

Tactical Interactions: Dialogues between Greece and Rome in Aelian and Arrian's military manuals*

Alice König

This chapter looks at two interconnected texts which were published within two or three decades of each other. I begin with Aelianus Tacticus' *Tactical Theory*, a treatise which harks back to a bygone age in Greek military history.¹ It draws on works which themselves looked back to Polybius and earlier,² and thus sets out prescriptions for the organisation and formation of troops which derive from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Consciously archaising, it is also heavily derivative: much of it appears to be a reproduction of a lost treatise by the Stoic philosopher Posidonius, the same text which Arrian seems to have drawn on in his *Tactics* two or three decades later.³ Arrian must have been aware of Aelian's treatise (the texts were presumably written and read within similar circles), which means that he compiled his own rewrite of Posidonius' original in conscious relation to Aelian's version, and perhaps in the expectation that readers would compare the two. There is no direct interaction, but the differences between the texts – and their respective interactions with other texts and authority-figures – offer an opportunity to explore different models of literary and cross-cultural interaction, occurring across language barriers, between different levels of social and political authority, and between different kinds of writing.

Aelian's interactions with Frontinus

Aelian begins the preface to his *Tactical Theory* in time-honoured fashion by explaining his reasons for writing. He anchors his efforts in a long-established Greek military writing tradition

* I am grateful to Rebecca Langlands, James Uden and CUP's anonymous readers for their feedback on various drafts of this chapter.

¹ On its date (sometime between 106 and 113), see Dain 1946: 18-19; Devine 1989: 31. Hereafter, I will refer to Aelianus Tacticus simply as Aelian, not to be confused with Steven Smith's Aelian later in this volume.

² Devine 1995.

³ The exact relationship between these texts remains a matter of debate (for run-down of views, see Devine 1989: 32-3; Stadter 1978), with Aselepiodotus' *Tactics* also part of the picture. Arrian notes at *Tact.* 44 that he was writing in the twentieth year of Hadrian's reign, thus around 136-137.

which (he claims) originated with Homer (*Tact. Pr. 1*).⁴ While claiming that his own contribution is an improvement on everything that has come before, he also asserts (in a dedication addressed to one of Rome's most militarily effective and ambitious emperors) the *longue durée* of Greek tactical theory.

Next, he confesses to some pre-publication qualms. Indeed (adapting a prefatory manoeuvre common to other technical/scientific texts), he admits a degree of ignorance: not of Greek tactical theory, but of the nature of Rome's military power and practice, which – he claims – have cast Greek theory into oblivion:

But in view of my own ignorance – the truth of which must be admitted – of that form of prowess [δύναμις] and practice [ἐμπειρία] current among the Romans, I was prevented by diffidence from handing down a science [μάθημα] forgotten [ἀπημαυρωμένον: literally 'cast into shadow'] and moreover long out of use since a new training system [διδασκαλία] was hit upon by your predecessors. (*Tact. pr. 2*)⁵

Aelian takes advantage of direct address here to underline the separation between his own (Greek) learning and 'your' (Roman) innovations. The language of conquest (underlined by the passive ἀπημαυρωμένον, and by the speed of Greek learning's displacement) evokes the power of imperial Rome, so that a mention of Aelian's qualms about publishing suddenly becomes a story about the overthrow of a long-established Greek tradition.⁶ Rome does not entirely win out, however; for the vocabulary which Aelian uses to characterise Roman military activity (δύναμις, ἐμπειρία and διδασκαλία) underlines its essentially practical, un-theorised nature, and sets up an implicit comparison with Greek military science (described alternately as μάθημα and θεωρία). The participle ἐφευρεθεῖσαν may also help to convey the impression that Roman military 'training' has been almost 'chanced upon', 'discovered' rather than systematically worked out. Greece retains mastery of the intellectual discipline, Aelian's language implies, despite Rome's victories in the field.

⁴ This claim (made by many Greek military writers) exploits a notion of 'Greekness' that is both expansive and authoritative.

⁵ Translations of Aelian's *Tactical Theory* are adapted from Devine 1989. All other translations are my own, unless indicated.

⁶ Bowie 2014: 58-62 notes that other near-contemporary Greek texts (by Philostratus, Aelius Aristides and Plutarch) tend to visualise military activity in Greek terms rather than Roman, and as belonging to the past not the present, with the Roman army and its contemporary activities barely visible.

Aelian invites some broad cultural and political reflections, then, as he outlines the story of his text's composition; and these reflections, which centre on the relationship between Greece and Rome, are given an added impetus by the arrival of Frontinus (*Tact.* pr. 3). Aelian met 'the distinguished ex-consul' (he tells Trajan) 'during the reign of your deified father Nerva', a temporal note which brings contemporary Roman politics momentarily into focus. Under Nerva, Frontinus had begun to emerge as one of Rome's most influential senators: appointed *Curator Aquarum* in 97, he went on to serve as consul for the second time in 98 before being awarded a rare third consulship in 100 (this time as *consul ordinarius*, with Trajan as his partner).⁷ Such honours were likely in recognition of the role that Frontinus had played in securing Nerva's adoption of Trajan as his heir, and mention of Trajan's 'deified father' in the same breath as 'the distinguished' Frontinus might trigger thought of the close connections between the three men, and of the tangled world of imperial politics more generally. The structure of rest of the sentence shifts our gaze away from centres of political power, however, to a centre of more leisured, literary activity – the seaside resort of Formiae – where we get to eavesdrop on an encounter in which Frontinus apparently assuaged Aelian's doubts about writing.

Aelian's description of Frontinus here is brief but pointed. Given Frontinus' authorship of at least two military treatises, one might have expected Aelian to refer to his clout in that literary sphere.⁸ He opts instead to foreground Frontinus' active service, characterising him above all as a man 'who has gained a reputation for experience in military matters':

...I was able to spend some days at Formiae with the distinguished ex-consul Frontinus, a man of great reputation by virtue of his experience in war (δόξαν ἀπενεγκαμένω περι τὴν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ἐμπειρίαν). Discovering in conversation with him that he had no lesser regard for Greek tactical science (τὴν παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησι τεθεωρημένην μάθησιν), I began not to despise their tactical writing, thinking that Frontinus would not pay so much attention to it if he indeed considered Roman tactical usage superior. (*Tact.* pr. 3)

Frontinus' literary activities must be implicit in the background here, but the 'hands-on' connotation of the word ἐμπειρία ('experience') identifies his campaigns in Britain and

⁷ On these significant appointments: Syme 1958: 16-7; Eck 2002: 219-26; Grainger 2003: 14, 100; Rodgers 2004: 5-8.

