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ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND SCIPIO AFRICANUS

by

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ABSTRACT: This article explores some literary and historical connections between the representation of the Roman general and statesman Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus and the famous world-conqueror Alexander III of Macedon (the Great) in Polybius of Megalopolis' fragmentary Book X of the *Histories*. Recourse is made to Polybius' source material, as we understand it, as well as other borrowings that he appears to have used in his writings that deal with Alexander. The inquiry delves further into the primary source material available to Polybius and considers some epistemological issues concerning the order in which the Alexander subject-matter was produced, the agendas and circumstances of those who produced it, along with the political and other agendas influencing both its production and its later reception by the time of Polybius. It is clear that Polybius has used the Alexander material as a kind of template for eulogising his Scipio, but he has had to do so carefully, and not un-problematically, due to the sensibilities of his contemporaries and target audience in the Roman Republic.

As part of his interwoven, biographical material on the character of Publius Cornelius Scipio "Africanus" in fragmentary Book X of his *Histories*, the Greek historian, and erstwhile military leader, Polybius of Megalopolis (c. 200–c. 118 BC) offers often digressive episodes that illustrate the moral superiority of his subject. These will have doubtless been pleasing to those who had a keen interest in his legacy and memory, not the least of which being the Scipio branch of the *gens Cornelia* who were Polybius' patrons in Rome. This article examines the depiction of Scipio Africanus in Polybius' *Histories*, focusing on Book X 2–20, in which the character and behaviour of that famous Roman general are related in terms very similar to those of Alexander the Great after the battle of Issus in 333 BC. A major source of information on Alexander, and one with which Polybius may have had some familiarity, was the now lost histories of Callisthenes of Olynthus (c. 360–327 BC), Alexander's court historian and his first biographer. The work of Cleitarchus of Alexandria (mid to late 4th century BC) and of Ptolemy and Aristobulus may too have supplied Polybius with source material. Versions of this episode have survived in other, later sources, namely Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius Rufus and it is through

these that we may trace links between authors. This article considers, in part, the epistemology of that tradition of transmission in the light of more recent scholarship about it, and most notably the ground-breaking work undertaken by N.G.L. Hammond and Andrew Chugg. The ultimate aims of this inquiry are twofold. Firstly, it seeks to discover, with relative certainty, whether Polybius was deliberately overlaying characteristics of Alexander onto Scipio, derived perhaps from Callisthenes, Cleitarchus or others, in order to produce a specifically dramatic "effect" and/or to appeal to his patrons and their contemporaries. Secondly, it considers some of the major historiographical trends and debates on this subject in order to determine, as near as possible, from which source(s) Polybius obtained such tales, which is the more difficult and speculative of the twain.

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It is fair to say that Alexander the Great presented a topic with which Polybius was concerned and which greatly interested his audience. Both Polybius and Livy (Titus Livius, 64 or 59 BC–AD 12 or 17) had argued for the superiority of Rome over the accomplishments of the great Macedonian; but, this also meant considerable recourse to Alexander's historical legacy, if only to cast shade upon it. There are numerous passages in Polybius, consequently, that discuss him, not least about his *fortuna*, as well as Theopompus' negative portrayals with which Polybius took issue[1]. Indeed, something like the "fortune vs. virtue" debate around Alexander seems to have haunted the legacy of Scipio too and Polybius is at pains in Book X to demonstrate that Scipio's success was largely down to his own innate cleverness and calculation rather than his good luck.

The description of Scipio's early career, as Overtoom writes, "appears to nearly parallel Alexander's"[2]. Scipio, unlike most Roman commanders, lead from the front, like Alexander; although, he was demonstrably more cautious and calculating in his actions[3]. As if to illustrate this very point, at the siege of New Carthage, Polybius has his Scipio being critical of incautious behaviour when the survival of the state was in jeopardy, adding that "such conduct is not the mark of a general who trusts to luck, but of one who possesses intelligence"[4]. This is an instance demonstrating Roman superiority with a clear reference (albeit implicitly) to what was perceived as Alexander's more reckless approach. In his explicit descriptions, Polybius (II 8–13) has compared Scipio to the Spartan legislator Lycurgus, rather than to Alexander. One might rightly ask, if he really wanted to model Scipio on Alexander,

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[1] See Polybius VIII 8, 7.

[2] Overtoom 2011: 21. See Livy XXVI 19, 7, where he mentions rumours that Scipio, like Alexander, was a favourite of the gods and the son of Jupiter, who had sexual relations with his mother in the form of a large snake.

