 427), Carney 1981, and Heckel 1992: 34-37 and 2006: 86-88.

⁶⁸ While Arrian specifies neither the precise time nor location of the banquet, Curtius (8.1.19-22) reports that it took place in the Sogdian city of Maracanda (modern Samarkand) during the second year of the Bactrian-Sogdian campaign (328 B.C.).

Granicus, the king reaches breaking point. Calling on the Hypaspists to come to his aid but receiving no response, Alexander seizes a weapon from one of them and, either immediately or shortly thereafter, runs Cleitus through with it. In the end, for Alexander, as for the heroes of Greek tragedy, suffering follows swiftly upon recognition. Realizing what he has done, Alexander reacts with behavior reminiscent of Homer's Achilles, secluding himself from his army (*Anab.* 4.9.3; cf. *Il.* 1-16 *passim*), blaming himself for his companion's death (*Anab.* 4.9.3-4; cf. *Il.* 18.79-84, 99-106), and possibly even contemplating suicide for his role in this tragedy (*Anab.* 4.9.2; cf. *Il.* 18.32-34).⁶⁹ While scholars have traditionally, and rightly, stressed the historical basis of Alexander's Achillean behavior in this episode,⁷⁰ this behavior can, and should, be understood in literary terms as well. During Alexander's seclusion in the wake of the murder, Arrian remarks that certain seers, recalling the king's forgotten sacrifice to the god prior to the fatal banquet, μῆνιν ἐκ Διονύσου ἤδον, "began to sing the wrath from Dionysus" (*Anab.* 4.9.5)—a phrase that, as several scholars have noted, clearly alludes to the first line of the *Iliad*, μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος, "Sing, goddess, the rage of Peleus' son Achilles" (*Il.* 1.1).⁷¹ With this Homeric allusion, Arrian confers on Alexander's Achillean behavior a distinctly literary quality. By calling to mind this Homeric verse in the context of Cleitus' murder, the historian draws a parallel not only between Achilles' wrath and that of Dionysus, but also, I suggest, between Achilles' wrath and that of Alexander,⁷² who becomes, in effect, the human

⁶⁹ Homer hints at the possibility of Achilles' suicide with his description of Antilochus holding Achilles' hands for fear the best of the Achaeans may cut his throat in response to the news of Patroclus' death (*Il.* 18.33-34). Moreover, as Celsiana Warwick reminds me, Achilles' decision to take vengeance on Hector is, in a sense, a suicidal one, inasmuch as he knows that his death will come shortly after the Trojan's (e.g., *Il.* 18.95-99).

⁷⁰ Lane Fox 1973: 312-313 and Carney 2000a: 278-281; cf. Radet 1931: 250.

⁷¹ Bosworth 1995: 240; Carney 2000a: 279; and Romm 2010: 164 n. 4.9.5.

⁷² Cf. Carney 2000a: 279.

agent of Dionysus' wrath with his drunken killing of Cleitus. Thus, if Alexander's wrath toward Cleitus is meant to be seen as parallel to Achilles' famous wrath in the *Iliad*, we may profitably ask what Arrian means by this deployment of the Achilles motif.

A natural starting point for answering this question is the preamble to Arrian's Great Digression, the context, as mentioned above, for the historian's account of the murder of Cleitus. Following his disapproving report of Alexander's mutilation of Bessus (*Anab.* 4.7.3-4), the Bactrian pretender to the Achaemenid throne, as well as his adoption of certain aspects of Persian and Median dress (*Anab.* 4.7.4), Arrian begins a heavily Stoic digression aimed at assessing his subject from a moral perspective:⁷³

καὶ τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου μεγάλα πράγματα ἐς τεκμηρίωσιν τίθεμαι ὡς οὔτε τὸ σῶμα ὄτω εἶη καρτερόν, οὔτε ὅστις γένει ἐπιφανής, οὔτε κατὰ πόλεμον εἰ δὴ τις διευτυχοίη ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὐδὲ εἰ τὴν Λιβύην τις πρὸς τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, καθάπερ οὖν ἐπενόει ἐκεῖνος, ἐκπεριπλεύσας κατάσχοι, οὐδὲ εἰ τὴν Εὐρώπην ἐπὶ τῇ Ἀσίᾳ τε καὶ Λιβύῃ τρίτην, τούτων πάντων οὐδέν τι ὄφελος ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνθρώπου, εἰ μὴ σωφρονεῖν ἐν ταύτῳ ὑπάρχοι τούτῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ τὰ μεγάλα, ὡς δοκεῖ, πράγματα πράξαντι.

And I consider Alexander's great deeds as proof that neither for the man who is physically strong, nor for the man who is distinguished by birth, nor indeed if anyone should be still more continually fortunate in war than Alexander—and not even if anyone should sail around and occupy Libya in addition to Asia, as he was in fact contemplating, nor if anyone should add Europe as a third part to Asia and Libya—not a single one of all these things is a benefit to a man's happiness, unless that man, who has accomplished great deeds, as it seems, should, at the same time, possess self-control (σωφροσύνη). (*Anab.* 4.7.5)

With this preamble, Arrian makes clear that the Great Digression's central theme will be σωφροσύνη, "self-control," a precondition of happiness from a Stoic perspective,⁷⁴ and its central question, whether Alexander, in his newfound position of power, will prove capable of

⁷³ On the Stoic nature of this passage, see Brunt 1977: 44; Bosworth 1995: 50-51; and Burliga 2013: 96-97.

⁷⁴ For the Stoics, as Bosworth 1995: 50 notes, "happiness depends upon what is under our control, correct use of external impressions." Cf. Burliga 2013: 96-97.

σωφροσύνη, whether, that is, “the ruler of Asia [will] rule himself...”⁷⁵ Throughout the following digression, and each of the episodes contained therein, the historian renders a consistent verdict on this question: despite his many virtues, Alexander repeatedly shows himself incapable of σωφροσύνη, killing a friend at a drunken banquet in the Cleitus episode (*Anab.* 4.8.1-9.8), entertaining the hubristic notion of forced obeisance in the *proskynesis* episode (*Anab.* 4.9.9-12.6), and facing a conspiracy against his life over his supposedly tyrannical behavior in the Conspiracy of the Pages episode (*Anab.* 4.12.7-14.3). With the present passage, the Cleitus episode, Arrian, of course, renders this verdict on Alexander’s σωφροσύνη explicitly, commenting that Alexander, by succumbing to the vices of anger and drunkenness, failed to behave in a way befitting an ἄνδρα σωφρονοῦντα, “a man of self-control” (*Anab.* 4.9.1).⁷⁶ What I argue in this section, however, is that the historian also renders this verdict implicitly, and does so through the Achilles motif, the comparison, in this case, between Alexander’s wrath and that of Achilles.

On a basic level, Arrian’s Homeric comparison serves to highlight the scale of Alexander’s anger—and, by extension, lack of Stoic self-control—during the Cleitus episode. Central to Arrian’s Homeric comparison, once again, is the word μῆνις (*Anab.* 4.9.5), the same word famously used to describe Achilles’ anger in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.1, 9.517, 19.35, 19.75). Of the Greek terms for anger, μῆνις ranks among the strongest, connoting, in Schein’s words, “a vengeful anger with deadly consequences,”⁷⁷ an anger that, as W. V Harris puts it, revolves

⁷⁵ Stadter 1980: 83.

⁷⁶ While Arrian calls into question Alexander’s general self-control during the Great Digression, he continues to vouch for the king’s *sexual* self-control (*Anab.* 4.19.5-6, 20.4; 7.28.2).

⁷⁷ Schein 1984: 91.

around “perceived major offenses” and “is normally lasting.”⁷⁸ For Arrian to compare Alexander’s anger to Achillean μῆνις, then, is not only to underscore the extreme nature of the king’s anger; it is also, given the historian’s previously mentioned antithesis between anger and σωφροσύνη (*Anab.* 4.9.1), to emphasize the king’s correspondingly profound lack of self-control.

