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Iulius Valerius on Alexander's Death

Reception, Representation, and Rewriting in Later Latin Literary Culture

Iulius Valerius' *History of Alexander*, a Latin adaptation of the Greek *Alexander Romance* (*AR*), has hardly been the most prominent item in studies of Alexander's reception.[1] This is a missed opportunity, for the text expresses a strong Roman interest in Alexander.[2] Accordingly, we stand to gain much knowledge by investigating the text, not least about the flourishing discourse on Alexander, or *Alexandrology*, of the later Roman Empire.[3]

Of course, modern scholarship has already gone a long way in contextualizing many other aspects of Iulius Valerius and Roman literary culture than Alexander's reception.[4] Editions, translations, and commentaries on Iulius' work have appeared recently, many written by Francophone scholars.[5] Ingrid Brenez has even suggested in her wide-ranging doctoral thesis and related articles that Iulius Valerius composed the very first version of the *AR*, which was replete with images of Constantinian ideology. While an intriguing idea, it has not managed to gain widespread acceptance.[6]

One particular point of scholarly contestation relates to language, for the bilingual author does definitely seem to be a Hellenophone based on the high level of Greekisms. Of course, this may either be explained by the possibility that the author was a Greek writing in Latin *or* that he was adapting an existing Greek text. It seems to me that the latter option is the more likely, for translation was booming in the fourth century, as

1 Iulius Valerius appears in a single footnote of a recent survey of Alexander's Roman reception, namely Peltonen (2019) 68, n. 267. For Alexander's reception in general, see most recently Stoneman (2022).
2 This tendency is manifest across a range of full-scale narrative accounts of the campaign or subtle references in passing, surveyed by e.g. Sainte-Croix (1804) 531–545, Hoffman (1907) 83–103, Eicke (1909) 77–82, Weber (1909) 110. Later contributors typically review the full-scale texts concerning Alexander, see e.g. Callu (1999) and Döpp (1999). Exceptions are Wirth (1993), Angliviel (2003), and Peltonen (2019), who are nevertheless not comprehensive.
3 A fallow field when compared to the rich study of Alexander's receptions in later periods. See e.g. the *Alexander Redivivus* series, such as Gaullier-Bougassas (2011).
4 See already the literature review of Carraroli (1892) 85–89, highlighting that Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782–1854) had published the text in 1817 and included it in his collection of "classical authors", *Classici Auctores*, vol. 7, pp. 59–246. Cf. Brenez (2003) 1.34–36, for the general history of editions. For a general bibliography on Iulius Valerius, see Molina Marín (2018) 226.
5 Callu (2009) outpaced Brenez (2003) to publish the first French translation. There exists an Italian translation in Richard Stoneman's multi-text edition of the *AR*, Stoneman (2007–). Gavin Kelly informs me that an unpublished translation of Julius Valerius into English was undertaken for Cecil Rhodes in the 1890s, and there is an initiative to digitise this and other translated texts at the Groote Schuur estate in Cape Town, South Africa.
6 Rosellini (2018) discussing Brenez (2017). Cf. Tabacco (2012) on Callu (2009).

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evidenced by Saint Jerome's endeavors and the Latin adaptation of Josephus' *Jewish War*, attributed to Hegesippus.[7] Réka Forrai has recently proposed that we should view the premodern practice of translation as a sort of rewriting,[8] arguing that translators like Iulius Valerius "were primarily concerned with detaching the text from its original environment and fitting it into a new context".[9] This perspective can help to explain why Iulius Valerius deviates so much from the other ancient versions of the *AR*, insofar as he revises an existing textual base and integrates it into his fourth-century socio-literary context.[10]

To be clear, while I do not accept Brenez' hypothesis that Iulius Valerius wrote the very first instantiation of the *AR*, I welcome her and recent scholarship's idea that Iulius Valerius' Latin revision created a completely new story for a Roman audience in a key period of Roman history. This sort of originality deserves further attention.

In what follows, I approach Iulius Valerius' work from the reception angle, exploring how the author rewrote the story of Alexander's death. In the first section, I survey the pertinent traditions of Alexander's demise, examining how authorial selection of materials created three chief storylines, one of which the original romancer reworked, and Iulius Valerius read. In the second section, I analyze how Iulius Valerius reordered and streamlined the existing narrative to create a compelling account of the king's final days, which significantly enhances the focus on Alexander as an ideal Roman ruler. I conclude the chapter with some methodological remarks on the vibrant nature of later Roman *Alexandrology* and Iulius Valerius' participation in it.

1 Texts and traditions pertaining to the death of Alexander before Iulius Valerius

In antiquity, much discourse revolved around the deaths of personages whose demise was thought to have marked monumental changes to the world order.[11] For writers of history and biography, such deaths were in the Lévi-Straussian phrase, "good to think with". Accordingly, authors could shape the death scene in such a way as to convey a particular meaning of the final event, employing features like meaningful pre-death actions, such as famous last words. In fact, some authors took the liberty of completely altering the very event itself to suit their purposes. For instance, Greek historians from Herodotus to Diodorus of Sicily made King Cyrus II of Persia (r. 559–530 BC) die many

7 This latter text has received an exceptional amount of study by Carson Bay, whose wide bibliography may be consulted.

8 Forrai (2018) 35–39.

9 Forrai (2018) 45.

10 This complements the contention of other current scholarship that Iulius Valerius adapted a Greek *AR* for a specific target audience, for which see Wulfram (2018).

11 For paradigmatic examples, consider e. g. Hector's death in Hom. *Il.* 22, which heralds the fall of Troy.

different deaths, signifying anything from the *hybris* of imperial Persia (Herodotus) to the ideal ruler (Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*).[12]

The death of Alexander was also a good story that deserved embellishment.[13] According to Elizabeth Baynham, an authority on Alexander historiography, there exist three principal storylines:[14]

a. Conspirators poisoned the king: this story can be traced to the context of the Lamian War (323 – 322 BC) during which the Athenian orator Hypereides could propose divine honors for Iolaus, who had supposedly done the deed.[15]
b. Dionysiac overdrinking destroyed the king: the pamphleteer Ephippus of Olynthus claims in the *Deaths of Alexander and Hephaistion* that Alexander died from drinking a twelve-pint cup at a symposium organized by Medius and that this was really punishment from Dionysus for the Macedonian sack of Thebes in 336 BC.[16]
c. An illness caused the death of the king: the so-called "Royal Diaries" or *Ephemerides* records an elaborate account of Alexander's deterioration by disease until death.[17]

While these storylines are rich, it is noticeable that they do not vary to the same extent as tales about other characters, like Cyrus. That may be because the three storylines came to dominate quickly, that is, within decades of the historical Alexander's death. The wide circulation of these stories is evident because of immediate reactions to them.[18] For instance, Aristobulus, an eye-witness to the events of the campaign, argues that Alexander only drank so much at the fateful symposium because the king already had a fever and so had a terrible thirst.[19] Nevertheless, the suspicion of poison prevailed in the aftermath, which may be explained by the fact that the displaced Successors could agree to its incrimination of Antipater and his faction, who controlled their Macedonian homeland.