[3] Goldsworthy 1998: 150–163.

[4] Polybius X 3.

why compare the latter with Lycurgus? I suspect that this is due to prevailing Roman, Republican attitudes towards Alexander in Polybius' era, which were fairly negative. Livy, by contrast, does explicitly compare Scipio to Alexander[5]. And this appears to be an illustration of how Roman attitudes towards Alexander had changed by the early Principate. Polybius does give the impression that he is using Alexander as his model for Scipio but had to do so in a less than overt way. The episodes discussed below self-consciously, if tacitly, recollect Alexander – or, at least they would to any who are familiar with his *Histories*[6].

The two key passages that shall be considered in terms of this potential "borrowing" are presented here and will be discussed throughout. The first is X 18, after Scipio has taken Nova Carthago by a clever stratagem:

> After this he set apart Mago and the Carthaginians who were with him, two of them being members of the council of elders and fifteen members of the senate. He committed these to the custody of Laelius, ordering him to pay them due attention. Next he invited the hostages, over three hundred altogether, to visit him, and calling the children to him one by one and caressing them bade them be of good cheer, as in a few days they would again see their parents. He also bade the rest to take heart and asked them all to write to their relations at home, firstly, that they were safe and well, and secondly, that the Romans were willing to restore them all in safety to their homes if their relatives chose to become allies of Rome. After speaking thusly, having reserved from the booty the most suitable objects for this purpose, he gave them such gifts as were appropriate for their sex and age, presenting the girls with earrings and bracelets and the young men with poniards and swords. When one of the captive women, the wife of Mandonius, who was the brother of Andobales, King of the Ilergetes, fell at his feet and entreated him with tears to treat them with more proper consideration than the Carthaginians had done, he was touched and asked her what they stood in need of. The lady was indeed of advanced age, and bore herself with a certain majestic dignity. Upon her making no reply he sent for the officials appointed to attend upon the women. When they presented themselves and informed him that they kept the women generously supplied with all they required, the lady again clasped his knees and addressed him in the same words, upon which Scipio was still more puzzled, and conceiving the idea that the officials who attended them were neglecting them and had now made a false statement, he again bade the ladies to be of good cheer, for he said he would himself appoint other attendants who would see to it that they were in want of nothing. The old lady after some hesitation said, "General, you do not take me rightly if you think that our present situation is about our food". Scipio then understood what the lady meant, and noticing the youth and beauty of the daughters of Andobales and other princes he was forced to tears, recognising in how few words she had pointed out to him the dangers to which they were exposed. So now he made it clear to her that he had taken her meaning, and grasping her by the right hand bade her and the rest be of good cheer, for he would look after them as if they were his own sisters and children and would accordingly appoint trustworthy men to attend on them.

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[5] XXVI 19, 6 f.; according to Livy both men were believed by the "common folk as being the offspring of a divine serpent".

[6] See Chaplin 2010.

Livy too details these same events in his *Ab Urbe Condita* (XXVI 49, 11–16). It is very similar but gives somewhat more speech to Scipio:

> ...then Scipio said: "thanks to my own training and that of the Roman people I would see to it that nothing which is anywhere sacred should suffer violence among us. But as it is, I am moved to an even stricter care in that respect by the courage and dignity of you women also, who even in misfortune have not forgotten what is seemly for a matron". He then handed them over to a man of proved uprightness, and ordered him to protect them with no less respect and modesty than the wives and mothers of guest-friends.

Livy's version emphasises traditional Roman values (perhaps *vis-à-vis* the Augustan moral reforms) regarding women even more so; but it no less portrays the *clementia* and *moderatio* of Scipio, albeit extended to the whole of the Roman people. One gets the impression that he had Polybius' treatise close to hand (and see below). The next passage from Polybius occurs at X 19, 3–7, shortly after the first one above:

> It was at this time that some young Romans came across a girl of surpassing bloom and beauty, and being aware that Scipio was fond of women, brought her to him and introduced her, saying that they wished to make a present of the maiden to him. He was overcome and astonished by her beauty, but he told them that had he been in a private position, no present would have been more welcome to him, but as he was their general it would be the least welcome of any, giving them to understand, I suppose, by this answer that sometimes, during seasons of repose and leisure in our life, such things afford young men most delightful enjoyment and entertainment, but that in times of activity they are most prejudicial to the body and the mind alike of those who indulge in them. So he expressed his gratitude to the young men, but called the girl's father and delivering her over to him at once bade him give her in marriage to whomever of the citizens that he preferred. The self-restraint and moderation he displayed on this occasion secured him the warm approbation of his troops.