With this Homeric comparison, Arrian also hints at Alexander’s notorious transgression of the boundary between mortal and immortal, a transgression that represents a further sign of his deficiency in σωφροσύνη. Beyond its general sense of serious and lasting anger, μῆνις, as scholars have long recognized, connotes specifically divine anger,⁷⁹ whether the anger of an actual god or goddess, or, as in the famous case of Achilles,⁸⁰ that of a hero with especially close ties to the gods.⁸¹ By comparing Alexander’s anger to the μῆνις of Achilles, then, Arrian presents the Macedonian king not only in an Achillean light, but also, I would argue, in a quasi-divine light. Like Achilles, Alexander here exhibits an anger that, symbolically, renders him godlike, both terrifying and all-powerful. Yet, by exhibiting this sort of anger, by playing the wrathful god to Cleitus’ provoking mortal, Alexander crosses the traditional dividing line between the human and the divine. While the sophist Anaxarchus subsequently defends Alexander’s formal attempt to cross this line in the *proskynesis* episode (*Anab.* 4.10.6-7), Callisthenes, with Arrian’s explicit approval (*Anab.* 4.10.1), denounces this attempt (*Anab.* 4.11.2-9). In Callisthenes’ view, as in Arrian’s, the boundary between mortal and immortal is, and forever will be, absolute. For

⁷⁸ Harris 2001: 51.

⁷⁹ Considine 1966 and Watkins 1977.

⁸⁰ As scholars have noted (e.g., Schein 1984: 91; King 1987: 31; Carney 2000a: 279, n. 45), Achilles is the only mortal to be associated with the word μῆνις in the *Iliad*; all other instances of the word are associated with the gods.

⁸¹ Considine 1966: 20: “Achilles was a hero set apart from men and related to the gods in three ways—divine parentage, relation to Zeus, attitude to death.”

Alexander to try to breach this boundary, therefore, represents hubris of the highest order, a failure to realize that, for all his power, he remains every bit as mortal as the next man.

The central theme of the Cleitus episode—and the theme I have argued the Homeric comparison is meant to reinforce—is Alexander’s deficiency in the key Stoic trait of σωφροσύνη. Here, as in the Great Digression as a whole, Arrian shows that his subject, the newfound ruler of the Persian Empire, cannot rule himself. Yet, Arrian’s verdict on Alexander’s behavior in the Cleitus episode is far from purely negative. Indeed, his verdict is remarkably, almost perversely, positive. In Arrian’s view, for all that the Cleitus episode shows Alexander’s lack of self-control, it also shows his capacity to admit and repent of a mistake:

ταῦτα μεγαλωστὶ ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, τὸ μήτε ἀπαυθαδιάσασθαι ἐπὶ κακῶ, μήτε προστάτην τε καὶ ξυνήγορον κακίονα ἔτι γενέσθαι τοῦ ἀμαρτηθέντος, ἀλλὰ ξυμφῆσαι γὰρ ἐπταικέναι ἄνθρωπὸν γε ὄντα.

For these reasons I greatly praise Alexander, namely that he neither willfully persisted in his wickedness nor became still more wicked by acting as a defender and advocate of his crime, but in fact admitted that he, as a human being, had erred. (*Anab.* 4.9.6)

Here, then, Arrian’s Homeric comparison tells only half the story. By casting Alexander in the role of Achilles, the hero of μῆνις, Arrian suggests that his subject lacks the necessary self-control for true happiness;⁸² yet, by simultaneously drawing attention to the Macedonian king’s capacity for repentance—another trait possibly valued by the Stoics⁸³—the historian makes clear that Stoic happiness may not be completely out of his subject’s reach after all.

⁸² Arrian’s preamble to the Great Digression makes the connection between σωφροσύνη and εὐδαιμονία, “happiness,” explicit: τούτων πάντων οὐδέν τι ὄφελος ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνθρώπου, εἰ μὴ σωφρονεῖν ἐν ταῦτῳ ὑπάρχει τούτῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ τὰ μεγάλα, ὡς δοκεῖ, πράγματα πράξαντι, “not a single one of all these things is a benefit to a man’s happiness, unless that man, who has accomplished great deeds, as it seems, should, at the same time, possess self-control” (*Anab.* 4.7.5).

⁸³ The Stoic view of repentance is a subject of debate among scholars. On the one hand, Burliga 2013: 97 believes that repentance was in fact a virtue for the Stoics, connecting it to another Stoic virtue, φιλανθρωπία, “humaneness” or “kindliness”; on the other, Brunt 1977: 38 and Bosworth 1995: 62 both question this view, noting that, of the Stoics whose views we are aware, most seem to regard repentance as a mark of baseness and foolishness, the exception being Seneca (*Ep.* 28.9, 53.8).

IV. The Mutiny at the Hyphasis (Anab. 5.28)

[1] Τοιαῦτα εἰπόντος τοῦ Κοίνου θόρυβον γενέσθαι ἐκ τῶν παρόντων ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις· πολλοῖς δὲ δὴ καὶ δάκρυα προχυθέντα ἔτι μᾶλλον δηλῶσαι τό τε ἀκούσιον τῆς γνώμης ἐς τοὺς πρόσω κινδύνους καὶ τὸ καθ' ἡδονὴν σφισιν εἶναι τὴν ἀποχώρησιν. Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τότε μὲν ἀχθесθεις τοῦ τε Κοίνου τῆ παρρησία καὶ τῷ ὄκνῳ τῶν ἄλλων ἡγεμόνων διέλυσε τὸν ζύλλογον· [2] ἐς δὲ τὴν ὑστεραίαν ξυγκαλέσας αὐθις ξὺν ὀργῇ τοὺς αὐτοὺς αὐτὸς μὲν ἰέναι ἔφη τοῦ πρόσω, βιάσεσθαι δὲ οὐδένα ἄκοντα Μακεδόνων ξυνέπεσθαι· ἔξειν γὰρ τοὺς ἀκολουθήσοντας τῷ βασιλεῖ σφῶν ἐκόντας· τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε ἐθέλουσιν ὑπάρχειν ἀπιέναι καὶ ἐξαγγέλλειν τοῖς οἰκείοις, ὅτι τὸν βασιλέα σφῶν ἐν μέσοις τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐπανήκουσιν ἀπολιπόντες. [3] ταῦτα εἰπόντα ἀπελθεῖν ἐς τὴν σκηνὴν μηδέ τινα τῶν ἐταίρων προσέσθαι αὐτῆς τε ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἐς τὴν τρίτην ἔτι ἀπ' ἐκείνης, ὑπομένοντα, εἰ δὴ τις τροπὴ ταῖς γνώμαις τῶν Μακεδόνων τε καὶ ξυμμάχων, οἷα δὴ ἐν ὄγλῳ στρατιωτῶν τὰ πολλὰ φιλεῖ γίνεσθαι, ἐμπεσοῦσα εὐπειθεστέρους παρέξει αὐτούς. [4] ὡς δὲ σιγὴ αὖ πολλὴ <ἦν> ἀνὰ τὸ στρατόπεδον καὶ ἀχθόμενοι μὲν τῇ ὀργῇ αὐτοῦ δῆλοι ἦσαν, οὐ μὴν μεταβαλλόμενοι γε ὑπ' αὐτῆς, ἐνταῦθα δὴ λέγει Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Λάγου, ὅτι ἐπὶ τῇ διαβάσει οὐδὲν μείον ἐθύετο, θυομένῳ δὲ οὐκ ἐγίγνετο αὐτῷ τὰ ἱερά. [5] τότε δὴ τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους τε τῶν ἐταίρων καὶ τοὺς μάλιστα ἐπιτηδείους αὐτῷ συναγαγὼν, ὡς πάντα ἐς τὴν ὀπίσω ἀναχώρησιν αὐτῷ ἔφερον, ἐκφαίνει ἐς τὴν στρατιάν, ὅτι ἔγνωσται ὀπίσω ἀποστρέφειν.

