

the **IMPACT OF** **ALEXANDER** the **GREAT**



European
Problem
Studies

Civilizer or Destroyer?

Edited by
Eugene N. Borza



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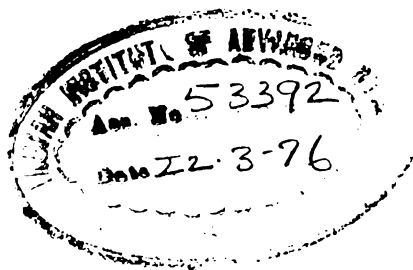
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Defaced bas-relief from Persepolis showing
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BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF ALEXANDER'S LIFE

- 356 B.C. Alexander's birth
- 338 Victory of the Macedonians over an allied Greek army at Chaeronea. Alexander commanding Macedonian left wing.
- 338-37 Philip of Macedon organizes Greek city-states into a Hellenic League.
- 336 Assassination of Philip. Alexander is crowned.
- 334 Alexander crosses Hellespont into Asia.
- 334-32 Campaigns in Asia Minor and the Levant.
- 332-31 Alexander in Egypt.
- 331 Defeat of Darius at Gaugamela. Babylon and Susa fall to Alexander.
- 330 Persepolis sacked and burned by Alexander.
- 330-27 Campaigns in Central Asia.
- 327-25 Campaigns along Indian frontier.
- 325-24 Return to Babylon.
- 323 Alexander's death at Babylon.

Introduction

*Alexander died, Alexander was buried,
Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is
earth; of earth we make loam; and why of
that loam, whereto he was converted, might
they not stop a beer-barrel?*

—Hamlet Act V, Scene 1

Prince Hamlet's comment on the transitory nature of matter is one of the more perceptive observations made about Alexander during the past four centuries. And yet it is slightly shocking to the modern mind (as it was to Shakespeare's age) to think that the physical remains of the world's conqueror might achieve such an ignominious use.¹

Fortunately we are not obliged to speculate on Alexander's end. We are mainly concerned here with his impact on the history of the Mediterranean and western Asian worlds. Yet Alexander's reputation does not rest so much for us on any precise knowledge of his actual exploits as it does on the legend created about him. (This was even more true for Shakespeare's contemporaries, which makes the force of Hamlet's comment all the more striking.) It is precisely the existence of a legendary romance about Alexander that has created an enormous intellectual problem for anyone who wishes to seek the sober truth about the king's impact. In one sense the problem is psychological as much as scholarly, as two sets of facts con-

stantly intrude upon our attempt to make historical sense of the young Macedonian's career. The first set are these: At eighteen years of age he was already an able military commander, and had also acted as regent of his father's kingdom; at twenty he was king; at twenty-two he crossed from Europe to Asia; at twenty-six he had forced the capitulation of the mightiest empire the Western world had yet seen; at thirty he had reached the edge of the known world at the Indian frontier; and he was dead before his thirty-third birthday. A rather straightforward set of data, beyond dispute, and yet implying that we are in the presence of an unusual, if not extraordinary, man.

The second set of facts depends on the first, for, unless one is willing to accept the extreme view that this startling career was mainly personal luck and external happenstance, one must admit that some uncommon personality was responsible for this unusual accomplishment. In other words Alexander's *personality* confronts us at every step in our search for meaning. And it is ironic that this very personality remains the most enigmatic aspect of Alexander studies.² Thus we are forced to examine a series of historical events which may have altered the course of European and Asian history without any certain understanding of the major motivating force behind what happened.

Alexander ranks as a world-figure. (Whether he deserves this honor is one of the problems raised in this book.) His place has been secured because since his own time many generations have been attracted to him, both because of what he did and because of what he has seemed to be. At the risk of repetition it must be emphasized that it is difficult to separate the two, for the man is the personality that pushed him, and the result of that drive is the historical impact. In the most coldly objective terms Alexander was a remarkably successful general. His military competence can be measured not only by his ability to devise and execute tactics in a variety of situations, but also by his capacity to lead men during the stress of extreme hardships. But even here, in this attempt to apply the most rational criteria for judgment, we are drawn again to the factor of personality. Since it is unavoidable, it may be worth pursuing for the moment.

Alexander was something entirely *new*,³ in some respects he represented a revolution in the ancient world. Unencumbered by the political ideologies or behavior patterns of city-state Greeks, he dared dream as no one before him, and do what no one had ever accomplished.⁴ Lacking the constraints of ideology he was free to pursue whatever line appealed to him; only the pressures of the Macedonian court and the exigencies of acting on an alien stage can be shown to have been effective in restricting his actions. He broke out of the rigid mold of Classicism and loosed on mankind a force which would in time give rise to new political institutions, social customs, and modes of addressing philosophical and religious issues. There were no boundaries to Alexander's ambitions, and few restraints on the exercise of his talents. Only death intervened, and, if the ancient world did not fully grasp what he

did, it understood what he was. The uncommon rush of events on a vast scale which was his life made him a subject of interest, and his death in the flush of young manhood almost certainly helped create the legend about him.

But we must leave the fascinating (and eternal) struggle to perceive the complexities of Alexander's personality, and turn to our investigation of his influence. The first two sections of this book concern themselves with problems of historical methodology. The selections here are included to afford some insight into the dilemma of modern historians, as well as provide some examples of the ancient evidence for Alexander's life.

The section on "Alexander and the Asians" offers a number of interpretations on what Alexander accomplished in Asia, where in some respects the influence of his passing was most dramatic. In the next section, the "Brotherhood of Mankind," theory will be investigated; more than any other one of Alexander's alleged ideas, this has occupied most space in modern literature.

Three theories concerning the king's "Personal Motivation" mark the next section, and pick up in some detail certain aspects of this intriguing study about which something was suggested a few paragraphs above. "Alexander's Achievement" is concerned with demonstrating the wide diversity of views regarding the king's historical legacy. Finally, Arnold Toynbee treats us to a flight of fancy in "If Alexander the Great had lived on." While Toynbee's essay is an exercise in an intellectual game which is a favorite of historians, it also has a serious intent behind it; as usual, Toynbee is stimulating, even if controversial.

We begin with a few straightforward, unalterable facts. A young king from a somewhat remote area of the Greek world, having inherited his father's conquest and reorganization of Greece, crossed over into Asia with a few thousand infantry and horses. Within about nine years he brought to an end Persian rule in a large area of the western and southern Asian land mass, and became master of an empire that stretched from Egypt to the Indian subcontinent. And then he died quite suddenly at Babylon in his thirty-third year (June 323 B.C.), bequeathing a legacy of legend and fact about himself that has intrigued men ever since. The life and career of Alexander III of Macedon (also called "the Great") has provoked considerable controversy, and the opinions about his impact on the history of that part of the world have ranged to all extremes.

We are concerned here with one general theme, the nature of his historical achievement. We will not address ourselves to "good" or "evil"; that is not to say that the historian should not ultimately devote himself to such matters;⁵ the historian may still be what the ancients conceived of as teacher about moral issues. But that is another story. The historian must first attempt to perceive some of the basic truths about what actually happened in the past. This is no mean task. In Alexander's case we must attempt to understand what he accomplished in this brief, star-struck career. Was he like "a meteor, a mere flash across the firmament, to light

up the sky and die away," (as a writer once described a certain queen from a later period) or was Alexander a true mover of history; if the latter, what was the nature of that impact?

In the political chaos that followed Alexander's death (one suspects that the empire itself rested mainly on the force of his personality) the generals who competed to succeed him attempted to tie themselves to Alexander in order to create a base for legitimacy. But all failed as there was no true successor; force of arms decided all outstanding issues. The eastern parts of the empire reverted to native rulers while the western areas eventually formed themselves into three major Hellenistic kingdoms, all ruled by Macedonian commanders who had survived the Wars of Succession.

In subsequent years the eastern Mediterranean developed two main currents of thought concerning Alexander. The Greeks, who had never liked him very much while he was alive, either paid little court to his memory or expressed an active hostility. The latter was in some cases a tenet of certain philosophical schools which resented the fact that this most famous pupil of Aristotle had violated both philosophy and honor in his maltreatment of Callisthenes. Callisthenes, a kinsman of Aristotle, had accompanied Alexander into Asia, but eventually ran afoul the king, was imprisoned, and later died. Thus Alexander himself became an object of philosophical-rhetorical exercises: the perfect example of the important man and student of philosophy who went bad. It is hard to know how pervasive the concept was. There are reflections of it in later literature, but the extent of the portrait's influence is quite uncertain.

The second major attitude was that expressed in the successor kingdoms. Macedonia, of course, viewed Philip and Alexander as their own; the Seleucid monarchs in Syria could hardly fail to be aware of the magnitude of the impression that Alexander had made there. But it was in Egypt, where Alexander, as successor to the Pharaohs, had been worshipped as a living god, that the deepest impression was made. It was here that king worship, the deification of the living monarch, first became a policy among persons of the Greek-Macedonian background; this occurred within half a century after Alexander's death. It was in Egypt that the very body of Alexander reposed in a special sarcophagus in the royal mausoleum in the city that bore his name, a kind of symbol of the continuity of rule from the king who had been a living god through his Hellenistic heirs in the dynasty of the Ptolemies. Thus we may note both a certain scepticism or hostility among the Greeks, and a virtual veneration in the new kingdoms of the Hellenistic world.

In some respects the Roman view of Alexander reflected the Roman historical experience. The people who first became the rulers of Italy, then of the whole Mediterranean world, initially expressed disdain for Alexander's accomplishments. ("If Alexander had come to Italy, he would not have defeated us," or "If Alexander were alive now, he would soon know who was master.") But it was always *Alexander* who drew the comparison, especially as the Romans penetrated deeper

into the East and became aware of the living legend there. In time prominent Romans sought to compete with the legend: but when it became clear that the memory of Alexander was much more deeply rooted and sanctified by time than the ephemeral policies of Roman generals, competition gave way to emulation. And thus Roman emperors paid homage to the corpse at Alexandria, or created special military units in imitation of Alexander's Companions, or planned to follow his track into Asia. One even took his name!

A considerable literature about Alexander had sprung into existence, some of it pure romantic fantasy, some the result of rhetorical exercises, and some a serious attempt to set down the truth about the king's career. The popularity of this literature is well-attested by ancient authors, and served to keep alive much legend and some few facts about Alexander. The European Middle Ages saw a whole new genre of Alexander romances come into being,⁶ and it is the continuing work of scholars to measure the impact of the legend upon the written and oral traditions of not only European languages and literatures but also those of peoples living in an area reaching from southeast Asia to the British Isles.

If one generalization may be permitted it is quite simply that the image of Alexander which emerged into modern history was highly romantic. A hero among kings, knight-adventurer, religious mystic—there are others, all forms so distorted or inflated that one could hardly recognize the young Macedonian warrior who left home to conquer the Persian Empire.

The modern age, however, brought with it not only the rediscovery of classical writers and other early evidence bearing on Alexander's life, but also a number of increasingly refined techniques for reconstructing and evaluating the events of antiquity. With the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came the development of "scientific" historical studies, that is, the writing of history based upon the rational analysis of texts, the fuller understanding of language use, the criticism of evidence, the corroboration of archaeological discoveries, and the application of principles drawn from the newly-emergent social sciences, especially economics. Thus the stage was set for the reemergence of Alexander as a historical, rather than legendary, entity.

No amount of rational method in historical study has ever quite been able to displace certain personal idiosyncrasies in the investigators themselves. Thus the modern image of Alexander, while heavily dependent on the use of the techniques of rational inquiry, still often reflects the personality of the historian.⁷ The diversity of portraits of Alexander has made for interesting reading, and each has contributed in its own way to lend new and different dimensions to the king's character. To the extent that Alexander's policies were reflections of his personality, the assessment of this impact depends upon the sort of personal outlook that the historian brings to his task. For in fact we are dealing with a set of relative "truths" based on minute bits of evidence and subject to developing modes of intellectual criticism as well as the vagaries of our own personalities.

Thus the debate about Alexander's achievement has been extended and complex. This collection of readings has as its purpose to illustrate examples of the various views concerning Alexander's historical impact; it also seeks to incline the reader toward further study of this unusual man.

Notes

1. Hamlet does not rest content with Alexander; thus the quatrain which follows immediately:

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

2. At least two distinguished Alexander scholars have perceived this. Ulrich Wilcken: "... every student has an Alexander of his own," *Alexander the Great* (New York, 1967), p. xxix, and Ernst Badian: "We all interpret the great drama of Alexander in terms of our experience and our dreams," *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (New York, 1964), p. 192.
3. Those who conceive of Alexander as recreating the Heroic Age, the semi-mythical account of Achilles' drive to the East, and possessing the characteristics and outlook of a Homeric warrior-king, would argue that the king was really something very *old*.
4. This is not, however, to suggest that Alexander's dreams or actions were necessarily rational or based on some notion of systematic change.
5. For example, see the concluding selection by Arnold Toynbee, whose basic premise is that had Alexander lived on, the world would today be a better and happier place.
6. An excellent comprehensive survey of this material can be found in George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge, 1956).
7. Theodor Mommsen, one of the great historians of the modern period, once wrote: "Those who have lived through historical events, as I have, begin to see that history is neither written nor made without love or hate."

**Part
One**

**THE PROBLEM:
ALEXANDER
AS A CREATION
OF HISTORIANS**

Chapter 1 **THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ALEXANDERS**

C. B. WELLES (1901-1969), late professor of ancient history at Yale University, was one of America's leading papyrologists and students of Hellenistic history. Welles' best work on Alexander took the form of short pieces, essays and reviews, one of which appears below and gives us some notion of the controversial nature of Alexander characterizations among modern scholars.

There have been many Alexanders. Probably there will never be a definitive Alexander. Before the War we had the documentary and statistical Alexander of Berve, the reasonable Alexander of Wilcken, the mythical Alexander of Radet, and the gentlemanly and sporting Alexander of Tarn. Then we had a humanitarian Alexander from our own C. A. Robinson, Jr., together with some additional Alexanders of no other consequence than to indicate the inescapable appeal of the Conqueror. It would seem that there was nothing new to say about Alexander, no new conception possible. But we should never discount the educational value of a tremendous historical event. Schachermeyr's Alexander is a conception which would have been impossible before Hitler and World War II, and is, in my opinion, the best

C. B. Welles, review of F. Schachermeyr's *Alexander der Grosse, Ingenium und Macht*, in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 55 (1951), 433-36. Reprinted by permission of *American Journal of Archaeology*. Some German quotations of the original have been translated into English.

Alexander thus far. But I hope that our historical sensitivities may be quickened in the future at smaller cost.

The problem of Alexander is more than a purely historical problem. It is, essentially, a psychological one. Usually in Ancient History we are confronted with fragmentary and inadequate sources, from which the most probable story must be reconstructed, or, more rarely, with a single overpowering source from which we vainly struggle to escape: a Thucydides or a Tacitus. The problem of Alexander is comparable, actually, only to the problem of Jesus. In both cases there is ample evidence, each appropriate to the career and importance of the individual. In both cases the evidence is a generation or two later than the events in question (there is a little contemporary evidence in the case of Alexander, of course), and in both cases the evidence is contradictory and tendentious. One's difficulty is to know what to believe.

In the last analysis, this leads to a circular line of argument. Approaching Alexander *de novo*, the historian is confronted with a number of later narratives, all differing among themselves, all drawing in one way or another on earlier accounts which he must reconstruct. Noting that these earlier accounts do not agree, he then develops a theory of the circumstances, background, and point of view of the writer. By this time the personality of Alexander has begun to take form in his imagination. Having decided that one writer wished to present Alexander from one point of view, and another from another, he has then an explanation of the differences of treatment which he has noted—and which themselves have led him to this theory of the authorship—but is still faced by the choice of what to believe. Which source found the truth to his liking and told it, which altered it to fit his taste, which embellished or invented in the attempt to make *his* Alexander convincing? When Callisthenes tells of Alexander's cutting the Gordian knot with his sword, while Aristobulus states merely that he pulled out the yoke-pin, and Ptolemy omits any mention of the incident altogether, how is one to choose? Or is one at liberty to discard all the sources' testimony and to decide that Alexander really untied the knot honestly, according to the rules of the game, because it would have been unlike Alexander to cheat? It is honest to confess that, in the last instance, we make of Alexander what we want or think reasonable.

To Schachermeyr, Alexander is neither what he wants nor thinks reasonable. The events of the last years in Germany showed him that such a "Titan," to use the term of which he is most fond, need not be a comfortable or attractive character with whom to spend a quiet evening. He was actually a person of "kriegerische Kraft and Brutalität" [of warlike strength and brutality]; Cassander was no gentle personality himself, but the recollection of Alexander's anger in later years still made him tremble. Alexander conquered much of the world, might have conquered the rest of it; perhaps he could not conquer only the monsoon rains of India, the blasting heat of Gedrosia, or the summer stews of Babylonia. Perhaps we should not call him, in Tarn's famous phrase, "fortunate in his death," doubting that he would

have gone on to some colossal disaster had he lived to attempt his “last plans.” He might have conquered the West, though Schachermeyr, who has great respect for Rome, doubts that he would have had lasting success there. But success does not make him admirable. He tolerated no rivalry and no opposition. He began his reign with the massacre of all the male members of his father’s house (save, of course, the harmless Arrhidaeus). He killed his most devoted and most deserving followers: Philotas, Parmenion, Clitus, Callisthenes. He was quite prepared to sacrifice the austere and irreproachable Antipater when his usefulness was over. He contemplated extensive exchanges of population, and he felt no compunction in staging mixed marriages for his Macedonians and Greeks on a scale which Schachermeyr compares to cattle breeding. Confronted with such a personality, are we to believe that he exchanged shields with Achilles, but did not drag the valiant Batis living behind his chariot after the stubborn defense of Gaza? Such an individual, whether genius or madman, can not be made amiable even after two thousand years, but he is a convincing son of Philip and Olympias and a fitting teacher for the Successors, who were to fight and betray each other mercilessly for the next half-century.

Alexander was a portent, terrible and more than human to himself and to his contemporaries, even if the half of his success was due to the armament, technical skills, and incomparable fighting qualities of Philip’s army.

From the beginning, Alexander felt himself very little Macedonian, and very little attached to Philip. After his return from exile, he received from Aristotle a detached point of view, and regarded Macedonia as peripheral to his world. Philip stood in his way, and while there is no reason to suppose that Alexander had anything to do with the murder of his father—it is apparently impossible that he could have had—it nevertheless did come at precisely the right time. To finance his initial expedition, he sold off his royal estates, purposely loosening his connection with his father’s country, and while he thought largely as a Greek, he had no wish to be a Greek hegemon either, and bound the liberated Ionian cities to himself personally, rather than to the Hellenic League. This desire to free himself from all ties, especially national ones, lay back of the rejection of Darius’ offer after Issus (Philip, like Parmenion, would certainly have accepted it), of his pilgrimage to Ammon to get a new father, of his persistent quarrel with the Macedonian nobility, and of his progressive subordination of the Macedonian soldiers from the enrollment of Iranian cavalry in Sogdiana to the creation of an Iranian phalanx and the mutiny at Opis. His rule was to be absolute, and only those who promoted this retained his favor and affection, Hephaestion most of all, and the Greeks: Eumenes, Nearchus, and Medius. His generals must have regarded him with awe mixed with fear and jealousy. Except for the appalling vacuum left by his death, his departure can have been regretted by hardly anyone.

Militarily he was a genius. That is only to state the obvious. Schachermeyr is not a military historian, and the tactics, logistics, and composition of Alexander’s army do not receive great emphasis. Nevertheless Schachermeyr has personally visited

many of the areas of Alexander's campaigns and battles, and has a surprising number of useful suggestions to make concerning them, and he has brought into sharp focus an aspect of Alexander's strategy which has been little noted. When it served his purpose, Alexander was not at all beyond stealing a victory. He out-maneuvered the Uxians on the way to Persepolis, and he tricked Porus. His early maneuvers in Thrace and Greece showed that he had a natural mastery of the double strategic surprise, that of hitting the enemy from an unexpected direction at an unexpected time. But the three great battles of the Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela, like the seemingly useless siege and sack of Tyre, were won the hard way, the enemy in each case selecting the battlefield and the battle maneuver. In each case, Alexander won through sheer, brute force, and the impact of the victories was consequently great. Later he was, similarly, to engage the nomad on the steppe and the feudal baron on his mountain crag. No one has known better than Alexander how to exploit the psychology of victory. No conqueror had less need to repeat victories, or was more successful in winning the allegiance of the conquered. He made it clearly hopeless to oppose him.

Alexander was great because of this power. Personally his nature was dual as are all natures, but in him, this Janus quality existed in gigantic proportions: "on the one hand the radiant hero, charming as a friend to his intimates, as a leader to his army, as the father-figure to the enlisted man; on the other hand he was the well-known terrifying, menacing, angry, gloomy king." He could charm as well as terrify. His planning was not only immense, but also beyond any considerations of logic or knowledge. . . . Schachermeyr credits Alexander with the introduction into the West of the concepts of charity and tolerance, but these, like the related concepts of harmony, peace, and world-brotherhood, are products of the world state and naturally, as Bolkestein has demonstrated, arose in the world states of the Middle East, where the relationship of man to man is equality in subjection to the higher, where subjection is met by kindness. It is not for nothing that the Eastern greeting is "Peace," while the Greeks still say "Rejoice."

Viewed in this light, it becomes clear why the Greek thinkers of the fourth century insisted on the superiority of the Greeks and of Greek culture. It has become popular, almost stereotyped, in the last years to regard their attitude as bigoted and provincial, but sooner or later we must give up our worship of the banal and the undifferentiated. It was Greek culture, working with what Schachermeyr calls the young, vigorous, country energies of the Macedonians, which made possible Alexander's conquest of the East; just as later, it was Greek culture which supplied the good in Hellenism. Perhaps it may have been narrow and selfish of the Greeks to develop that culture which still animates our Western World, but they would never have developed it had Greece been an undifferentiated fraction of a world empire, and the tragedy of Alexander is that, in mingling East and West, he damaged the West more than he aided the East. Hellenism there would have been without Alexander. Greeks and the Greek spirit were becoming not only familiar

but more and more dominant in the East before Alexander, and Aristotle preached a warning to his people not to lose in their giving. Alexander's . . . destruction and dislocation, the thousands slaughtered in his battles or condemned to forced residence in strange and remote and unwelcome lands, accelerated the process out of all reason and all control, and let loose on the world a welter of additional wars and disturbances. In all this Alexander was the father of the Hellenistic Age, just as he was also the father of the Roman Empire in more important ways than as the inspiration of Caesar. Viewing the matter in this light, Schachermeyr hopes mightily for our present generation peace and brotherhood, but no more Titans.

So Schachermeyr lifts his treatment of Alexander out of the plane of antiquarianism into that of world history, and gives it not only literary but also philosophical qualities. It will be read for a long time, and will be translated into other languages for a wider audience. Schachermeyr is original and ingenious. He is right to emphasize, I believe, the influence on Alexander's thinking of the great Cyrus, through his teachers and through Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. It is possible even that Alexander was drawing on Persian models in his reorganization of his army in Bactria. Even in the introduction of heavy infantry, Alexander had the precedent of the *kardakes*.¹ I doubt that the Persians had refrained from further experiments in this direction from fear of the political consequences of arming their peasantry, since Greek mercenaries were better and more convenient. Alexander took over the Persian governmental structure, which remained simple even after Darius. The great revolt of the Bactrians and Sogdians occurred when they feared that Alexander would tighten things up.

On the religious plane, Schachermeyr suggests, very ingeniously, that Alexander's progress can be measured by his choice of ancestral heroes. First came Achilles, a romantic personality but a hero of only the lesser sort. After Gaugamela, it was Heracles, who was both god and hero. With India, it was now Dionysus, god truly, and hero only in the sense that he had once been a human being. This led logically, with the return from the East, to the official promulgation of Alexander's own divinity, a conception which probably had been maturing in his consciousness ever since boyhood. It can not be too strongly emphasized that Alexander was a pagan, and that to a pagan, all things are full of gods. This is no sharp dividing line between natural and supernatural, between human and divine. It was difficult for an Iranian to become pharaoh of Egypt or king of Babylon, since these were pagan concepts. For a Macedonian there was no difficulty. No Greek could feel any real objection to recognizing divinity in someone who was out of the ordinary, provided that he either feared or liked him. Only the Cynics would scoff at the idea in itself, and they denied all divinity. Proskynesis was a humiliating practice, but if Alexander thought that he was a god and wished to be so regarded, even the Spartans said, "Why not?" You believed what you believed, but the notion as such was neither unreasonable nor incredible. To accept it was courteous, and involved no political considerations, as has often been pointed out.

No account of Alexander can fail to be fascinating. In addition to those accomplishments which incline the world to forget the unpleasant side of a conqueror—

“The good that men do lives after them;

The evil is oft interred with their bones”—

Alexander had youth and dash and a mysterious, romantic quality about him. No account of him is altogether wrong, even the most romantic, though I doubt that we should ever credit him with the extreme views toward life and death and honor, and temperance in life and in wine which are associated with the English gentry. “He lived hard and took his chances,” to use Tarn’s words again, applied to his generals, who seem to have been, with their smaller capabilities, as tough, proud, and ambitious as Alexander himself. It is Schachermeyr’s accomplishment to have brought out the contemporary and brutal features of the Conqueror, features which the charity of time inclines us to forget.

Note

1. A Persian word for foreign mercenaries, but also their own youth who underwent rigorous military training.—Ed.

Chapter 2 **IN DEFENSE OF ONE'S OWN ALEXANDER**

One of the most prolific American writers about Alexander, C. A. ROBINSON, Jr. (1900-1965), late professor of ancient history at Brown University, responds to Welles' review. It is interesting as an example of the kind of dialogue that has long characterized Alexander scholarship. Moreover, it shows how a historian reacts to someone else's characterization of his own portrait of Alexander, and how, in replying, Robinson recapitulates his own career in scholarship.

“There have been many Alexanders. . . . No account of him is altogether wrong,” says C. Bradford Welles, my good friend, in his extraordinarily interesting and able review of Schachermeyr’s *Alexander der Grosse* (*American Journal of Archaeology* 55 [1951] 433-436). I too admire Schachermeyr’s book, as I make clear in my review (*Classical Philology* 47 [1952] 196-98), though I have also been careful to indicate its limitations. The purpose of this paper is not to outline Alexander’s crimes, which can be had in my monograph, *The History of Alexander the Great* (volume I shortly)¹, but rather to pick up most of Welles’ statements of fact and to show that most of them are indeed altogether wrong.

Far be it from me to suggest that Welles is wrong when he says that in my biography of Alexander² I presented “a humanitarian Alexander”—these easy labels

C. A. Robinson, Jr., “Alexander’s Brutality,” *American Journal of Archaeology*, 56 (1952), 169-70. Reprinted by permission of the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

which the modern world so loves are almost meaningless. When I said, for example, in connection with the destruction of Tyre, that nothing "could hide the fact that the Phoenician coast had been won by the commission of an enormous crime" (108), we no more get the picture of an humanitarian, I submit, than again just for example, in the statement (151) that "Bessus' real crime had been his opposition to Alexander. After his nose and ears had been cut off, he was sent to Ecbatana. . . ." It seems, however, that if one is guided by the evidence to an essentially favorable over-all picture, he is guilty of some sort of hero worship.

Welles concludes his review with these words: "It is Schachermeyr's accomplishment to have brought out the contemporary and brutal features of the Conqueror, features which the charity of time inclines us to forget." Alexander had his brutal side, but Welles has either missed most of the examples or has chosen wrong ones: "He killed his most devoted and most deserving followers: Philotas, Parmenion, Clitus, Callisthenes." This is, of course, the chief list of personal crimes that can be levelled against Alexander. As for Cleitus, Welles is right; and on p. 154 of my biography I said, "At Maracanda one of the great tragedies of Alexander's life befell him, the murder of Cleitus . . . who had saved his life at the Granicus." On the other hand, to add, as Welles does not, that Alexander was drunk rather than innately brutish (and that the years in Bactria-Sogdiana were marked by marching, fighting, treachery, sickness, shaken nerves) is neither to excuse nor to whitewash Alexander; it is simply the historian's duty to bring out all the details. As for Philotas, Arrian (III, 26, 2) tells us that Ptolemy says that Philotas was convicted by "clear proofs and especially because Philotas himself confessed that he had heard of a certain conspiracy which was being formed against Alexander" and had "said nothing to the king about this plot, though he visited the royal tent twice a day" (Chinnock's translation). Whatever else may be said about our sources, no appeal from Arrian, when he is based on Ptolemy, is possible without very good evidence to the contrary. Parmenio's case is difficult but certain. I once showed in this Journal ("Alexander the Great and Parmenio," *American Journal of Archaeology* 49 [1945] 422-424) that in a trial for treason Macedonian law dictated that the relatives of a condemned person must also be put to death; and in my review of Tarn's *Alexander* (*American Journal of Philology* 70 [1949] 192-202) I gave further details. As I summed it up in my biography (146), "The execution of Parmenio, like that of Philotas, was judicial, and yet it is difficult to believe that Alexander, had he wished, could not have persuaded the army to different action. These were men to whom he owed much. . . ." Finally, we shall never know whether Callisthenes died a natural death or was executed by Alexander, as I showed in "The Arrest and Death of Callisthenes" (*American Journal of Philology* 53 [1932] 353-357). Arrian (IV, 14, 1) says on the authority of Aristobulus and Ptolemy that Callisthenes' arrest was connected with the conspiracy of the Pages, concerning which I say in my biography (168): "Though we cannot deny the veracity of Ptolemy's statement, it is probably true that Alexander was influenced by his own

feelings toward the pompous self-appointed historian.” Moreover, Welles is wrong in referring to Callisthenes as one of Alexander’s “most devoted and most deserving followers”; among other things, I showed in my review of Tarn that Callisthenes had long belonged to the opposition.

