Abstract

Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) was the king of Macedon and one of the greatest military commanders in the ancient world. Before his death at the age of thirty-three, Alexander had conquered Greece, the Persian Empire, and northern India. Alexander provided a model of a secular ruler for leaders in medieval and Renaissance Europe. Furthermore, with the revival of antique culture during the Renaissance, the life of Alexander became a favourite classical subject in art and literature.

My thesis seeks to examine the artistic interest in the life of Alexander during the Italian Renaissance. During the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, artists portrayed episodes from the life of Alexander for elite patrons, who commissioned monumental frescoes and panel-paintings, along with pieces of maiolica pottery, tapestry and sculpture for use in the rituals of court life. While Alexander represented a model of secular authority for the patron, he was also intrinsically linked with art. Alexander's court artists, particularly Apelles, had a legacy that was eagerly emulated by modern artists.

This thesis begins by tracing the long literary tradition of Alexander. Accounts by ancient authors, medieval romances, and new humanist texts all informed the production of images of the ancient king. I will explore the earliest representations of Alexander influenced by the humanist themes of *uomini famosi* and Petrarch's *I Trionfi*, followed by the reception and the appeal of portraits of Alexander created by Andrea del Verrocchio, Valerio Belli, and Giulio Romano. I will argue that, based on evidence in the form of drawings, Raphael had life-long artistic interest in Alexander, and many of his designs were adapted by other artists, including a fresco by Sodoma at the Villa Farnesina, and finely decorated maiolica pottery. Finally, I will consider the monumental cycles of frescoes executed by artists for patrons, who had a profound personal connection to the ancient monarch. While the artistic interest in the life of Alexander seems to
derive from the fact that he was an *all'antica* subject, as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis. This interest took many forms for patrons, artists, and viewers.
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I extend my deepest and most profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Cathleen Hoeniger. Since my third year of undergraduate studies, I knew that I wanted to write my doctoral dissertation under her guidance. Her support, suggestions, and insight cannot be paralleled. She refined my writing and my research, and, moreover, she helped me to articulate my ideas and my theories with an unmatched dedication that I hope to be able to pass on to my own students in the future.

Secondly, I am immensely and sincerely grateful to the generous funding of Dr. Alfred Bader, whose doctoral fellowship allowed me to study the monuments and collections of museums across Europe. Without his generosity, this study could not have taken place.

In addition, I must recognize the professors of the Department of Art at Queen's University, particularly Dr. Pierre du Prey, Dr. Una D'Elia, and Dr. Janice Helland, for all of their advice and assistance over the years. Likewise, my thanks extend to the members of my thesis defense committee, Dr. David McTavish, Dr. Caroline Falkner, and Dr. Sally Hickson for their expertise and discerning suggestions.

For all of their help, I would like to thank to the staff and curators at the Warburg Institute, the Prints and Drawings Collection at the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, and the Prints Room at Windsor Castle.

I am forever grateful to my colleague and dear friend, Eric Weichel, for his constant inspiration, commiseration, reinforcement and encouragement since the beginning of our doctoral studies.
You have been part-Aristotle, part-Philip, and part-Hephaestion from Kingston to South Kensington and back again.

Thank you to my parents for all their celeritas pecuniae over the years and over the oceans. They are far swifter than both Philip and Alexander combined.

To my comrades and friends, the hetairoi and diadochoi of the Department of Art at Queen's University, I commend you for your support and motivation, especially Heather Merla, Meaghan Whitehead, Casey Lee, Suzanne McColeman, and Amanda Morhart.

I am so very grateful to my international friends for keeping me grounded and reminding me of the world outside of academia. Maye Bonilla, Yuzhi Cao, Kimberly Hollon, and Sally Knox—you four are my impenetrable rocks of Sogdiana.

And lastly, my appreciation extends to my "research assistants", Max and Mittens, who, like Bucephalus, have been there from the incipit of this anabasis.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) was the king of Macedon and one of the greatest military commanders in the ancient world. Before his death at the age of thirty-three, Alexander had conquered Greece, the Persian Empire, and northern India. The figure of Alexander, which survived primarily in literary accounts, provided a model of a secular ruler for leaders in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Furthermore, with the revival of antique culture during the Renaissance, the life of Alexander became a favourite classical subject in art and literature.

My thesis explores the artistic interest in the life of Alexander the Great during the Italian Renaissance. During the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, artists portrayed episodes from the life of Alexander for elite patrons, who commissioned monumental frescoes and panel-paintings, along with pieces of maiolica pottery, tapestry and sculpture for use in the rituals of court life. While Alexander represented a model of secular authority for the patron, he was also intrinsically linked with art. Alexander's court artists, particularly Lysippus and Apelles, had a legacy that was eagerly emulated by modern artists.

Despite the significant interest that both artists and patrons had in Alexander during the Renaissance, few critical studies examine his artistic reception. Furthermore, while the Renaissance revived the culture and themes of antiquity, a long literary and artistic tradition from the Middle Ages informed Renaissance artists about the life of Alexander. By placing the artistic interest in the life of Alexander within this context, my thesis will redefine the way we understand the reception of ancient heroes in the Renaissance, thus contributing to the history of the classical tradition in art.

One of the most influential artists of the Renaissance, Raphael Santi (1483-1520), undertook drawings based on the life of Alexander. Raphael's composition, which portrays the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, recreated a famed antique painting known only through the
descriptions of ancient authors. His design was engraved and emulated by later artists who took inspiration from widely-circulating prints. In this thesis I will argue that based on evidence in the form of drawings, Raphael's life-long artistic interest in Alexander influenced many subsequent artists, including Giulio Romano, Cola dell'Amatrice, Perino del Vaga, Francesco Xanto Avelli and Francesco Primaticcio.

Because a wide variety of artists executed images based on the life of Alexander during the Italian Renaissance, there are hundreds of extant objects in collections today. However, due to the prominence of Raphael's artistic interest in Alexander, this thesis will focus on the designs by Raphael and those artists immediately influenced by his work: in other words, his workshop and circle in Rome. Thus, one of the most important case studies for my thesis is the Villa Farnesina, where Sodoma, a painter from Siena, adapted Raphael's composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne for one of the murals. In addition, Sodoma painted at least two further narratives from the life of Alexander.

Two of Raphael's most successful pupils also executed images from the life of Alexander the Great. Giulio Romano (c. 1499-1546), the court artist of Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, created a portrait of the ancient king. In addition, at the Palazzo del Té, the suburban pleasure palace of the Duke, Giulio and his workshop painted several scenes from the story of Alexander. By creating these representations of the Macedonian king, as I will contend, Giulio sought to ally himself with the ancient painter Apelles, and, similarly, the Duke fashioned himself as the patron of Apelles, Alexander the Great.

In contrast, Perino del Vaga executed a cycle of narratives that depicted Alexander for Pope Paul III Farnese at the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. The frescoes by Perino make explicit the association between the Pope and Alexander, as the Christian name of Paul III was Alessandro. I will place this cycle within the larger context of the artistic projects ordered by Paul III and his family to glorify his ancient namesake, including tapestries and a crystal casket. Furthermore, I will compare the cycle at the Castel Sant'Angelo with a contemporary example at
the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera in Città di Castello. Here, Cola dell'Amatrice, a provincial
master influenced by Raphael, carried out two sets of narratives that illustrate scenes from the life
of Alexander. In this case, the patron, Alessandro Vitelli, also sought to celebrate his ancient
namesake. To demonstrate the wider artistic context and the multifaceted meanings that
Alexander held for Renaissance artists and audiences, I will also consider maiolica dishes that
represent the same subjects as those decorating the Palazzo Vitelli.

In order to examine the images produced by Raphael and his circle, I will first explore the
visual precedents that informed such works. One of the most famous images of Alexander in the
Quattrocento was a bronze relief executed by Andrea del Verrocchio. Verrocchio based his relief
on an ancient gem that, in fact, portrayed the goddess Athena. Nevertheless, this representation of
a youthful, androgynous soldier became the ubiquitous image of Alexander throughout the
Renaissance and, as Michael Vickers has pointed out, well into the eighteenth century.¹

During the fifteenth century in Tuscany, representations of classical stories frequently
adorned marriage chests, also called *cassoni*. Alexander the Great was featured in relation to
nuptial imagery of this kind to instruct newlyweds on proper marital behaviour. As I will
demonstrate, artists of *cassoni* represented episodes from the life of Alexander in two forms:
scenes of his battles, or scenes of the ancient monarch in a triumphal procession after battle.
While Raphael and his circle were not immediately influenced by these objects, images of
Alexander on *cassoni* were popular and associated the king with the institution of marriage, a
tradition that Raphael's composition continues in the following century.²

¹ Michael Vickers, "The Changing Image of Alexander the Great," in *Classicism to
Neoclassicism: A Collection of Papers in Honour of Gertrud Seidmann*, eds. Martin Henig and
² Giorgio Vasari, in a well-known passage on *cassoni* from the life of Dello Delli, comments that
*cassoni* are considered old-fashioned by the sixteenth century. He writes that, "There are men,
who, out of attachment to these ancient usages, have not displaced these things in favour of
modern ornaments and usage." See Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de'piu eccellenti pittori, scultori ed
One of the earliest case studies that I will consider is a fresco cycle of Worthy Men at the Castello della Manta, near Turin, which dates to about the year 1420. During the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, Alexander often appeared as one of nine worthy figures from antiquity, the Old Testament, and recent Christian history. The Worthy Men were considered to be paragons of virtue and authority, whom modern rulers could emulate. This tradition was popular across Europe, and presented Alexander to audiences as a model king, a representation that echoes across the wide variety of images produced during the Renaissance, including those by the circle of Raphael.

Although portrayals of Alexander were created throughout Italy during the Renaissance, my primary focus will be on Tuscan and Roman examples, as Raphael and his circle largely worked within Central Italy. Thus, examples by Venetian artists, such as the group of four paintings of Alexander by a follower of Carpaccio (sold at Sotheby's New York, June of 2007), and the monumental Family of Darius Before Alexander by Paolo Veronese (in the National Gallery, London) will not form part of my thesis. Nevertheless, I will examine some images produced by Northern European artists, such as manuscripts and tapestries, because these objects were collected by elite Italian patrons, including Pope Julius II and Andrea Doria of Genoa. Furthermore, Northern manuscripts and tapestries promulgated a certain view of Alexander that informed artists and audiences across Europe during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, as I will argue in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

I seek to place my study in the tradition of art historical research established by Aby Warburg, a tradition that remains almost unparalleled in influence to this day. Throughout his academic oeuvre, Warburg was concerned with the reception of antiquity, primarily during the Renaissance. He sought to answer the question: "Was bedeutet das Nachleben der Antike?" [What is the significance of the afterlife of antiquity?]⁴ I seek to answer a similar question in my study, albeit with a focus on the afterlife of Alexander the Great. Warburg's scholarship offers a methodological model for all studies of the reception of classical themes in the Renaissance, including my own.

Beginning with his doctoral thesis devoted to Sandro Botticelli's paintings of the Birth of Venus and Primavera, Warburg established his methodology.⁵ Rather than focus at first on the images themselves, he analysed ancient and contemporary literary accounts that informed Botticelli's paintings. Through this approach, Warburg explored "the wide range of historical forces that determined Botticelli's creative engagement with the forms and expression of antiquity."⁶ Warburg discussed the poetic literature of the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence, including the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite by Angelo Poliziano, and the current art theory, i.e. Della Pittura by Leon Battista Alberti. In addition, he introduced the ancient texts that, in turn, informed the Renaissance literature, including the passages from the Metamorphoses and the Fasti by Ovid, along with poetry by Claudian. Thus, Warburg placed the object of study—in this case, Botticelli's painting—within the specific historical context in which it was produced, the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the sources available to inform the painting, both ancient

and modern. In essence, Warburg believed that considering the historical work of art in relation to contemporary ideas was the best way to reveal its meaning, rather than adopting an anachronistic theory that the historical viewer would not have encountered.  

The aim of Warburg's thesis was to prove that what interested Renaissance artists about antiquity was the portrayal of outward motion that reflected inner emotion (pathos). He himself outlined his methodology, stating that "the approach of interpreting the design of the painting through analogies with the critical literature, art, and poetry of the period reveals itself to be fruitful." His style of scholarship forms an important precedent for my examination of the artistic interest in Alexander during the Renaissance. Thus, throughout my case studies, I will address the reception of Alexander through the complex relationship between literature and art. This relationship is particularly significant because information about the life of the ancient king survived, almost entirely, through written sources.

Warburg did not limit the scope of his studies only to examples of fine art. His writings reveal an interest in a wide variety of media across broad geographical areas. While he began his academic studies on the mythological paintings by Botticelli, his later work considered diverse forms of media including engravings, medieval Arabic astrological tables, and even Northern European tapestries. In his brief study "Airship and Submarine in the Medieval Imagination", Warburg evaluated a pair of fifteenth-century tapestries that were later owned by Andrea Doria. He discussed the iconography of the hangings, one of which represented both an aerial adventure and a journey under the sea undertaken by Alexander according to the Romance of Alexander.

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8 Warburg (1893) as in Warburg (1999), op. cit., p. 112.

Warburg concluded that the hangings revealed a desire in the North to "recall the grandeur of antiquity" that was felt as vigorously as it was by counterparts in Italy. In Chapter Three, I will expand on his exploration of the hangings by considering how appealing tapestries were for Italian viewers and connecting such objects to wider literary and artistic traditions.

Furthermore, in a manner analogous to that used by Warburg, I will move beyond depictions of Alexander in the "fine arts" medium of painting. My study will address a variety of media, and contextualize such objects in the broad cultural settings for which they were produced. In the words that Warburg's assistant, Gertrude Bing, used to describe his studies that crossed geographical boundaries, I would like my study to be "undeterred by any political border posts." Yet, at the same time, my focus will remain fixed on the artistic interest in Alexander during the Renaissance in Italy. I will examine objects either produced by artists of the Italian Renaissance or objects that informed their work and their viewers, in a variety of media including frescoes, medals, tapestries and maiolica pottery.

Warburg adopted a cultural approach to the history of art that was informed by the tradition of nineteenth-century historians such as Jakob Burckhardt and Karl Lamprecht. To critically engage with Renaissance art, Warburg turned not only to ancient literature, but also to a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, pseudo-science, and magic. Indeed, at the end of his famous lecture on the astrological frescoes in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, he urged scholars to extend the "methodological borders of our study of art, in both material and spatial terms." At the core of his work, Warburg presented a history of ideas, particularly the history of ideas from the ancient Mediterranean traditions and their influence on the culture of Western

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10 Ibid., p. 337.
12 For a detailed examination of Warburg's methodological connection with Lamprecht, see Brush in Art as Cultural History: Warburg's Projects (2001), op. cit.
13 Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara," in Warburg (1999), op. cit., pp. 563-92, at p. 585. This was originally published as "Italienische
Europe. His final project, which was never fully realized, explored a "Mnemosyne" picture-atlas that was, essentially, a corpus of images grouped together thematically to form a cultural history of European memory. I do not propose to offer my study in such a broad sense. Nevertheless, Alexander perpetuates his own cultural memory in Europe (as well as in Asia and Africa), since he remains a fascinating subject of scholarly and popular culture even today, more than 2000 years after his death.

The methodology and cross-disciplinary approach used by Aby Warburg influenced a wide spectrum of historians of art, including Ernst Gombrich, Fritz Saxl, Edgar Wind, John Shearman and Luba Freedman, all of whom examine aspects of the reception of antiquity during the Renaissance. However, the impact of Warburg was perhaps most keenly felt in the scholarship of Fritz Saxl and Erwin Panofsky. Together, Saxl and Panofsky wrote an article on the interpretation of classical myth in the art of the Middle Ages, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art", in which they explored the problem of "renaissance phenomena." They proposed that the Renaissance, with its cultural "rebirth" of antiquity, was not unique and that earlier revivals of antique culture had occurred at various points throughout history. The scholars examined images of the constellation of Hercules, tracing it from astronomical manuscripts of late antiquity, to medieval Islamic examples, and finally to fifteenth-century manuscript illuminations in Europe, in order to show the "gradual degeneration of this image in the medieval Western tradition." Saxl and Panofsky established that, while classical figures such as Hercules survived during the Middle Ages, it was only during the Renaissance that the pathos and emotion in classical imagery was understood once more.16


15 Ibid., p. 240.
16 Panofsky continued this idea of renascences and the cultural memory of antiquity in subsequent studies, including Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art (Stockholm: Almqvist &
More recent scholarship is well-acquainted with the concept that the Renaissance was unique for its reintegration of classical themes with classical forms. This is emphasized in Luba Freedman's 2011 study, *Classical Myth in Italian Renaissance Painting*. Freedman builds upon such studies as Leonard Barkan's *The Gods Made Flesh* and Malcolm Bull's *The Mirror of the Gods*, both of which address the representation of classical mythology in Renaissance art, especially images that portrayed stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, one of the most popular ancient texts in the Renaissance. Indeed, much critical literature exists on the production of classically-themed works by artists of the Italian Renaissance. However, the majority of the scholarly writing on classical themes in Renaissance art is dedicated to representations of figures or stories from classical mythology. Studies devoted to images of historical figures from antiquity are less numerous, but, in my case, highly relevant.

The critical reception of the *Lives* of Plutarch is vital in later representations of historical figures from the classical world. In his *Lives*, Plutarch wrote parallel biographies of famous Greek and Roman men. As the catalogue *Biografia Dipinta: Plutarco e l'arte del Rinascimento, 1400-1550* discusses, Renaissance artists looked to these biographies for inspiration. An essay by Roberto Guerrini connects the biographies by Plutarch to heroic cycles painted for members of the elite in Italy during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Guerrini distinguishes

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Wiksell, 1960). However, he felt that the reintegration of classical themes with classical motifs was a distinct characteristic of the Renaissance, whereas in the Middle Ages only "numerous sporadic revivals of classical tendencies" on a small-scale occurred. See the chapter, "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art," in Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), pp. 26-54, at p. 54.


18 Roberto Guerrini, "Dai Cicli di Uomini Famosi alla Biografia Dipinta. Traduzioni Latine dell Vite di Plutarco ed Iconografia degli Eroi nella Pittura Murale del Rinascimento," in *Biografia Dipinta. Plutarco e l'Arte del Rinascimento 1400-1550*, ed. Roberto Guerrini (La Spezia: Agorà Edizioni, 2001), pp. 1-98. Roberto Guerrini had previously explored fresco cycles depicting the Roman general Scipio Africanus, a figure who was often compared with Alexander in art and literature. See Guerrini, "Dal testo all'immagine, La 'pittura di storia' nel Rinascimento," in
between the two tendencies in the Lives of Plutarch in Renaissance cycles: firstly, as a source, and secondly, as a model. For instance, the episodes at the Sala Paolina derive from a number of literary sources, including the Lives, and so, in this case, Plutarch was used as a source for the imagery portrayed. On the other hand, as Guerrini explains, some lives of ancient heroes found in fresco cycles of the Renaissance, such as Hannibal or Scipio, were not recorded by Plutarch. Therefore, the series of frescoes based on the life of Scipio in the Sala degli Arazzi in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, were simply inspired by Plutarch as a model.\textsuperscript{19} Highlighted in the study are the fresco cycles at the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera and the Sala Paolina, which I will examine in Chapter Six.

Marilena Caciorgna builds on Guerrini's categorization of the tendencies of Plutarch's Lives in Renaissance art by noting that, in some cases, the Lives inspired the iconography of a single scene (i.e. on a panel, rather than a fresco cycle). However, in other cases, such as the frescoes by Pinturicchio of the life of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini in the library of Siena Cathedral, Plutarch provided only a literary model.\textsuperscript{20} Her contribution to Biografia Dipinta examines the dissemination of the Lives in Tuscany in association with portrayals of ancient heroes found on fifteenth-century cassoni and spalliere, which were two of the earliest artistic formats on which antique themes were represented during the Renaissance. Classical figures included in the Lives, such as Alexander and Julius Caesar, were models of behaviour for the...

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\textsuperscript{19} Guerrini in Biografia Dipinta (2001), pp. 19-20.

Renaissance viewer, and even a single episode from one of their lives might hold significant meaning.

Elite patrons in Renaissance Italy allied themselves with famous men from antiquity in order to appropriate their virtue and fame, and, in the case of Alexander, his military prowess. One such individual who allied himself with classical heroes was Agostino Chigi, who fashioned himself as a new Julius Caesar. Ingrid Rowland examines the relationship between Chigi and Caesar in her article, "Render Unto Caesar the Things Which are Caesar's: Humanism and the Arts in the Patronage of Agostino Chigi." She studies the context of Chigi's artistic commissions and the humanist milieu in which both Raphael and Sodoma participated during the pontificates of Julius II and Leo X. Rowland proposes an interesting connection between Chigi and Alexander since Chigi could be viewed as a new Alexander by virtue of his artistic patronage. Some of Rowland's arguments parallel my own, since I will argue that many patrons consciously saw themselves as new Alexanders and therefore commissioned works of art to illustrate this connection.

As I will demonstrate throughout this study, images of Alexander created during the Renaissance were commissioned for learned patrons with humanist and antiquarian leanings. Significantly, Rowland illuminates the intellectual atmosphere of High Renaissance Rome by adopting an interdisciplinary approach in The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome. She focuses on the pontificates of Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X, and the relationships between the humanists and the elite who worked at the papal court. It was during this fruitful climate and for such patrons that Raphael and his circle executed the images of Alexander that form the core of my study.

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Moreover, in *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, Roberto Weiss highlights the antiquarian and proto-archaeological pursuits of scholars such as Andrea Fulvio and Fra Giocondo, both of whom advised Raphael.\(^{23}\) Weiss examines the reception of ancient artefacts, surveying the period from the late Middle Ages and the writings of Petrarch, through to the Quattrocento with the traveller-scholar Cyriac of Ancona, and finally into the High Renaissance, when numismatic interest flourished as revealed by detailed treatises. Throughout his study Weiss maintains that the Renaissance in Italy was, essentially, a rebirth of Roman culture in particular, because Rome was literally underneath Renaissance cities, whereas Greece was separated geographically and historically. This is important to keep in mind when considering the artistic interest in Alexander, as the Macedonian king was part of the history of ancient Greece, not Rome. As I will argue in Chapter Two, the writing of some early humanists, such as Petrarch, reflect this distinction.

The 2003 exhibition *In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece* considered the extent of the interest in ancient Greek culture during the Italian Renaissance, and how the legacy of ancient Greece was "transmitted to Italy by its poets, philosophers, historians, scientists, geographers and artists."\(^{24}\) The series of essays in the catalogue describe the variety of modes linking Italy with ancient Greece, including: the political connections between Italy and the Byzantine empire in the Middle Ages; the innovative cultural role of travellers and collectors, such as Cyriac of Ancona; the varied contributions of Greek scholars living and working in Italy, including Manuel Chrysoloras and Cardinal Bessarian, who taught Greek to Italian students and brought back manuscripts previously unknown in Italy; and, most importantly for art, the wide


range of artistic media circulating in Renaissance visual culture, particularly in the form of ancient sculptures, gems, and medals.

General surveys of *all'antica* themes in Renaissance Italy, in the course of tracing antiquarian themes, recurrently contain brief references to Alexander. For example, the comprehensive catalogue compiled by Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, lists the ancient sculptural sources used by artists during the Renaissance.²⁵ One work highlighted is the colossal pair of ancient statues of Castor and Pollux. Now known as the Dioscuri ("Sons of Zeus"), these two sculptures were among the few visible antique statues in Rome during the Middle Ages, and, in fact, the horses gave the Quirinal the name "Monte Cavallo."²⁶ During the Renaissance, both of the statues were believed to represent Alexander with his horse Bucephalus. Pirro Ligorio, the fascinating architect and antiquarian (d. 1583), was convinced that both of the colossi represented Alexander, as was Onofrio Panvinio, the librarian of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.²⁷ In addition, the publisher Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri, in his *Antiquarium Statuarum Urbis Romae* (c. 1574), specifically identified the statues as Alexander and Bucephalus, from the hand of the artist Phidias: "Bucephalus, et Alexander Magnus, opus Phidiae."²⁸ In fact, as Bober and Rubinstein explain, the interpretation of the colossi as Alexander and Bucephalus prevailed into the eighteenth century.²⁹

In *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900*, Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny examine the allure that antique sculpture held for early modern audiences,

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²⁶ They were first restored during the reign of Pope Paul II, and then again 1589-90 with new bases. See Ibid., pp. 159-61.

and the contribution that such works made to the history of taste. The authors present a series of essays that consider the history of collecting and of displaying classical statues, in both private and public spaces. Moreover, they explore the proliferation of casts and copies after the original works, which allowed for a broad dissemination of classical forms across Europe to such collectors as François I of France and Charles I of England. The second half of the book is devoted to a catalogue of some of the most famous antique sculptures, similar to that assembled by Bober and Rubinstein. Furthermore, the authors address the dynamic history of ownership, interpretation, and reputation that the ancient sculptures had for early modern viewers, in addition to their artistic and literary reception. However, Haskell and Penny do not include ancient sarcophagi, gems or medals.

Andor Pigler compiled an enormously useful subject index of the classical stories represented during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Barokthemen: eine Auswahl von verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts. Not only does Pigler list images that portray stories from the life of Alexander, but he also categorizes the works based on the iconography, from Alexander’s untying of the Gordian knot to his encounter with the Amazon queen, Thalestris. In addition, his catalogue concentrates on works from the Baroque period. Because there was such a large number of images that represent Alexander executed during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, for this thesis, I will not consider all, but only some of the most influential episodes illustrated by artists, including the Battle of Issus and Alexander’s marriage to Roxanne.

31 However, in History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), Haskell discusses how ancient coins and medals—along with sculptures and paintings discovered in catacombs under Rome—were interpreted as historical evidence by antiquarian scholars of the Renaissance and Early Modern eras.
The rich variety of classical themes that interested scholars and artists of the Renaissance forms the focus of *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, which examines the heritage of antiquity in art and architecture from the late antique period until the Renaissance. To gain a broader understanding of the classical tradition in Italian art, the contributors use an interdisciplinary approach that combines history, art history and archaeology. The most relevant essay for this thesis, "L'impronta delle parole. Due momenti della pittura di ricostruzione," by Lucia Faedo, focuses on the recreation of two lost ancient paintings: the *Calumny* by Apelles, and the *Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne* by Aëtion. The revival of interest in Aëtion's painting, as Faedo maintains, owes much to Raphael. Indeed, Ludovico Dolce, in his *l'Aretino*, extols the design by Raphael as an example of "ut pictura poësis." Interestingly, based on the inscription on a maiolica dish by Francesco Xanto Avelli of 1537 (now in the Museo Civico in Bologna), Faedo suggests that, while the composition by Raphael greatly influenced the popularity of the subject, it was unlikely that maiolica painters were aware of the relationship between the contemporary design (by Raphael) and the lost ancient painting. As this thesis will reveal, I do not completely agree with Faedo's proposal, particularly in the case of the maiolica artist Xanto, who executed several versions of the theme. In Chapter Five, I will discuss Xanto's familiarity with the *Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne*, and offer an alternative explanation as to why the inscriptions on some of his dishes do not faithfully correspond to the story of Alexander.

One theme that reoccurs in many discussions of the reception of classical subjects in Renaissance art is the relationship between ancient and modern artists. In their study, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz explore the tradition of artistic biographies and the literary devices used to highlight the specific qualities associated with artists. The authors focus on the biographies of ancient artists recounted by Pliny the Elder and other classical writers, who were often consulted by Renaissance humanists and artists. As Kris and Kurz demonstrate, some of the *topoi* used in the biographies of Renaissance artist by Giorgio Vasari, Matteo Bandello, and Francesco de Hollanda, were based on ancient literary prototypes.

In Chapter Four, focus will be placed on these literary devices and the ancient artistic biographies, in order to illuminate the relationship between ancient and modern portraits of Alexander.

David Cast considers the heritage of ancient artists and the competition between ancients and moderns in his book entitled *The Calumny of Apelles*. As is well known, during the Renaissance, artists executed images based on literary descriptions of lost ancient paintings, such as the *Calumny* by Apelles. Apelles was one of the three official court artists of Alexander, and one of the most famous artists from the classical world. The Greek author Lucian (c. 125-180 CE) provides an *ekphrasis*, a literary description, for the ancient painting of the *Calumny*, which was an allegory of slander that derived from Apelles' own experience of being falsely accused by a rival and imprisoned. Cast examines the reception of both the anecdote and the painting throughout the literature and art of the early modern era. Indeed, in his widely-read artistic

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37 Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979). Two specific "types" associated with artists that the authors highlight are the child prodigy and the idea of divine inspiration.
39 Interestingly, Apelles lived during the fourth century BCE, yet Lucian records the episode of the *Calumny* occurring the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator, who lived during the late third century BCE. Cast notes that the episode of may have, in fact, never happened and the entire event was simply a metaphor. See Cast (1981), p. 10.
treatise, *Della Pittura* (1435), Leon Battista Alberti suggested that modern artists recreate the painting as an exemplary model of *istoria*.⁴⁰

Although the Calumny was one of the most famous paintings from antiquity, Apelles and other ancient artists also executed portraits of Alexander. The ancient portraits of the king and their recreation by modern artists have inspired one of the major critical questions examined in this thesis: why were portraits of Alexander appealing to the Renaissance painter? The comparisons elicited between ancient and modern portraits of Alexander have yet to be addressed by scholars. In Chapter Four, I propose that through the creation of portraits of Alexander in a variety of artistic forms, such as relief sculpture, medals, and painting, modern artists could appropriate the fame and status of their ancient predecessors.

Despite the abundance of scholarly literature on the reception of antiquity and *all'antica* themes during the Renaissance, the modern scholarship devoted to representations of Alexander is incomplete. The critical studies tend to focus primarily on one object, or on a related group of images. Importantly, the evolution and transformation of the artistic interest in Alexander during the Renaissance has yet to fully be considered. Although there is no comprehensive study of the portrayals of Alexander produced during the Renaissance, in each chapter I will introduce the more specialized scholarship. However, several essential sources that inform my case studies need to be introduced at this point.

An important foundation was laid by Richard Foerster, who, in the late nineteenth century, published a series of articles devoted to the use of ancient *ekphrases* by Renaissance artists, and the influence of the cult of Apelles on artistic theory and practice.⁴¹ More essential for this thesis is Foerster's seminal article, "Die Hochzeit des Alexander und der Rossane in der

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Renaissance", in which he considered the influence of Raphael's design on a fresco in the Villa Farnesina by Sodoma and the ekphrasis that informed both compositions.\textsuperscript{42} Although Foerster reviewed the literary sources that informed the two compositions, he did not address the overall programme of the Alexander frescoes in the Villa Farnesina, nor did he investigate possible links between Renaissance texts and the design by Raphael. Nevertheless, Foerster remains the fundamental authority on the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne composition by Raphael to this day.

Foerster began his study of images of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne in the Renaissance with the Greek ekphrasis that both Raphael and Sodoma recreated. The ancient author Lucian described a painting he saw that depicted the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne by the artist Aëtion. Many features of Raphael's design correspond to the details recounted by Lucian, including putti frolicking in the armour of the king. In addition, Foerster placed the wedding of Alexander and Roxanne within the literary tradition of Western Europe. In the historical accounts, Roxanne was the daughter of a Bactrian war-lord, Oxyartes, yet in the tradition of the Greek Romance of Alexander, she was the daughter of King Darius of Persia, Alexander's enemy.\textsuperscript{43}

Following this, Foerster presented examples of the subject in Renaissance art, beginning with the fresco by Sodoma at the Villa Farnesina.\textsuperscript{44} Regarding Sodoma's use of the ekphrasis by Lucian, Foerster stated that: "by whom and in what form the text of Lucian was communicated to

\textsuperscript{43} Foerster (1894), p. 183. I will fully explain the long and complicated tradition of the Romance of Alexander in Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{44} Foerster, Ibid., p. 187, dated the fresco to about 1512, not too long after Sodoma stopped working in the Vatican Stanze for Pope Julius II. Foerster previously proposed this date in his Farnesina-Studien ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Verhältnis der Renaissance zur Antike (Rostock: Hermann Schmidt, 1880). However, most scholars tend to date the fresco to around the year 1517. See the discussion in Chapter Five for some of the more recent scholarship on the fresco.
the painter, we do not know.” Furthermore, he noted that the detail of Alexander giving Roxanne a crown in the fresco instead of a ring suggested that the Greek text was read through a Latin advisor, who used the word "corona" rather than the original Greek word, which could also denote "ring." However, I will propose an alternative theory as to why both Sodoma and Raphael might have interpreted the episode with the proffering of a crown.

Foerster linked the fresco with a number of related drawings by Raphael and his workshop, including the well-known compositions in the Albertina in Vienna, the Musée du Louvre, Windsor Castle, and the Teylers Museum in Haarlem. Moreover, he considered the literary discussion found in Ludovico Dolce's *l'Arentino* of the engraving made after the final design. Foerster acknowledged that the original design was widely copied, reproduced and transformed by the pupils and followers of Raphael. The most famous drawing of the group, the sheet found in the Albertina, he attributed not to Sodoma's hand, but to the school of Raphael, "perhaps Perino del Vaga.”

In addition, Foerster briefly introduced examples that demonstrated the dissemination of the composition by Raphael through the circulation of engravings. One such example is a 1533 maiolica pottery dish by Francesco Xanto Avelli in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The design also decorated a vault in the Villa Raphael during the mid-sixteenth century. In Chapter Five, I will explore both adaptations, and also place the works within their historical context.

Finally, Foerster considered later representations of the *Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne*, including a fresco at the Chateau de Fontainebleau, which was part of a cycle of eight episodes from the life of Alexander; a drawing by Parmigianino; and a painting by Rubens of *Alexander Crowning Roxanne as Queen* (now housed in the gallery in Schloss Wörlitz). Such

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., p. 198.
images are beyond the scope of the present study, but they reveal the continuing artistic interest of the theme during the Baroque period.

While Foerster's study remains the fundamental work on the subject of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne in Renaissance art, he does not place the images within the larger cultural context for which they were created. Indeed, his Farnesina-Studien, which thoroughly describes the frescoes that decorate the Villa Farnesina, considers the imagery of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne but only briefly mentions two of the other frescoes in the room. In this thesis, in addition to placing the frescoes within the visual tradition, I will build on Foerster's work by examining the literary sources available to the artists who executed the paintings. Moreover, I will suggest what meaning the frescoes might have held for the patron, Agostino Chigi, and for the artists. In other words, I will answer the question: what appeal did Alexander have for the patron and the artist in the milieu of High Renaissance Rome?

The only major study on the artistic reception of Alexander during the Renaissance is Alexander the Great in European Art. With essays by such distinguished scholars as Konrad Oberhuber, Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, and David Ekserdijan, the thematic studies in this collection examine the various episodes from the life of Alexander that were portrayed in art. Painted and graphic compositions, particularly those from the Baroque and Neoclassical periods, form the focus of the catalogue, while other media, such as maiolica, cassoni chests, and tapestries, are not addressed in significant detail. Indeed, the influence of medals, which were a critical mode for the transmission of artistic themes from antiquity to the Renaissance, is neglected entirely. Furthermore, despite its monumental importance to the reception of Alexander during the Renaissance, the medieval literary tradition is omitted, except for a brief mention that

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ancient accounts survived in illuminated manuscripts. As I will contend in my study, particularly in the next two chapters, the medieval literary and visual traditions of the life of Alexander are fundamental in order to achieve an understanding of how the ancient king was portrayed in the Renaissance.

Moreover, while the catalogue touches upon the humanist texts devoted to Alexander, many elements of the discussion merit further consideration. In Chapter Two, I will present the complex variety of literature devoted to the ancient king, beyond the well-known writings of Petrarch and Baldassare Castiglione. This discussion will be enhanced by some translations that I have made of humanist documents, including speeches dedicated to popes, and the long treatise De Politia Litteraria by Angelo Decembrio, which was the first detailed text devoted the deeds and character of Alexander since antiquity.

In particular, I wish to build upon the contribution that Konrad Oberhuber and Achim Gnann made to the catalogue in their article, "The Depiction of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxana." The scholars propose that Raphael created additional compositions for the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane in the Villa Farnesina. Indeed, Sylvia Ferino-Pagden presents a group of drawings by Raphael that render yet another episode from the life of Alexander, though executed

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49 The writings of Petrarch, Andrea Fulvio, and Castiglione are the only three Renaissance texts that discuss the life of Alexander to be described at length in the catalogue. In addition, the content of these sources is only described generally, not transcribed. See Nicos Hadjinicolaou, "The Artists' Sources and the Diverging Assessments of Alexander," in Ibid., pp. 67-76, at pp. 69-71.
earlier in his career.\textsuperscript{52} As I will suggest, this body of evidence in the form of drawings, seems to indicate that Raphael had a life-long artistic interest in Alexander.

In order to examine the representations of Alexander executed by Renaissance artists, the historiography of images of the king must be considered. Michael Vickers analysed the evolving image of Alexander the Great in a brief article of 1999.\textsuperscript{53} He discussed the impact of the influential description of an "Alexander" gem recorded by the antiquarian Cyriac of Ancona. This gem provided a source of inspiration for many artists, as I will examine in Chapter Three. In a related study, Marina Belozerskaya addressed the role that Cyriac played in the development of proto-archaeological methods during the Renaissance in her book, \textit{To Wake the Dead: A Renaissance Merchant and the Birth of Archaeology}.\textsuperscript{54} Broadly speaking, these two studies explore the reception of the classical past in the early Renaissance by focusing on Cyriac's antiquarian pursuits in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean world.

The 2009-10 exhibition in Mannheim, \textit{Alexander der Grosse und Die Öffnung der Welt Asiens Kulturen im Wandel}, centred on the artistic and cultural impact of Alexander's conquest of Asia.\textsuperscript{55} Beginning with the archaeological and historical context of Alexander's expedition into Persia and India, the exhibition traced the reception of the king in Asia and the flow of artistic forms and styles from the Graeco-Roman world into Afghanistan and Buddhist India from Alexander's lifetime until the third and fourth centuries, in sculpture, architecture, and manuscript illumination. While the exhibition mainly focused on the eastern areas of Alexander's empire and

\textsuperscript{53} Vickers (1999), op. cit.
the Persian and Arabic traditions that developed, it reinforced the influence that Alexander's campaign had on the art and culture across the different geographic regions of the ancient world.

J. J. Pollitt and Andrew Stewart both consider the portrayals of Alexander the Great during his life and during the reigns of his successors in the Hellenistic period. Pollitt, in his *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, primarily analyses developments and trends in Hellenistic art, though the author does touch on the work of Alexander's court artists, Apelles and Lysippus. Stewart, on the other hand, in his *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, specifically examines the textual and artistic representations of Alexander, including the works by Alexander's court artists and later copies. Stewart considers how Alexander used his image to disseminate messages about his rule across Europe and Asia, including the way Alexander's connection to the Olympian gods was used. In addition to describing the ancient images, Stewart provides detailed iconographic analyses of the lost works.

In his 1975 article entitled "The Portraiture of Alexander", Erkinger Schwarzenberg discusses connections between the literary and the visual traditions of images of Alexander in the classical world by investigating the sources for Plutarch's textual portrait of Alexander. He argues that Plutarch derived his characterization of Alexander from the bronze statues sculpted by Lysippus, and the literary accounts by Callisthenes and Eratosthenes (the librarian of Ptolemy III in Egypt). For our understanding of the Renaissance context, it is interesting that Schwarzenberg attributes the elevated status of Apelles to a combination of Alexander's generosity and his "squandering the reserves of the Persian treasury", rather than any artistic ingegno. Lastly, he attempts to piece together the appearance of the portraits of Alexander by the "great three" artists: Apelles, Lysippus, and Pyrgoteles. While portraits of the king were executed by other artists, such

as Euphranor and Leochares, Schwarzenberg proposes that such images were forgotten simply because they were not copied due to the "Augustan prejudice in favour of the great three."\textsuperscript{60}

In \textit{The Roman Alexander}, Diana Spencer addresses the reception of Alexander within Roman political and cultural discourse, including a lengthy analysis of the propaganda war between Octavian (later Augustus) and Marc Antony, when Alexander came to embody the decadent and corrupt East.\textsuperscript{61} Unlike Schwarzenberg, Spencer summarizes the subject of Renaissance portrayals of Alexander in her epilogue, but she fails to consider the general classicizing trends of Renaissance art, in addition to the tastes and interests of elite patrons who commissioned representations of the ancient king. Alexander was both a namesake and a model for a range of patrons, from dukes to popes to wealthy sophisticates. Her assertion that "images of Alexander stand in for the aspirant nobles who are beginning to take on greater importance in the power struggles of the post-feudal world" is particularly problematic.\textsuperscript{62} Images of Alexander created during the fifteenth century were not intended to allude to power struggles and social positions. Rather, as will become evident in my study, many representations were connected with themes of love and marriage, humanism and learning.

The historical life of Alexander has received much attention through the ages, and scholars offer a variety of perspectives on his deeds, his character, and his motivations, that range from the critical to the apologetic. Indeed, an examination of the reception of Alexander in critical writing would constitute an entire thesis on its own. My study does not seek to analyse the historiography of Alexander in scholarship, and for this reason I have restricted myself largely to consulting the surveys by the Oxford historian, Robin Lane Fox: \textit{Alexander the Great}, and The

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 237.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 249.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 208.
Search for Alexander. For the ancient sources on the life of Alexander, I primarily used the Loeb Classical Library editions, which reproduce both the original text and a reliable English translation. In addition, Historical Sources in Translation: Alexander the Great, a collection edited by the Canadian classicists Waldemar Heckel and J. C. Yardley, includes excerpts from the antique sources on the life of Alexander that are not limited to the main classical accounts.

Although the Italian Renaissance is often described as a rebirth of the culture of antiquity that is ideologically divorced from the Middle Ages, the artistic interest in the life of Alexander the Great during this time was not new. Rather, it was the continuation of a tradition which was more than 1000 years old by the dawn of the Renaissance in the fourteenth century. Therefore, I want to emphasize the continuing artistic and literary interest in Alexander from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. In the catalogue, Alexander the Great in European Art, Nicos Hadjinicolaou briefly mentions the rich literary traditions of the Middle Ages, but stresses that interest in Alexander was "revived" during the Renaissance. I do not feel that the contributors to the catalogue sufficiently underscore the continuity between the representations of Alexander from the Middle Ages and the portrayals executed by artists during the Renaissance. The medieval literary tradition, as I will argue over the course of this thesis, permeated the portrayals of Alexander executed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Indeed, the medieval tradition may have informed the work of Raphael himself, an artist whose predilection for all'antica forms is highlighted in countless studies.

Thus, my thesis proposes that there was not a distinctive "rebirth" of artistic interest in Alexander during the Italian Renaissance because his image survived in art and literature from

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63 Respectively, Robin Lane Fox, Alexander the Great (London: Allen Lane, 1973); Robin Lane Fox, The Search for Alexander (London: Allen Lane, 1980).
66 Including, for example, Freedman (2011).
antiquity into the Middle Ages and Renaissance, particularly in manuscripts. To explore this unbroken tradition, I look to the ground-breaking study, The Survival of the Pagan Gods, by Jean Seznec, in which the author argues that the ancient pagan gods were not rediscovered in the literature and art of the Italian Renaissance. Rather, the classical gods survived during the Middle Ages through four traditions, whose origins lie within antiquity itself. All of the traditions that Seznec categorizes—Historical, Physical, Moral, and Encyclopaedic—rely heavily on manuscripts that were copied and rewritten, and, in this way, transmitted classical writing through the Middle Ages. However, as Seznec demonstrates, the pagan gods and heroes were frequently transformed by medieval writers. For example, the Ovide Moralisée changed the heroes and gods found in Ovid's Metamorphoses into Christian allegories. Similarly, medieval authors transformed Alexander from a pagan king into a Christian knight.

I will present my argument using an approach similar to Seznec's and contend that the artistic and literary interest in Alexander survived unbroken through the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. As I will demonstrate, the complex and varied literary tradition was the primary source for information about the life of the Macedonian king. In fact, the literary sources remain the foundation for perceptions of Alexander that still survive today. Therefore, in Chapter Two, I will survey the ancient sources for the life of Alexander, explore the transformations during the Middle Ages, and conclude with an examination of the humanist literature devoted to Alexander. Together these literary traditions informed the production of images of the ancient king during the Renaissance.

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Chapter 2

The Literary Traditions of the Life of Alexander

Because information on the life of Alexander survived primarily through written, rather than visual sources, the literature devoted to the ancient king provided a crucial foundation for the artistic portrayals of his life during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as I will demonstrate over the course of this thesis. Thus, in order to examine the artistic interest in Alexander the Great during the Italian Renaissance, a consideration of the history of the literature on the king must occur first. Furthermore, the literary traditions of the life of Alexander reveal a continual interest in the ancient king in Western Europe from antiquity onward. In this chapter I will present the classical accounts of the life of Alexander, followed by Medieval and Renaissance texts (which include translations of classical accounts). This chapter approaches the material in a thematic rather than a chronological manner since the rich variety of literary traditions that present Alexander often overlap. Consequently, there is no definitive linearity to follow in tracing such portrayals over a two-thousand year period.

Ancient Accounts of the Life of Alexander the Great

The life of Alexander survives in five main accounts by the following classical authors: Diodorus Siculus, Pompeius Trogus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, and Arrian. However, not all of their accounts are biographies. Indeed, Diodorus (and possibly Pompeius Trogus) includes the career of Alexander as the author traces the history of the world in his universal history. Although more than twenty of his contemporaries wrote books dedicated to his life, not a single first-hand source on Alexander survives. Rather, the extant classical accounts that include
information on his biography are second- or third-hand sources, written centuries after Alexander
died.

During Alexander's campaign in the East, the king was accompanied by Callisthenes of
Olynthus, who was appointed to attend Alexander on the recommendation of his uncle Aristotle.
As Alexander's historian, Callisthenes wrote an official record of the king's achievements, which
was entitled Deeds of Alexander. This work glorified Alexander's military successes and
propagated the king's claim to divine paternity to readers back in Greece. Callisthenes, however,
later fell from Alexander's favour and was executed for conspiring against the king. His Deeds of
Alexander is lost, but his work was used as an indirect or minor source by other authors,
including Cleitarchus and Ptolemy.

The first surviving source of the life of Alexander is the Biblioteca by the Greek writer
Diodorus, who lived in the second half of the first century BCE. The Biblioteca recounts the
history of the world in forty books, from the Trojan War until the first century BCE. The title of
the work refers to the fact that Diodorus compiled his text from a number of sources. Only the
first five books, and books eleven through twenty, are preserved. Nonetheless, sections of the
remaining twenty-five are found in works by later authors. Diodorus devotes book seventeen to
the career of Alexander, from his ascension to the throne to his death. The account, however,
contains a lacuna of the events from mid-330 to early 326 BCE. The period that is missing
includes the destruction of Persepolis, the crossing of the Hindu Kush mountains, the campaigns
in Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander's marriage to Roxanne, and the advance into India.

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68 For an introduction to the extant sources of the life of Alexander, see the Introduction in
Waldemar Heckel and J. C. Yardley, Historical Sources in Translation: Alexander the Great
69 See the entry on Callisthenes by A. B. Bosworth in Oxford Classical Dictionary, eds. Simon
(London: William Heinemann, 1933), vol. 1, p. xix. Diodorus remarks in several places that he
will speak of the deeds of Julius Caesar in the Civil War and Britain (vol. 2, 3.38.2, p. 195; vol. 2,
Soon after Diodorus was writing, Pompeius Trogus, a Romanized Gaul, related the history of Alexander in the eleventh and twelfth books of his world history, the *Historiae Philippae*. *Historiae Philippae* is a general history of Greece and the East up to the late first century, and the text includes digressions on ethnographical and geographical subjects. While the original history of Pompeius Trogus is lost, fragments have been preserved in the epitome by the fourth-century writer Marcus Junianus Justinus, known as Justin.

The classical account of the life of Alexander the Great that had the most influence because of its wide dissemination was that composed by Quintus Curtius Rufus (d. 53 CE). Curtius, a rhetorician and politician during the Julio-Claudian era in Rome, wrote a ten-book biography of Alexander in Latin, *Historiae Alexandri Magni*. The work, in fact, is the only full-length account of the life of Alexander composed in Latin. Unfortunately, the first two books, which describe Alexander's very early career in Greece and Asia Minor, are lost, as are sections of books five, six and ten. From what survives it is evident that the account of Curtius takes a psychological approach to Alexander. Moreover, Curtius is extremely rhetorical, and frequently includes long (and likely fictional) speeches by Alexander and his rivals.

Of the five ancient authors who wrote extant accounts of the life of Alexander, the most famous was Plutarch, a Greek from the region of Thebes (c. 50-120 CE). He wrote a well-known series of biographies that paralleled famous Greek and Roman leaders. In the *Lives*, Plutarch juxtaposed the life of Alexander with that of Julius Caesar because both figures were renowned for their military skills. Furthermore, Plutarch presented Alexander as a balanced man, who

5.21.2, pp. 151-53; vol. 2, 5.22.1, pp. 155-57). However, the end of *Biblioteca* is lost and the author may simply have grown too old and tired to finish the work.


72 See, for example, a speech delivered by Darius in Curtius, Book 5, 8. 6-17, pp. 108-09; a speech given by Alexander to his troops in Book 6, 3. 1-18, pp. 121-23; and a speech delivered by a Scythian warlord whom Alexander fought, Book 7, 8. 12-30, pp. 168-69.

scorned luxury and desired only excellence and glory. Additionally, Plutarch frequently cited anecdotes of Alexander in his *Moralia*, a collection of his essays and speeches on various themes.\(^{74}\) One of the most famous sections of the Moralia is a tract devoted to the *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, in which he argues that Alexander brought civilization to Asia, and that "those who were vanquished by Alexander are happier than those who escaped his hand."\(^{75}\) Plutarch concludes that rather than being ruled by the whims of Fortune, Alexander gained his success through his virtue.\(^{76}\)

Arrian of Nicomedia (d. 160 CE), a Greek from Bithynia who became a Romanized citizen, wrote the *Anabasis* of Alexander.\(^{77}\) Arrian modelled his text on Xenophon's account of the march of Cyrus the Younger. His military narrative is noted for its clarity, which is due to his reliance on primary sources and his personal experience as a military commander under the Emperor Trajan.\(^{78}\) However, Arrian had a tendency to "white-wash" the life of Alexander.\(^{79}\) For example, he omitted Alexander's mass execution of civilians after the siege of Tyre, which other sources reported.

Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Plutarch and Quintus Curtius Rufus all seem to have used a common source for their accounts, which may have been written by Cleitarchus soon after Alexander's death. Cleitarchus was a historian, based at the court of Alexander's successor in


\(^{75}\) Plutarch, "On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander," *Moralia*, vol. 4, 328-29, p. 395.

\(^{76}\) Plutarch writes of Alexander that, "within himself he had his own high hopes, reverence for the gods, fidelity towards his friends, frugality, self-control, experience, fearlessness toward death, high courage, humanity, affability, integrity of character, constancy in counsel, quickness in execution, the height of good repute, and a disposition to gain his end in everything honourable." Ibid., vol. 4, 342, p. 475.


\(^{78}\) Heckel and Yardley (2004), "Introduction" at p. xxiii.

\(^{79}\) Ibid.
Egypt, Ptolemy I. He wrote an influential account of the life of Alexander, which is now lost. Most scholars believe that Cleitarchus did not accompany Alexander on his expedition. Rather, he used the accounts of Alexander's naval commanders, Onesicritus of Astypalea and Nearchus, along with other accounts by eye-witnesses and veterans living in Alexandria, Egypt. In addition, Curtius utilized the account of Ptolemy I, Alexander's companion and one of the diadochoi (successors of Alexander), who founded the Ptolemaic dynasty of Pharaohs.

At the beginning of his account, Arrian discussed which sources he had consulted for his Anabasis, writing that "wherever Ptolemy and Aristobulus in their histories of Alexander, son of Philip, have given the same account, I have followed it on the assumption of its accuracy." The account of Ptolemy was especially important as one of Arrian's reliable sources, because, in addition to the fact that Ptolemy participated in the entirety of Alexander's campaign and was a childhood friend of the king, Ptolemy was a king and thus "it is more disgraceful for a King to tell lies than for anyone else." Additionally, Arrian consulted the apologetic history of Aristobulus of Cassandria, who excused many of Alexander's faults and crimes. When his sources agreed, Arrian told their story as "wholly true", and, where they differed, he chose the source which seemed most credible, or worth telling. Although Arrian attempted to use first-hand sources as much as possible, during the Renaissance his work was less influential than the versions of the life of Alexander that were recorded by Plutarch and Curtius, as we will see shortly. In addition to the five important accounts, information about Alexander's life survived in anecdotes and references in works of other Greek and Roman authors, including Cicero, Aristotle, Livy, Pliny the Elder, and Valerius Maximus.

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80 Ibid., p. xxii.
81 Arrian, op. cit., 1. 1, p. 41.
82 Ibid.
83 Heckel and Yardley (2004), pp. xxi.
84 Robin Lane Fox, The Search for Alexander (London: Allen Lane, 1980), pp. 36-37.
85 Heckel and Yardley present excerpts from works on the life of Alexander by ancient authors other than the main Alexander historians. See Heckel and Yardley (2004), pp. xxiii-xxix.
Information on the life of Alexander did not survive only in accounts related by Greek and Roman authors. Indeed, stories about his life appear in the writings of Jewish authors who lived under Roman Imperial rule. Jewish writers enriched the image of Alexander as God's chosen instrument for the destruction of Persia. The most influential account about Alexander written by a Jewish author is that by Flavius Josephus, a Romano-Jewish historian and hagiographer. Although his account is now believed to be fictitious, Josephus records the history of Alexander the Great in Israel in his first-century text, *Jewish Antiquities*. Josephus writes that Alexander arrived to attack Jerusalem, but that when he saw the High Priest Jaddus with a procession of people in the distance,

in white garments, the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it on which was inscribed the name of God, [Alexander] approached alone and prostrated himself before the Name and first greeted the high priest.

The High Priest showed Alexander the Book of Daniel, in which the prophet had foreseen that a Greek would destroy the Persian Empire. Alexander was pleased to learn that it was predicted he would defeat his Persian enemy, Darius III. In the prophecy, Daniel had identified Alexander as the he-goat who attacks the ram with two horns (Darius), overcoming him and breaking his horns.

The story of Alexander's entry into Jerusalem, as it had been told by Josephus, was highly popular in the Middle Ages, when it was interpreted as a pagan king having reverence for the

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87 Ibid., vol. 3, 11. 331, p. 475.
88 This metaphorical image corresponds to Hellenistic numismatic representations of Alexander with the horns of Zeus Amon. See Daniel, 11: 2-3; also Daniel 7: 6, 8: 3-8, 8: 20-22.
89 As an aside, it is interesting to note that this metaphorical image corresponds to Hellenistic numismatic representations of Alexander with the horns of Zeus Amon.
high priest of the Judeo-Christian god. Indeed, many vernacular versions of the Romance of Alexander incorporated the story, particularly in Germany, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter.\textsuperscript{90}

In addition to the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus, Alexander appears in the first Book of Maccabees in the Bible, which summarizes Alexander's career as follows:

[Alexander had] advanced to the ends of the earth, plundering nation after nation; the earth grew silent before him, and his ambitious heart swelled with pride. He assembled very powerful forces and subdued provinces, nations and princes, and they became his tributaries.\textsuperscript{91}

This brief anecdote serves as a prelude to the deeds of Alexander's Hellenistic successor, King Antiochus IV of Syria. Because Antiochus persecuted the Jews, some theological literature in the Middle Ages condemned his forbearer, Alexander the Great, most notably in the twelfth-century Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum by Hugh of St. Victor.\textsuperscript{92} In a section of the Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum devoted to the mysteries found within the Book of Maccabees, Hugh commented that "Alexander the Great…subjugated almost the whole world with his rule" and no place was able to spare his reign because the ancient king was bestowed with such a great lust for power.\textsuperscript{93}

In fact, Hugh of St. Victor compared Alexander's lust for power to the Devil's own desire to ascend to the throne of Heaven, "above the heights of the clouds."\textsuperscript{94}

Hugh of St. Victor was not alone in condemning Alexander and his worldly ambition. Indeed, already by the fifth century, the theologian Orosius had described the king as a fierce beast—"insatiable of human blood”—who brought death and destruction to the world.\textsuperscript{95} Later

\textsuperscript{91} 1 Maccabees 1: 3-4.
\textsuperscript{92} Cary (1956), p. 124.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
theologians continued to comment on the symbolic interpretations of Alexander in the Bible, as George Cary has fully outlined in The Medieval Alexander. This negative characterization of Alexander was, on the whole, confined to sacred literature and did not exert notable influence on the popular romance tradition.

Moreover, it was not only in the literature of Western Europe that representations of Alexander appeared. Alexander's empire had included much of the known Eastern world, and, appropriately, many Arabic texts included stories of the king. Arab writers presented Alexander as a philosophical and venerable king, and this characterization later passed into Western Europe through Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Friedrich Spiegel thoroughly examined the Arabic tradition of Alexander literature in his 1851 study, Die Alexandersage bei den Orientalien. The textual tradition of Alexander in the Middle East was based on the Romance of Alexander by Pseudo-Callisthenes, which had been translated into Arabic sometime in the seventh or eighth century. In the moralizing tales of the Arabic tradition, Alexander was interpreted as a hero who acknowledges the fragility of power and glory and recognizes the transience of life and worldly possessions. As Z. David Zuwiyya notes, in a manner perhaps analogous to the Christian romances, which presented Alexander as a chivalric hero serving God, many Arabic texts showed Alexander as submissive to Allah.

98 Friedrich Spiegel, Die Alexandersage bei den Orientalien (Leipzig, 1851).
100 Z. David Zuwiyya, "The Alexander Romance in the Arabic Tradition," in A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 73-112, at p. 81. It is interesting to discover that in many of the Arabic stories Alexander bears the epithet
The Romance of Alexander and the Medieval Tradition

The five extant classical accounts of the life of Alexander the Great did not play a significant role in the understanding of the ancient king until the fifteenth century and the flourishing of humanism. Instead, a rich literary tradition developed independently. Late antique and medieval readers looked to the Romance of Alexander as their principal source for Alexander's exploits. The earliest of the romance manuscripts dates to the third century, and the work seems to have been originally composed by a Greek author living in Alexandria. Versions exist in Latin, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, and other oriental languages, revealing its popularity throughout both the West and the East.\textsuperscript{101} Medieval manuscripts erroneously attributed the authorship of the original Romance of Alexander to Callisthenes, Alexander's official historian (who was, coincidentally, killed by the king for slander). Hence, the unknown author is sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Callisthenes.

The Romance of Alexander presents an aggrandized account of the life of Alexander, which often deviates far from the historical truth. For example, the story begins with the episode of Alexander's conception. While Philip II was away on campaign, the Egyptian magus and pharaoh Nectanebo II visited Olympias in the guise of the god Amon and seduced her, and it was from this union that Alexander was born.\textsuperscript{102}

One of the most notable features of the Romance of Alexander is the epistolary format of some sections. Interspersed with the story are letters, written by Alexander to his rival Darius, his mother, and to his tutor, Aristotle. The letters contain descriptions of the fabulous adventures undertaken by Alexander and the exotic regions that he visits at the far edges of the world.

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\textit{Dhu 'l-Qarnayn} (the one with two horns), which may refer to coins of Alexander with the horns of Amon and his enthronement as pharaoh of Egypt. Furthermore, the figure of \textit{Dhu 'l-Qarnayn}, who appears in the Koran, is often identified as Alexander the Great. See Ibid., pp. 74-75.\textsuperscript{101} Heckel and Yardley (2004), "Introduction", p. xxiv.
Indeed, in a letter to Olympias, Alexander describes how he and some guides encountered a desolate place, populated by thirty-six foot tall giants, called Phytoi (of whom they kill thirty-two). In subsequent exploits, Alexander encounters hairy wild men, giant crabs filled with pearls, and the Brahmin philosophers of India. The most famous of these adventures are Alexander's descent to the bottom of the ocean in a glass jar, and his celestial adventure, where he ascends to the heavens in a car drawn by "large white birds." Such exotic tales held great appeal for late antique and medieval audiences.

The history of the dissemination and translation of the Greek Romance of Alexander is complicated (see the diagram at the end of the section). Copyists frequently made additions, deleted passages, or redesigned the narrative to make it more appealing to their intended readers. However, the importance of the tradition derives from the fact that Leo of Naples translated a Greek manuscript of the Romance of Alexander, which became highly influential as a source for vernacular literature about the life of Alexander in the West during the Middle Ages.

In Italy, around the year 950, Dukes John III and Marius II of Campania sent the Archbishop Leo of Naples on a diplomatic mission to the Byzantine court, where he found a Greek manuscript of Pseudo-Callisthenes. Leo transcribed the manuscript, and translated it into Latin prose for Duke John upon his return. He entitled his translation, the Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni, though it is usually known as Historia de Preliis. In comparison with the Greek Romance of Alexander, the translation made by Leo is very brief, and as Dennis Kratz points out, the

103 Ibid., book 2, p. 115.
105 Ibid., book 2, pp. 118-19; and book 2, p. 123.
Leo had based his account on an abridged Greek text.\textsuperscript{108} Leo's \textit{Historia de Preliis} was, in turn, revised and expanded by an anonymous author some time before the year 1100 in a version known as the J1 recension. The J1 recension led to the creation of two further expanded versions, J2 and J3, in the twelfth century. J2 was particularly influential since it was often copied and translated into vernacular versions, including German (before 1358), Old French derivatives (thirteenth century), English (mid-fourteenth century), Italian (\textit{I Nobili Fatti d'Alessandro Magno}, fourteenth century), along with Swedish and Hebrew.\textsuperscript{109}

In his prologue, Leo explains the reasons for his decision to translate the \textit{Romance of Alexander}. He writes that,

\begin{quote}
To hear and learn about the battles and victories of excellent heathen men who lived before the birth of Christ, even though they were pagans, is good and useful for all Christians, prelates as well as subjects, indeed both secular and spiritual individuals, because it spurs them on to better action.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

Thus, Leo felt that modern audiences could utilize the deeds and character of Alexander the Great as a model for their own lives, in a manner analogous to the \textit{Mirror of Princes}. This concept of Alexander as a model of virtuous behavior for sacred and secular leaders became especially important in the literature and art of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters.

An abbreviated version of the J3 recension of the \textit{Historia de Preliis} appears in the \textit{Zibaldone}, attributed to the Florentine poet, Antonio Pucci (1310-88). Also known as the \textit{Varie Storie}, the \textit{Zibaldone} survives in six manuscripts, though the parent version of all the extant copies seems to be the manuscript now in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.\textsuperscript{111} The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} Leo of Naples, "Prologue" in \textit{The Romances of Alexander} (1991), pp. 135-37, at p. 135.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Alberto Varvaro, "Introduzione" in Antonio Pucci, \textit{Libro di Varie Storie}, ed. Alberto Varvaro (Palermo: Presso l'Accademia, 1957), pp. xxiii-xxxii. The six surviving manuscripts are:
\end{itemize}
Zibaldone was, essentially, a compendium of stories, notable events, and anthropological digressions that Pucci collected from various sources, including Marco Polo and Dante. In a section of the Zibaldone devoted to the geographic regions of Asia under the control of the Tartars and the Great Kahn, where "Alexander found many strange countries", Pucci provides an abridged version of the life of Alexander that begins with his miraculous birth as a result of the union between Olympias and the magician-king "Nattanabo" of Egypt. While the Historia de Preliis and the recensions made after it spend a significant amount of text on the military campaigns of Alexander against Darius, Pucci condenses Alexander's conquest of Persia and the numerous battles against Darius into a single paragraph. However, Pucci does include Alexander's encounter with the dying Darius, who gives the hand of his daughter "Rosanella" to Alexander in marriage.

Pucci focuses much of his description on the legendary episodes found within the Romance of Alexander. For example, Alexander and his companions encounter wildmen ("uomini selvaggi"), whom they kill, a beast in the form of a horse with horns, bats that fly around like doves, and trees that produce wool. Later, Alexander arrives at a "very hot river", where he finds a group of women armed in silver, because "there is no iron in that land." He also discovers many serpents and dragons at this river, and "the fiercest animal", which has a back like a saw and teeth sharp like a knife. Following these fantastical encounters at the edges of Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Tempi 2 (fourteenth century); Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1922 (late fourteenth or early fifteenth century); Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1674 (fourteenth to fifteenth century); Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS 2. 3. 335 (fifteenth century); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Ital. 165 (fifteenth century); and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS Palatino 678 (fifteenth century).

