

PTOLEMY AND HIS RIVALS IN HIS HISTORY OF ALEXANDER

Scholarly opinion about Ptolemy Soter's history of Alexander has been far from unanimous. Not long ago Ptolemy was held to stand in the first rank of ancient historians. His history was described as brilliant, rational, straightforward, and exhaustive, while he himself was proclaimed a 'second Thucydides'.¹ In recent years, however, Ptolemy's reputation has seriously declined. His shortcomings, acknowledged also by his admirers, have been stressed and extensively analysed. Fritz Schachermeyr clearly reflected current opinion when he equated a 'version from the *Hauptquartier's* circles' with a lie, a fraud, and an intentional omission.² The purpose of this paper is to examine the recent reassessment of the nature and the aims of Ptolemy's work.

The date and the aim of Ptolemy's history are interrelated in modern research. The assumption is that if we knew when the work was written we should be able to appreciate its purpose. Not too long ago it was largely believed that Ptolemy must have written the history towards the end of his reign, when, presumably, he had time at his disposal. In those years, it was reasoned, there was no political urgency or gain in composing a work on Alexander. The main purpose of Ptolemy's history was to refute or correct certain widely accepted and romantic accounts about Alexander.³

What seems to vitiate this interpretation is its basic premiss: the purpose of the work is deduced from its alleged date and vice versa. From the assumption that Ptolemy wrote the history late in life it is deduced that he had nothing to gain thereby. Hence, it follows that he must have wanted to set the record straight as regards the late king. Similarly, if he planned to criticize other traditions, what better time for doing so than the peaceful period towards the end of his reign? But the thesis is flawed, and not only because of its circular nature. Active politicians did not necessarily write histories and memoirs at the end of their careers; they often produced them early on, fully aware of their political value. Moreover, the story of Alexander did not cease to be of political relevance after 323. It has been shown that friendship with, and service under, the Macedonian king carried weight long after Alexander's death.⁴

¹ Restrictions of space preclude listing all of Ptolemy's 'admirers'. The best known are E. Schwartz, 'Arrianos', *RE* 2 (1895), 1238; F. Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.* IIB, esp. pp. 498–500; E. Kornemann, *Die Alexandergeschichte des Königs Ptolemaios I von Ägypten* (Leipzig, 1935), pp. 170, 208 ff., 260; W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* 2 (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 1–2, 268, 443. For further readings see J. Seibert, *Alexander der Grosse* (Darmstadt, 1972), pp. 19–21. All dates in this paper are B.C.

² *Alexander in Babylon und die Reichsordnung nach seinem Tode* (Wien, 1970), pp. 89 ff.; cf. E. Badian, 'Agis III', *Hermes* 95 (1967), 86.

³ Compare F. Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.* IIB, pp. 499–500; H. Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 15–16; Tarn, 2, pp. 19, 43; L. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (N.Y., 1960), pp. 152, 193, and the bibliography cited in P. Goukowsky, *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre* (336–270 av. J.-C.). I: *Les origines politiques* (Nancy, 1978) (hereafter cited as Goukowsky), p. 338 n. 345.

⁴ H. Montgomery, *Gedanke und Tat* (Lund, 1965), p. 224; J. Seibert, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Ptolemaios' I* (München, 1969), pp. 152–6; esp. R. M. Errington, 'Alexander in the Hellenistic World', in *Alexandre le Grand. Image et réalité* (Fondation Hardt no. 22, Genève, 1976), pp. 137 ff. Cf. Goukowsky, pp. 75 ff.; K. Rosen, 'Politische Ziele in der frühen hellenistischen Geschichtsschreibung', *Hermes* 107 (1979), 462 ff.

Thus an alternative theory was put forward, namely, that Ptolemy wrote his history at the height of the war of the diadochs. Such a context throws light on his seemingly biased treatment of persons who became his rivals after the death of Alexander.⁵ Yet it seems that this interpretation suffers from flaws similar to those of its counterpart. Once again the date of the work is inferred from its apparent character, which is explained, in turn, by the work's time of publication. Still, focusing the attention on what is called 'the bias of Ptolemy' is fairly new and deserves investigation. Hence it may be worth examining once more if, or to what extent, Ptolemy distorted facts to promote his political interests.

E. Badian called to notice the 'mixture of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. . . in his [i.e. Ptolemy's] treatment of character and politics'.⁶ His observation was elaborated in an influential and much quoted study by R. M. Errington which aimed at demonstrating Ptolemy's biased writing through his treatment of his chief rivals in the wars of the successors.⁷ The most serious distortions are said to involve the person of Perdiccas.

When Arrian deals with Alexander's siege of Thebes he stresses the wish of the king for reconciliation as opposed to the unwise stubbornness of the Thebans (*Anabasis* 1. 7). Then, we are informed, Perdiccas attacked the enemy on his own initiative and drew Alexander into battle, which ended catastrophically for the Thebans (*Anab.* 1. 8. 1–2).

Arrian may have shown caution in his description of the events. In his narrative Perdiccas' assault is prefaced by the remark: 'But Ptolemy son of Lagos says. . . ' (1. 8. 1). Diodorus Siculus, on the other hand, suggests that Perdiccas, rather than initiating the hostilities with the Thebans, joined the battle in its midst, and did so under a direct order of the king (17. 12. 3). It was concluded, then, that Ptolemy deliberately changed the course of the battle so that Perdiccas would be made responsible for Thebes' destruction, which shocked the Greek world.⁸

This is the sole instance where Ptolemy is charged with actually lying to his readers concerning Perdiccas' career. Other distortions were traced in Ptolemy's practice of omitting facts which could have enhanced the reputation of Perdiccas. Thus Perdiccas' name was not found in the list of casualties of the battle of Gaugamela. Ptolemy did not mention that Perdiccas was already a *somatophylax* in 330, nor that he was in charge of the siege of a Sogdianian city. He ignored Perdiccas' and his own roles in the notorious Cleitus affair, and he said nothing of Perdiccas' promotion to Hephaestion's high position in 324 or his receiving the royal signet ring from the dying Alexander.⁹ The reason for the above distortions and omissions is not hard to guess. Not long after Alexander's death Perdiccas waged a war against Ptolemy, the satrap

⁵ Pearson (note 3 above), pp. 192–3, was hesitant concerning the traditional dating of Ptolemy's history. E. Badian's review of his book, *Gnomon* 36 (1962), 666, tied in the work with Ptolemy's war with Perdiccas and his taking possession of Alexander's body. In 'Alexander the Great', *CW* 65 (1971), 40, Badian dates the history at the time between the 'snatching' of the body and 308, in the context of Ptolemy's presumable ambition to become Alexander's successor. (See, however, his remarks in *ibid.* p. 38 and in *Alexandre le Grand* [note 4 above], p. 36.) R. M. Errington, 'Bias in Ptolemy's History', *CQ* n.s. 19 (1969), 241, clearly related the work to the war with Perdiccas and dates it to *post* 320.

