

## The Alexander Romance by Ps.-Callisthenes

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# The Alexander Romance by Ps.-Callisthenes

*A Historical Commentary*

*By*

Krzysztof Nawotka



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## Acknowledgments

I first took an interest in the *Alexander Romance* more than a decade ago while working on my *Alexander the Great*. Like every student of Alexander, I was in desperate search of sources, either new to scholarship or underused, and surely the *Alexander Romance* met the second of these criteria. This was before the first volume of Richard Stoneman's excellent commentary appeared in print, and at that time the most usable commentary was Ausfeld's rather dated 1907 work. Faced with the complexity of the sources likely consulted by Ps.-Callisthenes on the one hand and the undue neglect of the *Alexander Romance* in modern studies of Alexander the Great on the other, I decided to make a Polish translation the *Alexander Romance*, accompanied by a small commentary, published in 2010. This book has grown out of it, in addition to the fruits of several subsequent years of research and writing. In the course of my study of the *Alexander Romance* I became aware of the tremendous progress in scholarship after Ausfeld, Kroll and Merkelbach, due to a very large degree to the incessant efforts of Richard Stoneman. It is therefore my great pleasure to acknowledge his books and papers as a source of inspiration for this volume, as well as to thank him for his encouraging comments on my work and the books that he generously shared with me on more than one occasion.

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I have presented papers relating to the *Alexander Romance* at conferences and public talks in Wrocław, Warsaw, Toruń, Delphi, Innsbruck, Liverpool, Providence, Obergurgl, Erbil, Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg. The necessity of responding to perceptive questions asked by conference participants and members of the audience at my talks has led me to vastly improve the way I present numerous issues in this book. Papers read by scholars attending these

conferences were a great source of information and inspiration, especially in matters which used to be, and often still are, beyond my particular field of expertise.

Finally, I have the pleasant task of thanking all the people with whom I discussed various issues related to the *Alexander Romance* and from whose comments I greatly profited: Prof. Sir Fergus Millar, late Prof. Józef Wolski, Prof. John K. Davies, Prof. Alicja Szastyńska-Siemion, Dr. Zofia Archibald, Prof. Gościwit Malinowski, Robin Lane Fox. Prof. Ory Amitay, Prof. Robert Rollinger, Prof. Josef Wieshöfer, Prof. Corinne Jouanno, Dr. Ivan Ladynin, Dr. Micah Ross, Dr. Agnieszka Wojciechowska. But I dedicate my most heartfelt thanks to my wife, Małgorzata Możdżyńska-Nawotka, who has over the years provided the unstinting support that has allowed me to research and write this book.

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# Abbreviations

BGU	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i> , Berlin.
BNJ	<i>Brill's New Jacoby</i> , online.
Calderini	Calderini A., <i>Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano</i> , I–XXIV, Cairo 1935–2003.
DGE	Adrados F. Rodríguez and Gangutia Elícegui E. (eds.), <i>Diccionario griego-español</i> , Madrid 1980–.
ELB	<i>Excerpta Latina Barbari</i> : Garstad 2012.
EDG	Beekes R.S.P., and Beek L. van, <i>Etymological Dictionary of Greek</i> , Leiden 2010.
FGrH	Jacoby, F., et al., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Leiden 1923–1999.
LBG	Trapp E. and Hörandner W. (eds.), <i>Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität besonders des 9.–12. Jahrhunderts</i> , Vienna 1994–.
LDM	<i>Liber de Morte Testamentoque Alexandri Magni</i> (see: ME).
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> , Zürich, Munich and Düsseldorf 1981–1999.
LSJ	Liddell H.G., Scott R. and Jones H.S., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1996.
ME	<i>Metz Epitome</i> : P.H. Thomas (ed.), <i>Incerti auctoris Epitoma rerum gestarum Alexandri Magni. Cum libro de morte testamentoque Alexandri</i> , Leipzig 1965.
OP	Old Persian (language)
PGM	Preisendanz K. and Henrichs A., <i>Papyri Graecae magicae</i> <sup>2</sup> , I–II, Stuttgart 1973–1974.
PLRE	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I–III, Cambridge 1971–1992.
SB	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten</i> , Strasbourg, Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg and Wiesbaden 1915–.
THESCra	<i>Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum</i> , Basel and Los Angeles 2004.
Trail	Trail J.S., <i>Persons of Ancient Athens</i> , I–XXI, Toronto 1994–2012.
Welles	Welles C.B., <i>Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy</i> , London 1934.

# Introduction

This is a (mostly) historical commentary on the anonymous late work, variously referred to in modern academic literature: *Historia Alexandri Magni*, the *Alexander Romance* or Ps.-Callisthenes. The issues of its date and authorship will be discussed briefly later in this introduction. For now it suffices to say that no matter how complex the process of transmission of stories about Alexander, and how many strata of the *Historia Alexandri Magni* can be identified, the earliest version of the *Alexander Romance* of which we have exact knowledge, the so-called  $\alpha$  recension, must have had an author or editor. For lack of a better solution, this person will be referred to here as Ps.-Callisthenes.

Out of the many existing versions of the *Alexander Romance* (see Section 8 below), this commentary concentrates almost exclusively on ms. A, which is the best Greek rendition of the lost archetype ( $\alpha$ ). This version is perhaps least important to the study of Ps.-Callisthenes' influence on cultures of Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East and Central Asia in the Middle Ages and early modern times, as it lacks many episodes and motives popular after the end of antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Its value may lie, however, in best preserving the earliest stratum of the *Alexander Romance*, and with it some evidence of the life and exploits of Alexander the Great and the development of his legend in antiquity. This commentary was born out of the need to explore all possible sources of information on Alexander, which can be found almost exclusively in this earliest surviving version of the *Alexander Romance*.

## 1 Author, Title and Date of Composition

The ancient work commented upon in this book is most commonly referred to in modern literature as the *Alexander Romance*, or more formally Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Historia Alexandri Magni*. This second title is ultimately derived from the *incipit* in the Greek manuscript Parisinus graecus 1685 (belonging to  $\beta$  family) kept in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris dated to 1468. The learned scribe, Monk Nektarios of the St. Nicholas Monastery in Otranto says this about the contents of the manuscript:

---

1 About the *Alexander Romance* in Europe, Asia and Africa in the Middle Ages see now Zuwiyya 2011.

Καλλισθένης ιστοριογράφος ὁ τὰ περὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων συγγαψάμενος. Οὗτος ἱστορεῖ Ἀλεξάνδρου πράξεις

Historian Kallisthenes, who wrote about the affairs of the Greeks, this way describes the deeds of Alexander.

Nektarios did not invent this attribution: it belonged to the Byzantine cultural tradition from at least the twelfth c. and was known already to Ioannes Tzetzes.<sup>2</sup> The author named in Nektarios' *incipit*, Kallisthenes of Olynthos, was a well-known Greek historian whose works have sadly disappeared save for small fragments collected by F. Jacoby.<sup>3</sup> Cousin and collaborator of Aristotle, he earned his reputation as historian through a monograph of the Third Sacred War and through the *Hellenika* or the Greek history of the period 386–356 BC. Recommended by Aristotle, Kallisthenes accompanied Alexander to Asia as the official historian of his expedition. With Alexander's approval he sent his work back to Greece book by book, already contributing to the development of Alexander's legend within the king's own lifetime. For all the rhetorical embellishment, this was an extremely valuable work written by a first-class professional historian and an eye-witness, and it was surely consulted by many later Alexander historians. Kallisthenes did not cover the whole history of Alexander, having fallen victim in 327 BC to the "proskynesis affair" in which he demonstrated civic disobedience against what in the Near East was a universal gesture of respect, which the Greeks (and Macedonians) wrongly interpreted as the sacrilegious granting of divine honours to a living person, Alexander in this case. Kallisthenes' use of proskynesis disqualified him as a courtier and led to his downfall and death. He was soon accused of inspiring potential assassins of Alexander in the "Conspiracy of the Pages," arrested, tortured and either executed or left to die in prison.<sup>4</sup>

The sheer fact of Kallisthenes' death preceding Alexander's makes his authorship of the *Historia Alexandri Magni* impossible, since it runs to the death (323 BC) and burial of Alexander in Memphis (321 BC). This was noticed by the first modern scholar to deal with the manuscript Parisinus graecus 1685, Isaac Casaubon, a famous humanist and the keeper of the Royal Library in Paris. In a letter dated 15 August 1605 to Joseph Scaliger, another leading humanist, he

2 *Chiliades* I 316–329, III 390, 885–889. Stoneman 1996, 601; Bounoure 2004, XII.

3 *FGrH* 124: 95 fragments printed in 27 standard pages.

4 *Plu. Alex.* 54.2–55.9; *Arr. An.* IV 14.1–3; *D.L.* V 5; *Just.* XII 6.17, 7.1–3; *Suda*, s.v. Καλλισθένης. Brown 1949; Rubensohn 1993; Nawotka 2010, 288–294.

wrote: *Exstat in bibliotheca Pseudo-Callisthenis historia rerum Alexandri*.<sup>5</sup> Ever since this, the author of the *Alexander Romance* has been referred to as Pseudo-Callisthenes.<sup>6</sup>

We probably will never know the name of the author of the *Alexander Romance* but based on the strongly Egyptian coloring of his work (see Section 5) and on his good knowledge of the topography of Alexandria, the *opinio communis* of modern scholarship holds that the anonymous *Historia Alexandri Magni* was written in Alexandria by a Greek (or a Hellenized Egyptian), well acquainted with Egypt, its history and culture. For all the mistakes he makes, he is also familiar with Greek history and literature which suggests that the author of the *Alexander Romance* received a typical high-class education. He clearly disregards geography, with Alexander often jumping between distant places within one chapter, e.g. from the land of the Amazons to the Red Sea, then to the Tanais and to Susa (III 28).<sup>7</sup> Ps.-Callisthenes is clearly a pagan author who shares important characteristics with better known pagan authors of later antiquity, both in what he writes about and what he avoids.<sup>8</sup> To give an example, he never makes any reference to Christians. The chapters on Alexandria extol important pagan places of worship, the Great Serapeum and the god Serapis in the first instance, but also other gods of Alexandria, like Agathos Daimon. A place of prominence is given to the Tychaion of Alexandria (I 31.4) which is a point of orientation in the city. Tyche, although worshipped from the early Hellenistic age, attracted particular devotion in the Late Empire, when her cult was treated with hostility by Christian authors.<sup>9</sup> In his description of Alexander's fear of death, his seeking on several occasions to learn the hour of his death, and finally his attempts to commit suicide (III 32.4–7), Ps.-Callisthenes subscribes to themes popular in the philosophy of the age of the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup>

The *Alexander Romance* is a multilayered work, some parts of which are ultimately traceable to the early Hellenistic age (see Section 4 in this introduction) but what we can access now, even in the earliest surviving Greek version, ms. A, derived directly from the archetype (α), originated much later than this. No precise date of the composition of the archetype of the *Alexander Romance* can be given with any degree of certainty. Its language, sharing many features with the Greek of Christian authors (see Section 8 in this introduction) clearly points to

5 *Isaaci Casauboni epistolae*<sup>3</sup>, Rotterdam 1709, fol. ep. 460.

6 Zacher 1867, 7–9; Ross 1988, 5.

7 Cf. Stoneman 2007, LIII–LV.

8 Cf. Momigliano 1963.

9 Garstad 2005, particularly 94–96.

10 Stoneman 2007, LXI–LXIV.

late antiquity, as do the metrics of poetic parts of the book.<sup>11</sup> The date of the first Latin version of the *Alexander Romance* is the *terminus ante quem* of the Greek archetype (α). Its author Iulius Valerius is traditionally identified with the consul of 338, Iulius Valerius Alexander Polemius.<sup>12</sup> Although we cannot be sure whether this identification is based simply on similarity of names, no convincing dating past the first half of the fourth c. has ever been advanced. The Latin rendition of the *Alexander Romance* must have been known by 345, since this is the latest possible date of the booklet *Itinerarium Alexandri* dedicated to the Emperor Constantius II and based, to a degree, on the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>13</sup> Indeed some modern scholars try to demonstrate that it was Iulius Valerius who also authored the *Itinerarium Alexandri*.<sup>14</sup> The earliest illustrated manuscripts of the *Alexander Romance* are dated to the fourth c.<sup>15</sup> and this indicates that by that time it had already been circulating long enough to elicit considerable interest among readers. Merkalebach tentatively dates the *Alexander Romance* to the late third c. AD, while Kroll adheres to a date of ca. 300 AD.<sup>16</sup>

The date 300 AD is symbolic, nothing more. Historical circumstances point to an earlier date in the third c. AD. The age of the Second Sophistic (ca. 50–250 AD) reinvigorated literary interest in Alexander the Great, while the reigns of Caracalla and Severus Alexander brought about a genuine “Alexandromania.” Both emperors admired Alexander and tried to copy his achievements; the first was known as “the greatest admirer of Alexander” (D.C. LXXVII 9.1: φιλαλεξανδρότατος), the second was allegedly born in the Temple of Alexander (HA, *Alexander* 5.1).<sup>17</sup> This third-c. admiration for Alexander resulted amongst other things in the production of coins and medallions imprinted with effigies of him and his mother,<sup>18</sup> with the king reportedly spotted in many places (D.C. LXXX 18.1–3), much the same as Elvis Presley in many parts of the United States long after his death. One reason for this renewed interest in Alexander was the changing situation in the East where the Roman Empire now had to face the aggressive policies of the Persian Empire restored under the Sassanians, with an ideology which made ample use of the glory of the Achaemenids,

11 Hermann 1949.

12 Kübler 1888, VII; *PLRE* I, s.v. Iulius Valerius Alexander Polemius and Fl. Polemius; Stoneman 1996, 601–602.

13 Berg 1973, 372; Stoneman 2007, LXXV.

14 Lane Fox 1997; Davies 1998, 29.

15 Weitzman 1971, 96–125.

16 Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 90–91; Kroll 1926, xv.

17 Shayegan 2011, 341–349.

18 Dahmen 2007.





FIGURE 1 *Alexander the Great on a gold medallion, once belonging to a hoard from Aboukir (Egypt) of twenty medallions, coins and other objects. This medallion shows Alexander in a decorated cuirass and bearing a shield decorated with signs of the Zodiac. The Aboukir medallions belong in the age of the true Alexandromania in the Roman Empire. Found in Aboukir (Egypt).*

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whose empire was overthrown by Alexander.<sup>19</sup> The ideological climate of the mid-third c. seems to have furnished a fertile ground for the creation of the *Alexander Romance*, an idealized biography of the most admired historical character of the day.<sup>20</sup> The date of composition in the mid-third c. AD, therefore, falls within the period of the renaissance of Alexandria as an intellectual center, both on the pagan and on the increasingly influential Christian side championed by Clement of Alexandria and Origen and their pupils.<sup>21</sup>

19 Carney 2006, 118–120.

20 Kroll 1919, 1717–1720; Jouanno 2002, 26–28.

21 Torok 2005, 82.

## 2 Contents of the *Alexander Romance*

**Book 1:** Presentation of Nektanebo, the last king of Egypt and a *magos* (1). Informed by scouts of a great army about to invade Egypt (2) and having learned through this that the gods are abandoning him, he flees the country, while a prophecy of Hephaistos foretells the comeback of rejuvenated Nektanebo (3). Nektanebo settles in Pella and gains a reputation as an astrologer. He predicts that Olympias will bear a son by Ammon (4). Having taken Nektanebo's magical herbs she dreams of intercourse with Ammon (5). Wishing to experience this, she asks Nektanebo for assistance and assigns to him a small chamber next to her bedroom (6). Olympias has intercourse with Ammon/Nektanebo dressed as Ammon; Nektanebo assures her that Philip will not punish her for this (7). A sea falcon dispatched by Nektanebo lets Philip know in the dream that Olympias will bear Ammon's child (8). Back in Pella, Philip comforts Olympias (9). Philip suspects wrongdoing by a mortal man but Nektanebo, having assumed the shape of a giant snake, assures him that a god is father of Olympias' child (10). Philip receives a prophecy that Olympias' son will conquer the world but will not come back home (11). Birth of Alexander: Nektanebo observes the changing signs of the Zodiac to make sure that Olympias delivers her baby at the most propitious moment (12). Philip accepts the child and names it Alexander. Teachers of Alexander, including Aristotle presented. Philip receives a man-eating horse (Boukephalas) whom he keeps in an iron cage (13). Alexander, at twelve years old, accompanies Philip to war. One night Nektanebo teaches Alexander how to read the stars. Alexander pushes him from the cliff. Dying, Nektanebo confesses to him that he is his father. Alexander brings his dead body to Olympias to bury it (14). The Delphic oracle informs Philip that the man who tames Boukephalas will succeed him (15). Alexander's wisdom impresses Aristotle (16). Fourteen-year-old Alexander tames Boukephalas; Philip calls him ruler of the world (17). Fifteen-year-old Alexander goes to Olympia to compete in chariot races; he is insulted by Nikolaos king of Akarnania (18). Alexander wins the race, killing Nikolaos; while crowning him the priest predicts his future triumphs (19). Back in Pella, Alexander learns that Philip has left Olympias; Alexander attends the wedding of Philip and Kleopatra (20). During the wedding Alexander, insulted by Lysias, kills him and leaves Pella (21). Alexander reconciles Philip and Olympias (22). Standing in for Philip, Alexander receives Persian satraps and refuses tribute (23). Pausanias, a scorned suitor of Olympias, mortally wounds Philip. Alexander returns to Pella and arrests Pausanias to allow the dying Philip to deliver the mortal blow to Pausanias. Alexander constructs a magnificent tomb of Philip (24). Alexander exhorts Greeks and Macedonian veterans to war with Persia

(25). With Antipater's assistance eighteen-year-old Alexander takes over Macedonia; he gathers an army and moves to Sicily and Italy to receive a tribute from Roman generals (26). Crossing the sea to Africa, he continues overland to the Oracle of Ammon, where he learns that Ammon is his father and is advised to found a city opposite the island of Proteus (30). Alexander arrives at Rhakotis. He founds Alexandria, a city bigger than Rome and other cities in the world (31). Alexander visits the tomb of Proteus in Pharos. During the construction works in Alexandria the workers kill a snake, the incarnation of Agathos Daimon. Alexander appoints 25 Tybi for the holiday of Agathos Daimon (32). Alexander finds an old temple and Sesonchosis' inscription for Serapis. Serapis announces to him in a dream that Alexandria will be his final resting place. On Alexander's orders Parmenion/Parmeniskos builds Serapeum (33). Pharaonic coronation of Alexander in Memphis. Alexander imposes on Egypt the same tribute Darius had levied but this time money is to stay in the country to be spent on construction works in Alexandria (34). Alexander in Syria: he is not admitted to Tyre, his envoys are killed, he takes Tyre by storm (35). Arrogant letter written by Darius to Alexander (36). Alexander comforts his army and shows magnanimity to Persian envoys (37). In his letter to Darius, Alexander foresees his victory (38). Darius exchanges letters with his satraps who ask him to take over as head of a great army (39). The second letter sent by Darius to Alexander with a promise of pardon if Alexander surrenders (40). A battle on the Pinaros lost by Darius (41). Darius flees beyond the Euphrates. Alexander moves to Achaia, receives a propitious prophecy in Pieria and visits Troy (42). Alexander allows Abdera to remain neutral until he defeats Darius (43). Alexander ravages Chalkidike, subdues Black Sea cities and feeds his starving soldiers with the meat of slaughtered horses (44). Alexander marches through Lokris to Delphi where he extracts an oracular response (45). Alexander takes Thebes by storm (46). Auletes Ismenias performs a long song asking Alexander to show mercy for Thebes but Alexander destroys the city except for the tomb of Pindar (46a). During athletic games in Corinth Alexander promises to rebuild Thebes (47).

**Book 11:** Alexander in Plataiai expels Athenian *strategos* Stasagoras who had removed from office a priestess of Kore for having given a propitious prophecy to Alexander. Alexander demands tribute from Athens (1). An arrogant letter from the Athenians countered by Alexander's demand to hand over ten orators to him. During the debate in the Athenian assembly Aeschines declares his willingness to meet Alexander while Demades advises the people to reject Alexander's demands (2). Demosthenes speaks against Demades and defends Alexander's actions in Plataiai (3). Demosthenes praises Alexander's achievements, including the taking of Egypt (4). The Athenians send a wreath to Alexander

and Alexander replies with a conciliatory letter (5). Alexander marches against Sparta, he wins a sea battle but leaves Sparta undamaged and free from tribute (6). At a war council Persian notables, including a brother of Darius, praise Alexander and encourage Darius to gather an army from across his empire (7). While in Kilikia Alexander falls ill having bathed in the Okeanos. He disregards Parmenion's warnings and takes a medicine from his physician Philippos and having recovered punishes Parmenion (8). Alexander's army marches through Armenia, crosses the Euphrates. Alexander orders the bridge to be destroyed and fights a major battle on the Tigris with Darius, one of whose soldiers tries to kill him (9). The Persians retreat to Baktria; Alexander repudiates a Persian traitor who wants to betray Darius to him. Satraps write to Darius about Alexander's military might. Darius and Alexander exchange letters again (10). Alexander orders his satraps to send supplies to the base in Antioch. Darius learns from his satraps about Persian notables choosing Alexander's side (11). Poros refuses to aid Darius. Mother of Darius, captured by Alexander, praises Alexander to her son and tries to convince him to reconcile with Alexander (12). Alexander's army closes in on Persis tricking the enemy into thinking it is very numerous. Acting on Ammon's advice in a dream, Alexander decides to go to Darius disguised as his envoy (13). Alexander crosses the intermittent river Stranga and comes to the palace of Darius who invites him for a banquet (14). Alexander, whose disguise is blown by a Persian notable, flees the palace and comes to the bank of Stranga just in time to cross it before it unfreezes (15). The Persian army crosses the Stranga to fight a battle with Alexander's army. Darius flees across the Stranga which then unfreezes again drowning his defeated soldiers (16). Darius writes another letter to Alexander offering a big ransom for his family and recognizing his suzerainty. Alexander rejects this offer too. Alexander spends winter in Persis and burns the palace of Xerxes (17). Alexander visits the tomb of Cyrus and meets mutilated Greek POWs (18). Darius again asks Poros for military assistance. Alexander pursues Darius all the way to the Caspian Gates (19). Satraps Bessos and Ariobarzanes mortally wound Darius and abandon him to die. Alexander comforts his dying enemy who offers him his daughter Rhoxane (20). Alexander orders a magnificent burial of Darius and issues an edict promising the Persians the right to practise their religion and custom on condition of being subject to Alexander's satrap. Alexander tricks Bessos and Ariobarzanes into surrendering, and crucifies them (21). Alexander rejects the divine cult offered to him in a letter from the wife and mother of Darius. Olympias sends royal dress and jewelry to Rhoxane. Alexander sets out for India (22).

**Book III:** Alexander's army marches through difficult terrain and soldiers start grumbling about the war lasting twelve years already but Alexander man-

ages to calm his Greek and Macedonian troops (1). Alexander receives a boastful letter from Poros, to which he replies with irony (2). A battle with Poros: Alexander uses a trick to defeat wild animals in Poros' ranks. Numerous casualties on both sides; Poros kidnaps Boukephalas (3). The battle rages for twenty five days until Alexander kills Poros in a single combat, allowing his troops to leave the battle field. Alexander conquers the kingdom of Pausanias and the fortress Aornos but is seriously wounded in another Indian city (4). Meanwhile in the land of Oxydrakai, Alexander receives a letter from Indian naked philosophers (5). Alexander meets them and talks to them (6). Alexander's letter to Aristotle with a description of his adventures in India: soldiers drown by a giant whale, march to the Caspian Gates through a snake-infested land, a river full of hippopotami with a city on bamboo stilts, a march to the lake of sweet water, the night of horrors, snow storm, a visit in a desert sanctuary of two prophetic trees, a prophecy of the imminent death of Alexander followed by the death of Rhoxane and Olympias, return to Persis and to the palace of Semiramis (17). Alexander exchanges letters with Kandake, a descendant of Semiramis who offers magnificent exotic gifts (18). Kandake orders a portrait of Alexander to be executed without his knowledge. Kandaules son of Kandake shows up in Alexander's camp. Alexander disguises himself as Antigonos and asks Ptolemy to impersonate him (19). Alexander, disguised as Antigonos, frees the wife of Kandaules abducted by Bebrykes and travels with Kandaules to Kandake (20). They pass through exotic places close to the abodes of gods (21). Alexander admires the palace of Kandake who recognizes him from the portrait but guarantees safety to the benefactor of her daughter-in-law (22). Sons of Kandake argue about whether to kill Alexander's envoy or to reward him. Alexander diffuses tension. Kandake sends him back with royal gifts (23). On the way back Alexander visits the cave of the gods, fails to learn the time of his death but Sesonchosis and Serapis assure him that he will become immortal thanks to the founding of Alexandria (24). Alexander travels to the land of the Amazons who greet him by letter, inform him of their state and warn him not to attack them (25). Exchange of letters with the Amazons who promise military assistance to Alexander. His soldiers suffer through terrible rain in Prasiake in India. Alexander receives a letter from Aristotle and decides to go back to Babylon (26). Alexander informs Olympias in a letter of his march from Babylon, during which he encountered the Pillars of Herakles, and of his success in subduing the Amazons (27). Alexander further writes about his trip to the Red Sea shores, his encounter with exotic monsters, his visit to the City of the Sun, and about treasures found in the palace of Xerxes and Cyrus (28). A few days later, already in Babylon, a native woman brings to Alexander a monster baby. It is an omen, read by a Chaldean expert as a prediction of Alexander's

imminent death and of a war amongst his companions (30). Alexander summons Antipater who had quarreled with Olympias. Kassander, on Antipater's orders, brings poison to his brother Iolaos who laces with it wine which is then drunk by Alexander (31). Iolaos administers more poison with a feather. Rhoxane stops Alexander from committing suicide. Alexander dictates his last will. Ptolemy and Perdikkas make a covenant on power sharing. Alexander's farewell to his soldiers (32). Alexander's last will is read out. Death of Alexander (33). Alexander's body transported to Egypt and buried in Alexandria (34). Summary of life and achievements of Alexander (35).

It is perhaps useful to juxtapose the chronology of historical events referred to in the *Alexander Romance*, mostly pertaining to the life and exploits of Alexander, with a corresponding narrative of the *Alexander Romance*. Of course, Ps.-Callisthenes mixes facts with fiction and his attitude towards geography, and quite often chronology, is nothing short of cavalier. Nevertheless, as the table below shows, the storyline of the *Alexander Romance* is not a hotch-potch collection of anecdotes: quite the contrary, as for the most part it follows the life story of Alexander in chronological order.

Date <sup>22</sup>	Events	Locus in the <i>Alexander Romance</i>
July 356 BC	Birth of Alexander	I 12
359–340 BC <sup>23</sup>	The Reign of Nektanebo II	I 1–3
340–339 BC <sup>24</sup>	Artaxerxes III conquers Egypt/ flight of Nektanebo II	I 1–3
before 343 BC?	Taming of Boukephalas by Alexander	I 17
before 343 BC?	Alexander gives audience to Persian envoys, substituting for Philip II	I 23
343/2–340 BC	Alexander in the school of Aristotle in Mieza	I 13 and 16
337 BC	Marriage of Philip II and Kleopatra	I 20–21
336 BC	Philip II assassinated by Pausanias	I 24
336 BC	Alexander supported by Antipater takes over Macedonia	I 25
336 BC	Alexander delivers a speech (speeches) to the Macedonians and to the Greek allies	I 26

<sup>22</sup> Unless stated otherwise, in this table I follow the same dating practice as in Nawotka 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Wojciechowska 2016, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Wojciechowska 2016, 14.

Date	Events	Locus in the <i>Alexander Romance</i>
end of 336 BC	In Delphi Alexander extracts prophecy from Pythia	I 45
September 335 BC	Destruction of Thebes with the exception of the house of Pindar	I 46–46a
Autumn 335 BC	Alexander demands Athenian anti-Macedonian politicians to be handed over to him	II 2–5
April–May 334 BC	Alexander in Troy	I 42
May 334 BC	The Battle of the Granicus	II 9
Summer 333 BC	Darius III debates with his top advisors in Babylon and decides to lead his army in person	II 7
Late Summer 333 BC	Alexander falls ill after a swim in the Kydnos in Kilikia (in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> this is in the Okeanos); cured by his physician Philippos	II 8
November 333 BC	Darius defeated at Issos (in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> on the Pinaros)	I 41
November 333 BC	Darius flees beyond the Euphrates to gather a new army	I 42
December 333 BC	The first peace offering of Darius, rejected by Alexander	I 36–38
February–August 332 BC	The siege of Tyre	I 35
February–August 332 BC	The second peace offering of Darius, also rejected by Alexander	I 40
14 March 331 BC <sup>25</sup>	Pharaonic coronation of Alexander in Memphis	I 34
Early Winter 332/331 BC	Alexander's first visit to Rhakotis and the decision to found Alexandria	I 30
Winter 332/331 BC	Journey to Ammon's Oracle in Siwah	I 29
7 April 331 BC	Foundation of Alexandria	I 31–33
Spring–Autumn 331 BC	Antipater, Alexander's viceroy in the Balkans fights a war with Agis III of Sparta	II 6
Late Summer–Early Autumn 331 BC	Alexander's army crosses the Euphrates over two pontoon bridges, passes through Armenia and crosses the Tigris	II 9
Summer–Autumn 331 BC	The third peace offering of Darius, again rejected by Alexander	II 10

25 Date: Wojciechowska and Nawotka 2014.

(cont.)

