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TWO NOTES ON DARIUS III

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This article presents new insights into two aspects of the life of Darius III. In the first section, Darius' presentation as a 'slave' in one source tradition is argued to be a delegitimising trope aimed at presenting him as an unworthy king, even though all Persians could be regarded as slaves of the monarch. In the second, Justin's use of *cognati* to describe those who betrayed Darius is interpreted, in the light of other accounts of Gaugamela's aftermath, as possibly being an allusion not just to blood-relatives but also to the cavalry guard, known as the 'Kinsmen' (συγγενεῖς = *cognati*).

The last of the Achaemenid kings has received increasing attention in recent years, mainly as a result of Briant's monograph, aptly entitled *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander* in its English translation. As Payen and Stoneman point out in their respective reviews of the earlier French edition of this work, while we may forever be prevented from achieving a full understanding of Darius' life and actions given that we must generally view Darius through the prism of various literary, moralistic and oftentimes didactic constructs of Alexander, we have nevertheless been able to gain a better insight into the way in which the last Achaemenid king was presented by Greco-Roman authors writing, in most cases, long after his death.[1] While Brosius, reviewing the same edition of Briant's work, expressed concern about the modern tendency, as is supposedly exemplified in the monograph on Darius, to 'reduce history to a literary construct', a view also shared in part by Ambaglio in his review of the same work, there is nonetheless considerable merit in Briant's response: he feels that the contemporary historian's primary duty is not to determine precisely what happened and why, but to understand why the extant material is presented to us in the way that it

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Abbreviations follow the 'Liste des périodiques' in *L'Année philologique*, LSJ and the *OLD*. Unless stated otherwise, translations are from the relevant Loeb Classical Library edition, adapted where deemed necessary. I would like to thank the journal's anonymous reader for helpful suggestions on how to improve this article.

1 Payen (2004) 154; Stoneman (2006) 416. Payen (2004) 154, in particular, notes in his review of Briant (2003) that the same Greco-Roman authors used the example of Darius to understand better 'leur propre place dans l'univers', rather than undertaking a balanced conception of Darius' personality and motives.

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is.[2] Even so, it may still be possible, as Briant says, to draw out the 'informative kernel' of these Greco-Roman presentations of Achaemenid affairs.[3]

Despite this recent attention, two matters concerning the king's presentation in the extant Greco-Roman sources received only passing treatment in Briant's work, and therefore require further thought, particularly as they speak clearly to issues pertaining to the literary presentation of Darius. Although it is important to recognise Brosius' concern about excessive focus on the literary nature of what sources have survived to reach us, the following discussion will nevertheless seek, by determining what is the product of 'literary *topoi* and … *exempla*', and what could have historical roots, to ascertain the basis for the Greco-Roman presentation of two aspects of Darius' life and death.[4] The two aspects are: (a) the reason why Darius was puzzlingly presented as a 'slave' in certain source traditions outside the familiar narratives of Arrian, Diodorus and Curtius; and (b) whether we can explain inconsistencies in later treatments of the aftermath of Gaugamela and Darius' eventual demise, all of which seek to add pathos to Darius' betrayal and death, with particular emphasis given here to the degree to which Trogus' now-lost treatment of Darius' arrest can be extracted from Justin's abbreviated version thereof. This examination of these two aspects of Darius' life and death adheres closely to the postulates of Briant articulated above, inasmuch as it is the intention of these two notes to derive a clearer understanding of why the last Achaemenid is portrayed as he is in the extant sources, and to determine the degree to which these portrayals were achieved through the artful manipulation or even misinterpretation of still earlier source traditions no longer within our grasp.

Darius the slave

One of the more curious statements made by Greco-Roman authors about Darius III, the last of the Great Kings of Achaemenid Persia, is that he had been a slave before his accession. Briant has relatively little new to say about this matter in the latest edition of his monograph on Darius, other than that the accusation was made 'inaccurately'.[5] It is therefore opportune to dig somewhat more deeply into why this charge surfaced in the Greco-Roman sources. Building on Badian and Briant's thoughts, we attempt here to determine more precisely the rationale behind the source tradition of 'Darius the slave', and its implications for the presentation of Darius in the various source traditions underpinning the extant Greco-Roman accounts of his accession and brief reign.[6] Of

2 Brosius (2006) 430; Briant (2015) 259. Ambaglio (2005, 708–9) reflects on the emphasis placed on looking at Darius as a literary construct to augment ancient portrayals of Alexander, given that this approach 'non aumenta la nostra conoscenza della storia'.