[1] When Coenus had said such things, a cheer arose at his words from those present. And indeed the tears shed by many showed still more clearly their lack of resolve for further dangers and that retreat was to their liking. Vexed both by Coenus' freedom of speech and the hesitation of the other commanders, Alexander then dissolved the assembly. [2] On the next day, when he had angrily summoned the same men again, he said that he himself would go on, and that he would compel no Macedonian to follow him against his will. For he would have those who were following their king willingly. It was possible for those who wished to go back home to do so and to proclaim to their kinsmen that they had returned after having left their king in the midst of his enemies. [3] Saying these things, he went back to his tent and did not admit any of his companions on that day or till the third day after that one, waiting to see if a change, such as is often wont to occur in a mass of soldiers, would befall the minds of the Macedonians and allies and make them more amenable to persuasion. [4] But when there was a great silence again throughout the camp and they were clearly annoyed by his anger, not moved by it, then Ptolemy the son of Lagus says that he nonetheless had sacrifices performed for the crossing, but that the sacrifices proved unfavorable for him when he had them performed. [5] Then having brought together the eldest of the Companions and his very closest friends, he revealed to the army that, since everything was pointing, in his view, toward withdrawal, it had been decided to turn back.

When Alexander and his army reach the Hyphasis, the second-to-last river of the Punjab, Arrian, in common with all of the extant Alexander historians,⁸⁴ gives an account of the famous

⁸⁴ Curt. 9.2.12-13.19; Diod. 17.94.5; Just. 12.8.10-17; and Plut. *Alex.* 62.

Macedonian mutiny.⁸⁵ Faced with the prospect of a further campaign beyond the Hyphasis, the Macedonians, worn out from their previous campaigns, begin to voice their resistance to pressing on. Hearing of the army's disaffection, Alexander convenes a meeting of his officers and delivers a speech aimed at stirring his men to further conquest.⁸⁶ For the first time, however, Alexander's words fall on deaf ears. Following a period of tense silence, Coenus, a distinguished Macedonian general,⁸⁷ delivers a speech on behalf of the Macedonian rank and file in which he urges the king to abandon, at least temporarily, his plans for further conquest. Frustrated by Coenus' proposal, Alexander seeks in vain, as described in this passage, to win his officers over once more, first with another speech and second, and more importantly for present purposes, with another withdrawal to his tent in the manner of Achilles (*Anab.* 5.28.3). Traditionally, scholars have tended to view Alexander's Achillean withdrawal at the Hyphasis as purely historical in nature,⁸⁸ as the king's self-consciously Homeric way of shaming his Macedonians into following him further. While this way of reading Alexander's Achillean act is, on balance, compelling, there is, I believe, another way of reading it. When viewed from a literary, rather than historical, perspective, Alexander's Achillean withdrawal to his tent forms part of a broader network of Homeric allusions in Arrian's account of the Macedonian mutiny, a network of allusions that, as

⁸⁵ I have chosen to refer to this episode as a "mutiny" due to the conventionality of the term. I am aware, however, that a number of scholars, including Holt 1982: 47-49, Hammond 1983: 218-220, Carney 1996: 33-37, Spann 1999, and Heckel 2003, have questioned the term's suitability for describing what took place at the Hyphasis.

⁸⁶ Counter-intuitively, both Spann 1999 and Heckel 2003 have argued that Alexander never actually wanted to advance beyond the Hyphasis, and, indeed, purposefully triggered the mutiny as a way of saving face for his own decision to turn back at the Hyphasis. Though ingenious, this argument, as Anson 2015 argues, is ultimately unconvincing.

⁸⁷ For Coenus' life and career, see Berve 1926: 2.215-218 (no. 439); Heckel 1992: 58-64 and 2006: 91-93.

⁸⁸ Particularly Carney 2000a: 281-283, but also Radet 1931: 304; Tarn 1948: 1.100; Lane Fox 1973:370; Hamilton 1973: 118; Renault 1975: 201-202; Bosworth 1988a: 133; O'Brien 1992: 168; and Worthington 2004: 216; *contra* Maitland 2015: 14-16.

I will argue in this section, serves to highlight the complexity of Alexander’s leadership during this episode.

Within Arrian’s account of the mutiny at the Hyphasis, several additional Homeric allusions cluster around two passages: Alexander’s first speech to the Macedonian officers (*Anab.* 5.25.3-26), and Coenus’ speech on behalf of the Macedonian rank and file (*Anab.* 5.27.2-9).⁸⁹ With these allusions, Arrian consistently aims, as will be seen below, to cast Alexander in the role of Achilles. However, rather than casting Alexander in the role of the same Achilles in both passages, Arrian, I argue, aims to cast him in the role of a different Achilles in each: in Alexander’s speech, a pre-Iliadic Achilles, a version of the hero whose heady idealism remains firmly intact; and in Coenus’ speech, the Achilles of *Iliad* 16.⁹⁰

In Alexander’s speech, Arrian depicts the king in the mold of the pre-Iliadic Achilles through a series of three Homeric allusions. First, as Bosworth has noted, Alexander’s rhetorical question regarding the relative merits of campaigning in Asia versus remaining in Macedonia clearly recalls the famous choice of Achilles (*Il.* 9.410-416), a choice made, of course, well before the *Iliad* begins:⁹¹ ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς τί ἂν μέγα καὶ καλὸν κατεπέπρακτο, εἰ ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ καθήμενοι ἰκανὸν ἐποιούμεθα ἀπόνως τὴν οἰκείαν διασώζειν...; “For in fact what great and fine thing would we ourselves have achieved, if we, while sitting in Macedonia, had

⁸⁹ Bosworth 1988b: 123-134 has convincingly argued that both of these speeches represent “purely fictitious composition” on Arrian’s part (133), an argument which, if correct, makes the present suggestion regarding Homeric allusions more credible.

⁹⁰ Professor Morgan wonders whether an ancient reader would really have conceived of Alexander’s Achillean roles in the way I am proposing. While I suspect that some readers would have read Arrian’s allusions in a “general” way (i.e., Alexander plays the role of a generic Achilles), I believe that, given Homer’s central place in Greek education (Marrou 1982: 162-163, 255-257), certain readers—particularly highly educated readers—would have read these allusions in the “specific” way I argue for here (i.e., Alexander plays the role of a specific Achilles, the Achilles, that is, of a particular passage or book). My thanks to Celsiana Warwick for discussing this complex issue with me and helping to clarify my thinking on it.

⁹¹ Bosworth 1995: 350 calls this statement “a personal variation on the choice of Achilles.”

considered it sufficient to preserve our homeland without labor...?” (*Anab.* 5.26.6). Second, Alexander’s celebrated claim, καὶ ζῆν τε ζῶν ἀρετῇ ἢ δὸ καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν κλέος ἀθάνατον ὑπολειπομένους, “And it is sweet to live with virtue and to die leaving behind undying fame” (*Anab.* 5.26.4), further aligns the king with the pre-Iliadic Achilles. Whereas the Achilles of the *Iliad* spends much of the poem questioning the value of κλέος, and the heroic code of which it is a central pillar, the pre-Iliadic Achilles remains a staunch proponent, based on the few flashbacks provided in the poem,⁹² of his society’s heroic ideal. Finally, Alexander’s description of his own leadership deliberately echoes, I suggest, Achilles’ own view, clearly worked out before the *Iliad* begins, of what constitutes good leadership: νῦν δὲ κοινοὶ μὲν ἡμῖν οἱ πόνοι, ἴσον δὲ μέτεστι τῶν κινδύνων, τὰ δὲ ἄθλα ἐν μέσῳ κεῖται ζύμπασιν. “But, as it is, the labors are common to us all, and the dangers are likewise shared, and the rewards lie available for everyone” (*Anab.* 5.26.7). With this statement, Alexander presents himself, in effect, as possessing the two traits that Achilles suggests, via his repeated criticisms of Agamemnon (*Il.* 1.122-129, 163-168, 9.328-333), are essential to a good leader—regularly sharing in the toils of his soldiers, and fairly sharing out the prizes arising from these toils.