⁸ A lost 'Science of Warfare' is mentioned in Frontinus' surviving *Strategemata* (1. pr. 1); for evidence of Frontinus' later reputation as a canonical military author, see [Vegetius](#), 1.8 and 2.3.

elsewhere as the foundation of his authority and expertise, the main reason why Frontinus' views on military matters carry some weight. (Before rising to the dizzy heights of his third consulship under Trajan, Frontinus had served as Governor of Britain under Vespasian, where – Tacitus tells us – he had suppressed the powerful and pugnacious Silures;⁹ he had also seen active service in Germany under Domitian.¹⁰) The word ἐμπειρία picks up on the cultural contrast that Aelian has already drawn between Greece and Rome, underlining Frontinus' experience-based expertise as essentially *Roman*. As well as maintaining the notion that military theory (and writing about it) was primarily the preserve of the Greeks, this makes Frontinus' endorsement of Aelian's textual project particularly powerful. If a fellow Greek author were to evince interest in Greek tactical science, it would attract little attention. For a bastion of the Roman establishment (with all his practical military experience) to share Aelian's 'enthusiasm' for Greek 'theorised learning' (and note the added emphasis, here, on its *theorised* nature: **τεθεωρημένην** μάθησιν) and not to rate it inferior to Roman military 'arrangements': that is quite some affirmation.¹¹

Aelian goes on to engage with Frontinus' reputation as an author more explicitly later on, when he introduces the main body of his treatise. At *Tactica* 1.2, he cites him in a list of notable military writers (again going back to Homer) whose works he has read. Although Frontinus' inclusion as the only Roman in this list of Greeks might look flattering,¹² it ultimately serves to point up (again) the overwhelming dominance of Greek learning on the subject. No other Roman author/authority makes the cut. It is significant, too, that Frontinus is characterised here more as a commentator on other writers than as a theorist in his own right, despite the probability that his *Science of Warfare* was a theoretical work, whose originality Frontinus stresses.¹³ Moreover, Aelian goes on to make it clear again (*Tact.* 1.3-6) that he has found all of his predecessors' works inadequate, and that his own text will be an improvement on their efforts.¹⁴ Frontinus' reputation as an author is thus sacrificed, alongside others', to promote Aelian's superior credentials.

Aelian must have benefited socially and politically from association with a close ally of Trajan's; both because acquaintanceship with (and perhaps also patronage from) such an

⁹ Tac, *Ag.* 17.2, on which see König 2013.

¹⁰ As references at *Strat.* 1.1.8; 1.3.10; 2.11.7 indicate.

¹¹ We see a different trend in Siwicki's chapter in this volume, where stand-off-ish-ness seems to characterise Roman responses to Greek architectural writing.

¹² Cf. Arrian, *Tact.* 1.2, whose opening overview of earlier tactical manuals cites the same works as Aelian, with the exception of Frontinus.

¹³ *Strat.* 1.pr.1: 'Since I – one of a number of experts [or even 'alone amongst experts', *unus ex numero studiosorum*] – have attempted to draw up a science of warfare...'

¹⁴ Another familiar prefatory manoeuvre; cf. Arrian, *Tact.* 1.2, which makes a similar claim.

eminent statesman must have enhanced Aelian's standing in the eyes of his readers, and because Frontinus may have served directly or indirectly to broker a closer relationship between Aelian and the emperor. Aelian's self-positioning vis-à-vis Frontinus was not limited to purely personal agenda, however: he uses his interaction with Frontinus to stage a competitive encounter between Greece and Rome, particularly between the Greek past and the Roman present, and between writing and fighting – raising questions about where military expertise and authority actually lie. Frontinus matters – and must be engaged with – because he has strayed into what Aelian wants to demarcate as Greek territory: before Aelian set pen to paper, Frontinus' *Science of Warfare* may have been the most recent work on military theory in circulation (with his political clout presumably enhancing its profile). Deploying combative metaphors to conjure up a clash between Greek theory and Roman practice, Aelian wrests back control by interacting with Frontinus on paper in ways that occlude and usurp his literary/theoretical achievements.¹⁵

That is one way of reading the interactive dynamics of Aelian's preface, at any rate – an interpretation which is (?over-)influenced by the militaristic atmosphere of the wider text itself but also by our (or at any rate my) scholarly willingness to default to combative clichés when unpicking Graeco-Roman interactions. To what extent would Aelian's Greek and Roman readers have applied the same lens, reading a struggle for supremacy into his dealings with Frontinus – and one with a specifically cultural (Greco-Roman) not just intellectual dimension? My interpretation (which I broadly stand by, while deliberately pushing it to its limits as a reflective exercise) draws on all sorts of widely accepted/not-often-enough-contested narratives, about 'technical' writing and patronage as well as cross-cultural competition; it hinges too on the nuances of individual and selectively highlighted items of vocabulary and the translation of concepts such as 'theory' and 'experience' across cultures, raising questions (as other chapters in this volume do) about how we make meaning out of the material in front of us.¹⁶ Most of all, in prompting reflection on my interpretative manoeuvres I mean to draw attention to the ways in which analysis can often stop short, when we do not go beyond our first instincts in unpicking textual interactions. If we resist the temptation to read (only) competition and confrontation into Aelian's textual engagement with Frontinus, and

¹⁵ It is impossible to gauge how Frontinus himself navigated the competing claims of Greek and Roman authority in his lost treatise, but the start of his *Strategemata* may be indicative: at *Strat.* 1.pr.1 he acknowledges the Greek origins of his topic, but encircles Greek terminology with Latin phrasing that signals a Roman takeover; his opening *exemplum* (1.1.1.) then features Cato – celebrated by Vegetius as the founder of the Latin military writing tradition – writing (König 2018b).

¹⁶ See esp. Fields in this volume, on the specific challenges of tracking cross-linguistic overlaps/interaction.

consciously avoid military metaphors when articulating its dynamics, we may become more attuned (for instance) to the anxiety that Aelian clearly feels both for himself and for his discipline, and also to an underlying self-belief/optimism in the value of his work that does not only find expression in combative exchanges.

However we read his interactions with Frontinus, Aelian clearly felt the need to begin his treatise by positioning his own avowedly ‘Greek’ project in relation to Roman points of comparison, reinforcing the visibility of a Greek/Roman binary that glossed over a more complex reality (as Myles Lavan’s chapter amply demonstrates). Ironically, cross-cultural interactions prove fundamental in articulating Aelian’s literary identity and in investing his rather insular, backward-looking treatise with the kind of authority that carried weight in the Roman empire of the early second century. His narration of his encounter with Frontinus does not simply delineate separate and competing spheres of influence and authority, in other words; rather, the to-and-fro between Aelian and Frontinus/Greece and Rome across the course of the preface helps to carve out a new, interactive space for Greek learning/writing to gain new kinds of traction in an evolving Roman world.

Aelian in dialogue with the emperor Trajan

The rest of Aelian’s preface continues to oscillate between audacious self-assurance and staged hesitation. Aelian contrasts the burst of confidence that followed his conversation with Frontinus, for example, with the insecurity he had previously felt in the face of Trajan’s ‘unsurpassed’ strategic ‘courage’ (ἀνδρεία) and ‘experience’ (ἐμπειρία):

Having therefore projected this work some time ago, but not yet being prepared to publish it then on account of your unsurpassed valour and experience, Emperor, through which you excel all the other generals, without exception, who have ever been, I have taken it up again and completed this exceedingly worthwhile study...
(*Tact.* pr. 4)

This paean of praise was not unmerited: Trajan had probably recently completed his Dacian campaigns and was in the process of extending Rome’s frontiers further than ever. However, as well as ingratiating himself with his dedicatee and acknowledging the expanding power of

the Roman empire, this flattery brings Aelian's two most important acquaintances, Frontinus and Trajan, into indirect dialogue. Indeed, it establishes a stand-off between what they each represent – one that Frontinus, the newly-converted champion of Greek military science, wins: for his interest in Aelian's theoretical project ultimately overcomes (Aelian's inferiority about) the emperor's military know-how. Trajan may be unsurpassable in battle¹⁷ and the march of the empire may seem unstoppable, but that need not prevent Aelian from continuing to stamp his (Greek) authority over the world of military science, endorsed by Frontinus.

