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Heroism, Wisdom and Ruling

Iul. Val. 2,9,538 – 559

1 Introduction

The work of Iulius Valerius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, features prominently in the narrative universe of the *Alexander Romance*. Indeed, it represents “molto di piú di quella di Curzio Rufo, il trasferimento nelle lettere latine del filone romanzesco relativo a Alessandro”.¹

As he worked on his Greek model, included in the α recension, Iulius Valerius selected and removed various elements from the original, added others, and thus adapted his version to the socio-political circumstances and public of his time.²

He also made stylistic choices, clearly with artistic intentions.³ Among the work's singularities, one of the most significant is perhaps its “singulier mélange de langue savante et de *sermo cotidianus*”:⁴ its mixture of a skilful, elaborate and rhetorical style, with colloquial forms.⁵

As has previously been pointed out, Valerius' work – setting aside his Greek model – requires a literary analysis *per se*, to the extent that it forms an independent literary object.⁶ In addition, studies such as that of Wulfram (2018) on the presence of the *Aeneid* in the *Res gestae* about the foundation of Alexandria, show that as a learned

1 Paratore (1969) 295. As pointed out by Cracco Ruggini (1965) 4, “L'intera produzione letteraria latina del IV–V su Alessandro comincia con Giulio Valerius Polemio”.

2 On the major tradition of the *Alexander Romance* and the significance of the work of Iulius Valerius in relation to it, cf. Kroll (1926) III–XVI; Wolohojian (1969) 1–23; Berg (1973); Romano (1974); Garcia Gual (1977) 9–35; Merkelbach (1977); Tallet-Bonvalot (1994) 11–30; Stoneman (1996); (1999a); (1999b); Franco (2001) 15–64; Jouanno (2002); Brenez (2003); Rosellini (2004) V–L; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2007) XVII–CIX; Stoneman (2009); Bohmhammel (2008); Callu (1999) and (2010) 5–35; Foubert (2014) 1–27; Brenez (2016–2017); Stoneman/Nawotka/Wojciechowska (2018). Iulius Valerius' text citations were drawn from the Rosellini edition (2004).

3 Romano (1974) 70: “la versione valeriana attesta una chiara presa di coscienza, vale a dire una consapevole scelta di voci, forme e stilemi, che danno luogo ad un singolare impasto che rende piacevole la lettura della immaginosa storia di Alessandro”.

4 Schmidt (1993) 245.

5 On Valerius' language and style, cf. Fassbender (1909); Axelson (1936); Romano (1974) 65–87; Conde/López de Ayala (1995); Conde (2002); Brenez (2003) 27–29; Foubert (2014) 22–24; Wulfram (2018) 169–170. Particularly remarkable is the high degree of lexical creation found in his prose. As Conde (2002) 690–691 explains, Valerius bypasses the easy solution of borrowing from the Greek language and applies normal Latin word-formation mechanisms.

6 Foubert (2014) 25–26.

man of his time, Valerius was able to recreate classic authors by playing on intertextual subtleties.⁷

Following that line of research in this work, we sought to give another illustration of Iulius Valerius' literary "rewriting" and artistic intent. Using *hypotext* and *hypertext*⁸ as the methodological basis of our study, we will analyse, from an intertextual perspective, a specific excerpt of the *Res gestae* (2, 9, 538–559). Our objective is to demonstrate that Valerius relies on classical Latin historiography and, more specifically, on Livy's work to confer fresh nuances to his writings – which he undoubtedly expected his audience to interpret, identify and perceive.⁹

Moreover, the passage presents antithetical correspondences with another episode which is also included in Book II (21, 1085–1109). This play on parallels and contrasts, which we will attempt to uncover, is, in our view, wholly deliberate. It adds new meanings within the story and strengthens the links between different sections of the work. The departure point of our study is thus the idea that by rewriting his Greek model, Valerius introduced a layer of sophistication that is not always detectable at first sight. With this twofold comparative analysis, we will attempt to demonstrate that this brief episode, which may seem at first a simple anecdote, has a deeper meaning within his work. In addition, the relevance of the episode is particularly salient when one compares the passage to other texts.

2 The episode in context

The episode that we will focus on (2, 9, 538–559) is part of the account of the battle that took place near the Tigris. It consists of a literary recreation of the historic battle of Gaugamela (331 BC.)¹⁰ and tells how a Persian, bearing Macedonian arms, succeeds at getting close to Alexander and, approaching him from behind, strikes him with his sword. Alexander's helmet cracks but stops the blow. The Persian is arrested by Alexander's

7 On the influence of classical authors on Iulius Valerius, cf. Fassbender (1909); Brakmann (1919) 315; Roman (1974) 87 and Wulfram (2018) 170–171. The latter explains that Virgil, who was an essential part of the scholarly canon, together with Terence, Sallust and Cicero, is one of Valerius' most influential poets.

8 Genette (1997) 5: "It is therefore this fourth type that I now rebaptize *hypertextuality*. By *hypertextuality* I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary."

9 Fassbender (1909) 19–24 refers specifically to the influence of historians and points to echoes of Sallust and Livy himself in Valerius. He does not mention, however, this particular extract. This expectation of a learned public capable of perceiving such nuances is mentioned by Wulfram (2018) 171.

10 Nawotka (2018) 160: "In the *Alexander Romance* the battle by the Tigris is not what the historical battle of Gaugamela was: the decisive moment of the war between Alexander and Darius III. In the *Romance* this moment is postponed until the battle on the Stranga (II 16)." Cf. also Callu (2010) 239; Stone-man/Gargiulo (2012) 391; Nawotka (2017) 164.

guards and taken before him. As he is interrogated, he explains that he is in fact Persian and that he expected to receive a grand reward from Darius for his feat. Alexander presents him as an example of bravery and sets him free (Iul. Val. 2,9,538–559):

Sed enim cum omnis Darii exercitus propter Tigridis alveum locatus adventum Macedonum expectaret nec cunctabundus Alexander acie instructa sese hostibus obtulisset, coepto conflictu ferventique re bellica unus e Persis armis Macedonicis indutus, evitata hoc astu dinoscentia, ut propter similitudinem scilicet munimenti, a tergo Alexandrum ense infesto adoritur ac ferit. Sed ictus propter galeae fortitudinem habitus frustra dissiluit et ad comprehendendum protinus virum satellites properant regique eum offerunt. A quo cum Alexander requisisset causas ausi huius, primum, inquit, Alexander, neque te clam sit, non ego ex numero tuo sum, enim vestratibus armis Persa vestitus. Verum cum satrapes sim, <ad> dignitatem eiusmodi gloriae apud Darium praemium pactus sum ut, si interfecto te tantae rei compendium procurassem, cum regni parte filiam quoque regis ad coniugium promererer. Quae profecto haud dubie fierent, ni tecum fortuna potius quam mecum stetisset. His auditis Alexander multis suorum praesentibus iterare eum iubet sermonem promissi et audaciae, laudatum denique fidei ac fortitudinis ad suos ire iubet, quod eum exemplo strenui utilisque praecepti apud milites suos [id] esse vellet, si pari fide <in> se quoque sui satellites uterentur.