112 As I was unable to consult the original manuscript in Florence, I have relied on the 1957 edition of the Zibaldone, edited by Alberto Varvaro.
113 For Alexander's birth in the Zibaldone, see Ibid., 9. 1-7, pp. 81-82.
114 Ibid., 9. 15-16, p. 84.
115 Ibid., 9. 23-24, p. 86.
117 Ibid.
of the earth, Alexander returns to Babylon, where he is poisoned by Cassander, the son of Antipater, Alexander's regent in Macedon.\textsuperscript{118}

In a similar fashion to the epistolary sections found in the Romance of Alexander and the Historia de Prelii, Pucci includes a letter from Aristotle to Alexander at the end of his account. While the letters in the Historia de Prelii generally describe the wonders that Alexander encountered in the Far East, Pucci's letter instead concentrates on physiognomy: "Large and steady eyes show a lazy man, [but] large and lively eyes, a stupid man and a grand storyteller," Aristotle writes to his royal pupil.\textsuperscript{119} The philosopher continues on to say that, "a white face with some little red spots [denotes] a mad and cowardly man. A fleshy face that is not delicate, a lazy man who is made glad slowly."\textsuperscript{120}

Other references to Alexander occur throughout the Zibaldone in various forms. Most remarks about Alexander primarily relate to geographical discussions, such as the location of a battle in which Alexander fought. According to Pucci, in the city of "Gobia" there was a battle between Alexander and Darius, while in "Balaach", a very large city, Alexander took "the daughter of King Darius of Persia" as his wife.\textsuperscript{121} However, Pucci does, on occasion, cite other authors who discussed the ancient king, including Seneca, and he also uses Alexander to

\textsuperscript{118} Iobas, who assisted Cassander in poisoning Alexander in the Romance of Alexander and the Historia de Prelii, is not mentioned. Ibid., 9. 39-43, pp. 91-92.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 10. 1, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Respectively, Pucci (1957), op. cit., 8. 15, p. 48; Ibid., 8. 24, p. 50. Similarly, in Il Milione by Marco Polo, the author includes a number of references to Alexander in a geographic context. For example, in a section devoted to "The King of the Georgians", Polo writes that Alexander built a tower with a grand fortress in an impassable province, so that people would not be able to enter (and thus surpass him), and he called it, "the gate of iron." See Marco Polo, Il Libro di Marco Polo detto Milione, ed. Daniele Ponchielli (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1954), book 17, p. 18. Another section specifies "One Desert" located in part of "Gobiam" as the site where a battle between Alexander and Darius took place. See book 30, p. 34. In the city of Balac, Alexander took the daughter of Darius as a wife (book 33, p. 38). Interestingly, Marco Polo notes that in the province of "Balacsam", Alexander is referred to as "Zulcarney" in the Saracen language (book 35, pp. 39-40).
chronologically place events in history. For example, in book forty-four, devoted to a discussion of philosophers, the author notes that Christ lived at the time when "Alexander, Aristotle, Plato, Avicenna, and many other great philosophers lived." Although the Zibaldone by Pucci does not present a new or particularly detailed representation of Alexander, his text clearly shows the widespread dissemination of the Historia de Preliis and the romance tradition of Alexander in late medieval Italy.

Another popular Italian version of the Historia de Preliis, also based on the J3 recension, was the Alexandreida in Rima. This poem, in ottava rima, was written around the year 1430, and first printed in 1512. As D. J. A. Ross points out, at least fifteen editions appeared over the next two centuries. More recently, a critical edition of Alexandreida in Rima by Anne Wilson Tordi has made the poem accessible to scholars. The poem is a telling example of the characterization of Alexander in late medieval Italy. As is the case with most late Gothic and Renaissance Italian literature, Alexandreida in Rima presents Alexander in a predominantly positive light. Indeed, the poem specifically describes the king as a "valoroso sire." The unknown author begins the poem with an explanation of why he chose to write about Alexander the Great, namely because Alexander was neglected by the foremost classical authors Virgil,

122 Pucci relates a brief anecdote about Alexander meeting Diogenes in a section devoted to ancient philosophers. Here, Pucci notes that he derives the story from "Senaca." Pucci (1957), 34. 24, pp. 240-41.
123 Ibid., 44. 5, p. 305. The tradition linking Alexander with education and philosophy is particularly important during the Renaissance, as I will show in subsequent chapters.
125 See Ross (1963), p. 55. In addition, some versions of the Alexandreida in Rima were illustrated with woodcuts, including the 1521 edition, published by Bernardino de Viano de Lexona in Venice. The woodcuts are relatively crude, and show figures dressed in contemporary costume. In themselves, the woodcuts are not representative of early Renaissance images of Alexander the Great and thus this study will not analyze them in detail. For more on the 1521 edition, see Ross (1963), p. 63.
Ovid, and Lucian.\textsuperscript{128} The author then continues with a description glorifying the Macedonian king, proclaiming that:

\begin{center}
[Alexander] was the one who, through his vigour, 
had deposed all the other lords 
from their seats, and as far as he went through the world, 
he conquered each people everywhere.
\end{center}

Neither before nor after can we find another king so virtuous. 
He ruled the earth and the sea; 
he was abundantly endowed with intellect and power. 
Therefore, I want to tell about him, 
of whom there is no more gracious lord; he was honourable, just, and pious, 
as you will see in my poem.\textsuperscript{129}

This virtuous secular ruler promoted by the \textit{Alexandreida in Rima} was a model of kingship to many late medieval rulers across Europe, with whom the audience of the poem could ally themselves.

As the reader would expect, most of the plot of the \textit{Alexandreida in Rima} closely follows the \textit{Romance of Alexander}, beginning with Alexander's conception, and ending with his poisoning by Cassander and "Iubas", the two sons of Alexander's regent in Macedon, Antipater. Indeed, the poem also includes epistolary sections, such as an exchange of letters between Darius and King Porus of India.\textsuperscript{130} Furthermore, Darius, on his deathbed, gives the hand of his daughter "Rosana" to Alexander in marriage.\textsuperscript{131} However, the author adds further episodes to the story, including Alexander's visit to Gordium (called "Cardin" in the poem), where he unties the fabled knot by cutting it with his sword.\textsuperscript{132} In addition, at the end of the earth, Alexander encounters "un

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 21; also at Canto 1. 3, p. 37.  
\textsuperscript{129} Canto 1. 5 as in Ibid., pp. 21-22; also at p. 38.  
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., Canto 6. 8-13, pp. 151-53. However, as Wilson Tordi notes on p. 34, \textit{Alexandreida in Rima} omits the exchange of letters found in the J3 recension of the \textit{Historia de Preliis}.  
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., Canto 7. 27, p. 176.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., Canto 3, 83-86. This historical episode from the life of Alexander will be discussed further in Chapter Six.
gran serpente, lo qual per nome basilis[co] è detto" that consumes humans.\textsuperscript{133} He defeats the basilisk with a mirror, a manner that recalls how the hero Perseus triumphed over Medusa in Greek mythology. The basilisk episode, though not found in all versions of the Romance of Alexander, nevertheless continues the sort of fantastical adventures that appealed to audiences of the romance tradition.

The most influential group of stories based on the Romance of Alexander were those written by French authors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who transformed the Hellenistic king into their favourite courtly hero. The story was composed by Alberic of Pisançon in the south of France, and the oldest text dates back to the early twelfth century.\textsuperscript{134} Written in Old French, this poem was based on an early fourth-century Latin translation of the Romance of Alexander by Julius Valerius Polemius, entitled Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonis. However, Alberic also used the J1 recension of the Historia de Preliis as a minor source.\textsuperscript{135} While the standard version of the Roman d'Alexandre poem was written around the year 1185 by Alexandre de Paris, subsequent writers across Western Europe expanded on the original French poem, and a High German version, called the Alexanderleid, was produced in about the year 1155 by Pfaffe Lamprecht.\textsuperscript{136}

The Roman d'Alexandre popularized the characterization of Alexander as a courtly knight who participated in Arthurian-style quests. In a manner similar to the Romance of Alexander, the Roman d'Alexandre extrapolated from the historical life of Alexander to include a variety of mythical legends, such as Alexander's quest for the Fountain of Youth, in addition to his descent to the bottom of the sea and his ascent into the Heavens. The most notable difference

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., Canto 10. 15, p. 241. The basilisk episode is, however, found in the J3 recension of the Historia de Preliis. See the version provided in The Romances of Alexander (1991), pp. 89-106, at p. 97.  
\textsuperscript{134} Ross (1963), p. 9.  
between the Romance of Alexander and the French Roman d'Alexandre stories is how the tales end. At the end of the Romance of Alexander, the Macedonian king dies as a result of poison administered by Cassander and Iobas. Medieval readers were not satisfied with this ending, and thus, by the end of the twelfth century, sequels that describe the vengeance of Alexander were composed to supplement the original text. These French romances had an influence on both German and English chivalric traditions, in which, as Diana Spencer explains, "Alexander becomes a Crusader king, fighting the Saracens in a landscape of courtly pageantry." Furthermore, many manuscripts were illustrated with lavish illuminations that typically presented Alexander in the guise of a courtly knight in contemporary dress. Such illustrations contributed to the perception of Alexander as a chivalric hero, as we will see in Chapter Three.

The medieval tradition of Alexander stories has been thoroughly addressed in scholarship, particularly by the mid-twentieth-century historians George Cary and D. J. A. Ross. In his posthumous book, The Medieval Alexander (1956), Cary attempted to systematize the whole of the Western medieval tradition. He began by discussing the ancient texts and their transmission into the Middle Ages. Following this, Cary described the breadth of medieval literature devoted to the life of Alexander, from brief references in early theological writing by figures such as St. Augustine, to Gauthier de Châtillon's epic Alexandre poem (which I will address shortly). Cary, in fact, utilized an approach analogous to that used by Jean Seznec in

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136 Ross (1963), pp. 9-10. Lamprecht's version is particularly important because he names Alberic as the author of the original Roman d'Alexandre in Old French.
137 For some of the various vengeance sequels, see Ibid., p. 13. The vengeance sequels describe the siege, capture, and punishment of Alexander's murderers. One of the most famous vengeance sequels, Le Vengement Alixandre, was written by Guy de Cambray, around the year 1190. Other episodes, including the Prise de Defur and Voyage au Paradis Terrestre, were interpolated into the poem in the early thirteenth century, as discussed by Mark Cruse, Illuminating the Roman d'Alexandre in MS Bodley 264: The Manuscript as Monument (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), p. 4.
the *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, since the author categorized the medieval works on the life of Alexander according to whether they considered the ancient king morally, theologically, or in a secular manner. Finally, Cary briefly introduced some Renaissance conceptions of Alexander, including the moral view of Alexander's character that was provided by Petrarch in *De Viris Illustribus*. I will build on his introduction to the Renaissance literature on Alexander during the course of this chapter by examining, in detail, a range of texts written in Italy from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.

Ross, on the other hand, presented a guide to manuscripts and early printed editions of Alexander literature from across Europe in his *Alexander Historiatus*. Manuscript codices of Plutarch, Arrian, and Diodorus, for instance, were found in abundance and frequently ornamented with miniatures. Ross surveyed all the medieval and early modern Alexander literature in a comprehensive way, and with each manuscript catalogued, he noted whether or not illustrations accompany the text. One of the most popular medieval stories that Ross touched upon involved the apotheosis of Alexander to heaven in a chariot drawn by griffons. This tale appeared in many illuminated manuscripts, particularly in Germany, but also in France and Italy. The visual tradition of the ascent to heaven has been thoroughly studied, firstly by Chiara Settis-Frugoni (1973), and subsequently by Victor Schmidt (1995).

More recently, the authors contributing to *A Companion to the Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* (2011) re-evaluate the medieval Alexander literature in a series of chapters, each of which focuses on a different cultural tradition. Importantly for my study, Roberta Morosini

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141 Cary (1956), op. cit.
142 Ross (1963), op. cit.
143 Ross (1963), pp. 38-41.
reconsiders the dissemination of the Romance of Alexander in Italy.\textsuperscript{146} She criticizes Cary's rather dismissive stance toward Italian versions of the Romance of Alexander, whose authors, Cary felt, were imitative and uncreative in their manuscript copies.\textsuperscript{147} Moreover, Morosini discusses several late medieval versions, including the Zibaldone by Pucci, that Cary did not address in his study. She argues that Pucci focused his life of Alexander more on the "anthropological, namely the 'otherness' that fascinated his generation" rather than the battles told in most versions of the Romance of Alexander.\textsuperscript{148} This anthropological focus included descriptions of elephants and other wonders that the hero encountered in the East. However, I cannot completely agree with her suggestion since the Romance of Alexander and the stories written in that tradition already included long sections in which Alexander encountered a variety of exotic peoples and beasts at the edges of the earth. Most tellingly, Morosini writes that, "Italy was not France and, consequently, had no courtly interpretation of Alexander as a knight."\textsuperscript{149} Yet, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, in some parts of Italy Alexander was given a courtly interpretation, as the example of the fresco cycle at the Castello della Manta will show.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p. 344; also p. 335; p. 337. For example, Cary's analysis of the fourteenth-century prose version of the J2 recension, entitled "I Nobili Fatti di Alessandro Magno", which Cary maintains "has no special interest." See Cary (1956), p. 50. Furthermore, Cary states that the Italian Alexander tradition had "no poetic or imaginative merit", and the texts were filled with "other proofs of carelessness or ignorance" (pp. 260-61). It is most revealing that Cary claims the Italian translations of the Romance of Alexander "resemble the worst productions of the late medieval period in the rest of Europe" (p. 261).
\textsuperscript{148} Morosini in \textit{A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages} (2011), p. 345.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 337.
Greek Romance of Alexander (3rd century)

- Armenian (5th century)
- Syriac
- Arabic
- Oriental versions

Julius Valerius Pelenus (after 300)

- Lampricht
- Alexandre de Paris, Roman d'Alesandre

Leo of Naples, Historia de Prelis (c. 950)

Version J1, Historia de Prelis

- Version J2, Historia de Prelis
- Version J3, Historia de Prelis

Version J1, Historia de Prelis

- Western European versions
- Alessandrida in Rima
The *Romance of Alexander* and its derivative versions were the most popular group of stories about the life of Alexander the Great during the Middle Ages, as both Ross and Cary have pointed out based on the number and variety of surviving manuscripts. Nevertheless, some of the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander also survived during the Middle Ages. Of the five ancient authors, Quintus Curtius Rufus was the most influential during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. His narrative survived in two manuscripts, and became accepted into the literary corpus by the ninth century.

The account written by Quintus Curtius Rufus was much less fantastical than the *Romance of Alexander*, and far more critical of the character of the ancient king. Curtius represented Alexander as an ambitious adventurer who became corrupt and tyrannical by the end of his reign through his excessive good fortune. Indeed, at the end of his account, Curtius digresses to a list of Alexander's strengths and weaknesses, stating that, "it is obvious to anyone who makes a fair assessment of the king that his strengths were attributable to his nature and his weaknesses to his fortune or his youth." He continues on to claim that, "it must be admitted

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150 See especially Ross (1963), p. 5.
151 Simon Dosson provides a valuable historiographical study of Quintus Curtius Rufus, including his reception and translations in the Renaissance. See Simon Dosson, *Étude sur Quinte Curce, sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Hachette, 1887).
153 See, for example, the episode in which Alexander executes a group of Macedonian soldiers for sedition. One of the condemned asks Alexander, "How long are you going to indulge this self-gratification, with such executions, and executions of a foreign kind at that? Your own men, your own citizens, are being dragged off to punishment without trial!" Curtius, 10. 3.11-4.2, pp. 244-45.
that, much though [Alexander] owed to his own virtues, he owed more to Fortune, which he alone in the entire world had under his control.”

Nevertheless, Curtius achieved considerable significance in the Middle Ages when his work became the main source for the late twelfth-century hexameter poem by Gauthier de Châtillon, called the *Alexandreis*. Gauthier wrote his poem in Latin, in a style that recalls the epic poetry of Virgil and Ovid. In fact, the author utilizes many classical metaphors, allusions, and turns of phrase throughout the ten books of the *Alexandreis*, including the personification of Blind Fortune accompanying Alexander into battle against Darius. Furthermore, Gauthier echoes the critical tone of the final book of Curtius' version in the poem's final book when the author asks of his protagonist,

Great One, where will your hunger lead? What end will come of grasping? Pray, what bounds are set unto your search? Where stands your labours' goal? Madman, your works are naught. Though you enclose all kingdoms in one empire and subdue the entire world, a pauper you remain forever—for the soul is made a pauper not by dearth of wealth, but of contentment.

While Gauthier primarily based the *Alexandreis* on the account written by Quintus Curtius Rufus, he also used the *Romance of Alexander* and the versions of Alexander's life recorded by Justin and Josephus as minor sources. In addition, Gauthier includes a number of speeches given by various figures from the life of Alexander (though especially by Alexander himself), along with an exchange of letters between Alexander and Darius in book four that recalls the epistolary sections of the *Romance of Alexander*. It is interesting to note that the

155 Ibid., 10, 5.35-36, p. 248.
158 For example, the episode in which Alexander visits the High Priest in Jerusalem. See Ibid., book 1, p. 50.
159 Ibid., book 4, pp. 92-94.
painter Apelles is mentioned several times in the *Alexandreis*, including in a section that details
the decoration of a tomb for Darius that Alexander ordered from the artist.\textsuperscript{160}

The translation of the *Alexandreis* into Middle Dutch, Spanish, German, and even
Icelandic and Czech, during the thirteenth century, demonstrates the popularity of the poem
across Europe during the later Middle Ages. Indeed, a number of manuscripts of the *Alexandreis*
survive, as Ross has previously pointed out, and the poem was printed throughout the
Renaissance—four times in the sixteenth century, and even once in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{161}

By the fifteenth century, numerous manuscripts of Curtius circulated throughout Europe
in both the original Latin and vernacular translations. Scot McKendrick traces the manuscript
tradition of Curtius, focusing on the illumination of the texts in fifteenth-century France and
Burgundy, in *The History of Alexander the Great: An Illuminated Manuscript of Vasco da
Lucena's French Translation of the Ancient Text by Quintus Curtius Rufus*.\textsuperscript{162} McKendrick notes
that, in fact, no fewer than 100 fifteenth-century humanist copies of the account of Curtius
survive, including one owned by Federico da Montefeltro.\textsuperscript{163} The manuscripts took on more than
just a literary importance. Indeed, some manuscripts assumed a quasi-mystical status just as
Alexander had acquired legendary characteristics in the Romance tradition. King Matthias
Corvinus of Hungary reportedly slept with a copy of Quintus Curtius Rufus at his bedside, and
Alfonso V, King of Aragon, was cured of an illness by reading the *Historiae Alexandri Magni*.\textsuperscript{164}

The first vernacular version of Quintus Curtius Rufus did not occur until the 1438 Italian
translation by the humanist Pier Candido Decembrio, dedicated to his patron, Duke Filippo Maria

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., book 7, pp. 157-58.
\textsuperscript{161} Ross (1963), p. 72.
\textsuperscript{162} Scot McKendrick, *The History of Alexander the Great: An Illuminated Manuscript of Vasco
da Lucena's French Translation of the Ancient Text by Quintus Curtius Rufus* (Malibu, CA: J.
\textsuperscript{163} Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Urb. lat. 427.
\textsuperscript{164} McKendrick (1996), pp. 9-11.
Following this, in 1468, Vasco Fernandez, Count of Lucena, translated the account of Quintus Curtius Rufus into French for Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. This text, entitled *Les Faitz d'Alexandre*, was quite successful, as more than twenty-four manuscripts survive, and the translation was printed seven times between 1500 and 1555. Lucena's work is particularly important because he offers some of the earliest evidence for a critique of the romance tradition. In the prologue of his translation, he examined two of the stories from the *Romance of Alexander*, featuring the ascent into the heavens and the descent to the bottom of the sea. Lucena demonstrated that both legends were impossible, and argued that the authors of these medieval romances in French rhyme had "corrupted, changed, [and] falsified…the evidence" that the ancient accounts recorded. Regardless, the literary tradition of the *Romance of Alexander* remained popular into the sixteenth century.

The story of Alexander by Quintus Curtius Rufus was one of the first classical accounts of the life of the ancient king to be printed. Indeed, Curtius was printed in 1470 and 1471 in Venice by Vindelino da Spira, and, at the same time, a version edited by the humanist Pomponio Leto appeared in Rome. Over the next thirty years, the life of Alexander by Curtius was printed no less than six further times across Italy. Pier Candido Decembrio's translation came to press in Florence in 1478, in Milan in 1488, and was subsequently reprinted in the Cinquecento.

In contrast to the relative renown of Curtius during the Middle Ages, Plutarch's *Lives* were unknown in the West until the late fourteenth century, when a Dominican bishop of

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165 See Ross (1963), p. 68. See also Dosson (1887), p. 375.
167 Cary (1956), p. 238. The translation from the original French provided by Cary is my own.
169 Ibid.
Tudernopoli executed a copy for the Grand-Master of Rhodes, Juan Fernandez de Heredia. In 1450s Pier Candido also translated an abbreviated version the Lives into Latin. This translation is now lost, but one extant manuscript, Vat. Barb. lat. 112, refers to a now-lost book which may have contained the biography of Alexander.

The standard humanist Latin translation of the complete Lives was done by Guarino da Verona (1370-1460), who was responsible for the life of Alexander. Based on a letter of 10 July 1412, written from Manuel Chrysoloras to Guarino, in which Chrysoloras explains the meaning of a reference to the "Iliad of the Casket" found in the life of Alexander by Plutarch, the scholar Marianne Pade places the likely date of the first translation of the life of Alexander by Guarino to some time around 1408/10, before the letter was sent. Guarino's translation contained a brief reference to Alexander's marriage to the Bactrian chieftain's daughter, Roxanne, whom, according to Plutarch, Alexander fell in love with at first sight. A second epitome of the Lives was made in 1492 by Dario Tiberti in Cesena. This work survives as an edition printed in 1501 in Ferrara by Laurentius de Valentia. The first Greek edition of the Lives was not published until 1517 by

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170 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Espagnol 70-72. See Ross (1963), p. 82. Fernandez had an early interest in Greek texts.
Filippo Giunti of Florence. Two years after the *editio princeps*, Aldus Manutius republished the *Lives* in Venice.\textsuperscript{175}

Interestingly, in his own compendium of *Lives*, the fifteenth-century Florentine biographer Vespasiano da Bisticci names a number of contemporary scholars who translated the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander, including the Bishop of Sipontino (Niccolò Perotto, d. 1430) who translated Plutarch's *De Fortuna Populi Romani et Virtute Alexandri* into Latin.\textsuperscript{176} Vespasiano confirms that Guarino translated the lives of Marcellus, Alexander, Caesar, Pelopidas, Sulla and Lysander.\textsuperscript{177} Influential patrons of art and culture owned these biographies. Indeed, Federico da Montefeltro, Vespasiano writes, had the works of Livy, Sallust, Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Justin in his collection at Urbino, along with "a fine volume of Plutarch's *Lives* and his moral works."\textsuperscript{178} The moral works that Vespasiano refers to, Plutarch's *Moralia*, were published in 1509 by Manutius in Venice.

The literary reception of and translation of Plutarch's *Lives* in Renaissance Italy has been examined by Marianne Pade in *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-Century Italy*.\textsuperscript{179} She argues that the educational programme expressed by Plutarch in the *Lives*—that history and biography could be effectively used and imitated as part of a person's education—coincided with the theories of Renaissance educators.\textsuperscript{180} Moreover, Pade highlights the importance of the context in which the translations of the *Lives* were produced and how each life might be read differently,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[177] Ibid., p. 419.
\item[178] Ibid., "Life of Federico da Montefeltro," p. 103. Vespasiano knew Federico intimately, praising the Duke and his fine collection of manuscripts highly in his biography. Vespasiano was also instrumental in organizing the Florentine production of Federico's Bible in 1478.
\item[179] Pade (2007), op. cit.
\item[180] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 16.
\end{footnotes}
since some of the ancient biographies celebrate Republican heroes, while others, such as that of Alexan-
der, highlight the career of military leaders and kings.

The work of Diodorus Siculus was known in Renaissance Italy, though it was less
famous than the accounts of Curtius and Plutarch. The second book of his Library of History was
published in Venice in 1517 under the title De Philippi Regis Macedonia. In the following year,
Georgius de Rusconibus republished De Philippi Regis Macedonias in Venice. 181 Justin seems to
have been relatively well known by humanists, particularly during the fifteenth century, as D. J.
A. Ross has traced over one hundred codices in Italy. 182 Indeed, as I will point out later in this
chapter, some authors of Renaissance texts devoted to the life of Alexander refer to the account of
Justin, including Andrea Fulvio and Angelo Decembrio.

In contrast to Curtius and Plutarch, Arrian was not well-known in the Middle Ages or the
Renaissance. Indeed, the first known manuscript of the Anabasis by Arrian brought to Western
Europe was one owned by Giovanni Aurispa in 1421. His Greek account of the life of Alexander
was not translated into Latin until Emperor Sigismund (d. 1437) asked Pier Paolo Vergerio to
translate the work. In a letter to the Emperor, the humanist recommends the work of Arrian as the
best among all the ancient authors of Alexander, "que haud dubie magna fuerunt". 183 His
translation consists of a simple and medieval style of Latin appropriate to the cultural standards of
his Hungarian patron. 184 In 1450 Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (the future Pope Pius II) acquired
Vergerio's translation in Austria and sent it to Alfonso I of Naples, who commissioned his
historiographer Bartolomeo Facio to amend the translation. However, Facio died in 1457 without

181 For more on the publications of Diodorus Siculus during the Renaissance, see Max Sander, Le
427.
182 Ross (1963), pp. 76-77.
183 Epistola CXXXVIII is reproduced by Cary (1956), pp. 375-77.
184 Ross (1963), p. 81.
completing the revision, which Giacomo Curlo later completed. In all, there were four known translations of the Anabasis made between 1438 and 1508, including the two mentioned above, along with a lost translation by Niccolò Perotti (around the year 1454), and a translation around the year 1507 by the Brescian scholar Carlo Valgulio. The first printed edition of Arrian was not issued until much later, in 1535, by Vettore Trincavelli in Venice.

Petrarch and Early Renaissance Conceptions of Alexander

In addition to translating ancient accounts of the life of Alexander the Great, beginning in the fourteenth century, humanists began to compose their own texts dedicated to the ancient king. Although acknowledged by current scholars, Renaissance accounts of Alexander have yet to be satisfactorily examined, as I noted in the previous chapter. Given the learned tradition of court culture in the Italian Renaissance, it is crucial to analyze the relationship between these texts and the image under consideration in this thesis. Renaissance literature will shed light on how Alexander was viewed by humanist scholars, and by the artists who benefitted from their learning in the production of works of art. Joachim Storost, in his 1935 study, Studien zur Alexandersage in der älteren italienischen Literatur, begins to address this lacuna in the literature, though he

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185 A manuscript made for Pope Nicholas V of Vergerio's version of Arrian resides in Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale nouv. ac. lat. 1302. Facio's manuscript survives in several copies: Vat. Urb. lat. 415 and Naples, Nazionale V. G. I, and Vat. lat. 5268. The last manuscript was made for King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, and features a portrait of Corvinus on the title page. See Ross (1963), p. 81.


primarily surveys Alexander texts from the later Renaissance and Baroque periods.\textsuperscript{188} Among those treated are the Liber Alexandri Magni in volgare (Venice, before 1473), the Libro del Nascimento of 1474-1502 (Treviso and Naples), and the Trionfo Magno (Rome, 1521). The places of publication of these treatises reveal how widely dispersed the literature on Alexander was in Renaissance Italy. While Storost's study is important for the literary interpretations of Alexander, he focuses predominantly on the manuscript tradition, rather than on imagery. Furthermore, he does not describe much of the actual content of the stories, which I will address later in the chapter.

By the fourteenth century, various legendary and historical accounts of Alexander were circulating in Italy, and this serves to explain the numerous references to Alexander in early humanist literature. Dante briefly refers to Alexander in two instances in his Inferno. In canto twelve, Dante and Virgil encounter Alexander among a group of tyrants in Hell, who "took to blood and plunder", though, as Cary notes, this Alexander may, in fact, refer to Alexander of Pherae (d. 358 BCE), rather than Alexander the Great.\textsuperscript{189} However, in canto fourteen, it is evident that the reference to Alexander is to the Macedonian king, when the protagonists traverse a region of fiery hail that Dante compares to "those hot regions of India" that Alexander and his army crossed.\textsuperscript{190}

Dante mentions Alexander in two other works, the first of which is Il Convivio, a poem that is devoted to an allegorical banquet in praise of human and divine knowledge.\textsuperscript{191} This text, written between 1304 and 1308, is one of Dante's least known works, yet the way Alexander is presented offers a pointed contrast to the opinion of Boccaccio and Petrarch, since Dante remarks

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\textsuperscript{188} Storost (1935), op. cit.
\textsuperscript{190} Dante, op. cit., vol. 1, Canto 14, 28-39, p. 143.
\end{flushleft}

In his political treatise, called \textit{De Monarchia}, Dante addresses the subject of Alexander's world rule.\footnote{Dante Alighieri, \textit{Monarchy}, trans. and ed. Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).} In book two, Dante surveys the history of the world before Roman supremacy, demonstrating how earlier attempts at world domination all failed, including that by Alexander the Great. However, Dante concedes that Alexander, king of Macedon, "came closer than anyone else to winning the prize of [world] monarchy."\footnote{Ibid., p. 52. Dante indicates that Livy is his source for this discussion on Alexander's monarchy in comparison to the world rule by the Roman Empire.} Nevertheless, the author adds that God "carried off Alexander from the contest when he was striving to obstruct his Roman rival in the race, so that his foolhardiness might proceed no further."\footnote{Ibid.}

Boccaccio, on the other hand, in his \textit{De Casibus Virorum Illustrium}, cites Alexander as an example of the "disastrous career of princes."\footnote{Cary (1950), p. 46.} The author devotes a section of this work to "Alexander the Great and Callisthenes the Philosopher" (Callisthenes being the nephew of Aristotle and the official historian of Alexander).\footnote{I consulted the edition of \textit{De Casibus Virorum Illustrium} translated by Louis Brewer Hall. Giovanni Boccaccio, \textit{The Fates of Illustrious Men}, trans. Louis Brewer Hall (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1965), book 4, pp. 116-120.} Boccaccio derides Alexander for his ambition and cruelty, writing that after Alexander had conquered Darius and the Persian army, "he acquired such booty that he forgot he was a mortal being. He had the presumption to wish to be worshipped as a god by his followers according to the custom of the Persians."\footnote{Ibid.} Callisthenes, however, was "the most antagonistic" to this wish of the king, and thus Alexander had him tortured and executed. Boccaccio characterizes Callisthenes as a wise and "steadfast"
philosopher, who was ruled by reason (unlike Alexander).\textsuperscript{200} At times, Boccaccio seems to echo the rhetoric of Quintus Curtius Rufus when he asks of Alexander, "for was Fortune able to seize the castle of Philosophy? But what of your lengthy repose, sumptuous feasts, golden robes, obscene lusts, habitual vices? These are your frivolous defenses against Fortune."\textsuperscript{201} Despite Boccaccio's popularity, his opinion of Callisthenes does not seem to have been influential, since other Renaissance authors, such as Baldassare Castiglione, perceive Callisthenes very differently, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter.

Petrarch offers a similar characterization of Alexander to that found in Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium. In De Viris Illustribus, Petrarch presents the most illustrious lives of the ancient Romans, along with that of Alexander. He primarily used the account of Quintus Curtius Rufus as his source, and, from this, extrapolated his view of Alexander as a weak man made vicious by Fortune. In addition to accusing Alexander of insatiable ambition and intolerable cruelty—i.e. the murder of his historian Callisthenes—Petrarch states that when Alexander married Roxanne, the king was motivated not by political gain, but by "dishonourable passion for a contemptible little barbarian girl who would have found a better husband in a man less favoured by Fortune."\textsuperscript{202} Not only does Petrarch emphasize Alexander's vices, but he places the complete dependence of Alexander's success upon Fortune, rather than any personal military skill.

Petrarch briefly refers to Alexander in a number of writings, in a similar manner to Dante, and indeed, as will become evident, this became the pattern among later humanist authors as well. In De Remediis Utriusque Fortune, Petrarch notes that Alexander and Julius Caesar, "though very lucky in fortune, nevertheless [were] always restless and disturbed in life, and

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., book 4, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{200} See especially, Ibid., book 4, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., book 4, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{202} Cary (1950), p. 48. Unfortunately, I was not able to consult a version of De Viris Illustribus that contained the remarks on Alexander.
indeed never happy." Moreover, in Senilium Rerum Libri, Petrarch explicitly calls Alexander "ridiculous" and a "fool", proclaiming that the ancient king lived in fear of the victories of his father, Philip. Most revealing is the fact that throughout his work Petrarch never refers to Alexander as "Alexander the Great", and instead only calls the ancient king "Alexander" or "Alexander the Macedonian." Evidently, to Petrarch, Alexander was not worthy of his cognomen.

It is worthwhile noting that a Roman tradition informed Petrarch's view of Alexander. Some ancient Roman authors wondered if Alexander could have conquered Rome, including the first-century BCE author Livy in his history, Ab Urbe Condita. Livy believed that if Alexander had lived longer, he would have "turned his attention to war with Carthage first, and later with Rome, and [have] crossed over into Italy when somewhat old." However, Livy felt that Rome would have been victorious against Alexander regardless. To prove his argument, Livy compared cavalry and infantry numbers, along with the fact that Alexander would have been "warring in a foreign land" in Italy. Petrarch, in fact, specifically remarks on Livy's assessment of Alexander in his Invectiva Contra Eum Qui Maledixit Italie, a polemic written against the French cardinal, Jean de Caraman, in 1335. He writes that, as Titus Livius [Livy] said, "the Roman people would not have been able to sustain the majesty of Alexander the Macedonian...[because] so many distinguished captains [and] so many thousands of strong and prudent men [would have] resisted one mad adolescent."

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206 Ibid., vol. 4, 9. 19. 6, p. 239.

207 "Il popolo romano non avrebbe sostenere la maesta di Alessandro il Macedone, appena appena conosciuto a Roma...potuto tanti egregi capitani, tante migliaia di uomini forti e prudenti, resistere a un solo pazzo adolescente." Francesco Petrarca, "Invectiva Contra Eum Qui Maledixit..."
During the propaganda war between Octavian and Marc Antony in the first century BCE, Alexander represented the decadent, un-Roman, and the dangerous: qualities that were associated with Antony and the East. Slightly later Roman narratives, such as those by Seneca and his nephew Lucan in the first century CE, emphasized the changes that Alexander had imposed upon traditional Macedonian "democratic" practice through what some Roman writers saw as a tyrannical rule. Seneca, in particular, denigrated Alexander's achievements. He was convinced that Alexander was ruled by his passions and driven to excesses, and thus incapable of mastering his incredible fortune. Furthermore, Alexander's eastward journey invoked a place of excess and decadence, ruled over by despots that Romans, who supported traditional republican values, scorned.

The writings of Petrarch reflect the Roman tradition that presented Alexander as the anti-hero of antiquity. Petrarch, who loved the city of Rome, leapt to its defence with an attack against the man who could have been "greater than the greatest Romans." Indeed, Petrarch ended his life of Alexander with a scathing anecdote relating to Alexander's eponymous uncle, Alexander of Epirus, who fell in Italy against the Lucani and the Brutii tribes in 331 BCE. Petrarch asserts that Alexander of Epirus fought against men, but his nephew against women. Petrarch's insult is a fourteenth-century example of the feminization of the orient, transforming the Orientals whom Alexander defeated into women. This was also a frequent topos in ancient Roman


209 Ibid., p. 190.
211 Cary (1956), p. 266.
212 Similarly, Livy mentions Alexander of Epirus in his discussion of Alexander's hypothetical battle in Italy. See Livy, op cit., 9. 19. 6, p. 239.
213 As in Cary (1950), p. 53.
literature.\textsuperscript{214} The effeminate Alexander of Petrarch, like the Roman Alexander, would have never conquered an empire ruled by virtuous, masculine Roman men.

While Petrarch's account reveals a continuation of a pro-Roman view of Alexander the Great in the early Renaissance, his opinion was not influential, as I have already mentioned. Indeed, the biography of Alexander intended to form part of \textit{De Viris Illustribus} remained in obscurity until the nineteenth century because, at his death, Petrarch's second version of the work, known as the \textit{Epitome} (c. 1342), was left incomplete. Petrarch's friend and literary executor, Lombardo della Seta, finished the remaining biographies. Lombardo recorded the life of Alexander in his \textit{Compendium}, and he replaced Petrarch's harsh study of the king with a catalogue of his conquests, similar to the type found in many medieval world chronicles.\textsuperscript{215} \textit{De Viris Illustribus} was first printed in translation in Verona in 1476, then again in Venice in 1527 by Gregorio de Gregorii under the title \textit{Le Vite degli huomini illustri di messer Francesco Petrarcha}.\textsuperscript{216}

The vilification of Alexander also materialized in the translation of the Twelfth Dialogue on Death by the humanist Giovanni Aurispa in the 1420s.\textsuperscript{217} This work, known as the \textit{Comparatio}, featured a dispute between Scipio, Alexander, and Hannibal before King Minos in the Underworld to decide who among them was the best general. In the original second-century Greek text by Lucian, Minos awarded Alexander the top prize, while Scipio placed second.\textsuperscript{218} However, Aurispa changed the ranking in his Latin translation. Scipio was now the victor, not Alexander. Aurispa's version became the standard translation of the \textit{Comparatio} in the

\textsuperscript{214} For more information on ancient Roman literature and the degeneracy of the "East", see Spencer (2002), especially pp. 189-92.
\textsuperscript{215} Cary (1950), p. 54.
\textsuperscript{216} Hadjinicolaou in \textit{Alexander the Great in European Art} (1998), op. cit., p. 69.
\textsuperscript{217} Aurispa (1376-1459) was interested in Greek literature and travelled to Constantinople to further his study. When he returned to Italy in 1423, he brought 238 Greek texts, including manuscripts of Diodorus Siculus and Arrian. See Cast (1970), pp. 6-7.
Quattrocento. His version was printed in the 1470 edition of Lucian, where it was instead ascribed to Leonardo Bruni. The first Italian translation, carried out by Nicolò da Lonigo, did not appear until 1525.

By awarding the victory to Scipio, the revised Comparatio reflected a similar pro-Roman stance to Petrarch's writings. In the opinion of Petrarch, Scipio Africanus "was simply the most perfect man of antiquity." Indeed, De Viris Illustribus commemorated Scipio's virtues, and Petrarch's famous poem, Africa, was dedicated to the Roman hero. Aurispa's Scipio echoes the sentiment of Petrarch by announcing his fine moral character and alluding to the vices of Alexander. "I was not carried away by Fortune after my victory at Carthage," he proclaims. Alexander was accused by his detractors of riding the coattails of Fortune to achieve his immortal fame, as we will also see in the work of Angelo Decembrio.

The scholar David Cast, who has written extensively on ekphrastic themes in Renaissance art, argues that Aurispa's Scipio embodies a specifically Italian hero by his supremacy over a Greek (Alexander) or a Spaniard (Hannibal). Indeed, Florentines popularized the translation of Aurispa. In Florence, Greeks—including Alexander—were represented as tyrants, and the corruption of their civilization justified the conquest of Greek states by Republican Rome. Romans were viewed as the precursors of the Florentine Republic, and of

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219 Within ten years of its circulation, the text was attacked by Guarino and Poggio Bracciolini. See Emilio Mattioli, Luciano e l'umanesimo (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, 1980), pp. 49-50.
223 Ibid.
In her doctoral thesis, Caroline Campbell compiled a list of extant manuscript compendia found within Florentine archives. Significantly, the Comparatio appears in a number of these compendia. However, whether Aurispa's version was particularly popular in Florence because of the dominance of a republican hero (Scipio), or, if the dissemination of a version in which Scipio surpassed Alexander contributed to the vilification of the latter in Florence, remains unclear.

While Giovanni Aurispa and Petrarch both vilified Alexander in their writings, Jacques de Longuy included Alexander the Great as one of the worthy men from antiquity, along with Hector and Julius Caesar in his French romance, Les Voeux du Paon (1312). The Nine Worthies, or Neuf Preux, consist of three triads of worthy men: three pagan, three Jewish, and three Christian. In the Voeux du Paon, each worthy was enumerated in a brief account of their deeds as an exemplar for the reader to emulate. The theme proved so popular in Western Europe that from the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries, no subject was more frequently encountered in the humanist art and literature than the Nine Worthies.

Related to the Nine Worthies are the uomini famosi, a literary and visual tradition that includes Petrarch's De Viris Illustribus. Series of uomini famosi portrayed famous men, though the theme derived from Graeco-Roman literary traditions rather than late medieval French

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225 In particular, the Comparatio appears in Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, Plut. XLIII MS 17, fols. 28r-30r.; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Cl. VI, num. 115, fols. 158v-159r.; Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1105, fols. 73r-74v.; Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, Plut. XLIII, MS 26, fols. 152v-156v.
226 While the content of Les Voeux du Paon was not connected with stories of Alexander, the poem was frequently interpolated into many manuscripts of the Roman d'Alexandre, as Cary (1956), p. 32 has pointed out.
227 The numeric symbolism as the square of the number of the Trinity accounted for much of their immediate popularity. Ross (1963), Appendix 1, p. 108.
romances, as Christianne Joost-Gaugier has demonstrated.\textsuperscript{228} Plutarch's \textit{Lives}, the best-known collection of ancient biographies of \textit{uomini famosi}, was part of a tradition of collections of \textit{vitae} that was at least a century old by the time of his writing. The Republican Roman authors Cicero, Varro, and the \textit{De Viris Illustribus} of Cornelius Nepos all predated Plutarch. As a revival of ancient culture, Renaissance literature and art picked up on the theme. Cycles of famous men adorned princely palaces and civic buildings as exemplars of civic humanism, as Joost-Gaugier describes, to encourage viewers to act with the same virtues that the famous men embodied. The most famous artistic example of \textit{uomini famosi} in Renaissance Italy, by Andrea del Castagno in the Villa Carducci at Legnaia, does not include Alexander. Indeed, most fifteenth-century Italian cycles do not.

However, despite the absence of Alexander from many \textit{uomini famosi} cycles, the Macedonian king was included among the twenty-two figures that decorated an "aula minor" in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence during the late fourteenth century, probably executed under the chancellorship of Coluccio Salutati (d. 1406).\textsuperscript{229} Alexander was positioned between Ninus, King of Assyria, and Claudian, a Florentine poet. While the portraits were destroyed when subsequent reconstructions of the Palazzo Vecchio took place, a fifteenth-century Badia codex, discovered by Lorenzo Mehus around 1759, contained the epigrams copied from the text originally found below each worthy.\textsuperscript{230} Alexander's epigram summarized his military career, and offered the version of his death (by poison) recorded in the \textit{Romance of Alexander}:

\begin{quote}

\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
Alexander the Great, king of Macedon
Famed Alexander who avenged the fate of his father,
Destroyed the Theban rebels and spared the Athenian sages.
He subjugated the Persians, Scythians, Bactrians, and Indians,
and demanding sacred rights, perished by poison in Babylon.  

Although this Florentine cycle of *uomini famosi* included Alexander as a worthy hero from antiquity, once again the presentation follows the Roman tradition vilifying the king. God demanded retribution from a figure who had achieved such earthly fame and glory. Thus, Alexander met his end not in a valiant battle, but by the feminine manner of poison. While not formal literature, this epigram would have been read by an elite audience and helped to inform their perception of the ancient king. Other late medieval cycles of Worthy Men and *uomini famosi* included captions below the figures, highlighting their virtuous deeds and behaviour, and a similar inscription accompanied a fresco featuring Alexander at the Castello della Manta, near Turin, which I will discuss in Chapter Three. In the context of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Castello della Manta, these images and epigrams of Alexander served as examples of behaviour for the rulers of each respective realm: a warning for Republican Florentine oligarchs, and an exemplar for a courtly duke.

With the exception of the *Les Faitz d'Alexandre* translation of Curtius' text by Vasco Fernandez da Lucena in 1468, no new significant texts dedicated to the life of Alexander emerged in the fifteenth century.  

231 My translation of the original Latin, which is transcribed by Hankey (1959), p. 364:
Magnus Alexander rex Macedonum
Clarus Alexander patris ultus fata, rebelles
Evertit thebas, doctisque pepercit athenis.
Persas, et scithios, bactrasque subegit, et

Qui sacra deposcens perit babilone veneno.

232 Copies of this manuscript exist in Italian collections, including Vat. Regin. lat. 736 and Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Medic. Palat. 155. See Ross (1963), pp. 69-70.
scholars sought to display their knowledge of antiquity in their writings. For example, Leon Battista Alberti mentioned Alexander in his artistic treatise, *Della Pittura* (1435), when the author considered how to give specific types of figures movement appropriate to their stations in life.\(^{233}\) In yet another work, his *Trivia Senatoria*, Alberti brought up Alexander in a discussion of how nature gives certain attributes to people.\(^{234}\) He cited the examples of Caesar, Alexander, and Cato as figures who had an appearance that made them easy to love, or to hate. For Alberti, Alexander was eloquent and had a pleasing charm.\(^{235}\)

Another Tuscan humanist, Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), likewise included references to Alexander in his writing. His *Letters on the Politics of Aristotle*, written to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester in 1433, commented on Alexander's reputation for learnedness and the important value it held for modern rulers. He wrote, "While studies and letters are important to human beings generally, they are most necessary to princes, unless perhaps we should think that King Alexander wasted his time on Aristotle."\(^{236}\) Bruni later echoed this theme in his *Letter on Education* to Niccolò Strozzi (1431/34), when he asserted that,

> The dignity and worth of the humanities is, by contrast, so great that no prince or king thinks it a shameful thing to gain distinction for literary knowledge and eloquence. Philip surely did not entrust his son Alexander to Aristotle for him to learn the civil law…but in order for him to be taught about life and correct behaviour, and to learn eloquence.\(^{237}\)

In addition, Bruni undertook an account of the life of Aristotle, which, naturally, included numerous references to Alexander, as the young prince was tutored by the philosopher.\(^{238}\) As the


\(^{234}\) Leon Battista Alberti, "Trivia Senatoria," in *De Legato Pontificio* (Venice, 1558), fols. 18v-19r

\(^{235}\) "Facundia, et lepore gratus" in Ibid.


\(^{237}\) Ibid., pp. 251-53, at p. 253.

examples of Bruni and Alberti reveal, for many early fifteenth-century humanists, Alexander represented an ideal, learned and eloquent ruler whom their patrons could seek to emulate.239

Clear evidence of a dedicated humanist interest in Alexander the Great comes from the work of Angelo Decembrio (c. 1413-after 1467), who analyzed and critiqued the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander. Decembrio came from a family of at least four brothers—including Pier Candido, who translated Quintus Curtius Rufus for the Duke of Milan—and his father Uberto was one of the earliest Greek scholars in Italy. He worked for numerous courts across Italy and Spain, though he spent his early career among at the courts of Niccolò d'Este and his son Leonello at Ferrara. Afterward, in Naples, he collected manuscripts for the library of Juan II of Aragon (1456-58). He spent a brief time in Spain after 1458, and then moved to Milan under Galeazzo Maria Sforza in the 1460s, before returning to Ferrara under Borso d'Este (1465-66). He spent his final year in Burgundy in 1466. The best-known text by Decembrio, De Politia Litteraria, is a treatise primarily concerned with the achievement of literary polish through the study of Greek and Roman texts. It is framed as a series of conversations at the court of Leonello d'Este in Ferrara, but the dialogue evolves, in the words of Michael Baxandall, into "straight glossaries of Latin and Greek words arranged in alphabetical order" in the later parts.240

An autograph manuscript of Decembrio's De Supplicationibus maiis in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, which dates to 1447, lists an early version of De Politia Litteraria.241 As signified by the 1447 codex, Decembrio had originally dedicated the work to Leonello d'Este. The final

239 Indeed, the humanist tradition of presenting Alexander the Great as a model for leadership continued into the sixteenth century when Niccolò Machiavelli recognized Alexander's significance as an exemplar of authority in a chapter in Il Principe dedicated to the subject of "Why the Kingdom of Darius, conquered by Alexander, did not rebel against his successors after Alexander's death." See Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince, eds. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 15-17.


version of De Politia Litteraria, however, was dedicated to Pope Pius II. This copy exists in one manuscript, Vat. Cod. Lat. 1794, and in two printed editions, one from Augsburg (1540), and the other from Basel (1562). The manuscript was recorded in the Vatican Library in 1518, from where it was seized in the Sack of Rome (according to the frontispiece of the Augsburg edition). In addition, the frontispiece records that De Politia Litteraria was considered to be a treasure from the papal library.

De Politia Litteraria has not been carefully studied by scholars, in part because it is simply not well known today, and nor was it in the Renaissance. Additionally, the Latin is difficult to follow, and Decembrio often uses obscure classicizing vocabulary. There are, in fact, few critical studies devoted to Angelo Decembrio himself. Paola Scarcia Piancentini outlines Decembrio's biography and the dating of his manuscripts in her 1980 article, "Angelo Decembrio e la sua scrittura." Albano Biondi discusses the dissemination of De Politia Litteraria to print in 1540 Augsburg in his 1982 article. Until the publication of Anthony Grafton's What was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe (2007) no studies of Decembrio dealt with his citations of Alexander the Great and the classical accounts of his life—i.e. Quintus Curtius

242 Ibid., p. 309.

POLITIAE LITTERARIAE ANGELI DECEMBRII MEDIOLANENSIS ORATORIS CLARISSIMI, AD SUMMUM PONTIFICEM Pium II. libri septem, multiiuga eruditione refertissimi, ante annos octoginta plus minus scripti, et Rhomae in Biblioteca Pontificis thesauri loco reconditi, Clade vero Romana Carolo Borbonio, & Georgio Fronspergio ducibus Clarissimis, Anno M.D.XXVII. eruti, et per nos magni labore et diligentia in lucem aediti, quod omnibus studiosis faustum foelixque sit.

244 Piacentini (1980), op. cit.
245 Biondi (1982), op. cit.
Rufus—which are an important aspect of my research. However, rather than examine the reception of Alexander, Grafton briefly highlights the historiographical significance of Decembrio's analysis of Curtius and the contrary nature of his account of the life of Macedonian king.

Most references to Alexander in De Politia Litteraria are anecdotal and demonstrate the correct use of vocabulary (adverbs, homonyms, proper names) to achieve polish. However, the courtly protagonists of Decembrio's treatise also discuss the character and behaviour of Alexander, citing the Roman author Quintus Curtius Rufus. Through this, Decembrio displays an intimate familiarity with Curtius' account of the life of Alexander. One of the first references to Alexander, for example, compares the tenses of the verb 'to stand' utilized by Curtius (called the "Latin author") with the tense variations used by the "Greek authors" (Diodorus, Arrian, and Plutarch) when describing how Alexander's soldiers "stood strongly in battle." Decembrio refers to Curtius in a later section of the treatise that specifically associates his account of Alexander with the humanist intentions of De Politia Litteraria. The protagonist of De Politia Litteraria, Leonello d'Este, wishes to cultivate his humanist education by undertaking the same study habits as Alexander. According to the "histories of the writer Quintus Curtius Rufus", rather than sleeping through wintry nights, Alexander devoted himself to the "nocturnal studies" of

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246 Anthony Grafton, *What was history? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). While I will only address the figure of Alexander in *De Politia Litteraria*, he is, in fact, one of many classical figures discussed in the treatise by the protagonists of Decembrio.

247 Norbert Witten transcribed the *De Politia Litteraria* manuscript in the Vatican in his 2002 edition of the text, which facilitated its study for this author, as did the presence of a facsimile of the manuscript at the library of the Warburg Institute in London.

248 Decembrio (2002), op. cit., 59. 5. Decembrio seems to have read the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander by Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Justin, amongst other classical texts.
watching, writing, and meditation. Such a dedication to liberal studies would, naturally, improve the literary finesse of any humanist courtier.

Leonello then shifts the focus to discuss Alexander's death. Pliny the Elder, Livy, Sallust, Caesar and Justin gave varying accounts of Alexander's death and the cause of the sickness that killed the king. The account of Alexander's death in Curtius is unclear because there is, in fact, a section of text missing. However, the text that follows does include a discussion of the succession dispute among his generals.

Through the arguments of his protagonist Leonello, Decembrio is particularly critical of Alexander in a later section of the treatise. Since Decembrio primarily used the account of Curtius as his source, much of the discussion of Alexander the Great focuses on military aspects. For example, "Alexander would have achieved nothing of greatness or smallness" without the work of his seasoned general Parmenion and, by extension, his other advisors. If only the battles were considered, then all of the soldiers and mercenaries who stood with Alexander should receive equal praise. As for Darius, when Alexander conquered him, Leonello comments that his armies followed the Persian king in vain, whether by bribery, promises, or fear of punishment. According to Curtius, no Persians ever deserted Darius, yet, later in his account, he describes a deserter informing Alexander about the location of the Persian cavalry. Decembrio highlights his Greek learning with a Homeric comparison: his protagonist wonders if Darius was pursued blindly by Alexander as the son of Atreus [Agamemnon] followed Paris in

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249 Ibid., 65. 2: "Adeo vivax illius ingenium ab litterario munere rarissime quiescebat, hybernis lucubrationibus multum vigilans, scribens, meditans."
250 Ibid., 65. 3.
252 Decembrio (2002), 67. 8: "Quae laus sane ad Paremenonis consilia refertur. Nam si ad solam dimicandi spectat operam, omnes et alii commillationes gregariiique milites in eodem laudis genere constabunt, sine quorum opera nihil, inquam, magni vel minimi Alexander aggressus est."
253 Ibid.
254 Ibid., 67. 9.
vain. Curtius is concerned with battle formations, numbers and types of soldiers and numerical
detail, a focus which Decembrio's criticisms echo. Leonello brings up Curtius' mathematical error
when the author records that envoys brought 30,000 talents of gold to ransom Darius' mother and
two daughters, when the actual amount was 30,000 gold pounds. Here, Leonello notes that
certain authors foolishly changed the ransom from pounds to talents in the vernacular versions
(i.e. Latin) for dramatic effect.

Leonello continues to critique Quintus Curtius Rufus for conflating all the Indian kings
and Indian customs of different regions into one unified king and one custom of life. He
compares this conflation to how religion (Christianity) venerates one supreme pontiff and
partakes in one manner of religious rites rather than identifying them as specifically Spanish or
Italian. When Curtius stated that Alexander conquered the king of India, he meant, in fact, that
Alexander only conquered Porus because other princes of the Indians had not yet gone against
Alexander. Curtius, Decembrio writes, presented a contrary account of Alexander being both
lazily drunken, while also stating that he was the best warrior and a strong man. Leonello
criticizes Curtius for praising Alexander posthumously, the way one would if giving a funerary
oration for a friend "where faults are not spoken of." Had Alexander achieved old age,
however, Leonello believes that the king might have learned to control and moderate himself.

Similarly, Leonello and his companions accuse Curtius of "covering over" Alexander's
prominent faults. Curtius did not remember, the protagonist affirms, the rages Alexander had

257 Ibid., 67. 12. Moreover, Leonello notes that, as Justin and the Greek authors assert, the wife of
Darius was also his sister.
258 Ibid., 67. 16.
259 Ibid., 67. 17.
260 Ibid., 67. 18.
261 Ibid., 67. 20: "An quemadmodum orationem pro amico funebrem diceremus, ubi vitia vel
tacentur penitus vel etiam virtutum loco numerantur mendaci oratione subornata, non sat suis acta
temporibus?"
262 Interestingly, it is usually Arrian who is accused of this by modern Alexander scholars. See,
for example, Heckel and Yardley (2002), p. xxiii. The scholar A. B. Bosworth is particularly
when drinking, nor his cavorting with eunuchs and male prostitutes. Curtius asserted that Alexander did nothing luxuriously, or arbitrarily, which Leonello notes is contrary to what Curtius noted elsewhere in his account. However, Curtius, Leonello maintains, was a rhetorician, not a historian. Thus, he praised Alexander's self-restraint and moderation, yet he omitted the issue of what Decembrio phrases as Alexander's "bodily pleasures" (and thus, his moral faults). The Greek authors claimed that Alexander "used" his friend Hephaestion in the womanly manner. For this, Alexander is considered to be outside accepted sexual norms, and, therefore, his character is beyond nature because of his homosexual relationships. Curtius would have been very familiar with the Greek accounts in order to write his own history of Alexander's life. Despite all of the strong words voiced by Leonello, he brings up these aspects of Alexander's character primarily to reveal the stylistic faults of Curtius' writing. However, Leonello also cautions his readers about the vices of men ruled by emotions rather than reason.

Continuing the moral assessment of the character of Alexander, Leonello leads a debate to determine whether Alexander or his father Philip was the greater king. He refers to Plutarch's Lives, stating that the Greek author "put forth in the manner of comparisons" the parallel biographies of worthy ancients, including Alexander and Caesar. Again, Decembrio makes a Homeric allusion, writing that Philip was not even designated 'great' by all the Greeks of old, because Greeks did not call men 'great' or 'magnipotent' except when Homer referred to his heroes of the Iliad as such. The repeated references to Homer and Plutarch—particularly the

263 Ibid., 67. 22.
264 See Grafton (2007), pp. 49-60, especially at p. 58, for an examination of Curtius' role as a historian in De Politia Litteraria.
265 Decembrio (2002), 67. 22. The "corpoream delectationem" is noted in several instances to be "extra naturalem" or "praeter naturam."
266 Ibid., 73. 1: "in comparationum morem edidisset."
267 Ibid., 73. 1: "Multo maiorem Alexandrum ideoque sibi magni cognomen indictum, sive quod aliis eiusdem nominis Alexandris praestantior exititerit, haud sane Philippo nec aliis Graecorum veterum designatum, nisi cum Homerus magnificos vel magnipotens heroas suos appellarit."
latter—highlight Decembrio's familiarity with Greek texts, which was uncommon in mid-fifteenth century Italy.

The protagonists of the dialogue quote Cicero on the Philip versus Alexander debate. Leonello's companion, Giovanni Gualenghi, notes that in his De Officiis, Cicero designated one ruler "always great" and the other "often most distasteful". Philip was "sometimes truly most distasteful", namely in regards to his spousal and private affairs. In Giovanni's opinion, Philip was also "less swift" than Alexander in his wars against the Greeks. Giovanni reveals that Cicero, in fact, exposed the integrity of Philip and showed Alexander to be lustful and greedy, an opinion that was not unusual among the staunch republicans in ancient Rome. However, Leonello notes that in the cases they have discussed, all the virtues are adapted to Alexander and he is praised up to the stars, but, with regards to Philip, there is no mention. According to Cicero, in men such as Alexander and Caesar, "temerity passes for fortitude, greed for magnanimity, desire for modesty" and such men are raised up by wonderful praises. Leonello weighs the literary evidence and concludes that, like that of Curtius, Cicero's account was not without fault. Therefore, Alexander may keep the worthy cognomen.

In the best-known section of De Politia Litteraria, Leonello and his companions discuss theories pertaining to art, notably the *all'antica* proclivities of contemporary painters. While the majority of this section focuses on how an artist can best represent Nature through the portrayal

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268 Ibid., 73.2. Philip set aside his queen, Olympias (Alexander's mother), in order to marry the teenage niece of an advisor. Though polygamy was practiced in the Macedonian royal house, this affair was much resented by both Olympias and Alexander, who felt his inheritance of the throne compromised.  
269 Ibid., 73. 2: "Quemadmodum forte in bellis eius contra Graecos minus strenuum apparauisse vel potita de hostibus victoria clementiam minus exercuisse aut in re uxoria privataque reprehensum." Alexander was known for his "lightning warfare" (*CELERITAS BELLANDI*) against his enemies. See Spencer (1998), p. 198.  
270 Decembrio (2002), 73. 4.  
271 Ibid., 73. 6: "temeritatem pro fortitudine, avariciam pro magnanimitate, libidinem pro modestia." Caesar, in Cicero's opinion, was a tyrant.  
272 Ibid., 73. 3-4.
of nude figures (like the best ancient statues), Alexander is once again mentioned. According to
Leonello, clumsy northern painters represent Alexander's horse Bucephalus "not with the jaws of
an ox, as Curtius describes" but instead these artists take liberties and portray Bucephalus as a
"hell-horse of Plutos[sic] or Charon." Decembrio reflects the artistic theories of Alberti by
urging Italian artists away from the "folly of these northern people." Instead, the artist should
consult and imitate the ancients in art, as humanists consult the ancients in literary polish and
rhetoric.

Despite—or perhaps because of—Decembrio's long, often rambling, discussions and
multifarious references to antique heroes, De Politia Litteraria remained unknown outside select
readers of the papal circle who had both access to the manuscript and the ability to read the
challenging Latin prose. Nevertheless, Decembrio's examination of Alexander through the
dialogue of Leonello d'Este and his court reveals an increased interest in the Macedonian king
during the Italian Renaissance. The learned aristocratic characters in De Politia Litteraria do not
discuss the well-known events of the life of Alexander, such as his marriage to Roxanne. Rather,
the protagonists focus on details and minor events, for example, the monetary figures of the
ransom offered by Darius for his family, and Alexander's relationships with his generals and
soldiers. For the first time in the Renaissance, we see a dedicated interest in the detailed historical
life of Alexander the Great within the debates of De Politia Litteraria. In turn, this interest in the
historical Alexander would soon be reflected in art.

273 Michael Baxandall published a useful translation of this section of De Politia Litteraria. See
274 Decembrio seems to be familiar with tapestries of Pasquier Grenier of Tournai. The workshop
of Grenier executed several sets of tapestries featuring scenes from the life of Alexander the
Great for important patrons across Europe, including the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of
Milan, in the mid-fifteenth century. As will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, the Palazzo
Doria Pamphilij in Genoa contains two such tapestries. The man-eating horse Bucephalus is
shown in the tapestries with horns, rather like the "hell-horse" Decembrio describes. It is entirely
possible that Decembrio could have come into contact with similar tapestries at one of the many
courts where he worked. The court of Ferrara, in particular, patronized and imported Flemish
tapestry weavers in the fifteenth century.
Later Renaissance Accounts of Alexander the Great

In the aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, Alexander took on a new importance in the consciousness of Western literature. Along with his world conquest, in the fifteenth century it was understood that Alexander was the vanquisher of the East and the avenger of the West (i.e. the Greeks) against the Persian "barbarians." Alexander became a figurehead of the re-conquest of the Holy Land, and he was adopted into papal rhetoric. In a speech to Pope Paul II (1464-71), the Venetian patrician and politician Bernardo Giustiniani lauded Alexander as the victor of the Orient, who, when sitting on the throne of Darius, caused Demaratus, the Corinthian friend of Philip, to cry out: "O our unhappy fathers, who died without seeing Alexander on the throne of Darius!" Naturally, this laudatory statement also alluded to the ancestors of Giustiniani who had died without seeing the Venetian Paul II (born Pietro Barbo) on the papal throne.

Continuing this rhetorical tradition of linking popes to Alexander, in a speech to Pope Innocent VIII (1484-92), Ettore Fieschi of Genoa referred to Aristotle, along with Philip and his "only son Alexander." For the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI, the numerous connections with his classical namesake were explicit. The Genoese Jacopo Spinola asked,

What gregarious princedom, the highest kings, [and] emperors, do remember the whole of the terrestrial orbit? They silence Ninus of Assyria, who first of all brought war of all to [his] neighbours: Cyrus of Persia, they pass over in silence. They still the Macedonians: Amyntas, Philip, and Alexander.