3 Briant (2015) xiv.

4 Brosius (2006) 427.

5 Briant (2015) 120.

6 See Badian (2000) *passim*, and particularly 249–50; Briant (1996) 792.

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particular interest is that none of the major narratives that we have for Darius' reign – which, of course, focus primarily on the eastern conquests of Alexander the Great – introduces a servile origin for him. Arrian, whose work owes much to the 'eyewitness' accounts of Aristobulus and Ptolemy, certainly says nothing of the sort. He does not even delve into Darius' past, which coheres with Payen's view that Darius is a 'figure très marginale' in the extant narratives of Alexander's accomplishments.[7] Likewise, Diodorus Siculus and Curtius Rufus, whose narratives owe more to the so-called 'Alexander Vulgate' – a problematic term used here more for the sake of convenience than anything else – fail to touch on the charge of slavery.[8]

Plutarch, who does not really belong to either of the two main source traditions, as he appears to have utilised a wide variety of sources, alludes to a servile state for Darius in his *De fortuna Alexandri* (*Mor.* 326e). Here, Plutarch has Alexander, in a hypothetical discussion with Fortune (Τύχη), state that 'Darius was your handiwork, he who was a slave and courier of the king' (Δαρεῖος ἦν σὸν ἔργον, ὃν ἐκ δούλου καὶ ἀστάνδου βασιλέως …), and that it was Fortune who made Darius master of Persia.[9] Plutarch elaborates more on the same theme in his *Vita Alexandri*. At *Alex.* 18.4, which broadly seems to follow the Alexander Vulgate tradition given that a similar story is presented by Curtius (3.3.2–5), Plutarch describes a dream of Darius. In this dream, he saw the Macedonian phalanx in flames, and Alexander dressed in the Persian king's former attire, that of a 'royal courier' (ἀστάνδης ὢν βασιλέως).[10] All this was interpreted by the Magi as a positive sign for Darius, while Plutarch observes that the dream prophesied that Alexander was upon the same road to mastery of Asia, with the burning phalanx signifying the brilliance of the Macedonian military exploits to come. Now the word ἀστάνδης, repeated by Plutarch at *Alex.* 18.5, appears to be of Persian origin, as the *Suda* suggests,[11] yet its usual translation as 'courier' could well be misleading: Badian's contention that Darius held 'an appointment

7 Payen (2004) 143. It is of interest that the first time that Arrian mentions Darius is at *An.* 1.12.9, where we are simply told that Alexander was present at the Granicus (334 BC), but Darius was absent, with other Persian commanders leading his forces.

8 The Alexander Vulgate is generally presumed to rely heavily on Cleitarchus, although other authors, such as Chares and Onesicritus, also presumably contributed to this broader source tradition. On the term cf. Hammond (1993) 333: 'obsolete and should be abandoned'. On the tradition see Baynham (1998) 21, with Hamilton (1961) 458.

9 On the passage see Briant (2015) 227–8. Note the curious information presented by Plutarch at *Mor.* 340b–c, where he writes that 'Oarses' was placed on the throne by Bagoas, 'who stripped from him the garb of a courier' (στολὴν ἐκδυσάμενος ἀστάνδου). Perhaps Plutarch means Arses (Artaxerxes IV) here, as one might imagine from reading Diodorus (17.5.5). That said, Arses, a son of Artaxerxes III, would surely never have held the position of ἀστάνδης. Something does not seem quite right here, and the words seem to fit Darius better, particularly in the light of the other Plutarchean loci discussed. Babbit (1946, 460 note 'a') finds it difficult to chose between the two options, though leans in favour of Artaxerxes IV.

10 Cf. Curt. 3.3.2–5, where Darius has a dream in which Alexander was brought to him 'in the garb in which he himself had been made king' (*in eo uestis habitu, quo ipse factus rex fuisset*), which is later described as Persian but 'of the common sort' (*uulgari habitu*).

11 *Suda* α.389, s.v. ἄγγαροι = Adler (1971) 389: οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀστάνδαι. τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα Περσικά.

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in the King's "postal service"' is probably closer to the mark.[12] Aelian (*VH* 12.43) follows the same thread as Plutarch and states, in the context of naming people who attained high status from humble origin, that 'the last Darius' (ὁ . . . τελευταῖος Δαρεῖος), defeated by Alexander, was a 'slave' (δοῦλος).