Date	Events	Locus in the <i>Alexander Romance</i>
1 October 331 BC	The battle of Gaugamela (two battles in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> : one on the Tigris and the other on the Stranga)	II 9 and 16
January 330 BC	Alexander's encounter with mutilated Greek prisoners	II 18
Winter–Spring 330 BC	Alexander in Persepolis (called Persis in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> )	II 17
Early 330 BC	Alexander visits the tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadai	II 18
May 330 BC	Burning of palaces in Persepolis	II 17
330 BC	Mass defection of Persian nobles to Alexander's side	II 11
June–July 330 BC	Alexander pursues Darius in the direction of the Caspian Gates	II 19
June–July 330 BC	Darius arrested and killed by his satraps Bessos, Nabarzanes (Ariobarzanes in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> ) and Barsaentes	II 20
Late Summer 330 BC	Nabarzanes surrenders to Alexander	II 21
329 BC	Bessos captured by Alexander	II 21
328 BC	Execution (probably crucifixion) of Bessos	II 21
Spring 327 BC	Alexander marries Roxane, daughter of Oxyartes, an aristocrat from Eastern Iran (in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> daughter of Darius III)	II 20 and 22
Early Summer 327 BC	Beginning of Alexander's expedition to India	II 22
Winter 327/326 BC	Taking of Aornos	III 4
Spring 326 BC	Alexander's encounter with the Indian naked philosophers in Taxila (in the <i>Alexander Romance</i> in the land of the Oxydrakai)	III 5–6
June–July 326 BC	The Battle of the Hydaspes	III 3–4
Early Autumn 326 BC	The Mutiny at the Hyphasis	III 1
Early 325 BC	Alexander seriously wounded in the city of the Mallians	III 4
Late 325 BC	Macedonian sailors commanded by Nearchos encounter whales in the Arabian Sea	III 17
Late 324 BC	Alexander summons Antipater to Babylon	III 31
Late Winter/Early Spring 323 BC	Alexander returns to Babylon	III 26
Spring 323 BC	Omens of Alexander's death	III 30



Date	Events	Locus in the <i>Alexander Romance</i>
Spring 323 BC	Kassander, dispatched by his father Antipater, arrives at Babylon	III 31
Late May 323	Banquet in the house of Medios; beginning of Alexander's terminal illness	III 31
Early June 323 BC	Alexander's farewell to his soldiers	III 32
11 June 323 BC	Death of Alexander	III 33
June(?) 323 BC	Alexander's Last Will read to his soldiers and voted down by them	III 33
321 BC	The hearse with Alexander's body kidnapped by Ptolemy; Alexander's body buried in Memphis	III 34

### 3 Genre

The *Alexander Romance* is a composite literary work and the investigation into how it might fit within recognizable genres of ancient literature is perhaps best approached by first considering what it is *not*. Although its Latin title is *Historia Alexandri Magni*, it does not belong to the realm of historiography, wherein the principal aim is to reconstruct a chain of past events and their rational causes. Although (in places) there is a chain of largely historical events in the *Alexander Romance*, no serious attempts are made to find causal links between these, which could lead the work to be defined as a historical study. It is not a historical text, but of course we will never know whether Ps.-Callisthenes thought of himself as a historian or not.

Since the *Alexander Romance* covers the life of Alexander from birth, and even slightly before this—relating in detail the circumstances of his conception—to his death, the next obvious question to ask is whether it belongs in the realm of biography. In antiquity this was a distinct genre, differing from historiography not so much in its methodology or usage of sources, as in its intellectual aims. The best example of this style is the greatest ancient biographical author Plutarch, who in his *Life of Alexander* quotes 24 authors, mostly belonging to the first generation after Alexander, demonstrating in his source-gathering and in his critical approach a far greater affinity to modern historical research than any other ancient historian who studied Alexander. Yet,

in the opening section of this work, Plutarch inserts his famous methodological statement defining an ancient biography:

It is the life of Alexander the king, and of Caesar, who overthrew Pompey, that I am writing in this book, and the multitude of the deeds to be treated is so great that I shall make no other preface than to entreat my readers, in case I do not tell of all the famous actions of these men, nor even speak exhaustively at all in each particular case, but in epitome for the most part, not to complain. For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities.<sup>26</sup>

So the aim of biography is character study—ultimately derived from the school of Aristotle—not ascertaining a person's position in history.<sup>27</sup> The *Alexander Romance* relates the life and adventures of Alexander in more or less chronological order, albeit with no particular attention to character study. Ps.-Callisthenes directly refers only to Alexander's wit and cunning, with φρενήρης ("sound of mind," *LSJ*, s.v.) being the most common epithet applied to Alexander.<sup>28</sup> Strictly speaking, the *Alexander Romance* does not meet all the important criteria of ancient biography, although, as its contents prove, in many respects it is a biography.

Most modern renditions of the *Historia Alexandri Magni* are in line with the English title *Alexander Romance*, either purposely or inadvertently placing this book within what used to be called the genre of "ancient romance," now referred to as the "ancient novel."<sup>29</sup> For a long time the ancient romance was believed to be a pre-novel, lacking some important qualities of the so-called modern novel, especially in terms of character study and psychological analysis.<sup>30</sup> However, bearing in mind that many modern novels lack these characteristics too, it is better to agree with the majority view and to use the name ancient novel.<sup>31</sup> The ancient novel was long neglected in mainstream classi-

26 Plu. *Alex.* 1.1–2, tr. B. Perrin, Loeb.

27 Arist. *Po.* 1450a. Hamilton 1999, xliii–xlix.

28 Stoneman 1991, 19–20; Stoneman 1994a, 11–13.

29 The first English-language serious book on ancient novel is Perry's *The Ancient Romances* (1967). On terminology see: Tilg 2016, 256–258.

30 E.g. Schmidt 1989.

31 Stoneman 1994a, 117; Holzberg 1995, 26–27; Whitmarsh 2008, 2; Tilg 2016.

cal scholarship with the exception of investigating its origin, which began with a pioneering, yet now completely obsolete, book by the 19th century classical scholar, Rohde.<sup>32</sup> Only in recent decades has the ancient novel made its way into the mainstream of classical studies, with the clearest sign of this being seen in the arrival of a dedicated Cambridge Companion volume.

One reason for the comparatively slow advancement of study of the ancient novel in the field of classical studies is its undoubtedly late birth: it was not yet born when Aristotle was defining ancient literary genres, nor when Hellenistic studies of literary theory were written.<sup>33</sup> In fact we are not even sure of the Greek word for novel; the attested terminologies range from *πλάσμα*, to *διήγημα*, *ἐρωτικὸν δράμα*, to *σύνταγμα δραματικόν*,<sup>34</sup> none of which have gained universal acceptance. Modern investigation of the ancient novel initially concentrated on its unattested origins, with many fleetingly influential attempts but no convincing outcome. Some have attempted to demonstrate the style's development from preexisting genres,<sup>35</sup> others the universal deep meaning of surviving novels,<sup>36</sup> while others again saw the ancient novel as an expression of the pessimism of the Hellenistic man faced with the demise of the polis.<sup>37</sup> The prevailing view now is that the genre arose from the successful attempt of a writer in the Early Empire to create a larger fictional prose, whose success prompted others to follow.<sup>38</sup>

The ancient novel was long perceived to be a genre of popular literature catering to the tastes of an uneducated audience, much like the modern "Harlequin romance". We now know this approach to be false, since among other things, literacy levels in antiquity were very low, with certainly not much more than 10% of the population able to read at all, and those with the sophistication necessary to read a longer text in an even smaller minority.<sup>39</sup> If we also take into consideration the high price of books in antiquity, placing them well out of the reach of all but the very well-off, i.e. the same people who, as a rule, received a proper literary education, we have to realize that there was simply no space for mass readership in antiquity. Indeed, papyri do not show

32 Rhode 1876, equally obsolete is Merkelbach 1962.

33 Bowie 1994 and 1996.

34 Stoneman 1994a, 117; Holzberg 1995, 8–9; Whitmarsh 2008, 3.

35 Rohde 1876.

36 Kerényi 1927; Merkelbach 1962.

37 Perry 1967.

38 So already hinted by Perry 1967, 8–16. Also Holzberg 1995, 40–41; Tilg 2015, 264.

39 See Harris 1989 for low literacy figures and Bowman 1991 for a slightly more optimistic assessment.

that the novel was in any sense more popular than more traditional literary genres. Some novels at least were written in Attic dialect, a linguistic choice typical of literary production in the age of the Second Sophistic, but not used by anybody in everyday life, and their authors were skilled at applying regular literary techniques. Only an educated reader could understand and appreciate the ancient novel. There is now little doubt that the ancient novel was addressed to the same, elite literary audience as other, better established, genres known in antiquity.<sup>40</sup>

Five ancient Greek novels survived in their entirety: the *Callirhoe* of Chariton, *Ephesiaca* of Xenophon, *Leucippe and Clitophon* of Achilles Tatius, *Daphnis and Chloe* of Longus, and *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus, and it is no surprise that in modern scholarship they define the whole genre.<sup>41</sup> The major aspects uniting these five novels are the general characteristics of their heroes and of their plots. These heroes are always a heterosexual couple of young well-born people, in love, engaged or newly married. They are separated by pirates, bandits or slave traders, and go on to travel in the eastern Mediterranean involuntarily or in search of their abducted partner. Eventually they reunite and live happily ever after. The action, with the extensive travels of the young heroes, is set in the eastern Mediterranean in an age whose social organization resembles that of the Early Empire. Apart from these surviving five, grouped into a collection through the similarities of their contents and all featuring fictional characters, there were also those, now known from titles and fragments surviving in papyrus, whose leading characters were seemingly historical figures, such as the *Sesonchosis* or the *Ninos*, which tells the fictional love-story story of an Assyrian king named Ninos and Semiramis, who are here typical young Greek lovers dressed in Oriental costume.<sup>42</sup> An exceptional few of these ancient novels survive in full length, such as *History of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, which was written in Latin but was perhaps based on a Greek original. Moreover the vast majority of works in this genre, surviving as fragments, and mentions in the account of Photius, are stories of love, rather than historical accounts.<sup>43</sup> If we follow the restoration of Y. Trnka-Amrhein, the single exception may be the *Sesonchosis*, which possibly covered the whole life of its lead character.<sup>44</sup>

40 Hozlberg 1995, 33–35; Hock 1997; Hunter 2008; Whitmarsh 2008a; Tilg 2016, 256–257.

41 Whitmarsh 2005.

42 For fragments of ancient novels see: Stephens and Winkler 1995.

43 Tilg 2016.

44 Y.K. Trnka-Amrhein, *A Study of The Sesonchosis Novel*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University 2013.

There are fundamental and obvious differences between the *Alexander Romance* and almost all ancient novels known to us, even those surviving in fragments: its hero is a historical character, his adventures are largely historical, and, as his story ends in premature death, there is obviously not a happy ending. The only thing these books have in common is the extensive travels of Alexander, but these are mostly for the purpose of waging war, never on account of a love interest. Except for the story of Nektanebo seducing Olympias in the Egyptian logos (section 5 below), the *Alexander Romance* is devoid of erotic content, almost as though Alexander were an asexual creature. This is perhaps most clearly visible in the story of Alexander and the Amazons. As we know from a plethora of ancient mainstream sources, in 330 BC the Amazon queen Thalestris, accompanied by a number of female-warriors, arrived at Alexander's camp in Hyrkania expressly for the purpose of begetting a child by Alexander, the greatest male-warrior of her age, and reportedly they spent some thirteen days together. The *Alexander Romance* skips this romantic detail altogether, instead suggesting that Alexander spent this time negotiating a military alliance with the Amazons. It is inconceivable that Ps.-Callisthenes was not familiar with the mainstream version of this (fictitious) episode. He rather purified the image of Alexander of any sexual context, relegating his contact with the Amazons and their queen to purely political and military matters.<sup>45</sup> Of equal importance is the issue of historicity of the leading character of the *Alexander Romance*; this is therefore also not an ancient novel (or romance), at least not in the sense defined by other surviving novels of love and travel.

Perhaps it is better to describe the *Alexander Romance* as closer to what is referred to in modern literary studies as "fringe novels," whose titles are derived from names of historical or quasi-historical characters, some of which at least attempt to present the whole life of their heroes: *Ninos*, *Sesonchosis*.<sup>46</sup> They are oftentimes grouped together with the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* of Flavius Philostratos, the *Life of Aesop* (*Aesop Romance*) by an unknown author, and the *History of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, and even with Xenophon's *Cyropedia* and the *Christian Clementine Romance* or the fictional biography of Pope Clement I, in the category of fictional biographies. This genre is defined even less precisely than that of the ancient love novel, but even here a caveat is not out of place: it seems that the hero of the *Alexander Romance* approximates the life and character of the historical Alexander much more closely than the literary Ninos, Sesonchosis, Aesop or Apollonios of Tyana. This certainly

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45 For reference see commentary to III 25.1.

46 The category of "fringe novels" was devised by Holzberg (1995, 11–26).

differentiates the *Alexander Romance* from many other fictional biographies.<sup>47</sup> For all the differences between the *Alexander Romance* and the regular Greek novel, there is common ground too. First and foremost it is the intellectual and ideological climate of the age of the Second Sophistic which brought them to life. One important phenomenon of this age is the real cult of Greek culture and education (*paideia*) and the hero of the *Alexander Romance*, student and friend of the greatest Greek philosopher, Aristotle, in many ways embodies the ideas of this time. Under Roman rule the Greek fascination with Alexander can be construed as ideologically anti-Roman, proving Greek superiority in the military field, not only in the realm of culture—the latter a fact to which even the Romans conceded.<sup>48</sup>

Having made all these reservations, one may try two approaches to defining the genre of the *Alexander Romance*. The first, more radical, is to abandon the discussion of its literary genre altogether and to concentrate instead on the process behind the creation of the many known versions and recensions of the *Alexander Romance*, with their peculiar renditions of the original story and easily introduced new episodes, borrowed from the folklore, myths and traditions of cultures other than Greek. According to some, this makes the *Alexander Romance* a unique open text rather than a representative of any known literary genre.<sup>49</sup> The second option, perhaps more in line with modern research into late classical literary development, is to place the *Alexander Romance* in the grey area between “serious” ancient biography and fictional biography. Written by a pagan author, it fits the development of the (largely) Christian Greek late antique literature which was, for the most part, shunning unmistakably fictional prose genres. Their place was assumed by pseudo-historical, but for the most part fictional hagiographies.<sup>50</sup> Alexander of the *Alexander Romance*, purified of his earthly vices (see section 8 below) plays the role of a pagan saintly king in this pagan hagiography.

#### 4 Composition

The *Alexander Romance* consists of (prevailing) narrative sections, 35 letters, mostly to and from Alexander, a few poetic sections and the Last Will of Alexander. Historical events are often transposed chronologically, and are contam-

47 Koenen 1985, 172 n. 4; Stoneman 1994, 102–103.

48 Stephens and Winkler 1995, 249–250; Nawotka 2003, 27–28; Spawforth 2006, 21–22.

49 Konstan 1998.

50 Bowersock 1994, 139–143; Papioannou 2009, 21.

inated. Some of the most flagrant distortions of the chronological order of events are: Alexander's expedition to Egypt preceding the Battle of Issos (I 30–34 and I 41, respectively) and placing the war with Thebes after these two events (I 46–46a); Darius' letter to his satrap, relating the situation on the eve of the Battle of Granicus is also inserted into the context of events around the Battle of Gaugamela (II 17). Furthermore, sometimes information already known to the reader from the narrative is repeated in letters, while on more than one occasion letters are included out of the chronological order of the general story line; this points to the heterogeneous source bases perused by Ps.-Callisthenes.

Without trying to summarize here the history of modern research on the *Alexander Romance*, one has to acknowledge the particular role played in this by two German scholars: Wilhelm Kroll and Reinhold Merkelbach, and more recently by the English scholar Richard Stoneman. To Kroll we owe the exemplary edition of the earliest surviving version of the *Alexander Romance*, the ms. A, and thanks to his perceptive emendation of the much-corrupted text his edition is probably as close to the lost archetype (α) as the sound philological methodology allows.<sup>51</sup> Merkelbach's book of 1954, re-edited with Jürgen Trumpf's corrections and additions in 1977, is the foundation of our understanding of the composition of the *Alexander Romance*, still generally followed in the scholarship despite the serious criticism laid on it by his great contemporaries.<sup>52</sup> Merkelbach believed that most of the letters now contained in the *Alexander Romance* (all save Alexander's letter to Aristotle in III 17) had circulated as a separate volume, an epistolary "Romance of Alexander." To Merkelbach, Ps.-Callisthenes was but an editor who put together the narrative part, the epistolary romance, the miracle letter (III 17) and the last will of Alexander, making the *Alexander Romance* as we know it today out of these parts, divergent in origin. Richard Stoneman's is the greatest contribution to (re-)introducing the *Alexander Romance* to the mainstream scholarship of the modern age with numerous papers, an excellent English translation of a composite text drawn from a few versions of the *Alexander Romance* and his brilliant commentary, so far covering Books One and Two.

Out of the poetic sections of the *Alexander Romance*, the Song of Ismenias (I 46a) has attracted the greatest interest of modern scholarship. Based on the entry "Σωτήριχος" in the *Suda* which says that one Soterichos wrote a

51 About ms. A see Franco 1999, 54: "quasi un archetyp". See Traina 1998 for a generally favorable assessment with some critical remarks on Kroll's usage of the Armenian text in his emendations.

52 E.g. Pfister 1960 and Burstein 1989, but see Jouanno 2002, 20–21 (defending Merkelbach) and Whitmarsh 2013.

poem named “Pytho” or “Alexandriakos” about the destruction of Thebes by Alexander, Müller conjectured that the *Alexander Romance* contains all or at least part of this poem.<sup>53</sup> But this hypothesis is almost certainly wrong: no python ever appears among so many mostly mythological characters in the Song of Ismenias, and moreover Soterichos was an epic poet (*Suda*), while the choliambic poem of Ismenias belongs to the realm of lyric poetry. Similarity between the Python and the Song of Ismenias can be better explained by the common cultural climate of the third c. AD, with its interest in mythology and in Alexander the Great.<sup>54</sup>

Although the *Alexander Romance* is not a work of ancient historiography, its historical narrative broadly follows the same lines as mainstream historians of Alexander (see the table in Section 2 above). In building his narrative Ps.-Callisthenes, in the judgement of some modern scholars, was capable only of perusing one earlier authority, either Kleitarchos himself or some other ancient author working in the tradition of Kleitarchos.<sup>55</sup> Kleitarchos, an early-Hellenistic Alexandrian author now dated to the mid-third c. BC<sup>56</sup> rather than to the time around 310 BC,<sup>57</sup> wrote a history of Alexander, criticized for its excessive use of pathos but enormously influential in antiquity. His book is believed to be a principal source for the so-called “Vulgate authors”: Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Pompeius Trogus, known to us mostly from the summary of Justin, and the *Metz Epitome*.<sup>58</sup> Since he was also consulted by Plutarch and Arrian, practically all larger accounts of the history of Alexander surviving to this day share to some extent in the tradition of Kleitarchos. It would be pointless to exclude Ps.-Callisthenes from this general trend but it is equally unsafe to move farther from here: the book of Kleitarchos is known to us from fragments and testimonies alone and offers little with which to compare the *Alexander Romance*.

A distinct part of the *Alexander Romance* is that concerned with the last days, death and testament of Alexander (III 30–33). It was neither composed with other narrative sections nor borrowed from any historian of Alexander, but instead was taken from an early Hellenistic political pamphlet which probably underwent a transformation referred to as the Rhodian interpolation (see commentary to III 30 and 33) in ca. 200 BC. To us it is known from two of its

53 Müller 1846, XXIX–XXXV; followed by Janiszewski 2006, 151–161.

54 Jouanno 2002, 25; Braccini 2004, LIV–LVI.

55 Merkelbach and Trumpp 1977, 18; Fraser 1972, I, 677; Jouanno 2002, 21.

56 Parker 2009.

57 Schachermeyr 1970, 211–224; Bosworth 1980, 30, n. 52.

58 Pearson 1960, 212–242; Hamilton 1977.



derivatives, independent of each other: in the Greek *Alexander Romance* and in the Latin *Liber de Morte Testamentoque Alexandri Magni* attached to the *Metz Epitome* (ME 107–123).

Some knowledge as to the sources that Ps.-Callisthenes may have used in other narrative sections can be derived from an analysis of episodes known only from the *Alexander Romance* and one other source, e.g.: the story of sealing Olympias' womb in Philip's dream (I 8) comes from Ephoros and survives only in Plutarch (*Alex.* 2.4–5); the etymology of the name Boukephalas (I 15) is known only from Arrian (*An.* v 19.5); the new wife of Philip is the sister of Attalos (I 20) only in Justin (IX 5.9); innuendo on Alexander being a bastard (I 21) is only in Plutarch (*Alex.* 9.7), and although in the *Alexander Romance* it is pronounced by Lysias and in Plutarch by Attalos, Alexander's ironic comment upon Philip falling onto the floor (I 21) appears only in Plutarch (*Alex.* 9.10); the anecdote about Alexander seeing Persian envoys (I 23) is known only from Plutarch (*Mor.* 342b–c); Alexander's address to the Macedonian veterans upon the death of Philip (I 25) appears only in Justin (XI 6.4–7); only Curtius (IV 2.15) reports the execution of Alexander's envoys in Tyre (I 35); Alexander's dream with the wordplay upon the name of Tyre (I 35) appears only in Plutarch (*Alex.* 24.8–9); some elements of the Theban episode are common with Diodorus and some with Arrian;<sup>59</sup> the Baktrian proverb (I 37) is quoted only by Curtius (VII 4.13); Darius fleeing the battlefield of Issos by chariot and not on horseback (I 41.9) agrees only with Arrian (*An.* II 11.5); the threat of force to find an oracle in Delphi (I 45) is reported only by Plutarch (*Alex.* 14.6–7); the debate in the Athenian assembly is largely common to the *Alexander Romance* (II 1–5) and to Diodorus (XVII 15.2–4). These examples show that none of the surviving Alexander historians was a source for Ps.-Callisthenes, although he has most in common with what we know from Plutarch.

In addition to this, some episodes are known only from Ps.-Callisthenes and from anecdotal tradition, outside the surviving Alexander historians, e.g. Ps.-Callisthenes (II 9) seems to broadly follow the tradition of Alexander crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma and not at Thapsakos (see commentary to II 9.2), or he knows (II 10) a story of a Persian traitor who offered to betray Darius to Alexander (Aretades *FGrH* 285 F1). Sometimes Ps.-Callisthenes shows misguided erudition drawing on the traditions of obscure sources, e.g. he believes that the Euphrates and the Tigris emptied into the Nile (II 9) an idea that was known to, but rejected by, Pausanias (II 5) and Flavius Philostratos (VA 1.20). In a similar vein, for Ps.-Callisthenes the mother of Darius III is Rhodogune (II 12)

59 Jouanno 2002, 128–129.

which seems to be borrowed from Harpokration, with him confusing Darius I with Darius III. Alexander's visit in the palace of Persian kings where he sees a talking bird (III 28) is known from a papyrus fragment of the first c. BC (*PHal.* 31).

There are similarities between the speech of Demades in the debate in the Athenian assembly (II 2) and a fragmentarily preserved speech attributed to Demades. This is best explained assuming that Ps.-Callisthenes accessed a Hellenistic collection of speeches of Greek orators, not minding whether they were all genuine or made up.<sup>60</sup> An early Hellenistic source was almost certainly used by Ps.-Callisthenes in the letter to Aristotle (III 17), at least in the section predicting the death of Olympias.<sup>61</sup> And, finally, Ps.-Callisthenes accessed Egyptian sources for his version of the Nektanebo episode (see section 5 below) and almost certainly drew from local Alexandrian tradition on the topography and history of Alexandria.

All of this speaks against the theory that the narrative sections of the *Alexander Romance* are dependent on only one earlier author, be it Kleitarchos or someone belonging to the Vulgate tradition. Almost certainly Ps.-Callisthenes consulted a wide range of sources, with Kleitarchos and/or the Vulgate authors amongst them. The commentary later in this book shows that he rarely invented stories or episodes *ex nihilo*, preferring to rely on what had been written prior to his book. He felt free, however, to combine data borrowed from earlier authorities, even if they were not related to his story line. In the account of the battle by the Tigris, for example, there is an anecdote of a Persian soldier disguised as a Macedonian who struck Alexander from behind, wounding him in the head. This scene combines the episode of two Persian nobles attacking Alexander in the heat of the Battle of the Granicus (Rhoisakes who struck Alexander on the head, breaking his helmet and possibly wounding him, and Spithridates who raised his sword on Alexander from behind only to have his arm severed by a blow of Kleitos "the Black" (D.S. XVII 20.6–7; Plu. *Alex.* 16.8–12; Plu. *Mor.* 326f; Arr. *An.* I 15.7–8; *It.Alex.* 22)), and that of an Arab on Persian pay who, during the siege of Gaza, tried to assassinate Alexander, pretending to be a defector (Curt. IV 6.15–16). In the account of Alexander visiting the tomb of Cyrus, Ps.-Callisthenes mentions that the sarcophagus had a translucent cover, otherwise unattested for the tomb of Cyrus.<sup>62</sup> This detail was probably borrowed from Strabo's statement (or that of his source) about the translu-

60 Jouanno 2002, 22–23.

61 Gunderson 1970, 359–360; Franco 1999, 82.

62 Stoneman 1995, 161.

cent sarcophagus into which Ptolemy x transferred the body of Alexander from the original golden sarcophagus.<sup>63</sup> These show that historical evidence was for Ps.-Callisthenes primarily a literary matter which he used to make the desired artistic or ideological impact. Given that he almost never quotes earlier authors directly and avoids verbal echoes, it seems he preferred to show himself as a conscious artist, not the editor of a collection of anecdotes.

Finally, there were letters attributed to Alexander, Darius, Poros, the Amazons, Rhodogune, Stateira, and satraps and other historical characters, seemingly quoted *in extenso* in the *Alexander Romance*, most of which, according to Merkelbach, form an epistolary romance. One needs to remember that what Merkelbach proposed is only a model, attractive as it may be, of the composition of the *Alexander Romance*, since there is no direct evidence of the existence of Merkelbach's epistolary romance independent of the *Alexander Romance*, and the earliest fragmentary attestation of one letter, in a different context, seems to speak against this.<sup>64</sup> Some letters from the *Alexander Romance* (II 10.6–8 and 9–10 in *PSI* XII 1285)<sup>65</sup> have come to life in recent years, in new readings of papyri dating back to the first half of the second c. AD, often in little-changed form. This does not preclude a later date for Ps.-Callisthenes, but shows that some source material was circulating throughout the early Imperial age. Collections of (mostly fictitious) letters of Alexander were certainly known already in the second c. BC, as attested by *P.Hamb.* (II 129) published by Merkelbach.<sup>66</sup> They belong to the tradition of collections of fictitious letters, best known from the Arabic translation of the correspondence between Aristotle and Alexander, based on a Greek model of the sixth c. and transmitted through a Syriac intermediary.<sup>67</sup> There is also indirect evidence of collections of the letters of Alexander, Olympias and other characters relevant to the *Alexander Romance* and circulating widely in the age of the Roman Empire.<sup>68</sup> This fits the attested development of ancient letter-writing which flourished in the ages of the High and Later Roman Empire. A vast number of extant genuine letters by luminaries of this age testify to the vivid letter-writing culture. An offshoot of it were collections of (mostly spurious) letters attributed to literary and political figures of the past widely read by an educated audi-

63 Str. XVII 1.8: ὑαλίνῃ γάρ αὐτῇ.

64 The fragment of letter of Darius (II 17.2–4) is in *SEG* 33.802; for the discussion see Burstein 1989. For the broader consequence: Whitmarsh 2013, 172–175.

65 Date: Giuliano 2010, 209.

66 Giuliano 2010, 209.

67 Maróth 2006.

68 Pridik 1893; Jouanno 2002, 19, 43.

ence.<sup>69</sup> Since some letters known from the *Alexander Romance* betray great textual similarity to letter fragments surviving in papyri, we may be quite sure that Ps.-Callisthenes basically copied, sometimes in simplified form, letters attributed to Alexander and other characters, which he may have considered to be genuine documents.<sup>70</sup>

Whether the letters found their way into the *Alexander Romance* from a putative epistolary romance, as Merkelbach wanted his readers to believe, or they were rather selected by the author of this book (Ps.-Callisthenes) one by one from collections of real and fictitious letters circulating in the third c. AD, its narrative sections alone prove that the *Alexander Romance* is a multilayered work of complex origin. Since its initial part (the Egyptian logos) is certainly early-Hellenistic (see Section 5 below), as is the latter part of Book III covering the death and last will of Alexander, the hypothesis of the incremental growth of the *Alexander Romance*, from the early-Hellenistic original part to what we have now, may seem attractive.<sup>71</sup> Parallels between the *Alexander Romance* and Lucian's *True History* in stories of the giant whale, the city of the Sun and bronze columns would indicate the existence of the earlier version of the *Alexander Romance* before AD180.<sup>72</sup> But caution is advisable here: some of these stories, for example that of the whale, were known as early as Nearchos, and no meaningful verbal similarities between Lucian and Ps.-Callisthenes can be found. Therefore it is safer to agree with Kroll and Merkelbach that the *Alexander Romance* came into existence as a work of one author (Ps.-Callisthenes), active in Alexandria in the third c. AD.

This section, one may hope, disproves the derogatory opinion of Merkelbach who calls Ps.-Callisthenes editor and not author and perceives him as an uneducated product of the primitive and infantile late antiquity.<sup>73</sup> This opinion, not supported by evidence and anchored in fact in the nineteenth-c. classical philology with its disdain for anything post-classical, earned Merkelbach an ironic remark of being jealous of the literary success of Ps.-Callisthenes.<sup>74</sup> But a disdain for Ps.-Callisthenes is unfounded: he knows his sources, even if he does not always follow them in the way a modern historian would like. His language is simply typical of his age, and typical of someone familiar with major authors:

69 Rosenmeyer 2001; Ebbeler 2009.

70 Hägg 1991, 126; Arthur-Montagne 2014.

71 Rohde 1876, 198; Ausfeld 1907, 237–253; Pfister 1946; Seibert 1972, 219; Stoneman 1994a; Stoneman 2007, XXVIII–XXXIV.

72 Aerts 1994; Stoneman 1995.

73 Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 60, 89.