Welles says that Alexander “contemplated extensive exchanges of population.” In “Alexander’s Plans” (*American Journal of Philology* 61 [1940] 402-412) I indicated that this has no more than tradition behind it.

Welles says that Alexander “felt no compunction in staging mixed marriages for his Macedonians and Greeks on a scale which Schachermeyr compares to cattle breeding.” This is one of the most widely held notions about Alexander and is untrue. Tarn made the same mistake, as I showed in my review: “It is not true that on his return to Susa ‘10,000 of the troops married their native concubines. . . . that unique event in history’ induced by Alexander. . . . It is clear from Arrian (VII, 4, 8; cf. Plutarch, 70, 2) that Alexander gave presents to those who had *already* married, or taken up more or less permanently with a girl, or however you wish to express it. It was only their economic condition (whatever their other status) that was changed at Susa.” We are not to be surprised that all those Greeks and Macedonians found girls during the many years in Asia—or did Alexander really stage something comparable to cattle breeding?

Welles says, “Confronted with such a personality, are we to believe that he exchanged shields with Achilles, but did not drag the valiant Batis living behind his chariot after the stubborn defense of Gaza?” This makes good reading, but is poor history. The incident is not mentioned by Arrian, Diodorus, Justin or Plutarch, a formidable array (especially when you recall the vicious nature of Justin’s history). Curtius, lover of rhetorical bombast, is the sole extant Alexander-historian to give the story. Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Hegesias give it, but with no reference to Achilles, and neither they nor Curtius say that Alexander himself drove the chariot (invented by Grote and perpetuated by Radet). Though I do not agree with his statement, Welles reminds me of his own remark, “It is honest to confess that, in the last instance, we make of Alexander what we want or think reasonable.” Surely modern scholarship has accomplished something with the sources of Alexander and we pay some attention to it?

Welles speaks of Alexander’s “pilgrimage to Ammon to get a new father.” Alexander went to Ammon for military reasons, to confirm that the Libyan desert was in fact a frontier, as I showed in “Alexander’s Deification” (*American Journal of Philology* 64 [1943] 286-301).

Welles speaks of Alexander’s “progressive subordination of the Macedonian soldiers from the enrollment of Iranian cavalry in Sogdiana. . . .” That is certainly one way of putting it. Now, in the forthcoming second volume of the David Robinson Festschrift³ I show—and by that I mean throughout that I give the ancient evidence, which it would be pointless to rewrite here, in the absence of contrary argumentation—that shortly before this happened Alexander’s famous

Thessalian cavalry mutinied and were sent home. Needing troops, Alexander was forced to turn to the barbarian world for replacements. Here we get the motivation, the down to earth motivation, for that most extraordinary feature of Alexander's life, his idea of cooperation between peoples. I gave the ancient evidence for all this in "Alexander the Great and the Oecumene" (*Hesperia* Supplement 8 [1949] 299-304). I would only repeat here that my argument did not rest on Alexander's prayer at Opis and Tarn's interpretation of it—though Tarn may be right—but on dry facts of Alexander's earlier life, where our sources are sound.

Referring with approval to Schachermeyr, Welles says that "Alexander was not at all beyond stealing a victory. He outmaneuvered the Uxians on the way to Persepolis." Let the reader turn to Arrian III, 17: no theft there, just hard fighting, with sensible use of a bypass. Surely Welles would be the last to deny the wisdom of maneuver?

Welles adds, "And he tricked Porus." This is a play on words. Alexander did indeed get across the Hydaspes by a brilliant stratagem, but there still lay before him the hardest battle of his life.

All this looks as if I were hurrying to the defense of Alexander. Actually my appeal is to Clio, and I have considered nothing that Welles has not raised. Of course Welles is right when he says of Alexander, "Personally his nature was dual as are all natures." When all is said and done, however, you have to decide what a man is like on balance. Welles agrees with Schachermeyr that Alexander was a Titan, not "a comfortable or attractive character with whom to spend a quiet evening. He was actually a person of 'kriegerische Kraft und Brutalität.'" It is my hope that John H. Kent reflected the true spirit of my biography, when in his review (*Classical Journal* 43 [1948] 498-500) he referred to Macaulay's verdict on Clive and men who are raised above the ordinary: "Their bad actions ought not, indeed, to be called good; but their good and bad actions ought to be fairly weighed."

Notes

1. Published by Brown Univ. Press, Providence, R. I., in 1953. In this work Robinson divided the incidents of Alexander's Asian expedition into a number of topics or "categories," of which several might relate to Alexander's "crimes."—Ed.
2. *Alexander the Great*, New York, 1947.—Ed.
3. "Motivation for Alexander's Universalism," *Studies Presented to David M. Robinson*, II (St. Louis, 1953), 830-32.—Ed.

**Part
Two**

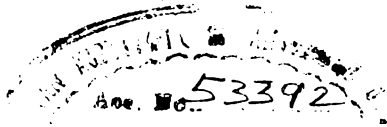
**THE
ANCIENT
SOURCES**

Chapter 3 THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

His main interests centering around the ancient and modern historiography of Alexander, EUGENE N. BORZA (b. 1935) is a professor of ancient history at the Pennsylvania State University. The following selection is excerpted from an introduction to Alexander studies which he wrote for the reprint of Ulrich Wilcken's Alexander the Great.

Our literary evidence for Alexander's life is scanty, resting almost entirely on five biographical or historical accounts plus one Romance surviving from antiquity. In chronological order, these writers are Diodorus, a Sicilian Greek of the mid-first century B.C., who composed a universal history in forty books, fifteen of which survive and one of which (Book Seventeen) deals entirely with Alexander. Quintus Curtius was a Latin author of the mid-first century A.D. whose only known work was a *History of Alexander* in ten books, most of which survive. Possibly the most famous of the ancient writers on Alexander was the moral essayist and biographer, Plutarch, whose *Life of Alexander* was composed early in the second century. Also dating from the second century is an abbreviated account of Alexander in the works of Justin. Justin, however, is nothing more than an epitome of an earlier

From Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, Norton Library (New York, 1967), pp. xxi-xxvii. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. Footnotes omitted.



general history by Pompeius Trogus; it is unfortunate that Trogus is lost, for Justin must be a poor reflection of the original. Finally there survives in complete form the *Anabasis of Alexander* by Arrian, written about the middle of the second century, the most complete and reliable account we possess. One should note also a version of the popular Romance of Alexander which has come down to us in its early fourth-century form. While interesting as a reflection of the classical Romantic tradition about Alexander, little of the Romance can be considered as serious history.

It should be noted that the earliest of our surviving accounts, that of Diodorus, was written nearly three centuries after Alexander's death, and the best version, Arrian, about two centuries later. The most immediate questions facing the modern student, therefore, relate to the sources and traditions which the surviving writers followed. The issue is complicated by the fact that most literature of the Hellenistic period is lost, including the many accounts known to have been written about Alexander in the period immediately after his death. We are, however, not entirely ignorant of the Hellenistic traditions about Alexander. Hundreds of fragments from dozens of lost Alexander historians exist in the works of later classical authors. For example, Plutarch (*Alexander* 54) says: "Chares of Mitylene relates that once during a banquet, Alexander, after drinking, gave the cup to one of his friends. . . ." The beginning of this passage shows that Plutarch had either first or second-hand knowledge of a statement of an earlier writer on Alexander whose name was Chares, whom he quoted for a banquet story, and whose work is lost except for about twenty such fragments. Of some of these lost historians enough fragments have survived to enable the modern scholar to construct some kind of view of the writer's work, and in some cases even criticize our surviving writers on the basis of how dependable their sources seem. Thus a picture, a blurred one, has evolved out of our attempts to reconstruct a three-century-long Hellenistic tradition about Alexander. We know, for example, that Alexander was a most popular figure in serious historical writing and in fiction, that he acquired the epithet "the Great," that famous Romans were compared (or compared themselves) to him, and that his final resting place in Alexandria became a pilgrimage stop for famous men. Alexander stories apparently were common, and, true or not, eventually formed a body of literature only a fraction of which survives.

The original account of Alexander's Asian expedition may have come from Callisthenes of Olynthus. Callisthenes bore the distinction of being the nephew of Aristotle, and may have been recommended to Alexander by his famous tutor. Callisthenes had already established himself as one of the foremost historians of fourth-century Greece, and may have eagerly anticipated becoming the chronicler for the ambitious young king. The task given him by Alexander was two-fold: to keep an official history of the Asian expedition, and to submit frequent accounts to be returned and published in Greece. Macedonian rule did not sit well with the Greeks: although they were perfectly willing to support Alexander in Asia where he

would be little trouble to them, they did not really like him. So it became Callisthenes' responsibility to make Alexander more acceptable to the Greeks, to publish reports of the king's activities which would convince the Hellenes that their ruler was not a backwoods Macedonian boor.

In time, however, the relationship between the king and the historian degenerated over the issue of Alexander's adoption of certain Asiatic ceremonial customs, a feature of court life against which even the flatterer Callisthenes protested. Eventually Callisthenes was arrested and executed. The death of Callisthenes in 327 B.C. may have had a profound effect on the transmission of the Alexander story. First, it brought to a halt the "official" accounts, both the propaganda being sent to Greece, and the chronicle Callisthenes was keeping. Second, his death may have set in motion a reaction against Alexander among the members of Aristotle's school. It has been suggested that many of Aristotle's followers, which included some of the foremost writers and thinkers of the day, adopted a hostile attitude toward Alexander because of the execution of the great philosopher's nephew. The anti-Alexander bias may have come into the accounts which survive to this day. Thus much of the later tradition about Alexander may be based not only on the flattering accounts of Callisthenes himself, but also on this post-Callisthenean hostility.

Another primary Hellenistic tradition was based on personal recollections. Alexander had failed to nominate a successor. Almost immediately after his death, the whole of the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia was caught up in a fierce war among his commanders. This struggle for succession continued for about two decades. By the beginning of the third century B.C., however, the issues had been resolved enough to bring about the division of Alexander's old empire into a number of Hellenistic kingdoms. Moreover, now that the war was over, some of the generals who had fought at Alexander's side began to write their memoirs (generals in every age have never refrained through modesty from putting pen to paper). The most important of these accounts was that of Ptolemy. Ptolemy, who had served under Alexander, managed to establish himself on the throne of Egypt, whence he founded that race of dynasts whose rule over the Land of the Nile ended three centuries later with the death of Cleopatra. Ptolemy's account of Alexander was generally favorable to the king, and may have been designed in part to justify the legitimacy of the author's grip on the rich prize of Egypt. Much of Ptolemy survives in the work of Arrian, our best extant source.

A number of other accounts appeared about the same time, some the personal experiences of those who had accompanied Alexander, others based on hearsay reports of what had happened, and still others concerned only with exotica and filled with the magical wonders of the mysterious East. In all there survive more than four hundred fragments from nearly thirty lost writers whose works were written between Alexander's death and our earliest account, that of Diodorus. Some of these works, as indicated, were serious history or biography, some were concerned only with Asian marvels, some were the products of the rhetorical

schools of Alexandria. Our evaluation of the surviving sources depends in part, therefore, on what has been pieced together about the Hellenistic tradition.

It is agreed that Arrian provides the most reliable ancient evidence, even though he is furthest removed (some five centuries) from the events themselves. Arrian ranks first because he names his sources, he makes clear from time to time the critical method which he is employing, and he does not appear to possess any excessive prejudice about his subject. Moreover, Arrian depended on sources who were contemporaries of Alexander and presumably were in a position to know what had happened. Their proximity to the events, however, does not necessarily guarantee that they always spoke the truth, and Arrian himself exhibits an astonishing naïveté by telling us in his preface: "It seems to me that Ptolemy and Aristobulus are more trustworthy in their narratives, for Aristobulus took to the field with King Alexander; Ptolemy not only also campaigned with him, but being a king himself, to speak falsely would be more shameful to him than to another." We know that kings are not only capable of lying, but that they might have more than ordinary cause to lie if their accounts are in part designed to justify their crowns. This is not to say that Ptolemy did speak falsehoods (as a matter of fact his account, at least that part of it preserved in Arrian, appears to be rather straightforward), but that he, like ordinary men, was not incapable of it.

Of the remaining four accounts, Justin may be dismissed, in Wilcken's words, as a "wretched excerpt" on Alexander although it may yet prove valuable in future attempts to reconstruct the history of his source, Pompeius Trogus. Plutarch's *Alexander* is fascinating and complex. It is especially valuable for a reconstruction of the intrigue at the Macedonian court which led to Philip's death and the succession of Alexander. On the whole, Plutarch's narrative is favorable to Alexander, touches on romance in places, and appears to be derived from a number of sources, some of whom he names. To judge from the number of other writers he quotes, Plutarch was one of the best-read men of antiquity. No one has yet succeeded in establishing the underlying tradition of his *Alexander*. It may be that his eclectic manner of composition makes this impossible.

Diodorus presents even greater problems. Nowhere in his book on Alexander does he name a source, although he shares much with both Plutarch and Arrian. Diodorus' account is generally colorless, frequently confused on questions of chronology and geography, and lacking in the recognition of any great theme or motive in Alexander's life beyond the role which Fortune (*Tychê*) plays in determining the course of men's affairs. This is an author who contains much good material, but who must be used with care and common sense until more can be said about his methods and the traditions he followed.

Curtius provides us with the most colorful of the surviving historical accounts. His *History of Alexander* is highly rhetorical, riddled with impossible speeches, and contains a well-defined unflattering tradition. Its fullness also supplies information about a number of events hardly recorded elsewhere, although it is frequently

difficult to determine to what extent such matters are credible. The nature of Curtius' *History* is such that it has led modern critics to suspect that his main source was Cleitarchus, an extremely popular author who probably wrote in the early third century B.C., and whose flamboyant account of Alexander's exploits may have been the most widely-known in the classical world. Moreover, Curtius even mentions Cleitarchus' name on two occasions, and if Curtius did not rely heavily on Cleitarchus, about whom classical antiquity had a low opinion as a reliable historian, then Curtius' account is at least suspect.

Such is the state of our literary evidence for the life of Alexander. The interpretations of his career which have emerged rest mainly on this small group of sources.

Chapter 4 **ALEXANDER IN EGYPT**

Following his victories in Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, Alexander crossed into Egypt in the autumn of 332 B.C. Without bloodshed the Persian satrap of Egypt surrendered the country to the Macedonians. While there Alexander accomplished two things of note: he founded the city which was to bear his name and eventually became one of the great urban centers of the Mediterranean world, and he journeyed into the Libyan desert to consult the renowned oracle of Ammon at the Siwah Oasis.

The following selection of ancient sources treats these two episodes. While these incidents are not directly related to our main theme, the historical impact of Alexander, they deserve our attention partly because of intrinsic interest, but mainly because the Egyptian episodes are among the mostly fully documented by the ancient writers. Thus the reader has an opportunity to assess the character of the evidence for the life of Alexander.

ARRIAN's account is based on Ptolemy and Aristobulus, as he indicates; in a number of places Arrian not only identifies his source, but states explicitly why he accepted a particular version of a story. Arrian puts the founding of Alexandria before the visit to Siwah, he spends considerable time on the details of the journey into the desert, describes Siwah itself, but, oddly, tells us almost nothing about Alexander at the oracle beyond a terse ". . . he received the answer his soul desired." It is difficult to know whether Arrian himself considered this incident of little account or whether, rejecting the fabulous stories current about what went on, he simply depended on his sources who were virtually silent about the matter. It is an unresolved question whether a) Aristobulus and/or Ptolemy even accompanied Alexander to Siwah, or b) if they were present at Siwah they were in a position to know what went on at the oracle, or c) some other (unnamed) source lies at the base of Arrian's narrative.

Alexander now led an expedition into Egypt, whither he had set out at first (from Tyre); and marching from Gaza, on the seventh day he arrived at Pelusium in Egypt. His fleet had also set sail from Phoenicia to Egypt; and he found the ships already moored at Pelusium. When Mazaces the Persian, whom Darius had appointed viceroy of Egypt, ascertained how the battle at Issus had resulted, that Darius had fled in disgraceful flight, and that Phoenicia, Syria, and most of Arabia were already in Alexander's possession, as he had no Persian force with which he could offer resistance, he admitted Alexander into the cities and the country in a friendly way. Alexander introduced a garrison into Pelusium, and ordering the men in the ships to sail up the river as far as the city of Memphis, he went in person towards Heliopolis, having the river Nile on his right. He reached that city through the desert, after getting possession of all the places on the march through the voluntary surrender of the inhabitants. Thence he crossed the stream and came to Memphis; where he offered sacrifice to Apis and the other gods, and celebrated a gymnastic and musical contest, the most distinguished artists in these matters coming to him from Greece. From Memphis he sailed down the river towards the sea, embarking the shield-bearing guards, the archers, the Agrianians, and of the cavalry the royal squadron of the Companions. Coming to Canopus, he sailed round the Marian lake, and disembarked where now is situated the city of Alexandria, which takes its name from him. The position seemed to him a very fine one in which to found a city, and he foresaw that it would become a prosperous one.¹ Therefore he was seized by an ardent desire to undertake the enterprise, and himself marked out the boundaries of the city, pointing out the place where the agora was to be constructed, where the temples were to be built, stating how many there

Based on a translation of the *Anabasis of Alexander*, 3.1.1-4.5, by E. J. Chinnock (London, 1884), 140-48.

were to be, and to what Grecian gods they were to be dedicated, and specially marking a spot for a temple to the Egyptian Isis. He also pointed out where the wall was to be carried round it. In regard to these matters he offered sacrifice, and the victims appeared favourable.

The following story is told, which seems to me not unworthy of belief:—that Alexander himself wished to leave behind for the builders the marks for the boundaries of the fortification, but that there was nothing at hand with which to make a furrow in the ground. One of the builders hit upon the plan of collecting in vessels the barley which the soldiers were carrying, and throwing it upon the ground where the king led the way; and thus the circle of the fortification which he was making for the city was completely marked out. The soothsayers, and especially Aristander the Telmissian, who was said already to have given many other true predictions, pondering this, told Alexander that the city would become prosperous in every respect, but especially in regard to the fruits of the earth. . . .

After this an ardent desire [*pothos*] came upon Alexander to visit Ammon in Libya, partly in order to consult the god, because the oracle of Ammon was said to be exact in its information, and Perseus and Heracles were said to have consulted it. . . . Alexander was also partly urged by a desire of emulating Persius and Heracles, from both of whom he traced his descent. He also deduced his pedigree from Ammon, just as the legends traced that of Heracles and Perseus to Zeus. Accordingly he made the expedition to Ammon with the design of learning his own origin more certainly, or at least that he might be able to say that he had learned it. According to Aristobulus, he advanced along the sea-shore to Paraetonium through a country which was a desert, but not destitute of water, a distance of about 1,600 stades.² Thence he turned into the interior, where the oracle of Ammon was located. The route is desert, and most of it is sand and destitute of water. But there was a copious supply of rain for Alexander, a thing which was attributed to the influence of the deity; as was also the following occurrence. Whenever a south wind blows in that district, it heaps up the sand upon the route far and wide, rendering the tracks of the road invisible, so that it is impossible to discover where one ought to direct one's course in the sand, just as if one were at sea; for there are no landmarks along the road, neither mountain anywhere, nor tree, nor permanent hill standing erect, by which travellers might be able to form a conjecture of the right course, as sailors do by the stars. Consequently, Alexander's army lost the way, and even the guides were in doubt about the course to take. Ptolemy, son of Lagus, says that two serpents went in front of the army, uttering a voice, and Alexander ordered the guides to follow them, trusting in the divine portent. He says too that they showed the way to the oracle and back again. But Aristobulus, whose account is generally admitted as correct, says that two ravens flew in front of the army, and that these acted as Alexander's guides. I am able to assert with confidence that some divine assistance was afforded him, for probability also coincides with the

supposition; but the discrepancies in the details of the various narratives have deprived the story of certainty.

The place where the temple of Ammon is located is entirely surrounded by a desert of far-stretching sand, which is destitute of water. The fertile spot in the midst of this desert, is not extensive; for where it stretches into its greater expanse, it is only about forty stades broad. It is full of cultivated trees, olives and palms; and it is the only place in those parts which is refreshed with dew. A spring also rises from it, quite unlike all the other springs which issue from the earth. For at mid-day the water is cold to the taste, and still more so to the touch, as cold as cold can be. But when the sun has sunk into the west, it gets warmer, and from the evening it keeps on growing warmer until midnight, when it reaches the warmest point. After midnight it goes on getting gradually colder: at day-break it is already cold; but at midday it reaches the coldest point. Every day it undergoes these alternate changes in regular succession. In this place also natural salt is procured by digging, and certain of the priests of Ammon convey quantities of it into Egypt. For whenever they set out for Egypt they put it into little boxes plaited out of palm, and carry it as a present to the king, or some other great man. The grains of this salt are large, some of them being even longer than three fingers' breadth; and it is clear like 'crystal. The Egyptians and others who are respectful to the deity, use this salt in their sacrifices, as it is clearer than that which is procured from the sea. Alexander then was struck with wonder at the place, and consulted the oracle of the god. Having heard what was agreeable to his wishes, as he himself said, he set out on the journey back to Egypt by the same route, according to the statement of Aristobulus; but according to that of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, he took another road, leading straight to Memphis.

Notes

1. Alexandria, of course, would become one of the great commercial emporia of the ancient world, although we have no way of knowing the extent to which Arrian's comment is after the fact, or whether Alexander himself possessed the gift of foresight.—Ed.
2. About 200 miles.—Ed.

PLUTARCH's propensity for story-telling and his interest in Alexander's personality and character are easily apparent. The use of omens, the emphasis on non-rational and mystical elements (the role of Fortune, the place of divinity and divine sonship, etc.) and the inclination to tell several versions of an incident for their own sakes characterize the work of an author for whom the writing of "straight" history was always subordinate to his interest in analyzing individual personalities.

A number of similarities with Arrian are apparent: the founding of Alexandria before the Siwah expedition; the desolate nature of the Libyan desert; and the deliverance from the wastes (here by birds rather than serpents, as in Arrian). In one respect, however, there is a major difference. Plutarch is obviously aware of the many stories current about Alexander at the oracle of Ammon, but he tells only one of them at some length. Callisthenes, Alexander's "official" historian, is cited as a source for part of the account, but it is problematic how many other versions lay under Plutarch's complex narrative.

They say, namely, that after his conquest of Egypt he wished to found a large and populous Greek city which should bear his name, and by the advice of his architects was on the point of measuring off and enclosing a certain site for it. Then, in the night, as he lay asleep, he saw a wonderful vision. A man with very hoary locks and of a venerable aspect appeared to stand by his side and recite these verses:—

“Now, there is an island in the much-dashing sea,
In front of Egypt; Pharos is what men call it.”¹

Accordingly, he rose up at once and went to Pharos, which at that time was still an island, a little above the Canobic mouth of the Nile, but now it has been joined to the mainland by a causeway. And when he saw a site of surpassing natural advantages (for it is a strip of land like enough to a broad isthmus, extending between a great lagoon and a stretch of sea which terminates in a large harbour), he said he saw now that Homer was not only admirable in other ways, but also a very wise architect, and ordered the plan of the city to be drawn in conformity with this site. There was no chalk at hand, so they took barley-meal and marked out with it on the dark soil a rounded area, to whose inner arc straight lines extended so as to produce the figure of a chlamys, or military cloak; the lines beginning from the skirts (as one may say), and narrowing the breadth of the area uniformly. The king was delighted with the design; but suddenly birds from the river and the lagoon, infinite in number and of every sort and size, settled down upon the place like clouds and devoured every particle of the barley-meal, so that even Alexander was greatly disturbed at the omen.

However, the seers exhorted him to be of good cheer, since the city here founded by him would have most abundant and helpful resources and be a nursing mother

From B. Perrin's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* (26.2-27.6) in the Loeb Classical Library, *The Parallel Lives*, VII (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 299-307. Reprinted by permission of the Loeb Classical Library and Harvard University Press. A full account of Plutarch's narrative can be found in J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch: Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), 66-73.

for men of every nation, and so he ordered those in charge of the work to proceed with it, while he himself set out for the temple of Ammon. The journey thither was long, full of toils and hardships, and had two perils. One is the dearth of water, which leaves the traveller destitute of it for many days; the other arises when a fierce south wind smites men travelling in sand of boundless depth, as is said to have been the case with the army of Cambyses, long ago; the wind raised great billows of sand all over the plain and buried up fifty thousand men, to their utter destruction. Almost all of Alexander's followers took all these things into consideration, but it was difficult to turn him aside from any course so ever when he had once set out upon it. For Fortune, by yielding to his onsets, was making his purpose obstinate, and the high spirit which he carried into his undertakings rendered his ambition finally invincible, so that it subdued not only enemies, but even times and places.

At all events, during the journey which he made at this time, the assistance rendered him by Heaven in his perplexities met with more credence than the oracles which he afterwards received, nay, in a way, the oracles obtained credence in consequence of such assistance. For, to begin with, much rain from heaven and persistent showers removed all fear of thirst, quenched the dryness of the sand, so that it became moist and compact, and made the air purer and good to breathe. Again, when the marks for the guides became confused, and the travellers were separated and wandered about in ignorance of the route, ravens appeared and assumed direction of their march, flying swiftly on in front of them when they followed, and waiting for them when they marched slowly and lagged behind. Moreover, what was most astonishing of all, Callisthenes tells us that the birds by their cries called back those who straggled away in the night, and cawed until they had set them in the track of the march.

When Alexander had passed through the desert and was come to the place of the oracle, the prophet of Ammon gave him salutation from the god as from a father; whereupon Alexander asked him whether any of the murderers of his father had escaped him. To this the prophet answered by bidding him be guarded in his speech, since his was not a mortal father. Alexander therefore changed the form of his question, and asked whether the murderers of Philip had all been punished; and then, regarding his own empire, he asked whether it was given to him to become lord and master of all mankind. The god gave answer that this was given to him, and that Philip was fully avenged. Then Alexander made splendid offerings to the god and gave his priests large gifts of money.

This is what most writers state regarding the oracular responses; but Alexander himself, in a letter to his mother, says that he received certain secret responses, which he would tell to her, and to her alone, on his return. And some say that the prophet, wishing to show his friendliness by addressing him with "O paidion," or *O my son*, in his foreign pronunciation ended the words with "s" instead of "n," and said, "O paidios," and that Alexander was pleased at the slip in pronunciation, and a

story became current that the god had addressed him with “O pai Dios,” or *O son of Zeus*.² We are told, also, that he listened to the teachings of Psammon the philosopher in Egypt, and accepted most readily this utterance of his, namely, that all mankind are under the kingship of God, since in every case that which gets the mastery and rules is divine. Still more philosophical, however, was his own opinion and utterance on this head, namely that although God was indeed a common father of all mankind, still, He made peculiarly His own the noblest and best of them.

Notes

1. From Homer, *Odyssey* 4. 354-5.—Ed.

2. This charming story about the priest who learnt up a bit of Greek to impress his distinguished visitor, and then muffed it when the moment arrived (thereby giving divine sonship to Alexander), has been the subject of considerable controversy. For example, did the priest greet Alexander outside the shrine (where there would likely be witnesses) or inside, where they may have been alone? If inside, and the priest did not speak Greek, there may have been an interpreter who was the source of the story. If Alexander and the priest were inside alone, who would know what happened? Did Alexander talk? And who would know what was in the letters sent by the king to his mother? All such questions (and there are others) have a bearing on the underlying sources for this incident, the solution of which could help determine the reliability of our evidence for this and other episodes in Alexander's life.—Ed.

DIODORUS's narrative is in many respects the most complex of those that survive; against the same portents of mystical influence (rain in the desert, crows guiding the lost party, suggestions of Alexander's divine sonship) is a remarkably straightforward account of other matters. We owe to Diodorus the exact details of the diplomatic mission from Cyrene, the precise itinerary of the journey in the desert, a full description of the Siwah oasis, and a number of comments about the character of Alexandria (the founding of which Diodorus, unlike Arrian and Curtius, places on the return from Siwah). The latter certainly derives from Diodorus' own visit to Alexandria, but the details of Alexander's mission to Siwah may come ultimately from some eyewitness account of the proceedings upon which Diodorus imposed the standard stories concerning the oracular response. It is a difficult task to sort out these various traditions in Diodorus.

He himself with all his army marched on to Egypt and secured the adhesion of all its cities without striking a blow. For since the Persians had committed impieties

From C. B. Welles' translation of Diodorus (17.49.2-52.6) in the Loeb Classical Library, *Diodorus Siculus*, VIII (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 259-69. Reprinted by permission of the Loeb Classical Library and Harvard University Press.

against the temples and had governed harshly, the Egyptians welcomed the Macedonians.

Having settled the affairs of Egypt, Alexander went off to the Temple of Ammon, where he wished to consult the oracle of the god. When he had advanced half way along the coast, he was met by envoys from the people of Cyrenê, who brought him a crown and magnificent gifts, among which were three hundred chargers and five handsome four-horse chariots. He received the envoys cordially and made a treaty of friendship and alliance with them; then he continued with his travelling companions on to the temple. When he came to the desert and waterless part, he took on water and began to cross a country covered with an infinite expanse of sand. In four days their water had given out and they suffered from fearful thirst. All fell into despair, when suddenly a great storm of rain burst from the heavens, ending their shortage of water in a way which had not been foreseen, and which, therefore, seemed to those so unexpectedly rescued to have been due to the action of divine Providence. They refilled their containers from a hollow in the ground, and again with a four days' supply in hand marched for four days and came out of the desert. At one point, when their road could not be traced because of the sand dunes, the guide pointed out to the king that crows cawing on their right were calling their attention to the route which led to the temple. Alexander took this for an omen, and thinking that the god was pleased by his visit pushed on with speed. First he came to the so-called Bitter Lake, and then, proceeding another hundred furlongs, he passed by the Cities of Ammon. Then, after a journey of one day, he approached the sanctuary.