12 Beckman (2018).

13 In the modern world, the most evocative strand of story is Alexander's illness, which have stimulated scholars, medical doctors, and even Pentagon to identify a host of fatal diseases. Molina Marín (2018) 130 – 132 counts eleven different fatal diseases and lists more than a hundred specialist studies. Cf. Baynham (2018) 190 – 191 and Hall (2018).

14 Baynham (2018) 189.

15 Ps.-Plut. *Mor.* 849B. The stories gain further historical currency when Alexander's mother, Olympias, could use them to purge her political rivals from Macedon when she returned from exile in 317 BC. Principal sources: Diod. 19.11.8 and Plut. *Alex.* 77.1.

16 Ephippus of Olynthus *BNJ* 126 F 3 (Prandi) ap. Ath. 10.44 Olson (434 A–B). Cf. Nicobule *BNJ* 127 F 1 (Sheridan) ap. Ath. 10.44 Olson (434C).

17 See the collected fragments of Alexander's Ephemerides *BNJ* 117 (Bearzot).

18 See e. g. Heckel (2007).

19 Aristobulus of Cassandreia *BNJ* 139 F 59 (Pownall) ap. Plut. *Alex.* 75.6.

The poison rumors also dominated in the literary production of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.[20] The tale even convinced intellectuals, such as the Skeptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus (second century AD), who considered Alexander's assassination by poison the very best example of a true historical event.[21] Indeed, not even sober historians were able to ignore it. Diodorus, writing from the province of Sicily in the last days of the Roman Republic, believed that the Macedonian king died of illness, yet he felt compelled to record the poison plot as a postscript.[22] This seems a common feature in Romano-Greek authors, for they appear to have a similar preference for the storylines of illness and poison, as well as a similar priority. For instance, Plutarch the biographer and Arrian the historian dismiss the poison plot on ostensibly historical grounds.[23] Plutarch posits that the rumors of poison began five years after the event (*Alex.* 77.2), whereas Arrian expresses skepticism about certain "fabrications":

> I am aware that many other versions of Alexander's death have been recorded; for example, that Antipater sent Alexander a drug that caused his death, and that the drug was concocted for Antipater by Aristotle, who was now afraid of Alexander on account of Callisthenes. It was carried by Cassander, Antipater's son, and some have even reported that he conveyed it in a mule's hoof; it was given to Alexander by Iollas, Cassander's younger brother, since Iollas was a royal wine pourer and had been offended by Alexander shortly before his death. Others say that Medius, who was Iollas' lover, took a hand in the affair, seeing that it was Medius who suggested the symposium to Alexander; Alexander also felt a sharp pain on taking a drink and left the party for that reason. One writer is even shameless enough to report that Alexander, sensing that his end was near, went to throw himself into the Euphrates, so that he might disappear and, thereby, make it seem more credible to posterity that he had sprung from a god from birth and now had returned to the god at death. His wife Roxane noticed him going out and stopped him, at which point he bemoaned that she was actually begrudging him the eternal renown of having been born a god. I set down these stories more so that I may not be thought ignorant of them rather than because they are credible.[24]

The features criticized by Arrian appear rather sensationalist, not least in relation to the manner of its execution and the instigators behind the plot, including Alexander's schoolteacher-turned-tyrannicide. One may interpret Arrian's attempt to weed out such stories as reflecting the task of a serious historian, who judiciously evaluates the evidence – no doubt corroborating his own self-fashioning – but it is also important to notice how Arrian the historiographer reduces the significance of the poison plot, so

20 See e. g. Curt. 10.5.1–6 (lacunae after the speech at Opis until Alexander's deathbed), Just. 12.14–16. Cf. Vitr. *De Arch.* 8.3.16; Ov. *Ib.* 297–8; Sen. *Epist.* 83.19; Plin. *NH* 30.149. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule, including Fronto, *Ep.* 157, who suggests that Alexander's death by disease is a rhetorical theme for orators. The evidence of the grammarian Lucius Ampelius *Liber Memorialis* 16.2 indicates that both drink and poison were viable interpretations into the early third century AD.

21 Sext. Emp. *Math.* 1.263.

22 Diod. Sic. 17.117.5.

23 Plut. *Alex.* 75–77.5, Arr. *Anab.* 7.25–28.1.

24 Arr. *Anab.* 7.27 (trans. Mensch, adapted).

as to convey a particular meaning of Alexander's death.[25] This is especially true of his inclusion of the story about Roxane's "betrayal" – omitted in Plutarch's account – for Alexander's attempt to fake his own deification does not align with Arrian's general portrayal of the king.

The anonymous author of the Greek *AR* presents another view, insofar as he preserves and posits many of the stories dismissed by Arrian.[26] In the third and final book, the romancer lays out a narrative of death, the principal points of which are summarized below:

An ill omen of Alexander's death in Babylon (3.30):

> A local woman gives birth to a stillborn child with wild animals for his lower body. The unfortunate mother bring this freak of nature to Alexander and his Babylonian interpreters, who decide to burn the newborn because it signifies the death of the king (dead baby) and the fierce wars among the successors (animals).

The poison plot (31–32):

> Antipater, Alexander's regent in Macedonia, has an enmity towards Olympias, so when Alexander seeks to do something about it, Antipater engages his son Cassander in an elaborate plot to kill the king (31);
> Cassander conveys a poisonous draught in a mule's hoof to Babylon, and his accomplice Iollas manages to serve Alexander the drink twice for rapid effect; the assassins make their escape (31.10–32.3);
> At night, Roxane prevents the dying Alexander from throwing himself into the Euphrates to disappear as if a god (32.4–10);
> Alexander wants to settle his affairs and summons Ptolemy among others (32.11–15);

The will (33.1–25) and death of Alexander (33.26–27):

> Holkias reads Alexander's will (33.1), which confers major possessions upon all successors, but especially Ptolemy;

Ptolemy asks to whom Alexander bequeaths his kingdom (33.26), and the king dies (33.27).