Indeed, Aelian ends up sounding rather like his description of the all-conquering Trajan as he embarks upon his literary campaign. Once inspired to press ahead, he employs strong, even combative verbs (in particular παραγκωνίζομαι – 'to elbow aside') to characterise his endeavours, and depicts himself triumphing over all other writers, rather as Trajan surpasses all generals, past and present (*Tact.* pr. 4-5). This renders his sudden return to doubt and hesitation at *Tact.* pr. 6 and the stock-in-trade contrast that he draws between the greatness of his dedicatee (τηλικούτων πολέμων στρατηγῶ – 'a general with such great wars behind him') and the 'paltriness' of his treatise (εὐτελέστερα) less than convincing. Moreover, his language in this closing section underlines common ground as well as distance between author and addressee, and even effects a subtle transformation on Trajan:

Nonetheless, I was not confident in sending this work to you, who have commanded in such great wars, lest it should prove too paltry, as you compare my instructions (ὕφηγούμενα) with your own notions (ἐπίνοια). If, however, you think of it as a Greek theoretical work and a polished dissertation (Ἑλληνικὴν θεωρίαν καὶ γλαφυρὰν ἱστορίαν), the book will afford you an evocation of the dead (ψυχαγωγία), since in it you will observe (θεωρήσεις) Alexander the Macedonian's endeavours in marshalling his forces. (*Tact.* pr.6)

Using his lack of self-confidence as a convenient excuse to place his own 'instructions' (ὕφηγούμενα, from a verb which means 'to show the way') side by side with Trajan's military 'ideas' (ἐπίνοια: 'notions'/'thoughts'/'inventions', a word with arguably more ad hoc than systematic connotations, and one that distinguishes Trajan's expertise from more textual forms of learning), Aelian encourages the emperor to approach his treatise primarily as an academic

¹⁷ Note that his military credentials (ἀνδρεία and ἐμπειρία) belong, like those of other Romans in Aelian's text, to the practical sphere.

work with distinctively Greek aesthetics – a suggestion which effectively ‘disarms’ the text, by aligning it with literary, philosophical and now bygone military traditions, downplaying any sense of contemporary relevance or utility.

The noun ψυχαγωγία (‘evocation of the dead’, and – in a literary sense – also ‘gratification’, or ‘amusement’) reinforces the impression both that Aelian’s *Tactical Theory* focuses on the past and that it should be viewed as a piece of edifying but essentially ideological writing. No sooner has Aelian implied a retrospective and scholarly, even abstract focus (and reinforced the link between Greece and theory), however, than he tells Trajan that he might use the treatise to ‘observe’ (θεωρήσεις) Alexander the Great in action. The image that is suddenly conjured up of Alexander in the field reminds us that Macedonian Greeks were not just good at theorising; indeed, their *deeds* might teach the Romans – even so notable a Roman as Trajan – a thing or two (as indeed they do in Frontinus’ *Strategemata*, which brings Greek, Roman, Carthaginian and many other stratagems into instructive proximity to each other¹⁸). Of course, Alexander the Great was a leader on whom several Roman emperors modelled themselves. According to Cassius Dio, Trajan explicitly invited the comparison himself, even claiming in a letter to the Senate to have advanced further than he did despite stopping short of an expedition into India.¹⁹ Alexander was not just a military model whom Trajan aspired to emulate, then, but a figure who may have flagged up some of Trajan’s relative shortcomings, towards the end of his reign in particular when Trajan mooted but drew back from extending his ventures beyond Arabia and Mesopotamia. Aelian’s recommendation that Trajan might use his treatise to scrutinise Alexander’s methods potentially tapped into both aspiration and anxiety, in other words.²⁰ His choice of a verb from which the noun θεωρία takes its meaning also toys with a significant role-reversal for Trajan, for it invites his addressee to be more ‘Greek’ in his approach to military strategy – not simply to ‘observe’ but perhaps even to ‘theorise’.

¹⁸ König 2017.

¹⁹ Cass. Dio. 68.29-30; Cassius appears critical of Trajan’s pretense here (Stadter 1980: 140), emphasising the difference between the two men, in particular the gap between Trajan’s ambitions and achievements and his failure to preserve even the territory he had subdued. The context was Trajan’s Parthian campaign (113-117), during which he also visited Babylon to sacrifice at the place where Alexander had died. As Trajan’s final adventure (he would die en route back to Rome), this Parthian campaign met with mixed success (plagued by a series of revolts and rebellions) and marked the end of the Roman empire’s expansionist policy.

²⁰ Alexander the Great’s value as a model was debated, of course. Emperors may have emulated him (in their imagery, if not in their deeds), but Greek and Roman authors had long drawn attention to his failings as well as his achievements. See, e.g., Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 2, and Whitmarsh 2001: 201-4, on the implications of Dio’s ambivalent characterization of Alexander there for Trajan’s *imitatio* of him; also Stoneman 2002.

Aelian follows this up by explaining that he has prefaced his treatise with handy headings, so that his addressee might learn from it without reading the whole thing:

On account of the pressure of your business, I have prefaced the work with subject headings, so that you can, without reading the book as a whole, determine its contents from a few words and without spending much time easily find the places you want to look up. (*Tact.* pr. 7)

This does not simply defer to Trajan's imperial workload. It underscores the potential utility of Aelian's text, after all that emphasis on its theoretical and literary dimensions. Indeed, by imagining Trajan leafing through it, it effects (if only as a fantasy) the emperor's progression from almighty general to potential pupil.²¹ In reality, reading this treatise (if he ever did) could hardly have made a difference to the way in which Trajan conducted future campaigns. Out of touch in all sorts of ways, the *Tactical Theory's* rehearsing of long-gone military techniques was never likely to teach contemporaries reader any handy new tactics. The act of (imagining Trajan) reading this text marks the Roman emperor hereafter as a student of Greek tactical theory, however, no matter what he went on to do in the field, just as the narration of Aelian's encounter with Frontinus also signs him up as an enthusiast for Greek military science (more than a military theorist in his own right). Through his interactions with both men, Aelian creates a conceptual space in which cross-fertilisation between ancient Greek theory and contemporary Roman practice (in one particular direction, from Greece to Rome) becomes imaginable, if not a reality.

