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## Alexander the Great and Achilles: The origin of the connection between the Homeric hero and the king of Macedon

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ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND ACHILLES: THE ORIGIN OF THE CONNECTION  
BETWEEN THE HOMERIC HERO AND THE KING OF MACEDON

A Thesis Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
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## **Introduction**

Alexander III of Macedon is one of the most famous figures in all of history. From inheriting a kingdom at the age of twenty, to conquering the mighty Persian Empire by the age of twenty-six, to his untimely death at the age of thirty-two, Alexander achieved what no man before or after ever could. He accomplished some of the greatest military and political feats known to history and remade most of Greece and the Near East in his image. He is remembered universally today as “Alexander the Great”; was worshiped as a god in Egypt, and hated as a thief and murderer in places like modern day Afghanistan. It is beyond doubt that he was one of the most influential people who ever lived. His death ushered in the Hellenistic Age in the Greek world, which was a relatively peaceful time when both trade and travel flourished in the newly expanded Greek territories. Of course, Alexander had help with creating his image and accomplishing all that he did. He inherited a vastly strengthened Macedonian kingdom from his father Philip II, who had restructured the Macedonian military and transformed Macedon from a backwater kingdom into a military powerhouse. Alexander received an impressive education from his tutor Aristotle, who helped to cultivate Alexander’s interests in literature, science, and philosophy. So, while Alexander’s achievements are some of the most impressive feats in human history, he had help from those close to him in becoming the “great” figure that he is regarded as today.

While Alexander himself was a remarkable individual, his story is extremely connected with the stories of other important figures who helped shape not only his actions throughout his thirty-two years of life, but his legacy that has endured for thousands of years. One of these figures is the character of Achilles. Given that Achilles was not an actual historical figure and instead the hero of the *Iliad*, he did little to shape the actual events of Alexander the Great’s life.

Instead, the heroic ideals associated with Achilles, such as his prowess as a warrior, helped to shape Alexander's legacy that have endured to this day. Alexander and Achilles are frequently compared to each other by the primary sources that wrote about Alexander the Great. Those who wrote about Alexander both during this lifetime and after his death, compared his actions and decisions to those of Achilles. The ancient historians Quintus Curtius Rufus, Arrian, and Plutarch all compare Alexander to Achilles in their works on Alexander. These primary sources on the life of Alexander even go so far as to make the assertion that Alexander was related by blood to Achilles, as well as claiming that some of Alexander's major accomplishments and actions were done in emulation of Achilles and his actions during the Trojan War as detailed by Homer. Modern scholars have also included the idea that Alexander was emulating Achilles in their analysis of Alexander, however few have deeply explored the roots of the comparison between Alexander and Achilles. How did it come to be so widely recognized among ancient sources that Alexander was emulating Achilles in his actions, and why would these sources decide to include that comparison in their accounts of Alexander's accomplishments? Did these ancient sources have a source of their own that led them to believe that Alexander and Achilles were so similar, or did they have their own motives for presenting Alexander's actions as a mirror image of Achilles? Examination of the origin of the comparison between Alexander and Achilles by the primary sources of Alexander will help to shed light on the legacy of Alexander by inspecting how this connection impacted Alexander the Great himself, and the development of the Greco-Roman world after Alexander's death.

## Who was Alexander the Great?

First, who was Alexander the Great, and why has he remained one of the most important and remembered figures in history? Alexander III was born in 356 BCE in Pella, the capital of the growing Macedonian empire. He was the son of Olympias, a princess from the Molossian kingdom of Epirus in northwest Greece, and the new king of Macedon, Philip II. Alexander would spend most of his life and political career conducting a three-thousand-mile campaign throughout Asia. Eventually, he would create one of the largest empires ever known, which stretched from Greece to northern India. He is regarded as one of history's greatest military commanders and the argument has been made that he was undefeated in his many battles.

Alexander grew up in a palace surrounded by political intrigue, and watched as his father instituted radical political, cultural, and military reforms that would transform Macedon into the dominant power in the Greek world. During his childhood, he was tutored by Aristotle at the Temple of the Nymphs at Mieza.<sup>1</sup> Alexander was part of a group of children of Macedonian nobles that included Ptolemy, Hephaestion, and Cassander, who would later on become the core of Alexander's "Companions".<sup>2</sup> The "Companions" were members of the Macedonian aristocracy who were close to Alexander and held many of the important military positions during Alexander's campaigns. While Aristotle taught Alexander and the other students about medicine, philosophy, morals, logic, and art, the thing that Alexander really took away from his education was his love of the epic poet Homer. He especially developed a love of the *Iliad*, and was gifted an annotated copy of it by Aristotle which Alexander would take with him on his

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Green. *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C.: A Historical Biography*. (University of California Press, 2013), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Green, 55.

many campaigns.<sup>3</sup> When Alexander turned sixteen, his education ended and he became regent of Macedon while Philip left to wage war with the Thracians to the north.

Then, Alexander accompanied his father on his campaigns in Greece and the two worked together to defeat the armies of Thebes and Athens at the Battle of Chaeronea in Boeotia. This was a decisive victory for Philip II, as it demonstrated that the Macedonian army was now the dominant force in the military sphere of the Greek world. Upon returning to Pella after these campaigns and despite the success of Alexander during the Battle of Chaeronea, much political strife was about to unfold. Alexander's mother Olympias was not Philip II's only wife. She was one of several and when Alexander and Philip returned to Pella, Philip married a Macedonian woman named Cleopatra Eurydice. This posed a problem for Alexander, because if Philip and Cleopatra were to have a child together, that child would have had a more legitimate claim to the throne than Alexander. This is because of the fact that any child of Philip and Cleopatra would have been fully Macedonian, where Alexander was only half-Macedonian because his mother was an Epirote Greek and not a pure-bred Macedonian.<sup>4</sup> This fear led Alexander and his mother to leave the Macedonian court and go to her native kingdom of the Molossians for a few years before returning to Pella after it became clear that Philip had no intentions of disowning his highly regarded son. These fears felt by Alexander and his mother about Alexander's status as heir to the throne play into speculation regarding the real perpetrator of Philip II's murder in 336 BCE. Philip was murdered at the wedding of his daughter by his own bodyguard, Pausanias, whose motives are still being debated by scholars.

While the death of Philip II came as a shock to the Macedonians, in the end it worked out favorably for Alexander. At the age of twenty, he was declared King of Macedon almost

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<sup>3</sup> Robin Lane Fox, *The Search for Alexander* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Cartledge. *Alexander the Great*. (Vintage Books, 2004), 95.

immediately by the Macedonian nobles and went about eliminating any potential rivals for the throne. But after the death of Philip II, Greek states such as Athens and Thebes, as well as the Thracian tribes, started to revolt against the powerful Macedonians. Alexander acted quickly to put down these revolts, by committing the first of three major massacres of his career. This atrocity occurred when Thebes fell to Alexander and he had the adult males slaughtered, the women and children sold into slavery, and everything in the city destroyed except for the temples. After brutally putting down the revolt at Thebes, Alexander was able to gain control of most of the Balkans. With the Balkans secured and the Macedonian noble Antipater acting as regent, Alexander set out on his ultimate goal; conquering the Persian empire. This was a goal that he had inherited from his father, and in 334 BCE he crossed the Hellespont into Asia and began his conquest of Persia. He began the campaign by winning the Battle of the Granicus against the Persian army in Anatolia and then continued to advance through the eastern Persian satrapies of the empire. During his advance across Anatolia, he went to view the legendary Gordian Knot at the ancient Phrygian capital of Gordium. According to legend, whoever was able to undo the Gordian Knot was to become the “King of Asia”. The story goes that Alexander declared that it didn’t matter how the knot was undone, and hacked through it with his sword.<sup>5</sup> While there is debate about the truth of this story, it is a prime example of the type of legend and myth that surrounded Alexander during his lifetime and demonstrates the way that he presented the takeover of Asia as his ultimate destiny.<sup>6</sup> Legends such as this one show how Alexander used his strength and character to make public claims to his overlordship of Asia while he was on his campaigns.

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Cartledge, 143-144.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Cartledge, 143-144.



In 333 BCE, Alexander focused his energy on the Levant and Syria. He now faced the main Persian army, led by King Darius III. They met in battle at Issus, which was won by the ever-victorious Alexander. This battle was significant for many reasons, but one of the most important reasons was that Alexander captured Darius's family, whom the Persian king had left behind when he fled the field following his defeat. When Darius attempted to negotiate for his family's return, Alexander made the claim that as the King of Asia, it was up to him to set the terms. Alexander then went on to take control of Syria, and on his way to Egypt, attacked Tyre and committed the next massacre of his campaign. Capturing Tyre required a difficult and long siege for Alexander and resulted in his killing all the men of military age and selling the women and children into slavery.

Alexander next made his way into Egypt, where he committed another massacre following his siege of Gaza. He once again killed all men of military age and sold the women and children into slavery. However, after the massacre at Gaza, Alexander achieved impressive feats while in Egypt. Egypt was one of the richest Persian territories, and after visiting the sacred oracle of the sun god Ammon at the Siwa Oasis in the Libyan desert, he was crowned pharaoh. Alexander started to refer to himself as Zeus-Ammon in an attempt to blend together his Greek roots with the people who he was trying to rule, along with establishing a legitimate claim to power by recognizing himself as the descendent of a long line of pharaohs. While in Egypt, Alexander also established the most famous of his many colonies, all named after himself, Alexandria. Alexander's time in Egypt was an especially important part of his conquests because he was able to cement himself as a legitimate ruler for a vitally important part of the Persian Empire, and spent a great deal of time and energy blending together his Greek background with the cultural practices of the Egyptians.