While Darius' entire army, deployed by the banks of the river Tigris, awaited the arrival of the Macedonians, Alexander boldly confronted the enemy with the army in formation. Once the fighting had begun, in the heat of battle, one of the Persians, bearing Macedonian arms and avoiding being recognised owing to his similar attire, draws his sword, attacks Alexander from behind and strikes him. But the blow is in vain, halted by the helmet. The guards hasten to capture the man and present him before the king. When Alexander enquires as to the reasons for his deed, the Persian answers: "First of all, Alexander, let it be known to you that I am not one of your own; I am a Persian wearing your arms. I am indeed a satrap. In accordance with the magnitude of that deed, I agreed with Darius that, as a reward for slaying you and thus bringing him the benefits of such a feat, I would marry his daughter and receive a share of the kingdom. And this would certainly have been so, had fortune not been more on your side than on mine." Upon these words, Alexander orders him to repeat the account of his vow and audacity before a crowd of his own men. Later, praising his loyalty and valour, he orders him to return to his own people. Indeed, he wished the Persian to serve as an example for his soldiers and to draw some valuable lesson, so that his guards act with a similar loyalty towards himself.

As mentioned above, the episode takes place within a literary recreation and, naturally, has no historical value. However, though fictional, the scene has precedents in other historical sources.¹¹ On the one hand, various authors (Curt. VIII, 1, 20; Arr. I, 15, 7–8; D. S. XVII, 20, 6–7; Plut. Alex. 16, 8–10) related how Alexander was struck on the head by Rhoesaces during the Battle of the Granicus (334 BC). Alexander's helmet breaks but stops the blow. Spithridates then sets out to attack Alexander from behind and Kleitos defends him. In addition, Q. Curtius (IV, 6, 15–16) tells that during the capture of Gaza (332 BC), a soldier of Darius poses as a deserter and throws himself at Alexander's feet. When Alexander invites him to join his own, the soldier strikes Alexander in the neck; he dodges the blow and cuts off his hand.

11 Cf. Callu (2010) 239; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2012) 391; Nawotka (2017) 22 and 164–165.

The episode thus seems to combine both anecdotes. Its narrative rhythm is slower, and it constitutes the only fight scene in an account that barely describes the battle.

In the context of the narrated events, the Persian soldier's brave and daring behaviour is in sharp contrast with the Macedonian soldiers' distrustful and fearful attitude. Valerius had explained in previous paragraphs how Alexander, seeking to set an example of bravery and to dissipate the qualms of his own soldiers, first crossed the pontoon bridge over the Euphrates (2,9,499–501): *quo iter suis incunctantius persuaderet, primus omnium pontem emensus auctoritatem cunctis audaciae praestitit*. Subsequently, as he orders to destroy the bridge, a feeling of indignation and wariness spreads among his soldiers. Alexander wishes to dispel their fears in a harangue that immediately precedes the episode. In it, he incites them to pursue glory and to show the bravery that will enable them to obtain the *debitam victoriam* (2,9,535).

The enemy soldier exhibited precisely this bravery, and that is why Alexander asks him to repeat before many of his own soldiers what he told him (2,9,554–556): *His auditis Alexander multis suorum praesentibus iterare eum iubet sermonem promissi et audaciae*. Alexander offers him as an *exemplum*, praising his valour and rewarding him with freedom.

The effect on the soldiers is not specified then. It is only mentioned the day ends with a slight Macedonian advantage (2,10,560–561): *Sed hoc quidem die[i] inclinatione tantum leviter pro Macedonum partibus ostentata, uterque exercitus ad castra discedit*. It is evident, however, that the episode's connection with the events recounted above is perfectly justified by this antithetical game.

3 Comparative analysis with Livy, 2,12–13,2

Yet beyond the excerpt's significance in its concrete context, Iulius Valerius “constructs” his narration keeping in mind, as a hypotext, an episode contained in Livy's *Ab urbe condita*. Through an intertextual play, he enriches Alexander's characterisation with fresh nuances, as we will now attempt to demonstrate.

Let us first examine and reproduce here the passage of Livy we are referring to (Liv. 2,12–13,2):¹²

[12] (1) Obsidio erat nihilo minus et frumenti summa caritate inopia, sedendoque expugnaturum se urbem spem Porsinna habebat, (2) cum C. Mucius, adulescens nobilis, cui indignum videbatur populum Romanum servientem sub regibus esset nullo bello nec ab hostibus ullis obsessum esse, liberum eundem populum ab iisdem Etruscis obsideri sa quorumepe exercitus fuderit, (3) – itaque magno audacique aliquo facinore eam indignitatem vindicandam ratus, primo sua sponte penetrare in hostium castra constituit; (4) dein metuens ne si consulum iniussu et ignaris omnibus iret, forte deprehensus a custodibus Romanis retraheretur ut transfuga, fortuna tum urbis crimen adfirmante, senatum adit. (5) “Transire Tiberim” inquit, “patres, et intrare, si possim, castra hos-

12 Cf. Ogilvie (1970) 262–266 on the episode in question. The Livy edition the citations were extracted from is that of Conway/Walters (1914). The translation is that of Warrior (2006).

