GAIUS' BRIDGE AT BAIAE AND ALEXANDER-*IMITATIO*

The Emperor Gaius' bridging of the Bay of Baiae, traditionally dated to 39, just previous to his northern expedition (Dio 59.16.11–17. 11; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 19.3), has suffered from a historical tradition which is not only hostile, but also, in this case, at pains to explain what the *princeps*' motives were. It may, in the end, be the apparent rationality of the enterprise that so prompts the sources to formulate their explanations, which for the most part seek to display Gaius' eccentricity or excess. Accordingly, some interpretations are derived not from observations of the details of the event itself but are inspired by larger themes within Gaius' principate as a whole: these themes serve to produce a narrow or distorted view of the *spectaculum*. The motives offered by Josephus and Suetonius are good examples of this tendency. Josephus describes the construction of the bridge in grandiose terms, suggesting that it grew out of Gaius' madness and self-deification (*A.J.* 19.6). Suetonius records one tradition which alleged that the emperor was attempting to intimidate Germany and Britain by means of his engineering feat (*Cal*. 19.3). And, although Seneca offers a motive (to be examined later), he refers to the Baiae episode within a hostile denunciation of the emperor as *tyrannus*, who threatened the city with the greatest evils (*ultima mala*) and with destruction (*De Brev. Vit.* 18.5–6; cf. Dio 59.17.2); thus, beyond the immediate motive provided by the philosopher, the event is made to derive from what came to signify Gaius' reign: his tyranny. Admirable as it may be that the sources sought to contextualize Gaius' activities, these motives tend to remove from the event any inherent meaning and thus ultimately trivialize the detail of the proceedings. Not surprisingly, modern scholars have largely dismissed the ancient interpretations.[1]

One motive adduced by Suetonius is unique and rich in detail. He claims to have heard from his grandfather, who had it from those in the know, that Gaius sought to disprove Thrasyllus' prophecy, that the prince would no more be emperor than ride over the Bay of Baiae with horses (*Cal*. 19.3). This has rightly been rejected by modern scholars as quite absurd. Yet one gets the impression that Suetonius works to emphasize just that very absurdity, by making Gaius' efforts appear positive and rational in negating Thrasyllus' prophecy.[2] Had the biographer denounced the enterprise in the fashion of Josephus and of Seneca, much of this subtlety would have been

[1] For a convenient survey of modern arguments, see D. Wardle, *Suetonius' Life of Caligula: A Commentary*, Collection Latomus 225 (Brussels, 1994), 194–6, to which add Donna Hurley, *An Historical and Historiographical Commentary on Suetonius' Life of C. Caligula* (Atlanta, 1993), 73ff.: surrogate triumph for the eastern success of L. Vitellius; Marc Kleijwegt, 'Caligula's "triumph" at Baiae', *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994), 652–71: cement link with soldiers; cf. Jonathan Edmondson, *Dio: The Julio-Claudians: Selections from Books 58–63 of the Roman History of Cassius Dio* (London, 1992), 163ff.; Hugh Lindsay, *Suetonius: Caligula* (London, 1993), 94–7. It is not my intention to address these other interpretations, but various individual points will be scrutinized throughout this paper. It is enough to say here, though, that some modern interpretations, following the ancients' lead, ignore or trivialize the detail of the event in presenting brief, vague or generalized explanations. Barrett's interpretation is a case in point (*Caligula: The Corruption of Power* [London, 1989], 211–12); cf. Barry Baldwin, review of Barrett in *Ancient History Bulletin* 4 (1990), 140; Kleijwegt (n. 1), 655, n. 12.

[2] Cf. Lindsay (n. 1), 97.

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lost. Like those motives mentioned earlier, however, the actual details of the episode are trivialized if Suetonius' motive is accepted; the military atmosphere cannot be explained by recourse to Thrasyllus' prophecy. Of interest, however, is Suetonius' narrative craft, two aspects of which need examination here. First, in order to make his motive appear as plausible as possible, the biographer has placed the episode within the positive section of the *vita* (chs. 15–21), and accordingly all details that might indicate excessive behaviour, such as the feasting and violence of the afternoon and night-time celebrations, which also appear in Dio's account (59.17.9–10), are dislocated and placed in the *monstrum* section of the narrative (*Cal*. 32.1). Similarly, while Suetonius does justice to the military aspect of the episode, he does not refer to Alexander's breastplate (Dio 59.17.3), but rather mentions it later in the *vita* in a general observation, devoid of context (*Cal*. 52). In the same chapter (52) is a reference to the gem-encrusted cloak which too finds no room in the main narrative of the events at Baiae. Such detail does not substantiate Suetonius' preferred motive, since it implies that the event was something more than the harmless, if extravagant and hubristic, fulfilment of Thrasyllus' prophecy. Material that has the potential to undermine his thesis is, consequently, removed from the immediate account.