⁶ *Gnomon*, 36 (1962), 666.

⁷ 'Bias in Ptolemy's History', *CQ* n.s. 19 (1969) (hereafter cited as Errington), 232–42.

⁸ Errington, 237. Cf. Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.* IIB, p. 501; H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* 2 (München, 1926), p. 313; Goukowsky, p. 238 n. 344. Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, p. 22 sees here a typical Ptolemaic description based on 'psychological alternatives' which stresses Perdiccas' impetuosity as against Alexander's hesitation. But Alexander hesitated not at all.

⁹ For all these, with references, see Errington, pp. 236–8 and below. Errington notes another Ptolemaic omission: Perdiccas' command over the siege of Tyre in Alexander's absence (Curtius

of Egypt, and invaded his country. As it happened, Perdikkas was murdered by his officers and Ptolemy's rule was saved. But Perdikkas' invasion exacerbated certain problems which faced Ptolemy in Egypt. The satrap sought recognition as the legitimate lord of the land, that is, as a true successor to Alexander. He also needed Macedonians and Greeks to serve in his army and to populate Alexandria. This provided the background for Ptolemy's biased history of Alexander. It was a work which glorified and flattered Alexander and his army, exaggerated Ptolemy's contribution to the campaign, and spoke ill of, or minimized, the achievements of the opponents of Ptolemy. Ptolemy, in sum, wrote a history of Alexander to be used in the diadochs' war of propaganda.¹⁰

However, a thorough examination of Ptolemy's 'biased account' seems to suggest that the author must have been a master of subtle propaganda, of a propaganda indeed so subtle that its usefulness may be doubted. The account of the siege of Thebes is a case in point. Arrian's narrative leaves no room for doubt. Responsibility for the disaster in Thebes lay with the Thebans themselves, or more specifically, the Theban exiles who returned to the city and their supporters (*Anab.* 1. 7. 1, 11). The massacre of the Theban population was mainly the doing of Alexander's Boeotian allies, who are also made responsible for the decision to destroy the city and to enslave its inhabitants (1. 8. 8; 9. 9–10). Perdikkas' blame, therefore, for the tragic fate of the city was practically negligible.

Moreover, a close examination of the course of the battle in Arrian's narrative shows that Alexander sent in his main force under circumstances which were only indirectly associated with Perdikkas' attack. Perdikkas did, in fact, commence fighting with the assistance of Amyntas, son of Andromenes (1. 8. 1 ff.). To prevent their being cut off Alexander sent in the archers and the Agrianians but still did not involve the *agema* and the *hypaspistai*. Meanwhile, however, Perdikkas was wounded and carried off the field; his role in the affair was over. The rescue force pursued the Thebans, but only after it was pushed back and the Thebans threatened to destroy it did Alexander involve his main army, which defeated the enemy.¹¹ Thus a close examination of the course of the battle considerably reduces Perdikkas' responsibility for its consequences. But it is unlikely that many readers of Ptolemy's history would have paid close attention to such minute details, or concluded from the description of the battle, or the whole work, that Thebes' destruction originated in Perdikkas' charge.

Whatever the date of Ptolemy's history was, not many of Perdikkas' soldiers would have forsaken him or his memory because of his (supposed?) initiative in Thebes. In fact the Macedonians felt no remorse for the fate of the city, while the Greeks held no one but Alexander responsible for its destruction.¹² If Ptolemy lied about Perdikkas'

Rufus 4. 3. 1). The omission, if by Ptolemy, need not be attributed to ill will. Alexander's campaign in Lebanon lasted just ten days, and Arrian 2. 20. 4–5 also omits the name of Craterus, who shared command with Perdikkas. There is no known Ptolemaic bias against Craterus.

¹⁰ See Errington, pp. 241 ff.; E. Badian, *CW* 65 (1971), 38, 40; A. B. Bosworth, 'Arrian and the Alexander Vulgate', in *Alexandre le Grand* (note 4 above), pp. 15–16, 27, 29, 32; idem, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* 1 (Oxford, 1981, hereafter cited as Bosworth, *Commentary*), pp. 23, 25 ff. Compare also M. A. Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno* (Milano, 1977), pp. 44, 52, 56–8, 81–2. Errington in *Alexandre le Grand*, p. 45 seems to retract slightly his earlier position when he states that Ptolemy's work was not a flagrant political pamphlet. He still implies, however, that it was used for propaganda.

¹¹ Arrian 1. 8. 5. The present analysis aims, not at reconstructing the course of the battle (for which see, for example, Bosworth, *Commentary*, pp. 80 ff.), but at dealing with its presentation in Arrian.

¹² See Antigonus' remarks concerning the rebuilding of the city by Cassander: Diod. Sic. 19. 61. 1–3. For the Greeks' reaction see, for example, Ephippus, *F. Gr. Hist.* no. 123, F3, P1 b. 37. 2. 13; Pausanias 9. 7. 2.

role in the attack (and did not record the battle as he remembered it), he did so primarily to exculpate Alexander from the charge of initiating the battle rather than to damage the reputation of his rival. The bias, if any, was pro-Alexander, not anti-Perdiccas.

The rest of the so-called Ptolemaic distortions consist of omission of information that could have contributed to Perdiccas' fame. It has been maintained reasonably that it is impossible to deduce bias from omission when the work is not extant in its entirety.¹³ Alternatively, the omissions can be blamed on Arrian's careless use of the history of Ptolemy, or possibly on his citing a faulty copy of the work. Yet such suggestions seem to offer too easy a solution. It is necessary to discuss in detail whether, in fact, Ptolemy concealed information about Perdiccas' career, and if so, to what end.