tium volo, non praedo nec populationum in vicem ultor; maius si di iuvant in animo est facinus.” Adprobant patres; abdito intra vestem ferro proficiscitur. (6) Ubi eo venit, in confertissima turba prope regium tribunal constitit. (7) Ibi stipendium militibus forte daretur et scriba rege sedens pari fere ornatu multa ageret eumque milites volgo adirent, timens sciscitari uter Porsinna esset, ne ignorando regem semet ipse aperiret quis esset, quo temere traxit fortuna facinus, scribam pro rege obruncat. (8) Vadentem inde qua per trepidam turbam cruento mucrone sibi ipse fecerat viam, concursu ad clamorem facto comprehensum regii satellites retraxissent, ante tribunal regis destitutus, tum quoque inter tantas fortunae minas metuendus magis quam metuens, (9) Romanus sum inquit, civis; C. Mucium vocant. Hostis hostem occidere volui, nec ad mortem minus animi est, quam fuit ad caedem; et facere et pati fortia Romanum est. (10) Nec unus in te ego hos animos gessi; longus post me ordo est idem petentium decus. Proinde in hoc discrimen, si iuvat, accingere, ut in singulas horas capite dimices tuo, ferrum hostemque in vestibulo habeas regiae. Hoc tibi iuventus Romana indicimus bellum. (11) Nullam aciem, nullum proelium timueris; uni tibi et singulis res erit. (12) Cum rex simul ira infensus periculoque contreritus circumdari ignes minitabundus iuberet nisi expromeret propere quas insidiarum sibi minas per ambages iaceret, (13) “En tibi” inquit, “ut sentias quam vile corpus sit iis qui magnam gloriam vident”; dextramque accenso ad sacrificium foculo inicit. Quam velut alienato ab sensu torreret animo, prope attonitus miraculo rex ab sede sua prosilisset amoverique ab altaribus iuvenem iussisset, (14) Tu vero abi inquit, in te magis quam in me hostilia ausus. Iuberem macte virtute esse, si pro mea patria ista virtus staret; nunc iure belli liberum te, intactum inviolatumque hinc dimitto.” (15) Tunc Mucius, quasi remunerans meritum, “Quando quidem” inquit, “est apud te virtuti honos, ut beneficio tuleris a me quod minis nequisti, trecenti coniuravimus principes iuventutis Romanae ut in te hac via grassaremur. (16) Mea prima sors fuit; ceteri ut cuiusque ceciderit primi quoad te oportunum fortuna dederit, suo quisque tempore aderunt.”

[13] (1) Mucium dimissum, cui postea Scaevolae a clade dextrae manus cognomen inditum, legati a Porsinna Romam secuti sunt; (2) adeo moverat eum et primi periculi casus, a quo nihil se praeter errorem insidiatoris texisset, et subeunda dimicatio totiens quot coniurati superessent, ut pacis condiciones ultro ferret Romanis.

Nonetheless, the siege continued, as did the shortage of grain and its consequent high price. Porsenna was hoping that he would take the city just by sitting tight, when Gaius Mucius, a young Roman noble intervened.

Mucius thought it an outrage that the Roman people, who had never been besieged in war by any enemy when they were under the subjection of a king, were now, though free, being besieged by those same Etruscans whose armies they had often routed. Thinking that his outrage must be vindicated by some great and bold deed, he first decided to penetrate the enemy's camp on his own initiative. But then he feared that, if he went without consular orders, and without telling anyone, he might be caught by the guards and brought back as a deserter – a charge made plausible by the city's fortunes at that time. So, he approached the Senate. “Senators,” he said, “I want to cross the Tiber and, if I can, enter the enemy's camp. My aim is not to plunder nor to exact vengeance for their raids, but, with god's help I have in mind a greater deed.”

The senators gave their approval. He did a sword in his clothing and set out. Arriving there, he stood in the thick of the crowd near the king's tribunal where the soldiers happened to be receiving their pay. A secretary, who was sitting with the king and wearing much the same kind of clothing was busy, and dealing generally with the soldiers. Mucius was afraid to ask which was Porsenna, lest his ignorance of the king's identity betray him. Fortune led him to make a random choice and he cut down the secretary instead of the king. As he marched off, making a path for himself through the frightened crowd with his blood-stained blade, the king's guards rushed in the direction of the outcry. He was seized and dragged back.

There, alone before the king's tribunal, and confronted with such threats to his fortunes, he was more to be feared than afraid himself. “I am a Roman citizen,” he cried. “Men call me Gaius

Mucius. As an enemy. I wished to kill an enemy. My intent is to die, just as it was to kill. To act and suffer bravely is the Roman way. Nor am I the only one who is of this mind toward you. After me is a long line of men who seek the same honor. If this is your pleasure, prepare yourself for this struggle in which you must fight for your life from hour to hour. You will always have an enemy at the entrance to your palace, sword in hand. This is the war that we, the youth of Rome, declare on you. It is not action in the field and pitched battles that you should fear. The issue will be for you alone, against one enemy at a time.”

The king, at once incensed with rage and terrified at his danger, tried to intimidate him by ordering that he be burned alive if he did not immediately reveal the plot that lay behind his obscure threats. At this, Mucius exclaimed, “Look and see how cheaply the body is regarded by those who look to great glory.” With these words, he thrust his right hand into the fire that was kindled for sacrifice. As he scorched his hand, his mind seemed detached from all sensation, dumbfounding the king with this miracle. Leaping from his seat, Porsenna ordered the young man to be removed from the altar. “Depart!” he cried. “You have dared to be a greater enemy to yourself than to me. I would invoke success upon your courage, if that courage were in the service of my country. Now I send you away from here untouched, unharmed, and free from the laws that apply to prisoners of war.” Then, as if to repay his generosity, Mucius replied, “Since you honor courage, my gratitude will give you the information that your threats could not extort. We are 300, the foremost youths of Rome, who have sworn to seek you out in this way. The first lot fell to me; the others in whatever order the lot falls to them, will be here, each in his own time, until fortune grants us the opportunity to kill you.”

The release of Mucius, who was afterward given the cognomen Scaevola because of the damage to his right hand, was followed by the dispatch of envoys to Rome by Porsenna. The king was disturbed, not only by the occurrence of this first attack that had only been averted by his assailant’s error, but also by the thought that he would have to undergo the struggle as many times as there were conspirators. So, he voluntarily proposed peace terms to the Romans.

As we can see in Livy’s episode, the hero is C. Mucius (later nicknamed Scaevola), a young Roman who is ready to die to free Rome from the abhorrent siege it is suffering from the Etruscan king Porsenna. Concerned primarily with his honour, he is not impulsively heroic. He appears before the Senate to expose his plan to enter the enemy camp and accomplish an exploit that he does not specify in that instance (he only alludes enigmatically to *maius si di iuvant in animo est facinus*). The story will, however, later reveal that the deed consists of slaying Porsenna. Indeed, he enters the enemy camp, approaches the royal tribune, sees Porsenna with a secretary busy paying soldiers and, without daring to ask who Porsenna wishes not to reveal his own identity, chooses at random between them. He approaches the secretary, who is also dressed in royal clothes, and kills him. Unsurprisingly, the king’s guard stops him and brings him before Porsenna, who interrogates him about his deed. It is then that a confident Mucius (*metuendus magis quam metuens*), for he was as prepared for death as he was for the glory of slaying the enemy king (*nec ad mortem minus animi est quam fuit ad caedem*) reveals to Porsenna what his intention had been. He also affirms that many others will attempt to accomplish the same exploit as himself, which fortune had prevented him from achieving. Porsenna threatens to torture him. Thereupon, Mucius himself, in defiance of such a menace, places his right hand on the fire, which had been prepared for the sacrifice, enduring the pain *velut alienato ab sensu animo*. Porsenna, im-

pressed by his valour and heroism, sets him free and sends legates to Rome to negotiate peace.

