

Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics

Arrian the Personal Historian

Version 1.0

December, 2005

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Abstract: Current scholarship ignores the personal nature of the second preface of Arrian's *Anabasis*. This preface reveals that the *Anabasis* can be read as a work about Arrian's own personal identity. Arrian's biographical history allows us to speculate that his identity was in flux throughout his life. By understanding the *Anabasis* as Arrian's way to claim to be a Greek, we can better interpret his characterization of Alexander.

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Arrian the Personal Historian

In his *Anabasis*, Arrian claims his work about Alexander as a peculiarly personal triumph for a historian. He does not claim it to be a defining work for all mankind but rather to fulfill a personal goal that he has held since childhood.

...ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο ἀναγράφω, ὅτι ἐμοὶ πατρίς τε καὶ γένος καὶ ἀρχαὶ οἶδε οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶ τε καὶ ἀπὸ νέου ἔτι ἐγένοντο. (I.12.5)

...But I write this because these words are country, family, and offices and have been since I was a child.

Arrian claims that οἶδε οἱ λόγοι has been a work connected to his personal life unlike any other. Much discussion over the meaning of οἶδε οἱ λόγοι has shown that its interpretation depends mostly upon the view that an individual scholar holds concerning Arrian's trustworthiness. It has been interpreted as everything from "this history" to "these writings" to "writing history" in an abstract sense.¹ But the interpretation of this passage is crucial to our interpretation of the work, for if Arrian's history was intensely personal, then this raises questions about his historiographical aims and method. Arrian certainly considered the historical purpose of his project and admits at least a surface concern that his work will be classified as history.

Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Λάγου καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος ὁ Ἀριστοβούλου ὅσα μὲν ταῦτ' ἄμφω περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Φιλίππου ξυνέγραψαν, ταῦτα ἐγὼ ὡς πάντῃ ἀληθῆ ἀναγραψαν... (I.1.1.)

Whatever things Ptolemy son of Lagos and Aristoboulos son of Aristoboulos both wrote the same about Alexander son of Phillip, I have written as entirely true...

Since Arrian attempts to explain his reasoning in a search for truth, he invokes a historiographical aim. But considering the personal statement mentioned above, his

¹ G. Schepens, *Ancient Soc.* ii (1971) 255; P. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia*. Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina University Press, 1980. p. 64; A. Bosworth, *CQ* xxii (1972) 168

approach to this history uses aims and methods not typical of the historiographic tradition. To explain these ends, I contend that this history displays Arrian's search for his own personal identity. Arrian identified with Alexander in defining his personal Greekness, and this history provides evidence that Arrian uses Alexander to argue his own identity.

To the detriment of identity, much of the debate concerning Arrian's purpose for writing the *Anabasis* has been considering whether his purpose was primarily historical or literary. Arrian seems to assert both. Arrian has two proems in which he outlines his apparent purpose for writing. He first emphasizes his reaction to other historians.

“Ὅστις δὲ θαυμάσεται ἀνθ’ ὅτου ἐπὶ τοσούτοις συγγραφεῦσι καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐπὶ οὐκ ἴσθαι ἢ συγγραφῇ, τὰ τ’ ἐκείνων πάντα τις ἀναλεξάμενος καὶ τοῖσιδε τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐντυχῶν οὕτω θαυμάζετο. (P.1.3)

Whoever is amazed that with those writings of so many [Alexander historians], this work came to my mind, that man should not yet wonder until he has read all the works of those men and then taken up my work.

Arrian is clearly concerned with the historical tradition that focused upon Alexander, and from the context of this passage, he desires to fill a factual void by combining the truth within various sources. But less than halfway through his first book, Arrian asserts another purpose.