The relationship and balance of power between author and addressee thus shifts over the course of Aelian's preface, just as it does between the two cultures that Aelian and Trajan respectively represent, as we discover that Aelian's *Tactical Theory* may not be a purely retrospective/abstract work after all; or, rather, that in so being, it may yet have some didactic relevance for Aelian's contemporaries, and for Trajan specifically. Before he launches into a long account of a largely bygone military tradition, Aelian explicitly confronts its lack of connection with contemporary military practice in a way which puts the interactive onus on his Roman readers. Greek science remains steadfast – unchanged, unchallenged even (and the style of Aelian's Greek prose reinforces this point throughout the treatise); two important

²¹ Cf. Whitmarsh 2001: 325-7 on the fantasy of Dio teaching Trajan in his *Kingship Orations*.

Romans, on the other hand, are seen starting to engage with and (re-)legitimise it. Through interactions, literary and personal, with both Frontinus and Trajan, Aelian manipulates assumptions about the relationship between literature and practice in the military sphere, forging (somewhat fanciful) connections between Greek textualised theory and Trajan's military activities, while also keeping the interactions culturally one-way. Indeed, in capturing an image of the current emperor looking to past Greek military models for inspiration (as we know Trajan *did*) via the medium of Greek military writing and his own treatise in particular, Aelian projects an ongoing role for (Greek) writing in the context of future (Roman imperial) fighting. Almost impossibly, given its outdated-ness, Aelian even prompts us to visualise a new era of influence for Greek military writing through the cross-cultural interactions that his preface opens up.

Textual Resonances between Aelian, Frontinus and Pliny the Elder

The interactions that I have discussed in the previous two sections revolve around the endurance, absence and impermeability of whole writing traditions: indeed, a (projected) *lack* of interaction between Greek and Latin writing traditions, alongside the delineation of specific spaces in which powerful Romans might be seen/imagined interacting with the Greek theoretical tradition that Aelian's *Tactical Theory* embodies. I now turn briefly to some smaller-scale instances of literary interaction (and occlusion); indeed, to what might look like more 'conventional' intertextual analysis, focusing on traces of cross-cultural interactivity that are faintly visible between Aelian's preface and a couple of near-contemporary Latin texts.

Aelian's emphasis on the accessibility of his text and his use of headings, for example, may reveal a far closer engagement with Frontinus' writing than his preface leads us to expect. Writing fifteen or twenty years before Aelian, Frontinus introduced his *Strategemata* by promising to spare his busy readers the arduous task of trawling through lots of books themselves to find instructive military *exempla* (*Strat.* 1.pr.2). While other authors had 'overwhelmed' their readers with a great 'pile' of material, Frontinus claims to have set it out carefully, gathering material into topics 'as if in response to questions' (*quasi ad interrogatum*). He goes on to outline the focus of each of his themed books, and within the body of each book he then divides his material into further subsections, providing readers with lists of section headings. Other authors of military treatises had prefaced their works with 'contents pages' before Frontinus; notably Asclepiodotus, whose use of chapter headings may derive from the

same source that inspired Aelian's treatise, which itself starts with an 'index' outlining 113 upcoming topics. The combination of section headings and reflections on text-accessibility, however, draws a tighter connection between Frontinus' *Strategemata* and Aelian's treatise. Indeed, Aelian's suggestion at *Tact.* pr. 7 that Trajan may use the section headings to get to know his treatise in brief, and particularly to locate the topics in which he is particularly interested, is reminiscent of some of what Frontinus says about the ways in which readers might ask specific questions of his *Strategemata*.

A skeptic may argue that we are dealing here more with generic trends than direct interaction: perhaps Frontinus and Aelian were independently adapting methodologies common to technical/didactic writing generally. Another way of putting the question is: are we dealing with (?mere) parallelism here, or with overlaps that have a more interactive dynamic (and what is at stake in making that distinction)? The chronological proximity of their texts and Aelian's certain knowledge of Frontinus' writing might argue for the latter; but even if we are convinced that Aelian's reflections on the use of subheadings are (in part at least) the result of some literary interaction with Frontinus, we are still left pondering its nature and purpose. In particular, could Aelian have expected readers to recognise the parallels – and what does he stand to gain or lose, if we do? Given the trouble he takes to pigeon-hole Frontinus' contributions to the military writing tradition, it is unlikely that Aelian hoped to gain authority by obviously emulating his Roman predecessor; on the other hand, he may benefit from some indirect comparison, by mastering the art of military 'indexing' at much greater length himself.

Another Latin text that begins with a lengthy contents page – on quite another scale, of course – is Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. The reasons that Pliny gives for this sound remarkably similar to what Aelian wrote a generation later,²² although Pliny arguably had his tongue more firmly in his cheek. Dedicating his work to Titus, Pliny explains at the end of a long prefatory letter that out of deference to Titus' public responsibilities he has included a list of contents so that his addressee need not spend time reading the text itself:

Since, in the midst of your business, I must consult the public interest, I have attached to this letter a list of the contents of each individual book, and have taken great pains with this so that you are not obliged to read them yourself... (NH, Pref. 33)

²² As Dain 1946: 52 also noted.

There are obvious verbal and thematic echoes in Frontinus' later introduction to his *Strategemata*; but even more striking are the overlaps with Aelian's preface. Both Pliny and Aelian move from their imperial addressee's 'busy-ness', to their compression of their respective books into digestible format, to a purpose clause which concludes with what their dedicatees will NOT have to do ('read all of this'/'waste your time'). Might Pliny's letter to Titus have been in Aelian's mind (and perhaps deliberately invoked as an intertext) when he penned his own dedication to Trajan? After all, Pliny's epistolary address is a self-conscious reflection on the very nature of imperial dedications, a dedicatory experiment which must still have been well-known in Aelian's day.

If I am right that Aelian's preface ends by triggering thought of Pliny's dedication to Titus, and perhaps also of Frontinus' *Strategemata*, we find ourselves reading a rather more complex text than it first appears. Aelian's occlusion of Latin literary activity in his account of the composition of his *Tactical Theory* obscures from view an underlying set of cross-cultural cross-fertilisations between his literary endeavours and some recent Roman military and scientific writing. Indeed, if he wrote his preface in conscious relation to Pliny's dedicatory epistle (among other works), Aelian might even have been trying to write himself into some distinctively Roman literary traditions, particularly the tradition of building authoritative relations with one's imperial addressee.²³ An imperial address hooks in all sorts of readers, of course, securing engagement from a spectrum of people through the imperial lens; it also establishes parallels with other works that start in the same way, Roman and Greek, anchoring the text in a writing community that was defined not by cultural or ethnic specificities but by hierarchical relations between authors and imperial authorities. The echoes of Pliny's dedication in Aelian's address potentially lay claim to common ground between the two, in other words, to a shared authorial experience and textual status that cut across linguistic and cultural divides. Indeed, they open up a literary space in which cultural difference (being Greek OR Roman) might not count.²⁴

That said, the parallels we can see between Aelian's preface and Pliny's dedication also draw attention to significant cultural differences. Comparison with Pliny – an elite insider, addressing his imperial dedicatee with daring familiarity – sets Aelian's more formal, distanced

²³ Not an exclusively Roman tradition, of course, but one honed by a host of Roman writers before Aelian tried his hand at it: for instance – just in the technical/didactic realm – Vitruvius, and Frontinus in the *De Aquis*.