When we compare the texts, there are many obvious differences between the two episodes at first glance. Valerius' episode is clearly shorter and more succinct. Livy's text carefully describes the protagonist, specifying the character's thoughts and intentions that precede his action in great detail. Moreover, when brought before the king, the young Roman's utterance is much longer than that of the Persian. In addition, there is no correlation between our episode and Porsenna's threatening attitude, nor Mucius' revelation regarding the pact of the three hundred young Romans to slay the king.

Nevertheless, within its conciseness, Valerius' account reproduces the same essential elements as does Livy's episode and presents the same combination of narrative motifs and sequence of events.

3.1 Narrative motifs and story development

1. The action takes place against the backdrop of a large, stirred crowd. The agitation contributes to the confounding of identities. In Livy's text, the setting is Porsenna's camp, as the soldiers' pay is being handed out, and in Valerius' narration, it is the battlefield in which both armies are fighting:

Iul. Val. 2,9538–541: *Sed enim cum omnis Darii exercitus propter Tigridis alveum locatus adventum Macedonum exspectaret nec cunctabundus Alexander acie instructa sese hostibus obtulisset, coepit conflictu ferventique re bellica*

Liv. 2,12,7: *Ibi cum stipendium militibus forte daretur et scriba cum rege sedens pari fere ornatu multa ageret eumque milites volgo adirent,*

2. There is a confusion of identities. Mucius mistakes the secretary for the king due to his attire and actions in the same way that the Persian bearing Macedonian arms pretends to be Alexander's soldier:

Iul. Val. 2,9541–543: *unus e Persis armis Macedonicis indutus, evitata hoc astu dinoscentia, ut propter similitudinem scilicet munimenti,*

Liv. 2,12,7: *timens sciscitari uter Porsinna esset, ne ignorando regem semet ipse aperiret quis esset,*

3. The protagonist's mission fails. Mucius murders the secretary instead of the king, and the Persian soldier's blow is unsuccessful, as it is halted by Alexander's helmet:

Iul. Val. 2,9543–545: *a tergo Alexandrum ense infesto adoritur ac ferit. Sed ictus propter galeae fortitudinem habitus frustra dissiluit*

Liv. 2,12,7: *quo temere traxit fortuna facinus, scribam pro rege obruncat.*

4. The protagonist is immediately seized by the royal guard:

Iul. Val. 2,9,545–546: et ad comprehendendum protinus virum satellites properant

Liv. 2,12,8: Vadentem inde qua per trepidam turbam cruento mucrone sibi ipse fecerat viam concursu ad clamorem facto comprehensum regii satellites retraxissent,

5. The protagonist is brought before the king:

Iul. Val. 2,9,546: regique eum offerunt.

Liv. 2,12,8: ante tribunal regis destitutus,

6. The protagonist makes a defiant speech in which he proclaims his true homeland, openly declares what his intentions were and acknowledges that fortune alone impeded his deed:

Iul. Val. 2,9,546–554: A quo cum Alexander requisisset causas ausi huius, “Primum”, inquit, “Alexander, neque te clam sit, non ego ex numero tuo sum, enim vestratibus armis Persa vestitus. Verum cum satrapes sim, <ad> dignitatem eiusmodi gloriae apud Darium praemium pactus sum ut, si interfecto te tantae rei compendium procurassem, cum regni parte filiam quoque regis ad coniugium promererer. Quae profecto haud dubie fierent, ni tecum fortuna potius quam mecum stetisset.”

Liv. 2,12,9–11: tum quoque inter tantas fortunae minas metuendus magis quam metuens, “Romanus sum” inquit, “civis; C. Mucium vocant. Hostis hostem occidere volui, nec ad mortem minus animi est, quam fuit ad caedem; et facere et pati fortia Romanum est. Nec unus in te ego hos animos gessi; longus post me ordo est idem petentium decus. Proinde in hoc discrimen, si iuvat, accingere, ut in singulas horas capite dimices tuo, ferrum hostemque in vestibulo habeas regiae. Hoc tibi iuventus Romana indicimus bellum. Nullam aciem, nullum proelium timueris; uni tibi et cum singulis res erit.”

7. The king has a positive reaction and extols the valour and heroism of the one who had sought to slay him:

Iul. Val. 2,9,554–556: His auditis Alexander multis suorum praesentibus iterare eum iubet sermonem promissi et audaciae,

Liv. 2,12,12–14: Cum rex simul ira infensus periculoque conterritus circumdari ignes minitabundus iuberet nisi expromeret propere quas insidiarum sibi minas per ambages iaceret, “En tibi” inquit, “ut sentias quam vile corpus sit iis qui magnam gloriam vident”; dextramque accenso ad sacrificium foculo incit. Quam cum velut alienato ab sensu torreret animo, prope attonitus miraculo rex cum ab sede sua prosilisset amoverique ab altaribus iuvenem iussisset, “Tu vero abi” inquit, “in te magis quam in me hostilia ausus. Iuberem macte virtute esse, si pro mea patria ista virtus staret.”

8. The protagonist is freed:

Iul. Val. 2,9,557–559: laudatum denique fidei ac fortitudinis ad suos ire iubet, quod eum exemplo strenui utilisque praecepti apud milites suos [id] esse vellet, si pari fide <in> se quoque sui satellites uterentur.

Liv. 2,12,14–13,3: “Nunc iure belli liberum te, intactum inviolatumque hinc dimitto.” Tunc Mucius, quasi remunerans meritum, “Quando quidem” inquit, “est apud te virtuti honos, ut beneficio tuleris a me quod minis nequisti, trecenti coniuravimus principes iuventutis Romanae ut in te hac via grassaremur. Mea prima sors fuit; ceteri ut cuiusque ceciderit primi quoad te opportunum fortuna dederit, suo quisque tempore aderunt.” Mucium dimissum, cui postea Scaevolae a clade dextrae manus cognomen inditum, legati a Porsinna Romam secuti sunt; adeo moverat eum et primi periculi casus, a quo nihil se praeter errorem insidiatoris texisset, et subeunda dimicatio to-tiens quot coniurati superessent, ut pacis condiciones ultro ferret Romanis.

The sending of emissaries to Rome to ask for peace (2,12,15–13,3) constitutes a sort of epilogue. Livy makes it clear that Porsenna is sending the embassy for fear of a conspiracy against his person, aware that on this occasion his life had been saved only by chance.¹³

According to the analysis above, the events unfold in the same way in both texts. It is worth noting that the episode is also present in the Greek version A (also in β and in γ) and in the Armenian version.¹⁴ Moreover, Livy himself may have drawn from Hellenistic sources.¹⁵ We could thus consider that these similarities – unless they are accidental – are simply due to a common tradition and not to Valerius’ conscious elaboration.