The land where this temple lies is surrounded by a sandy desert and waterless waste, destitute of anything good for man. The oasis is fifty furlongs in length and breadth and is watered by many fine springs, so that it is covered with all sorts of trees, especially those valued for their fruit. It has a moderate climate like our spring and, surrounded as it is by very hot regions, alone furnishes to its people a contrasting mildness of temperature. It is said that the sanctuary was built by Danaüs the Egyptian. The land, which is sacred to the god, is occupied on the south and west by Ethiopians, and on the north by the Libyans, a nomadic people, and the so-called Nasamonians who reach on into the interior.

All the people of Ammon dwell in villages. In the midst of their country there is a fortress secured by triple walls. The innermost circuit encloses the palace of the ancient rulers; the next, the women's court, the dwellings of the children, women, and relatives, and the guardrooms of the scouts, as well as the sanctuary of the god and the sacred spring, from the waters of which offerings addressed to the god take on holiness; the outer circuit surrounds the barracks of the king's guards and the guardrooms of those who protect the person of the ruler.

Outside the fortress at no great distance there is another temple of Ammon shaded by many large trees, and near this is the spring which is called the Spring of the Sun from its behaviour. Its waters change in temperature oddly in accordance

with the times of day. At sunrise it sends forth a warm stream, but as the day advances it grows cooler proportionally with the passage of the hours, until under the noonday heat it reaches its extreme degree of cold. Then again in the same proportion it grows warmer toward evening and as the night advances it continues to heat up until midnight when again the trend is reversed, and at daybreak once more the waters have returned to their original temperature.

The image of the god is encrusted with emeralds and other precious stones, answers those who consult the oracle in a quite peculiar fashion. It is carried about upon a golden boat by eighty priests, and these, with the god on their shoulders, go without their own volition wherever the god directs their path. A multitude of girls and women follows them singing paeans as they go and praising the god in a traditional hymn.

When Alexander was conducted by the priests into the temple and had regarded the god for a while, the one who held the position of prophet, an elderly man, came to him and said, "Rejoice, son; take this form of address as from the god also. He replied, "I accept, father; for the future I shall be called thy son. But tell me if thou givest me the rule of the whole earth." The priest now entered the sacred enclosure and as the bearers now lifted the god and were moved according to certain prescribed sounds of the voice, the prophet cried that of a certainty the god had granted him his request, and Alexander spoke again: "The last, O spirit, of my questions now answer; have I punished all those who were the murderers of my father or have some escaped me?" The prophet shouted: "Silence! There is no mortal who can plot against the one who begot him.¹ All the murderers of Philip, however, have been punished. The proof of his divine birth will reside in the greatness of his deeds; as formerly he has been undefeated, so now he will be unconquerable for all time." Alexander was delighted with these responses. He honoured the god with rich gifts and returned to Egypt.

He decided to found a great city in Egypt, and gave orders to the men left behind with this mission to build the city between the marsh and the sea. He laid out the site and traced the streets skilfully and ordered that the city should be called after him Alexandria. It was conveniently situated near the harbour of Pharos, and by selecting the right angle of the streets, Alexander made the city breathe with the etesian winds so that as these blow across a great expanse of sea, they cool the air of the town, and so he provided its inhabitants with a moderate climate and good health. Alexander also laid out the walls so that they were at once exceedingly large and marvellously strong. Lying between a great marsh and the sea, it affords by land only two approaches, both narrow and very easily blocked.

In shape, it is similar to a chlamys, and it is approximately bisected by an avenue remarkable for its size and beauty. From gate to gate it runs a distance of forty furlongs²; it is a plethron³ in width, and is bordered throughout its length with rich façades of houses and temples. Alexander gave orders to build a palace notable for its size and massiveness. And not only Alexander, but those who after him ruled

Egypt down to our own time, with few exceptions have enlarged this with lavish additions. The city in general has grown so much in later times that many reckon it to be the first city of the civilized world, and it is certainly far ahead of all the rest in elegance and extent and riches and luxury. The number of its inhabitants surpasses that of those in other cities. At the time when we were in Egypt, those who kept the census returns of the population said that its free residents were more than three hundred thousand, and that the king received from the revenues of the country more than six thousand talents.

However that may be, King Alexander charged certain of his Friends with the construction of Alexandria, settled all the affairs of Egypt, and returned with his army to Syria.

Notes

1. This is an indirect reference to a story, then current, that Alexander's father was Zeus, who had sired the king by coming to Olypias in the form of a snake—Ed.
2. Forty stadia, or about five miles.—Ed.
3. 100 feet—Ed.

QUINTUS CURTIUS is the most highly rhetorical of the surviving Alexander historians, and this inclination toward elaborate style has caused modern scholars to question his credibility. It must be said, however, that modern scholarship on Curtius has been mainly superficial; this interesting author needs the deep analysis that has recovered so much in other writers. We may yet discover beneath the crust of floridity a basic account of the king which deserves some trust. One may notice here the similarity in overall structure and some details to Diodorus' narrative. Many historians believe that Diodorus and Curtius are often based on the same source tradition, even though the differences between them reflect their own personal predilections.

The Egyptians, hostile of old to the power of the Persians—for they believed that they had been governed avariciously and arrogantly—had taken courage at the prospect of Alexander's coming, since they had welcomed even Amyntas, although a deserter coming the authority depending on favour. Therefore a vast multitude of them had assembled at Pelusium, where they thought that Alexander would enter

From J. C. Rolfe's translation of Curtius (4.7.1-8.6) in the Loeb Classical Library, *Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander*, I (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 227-37. Reprinted by permission of the Loeb Classical Library and Harvard University Press.

the country. And in fact six days after moving his forces from Gaza he came to that part of Egypt which they now call Alexander's Camp. From there he ordered the infantry forces to go to Pelusium, and he himself with a light-armed band of elite troops sailed up the river Nile. The Persians did not await his coming, being greatly alarmed also by the revolt of the Egyptians. And already he was not far from Memphis, when Mazaces, the general of Darius who had been left in charge of the city, of his own accord crossed the river, and delivered to Alexander 800 talents and all the royal furniture. From Memphis the king sailed on the same river to the interior of Egypt, and after arranging matters in such a way as to make no change in the native customs of the Egyptians, he decided to visit the oracle of Jupiter Ammon.

The journey which it was necessary to make was hardly endurable even for those who were lightly equipped and few in number; on earth and in the sky there is scarcity of water; it is a flat waste of barren sands. When the burning sun inflames these, intolerable heat results and the fiery soil scorches the soles of the feet, and one has to contend, not only against the high temperature and dryness of the region, but also the extreme tenaciousness of the course sand, through which, as it is very deep and gives way beneath the step, the feet toil with difficulty. These troubles the Egyptians in fact exaggerated; but yet a great longing plied spurs to the king's purpose of visiting Jupiter, whom he, not content with mortal eminence, either believed, or wished men to believe, to be the founder of his race. Therefore, with those whom he had decided to take with him he went down the river to the Mareotic Lake. Thither envoys from Cyrenê brought gifts, and asked for peace and for a visit to their cities. He accepted the gifts and after concluding friendship with them continued to pursue his intended journey.

And indeed on the first and the following day the toil seemed endurable, since the solitudes to which they had come were not yet so desolate and barren, yet the land was already sterile and moribund. But when plains covered with deep sand disclosed themselves, just as if they had entered a vast sea, they looked in vain for land; not a tree, not a trace of cultivated soil met the eye. The water also, which camels had carried in leather bottles, gave out, and there was none to be found in the dry soil and burning sand. Besides this, the sun had made everything fiery-hot, their mouths were dry and parched, when suddenly—whether that was a gift of the gods or mere chance—the sky was overcast with clouds which hid the sun, a great help to those worn out by the heat, even if water were lacking. But indeed, when storms poured out copious rain also, each man received it in his own way; some, beside themselves with thirst, even began to try to catch it in their open mouths.

Four days were spent in traversing desert wastes. And now they were not far from the abode of the oracle, when a great flock of ravens met the army; flying at a moderate speed before the van, they now lighted on the ground when the line advanced more slowly, now raised themselves on their wings, as if acting as guides and showing the way. At length they arrived at the abode consecrated to the god.

Incredible to relate, although situated amid desert wastes, it is so covered on all sides by encircling branches that the sun barely penetrates their dense shade, and many founts of sweet water, flowing in all directions, nourish the woods. A wonderful mildness of climate too, very like the warmth of spring, continues through all seasons of the year with like wholesomeness. The nearest neighbours of the place, to the east, are of the Ethiopian race. Towards the south they face in the direction of those Arabians whose name is the Trogodytes; the land of these extends as far as the Red Sea. But where the slope is towards the west, other Ethiopians dwell, whom they call the Snub-nosed. To the north are the Nasamones, a race of the Syrtes, enriched from the spoils of ships; for they beset the shores, and since they know the shoals, seize the vessels which are stranded by the shifting sea. The dwellers in the grove, whom they call Ammonii, live in scattered huts; the middle of the grove they hold as a citadel, surrounded by three walls. The first of these enclosed the ancient palace of their kings, within the next their wives lived with their children and concubines; here also is the oracle of the god; the outermost fortification was the abode of the attendants and the men-at-arms.

There is also another grove of Ammon; in the middle of it is a fountain—they call it the water of the Sun—; at daybreak its flow is lukewarm, in the middle of the day, which is very hot indeed, the same fount is cold, as the day inclines towards evening it grows warmer, in the middle of the night it boils forth hot, and as the night approaches nearer to dawn, it decreases greatly from its nocturnal heat, until at daybreak it cools off to its normal temperature. What is worshipped as the god does not have the same form that artificers have commonly given to the deities; its appearance is very like that of a navel fastened in a mass of emeralds and other gems. When an oracle is sought, the priests carry this in a golden boat with many silver cups hanging from both sides of the boat; matrons and maidens follow, singing in the native manner a kind of rude song, by which they believe Jupiter is propitiated and led to give a trustworthy response.

At the time we are describing, as the king drew near, the eldest of the priests called him son, declaring that his father Jupiter gave him that name. Alexander indeed said that he accepted and acknowledged it, forgetful of his human condition. He then asked whether the rule of the whole world was destined for him by the fates. The prophet, equally disposed to flattery, answered that he would be the ruler of all lands. After this the king went on to inquire whether all the murderers of his father had paid the penalty. The priest said that his father could suffer from no man's crime, but that for the crime against Philip all had suffered punishment; he added that Alexander would be invincible till he departed to join the gods. Then, after sacrifice had been offered, gifts were given both to the priests and to the god, and the king's friends also were allowed to consult Jupiter. They asked nothing more than whether the god authorized them to pay divine honours to their king. The prophets replied that this also would be acceptable to Jupiter.

In the light of a genuine and entirely sane appraisal, these unquestionably vague

responses of the oracle would have brought ridicule upon its trustworthiness, but Fortune makes those whom she has forced to have confidence in herself alone more eager as a rule for glory than big enough to have room for it. Accordingly, Alexander not only allowed himself to be called the son of Jupiter, but even ordered it, and thus while he wished to increase the renown of his exploits by such a title, he really spoilt it. And the Macedonians, accustomed, it is true, to the rule of a king, but living in the shadow of a greater freedom than the other peoples, opposed his claim to immortality more stubbornly than was expedient either for themselves or for their king. But instances of this may be reserved each for its appropriate time. Now I shall proceed with the rest of my narrative.

Alexander, has he returned from Ammon, came to the Mareotic Lake, situated not far from the island of Pharos. Contemplating the nature of the place, he had decided at first to build a city on the island itself; then, as it was apparent that the island was not large enough for a great settlement, he chose for the city the present site of Alexandria, which derives its name from that of its founder. Embracing all the ground between the Lake and the sea, he planned a circuit of eighty stadia for the walls, and having left men to take charge of building the city, he went to Memphis. A desire that was not really unreasonable, but untimely, had seized him to visit not only the interior of Egypt, but also Ethiopia; eager as he was to become acquainted with ancient remains, the celebrated palace of Memnon and Tithonus was drawing him almost beyond the limits of the sun. . . .

Having ordered inhabitants of the neighbouring cities to move to Alexandria, he filled the new city with a great population. It is reported that when the king had marked out the circuit of the new city with peeled barley, as is the custom of the Macedonians, flocks of birds flew to the spot and ate the barley; and when that was regarded by many as a bad omen, the seers predicted that a great number of new-comers would dwell in that city, and that it would furnish sustenance to many lands.

JUSTIN's version of Alexander in Egypt is quite brief and is almost entirely concerned with Alexander at the oracle. Here the divine sonship is again emphasized, as well as future world rule. One must also note that the foundation of Alexandria is put after the visit to Siwah. Justin's account is difficult to assess as it is admittedly only an abridgment of the earlier history of Pompeius Trogus; it is quite impossible to know what the emphases and interests were in the original work.

He then went to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, to consult the oracle about the course of future events and about his own parentage. For his mother Olympias

From *Pompeius Trogus, Fragmenta*, 11. 11.2-13, edited by Otto Seel (Leipzig, 1956). Translated by Eugene N. Borza.

had confessed to her husband Philip that she had conceived Alexander not by him, but by a serpent of extraordinary size. Moreover, Philip, near the end of his own life, had declared openly that Alexander was not his son, for which reason therefore he divorced Olympias as having been guilty of adultery. And thus Alexander, desiring to obtain the reputation of divinity, and clear his mother from infamy, instructed the priests by messengers sent in advance what answers he wished to receive. As soon as he entered the temple the priests saluted him as the son of Ammon. Alexander, now pleased with the god's adoption of him, directed that he should be regarded as his son. He then inquired whether all the assassins of his father were avenged. He was answered that his father could neither be murdered nor could die; but that the murder of King Philip had been avenged. On putting a third question, he was told that success in all his wars and dominion over the world would be given him. And to his companions was given the response that they should reverence Alexander as a god, not as a king. Thus his haughtiness increased, and an astonishing arrogance arose in his mind, so that the affiability which he had acquired from Greek learning and Macedonian customs was now set aside. On the return from Ammon he founded Alexandria, and ordered that this Macedonian colony be the principal city of Egypt.

Among other works STRABO (c. 64 B.C.-c. A.D. 21) wrote a great compendium of historical geography which is a storehouse of information. For his subject matter Strabo depended upon a number of Greek and Roman writers as well as on his own limited travels. The following passage on the Ammon oracle at Siwah is important because it names Callisthenes as a source for much of what appears in our other writers.

Hence the oracle of Ammon, which was formerly held in great esteem, is now nearly deserted. This appears chiefly from the historians who have recorded the actions of Alexander, adding, indeed, much that has the appearance of flattery, but yet relating what is worthy of belief. Callisthenes, for instance, says that Alexander was ambitious of the glory of visiting the oracle, because he knew that Perseus and Heracles had earlier made the journey there. He set out from Paraetium, although the south winds were blowing, and succeeded in the project by vigor and perseverance. When he had lost his way on the road he escaped being overwhelmed in a sand storm by a fall of rain and by the guidance of two crows which directed his course. These things are stated by way of flattery, as also what follows: that the priest permitted the king alone to pass into the temple in his usual dress, whereas the others changed theirs; that all heard the oracles on the outside of

Based on a translation by W. Falconer in *The Geography of Strabo*, III (London, 1857), 17. 1. 43.

the temple, except Alexander, who was in the interior of the building; that the answers were not given, as at Delphi and at Branchidae, in words, but chiefly by nods and signs, as in Homer: "the son of Kronos nodded with his sable brows," the prophet imitating Zeus. This, however, the man told the king, in express terms, that he was the son of Zeus. Callisthenes adds (after the exaggerating style of tragedy) that when Apollo had deserted the oracle among the Branchidae, on the temple being plundered by the Branchidae (who espoused the party of the Persians in the time of Xerxes) and the spring had failed, it then reappeared on the arrival of Alexander; that the ambassadors also of the Milesians carried back to Memphis numerous answers of the oracle concerning the descent of Alexander from Zeus, and the future victory which he should obtain at Arbela, the death of Darius, and the political changes at Sparta. He says also that the Erythraean Athenais, who resembled the ancient Erythraean Sibyl, had declared the high descent of Alexander. Such are the accounts of the historians.

The events of 332-31 B.C., Alexander's assumption of Egyptian rule, the founding of Alexandria, and the king's visit to the oracle of Ammon (with its hints of his apotheosis) are episodes which set into motion certain forces that would have a profound effect on ancient history. Egypt would emerge as one of the most important economic and cultural centers of the Hellenistic world. Its political system would evolve as a transition between the divine kingship of the state of the Pharaohs and the divine emperorship of Rome. And the effect of the Egyptian experience on Alexander himself might help explain a complex personality which always seemed to be in a state of permutation.

It is apparent that a number of variances occur among our sources; some of these can be traced to primary accounts. Arrian, for example, tells us that his sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus, occasionally gave different versions of an incident, and even Arrian himself is uncertain which version is correct because of the multiplicity of traditions about Alexander's deeds.

The identification of such variances, and the attempt to attribute them to particular primary sources, naturally leads to a second step in method. Callisthenes is identified by Strabo as the source of the story that Alexander wished to visit the oracle of Ammon because both Perseus and Heracles had done so. Now Arrian (without naming his source) also has Alexander acting in the steps of Perseus and Heracles. Does this signify that Arrian also used Callisthenes as a source for this story? Or should we suggest that Arrian got this information second-hand, perhaps through Ptolemy, who may have used Callisthenes? Or was the story such common

knowledge in antiquity that everyone knew it, and it is therefore impossible to say how it originated and was transmitted? The issue has some importance: if we could establish that Arrian (or anyone else) used Callisthenes (or any other writer) as a source for one incident, then we open the possibility at least that Callisthenes may be a source for other incidents. Ultimately, of course, we must attempt to judge the credibility of Callisthenes as a witness to the events around him, and this judgment will have some effect on our evaluation of Arrian (or any other writer) as a source for the life of Alexander.

All of which is prelude to the main questions: what happened in Egypt? And what is the significance of what happened? The latter question is one of historical interpretation, but it must rest squarely on an attempt to reconstruct the pattern of events themselves. That in turn depends on establishing the reliability of our evidence, which involves a close criticism of secondary and primary sources.

Part
Three

**ALEXANDER
AND
THE
ASIANS**

Chapter 5 THE MIDDLE EAST

A. R. BURN (b. 1902) is senior lecturer in ancient history at the University of Glasgow. He has written several volumes on Greek history as well as many technical articles in the professional journals, a number concerning Alexander. The following excerpt is taken from one of the best short, general biographies of Alexander. Here Burn discusses the lasting impact of Alexander and his successors in the Middle East.

Nearer the Mediterranean, in the Near or, as our generation has come to call it, the Middle East ("Middle" in the sense of being intermediate between Europe and the remoter east, from India to China), Hellenistic culture long outlasted the absorption of the Hellenistic states by Rome. This Greek culture—Greek at least in that this was the language of nearly all literature and education—the culture brought into western Asia by the successors of Alexander, survived to be that of the whole eastern half of the Roman Empire; thus, to be that of the world in which Christianity emerged, and even profoundly to influence the philosophy and science of mediaeval Islam.

This is not to say that the culture of the Roman Near East was at all times and at

From A. R. Burn, *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World* (New York: Collier Books by arrangement with the Macmillan Company, 1962), 195-210. Reprinted by permission of the English Universities Press, Limited, Crowell-Collier, and Macmillan, Inc. Footnotes omitted.

all levels on a par with even the more “popular” culture or ways of life of classical Athens. Papyri and inscriptions, including such things as curses, inspired by frustration and hate, written on leaden tablets, show us the influence not only of the lofty philosophy of the Stoics, or of Epicureans and sceptical Academics at their best, but also of crude magic: magic, the natural product of pre-rational and pre-Hellenic thought, expressed in attempts of the ignorant and frustrated to get their way, usually in love or revenge, by short cuts; by symbolic actions, bearing some resemblance to what the frustrated person would like to do (e.g. maltreating a portrait or image as a substitute for maltreating the person), often combined with prayers to some god or power, whom it is thought important to address by his right name. The tendency to relieve pent-up feelings in such way is primitive, world-wide, and can be traced rudimentarily even in captive apes; and the belief that such procedures are causally effective dies very hard. But even these magical papyri and curse-tablets are almost always written in Greek; and the theories invented from time to time to “rationalise” such behaviour show the influence of earlier and better Greek thought as well as of Babylonian astrology. The Magi, who were rather unfairly credited with the invention of magic (whence the name), are probably not those of early Persia, but a section of their descendants, domiciled in the Hellenized world. They were strong in Cappadocia, where they venerated images, not only the the primitive Persian mother-goddess Anaitis but even of “Omanos,” who is Vohumana, originally almost an abstract concept in the thought of Zoroaster: “Good Thought,” a partly personified emanation of Zoroaster’s God of Truth. These western Magi were also the transmitters to the Roman world of the worship of the Persian Mithras, a cult which, adapted by and for westerners, became the personal religion of many centurions and higher officers of the Roman army, and appeared for a time as the most formidable rival of Christianity.

It was the international or rather de-nationalised thought of this Greco-Oriental “middle eastern” world, with its welter of rational and irrational speculation, which issued in Gnosticism: a term describing not a single philosophy, but the theological doctrines of many thinkers, of varying degrees of profundity or shallowness. Syncretistic, or tending to a mixture of religions, and desirous to find a way of salvation or deliverance from the evils of the world, Gnosticism in the Christian era found Christianity highly congenial. Gnostics would gladly have absorbed the religion of Christ into an amalgam of all the religions and popular philosophies of the near east; and it was only after prolonged, severe and sometimes bitter controversy that Christianity extricated itself from this dangerously friendly embrace. Christian thinkers themselves, even the orthodox, inevitably used the terms and categories of Hellenistic thought when they came to philosophise about their faith. Christians as distinguished as the martyrs Justin in the second century and Cyprian in the third had been mature men, trained in the best pagan thought of their time, before they became Christians; Augustine, even later, had come under and thrown off the influence of Manichaeism, the latest form assumed by Hellenized Persian Zoroastri-

anism, before his final conversion of “commitment.” But after a struggle, the intellectual counterpart of that in which Judaism rejected militant Hellenization under the Maccabees, Christianity remained at heart comparatively matter-of-fact, earthy, practical and historically minded, true to its Jewish ancestry.

Meanwhile mathematics, astronomy and medicine, parting company, as knowledge increased and specialisation became necessary, from the general “natural philosophy” of earlier Greece, continued to make important progress even in what might have been thought the unpromising environment of later antiquity; and it was in Ptolemy’s Alexandria, in and round his great “Museum” or Institute for Advanced Study, that much of the best work was done. Here Euclid (Eukleides), perhaps before 300 B.C., gave geometry its long-enduring system; here in the next century Aristarchos of Samos anticipated the Copernican revolution; here Eratosthenes devised a means to measure the circumference of the earth, and Apollonios of Perga learned astronomy and mathematics from the successors of Euclid; though later, returning to his native Asia Minor, he dedicated his later books on Conics to another patron, Attalos I of Pergamon. The first century of Alexandria’s history was the greatest; but original work was still being done there after five hundred years and more. Aristarchos was unable to prove his daring *hypothesis*, as he himself called it (in spite of which, Kleantes the Stoic leader is said to have said that he ought to be prosecuted for impiety!), and the last word of the ancient world on the planetary system was that of Ptolemy the astronomer, with its arrangement of epicycles, complicated and ingenious, written out under the Antonine emperors in the second century A.D. It was the same Ptolemy who, incidentally to his astronomical work, mapped the known world as far as south-east Asia, attempting, with varying success, to define positions in terms of latitude and longitude.

Even later than Ptolemy lived two of the greatest Alexandrian mathematicians: Diophantos, who in the third century was using algebraic symbols, and (probably) Heron, who also gave accounts of several mechanical contrivances using steam-power. No practical use was made of them, and this is commonly put down to a lack of interest in labour-saving devices among influential people, in a world in which hard labour was left to slaves. Yet the Roman world did introduce and use the water-mill; and there was, at times, a labour shortage; so perhaps the real reason for the failure to exploit the discovery of steam-power was rather that ancient metallurgy, which never produced even swords and armour nearly as good as those of the later middle ages, could not have produced high-pressure boilers that would not burst. However Heron’s work remains—though we note with distress that one of the purposes for which he proposes to use steam is to fake a miracle—as evidence that even in his time applied science was not dead.

But it was the great systematisers, especially, whose names were revered in the authoritarian world which lasted for nearly 2000 years after the time of Alexander. Plato, Aristotle and Euclid were treasured, copied, annotated, expounded in thousands of lecture rooms; and with them was revered among posterity the name of

Ptolemy, and of a contemporary of Ptolemy, the physician and surgeon Galen of Pergamon; a man of profound learning, a practiser of dissection (though on the strength of it he seems to have reasoned too freely by analogy, from the structure of other mammalian bodies to that of man), and an immensely prolific writer. He was also a teleologist, which suited the theological bent of thought of the ensuing millennium. But if he became, as he has been called, the “dictator of medicine” for all that time and more, it was not his fault, revealing himself, as he does, as both a first-hand observer and devoted to the free exercise of reason in argument.

When Constantine in A.D. 330 transferred the chief seat of Roman government to Byzantium and named the city after himself, it was in recognition of the superior importance of this most populous, civilised and economically prosperous eastern part of his empire, as well as of the need to keep a closer eye on Goths and Huns north of the Black Sea and lower Danube, and on Persia, once more powerful and aggressive under the Sassanid dynasty; and as capital of a mainly Greek-speaking and now a Christian Roman Empire Constantinople stood for eleven centuries, long after western and central Europe had been lost to Germanic barbarians. Not the least among the achievements of the Hellenized east was the work of the Greek Christian intellectuals or “Doctors,” Athanasios of Alexandria (not author of the famous creed called after him), Basil of Cappadocia, his brother Gregory of Nyssa and his friend Gregory of Nazianzos, and the “golden-tongued” John Chrysostom of Antioch; all men of the Hellenized east, and all men of the fourth Christian century—which did not mean that they did not have frequent occasion to display courage in resisting the sometimes unchristian behaviour of a nominally Christian government and its officials.

For three centuries (a period little mentioned in our western history-books) the Christian emperors of Constantinople held sway over Asia Minor, Egypt and Syria as well as over the Aegean world; then, very swiftly, Egypt and Syria were lost to the immediate successors of Muhammad. Once the regular army was defeated, there was no popular resistance, and the Christian populations showed no sign of wishing to return to the rule of the old empire, with its bureaucratic government and its all too efficient tax-collectors. And the circumstances of the loss reveal, still present even a thousand years after Alexander, what had always been the great weakness of the Hellenistic world.

For all the Hellenization of their higher culture, Egypt and Syria had never been fully assimilated, fully Hellenized. Only the Jews, through the Maccabean resistance, had succeeded in preserving their national culture and literature; elsewhere, as we have seen, writing was Greek. But speech, among the peasants and the proletariat in the towns, was not. Coptic (“Gyptic,” i.e. Egyptian) survived as the language of the people, as did Semitic speech in Syria; how continuously, we may see from place-names. Under the Macedonian *Selenkids*, many towns had been renamed; the ancient Halep (Aleppo) became Beroia, named for Beroia in Macedonia; Hamath, Epiphaneia, after Antiochos Epiphanes (but St. Jerome knew that

the people still called it Hamath in his time); Rabbah of Ammon, Philadelphia; but today all these and many other Greek names have perished or have to be sought in ancient sources, and the cities have returned long since to their vernacular names, as Halep, Hamah, Amman. There is some evidence even from church history that the peoples were restive under a Greek, upper-class, church government as well as secular rule; for it was these lands which most clung to theological, especially Christological doctrines, which the great Councils held at the capital or near it (Nicea, Chalcedon) had ruled out as heretical: resenting, it seems, that they should have imposed on them the subtleties of the Greeks. Most of their descendants went over, gradually, to the simplicities of Islam; but from the first, one of the attractions of Muslim rule was that not only did it, by command of the Prophet, never force Islam upon Jews or Christians, but also it was unconcerned as to whether particular Christians were heretical or orthodox.

In Asia Minor, Hellenization had been more intensive. Here Greek does seem to have replaced the vernaculars; the mention of a crowd shouting "in the speech of Lykaonia," in the *Acts of the Apostles*, seems to be the last evidence of such a thing that we have. Here the Byzantine or Christian Hellenistic "Roman Empire," though more than once hard pressed, lasted on, and had the main source of its military strength, until late in the 11th century, with the coming of the Turks from central Asia. Armenia, with its own language and literature, though Christian, did indeed cherish its own ideological, that is inevitably theological differences; but from Cappadocia westward we hear of no important heresies, unless we count the Iconoclastic ("image-smashing") movement in the 8th–9th centuries, a movement strongest among the frontiersmen toughened in fighting the infidel, to "save" the western townsmen from idolatrous practices. The Empire never appeared stronger or more stable than about A.D. 1000, when it had even recaptured north Syria, Cyprus and Crete; but the Turks caught it at a time of disputed succession, and when oppressive taxation and the greed of landlords had destroyed the economic basis of its Anatolian peasant soldiery. Winning the decisive Battle of Mazikert in 1071, the Turks occupied the central plateau and deprived the Empire forever of its best recruiting-ground; but even then, the final end was not for nearly 400 years more, and the Empire might have lasted longer yet had it not been stabbed in the back by the aggressive and predatory west, as the Seleukids had been by Rome long before; this time, by Norman-French crusaders, intent on carving out lordships for themselves under the ideological banner of religion, who sacked Constantinople and broke up the Empire for a time, in 1204.