When we turn to Coenus’ speech, we find Arrian not only casting Alexander in the role of a different Achilles, but doing so by different means. In this speech, as Bosworth has noted, Arrian appears to cast Coenus in a Homeric role of his own: the Patroclus of *Iliad* 16, the Patroclus who seeks to persuade his uniquely powerful friend and leader to relent in his selfish desire and take pity, at long last, on his hard-pressed companions⁹³ To begin with, in making this

⁹² E.g., *Il.* 1.149-171, 9.323-333, 21.74-82.

⁹³ Bosworth 1995: 354.

speech, Coenus, like Patroclus, stands upon the threshold of death.⁹⁴ Whereas Homer comments on Patroclus' impending death directly following the hero's speech (*Il.* 16.46-47), Arrian, alone of the surviving Alexander historians besides Curtius (9.3.20), notes Coenus' actual death shortly after the mutiny at the Hyphasis (*Anab.* 6.2.1).⁹⁵ Moreover, and more specifically, Coenus' speech contains a suggestive verbal parallel to Patroclus' speech at the beginning of *Iliad* 16. Much as Patroclus concludes his speech to Achilles by saying ῥεῖα δέ κ' ἀκμηῆτες κεκμηότας ἄνδρας ἀυτῆ | ὤσαιμεν προτὶ ἄστρῳ νεῶν ἄπο καὶ κλισιάων, “but easily would we, unwearied, push wearied men back to the city from the ships and the huts with a battle cry” (*Il.* 16.44-45), Coenus does so by suggesting that Alexander begin a new campaign with νέοι τε ἀντὶ γερόντων καὶ ἀκμηῆτες ἀντὶ κεκμηκότων, “young men instead of old men and unwearied men instead of wearied men” (*Anab.* 5.27. 8).⁹⁶ Finally—and a point overlooked by Bosworth—both Coenus and Patroclus cite their army's debilitated state as a further reason for their addressee to relent in his selfish desire:⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Bosworth 1995: 354.

⁹⁵ According to both Arrian (*Anab.* 6.2.1) and Curtius (9.3.20), Coenus died of illness. However, some scholars, such as Badian 1961a: 20 [2012: 62], Bosworth 1996: 117, and Worthington 1999a: 44 and 1999b: 136-139, have argued that, based on the proximity of the general's death to his speech opposing Alexander's planned advance beyond the Hyphasis, the king may very well have had a hand in his subordinate's demise. While the timing of the general's death is certainly suspicious, Holt 1999: 112-113 and 2000 is right to point out that there is no actual evidence to support this supposition.

⁹⁶ Bosworth 1995: 354. While this verbal echo is, as Bosworth concedes, not certain, given its recurrence in both Homer (*Il.* 11.802) and Arrian (*Anab.* 5.18.1), not to mention other authors (e.g., Plut. *Cim.* 13.1 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.65.3), it is, I think, generally persuasive given the other parallels noted above and below.

⁹⁷ As Bosworth 1995: 352-353 notes, Coenus' description of the Macedonians' debilitated state is embellished for rhetorical effect: “This flight of fancy...implies that the Macedonian army had been literally whittled away to a skeleton force, ignoring the vast reinforcements down to 331 and the continued recruiting of mercenaries. Arrian's rhetoric is totally contrary to fact.”

αὐτοὶ τε καὶ ἡ Μακεδονικὴ στρατιὰ, τοὺς μὲν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ἀπολωλέκασιν, οἱ δὲ ἐκ τραυμάτων ἀπόμαχοι γεγεννημένοι ἄλλοι ἄλλη τῆς Ἀσίας ὑπολελειμμένοι εἰσὶν, οἱ πλείους δὲ νόσῳ ἀπολώλασιν, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκ πολλῶν ὑπολείπονται...⁹⁸

Both they [the Greek mercenaries] and the Macedonian army have lost some in battles; others, having been rendered unable to serve due to their wounds, have been left behind, some in one part of Asia, others in another; the majority have been lost from sickness, and few out of many are left... (*Anab.* 5.27.5-6)

οἱ μὲν γὰρ δὴ πάντες, ὅσοι πάρος ἦσαν ἄριστοι,
ἐν νηυσὶν κέαται βεβλημένοι οὐτάμενοί τε.
βέβληται μὲν ὁ Τυδεΐδης κρατερὸς Διομήδης,
οὐτάσται δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς δουρικλυτὸς ἠδ' Ἀγαμέμνων,
βέβληται δὲ καὶ Εὐρύπυλος κατὰ μηρὸν ὀϊστῶ.

For indeed all those who were previously the bravest lie struck and wounded among the ships. Diomedes, the mighty son of, Tydeus, has been struck, and Odysseus has been wounded as has spear-famed Agamemnon, and Eurypylos, too, has been struck by an arrow in the thigh. (*Il.* 16.23-27)

If, then, Bosworth's suggestion about Coenus' Homeric role is correct, Alexander's Homeric role is not far to seek: the Macedonian king must, by default, be meant to play the role of the Achilles of *Iliad* 16, the Achilles who, following a plea from a close companion, finally relents, at least to some extent, in his selfish pursuit of honor and glory.

Having surveyed Arrian's Homeric program in this passage, let us turn now to the program's thematic significance, first in Alexander's speech and then in Coenus'. When Alexander addresses the Macedonian officers at the Hyphasis, chief among the arguments he employs to win them over is his superior leadership. At the beginning of his speech, for example, he challenges his officers to find fault with him *qua* leader: εἰ μὲν δὴ μεμπτοὶ εἰσιν ὑμῖν οἱ μέχρι δεῦρο πονηθέντες πόνοι καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἡγούμενος, οὐδὲν ἔτι προὔργου λέγειν μοί ἐστιν, "If you should find fault with the labors you have undergone up to this time and with me myself as your

⁹⁸ Curtius (9.3.10) also mentions the Macedonian army's debilitated state, but places less emphasis on it than Arrian does.

leader, there is no point in speaking further” (*Anab.* 5.25.3). Similarly, at the end of his speech, he stakes his final appeal on his past and future generosity as a leader:

ἢ τε χώρα ὑμετέρα καὶ ὑμεῖς αὐτῆς σατραπεύετε. καὶ τῶν χρημάτων τὸ μέρος νῦν τε ἐς ὑμᾶς τὸ πολὺ ἔρχεται καὶ ἐπειδὴν ἐπεξέλθωμεν τὴν Ἀσίαν, τότε οὐκ ἐμπλήσας μὰ Δι’ ὑμᾶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπερβαλὼν ὅσα ἕκαστος ἐλπίζει ἀγαθὰ ἔσεσθαι τοὺς μὲν ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε ἐθέλοντας εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ἀποπέμψω ἢ ἐπανάξω αὐτός, τοὺς δὲ αὐτοῦ μένοντας ζηλωτοὺς τοῖς ἀπερχομένοις ποιήσω.

The country is yours and you are the satraps of it. Now the majority of the wealth comes to you; and whenever we pass through Asia, then, after having not only satisfied you, by Zeus, but even overwhelmed you with so many good things as each man hopes to have, I will send home those who wish to go home or will lead them back myself, and will make those who remain here objects of envy to those who depart. (*Anab.* 5.26.8).