The burial (34):

> A quarrel breaks out about Alexander's burial, but Ptolemy consults the oracle of the Babylonian Zeus, who sends the king to Memphis, Egypt (3.1–3);

25 Baynham (2018) 196–198. On Arrian's cultural context and literary agenda, see now Liotsakis (2019), Leon (2021), and the new Budé text in Goukowsky (2022).

26 Of course, Arrian and the romancer are similar in other ways, for which see e.g. McInerney (2007).

Ptolemy escorts Alexander's body to Memphis, where the deceased is greeted as a new Sesonchosis (34.4), but the Archpriest redirects the procession to Alexandria, where Ptolemy builds a tomb (33.5–6).

An epitaph recording certain biographical details, campaigns, and city foundations of Alexander (35).

This narrative of Alexander's final days and death provides an explanation of the earliest Hellenistic history that endorses the Ptolemaic regime as the rightful heir to Alexander's empire. To this end, the romancer presents a particularly powerful version of events replete with references to dramatic occurrences, divine portents, and major decisions by important individuals, primarily Ptolemy, the future king of Egypt. The partiality towards Ptolemy is evident in several ways. It is clear that the author centers Ptolemy's actions; Ptolemy takes initiative in most things after Alexander's death, and his deeds are legitimized by the highest authorities from Zeus (through portents, oracles) to Alexander (through the testament). The romancer also manages to deflect blame away from Ptolemy. For instance, the most recent commentary by Nawotka points out that the romancer's account of Alexander's burial reworks the events of Hellenistic history; the historical Ptolemy actually hijacked the king's funeral procession, which was *en route* to Macedon under Perdiccas' orders.[27] Finally, the romancer incorporates Egyptianizing features, including Sesonchosis, the legendary Pharaoh, to enhance the narrative emphasis on Ptolemy's Egypt and Alexandria, the latter of which eventually became the center of Ptolemaic rule.

Few would contest that such content must have originated in early Hellenistic times. Scholarship has deduced that the material ultimately stems from a now lost Hellenistic pamphlet, not only represented by the narrative of the *AR* (3.30–34), but also refracted separately in a Latin text known as the *Book of Alexander the Great's Death and Will* (*Liber de morte testamentoque Alexandri Magni*).[28] The latter was probably a fourth-century (or fifth-century) rendition of an originally Greek text, perhaps the lost pamphlet itself, although later material may have crept in the course of transmission and adaptation.[29]

While the account of Alexander's death in the *Liber de morte* offers a rather dramatic retelling, it is closely comparable to the narrative of the *AR* with some variation in, for instance, the will (§§106–111; 115–123). One significant difference is the role played by Roxane, which goes beyond the confounding of Alexander's deification (§§101–102). She concocts a potion that keeps the king alive for five more days (§110), draws out his soul by a kiss at the moment of death (§112), and mourns him,

27 The historical content the romancer rewrites is discussed *ad loc.*, *AR* 3.34 in Nawotka (2017) 260–265.
28 The latest edition is Ravazzolo (2012). Fuller bibliography at Molina Marín (2018) 45.
29 Much happened to the *Liber de morte*; at an unknown point in late antiquity, the *Liber de morte* became grafted onto the so-called *Metz Epitome*, a historical narrative of Alexander's campaigns from Hyrcania to India. Cf. Baynham (1995) 62.

after which – at Alexander's wish (§112) – she is given in marriage to Perdiccas, one of the principal Successors (§118). Such drama is powerful and may either stem from the original pamphlet or represent the poetic license of a later translator/transmitter.

It is notable that, in the quote above, Arrian explicitly targeted a *single* unidentified writer for the story of Roxane's conduct. Of course, we have no way of confirming whether Arrian was referring directly to the lost pamphlet or one of the two distinct texts that tell the story, i.e. the Greek *Vorlage* of *Liber de morte* and the Greek *AR*, in the eventuality that an instantiation existed prior to Arrian.[30] However, it is key that Arrian's testimony corroborates the notion that stories such as this circulated long before Iulius Valerius picked up the pen. It supports the argument that Iulius Valerius mainly reworked existing material rather than invented everything himself, in a similar fashion to our other principal Alexander historians from the Roman world, including Arrian.

2 Death is not the end: Iulius Valerius' rewriting of the great finale

So far, I have examined how narratives of Alexander's demise acquired a life of their own in the writings of ancient historiographers. While the Successor Wars of the early Hellenistic period may not have passed on more than three main storylines, the opportunities for reinterpreting them were many, not least because the reworking of different tales permitted authors to accommodate a certain representation of the subject. Iulius Valerius was no different. In my view, Iulius Valerius, like Arrian or the romancer, shaped the story in a way that projected Alexander as a good Roman emperor. As other scholars have argued, there was already a good deal of Roman material in the Greek *AR*, such as the detail of the vomit-inducing feather in Claudius' poison plot against Agrippina and Alexander's Romulus-like apotheosis,[31] but I aim to show below that the author goes much further in the construction of Alexander's imperial image.

Of course, my line of argument presupposes that Iulius Valerius was an agent of change. I do believe that he did have agency, for which I again point to Forrai's argu-

30 The uncertainties regarding the Greek *AR*'s origin and its constitution prevent any conclusive dating. Richard Stoneman, doyen of *AR* studies, has vehemently argued for an early Hellenistic version and compiled a long list of chronological arguments in favor of its earliness. Cf. Stoneman (2007) xxv–xxxiv. Other leading scholars insist, however, on the traditional dating in the third century AD: see e.g. Jouanno (2002) 26–28, reiterated in Jouanno (2020) 210. The text could thus have appeared anytime in a window of about six hundred years. Material culture and epigraphical evidence is suggestive of the text's existence at the later end of the spectrum, for which see still Burstein (1989).

31 For the former, see Nawotka (2017) 240, *ad loc. AR* 3.32.1. For the latter, see Palmer (1981), accepted by Nawotka (2017) 259.

ments about translation as rewriting in late antiquity.[32] Moreover, my position also assumes that Iulius Valerius had access to Greek and that he did alter existing material from an existing text. Certainty is impossible but, given the comparative material from other instantiations of the *AR* in Greek and Armenian, plus the *Liber de morte* itself, it is clear that Iulius Valerius' text at least offers something different.

There are many ways and means to deal with literary texts. In what follows, I shall employ existing approaches from current scholarship to highlight three aspects of Iulius Valerius' adaptation: restructuring of narrative, rewriting of episodes, and the representation of Alexander.