The ultimate heir to all the lands once unified by Persia and Hellenized, some more and some less, under the successors of Alexander, was therefore Islam; but the mission of Greece was not exhausted even with the Muhammadan conquest. The Muslim world was profoundly indebted, especially in its earlier centuries, to its Hellenized subjects, for the beginnings of its architecture, and for its higher learning in medicine, astronomy, mathematics and philosophy. The title *Almagest*, by which

we still know the great work of Ptolemy, consists of the Arabic article prefixed to the Greek *megistos*, “greatest”; algebra is *Al-gebir*, “the greater” branch of mathematics; and if Arab mathematicians developed this, there is more than a bare beginning of it in Greek Alexandria, especially in the work of Diophantos. Aflatun and Aristu, which are the Arabic names of Plato and Aristotle, were honoured no less in the Muhammadan world than ever in Europe, and gave Muslim philosophy its starting point. It was from the Arabs, in Spain, that the west derived its first knowledge of Aristotelian logic, long before the recovery of Greek in 15th-century Italy, just in time, from the failing hands of Byzance. So, by the time that the Muslim civilisation itself had fallen into stagnation and decay, a Europe equipped once more with the legacy of Greece, or at least considerable fragments of it, was in a position to carry on the mental exploration of the universe where the Greeks had left it.

Chapter 6 **CENTRAL ASIA**

*For more than half a century Sir MORTIMER WHEELER (b. 1890) has exercised a distinguished career in archaeology and related studies. An important contributor to our knowledge of ancient Britain, Wheeler's attention since World War II has been directed to the East. He has written widely on Asian civilization, with primary emphasis on early Indic cultures. In his *Flames Over Persepolis*, Wheeler argues that the destruction of Persepolis by Alexander ushered in an age which began to change the face of Asia as Greek influences made inroads on indigenous cultures.*

So much for the Western background to the conflagration of Persepolis. In effect, the event marked the end of what may be called the Graeco-Persian episode: an episode distinguished by a symmetry such as Clio does not always exhibit. It had begun with the destructive invasion of Europe at the will of the first Darius who was also the first builder of the Persepolitan palace. It now ended with the counter-invasion of Persia by Europe in the last days of the last Darius, and culminated in the great burning. The story might seem to be rounded and complete.

And so in a sense it was. Persepolis in 330 BC saw the end of an era. But by the same token it also saw the beginning of another. In that year, Alexander paused at the middle point of his great adventure—middle point in time and space. He had

From Mortimer Wheeler, *Flames Over Persepolis* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 63-69. Reprinted by permission of Reynal & Company, Inc. in association with William Morrow & Company, Inc., and George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd.

crossed the Hellespont in 334, and was to turn back from the Punjab in 326. At Persepolis he had behind him two thousand miles of urbanized Asia; in front of him lay two thousand miles of desert, steppe and mountain, with an ultimate fringe of settled living, but mostly a quicksand of nomadic or semi-nomadic villagers and tent-dwellers. Here, to the East, new problems awaited his statesmanship no less than his generalship. In many ways it was here that Alexander's genius showed its most enduring qualities. And Persepolis was the turning-point. The cliché is justified; Persepolis is one of the landmarks of history.

To trace the sequel of Persepolis is to explore two of Alexander's greatest achievements: the systematic civilization of the wild eastern regions of the old Persian Empire; and the resultant creation of a civilized continuum through a multitude of nations and cultures from the Mediterranean to the Ganges. That continuum has never since been completely broken. No other single creative act in world-history—unless the European discovery of America—has in so short a time matched this astonishing triumph.

First, in the tracks of Alexander we move rapidly if circuitously from the ruins of the great palace and the paltry obsequies of the last Persian king towards the north-eastern limit of the Persian Empire beside the Jaxartes, partly across uncharted country full of Parthians and a miscellany of Scythians or Sakas and other folk, and partly along the royal roads laid out by Cyrus and his successors. On the way Alexander looped sharply southwards through Herat and Seistan, and thence north-eastwards through Kandahar (of which, more anon), Kabul and the Hindu Kush to Bactria in what is now northern Afghanistan. There the satrap Bessus, who had been at least partly responsible for the murder of Darius, had assumed the trappings of the Persian king and was collecting an army of resistance. On the approach of Alexander, he fled across the Oxus but was shortly delivered up to his enemy and was eventually, after oriental torture, executed at Ecbatana. His principal crime had been that of usurping the usurper's crown.

Meanwhile Alexander had sped northwards to the Jaxartes and his inherited frontier. On the way he reduced the high-walled Persian frontier-city of Cyropolis and seven fortresses also established by Cyrus the Great between that and the river; and, in the face of trouble from the nomad Scythians of the borderland, he founded on the river-bank, as counterpart to Cyropolis, his 'Furthest Alexandria' (*Alexandria Eschate*), the modern Chodjend, to serve, in the words of Arrian, as 'an excellent base for a possible future invasion of Scythia and as a defence against raiding tribes from across the river'. Alexander himself 'spent twenty days on the work of fortifying his new town, and arranged for the settlement there of any Greek mercenaries and neighbouring tribesmen who wished to avail themselves of the opportunity, and also of a number of Macedonians no longer fit for active service. To mark the occasion, after his customary religious ceremonies he held games with athletic and equestrian contests.' The picture is no doubt representative of many other episodes of the kind.

And here it is appropriate to recall that the basis of Alexander's colonial policy, like that of the Romans after him, was the building or reshaping of towns after the traditional Greek pattern. He conquered by civilizing, by sowing 'Alexandrias' as he went, particularly in the uneasy wastelands of Asia. His Furthest Alexandria on the Jaxartes has just been mentioned, but that was 'Furthest' or 'Last' only in the sense that it confirmed the old Persian line along the river as his own ultimate border in those parts. Geographically his remotest Alexandria was founded in 326, when, in the last stage of his adventure, he left the Hindu Kush behind him and struck deep into the Punjab. There, on the left bank of the Jhelum river, he established Alexandria Bucephala to commemorate the death of his famous war-horse Bucephalus, before facing the vicissitudes of his long return to Babylon. The exact site of the city on the Jhelum has not been identified.

Plutarch tells us that in all more than seventy cities were founded by the conqueror. The number need not be exact, but it is certain that, of one kind or another, his foundations were numerous. They might be full-blown cities of the Greek type; Alexandria-by-Egypt and Alexandria Eschate were of this sort. They might be adaptations of, or supplements to, existing native towns; such probably was the new Bactra, established as an Alexandria beside the old provincial capital. They might be more or less evanescent garrison-posts, planted perhaps (but not necessarily) in the vicinity of a native village. The eminent William Tarn, in an elaborate and unnecessary argument, sought to regard Kandahar, which has commonly been regarded as reflecting the actual name 'Alexandria', as such a post; arbitrarily degrading it to 'Alexandropolis' with the wholly unwarranted comment that a place so-called 'cannot have been a city founded by Alexander' and was 'at best a military colony'. But here, without more ado, I pause to draw attention to new evidence not available when Tarn was writing.

Somewhere hereabouts, if not at Kandahar then within a reasonable distance of it, Alexander established an Alexandria in Arachosia, a broad region of Baluchistan behind the Quetta hills. For conjectural reasons which need not here be repeated, Tarn preferred to find this foundation 'without any doubt' at Ghazni, some two hundred miles north-east of Kandahar. No physical evidence for any such Alexandria-Ghazni has ever been recognized, though in the absence of systematic search this default cannot be stressed. On the other hand, at the rejected Kandahar in 1958 and 1963 two very important inscriptions were brought to light and alter the situation. Both bear the title of the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor who governed most of India approximately from 268 to 233 BC. In the north-west his empire included Arachosia as one of the border-satrapies ceded to his grandfather Chandragupta, the first Mauryan king, by Alexander's successor Seleucus.

To establish these inscriptions in context it may be recalled that Ashoka, at heart a saintly fanatic, having begun his reign by slaughtering a hundred thousand wretches in Orissa, turned with equal thoroughness to humanitarianism, and as a

Buddhist convert inflicted charity relentlessly upon his subjects and his neighbours. The first of the two new inscriptions, carved on rock, is duplicated in Greek and Aramaic. The latter was an official language of Achaemenid Persia and was therefore traditionally appropriate to the region; but here the Greek takes precedence above the Aramaic and occupies two-thirds of the inscribed space. It runs to fourteen lines and is complete; the Aramaic text, in smaller lettering, is also complete and runs to eight lines.

Though not specifically dated, the double inscription is shown by its content to reflect a part of the fourteen Major Rock Edicts whereby the converted Buddhist emperor broadcast his precepts, particularly in the northern and north-western parts of his immense empire, in the years adjoining 255 BC. With this date, analysis of the severe and monumental Greek lettering by Louis Robert is wholly consistent; it points to the third century BC with a bias towards the middle of the century. Language and style are authentically and scholastically Hellenistic, and the persistent tendency to link phrases with the word *kai* ('and') is a recognized formalism of priestly Greek. Here is Hellas authoritatively *in partibus*.

But not so the import of the proclamation—for such it is. Here is the thinking, not of the Western world, but of the Orient and, particularly, of India. It reads thus:

Ten years having been fulfilled, the king Piodasses ['The Beneficent', honorific by-name of Ashoka] has demonstrated Piety to mankind. And from this he has made mankind more pious, and all things prosper throughout the world. And the king abstains from living things, and all other men and the hunters and indeed the fishers of the king have ceased to kill. And any who lacked control have ceased from their weakness to the best of their power. And they have become obedient to father and mother and to their elders, contrary to previous custom. And, in future, acting thus, they will live better and more laudably in all things.

This quiet and searching selflessness, with its underlying quality of negation, is native to the homeland of the Buddha. Its mood is incompletely in tune with that of the terse and virile Greek in which the expatriate epigrapher has expressed it. In his Western idiom he has interpreted rather than mirrored the original Sanskrit or Prakrit that no doubt lay before him. Even though his matter savour of the Orient, his utterance is truly Greek. It has been pointed out by Louis Robert that the last words of the text actually reproduce the traditional blessing offered by Greek oracles to their clients, as we know from a crowd of literary and epigraphic examples.

So too in [a] prolix Aramaic version which [also exists]. Here in the language of Persian officialdom are, with slight but significant variations, the same expressions of charity and compassion, this time tempered not to the Greek but to the Iranian mind; as Dupont-Sommer remarks, a little closer (not unnaturally) than the

Greek to the Indian original, but aimed carefully, like all the edicts of Ashoka, at the local understanding. To the Greeks or 'Yonas' he talked like a Greek, to the Persians like a Persian administrator of the old régime whose *lingua franca* still endured in a land of many vernaculars.

In one way and another, the two simultaneous documents on this rocky outcrop at Kandahar illustrate with a dramatic vividness the multiple elements in the culture of the region three-quarters of a century after Alexander: the Greek with its continuing social primacy, its Hellenism still substantially intact, albeit in a remote environment and in confrontation with a powerful alien philosophy; the Persian, beneath the Greek but hardly proclaiming its own sense of style and tradition; and, from the background, India with its assertive but beneficent doctrinal ethic, the first of its catholic kind known to history. The traditional opposition between 'Greek' and 'foreign' or 'barbarian' is on the way out. In its place, no doubt in this instance encouraged by the political pressures of the strong Mauryan régime, we face the beginnings of a new cultural fusion on an international scale. The general picture is that of one of the happier and more intelligent moments of human and humane interchange.

But that is not the whole of the story. In 1963 an inscribed rectangular building-stone was recovered from debris in Old Kandahar, though what the debris represented could not be ascertained. The face of the stone is covered by a Greek epigraph consisting of twenty-two long lines, incomplete in all four directions but sufficient to indicate that they were again a paraphrase and modification of a part of Ashoka's fourteen Major Rock Edicts; more precisely, of the twelfth and thirteenth. The paraphrase had doubtless occupied the surface of some public building but whether, like the rock-inscription of 1958, it had been accompanied by an Aramaic version there is no evidence. In translation the inscription reads as follows:

. . . piety and self-mastery in all the schools of thought; and he who is master of his tongue is most master of himself. And let them neither praise themselves nor disparage their neighbours in any matter whatsoever, for that is vain. In acting in accordance with this principle they exalt themselves and win their neighbours; in transgressing in these things they misdemean themselves and antagonize their neighbours. Those who praise themselves and denigrate their neighbours are self-seekers, wishing to shine in comparison with the others but in fact hurting themselves. It behoves to respect one another and to accept one another's lessons. In all actions it behoves to be understanding, sharing with one another all that each one comprehends. And to those who strive thus let there be no hesitation to say these things in order that they may persist in piety in everything.

In the eighth year of the reign of Piodasses, he conquered Kalinga. A hundred and fifty thousand persons were captured and deported, and a hundred thousand others were killed, and almost as many died otherwise. Thereafter, pity and

compassion seized him and he suffered grievously. In the same manner where-with he ordered absention from living things, he has displayed zeal and effort to promote piety. And at the same time the king has viewed this with displeasure: of the Brahmins and Sramins and others practising piety who live there [in Kalinga]—and these must be mindful of the interests of the king and must revere and respect their teacher, their father and their mother and love and faithfully cherish their friends and companions and must use their slaves and dependents as gently as possible—if, of those thus engaged there, any has died or been deported and the rest have regarded this lightly, the king has taken it with exceeding bad grace. And that amongst other people there are. . . .

The fragment began, as has been seen, with an incomplete reference to *schools* of thought, using the word *diatribe* which to a Greek signified a 'school of philosophy'. Its precise connotation in Ashoka's Buddhism is conjectural, but, like much else in these two Greek inscriptions, the word must have had a homely sound to Greek ears. The text goes on to denounce self-praise and denigration of others, and to advocate mutual respect. All this comes over well in the Greek, for all that its emphatic morality is rooted in Hindu introspection.

Then Ashoka (Piodasses) goes on to lament almost masochistically the slaughter and misery brought about by his famous campaigns in eastern India against the Kalingas—the primary cause of his conversion to Buddhism. From that moment, pity and compassion had seized upon him, culminating in the vegetarianism which comes readily to the Indian way of life. The main theme is accompanied by a catalogue of virtues which include respect for master and parents and an injunction to 'use slaves and dependents as gently as possible' (this last an interesting anticipation of the humanitarianism which, in the West, scarcely emerged until the end of the Roman Republic). In all this we are in the Orient of the third century BC, but the Greek adapter has done his best to acclimatize Indian sentiment to Greek idiom.

Indeed, once again it is the 'Greekness' of the text that strikes the reader. As Louis Robert has pointed out in discussion, the sustained cultural unity of the far-flung Hellenistic world in the third century BC is an astonishing phenomenon. These inscriptions from the depths of Asia, although marking the advent of new and oriental ideas, show no hint of degeneration or provincialism in expression. Their style runs free, with a certain iteration for emphasis and leisurely popular consumption but with a tightness of phraseology in the concise Greek manner. Their vocabulary is wholly borrowed from the Greek literary and philosophical tradition. There is nothing laboured in its rendering of the Indian prototype.

Chapter 7 INDIA

*Our views of Alexander are seen almost entirely through Western eyes, both ancient and modern. But here is the work of an important scholar of ancient Indian history and culture, A. K. NARAIN (b. 1925). After receiving his Ph. D. at the University of London he returned to his native India to engage in a distinguished career in the history, archaeology and numismatics of ancient Indian civilization. Narain is now Professor of History and Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin. His *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford, 1957) is still basic to an understanding of the events of the post-Alexander period in India and Central Asia. The following essay surveys Alexander's easternmost campaigns and analyses the mutual impact of East meeting West in the fourth century B.C.*

No army leader has become more famous in history than Alexander. He has been praised and admired as well as blamed and cursed. But even if blemishes can be found in his career and character, no one can deny his 'daemonic' strength of will and leadership, which alone are sufficient to mark him out as one of the greatest generals history has seen. Opinions may, however, differ as to whether he was more than that.

We are told Alexander's invasion of Persia was a pan-Hellenic war of revenge and he was elected as the leader of the League of Corinth for the purpose. It is said he was influenced by Isocrates' *Philippus*; if so, he should have envisaged the conquest of Asia Minor only. And Tarn would have us believe that Alexander did not cross the Dardanelles with any definite design of conquering the whole of the Persian

A. K. Narain, "Alexander and India," *Greece & Rome* 12 (1965) 155-65, by permission of the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Footnotes omitted.

empire (Tarn, i. 9).¹ But when it comes to Alexander's invasion of India, he states, 'India had been part of the empire of Darius I; and Alexander's invasion was only the necessary and inevitable completion of his conquest of that empire. It had nothing to do with any scheme of world conquest; indeed it could not have, for in the far East the 'world', like 'Asia', only meant the Persian empire; nothing else was known' (ibid. i. 86-87). He goes one step further and adds, 'possibly the Beas [=Hyphasis] had been the boundary of Darius I; it would agree with what happened. For at the Beas the army mutinied and refused to go farther' (Tarn, i. 98). Tarn would not like Alexander to dream of more than he actually achieved. For nothing succeeds like success and a fulfilled dream is the perfection of success.

But Alexander was certainly more ambitious than that; perhaps his ambition had no end. Describing the return march of Alexander, when he reached the Pasargadae and Persepolis, Arrian pauses to remark 'that Alexander had no small or mean conceptions, nor would ever have remained contented with any of his possessions so far, not even if he had added Europe to Asia, and the Britannic islands to Europe; but would always have searched far beyond for something unknown, being always the rival if of no other, yet of himself' Even if Alexander dreamt of more than Isocrates recommended he might very well have stopped with the collapse of the power of Darius III or when the latter died, and he would still be remembered as the glorious Captain of the League who succeeded not only in avenging the prestige of Hellas but also in bringing the Achaemenid era to an end. But he did not stop. He dragged his war-weary army to Sogdiana and the Punjab. He could have even taken them beyond the Beas, but he was fortunate, as he was in his death (cf. Tarn, i. 121), that the army refused to listen to him.

Of course, it serves no purpose to speculate what would have happened if Alexander had not retreated from the Beas, just as it does not help to discuss what would have happened if Napoleon had not marched into Russia. But certainly there is no evidence to extend the empire of Darius I east of the Indus and certainly not as far as the Beas. Even if it was Alexander's *mission* to conquer the whole of the Persian empire, whether to Hellenize it or for *Homonoia*, he had no justification in crossing the Indus, for 'the Indus river was the boundary between India and Ariana, which latter was situated next to India on the west and was in the possession of the Persians at that time'. Doubtless therefore Alexander did nourish an ambition to conquer India, perhaps even to reach the 'Eastern ocean' (Tarn, i. 99). Otherwise the crossing of the Indus was meaningless. Of course, Alexander hardly invaded India within its present boundaries because the point he reached at the Beas is only a few miles within the Indian Union. India, as his contemporaries knew it, did not end at the Beas either, and it was reported to him that the main power of India was really beyond this river. But the conquest of India remained an unfulfilled dream of Alexander. However, even what remains of Alexander's story would be shorn of all its romance and glory if his campaigns in Sogdiana and the Punjab were deleted and if there were no Spitamenes and Porus, Scythians and the Malloi.

It is beyond the scope of the present paper to give a detailed account of Alexander's conquest. But we can make a summary review of Alexander's march from Kabul to the Beas and from the Beas to the lower Indus. Alexander took almost two years to cover this area, which is proportionately a longer time for a lesser space than in his other campaigns, and the battles fought were as dangerous, as glorious, as full of bravery and adventure.

It was early summer of 327 when Alexander recrossed the Hindu Kush and divided his army. He sent Hephaestion and Perdikkas with the baggage and part of the army through the Khyber pass to the Indus and himself followed the old route through Laghman, ascended the Kunar river, and crossed into Swat. The people of these mountain tracts were called the Aspasiens, Gouraians, and Assakenians by Arrian (iv. 23. 1). They were brave people and it was hard work for Alexander to take their strongholds, of which Massaga and Aornus need special mention. At Massaga, Alexander massacred 7,000 mercenaries because they refused to join him against their own countrymen (Arrian iv. 27. 3 ff.; Diodorus 84). What makes this massacre 'a foul blot on Alexander's martial fame' is his treachery to the mercenaries who had capitulated, and the account given by Diodorus of the desperate fight which both the men and the women gave to meet a glorious death 'which they would have disdained to exchange for a life with dishonour' is really heart-rending. At Aornus, the fighting was at once fierce and dangerous. Ptolemy, who had taken a vantage point at the far end of the fortress by surprise, was cut off there for two days and hard pressed before the main body under Alexander could break through to him (Arrian iv. 29). The valley of the Swat was thus subjugated.

After these prodigious encounters, Alexander had a pleasant relief when he reached Nysa. The leader of the Nysaeans, Acuphis, not only offered submission but claimed kinship on account of their Greek origin and traditional association with the mythical Dionysus (Arrian v. 1-2; Curtius viii. 10. 7 ff.). It pleased the fancy of Alexander and his army. The Nysaeans were left undisturbed in their rule and Alexander gave his army licence to fraternize and enjoy Bacchanalian revelry.

Alexander joined Hephaestion at the Indus. Hephaestion had already bridged the river at Ohind, sixteen miles above Attock. He crossed the Indus and was welcomed by Ambhi and lavishly entertained in Taxila for three days. Alexander also made return presents to Ambhi, enjoyed the hospitality there and allowed Ambhi and those who were unable to defend themselves to live in peace. But the ambition of the impetuous and aggressive Alexander as well as the brave warrior in him did not wander so far only to enjoy stale luxury in the company of cowards and those who did not value freedom. He appointed Philippus as a satrap and left a garrison there (Arrian v. 8. 3) and proceeded to the Jhelum (=Hydaspes) without wasting more time, for he was getting restive to meet Porus, perhaps more because he wanted to test his mettle than to help Ambhi in his designs.

Alexander had learnt that Porus was ready at the far side of the Hydaspes with all his army, determined to prevent his crossing or at least to attack him, should he

attempt it. Although hemmed in by enemies, cowards, and traitors, both in front and rear, the undaunted spirit of Porus refused to submit. We are told, when envoys went to him to summon him to meet Alexander, he proudly replied that he would indeed meet him, but at his frontiers and in arms. This was a sufficient challenge for Alexander and he reached the Jhelum in early June 326. He found Porus ready with his forces on the opposite bank. Both sides made active preparation for the inevitable war, of which the details of strategy and movements are so well known that we need not repeat them. The part played by the rains also need not be gainsaid. Porus fought bravely, and even when he saw his army had almost perished, 'he did not copy the example of the great king Darius and set his own men an example of flight, but so long as any part of the Indian troops held their ground in the fight, so long he battled bravely', but having been wounded in the right shoulder 'he wheeled his elephant and retreated'. 'Alexander having seen him play a great and gallant part in the battle desired to save him' (Arrian v. 18). First Ambhi was sent with Alexander's message, but, when Porus saw him coming, he once again turned his elephant and rode up to pierce him with a javelin and Ambhi could save himself only with great difficulty and returned. Alexander sent others in relays and finally Meroes who had long been a friend of Porus. 'But Porus, hearing Meroes' message, and being also much distressed by thirst, halted his elephant and dismounted; and after drinking, and recovering his strength, bade Meroes conduct him at once to Alexander. Porus was then conducted to Alexander, who, learning of his approach, rode a horse and met him in advance of the line with a few of the Companions; then halting his horse, he admired the great size of Porus, who was over five cubits in height, and his handsomeness, and the appearance he gave of a spirit not yet tamed, but of one brave man meeting another brave man after an honourable struggle against another king for his kingdom. We need not repeat again the very well known conversation between Alexander and Porus. Porus was not only reinstated but further territories were added to his kingdom. Alexander thus became greater in peace than in war; according to Indian codes he acted as a *Dharmavijayi* like Samadragupta, the great king of the Magadhan empire, who behaved in this way towards the kings of South India in the middle of the fourth century A.D.

Alexander then proceeded further and crossed the Chenab and the Ravi (=Acesines and Hydraotes) and on the way defeated another Porus and also obtained the submission of Abhisares. He then crossed the Ravi and entered the country of the Cathaeans (Kathas), who were among the best fighters of the Punjab and first among 'the self-governing Indians'; they gave Alexander some of the toughest experiences of his campaign. He did capture Sangala, the hill fortress of the Kathas, by assault in which 'there perished some seventeen thousand of the Indians, and over seventy thousand were captured, with three hundred waggons, and five hundred horsemen'; however, Alexander had at one time to leap down from his horse and lead the Phalanx on foot, and over twelve hundred, including several of the officers and Lysimachus, were seriously wounded besides those who

were slain (Arrian v. 24. 5-8). Alexander razed the city of Sangala to the ground and advanced towards the Beas.

Phegeus, a near-by king who submitted to Alexander without resistance in order that his subjects might attend to the cultivation of their fields according to their needs, told Alexander about the extent and power of the Nanda empire east of the Beas, and Porus also confirmed his statements. Of course, such statements whetted Alexander's eagerness to advance further; but his troops, especially the Macedonians, had begun to lose heart at the thought of the distance they had travelled from their homes, and the hardships and the dangers they had been called upon to face after their entry into India. Alexander's exhortations and the reply of Coenus, which form a classic dialogue between a general and his army, are well known. The army mutinied and refused to march further. It was a severe blow to Alexander. He saved his face by offering a sacrifice preliminary to crossing the river, and, finding the omens unfavourable, as expected, he proclaimed his decision to return. The army received the announcement with tears of joy and grateful shouts. They hardly realized what was still in store for them. For Alexander had yet to fight some of his fiercest and most dangerous battles. From the bank of Beas he returned to the Jhelum, handed over all the country between the Jhelum and the Beas to Porus, and sailed down the Jhelum on his return journey.

Below the confluence of the Jhelum and the Chenab the armies of Alexander camped and he prepared for his last important campaign against the Malloi (Malavas). Unlike the monarchical states of the Punjab, the 'republican' states had the sense to unite against the common aggressor. The spectacle of Alexander's success did not deter them. The Cathaeans fought alone and failed. The Malloi therefore made a confederacy with the Oxydracae (Kshudraka) and planned to defend themselves together. But by his quick movements Alexander prevented the Oxydracae from joining the Malloi and the latter had to face the aggression alone, and it is clear from the accounts that they fought bravely. In fact, among Alexander's campaigns this is unique in its dreadful record of mere slaughter. Indeed, it was the least creditable of the campaigns, and the deep wound Alexander got in his chest as a result of his desperate expedient in the fight with the Malloi left him weakened and indirectly hastened his end. The Oxydracae, who could not join the Malloi, had no alternative but to submit after the collapse of their confederates the Malloi.

'The progress of the flotilla down the Chenab and the Indus cannot be traced, nor the places mentioned be identified, because all the rivers, more especially the Indus, have since altered their course many times' (Tarn, i. 103). But obviously more 'peoples' and kings fought with him. The most important among them were the Brahmanas and a king called Musicanus. About the end of July 325, Alexander reached Patala. Here the Indus bifurcated and Alexander halted to prepare for the last stage of his journey out of India and back to Hellas (Tarn, i. 104).

How did contemporary India react to his invasion? The following information

about 'the wise men' and 'philosophers' of ancient India is significant in this connexion:

Arrian refers to Indian wise men, some of whom, the story goes, were found by Alexander in the open air in a meadow, where they used to have their disputations, and who, when they saw Alexander and his army, did nothing further than beat with their feet the ground on which they stood. Then when Alexander inquired by interpreters what this action of theirs meant, they replied: 'O king Alexander, each man possesses just so much of the earth as this on which we stand; and you being a man like other men, save that you are full of activity and relentless, are roaming over all this earth far from your home troubled yourself, and troubling others. But not so long hence you will die, and will possess just so much of the earth as suffices for your burial' (Arrian vii. 1. 5 ff.).

Plutarch says that, 'the philosophers gave him (Alexander) no less trouble . . . because they reviled the princes who declared for him and encouraged the free states to revolt from his authority. On this account he hanged many of them.

Plutarch also refers to a certain Indian 'philosopher', Kalanus, as showing Alexander a symbol of his (Alexander's) empire. Kalanus threw down on the ground a dry and shrivelled hide and planted his foot on the edge of it. But when it was trodden down in one place, it started up everywhere else. He then walked all round it and showed that the same thing took place wherever he trod, until at length he stepped into the middle, and by doing so made it all lie flat. This symbol was intended to show Alexander that he should control his empire from its centre, and not wander away to its distant extremities.

There is again a reference to the capture of ten of the 'gymnosophists', who had been principally concerned in persuading Sabbas (?) to revolt and who had done much harm to the Macedonians in other ways. They were all to be executed for this, but before their execution they were asked certain questions. One of them was asked for what reason he had induced Sabbas to revolt. He answered, 'Because I wished him to live with honour or die with honour.'

The contemporary Indian observations made above are at once philosophical and patriotic. They indicate two things. First, there was an emotional love of freedom and a patriotic sense of honour. Second, India, with her peculiarly philosophical attitude, was not at all overawed by the greatness of Alexander and not only regarded the Indian campaign as most unjustifiable, but also anticipated its futility. The astute Brahman politician Chanakya and the youthful Kshatriya commoner Chandragupta, who seems to have had a first-hand view of Alexander's campaign in the Punjab, and who had perhaps met and offended Alexander (Justin xv. 4), understood the Indian pulse of reaction correctly. Even while Alexander was in Gedrosia, the only alien satrap appointed by him in India was murdered, and when Alexander was dying in Babylon, Chandragupta and Chanakya, perhaps with the help of Porus, were liberating and unifying the Punjab as a prelude to the final overthrow of the great Nanda power of the Ganges valley, which the army of

Alexander dreaded so much that the latter was forced to withdraw from the Beas. Alexander's campaign in India was therefore certainly not a political success. And it is also true that it left no permanent mark on the literature, life, or government of the people. The name of Alexander is not found in Indian literature. Certainly, Alexander did not intend his conquests in India to be as meaningless as this. But it was so.