Another source tradition omits the notion of Darius having once been a slave or a royal courier, but claims that he was not of the royal family, or at least the immediate royal family. In an extremely brief summary of Persian history, Strabo (15.3.24) states that Darius was made king by Bagoas, described as a eunuch, upon the murder of Arses (Artaxerxes IV). But he was 'not of the royal family' (οὐκ . . . τοῦ γένους τῶν βασιλέων). Diodorus provides a fuller account. With Bagoas' assassination of Arses, Diodorus (17.5.4–5) writes that there was no one left alive in the direct line of ascent, and we are told that Bagoas was forced to look elsewhere for a royal puppet. He settled on Darius, designated by Diodorus (17.5.5) as one of the 'friends' of the king (ἕνα τῶν φίλων), i.e. a member of court, as Bradford Welles' translation suggests.[13] Darius is described as the son of Arsanes, and grandson of a brother of Artaxerxes, one Ostanes (17.5.5). This would mean that Darius was, in a way, descended from Persian royal blood. Badian thinks it more likely that this genealogy was a fiction, and that Darius was an Achaemenid on his father's side, but was perhaps of other stock – possibly Semitic – on his mother's side. This helps to explain why he was not murdered by Ochus (Artaxerxes III), who allegedly killed numerous family members.[14] Darius, or Codomannus as he was supposedly known before his accession, at least according to Justin (10.3.4), was simply not perceived as a threat to the king's power.[15] And so he survived. The new king also appears to have been a seasoned campaigner, with Diodorus (17.6.1) noting that, in the reign of Artaxerxes III, he single-handedly killed a fearsome champion of the Cadusians in mortal combat. So with this hardly obscure origin in mind, let us now turn to explaining the origin of 'Darius the slave'.

Badian proposes that δοῦλος is 'the standard Greek translation of OP [Old Persian] *bandaka*, one "bound" to a superior, especially the King', a view supported by Briant.[16] He also observes that Darius I uses the term in many places in the Bisitun inscription to

12 Badian (2000) 250. Badian adduces the case of Pharnaces (Parnaka), who held such a role, 'or so it appears from the Persepolis Fortification Tablets'. See also Hesychius, s.v. ἀστάνδης = Latte (1953) 264: ἡμεροδρόμος. [ἢ κράββαττον.] ἢ ἄγγελον. Ταραντῖνοι. Cf. Briant (1996) 792, who suggests, probably rightly, that it was 'un titre aulique', with a good deal of prestige associated with it.

13 Bradford Welles (1963) 133: 'a member of the court circle'. Note that Goukowsky's translation (1976, 13) implies that Darius was a friend of Bagoas: 'Bagoas jeta son dévolu sur l'un de ses amis, nommé Darius.' The Greek does not seem to bear out this interpretation. Badian (2000, 249) says that Diodorus uses this term 'plausibly enough'. Diodorus (17.31.1) uses the word in a similar sense in the context of the battle of Issus (333 BC), where we are told that Darius, immediately before the battle, summoned his 'friends' (φίλοι) and 'relatives' (συγγενεῖς). Some of these were given commands, and others were ordered to fight next to him.

14 On the murders see Curt. 10.5.23; Val. Max. 9.2 ext. 7; Just. 10.3.1, with Badian (2000) 244–5.

15 Darius' pre-regnal name was perhaps more accurately Artašarta. This name has been provided to us by an astronomical text from Babylonia; see Sachs (1977) 143, with Kuhrt (1987) 150 and Briant (2015) 48, 545.

16 Badian (2000) 250, with Briant (1996) 792.

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describe his senior military officers, including a member of one of the other six families that had participated in overthrowing the false Smerdis/Bardiya and installing Darius on the Persian throne. In fact, Darius uses the term *bandaka* for Gobryas (DB 5.71), Intaphernes (DB 3.50) and Hydarnes (DB 2.25), all part of the Seven. In addition, he uses the term for other elite persons, such as Dardaršiš, satrap of Bactria (DB 3.38) and Vivana, satrap of Arachosa (DB 3.45).[17] In another text, Darius calls Gadates, his satrap in Ionia, his 'slave'.[18] It therefore seems clear that the word does not mean 'slave' in the same sense as the Greek δοῦλος. Rather, the Old Persian *bandaka* arguably entails honourable service, possibly with undertones of piety given the semi-divine status of the Persian king, and not outright abasement and servitude. In her translation of the text, Brosius simply uses 'subject', which seems apt enough.[19] But Greek writers who came across the term in the context of Darius, presumably in the context of early propaganda material attempting to legitimise Alexander's rule and delegitimise that of Darius, used it indiscriminately to describe the last Achaemenid king.[20] By the time of Plutarch and Aelian, the original sense of the word had clearly been lost. It is therefore necessary to explore further how the term was used by these authors, and presumably by the sources underpinning their brief accounts of Darius, since it should seem reasonably clear that they are using δοῦλος for reasons that are more rhetorical than historical.