Ptolemy is said to have cheated Perdiccas out of glory by omitting his name from the list of officers wounded during the battle of Gaugamela. But the fact is that it is impossible to determine what source Arrian was using in the *Anabasis* 3. 15. 2 where the casualties are mentioned. H. Strasburger suggested the intervention of Arrian or of a source of inferior standing in this passage.¹⁴ Diodorus (17. 61. 3), who mentioned Perdiccas, also remarked that there were other wounded commanders. He did not name them and it is not likely that either he or his source omitted them deliberately. The omission of Perdiccas' name, then, could have been due either to literary considerations, or to a slip of memory, or to the fact that Arrian was using an alternative source.¹⁵

Ptolemy is also blamed for not reporting that Perdiccas had been one of Alexander's *somatophylakes* since at least 330. Yet Arrian, and probably his sources, did not bother to record the occasions for the bestowal of this honorific title, save for two exceptions: the case of Ptolemy himself, who might be expected to report such a fact significant to his career, and of Peucestas, who received the title in remarkable and famous circumstances.¹⁶

Curtius Rufus (7. 6. 19–23) tells of a town of the Memaceni in Sogdiana that refused to surrender to Alexander. The king sent Perdiccas and Meleager to besiege it, went to Cyropolis to complete its capture, rejoined his generals and destroyed the city. Curtius is the only source to record the mission of Perdiccas, and the failure to refer to it in Arrian was attributed to a deliberate omission on the part of Ptolemy.¹⁷

However, a comparison between the versions of Arrian and Curtius suggests that the latter's account (or his source) is not free from flaws. The following is a summary of the parallel passages in both sources:

¹³ N. G. L. Hammond, *Alexander the Great. King, Commander and Statesman* (London, 1981), p. 4. Cf. more generally P. A. Brunt, 'On historical fragments and epitomes', *CQ* n.s. 30 (1980), 476–94. Levi (note 10 above), p. 45 and Goukowsky, p. 141, point to the difficulties of appreciating the nature of Ptolemy's work but go on to analyse its characteristics. The latter scholar argues reasonably against dating Ptolemy's work by its presumed bias (p. 142). Nevertheless, he dates it to the period after Ipsus because of Ptolemy's alleged failure to mention Antigonus' and Lysimachus' achievements under Alexander (p. 143).

¹⁴ Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, p. 35.

¹⁵ Bosworth, *Commentary*, p. 311, suggests that Arrian's source (and perhaps it was Arrian himself?) digressed in 3. 15. 2 to the general list of casualties. If the list was originally located (*apud Callisthenem*?) at the conclusion of the battle description, as it is now placed in Diod. 17. 61. 3 and Curt. 4. 16. 32, Perdiccas' name could have been missed in the process of copying.

¹⁶ Ptolemy as a bodyguard: Arr. 3. 27. 5; Peucestas: Arr. 6. 28. 3–4.

¹⁷ Errington, p. 237.

Arrian

- 4. 2. 2: Alexander sent Craterus to Cyropolis
- 4. 2. 3–4: the king captured Gaza
- 4. 2. 4: Alexander took two more cities
- 4. 2. 5–6: Alexander dispatched cavalry, which surprised fugitives from two other cities
- 4. 3. 1–4: the king captured Cyropolis after penetrating its walls through a dry riverbed; was struck with a stone
- 4. 3. 5: Alexander captured a seventh city
- 4. 3. 6: war with the locals had resumed

Curtius

- 7. 6. 16: Alexander sent Craterus to Cryopolis
- ibid.: the king took another city
- 7. 6. 17–18: the Memaceni revolted and killed Alexander's fifty horse embassy
- 7. 6. 19: Alexander ordered Perdiccas and Meleager to besiege the Memaceni while he joined Craterus
- 7. 6. 20–2: the king destroyed Cyropolis and returned to the Memaceni, where he fought hard and was struck with a stone
- 7. 6. 23: the walls were undermined and the city was taken
- 7. 6. 24: war with the locals had resumed

Since Curtius and Arrian are our only sources for the events, it is difficult to decide whose account is more accurate. A compromise between the versions may be attained if the Memaceni are identified with one of the two cities which according to Arrian (4. 2. 4) were captured after the fall of Gaza.¹⁸ But few details of Curtius' account of the siege of the Memaceni make it likely that the author is dealing with what Arrian records as the battle of Cyropolis. Thus the Memaceni lost their city after 'cuniculo... suffossa moenia' (7. 6. 23), while in Arrian's narrative Cyropolis was captured after its penetration by way of a dry riverbed. Moreover, it was during the siege of Memaceni (Curtius) or Cyropolis (Arrian) that Alexander was hit by a stone. Now both historians agree that Cyropolis was besieged by Craterus and not by Perdiccas and Meleager. The conclusion must be either that Curtius confused the siege of Cyropolis with that of another city which is otherwise unknown, or that Arrian/Ptolemy not only ignored Perdiccas' mission in Sogdiana but also confused the battle of Cyropolis with another operation. I suggest that the first alternative is the more likely. There is even an indirect proof of Arrian's general credibility in describing the events under discussion. The town of Gaza, which is mentioned in his report alone, has been identified with a locality named *Ghazaq* in the vicinity of *Kurkath-Cyropolis*.¹⁹

It is hard to know how Curtius obtained the story of the siege of the Memaceni by Perdiccas and Meleager. It could be that their mission involved the submission of one of the seven Sogdian cities which Arrian chose to allude to only generally in 4. 2. 3–4. 3. 5. If so, the omission of their names indicates not malice but literary considerations. For even if we accept Curtius' version as authentic,²⁰ it is evident that he did not regard the incident as significant, and hence its omission would not have been likely to damage Perdiccas' reputation.

Ptolemy, allegedly, also used the so-called Cleitus affair for the denigration of Perdiccas. Curtius (8. 1. 45–6) says that Ptolemy, Perdiccas, Lysimachus and Leonnatus tried to restrain the raging king before he killed Cleitus. Arrian's account of the affair is full of *legomena*, so that it is difficult to determine the identity of his source. But he gives two, slightly different, versions of the last phases of the quarrel. One has Alexander checked by his companions (4. 8. 8). The other, based on Aristobulus, maintains that Ptolemy took the drunken Cleitus out of the royal tent (4. 8. 9). If the

¹⁸ Gaza is presumably the unnamed city in Curt. 7. 6. 16.