²⁴ Cf. Lavan in this volume (p. 000) on the multi-dimensional nature of identity-construction in this period, with the Roman/non-Roman divide not always the most salient aspect.

interactions with Trajan into sharp relief.²⁵ In particular, Pliny's jovial references to the time he spent on military campaign with Titus expose the gulf between a well-established Roman equestrian-cum-author and a Greek military theorist trying to gain authority in the Roman world. I am not suggesting that such comparisons are an intended consequence on Aelian's part; rather, they are a telling example of the ways in which interaction between texts can sometimes work against the interests of the author who triggers that interaction (whether consciously or not). To put it another way, they underline the complexity of cross-cultural literary interactions, which sometimes function combatively, sometimes more collaboratively, and sometimes in unpredictable, uncontrollable ways.

In sum, Aelian begins his *Tactical Theory* by opening up dialogue between himself, Trajan and Frontinus and between Greek and Roman military science and writing. These interactions prove to be distancing tactics, however, which, far from forging cross-cultural bridges, strengthen cultural divides. Aelian throws up various (well-worn) barricades, making the Greek military writing tradition seem impervious to any contemporary Roman influence – and full of life yet. At the same time, he visualises his Roman patrons just about interacting with it (peering admiringly over the parapets, if you like), in ways which hint at their evolution from militarily expert, all-conquering Romans into enthusiasts for Greek tradition. The (limited) literary or intellectual interaction that is anticipated by Aelian's text is thus largely one-way, and a reversal of recent military encounters (conquered Greece threatens to capture her savage conqueror all over again,²⁶ not just with literature but with a literary tradition that might shape future Roman military practice). That said, Aelian's preface shows traces of some near-contemporary Latin literature; for all the defensive barriers he puts up, the literary and cultural interactions visible in his treatise travel in more than one direction, showing cross-fertilisation between camps that Aelian seems to want us to keep conceptually apart.

Arrian's Tactics

While Aelian appears to have had no hands-on military experience and casts himself in the role of scholar rather than practitioner, Arrian enjoyed a successful senatorial career which involved some military service and plenty of opportunity to see Roman and non-Roman practices

²⁵ Of course, Titus was not emperor when Pliny dedicated the *Natural History* to him; Pliny takes a more respectful approach when he mentions Vespasian (*N.H.* 1 pr.1).

²⁶ Horace *Ep.* 2.1.156-7.

coming into contact. Indeed, this provincial from Bithynia became fully embedded in the Roman establishment, serving as consul in AD 129/130 and becoming one of the first Greeks to govern multiple Roman provinces (Baetica in the late 120s, Cappadocia in 131).²⁷ In that capacity, he took command of two Roman legions and a number of auxiliary troops, and was called upon to repel an invasion by the Alani in 135. That campaign inspired one of his texts – the *Acies* (or *Ectaxis*) *contra Alanos*, whose fusion of Roman and Macedonian military models has long been noted.²⁸ He also wrote (inter alia) a lost description of Roman infantry exercises (mentioned at *Tact.* 32.3);²⁹ and his *Tactics* was perhaps intended as a sequel to that, for the section on Greek tactics (which draws on the same source material as Aelian’s treatise) is followed by a short section on contemporary Roman cavalry exercises which Arrian explicitly invites us to read alongside that infantry material. Arrian’s discussion of ancient Greek tactical science is thus embedded in a wider project that was concerned as much, if not more, with contemporary Roman military activity.³⁰

Perhaps as a result, Arrian’s *Tactics* engages in rather different cross-cultural interactions from Aelian’s *Tactical Theory*. The first three quarters of the text review Greek military traditions in strikingly similar ways to Aelian’s text.³¹ However, as well as giving examples of variations in Greek practice (Macedonian, Spartan, Cretan, etc, from a range of different periods as well as places), Arrian introduces various non-Greek parallels (Indian, Ethiopian, Carthaginian, Persian, Scythian, Roman) to clarify and illustrate the military principles he sets out.³² His narrative explicitly invites a range of cross-cultural comparisons, in other words; and far from demarcating Greek military science as a world apart from other traditions, Arrian’s text visualises them on a theoretical continuum. Macedonian practices still emerge as some kind of military ideal, but the similarities that we glimpse between different nations convey an impression of widespread endeavour and even cross-cultural contact, not exclusively Greek expertise. This is already a change from Aelian’s more culturally defensive, distancing tactics; and it prepares the ground for Arrian’s discussion of Roman cavalry training

²⁷ Wheeler 1978: 351; Stadter 1980: 6 (who notes that the governorship of a vital frontier province like Cappadocia ‘marked the end of a special kind of career, carefully differentiated by Trajan and Hadrian from the normal administrative posts in interior provinces entrusted to senators with a minimal experience in military affairs’); on Arrian’s career generally, see Syme 1982.

²⁸ E.g. Kiechle 1964; Stadter 1967; and (responding to both) Bosworth 1977.

²⁹ DeVoto 1993: 101, n. 44 suggests that *Tact.* 32.2 may refer not to a separate treatise but to Arrian’s lost *Parthica*, which analysed Trajan’s Parthian campaigns.

³⁰ On Arrian’s *Tactics* and its place in Arrian’s wider corpus, see Wheeler 1978; Devine 1993; Bosworth 1993. See also Rees/Madsen 2014: 6–7 on Arrian’s composition of a military report in Latin, mentioned at *Periplus* 6.2.

³¹ Stadter 1978 analyses the parallels and differences between the two works.

³² On this deviation from Aelian’s text, see Stadter 1978: 122–7; also Devine 1993: 325–8 on Arrian’s up-dating and Romanizing of Hellenistic tactics.

in the final quarter of the text, which is marked by an insistence on the Romans' conscious and extensive incorporation of non-Roman traditions.³³

At *Tactica* 33.1, Arrian even hints that his discussion may feel impenetrable to Romans themselves, because many of the terms he is about to use (transposed into Greek, of course) are originally Celtic or Iberian.³⁴ In fact, in praising the Romans for their habit of adopting all sorts of customs from other peoples and places, he provocatively claims that most of the laws inscribed on the Twelve Tablets were Athenian in origin – a way of underlining just how hybrid everything 'Roman' was. As in the *Ectaxis* – or what remains of it – the discussion that follows paints a picture of Roman military practices that is strikingly multi-national: Scythian banners, Cantabrian manoeuvres, Celtic throws, even Parthian and Armenian techniques are all subsumed into the 'Roman' cavalry.³⁵ Arrian closes by claiming that this is a particular policy of Hadrian's (*Tact.* 44): indeed, that Hadrian not only sought out foreign techniques with which to train his troops, alongside age-old Roman customs, but also encouraged different ethnic groups to continue specialising in their own native traditions (Celtic, Getic and Raetian). In a final paean of praise, the *Tactics* suddenly veers into verse:

The following words seem to fit the present reign, in this twentieth year of Hadrian's rule, far better than they did ancient Sparta:

'There flourish the spear points of the young men, and the clear-voiced muse, and far-reaching justice, which encourages fine deeds.' (*Tact.* 44)

(The Spanish) Hadrian thus comes across as superlatively Roman in his enthusiastic chasing down and absorption of other nations' practices – a long-established Roman habit – but also as superlatively Greek: indeed, Hadrian's Rome emerges as a Sparta even more Spartan than the original.³⁶

The literary interactivity of Arrian's text is worth noting here: his final lines quote the words of the Greek poet Terpander, which near-contemporary Plutarch had recently quoted in

³³ As Haynes 2013 underlines, the Roman army was itself a driver (not just an example) of extensive cross-cultural interaction and identity shifts in this period. Cf. Bowie 2014, who stresses contemporary Greek disengagement with the Roman army/military activity at this time, especially amongst the Greek elite, which makes Arrian's cultural bridge-building all the more striking.