74 Montgomery 1993.

Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and some other tragedy writers such as Menander, Favorinus, perhaps Aelius Arisitides.<sup>75</sup> The literary form of the *Alexander Romance* unsurprisingly is not classical, reflecting the taste of later antiquity, but this is not something its author should be blamed for.<sup>76</sup>

## 5 Egyptian Roots of the *Alexander Romance*

Egypt features prominently in the *Alexander Romance*, much more than in other more mainstream histories of Alexander. In keeping with intellectual trends of the late age it conveys the notion of Egypt as the place of wisdom (see commentary to I 1.1). Apart from numerous references to Egypt scattered throughout the text, there are two major episodes set (largely) in Egypt. The first is the story of Nektanebo, or the Egyptian logos of the *Alexander Romance* (I 1–12). It introduces Nektanebo II, the last generally recognized native pharaoh (Dynasty XXX), into the life story of Alexander, placing him in a position of prominence. In the *Alexander Romance* Nektanebo is Alexander's earthly father which is chronologically impossible but easily explicable within the Egyptian monarchic ideology which ideally perceived a current pharaoh as his predecessor's son. The portrait of Nektanebo, the magus, incidentally reflecting the interests of the historic Nektanebo II,<sup>77</sup> is drawn in accordance with the Egyptian rather than the Greek perception of magic. Alexander's divine father is Ammon, also in keeping with the Egyptian royal birth cycle (see commentary to I 4.8). These close ties to Egypt have already been interpreted as a trace of the Egyptian origin of the *Alexander Romance* by E.A.W. Budge.<sup>78</sup> Nektanebo features also in an originally Demotic story, known mostly from Greek fragmentary papyri, the *Dream of Nektanebo*, which explains why the gods of Egypt abandoned him.<sup>79</sup> Since in the *Alexander Romance* Nektanebo, abandoned by the gods, has to leave Egypt, some scholars believe that both the Egyptian logos of the *Alexander Romance* and the *Dream of Nektanebo* originally belonged to the royal novel of Nektanebo, a representative of the Egyptian literary genre with the pharaoh as the lead character.<sup>80</sup> Others see in the Nektanebo logos a part of the original *Romance of Nektanebo*, featuring the story of Nektanebo down

75 Kroll 1919, 1713; Franco 1999, 70–71; Jouanno 2002, 30–33; Polignac 2005.

76 Franco 1999, 54–57; Jouanno 2002, 33–34.

77 Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2016.

78 Budge 1889, XXXV–LI.

79 Koenen 1985; Gozzoli 2006, 290–291.

80 Koenen 1985; Jasnow 1997, 99–101.

to his flight from Egypt and the prediction of his return.<sup>81</sup> Even if direct evidence supporting these hypotheses is still lacking, distinctly Egyptian features of the Nektanebo story in the *Alexander Romance* offer a convincing argument for its origin in Demotic literature; if it belonged to a bigger work, its ideological message is not clear. It could have an Egyptian, anti-Macedonian overtone, stressing the fact that Alexander, the conqueror of Egypt, was in fact Egyptian and not Macedonian.<sup>82</sup> Or it could have been siding with the policy of the first Ptolemies by stressing the ties between the last Egyptian dynasty and new Macedonian rulers.<sup>83</sup> What is certain is the popularity of the stories about Nektanebo II in the early Ptolemaic age. The very idea of ties, in policy if not in blood, however, between Nektanebo II and Alexander was certainly born under Alexander whose religious policy, royal Egyptian titles and building program in the temples of Egypt followed closely in the footsteps of pharaohs of Dynasty XXX, and Nektanebo II in particular.<sup>84</sup>

The second major Egyptian episode is the story of Alexander's sojourn in Egypt which culminates in the founding of Alexandria. Ps.-Callisthenes describes the foundation of the city (I 31–32) and in the generally Roman-age topography of Alexandria there are traces of the early Hellenistic tradition.<sup>85</sup> Apart from this, Alexandria features in the *Alexander Romance* on other occasions too: as a future metropolis of the inhabited world (I 33 and 34), the source of the immortal glory of its founder (III 24), its high priest receiving privileges (III 33), and ultimately as the burial place of Alexander himself (III 34). The eulogy of Alexandria in I 33 can be construed as a parallel, consciously invoked, to the eulogy of Rome of Aelius Aristides, both drawing on the similar theme of the city as a metropolis of the world.<sup>86</sup> All of these suggest that Alexandria was the place where the *Alexander Romance* was written. Corroborating evidence is indicative of the Alexandrian/ Egyptian patriotism of Ps.-Callisthenes, extolling Ptolemy as the son of Philip II (III 3), second in command to Alexander (III 19) and this among the Successors who discussed power sharing with Perdikkas (III 32).<sup>87</sup>

The *Alexander Romance* makes frequent use of native Egyptian cultural symbols and characters, be it in the hieratic scripture, magical paraphernalia and

81 Braun 1938, 19–25.

82 Huß 1994, 129–137; Franco 1999, 65; Jouanno 2002, 58–61.

83 Braun 1938, 35–36; Aerts 1994; Gozzoli 2006, 292–293.

84 Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2016.

85 Fraser 1972, I, 3–7.

86 Polignac 2005.

87 Pfister 1946, 34–38; Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 33–34, 46–47.

historical or legendary figures of Sesonchosis and Nektanebo. Even with some mistakes it shows greater knowledge of the native culture of Egypt than does Horapollo in his distorted attempt to explain hieroglyphics. They both belong to a kind of intellectual milieu which was seeking to incorporate local cultures into the general Hellenic tradition which was distinctly pagan in nature.<sup>88</sup> It is not possible to say whether Ps.-Callisthenes could read hieroglyphic or Demotic scripture but he was immersed in Egyptian culture and was perfectly capable of selecting Egyptian motives and stories to embellish his biography of Alexander, making it more significant in the Egyptian cultural milieu.

## 6 Alexander the Great and the *Alexander Romance*

It is the life story of Alexander the Great which organizes the narrative in the book of Ps.-Callisthenes. As previously discussed, *Alexander Romance* is not a biography in the ancient meaning of this word, i.e. it does not study Alexander's character and its gradual degeneration. The portrait is so idealized that some call it a hagiography of Alexander.<sup>89</sup> Alexander receives the best Greek education possible, very early in life he speaks and acts like an adult, reversing the social roles played by children and their parents in the scene of reconciliation of Philip and Olympias (1 22) which, at the same time, preempts his life of wisdom and temperance.<sup>90</sup> Alexander shows chivalrous magnanimity to Darius' family and to his defeated enemy, mortally wounded and abandoned by his vassals. When juxtaposed with the boastful Oriental kings, Darius and Poros, Alexander embodies the paragon of Greek culture with its restraint, reverence to gods and dignity.<sup>91</sup> His most common epithet is φρενῆρης ("sound of mind," *LSJ*, s.v.) and indeed he wins more often with wit than with arms.<sup>92</sup> He is, simply speaking, just, magnanimous, and an ideal king.<sup>93</sup>

Equally important is what is lacking in the *Alexander Romance*. There is no trace of the killing of Kleitos "the Black" by Alexander in the drunken rage in Marakanda, and no word is mentioned of the historian Kallisthenes executed or suffering death in prison for opposing Alexander in the proskynesis affair. The episode of the burning of palaces in Persepolis (11 17) is stripped

88 Torok 2005, 96.

89 Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 16.

90 Jouanno 1995.

91 Jouanno 2002, 191–193.

92 Kroll 1919, 1711; Jouanno 2002, 206–107.

93 Franco 1999, 68–69.

of any scandalous details, i.e. the preceding drinking banquet and instigation of Thais, a courtesan. In the *Alexander Romance* Alexander is always self-restrained and never drinks, save for the moment when he consumes wine poisoned by his enemies. This plainly contradicts the well-established image of Alexander as being ill-tempered and with excessive drinking habits. This image, in a modern historiography which culminated in O'Brien's book,<sup>94</sup> owes much to criticism of Alexander born among Athenian intellectuals outraged at his mistreatment and execution of Kallisthenes.<sup>95</sup> It may have also been influenced by the propaganda efforts of Darius III as the lack of restraint and overindulgence on alcohol disqualified Alexander to rule Persia.<sup>96</sup> But pride of place goes to Roman authors since Livy's heaping of moral and political criticisms on Alexander.<sup>97</sup>

There is no evidence that Ps.-Callisthenes wanted his book to be directly polemical with Roman detractors of Alexander. Nevertheless, the *Alexander Romance* offers the image of Alexander purified precisely of those vices for which he was so often blamed by Greek and Roman critics alike: drunkenness, ill temper, cruelty. He cannot be blamed for Orientalizing policy as well, being a staunch champion of Hellenism. Any notion of tensions with Aristotle, whose cousin Kallisthenes Alexander had killed, are dispelled: in the *Alexander Romance* Alexander is Aristotle's best pupil and friend and they keep in touch through letters.

And finally Alexander of Ps.-Callisthenes is conspicuously asexual, even if his wife and a child-to-be are recorded. Other women with whom Alexander is known to have had sexual relations are never mentioned, not even Barsine, mother of Herakles, his only son in the moment of Alexander's death. As discussed earlier, the *Alexander Romance* also skips completely all "romantic" details of Alexander's encounter with Thalestris, the queen of the Amazons. Needless to say, homosexual interests of Alexander are never alluded to in the *Alexander Romance* where Hephaistion is just a friend and other alleged homosexual lovers are not named at all.

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94 O'Brien 1992. Amitay 2010, in the Appendix c "Alexander Alcoholicus" lists on three pages loci in ancient (mainstream) authors on Alexander's drinking, often excessive.

95 Brown 1949a, 225–226, 245–247; Wardman 1955, 96.

96 Jamzadeh 2012, 66–69.

97 Spencer 2002.



## 7 Language of the *Alexander Romance*

The Greek language used in the *Alexander Romance* shows many features typical of the Koine Greek of later antiquity in declension, gender and voices.<sup>98</sup> There is no need, however, to follow Wyss in calling it vulgar or primitive: it is a developed literary language, even if some modern scholars wish it be more rhetorically influenced.<sup>99</sup> The language of the *Alexander Romance* is Late Greek with numerous words or word forms otherwise attested exclusively in Christian authors, e.g.: ἔσκυλλε (only I 1.3 and Sokrates Scholastikos, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII 31), ἐπιτινάσσω (I 21.2: ἐπετίναξε and Ioannes Chrysostomos, *In Bassum martyrum*, PG L, p. 721; Basilios, *Sermones de moribus*, PG XXXII, p. 1289), Περσολέτης (only III 22.12 and Basilios, *De vita Theclae*, II 20). Sometimes the *Alexander Romance* uses words with specific meanings used only by Christian authors, e.g. σκήνωμα (I 24.11) as “corpse” (usually σκήνος), like in 2*Ep.Pet.* 1.13, or τίμιον (III 33.4) as “treasure, treasury.”

This does not deny that P.-Callisthenes was a pagan author. There were no basic differences between the linguistic habits of pagan and Christian writers of late antiquity, but since Christian literature was produced in far greater numbers, rare words or forms can be found more easily in the books of Christian authors. Similarity in form between the pagan *Alexander Romance* and Christian literature, beginning with the *New Testament*, goes, however, beyond word forms, to the paratactic style and lack of precision in defining time and place. These are features of literary works concerned with a unique individual: Jesus in St. Mark's Gospel and Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>100</sup>

The *Alexander Romance* very rarely quotes directly from other authors; these exceptional examples are: I 13.7, from Menander, fr. 337 (407), Koerte, III 26.7 from the *Odyssey* I 3 and I 24. More often it relates stories known from other sources, such as: II 2.14 from Herodotus. It is very difficult to list many obvious verbal echoes, as though the *Alexander Romance* made a conscious effort always to retell a well-known story in its own words, staking a claim to its literary independence from its predecessors. Rare examples of verbal echo are in II 5.8: παιδευτήριον τῆς Ἑλλάδος of Socrates surely referring to Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν of Thucydides or in II 17.11: μετὰ δὲ μικρὸν μετανοήσας σβεσθῆναι ἐκέλευσεν after μετενόησε ταχὺ καὶ κατασβέσαι προσέταξεν of Plu. *Alex.* 38.8.

98 Wyss 1942.

99 See Pfister 1944 on Wyss; Kroll 1919, 1717.

100 Reiser 1984; Stoneman 1994a, 124; Whitmarsh 2008a, 82–83. On literary affinity between Alexander and Jesus see Amitay 2010 at 123–145.

## 8 Recensions and Versions of the *Alexander Romance*

A notable peculiarity of the *Alexander Romance* is that more than one of its Greek version were circulated at one time, and that none of them can be referred to as canonical. Another distinguishing feature is that a very high number of its versions were produced in late antiquity, the Middle Ages and the early modern age in many literary languages of Europe, Asia and Africa, usually not as a proper translation but rather as variant versions transformed to fit the cultural needs and traditions of the target reader, with F. Pfister registering some two hundred of them.<sup>101</sup> The impressive range of known versions of the *Alexander Romance* stretches from Timbuktu and Coptic Egypt, to Ethiopia, the Arab world, Iran and Malaysia,<sup>102</sup> with traces of Alexander legends recorded as far from Greece as Mongolia.<sup>103</sup> However fascinating the issue of the presence of Alexander legends in the cultures of Europe, Asia and Africa is, this Introduction shall concentrate exclusively on those versions which are of importance in establishing the original text of the archetype of the *Alexander Romance*.

There are four surviving major Greek versions, or recensions as they are usually called: ms. A, β, γ, ε, with a variant of β surviving as ms. L, also referred to as rec. λ. The fifth Greek recension, the most important of all in terms of transmitting the *Alexander Romance* to the non-Greek world, is the no longer extant \*δ. Ms. A (Parisinus graecus 1711 dated to 1013–1124) is almost the sole complete representative of the earliest Greek version, derived from the archetype, or α. Ms. A is not a direct copy of the third-c. archetype: as we learn from a scribal notice, it was copied from a manuscript which lacked two folios containing 1 41.12–44.2. In addition two manuscripts, Parisinus suppl. Graecus 689 and Vaticanus graecus 1700, preserve excerpts from the α and \*δ branches of the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>104</sup> Although in Kroll's edition ms. A comes close to α, it is not the archetype; apart from lacunae, it is also burdened with innumerable mistakes, some certainly made by the scribe who produced it, the others transmitted from the intermediary manuscript between α and ms. A.<sup>105</sup> K. Müller in his *editio princeps* of the *Alexander Romance* tried to restore the archetype

101 Pfister 1946.

102 Timbuktu: Bohas, Saguer and Sinno 2012; Coptic: Selden 2011; Ethiopia: Kotar 2011; Arab world: Doufikar-Aerts 2010; Iran: Southgate 1978; Gaillard 2005; Manteghi 2011; Wiesehöfer 2011; Malaysia: van Leeuwen 1937, Ng 2016.

103 Poppe 1957; Cleaves 1959.

104 Trumpf 1965; Ballaira 1965.

105 Stoneman 2007, LXXIII–LXXIV.

on the basis of three manuscripts representing three branches of manuscript tradition:  $\alpha$  (Parisinus graecus 1711),  $\beta$  (Parisinus graecus 1685) and  $\gamma$  (Parisinus suppl. graecus 113). Because of Müller's over-optimistic presumption that the three manuscripts are archetype-based and not, as we now know, representing three different lines of the tradition of the text, his edition is useless and should not be used as it is not representative of the ancient text.<sup>106</sup> Another attempt (Ausfeld's) to reconstruct the archetype by putting together passages drawn from various versions of the *Alexander Romance*,<sup>107</sup> is remembered now more as a curiosity than an example of serious scholarship. Thus the only proper critical edition of ms. A approximating the archetype is still Kroll's. We owe significant improvement of Kroll's edition to Bergson, Gunderson and Braccini who re-edited poetic sections, Alexander's letter to Aristotle (III 17) and the Song of Ismenias (I 46a) with valuable emendation.<sup>108</sup> This commentary, not attempting to offer any new manuscript-based readings, follows in general Kroll, Gunderson and Braccini.

The second Greek version of late antiquity is  $\beta$ , roughly dated to the fifth c. AD. It is derived from the archetype ( $\alpha$ ) but, in text-critical terms, not from this variant of  $\alpha$  which produced ms. A. Quite obviously it was written by an historically-educated author who interpolated some of the stories or phrases found in the archetype in line with the mainstream tradition on Alexander.<sup>109</sup> These interpolations diminish the importance of  $\beta$  as a historical source preserving the original tradition extant in  $\alpha$ .<sup>110</sup> On top of that he reduced the Egyptian component in the *Alexander Romance*, effectively Hellenizing Alexander beyond what was the original design of Ps.-Callisthenes. Rec.  $\beta$  renders original poetic passages in prose and simplifies the language of the archetype. Its greatest contribution to the development of the *Alexander Romance* lies, however, in adding new episodes absent in  $\alpha$ : Alexander's journey through the land of darkness and his search for the water of life.<sup>111</sup> Enriching the narrative with fantastic and fairy-tale episodes marks the beginning of the long process of transformation of the *Alexander Romance* in many cultures in late antiquity and in the Middle Ages in Europe, Asia and Africa, leading away from the original fictional biography of a historical character to a fiction whose lead character embodies ideals of European chivalry, searches for immortality, travels to the

106 Jouanno 2002, 5.

107 Ausfeld 1907: his "archetype" is in German, with no parallel Greek version.

108 Gunderson 1980; Bergson 1989; Braccini 2004.

109 Noticed already in Müller 1846, xv–xvi.

110 Stoneman 1996, 605–606; Jouanno 2002, 247–303.

111 On water of life see Szalc 2012.

end of the world,<sup>112</sup> who encloses the Gog and the Magog,<sup>113</sup> journeys to heaven and descends to the bottom of the sea. Later Greek versions, γ, ε, λ (ms. L) and other Byzantine versions belong to the realm of medieval Greek literature, and, although important in their own rights, are less significant for the purposes of historical commentary on the oldest version of the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>114</sup>

Apart from ms. A, good witnesses of the archetype are other early versions based on α: the Latin rendition of Iulius Valerius and an anonymous Armenian version. Unfortunately another early Greek version named \*δ, apparently of good quality, is lost but a Syriac translation, and a Latin version derived from it by Leo the Archpresbyter of Naples both retain some qualities of \*δ and may therefore be used to restore the original text of the archetype. The Latin version of Iulius Valerius is very early, completed no later than 345 (see section 1 above), and was based on the Greek archetype. This is, however, not a translation *sensu stricto*, with some passages either abbreviated or expanded and with some emendations aimed at making the story line more compatible with mainstream historians of Alexander.<sup>115</sup> Therefore it is somewhat less useful in establishing the original text of α than a much later Armenian version, now dated to the fifth c. The Armenian rendition is good in its own right, and is based on a better quality Greek text than ms. A. and for these reasons it was used profusely by Kroll, and in Raabe's re-translation from Armenian into Greek, to emendate ms. A.<sup>116</sup> Bearing in mind the limitations of re-translation, most non-Armenian speaking scholars now access the Armenian *Alexander Romance* in an excellent English translation by Wolohojian.<sup>117</sup>

Among two witnesses to the \*δ branch of the *Alexander Romance*, that produced by Leo of Naples in the ninth century was fundamental in transmitting Ps.-Callisthenes in the Western world, since a large number of medieval European versions of the *Alexander Romance* are derived from it through a much-transformed work known as *Historia de Preliis*.<sup>118</sup> Leo, as it is known from the Bamberg manuscript (cod. Bamb. E. III. 14), is a somewhat abbreviated version of the *Alexander Romance* and therefore its importance in establishing the text of the archetype is limited. A more important witness of \*δ is the Syriac translation. The issue of its origin gave birth to a serious study of the Oriental

112 Goldenberg 2003, 61–67.

113 Anderson 1932; van Donzel and Schmidt 2010, 15–54.

114 On the *Alexander Romance* in the Byzantine culture see Jouanno 2000–2001.

115 Jouanno 2002, 15–16; Stoneman 2007, LXXV–LXXVI.

116 Raabe 1896.

117 Wolohojian 1969; cf. Stoneman 2007, LLIV–LLV.

118 Pfister 1913, 35–43; Cary 1956; Ross 1988, 47–70; Smith 1993; Stoneman 1996.

tradition of the *Alexander Romance* which begins with T. Nöldeke's hypothesis of the Pahlevi intermediary between the Greek \*δ and the Syriac we have today.<sup>119</sup> It dominated the field for almost a hundred years, to be disproven only in recent decades when persuasive arguments have suggested its direct transmission from Greek into Syriac.<sup>120</sup> It also lies behind most, if not all of the Eastern traditions of the *Alexander Romance*. The Syriac version, although quite late, (perhaps late sixth or even early seventh c.), transmits quite faithfully the version of the *Alexander Romance* and is of great importance in establishing the original reading.<sup>121</sup>

## 9 Editorial Principles

So far there has not been no universal agreement in the issue of spelling ancient names which essentially leaves every modern author to his own devices. In this book I have attempted to steer a middle course between the somewhat outdated traditional Latinized spelling and the radical literal transcription of all words borrowed from Greek. I retain the traditional spelling of the names which, I feel, are familiar to most readers ever likely to consult this book, thus having e.g. Philip and not Philippos, Thucydides and not Thoukydides. All other Greek names are transcribed. Ancient sources are abbreviated after major dictionaries: the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the *Greek-English Lexicon*. Titles of journals are abbreviated after the *L'Année Philologique*. Other abbreviations are listed separately.

119 Nöldeke 1890, 11–16. Still accepted by Monferrer-Sala 2011.

120 Frye 1985; Kapler 1995, 372; Ciancaglini 1998; Ciancaglini 1999. See the assessment of Jouanno (2002, 16) and Stoneman (2008, 232–233).

121 Stoneman 2007, LXXX–LXXXII.



## *Commentary*







# Book One

## Chapter 1

1 οἱ σοφώτατοι Αἰγύπτιοι: the initial words of the *Alexander Romance* are open to interpretation. It may be a Greek rendition of the Egyptian “*rhy-ht*,” meaning scholars, people who can read and are thus endowed with access to knowledge of Ancient Egypt, in practical terms priests and scribes (Erman and Grapow 1971, 443, s.v.), traditionally consulted by pharaohs (Budge 1889, xxvii–xxviii). It may also be a reference to Greek scholars active in Ptolemaic and Roman Alexandria, such as Eratosthenes, Hipparchos, Ptolemy who indeed measured with great accuracy the circumference of the Earth and created maps of the Earth and the sky (Papathanassiou 1999, 119), as stated further in the first sentence of the *Alexander Romance*. These words may echo Plutarch’s praise of the Egyptian knowledge of the sacred: ἡ μὲν οὖν εὐλάβεια τῆς περὶ τὰ θεῖα σοφίας Αἰγυπτίων τοσαύτη [ἦν], μαρτυροῦσι δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ σοφώτατοι, or “so great, then, was the circumspection of the Egyptians in their wisdom touching all that had to do with the gods. Witness to this also are the wisest of the Greeks” (*Mor.* 354d, tr. F.C. Babbitt). The wisdom of the Egyptians is a topos of Greek literature from Herodotus on (Stoneman 2007, 468). Its renewed popularity features in pagan and Christian literature from the late second c. AD, with most attested examples of the expression σοφώτατοι Αἰγύπτιοι (or sim.) belonging to this age: Celsus 1.20; Aristid. *Or.* 45, Jebb p. 168; Clem.Al. *Strom.* v 5.28; *Sch. vetera in Aris-tidem*, Jebb p. 168, 17; Chor. 32.2.148. The eulogy of Egypt in the opening sentence of the *Alexander Romance* is a vivid testimony to the Egyptian origin of the first part of Book I and to the final editing of the whole work, in all probability conducted in Alexandria (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 165).

εὔρεσιν μαγικῆς δυνάμεως: Egypt was widely credited with the invention of magic (q.v. ad I 1.3), with the Babylonian Talmud attributing to Egypt nine-tenths of all magic, with, it is assumed, only one tenth associated with the rest of the world (*Kiddushin* 49b. Theis 2014, 15).

2 Νεκτανεβώ: Nektanebo II—after classical sources modern scholarship uses the name Nektanebo in reference to two pharaohs of Dynasty xxx: Nechetnebef (Nektanebo I) and Nechtharehbe (Nektanebo II). Nektanebo II was the third and last pharaoh of the last native dynasty of Egypt, whose rule came to an end with the Persian re-conquest of Egypt after over sixty years of its independence from the Achaemenid Empire. The reign of Nektanebo II, usually dated, until recently, to ca. 360–343/342 BC, almost certainly lasted until 340 BC.

For the low date see: Depuydt 2010. His reign was a period of great strength and economic prosperity in Egypt, demonstrated by monumental construction projects in no less than 52 temples within Egypt. In many respects Nektanebo II followed in the footsteps of Dynasty XXVI (Saite), overthrown by Kambyses in 525 BC. Thanks to the economic prosperity of Egypt, Nektanebo II was able to field large armies, including but not limited to thousands of Greek mercenaries, and to pursue an active foreign policy supporting enemies of the Persian Empire in Phoenicia and elsewhere, thus successfully keeping Persia at bay. After two failed attempts to conquer Egypt, Artaxerxes III succeeded in defeating Nektanebo II in the war of 340–339 B.C. Nektanebo II suffered defeat in the Battle of Pelusium, and was soon to lose his capital Memphis to the Persian might. After an unsuccessful attempt to offer resistance in Upper Egypt he left the country for Nubia, rather than for Ethiopia as claimed by Diodorus (XVI 51.1). For Nektanebo see now Wojciechowska 2016, 52–72, with copious references.

τελευταῖον τῆς Αἰγύπτου βασιλέα: in fact there was another native king of Egypt after Nektanebo II, Khababash (*Hbbš*), unrecorded by classical sources but known from the Satrap Stele of Ptolemy (I) and from a number of accidental finds throughout Egypt. Taking advantage of the dissatisfaction of part of the Egyptian elite with the Persian rule, Khababash led a revolt against Artaxerxes III and Artaxerxes IV, probably in Upper Egypt. He then controlled much of Lower Egypt, with his rule extending over some parts of Egypt between 338 and 336 BC. Khababash is not listed in Manetho's list of pharaohs; Manetho may have wanted to deny his legitimacy as King of Egypt (see Wojciechowska 2016, 75–79, with reference). The *Alexander Romance* seems to be following the same tradition in which the native rule of Egypt ends with the flight of Nektanebo II, the last king of Manetho's Dynasty xxx.

3 τῇ μαγικῇ δυνάμει πάντων περιγενέσθαι: Nektanebo, as every king of Egypt from the Old Kingdom onwards, was by definition endowed with magical powers or *heka* (Etienne 2000, 41–44; Pinch 2006, 50), and in fact the same word transcribed as *hk3* (*heka*) may mean both “magic” and “king.” Unlike in Greece and much of the Western world where magic was a private activity, outside the realms of the polis religion, and seen as potentially harmful and against religious rituals and cults (e.g. Clerc 1995; Petropoulos 2008), in ancient Egypt magic was part of the religion with no negative overtones (Ritner, 1995, 3352–3355; Etienne 2000, 34; Pinch 2006, 9–17; Assman 2010, 23; Theis 2014, 10–18). It was included in priestly functions and the description of Nektanebo in the *Alexander Romance* is reminiscent of representations of an Egyptian priest (Frankfurter 1998, 225–237). *Heka* was in fact a divine gift to humanity to help

people fight disease, venomous animals and other adversities, while it was in use by pharaohs to protect Egypt from chaos caused by external enemies and by internal forces of social disorder (Etienne 2000, 13–15, 40–44). In the Egyptian cultural context it is not surprising that Nektanebo surpassed his contemporaries in his magical powers. There is also at least one specific piece of Egyptian evidence for Nektanebo-*hekau* (a person endowed with magical powers): the Metternich Stele, one of the so-called “Cippi of Horus,” very popular in the Late Period, containing an Egyptian inscription with magical spells and magic-related stories meant to protect people from attacks by scorpions and other venomous animals. Nektanebo II commissioned the stele, and as a pharaoh was seen as the “living Horus”; thus he was endowed with magic powers, much like Horus represented in the Metternich Stele holding snakes and scorpions to symbolize his magic powers. On the Metternich Stele see: Sander-Hansen 1956; Sternberg-el-Hotabi 1999. Both the Metternich Stele and the *Alexander Romance* almost certainly reflect the actual interests of Nektanebo II in magic (Koenig 1994, 101–105; Stoneman 2007, 470). The story of Nektanebo in the *Alexander Romance* contains several typically Egyptian literary features, including the motive of a magician manipulating people and the generally positive rendition of magic. A literary predecessor of Nektanebo, Amenophis in Manetho’s story, surviving in Josephus, is also a wise man and a prophet (J. Ap. I 232–253). All of these aspects suggest an Egyptian origin for the Nektanebo story in the *Alexander Romance* (Braun 1938, 42–43; Barnes 1956, 32; Tait 1994, 307; Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2016). However, one needs to remember that in the Greek *Alexander Romance* the image of Nektanebo, a sex-driven magician tied to a strange god with ram horns (Ammon), bears a strong imprint of the Greek stereotype of a “barbarian” (Stephens 2008, 69–70). The image of Nektanebo as prophet and magician in Greek literature, first created in the *Alexander Romance*, resurfaced later in the works of Byzantine authors: Georgios Monachos, *Chronicon* I, p. 25; id., *Chronicon breve*, I 17; Malalas, VII 17; Kedrenos, *Compendium* I, p. 264; Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, I, p. 156.