¹⁹ E. Benveniste, 'La ville de Cyreschata', *Journal Asiatique* 234 (1943–5), 165 f.; cf. J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander. A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), p. 122. *Plut. Moral.* 341b is of no help here.

²⁰ Cf. Berve (note 8 above), p. 34; but see Hamilton, *op. cit.*

first version is Ptolemy's – and this cannot really be proven –, then Ptolemy omitted not only Perdiccas' name but also his own. It was suggested that Ptolemy was not proud of his part in the affair and preferred to omit his own name and also play down the role of others.²¹ But why would Ptolemy conceal his part in the incident? In both Arrian's and Curtius' accounts he plays a positive, restraining role in his attempt to prevent the coming catastrophe. Conversely, if Perdiccas' participation in the banquet could have damaged his reputation, why was he not mentioned among those present? It seems that the problem lies not with Perdiccas' real or imaginary role in the affair but with the extant evidence for the episode. Ptolemy's version is lost and it is impossible to determine what it included or lacked. If Ptolemy dealt with the story, it is reasonable to assume that he emphasized the provocative behaviour of Cleitus which led to his doom. That, probably, was the essence of his report and not the absence of Perdiccas' name from his narrative.

The most significant omission concerning Perdiccas' career is said to be found in Arrian's statement (*Anab.* 7. 14. 10) that Alexander did not appoint a new chiliarch of the *hetairoi* cavalry after the death of Hephaestion, so that his friend's name might not be taken from his unit. Diodorus (18. 3. 4) and Plutarch (*Eumenes* 1), among others, state expressly that Perdiccas inherited the office of Hephaestion. Since the incumbent of the office was second in command to the king, it was maintained that Ptolemy concealed the information to undermine Perdiccas' later claim of supremacy. To this may be added the fact that the story of Alexander handing Perdiccas his signet ring on his death-bed is told by, e.g., Diodorus (17. 117. 3), Curtius (10. 5. 4), and Justin (12. 15. 2), but not by Arrian.²²

Not everyone accepted the above reports as authentic. It was argued that Perdiccas was the commander of the cavalry *de facto* but not in name, and the story of the ring has been labelled unhistorical.²³ But the main reason given for the rejection of these traditions was the fact that Arrian does not cite them—a not particularly convincing argument. Arrian's silence is undeniable, and should be accounted for. It was suggested, then, that the blame lay with Ptolemy, who was both Arrian's source and an enemy of the chiliarch.²⁴ Such an assumption, however, calls for at least two additional inferences: (a) that Arrian zealously reproduced the statements and the silences of his main sources; (b) that he ignored other traditions concerning Perdiccas either because of the silence of his sources, or because he was slack in collecting additional information. By themselves, these are not unlikely conjectures. When he chose to, Arrian doubted information about Alexander since it was not written down by his main sources, and his over-reliance on Ptolemy and Aristobulus led him to some errors of judgement.²⁵ But perhaps the omission of Perdiccas' ascent to power in 324/3 should not be attributed to Arrian's usual handling of his sources. Perdiccas became pre-eminent towards the end of Alexander's reign. This period in Alexander's life is

²¹ Errington, pp. 238–9.

²² Berve, p. 316; Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, p. 47; Kornemann (note 1 above), p. 247; Pearson (note 3 above), p. 193; Errington, p. 240; Bosworth, 'The death of Alexander the Great; rumours and propaganda', *CQ* n.s. 21 (1971), 128 n. 7, 132, 134.

²³ W. W. Tarn, 'Alexander's *Hypomnemata* and the World Kingdom', *JHS* 41 (1921), 4 ff.; cf. M. J. Fontana, *La lotta per la successione di Alessandro Magno* (Palermo, 1960), pp. 117, 252 ff. Goukowsky, esp. pp. 117–18, cf. 31–4 accepts Arr. 7. 4. 10 as authentic but on the basis of a questionable distinction between the chiliarch's duties.

²⁴ See note 22 above.

²⁵ See *Anab.* 6. 28. 2; 7. 13. 3; 7. 15. 6 and Bosworth, *Commentary*, p. 30. Compare Bosworth, *ibid.* pp. 33 f. on Arrian's biased attitude towards Alexander, which was adopted from his sources.

recorded in the seventh book of the *Anabasis*, which is somewhat different from the rest of the work.

It seems that Arrian intended Book Seven of the *Anabasis* to be a proper conclusion to the story of Alexander, interwoven with his own reflections on the hero. The narrative, which records just one campaign (7. 15. 1–3), leads the reader to Alexander's unavoidable death, with particular emphasis on Alexander's behaviour and character. Accordingly, the philosophical features of the *Anabasis* are salient and Arrian's intervention in the course of the narrative is highly visible.²⁶ Such an approach called for a change in the use of the sources. Book Seven includes an unusual number of *legomena*, while Ptolemy and Aristobulus are cited only selectively.²⁷ Thus Ptolemy is mentioned three times only in Book Seven as an authority, twice for the purpose of refuting traditions which were not recorded in his work, and a third time to mark a point in his narrative.²⁸ This is, I believe, a valuable indication of how little the book relies on him. Aristobulus, on the other hand, is mentioned sixteen times and is Arrian's authority, *inter alia*, for Alexander's meeting with the Chaldeans, his preparations for the Arabian campaign, the sailing on the Euphrates, the story of the man who sat on Alexander's throne, and many more details.²⁹ Arrian, then, must have relied only sparingly on Ptolemy in Book Seven. The bulk of the narrative appears to come from Aristobulus and the subsidiary sources.

If the analysis of his sources in Book Seven is correct so far, Arrian's silence concerning Perdikkas' prominence should not necessarily be attributed to the vindictiveness of Ptolemy. It is equally possible that Arrian used other sources, such as Aristobulus, who seemed to have no known reason to damage Perdikkas' reputation, but who, nevertheless, did not mention the stories of Perdikkas' inheritance of Hephaestion's chiliarchy or Alexander's ring.³⁰ Arrian's silence, therefore, is a poor indication of any bias on the part of Ptolemy. As far as Perdikkas' ascent is concerned, it may very well reflect Arrian's literary preferences rather than his source's ill will.³¹

So far the present investigation has tried to call into question instances where Ptolemy was said to treat Perdikkas unfairly. But the issue of Ptolemy's anti-Perdiccan

²⁶ For example, 7. 1–3, 12. 5, 13. 4, 27–30. For the characteristics of Book Seven compare Badian, 'A King's notebooks', *HSCP* 72 (1968), 192–4, and especially P. A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia* (University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 86–8.