The second important aspect of Suetonius' technique here is his claim of first-hand and inside information: as a *puer*, he heard the real reason from his *avus*, who had it *interioribus aulicis* (*Cal*. 19.3). Some have taken this assertion at face value,[3] yet it might well have been a conflation of two literary techniques used to establish authority: the invoking of contemporary witnesses who in turn claimed privileged access. Such strategies were common in ancient historiography.[4] One example of this technique is Tacitus' claim, during his narrative of the trial of Cn. Calpurnius Piso in 20, to have heard older men (*seniores*) speak of a *libellus* seen in Piso's hand (*Ann*. 3.16.1). In a similar fashion, Dio invokes his father as having 'ascertained accurately the whole story' of Trajan's death (69.1.3). The invoking of older men who could claim first-hand or contemporary knowledge clearly assists Tacitus in authenticating the following narrative about the possibility of Piso's murder,[5] as Dio's reference to his father's enquiry gives authority to the details he provides about Trajan's death. So, too, in Suetonius' account, his recourse to contemporary witnesses authenticates his motive to a degree whereby the other explanations he records cannot compete. This careful narrative style, the moulding of the detail of the episode, and the establishing of authority, is an interesting feature of Suetonius' version, and one wonders whether there was not something more at stake than merely presenting a convincing account. Perhaps here he was competing against rival authors, as he clearly was in his treatment of Gaius' birthplace (*Cal*. 8). Perhaps he had to be careful in crafting his account because the details of the episode clearly undermine the general nature of the motive with which he presents the *princeps*. His silences and manipulation of material are important and should be borne in mind when using his evidence.

One tradition that appears to derive meaning from the event itself links the enterprise with an *imitatio* of the Persian king Xerxes and to a lesser extent Darius.

[3] J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)* (Oxford, 1934), 52–3; Barrett (n. 1), 212; Lindsay (n. 1), 97; Hurley (n. 1), 78; Kleijwegt (n. 1), 657; Wardle (n. 1), 193. It should be noted that although scholars have accepted Suetonius' claim, it does not follow that they have agreed with his motive.

[4] For a survey, see John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 2 and appendix 4.

[5] A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin, *Annals of Tacitus, Book 3* (Cambridge, 1996), 168ff.

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Suetonius records that most (*plerique*) thought that the bridge was motivated by rivalry of Xerxes' achievement (*Cal.* 19.3), but this, like the Germany–Britain explanation, is soon rejected without comment or analysis. Dio records the conscious rivalry of the emperor with Xerxes with the additional inclusion of Xerxes' father, Darius (59.17.11). The allusion is presented more as an observation than as a explanation; on the whole it is difficult clearly to ascertain a motive in Dio's account.[6] Darius and Xerxes were natural points of comparison for Gaius' bridging of the Bay of Naples. During his Scythian campaign of *c.* 512 B.C., Darius had built a bridge of boats across the four stades of the Bosporus (Hdt. 4.83–9),[7] which was commemorated in a painting showing Darius seated aloft on a throne with his army crossing beneath him (4.88). Herodotus provides more detail of the later exploit of Xerxes, who built a bridge seven stades long across the Hellespont in his march into Greece in 480 B.C. (7.33–7). It is mainly the similarity of conception that links Gaius' effort with those of Xerxes and Darius, and beyond general points of detail—such as Gaius' use of two lines of boats upon which a passageway was constructed (Suet. *Cal.* 19.1; Dio 59.17.3; *Epit.* 3.9) as had been adopted by Xerxes (Hdt. 7.36), and the reported comments by Gaius about the Persian kings—there are no further specific links with the enterprises of Darius and of Xerxes. The most that could arise from an allusion to the kings was the fact that Gaius had surpassed their achievements by bridging a wider expanse of water—their individual efforts had resulted in discomfiture (Darius) and disaster (Xerxes) and were therefore models to avoid. Dio's placing of the reference to the kings in a conversation of Gaius' perhaps offers the sum of their role in the emperor's scheme.

Although the explanation of *imitatio* may be misguided in relation to the Persian kings, there is much in the sources' narratives of the event to suggest that an *imitatio* of a different monarch was intended: Alexander the Great.[8] The earliest source for the event, Seneca, may well provide the key to this interpretation. Interestingly, Seneca has been thought to be referring to the *imitatio* of Xerxes when he describes Gaius' exploits at Baiae: *ille pontes navibus iungit . . . furiosi et externi et infeliciter superbi regis imitatio* (*De Brev. Vit.* 18.5).[9] It is clear, however, that Xerxes is not mentioned here, nor could an identification with him be assumed from the context. Indeed, Xerxes appears only twice in the whole extant corpus of Seneca's works. Of those appearances, only one is relevant here, where, at *De Ben.* 6.31.1–11, the king is assigned an *animus tumens*,

[6] One may be suggested by the construction of Dio's narrative: the episode grew out of Gaius' dislike of the ovation voted to him by the senate (59.16.11), and his eagerness 'to drive his chariot through the sea' (59.17.1; cf. Barrett [n. 1], 211, who has reservations about Dio's placement of the event). There is a problem with this motive, though, in that it is not mentioned again later by Gaius during his speech (59.17.6–8), nor does the atmosphere and complexity of the event suggest such a relatively straightforward intention.

[7] For the date of the Scythian campaign, see W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford, 1912), 1.429; for the width of the Bosporus in stades, see 1.332 (on 4.85.2).

[8] This has been noted, but has remained largely unexplored by modern scholars: see e.g. Edmondson (n. 1), 164; Richard Alston, *Aspects of Roman History A.D. 14–117* (London, 1998), 73. A further parallel has been argued by Hurley ([n. 1], 73–4), that the episode is related to L. Vitellius' settlement with Artabanus III in the early months of Gaius' reign (Suet. *Cal.* 14.3; Dio 59.27.3; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 6.41–44.5). Whilst Gaius' activities might have been partially inspired by the recent success on the Euphrates, perhaps in his desire to surpass the bridge built over the Euphrates (Wardle [n. 1], 195), it is unlikely that the *princeps* would have been keen to focus solely on this settlement, for it would have elevated L .Vitellius to a position of prestige which would have been intolerable to Gaius, who had not achieved such a success himself.