ἐλάμβανε χαλκὴν λεκάνην: this is a composite magic and divination scene containing Greek and Egyptian features. The Greek feature in this scene is lecanomancy or “bowl inquiry” (although the Greeks borrowed this divination method from the East, Burkert 2005, 9), usually performed by studying the shapes formed by oil poured over water in a bowl, as in the classic recipe (including bronze bowl) in *PGM* IV 222–260 (Garzyniec 1925). John Malalas, obviously drawing on the tradition of the *Alexander Romance*, says that Nektanebo performed λεκανομαντεία and thanks to it learned that Artaxerxes III Ochus would conquer Egypt (Malalas VII 17). One needs to admit that vessel

inquiry was also known in Egypt, as attested by the Leiden papyrus (Griffith and Thompson 1974; Brashaer 1995, 3395; Donnat 2002, 215–217). Lecanomancy's popularity in later antiquity from the second c. AD onwards is best attested by Greek magical papyri from Egypt (PGM IV 222–223, 3209–3354, V 1–53, 55–69, VII 319–334; Graf 1999, 287–288). Lecanomancy could be performed only by the select few, often assisted by magic experts (Burkert 2005, 9). The link between magic and divination, so prominent here, was well established from the second c. AD (Graf 1999). Here, however, Nektanebo certainly does not read from oil on the surface of water, rather seeing clear images, much like in katoptromancy, well attested in Byzantium (Greenfield 1995, 146–147). The Egyptian feature in this scene is found in the usage of magic ritual wax figurines, known as ushabti, widely used both in pharaonic times and under both Macedonian and Roman rule (Thiel 1974, 169; De Salvia 1987, 356; Ritner 1995; Ogden 1999; Aufrère 2004, 99–110; Theis 2014, 65–96). Indeed, the idea of using wax figurines in protective magical rituals even survived into Coptic texts (Theis 2014, 94–95). In the Egyptian belief system, as discovered in magical papyri, wax figurines could be animated by magicians, thus demonstrating the power of heka (Smith and Tait 1983, 150–151; Ogden 1999, 74–75; Etienne 2000, 48–50). Wax figures are the only images used for magic ever attested in Egyptian literary texts (Smith and Tait 1983, 150). The authenticity of the representation of the Greco-Egyptian magician in this chapter is compounded by the employment, in the appropriate context, of terminology attested in Greek magical papyri: ἄγγελος, ἀστροθεσία, δύναμις, ἐβένινος, κηρός, λεκάνη, λεκανομαντία, ὄμβριος (see: Delgado 2001, s.vv.).

ὕδατος ὄμβριου: the source of water used in lecanomancy depended on the god invoked, hence a fourth c. AD magical papyrus (PGM IV 222) says ἐὰν μὲν τοὺς ἐπουρανίους θεοὺς κλήζῃ, ζήνιον (“If you are invoking the heavenly gods, use Zeus’s rainwater,” translation: Ogden 2009, 205, comm. 206). In addition, Chapter 12 of Book I shows that here, as in many other places, Zeus is identified with Ammon.

ἐβεννίνην ῥάβδον: although magic wands were often made of bronze, steatite or ivory, especially of hippopotamus ivory, shaped like throw sticks and often referred to as magic knives (Pinch 2006, 40–43, 78–79), ebony wands are also known, e.g. the one shaped as a ram-head serpent from Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (acc. no. I.IX.28; picture: Raven 2012, 75).

4 ἄγγέλους καὶ θεὸν Λιβύης Ἀμμωνα: ἄβ has here τοὺς ὡσανεὶ θεοὺς τῶν ἐπωδῶν καὶ ἀέρια πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς καταχθονίους δαίμονας, which may reflect the lost archetype (α) of the *Alexander Romance* better than what is preserved in ms. A since here the Armenian version follows the text identical to rec. β (Ausfeld 1907, 30). The Libyan Ammon is the god from the Siwah Oasis. This was a Berber

ithyphallic deity, which for not entirely clear reasons began to be associated with the Egyptian Amun, the principal god of Thebes; both were identified by the Greeks with Zeus. Ammon of Siwah rose to great prominence from the sixth c. BC, thanks to his oracle. About this oracle see commentary ad I 30.2.

καὶ οὕτω τῇ τοιαύτῃ λεκανομαντείᾳ τὰ ἐν τῇ λεκάνῃ πλοῖα ... τῶν ἐπερχομένων πολεμίων ἀπολλυμένων: there is a lacuna in ms. A, but rec. β and the Armenian version leave little doubt that the original text must have spoken of the sinking of wax ship models using the magic of Nektanebo: καὶ οὕτως τῶν τῶν ἐπερχομένων κτλ., in Kroll's restoration (cf. Stoneman 2007, 473). Sinking wax ship models could happen despite the natural positive buoyancy of wax, thanks to the magic of Nektanebo (Bounoure 2004, 228). An important ritual in Egyptian magic was the ritual of overthrowing Apep, a symbol of chaos, rebellion, foreign and internal enemies of the pharaoh. It included destroying wax figurines of Apep and of enemies of Egypt. The sinking of enemy ships by Nektanebo's magic may echo this ritual (Pinch 2006, 81, 86–87, 91–93). Yet the question remains as to why Nektanebo acquired the reputation of a magician destroying enemy ships and land forces by sinking/drowning them (I 1.4: τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διὰ γῆς ἐπερχομένων). This may reflect the memory of historical Nektanebo's military triumphs over Persian forces drowned in the marshy Lake Sirbonis thanks to a ruse employed by the pharaoh (D.S. XVI 46.5; Fron. Str. II 5.6. Gmirkin 2006, 219–220).

## Chapter 2

1 ἐκπλωράτωρων ... κατασκόπων: the first word is a Greek rendition of the Latin *exploratores*. It is a rare word, not attested before the beginning of the third c. AD, usually spelled ἐξπλωράτορες (rec. β, I 2.1; *Etymologicum Gudianum*, s.v.; *Marci Aurelii Epistula ad Senatum*, p. 248; *IG* XIV 2433; *IGB* III 1570) or ἐξπλοράτορες (*Suda*, s.v. ἐξπλοράτωρ; Ps.-Mauricius, *Strategicon*, IV 9.5, V 9.20, VI 1.1, IX 5.23, XII 8.12), but quite common in Byzantine Greek (*LBG*, s.v. ἐξπλοράτωρ). Since elsewhere, including the β recension, this word is always spelled with ξ, the most probable explanation of the spelling ἐκπλωράτορες is a scribal error in the transmission from the lost archetype (α) to ms. A. In the Roman army of the Early Empire *exploratores* were soldiers of tactical intelligence, operating further afield than scouts (*procursatores*). Thus the Roman military intelligence consisted of three branches: *procursatores*, *exploratores*, and *speculatores* (covert agents working amidst the enemy forces). They were all referred to in Greek as κατὰσκοποι (Austin and Rankow 1995, 9, 39–53). The *Alexander Romance*, although ostensibly narrating a fourth-c. BC story, uses

terminology typical of the second-third c. AD Roman military. Its account of *exploratores* is accurate: they gathered information on the enemy once the war had started and they had easy access to the commander-in-chief, Nektanebo in this case.

2 Σχύθαι ... Εὐωνυμῖται: this list of peoples about to attack Egypt surprisingly does not include the Persians and is not attested in other sources. It was probably composed by the author of the *Alexander Romance* who drew from barbarian and exotic names known from various sources. It is not, however, made up in a haphazard way, as it includes, among the identifiable ethnonyms, four groups of peoples: those living within the Persian Empire or Persian allies (Σχύθαι, Ἀραβες, Χαλδαῖοι, Μεσοποτάμιοι), peoples of the Far East (Ὀξύδρακες, Σῆρες), desert peoples from the lands adjacent to Egypt (Ἀγριοφάγοι, Εὐωνυμῖται) and Black Sea peoples (Ἰβηρες, Καύκωνες, Βοσπόριοι, Ἀγριοί). The most striking feature of this list is a concentration of ethnonyms from the Black Sea region, especially from the northern and eastern shores of it. This may result from a specific source, perhaps a periplous or a war account consulted by the author of the *Alexander Romance*. Not all names mentioned in this list are otherwise attested; those that are, are discussed below. In the Egyptian tradition it is the pharaoh who defeats the chaos created by foreign peoples, thus defending *maat*. Hence the pharaoh is often represented standing over defeated enemies or lists of names of enemy peoples (Etienne 2000, 40–41). This inclusion of a list of peoples about to invade Egypt may therefore result from the Egyptian tradition of story-telling, surviving in accounts of Nektanebo and Alexander (Jouanno 2002, 57). The fight with the forces of chaos was a popular motive in Egyptian *Königsnovellen* in which Nektanebo features prominently (Frankfurter 1998, 241–248). Once Nektanebo learns through his magic that the enemies (forces of chaos) will triumph, his mission as pharaoh is finished.

Σχύθαι: “Skythians” are among the most typical names of “barbarians” (Dowden 1995; Stoneman 2007, 473). Since the Skythians were, for the most part, allies of Persia, they could take part in the army of Artaxerxes III which invaded Egypt in 340 BC but their participation in the invasion is not known from other sources.

Ἀραβες: Arabs were among the most important allies of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, employed among others by Kambyzes in his invasion of Egypt in 525 BC (Hdt. III 5), so one can imagine Arabs in the army of Artaxerxes III too. Arabs are attested among the subjects or tribute-bearing peoples of Darius I and Xerxes (Macdonald et al. 2015, 57–58). Later various Arab principalities were vassals of Roman and Parthian/Sassanian empires, from Nabatea to Hatra respectively (Bosworth 2011; Fisher 2011; Macdonald et al. 2015). Although

Arabic-speaking people were well known to the Greeks and Romans, the name was sometimes used with the derogatory meaning of “nomads” (Briant 1996, 373).

Ὀξύδρακες: see commentary to III 5.1.

Ἰβηρες: two Iberias were known in antiquity: in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) and in the Caucasus (Georgia). Because this list contains names of peoples in the East, most probably the Iberia in the Caucasus is meant. It was a kingdom reportedly founded in the third c. BC by an Iranian dynasty which had been present in the territory from the sixth c. BC, rich in Iranian influences in architecture, art and craft. Almost certainly it was either a part of the Achaemenid Empire governed by a satrap, or a vassal state or states (Knauss 2006). From the age of Mithridates VI and Pompey the Great Iberia went into unequal relations with Rome, becoming a vassal kingdom. But Iberia was a land in which the Parthians and the Sassanians vied for influence with Rome and whose culture still betrayed strong Iranian influence (Braund 1994, 161–170, 205–261).

Σῆρες: “Silk people,” the Greek name for the Chinese, first attested in the *Parthika* of the (late?) first c. BC author Apollodoros of Artemita (*FGrH* 779 F7, ap. Str. XI 11.1. Date of Apollodoros: Nawotka 2017d) which betrays the contacts between the Greeks of Bactria and the Chinese, even if etymologically the name Seres may be derived from the name of the Indian kingdom of Chera (Malinowski 2011). Contacts between China and the Greco-Bactrians probably started with the diplomatic mission of Chang Ch’ien (Zhang Qian) dispatched by Emperor Wu of Han to the Yüeh-chih (Tokharians?) who overthrew the Greek kingdom in Bactria. Chinese-Iranian contacts, in trade and culture, remained quite extensive over the following centuries (Pulleyblank 2011). Trade contacts between the Chinese and the Mediterranean are attested from the age of Augustus, but the knowledge of China among the Greeks and Romans remained patchy. Seres were placed somewhere in the East, either in India or to the east of the Skythians by the Ocean (Brentjes 2008). Even if the Syriac and the Ethiopian versions of the *Alexander Romance* and the *Romance*-derivative Persian and Arabic literature see Alexander waging war in China, there is not a shred of evidence that the historical Alexander had ever heard of China or that the ancient Chinese had any knowledge of him (Stoneman 2011, 6; Malinowski 2016).

Καύκωνες: Greek literature knows more than one Kaukonas: allies of the Trojans in the *Illiad* (x 429; xx 329), a tribe in northern Asia Minor on the River Parthenios (now Bartın Çayı in Turkey), in the borderland between Bithynia and Paphlagonia (Str. VIII 3.17 and after him Eust. *Comm. in Iliadem* I, p. 570; Ptol. *Geog.* v 1.11; *Sch. vetera in Il.*, ad x 429), and a tribe in the Peloponnese

(Str. VIII 3.17; St. Byz. s.v. Μάκιστος; Eust. *Comm. in Iliadem* I, p. 467). The Paphlagonian Kaukones were believed to be the allies of the Trojans (Str. VIII 3.17; Biraschi 1994). Since here it is a list of barbarian tribes, presumably the Kaukones of Asia Minor are meant.

**Βοσπόριοι:** the name Bosporos designated either of two sea straits: between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara or Propontis (Bosporus) and between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov or Maiotis (the Strait of Kerch). It is applied also to the kingdom in east Crimea and the Taman Peninsula, the Bosporan Kingdom (Str. XI 2.10; Ptol. *Geog.* V 9.24; Luc. *Tox.* 44 and innumerable epigraphic attestations). The usual ethnic is Βοσποράνιοι (Str. XI 2.10; Luc. *Tox.* 44, 55; Arr. *Alan.* 3; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 8425, 8426, 8427; *IPE* I<sup>2</sup> 203) more commonly attested in Latin in the genitive plural *Bospor(anorum)* (e.g. *ILS* 9499; *IDR* I 15; *IDR* III.3 76, 107), with the word Βοσπόριος attested only in the names of a month (e.g. *IByzantion* 30, 31, 33) or of a sea (*IKalchedon* 35). The Bosporioi here is a tribe, with a name surely related to the real subjects of the Bosporan Kingdom, but distorted.

**Ἀγριοι:** Strabo mentions the “Agrioi” as a tribe belonging to the Maiotai (XI 2.11), a people living on the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov (Maiotis).

**Χαλδαίοι:** Chaldeans: see commentary to III 30.6.

**Ἀγριοφάγοι:** a people known from Ptolemy (*Geog.* VII 1.64), Pliny (*Nat.* VI 195) followed by Solinus (30.4) and Ps.-Arrian (*Periplus Maris Erythrei* 2). Pliny describes the fabulous tribes of the desert to the east of the Nile: “reliqua deserta, dein fabulosa: ad occidentem versus Nigroe, quorum rex unum oculum in fronte habeat, Agriophagi, pantherarum leonumque maxime carnibus viventes.” The Agriophagoi, however, were real people, as we learn from an inscription commemorating their defeat at the hands of the Roman forces, probably the *ala Vocontiorum*, led by Servius Sulpicius Serenus ca. AD 122/123 (Bernand 1977, no. 87). They are believed to be identical to the better known tribes of the desert and of the coast of the Red Sea; Ichthyophagi and Troglodytai, with their made-up names betraying the very limited knowledge of the Greeks and Romans of the inhabitants of the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea (Bernand 1977, 264–266).

**Μεσοποτάμιοι:** Mesopotamia was a part of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, most of it belonging to the satrapy Babiruš (Babylonia) in the heart of the empire. Naturally, soldiers from Mesopotamia took part in the expedition of Artaxerxes III in 340 BC.

**Εὐωνυμίται** were people who lived in Nubia, to the south of the first cataract (Ptol. *Geog.* IV 8.32; *Geographiae Expositio Compendiaria* 18; St. Byz. s.v. Εὐωνυμίται).



### Chapter 3

This chapter conveys the authentic Egyptian tradition of the second Persian conquest of Egypt. Frustrated in his two earlier attempts to conquer Egypt, this time Artaxerxes III himself led the imperial army, and the rare personal involvement of the Great King in war was a clear sign of Egypt's importance to the Achaemenid Empire. Nektanebo II proved unable to resist the Persian invasion and in 340 BC his capital Memphis fell to the Persians. Nektanebo soon lost also Upper Egypt and fled to Nubia where he probably died. These events are known from the *Demotic Chronicle*, an early-second c. BC document presenting a history of Egypt in a series of oracular sayings written from an anti-Persian point of view. It and the later *Prophecy of the Lamb* show the Persians expelled from Egypt by the will of the gods (Bresciani 2011). It seems that for a long time after his defeat Nektanebo II was expected to return to Egypt from exile. When Alexander came to Egypt some eight years after the flight of Nektanebo II, the memories of the last pharaoh of Dynasty XXX must have been very much alive and so was the expectation of his return (Braun 1938, 19–25, 40–41; Stoneman 2008, 16). The story of a pharaoh expelled from Memphis by foreign invaders and spending years abroad to return to Egypt belongs to the Egyptian literary lore, which can be seen in the parallel story of Amenophis forced to leave Egypt for thirteen years (Manetho *FGrH* 609 F10, ap. J. *Ap.* I 232–253. Stoneman 2007, 469–470).

1 λεκάνην θείς εἰς μέσον ἐπλησεν ὕδατος: the bowl filled with water this time denotes a divination scene, not magic to harm the enemies as in I 1.

2 στοχάσας τὸν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων βασιλέα ὑπὸ τῶν μακάρων ἤδη προδοσίαν: a parallel to this motif can be found in the *Dream of Nektanebo*, an early Egyptian story known from both Greek (P. Leiden I 396) and Demotic papyri fragments (P. Carlsberg 424, 499, 559, 562). In his dream Nektanebo hears the god Onuris complaining that his temple in Sebennytyos has not been properly maintained and he promptly dispatches Petisis to do the job. Petisis, however, fails to perform his duty and thus brings the divine wrath upon Nektanebo. The same idea of the gods of Egypt abandoning Nektanebo appears in Chapter 3 of Book I of the *Alexander Romance*, indicating a common source of inspiration in early-Hellenistic stories of Nektanebo. Some even think they belong to a now-lost “royal novel” of Nektanebo which contained a literary account of the king's downfall in Egypt and a prophecy of Alexander liberating Egypt from the Persian rule (Braun 1938, 19–25; Koenen 1985; cf. Jasnow 1997).

ξυρησάμενος τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸν πώγωνα: in Egypt shaving all body hair was necessary to attain ritual purity and hence it was practiced by priests and magicians. Many kings, however, kept their hair (Pinch 2006, 76–77), as obviously did Nektanebo until he had to assume disguise of a prophet.

ἔφυγε τὴν Αἴγυπτον διὰ τοῦ Πηλουσίου: Pelusium was a city and a major fortress in the north-eastern part of Egypt on the (now silted up) Pelusiac branch of the Nile, now an archaeological site named Tall al-Farama located to the south-east of Port Said. Since by land Egypt was accessible from the east exclusively through a coastal road which led through Pelusium, the city became the key fortress of Egypt, guarding the way to Memphis from any invader coming from Asia. Its importance was proven during the first Persian invasion of Kambyses who won there a decisive battle over Psamtik III (Hdt. III 10–12). All subsequent invaders, from Artaxerxes III and Alexander the Great, to Antiochos IV and through to Octavian and 'Amr ibn al-'As, had to take Pelusium first to be able to march to the capital city, Memphis or Alexandria next. Dynasty xxx pharaohs invested heavily in the fortifications of Pelusium and the surrounding forts, reportedly commissioning the famous Athenian general Chabrias to supervise the works (Str. XVI 2.33, XVII 1.22; Plin. *Nat.* v 68). These fourth c. BC military construction works have been identified in archaeological excavations, although no particular place can be safely attributed to Chabrias (Valbelle and Nogara 2000; Wojciechowska 2016, 37–38). In theory, a route from Memphis to Macedonia would lead through Pelusium but in 339 BC the city was firmly in Persian hands and the historical Nektanebo could not take this route, even if he had ever considered going to Macedonia rather than to Nubia. But here the logic of the story of a Nektanebo who ended up in Macedonia would certainly suggest a route taken via Pelusium (Jouanno 2002, 218). The ahistorical story of Nektanebo going to Macedonia through Pelusium resurfaces in the fourth c. *Alexandrian World Chronicle*, surviving as the *ELB* (I 8.4. Garstad 2012, xviii–xxiii), and in Malalas (VII 17).

3 Πέλλην: in the fourth c. BC Pella was the largest city of Macedonia, where from ca. 400 BC Macedonian kings, beginning with Archelaos, had their residence. The peak of its prosperity coincided with the reigns of Philip II and Alexander the Great. In these times Pella was a walled city, corresponding in size, if not in population, to Athens. Philip II resided in a palace in the northern section of Pella.

προφήτης Αἰγύπτιος (καὶ) ἀστρολόγος: in the Hellenistic and Roman ages the Greek word προφήτης was applied to officials at the head of a temple in which there was an oracle, and to high Egyptian priests or *hm-ntr* (Quack

and Bremmer 2008). This reflects the great importance of oracular responses pronounced by temples in the later stages of Egyptian religion (Assmann 2001, 153–154). The second meaning of the word προφήτης is applicable to Nektanebo in the *Alexander Romance*.

ἄστρολόγος: from Herodotus (II 82–83) on Egyptian priests, who enjoyed among the Greeks a reputation as experts in divination (De Salvia 1987, 356–357).

4 προπάτορα τῶν θεῶν Ἡφαίστων: the Greeks identified Ptah with Hephaistos. In the context of Greek literary sources, the notion of Hephaistos/Ptah as the original god of Egypt is Manetho's (*FGrH* 609 F1.1: in Eusebius' Latin rendition his name is Vulcanus; also reference to Mentho is in Ioannes Lydus, *De mensibus* IV 86). In the *Khonsu cosmogony*, known from an inscription from Karnak of the Ptolemaic age, Ptah gives birth to an egg which ultimately gives origin to the eight primeval gods of Egypt (Parker and Lesko 1988). The shortened Greek version of this was presented by a Hellenized Egyptian priest and a first c. AD author named Chairemon, known from Porphyrios (*De cultu simulacrum*, in: Eus. *PE* III 11.45–47. See: Mendel 2003, 82–189). Ptah was originally a local god of Memphis, but since Memphis was the residence of kings, in the Ramesside period he rose to the rank of a principal god of Egypt, alongside Amun and Re (te Velde 1982; Lieven 2008).

Σινωπίου: the term “Sinopean” is used as metonymy for Serapis, like Σινωπίταιο Διὸς μέγαλοιο μέλαθρον in D.P. 255 about the Serapeum. Serapis was a syncretic god, in its Greek shape not attested safely before Ptolemy I, whose origin is attributed to the decision of this king searching for a religious symbol acceptable to both his Greek and Egyptian subjects. There is some late evidence tracing the origin of the (Greek) Serapis to the age of Alexander (Malalas VIII 1; *Suda*, s.v. Σάραπης), and passing remarks by Plutarch (*Alex.* 76) and Arrian (*An.* VII 26.2) on the temple of Serapis in Babylon, usually disregarded as probably stemming from the association of Serapis with a Babylonian deity. Some modern scholars use evidence of the cult of Serapis extending far beyond the Ptolemaic realm by the Hellenistic age to assert that the origin of (Greek) Serapis came under Alexander (Vidman 1970, 45; Stambaugh 1972, 6–13). This is highly conjectural and Serapis, as we know him, was a profoundly Hellenized Egyptian god stemming from Memphis. Memphis was the cult place of the Apis bull who, once dead was identified with Osiris, the god of the netherworld (Egyptian theology of Osiris-Apis: Kessler 2000). In the fourth c. BC at the latest this identification resulted in the hypostasis of Osiris and Apis to create the god *wsir hp*, initially rendered in Greek as Ὅσεραπίς (*UPZ* 1; of the fourth c. BC), before changing again to Serapis (Quack 2008). But the origin of the name does

not mean a complete identification of two gods: the principal place of worship of Osorapis remained the necropolis of Memphis, while the principal temple of Serapis was in Alexandria. The Egyptian cult of this god is attested in Memphis from the age of Dynasty xxx, with a temple commissioned by Nektanebo II (Memphite Serapeum). The Hellenized Egyptian Serapis became the principal god of Hellenistic Egypt, worshipped in the magnificent temple in Alexandria with a renowned cult statue by Bryaxis (Athenodoros of Tarsos, ap. Clem.Al. *Protr.* 4.48.5) and in other temples throughout Egypt, reportedly as many as 42, or perhaps one in every nome (Aristid. *Or.* 45.32. Kessler 2000, 170). Serapis became the principal tutelary god of Alexandria too (πολιεύς, first attested with this epithet in *OGIS* 708 of the Imperial age). The Egyptian identification of Serapis with Osiris was reflected in the Greek story explaining iconographical similarities between Serapis and the Greek god of the underworld, Hades-Pluton. It says that, on the request of the god delivered to the king in a dream, the cult statue of Serapis-Pluton was imported by Ptolemy I from Sinope on the Black Sea (Tac. *An.* IV 83–84; Plu. *Mor.* 361f–362a, referring to Manetho, *FGrH* 609 T3). This explains why here Serapis is referred to as Sinopean. Serapis in his function as a helping god was called σωτήρ. (Fraser 1972, I, 246–260; Hölbl 1983; Bernhard 1992, 469–471).

5 Νέος: the idea of an old man becoming a youth again is drawn from the Egyptian idea of the transfer of power from a pharaoh to his successor. In the Egyptian royal ideology the dead king became Osiris while his successor was, in theory at least, a son of his predecessor and Horus (Barta 1977; Aufrère 2004, 106).

## Chapter 4

1 Ὀλυμπιάδα: Olympias (ca. 373–316 BC) was a daughter of Neoptolemos the King of the Molossians in Epirus. Ca. 357 BC she married Philip II of Macedonia whom she bore two children: Alexander (the Great) in 356 BC, and Kleopatra, probably in 355 BC. Olympias is the first woman in Greek history known by name to have played an important political role in her own right. After the death of Philip II in particular, she showed a tremendous interest in exercising political power, thus transgressing the traditional norms of conduct prescribed for women in the Greek society of the fourth c. BC. This led to accusations of an undue thirst for power, and character assassinations. During Alexander's expedition to the East, Olympias was noted for her constant conflict and struggle for power and prestige with Antipater, Alexander's viceroy in Europe. After the



FIGURE 2 *An imaginary portrait of Olympias on a golden medallion of ca. 215–243 AD. Executed in the age of the renaissance of interest in Alexander the Great and his family. Found in Aboukir (Egypt).  
WALTERS MUSEUM, BALTIMORE*

death of Alexander, Olympias fought for power in Macedonia for herself and for her grandson Alexander IV. In 317 BC she took Philip III Arrhidaios and his wife Eurydike captive and had them killed, which alienated most of her supporters in Macedonia, playing into the hands of Kassander, son of Antipater and a pretender to the throne of Macedonia. Next year Olympias, encircled by Kassander in Pydna, was forced to capitulate and was executed together with her grandson Alexander IV (Carney 2000, 51–81, 114–152; Carney 2006). The encounter between Olympias and Nektanebo never took place and is historically impossible: it would have had to take place before Alexander was conceived, i.e. in the summer-autumn of 357 BC when Nektanebo was firmly holding power in Egypt which he left only in 339 BC.

Σελήνης: Selene, the Greek moon goddess. In Hesiod's *Theogony* (371–374) she is a daughter of the Titan Hyperion, sometimes identified with Artemis and Hekate. In myth, Selene is best known for her romance with the beautiful shepherd Endymion. In art, Selene was represented as a beautiful woman riding through the sky in a chariot driven by horses or oxen. A comparison of Olympias to Selene made by amorous *magos* and astrologer Nektanebo is well-suited in this context, since Selene was a goddess associated with magic and a confidante of those in love, well-attested in magical papyri and featuring prominently in the love-magic of the *Second Idyll* of Theocritus (Buffière 1999).

2 μὴ καταξιώσας αὐτὴν δέσποιναν εἰπεῖν: Nektanebo, mindful of his royal dignity, avoids the word δέσποινα, used very often, but not exclusively, by slaves addressing their mistress.

μαθηματικέ: in the Greek of the age of the Empire this word meant, apart from “mathematician,” also “astrologer” (MacMullen 1966, 128–129; De Salvia 1987, 356; Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 164–165; Evans and Berggren 2006, 127). Surely the second meaning is applicable here.

3 πολυσχιδῆς γάρ ἐστι τῆς σκέψεως ἡ κρίσις: Nektanebo's enumeration of various divinatory practices is evidence for practices of magic, astrology and the occult growing more and more specialized in Hellenistic and Roman times (Luck 1985, 12–46).

ὄνειροκρίται: dream interpretation belongs to the most widespread divinatory techniques in antiquity, known in Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt and in the classical world, with Assyrian and Egyptian Books of Dreams surviving in clay tablets and papyri, among them in the Chester Betty III papyrus of the Rameside period (Luck 1985, 232–239; Szapkowski 2003). The only complete Greek handbook of dream interpretations is the second c. AD *Oneirocritica* of Artemidoros of Daldis, enormously influential, as was this genre in general, in later antiquity, the Middle Ages in Europe and in the Arab world (Martin 1987, 48–50; Stoneman 2011a, 104–109; Harris-McCoy 2012).

ὄρνεοσκόποι: bird divination was a well-known Near Eastern method of ascertaining the future, amply attested in Hittite texts. Near Eastern bird divination methods are recorded also in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Later bird divination lost some importance in Greece, although it never went out of use (Luck 1985, 250–241; Bremmer 2004).

ἀμμουμάνταις: this is a hapax, translated hypothetically in *LSJ Suppl.* as “diviner by sand.” This is a more probable understanding of this difficult word than “the seers of Ammon” in Wolohojian's (1969, 25, 161) translation of “ammovnagētk” in Arm. I 7, accepted by *DGE* (s.v. ἀμμουμαντίς: “adivino de Amón”). Two methods

of sand divination were practiced in antiquity: “geomancy,” which was a study of lines formed by sand thrown onto a surface, and “aeromancy,” which was a study of the cloud of dust formed by fine sand in the air (Luck 1985, 253).

γενεθλιαλόγοι (...) ἀστρολόγοι: divinatory disciplines based on the observation of astral phenomena, in particular the positions of heavenly bodies, the Sun and planets within the signs of Zodiac and their subdivisions, called “decans.” Genethlialogy was the most widespread subdivision of astrology, concerned with predicting the fates of individual people (Firmicius Maternus III 1). The following sections of this chapter contain descriptions of astrological tablets with “decans,” i.e. with Zodiac deities, 36 in all. In antiquity, astrology was a discipline of paramount importance, permeating all aspects of culture. It was scientific and rational on the one hand and immersed in myth and popular piety on the other, with mythological names of heavenly bodies (MacMullen 1966, 137–144; Martin 1987, 42–44; Evans and Berggren 2006, xv). The Greeks believed that astrology was an Egyptian invention (D.S. I 28.1–2), while in fact both Egyptian and Greek astrology drew heavily on Babylonian astrology, in much the same way as Greek astronomy in general borrowed much from Babylonia, where celestial divination had begun in the second millennium BC. Assyrian and Babylonian documents attest astrological omen series from at least the seventh c. BC, while genethlialogy was developed in Babylonia as early as the fifth c. BC. Babylonian genethlialogy was based on similar but not identical premises to the Greek version, considering the astronomical situation of the seven “planets” (i.e. the Sun, the Moon and five planets) at the moment of birth. The difference between the two arose with the Greek idea of *horoskopos*, i.e. the rising point of the ecliptic at the moment of birth (Rochberg 1988; Rochberg 2008; Rochberg 2010). A detailed knowledge of the astronomical principles of astrology was transmitted to the Greeks by the second-first c. BC, and the real flourishing of this discipline came with the detailed astrological tables of Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus) and with the invention of the astrolabe (Luck 1985, 309–326; Evans and Berggren 2006, 14). Hence the majority of horoscopes surviving in Greek papyri in Egypt can be dated to the second and the third c. AD (Baccani 1992, 21–25). The importance of horoscope-making in the Nektanebo story of the *Alexander Romance* reflects the genethliological fashion of the day.