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276 This and all of the following speeches are found in Orationes Clarorum Hominum vel Honoris Officiique causa ad Principes, vel in fundere de virtutibus eorum habitae (Venice, 1559). Plutarch relates the story concerning Demaratus in Alexander, 37.4, p. 337.
277 Orationes Clarorum (1559), fol. 11r. The speech was given on 27 April 1485. The translation is my own.
278 Interestingly, the antipope Alexander V (1409-10) was a Greek.
279 Ibid., fol. 22v.
Here, the office of the pope silenced and superseded even the greatest princedoms of the ancient world, including the empire of Alexander. Another speech dedicated to Pope Alexander VI, given by Giasone da Maino of Pesaro, announced that nothing could express such shame as the greatest of orators, Demosthenes, becoming weak in the presence of one man—Alexander. Both Angelo Poliziano and Nicholas Tygrinus compared Alexander VI to the Macedonian king, as Sabine Poeschel has pointed out. Poliziano urged the pope to wage war against the Muslims, and, in a play on Alexander's Latin nomenclature, he proclaimed that the pope should be "not great, but greatest; not king, but Pope." Tygrinus also encouraged Alexander VI to live up to his name and to be victorious against all of the enemies of the Catholic faith (i.e. "omnes Orientis populos"). He used similar superlative language when he announced that, "it is better to be the prince of the Romans than the Macedonians" and that the pope will surpass Alexander. The Pope, like the Macedonian king, reigns over the entirety of the civilized world, but because the pope is a disciple of Christ, not a pagan, he will surpass Alexander the Great.

The papacies after the Fall of Constantinople marked a watershed in the renewed literary interest in the historical Alexander. Indeed, no less than eighteen accounts of the life of Alexander entered the papal library between 1475 and 1526. Pope Alexander VI Borgia had a particular affinity for his namesake, as the frequent mention of the Macedonian king in rhetoric

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280 Ibid., fol. 25v.
282 Orationes Clarorum (1559), fol. 36v.
283 Ibid., fols. 37r-37v.
284 See the inventories transcribed in Maria Bertòla, ed., I due primi registri di prestito della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Codici Vaticani Latini 3964, 3966 (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostólica Vaticana, 1942). Among the accounts of the life of Alexander listed are those by Diodorus Siculus, Justin (Pompeius Trogus), Plutarch, Arrian, and Josephus.
from his papacy attests. His successor, Julius II, who loathed Alexander VI, viewed himself as the Julius Caesar to Borgia's Alexander the Great, and, therefore, was not much interested in representations of Alexander in literature, or in art.

Following the bellicose papacy of Julius II, humanists hailed the reign of Leo X (1513-21) as the beginning of a new golden age of culture and learning. Under his papacy are found some of the most telling Renaissance texts devoted to Alexander. The first example, *Illustrium Imagines*, was published in 1517 by Andrea Fulvio (c. 1470-1527), a pupil of Pomponio Leto and an antiquarian scholar in his own right. The work contains a series of 207 brief moralizing biographies of ancient figures, including a large number of women. This book was intended to be instructive, and evolved from Fulvio's earlier employment as a primary school teacher, which involved the education of both sons and daughters of the Roman rich. A numismatic woodcut "portrait", intended to evoke ancient Roman coins, accompanies each biography. The *Illustrium Imagines* was reissued at Lyons in 1524, and then imitated in the *Imperatorum Romanorum Libellus una cum imaginibis ad vivam effigiem expressis* (1525) by Johann Huttlich, which was subsequently reprinted.
Alexander the Great appears as the second entry in Illustrium Imagines, following the god Janus. With the exception of a mention of Alexander's fondness for wine, the presentation of the king in Illustrium Imagines is relatively positive:

Alexander, son of Philip, king of Macedon, by virtue, and by faults greater than his father: the reason of his conquering is clear, [he] quickly got things done. And publicly, with his enemies scattered, he was magnificent in the rejoicing of his spirit, when he burned with ardour, neither was there delay nor a limit in vengeance. Gluttonous of wine, he heedlessly carried himself into danger. Happy to be feared more than to be loved. Exceedingly cultured with letters, of great loyalty, generous, a spirit prompt to spare the conquered. With the skills that his father Philip laid for the foundations of his rule of the world, Alexander achieved the heights of glory of the whole enterprise.290

The text of Fulvio uses Justin's epitome as a source, and belongs to the tradition that saw Alexander continuing the work of his father, whose virtues and faults he possessed in magnified form.291 Although Philip the begun the enterprise of an "imperium orbis", Alexander, who was superior to his father in both virtues and faults, achieved the summit of glory by finishing the conquest of the known world.292 The numismatic portrait above the text shows Alexander in profile facing left, with flowing hair and an aquiline nose (Fig. 1). On the side of his helmet a human Lapith battling a centaur is shown. Roberto Weiss, who has written extensively on Fulvio, edited a facsimile edition of the Illustrium Imagines (1967).293 He believes this portrait comes from contorniates, which are late antique bronze medals of uncertain purpose that often portrayed famous heroes and savants.294

In addition to Fulvio, Leo X patronized the author Domenico Falugio, whose Trionpho Magno, based on the historical account of the life of Alexander by Quintus Curtius Rufus, won

290 Andrea Fulvio, Illustrium Imagines (Rome, 1517). The translation is my own.
291 Hadjinicolaou in Alexander the Great in European Art (1998), op. cit., p. 70.
292 Ibid., p. 70.
293 Weiss (1967), op. cit.
him the poet's crown from the pope. This Italian poem in twenty-seven cantos in ottava rima was not influential, however, and exists in only one edition, printed in Rome in 1521.

The most famous literary work of the early sixteenth century in which Alexander appears is *Il Cortegiano* by Baldassare Castiglione, first printed in Venice by Aldus Manutius (1528). Castiglione, similar to Decembrio, frames his book as a dialogue, but he sets his work at the court of the Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro. However, *Il Cortegiano* is concerned with the achievement of courtly manners, rather than literary polish. Castiglione further differs from Decembrio by presenting Alexander as a balanced man, and a continent and wise ruler. Although Alexander appears less frequently in *Il Cortegiano* than in *De Politia Litteraria*, Castiglione includes Alexander in a number of anecdotes related by the speakers. Furthermore, the protagonists of *Il Cortegiano* consider the courtly qualities of Alexander, of which the most prominent is his reputation for learnedness: for example, his reverence for Homer is mentioned. This is followed by a comparison of Caesar, Alexander, Scipio and Hannibal. All of these ancient heroes committed such remarkable deeds that they inspire a fervent longing in modern courtiers to follow their examples. Alexander and Scipio, notably, abstained from acting dishonestly towards captured women brought before them: "each of them did a deed worth much

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294 See Weiss' note in Ibid., p. 70; also Cunnally (1999), p. 64.
296 See Ibid., p. 272; Storost (1935), pp. 231-82. Morosoni briefly discusses one of the episodes found within the poem, about an eye-shaped stone that Alexander is unable to pick up at the end of the world. The episode was meant to represent Alexander's greed and the transience of life. See Morosini in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* (2011), pp. 351-52. Interestingly, the title page of the only extant copy of the *Trionfo Magno* shows Alexander in a triumphal car drawn by elephants, which may allude to Leo's pet elephant Hanno, but, additionally, to Alexander's use of war elephants in Persia and India. For a description of the title page, see Ross (1963), p. 73
297 Castiglione's source is likely Plutarch's account, according to Cary (1956), p. 267.
299 Ibid., book 1, p. 70.
praise." In the case of Alexander, he welcomed the female relatives of his enemy Darius into his own family.

According to the speakers of Il Cortegiano, the ideal courtier should have an understanding of painting in order to appreciate beauty, as Alexander appreciated Apelles' painting so much that he gave his mistress, Campaspe, to the painter. Alexander not only disregarded his own affections and desire for Campaspe through this gift, but he proclaimed that no other artist should paint his portrait besides Apelles. Castiglione's speakers underscore the admirable qualities of Alexander, including his "noble courage", his "deeds of continence" and "martial prowess", and his respect for women. In contrast to Decembrio, Castiglione highlights the magnanimity of Alexander towards the family of Darius, rather than presenting Alexander's encounter with Darius' family as an opportunity to acquire a ransom or dowry.

Castiglione also recognizes that Alexander's historian Callisthenes, unlike his uncle Aristotle, did not practice the ways of a good courtier, which is in contrast to Boccaccio's presentation of Callisthenes as a steadfast philosopher ruled by reason. Callisthenes, in Castiglione's opinion, spoke slanderously about Alexander because he was too sharp with the "bare truth", and did not "mingle it with courtliness." This is a warning to readers that a lack of courtly manners towards one's prince could result in death. In Il Cortegiano Alexander is presented in a way that embodies an ideal prince. His respect for men, letters, artists and education all reflect the behaviour expected of Renaissance courtiers.

This chapter introduced the classical accounts of Alexander's life, and summarized their transformation and translation over the course of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. As I have demonstrated, a variety of literary portrayals of Alexander developed from the late antique period onward, including the rich and complex Romance of Alexander tradition that popularized a

300 Ibid., book 2, p. 224.
301 Ibid., book 1, pp. 80-82.
Christianized hero who embarked on mythical adventures in the East. However, it was not until the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 that the historical Alexander began to play a significant role in humanist texts of Renaissance Italy. The Ottoman threat, combined with a revival of classical literature and art, contributed to the re-emergence of the historical Alexander in Western Europe. For the first time since antiquity, historical accounts of his life were scrutinized and used as the basis for a new understanding of the Macedonian king, though aspects of the romance tradition continued to echo throughout the Renaissance, including in the work of Raphael. As we will see over the course of this thesis, this new historical interpretation of Alexander the Great motivated artists of the Italian Renaissance to take an interest in his life and informed how they rendered the ancient king in a variety of media.

303 Ibid., book 4, pp. 299-300.
Chapter 3

Humanism and Alexander the Great

Humanist themes, emphasizing the values and achievements of man, pervaded the literature and informed the art of the early Renaissance in Italy, including images of Alexander the Great. Humanism involved a renewed interest in ancient literature, and allowed Renaissance authors—and subsequently artists—to access classical accounts of the life of the ancient king. Through this predilection for antiquity, a shift occurred during the early Renaissance away from the legendary representation of Alexander in the romance tradition and toward the historical monarch. This chapter will explore the relationship between text and image in early Renaissance conceptions of Alexander based on humanist writings and the illustrated manuscript tradition.

Because there was no detailed humanist writing devoted to Alexander until Angelo Decembrio in the later fifteenth century, this chapter focuses on early Renaissance images of Alexander, which developed from manuscript traditions of *uomini famosi* and the *Trionfi* of Petrarch. However, in order to understand the early Renaissance artistic interest in Alexander, visual antecedents from the late Middle Ages must be briefly addressed first. In the late Middle Ages, one mode of conceptualizing the Macedonian king was as a courtly knight. This Christianized hero of the romances appealed to the audiences of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, particularly at the courts of Northern Italy. As discussed in Chapter Two, the *Romance of Alexander* was one of the most popular secular tales throughout late medieval Europe, and the Alexander promoted by these manuscripts informed artistic perceptions of the king. Since the literary tradition of the *Romance of Alexander* plays such a salient role in formulating Alexander's character in the late Middle Ages, this chapter will begin by reiterating this manuscript tradition, and, thus, will not be confined strictly to Italy. Following this, the first Italian case study will explore a cycle of Famous Men at the Castello della Manta, linking the
chivalric Alexander of the Northern courts with the humanist theme of *uomini famosi*. The extant cycle at Manta forms an emblematic example of the early artistic interest in Alexander in Italy.

The second example that I will explore continues to link representations of Alexander the Great with the literary tradition. However, in this case, I will consider a monumental form of early Alexander imagery in tapestries. Tapestries are primarily a Northern European medium, as they were designed and woven in the Low Countries and Northern France. Nevertheless, their narratives were based on the manuscript tradition of Alexander's life, and patrons of art in Italy desired this luxury medium.

The final focus of this chapter involves another early humanist theme; namely, triumphal imagery. Based on ancient descriptions of triumphal processions, the subject was disseminated through illustrated manuscripts of the poem, *I Trionfi*, by Petrarch. The Triumphant Alexander represents an early visual conception of the king that connected the ancient hero with contemporary concerns and institutions, such as marriage. Images of Alexander *triumphans* proliferated in the decoration of Florentine *cassoni*. *Cassoni* examples will serve to reinforce the linkages between visual representations of Alexander the Great during the Italian Renaissance and the literary sources that informed the artists.

As discussed in Chapter Two, George Cary codified late medieval conceptions of Alexander the Great in his pioneering work, *The Medieval Alexander* (1956). Naturally, this chapter builds on his study, examining the Alexander created by the secular writers of the late medieval stories derived from the *Romance of Alexander*, such as Gautier de Châtillon, who turned "Alexander into a godlike hero" or idealized Christian warrior in his *Alexandreis*. Versions of these romances were found across Europe, and featured an Alexander who embarked on a variety of legendary quests. His conquests in these chronicles were associated with what Cary describes as the "conventional qualities of the period: liberality, courtly love, and the rest of
the chivalric code" of honourable and brave behavior, both on and off the battlefield. Many of
the manuscripts were illustrated, as D. J. A. Ross succinctly outlines in his *Alexander
Historiatus*.306

One of the most famous illustrated Roman d'Alexandre manuscripts from the late
medieval period, MS Bodley 264 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, was the focus of a recent
study by Mark Cruse.307 The dominant concern within the study is an association between the
manuscript and the "feste" culture of the late Middle Ages in Northern France and the Low
Countries, where the manuscript was produced. Rather than addressing the relationship between
the text of the Roman d'Alexandre and the images of Alexander, Cruse interprets the *bas-de-page*
images of contemporary knights, dancers, and musicians that accompany larger illuminations of
the ancient king as having a "memorial and performative function."308 MS Bodley 264 is worth a
brief consideration as an exemplary version of the sort of Alexander manuscript that circulated
throughout Europe during the late Middle Ages, particularly for the quality of the illustrations.

The first half of MS Bodley 264 was completed in 1344 in Tournai. While not Italian, the
miniatures featuring scenes of Alexander the Great reflect the courtly culture in which they were
produced. Many of the illuminations depict scenes from the legendary exploits of Alexander,
including a vow in the presence of a statue of a peacock, a bird often interpreted to symbolize
Christ, as the peacock was believed to have flesh that did not rot.309 Considering that the
manuscript features the story of the vow of the peacock, the reader could easily connect the

305 Ibid., p. 208.
308 Ibid., p. 68. However, the author is not an art historian and thus his primary concerns are not art historical.
309 Especially folio 182. Cruse discusses the story in detail at pp. 47-53. However, he neglects to
link the story of the peacock with the religious significance of the bird at the time.
Christian symbolism of the bird with Alexander and perceive the king to be a Christianized hero. This story was not found in the historical accounts of the life of Alexander. Indeed, medieval authors included the vow of the peacock in the romance stories in order to ally Alexander with the chivalric tradition and, thereby, contribute to a Christianization of the ancient pagan king.

Many of the illuminations in MS Bodley 264 portray imagery common to both the classical Alexander and the Alexander of the romances, including feasting, besieging towns, and cavalry battles. One of the most interesting images is on folio 2 verso, just preceding the beginning of the text (Fig. 2). The artist portrays four scenes from the early life of Alexander in a full-page, framed illumination, beginning in the lower left: the birth of Alexander; the appointment of Aristotle as tutor to Alexander; a dream in which the young prince is visited by a dragon; and, lastly, the taming of Bucephalus. Of the four miniatures, the Taming of Bucephalus best reveals the secular characterization of Alexander in late Gothic art, as I will demonstrate through a brief analysis of the image.

Plutarch relates the story of The Taming of Bucephalus in his historical account of the life of Alexander. He records that the horse, brought to the court of Alexander's father by a merchant, refused to be mounted by any man. Realizing that, in fact, the horse was frightened by its own shadow, the young Prince Alexander turned the horse away from the sun. He took control of the horse and was able to mount it. King Philip, who watched the event with joy, told his son: "Look for a kingdom that matches your size. Macedonia has not enough space for you." This event prefigured Alexander's conquest of the East, which was often seen as uncivilized or corrupt by the Greeks and Romans, as I discussed in the previous chapter.

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310 Cruse (2011), pp. 128-30 suggests that the lower left-hand scene portrays Nectanebo, in the guise of a dragon, visiting the Queen to impregnate her. However, considering that the artist represents the sleeping figure in a manner similar to the young Alexander, rather than the Queen, I do not agree.


312 Ibid., 6.5, p. 239.
If we compare the text of Plutarch with the illumination, it becomes apparent that the artist does not faithfully follow the classical account. In the miniature, Alexander, accompanied by courtiers, bangs a sledgehammer at the door of the cage in which the ferocious horse is kept (Fig. 3). Unlike the historical horse Bucephalus, this Gothic creature sits in a cage, surrounded by the bones and skulls of the previous men who may have attempted to tame him (and whom the horse has subsequently eaten). Furthermore, Bucephalus is not merely a man-eating horse. Instead, he sports the horn of a unicorn in the middle of his brow! In the various versions of the Romance of Alexander, Bucephalus, like Alexander, has mythical attributes, and he is often described as having a horn and eating men.313 Indeed, in a Greek recension of the Romance of Alexander from around the seventh century, following the death of Alexander, the horse, Bucephalus, enters the room where Alexander's body resides, identifies the murderer of the king, and tears him into pieces: "bits of him flew all over everyone like snow falling off the roof in the wind."314 The late tenth-century Historia de Preliis by Archbishop Leo describes the horse as having either a bull's head mark branded on his forehead, or a pair of horns. This account, along with other romances, featured King Philip using the horse to kill and eat any criminals convicted of capital crimes.315 From the illumination, it is evident that the artist of MS Bodley 264 is familiar with the romance tradition in which the ferocious Bucephalus is imprisoned and fed with criminals. The MS Bodley 264 illustration demonstrates how the medieval courtly audience of the


manuscript continued to take the historical figure of Alexander the Great and aggrandize him into a brave hero who achieves fantastical feats, such as taming the horned, man-eating Bucephalus.

To turn from Northern European manuscripts to early Italian depictions of Alexander, the first surviving large-scale painted images of Alexander executed by Italian artists occur in cycles of *uomini famosi* adorning secular palaces. *Uomini Famosi*, or Famous Men, were groups of famous individuals from antiquity, the Old Testament, and medieval and contemporary history who functioned as models of behaviour for secular authorities, building on the tradition of the *speculum principis*. The specific individuals portrayed in *uomini famosi* cycles varied according to location and the preferences of the patron. Alexander the Great was one figure who sometimes accompanied Scipio, Julius Caesar, Brutus, Arthur, Charlemagne, Aristotle, Dante, and Petrarch in Italian cycles.

*Uomini Famosi* had their literary origins in the epigrams and eulogies praising meritorious men of ancient Greece and Rome, and in the commemoration of heroes in literature beginning in the Archaic Period (800-480 BCE), as traced by Christianne Joost-Gaugier.\(^{316}\) Already in 1900, Paul Schubring had recognized the theme as an isolated iconographical subject in secular art from the late Gothic period onward in Italy.\(^{317}\) The theme of *uomini famosi* developed during the Italian Renaissance in both art and literature, as I outlined in the preceding chapter. Indeed, Petrarch wrote an influential literary account of Famous Men, *De Viris Illustribus*, that was originally intended to include an unflattering biography of Alexander the Great, criticizing the cruelty and uncontrollable anger of the king. However, the biography of

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Alexander was incomplete at the time of the author's death. As a result, artists executed images based on Petrarch's other biographies of famous men—but not his characterization of Alexander.

Uomini Famosi cycles are early examples of imagery based on humanist texts, and these images are often found within courtly settings that cultivated humanist thinking, such as Naples and Milan. Naples, in particular, attracted many learned scholars as early as the reign of Robert of Anjou (1309-43). In the fifteenth century, the notable humanists Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, Lorenzo Valla, and Angelo Decembrio all worked at the court of Naples. The humanist theories and opinions discussed in court circles must have informed the imagery of Uomini famosi cycles. One of the earliest cycles, executed by Giotto around the years 1328-33 for Robert of Anjou, included Alexander the Great, and, most likely, his wife Roxanne.\footnote{318} This cycle at the Castel Nuovo in Naples survived into the fifteenth century, when Lorenzo Ghiberti described it, but the work was lost by the time Giorgio Vasari was writing in the following century.\footnote{319} A few years later, a similar cycle for Azzo Visconti of Milan (1339) by the workshop of Giotto portrayed ancient military leaders, such as Attila, Hector, and Charlemagne, but, significantly, not Alexander.

Alexander the Great was included, along with his father Philip, among the three hundred Uomini famosi in the famous fresco cycle in a chamber of the palace of Cardinal Giordano Orsini at Monte Giordano. In his Vite, Vasari attributes the cycle to Masolino, though the artist may have been helped by assistants, including Paolo Uccello.\footnote{320} The enormous cycle seems to have been completed in the year 1432, and, while the work has long been lost, descriptions of the

\footnote{318}{Christianne L. Joost-Gaugier, "Giotto's Hero Cycle in Naples: A Prototype of Donne illustri and a Possible Literary Connection," Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte, 43 (1980), pp. 311-18, at p. 311.}

\footnote{319}{Ibid.}

images survive.\textsuperscript{321} In addition, figures copied from the cycle are found in a fifteenth-century
manuscript in the Crespi Collection in Milan, and in a group of silverpoint drawings in the
Gabinetto delle Stampe of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica at the Palazzo Corsini in Rome.\textsuperscript{322}

However, during the mid-fifteenth century, Alexander failed to appear both in Andrea del
Castagno's frescoes at the Villa Carducci in Legnaia (1449-51) and in the \textit{studiolo} of Federico da
Montefeltro at Urbino (c. 1473-76). Nevertheless, as Theodor Mommsen pointed out, Alexander
was included among the portraits of \textit{uomini famosi} in the old \textit{Sala Virorum Illustrium} in the
palace of Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara in Padua, executed around the years 1360-70s.\textsuperscript{323}
Although it is impossible to know precisely how prevalent Alexander was in these cycles, as so
many have been destroyed, the Macedonian king seems to have been included relatively often by
Italian artists.

One important cycle of famous men that survives from the late Gothic period is found at
the Castello della Manta, near Turin (Fig. 4). In the \textit{Sala Baronale}, a mural cycle of the \textit{Neuf
Preux} and \textit{Neuf Preuxes} includes a representation of Alexander (Fig. 5). The tradition of \textit{Neuf
Preux} relates to the \textit{uomini famosi}, but derives instead from medieval French iconography.\textsuperscript{324} The
male Worthies of this group were first codified in a French poem of 1312, \textit{Les voeux du paon}, by
Jacques de Longuyon. This poem was connected with the \textit{Roman d'Alexandre} and many versions
were illustrated. Notably, the poem features a banquet at which vows are made when the

\textsuperscript{321} Including a manuscript by the scholar Marco Attilio Alessi (1470-1541) in the Biblioteca della
Fraternità di Santa Maria, Arezzo, Cod. 63, fols. 149v.-152r. See W. A. Simpson, "Cardinal
Giordano Orsini (+1438) as a Prince of the Church and a Patron of the Arts," \textit{Journal of the
Warburg and Courtauld Institutes}, vol. 29 (1966), pp. 135-59, at p. 139. Simpson reproduces the
list of \textit{uomini famosi} figures in the cycle recorded by the manuscript from pp. 150-59.
\textsuperscript{322} Mode (1972), p. 370.
\textsuperscript{323} Theodor Mommsen, "Petrarch and the Decoration of the \textit{Sala Virorum Illustrium} in Padua,"
\textit{The Art Bulletin} vol. 34, no. 2 (June 1952), pp. 95-116, at p. 103.
\textsuperscript{324} For a thorough consideration of the theme, see Horst Schroeder, \textit{Der Topos der Nine Worthies in
Literatur und bildender Kunst} (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971).
centrepiece, a peacock, is presented. Although this poem was popular in France, Italian versions
dating from the mid-fourteenth century also survive.\(^\text{325}\)

The *Neuf Preux* consists of a triad of men each from the Old Testament, antiquity, and
the medieval (contemporary) world. As with the *Uomini Famosi*, the theme of the *Neuf Preux*
developed out of the medieval tradition of political texts, called *speculum principis*, written to
instruct rulers on proper conduct and to provide historical figures of authority to emulate. In this
tradition, Alexander represented an exemplar of ideal royalty. He was a model of prowess in
battle and his schooling under Aristotle made Alexander a princely paragon of wisdom.
Especially important for a late medieval courtly audience, Alexander was also linked with the
value of *largesse*. Furthermore, in the romance tradition, Alexander often invoked the Christian
God, not always a pagan hero or deity.\(^\text{326}\) This ancient model of secular authority would have
appealed to the late medieval courtly rulers of Manta who sought to portray themselves as
virtuous and wise rulers.

The *Neuf Preux* cycle at Manta was painted around the year 1420 by the Maestro della
Manta, sometimes identified as Giacomo Jacquiero.\(^\text{327}\) It is one of the oldest and best-preserved
mural cycles of worthy men in Italy. Importantly, the work remains *in situ*. At the time of the
execution, the castle was owned by the family of the Marquises of Manta, who passionately
promoted French court culture.\(^\text{328}\) Indeed, the local rulers were so enraptured by French culture
that Marquis Tommaso III (d. 1416) travelled to Paris, the centre of late Gothic court culture, on

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\(^{325}\) Ross (1963), p. 16. For a brief discussion of French sculptural groups of the *Neuf Preux*, see
Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy* (University

\(^{326}\) The connection between Alexander and the *Mirror of Princes* tradition is expanded on by
216-19.

\(^{327}\) See Giovanni Romano, "Per un eroe senza nome: Il Maestro della Manta," in *La Sala
several occasions, and, in 1395-96, he composed a romance, *Le Chevalier Errant*. His poem incorporates the story of the vow of the peacock, as in *Les voeux du paon* and the *Roman d'Alexandre*. In addition, *Le Chevalier Errant* includes the story of Alexander's journey to the Earthly Paradise, where the ancient king was presented with the "wonderstone", a stone carved with the human eye. However, at the end of *Le Chevalier Errant*, the titular errant-knight reaches the palace of Fortune where he encounters the seats of the eighteen *Preux* and *Preuxes*, the chosen men and women of Fortune. Although the execution of the cycle did not take place until the reign of Tommaso's son, Valerano, Tommaso's romance provided the literary basis for the imagery in the Sala Baronale.

The Manta cycle illustrates the nine male *Preux* and their female counterparts in the International Gothic style of fashion prevalent in Northern Italy during the early fifteenth century. Three of the walls of the *Sala Baronale* are decorated with the Worthies, identified below by French inscriptions from *Le Chevalier Errant*. Behind the figures, heraldic shields in the frieze of trees contribute to the identification. The Worthies are arranged chronologically, and categorized into classical, biblical, and contemporary groups. Thus, Alexander stands between Hector and Julius Caesar. The fourth wall in the room depicts an allegorical and erotic scene of the *Fountain of Youth*, offering a pointed contrast with the seriousness of the *Preux*, while continuing to highlight the theme of immortal fame for the viewer.

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329 As far as we can tell, *Le Chevalier Errant* was not widely read, as only two codices survive today, one in Paris, and one in Turin. However, this is not conclusive evidence. See Ibid., p. 21.

330 This tale was found in the *Faits des Romains*, an Old French prose text dedicated to the life of Julius Caesar, and some versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre*. See Ross (1963), pp. 35-36. Also, Ross, "Alexander and the Wonderstone in *Le Chevalier Errant*," *French Studies*, vol. 19 (1965), pp. 159-63.

331 For a discussion of the Worthy Women in the cycle, see Francesco Novati, "Un cassone nuziale senese e le raffigurazioni delle donne illustri nell'arte italiana dei secoli XIV e XV," *Rassegna d'Arte*, vol. 11, no. 4 (April 1911), pp. 61-67.
The Maestro della Manta portrayed Alexander in golden armour, with a blue tunic and mantle draped from his shoulders. A golden crown signifies his authority, and, above his right hand, floats a golden orb surmounted by an equilateral Greek cross. The orb is divided into three segments that may refer to Alexander's mastery over the three known continents—Asia, Africa, and Europe—in addition to his mastery over the terrestrial, celestial, and nautical realms in the romance tradition. On Alexander's right side there is a shield with his Gothic heraldry, which consists of a silver lion with an axe against a red background. The Paris manuscript of Le Chevalier Errant, illuminated by the Master of the Cité des Dames (BN MS Fr 12559) in about 1400-05, reproduces the heraldry of each of the Manta Worthies, including Alexander (Fig. 6). The lion represents bravery—fitting for Alexander's role as an exemplary ancient king. Moreover, Alexander had been closely linked with the characteristic lion since antiquity. The lion is associated with Hercules, who killed the Nemean lion, and Alexander frequently allied himself with the hero, as we will see in the following chapter.

Most striking about the Manta Alexander is the fact the artist represents the king with a beard, a fashion in which he was never portrayed by ancient artists. In fact, ancient authors note Alexander's smooth face. Plutarch recounts that Alexander commanded his troops to shave, lest their enemies grab hold of their beards during battle.332 The artist, not familiar with the historical accounts, portrays Alexander with a beard, as was the fashion for men at the time. Indeed, Alexander, along with all of the other Worthy Men and Women in the Sala Baronale, is shown in current, courtly costume of the International style. The costumes are also comparable with those found in French manuscripts with which the patron Valerano would have been familiar.333 According to tradition, Alexander is said to depict Valerano's father, Tommaso.334 The figure of Hector was painted to resemble Valerano, and Pantsilea, one of the female Worthies, was painted

333 Dunlop (2009), p. 149.
with the features of Valerano's wife, Clemenzia Provana. This inclusion of the patron among the figures strengthens his identification with these ancient exemplars. Moreover, because Valerano was an illegitimate son of Tommaso III, allying himself with an ancient worthy would help to legitimize his rule of the local area. 

Below each Worthy is a French verse derived from Le Chevalier Errant. The lines below Alexander read:

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With my might I conquered the islands of the Orient;
From the East to the West I was once called Lord;
I killed King Darius the Persian, Porus the Indian,
Nicholas the Armenian
I made Great Babylonia bow before me;
And I was Lord of the World, and then in Araby
It was three hundred years before the birth of God.
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The text aids in identifying each figure painted, in addition to summarizing the accomplishments of the Worthy that the patron could emulate. The inscription highlights Alexander's military prowess, including his conquest of both the Eastern and the Western halves of the world. The epigram also mentions Nicholas the Armenian, whom, according to the Romance of Alexander, Alexander defeated at the Olympics as a teenager. A courtly viewer would have been familiar with the popular romance stories and immediately understood the connection. Furthermore, the inscription demonstrates that the audience for the cycle consisted of the literate elite, as reading was generally reserved for the highest classes of society.

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336 The Castella della Manta was Valerano's principal residence, given to him by his father as part of his inheritance upon Tommaso's death in 1416. In 1419, Valerano was entrusted with the protection of his younger half-brother, Ludovico I, and appointed governor of the underage marquis. See Silva (2011), p. 12.
337 The original inscription in French: "Alisandre/ J'ai conquis por ma force les illes d'outremer; D'Orient jusque a Ocident fuge ja sire apeles; J'ay tue roy Daire li Persian, Porus li Endian, Nicole l'armires; La grant Babiloina fig ever moy encliner; E fuy sure du monde; puis fui enarbes; Ce fut III. C ans devant que Diu fut ne." First transcribed by Paolo d' Ancona in 1905. As in Dunlop (2009), p. 259.
The entire cycle is framed by the identifying inscriptions below, and, above, by a decorative vegetal border "in the guise of a tapestry", as described by Paolo d'Ancona.\textsuperscript{339} Many narrative tapestries at the time included inscriptions running along the top or bottom to identify the story told in the hanging. With the painted allusion to tapestry, the patron of the Manta cycle could display not only his taste for secular imagery from the romance stories, but also his sophisticated taste for (fictive) luxury textiles. Appropriately, the Neuf Preux was one of the most popular themes in tapestries at this time.\textsuperscript{340}

Monumental art of the late Gothic period took two forms: wall painting and the woven medium of tapestries.\textsuperscript{341} From the late fourteenth-century onward, Alexander appeared in tapestry cycles both as a figure among a group of Worthy Men, and as an independent subject. Promoters of humanism and classicism in Italy actively collected and prized these luxury hangings. Yet, tapestry representations of Alexander have been relatively neglected in critical studies on images of the ancient king, including the foundational exhibition catalogue from 1998, \textit{Alexander the Great in European Art}.\textsuperscript{342}

\textsuperscript{338} For example, see \textit{The Greek Romance of Alexander} (1991), book 1, 18-19, pp. 49-51, in which Nicholas is called "Nicolaus the Acarnanian."
\textsuperscript{339} D'Ancona (1905), p. 96. The relationship between tapestries and the frescoes of the Neuf Preux at the Castello della Manta is also discussed by Andreina Griseri, "Ritorno a Jaquerio," in Giacomo Jaquerio e il gotico internazionale, eds. Enrico Castelnuovo and Giovanni Romano (Turin: Assessorato per la Cultura, Musei Civici, 1979), pp. 3-29, at pp. 28-29.
\textsuperscript{340} For example, four hangings from tapestry fragments from a series of Nine Worthies dating to c.1400 have been reconstructed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. See James R. Rorimer and Margaret B. Freeman, "The Nine Heroes Tapestries at the Cloisters," \textit{The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin}, New Series, vol. 7, no. 9 (May 1949), pp. 243-60.
\textsuperscript{341} Images of Alexander had appeared on woven textiles since at least the late seventh century, as evidenced by an example in the Textile Museum in Washington D.C. of a pair of Coptic segmenta (round or square patches used to decorate clothing). These segmenta show Alexander being crowned victorious by a winged pair of genii. The inscription "II MAKETON ΑΛΕΚΚΑΝΤΕΟΣ [Alexander the Macedonian]" firmly identifies the figure as Alexander the Great. See Dorothy G. Shepherd, "Alexander: The Victorious Emperor," \textit{Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art}, vol. 58, no. 8 (October 1971), pp. 244-50.
Often separated from formal studies of the fine arts because of the ‘craft’ categorization, the study of tapestries has been reinvigorated by recent critical writing. Tapestries featured in the blockbuster exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 2002, and the scholar Tom Campbell, who curated the exhibition, has continued to publish important studies on the collections of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII in early sixteenth-century England. The former curator of textiles at the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels, Guy Delmarcel, has contributed to the field with his studies of Flemish and Hapsburg tapestries, including a monograph on the *Los Honores* cycle for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and a collaborative study with Clifford Brown and Anna Maria Lorenzoni on the tapestry patronage of the Gonzaga dukes in Mantua.

Significant for my study, Hillie Smit considered the tapestry collections of the popes in Renaissance Rome, notably Julius II, in whose collection were two tapestries with scenes from the life of Alexander the Great. While there was no Italian tapestry manufacture on a large scale until the mid-sixteenth century under Duke Cosimo I de' Medici in Florence, there was still a significant demand for images of Alexander in this medium.

Tapestry production was a major industry of the Low Countries from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Tapestry designers, such as the famous Pasquier Grenier of Tournai (fl. 1447-93), oversaw the design and production of works for important courtly patrons across Europe (though few of these tapestries survive today). Tapestries underscored the "magnificence" of the

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late Gothic patron, which was characterized as a public demonstration of wealth and power through lavish expenditure. \(^{346}\) This concept existed in medieval court culture as the "largesse" required of a nobleman, and survived into the High Renaissance when the quality of magnificence marked the elite patrons of art, such as Agostino Chigi. \(^{347}\)

From the late fourteenth century, ancient rulers, such as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, featured on many figurative tapestries. Indeed, Sultan Bayezid demanded tapestries featuring the Macedonian king as part of the ransom paid for the Burgundian Prince John, who was captured in the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396. \(^{348}\) Contemporary rulers identified with classical figures of secular authority, and some even believed themselves to be descended from these historical or mythical figures. \(^{349}\) Importantly, many Northern European tapestries ended up in the collections of Italian rulers who self-consciously sought to own examples of the monumental woven art form. Tapestries, produced abroad near the centre of French court culture, promulgated the courtly conception of Alexander to Italian audiences during the late Gothic period. Furthermore, tapestries often included bands of text running along the top of the weaving, relating the content of the scene to the viewer, and linking the image with text. Most of the textual bands

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\(^{346}\) As discussed by Campbell (2007), p. 7.

\(^{347}\) Ibid. See also, as I discussed in Chapter One, the article by Ingrid Rowland, "Render Unto Caesar the Things Which are Caesar's: Humanism and the Arts in the Patronage of Agostino Chigi." Renaissance Quarterly, vol. 39, no. 4 (Winter 1986), pp. 673-730.

\(^{348}\) This demand also shows the early importance of tapestries as diplomatic gifts. See Aby Warburg, The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: contributions to the cultural history of the European Renaissance (Malibu: Getty Publications, 1999), pp. 333-37, at p. 337. Originally published as Aby Warburg, "Luftschiff und Tauchboot in der mittelalterlichen Vorstellungswelt," Illustrierte Rundschau, supplement to Hamburger Fremdenblatt, 83, no. 52 (2 March 1913).

were cut off at a later date, and, thus, no surviving tapestries that feature narratives of Alexander are accompanied by text. However, a four-piece set of tapestries portraying scenes from the life of Julius Caesar (c.1460 or later), now at the Historisches Museum in Bern, does retain the original textual band on the tops of the hangings.

The most famous surviving cycle of tapestries portraying Alexander the Great was created by the workshop of Pasquier Grenier. Grenier ran a large and successful workshop that supplied hangings to kings, dukes, and princes across Europe. In 1459, Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy paid Grenier 5000 écus d'or for a "chamber de tapisserie de l'histoire d'Alexandre", which is likely the first version of the design.\footnote{Betty Kurth, "Die Blütezeit der Bildwirkerkunst zu Tournai und der burgundische Hof," \textit{Jahrbuch der Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses}, 34 (1917), pp. 53-110, at p. 71. A. E. Popham discusses two drawings that may be connected with the Alexander tapestry cycle in "Two Fifteenth-Century Drawings for Tapestry in the British Museum," \textit{The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs}, vol. 45, no. 257 (Aug., 1924), pp. 60-66. During the fifteenth century, the Dukes of Burgundy cultivated a connection with Alexander through the commissioning of many works of art, including the tapestry cycle by Grenier, as revealed by Birgit Franke, "Herrscher über Himmel und Erde. Alexander der Grosse und die Herzöge von Burgund," \textit{Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft}, 27 (2000), pp. 121-69.} During the same year, Grenier's son travelled to Milan to show Duke Francesco Sforza a "designum" for another set of tapestries featuring Alexander.\footnote{A. Rapp Buri and M. Stucky-Schürer discuss the Alexander tapestries by Grenier's workshop in their article, "Alexandre le Grand et l'art de la tapisserie du XVe siècle," \textit{Revue de l'Art}, 119, pt 1 (1998), pp. 21-32. They emphasize the tapestries as corresponding to the conception of heroes in the late Middle Ages. Classical figures such as Alexander were moral and virtuous exemplars for the courtly viewer, and the clients of Grenier had a predilection for the legendary stories.}

Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, a member of the ruling family of nearby Mantua, also owned tapestries of Alexander, possibly from the Grenier manufactory. An account of his arrival into Bologna in July of 1471 describes his tapestries. Included in the sumptuous procession and hung around the courtyard of the legate's residence was a tapestry with the story of Alexander fighting King Porus of India, with cavalry and many infantry, and war elephants. The hanging
was described as very "naturalistic" and the manufacture of high-quality, woven with gold and silk.\textsuperscript{352}

Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga owned at least two Alexander tapestries at the time of his death in 1483, as his inventory lists "doi panni de razo d'oro e de seta de Alexandro."\textsuperscript{353} The provenance of these tapestries is uncertain, but the description includes a similar plethora of figures, soldiers, cavalry and fantastical elements—i.e. elephants—as those found in Grenier's designs for the Duke of Burgundy. After the death of Cardinal Francesco in 1483, claimants demanding the cardinal owed them money came forward to settle their claims, including the money-lender Alvise Vismara. A Latin epistle dated 10 August 1484 from Ludovico Gonzaga, Bishop-Elect of Mantua, to Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, Count of Rodigò, specifically described Vismara desiring "li duoi panni de Alexandro" from the Cardinal's collection.\textsuperscript{354} Vismara was unsuccessful in acquiring both tapestries, as the inventory of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga of 1496 lists "uno panello de razo cum figure a la hystoria de Alexandro" that he had inherited from his cardinal brother.\textsuperscript{355}

In the subsequent century, an inventory done at the death of Andrea Doria, the ruler of Genoa, in 1561, includes "due grandi vecchi arazzi."\textsuperscript{356} According to the oral history of the Doria-Pamphilj family, two tapestries illustrating the "history" of Alexander were given to Andrea

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\textsuperscript{352} "con la istoria di Alixandro Magno contra del re Porto de India con gente d'arme da cavolo et da piede tutti armati et alifanti con castele adosso et li omni che combataneo; con molti de loro, feriti de vertuni, pareano essere vivi, li omni e cavali tanti erano naturalmente bene lavorati: era una belessa et alegresa de core a vedere tanti beli lavori d'oro et di seta." As described in the Corpus chronicorum Bononiam, transcribed by D. S. Chambers, \textit{A Renaissance Cardinal and his Worldly Goods: The Will and Inventory of Francesco Gonzaga (1440-1483)}, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts 20 (London, 1992), p. 82.

\textsuperscript{353} Archivio storico diocesano, Mantua, Fondo Capitolo della Cattedrale, serie miscellanea b. 2/A, fol. 5r, item 198, as in Ibid., p. 150.

\textsuperscript{354} Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Fondo d'Arco 85, fols. 125-26, as in Ibid., pp. 200-201.

\textsuperscript{355} Biblioteca comunale, Guastalla, Fondo Davolo-Marani, b. 23, c. 18r, as in Ibid., p. 150.

Doria by Charles V, who had conferred the title of Prince of Melfi and an admiralty to Andrea.\textsuperscript{357} The two tapestries survive in the family collection today. Aby Warburg has previously suggested that these tapestries may have originally belonged to the set commissioned by Philip the Good from Pasquier Grenier.\textsuperscript{358} This cannot be conclusively proven because, unfortunately, the iconography of the tapestries is only described in inventories dating after the late eighteenth century, around the time when Doria's descendants (who had married the Pamphilj heiress in 1671) took a large part of the collection to Rome.\textsuperscript{359} Regardless, the two Doria-Pamphilj tapestries represent some of the last monumental images of Alexander as a courtly prince in the late Gothic tradition. Consequently, if these two tapestries portraying scenes from the life of Alexander are, in fact, the pair owned by Andrea Doria, then the hangings also demonstrate the value that was still placed on the courtly character of Alexander during the sixteenth century.

The first Doria-Pamphilj tapestry portrays a number of packed narratives from the boyhood of Alexander (Fig. 7). The first scene on the left is set in an elegant architectural canopy filled with lancet and rose windows. Here, the horse Bucephalus is brought to the court of Philip of Macedon. Philip is surrounded by courtiers and accompanied by his queen Olympias, who is distinguished by her ermine cape and tall, veiled henin headdress. All of the courtiers wear the contemporary high fashion of the Burgundian court in the mid-to-late fifteenth century. Bucephalus, in chains, has two curling ram's horns, continuing the medieval tradition—seen earlier in MS Bodley 264—of portraying the horse as the man-eating hell-horse in the romances, whose ultimate taming by Alexander is a metaphor for the civilizing triumph over beastly natures. In the adjacent scene on the bottom right, Alexander rides the subdued horse in front of the eyes of his parents.

\textsuperscript{357} Ibid., pp. 25-26.
\textsuperscript{358} Warburg (1999), op. cit., p. 336. The tapestries are the focus of a forthcoming study published in celebration of the 100\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Warburg's 1913 study on the hangings: \textit{L'Histoire d'Alexandre dans les tapisseries au XVe siècle}, eds. F. Barbe, L. Stagno and E. Vallari (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
The following scenes, progressing across the top-centre of the tapestry, are densely packed with armoured figures. On the left, an armed Alexander kneels at the feet of his father, as he is about to depart for battle. Bucephalus arrives beside his master, dressed in the trappings of a war-horse. The battle that follows renders a struggle against the evil Pausanias, set against a landscape of Northern-style turreted town walls. Soldiers pour through the town gate in fantastical helmets decorated with star-shaped spurs, ribbons, and curling braids of metal. Philip is injured in this battle, as the viewer next encounters the king lying abed in the top right scene of the tapestry (Fig. 8). In this narrative, Alexander brings the captured rebel Pausanias to Philip, who manages to slit Pausanias' throat from his deathbed. This scene is set within a tight space lined with rich brocades, and behind Philip is a bed canopy. The final episode in the hanging repeats this setting in the bottom right corner of the tapestry. Olympias attends her husband's deathbed, as Philip hands over his crown to the kneeling Alexander to continue the lineage of kingship within the family.

The second Doria-Pamphilj tapestry shows a series of deeds of Alexander in the East, and also reads from left to right (Fig. 9). On the left, comprising nearly half the length of the tapestry, is a representation of the Siege of Tyre. As in the first tapestry, the scene is packed with soldiers dressed in fifteenth-century Burgundian armour. The soldiers also use contemporary weapons, as evidenced by the two men loading a small canon along the bottom of the hanging. Beside the cannon-loaders, an archer draws his long bow. Swords and banners fill the battlefield, and in the background, tall, Flemish-style houses dominate the besieged town. In the middle of the action, Alexander, identified by his crowned helmet, engages in battle. Beside Alexander, an elderly bearded man—perhaps Parmenion, his father's general—advises the young king.

The *Romance of Alexander* supplies the narrative for the central scene of the tapestry, in which Alexander ascends to the Heavens (Fig. 10). Indeed, Aby Warburg demonstrated that the precise source for the imagery in the tapestry was the account of the life of Alexander by the French writer, Jean Wauquelin, who wrote the *Histoire du bon roy Alixandre* around the year 1448 for the court of Burgundy. Here, in the tapestry, Alexander sits in a gilded car, decorated with flower motifs and covered with precious stones. In each hand he holds a long red rod which spears a hamhock. The hamhocks goad the griffons, who are chained to the cage, to flap their wings in order to lift the car into the Heavens, where God the Father awaits in the clouds. On earth below, five courtiers comment on the ascent of Alexander to the Heavens, now that the king has conquered the earthly realm. As a companion scene to this heavenly adventure, on the right of the tapestry, Alexander descends to the bottom of the ocean in a glass diving bell (Fig. 11). To echo his pose in the previous narrative, Alexander now holds a torch in each hand to illuminate the dark waters. Vigilant courtiers fill four boats as Alexander descends below the surface. As is the case with his *Ascent to Heaven*, the story of Alexander's underwater adventure does not appear in any of the historical biographies. Alexander performed this deed in the medieval romances, and it was understood as a metaphor for both his search for knowledge and his desire to conquer the whole of the world—terrestrial, celestial, and nautical.

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361 Wauquelin based his account on the *Roman d'Alexandre*, as discussed by Warburg (1999), op. cit., pp. 334-35.
362 The hamhocks are specifically mentioned in the *Histoire du bon roy Alixandre*: "[Alexander] entered the said cage [of the chariot] and took with him two sponges soaked in water and a lance, on the point of which he placed a piece of meat, and held it out above the cage. Then the griffins, which were hungry, began to rise into the air, trying to catch the meat, and as they took flight they bore up the cage with the meat, and they were off." As in Warburg (1999), p. 334.
363 This same scene occurs in a number of mediums in the Middle Ages, including a Mosan enameled plaque (M.53-1988) at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London dating to the mid-twelfth century.
364 The torches are also mentioned in the *Histoire du bon roy Alixandre*: "[While underwater, Alexander] saw fishes that walked on the ground like quadrupeds and ate the fruits of the trees they found on the bottom of the sea; and whales of incredible size, which recoiled, however, from the bright glare of the lamps that he had brought with him." See Warburg (1999), p. 335.
The bottom right corner of the tapestry portrays the final chapter of the story. We will recall from Chapter Two that, in the romances, once Alexander conquered all of the people of the world, he reached the boundaries of the earth where monsters ruled. The king, accompanied by his companions, slays these headless monsters, whose faces are covered in thick fur (Fig. 12). The faces of these monstrous beings are located in the middle of their chests. Meanwhile, a small blue dragon rears up against Alexander's legs, and a hairy Wildman fights with some of Alexander's other companions. This final scene is set against a patterned vegetal ground, typical of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries that display the courtly taste for verdure ornamentation.

The iconography of Alexander fighting monsters at the world's end appealed to courtly rulers who desired to expand, or perhaps even consolidate, their rule as Alexander had stretched his realm to the edges of the earth. These tapestries were created in an age that witnessed the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Alexander's battle against Wildmen and monsters at the edges of the world demonstrated a latent desire of the West to re-conquer the East and beyond the reaches of civilization, and to expand the civilizing rule of Christianity. Fighting the Ottoman Turks had personal significance for Andrea Doria, who commanded the fleet of Charles V against the Turks in the 1530s and 1540s. Ironically, Doria was not particularly successful against the Ottomans. The fleet of the Holy League, under his command, was defeated by the Ottomans at the Battle of Preveza in September 1538, and he participated in the disastrous Algiers Expedition of 1541, when Charles V attempted to land a fleet at the Ottoman stronghold of Algiers. Nevertheless, Doria could express his desire to successfully re-take the East through the monumental imagery in his collection, such as these tapestries.

Although tapestries such as the two Doria-Pamphilj examples were created by Northern European artists, the hangings reveal a taste for luxury objects featuring scenes from the life of Alexander by Renaissance patrons in Italy. The noble Doria and Gonzaga families were not the only patrons who owned such objects. In fact, Pope Julius II owned two large tapestries.
illustrating the history of Alexander the Great, which are mentioned in the 1518 inventory undertaken by his successor, Pope Leo X. \textsuperscript{365} While his tapestries do not survive, it would be entirely reasonable to assume that they had a similar appearance to Pasquier Grenier's hangings, and likely represented a similar combination of history, courtly figures, and legend. It is tempting to wonder if Julius bought the tapestry owned by Gianfrancesco Gonzaga. As Pope, he would have had the means to buy tapestries. However, it is equally plausible that he acquired the tapestries prior to his election as Pope. As Cardinal, Giuliano della Rovere spent a significant amount of time in France during the papacy of Alexander VI (1492-1503). Whilst there, Giuliano could have developed a taste for these Northern trappings of authority and majesty, and purchased hangings from French workshops, dealers, or courtly collections.

In addition to the pair of Alexander tapestries, Julius owned a set of four large tapestries portraying the history of Heliodorus. As Hillie Smit has demonstrated, these hangings must have been purchased before the decoration of the Vatican Stanze as his coat-of-arms dating to the time when he was still a cardinal is present on the hangings. \textsuperscript{366} There is no doubt that these tapestries had an influence on the choice of iconography in the apartments decorated by Raphael, particularly the Stanza d'Eliodoro, which features a fresco of Heliodorus. Considering that Raphael saw the Heliodorus tapestries in the collection of Julius II, he would have also had access to the Alexander tapestries, which could have informed his famous composition of The Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne.

Images of the late Gothic secular conception of Alexander flourished in Renaissance Tuscany, though neither fresco cycles of Alexander among \textit{uomini famosi} nor tapestries featuring the king survive from Florentine palaces. \textsuperscript{367} During the fifteenth century, Florence was not a court (as were the centres that patronized courtly images of Alexander in Northern Italy), but rather a

republic. Here, a particular type of object decorated with a more humanist conception of Alexander proliferated on cassoni (wedding chests). In the fifteenth century, cassoni were commissioned by the families of grooms to celebrate marriage, and were often decorated with didactic narratives from classical mythology and history, and the Old Testament. Alexander the Great was one figure who ornamented marriage chests so that newlyweds would model their behaviour after his virtuous example. Portrayals of Alexander on cassoni built on many of the themes present in the courtly representations, including his virtue as a Christian knight. In particular, scenes featuring Alexander triumphans, which form a major group of surviving cassoni images, combine the courtly Alexander with the humanist literary tradition of I Trionfi by Petrarch. An examination of portrayals of the Macedonian king on domestic furniture will further elucidate how he was viewed during the early Renaissance in Tuscany.

The association between Alexander the Great and marriage during the early Renaissance was particularly strong in Italy. Not only did his image adorn marriage chests, but, at the same time, he also appeared in humanist speeches given at elite weddings. Ephithalamia (wedding orations) frequently cited Alexander as an exemplum of moral marital behaviour, as discussed by Anthony D’Elia in his 2004 book, The Renaissance of Marriage. For example, in the epithalamium for Eleanor of Aragon and Ercole d'Este, the humanist Ludovico Carbone praised the father of the bride, Ferrante of Aragon, comparing him to Alexander by stating that, "Alexander the Great restored the kingdoms of Asia to their vanquished princes and treated King Darius' mother and wife with reverence." Alexander was a model not only for the courtly ruler and the humanist prince, as discussed in the texts of Angelo Decembrio and Baldassare Castiglione, but also for the courtly groom. Antonio Trivulzio, in his wedding oration for

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367 See Chapter Two for the lost inscription of Alexander among Worthy Men in the Palazzo Vecchio.
369 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
Giagaleazzo Sforza and Isabella of Aragon in 1489, lauded the allegiance of their two families with the following: "Now both families are wisely reinforcing their bond with the marriage of Giangaleazzo and Isabella...For as Aristotle told Alexander, a king must cultivate friendships and alliances with powerful neighbours so that each may aid the other." Comparing the families of the bride and groom with worthy ancients at public events both flattered the wedding guests, and, additionally, displayed the renewed humanist interest in antiquity. The speeches highlighted Alexander's learned, courtly behaviour and his respect for women, and urged the Renaissance groom to exhibit the same character traits.

Although wedding orations were popular in the courts of Ferrara, Milan, Rimini and Naples, there also was an association between Alexander and marriage in Republican Florence. Wedding chests, called cassoni, were a Tuscan phenomenon, and portrayed some of the first painted classical imagery in the Italian Renaissance. Appropriately, episodes from the life of Alexander are among the themes depicted. Such representations reveal not only how he was perceived in the fifteenth century, but, additionally, underscore the importance of humanist themes in early Renaissance images of the ancient king.

No study devoted to images of Alexander on cassoni exists, though surveys of cassoni as an artistic form and monographs on artists often include examples that portray the ancient king. The pioneering work on marriage chests, and other paintings designed specifically for the domestic interior during the Quattrocento, is Paul Schubring's Cassoni, Truhen und Truhenbilder der italienischen Frührenaissance (1915). Schubring catalogued hundreds of surviving panels from cassoni, as well as spalliere, which had a similar shape to cassoni panels, but instead formed part of the wall panelling of rooms. Among the hundreds of catalogued cassoni and spalliere in his work, Schubring listed several examples that he identifies as scenes from the life of Alexander.

370 Ibid., p. 88.
of Alexander the Great. Almost a century after its publication, Schubring's work remains important to modern scholars as the first corpus dedicated to cassoni, including examples from both public and private collections. He assigned dates to all of the cassoni, in addition to attributing authorship and, in most cases, offering an identification of the subject. Nevertheless, scholars believe Schubring assigned unrealistically early dates to many cassoni, in addition to attributing subject matter that is, at times, very tenuous.

Further research on depictions of Alexander the Great on cassoni was conducted in the early twentieth century by scholars and collectors such as Tancred Borenius. His article, "Cassoni Panels in English Private Collections" (1913), examined the Alexander cassoni in the collections of the Earl of Crawford and Conte Carlo Cinughi.372 His research predominantly focused on issues of connoisseurship, such as the identification of artists by comparative studies, in addition to tracing provenance.

In 1955, Ernst Gombrich published an article devoted to one of the most prolific cassoni painters of the Quattrocento, Apollonio di Giovanni.373 While Gombrich primarily examined the workshop practice of the artist, he also highlighted the comparisons in contemporary literature between artists of cassoni chests and ancient artists. His study was followed in 1974 by a monograph on Apollonio di Giovanni by Ellen Callman.374 In addition to exploring the oeuvre of the artist, the author connected surviving cassoni with his workshop journal, which lists the families from whom he received commissions. Another monograph on a cassoni painter was published in 1999 by Luciano Bellosi and Margaret Haines, which considered the artist Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, known as "Lo Scheggia", who was the younger brother of the revolutionary

painter Masaccio. Lo Scheggia headed a successful workshop and, through his long career, specialized in the decoration of secular domestic objects for elite patrons, including birth trays and cassoni, many of which survive today. One of his most important commissions, the famous Adimari Cassone, depicts contemporary wedding festivities set against a city landscape (now in the Accademia, Florence). Importantly for my thesis, among the variety of subject matters that Lo Scheggia portrayed on cassoni, he depicted a Triumph of Darius (formerly at the Villa Landau in Florence).

Cassoni themselves have been the focus of several recent exhibitions in the United States and the United Kingdom. The large exhibition on household furnishings and interiors held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2006 included cassoni. In 2009, two exhibitions dedicated to cassoni took place: The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence: The Courtauld Wedding Chests at the Courtauld Gallery in London. These exhibitions examined cassoni in the marital contexts for which they were commissioned. The Courtauld exhibition, which centred on the Morelli-Nerli chest from their collection, included a consideration of the physical and technical production of cassoni, in addition to a discussion of the historiography of cassoni.

375 Luciano Bellosi and Margaret Haines, Lo Scheggia (Florence and Siena: Maschietto and Musolino, 1999).
376 Indeed, one of the objects attributed to Lo Scheggia is a birth tray (desco da parto), now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, that represents the Triumph of Fame (recto) and the Medici and Tournabuoni arms (verso). This tray was commissioned to celebrate the birth of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1449.
377 The cassone was sold in 1997 and the current location is unknown. See Christie's, London, 18 April 1997, lot 154.
collecting cassoni from the late eighteenth to early twentieth century. Indeed, Caroline Campbell notes that the market for Schubring's catalogue was based on the large number of paintings for cassoni chests and spalliere that circulated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{379}

Related to cassoni, spalliere paintings were the focus of Anne Barriault's 1994 study, \textit{Spalliera Paintings of Renaissance Tuscany: Fables of Poets for Patrician Homes}.\textsuperscript{380} Spalliere were wall panels positioned at eye-level in the bedrooms of wealthy families in Renaissance Tuscany. The term derives from the word for shoulder, as spalliere tended to be placed at shoulder level in the wainscoting of rooms. Spalliere had similar, horizontal formats to cassoni which often makes the two difficult to distinguish, as Barriault points out. As with cassoni, scenes from ancient mythology and history decorated spalliere, and the imagery served to instruct viewers on appropriate virtues and behaviour in marriage. Barriault's study underscores the differences between the two formats of domestic art. In particular, she examines the spatial unity amongst the panels in spalliere cycles, which is not a characteristic found in cassoni. One of the examples in her study, a panel depicting Alexander and now in the Barber Institute at the University of Birmingham, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Two modes of representing Alexander occur in surviving cassoni and spalliere. The first consist of scenes of his famous battles. One notable example of a cassone with a battle of Alexander is found at the British Museum in London, which dates to around the year 1450 (Fig. 13). The panel is often attributed to Apollonio di Giovanni, one of the most prolific cassoni


painters during the fifteenth century in Florence.\textsuperscript{381} The panel portrays the Battle of Issus in 333 BCE, where Alexander the Great won an important victory against Darius, the King of Persia. Toward the centre and right of the panel, the artist focuses the attention on a cavalry battle in a format similar to Uccello's \textit{Battle of San Romano} panels. However, the left side of the panel links Alexander and the function of \textit{cassoni} in Renaissance marriages. Here, Alexander encounters the family of Darius after the battle. Darius had brought his female relatives to the battlefield, and, after he fled from Alexander, the women encountered the Macedonian king. The artist portrays the women, dressed in patterned gold robes, kneeling before the young Alexander. This episode of Alexander encountering the female relatives of Darius and subsequently treating the women as members of his own family in a chaste manner highlighted the virtue of chastity in Alexander. During the fifteenth century, chastity was an important marital virtue, which both brides and grooms were encouraged to cultivate in their relationship. Thus, while the battle spreads over two-thirds of the panel, the smaller scene of Alexander and the women of Darius connects the overall iconography of the chest with the nuptial function.

Another example is a chest formerly in the collection of the Earl of Crawford (Fig. 14). Schubring identifies the subject of both this \textit{cassoni}, and the example above, as the \textit{Battle of Granicus}.\textsuperscript{382} Both \textit{cassoni} include a scene of a cavalry battle on the right of the panel, while on the left, Alexander encounters the family of Darius. Four of the main ancient accounts (Diodorus, Curtius, Arrian and Plutarch) all record this event happening after the Battle of Issus, not Granicus.\textsuperscript{383} A third example of the same subject, attributed to Lo Scheggia, was sold recently at

\textsuperscript{381} Including by Gombrich (1955), p. 31, and by Luke Syson and Dora Thornton in their book, \textit{Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy} (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2001), p. 71. Callman (1974), no. 45, p. 71 notes that this panel is "so obscured by restorations, varnish and grime that it is difficult to judge its quality or how well it fits into the shop's production."

\textsuperscript{382} See Schubring (1915), cat. nos. 150 and 160 respectively.

Christie's in London in December of 2011 (Fig. 15). The representations of the landscape on the latter two cassoni reveal that the respective artists likely consulted the account of Curtius for their paintings, since the two examples include a bay filled with ships in the background. The presence of the ships corresponds to the "coastal area" described by Curtius where the Alexander sent scouts before the battle of Issus. As with the British Museum cassone, despite the prominence of the battle scene, the second event within the story is more important for the overall didactive function of the imagery. As a model of chastity for newlyweds, Alexander graciously accepts the family of his enemy into his own court and treats them as his own blood.

The second—and it seems, more popular—mode of representing Alexander on cassoni panels is in triumph. As this particular type of imagery highlights the connection between humanist literature and Alexander the Great in the early Renaissance, I will focus on several examples that represent the Triumph of Alexander. Firstly, however, it is necessary to briefly examine the tradition of triumphal imagery during the early Renaissance, but also in ancient Rome, where the concept of a triumphal procession originated. Finally, I will examine cassoni panels that portray Alexander in triumph, and associate the iconography with the contemporary literary tradition, as well as with the institution of marriage.

The term trionfo describes a kind of procession that originated in Italy, deriving from the classical triumphal processions of a victorious general under the Republic of Rome, and later under the emperors. In the fourteenth century, humanist authors, particularly Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, adopted the idea of the triumph in their writings. No longer the martial parade of ancient Rome, the literary triumph now represented processions of allegorical figures. For instance, in the Amorosa visione (1342), Boccaccio described wall paintings in an imaginary

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384 Callman (1974), p. 43 notes the popularity of the story of Alexander and Darius. She cites five extant cassoni panels that portray a battle between the ancient kings.

385 Curtius, 3.8.17, pp. 39.
Yet another literary triumph occurred in the *Divine Comedy* of Dante with the Triumph of Revelation. Dante presented an allegorical procession through Purgatory, at the head of which come twenty-four singing elders, representing the books of the Old Testament, and apostolic animals surround the triumphal chariot of the church, in which Beatrice, personifying Divine Revelation, is drawn by a griffin.

The most celebrated literary manifestation of this imagery was Petrarch's long allegorical poem, *I Trionfi*, which elaborates on the theme by describing a series of allegorical triumphs, one after the other, and ending with the Triumph of Eternity. The triumphs of Petrarch informed a new type of Renaissance representation of the celebration of personifications of various virtues or virtuous figures in art. The *Trionfi* depend on the device of the author falling asleep and dreaming of a procession of figures, including heroes from mythology and history. In one of the allegorical processions, Petrarch visualizes a triumph of Fame personified, who arrives with a series of famous ancient worthies, including Alexander the Great. Petrarch also utilized the theme of the triumph in his account of Scipio Africanus, which was based on the description given by Livy in *Ab Urbe Condita*. These triumphs expanded on the humanist themes spreading through Italy at this time, namely, the literary celebration of virtuous figures from the past, and were adapted to the decoration of domestic furnishings in the Quattrocento. Furthermore, the Petrarchan triumphs came to be portrayed by artists as individual carnival floats surrounded by a cluster of followers, reducing the entire triumph into a single triumphal presenting piece representing a limited message, for example, a triumph of Chastity.

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Not only did the revival of triumphs in vernacular literature inform artists of cassoni panels, so, too, did the revival of classical literature. As I have shown in the previous chapters, Quattrocento humanists had an improved understanding of ancient historians than earlier scholars, and they were intimately familiar with the classical authors who described Roman triumphs. The image of a triumph derives, in actuality, from Roman military tradition, in which a victorious general might be awarded the special privilege of parading his armed troops on a designated route through the city of Rome, accompanied by booty and captives taken in battle. One important description of a triumph was provided by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, who recounted the triumph of Titus and Vespasian following the conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE.390

Complementing the description of Josephus, relief panels on the Arch of Titus in Rome portray the same triumph of 70 CE (Fig. 16). Renaissance artists, with their renewed interest in classical art and classical subject matter, consulted ancient monuments like the Arch of Titus and the Column of Trajan, which represented both images of battle and the subsequent triumphal processions.391 Although such scenes represent Roman triumphs, Renaissance artists adapted the imagery to representations of many ancient heroes—Roman and Greek—contemporary rulers, and allegories of virtue.