[9] Barrett (n. 1), 212; Edmondson (n. 1), 166; Wardle (n. 1), 193.

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a description that echoes the *superbia* of the *externus rex* quoted above. Yet, despite the appropriateness of this picture, Xerxes' pride is not enough on its own to secure an identification on internal evidence; the link seems, therefore, to have been made on the basis of the references to him, discussed above, in Suetonius (*Cal*. 19.3) and in Dio (59.17.11). Internal evidence from Seneca does, however, suggest that a more likely parallel exists with Alexander the Great. The Macedonian king was often invoked by the Roman philosophical tradition as an *exemplum* of the tyrant, and contrasted with the *exemplum* of a good king or statesman (that is, Cato).[10] He is invoked by Seneca in that role on numerous occasions, but in the passage from *De Brev. Vit*. the allusion is slightly different in that the contrast is invoked in order to demonstrate Gaius' tyrannical behaviour. Seneca's description of Alexander elsewhere accords with the qualities of the *externus rex*: his madness,[11] his pride,[12] and his misfortune.[13] It is plausible, therefore, that if Seneca were to make a brief allusion to a king to whom Gaius' tyranny might be likened, Alexander the Great would appear as a more effective and more recognizable figure than that of Xerxes, at least in the context of the Seneca's writings and of the philosophical tradition. But by not identifying the king by name, as Seneca does elsewhere, he presumes upon the reader's knowledge of the episode at Baiae under discussion. This is not surprising given the proximity of the philosopher to the events being described; indeed, he might have been present at them. At any rate, the philosophical treatise was written within living memory of the episode, between A.D. 48 and 55.[14]

Seneca, thus, may have Alexander in his mind, and there are significant allusions to the king both in Dio and in Suetonius. Dio is the crucial source for the detail, whereas Suetonius who provides valuable information does so in an indirect manner in order, as stated earlier, to give preference to his own explanation. The importance of the occasion is highlighted by the sheer size of the undertaking: the (roughly) twenty-six stades of the gulf were bridged with two parallel lines of boats which had been linked together, and on which was constructed a road for the emperor's crossing (Suet. *Cal*. 19.1; Jos. *A.J.* 19.6; Dio 59.17.1–3; *Epitome de Caesaribus* 3.9).[15] In the accounts of Suetonius and Dio, Gaius crossed the bridge twice: the impression is that the first crossing signified conquest, the return, a triumphal procession, as the author of the *Epitome* or his source discerned (*quasi triumphans*: 3.9).[16] This idea manifests itself strongly through Gaius' regalia, and here the link with Alexander first manifests itself.

[10] See J. Rufus Fears, 'The Stoic view of the career and character of Alexander the Great', *Philologus* 118 (1974), 113–30; also, briefly, A. B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph* (Oxford, 1996), 1–2. For Alexander as a subject of *declamatio* in the rhetorical tradition, see Elizabeth Baynham, *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Michigan, 1998), 11, 25–30.

[11] *vesanus*: *De Ben*. 1.13.3, 2.16.1, *Epp*. 91.17; *furor aliena vastandi*: *Epp*. 94.62.

[12] *animus supra humana*: *De Ben*. 1.13.1; *mens vanissima*: *De Ben*. 1.13.2; *tumidissimum animal*: *De Ben*. 2.16.2.

[13] *infelix*: *Epp*. 91.17. Alexander's misfortune manifests itself in a moral sense, for it was thought that his successes were attended by fortune (cf. *felix temeritas*: Sen. *De Ben*. 1.13.3). Seneca also gives Alexander other disagreeable qualities. He is, for example, greedy (*aviditas*: *De Ben*. 7.2.6), cruel (*crudelitas*: *Epp*. 94.62), thievish (*latro*: *De Ben*. 1.13.3), and dangerous (*pernicies*: *De Ben*. 1.13.3). Cf. Lucan's equally hostile denunciation of Alexander (*B.C.* 10.20–46). See Baynham (n. 10), 11.

[14] Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976), 316.

[15] The details of the bridge's exact location and size differ between the sources; see below, n. 48.

[16] There is a discrepancy over the duration of Gaius' crossing of the bridge, but it does not change the essential details of the event. See Hurley (n. 1), 75–6.

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The context was one of warfare: Dio indicates that before the emperor commenced his first crossing of the bridge he was adorned with what Gaius considered to be the breastplate of Alexander (59.17.3; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 52). During the crossing, riding a horse adorned with *phalerae* and *insignia*,[17] he wore a *quercea corona*[18] and a purple silk *chlamys*, with gold embroidery (Suet. *Cal*. 19.2; Dio 59.17.3; *Epit.* 3.9), and carried a sword (*gladius*) and a shield, called by Suetonius a *caetra* (*Cal*. 19.2), a typically Greek item that might readily be identified with the Macedonian war machine, which designated the soldiers who carried such shields *caetrati*.[19] The context is further made specific with the description of Gaius' purple silk *chlamys*. As an item of clothing, the *chlamys* was identifiable with the Greeks and the Macedonians (cf. *Macedonica chlamys*: Pliny, *N.H.* 5.62),[20] whereas the silk gave an oriental touch to the costume.[21] Furthermore, and importantly for our purposes, the *chlamys* was embedded with precious stones from India (Dio 59.17.3; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 52). Both the breastplate and the *chlamys* provide the first aspect of *imitatio*, the former in a broad symbolic sense, whilst the latter provides a specific context: they link Gaius' bridge at Baiae with Alexander's bridging of the Indus during his campaigns of 327/6 B.C. (Arr. 5.3.5–4.2; Diod. 17.86.3; cf. Curt. 8.12.4).[22] Gaius' evocation of Alexander through his clothing is important since it places the imitation of the Macedonian king literally at the heart of the enterprise. This is substantiated by the knowledge that Gaius dressed in such a manner only when 'all was ready' and even before the sacrifices to the gods were performed (Dio 59.17.3; cf. *dedicatio* at Suet. *Cal*. 32.1), which, incidentally, provides a further point of similarity: Alexander's sacrifice before he crossed the Indus (Diod. 17.86.3; Arr. 5.3.5, 8).[23]