After his brief time in Egypt, Alexander made his way to the central portions of the Persian empire. In 331 BCE, he once again defeated Darius at the Battle of Gaugamela, which was the final decisive battle with Darius, as well as his final decisive battle in his conquest of Persia. Then, using the Persian Royal Road, Alexander sent his troops to the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire, Persepolis, while leading a small force in pursuit of Darius, who was now a fugitive. Unfortunately for Darius, he was taken prisoner by Bessus the satrap of Bactria. With Alexander fast approaching, Bessus had his men kill Darius and then declared himself as Darius' successor. Alexander helped to bury Darius' body and claimed that while Darius was dying he named Alexander as the successor to the Achaemenid throne. Some scholars believe that the Persian Empire fell with the death of Darius, however some believe that as basic ways of life for the Persians remained relatively the same under Alexander's rule as they had under previous rules, Alexander may have actually been the "last of the Achaemenids".<sup>7</sup> Either way, Alexander was now the ruler of the Persian Empire, and his goal of defeating the mighty Persians was complete.

After the defeat of Darius III, Bessus still posed a problem for Alexander. Led by Bessus, the satrapy of Bactria resisted Alexander. Beginning in 330 BCE after the death of Darius, Alexander set out to conquer territories that comprised parts of modern Afghanistan. He spent the next two years conquering Bactria and had to face intense guerrilla warfare in the process. This was a challenging time for Alexander because he not only had to deal with the nationalistic Bactrians, but he had to do so while navigating the intense mountain terrain of the region.<sup>8</sup> It is during his conquest of Bactria that Alexander puts into practice the idea of a diplomatic marriage. In the early spring of 327 BCE, he captured the Sogdian Rock where the Bactrian

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<sup>7</sup> Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Cartledge, 154.

noblewoman, Roxanne, was hiding. The Sogdian Rock was a fortress that was used as a hiding place for Bactrian nobles during Alexander's siege because they believed it to be impregnable. A volunteer force of Macedonian mountaineers climbed up the Sogdian Rock, and when it surrendered to Alexander he found Oxyartes of Bactria, a Bactrian nobleman, and his family at the top. Oxyartes' daughter, Roxanne, was among those at the fortress and Alexander was said to have fallen in love with her at first sight because of her immense beauty.<sup>9</sup> He was taking a page out of his father's book because Philip had "fought his wars by marriage", and by marrying a Bactrian noblewoman Alexander hoped to assert his authority and quell some of the unrest of that region.<sup>10</sup> So, before heading into India, Alexander married Roxanne.

Following his conquest of the Persian empire and Bactria, rather than administering the great empire that he had already acquired, Alexander then set his sights on conquering another formidable opponent. In the summer of 327 BCE he set off to conquer the Indian subcontinent. He crossed the Indus River and fought the Battle of the Hydaspes against the Indian King Porus, which Alexander ultimately won after a very hard fight. Once Alexander and his troops had defeated Porus and begun their invasion of the Indian subcontinent, his goal of conquering everything he encountered was about to be frustrated. After years of constant military campaigns all for the glory of Alexander of Macedon, and facing war elephants during the Battle of the Hydaspes, Alexander's army refused to go any farther into the East. So, after receiving omens that bad things awaited him in India, Alexander agreed to lead the army home. After making this decision, Alexander and his armies made their way down the Indus Valley to the ocean. They faced and conquered many Indian tribes and clans, such as the Malli clan of modern-day Multan, while following the lower Indus River. After the hard-fought campaign through India, Alexander

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<sup>9</sup> LT Bernd Horn, *No Easy Task: Fighting in Afghanistan*, ed. Emily Spencer (Dundurn Press Ltd, 2012), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Cartledge, 155.

met his unfortunate end in 323 at the age of thirty-two while in Babylon. Like the death of his father, mystery shrouds the death of Alexander. Plutarch recounts that Alexander spent a night, and the whole next day, drinking copiously and then developed a fever which worsened until he was unable to speak. Eventually this worsened until he died.<sup>11</sup> A second account by Diodorus reports that Alexander experienced excessive pain after drinking a large bowl of unmixed wine in honor of Heracles. This was followed by eleven days of weakness and an agonizing death.<sup>12</sup> Following Alexander's death, a war of succession broke out to determine who would take control of the vast empire that Alexander had conquered throughout his life.

While Alexander was an actual historical figure and accomplished impressive feats which have been recounted since the fourth century BCE, Alexander's character has also become as legendary as his actions. Obviously a brilliant general, Alexander was also a patron of the arts and sciences and was said to have had a charismatic personality. He had many close friendships, the closest being with his old schoolmate, Hephaestion, but was said to have descended into symptoms of paranoia and megalomania after Hephaestion's death.<sup>13</sup> His boundless ambition drove him to the far ends of the Earth, and perhaps played a role in the delusions of grandeur that he displayed throughout his life, such as believing it was possible to be descended from Zeus and to portray himself as a deity. While he would turn out to be an immensely important historical figure, his desire to deify himself serves as an example of his delusions as to his ultimate importance, and his egotism. He also drank heavily and had no qualms about killing people when

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<sup>11</sup> Plutarch. *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*. Translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977).

<sup>12</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica Books VII–XVII*, trans. C.H. Oldfather (Harvard University Press, 1935).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Green. *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C.: A Historical Biography*. (University of California Press, 2013).

it suited him, as shown by the massacres that he committed during his campaigns. The character of Alexander is full of dark traits which add even more layers to his complex thirty-two-year life.

## Let's Meet Achilles

Unlike Alexander the Great, Achilles, of course, was not an actual historical figure. He is most prominently known as the hero of the Trojan War and as the central character of Homer's *Iliad*. Achilles has been the subject of or appeared in countless poems, plays, songs, and was even the central object of worship in hero cults in antiquity. Because of the vast amount of material produced about Achilles, many facets of his story have survived and are even inspiring new works, such as Madeline Miller's award-winning novel, *The Song of Achilles*, and Brad Pitt's film *Troy*. Just like Alexander the Great, Achilles is clearly still a notable character from antiquity, and the attributes that he is associated with can shed light on works that he appears in, along with figures he is closely connected to.

The literature that features Achilles, such as the *Iliad*, states that he is the son of a sea nymph, Thetis, and King Peleus, the ruler of the Kingdom of Phthia in ancient Thessaly. The Greek poet, Statius, living in the first century AD, invented perhaps the most well-known myth about Achilles. Statius' uncompleted epic poem, *Achilleid*, tells the story of how Achilles' mother dipped him into the river Styx in the Underworld when he was an infant to make his body invulnerable to attacks.<sup>14</sup> However, since Thetis held him by his heel to dip him in the river, his heel remained his one weak point. This story gave rise to the term, "Achilles Heel" to describe a reasonably strong person's one debilitating weakness. Achilles was also said to have been tutored by the centaur Chiron, who lived on Mount Pelion in the region of Thessaly in modern day Greece. Thetis was told that her son's fate would either be one of glory and victory that would cause him to die young, or that he would live a long life of obscurity. According to Homer, even though his mother tried to hide him and give him an education that would last

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<sup>14</sup> Christine Harrauer, "Why Styx? Some Remarks on Statius's *Achilleid*," *Wiener Studien* 123 (2010): pp. 167-75, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/24752330>, 167.

throughout his lifetime, Achilles would go on to fight in the Trojan War to obtain glory, but would have to deal with the tragedy of losing his best friend.

While Achilles has been a character in many different poems, plays, and other works throughout time, his most prominent role was being the central character in the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* tells the story of a few weeks of the alleged ten-year-long Trojan War which focuses on Achilles and the Trojan warrior Hector. While there may have been an actual historical conflict that took place at Troy in the thirteenth century BCE, it is more akin to a brief conflict instead of a decade long epic war fought for the beautiful Helen. The *Iliad* opens with a disagreement between Agamemnon, leader of the Achaean forces, and Achilles, since Achilles felt he had been dishonored by Agamemnon. This leads to a conflict between the two when Agamemnon tries to sacrifice the daughter of a priest of Apollo, and Achilles vows to protect a prophet who declares that the daughter must be returned or else the plague that Apollo inflicted on the troops will not end. The girl is kept safe, but an angry Agamemnon tries to dishonor Achilles further by demanding that he instead give up his captured slave, or in some interpretations his close friend or lover, Briseis. This angers Achilles, so he refuses to fight alongside his fellow Greeks and asks his mother to intervene on his behalf with Zeus. Thetis asks Zeus to help the Trojans gain ground against the Achaeans so that they will see how much they need Achilles to help them.

As the Trojans edge closer and closer to the Greek camp, Agamemnon tries to mend relations with Achilles, but Achilles instead urges the Greeks to sail home with him. When the Trojans are on the verge of defeating the Greeks, Achilles' close friend, Patroclus, decides to lead the Greeks into battle wearing Achilles' armor. Patroclus succeeds in pushing the Trojans back, but is unfortunately killed by Hector, Achilles' Trojan rival. The angered Achilles returns to the fight and goes on to slaughter the Trojans all the while seeking out Hector. The predestined

battle between Hector and Achilles does indeed occur, and when Achilles' victory seems certain Hector begs him to treat his body with respect after he is dead. Achilles proclaims that that is a hopeless notion, saying, "my rage, my fury would drive me now to hack your flesh away and eat you raw – such agonies you have caused me".<sup>15</sup> This declaration is followed by the death of Hector, which is then followed by Achilles dragging Hector's corpse, attached by his heels to a chariot, around the battlefield. After exacting revenge on his rival and the killer of his closest companion, Achilles is persuaded to return Hector's body to his family so that they can hold a funeral for him. The god Hermes helps Hector's father, Priam, go to Achilles and pleads with him to return Hector's body so that it can be buried. The *Iliad* closes with the funeral of Hector, and while it doesn't describe the death of Achilles, it is foreshadowed that doom does indeed lie ahead for him.