³⁴ On Arrian's hyperbole here, see Busetto 2013: 230.

³⁵ If anything, the *Ectaxis* is more striking in this respect, not least because the military commander depicted in this extraordinary text is given the name Xenophon.

³⁶ See Uden 2015: 121-45 on Juv. 8, where Roman absorption of other cultures and an increasing trend towards the Hellenizing of Romans emerge as particularly Hadrianic phenomena.

his *Life of Lycurgus* (21), another work that was part of a wider literary project bringing Roman and Greek cultures into dialogue/comparison. The legendary Lycurgus was traditionally given the credit for transforming many aspects of Spartan society, including its military of course, which allows Plutarch to spend much of his biography characterising Sparta itself. The implicit comparison of Lycurgus and Hadrian, brought out by the Plutarchan intertext, is therefore highly complementary. It may even be a response to contemporary criticism of Hadrian's controversial decision, taken soon after his succession, to pull Roman forces back from Trajan's newly-won territory and to consolidate (even shrink) rather than continue expanding the empire: Arrian's insistence on Hadrian's *cultural* imperialism and what he achieved through that (a Spartan ideal, no less) puts a positive spin on (at least some of) Hadrian's military policies.³⁷

As well as praising his emperor, however, Arrian's quotation opens up dialogue with Plutarch's text; and in the process, it draws attention to the ways in which literary interactions can both cement and challenge assumptions about cultural identity. In his *Life of Lycurgus*, Plutarch firmly endorses Terpander's characterisation of the Spartans as accurate, definitive, a description which captures a cultural truth. When Arrian redeploys Terpander's verse to characterise Hadrianic Rome, he not only updates the now-canonical Terpander (whose words, it turns out, are even better applied to a later age); he also sends readers back to Plutarch's recent discussion of what made Sparta so 'Spartan' with thought-provoking questions, from a more Roman perspective, about cultural distinctiveness, 'superiority' and, above all, the authoritative construction of cultural identities. In appropriating verses that Plutarch had used differently, Arrian draws attention to a diversity of outlooks and to the many layers of interaction that shape cultural debate.

Tactical Interactions between Arrian and Hadrian

Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* is not the only near-contemporary text that we might be invited to think of. In fact, the closing section of Arrian's *Tactics* recalls a set of speeches that Hadrian gave after inspecting troops in and around Lambaesis (the Roman army's main base in Africa) in July 128. The speeches were later inscribed, in edited form, on a viewing platform at the

³⁷ Le Bohec 2003: 10-19 offers a useful overview of Hadrian's military policies, noting (19) that historians may have exaggerated the extent to which Hadrian reformed the army; see also Uden 2015: 138-9 on the complexity of responses to some of Hadrian's military decisions (with further references at n. 44).

centre of the parade ground and now survive only in part; but some substantial fragments indicate their general tenor and register.³⁸ Comparison of these with Arrian's later *Tactics* reveals some fascinating overlaps; indeed, as Anna Busetto has shown, there are several phrases in Arrian's Greek which look remarkably like paraphrases or even translations of what Hadrian is recorded to have said in Latin.³⁹ Of course, one might argue that two treatments of the same narrow topic (however divergent their contexts) are bound to cover similar ground and have technical phrasing in common: there are only so many ways one can describe set-piece cavalry manoeuvres. Given how hard Arrian tries to attract Hadrian's attention in this part of the treatise, however, framing his description with a eulogy of the emperor's military policies, it feels more like a strategy than a coincidence.

Hadrian's speeches praise what he has seen: in particular, the honing of tricky techniques and the officers who have been successfully drilling different units.⁴⁰ Hadrian himself figures as the ultimate authority, an experienced Commander-in-Chief with something of the military theorist about him: he critiques what still lacks polish and deals out expert advice. His enthusiasm for some elements of the display also vividly visualises the Roman army in dramatic form, charging fast, wheeling nimbly, and shooting skilfully, as her enemies cower, scared to lift their heads.⁴¹ Some sections read like fantasy battle-narratives-to-come, not just critical assessments of a technical display, in other words: as much as Hadrian is describing training exercises, he is also gauging their effectiveness in ways which look ahead to future (ideally successful) encounters. Hadrian's *adlocutio* is thus a (very loosely) interactive text itself, in so far as it incorporates literary registers and imagery that connect it with both technical and historiographic (perhaps even epic) writing traditions – and no doubt scenes in art and anecdote too – as well as evoking the emperor's own training reforms/instructions.

While Hadrian's authoritative tones faintly evoke a kind of specialist expertise, not just his imperial authority, and almost read like a military manual in places,⁴² Arrian's *Tactics* firmly reclaims the subject-matter of cavalry training for the technical genre, imposing conspicuous levels of technicality and didacticism on it. That is part of the point when he uses a range of specialist terms from different national traditions; but this is embedded in a wider,

³⁸ The best modern edition is Speidel 2006 (whose numbering of fields/fragments I follow); see also Le Bohec 2003.

³⁹ Busetto 2013: 239; Speidel 2006: 73 also notes some parallel wording; see also Voisin in Le Bohec 2003: 33 and n. 119 with additional references.

⁴⁰ The legate Catullinus (in overall command at Lambaesis) earns especially frequent praise; Speidel 2006: 31 notes that Catullinus may have had an editorial hand in drafting the inscription.

⁴¹ See esp. fields 22 (noted by Speidel 2006: 51 for its sudden switch from past tense to 'the storyteller's historical present'), 26, 29 and 30.

⁴² E.g., fields 6 and 26.

universalising approach, which translates the personalised ‘you did’ or ‘you must do’ of Hadrian’s speeches into a generalising set of impersonalised prescriptions that details what the Roman cavalry typically does/should always do (always implicit in Hadrian’s speech of course, but his *adlocutio* never achieves the birds-eye theoretical view that Arrian’s text manages). Significantly perhaps, the slippage between technical description and battle proper does not emerge from Arrian’s text as it does from Hadrian’s speeches: Arrian’s text provides us with snapshots of potentially dramatic manoeuvres,⁴³ but – curtailed/hemmed in as they always are by etymological facts or more technical explanation – they are never allowed to build into more evocative, potentially triumphal scenes. In offering a more detailed, systematic description of Roman cavalry techniques than Hadrian’s speeches ever did, Arrian’s *Tactics* thus reins Roman military activity in somewhat, confining it to the parade ground⁴⁴ and to the pages of a manual in which much older cavalry practices had already been theorised (or fossilised).