2.1 Narrative structure

The first approach to Iulius Valerius' account of Alexander's death is a basic comparison at the level of narrative. I build here on the work of Corinne Jouanno, who argues that some literary features of the *AR* create structure in the text.[33] The placement of episodes thus matters because they chronicle the story in a certain way that may engender new meaning. I tabulate below the narrative structure of our principal texts (Tab. 1):

Tab. 1: Narrative structure of the principal texts

Liber de morte	*AR Alpha*	Iulius Valerius (ed. Rosellini 2004)[34]
90 – 95: Omen of death	3.30: Omen of death	3.30 (1277 – 1319): Omen of death
96 – 100: Poison plot	3.31: Poison plot	3.31 (1320 – 1340): Poison plot & death
103 – 112: Preparations for death & death scene	3.32: Poison plot (continued)	3.34 (1341 – 1373): Burial (by Ptolemy)
113 – 114: Burial (by Perdiccas)	3.33: Will (read by Holkias) & death	3.33 (1374 – 1438): Alexander's will (read by Ptolemy)
115 – 123: Will (read by Holkias on Perdiccas' orders)	3.34: Burial (by Ptolemy)	3.35 (1441 – 1456): Epitaph
	3.35: Epitaph	

The table presents us with three different sequences. This is immediately clear simply by looking at the modern paragraph order. For instance, in Iulius Valerius, 3.34 and 3.33

32 See n. 8. According to Bergeman *et al.* (2019) 12, translations are also transformative to the extent that they transfer meaning partially from one language to another.

33 Jouanno (2020).

34 For a general commentary on this narrative, see Callu (2009) 260 – 264.

have swapped place,[35] whereas 3.32 is omitted. It is true for all three narratives that, after the initial omen story, the poison plot begins, but this is expected, because it is precisely portents that Corinne Jouanno proposes give order to the *AR* narrative in that they create narrative expectations; the action must follow the divine premonition.

In all cases, the omen is immediately followed by the successful poison plot to kill Alexander. However, only in Iulius Valerius does Alexander die right away, whereas the other texts draw out the misery or provide excruciating detail. I shall return to this reduction below.

While the burial must necessarily follow the scene of death, the placement of the will is as variable as it is notable. The *Liber de morte* refers to it throughout the preparations for Alexander's death so that Alexander's agency in writing it is certain. The text also places it last, which gives the impression that Alexander's will is indeed being imposed on the world continually, as if the king were still ruling from beyond the grave. The romancer places it even before death, to have Alexander himself testify. Iulius Valerius makes a key alteration from the *AR* by placing the will in the penultimate position but still maintaining an epitaph in the final position.

Iulius Valerius' restructuring generates a neat narrative of temporal and spatial order with resonance for a Roman readership. In his account, Alexander's corpse is first taken to Alexandria, and then the king's will is revealed at the site of his tomb by a significant successor, i. e. Ptolemy. This achieves a similar effect to the narrative of the *Liber de Morte*, but the will is now read in the context of a successor kingdom with lasting impact. The content adds to this narrative thrust: the final line of Iulius Valerius' epitaph points back towards this Alexandria-centric narrative, saying, "Alexander's day of death is still held very sacred in Alexandria".[36] Iulius Valerius' version is thus particularly powerful in that it emphasizes a link between past and present, evidenced by the city of Alexandria and its customs of annually honoring its founder.

What are the overall effects of this reordering? I would propose that Iulius Valerius' revisions simply generate a tidier narrative. We may interpret the story of Alexander's death as a two-part narrative: Alexander is first warned of imminent death, is poisoned, and dies in accordance with divine will. After the proper ending, his custodian executes the king's final wishes and establishes his legacy in Alexandria, which has staying power and cultural influence. In my view, Iulius Valerius' restructuring provides a clear-cut and concise version of events.

Why tell the story in such a way? There are obvious aesthetic and historiographical reasons, such as telling a coherent and compelling story, but I would also suggest that the narrative makes a case for the continued relevance of Alexander in the later Roman Empire. As noted above, through the existence of the city, the legacy of Alexand-

35 *Pace* Callu (2009) 261, who claims that the editor Rosellini has swapped the chapters. This ordering appears in every edition of the text since 1817.

36 Iul. Val. 3.35 (1455–1456): *Obitus tamen eius diem etiam nunc Alexandriae sacratissimum habent.*

er remains relevant for would-be successors, including the Romans of Iulius Valerius' time. I have argued elsewhere that the mentioning of the city of Alexandria in connection with the founder presents a case for the permanence of Alexander's legacy, and Roman writers could take various approaches to it.[37] For example, if they avoid referring to the city, they effectively decreased Alexander's cultural worth. By doing the opposite and by doing it in such a laudatory fashion, Iulius Valerius makes a heavy claim upon the attention of his readers and presses them to take seriously the subject of his "translation", i. e. the figure of Alexander. It is a way of showing – rather than telling – why his history matters to potential readers.

2.2 Narration of episodes

The second approach to Iulius Valerius' narrative of Alexander's death is the comparative method adopted by Michael Paschalis.[38] He compared episodes in the Greek, the Armenian, and the Latin versions of the *AR* to explore not only how the romancers narrated individual episodes differently, but also how those differences changed the overall effect of the narrative.

In the following, I shall provide brief summaries of the individual scenes as they appear in Iulius Valerius, noting some of the main deviations in terms of content from the other extant versions of the *AR* (outlined in section 1):

3.30 (1277 – 1319): Omen of death

The baleful birth occurs not while Alexander is in Babylon, but rather when "he went away from Babylon" (*a Babylonia iret Alexander*). The local woman does not have direct access to the king but has to reach him via an intermediary, a messenger, who alerts Alexander during his "midday slumber" (*meridiano somno*). The color of the unnamed woman's baby is not blue, but "black" (*colore atro*). One of its animal parts is from "bears" (*ursorum*). She reveals the portent to the king alone. Alexander then summons the interpreters, whom he bids, not forces, to keep nothing from him. Every interpreter appears immediately – rather than a single one returning from abroad – and they report that the sign spells out Alexander's death and strife to follow. Only one unnamed interpreter of the ones present (*unus igitur e praesentibus*) speaks on their behalf, however. The burning of the monstrosity follows, which happens in the most pious fashion.

Alexander is only momentarily disturbed by his imminent death, telling Jupiter in direct speech that "it is good to be ignorant of fearful things" (*Pro bone Iuppiter, quam bona res est ignoratio metuendorum*) but Alexander is not further moved by this mes-

37 Djurslev (2020) 12.

38 Paschalis (2007).

sage (*sed hactenus illa animi commotio fuit*). He begins to look forward to his deification in a "manly" (*viriliter*) and "proper" (*decore*) fashion.