Although the *Iliad* is primarily a story about the rivalry between Achilles and Hector, there are important relationships between Achilles and numerous other characters. Perhaps the most important of those relationships is that of Achilles and Patroclus. In the various analyses of their relationship, Achilles and Patroclus have been defined as friends, brothers in arms, and lovers. It is mostly later authors who suggest that Achilles and Patroclus could have been lovers, since it is never mentioned in the *Iliad*. Furthermore, there is no distinction in ancient Greek between the words, "homosexual" and "heterosexual," because it wasn't unusual for people to engage in same-sex relations.<sup>16</sup> So, Homer wouldn't necessarily have thought of making a distinction between Achilles and Patroclus' sexuality, and he also does not mention that the two had any sexual relationship. Despite the lack of sexual relations between them in the *Iliad*, there still has been plenty of speculation and arguments about the two men being lovers. From

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<sup>15</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin Books, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard University Press, 1989).



antiquity to the present, people have interpreted their relationship through their own lens. For example, in fifth century BCE Athens, the relationship might have been viewed in terms of what the Greeks called *paiderastia*. This was a custom where there was a romantic relationship between an older man and a younger teenage male. Although in the *Iliad* Achilles and Patroclus are around the same age, this still serves as an example of how the intense bond between the two men has been interpreted in different ways during different time periods. Throughout history the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus has been used to describe other homosexual relationships between men. Essentially, the two have become symbols of homosexual love and are often referenced when implying a homosexual relationship. So, even though Homer doesn't explicitly state that these characters were involved in a romantic relationship, there is no denying that Achilles and Patroclus had an intense bond and were powerfully connected to each other throughout the *Iliad*, and many other stories told about them such as *The Song of Achilles*.

Overall, Achilles is a complicated and complex character. Like Alexander, he is a figure who has survived antiquity and has had many versions of his legacy carry on into the modern world. From the story of the *Iliad*, to the legend of the Achilles' heel, to the hero cults of antiquity, the character of Achilles was portrayed as the ideal Greek warrior who was the epitome of human excellence. He was the perfect Greek warrior who embodied strength, courage, and success in battle. The various tales about him taught their audiences about weakness, fate, love, and standing up for what you believe in, along with the idea that actions have consequences that cannot be avoided. Achilles and Alexander the Great are two figures whose legacies have passed the test of time, and are frequently compared with each other in order to highlight the Greek ideals which are present in both of them.

### **The Connection Between Alexander and Achilles**

Alexander the Great has become connected to Achilles through many cultural practices that perpetuated the legends of both of these men. In antiquity, it was common for aristocratic families to trace their lineage back to an important deity or heroic figure. Alexander was no exception to this, claiming descent from Achilles, among other heroes such as Hercules, and even the Egyptian god Ammon. Alexander believed that he was descended from Achilles through his mother's bloodline. The Molossian dynasty of Olympias' home kingdom of Epirus claimed descent from Achilles through his grandson, Pyrrhus.<sup>17</sup> This linkage to Achilles would have been immensely influential on Alexander as a child, leading him to believe that he was directly descended from a revered Greek hero. The ancestral relationship between Alexander and Achilles is significant because of the way that it emphasizes the importance of these types of genealogies in the ancient Greek world. For people, such as the Macedonians, heroic myths like that of Achilles would have been an actual reality and would have shaped the way that families viewed their inherited legacies.

Along with the ancestral association between Alexander and Achilles, Alexander's love of the *Iliad* also established a link between the two. Alexander's favorite line from the *Iliad* emphasizes his ambition to be 'a good king and strong spear fighter' but also to follow in the footsteps of Achilles and his aims 'to strive to be the best and outstanding above all others'.<sup>18</sup> Alexander's desire to be "great" might have been inspired by his love of the *Iliad*, and his desire to emulate the perfection of Achilles. Another of Alexander's tutors helped to foster the connection between Alexander and Achilles. That tutor, Lysimachus of Acarnania, known for indulging his royal pupil's fantasies, used to call Alexander Achilles, Philip Peleus, and himself

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Green, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Green, 41.

Phoenix, who was Achilles' elderly mentor in the *Iliad*.<sup>19</sup> From his supposed familial relationship to being referred to as Achilles by his tutor, Alexander was clearly well acquainted with the character of Achilles before Aristotle helped foster his love of the *Iliad*.

These linkages between Alexander and Achilles serve to show that the connection wasn't something that the primary sources on Alexander invented. They had specific reasons for documenting these and other connections between Alexander and Achilles, such as wanting to impose Roman ideals onto Alexander, becoming Alexander's Homer, and writing about Alexander's character. The primary sources for Alexander, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Arrian, and Plutarch, all point out ways in which Alexander acted in emulation of Achilles. All three accounts of Alexander draw numerous parallels between him and Achilles while discussing the actions of Alexander's lifetime, and even those legends that characterized the myth of Alexander after his death. While much has been written on the connection between Alexander the Great and Achilles, little has been said about the origin of this connection or why it appeared in the first place. What motive did the primary sources of Alexander have for connecting Alexander to Achilles, and what was the original inspiration for the comparison? Understanding the origin of the connection between Alexander the Great and Achilles will help people to better understand both Alexander and Achilles as important historical and literary figures respectively, while also affording a better understanding of what the ancient sources on Alexander deemed worthy of writing about him and what kind of image of Alexander III of Macedon they wanted to portray. Establishing the origin of this connection will also shed light on how the life and legacy of Alexander shaped the Hellenistic world immediately after his death, and what would become the Western world later.

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Green, 42.

### **A Note on the Recording of History in Antiquity**

Before examining the main primary sources of Alexander the Great, it is important to understand how history was recorded during the lifetime of Alexander. How is a person supposed to record history when he knows that he is making history? Alexander made sure to take a historian with him on his campaigns to record his accomplishments. Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew, was Alexander's historian throughout the majority of his campaigns, up until 328 BCE when Alexander brought Callisthenes up on charges of conspiracy and had him killed. Evidence of Callisthenes' works only survived in the works of Alexander historians who were writing during the Roman imperial period, but since then have perished.

The recording of history during the life of Alexander would have been very different from how history is done today. Historical research today consists of evaluating sources, consulting primary and secondary sources, and utilizing the materials that are available to help answer specific research questions. Historical research is used not only to examine the past, but to understand how the past has shaped the current world in which we live. The ancient Greeks' historical works relied less on source analysis and creating a thorough bibliography rich with enough sources to provide a full and complete account of the topic at hand, and instead focused more on recounting grand stories of grand men in order to emphasize a moral message. Works that were considered to be of a historical nature often included elements of myth, and would attribute important events in Greek history to the gods or goddesses. In the case of Alexander, as someone who was entirely aware of his own importance, he would have taken Callisthenes along on his campaigns to not simply record the events that were unfolding, but also to record how great and heroic a leader Alexander was. While history can be manipulated for political, religious, or personal reasons, there was a greater proclivity for that in antiquity when the rules

of historical writing were less defined than they are today. This is important to take into account because as the sources of Alexander are examined it is crucial to understand how the recording of history in antiquity differed from the way that it is done today.

## **The Royal Journal**

While Callisthenes is an important source of information for later primary sources discussing Alexander, one other source of information for Alexander's primary sources would have been the Royal Journals. The Royal Journals, or Ephemerides, are a hotly debated and controversial topic among historians. The term, Ephemerides, is used to refer to a day-to-day record of Alexander's campaigns throughout his life.<sup>20</sup> The use of the term "Ephemerides" can be confused with the work by Strattis titled, "Ephemerides about the Exploits of Alexander". This work was most likely written a generation after the death of Alexander and is a commentary on the Royal Journal and Alexander's campaigns.<sup>21</sup> The exact nature of the journals, the authorship, the authentication, and the content are all debated by historians. On a basic level, historians agree that some sort of daily record was kept by Alexander's chief secretary, Eumenes of Cardia. He was from Thrace, and served not only as Alexander's secretary but also as a commander in the Macedonian army.<sup>22</sup> Eumenes was an important member of Alexander's entourage and played a large role in the creation of the Royal Journals of Alexander's campaign.

Essentially, the Royal Journal of Alexander the Great was not a diary that Alexander himself kept, but instead a daily activity log kept by Eumenes. While it is unlikely that a daily log of activities would have had an author listed, it can be assumed that Eumenes, or more likely his staff scribe, was the main recorder of daily activities for the Alexander campaign because it was a part of Eumenes' job as Chief Secretary. Macedonian court also had a history of recording daily logs and information regarding the king in order to maintain an official record of events.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Andrew Chugg, "The Journal of Alexander the Great," *Ancient History Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (2003): pp. 155-175.

<sup>21</sup> See footnote above.

<sup>22</sup> A. B. Bosworth, *Gnomon* 77, no. 8 (2005): 684-88. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27693690>.

<sup>23</sup> N. G. L. Hammond. "The Royal Journal of Alexander." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 37, no. 2 (1988): 129-50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436045>.