What might we read into this? Arrian’s authoritative analysis of Roman cavalry manoeuvres at the end of his *Tactics* might have been motivated by multiple factors: self-promotion (as an expert himself),⁴⁵ favour-currying with Hadrian (whose continued patronage Arrian clearly needed),⁴⁶ perhaps even an interest in some bridge-building between Greek and Roman traditions/institutions (visible in some of Arrian’s other writing, as I noted above).⁴⁷ In fact, as I read it, his interaction with the Hadrianic inscription takes back control of the subject of military training from the emperor/Romans and returns it to the wider sphere of (traditionally Greek) military theorising and writing, but in a new, hybrid Greco-Roman form. That is what I mean when I suggest that Arrian’s cross-cultural interactions are different from Aelian’s, but no less tactical. While Aelian effectively elided Frontinus from the canon of great military theorists, Arrian’s *Tactics* embeds Hadrian within it, raising questions in the process about just how Roman or Greek (or Greco-Roman) his military thinking was.

⁴³ E.g. the Scythian banners at *Tact.* 35, or the descriptions of pole-twirling/sword-work at 43.

⁴⁴ Wheeler 1978 even argues that Arrian’s descriptions evoke a ‘festive performance’, not serious training exercises; also Devine 1993: 332.

⁴⁵ Speidel 2006: 74 raises the possibility of some one-up-man-ship with the Catullinus of Hadrian’s speeches. Cf. Rees/Madsen 2014: 4-5 on Arrian ‘attempting to write himself into a tradition of the textbook Roman governor’ vis-à-vis Tacitus’ *Agricola* and Pliny, *Ep.* 10, in his *Periplus*.

⁴⁶ E.g. Wheeler 1978: 363-5 (but cf. Syme 1982: 203-4). Stadter 1978: 127-8, Bosworth 1993: 259-61 and Busetto 2013 also read flattery into Arrian’s close engagement with Hadrian’s speech and wider military reforms.

⁴⁷ Arrian’s emphatic praise of Roman openness to what is foreign of course served his own ends, as a Bithynian Greek working within the Roman establishment. Cf. Steven Smith’s chapter in this volume, which discusses the cultural openness and hybridity of (his) Aelian’s retelling of the Gilgamesh myth as a subtle commentary both on the cultural hybridity of the author himself and on the wider intercultural interactions that were transforming identity across the empire. On how Arrian’s ‘double’ identity (as ‘both a devoted and proud governor, representing all the interests of Rome, and at the same time someone who was passionately rooted in his Greek cultural background’) might have played with wider readers, see Rees/Madsen 2014: 2-3.

The Lambaesis inscription comes across as a fundamentally homogenising text, whose praise of individual sections of the army connects them with each other by emphasising recurring values and principles.⁴⁸ As the speeches go on, we see the Roman army in Africa building up before our eyes (much as the audience at the displays must have done), so that by the end we are left with the impression of a formidably effective fighting force that is well-drilled in all of its interlocking parts. Evening out qualitative differences (while maintaining a sense that in their discrete ways they all have a powerful role to play) is part of the point here; but there is another kind of homogenisation at work too. Hadrian mentions non-Roman manoeuvres (e.g. the Cantabrian formation) a couple of times in the surviving fragments, but the emphatic Romanness of the inscription's introduction, its frequent mention of different levels of Roman office-holders, and Hadrian's recurrent use of Latin military terminology drowns out those brief references to non-Roman traditions. It is Rome that is on display here, not just the Third Augustan Legion and its auxiliaries, and it is Roman power and Roman identity that emanates from Hadrian's *adlocutio*.

Arrian's text is different, as we have seen. It goes into the Roman cavalry and separates out the different cultural strands. More than that, it tacks its discussion of Roman cavalry onto a much longer section of text that reasserts, as Aelian had done, the significance (perhaps even the practical relevance) of long-standing Greek military traditions. The Roman parallels that Arrian inserts into this Greek section help to bring age-old Greek military science into dialogue/up-to-date with a more contemporary world, as if the latter is not just connected but somehow a natural outgrowth of the former. A sense of continuity is thus hard-wired into the fabric of this text – a continuity that breathes new life into the Greek military writing tradition and the theoretical precepts it aims to pass on.⁴⁹ Admittedly, we do not see Romans adopting specifically Greek practices in Arrian's treatise; they mostly adopt other cultural traditions.⁵⁰ The implication of the text's progression (from Greek to Roman) and of Arrian's recurrent comments on Rome's cultural openness is that they might, however; and that in more

⁴⁸ Cf. Haynes 2013: 76, who underlines ongoing differentiation and argues for *incorporation* of different elements rather than homogenisation.

⁴⁹ See Busetto 2013: 231 on Arrian's clear didactic intentions (unusual amongst contemporary Greek military manuals), not just his display of ancient erudition (cf. Wheeler 1978: 357; and Devine 1993: 331-2).

⁵⁰ Significantly, these other traditions are not represented as being qualitatively different (e.g. less systematic/scientific) than Roman or Greek military practices, as they would be (for instance) in Valerius Maximus, where barbarians tend to be more untutored/instinctive. (I am grateful to Rebecca Langlands for prompting me on this point.)

general terms the Romans are adapters of an essentially Greek system which continues to dominate, as it does physically/visibly in the pages of Arrian's *Tactics*.⁵¹

In his interaction with Hadrian's speech, Arrian even conveys a hint that Hadrian himself has been channelling this Greek science (perhaps even reading Greek military treatises), both in his military reforms generally and in his African *adlocutio*. For by incorporating echoes of Hadrian's speech into his own technical treatise (and in turning up the volume on the specialist, technical elements of Hadrian's original words in the process), Arrian projects an image of Hadrian as an emperor who is already steeped in technical learning and thoroughly indoctrinated in a fundamentally Greek military training tradition. Arrian's engagement with Hadrian's speech not only endorses Hadrianic military principles as compatible with Greek traditions of military science, in other words; it has a transformative effect on it. In reality, it is Arrian who is drawing on Hadrian's text; but the structure of the *Tactics* leaves us with the impression, however faint, that the interactive dynamics also work the other way around: that Hadrian formulated his speech and military policies in response to the kind of theorising which Arrian's treatise embodies, as well as influencing Arrian's subsequent description of Roman cavalry techniques.

Hadrian's *adlocutio* was delivered and inscribed in one, out-of-the-way place in north Africa; but it also represented – and may even have circulated more widely as – an official, imperial vision of the potency of the Roman cavalry under Hadrian's guidance and of Rome's military might more generally.⁵² Arrian's text had a different, probably more widespread circulation, reaching places which the text of Hadrian's speech in all likelihood did not. The dialogue that I have examined between them remind us that 'literary' interactions crossed boundaries of genre, audience and medium, as well as language and culture;⁵³ but also that such (transformative) interactions were often intensified through engagement with whole literary and cultural traditions, not just individual texts. In particular, the weight of Greek authority at play in Arrian's *Tactics* is enhanced by the fact that it is itself the third or fourth (at least) reincarnation of the same enduring set of tactical precepts. Coming after and looking similar to Aelian's *Tactical Theory* (and other variations of the same material) adds an extra dimension to Arrian's interactions.