μάγοι: in Herodotus (I 101) Magi were one of six Median tribes who monopolized priestly functions amongst the Iranians. Magi (*maguš*) are well attested in Persian, Elamite, Babylonian and Egyptian sources, beginning with the Bisutun inscription of Darius I (DB 1). They are the only known Iranian priests in Persia from Achaemenid until Sassanian times. Some of their priestly functions involved astrology, which probably led the Greeks to confuse Iranian Magi

with Babylonian priests, called “Chaldeans” in Greek (Graf 1997, 20–35; Dandamayev 2012). Nektanebo is surely using the word μάγοι here with the meaning “astrologers, magicians.” The later antiquity (second-fourth c. AD) moved away from the rational towards magic and theurgy, with words like *magos* becoming equivalent to “philosopher” (Apul. *Apol.* 2.7). Magic attained great popularity amongst both the common people and the wealthy educated elite from the second c. AD, with late antique philosophers studying magic (MacMullen 1996, 107–111, 120–127, 136–137), which may further explain the usage of the word μάγοι in this place.

4 πίνακα πολυτίμητον βασιλικόν: doubtless a reference is made here (and in I 14) to an astrological instrument, probably to astrological tables containing a map of the sky with the Zodiac signs and decans. Plutarch attests the usage of such tablets (πίναξ) in the casting of horoscopes by Egyptian astrologers (*Rom.* 12.3). The only literary parallel to the description of such tablets in the *Alexander Romance* is provided by a papyrus (*P.Wash.Univ.* inv. 181 and 221) of the second-third c. AD from Oxyrhynchus, containing an instruction for placing planet markers on a board used for casting horoscopes (Packman 1988). Few examples of such horoscope boards or astrological tablets have survived to the present day. Astrological tablets of ivory set in wood made in Egypt in the second c. AD were found in the Gallic sanctuary of Apollo Grannus in Grand, France (Béal 1993; Goyon 1993; Aufrère 2004, 107). Another portable astrological tablet with similar, although not identical iconography is a glass disk set in wood from the third-fourth c. AD, found in the Kharga Oasis (Nenna, 2003). These are related to the Tabula Bianchini and, first of all, to Zodiac ceilings curved and painted in Roman times, surviving in some Egyptian temples: of Hathor in Dendera and of Khnum in Esna, while the inner sanctuary of Horus in Edfu testifies to the interests of the historical Nektanebo or his advisors in representing cosmic beginnings in the ritual creation of Egypt (Gundel 1936, 184–194; Cauville 1997; Bjerne Finnestad 1997, 188, 208; Stoneman 2007, 479). From the second c. AD astrologers were employing astrolabes which allowed them to solve astronomical problems with far greater accuracy than before, no doubt impressing the people who commissioned their horoscopes. The dominance of the astrolabe among astrological instruments resulted in supplanting the phrase “royal tablet” with the word ἀστρολάβιον in some later versions of the *Alexander Romance* (γ, λ: Papathanassiou 1999, at 118).

δεκανοὺς ἔχοντα τοὺς λς' ... ζῳδία τὰ ιβ': the royal tablet has the twelve Zodiacal signs and 36 decans. The concept of the Zodiac, or an imaginary belt in the sky, oblique with respect to the equator and divided into twelve houses, is Babylonian, with the first attestations of the individual Zodiacal signs dating back



to as early as the 16th c. BC. The precursor of the Zodiac can be traced to the Babylonian astronomical handbook *MUL.APIN* of ca. 1000 BC, while the proper Zodiac was developed by the mid-fifth c. BC (Hunger and Pingree 1999, 57–83; Ross 2014). The earliest extant Babylonian birth horoscope using the Zodiacal signs dates to 410 BC (Rochberg 1998, 51–58). The Greeks borrowed the Zodiac from Babylon and the word ζῳδιον appears first in an astronomical context in the works of Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1073b; *Mete.* 343a, 345a, 346a). The Babylonian (and Egyptian) Zodiac starts with a fixed star and the Greek Zodiac begins from the position of the Sun at the Vernal Equinox, and because of this the two systems shift away from each other. They coincided in 316 BC which seems to indicate that the Babylonian Zodiac was introduced by this year in Egypt and the rest of the Hellenistic world (Ross 2014). Although the art of casting birth horoscopes is Babylonian in origin, the practice broadened with some Egyptian contributions such as decans, which were originally constellations of stars and minor protective deities, each ruling over ten days of the Egyptian year; in the Hellenistic age, after the introduction of Babylonian astrology, they too became incorporated into the Zodiac (on decans see: Gundel 1936; Kákosy 1982). Astrologically they are groups of stars marking hours of the night, their association with the Zodiac first attested in Egypt in the third c. BC (Nenna 2003, Greenbaum and Ross 2010). The complete list of names of decans written in Greek letters is attested in tablets from Grand (Abry 1993). Nektanebo's tablet shares the rare characteristic of having the Sun and the Moon represented in the middle, with the tablets from Grand and up to five other ancient depictions of the Zodiac, most notably a graffito from Hatra of the second c. AD. It was therefore chronologically close to both the tablets from Grand and to the date of composition of the *Alexander Romance* (Gury 1993; Nenna 2003).

6 ἐπὶ ἄστéρας: the Sun, the Moon, and five planets (Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn).

ἀδάμαντος λίθου: neither were the Greeks utterly consistent with the names of stones, nor do the Greek names of stones correspond to names created on the basis of Greek words in modern languages. Greeks were not very consistent with attaching particular stones to planets in astrology, in general following the principal of color clusters, i.e. attaching stones of a similar color to a planet (Boll 1916, 19–26; Peckman 1988, 87–89). In this commentary I usually follow the Eichholz (1965) commentary to the *De Lapidibus* of Theophrastus in identifying stones. The Greek word ἀδάμας, most likely a Semitic loanword pertaining to red substance (as it originally was referring to haematite), akin to Akkadian *adamu* or Hebrew אַדָמָה (*adamah*) for red-brown soil (Barb 1969, 66–82; EDG, s.v.), may mean a mythological indestructible substance, like that from

which the chains of Prometheus were made (A. Pr. 6), or iron, steel, corundum, haematite, magnetite, diamond and other stones of similar qualities (Eichholz 1965, 100–101; Barb 1969, 66–82; Haas, Hödl and Schneider 2004). In a magic papyrus (*PGM C 10.17*) the third circle of heaven was made of “adamantinos lithos.” In the *Analecta Astrologica* VI the Sun may be made of ἀδάμας. Since Nektanebo’s tablet is meant to impress with the quality and high price of materials from which it was executed, diamond would be the best translation of the ἀδάμας here.

αἱματίτου λίθου: haematite (Eichholz 1965, 114; Delgado 2001, s.v.); in magic writings this was the meaning of the code name “blood of snake” (Betz 1986, 168 in: *PGM XII.401–444*). Here we may have to do with the reflection of Egyptian *biz*, often understood as haematite but commonly applied to a substance associated with meteorites (Harris 1961, 166–168) and thus fitting for any celestial body.

σμάραγδου λίθου: the word σμάραγδος was famously used to describe a number of different stones of green hue, including the green basalt suitable for making obelisks known from Theophrastos (*Lap.* 25) and Pliny (*Nat.* XXXVII 74), green porphyry, malachite, emerald, beryl (Harris 1961, 104–110; Eichholz 1966, 102–107). The only sure thing to be said about the stone used in Nektanebo’s tablet is that it was precious and rare which gives preference to emerald or malachite. The *Analecta Astrologica* VI lists σμάραγδος among the stones associated with Mercury.

αἰθερίτου λίθου: this may be a corruption of αἰτίτης; aethitae or eagle-stones (Plin. *Nat.* XXXVI 149–151; Ael. *NA* I 35), are stones which rattle when shaken, like limonite (Eichholz 1965, 91; Stoneman 2007, 481–482).

σαφείρου λίθου: more likely lapis lazuli than sapphire (Harris 1961, 124–129; Eichholz 1965, 113; Packman 1988, 89; Karttunen 1997, 242; Stoneman 2007, 482). The same stone is associated with Venus in the *P.Wash. Univ.* inv. 181 and 221.

ὄφιτου λίθου: serpentinite, in Egypt used commonly to produce scarabs (Harris 1961, 130–131; Stoneman 2007, 482).

ὠρόσκοπον: this word originally referred to the ascendant or the sign of the Zodiac rising on the horizon, later evolving to designate a stylized map of the sky used by astrologers in forecasting future. Here this later usage is apparent.

7 Λέξον μοι βασιλίσσα ἐνιαυτόν: as a rule ancient astrologers did not observe the sky in the moment of birth nor did they conduct regular astronomical observations. They drafted horoscopes on the basis of astronomical almanacs which gave precise positions of planets using the precise date of birth of the person commissioning a horoscope (Jones 2007). In this scene Nektanebo approximates the working method of a Hellenistic or Imperial-age astrologer.

εἰ συναστρεῖ ... εὖ κειμένην συναστρία: the friendship or affinity between two people caused by stars (Boll 1950 and 1950a).

ἀποβαλεῖν με καὶ γαμεῖν ἄλλην: the *Alexander Romance* does not expressly explain the reason that rumors circulated of a possible rejection of Olympias by Philip. The context of these scenes indicates, however, that it was Olympias' sterility (Thiel 1974, 170; Bounoure 2004, 230). The motive of Philip in repudiating Olympias in this chapter is possibly linked to the alleged divorce between the two prior to Philip's seventh marriage to Kleopatra, covered in detail in the *Alexander Romance* I 20–22 (see commentary ad loc.).

8 Ψευδὴς ἢ φήμη γέγονε: some other versions of the *Alexander Romance* (β, γ, Arm.) state that Nektanebo answered to the contrary, rec. β: οὐκ ἔστι ψεύδος ἦν ἀκούεις φήμην περὶ σοῦ. With the negative answer, as in ms. A, Olympias' decision to get involved with Nektanebo is less obviously understandable than with the positive answer as in other versions (Stoneman 2007, 482). This might be a *lectio difficilior* of the archetype nevertheless.

θεῶ ἐπιτείω συνελθεῖν καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ σύλληψιν ἔχειν: a divine conception would have elevated the son of Olympias. The historical Alexander made it known that he considered Ammon as his father (Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F14a; Ephippus *FGrH* 126 F5; Arr. *An.* VII 8; V.Max. IX 5 ext.1; Gel. XIII 4. Ferrando 1998, 261) and at least some other people in his lifetime shared this opinion (Paus. IV 14.8). Most probably the real aim of his dangerous expedition to the Siwah Oasis was to learn precisely this (on that see commentary to I 20). This idea of the divine parenthood of a king is also, if not primarily, Egyptian. Egyptian religion and royal ideology recognized the idea of sacred marriage between a god and a queen. From the New Kingdom onwards, the Egyptian Birth Cycle represented Amun-Re taking the appearance of a pharaoh and begetting the next king by the wife of his predecessor. This is known from two complete attestations (in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari and in the temple of Amenhotep III in Luxor) and from a range of fragmentary evidence. The inscription in Deir el-Bahari reads: "Words spoken by Amun-Ra, Lord of Karnak, pre-eminent in his harem, when he had assumed the form of her husband, King Menkheperura (Thutmose IV), giving life. He found her as she slept within the innermost part of the palace. She awoke on account of the divine fragrance, and turned towards his Majesty. He went straightway to her, he was aroused by her. He allowed her to see him in his divine form, after he had come before her, so that she rejoiced at seeing his perfection. His love, it entered her body. The palace was flooded with the divine fragrance, and all his odours were those of the land of Punt." (Kemp 1989, 198). The sacral marriage and the divine conception of a king was a religious and political myth and a ritual to legitimize

pharaohs (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 77–83; Koenen 1985; Brunner 1986, 194–203; Kemp 1989, 197–200; Huß 1994, 131; Hölbl 2001, 78–79; Rikala 2008). This Egyptian concept was not unknown to the Greeks (Plu. *Mor.* 718a–b) to whom it surely resembled their myth of Zeus siring Herakles with Alkmene (Stoneman 2007, 476–477).

ἔκδικον: this word, if taken with its basic meaning “avenger” is (intentionally?) ambiguous as the reader of the *Alexander Romance* has not learned so far of any injustice committed by Philip against Olympias which would have to be avenged by her son. In Egypt of the Second Intermediate Period some pharaohs were called Hornedjherotef (“Horus avenger of his father” or more precisely “Horus curator/ champion of his father”). Some knowledge of this was accessible to the Greeks, as is attested by Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*, (*Mor.* 358b. Meeks 1977; Grimal 1997, 183). This understanding of the pharaonic epithet “Hornedjherotef” comes closer to the meaning of the word ἔκδικος in the legal usage of the Roman age, when *ekdikoi* became legal representatives of Greek cities (Marchetti 1987; Rupprecht 1994, 64, 144). Indeed later in the *Alexander Romance* (I 21–22; ἔκδικος again employed in I 21.4) Alexander acts as though an attorney to Olympias in her quarrel with Philip.

9 Ὁ τῆς Λιβύης κεραὸς πλουτηφόρος Ἄμμων: this Ammon of the Siwah Oasis, here bearing a unique epithet πλουτηφόρος (“wealth-bringing,” *LSJ* Suppl., s.v.). This word is a hapax and no reason can be easily found for giving it to Ammon of Siwah (Stoneman 2007, 483). This chapter mentions the most conspicuous attribute of this god: the ram-horns always present in images of Ammon (Leclant and Clerc 1981; Ogden 2009a, 146–147). About ram-horns in representations of Alexander, see commentary to III 34.3.

## Chapter 5

1 κατ’ ὄναρ ἰδεῖν τὴν Ὀλυμπιάδα περιπλακέντα αὐτῇ τὸν Ἄμμωνα: Nektanebo imposes on Olympias a vision of an intimate relation with a god, acting in a way typical of Egyptian magic (Stoneman 2007, 484–485).

## Chapter 6

3 δράκων: a snake features prominently in the birth-myth of Alexander. In his list of stories of the divine origin of Alexander, Plutarch (*Alex.* 2–3) mentions a god in the guise of a giant snake as one who conceived Alexander



FIGURE 3 *Magical Stela (Cippus of Horus) of meta-greywacke, 0.835m high, probably originally from Memphite Region. The representation of Nektanebo II, kneeling in the top right section, is a vivid testimony to the pharaoh's interest in magic. known also from the Alexander Romance.*  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK,  
FLETCHER FUND, 1950

with Olympias. Plutarch presents this story in the context of Olympias' participation in orgiastic religious rituals, involving handling snakes. Reportedly Philip learned from the Delphic oracle that it was Ammon whom he saw with Olympias, and that losing the eye with which he spotted the god would be his punishment. The story was well-known in antiquity and is attested both by authors of the Imperial age (Paus. IV 14.7; Luc. *Alex.* 7; Solinus IX 18; Just. XI 11.3, XII 16.2) and in iconographic sources, such as coins of Roman Macedonia, contorniates and the Soueidié Mosaic (Chéhab 1957; Ross 1985; Dahmen 2007, 32, 37–38). A second-c. AD choliambic epitaph which lists Alexander son of Ammon-turned-into-a-snake among those who could not escape death (*SEG* 8.372: οὐδ' αὖ Μακηδῶν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος/ ὃν τίκτεν Ἀμμων θέμενος εἰς ὄφιν μορφήν) highlights the popularity of the story in Egypt. Some scholars believe that this story originated in Alexander's lifetime, even if there is no direct evidence before Plutarch (Ogden 2009a). The identity of the snake in Alexander's birth story is not obvious from the Greek point of view, since in Greek mythology and iconography a number of supernatural creatures can assume the shape of a snake (for discussion of their identity in the context of Alexander's birth story see Ogden 2011, 42–52), but Ammon is not one of them. Egyptian Amun (in the *Alexander Romance* associated with Ammon of Siwah) was, however, associated with the snake-god Šai and was worshipped in the form of other snake-deities (Ogden 2011, 3). This further points to the Egyptian, not Greek, roots of the Alexander birth story in the *Alexander Romance*.

## **Chapters 6/7**

At the end of Chapter 6 and in the beginning of Chapter 7 in the place of the sentence which reads: εἶπεν· Προεῖπόν σοι τὸν τοῦ δράκοντος συρισμόν, μὴ πτυρῆς τὸ κῆτος, μᾶλλον δὲ προσηγῆς αὐτῷ καὶ ἄδελλος ἔσῃ, some other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* (β, Arm.) have a longer passage, which reads in β: λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Νεκτεναβῶ· “πρὸς τὸ γινώσκειν σε, δέσποινα, πρόδρομος τοῦ εἰσέρχεσθαι τὸν θεόν ἐστὶ τὸ σημεῖον τοῦτο· ἐὰν καθεζομένη τῇ ἐσπέρᾳ ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνός σου ἴδῃς δράκοντα ἐρπύζοντα ἐπὶ σέ, κέλευσον πάντας τοὺς παρόντας ἐξελθεῖν. σὺ δὲ μὴ ἀποσβέσης τὰ φῶτα τῶν λύχνων, ὧν ἐγὼ νῦν σκευάσας εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἄπτειν καθὼς ἐπίσταμαι δώσω σοι, ἀλλὰ ἀνελθοῦσα ἐπὶ τῇ βασιλικῇ σου κλίνῃ ἑτοιμος γενοῦ καὶ συγκάλυψόν σου τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ παρόρα τὸν θεὸν ὃν εἶδες ἐν ὄνείρῳ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς σε.” καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν Νεκτεναβῶ ἐξέρχεται. καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον δίδωσιν αὐτῷ ἡ Ὀλυμπιάς ἔγγιστα τοῦ κοιτῶνος αὐτῆς κοιτῶνα.

Ὁ δὲ Νεκτεναβῶ ἡτοίμασεν ἑαυτῷ πόκον κριοῦ ἀπαλωτάτου σὺν τοῖς κέρασι τῶν κροτάφων αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα χρυσῷ παραπλήσια, καὶ σκῆπτρον ἐβέλινον καὶ ἱμάτιον

λευκὸν καὶ τρίβωνα καθαρῶτατον δρακοντιοῦντα· καὶ εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὸν κοιτῶνα, ἔνθα ἦν ἐπὶ κλίνης ἡ Ὀλυμπιάς κατεσκεπασμένη. ἄκρω δὲ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ ἔβλεπεν. καὶ ὁρᾷ αὐτὸν εἰσερχόμενον καὶ οὐκ ἐδειλίασεν. αὐτὸν γὰρ προσεδόκα καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὀνείρῳ εἶδεν. οἱ δὲ λύχνοι ἤπτασιν, καὶ συνεκάλυψεν ἡ Ὀλυμπιάς τὸ πρόσωπον ἑαυτῆς. ὁ δὲ Νεκτεναβὺς ἀποθέμενος τὸ σκῆπτρον ἀναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην αὐτῆς καὶ συγγίνεται αὐτῇ, or: “‘You must know,’ went on Nektanebo, ‘that the following sign will be given before the god enters your room. If, as you rest in the evening in your chamber, you see a serpent creeping towards you, order everyone to go outside. But do not put out the lamps, which I have prepared to give proper honor to the god, and which I will light and give you; no, go to your bed and make yourself ready, cover your face and do not look directly at the god whom you saw come to you in your dream.’ So saying, Nektanebo went away. The next day Olympias gave him a bedroom immediately adjoining her own. [Chapter 7] Nektanebo, meanwhile, procured a fleece of softest sheep’s wool, with the horns still attached to its temples. The horns shone like gold. He also procured an ebony sceptre, a white robe and a cloak resembling a serpent’s skin. Wearing these, he entered the bedroom, where Olympias was lying under the coverlet, just peeping out. She saw him come in, but was not afraid, because he looked just as the god had done in her dream. The lamps were lit, and Olympias covered her face. Nektanebo, putting aside his sceptre, climbed on to the bed and made love to her.” (tr. by R. Stoneman, 1991)

The following narrative, in particular in I 14, presupposes a reader’s knowledge of this passage. It may have originally belonged to the archetype (α) and hence it made it to β and to Arm., but it disappeared in the process of copying α to ms. A. It should be tentatively restored in this place (Ausfeld 1907, 33–34).

## Chapter 7

On the possible meaning of sexual intercourse between Olympias and Nektanebo, who pretended to be Ammon of Siwah, as the Egyptian sacred marriage ritual see the commentary to I 4.8. Apart from approximating the sacred marriage ritual in this chapter, the *Alexander Romance* plays on the theme of Egyptian magical practices of the Hellenistic age, including the magician appearances of a god (Luck 1985, 25–26). This story can be and indeed was understood as the story of seduction of Olympias by Nektanebo, a human being only pretending to be Ammon; just as in *Analecta Syriaca*: “King Alexander was the son by adultery of Nectanebus, the last King of Egypt, and of Olympias, the wife of Philip, King of the Macedonians. According to the deception by which his father deceived his mother when he committed adultery with her, the son

was attributed to Ammon, the god of Thebes, who was the forefather of all the Egyptian kings.” (tr. E.A.W. Budge).

10 Ὀλυμπιάς ἐπλανᾶτο: there is more than one possible aspect of the story of seduction of Olympias by Nektanebo. In principle the story of a magician seducing a woman is an Egyptian literary motive (Ritner 1993, 219; Jasnow 1997, 97). Some scholars think that it was adopted for the story of Olympias and Nektanebo by an Egyptian unknown to us who invented the story of the sexual conquest of a Greco-Macedonian queen by a noble Egyptian symbolically exacting vengeance on the ruling class of the Macedonian- and Roman-ruled Egypt who despised mixed marriages thus making it more difficult for their Egyptian subjects to become members of the privileged, culturally Greek minority in Egypt (Fraser 1972, I, 49; Jouanno 2002, 61).

## Chapter 8

1 λαβών ἱέρακα πελάγιον: the Greeks were not very precise in naming birds; hence the word ἱέραξ was applied to small hawks and falcons, but neither is known to bring prophetic dreams in Greece (Thompson 1895, s.v.; Stoneman 2007, 486–487). In Egypt, however, the bird referred to in Greek sources as ἱέραξ allegedly was a prophetic animal (D.S. I 87.7; Ael. NA XI 39). The falcon was believed to bring dreams to people (De Salvia 1987, 358; Thompson 1988, 127, n. 116; Hölbl 2001, 101 and n. 149). In particular the ἱέραξ πελάγιος is attested in this capacity in magical papyri (PGM IV 210; Graf 1997, 104–105). Therefore it is plausible to say that the scene of a prophetic dream sent to Philip by Nektanebo using a ἱέραξ πελάγιος was Egyptian in origin. Although a precise identification of this bird is not possible, it was almost certainly a falcon, of which 26 species are known in Egypt (Stoneman 2007, 486). In Egypt the falcon was a bird sacred to Horus in his divine-ruler aspect and the same hieroglyphic sign (*ḥrw*) was used for the name Horus and for the word falcon; thus, the falcon was believed to be most appropriate as a designated “bird of the pharaohs” (Bjerne Finnestad 1997, 233; Franco 1999, 81; Meltzer 2001). In Memphis in particular, Nektanebo II was worshipped as a falcon (Thompson 1988, 212; Hölbl 2001, 94) and under the Ptolemies this was a state-sponsored cult of “the divine falcon” (Yoyotte 1959; Meulenlaere 1960; Bjerne Finnestad, 1997, 223; Gorre 2009). In art the ties between Nektanebo and Horus-falcon are best illustrated by a sculpture, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York which represents a miniature figure of the king standing in front of the legs of a giant Horus-falcon who protects him.



2 σφραγίζειν δακτυλίῳ χρυσῷ: the signet-ring with a lion-seal with which Philip II seals Olympias' womb belongs to the realm of Alexander's birth-myths, related to Zeus' role in siring Alexander (Ogden 2011, 8–12). It is known from Ephoros (*FGrH* 70 F217) who died ca. 330 BC. Thus this story certainly originated in Alexander's lifetime or perhaps even in Philip's lifetime (Ogden 2013, 332). It is repeated by Plutarch (*Alex.* 2.4–6) and Stephanus (s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια), thus giving testimony to its popularity in antiquity.

11 συμπαθὴς ἐγένετο Φίλιππος: the account of ms. A is, in the light of the later behaviour of Philip, less obvious than that contained in other early versions (β, γ, Val., Arm.), i.e. that Philip became sad realizing that Olympias became pregnant by somebody else. However, precisely by being less obvious, this *lectio difficilior* of ms. A, may in fact transmit correctly the words of the lost archetype (α).

## Chapter 9

2 ὅτι ἀμαρτήσασα: before these words, some other early versions (β and Arm.) have: γύναι, τὸ γενόμενόν σοι οὐ παρὰ σὴν αἰτίαν συνέβη (β: “This which happened to you, did not happen through your own fault”) which seems to fit the following part of the sentence. In ms. A there is probably a lacuna in this place.

## Chapter 10

The picturesque scene of the giant snake kissing Olympias is among the earliest iconographical motives inspired by the *Alexander Romance*, attested already in the fourth c. AD, in a mosaic found in the ruins of a Roman villa in Soueidié near Heliopolis-Baalbek in Lebanon (Chéhab 1957; Ross 1985).

## Chapter 11

1 φιλολόγοις βιβλίοις: learned or scholarly books. The word φιλόλογος is usually applied to people (also as a proper name), and exceptionally and in later sources referred only to products of intellectual pursuit: φιλολόγοις ἀκροάσασιν (Plu. *Mor.*, 44e), φιλόλογα ζητήματα (Plu. *Mor.* 737d), Τάρρα πόλις Κρήτης, ὧς φησι Λογγίνος ἐν τοῖς Φιλολόγοις (*Sch. vetera in A.R.*, p. 329); cf. Stoneman 2007, 489.



FIGURE 4 *God Horus Protecting King Nektanebo II. Meta-ghreywacke statue, 0.72 m high, said to be from Memphite Region.*

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, ROGERS FUND, 1934

3 σημειολύτην Ἀντιφῶντα: no interpreter of signs named Antiphon is known to have worked either for Philip II or Alexander. The only Antiphon somehow associated with Philip II was an Athenian who promised Philip that he would burn the Athenian harbour in Piraeus. He was tried for treason in Athens and executed (D. 18.132–133; Din. 1.63; Plu. *Dem.* 14.5. Trail, no. 138210). Perhaps the *Alexander Romance* conflates the historical Athenian partisan of Philip with a fifth c. BC Athenian sophist, soothsayer and orator, author of *Περὶ κρίσεως ὀνείρων* (*On Interpretation of Dreams*), perhaps best known as an opponent of Socrates (X. *Mem.* I 6; D.L. II 46; *Suda* s.v. Ἀντιφῶν. Trail, no. 138190; Seltzer 2002).

## Chapter 12

Only in ms. A does this chapter contain the elaborate scene of the birth of Alexander anchored in astrology. It is generally believed to have been corrupted in the process of transmission (Boll 1950b, 351–356; Stoneman 2007, 490).

1 σωτήριον κυηφόρον δίφρον: in antiquity, in the Egyptian and classical traditions alike, a well-attested birth position was upright, with the woman sitting on a birth-chair (Carson 1999, 1–5) or, more often on birth bricks (Roth and Roehrig 2002; Marshall 2015, 81–89). A specimen of a birth-chair is housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Bounoure 2004, 231). The Soueidié mosaic in its upper register shows Olympias on the birth chair (Ross 1985).

2 ὥροσκοπεῖ γὰρ σκορπίος: Nektanebo does work here as a standard ancient astrologer would have done, limiting the scope of his horoscopic pursuits to studying astrological charts. For maximum dramatic impact Nektanebo observes the sky and directs Olympias to deliver her child in the most propitious hour. He is not only an astrologer forecasting the future but as a true *magos* he influences it. Nektanebo sees the Zodiacal signs rising on the eastern horizon: Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn. Ferrando (1998, 263–266) has noticed that in the beginning of July 355 BC a sequence of astral phenomena corresponding to those related in this chapter could be seen: Saturn in Aries, Jupiter in Virgo, Mars in Capricorn, Venus in Scorpio, Mercury in Sagittarius, Moon in Gemini, Sun in Capricorn. This may indicate that the *Alexander Romance* belongs to the tradition which dates the birth of Alexander to early July 355 BC. The date of his birth, however, is calculated in more conventional sources, in Plutarch (*Alex.* 3.5–8) in particular, and is generally accepted in modern historiography as July 356 BC (Hamilton 1999, 7–9; Nawotka 2010, 3). An alternative

date for the Zodiacal situation represented here, calculated from the partially emendated text, falls on the night of 2/3 November 149 BC. This date is not significant in any way but, if true, it may give the *terminus post quem* of the original version of the episode known from this chapter of the *Alexander Romance* (Papathanssiou 1999).

3 Κρόνος: Saturn was an inauspicious Zodiacal sign because of what mythological Kronos (Saturn) had done to his father Uranos (*vide infra*).

διδύμων σποράν ἄχρις στάχους ἔκτεμῶν: although the phrase is a bit unclear, lacking the object of Kronos's action (it is his father Uranos), Nektanebo certainly explains here why Kronos (Saturn) as a Zodiacal sign is unpropitious: because he had castrated his father Uranos, soon to be overthrown by his children named in the following phrase. στάχους figuratively as “testicles”: τὸ δ' ὑπ' αὐτῇ [scil. γαστρὶ] στάχους καλεῖται (Pollux II 169; cf. Stoneman 2007, 492).