It is believed that the Royal Journal would have contained information on hunting expeditions, military campaigns, orders issued by the King, copies of letters sent and received, negotiations with foreign embassies, and plans Alexander discussed with officers as well as plans that Alexander did not discuss with them.<sup>24</sup> Since this would have been a vast amount of information for one man to record, there are many theories concerning the authorship of the Journal. There is no denying that Eumenes had a hand in the creation of the Royal Journal, but there is much speculation that there is a second contributor to the Ephemeredes. Diodotus of Erythrae is listed as a co-author of the Ephemeredes by the ancient source Athenaeus, who was a Greek rhetorician living in the second century AD. The name Diodotus does not appear in the records of Alexander's campaigns and is relatively unknown except for the mention of him by Athenaeus.<sup>25</sup> Historians like N.G.L Hammond believe that Diodotus could have been a co-author of the Ephemeredes by suggesting that he was the successor of Eumenes when the latter joined a unit of the Companion Cavalry under the leadership of Perdiccas in 324 BCE.<sup>26</sup> There is little evidence that just because Eumenes moved to a military position he also gave up his administrative duties, but the speculation regarding Diodotus and the possibility of a second author of the Ephemeredes shows how little is actually known about the exact nature of the Royal Journals.

Another object of speculation concerning the nature of the Royal Journals is constructed by Hammond. He proposes the argument that the Royal Journal of Alexander is part of a larger archival collection at the Macedonian court.<sup>27</sup> Hammond asserts that it was common practice for Macedonian royalty to keep archival records as a governmental function. He agrees with other

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<sup>24</sup> See footnote above.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Chugg, "The Journal of Alexander the Great," *Ancient History Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (2003): pp. 155-175.

<sup>26</sup> N. G. L. Hammond, "Alexander's Journal and Ring in his Last Days", *American Journal of Philology* 110 (1989) 157-158.

<sup>27</sup> N. G. L. Hammond. "The Royal Journal of Alexander." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 37, no. 2 (1988): 129-50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436045>.

historians that Eumenes would have played a key role in keeping the records in the archive and recording the daily activities of the King. Hammond also makes the point that an archival journal of this nature would not have been a literary work. While the contents of the archive would not necessarily have been secret, they would not have been published in the way that journals and records are published today, and it would have contained many fragmented thoughts and writings since it was not meant to be any sort of cohesive piece of literature. Hammond's theory that the Royal Journal was archival in nature helps to combat other theories concerning the authenticity of the Ephemerides. Other scholars believe that sources like Arrian and Plutarch were dealing with a forged version of the Ephemerides in their works on Alexander. Hammond argues that if the Royal Journal was more of an archival collection of materials, then it would be extremely difficult for anyone to create a forged version of the Ephemerides. They would have had to track down the location of the Ephemerides, replace and then destroy the original copy, and perhaps the hardest task of all, deceive the people who were around Alexander and were a part of his campaigns into believing that the forged version was legitimate.<sup>28</sup> Here Hammond is pointing out the extreme difficulty that anyone hoping to forge the documents would have had, in order to prove his point that it would have been inconceivable for a forged version of the Journals to ever have existed.

While there are lots of different views concerning the Royal Journal, for all intents and purposes the point of view that will be adopted for the remainder of this argument is that the Ephemerides were the works of Eumenes that detailed the daily activities of Alexander during his campaigns. Now that the nature of what the Ephemerides contain is established, the question turns to how did the primary sources of Alexander utilize the Royal Journal? Most of the Royal

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<sup>28</sup> See footnote above.



Journals were burnt in a fire in Eumenes' tent while Alexander's campaign was in India, so most of what remained was the writings from the end of Alexander's life. Eumenes was suspected of being involved in the death of Alexander, and allegedly published the remaining portions of the journal after Alexander's death to help draw attention away from himself and to refute rumors about himself.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps this emphasis on detailing Alexander's last days and untimely death helped to inspire primary sources like Arrian to turn to the Royal Journal as a source for his own report on Alexander's death. Hammond points out that Arrian would have used the Ephemerides directly and that Arrian refers to them explicitly in *The Campaigns of Alexander* by often calling them the "diaries".<sup>30</sup> Arrian provides many more military and administrative details than the other primary sources of Alexander, which as many modern critics believe, is because he had access to sources that his contemporaries did not use such as the Royal Journal.<sup>31</sup> While it cannot entirely be said that the other primary sources did not use the Royal Journals at all, there is much clearer evidence that Arrian used them to his benefit when writing about Alexander.

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew Chugg, 174.

<sup>30</sup> N. G. L. Hammond. "The Royal Journal of Alexander." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 37, no. 2 (1988): 129–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436045>.

<sup>31</sup> Lionel Pearson. "The Diary and the Letters of Alexander the Great." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 3, no. 4 (1955): 429–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4434421>.

## Quintus Curtius Rufus

Our earliest primary source for Alexander is the first century AD Roman historian, Quintus Curtius Rufus. His only surviving work is the ten-book history titled, *The History of Alexander*. *The History of Alexander* is interesting in the way that it paints Alexander in a sensational and usually negative light.<sup>32</sup> The exact nature of the author's identity and the date that this work was written are subject to much debate, but it is believed that he was a politician and soldier. Scholars believe that Curtius Rufus had a political career under Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), and then when Tiberius died, he turned to writing. It is thought that while finishing *The History of Alexander*, he received the proconsulship of Africa and then died in office in 53 A.D.<sup>33</sup> The first two books of *The History of Alexander* are lost, but historians are still left with a comprehensive narrative of Alexander's life and campaigns from the perspective of a Roman historian.

In the portions of *The History of Alexander* that are still available, there are only two mentions of Achilles in connection with Alexander. As an educated Roman, Curtius Rufus would have been very familiar with the *Iliad*, which serves as a basic explanation for why Curtius Rufus likened Alexander to Achilles. The first mention appears in Book Four, and describes when Alexander kills Betis at the siege of Gaza. The siege of Gaza took place in 332 BC and was part of Alexander's Egyptian campaign against the Persian empire. The commander of the Fortress of Gaza, Betis, was supposed to hold onto Egypt until Darius III could raise an army and bring it to confront Alexander.<sup>34</sup> After Alexander took Gaza, he allegedly tied Betis to

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<sup>32</sup> James Romm. *Alexander the Great: Selections from Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Quintus Curtius*. (Hackett Publishing, 2005.) 183.

<sup>33</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus. *The History of Alexander*. Translated by John Yardley. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984), I.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Cartledge, 147.

the back of a chariot and dragged him around until he died an excruciating death in imitation of Achilles' actions after killing Hector in the *Iliad*. In the *Iliad*, Homer describes Achilles killing Hector and then details Achilles' treatment of Hector's body. Homer says, "So he triumphed and now he was bent on outrage, on shaming noble Hector. Piercing the tendons, ankle to heel behind both feet, he knotted straps of rawhide through them both, lashed them to his chariot, left the head to drag and mounting the car, hoisting the famous arms abroad, he whipped his team to a run and breakneck on they flew, holding nothing back. And a thick cloud of dust rose up from the man they dragged, his dark hair swirling round that head so handsome once, all tumbled low in the dust- since Zeus had given him over to his enemies now to be defiled in the land of his own fathers. So his whole head was dragged down in the dust".<sup>35</sup> Curtius Rufus directly compares Alexander's actions after the siege of Gaza to Achilles' treatment of Hector's body. Rufus says, "Alexander's anger turned to fury, his recent successes already suggesting to his mind foreign modes of behavior. Thongs were passed through Betis' ankles while he still breathed, and he was tied to a chariot. Then Alexander's horses dragged him around the city while the king gloated at having followed the example of his ancestor Achilles in punishing his enemy".<sup>36</sup> Of the primary sources of Alexander, Curtius Rufus is the only one to mention Alexander's brutal treatment of Betis and therefore also the only one to make this connection between Alexander and Achilles.

The second mention of a connection between Alexander and Achilles occurs when Curtius Rufus is discussing Alexander's decision to marry Roxane. Curtius Rufus says, "So it was that the man who had looked with what were merely paternal feelings on the wife and two unmarried daughters of Darius- and with these none but Roxane could be compared in looks-

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<sup>35</sup> Homer, 554.

<sup>36</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus, 66.

now fell in love with a young girl, of humble pedigree in comparison with royalty, and did so with such abandon as to make a statement that intermarriage of Persians and Macedonians would serve to consolidate his empire, that only thus could the conquered lose their shame and the conquerors their pride. Achilles, he said, from whom he traced his descent, had also shared his bed with a captive. Her people should not think they were being done any wrong- he was willing to enter into a lawful marriage with Roxane”.<sup>37</sup> In this passage, Curtius Rufus is comparing Alexander's relationship with a captive to Achilles' relationship with his captive, Briseis. Curtius Rufus also draws attention to Alexander's alleged familial connection to Achilles.

These examples beg the question, why would Curtius Rufus include this account of Alexander's treatment of Betis and the reference to Achilles relationship with his captive Briseis? Was this something that Curtius Rufus chose to include to portray a specific image of Alexander, or was it something that he picked up from his sources? Since little is known about Curtius's life and writings, little is known about the sources that he used to compose his work. Most of the analysis on Curtius Rufus' sources and writing discusses his descriptions of Alexander's death and the days after, rather than the examples of the connection between Alexander and Achilles. Curtius Rufus is said to have incorporated Roman current events and issues into his interpretation of Alexander and might have adapted the stories of Alexander and the characters within that story to fit personalities, ideas, and crises of the Roman empire.<sup>38</sup> Examples of this would include the Roman ideal of there being an imperial Roman race, the importance of not trespassing against the unifying power of religion, and the idea that war was always imminent.<sup>39</sup> Curtius Rufus was writing in a turbulent time in Roman history, and would

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<sup>37</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus, 186.