3.31 (1320 – 1340): Poison plot & death

The appropriate time of death occurs when Alexander is informed by his mother of a conflict between Antipater and *Divinopatris*,[39] apparently a person who takes over the conflict from Olympias, who is normally considered the antagonist of Antipater. Alexander decides to end the conflict between the two "men" (*virorum*) by inviting Antipater to court; Antipater responds by developing a powerful poison and forcing an unnamed servant to assassinate the king at a dinner. Alexander fights the illness for a few days while, simultaneously, managing to discover not only the cause of his death but also Antipater's instigation.[40] The discovery is followed by the scene of Alexander's apotheosis: a dragon and eagle bring Alexander's soul – in the form of a star – to heaven, after which the king breathes his last. He does not get to say any final words, but his people bear witness to the apotheosis.

3.34 (1341 – 1373): Burial

A conflict breaks out between Persians and Macedonians regarding the site of burial. However, Ptolemy consults the oracle of Zeus in Babylon, which declares that Alexander must be buried in Memphis, Egypt. The deceased king is conveyed – it is not explained that it is by Ptolemy – on a lavishly described bier. In Pelusium, Egypt, he is greeted by leading members of society (priests and lords), who revere him not only as the Pharaoh Sesonchosis, but also Vulcan, the chief god of Egypt. They ask that he be buried in Alexandria, not because his presence is the cause of much strife, but because he was the city's founder and greatest protector of the city (*auctor conditus fuerit et tutela vel maxima perpetuo futura*). Iulius Valerius adds that it is known that the place is unconquerable, as revealed by divine signs, in the same way that Alexander had indefatigable virtue, (*indefessae virtutis*). A major temple is built for the king at the expense of much toil, and the place is called Alexander's.

3.33 (1374 – 1438): Alexander's will

The chief alterations are that Ptolemy reads the will aloud in Alexandria and that the text states that he will receive Libya rather than Egypt.

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39 Callu (2009) 261 *ad loc.* argues that this is a misunderstanding of a Greek term.

40 The king does not do so in any other version.

3.35 (1441 – 1456): Epitaph

The biographical details listed are: Alexander's thirty-three years of life, his eighteen years at the ascension to kingship, and the seven years of warfare before he turned twenty-five (not the eight years of subsequent peace). Iulius Valerius records twenty-two barbarian nations defeated and sixteen Greek (twelve in the Armenian). He further lists twelve Alexandrias. In one city – it is unclear which one but probably the one in Egypt – Alexander divided the districts into five by capital letters to the effect that the five letters signified, "Emperor Alexander, line of Jupiter, founded" (*Alexander Imperator Genus Iovis Condidit*). Iulius Valerius ends on the significant remark, already discussed, that Alexandrians still kept Alexander's day of death sacred.[41]

We have already witnessed how much the structure of the narrative has been changed in Iulius Valerius, and this summary has given further evidence of the author's creativity. Many alterations are evident with implications for Iulius Valerius' narrative and representation. One significant feature is perhaps less clear, but very important. A key feature of Iulius Valerius' text is the heavily abbreviated narrative. This is not just true of content, but also of form. For instance, much direct speech has been turned into paraphrase or simple summary. Abridgement was a common historiographical practice,[42] and this condensation signals that Iulius Valerius did indeed rewrite an existing text. Of course, Iulius Valerius was not prohibited from adding material and, in the analysis below, I will point out such additions, but the general impression is revision by careful editing to control the narrative.

Further commentary on the main consequences of Iulius Valerius' changes is necessary. While we have already seen how the reordering led to a more concise narrative, the shortening of individual scenes also contributes to this effect. A clear instance of this is the stories revolving around Ptolemy, who appears significantly less involved than usual. It is true that he consults the oracle and reads the will of Alexander; little explicit emphasis is conferred upon those actions, and Ptolemy himself achieves much less by these actions in comparison to what he gains in the *Liber de morte* and the Greek *AR*. For example, Alexander's will grants him Libya, not Egypt, which is given to Perdiccas, his rival. As I have argued above, it is striking that we are not offered a particularly Ptolemaic Alexandria, but rather a sort of original Alexandria that goes back to the founder. To me, Iulius Valerius' extremely positive spin on the city feeds into the idea that Romans were interested in Alexander, but less so in the Ptolemies.[43]

41 Cf. *AR* Arm. §286: "And he [i. e. Alexander] came to his end on the fourth day of the month of Parmouphir, toward nightfall. And *his army* called that day *sacred* because of Alexander *who died young.*" (my emphases in the translation of Wolohojian).

42 See e. g. Schepens and Schorn (2010).

43 Finn (2022) 186.

The redaction of the narrative is most apparent in the case of the poison plot. We have already witnessed that an entire paragraph is omitted, but there are further changes at content level. Olympias' role in the conflict is greatly reduced; she functions not as an antagonist of Antipater, but rather as a reporter of the rivalry between leading men in Macedon (though the text says Epirus, the historical Olympias' ancestral land). The sole blame for Alexander's death is put on Antipater, who not only creates the poison, but also devises the entire plot. It is clear that he does not work alone, but not one other character is mentioned, and we would expect to hear of his son Cassander or the wine-server Iollas (presumably the unnamed servant, *minister*). There is no protracted narrative of the poison affecting the king. Alexander simply dies a few days after a single dose taken at an unspecific dinner (the name of Medius is not supplied). The poison plot thus reads as the obvious course of action after the portent provided by the baby omen in the paragraph prior to the death narrative. Iulius Valerius then proceeds immediately to the divinely ordained conclusion that Alexander joins the gods in proper fashion, despite being the victim of foul play.

The reduced cast of characters also extends to Roxane, whom Iulius Valerius only mentions briefly in the will regarding the issue of Alexander's successor. Her absence is particularly striking considering her role in the *Liber de morte*, studied in section I, and scholars have remarked on her nonappearance in the *AR* tradition.[44] In Iulius Valerius, however, the author goes much further to remove her from history. He deletes the scene in which she stops Alexander from throwing himself in the Euphrates, thus adopting the stance of Arrian, who considered the tale particularly incredible. Her omission is a natural consequence of the cutting of paragraph 32, but it is an editorial – as much as an authorial – choice to remove her in this fashion.

The absence of the supporting cast creates an extreme focus on the protagonist of the text, which will detain us for a space.