Μήνη, or Selene, the goddess of Moon. These are two names of the same goddess (e.g. *Suda*, s.v.: Μήνη: σελήνη). Orphic scriptures contain a statement that the goddess was called Selene by the gods and Mene by humans. The idea of such double names is Homer's (*Il.* XX 274); it does not carry any identifiable value beyond being a poetic concept (West 1983, 92 n. 40; Athanassakis and Wolkow 2013, 90). In art, Mene is represented as a beautiful young woman driving a chariot drawn by a pair of horses or oxen (Gury 1994, 711–712, nos 58–66). Pausanias (VI 24.6) mentions a statue of a horned Mene in Elis. The same epithet (κερασφόρος) is attested for Mene in Maximus Astrologus (12.587). Incidentally, Alexander also bears the epicleris κερασφόρος later in the text (III 34.3, cf. commentary ad loc.). In myth Mene/Selene is best known for her romance with the beautiful shepherd Endymion.

διὸ καὶ τὰ χρήσιμα πυρὶ φλεγείς τελευτᾷ: the place is corrupt; even with Boll's (1950b, 355 without further discussion) emendation of Διὸς in place of διὸ, it is unclear what was originally meant, since no connection between the myth of Mene/Selene and Endymion and Zeus's fire (thunderbolt) can be established.

4 φιλοθάλαμος, or “loving the bridal-chamber” (LSJ Suppl., s.v.) is a hapax.

σοπλήγα Ἀδωνιν: in Greek mythology Adonis was a son of the Phoenician King Phoinix (Hes., fr. 139, MW), Theias (Ant. Lib. 34) or, most commonly, Kinyras (Plat. Com. fr. 3; *Sch. in Theoc.* I 107; Ov. *Met.* x 298–524) and his daughter Myrrha (Panyas, fr. 27 = [Apollod.] *Bibl.* 3.182. Reed 2000, 342, n. 108) or Smyrna (Hyg. *Fab.* 242). The only attested role Adonis plays in myth is that of a young shepherd and hunter, beloved of Aphrodite with whom he is practically always associated in myth and cult, attested from at least the

seventh c. BC in Lesbos (Sappho, fr. 140, 168, Voigt), with fifth-c. BC evidence from Athens (Atallah 1966, 309–312). There is little support in these sources for the common interpretation of Adonis as a god associated with the cycle of vegetation (e.g. Nötscher 1950, 94; Eissfeldt 1970, 16; Baudy 2002), as a solar deity (Atallah 1966, 317, 320–322), or his death as “a mythical paradigm of an act of personal atonement” (Robertson 1982, 359). In the Hellenistic age the cult of Adonis spread throughout the Mediterranean; some believe it even attracted Ptolemaic sponsorship (Reed 2000; Aupert 2008, 358–359), the most celebrated evidence for this being the 16th Idyll of Theocritus portraying the Adonaia in Alexandria. While on a hunting expedition, Adonis was killed by a wild animal, in most version of the myth, including that conveyed by the *Alexander Romance*, by a boar (most notably: Luc. *D.Syr.* 6. Soyez 1977, 20–21), sometimes believed to be a jealous Ares in the guise of the animal (Kyrillos Theologos, *Commentarius in Isaiam*, PG LXX, 440–441; Meliton, in: *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 44. Declerck 1976). Lamenting for the deceased youth was the essence of the veneration of Adonis which in Athens and in most other places in the Greek world took the shape of an essentially private cultic event in summer in which only women were involved. Here, however, Adonis is named in the context of Byblos and on Adonis’ celebrations there, *vide infra*. Adonis, although never attested directly in Eastern written sources, is a Phoenician deity. His name is derived either from the Western Semitic “adon” (“lord”) with a Greek ending -ις (Kretschmer 1916 and most later scholars) or “adoni” (“my lord”) with a Greek ending -ς (Eissfeldt 1970, 5–6). The title/epithet adon is attested in a tablet from Ras Shamra (Ugarit) of the 13th c. BC for the main god of Ugarit, Baal (KTU 1.124. Loretz 1980), a ready analogy being אֲדֹנַי (Adonai = my Lord) as the name pronounced by pious Jews instead of God’s name יהוה. The memory of the Semitic origin of the name Adonis survives in the Lexicon of Hesychius (s.v.): ἄδωνις ... δεσπότης, ὑπὸ Φοινίκων. καὶ βόλου ὄνομα (“adonis ... lord, among the Phoenicians, and the name of Bolos [i.e. Belos]”), with βόλος as a corrupt name of Baal (Eissfeldt 1970, 17). Thus, the Adonis of Greek mythology undoubtedly follows the Ugaritic myth of the katabasis of Baal. A dying youthful god is a well-known feature of Semitic religions with the Babylonian Tammuz, with whom Adonis was sometimes juxtaposed or identified, as a prime example (Origenes, *Selecta in Ezechielem*, PG XIII, 797, 800; Hieronymus, *Commentarium in Ezechielem*, PL XXV, 82–83; Ps.-Nonn. 5.38; Procop.Gaz., *Commentarii in Isaiam*, 2140; Theodoretos, *Intrpretatio in Ezechielem*, PG LXXXI, 885; Kyrillos Theologos, *Commentarius in Isaiam*, PG LXX, 441; Meliton, in: *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 44).

Βυβλίᾶδων γυναικῶν σέλας: Byblos is a Greek name of Gubal/Gebal, a leading city in Phoenicia, now Jubayl in Lebanon. Byblos is a place in myth and

cult closely associated with Adonis, who was killed in a hunting accident near Byblos in Mount Lebanon (Luc. *D.Syr.* 8; Meliton, in: *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 44. Robertson 1982). In the Imperial age his tomb was shown in the rural territory of Byblos in Afqa/Aphaca in the valley of the small Adonis River (Luc. *D.Syr.* 8), now Nahar Ibrahim. Adonis was almost certainly worshiped and lamented in Byblos in pre-Hellenistic times, although the earliest written evidence for his ties to the city is quite late: directly found only in the third c. BC *Alexandra* (828–833) of Lykophron and indirectly in the *Histories of Kleitarchos* (FGrH 137 F3, ap. Stob. IV 20.73. Soyez 1977, 9–11). Perhaps due to strong and long-lasting ties between Byblos and Egypt, Adonis in Byblos assimilated many features of Osiris, both in myth and literature (Luc. *D.Syr.* 7) and in iconography (Fani 2008). The Byblos festival of Adonis, known from Lucian's account (*D.Syr.* 6–7), took place in the spring in the temple of Astarte-Aphrodite, perhaps with some parallel event at the tomb of Adonis in Afqa/Aphaca (on this uncertain tradition see: Aliquot 2009, 59–61), with the involvement of the whole population, thus differing fundamentally from the Athenian Adonaia, which were private summer celebrations in which only women participated (Soyez 1977, 30–36, 60–67; Robertson 1982; Grottanelli 1985). In Byblos it was a two-day ceremony, the first day of which was devoted to lamenting the death of Adonis, first at homes then in public, while the resurrected god was celebrated on the second day (Luc. *D.Syr.* 6–7; Kyrrillos Theologos, *Commentarius in Isaïam*, PG LXX, 441. Soyez 1977, 35–39; Baudy 2002). Lucian says that the women of Byblos were expected to shave their heads on this occasion and those who did not want to do this had to engage in sacred prostitution for one day. This is perhaps an example of rites of feasting and sexual orgy, attested at funerals in the ancient Near East and North Africa as almost obligatory for young women (Soyez 1977, 39–41; Grottanelli 1985). A reflection of these practices is a Greek myth in which the sisters of Adonis were credited with giving origin to prostitution ([Apolod.] *Bibl.* 3.182–183). In this passage Nektanebo certainly refers to the Adonaia of Byblos, probably remarking upon the noisy ὄργια and ritual conflagration (Robertson 1982, 341–344).

5 † τὸν τοῦ λέοντος Ἄρεως θυμόν: it is not entirely clear why a person born in this unspecified hour should demonstrate the lion-like nature of Ares. The sentence continues with an allusion to the unpleasant adventure of Ares first related in the *Odyssey* (VIII 266–366): Helios, having spotted Ares and Aphrodite in the bed chamber, informed Aphrodite's husband Hephaistos about this act of marital infidelity and Hephaistos trapped the lovers in a mesh of fine but unbreakable bonds and then summoned other gods to watch them, freeing Ares only after Poseidon's intercession.

6 Δυσώμνυμον: this is a nickname of the Monkey, a sign in the Egyptian Zodiac (Stoneman 2007, 493).

7 Ζεὺς ... κριὸς Ἀμμών γενόμενος: Zeus (Jupiter) is in Aries. In Egyptian astrology Aries was in the center of the Sky. Because of this privileged position this was the best Zodiacal sign to mark the birth date of a king. The handbook of Julius Firmicus Maternus to those born under this sign promises a turbulent young age followed by successful adulthood (v 4.2): “Quicunque Iovem in Ariete habuerint, in prima aetate in omni actu turbantur, quamdiu conpleverint geniturae contraria. Sed cum haec tempora completa fuerint, tunc honestates tunc felices actus tunc bona tempora tunc proficiendi tempus tunc maximorum negotiorum actus decernuntur, tunc potentium et magnorum viro-  
rum amicitia copulantur, aut in magnis ac regiis domibus constitutis potentis administrationis officia creduntur, tunc patrimonia maxima consequuntur, et dominandi accipiunt potestatem, et ex uxoribus et filiis laetitiae relevantur augmento.” From the Egyptian point of view the proximity of Aquarius, associated with the Nile and with Osiris, was an additional bonus (Boll 1950b, 354; Stoneman 2007, 493–496).

Αἰγύπτιον ἄνθρωπον: for Nektanebo, Alexander is an Egyptian because his father is also Egyptian. Foreign rulers of Egypt were often portrayed as Egyptians, which was to erase, in the ideological sense, the shame of foreign domination. Presenting Alexander as an Egyptian in this section of the *Alexander Romance* indicates that it originated in the priestly establishment of Egypt in Alexander’s lifetime or soon after his death. By making the Macedonian conqueror the last Egyptian pharaoh reincarnate, the anonymous author of the Egyptian logos was trying to erase the disgrace of the Greco-Macedonian rule (Lloyd 1982, 48–49; Huß 1994, 131–137). The legend of the Egyptian origin of Alexander filtered down to even the Zoroastrian historical tradition, also hostile to the Macedonians. The Zoroastrian text *Ardā Wīrāz-namag* of the early Islamic age states that Alexander, prior to his conquest of Ērān šar (Persian Empire) lived in Egypt (Shahbazi 2003, 20–23).

κοσμοκράτορα: this expression appears a few times in the *Alexander Romance*, in reference to Alexander, Sesonchosis and once to Philip II. They are three out of seven mortals for whom this word is recorded in extant Greek sources, the other four being: in literary sources, King Archelaos (Michael Psellus, *Theologica* 96), and in inscriptions, Caracalla, Gordian III and the tetrarchs (IGR I.1063; IG XIV.926 = IGR III.387; SEG 25.746). The word κοσμοκράτωρ is, on the other hand, profusely attested in Christian literature, always referring to Satan, on the example of St. Paul’s *Letter to the Ephesians* (6.12): τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου. In general, this word is quite late, as it is attested

only in Hellenistic and Roman sources. In non-Christian literature it appears most often in astronomical works, commentaries to Aristophanes and Plato, in third-fourth c. *Orphic Hymns* and in magical papyri. It was applied to planets, to the Sun, to the Sun and the Moon, both understood as heavenly bodies and personified as Helios and Selene, to Zeus and exceptionally to Pan, equated with Zeus. One of the earliest and most significant attestations is in Manetho, known from a summary of Georgios Synkellos: 'Ο δὲ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις ἐπισημότατος Μανεθῶ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λ' δυναστειῶν γράψας ... ὁ χρόνος τὰ πάντα συνήξεν ἔτη ,γφνε' (3555), ἀρξάμενα τῷ ,αφπς' (1586) ἔτει τοῦ κόσμου καὶ λήξαντα εἰς τὸ ,ερμζ' (5147) κοσμικὸν ἔτος ἦτοι πρὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος κοσμοκρατορίας ἔτη που ιε' or "The illustrious Egyptian Manetho, writing of these same 30 Dynasties ... and the time which he assigns amounts in all to 3555 years, beginning with Anno mundi 1586 and ending with 5147, or some 15 years before the rule of the world by Alexander of Macedon." (*FGrH* 609 T11d, tr. W.G. Waddell, with corrections). This, with the exception of two more places in anonymous epigrams (*Anthologiae Graecae appendix*, epigram 3.256b.17 and 256c.10) is the only reference made to the word in ancient sources, apart from the *Alexander Romance*, in which the epithet κοσμοκράτωρ (or derivative κοσμοκρατορία) is applied to Alexander. The word κοσμοκράτωρ in non-Christian context is attested chiefly in Egypt where it was certainly applied to kings, as a passage from Horapollo testifies: Πάλιν δὲ τὸν βασιλέα κοσμοκράτορα νομίζοντες καὶ μνηνόντες (I 61). Manetho almost certainly drew his notion of Alexander's "rule of the world" (κοσμοκρατορία) from what was current in Egyptian religious and political language. The notion of a "lord/ruler of the world" is well-attested in Egyptian sources, from the Middle Kingdom until the Greco-Roman age. The oldest and best attested Egyptian phrase expressing it is "*nb r dr*," in use from the Middle Kingdom onwards, most commonly as an epithet of the principal gods of Egypt: Osiris, Amun, Re. The Egyptian sources reserve this notion almost exclusively for gods, but it is encountered frequently in a royal context as in some texts a god who addresses a king or is implored by a king bears the title "lord of the world." One poignant example of a crossing of these boundaries is in a document composed under Sesostri I and on the king's orders, known as the *Instruction of Amenemhat*, in which the king's father address Sesostri as *nb r dr*. With the usage of the expression "lord of the world" ebbing through the ages, one peak was in the fourth c. BC and in the Ptolemaic age, i.e. in the period when Manetho introduced to the Greek audience the idea of Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος κοσμοκρατορία as a turning point in the history of Egypt which came after thirty dynasties of pharaonic times. Alexander's eye-catching epithet κοσμοκράτωρ was adopted for the ideological usage of Roman emperors much later, in the third c. AD, when the threat from the Parthian and Sassanian empires rein-



vigorated interest in the greatest Western conqueror of Iran (Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2014). Manetho, extolling the pharaohs of the glorious past of Egypt, hinted at the aspirations of Sesonchosis/Sesostris to the universal kingship (*FGrH* 609 F2). In the Egyptian logos of the *Alexander Romance*, which found its origin in the Hellenistic times, Sesonchosis became the ideological predecessor of Alexander the *kosmokrator*. The notion of Alexander the *kosmokrator* played to the propaganda of the Ptolemies, whose monarchy was underpinned by the universal kingship of Alexander and whose capital city Alexandria was housing the tomb of Alexander as if in the center of *oikumene*. At the end of the fourth c. AD, Libanios saw in Alexandria a mounted statue of Alexander the ruler of the world standing on a base which represented the known world, illustrating the scope of his conquests (*Progymnasmata*, 12.27). The *Alexander Romance*, which took its final form in Alexandria about a century earlier, espouses the same notion of Alexander the *kosmokrator* (Pfister 1964, 60–63; Goukowsky 1978, 149–165; Payne 1991, 165–166; Polignac 1996; Nawotka 2003, 30–33).

8 Ζεὺς ... εὐδῖος μεσουρανήσας, κριὸς Ἀμμων γενόμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ Ὑδροχόου (καὶ) Ἰχθύων: Jupiter is now in Aries and, in Boll's interpretation (Boll 1914, 13, n. 3; also Stoneman 2007, 493), this puts Jupiter/J Zeus/Ammon in the position of the beginning of the world, from the Egyptian point of view at least. Ancient astrology believed that those born when Jupiter was in Aries had a life of success after a turbulent childhood; in the words of Firmicus Maternus: "Quicumque Iovem in Ariete habuerint, in prima aetate in omni actu turbantur, quamdiu conpleverint geniturae contraria. Sed cum haec tempora conpleta fuerint, tunc honestates tunc felices actus tunc bona tempora tunc proficiendi tempus tunc maximorum negotiorum actus decernuntur, tunc potentium et magnorum virorum amicitii copulantur, aut in magnis ac regiis domibus constitutis potentis administrationis officia creduntur, tunc patrimonia maxima consequuntur, et dominandi accipiunt potestatem, et ex uxoribus et filiis laetitiae relevantur augment" (V 4.2). Since Aries is a royal sign (Firmicus Maternus II 10.2: "Aries est signum in caelo masculinum aequinoctiale solstitiale regale"), this combination of Jupiter (i.e. Ammon, Alexander's father) and Aries is best suited for the ruler of the world (Stoneman 2007, 495).

9 ἀστραπή ... βροντή ... σεισμός: that the birth of the future ruler of the world is marked by appropriate signs on the Earth and in heaven is the illustration of a popular belief in antiquity that these natural signs accompany or announce important events, as in the famous scene of the selection of the next King of Persia: once the horse of Darius whinnied, there was lightning and thunder

(Hdt. 111 86). This is the only ancient account of celestial phenomena accompanying the birth of Alexander. More popular is the report that his birth coincided with the conflagration of the famous temple of Artemis in Ephesos and that the goddess could not save her shrine, being busy with assisting Olympias in labour: Timae. ap. Cic. *N.D.* 11 69; Cic. *Div.* 1 47; Hegesias *FGrH* 142 F3, ap. Plu. *Alex.* 3.6–7; Solinus 40.4. The story of signs and portents related to the birth of Alexander finds reflection in reports of similar signs accompanying the birth of Octavian, a known imitator of Alexander (Vigourt 2001, 311–313).

### Chapter 13

1 **τραφήτω**: the *Alexander Romance* approximates here the Athenian, and presumably the Greek in general, notion that a child in order to become a member of his biological family, had to be officially accepted by his father in the ceremony of *amphidromia* on the fifth or seventh day after his birth. The kyrios of the household could just as well decide not to rear the child and to expose the baby instead (Golden 1990, 23–24). In Greek cultural standards Philip had some freedom of choice as to the future of Olympias's child.

εἰς μνήμην παιδὸς τελευτήσαντος ἐκ τῆς προτέρας μου γυναικὸς καλεῖσθω Ἀλέξανδρος: there is no corroborating evidence on this other Alexander, son of Philip II. This section continues in line with what is known about Greek (i.e. Athenian) habits associated with childhood: a child received the name either at the *amphidromia*, or in better-off families, at a separate ceremony a few days later (Golden 1990, 23–24).

2 **στεφανηφορία**: either another allusion to the Athenian ceremony of *amphidromia* which was accompanied by decorating doors with a wreath of olives if a boy was born (Golden 1990, 23), or a reflection of the tradition in Egypt during Ptolemaic and Roman times to celebrate joyful occasions in the ruling family in this way (Ausfeld 1907, 129).

3 **λεοντοκόμου**: a feature of Alexander, celebrated and imitated by later kings and generals, was his hair combed back above the forehead with a centre parting so that it fell to the sides like a lion's mane (Plu. *Pomp.* 2.1; Plu. *Mor.* 335c; Ael. *VH* XII 14), although the adjective *λεοντόκομος* in reference to Alexander is not attested outside the *Alexander Romance*. Alexander was self-conscious in his image-building, projecting his lion-like nature using the template of his ancestor Achilles, the most lion-like of all Greek heroes (Stewart 1993, 76–78).

ἐτερόφθαλμον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶχε λευκόν, τὸ δὲ μέλαν here the word ἐτερόφθαλμον: should be understood not in its basic meaning, “one-eyed,” but as “with different-colored eyes” (*LSJ* s.v.). Tzetzes (*Chiliades* XI 90–93) is the only other author to say that Alexander’s eyes differed in color, probably following, as in many other places, Ps.-Callisthenes. This is a comparatively rare condition, medically known as heterochromia iridis (Pearce 2003, 248).

τοὺς δὲ ὀδόντας ὀξεῖς: the sharp teeth of Alexander is another anecdotal detail unknown from other sources.

4 παιδαγωγὸς ἦν αὐτοῦ† Λακρητητις μέλανος: this place is corrupt both with respect to names and functions. Since the list of people responsible for the care and education of Alexander is chronological, it should begin with his wet nurse who is here conflated with his guardian (παιδαγωγός). It seems that rec. β and γ preserve more faithfully the text of the lost archetype here as they read: ἐγένετο δὲ αὐτοῦ τροφὸς Λεκάνη ἡ Μέλαντος ἀδελφή, παιδαγωγὸς δὲ καὶ ἀνατροφεὺς Λεωνίδης (“His nurse was Lekane the sister of Melas, his tutor and attendant was Leonides,” tr. R. Stoneman). This better agrees with other sources which attest the wet nurse of Alexander was Lanike, sister of his companion Kleitos the Black, or *Melas* in Greek (Curt. VIII 1.21; Arr. *An.* IV 9.3; Athen. IV 2; indirectly Ael. *VH.* XII 26 and Just. XII 6.10 without the name of the wet nurse) who saved Alexander’s life at the Granicus and whom Alexander killed in a drunken rage in Marakanda in the autumn of 328 BC (Heckel 2006, 86–87, s.v. Cleitus [2]).

τροφεὺς Λευκονίδης: probably a corruption. Other early versions (β, Val.) have here Λεωνίδης which agrees with the attested name of the guardian/ tutor of Alexander who was Leonidas, a relative of Olympias (Plu. *Alex.* 5.7).

διδάσκαλος: Merkelbach (1977, 29) believes that after the Egyptian logos, the *Alexander Romance* follows a biography of Alexander which could not do without the account of his childhood and teachers. It is of course possible but utterly conjectural without a shred of evidence. Information about the teachers of Alexander, others than Aristotle, is difficult to verify since in most cases the *Alexander Romance* is the only source listing their names. In the age when the *Romance* was created, *paideia* was a subject of enormous interest among both intellectuals and authors of Greek novels, from Plutarch to Favorinus, Flavius Philostratus and Lucian. Val. and Arm. refer to Favorinus (F24 and F24a, Mensching) in the context of the teachers of Alexander but there is no reason to think that the original list of teachers in the *Alexander Romance* follows Favorinus (Leo 1901, 253, n. 2; Mensching 1963, 102), nor that Favorinus was mentioned in the lost archetype. Alexander of the *Alexander Romance* is a mixed-race person who becomes truly Greek not by virtue of birth but thanks to a classical

education (Whitmarsh 2008, 8–11; Stephens 2008, 56–57). John of Antioch (25, Mariev) conveys the tradition, present also here, that Alexander was associated with the best masters.

γεωμετρίας Πελοποννήσιος Μένιππος: this Menippos is otherwise unknown. This may be a reflection of Alexander's attempt at learning geometry; as a king he reportedly wanted to hire one Menaichmos to teach him geometry, and the mathematician replied that in geometry there are the same standards for everyone, presumably declining the offer: “ὦ βασιλεῦ,” εἶπε, “κατὰ μὲν τὴν χώραν ὁδοὶ εἰσιν ἰδιωτικαὶ καὶ βασιλικαί, ἐν δὲ τῇ γεωμετρίᾳ πᾶσιν ἐστὶν ὁδὸς μία” (Stob. II 31.115, after Serenos. Jouanno 2002, 148). A similar anecdote was told about Ptolemy I and Euklides (Procl. *In Euc.*, p. 68. Kliem 1932; Brocker 1966, 50, n. 69). Brocker (1966, 50–51) speculates that Onesikritos or Marsyas could be a source on Menaichmos as Alexander's teacher.

ῥήτοριχου δὲ λόγου Ἀθηναῖος Ἀριστομένης: this place is most probably corrupt: ms. A has here Ἀθηναῖοι Ἀριστομένης emendated by Kroll to Ἀθηναῖος Ἀριστομένης, while other early versions read (Ἀν)αξιμένης Ἀριστοκλέους ὁ Λαμψακηνός (β, Val., Arm.). They may render more correctly the reading of the lost archetype (α). If so, this would reflect the antiquarian tradition of a teacher of Alexander (V. Max., VII 3 ext. 4; *Suda*, s.v. Ἀναξιμένης Ἀριστοκλέους Λαμψακηνός. On this rhetorical writer but without a reference to Alexander also D.L. II 3, VI 57). Anaximenes of Lampsakos is known to have written a treatise on types of speeches (Quint. *Inst.* III 4.9), generally assumed to be identical with Pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* since it begins with a letter of dedication to Alexander the Great. The dedicatory letter is later than the *Rhetorica* itself, so it may have been attached to the anonymous treatise in memory of a teacher of Alexander the Great (Weißenberger 2008). Pausanias (VI 18.3–4; also *Suda*, s.v. Ἀναξιμένης Ἀριστοκλέους Λαμψακηνός), in his anecdote of Anaximenes tricking Alexander into not destroying Lampsakos and not enslaving its inhabitants in spite of the city having taking the wrong side in Alexander's war with Darius, states that Anaximenes was known to Philip II and Alexander. The testimony of Valerius Maximus proves that in the first c. AD at the latest, Anaximenes of Lampsakos was known as a teacher of Alexander. Although there is no decisive proof of the veracity of this information, we know at least that Ps.-Callisthenes was working within the established (anecdotal) tradition on the teachers of Alexander.

Μιλήσιος Ἀριστοτέλης: it was Aristotle son of Nikomachos of Stageira in 343/2 BC who was selected by Philip II to become tutor of his son out of a number of Greek luminaries who applied for the job, including Isokrates (Plu. *Alex.* 7; Apollod. *Gramm. FGrH* 244 F38; D.L. V 4; Just. XII 6.8, 16.7). The reason for Philip's choice was, apart from Aristotle's intellectual reputation, also the

family history: his father Nikomachos was a physician of King Amyntas III, father of Philip (D.L. v 1) and for this reason alone Aristotle was certainly more trusted by the Macedonian court than most other Greek intellectuals. Some early versions of the *Alexander Romance* have the name of Aristotle here; rec. β reads: Ἀριστοτέλης Νικομάχου ὁ Σταγειρίτης, (also Val.), while Arm. adds that he was of Miletos. It seems that this garbled text is a result of double confusion between Anaximenes, a teacher of Alexander who preceded Aristotle in the text, and the famous philosopher Anaximenes of Miletos, and then of Anaximenes with Aristotle (Brocker 1966, 51). It is possible that the creator of this confusion was a scribe who wrote Μιλήσιος on the margin of the line of the text which contained the names of Anaximenes and Aristotle and then the marginal remark was incorporated into the main text, giving Μιλήσιος Ἀριστοτέλης (Ausfeld 1907, 37).

Λαμψάκης: this is probably not a person but a transposed place of origin for Anaximenes, Alexander's teacher of rhetoric (Stoneman 2007, 499–500).

5 διδασχὴν πᾶσαν: sources other than the *Alexander Romance* say nothing about colleagues of Alexander in the “school” of Aristotle in Mieza, although some of Alexander's companions are referred to as those who were raised with him. We know that in the fourth c. BC at least (if not earlier too) a king and a crown prince of Macedonia were accompanied by a select group of aristocrats, some of whom were the king's bodyguards, or *somatophylakes*, some his pages. Presumably some aristocratic boys selected by Philip II went with Alexander to Mieza to accompany the crown prince and also to receive education under the guidance of Aristotle (Lane Fox 1973, 51–54; Carney 2003; Nawotka 2010, 41–42).

6 Καππαδοκίας ἄρχοντες: Kappadokia is a country in eastern Anatolia, In the fourth c. BC it was a Persian satrapy (OP Katpatuka), with no attested ties to the Macedonian court. Kappadokia was a horse-breeding country (Servius, ad III 704; Solinus 45), part of whose tribute to the Great King consisted of 1500 horses (Str. XI 13.8). It is possible that the *Alexander Romance* reflects a spurious tradition of the Kappadokian origin of Alexander's horse, attested also in *Excerpta Vaticana* (202) and indirectly in Solinus (45.5–8) who mentions it among examples illustrating the superior quality of Kappadokian horses (Anderson 1930, 8–9; Stoneman 2007, 500). This sentence introduces the celebrated story of the taming of Boukephalas by Alexander (Plu. *Alex.* 6; Zonar. IV 8) continued in I 15 and I 17. Boukephalas was the most famous horse in antiquity whose name Βουκεφάλας (“bull-headed,” *LSJ*, s.v. βουκεφάλος), according to most evidence (Plin. *Nat.* VIII 154; Arr. *An.* v 19.5; Solinus 45.8; *Excerpta Vati-*

*cana* 183; *Sch. in Ar. Nu.* 23; *EGen.* β208; *EM*, s.v. Βουκέφαλος; *Suda*, s.v. κοππατίας; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* I 809–814) originated from a mark of an ox-head on its thigh or shoulder, or from a distinctive white mark on the forehead. Some in antiquity apparently understood it literally as “ox-head,” as shown in Seleukid coins representing a horned horse (Miller and Walters 2004) and surviving in some sources (Gel. v 2.1; Solinus 45.8). The better tradition claims that Boukephalas came from the herd of a Thessalian Philonikes (Plu. *Alex.* 6.1; Plin. *Nat.* VIII 154; Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, IV 489–491) or simply that it was a Thessalian horse (*EGen.* β208; *EM*, s.v. Βουκέφαλος). The story, as told in the greatest detail by Plutarch and ultimately originating in Chares, who may have been an eye-witness, has a large and beautiful horse named Boukephalas offered for sale to Philip. Nobody was able to ride it and only Alexander, who had noticed that the horse’s wild behaviour resulted from the fact that it was afraid of its own shadow, was able to calm the animal down, mount it and then ride it. The Macedonians, themselves expert horsemen, were amazed and Philip reportedly exclaimed: “My son, seek thee out a kingdom equal to thyself; Macedonia has no room for thee!” Boukephalas was then given to Alexander as a gift by his father’s Greek companion Demaratos of Corinth who had bought it for 13 talents, the highest price for a horse in antiquity (Chares *FGrH* 125 F18, ap. Gel. v 2.1–3; Plu. *Alex.* 6; Arr. *An.* v 19.4–6; D.S. XVII 76.6. Quotation above is from Plu. *Alex.* 6.8, tr. B. Perrin).

ἀνθρωποφάγον: this is a legendary detail, known also from Tzetzes (*Chiliades* I 810), as horses do not eat human flesh although they can inflict wounds from biting humans (Baynham 1995, 8). It relates to the myth of Herakles capturing the man-eating mares of Diomedes, a king of Thrace. Historical Alexander frequently measured himself against Herakles, his mythological ancestor (Anderson 1930, 13; Huttner 1997, 102–123; Stoneman 2007, 500; Amitay 2010, 9–77).