²⁷ I have counted forty-six cases of Arrian using words and expressions which imply that he was following a source other than Ptolemy and Aristobulus: 7. 1. 2, 1. 3, 1. 5, 2. 1, 2. 3, 2. 4, 3. 2, 12. 5, 13. 1, 13. 2, 13. 6, 14. 1, 14. 2, 14. 3, 14. 4, 14. 5, 14. 6, 14. 7, 14. 8, 15. 4, 15. 5, 17. 2, 18. 6, 20. 1, 20. 2, 20. 4, 20. 5, 24. 4, 25. 1, 26. 1, 26. 3, 27. 1, 27. 2, 27. 3. Not every occurrence of *oratio obliqua* means a subsidiary source; cf. the famous example of Arr. 7. 20. 1 and Strabo 16. 1. 11 (p. 741), both using Aristobulus. Still, the burden of proof rests upon whoever wishes to show the derivation of the majority of the *legomena* in Book Seven from Arrian's main source.

²⁸ *Anab.* 7. 13. 3, 15. 6, 26. 3. The favourable reference to Ptolemy in 7. 15. 3 implies that he was Arrian's source for the campaign against the Uxii (7. 15. 1–3).

²⁹ *Anab.* 7. 13. 3; *F. Gr. Hist.* no. 139, frs. 52–5, 60–1. By way of comparison Book Six of the *Anabasis* includes Ptolemy's fragments nos. 24, 25, 10, 26a, 27 (*F. Gr. Hist.* 138) and Aristobulus' fragments nos. 16, 49a; 50, 51a (*F. Gr. Hist.* 139). The narrative mentions Nearchus five times (6. 2. 3, 13. 4, 13. 5, 24. 2, 24. 3), Onesicritus once (2. 3), and includes expressions which convey the use of subsidiary sources in 6. 11. 1, 11. 3–4, 7–8 (all in the context of Arrian's demonstration of his historiographical pretensions), 22. 8, 26. 1, 28. 1. The contrast with the use of the sources in Book Seven is striking.

³⁰ Levi's attempt (note 10 above), pp. 81–3, to trace Seleucid propaganda in Aristobulus' history lacks sufficient evidence.

³¹ Arrian's silence might even be anchored in historical grounds. Badian, though uncommitted, raised doubts concerning the story of the ring: *HSCP* 72 (1968), 185, 204.

bias must be examined from yet another perspective, namely, its purpose and/or its influence on Ptolemy's readers. For Ptolemy's anti-Perdiccan campaign would have been most effective and necessary when his reign was exposed to a danger from that direction. It is important, then, to discuss briefly the nature of their relationship after the death of Alexander the Great.

Our sources indicate clear signs of dissension between Ptolemy and Perdiccas only in 321, when Antipater and Craterus wished to ally themselves with Ptolemy against Perdiccas, who seemed to have wanted Macedon to himself.³² Earlier, in Babylon, Ptolemy and Perdiccas may have disputed on the way to rule Alexander's empire.³³ But this rift between them, possibly the first – if rift it was –, was soon healed, as proved by Ptolemy's support of the regent Perdiccas against the challenges of Meleager (Curtius 10. 7. 16). Pausanias charges Ptolemy with eliminating Cleomenes, the former ruler of Egypt, because of his ties with Perdiccas (1. 6. 3). But since Pausanias' account is not free from errors or difficulties of interpretation, it is uncertain whether Cleomenes was murdered for his contacts with Perdiccas or for his hold on the treasury and other sources of local power.³⁴ There is also no assurance that Ptolemy's subsequent annexation of Cyrene was done against Perdiccas' express wishes.³⁵ Arrian (*Succ.* 16–19) and Diodorus (18. 19–21), who deal extensively with the conquest of Cyrene, say nothing of Perdiccas' resistance to Ptolemy's policy. The first overt breach in their relationship followed the 'snatching' of the body of Alexander, which took place at the beginning of 321.³⁶ Ptolemy's growing power and independence, the bitter fighting in Asia Minor, and the conflict with Antipater, directed Perdiccas' steps toward Egypt. At the beginning of 320 Perdiccas invaded the country and met his death near Memphis by the hands of his lieutenants. No source reports that the soldiers of

³² Diod. 18. 25. 4. Diod. 18. 14. 1–2 is confused chronologically. Ptolemy's hostility towards Perdiccas is deduced from later events, and the negotiations with Antipater are antedated to the period preceding the Cyrenian campaign: J. Seibert, *Historische Beiträge zu den dynastischen Verbindungen in hellenistischer Zeit* (Historia Suppl. 10, Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 17; P. Briant, *Antigone le Borgne* (Paris, 1973), p. 183, n. 2. I follow here the chronology of E. Manni, 'Tre note di cronologia ellenistica', *RAL* ser. 8, 4 (1949), 53 ff. in spite of Briant's objections to his reconstruction (pp. 218 ff.).

³³ The main source for the deliberations in Babylon is Curtius 10. 6 ff. They were recently analysed by F. Schachermeyr (note 2 above), esp. pp. 134 ff.; R. M. Errington, 'From Babylon to Triparadeisos', *JHS* 90 (1970), 46–56; Bosworth, *CQ* n.s. 21 (1971), 112 f.; Briant, esp. pp. 235 ff.; Goukowsky, pp. 75–84, 193–4.

³⁴ Pausanias (1. 6. 2) makes Ptolemy responsible for the division of the empire at Arrhidaeus' expense. Yet he neglects to mention that the Macedonians, who were persuaded by Ptolemy to hand over Alexander's body to him (ibid. 3), were led by Arrhidaeus, who should have known better. Pausanias' narrative also conveys the distinct, but misleading, impression that Perdiccas had been first pushed back from Egypt and then murdered: 'ἐξωσθεῖς δὲ Αἰγύπτου... ἀπέθανεν ὑπὸ τῶν σωματοφυλάκων' (1. 6. 3). The Egyptian treasury: Diod. 18. 14. 1, and see Seibert (note 4 above), pp. 77, 97–100.