...καὶ εὐδαιμόνισεν ἄρα, ὡς ὁ λόγος, Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀχιλλεῖα, ὅτι Ὀμήρου κήρυκος ἐς τὴν ἔπειτα μνήμην ἔτυχε. Καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτου ἕνεκα εὐδαιμονιστέος Ἀχιλλεύς, ὅτι αὐτῷ γὰρ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην ἐπιτυχίαν, τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο ἐκλίπες ξυνέβη οὐδὲ ἐξηνεχθῆ ἐς ἀνθρώπους τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα ἐπαξίως· οὐτ’ οὖν καταλογάδην οὐτε τις ἐν μέτρῳ ἐποίησεν. Ἐνθεν καὶ αὐτὸς ὀρμηθῆναί φημι ἐς τὴνδε τὴν συγγραφὴν, οὐκ ἀπαξιώσας ἑμαυτὸν φανερά καταστήσειν ἐς ἀνθρώπους τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα. (I.12.2-5)

And, so the story goes, Alexander considered Achilles happy, since he happened upon Homer as a herald for his memory thereafter. And in fact, Alexander would be right to count Achilles happy on this account, since, fortunate as Alexander was in other ways, there was a great gap left here, and Alexander's exploits were

never worthily bruited abroad; no one did so in narrative prose, no one sang of him in verse... That, I declare, is why I have set forth to write this history, not judging myself unworthy to blazon before mankind the deeds of Alexander.

In contrast to his historical aims, Arrian seems to approach the text as an encomium to Alexander. The work becomes a desire to showcase his literary skill in the manner of Homer to the detriment of historical accuracy—the “truth” whose criteria he worked so hard to establish in the opening proem. In fact, he states that the most reliable historians are those who lived after Alexander because they lacked any “hope of gain in writing anything other than plain fact (I.P.2).” This “second proem” seems to deviate from his sworn historical purpose.

Modern scholars have tried in vain to explain Arrian’s shift from historical distance to personal involvement by looking at the second proem as part of a larger historiographical tradition. In his article detailing the influence of Arrian’s historical predecessors, Moles states that the second preface implies that “...οἱδε οἱ λόγοι will be an imperishable artefact, just as Thucydides’ history was ‘a possession for ever,’ Pindar’s poetry a ‘treasury’ and Horace’s odes a ‘monument.’”² So the desire to create an everlasting statement connects history and literature. Arrian recognizes this and can incorporate literature into his history because the ultimate goal of glorifying Alexander is more important than the proposed goal of historical accuracy. But this does little to explain the personal connection that Arrian claims to the work. Thucydides’s encomium was dependent upon setting his work “for all mankind,” not considering his work the expression of his worth since childhood. Further, Moles can only account for the placement of the second preface by claiming “the dramatic context...is ideally suited to

² Moles (1985) p.166

exposition of all the different historical and literary traditions with which Arrian wishes to align the *Anabasis*...”³ But while the situation may have been ideally suited to remind his audience of historical aims, it was hardly suited to contradict his previous ones. And while there was historical precedent for a second preface, the preface did more to reinforce the historical aims already expounded.⁴ Moles attempts to reconcile these statements based only on the text, but such an argument fails to account for both the change in historical aim and the placement of this change.

As another approach, Marincola goes beyond the text to consider the influence of Arrian’s audience. He finds, like Moles, that the situation of the second preface within the narrative is “ideally suited to exposition of all the different historical and literary traditions with which Arrian wishes to align the *Anabasis*.” But for Marincola, the situation is also ideal because of how Arrian anticipates his audience’s reaction to the narrative. “In a movement that wished to recall (and in some sense idealize) the Greek past, Alexander’s conquests in mainland Greece and his destruction of Greek cities were a far less congenial subject than his command of a ‘united’ Greece against the Persian empire.”⁵ Arrian uses the second preface to tap into a patriotic ideal that would bring his Greek audience back on his side after Alexander’s campaign against Greece. But if Arrian is consciously working within the traditions of Thucydides and Herodotus in including a second preface (as Stadter’s article argues forcefully), then the purpose of two

³ *ibid* p.167

⁴ See Stadter (1981) p.158 for discussions of the second preface in Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus connects his historiographical purpose with a discussion of responsibility for the war. He outlines causation as the major historical aim of the historian and the second proem builds upon the first. Thucydides expands upon this and continues the apology for causation while extending it to larger forces to justify his didactic purpose. In other words, he tries to attribute causation to larger forces than any one people because he hopes these larger forces will reappear in a cyclical understanding of history. Thus his work can serve as a self-proclaimed moral guidebook for all time.