It might well be suggested that, in the source tradition privileging the use of δοῦλος to describe Darius, he was characterised as a slave, or at least a low-born Persian, in order to add a greater legitimacy to Alexander's succession. In short, Darius, put on the throne by a puppet-maker, was cast as being 'not a proper king', presumably because he was not of the immediate royal family, even if Alexander did see to it that Darius was buried in the royal tomb (Arr. *Anab.* 3.22.1, with 3.22.6). But this does not necessarily explain why Darius was specifically called a slave in the source tradition of interest to us. In Greek and presumably also Macedonian eyes, all subjects of the Great King were regarded as slaves. This was not just in the sense of one 'bound' to a superior, as the original Old Persian term suggests, with its connotation of honourable service; rather, the term was used in the sense of a completely subordinated person prepared to abase him or herself before a master; witness the opposition of many Greeks to the performance of *proskynesis* in Alexander's day, as is exemplified by Callisthenes of Olynthus' objection to the practice (Arr. *Anab.* 4.10.1; Plut. *Alex.* 54.1–2).

By contrast, freeborn Greeks believed, rightly or wrongly, that they were not subjected to the same level of domination by their political leadership. For example, Isocrates (*Paneg.* 150) writes that Persians, as a whole, are a mob 'trained more effectively for servitude than slaves in

17 Badian (2000) 250.

18 See Dittenberger (1915) no. 22.3–4: Γαδάται δούλωι.

19 Brosius (2007) ad loc.

20 On this see especially Briant (1996) 790–2, who deals with Darius being deligitimised by 'la propagande macédonienne'.

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our country' (πρὸς δὲ τὴν δουλείαν ἄμεινον τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν οἰκετῶν πεπαιδευμένος).[21] Even the Macedonians of Alexander, who obviously lived under a royal regime, with a king at its head, might not have equated their condition with that of the Persians ruled by the Great King. Plutarch (*Alex.* 51.3), by way of example, refers to the Macedonians not being slaves like the Persians. In addition, we witness numerous instances of the Macedonians – even the common soldiery – arguing with Alexander, such as when they refused to go any further into India in 326 BC (Arr. *Anab.* 5.25.2).[22] This ability to question the king's orders seems to have been regarded as a fundamental right, yet it was something which would not have been countenanced when dealing, as a subject, with a Persian king.

Thus Darius III was characterised as a slave in one delegitimising source tradition, simply because he was not an immediate descendant of a Persian king, even if he was clearly a relative of kings. The absurdity of the accusation is magnified by the fact that even a brother of a king was also technically a slave, as Xenophon (*An.* 1.9.29, 2.5.38) suggests: he twice refers to Cyrus the Younger as the 'slave' (δοῦλος) of Artaxerxes II, his brother. *Every* Persian king had therefore been a *bandaka* at some point. But to the Greeks, Darius, not having been born into a position conducive to becoming king, would have had to abase himself on a regular basis. Could such a man really be a king? In the eyes of the delegitimising source tradition argued for here, presumably not. Of course, Alexander himself – at least according to our main sources for the period – seems to have had rather different ideas on this matter, with Darius' regicide at the hands of Bessus and Nabarzanes allowing him be portrayed as an avenger of Achaemenid honour, particularly through his castigation of the 'usurper' and 'parricide' Bessus.[23] Alexander was thus able to position himself as a restorer of the proper order of things, rather than one who had swept away an unworthy 'slave-king' who had been placed on the throne, as a puppet, by the intrigues of Bagoas.[24] Curtius (5.9.9) seems to have followed this way of thinking, for he makes Darius call the treacherous Nabarzanes, when the latter had proposed to transfer the kingship to Bessus, satrap of Bactria, 'basest of slaves' (*pessimum mancipium*) – and this without any hint of irony.[25] That Curtius could make Darius call

21 See also Hdt. 7.135.3, where two Spartans call Hydarnes, a noble Persian, a 'slave' (δοῦλος) who has never tasted freedom.

22 On Bessus' possible royal blood, which remains in any case debatable, see the first paragraph of the following section, with references.

23 Arr. *Anab.* 4.7.3; Diod. Sic. 17.83.9; Curt. 7.10.10.

24 See Briant (1996) 790, with reference to Arr. *Anab.* 2.14.5 and Curt. 6.3.12, which sources stress that Darius' rule was not based on hereditary right, which is advanced as Persian law, or at least custom (see, in particular, Arrian's Περσῶν νόμον). Brosius (2003) 171 cautions against assuming that Alexander had been styled or accepted as 'Great King, king of kings, king of lands', but was rather 'king of Asia'. Cf. Badian (2000) 264, who thinks that Alexander claimed to be 'the rightful heir of the Achaemenids'. Alexander's preoccupation with being seen as a restorer of order is further exemplified by his concern with safeguarding the tomb of Cyrus the Great; see Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.4–11, which follows Aristobulus.

25 Curtius (5.12.16) also calls those who captured Darius *serui*, even though it is clear that his captors were soldiers and senior Persian officers, with the description of Darius as *captiuus seruorum suorum* adding to the pitiful scene of role-reversal.

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Bessus, a satrap and a man possibly also of distant Achaemenid blood, *manceps* again reinforces the view that all Persians aside from the king could be regarded as slaves. Since Curtius does not dwell on Darius' origin, calling Bessus a slave should be no cause for alarm – indeed, it makes perfect sense.