One Indian historian feels that 'the adventure was no doubt highly creditable, but cannot be regarded as a brilliant military achievement, as he had never been brought face to face with any of the great nations of Hindusthan'. The same historian makes a note of 'the untold sufferings inflicted upon India—massacre, rapine, and plunder on a scale till then without a precedent in her annals, but repeated in later days by more successful invaders like Sultan Mahmud, Tamerlane, and Nadir Shah. In spite of the halo of romance that Greek writers have woven round the name of Alexander, the historians of India can regard him only as the precursor of these recognized scourges of Mankind'. This may be an extreme statement. But so is the statement that Alexander 'proclaimed for the first time the unity and brotherhood of mankind'. If the Indian historian suffers from sentiment, the western historian suffers from guilt; if one sees in Alexander's campaign an unjustified aggression, the other sees a justification for his mission, and neither of them needs to be blamed for his attitude. Shorn of these overstatements, Alexander's image remains that of an admirable army leader who suffered no defeat before he died, an image of a youthful person full of ambition and adventure curbed only by death, and above all an image of a human being who could commit crimes and atrocities and yet feel remorse and sympathy. Alexander will no doubt remain 'great', but not because of historians seeing more in him than what he actually was, but just for what he actually was.

But when all is said, we must admit two indirect results of Alexander's raid. People of the North-West, perhaps, realized that 'emotional love of independence was no match to the disciplined strength of a determined conqueror'; and it was felt that the existence of small states was not in the wider interests of the country. Chandragupta had probably himself witnessed the spirit of resistance, which the freedom-loving people of the Punjab had shown. He organized a disciplined army out of them and unified the Punjab and later the whole of Northern India after overthrowing the Nandas; he even added territories in the south and within a few years the first big Indian empire was established. To this empire were also added the four satrapies of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia, and Paropamisadae, which were ceded by Seleucus to Chandragupta only a few years after the death of Alexander. Seleucus I sent Megasthenes as an ambassador to the Mauryan court of Chandragupta. We have no evidence to tell us whether Chandragupta sent a return embassy to Seleucus. But stray references do indicate the continuance of diplomatic exchanges between the Hellenistic kingdoms and India. Athenaeus tells us, on the authority of Hegesander, that Amitrochates, king of the Indians, wrote to Antioch-

hus I of Syria asking that monarch to buy and send him sweet wine, dried figs, and a sophist. The Syrian king replied, 'We shall send you figs and the wine, but in Greece the laws forbid a sophist to be sold' (Athenaeus xiv. 652 ff.). Diodorus testifies to the great love of the king of Palibothra, apparently a Mauryan king, for the Greeks (Diodorus ii. 60). Strabo refers to the sending of Deimachus to the court of Allitrochades, son of Sandrokottos (ii. 1. 9, 70c). Pliny mentions another envoy, Dionysius, from Ptolemy II of Egypt (*Natural History* vi. 58). Asoka's friendly relations with the Yavanas of Western Asia and Egypt are well known. The thirteenth Rock Edict, a version of which has also been found in Greek recently at Kandahar, refers to the *Dhammavijaya* of Asoka in the kingdoms of Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus II of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Corinth. Asoka arranged for the medical treatment of men and cattle in the dominions of Antiochus II and his neighbours. It is not unlikely that his description of himself as *Devanampriya Piyadassi* is an echo of the deification of kings current among Alexander's successors in the Hellenistic East, although the style of his edicts is clearly influenced by edicts of Darius. These stray references do give a cumulative impression of a continuous contact of India with the Hellenistic world. The very fact that both Megasthenes and Kautilya refer to a state department run and maintained specifically for the purpose of looking after foreigners, who were mostly Yavanas and Persians, testifies to the impact created by these contacts. It also explains the occurrence of such finds as the fragmentary handle of a terra-cotta vase recovered from Taxila, showing Alexander's head in lion's skin, or random finds from the Sarnath, Basarh, and Patna regions of terra-cotta pieces of distinctive Hellenistic appearance or with definite Hellenistic motifs and designs.

The second indirect result was the rise of the Yavana power in Bactria and its ultimate expansion and rule over what is now known as Afghanistan and Western Pakistan for about one hundred and fifty years. I have shown elsewhere that these 'Greeks' were not necessarily Hellenistic Greeks, but mostly the descendants of earlier settlers preserving their traditions but much intermixed with the Iranian peoples and in some measure reinforced by the newcomers, the veterans of Alexander or colonists of the Seleucids. But they no doubt got their chance owing to the invasion of Alexander and the resultant dismemberment of the Achaemenid empire. There are as many as forty-one names of men who ruled this Yavana kingdom known from coins alone. It is to these kings that Strabo referred when he mentioned that 'more tribes were subdued by them (i.e. the Indo-Greeks) than by Alexander—mostly by Menander (at least if he actually crossed the Hypanis towards the east and advanced as far as the Imanus), for some were subdued by him personally and others by Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus, the King of the Bactrians. . .'. I have shown elsewhere that Menander was the most powerful among the Indo-Greek kings. He is the only king who has survived in Indian literature and tradition. He is known to have become a Buddhist and a tradition connects with

Menander the origin of the most famous statue of Buddhism in Indo-China, the statue of Buddha of the Emerald, which Menander's Indian teacher Nagasena materialized out of a magic emerald by supernatural power. The discussions between Menander, who is known as king Milinda in the Pali-Buddhist literature, and Nagasena are embodied in a book called *The Questions of King Milinda*. Plutarch (*Moralia* 821D-E) says that when Menander died the cities celebrated his funeral in other respects as usual, but in respect of his remains they put forth rival claims and divided the ashes equally to erect monuments on the relics, which is typical of the Buddhist custom. Numismatists believe that the occurrence of the wheel on some coins of Menander is the *Dharma Çakra*, the wheel of righteousness connected with Buddhism. We also know from an inscription engraved on a Garuda pillar found at Besnagar near Bhilsa (in the state of Madhya Pradesh) that an inhabitant of Taxila named Heliodorus, son of Dion, came as an envoy from Antialcidas, an Indo-Greek king, to the court of the Indian king, Bhagabhadra, and that Heliodorus was a follower of the Bhagawat sect of Hinduism. We also know from later evidence about Greeks who adopted not only Indian religions but also Indian names. The Indo-Greeks were more influenced by Indian religion and thought than was any Hellenistic king by the faith and ideas of the land in which he lived and ruled. No Seleucid ever put Iranian or Babylonian legends on his coinage, no Ptolemy ever used Egyptian, but the Indo-Greeks introduced Indian legends in Indian scripts on their money. They came, they saw, but India conquered.

Note

1. W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, I (Cambridge, 1948), now a Beacon paperback (Boston, 1956).—Ed.

Chapter 8 THE POLICY OF FUSION

ULRICH WILCKEN (1862-1944) *was one of Germany's most distinguished ancient historians. In addition to producing a number of general and specialized works on Greek and Hellenistic history, Wilcken wrote prolifically about Alexander. His biography (1931) of the Macedonian king still ranks as the most sensible and balanced such account. In the following passage Wilcken discusses Alexander's attempt to create a new role for himself in relation to the vast conglomerate of peoples over whom he now ruled.*

During this stay at Susa which lasted many months, and in the spring and summer of 324, are to be placed certain actions of Alexander, by which he gave clear expression to the thoughts which had ripened in his mind about his policy in Asia and about his relations to Greece. On the one hand we have the so-called 'Mass marriage at Susa', and on the other the demand he made of the Greeks for his 'apotheosis' and the decree on the 'restoration of the exiles'.

In connexion with his marriage to Roxane it was pointed out that it was the first indication that out of the military necessity of drafting Persians and other Iranians into his army, and under the influence of his maturing plans for world-dominion, the idea had grown up in him that these nations should be combined with his Macedonians into a dominant people, to whom he could entrust the defence of his

From Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, Norton Library (New York, 1967), pp. 207-210, 211-213, and 244-251, by permission of W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. Footnotes omitted.

Asiatic Empire, for which his Macedonians alone were not sufficient. After his successes in India, the more he was occupied with schemes of world domination, the more he seems to have become absorbed in this project of an amalgamation of the nations. Here it is to be noticed, though it is often overlooked, that Alexander did not aim at a universal world fraternity, but exclusively at an intermingling of his Macedonians with the Persians, heretofore the ruling nation, and with the Medes their kinsmen and the other Iranians, but not with Semites, Anatolians, Egyptians and other races. At Susa he expressed this idea with unmistakable plainness in an act of symbolic meaning before all the world, by arranging, for himself and eighty Macedonians who were nearest to his person, marriages with Persian and Iranian princesses and daughters of magnates. With unprecedented pomp a gigantic royal tent, in which Alexander was wont to hold his audiences, was erected on the model of the Persian *Apādana*, and the marriage ceremonies performed in it after the Persian rite, just as in the case of Roxane the Bactrian rite had been used. Chares, the court marshal, has left us valuable information both about this structure and the solemnities of the day. Alexander himself married Stateira, a daughter of Darius, certainly with the added motive of legitimising his sovereignty over Asia in the eyes of the Orientals by alliance with the former ruling house; and his dearest friend Hephaestion married her sister Drypetis, because Alexander wanted their children to be cousins. Alexander himself provided the dowry for each of the young bridegrooms. In addition he gave wedding presents to the ordinary Macedonians, who then or previously had taken Asiatic wives. We are told that enquiry established their number as exceeding 10,000.

But in spite of all their king's generosity his Macedonians grumbled, when those young Persians named *Epigoni*, who had in the meantime been trained in Macedonian fashion, were paraded before him at Susa to the number of 30,000, and incorporated as a separate unit in the army. What specially annoyed them was that in the reorganisation of the army, which was a necessity after the return from India, Alexander, first in the case of the cavalry, proceeded from a system of parallel Macedonian and Persian formations to a mixture of both races in one, and went so far as to receive Persians and Iranians into the proud *Agema* Guard. The temperature became sultry and ominous, and anger gained strength among the Macedonians against their commander, who seemed to them ever more and more like an Asiatic Great King. To remedy this discontent, Alexander announced that he wished to pay back the debts which they had contracted in camp life during the campaign, but it became evident that their confidence in him had been shaken. For when he ordered that the debtors should declare in writing their names and the amount of their debts, many were afraid to do this. They feared he only wanted to find out which of them had not found their pay sufficient. The mistrust of his troops wounded him most deeply, and he told them that a king might only speak the truth to his subjects, and the subjects might only expect truth from their king. He then com-

manded that the money should be paid out to them, without the necessity of giving their names in writing.

From Susa Alexander turned his attention again to affairs in Greece. Since the defeat of Agis and the infliction of punishment on the Spartans he had had neither time nor cause to occupy himself with Hellas. Though after the ending of the Panhellenic war of vengeance he still was *Hegemon* of the Corinthian League, yet through the colossal successes of the last years and through the extension of his empire to India the relation of power between the *Hegemon* and the Greek allies had altered very much to their disadvantage. Conscious of these superhuman and extraordinary achievements, Alexander now issued from Susa the request that he should be recognised as a god by the Greek allies. . . .

It was in harmony with purely Greek ideas that after his victorious return from India he claimed divine honours from the Greeks. The idea was all the more familiar to him, because, seven years before, the priest of Ammon had greeted him as son of Zeus. If then he had not committed himself to proclaiming officially in the Greek world this divine sonship, the announcement of which he had accepted with faith, in the sense of the Greek conception, as a divine revelation and a recognition of his superhuman divine force, yet this consciousness of a divine sonship had always remained in his mind. Possessed by it, elevated by his fabulous successes and in expectation of his plans for world-sovereignty, he now took the decisive step of going further than these special revelations, and of requiring divine honours from the Greeks of the Corinthian League. It is a mistaken view of Alexander's character to bar out this inner religious experience and to assume that the demand was a purely political move, the only object of which was to lift him as a god above the stipulations of the Corinthian League and to subject the autonomous Greek cities and their lands to his divine will. Certainly his apotheosis, if accepted, meant a great increase of his personal prestige with the cities of the league, a consummation which could not but be desirable to him; and on the theory of Aristotle his will would then have been raised above the laws. But on the one hand, Alexander had already, as we saw, previously set himself above the provisions of the league treaty, without needing a divine authority, merely on the ground of his growing predominance, and he could continue to do the same. On the other hand the Greeks, though they admitted the apotheosis, did not on that account recognise his will as divine law, but—at any rate in the case of the Athenians—refused him obedience and were determined to resist him to the uttermost even by violence. In the practice of political life they made a distinction between the god whom they worshipped with a cult, and the earthly *Hegemon*, whose rights and duties were fixed in their eyes afterwards as before by the Covenant of the league. It must be mentioned that even later the Hellenistic cult of kings, though as imperial cult it meant more in the several Greek states than Alexander's apotheosis, was never an obstacle to disobedience, and had no influence whatever on the practice of political life.

This distinction between the political and religious spheres, along with the Greek

character of the apotheosis, explains to us the fact that the Greeks complied with Alexander's wish without serious scruples. Naturally the members of the anti-Macedonian factions argued against it, but if those political consequences had really been bound up with the apotheosis, the opposition would have been of a different kind, and the speeches in the popular assemblies would not have been as harmless or as ironical in their tone as those that have been handed down to us; nor would a champion of freedom like Demosthenes, after an original protest, have finally advised the Athenian people to recognise the king 'as son of Zeus or as Poseidon too if he wished'. The indifference, which treated the question almost as a bagatelle, demonstrates that it was a question not of high politics but of religion, which in the opinion of the *illuminati* to whom the old polytheism was no longer possessed of any meaning, had no exciting importance. . . .

It is more difficult to understand or even to judge the statesman in Alexander than the general; for his views as a statesman were in a state of flux, when he was called away by an early death. None of his political creations had as yet taken definitive shape, and new plans were constantly emerging from his restless brain. It is impossible to conceive how different the world would have looked, if he had lived only ten or twenty years longer. How differently then should we be able to judge the youthful work which he did up to 323. We must never forget that we have only beginnings before us. In no single instance had the last word been spoken.

Looked at externally, his evolution seems to show a continuous development from King of Macedonia and *Hegemon* of the Corinthian League to Great King of the Persian empire and finally to world-ruler, and thus it has generally been represented in antiquity and to-day. But if from the standpoint of law one examines his relation to these different complexes of government, one finds instead of succession the continuance side by side of these different positions. Here, as generally, the historian cannot be content to work out the legal aspect; the true historical problem for him is to consider how the practice of political life stood to these forms.

Let us first consider the legal forms. By acclamation of the army Alexander became lawful king of Macedonia, and immediately afterwards by resolution of the *Synhedrion Hegemon* of the Corinthian League, which Philip had united as a free and sovereign league of states by union in his person with the kingdom of Macedonia. To this double position corresponded the duality of his war aims on crossing the Hellespont: as *Hegemon* he wished to conduct the Panhellenic campaign of vengeance, as King of Macedonia he wanted to conquer territory. But he did not incorporate in Macedonia what he conquered, as Philip had done as far as possible with his conquests; by immediately organising as satrapies the earliest conquests on the soil of Asia Minor he expressed the fact that these territories were to remain outside of Macedonia; then, as *Hegemon*, he incorporated in the Corinthian League the liberated Greek cities of Asia Minor, which were not included in the satrapies. As king he continually conquered more territories, till after the final victory over Darius he caused himself to be acclaimed by his Macedonians as King of Asia at

Arbela. Yet in spite of this sanction from the assembly of the Macedonian army, this Asiatic empire, as was said above, was not incorporated in the kingdom of Macedonia, but simply united with it by personal union. The acclamation of the army rather expressed the fact that it was the King of Macedonia to whom now belonged the rule over Asia. The foundation of Alexander's power was and remained his monarchy over Macedonia. To whatever boundless size this Asiatic empire might grow, in political law it remained, just like the Corinthian League, an annex joined by personal union to Macedonia.

The result of this was the quite different legal position which Alexander held in these three parts of his whole empire. In Macedonia he was and remained like Philip and his predecessors the king of the people and army, beside whom the nation in arms preserved its old rights in the assembly of the army. To the Greeks of the Corinthian League he was their *Hegemon* with the rights and duties laid down by the Covenant of the League. As King of Asia he was to the Asiatics an absolute ruler in the sense of the Achaemenids, as whose legal successor he regarded himself after the death of Darius. But this Asiatic absolutism was not uniform, since under the Achaemenids it had developed in various forms in different parts of the empire, and as far as possible Alexander allowed these forms to continue unchanged. In Egypt, for instance—if we may count it as belonging to the monarchy of Asia on the ground that it was an early part of the Achaemenid empire—he was Pharaoh and also divine; in Babylon, like Cyrus and Darius of old, king of the city but not a god; in the Phoenician and Cypriot cities he kept their kings as his vassals, just as he retained Porus and Abisares in India. On the other hand, his absolutism did not hold good in Asia with regard to the Macedonians and Greeks of the army that attended him or to the Greek cities which he founded. From the legal standpoint this triple division of the whole empire remained unchanged till his death, for he created no new legal formula for the control of the whole area. He remained the King of Macedonia, to which the Corinthian League and the monarchy of Asia were bound by personal union. The unity of the whole world empire rested on his personality.

We have now to ask whether in the actual practice of political life Alexander adhered to these legal forms as regards his different status in the three parts of his empire. In particular the question arises whether the enormous authority which he acquired as King of Asia influenced his position with reference to Macedonia and the Corinthian League. The first point to be established is that Alexander was fully conscious of the legal distinction between his position in Asia and in Europe, that is, in Macedonia and the Corinthian League. This follows from the statement that from the death of Darius he sealed letters destined for Europe with his Old Macedonian seal, but on the other hand those intended for Asia with the seal of Darius. An attempt has been made to interpret this as expressing the change from Macedonian sovereignty to the position of successor to the Achaemenids. The essence of the statement is rather that it testifies to the parallelism of the two legal positions.

It is of the utmost moment that Alexander showed himself conscious in principle that his legal position in Asia did not also hold good for Europe. To Europe he remained up to the end of his life King of Macedonia, and as such also *Hegemon* of the Corinthian League. Even when he was in Asia, he acted as King of Macedonia, when he had to send to Europe a communication affecting Macedonia or the League. The seal of Darius was used only for the kingdom of Asia.

On the other hand, in the externals of Alexander's life his Asiatic monarchy appears ever more obtrusively as time goes on. We must not, however, overlook the fact that in tradition, especially that hostile to him, this 'Orientalisation' of the king is treated with special jealousy and great prejudice. Let us first examine his behaviour as King of Asia. The use of Darius' seal confirms the view that after the death of Darius Alexander felt himself to be his legitimate successor; henceforth on principle he regarded the Asiatics no longer as his enemies but as his subjects. Starting from this, he reached the thoroughly statesmanlike conviction that he must enlist the vigour contained in these nations for the great problems that Asia presented to him. This course commended itself the more as it was to be hoped that it would have a reconciling and calming influence on the subjected peoples. In Caria and Egypt he had already committed the civil administration to natives; and so now that he had been proclaimed King of Asia at Arbela, he began to appoint Persian nobles as satraps. But they received only the civil power; each had a Macedonian officer at his side as commander of the troops. The ultimate control was thus in Macedonian hands. A still more urgent necessity was the recruiting of his army with the élite troops of Asia, for his European troops were insufficient for the colossal plans he was revolving in his brain. The filling up of gaps with Asiatic forces was absolutely imperative from the military point of view. Here, as in the administrative posts, he chose Iranians, especially Persians, and after the conquest of Eastern Iran its inhabitants too. Of the Semitic peoples he utilised for the fleet the seafaring Phoenicians and Syrians, but did not put them into the land forces. We have seen how in the various reorganisations he connected these Iranians ever more closely with his army. Yet even in the last innovation at Babylon (323), when he actually drafted Persians into the decads, the command remained in Macedonian hands.

He did not, however, stop at the use of Iranians in the administration and the army, a use which will be recognised as politically right and required by circumstances, but went beyond it to the idea of a race-fusion of his Macedonians with these Iranians, an idea which dominated him more and more, as we saw, in his last years. He himself set the example by his marriage with Roxane (327), and later by the mass-marriage of Susa (324) he expressed most plainly his political intentions. Obviously he regarded this fusion as a means to an end; his aim was to build a bridge between the Macedonians, who were increasingly dissatisfied with the military employment of the Persians, and these same Persians, and to restore concord and agreement between the two peoples, so that hand in hand they might afford a sufficient guarantee against possible hostile reactions on the part of other nations of

the empire. Thus conceived, the policy of fusion may be regarded as a statesmanlike idea, however surprising the thought of race-breeding promoted by government may appear, and however doubtful it is whether such a fusion as Alexander desired was at all feasible, and finally, whether it would have had the effect for which he hoped.

The notion of world sovereignty, which laid hold of him ever more strongly in his last years, must have contributed largely to the birth of such a thought in his mind. Only a world ruler, before whose eyes peoples lose their national significance, is capable of conceiving such a scheme. When in the memoranda about Alexander's latest plans it is stated that he intended to transfer Asiatics to Europe and *vice versa*, in order that by mixed marriages concord between the two continents might be brought about, the scanty extract leaves too many questions open for any certain inferences as to his last thoughts on the matter. In any case the information neither compels nor justifies us in thinking that fusion was contemplated with any other race than the Iranian.

In the 'Prayer at Opis' Alexander expressed very clearly the conception he held of his monarchy over Asia and his policy of reconciliation, when at the great feast of union he prayed to the gods that concord and partnership of rule might be granted to the Macedonians and Persians. As the Macedonians alone were insufficient for the ruling of Asia, the previously dominant Persians, who already under the Achaemenids had taken up a privileged position before the other nations of the world empire, were to be called to the leadership along with them. Alexander's Asiatic empire—for only to this can his words refer—was thus to become a Macedonian-Persian empire. In this ideal, only to be brought about by concord, he seems to have seen the best guarantee for the security and permanence of his Asiatic empire, and his civilising policy.

His wish to be King of Asia in the form of ruler of a Macedonian-Persian empire, Alexander also expressed in his attire. The statements concerning his royal dress, as it was after Darius' death, are very contradictory, since probably he only gradually adopted a definite use, and, especially at first, dressed differently, according as he had to appear before Macedonians and Greeks or before Persians. But one thing seems established, that he never adopted the entire costume of a Persian king; all are unanimous that he never wore the Persian trousers, which the Greeks regarded as especially barbaric and ridiculous. Nor does he ever seem to have worn the tiara, though this is disputed. The costume which is described to us as that which he wore every day, was a mixture of Macedonian and Persian garments. He wore the Macedonian *chlamys*, a mantle and a purple one like that worn by the Macedonian nobility, and the purple *causia*, the specially Macedonian head-covering, a round flat cap. From Persia he took the purple chiton with the white stripe inserted in the middle, and the diadem, the ribbon, which the Persian king bound round his tiara, and Alexander round his *causia*. It seems certain that his purpose was to wear this or similar attire only in Asia as King of Asia, and if he had returned to Macedonia

or Hellas, he would assuredly have appeared in purely Macedonian garb, just as he sealed the documents he sent there with the royal seal of Macedonia.

Though the idea of Macedonians and Persians sharing the rule of Asia was before his mind, he practised Asiatic absolutism solely towards Asiatics, and not towards the Macedonians of the army who accompanied him in Asia. These he continued to regard as citizens of his kingdom of Macedonia. While Bessus was punished according to Persian laws, Philotas and other Macedonians suspected of high treason were brought before the assembly of the Macedonian army, and we never hear that this assembly lost its old rights in Asia. It is stated that when Alexander had to sit in judgment on Macedonians or Greeks he did so in simple form in a plain judgment hall, but on the other hand, when it was a question of Orientals, he delivered judgment in a magnificent tent of audience on a golden throne, like the Great King, and with a great display of military pomp. We have already observed that even as King of Asia he preserved an attitude of comradeship with the Macedonian officers, and to the Macedonian rank and file on the march and in battle he was always the old army king. At the feast of reconciliation at Opis, though it was there that he proclaimed the common rule of Macedonians and Persians, nevertheless the Macedonians had the place of honour by Alexander above the Persians. In spite of the employment of Persians in administration and in the army, the command, as we saw, was reserved to the Macedonians. They were to take their place before the Persians in this joint rule.

In spite of all this the Macedonians were dissatisfied that Iranians were brigaded with them in the army, and especially that their king partially adopted Persian dress and also many details of the ceremonial of the Persian court. These are the things which are again and again adduced as stumbling-blocks, when the Macedonians take up a hostile attitude, as in the catastrophe of Cleitus and at the mutiny of Opis. They felt that they were the victors, and they looked down with contempt on the vanquished Orientals, whose masters they intended to be. It is the profound tragedy of the life of Alexander that he could not convince the Macedonians of the necessity of his Iranian policy—apart from the idea of the fusion of races it must be regarded as necessary—and that thus a widening gulf opened to divide the king ever more and more from his people.

**Part
Four**

**THE BROTHERHOOD
OF MANKIND:
A REVOLUTION
IN SOCIAL THOUGHT?**

One of the key pieces of evidence for Alexander's notion concerning the unity of mankind is a passage in Arrian (7. 11.9). This describes a prayer offered by Alexander at a banquet held at Opis, near Babylon. The passage serves as the basis for the next two selections, and is given below in a transliteration of the Greek with an interlinear English translation:¹

Eucheto de ta te alla agatha
He prayed (for) other good things

kai homonoian te kai koinōnian
and (for) homonoia and (for) a partnership

tês archês tois te Makedosi kai Persais.
of rule (for) Macedonians and Persians.

Chapter 9 THE UNITY OF MANKIND: A NEW SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Sir WILLIAM WOODTHORPE TARN (1869-1957) was unquestionably the most famous student of Alexander and his successors in the first half of the twentieth century. He fashioned the image and role of Alexander into a figure that came to dominate modern thinking on the subject, making of the king an innovative social philosopher who introduced for the first time the ideals of a universal brotherhood and the unity of mankind. What follows is from Tarn's fullest statement on the matter, and represents only a part of the argument that produced the famous theory. It demonstrates how much of Tarn's idea rests on his own extended interpretation of a few lines of the Greek text of Arrian.

Somewhere between the middle of the fourth century B.C. and the early third century there took place a great revolution in Greek thought. For long, prior to that revolution, Greeks had divided the world they knew into Greeks and non-Greeks; the latter they called barbarians, men who said 'bar-bar', that is, men whose speech could not be understood; generally speaking, they regarded barbarians both as enemies and as inferior people to themselves. But in the third century we meet with a body of opinion which discarded this division; it held that all men were brothers and ought to live together in unity and concord. Few modern writers have had any doubts as to who was the author of this tremendous revolution; it was

From W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, Vol. II, "Sources and Studies," (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 399-400, 440-449. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press. Footnotes omitted, and the Greek of the original translated by the editor.

Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy. But there are several passages in Greek writers which, if they are true, show that the original author was not Zeno but Alexander. Until recently, these passages received very cavalier treatment; some scholars either simply discarded them as unhistorical or else said that it was only a case of late writers attributing to Alexander ideas which they had taken from Stoicism, while others whittled them down to make of them a mere expression of Alexander's policy of fusion, which will be noticed in § VI. The first attempt at a thorough treatment of them was in a lecture I gave before the British Academy in 1933; I give the subsequent literature, so far as known to me, in a note. What I am trying to do in this Appendix is to clarify this somewhat involved subject for readers; merely to reprint my own studies would not serve the purpose, though I draw upon them freely where advisable. I have also, I hope, improved upon my earlier treatment of these ideas of Alexander's; they merit all the consideration one can give to them, for they were probably the most important thing about him, and they do more than anything else to negative the stupid but widespread belief that the man whose career was one of the great dividing lines of world-history was a mere conqueror. I am postponing Alexander himself, that is to say the meaning and bearing of the Greek passages to which I have referred, to the end of this study (§ VI), so as to get all the preliminary considerations out of the way first; but there is no reason why anyone who prefers should not read § VI first. I may, however, for the reader's convenience, indicate here very briefly the conclusion to which this study leads. In 1933 I referred everything about Alexander to a single idea; it can now be seen that what we possess relates, I will not say to three ideas, but to an idea which had three facets or aspects, and these must be distinguished, though they are closely interconnected. The first is that God is the common Father of mankind, which may be called the brotherhood of man. The second is Alexander's dream of the various races of mankind, so far as known to him, becoming of one mind together and living in unity and concord, which may be called the unity of mankind. And the third, also part of his dream, is that the various peoples of his Empire might be partners in the realm rather than subjects. The keynote of the whole is the conception of *Homonoia*, a word which will run through this study. It means 'a being of one mind together'; it was to become the symbol of the world's longing for something better than everlasting wars. There is no word in English to translate it. It signifies far more than its Latin translation *concordia* or our 'concord'; 'to live in concord' can be satisfied by the negative meaning 'to live without quarrelling', a thing that can be done by people of very different mentalities and outlooks. 'Unity' might pass, but is too vague; the English political catchword of a generation ago, a 'union of hearts', is better, but hearts are not minds; so I shall keep the Greek word *Homonoia* throughout. . . .

After the mutiny at Opis and the reconciliation between Alexander and the Macedonians, Alexander first sacrificed to his accustomed gods, doubtless a thanksgiving for the reconciliation, and then passed on to a greater reconciliation; he gave

a vast banquet, traditionally to 9,000 people, in order to emphasise that the long war was now over and that the world with which he was concerned was at peace; the banquet concluded with all the guests making a libation together, which led up to and was followed by his prayer. Arrian's account of the scene and the prayer is, as has been seen, from Ptolemy; Eratosthenes' references go back to some eyewitness (see *post*) who was not Ptolemy. That this extraordinary scene, unparalleled I fancy before or since, was, as it happened, the culminating point of Alexander's career is certain, though no one may have realised it at the time, since it could not be foreseen that he would die next year. The number of guests, all of whom were seated, would necessitate many tables; Alexander's own would be the largest and most prominent, and on it stood the krater Ptolemy mentions, which contained the wine for the libation; it was said to have been of enormous size. Presumably on the other tables would be smaller kraters of wine, otherwise all the guests could not have joined in the libation, as they did; notionally, the other kraters were all part of Alexander's krater and the other tables part of his table, separate tables and kraters being mere machinery necessitated by the great number of guests.