From the very beginning of the proceedings, therefore, the association with Alexander was firmly established for all to see and to comprehend. The return crossing resembled a celebratory parade, and here Gaius' *imitatio* of Alexander is subtle but nevertheless discernible. In Dio's account, the emperor, wearing a gold-embroidered tunic and being pulled by two famous race-horses, is followed by the spoils of

[17] For *phalerae*, see Valerie A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (London, 1981), 91ff. The image of a general riding an *equus phaleratus* occurs later under Claudius, when M. Crassus Frugi rides such a mount during the triumph for the British campaigns (Suet. *Claud*. 17.3).

[18] The *quercea corona* or *corona civica* was awarded to a soldier who had saved the life of a fellow Roman and had subsequently held his ground. It later came to be an imperial emblem, adopted by Julius Caesar (Dio 44.4.5; Appian, *B.C.* 2.106), Augustus (*R.G.* 34; Dio 53.16.4), and Claudius (Suet. *Claud*. 17.3), but refused by Tiberius (Suet. *Tib*. 26.2). Gaius is supposed to have been awarded this honour in September 37 (Barrett [n. 1], 70–1). He could, however, have claimed it in the aftermath of the eastern settlement, since he had 'saved Rome' from the Parthians. For *corona civica*, see Maxfield (n. 17), 70ff; for its significance here, from which the above is drawn, see Hurley (n. 1), 76.

[19] Livy 31.36.1; 33.4.4; 33.8.7, 13; 33.15.11; 35.28.11.

[20] The *chlamys* is also identified with the *paludamentum*, which is associated with triumphing generals and with the *princeps* (cf. *Epit.* 3.9: [*Gaius*] *quasi triumphans indutus aurea paludamento*; Hurley [n. 1], 76; Lindsay [n. 1], 96).

[21] From A.D. 16, men had been forbidden to wear clothing made of silk (Tac. *Ann*. 2.33.1–2; Dio 57.15.1), but evidently Gaius liked it for he wore it on other occasions (Suet. *Cal*. 52; Dio 59.12.2, 26.10). See Edmondson (n. 1), 165.

[22] Although Arrian affects uncertainty over the way in which Alexander's bridge was constructed, he does suggest that boats were used (5.7.1–8.1), as does the vulgate tradition of Curtius (8.10.2–3), Diodorus (17.86.3) and the *Metz Epitome* (48). See A. B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* 2: *Books IV–V* (Oxford, 1995), 254–9.

[23] Cf. Alexander's sacrifice before crossing the Hellespont (Arrian 1.11.1–6).

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conquest, by Darius, by φίλοι and by ἑταῖροι, with each group wearing flowered robes, by the soldiery and by the general mass of people, with each man dressed according to individual taste (59.17.5–6; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 19.2; *Epit.* 3.9). Although Suetonius mentions Darius and Gaius' *amici* and refers to the soldiers as praetorians, the omissions are interesting. Apart from the absence of the spoils, no mention is made of the clothing of the other participants in the parade. This is important, for here primarily lies part of the evidence for an aspect of Alexander-*imitatio*. However, for the reasons related earlier in this paper, Suetonius might have chosen to ignore such detail so that it should not detract from his own thesis. This is further apparent in his silence in *Cal*. 19 on the celebrations which followed the events on the bridge—the feasting and violence of Dio's account. For these elements—the nature of the clothing as presented by Dio, the flowered robes and individualized dress, as well as the drunken celebration of the afternoon and evening—appear to indicate that the return trip was anything but a triumphal procession in the traditional Roman sense of the institution, with which it has often been associated.[24] Rather, it seems more likely that Gaius undertook a parade in the fashion of Alexander's 'Bacchic' procession through Carmania in 325 B.C. Although some moderns, presumably following Arrian's lead (6.28.1), have rejected the episode as fiction,[25] it is not unlikely that such a celebration could have taken place, for it would have helped compensate for the starvation diet forced upon the troops during their march through the Gedrosian desert.[26] But whether or not Alexander actually undertook such a procession is irrelevant here in the case of Gaius, for it is clearly a part of the historical picture of Alexander available to the Romans.[27] The most commonly read of the Alexander historians during the Roman period was Cleitarchus,[28] who ultimately formed the basis of the vulgate tradition.[29] As his history, therefore, underpins the narrative provided by Curtius (9.10.24–8), Curtius' version of the procession will be used here as representative of the Cleitarchan tradition that most influenced the Romans and, importantly, either directly or indirectly, Gaius.[30]