However, the syntactic and also lexical parallels that one can draw between both texts support the hypothesis that Valerius had Livy’s Mucius Scaevola episode in mind when he gave a literary account of this passage.

3.2 Syntactic and lexical parallelisms

The comparison of both texts reveals clear similarities between the order and distribution of the syntactic structures. Valerius appears to be imitating the narration’s organisation. Livy’s text shows a complex syntactic construction consisting of the following elements:

1. a temporal-causal adverbial subordinate: *cum ... daretur et ... adirent*,
2. a participle construction (*timens*) referring to the subject, on which, in turn, various subordinate structures (*sciscitari uter ... ne esset*) are dependent,
3. an adverbial subordinate (*quo ... traxit*),
4. the main verb *obtruncat* preceded by its complements (*scribam pro rege*).

¹³ In this explanation, Livy differs from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who also recounted the episode (5,31,2). Indeed, the latter states that Porsenna in this way attempts to regain the favour of his own men, who are tired of the war. Another significant difference is that Livy (who emphasizes the young Roman’s nobleness and heroism) omits two details that Dionysius explicitly attributes to Mucius: planning to enter the camp posing as a deserter and his intention to deceive Porsenna.

¹⁴ Cf. Wolohojian (1969) 89; Franco (2001) 227; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2012) 32, 84–86, 148–150 and 391; Nawotka (2017) 164–165. Bohmhammel (2008) 58 points out that in Valerius’ version there is a greater emphasis on the praise given to the Persian.

¹⁵ Cf. Ogilvie (1970) 262.

Thus, if we establish a correlation between these syntactic structures and the actions identified above, we can observe how elements 1 (crowd and agitation scenario) and 2 (confusion of identity) are reflected by means of subordinates in that syntax, while element 3 (failed deed) is expressed by the main verb identified above.

Valerius' text presents a similar distribution:

1. a temporal-causal adverbial subordinate: *cum ... exspectaret nec ... obtulisset*,
2. several participle constructions: *coepto ... bellica; armis ... indutus; evitata ... munimenta*,¹⁶
3. main verbs: *adoritur ac ferit. Sed ictus ... dissiluit*.

As in Livy's text, here too the subordinate structures correspond to elements 1 (scenario of crowd and agitation) and 2 (confusion of identity), while the main verbs correspond to element 3 (failed action) – in this case, that of the Persian.

Furthermore, while Valerius replaces the Greek text's direct style with an indirect style elsewhere,¹⁷ in our episode he reproduces the Persian's words in a direct style when he is brought to Alexander – just as in Livy's text, where Mucius speaks before Porsenna. In that way, following the same distribution of *showing* and *telling*,¹⁸ Valerius replicates the same dramatic tension, since this scene is the highlight of the entire episode.¹⁹ In this sequence, the protagonist adopts an audacious and defiant attitude despite being in extreme danger. He identifies himself before the enemy chieftain (*Romanus sum / non ego ex numero tuo sum. Enim vestratibus armis Persa vestitus*) and, plainly disregarding his own life, openly acknowledges that his intention was to slay the king, although his deed ultimately failed.²⁰

Finally, we wish to draw the reader's attention to two lexical parallels that seem to be relevant. The first is the presence of the term *satellites*:²¹ it is Alexander's *satellites* (the same term that Livy uses to designate those who detain Mucius) who capture the Persian and bring him before Alexander. Alexander is himself referred to as the "king", like Porsenna (*regique eum offerunt*). The second is the term *fortuna* introduced by Valerius at the end of the speech: *Quae profecto haud dubie fierent, ni tecum fortuna potius quam mecum stetisset*. The expression visibly evokes Livy's *quo temere traxit fortuna facinus*. In Valerius, however, the term does not merely signify "chance". It can also be somehow interpreted as a tribute to the condition of the one chosen by fortune, as was Alexander: the Persian's attack is doomed to fail because he sought to inflict

¹⁶ As Romano (1974) 81–82 points out, absolute ablative structures are common in Valerius' prose.

¹⁷ On Valerius' tendency to use an indirect style, cf. Callu (2010) 34.

¹⁸ On the *mood* as a discourse category and the difference between *showing* (representing) and *telling* (narrating), cf. Genette (1980) 161–169; García (1998) 173–184.

¹⁹ Cf. Ogilvie (1970) 263.

²⁰ On this refined rhetorical technique of Valerius, which emphasizes certain moments of the narrative, cf. Romano (1974) 70.

²¹ The term is not often used in Valerius' work: 2,2,151; 2,14,692; 3,19,690; 692; 695; 3,23,942; 966. In addition to *satelles*, he also uses *satellitium* (1,24,695), as pointed out by Conde (2002) 687.

harm on a superior being – not only in terms of warrior strength, but also regarding divine protection.²²

3.3 Alexander's characterisation in the intertextual play

All the arguments advanced so far have attempted to demonstrate that Valerius used Livy's text as a hypotext when he rewrote this episode. On this basis, we will now uncover the nuances and new meanings in Valerius' narrative that stem from this intertextual play.

The most evident correlation game is the identification of Mucius with the Persian soldier and Alexander with Porsenna. Indeed, both Alexander and Porsenna represent the supreme authority and both are the object of the brave but ineffective attack of a hierarchically inferior enemy.

We believe, however, that Valerius' intention when recreating Livy's passage was to project the merits and qualities of Mucius onto Alexander.²³ This enables an exchange of correlations: the Mucius character does not correspond to the Persian soldier but to Alexander, and both (Mucius and Alexander) are the true heroes in their respective episodes. We can advance several arguments to support this interpretation.

On the one hand, Mucius performs his heroic action out of love for his homeland in a disinterested fashion. In fact, when he announces to the senators that he wishes to enter the enemy camp, he clarifies that the objective is not to collect spoils (*castra hostium volo, non praedo nec populationum in vicem ultor*). The Persian, for his part, is driven by Darius' promise of rewards. In exchange for his feat, he offers him a share of power and his daughter in marriage (*Verum cum satrapes sim, <ad> dignitatem eiusmodi gloriae apud Darium praemium pactus sum ut, si interfecto te tantae rei compendium procurassem, cum regni parte filiam quoque regis ad coniugium promererer*).