391 The influence of the Column of Trajan on Renaissance artists is the focus of the 1988 study, *La Colonna Traiana*. In a chapter dedicated to new research on the influence of the column, the scholars Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella explore the fascination that the column held for antiquarian-minded artists: in the early sixteenth century, the painter Jacopo Ripanda climbed the column in order to access all the scenes top-down. See Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella, "Nuove ricerche sulla Colonna Traiana nel Rinascimento," in *La Colonna Traiana*, ed. Salvatore Settis (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1988), pp. 549-89.
The study of triumphal imagery in the art of the Italian Renaissance can be traced back to the early twentieth century. Werner Weisbach was the first to examine the theme of triumphs in Renaissance art in his brief survey, I Trionfi (1919), which primarily addressed the appearance of triumphs in art. His work was supplanted by the much more comprehensive survey by Giovanni Carandente (1963), who emphasized the importance of the writings of Petrarch on all later manifestations of triumphal imagery. Carandente highlighted the variety of triumphal representations in manuscripts of Petrarch, such as the Codex Strozzi 174, illuminated by Apollonio di Giovanni. In addition, he considered a standardized representation of triumph, based on engravings by the Florentine artist Francesco Rosselli. This form of portraying a triumph had a broad diffusion in the second half of the fifteenth century, and it appeared in the first printed editions of I Trionfi, including the editio princeps of 1488 by Bernardino da Novara. Importantly for my study, Carandente expanded his examination of triumphal imagery in the fifteenth century to include decorative furniture in Tuscan homes, including deschi da parto (birth trays) and cassoni.

Numerous studies in English demonstrate the influence of literary descriptions of triumphs on Renaissance and Baroque regal entries into cities and on court fêtes, including those by Roy Strong. More recently, Margaret Ann Zaho has evaluated the triumphal motif and its meaning for rulers in early Renaissance Italy, focusing on the fifteenth-century courtly rulers of Naples, Rimini, Urbino and Ferrara. The majority of her case studies involve painting or sculpture that glorifies the local ruler. However, Zaho does briefly address the manuscript

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392 Werner Weisbach, I Trionfi (Berlin: G. Grote, 1919).
395 Ibid., p. 43.
396 For example, Roy Strong, Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).
tradition of Petrarch's *Trionfi* in Florence. 397 Robert Payne, in his book *The Roman Triumph*, surveys the tradition of the Roman imperial triumph, and contributes an examination of the revival of triumphs during the Renaissance. 398 The *Triumphs of Julius Caesar* by Andrea Mantegna for the Marquis of Mantua, the most famous artistic revival of an antique triumph, has been the subject of a comprehensive monograph by Andrew Martindale. 399 Martindale places the series of nine canvases in the context of the artist's career and the intellectual climate of the Gonzaga court, in addition to considering the extant drawings. Mantegna's *all'antica* triumphs, because of their large-scale and fame, offer a pointed contrast to the small-scale and often very courtly appearance of the triumphs of Alexander the Great found on domestic furnishings.

One striking surviving example of a triumph of Alexander on a *cassone* is found at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fig. 17). 400 The museum now attributes the panel to the Florentine artist Bernardo Rosselli, and dates it to the years 1480-85. Scholars, including Susan Caroselli, generally identify the subject as the *Triumph of Alexander and the Women of Darius*. A brief examination of the imagery seems to confirm this identification.

The Los Angeles panel illustrates a triumph proceeding from left to right. At the far left, the procession of cavalry begins in the distant background. Ahead of the cavalcade, a group of women sit on a canopied car, dressed in fashionable gold brocade dresses *alla francese*. The carriage itself is decorated with verdure tapestry, further displaying the taste for French fashion of the elite classes. More courtly figures on horseback accompany the ladies, including a dwarf in

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399 Martindale (1979), op. cit.
the foreground. At the centre of the panel, the youthful victor, dressed in golden armour, sits under a golden *baldacchino* on a chariot hung with cloth-of-gold. The figure (Alexander) holds a sceptre in his left hand, proclaiming his kingship. Next to him ride companions in armour and fantastical winged and feathered helmets. Ahead of the victor, a car bears a golden statue of a winged warrior, which is surrounded by cavalrymen portrayed with extreme foreshortening (Fig. 18). At the head of the procession, trumpeters, men carrying banners, and more soldiers march forward. They surround, in turn, a chariot bearing a golden urn, in which burns a sacred fire. A mandorla encircles the urn, similar to the statue in the car ahead of the victor. The processional scene is set against a landscape of mountains, rocky crags, fields, and a fortified town.

Susan Caroselli proposed that the women in the procession are Darius' mother, wife, and daughters. This identification makes most sense. For example, we know that artists portrayed battle scenes of Alexander that relate to this encounter with the women of Darius' family, including the panel now at the British Museum that was discussed earlier. If the Los Angeles *cassone* panel illustrates Alexander and the women of Darius' family, it follows, historically, the Battle of Issus. Darius brought his family to Issus (now southern Turkey) before the Battle of Issus, and fled, leaving them behind, after his defeat. Alexander encountered the women after battle, when Sisygambis, the mother of Darius, confused the king and his companion Hephaestion. The artist of the Los Angeles *cassone* panel, in contrast to the artist of the British Museum example, portrays an imagined episode after the encounter in which Alexander rides in triumph with the women.

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401 Dwarves were a fixture at many courts in Medieval and Renaissance Italy, including Mantua and Milan.
403 See, for instance, Curtius, 3. 12. 16-17, p. 46.
404 Indeed, in the Moretti collection in Florence, there is a pair of cassone panels, attributed to Apollonio di Giovanni, that portray, respectively, the *Battle of Issus* and the *Family of Darius* before Alexander. See the catalogue entry by Cecilia Filippini in *In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece*, ed. Mina Gregori, exhib. cat., 2 vols., National Gallery, Alexandros Soutzos Museum, Athens, 2003-2004, vol. 1, cat. I. 65, pp. 177-78.
In the Los Angeles panel, Sisygambis and Darius' wife wear golden dresses and elaborate headdresses (Fig. 19). Alexander wears a hat nearly identical to that worn in representations of the Byzantine Emperor John VII Paleologus. The hat, therefore, alludes to Alexander's assumption of oriental kingship, since, at the time, the Byzantine Empire was considered to be part of the "East." One of the women, specifically the mother of Darius, wears the same hat, despite her Western dress. This parallel in costume alludes to the close relationship between Alexander and the mother of Darius mentioned in the various stories of the life of Alexander. In the Historia de Preliis, Darius writes to Alexander and states that he has been informed of Alexander's kindness toward his family, but he adds that this will not affect their enmity. Alexander responds that, "if I treated your family well, it was not out of fear."\footnote{Historia de Preliis," in The Romances of Alexander (1991), book 2, 10, p. 161. The original Greek Romance of Alexander presents a slightly different version of the event. After capturing the family of Darius, Alexander's general, "Parmenio", urges Alexander to accept the ransom offered by Darius and to "give back to Darius his mother and his children and his wife, after sleeping with them." Alexander declines, declaring that, "it is shameful and more shameful that a man who has defeated men through his manliness should be defeated by women." See The Greek Romance of Alexander (1991), book 2, 17, pp. 106-107.}

In contrast, according to Quintus Curtius Rufus, Alexander referred to the mother of Darius as a second mother: "Alexander showed Sisygambis every mark of respect and his regard for her was that of a son."\footnote{Curtius, 5. 2. 18-22, p. 97.} Alexander became so dear to Sisygambis that when she heard of his death, she "withdrew simultaneously from nourishment and the daylight", despite the pleading of her grandchildren, and died five days later.\footnote{Ibid., 10. 5. 19-25, p. 247.} Moreover, in this image, the oriental-style hat also functions as a symbol of oriental kingship, which Alexander acquires with his triumphal parade following his victory over the King of Persia.

The artist of the Los Angeles cassone panel, Bernardo Rosselli, seems to have been intimately familiar with the literary tradition of the Trionfi of Petrarch. Indeed, elements found within the Triumph of Alexander and the Women of Darius resemble an engraving by Francesco

\footnote{Curtius, 5. 2. 18-22, p. 97.}
Rosselli executed around the years 1485-90, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Fig. 20).\(^{408}\) The engraving, which portrays the Triumph of Love, includes a flaming urn surmounted with a Cupid at the head of the procession. In the engraving, the car on which the flaming urn and Cupid rest is drawn by four steeds, in a similar manner to the Los Angeles panel. The date of execution of the engraving is within a few years of the generally-accepted date for the Alexander panel in Los Angeles. Because the two artists were, in fact, cousins, it is highly likely that they were familiar with the triumphal representations executed by each other.

Moreover, several notable details in the Los Angeles cassone faithfully follow the literary descriptions found in Petrarch's Trionfi. White horses drive the car carrying Alexander. In the Triumph of Love, Petrarch similarly describes four steeds, "whiter than whitest snow," pulling the car of the allegorical figure.\(^{409}\) The poet further writes that "the sound of the trumpet" accompanies the procession, which is reflected in the trumpeters present in the cassone panel.\(^{410}\) While the artist could have read these details in the Italian version of I Trionfi, he was more likely familiar with the visual tradition, which circulated in illustrated manuscripts. For example, an incunabulum of I Trionfi from 1488, now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Bod. Inc. Cat. P-159), portrays a full-page illuminated woodcut of the Triumph of Love on folio 3 verso (Fig. 21).\(^{411}\) The Triumph of Love includes the four white steeds from the poem, and a cart topped with a statue of Cupid standing on a flaming urn. In addition, the iconography of Petrarch's triumphs was adopted in festivals and processions in the Renaissance, for which artists like Bernardo Rosselli would have created banners, cars, and parade armour. While Rosselli was not a court

\(^{408}\) Carandente (1963), p. 43 proposed that the engraving may have been executed after an original design by Botticelli.
\(^{410}\) Ibid., p. 23.
\(^{411}\) The image is included with a text printed by Bernardinus Rizus for the Bentivoglio family of Bologna, as indicated by the coat-of-arms beneath the woodcut. For a high-resolution version of the image, see the Bodleian Library website: http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet
artist, he nevertheless worked in the milieu of the Medici family in Florence, who patronized the arts and literature much in the same way as aristocratic families in Northern Italy.

No surviving ancient literary tradition of a triumph of Alexander the Great exists. However, Quintus Curtius Rufus records a similar event in his account of the life of Alexander. According to Curtius, Alexander entered the city of Babylon as a victor after the city surrendered. The city was carpeted with flowers and garlands, altars were heaped with incense, following Alexander were cattle and horses, lions and leopards. Magi, priests and musicians sang, and in the rear were the cavalry. The king himself rode a chariot. 412 This was not necessarily a triumphal procession after a military victory, but rather an entry into the city as the new king that was re-imagined by later audiences as a triumphal entry.

No precedent exists for a representation of a triumph of Alexander on a cassone panel in the Renaissance. In fact, no known Renaissance depictions of Alexander's Babylonian "triumph" exist until the small-scale vault fresco at the Sala Paolina in the Castel Sant'Angelo (1545-47). 413 Although the account of Curtius was available to Rosselli, the Los Angeles cassone does not faithfully follow his description of Alexander's Babylonian triumph. Rather, the literary tradition of Petrarch's I Trionfi informed the artist.


413 The first monumental representation of Alexander entering Babylon in triumph was not created until Charles le Brun executed five panels representing episodes from the life of Alexander around the year 1670. Alexander, holding a sceptre topped by Victory, rides a chariot drawn by two elephants. The king is crowned with laurel leaves, and his companion Hephaestion rides on the steed in the foreground. Figures carry golden spoils of war and a fire burns in a tripod altar. Behind Alexander are landscape details that set the scene in Babylon: in the background are the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These Alexander panels were executed for Louis XIV to celebrate his power as the absolutist monarch of France. The artist relies closely on the ancient account of Alexander's entry into Babylon by including the terraces of the Hanging Gardens, the burning altars, and the elephants that Alexander captured from Darius' army. The scene is cramped with figures, all dressed in classicizing costume, and lit with dramatic Baroque lighting. Erkinger Schwarzenburg examines the painting, along with other seventeenth-century representations of Alexander the Great in the article "From the Alessandro Morente to the Alexandre Richelieu: The Portraiture of Alexander the Great in Seventeenth-Century Italy and France," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969), pp. 398-405.
As mentioned earlier, the concept of a triumph derives from Roman military processions. Triumphs in this sense did not occur in the world in which Alexander lived. With that said, Pliny the Elder, writing almost four centuries after Alexander, describes two paintings by Apelles that prefigure some of the triumphal imagery that developed in ancient Rome. The two paintings were both displayed in the Forum Augusti in Rome by Augustus. The first painting portrayed Alexander with Nike (Victory) and the twin Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux). The second painting depicted Alexander in a triumphal chariot, accompanied by a personification of Triumph, and the bound figures of War (Polemos) and Fury. This painting alluded to Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, and by extension, the "Greek" victory over the East. Renaissance artists like Rosselli could not have seen these paintings by Apelles, as they were lost along with the rest of Apelles' oeuvre. However, the descriptions survived, and artists of Rosselli's generation could read Pliny's *Natural History* and seek to recreate other lost paintings of Apelles, including the *Calumny*. Could Rosselli have sought to recreate the *Triumph of Alexander* by Apelles? This is unlikely. For instance, Rosselli does not include the bound figures of War and Fury. Instead, the procession in the Los Angeles *cassone* includes a winged, flaming urn and a golden statue of an armed figure, who has sometimes been identified as Hermes Trismegistus.

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414 Since the Dioscuri were the patrons of sailors, this work could refer to either Alexander's *periplous* of the Indian Ocean, or the expedition down the Indus.
415 For a brief description of these paintings see J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 22-23. Both Nike and the Dioscuri were familiar figures from Greek victory dedications.
416 Baskins offers an identification of the statue as Hermes Trismegistus, a favourite of Neoplatonic scholars in Florence like Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, who was associated with Persia and Zoroastrianism in the Renaissance. She connects the Hermes Trismegistus statue with the flaming urn as a manifestation of divine spirit, assuming that the artist Bernardo Rosselli was familiar with Zoroastrianism. See the catalogue entry by Cristelle Louise Baskins in *The Triumph of Marriage* (2008), cat. 8, pp. 121-26, at p. 125. While many artists were familiar with Neoplatonic ideas through humanists at the time (including Botticelli), this identification seems too obscure for such a work. Rather, including an allusion to the triumphal imagery of Petrarch in a triumphal image on a marriage chest seems more plausible. Because the *cassone* was commissioned for a marriage and utilized in a nuptial chamber, Hermes Trismegistus is too obscure of an ancient deity for a bride to easily recognize. Moreover, other fifteenth century images of Hermes Trismegistus show different attributes. For example, a
A similar cassone panel may, however, include the fettered personifications from the lost Apelles painting. In 2000, the antique dealer Gianfranco Luzzetti held an exhibition displaying his collection in his hometown of Grossetto. Among the works displayed was a cassone panel depicting a triumph of Alexander the Great (Fig. 22). The scene illustrates a procession to the left. At the far right, a youthful victor rides a golden chariot, accompanied by soldiers on horseback and a group of courtiers as well. In front of the victor's cortege is a horse-drawn car with bound captives sitting on top. An open view to the inside of the car reveals further captives. All of the captives wear rich costumes, indicative of noble status. The carriage is surmounted with a column topped by a golden sundisk. The car on the far left, at the head of the procession, bears a large gilded trophy, and is topped with a sundisk around whose base the helmets of enemies are arranged. The entire scene is set against a background of Italianate buildings and towers, and rocky crags. The captives cannot be firmly identified as allegories of War and Fury, and, indeed, they may only represent descriptions from the poem of Petrarch. In the Triumph of Love, for instance, Petrarch describes a procession of captives, including famous doomed lovers from antiquity, mythology and medieval romances. In the subsequent Triumph of Chastity, the author further describes more prisoners in the allegorical parade, including Cupid. Thus, while it is tempting to wonder if the artist of the Grossetto cassone may have alluded to the lost work by Apelles, the detail of fettered captives is also found in Petrarch.

drawing in the Florentine Picture Chronicle (c. 1470-75) by an artist of the circle of Maso Finiguerra that survives today at the British Museum shows the figure of an old, bearded man dressed in long oriental robes and crowned with a fanciful tiered hat (British Museum, recto of 1889,0527.48). The sheet identifies the figure by the inscription "MERCIURIUS RE DEGITTO". Hermes Trismegistus holds a homunculus. Similarly, a fifteenth-century floor mosaic in the Cathedral of Siena shows a bearded figure in long robes and an oriental-style hat passing a tome to a turbaned Eastern figure.

It seems most likely that Rosselli and other cassoni painters focused their attention on creating images of a triumphant Alexander based on the literary prototype of Petrarch's Trionfi. The Trionfi provided not only a humanist foundation, but also stressed the cultivation of particular virtues in marriage, notably chastity. Alexander, as a triumphant victor in the style described by Petrarch, embodied chastity through a variety of motifs included in the cassoni scenes. The presence of the family of Darius alerted viewers to his chaste, respectful relationship with the female relatives of his vanquished enemy. Other motifs, such as the general organization of a triumphal procession based on Petrarch's Trionfi further underscored virtuous behaviour, as allegorical virtues form the foundation of Petrarch's poem.

One further motif found in the Los Angeles cassone panel is worth noting for a connection to virtuous behaviour. In the car preceding Alexander, a winged statue in armour tramples a dragon. While Christelle Louise Baskins has suggested the statue may represent Hermes Trismegistus, considering the nuptial context, I believe it could also represent either St. Michael or St. George, the most recognizable warriors who slew a dragon in fifteenth-century imagery. Both of these Christian knights slew Satan in the form of a dragon. While Alexander was not a Christian, his victory over his Persian rival could be considered to prefigure the slaying of Satan. Likewise, the statue may allude to his conquest of desire through his chaste relationship with the female relatives of Darius. This inclusion of a Christian symbol could further allude to the stories in the tradition of the Romance of Alexander, which included the ancient king slaying a basilisk and battling other fantastical monsters at the edge of the world. As the arm of Christianity did not reach to these peripheral areas, Satan controlled the monsters there. Alexander, therefore, battled Satan in the guise of these fantastical beasts, as St. Michael and St. George would later do. The learned patron who commissioned such a cassone would have been familiar with the late medieval literary accounts of Alexander's "life". Thus, through repeated
visual motifs, the newlywed viewer of the cassone would be reminded to model their own behaviour after the chaste ancient exemplar, Alexander.

While the cassoni examples are some of the first representations of Alexander the Great executed in a classical spirit, the representations contain many residual elements of the courtly Alexander from the late Middle Ages. Firstly, as in the Doria-Pamphilj tapestries and the fresco cycle at the Castello della Manta, Alexander is always represented in the garb of the contemporary elite, often with gilded armour and heraldry. Secondly, while the Trionfi of Petrarch are based in classical literature and imagery, the theme also highlights many of the qualities that a courtly knight should possess, including love and chastity.

Because Alexander survived from antiquity mainly through textual sources, the value placed on the manuscript tradition cannot be overemphasized. Literary accounts informed the work of all of the artists examined in this study. In the case of this chapter, the legendary Alexander of the romance tradition begins to be replaced by the humanist Alexander of uomini famosi and triumphal literature. As more ancient accounts of Alexander's life become available through translations and humanist commentaries, a shift begins to occur, away from the vernacular literary sources, such as the romances and Petrarch, to the direct consultation of the ancient accounts that present a historical Alexander, as I will demonstrate in the forthcoming chapters.

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418 Baskins briefly suggests this, but argues that Hermes Trismegistus is the more likely identification for the statue. Baskins in *The Triumph of Marriage* (2008), p. 125.
Chapter 4

Portraits of Alexander the Great

In his *Life of Alexander*, Plutarch describes a portrait of Alexander the Great at Delphi so convincing that it "smote [King Cassander] suddenly with a shuddering and trembling from which he could scarcely recover." The Florentine humanist Leon Battista Alberti repeats this anecdote in his treatise *On Painting* (1435) as an example of the divine power of painting. Additionally, this anecdote underscores the renown of portraits of Alexander in both the ancient world and in the Renaissance. This chapter focuses on the artistic interest in portraits of Alexander during the Renaissance. In the Renaissance, the ease of access to ancient art models made portraits, rather than narrative episodes, appealing to artists. Unlike ancient narratives that portrayed the life of Alexander, some examples of portraiture survived for the Renaissance artist to emulate. Furthermore, portraits of Alexander were associated with the representations that were executed by three of the most famous classical artists, his court portraitists, Lysippus, Pyrgoteles and Apelles.

In order to examine the artistic interest in portraits of Alexander during the Renaissance, I will first consider what ancient portraits of Alexander were available to the Renaissance artist, including both textual descriptions and surviving images on coins and gems. Then, I will consider specific images of Alexander executed by Andrea del Verrocchio, Valerio Belli, and Giulio Romano. These three Renaissance artists created portraits of Alexander in three different media, paralleling those portraits in sculpture, metal, and painting by the court artists of Alexander. Through a comparison with descriptions of the ancient Alexander portraits, found in the *Natural History* by Pliny the Elder, and other literary sources, I will argue that the works of Verrocchio,

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Belli, and Romano echo the ancient prototypes. Moreover, I will demonstrate that through the execution of portraits of Alexander, each of these three Renaissance masters self-consciously sought to emulate Alexander's privileged court artists and acquire their lasting fame.

In his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder records that Alexander the Great gave three artists the exclusive right to depict his portrait in art: Lysippus the sculptor, Pyrgoteles the gem-engraver, and Apelles the painter. Although all of the original ancient portraits of Alexander that he describes were lost to the Renaissance, his text was nonetheless known through translated versions throughout the Middle Ages, and the Latin text of the *Natural History* was first printed in 1469 in Venice by Johann and Wendelin of Speyer. Because Pliny includes lengthy discussions of the famous artists of antiquity and the works that they executed, the *Natural History* was the most important source for information about the ancient portraits of Alexander in the Renaissance. For the most part, however, Pliny does not describe the iconographical details of the

421 "[Alexander] by public edict, declared that no one should paint his portrait except Apelles, and that no one should make a marble statue of him except Pyrgoteles, or a bronze one except Lysippus." Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1952), vol. 7, 7. 37. 125, p. 591. These three artists acquired such lasting fame that the fourteenth-century writer Petrarch mentions them in his *Canzoniere*, 232:

Anger conquered Alexander the conqueror,  
and made him less than Philip his father:  
what matter if Pyrgoteles and Lysippus  
alone could sculpt him, or Apelles paint him.


Hellenistic portraits of Alexander, nor does he specify the style of the images. Furthermore, while some artists were literate in the fifteenth century and could thus familiarize themselves directly with the vernacular translation of Pliny (published in 1476), it was not until later in the Renaissance that artists deliberately sought a humanist education and consulted the ancient texts themselves. Moreover, the humanist education that an artist might receive varied considerably. Depending on whether an artist grew up in a workshop environment or an aristocratic court influenced the sort of learning they acquired. Many artists could read Italian, but fewer were literate in the Latin used to access original ancient texts. Nevertheless, humanist advisors often worked closely with artists to design complex imagery and they could have easily interpreted the text of Pliny for artists to model their works on his descriptions.

In addition to the *Natural History* of Pliny, coins and gems were a source for antique portraits of Alexander during the Renaissance. During Alexander's lifetime, coins were the primary method for disseminating the imagery of a ruler. A sculpture or painting had a limited audience in the select city where the objects were displayed. Coins, on the other hand, were a medium of exchange used in business transactions across the empire. One of the most important forms of coinage during Alexander's lifetime depicted the head of Hercules wearing the skin of the Nemean lion. However, after 332 BCE, when Alexander visited the oracle at Siwa in Egypt

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423 Plutarch describes Alexander's complexion, recording that "Apelles did not reproduce his complexion, but made it too dark and swarthy. Whereas he was of a fair colour, as they say, and his fairness passed into ruddiness on his breast particularly, and in his face." Plutarch, *Alexander*, vol. 7, 4. 2, pp. 231-33.

424 An Italian translation of the *Natural History* was completed by Cristoforo Landino in 1475, and published the following year. Stephen John Campbell discusses the influence of the vernacular version on the artist Andrea Mantegna in *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 134.

425 For instance, one of the first artists to be educated was Andrea Mantegna. Leonardo da Vinci, too, had a voracious appetite for learning and he expanded the scientific ideas of others in his notebooks.
that proclaimed him to be a god, the coins show subtle changes, in which the head of Hercules is transformed into that of Alexander.  

For a Renaissance artist interested in the antique, coins were among the first visual references, providing both a stylistic and an iconographical stimulus. Of particular interest for this thesis is the description of an ancient gem by Cyriac of Ancona. One evening in November of 1445, the Venetian naval commander Johannes Delphin invited Cyriac of Ancona onto his ship to show off his collection of antique coins and cameos. Cyriac, a traveller, merchant, and classics-enthusiast, recorded this meeting in his diary:

And to tell you something really remarkable—when Jo. Delphin [Johannes Delphin], that keen and hard-working naval commander, had displayed a number of coins and precious gems to me when I stayed through the night in his office on board, among other things of the kind, he showed me a noble seal of crystal, of the size of one's thumb; it was engraved in very deep relief by the wondrous skill of the artist Eutyches with the portrait of Alexander of Macedon, helmeted, as far down as the breast; and for an ornament of the polished helmet two heads of rams impressed in front, with twisted horns—the very symbol of his father Jupiter Amon; and at the very top a tiara is seen to bear on each side.

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Molossian hounds, swift in the chase, of the highest artistic beauty: and under the helmet of the prince most delicate with curls on either side, dressed in fine cloth and in a traveller's cloak with elaborate designs at the top seems to have moved his right hand which is bare to the elbow, holding out his clothing becomingly from the upper part of his chest: and his face with a wonderful expression with royal aspect directing his gaze keenly, truly he seems to show living features from the glistening stone, and also his own heroic grandeur. When you hold up the thick part of the gem right towards the light, where the breathing limbs are seen to shine out in wondrous beauty with complete solidity, and with luminous crystal shadows in the hollows, we learn who is the maker of so splendid a thing, by the Greek letters—very ancient ones, too—carved above.\textsuperscript{429}

The gem that Cyriac described was probably the "chrystallinam Alexandri I. imaginem" which the Camaldolite monk, Ambrosio Traversari, had been unable to see while in Venice in 1433.\textsuperscript{430} Despite the small size of the gem (37.2 x 29.0 mm), a significant amount of detail is visible due to the skill of the ancient engraver, Eutyches. Unfortunately, the gem was broken into four pieces in the nineteenth-century, and it is difficult to see some of the details that Cyriac described.\textsuperscript{431} Furthermore, as Bernard Ashmole notes, Cyriac's description of the gem is not entirely accurate because the Molossian hounds that he mentioned are, in fact, griffons.\textsuperscript{432} It is possible that Cyriac's highly emotional response to the gem was written from the memory of what he actually saw aboard the ship that evening in November of 1445, and thus, in order to emphasize the grandeur of such a small object, some details were elaborated upon (or incorrect).

As the important trade centre to the eastern Mediterranean, Venice had commercial connections to Alexandria, Egypt—the city which Alexander founded around the year 331 BCE.


\textsuperscript{430} See Weiss (1988), p. 186. In 1445 the gem was owned by Bertuccio Delfin, before passing to the Salviati family, then to the Colonnas (until 1724) and Prince Avella. In 1882 the gem was acquired in Milan for the Staatliche Museen in Berlin. See the catalogue entry by Stefano Gabriele Casu in \textit{In the Light of Apollo} (2003-2004), vol. 1, n. I. 19, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{431} Ashmole (1960), p. 38.

\textsuperscript{432} Ibid., p. 39.
Johannes Delphin commanded the Alexandrian fleet of Venice. Consequently, Delphin may have developed a personal interest in Alexander. Although both Delphin and Cyriac believed the gem represented the bust of the ancient monarch, in actuality it rendered the goddess Athena. The gem, which survives today at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, portrays an androgynous figure, full-face in a crested helmet (Fig. 23). The helmet is embossed with griffons on the crown, and rams' heads on the cheek pieces.

Coins of Alexander from antiquity, such as the gold stater from his lifetime, actually featured a helmeted Athena, who protected the king (Fig. 24). Athena was the patron of Alexander's whole expedition and the recipient of the spoils from the Battle of Granicus in 334 BCE. She was also the patron of the Corinthian League of Greek states, whose hegemon (leader) Alexander became in 336 BCE. While the figure of Athena appears on these coins, Alexander's name, in Greek, was inscribed on the reverse. For the amateur antiquarian in the Renaissance, the androgynous figure combined with the inscription of Alexander's name led to the logical conclusion that these coins portrayed Alexander the Great.

Other collectors and antiquarians in the Renaissance described coins featuring the portrait of Alexander. Some forty years after Cyriac's visit with Delphin, the Mantuan nobleman Antonio da Crema recorded his finding and acquisition of two silver coins in Corfu, one with the helmeted head of Alexander and the other with an image of Pyrrhus, in his Itinerario al Santo Sepolcro of 1486. Isabella d'Este believed that she had an antique cameo of Alexander and his mother.

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434 Gold quarter and gold eighth staters were rare, but they also featured the goddess Athena. See Alfred R. Bellinger, Essays on the Coinage of Alexander, Numismatic Studies No. II, American Numismatic Society (New York, 1963), pp. 26-27.
436 See Scalini in In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece (2003-2004), vol. 1, p. 366. Pyrrhus was the king of Epirus, from 306 BC. He was also a distant relative of Alexander the Great through Alexander's mother, Olympias.
Olympias in her collection.\textsuperscript{437} However, much like Cyriac, Isabella misidentified a gem. Her gem, in fact, represented the Roman emperor Augustus and his wife Livia.\textsuperscript{438} The misidentification of coins of Alexander seems to have been relatively common. For example, a friend of Isabella d'Este, Fra Sabba da Castiglione, recorded a humorous anecdote in which a foolish dilettante asked him if a coin in his collection portrayed the Alexander who wrote the catechism that the dilettante had studied as a youth.\textsuperscript{439} The coin Castiglione described is, in fact, a gold stater from Corinth with the helmeted head of Athena on the obverse, and a winged personification of Victory on the reverse.

Antique cameos and coins of Alexander were also found in the inventories of erudite ecclesiastical collectors, of whom one of the most important was Pietro Barbo. Pietro Barbo, who ascended the papal throne as Paul II in 1464, owned one of the largest gem collections of his day. The 1457 inventory of then-Cardinal Barbo's Palazzo di San Marco in Rome described a coin of Philip of Macedon; Philip, it will be remembered, was revered for being the father of Alexander the Great.\textsuperscript{440} A post-mortem inventory of 30 November 1471 listed a chalcedony gem "with the head of Alexander" estimated with a value of eighty ducats.\textsuperscript{441} Barbo was not the only cleric to


\textsuperscript{438} This cameo is found today in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, which is home to many gems from the Este collection. For some of the objects in the Kunsthistorisches Museum originally from the Este's collection, see Leo Planiscig, \textit{Die Estensische Kunstsammlung, I, Skulpturen und Plastiken des Mittelalters und der Renaissance} (Vienna: Kunstverlag Anton Schroll and co., 1919). The figures in this gem are identified sometimes as a Ptolemaic king and queen.


\textsuperscript{440} Ibid., p. 238.

\textsuperscript{441} "Item adimanda uno calcedonio cum testa de Alexandro, el quale extima ducati 80, che tanti ne trovo da Jacobo Branchaleone da Napoli..." The original Italian is recorded by M. Eugène
own gems representing Alexander. The inventory of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (d. 1483) listed twenty-two gems, two of which are identified as Alexander the Great: a chalcedony and an emerald.\footnote{D. S. Chambers transcribes the inventory in D. S. Chambers, \textit{A Renaissance Cardinal and his Worldly Goods: The Will and Inventory of Francesco Gonzaga (1440-1483)} (London: Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts 20, 1992). The emerald is described as item 545, "Alexandro Magno incavato in brillo legato in ariento dorato"; the chalcedony item 557: "Alexandro Magno in calcedonio biancho legato ut supra cum cadenella".} The use of emerald immediately evokes Pliny's brief description of Pyrgoteles, who carved Alexander's portrait on emerald.\footnote{According to Pliny the Elder, vol. 10, 37. 3. 8, p. 169.} In addition, while these gems were prized for their precious material and the technical ability of the ancient artist to carve in the medium, the subject of Alexander would have been appealing to these elite patrons. Alexander, as discussed in the previous chapter, was a model of authority and power, qualities that ambitious cardinals in the papal circle in Rome would no doubt aspire to possess.

In addition, the proliferation of numismatic literature during the sixteenth century reflects the importance of coins as historical documents—both for artists and for scholars. Andrea Fulvio's \textit{Ilustrium Imagines} (1517) represented imperial Roman portraits with woodcuts of ancient coins, both real and imagined. The numismatic illustration of Cicero, for instance, was imagined, as coins were never executed in antiquity to commemorate the orator. However, the earliest catalogues of ancient coins did not appear until the mid-sixteenth century, when more scientific and methodical antiquarian studies developed. The engraver Enea Vico published his \textit{Discorsi di M. Enea Vico...Sopra le Medaglie De Gli Antichi Divisi in Due Libri} in 1555 in Venice.\footnote{Vico was, in fact, a member of a noble family in Parma and eventually became such an expert on ancient medals and coins that he was put in charge of the medal cabinet of the Estes in Ferrara, Müntz, \textit{Les Arts à la Cour des Papes Pendant le XVe et le XVIe siècle}, 3 vols. (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1879), vol. 2, p. 117.} Although unillustrated, Vico's text features a series of chapters dedicated to various aspects of numismatic and antiquarian historiography. Importantly, Vico is the first scholar to consider the well-established practice of forging ancient coins. Vico describes the three principal

He further lists the most skilled \textit{imitatori} of classical coins, including Benvenuto Cellini, Alessandro Cesati, and Leone Leoni.\footnote{Michael Crawford, "Numismatics," in \textit{The Classical Tradition}, eds. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 648-49, at p. 648. The interest in ancient numismatics was primarily Roman, not Greek, since Roman coins survived in greater numbers in Italy.}

Vico's text was followed by the publication of Sebastiano Erizzo's \textit{Discorso di M. Sebastiano Erizzo. Sopra le medaglie de gli antichi} in 1559.\footnote{Erizzo was from a patrician family in Venice. He had a personal collection of over 2000 ancient coins. See Haskell (1993), p. 19.} This text is notable for dealing with both republican and imperial Roman coins, including what would now be referred to as Roman provincial coinage.\footnote{McCrory (1987), p. 117.} The work was particularly concerned with the iconography of coins, and indeed, it contained over 500 woodcut illustrations of both the obverse and reverse of ancient coins. Erizzo's study proved so popular that it was soon reprinted in 1568 and 1571.

Although both numismatic examples and literary descriptions of ancient portraits of Alexander existed during the Renaissance, these sources could only be accessed through a study of antiquity, either by reading the text of Pliny, or by copying ancient coins. As a result, in the absence of direct evidence linking the artists to specific ancient prototypes, it is difficult to say definitely what sources inspired the artistic interest in portraits of Alexander in each example. Nevertheless, information about the classical portraits of Alexander survived into the Renaissance and provided a basis from which the artist could execute a representation of the Macedonian king.
The first and most important sculptural representation of Alexander the Great during the Renaissance formed part of a pair of now lost reliefs by the master Florentine sculptor, Andrea della Verrocchio. In his Vita of the artist, Vasari writes that Verrocchio did two separate bronze heads in half relief, one of Alexander the Great in profile, the other a portrait of Darius, with contrasted crests, armour, and so forth. Both these heads along with various other works were sent by Lorenzo the Magnificent to King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary.449

Despite the fact that Vasari informs the reader that Lorenzo de' Medici gave the bronze portraits to Matthias Corvinus as a gift, the exact date of the commission is unknown. Gunter Passavant postulates that it could not have been before 1480, when the war between Florence and Naples ended, because Matthias married the daughter of the king of Naples.450 However, related drawings from artists in the circle of Verrocchio, including a drawing of an aged warrior by Leonardo da Vinci, are generally dated to the 1470s, which could support a slightly earlier execution date than 1480.

While Verrocchio's bronze reliefs are lost, their design is recorded through several copies in marble, stucco, and terracotta, and as drawings.451 The attribution of various versions has been

450 Gunter Passavant, Verrocchio (London: Phaidon, 1969), p. 199. Andrew Butterfield, similarly, proposes the dating to be around the early-to-mid 1480s, for political and artistic reasons, including the fact that Verrocchio is known to have been engaged in another project for Matthias Corvinus (a fountain, left incomplete at the artist's death in 1488). See Andrew Butterfield, The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), at pp. 156-57.
451 It is possible that Vasari was incorrect and Verrocchio's original reliefs were carved from marble instead of bronze. See C. Seymour, The Sculpture of Andrea del Verrocchio (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 127 for more.
much debated by scholars for well over a century.\textsuperscript{452} Rather than continue the debates of attribution and connoisseurship surrounding the copies after Verrocchio's reliefs, I will treat the copies as inspired by Verrocchio's model. In particular, several copies after Verrocchio's bronzes are believed to be faithful copies, especially the examples housed in Vienna, Washington and Paris, which will be discussed below.\textsuperscript{453}

One of the best-preserved copies of Verrocchio's relief is the marble relief by an unknown artist in the National Gallery, Washington, D. C., formerly in the Herbert N. Straus Collection, New York (Fig. 25). Alexander is shown as a beardless youth with his face in profile. He wears a conch-like helmet with an ornate visor covered in foliage and a curling shell-type swirl on the side. In place of a feathered crest is a winged dragon, whose head is broken off. Ribbons stream from behind the helmet, and Alexander's hair curls beneath. Alexander also wears an antique-style cuirass with a winged Gorgon mask at the centre. His chest turns toward the viewer to show further classicizing details. His left shoulder is draped with a cloak, and the right shoulder, closest to the viewer, has a pauldron (shoulder and upper arm defence) decorated with a scene of a nereid riding the tail of a triton. The nereid holds a cornucopia, the symbol of


abundance. Below this, the *pteruges* (pendant straps) of Alexander's armour are decorated with masks.

Many of the elements incorporated in the relief of Alexander seem to echo the gem described by Cyriac of Ancona. The king is youthful, helmeted, his armour is decorated with antique motifs, and he projects the "wonderful expression of royal aspect" that Cyriac so keenly felt. However, the gem renders a frontal portrait of the subject, whereas the relief portrays the king in profile, in a manner analogous to ancient coins and medals. Thus, based on the positioning of the portrait, it seems most likely that Verrocchio consulted coins and medals in order to portray Alexander in an *all'antica* manner.

The specific motifs that decorate the armour underscore that the warrior shown is from the classical past. Indeed, Nancy Lodge connects the nereid and triton figures with a gold medallion minted at Ephesus around the year 212 CE for the Emperor Caracalla (Fig. 26). On the obverse of the medallion is a portrait of Olympias, the mother of Alexander. Although it cannot be proved conclusively that Verrocchio consulted the gold medallion of Caracalla, evidently the artist was familiar with classical motifs. The dragon, the gorgon, and the nereid decorations on Alexander's helmet and armour, all figures of ancient mythology, reveal knowledge of the classical past. In other words, not only does the sculptor execute a portrait of the famed ancient king, but he also decorates the portrait with motifs that highlight his knowledge of antiquity.

In particular, the gorgon head on Alexander's cuirass is a multivalent motif. According to the classical legend, the Gorgon Medusa turned men into stone with a mere glance. The hero Perseus decapitated the Gorgon and gave her head to his protectress Athena to wear on her aegis. The head of Medusa was a popular motif in late Quattrocento Tuscany, as Eugène Muntz

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454 Ibid., p. 34.
455 Indeed, as Athena was the patron of Alexander's expedition into Asia, it is fitting that his aegis reflected that of Athena and included an image of Medusa's head. The cult statue of Athena in the
discussed in his 1897 article, "Le Type de Méduse dans l'art Florentin du XVe siècle et le Scipion de la Collection Rattier." Medusa was the most ancient blazon on the shields of warriors, and her image was frequently used on Italian parade armour in the sixteenth century. Her screaming visage was intended to create the impression that the wearer of the armour was as fearsome as the Gorgon herself. However, when Plutarch, in his influential account of the Life of Alexander, describes Alexander's armour, he makes no mention of any Gorgon heads decorating Alexander's breastplate. Nevertheless, indirect associations between Alexander and Medusa exist.

Firstly, Plutarch records the fondness Olympias had for snakes immediately following his account of the conception of Alexander. Plutarch writes that "a serpent was once seen lying stretched out by the side of Olympias as she slept", which in time came to dull the ardour of Philip's attentions to his wife. This account became garbled into a legend told in the Romance of Alexander, whereby Nectanebo the magician-pharaoh visited Alexander's mother in the guise of a snake, which was later represented by Giulio Romano at the Palazzo del Té in Mantua. Verrocchio likely became aware of these legends through copies of Plutarch, in addition to Parthenon, which Alexander would have seen when he visited Athens in 335 BCE, had an ivory image of Medusa on the aegis.

Medusa heads in art, especially in ornamental shields, continued as a popular artistic subject in Italy into the seventeenth century; Caravaggio's famous painting is one such example. Carolyn Springer takes a literary approach in addressing the apotropaic function of Renaissance armour in her book, Armour and Masculinity in the Renaissance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). See pp. 54-62 for a discussion of Medusa images on parade shields in the mid-sixteenth century.

In his Alexander, 14. 4, pp. 265-67, Plutarch describes the crest of Alexander's helmet with the following: "on either side of which was fixed a plume of wonderful size and whiteness." Later, the author describes Alexander's armour at the Battle of Gaugamela. He states that Alexander wore a "vest of Sicilian make girt about him, and over this a breastplate of two-ply linen from the spoils taken at Issus. His helmet was made of iron, but gleamed like polished silver, a work of Theophilus; and there was fitted to this a gorget, likewise of iron, set with precious stones." As in Ibid., 32. 5-6, pp. 321-23.

vernacular versions of the Romance of Alexander that circulated in Quattrocento Italy. While this iconography may be too elevated for Verrocchio to have known personally, it would have been appreciated by the learned humanist court of Lorenzo de' Medici.

Indeed, the presence of Medusa can be seen as an early manifestation of the ascendancy of sculpture over painting in the paragone debate: Verrocchio's sculptural representation of Alexander wears the Medusa head on his breastplate. Medusa's appearance creates the ultimate—literally the last—experience a viewer will ever encounter. Thus, Verrocchio created a lasting representation of the Macedonian king, so powerful that other artists, in turn, imitate and adapt it.

The second close copy after Verrocchio's lost bronze of Alexander is a relief in the Louvre, the so-called Scipio by an anonymous artist (Fig. 27). Formerly in the Rattier Collection, it was acquired by the Louvre in 1903. The relief is usually dated to the fifteenth century, though Émile Bertraux believed it was a more recent work of the nineteenth century. While most scholars tend to consider it simply as a Florentine work of the late fifteenth century, Müntz presented a strong argument that the relief is, in fact, a work by the young Leonardo based on the arrangement of the figure and the modelling. Regardless of the precise identity of the artist of the so-called Scipio, the relief nevertheless derives from the original bronze by Verrocchio.

The marble bas-relief shows a youthful, beardless warrior, again in profile to the right. The warrior has a similar ornamental conch-shaped helmet as the Washington relief, including a dragon in place of the crest, and ribbons streaming behind. The Louvre relief has fewer curls of hair below the helmet, and Alexander's chin is less prominent. The breastplate of the figure also has a 'screaming' winged Medusa mask—here, however, the tendrils of her hair have a 'flame-


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like' quality. Notably, the Louvre Gorgon mask is in profile to the right, whereas the Washington version faces the viewer frontally.

The Louvre example differs from the Washington relief in two main ways. Firstly, the Louvre relief lacks a pauldron with grotesque zoomorphic figures, and instead portrays simpler fanning rows of "bat wing" armour, similar to the dragon's wing on the helmet. Secondly, the Louvre relief is inscribed at the bottom in Latin-style lettering, "P. SCIPIONI." Vasari makes no mention of Verrocchio executing a Scipio as part of the series for Matthias Corvinus, thus the Louvre relief reveals a change from the original Alexander design by Verrocchio to Scipio by the addition of an inscription. As discussed in Chapter Two, Alexander was compared in ancient and Renaissance literature with the Roman hero Scipio, since both leaders were renowned for their magnanimity towards vanquished women. Without any distinguishing attributes, a portrait of a youthful all'antica warrior without an inscription could portray either Alexander or Scipio.

From the Louvre relief, a squeeze in stucco was made, which is now housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Fig. 28).463 Unfortunately, the stucco was broken into ten pieces, and as a result the surface is quite damaged. Indeed, it is difficult to distinguish specific details besides the curling vinework of the helmet and the rough shape of the profile of the face, as well as the body and head of the winged dragon. Eric MacLagan has argued that "it is not unreasonable to suppose that [this] stucco is in fact moulded from the lost bronze relief of Alexander the Great by Verrocchio, with the description of which it so exactly corresponds."464 However, I am not so certain. Firstly, due to the fragile nature of plaster, the likelihood of a stucco squeeze surviving five centuries is very slim. Secondly, Vasari's description of the relief is too vague to confirm the attribution, as he does not specify the iconography of the bronze, besides

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462 Müntz (1897), p. 121.
464 MacLagan (1921), p. 137.
the relief portraying Alexander in profile wearing a crested helmet and armour. In fact, all of the reliefs in the group after Verrocchio's original could fit Vasari's description.

Imitations of Verrocchio's Alexander relief exist in other media besides marble. A terracotta roundel, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, is a prime example of the diffusion of Verrocchio's design to other artists in Florence (Fig. 29). This Alexander terracotta, originally from the Museo Estense treasury in Modena, was mentioned in an 1806 inventory from the castle of Catáio, near Padua. The roundel was made by the della Robbia family workshop around the year 1500. As it is well known, the della Robbia family workshop was famous for their sacred and secular sculpture in glazed terracotta, which was used to adorn as prominent a location as the façade of Filippo Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti, in addition to the more private realm of family chapels. Terracotta, a form of clay pottery that was fired and glazed multiple times in a technique not dissimilar to maiolica, was produced with moulds. Moulds allowed for easier and more numerous reproduction of the design than workshop carvings in marble. The Vienna terracotta has a nearly identical portrayal of a young warrior to the Louvre and London versions, with the exception that the image is a roundel, reduced in scale, and bordered by vegetation. Because of the similarity to the Louvre and London reliefs, a common source likely connects all three images: most probably the marbles were carved after Verrocchio's original bronze reliefs—perhaps using wax models from the bronze as templates. The compositions were then adapted to terracotta by a member of the della Robbia workshop. Terracotta offered a more affordable version for a sophisticated patron to acquire, while remaining faithful to the original imagery found on Verrocchio's reliefs.

A recent addition to the group of reliefs inspired by Verrocchio's original is a marble in
the Art Institute of Chicago, which is sometimes attributed to Francesco di Simone (Fig. 30).
This relief is similar—though not identical—to the Washington and Louvre versions since the
warrior is in profile to the left, not to the right. He lacks the helmet ribbons, and his hair has more
stylized, regular curls. He wears archaizing armour, with a screaming Medusa mask in profile on
his breastplate. His left shoulder, which faces the viewer, has neither fanning rows of bat wings,
nor *all'antica* animorphs. Rather, his pauldron consists of a lion's mask. The stylized lion mask
alludes to the god Hercules, who wore the skin of the Nemean lion as a trophy. The lion was said
to have impenetrable skin. Alexander's wearing of the lion skin in portraits, therefore, suggests
his appropriation of both Hercules' power in strangling the lion, and the skin's impenetrability to
weapons. The ancient authors Justin and Quintus Curtius Rufus both record Alexander's
personal devotion to Hercules, and, as I mentioned earlier, Hellenistic coins of Alexander
featured the king's head covered with a lion skin. In addition, lion-mask pauldrons appear

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467 Borders consisting of acorns, pinecones, and lemons were typical on della Robbia terracotta
ware (both sacred and secular).
468 See Lodge (1990), p. 28. She attributes the work to Francesco di Simone. However, the Art
Institute of Chicago now catalogues the work as a nineteenth century object. See the Art Institute
of Chicago website: http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/artist/964. Leo Planiscig
attributed this relief to Verrocchio, but I think it should instead join the group of sculptural reliefs
made after Verrocchio's lost composition. In the literature, Planiscig seems to be searching for the
original bronzes by Verrocchio. His 1933 article describes his 'discovery' of a lost marble in a
Hungarian castle some years previously, though Ricci and Gustave Soulier disprove Planiscig's
'discovery' by noting how they saw the marble in a French antique dealer's shop. See De Ricci
(1933) and Gustave Soulier, "Un sculpture inconnue de Verrocchio," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*,
469 Alexander's physical impenetrability to weapons is commented upon by Plutarch, both in his
Classical Library, 15 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927), vol. 4, 327a-b, pp. 385-87,
and in his *Alexander*, 45. 5-6, pp. 355-57.
470 See the excerpts by the two ancient authors in Waldemar Heckel, and J. C. Yardley, *Historical
Sources in Translation: Alexander the Great* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing,
Inc., 2004), pp. 211-12, particularly Justin 11. 4. 5: "Cleadas even appealed to the king's personal
devotion to Hercules, who was born in their city and from whom the clan of the Aeacidae traced
its descent, and to the fact that his father Philip had spent his boyhood in Thebes." Justin 11. 10.
10: "The city of Tyre had sent Alexander a deputation with a heavy crown of gold in a show of
congratulation. He accepted it with gratitude, then said he wished to go to Tyre to discharge his
frequently on Renaissance parade armour, imitating the costume worn by the Praetorian standard-bearers (*signifers*) in ancient Rome. Renaissance artists were familiar with these figures through their dedicated study of the representations on the Arch of Constantine, Trajan's Column, and other imperial Roman monuments.  

The commission that Vasari records Lorenzo the Magnificent gave to Verrocchio did not include only a relief of Alexander the Great. Rather, the commission consisted of a pair of reliefs representing Alexander and his rival Darius, the king of Persia. No fewer than five reliefs of Darius survive in enameled terracotta, one of which is found in the Bode Museum (before the Kaiser Friedrich Museum) in Berlin. This terracotta is rectangular, while round versions are found in the Louvre, the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon (Fig. 31), the Palazzo Frescobaldi in Florence, and the Museo di Maiolica in Pesaro. These copies all feature similar elements: an older warrior, in profile to the left, with a dolphin crested helmet, a roaring lion mask in profile on the cuirass, and a relief of a dragon on the pauldron. Appropriately, the details on the representations of Darius contrast to those found on the Alexander examples. For instance, a dolphin crest on Darius compares to a dragon on Alexander, opposing a creature of the sea (dolphin) with a creature of the air and earth (dragon). A Medusa and lion mask both roar, but one is a beast, the king of the animals, and the other was once a beautiful human girl. In addition, the

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vows to Hercules." Justin 12. 7. 12-13: "After traversing India Alexander now reached a rocky eminence which was extremely high and precipitous, on which many tribes has sought refuge; and he was told that Hercules had been prevented from capturing this by an earthquake. So it was that, overcome by an urge to better Hercules' exploits, he braved extreme hardship and peril to take the height, finally accepting the surrender of all local tribes." For Quintus Curtius Rufus, see *The History of Alexander*, trans. John Yardley, with an introduction and notes by Waldemar Heckel (London: Penguin Books, 1984; rpt. 2001), 3. 12. 27, pp. 39-40: "He consecrated three altars on the banks of the river Pinarus to Jupiter, Hercules, and Minerva, and then made for Syria."

472 MacLagan (1921), p. 137.
lion echoes the leonine features of the scowling Darius.⁴⁷³ The dragon on Darius' pauldron further emphasizes the wilder, oriental nature of the Darius composition, as the dragon twists and turns. Most notable, however, is the juxtaposition between a young unblemished warrior and an old one, whose face is cragged and sagging.

The most famous example of this Darius old-warrior-type is the silverpoint drawing in the British Museum attributed to the young Leonardo (Fig. 32).⁴⁷⁴ Leonardo's drawing differs slightly from the terracotta reliefs inspired by Verrocchio as the artist replaces the dolphin crest with a butterfly wing and the curls of a flowing vine. The lion-head mask on the cuirass is drawn with sensitive realism, with delicate whispering lines forming his mane. Coffer ed armour over chainmail replaces the pauldron. Regardless of whether or not Leonardo intended this drawing to portray Darius or simply an aged warrior, it is undoubtedly connected with Verrocchio's original bronze relief. We cannot securely date the commission for the King of Hungary, and thus it is not clear whether Leonardo's warrior was inspired by Verrocchio's pair of reliefs, or if Leonardo was simply representing the type of warrior that flourished in projects executed by Verrocchio and his workshop during the 1470s and 1480s. While this drawing could be a finished composition of its own, it could also be a model for a plastic composition by Leonardo that was never realized (Leonardo acquired a reputation for being very slow to finish his projects). If other members of Verrocchio's workshop produced the examples discussed in this chapter, then Leonardo, likewise, may have intended to carve his Darius into a marble relief.

The existence of various copies after Verrocchio's warriors—both young and old—clearly reveals that there was an interest in antique warriors during the late 1470s and early 1480s

⁴⁷⁴ The recent exhibition at the British Museum included this particular drawing. For a survey of the recent literature, see the catalogue entry by Hugo Chapman in Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings, eds. Hugo Chapman and Marzia Faietti, exhib. cat., British Museum, London (2010), cat. 50, p. 204.
in Florence. The number of surviving copies suggests that there was a market for Verrocchio's images in particular. Indeed, other works of the period reflect a taste for "fantastic armour", including a parchment drawing by Marco Zoppo of a warrior in the British Museum, and Verrocchio's silver reliefs of the *Decapitation of St. John the Baptist*, now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence. Lorenzo the Magnificent was fascinated by such warriors, and he often commissioned fantastic costumes for parades, or fanciful shields. The ornamentality of the armour may derive in some ways from the late gothic taste for elaborate decoration that was also found in tapestries and manuscripts, with their rich margins of curling foliage. However, the variety in the armour also reflects Alberti's urging that modern artists include *varietà* in their compositions. Alberti writes that "copiousness and variety please in painting", and indeed the variety of classical motifs delights the viewer. Most of the motifs on these highly decorative warrior reliefs—dragons, lions, nereids—seem to have some significance for the iconography of Alexander, but, more importantly, the details communicate his identity as a figure from antiquity, in addition to the general Renaissance taste for classical subjects and classical style.

While the relief by Verrocchio contains motifs emblematic of the Macedonian king, such as the Medusa head, the youthful face, and *all'antica* ornamentation, the portrait remains an idealized image of Alexander. Without specific identifying features, Verrocchio creates a "portrait" of a heroic male onto which the viewer can project a version of himself. The recipient of Verrocchio's reliefs, Matthias Corvinus, was a passionate collector of art, and introduced ideas of the Italian Renaissance to Hungary, in addition to conducting a series of successful wars in

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475 Lodge (1990), p. 28.
476 The motifs on the helmets and cuirasses of these Verrocchian warriors almost seem to predicate *all'antica* grotesques, which begin to show up in art in the sixteenth century after the discovery of the subterranean Roman frescoes in the Domus Aurea around 1480. For a comprehensive study of the Domus Aurea and its influence on painting of the Renaissance, see Nicole Dacos, *La Découverte de la Domus Aurea et la formation des Grotesques à la Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1969).
central Europe. Politically, both Matthias and his father, John Hunyadi, won victories against the Turks after the fall of Constantinople. Matthias' modern victories against the Turks paralleled Alexander's ancient defeat of the Persians in Asia. Indeed, Matthias was praised as a new Alexander both by poets at his court, and by Florentine humanists. In his Laudes poeticae historiaeque fere omnium vatum of 1480, the humanist Angelo Poliziano extols: "not to supersede Alexander…but you, King Matthias, will not yield to him whether we consider his victories or his generosity." While comparisons with ancient heroes were a common literary device, not only does Poliziano praise Matthias' military prowess, but he also allies the virtues of the ancient king with the modern one, continuing the humanist tradition that we saw in the previous chapter.

Matthias self-consciously encouraged these comparisons. For instance, he kept a copy of Livy's Histories under his pillow in the same manner that Alexander had kept Homer under the head of his bed. Among his collection of over 600 books, Matthias owned at least six manuscripts that included versions of the life of Alexander the Great. His copy of Arrian, dated

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477 These reliefs have also been discussed by Eastern European scholars, including Lajos Vayer, "Alexandrosz és Corvinus: A Verrocchio-oeuvre és az olasz-magyar humanizmus ikonológiaja," Művészettörténeti Értesítő, 24 (1975), pp. 25-36.
478 Lodge provides a concise summary of the historical and political events of the Hungarian struggle with the Turks. See Lodge (1990), p. 40.
479 This text was dedicated to King Matthias. "Nec tu profectu Alessandro…iure esseris Mathia Rex seu victorias eius seu beneficiam consideres." Text from Pietro Adorno, Il Verrocchio (Florence: Casa Editrice EDAM, 1991), p. 177. The translation is my own.
480 Lodge (1990), pp. 38-40. The Biblioteca Corviniana Digitalis, directed by István Monok of the Széchényi National Library, is a millennial project devoted to creating a digital reconstruction of Matthias' library. They have compiled a list of Corvinian manuscripts, available on their website: www.corvina.oszk.hu
481 Matthias's manuscripts of the life of Alexander have been dispersed across Europe. At the Széchényi National Library in Budapest are two manuscripts, Cod. Lat. 160 De Gestis Alexandri Magni of Quintus Curtius Rufus ("escript Florentie Petrus Cenninius 1467"), and Cod. Lat. 425 De Casibus Vitorum Illustrium by Boeceaco. At the University Library of Universal Science in Budapest is a copy owned by Matthias' wife, Beatrice of Naples, with the arms of Aragon, made 1471-75, Cod. Lat. 4 De Gestis Alexandri Magni by Quintus Curtius Rufus. At the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna is Plutarch's Lives (Cod. 23, made in Florence in 1470 by Mariano del Buono), and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana has Matthias' copy of
to around the year 1480, contains a portrait of Matthias as Alexander on the frontispiece. Matthias not only emulated Alexander's prowess as a military leader, but he also connected his scholastic interests with those of Alexander. Lorenzo de' Medici commissioned Verrocchio to create the gift of the bronze reliefs with the understanding that Matthias was being compared to Alexander, whose virtue, magnanimity and ingenuity on the battlefield would serve him well as a military leader.

Furthermore, it was imperative that Matthias symbolically associate himself with models of secular kingship because he was not of royal blood. In January of 1458, he was elected king of Hungary, and, in fact, he was the first non-royal to ascend the Hungarian throne. Thus, in addition to displaying his cultivated taste and humanist learning, allying himself with Alexander the Great served to legitimize his authority in Hungary.

By executing a sculptural portrait of Alexander the Great for Matthias Corvinus, Verrocchio actively aspired to be compared with Alexander's court sculptor, Lysippus. In his Natural History, Pliny wrote that the sculptures by Lysippus of Sicyon so pleased Alexander that the king designated Lysippus as his court sculptor. Indeed, his portrayal became the quintessential image of Alexander that is still promulgated today. Plutarch described this "type" in two passages:

The outward appearance of Alexander is best represented by the statues of him which Lysippus made, and it was by this artist alone that Alexander himself thought it fit that he should be modelled. For those peculiarities which many of his successors and friends...
afterwards tried to imitate, namely, the poise of the neck, which was bent slightly to the left, and the melting glance of his eyes, this artist has accurately observed.485

When Lysippus first modelled a portrait of Alexander with his face turned upward toward the sky, just as Alexander himself was accustomed to gaze, turning his head gently to one side, someone inscribed, not inappropriately, the following epigram:

The bronze statue seems to proclaim, looking at
Zeus: I place the earth under my sway; you,
O Zeus, keep Olympus.

For this reason, Alexander decreed that only Lysippus should make his portrait. For only Lysippus, it seems, brought out his real character in the bronze and gave form to his essential excellence. For others, in their eagerness to imitate the turn of his neck and the expressive, liquid glance of his eyes, failed to preserve his manly and leonine quality.486

The sculptures of Lysippus portrayed not only Alexander's physical appearance, but also his arete (the virtues society could be expected to admire), and his ethos (personal character).487 The "leonine" quality described by Plutarch alludes to Alexander's personal affiliations with the hero-god Hercules (whose legendary feats Alexander sought to recreate and ultimately surpass).488 The upward-turning face of Alexander, meanwhile, emphasized his Olympian ancestry. Alexander claimed paternal descent from Zeus, who visited his mother Olympias while his earthly father Philip was away at war. The Alexander portrait by Lysippus glanced upwards toward heaven, which was the abode of his true father. Unfortunately, no original portraits of Alexander the Great by Lysippus survive, though countless copies said to be after his works or after the works of his pupils, both Hellenistic and Roman, abound.489

Even though Verrocchio likely did not encounter the ancient copies after the original statues by Lysippus, he would have been familiar with Lysippus' fame as a sculptor. He assumed

485 Plutarch, Alexander, 4.1, p. 231.
488 For instance, by the late fourth century BCE, it was generally accepted that Hercules had conquered the known world from the Pillars of Hercules (Gades) in the West to India in the East. Hercules had failed to take the Rock of Aornos, which Alexander scaled in 327 BCE. See Stewart (1993), pp. 235-36.
489 This author encountered a notable number of Lysippan-style Alexander portrait busts in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, amongst other museums across Europe.
a comparable artistic reputation through his creation of a bronze portrait of Alexander. Lysippus had acquired an enduring fame in part because of his association with his glorious patron, Alexander the Great, and in part because of his refined artistic skill. Verrocchio, commissioned by the most important figure in Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici, to create a pair of portrait reliefs for a king of Hungary, gained a reputation for his own artistic skills both in Florence and abroad in Europe. Thus, he must have consciously appreciated the fact that the gifting of a work fashioned from his hands to an important international patron would increase his artistic renown across Europe.

If Matthias Corvinus, according to contemporary humanists, became the new Alexander through his victories against the East and his cultivated learning, then Verrocchio became the equivalent of his court sculptor even if the artist never visited Hungary. Vasari never explicitly states that Verrocchio equalled Lysippus. However, his comments in the biography of the artist allow such connections to be drawn. For example, Vasari describes Verrocchio's fondness for making plaster casts of "natural forms" which the artist then utilized for copying purposes. Verrocchio was also one of the first to create "inexpensive casts of those who died" (to be hung over doors and mantles as memoratio of the deceased). Verrocchio, therefore, continued the artistic tradition of memorial casts began by Lysippus. Verrocchio, therefore, continued the artistic tradition of memorial casts began by Lysippus, in addition to creating a portrait of Alexander the Great.

Vasari may have never overtly connected Verrocchio with Lysippus, yet other Renaissance writers compared Verrocchio with ancient sculptors. Verrocchio was juxtaposed with another ancient sculptor in the eulogy given by the humanist poet Ugolino Verino in 1488 to

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491 Pliny the Elder, op. cit., vol. 7, 35. 44. 153, pp. 373-75.
the city of Florence with the praise, "Nor is our Verrocchio less than Phidias, and he surpasses the Greek in one respect, for he both casts and paints."\textsuperscript{492} In 1503, Verino continued the comparison between ancient and modern artists in his rhymed history of Florence, \textit{De illustratione urbis Florentiae}. Specifically, he associated Fra Filippo Lippi with Apelles, Leonardo with Protogenes, and Botticelli with Zeuxis. Andrea del Verrocchio, he asserted, was the "equal of Lysippus."\textsuperscript{493} Thus, some twenty years after Verrocchio executed a pair of portraits of Alexander and his rival, an overt association between the two artists still resonated in Florence.

Far less explicit than the comparison between Verrocchio and Lysippus is the example of Valerio Belli and the ancient court artists of Alexander the Great. Belli (1468-1546), a medalist from Vicenza, was known in his day for skill of engraving rock crystals. However, he also executed an \textit{all'antica} portrait medallion of Alexander. Unlike Verrocchio, Belli does not seem to have created this portrait for a specific patron seeking allegiance with the ancient king. Rather, the medallion was a part of a series of ancient individuals, which served to advertize both Belli's refined skills as a designer of medallions and his knowledge of antiquity.