Having survived the hardships of the Gedrosian desert in the return march from India, Alexander is said to have indulged his troops with a revel through the town of Carmania, based on Bacchus' 'triumph' after the god's success in India (Curt. 9.10.24; Diod. 17.106.1). The town was prepared for the celebratory parade: the streets were strewn with flowers and households were instructed to provide wine on their thresholds (Curt. 9.10.25). Music was to accompany the procession (Curt. 9.10.26). At the head

[24] That is, Hurley ([n. 1], 74) 'surrogate triumph'; Kleijwegt ([n. 1], *passim*) 'mock triumph'; cf. Wardle ([n.1], 192) 'the details of the episode do not suggest that Gaius mimics a triumph'. Wardle argues that Suetonius' *curriculum* 'ill fits a triumphal chariot' as four were used by the *triumphator* (ibid.).

[25] Cf. J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), 185. For this episode in general, see Paul Goukowsky, *Essai sur les origines de mythe d'Alexandre (336–270 B.C.)*, 2: *Alexandre et Dionysos* (Nancy, 1988), ch. 4.

[26] See A. B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1988), 147.

[27] Cf. P. H. Green, 'Caesar and Alexander: aemulatio, imitatio, comparatio', *AJAH* 3 (1978), 7: '. . . by the mid-first century B.C. all levels of the historiographic tradition were familiar to educated Romans'.

[28] The elder Pliny, for example, refers to him as *celebratus auctor* (*N.H.* 10.136).

[29] Bosworth (n. 26), 297–8.

[30] Diodorus, another vulgate author, mentions the episode but only briefly (17.106.1). Plutarch (*Alex*. 67), who did consult Cleitarchus for material in his life (Bosworth [n. 26], 298), provides a narrative, but his divergence from Curtius on several points of detail indicates that he might have used a different tradition. Arrian (6.28.1–3) does not vouch for it yet still relates it.

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of the parade came Alexander's *amici* and his *cohors regia*, who were adorned with *coronae* made from a variety of *flores* (Curt. 9.10.26). The king and his *convivae* were conveyed by a chariot which contained golden bowls and beakers (Curt. 9.10.26), presumably for the feasting and drinking that continued unabated throughout the whole proceedings (Curt. 9.10.27; Diod. 17.106.1). The troops followed behind in *vehicula* decorated according to each man's means (Curt. 9.10.26, cf. 25). The revelling lasted seven days (Curt. 9.10.27; Diod. 17.106.1).

This narrative sheds much light on Gaius' enterprise. The buildings constructed along the course of the bridge now make sense as providing the infrastructure for the feasting and revelling, with Gaius on the bridge which was itself surrounded by boats fulfilling a similar, festive function (Dio 59.17.3, 7–10).[31] Further, the emperor dressed in a gold-embroidered charioteer's tunic—not quite the triumphal kind (Suet. *Cal*.19.2; Dio 59.17.5)—whilst the military atmosphere, specifically the symbolism of conquest, was continued with the presence of spoils and of Darius: just as Alexander had conquered Darius III, so too Gaius paraded the Parthian as a defeated enemy leader (59.17.5; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 19.2).[32] The emperor further mimics Alexander by being accompanied by his φίλοι and by his ἑταῖροι who wear flowered robes (Dio 59.17.6) and, according to Suetonius, ride in chariots (*Cal*. 19.2). Similarly, the body of troops, perhaps praetorians (Suet. *Cal*. 19.2), who follow are dressed according to the individual taste of the soldier (Dio 59.17.6). The nature of these robes is strongly evocative of the garlands and floral *coronae* of Alexander's associates, whilst the latitude given to the soldiers concerning their dress plays on the same idea but also recalls the freedom given to Alexander's troops to decorate their vehicles as they pleased.

The events after the parade likewise make sense if viewed within the context of Gaius' *imitatio* of Alexander's 'Bacchic' procession. Dio again provides the detail, for Suetonius' narrative ceases after Gaius' return trip. Dio records that Gaius felt obliged, in line with the atmosphere of campaigning and victory, to deliver a speech of self-praise and to give the soldiers a donative (59.17.6–8). The harangue speaks of the emperor as an 'undertaker of great enterprises' and of the troops having undergone 'great hardships and perils' (Dio 59.17.7), a speech of obvious irony but effective in its skilful allusion if Gaius did in fact identify himself with Alexander. Similarly, the feasting and drunken revelry of the rest of that day and following night is strongly reminiscent of Alexander's conduct, with some violent behaviour thrown in for good measure (Dio 59.17.8, 9–10; cf. Suet. *Cal*. 32.1).[33] Dio notes the abundance of light during the first night which was created by strategically located fires which might suggest that some sort of games or other festivities were held, perhaps providing the context for Gaius' mini naval 'battle' that sank the boats of others (Dio 59.17.9–10).

[31] Balsdon ([n. 3], 51) and Wardle ([n. 1], 190), believe that this aspect of Dio's account is a late accretion. Cf. T. S. Jerome, *Aspects of the Study of Roman History* (New York and London, 1923), 394–5. The presence of such features only late in the extant tradition is not in itself evidence of accretion, especially if earlier sources (like Suetonius, for example) chose to ignore an interpretation of which these aspects were a feature.

[32] Kleijwegt ([n. 1], 659) argues that Gaius took pleasure in posing as Alexander and displaying a living Darius—something the Macedonian was unable to achieve. I take the display of Darius more symbolically, namely as representing *conquest* in general.