On the other hand, Porsenna reacts with fear and distrust to the attack and, at first, is threatening and cruel, trying to intimidate Mucius in vain. When the young Roman comes forward and places his hand in the fire, Porsenna, who is impressed by his bravery, tells him that he would applaud him if Mucius were fighting on his side (*Iuberem macte virtute esse, si pro mea patria ista virtus staret*) and he frees him. Alexander, for his part, admired this show of bravery from the very beginning,²⁴

²² On the concept of *fortuna* in Valerius, cf. Benez (2003) 735–737. Regarding this term, the expression *Maius fortune sua facinus ausus* used by Quintus Curtius (4,6,15), to refer to Darius' soldier who poses as a deserter and attempts to kill Alexander in the excerpt mentioned above, appears to echo the *maius si di iuvant in animo est facinus* that Livy puts in Mucius' mouth. On the influence of Livy on Curtius cf. Stoneman (1999a) 171; Pausch (2016) 91; Wulfram (2016) 152; Galli (2016) 159. On the concept of *fortuna* of Curtius cf. Stoneman (2016).

²³ A singular example of *virtus Romana*, as pointed out by Walsh (1961) 75.

²⁴ In his narration of the battle of Issus, Valerius had already reflected on Alexander's respect for warrior courage, including that of his enemies (1,41,1394–1398).

and exhibits the Persian soldier as a hero and example to follow. He lets him go without harming him in any way, in a clear display of *clementia*.

Finally, while the Persian is bearing Macedonian arms in order to safely approach Alexander,²⁵ Mucius penetrates the enemy camp without trying to pass for someone else at any time. In addition, Porsenna is protected from what would have been a certain death because his secretary is mistaken for the king owing to his attire.²⁶ And in the case of Alexander, he himself is fighting on the front line, brave and oblivious to any risk to himself, in full view of all. It is he who stops the enemy's blow. Thus, in Valerius' episode, the reason for the mistaking of identity – the attire – is also reversed. It does not apply to the figure of Alexander, as would have been the case, if a strict parallel with Porsenna had been created.²⁷

Thus, Mucius' indisputable heroism in Livy's episode lies in Alexander himself in Valerius' story, since the two are driven by an ideal of belligerent bravery which they regard as the supreme value. They openly expose themselves "as they are", embracing the risk and disregarding their own lives.²⁸

In this way, the episode is significant within its concrete and limited context, as it accentuates the contrast between the attitude of Alexander's soldiers and the behaviour of the Persian protagonist. The scene also contributes new nuances to Alexander's characterisation, covering the figure with *Roman virtus* and highlighting qualities such as *clementia*. While the sequence is historically inaccurate, it does have an explicit literary identity. That means, using historical data as a springboard, the episode mutates into another reality, one that conforms with Valerius' particular interests. The author is thus able to commend Alexander and portray him as a paragon of authority and model of a Roman emperor, suited to the times in which he wrote the work.²⁹

25 This detail (*armis Macedonicis indutus*) also evokes the passage of Virgil's *Aen.* 2,391–393: *comantem/ Androgei galeam clipeique insigne decorum/induitur*, when Aeneas and his companions bear Greek weapons to make their way through a devastated Troy completely taken over by the enemies.

26 Cf. *supra* n. 13.

27 The subject of attire and clothing is a recurring motif in the *Alexander Romance*, not only as a status identifier, but as a novelistic resource, due to Alexander's impersonations. Thus, in 2,14–15, he approaches Darius by posing as a messenger and, in 3,19, makes his general Ptolemy present himself as Alexander before Candaules while he himself poses as his general Antigonus. Cf. Stoneman/Gargiulo (2007) L and (2012) 396.

28 There is also a similarity here in the fact that Alexander's reaction of rewarding the enemy who tried to kill him is somewhat unexpected. The same applies to Mucius' attitude, as he puts his hand in the fire defying the threats of Porsenna. We have here, in the words of Walsh (1961) 213, "the element of the unexpected".

29 Cf. Brenz (2003) 889–903. Interestingly, in order to create this intertextual play, which accentuates Alexander's *virtus*, Valerius turns precisely to Livy, an author who to some degree questioned Alexander's greatness. On Livy's vision of Alexander, cf. Walsh (1961) 65, 137; Stoneman (1999a) 171; Garstad (2018) 139–140.

4 Comparative analysis with Iul. Val. 2,21, 1085–1109

As previously set out, in this section, we will compare our episode with another passage of Valerius' work (2,21,1085–1109) with which it has a special relationship. In this excerpt, Alexander decides to avenge Darius – who was betrayed and killed by his own men – by capturing and punishing his murderers. To do so, he resorts to the ruse of promising a reward. The text is as follows (Iul. Val. 2,21,1085–1109):

Quod vero ad comprehendendos eos, qui Darium vulneribus incesserant, dicit haec: equidem me gaudeo hostem maximum Darium servitio subiugasse, eiusque mortem licet ipse exsecutus non sim, habeo tamen hisce qui id fecerint gratiam. Quare quod benivolentiae suae erga me studium protestati sunt ii quique sunt auctores huiusce, hortor ac moneo uti se prodant mihi que indicent praemia debita recepturi. Neve istud in ambiguum dubiumque quis transferat, iuro deos maiestatemque patris Ammonis et Olympiadis matris meae, quique hi fuerint, eos me sublimes ac notissimos omnibus effecturum. Neque enim non maximo digni praemio qui eius consilia praeverterint qui rursus bellum et novum mihi proelium meditabatur. Ad hoc edictum multis quidem fletu res digna videbatur. Sed enim Besas et Ariobarzanes, auctores scilicet caedis Darii, Alexandro sese obvios ferunt et professi facinus sponsonem praemii repetunt. Tunc viros protinus comprehendi et quam editissimo in loco cruci suffigi iubet. Quod praeter spem hominibus accidisset, patefecit rex dignum se suo nomine existimasse si quid de regia libertate subtraxerit, dum Darius modo ultio debita procuraretur. Neque tamen hisce ipsis de periurio se reum fore, sublimes eos notissimosque omnibus fore edicto promiserit quos quidem facile sit visere in illo suggestu crucibus adfixos. Tunc omnibus et oratio placuit et regis benignitas comprobata est.

But in order to capture those who had attacked and wounded Darius, he said: "I am truly pleased to have subjected my greatest enemy, Darius, to slavery, and although I did not slay him myself, I am grateful to those who did. The authors of this action have thus demonstrated their good will towards me, and I exhort them to surrender and show themselves before me in order to receive their due reward. And lest anyone doubt my statement, I swear by the gods and by the majesty of my father Amun and my mother Olympias that, whoever they may have been, I will place them in a high position and make them known to all. For those who have thwarted the plans of those who were plotting war again and new battles against me are worthy of the greatest reward." Upon hearing this edict, many deemed the circumstances worthy of tears. But Bessos and Ariobarzanes, the perpetrators of the murder of Darius, present themselves to Alexander and, confessing their action, claim the promised reward. Alexander then orders the men to be captured and nailed to a cross in the highest possible place. As this countered the public's expectations, the king declared that he had considered it worthy of his name to take a little of the liberty that is granted to a king to seek due revenge on Darius. And that he was not to be regarded as guilty of perjury, since, in his edict, he had promised to place them in a high position and make them known to all. They were certainly easily visible in such a high place, nailed to the crosses. His speech seemed to satisfy all, and the king's benevolence was confirmed.