In contrast to Verrocchio, few Renaissance authors discuss Belli's artistic achievements, though Belli does appear in Francisco de Hollanda's \textit{Four Dialogues on Painting}. Francisco was a talented young Portuguese artist of Dutch descent at the court of the Infante Fernando, and in 1537 he was sent to Italy to further his artistic education.\textsuperscript{494} His \textit{Four Dialogues}, composed upon his return to Lisbon the following year, were likely based on actual encounters and conversations


during his stay in Rome. However, these accounts were fictionalized for a didactic purpose, most likely intended as instruction on the latest Italian artistic trends for the Portuguese court. Although most of these dialogues involve conversations with Michelangelo, in the Fourth Dialogue, Francisco and his Roman companions are joined by Valerio di Vicenza (Valerio Belli), whom Francisco writes has just returned from Venice:

He was an old man, in good health and spirits, and a gentleman of fine culture; he was moreover the one man of the present time in Christendom who could rival the ancients in the art of carving medals in high or fairly high relief, in gold and crystal and steel… [Valerio] produced from beneath his velvet dress fifty medallions of purest gold, fashioned by his hand after the manner of the ancient medals and so admirably done that they seemed to increase my respect for antiquity. They were stamped with marvellous skill… And thenceforth I esteemed Messer Valerio a greater man than I had thought.

Francisco records one such medal Belli executed of Artemisia, the ancient Queen of Caria who constructed the famous Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, in "the Greek manner." The series of medals he describes Belli exhibiting in the dialogue did, in fact, exist. A copy of an inventory of the one hundred dies engraved by Belli to strike this series of fifty medals includes some forty Greek subjects and ten Latin. For the series, Belli engraved a wide range of both male and female classical figures: philosophers, poets, and rulers, including Alexander the Great. Indeed,

496 De Hollanda (1928), pp. 77-78.
497 This copy survives in an anonymous and undated manuscript in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, published in 1864. Considering that Francisco wrote his book in 1537, the fifty medals must have been completed by this date. See Lawrence (1996), p. 20; Philip Attwood, Italian Medals c. 1530-1600 in British Public Collections, 2 vols. (London: British Museum Press, 2003), vol. 1, p. 208.
498 Valerio Belli was not the first engraver of the Renaissance to portray Alexander the Great. In the L. Courajod Collection at the Louvre, there is an unsigned medal from the fifteenth century, with a female in profile to the left, wearing a diadem, and bearing a bow and quiver on her back. She is sometimes identified with the Amazon queen Thalestris, who seduced Alexander in order to bear his son. Émile Molinier provides the more convincing identification of the woman as the goddess Diana. See Molinier, Les bronzes de la Renaissance—les plaquettes (Paris: Jules Rouan, 1886), p. 23, no. 45. On the reverse of the medal is a bust of Alexander in profile to the right. He is beardless, with long, androgynous hair. His helmet visor represents a bearded man, and the side of his helmet is a triton sounding his trumpet. The aegis of Minerva covers his cuirass. This figure corresponds with busts of Minerva, yet the artist inscribes the identification ALIX[ANDER] on the face of the medal. For the artist, this androgynous figure was not the goddess, but the
the ancient individuals portrayed on the medallions almost seem to echo the humanist tradition of *uomini famosi*, discussed in Chapter Three, because viewers could emulate the virtues and accomplishments of these exemplary figures, which included Julius Caesar, Timoclea, Hannibal and Aristotle.

A silver medallion of Alexander from this series survives in the Cabinet des Médailles in the Louvre (Fig. 33). Belli portrays Alexander in profile facing right, and he simplifies the helmet. He omitted both a crest and the fantastical grotesque details of Verrocchio's figure. Instead, Belli represents the visor as a moulded mask, with prominent eyes and nose. Belli continued to portray Alexander in the standard format established by Verrocchio since his sitter is youthful and beardless, with an aquiline nose and curls coming up from under his helmet.

However, Belli does not illustrate any armour because, due to the small size (22 mm), the medal cuts Alexander off at the neck. With the absence of iconographic elements that might aid in identifying the subject, Belli includes a Greek inscription bordering that reads "ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ [of King Alexander]." Since the series of medallions includes many ancient military commanders an inscription is necessary for the viewer—and perhaps for the artist as well—to distinguish between the figures. On the reverse of the coin is an image of a winged horse, which

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Macedonian king. A similar fifteenth century medal of Alexander in the G. Dreyfus Collection at the Louvre represents Alexander with a helmet crest in the form of a dolphin, and the side with the Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs (Molinier, p. 26, no. 49). The legend on this medal identifies the androgynous warrior as ALISANDRO.

The Samuel Kress collection also contains a Minerva medal by an anonymous artist from the sixteenth century [A.316.39B], which is similar to Alexander, although her head is tilted higher, her hair longer, and her helmet decorated with a triton blowing a conch. Although this plaquette is identified as Minerva because it lacks an identifying inscription, there is no reason why this medal could not have been viewed as another representation of Alexander to the Renaissance viewer. The figure has the same androgynous face as the other Cyriae-types. See John Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Reliefs, Plaquettes, Statuettes, Utensils, and Mortars* (London: Phaidon Press, 1965), no. 261, p. 76.
alludes either to Bucephalus, or to Pegasus, the horse companion of the hero Bellerophon in his fight against the Chimera and the Amazons. 499

The quality of workmanship and the use of Greek text on the medallion indicate that Belli created his medal in deliberate competition with those of the ancients. 500 Presumably Belli had help with the Greek text, either copying an ancient model, or consulting a scholar. A number of scholars could have performed such a role at the papal courts of Leo X and Clement VII where Belli worked, including Tommaso Inghirami, Filippo Beroaldo the Younger, Cornelio Benigno, Pietro Bembo, Giovanni Battista Pio, Giovanni Lorenzi, and Angelo Colocci. 501 As Antonio Magrini suggested in 1870, Belli's programme for the medals was most likely devised by Giovanni Lascari, a scholar of Greek language and literature, who, under the patronage of Leo X, founded a centre for Greek studies at the Quirinal in Rome. 502 Moreover, Lascari was familiar with at least some of the medals in Belli's series of famous ancient figures since he composed an epigram in praise of Belli's medal of Virgil: "To Valerio of Vicenza, if Maro had been alive to see

499 Belli's winged horse is the type found on Carthaginian and Greek coinage in Hellenistic Sicily. See the catalogue entry by Davide Gasparotto in Valerio Belli Vicentino 1468c.-1546, eds. Howard Burns, Marco Collareta and Davide Gasparotto (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 2000), p. 370.

500 Although the Renaissance is famous for its revival of Greek and Latin learning, the Renaissance was primarily a rebirth of Latin learning. Most people, including learned humanists, did not know Greek, even if they did have a little Latin, such as Raphael.

501 See Paul Grendler, The Universities of the Italian Renaissance (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 221. Beroaldo (1472-1518) was the nephew of a famous Bolognese humanist of the same name. He became the secretary of the future Pope Leo X around 1505, and succeeded Inghirami as the papal librarian in 1516. Cornelio Benigno was a corrector of Greek texts in Rome around 1505-20. He was a collaborator on the first Greek edition printed in Rome, the 1515 Pindar, which was printed by Zacharias Calliergis, in the house of Benigno's patron, Agostino Chigi. Benigno was sued in 1518 by Chigi for the return of the four hundred ducats he advanced for the Pindar. See Julia Haig Gaisser, Piero Valeriano on the ill fortune of learned men: A Renaissance Humanist and His World (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 267. Giovanni Lorenzi published, at Pope Leo's favour, a translation from Greek to Latin of Plutarch's Libellus aureus guomodo ad adulatorae discernatur amicus: see Christopher L. C. E. Witcombe, Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 47-48ff.. Angelo Colocci collaborated with Leo X to form a Greek gymnasium at Colocci's villa on the Quirinale: see Charles Stinger, The Renaissance in Rome (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1985), p. 287.
you executing faces then, Valerio, he would not have attributed this work to others. At the very least, Lascari could have assisted Belli with the Greek inscriptions on the medals, if not have devised the entire iconographic programme for all fifty of the medals in the series.

In addition to the medal of Alexander, Belli executed a silver medallion of Alexander's wife, Roxanne (Fig. 34). This medal has a similar Greek inscription, "ΡΟΞΑΝΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΗΣΑ [Queen Roxanne]", and Roxanne's profile bust faces to the right. As is the case with the Alexander medallion, the inscription is necessary to identify Roxanne because the series also included many illustrious women from antiquity. To compliment the helmeted Alexander, she wears a diadem, indicating her royal status. On the reverse are three figures, one holding a lyre, the second a wreath, and the third sacrificing a bull at a garlanded altar. Together, these figures illustrate a celebration, perhaps that of the marriage of Alexander and his wife. In the background is the façade of a tetrastyle temple, which was a favourite motif of the artist. The small size of this medal—Roxanne measures 26mm in diameter—accounts for the limited amount of detail.

Significantly, Belli was one of the only practitioners of the so-called minor arts who was worthy of a biography in the Vite, in which Vasari praised Belli as a technician of his craft, if not as a designer in his own right. Belli was working in Rome by 1517, and had received commissions from Pope Leo X. He circulated in the same artistic milieu as Raphael, and could

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504 One example is in the British Museum, M8840.
505 As I will discuss in Chapter Five, Alexander presents Roxanne with a diadem, or a crown in the famous composition by Raphael, inspired by an ekphrasis of the ancient painting by Aëtion. It is possible that Roxanne continues the narrative begun in Raphael's image—in Belli's medallion, she now wears the crown after assuming the position of Alexander's queen.
506 Attwood (2003), vol. 1, p. 222, no. 383.
well have had access to many of the same sources that inspired Raphael's interpretation of Alexander the Great, including the *Illustrium Imagines* of Andrea Fulvio. As a member of Raphael's circle, Belli could have been in direct contact with Andrea Fulvio. Indeed, the portrait of Alexander in profile of the *Illustrium Imagines* has similarities to the medal by Belli since it also faces right and Alexander's helmet has a mask-shaped visor. Because the woodcut is more than twice the diameter of Belli's medal, the artist could incorporate more detail in the helmet and cuirass. However, in Belli's medal, Fulvio's Latin inscription is replaced with a Greek one, which serves to authenticate his Alexander as a Hellenistic representation.

In the Renaissance, forging copies of antique works was not an uncommon practice. For instance, Vasari describes the young Michelangelo burying a sleeping cupid in the earth so it could be excavated as a piece of genuine classical sculpture. Enea Vico, if we recall, dedicated a chapter in his treatise to the practice of forging coins and medallions. Belli was not necessarily trying to pass his medallions off as antiques, but it is notable that he did not sign his authorship anywhere on the medal. He could have created this medal to intentionally compete with famous examples from the classical past, particularly the gem engraver Pyrgoteles, who was the only engraver allowed to carve Alexander's image during his lifetime. Although Francisco de Hollanda frequently mentions classical figures and artists, including Alexander, Protogenes, and Apelles, he does not bring up any comparisons with contemporary figures. In contrast, Vasari

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508 Belli's presence in Rome is evidenced by Raphael's 1517 portrait miniature of the engraver. Their friendship is discussed in John Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources 1483-1602* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 312-13. Raphael painted the miniature in thanks for his being chosen the godfather Belli's daughter. The identity of the father and the godfather is complicated by the Italian pronouns in the 1643 description of the miniature by Giralamo Gualdo the Younger. Shearman explains the complexity of the pronoun use.


510 The practice of signing medals was used, for example, by the engraver Alessandro Cesati on a medal created for Pope Paul III, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

511 Nonetheless, Francisco does mention the greatest artists of the day, particularly Michelangelo. In the Third Dialogue, Francisco names "those deserving of praise", including Polidoro da Caravaggio, Baldassare Peruzzi, Perino del Vaga, Giulio Romano [incorrectly translated in the 1928 edition as Giulio Clovio], Maturino, Parmagianino, Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and
writes that Belli executed, "quantities of intaglios, large and small, with incredible delicacy and ease, and if Nature had made him as excellent in design as he was diligent and patient in execution, he would have surpassed the ancients, whom he equaled."\textsuperscript{512}

According to Vasari, however, because Belli used the designs of others, or copied ancient intaglios, he could never achieve the true genius of other artists of the terza età, such as Michelangelo and Raphael. While Vasari continues the literary topos of comparing a contemporary artist with ancient artists, he does not take the juxtaposition further to name a specific ancient engraver. This can easily be explained by the fact that Hellenistic gem engravers were virtually unknown to Renaissance writers. In fact, even the ancient authors say little about Pyrgoteles, the artist who engraved portrait gems of Alexander. Pliny only briefly states that Pyrgoteles was without a doubt chief of his craft in the time of Alexander, confirming an edict of the king that forbade his likeness to be engraved on stone by anyone except Pyrgoteles.\textsuperscript{513}

Unfortunately, as Andrew Stewart has noted, because there was no independent Hellenistic tradition of writing about gem engravers that Pliny could have consulted, he does not mention any specific works by Pyrgoteles.\textsuperscript{514}

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Sebastiano del Piombo. As an aside, it is interesting to discover that that many of these artists either collaborated with Raphael, or were members of his workshop.


\textsuperscript{513} Pliny the Elder, vol. 10, 37. 3. 8, p. 169. The same technique of intaglio carving was also used to make coin dies. Therefore, Pyrgoteles may also have served Alexander as a sculptor of coin dies. See Pollitt (1986), p. 25.

\textsuperscript{514} Stewart (1993), p. 36.
It is difficult to compare Belli with Pyrgoteles, in part because neither the originals nor copies after the Alexander portraits by Pyrgoteles can be identified. In addition, very little is known about Pyrgoteles and not a single source cites an anecdote about his relationship with his patron, Alexander the Great. Nevertheless, Pyrgoteles represents an exemplary ancient portraitist of gems and medallions to whom Belli could aspire to be compared. The two artists worked in the "minor arts" of engraving gems and creating die casts for medallions. Thus, if Belli was the equal of the ancient gem engravers and medalists, Pyrgoteles becomes the ideal comparison. Just as Pyrgoteles was the court engraver to Alexander, Belli worked for the most sophisticated patrons of his day, including Pope Clement VII. Given the long tradition of imitating and emulating classical sculpture in Renaissance art, Belli's "copying" of ancient intagios is certainly nothing of consequence. Rather, because of his faithful recreation of classical forms and his technical skill at engraving Belli places himself within this rich artistic tradition of competition with the ancients: if he is equal to them, surely he is equal with Pyrgoteles.

Meanwhile, comparisons with the painter Apelles were one of the most common juxtapositions between ancient and modern artists in the Renaissance. Artists including Jan van Eyck, Botticelli, Mantegna, Dürer, and Raphael were heralded as the "new Apelles" not only for their interest in classical style and subject matter, but also for their skill in painting. It would be easy to compare any of these artists with Apelles, except that none seems to have created a portrait of Alexander the Great. A painted portrait of Alexander does not, in fact, appear until

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515 Since antique gems after the Archaic Period (c. 800-480 BCE) are notoriously hard to date, even if Pyrgotelian gems survive, they would be impossible to identify. Pollitt (1993), p. 23, briefly discusses the problematic nature of dating ancient gems.
516 Belli executed a crystal casket with a scene of the Crucifixion for Clement VII. For the description of the casket by Vasari, see Vasari, trans. Hinds, ed. Gaunt (1963), vol. 3, p. 64.
relatively late in my period of focus. The artistic heir of Raphael, Giulio Romano, was the first to execute a true painted portrait of Alexander the Great in the Italian Renaissance, and thus he self-consciously sought to ally himself with Apelles.

Of the three ancient artists who portrayed Alexander, Apelles had a preferred relationship with his patron. Indeed, Pliny specifically uses the Latin word "comitas", which has connotations of friendship, when he describes their relationship. In one of the most famous anecdotes about their relationship, Pliny records that Alexander was so pleased with Apelles that he gave the artist his favourite mistress Campaspe as a wife. Furthermore, Apelles had so much authority at court that, despite Alexander's irascible temper, he advised the king to avoid talking about painting as Alexander was not an expert.

The Greek author Plutarch discusses the reception of the portrait that Apelles executed, stating that Apelles painted Alexander "so vividly and with so natural an expression, that men said that, of the two Alexanders, Alexander, son of Philip, was invincible, but the Alexander of Apelles was inimitable." Along with the rest of Apelles' oeuvre, this image was lost long ago. Nevertheless, descriptions of his paintings existed in accounts that were widely available in Latin and vernacular translations in the Renaissance. For the Renaissance, Apelles embodied an exemplary ancient artist, both in terms of his talent, and his status at the court of Alexander.

In his Vita of Giulio Romano, Vasari briefly notes that Count Nicola Maffei had a life-size portrait of Alexander the Great holding a Victory in his hand, painted by Giulio. Vasari praises the work, which was "copied from an ancient medal, and a very beautiful thing." This painting likely corresponds with a portrait of Alexander that Giulio created around the year 1537,
formerly in the Lederer collection in Geneva, and now in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva (Fig. 35). The artist portrays Alexander in half length, in a costume of scale armour adorned with classicizing details, such as a winged putto head on his breastplate. Alexander also wears an ostrich-plumed helmet encircled with laurel, and a visor in the shape of a mask. The hilt of his sword takes the shape of a lion's head, which alludes to Hercules and the Nemean lion. In his right hand, Alexander holds the statue of Victory and in his left, he clutches a scroll, which may refer to the edict described by Pliny that proclaimed Apelles as the only artist allowed to paint the likeness of the king.

Giulio may have, in fact, painted two versions of the portrait. The nineteenth-century scholar Carlo d'Arco cites two examples of the painting: one in Vienna, and the other in the collection of the Marchese Tullio Guerrieri in Mantua.524 The second example was unknown to any later authors.525 The Vienna painting, on the other hand, is identified as the one now in Geneva, having come into the Lederer collection.526 Indeed, the leading scholar on Giulio Romano in the twentieth century, Frederick Hartt, saw the Geneva version in a salt mine at Altaussee in 1945-46 after its confiscation by the Nazis in the Second World War.527

An interesting painting exists today in a private collection in London, attributed to Giulio Romano (Fig. 36). It represents Alexander in a similar fashion to the Geneva version: he is dressed in all'antica armour and he holds a statue of Victory in his right hand. While his pose is nearly identical, there are small and notable changes. In the London painting, a griffon decorates the side of the helmet of Alexander. And, rather than clutching a scroll in his left hand, Alexander

524 Carlo d'Arco, Storie della vita e delle opera di Giulio Pippi Romano (Mantua, 1838; 1842), p. 53.
525 One of the only modern scholars to mention the painting is Raffaella Morselli in Le Collezioni Gonzaga. L'elenco dei beni, eds. Stefania Lapenta and Raffaella Morselli (Milan: Silvana, 2000), n. 880, pp. 224-25, at p. 225.
526 One of the first scholars to mention the portrait is Leo Planiscig, "Ein Neues Aufgetauchtes Bild von Giulio Romano," Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft, 41 (1919), pp. 231-37.
instead touches the head of a lion skin cloak. I think that this painting could be the elusive second
copy mentioned by d'Arco.

According to Vasari, Giulio derived the imagery of the painting from an ancient medal,
though an ancient coin would have been a more likely source. Indeed, an early third-century BCE
coin, minted under the Hellenistic king Lysimachus (c. 360-281 BCE), shows the head of
Alexander as Zeus Amon, and Athena holding a statuette of Victory on the reverse (Fig. 37). As it
is well known, Hellenistic rulers, including Lysimachus, minted coins with the image of
Alexander to proclaim that they were his legitimate successors.528 This particular coin was copied
in a numismatic manuscript by the Mantuan antiquities dealer Jacopo Strada entitled Selecta
Numismata Antiqua around 1550.529 Although Strada's manuscript has too late a date for Giulio's
Alexander, it reveals that coins of this kind were in circulation at the Mantuan court at roughly
the same time as Giulio was working there.530

However, perhaps the ancient medal or coin from which Giulio derived his imagery
portrayed not the head of Alexander, but a different motif. Both the Geneva and the London
paintings portray Alexander holding a statuette of Victory. This format may derive from a
Keraunophoros type portrait by Apelles, in which the subject holds a thunderbolt.531 This most
famous portrait of Alexander the Great by Apelles, depicted the king in the traditional format of

528 For example, see the discussion in Pollitt (1986), pp. 26-28 and Stewart (1993), pp. 312-17.
529 The manuscript is housed at the Houghton Library, Harvard College, MS. TYP 411, c. 41r. A
photocopy of this manuscript is in the library of the Warburg Institute in London. Guido
Rebecchini links the coin with the portrait of Alexander by Giulio. See Guido Rebecchini, Private
Collections in Mantua 1500-1630 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002), p. 82.
530 Indeed, it is well known that Giulio executed his infamous series of I Modi prints based on
motifs from antique erotic coins (called spintriae). For a discussion of this, see Bette Talvacchia,
Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
531 A possible derivation of the Keraunophoros type is preserved in the House of the Vetii at
of the Alexander Keraunophoros painting, as well as the iconography of Zeus' thunderbolt, in
addition to the historical significance of Alexander "liberating" Asia from the Persians. Alexander
was avenging the invasions of Darius and Xerxes on the Greeks and regaining Artemis' land for
her people.

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Zeus Keraunophoros, and, by doing so, compared Alexander's power to that of Zeus: he was universal, invincible, and omniscient. Additionally, the portrait connected Alexander with the goddess Artemis, as it was placed in the temple at Ephesus dedicated to her, which had burned down on the eve of Alexander's birth in June of 356 BCE. Thus, by placing the portrait of the king in the reconstructed temple, Alexander was now symbolically laying the "liberated" territory of Asia at her feet.532

Although the original painting of Alexander Keraunophoros by Apelles of course has not survived, Hellenistic gems adapted the attributes of the Keraunophoros portrait. One such carnelian gem, now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, called the "Neisos" gem after an inscription on the work, portrays a heroic nude image of Alexander accompanied by the eagle of Zeus (Fig. 38). In his right hand, Alexander holds a thunderbolt and in his left, a sheathed sword. This portrayal may, in turn, derive from Lysippan statuettes of Alexander holding a lance, but I am of the opinion that it could represent an amalgamation of the portrait types of both Apelles and Lysippus, in an engraved gem.533 Giulio could have been familiar with a similar gem through the collection of his patron, Duke Federico Gonzaga (1500-40). Federico's mother, Isabella d'Este, had an infamous weakness for collecting gems, and she even pawned jewellery and other antique statuettes in order to enrich her collection.534 Giulio could have viewed such a gem in Federico's studiolo, where the Duke kept his collection of antiquities along with modern paintings.

One of the Alexander portraits by Giulio must have been made for Count Nicola Maffei or a member of his family, since, at the time of Vasari's writing, the painting was in the house of the Maffei family. Nicola Maffei (1487-1536) was a nobleman and ambassador for the Gonzaga

court in Mantua. He was also an avid collector of antiquities and modern paintings. On the occasion of Duke Federico's wedding in 1531, for instance, Maffei gave him a Leonardo painting from his collection.535 The year before, Maffei had also commissioned a painting of the Supper at Emmaus from Titian.536 The inventory of his eponymous grandson (d. 1589), describes a Venus and Cupid by Correggio in a richly furnished bedroom, along with a Venus, Cupid and Mercury, also by the hand of Correggio.537 This same inventory lists Giulio's portrait of Alexander: "un quadro grande con la figura di Alessandro Magno con la cornise adorata" in the "sala grande di sopra."538 The description clearly states the subject matter and differs slightly from Vasari. There is no mention of a statuette of Victory, but instead the painting contains an adorned setting. This "cornise adorata" could refer to the ornate suit of armour that Alexander wears, rather than the object he holds in his hand.

Vasari's account of the Alexander portrait owned by Maffei, however, is problematic. Scholars believe that Giulio painted the work as a response to a portrait of Augustus by Titian that had arrived in Mantua in 1537 as part of the series of the Twelve Caesars. Because Nicola Maffei had already died in 1536, it is possible that the Nicola Maffei, who owned the work in 535 This painting is referenced in a letter from Ippolito Calandra to Federico, dated 28 October 1531. Rebecchini (2002), Appendix 5. II, p. 347 reproduces the original Italian text from the Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 2516, cc. 103r-5r (104v). The subject matter of the Leonardo painting is not specified, but it may be the so-called 'Scapiliata', now in the Galleria Nazionale at Parma. Rebecchini (2002), p. 57 discusses the inventoriel provenance of this work. On Maffei's acquisition of antiquities, see Rebecchini (2002), pp. 56-61. Maffei purchased antiquities, including a marble head of Augustus, on diplomatic missions to Rome and Naples.
536 This painting was completed around 1534. See Rebecchini (2002), pp. 62-66. Titian petitioned for the purchase of land in Treviso, and he asked the Mantuan court for assistance as part of the payment for the painting. The lands were never actually acquired.
537 It is possible that the elder Maffei could have commissioned the two Venuses, which date to 1523-25, on a diplomatic mission to Parma around 1523, where Correggio had signed a contract to paint the cathedral dome. See Ibid., pp. 73-78. Rebecchini reproduces the inventory in Appendix 2. IV, pp. 278-86 from the Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio notarile, registrazioni, year 1589, cc. 782r-92v. The Correggio Venuses are described as "una Venere et Cupido che dormano con un satiro che scopre di man del Correggio" [item 29], and "una Venere che guida Cupido a scuola da Mercurio di man del Correggio" [item 31].
538 Ibid., item 200.
Vasari’s account, was the son or close relative of the deceased Nicola. In addition, Vasari did not visit Mantua until 1541, five years after Maffei had died. Therefore, as Guido Rebecchini has suggested, if the Alexander was painted in response to the Augustus by Titian, then Vasari’s claim that the Alexander was in Nicola Maffei’s house must be contradicted. A more probable scenario is that one of the sons of Maffei had acquired it.539

Recently, Simon Legrand has presented compelling evidence for the existence of a third extant portrait of Alexander the Great after Giulio Romano.540 In addition to the paintings in Geneva and London, the third version, dated to around 1550 (and thus not by Giulio himself), is found in the Seidner collection in Los Angeles. This third version may have been executed for members of the Guerrieri, a family of powerful condottieri who were eminent members of the court at Mantua.541 The Guerrieri and Maffei families, Legrand argues, both wanted to highlight their connection to the Gonzaga family by ordering their own copies of the original Alexander portrait.542 Regardless of the exact patron of each portrait, the works were all doubtlessly owned by intellectual collectors who also participated in the classical interests of the Mantuan court.543

The Geneva portrait is generally associated with the painting that is recorded in the collection of the younger Nicola Maffei, and it seems that the London version was likely painted

539 Ibid., p. 83.
541 Ibid., p. 43.
542 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
543 The Alexander portrait was acquired by the Gonzaga, along with the two Maffei Correggio Venuses and the Supper of Emmaus by Titian, in whose collection it was recorded in 1626-27. The painting is described as "un quadro guasto dipintovi Alessandro Magno, opera di Giulio Romano, stimato lire 18. V." However, the painting was not acquired by Charles I in the Mantua sale in 1627, but it instead appears in a 1631 inventory of the Savoy family in Turin as a "testa di Alessandro Magno, mano di Giulio". See Ibid., p. 82; Raffaella Morselli in Le Collezioni Gonzaga. La quadreria dell'elenco dei beni del 1626-1627, eds. Stefania Lapenta and Raffaella Morselli (Milan: Silvana, 2000), n. 880, pp. 224-25; R. Romano, "Artisti alla corte di Carlo Emanuele I," in Le Collezioni di Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia, ed. Giovanni Romano (Turin: Fondazione CRT, 2005), pp. 13-62, at p. 54.
for the Duke of Mantua, Federico Gonzaga. The Duke and Giulio had a close relationship that was remarked upon by Vasari. Indeed, when the Duke commissioned Giulio to elevate houses in order to prevent flooding in Mantua, Vasari writes that:

[though] some opponents told the duke that Giulio was destroying too much, he refused to hear them, making Giulio master of the work and directing that no one should build except under him. This led to many complaints and threats, which reached the duke's ears, and he spoke out, letting it be known that he would consider any wrong done to Giulio as an injury to himself. The duke loved him, and Giulio cherished the utmost reverence for the duke.

Vasari, using a common literary device, creates an image of an intimate relationship between patron and artist that mirrors that between Apelles and Alexander.

One of the most famous anecdotes by Pliny records Alexander's generosity toward Apelles. Apelles depicted Campaspe, the beautiful mistress of Alexander. Upon seeing the beauty of her nude portrait, Alexander saw that the artist appreciated Campaspe (and loved her) more than he. Alexander kept the painting, but he presented Apelles with Campaspe, whom the artist then took as a wife. This story is the ultimate manifestation of the status of the artist: so esteemed by a royal patron, the artist receives the love of the king in thanks—literally and metaphorically. Robin Lane Fox succinctly summarizes this relationship, stating that, "Alexander gave [Apelles] Campaspe as a present, the most generous gift of any patron and one who would remain a model for patronage and painters on through the Renaissance." The woman also becomes an extreme example of sexual objectification in this story, given as a possession to an artist against her will. The power of the image—and, of course, Alexander—supplants the wishes of the model.

544 Morselli suggests that the London painting may have been executed for an ideal gallery of illustrious men, which consisted of the "novantacinque retrati de varii Sri et capitani Christiani et infideli" mentioned in the post-mortem inventory of art objects in the studio of the ducal palace in Mantua in 1540. See Raffaella Morselli in Le Collezioni Gonzaga. L'elenco dei beni, p. 225. In contrast, Legrand (2008), p. 44 proposes that the Geneva portrait was done by Giulio for Federico and the London example for the Maffei family.


Even if the London portrait was not created for Federico Gonzaga, Giulio executed a number of other images of Alexander for the Duke at the Palazzo del Té. In the Camera di Attilio Regolo there is an ambiguous fresco that may illustrate The Clemency of Alexander (Fig. 39).547 In the fresco a group of soldiers surround a seated figure, who reacts with violent gestures at the touch of a regal-looking leader. According to a story related by Quintus Curtius Rufus, while on campaign in Asia, Alexander was warming himself in front of a fire when he encountered a weary soldier. Alexander told the soldier to take his seat. For some time, the soldier was unaware with whom he was resting, until he noticed the throne and got up in terror. Alexander told the man to continue sitting.548 The story was also intended to highlight the difference between the Greeks and the Persians because, after Alexander revealed himself to the soldier, he asked, "soldier, do you realize how much better a lot you Macedonians enjoy under a king than the Persians do? For them sitting on a king's throne would have meant death; for you it meant life."549

Previously this scene was identified as Coriolanus Revealed to the Eyes of Tullus Aufidius.550 However, Ugo Bazzotti proposes the new identification of the narrative as Alexander's clemency, based on the presence of the soldiers, the style of chair, and other details that do not correspond to the Coriolanus story. Bazzotti argues that the chair is an antique style.

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547 A primo pensiero drawing for the fresco survives at the Yale University of Art Gallery in New Haven (in pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk, inv. 1976.91). See the entry by Valerie Taylor in Giulio Romano: Master Designer, ed. Janet Cox-Rearick (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1999), cat. 28, pp. 105-6. My thanks to Valerie Taylor for pointing this out to me.

548 Curtius, 8. 4. 15-17, pp. 185-86.

549 Ibid., 8. 4. 17, p. 186.

550 Coriolanus was a legendary Roman general from the fifth-century BCE, who led the Roman soldiers to victory against the Volscians, an enemy tribe. He later allied with the Volscians to lead an attack against Rome after he was declared a traitor. According to the life of Coriolanus by Plutarch, he stole into the house of Tullus Aufidius, a respected Volscian man, who was eager to requite upon Rome the evils they had done to his tribe. Coriolanus sat by the fire, covering his head, until he was discovered by Tullus. When his mother Venturia, wife and children threw themselves at his feet after the battle, Coriolanus relented and withdrew the Volscian troops. This subject was not well-known in Italian art. See Plutarch, "Life of Coriolanus," in Plutarch, Lives, trans. Bernadette Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 11 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1914-26), vol. 4, 22-23, pp. 171-75.
throne with a back and arms appropriate for a king. In the Coriolanus story, no other soldiers are mentioned. Rather, Coriolanus comes to the private home of Tullus Aufidius as the latter's family is eating supper. In addition, Bazzotti points out that the seated figure has an expression of "timorous stupor" that is fitting for a simple soldier surprised by his king. In Plutarch's account of the Coriolanus story, the seated Roman general instead maintains a calm demeanour when speaking to his enemy.551

The story of The Clemency of Alexander is rare in Renaissance art. With that said, the representation in the Camera di Attilio Regolo had an artistic precedent in Mantua, as it was painted on the façade of the Casa Tallarico in the old Piazza del Purgo by a follower of Andrea Mantegna around the years 1495-1500. The façade decoration, which was recently restored, is heavily damaged, but the figure of a crowned king, surrounded by soldiers, is visible (Figs. 40-41). An inscription below the fresco proclaims: "Alexander, king and common soldier. Nothing is more worthy of praise, nothing more suitable to a great man than placability and clemency.552 As in the Palazzo del Té, the Palazzo Tallarico announces the placibilitas et clementia of the Macedonian sovereign. The Palazzo del Té, on the other hand, does not include an inscription to help identify the subject. Rather, to the left of the Alexander fresco is an allegorical female figure, who holds children, the attribute of personifications of Charity (Fig. 42).

In combination, the allegory of Charity and the narrative fresco of Alexander in the Camera di Attilio Regolo highlight one of the virtues of the ancient king: his clemency toward his soldiers. Through this, Duke Federico himself is encouraged to have magnanimity for his subjects. The Alexander fresco is, in fact, one of four vault narratives in the room celebrating the virtues of Federico Gonzaga: Attilius Regulus personifies Prudence, Horatius Cocles represents

551 Ibid.
552 "Alexander Miles gregarius rex. Nihil laudabilius, magno viro dignius, quam placabilitas et clementia." The translation is my own. See also Umberto Baldini, Valter Curzi, and Cecilia Prete, Andrea Mantegna (Florence: Edizioni d'Arte il Fiorino, 1997), pp. 42-43. Interestingly, the crown
Strength, and the Greek jurist Zaleucus embodies Justice. Together these frescoes proclaim the exalted moral and intellectual qualities of the patron, concluding with the central scene of the 

**Triumph of Virtue of Federico Gonzaga.**

A second narrative of Alexander in the Palazzo del Té, found in the Camerino dei Cesari, illustrates **Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in a Casket** (Fig. 43). Plutarch records Alexander's admiration for Homer in his biography of the king, writing that, "Alexander took with himself into Asia Aristotle's recension [of Homer]...because he thought and called the *Iliad* a viaticum of military art." Plutarch further recounts that when a coffer of Alexander's enemy, King Darius, was brought to Alexander after battle, Alexander chose to deposit his *Iliad* in the coffer for safekeeping, as the coffer was considered to be the most precious object in Darius's treasury. Since antiquity, the narrative has demonstrated Alexander's reverence for literature and his scholastic endeavours, which began in his youth under the tutelage of Aristotle.

The tradition of Alexander's esteem for Homer was widely known in the Cinquecento. For example, in *Il Cortegiano*, Castiglione wrote that Alexander admired Homer because Homer recounted the deeds of Achilles, his hero. Raphael had designed an earlier version of the same scene to decorate the *basamento* register under the *Parnassus* in the Stanza della Segnatura that will be discussed further in Chapter Five. The design was later engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi, and even adapted to maiolica ceramics (Fig. 44). There is no doubt that Giulio would have known the design by Raphael well. However, Giulio chose to update the subject by moving away from the single plane composition. Instead, he foreshortened the scene with diagonals receding into the background, and he placed Alexander on the left. This change in spatial

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Alexander wears is the same spiked "eastern" type that Raphael later includes in his famous composition of *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne.*

554 Ibid., 26. 1-3, p. 299.
organization could, in part, be explained by the location of the fresco in a vault, rather than the flat wall surface at eye level in the case of the Stanza della Segnatura.

Frederick Hartt suggests that the imagery in the vault of the Camerino dei Cesari, including the Alexander narrative, celebrated the magnanimity of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who visited the Palazzo del Tè on two occasions, in 1530 and 1532. However, the subject could also be interpreted as yet another illustration of Federico Gonzaga's interest in Alexander, and his desire to ally himself visually with his ancient exemplar. Federico had a personal interest in Alexander the Great. Indeed, his son, born in 1528 to his mistress Isabella Boschetti, was named after the Macedonian king. In the Sala di Amor e Psiche at the Palazzo del Tè, Giulio depicted the legendary conception of Alexander the Great. This work, portrayed with heavy eroticism, shows Zeus, in the guise of a serpent, embracing Alexander's mother Olympias (Fig. 45). From this union, Alexander was conceived. Most scholarly discussions of the work stress the pornographic aspect. However, in this context the fresco becomes another example of Federico's interest in Alexander at the Palazzo del Tè. It also highlights Giulio's artistic interest in portraying yet another scene from the life of Alexander.

Thus, through both his portraits and his narrative paintings of Alexander, Giulio assumes the elevated artistic status of Apelles. The comparison is made explicit in a decree of 13 June

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557 This is not the only image of a scene from the very early life of Alexander connected with the pupils of Raphael. A damaged drawing is found in the British Museum, usually attributed as a copy after Polidoro da Caravaggio, which illustrates the birth of Alexander the Great (inv. 1960,1115.1). Olympias lies in bed in a pose reminiscent of the *Sleeping Ariadne*. A twisting snake lies atop the sheets. Two female attendants run screaming from the bed, and a third pours water into a basin in the foreground. The remaining maid holds the baby Alexander to her chest before she deposits him into the bath. The drawing may relate to an engraving in J. Metz's *Schediasmata Selecta* (1791), which reproduces late sixteenth-century copies of Roman façade paintings by Polidoro and other artists. For more on the drawing, see Philip Pouncey and J. A. Gere, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Raphael and his circle: Giulio Romano, G. F. Penni, Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine, Tommaso Vincidor, Polidoro da Caravaggio, Baldassare Peruzzi, Timoteo Viti and Girolamo*
1526, when the Duke identified himself as Alexander the Great, and Giulio as Apelles. After
Federico's introduction as the Captain-General of the Republic of Florence, he describes the
relationship with his artist:

We have discovered that the Macedonian Alexander raised up painting to have no equal
in dignity, that only by Apelles did he wish to be painted because Apelles alone knew
how to embrace with most excellent colours all the majesty and all the honour and
ornament of the most perfect art...We too have always admired such outstanding
achievement of art, and we have gladly received the artists themselves and have accorded
them our graces and our favours increasing from day to day, and we found that among
them our dear Giulio Pippi Romano has to be considered most outstanding.558

As the Captain-General, Federico takes on the highest role in the military, similar to Alexander's
role as the military leader of the Greeks. Giulio, who has the most excellent colours and the most
perfect art, in a sense becomes Apelles, the most famous of the ancient painters and the official
portraitist to Alexander.

In his representations of Alexander the Great, Giulio underscores the comparison
between the moderns and the ancients. The images reinforce the metaphor that Federico is a new
Alexander, who has the same virtuous qualities, strength in battle, and an appreciation of
learning.559 Giulio himself was actively compared to Apelles during his lifetime and he developed
an intimate relationship with his patron that deliberately mirrored that of Alexander and Apelles.
Therefore, through a combination of his role as court artist to the Duke of Mantua, and his self-

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558 For the Latin, see Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, Decreti, lib. 37, cc. 261v.-
262r., as in Giulio Romano. Repertorio di fonti documentarie, ed. Daniela Ferrari, 2 vols. (Rome:
Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivisti, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 158-59.

559 Indeed, it seems that Federico may have commissioned further representations of Alexander.
As Clifford Brown has pointed out, based on letters from 1539 and 1540, we know that the
tapestry designer Nicolas Karcher was in the employ of the Duke and Duchess of Mantua. Brown
suggests that the work in progress may have been two sets of tapestries, Tiberius and Alexander
the Great and Philomela (the context of the tapestries is not clear). The iconography of the
tapestries, however, is only specified in the 1627 inventory of the Gonzaga palaces of Mantua and
Casale. See Clifford Brown, Guy Delmarcel, and Anna Maria Lorenzoni, Tapestries for the
Courts of Federico II, Ercole, and Ferrante Gonzaga, 1522-63 (Seattle and London: College Art
86-87.
consciously *all’antica* representations of Alexander, it is Giulio Romano who engenders the Renaissance reincarnation of Apelles, an *Apelles Romanus*.

The focal three artists of this chapter all executed portraits of the Macedonian king with the intention of eliciting comparisons with Alexander's court artists on some level, though one emulates the ancient exemplars much more faithfully. Verrocchio, compared with Lysippus in contemporary literature, created a work that reflects the famous lost sculptural portraits by Alexander's sculptor. Belli, who executed a medallion as an example of his artifice, echoes the shadowy figure of Pyrgoteles. Giulio, on the other hand, was overtly linked with Apelles and he depicted Alexander the Great on numerous occasions for Federico Gonzaga at the Palazzo del Té, in addition to the portraits of Alexander he executed, one of which was owned by the Maffei family in Mantua.

Of the three artists examined in the chapter, Giulio comes closest to appropriating the status and fame of Alexander's court portraitists. While there was a literary *topos* of comparing a modern artist with an ancient exemplar in Renaissance literature, the fact that these artists executed portraits of Alexander is important. If we recall from the previous chapter, episodes from the life of Alexander had been portrayed in art during the late Middle Ages. Yet, no true portraits of Alexander existed, because even images of the king among a group of Worthies were idealized and represented him in the guise of a contemporary ruler. However, by the late fifteenth century, artists such as Verrocchio began to represent portraits of the king in classical costume that were based on ancient artistic models, such as surviving coins and gems. In other words, they reunited the portraits of the classical king Alexander with an antique appearance, combining the classical subject with the classical style, as Seznec argues in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*. Thus, through the execution of *all'antica* style portraits of Alexander, Renaissance artists combined their interest in classical art with the desire to improve their status by appropriating the fame of Alexander's three court artists.
Chapter 5

Raphael's Interest in the Life of Alexander the Great

Raphael Santi, like his artistic heir Giulio Romano, executed works portraying scenes from the life of Alexander the Great. Indeed, from the surviving evidence it appears that Raphael was interested in Alexander from his early career through to his late period in Rome, though the evidence—in the form of drawings—is far from conclusive. Nevertheless, a case can be made for his artistic interest in Alexander throughout the course of his brief career. This chapter, which explores Raphael's interest in the life of Alexander the Great, begins with an examination of drawings by his hand or copied after originals by him. Although the iconography of many of the drawings is difficult to identify, Sylvia Ferino-Pagden convincingly argues that at least one group of these drawings represents a personal artistic interest in Alexander the Great that was not directed by a patron's commission. After examining the iconography of the drawings and, in many cases, providing my own arguments that support an identification of Alexander themes, the focus will shift to the most famous Alexander composition that Raphael executed, The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. This design survives in drawn and engraved forms, and Sodoma adapted it in the bedroom of the Villa Farnesina as one scene within a cycle of episodes from the life of Alexander the Great. Most of the literature on the Villa Farnesina cycle focuses only on The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. However, in order to fully understand the function and iconography of the space, I will evaluate all of the scenes found within the room.

Lastly, this chapter will turn to the influence of Raphael's composition on the subject of Alexander. Significantly, the Alexander designs by Raphael provided a source of inspiration for future artists, not only in the "fine arts", but also in the medium of maiolica pottery. Maiolica examples will be analyzed not only for their indebtedness to Raphael's original compositions, but
also for the inventiveness of maiolica artists in adapting and transforming Raphael's designs.  

As in previous chapters, the relationship between the ancient literary accounts and the images created during the Renaissance remains important for my examination of Raphael's interest in Alexander. This relationship takes on a special significance because of the complexity of the episodes that Raphael represented. In contrast to Verrocchio, Valerio Belli and Giulio Romano, who all executed portraits of Alexander, Raphael illustrated complex and often obscure narratives from the life of Alexander. As with other all'antica projects, much direct evidence exists of Raphael's interaction with the ancient texts based on the faithfulness of his images to the literary accounts.

No detailed discussion of Raphael's overall interest in the life of Alexander the Great appears in the critical literature. The earliest written source describing Raphael's interest in Alexander comes from Ludovico Dolce's l'Aretino in 1557, in which the protagonists in the dialogue discuss the merits of Raphael's historical narratives in comparison with those by Michelangelo. Aretino describes the composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, and, importantly, links the image with the competition between ancient and modern artists. Not only does Raphael's skill in rendering all'antica subjects equal that of Apelles, but his figures also contain the same "charm" that Pliny ascribed to those by the ancient artist.

In the nineteenth century, the German art historian Richard Foerster supplied the first critical examination of Raphael's interest in Alexander. In addition to his thorough analysis of the imagery of the paintings in the Villa Farnesina in Farnesina-Studien. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Verhältnis der Renaissance zur Antike (1880), Foerster considered the composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne in his 1894 article, "Die Hochzeit des Alexander und der

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Rossane in der Renaissance." As I discussed in Chapter One, Foerster connected the design with the ancient *ekphrasis* given by Lucian, and compared the details provided by the text with both Raphael's graphic adaptation and the fresco by Sodoma.

Because the most evidence of Raphael's interest in Alexander can be found in his drawings, catalogues devoted to his drawings provide an important foundation for my study. In particular, Oskar Fischel's multi-volume catalogue, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* (1913-41), and the more recent catalogue, *Raphael, die Zeichnungen* (1983), compiled by Eckhart Knab, Eawin Mitsch, and Konrad Oberhuber, examine a variety of drawings from Raphael's oeuvre, both those used in the design process of frescoes and panel paintings, and those that functioned purely as creative exercises. Finally, the chapter "Raphael's Invention of 'Storie' in His Florentine Drawings" by Sylvia Ferino-Pagden provides some of the most conclusive evidence for a conspicuous interest in the subject of Alexander through the development of series of narrative sketches dating to his Florentine period. My chapter will expand upon the evidence presented by Ferino-Pagden to include drawings dating to the earliest years of Raphael's career through to his final projects in Rome.

Firstly, it must be noted that Raphael spent his youth in Urbino, where his father, Giovanni Santi, worked as a court painter to Duke Federico da Montefeltro (1422-82), a successful *condottiero* and a passionate patron of the arts and literature. Federico had a famous library in his palace that was, in fact, one of the largest private libraries in Italy at the time. If we

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562 Ibid., p. 175.
recall from Chapter Two, his collection of books included an illuminated copy of the *De gestis Alexandri Magni* by Quintus Curtius Rufus, which survives today in the Apostolic Library in the Vatican (Urb. Vat. Lat. 427). On the frontispiece of the manuscript is a small, but richly illuminated miniature of Alexander the Great, executed by the Camaldolese painter and miniaturist, Bartolomeo della Gatta (1448-1502). The artist portrays Alexander in *all'antica* armour, with a dragon-headed crown, not unlike the reliefs of the ancient king after Verrocchio (Fig. 46). However, Alexander is portrayed with a beard, flowing hair, and he holds a sword in one hand, while the other hand rests on a shield. We cannot conclusively prove that Raphael saw this particular miniature as a boy, but, nevertheless, the illumination and the manuscript are evidence of the sort of images of Alexander available to Raphael during his formative years in Urbino.

The earliest evidence for Raphael's artistic interest in Alexander the Great is a drawing of an unusual marine landscape with a diving bell, executed in pen and brown wash, with traces of black and red chalk. The drawing is now in the Fond des Dessins et Miniatures at the Musée du Louvre (INV 3889, Fig. 47). This mysterious scene must portray an episode from the *Romance of Alexander*, because, in fact, no other stories that featured glass diving bells were known in the Middle Ages or Renaissance, aside from descriptive accounts of the function and use of diving bells in scholastic theory. The drawing portrays a number of ships that fill a wide bay, which sits between two shores teeming with figures, some of whom are on horseback. In the background

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567 Such as Roger Bacon, in *De Mirabili* of 1251, where he describes devices "made by means of which men could walk on the bed of the ocean without harm to their bodies. Alexander used such a device in order to discover the secrets of the sea." See Arthur J. Bachrach, "History of the Diving Bell," *Historical Diving Times*, No. 21 (Spring 1998), pp. 4-10.
on the left are found the crenulated walls of a fortified town. At the centre of the scene,
geometrically-sketched figures on two boats lower a large diving bell into the water by means of
ropes and pulleys. Contained within the spherical bell is a figure accompanied by two domestic
animals. Fish swim in the harbour below the sphere, which the artist has worked out in a series of
latitudinal lines. The sphere resembles the barrel- or spherically-shaped diving bells of medieval
manuscripts.

In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle was the first to describe diving bells, when he stated
that: "they enable the divers to respire equally well by letting down a bucket. For this does not fill
with water, but retains its air. Its lowering has to be done by force. For any vessel which is
upright admits the water if it is tilted." According to some legends, however, at the siege of the
Levantine city of Tyre, in 332 BCE, Alexander ordered divers to destroy any submarine defenses
the city might undertake to build.

The story of Alexander's underwater adventure was invented and greatly elaborated upon
in versions of the Romance of Alexander that circulated throughout the Middle Ages.
Supposedly, as a result of his interest in the natural world, stimulated by his boyhood studies
under Aristotle, Alexander had himself lowered into the water in a bathysphere, or glass diving-
bell. Indeed, in the Historia de Preliis, Alexander wrote to his mother Olympias and informed her
of the myriad of fishes and "marvelous creatures" that he saw at the bottom of the sea.

Heinemann, 1937), vol. 2, 32. 5, p. 205. Interestingly, Leonardo da Vinci drew sketches for
designs of an underwater breathing apparatus and other diving suits. See, in particular, Arundel
MS 263, f. 24v at the British Library.
569 For example, see Bachrach (1998); John Bevan, "Diving Bells through the Centuries," Journal
42. Some sources incorrectly cite Aristotle's Problems as the origin of the story of the use of
diving bells at Tyre, but I cannot find any reference to this. Curtius, 4. 3. 10, p. 57, however, does
mention that at the Siege of Tyre, the city sent swimmers who would "submerge out of their
enemies' sight and swim unobserved right up to the mole [that Alexander's troops were
constructing]."
570 Leo of Naples, "Historia de Preliis," in The Romances of Alexander, trans. Dennis M. Kratz
thirteenth century, versions of the Romance of Alexander featured three animals accompanying the king underwater: a cockerel, to tell if it was night or day by its crowing; a cat, whose breathing was supposed to purify the air; and a dog, whom Alexander was to kill because the sea would not tolerate a corpse and would thus cast the whole contraption ashore, allowing the king to escape.\textsuperscript{571} Alexander entrusted his most loyal mistress to look after the chain that pulled the bell up to the surface. However, she was persuaded by her lover to elope, and thus she cast the chain into the sea. With the chain coiled on the ocean floor, Alexander was left to devise his own escape.\textsuperscript{572}

If we return to the drawing from the Louvre, though the illustration does not include the cockerel mentioned in some versions of the tale, the two domestic animals inside the sphere do resemble the dog and the cat. Furthermore, the cityscape in the left background of the sheet, complete with crenulated walls, is intended to represent the coastal city of Tyre, which Alexander besieged at the time of his underwater adventure, according to some versions of the Romance of Alexander.\textsuperscript{573}

The figures in the drawing have a Peruginesque elongation and gracefulness, which led the great scholar of Raphael drawings Oskar Fischel, in his volume on drawings from Umbria, to attribute this sheet to Perugino.\textsuperscript{574} However, recent scholars tend to attribute the drawing to the

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\textsuperscript{572} An illuminated fifteenth-century German manuscript that portrays the underwater adventure of Alexander is housed at the Getty Museum in Malibu. For a detailed coloured image see: http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=2276.

\textsuperscript{573} Especially German versions of the story. The recensions of the \textit{Historia de Preliis} do not specify where the underwater adventure took place. However, the episode also appears in \textit{Le Vrai Histoire d'Alexandre} (c. 1250), \textit{Alexandreida in Rima}, the \textit{Alexanderlied} of Lamprecht, and the \textit{Roman d'Alexandre}. See Ross (1963), pp. 38-40 for a list of specific manuscripts.

hand of the young Raphael instead. The subject was only recently identified as Alexander the Great Descending to the Bottom of the Sea in a Glass Diving Bell by both Madeleine Le Merrer in 1984 and David Ekserdjian in 1991. The scholars Dominique Cordellier and Bernadette Py propose an approximate dating around the years 1494-99, while Eckhart Knab put forward a more precise dating of 1498. Additionally, Knab posits that the banks in the drawing resemble those of Lake Trasimene, the "Umbrian sea", whose motifs are found in numerous paintings by Perugino, Pinturicchio, and Raphael. Knab, however, seems unfamiliar with the story of the diving bell, as he misidentifies the figure in the sphere as a woman. He writes that the drawing is "rather childish" and most likely the work of a twelve-to-fifteen year old, who had difficulty rendering the human body and the horse in movement, but who portrayed the ships, trees, mountains, and the city view relatively well.

If, indeed, the teenaged Raphael executed the drawing, then the sheet may reflect his first documented interest in the life of Alexander—albeit an interest based on romance tradition rather than one of the historical accounts of his life. If, instead, Perugino created the drawing, then an artistic interest in the life of Alexander the Great was nevertheless present in the milieu in which Raphael worked at this time. As I have demonstrated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, from the mid-fifteenth century onward, scholars and artists were increasingly interested in the classical accounts of Alexander's life, though the courtly romances remained popular well into the sixteenth century. The legendary feats of Alexander may have had particular appeal to Raphael.

576 As described in Ibid., p. 673.
577 Eckhart Knab in Raphael, die Zeichnungen (1983/84), fig. 48, p. 43.
578 Ibid., p. 43.
579 Ibid., p. 44: "piuttosto infantile."
when he was young and impressionable. Furthermore, romances, which were widely available in the vernacular, could have been read more easily by the young Raphael than a classical account in Latin.⁵⁸⁰

Because the other drawings by Raphael that represent scenes from the life of Alexander cannot be securely dated, I will move from the most unfinished to the most defined examples, culminating in his composition of The Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne. The second example of a composition reflecting his interest in the life of Alexander appears in three versions of an antique banquet scene, which are now housed in the Cabinet des Dessins at the Musée du Louvre. These drawings, rendered after an original by Raphael, are identified sometimes as the Banquet of Alexander.⁵⁸¹ Invs. 4310 and 4311 both portray a group of men and women in classical garb, seated at a table running the width of the sheet (Figs. 48-49). On the left, a figure peeks out from behind a column. On the right, a second male figure frames the scene. His back is turned, and he rests his left hand on a thin staff. A serving woman approaches the banquet table, holding a dish in her right hand. She faces an armed man seated on the right side of the table. In both drawings, this man, wearing a crested helmet, turns his face in profile to a companion on the right. The companion of the helmeted man is the only other figure in the drawing who wears armour—in this case, a simpler helmet. Additionally, the drawings have faint traces of Corinthian pilasters on the wall behind the diners. The third version of the banquet scene, Inv. 18393, is a mirror image of the other two, though the artist of this sheet executed the drawing in red chalk, rather than the wash and white heightening of the other copies (Fig. 50). Furthermore, the red

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⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, if we recall from Chapter Two, the Alexandreida in Rima, a popular Italian version of the Romance of Alexander, circulated throughout Italy at the time when the young Raphael executed this drawing. In the poem, the author notes which animals accompanied Alexander underwater, stating that, "Poi una gatta dentro ce mettea, e uno gallo che l'hore cantasse, e anco uno cane domestico ch'avea." See Alexandreida in Rima—the Life and Deeds of Alexander the Great in an Anonymous Renaissance Poem, ed. Anne Wilson Tordi (Lewiston, NY: Edward Mellon Press, 2004), canto 11. 42, p. 272.
chalk drawing has crisper figures. Indeed, the detail of the serving maid shows clearly that she pours liquid from a vessel—perhaps wine—into a dish.

The identification of the subject is uncertain. Dominique Cordellier and Bernadette Py suggest that these drawings may represent *Vulcan Watching Hebe Serve Ambrosia to the Gods*, or *Penelope and her Suitors*.\(^\text{582}\) Regarding the first suggestion, the viewer would anticipate a banquet of the gods to include identifying attributes of the deities, and for the episode to be set within an Olympian realm as are other classical stories by Raphael. For example, the fresco by Raphael and his workshop depicting the *Banquet of the Gods* in the Loggia of Psyche and Eros in the Villa Farnesina includes the figure of Hercules seated on his lion skin, with his club beside him (Fig. 51). The scene is located within an Olympian setting formed from clouds, with *amorini* attending the banquet. As the banquet takes place on the heavenly Mount Olympus, the scene contains no pilasters associated with a terrestrial room. Another fresco in the same loggia, *The Council of the Gods*, portrays the Olympian deities with their attributes: Mercury holds a caduceus and wears a winged cap; Mars is garbed in *all'antica* style armour and seated beside the beautiful nude Venus; Neptune holds his ubiquitous trident; and Zeus sits with a large eagle between his legs (Fig. 52). While numerous figures in Raphael's scenes of gathered gods are heroically nude, those in the three drawings in the Louvre are all clothed. Because of the lack of divine attributes and a cloudy setting, and the presence of clothed, terrestrial figures (rather than heroic nudes), in my opinion, it is unlikely that the banqueting scene represents *Vulcan Watching Hebe Serve Ambrosia to the Gods*.

On the other hand, the story of *Penelope and her Suitors* would account for the presence of marginal figures in the three drawings in the Louvre. In the *Odyssey* by Homer, the hero Odysseus travels for ten years after the Trojan War in search of home, while his patient wife

\(^{581}\) Cordellier and Py (1992), p. 312, inv. nos. 4310 (recto), 4311, and 18393 (recto). In the curatorial file at the Louvre, Philip Pouncey attributes the authorship of INV 4311 to Biagio Pupini.
Penelope waits for his return. Promising her suitors that she will pick a new husband when she finishes weaving a shroud, each night Penelope unravels her day's work in the hope Odysseus is still alive. Odysseus does return, though at first he disguises himself as an old beggar before a contest is held to win Penelope's hand, which he, of course, wins, and his ruse is revealed. In the banquet drawings, the older figure resting on the staff could represent the disguised Odysseus. However, the usual attribute of the story, the loom on which Penelope pretended to weave a burial shroud, is not present in the drawings. Other artists included the loom in their representations of the Penelope story, such as the fresco Pinturicchio executed around the year 1509 (Fig. 53). Indeed, Pinturicchio prominently depicts Penelope at her loom on the left of the scene. Additionally, he includes a vista through a window onto a marine landscape where a large ship sits in a harbour, which suggests Odysseus' long sea voyage home. The three Louvre drawings include neither a loom, nor allusions to the sea odyssey of Odysseus.

Do the three Louvre drawings portray the banquet of Alexander? The banquet scene could be a generic representation of the prolonged banquets for which Alexander was renowned. However, more likely, the drawings represent a specific, famous banquet, described in the accounts of Plutarch and Quintus Curtius Rufus. After a drunken banquet at which Alexander's generals feasted together with courtesans, Alexander burned the palace at Persepolis to the ground. In these two accounts, the conflagration is blamed on Thaïs, a courtesan and the

582 Ibid.
583 Now in the National Gallery in London.
mistress of Ptolemy. According to Curtius, Thaïs claimed that if Alexander ordered the palace burned down, he would earn the deepest gratitude from the Greeks.\textsuperscript{585} The presence of both male and female banqueters in the three drawings corresponds with the account, as does the inclusion of a serving girl with a jug of wine, as the true cause of the fire was Alexander's drunkenness. Furthermore, the drawings place the banquet within a setting of Corinthian pilasters and columns, from which the viewer can visualize a palace. Moreover, the helmeted figure with the crest stands out from the other banqueters. Here is the standard Renaissance representation of Alexander derived from the gem described by Cyriac of Ancona: Alexander's face is in profile and he is dressed in armour. The king speaks to a companion dressed in similar attire, who may be identified as Hephaestion, the "other Alexander". Hephaestion, as we recall from Chapter Three, was so close in appearance to Alexander that the mother of Darius mistook him for the king.

Although the identification of these copies after a lost design by Raphael as a banquet scene of Alexander is tentative, it is certainly plausible. Raphael may have executed a drawing of Alexander's banquet as a creative exercise. The story was found in accounts that Raphael could easily access—both in Italian and Latin, in manuscript and in print. Since the subject is an antique banquet, perhaps these drawings record a lost or never-realized commission for a sophisticated patron of the Roman elite, who held elaborate \textit{all'antica} banquets in their palaces and villas. Perhaps the design was intended to decorate a villa in a manner analogous to the Banquet of the Gods at the Villa Farnesina. Nevertheless, unlike the Banquet of the Gods, and, indeed, some of Raphael's other Alexander compositions, this project for a banquet scene was never fully realized, nor was it adapted to engraving.\textsuperscript{586} In fact, some scholars, such as Konrad Oberhuber, believe that


this banquet scene could have been intended for the Sala di Alessandro and Rosanna in the Villa Farnesina. However, because the original composition by Raphael's hand is lost and we do not know what medium it was, a conclusive purpose cannot be determined.

The next group of Alexander drawings by Raphael, like the Banquet of Alexander, never came to fruition as a fresco or engraving project. Instead, as Sylvia Ferino-Pagden asserts, Raphael developed the theme over a series of sketches as a learning exercise for himself, and he may also have used the drawings in order to acquire a commission from patrons. The first image in this group, a pen and ink drawing in the Musée des Beaux Arts at Lille, is usually identified as Alexander the Great and Timoclea (Fig. 54). The drawing illustrates a woman, with her hand over her breasts, kneeling before a seated male figure, who extends one hand in a gesture of judgment. Male figures dominate the scene: one presents the woman to the seated man; others gesture animatedly with arms raised; and, on the right, one man wraps the thigh of another with a bandage. A drawing at Bowdoin College Museum of Art (Brunswick, Maine) portrays nearly an identical narrative as the Lille drawing, though the Bowdoin version has numerous stains, folds, and losses at the top and left edges, which makes the scene more difficult to distinguish (Fig. 55). At the Städelisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt, the same scene is found on a drawing that Sylvia Ferino-Pagden specifically attributes to the hand of Raphael, drawing attention to the "sensitivity of the graphic handling" of the female body, and the fine pen strokes (Fig. 56). Rather than deal solely with questions of connoisseurship, Ferino-Pagden is the first scholar to present the drawings as a group of related images created for the same project. In 1924, Oskar Fischel identified the episode as Alexander and Timoclea, but already in the nineteenth

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588 See David Becker, Old Master Drawings at Bowdoin College (Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1985), n. 188, p. 225.
In the 19th century, the catalogue of Raphael drawings at Windsor Castle compiled by Prince Albert had proposed that the subject was Alexander and Timoclea.\textsuperscript{590}

Plutarch relates the story of Alexander and Timoclea in a section of his \textit{Moralia} devoted to "The Bravery of Women", in addition to including a brief version of the tale in his biography of Alexander. According to Plutarch, during the siege of Thebes, Timoclea, a noblewoman, was raped by a captain serving under Alexander. After raping her, the captain asked if she had hidden any money. Timoclea led the captain to her garden, where she told the man her money was hidden in the well. When the captain peered down, Timoclea and her maidservants pushed him into the well, and then threw in heavy stones until the captain perished. Macedonian soldiers arrested Timoclea and brought her before Alexander. She informed Alexander that her brother had fought at the Battle of Chaeronea with Alexander's father Philip, "for the freedom of Greece."\textsuperscript{591} Moved by her bravery, Alexander, in a gesture of magnanimity, ordered her release.

All three of the drawings reflect the story of Timoclea. She is shown on her knees as Alexander, the judge, considers her fate. Many of the other male figures in the scene have swords and shields, indicating that they are at war. The artist portrays the judge as a beardless youth rather than an old sage. This beardless youth, as I have shown in Chapter Four, corresponds with the ubiquitous representation of Alexander the Great in the Renaissance, though the ancient king does not wear a crested helmet. Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate with his designs for The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, Raphael portrayed Alexander the Great in varying manners at different stages of the creative process. From this, I would suggest that these extant drawings


for a composition of Alexander and Timoclea represent an early stage in the development of the design.