7 παροιμιακὸς λόγος “ἐγγὺς ἀγαθοῦ παραπέφυκε κακόν”: an abbreviated and transformed quotation from Menander (fr. 337 (407), Koerte):

ὦ Παρμένων, οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθὸν τῷ βίῳ  
 φυόμενον ὥσπερ δένδρον ἐκ ρίζης μιᾶς,  
 ἀλλ’ ἐγγὺς ἀγαθοῦ παραπέφυκε καὶ κακόν,  
 ἐκ τοῦ κακοῦ τ’ ἤνεγκεν ἀγαθὸν ἢ φύσις.

## Chapter 14

1 **δωδεκαέτης**: the deeds of Alexander, the twelve-years old boy described in this chapter, are unknown to other sources. This statement may, however, reflect the Egyptian idea that at this age the true nature of a man is revealed: in the case of Alexander, the nature of a warrior (Thiel 1974, 172).

2 **Πάτερ**: already in epic poetry this was the way of respectfully addressing elder males, even when unrelated (e.g. Hermes disguised as a mortal youth to Priam: Hom. *Il.* xxiv 362; *LSJ* s.v. 111). But here this conventional address is laden with dramatic irony, bearing in mind that Alexander does not know the identity of his real father, nor that he is about to kill him (Thiel 1974, 172; Bounoure 2004, 232; Stoneman 2007, 501).

5 **Σεαυτὸν μέμφου ἀστρολόγε**: this is a complex literary motive unrelated to the life story of the historical Alexander. To a degree it draws upon an anecdote of the philosopher and astronomer Thales of Miletos, best known from Diogenes Laertios, albeit with no verbal echoes, “that once, when he was taken out of doors by an old woman in order that he might observe the stars, he fell into a ditch, and his cry for help drew from the old woman the retort, “How can you expect to know all about the heavens, Thales, when you cannot even see what is just before your feet?”” (I 34, translated by R.D. Hicks; also Pl. *Tht.* 174a). Thus it belongs to a topos of a seer unable to predict his fate (Krappe 1927). Some maintain that the story of Alexander slaying Nektanebo reflects the Egyptian belief that a pretender may become a legitimate pharaoh by killing his predecessor (Thiel 1974, 172; Bounoure 2004, 232). But perhaps the closest to the truth is Kroll’s (1919, 1721) purely literary explanation that Ps.-Callisthenes simply no longer needs Nektanebo in the storyline. He is thus disposed of and the narrative returns to (more or less) historical events. Alexander’s speech to the dead Nektanebo (I 14.9–10) is not extant in other early versions of the *Romance* (β, Arm., Val., Syr.). Both it and Alexander’s words to the dying Nektanebo contain bitter accusations lodged against Nektanebo, playing on the motive of avenger whom the son of Olympias was to become, just as in the words that Nektanebo had once spoken to Olympias. Alexander distances himself from the astrology and Oriental wisdom in general represented by Nektanebo, becoming in the following sections of the *Alexander Romance* the son of Ammon alone and not of Nektanebo, regardless of whether he learned the truth of his father here (Franco 1999, 81). In late antiquity the story of Nektanebo, father of Alexander, coming to an end in this chapter, was borrowed from the *Alexander Romance* by Moses Khorentasi’s *History of Armenia* (11 13), too.

## Chapter 15

1 Φίλιππος ... ἔπεμψεν εἰς Δελφοὺς χρησμὸν ληψόμενος: here Philip's application for oracular response is apocryphal and serves only the literary purpose of demonstrating Alexander as the conqueror of the world. The historical Philip had close ties to the Delphic shrine and oracle, having fought the Sacred War with the Phokaians in defence of Apollo's temple, as a result taking the seat on the Amphiktyonic Council formerly occupied by the Phokaians and receiving *promanteia*, a coveted privilege of priority in consulting the oracle (Cawkwell 1978, 62–68, 77–113; Buckler 1989, 30–142). Pausanias records an oracle received by Philip from Delphi in 336 BC as a response to his question pertaining to the war he was launching against the Persian Empire: ἔστεπται μὲν ὁ ταῦρος, ἔχει τέλος, ἔστιν ὁ θύσων (VIII 7.6: "The bull is crowned; the consummation is at hand; the sacrificer is ready," tr. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod) and, Pausanias says, the oracle pertained to the upcoming death of Philip.

2 Βουκέφαλος: the name of Alexander's horse is introduced for the first time. It should be: Βουκεφάλας. On the etymology of its name see commentary to I 13.6.

νέον Ἡρακλέα: in the *Alexander Romance* Boukephalas is a man-eater, like the mares of Diomedes captured by Herakles.

## Chapter 16

1 Ἀριστοτέλει τῷ Μιλησίῳ σοφιστῇ: the adjective *Milesios* is applied to Aristotle in this chapter as a consequence of the earlier mistake (see commentary to I 13.4). This phrase should not be interpreted as a reference to any links between Aristotle and the sophistic movement of the fifth c. BC. In Greek of the Imperial age the word σοφιστής was used to mean "intellectual" and applied not only to philosophers but also to orators. Under the Empire, especially in the age aptly named the Second Sophistic (Philostr. *vs* 481), sophists constituted the very intellectual and social apex of the Roman East, famous for their exclusivity and close ties with the Imperial political elite (Eshleman 2012, 1–12, 23–28, 38–490; Puech 2002, 10–15, 23–35); this is how this name is applied to Aristotle here. This whole chapter is almost certainly a literary fiction: other sources in general convey no detailed information about Alexander's education with Aristotle in the Sanctuary of the Nymphs in Mieza from 343/2 to 340 BC, except for Zonaras' statement about the esoteric knowledge allegedly taught to Alexander by Aristotle: ἐποπτικούς καὶ ἀκροαματικούς καλοῦντες αὐτούς (IV 8).



5 Χαίροις κοσμοκράτωρ· σὺ γὰρ εἶ βασιλεὺς μέγιστος: Aristotle recognizes the wisdom of Alexander: a topos of a famous teacher recognizing the future greatness of his pupil, just as Socrates recognized it in Plato (Paus. I 30.3; D.L. III 5; Olymp. *Vit.Pl.* 2.23–41. Bieler 1935, 37; Brocker 1966, 53). The clever answer of Alexander to Aristotle's question was popular especially in the Eastern tradition of Alexander legends (Brocker 1966, 53). For κοσμοκράτωρ see commentary to I 12.7.

## Chapter 17

This chapter contains the alternative version of the story of the taming of Boukephalas (for the more conventional rendering of it see commentary to I 13.6). This version of the *Alexander Romance* accentuates the exceptional heroic personality of Alexander, dominating both men and animals (Baynham 1995, 5–9).

2 Πτολεμαῖος (ὁ) ὕστερον σωτὴρ ἐπικληθεῖς: the later satrap and King of Egypt, Ptolemy I Soter. He was an older companion of Alexander and one of his co-called “boyhood friends,” a group of young aristocrats appointed by Philip II to provide his son with good advice on how to behave, presumably in a way pleasing to his father (Heckel 1992, 205–208). He may have been a member of a collateral line of the Argead family (Satyr. fr. 21; Theoc. 17.26–27; *OGIS* I 54, l. 6) and in gossip, an illegitimate son of Philip II (Curt. IX 8.22; Paus. I 6.2. Heckel 2006, 235, with reference). According to Pausanias (I 8.6), our only source which states this expressly, Ptolemy I received the epithet Soter (“saviour”) in 304 BC from the Rhodians grateful for his assistance during the epic Siege of Rhodes by Demetrios Poliorketes. This statement is generally believed in modern scholarship, especially when evidence is adduced from Diodorus (XX 100) who described in detail how the Rhodians celebrated their ally after the siege (Habicht 1970, 109; Hauben 1977, 339; Will 1979, 201; Johnson 2000). Diodorus, however, does not use the word σωτὴρ in reference to Ptolemy. This and the strange absence of this epithet in Rhodian epigraphy and literary evidence casts some doubt on the Rhodian origin of the epiclesis of Ptolemy I, especially that Pausanias is notorious for his careless recording of Ptolemaic history. Ptolemy I is attested as Soter no earlier than in 262 BC, in coins (Svoronos 1904, 123, no. 821: a silver tetradrachm of the 23rd year of Ptolemy II) and in inscriptions (*Milet* I.3.139). It is therefore possible that the epiclesis Soter was coined for Ptolemy I by his son Ptolemy II in 263–259 BC, perhaps in 262 BC (Hazzard 1992; Stoneman 2007, 506). For a reconstruction of Ptolemy's career see now Lane Fox 2015.



FIGURE 5 *The vaulted tunnel leading to the stadium in Olympia. Olympia is the venue of chariot-races won by Alexander in the Alexander Romance. The whole event is fictitious testifying, however, to the high prestige of the Olympic games in late antiquity.*

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## Chapter 18

Chapters 18 and 19 tell the apocryphal story of Alexander competing in Olympia in chariot races, the most prestigious of all Greek sports and the most popular spectator sport in late antiquity. A horse or horses of Philip II won a race in Olympia in 356 BC, and, in an anecdote related by Plutarch and Justin, the news of this victory was brought to Philip II on the same day on which he learned that Alexander was born (Plu. *Alex.* 3.8; Just. xii 16.6). This was the first historical example of any Macedonian allowed to compete in the Olympic Games, which was reserved for Greeks. Herodotus attributes an Olympic victory to Alexander I, an ancestor of Alexander the Great, but since his name is lacking in the surviving list of Olympic victors, this is perhaps but a reflection of the Macedonian court propaganda (Hdt. v 23; but see Borza 1982, 8–13). Philip II, Alexander's father, is known to have used sport, or rather the victories of his horses in Panhellenic games, to stress his Greek pedigree and to legitimize his power in Greece (Kyle 2007, 232–235). If we can trust Plutarch, the historical Alexander was quite disdainful of professional athletes. Reportedly,

while asked whether he would compete in Olympia, Alexander responded that he would only do so if other kings were competing (Plu. *Alex.* 4.10; *Mor.* 331b. Adams 2007 thinks that the anecdote is apocryphal) and indeed in the *Alexander Romance* he competes against sons of kings, satraps and strategoi (1 19.1–2). In Miletos while shown statues of Olympic and Pythian victors Alexander was to ask “Where were the men with bodies like these when the barbarians were besieging your city?” (Plu. *Mor.* 180a, tr. F.C. Babbitt). On the other hand, however, Alexander did organize sporting events for his troops and Macedonians of his age are known to have competed in Olympia (Kyle 2007, 235–241). The Olympic episode in the *Alexander Romance* is a self-contained story, possibly early-Hellenistic, probably devised to enhance the status of the Olympic Games in an age which brought great competition among the traditional athletic events in continental Greece and new Panhellenic festivals in the eastern Mediterranean (Meyer 2016).

1 Ὁ οὖν Φίλιππος ἰλαρὸς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ τέκνου ἐλπίδι γεγηθότως διετέλει: in standard editions of rec. β and γ this sentence is printed at the end of Chapter 17, to which it really belongs, as it rounds up Philip’s admiration for his son’s feat of taming Boukephalas.

2 εἰς Πίσας: Pisa is a region in the western Peloponnese, on the River Alpheios, in historical times belonging to Elis, known principally for Olympia which lies in Pisa. In later sources the name “Pisa” could be used interchangeably with “Olympia” (Lafond and Olshausen 2007).

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ‘... οὐχὶ πάτερ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἀγωνίσασθαι.’: there is a lacuna after Philip’s words are announced and before Alexander’s answer. It must have been something like “Do you wish to see the Olympic contest?,” surviving in Arm. (49, sim. in Syr. I 18).

5 Ἡφαιστίωνι: Hephaistion was Alexander’s closest friend and, in the late anecdotal tradition, his homosexual lover (Epictetus, *Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*, II 22.17; Ael. *VH* XII 7; Luc. *DMort.* 12.4. Reames-Zimmermann 1999; Ogden 2009b). Some believe, but with no sure evidence, that he was among the aristocratic youth who pursued their education with Alexander under Aristotle (Heckel 2006, 133). During the expedition to the East, Hephaistion was one of seven *somatophylakes* (king’s bodyguards), by Diodorus even called “leader of *somatophylakes*” (XVII 61.3). Despite mediocre military leadership qualities, Hephaistion advanced fast through the ranks, owing everything to Alexander’s favours, as Alexander was to say: ἐάν τις αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον ἀφέληται, μηδὲν ἔστιν, or “without Alexander’s favour he was nothing” (Plu. *Alex.* 47.11, tr. B. Per-



FIGURE 6 A marble relief, now in the Archaeological Museum in Thassaloniki, representing Hephaistion, the closest friend of Alexander. The inscription, commissioned by a certain Diogenes, testifies to the heroic cult of Hephaistion instituted by Alexander.

PHOTO K. NAWOTKA

rin). For all his elevated military rank, Hephaistion is not recorded as ever having been entrusted with an important independent combat command. At some point he received also the highest court position of *hazarapatiš* or *chiliarchos*. Hephaistion was an accomplished intrigue monger, instrumental in the fall of Philotas, son of Parmenion in the autumn of 330 BC. As a reward for his participation in the trial and tortures of Philotas, Hephaistion received the joint command of companion cavalry together with Kleitos “the Black”. In 327 BC he again distinguished himself in leading other Macedonian courtiers in false accusations, this time against the historian Kallisthenes, who had opposed Alexander’s policy of introducing *proskynesis* or the Oriental ceremonial bow to the European part of his court. Hephaistion’s arrogance and propensity to intrigue led to frequent conflicts with other generals and courtiers, including Krateros and Eumenes in the first instance. Hephaistion was among those in Alexander’s court who were most enthusiastic about their king’s Orientalizing

policy. At the mass wedding in Susa in the spring of 324 BC he was rewarded by Alexander by being married to Drypetis, the sister of Stateira, the royal bride and daughter of Darius III. In the winter of 324/3 BC in Ekbatana, Hepaistion died, almost certainly through the excessive consumption of alcohol. This led to Alexander's ostentatious grieving, culminating in the cremation of Hephaistion's body in Babylon on a gigantic pyre reportedly worth 10,000 or 12,000 talents (Plu. *Alex.* 72.5; D.S. XVII 115.5–6; Just. XI 12.12). Alexander wanted to proclaim Hepaistion a god, but settled for the heroic cult which followed the response he received from Ammon's oracle in Siwah (Plu. *Alex.* 75.2; Arr. *An.* VII 14.7 and 23.8; Just. XI 12.12); this heroic cult is attested by a marble plate with the inscription Διογένης Ἡφαιστίωνι ἥρωι (*SEG* 40.547), now in the Thessaloniki Museum. Hephaistion's premature death had a devastating effect on Alexander in the last months of his life (Heckel 1992, 65–90).

6 Νικόλαος: both he and other participants in the chariot races are unknown from other sources and almost certainly fictitious. Akarnania, a land in the north-west of Greece, bordering the Ionian Sea, Epirus and Aetolia, was not a monarchy but a federal state (*koinon*), at least from the early fourth c. BC until the Roman age. It was a backward, economically and militarily weak region, for most if its history subservient to the leading powers in Greece: to Athens for much of the fifth c. BC, to Sparta after the Peloponnesian War, from 375 BC to Athens again, to Macedonia after Chaironeia and in the Hellenistic age either to Epirus or Macedonia or the Aetolian League. In the Battle of Chaironeia the Akarnanians fought with Athenians and together with them they experienced a crushing defeat at the hands of Philip II (Aesch. 3.97–98; Tod, *GHI* 178. On Akarnania see: Larsen 1968, 89–95, 264–273; Dany 1999). But since the narrative in this and the next chapter is utterly fictional, it would be too risky to take the remark of the father of Nikolaos killed by Philip (I 19.4) as a reference for Akarnanian casualties of war suffered on the battlefield of Chaironeia.

πλούτῳ καὶ τύχῃ: wealth and chance were not only regular nouns but, conventionally written with capital letters, personifications: Ploutos and Tyche. Ploutos, first attested in Homer (*Od.* V 125–128), then in the classical age and later linked with Eleusinian mysteries, never achieved much popularity in cult or mythological stories. Tyche, known to Hesiod (*Th.* 360) achieved great importance in the Hellenistic age when she was recognized as an omnipotent, random force, guiding seemingly the unexplainable changes of fate of so many princes and kingdoms in this age. The cult of Tyche, attested from the fourth c. BC, tended to concentrate on good fortune (Agathe Tyche). Tyche, Pausanias (IX 16.1–2) shows, could be represented in art with a child personifying Ploutos (Villard 1997: Tyche with Ploutos, 118 nos. 11–14; Johannsen 2010). In Chapters

18–19, Book I of the *Alexander Romance* the fate of Nikolaos, over-reliant on wealth and luck, illustrates the unstable nature of Tyche.

7 Μὴ οὕτως γαυριῶ Νικόλαε βασιλεῦ, ὥς ἱκανὸν ἔχων περὶ τῆς αὔριον ἐνέχυρον ζῶῃς: this may reflect Epicurean philosophy: σὺ δὲ τῆς αὔριον οὐκ ὦν κύριος ἀναβάλλῃ τὸν καιρὸν (fr. 204, Usener, ap. Stob. III 16.29. Stoneman 2007, 508)

10 δόρατί σε λήψομαι: Alexander announces to Nikolaos that he will conquer Akarnania. In antiquity a winner in a war, especially when a pitched battle decided its outcome, became the legitimate ruler of the δορίκτητος χώρα, or the land conquered with a spear (Mehl 1980–1981).

## Chapter 19

6 νεωκόρος: “temple warden,” originally a temple official in Greece. In some temples already in the classical age *neokoros* was the senior official of a temple, e.g. Xenophon (*An.* v 3.6) uses this term for the *Bagabuxša* or μεγαβύζος in Greek, the chief administrator of the Artemisium of Ephesos (Briant 1966, 721–722). In the Hellenistic age and later the *neokoros* was a temple official, usually not a priest, but assisting priests in their duties and responsible for administrative matters. It is attested especially in Asia Minor, but also in Delphi, Delos and to a lesser extent in many other parts of the Mediterranean, although not in Olympia. In the Imperial age the office of *neokoros* often belonged to the *leitourgiai*, and was assumed by members of the local elite. Under the Empire *neokoros* became either the honorific title of a city maintaining and supervising an important temple, like Ephesos the *neokoros* of Artemis (*Act.Ap.* 19.35), or, more often, the title awarded by the Senate, with the consent of the Emperor to Greek cities housing temples of the Imperial cult (Friesen 1993, 50–59; Burrell 2004). In this place this word was used because it carried great prestige, without any connection to Olympia which was never endowed with this title and the only *neokoros* attested in Olympia is the title of the people of Smyrna (*neokoros* on account of a temple of the Emperor) who commissioned a statue to be set up in Olympia (*IOlympia* 55).

Νικόλαον ἐνίκησας the prophecy delivered by the *neokoros* plays upon the meaning of the name Νικόλαος derived from the noun νίκη (“victory.” Taller-Bonvalot 1994, 166).

## Chapter 20

1 Φιλίππου, γαμοῦντα δὲ τοῦτον τὴν ἀδελφὴν Ἀττάλου Κλεοπάτραν: the *Alexander Romance* conveys the celebrated story of the seventh marriage of Philip II, known from other sources too. The details of this differ in the various accounts. In 337 BC Philip married a young Macedonian woman, whose name in most sources is Kleopatra (Satyr. *FGrH* 631 F25; D.S. XVI.93.9; Plu. *Alex.* 9.6; Paus. VIII 7.7; Just. IX 5.8, 7), with only Arrian claiming that it was Eurydike (*An.* III 6.5). All sources (Satyr. *FGrH* 631 F25; D.S. XVI 93.9; Plu. *Alex.* 9.7; Paus. VIII 7.7), except for Justin (IX 5.8), and in one place Diodorus (XVII 2.3), and the *Alexander Romance* attest that she was a niece, not a sister of Attalos, the Macedonian general whom Philip shortly after the marriage ceremony dispatched to Asia Minor with Parmenion to lead Macedonian forces in the first stage of the planned war with Persia. Argead kings, Philip II and Alexander, practiced polygamy and they did not have to divorce in order to marry again. The claims of Justin (IX 5.8, 7.1) and of the *Alexander Romance* that Olympias had been repudiated by Philip before he married Kleopatra most likely result from the deficient knowledge of the Macedonian royal polygamy and reflect the prevailing views of the age of the Roman Empire that monogamous marriage is the only way imaginable in a civilized society. Philip's biographer Satyros lists six marriages of Philip preceding the one with Kleopatra, all of them related to foreign policy aims. None of them caused any tension between Philip and Olympias reflected in the extant sources, the reason probably being the established position of Olympias as the *de facto* first wife by virtue of being mother of the crown prince. The seventh marriage of Philip caused a rift between the king and Olympias and Alexander precisely because they were afraid that the son of Kleopatra, if one were born, might be declared crown prince, robbing Alexander of prospects of inheriting Macedonia: *Alexandrum quoque regni aemulum fratrem ex nouerca susceptum timuisse* (Just. IX 7). Kleopatra would have then replaced Olympias as the most important woman in Macedonia (Carney 1987; Greenwalt 1989; Ogden 1999a, xiv–xvi; Carney 2006, 22–26). The violent incident at the wedding party was only one of a number of symptoms of a rift between Philip II and Alexander in 337 BC (Nawotka 2010, 73–75).

2 ὅταν μέντοι καὶ γὰρ ἐκδώσω τὴν ἑμαυτοῦ μητέρα πρὸς γάμον, καλέσω σε εἰς τοὺς ἐμῆς μητρὸς γάμους: these words of Alexander are not attested in any other source, but their witty and malicious tone means that they are not unlikely, having in mind his rhetorical training and the tense atmosphere at the wedding party.

## Chapter 21

1 Λυσίας: no Lysias participating in this wedding party is known to other sources. More or less the same words as attributed here to Lysias were spoken by Attalos in Plutarch's account (*Alex.* 9.8).

2 Ἀλέξανδρος ... τὴν κύλικα ἐπετίναξε τῷ Λυσίᾳ: outside of the *Alexander Romance* the verb ἐπιτινάσσω appears only in Basil and Ioannes Chrysostomos with the meaning “erschüttern” (*LBG*, s.v.). The earlier Greek knows only the simple form τινάσσω “shake or brandish” (*LSJ*, s.v.). The compound form with ἐπι- must mean in this context “hurled at.” Plutarch claims that both Alexander and Attalos threw goblets at each other but they both missed the opponent (*Plu. Alex.* 9.9. Alexander's clash with Attalos also *Just.* IX 7.3). Alexander exacted his revenge on Attalos very soon: when he became king upon Philip's death, Alexander spurned Attalos' entreaties and dispatched a commando headed by a Hekataios who executed Attalos in the midst of his soldiers in Asia Minor, with the second general and Attalos' father-in-law Parmenion prudently taking side of the king (*D.S.* XVII 2.3–6; *Curt.* VI 9.17; *Just.* XI 5.1, XII 6.14). The execution of Attalos took place most probably in the second half of 335 BC (*Nawotka* 2010, 88–89).

3 Εὐρώπην ἐκβαθρῶσαι: the verb ἐκβαθρῶ is a *hapax legomenon*. A similar verb ἐκβαθρεῦσαι is also late, attested no earlier than Clement of Rome. Both are probably derived from the noun τὸ βάθρον (itself a derivative of βαίνω, *EDG*, s.v.) meaning “base, foundation” (*LSJ*, s.v.), both in the material and figurative sense. When preceded by the particle ἐκ- a verb derived from it must refer to shaking this foundation. This scene of Philip drawing his sword on Alexander in defense of the honor of Attalos, the guardian of Philip's new wife, and losing balance because of anger and inebriation to be ridiculed by his son is known also from Plutarch (*Alex.* 9.9–10). Justin (IX 7.4) conveys a less colorful but perhaps more likely version of the events with Philip drawing his sword at Alexander and being restrained from using it by his friends.

4 ἥρπαξεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ ξίφος καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνακεκλιμένους ἡμισφαγεῖς ποιεῖ: the key word in this phrase is ἡμισφαγεῖς, a *hapax legomenon*, most probably meaning “half slain” (*LSJ*, s.v.). Later versions of the *Alexander Romance* are more unambiguous in their account of the incident at Kleopatra's wedding, comparing it to the mythological battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths or to the slaughter of the suitors by Odysseus (β, γ, *Arm.*), thus suggesting that Philip's guests were all killed by Alexander. Ms. A, most probably after the lost



archetype (α), uses the word ἡμισφαγεῖς figuratively, showing the terror which struck among the guests, leaving Lysias dead and Philip humiliated.

ἐρχεται πρὸς τὴν μητέρα ἑκδικὸς τῶν κατ' αὐτῆς γάμων: this is a reference to Nektanebo's prophecy in I 4.7. Historical Olympias left Pella for her brother's Epirus upon Philip's last marriage, while Alexander went to an unnamed Illyrian king who was his guest-friend (Plu. *Alex.* 9.11; Just. IX 7.5–7).

## Chapter 22

This chapter contains an apocryphal story of Olympias' reconciliation with Philip thanks to Alexander's urging. In fact until Philip's death Olympias stayed at her brother's court in Epirus reportedly urging him to declare war on Philip in defence of her honor and position in Macedonia (Plu. *Alex.* 9.11; Just. IX 7.5–7). Alexander was reconciled with Philip by Philip's old friend Demaratos of Corinth (Plu. *Alex.* 9.12–14; Plu. *Mor.* 70c, 179c). The story conveyed by the *Alexander Romance* presents a reversal of traditional social roles played by younger and older people. Young Alexander exhibits wisdom and moderation traditionally associated with older age, admonishing Philip to reconcile with his estranged wife.

## Chapter 23

1 Μοθώνη: Mothone (alternative spelling: Μεθώνη in Th. II 25 and Str. VIII 4.3) was a city on the western coast of Messenia (Shipley 2004). However, almost certainly here the *Alexander Romance* refers to the city of Methone (Μεθώνη) in Pieria on the Thermaic Gulf, a colony of Eretria. In 359 BC Methone was a base of Argaios, a pretender to the throne of Macedonia supported by Athens and defeated by Philip II (D.S. XVI 3.5–6). In 355/354 BC Philip besieged and conquered Methone (Hatzopoulos and Paschidis 2004). It is during this siege that Philip lost one eye, struck by an enemy arrow (D.S. XVI 31.6, 34.4–5; *Suda*, s.v. Κάρανος).

φόρους τάλαντα γ': the story of Alexander convincing the citizens of Methone to accept Philip's rule is entirely made up: Alexander was barely two years old during the Siege of Methone. The size of the tribute, however corresponds to the size of the city: Methone as a member of the Delian League was assessed, for the first time in 430/429 BC, at three talents (IG I<sup>3</sup> 281.11.33. Hatzopoulos and Paschidis 2004, 804).

2 *Σατράπαι Δαρείου*: in the Achaemenid Empire the title *xšaça-pāvan* (“protector of empire”), usually rendered in Greek as *σατράπης*, was employed mostly to designate governors of territorial units of unrecorded Persian description, in modern scholarship known as satrapies. In some cases it was applied to other prominent Persian nobles who enjoyed the Great King’s favour but who were not governors of “satrapies” (Str. xv 3.18; Polyae. vii 10. Briant 1996, 75–78, 350–355; Klinkott 2005, 28–31; Wiesehöfer 2008). In this scene no reference is made to any territorial power of these satraps of Darius, so it seems their title is employed in the second meaning of the word. The episode of Alexander receiving a Persian embassy is known also from Plutarch (*Mor.* 342b–c) but only in this version are the Persians demanding tributes from Macedonia which Alexander contemptuously rejects. This element leads Aerts (1994, 36–37) to draw a parallel between this story and Lucian’s fantastic account of a Cypriot living in the belly of a gigantic whale and also refusing to pay a tribute (vH I 36). If indeed the story known to us from the *Alexander Romance* was a template for Lucian, it must have been circulated for over a hundred years before the generally accepted date of the *Alexander Romance*.

5 *ἑτέρας πόλεως ἀτακτησάσης πέμπει αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ πολεμήσαι*: the episode as presented here is fictitious and meant to demonstrate Alexander’s ability to convince people (here to pay tribute) by the strength of his mind and character rather than to conquer them by force. The only recorded war waged by Alexander in Philip’s lifetime was in 340–339 BC when Philip, while on campaign in the region of the Sea of Marmara, appointed Alexander as Regent of Macedonia. Alexander, surely relying on the advice of Philip’s best generals, waged a short war against the Thracian Maidi in the Valley of the Strymon. The Maidi were defeated and expelled from their chief town, in place of which Alexander founded the first city bearing his name, Alexandropolis (Plu. *Alex.* 9.1; St. Byz., s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια. Fraser 1996, 26, 29–30).

## Chapter 24

1 *Παυσανίας*: the name of the man who assassinated Philip II is about the only correct historical detail of this event conveyed by the *Alexander Romance*. The assassination story of Philip is well known from a plethora of ancient sources. The circumstances of the assassination in the *Alexander Romance* are utterly transformed and romanticized. The historical Pausanias was a noble Macedonian from the canton of Orestis, a bodyguard (*somatophylax*) and a homosexual lover of Philip II. This last detail is lacking here, probably in line with the gen-

eral omission of any reference to homosexuality in the *Alexander Romance*. At one point Philip gave preference to a younger homosexual lover, also a Pausanias. Pausanias, the spurned lover, abused the new favourite of Philip, making him effectively commit suicide by exposing himself to enemy blows on a battlefield but not before he had complained to Attalos, the guardian of Kleopatra. Attalos in turn had Pausanias the future assassin gang raped. When the victim complained to Philip, the king did nothing to punish his general and father-in-law, trying instead to assuage Pausanias with gifts and promotion to the bodyguard, a very high court position indeed. But this did not work and Pausanias decided to take revenge on Philip (Arist. *Pol.* 1311b; *Chronicon Oxyrynchi FGh* 255 F1.6; D.S. XVI 93.3–94.1; J. *AJ* XI 304, XIX 95; Plu. *Alex.* 10.5–6; Just. IX 6.4–8; Ael. *VH* III 45; V.Max. I 8 ext. 9; Lib. *Progygmnasmata* 9.3.14; Orosius III 14.7; Joannes Antiochenus, fr. 24, Mariev). He accomplished his deed in the broad daylight on the day of a festive gathering in the theatre in Aigai on the occasion of the wedding of Philip's daughter Kleopatra with Alexander of Epirus, the brother of Olympias. Most likely it happened in the early autumn of 336 BC, with various scholars giving support to a date in late September (Grzybek 1990, 21–28; Hauben 1992, 146; Bennett 2011, 146–148) or, less likely, in October (Bosworth 1980, 45–46; Hatzopoulos 1982).