[33] Alexander was also infamous for his violent temper, the Cleitus affair being a classic example (Curt. 8.1.20–2.12; Plut. *Alex*. 50–2; Arrian 4.8–9; Just. 12.6.1–16). Gaius' behaviour at Baiae, though certainly violent, was, however, more mischievous than deliberately murderous; the deaths were due partly to the drunken state of those thrown into the water.

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At this point, it is worthwhile noting an aspect of Augustan poetic flattery which may shed some light on Gaius' return procession, and perhaps reveal some of his thinking behind it. For in being modelled on Alexander's parade, which in turn was supposedly based on Bacchus' 'triumph' after his success in the east (Diod. 17.106.1; Curt. 9.10.24; Arr. 6.28.1), Gaius appears to have been seeking recognition for something. *Something* had been achieved, hence his celebratory procession and victory speech. Here the concept of the 'imagined triumph' is of interest. In the description of the shield of Aeneas (*Aen*. 8.626ff.), Virgil moves from 'embellished history to magnificent imagination'.[34] Amidst such imagery appears the Araxes river in Armenia, which is described as *pontem indignatus* (8.728). The image is a strong one, the force of *indignatus*[35] indicating that the river took offence and resented the presence of the bridge as if it were perceived as some sort of restraint.[36] The image seems to play upon the belief (or the hope)—erroneously thought by Servius to have been realized[37]—that Augustus would fulfil the metaphor by means of a Parthian expedition. Yet that almost seems irrelevant, for the image of Augustus as a world conqueror stands even in the eventuality that there were no military successes in the east.[38] It is the idea and the accompanying image that counts. Furthermore, part of the message conveyed by the image is that the bridging of a major river as a metaphor for conquest could be grounds for a triumph or at least for being part of a triumphal parade.

Such Virgilian imagery and the tradition of imagined triumphs with their metaphorical content[39] help add further meaning to Gaius' actions. The act of bridging the Bay of Baiae was a metaphor for conquest, symbolized by Gaius' first crossing as a charge into battle. Moreover, it was a successful conquest at that. For note that in Dio's account, Gaius was elated at the calmness of the sea both during construction of the bridge and during the event. This he interpreted as evidence of Neptune's fear (59.17.11). It gains some significance in light of the Virgilian imagery of the indignant river: Gaius' jubilation stemmed from the lack of *resistance*, in this case, by the god. He thus appeared more confidently as a conqueror, for Neptune (and the Ocean, for that matter) did not dare to show outrage. The *princeps* deserved, so he believed, recognition and glory for this act of conquest, which given its metaphorical nature demanded something not in the tradition of a Roman triumph, but one that nonetheless indirectly hinted that the procession was in celebration of a *military* feat. Hence, the return parade, which, in keeping with the emperor's desire to imitate Alexander, was modelled on the Macedonian's 'Bacchic' procession through Carmania.

If the sources' evidence lends itself to the interpretation that Gaius sought to imitate Alexander, it would have come as no surprise given the tradition of *imitatio* of the Macedonian king. This tradition is, however, a complicated one in which a distinction

[34] John D. Christie (ed.), C. J. Fordyce, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Libri VII & VIII* (Oxford, 1977) on 8.720ff. Cf. Brian Bosworth, 'Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic theories of apotheosis', *JRS* 89 (1999), 8.

[35] *OLD* s.v. *indignor* 1a.

[36] Virgil employs the image elsewhere: in the second book of the *Georgics*, the Ocean expresses outrage (*indignatus*) at the barrier (*claustra*) which prevents its access to the Lucrine (161, with Mynors ad loc.).

[37] *postea Augustus firmiore ponte eum* [Araxes] *ligavit* (on *Aen*. 8.728).

[38] Bosworth (n. 34), 8.

[39] Virgil writes of future glories elsewhere (*Aen*. 6.792ff., *Geo*. 3.26ff.), nor was he alone: see Horace, *Odes* 1.12.53–60, 4.14.41–52; Propertius 3.4. Further, Servius found the paradigm for this treatment in Augustus' *Porticus ad nationes* (on *Aen*. 8.721; Alexander G. Mackay, '*Non enarrabile textum*? The shield of Aeneas and the triple triumph of 29 B.C. [*Aen.* 8.630–728]', in Hans-Peter Stahl (ed.), *Vergil's Aeneid. Augustan Epic and Political Context* [London, 1998], 211).

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must first be drawn between an individual's deliberate imitation and imitation invoked by the literary sources (better described as *comparatio*).[40] Even then, recent scholarship, focusing on the Republican manifestations of imitation, has largely dismissed instances of *imitatio* as having been initiated primarily by the sources (for example, Scipio Africanus and Julius Caesar), or has demonstrated that the link could largely be a negative one (in the case of Pompey the Great). This line of argument has discredited the view that *imitatio* was a goal in itself, and has preferred to view such actions as a rivalry (*aemulatio*) or an 'overcoming' of the feats and of the character defects of Alexander.[41] Although such analysis concerns itself primarily with *imitatio* under the Republic, which would not have looked positively on certain other aspects of Alexander's character and reign, such as imperialism, deification, and absolute kingship, it may also find relevance under the early principate, if only in part. Augustus, for example, might have used an identification with Alexander in order to lay claim to the east, but did not need continually to evoke the identification when he was entrenched as *princeps*.[42]