2.3 The representation of Alexander

The third approach taken here revolves around the way in which Iulius Valerius projects his main character. By projection, I do not simply mean whether the author represented the king positively or negatively, but rather how Iulius Valerius constructed a textual image of Alexander for a certain audience, which could be disseminated widely. In this, I follow the lead of Diederik Burgersdijk and Alan Ross, who have made a strong case for studying the rhetorical representations of Roman emperors.[45] In what follows, I apply this position to Iulius Valerius' representation of Alexander, aiming to investigate how the overall representation of the main subject reflects the narrative thrust of the text. This is important, not least because, as we saw in section I, the manner in

44 See e.g. Müller (2012).

45 Burgersdijk/Ross (2018) 8.

which a character faces death provides a frame for readers' interpretation of the person's entire life. I sift through the stories in order of appearance, noting their individual and collective depiction of Alexander.

The opening of Iulius Valerius' death narrative makes clear that we are dealing with an extraordinary individual in which the divine takes an interest. The king faces the omen of the monstrous child with relative calm; in fact, the sign is revealed during his midday rest, which was a particularly popular time for the manifestation of the supernatural, i.e. "the dangerous hour" in folkloric terms.[46] This follows the narrative of the *AR* (Arm. §259). However, the reaction to the divine message of impending doom is different, as Elizabeth Baynham has noted.[47] Indeed, Iulius Valerius changes the king's reaction to the message, as well as his utterance. Instead of Alexander mentioning that he will join the gods as Dionysus and Hercules did, like in the *AR*, he remarks that it is good not to know frightening things (i.e. misfortunes that will happen). This alteration is followed by Iulius Valerius' invention of Alexander's manly meeting with death, knowing full well that he will be apotheosized. Of course, in essence, the gist is the same – he will be a deity – but the narrative of Iulius Valerius masculinizes Alexander's mentality and removes the comparanda of other deified mortals. It follows that Alexander not only meets his end on his own terms, but also as singular individual beyond compare. Alexander stands below Jupiter only.

The theme of the ingenious and resilient monarch continues in the story of the poison plot. In the other versions, the story almost seems to mock Alexander for his ignorance when meeting his fate. For example, the *Liber de morte* has Roxane obstruct Alexander's poor attempt at trickery in her devotion to him. The Greek *AR* reads as if tragicomedy when Alexander repeatedly imbibes poison from drink and Iollas' feather. In Iulius Valerius, however, a point is made of the king coming out on top. As already noted, the author presents a unique scenario in which Alexander actually discovers "after a few days that Antipater is the cause of his peril" (*tandem causam eiusdem periculi esse ab Antipatro cognovit*). While the king remains powerless to prevent his own demise, he receives satisfaction by joining the readers in knowing who had done it.

The deification scene updates Alexander's personal power to the expected level. The Roman features, including its echoes of Romulus' deification, have already been noted in scholarship, as outlined above. The episode achieves significantly greater amplification in Iulius Valerius because Alexander's two fathers, Nectanebus (dragon) and Zeus (eagle), come down from heaven to retrieve their son's soul. Moreover, it is noteworthy that unspecified people witness the divine event, so as to confer authority upon the realism of it. This is a particularly powerful narrative when compared to that of the *Liber de morte* (§112): Roxane extracts the soul of Alexander through a kiss of death. Despite the dramatic ending, the *Liber de morte* does not declare explicitly the divinity of Alexander, as Iulius Valerius does.

46 I thank Daniel Ogden for this information.

47 Baynham (1995) 74.

The episode of conveying Alexander to his final resting place lends authenticity to the newfound power post mortem. His entire empire is in uproar before the transport commences. Alexander's bier is given a full description to augment the king's magnificence. That the Egyptian elite greets the king as Sesonschosis is not new, but Iulius Valerius' comparison to Vulcan is (no Egyptian deity name is given). It means that the king can be considered the highest god among the Egyptians, since that is what Vulcan had been in Greco-Roman *Aegyptiaca* since Manetho.[48] Moreover, the idea that Alexander cannot reside in Memphis is supported with reasoning unique to Iulius Valerius: Alexander is supposed to stay in the city he founded because of its invincibility and virtue. Indeed, a house has been built to perpetuate these traits.

The commanding posthumous presence continues in the scene of the will. Ptolemy finds one of Alexander's last wishes "written while he was dying" (*quod scripserat moriens*), namely, that the will is to be "read publically" (*publice recitari*). Ptolemy proceeds to do the scripted action. Iulius Valerius claims that the immediately following text preserves an almost *verbatim* copy of the will. Iulius Valerius' preservation of this text thus becomes Alexander's final words before the epitaph and, through this document, his measures for political order are imposed upon the brave new world.

The epitaph makes a summative claim to Alexander's continued power, as argued above. Following on from the record of his closing words, his deeds are listed. Iulius Valerius' focus rests upon military and colonial achievements, ending with Alexander's chief claim to immortality, the commemoration of his life and death through Alexandria.

Iulius Valerius' overall representation of Alexander is perhaps best summed up by the end of the epitaph. The five letters corresponding to the Alexandrian city districts – "Alexander, Emperor, Scion of Jupiter, Founded" (*Alexander Imperator Genus Iovis Condidit*) – corroborate the chief points of the five paragraphs under review: Alexander is lord, divine, and creator of civilization. On this reading, Iulius Valerius' account reads as something closely resembling a sustained encomium of an ideal ruler, who is emperor, even in name.

2.4 The curtain falls: Iulius Valerius' rewriting of Alexander's death

The three analyses above have demonstrated that Iulius Valerius has constructed an engaging and concise narrative of Alexander's demise by several means. In terms of narrative structure, he has recombined multiple stories, causing them to change meaning when read in the new order. In terms of the episodes, he has deliberately omitted or invented material to augment the representation of the protagonist. Indeed, he has

48 References in Djurslev (2020) 67. In Iul. Val. 1.34 – the only other place Vulcan is mentioned – we learned that Alexander himself visited Vulcan's sanctuary in Memphis.

increased the focus on the protagonist to the point of obfuscating the actions or even existence of others. In terms of the representation of Alexander, the portrayal is consistent and culturally appropriate: the king has been dressed as a Roman ruler. In conclusion, I submit that Iulius Valerius translated a Greek *AR* by rewriting it into an imperial idiom and by arraying Alexander in an even more Roman guise.

