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Differences in Greek and Roman Historians

Greek and Roman historians have a very different style of writing although many of these historians write about the same event, they vary in the story being told. Four historians, Diodoros, Plutarch, Justin, and Athenaios record the death of King Philip II of Macedon. Each historian has a different cultural perspective which they use to write their own interpretation of Philip's death. Diodoros is culturally Greek and spends his time writing Greek history. Diodoros uses his cultural Greek background to build his account and includes the story of a jealous male lover, the importance of religion and the absence of women and Alexander the Great. Plutarch and Justin are culturally and Roman have a different approach to Philips death. Both historians exclude male lovers and religion but include women and Alexander. The last author Athenaios is culturally Roman but quotes the words of a Greek historian Satyros rather than writing his own account to avoid interjecting his own cultural lens. All four of these historians used Philips murder to frame their own cultural lens by infusing cultural relevance presence in their culture.

Since Diodoros is a Greek historian, his account of the death of King Philip has a deep Greek theme by including religion and presence of a male lover while excluding women and Alexander the Great. In section 91.2 King Philip wants the gods approval to begin the war with Persia. So he asks the Pythia whether he will conquer the Persians in war. Although Philip accepts the oracle's answer as positive, it is a common theme among Greek writers for the

historical figure to prophesize his fate with the Oracle. Religion is extremely important for the Greeks, they must always please the gods before they act. Not only does Diodoros use the background of religion but also the cultural gender norms.

Diodoros writes Philip's death into a dramatic story of a jealous male lover Pausanias. This theme is similar throughout other Greek historians, most specifically Thucydides who write an account of the death of Hippias who also was killed by a male lover. Pausanias was beloved by Philip because of his beauty, yet falls out of favor when Philip begins to notice another man. The manipulator of the story, Attalos, exploits Pausanias into embarrassing himself, knowing his prominent status makes him politically untouchable. Attalos provokes Pausanias causing him to kill Philip. But one thing that Diodoros is missing is the presence of Philip's wives.

While other sources claim Philip married several women, Diodoros leaves out any female presence. Both Olympia and Kleopatra, two different wives of Philips, are only mentioned in passing with no important significance. In Greek culture, women are not written about and do not exist in many historical writings. Even Philip's son Alexander, also known as Alexander the Great, is barely mentioned while Diodoros's account included important Greek elements, the Romans have a different idea of what is important to their culture.

Plutarch and Justin offer different accounts of the death of Philip, offer a profoundly Roman account. Which is shown through cultural and social differences. In section 9 Plutarch begins his account with Philip's military commands but makes no mention of Philip's religious duty. Plutarch continues by emphasizing the closeness of Philip and his son Alexander. The next section shows that the father and son relationship fell apart because of a "domestic strife" which led to "bitter clashes and accusations between father and son." These bitter clashes and

accusations are caused by Olympias, Philip's wife, who is a major character in Plutarch's narration. Plutarch portrays Olympias as most Roman historians portray women, as jealous, manipulative, and power hungry. Plutarch has Olympias turn Alexander against his father Philip. Rejecting Olympias, Philip decides to marry a "girl," Kleopatra, who he falls in love with. Olympias "incited Alexander to oppose his father" and has Alexander move her to Epirus. After turning Alexander from Philip, Pausanias assassinates Philip to which Plutarch comes to the conclusion that it was Olympias "who was chiefly to blame for the assassination." After turning Alexander from Philip, Olympias uses Pausanias as a pawn to exact her revenge. She encourages and incites Pausanias to kill Philip. Plutarch, writing during the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties, draws parallels between Olympias and women who were written during the time of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Just as Tacitus and Suetonius describe Livia, the wife of Augustus and Agrippina, Nero's mother, as manipulative and power-hungry, Plutarch portrays Olympias as scheming and cunning. Plutarch also includes a hero who is famous in Rome, Alexander the Great.

Plutarch differs from Diodoros in not only his inclusion of women but also his inclusion of Alexander in Plutarch's account is larger. Plutarch, as a Roman citizen, incorporates Alexander into his account. The Romans revere Alexander the Great and many military leaders compare themselves to him. Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* notes the story of Pompey Magnus, or Pompey the Great, a famous military general in the Roman Republic who combs his hair to appear as Alexander. In another instance, Tacitus compares the greatness of another military commander Germanicus to the honorable Alexander.

Similar to Plutarch's account, the narrative of Justin excludes religion and includes women and Alexander. Religion plays no part in Philip's decision to fight the war with Persia and Philip makes no trip to Delphi in order to ask the Oracle about the outcome of the war. Though Plutarch and Justin both address the presence of women, Justin's account is unique in that Philip divorces Olympia on the grounds of adultery. Justin, similar to Plutarch, Tacitus, and Suetonius describes Olympia as jealous and crafty. Angry that Philip divorces her to marry another girl, she moves to Epiros and manipulates Pausanias to kill Philip. Olympia also uses her relationship with Alexander to influence hate towards his father. Justin claims that Alexander "was not ignorant that his father was to be killed." Alexander does nothing since he fears that his new step-mother's child might rival him for the throne. Justin suggests that Olympia and Alexander plot together and encourage Pausanias to kill Philip.

Athenaios, another Roman Historian, offers the most unique account since Athenaios quotes the words of the Greek historian Satyros who specialized in the lives of kings. In Athenaios's account, he states Philip "married a new wife with each new war he undertook." Athenaios strengthens his argument when he includes Satyros and tries to avoid imposing his own cultural lens into his account. Satyros discusses how after marrying many women Philip fell in love with Kleopatra, which after bringing her home threw his life into "confusion." Again, women are included as a major character. But in this account Alexander is missing. This account is hard to get a Greek or Roman voice from, Athenaios excludes his own voice, yet Satyros's writing is different from most Greek authors.

Diodoros, Plutarch, Justin, and Athenaios have widely different accounts of why Pausanias murdered Philip making the truth muddled with each author's own cultural slant

changing their account of Philip. Facts are hard to make out since the reader does not know what biases and the real truth. Historiographically, Diodoros portrays Philip as pious and righteous, Attalos as devious, and Pausanias as a puppet. Plutarch and Justin portray Philip as a victim, women as manipulative, Pausanias as manipulative, and Alexander as the great. These personal characterizations create for the reader personas that cannot be proven from primary sources. The reader cannot prove character traits of Philip, other than Philip being the king of Macedon since the historiographical Philip is portrayed as easily manipulated and weak. The authors Diodoros, Plutarch, Justin, and Athenaios when writing their account of Philip's death, write the death of Philip through their own culture significance building four different accounts. Each other infuses his own cultural lens into his account making the truth bleary.

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