Gaius provides a further example of *imitatio*. This is not the place to discuss the phenomenon of Alexander-*imitatio* under the principate, and so I shall restrict my discussion to Gaius' case. In the first place, in the context of the Baiae episode, the parallel drawn between Alexander and Gaius is one instituted and promoted by the emperor himself; it is not one established merely by the speculation of the sources. Dio states that Gaius wore what he claimed was the breastplate of Alexander (59.17.3). Suetonius too reports bluntly that he wore it, having taken it from the sarcophagus (*Cal*. 52). The genuineness of the artefact is not at issue here, for the importance resides in the fact that Gaius promoted it as Alexander's. The sources are silent on this issue: they neither discredit the authenticity of the breastplate, nor do they pass judgement on Gaius' wearing of it.[43] This is most conspicuous in Dio's account which is not framed by an attempt to explicate Gaius' actions, despite the fact that it provides a wealth of information.[44] The details of the first crossing and of the parade examined earlier provide a further demonstration of *imitatio*, but again they are narrated by the sources in a straightforward manner; the event is not used as material for an exercise in *comparatio*, as can be found, for example, in Appian's comparison of Julius Caesar with Alexander (App. *B.C.* 2.149–54). Gaius' 'active' *imitatio*, as distinguished from that invoked by the sources, had much to recommend it, as there were other favourable points of comparisons, such as his youth,[45] popularity, and royal upbringing, covering the all too obvious fact that the *princeps* lacked any real, achieved military glory. And

[40] J. S. Richardson, review of O. Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio und Römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit* (Augsburg, 1972), in *JRS* 64 (1974), 238; Green (n. 27), 2.

[41] See Green (n. 27), 1–26; E. S. Gruen, 'Rome and the myth of Alexander', in T. W. Hillard *et al*. (edd.), *Ancient History in a Modern University* 1: *The Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome* (Macquarie University, NSW; Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, 1998), 178–191.

[42] Gruen (n. 41), 190–1.

[43] Though, by removing the reference to the breastplate of Alexander, Suetonius shows that he rejects that interpretation (like the others he records) in preference to his own. But that does not indicate that *imitatio* did not actually occur. Coincidentally, it may be argued against my interpretation of the event and of Suetonius' narrative methodology, that if Alexander-*imitatio* had been Gaius' concern, why did Suetonius not explicitly reject *that* as a motive? In response, it may be countered that Suetonius only presents what *other people* say were the emperor's motives. Nowhere does he mention Gaius' own intention.

[44] See above, p. 208 with n. 6.

[45] At the time of the Baiae episode (39), Gaius, at twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, was younger than Alexander, who was about twenty-nine or thirty when he bridged the Indus. The

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that is where, for Gaius, the crux of the matter lies. The Romans' interest in Alexander could be said to have been related primarily to the king's military successes.[46] Certainly one of the more memorable instances in the Alexander-*imitatio* tradition is Caesar's bemoaning, at the foot of a statue of Alexander at Gades, his own lack of achievement in terms of conquest in comparison to the Macedonian's (Plut. *Caes*. 11.3; Suet. *Iul*. 7; Dio 37.52.2).[47] The sentiment revealed by such a scene is of Caesar's desire to match or more probably to outdo Alexander, and this can be seen as a main feature of the emphasis on the king's military success: the Romans wanted to better him. Gaius too wished an identification with Alexander, one that invoked and drew upon the military achievements of the Macedonian. It may be doubted, however, that here was a case of 'overcoming' in the sense of the Republican tradition as emphasized by Green and by Gruen. The details of the Baiae episode suggest *imitatio* primarily; there is little to indicate that the surpassing of Alexander's successes was a part of the message. Certainly it may be said that the bridging of Baiae itself outdid Alexander's bridging of the Indus, for depending on exactly where the Macedonian constructed *his* bridge, the bridge at Baiae would have been wider.[48] Yet Gaius does not appear to have emphasized this aspect of the enterprise: it will be recalled that Dio only provides references to the emperor's comments about Xerxes and Darius.

Furthermore, *imitatio* seems unique to this episode: it could not be said that Gaius perceived the imitation of Alexander in terms of a sophisticated system of propaganda which enveloped all aspects of his military conduct or imperial administration, as is clear from the lack of obvious evidence for Alexander-*imitatio* in the German expedition and elsewhere. Rather it was more a case of what seemed pertinent to the present situation, and what would make the greatest impact on his contemporaries. It seems plausible, therefore, that Gaius undertook *simply* to imitate Alexander, and I would argue that he did so in order to establish his own military glory—to present himself as a new Alexander, as a new world conqueror. For there is a strong impression accompanying the events at Baiae that Gaius wished to be viewed as a potentially powerful *triumphator*.[49] The prestige of military glory was an important part of the make-up of an emperor and would not have been lost on the young *princeps*.

difference in age here is positive in its suggestion of Gaius' achievement and potential—just as it was in these terms negative for older Julius Caesar at Gades (Plut. *Caes*. 11.3; Suet. *Iul*. 7; Dio 37.52.2).

[46] Green (n. 27), 8, 10, 16; Gruen (n. 41), 186.

[47] The truth of the story may be doubted—it may be a literary construction—but the message is pertinent here. See Green (n. 27), 3–4; Gruen (n. 41), 187.