⁵ Marincola (1989) p.187

prefaces was to showcase the writer's talents with the material held between them. It seems improbable that Arrian would display his greatest ability with a subject displeasing to his audience. Marincola's explanation for the second preface helps prepare Arrian's audience only for the narrative to come, and yet Herodotus and Thucydides use the second preface to look back to the encapsulated narrative and the original historiographical aims. In light of historical tradition, Arrian uses the second preface to connect the first narrative to the rest of the history, not to separate it as a mini-history to be forgotten.

In a more convincing argument, Gray examines the moral responsibilities of the historian in the historical tradition, and she notes that Arrian uses the second preface to give himself authority because he has best followed the moral guidelines that define how the historian relates to his subject. Thus, in the second preface, Arrian does not so much change his aims as apply the moral criteria that he used upon the other historians in his original preface to himself in the second preface. In the end, he uses it to claim greater authority. "The position of the preface conspires with its content to advertise the moral character that is the basis of Arrian's claim to worth."⁶ According to Gray, the moral criterium that evaluated authority was the apportionment of glory between the historian and the subject. Arrian makes a greater claim to authority in the second preface because he is unwilling to divulge personal information. But merely not divulging information is not a deferral to the preeminence of the historical subject. Arrian draws attention to himself and states his tremendous personal investment in the work, two practices that run counter to his moral authority. Arrian makes it clear that this is not Alexander's history; it is Arrian's history of Alexander. Gray ignores Arrian's statements about the personal

⁶ Gray (1990) p.185

role that the history played in his life, thinking that because Arrian discloses no details, he is separating himself from his subject according to historical tradition.⁷ But Arrian wished the preface to focus attention upon the role of the work within his own life, and thus Gray's theory does not appropriately explain the role of the second preface.

Scholarship has not adequately explained this preface because it has not begun with the role of this history to the historian. The second preface cannot be explained in terms of the text, audience or tradition, but Arrian's statements concerning its personal nature show that it certainly served a purpose to the historian. The work developed the personal identity of the author. Arrian uses Alexander to defend his own Greekness, and in this apology, we see why the reason for Arrian's deviation from mere historical aims is necessary in the second preface.

Arrian had reason to find his personal identity difficult. He was a historian that had feet in many worlds but could claim none alone. Born in Bithynia, the historian undoubtedly had difficulty placing his origin in either the Greek or Roman world. Arrian was born in Nicomedia, a city in the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor that was more a Roman city than Greek. It was founded in 274 BCE by Nicomedes I, who supplanted a Greek colony already on the site. But while the Bithynians were extremely nationalistic, were for a time ruled by Persia with a limited autonomy, and continually warred with Greek cities along the coast, Nicomedes actively promoted Greek culture. In Roman times, the city gained prominence only through the patronage of the Roman emperors beginning when Augustus named it the capital of the province Bithynia-Pontus in 29

⁷ *ibid* p.182: "The plain reading of Arrian's introduction and the preface in conjunction with the tradition invites the conclusion that his suppression of his personal details announces his intention not to promote himself in his history, with the implication that he will not flatter Alexander or others for selfish reasons, nor denigrate them out of enmity, but simply tell the truth."