On my view, it is this basic argument that Alexander’s role as the pre-Iliadic Achilles serves to reinforce. In the first place, Alexander’s Achillean role conveys the heroic nature of his leadership. For Alexander, as for Achilles, the Homeric values of κλέος and ἀρετή are as central to the way he leads his own life as to the way he leads his army. When Alexander proclaims πονούντων τοι καὶ κινδυνευόντων τὰ καλά ἔργα, καὶ ζῆν τε ζῆν ἀρετῇ ἢ δὲ καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν κλέος ἀθάνατον ὑπολειπομένου. “Fine deeds, I tell you, belong to those who labor and run risks, and it is sweet to live with valor and to die leaving behind everlasting fame” (*Anab.* 6.26.4), it is as much a personal credo as a call to collective action. Second, Alexander’s Achillean role conveys the fundamentally fair and egalitarian nature of his leadership. Like Achilles in his quarrel with Agamemnon, Alexander presents himself as a leader committed to ensuring that the campaign’s toils be shared in common and its spoils divided in an equitable fashion. By playing the part of this Achilles, therefore, Alexander presents himself as a leader of the highest caliber—a leader, in short, whom his troops should be ashamed to refuse.

In Coenus’ speech, by contrast, Alexander’s Achillean role carries with it a more negative significance. By presenting Coenus in the guise of the Patroclus of *Iliad* 16, Arrian, as

suggested above, simultaneously, if implicitly, presents Alexander in the guise of the Achilles of *Iliad* 16. How is the Macedonian king's Homeric role to be understood? On the one hand, by casting Alexander in this role, Arrian, I would argue, hints at the king's pitilessness and stubbornness—at the king's decidedly *non*-superior leadership—as the mutiny at the Hyphasis begins. Like the Achilles of *Iliad* 16, who, prior to Patroclus' speech, refuses to render aid to the hard-pressed Greeks, Alexander, prior to Coenus', refuses to heed his war-weary soldier's wishes to turn back, preferring instead to press on, no matter the cost. On the other hand, by casting Alexander in this Achillean role, Arrian also hints, I believe, at Alexander's eventual change of heart. Much as the Achilles of *Iliad* 16 decides, following Patroclus' speech, to provide aid to his fellow Greeks, so does Alexander decide, following Coenus', to take pity on his fellow Macedonians, giving the long-awaited order to begin the march home. Yet, in this similarity lies a crucial difference. Where Achilles' change of heart comes about precisely because of Patroclus' speech, and the special bond between the two heroes, Alexander's change of heart comes about only indirectly because of Coenus' speech. Indeed, as Arrian reports, Alexander remains determined to march on for several days after Coenus' speech (*Anab.* 5.28.3), and decides to relent only when, in his view, all factors, both human and divine, seem opposed to his plan (*Anab.* 5.28.4-5). Thus, through this Achillean role, Arrian suggests that Alexander, far from a truly perfect leader, as the previous speech implies, is, in reality, an all-too-human leader, a leader who, for all his noble qualities, is marred by another quality that, from a Stoic perspective, is highly problematic: an insatiable desire for glory.⁹⁹ Ultimately, while this quality

⁹⁹ From a Stoic perspective, an insatiable desire for glory is hardly conducive to happiness, as a person afflicted with this desire will tend to be controlled by, rather than in control of, said desire.

causes no further tension at the Hyphasis, it soon threatens, as Arrian shows in the following passage, to be the ruin of both Alexander and his army.

V. Alexander's *Aristeia* at the Mallian Town (*Anab.* 6.9.2-6)¹⁰⁰

ὡς δὲ ἡ ἄκρα ἐχομένη πρὸς τῶν πολεμίων καὶ πρὸ ταύτης τεταγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἀπομάχεσθαι πολλοὶ ἐφάνησαν, ἐνταῦθα δὴ οἱ μὲν ὑπορύσσοντες τὸ τεῖχος, οἱ δὲ προσθέσει ὄπη παρείκοι τῶν κλιμάκων βιάσασθαι ἐπειρῶντο ἐς τὴν ἄκραν. [3] Ἀλέξανδρος δέ, ὡς βλακεύειν αὐτῷ ἐδόκουν τῶν Μακεδόνων οἱ φέροντες τὰς κλίμακας, ἀρπάσας κλίμακα ἐνὸς τῶν φερόντων προσέθηκε τῷ τείχει αὐτὸς καὶ εἰληθείς ὑπὸ τῆ ἀσπίδι ἀνέβαινεν· ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῷ Πευκέστας ὁ τὴν ἱερὰν ἀσπίδα φέρων, ἦν ἐκ τοῦ νεῶ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς τῆς Ἰλιάδος λαβὼν ἅμα οἷ εἶχεν Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐφέρετο ἐν ταῖς μάχαις· ἐπὶ δὲ τούτῳ Λεοννάτος ἀνήει κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν κλίμακα ὁ σωματοφύλαξ· κατὰ δὲ ἄλλην κλίμακα Ἀβρέας τῶν διμοιριτῶν τις στρατευομένων. [4] ἤδη τε πρὸς τῆ ἐπάλξει τοῦ τείχους ὁ βασιλεὺς ἦν καὶ ἐρείσας ἐπ' αὐτῇ τὴν ἀσπίδα τοὺς μὲν ὄθει εἴσω τοῦ τείχους τῶν Ἰνδῶν, τοὺς δὲ καὶ αὐτοῦ τῷ ξίφει ἀποκτείνας γεγυμνώκει τὸ ταύτη τεῖχος· καὶ οἱ ὑπασπισταὶ ὑπέρφοβοι γενόμενοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ βασιλέως σπουδῇ ὠθούμενοι κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν κλίμακα συντρίβουσιν αὐτὴν, ὥστε οἱ μὲν ἤδη ἀνιόντες αὐτῶν κάτω ἔπεσον, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλοις ἄπορον ἐποίησαν τὴν ἄνοδον. [5] Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ τείχους στάς κύκλῳ τε ἀπὸ τῶν πλησίον πύργων ἐβάλλετο, οὐ γὰρ πελάσαι γε ἐτόλμα τις αὐτῷ τῶν Ἰνδῶν, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, οὐδὲ πόρρω τούτων γε ἐσακοντιζόντων (ἔτυχε γάρ τι καὶ προσκεχωσμένον ταύτη πρὸς τὸ τεῖχος), δῆλος μὲν ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος ὢν τῶν τε ὄπλων τῆ λαμπρότητι καὶ τῷ ἀτόπῳ τῆς τόλμης, ἔγνω δὲ ὅτι αὐτοῦ μὲν μένων κινδυνεύσει μηδὲν ὅ τι καὶ λόγου ἄξιον ἀποδεικνύμενος, καταπηδήσας δὲ εἴσω τοῦ τείχους τυχὸν μὲν αὐτῷ τούτῳ ἐκπλήξει τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς, εἰ δὲ μή, καὶ κινδυνεύειν δέοι, μεγάλα ἔργα καὶ τοῖς ἔπειτα πυθέσθαι ἄξια ἐργασάμενος οὐκ ἀσπουδεὶ ἀποθανεῖται—ταῦτα γνοὺς καταπηδᾷ ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους ἐς τὴν ἄκραν. [6] ἔνθα δὴ ἐρεισθεὶς πρὸς τῷ τείχει τοὺς μὲν τινὰς ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθόντας καὶ τὸν γε ἡγεμόνα τῶν Ἰνδῶν προσφερόμενόν οἱ θρασύτερον παίσας τῷ ξίφει ἀποκτείνει· ἄλλον δὲ πελάζοντα λίθῳ βαλὼν ἔσχε καὶ ἄλλον λίθῳ, τὸν δὲ ἐγγυτέρῳ προσάγοντα τῷ ξίφει αὐθις. οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι πελάζειν μὲν αὐτῷ οὐκέτι ἤθελον, ἔβαλλον δὲ πάντοθεν περιεστηκότες ὅ τι τις ἔχων βέλος ἐτύγχανεν ἢ ἐν τῷ τότε ἔλαβεν.