³⁵ Thus Errington, *JHS* 90 (1970), 65. Pace Seibert, pp. 109–10, the Heidelberg epitome (*F. Gr. Hist.* no. 155) and Justin 13. 6. 20 do not make the conquest of Cyrene a cause for the war between Ptolemy and Perdiccas. It is perhaps significant that in a Perdiccan propaganda pamphlet (*Julii Valerii Alexandri Polemi* [ed. B. Küler], p. 166, for which see R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans* [München, 1954], pp. 125 ff., 145), Alexander's testament deprives Ptolemy of Egypt but gives him Libya.

³⁶ Diod. 18. 29. 1, Arr. *F. Gr. Hist.* no. 156, F10. 1. On the affair see Badian, *HSCP* 72 (1968), 186–7; Seibert, pp. 66–7, 97 ff.; Errington, *JHS* 90 (1970), 64–5; O. Müller, *Antigonos Monophthalmos und 'das Jahr der Könige'* (Bonn, 1973), pp. 59–61. On Alexander's tomb and its significance see P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 1 (Oxford, 1972), esp. pp. 15–17, 225–6; Errington in *Alexandre le Grand*, pp. 141–5; Goukowsky, pp. 91 ff.

Perdiccas lamented his loss. In fact Ptolemy had no difficulty in persuading them to change their allegiance from the late general to Pithon, who conspired against him.³⁷

Perdiccas' disappearance from the political scene seems to have made but scant impression on the Greeks and the Macedonians. Till 320 he was a prime mover in the region. His death left his brother, Alceatas, his brother-in-law, Attalus, and his friend, Eumenes, who fought for themselves and not for his memory. Indeed, when unrest is reported among Perdiccas' former soldiers, it was due to their demand for *chremata* and not to their loyalty to the memory of their former master.³⁸ For unlike Alexander, or even Ptolemy, Perdiccas had no *Nachleben*. The reputation he left of having been a hard and violent man evoked no sentiments of political value.³⁹ Indeed, after his brother's defeat Alceatas was deserted by his Macedonians and had to rely on the loyalty of the Pisidians for his survival.⁴⁰

Thus the period of open conflict between Ptolemy and Perdiccas, during which it would have been most profitable to slander Perdiccas, lasted two years at the most. Was Ptolemy's history written between 321 and 320? These dates seem to be rejected even by scholars who ascribe contemporary political bias to his work.⁴¹ What was the purpose of such history? Were the Macedonians, or the Greeks of Alexandria, so agitated by Ptolemy's treatment of Perdiccas that they consequently stood by Ptolemy or moved over to his side? It is not likely that many soldiers took their arms and deserted to Ptolemy's camp if they could not find mention in his book of Perdiccas' succeeding Hephaestion or receiving Alexander's ring. The distortions associated with Ptolemy's work were likely to influence only a small number of people who were anxious to damage Perdiccas' cause by fair means or foul. It is doubtful that the prospective audience of Ptolemy fitted such a category. It is also worth remembering that Arrian, largely relying on Ptolemy, is the only source to record Perdiccas' participation in the battles of Alexander north of Macedonia, in Granicus, in Halicarnassus, and at the Persian Gates. Arrian is also the only authority to report Perdiccas' command over one-fifth of Alexander's army in Sogdiana and half of the charging force in the attack on the city of the Malli.⁴² Why Ptolemy chose to record these facts and to conceal others is unclear. His bias must have been highly selective or erratic.

Another contemporary figure who is said to suffer from Ptolemy's history is

³⁷ Diod. 18. 36. 6–7. For Goukowsky, p. 89 see Diod. *ibid.* and Errington, *JHS* 90 (1970), 65–6.

³⁸ Arr. *Succ.* 32–3; Diod. 18. 39. 2–3; cf. Polyæn, 4. 6. 6.

³⁹ Perdiccas' reputation: Diod. 18. 33. 3; Arr. *Succ.* 28; Justin 13. 8. 1; Suda s.v. 'Perdiccas'. Cf. F. Geyer, 'Perdiccas', *RE* 19 (1937), 613–14. Perdiccas' memory could have been cherished by some, hardly significant, communities in Coele-Syria: Goukowsky, p. 302 n. 39.

⁴⁰ Diod. 18. 46. 1. On possible friction between Alceatas and Perdiccas before the Egyptian campaign: Briant, pp. 196 ff. (see, however, Diod. 18. 37. 2). It is worth noting that all our information concerning the pre-323 career of Alceatas, who surely had no love for Ptolemy, comes from Arrian (Ptolemy?). In fact Curtius (8. 11. 1) grants Polyperchon a victory over Ora (Hora) which Arrian (*Anab.* 5. 27. 5–6) attributes to Alceatas. For more references see Berve (note 8 above), pp. 22–3. Attalus managed to gather soldiers after Perdiccas' death, but that only by virtue of his control over the treasury: Diod. 18. 37. 4; Arr. *Succ.* 39.

⁴¹ Errington and Bosworth, note 10 above.

⁴² *Anab.* 1. 6. 9, 14. 2, 20. 5; 3. 18. 5; 4. 16. 2; 6. 9. 1 (cf. 5. 22. 6). If Curtius' 'Sambagrai' (9. 8. 4–7) and Diodorus' 'Sambastai' (17. 102. 1–4) are Arrian's 'Abastanes' (6. 15. 1), then, according to Arrian's version, they were vanquished by Perdiccas, while the other two sources have them surrender to Alexander. Moreover, if Ptolemy is the source of Arrian 4. 16. 2, then the reporting of Perdiccas' command over one-fifth of the army is much more significant than the omission of his title of a bodyguard in that context (Errington, p. 238).