Livy also details these events, like Polybius, almost immediately after the previous ones. However, he has his Scipio address the young man to whom he learns that the attractive girl has been betrothed (XXVI 50, 4–8):

> "...as a young man", he said, "I speak to you as a young man so as to lessen embarrassment between us in this conversation. It was to me that your betrothed was brought as a captive by our soldiers, and I learned of your love for her and her beauty made that easy to believe. Therefore, since in my own case, if it were only permitted me to enjoy the pleasures of youth, especially in a proper and legitimate love, and had not the state preoccupied my attention, I should wish to be pardoned for an ardent love of a bride, I favour what is in my power: your love. Your betrothed has been in my camp with the same regard for modesty as in the house of your parents-in-law, her own parents. She has been kept for you, so that she could be given you as a gift, unharmed and worthy of you and of me. This is the only price that I stipulate in return for that gift: be a friend to the Roman people, and if you believe me to be a good man, such as these tribes formerly came to know in

> my father and uncle, be assured that in the Roman state there are many like us, and that no people in the world can be named to-day which you would be less desirous of having as an enemy to you and yours, or more desirous of having as a friend".

Once more, Livy has added extra lines for Scipio and, for a second time, he has extended Scipio's own virtues to the whole of the Romans. Again, it seems he had Polybius as his guide here. And there are further parallels between Livy and Polybius on Scipio. While that is not the subject of this inquiry, it is no less interesting that we might observe an example of one of Livy's sources which he has neglected to cite as well as seeing how an original source has found its way along a chain of scholarly transmission.

In these passages from Polybius, as with Livy, we are presented with evidences of the victorious Roman general's *clementia*, *enkrateia* and *sophrosyne*, the latter two being Greek concepts with which Polybius would have been well-acquainted, highly compatible with Roman attitudes and sensibilities. Scipio's self-restraint in the second passage (albeit troublingly circumstantial to modern readers), in particular, would have demonstrated his adherence to traditional Roman values and both passages conspicuously illustrate his *virtus*, *dignitas* and *honos* and, crucially, his *continentia*, *moderatio* or *temperantia*[7]. Both episodes also prominently recollect similar descriptions of Alexander the Great. And these appear too similar to be coincidence which then begs a range of additional questions about the veracity of each account as well as the motivations of their authors.

The sources on Alexander that resonate along similar lines shall next be given and I shall then move on to some analysis of all of these and their prospective relationships. As we shall see, pinning down the precise origin of these accounts is complicated, although Hammond has concluded that they ultimately derive from the lost work of Cleitarchus[8]. That however remains to be seen. And Callisthenes and Ptolemy perhaps play a greater role. Let us begin with Diodorus Siculus' (fl. 1st cent. BC) version from his *Bibliotheca Historica*. According to this, after first enjoying a bit of sport with the Persian Queen Mother Sysigambes'[9] misapprehension of his and Hephaestion's identity, and then informing her that she and the other captured Persian royals would be treated as his own family, we are told the following (XVII 38, 1–5):

> He decked her out in royal jewellery and restored her to her former dignity, with its proper honours. He made over to her all of her former retinue of servants which she had been given by Dareius and added more in addition, no less in number than previously. He promised to provide for the marriage of the king's daughters even

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[7] X 19, 7: τὰ τῆς ἐγκρατείας καὶ τὰ τῆς μετριότητος ἐμφαίνων.

[8] Hammond 1993: 52.

[9] Diodorus uniquely, and rather oddly, calls her "Sisyngambris".

> more generously than Dareius had done and to bring up the boy as his own son and to show him royal honour. [...] As to the wife of Dareius, he said he would see that her dignity should be maintained so that she would experience nothing inconsistent with her former happiness. He added many other assurances of consideration and benevolence, such that the women broke out into uncontrolled weeping, so great was their unexpected joy. He gave them his hand as pledge of all this and was not only showered with praise by those who had been helped, but won universal recognition throughout his own army for his exceeding propriety of conduct.