Iulius Valerius had already adumbrated this representation by making Alexander conquer Rome as one of the first nations,[49] if not the first, thereby projecting that they assisted him from the outset and throughout the entire campaign.[50] The Roman world thus functioned as the western boundary of Alexander's global empire. In this respect, Iulius Valerius can be said to have attempted to fix the meaning of Alexander as *Alexander imperator* across his new *History*, and the great finale contributes to this strong impression.

To modern eyes, which may be influenced by the hostile views of Roman Republicans,[51] it may seem strange to consider Alexander such a sharp-dressed king of Rome, but this was not an issue for imperial minds. By various cultural and political processes, Alexander had been a proud part of Roman historical imagination since Augustan times, if not before. Indeed, as Jennifer Finn shows in a seminal book,[52] Roman writers regularly rewrote Alexander's image in light of their own, especially during times of high political pressure and cultural transformation. Given this, it is unproblematic that Iulius Valerius should be at liberty to amplify this image of a fully Roman Alexander, which was already partially developed in the Greek version of the *AR*.

It is tempting to begin attributing this imagery to a specific Constantinian context like Ingrid Brenez, but it is perhaps more appropriate to take a step back. One feature that contradicts Brenez's argument is precisely the timelessness of Iulius Valerius' representation of Alexander. There are no specifics, despite Iulius Valerius' heavy hand in retelling of the campaign. It seems to me that this image could belong to any given point of imperial Roman history, given its generic praise of the Romanized Macedonian ruler. If not a particular political context, how then do we explain Iulius Valerius' revision? I would propose that an answer lies in the cultural production of the later imperial period, which I shall sketch below.

49 Iul. Val. 1.29, cf. *AR* 1.26.4–6. For Alexander and Rome in the *AR* tradition, see e.g. Garstad (2015).
50 Cf. Joseph. *AJ* 11.339 for the notion that the Jerusalemite Jews were invited to campaign with Alexander after his peaceful overtaking of the city.
51 These views are extracted well in Spencer (2002) whose principal chapters focus on Latin materials, including Livy's lengthy digression on the *locus* Rome versus Alexander in book 9.17–19. Cf. Welch/Mitchell (2013) and the Romano-centric papers of the first part of Moore (2018), in particular the contribution of Dawn Gilley.
52 Finn (2022) 184–186.

3 Iulius Valerius' *History of Alexander* and later Roman culture

There is rich evidence for later Roman engagement with Alexander in the literary and material culture of the third and fourth centuries, to the extent that local agents celebrated festivals for Alexander, erected temples, and wore lavish medallions that channeled the fortune of Alexander.[53] Literary references to Alexander rapidly increased in frequency, and we have already seen that there was a market of literature consumption that allowed for texts, like the *Liber de morte*, to be translated and recirculated. For those who may wish to place the *AR* in the third century AD, this particular text can be seen as part of this sort of cultural activity in later antiquity.

There are now several models that partly describe this cultural phenomenon of "Alexander mania". In 1993, Gerhard Wirth (1926–2021) published a wide-ranging synthesis, arguing on the basis of texts that the later writers distorted the image of the historical Alexander to oblivion in an ever-declining spiral of discourse.[54] This explanation no doubt seems attractive after reading Iulius Valerius' rewrite of Alexander history, but the basic premise is faulty. It does not appreciate the ways in which later cultural production worked, as I have argued elsewhere,[55] and it is also true that Wirth's model recycles the basic modern value judgements that scholars for centuries have made concerning later antique literature.[56] However, Wirth's point about the distortion of meaning remains useful as a note of caution for anyone embarking on studies of the historical Alexander.

Jaakkojuhani Peltonen outlines another model that stresses education in rhetoric across the Greek and Roman worlds.[57] He builds on recent advances in our knowledge of imperial rhetoric, which have *inter alia* revealed how later Roman historians, including the fifth-century Christian polemicist Paulus Orosius, employed rhetoric to support their aims in authenticating a particular reading of the distant past.[58] Peltonen's mode of interpretation is certainly apt for describing some of the highly conflicting accounts about Alexander in later Latin historical writing. To take one of Peltonen's many examples,[59] we may briefly consider the so-called *Itinerarium Alexandri* or *Itinerary of Alexander*.[60] This travel itinerary offers the first half of a double set of military cam-

53 See e.g. Dahmen (2007).
54 Wirth (1993).
55 Djurslev (2020) 197–198.
56 Scholarly conceptions of later Latin literature in Vessey (2015).
57 Peltonen (2019).
58 See e.g. Van Nuffelen (2012) and Leonard (2022). Gassman (2017) offers a detailed study of the Roman kings' reception in Orosius.
59 Peltonen (2019) 68–70.
60 The text can be dated to after c. 340 and before 350 because of the prefatory dedication to Emperor Constantius II (r. 337–361). For general bibliography, see Molina Marín (2018) 46.

paigns against the east by major public figures, Alexander and Trajan, but only the account of Alexander's Persian campaign survives. The extant text ends with an intriguing passage before the manuscript page breaks off:

> There followed banquets and the more pleasant civilities through which Alexander caused his own death. The chief officers of the army had established a custom of entertaining each other at dinner in turn. When, as it happened, they were dining with Medius, Alexander made himself a participant in their revel. At once Medius offered him a "goblet of Hercules" from which to take wine. Far from scorning this honor which involved invoking the god by name, he filled the goblet right up and drank if off at a draught. This was what caused the death of this hero with all his great virtues. He whom honorable wounds, sustained in so many a battle, had failed to overcome was, through the jealousy of fate, taken off by a mere act of juvenile bravado on his own part. Not to dwell more on his death in preference to his praises, I shall set down also here the diligent labors that he performed. …[61]

The content of this extract provides a highly historicizing and panegyrical review of the death scene, explicitly mentioning a cause of death and a high level of historicizing detail,[62] before the authorial intrusion makes clear the wish to avoid discussing Alexander's vices any further. The subsequent amplification of Alexander's virtues thus stands in stark contrast to his self-inflicted death by overdrinking. It is noteworthy that this rewrite substantially alters the death scene, once again, but this time for the worse; Alexander's demise is represented as a disappointing finish to a virtuous life of military glory.

In case of the *Itinerary*, we are also able to test further Peltonen's model of rhetoric because we can verify the political and cultural context by the ancient author's own words. We know that the chief aim of the text was to offer Emperor Constantius historical models for emulation in his "third" Persian war, for which the selection of Alexander and Trajan was a pairing suggestive of previous success in this endeavor. The anonymous author, possibly Iulius Valerius himself,[63] constantly draws explicit and implicit comparison to Alexander, as argued by Raffaela Tabacco.[64] This point of comparison is a typical rhetorical tool, the *comparatio* (Gk. *synkrisis*). The rhetorical setting of the text thus suggested in no uncertain terms that the present emperor already surpassed his precursors in personal virtue and, by learning from their mistakes, his eastern campaign could make him achieve more military glory than either Alexander or Trajan.