Aristonous.⁴³ His name is not mentioned among the combatants who saved Alexander from the Malli, and the fact that he was triarch on the Indus and a *somatophylax* was recorded by Nearchus and Aristobulus but not by Ptolemy. Again the omission is explained by political motives. Aristonous' speech quashed Ptolemy's proposal of forming a group of marshals to succeed Alexander, and he also fought for Perdiccas against the kings of Cyprus, who were the allies of Ptolemy.⁴⁴

The omissions, however, can be interpreted differently. Curtius (9. 5. 15) names Alexander's saviours in the Mallian town as Peucestas, Leonnatus, and Aristonous. All were wounded, he says, except for Timaeus, who lost his life. Arrian names the defenders of the king as Peucestas and Leonnatus, and Abreas, who died in the battle (6. 10. 1). Later he adds that historians agree about Peucestas' participation but not on that of Leonnatus or Abreas (6. 11. 7). His evaluation of the sources' handling of the episode is still valid. Of the participants in the battle, Diodorus (17. 99. 4) mentions only Peucestas, while Plutarch adds Lymnaeus, who fell in battle (*v. Alex.* 63. 7–8), Leonnatus, and Ptolemy (*Moral.* 327b; 344d). Thus, except for Peucestas, there is no agreement over who saved Alexander. Ptolemy indeed is Arrian's source for the episode. But no ulterior motive can explain why he omitted Timaeus' name, which is mentioned only by Curtius, or Lymnaeus' name, which is mentioned only by Plutarch. The variants in the sources stemmed either from the primary sources, who gave different accounts of the affair, or from the secondary sources' treatment of these accounts. Ptolemy, then, may have given an accurate account of the episode rather than concealed Aristonous' heroism.⁴⁵

Ptolemy cannot be held responsible for depriving Aristonous of the title *somatophylax*. Arrian's source for this detail was indeed Aristobulus (6. 28. 4), but only because the latter made a list of Alexander's bodyguards which Arrian gratefully copied. It should be noted that Aristobulus (*ibid.*), and not Ptolemy, was also Arrian's source for Pithon's title of bodyguard, that Pithon who was Ptolemy's chief ally in Perdiccas' camp.⁴⁶

Nor should excessive significance be attributed to the omission of Aristonous' triarchy on the Indus. Arrian left the detailed description of that enterprise to the *Indica*. Hence no triarch is mentioned in his account of the voyage, not even Ptolemy, who according to Curtius' testimony 'scilicet gloriae suae non refragatus' (9. 5. 2; *Arr. Ind.* 18. 5).

The extensive discussion of the treatment of Perdiccas and Aristonous by Ptolemy was aimed at examining whether his work was substantially influenced by the history of his wars during the post-Alexander era.⁴⁷ I think that Ptolemy's 'distortions' do not justify such characterization. If Ptolemy's chief aims were to increase his following, to lure supporters away from his opponents, or to justify his hold over Egypt by virtue of his past services to Alexander, it is hard to see how he would have achieved these

⁴³ Errington, pp. 235–6; cf. Tarn (note 1 above), 2 pp. 109–10, but also Goukowsky, p. 302 n. 37.

⁴⁴ See Curtius 10. 6. 10; *Arr. F. Gr. Hist.* 156 F 10. 6 and the previous note.

⁴⁵ Berve (note 8 above), p. 69, assumes that Aristonous' participation in the battle was deduced from his title of bodyguard.

⁴⁶ Seibert (note 4 above), pp. 122 ff.; Errington, *JHS* 90 (1970), 65–6. The fact that Pithon became Antigonos' ally c. 317 would hardly make this year a *terminus post quem* for Ptolemy's history.

⁴⁷ Tarn, 2 p. 110, blames Ptolemy for omitting Antigonos' achievements; but see Errington, p. 234 and compare Briant, p. 99. There is little doubt that Ptolemy had ample reason to dislike Perdiccas and that the two waged a war of propaganda: Merkelbach (note 36 above); Bosworth, *CQ* n.s. 21 (1971), 112 ff.; Goukowsky, pp. 88 ff., 305 n. 61, 336 n. 302. But neither Ptolemy's work nor probably the *ephemerides* were used as weapons in that war.

ends by recording detailed descriptions of battles and journeys (which he probably did), in which neither he nor his later rivals and friends seemed to have played a truly significant role. It may be argued that a direct approach or blatant propaganda would have exposed the historian's hidden intentions. But it is unclear why Ptolemy should wish to be discreet. For who was his audience? Surely not soldiers looking for ideals or people who needed only gentle persuasion to move to his side.⁴⁸

If Ptolemy had other aims than writing history *qua* history, they should be sought in what his work contained rather than in what it supposedly lacked. Ptolemy's entire history is not extant, but the surviving fragments are characterized by their emphasis on military affairs and warfare, a tendency to glorify Alexander and/or justify his actions (especially the questionable ones), and by an element of autopsy which depicts the author as a successful and loyal general.⁴⁹ These general traits of the fragments were taken to reflect the original purpose of the work. The stress on the military, Arrian's matter-of-fact style, which was held to reflect that of his source, and especially his use of Ptolemy's statements and silences to refute what he called 'popular versions', created the impression that Ptolemy aimed at improving upon previous and inaccurate accounts of the exploits of Alexander.⁵⁰ But the only direct proof of Ptolemy's attempt to correct the so-called vulgate version concerned his participation in Alexander's battle with the Malli. Both Arrian (6. 11. 8) and Curtius (9. 5. 2) reject the tradition that Ptolemy saved Alexander on the basis of Ptolemy's statement that he was not with Alexander at that time. However, there is no assurance that Ptolemy denied the story of his presence in the battle *suis verbis*. Arrian and Curtius could have used his statement about his absence from the fighting to disprove the versions that claimed otherwise. But even if Ptolemy wished to deny his participation in the battle, a single example of dissent on his part is hardly an indication of the nature of the entire work.⁵¹

Ptolemy's inclination to idealize Alexander and absolve him from wrongdoing, while accentuating his own role in the campaign, was also interpreted as an attempt by the satrap to base the legitimacy of his rule on his relationship with Alexander. After all, Alexander was both Egypt's conqueror and Alexandria's founder, and his cult and tomb were closely associated with the cult and the state symbols of the Ptolemies.⁵² It was claimed, then, that by making all marshals equal in the eyes of the king while emphasizing his own close friendship with Alexander, Ptolemy rendered his reign in Egypt legitimate.⁵³

⁴⁸ For Ptolemy's *autopsia* see below. K. Rosen, *Hermes* 107 (1979), 463–5, maintains that Ptolemy stressed the military achievements of Alexander in the service of the *Alexanderideologie*, which was used to retain the loyalty of the soldiers and to make his rule legitimate. Judging from the extant sources, few histories of Alexander could avoid bringing the military into the foreground. Similarly, Bosworth's attempts to show a Ptolemaic bias against the sons of Andromenes (in *Alexandre le Grand*, pp. 13–14) call for much co-operation on the part of his audience in order for the bias to be effective.