While the subject of the three drawings is most often identified as Alexander and Timoclea, David Becker instead maintains that the subject represents the Continence of Scipio, which M. H. Pluchart proposed in 1888. However, given the figures rendered in the scene, and Raphael's artistic interest in Alexander, Scipio seems less likely. The Scipio story involves the return of a captured young woman to her fiancé, after Scipio, a Roman general, refused to accept her as a prize during the Second Punic War. Nicolas Poussin depicted this episode in a painting of 1640, now at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (Fig. 57). He portrayed a woman, shown with her hand similarly across her breast, before a bearded Roman judge (Scipio). The grateful fiancé bows before Scipio.

None of the Raphael designs include the figure of a fiancé. Instead, the soldiers "show off" the kneeling woman, who bows her head in supplication. The story of Scipio was known in the Renaissance, though rarely represented in visual form. The story of Timoclea before Alexander was likewise unusual, and indeed it has no precedents in art before Raphael. Nevertheless, the story was not unknown, since an edition of Plutarch's Moralia, which records the tale, was published in 1509 in Venice, and the narrative was also told in his life of the king, which had been available in Latin translations from the early fifteenth century. In addition, a drawing attributed to Perino del Vaga in the British Museum shows a very similar scene to the designs by Raphael (Fig. 58). The drawing by Perino, whose subject is uncertain, portrays a nude, of Alexander," in Plutarch, Lives, trans. Bernadette Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 11 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1914-26), vol. 7, 12. 3, p. 257.


593 An undated painting of the Continence of Scipio by Niccolò dell'Abate at the Musée du Louvre includes a kneeling fiancé with the woman before Scipio. A monochrome painting of the same theme by Giovanni Bellini at the National Gallery in Washington portrays a significantly larger
kneeling woman brought before two figures seated on a throne. While many elements of the drawing are similar to Raphael's composition of Alexander and Timoclea, Perino's figures are much more elongated and mannered. Furthermore, numerous figures in the British Museum drawing carry staffs and ornamental banners, emphasizing the theatricality of the image. A repoussé figure on the left holds one corner of a canopy above the heads of two seated men. Raphael's design includes only one judge. A fresco in the Palazzo Caetani in Rome by Taddeo Zuccaro from around the year 1560 also depicts Alexander and Timoclea, though because the work is a final version and not a drawing study, the painting represents all of the figures clothed (Fig. 59). Alexander wears his standard crested all'antica helmet, and he is shown with his face in profile.594

Interestingly, Philip Pouncey and J. A. Gere point out that one element included in the Perino drawing, the figure of the man on the right having his leg is bandaged is not found in the story of Scipio, nor in the story of Alexander the Great and Timoclea.595 Indeed, the drawings associated with Raphael also prominently include such a figure in the foreground on the right. Perino, it seems, quotes the figure from the original design by Raphael, though his wounded soldier is a mirror image of the one by his master. But why would Raphael include this puzzling figure that does not fit with the Timoclea narrative if, in fact, the drawings do represent the story

number of figures than the designs by Raphael, including cavalry, as well as the fiancé of the captured woman.

594 The Palazzo Caetani was formerly the house of Alessandro Mattei in the Botteghe Oscure. Zuccaro frescoed several other Alexander scenes for the patron, in addition to the story of Timoclea. For a detailed study of the fresco decoration of the palace, see Patrizia Tosini, “La Decorazione tra Cinquecento e Seicento al Tempo dei Mattei,” in Palazzo Caetani: Storia e Cultura, ed. Luigi Fiorani (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2007), pp. 141-70, particularly at pp. 144-52.

of Timoclea? Perhaps Raphael included this figure as a reference to the famous Battle of Cascina design by Michelangelo, which includes a soldier donning his armour in a strikingly similar pose.

My opinion is that the drawings in the group after the original design by Raphael most likely represent Alexander and Timoclea, in keeping with the artist's interest in the life of Alexander. The story of Timoclea offered an opportunity for the artist to study both the female figure in a heightened state of emotion, and male figures in a variety of actions, including the bringing of Timoclea before Alexander. Ferino-Pagden connects this group of drawings to two further sheets. The first, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, portrays the capture of a woman (Timoclea) in a violent scene of struggling nudes (Fig. 60). The second, in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, shows an unidentified scene, which she proposes to be Alexander the Great Attempting Suicide after the murder of his friend Cleitus (Fig. 61). If the artist was studying multiple moments from the life of Alexander, the Oxford drawing could represent another episode from the same story.596

In fact, there may be yet another drawing associated with the group of sketches by (or after) Raphael. At Christ Church in Oxford, there is a drawing that portrays a youthful, armed figure, seated on an all'antica style throne, gesturing to a group of women on the left (Fig. 62).597 Included among these women is a kneeling figure, who looks up at the seated warrior and stretches her hand toward him as she opens her mouth to speak. This drawing may best represent the story of Timoclea, in particular because Timoclea, known for her bravery in the account related by Plutarch, does not bow her head in supplication, but rather boldly asserts her case to

596 However, the story of Alexander attempting to commit suicide after the death of Cleitus (in a drunken quarrel) does not follow chronologically the story of Alexander's clemency toward Timoclea. Indeed, Alexander did not kill Cleitus until many years later, while he was on campaign in Maracanda (Samarkand). See Quintus Curtius Rufus, The History of Alexander, trans. John Yardley, with an introduction and notes by Waldemar Heckel (London: Penguin Books, 1984; rpt. 2001), 8. 1. 20-52, pp. 177-80.
the judging warrior-king. Moreover, the sheet does not include the wounded soldier, whose inclusion in the other drawings is notably puzzling.

This group of drawings emerges from around the time in Raphael's career when the artist, based in Florence, studied the ancient and contemporary art models of that city, including nude men based on Michelangelo's David and Battle of Cascina. Indeed, Ferino-Pagden dates the drawings specifically to Raphael's final weeks in Florence or his first period in Rome, as particular figural gestures in the Frankfurt sheet reference the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Yet, in the same drawing, the enthroned judge with the dramatically-turned chest reminds the viewer strongly of the Belvedere torso, which was known in Rome from the turn of the century. Thus, Ferino-Pagden maintains that a date for the drawings around the years 1508-09 is the most convincing solution. Moreover, she argues that the similarity in composition, style, and graphic treatment of the Oxford, Frankfurt and Cambridge drawings corroborates a proposal that these drawings were made for "one and the same project."

However, in contrast to Ferino-Pagden's assertion that the drawings represent the development of one theme over a series of sketches, it seems that the Lille, Bowdoin College and Frankfurt drawings all portray a nearly identical design and do not show any significant differences in the arrangement of figures. Thus, it seems that perhaps these drawings instead were made after one original composition by Raphael that may be connected with the Ashmolean sheet, which illustrates the capture of a woman in battle.

Raphael created this group of related drawings at a time when he was encountering the very ambitious projects for large-scale history paintings executed by other artists, including Leonardo's Battle of Anghiari and Michelangelo's Battle of Cascina. Raphael had firsthand experience with large cycles, since he had participated in the design of Pinturicchio's frescoes

599 Ibid.
600 Ibid., p. 111.
depicting the life of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini in the Piccolomini Library in Siena cathedral, as surviving drawings attest. In an effort to be competitive with other artists, Raphael must have felt the drive to exercise himself, even without necessarily realizing his project.\textsuperscript{602}

One design for an episode from the life of Alexander the Great by Raphael that was eventually actualized was Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius (Fig. 63). This composition was intended to decorate the \textit{basamento} under the \textit{Parnassus} scene in the Stanza della Segnatura, though the monochrome fresco was not realized until the papacy of Paul III, when it was completed by Perino del Vaga (Fig. 64).\textsuperscript{603} Unlike the group of Timoclea drawings, this image is an isolated scene and is not part of a cycle of episodes from the life of Alexander. A drawing attributed to Raphael or to his pupil, Gianfrancesco Penni, for Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius is found in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.\textsuperscript{604} Additionally, engraved versions exist in collections in Rome, Paris, and Washington.

The scene portrays Alexander the Great in armour on the right, directing an older bearded man to place the book of Homer in the coffer of Darius, found at the centre of the image. Men on the left hold open the lid of the coffer, which is decorated with classical volutes, as other figures peer down to view the contents. Soldiers in \textit{all'antica} helmets surround Alexander. The drawing

\begin{footnotes}
\item[601] Ibid., pp. 114-16.
\item[602] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
and engravings closely match the fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura, though the figures in the fresco appear slightly elongated, and the cover of the book is more visible. On the other side of the window underneath the Parnassus, the episode of Augustus Preserving the Books of Virgil parallels the Alexander monochrome. The placement of the two frescoes under the Parnassus led the scholar Ernst Platner to argue that the overarching theme of this wall was, on the left, Alexander honouring the Greek epic, and, on the right, Augustus ensuring the preservation of the Latin epic.\footnote{Ernst Platner in Beschreibung der Stadt Rom, eds. Ernst Platner, Carl Bunsen, Eduard Gerhard and Wilhelm Röstell, 2 vols. (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J. G. Gotta, 1832), vol. 2, p. 348. See also Hoogewerff (1926-1927), p. 5.}

Plutarch recorded Alexander's admiration for Homer in his biography of the king, writing that, "Alexander took with himself into Asia Aristotle's recension [of Homer]...because he thought and called the Iliad a viaticum of military art."\footnote{Plutarch, "Life of Alexander," vol. 7, 8. 2, p. 243.} Plutarch went on to state that when a coffer of Darius was brought to Alexander after battle, which those in charge of the baggage of Darius believed to be the most precious object there, Alexander chose to deposit the Iliad in the coffer for safekeeping.\footnote{Ibid., 26. 1-3, p. 299.} The tradition of Alexander's esteem for Homer was well-known in the Cinquecento, as I discussed in the previous chapter. For example, in Il Cortegiano, Castiglione wrote that Alexander admired Homer because the poet recounted the deeds of Achilles, Alexander's hero.\footnote{Hoogewerff (1926-27), p. 11.} The basamento scene in the Stanza della Segnatura functions as appropriate imagery in a space that many modern scholars believe may have held the papal collection of books.\footnote{Including Hoogewerff, Christianne Joost-Gaugier, Elizabeth Schröter and John Shearman. See Joost-Gaugier, "The Concord of Law in the Stanza della Segnatura," Artibus et Historiae, vol. 15, no. 29 (1994), pp. 85-98; Joost-Gaugier, Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura: Meaning and Invention (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Schröter, Die Ikonographie des Themas Parnass vor Raffael: die Schrift- und Bildtraditionen von der}
directly above the Alexander episode. Thus, the viewer can visually link the author of the Greek epic above, with the later preservation of his text by Alexander below.

Although Vasari, in his *Vita* of Raphael, describes the poets on Mount Parnassus, he does not consider the monochrome paintings below. However, Vasari does emphasize that, for the figures of the *Parnassus*, Raphael "copied some from statues or medals, many others from old paintings." It is entirely conceivable that the artist derived his representation of Alexander the Great in *Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius* from an ancient prototype. Most likely, he would have consulted an antique cameo or coin for a visual precedent of Alexander's head and bust. Interestingly, Raphael's Alexander holds a lance. This detail may refer to both the famous sculpture by Lysippus and a passage by Plutarch. In the *Moralia*, when Plutarch described a statue by Lysippos in which Alexander was shown holding a lance, he revealed the symbolic meaning of the weapon:

Moreover, Lysippos the sculptor was quite right in his disapproval of the painter Apelles, who when painting Alexander's portrait had put a thunderbolt in his hand; he himself had given the king a lance, his true and proper weapon whose glory Time could never take away.

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610 Vasari seems to have first visited the Vatican Stanze in 1532. He records, in the life of Perino del Vaga, that Perino painted the socle register in the Stanza della Segnatura in place of the earlier wooden wainscoting by the woodcarver Fra Giovanni. However, Vasari only describes Perino's contribution to these socles as "marbles with festoons, masks and other ornaments and in certain spaces...some things in bronze colour" rather than a narrative. Therefore, they may not have been finished by the time he wrote the biography of Perino. See Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 368. For the quote by Vasari, see Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. A. B. Hinds, edited with an introduction by William Gaunt, 4 vols. (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1963), vol. 3, p. 135.


Just as Time will never take away the glory of Alexander the Great, Time will also never take
away the glory of Homer's works. The pope and his immediate circle—the intended audience of
the fresco—would have appreciated the allusion that a modern artist made to both an ancient
story about the appreciation of literature, and an ancient image of the Macedonian king.

Around the year 1520, Marcantonio Raimondi printed the design for Alexander Placing
the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius. In turn, this was copied by later sixteenth-century
engravers, including Étienne Delaune and the Monogrammist PVI. 613 The nineteenth-century
scholar Adam Bartsch recorded the engraving in his Le Peintre Graveur, where he identified the
engraving as "Alexander the Great placing the books of Homer in a coffer of Darius…this print is
one of the most perfect that Marcantonio engraved after Raphael." 614 While not as influential as
the engravings after The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, this engraving of Alexander safer-
guarding the books of Homer circulated across Italy and France, as surviving works attest, and it
was translated to the medium of maiolica pottery. A dish from Faenza, dated to 1575, by the
workshop of Virgiliotto Calamelli, is found in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum
(Fig. 65). On the front of the dish, under the narrative, an inscription on an unfurled scroll reads:

GIVNTE ALESANDRO ALA FAMOSA TOMB DEL FIERE ACHILLE
SVSPIRADO DISSE O FVRTVNATO CHI SI CHIARA TROBA TROVASTIE CHE
DI TE SI ALTO SCRISSE [Alexander, when he came to the famous tomb of the proud
Achilles, said, with a sigh 'Happy thou who has found so splendid a tomb and of whom
so exalted a poet has written.'] 615

In the absence of an identifying inscription on the engraving, the artist of the maiolica dish
interprets the scene as a different episode from Plutarch—Alexander visiting the tomb of Achilles
in Ilium—despite the central motif of a book clearly being deposited into the "tomb". Some

613 For a list of all the known versions of the engraving, and the frescoes made after the
engravings, see the catalogue entry by Stefania Massari in Raphael Invenit, Stampe a Raffaello
nelle Collezioni dell'Instituto Nazionale per la Grafica, eds. Grazia Bernini Pezzini, Stefania
Massari, and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodino, exhibit. cat. (Rome: Edizioni Quasar di Severino
Tognon, 1985), no. 3. 1, p. 37.
scholars have identified the original design by Raphael as *Alexander Placing the Poems of Homer in the Tomb of Achilles*, rather than the coffer of Darius. The Achilles episode related by Plutarch makes no reference to the deposition of a text in the tomb of Achilles. Indeed, Plutarch simply writes that, "going up to Ilium, [Alexander] sacrificed to Athena and poured libations to the heroes. Furthermore, the gravestone of Achilles he anointed with oil, ran a race by it with his companions, naked, as is the custom, and then crowned it with garlands." The large chest in both the Raphael composition and the maiolica dish could represent a sarcophagus or a treasured "coffer" of the Persian king. The maiolica artist has either confused the original source, which portrays the coffer of Darius, or actively chose to re-interpret the engraving as the Achilles story. Regardless, Raphael's interest in Alexander provided a visual model of a classical narrative for the maiolica artist, who gave the dish not only an elevated *all'antica* subject, but also the recognizable dignity of a design originating from the hand of Raphael.

The most famous project by Raphael representing a scene from the life of Alexander the Great that did come to fruition is *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne*. The composition survives in a group of drawings generally dated to around 1514. A pen drawing in the Teylers Museum at Haarlem shows a briskly-sketched group of figures set against a Roman arch (Fig. 66). Small *putti* pull a helmeted man towards a nude woman seated on a couch on the left. A

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615 For a detailed image of the inscription, see the Victoria and Albert Museum website entry on the dish: [http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O163101/dish/](http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O163101/dish/)


618 However, not all scholars agree on the dating of the composition. Andrée Hayum, for instance, argues that, based on stylistic grounds, Raphael's design "cannot date earlier than 1515-16." See Hayum, "A New Dating for Sodoma's Frescoes in the Villa Farnesina," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 48, no. 2 (June 1966), pp. 215-17, at p. 215.

619 Oskar Fischel believed the drawing was a copy after Raphael. See Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen Versuch Einer Kritik der Bisher Veröffenlichten Blätter* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1898), pp. 123, n. 295. Oberhuber, on the other hand, insists the drawing was executed by Raphael. See Oberhuber in *Le Cabinet d’un Grand Amateur P. J. Mariette, 1694-1774. Dessins du XVe siècle au XVIIIe siècle*, exhib. cat., Musée du Louvre; Galerie Mollien, Paris,
copy from the School of Raphael at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (inv. no. 2625, Fig. 67) presents a lost nude study for the design in pen and brown wash. At the Albertina in Vienna, a much more detailed study in red chalk shows how Raphael has arranged a group of nude figures in space and light (Fig. 68). There was, originally, a final compositional study, but the drawing has been lost since the early nineteenth century. However, copies were executed, including one by Raphael's collaborator Tommaso Vincidor, now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. In addition, around the year 1520, Jacopo Caragio engraved a version of the final composition, which provides a good indication of the appearance of Raphael's image, albeit reversed in the engraving process (Fig. 69). In the final version Raphael removed all traces of architecture, except for the bed on which Roxanne sits. The two oldest male figures—Alexander and his groomsman Hephaestion—wear *all'antica* armour. Raphael represents Alexander extending a crown to Roxanne, symbolizing her new role as queen of his vast realm. Scholars most often present these drawings in sequence to show the development of Raphael's *Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne* design from a preliminary stage to the final, polished version. However, the extant drawings may have originally formed part of a larger group of studies for the composition.

The artist Sodoma adapted Raphael's composition as a fresco decorating the bedroom of the Villa Farnesina for the merchant-banker Agostino Chigi. Sodoma had earlier collaborated with Raphael in the decoration of the Stanza della Segnatura for Pope Julius II. At the Villa


Farnesina, Sodoma had been asked to step in and execute a fresco portraying the **Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne** when papal projects kept Raphael away. Although no direct documentation surrounding the role of Raphael and Sodoma in the commission of the Villa Farnesina survives, an extant drawing of the **Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne**, attributed to Sodoma or to Vincenzo Tamagni, is found today at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe at the Uffizi (Fig. 70). This drawing renders a lost sketch by Raphael, at a somewhat later stage of the development of the design, though the figure of Hephaestion differs from the Vienna drawing. In the final fresco, Sodoma builds on the architectural elements first seen in the Haarlem drawing by extending the arch into a colonnade (Fig. 71). He also includes three maids attending to Roxanne on the left. On the left side of the fresco, an illusionistic view opens onto a river landscape. Alexander, at the centre, still offers the crown to Roxanne.

Raphael's original composition is closely allied with literary sources. The most important text that Raphael and his advisors would have consulted is an *ekphrasis* found in a text by the classical author Lucian. Lucian describes a work by the painter Aëtion that was exhibited in a festival at Olympia. The painting depicted Roxanne on the bridal couch, removing her veil and attended by *erotes*—the classical *putti*—who remove her sandals and pull Alexander toward her. Alexander extends a garland to Roxanne, while his groomsmen Hephaestion carries a blazing torch. The painting won the artist not only renown, but also the hand of the daughter of a competition judge. The dialogue *Herodotus*, in which Lucian describes the ancient painting, was

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621 For example, see the entry in *Mostra delle Opere di Giovanni Bazzi detto "Il Sodoma,"* ed. Enzo Carli, exhib. cat., Vercelli: Museo Borgogna (Siena: Pinacoteca, 1950), no. 1. Oberhuber, however, believes the drawing is the work of an artist from Bologna that renders a lost sketch by Raphael at a somewhat later drawing stage. See Gnann in *Alexander the Great in European Art* (1998), p. 229.


not well-known in the early sixteenth century. In fact, it was only in 1529 that a Latin translation was printed. Greek versions of the text, however, had circulated since the Quattrocento. Raphael, who could not read Greek, must therefore have consulted learned advisors of the papal court in order to access the original Greek text of Lucian describing the ancient painting.

While The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne by Raphael is not discussed in Vasari's life of the artist, his composition is described in other Renaissance accounts. According to Ludovico Dolce in l'Aretino, by recreating ancient paintings from written descriptions, Raphael was not just competing with the ancients; he strove to "[depict] the events better than the writers who had described them." In fact, Raphael's invention was so well done, in Dolce's opinion, that "doubt could arise as to whether Raphael had lifted it from the pages of Lucian, or Lucian had taken it" from Raphael, were it not for the fact Lucian had lived over one thousand years prior. By emulating the descriptions of antique paintings, Raphael also placed himself in the long artistic tradition of Sandro Botticelli and Luca Signorelli, who painted versions of the Calumny of Apelles, and other lost classical paintings in the fifteenth century. This practice of imitating ancient artists was advocated by art theorists, including Alberti, whose treatise Della Pittura provided a humanistic theory of art for painters of the period.

The one notable difference between Raphael's composition and Lucian's text is Alexander's offering of the crown. Lucian describes it as a "garland", which is less political than a crown for the new queen of an empire stretching from Greece to India. However, the crown does not appear in all of Raphael's studies. Some of the drawings portray Alexander extending his hand to Roxanne, rather than a crown or a garland. The crown appears in the engraving by Caraglio, which was created from the final version of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne

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625 Ibid., p. 169.
627 Lucian, vol. 6, p. 147.
composition. Thus, Raphael must have decided in the end to include the politically-charged symbol of the crown.

It is very clear that Raphael's primary source for the composition is Lucian, but the presence of a crown, rather than a garland, or Alexander extending his hand to Roxanne adds a new political element. A political interpretation of the marriage of Alexander is, in fact, found in humanist literature, including the writings of Angelo Decembrio. As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, the Milanese humanist Angelo Decembrio discusses Alexander in his De Politia Litteraria, a treatise primarily concerned with the achievement of literary polish through the study of Greek and Roman texts. Decembrio's treatise was one of the first to critique the ancient accounts of Alexander's life, offering, in addition, a comprehensive analysis of his character.

Comparing and analyzing different ancient stories was part of the humanist technique. We recall from Chapter Two that Decembrio frames his treatise as a series of dialogues set at the learned court of Leonello d'Este of Ferrara. One of the many ancient texts Leonello and his courtiers discuss in De Politia Litteraria is the account of the Alexander's life by Quintus Curtius Rufus. Curtius' military history of Alexander had, in fact, recently been translated from the Latin to Italian by Decembrio's brother, Pier Candido, in 1438. The inventory of the papal library in 1518 shows that Decembrio's manuscript was present when Raphael was working for Pope Leo X in Rome. Although De Politia Litteraria was not the primary source Raphael drew on for his own depiction of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, it does illustrate the continued interest in the life of Alexander when Raphael was working in the learned milieu of the papal circle.

Leonello and his courtiers say little about Alexander's marriage to Roxanne. However, Decembrio does state that Alexander had a habit of marrying captive women—whether he was acquiring their ransoms, or was given the women by contract. Roxanne was one such wife from a
"captured region", whose lower-ranking family then joined Alexander's by marriage.628 Unlike the ancient accounts of Arrian and Curtius that describe Alexander falling in love with the most beautiful woman in Asia, Decembrio presents the marriage as a union motivated entirely by political expediency.629

De Politia Litteraria emphasizes the marriage as a political union for Alexander to acquire the region of Bactria for his empire. In the compositions of both Raphael and Sodoma, the offering of a crown echoes this political stance. Yet attributes of love dominated the images. The presence of putti, playing with Alexander's armour and undressing Roxanne, underscores the influence of Venus. Hymen, the young, male nude accompanying Hephaestion in both designs, is the god of marriage, the son of Venus and Mars. The inclusion of both Hymen and the putti suggests that Raphael was more interested in portraying the marriage of Alexander and Roxanne as a love-match.630 Indeed, the composition is generally thought to have been created for Chigi's wedding, which itself was not a political union, but a love match. In August of 1519, Chigi married Francesca Ordeaschi, who had already given him five children. Francesca was from

629 Curtius describes not just Alexander meeting Roxanne, but also the wedding that followed: "The king, in the heat of passion [for Roxanne], ordered bread to be brought, in accordance with his ancestral tradition, for this was the most sacred symbol of betrothal among the Macedonians. The bread was cut with a sword and both [Alexander and Roxanne's father] tasted it." (8. 4. 27-28, p. 187). Curtius does note that, in addition to falling in love with Roxanne, Alexander hoped the marriage would "make a statement that intermarriage of Persians and Macedonians would serve to consolidate his empire, that only thus could the conquered lose their shame and the conquerors their pride" (8. 4. 25, p. 186). Arrian, on the other hand, simply states that Roxanne was the loveliest woman in Asia (apart from Darius' wife) and that Alexander fell in love with her at first sight. See Arrian, The Campaigns of Alexander, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt [London: Penguin Books, 1971], 4. 19-20, pp. 234-35.
630 Bernard Aikema suggests that the fresco of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne symbolized the motto, "amor vincit omnia." Considering the long visual tradition that linked Alexander and marriage, I believe that the fresco represents much more than love conquering all and that there is also a political theme within the image. See Aikema, "Exemplum Virtutis: 'The Family of Darius before Alexander' in Renaissance and Baroque Art," in Alexander the Great in European Art, ed. Nicos Hadjinicolau, exhibit. cat., Thessaloniki, Organisation for the Cultural
humble origins—though not a barbarian's daughter like Roxanne. Her father was a grocer from Venice, and she arrived in Rome as Chigi's mistress in 1511. Representations of the union of two social opposites are found elsewhere in the Villa Farnesina, as the loggia was decorated by Raphael's workshop with the story of the god Eros and the mortal Psyche.

In the fresco by Sodoma, however, the political nature of the marriage seems to have been taken further than in Raphael's drawings. On the right of the scene a landscape extends into the distance (Fig. 72). There, a group of cavalry and infantry cross a bridge over a river, which is bordered on one side by a steep cliff topped with a citadel. The landscape seems intended to allude to the breadth of Alexander's realm, as it unfolds across the background of the fresco, behind the maids of Roxanne, through the arcade behind Alexander, and beyond the fictive marble columns. The cavalry in the landscape reminds the viewer of Alexander's military presence in Roxanne's homeland. Originally, Alexander did not come to the region to acquire a bride, but rather to subdue and conquer. His marriage to Roxanne, the daughter of a local chieftain, while based on love at first sight in the ancient accounts, consolidated his rule in Bactria.631 Although a landscape is not present in any of the extant drawings of Raphael, it is important to note that Raphael drew detailed landscape studies for other commissions. He could have provided Sodoma with the idea to include an illusionistic landscape in the fresco to highlight the politics of the marriage.

On the other side of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne fresco, three women attend Roxanne (Fig. 73). Since the scene is filled with putti and attributes of the goddess of love, these women could be associated with the attendants of Venus.632 However, they are certainly not the


631 Interestingly, in his life of Alexander, Plutarch commented that while the marriage was a "love affair, it was thought to harmonize well with the matters that Alexander had [in Bactria]." See Plutarch, Alexander, 45. 1. 4, p. 359.

632 Neither the original composition by Raphael, nor the ekphrasis by Lucian include handmaidens attending Roxanne.
classical handmaidens of Venus. Instead, the women may allegorically portray the three
continents that form Alexander's empire: the fair young lady represents Europe, the woman in the
green robe with the metal pitcher is Asia, and the black woman symbolizes Africa. Earlier
representations of Alexander include references to the three continents of his empire. We recall
that in the Castello della Manta, for example, Alexander holds a tripartite orb. It is possible that
the three women in the Villa Farnesina fresco have a similar symbolic meaning, especially when
considering their differing ethnicities. With that said, the women may not necessarily function as
personifications of each continent. Rather, they remind the viewer of the vastness of Alexander's
empire and the varied ethnic groups found within his realm.

Although it is certain that Raphael would not have been able to read Decembrio's difficult
Latin on his own, learned humanists of the papal circle could have enlightened him. One such
humanist in Rome, Andrea Fulvio, wrote a compendium of brief biographies of classical figures
entitled the Illustrium Imagines in 1517, which included the life of Alexander the Great. Raphael,
in fact, collaborated with Fulvio on a project to chart the topography of ancient Rome at this same
time for Leo X. Fulvio could well have read Decembrio and suggested the political elements for
Raphael to include in his design. Indeed, the brief biography of Alexander the Great in Illustrium
Imagines does include political elements. Fulvio stresses that Alexander expanded the "empire of
the world" laid by his father Philip through his speed at "getting things done" and his defeat of the
enemy Persians. The "empire of the world" is certainly reflected by the three handmaidens and
the landscape in Sodoma's fresco, as well as by the crown in Raphael's composition.

Whereas Decembrio places emphasis on the character and deeds of Alexander the Great,
including his politically-motivated marriage to Roxanne, Raphael's drawings and Sodoma's fresco
instead stress elements of love. Determined in large part by the context of the bedroom, these
compositions only echo the political imagery found in some humanist discussions of Alexander.

633 As I previously discussed in Chapter Two.
Instead, Raphael's composition of *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne* and Sodoma's fresco both continue to promulgate an earlier tradition that associated the ancient king with virtuous marriage.\(^{634}\) The intended function of the final image to celebrate the marriage of Agostino Chigi marks a culmination of the connection between Alexander and marriage in the Renaissance. We recall from Chapter Three that images of Alexander decorated *cassoni* to help newlyweds cultivate virtuous behaviour in marriage, as the ornamentation highlighted Alexander's chastity toward women. Raphael could have encountered *cassoni* decorated with triumphal representations of Alexander the Great during his years in Florence.

In addition, Raphael may have viewed other well-known nuptial images of Alexander. For example, in the Piccolomini Palace in Siena, there was a *spalliere* cycle of worthy men and women, painted by Francesco di Giorgio Martini and his collaborators around the year 1494.\(^{635}\) Among the group of ancient and biblical worthies is Alexander the Great. The Alexander panel survives today in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham (Fig. 74). The artist presents Alexander as a courtly king of the *Roman d'Alexandre* tradition, with an elongated body and a *contrapposto* pose. He wears *all'antica* armour, with a Medusa head on his cuirass and theatrical masks on his *pteruges*. To remind the viewer of his oriental realm and exploits in the East,


\(^{635}\) The attribution of this cycle of paintings is complicated. The commission seems to have originally been given to Luca Signorelli, and then passed on to Francesco di Giorgio Martini, and finally finished by a group of painters who include the Griselda Master, artist of the Alexander panel. Gertrude Coor has suggested Neroccio de' Landi as another artist of the paintings, as has Giacomo Pacchiarotto. For a thorough discussion of the attribution of the various paintings of the Piccolomini Worthies, see Roberto Bartalini in *Francesco di Giorgio Martini e il Rinascimento a Siena. 1450-1500*, ed. Luciano Bellosi, exhib. cat., Chiesa di Sant'Agostino, Siena, Milan: Electa (1993), cat. 103, pp. 462-469; Gertrude Coor, *Neroccio de' Landi, 1447-1500* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 94; Lawrence B. Kanter, "Re-thinking the Griselda Master," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 135 (February 2000), pp. 147-56; Robert Mode, "Ancient Paragons in a Piccolomini Sceme," in *Hortus Imaginum*, eds. Robert Enggass and Marilyn Stokstad (Lawrence:
Alexander rests his hand on a curved scimitar. In the background, another narrative from his life emphasizes his magnanimity and chastity: in two military tents, Alexander encounters the family of Darius after battle, and he allows them to retain their royal titles and treatment. These elements, however, are relegated to the background, and the figures are small and difficult to make out.

Below the figure of Alexander, a Latin caption, held in a banderole between two putti, reads: "I, Alexander, who conquered the whole world with my own strength, shook off the flames of desire from my heart. It is of no avail to rejoice in the outward triumphs of war if the mind lies sick and rages within." The inscription underscores the theme of marital chastity for newlyweds through Alexander's behaviour toward the ladies of Darius' family, demonstrating the original function of this spalliere series. The Piccolomini worthies were painted in connection with a wedding, in a manner analogous to the decoration of the Sala di Alessandro and Rossane at the Villa Farnesina. However, unlike the Villa Farnesina frescoes, it is difficult to determine exactly for which wedding the Piccolomini spalliere were created since two weddings took place around this time. Giulio and Antonio Spannocchi, whose family was granted the arms of the Piccolomini by Pope Pius II, had a double wedding on 17 January 1494. On the other hand, the scholar Roberto Bartalini connects the cycle with the wedding of Silvio di Bartolomeo Piccolomini di Sticciano and Battista di Neri d'Aldello Placidi on 18 January 1493. Regardless of which particular couple the paintings were commissioned for, it is certain that the spalliere panels were created to celebrate an elite wedding.

Raphael, who is known to have worked with Pinturicchio in Siena on the Piccolomini Library in the cathedral of Siena, could easily have seen the Piccolomini *spalliere*. He was in Siena just ten years after the cycle was completed. Most importantly, he worked for the same family that is generally connected with the series. Although the Alexander panel depicts a portrait of the Macedonian king alongside his encounter with the family of Darius, rather than his wedding, this early precedent nonetheless could have further informed the young artist about the subject of Alexander the Great and the tradition connecting the ancient king with marriage.

Raphael's composition of *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne* was not only used to decorate the bedroom of the Villa Farnesina. His design was also adapted to at least one other sixteenth-century Roman villa. From the so-called Villa of Raphael (Casino Olgiati-Bevilacqua, destroyed in 1848), three vault frescoes were detached and removed to the Borghese Gallery (Figs. 75-77). One of these detached frescoes, which dates to around the years 1540-50, depicts *The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne*. Because of the close association between the original Raphael design and the Villa Raphael fresco, the latter seems to be the work of an immediate follower of Raphael.\(^{639}\) The predominant change from Raphael's composition is that a marriage bed is clearly illustrated behind Roxanne. Indeed, the bed cover has been pulled back in anticipation of the newlyweds. Additionally, the artist includes a background landscape behind the frolicking *putti*. This landscape consists of soft rolling hills and treetops, rather than the fluvial landscape of Sodoma. Bernice Davidson suggests that the artist of the Villa Raphael fresco may be Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta, a member of Perino del Vaga's workshop, who participated in the decoration of the Sala Paolina in the 1540s.\(^{640}\) If that is the case, then

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\(^{639}\) In the early nineteenth century, the frescoes were attributed to the hand of Raphael by Karl Förster in 1827, and to Perino by Johann David Passavant in 1839. See John Hunter, *Girolamo Siciolante pittore da Sermoneta (1521-1575)*, Fondazione Camillo Caetani (Rome: 1996), p. 137.

Siciolante would have been familiar with the original composition by Raphael through Perino, who was a member of Raphael's workshop in Rome.

Considering the iconography of the other surviving frescoes from the Villa Raphael, the original vault housing them may have been connected with a wedding. Saved along with the Alexander scene were The Offering to Vertumnus and Pomona and The Archers. All three stories have undertones of eroticism. According to the tale from Ovid, Vertumnus wished to seduce Pomona, so he disguised himself as an old woman in order to gain access to both Pomona's orchard, and Pomona herself. Raphael's design for Alexander and Roxanne features a moment immediately preceding the marital consummation, as putti undress the reserved bride. Archers, in the form of putti who wield the arrows of love, also appear in the bedroom of the Villa Farnesina. The Offering to Vertumnus and Pomona episode complements The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne both iconographically and organizationally. In the Offering to Vertumnus and Pomona, the artist illustrates a procession of women bearing offerings to the couple, who are seated on a bed on the left. The couple, like Roxanne, is framed with a bed curtain which a putto pulls away to reveal the lovers. Another putto arranges Roxanne's hair in the Alexander fresco, and, similarly in The Offering to Vertumnus and Pomona, a putto crowns Vertumnus with a wreath. The analogies in theme and composition may indicate that these two episodes were intended to complement each other and to be viewed in tandem. However, little is known of the villa, as J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle pointed out in 1885, and it may or may not have been used by Raphael as a weekend retreat. The destruction of the original location in the nineteenth century further complicates an analysis of the frescoes, as it is difficult to visualize where the paintings were originally situated on the vault, in addition to what other images accompanied these scenes.

The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne composition by Raphael was adapted not only to the decoration of all'antica villa spaces, but also to maiolica pottery. Indeed, in l'Aretino, Dolce refers to an "engraving on copper" by Caraglio which maiolica artists would have consulted.\textsuperscript{642} Engravings were the mode of transmission from the artist to learned collectors, in addition to other artists. Maiolica artists, including Francesco Xanto Avelli, frequently utilized engraved reproductions of Raphael's designs. An autograph maiolica dish by Xanto in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London replicates the original Raphael composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne (Fig. 78).\textsuperscript{643} Alexander, extending a crown, approaches Roxanne, who is seated on a bridal couch and in the process of déshabillé by swarms of putti. Xanto includes a putto crawling in Alexander's cuirass and a group of putti playing with his shield. As with the Raphael drawings, these vignettes provide comedic effect to the otherwise lofty subject matter.

Xanto elaborates on the works of Raphael and Sodoma with further details alluding to both Alexander the Great and the theme of love. At the far left, an armed soldier enters the narrative, holding a baton in one hand. On the far right, an elderly figure, dressed in Ottoman-

\textsuperscript{642} Dolce, op. cit., p. 169. The engraving forms the basis of the discussion that the protagonists of l'Aretino have about Raphael's in skill depicting antique themes. In addition to maiolica artists copying the engraving, Parmigianino executed at least two drawings based on Raphael's design. One drawing is now at the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, and the other in Vienna. See A. E. Popham, Catalogue of the Drawings of Parmigianino, 3 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), cats. 149 and 795 respectively.

\textsuperscript{643} Xanto seems to have represented the design of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne on several extant dishes. There is a plate in the Herzig Anton Ulrich-Museum in Braunschweig, dated to 1534, that bears the inscription "Semiramis Regina/ di Babilonica". There is also a dish in the Metropolitan Museum of New York that contains a scene of the Rape of Helen in the background. See Francesco Xanto Avelli da Rovigo, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, exhib. cat., Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo, 3-4 maggio 1980, p. 80; cat. 13, p. 129. Yet another maiolica dish, dated 1537, by Xanto portraying The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne is found in the Museo Civico, Bologna.

Xanto, however, was not the only maiolica artist to portray The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. A dish, attributed to Giacomo Mancini, dated to around the years 1540-45, also uses the design by Raphael as a source. See Francoise Barbe and Carmen Ravanelli Guidotti, eds., Forme
style pants and a turban, carries a trophy on a spear. This figure is based on that of Noah in The Sacrifice of Noah, after Raphael, who stands in the same pose with his left foot raised and his hands raised.\textsuperscript{644} The maiolica artist has adapted the figure of Noah to his composition by dressing him in eastern clothing. Since the original composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne by Raphael was well-known in the Renaissance, Xanto expands on design by including this representation of an oriental figure, which alludes to Alexander's conquest of the East. Xanto flourished as an artist during the 1530s in Urbino, at a time when Europe experienced renewed threats from the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{645} Including a submissive figure of an oriental in this work also would have held appeal to the patrons who could afford such a deftly-executed maiolica scene.

With regards to the theme of love, a small dog sits in the foreground of the scene. Small dogs often alluded to loyalty, an appropriate attribute of marriage. Additionally, the artist includes an overturned jug between the small dog and the oriental figure on the right. This jug is shown prominently in the foreground, which indicates that it is an important iconographic element within the composition. The overturned jug could, firstly, refer to Alexander's famous penchant for wine, which was remarked upon by many writers, including Fulvio in his Illustrium Imagines. More likely, however, the overturned jug refers to the physical act of the marriage night, and the loss of Roxanne's innocence that is about to take place in the nuptial chamber.

Xanto sets the marriage scene within an architectural space similar to that in the fresco by Sodoma. Large swags of yellow curtain frame the action, which takes place within a classicizing architectural space: green fluted pilasters suggest an antique setting. Through a window, the scene opens onto a landscape consisting of craggy mountains and a fortified village. The landscape may

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\textsuperscript{645} For example, the Turks advanced through Eastern Europe, only to be stopped at Vienna in 1529. During the winter of 1533-34, the Ottoman fleet executed a series of raids along the coast.
be connected with the mountainous region of Bactria, Roxanne’s homeland. The account of Curtius describes Alexander’s campaigns in this difficult terrain. Xanto could have read an Italian edition of Curtius, whom, as we recall, was the best known of all five of the ancient authors of the life of Alexander. In addition to being a highly skilled maiolica master, Xanto is known for his literary ambitions. In fact, he composed a lengthy poem in praise of his patron, the Duke of Urbino. By consulting the ancient account of Curtius, the artist could evoke a more “accurate” setting for this classical episode.

The dish is dated with an inscription on the back to 1533, and it has generally been connected with the marriage celebration in November 1531 of Margherita Paleologa of Monferrato and Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. Indeed, at the centre of the maiolica dish, a set of arms hangs above the landscape. These arms have been identified as those of the family of Margherita. The inscription on the back of the dish reads as follows:

Hor uedi la magnanima Reina chuna treccia rivolta, e, laltra sparsa corse alla, Babilonica ruina. Nel. I. libro di Trogo Pompeio [Now behold the noble queen who ran with one tress bound up, the other loose, at the fall of Babylon. In the first book of Pompeius Trogus.] Frâ: Xâto. A. daRovigo T urbino.

The inscription does not correspond with the imagery on the obverse of the dish since the artist does not portray the Fall of Babylon. Rather, he seems to confuse Roxanne with Semiramis, who wed King Ninus of Babylon after her first husband committed suicide. It is interesting to discover that the exact text that Xanto quotes derives, in fact, from Petrarch’s Triumph of Fame. Therefore, not only does the dish represent an episode from the life of Alexander, but, through the literary reference, the viewer should also consider Alexander’s lasting fame and renown.

of Italy. Europe retaliated in 1535 with the conquest of Tunis, under the Emperor Charles V Hapsburg.

646 See, for instance, Rackham (1940), vol. 1, cat. 632.
647 Ibid.
Moreover, the blending or conflation of stories was common on maiolica dishes, as was the quotation of numerous figures from Raphael engravings. Xanto has done both with this single dish. Although the stories of Semiramis and Ninus and Alexander and Roxanne seem to have little in common, in fact, the theme of love and marriage is central to both. By conflating the two classical stories, Xanto underscores the theme of marriage on the dish that celebrates a contemporary marriage. Furthermore, as I have shown in the previous chapter, Federico Gonzaga had a personal interest in Alexander the Great and numerous representations of the ancient king adorned his Palazzo del Té in Mantua. However, it should also be noted that Margherita was a member of the Paleologa family, the descendants of the last Byzantine emperor. As an eastern queen, Semiramis could be allied with Margherita, and thus Federico's marriage could be allegorized as a union of a Western ruler (Federico) with an Eastern heiress (Margherita), in a manner analogous to Alexander's marriage to Roxanne.

To fully understand the original intention of Raphael's design for The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, we need to return to the Villa Farnesina and consider the other representations that decorate the nuptial chamber because the room contains scenes from the life of Alexander on all four walls. If the episodes are considered chronologically, the decoration can be most readily understood. On the east entrance wall is a scene from Alexander's youth, The Taming of Bucephalus (Fig. 79).\(^{649}\) The young prince rides the large white, rearing horse on the right of the fresco, as figures flee out of the picture plane. To the left, a courtly retinue watches the commotion, including King Philip, who wears an eastern crown, analogous to that which Alexander proffers to his bride Roxanne in The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. The Taming of Bucephalus is set against a distinctly Roman background: behind Alexander is a ruined antique structure composed of arched bays and crumbling coloured columns. Further back

\(^{649}\) Both Christoph Frommel and Roberti Bartalini suggest that the bridal bed rested against this wall. See Frommel, *Die Farnesina und Peruzzis arkitektonisches Frühwerk* (Berlin: Walter de
are, respectively, edifices resembling the Colosseum and the Basilica of Constantine. In the foreground on the left, the presence of a wolf, suckling the infants Romulus and Remus, firmly situates the episode in an imaginary view of Rome (Fig. 80).

The Taming of Bucephalus was one of the best-known stories from the life of Alexander, particularly in the Middle Ages when Bucephalus was characterized as a man-eating, horned, hell-horse. As we recall from Chapter Three, the story also appeared in illustrated medieval manuscripts of the Roman d'Alexandre, such as MS Bodley 264. Plutarch records the event as follows: the horse, which refused to be mounted, reared up against any who tried. Realizing that, in fact, the horse was frightened by its own shadow, the young Prince Alexander turned the horse away from the sun. He took control of the horse and was able to mount it. King Philip, who watched the event with joy, purportedly told his son: "Look for a kingdom that matches your size. Macedonia has not enough space for you."650 Because the story was so well-known, the artist of the fresco would not necessarily have had to read Plutarch's account in order to paint this scene. Indeed, the inclusion of specifically Roman elements in the Villa Farnesina, such as the she-wolf, suggests that Sodoma is not faithful to Plutarch's account of a Greek story. However, placing an episode of Greek history in a Roman setting can be explained by the positioning within the physical space of the building. Setting this scene in a Roman landscape connects this room to the illusionistic Roman landscapes of the Stanza delle Prospettive by Baldassare Peruzzi (c. 1516), which the patron had to pass through in order to reach the bedroom.

Because Sodoma adapted a composition by Raphael for the scene of Alexander's marriage, it would be entirely plausible for him to have also utilized suggestions from Raphael for The Taming of Bucephalus. Stylistically, many of the figures in the Taming of Bucephalus echo those in the Stanza dell'Incendio del Borgo in the Vatican (executed by Raphael and his workshop

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650 Plutarch, Alexander, 6, as in Yardley and Heckel (2004), pp. 45-46.
c. 1514-17, Fig. 81), notably the soldier with his back turned, who reminds the viewer of the water carrying woman in the Fire in the Borgo. Even the violent action of the rearing horse brings to mind the thrashing cavalry that would later populate the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in the Sala di Costantino (1520-24, Fig. 82). However, unless drawings by Sodoma's hand after Raphael's designs for the Vatican Stanze emerge, the linkages cannot be confirmed. Nevertheless, quotation was an important element of art at this time in Italy. Not only did modern artists emulate the ancients, but they also emulated and referenced each other.652

Raphael's antique pursuits could have led to the inclusion of identifiable ancient structures in the fresco, quoting the famous monuments of Rome in an all'antica painting. Indeed, from 1517 he, along with Andrea Fulvio, began a project of the archaeological reconstruction of ancient Rome for Pope Leo X—Raphael was responsible for drawing the extant classical remains. However, Sodoma himself had antique interests, and frequently quoted ancient sculptures in his paintings.653 Additionally, the ruined classical buildings in The Taming of Bucephalus allude to the glory of the Greek (i.e. Western) world that Alexander—and his father—re-invigorated with their conquests. His taming of the wild horse Bucephalus, which no other man was able to do, prefigures his conquest of the East that subsequent episodes in the cycle portray.

On the south wall of the room, windows interrupt the next episode in the cycle, the so-called Battle of Issus (Fig. 83). This fresco depicts a soldier on horseback in the foreground, with

651 Richard Foerster was the first to make the link between the Farnesina frescoes and the Vatican Stanze. See Foerster (1880), pp. 113-4; also Robert H. Hobert Cust, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (London: John Murray, 1906), pp. 145-46.
sword drawn at a cavalryman on the right, who falls back with a cry. Infantry surrounds the two men, including some who are trampled under the horses. The battle is set against a landscape, with a tall cypress tree bisecting the fresco. In the distant background, the artist includes a walled town on the shores of a bay filled with ships. It might be assumed that Alexander is the victorious figure in the fresco, holding the scimitar and lunging at his opponent, but, in fact, this figure most likely represents Darius. This figure is older, and the curved scimitar alludes to his oriental nature. The figure falling back with a cry is most likely Alexander—he is younger, rides the same white horse as seen in The Taming of Bucephalus, and has the flowing locks of the standard-type representation of Alexander. At the Battle of Issus in 333 BCE, the armies of Alexander and Darius engaged in fierce and bloody combat, and while Alexander sustained an injury to the thigh, Darius fled the battlefield. The fresco, therefore, seems to illustrate the most dramatic moment, before Alexander was injured with the scimitar, when it seemed, perhaps, that he would not be the victor after all. Nevertheless, a learned viewer would realize that Alexander rallied himself and his troops to win the day.

Little research has been conducted on the fresco, possibly due to its marginal position and role in the room. Nevertheless, the story forms a crucial link between The Taming of Bucephalus and the following scene of Alexander and the Family of Darius. Alexander, who tamed Bucephalus in his youth, now rides the horse into battle against the Persian king, whose wife and daughters he will encounter in the following episode on the east wall. The scholar Florella Sricchia Santoro convincingly suggests that Bartolomeo di David, a contemporary of Domenico Beccafumi, painted this scene, based on the particulars of the landscape that recall the Manto Chapel, which he painted in Certosa di Pontignano. While it is certain that neither Raphael nor his workshop executed the Battle of Issus, details of the fresco nevertheless echo

other antique episodes that he designed, such as the cavalry battles in the Sala di Costantino. The battle scene in the Villa Farnesina dates to around 1517-18. At the same time, Raphael and his workshop were in the process of planning and executing compositional drawings for the Sala di Costantino, which makes connections between the two battle frescoes completely plausible. Both paintings contain figures that are packed densely, who twist and turn between the rearing horses. The soldier in the right foreground, whose back is turned to us, strongly recalls a figure in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, who is likewise twisted away from the viewer. It would not be difficult to imagine that, though Raphael did not paint the actual fresco, his compositions nevertheless informed the artist of the Battle of Issus. 656

When comparing the details of the fresco to the text of the classical accounts, it becomes apparent that the fresco may, in fact, not represent the Battle of Issus. The prominent detail of the scimitar in the fresco would suggest that the artist—or an advisor—consulted one of the ancient accounts in an attempt to faithfully render the historical episode. Curtius, the most widely-read of the ancient sources for the life of Alexander, mentions a scimitar of Darius not at the Battle of Issus, but at the Battle of Arbela, which took place in 331 BCE, two years after Issus. 657 However, if the artist represented Arbela, instead of Issus, then the order of the frescoes in the room no longer follows a chronological pattern.

With that said, there is another possibility for the identification of the battle fresco. In the background, the artist renders a bay filled with ships, a shoreline leading up to a fortified town, and, emerging from the bay, a river meanders into the foreground battle. No rivers are associated with the battles at Issus or Arbela, but the Battle of Granicus occurred on the shores of the River Granicus (now in western Turkey) in May of 334 BCE. This battle was the first of the three major battles fought between Alexander and the Persians. While story is not found in the account of

656 It is also likely that the two battle scenes were informed by the carved episodes on Trajan's Column rendering the Emperor's Dacian campaign.
Curtius (as it was part of the lost second book), both Arrian and Plutarch record the details. According to Plutarch, two Persian commanders, Spithridates and Rhoesaces, noticed Alexander in the battle and charged at him. Alexander avoided one, and smote the other with his spear. While Alexander was engaged with Rhoesaces, Spithridates "rode up from one side, raised himself up on his horse, and with all his might came down with a barbarian battle-axe upon Alexander's head." The Persian would have delivered the fatal blow to Alexander, when Cleitus, a friend and commander of Alexander, arrived to save the king by running Spithridates through with his spear. Arrian's account is similar, except that he records that Spithridates came at Alexander with a scimitar, rather than a battle-axe.

Could, therefore, the fresco represent the Battle of Granicus? It seems very fitting that the artist would include the first major battle of Alexander against the Persians in a room decorated with scenes from the life of the ancient king. In this case, the harbour in the background represents the Hellespont, with Alexander and his troops crossing the water on the ships. The narrative winds along with the river to the battle scene in the foreground on the banks of the River Granicus, where the Persian commander Spithridates lunges at Alexander with his scimitar, as described by Arrian, to deliver the final blow. The figure on the far right foreground must be Cleitus, who reaches back in preparation to attack the Persian and save the young king Alexander. Furthermore, the Battle of Granicus aptly fits into a chronological organization of the cycle of frescoes in the room, occurring after the Taming of Bucephalus but before Alexander encounters the family of Darius.

In the next narrative in the cycle, and directly preceding The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, Sodoma portrays two armed generals encountering a group of women in Alexander and the Family of Darius (Fig. 84). To the left of the generals, an older veiled woman kneels before

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657 Curtius, 4. 15. 30, p. 88. My thanks to Dr. Caroline Falkner for pointing this out to me.
659 Arrian, 1. 16, p. 74.
them with her hands outstretched. It is unclear to which soldier she motions. Does the woman
reach for the general in the golden cape and the animorphic helmet? Or does she reach for his
companion with the silver cape and scimitar? The older woman is accompanied by a group of
women and girls in classical robes, and a single nude boy.

Alexander and the Family of Darius is, in fact, the foreground scene of a larger narrative
running across the wall from right to left. On the far right of the wall, a cavalry battle takes place.
The viewer understands that the battles between the Macedonians and the Persians continue onto
the east wall here. The white horse rearing up in battle echoes the fresco of Alexander and
Bucephalus on the wall directly opposite, and advances the narrative from the Battle of Granicus
on the south wall to the battle portrayed on the far right of the east wall. Here, we see a cavalry
battle while birds hover in the sky above the fighting (Fig. 85). This element seems to correspond
to the account of Curtius, who writes that an eagle was seen hovering overhead during the Battle
of Arbela and the prophet Aristander interpreted it as an omen of victory for the Macedonian
king. Following the battle and circling birds, and before Alexander encounters the family of
Darius, a group of soldiers carrying shields and banners lead the narrative from the battlefield to
the scene in the tents afterward. If the previous fresco does represent the Battle of Granicus and
continues onto this wall on the right, then including the story of the eagle overhead (at Arbela)
and the encounter of the family of Darius (which happened after the Battle of Issus), conflates the
three battles into one.

The episode of Alexander and the Family of Darius is located over the fireplace of the
room, and below, two small depictions frame the fireplace: to the left, the god Vulcan is shown at
his forge, accompanied by a putto; on the right, three putti carry the arrows of love that Vulcan
has forged. The location of these scenes on either side of the fireplace is appropriate since both
refer to the role of fire in the smith's shop. These same putti, armed with the arrows of love,
populate the final fresco of the chamber, The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. Thus, through the nuptial vignettes, the artist connects both the preceding scene of battle and the subsequent marriage on one single wall.

Returning to the main episode on the east wall, all of the principal ancient sources discuss the story of Alexander and the Family of Darius, and all five accounts have similar content. Arrian, whose account is most detailed, writes:

This is the account given by Ptolemy and Aristobulus...Alexander on the following day [after Issus] entered the tent accompanied only by Hephaestion, and that Darius' mother, in doubt, owing to the similarity of their dress, which of the two was the King, prostrated herself before Hephaestion, because he was taller than his companion. Hephaestion stepped back, and one of the Queen's attendants rectified her mistake by pointing to Alexander; the Queen withdrew in profound embarrassment, but Alexander merely remarked that her error was of no account, for Hephaestion, too, was an Alexander—a 'protector of men.'

After the Queen's mistake and the revelation of the true King, Alexander allowed the Persian royal ladies to retain their titles and finery. Additionally, Alexander refused to take advantage of any of the unmarried princesses, whom Curtius asserts were "extremely beautiful." This episode displays not only Alexander's magnanimity toward the captured female relatives of his rival, but also his self-restraint.

As we recall from Chapter Two and Chapter Three, humanist authors were very familiar with this episode in the Renaissance. For example, Castiglione highlighted Alexander's continence in Il Cortegiano, stating that his treatment of the Persian royal women was "a deed worth much praise", while Angelo Decembrio presented less admirable motives. Decembrio

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660 Curtius, 4. 15. 26-27, pp. 87-88. Alternatively, the birds in the fresco could be crows or vultures, waiting to feast on the dead soldiers.
662 Curtius, 3. 12. 21, p. 46.
suggested that Alexander considered the money Darius offered for his family as a dowry for one of the daughters. Curtius stated that her dowry extended from the Hellespont to the Euphrates, though Decembrio pointed out that, oddly, there is no mention of these daughters in the account of Curtius. Legates came from Darius to Alexander, offering him 1000 pounds of gold by mistake: Darius believed it was ransom, and Alexander, a dowry. Decembrio focused on the monetary aspect of the encounter between Alexander and the women of Darius' family, rather than the usual theme of magnanimity, in order to critique Curtius' account. Unlike the depiction of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, little in this fresco echoes Decembrio's account. The only possible reference to Decembrio is the bridge in the background on the right, which may refer to the Hellespont, the crossing from Europe into Asia. Envoys and a ransom of gold or treasure, the key elements emphasized by Decembrio, are not included. Instead, the artist portrays a tender scene of the young Alexander exercising his self-restraint—despite the scantily-clad ladies—and his kindness toward these captured women. The fresco of Alexander and the Family of Darius continues the tradition of connecting Alexander the Great with marriage, as the image underscores the virtue of chastity, which the new bride and groom should display toward each other in the marital union. This theme, however, has evolved from the relatively static images found on cassoni, which present the episode as a triumph, into a true all'antica narrative. Now, the artist emphasizes the dramatic nature of the story not only by the Queen kneeling on the

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that, instead of being enamoured of the ladies, Alexander was enamoured with renown and greatness.

664 Decembrio (2002), 6. 67. 13: "Ad hoc non Alexander legatos ad Darium mittit pro eis tribus corporibus redimendis eam auri summam postulantes, quo magis Dario sit de redemptione prius, mox de uxoria pactione deliberandum, verum ultro a Dario ad Alexandrum veniunt legati ea milia pondo auri frustra pollicentes, uti nunc considerimus, si de uxore danda constituunt."

665 Andrée Hayum, on the other hand, suggests that this fresco, along with the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, was intended to highlight the masculine ideal through "a confrontation with the female sex." Hayum notes the secondary, and passive role of the women in each instance. However, Hayum does not seem to take the marital context and the tradition of imagery into consideration. See Hayum, Giovanni Bazzi—"Il Sodoma" (New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 30-31.
ground in desperation before Alexander (instead of riding in a car behind Alexander), but also by including the soldiers on the right as reminders of the bloody battle that has just taken place.

As I have shown in Chapter Three, Alexander was connected with marriage since the Early Renaissance. The frescoes in the Villa Farnesina continue this tradition since the paintings were executed to celebrate the marriage of Agostino Chigi. Furthermore, The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne represents a culmination of the tradition linking Alexander and marriage, as the fresco in the Villa Farnesina is the first monumental representation of Alexander's own marriage. Previously, the triumphal iconography on cassoni served to emphasize the virtue of Alexander and his chaste relationship with the women of Darius' family. Raphael's design for The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne predominantly emphasizes the chastity of Alexander's wife, Roxanne, with her downward gaze and modest pose. In the Villa Farnesina fresco, in contrast, by altering Roxanne's body to a more erotic, open positioning, Sodoma does away with modesty almost entirely. His inclusion of the leering African maid emphasizes the erotic nature of the scene. However, the convex mirror inside the bed curtains, which reflects closed curtains, contradicts the overt eroticism by not permitting the viewer any further voyeuristic opportunities. The viewer, like Alexander's companions and Roxanne's maids (who will soon leave the chamber), must rely on their imagination for what happens next in the bridal bed.

The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne is unique within the decoration of the bedroom at the Villa Farnesina as it is the only ekphrastic episode within the Alexander cycle. Although Pliny the Elder describes a painting for King Cassander that depicted a battle between Alexander and Darius by the artist Philoxenos of Eretria (generally thought to be the model for the Alexander Mosaic at the House of the Faun, Pompeii, c. 100 BCE), there is no discussion of the iconographic content of the painting.666 The artists of the other fresco scenes in the Villa

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Farnesina utilized only the accounts of the life of Alexander to convincingly portray the historical episodes in a classical style. In Alexander and the Family of Darius, for instance, Sodoma closely follows the details of Alexander's encounter as told by Curtius. Curtius describes Alexander and Hephaestion entering the tent of the Persian women. In the main scene of the fresco, a red tent stretches between two trees, above the heads of the figures. According to Curtius, the six-year-old son of Darius was among the royal retinue that Alexander encountered. The artist, who would have easily had access to the account of Curtius, includes the young son with the women of Darius' family. Additionally, it is notable how Sodoma portrays the figures of Alexander and Hephaestion, "the other Alexander." Alexander wears a golden cloak and elaborate helmet. Hephaestion, his closest companion, wears a complimentary silver cape: rich, but not regal gold.

The paintings in the Villa Farnesina represent the first extant Renaissance fresco cycle devoted to the life of Alexander the Great. Prior to this, Alexander does occur in the decoration of nuptial spaces—for instance, in the triumphal cassoni discussed in Chapter Three—but these representations portray a singular event, either a triumphal procession or a battle. At the time when the Villa Farnesina Alexander cycle was executed, all'antica subjects began to decorate spaces on a monumental scale. Classical imagery was no longer restricted to furniture and small-scale domestic ornamentation. In fact, the patron of the frescoes, Agostino Chigi, decorated the whole of his suburban palace with classical subjects, yet he chose scenes from the life of Alexander to ornament the most private and intimate space in the building. Alexander must have had a personal significance for Chigi, as he did with other important patrons, including Federico Gonzaga. In fact, Ingrid Rowland presents an interesting link between Chigi's life and Alexander's. Regarding Sodoma's Alexander and Roxanne fresco, Rowland writes, "Alexander's virginal Bactrian princess provided a neat way to mix the imagery of love and empire, appropriate

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667 Curtius, 3. 11. 15-26, pp. 43-44; also 3. 12. 8-12, p. 45.
to the bedroom of a womanizing magnate whose patronage had already drawn on patrician and Imperial conceits. Much in the same way that Raphael appropriated the identity of classical artists by reproducing antique painting, Chigi could be viewed as a new Alexander by virtue of his artistic patronage.

The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne is the focal point of the room and the scene of the ancient newlyweds parallels the function of the physical space. It is only fitting that this important representation was designed by the most important artist of the day, Raphael. Indeed, The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne represents the culmination of Raphael's lifelong interest in the subject of Alexander. Raphael portrayed a variety of episodes from the life of Alexander throughout his career, both from the romance tradition, and, as a mature artist, from the ancient accounts. It is quite possible that the artist himself suggested the subject to his patron, and thus finally realized his long-cultivated artistic interest in Alexander.

Chapter 6
Mannerist Images of Alexander the Great

The Sala di Alessandro e Rossane frescoes in the Villa Farnesina mark a watershed in the development of the artistic interest in the life of Alexander the Great during the Italian Renaissance. Not only are these depictions the first portrayals of Alexander on a monumental scale since antiquity, but they also represent the first images of the ancient king informed directly by the classical texts. Most importantly, the Villa Farnesina episodes form the first true fresco cycle depicting scenes from the life of Alexander. Although there had previously been literary interest in the Macedonian king in the late fifteenth century, seen in such works as Angelo Decembrio's De Politia Litteraria, it is not until the circle of Raphael in Rome that a detailed visual interest based on the historical Alexander takes place. The generation of artists after Raphael expands on his interest in Alexander with the creation of fresco cycles celebrating the life of the ancient king as a metaphor for contemporary patrons. In this chapter I will explore two fresco cycles from the Mannerist period in an attempt to determine how Raphael influenced these interpretations of Alexander, and I will consider how perceptions of the ancient king were transformed.

The Cinquecento Alexander no longer embarks on the chivalrous adventures of the Romance of Alexander. Rather, he becomes a classical metaphor for authority in the transformative years after the Sack of Rome. This is particularly clear in two cases, the first of which is the famous cycle in the Sala Paolina, a work commissioned by Pope Paul III Farnese from the workshop of Perino del Vaga. I will begin the analysis with an exploration of the iconography of each episode, since the imagery is often complex and obscure. Additionally, I will evaluate these frescoes in the context of other commissions for the Farnese family that have been marginalized or largely forgotten in previous scholarship.
The second example comprises two cycles in the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera in Città di Castello. The provincial master Cola dell'Amatrice executed these Alexander cycles in the same years as the Sala Paolina images, but for a lesser-known patron. As is the case with the Sala Paolina frescoes, I will examine the literary sources that underlie the imagery. Even though the cycles in these two different locations are rendered in different artistic styles and for quite different patrons, the functions of the imagery are analogous in glorifying the ancient namesake of the patron, and likewise in conferring dignity on the patrons themselves. Although other examples exist that portray episodes from the life of Alexander, such as the cycle executed by Francesco Primaticcio for François Ier at the Chateau de Fontainebleau, due to the constraints of this dissertation, I will not examine the Fontainebleau example.671

The frescoes of Alexander the Great in the Sala Paolina in the Castel Sant' Angelo are the best-known Mannerist representations of the Macedonian king. The interest in Mannerist art in the later twentieth century led to a rediscovery and a re-appreciation of these frescoes. The late German scholar Richard Harprath was instrumental in the renewed attention to the Sala Paolina. In his 1978 doctoral thesis, Papst Paul III als Alexander der Grosse, Harprath examined the payment documents in order to firmly date the frescoes and to attribute specific scenes in the room to artists of Perino's workshop, including Marco Pino.672 Furthermore, Harprath attached


each Alexander narrative to a specific political event from the papacy of Paul III. Several scholars, including Loren Partridge and Charles Hope, critically evaluated his metaphoric interpretations as the connections Harprath drew between the frescoes and historical events were tenuous. Nevertheless, his work provided a foundation for any modern evaluation of the Sala Paolina frescoes.