<sup>38</sup> Paul McKechnie. "Manipulation of Themes in Quintus Curtius Rufus Book 10." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 48, No. 1 (1999): 44–60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436531>, 50.

<sup>39</sup> Paul McKechnie, 52.

have been influenced by these Roman ideals, along with Rome's political crisis as it was shifting from the Republic into the Principate. It would be a stretch to say that Curtius Rufus manufactured facts, or deliberately changed facts concerning Alexander, however it would be less of a stretch to argue that he might have manipulated the specific content of speeches given by Alexander to align to Roman political ideas.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it is safe to say that Curtius Rufus was attempting to discuss Greek affairs in Roman terms.<sup>41</sup> As a Roman historian, Curtius Rufus was likely trying to use historical evidence to artistically articulate Roman ideals that he thought were important, and was using the story of Alexander as his vessel.

In terms of the sources used by Curtius, there is little evidence that shows how he knew the information that he provides. There is speculation that he gathered some information from Ptolemy, one of the Royal Companions, who was named governor of Egypt after Alexander's death. To take it even farther back, Ptolemy is said to have gathered his information from Alexander's official historian, Callisthenes. Callisthenes was Alexander's primary historian during his campaigns and then was executed for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy against Alexander. After the death of Callisthenes, historians speculate that Callisthenes' account of the time that he spent with Alexander provided information for Ptolemy to create his own account of the time that he spent with Alexander and his thoughts on the Alexander years. Many historians believe that Curtius Rufus might have used Ptolemy as a source for basic historical information, but that most likely the bulk of his information came from Cleitarchus.

Cleitarchus was a Greek writing in Alexandria around 310 BCE, and unlike Ptolemy and Callisthenes, he did not actively participate in the events with which he was writing about.

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<sup>40</sup> A.B. Bosworth, "Curtius Rufus, Quintus, rhetorician and historian." *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. (7 Mar. 2016) ;<https://oxfordre.com/classics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-1969>.

<sup>41</sup> Paul McKechnie, 53.

Cleitarchus is mentioned by Curtius Rufus himself as a source multiple times, and is believed to be the main source that Curtius Rufus used.<sup>42</sup> Cleitarchus is one of the only sources identified by Curtius Rufus, and while Curtius Rufus does insert some imaginative storytelling into his narrative to relate Macedonian affairs to the Roman experience, his basic factual evidence can be attributed to Cleitarchus. Alexander's vices were a key component of the character of Alexander that Curtius Rufus creates in his narrative, which would have pushed him to find sources who felt the same way. While we can't be certain that Cleitarchus felt strongly about Alexander's vices, he did gather eye-witness reports from Macedonians and Greeks who had served as mercenaries of Alexander, and might have had something unpleasant to say about the Great King.<sup>43</sup> These mercenaries who had unpleasant things to say about Alexander would have contributed to Curtius Rufus' narrative about the vices of the Great King.

In terms of relating Alexander to Achilles, it is likely that Curtius Rufus would have been inspired by Cleitarchus. Myths played a large role in the writing of historical accounts and would have been weaved into the historical narratives that were written during antiquity. So, authors like Cleitarchus would have believed that Alexander's emulation of Achilles was part of the historical context of what he was writing about and would have caused him to link Alexander and Achilles whenever possible. This would then encourage Curtius Rufus to make his own comparison between the two men.<sup>44</sup> Curtius Rufus' comparison of Alexander and Achilles when discussing Alexander's marriage to Roxanne is particularly interesting. This example of connecting the two men is not found in the other primary sources, and shows Curtius Rufus'

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<sup>42</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus, VII.

<sup>43</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Waldemar Heckel, "Notes on Q. Curtius Rufus' History of Alexander," *Acta Classica : Proceedings of the Classical Association of South Africa* 37, no. 1 (1994): pp. 67-78, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC26816>, 73.

effort to justify Alexander's marriage to a captive foreigner. Curtius Rufus points to the precedent set by Achilles, and cements the idea that he was inserting Roman ideas and undertones into his writing, as the Roman empire was extremely inclusive. The master-slave relationship is typical of Roman poetry and rhetoric, and these beliefs are inserted into Curtius Rufus' work.<sup>45</sup> Curtius Rufus expresses his approval of these ideas by comparing Alexander and Achilles in this sense in order to point out a favorable view on the marriage instead of the negative view that Macedonians actually held when they learned that their King was planning to marry Roxane. Essentially, Curtius Rufus had clear motives for likening Alexander to Achilles, and has a set source from which he gathered most of his information which emphasizes the importance of this connection.

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<sup>45</sup> See footnote above.

## Arrian

Our next primary source, Lucius Flavius Arrianus, wrote about Alexander in his *Campaigns of Alexander*. Arrian was born in the Roman province of Bithynia around 90 A.D. and spent most of his life serving as an imperial civil servant. Sometime around 140 A.D., he retired to Athens and was granted Athenian citizenship, rose to the position of chief archon, and eventually became a member of the Areopagus, Athens' equivalent of Rome's Senate. It was during this Athenian period that Arrian composed most of his writings. Arrian is most famous for *The Campaigns of Alexander*, and intended for it to be his masterpiece, which he makes clear in the beginning of the work when he says, "I need not declare my name - though it is by no means unheard of in the world; I need not specify my country and family, or any official position I may have held. Rather let me say this; that this book is, and has been since my youth, more precious than country and kin and public advancement- indeed, for me it *is* these things".<sup>46</sup> Arrian felt like it was his job to capture the story of Alexander in a way that hadn't been done before. During Arrian's life, Alexander was already one of the most written-about figures but often the writings about him were full of contradictions and falsehoods.<sup>47</sup> Arrian felt that no one had done Alexander justice, and believed that it was up to him to become to Alexander what Homer was to Achilles.

In, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, Arrian makes a few comparisons between Alexander and Achilles, but three times directly mentions Alexander acting as Achilles. The first comes when Arrian is describing Alexander's visit to the tomb of Achilles when he visits the site of Troy on his way through Asia. Arrian describes the event saying, "One account says that

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<sup>46</sup> Lucius Flavius Arrianus. *The Campaigns of Alexander*. Translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1971), 18.

<sup>47</sup> See footnote above.



Hephaestion laid a wreath on the tomb of Patroclus; another that Alexander laid one on the tomb of Achilles, calling him a lucky man, in that he had Homer to proclaim his deeds and preserve his memory. And well might Alexander envy Achilles this piece of good fortune, the single break, as it were, in the long chain of his successes, was that he had no worthy chronicler to tell the world of his exploits”.<sup>48</sup> This comparison is interesting in the way that Arrian equates Alexander to Achilles in terms of how each man is worthy of being remembered, and feels remorse about the fact that Alexander didn’t have an author like Homer to preserve him the way that the memory of Achilles is preserved.

The second comparison made by Arrian between Alexander and Achilles occurs when Arrian is describing the death of Hephaestion, who was Alexander's closest companion, and died suddenly while they were in Ecbatana at the age of thirty-two. It is thought that he fell ill with a fever, which eventually killed him. Alexander was so distraught after Hephaestion’s death that he petitioned the oracle at Siwa to grant Hephaestion divine status and demanded that he be honored as a hero. Arrian describes Alexander’s grief in comparison with Achilles grief over the death of his closest friend, Patroclus. Arrian says, “I do not, however, think it unlikely that Alexander cut his hair short in mourning for his friend, for he might well have done so, if only in emulation of Achilles, whose rival he had always felt himself to be, ever since he was boy”.<sup>49</sup> In this example, Alexander is said to be directly copying Achilles' actions in the *Iliad* after the death of Patroclus. In the *Iliad*, Achilles rips out his hair and is overcome with grief as he “wept his proud heart out” when he hears the news of Patroclus’ death.<sup>50</sup> After making this comparison,

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<sup>48</sup> Lucius Flavius Arrianus, 67.

<sup>49</sup> Lucius Flavius Arrianus, 372.

<sup>50</sup> Homer, 486.

Arrian goes on to detail how Alexander refused to appoint anyone else to Hephaestion's cavalry position and held games in Hephaestion's honor.

The third comparison that Arrian makes between Alexander and Achilles is a continuation of the narrative about Hephaestion's death. Arrian says, "Even in Alexander's case, Hephaestion's death had been no small calamity, and I believe he would rather have been the first to go than live to suffer that pain, like Achilles, who surely would rather have died before Patroclus than have lived to avenge his death".<sup>51</sup> Here, Arrian is once again pointing out the similarities between Alexander and Achilles, while also drawing on his knowledge of Homer's story to try to relate himself to the epic poet. Arrian emphasizes many times just how important Hephaestion was to Alexander, by comparing their friendship to that most famous of friendships in the ancient world. The clear comparison between Alexander and Achilles' grief allowed Arrian to also liken himself to Homer and remind his reader that he was attempting to construct a story of Alexander that would be equivalent to the epic story told about Achilles.

In terms of the sources used by Arrian, historians seem to agree that Arrian gathered most of his information from Ptolemy and Aristobulus. Aristobulus accompanied Alexander on his campaigns and most likely served as an engineer or architect. He was a close friend of Alexander, and wrote a historical account of his time with the campaign that was mainly geographical and ethnological in nature.<sup>52</sup> His work survives only in reconstructed quotations by other historians. Arrian himself names them as his main sources and says, "Wherever Ptolemy and Aristobulus in their histories of Alexander, the son of Philip, have given the same account, I have followed it on the assumption of its accuracy; where their facts differ I have chosen what I

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<sup>51</sup> Lucius Flavius Arrianus, 377.