⁴⁹ Ptolemy's military fragments are: *F. Gr. Hist.* 138, nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 15, 18, 20, 21, 24–6, 34–5. Alexander is especially idealized and justified in frs. 1, 3, 13, 16, 23. Ptolemy's autopsy: frs. 14, 18, 35; Arr. 4. 29. 1–6. For the following compare Levi (note 10 above), pp. 43 ff.; Bosworth, *Commentary*, pp. 22 ff.

⁵⁰ Ptolemy frs. 20, 27, 28 b, 29; and esp. 26a. On Ptolemy's dissatisfaction with the vulgate see, e.g., Schwartz, *RE* 2 (1895), 1237–8; Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.* IIB, pp. 500–2; Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, pp. 14 f., 27; Pearson (note 3 above), pp. 180, 205–6. Cf. R. D. Milns and F. Schachermeyr in *Alexandre le Grand*, pp. 42–3.

⁵¹ The conclusion holds true even if Ptolemy argued with Aristobulus on the details of Alexander's battle with the son of Porus: *Anab.* 5. 14. 3 ff.

⁵² See Errington, Bosworth, and Levi, note 10 above; Goukowsky, pp. 91 ff., 143.

⁵³ See the above note and Levi, pp. 51–2; Goukowsky, pp. 134, 141.

But if Ptolemy's aim was to impress his readers with proofs of his *arete* as well as his intimate relationship with Alexander, he must have disguised his purpose quite skilfully. For it is noteworthy that two episodes which could have contributed most significantly to Ptolemy's image as Alexander's close friend were absent from his work: one had Ptolemy saving Alexander from the Malli and the other had Alexander miraculously curing Ptolemy from a poisoned weapon.⁵⁴ Furthermore, as far as can be judged from Arrian's *Anabasis* or Ptolemy's fragments, the theme of Ptolemy's personal contribution to Alexander's campaign hardly dominated his work. Indeed scholars seem to exaggerate the importance of the element of autopsy in Ptolemy's history. In the *Anabasis* the tales of Ptolemy's own *erga* are hardly numerous or of pivotal significance to the narrative. Arrian was not very likely to have omitted autobiographical portions of Ptolemy's work as immaterial to the history of Alexander. The personal accounts of Ptolemy which he had left in the *Anabasis* are of modest or little consequence to its central theme.⁵⁵ What distinguished Ptolemy's own stories from the rest of his fragments, besides their concentration on Ptolemy's exploits, was their use of minute details, some of them remarkable, others not very significant, which created an especially vivid picture of the actions of Ptolemy and Alexander. Conversely, what the autobiographical tales and the rest of Ptolemy's fragments had in common was the dominant position that they allotted to Alexander within the narrative.⁵⁶ I believe that the lively description, Ptolemy's own participation in the events (which lent them authenticity), and the strongly felt presence of Alexander encouraged rather than discouraged Arrian to incorporate Ptolemy's private stories within the *Anabasis*. The small number and the uniqueness of Ptolemy's pieces of autopsy, as well as his apparent avoidance of reporting personal stories of clear propaganda value, should caution against designating his work as an autobiography or memoir aimed at sustaining his position at home or abroad.⁵⁷

Neither does the fact that Ptolemy depicted Alexander in most favourable terms make his history a contemporary political pamphlet. Other contemporary authors such as Chares, Onesicritus, Nearchus, Aristobulus, and probably Cleitarchus, shared his attitude toward the king. Yet their approbation of the king was not considered a propaganda ploy. Their bias, including Ptolemy's, could have stemmed from personal sentiments and the fact that they made their reputation by serving Alexander.⁵⁸ Ptolemy owed his prominence and ultimately his rule to Alexander. He could not (and certainly did not intend to) slander Alexander, minimize his achievements, or depict him as a tyrant, unless he wished to face disturbing questions concerning his own role and standing during the campaign. Hence he glossed over Alexander's faults, ironed out his failures, and often seemed to write as the spokesman of Alexander.⁵⁹ But such

⁵⁴ See Arr. 6. 11. 8 and Curt. 9. 5. 2 above, and Diod. 17. 103. 6–8; Curt. 9. 8. 20–8 for Ptolemy's recovery. For other sources and an explanation for the absence of the last episode in Arrian see Goukowsky, 'Clitarque seul? Remarques sur les sources du livre XVII de Diodore de Sicile', *RÉA* 71 (1969), esp. p. 320.

⁵⁵ This is especially true for F 35, which seems to stand out from Arrian's narrative in a splendid descriptive isolation. For Ptolemy's autopsy see note 49 above and C. B. Welles, 'The reliability of Ptolemy as an historian', in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (Torino, 1963), pp. 101–16, whose analysis is disputed by Seibert (note 4 above), pp. 4 ff.

⁵⁶ Compare Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, pp. 38–9, 42.
⁵⁷ See also Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.* IIB, p. 499; Strasburger, pp. 53–4; Pearson (note 3 above), pp. 200–2.

⁵⁸ Cleitarchus, however, may not have taken part in the campaign. For his date see, for example, Schachermeyr (note 2 above), pp. 211 ff.; Levi (note 10 above), pp. 84 ff.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Ptolemy frs. 1 (with Strasburger, *Ptolemaios und Alexander*, p. 21), 13, 16–17. Compare Bosworth in *Alexandre le Grand*, pp. 9 ff.

attributes, as well as his detailed, non-epic account of Alexander's combats and actions, could only complement rather than form the basis of Alexander's heroic stature as the last Pharaoh of Egypt and the *ktistes* of Alexandria.

What was, then, the nature of Ptolemy's history? It is my opinion that it was not the purpose of the work to strengthen Ptolemy's position in Egypt or to weaken that of his rivals. To be sure, Ptolemy could scarcely have escaped all contemporary influence. He certainly welcomed any political advantage that could be gained from the work, especially when it enhanced his reputation or interests. But to judge from his fragments and the *Anabasis* of Arrian, Ptolemy's composition was not the tool of propaganda in the sense hitherto alleged. Perhaps it would be better to leave the riddle of Ptolemy's aims unsolved as long as his work exists in its present fragmentary form. For all we know, Ptolemy could have written his history simply for the sake of writing history. If so, the time of its composition was of little political relevance.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ I wish to thank the editors of *Classical Quarterly* for their most helpful remarks. No one but the author is guilty of the opinions expressed here.