

DORYPHORAE IN CURTIUS 3.3.15

Q. Curtius Rufus, describing the order of the Persian march, writes: *Doryphorae vocabantur proximum his* (i. e., the 'king's kinsmen') *agmen, soliti vestem excipere regalem; hi currum regis antebant, quo ipse eminens vehebatur* (3.3.15). Spearmen (or, more properly, 'Bodyguards') who looked after the king's wardrobe? J. Mützell objected: "... das Geschäft, welches den Doryphoren beigelegt wird, paßt weder zu ihrem Namen, noch zu den sonstigen Nachrichten über ihre Dienstpflichten"¹⁾. The manuscript reading is clearly corrupt, but even the imaginative text of E. Hedicke (2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1908) had no solution to the peculiar phrase, *soliti vestem excipere regalem* (an expression without parallel and elucidated only by J. Freinshem's comments²⁾), which demeans the *Doryphoroi*. Furthermore, Mützell rightly remarks: "vorausgesetzt auch, daß ihnen jenes Geschäft zukam, so verdiente es doch nicht hier besonders hervorgehoben zu werden ..."³⁾. J. E. Atkinson seeks support in Herakleides of Kyme (FGrHist 689 F 1 = Athen. 12.514 B), concludes that "Curtius may be correct in attributing to them care of the royal robes" and suggests a dramatic link in Curtius' narrative with 3.11.11 and 3.12.5⁴⁾. But the argument is not persuasive, and one suspects that Atkinson has his misgivings.

I suggest a relatively simple emendation, which may return to the *Doryphoroi* a measure of dignity: *soliti (ad) vest (ibulu)m excubare regale*. This would bring the bodyguards of Dareios in line with the Macedonian groups in Curtius who are entrusted with *custodia corporis*. Cf. *cohors quoque, quae excubabat ad tabernaculum regis* (3.12.3, *pueri regii*); *per hos imperatum ut, qui ad praetorium excubabant, armati vigilarent* (6.8.17, *hypaspistai*, sometimes called *doryphoroi*); *Ptolomaeum et Leonmatum excubantes ad cubiculi limen* (8.6.22, *somatophylakes*). The phrase *ad vestibulum excubare regale* (or possibly *regiae*)⁵⁾ would be a variant on the above-mentioned examples. It would also be in keeping with the role of the *Doryphoroi* in this procession, the guard preceding the king's chariot⁶⁾.

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1) J. Mützell, *Q. Curtii Rufi de gestis Alexandri Magni regis Macedonum libri qui supersunt octo*, Berlin 1841, 45.

2) See Mützell's comments *ad loc.*

3) Mützell, 46.

4) J. E. Atkinson, *A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus' Historiae Alexandri Magni Books 3 and 4*, Amsterdam 1980, 126.

5) *ad vestibulum regiae* (5.7.7); *ante vestibulum regiae* (6.7.17); and for the vestibule before the *tabernaculum*, cf. 3.12.8.

6) This note was written during a stay in Freiburg i. Br. I thank my hosts in the Seminar für Alte Geschichte, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, for their kind hospitality.