BCE and built a temple to himself there sometime after. The city became extraordinarily wealthy through trade, serving as the endpoint of a land route that connected the east with Greece and beyond while also serving as a mid point for sea trade between the Aegean and the Black Sea.⁸ It maintained the favor of the Emperor for financial reasons, and it became the site of the provincial assembly. This imperial favor most likely mitigated the Hellenic nationalism that arose in other Greek cities during the late second century AD⁹, and Nicomedia accumulated many honors and was labeled ‘greatest metropolis, leading city of Bithynia and Pontus, Hadrianic Severianic Nicomedia, twice *neocorus*, sacred asylum, friend and ally of the Roman people.’¹⁰

Like his hometown, Arrian was deeply institutionalized in the Roman world. Although ethnically Greek, his family held Roman citizenship from at least the time of the Flavian emperors and most likely much before that.¹¹ His first name, Lucius, indicates the Roman who granted him citizenship, but like many Greeks he kept a Greek name, Xenophon, alongside the Roman one. Arrian spurned the local schools frequented by the aristocracy with Roman citizenship to study in Nicopolis with Epictetus, a Greek stoic and an ex-slave. After his schooling, he began the *cursus honorum* and became one of the very first Greeks to participate in high levels of Roman government. Arrian advanced through patronage of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian to the rank of consul before retiring to Athens, presumably to write the history under discussion as well as other works.

⁸ Stadter (1980) p.3

⁹ *ibid* p.8: “The Greeks were difficult to assimilate [into the Roman Empire]-- and reluctant to be assimilated...the Greek cities remained aloof, asking only their freedom and the maximum independence. Most Greeks of some pretensions in the first century AD preferred not to become any more involved than necessary with Rome on a governmental level...”

¹⁰ OCD

¹¹ See the discussion in Stadter (1980) p.2 ff, and Syme (1982)

In all respects, Arrian is an anomaly for his social situation, and seems to have been especially prone to difficulties determining a single identity to all the groups with whom he interacted.

Arrian is among the first to become thoroughly integrated into the Roman system. Neither from old Italic stock which had settled in the East nor from one of the dynastic families to which Rome had found it politic to grant citizenship and advancement to high position, from a province which produced no known senators in the first and only four in the second century, he nevertheless rose to one of the most important posts in the empire.¹²

But in no respect is this more apparent than in the relationship that his city and biography have toward Roman and Greek loyalties. Nicomedia was considered a Greek city by the Romans, a Bithynian city by the Greeks, and probably a Greek city that liked Rome by its inhabitants. Like his city, Arrian maintained a Greek and a Roman identity, as evidenced by his name. He grew up a Roman citizen surrounded by others who could not share the distinction. He was the Greek to his Roman colleagues, the Roman senator to his Bithynian countryman, and to the Greeks the Bithynian outsider (sympathetic to the Romans who were, in Greece, at the least confusing, at most despised). Arrian maintained an immense pride in his birthplace, evidenced by his history that he wrote about it, but still chose to reside in Athens after retirement. All information points to an Arrian with a chameleon-like social identity, ever changing at a time when social identity seems to be more important to Easterners than ever before.

And yet for all his possible identities, the choices that Arrian made seem to indicate which identity he most wanted to hold. His retirement in Athens and his desire to learn from Epictetus in Greece show a desire to join the Greek world. He makes several claims in the *Anabasis* of the tradition that he desired to join.

¹² *ibid.* p. 8

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶδε οὐκ ἀπαξιῶ ἑμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι...(I.12.5)

And so I do not flatter myself to state that I am among the best in Greek speech...

Arrian compares himself to the Greek tradition, and while it can be read merely as a statement of the language in which he was comfortable, his desire to be Alexander's Homer places him firmly within the Greek tradition. When Arrian had his choice of identity, he has promoted himself as a Greek.

Arrian was in fact a constant outsider who desired to be Greek, and he used his history with Alexander to bolster his own personal claim to Greekness, which is the basis of the second preface. He does this by displaying Alexander in the same liminal position that he himself seems to occupy and uses the narrative to exemplify an ascension to Greekness that Arrian himself wishes to achieve. The relationship between author and subject is developed particularly strongly by Arrian's second preface. To end the preface, Arrian states the following:

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶδε οὐκ ἀπαξιῶ ἑμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἰπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρος τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις. (I.12.5)

And so I do not flatter myself to count myself among the best in Greek speech, if in fact Alexander is among the best in military accomplishments.