<sup>52</sup> Lionel Pearson, "Aristobulus the Phocian," *The American Journal of Philology* 73, no. 1 (1952): pp. 71-75, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/292236>.

feel to be the more probable and interesting. There are other accounts of Alexander's life- more of them, indeed, and more mutually conflicting than of any other historical character; it seems to me however, that Ptolemy and Aristobulus are the most trustworthy writers on this subject, because the latter shared Alexander's campaigns, and the former- Ptolemy- in addition to this advantage, was himself a King, and it is more disgraceful for a King to tell lies than for anyone else. Moreover, Alexander was dead when these men wrote; so there was no sort of pressure upon either of them, and they could not profit from falsification of the facts".<sup>53</sup> Here, Arrian is asserting that both sources are accurate in nature because they were witnesses to and participants in Alexander's campaign. Arrian argues that Ptolemy is extra trustworthy because he became King of Egypt after Alexander's death, and kings allegedly never lie.<sup>54</sup> Arrian believes that a person in a position of power, such as a king, can be deemed as trustworthy simply because of their high social and political status.

There is also evidence that Arrian might have had access to the Royal Journal. The Journal is believed to have been taken to Alexandria after Alexander's death where historians like Arrian would have been able to consult its contents.<sup>55</sup> While it would be accurate to say that Arrian might have consulted the Royal Journal to gather information on Alexander's daily activities and whereabouts, it would be a stretch to say that this was his main source of guidance when it came to comparing Alexander to Achilles. Arrian was on a mission to create the most truthful and thorough narrative of Alexander, which can explain why he would have consulted the Journal to understand what Alexander did on a day to day basis. Essentially, Arrian only used the Journal for his framework of facts on Alexander, and not for material comparing Alexander's

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<sup>53</sup> Lucius Flavius Arrianus, 41.

<sup>54</sup> See footnote above.

<sup>55</sup> N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

deeds with Achilles. By becoming an expert on Alexander in order to tell his story, and creating comparisons between Alexander and Achilles, he is casting himself in the role of Homer. In the specific mentions that Arrian makes of Achilles in his narrative, he is attempting to cast the significance and glory associated with Achilles onto Alexander. He uses the comparison of Alexander as Achilles and Hephaestion as Patroclus to foreshadow the dire fate that ultimately is waiting for Alexander and Hephaestion.<sup>56</sup> The Achilles-motif used by Arrian throughout his narrative emphasizes the role that Arrian himself wanted to embody as Alexander's Homer, as well as providing a reflection on Alexander's feelings about those close to him. The sources that Arrian utilizes, specifically Ptolemy and Aristobulus, might have inspired him to make the Achilles comparisons, as they were present at the time of Alexander's campaigns. Essentially, if Alexander was truly acting as Achilles, especially after Hephaestion's death, Ptolemy and Aristobulus would have seen that encounter and their firsthand accounts could have inspired Arrian to make the comparisons between these two great men in an attempt to be the next Homer.

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<sup>56</sup> J. G. Vorhis. (2017). *The Best of the Macedonians: Alexander as Achilles in Arrian, Curtius, and Plutarch*. *UCLA*. ProQuest ID: Vorhis\_ucla\_0031D\_15696. Merritt ID: ark:/13030/m5k11zm1. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/76s9x3jv>, 145.

## Plutarch

The last primary source on Alexander is Plutarch, one of the greatest Greco-Roman biographers. He was born around 46 CE at Chaeronea in Boeotia and spent most of his life on scholarly pursuits. He established a school at Chaeronea, became a philosopher of the Platonic school, and wrote many essays and works about influential philosophical, scientific, and literary subjects such as his *Parallel Lives*. In the *Lives*, Plutarch pairs important Greek figures with their Roman counterparts. He takes the actions of Alexander the Great's life and sets them up in comparison to the actions of Roman dictator Julius Caesar. Plutarch starts his narrative on Alexander by declaring that he isn't aiming to write a historical account of Alexander but instead a biography.<sup>57</sup> Plutarch says, "When a painter sets out to create a likeness, he relies above all upon the face and the expression of the eyes and pays less attention to the other parts of the body; in the same way it is my task to dwell upon those actions which illuminate the workings of the soul, and by this means to create a portrait of each man's life. I leave the story of his greatest strengths and achievements to be told by others".<sup>58</sup> Plutarch's goal was not to record Alexander's achievements or discuss them in detail, but instead to paint a portrait of who Alexander was and what his character was, which is where his emulation of Achilles comes most directly into play.

Plutarch makes a few mentions of Alexander in relation to Achilles. The first comes at the beginning of the work when Plutarch is discussing the lineage of Alexander. He mentions that Alexander was descended from Aeacus on his mother's side, who was the legendary king of Aegina and grandfather of Achilles.<sup>59</sup> Plutarch also takes care to mention the education of Alexander in relation to Achilles. While discussing Alexander's education, Plutarch brings

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<sup>57</sup> Plutarch. *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*. Translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977), 252.

<sup>58</sup> Plutarch, 252.

<sup>59</sup> Plutarch, 252.

attention to one of Alexander's tutors, Lysimachus. Similar to the example provided by Curtius Rufus, Plutarch discusses how Lysimachus allegedly referred to himself, Alexander, and Alexander's friends and family as characters in the *Iliad*, "The person who took on both the title and the role of pedagogue was an Acarnanian named Lysimachus. He was neither an educated nor a cultivated man, but he managed to ingratiate himself by calling Philip Peleus, Alexander Achilles, and himself Phoenix, and he held the second place in the prince's household".<sup>60</sup> Peleus was Achilles' father and Phoenix was the tutor of Achilles, so in this example Plutarch is showing how Alexander's tutor tried to integrate himself into Alexander's life by comparing himself, along with Alexander and his father, to their equivalent characters in the *Iliad*. Plutarch makes another comparison between Alexander and Achilles involving Lysimachus. When Alexander and his army were besieging Tyre, Alexander had to save Lysimachus from danger. Plutarch describes the situation by saying, "In the midst of this siege Alexander led a force against the Arabian tribes who inhabit the mountains of the Anti-Lebanon. During this expedition he risked his life to rescue his tutor Lysimachus, who had insisted on accompanying him, since he claimed that he was neither older nor weaker than Achilles' tutor Phoenix".<sup>61</sup> Plutarch seems to find it important that Lysimachus frequently thought that he was similar to Achilles' tutor. This could point to the idea that those close to Alexander, such as Lysimachus, thought that Alexander was so similar to Achilles that by default they were equivalent to whoever held their role for Achilles in the *Iliad*. It is also important that Plutarch describes multiple instances where not only is Alexander compared to Achilles, but those around him are comparing themselves to characters of the *Iliad*, showing how influential the *Iliad* was during both Alexander's and Plutarch's lives. So, this would demonstrate that even in Alexander's own

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<sup>60</sup> Plutarch, 257.

<sup>61</sup> Plutarch, 279.

entourage other people saw him as their Achilles, and themselves as part of an epic undertaking similar in scale to that of the Trojan War.

Plutarch also mentions the fact that the *Iliad* was very important to Alexander himself. He discusses Aristotle's gifting Alexander an annotated copy of the *Iliad*: "He was also devoted by nature to all kinds of learning and was a lover of books. He regarded the *Iliad* as a handbook of the art of war and took with him on his campaigns a text annotated by Aristotle, which became known as the 'casket copy' and which he always kept under his pillow together with his dagger".<sup>62</sup> Later on in his work, Plutarch once again brings up the subject of Alexander and his copy of the *Iliad*. During his campaign in Asia in 332 BCE, Alexander is presented with a casket of Darius' and ponders what he should do with it. Plutarch describes this situation by saying, "One day a casket was brought to him which was regarded by those who were in charge of Darius' baggage and treasure as the most valuable item of all, and so Alexander asked his friends what he should keep in it as his own most precious possession. Many different suggestions were put forward, and finally Alexander said that he intended to keep his copy of the *Iliad* there".<sup>63</sup> Alexander valued his copy of the *Iliad* so much that he found it reasonable to store it in one of Darius' most valuable possessions.

Another mention of Achilles comes during Plutarch's description of Alexander's campaign arriving at what they believed to be the city of Troy. Plutarch relates that, "Once arrived in Asia, he went up to Troy, sacrificed to Athena and poured libations to the heroes of the Greek army. He anointed with oil the column which marks the grave of Achilles, ran a race by it naked with his companions, as the custom is, and then crowned it with a wreath; he also remarked that Achilles was happy in having found a faithful friend while he lived and a great

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<sup>62</sup> Plutarch, 259.

<sup>63</sup> Plutarch, 281.

poet to sing of his deeds after his death. While he was walking about the city and looking at its ancient remains, somebody asked him whether he wished to see the lyre which had once belonged to Paris. ‘I think nothing of that lyre,’ he said, ‘but I wish I could see Achilles’ lyre, which he played when he sang of the glorious deeds of brave men’’.<sup>64</sup> Here, Alexander expresses his jealousy that Achilles had a poet to write about his greatness and expresses his desire to see the lyre Achilles used to sing about brave men. Plutarch also recounts that Alexander expressed how Achilles must have been happy to have had such a faithful friend during his life. Here Alexander is referring to the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus and making it clear that he knew what it was like to have such a close companion and could compare himself to Achilles in that regard.