Having narrated Darius' royal funeral and Alexander's address to the Persians, the protagonist's intentions are now clear: to capture and punish Darius' murderers.³⁰ To do

30 On this passage, cf. Wolohojian (1969) 108–109; Franco (1993) 233–234; Bohmhammel (2008) 67–68,

this, Alexander lures the latter by announcing that a reward is awaiting those who free him from his enemy. Having then succeeded in getting them before him, he orders their crucifixion, justifying that he is fulfilling his promise of *eos me sublimes ac notissimos omnibus effecturum* in this way. Alexander's move is applauded by all.

This episode of the punishment of Bessos and Ariobarzanes is fictional. It results from a novelistic alteration of historically documented facts, in the same way that the war scenario with the episode of the Persian analysed above corresponds, as we mentioned, to a literary recreation of the battle of Gaugamela.³¹

Although both episodes pertain to very different contexts, they share a sort of deliberate “antithetical symmetry”. As we will attempt to demonstrate, Valerius links both episodes using contrasts and repetitions,³² playing on internal references and reinforcing the counterpoints between Alexander and Darius, his great antagonist in this Book II – which recounts Alexander's *acta*.

In both episodes, Alexander acts as judge and supreme authority who decides the fate of the “prisoner”. Certain narrative elements that link both episodes repeat themselves antithetically, using similar terms:

1. The Persian soldier is imprisoned and brought before Alexander, while Bessos and Ariobarzanes, Darius' assassins, spontaneously appear before him:

2,9,545–546: ad comprehendendum protinus uirum satellites properant regique eum offerunt

2,21,1085–1109: Quod vero ad comprehendendos eos qui Darium vulneribus incesserant, dicit haec: “Equidem me gaudeo hostem maximum Darium servitio subiugasse, eiusque mortem licet ipse executus non sim, habeo tamen hisce qui id fecerint gratiam. Quare quod benivolentiae suae erga me studium protestati sunt ii quique sunt auctores huiusce, hortor ac moneo uti se prodant mihi-que indicent praemia debita recepturi. Neve istud in ambiguum dubiumque quis transferat, iuro deos maiestatemque patris Ammonis et Olympiadis matris meae, quique hi fuerint, eos me sublimes ac notissimos omnibus effecturum. Neque enim non maximo digni praemio qui eius consilia praeverterint qui rursus bellum et novum mihi proelium meditabatur. “ Ad hoc edictum multis quidem fletu res digna videbatur. Sed enim Besas et Ariobarzanes, auctores scilicet caedis Darii Alexandro sese obvios ferunt

2. The Persian soldier explains which reward had been promised by Darius had he succeeded at slaying Alexander, while Bessos and Ariobarzanes claim the reward promised by Alexander:

121–122; Callu (2010) 152 and 244–245; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2012) 68–71, 118–121, 186–189, 368–371 and 412; Nawotka (2017) 187.

31 Cf. Stoneman (2012) 412; Callu (2010) 245; Nawotka (2017) 187.

32 Merkle (1996) conducts a similar analysis of the *Vita Aesopi* and points out (1996) 216 how every episode is significant via these internal references, not only in relation to their immediate context, but also with regard to the whole work. Karla (2016) 54 also stresses the key role of antithesis as a narrative procedure in the *Vita Aesopi*.

2,9,550–554: apud Darium praemium pactus sum ut, si interfecto te tantae rei compendium procurassem, regni parte filiam quoque regis ad coniugium promererer;

2,21,1100–1101: et professi facinus sponsonem praemii repetunt.

3. Alexander pronounces the sentence. In one case, his sentence is favourable and the prisoner is released unharmed. In the other, the sentence is to die on the cross:

2,9,557: laudatum denique fidei ac fortitudinis ad suos ire iubet

2,21,1101–1108: Tunc viros protinus comprehendi et quam editissimo in loco cruci suffigi iubet. Quod praeter spem hominibus accidisset, patefecit rex dignum se suo nomine existimasse si quid de regia libertate subtraxerit, dum Darius modo ultio debita procuraretur. Neque tamen hisce ipsis de periurio se reum fore, sublimes eos notissimosque omnibus fore edicto promiserit quos quidem facile sit visere in illo suggestu crucibus adfixos.

The contrast may be obvious, but it is meaningful: it is not what one would expect following the logic of war. Alexander frees an individual from the enemy army who attempted to kill him, and he punishes the individuals who slew the enemy king.

This paradox naturally reinforces Alexander's superiority not only in war, but also in moral terms: he does not need the help of traitors to defeat his enemy.³³ In addition, he respects the code of honour in combat to the point of wishing to avenge the death of his rival. From this perspective, even the ethically questionable ruse and ambiguous wordplay with which he deceives the condemned are fully justified.³⁴

Alexander's response is unexpected in both episodes, especially in the second. He frustrates his observers' expectations and surprises them. The *praeter spem* interpretation of his own words somewhat recalls the technique of the *decepta expectatio* (or *fulmen in clausula*).³⁵ Indeed, an initially created expectation is later left unfulfilled in the denouement, and this "surprise"-effect accentuates the antithesis between both episodes.

Thus, if respect for warrior courage and *clementia* are the qualities that characterise Alexander's attitude towards the Persian, the quality that is spotlighted in the punishment of Bessos and Ariobarzanes is wisdom, his resourcefulness to surprise others. In this way, his intellectual superiority is added to his military and moral superiority.³⁶

³³ This is what Alexander himself affirms when another satrap offers to help him to capture Darius: *ad haec Alexander reverti hominem et, si quid valeret, auxiliari regi suo mandat. "Qua enim," inquit, "spe alienos tibi milites tuto commiserim cives tuos propriosque prodenti?"* (Iul. Val. 2,10,569–572).

³⁴ Cf. Bohmhammel (2008) 121–122.

³⁵ This compositional technique is widespread in the epigram and is masterfully developed by Martial, as explained by Cortés (1996) 428.

³⁶ This quality is prominent throughout the work, as opposed to other major characterization gaps such as feelings of love. Cf. Callu (1999) 43: "Le romanesque aurait pu s'intéresser à une intrigue sentimentale. Valère ne s'engage pas dans cette direction car Alexandre, dans le roman, n'est pas un amant et guère un mari."