There are clear parallels between this from Diodorus and Polybius' account of Scipio with the Spanish nobles above, granted that Alexander's version is somewhat more extravagant, perhaps in keeping with his own grandness (or Greek "decadence" as perceived by Roman Republican sensibilities) and that of his accomplishments by contrast to Scipio's. Plutarch's (c. AD 46–120) account form his *Life of Alexander* is slightly less embellished but imparts essentially the same message. Alexander discovers that the family of Dareius are amongst his prisoners and, having seen Dareius' bow and chariot, they believe him dead and are lamenting. Alexander sends Leonnatus (so too in Diodorus) to inform them that the Persian King is not dead. Plutarch omits the identity trick with Hephaestion but states (*Alex*. 21):

> ...they should be provided with everything they had been accustomed to regard as their own when Dareius was king. This kindly and reassuring message for Dareius' womenfolk was followed by still more generous acts. Alexander gave them leave to bury as many of the Persian dead as they wished and to take from the plunder any clothes and ornaments that they thought appropriate and to use them for this purpose. He also allowed them to keep the same attendants and privileges which they had previously enjoyed and he even increased their income. But the most honourable and truly regal service which he rendered unto these chaste and noble women was to ensure that they should never hear, suspect nor have reason to fear anything which could disgrace them: for they lived out of sight and earshot of the soldiers, as though they were guarded in some inviolable retreat set aside for virgin priestesses rather than in the camp of their enemy.

Both Plutarch and Diodorus are especially praising of Alexander for his moderation and self-restraint and how this affected his army's admiration of him (as is Justin in his epitome of Pompeius Trogus, XI 9, 16, which recounts the same tale). Both indicate that the women's chastity would be maintained, as with Polybius' Scipio, with Plutarch emphasising it to an even greater extent. It is as if they had provided a ready-made template for promoting the virtues of a noble and honourable man for Polybius to use for his own ends.

Arrian (Lucius Flavius Arrianus "Xenophon", c. AD 86/89–c. after 146/160) too gives a very similar account of this, with many of the details repeated, including the misidentification of Hephaestion and Leonnatus being sent in initially, with an albeit much more "bare bones" version of the kindly treatment of the Persian women. He, however, does add a note of uncertainty whilst commenting on how these deeds promoted Alexander's good character (*Anab*. II 12 f.):

> If these were indeed the facts, I cannot but admire Alexander both for treating these women with such compassion and for showing such respect and confidence towards his friends; but if the story is apocryphal, then it was at least inspired by Alexander's character: thus he would have acted, thus he would have spoken – and on that account I admire him no less[10].

It is interesting that Arrian alone questions the authenticity of this material and it suggests that he might have had some reason to do so; although he does not tell us what that is. I suspect that it is because he knows that the original source was Callisthenes, albeit used by Ptolemy. If it indeed came from Callisthenes that would seem reasonable enough for Arrian to doubt it, bearing in mind that Arrian has explicitly placed his trust in Ptolemy and Aristobulus (*Anab*. I 1, 1–5) – even regarding such fantastical things as the hissing snakes guiding Alexander to Siwah, given by Ptolemy. Hammond is convinced that these events with the Persian women in Arrian must come from Ptolemy, who was present and would have been conversant with these details[11]. Yet, given that it is also in Vulgate sources, the account was most probably in both Cleitarchus' and in Ptolemy's lost histories. For many years, it was assumed that Cleitarchus wrote his version first and that Ptolemy produced his afterwards in order to "set the record straight" but recent evidence has come to light to the effect that Ptolemy in fact wrote his account first, that it was suppressed by his heirs for reasons of their own, and Cleitarchus wrote his afterwards, possibly using Ptolemy's unedited memoires as a source but relying also on his interviews with Alexander's veterans[12]. I shall return to that point below. For now, it is clear that Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch and Arrian all recount a similar tale, probably derived from the same source or sources (at least Cleitarchus and Ptolemy), to that of Polybius in his account of Scipio with the Spanish nobles. It is somewhat rare that Vulgate and Official sources both agree so completely on precise details, such as these, about a specific episode. And, when they do, it seemingly points to a common source.

There are further, telling points of connection between Polybius' account and the Alexander historians. The second extract from Polybius, quoted above, in which Scipio manfully refused the offer of an attractive young woman whom his soldiers have taken as a war prize likewise recollects a similar event reported about Alexander which was also seen to indicate his self-restraint. This one is found in Plutarch, located just after the incident with the Persian women, where he writes (*Alex*. 22):

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[10] To add further uncertainty to this episode is a letter allegedly to Parmenion, quoted in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* (22, 5), in which Alexander claims never to have seen the wife of Dareius.

[11] Hammond 1993: 53.

[12] See Chugg 2013: 572 ff.