But when the citadel was clearly held by the enemy and many were clearly deployed before it to fight back, [the Macedonians] then began trying to force their way into the citadel, some by undermining the wall, others with the application of ladders wherever it was suitable. [3] But Alexander, when those carrying the ladders seemed to him to be shirking, seized a ladder from one of the men carrying them, placed it against the wall himself, took cover beneath his shield, and began making his way up it; after him came Peucestas, who carried the sacred shield that Alexander took from the temple of Athena at Troy and kept with him and had carried before him in battle; after him, Leonnatus the bodyguard began to go up the same ladder; and up a different ladder, Abreas, a double-pay man. [4] The king was already on the parapet of the wall and, by leaning his shield against it, pushed some of the Indians back within the wall and, having killed others there with his sword, cleared the wall in that sector. The Shield Bearers, having become

¹⁰⁰ For Plutarch's account of Alexander's *aristeia* at the Mallian town, see Chapter 2, Section IV.

terribly afraid for the king pushed up the ladder in haste and broke it, so that some of those who were already going up fell down and made the ascent impossible for the rest. [5] When Alexander, standing upon the wall, was being shot at in a circle both from the nearby towers (for none of the Indians dared approach him) and by those from the city—these, in fact, not even shooting from long range (for there happened to be a mound there next to the wall)—he was conspicuous both by the brilliance of his arms and by the strangeness of his daring. He realized, however, that, if he stayed there, he would be in danger without showing forth any deed worthy of record, but, if he leapt down within the walls, he would perhaps astound the Indians by this very act, and, if not—and if he had to be in danger—he would die not without effort, having performed great deeds worthy to be heard of by future generations. Realizing these things, he leaps down from the wall into the citadel. [6] There, having propped himself against the wall, he kills some who come at him hand to hand, and also the leader of the Indians with a stroke of his sword as he attacks him over boldly; one after another as they drew near he hit with a stone and checked, while whoever came closer he checked again with his sword. The barbarians were no longer willing to approach him, but, as they stood around him, they hurled whatever missile anyone happened to have or seized in the moment.

In this passage, Arrian recounts Alexander's famous *aristeia* at the Mallian town. During the final assault on this town, Alexander, perceiving his soldiers to be malingering, seizes a ladder and scales the Mallian walls himself. Thereupon, finding himself virtually alone on the enemy battlements, the king takes the supremely heroic step of jumping into the enemy citadel, where he proceeds to slay several Indians before finally receiving a near-fatal arrow wound to the lung. Throughout Arrian's account of this episode, a general Homeric resonance is patent: in true Homeric fashion, Alexander not only seeks *kleos* through martial *aretē*, but is willing to lay down his life for the same.¹⁰¹ Yet, if this passage's Homeric resonance is patent, there is controversy as to which Homeric hero, if any, Arrian means to cast Alexander as in this passage. While J. Mossman has suggested the Achilles of the closing books of the *Iliad*,¹⁰² and Stadter and Bosworth the Hector of *Iliad* 22,¹⁰³ I argue that Arrian actually means to cast Alexander in

¹⁰¹ Stadter 1980: 111-112 and Tonnet 1988: 1.20.

¹⁰² Mossman 1988: 90.

¹⁰³ Stadter 1980: 111-112 and Bosworth 2007: 448-449.

both of these Homeric roles, and that, as in the two preceding passages, the king's dual Homeric roles are central to this passage's thematic significance.

Let us begin with Alexander's role as Achilles. While Mossman is correct to suggest that "Alexander is never more like Achilles than this,"¹⁰⁴ the evidence she adduces for this parallel is in need of supplementation. Besides the rather general observation that Alexander here displays "magnificent courage," by which she seems to mean Achilles-like courage, Mossman's sole evidence for this claim is that Arrian describes Alexander with similar vocabulary to that with which Homer describes Achilles in the final books of the *Iliad*.¹⁰⁵ Where Achilles' armor, for example, ἔλαμπε, "shined brilliantly" as he approaches Troy for his duel with Hector (*Il.* 22.32), Alexander's weapons gleam λαμπρότητι "with brilliance" as he stands on the Mallian battlements (*Anab.* 6.9.5); and where Achilles' voice is ἀριζήλη, "very clear" as he shouts from the Greek trench (*Il.* 18.221), Alexander himself is δῆλος "clear," "conspicuous" (*Anab.* 6.9.5), an Attic cognate of Homeric ἀρίζηλος.¹⁰⁶

While Mossman lets her case for the Achilles motif rest with verbal parallels of this sort, broader narrative parallels, I suggest, provide more compelling evidence for the motif's presence in this passage. Like Plutarch's account of Alexander's *aristeia*, Arrian's account can be seen to contain parallels to Achilles' famous epiphany in *Iliad* 18.¹⁰⁷ First of all, both Alexander and Achilles stage their respective epiphanies in highly conspicuous places, the Mallian battlements in the former's case (*Anab.* 6.9.5) and the Greek trench in the latter's (*Il.* 18.215). Second, both

¹⁰⁴ Mossman 1988: 90.

¹⁰⁵ Mossman 1988: 90.

¹⁰⁶ Mossman 1988: 90 does not actually draw any specific parallels between Arrian and Homer, but the part of Arrian's account that she singles out as Homeric, δῆλος μὲν ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος ὦν τῶν τε ὀπλῶν τῆ λαμπρότητι καὶ τῷ ἀτόπῳ τῆς τόλμης, suggests that such parallels are the sort she has in mind.

¹⁰⁷ I wish to thank Professors Morgan and Purves for calling my attention to these Homeric parallels.

heroes shine with an arresting, more-than-human brilliance in the course of their respective epiphanies:

δῆλος μὲν ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος ὦν τῶν τε ὄπλων τῆ λαμπρότητι καὶ τῷ ἀτόπῳ τῆς τόλμης...

Alexander was conspicuous both by the brilliance of his arms and by the strangeness of his daring... (*Anab.* 6.9.5)

ὧς ἀπ' Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρ' ἵκανε...

Thus a flame reached heaven from Achilles' head... (*Il.* 18.214)

Third, both heroes, despite being totally or virtually alone, manage to strike terror in their enemies with their respective epiphanies:

οὐ γὰρ πελάσαι γε ἐτόλμα τις αὐτῷ τῶν Ἰνδῶν...

For none of the Indians dared approach him [Alexander]... (*Anab.* 6.9.5)

οἱ δ' ὡς οὖν ἄϊον ὄπα χάλκεον Αἰακίδαο,
πᾶσιν ὀρίνθη θυμός· ἀτὰρ καλλίτριχες ἵπποι
ἄψ ὄχρα τρόπεον· ὄσσοντο γὰρ ἄλγεα θυμῷ.

Therefore, when they [the Trojans] heard the brazen voice of the son of Aeacus, all their hearts were affrighted, and the fine-maned horses began to turn the chariots around, for they beheld pains in their heart. (*Il.* 18.222-224)

Finally, much as Achilles must await the arrival of his divinely made shield during his epiphany (*Il.* 18.134-137), so is Alexander depicted, in a detail unique to Arrian, as being accompanied by the sacred shield of Troy,¹⁰⁸ a purported relic of the Trojan War taken by the king during his pilgrimage to Troy (*Arr. Anab.* 1.11.7-8; *Diod* 17.18.1) and subsequently carried before him in battle by the Hypaspists.¹⁰⁹ Based on these Homeric parallels, then, this passage, I would argue,

¹⁰⁸ While Stadter 1980: 111-112 notes that the sacred shield of Troy contributes to the passage's general Homeric quality, he stops short of comparing it to the shield of Achilles.

¹⁰⁹ Droysen 2012: 116 claimed that this shield was actually thought to have been the famous shield of Achilles. The ancient sources, however, do not support this view. While both Arrian and Diodorus, the two sources for the shield, connect it to the Trojan War, neither connects it to Achilles specifically (*Arr. Anab.* 1.11.7-8 and 6.9.3; *Diod.* 17.21.2).

should be seen as containing a specific, rather than general, allusion to Achilles: rather than playing the role of the Achilles of the final books of the *Iliad*, as Mossman maintains, Alexander plays, in fact, the role of the Achilles of *Iliad* 18.