To return to the source tradition of interest to us, describing Darius as a slave, in the sense of someone who had once been in what Greek authors might regard as a form of bondage, was always a rather specious claim, and probably a manifestation of early Macedonian attempts to delegitimise Darius' rule before Alexander's final victory – after which Darius was accorded a more legitimate royal status, with the tag of 'usurper' being transferred to Bessus, thus allowing Alexander to be seen not as a deposer of an unfit monarch of base origin, but as a restorer of order and a champion of some sort of continuity. As Briant has continually sought to show us, the character of Darius is used as a cipher through which we are meant to form an opinion on Alexander. The facts underpinning the narrative, including Darius' former (honourable in Persian eyes) position as a *bandaka*, were therefore manipulated to advance a larger narrative project – even if we are now only left with fragments of this endeavour, such as those of Plutarch and Aelian. Briant's description of Darius being 'inaccurately' called a former slave in the normal Greek sense of the term is therefore quite correct. But this error arguably stems from an inability on the part of our extant sources, seemingly not sufficiently cognizant of the intentions of the sources underpinning their assertions regarding Darius' background, to provide the correct nuance of the Persian term *bandaka*, which word could really be applied to *any* Persian.[26] As a result, the more familiar sources referring to Alexander's castigation of the 'parricide' Bessus and his burial of Darius with the usual royal honours, such as Arrian, Curtius and Diodorus, arguably embrace a different narrative thread compared to those preserving the view that Darius was low-born, and indeed a slave. In the end, it is not necessary to regard the use of 'slave' as an outright fabrication on the part of the immediate sources underlying Plutarch and Aelian; rather, this inaccurate use of a Persian term, misappropriated by those writing towards the end of the Achaemenid period or shortly thereafter, fed into one interpretation or even literary appropriation of the Persian monarchy, and how those living under such a regime were perceived by the Greeks and Macedonians.

The arrest of Darius

Much has been written about the arrest and deposition of Darius, particularly on the motives of the conspirators themselves, with most authors, such as Briant, merely pointing to the highly ranked nobles Bessus and Nabarzanes as the instigators, while Payen, in his review of the first edition of Briant's work, simply blames 'ses proches'.[27] But little has been

26 Briant (2015) 120.

27 Briant (2015) 394; Payen (2004) 141.

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done to establish which troops, in particular, were responsible for carrying out these orders. An intriguing opportunity to establish the precise agents of Darius' capture and downfall is presented by Justin's epitome of the history of Pompeius Trogus, composed at some uncertain point but probably in the early third century AD.[28] He makes the following curious statement at 11.15.1: *interea Darius in gratiam uictoris a cognatis suis aureis conpedibus catenisque in uico Parthorum Thara uincitur*. This is translated by Yardley as: 'Meanwhile, in the Parthian village of Thara, Darius was bound in fetters and chains of gold by his own kinsmen, who wished to conciliate the victor.'[29] This has occasioned some rather confused commentary. In the same volume, Heckel observes, in his commentary on the passage, that 'Bessus is not called a kinsman of the king (cf. Arr. *Anab*. 3.21.5, 30.4), though it is not clear whether he [Bessus] was related by blood or marriage, as Badian and Bosworth contend, or if, in fact, he belonged to the group known as the King's kinsmen (*syngeneis* = *cognati*).'[30] Chambrey and Thély-Chambry translate *cognati* as 'ses propres parents', though no commentary is offered on the matter.[31]

Now Heckel clearly assumes that Justin, at the locus in question, is referring, in very specific terms, to the men responsible for putting Darius in chains. In his treatment of the problem, Heckel holds that the answer to the question of what Justin means by *cognati* must lie in determining if Bessus (a) was indeed a blood relative of the king,[32] (b) was related to him by marriage, or (c) was one of the mysterious group described, in more figurative terms, as the 'kinsmen' of the king, i.e. men of a certain exalted social rank.[33] It would appear that these are the supposedly fifteen thousand *cognati regis* ('kinsmen of the king') described by Curtius at 3.3.14, in the context of a rather fanciful procession of Persia's military forces before the battle of Issus (333 BC). Yet there remains another possibility: the so-called 'Kinsmen Cavalry' or συγγενεῖς ἱππεῖς, a group which could presumably also be presented by Latin writers as *cognati*. These particular συγγενεῖς were organised into a 1,000-strong unit, if we follow Diodorus' description (17.59.2) of them at Gaugamela in 331 BC, and constituted the Great King's cavalry bodyguard, with the foot guard being the so-called 'Apple Bearers' or μηλοφόροι, also presumably a thousand strong.[34]