[48] The sources are confused about the length of Gaius' bridge: Josephus = 30 stades (*A.J.* 19.6); Suetonius = 3.6 miles (*Cal.* 19.1); Dio = 26 stades (59.17.1); *Epit*. = 3 miles (3.9). Clear figures for the width of the Indus are unattainable, and it is not known for sure where Alexander crossed. Arrian accepts the mean width to be 40 stades, the narrowest to be 15 stades (5.20.10), but he also records figures of 100 (5.4.2, 6.14.5) and of 200 (6.18.5). Arrian assumed that Alexander crossed at the widest part where the current was slowest, but this is only his conjecture (5.20.10 with Bosworth [n. 22], ad loc.). Clearly, then, Gaius' bridge had some chance of being wider than Alexander's, but it would have been a moot point, though no doubt the ambiguity of the detail would not have prevented the emperor from claiming a greater bridge. For discussion of the width of the Indus, see Bosworth (n. 22), on Arr. 5.4.2. For discussion of the location and size of Gaius' bridge, see Barrett (n. 1), 212; Edmondson (n. 1), 164; Lindsay (n. 1), 94–5; Hurley (n. 1), 74–5; Wardle (n. 1), 189–90.

[49] Cf. Kleijwegt (n. 1), 664: 'Altogether I suspect that Gaius did *not* want the triumph because *it would increase his reputation as a great general* . . .' (my italics). *Contra* Kleijwegt, the crux here is Gaius' *establishing* his military reputation: Gaius as yet had no reputation as a general on which to build, and to call him such at that point would be stretching credibility.

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When Gaius succeeded Tiberius as *princeps* in 37, he came to the position wholly inexperienced in military affairs, and with only minimal exposure to public life.[50] He had, to be sure, inherited military glory through his family, primarily from Germanicus, but also through his grandfather Drusus, Augustus, and Julius Caesar, and he had gained valuable exposure to his father's legions as a child. But he had not been given military training, nor had he achieved the necessary military experience suitable for an emperor. At various points in his youth, Gaius was present with Germanicus in the provinces, notably during the revolt of the German legions in 14, and later in 17, in Syria.[51] Similarly, he accompanied Germanicus on the latter's triumph for the German campaigns of 15–16 (Tac. *Ann*. 2.41.2–3). Such involvement on Gaius' part was to a large degree passive; his age excluded the possibility of any practical experience of war. The advantage lay, however, in the military glory that Germanicus reflected upon his son. When his father died in 19, Gaius was still too young at seven to have played an active role in war, and throughout Tiberius' reign such an essential grounding was denied or was unavailable to him. When it appeared that Gaius had been chosen to succeed,[52] the young prince was still not given the benefit of being promoted through military commands, as Augustus had done with Gaius Caesar, and as Tiberius himself had done with Germanicus and with Drusus. Tiberius would have been aware of the prince's popularity, and that he had to his advantage the reflected glory of his family. Gaius, therefore, came to the throne without having achieved military experience and glory, but, rather, with the distinction of his family's achievements. The *princeps*' background and early exposure to camp life brought him valuable popularity with the army, helping to make his succession smooth (Suet. *Cal*. 13, cf. 9.1). He seems to have built upon this inheritance by adopting titles that identified him closely with the legions, such as *castrorum filius* and *pater exercituum* (Suet. *Cal*. 22.1), not to mention his using coin types which, for the first time, depict an imperial speech to the army.[53] The next obvious stage in the process of gaining military prestige was to campaign actively and celebrate a triumph, hence his northern expedition of 39.

Meanwhile, the act of bridging the bay of Naples was an excellent—and safe—means by which to lay the foundation for much needed military glory. Gaius' identification with Alexander, which was the motive for the enterprise, was a fitting way to introduce himself as the next world conqueror, and, like the poetic image of Augustus as world conqueror, it looks forward to successes in the future, such as those expected in the north later in that year and in the next. But, whilst Gaius might have measured up to Alexander in terms of age, royalty, and, ultimately, an early death, in the final

[50] Gaius was summoned to Capri to be with Tiberius in late 30 or 31 (Suet. *Cal*. 10.1; Wardle [n. 1], 138). His introduction and exposure to public life were, therefore, limited. He was made pontifex in 31 (Suet. *Cal*. 12.1; Dio 58.7.4 cf. 8.1); he was granted the *toga virilis* in 32, at a later age than his brothers, Drusus and Nero; he was given a quaestorship in 33, and was guaranteed preferment to other offices five years before the legal age (Dio 58.23.1; *ILS* 189 = EJ no. 97); he was also granted minor offices throughout Italy and Spain (Barrett [n. 1], 261, n. 59). See Balsdon (n. 3), 12–24; Barrett (n. 1), ch. 2.

[51] Germany: Tac. *Ann*. 1.41–4; Suet. *Cal*. 9; Dio 57.5.5–7. Syria: Suet. *Cal*. 10.1; *IGGR* 4.251; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 3.1.4 (with Woodman and Martin [n. 5], ad loc.).

[52] There is no specific date, though Tiberius' removal of Gaius to Capri in 30/31 might have been the starting point (Suet. *Cal*. 10.1 = 30 or 31, see Wardle [n. 1], 138). The subsequent conspiracy of Sejanus might have been prompted by Gaius' promotion in 30/1.

[53] Harold Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* I: *Augustus to Vitellius* (London, 1965), Caligula, no. 33 (p. 151); J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 B.C.–A.D. 235* (Oxford, 1984), 35.

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outcome he was unable to take the process of *imitatio* of the king's military success to the level where he could, in the Republican tradition, usurp Alexander's place as the pre-eminent world conqueror.[54]

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