The relationship of the author to the subject is one of dependence. Arrian will attain recognition among writers only if his subject attains recognition among his own peers, military leaders. And just as Arrian limits himself here to those ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, he also limits Alexander to Greek military commanders. In the second preface, Arrian compares other military accomplishments to the deeds of Alexander.

...ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν μέλει ἦσθη Ἀλεξάνδρος, ἐν ὅτῳ ἱέρων τε καὶ Γέλων καὶ Θήρων καὶ πολλοὶ ἄλλοι οὐδὲν τί Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐπεοικότερες, ὥστε πολὺ μείον γινώσκεται τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἢ τὰ φαυλότατα τῶν πάλαι ἔργων. ὁπότε

καὶ ἡ τῶν μυρίων σὺν Κύρῳ ἄνοδος ἐπὶ βασιλέα' Ἀρταξέρξην καὶ τὰ Κλεάρχου τε καὶ τῶν ἅμα αὐτῷ ἄλόντων παθήματα καὶ ἡ κατάβασις αὐτῶν ἐκείνων, ἣν Ξενοφῶν αὐτοὺς κατήγαγε, πολὺ τι ἐπιφανέστερα ἐς ἀνθρώπους Ξενοφῶντος ἕνεκά ἐστιν ἢ Ἀλέξανδρος τε καὶ τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα. (I.12.2-4)

But Alexander was never put in song, in the way that Hieron and Gelon and Theron and many others who were in no way similar to Alexander, thus the deeds of Alexander are thought to be much less than those insignificant events of the achievements before him. Whenever the Anabasis of the Ten Thousand with Cyrus against Artaxerxes and the suffering of Klearchus and of those having been caught with him and the decline of those men, when Xenophon led them himself, they are much better known among men because of Xenophon than is Alexander and his accomplishments.

In his comparisons, Arrian compares Alexander to Hieron, Gelon and Theron, three Greek generals, and avoids drawing comparisons with contemporary military commanders. Having served in the senate and the army, Arrian undoubtedly was familiar with the military accomplishments of Roman generals and could have presented a more vivid description to glorify the works of his subject (Julius Caesar comes especially to mind). Yet Arrian compares Alexander to Greek generals because he is concerned with drawing upon questions of Alexander's relationship to the Greek people, on which his own identity among them depends.

Thus Arrian's Greekness is dependent upon his ability to create a Greekness for Alexander. Alexander becomes Greek during the narrative between Arrian's two proems. Arrian truly begins with Alexander's campaign in Thrace, a campaign that is focused on the protection of Macedonia.¹³ The death of Phillip and Alexander's capture of power among the Greeks is condensed to less than a paragraph. Arrian mentions a military march to Athens, but is reluctant to detail the situation. He skips ahead to Alexander's campaigns near Macedonia and seems to want to start with his campaigns

¹³ I.1.4

outside of Greece, delaying the Persian battle in which Alexander was acting in the interest of the Greek union. Arrian seems to want to begin outside of Alexander's relations to Greece. His first battle (which could have easily been Athens) and his diplomatic skills (which could have been shown in his diplomatic move to power), are both exemplified with barbarian races. In Thrace, Alexander seems concerned only with his own region, not the Greek cause, because Arrian wanted to first portray an unGreek Alexander.

Alexander suddenly confronts his own Greekness at the siege of Thebes. During the battle, Alexander's identity as a foreign conqueror is confused with that of a Greek law-giver. Arrian does everything possible to show that Alexander does not want to fight against Thebes. Three times he emphasizes Alexander's patience when besieging the city.