28 On the date, see Yardley and Heckel (1997) 1.

29 Yardley in Yardley and Heckel (1997) 54.

30 Yardley and Heckel (1997) 177; cf. Badian (2000) 262 ('an Achaemenid'); Bosworth (1980) 343.

31 Chambrey and Thély-Chambry (1936) 237.

32 This seems to be the meaning at Diod. Sic. 17.67.4, where Madetes is described as a kinsman (συγγενοῦς) of Darius.

33 Arrian uses the phrase κατ' οἰκειότητα when he refers to Bessus' relationship to Darius at *Anab*. 3.21.5, and writes, at *Anab*. 3.22.5, that Darius perished by the machinations 'of his closest connections' (τῶν οἰκειοτάτων). This causes Bosworth (1980, 343) to ponder whether the apparent ease with which Bessus assumed leadership of the conspirators was owing to a blood relationship with Darius. The satrapy of Bactria/Sogdiana was an important post that had previously been held by Achaemenids, such as the son and brother of Xerxes (Hdt. 9.113.2; Diod. Sic. 11.69.2); see, too, Diod Sic. 12.71.1, where the brother of Xerxes II is called 'Sogdianus'.

34 See Charles (2011) 131. Curtius (3.9.4) oddly describes the king's cavalry body at Issus as being 3,000 strong, though I have elsewhere cast doubt on this figure; see Charles (2015) 25–6. This information supposedly came

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Let us see if the involvement of the συγγενεῖς (= *cognati*) in Darius' capture represents a genuine possibility. In Gaugamela's aftermath, we are told by Arrian (*Anab.* 3.16.1) that Darius fled, accompanied by many (πολλοί) of his μηλοφόροι (the rest having presumably fallen), the Bactrian cavalry, which had been posted close to Darius in the battle, *and* the συγγενεῖς.[35] In his summary of Darius' life, Arrian (*Anab.* 3.22.5) described the Persian king being 'at the end a fugitive from his own kingdom and a wanderer, betrayed by his own escort to the worst of fates, to be at once a king and prisoner carried off in dishonour' (φυγάς τε ἐκ τούτου τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀρχῆς πλανώμενος καὶ τελευτῶν πρὸς τῶν ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἐς τὰ ἔσχατα προδοθείς, βασιλεύς τε ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ δεσμώτης ξὺν ἀτιμίᾳ ἀγόμενος).[36] Here, τῶν ἀμφ' αὐτόν could conceivably refer to those troops who still accompanied Darius, and his remaining guard troops in particular, the greatest part of which, according to Arr. *Anab.* 3.16.1, were the συγγενεῖς = *cognati*.[37] It is unfortunate that Arrian (*Anab.* 3.21.1) does not describe Darius' imprisonment, but merely reports that he had been arrested – curiously in the following order: by Nabarzanes, a Persian military commander, Bessus, satrap of Bactria, and Barsaentes, satrap of the Arachotians and the Drangians (or Zarangians), even though it was Bessus who supposedly claimed the kingship (Arr. *Anab.* 3.21.4).

Of clear relevance, too, is the precise role of the conspirator Nabarzanes in the arrest and subsequent murder of Darius. This Nabarzanes, although not specifically described in the context of Gaugamela itself, is variously described by Arrian as 'chiliarch of the cavalry which had taken flight with Darius' (χιλιάρχης τῶν ξὺν Δαρείῳ φευγόντων ἱππέων, *Anab.* 3.21.1), and 'Darius' chiliarch' (ὁ Δαρείου χιλιάρχης, *Anab.* 3.23.4). Although some have seen Nabarzanes solely as a commander of the thousand-strong Apple Bearers, or – less likely – the commander of the Bactrian cavalry, there is reasonable cause to hold that he was, at the very least, associated with the συγγενεῖς ἱππεῖς.[38] It is even possible that, given the unusual set of circumstances at the end of the Achaemenid era, Nabarzanes had nominal command of *all* the guard units, which would explain his high level of influence in the subsequent machinations against Darius.[39] If so, we have further cause to

from Bisthanes, the son of Ochus (Artaxerxes III), who is oddly described as the predecessor of Darius – with no mention of Arses (Artaxerxes IV) here.

35 At *Anab.* 3.19.5, we read that Darius had about 3,000 cavalry and roughly 6,000 infantry after his defeat at Gaugamela.

36 It is interesting to reflect on Bosworth's view (1980, 346) that Darius' necrology, in the pages of Arrian, 'is no more than an exercise in rhetoric and is not merely historically valueless but positively misleading'. He is reflecting, in the main, on Arrian's assessment of Darius as a militarily inept coward; see *Anab.* 3.22.2–5, with Nylander (1993) *passim*.