Plutarch also makes mention of both the death of Patroclus and the death of Hephaestion. While talking about a fight between Alexander and Callisthenes, Plutarch states that Callisthenes quoted a line from the *Iliad* to Alexander by saying, “braver by far than yourself was Patroclus, but death did not spare him’’.<sup>65</sup> Callisthenes is trying to give a warning to Alexander that death awaited him. This is an interesting circumstance because here someone is comparing Alexander to Patroclus, who does end up being killed by Hector in the *Iliad*, instead of the indestructible Achilles. Callisthenes would be proved right when Alexander died unexpectedly in 323 BCE. Plutarch also draws a parallel between the death of Hephaestion in 324 BCE and the death of Patroclus in the *Iliad*. Plutarch chronicles Hephaestion’s death and Alexander’s reaction when he says, “His fever quickly mounted and soon afterwards he died. Alexander’s grief was uncontrollable. As a sign of mourning he gave orders that the manes and tails of all horses should be shorn, demolished the battlements of all the neighboring cities, crucified the unlucky

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<sup>64</sup> Plutarch, 267-268.

<sup>65</sup> Plutarch, 311.



physician and forbade the playing of flutes or any other kind of music for a long time until finally an oracle was announced from the temple of Ammon, commanding him to honor Hephaestion and sacrifice to him as a hero”.<sup>66</sup> This is similar to the wrath of Achilles that is expressed in the *Iliad* after Patroclus is killed by Hector. Plutarch marks Alexander as similar to Achilles in the way that they cared deeply about their friends, and he points out many times how important the story of the *Iliad* was to Alexander.

Since Plutarch was attempting to paint a picture of Alexander’s character, he used many different sources. Throughout his narrative, Plutarch often tells an anecdote about Alexander or his campaigns, and then cites the source of his information directly afterwards. One example of this is Plutarch’s account of Alexander deciding to keep his copy of the *Iliad* in Darius’ luggage. Plutarch describes this decision and then says, “this anecdote is supported by many reliable historians, and if the tradition which has been handed down by the Alexandrians on the authority of Heracleides is true, then certainly the poems of Homer were by no means an irrelevant or an unprofitable possession to accompany him on his campaigns”.<sup>67</sup> Plutarch frequently makes mention of “historians” as his source for the anecdotes that he includes in his narrative. He does mention specific sources for other anecdotes and uses his knowledge of the sources of Alexander to build his expertise on Alexander’s life. One example of a passage where Plutarch mentions a vast number of sources is when he describes Alexander’s alleged encounter with the Queen of the Amazons, “It was here that he was visited by the queen of the Amazons, according to the report we have from many writers, among them Cleitarchus, Polycleitus, Onesicritus, Antigene, and Ister. On the other hand, Aristobulus, Charles the royal usher, Ptolemy, Anticleides, Philip the Theban and Philip of Theangela, and besides these Hecataeus of Eretria, Philip the

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<sup>66</sup> Plutarch, 329.

<sup>67</sup> Plutarch, 281.

Chalcidian and Douris of Samos all maintain that this is a fiction, and this judgment seems to be confirmed by Alexander's own testimony. In a letter to Antipater in which he describes the details of the occasion, he mentions that the king of the Scythians offered him his daughter in marriage, but he makes no reference to an Amazon".<sup>68</sup> While this example doesn't specifically mention Achilles, it does list a great deal of sources about Alexander, and does show that Plutarch was well acquainted with the literature available to him on Alexander. Plutarch's goal may not have been to write a historical account of Alexander, but he would have still needed to be well read on the sources of Alexander to be able to accurately paint a picture of Alexander's ethos and moral character.

Among the historians who have studied the sources used by Plutarch, there is agreement on the fact that he used a large number of sources, many of which are now lost. Hammond argues that Plutarch makes use of Cleitarchus as a source in the same way that Curtius Rufus used him as a source. It is suspected that Cleitarchus is Plutarch's source for the specific instance when Plutarch is discussing the actions of Alexander after Hephaestion's death. This is a clear instance where Alexander is seen to be imitating the actions of Achilles, which leads Hammond to argue that Cleitarchus was the source used by Plutarch. Hammond asserts that Cleitarchus delighted in representing Alexander as a merciless predator who frequently indulged in violence who used Achilles as his model for violence but often exceeded Achilles in his scale of destruction.<sup>69</sup> The main theory surrounding the arguments about what sources Plutarch used all conclude that Plutarch would have most likely used any and all sources available to him in order to paint as clear a picture of Alexander's character as possible. Historian Paul Cartledge asserts

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<sup>68</sup> Plutarch, 302.

<sup>69</sup> N. G. L. Hammond. *Sources for Alexander the Great: An Analysis of Plutarch's 'Life' and Arrian's 'Anabasis Alexandrou'*. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140.

that many of Plutarch's anecdotes come from Callisthenes, Alexander's primary historian on his campaigns.<sup>70</sup> Since Plutarch was writing a moralizing character biography of Alexander, what better source than the man who was tasked with preserving every action and decision performed by Alexander?

Along with using a wide variety of sources written about Alexander, Plutarch allegedly utilized sources written by Alexander himself or as part of royal court documents. Cartledge claims that there was a personal notebook of Alexander, called *The Hypomnemata*, that was used by Plutarch to write his *Parallel Lives*.<sup>71</sup> There is little evidence to say whether this personal notebook was authentic or not, but if something like it did exist it most likely would have contained letters written by Alexander. Cartledge believes that Plutarch had access to sources of this nature and preserved them in a collection to be used by other writers, but that their accuracy and authorship should be examined carefully. If such letters did exist, the contents might have included "the Last Plans", a list of current and future projects that Alexander hoped to complete, along with the letter that Alexander supposedly wrote to Darius after the Battle of Granicus in 334 claiming that he was the legitimate King of Persia.<sup>72</sup> Plutarch makes fourteen mentions of these letters as a source of his, however much about their content and authorship remains unknown.

Another source that Plutarch made use of was the Royal Journal. It is believed that the Journal, or a copy of the Journal, made its way to the Library of Alexandria after Alexander's death, which allowed writers like Plutarch to have access to it. For Plutarch, the Journal would have served as a factual record of the everyday happenings in Alexander's life as they were

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Cartledge, 270.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Cartledge, 278.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Cartledge, 278.

happening, not as a body of work that was intended for publication.<sup>73</sup> Knowing how Alexander spent his day-to-day life would have helped Plutarch to shape him into a well-rounded figure, instead of just a magnificent conqueror who spent his days taking over the world. While Plutarch decided to write about Alexander in his *Parallel Lives* because of Alexander's profound impact on the Hellenistic, and later Roman world, he also chose to write about Alexander because of the immense amount of information available to him. Plutarch had a great number of sources at his disposal, and the fact that so many others had already written about Alexander's campaigns made him a perfect figure for Plutarch to examine.<sup>74</sup> Plutarch wanted to take the information available on Alexander and synthesize it in a way that would reveal his character and paint a picture of him as an individual, before ultimately comparing his personality to that of one of the greatest men in Roman history, Julius Caesar.

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<sup>73</sup> N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Geiger, "Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: The Choice of Heroes," *Hermes* 109, no. 1 (1981): pp. 85-104, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/4476192>.

### **So, what does all of this mean? Time for some conclusions.**

Now that the primary sources on Alexander have been examined, the pieces can be put together to identify the origin of the connection between Alexander and Achilles. There are numerous primary sources that discuss Alexander copying and imitating Achilles, or mention Alexander's alleged familial connection to Achilles. Our primary sources, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Arrian, and Plutarch all had their own motives for writing about Alexander, which would have influenced their decisions to write about his connections to Achilles. Curtius Rufus aimed to link one of the greatest figures from the Hellenistic age to Roman politics and ideas by relating Alexander to Achilles, since most elite Romans would have been extremely familiar with the *Iliad* and the character of Achilles. Arrian set his sights on becoming Alexander's Homer by becoming the epic chronicler of Alexander's campaigns, so who better to compare Alexander to than the hero of the story he was hoping to emulate? Plutarch's goal was to paint a picture of Alexander's character rather than his actions and use the comparison with Achilles to emphasize Alexander's moral code and ethos. By understanding why each of the primary sources included the comparison between Alexander and Achilles, we gain insight into what these authors deemed important when writing about Alexander and what image of him they hoped to portray.

In terms of the research question at hand, where the connection between Alexander and Achilles originated, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. It could be argued that the connection between these two men began with Alexander himself, since he claimed to be a descendant of Achilles, and because of the fact that he was well-versed in the actions taken by Achilles in the *Iliad*. Alexander greatly valued the story of the *Iliad* and channeled the actions of Achilles into his own actions. He also cared about many of the same things as Achilles, such as

protecting his friends and obtaining glory. He continued the long-standing tradition of the Macedonian court by having a large group of Companions for himself within the Macedonian army and valued his best friend Hephaestion in ways similar to Achilles and his best friend Patroclus. His military record is similar to that of Achilles, in the sense that both of them were thought to have never lost a battle. For the Macedonians, Greek myths were a living reality, so Alexander strived to embody Achilles' achievement of being the best and most outstanding warrior.<sup>75</sup> Alexander's road to personal *arete* was based around his Homeric view of war, that it was his destiny from birth to win glory in battle by conquering unconquerable Asia. The Achilles-motif was basically guaranteed to appear in any writings on Alexander due to the way that Alexander embodies qualities and actions attributed to the character of Achilles.