Οὐ δὴ καὶ ἔστρατοπέδευσεν, ἐνδιδοὺς ἔτι τοῖς Θηβαίοις τριβήν...(I.7.7)

...οὐδὲ τότε προσέμιξε τοῖς τείχεσιν αὐτοῖς...(I.7.9)

Ἄλεξανδρος δέ, ἔτι γὰρ τοῖς Θηβαίοις διὰ φιλίας ἔλθειν μᾶλλον τι ἢ διὰ κινδύνον ἠθελε, διέτριβε πρὸς τῇ Καδμείᾳ κατεστρατοπεδευκῶς.(I.7.11)

Even then he encamped, giving a grace period to the Thebans...

...not even then did he attack their walls...

But Alexander, since he still wished to approach the Thebans on account of friendship rather than on account of harm, he waited, having staked out positions next to Kadmeia.

When the battle finally does break out, Arrian attributes responsibility to Ptolemy, son of Lagus, and Alexander is forced to protect the men whom Ptolemy has sent into battle.

With his patience, Arrian shows Alexander's concern for the Greek citizens.

In the following massacre, Arrian attributes responsibility to the Greeks at large, a move intended to connect the invading Macedonians, and thus Alexander, to the Greek nation.

”Ενθα δὴ ὀργῇ οὐχ οὕτως τι οἱ Μακεδόνες, ἀλλὰ Φωκῆις τε καὶ Πλαταιεῖς καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι δὲ Βοιωτοὶ οὐδὲ ἀμυνομένους ἔτι τοὺς Θηβαίους οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ ἔκτεινον, τοὺς μὲν ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις ἐπεισπίπτοντες, οὓς δὲ καὶ ἐς ἀλκὴν τετραμμένους, τοὺς δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἱεροῖς ἰκετεύοντας, οὔτε γυναικῶν οὔτε παίδων φειδόμενοι. Καὶ πάθος τοῦτό Ἑλληνικὸν μεγέθει τε τῆς ἀλούσης πόλεως καὶ ὀξύτητι τοῦ ἔργου, οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ καὶ τῷ παραλόγῳ ἐς τε τοὺς παθόντας καὶ τοὺς δράσαντας, οὐ μείον τι τοὺς ἄλλους Ἐλλενας ἢ καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς μετασχόντας τοῦ ἔργου ἐξέπληξε. (I.8.8-9)

Then in the rage, not so much the Macedonians, but the Phocians and Plataeans and the other Boetians killed without order the Thebans no longer able to defend themselves—some they killed in the houses, breaking into them, some rushed to fight, some they killed supplicating at the temples, and they showed pity neither to the women or children. And this Greek tragedy, by the size of the seized city and the harshness of the event, struck the other Greeks as it did those who had a hand in it, and it was no less unexpected to those suffering the event as to those doing it.

In his explanation of the reaction to the slaughter, Arrian takes blame away from the Macedonians and places it onto unmistakably Greek creeds, the Phocians, Plataeans and Boetians. But after his apology of the Macedonians, Arrian emphasizes that the Macedonians and the Greeks are one in their reaction. All of the players in this event and beyond are part of a feeling of horror, and the Macedonians are certainly included in τοὺς δράσαντας. Throughout the battle, Arrian is able to mitigate the responsibility of the Macedonian army so that they are no longer invaders but rather ξυμμαχοι (I.9.9, used after the battle for the first time).

The Macedonians become Greek during the battle, and Alexander personality and the perception of those around him changes remarkably as a result. In the first place,

Alexander becomes the protector of Greece in two ways. First, the blame for the bloodiness of the battle is laid upon Thebes herself at the mandate of divine wrath.¹⁴

...ὥς τῆς τε ἐν τῷ Μηδικῷ πολέμῳ προδοσίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων διὰ μακροῦ ταύτην δίκην ἐκτίσαντας Θηβαίους...(I.9.7)

..[They also said] that Thebes had paid the price ten fold for betraying the Greeks in the Persian War...