Having considered Alexander's role as Achilles, let us turn now to his role as Hector. As Bosworth and Stadter have shown, Alexander here takes on the role of Hector through Arrian's Hector-esque way of describing the king prior to his fateful leap into the Mallian town:¹¹⁰

μεγάλα ἔργα καὶ τοῖς ἔπειτα πυθέσθαι ἄξια ἐργασάμενος οὐκ ἀσπουδεὶ ἀποθανεῖται...

he [Alexander] would die not without effort, having performed great deeds worthy to be heard of by future generations... (*Anab.* 6.9.5)

μὴ μὲν ἀσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,
ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.

so that I may not perish, indeed, without effort and without glory, but after having done some great deed to be heard of even by men to come. (*Il.* 22.304-305)

The similarities between these two passages are, to put it mildly, striking. On a basic level, Arrian's language clearly echoes Homer's,¹¹¹ with three Arrianic words or phrases finding parallels in Homeric words or phrases: ἀσπουδεὶ (*Anab.* 6.9.5) ~ ἀσπουδί (*Il.* 22.304); μεγάλα ἔργα...ἐργασάμενος (*Anab.* 6.9.5) ~ μέγα ῥέξας (*Il.* 22.305); and τοῖς ἔπειτα πυθέσθαι (*Anab.* 6.9.5) ~ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι (*Il.* 22.305). Moreover, and as a direct result of this similarity of language, Alexander's behavior and motivations at the Mallian town come to resemble those of Hector prior to his final confrontation with Achilles: faced with a foe against whom victory is doubtful, Alexander, like Hector, chooses to face this foe all the same, deeming it preferable, should victory be denied him, to die gloriously and, in so doing, become the stuff of legend for

¹¹⁰ Stadter 1980: 111-112 and Bosworth 2007: 448; cf. Tonnet 1988: 1.20.

¹¹¹ While both Stadter 1980: 111-112 and Bosworth 2007: 448 note this similarity of language, neither spells out these similarities.

generations to come. Thus, much as Alexander plays the role of a specific Achilles in this passage, so does he also play the role of a specific Hector: the Hector of *Iliad 22*.

With Alexander's two Homeric roles in this passage established, we may now consider their thematic significance, both separately and together. While the few scholars who have considered this passage's Homeric dimension have generally been content to note Alexander's role as Achilles or Hector, Bosworth has recently attempted to go further, discussing, in his case, the significance of the king's role as the Hector of *Iliad 22*. According to Bosworth, this Homeric role works on two levels: on the one hand, Alexander's role as Hector foreshadows the king's near-death at the Mallian town and, shortly thereafter, his actual death in Babylon;¹¹² on the other, this role implicitly underscores the king's rashness, inasmuch as the Hector of *Iliad 22* finds himself facing death through the will of the gods, whereas Alexander does so simply through his unwillingness to wait for reinforcements.¹¹³ Compared to Alexander's role as the Hector of *Iliad 22*, his role as the Achilles of *Iliad 18*, a topic never considered from a thematic perspective, calls for more attention. On my reading, the thematic significance of Alexander's second Homeric role is twofold. In the first place, Alexander's role as Achilles clearly highlights the king's heroic grandeur. Like Achilles at the Greek trench, Alexander here has but to show himself for his enemies to be seized by fear. In the second, Alexander's role as Achilles, like his role as Hector, hints at the king's basic rashness in this passage. In *Iliad 18*, when Achilles shows himself at the Greek trench, he refrains, following Thetis' advice, from taking part in the fighting until he receives his new, divinely made shield. In Arrian's reworking of this Homeric episode,

¹¹² Bosworth 2007: 448-449.

¹¹³ Bosworth 2007: 449.

however, the new Achilles fails to heed Thetis' advice: while Peucestas the Hypaspist,¹¹⁴ like Thetis, is in the process of bringing the hero his special shield during the hero's epiphany (*Anab.* 6.9.3), Alexander refuses to wait for this shield—and the protection it represents—thereby courting disaster for himself and his army. Now, in the event, disaster strikes not when Alexander is alone in the Mallian town, but when Peucestas and the sacred shield are there to protect him (*Anab.* 6.10.2). Still, by leaping into the Mallian town without Peucestas and the sacred shield, Alexander behaves, as this Achilles parallel hints, in a thoroughly reckless way—a theme, in fact, to which Arrian returns in the aftermath of this episode.¹¹⁵ Following Alexander's recovery from his wound, the king's friends, with Arrian's approval, reproach him for having needlessly risked his life, for having played, in effect, the part of a soldier rather than that of a general (*Anab.* 6.13.4). Ultimately, in Arrian's view, for Alexander to play the role of Achilles in this passage, to prioritize, that is to say, the role of soldier over that of general, is not only a sign of recklessness; it is also a sign of a deeper defect, and one especially serious from a Stoic perspective: Alexander's inability to check his pleasures, both his lust for battle and his passion for glory (*Anab.* 6.13.4).¹¹⁶

While both of Alexander's Homeric roles can thus be interpreted on their own, these same roles can also be interpreted as a pair. On a basic level, by casting Alexander in the role of both Achilles and Hector, the two greatest heroes of the Trojan war, Arrian highlights his hero's preeminent heroism: Alexander, the historian suggests, represents the perfect culmination of Homeric heroism, the Homeric ethos made flesh. Yet, the combined thematic significance of

¹¹⁴ Heckel 2006: 329, n. 550 makes a strong case for considering Peucestas a member of the Hypaspists, the elite infantry unit of Alexander's army.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Stadter 1980: 111-112.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 7.2.2 ἐκ δόξης...δεινῶς ἐκρατεῖτο, "he [Alexander] was terribly controlled by his love for glory."

these two roles is not solely complimentary. Besides being the two greatest heroes of the Trojan war, Achilles and Hector are also, of course, mortal enemies. For Arrian to cast Alexander as both of these heroes, therefore, is to suggest that Alexander is, in a symbolic sense, the agent of his own destruction: Alexander *qua* Achilles will be the ruin of Alexander *qua* Hector.

Furthermore, if, as J. Redfield has argued, Achilles and Hector represent two different modes of heroism¹¹⁷—with Achilles standing for a more personal and Hector a more communal heroism—Alexander’s dual Homeric roles take on still deeper meaning. From this vantage point, for Alexander to play the role of both Achilles and Hector suggests not only that the king is capable of both modes of heroism, but that, just as Achilles will triumph over Hector in their final duel, so will Alexander’s personal heroism triumph over his collective heroism at the Mallian town.¹¹⁸ In the final analysis, then, Alexander’s dual Homeric roles show Alexander in a nuanced light, as both a hero of peerless brilliance and a hero of terrifying destructive potential, both for himself and others.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the Achilles motif serves to highlight two strands of Arrian’s portrait of Alexander: the encomiastic and the Stoic. On the one hand, Arrian deploys the motif as a means of stressing Alexander’s greatness, and several facets thereof, from his supreme heroism, as in the Troy (*Anab.* 1.12.1) and Mallian town (*Anab.* 6.9.1-10.4) episodes, to his fair and egalitarian leadership, as in the Hyphasis episode (*Anab.* 5.24.8-29.2). On the other hand,

¹¹⁷ Redfield 1975: *passim*.

