

Hist 4013 Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World
Paper 1 - Five Pages
Due at 11:30 am on February 6

One of the fundamental problems for an historian of Alexander the Great is the interpretation in the sources. All of the extant sources for Alexander the Great were written several hundred years after the events they chronicle, and as a result all drew on earlier written sources that are now lost.

Two of the extant sources are Quintus Curtius Rufus and Diodorus Siculus. Both Curtius and Diodorus are part of the “vulgate” tradition that is believed to derive mainly, although not necessarily exclusively, from the work of the historian Cleitarchus. In spite of this, there are many differences between Diodorus and Curtius even when they describe the same events.

One such instance is found in their descriptions of the selection of Abdalonymus to be the king of Sidon. This episode is found at Diodorus 17.47 (below) and Curtius 4.1.15-26 (pp. 51-52 of your translation). For this paper you will compare and contrast these two accounts in order to better understand the ways in which ancient historians deal with and adapt their sources. Some questions you might wish to consider:

- How do Diodorus and Curtius present Abdalonymus and his ascension?
- What details are present in one account, but not the other? Why might this be?
- Do the two accounts contradict? What might the preference of the historians for one version over another show about them and their purposes?
- What larger purpose does this episode serve for the two historians? You may want to read a bit of the narrative on either side of the Abdalonymous episode.
- Does the basic factual narrative differ between the two historians?
- What purpose does this episode serve for each of the historians (you may want to read a little more of the surrounding narrative for this)?
- What conclusions can we draw about how ancient historians use their own sources?

You are to limit your analysis to the ancient texts themselves – do not look at modern scholarship. I want to read what you have to say, not what someone else has to say.

Use direct quotes sparingly and when they will specifically illustrate the point you are trying to make. Try to avoid excessive summary. Whenever you quote or paraphrase, be sure to cite the ancient author. Cite by book, chapter, and sentence either in the sentence or parenthetically; e.g. “As Curtius says at 4.1.18...” or “as explained by Diodorus (17.47.2)” Don’t forget to put a page number at the bottom of each page. Additional formatting guidelines can be found here:

<http://comp.uark.edu/~cmuntz/teaching/format/format.html>

Papers are due on February 6 at the start of class. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. If a paper is not turned in at the start of class, it will be considered late. Papers grades will be lowered by one full letter for each day late.

Diodorus Siculus Book 17, Chapter 47

[1] The former king, Straton, was deprived of his throne because of his friendship for Dareius, and Alexander invited Hephaestion to nominate as king of [Sidon]* any personal guest-friend whom he wished. [2] At first he favoured the host with whom he found pleasant lodging, and proposed that he should be designated master of the city. He was prominent among the citizens in wealth and position, but not being related to those who had been kings he would not accept the offer. [3] Hephaestion then asked him to make a choice from among the members of the royal family, and he said that he knew a man of royal descent who was wise and good in all respects, but he was poor in the extreme. [4] Hephaestion nevertheless agreed that he should be given the royal power, and the one who had been given the choice went off to find the man he had named, bearing with him the royal dress, and came upon him drawing water for hire in a garden, dressed in common rags. [5] He informed him of the transformation in his position, dressed him in the king's robe, and gave him the other appropriate trappings of office. Then he conducted him to the market place and proclaimed him king of Tyre. [6] Everyone accepted him with enthusiasm and marvelled at the vicissitudes of Fortune. Thus he became a Friend of Alexander's and took over the kingdom, an instructive example to those who do not know the incredible changes which Fortune can effect.

*The manuscripts of Diodorus incorrectly read Tyre here - Sidon is correct, as in Curtius, but you should not worry about this error.