Prior to Harprath's study, scholarship on the Sala Paolina tended to focus on the attribution of related drawings to the cycle, the best example being the connoisseurship of John A. Gere, who, in fact, owned two studies for the Sala Paolina that he attributed to the hand of Perino. A series of exhibitions featuring the Castel Sant'Angelo in the early 1980s further highlighted the paintings in the Sala Paolina, including the catalogue edited by F. M. Aliberti Gaudioso and Eraldo Gaudioso, Gli affreschi di Paolo III a Castel Sant'Angelo 1543-1548. In addition to considering the iconography of the Sala Paolina and the other rooms redecorated in the Castel Sant'Angelo during the papacy of Paul III, the scholars describe the condition and the restoration of the frescoes. Earlier, Eraldo Gaudioso had contributed independently to the scholarship on the physical changes in the architecture of the Sala Paolina in his 1976 article, "I lavori farnesiani a Castel Sant'Angelo. Precisazioni ed ipotesi." Gaudioso examined the extant


drawings in relation to the architecture, which changed over time from the construction of the Castel Sant'Angelo under Pope Alexander VI to the renovations undertaken by Paul III.

Clare Robertson, in her 1992 monograph *Il Gran Cardinale: Alessandro Farnese, Patron of the Arts*, addressed not only the Sala Paolina itself, but also the wider artistic patronage of the Farnese pope and his family, including works commissioned by his eponymous cardinal nephew, Alessandro (1520-89). 677 Robertson elucidated the varied tastes of Paul III and explored how his artistic commissions celebrated him and his family, in addition to the broader context in which these objects functioned. She considered the most famous monumental paintings commissioned by Paul III, including the Sala Paolina and the frescoes at the Villa of Caprarola that praise his political achievements. Importantly for my focus on a variety of media, Robertson did not neglect lesser-known commissions in her study, such as tapestry cycles and the precious metal and cut-rock-crystal Cassetta Farnese.

Born Alessandro Farnese in 1468, Pope Paul III commissioned the decoration of a suite of apartments in the Castel Sant'Angelo from leading artists of Mannerist Rome, the most prominent of whom was Perino del Vaga. One of the stylistic heirs to the art of Raphael, Perino led a team of highly skilled artists in the execution of frescoes in the Sala Paolina from 1545 until his death two years later (Fig. 86). 678 Perino is generally considered to be responsible for the conception of the episodes portrayed, as several preliminary designs by his hand survive, including a drawing in the British Museum of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, and a drawing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York of Alexander Untying the Gordian Knot (Figs. 87-88). 679

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678 Harprath noted that the payment documents for Perino go up right to the time of his death. See Harprath (1978), pp. 14-15; Gere (1960), op cit.
679 For detailed scholarship and recent bibliographical listing for these drawings, see Elena Parma, *Perino del Vaga: tra Raffaello e Michelangelo*, exhib. cat., Palazzo del Té, Mantua, 18 March-10 June, 2001 (Milan: Electa, 2001), cats. 186 and 187 respectively.
Monumental scenes from the life of Alexander the Great decorate the walls of the Sala Paolina, and the vault contains further, smaller episodes (Fig. 89). Between the mural narratives are female allegories of virtues that allude to specific themes within the Alexander scenes. Amidst these frescoes are small roundels containing scenes from the life of St. Paul. At the far end of the room (opposite the door), the wall is frescoed with St. Michael swooping down to kill Satan's dragon with his lance, while a full-length painted figure of the Roman Emperor Hadrian decorates the entrance wall (Fig. 90). The two pendant walls serve as reminders of the history of the Castel Sant'Angelo. The structure was originally built between 135-139 CE by Hadrian to serve as his mausoleum. Later, according to legend, in the year 590, St. Michael appeared above the mausoleum sheathing his sword as a sign that the plague that had been ravaging Rome was now over.

The St. Paul roundels glorify the deeds and character of the biblical namesake of Pope Paul III, in contrast with the Alexander murals that extol his secular namesake. However, the overall role of the St. Paul scenes is minimal and the visual impact minor in comparison with the monumental Alexander scenes, which are rendered in monochrome narratives positioned well above the viewer's eye-level. The episodes from the life of Alexander run clockwise from St. Michael, beginning with Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, Alexander Untying the Gordian Knot, and Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius. On the wall opposite, the cycle continues with two further scenes that depict Alexander Reconciling Hephaestion and Craterus and Alexander Dedicating the Altars.

Broadly speaking, all of the Alexander episodes in the Sala Paolina are relatively passive, particularly in comparison with the frescoes of the Battle of Granicus and Alexander Taming Bucephalus in the Villa Farnesina, which feature the violent action of battle and the taming of a

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wild, frenzied beast, respectively. In the Sala Paolina, the more contemplative side of Alexander's character is praised in scenes that focus, for instance, on his reconciliation of friends and his literary interests, rather than his martial qualities. Furthermore, the Sala Paolina frescoes are iconographically appropriate for the patron for whom they were created, as I will demonstrate. In other words, the viewer of the Sala Paolina frescoes does not encounter a monumental version of the Marriage of Alexander because a scene of secular marriage, for instance, would not be appropriate to decorate a space commissioned by the highest religious authority in Christendom; likewise, a secular battle scene would be inappropriate in this space.

The Alexander monochromes in the Sala Paolina are arranged in chronological order, with the first scene, Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, being the exception (Fig. 91). This fresco represents the same story as the basamento grisaille under the Parnassus by Raphael in the Stanza della Segnatura, which is derived from Plutarch's account of the life of Alexander. Perino, as we recall from the previous chapter, may have been responsible for the execution of the Stanza della Segnatura version of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, and, even if he did not execute the work, as a member of Raphael's workshop he would have been familiar with the ancient story and Raphael's design. Because Raphael and Perino both portrayed the same event in a suite of papal apartments, Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer may have been positioned first in the Sala Paolina cycle to stress the continuity between Pope Paul III and his predecessor Pope Julius II. The learned viewer would have understood that the quotation in the Sala Paolina was an up-to-date version of Raphael's Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, executed in the mannered style of the mid-sixteenth century.

Iconographically, Perino's version of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer does not differ significantly from the design by Raphael. Perino presents Alexander in armour, accompanied by his generals, as an elderly sage places a tome into a large all'antica coffer in the centre of the narrative. However, the format for the narrative is different since Perino
stretches the scene from the horizontal format of the Stanza della Segnatura grisaille to a highly vertical version that is framed by monumental, mannered figures of his late Roman style. A repousoir figure of Hephaestion frames the left side, with his elongated and highly muscled back, buttocks, and legs turned toward the viewer. Alexander frames the right side of the fresco. His body turns toward the viewer, though his face turns down to the coffer. The figures in the fresco appear disproportionate when viewed head-on, but the scene is intended to be seen from below, and from this perspective the heads become less tiny and the bodies less exaggerated.

Perino elaborated on Raphael's design by including elements not present in the Stanza della Segnatura grisaille, such as a tome overturned on the floor in the foreground. There are additional decorative flourishes on the coffer, notably the elaborate strapwork on the volute, carved nude female nymphs, and claws on the animal feet supporting the coffer. The differences in size and proportion between the two images likely account for the added details. Raphael's composition acts as a small supporting scene below the Parnassus, while the Sala Paolina version is one of five large frescoes that dominate the room. With an increased mural space, Perino could include extra ornamentation to contribute to a stronger visual impact upon the viewer. Furthermore, Perino decorated the Sala Paolina some twenty years after Raphael's composition in the Mannerist style, which favoured decorative flourishes and complex details not always necessary to include in the story told by the painting.

Richard Harprath believes that this fresco symbolically referred to the education of Paul III during his youth by his humanist tutors, Gregorio da Spoleto, Pomponio Leto, and Demetrios Chalkondylas. The connection, however, cannot be proven without documentary evidence specifying the intended meaning of the scene. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the humanist pope Julius II appreciated the story of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer. The episode highlighted the esteem for classical learning and literature held

by an exemplary ruler, which made it particularly appropriate for ornamenting the basamento space under the Parnassus in the Stanza della Segnatura. Perino may have even suggested the inclusion of the scene to Paul III because he was so familiar with Raphael's earlier version.

The following episode of Alexander Untying the Gordian Knot has no precedent in Italian Renaissance art (Fig. 92). The story, however, was known through the accounts of Plutarch, Arrian, Curtius, and Justin. The most important account of the life of Alexander available to a Renaissance reader was that written by Quintus Curtius Rufus, who describes the knot with "its remarkable feature being the yoke, which was strapped down with several knots all so tightly entangled that it was impossible to see how they were fastened." According to local legend at the time of Alexander, the man who untied the knot would become the Master of Asia. Thus, when Alexander passed through Gordium (in modern-day Turkey), he was confident that he would untie the knot. After a series of unsuccessful attempts, Alexander finally cut through the knot with his sword, proclaiming that, "it makes no difference how [the knot] is untied." Curtius comments that by cutting the knot with his sword rather than untying it, Alexander either evaded the prophecy or fulfilled it. Plutarch and Arrian, on the other hand, relate an alternate version of the story, originally told by Alexander's contemporary Aristobulus, in which the king did not cut through the knot with his sword, but instead pulled the knot out of its pin pole, which exposed the two ends of the rope and allowed him to untie the knot.

Perino seems to have consulted the version of the story told by Curtius. On the right side of the fresco, Alexander raises a short sword as he leans back awkwardly and supports the heavy

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683 Curtius, 3. 1. 15, p. 27.
684 Ibid., 3. 1. 18, p. 27.
yoke in front of him. As in Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer, Hephaestion frames the left side of the painting, and additional soldiers fill the background, watching the narrative unfold. Some of the soldiers raise their hands in shock, while another helps to hold up the yoke, which is ornately carved with the head of a monkey at the curved end and zoomorphic reliefs on the sides. The knot consists of a large, circular braid of rope that remains untouched in the instant before Alexander brings his sword down to cut it. Perino chose to depict the moment immediately before the highest point of action. He renders the most important elements—Alexander and the knot—in the foreground in bright lighting to underscore their centrality.

Alexander wears the same military garb as in the previous scene: a crested helmet, *all'antica* style armour, and lion-faced greaves that emphasize his emulation of the god Hercules, as we saw in Chapter Four.

Harprath posits that this episode reflects the universal primacy of the Church during the Protestant Reformation, and he connects the fresco with a particular manuscript miniature of Paul III on a wheel of Fortune, with flanking figures of the king of France and the Holy Roman Emperor as the wheel crushes a Turk below. While both images represent a Western leader who intends to conquer the East, the comparison with a little-known manuscript illumination seems to be too precise to reflect the episode of the Gordian Knot. What viewers, apart from the pope and perhaps a few close advisors, would be aware of such a specific manuscript? Although the Sala Paolina episode was executed during a fractious time for the Church, the fresco does not necessarily allude to the Reformation. Instead, as Loren Partridge proposes, the frescoes of the Sala Paolina are more reflective of the general yearnings of Paul III for a new crusade against the

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686 A preparatory drawing for the fresco, in pen and brown ink with grey wash, is found in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Linda Wolk Simon attributes the drawing to Perino's hand, and notes that while Perino had "little role in the execution of the [Sala Paolina] frescoes, the inventions of the major parts of the decorative cycle…belongs to him." See the catalogue entry by Wolk Simon in *Sixteenth-Century Italian Drawings in New York Collections*, eds. William Griswald and Linda Wolk Simon (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), cat. 66, pp. 74-75.
Turks and a united Christendom under his leadership, as the manuscript miniature similarly implies. The ancient accounts make the theme of the Gordian Knot story very clear. The story emphasizes the beginning of Alexander's fulfillment of his conquest of the world, either by destiny (as prophesized from his birth), or because he is able to control his own destiny through his clever negotiation of the method of "untying" the knot. Rather than linking specific events in the life of Paul III with episodes from that of Alexander the Great, the career of the ancient king functions as a metaphor for that of the pope.

The subsequent scene in the Sala Paolina cycle depicts Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius (Fig. 93). This event, as we recall, decorates one of the walls in the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane at the Villa Farnesina and, additionally, forms the background narrative in the Piccolomini spalliera panel of Alexander the Great. During the fifteenth century, some cassoni panels portrayed the family of Darius with Alexander to highlight his chastity and to link the ancient king with virtues of marriage. In the Sala Paolina, not only does Perino completely transform Sodoma's earlier version, but he also presents the story without a marital context. He removes almost all of the extraneous figures, and he omits the staffage scene of the Battle of Issus. Instead, Perino portrays the mother of Darius clinging to Alexander, with her arms wrapped tight around the king's thighs. Alexander carries the young son of Darius, who wraps his arms around Alexander's neck in a pose reflecting that of Darius' mother. Meanwhile, Hephaestion mirrors the pose of Alexander, thrusting his leg forward to the side of Darius' mother, and, once more, he frames the left side of the fresco. While it is difficult to distinguish between Alexander and Hephaestion, the viewer will recognize the lion-headed greaves on Alexander (the right-hand figure), which serve to identify and differentiate the king. In the background the artist includes a small group of figures, whose faces are the only visible elements. These figures include bearded old men and veiled women. Assuming that Perino consulted the ancient accounts or received

advice on the story from a humanist at the papal court, the old men most likely represent the Persian envoys and the veiled women correspond to the female relatives of Darius.

Once again, in an effort to find a connection between specific events from the lives of Alexander and Paul III, Harprath links this episode (generally associated with clemency) to Paul III's own act of clemency, his pardoning of the town of Perugia following the revolt of 1541. There exists, in fact, an inscription in the vault of the Anticamera del Concilio in Paul's villa of Caprarola that mentions his pardoning of Perugia, though the act is not depicted. While it is tempting to connect the Alexander narrative with Paul's political deed, it could also be argued that Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius symbolizes Paul's wish to reconcile the Protestants with Christendom. Moreover, if other general themes of the period can be read into the image, there is no firm evidence to support Harprath's assumption. Additionally, we must remember the Renaissance tradition linking Alexander with marriage. Unlike the precedents for Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius, the Sala Paolina episode has no connections to an underlying nuptial theme or function. Indeed, the viewer would understand that popes cannot marry. Instead, the viewer would have entered this space within a set of papal apartments and read religious connections into the scene: perhaps the reconciliation of the Protestants, or perhaps the pardoning of Perugia. In my opinion, because Alexander is not shown pardoning the Queen—he was affirming her royal status and, more importantly, refusing to take the daughters of Darius as his concubines—the fresco in the Sala Paolina most likely alludes to the chaste life of clerics, who vow to treat women with respect while maintaining a celibate life.

On the west wall of the Sala Paolina, the cycle continues with two episodes from the life of Alexander the Great that are both difficult to interpret iconographically, and additionally have

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690 The irony of celebrating the chaste life of a cleric in this space is not lost on the fact that Paul III fathered children. However, the fresco could simply represent the ideal of a chaste lifestyle for clerics.
no known precedent in Renaissance art. The first narrative is a narrow, vertical scene that
emphasizes the monumentality of the muscular figures, which fill the picture plane tightly and
nearly burst out (Fig. 94). Alexander, in the front, raises his right hand towards a beardless,
youthful soldier on the left. The similarities in armour, age and style of hair reveal the figure to be
Hephaestion. Behind Alexander and Hephaestion stands a bearded soldier in a crested helmet,
though his crest is significantly smaller than that of Alexander, indicating his lower status. This
soldier must be Craterus, Alexander's second-in-command after the death of Parmenion, and one
of his diadochoi (political heirs) in the immediate years after his death.

While this scene of Alexander receiving two friends has no precedence in Renaissance
art, it is found in the ancient literature. Plutarch describes that, "in general [Alexander] showed
most affection for Hephaestion, but most esteem for Craterus, thinking and constantly saying that
Hephaestion was a friend of Alexander, but Craterus a friend of the king."691 The two men held a
secret grudge against one another, and, on the Indian Expedition, they drew swords. Although
Alexander chastised Hephaestion publicly, stating that, "without his favour Hephaestion was
nothing", the king also "sharply reproved Craterus" in private.692 Alexander reconciled his two
comrades, expressing in an oath to Amon and other gods that he loved them "most all of men",
but that if he heard of their quarrelling again, he would kill them both.693

The account of Arrian offers a similar version of a quarrel and reconciliation of two
generals serving under Alexander, though in his account the generals are identified as
Hephaestion and Eumenes. Unfortunately, the page of Arrian that recounts the quarrel has been
lost, and thus only the end of the reconciliation is mentioned.694 As the account of Plutarch was
much better known in the Renaissance than that of Arrian, Perino most likely consulted the

691 Plutarch, *Alexander*, 47. 5-7, p. 361.
443.
693 Ibid.
version of the story related by Plutarch. In the fresco Alexander's raised palm could portray the oath to Amon taken by the king according to Plutarch, as the gesture of raising a palm in oath is still used today. However, rather than swearing an oath with his hand placed on a book, Alexander holds a lance with his left hand. This gesture, too, could refer to his threat to kill his comrades if once again they raise arms to each other. From this, the viewer understands that Alexander's oath is not passive. Rather, the ancient king utilizes an active object symbolic of his role as a conqueror.

Harprath posits that Alexander Reconciling Hephaestion and Craterus refers specifically to Paul III presiding over the exchange of peace between Charles V and François I at Nice in June of 1538. Taddeo Zuccaro and his school depicted the same event in the Sala del Consiglio Trento at Caprarola in 1562 (Fig. 95). However, these two images share few similarities. The fresco at Caprarola shows an idealized version of the truce between Charles and François. The two rulers shake hands, surrounded by their courtiers and cardinals, as Paul III stands behind, in the middle. The positioning of the pope signifies his role as the mediator of the peace. In reality, the two rulers despised each other so much that they refused to sit together in the same room, and Paul III had to shuttle from room to room during the negotiations. While it is not out of the realm of possibility that Alexander Reconciling Hephaestion and Craterus alludes to this contemporary détente, Partridge, in his review of Harprath, offers a far more convincing alternative. He suggests that this scene, along with the following episode on the west wall of the Sala Paolina, allegorically represents the mission of the Church to pacify and reconcile all nations of the world. Partridge maintains that, rather than symbolically alluding to a specific contemporary

694 Arrian, 7. 13, p. 369. However, the reconciliation is explained in Plutarch, "Life of Eumenes," Lives, vol. 8, 2. 1, p. 81.
695 As I discussed in Chapter Two.
697 Another version of the Truce of Nice was painted in 1552-55 by Francesco Salviati in the Sala dei Fasti Farnese in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.
event, the frescoes "reflect broader concerns and deeper aspirations of the age."

Indeed, considering that Alexander Reconciling Hephaestion and Craterus is so obscure a subject that even a learned viewer might not recognize the story but instead view the image in a more generalized sense as the Macedonian king reconciling two soldiers, a more over-arching metaphor better fits the image.

The final fresco, Alexander Dedicating the Altars, carries a similar underlying message of Paul's desire to Christianize and reconcile the entire world (Fig. 96). On the left of the scene, Alexander, in his ubiquitous armour, approaches two sarcophagi-like altars, around which a group of soldiers and bearded sages congregates. The altars are decorated with fictive all'antica high reliefs consisting of garlands, lions' heads, griffons, and theatrical masks. The garlands allude to a religious function, as the motif decorated many ancient Roman temples. The end of the altar closest to Alexander has two winged Victory caryatids nearly in the round, and between them is a small figural scene that may illustrate a sacrifice (Fig. 97). A sacrificial image fits with the overall theme of Alexander dedicating altars. Because of the winged victories and the ancient religious motifs, I would suggest that the decorations on the altar specifically evoke a dedication to Athena Victory. The second altar, on the other hand, is decorated with eagle caryatids and a figural scene of a she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus.

Quintus Curtius Rufus, Diodorus Siculus, Arrian and Plutarch all describe Alexander dedicating the twelve altars. The version given by Curtius is brief: after the mutiny of his troops in India, Alexander retreated to his tent for two days in anger. On the third day, he emerged from his tent and instructed that twelve altars of square-cut stone be erected to commemorate his

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699 Ibid., p. 661.
700 The figural scene is extremely difficult to make out and, therefore, to identify.
701 A drawing in pen and brown ink with wash by the hand of Perino, in the Woodner collection at National Gallery in Washington, closely follows the final fresco. However, the ends of the altars in the drawing both lack the figural scenes. For more on the drawing, see the catalogue entry by Linda Wolk Simon in The Touch of the Artist: Master Drawings from the Woodner...
expedition, marking the limits of his territory. The account of Arrian is longer, describing the altars as "high as the loftiest siege-towers and even broader in proportion." Furthermore, the author writes that Alexander offered sacrifice upon the altars (as his custom was), and that games were held with contests for both horse and man. Plutarch records that the altars are still "revered by the kings of the Praesii [of India] at the present time", but he does not describe their appearance. Diodorus states that Alexander had prepared a speech for his troops about an expedition against the Gandaridae tribe that his Macedonian soldiers did not accept. Importantly, he specifies the reasons for the erection of the altars, recounting that:

Thinking how best to mark the limits of his campaign at this point [in India], Alexander first erected altars of the twelve gods each fifty cubits high and then traced the circuit of a camp thrice the size of the existing one…his idea in this was to make a camp of heroic proportions and to leave the natives evidence of men of huge stature, displaying the strength of giants.

In addition, the Greek author Strabo (64 BCE-24 CE) briefly mentions the altars erected by Alexander in the third book of his Geography. Strabo notes that, "Alexander set up altars as limits of his Indian Expedition, in the farthest regions reached by him in Eastern India, thus imitating Heracles and Dionysus."

The fresco of Alexander Dedicating the Altars seems to follow the text of Curtius more closely than the other accounts. The two altars in the painting resemble ancient stone sarcophagi in shape and size. Renaissance artists had been intimately familiar with such objects since at least the turn of the fifteenth century, copying the antique reliefs on Graeco-Roman sarcophagi found

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*Curtius*, 9.3.19, p. 219.

*Arrian*, 5. 29, pp. 298-99.

*Plutarch, Alexander*, 62. 4, p. 401.


throughout Italy, though especially in Rome.\textsuperscript{707} The artist of \textit{Alexander Dedicating the Altars} takes some creative liberties with the account of Curtius by ornamenting the "altars" with both Greek and Roman motifs. The she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, for instance, never appeared on any ancient imagery associated with Alexander. Rather, the motif specifically signals the city of Rome, the seat of the Pope. Additionally, the she-wolf recalls the episode of \textit{Alexander Taming Bucephalus} painted by Sodoma in the Villa Farnesina, which includes explicit visual references to Rome, such as the Colosseum. Although the workshop of Raphael did not execute the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane frescoes, Perino took part in the execution of the images in the Loggia of Psyche in the same building around the years 1518-19. The Loggia of Psyche post-dates the images in the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane, and Perino would have seen \textit{Alexander Taming Bucephalus} while he participated in the decoration of the Loggia. Thus, later on, he deliberately referenced the Villa Farnesina fresco in his own Alexander episode at the Sala Paolina.

Harprath equates \textit{Alexander Dedicating the Altars} with the reconstruction of St. Peter's under Paul III.\textsuperscript{708} However, other images from the same period display the associations of Paul and the rebuilding of St. Peter's much more overtly. For example, in 1546, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese commissioned Giorgio Vasari to execute a series of frescoes celebrating the life of his uncle, Paul III, in the Sala dei Cento Giorni in the Cancellaria. In one of the frescoes, Vasari depicted Paul III in the robes of the High Priest of Jerusalem inspecting the construction of the new St. Peter's (Fig. 98). It is unlikely that such an important building project would be hidden under an obscure ancient narrative in the Sala Paolina. To fully connect the episode of \textit{Alexander Dedicating the Altars} with the project of St. Peter's, the viewer would expect to see the basilica in the background of the fresco, as in the Sala dei Cento Giorni. Yet the artist provides no reference.

\textsuperscript{707} For instance, Filippo Brunelleschi and Donatello travelled to Rome together in the early Quattrocento to consult the ancient monuments, including sarcophagi which littered the Appian Way into Rome.
to St. Peter's, besides an allusion to Rome through the infant Romulus. In response to Harprath, Partridge proposes that, rather than suggesting a contemporary event, Alexander Dedicating the Altars reflects the more general spiritual aim of renewed faith, reconciliation, and salvation.\footnote{Partridge (1980), p. 662.} Alexander united the world under one rule, and the pope aimed to do the same under one faith—a Roman faith, as hinted at by the suckling she-wolf. Perhaps, too, the story reflects a latent understanding that, like Alexander dedicating the altars at the limits of his empire, Paul III and the Church realized the limits of the Roman Church in the world.

The vault of the Sala Paolina contains six additional scenes from the life of Alexander set within an elaborate network of decorative geometric frames. Compared with the monumental wall paintings, the vault images are somewhat difficult to discern when viewed from below. The episodes are Alexander Before the High Priest of Jerusalem, Alexander in the Temple of Jerusalem, Alexander Burning his Booty, Alexander Fighting Porus, Alexander Building Ships for the Voyage down the Hydaspes River, Alexander Entering Babylon in Triumph.\footnote{Harprath (1978), p. 45.} Because of the more marginal nature of these images, I will not provide a detailed analysis of each individual scene. Rather, these episodes collectively suggest Alexander's predestined conquest of the East, and, therefore, allude to Paul's desire to re-conquer the East and ultimately unite the world under one faith for the Second Coming.\footnote{Harprath (1994), p.444.}

One scene, Alexander Encountering the High Priest, seems to have been the most important of the six vault frescoes, as it highlights the importance of spiritual authority over temporal power, a theme which would have been highly appealing to Paul III. This vault narrative is generally thought to have been executed by Marco Pino (c. 1525-1586), since a preparatory design attributed to Marco Pino, a member of the team, is preserved (previously in a collection in New York, current location unknown). See Harprath (1994), p.444.
The fresco of Alexander Encountering the High Priest also seems to be related to an engraving designed by Francesco Salviati (1510-1563). Both the fresco and the engraving portray the Macedonian king kneeling to the authority of the high priest of Jerusalem (Figs. 99-100).

The subject of the engraving has been long debated in the literature. In the early nineteenth century Adam von Bartsch identified the subject as St. Ambrose and the Emperor Theodosius. In 1969, John Gere advanced an identification of Alexander Before the Priest of Amon. Curtius records the story of Alexander encountering the High Priest of Amon when the king visited the oracle in Siwa, Egypt. Here, Alexander was addressed as "son' by the oldest of the priests, who claimed that this title was bestowed on [Alexander] by his father Jupiter." The priest further flattered Alexander by claiming the king would "rule over all the earth". In contrast, as discussed in Chapter Two, the story of Alexander's encounter with the High Priest of Jerusalem was an apocryphal tale recorded only in the Jewish Antiquities by the first-century Jewish-Roman author Josephus. Both stories would have been available to the Renaissance artist.

In the engraving, the warrior kneeling before the priest must represent Alexander because he wears all of the ubiquitous attributes: the crested helmet, a lion-faced pauldron, and all'antica

711 As with the wall frescoes, Harprath connects each vault scene with a specific historical event from the life of Paul III without fully considering more general contextual themes found throughout the images.

712 Three payment documents dating to 19 January, 14 March, and 22 May of 1546 further evidence that Perino subcontracted six Alexander stories in the vault of the Sala Paolina to Pino. See for example the entry in Gli affreschi di Paolo III a Castel Sant'Angelo 1543-1548. Progetto ed esecuzione (1981), vol. 1, cat. 86.


716 Curtius, 4. 7. 25-26, p. 68.
armour. He holds a curved scimitar in his right hand, a detail which we have encountered in earlier images of the Macedonian king, including the Piccolomini spalliera panel. Moreover, Alexander is shown in profile, as is standard, and he is a beardless youth. The priest raises his hand to Alexander in a gesture of Christian blessing. However, I would propose that the priest shown is not the High Priest of Amon, but indeed the High Priest of Jerusalem. If the priest represented was the High Priest of Amon, the viewer would expect either the ram's horns of Amon on the headdress of the priest, or another exotic attribute signifying that the priest served an Egyptian—and therefore, pagan—god. Rather, the temple in the background of the image strongly resembles Bramante's Tempietto at San Pietro in Montorio in Rome (c. 1504).

According to the Book of Daniel and Josephus, Alexander knelt before the high priest of Jerusalem only after realizing the true faith, prefiguring the ideal that worldly kings should bow to the authority of the pope. Connecting the ancient temple of Jerusalem with a contemporary example of classical architecture that celebrated St. Peter reinforces a Christian metaphor for the episode. In contrast, Alexander's deference to the priest of Amon would have had little symbolism for a Renaissance audience, as Amon was a pagan god. Furthermore, Paul III was shown in the guise of the High Priest of Jerusalem in the Sala dei Cento Giorni in the Cancelleria. This association, therefore, was a useful and familiar metaphor in papal propaganda of the period.  

The engraving was adapted not only to the vault of the Sala Paolina, but also to a silver medallion designed by Alessandro Cesati, probably to celebrate the opening the Council of Trent on 13 December 1545 (Fig. 101). On the obverse of the medal is a portrait of Paul III Farnese with the inscription, "PAVLVS. III. PONT. MAX. AN. XII." and in small letters, in Greek,  

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717 Ibid.  
718 Indeed, Richard Harprath points out that in the vault of the Sistine Chapel, above the Cumean Sibyl, Michelangelo portrayed a small roundel of Alexander the Great Encountering the High Priest of Jerusalem for Julius II. See Harprath (1978), p. 28.
"ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ [Alexander (Cesati) made this]." The reverse of the medal portrays Alexander kneeling before the high priest, along with an inscription that reads: "OMNES. REGES. SERVIENT. EI. [All kings will serve Him]." This inscription is derived from Psalm seventy-two, which underlines the submission of temporal power to religious power. As noted by Richard Harprath, this psalm was a favourite prayer of Paul III. It was an especially apt prayer at the time, since Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church, and Paul excommunicated the king in December of 1538. The final part of the phrase, "et obedient [and they will obey (him)]", which followed "omnes reges servient ei", would have been understood by a faithful viewer. Paul III had already appropriated this event from the life of Alexander and made his interpretation clear through the Latin inscription. Therefore, without reservation, we can interpret the painting in the Sala Paolina in the same light.

The medalist Alessandro Cesati made two significant changes from the earlier engraving after Salviati. Firstly, the pope does not bless Alexander, but rather holds his arm straight in admonishment. Secondly, a group of companions surround the two protagonists in the medallion. In the engraving, on the other hand, there is a large cavalry army with banners in the distant background behind the temple. Such a detail would be too difficult to reproduce in a medal with a diameter of only 51 mm. However, larger figures of soldiers would be technically feasible. Additionally, the detail of the high priest's admonishment is notable: is Paul commenting on the need to admonish the temporal kings of Europe? or does the admonishment refer to the breakaway sects of Protestants who caused the Council of Trent to convene?

719 As an aside, it is interesting to note that many ancient Greek vases painters signed their works in the same manner. Cesati, who was originally from Cyprus and would have known Greek, may have encountered ancient vases in his native Greece, or even during his career in Italy.
720 Psalm seventy-two, according to the King James version of the Bible, but Psalm seventy-one, according to the Vulgata (Catholic Bible).
The scholar David Jaffé proposes that the original design by Salviati may have been created for the medal by Cesati. A preparatory drawing by Salviati, mentioned earlier, portrays the priest in red chalk (Fig. 102). The drawing has circular indentations (possibly indicating that it was copied), and the echoing rows of heads behind the high priest are a "Salviati signature." The drawing by Salviati is most likely to date from after his return to Rome in 1548. Jaffé further suggests that the medal was not intended to celebrate the opening of the Council of Trent, but rather the 1550 Jubilee, just before which Paul died. Thus, following the death of the Pope, Salviati may have assigned the now-redundant design to an engraver.

Cesati was a gem engraver and metallurgist, who worked in Rome for more than twenty years, under Popes Paul III, Julius III, Pius IV, and Paul IV. He was named a master in the papal mint in 1540, and had an enormous reputation as an imitator of the antique. In fact, Vasari claims that Cesati's medal of Alexander Encountering the High Priest of Jerusalem elicited from Michelangelo the statement that, "the death hour of the art [of engraving] had come, for it could not go farther." A few years later, Gian Paolo Lomazzo provided a slightly different anecdote, writing that Michelangelo, upon seeing the steel die by Cesati, marvelled at it, and expressed doubt as to whether it would be possible to strike from such a deep relief. Because Vasari, who had seen the print firsthand, identifies the subject of the medal as Alexander and the High Priest of Jerusalem, it makes most sense that the original composition by Salviati portrayed the same subject.

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724 My thanks to Dr. David McTavish for pointing out the dating of the drawing.
725 Ibid.
Alessandro Cesati created a second medal portraying Alexander the Great, as demonstrated by the scholar-physician Dr. Frederick Parkes Weber in 1897 (Fig. 103). The obverse of the medal has a portrait of Athena that was copied from the gold stater coins of Alexander (and therefore assumed in the Renaissance to be a portrait of Alexander). The profile bust of Athena-Alexander faces left, and wears a helmet on which Pegasus is represented along with an inscription, in what G. F. Hill refers to as "queer Graeco-Latin lingo": "ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΔΙΙΟΣ [the Divine Alexander]." On the reverse, Alexander rides through a triumphal arch, seated on a pile of arms and a bound prisoner, in a chariot drawn by a quadriga of elephants. Soldiers sound trumpets and bear standards around Alexander. Above, in the arch, there is a winged figure of Victory, and the Greek inscription "ΙΠΕΡΣΙΣ ΑΛΩΘΕΙΣΑ [Persia captured]." This scene possibly represents Alexander's entry into Babylon after the defeat of Darius at the Battle of Arbela. Curtius notes the plethora of exotic animals that were presented to Alexander in Babylon, including lions and leopards—a quadriga of elephants would be an appropriate motif to include with this event. It is quite possible that Cesati, like Paul III, had an artistic interest in his namesake and deliberately created such a project in honour of Alexander the Great, in addition to demonstrating his prowess as a modern medalist competing with the ancients.

Indeed, a third medal of Alexander the Great by Cesati survives in the British Museum in London (1976-8-4-1, Fig. 104). On the obverse is a bust of Alexander facing left, wearing a helmet that is decorated with Neptune holding a trident and riding on two dolphins, with the inscription, "ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ [Alexander]." The choice of Neptune as a motif on the helmet of Alexander is unusual. Alexander was frequently connected with other gods and heroes, including

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728 Frederick Parkes Weber, "Attribution of medals of Priam, Augustus, and Alexander the Great to a medallist of Pope Paul III, possibly Alessandro Cesati," Numismatic Chronicle 17 (1897), pp. 314-17, at p. 314. The medal (BM 1906-11-3-1002) is cast bronze, 35mm in diameter, and was presented to the British Museum by Dr. Parkes Weber in 1906. The obverse die cast is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Athena, Zeus, Amon, and Hercules. The only connection between the sea god and the Macedonian king was Alexander's sacrifice to Neptune before he boarded the ship to cross the Hellespont from Europe into Asia. The reverse of the medal is the same as for the previous example, with a triumphal procession following the conquest of Persia. The similarities between these two triumphal medals suggest that Cesati may have had a distinct artistic interest in Alexander the Great and had been experimenting with the subject for some time.

In addition to the monumental fresco cycle in the Sala Paolina, and the smaller-scale— but more public—engraving after Salviati and medals by Cesati, Paul III and his family commissioned more private and more precious works decorated with scenes from the life of Alexander the Great. In his Vite, Vasari describes a rich, silver casket ordered by the cardinal Alessandro Farnese from the goldsmith Marino of Florence (Fig. 105). To "fill the spaces" of the shrine with crystal, the cardinal employed the gem engraver and medalist Giovanni Bernardi da Castel Bolognese. Vasari identifies only the scenes on the outer panels of the casket: the chase of Meleager and the Calydonian boar; the Bacchantae and a naval battle; the combat of Hercules with the Amazons; and "other fancies of the cardinal" designed by Perino del Vaga and other masters. The contributions of other famed artists in the anecdote of Vasari are confirmed in a letter from Claudio Tolomei to Apollonio Filarete, in which Tolomei mentions drawings by Perino del Vaga and Michelangelo for the Cassetta Farnese.

__Curtius, 5. 1. 21, p. 93.__
__Arrian, 1. 11, p. 66.__
__Attwood (2003), vol. 1, p. 385, no. 947.__
__Ibid.__
__The letter is undated, but seems to have been written some time between the years 1537 and 1547. See Ernst Steinmann and Rudolph Wittkower, eds. Michelangelo-Bibliographie (1520-1926) (Leipzig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1927), no. 1932. For a discussion of the iconography of the other panels on the Cassetta Farnese, see the entry by Christina Riebesell in I Farnese. Arte e Collezionismo, eds. Lucia Fornari Schianchi and Nicola Spinosa, exhibit. cat. Palazzo Ducale di Colororno, Parma, 4 March-21 May, 1995; Galleria Nazionale di Capodimonte, Napoli, 30 September-17 December, 1995; Haus der Kunst, Monaco di Baviera, 1 June-27 August, 1995 (Milan: Electa, 1995), pp. 58-69.__
Among the "other fancies" mentioned by Vasari on the bottom of the inside of the casket is a scene of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer (Fig. 106). It was believed that the cardinal used the crystal and silver casket to store his early edition of Homer (now in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli), which had been printed in Florence in 1488 by Demetrio Cretese and ornamented with miniatures by Monte and Gherardo di Nanni di Miniato. However, in 1923-24 the scholar Aldo de Rinaldis compared the dimensions of the incunabulum (335 x 230 x 90 mm) with the casket (360 x 196 x 183 mm) and determined that it could not have been possible for the casket to have ever held the book.  

Although Perino del Vaga depicted the narrative of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer in the Sala Paolina around the same time that the Cassetta Farnese was created, c. 1543-61, Salviati was the more likely designer of the scene, as suggested by Clare Robertson. For example, the treatment of the swirling draperies in the Cassetta version is reminiscent of the work of Salviati. More importantly, because Salviati trained as a goldsmith, he would have understood the technical limitations of casting metal.  

Given the previous patronage of the Farnese family, either Perino or Salviati would make sense.

As is the case with the Sala Paolina fresco, the story portrayed in Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer served to underscore the humanist learning of the Farnese family and celebrate their appreciation of classical literature. The coffer into which Alexander placed the book of Homer was, as we recall, one of the most precious objects in the treasure left behind at Issus by Darius. This Renaissance cassetta is, likewise, an extremely precious and expensive object, made of silver gilt and rock-crystal. While the Farnese pope ordered large-scale works portraying Alexander and further promoted the circulation of medals representing the ancient king (both of which were intended for a wide, public audience), at the same time he and his

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737 Robertson (1992), p. 44.
family also commissioned smaller-scale, much more private works, such as the Cassetta Farnese, for their own personal delight.

In addition to the Cassetta narrative and the engraving of Alexander Before the High Priest of Jerusalem, Salviati was also involved with a series of tapestries for the Farnese family. Pier Luigi, the son of Paul III, ordered a series of tapestries for his castle at Nepi portraying episodes from the life of Alexander. These may be the same tapestries that Pier Luigi referred to in a letter of February 1540 to his agent in Brussels. A one of the hangings, The Sacrifice of Alexander, is now in the collection of the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples (Fig. 107), and the design was subsequently engraved by Enea Vico in 1542.

The tapestry is framed with a wide border of fruit and flower garlands, trophies of war, and putti. The central narrative portrays a large androgynous figure in robes on the left, holding an object above a sacrificial fire. On the right, a group of figures pinch their noses, while a young boy swings a censer over the fire. The unusual scene derives from a passage in the Factorum et dictorum memorabilium of Valerius Maximus (first century CE), which tells of a young censer holding a burning coal in a ritual sacrifice led by Alexander. Valerius Maximus writes that:

In keeping with an ancient Macedonian custom, boys from the noblest family would assist King Alexander when he was sacrificing. One of them picked up an incense burner and stood before Alexander. A burning coal fell onto his arm. His flesh was burning so badly that the smell reached the noses of the bystanders. But the boy kept his agony quiet and held his arm out rigidly, because he did not want to disturb Alexander's sacrifice by throwing the incense burner down or crying out inauspiciously. The king was delighted with the endurance of this boy, but he wanted to be absolutely sure of his steadfastness. So he deliberately made the sacrifice last longer, but even this did not make the boy

738 See Ibid., p. 25.
740 In the borders of the tapestry are inscriptions. On the left: "PATERE ET ABSTINE [Suffer and Abstain]. On the right: "LEVIVS FIT PATIENTIA [Patience makes lighter]." A third inscription runs along the bottom: "CARBONE VIVO IN BRACHIVM/ EX ACERRA PROLAPSO PVERI VRI/ PASSVS EST NE SACRIFICIVM/ GEMITV TVRBARET [With live coals falling from the incense burner onto his arm, the boy suffered the burn lest he disturb the sacrifice with a groan]." The inscription regarding patience is a quote from Horace: "Patience makes lighter what sorrow may not heal." Horace, The Odes and Epodes, trans. C. E. Bennett, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1964), Book 1, Ode 24, p. 69.
change his behaviour. If Darius had gotten a look at this extraordinary event, he would have known that soldiers from such stock were invincible, since they were endowed with such courage from a tender age.\textsuperscript{741}

The episode was intended to exhort the virtues of patience and faith, which would have been appreciated by the mid-sixteenth century viewer. Vasari speaks of cartoons for a set of Alexander tapestries designed by the young Salviati on the occasion of Pier Luigi Farnese becoming Duke of Nepi in 1538.\textsuperscript{742} However, Nello Forti Grazzini advances another hypothesis, suggesting that the Sacrifice of Alexander could have been designed instead as a single tapestry for Ottavio Farnese, the son of Pier Luigi, around 1550. The tapestry was first documented in 1587, already as an isolated piece functioning as the dossal of a throne-apparate of Ottavio in Parma.\textsuperscript{743} However, in a letter of 1589 by Vespasiano Gonzaga, Duke of Sabbioneta, to Alessandro Farnese, Gonzaga recalls having returned to Ottavio (the father of Alessandro) a tapestry based on a cartoon by Salviati that represented the Sacrifice of Alexander, which he had purchased after the citadel of Pier Luigi was sacked in 1547.\textsuperscript{744} Therefore, it is possible that the Sacrifice of Alexander tapestry was originally part of a set commissioned by Pier Luigi from Salviati. The full set (if it ever existed) was distributed or destroyed after the death of Pier Luigi, but the Sacrifice of Alexander was purchased by Vespasiano Gonzaga, later to be returned to Ottavio Farnese and used as a


\textsuperscript{742} In his \textit{Vita} of Salviati, Vasari records that, "when Sig. Pier Luigi Farnese was created Lord of Nepi, he wished to adorn that city with new buildings and paintings, and took Francesco [Salviati] into his service, giving him rooms in the Belvedere, where he did large water-colour scenes on cloth of the deeds of Alexander the Great, afterwards executed as arras in Flanders." See Vasari, trans. Hinds (1963), vol. 4, p. 58.


throne dossal by 1587. No other pieces from the original series of Alexander tapestries for Pier Luigi appear to have survived.745

The images of Alexander the Great commissioned by Pope Paul III and his family to celebrate his ancient namesake continue the association between the popes and Alexander that began in the literature of the late fifteenth century, particularly under the Borgia pope Alexander VI. However, from an early age Alessandro Farnese had deliberately cultivated a personal metaphor. The name of Alexander immediately brought to mind connotations of the ancient king and his legendary greatness. Already in a letter to a friend dated 20 December 1488—when Alessandro was twenty—the future pope self-consciously signed himself as "Alexander romanus", the Roman Alexander.746 Alexander functioned as a model of learnedness, virtue and authority for Alessandro Farnese, in addition to being a sort of symbolic ancestor. As pope, Alessandro Farnese had the financial means to commission large-scale fresco cycles celebrating his ancient namesake, in addition to expensive luxury objects, such as the Cassetta Farnese, which portrayed further all'antica images of the Macedonian king.

Yet, as seen above, the Farnese pope was not the only patron during the mid-sixteenth century who encouraged associations between himself and Alexander the Great. At the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera in Città di Castello, another patron commissioned frescoed scenes from the life of the ancient monarch. This patron, Alessandro Vitelli (1500-54), was an illegitimate son

745 Bertrand Jestaz believes that the early death of Pier Luigi meant that the project was not able to be completed, and that only the one piece portraying The Sacrifice of Alexander was completed. See Jestaz, "Gli arrazzi nelle residenze farnesiane," in Gli Arazzi dei Farnese e dei Borbone: Le collezione dei secoli XVI-XVIII, eds. Giuseppe Bertini and Nello Forti Grazzini, exhibit. cat., Palazzo Ducale, Colorno, 19 settembre-29 novembre, 1998 (Milan: Electa, 1998), pp. 54-60, at pp. 54-58. Alternatively, Nello Forti Grazzini suggests that the tapestry was commissioned by Ottavio Farnese, after the death of his grandfather Paul III and after he re-entered Parma in 1550, to commemorate his recent travails and to celebrate his recent suffering and test of his spirit. See the catalogue entry by Grazzini in Gli Arazzi dei Farnese e dei Borbone: Le collezione dei secoli XVI-XVIII, pp. 108-10.

746 Harprath (1978), p. 63; also Harprath (1994), p. 440. Later, his cardinal nephew was also compared to the Macedonian king by the humanist Claudio Tolomei in 1542, who stated that, "I do not know if some new Alexander the Great will be re-awakened." See Robertson (1992), p. 21.
of the *condottiero* Paolo Vitelli, and a military commander in his own right. Vitelli served the Medici pope Clement VII and the Medici dukes before finally serving under Pier Luigi Farnese. While nowhere near as prominent a figure as Pope Paul III, Vitelli also highlighted the connection with his ancient namesake through monumental frescoes.

The Alexander cycles in the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera were completed as part of a series of renovations to the family palace ordered by Vitelli in the 1530s and 1540s, as documented in the archives of the local Biblioteca Comunale. In addition to the widening of rooms and the construction of a new *sala grande*, Vitelli had the façade adorned with grotesques by Cristofano Gherardi, called il Doceno, and Giorgio Vasari in 1537. Scenes from the life of Alexander decorate two rooms inside the palace. Six distinct episodes are represented on part of the east wall of the *salone*, and a further nine are illustrated in a small room that may have functioned as Alessandro's *studiolo* (Figs. 108-109). All of the scenes were executed between 1543-47 by the artist Cola dell'Amatrice and his workshop.

Cola dell'Amatrice (Niccola di Mariano Filotesio, c. 1480-1547) was a painter, sculptor, and architect from the town of Amatrice in the region of Latium. He primarily worked in the town of Ascoli in the Marche, where he designed several churches, including the cathedral, and other civic buildings. Cola seems to have worked briefly for the Cardinal Raffaele Riario, as indicated by a payment document of July 26, 1513 made out to a certain "Chola della Matrice" for some works provided for the cardinal's palace in Ostia. Additionally, he may have travelled to Rome in October of 1525, where he met the pupils of Raphael. In 1529, Cola returned to his

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750 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
hometown to participate in the town's reconstruction after the sack by Spanish forces. Here in Amatrice, Cola first encountered Alessandro Vitelli. Vasari, who only briefly outlines Cola's life in his biography of Marco Calvarese, states that not long after Alessandro Vitelli was made the lord of Amatrice, he brought Cola to Città di Castello to decorate his palace with frescoes and other works.\footnote{Vasari, trans. Hinds (1963), vol. 3, pp. 5-6.} Indeed, in 1538, Charles V had appointed Vitelli the lord of Amatrice in the kingdom of Naples, under pressure from Cosimo I de' Medici to remove Vitelli from Florence after Vitelli had supported the plans of Cosimo's rivals.\footnote{Vitelli supported the plans of Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo, the nephew of Leo X, to secure the succession for the natural son of Duke Alessandro de' Medici instead of Cosimo. See Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher, \textit{Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation}, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985; rprt. 1995), vol. 3, p. 403.}

Cola was the most important artist in Amatrice, and there are several critical studies devoted to his art. Although Cola was the subject of a 1952 book by Giuseppe Fabiani, this study, however, focused only on the altarpieces and architecture that Cola completed in Ascoli, and did not consider his work in Amatrice, or his late work in Città di Castello.\footnote{Giuseppe Fabiani, \textit{Cola dell'Amatrice secondo i documenti Ascolani} (Ascoli Piceno: Società Tipolitografica Editrice, 1952).} The first scholar to consider the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera was Vittorio Corbucci in the 1931 catalogue, \textit{Il Palazzo di Alessandro Vitelli e la Pinacoteca Comunale di Città di Castello}.\footnote{Il \textit{Palazzo di Alessandro Vitelli e la Pinacoteca Comunale di Città di Castello}, ed. Vittorio Corbucci (Città di Castello: Società an. tipografica "Leonardo da Vinci", 1931).} Corbucci explored the architecture and decoration of the palace, in which the Pinacoteca now resides, along with the holdings of the museum, though he did not discuss the frescoes of the life of Alexander by Cola dell'Amatrice. A later catalogue of 1987, \textit{La Pinacoteca di Città di Castello} examined not only the holdings of the museum—including early works by Raphael—but also the decoration of the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera.\footnote{La \textit{Pinacoteca di Città di Castello: I Dipinti}, ed. Francesco Federico Mancini (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri Associati, 1987).} Importantly, the catalogue considered the iconography of the
mural decorations within the palace, with particular focus given to the fresco cycles that depict lives of ancient heroes in the salone and studiolo.

A major monograph on the artist, Cola dell'Amatrice, was compiled by Roberto Cannatà and Adriano Ghisetti Giavarina in 1991.\textsuperscript{756} This work explored the entirety of his artistic career, dividing it into his early period, his encounter in Rome with the art of Raphael, his mature period, his late period (including a brief consideration of the frescoes at the Palazzo Vitelli), and finally his architecture. For my study, Cola's encounter with the art of Raphael, Bramante, and the followers of Raphael in Rome is of particular interest. While Vasari claims that Cola did not care to see the great monuments of Rome, the evidence suggests otherwise.\textsuperscript{757} Cola may have frequented the circle of Bramante in the early sixteenth century, as evidenced by the façade of the cathedral of San Emidio in Ascoli (completed in 1539), which utilizes giant Corinthian pilasters and niches, in a manner perhaps analogous to the Cortile del Belvedere in the Vatican.

Furthermore, a notebook of his drawings and notes of major Roman monuments survives today in the Biblioteca Comunale in Fermo, in the Marche.\textsuperscript{758} The Taccuino di Fermo contains sketches after paintings by Raphael, Michelangelo, and antique sculpture, as well as notes and lists in Latin and Italian further describing works that Cola saw, including the colours used for the sibyls by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. While these sheets do not include any sketches portraying Alexander the Great, the Taccuino nonetheless indicates that Cola had a detailed and significant interest in the art produced in Rome.

His visit to Rome directly influenced the images that he executed at the Palazzo Vitelli, particularly in the all'antica style and subject matter of ancient heroes found in the work of Raphael, and in that of other early Cinquecento artists working in Rome, such as Jacopo Ripanda.

\textsuperscript{756} Roberto Cannatà and Adriano Ghisetti Giavarina, Cola dell'Amatrice (Florence: Cantini, 1991).
\textsuperscript{758} In their monograph on the artist, Cannatà and Ghisetti Giavarina provide facsimile copies of each folio in the Taccuino, in addition to providing transcriptions of any inscriptions.
The *sala grande*, or *salone*, in the Palazzo Vitelli contains a series of large frescoes representing landscape in an *all'antica* manner by il Doceno and his workshop on the lower registers of all four walls (Fig. 110). Above are paintings by the workshop of Cola, which depict episodes from the lives of the four great military commanders of antiquity. On the south wall are scenes from the story of Hannibal, and on the west, further Hannibal scenes and the story of Scipio, the foe of Hannibal. On the north wall and continuing onto the east wall is the story of Julius Caesar. Finally, on the second half of the east wall are two registers that contain six episodes from the life of Alexander, including Alexander Crossing the Hellespont, The Battle of Granicus, The Battle of Issus, a Banquet Scene, The Capture of Bessus and Alexander Encountering Diogenes. Three surviving allegorical figures accompany the narratives between The Battle of Issus and the Banquet Scene.

Roberto Guerrini, who has studied the decoration at the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera in detail, has tentatively identified the first episode in the *salone* as Alexander Crossing the Hellespont (Fig. 111), an event recorded by Diodorus, Justin, Arrian and Plutarch. As Diodorus relates,

> Alexander advanced with his army to the Hellespont and transported it from Europe to Asia. He personally sailed with sixty fighting ships to the Troad, where he flung his spear from the ship and fixed it in the ground, and then leapt ashore himself the first of the Macedonians, signifying that he received Asia from the gods as a spear-won prize.

Significantly, the act has affinities with the Roman procedure for declaring war as outlined in Livy, in which a spear is thrown onto enemy territory after a formal declaration of war.

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760 Diodorus, vol. 8, 17. 17. 1, p. 163.

Justin offers a very similar version of the story, while Arrian agrees that Alexander was the first to disembark but he makes no mention of the spear. Plutarch offers a longer account in his life of Alexander, where he focuses predominantly on the omens that Alexander saw before the crossing and his visit to the oracle at Delphi. However, he does continue on to discuss the campaign finances at some length.

In keeping with the literary sources, the artist portrays a group of soldiers on the right of the image, with Alexander shown as a youthful helmeted commander on horseback, who points to a wide river on the left-center of the scene. The left side of the fresco is quite damaged, but two figures constructing a wooden structure to bridge the river remain visible. Because this episode marks the beginning of Alexander's military campaign in Asia and his defeat of the Persians, it is fitting that the first image in the cycle represents Alexander Crossing the Hellespont.

The subsequent episode, The Battle of Granicus, when Alexander first encounters the Persians in battle, follows Alexander Crossing the Hellespont. Plutarch describes the battle fought on the steep banks of the River Granicus, now in western Turkey. Here, the Macedonian cavalry plunged across the river as many foes "rushed up to Alexander, for he was conspicuous by his buckler and by his helmet's crest, on either side of which was fixed a plume of wonderful size and whiteness." Alexander's crest was broken off by the Persian commander Spithridates, who raised his arm to deliver the final blow. Before Spithridates could kill Alexander, Cleitus ran him through with a spear. By this point in the battle, the Macedonian phalanx crossed the river, and the enemy began to flee. Curtius' account of the battle, told in book two of his History, is

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763 Plutarch, Alexander, 14. 4, p. 261.
unfortunately lost. The version told by Arrian is very similar to Plutarch, stressing the role of the Thessalian cavalry in battle, as well as the heroics of Cleitus.\footnote{Arrian, 1. 13-16, pp. 69-75.}

The fresco illustrates a cavalry battle on the left of the scene (Fig. 112). In the foreground of this battle, an elderly bearded warrior holding a short sword engages in combat with a younger horseman, dressed in more elaborate \textit{all'antica} armour with a flowing cloak. The two warriors possibly represent Spithridates and Alexander. Fallen soldiers are crushed beneath the horses of these two warriors. On the right, three large ships float in the harbour. Guerrini suggests that these ships allude to Alexander’s recent traversing of the Hellespont, in addition to the beginning of the dismissal of the fleet which Alexander employed to transport his siege engines.\footnote{Guerrini in \textit{La Pinacoteca di Città di Castello: I Dipinti} (1987), p. 109. Also Diodorus, vol. 8, 17. 22. 5-23. 2, pp. 181-83.} This makes most sense, but because \textit{The Battle of Granicus} follows \textit{Alexander Crossing the Hellespont} on the right, the placement of the ships does not seem to indicate a clear passage of time. Having read the cycle from left to right, the viewer would expect that the ships in \textit{The Battle of Granicus} be placed on the left of the image in order to connect the scene with the previous episode. Thus, perhaps the body of water and the ships in \textit{The Battle of Granicus} instead suggests the Granicus River, where the battle took place.

The subsequent episode depicts the \textit{Battle of Issus} (Fig. 113). In a similar manner to the version represented in the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane in the Villa Farnesina, Cola conflates the battle scene with Alexander’s encounter with the women of Darius. As we recall from previous chapters, Darius brought the female members of his family with him to the battle camp. These women appear on the right of the scene in chariots, and away from the action of battle. Many of the female figures display violent gestures of grief and fear: for example, two women raise their arms in alarm, two other women cradle their children as they glance toward the melée of soldiers, and another woman clasps her hands together tightly in a furtive prayer. Meanwhile, a cavalry...
battle occurs on the left of the fresco, in a manner analogous to The Battle of Granicus. As in the previous fresco, Alexander is clearly identified by his cloak, muscled cuirass and helmet, as he charges into battle on horseback. The paint of some of the swords has been lost, leaving shadowy outlines of weapons in the hands of the soldiers, including the figure against whom Alexander charges. Behind the women in the middle ground, soldiers flee the battlefield. These figures must represent the Persian army who fled when Darius began to lose the battle. One soldier glances over his shoulder back to the fighting, while another carries the limp body of a fallen comrade. In contrast to the representation of the battle in the background of Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius in the Villa Farnesina, the Battle of Issus in the Palazzo Vitelli does not include an eagle in the sky foretelling the victory of Alexander. Rather, the image focuses the viewer’s attention on the violent emotions of the battle, with such elements as the wailing women and fleeing soldiers.

From an ideological point of view, Alexander's battle against the Persians would have held particular interest to Alessandro Vitelli. In 1546, he followed Ottavio Farnese to Germany, where he joined campaigns against the Ottoman Turks, and then against the Protestants.769 Already in 1542, Vitelli had commanded troops in Hungary for the Holy Roman Emperor, and on October 1 of that year he had coaxed a substantial Ottoman contingent out of Pest.770 Representations of Alexander the Great battling the ancient Persians would have been apt imagery for this contemporary military commander who desired to associate himself with the active, martial qualities of the ancient king.

Below the first register of frescoes in the cycle are several allegorical figures represented in monochrome (Fig. 114).771 One is a nude woman with a thin veil at her waist. She holds a

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771 Roberto Guerrini connects these figures to the allegorical tradition that Cesare Ripa would later codify in his Iconologia (first published 1593), a book which was conceived as a guide to
lance in one hand, and in the other, a shield emblazoned with the visage of Medusa. Behind her, an olive tree blooms. The female figure represents True Wisdom, but her attributes also evoke the accoutrements of Minerva, the ancient goddess of Wisdom. Another monochrome figure, specifically representing Minerva, is clothed in *all’antica* drapery, and holds a lance in one hand. In the other hand, Minerva holds a crested helmet. According to the sixteenth-century emblematist Cesare Ripa, the lance signifies the sharpness of Minerva's *ingegno*, and therefore would have been a prized attribute for a warrior to have on the battlefield. This attribute is also associated with the bold battles of Alexander.\textsuperscript{772} It was well known that Alexander's wisdom had blossomed under the tutelage of Aristotle and, like a Renaissance humanist, he honoured the great Greek epic of Homer. Furthermore, Minerva-Athena, the goddess of Wisdom, was one of his patrons in the conquest of Persia.

In another allegory on the wall, an armed male figure represents the war god, Mars. The artist portrays him with *all’antica* armour, including a muscled cuirass and a crested helmet. With his left hand, Mars holds a shield, and in his right, a sword. He has the "ferocious and terrible" face that would invoke terror and fear in his enemies.\textsuperscript{773} His shield denotes control and his sword cruelty. In addition to the *ingegno* of Minerva, the attributes of Mars are linked with Alexander. Alexander was a great military conqueror like the god Mars: in control on the battlefield, but also capable of great cruelty.\textsuperscript{774}

symbolism in emblem books. Ripa's text included descriptions of allegorical figures used to represent certain concepts, along with the explanation for the symbolic paraphernalia, which often derived from classical literature. Although Ripa's *Iconologia* post-dates the Palazzo Vitelli frescoes executed by Cola dell’Amatrice by a half-century, Ripa compiled his work from various earlier emblem books and visual sources, including sculptures, engravings, and coins with which a mid-sixteenth-century artist such as Cola would have been familiar.\textsuperscript{772} Ripa, as discussed by Guerrini in *La Pinacoteca di Città di Castello: I Dipinti* (1987), p. 111. \textsuperscript{773} Ibid.\textsuperscript{774} Plutarch specifically describes the qualities he associates with Alexander's martial character: Was, then, Alexander ill-advised and precipitate in setting forth with such humble resources to acquire so vast an empire? By no means. For who has ever put forth with greater or fairer equipment than he: greatness of soul, keen intelligence, self-restraint, and manly courage, with which Philosophy herself provided him for his campaign? Yes, the
Two further allegorical monochromes in red earth pigment have been lost, but it is tempting to hypothesize that they would have represented Justice and Fortune. Considering all of the Alexander imagery examined over the course of this study, these two allegories seem most likely. Fortune would have been accompanied by her wheel, and have held a cornucopia in her left hand. The wheel, of course, alludes to the fickle nature of Fortune, while her cornucopia denotes abundance.775 Justice could have been portrayed as a woman in white robes, blind-folded, holding the Roman *fasces* in one hand, and in the other, a flame. An ostrich might accompany her as a symbol of matters to be ruminated upon slowly, as an ostrich digests iron over time.776 However, if the artist looked to the tradition of the school of Raphael, he most likely would have shown Justice with the attributes of a sword and scales, as Raphael depicted the virtue on the vault of the Stanza della Segnatura.

As I discussed in Chapter Five, Alexander was often associated with Justice. This virtue was exemplified, for instance, in his encounter with the Theban noblewoman Timoclea. With regards to Fortune, the question of Alexander's dependence on Fortune rather than military skill in his conquest of the world has been a subject of debate in literature since Antiquity. Plutarch devoted a tract to Alexander's association with Fortune, and we recall from Chapter Two that Cicero claimed that Alexander's career depended entirely on Fortune. While the case for the identification of the lost figures as Justice and Fortune makes sense given the linkages with Alexander, it remains only speculative until further evidence—perhaps in the form of preparatory studies—surfaces.

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775 Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, or Moral Emblems*, trans. P. Tempest (London: Benjamin Motte, 1709), p. 33. An online version of this text, complete with woodcut images, can be found at the English Emblem Book Project at the Pennsylvania State University Libraries' Electronic Text Center here: [http://emblem.libraries.psu.edu/](http://emblem.libraries.psu.edu/)

776 Ripa (1709), p. 47.
A partly-lost monochromatic scene of an antique banquet follows the allegorical figures (Fig. 115). A young woman in thin drapery stands at the centre of the table. On the left, another woman turns (perhaps to a lost figure of a guest). On the right, a serving woman carries a platter above her head. Platters and smaller plates of food fill the table. Guerrini offers two possible identifications for the fresco: The Marriage Banquet of Alexander and Roxanne, or The Banquet at Persepolis, where the courtesan Thaïs goaded Alexander into burning the palace. Without any surviving male protagonists in the image, it is impossible to firmly identify the episode. The central woman could represent either Roxanne or Thaïs. However, the downward gaze of the woman suggests a modesty that courtesans were not reputed to possess. Furthermore, the pose of the woman is reminiscent of Roxanne in Raphael's famous composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. The figure in the banquet scene partly covers her breasts with her hands in the same manner as Raphael's Roxanne. The pose may intentionally echo the famous design by Raphael, which would certainly have been available to Cola in circulating engravings.

Furthermore, evidence exists in the form of drawings from the Taccuino di Fermo that the artist visited and sketched scenes from the Loggia of Psyche by Raphael's workshop. Although no drawings by Cola's hand of the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane figures exist, there is no doubt that Cola would have seen the frescoes by Sodoma if he visited the Villa Farnesina.