¹¹⁸ Professor Morgan rightly notes that Hector becomes more closely aligned with personal heroism in *Iliad* 22, deciding, as he does, to face Achilles for personal reasons (i.e., glory, shame) rather than communal reasons (i.e., the wellbeing of Troy). From this perspective, then, Alexander’s role as Hector may be seen as pointing in the same direction as his role as Achilles, with both stressing the Macedonian’s decisive choice in favor of personal over communal heroism.

and perhaps more unexpectedly, Arrian uses the motif to reflect Alexander's moral defects as seen from a Stoic perspective, from his lack of self-control, as in the Cleitus episode (4.8.1-9.8), to his all-consuming passion for glory and conquest, as in the Hephaestion (*Anab.* 7.14, 16.8), Hyphasis, and Mallian town episodes. What, then, can this chapter tell us about Arrian's portrait of Alexander overall? While scholars have traditionally viewed the historian's portrait of the king as overwhelmingly positive, this chapter, in line with more recent scholarship on the *Anabasis*,¹¹⁹ suggests that this portrait is more complex than scholars have previously thought. Without question, the portrait's essence is firmly laudatory, as the historian's claim to be the Homer to Alexander's Achilles makes clear; at the same time, however, its laudatory strain is partially balanced by a more critical one, a strain that periodically stresses the king's philosophical—and specifically Stoic—shortcomings. Ultimately, as Bosworth, the late doyen of Alexander studies, has remarked, the *Anabasis* “is no literary *proskunēsis*, but a reasoned and nuanced study of Alexander's reign, reflecting the complexity of Alexander himself.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Bosworth 2007 and Burliga 2013.

¹²⁰ Bosworth 2007: 453.

CONCLUSION

[The Iliad's] power ensured that as long as war remained a central concern to the societies involved, Achilles, best of Greek warriors, would be a figure to be reckoned with, able to be fruitfully manipulated for poetic, political, and philosophical ends.¹

This dissertation has been concerned with the Achilles motif, the Alexander tradition's familiar device of comparing the Macedonian king to his favorite Homeric hero. While scholars have traditionally studied the Achilles motif from a historical perspective, seeking to determine which of Alexander's Achillean acts are based in fact and which are based in fiction, I attempted in this dissertation to study the motif from a literary perspective. Starting from the premise that each of Alexander's Achillean acts constitutes, in a fundamental sense, a literary phenomenon, I posed two questions about the Achilles motif, taking Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch, three of the extant Alexander historians, as the focus of my study: First, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in the specific passages of each historian's work in which it appears? Second, what is the thematic significance of the Achilles motif in each historian's work overall? To answer both of these questions, I considered the three Alexander historians' uses of the Achilles motif in three separate, chronologically arranged chapters.

In Chapter 1, on Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni (Histories of Alexander the Great)*, I argued that the Achilles motif serves to highlight Alexander's moral decline over the course of the work, his transformation, in effect, from the good *rex* of the first pentad to the corrupt *tyrannus* of the second. Throughout the first pentad, in passages such as the Betis episode (4.6.26-29), Curtius, I showed, uses the motif to foreshadow Alexander's royal degeneration upon becoming Great King; conversely, throughout the second, in passages such as the Roxane

¹ King: 1987: 219.

episode (8.4.22-26), the historian employs the motif to confirm this royal degeneration, and to explore its effects on both Alexander and those around him. Thus, in Curtius, the Achilles motif contributes to a relatively dark characterization of the Macedonian king—a characterization that may owe something to the historian’s own historical context, the Rome of the Early Empire.

In Chapter 2, on Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander*, I argued that the Achilles motif serves, by and large, to characterize Alexander as a “spirited” man (θυμοειδής), in both its positive and negative senses. On the positive side, in passages such as Alexander’s quasi-arming scene (*Alex.* 32.8-11), Plutarch uses the Achilles motif to highlight Alexander’s ambition and heroism. On the negative side, in passages such as Alexander’s tutelage under Lysimachus (*Alex.* 5.7-8) and the death of Hephaestion (*Alex.* 72.1-5), the biographer employs the motif to underscore his subject’s adherence to passion over reason (λόγος), and the dangers, from a Platonic perspective, of such adherence. Based on this examination of the Achilles motif in Plutarch’s *Alexander*, I conclude that, while Wardman overstated his case when he claimed that τὸ θυμοειδές is Alexander’s key quality, it is nevertheless an important one.

In Chapter 3, on Arrian’s *Anabasis of Alexander*, I argued that the Achilles motif serves to reinforce Arrian’s complex portrait of Alexander, a portrait at once encomiastic and Stoic. On the one hand, Arrian deploys the motif as a way of celebrating the Macedonian king, highlighting positive aspects of his character such as his preeminent heroism, as in the pilgrimage to Troy episode (*Anab.* 1.12.1), and his fair and egalitarian leadership, as in the mutiny at the Hyphasis episode (*Anab.* 5.24.8-29.2); on the other hand, and more unexpectedly, the historian uses the motif as a means of critiquing his subject from a Stoic perspective, drawing attention to more negative aspects of his character, such as his lack of self-control (σωφροσύνη), as in the Cleitus episode (*Anab.* 4.8.1-9.8), and his all-consuming love of glory, as in the Mallian

town episode (*Anab.* 6.9.1-10.4). Ultimately, while scholars have traditionally viewed Arrian's portrait of Alexander as overwhelmingly positive, the historian's use of the Achilles motif suggests that this portrait should be seen as more complex in nature.

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from this study of the Achilles motif as found in Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch? A preliminary conclusion relates to the Achilles motif's function within Alexander historiography as a whole. In his survey of Alexander as the "New Achilles," A. Stewart claims that the Macedonian king's connection to the Homeric hero became, for his historians, "a *topos*, offering a prepackaged guide to his motivations and goals."² While Stewart is right to describe Alexander's connection to Achilles as a *topos* of Alexander historiography, this *topos*' function, as this dissertation has shown, is significantly more complex than Stewart suggests. Based on the preceding analysis, rather than serving a single fixed purpose, as Stewart holds, the Achilles motif serves a variety of purposes. Without doubt, the motif can—and does—highlight Alexander's heroism, the function emphasized by Stewart, but it can also, to pick but a single example from each of the historians considered in the preceding chapters, underscore his transgressive behavior (Curtius), foreshadow his impending death (Plutarch), and hint at his tragic nature (Arrian).³ In short, the Achilles motif represents a highly flexible literary device, capable of furthering a range of thematic agendas.

This study also permits conclusions to be drawn about the three Alexander historians' relationship to their sources. Throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, the extant Alexander historians tended to be viewed as essentially copyists of the lost Alexander historians. On this view, Arrian, for example, was a pure reflection of Ptolemy and/or

² Stewart 1993: 81.

³ Curtius: see Chapter 1, Section, III; Plutarch: see Chapter 2, Section IV; Arrian: see Chapter 3, Section II.

Aristobulus, his two main sources, while Curtius and Plutarch represented more complex re-workings of both Cleitarchus, the father of the Vulgate tradition, and other lost historians. In recent decades, however, scholars have generally moved away from this view, coming to regard each of the Alexander historians as, at least to some extent, authors with their own literary agendas, their own themes, styles, and structures. While the Alexander historians' literary complexity can be seen from a number of angles, their use of the Achilles motif, I suggest, is a perfect example of this quality. On a basic level, all three historians seem to deploy the motif either in places unique to them, such as Curtius' account of the diplomatic exchanges between Alexander and Darius (4.1.7-14; 4.5.1-8; 4.11.1-10, 16-21), or in ways unique to them, such as Arrian's evocation of the choice of Achilles in Alexander's speech at the Hyphasis (*Anab.* 5.26.6) or Plutarch's allusion to Achilles' appearance at the Greek trench via the word σέλας (*Alex.* 63.4). Furthermore, and more tellingly, all three historians connect the Achilles motif to major themes of their works, with Curtius tying the motif to Alexander's moral decline, Plutarch relating it to Alexander's Platonic struggle between passion and reason, and Arrian linking it to Alexander's single-minded passion, problematic from a Stoic perspective, for glory and conquest. What a study of the Achilles motif suggests, therefore, is that the recent view of the Alexander historians is fundamentally correct: far from simple compilers, the Alexander historians are, in fact, sophisticated artists whose works deserve to be read with an eye to both their historical and their literary content.

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