> When Philoxenus, the commander of his forces on the sea coast, wrote to say that he had with him a slave merchant from Tarentum named Theodorus who was offering exceptionally handsome boys for sale and asked whether Alexander wished to buy them, the king was furious and angrily demanded of his friend what signs of degeneracy Philoxenus had ever noticed in him that he should waste his time procuring such debased creatures.

And this is not the only such example. Another such offering of a handsome youth is mentioned after the above one, this time by a Companion named Hagnon, who is similarly rebuked for it. Also, immediately thereafter is recounted how Alexander then hears of some of his soldiers having seduced the wives of some Greek mercenaries and orders an investigation saying that if they were found guilty, they should be put to death. It is not quite the same as Scipio restoring the captured girl to her father etc. rather than ravishing her, but it is along much the same lines and with a similar import about the leading figure's character. If Polybius borrowed this episode for his Scipio, then he appears to have sanitised it somewhat for Roman sensibilities, omitting any prospect of same-sex relations, implicit or otherwise; however, the import is more than comparable.

Tales such as this of people in positions of power showing similar mercies to their captives are effectively commonplace in Plutarch's works[13]. Even so, the refusal of the handsome youths by Alexander does not appear in Diodorus and neither does Hammond comment on its origin for Plutarch. Arrian does not mention it but, like Diodorus, moves onto other military matters. While Curtius Rufus does recount the episode with the Persian women more or less the same as Diodorus, he too omits the refusal of the handsome youths (III 11 f.) as does, unsurprisingly, Justin. It is possible that the original comes from Cleitarchus' version of Alexander but that seems unlikely, given its absence in Vulgate sources. We can almost certainly exclude Ptolemy's *History* as the source for these refusals.

There are other similar episodes in anecdotal accounts of Alexander's *sophrosyne* by diverse sources. They are all much later than Polybius but may derive from sources of which he knew. For example, in his *Dialogue on Love* (*Amat*. 16 = *Mor.* 760D) and *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* (*Reg. et imp. apophth*. Alex. 19 = *Mor.* 180F), Plutarch reports that Antipatrides had a female lyre-player whom Alexander found attractive but he restrained himself "and did not touch the woman". We get a similar story in Athenaeus (*Deipn.* XIII 603B–C) who reports an account by Carystius, from his *Historical Notes*, in which Alexander refuses to kiss an attractive youth when offered to do so by Charon of Chalcis. Carystius (by way of Athenaeus) next comments on the king's self-mastery and then, conveniently enough, recounts the story of his encounter with the Persian

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[13] See Plut. *Per.* 38, 4; *De Alex. fort.* I 7 (= *Mor*. 329D); I 11 (= *Mor*. 332C); II 7 (= *Mor*. 339A–E).

women. Carystius of Pergamum was a 2nd century BC writer described by Jacoby as a *Literatur-historiker*[14]. The fact that he is more or less contemporary with Polybius is telling but inconclusive, especially given the uncertainty over Carystius' dates. Both authors may have obtained this information originally from the same source or sources.

To summarise thus far, Polybius has presented his Scipio as being magnanimous to captured Spanish nobles and refusing a local girl from Nova Carthago who had been proffered to him for sexual gratification. In doing so, he exemplifies a range of positive characteristics, notably clemency, moderation and self-restraint. We also find very similar accounts in the histories of Alexander the Great, which have been presented above. The similarities, I argue, are too great to be coincidence. It appears that Polybius has "borrowed" the basic paradigm for such actions from the Alexander historians to use for his Scipio. The next questions that I am asking are: what is/are the source(s) for these paradigms and by what means did they find their way into the works of Polybius? Laterally, the question of their veracity remains a topic under consideration.

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The business of chasing down lost sources on Alexander, much less determining who read whom, is tricky at best. If we can say that Polybius used Alexander as his model for Scipio, which seems fairly apparent, then whence is he deriving this borrowed material? One particular lost source about which we have some information seems to connect with many of our extant ones in these matters. It is clear that Polybius had read Callisthenes of Olynthus and was fairly critical of his work, the battle narratives in particular, although he also praised him for admiring Alexander[15]. But did he in fact also read Cleitarchus or Ptolemy and might there be a connection between them here[16]? Errington has argued that Polybius' knowledge of Alexander derived from Callisthenes alone and it is the case that he is the only Alexander historian mentioned by name in Polybius' *Histories*[17]. That seems to go too far but no less entails a kernel of truth. Polybius certainly used Callisthenes for his account of the Battle of Issus, in Book XII, after which the above quotes about the Persian women come in Arrian, Diodorus, Curtius Rufus and Plutarch. But the refusal of the handsome youths from Philoxenus and Hagnon are only to be found in Plutarch. This suggests the possibility that

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[14] See F. Jacoby, *Karystios von Pergamon*, *RE* X 2, 1919, col. 2054, which builds upon C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vol. IV, Parisiis 1851 [reprinted Frankfurt 1975], pp. 356 f. = Athenaeus XI 115 (506E–F).