Additionally, parallels can be found between the nuptial function of the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane in the Villa Farnesina and the Alexander cycle in the salone of the Palazzo Vitelli. The Palazzo Vitelli was constructed to accommodate Alessandro's second wife, Paola Angela, who was from the old and powerful family of the Rossi counts of San Secondo Parmense. Paola Angela was also a distant relative of the Medici. A scene in which the chaste wife of Alexander was represented would have been appropriate imagery for a space meant to celebrate the life of Alessandro Vitelli. Paola could emulate Roxanne with virtuous behaviour in marriage, just as her husband emulated Alexander in war.
The next Alexander episode in the *salone* may represent *The Capture of Bessus* (Fig. 116). This narrative is obscure, and, in fact, there is no artistic precedent in the Renaissance for the story. Bessus was a Persian satrap who killed his relative, King Darius, after the Persians lost at the Battle of Gaugamela to Alexander's troops in 331 BCE. Darius fled the battle with a group of followers, including Bessus, but Bessus plotted against the king and murdered Darius, assuming royal dress and the title Artaxerxes. Alexander pursued Bessus into Bactria, where Bessus was eventually betrayed and handed over to Alexander for punishment. The ancient accounts of this story offer relatively similar versions of the execution of Bessus: Curtius states that Bessus' people tied him up and ripped off the clothes he had assumed from the spoils of Darius. Stripped of his clothes, Bessus was brought to Alexander in irons led by a chain around his neck. Alexander ordered Bessus to be hung from a cross, his ears and nose cut off, and his barbarian allies were to shoot arrows into him. However, his execution was postponed so that he could be killed on the very spot where he had murdered Darius. Arrian, in contrast, writes that when Bessus was captured, he was to be stripped of his clothes and led in a dog-collar to Alexander. This detail, Arrian reports, comes from the account of Ptolemy, as well as Aristobulus. Bessus was brought before a "full meeting" of Alexander and his officers, where Alexander ordered his nose and ears cut off in the Persian manner, which Arrian denounces as a "barbarous custom" (i.e. of the Persians, not the Greeks). Finally, Bessus was taken to the city of Ecbatana "to suffer public execution before his own countrymen, the Medes and the Persians."

The artist of the fresco (or his advisor) must have based the image on one of the above accounts. On the left, a group of soldiers in *all'antica* armour stand under an arbour. Among them

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778 Curtius, 7. 5. 19-43, pp. 159-61.
779 Arrian, 3. 30, p. 198.
781 Ibid.
is Alexander, who is distinguished by a crown over his helmet. Three soldiers lead a bearded man in tattered rags by ropes around his neck to Alexander. This collar specifically recalls the description given by both Curtius and Arrian, though his rags reflect neither account. Overall, the fresco can be read as an allegory of regal justice, which is a theme found throughout the Palazzo Vitelli: for example, in the salone, among the scenes from the life of Julius Caesar there is an image of The Surrender of Vercingetorix, which illustrates the similar story of a vanquished foe being led to Caesar to meet his punishment.

The final Alexander episode in the salone portrays Alexander Encountering Diogenes (Fig. 117). Unlike the previous two images in the cycle, the final fresco is easily identifiable. The story, related by Plutarch, is as follows: Alexander was passing through Corinth and desired to meet the famed Cynic philosopher Diogenes. Upon finding Diogenes in his barrel, Alexander asked if there was anything he could do for the philosopher, and Diogenes replied, "Yes, get out of my sun!" Alexander was so struck by this, and so admired the haughtiness and grandeur of the man who had nothing but scorn for him, that he said to his companions: "If I was not Alexander, I would be Diogenes."\(^{782}\) The artist depicts the young, armed Alexander standing before Diogenes with his hand extended to offer the philosopher anything he might wish. Two companions accompany the king, one leading a horse. Meanwhile, the elderly, bearded Diogenes sits on the threshold of the doorway to the barrel where he lives.

In contrast to The Capture of Bessus, Alexander Encountering Diogenes is not a rare scene in Renaissance art.\(^{783}\) The story of Diogenes was known in the Renaissance, and a number of representations of the tale survive, particularly in the medium of maiolica pottery.\(^{784}\) Three examples alone are found in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The

\(^{784}\) However, Paul Schubring identifies the subject of Alexander encountering Diogenes as a side painting from a fifteenth-century cassone chest by the Paris Master. See Schubring *Cassoni:*

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first, no. 1673-1855, depicts a figure with long hair and feminine robes, with a dragon-crested helmet and a lance, standing before a nude Diogenes, who leans against his barrel (Fig. 118). Two groups of mounted soldiers attend the oddly feminized figure of Alexander. In this representation, Alexander has acquired the lance and long robes of Athena, rather than his usual sword and all'antica armour. The artist seems to have adopted the androgynous qualities of the Alexander-Athena type from the Cyriac-style of representation, and gone even further by including the lance and long robes of Athena. Nevertheless, the barrel and the naked philosopher firmly identify the subject as Alexander Encountering Diogenes.785

The second example in the Victoria and Albert Museum (no. C.27-1943) has been attributed to the hand of Giudo Durantino, a maiolica master working in Urbino, and dated to about 1540 (Fig. 119). The saucer on low feet shows Alexander the Great on horseback with a foot soldier and other companions. They approach the naked philosopher, who is sitting outside his barrel and pointing to an open book (indicating his role as a philosopher). The episode is set in a mountainous, fluvial landscape. A coat-of-arms, which is suspended from a tree, contains a tree growing from three flaming balls on a blue ground with the initials "RS"—presumably the heraldry of the original owner of the saucer. The representation of Alexander is particularly unusual, as he is shown with a beard. Alexander, who died young, was known for his beardless appearance, and he was not portrayed in classical art with a beard. Indeed, Plutarch specifically records an anecdote that highlights the reason why Alexander was beardless. According to Plutarch, before a battle, one of Alexander's generals asked him if there were any further preparations to be made. Alexander responded, "Nothing…except to have the Macedonians' beards!" When the general expressed his surprise, Alexander stated, "Don't you know that in


battles there is nothing handier to grasp than a beard?" The bearded figure of the Macedonian king on the maiolica dish could reflect the attribute of an ancient philosopher, and allude to Alexander's association with both Aristotle and Diogenes.

The final example at the Victoria and Albert Museum (no. 8916-1863, Soulages Collection) represents Alexander and his soldier-companions approaching, on foot, the naked philosopher, who is, once again, sitting by his barrel and pointing to a tome on the ground (Fig. 120). As in the previous example, a coat-of-arms hangs suspended from a tree branch above the figures. A banderole ribbon floats around the shield, with the following inscription: "SAPIES DOMINABITUR ASTRIS [The wise man will be dominated by Fate]." On the reverse of the plate, an inscription specifically identifies the story as "Alesandro magnio quand mova innanze…allo Diogine [Alexander the Great when he went before Diogenes]." This dish has been tentatively attributed to the workshop of Ludovico and Angelo Picchi, two brothers who worked in Castel Durante (near Urbino) in the mid-sixteenth century.

A fourth extant maiolica dish portraying Alexander Encountering Diogenes was sold at Asta Sotheby's in Florence on 17 October 1969 (Fig. 121). The dish was painted by Orazio Fontana in 1545, as an inscription on the barrel reveals. Fontana was the son of Guido Durantino, the Urbino pottery painter responsible for the first dish discussed above. He would have been familiar with the story of Diogenes from the example created by his father a few years earlier. The dish by Fontana portrays Alexander and his companions on horseback, approaching the philosopher seated on a rock outside his barrel. Here, Diogenes points to a page in an open book with a stick. An inscription on the reverse confirms the subject: "DIOGINO ET ALISANDRO MAGNIO."

Interestingly, beside Diogenes, the artist portrays a plucked chicken. This detail alludes to the story of the philosopher's response to Plato's definition of a man as a featherless biped.

According to the ancient biographer Diogenes Laërtius, the philosopher brought a plucked chicken to Plato's Academy and announced, "Behold! Here is Plato's man!" In 2011, this dish once again came up for sale at Christie's, London.

Judging from the number of surviving maiolica dishes that portray Alexander meeting Diogenes, it was a popular subject with maiolica and print artists in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Indeed, the Mannerist painter and printmaker Ugo da Carpi printed a chiaroscuro woodcut after a design by Parmigianino, with whom he may have collaborated (Fig. 122). The woodcut, dated to the mid-1520s, survives in examples at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. While the maiolica examples represent the story of Alexander encountering Diogenes, the woodcut print instead portrays a monumental figure of the philosopher swathed in swirling drapery. Resting on a staff, Diogenes gazes at a pile of open books. In the background, there is a chicken, which Fontana seems to have copied for his dish. Moreover, Raphael himself painted the figure of Diogenes sprawled across the steps of The School of Athens in 1509 (Fig. 123). While the specific pose of Diogenes may not have been copied on the maiolica and woodcut examples, the subject of Diogenes had certainly spread after Raphael's fresco.

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790 In fact, another extant maiolica dish with the story of Alexander encountering Diogenes is found in the collection of the Museo Classense in Ravenna. This dish, dating to the 1550s, and an inscription indicates that it was made in Forli. See the entry in *Ceramiche dale Collezioni del Museo Nazionale di Ravenna*, eds. Francesco Zurli and Anna Maria Ianucci (Bologna: University Press Bologna, 1982), cat. 16, p. 69.

791 Jacopo Caraglio also executed an engraving representing Diogenes and his chicken, which seems to have been created after a drawing by Parmigianino. The British Museum holds a copy of
Although the literary source for the representation of Alexander Encountering Diogenes in the Palazzo Vitelli may be Plutarch's account of the life of Alexander, it is equally possible that the source used by Cola dell'Amatrice, as well as the artists of the maiolica examples, was the 1480 Italian translation from the Greek of the Vitae et sententiae philosophorum by the third-century CE author Diogenes Laërtius. A Latin translation of 1424-33 produced by Ambrogio Traversari in Florence had already circulated around Italy during the previous century, and numerous Latin and Italian versions were issued in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Cola could have read either version of the Vitae et sententiae philosophorum. Based on the inscriptions in the surviving sketchbook of the artist, the Taccuino di Fermo, Cola was literate in Italian and had some Latin, as he frequently included descriptions of his sketches in one language or the other. Most likely, he would have read an Italian version of Vitae et sententiae philosophorum.

Alexander Encountering Diogenes is the final episode in the salone of the Palazzo Vitelli. However, Cola dell'Amatrice and his assistants painted a second fresco cycle representing further scenes from the life of Alexander for Alessandro Vitelli. Indeed, the second cycle covers the entirety of a small room adjacent to the salone on the southern side. This small room was part of a later phase of reconstruction, obtained by the enlargement of the south wing of the palace in 1543-44. The decoration took place the following year.

The second cycle of Alexander episodes expands on the martial theme in the salone, because the smaller room portrays, almost exclusively, battle scenes. Furthermore, the second cycle lacks the allegorical figures in monochrome that highlight the other qualities of Alexander,
such as his wisdom. The scholar Adriano Ghisetti Giavarina suggested that this second room functioned as a personal studiolo for Alessandro Vitelli. Because of the small scale of the room, and the specific imagery focusing solely on the eponymous hero of antiquity, Ghisetti Giavarina's proposal is a likely possibility.

The first episode in the studiolo represents The Taming of Bucephalus, though, unfortunately, most of the fresco has been lost (Figs. 124-125). The small remaining section shows a young armed Alexander leading the rearing horse away from the sun. If we recall from Chapter Three, according to the story, a horse seller came to the court of King Philip, Alexander's father, but warned the king against one particular untamed horse. Alexander, who realized the horse feared its shadow, turned the horse away from the sun and was able to tame the horse, which he named Bucephalus. While the Villa Farnesina version of the same subject includes the figures of King Philip and his court amidst a backdrop of ancient Roman monuments, because of the fragmentary nature of the Palazzo Vitelli version, it is difficult to determine whether or not Cola originally included similar figures.

What is notable about the Palazzo Vitelli image is how the artist represents Bucephalus: the horse has the horn of a unicorn. In the Middle Ages, Bucephalus was traditionally represented as a man-eating hell-horse. He was frequently given either the horn of a unicorn, or two ram's horns, such as in The Youth of Alexander tapestry panel designed by Pasquier Grenier of Tournai (c. 1460). In addition, the late medieval manuscript discussed in Chapter Three, the Roman d'Alexandre MS Bodley 264, contains a small painting with an image of a horned Bucephalus, so ferocious that the beast is kept in a cage, along with a skeleton of an unfortunate victim.

Such images of a horned Bucephalus were known in Italy. In his De Politia Litteraria, Angelo Decembrio criticized the visual representations of Bucephalus, writing that Northern

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European tapestry designers, "represent Bucephalus, Alexander's horse, not with the jaws of an ox, as Curtius describes him and as his very name in Greek makes clear, but rather some hell-horse of Pluto's or Charon's, or like Jason's fettered fire-breathing bulls."\textsuperscript{796} The artist of the Taming of Bucephalus in the Villa Farnesina, perhaps on the suggestion of Raphael, portrays the horse naturalistically, while Cola, in contrast, includes the older motif in the horns. However, there is another more subtle allusion for the unicorn horn of the Palazzo Vitelli. One of the imprese of the Farnese family was a unicorn, and this emblem is found throughout the decoration of the Castel Sant'Angelo, which was instigated by Pope Paul III Farnese. At the time of the renovations of the Palazzo Vitelli, Alessandro Vitelli served the Farnese family, and the Alexander cycles in Città di Castello may also glorify the Farnese pope and his eponymous nephew, the cardinal Alessandro. The portrayal of Bucephalus with a horn in a narrative of Alexander the Great was probably intended to link the patron of the Palazzo, Alessandro Vitelli, and his illustrious overlords, the Farnese.

The majority of the frescoes in the studiolo of the Palazzo Vitelli, as I have already mentioned, represent battles from the life of Alexander, including The Siege of Halicarnassus, The Battle of Issus, The Siege of Tyre, The Death of Darius (which includes Alexander's cavalry pursuit of Bessus), The Crossing of the Hydaspes River, and The Defeat of Porus. Overall, the iconography of these episodes is similar, showing all'antica cavalry battles against a landscape of mountains and towns. Vitelli fought in a number of battles in Italy and Hungary as a military commander in the early sixteenth century, and the scenes in the studiolo stress the link between the military careers of Alexander the Great and Vitelli. In themselves, the scenes are not individually notable, with the exception of The Siege of Tyre (Fig. 126).

As the scholars Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella have pointed out, Cola reproduces the Dacian scene thirty-two of the Column of Trajan in *The Siege of Tyre* (Fig. 127).\(^{797}\) While in the service of Cardinal Riario at his palace in Ostia in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Cola had direct contact with the specialist in historical paintings of antique subjects, Jacopo Ripanda.\(^{798}\) Ripanda executed fresco cycles of antique heroes such as Hannibal in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome (1505-06). More importantly, Ripanda had himself lowered in a basket from the top of Trajan's Column to execute a series of accurate drawings of the ancient reliefs. The accuracy of the reproduction of the scene from the Column of Trajan showing soldiers attempting to scale a wall defended by crossbowmen suggests that Cola either copied or owned versions of the drawings by Ripanda. As a patron with *all'antica* interests, Alessandro Vitelli would have appreciated the quotation, not only as an exemplary work of ancient relief sculpture, but also as an exemplary work of ancient art representing a battle. The *Siege of Tyre* is a rare subject in humanistic iconography, as Roberto Guerrini stresses.\(^{799}\) In fact, the episode represents an example of the unvirtuous cruelty that could be found in his character. After a lengthy siege of the Levantine city of Tyre, Alexander ordered the population slaughtered.\(^{800}\) We can only speculate as to why the episode was included in the cycle of frescoes in the room. Surely the patron would not have wanted to include the negative characteristics and deeds of his namesake. Nevertheless, perhaps the episode represented the necessary cruelties that accompany a military career, which the patron personally understood. Vitelli was known for Machiavellian tactics on the battlefield, and in the political scheming in


\(^{798}\) Ibid., p. 576.


\(^{800}\) Diodorus, vol. 8, 17. 46. 2, p. 249; also Curtius 4. 4. 10-11, p. 60.
which he participated following the assassination of Duke Alessandro de' Medici.\textsuperscript{801} After the assassination, Vitelli sacked the palace of Alessandro, and occupied the citadel of Florence in the name of the emperor. In August of 1537, he led imperial troops to defeat enemies of Cosimo de' Medici at Montemurlo. Yet, despite his reputation for cruelty and violence, the decoration of Vitelli’s palace shows a cultured interest in art and literature.

The representation of a town's destruction in The Siege of Tyre also had personal significance for the artist. Cola was hired to rebuild the civic buildings of the town of Amatrice after its destruction at the hands of the Spanish army in 1529. Following the destruction, Charles V gave the town to Alessandro Vitelli, who recalled Cola from Ascoli to rebuild the city. Perhaps, then, this fresco reflects the initial destruction of a town that led to the artist working for the patron to create these images.

Following The Death of Darius, the cycle in the studio\textit{o} progresses to Alexander in the Palace of Darius, which is one of the only episodes in the room that does not depict a battle scene (Fig. 128). The literary source for this image is Diodorus, who describes how Alexander, after entering the imperial Persian city of Susa and finding treasure in the palace, seated himself on the royal throne. When a page noticed Alexander's feet dangling, the page picked up a table and brought it to the king. A eunuch, who observed the event, began to weep because he was troubled by this "reminder of the changes of Fortune." When Alexander asked the eunuch why he was crying, the eunuch replied that he was now the slave of Alexander, whereas once he was the slave of Darius. He was most grieved, however, that an object held in honour by Darius had now become a piece of ignoble furniture. Alexander responded that he had unintentionally committed an arrogant act and ordered the page to remove the table. However, Philotas, one of the generals of Alexander, begged to differ: "But this was not insolence, for the action was not commanded by

you, it occurred through the providence and design of a good spirit.” In response, Alexander took the remark for an omen, and ordered the table to be left at the foot of the throne. 802

The artist depicts the armed Alexander enthroned under a canopy on the left, and surrounded by his Macedonian guard. A page brings a small table for Alexander to set his feet upon. On the right of the scene, servants carry large baskets bursting with treasure to the king. In the background, an archway overlooks a landscape vista. The palace is not decorated with exotic-style motifs. Rather, there are Ionic columns in the classical tradition. Furthermore, the artist includes a tiled floor composed of orthogonal lines. This subject, like The Siege of Tyre, is rare in Renaissance art, and there are no precedents that Cola would have been able to consult. The appearance of a scene without artistic precedents reveals that the artist and patron are interested in the representation of the more obscure stories from the life of Alexander the Great.

In the previous episodes, Alexander's virtuous behavior towards the family of Darius is extolled. In Alexander in the Palace of Darius, on the other hand, Guerrini suggests it is not a celebration of virtue that is portrayed, but instead an instability hanging over the "regal condition." 803 In fact, the timid and sad expressions of some of the servants suggest an unhappiness that accompanies a change of authority. However, the fresco may also simply function as a reminder of the aftermath of war. Following a conquest, the victor takes his spoils. In this case, Alexander sits on the throne of the king of Persia to inspect his new riches. Although the viewer might expect a scene of a triumphal entry into the city rather than this palace narrative, the artist and patron did not choose to illustrate the traditional iconography of a triumph. Perhaps the episode of Alexander in the Palace of Darius reminded the patron of a successful conquest and plunder from his own career as a military leader.

The last episode in the room that I will examine is The Story of Roxanne (Fig. 129), which follows two Indian scenes, The Crossing of the Hydaspes River and The Defeat of Porus.

Given the fame of Raphael's composition of the *Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne* as circulated by Caraglio's engraving, it is odd that Cola does not adopt Raphael's composition. Rather, Cola takes a different approach as he depicts the events preceding the marriage, rather than the marriage itself. He portrays the capture of the Sogdian Rock by Alexander, a story found in the ancient account of Arrian, and, additionally, in the work of Strabo.\(^804\) The Rock was defended by Oxyartes, a mountainous chieftain, who refused to submit to Alexander. He chose the impregnable Sogdian Rock as a refuge for his family. Alexander proclaimed that he would grant a prize of twelve talents—an extremely large sum of money—to the first man to scale the Rock, which spurred his men to climb it. Under the cover of darkness, men began to ascend, and, as dawn broke, the summit of the Rock belonged to the Macedonians because the sight of the Macedonians so shocked the natives that they surrendered. Many women and children were taken prisoner, including the wife and daughters of Oxyartes. One of the daughters was Roxanne, with whom Alexander fell in love at first sight. Alexander refused to force Roxanne, though she was his captive, and he condescended to marry her—an act for which Arrian has "more praise than blame".\(^805\)

Cola dell'Amatrice portrays the Rock not as a mountainous outcrop as the ancient accounts describe, but rather as a tower, more in line with Renaissance ideas of a "rocca", such as the fortifications designed by Francesco Giorgio Martini for Federico da Montefeltro in the Marche. Indeed, having worked in the Marche region for most of his career, Cola would have been familiar with those structures. In the foreground of the fresco, running right to left, Alexander and his Macedonians approach a group of men who gesture at the height of the Rock/Tower. In the background, the narrative runs in the opposite direction (left to right) as the Macedonian cavalry lead an assault against the Tower, from which three women emerge from an

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\(^803\) Guerrini in *La Pinacoteca di Città di Castello: I Dipinti* (1987), p. 120.
\(^805\) Arrian, 4. 20, p. 235.
open door. There is no representation of the wedding of Alexander and Roxanne, nor are the rock-climbing soldiers from the account of Arrian included. Nevertheless, the viewer would have understood the tradition of the story, which culminated in the wedding. As with the women of the family of Darius, Alexander preserved the honour and chastity of the women in the narrative by choosing to marry, rather than to rape, the beautiful Roxanne.

Guerrini posits that the scene relates to the theme of conjugal love and family virtue that is found in other frescoes in the Palazzo Vitelli. Indeed, the palace contains inscriptions specifically related to Vitelli's own marriage. After the second ramp of the stairway leading into the salone is the inscription:

PAOLA DI PARMA E IL CONIUGE/ PER LA PROPRIA TRANQUILITÀ E QUELLA DEI GENITORI/ FECERO ESEGUIRE QUESTI LAVORI/ PERCHÉ NON ANDASSE PERDUTO IL RICORDO DELLA VIRTŪ FAMILIARE. [Paola di Parma and her husband for their own tranquility and that of their parents had these works carried out so that the family virtue would not be lost.]

Paola Angela de Rossi was the second wife of Alessandro Vitelli. Previously, she had been married to his cousin Vitello, who died in 1528. She married Alessandro in 1530/31, and together they had six children. According to the inscription, it was Paola who renovated and decorated the palace to celebrate herself and her family. Her husband, Alessandro, is relegated to the periphery. Vitelli was an illegitimate son, and his wife, on the other hand, was related to the Medici, one of the most important families in Italy. Therefore, the inscription may have served to legitimize the space and to legitimize Vitelli. Ironically, Paola Angela was not the meek, submissive Roxanne of Raphael's composition, since she dominated the local politics, and terrorized her family and the local inhabitants. Perhaps a scene of the marriage was not

807 For more on Paola Angela de Rossi, see Isabella Consigli, and Silvia Consighi, Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera: Pinacoteca Comunale (Città di Castello: Petruzzi, 2009), pp. 13-14.
808 Local historian Dino Marinelli has written on many of the legends and local ghost stories surrounding Paola Angela in his Leggende e Tradizioni castellane (Cooperativa L’Altrapagina, 2004).
included in the studiolo because the union of Paola and Alessandro was more political than a love-match, unlike the case of Agostino Chigi and his wife. Furthermore, the studiolo was the private space of the husband, who seems to have preferred imagery strictly celebrating his namesake in battle.

In some ways, the decoration of the studiolo echoes the Sala di Alessandro e Rossane in the Villa Farnesina because both celebrate the life of Alexander the Great, and culminate in his marriage to the most beautiful woman in Asia. However, the episodes in the Palazzo Vitelli almost exclusively represent scenes of war, while the images at the Villa Farnesina instead portray Alexander's noble deeds off the battlefield, namely The Taming of Bucephalus, Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius, and The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. The patron of the Palazzo Vitelli, Alessandro Vitelli, was a successful military commander, and this can account for the focus on martial narratives in the decoration of the building. Agostino Chigi, on the other hand, was a merchant-banker and he preferred more civilian scenes from the life of Alexander. Similarly, the decoration of the Sala Paolina in the Castel Sant'Angelo reflects the patron's identity as pope and the need for appropriate imagery evoking metaphors with the Church. The Sala Paolina focuses predominantly on scholarly and religious episodes of Alexander, such as Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius and Alexander Dedicating the Twelve Altars. Moreover, the political climate had changed significantly in the thirty years since the decoration of the Villa Farnesina. The Sack of Rome and the Protestant Reformation had both taken place, and patrons now turned to imagery that would emphasize their political power and martial strength.

Perino del Vaga and Cola dell'Amatrice, unlike many of their artistic predecessors, could demonstrate both their own antiquarian interests and those of their patrons through the execution of images based on the life of Alexander the Great. The fresco cycles in the Castel Sant'Angelo and the Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera present revealing manifestations of an artistic interest in Alexander that was based exclusively on his historical life, as all of the episodes portrayed derive
from the ancient accounts. Thus, by the Mannerist period, it seems that artists moved completely
away from the romance tradition which, as we recall, had continued to inform the work of
Raphael.

Rather than seeking to ally themselves with the exemplary artists of Alexander's court
through the execution of portraits or ekphrastic paintings of the ancient monarch, the Mannerist
artists in these two case studies created visual metaphors linking the patrons with their
eponymous namesake. In contrast to many earlier patrons, both Paul III and Alessandro Vitelli
commissioned multiple works that portrayed Alexander, particularly Paul III and his family, who
ordered a wide range of objects, including medals and a precious casket. Moreover, the
representations of the life of the ancient king in the cycles at the Sala Paolina and the Palazzo
Vitelli alla Cannoniera contain complex and often obscure imagery that both celebrated the
Alexanders and challenged the viewer with multivalent Mannerist themes.
Conclusion

In 1548, one year after the completion of the fresco cycles in the Sala Paolina and the Palazzo Vitelli in Città di Castello, Giorgio Vasari decorated the study of his house in Arezzo with a series of narratives depicting ancient painters, based on stories related by Pliny the Elder in the *Natural History*.809 Included was the story of Apelles presenting a portrait of Campaspe to Alexander the Great (Fig. 130). The narrative shows Alexander armed and surrounded by his generals, gesturing to Campaspe and the artist, whose features resemble those of Vasari. The Renaissance viewer would have understood that following this event, Alexander realized the painter's love for Campaspe, and gave her in marriage to Apelles—an event that highlighted both Alexander's magnanimity and his appreciation of art.

By portraying himself as Apelles within his own house, Vasari proclaimed that he was a literal embodiment of Apelles and thus he also equalled the fame and status of Apelles.810 Moreover, Vasari underscored the importance of the ancient king in artistic history and theory. All of the other narrative frescoes in the room illustrate stories that highlight the *ingegno* of the ancient artists, including Gyges Outlining His Shadow and the Contest Between Zeuxis and Parrhasius.811 For Vasari, the story of Alexander and Apelles represented more than simply a

809 For a detailed study of Vasari's decoration of his homes, see Liana de Girolamo Cheney, *The Homes of Giorgio Vasari* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).
classical subject. The Hellenistic king was the patron—and friend—of the most revered ancient artist, Apelles. Indeed, Vasari placed the fresco below the personification of Charity to underscore the magnanimity of the king toward his court artist. Moreover, he proclaimed in the preface to his Vite that the celebrated Apelles "was greatly honoured and cherished for his genius by Alexander the Great." Evidently it was because the king was so was firmly linked to the historical development of art that Vasari and other Renaissance artists represented episodes from the life of Alexander.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the artistic interest in the life of Alexander the Great during the Italian Renaissance, beginning with examples from the late Middle Ages, tracing the developments and transformations during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and concluding with two fresco cycles from the Mannerist period. My study has focused particularly on Raphael, who created one of the most famous Renaissance images of Alexander in his composition of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne. Furthermore, this thesis has also considered works by members of Raphael's workshop, including Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga, and artists from his circle in Rome, such as Valerio Belli and Sodoma, to examine the similarities and differences between their representations of Alexander, and to explore which literary sources informed the images.

Most significantly, the reinvigorated study of classical texts during the Renaissance contributed to the artistic interest in Alexander. In the late Middle Ages, artists tended to represent Alexander as part of cycles of Worthy Men or in works that represented the legendary episodes from the Romance of Alexander. In contrast, Renaissance authors and artists began to

Also according to Pliny, Zeuxis and Parrhasius held a contest to determine the better artist. Bother depicted a bunch of grapes and those painted by Zeuxis were rendered so well that birds flew down from the sky to peck at them. Zeuxis then asked Parrhasius to draw the curtain away from his painting, and it was revealed that the curtain was, in fact, painted. Zeuxis then proclaimed, "I have deceived the birds, but Parrhasius has deceived me." Pliny the Elder, vol. 9, 35. 36. 65-66, pp. 309-311.

study the ancient accounts of Alexander's life and legend in order to understand the king as a historical figure. By the time of Raphael, artists began to illustrate episodes from the historical biographies of Alexander in the all'antica style on an increasingly monumental scale.

Three overarching themes have been developed in this thesis. First, the relationships between a number of literary texts and corresponding images have been carefully examined. The literary tradition devoted to Alexander was the predominant means by which information was transmitted to Renaissance audiences about the king's historical life and about the apocryphal legends from the romance tradition. Although humanists based their perceptions of Alexander on the existing literature, they also composed new texts in which his character was discussed, which emerge first as brief anecdotes about his life, such as those in the works of Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo Bruni, but develop into detailed critiques of the ancient authors, as seen in Angelo Decembrio's De Politia Litteraria. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, both the humanist writings and the ancient literature provided Renaissance artists with information about Alexander. Furthermore, artists were influenced by the ancient descriptions of paintings (ekphrases) that featured Alexander, for instance in such texts as Pliny the Elder's Natural History and the writings of the Greek author Lucian. Modern artists consciously competed with their classical predecessors through the recreation of lost paintings described in ancient texts.

The theme of the heritage of ancient artists has also been considered in this thesis. Alexander's court painter Apelles was one of the most famous artists of the classical world, both because of his talent and on account of his close relationship with the Macedonian king. Renaissance artists emulated the famous Apelles through the conscious recreation of his paintings, in particular the Calummy, which was an allegory of slander. To herald a modern artist as "the new Apelles" became a topos in the literature of the period. For example, Jan van Eyck, Mantegna, Botticelli, and Raphael were all hailed as "the new Apelles" for their skill in painting in a classical style. Certainly, by executing ekphrastic works that portrayed Alexander, Raphael and Giulio Romano deliberately encouraged such comparisons. Similarly, Verrocchio and Valerio
Belli both ensured that they would be seen to be emulating the lauded ancient works by Alexander's other court artists when they created portraits of the ancient monarch in sculpture and in the form of medals.

The final and most revealing theme developed in my dissertation stems from the famous relationship between Alexander and his favourite artist Apelles. It follows that if the modern artist could emulate, and thereby partially appropriate the creativity and position of the ancient painter Apelles, then, in an analogous way, the modern patron could take on some of the magnificence of Alexander. Indeed, Alexander was an exemplary figure of authority in the literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the chivalric romances of the Middle Ages, for example, Alexander was presented as a Christianized hero, while in Renaissance texts, he was a learned prince and skilled as a military leader. Renaissance rulers eagerly compared themselves with Alexander because their own education in classical literature, their patronage of the arts, and their engagement in warfare paralleled the education, interests, and deeds of the ancient king. Many of the patrons who ordered images of Alexander had been named after the king at birth, which obviously made the comparison explicit, though this was not always the case. Because Alexander was one of the most famous and successful figures from antiquity, elite patrons desired to ally themselves with the ancient king to acquire his lasting fame.

In Chapter One, I considered the methodological tradition in art history established by Aby Warburg, which provided an important precedent for my study. Moreover, I presented some of the major studies of antique themes and their reception in Renaissance art and literature. I also explained that I would draw upon Jean Seznec's thesis concerning the survival of the pagan gods, since the artistic and literary interest in Alexander survived, uninterrupted, from the classical period into the Renaissance.

In Chapter Two, I surveyed the literary tradition of Alexander, beginning with the ancient accounts of his life. During the Middle Ages, the most widely-read and influential text devoted to the life of Alexander was the Romance of Alexander. Ascribed to Callisthenes, this text recounted
the legendary exploits of Alexander, which often deviated far from the historical truth. Later medieval authors built upon the Romance of Alexander, and the result was a variety of recensions and vernacular translations, though some writers, like Gauthier de Châtillon, also consulted the classical account of Quintus Curtius Rufus. The romance tradition was the most popular vehicle for the perpetuation of the legend of the king during the medieval period, and in the romance stories Alexander was presented as a mythical hero, who embarked on fantastic quests, including diving under the ocean in a glass submarine and fighting wildmen at the edge of the world. By the early Renaissance, however, the humanist drive to consult the original ancient documents resulted in a re-evaluation of Alexander. No longer did authors and scholars base their reception of Alexander on his mythical deeds in the romances. Rather, humanists read and translated most of the principle ancient accounts, particularly those by Plutarch and Curtius.

Furthermore, by the Renaissance, some of the earliest, detailed literature devoted to Alexander began to emerge. The events surrounding the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 had an impact on this development, since Alexander became a figurehead of the re-conquest of the eastern Mediterranean in papal rhetoric. Alexander also featured prominently in De Politia Litteraria by Angelo Decembrio, a text dedicated to the achievement of a perfect writing style. Within this treatise on polished writing, Decembrio critically examined the account of Curtius in a dialogue set at the humanist court of Leonello d'Este of Ferrara. The protagonists in Decembrio's dialogue explain that Alexander, though a model of humanist learning, was fundamentally flawed because of his ambition and his political motives for marriage. Some fifty years later, Baldassare Castiglione, in his Il Cortegiano, considered the character of Alexander in a similar dialogue format. However, Castiglione presented Alexander as a model of virtuous behavior for courtiers to follow, especially because of his treatment of captive women and his appreciation of art.

The third chapter explored the relationship between text and image in early Renaissance conceptions of Alexander within the humanist traditions of uomini famosi and the Trionfi of...
Petrarch. Because no ancient paintings or sculptures of the king survived, literary accounts of Alexander informed the visual representations during this period. In order to examine the precedents for early Renaissance representations of Alexander, I introduced a late Gothic manuscript, MS Bodley 264, which was an example of the popular conception of the king, derived from the romance tradition. The manuscript opens with illuminated scenes from his youth, including the *Taming of Bucephalus*, which reveal important differences between the romance stories and the historical life of Alexander.

The concept of a chivalric hero as an exemplar of secular leadership is central to the late medieval theme of *uomini famosi*. The Worthy Men cycle at the Castello della Manta portrays Alexander as one of the three worthy men from the ancient world with the intention that the viewer would model themselves after his noble deeds and character. The cycle was based on *Le Chevalier Errant*, a romance that was part of a tradition of French chivalric prose that included the *Roman d'Alexandre*. Members of the court of Manta would have understood the intimate connection between the text and image, particularly because *Le Chevalier Errant* included portraits of the Worthy Men that inspired the artist of the fresco. The frescoes at Manta represent one of the earliest extant cycles of the theme of Worthy Men in Italy, and, moreover, include one of the earliest monumental images of Alexander from the Renaissance.

The elite patrons who ordered humanist cycles of Worthy Men to decorate their palaces in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries also collected luxury tapestries that illustrated episodes from the life of Alexander. The most famous tapestry design representing Alexander was created by Pasquier Grenier around the year 1459 for the Duke of Burgundy. Italian patrons, including the Duke of Milan and Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, owned tapestry sets that portrayed the ancient king, though their hangings no longer survive. One surviving pair of Alexander tapestries, owned by Andrea Doria of Genoa in the sixteenth century, features scenes from the romance stories. The presence of such hangings in collections of sophisticated Italian patrons demonstrates the variety of ways that viewers perceived Alexander in the Renaissance.
Cassoni were the final group of objects that I addressed in Chapter Three. These chests were expensive and decorative furnishings commissioned to celebrate marriages, which often included stories from the Old Testament, mythology or classical history. The narratives seem to have been intended to remind newlyweds of the virtuous behavior required in marriage. Artists portrayed Alexander on cassoni in two manners, in battle or in triumph. The Triumph of Alexander seems to have been the more popular representation. As I have demonstrated, the subject did not derive from a classical account of Alexander's life or a medieval romance. Rather, the iconography of The Triumph of Alexander was based on the literary tradition of Petrarch's Trionfi, a very well known allegorical poem. Such triumphal representations typically depict Alexander enthroned on a processional cart, amidst a parade of his soldiers, statues of gods (or allegories), and often accompanied by a group of women from the family of Darius. According to the ancient authors, Alexander encountered these women after he defeated Darius at the Battle of Issus, and he treated them as members of his own royal family. The story became an allegory of Alexander's chastity and, in the context of cassoni, the story was shown to emphasize the virtue of chastity in marriage. This association between Alexander and marriage, first developed in the imagery on cassoni, was developed much further in the composition of The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne by Raphael, as discussed in the thesis.

Chapter Four offered insight into the artistic interest in portraits of Alexander during the Renaissance, and the association between modern artists and his three court artists, Lysippus, Pyrgoteles, and Apelles. Descriptions of ancient portraits of Alexander were found in Pliny the Elder's Natural History and other sources, and coins and gems provided further sources of inspiration for Renaissance artists. One gem, described by the antiquarian Cyriac of Ancona, was particularly influential, though it actually portrayed the goddess Athena, not Alexander the Great. Nevertheless, this gem set the standard for representations of Alexander: bust-length, in profile, with curling hair under a crested helmet, beardless, and youthful. Based on surviving copies, Verrocchio rendered a similar presentation of Alexander in his bronze relief for King Matthias
Corvinus of Hungary, as did Valerio Belli and Giulio Romano in their portraits of the ancient king.

The three artists who received particular focus in Chapter Four—Verrocchio, Valerio Belli, and Giulio Romano—were all compared with ancient artists in the vernacular literature. Although comparisons of this kind were common in the literature of the day, the portraits of Alexander by these three modern artists helped strengthen associations with the court artists of the Macedonian king. Giulio Romano had a profound affinity with the painter Apelles. He executed at least two portraits of Alexander, in addition to several narratives from the life of the king in the Palazzo del Té for Federico Gonzaga. Furthermore, Federico cultivated a close relationship with the artist that paralleled the bond between Alexander and Apelles, and in speeches the Duke declared Giulio to be “most outstanding” among modern artists, because he embraced the most excellent techniques and colours in painting, as Apelles had at Alexander's court.

I continued the comparison between modern and ancient artists in Chapter Five, which traced Raphael's interest in Alexander through the drawings that he executed over the course of his brief career. The most famous of these was the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne, yet already as a teenager he may have executed a drawing of Alexander the Great Descending to the Bottom of the Sea in a Glass Diving Bell, based on the Romance of Alexander. Not only does this drawing demonstrate a lingering interest in the romance tradition, but it is also the earliest drawing possibly by Raphael's hand that portrays the ancient king. In subsequent years, Raphael did not return to the romance tradition for inspiration, but instead he consulted ancient literature. His final and most famous design of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne is, in fact, based on the ekphrasis of Lucian, which describes a painting by the ancient artist Aëtion. Through his faithful recreation of the work, Raphael invited comparisons with the ancient painter, and, indeed,
Ludovico Dolce proclaimed that Raphael had depicted the events better than the ancient writes had described them.813

Raphael did not realize the design of the Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne as a painting, however. Sodoma, who worked within the circle of Raphael, adapted the composition for a fresco at the Villa Farnesina to celebrate the marriage of Agostino Chigi. In fact, a total of four scenes from the life of Alexander decorated the bedroom at the villa, though the most prominent episodes, The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne and Alexander and the Family of Darius, underscored the theme of marriage. The latter presented the king as a model of chastity. In contrast, the nuptial narrative celebrated the union of Alexander and his wife, which mirrored the celebration of the patron's own wedding. Sodoma did not copy Raphael's composition exactly in his Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne fresco since he added details, including an illusionistic landscape and three handmaids who may function as allegories of Alexander's empire. The Taming of Bucephalus expanded on the layers of meaning in the original story through the inclusion of references to the city of Rome in the background (i.e. the she-wolf and the Colosseum), which link Alexander with Rome, where the Villa Farnesina is, of course, located.

Patronage played a key role in the case studies examined in Chapter Six. Pope Paul III, born Alessandro Farnese, ordered the decoration of a suite of rooms in the Castel Sant'Angelo. Here, Perino del Vaga, another pupil of Raphael, and his workshop executed a cycle of scenes from the life of Alexander in the Sala Paolina. As with Raphael before him, Perino based his paintings on the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander, including several obscure stories related by Quintus Curtius Rufus. One episode in the Sala Paolina deliberately competed with the work of Raphael, since Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius represented the same story that Raphael had designed for the Stanza della Segnatura, though

Perino updated the style and format. Moreover, the same episode also competed with another pupil of Raphael, Giulio Romano, who executed his own version of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius at the Palazzo del Tè in Mantua a few years before.

On the vault of the Sala Paolina, further scenes from the life of the Macedonian king decorated the room, and underscored the message that the patron, Paul III, was a new Alexander. Indeed, even as a young man, Farnese called himself an "Alexander Romanus." After the death of Paul III, his family continued to commission works representing the ancient king, including a set of tapestries, and a carved rock crystal casket, the Cassetta Farnese.

An analogous example from a different palace provided further evidence of a patron's personal artistic interest in Alexander. At the same time that Perino executed the Sala Paolina frescoes, Cola dell'Amatrice and his workshop painted two cycles that depict scenes from the life of Alexander at the Palazzo Vitelli all Cannoniera in Città di Castello. The patron, Alessandro Vitelli, was a mercenary commander who wanted to emphasize the connection to his ancient namesake, and thus the subjects of the frescoes in the Palazzo Vitelli reflected his profession. Indeed, almost all of the representations of Alexander involved battle scenes, or the repercussions of war. Cola, like Perino, based the paintings on the ancient accounts of the life of Alexander, and he, too, included narratives with no visual precedents, such as The Capture of Bessus and The Siege of Tyre. The latter example represented an unflattering event in which Alexander besieged a town, and then massacred all of the inhabitants, which could relate to Vitelli's personal experience on the battlefield. However, Cola used the scene as an opportunity to display his antiquarian interests and his artistic education in Rome, since he recreated a relief from the Column of Trajan in painted form. In addition, through the all'antica style and historical subject matter, the patron could demonstrate his own learning and classical tastes.

If we consider the patrons who commissioned images of Alexander, a specific social group seems to emerge. Military commanders, such as Matthias Corvinus, Federico Gonzaga, and Alessandro Vitelli, had a vested interest in Alexander, since the ancient king represented a model
of authority and success that modern commanders sought to emulate. Other patrons who sought to own images of Alexander included Pope Paul III, who was involved in the politics of the volatile mid-sixteenth century, a period of warfare between the West and the Ottoman Turks, in addition to escalating tensions between Catholics and Protestants. Agostino Chigi, who did not actively participate in war, nevertheless financed Popes Julius II and Leo X. In fact, he accompanied Julius II on military campaigns in the years 1506 and 1510, and he was sent to Venice in 1511 to buy support for war against the French during the War of the League of Cambray.\footnote{The War of the League of Cambray (1508-16) was one of the major conflicts during the Italian Wars.} An exploration of the personal writings and documents by and dedicated to such patrons might prove fruitful in future research to determine the broader extent of the interest in the ancient king. Their personal interest in Alexander might not only have been artistic, but possibly literary as well.

One important cycle of images of Alexander that would benefit from future comparative study is that found at the Chateau de Fontainebleau. At about the same time that Perino del Vaga and his workshop decorated the Sala Paolina, the Italian artist Francesco Primaticcio executed a cycle of frescoes in the Chambre d'Alexandre at Fontainebleau. Commissioned by François I of France, the Chambre d'Alexandre portrayed narrative episodes from Alexander's life, including Alexander Crowning Roxanne. Primaticcio worked with Giulio Romano in Mantua, and he could have carried ideas from Giulio Romano (or even Raphael) to France. Parallels between the Alexander cycles of Perino del Vaga and Primaticcio have already been noted by Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, who links the political allegory and patron glorification in each of the cycles.\footnote{See Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, Fontainebleau et l'estampe en France au XVIe siècle: iconographie et contradictions, exhib. cat. Chateau-Musée, Ville de Nemours, 1985, especially cats. 22, 119, 120, and 121.} Furthermore, as is the case with many of the compositions by Raphael, some of the images of Alexander at Fontainebleau were disseminated through engraved copies. Because the
Chambre d'Alexandre has been altered and some of the frescoes have been destroyed since the sixteenth century, consulting the extant drawings and engravings would be essential for an analysis of the cycle.

While the artistic interest in the life of Alexander seems to derive from the fact that he was an all'antica subject, as I have shown throughout this thesis, this interest took many forms. Militaristic patrons could ally themselves with Alexander as their most successful symbolic ancestor and figurehead of the conquest of the East. For artists, the relationship between Alexander and Apelles offered an example of an artist who was almost equal in fame to a king, a reputation and appreciation that they sought for themselves. By executing a portrait of Alexander, a modern artist could appropriate the fame of his ancient forbearers. Finally, in the broadest sense, viewers could appreciate the visual adaptation of the literary sources they had read and collected in their libraries.

One of the aims of my study was to demonstrate that the artistic interest in Alexander the Great was neither reborn, nor unique to the period of the Renaissance. However, I have shown that there are elements of this artistic interest that have no precedent in earlier art or literature. For example, Petrarch's Trionfi informed portrayals of Alexander on cassoni and led to the development of a completely new motif that represented the king participating in an allegorical parade that proclaimed his embodiment of the virtue of chastity. A second example is offered by Verrocchio, who, unable to consult the ancient sculptures of Alexander, instead executed a bronze relief of the king that echoed the literary description of an ancient gem incorrectly identified as Athena. His rendering of Alexander as a beardless, slightly androgynous youth in armour was highly influential and became the ubiquitous type for the king, which Raphael and his circle developed into the monumental images found in sixteenth-century fresco cycles. Engravings after Raphael's designs promulgated this new image of Alexander, many of which were adapted to maiolica ceramics. 
Moreover, I have exposed the transformations in the artistic interest in Alexander during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The earliest examples tended to portray the ancient king as an ideal type, dressed in contemporary costume, onto which the sophisticated patron could project himself. By the mid-fifteenth century, cassoni began to display the king as part of a historicized narrative, though these objects continued to illustrate Alexander in the guise of the contemporary elite. The first image to combine a narrative from Alexander's life with the all'antica style was, in fact, not the work of Raphael, but rather the spalliera panel from the Piccolomini cycle of Worthy Men and Women, now in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham. This painting portrays the relatively static and ideal portrait of a young royal commander in classicizing costume, but, in the background, a profound change in the imagery has occurred: the artist includes the historical encounter of Alexander and the family of Darius based on the story recorded by Curtius. Raphael, however, was the first artist to execute all'antica designs of narratives from the life of Alexander, with the intention of adaptation on a monumental scale, as in the examples of Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer of Darius and The Marriage of Alexander and Roxanne.

Sodoma adapted the most famous of Raphael's compositions as part of a group of four narrative frescoes at the Villa Farnesina. This mural group constitutes the very first cycle of frescoes devoted to the life of Alexander during the Renaissance, and, indeed, perhaps even in the history of art. Subsequent cycles in the Mannerist period emphasized particular qualities or virtues of Alexander through the depiction of stories from the ancient accounts that were read as metaphors, such as The Clemency of Alexander by Giulio Romano in the Palazzo del Té. The portrayal of complex and obscure stories reveals a dedicated interest in restoring a historical
accuracy to the king because artists and their advisors had to directly consult the ancient sources.816

Most importantly, this artistic interest in Alexander the Great could not have occurred at any other moment in history. While Alexander had been a model for kings and rulers long before the Renaissance, the political climate of the period around the years 1490-1550 offered a fertile new opportunity to juxtapose Alexander's conquest of Persia with the latest desire of the West to retake the Holy Land and defeat the Ottoman Turks. Furthermore, it was at this point in time that modern artists began to self-consciously view themselves not as anonymous craftsmen, but rather as part of a long tradition of highly-skilled and famous artists that extended back to antiquity, when Apelles was so revered by Alexander that the king presented his mistress to the painter as a wife. It can be no coincidence that the flourishing of representations of Alexander took place in Italy at this time in the work of such influential artists as Raphael, Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga.

I hope that my work may set a precedent for re-examining the artistic interest in ancient figures during the Italian Renaissance. By considering a wide variety of artistic forms, my study has elucidated further facets of the complex relationship between text and image in objects that portray all'antica subjects, in particular a historical figure. Moreover, in a broader sense, I hope to have contributed to the ever-changing reception of the classical tradition through my examination of the artistic interest in the most famous ancient king.

816 Erwin Panofsky, of course, argued that the Italian Renaissance was unique among various renascences of ancient culture in the West, because classical forms were finally reunited with the
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classical style. See, for example, Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1960).


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Appendix 1

Known Works Portraying Alexander the Great by artists in Italy, c. 1325-1575:


Cycle of *Uomini Famosi*, c. 1360s-70s, Sala Virorum Illustrium, Carrara Palace, Padua.

Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, lunette frescoes, 1391, Palazzo Datini, Padua.

Cycle of *Uomini Famosi*, late fourteenth century. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (now lost).


Masolino and Assistants, Cycle of *Uomini Famosi*, fresco. Palace of Giordano Orsini, Monte Giordano (now lost).


Apollonio di Giovanni, *Triumph of Darius*, 1450s, *cassone* panel, tempera on wood, 48.5 x 141.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.


Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, called 'Lo Scheggia', *Triumph of Alexander the Great*, *cassone* panel, tempera, silver and gold leaf on panel, 47.9 x 157.4 cm. Formerly collection of Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Merton, London. Failed to sell at Christie's New York, January 30, 2013.


Anonymous, *Alexander defeating Darius and Building Alexandria*, *cassone* panel. Franchetti Collection, Venice (?).


Andrea del Verrocchio, *Alexander the Great* and *Darius*, c. 1480, bronze panels. Commissioned by Lorenzo de'Medici for King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (now lost).

After Andrea del Verrocchio, *Alexander the Great*, 1480-90, marble relief, 55.9 x 36.7 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

After Verrocchio, *Scipio*, late fifteenth century, marble relief, 60 x 38 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

After Verrocchio, *Alexander the Great*, late fifteenth century, stucco cast, 48.3 x 35.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

After Verrocchio, *Warrior*, late fifteenth century or nineteenth century, marble, 41.6 x 30.5 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.


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Unknown artist, Thalestris (obverse), and Alexander (reverse), late fifteenth-century, medal. L. Courajod Collection, Louvre.

Unknown artist, Thalestris (obverse), and Alexander (reverse), late fifteenth-century, medal. G. Dreyfus Collection, Louvre.

Follower of Vittore Carpaccio, *Four Episodes from the Life of Alexander the Great: Alexander taming his horse, Bucephalus; Alexander and Aristotle; Alexander Apprising Soldiers of the Victories of his Father, King Philip of Macedonia; Alexander and his Physician Philip*, c. 1490s, tempera on panel. Sold at Sotheby's New York, June of 2007.

Griselda Master, *Alexander the Great*, c. 1493-94, panel, 105.4 x 50.8 cm. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham.

Domenico Ghirlandaio (formerly attributed to Pinturicchio), *Magnanimity of Alexander the Great*, c. 1493-1494, tempera on panel, 229.5 x 76 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Pinturicchio, relief portrait of *Alexander the Great*, 1493-1494, stucco. Borgia Apartments, Vatican.

Attributed to Raphael, *Alexander the Great Descending to the Bottom of the Sea in a Glass Diving Bell*, INV 3889 recto, c. 1495, pen and brown wash, with traces of black and red chalk, 209 x 388mm. Fond des Dessins et Miniatures, Musée du Louvre, Paris.


Della Robbia family workshop, *Darius*, c. 1500, glazed terracotta, 76 cm diameter. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.


Florentine artist(?), *Alexander the Great*, INV A318. 41B, early sixteenth century, bronze bust. Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.
Pinturicchio, series of Triumphs including *Alexander the Great*, c. 1509. Detached from the ceiling of the Palazzo Magnifico in Siena, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York since 1814.


Raphael, *Capture of Timoclea(?)*, c. 1508-09, preparatory study, 240 x 351 mm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.


Copy after Raphael, *Alexander the Great and Timoclea(?)*, sixteenth century, pen and ink, 24.4 x 40cm. Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille.


Agostino Busti, called 'Bambaia', *Alexander and Bucephalus (?)*, INV 7260-1860, 1515, marble relief, 41 x 36.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.


Bartolomeo di David(?), *Battle of Granicus (Battle of Issus)*, c. 1517-18, fresco. Villa Farnesina, Rome.


'Master B with the Dice' after Raphael, *Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne*, engraving, 22.4 x 31.6 cm. Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Roma.


Unknown Northern Italian artist, *Alexander the Great*, c. 1524, marble bust. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Monogram of A. L. has been attributed to Aurelio Lombardo or Alfonso Lombardo.


Attributed to Girolamo della Robbia, *Alexander the Great*, c. 1526-1535, glazed terracotta bust. Made for Chateau D'Assier, France, where it was until late 18th century. Sold at Sotheby's, 2009.


Giovanni Francesco Penni, *Timoclea before Alexander*, 1520s(?), pen and light brown wash, heightened with body colour, over black chalk, on buff paper, 240 x 351 mm. Christ Church, Oxford.

Polidoro da Caravaggio, *Family of Darius before Alexander(?)*, 1520s, fresco. Façade of Palazzo Milsei, Rome (now lost). Formed part of the decoration of the Palazzo Milesi, along with the story of Niobe.

Parmigianino, *Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne*, sepia and quill drawing with wash, 1520s, 15.2 x 22.2 cm. Private Collection, Brussels.


Perino del Vaga, *Alexander the Great and Timoclea(?)*, INV 1860.0616.118, c. 1520s-30s, pen and brown ink with grey wash, 26.2 x 42.1 cm. British Museum, London.


Francesco Xanto Avelli, *Marriage of Alexander the Great and Roxanne*, 1534, maiolica dish. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Plate also shows the *Rape of Helen* engraving by Raimondi in the background.


Giulio Romano, *Alexander the Great*, c. 1537, oil on canvas, 142 x 109 cm. Private Collection, London (formerly Turin).


Giorgio Vasari, *Bust of Alexander the Great* (over *Universal Homage to Paul III*), 1546, fresco, Sala dei Cento Giorni, Cancelleria, Rome.


Alessandro Cesati, *Alexander the Great*, obverse portrait of Alexander; reverse triumphal scene, INV. M0148, 1540s, cast bronze, 35 mm diameter. British Museum, London.

Alessandro Cesati, *Alexander the Great*, obverse portrait of Alexander; reverse triumphal scene, INV. 1976-8-4-1, 1540s, cast bronze, 35 mm diameter. British Museum, London.


After Giulio Romano, *Alexander the Great*, after 1550, oil on canvas, 139.7 x 105.7 cm. Seidner Collection, Los Angeles.


Taddeo Zuccaro, *Alexander and Bucephalus*, c. 1553, pen and bistre wash, over black chalk, 376 x 429 mm. Christ Church, Oxford.


Circle of Perino del Vaga, Design for a ceiling decoration, the central panel showing the *Family of Darius before Alexander*, with Venus, Juno, Diana, Mars and the Four Seasons in the pendentives, and landscapes in the lunettes, mid-sixteenth century, black chalk, pen and black ink, grey wash. Sold at Christie's London, July 1999.


Unknown artist, bust of *Alexander the Great*, sixteenth century (base from eighteenth century), bronze, 29.6 cm high. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.


Unknown artist from Deruta, Portrait of Warrior, possibly Alexander the Great, maiolica dish. Museo Nazionale di Ravenna.
Appendix 2

Lucian's *Herodotus or Aëtion*: 817

I wish it were possible to imitate Herodotus's other qualities too. I do not mean all and everyone (this would be too much to pray for) but just one of them—whether the beauty of his diction, the careful arrangement of his words, the aptness of his native Ionic, his extraordinary power of thought, or the countless jewels which he has wrought into a unity beyond hope of imitation. But where you and I and everyone else can imitate him is in what he did with his composition and in the speed with which he became an established man of repute throughout the whole Greek world.

As soon as he sailed from his home in Caria straight for Greece, he bethought himself of the quickest and least troublesome path to fame and a reputation for both himself and his works, now in Athens, now in Corinth or Argos or Lacedaemon in turn, he thought a long and tedious undertaking that would waste much time. The division of his task and the consequent delay in the gradual acquisition of a reputation did not appeal to him, and he formed the plan of winning the hearts of all the Greeks at once somewhere if he could. The great Olympian games were at hand, and Herodotus thought this the opportunity he had been hoping for. He waited for a packed audience to assemble, one containing the most eminent men from all Greece; he appeared in the temple chamber, presenting himself as a competitor for an Olympic honour, not as a spectator; then he recited his *Histories* and so bewitched the audience that his books were called after the Muses, for they too were nine in number.

By this time he was much better known than the Olympic victors themselves. There was no one who had not heard the name of Herodotus—some at Olympia itself, others from those

817 This English translation from the Greek is reproduced from Lucian, "Herodotus or Aëtion," in Lucian, trans. M. D. MacLeod, Loeb Classical Library, 8 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1959; rpt. 1968), vol. 6, pp. 142-51.
who brought the story back from the festival. He had only to appear and he was pointed out:
"That is that Herodotus who wrote the tale of the Persian Wars in Ionic and celebrated our
victories." Such were the fruits of his Histories. In a single meeting he won the universal
approbation of all Greece and his name was proclaimed not indeed just by one herald but in every
city that had sent spectators to the festival.

The lesson was learnt. This was the short-cut to glory. Hippias the sophist was a native of the
place, and he and Prodicus from Ceos and Anaximenes from Chios and Polus from Acragas and
scores of others always gave their recitations in person before the assembled spectators and by
this means soon won reputations.

But why need I mention those old sophists, historians, and chroniclers when there is the
recent story of Aëtion the painter who showed off his picture of The Marriage of Roxana and
Alexander at Olympia? Proxenides, one of the chief judges there at that time, was delighted with
his talent and made Aëtion his son-in-law.

You may well wonder at the quality of his work that induced a chief judge of the games to
give his daughter in marriage to a stranger like Aëtion. The picture is actually in Italy; I have seen
it myself and can describe it to you. The scene is a very beautiful chamber, and in it there is a
bridal couch with Roxana, a very lovely maiden, sitting upon it, her eyes cast down in modesty,
for Alexander is standing there. There are smiling Cupids: one is standing behind her removing
the veil from her head and showing Roxana to her husband; another like a true servant is taking
the sandal off her foot, already preparing her for bed; a third Cupid has hold of Alexander’s cloak
and is pulling him with all his might towards Roxana. The king himself is holding out a garland
to the maiden and their best man and helper, Hephaestion, is there with a blazing torch in his
hand, leaning on a very handsome youth—I think he is Hymenaeus (his name is not inscribed).
On the other side of the picture are more Cupids playing among Alexander’s armour; two of them
are carrying his spear, pretending to be labourers burdened under a beam; two others are dragging
a third, their king no doubt, on the shield, holding it by the handgrips; another has gone inside the
corslet, which is lying breast-up on the ground—he seems to be lying in ambush to frighten the others when they drag the shield past him.

All this is not needless triviality and a waste of labour. Aëtion is calling attention to Alexander’s other love—War—, implying that in his love of Roxana he did not forget his armour. A further point about the picture itself is that it had a real matrimonial significance of quite a different sort—it courted Proxenides’ daughter for Aëtion! So as a by-product of his *Alexander’s Wedding* he came away with a wife himself and the King for best-man. His reward for his marriage of the imagination was a real-life marriage of his own.

Herodotus then (to return to him) thought the Olympic festival a suitable shop-window for showing the Greeks such a wonderful historian of the Greek victories as himself. As for me—and in the name of the God of Friendship do not think me mad or that I am comparing my works to his, bless him—I declare that my case and his are alike. When I first came to live in Macedonia, I wondered what should be policy. My dearest wish was to become known to you all and to show off my works to as many in Macedonia as I could; but to go round visiting each city in person at that time of the year seemed an arduous undertaking, whereas I thought that if I took the occasion of this present festival of your nation and made my appearance and gave my lecture then, my prayers must surely be answered.

Here you are then gathered together, the cream of every city, the very epitome of all Macedonia, in the country’s finest city, so different, thank goodness, from Pisa with its lack of space, its tents and huts, its stifling heat; nor is my audience a vulgar mob more keen on seeing athletics, most of them thinking Herodotus of secondary importance. No, there are the finest orators, historians, and rhetoricians—no small matter indeed that my arena should not seem far inferior to Olympia. Compare me with Polydamas, Glaucus, and Milo, and I know that you will judge me imprudent. But remember them less and strip me and look at me as I am, and then perhaps you will not find me altogether deserving of the whip. My arena being what it is, I should not find even this judgment unsatisfactory.
Figures

23. Intaglio of Athena, original gem on left, imprint on right, late first century BCE, rock crystal, signed by Eutyches, 37.2 x 29.0 x 14 mm. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.
25. After Andrea del Verrocchio, *Alexander the Great*, 1480-90, marble relief, 55.9 x 36.7 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
26. Gold medallion, obverse Olympias; reverse nereid and triton, c. 212, minted at Ephesus. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.
30. After Verrocchio, *Warrior*, late fifteenth century or nineteenth century, marble, 41.6 x 30.5 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.
38. Neisos, Alexander, portrayed as Zeus with his eagle, first century BCE, carnelian, 29 x 30 mm. Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
46. Quintus Curtius Rufus, MS Urb. Lat. 427, *De gestis Alexandri Magni*, detail of Alexander the Great, fol. 2r, c. 1480. Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican.
Attributed to Raphael, *Alexander the Great Descending to the Bottom of the Sea in a Glass Diving Bell*, INV 3889 recto, c. 1495, pen and brown wash, with traces of black and red chalk, 209 x 388 mm. Fond des Dessins et Miniatures, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
53. Pinturicchio, *Penelope and Her Suitors*, c. 1509, detached fresco from Palazzo del Magnifico, Siena, 125.5 x 152 cm. National Gallery, London.
57. Nicholas Poussin, *Continence of Scipio*, c. 1640, oil, 114.5 x 163.5 cm. Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.
60. Raphael, *Capture of Timoclea(?)*, c. 1508-09, preparatory study, 240 x 351 mm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
62. Giovanni Francesco Penni, *Timoclea before Alexander*, 1520s(?), pen and light brown wash, heightened with body colour, over black chalk, on buff paper, 240 x 351 mm. Christ Church, Oxford.
64. Raphael, *Parnassus*, 1509-10, fresco, 5.8 x 8.2 m. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican.
74. Griselda Master, *Alexander the Great*, c. 1493-94, panel, 105.4 x 50.8 cm. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham.
Vault Frescoes:
I: Alexander Before the High Priest of Jerusalem
II: Alexander in the Temple of Jerusalem
III: Alexander Burning his Booty
IV: Alexander Fighting Porus
V: Alexander Building Ships for the Voyage down the Hydaspes River
VI: Alexander Entering Babylon in Triumph

Alexander Monochromes:
VII: Alexander Placing the Books of Homer in the Coffer
VIII: Alexander Untying the Gordian Knot
IX: Alexander Encountering the Family of Darius
X: Alexander Reconciling Hephaestion and Craterus
XI: Alexander Dedicating the Altars

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Paul Tondi:
XVI: Conversion of St. Paul
XVII: St. Paul Preaching to the Jews
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XXXIV: Emperor Hadrian
XXXV: Archangel Michael

89. Plan of frescoes. Sala Paolina, Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome.
105. Manno Sbarri and Giovanni Bernardi da Castel Bolognese, *Cassetta Farnese*, c. 1543-61, silver gilt and rock crystal, 360 x 196 x 183 mm. Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.
Sud: Story of Hannibal
Ovest: Story of Hannibal (1-2), Story of Scipio (3-11)
Nord: Story of Julius Caesar
Est 1: Story of Julius Caesar

Est 2: Story of Alexander
1. Alexander Crossing the Hellespont
2. Battle of Granicus
3. Battle of Issus
4-7: Allegorical Figures (partially lost)
8. Banquet Scene
9. Capture of Bessus
10. Alexander Encountering Diogenes

O1. Taming of Bucephalus
O2. Siege of Halicarnassus
O3: Battle of Issus
O4: Siege of Tyre
N1. Death of Darius
N2. Alexander in the Palace of Darius
E1. Crossing of the Hydaspes River
E2. Defeat of Porus
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