⁵¹ Cf. Arrian's comment in the *Anabasis* (3.5.7) that the Romans may have learnt from Alexander how best to govern Egypt (Carlsen 2014: 213).

⁵² See Speidel 2006: 5 on its (long-lasting) local reception.

⁵³ Cf. Nathanael Andrade's chapter in this volume, on the multiple ways (textual and oral) in which knowledge could be exchanged across cultures.

Aelian and Arrian in Dialogue

Juxtaposing Aelian and Arrian's versions of the same source text exposes differences in their respective approaches to literary and cross-cultural interactions. They establish different relations with their Roman addressees, and with the texts and authors which their works reference (or occlude). Aelian emphasises gaps, even gulfs, obscuring connections between Greek writing and Roman military and literary traditions; he also attempts to control the direction – or at least direct our view – of future cross-pollinations, opening up spaces in which we can see important Romans interacting with Greek culture, but not the reverse. Starting from a different base and writing in an altered context, under a different emperor, Arrian exploits (even conjures up) overlaps: he projects parallels and continuity between Greek and Roman military practices, authorities and texts, weaving the two traditions into a complex, almost collaborative relationship with each other. Both kinds of interaction are equally strategic, I suggest – aware, of course, that I am here perpetuating a wider tendency to read combative dynamics into all instances of cross-cultural conversation between Greece and Rome. The military nature of the texts I am looking at makes it particularly tempting to employ military metaphors (of contest, overthrow, annexation, and so on) to talk about the literary and cultural interactions that we can see taking place within them; but Aelian and Arrian's different voices prompt fresh scrutiny not only of the interpretative spin that *we* tend to put on cross-cultural interactivity but also of the recurrent leitmotifs which the texts themselves promulgate.⁵⁴ If the juxtaposition of Aelian and Arrian's treatises shows us one thing, it is that cross-cultural interactions between literary traditions and cultural practices took many forms, even when the same basic material, paradigms and issues were involved. Arrian may make sweeping statements about the ways in which Romans have always interacted with non-Romans, inviting us to see the process in imperialistic terms, and Aelian may strike a belligerent tone which spins interaction as a series of cultural clashes; but his complex engagement with Latin literary models, set alongside the tangle of crossovers which Arrian's text hints at between Roman and

⁵⁴ Cf. Uden 2015, who sees an increased 'blurring' of rather than competition between cultural identities in Juvenal's *Satires*; e.g. 204, on Juvenal 15: 'Far from firmly defining Roman behaviour or culture against an alien other, the inconsistencies of the poem suggest precisely the increasing *inability* to maintain clear distinctions between Roman and non-Roman in an Empire in which Roman identity has become an increasingly capacious category.' See Peirano 2013: 84-5 (and n. 11 for further references) on the ways in which metaphors can both inform and distort literary criticism, particularly in relation to intertextuality.

Greek thinking, doing and writing, exposes other, more synergetic aspects of cross-cultural interactivity – the labyrinthine reality behind all the posturing.

As well as reminding us how differently individual authors could choose to manage and visualise cross-cultural interactions, Aelian and Arrian's treatises underline the role played by literary interactivity itself in forging new dialogic spaces for cross-cultural cross-fertilisation. As 'technical' treatises, Aelian and Arrian's works operate at the interface between literature and practice: embedded in established literary traditions that trace their origins all the way back to Homeric epic, they also claim to intervene in 'real-life' military practice, offering important insights into the complex relationship between textual and extratextual (inter)activity. They also alert us to the ripple-effects of such interactivity: in small but significant ways, Aelian and Arrian both shaped the arena for further cross-cultural interactivity beyond their own works. Aelian's engagement with Frontinus, for instance, as (deliberately) limited it was, both acknowledged and helped to embed a literary tradition whereby Greek experts measured their authority in relation to Roman counterparts (not just the other way around). Arrian's interaction with the spoken/recorded word of his emperor, meanwhile, embraced and perhaps boosted a trend which other chapters in this volume discuss, which saw increased levels of interplay between literary and documentary/public texts. I am not suggesting that either treatise was revolutionary individually; rather, that the cross-cultural interactions they engaged in contributed to a wider culture of interactivity that was evolving all the time.

In fact, part of the point of setting Aelian and Arrian alongside each other has been to illuminate the impact of such literary interactivity over time. Written around twenty years apart, Aelian's *Tactical Theory* and Arrian's *Tactics* arguably reflect the specific times in which they were produced, with Aelian's agonistic championing of Greek science perhaps a response to Trajan's ongoing empire-building (among other things), and Arrian's bridge-building approach more in keeping with Hadrian's conspicuous engagement with Greek cultural traditions and investment in cross-culturality more generally. Arrian's approach may even gain exposure and heightened meaning precisely because it reworks Aelian's treatment of the same material: the differences between the two texts are part of Arrian's interaction with Hadrian and Hadrian's Rome, in other words. Indeed, in dialogue with Aelian's text, Arrian's *Tactics* potentially signals change not just in military context, political atmosphere and cultural trends but also in the development of the military writing tradition itself: the cultural bridge-building of Arrian's treatise, which emerges particularly strongly through contrast with Aelian's work, may mark not just a difference of idiom between two individual texts but a new direction for their genre,

or an aspiration at least for the onward evolution of Greek (and/as Greco-Roman) military writing.⁵⁵ Arrian does not interact explicitly with Aelian's treatise; but by bringing them into dialogue and considering the possibility of some indirect interactivity – at the point of consumption, if not of composition – we can get a glimpse of the impact which successive layers of interaction could have on long-standing literary and cultural traditions. If Arrian's *Tactics* triggers thought of Aelian's *Tactical Theory* – and, above all, its entrenched position on Greek military science, its occlusion of Latin military writing, and its skirmishes with Frontinus and Trajan – its own reflections on cross-cultural connections become as much a tussle between Arrian and Aelian as between Arrian and Hadrian for ownership of/authority in (what was once exclusively Greek) military theory.

⁵⁵ Military realities on the ground must have emboldened Arrian to imagine a different onward relationship between Roman military practice and Greek military writing: not only the changing status and use of non-Roman auxiliaries, for example, but also Hadrian's halting of Roman imperial expansion, which altered Roman imperial/military identity as well as agenda. Arrian's *Tactics* did not have any discernible impact on later military writing, but his openness to cultural exchange (rather than defensiveness) was clearly part of a wider trend. On Polyaeus' slightly later *Strategika*, for example, see Pretzler 2010 and Morton 2010, who argues (132) that it should not be read as the work of 'a Greek lamenting his lost culture, or trying to assert the superiority of his own people to foreign masters.' Rather, the *Strategika* 'shows a Macedonian advocate and intellectual offering lessons in the style of his Hellenistic predecessors to the leaders of the Graeco-Roman world in full expectation of a warm reception... Polyaeus expresses the growing Roman attachment to Greek civilisation, and vice versa.'