[15] Billows 2000: 291–293.

[16] See Walbank 1967: 64–68 and 193 f., where he discusses Callisthenes and Timaeus of Tauromenium, amongst others, as possible sources as well as providing some extensive scholarship on Polybius' sources. See too Meister 1975: 81–91 and Scullard 1970: 237, 282.

[17] Errington 1976: 178.

these moral refusals were originally in Callisthenes' account, given that all extant Alexander historians, and Plutarch in particular, used Callisthenes to some extent. Billows has demonstrated that Polybius likely obtained his material on the fortune of Alexander from the peripatetic philosopher/statesman Demetrius of Phaleron (c. 350–c. 280 BC), so it is apparently the case that he was using at least one original Alexander source other than Callisthenes, contrary to Errington[18]. Demetrius' treatise can be reasonably dated to around 318 BC, making it the earliest source on Alexander to our knowledge apart from that of Callisthenes (and the Attic orators)[19]. Diodorus' and Curtius Rufus' emphasis on Alexander's fortune appears to derive from Demetrius' work as well which suggests that Cleitarchus likely accessed it in his research. This paper chase does not, however, demonstrate that Polybius read Cleitarchus, only that they perhaps used some of the same source material, with that namely being Callisthenes.

What about Ptolemy? His lost *History of Alexander* was profoundly influential on later scholarship. I had alluded earlier that Cleitarchus might have had access to it (or, at least to Ptolemy's memoires) and it seems almost beyond a doubt that the tale of the Persian women was also present in his account thanks to it being preserved in Arrian. Along with this is the fact that Arrian is taking the somewhat unusual step of doubting the authenticity of the account. The relationship between Ptolemy's work and that of Cleitarchus bears some consideration. Chugg has re-examined Oxyrhynchus papyrus 4808 "On Hellenistic Historians" in relation to this. Lines 15–17 assert that, shortly before his death, Cleitarchus was the tutor to Ptolemy IV Philopator (born c. 244 BC)[20]. We know that Cleitarchus' accounts (by way of Diodorus and Curtius Rufus) contradict Ptolemy's on a number of key points, not least being the blame of Thais, Ptolemy's later mistress, over the burning of Persepolis along with Perdiccas' role in the destruction of Thebes. It seems unlikely that Cleitarchus, active in court life, would have dared to write such a contradictory account after Ptolemy's work had been officially published and so the tentative consensus had been that his version must have come first (about 300 or 310 BC)[21]. The precise time of the publication of Ptolemy's *History* is hotly debated. Young, for example, reports a date of about 305–295 for it[22]. Yet Chugg argues that Ptolemy (c. 367 BC–282 BC) produced

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[18] Billows 2000: 297 f.

[19] *Ibidem*. Billows (2000: *passim*) has also demonstrated that Polybius (along with Diodorus later) was using Hieronymus of Cardia (contemporary and friend of Eumenes of Cardia) as a source as well, with Hieronymus having taken material from Eumenes. The Attic Orators notwithstanding.

[20] Chugg 2013: 573–577.

[21] Pandi 2012.

[22] Young 2014: 11. Young also concludes that the source of the tale of the Persian women was Ptolemy (p. 61).

his memoirs earlier than Cleitarchus' history but that they remained unpublished until they were later released, having been edited and likely sanitised, under his successors, possibly Ptolemy II or III[23]. These efforts may account for some of the inconsistencies with other traditions. If that were the case, it would remedy the issue of Cleitarchus' contradictions and, being a court insider writing on Alexander, Cleitarchus would likely have had access to Ptolemy's work which he then used in his own writings on Alexander. The presence of the treatment of the Persian women in Arrian, Diodorus, Curtius Rufus and Plutarch (along with the above mentioned scholarship) is more than highly suggestive that this episode was likewise present in both Ptolemy and Cleitarchus, which lends some credibility to Cleitarchus also using Ptolemy as a source, assuming Chugg's dating is correct. So, a line may be drawn from Ptolemy to all of the Official *and* Vulgate sources, at least on the transmission of this tale of the treatment of the Persian royal family.