Ptolemy says that at Alexander's own table were seated Macedonians, Persians, some Greek seers, some Magi (presumably Medes), and those representatives of 'the other peoples' (i.e. other than Macedonians or Persians) who, through being distinguished for this or that, ranked highest in dignity; that is, the most prominent men from every race in his Empire and from at least one people not in his Empire, Greeks, sat at his own table. All those at his table (*amph' auton*) drew for themselves wine from the krater on his table; those at the other tables must have done the same from their kraters (which notionally would be part of Alexander's krater), for the whole assembly made one libation, i.e. at the same time. At an ordinary Macedonian banquet or dinner (not at a Greek one) the signal for the libation after the meal was given by trumpet, and it is known that Alexander followed Macedonian custom; the signal therefore at Opis was given by trumpet, which also enabled any one outside the banquet to associate himself mentally, if he so desired, with the act of worship involved. The libation, Ptolemy says, was led by the Greek seers and the Magi, not by Alexander or any Macedonian; and it is to be wished that we knew to what god it was made. The "Good Spirit" of the private Greek dinner-party is out of the question. The Magi were notoriously strict upholders of their own religion, and could hardly have led a libation to a Greek god; the formula, one supposes, must have been phrased in such a way that every people there could have seen in it the supreme deity of its own religion, and with this agrée Alexander's saying that 'God' (and not Zeus or another) was the common father of mankind, and Eratosthenes' statement that he thought his mission was from God. What is certain is that no witness of the scene could ever have forgotten the sight of that great krater on Alexander's table and people of every nationality drawing wine from it for their common libation; this in turn shows that the krater was Eratosthenes' loving-cup, in which men from everywhere were mixed, as though notion-

ally it contained portions of wine named for each one of them. Eratosthenes does not say that it *was* a loving-cup; he says '*as if* in a loving-cup', because the assembly did not *drink* the wine themselves; it was poured out to heaven in a solemn act of worship. Eratosthenes' account then must go back to an eyewitness, one who had seen that krater; guesses as to who it might have been are useless, except that it was certainly not Ptolemy. But Eratosthenes used the metaphor of the loving-cup to illustrate the phrase 'reconciler of the world'; that phrase then also belongs to, or depends on, the scene at Opis, and may ultimately go back to the same eyewitness; indeed it is conceivable (I will put it no higher) that Alexander used the occasion to proclaim his mission.

The culminating point of the whole scene was Alexander's prayer, to which the libation led up; it does not appear how the two can be separated. We have a formal version of the prayer in Arrian from Ptolemy, who heard it, and also an informal reference to it in Plutarch.² Plutarch has been using Eratosthenes off and on in this part of the *de Alexandri Fortuna* since 329 B (he is referred to by name in 330A); and this passage, which conjoins the two key-words of the prayer, *homonoia* and *koinônia*, and in the same order, and thus relates to the scene at Opis, must, it seems, be from Eratosthenes and therefore ultimately from some one who heard it; but the passage (which I shall come to) does not do more than give the tenor of the prayer, though it helps to elucidate it. *A priori*, one would expect that the prayer to which such a scene led up as its culmination would have contained more than the fourteen words which are all that Ptolemy gives. It almost certainly did. Ptolemy was truthful over facts (though not always so over figures), and the prayer was a fact and so had to be given; but by the time he wrote his history he had long parted company with Alexander's ideas, and he would hardly say more than he could help about a scene with which he had small sympathy and a prayer which was the condemnation of his own methods of rule. But there is another matter. No prayer could possibly *begin* by asking for 'the other good things' (a commonplace formula) before the real object of the prayer had been stated; it is almost certain therefore that what we have is only a brief summary or paraphrase. But we have no means of going behind the words we have, and must take them as they are. It is fortunate therefore that, as Eratosthenes must also go back to some one who, like Ptolemy, was there, we can add to Ptolemy's factual account the interpretation given by Eratosthenes or rather perhaps by his ultimate source.

Two translations of the prayer as given by Arrian are grammatically possible, and both are equally true to the Greek. We can read it: Alexander 'prayed for the other good things and for Homonoia between, and partnership in rule between, Macedonians and Persians'. This is the usual rendering, often enough turned merely into a prayer for the joint rule of Macedonians and Persians, thus enabling writers to say that there is nothing to the scene at Opis at all but the policy of fusion. Or we can read it: Alexander 'prayed for the other good things, and for Homonoia, and for partnership in the realm between Macedonians and Persians'; and two things show

that this rendering is the correct one. He *could* not have prayed for a joint rule of Macedonians and Persians; it had no meaning. His two realms, Macedonia and 'Asia', were not two Empires but one, united in his own person as equally ruler of both; he was alike king of the Macedonians and Great King of 'Asia', the one-time Persian empire, and while he lived there could be no talk of any other rule in the joint Empire but his own. And we shall see that Homonoia in the prayer has to stand alone as a substantive thing, and not merely be tacked on to the words 'Macedonians and Persians'.

All this is borne out by the Eratosthenes passage I have referred to (p. 443 n. I); it has already been seen (§ III, p. 417 *ante*) that we start with a strong presumption in favour of its truth. The passage says this: Alexander's intention was to bring about for all men Homonoia and peace and partnership (or fellowship) with one another. The *koinônia pros allêlous* of this sentence shows that the *koinônia tês archês* of the prayer does mean partnership in the realm and not partnership in rule. Peace must have been included in the prayer, for in one aspect the whole scene celebrated the end of the war and the return of peace. Finally, the Homonoia of all men towards each other—all becoming of one mind together—shows that the Homonoia which Alexander prayed for was not meant to be confined to Macedonians and Persians. It is hard to believe that in the actual prayer Homonoia was not defined; for it is Homonoia between all men which is signified by Alexander's claim to a divine mission to be the harmoniser and reconciler of the world, that Homonoia which for centuries men were to long for but never to reach.

The prayer was the culminating point of, and cannot be separated from, the libation; and this being so, there is one more question to ask—what peoples were included in the prayer for Homonoia? In 1936 Professor Kilbe claimed that the prayer must have included all the peoples of the Empire; he was on the right tack, but he supported his view solely from the fusion policy—Iranian satraps, mixed army, mixed marriages—and he made the 'other peoples' share in the *archê in the sense of rule, Herrschaft*; and though he said (p. 18): "The notion of a general world brotherhood was born," brotherhood did not follow from anything which he had been saying about the scene at Opis, and seemingly only meant that all men were alike to be subjects in Alexander's 'World-kingdom'. It was not too difficult therefore for Wilcken to discard a conclusion which had not been properly founded. Now, however, that Eratosthenes' loving-cup is seen to have actually existed and that consequently Eratosthenes also is referring to the scene at Opis, many of the old arguments have lost their meaning. That the Homonoia for which Alexander prayed was meant to include more than Macedonians and Persians, more even than the people under his rule, seems certain enough, for Eratosthenes calls the people mixed in the loving-cup, "people from everywhere," and again "all men." But one can get much the same thing from Ptolemy-Arrian also. This account mentions the leading men of the 'other peoples' seated at Alexander's table, and states that the libation was led by Greek seers and Magi; and the Greek seers, at

the least, show that the participants were not confined to Alexander's Empire. Indeed there must have been plenty of Greeks among the guests, for there were many whom, if the guests numbered anything approaching 9,000, he could not have failed to invite: leading figures like Eumenes and Nearchus, his very important Greek technicians, including Aristobulus, the philosophers and poets at his court. But he was not ruler of the Greek world; he had no Greek subjects, unless in Cilicia. With part of that world he had no political connection at all; with another part the connection was only that he was Hegemon of the League of Corinth; the Greek cities of Asia were his free allies (App. 7, I); with Thessaly alone his relations were somewhat closer, but the fact that he was the elected head of the Thessalian League no more made him *ruler* of Thessaly than Aratus of Sicyon was ruler of the Achaean League. But, besides Greeks, there was another people outside of Alexander's Empire who could not fail to have been represented. If anything like 9,000 people were invited to a banquet whose ostensible object was to celebrate the restoration of peace, representatives of his own armed forces must have been included; and, if so, he could not possibly have omitted the Agrianians, that favourite and indispensable corps to whom he had already paid such marked honour in the presence of the whole army; and the Agrianians were not his subjects or even his allies, but just northern 'barbarians'.

I must turn for a moment to Wilcken's already noticed criticism. It is, of course, indisputable, as he said, that only two peoples, Macedonians and Persians, are named in the prayer; that is, in the version Arrian gives, which, we have seen, cannot be more than a summary or paraphrase. However, this is Wilcken's foundation, and as such I take it; and, that being so, it is easy enough to see the reason. Alexander was praying primarily for the reconciliation of the two sides in the great struggle; and Macedonians and Persians are named because they were the protagonists, the leaders, the peoples who had supplied the two rival monarchs. But just as he took advantage of a great gathering, invited primarily to mark the end of the war, to promulgate certain new ideas of his own, so his prayer that Macedonians and Persians might live in partnership (or fellowship, *koinônia*) was only part of his prayer for the reconciliation of all men in Homonoia. Wilcken, however, has a very different interpretation: the object of Alexander's prayer, which was confined to Macedonians and Persians, was that these two peoples should keep the peace while he was absent conquering the West. This of course depends on Alexander's supposed plan for the conquest of the western Mediterranean basin, which Wilcken believed to be genuine but which, I trust, I have shown to be a demonstrably late invention (App. 24). Wilcken continued that participation of Greek seers and Magi in the sacred ceremony confirms the fact that no peoples other than Macedonians and Persians were meant to be included. About the Magi I cannot dogmatise. They would probably be Medes, and apart from that Alexander could not have left out his wife's Bactrian kinsfolk, the great barons of the north-eastern marches who had cost him such labour to overcome and reconcile; and though I cannot say that the

word 'Persians' here could not have included Medes and Bactrians, as it often did in common parlance, still we are not dealing with common parlance, and I cannot recall any *formal* document or occasion on which it does so. But putting that aside, Wilcken's statement about Greeks is surely misconceived. If there was one racial distinction more vigorous and vital than another in Alexander's day it was that between Greeks and Macedonians; and though a century later the distinction may have died out in the Farther East, it remained lively enough in the Aegean world till the end of Macedonia's independence. What the Greeks do show has already been indicated. Wilcken's final suggestion was that the representatives of the 'other peoples' were only there as *witnesses*. This, as he means it, is flatly contradicted by Eratosthenes and by the *logos* in Arrian; and one might well ask, why summon representatives from the greater part of the known world to witness a simple political arrangement? But in another sense, everyone there save Alexander himself was both participant and witness—witness to the first tentative enunciation of one of the most important ideas ever put forward in a world which regarded perpetual warfare as an inevitable rule. Before leaving Wilcken, I must notice one point of much interest: he said he had never met a really good explanation of the difficult phrase *koinônia tês archês*, taking *archê* to mean "rule". Neither have I, and I venture to think I never shall; the explanation is that *archê* does not mean "rule". I may note in conclusion that he passed over 'Reconciler of the World' in silence, which is perhaps better than recent attempts to explain it away.

It seems to me then to be proved as clearly as a difficult question of this sort in antiquity is ever likely to be proved that Alexander did think of, and hold, the ideas which I have ascribed to him; and now that the examination of our texts is ended, it should be possible to be a little more precise about what those ideas were. We have really been dealing, as I mentioned by anticipation in § I, with three things, though I cannot call them three ideas; all are interconnected, and they are rather three facets of a single idea. The first is the statement that all men are brothers; Alexander was the first man known to us, at any rate in the West, to say so plainly and to apply it to the whole human race, without distinction of Greek or barbarian. The second thing is his belief that he had a divine mission to be the harmoniser and reconciler of the world, to bring it to pass that all men, being brothers, should live together in *Homonoia*, in unity of heart and mind. This was a dream, or an inspiration; it was something which had come to him and was struggling for expression; he gave it expression for the first time at Opis, tentatively, in the form of *Homonoia* between all men, and one who was there crystallised it in the metaphor of a loving-cup in which all men were mixed. It would seem that his application of this idea was not so much to humanity generally as to the world he himself knew and lived in—not only to the peoples of his Empire, but also to those outside it and in particular to the Greek world, alike the most important, the most civilised, and the most quarrelsome of the peoples with whom he had to do. There is no question of his having had any cut and dried plan; indeed it is unlikely that he had any plan at

all, though the recall of the exiles may conceivably have been meant as a first attempt to do something about it. It was, and was to remain, a dream, but a dream greater than all his conquests. Many have dreamt his dream since; but the honour of being the first remains his. But no one has ever seen how it could be made a reality; least of all perhaps do we see it to-day. It is not at all likely that he saw it either; but, being Alexander, he would, had he lived, have tried to do *something* to outlaw war, and would have failed as the world has failed ever since. The third thing of the three which I mentioned was the desire, expressed in the libation and prayer at Opis, that all the peoples in his realm should be partners and not merely subjects; had he lived, this was a thing which he probably would have attempted. The policy of fusion may have been meant as a step towards this idea of partnership, as partnership itself was to be a step towards the fulfilment of his dream.

Hardly any one at the time could understand what he meant. One philosopher after his death, Theophrastus, did get hold of some sort of idea derived from the brotherhood of man and used it theoretically (§ V); one small ruler, Alexarchus, was affected, and was promptly called mad; but the world had to wait for a generation for a man who should be big enough himself to understand Alexander. The tradition that behind Zeno lay Alexander is true enough, but not merely in the somewhat material shape in which it has reached us; what lay behind Zeno was not so much Alexander's career as Alexander's ideas. Zeno's great city of the world took up and was founded on Alexander's idea of a human brotherhood, but as regards the unity of mankind in Homonoia Zeno took his own line; while Alexander thought he had a mission to bring it about, Zeno said that Homonoia was there already and always had been, if only men's eyes could be opened to see it. In practice it made little difference, for a mission to men was necessary in either case, and Zeno and his followers tried to carry that out; but there was a clear difference in theory. We can perhaps trace, in the third century B.C., some slight influence of Alexander's dream on Greeks, whether it came through Zeno or however else: the Greek remained as quarrelsome as ever, but he began to have an uncomfortable feeling that he ought not to be. As to the partnership in the Empire of its different peoples, that to Zeno had no meaning; in his World-State there were neither empires nor races. But this happened to be an idea which Alexander's generals could and did grasp as a practical matter, and they made up their minds to have nothing to do with it; the day he died it vanished like the morning mist.

But the mist returns, and more than a century later this idea of Alexander's came back; it came back in the empire of Northern India set up by Demetrius the Euthydemid, who, like the great Cleopatra, was half Macedonian and half Greek. The evidence that Demetrius was quite consciously copying Alexander—that he meant to be a second Alexander, as he very nearly was—seems conclusive; and his Indian empire can hardly be called the rule of Greeks over Indians, for it was an empire in which both peoples participated, a kind of partnership or joint commonwealth; there is evidence enough for the *fact*, though we know too little of the

form. I have told the whole story elsewhere; here I need only mention that Demetrius tried to put into practice one of the things for which Alexander prayed, and fell because his ideas were too advanced for many of his Greek subjects to follow.

Notes

1. On the validity of this and other translations appearing in these selections, see the editor's comment on p. 000.
2. Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander* 330E: "... the plan and design of Alexander's expedition commends him as a philosopher whose intent was not to gain for himself luxury and high living, but to procure for all men *homonoia* and peace and a *koinônia pros allêlous* ("partnership with one another" or "association of interest.")

Chapter 10 NO EVIDENCE FOR THE DREAM

ERNST BADIAN (b. 1925) is professor of ancient history at Harvard University and has divided his time about equally between Greek history and studies of the Roman Republic. More than any other scholar he has been responsible for the most penetrating analysis of the theories of Tarn and others, and can be said to have opened a whole new school of criticism in Alexander scholarship. In the short excerpt below we can see how Badian's technique works in response to Tarn's theory expressed in the preceding selection.

Twenty-five years ago Sir William Tarn delivered a Raleigh Lecture on History to the British Academy, to which he gave this challenging title and in which he created the figure we may call Alexander the Dreamer: an Alexander "dreaming" of "one of the supreme revolutions in the world's outlook," namely "the brotherhood of man or the unity of mankind." He did not claim to have given proof—only "a very strong presumption indeed." Perhaps no one, in a subject of this nature, ought to ask for more. Yet six years later Tarn could write: "It is now, as I see it, certain." Ten years ago, in his great work on Alexander, certainty was apparently a little abated. But if there was less pretension, there was no more ability to think himself mistaken, and no more civility in dealing with opposing views. And the conclusion

From E. Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind," *Historia* 7 (1958) 425-444, by permission of the author and Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden. The Greek of the original has been translated by the editor.

reached was described by its author as “the most important thing about [Alexander].” The matter is indeed important. That the “revolution in the world’s [i.e. the Greek world’s] outlook” did take place is a fact; and that it prepared that world for the spiritual climate of the Roman Empire and Christianity—helping to make first one and then the other possible and generally accepted—makes it one of the decisive revolutions in the history of Western thought. Ever since 1933, Tarn’s figure of Alexander the Dreamer has explicitly claimed the credit for this re-orientation: the phantom has haunted the pages of scholarship, and even source-books and general histories of philosophy and of ideas—at least in this country—have begun to succumb to the spell. Perhaps a quarter of a century is long enough for the life-span of a phantom: it is clearly threatening to pass into our tradition as a thing of flesh and blood. It is the aim of this article—an aim in which it can hardly hope to be immediately successful—to lay the ghost.

Badian’s article, like Tarn’s work, is very complex, and consists of four separate sections dealing with what he regards as Tarn’s principal arguments: (i) “The Fatherhood of God,” a challenge to Tarn’s notion that Alexander conceived of all men being brothers under a common Godhood, and a denial of the implication that such a concept has any necessary ethical consequences; (ii) “The Banquet at Opis,” reprinted below; (iii) “Eratosthenes and Plutarch,” an analysis of passages in these two authors cited by Tarn in support of his thesis on (ii); (iv) “Aristotle and the Barbarians,” an examination of Aristotle’s views on non-Greeks, and their supposed relation to Alexander’s thinking.

It must be emphasized that the translations from the Greek appearing in these sections are not hard-and-fast; differences in interpretation are legitimate and possible. Indeed it is the variances among such interpretations of what the Greek means that has caused scholarly debate; and as these interpretations vary so do the translations themselves. Wherever possible the translations given in these sections attempt to reflect the view of the author; nevertheless it must be understood that quite often other versions are possible—Ed.

The other two “facets”—far more important—are fashioned out of the Opis banquet, which we must now investigate. The scene is reported only by Arrian (*Anab.* 7. 11, 8-9: all our references to Arrian are to this work), and, considering the importance it has in Tarn’s elaborate structure, we must give Arrian’s account in full:

“In gratitude for this [*epi toutois*: the settlement of a mutiny among his troops.] Alexander sacrificed to those gods to whom it was his custom to sacrifice, and gave a great feast, sitting himself there and of all those seated, the

Macedonians were around him (*amph' auton*); and next to them in order the Persians, and next to them those men of other nations which were distinguished according to their dignity or some other quality. Both he and those around him (*amph' auton*), drawing from the same bowl (*krater*) poured out the same libations, with both the Greek seers and the Magians beginning the ceremony. And he prayed for other sorts of blessings (*te alla agatha*), both for harmony (*kai homonoia*) and a partnership in rule (*te kai koinônian tês archês*) for Macedonians and Persians (*Makedosi kai Persais*)."

It is clear that to Arrian (i.e. to his source) the whole affair is not of outstanding importance. It is a tailpiece (*epi toutois*) of merely two sections to the Opis mutiny, which is an important event and has taken up chapters 8 to 11, 7; and it is immediately followed (12, 1) by the dismissal of the Macedonian veterans. This had been planned and announced before the mutiny and had been immediately responsible for its outbreak; and after its settlement it could at last be executed. The banquet, as we can see, just like the sacrifice that precedes it, marks the formal settlement of the dispute that had led to the mutiny; and it follows upon the account of the details of that settlement. The mutiny, as we are repeatedly and unanimously told, was due to the Macedonians' jealousy of the favour Alexander was showing to the "Persians". The reconciliation, therefore, might be expected to be between (a) Alexander and the Macedonians, whose quarrel was the mutiny; (b) the Macedonians and the "Persians", whose differences caused it. This interpretation, which follows from the context, will be seen to be fully confirmed by analysis of the passage itself. That the banquet marked "a greater reconciliation" or even the official conclusion of peace is neither stated nor implied in the source.

Tarn's scene-setting is at once splendid and misleading: it is thus that the foundations for this theory are established before proper discussion even begins.

"Ptolemy says that at Alexander's own table were seated Macedonians, Persians, some Greek seers, some Magi . . . , and those representatives of 'the other peoples' . . . who . . . ranked highest in dignity; that is, the most prominent men from every race in his Empire and from at least one people not in his Empire, Greeks, sat at his own table. . . . No witness of the scene could ever have forgotten the sight of that great *krater* on Alexander's table and people of every nationality drawing wine from it for their common libation."

It is a fit setting for a ceremony of international brotherhood. What, in fact, does Arrian (and we must agree with Tarn that that means Ptolemy) say? There is nothing about tables—how many were used and who used them—and certainly nothing about Alexander's own table; there is merely the statement that everyone was seated: apart from other reasons that might plausibly be conjectured, there were presumably too many people for everyone to be able to recline. Even a large refectory table could hardly have accommodated the crowd that Tarn wishes to place at it. The source merely tells us how the guests were grouped within the area

given over to the banquet—there is no implication that each group had only one table, and indeed numbers make it impossible. If Alexander had a table to share, he presumably shared it, on this occasion as on others, with a handful of high-ranking officers and courtiers.

On the *grouping*, however, the source is precise: around Alexander (*amph' auton*) were Macedonians, next to them in order (*en de tô ephleksês toutôn*) “Persians”, next to them (*epi toutois*) the rest. Thus, when “those around” Alexander join him in the libation from his krater, the emphatic repetition of the same phrase (*amph' auton*) within a few words makes it clear that only the Macedonians are meant. No doubt the “Persians” and the rest poured the “same” libation—in an extended sense—from their own bowls: Arrian goes on to tell us that it is said 9000 people did so. But the sharing of Alexander’s own krater was limited to the Macedonians. The inspiring ceremonial of an international love-feast is purely imaginary and due to misinterpretation of an unusually precise source. In fact, as we have seen, treatment is carefully graded according to nationality—so far is it from being equal and cosmopolitan. Though we do not know whether the grouping by nationalities was confined to the Macedonians and “Persians” (who, as we shall see, probably alone mattered) or extended to the “other peoples”, it was clearly maintained as between these two chief races. This fits in with what we have seen to be the purpose of the banquet and with the account of the mutiny and its settlement. Eager to regain the loyalty of his Macedonians (who were still his best soldiers and would be needed for his further plans of conquest), Alexander had called them *syngeneis* (kinsmen), and thus made them—every common soldier of them—equal to the noblest of the “Persians”. For he could be sure of the latter and their submissiveness, while the Macedonians had to be courted. He now reinforced this timely act of flattery by seating them *amph' auton* (“around him”) at the banquet and letting them, and them only, use his own krater for the libation. After the banquet, of course, he proceeded to carry out his plans precisely as he had made them before the mutiny, and there was no further protest: tact meant no surrender of principle. But the flamboyant gesture—as always, carefully calculated for political effect—reveals the unmistakable Alexander of history, who did not gain his Empire by well-meaning muddle-headedness.

The setting, then, is not that of an international love-feast. Having escaped from the initial misdirection, we are now free to look at Alexander’s prayer, as given by our source, without prejudice. It is on this prayer that Tarn’s view of Alexander the Dreamer is chiefly founded. “Two translations of the prayer as given by Arrian”, he writes, “are grammatically possible, and both are equally true to the Greek.” One—which used to be the accepted version—takes “Macedonians and Persians” as applying to both *homonoia* (“harmony”) and *koinônian tês archês* (“partnership in rule”); the other—that proposed by Tarn and, as we have seen, widely accepted—makes “Homonoia . . . stand alone as a substantive thing and not only be tacked on to the words ‘Macedonians and Persians’”. That both are “grammatically possible”

cannot be denied; that both are “equally true to the Greek” can and must be. The natural interpretation, for the reader who is not defending a thesis, must be the one rejected by Tarn: *homonoia* (“harmony”) and *koinōnian tēs archês* (“partnership in rule”) are carefully linked by *te kai* in order, as it were, to bracket them together: “he prayed for . . . (both *homonoia* and *koinōnia tēs archês*) (for Macedonians and Persians).” In fact, *homonoia* badly needs a dative to define it: if we had no dative with it, we should have to invent one. And that, oddly enough, is exactly what Tarn next finds himself forced to do! “It is hard to believe”, he goes on to say, “that in the actual prayer as distinct from the version we have in our source *Homonoia* was not defined: for it is *Homonoia* between all men. . . .” This is the reduction to the absurd of the weird game that has been played before our eyes with our only good source: by violent distortion of the Greek we sever *Homonoia* from the object to which Arrian has carefully attached it and thus arrive at *Homonoia* “as a substantive thing” (as we are told)—i.e., left floating unattached in a notional void; then, discovering that it badly needs attachment, we proceed to moor it to whatever best fits in with our preconceptions; and if this flatly contradicts the source, we then accuse the source of misrepresentation. Unfortunately history—and the history of ideas perhaps more than any other kind—is too often written like that.

Finally *koinōnian tēs archês*. Wilcken, Berve, and others, are again “guilty” of accepting the natural meaning and translating “partnership in rule”. This, says Tarn, is meaningless: for Alexander alone was ruler of the Empire and Macedonians and Persians could not be said to “rule” it. Strictly speaking, this is incorrect. There is undoubtedly a sense of “rule” in which Macedonians and Persians *could* “rule” the Empire, even though Alexander was its King. (Whether they in fact did so is not to the point.) It is the sense in which the Germans “ruled” the European Continent during the War, even though Hitler was Dictator, and the sense in which the Graeco-Macedonians were a “ruling class” in Ptolemaic Egypt. We shall have to return to this later. But admittedly, alternative interpretations of the phrase should not be denied a hearing. What is Tarn’s alternative? He translates “partnership in the realm” and thus arrives at his third “facet” of Alexander’s Dream: that all “the various peoples of his Empire might be partners in the realm rather than subjects”. We can now deal with this quite briefly: it is at once clear that there is no longer even any pretence to be following the source: whatever juggling *homonoian* may allow, *koinōnian tēs archês* is firmly limited to Macedonians and Persians. Thus we are here invited to move freely in the realm of the historical novelist. Yet, in any case, what can Tarn’s phrase mean? As he himself has just pointed out, Alexander was sole ruler. If there is (as we saw) a sense in which Macedonians and Persians might be said to “rule” his Empire, there is none in which they might be said to be his “partners” in it: they were his subjects. If men cannot be partners of Zeus in his power, neither can they be partners of Zeus’ son in his. And Alexander, almost at the very time when these events were going on, was forcing the Greek cities to

worship him as a god—against the outraged protests of sincere and pious men like Lycurgus—and was writing to the Athenians as the son of Zeus. That man certainly did not intend to become the figure-head of a free Commonwealth of Nations.

**Part
Five**

**ALEXANDER'S
PERSONAL
MOTIVATIONS**

Chapter 11 POTHOS

In a career of scholarship which has lasted more than half a century VICTOR EHRENBURG (b. 1891) has distinguished himself as a leading authority on the political and social traditions of the Greek world. The follow essay demonstrates the methodology of language analysis in an attempt to suggest the primary motivating force of Alexander's personality.

I have attempted in a paper published some years ago to trace back to Alexander himself the well-known phrase recorded in our traditions of Alexander's history: *pothos elambane auton* ["longing seized him".] In doing so, I have met repeatedly with approval and, to the best of my knowledge, with no opposition whatever. Yet my arguments were based rather on feelings and intuitions than on strictly rational evidence. It seems possible to me now to go beyond this vague statement and to have a clearer insight into the problems of transmission and also into the psychological problem, which is far more interesting.

First of all, we must bear in mind that the phrase of Alexander's "longing", though always introducing the narrative of uncommon and generally very arduous

From Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938), 52-61. Reprinted by permission of the author. Footnotes omitted, and the Greek of the original has for the most part been translated into English.

feats and enterprises, is *not* used in very many cases where it would be equally apt. From Alexander's stay in Egypt to the conquest of Aornus the passage is not found in Arrian, who is our main authority for this phrase; yet there were opportunities enough of applying it. Not even Alexander's resolve to go to India is stressed particularly; like most of the incidents of those years it is merely related in the style of a military journal: "he advanced toward India" (IV, 22, 3). Nor is *pothos* mentioned in connection with Alexander's preparation of his expedition to Arabia (VII, 19 6); Arrian merely records motives of political ambition, and that, according to his (Arrian's) personal opinion, "Alexander was always greedy to acquire things." I do not believe that we are entitled, by these *testimonia ex silentio*, to conclusions on the state of our sources. However, it is just this obviously accidental use of the phrase in our texts which seems to prove that generally speaking it is called for, not by an absolute necessity of style and context, but rather by a necessity of matter, that is, by an actual fact. And this fact can be no other than the existence of a spoken word.