Alexander is presented as a ἀνὴρ σοφός or even as a kind of *trickster*, just like Aesop.³⁷ With this mastery of language and this wisdom, the author adds to the sovereign's status the capacity that a "marginal" character like Aesop has to attract attention, demonstrate superiority, obtain recognition and build a reputation. In fact, these manifestations lead Konstan/Walsh (2016) to place the *Alexander Romance* within the so-called *subversive biography* category, as opposed to Plutarch's biography, which would belong to *civic biography*.³⁸

4. Alexander's sentence has *exemplum* value before the onlooking public:

2,9,557–559: quod eum exemplo strenui utilisque praecepti apud milites suos esse vellet, si pari fide in se quoque sui satellites uterentur

2,21,1108–1109: Tunc omnibus et oratio placuit et regis benignitas comprobata est.

His response, both to the Persian soldier and to Bessos and Ariobarzanes, is directed towards setting an example and legitimizing his authority. Rather than an emotional response or a demonstration of character, his address is calculated based on the effects it will have on other people. In this way, the reader³⁹ is able to identify with the public in front of which Alexander is "performing", triggering unanimous admiration and the acceptance of his teaching, wisdom and authority. In that sense, this audience contributes to forging Alexander's own "character" and somehow becomes implicated in this sort of "cosmic consensus" that gives him supreme power.

Given that Alexander's initiative was an opportunity to exhibit his wisdom, we could even suggest that these episodes offer another example of *χρεία* of rhetorical origin, as elsewhere in the work.⁴⁰

In our view, this play on internal references results from Valerius' deliberate opposition between Alexander and Darius. The differentiation is observable throughout the work and is to the clear benefit of Alexander. The latter is victorious and, in addition, can afford to spare the life of the enemy soldier who attempted to kill him. Darius, on the other hand, not only loses the fight and is forced to flee, shamefully, he also falls victim to the betrayal of his own men and dies. His rival will be the one to avenge him.

³⁷ Cf. Merkle (1996) 217; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2007) L; Karla (2016) 59.

³⁸ Konstan/Walsh (2016) 37: "Although Plutarch's Alexander displays some wit here and there (e.g. 14.3, 64.1–10), the emphasis is not on his ability to engage in clever exchanges so much as to exemplify his sagacity as a leader. The *Alexander Romance*, by contrast, presents itself not as a display of its hero's virtues and vices but rather as an exhibition of Alexander's canniness, his ability to turn his adversaries' pretensions against them with a clever word or observation."

³⁹ On the concept of "implicit reader", cf. Genette (²1980) 260; García Landa (1998) 444; Karla (2016) 63.

⁴⁰ Stoneman (2009) 145 points out that the literary genre of the lives of philosophers influenced the *Romance*, which explains why several examples of *χρεία* can be found, such as the reconciliation of Alexander's parents. Cf. also Gallo (1996) 247; Stoneman/Gargiulo (2007) XLI. On the preparatory rhetoric exercises (*progymnasmata*), cf. Reche (1991) 7–27 and Acosta (1994).

We could say that the only way out for Darius is to submit and surrender to Alexander. As he refuses to do so, he prepares for his own death and acts somewhat as a tragic character; in his attempt to counter a destiny that is beyond him. Thus, for example, his first arrogant and conceited letter to Alexander conveys a tragic irony, particularly when he threatens to send someone to capture him and bring him before him if Alexander does not heed his warnings (1,36,1213–1214): *Quod si hisce monitis ac praeceptis ulterius refragare, mittam protinus qui te comprehensum huc transferant*. Indeed, the reader knows that Darius is unaware of whom he is facing, which is why he permits himself to make those threats. Not only will they later be in vain, but also completely turned around. It is Alexander who manages to capture Darius' murderers (2,21,1085–1086): *Quod vero ad comprehendendos eos, qui Darium vulneribus incesserant, dicit haec* and the repetition of the verb *comprehendo*, used in both contexts, generates a sort of "echo" that accentuates the Persian king's pathetic ignorance.⁴¹

Thus, this play of oppositions is one of the techniques employed by Valerius to noble and enrich the figure of Alexander. His work, which is part of that "Alexandrinum corpus of the fourth century" constitutes an ideological rewriting, adapted to his times. Alexander embodies the paragon of a Roman emperor; an ideal sovereign who confers a new cultural identity to the known world in the light of his example and authority.⁴²

5 Conclusions

To summarise, the major conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. The episode of the Persian's attack during the battle next to the Tigris (Iul. Val. 2,9,538–559) is based on the hypotext of the Mucius Scaevola episode told by Livy (2,12). Through this intertextual play, Alexander, represented as the paragon of a Roman emperor; is clothed in the virtues and heroic qualities of the Mucius figure, a legendary hero in the history of Rome. Thus, the episode is not only significant in its context (Alexander presents the Persian as an *exemplum* to his soldiers, who were distrustful and feared the battle), it also contributes fresh nuances to Alexander's character.

⁴¹ And we can add another small antithetical parallelism: Alexander orders that the messengers who brought the letter be punished by dying on the cross (1,37,1231–1232): *Et ubi haec dicta sunt, corripit internuntios iubet crucibusque suffigi*. Thereafter, upon their protestations and arguments, he explains that he never intended to put them to death, but to set the *iustitia Graeca* as an example as opposed to the *iniquitas tyrannorum* (1,37, 1242–1245). Versus this lesson of wisdom and *clementia* to the messengers of Darius, he will apply in this passage that same punishment of crucifixion to Bessos and Ariobarzanes (for real this time).

⁴² Cf. Brenez (2016–2017) 9: "Mais surtout, les *Res gestae* transforment Alexandre en un empereur idéal, qui emprunte nombre de traits à Constantin. [...] Valérius le pose, comme l'empereur, en organisateur du monde, défenseur de l'ordre moral et de la civilisation gréco-romaine."

2. The episode also establishes antithetical symmetries with respect to the passage on the punishment of Darius' murderers (Iul. Val. 2,21,1085–1109). In both episodes, Alexander acts as the judge and supreme authority who brings moral order to the world, assigning to each their place. These parallels and distinctions reinforce the opposition between Alexander and Darius, in which Alexander is clearly portrayed as superior, not only in battle but also morally.

3. His initiative regarding Bessos and Ariobarzanes illustrates, in a particularly significant way, Alexander's ingenuity, one of his most remarkable qualities throughout the work. His response is in accordance with the *decepta expectatio* technique and it gains the admiration of the onlooking public.

4. If, borrowing the words of Nawotka, we consider the account to be a *pagan hagiography*,⁴³ we could say that the episode of the Persian's attack contributes to demonstrating that Alexander is a Chosen One – one who, like a sacred figure, is in constant connection with divinity and who acts as the ambassador of the divine in the earthly world. Nevertheless, Alexander is also depicted as a supreme example of a force beyond this point – a force that is both human and divine.

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43 Cf. Nawotka (2017) 18. Tallet-Bonvalot (1994) 16 also refers to a “propos hagiographique”.

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