37 De Sélincourt (1971) 185 has 'ruthlessly betrayed by his own guards'.

38 For commander of the Apple Bearers see Bosworth (1980) 342; Collins (2012) 162; for commander of the Bactrian cavalry see Keaveney (2003) 67; for commander of the συγγενεῖς see Lewis (1977) 17; Briant (1996) 766; Meeus (2009) 309; Charles (2015) 26. I have dealt with Nabarzanes more extensively in two other studies: see Charles (2016) 293–6 and (forthcoming).

39 I have suggested this elsewhere; see Charles (forthcoming). If Nabarzanes was indeed the so-called 'court Chiliarch', who is often presented by Greek authors as the most influential of all Persian officials, it is possible

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hold that Darius' own cavalry guard was in some way involved in the king's actual arrest, after he had been betrayed by their likely commander Nabarzanes.[40]

So where does the story told by Trogus through Justin originate? We turn next to Diodorus (17.73.2). But he only writes that Darius made his way to Bactria, supposedly accompanied by 30,000 Persians and Greek mercenaries, and was arrested and thereafter murdered by Bessus, the satrap.[41] There is no mention of co-conspirators. The next stop must therefore be Curtius, who based his work largely on the late fourth- or early third-century BC Cleitarchus, yet also had recourse to the autobiography of Ptolemy and – more importantly for our purposes – the history of Trogus.[42] This has significant implications, for Diodorus, although he generally follows the Alexander Vulgate tradition rather than the apologetic tradition of Arrian and the *Itinerarium Alexandri*, says next to nothing about Darius' arrest, while Curtius is our main source for it. Given that, as we shall see, there are marked similarities between (a) the little that Justin says about the matter, and (b) what Curtius has to say, one might reasonably hypothesise that they share a basic underlying narrative, which one might presume would have been found in Trogus' history. Atkinson is firmly of this view, and discounts the possibility that Justin 'departed from Trogus' text to incorporate passages from Curtius'.[43] Let us keep that in mind as we explore Curtius' description.

At 5.9.2, Curtius writes that Nabarzanes, together with Bessus, had formed a conspiracy to arrest the king 'by means of the forces which they both commanded and putting him [i.e. the king] in fetters' (*regem suum per milites quibus ambo praeerant comprehendere et uincire decreuerant*). We then read (5.10.5–7) that the two conspirators resolved to have the Bactrian troops, being the most likely to carry out the order, arrest the king, since 'so many thousands of the Persians would bear aid to their king' (*tot Persarum milibus laturis opem regi*). In the end, the conspirators resolved to carry out the deed, and 'the men accustomed to form his bodyguard, who ought to have protected the king's safety even at the peril of their lives' (*custodiae eius assueti, quos regis salutem uel periculis uitae tueri oportebat*, 5.12.9), left the king to what seem to be the Bactrians. If so, the traitorous troops to whom Curtius refers must be the Apple Bearers and the presumably more numerous συγγενεῖς. If further evidence is required, one might well note that, in the context of Issus, Curtius (3.9.4) describes Darius' cavalry guard, supposedly composed of 3,000 elite horsemen (*tria milia delectorum equitum*), as 'his customary bodyguard' (*assueta corporis*

that he was acting as king-maker, which would provide further support to the view that Bessus had more appropriate blood qualifications to rule than he did.

40 See Schachermeyr (1972) 296.

41 The number of troops is mentioned by Curtius (5.8.3), who observes that 4,000 were Greek mercenaries (repeated at 5.12.4). He adds (5.8.4) that Darius also had 4,000 archers and slingers, and 3,300 horseman, mainly *Bactriani*, with Bessus, their satrap, commanding them.

42 Yardley and Heckel (1997) 34–5, following Atkinson (1980) 59–61; but cf. Tarn (1948) 124: 'I have found nothing to indicate either that Trogus used Curtius or that Curtius used Trogus, though there are a few cases where both seem to be using the same popular story.'

43 Atkinson (1980) 60.

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custodia). The similarity of the language (compare *custodiae eius assueti* with *assueta corporis custodia*) could mean that it is possible that Curtius (or rather his underlying source, since Curtius does not seem to refer to *cognati* anywhere in his narrative as the cavalry guard) had the συγγενεῖς = *cognati* in mind on both occasions.