While it is safe to say that Alexander laid the foundations for the comparison between himself and Achilles for the future writers who would chronicle his life, which of those writers was the first to draw the comparison between the two men? First, while the Royal Journal was an important source of information about Alexander's campaigns and reign as King of Macedon, it is unlikely that it was the origin of the connection between Alexander and Achilles. Only Arrian and Plutarch are believed to have had access to the Royal Journal to gather information on Alexander. Curtius Rufus most likely didn't utilize the Journal as a source because the bulk of his information came from Cleitarchus, who is also believed to have not used the Royal Journal as a source of information.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, even if all of our sources had had access to the Journal and utilized it as a source for their writings, it is unlikely that it would contain the kind of information that would allow these writers to draw their comparisons of Alexander and Achilles.

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Green, 40-41.

<sup>76</sup> N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

The Royal Journal would have included information of Alexander's daily activities, and would have taken on more of an administrative role, rather than functioning like a diary of Alexander's life. It would have been unlikely that Eumenes would have suggested that Alexander was acting like Achilles while he was recording the daily activities taken by the King. The conclusion that Alexander's actions emulated Achilles would most likely have been drawn by the Alexander authors long after Eumenes wrote the Royal Journal, and would have been an element in their interpretation of the events that they were researching. In the Greek world, religion and myths did play an important role in everyday life, however, it is improbable that the Royal Journal would have included any resemblance between the actions and decisions of Alexander in relation to those of Achilles.

In terms of the main primary sources of Alexander, Curtius Rufus, Arrian, and Plutarch, one of them was the first to discuss the connection between Alexander and Achilles. By evaluating the sources that they used while writing their accounts of Alexander's life, we can see that all three men utilized firsthand accounts of Alexander's campaigns. They used sources such as Callisthenes, Eumenes, Ptolemy and Cleitarchus, some of whom were part of Alexander's campaigns and act as primary sources for our primary sources. Each source has a clear motive for writing about the connection and established their expertise on the subject of Alexander and Achilles by naming their sources or explaining why they included a specific anecdote within their narratives. It can be said that the first of the primary sources to establish a connection between Alexander and Achilles was Quintus Curtius Rufus. Since a motive and a vast number of sources can be identified for each primary source, the main consideration in determining which came first lies with the simple question of which one was written first. It is believed that Curtius Rufus wrote *The History of Alexander* around 40 A.D., with Plutarch writing *The Age of*

*Alexander* in his *Parallel Lives* around 100 A.D., and finally Arrian writing *The Campaigns of Alexander* around 140 A.D. Furthermore, Arrian can be removed from consideration as the originator of the connection since it is believed that he read and used Plutarch as a source or as inspiration for his own work.<sup>77</sup> Plutarch can be ruled out as the originator simply because of the fact that he wrote approximately 60 years after Curtius Rufus wrote *The History of Alexander*. Therefore, Quintus Curtius Rufus stands as the creator of the connection between Alexander and Achilles among our three primary sources. This isn't to say that the sources that wrote about Alexander would not have written about Alexander and Achilles if Curtius Rufus had not been the first, it is merely to establish that the connection was indeed put into place for each of these authors to make a specific point about Alexander. However, it can be taken back even further than Curtius Rufus in terms of the origin of the connection between Alexander and Achilles. Curtius Rufus gathered inspiration from Cleitarchus who was writing shortly after Alexander's lifetime in the fourth century BCE. So, while Curtius Rufus is the originator of the comparison when it comes to himself, Arrian, and Plutarch, Cleitarchus takes the origin of the connection between Alexander and Achilles back to Alexander himself.

Overall, understanding how Alexander is connected to Achilles throughout the primary source material on him helps shed light on what these authors thought was important to display about Alexander's actions and character. As one of the most important figures in human history, understanding why sources included what they did and what connections they made between Alexander and other notable figures, even literary figures, helps paint a more accurate picture of this "Great" individual. Using the Achilles-motif while narrating accounts of Alexander, paints Alexander in both a heroic and sadistic light, emphasizing the juxtaposition that highlights

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<sup>77</sup> N. G. L. Hammond. *Sources for Alexander the Great: An Analysis of Plutarch's 'Life' and Arrian's 'Anabasis Alexandrou'*. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 36.



Alexander's alleged "greatness". These primary sources, along with their use of the Achilles comparisons, contextualizes the importance of Alexander during the Roman period that these authors were a part of, and the greater scope of history that Alexander helped to shape with his actions.

## **Glossary of People**

**Achilles-** Main character and the hero in the *Iliad*. Warrior for the Achaean army throughout Homer's account of the Trojan War in the *Iliad*.

**Aeacus-** Legendary king of Aegina and the grandfather of Achilles.

**Agamemnon-** King of the Mycenaeans, leader of the Achaean army during the Trojan War throughout the *Iliad*.

**Alexander the Great-** Also known as Alexander III of Macedon, King of Macedon from 336 BCE until 323 BCE. Conducted a lengthy military campaign throughout the Greek world and Asia.

**Ammon-** Ancient Egyptian sun-god.

**Antipater-** Macedonian general and statesman under Philip II and Alexander. Acts as regent of Macedon while Alexander is away from the Kingdom.

**Aristobulus-** Accompanied Alexander on his campaigns and served as an engineer or architect. Wrote an account of his time with Alexander.

**Aristotle-** Greek philosopher who served as a tutor for Alexander.

**Athenaeus-** A Greek rhetorician living in the 2nd century AD.

**Bessus-** Satrap of Bactria who killed Darius.

**Betis-** The commander of the Fortress of Gaza who was supposed to hold onto Egypt until Darius III could raise an army to confront Alexander. He is killed by Alexander and then Alexander drags his corpse around Gaza.

**Briseis-** Achilles' captive in the *Iliad*. When Agamemnon takes her away from Achilles, he refuses to continue fighting for the Achaean army.

**Callisthenes-** Aristotle's nephew who served as Alexander's historian throughout his campaigns until 328 BCE when Alexander had him killed on charges of conspiracy.

**Cassander-** Macedonian noble who becomes one of Alexander's Companions.

**Chiron-** Centaur who tutors Achilles in the *Iliad*.

**Cleitarchus-** A Greek writing in Alexandria around 310 BCE.

**Cleopatra Eurydice-** The last of Philip II's seven wives, but his first Macedonian wife.

**Darius III-** King of the Persian Empire, ruling from 336 BCE until 330 BCE.

**Diodorus Siculus-** Ancient Greek historian known for writing the monumental universal history *Bibliotheca historica*, in forty books, fifteen of which survive intact, between 60 and 30 BC.

**Diodotus of Erythrae-** Suggested as a co-author of the *Ephemerides* and as a successor of Eumenes when the latter succeeded to a military position under Perdicas' command in 324 BCE.

**Eumenes-** Alexander's chief secretary who authored the Royal Journal/daily activity log of Alexander's campaign.

**Hector-** The Trojan warrior who acts as Achilles' nemesis in the *Iliad*. In the *Iliad*, he is the son of the Trojan king and the strongest of the Trojan warriors.

**Helen-** Deemed the most beautiful woman, and is captured by Paris of Troy, which starts the Trojan war.

**Hephaestion-** Macedonian nobleman who was Alexander's closest companion.

**Homer-** Author of the epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

**Julius Caesar-** A Roman general and statesman. A member of the First Triumvirate who led the Roman armies in the Gallic Wars before defeating his political rival Pompey in a civil war. He became dictator of Rome in 49 BCE and was assassinated in 44 BCE.

**King Peleus-** Mythical king of Phthia and father of Achilles.

**King Porus-** Ancient Indian King who ruled from 326 BCE until 317 BCE.

**Lucius Flavius Arrianus-** One of the primary sources on Alexander. Born in a Roman province and wrote *The Campaigns of Alexander* around 140 AD.

**Lysimachus-** Alexander's second tutor.

**Olympias-** Alexander's mother and a princess from the Molossian kingdom of Epirus in northwest Greece before she married Philip II.

**Oxyartes of Bactria-** A Bactrian nobleman, father of Roxanne, hid at the Sogdian Rock fortress during Alexander's campaign in Bactria.

**Patroclus-** Character in the *Iliad*, best friends with Achilles and goes into battle against the Trojans wearing Achilles armor and ends up getting killed by Hector.

**Pausanias-** Philip II's bodyguard who murdered him at the wedding of his daughter.

**Perdiccas-** General under Alexander who became regent for Alexander's brother after Alexander's death.

**Philip II of Macedon-** Father of Alexander the Great and King of Macedon from 359 BCE until 336 BCE.

**Phoenix-** Achilles elderly mentor/tutor in the *Iliad*.

**Plutarch-** Classical Greek biographer who was born around 46 AD. and wrote his *Parallel Lives*, which included *The Age of Alexander* around 100 AD.

**Priam-** Hector's father in the *Iliad* and the King of Troy.

**Ptolemy-** Macedonian general, nobleman, companion of Alexander and historian who wrote an account of his time spent on Alexander's campaigns. Would go on to rule Ptolemaic Egypt after Alexander's death.

**Pyrrhus-** He was king of the Greek tribe of Molossians, of the royal Aeacid house, and later he became king of Epirus. Allegedly a descendant of Achilles.

**Quintus Curtius Rufus-** Roman historian and author of *The History of Alexander*, written around 40 AD.

**Roxanne-** A Bactrian who was captured and then married to Alexander in 327 BCE during his conquest of Asia.

**Statius-** A Greek poet living in the 1st century AD, began perhaps the most well-known myth about Achilles. Author of the uncompleted epic poem titled, *Achilleid*.

**Strattis-** Author of a work titled, "Ephemerides about the Exploits of Alexander". This work was most likely written a generation after the death of Alexander and is a commentary on the Royal Journal and Alexander's campaigns.

**Thetis-** Sea nymph goddess who is the mother of Achilles in the *Iliad*.

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