Thus Alexander, like the Macedonians, is released from all responsibility. Then, the razing of Thebes and the punishment of its citizens is done by a consensus of ξυμμαχοι, and Alexander gains distinction for being the only one to care about the house of Pindar out of reverence.¹⁵ Through both of these actions, Alexander has become the defender of Greece and of Greek culture—the tool of divine wrath that punishes not the betrayers of the Macedonian empire but the traitors to all Hellas.

After the battle, Alexander both acts and is received as a Greek in contrast to his actions earlier. In chapter 1, when he first interacted with the Greek city-states, Alexander called his own council. He requested troops and used force with the Greeks, approaching Athens as an invading army. After the battle at Thebes, the Greek states accept his leadership (evident in how they allow the house not to be raised), though Arrian displays the responsibility for settling Thebes to be theirs. Next, Alexander returns to Macedon and sacrifices, and action he did once before the battle of Thebes. In the sacrifice before Thebes, Alexander defeats the Getae and sacrifices to Zeus the Preserver, Heracles and Ister. After the battle of Thebes, Arrian allows Alexander to do only one thing before the invasion of Persia—sacrifice to Olympian Zeus and keep the Olympic games, the symbol of Pan-Hellenic Identity since the 8th century BCE. Finally,

¹⁴ I.9.5-9

¹⁵ I.9.10

it is only after the battle of Thebes that Alexander becomes concerned with his fame in the poetic tradition. Before the battle, Alexander was concerned with the barbarian's fear of him, not his poetic glory.¹⁶ After the battle, he concerns himself both with Pindar's house and an oracle that marks his future within the poetic tradition.¹⁷ This change affects his physical appearance as well, for when he comes to the Hellespont, the ceremonial changing of his armor from Macedonian to bronze-age Greek.¹⁸ He becomes the physical embodiment of the Greek tradition and the Greek ideals of manliness that were exalted in the Homeric tradition. Thus, the Theban slaughter becomes the means through which Alexander becomes more than a barbarian invader. He becomes the representative and defender of Greek values and culture.

It is only at this point that Arrian connects his fate with that of Alexander. The second proem comes right after the battle, and Arrian attempts to connect himself to Alexander's newly formed Greek identity in the mind of the reader. He delays attributing his dependent relationship because he desires his reader to connect the author not with the barbarian Alexander before Thebes, but with the Greek Alexander after Thebes—the historical representation of Arrian's personal ideal. This does not, however, prevent Arrian from evaluating Alexander's character. Arrian criticizes Alexander in book four, and the criteria on which Arrian criticizes Alexander are indicative of the traits that Arrian wishes for himself.

Arrian's critiques of Alexander all concern a divergence from Greek identity. These critiques come in the fourth book, after Alexander's military campaign over Persia, when the army's stay in Persia began to blend barbarian customs with their Greek

¹⁶ I.4.7

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ I.11.8

identity. In his criticisms, Arrian sets the vice attributed to Alexander is an indication of barbarity.

Καὶ ἐγὼ οὔτε τὴν ἄγαν ταύτην τιμωρίαν Βήσσου ἐπαινῶ, ἀλλὰ βαρβαρικὴν εἶναι, τίθεμαι τῶν ἀκρωτηρίων τὴν λώβην καὶ ὑπαχθῆναι Ἄλεξανδρον ξυμφημι ἐς ζῆλον τοῦ Μηδικοῦ τε καὶ Περσικοῦ πλοῦτου καὶ τῆς κατὰ τοὺς βαρβάρους βασιλέας οὐκ ἴσης ἐς τοὺς ὑπηκόους ξυνδιαιτήσεως ἐσθῆτά τε ὅτι Μηδικὴν ἀντὶ τῆς Μακεδονικῆς τε καὶ πατρίου Ἡρακελίδης ὧν μετέλαβεν, οὐδαμῆ ἐπαινῶ, καὶ τὴν κίταριν τὴν Περσικὴν τῶν νενικημένων ἀντὶ ὧν αὐτὸς ὁ νικῶν πάλαι ἐφόρει ἀμείψαι οὐκ ἐπηδέσθη, οὐδὲν τούτων ἐπαινῶ, ἀλλ' εἶπερ τι ἄλλο, καὶ τὰ Ἄλεξανδρου μεγάλα πράγματα ἐς τεκμηρίωσιν τίθεμαι ὡς οὔτε τὸ σῶμα ὅτῳ εἴη καρτερόν, οὔτε ὅστις γένει ἐπιφανής, οὔτε κατὰ πόλεμον εἰ δὴ τις διευτυχόη ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ Ἄλεξανδρος... τούτων οὐδὲν τι ὄφελος ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνθρώπου, εἰ μὴ σωφρονεῖν ἐν ταύτῳ ὑπάρχοι τούτῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ τὰ μεγάλα, ὡς δοκεῖ, πράγματα πράξαντι. (IV.7.4-5)