With his own guard having turned a blind eye, Darius was 'seized and bound' (*comprehendi uincirique*, 5.12.15), again presumably by the Bactrians. A short time thereafter, certain unnamed men 'bound Darius in fetters of gold' (*aureis compedibus Dareum uinciunt*, 5.12.20). Rolfe believes that the subject of *uinciunt* 'is, of course, not *Persae*, as the connection might suggest, but *Bactriani*, or better, *Bessus et Nabarzanes*. This is clearly shown by the following *ludibria*, and by Justin xi. 5 *a cognatis suis . . . uincitur*.'[44] Yet there is no certainty that Curtius means that it was the Bactrians and the two named conspirators who bound the king in golden fetters. Furthermore, Rolfe appears to ignore that, in the context of the Achaemenid military, *cognati* = συγγενεῖς could also refer to elite cavalry.[45] In addition, the preceding sentence at 5.12.19 describes the Persians being persuaded by Bessus to fall in with the designs of the conspirators, and joining themselves with the Bactrians (*coniunxere se Bactrianis*). But the sentence of interest to us, namely 5.12.20, suggests a certain degree of remorse on the part of the perpetrators – especially that they applied golden fetters out of respect for the king's honour (*ne tamen honos regi non haberetur*) – which arguably fits in with the guilt-burdened Persians better than the shameless Bactrians. One might well reflect on 5.12.13, where the Persians were paralysed by fear (*attoniti metu*) as the conspiracy got under way, and did not know whether to take up arms, or simply let matters run their course (*nec quiescere audebant, ne impie deserere regem uiderentur*). Finally, *pace* Rolfe, it is unclear why the subject of *uinciunt* should be anyone other than the *Persae* of the preceding sentence, since it was they who 'joined themselves with the Bactrians', who are in the dative case:

> Persae promissis Bessi onerati, maxime quia nemo alius erat quem sequerentur, coniunxere se Bactrianis, agmen eorum tertio assecuti die. ne tamen honos regi non haberetur, aureis compedibus Dareum uinciunt, noua ludibria subinde excogitante fortuna.
>
> After having promises heaped on them by Bessus, and largely because they had no one else's lead to follow, the Persians attached themselves to the Bactrians whose column they overtook two days later. To allow the king some mark of respect, however, they bound him with fetters of gold, for fortune kept on devising new kinds of insult for him. (5.12.19–20)[46]

44 Rolfe (1946) 416 note 'b'.

45 Briant (2015) 396 does not specify who captured Darius, but writes that he was made 'a prisoner of his own men'.

46 This is Yardley's somewhat more flowing translation (1984, 115), which, in contrast to that of Rolfe (1946, 417), obviously takes it to be the Persian soldiers who so 'honoured' the king.

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One might naturally extract from this that *Persae coniunxere se Bactrianis . . . [et] aureis compedibus Dareum uinciunt*. In short, it is more likely that it was the Persian troops rather than the Bactrians who 'honoured' the king by tying him up with golden fetters, and that a good proportion of these men would have been the cavalry guard, the *cognati* = συγγενεῖς, even if they are not specifically named as such in the vignette presented by Curtius. What is more important for us is the possibility that Curtius' source did identify them.[47]

To reflect back on Justin's problematic *interea Darius in gratiam uictoris a cognatis suis aureis conpedibus catenisque in uico Parthorum Thara uincitur* at 11.15.1, it is possible to see those whom he describes as binding Darius in fetters of gold as members of the king's cavalry guard – or at least the guard in general in a collective sense. Although we clearly cannot be sure without having recourse to Trogus' original text, which might have provided more details about which actors precisely were on stage at this part of the tragedy, it is unwise to state categorically that Justin's *cognati* can refer only to Bessus and Nabarzanes. The discussion above shows that the word could also refer to the king's guard cavalry or – to extrapolate further, and feed into the tragic rhetoric surrounding Darius' downfall and his subjects' treacherous conduct – those who were known to him and were meant to protect him. Such an interpretation would obviously include Bessus and Nabarzanes, but would also encompass his Persian guard, including the *cognati* = συγγενεῖς. If so, we have further evidence that the fall of Darius was presented in a way that underlined the supposed barbarism and cowardice of the Persians, an outcome which, in a way, contributes to the portrayal of Darius as a rather pathetic figure, abandoned even by his closest followers, with only Alexander and his army being interested in keeping him alive (Curt. 5.13.3–5, with Arr. *Anab.* 3.21.1; Diod. Sic. 17.72.3) – all of which helps to justify the Macedonian intervention into Persian affairs, and the end of Achaemenid rule.

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47 That Justin and Curtius could have had recourse to the same underlying tradition regarding Darius' arrest is possibly also indicated by their description of Darius' mode of transport after his arrest and binding. Curtius (5.12.20) writes that, to prevent the king from being recognised by his regal apparel, 'they had covered the cart with dirty hides, and unknown persons drove the beasts' (*sordidis pellibus uehiculum intexerant; ignoti iumenta agebant*). In Justin (11.15.3), we read that Alexander soon arrived at the spot where Bessus and Nabarzanes had seized Darius 'only to discover that Darius had been removed at night in a covered carriage' (*ibi cognouit Darium clauso uehiculo per noctem exportatum*). Yet Arrian (*Anab.* 3.21.4) also writes of Darius being conveyed in a closed wagon, so the source tradition may run deeper than simply Trogus.

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