But does that line begin with Callisthenes rather than with Ptolemy? The court historian from Olynthus' presence looms large here, despite a tendency in modern scholarship to dismiss his now lost work as having been overly flattering and inaccurate. As stated, it will have had a correct chronology at least up to the point that it terminated, probably after Gaugamela. Could Callisthenes, as we have already seen, likely the source for the refusals of the handsome youths, also be the original source for the treatment of the Persian women? Callisthenes of Olynthus was either Aristotle's nephew or grand-nephew. He was known for an inclination towards antiquarianism but was also well-published on historical subjects and the natural sciences, in keeping with both Aristotle's and Alexander's interests, prior to taking up his post as royal historian. Callisthenes had been either a fellow student or more likely Aristotle's "teaching assistant" at the Shrine of the Nymphs at Mieza (between c. 343 and 340 BC) when Alexander was receiving his tutelage. His role was that of the official historian on the Asiatic expedition. The mystery surrounding his death in 328 BC, after being accused of fomenting treason, haunts us to this day[24]. Tarn argued that, in the propaganda wars that accompanied the Wars of the Diadochi, the Peripatetic School, patronised by Cassander of Macedon, had sought revenge for Callisthenes' treatment through advancing the invective argument of Alexander the "lucky tyrant"[25]. And this resonates well with the position of Demetrius of Phaleron, another peripatetic whom Polybius, as we have observed, seems to have used as a source on Alexander.

There is also fairly un-equivocal evidence of Ptolemy and Aristobulus, amongst others, "borrowing" from Callisthenes elsewhere. The prevailing view

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[23] Chugg 2013: 576.

[24] See Moore 2018.

[25] Tarn 1930: 255 f.

is that the court historian sent back approved instalments of his *opus* throughout the expedition, up to Gaugamela, but that he must have kept copies which Ptolemy and Aristobulus obtained after his somewhat mysterious and suspicious demise[26]. I have already mentioned that his chronology and nomenclature were probably used by any successor historians who had access to them. One example of more detailed borrowing is of Callisthenes' description of a statue of an Assyrian king at Archiale, observed by Alexander's army in 333. It is quoted in the *Suda* under the entry for Sardanapalus (probably Ashur-bani-apal), attributed to Callisthenes. It is also quoted from a fragment of Aristobulus found in Athenaeus (XII 39) and in Strabo (XIV 5, 9). There is a third depiction in Arrian (II 5, 3 f.), apparently coming from Ptolemy. The descriptions are nearly identical, including the reported inscription on the statue, apart from the orientation of the statue's hands[27]. We have three slightly different versions of that. Callisthenes himself appears to have obtained the information about the statue's inscription from an earlier text, either the *Persica* of Hellanicus or, perhaps more likely, from Ctesias of Cnidus, a 5th century Greek physician in Caria who also wrote a treatise called the *Persica*. And this description also finds its way into both Diodorus of Sicily and Plutarch[28]. Another example is that of the capture of the Sogdian Rock in Arrian VI 18 ff. which is also in Curtius Rufus VII 11. Callisthenes seems to have obtained much of his detail of this locality from Ctesias as well[29]. The visit to the Siwah Oasis too, present in both Vulgate and Official sources, with surprising consistency, except for what the oracle actually said, appears derived from Callisthenes and he himself probably gleaned much of the geographic and other physical and ethnographic details from Herodotus. So too is there remarkable consistency between the various accounts of the battle of Issus in the extant Alexander historians, apart from the purported speeches, and "that the source was Callisthenes is made fairly clear by Polybius"[30].

Yet Hammond is convinced, and unequivocally states, that "Callisthenes' version was not adopted by Ptolemy and Aristobulus and was not transmitted through them to Arrian"[31]. He cites Arrian's contempt for Callisthenes as a "flatterer", a tactless and boorish man of little scruple (*Anab*. IV 12, 6 ff.). And it is true that Arrian does not mention Callisthenes as a source whereas he does name Ptolemy and Aristobolus. To be fair, Arrian does sometimes refer to "others"

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[26] Prentice 1923: 76.

[27] Prentice (1923: 77 f.) considers the possibility that Ptolemy and Aristobulus may have seen different statues but the consistency of the inscription suggests a single source.

[28] Diodorus II 21, 8 ff.; Athenaeus XII 38 (528E–529D); Plutarch, *De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute*, II 3 (= *Mor*. 336C).

[29] Much of the material from Ctesias on this is present in Book II of Diodorus.