There is yet another, though rather indirect, evidence of the fact that literary tradition was not responsible for this usage. The story of the occasion when the conqueror expressed his longing most definitely, that is, the moment when, on the banks of the Hyphasis, he believed the Eastern Ocean and the boundaries of the earth to be within his reach, is related by Arrian (V, 25, 2) with the remark that, whatever had been reported to Alexander of the Eastern countries "excited in Alexander a strong desire (*epithymia*) to go on further." In this passage, he uses a stronger term than usual; incentive desire and avidity take the place of longing and yearning. We may well understand that Arrian or his original source would have sought after a stronger expression for this moment of unfulfilled longing and of tragic peripeteia.

We shall see, however, that Alexander may have spoken of his *epithymia* himself. Professor Kornemann has added an explanatory "*=pothos elambane*" to this passage. Curtius IX, 2, 12 says: *vicit ergo cupido rationem*, "thereupon a desire (*cupido*) overcame his judgment". Whether this is meant to translate *epithymia* or *pothos* must remain dubious. But for other reasons it seems more probable than Alexander mentioned his *pothos* also on the Hyphasis. The speeches which are recorded as being made there, have often been proved to be literary inventions in their main points. But though Arrian, even more than Curtius, certainly has embellished that dramatic scene, his narrative is based on authentic foundations; nor should we doubt at all this report of the events on the Hyphasis, for the significance of this moment was recognized already by Alexander's contemporaries. We should therefore observe in the speeches which Arrian records, two passages whose wording can hardly be accidental. In one of them, Arrian makes Alexander say (26, 1): "but if anyone desires (*pothei*) to hear what will be the end of the fighting itself," whereupon he enlarges on the prospect of reaching the Eastern Ocean soon—in terms which certainly are embellished by the author. The rejoinder of Coenus, the

spokesman of his soldiers, is even more manifest: he says of the Macedonians (27, 6): “and for all of these there is a yearning (*pothos*) for their parents . . . a yearning (*pothos*) for their wives and children, and a yearning (*pothos*) for their very own homeland.” We are not inferring too much, if we recognize this passage as a hint, even more, as an explicit and tart repartee to the king’s favourite phrase, which was well-known to all Macedonians and which Alexander probably had used just before, an answer as dauntless as the whole of the speech.

The phrase is found also in descriptions of some other situations which—albeit less high-pitched—correspond to the one cited above. The wish to press forward, the desire to know unknown regions and thus to comprehend the Oecumene up to all its boundaries, determines Alexander to sail down the Euphrates and Tigris to their mouth (VII, 1, 1) and to explore the Caspian Sea and its presumable connection with the Okeanos (VII, 16, 2). Above all the episode of Nearchus should be mentioned here: when beginning to describe his enterprise (Arrian, *Indica* 20 1), he expressly alleges that Alexander had the *pothos* to sail the Ocean from India to the Persian gulf, and that in spite of great and justified scruples the *epithymia* had triumphed “as always to accomplish some new and unusual deed.” These words reveal, with a dispassionate dryness verging on criticism, the motive of Alexander’s longing in each case. And here the terms *pothos* and *epithymia* are used indiscriminately; consequently we may allow for this promiscuous use also in the speech on the bank of the Hyphasis.

Each of these passages may have its origin in an authentic utterance of Alexander; and for the last one this is obvious. We must not believe however that, inversely, the authenticity of an utterance is proved merely by the occurrence of our phrase in a “geographical” sense. Curtius (IV, 8, 3) relates that Alexander was longing to see not only Upper Egypt (*interiora Aegypti*) but also Ethiopia; but that no time was left for the latter. Now there is something wrong with this statement, for not even the expedition to Upper Egypt, which Curtius reports before (7, 5) actually took place. So it stands to reason that we cannot regard this quotation of the “Vulgate” as authentic.

The same idea of overcoming space and of exploring the unknown, combined with, and overshadowed by, the sensation of mythical analogy so characteristic of Alexander, drove him to conquer the citadel of Aornos as Heracles did (Arrian IV, 28, 4; Justin XIII, 7, 13), to go to Nysa and find memorials of Dionysus (V, 2, 5), and above all to set out to the oracle of Ammon as Perseus and Heracles had done before him (Arrian III, 3, 1; Curtius IV, 7, 8). In these cases, the *pothos idein*, the craving towards the unknown, is determined by yet another power: by a mythical and historical consciousness and pride which were deep-rooted in the innermost core of Alexander’s personality. It is the same *pothos idein* and the same mythical power which drove him to the stronghold of Gordium, to see the famous chariot with its knot (Arrian, II, 3, 1; Curtius, III, 1, 16; Justin, XI, 7, 4). Here, however, as in the temple of Ammon, Alexander at the same time was endeavouring

to obtain a divine oracle: "the oracle had let it be known that whoever loosed the knot would rule Asia." Obscure faith and conscious will-power were acting together and bestowing on his *pothos*, on the impulse towards the far and farthest distance, that weighty and profound significance, which made Alexander become, beyond his conquests and discoveries, son of the gods and sovereign of the world.

Thus, desires so different in nature and value, in scope and range as the wish to found Alexandria (III 1, 5) and the wish to meet the Indian Gymnosophists (VII, 2, 2) may have taken hold of him with the same intensity, in the same depth of his heart. This may be so, but not necessarily. I am inclined to believe that all, or almost all, of the above-mentioned records of the Pothos-phrase really are genuine utterances of Alexander; but incontestable evidence can hardly be produced, and it remains possible that later authors may have repeated the well-known phrase here and there. Arrian himself reports (VII, 26, 1), that during the last days of Alexander's illness his soldiers had forced their way "out of grief and longing (*pothos*) for the king" to see Alexander; and the sense of this sorrowful and affectionate longing and loyalty differs widely from that of our phrase. It may seem probable that this *pothos* is far more adequate to common usage (this subject will be discussed later on) than the (so to speak) dynamic *pothos* of Alexander; and this might confirm a fact which we recognize over and over again: that no literary tradition, from Callisthenes and Ptolemy down to Arrian, coined the unique meaning, the sense common and peculiar to every occurrence of the phrase; it was the genuine word of the king himself, as it passed over into the reports of his fellow-combatants.

One example is left: Arrian, I, 3, 5. In this chapter, and in none but this one of all the passages containing the Pothos-phrase, the military reasons of an enterprise (the crossing of the Ister [Danube—Ed.]) are discussed; and only then a second motive is added to this reasoning: that of *pothos*, in a clumsy and reiterating style: "and he decided to cross the Ister and march up against the Getae who dwell on the far side of the Ister . . . and at the same time a desire seized him (*pothos elaben auton*) to advance beyond the Ister." Now this just looks as if a literary description had taken over the the motif of *pothos* later on; for nowhere else is rational argumentation combined with *pothos* in this manner. We have no reason to assume that Arrian here substituted another source for Ptolemy, nor can we regard as two entirely different things the combat against the Getae (who not only had pitched camp but also were living beyond the Danube) and the invasion of the country beyond the Danube, and we cannot, by such arguments, invalidate all objections. Besides, the moment of this event should be considered (the spring of 335). Alexander, having only just ascended to the throne, could hardly have had a chance, much less found a real opportunity, of mentioning the *pothos* which had seized him. And secondly, Alexander certainly did not intend to advance far beyond the Danube. So we can almost be sure that this passage is not based on authentic words of Alexander's.

If Ptolemy did introduce the phrase here—and he seems to be the go-between in

some other passages too—, we could state an interesting fact, namely, that the two men of Alexander's entourage who became well-known historians, Ptolemy and Nearchus, both used the phrase. This would be all the more significant, since a polemic attitude towards Nearchus, especially against his representation of Alexander, can be proved with certainty in the work of Ptolemy. Literary influence is quite out of the question; rather we hear a twofold echo of Alexander himself, and realize, in the sober and dry criticism of *pothos* by Nearchus and in the awed admiration of Ptolemy, the great difference between these two kinds of resonance. Thus, Alexander's recognized authorship of the phrase is again confirmed.

An attempt to date the first appearance of the Pothos-phrase can only be made with the utmost reserve, if it can be made at all. No doubt we find examples increasing in Alexander's last years (from 327), and we may easily believe that especially in these last years conflicts occurred more frequently between Alexander's irrational resolutions and the "reasonable" advice of his entourage, and these conflicts were forcibly solved by the emphatic longing of the king. Among the events of the former years, two seem narrowly connected with the Pothos-phrase: Gordium and the temple of Ammon. In the first case, it is true, the desire of the king to see the chariot can hardly have met with any opposition, and for this reason it might seem doubtful whether Alexander here used the same word at all, were it not for the ample evidence of Arrian, Curtius, and Justin.

The expedition to the temple of Ammon however is a clear and obvious example. Many a voice may have been raised against the wearisome and lengthy march through the desert, but at that point the personal desire, the longing of the man who soon after was called Son of Ammon, would break forth with elemental power. Only a few months earlier Alexander, without any mention of his *pothos*, had opposed the counsel of Parmenion, who wished him to accept the offer of Darius. The well-known witty anecdote of the king and the general reveals Alexander's consciousness of his own personality and of his distance from all average standards. But in spite of this knowledge of his supreme worth, his decision was determined by entirely rational considerations: he weighed his own relative strength against that of Darius' forces (Arrian, II, 25, 3). Thus it is possible—and we cannot get beyond mere possibilities, Gordium remaining a counter-argument—that Alexander's stay in Egypt, which was epochal for him in so many respects, and above all the expedition to the oasis of Ammon gave him the phrase of *pothos*; and that thereafter time and again he at once veiled and revealed his passionate and boundless schemes in its emotional and iridescent vagueness. May we perhaps add that this surmise finds its complement in the passage which terminates Nearchus' account of his voyage, the greatest enterprise which ever fulfilled Alexander's Pothos (Arrian *Indica*, 35, 8), namely, that Alexander made sworn witnesses of his overgreat joy "Zeus of the Hellenes and Ammon of the Libyans"?

The word *pothos*, which we translate by "longing, yearning" or the like, has been said to have an etymological relation to *thessasthai*, "to pray for"; in that case, it

would originally contain the meaning of praying or imploring for a thing, for an object of hope or longing. This would imply, so to speak, a halo of meek submission and heart-felt devotion surrounding the core of its precise meaning. Hoping, longing and yearning: these are the meanings which prevail in the Greek usage known to us, and which are found in the Indo-European root. And so it may have come to pass that also that secondary meaning—more accentuated in *thessasthai*—did not quite disappear in *pothos*.

Be this as it may; the common usage of *pothos* and *pothein* (“to long for”) indicates a power of love surging from a man’s innermost being. Though it is sometimes used, like *himeros* and *eros*, to express amorous longing only, yet it mainly differs from them by a nuance of sorrow. It conveys longing for something or someone absent, mourning for someone or something lost, now and then merely regret for, want of, a thing or person. Therefore Plato (*Cratylus* 420a) says that just the same feeling is called *himeros* when applied to an absent one. This meaning is confirmed by the lexical testimonies, which unfortunately are not very numerous. Examples of poetic usage, found as early as in Homer, are comparatively frequent, but they go for little; in prose, it often means just homesickness (Herodotus I, 165, 3; Xenophon *Anabasis*, VI, 4, 8; Isocrates XIX, 7; we find a parallel of older date in the *Odyssey*, IV, 596); longing for a dead person (Herodotus III, 36, 6; 67, 3; Plut. *Pericles*, 39, 3) or for a banished one (Plut. *Pericles*, 10, 3). That *pothos*, which really signified a sensation of love and could, as amorous longing, be called brother of Peitho (amorous persuasion) and son of Cypris (Aeschylus *Suppliants*, 1039), that same *pothos*, which belongs to the high and to the low spheres of love and occurs as frequently in Sappho as in Aristophanes, has in Plato become fierce erotic desire, a goad and a scourge (*Republic* 573a; *Phaedrus* 253c). Elsewhere however it generally remains affectionate longing, in resignation or hope, just as Arrian expressed it in the passage I have quoted, when the soldiers yearned to bid farewell to their dying king. It is a long way from this yearning of affection and sorrow to Alexander’s impetuous desire of achieving great exploits.

It is surprising enough that hardly anywhere in literature—so far as it is within lexical reach—the state of mind is really set forth of a man whom *pothos* has taken hold of in whichever of its varieties; but it is far more astonishing still that the meaning of *pothos* nowhere corresponds to that of Alexander’s phrase. Neither in the literary nor in the everyday use of the word can we find an example that might have served as a model. Hence we are made to conclude that Alexander himself picked out this word to convey a meaning peculiar to him alone, and alien to the mainly rational mind of the Greeks. The reason why he unconsciously chose just this word, seems to have been that it expressed longing for absent things, for things not, or no longer, within reach. This he transformed into longing for things not yet within reach, for the unknown, far distant, unattained. But as Alexander charged this conception with the full power and impetus of his genius, this humane and heart-felt longing, this meek and submissive yielding to yearning tenderness, grew to

become the motive force of the conqueror of the world. On the other hand: Alexander chose a word conveying so much gentle and homely feeling, so alien to the sphere of war and politics—and this reveals the fervent heart of a youth, palpable below all his greatness and all his excesses.

The phrase of the *pothos* was Alexander's own and remained so. None of the satraps and generals who fought over his legacy, could claim to be "seized by longing" as the great king had been. Demetrius Poliorcetes was the only one to bear, albeit coarsened and reduced, traits of Alexander's longing. The deeds and misdeeds of the tempestuous decades after Alexander's death were determined by ambition, jealousy, desire for power, political necessities; but *pothos* did not count in this noisy and disrupted world. Thus the epoch in which the great Hellenistic powers were moulded, lacked the poetic glamour and the oecumenic vastness of Alexander's empire in its making. It was a hard age, governed by will-power and intellect, and it could not be otherwise, as it was to form separate States from the decaying empire of the world. The strength of *pothos* continued, not in these separate States, but rather, perhaps, in the oecumenization of the Greek mind, in those Greek men, who, whatever their motive—adventurousness or desire for research or covetousness or yet other impulses—went out into the world and gave it the Greek mold.

Chapter 12 THE STRUGGLE FOR PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE

Among Badian's several contributions to Alexander scholarship has been his emphasis on the close study of the relationships between Alexander and the Macedonian nobles who surrounded him—"court prosopography." Badian's work on the personal and familial ties among this group has produced new interpretations concerning the motives of the king with reference to his relationships with his contemporaries. Here, in an essay that is both political and psychological, we see in Alexander's career the struggle of a man to seek independence and security, and witness the gain and loss to him, both as a king and a human being.

Few episodes in history have fascinated as many readers and listeners as the bright star of Alexander the Great shooting across the firmament, to mark the end of an era and the beginning of another. From schoolboys wide-eyed at the great adventure to old men moralizing on philosopher kings, we all interpret the great drama in terms of our experience and our dreams. It has gained a secure standing among the Myths of Ancient Greece, ranking (one may say) with the story of Odysseus or of Oedipus. Needless to say, the history of Alexander III of Macedon has to some extent been lost underneath the myth-making, and some aspects of it can perhaps no longer be salvaged. But the tragedy of the historical Alexander is at least as fascinating as the best of both the ancient and the modern legends; and it is this that, across the fragments of the history, I want to sketch on this occasion.

E. Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Loneliness of Power," *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 192-205. Reprinted by permission of the author and Basil Blackwell. Footnotes omitted.

Macedonia, during twenty years or so in the fourth century B.C., had been raised by Philip II from a semi-barbarian feudal state on the borders of civilized Greece to the leading rank among the powers of the Greek world. But, as so often in the history of nations rising to sudden greatness, this had done little to civilize the primitive passions and ways of thought of the people and even of the ruling class. Philip had tried to Hellenize his court, where Greeks and Macedonian nobles mingled freely; but their mutual suspicions were not eliminated, particularly as the Macedonians, on the whole, provided the soldiers and administrators, while the Greeks, on the whole, provided the cultural prestige. As far as the Macedonian barons themselves were concerned, Philip had tried to curb the traditional feudal anarchy by methods not unlike those of the French crown in the seventeenth century. The nobles had to some extent been brought under the direct control of the court; but their connection with the feudal levy of their districts was not broken, and the feudal rivalries were merely transmuted into court intrigues.

One of these intrigues finally led to a serious estrangement between Philip and his wife Olympias and crown prince Alexander. Olympias, Alexander and their adherents had to leave the country; and though Alexander himself was apparently allowed to return, his chances of retaining his position were not rated very highly either by himself or by others competent to judge. Then, in 336 B.C., Philip was assassinated in very mysterious circumstances. We cannot quite penetrate the mystery; but in any case, Alexander was the one who profited. Antipater (one of the most prominent nobles) had everything all prepared and at once produced the young man to the army, which swore allegiance to him. The opposing faction (led by one Attalus), which only a little earlier had carried all before it, was taken entirely by surprise. Charged with having instigated the assassination (which was absurd, in the circumstances), it was wiped out even to infants in arms, and Alexander's rule was made secure.

The King was secure, but far from all-powerful. We must not think of this boy of less than twenty in terms of the great leader he turned out to be. For the moment he was a youth raised to power by a clique of powerful nobles, who no doubt expected to rule through him. So, in addition to his numerous foreign problems (barbarian invasions, Greek insurrections, and the war against Persia that Philip had already begun and from which his successor could not withdraw even if he had wanted to), Alexander, on a long view, was faced with an even more formidable internal problem: how to assert his independence and to become King in fact as well as in name.

The most powerful of all noble families was that of Parmenio. He had been Philip's most trusted general and had followed his master in turning to the faction headed by Attalus, who had, in fact, become his son-in-law. Philip's assassination took him entirely by surprise. He was away in Asia at the time, commanding the advance guard that had secured a bridgehead there, and Attalus was with him. As a result, they seem to have been a little out of touch with the intrigues at court—and

this, perhaps, cost Philip his life. However, once they were confronted with the accomplished fact of Alexander's succession, they had to submit or rebel. Rebellion was dangerous, with the home army firmly won over to Alexander; and with wars to fight on all frontiers, Parmenio was probably too much of a staunch Macedonian to consider treason. Moreover, unlike Attalus (whose case was now hopeless), he was not irretrievably committed: Alexander would welcome his allegiance and be prepared to pay for it. Parmenio swiftly decided to throw his full weight behind Alexander. He personally saw to the elimination of his son-in-law Attalus and in return secured his own terms. When Alexander crossed to Asia in 334, after settling all wars and revolts in Europe, Antipater (his chief sponsor) was left behind with half the Macedonian forces to look after Europe; but Parmenio and his family and supporters were firmly entrenched in the army that went with the King. Parmenio's eldest son Philotas commanded the famous Macedonian cavalry (the 'Companions'); his second son commanded the most important infantry force (the 'hypaspists'); his brother Asander was in charge of the light cavalry; and many known adherents of the family (we need only mention Coenus, a son-in-law of Parmenio, and his brother Cleander, probably Parmenio's trusted aide) held other high posts. Parmenio himself was in charge of the whole infantry force and acted as the King's second-in-command and chief of staff. In view of his experience and Alexander's age, it was no doubt expected that he would take practical charge of the war against Persia.

The loyalty of these men, in the war against Persia, was not in question. For one thing, it was their own war, begun, with their enthusiastic agreement, under Philip, and waged by Parmenio long before Alexander's accession. Alexander was merely following in his father's footsteps. Moreover, nearly all possible pretenders had now been killed off, and there was no one who could rally support in a bid for the throne. But Alexander found himself in a position intolerable to a man of his temperament. Screened off from personal command of his forces, he was the puppet of a faction of powerful nobles, ruling at their mercy.

The next few years saw Alexander's great victories, in which the main forces of the Persian Empire were defeated and Darius left a fugitive (finally killed by his own nobles), while Alexander emerged as the unchallenged ruler of the Empire west of the Euphrates and eastward well into Iran. Throughout this period of his greatest glory he was ably supported by his commanders. But as he became better known and showed those qualities of courage and leadership that won him the enthusiastic allegiance of his men, he carefully used all opportunities of undermining the position of his excessively powerful subordinates. After the first victory, soon after the crossing to Asia, Parmenio's brother Asander was moved from his field command to become governor of the first province of the Empire to be taken over by the Macedonians (that of Lydia) It was, of course, a great honour; but in fact it turned out a loss rather than a gain to Parmenio. The field command was lost to him, while his brother was soon merely one governor among many and, in spite of distin-

guished service in his province, was before long inconspicuously removed from it and given a minor assignment. Moreover, those in Alexander's confidence now apparently began to spread rumours distinctly unfavourable to Parmenio. (These can be traced back to the Greek Callisthenes, a nephew of Aristotle and an enthusiastic admirer of Philip and Alexander, who had joined the expedition in order to sing its praises to the Greek world.) It was said that on various critical occasions Parmenio had given Alexander advice that the King had ignored—luckily for himself, as it had turned out; and that in battle Parmenio was no longer up to his old strength and had had to be rescued from defeat by Alexander. All this was far from true; but it was given a shadow of plausibility by the fact that in battle Parmenio normally had the difficult assignment of holding the enemy's main forces on one wing, while Alexander made the decisive breakthrough on the other. In this way, gradually, Alexander won the loyalty of the army away from him. At the same time, his adherents were kept under close watch: we know that Philotas' mistress was suborned to spy on her lover and report to one of Alexander's trusted officers.

As the victorious advance continued into Iran, tension between Alexander and many of the great nobles increased. They had no intention of going on fighting and marching for ever. After gaining glory and plunder, they wanted to settle down to rule the conquered and enjoy the fruits of victory. Alexander, on the contrary, now claimed to be the lawful successor of the Persian kings (he even charged Darius with having been a usurper!) and would certainly not be satisfied with anything less than the conquest of the whole of the Empire up to the Indus. Moreover, he knew that he would have to conciliate his new subjects and win their support; and this applied particularly to the Persian aristocracy, who were the traditional administrators of the Empire. Above all (perhaps), he liked being Great King, with all the pomp and ceremonial that went with the title. In his relations with Asiatics (many of whom were now promoted to positions of honour and responsibility) he behaved entirely as they expected their Great King to behave. Naturally, this policy could not be fully carried out until Parmenio's power had been dealt its final blow: his family were among the most vocal objectors to it.

It is hard to separate personal antagonism from political opposition in all this. But the result, in any case, was to increase tension and make conflict inevitable. In Media Alexander took an important step: he left Parmenio behind in charge of the lengthening supply-lines. The general had no reasonable grounds for objecting to this; but it meant, in effect, that the King had got rid of his overpowering presence. Soon after, Parmenio's younger son, who had commanded the hypaspists, died. Philotas, his elder brother, had to stay behind to see to his funeral. This was clearly Alexander's chance, and he seized it at once. A few days after Philotas rejoined the camp, a 'conspiracy against the King' was discovered. The alleged instigator (a very obscure person) was killed while resisting arrest, but Philotas was somehow implicated. In a tense and anxious situation Alexander staged his *coup d'état*. We have a vivid description of it in our sources. Some of the King's trusted boyhood friends,

in the meantime promoted to minor (though not yet major) commands, were detailed to surround Philotas' quarters with their own detachments. Struck out of the blue, Philotas could not resist and was arrested. The King at once put him on trial for high treason before the army. The army, of course, was stunned by the incident. Since the massacre at the beginning of the reign, there had been no outward sign of conflict among their commanders. But although no proof of Philotas' implication in the conspiracy could be produced, the King made it a question of confidence between himself and Philotas and demanded the death penalty. He thought that he could now use the army for the final overthrow of Parmenio's power. As usual, he had judged rightly. It is noticeable how in politics as in fighting Alexander's character appears consistent and unmistakable: never rushing things, always carefully planning further ahead than the enemy could see, but never missing the chance of striking the decisive blow when it presented itself, and then leaving the enemy no hope of resistance or recovery. Some of Parmenio's old adherents had been won over to abandon the declining cause. Coenus, for instance, was one of the most eager prosecutors. This must have helped to persuade the army. Philotas was condemned and at once executed.

A more delicate task remained. Parmenio could not be tried before his own men for crimes which there was no evidence that he had committed. The King could not risk failure. It was only after his death that stories of his planning treason appeared, and it was even said that Philotas had confessed this. But at the time there was only one thing to do. Fortunately Coenus (as we have seen) has been won over, and with him his brother Cleander, who was Parmenio's second-in-command in Media. This facilitated matters. A secret messenger was sent to assassinate the old general, with Cleander's co-operation. Though this provoked ominous unrest among the army, there was nothing the men could now do. Alexander had finally gained his independence. In Europe, Antipater remained, too powerful to be touched from a distance. But that could wait: at least he was too far away to interfere with the King.

There followed a series of spectacular trials of Parmenio's adherents. Not all were convicted: Alexander could not afford a wholesale slaughter of the Macedonian nobility and, as in military pursuit, he knew where to call a halt. But the final result was a clean sweep. All those who had not left the faction in time, or could be trusted to submit quietly now, were eliminated, and the King's trusted friends—especially those prominent in the *coup d'état* against Philotas—were promoted. The chief of these men, Hephaestion, whom Alexander called his *alter ego*, now became commander of half the Companion cavalry. The other half, in a characteristic gesture, went to a dour old Macedonian, Clitus.

Naturally, much bitterness remained. Not long after, this erupted in an ugly incident at Samarcand. At a drinking party (such as were common at the half-barbarian court of Macedon) Clitus took offence at a casual remark of Alexander's. Tempers flared up, stimulated by alcohol, and finally Alexander killed Clitus with his own hand. The deed itself was merely manslaughter, significant (apart from the

light it casts on the Macedonian court) only as a symptom of continuing tension. But what followed was of outstanding importance. It shows, more than almost any other incident, Alexander's ability to seize a chance offered and turn it to decisive advantage, even where (as in this instance) he had not planned to prepare it.

Alexander now shut himself up in his tent and proclaimed overwhelming remorse for what he had done, and a determination to expiate it by fasting to death. The army was utterly thunderstruck by this. But gradually the realization began to sink in of what it would mean to them, if the King died; they would face an almost hopeless retreat from Samarcand, with no one to command them and the barbarians taking full advantage of their weakness. So, on the third day, they sent envoys to plead with Alexander to change his mind. When they passed a resolution posthumously convicting Clitus of treason, and thereby legitimizing Alexander's action, he let himself be persuaded. He now knew that he could rely on the army against anyone—and so did whoever might be concerned. As the historian Curtius remarks, the death of Clitus was the end of freedom. Alexander now regularly wore an adaptation of Persian royal dress, and before long he married an Iranian princess. This would have been unthinkable a few months earlier.

However, he now went too far. Pressing home his advantage, he tried to unify his court ceremonial on a Persian basis. Hitherto he had had to keep up two entirely separate establishments: a traditional one, in which he was the first among peers, for Greeks and Macedonians, and an elaborate Persian one, in which he was the Great King, for Asiatics. He now tried to take the major step towards abolishing the former by making prostration (the ordinary mode of saluting the Great King) compulsory for Europeans. His friend Hephaestion undertook to arrange the first precedents informally at a dinner-party. He probably did not expect any serious opposition. But things went unexpectedly wrong. The Greek Callisthenes, now thoroughly disillusioned with Alexander, who from being the leader of the Greeks had become an Oriental despot, refused to perform the ceremony; and when the Persian nobles one after another duly performed it, falling on their faces in all their stately robes, a Macedonian officer burst out laughing. In a rage, Alexander had to call it off.

It was his first serious setback. As usual, he had been quick to learn by his mistake and had cut his losses. But the defeat had been beyond disguise. Callisthenes' part was significant: it was clear that Alexander had lost the sympathy of thinking Greeks—even of those who had once hailed him enthusiastically as a divinely appointed leader. Callisthenes, of course, could not live much longer. He was soon executed on a trumped-up charge of having instigated some page-boys to assassinate the King. But this, though it satisfied Alexander's resentment and demonstrated his power, merely made the hatred of most Greek intellectuals for him permanent and incurable. He was now committed to looking chiefly to Asia.

The memory of purges and murders could best be wiped out by military success. In a brilliant campaign in India, the army was reunited behind its invincible leader.

He seems also now to have reorganized it in such a way that the four trusted men who had taken part in the arrest of Philotas became the marshals of the Empire. Hephaestion, the chief of them, combined the positions of second-in-command and Grand Vizier. At the same time, the training of natives in the Macedonian fashion was begun. This, at the time, aroused little attention. But Alexander was again thinking far ahead.

Then there came another disappointment, and a warning. After weeks of marching through the monsoon, with no end in sight, as Alexander, with the defective geographical knowledge of his age, pursued an elusive Ganges (or perhaps even the end of the inhabited earth)—after weeks of unimaginable and apparently pointless hardships, the men, one day, simply refused to go on. Alexander had discovered the limit of what he could expect of them. But there was worse still. The spokesman for the mutinous soldiers was none other than Coenus—the man who, once Parmenio's son-in-law, had helped to wipe out the power and the family of his benefactor and who, in due course, had become one of the four marshals. Coenus was clearly not a man to be trusted if things began to go wrong. The King, who had used the army to break the power of the nobles, was suddenly faced with the spectre of co-operation between the army and a scheming noble against himself. For the moment, nothing could be done. Alexander tried to threaten and browbeat; but the men, this time, would not yield: they knew that he could not do without them and that they had good support. Finally Alexander had to retreat down the Indus valley to the sea. During the next few months, he gave the men harder fighting and marching than ever before, though from a military point of view it was now unnecessary. And it is clear from our accounts that they no longer followed him as eagerly as before. To regain their loyalty, the King himself was always in the front line; and once, when storming a city, he was so severely wounded that no one thought he could survive. This at last brought the men back to their old worship of their leader. But Alexander never wholly recovered from the shock he had received. He had no sooner achieved his objective of gaining untrammelled power than he found that he was more than ever dependent on others, and that absolute power meant eternal vigilance.

As for Coenus, he died in action soon after. Alexander gave him a splendid funeral, but is said to have inveighed against his memory. We cannot be certain as to the circumstances surrounding the death of this sinister man. But those who remember the fate of Rommel are entitled to be cynical—especially in view of what happened before long.