This over-punishing of Bessus I cannot approve; I regard as barbaric the mutilation of the extremities, and I agree that Alexander was carried away to the extent both of copying Medic and Persian splendour, and also the fashion of barbaric kings to treat their subjects as lower creatures. Nor do I at all commend his taking to Median garb instead of the Macedonian traditional dress, especially since he was a descendant of Heracles. Moreover, he did not blush to exchange the head-dress he had long worn as a conqueror for the tiara of the conquered Persians. I commend none of these things, but I hold that Alexander's own splendid achievements prove, if aught can prove, that neither vigorous bodily strength nor splendour of birth nor greater fortune in war than Alexander's own...not one of these things is of any use to make a man's happiness, unless the man that has done, in the eyes of the world, these mighty deeds, has learnt the mastery of himself.¹⁹

In the first of the four events that Arrian evaluates, he makes his evaluative criteria to be the barbarousness of the action. He criticizes the influence of barbaric tradition in the mutilation of Bessus and the barbaric usurpation of Alexander's physical appearance (the physical manifestation of his removal of Greek identity) because they run contradictory to a man's ability to be happy (*eudaimonia*).²⁰ That is, they run counter to Arrian's

¹⁹ Robson, trans.

²⁰ I have found little scholarship about imagery in Arrian, but it is interesting that Alexander is always wearing what defines him. He changed to Greek armor when he entered Asia, now he has lost his Greek

ability to be happy. The other three critiques follow the criteria of barbarianism.²¹

Arrian uses these critiques to explore his own definition of the Greek identity, and thus to further redefine the Greekness that he has achieved. Having used Alexander to ascend to Greekness, Arrian is now portrays himself as a judge of Greek ideals, something that can only be accepted if his readers now accept that Arrian as a standard for Greek ideals.

Thus, the content and placement of the second preface cannot adequately be explained solely within the text, nor by considering the audience, nor even through analogy to historiographic tradition. But if we read the *Anabasis* as a means through which Arrian explores his own personal identity, we see the second preface connects him to Alexander's ascension to Greekness. Arrian uses Alexander to become Greek, and his criticisms are an indication that Arrian expects the reader to consider him a judge of Greek ideals only after he has made an argument for his own Greek identity. In judging Arrian, the personal nature of this individual text is of the utmost importance. It cannot be ignored or delegated to a mere fascination with the Greek language. For Arrian, this text truly is his ... While Arrian desires to take on Greek identity, I hope further studies can explain how he reconciled his Roman past and identify how his Roman sympathies influenced the *Anabasis* of Alexander.

morals and changes into Persian garb. I take these as indicators of a connection between characters and appearance in Arrian that will be fascinating to pursue in further study.

²¹ The second, Cleitus's murder, is a critique of drunkenness as a barbaric practice. The third, Callisthenes's reproach, is an evaluation of Alexander's acceptance of mortality at the hands of the Greek gods (unlike Achilles, he refuses it). The final one is an exploration of Alexander's divergence from Greek political traditions. All are criticisms relating to Alexander's achievement of Greek ideals. (IV.7-14)

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