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61 *It. Alex.* 53–54 (118–119), ed. Tabacco 2000 (trans. Davies, adapted).

62 Such as the Herculean drinking cup. Alexander's literary tradition makes so much of this feature that Plut. *Alex.* 75.5 feels compelled to clarify that the king did not drink from such a device. Cf. Diod. Sic. 17.117.1, Just. *Epit.* 12.13.8.

63 Lane Fox (1997) has argued that the anonymous author of this text is Iulius Valerius, not least because a unique manuscript contains both Iulius Valerius' *History* and *Itinerary*. Verbal echoes and similar contents suggest the author of the *Itinerary* rewrote parts of the *History*, thus revealing the priority of the *History*. Unfortunately, no conclusive evidence about the dual authorship exists.

64 Tabacco (1994).

In sum, it seems a productive way forward to explore rhetorical contexts of Roman references to Alexander, for they reveal the processes by which Roman agents of change made the Macedonian king their own. It is, however, possible to bring further nuance to this approach which – exactly by being all-embracing – may result in being unfocused. By privileging close study of single snippets of individual texts, it might also not capture the overarching patterns and systems in which the texts participated on the ground.

It seems to me that most productive approach to begin excavating this underlying discourse is that of Jacqueline Arthur-Montagne.[65] She calls to the study of declamations in the rhetorical schools of the Roman Empire, examining how Alexander regularly appeared in rhetorical handbooks attested in literary, papyrological, and anecdotal evidence across the vast expanse of the empire. Such books gave grammarians the means to drill students in exercises that required them to revise the Alexander narrative, necessitating creativity and imagination so as to compose letters like the king,[66] speak like him, or resolve conflicts caused by him (especially in Greece). Such exercises were not fully-fledged compositions, but rather foundational pieces or writing-prompts for rehearsing rhetorical arguments anchored in a historical setting. They were thus starting points for developing historical episodes in new directions, whereby students created original "revisionist fictions", to use Arthur-Montagne's term. This sort of activity went much beyond the classroom as students graduated to public life in the institutions of Roman society.

Arthur-Montagne's theory also contains the topics to be covered. The bulk of the evidence falls into four categories, one of which she designates with the title, "Alexander post-mortem". Discussing the king's death, its meaning, and its aftermath were accordingly major rhetorical themes to be explored, and we may test the theory by consulting the many results of this variation over the same theme in a range of texts. Consider only this brief summary of Alexander's achievements features in a Latinate Christian revision of Josephus' history of the First Jewish-Roman War (AD 66 – 73),[67] the *De excidio Hierosolymitano* or *On the Destruction of Jerusalem* (c. 370):

> The Macedonians are not excited by the achievements of Philip, nor the triumphs of Alexander. They nevertheless justly consider the pair the most prudent of all, because one kept himself to Greece, whereas the other fled Roman forces to arrive a conqueror in the Caspian kingdoms and then all the way to the limits of the Persia and the remote regions of the Indians. Alexander obtained the name of "the Great", because he did not challenge the greatest of all. A premature death took him away from the triumph of the Romans, but it served his descendants by whom

65 Arthur-Montagne (2016). I thank the author for sharing chapter 5 of her unpublished dissertation, as well as the revised discussion from her much-anticipated monograph, which is currently under review.
66 Arthur-Montagne (2014).
67 The text recasts the Roman-Jewish war as the end of Jewish history and divine grace, which feeds into a broader discourse by fourth-century Christian intellectuals. They increasingly conferred legitimacy upon Christian difference by stressing Jewish hostility and culpability, for which see Knust (2006) 533 – 534.

> the plunder of the east was sought [...] The great worth in Alexander: what was so wonderful? He extended his conquests to the Ocean, the Romans beyond the Ocean.[68]

The rhetorical setting may explain this engaging image of an Alexander figure running away from Roman power, a rather novel representation when compared to the emperor-figure of Iulius Valerius, among others. The passage occurs in a public speech put into the mouth of Herod Agrippa II (c. AD 28–93/94), functioning as an exhortation to his fellow Jerusalemite citizens to avert war with Rome before the outbreak of the war in 65/66. Agrippa seeks to discourage action by illustrating the martial superiority of Rome against every enemy with a host of historical *exempla*. The pro-Roman slant evidently reworks Alexander's external campaigns into a retreat from the Roman superpower, thus revising a *locus* of counterfactual history known since Livy.

In my view, Arthur-Montagne's hypothesis captures several aspects relevant for Iulius Valerius' revisionist version of Alexander history.[69] First, it helpfully describes the massive scale on which people engaged with Alexander-related materials across linguistic divides in the empire. Secondly, it makes more tangible a thriving market of Alexander-related histories and fictions, which explains the ongoing literary occupation with Alexander in which Iulius Valerius participated. Thirdly, it offers a robust framework for exploring the discourse along useful categories rather than privileging individual campaign narratives or terse remarks on Alexander made in passing. The hypothesis thus supports studying *Alexandrology* as a cultural phenomenon that straddles ideological divides, as well as literary and material culture, while simultaneously unifying scholarship on the history and reception of Alexander.

4 Conclusion

As I hope to have shown, Iulius Valerius was but one of many participants in a much-wider discourse on Alexander, or *Alexandrology*, in the later Roman Empire. This helps to explain why he would rewrite such a narrative about Alexander in such a fashion. Roman audiences expected artists to engage with Alexander's story, and so Iulius Valerius' version of events represents one such attempt at generating historical meaning and literary quality. Perhaps the high cultural interest and activity also reveals why Valerius' version did not come to dominate the literary culture of the Latin West – the rhetorical utility of this malleable historical figure was simply too great to be controlled by any single authoritative text. Nevertheless, Iulius Valerius' creative rewriting of Alexander's death demonstrates that, despite the translator label, he was an author in his own right.

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68 *De excidio* 2.10, ed. Ussani, *CSEL* 66.1: 149–150 (trans. Blocker, adapted).

69 In Djurslev (2020) 16–17, I proposed to view *Alexandrology* as reflecting the building blocks of rhetorical materials based on *exempla*, an approach that complements Arthur-Montagne's position on the declamations. The theory has been well-received by Briant (2020) among others.

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