After Alexander regained full control of his men, he decided to test them in a march through the desert of southern Iran. He was well informed of the nature of that region; but the test turned out more severe than he had expected, and after incredible sufferings, worse than any endured in actual fighting, the remnants of the grand army straggled to safety in the cultivated land southwest of the plateau. Naturally, the King was quick to suspect treason as the cause of the disaster; and to

his increasing distrust there was now added the need to find a scapegoat. The result was a bloody purge that went on for months. Among the first to suffer—and this is what makes us suspicious of the manner of Coenus' death—was Coenus' brother Cleander, who had arranged Parmenio's assassination and thus earned promotion. He and three of his associates among the army commanders were now summoned to bring reinforcements to the King. On their arrival they were arrested and soon executed on charges of maladministration. Altogether more than a third (perhaps two-thirds) of all the provincial commanders shared their fate, and one or two others seem to have barely averted it. The armies under the command of the provincial governors were dissolved (at the price of causing mass unemployment that led to grave social problems), and unknown men who owed everything to Alexander were appointed to the vacant posts.

Then Alexander began to put into execution a great scheme that he had long been bearing in mind. He now realized that he could not count on the absolute submission of the present generation of nobles or men. In the spring of 324, at Susa, Alexander and eighty of his principal courtiers and commanders (chief of them Hephæstion) married Iranian princesses. What these nobles thought of it became clear after his death, when most of them repudiated their wives. But at the time they had to submit, and the marriages were celebrated with unprecedented pomp. Alexander wanted nothing less than a new ruling class of mixed blood, which would be free of all national allegiance or tradition. At the same time, 10,000 unions of Macedonian soldiers with native women were recognized as valid marriages (which meant legitimation of the children and rich wedding-presents from the King): clearly such associations were to be encouraged. That this was not from any humane motive was made clear at once. After putting the young natives trained in the Macedonian fashion through their paces, Alexander proceeded to dismiss (with rich rewards, of course) a large number of Macedonian soldiers; and he asked them to leave their native wives and children with him, in order not to cause trouble with their families in Macedon. His purpose, ultimately, was the creation of a royal army of mixed blood and no fixed domicile—children of the camp, who knew no loyalty but to him. At this point the Macedonian army rebelled. But Alexander was now ready for them: there was no major war in prospect, and he had them at his mercy. It might even be thought that he had deliberately provoked them at this point in order to see whether they would mutiny; if they did, he wanted them to do so when it suited him, so that he might avoid a repetition of his Indian experience. At any rate, he at once calmly told them that they were all dismissed and could make their way home by themselves: he would make do with Oriental troops. The men had no option but to ask his pardon—which he readily granted, since they were his best fighters. But he had won decisively, and after a grand banquet to celebrate the reconciliation he carried out his plans without change.

It is clear that the failures in India and in the desert had caused a severe psycho-

logical reaction in Alexander. He had discovered the insecurity of power, which all his successful scheming could not overcome. His success in the purges, and in the Susa marriages and his dealings with the mutineers, only increased the resulting instability. He took refuge from the insecurity of power in the greater exercise of power: like a god intervening in the affairs of mortals, he would order the fate of princes and of nations. He had always liked and encouraged the story that he was the son of the god Ammon (a Libyan god whom the Greeks identified with Zeus and whose oracle he had visited). The myth had been useful to inspire loyalty, particularly in Greeks, whose religion had a place for such things. But he now actually began to believe in his own divinity. About the middle of 324, he sent envoys to Greece demanding that he should be worshipped as a god. There are many anecdotes about the reluctance with which the Greeks complied. We have seen that educated Greek opinion was already largely estranged from him; and this act of blasphemy—for such it clearly was, even for the polytheistic Greeks, as many of our sources circumstantially assure us—would not endear him to them. Nor had he anything to gain by deification of this enforced sort: divine status would give him no significant political rights in a Greek city state, and men's opinion of him would not change for the better. There is no escape from the conclusion that he wanted deification purely for its own sake, for psychological and not for political reasons. As for the Greeks, they had to obey. The famous decree passed by the Spartans and later quoted as an admired example of 'Laconic' speech expressed their feelings: 'Since Alexander wishes to be a god, let him be a god.'

One man, however, remained a danger to the King and god. Antipater, viceroy of Europe, the man who had made Alexander king, had no love for this new Persian King, who had murdered so many Macedonian nobles. And since the homeland, after ten years, knew him much better than it had ever got to know the King, he could count on a great deal of support. Alexander now sent one of his marshals home to supersede Antipater and ordered Antipater to report to him in person. At the same time he began to prepare the ground for what was inevitably to follow by listening with patience and obvious favour to the complaints of Greek embassies about Antipater's oppressive government. But Antipater was neither ingenuous nor easily frightened: he was, after all, the man who had manipulated Alexander's accession to the throne; and after the King's death he was to show himself, in his surehanded and solid way, far abler than any of the more mercurially brilliant successors. Antipater simply refused to come, but sent his eldest son to negotiate on his behalf. In the meantime, he began to insure himself by entering into negotiations with the most powerful of the Greek states, which he knew to be hostile to the King.

About this time Alexander suffered his most serious blow. In the autumn of 324, Hephaestion, the only man he fully trusted, drank himself to death. Alexander now approached more and more closely to insanity. Hephaestion was made a demigod,

and his memory was celebrated with incredible splendour and magnificence. But there was no one to take his place. It is significant that, although his duties had to be carried out, Alexander never again bestowed his titles on anyone. Henceforth the reign visibly declines. There is still some brilliant fighting. There are still some great schemes, befitting the King's new conception of his status. In fact, there are *too* many. We hear of plans for the conquest of the western Mediterranean, for the conquest of Arabia, for vast buildings and movement of populations. Historians have found it difficult to believe our evidence, though its source seems reliable enough. The fact appears to be that Alexander, amid the grandeur of divine dreams, had no real purpose left. He had won all the power he could. There was nothing left that was worth doing.

So the last few months dragged on until, about midsummer 323, at the age of 32, Alexander fell ill. Whatever the nature of his illness (and poison was, of course, suggested; but this can be neither proved nor disproved), he aggravated it by heavy drinking, until finally all hope was abandoned. He was urged to designate a successor; but he refused to the end. There is a story that, when he was asked for the last time whom he wanted to succeed him, he replied: 'The strongest'. Alexander was, essentially, not interested in a future without himself. And there was no one left about whose personal future he cared enough to help him succeed.

This is not, of course, the whole story of Alexander's reign. His military and political greatness is beyond question, and he retained his masterly touch in these fields to the end. But on the personal level, the story of Alexander the Great appears to us as an almost embarrassingly perfect illustration of the man who conquered the world, only to lose his soul. After fighting, scheming and murdering in pursuit of the secure tenure of absolute power, he found himself at last on a lonely pinnacle over an abyss, with no use for his power and security unattainable. His genius was such that he ended an epoch and began another—but one of unceasing war and misery, from which only exhaustion produced an approach to order after two generations and peace at last under the Roman Empire. He himself never found peace. One is tempted to see him, in medieval terms, as the man who sold his soul to the Devil for power: the Devil kept his part of the bargain, but ultimately claimed his own. But to the historian, prosaically suspicious of such allegory, we must put it differently: to him, when he has done all the work—work that must be done, and done carefully—of analysing the play of faction and the system of government, Alexander illustrates with startling clarity the ultimate loneliness of supreme power.¹

Note

1. The views expressed by Badian in this essay rest in part upon a number of special studies done elsewhere. In his "Death of Philip II," *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 244-50, Badian dealt in detail with the king's murder. A full account of the critical relationship between Alexander and the

house of Parmenio can be found in Badian's "The Death of Parmenio," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 91 (1960) 324-28. The same author wrote of the purge and the story of Alexander's last year in "Harpalus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 81 (1961) 16-43. For more on Alexander's personal obsessions see J. R. Hamilton, "Alexander and His So-Called Father," *Classical Quarterly*, N.S. 3 (1953) 151-57.—Ed.

Chapter 13 THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

In the following essay RAMON I. HARRIS (b. 1929), professor of history at the University of South Dakota, uses the ancient evidence to build a cohesive picture of Alexander's personality, and to couch this characterization in the terminology of "psycho-biography." Harris' technique is one which has been employed to analyze the motivations of a number of important historical personalities, and is highly controversial. Footnotes have been included in this selection as the reader may wish to refer to other psycho-biographical studies as a means of measuring the validity of this method of analysis.

Since the early years of the twentieth century, men of vision have indicated the need for a closer relationship between the humanities and the behavioral sciences. Scholars in both fields have, from time to time, attempted to correlate history and psychology. For the most part their works have been neglected, and in many cases even derided. Perhaps L. Pierce Clark summed up the situation best when he wrote,

'True historical interpretation . . . of any great epochal moment is not possible until we make a careful psychological study of the people of that particular period, especially its great men and leaders. The position in the main is not a

Ramon I. Harris, "The Dilemma of Alexander the Great," *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations*, 11 (1968), 46-54. Reprinted by permission of the author and *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations*, through their publisher, The Classical Association of Central Africa. Footnotes omitted.

new one, but heretofore historians have made a study of the more obvious characterology of the great statesmen and either have not been able, or were unwilling to study such historic personages in the more scientific manner now possible, although this has already been done in several instances by those trained in methods of intensive mental analysis. The historian therefore has not fully exhausted the possibilities of his subject, because of inadequate psychological training, while the psychologist for the most part has not coupled up his accurate personal analysis with the events to which his characterological study forms a necessary part.¹

It is only within the past few years, with an increase in the understanding and awareness of psychological motivations, that some historians have turned their attention to what is appropriately termed Psycho-Biography. As a result, we are now better able to evaluate the character of the great historical figures, as well as the psychological motivations of their contributions to society.²

Although there are no primary sources left (except in fragments), we have a host of secondary accounts of the life and deeds of Alexander the Great. Throughout these, in Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius, even the modern biographies of Wilcken and Tarn, certain characterological patterns become apparent.

This lack of primary source material need not deter us from examining and formulating certain concepts regarding the nature of his character structure and the causes which contributed to it. *All* psycho-biography lacks the authoritative validity of psychoanalysis since it is the individual analysed who must ultimately confirm or deny the reality of interpretations. "There are, of course, numerous difficulties and potential pitfalls inherent in applied psychoanalysis, but they are . . . far from being insurmountable. "A policy of restraint", a proper documentation, scientific rigor, and the analyst's careful search for prime or well authenticated sources, together with their systematic accumulation and cautious evaluation, can resolve many problems of applied analysis. . . .

Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C., the son of Philip II of Macedon and his wife, the Epirot Princess Olympias. The contrast in the character of his parents was striking.

Philip, the outstanding man of his times, was a proven general, a brilliant diplomat and an astute politician. He was boisterous, a heavy drinker, sometimes subject to violent rages, and since polygamy was practiced in Macedonia, much married. To solidify relations between his allies, and possible enemies, he resorted to the useful device of marrying into those royal families which might be of aid to him.

Olympias appears to have been a jealous, introverted, unstable woman addicted to the mystery cults of the time. Among her more bizarre activities, she seems to have delighted in playing with snakes. This has led biographers, both ancient and modern, to conclude that Philip, particularly in his cups, became more and more

wary of her. Although her son had 'always been recognised as crown prince', she was extremely jealous of her husband's other wives. The evidence suggests that her ambitions for her son sprang from inordinate needs for self-gratification and not primarily out of love for Alexander, with whom she identified herself, for she seems to have been a woman incapable of love for anyone other than herself. While she can hardly be considered a part of the royal harem in the literal sense, one is reminded that the wives of the Egyptian Pharaohs were also jealous and ambitious for their sons. At least one plot to overthrow the king of ancient Egypt may be traced to the harem.

There is reason to suspect that Olympias poisoned one of Alexander's half-brothers (who became insane); and on Philip's death, an infant half-sister was murdered on her orders.

The relationship between Philip and Olympias, never a good one, was terminated in 337 B.C., when Philip acquired another wife, this time a Macedonian. 'At the wedding feast . . . the bride's uncle, insulted Alexander implying . . . that this marriage was intended to give the country a legitimate (i.e. fully Macedonian) successor. . . . Olympias fled to her native Epirus.' The 19-year-old Alexander reacted with characteristic loss of control and was exiled. Nevertheless, the idea instilled in him that he was the son of a god, rather than the son of a mere mortal, Philip, would soon bear fruit.

Alexander appears to have been a precocious child, arrogant and on occasion openly hostile to those who offered counsel. Nourished from an early age by a wet-nurse, he was later placed in the hands of a male tutor—both not uncommon in antiquity. However, at the age of thirteen, his education was taken over by Aristotle, who had been persuaded by Philip to join the court.

Training of the mind may well have been essential for a future king, but so too was training of the body. We learn that Alexander was both a good athlete and an accomplished horseman. Unfortunately many of the stories concerning his athletic prowess so closely resemble those of an Egyptian Pharaoh of the Eighteenth dynasty that one is inclined to view them with some suspicion. Nevertheless, these stories, too, add to the belief that he was arrogant and contemptuous of those beneath him in rank. Arrogance and contempt of those beneath oneself are usually a defence against underlying feelings of inferiority and worthlessness. An attempt will be made later to demonstrate that in the case of Alexander, an unconscious awareness of a female identification based upon the influence of his mother could have contributed to such defensive character traits.

Associated with arrogance was envy of those in a superior position apparently related to his attitude toward his father, the public hero who was constantly engaged in waging and winning wars. The statement attributed to Alexander, 'If father goes on conquering, there will be nothing left for me to conquer,' suggests this. The rift already created by Olympias between father and son would eventually develop into an almost complete lack of communication between the two men.

In 336 B.C. when Alexander was twenty years of age, Philip of Macedon, newly married and on the verge of leading a well trained army against the enemies of Greece, was assassinated. The circumstances surrounding the assassination were 'very mysterious'. Most historians believe that Olympias was involved in her husband's murder, but the idea that Alexander was also involved, is rejected as 'vicious propaganda spread by his enemies'. His character was such, they claim, that he could never have played any part in the assassination of his father. These arguments are far from convincing. In the light of his character, which was so similar to his mother's, it is not too difficult to associate him with his father's murder. It was Olympias who had Philip's new-born daughter literally plucked from the arms of her mother and murdered before her eyes.

Arrian, considered our most reliable source, tells us nothing of Philip's death, merely recording it. Plutarch, on the other hand, cynically mentions that 'some suspicion was attached to Alexander', who was careful to 'seek out the participants in the plot and punish them'. However, not all of the accomplices were punished. Three brothers of the Lyncestian dynasty were implicated, two of whom were executed. The third, a son-in-law of the general Antipater, was spared. According to Macedonian custom it was the army who approved a new king. The prospective monarch was presented to them and then acclaimed as their new leader. In the case of Alexander, it was Antipater who presented him to the army, leaving one to speculate why the third man was spared. Was it, as Wilcken has suggested, 'respect for Antipater', or was this Alexander's way of paying for services rendered?

Thus, at the age of twenty, Alexander found himself assuming the status he had probably secretly coveted all his life, the position of King of Macedon, leader of what was probably the most efficient army in the world, and Hegemon of the Greek league. Now indeed he had something to conquer, and he lost little time in playing the role of conqueror.

His aims in this campaign have been described as two-fold. Not only would he fight Persia, but in the process Greek science would benefit from the 'research and discovery' which would be carried out. To be sure the expedition did help the cause of Greek science, but this was in spite of, rather than because of, Alexander's campaign. The Crusades of the Middle Ages were to have a similar effect upon science and commerce in the western world, yet these, too, cannot be attributed to any conscious purpose on the part of the European monarchs who took part in them. As for the idea that Alexander consciously planned to 'civilize' the world, one might suggest that, through the ages, man has seen many such 'civilizers'. Perhaps Plutarch summed up the situation best, when he said, in effect, that before civilizing a people one must first vanquish them. Having defeated the Persians decisively, he then marched to India.

Tarn implies that the advance into India was quite logical since it 'had been part of the empire of Darius I; and Alexander's invasion was only the necessary and

inevitable conquest of that empire'. He may well be correct. The invasion was not only logical, but in view of his father's proven ability as soldier and statesman, it was both 'necessary' and 'inevitable' that the son, too, prove himself.

Contradictory evidence suggests that Alexander had an alcoholic problem. His admirers believe that he did not drink, or if he did, it was in moderation. Tarn, for example, denies that he drank to excess, but admits that he was drunk when he quarreled with Cleitus. Athenaeus on the other hand refers to a man performing a remarkable feat—actually drinking more than Alexander! If Athenaeus was a gossip, we have the testimony of Arrian (who favored Alexander), who said that he had 'taken to the barbaric ways of drinking'. Probably what Arrian means is that he was drinking 'uncut' wine following the Persian fashion, rather than cutting it with water, after the fashion of the Greeks.

Alexander was excessively generous in the giving of gifts, keeping few material things for himself. Plutarch points out that he was far more angry with those who refused his gifts than with those who begged from him. This tendency to lavish gifts suggests a compulsive need to give and frequently masks unrecognized guilt. In contrast to the generosity exhibited toward those he favored was an almost fanatical cruelty toward those who opposed him, the characteristic reminiscent of his mother.

The treatment meted out to the Persian Satrap Bessus, is a good example of this. It was Bessus who murdered the king of Persia, taking personal command of what was left of the Persian army. Eventually he was captured, stripped and made to stand in chains while the Macedonian army marched past. Not content with this, he was, as Arrian says, disgracefully tortured before being sent to Ecbatana for execution.

Certainly we should make allowances for the fact that customs and mores in antiquity differed from our own. What appears to be cruel to us may have been the accepted norm in antiquity when, for example, unwanted infants, usually female, were frequently exposed and left to die. However, even Arrian did not approve of what he termed the 'over-punishing' of Bessus, regarding as 'barbaric the mutilation of the extremities', condemning Alexander for copying the 'barbaric kings', who treated their subjects 'as lower creatures'. As in so many areas of his life, Alexander was driven to extremes. Ehippus, who may have been a contemporary, says that '... Alexander used to sprinkle the floor with good perfume and scented wine, and would have myrrh and all kinds of incense burning. And a hushed stillness used to hold all who were present, out of fear, because he was blood-thirsty and intolerable. . . .'

The murder of Aristotle's nephew, Callisthenes, who was the official historian for the expedition, lends credence to Ehippus' description of the King. It is true that Callisthenes was not an easy man to get along with, and had refused to comply with the order to prostrate himself (in the Persian fashion) when greeting the king, who

became infuriated. His presence had become a source of embarrassment and it became necessary to remove him. The means for this were soon found in the so-called 'Page Boys' plot' to assassinate Alexander. Callisthenes was implicated, and put to death.

Perhaps the outstanding example of his uncontrollable rage and violent hostility was the murder of his close companion, the man who had saved his life at the Granicus, Cleitus. During the winter of 329/8, the army was inactive. Since there was no fighting, the time seems to have been spent in that favorite Macedonian pastime, drinking. During one banquet, Alexander's admirers flattered him over his past victories. Some of the Macedonian nobles who were present were disgruntled, expressing the view that these achievements were not his alone. Cleitus apparently claimed that there was nothing surprising about the victories, since they had been paid for in Macedonian blood, implying that the army had been *trained by Philip*. There are numerous accounts of what followed. We are reasonably certain that Cleitus taunted his king to such a degree, that eventually, losing complete control, Alexander seized a spear and ran his friend through. It may be of some interest to note that Lanike, Cleitus' sister, had been the king's wet-nurse.

For three days after this experience, Alexander remained in his tent, profoundly depressed and 'proclaiming overwhelming remorse for what he had done, and a determination to expiate it by fasting to death'. The army, fearful that their commander might indeed attempt suicide, sent a delegation of officers to plead with him. They not only absolved him of all blame, but convicted Cleitus of treason. Alexander's overwhelming depression, guilt and self-torment must have been apparent to all.

The liquidation of two other men, Parmenio and his son Philotas, is also significant. Parmenio, the oldest of the generals, had been close to Alexander's father, Philip. Thus he represented a link with the past which Alexander may have preferred to forget. Parmenio, tried in battle, was cautious, the caution which comes not only with maturity, but with training. He had earned the devotion and respect of the troops. 'Alexander', on the other hand, 'wanted his genius recognized as superior to the trained prudence of the general'. The task of removing Parmenio might be difficult, but this was not insurmountable. Gradually '... Parmenio was assigned the defensive part, while Alexander reserved the decisive advance for himself: success belonged to the king. Finally, at Gaugamela, Parmenio found himself left in an almost impossible position: the King, engaged in pursuit, did not bother to maintain contact with him, until Parmenio sent an urgent messenger to recall him from his dangerous advance. This could be construed as an appeal for help, which prevented the king from completing his victory—and thus we find it in some of our sources, even though Parmenio in fact dealt with the greatly superior forces opposing him without Alexander's help.'

The damage, however, had been done. Parmenio, the prudent and cautious general, victor in so many battles for Philip, had appealed for help, and the young king

had been forced to return and save him. Alexander had won the first round in his battle to have the old general removed. An excuse to remove him permanently would soon be forthcoming.

Philotas, the son, too, had earned respect as an officer in the field, and had many friends. Tarn speculates that he may have represented the conservative element among the generals, and was therefore opposed to Alexander's position as 'Great King'. It is also possible that he, along with other Macedonians, was convinced that it was no longer necessary to continue the war. The main objective, that of defeating Persia, had been accomplished, and since both he and his father were so popular, there was a real danger that, with the support of the army, they could exert sufficient pressure upon Alexander to induce him to return home. In any event, it became imperative that Philotas be removed. Some men respect and admire competence, others are envious and seek some excuse to belittle the successful colleague. Young, successful and ambitious, Philotas had friends and admirers, but he also had enemies. Plutarch tells us that 'after the king had once given ear to such speeches and suspicions, the enemies of Philotas brought up countless accusations against him. Consequently he was arrested and put to the question.

The details of the 'plot' against Alexander, the part played by Philotas and his subsequent trial, need not be repeated here. He had outlived his usefulness. Tarn has asserted that since Alexander had 'uniformly disregarded Philotas' advice, he had been uniformly successful'. Here was the instrument to be used in the liquidation of the man who had been closest to Philip, Parmenio. If Philotas could be implicated and found guilty of conspiring to murder the king, then his father, Parmenio, must also be guilty. Others were, of course, implicated in this plot, but only Philotas was subjected to torture, and made to confess. Surprisingly some of our sources give few details. Arrian skims over the incident, and Tarn is content to accept Ptolemy's version that Philotas was tried, found guilty, then put to death by the army. A short time later, Parmenio was murdered, almost causing a mutiny among his troops. A majority of scholars agree that Alexander twisted the details of the 'plot' to suit his own ends. Badian is the most outspoken in his condemnation of Alexander, stating that the whole affair was premeditated. It 'was a transparent fabrication', therefore, he concludes, the 'assassination of his father Parmenio was not a panic-stricken reaction to an unforeseen emergency; it must be regarded as an integral part of the same scheme, and indeed, in view of Parmenio's position, as its culmination. The careful preparation, the detailed planning . . . finally the quick and decisive blow when fortune offered the chance—these will be recognized at once as the hall-marks of Alexander's genius, both military and political.'

In 327 B.C., campaigning in Bactria-Sogdiana, one of the greatest of Sogdian chieftains, Oxyartes, surrendered to Alexander. His daughter, Roxane, was reputed to be one of the most beautiful women in Iran; and shortly after her capture, she was married to Alexander. Plutarch tells us that Alexander, overwhelmed by her beauty, married her for love, but one wonders if this could have played any part in

his choice of a wife. This marriage, and the subsequent one, were based upon political expediency; they were symbolic in that they joined Europe and Asia. However, Tarn's statement that 'apart from his mother, he apparently never cared for any woman . . .' is questionable. It is probable that, like his mother, Alexander was incapable of genuinely caring for anyone other than himself.

The cementing of alliances by marriage (Oxyartes, the father of Roxane, became one of his staunchest allies) was not new. The example had been set for him by his father. However, where Philip envisioned a fusion of states, his son may well have dreamed of the conquest of the whole world, with himself as 'divine' ruler. The constant need to prove his masculinity, to emulate or even exceed the deeds of his father, and to free himself from his mother, leads one to believe that this is indeed what he intended. Tarn has gone to great lengths to defend his hero against the charge of dreaming of world domination, yet the picture he has drawn is that of a monarch steeped in medieval chivalry.

The evidence suggests that Alexander was sexually inhibited, for when the wife and daughters of Darius fell into his hands, he paid no attention to them, although they were reputed to be beautiful women and apparently expected to be treated in the manner of other female prisoners. 'This denial as a defence against anxiety (castration or separation) is a basic psychoanalytic conception. Delusions of grandeur and omnipotence, of world domination or world destruction, are, in extreme cases, psychotic manifestations of such defenses.'

There is some evidence of overt homosexuality and suspicion is certainly aroused over his relationship with Hephaestion, his constant companion after the death of Cleitus. When he died (of gluttony), Alexander went on a rampage reminiscent of a distraught lover, killing hundreds as a sacrifice to the spirit of his dead friend.

This brings us finally to the question of Alexander's self-deification. Did he, as Tarn has claimed, have himself deified by the Greeks in 324 B.C., merely for political purposes, or was this the manifestation of an actual delusion?

Olympias had instilled in her son the myth that he had been begotten not by Philip, a mere mortal, but by a god who had appeared in the form of a snake. But was this fantasy or delusion?

Soon after the submission of Egypt (late 332 B.C.), Alexander paid a visit to the oracle of Ammon in the oasis of Siwah. This visit took him away from his military base for a period of six weeks—a rather dangerous venture from the military standpoint, but out of his anxiety and the need for reassurance, the visit to the oracle became vital. Even if we take into account the superstitions of the age, one is forced to the conclusion that Olympias had done her job well. Having liberated Egypt from the Persian yoke (and placed it under his own), it would be expected by the Egyptians, that he would adopt both the epithets and the divinity of the Pharaoh, simply because this was traditional. However, it is worth pointing out that long before Alexander's time, in fact by the late New Kingdom (ca. 1300 B.C.), the sophisticated Egyptian did not really believe that the Pharaoh was divine. Yet

Alexander left Siwah more than ever convinced that he was a god. Formal deification by the Greek states would have to wait until later; for the moment his visit to the oracle had served its purpose. The conviction that he was a god might today be considered a serious symptom of mental disease.

He died in 323 B.C., and the incessant squabbles among the remaining generals served to create chaos within the empire he had carved out, although the long-range effects of his conquests would be felt for generations. The generals soon discovered what Alexander had learned to his own sorrow, that no one could be trusted. His '... failures in India and in the desert had caused a severe psychological reaction. ... He had discovered', as they soon would, 'the insecurity of power, which all his successful scheming could not overcome. His success in the purges, and in the Susa marriages and his dealings with the mutineers, only increased the resulting instability. He took refuge from the insecurity of power in the greater exercise of power.'

Some historians have presented Alexander as a man dedicated to the noble purpose of civilizing mankind. This seems to be a glorified picture which he himself would have preferred. One becomes convinced that, when he demanded deification in 324 B.C., he did so because he saw himself through his mother's eyes, the psychological mechanism of identification, in this case the identification with a very emotionally and mentally disturbed woman.

The character structure of his mother, cruel, aggressive, jealous, combined with her self-love (narcissism), her envy, and continual competition with Philip, made love of her difficult, if not impossible. However, the love of mother, as the primary love object, is always essential. Even when the mother is unloveable, this need persists and is manifested in the primitive psychological mechanism of identification with the aggressor as a defence against the hostility which must be denied. There are many indications that Alexander had identified himself with his mother in this pathological way. To identify excessively with a female (aggressor) is, for the male, to jeopardize his masculinity. His competition and hostility toward his father (and men) was not like a man's healthy masculine competition with other men. Rather, it was more like his mother's unrelenting hatred of his father: and in his relative indifference to women, he was at the same time manifesting his underlying hostile feelings toward his mother.

He was the son of a famous warrior and statesman, whose exploits were known throughout the Greek world. Emulating such a man would have been difficult under any circumstances, and would have served to increase the normal competitiveness between father and son. Under ordinary circumstances, the son, as infant and child, both competes and identifies with the father for the favor and love of the mother. This is the basis of the well-known Oedipus conflict, the solution of which determines the subsequent character structure of the adult. In the case of Alexander, a variety of important factors altered this normal development.

Philip had established himself as the leader of the Greek states, he had built the

first truly national state in Greek antiquity (Macedonia), and had proven himself in the field. As a statesman and strategist, he was far superior to anyone at that time. All of these factors both intensified and complicated *masculine* identification.

When these additional obstacles to a healthy identification with his father were superimposed upon the underlying pathological female identification with an aggressive mother, it intensified the psychological dilemma of Alexander. The inner, unconscious need to prove his masculinity, when it became expressed in the external world, undoubtedly contributed to his very real achievements. For all his emotional instability, the impact of these achievements would continue their influence long after he was gone. On the basis of this alone, he surely deserves the epithet: Alexander the Great.

Notes

1. L. Pierce Clark, M.D., "Psychologic Study of Abraham Lincoln", *Psychoanalytic Review*, 8 (1921), 2. The student of a colleague, having just read Erikson's *Young Man Luther* remarked that "more studies of this type would benefit us all". On being told that I had engaged in similar studies both with Alexander the Great and Jefferson, she was visibly shaken. "Well," she exclaimed, "it's fine to work on Alexander the Great, but no one has a right to meddle with the founding fathers!"
2. An earlier psycho-biographical approach to Alexander is L. Pierce Clark, "The Narcissism of Alexander the Great," *Psychoanalytic Review* 9 (1923) 56-59. For a recent criticism of psycho-history in general one should read Jacques Barzun, "History: The Muse and Her Doctors," *American Historical Review* 77 (1972) 36-64.—Ed.



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