

Sources for Bagoas

Dicaearchus in Athenaeus 603b

Sacrifice at Ilium [written ca 320 BC; frag: Athenaeus 603b, incorporating Dicaearchus F23 Wehrli]

"Alexander the king loved boys to distraction. At any rate, Dicaerchus says in his *The Sacrifice at Ilium* that he was so enthralled with the eunuch Bagoas that in the view of the entire theatre he bent back and kissed him deeply, and when the audience shouted approval and applauded, he did as they bid and bent back and kissed him again." (Athenaeus 603b, incorporating Dicaearchus F23 Wehrli)]

Quintus Curtius Rufus (6.5.22-3; 10.1.22-42)

Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.5.22-3 "Now they had come to the city of Hyrcania in which the palace of Darius had been; there Nabarzanes, having received a safe conduct, met him, bringing great gifts. Among these was Bagoas, a eunuch of remarkable beauty and in the very flower of boyhood, who had been loved by Darius and was afterwards to be loved by Alexander; and it was especially because of the boy's entreaties that he was led to pardon Nabarzanes"

Quintus Curtius Rufus Book 10.1.22-29

"From there they came to Parsagada; that is a Persian race, whose satrap was Orsines, prominent among all the barbarians for high birth and wealth. He traced his descent from Cyrus, formerly king of the Persians; he had wealth, both what he had inherited from his forefathers and what he himself had amassed during long possession of sovereignty. He met the king with gifts of every kind, intending to give presents not only to Alexander but to his friends as well. Troops of tamed horses followed him and chariots adorned with silver and gold, costly furniture and splendid gems, golden vases of great weight, purple vestments, and 3000 talents of coined silver. But this great generosity of the barbarian was the cause of his death. For when he had honoured all the friends of the king with gifts beyond their highest hopes, to Bagoas, a eunuch who had won the regard of Alexander through prostitution, he paid no honour, and on being admonished by some that Bagoas was dear to Alexander, replied that he was honouring the friends of the king, not his harlots, and that it was not the custom of the Persians to mate with males who made females of themselves by prostitution.

On hearing this, the eunuch exercised the power which he had gained by shame and disgrace against the life of an eminent and guiltless man. For he secretly supplied the most worthless fellows of that same nation with false accusations, warning them not to make them public until he himself should have given the word. Meanwhile, whenever no witnesses were present, he filled the credulous ears of the king with lies, concealing the reason for his anger, in order to add greater weight to his accusations. Orsines as yet was not suspected, but nevertheless was already less esteemed; for he was secretly being incriminated without being aware of the hidden danger. And that most shameless harlot, not forgetting his deception even amid debauchery and the endurance of shame, whenever he had aroused the king's passion for himself, charged Orsines now with avarice, sometimes even with treason.

And now the calumnies were ripe for the ruin of a blameless man, and Fate was on hand, whose will is inescapable. For it chanced that Alexander ordered the tomb of Cyrus to be opened, in which his body had been laid at rest, and to which Alexander wished to pay funereal honours. He had believed it to be a storehouse filled with gold and silver—for that was common rumour among the Persians—but except the king's mouldering shield, two Scythian bows, and a scimitar he found nothing. However, having placed a crown of gold upon the coffin in which the body lay, he covered it over with the robe which he himself was accustomed to wear, expressing surprise that a king of such renown and endowed with such power had been buried no more sumptuously than if he had been one of the common folk. The eunuch was at

Alexander's side; looking significantly at him, he said: "What wonder if the tombs of kings are empty, when the houses of their satraps cannot contain the gold that they have amassed from them? For my part, I had never seen the tomb before, but I learned from Darius that 3000 talents of gold were buried with Cyrus. Hence that generosity to you, in order that what Orsines could not keep with safety, he might even curry favour by giving away."

He had already aroused the king's mind to anger, when those to whom he had entrusted the same business arrived. On one side Bagoas, on the other those whom he had suborned, filled the king's ears with false charges. Before Orsines suspected that he was being accused he was delivered into bondage. Not content with the punishment of an innocent man, the eunuch laid his hand upon him as he was about to be executed. Orsines with a glance at him said: "I had heard that women once reigned in Asia; this however is something new, for a eunuch to reign!" Such was the end of one of the noblest of the Persians, who was not only blameless but of remarkable kindness towards the king. At the same time Phradates, suspected of aspiring to royal power, was put to death. Alexander had begun to be too hasty in inflicting prompt punishment, and also believing calumnies; so true is it that success is able to change one's nature, and that rarely is anyone cautious enough towards his own good fortune. For this same man shortly before had not been able to bring himself to punish Lyncestes though he had been charged by two witnesses, had even suffered humbler criminals to be acquitted against his desire because the rest believed them innocent, and had restored their thrones to vanquished 42 enemies; but towards the end of his life he had so degenerated from his true self, that though formerly of a mind proof against lust, at the caprice of a catamite he gave kingdoms to some and took life from others."

Plutarch Alexander 67

(refs kiss) "We are told, too, that he was once viewing some contests in singing and dancing, being well heated with wine, and that his favorite, Bagoas, won the prize for song and dance, and then, all in his festal array, passed through the theatre and took his seat by Alexander's side; at sight of which the Macedonians clapped their hands and loudly bade the king kiss the victor, until at last he threw his arms about him and kissed him tenderly"