[30] Prentice 1923: 83.

[31] Hammond 1993: 34.

who are not named and Hammond himself has postulated the identities of some of these such as Chares of Mytilene (via the *Royal Diary*) who was probably used by Arrian as well as by Plutarch[32]. It is possible, as Young has argued, that Callisthenes also made entries in the *Royal Diary*, acting for a time as secretary, and that Eumenes of Cardia may have taken over after his death[33]. The fact that Arrian has not named Callisthenes as his source and that he seemingly held him in disdain are not sufficient reasons to exclude him as a possible source, directly or indirectly, for Arrian's *Anabasis Alexandrou*. Polybius was also highly critical of Callisthenes but still explicitly used him as a source, if sometimes discrediting his historical acumen[34]. Indeed, he appears to have read Callisthenes work very closely.

Others have been more circumspect. Young argues that Ptolemy must have used Callisthenes[35]. And Devine has made a case for Callisthenes' description of the Battle of Issus, along with other details, having been "passed on through Ptolemy and Aristobulus and enshrined in the *Anabasis* of Arrian", which Hammond had largely dismissed[36]. The placement of the description of Alexander's generosity and self-restraint, which I am arguing that Polybius has "borrowed", directly after Issus seems to support those items coming from Callisthenes. Significantly, as Nawotka has asserted, this "romantic tale [...] regarding Alexander's first contact with Darius' family" was "originally ascribed to Callisthenes"[37]. He does not comment further on the matter of the sources as that was not the aim of his argument; but the fact that Callisthenes had been thought to be the source for this episode is telling. Perhaps that original ascription was correct. Again, the presence of the account of the Persian women in both Vulgate and Official traditions does suggest a common origin. And if that was not Ptolemy, and even if he also reported it as he seems to have done, it may well have been Callisthenes who originated the tale and both Cleitarchus and Ptolemy then utilised Callisthenes' account. Invented or otherwise, it certainly depicts Alexander in a flattering light.

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We are left with several possibilities concerning Polybius' "borrowing": either (a) Scipio Africanus just happened to act in very similar ways to Alexander under similar circumstances and Polybius, though not an eye-witness, reported it, or (b) he was deliberately imitating Alexander, having read some of these very

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[32] Hammond 1993: 97.

[33] Young 2014: 109, 200.

[34] See e.g. Polybius XII 17–22.

[35] Young 2014: 19 *et passim*.

[36] Devine 1985: 25. See Hammond 1992.

[37] Nawotka 2010: 174.

descriptions that I have been discussing, or (c) Polybius purposefully chose to pattern elements of his biographical excursus on Scipio after events described by Alexander historians in order to enhance his subject's character. Given the historiography on these matters, it is the latter interpretation that I am supporting here. We do not know for certain whether Polybius read Cleitarchus or Ptolemy from which he then obtained his paradigm for Scipio, derived from moralising descriptions of Alexander. The similarity of those accounts, however, appears too great to be coincidence. We only know for certain that Polybius read Callisthenes and probably Hieronymus of Cardia and Demetrius of Phaleron, with the latter giving anything but a flattering presentation of his subject. If Polybius read these, being a relatively thorough scholar, it seems likely that he must have also read others as well. Ptolemy and Cleitarchus almost certainly used Callisthenes to some extent – to what extent remains a subject of scholarly debate. Even if Polybius only read Callisthenes (which to me seems doubtful) then he may have lifted elements from the encounter with the Persian royals at least from there, which would account for the similarity with Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Arrian and Plutarch – all derived to some extent from Callisthenes, whether directly or second-hand through Ptolemy and Cleitarchus.

The case of the Persian women seems almost certainly to have come down to us via just such a route. The refusals of the attractive youths are harder to explain although, as suggested, they also appear to have been derived from Callisthenes, falling just after the description of the Persian women. Given Polybius' frequent recourse to Callisthenes, he seems the most likely candidate for any "borrowing" on the former's part in shaping his virtuous image of Scipio. Did any of these episodes actually happen, whether Alexander and the Persian royal women or the refusal of the attractive youths, or Scipio's treatment of the Spanish nobles and the similar refusal of the beautiful maiden? If they did all derive from Callisthenes, as I strongly suspect, then, like Arrian, I too am inclined to take them with a "grain of salt". That is not to say that they did not happen or that these men would not have behaved in just such a manner under those circumstances. But we can at least observe how an historical agenda from one era may have evolved into a *topos* to be transmitted down the generations to suit the exigencies of a writer in another.

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