**Θεσσαλονικεύς:** the city of Thessaloniki did not exist yet at the moment of Philip's death. It was founded by Kassander ca. 315 BC in or near the previously existing city of Thermai, and so named after Kassander's wife Thessalonike, the half-sister of Alexander the Great. Thessaloniki was selected by Ps.-Callisthenes as the place of origin of Pausanias probably because in late antiquity (and also later) it was by far the greatest city of Macedonia and of all northern Greece.

**ἡρώσθη Ὀλυμπιάδος:** other sources say nothing about the love life of Olympias, while the *Alexander Romance* relates only her earlier risky sexual behaviour, the intercourse with the Egyptian astrologer Nektanebo. The episode of Pausanias falling in love with Olympias is fictitious, most probably introduced as a romanticizing feature on the one hand, and to exculpate the mother of Alexander from any blame she might incur in connection with the death of Philip II on the other. In antiquity Olympias was blamed for encouraging Pausanias to kill Philip and for providing him with logistical support in his attempted flight from the crime scene. She was believed to have crowned his dead body, arranged a proper burial of it and to have offered his sword to Apollo (D.S. XVI 94.3; Plu. *Alex.* 10.5–6; Just. IX 7). These ancient accusations find some following among modern scholars (Green 1974, 107; Worthington 2008, 184–186), although the prevailing opinion is that ancient authors found it very easy to accuse a strong-willed woman of conspiracy, while Pausanias had genuine personal reasons to assassinate Philip without anybody prodding him to do so

(Hamilton 1965, 120–122; Fears 1975; Ellis 1981; Develin 1981; Burstein 1982, 69–70; Carney 1987, 46–48; O'Brien 1992, 36–40; Hammond 1994, 175–176; Badian 2000, 54–58; Corvisier 2002, 268–269; Briant 2002, 9; Mortensen 2007; Nawotka 2010, 81–82).

2 ἐπὶ πόλεμον ὄντος τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου: this is a fictitious detail, in line with the romantic story-line of the episode of the death of Philip in the *Alexander Romance*. In fact the assassination took place in the theatre in Aigai (not in Pella, as the next chapter may suggest) with Alexander present at the crime scene, as he was accompanying his father from the palace to the orchestra of the theatre (Just. IX 6.3).

6 ἀμφοῖν: a suggestion that Alexander was returning from a war in which he had defeated two enemies or that he had waged two victorious wars is fictitious.

παρασπιστῶν: this probably means “bodyguards” (as in the translations of Haight and Stoneman 1991) and not “companions in arms” (*LSJ*, s.v.), cf. Plb. XI 18.2 and D.H. II 13.3 and 4. The *Alexander Romance* does not recognize here that bodyguards of the Argead kings were *somatophylakes* and guards were *hypaspistai*.

7 ἐκκοντίζειν: this word is unattested elsewhere, but it is surely used to mean something similar to ἀκοντίζω “hurl a javelin at” (*LSJ*, s.v.), which Kroll suggests in his apparatus. A similar meaning is also in Arm.

9 προαποστείλας τὸν ἐχθρόν: ms. A is the only version of the *Alexander Romance* which describes this scene in such detail. The historical Pausanias, the assassin of Philip II, tried to flee the crime scene but was killed by Philip's bodyguards, three of whom were Alexander's friends: Leonnatos, Perdikkas and Attalos (D.S. XVI 94.4). This leads some modern scholars to believe that they were all members of a conspiracy, inspired by Olympias, to assassinate Philip, and that by killing the perpetrator the three *somatophylakes* staged a very successful cover up (Green 1974, 108–110).

10 Κύκλωψ Παισανίας: Kroll (app., p. 25) suggests that Pausanias receives this nickname *ob concupiscentiam* for having tried to rape Olympias. Indeed, Theocritus and Ovid portray the Cyclops Polyphemos as in love with the Nereid Galatea (Theoc. II; Ov. *Met.* XIII 759–897).

11 κοσμήσας αὐτῷ τάφον πολυτελὴ κατέθετο τὸ σκήνωμα αὐτοῦ, ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ τάφῳ καθιδρύσας ναόν: certainly one of the first decisions taken by the new Macedo-

nian King Alexander was to organize a funeral befitting his father (D.S. XVII 2.2; Just. XI 2.1; *POxy* 1798 = *FGrH* 148 F1). The tomb of Philip is one of the royal tombs uncovered by M. Andronicos in Vergina, where ancient Aigai was. It is immaterial here whether it is “tomb II” surviving intact from antiquity, as Andronicos (1984) believed, or perhaps rather “tomb I,” despoiled already in the early Hellenistic age (for a summary of the discussion on the attribution of the tombs see: Nawotka 2010, 89–93; Gattinoni 2015). This passage may be referring to the actual burial of Philip or to Alexander’s designs, among his so-called “last plans,” known from the account of Diodorus based on Hieronymos of Kardia (D.S. XVIII 4). One was to construct a tomb for Philip greater in scale than the pyramids of Egypt (Stoneman 2007, 514–515). The authenticity of the “last plans,” although assailed by some (Tarn 1948, II, 378–398; Pearson 1960, 261–262), should not be doubted, even if they were voted down by Macedonian soldiers and never implemented (Wilcken 1937; Wilcken 1967, 224–229; Schachermeyr 1954; Badian 1968; Bosworth 1988, 207–211; O’Brien 1992, 217–218; Hammond 1996, 281–285; Nawotka 2010, 379–380; Waterfield 2011, 11–12).

## Chapter 25

1 Ἀλέξανδρος ... ἐβόησε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων: the words of Alexander are, no doubt, fictitious, although we know from other sources that immediately upon taking over after Philip’s death he spoke to the Macedonian soldiers and the allies gathered in Aigai on Philip’s invitation. Alexander is recorded to have promised to relieve his subjects of all duties other than military service, and to have proclaimed the continuation of Philip’s policies (D.S. XVII 2.2; Just. XI 1.8).

ὦ παῖδες Πελλαίων καὶ Ἀμφικτυόνων καὶ Θεσσαλῶν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλλαδικῶν ἐθνῶν: this is a fictitious address, mixing up people who were likely to listen to the historical speech of Alexander with those who were not likely to do so. To the first group belong the citizens of Pella, the principal city of Macedonia and residence of its kings, and Thessalians, the most important allies of Philip II, surely present in Aigai in the autumn of 336 BC. In the narrower sense *amphiktyones* were delegates sent by all member states to meetings of the council of the Delphic Amphiktyony (Roux 1979, 164–167), but here perhaps one should understand the expression παῖδες Ἀμφικτυόνων as a metonymic reference to citizens of the member-states of Amphiktyony. From 352 to 346 BC Philip II fought the Third Sacred War in defense of the Delphic temple of Apollo despoiled by the Phokaians, and as a reward received the seats on the Amphiktyonic Council once held by them. Sparta (παῖδες Λακεδαιμονίων), however, kept aloof of Greek politics in the age of Philip II,

neither fielding troops for the Battle of Chaironeia nor sending representatives to the congress of Corinth. It is not likely that a Spartan embassy might have been present in Aigai to listen to Alexander's speech. They are surely named here to strengthen the impression that Alexander was the champion of the whole Greek world.

3 παρασπιστάς τοῦ Φιλίππου γηραιούς: unlike in I 24.6 παρασπισταί means here "companions in arms" (as in *LSJ*, s.v.). Justin (XI 6.4–6) too says that Alexander selected veterans rather than young recruits for his expedition to Asia; see also Frontinus (*Str.* IV 2.4) about Alexander's soldiers as Philip's veterans. It may reflect a topos of old Macedonian soldiers/ veterans renowned for their superiority on the battlefield. An example of this was the use of Philip's veterans in Alexander's army during the Siege of Thebes in the autumn of 335 BC (D.S. XVII 9.3), and in the autumn of 333 BC at Halikarnassos it was also Philip's veterans who halted the flight of younger Macedonian soldiers, helping them to beat off the assault of Memnon's mercenaries (D.S. XVII 27; Curt. V 2.5, VIII 1.36). Cf. Stoneman 2007, 515.

## Chapter 26

1 Μακεδόνας πεζοὺς μὲν οβ': only ms. A gives such a high number (72,000) of Macedonian infantry, with Syr. listing 50,000, β and Arm. 25,000 and Val. 15,000. With this striking discrepancy, no sure answer is possible as to the number of Macedonian infantry originally listed in the archetype (α). All these figures differ from what we learn about the strength of Alexander's army on the eve of his expedition to Asia from other sources, which claim that there were between 10,000 (*It. Alex.* 17) and 43,000 infantry (Anaximenes *FGrH* 72 F29, ap. Plu. *Mor.* 327d). The only precise number of Macedonian (not allied or mercenary) infantrymen comes from Diodorus (XVII 17.3): 12,000.

ἱππέας δὲ Μακεδόνας δισχιλίους: this comes closer to the known number of Macedonian Companion Cavalry in Alexander's army in 334 BC: 1,800 (D.S. XVII 17.4).

2 συναριθμήσας δὲ καὶ τοὺς παρόντας σὺν οἷς παρειλήφει εὗρεν οἷς καὶ δχ': other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* give different figures than ms. A (77,000 and 4,600) for Alexander's army: 70,000 and 6,500 archers (β), 74,600 (Arm.), 70,654 (Val.), 270,000 (Syr.). Except for the obviously exaggerated numbers listed in Syr., all other numbers seem to relate somehow to what can be excerpted from more conventional sources. In 334 BC Alexander took with him

to Asia ca. 45,000 troops, while in 331 BC his viceroy in the Balkans, Antipater, was able to muster some 40,000 troops, Macedonian and allied (Nawotka 2010, 111–112). Put together, these figures come close to the strength of Alexander's army in most of the early versions of the *Alexander Romance*. They seem to transform somehow the original figures of the archetype (α) which followed a tradition which had combined the total military assets of Macedonia in 334 BC to put the strength of Alexander's army at ca. 80,000 troops.

3 χρυσοῦ νενομισμένου τάλαντα σ': the 70 talents inherited by Alexander from Philip II is known also from Aristobulos (*FGrH* 139 F4, ap. Plu. *Mor.* 327e; also Plu. *Alex.* 15.2). Reportedly in his speech to the Macedonian troops in Opis in 324 BC, Alexander mentioned a slightly lower figure, 60 talents, left by Philip (Curt. x 2.24; Arr. *An.* VII 9.6). Even the higher of these numbers would have allowed him to pay his soldiers for only two weeks!

τρήρεις, ἔτι δὲ λίβερνα: triremes, powered by a sail and three rows of oarsmen on each side, were the most common combat vessels of classical antiquity. The liburnians (*Liburna*), spelled also λιβυρνή, λιβυρνίς, were the most typical Roman ships, powered by a sail and two rows of oarsmen on each side, being smaller and more agile than triremes (Morrison and Coates 1996, 264, 317). Naming a λίβερνα in this context is anachronistic, reflecting the late date of composition of the *Alexander Romance*.

Θερμώδοντος: Thermodon (Terme Çayı) is a river in the Pontic part of Asia Minor, which flows into the Black Sea ca. 50 km to the east of Samsun (ancient Amisos). In mythology Themiskyra, the capital of the Amazons, was on the Thermodon. As in many other places, here the geography of the *Alexander Romance* is contorted, with the Thermodon flowing between Macedonia and Thrace. If any river can be named as marking the border between Macedonia and Thrace it is the Strymon in the times before the conquests of Philip II in Thrace (Danov 1979).

4 Λυκαονίαν: Lykaonia is a land in central Asia Minor between Kappadokia, Phrygia, Pisidia and Isauria, so it is out of place in the section concerned with Alexander's expedition from Thrace to Sicily. A better fitting here would be Λουκανίαν, as Lucania is a land in southern Italy in which one might make a stopover on the way to Sicily. However, it seems that Λυκαονίαν is as per the version of the archetype (α), as two early versions (A and Arm.) have it, while the well-educated Iulius Valerius makes an emendation to the original ill-fitting version: *pergit ad Lycaoniam, cui nunc aetas recens nomen Lucaniae dedit* (I 29). Kroll rightfully rejects Ausfeld's emendation Λευκανίαν (cf. Fraser 1996, 208 n. 6).

4–6 Alexander’s fictitious expedition to Italy. The idea of Alexander’s expedition to Italy involving (or not) his armed conflict with Rome gained a wide following in ancient literature, beginning with Livy and soon becoming a literary topos in Rome (Spencer 2002). Some later versions of the *Alexander Romance* convey a more elaborate story of Alexander’s adventures in Italy, among them subjugating Rome and a visit to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill (e.g. ε 13, γ 1 46). Almost certainly the *Alexander Romance* was the source used by John Malalas (VIII 1) when he claims that Alexander conquered Rome. The story of Alexander’s fictitious exploits in Italy may spring from two sources. The first is a possible contamination of Alexander the Great with Alexander I of Epirus (a.k.a. “The Molossian”), the brother of Olympias, who, probably in May 333 BC came to Italy to support Tarentum against the Bruttians, to be killed in a battle near Pandosia in 331 BC (Nöldeke 1890, 4; Jouanno 2002, 157–158). The Italian expedition of Alexander of Epirus is well covered in ancient sources, beginning with a statement of Aristotle, a contemporary of the events (Arist. fr. 614, Rose, ap. Ammon. *Diff.* p. 98; *Chronicon Oxyrhynchii FGtH* 255 F1.6; Str. VI 1.5, VI 3.4; Liv. VIII 3.6–7, VIII 17.9, VIII 24; Just. XII 1.4, 2.1–15, XVII 3.14–15, XVIII 1.2; Oros. III 18.3. See: Werner 1987, with copious reference). Justin, the principal source for this expedition, highlights Alexander of Epirus’ wish to emulate the conquests of Alexander the Great in the East through his exploits in the West (Just. XII 2.2, also Oros. III 18.3. See: Heckel 1997, 190) which might contribute to the rise of the story of the expedition of Alexander the Great to Italy. The second source of this story comes from Alexander’s known contacts with Rome and his unfulfilled plans of conquest in the West. Arrian (*An.* VII 15.5), after Aristos and Asklepiades, names the Romans among a large number of foreign embassies calling upon Alexander in Babylon in the spring of 323 BC. The historicity of the Roman embassy to Alexander, although disputed by some (Walbank 1986), is certainly real (Bosworth 1988, 167; Heckel 1997, 281; Flower 2000, 132–135; Nawotka 2010, 366–367), as it finds direct support in Kleitarchos (Clitarch. *FGtH* 137 F31, ap. Plin. *Nat.* III 57), who had no reason to invent it. Strabo (V 53.5) mentions in turn an embassy to Rome concerned with Etruscan piracy. In addition to this, a campaign to conquer the West down to the Pillars of Herakles, thus including Italy and Rome, was among the “last plans” of Alexander the Great (D.S. XVIII 4; Plu. *Mor.* 343d.), the historicity of which should not be questioned (Wilcken 1937; Schachermeyr 1954; Badian 1968; Bosworth 1988, 207–211; Nawotka 2010, 379–380; Waterfield 2011, 11–12).

5 Προσεπιστεφανοῦμέν σε κατ’ ἔτος Ἀλέξανδρε χρυσοῦν στέφανον ὀλκῆς λιτρῶν ρ’: the story of a golden crown sent from Rome to Alexander was told by



the second c. AD author Memnon, summarized by Photius: ὅπως τε ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ διαβαίνοντι, καὶ γράψαντι ἢ κρατεῖν, ἐὰν ἄρχειν δύνωνται, ἢ τοῖς κρείττοσιν ὑπέκτειν, στέφανον χρυσοῦν ἀπὸ ἱκανῶν ταλάντων Ῥωμαῖοι ἐξέπεμψαν or “He told how the Romans, when Alexander was crossing to Asia and had written to them saying that they would either prevail, if they were capable of ruling, or would submit to stronger forces, dispatched to him a golden crown weighing a considerable number of talents” (*BNJ* 434 F18.2, tr. Keaveney and Madden). Almost certainly this story is spurious (Gruen 1986, 718; Keaveney and Madden, *BNJ*, comm. ad loc.) but it proves that the motive of crowning Alexander by the Romans precedes the earliest version of the *Alexander Romance* by some hundred years. Ausfeld (1907, 134–136) speculates that it echoes the story of gifts sent to Rome by Ptolemy II.

6 **Καρχηδονίοις**: Karchedonioi is the Greek name for Carthaginians. In the age of Alexander Rome was maintaining friendly relations with Carthage, so the excuse of not providing him with troops on account of a war with Carthage is but a stock reference to the well-known Punic Wars.

### Chapters 27–29

**Chapters 27–29** are not to be found either in ms. A or in Arm. The contents of Chapters 27–29 in Syr. (Budge’s edition) and of Chapter 29 in Val. (Rosellini’s edition) correspond to what can be read in Chapters 26 and 30 of ms. A. All of these suggests that the archetype (α) lacked these chapters too. Chapters 27–29 surviving in later Greek versions of the *Alexander Romance* narrate events in Greece, interrupting the geographical sequence of the adventures of Alexander known from ms. A.

### Chapter 30

1 **παρεγένετο εἰς Ἀφρικήν**: the fictitious adventures of Alexander continue in Chapter 30 in which he crosses from Italy to Africa to turn down the entreaties of the Carthaginians (οἱ δὲ τῶν Ἀφρων στρατηγοὶ) to assist them in their war with Rome. Alexander’s fictitious dealings with the Carthaginians were a topic of some following in rhetoric and education in the age of the Second Sophistic: a second c. AD ostrakon from Egypt (Milne 1908, no. XIV) preserves an example of a school exercise in writing an *ethopoieia* letter of Alexander to the Cathaginians (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 171–172).

2 Ἡ κρείττονες γίνεσθε ἢ τοῖς κρείττοσι φόρους τελεῖτε: Alexander's answer to the leaders of Carthage mirrors his words to the Romans quoted, in indirect speech, in Photius' summary of Memnon (see above comm. to I 26.5). It looks as though Memnon and the *Alexander Romance* drew from a common source, possibly from a collection of sayings of Alexander (Janke 1963, 17–18; Stoneman 2007, 522).

μετ' ὀλίγων στρατιωτῶν πᾶσαν τὴν Λιβύην ὑπερβέμενος εἰς Ἀμμωνα παραγίνεται: in the *Alexander Romance* Alexander moves through Africa in the opposite direction than in historical reality—from the west to the east, travelling from Carthage to Egypt via the Siwah Oasis. The historical Alexander, with a small army detachment, travelled to Siwah from Memphis via Taposiris and Paraitonion in the beginning of 331 BC. This indeed involved crossing the inhospitable Western (Libyan) Desert for a distance of ca. 300 km from Paraitonion (Marsa Matruh) to Siwah. This episode attracted enormous interest both amongst ancient authors (Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F14a, ap. Str. XVII 1.43; Ehippos *FGrH* 126 F5, ap. Ath. XII 53; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.9–10; Curt. IV 7.5–32; D.S. XVII 49–51; Plu. *Alex.* 26.11–14, 27; Arr. *An.* III 3–4; Just. XI 11; *It. Alex.* 53) and modern historians, not so much because of the sheer difficulty of the desert travel but because of Alexander's aims and the oracular answer he received (*infra*). The Siwah Oasis was at that time a small Berber kingdom whose only claim to fame was that it housed a temple of a local ithyphallic god identified with the famous Egyptian Amun (on Siwah see: Fakhry 1973; Aldumairy 2005). The oracle of this god, by the Greeks variously referred to as Ammon or Zeus, and known to them from the sixth c. BC, enjoyed a reputation of infallibility (Classen 1959; Parke 1967, 196–219; Kuhlmann 1988, 9–107).

3 αὐτὸς δὲ προσκυνήσας τὸν Ἀμμωνα ... εὐξάμενος εἶπε: the oracle at Siwah usually worked by pilgrims asking questions to which the god would give an answer “yes” or “no,” and it was deduced by his priests from the movement of the boat of Ammon carried in a procession (Parke 1967, 200; Kuhlmann 1988, 123–135). But since Alexander was the King of Egypt and this was the first visit of a pharaoh to Siwah, he was admitted to the inner sanctum of the temple and most probably was allowed to ask a more complex question and received a verbal answer, going beyond the standard oracular lore (Kuhlmann 1988, 137–142). The reason for Alexander's arduous expedition to Siwah and the oracular response he received there have been endlessly debated by modern scholars and remain unknown. One may note the extreme view of Bloedow (2004) that visiting Siwah was for Alexander the real reason for conquering Egypt and Phoenicia first and turning against Darius later. Arrian and Curtius write that he went to Siwah because of his longing (*pothos* or *ingens cupido*:

Arr. *An.* III 3.1; Curt. IV 7.8). This may be harmonized with the “official” version of events conveyed by Kallisthenes (*FGrH* 124 F14a, ap. Str. XVII 1.43) and by other courtiers, such as Aristobulos and Ptolemy, followed by Arrian (*Arr. An.* III 3.1), that he wanted to rival his mythological ancestors Herakles and Perseus who had also made this trip (cf. Hamilton 1999, 69). The ancient authors, on the other hand, believed that Alexander wanted to question Ammon about his divine ancestry (*Arr. An.* III 3.2; Just. XI 11.2). We will never know what Alexander heard in the Ammoneion since he went inside unaccompanied and was willing to reveal the secret answer only to his mother (Plu. *Alex.* 27.8) whom he never saw again after leaving Macedonia in 334 BC. Therefore the vision of Ammon having intercourse with Olympias related in this chapter is a literary fiction with no support in sources. What is certain, however, is that from his visit in Siwah Alexander allowed other people to believe that he was the son of Ammon (Ephippus *FGrH* 126 F5; Curt. IV 7.8, 7.30; Paus. IV 14.8; Gel. XIII 4; Arr. *An.* VII 8; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.54.2) whom he revered most among the gods for the rest of his life, having enormous trust in his oracle (*Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.10; D.S. XVII 51; Plu. *Alex.* 3.2; Arr. *An.* VI 19.4; Just. XII 15.7). Hence the ancient authors speculate that he learned from Ammon of Siwah that his father was a god (Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F14a; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.10; D.S. XVII 51; Curt. IV 7.25–29). An inscription from the Bahariya Oasis, dated by the editor to 332–323 BC, announces: Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξ(α)νδρος Ἀμμωνι τ[ῶ]ι πατρί (SEG 59.1764; cf. Philostr. VA 2.43 for an alleged parallel dedication to Ammon). It is accompanied by a hieroglyphic inscription with a full set of Alexander’s pharaonic titles which further testifies to the authenticity of the monument as commissioned in the age of Alexander. If so, it is a testimony of Alexander’s belief in the divine fatherhood of Ammon (Bosch-Puche 2008).

5 Ἡξίου δὲ καὶ χρησμὸν λαβεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ποῦ τῆς ὀνομασίας ἑαυτοῦ ἀείμνηστον πόλιν κτίσει: as was customary in antiquity, Alexander had to obtain an oracular response prior to founding the city named after him, i.e. Alexandria in Egypt. Although Plutarch (*Alex.* 26.4) and Arrian (*An.* III 1.5–2.2) place the foundation of Alexandria before Alexander’s expedition to Siwah, the alternative versions of Diodorus (XVII 52), Curtius (IV 8.1–2), Justin (XI 11.13), the *Alexander Romance* and Orosius (III 16.14) are more likely, precisely because the oracle surely preceded the foundation ceremony (Welles 1962; Hamilton 1999, 67; Heckel 1997, 156; Stoneman 2007, 523) and thus the *Alexander Romance* preserves the historically accurate version of Ammon’s propitious oracle in the issue of founding Alexandria. It is possible that Plutarch and Arrian refer to Alexander’s exploratory visit to the site of the future Alexandria on his way to Siwah (Bosworth 1980, 263–264; Heckel 1997, 156; Nawotka 2010, 207–208).

6 Φοῖβος ὁ μηλόκερως: this epiclesis (“having sheep’s horns,” *LSJ* Suppl., s.v.) of Apollo is attested uniquely in the *Alexander Romance* and was most likely devised as a periphrasis for Ammon of Siwah, usually identified by the Greeks with Zeus. Here Phoibos with sheep’s horns becomes Ammon because of the prophetic powers of both gods (Stoneman 2007, 524–525) rather than through the identification of Ammon of Siwah with the solar deity Amun-Re (van Thiel 1974, 175).

εἶγε θέλεις αἰῶσιν ἀγηράτοισι νεάζειν: here and in other places in the *Alexander Romance* appears the idea of gaining immortality/eternal fame not through conquest but through founding Alexandria. This is surely a reflection of the local pride of the Alexandrian author of the *Alexander Romance* (Polignac 1996, 151).

Πρωτηίδα νῆσον: the island of Proteus is Pharos. The *Alexander Romance* follows here the most popular version of the Myth of Proteus who already in the *Odyssey* (IV 349–483) is a minor sea god tending Poseidon’s seals on the island of Pharos (also *Amm.* XXII 16.10), later, beginning from Stesichoros (fr. 16, Page), to become a king of Egypt (el-Abbadi 2004). The island of Pharos is attested in numerous ancient sources, see: Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Φάρος.

Ἀἰών Πλουτώνιος: Aion was a divine personification of time and eternity attested already in the *Iliad* (xvi 453), although with but the faintest traces of a real cult before Roman times. His cult is attested from Augustus to gain more popularity under Antoninus Pius (Cline 2011, 32–33). In the Imperial age Aion was worshiped in Alexandria, with a festival on 6 January, and there is some conjecture that the Ptolemies were identified with this god (Alföldi 1977). What can be understood as Aion Ploutonios was also Serapis: both were connected with the underworld, while the time-aspect (of Aion) is identifiable also in the cult of Serapis and Plutarch says that the Alexandrians call Pluton Serapis (*Plu. Mor.* 362a. Pettazzoni 1954, 171–179; Bousset 1979; Bowman 1986, 175; Stoneman 2007, 525–526). Slightly later in the text the *Alexander Romance* (I 33.1) leaves no doubt that the place “where once Aion Ploutonios first took his throne” (tr. E. Haight) is the temple of Serapis, indeed located on the mainland opposite the island of Pharos near the place where Pompey’s Pillar now stands (Green 1996, 13). The *Alexander Romance* may reflect here an early Hellenistic tradition of Serapis, the god of the underworld presiding over eternity just as Osiris was Lord of Eternity in the *Book of the Dead* (Stambaugh 1972, 84–85). One should notice too that in later antiquity Aion, sometimes identified as the supreme god, was represented as a youth standing within the circle of the Zodiac (Cline 2011, 33–34 with reference) and this immediately brings to mind Chapters 4 and 12 of Book I in which the Zodiac plays such a prominent role in Nektanebo’s actions leading to Alexander’s birth.

(πενταλόφοις κορυφαῖσιν ἀτέρμονα κόσμον ἐλίσσων): this line, lacking in ms. A, is restored by editors (Kroll, Bergson) after Arm. and Val. The ground level rises in the area surrounding the Great Harbour of Alexandria and some of the elevation may be understood as hills. Out of the five hills around the harbour of Alexandria four have distinct names, ancient or modern: Brucheion, Paneion (in older publications erroneously identified with the artificial hill of Kom ed-Dikka, see: Adriani, 233; Haas 1997, 18), the hill of the Serapeum (Amud es Sawari or “The Pillar of Columns”) in Rhakotis, and Fort Napoleon (Fraser 1972, I, 10–11, 25–29; Stoneman 2007, 526).

### Chapters 31–32

Chapters 31–32 contain the story of the foundation of Alexandria, known also from a variety of sources: D.S. XVII 52; Str. XVII 1.6, 8–10; Curt. IV 8.1–2; Vit. II pr. 3–4; Plu. *Alex.* 26.4–10; Arr. *An.* III 1.5–2.2; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.11; Just. XI 11.13; *It. Alex.* 48–49; St.Byz., s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια; Oros. III 16.14; Malalas VIII 1. The foundation story is fairly consistent in all sources, with Malalas adding, probably after a little known anti-pagan Christian historian Bouttios, a spurious detail of Alexander sacrificing on this occasion a Macedonian girl (Garstad 2005, 87–93, 129). In the *Alexander Romance* Alexander travels to Egypt from the west and not from the east as historical Alexander did. He comes to the place where he founded Alexandria from Siwah, to found a new city as instructed by Ammon. The detailed description of Alexandria in the *Alexander Romance* suggests that the work was composed within the city itself, and the features recorded point to a date of writing in the Imperial age (Fraser 1996, 215–221; Stoneman 2007, 526). A prominent place in the Alexandria foundation story is an amplified description of Alexander’s building activity. It is apocryphal in attributing to Alexander a tremendous scope of construction work which in fact barely started in Alexandria in his age, let alone during his stay in Egypt. But extolling the building projects of a ruler was a time-honored way of praising a king; in the late Empire it was a standard part of an encomium of an emperor (Garstad 2005, 112).

### Chapter 31

1 Παρατόνιον: a city in Egypt on the Mediterranean coast, some 140 km to the west of Alexandria, now Marsa Matruh. The name was spelled most often Παραϊτόνιον both in literary and papyrological sources (only this spelling is



FIGURE 7 *Taposiris: the Hellenistic tower in Taposiris now identified as a cenotaph of Osiris.*  
 PHOTO K. NAWOTKA

attested in papyri). In late antiquity both spellings were used. A fortress and a temple were built in Paraitonion under Ramesses II and in the Hellenistic age a harbour was in existence there. The desert road to Siwah begins in Paraitonion and it was this road which historical Alexander took, albeit in the opposite direction than in the *Alexander Romance*. The *Alexander Romance* is the only source for this bizarre aetiological story. The anonymous *Oxyrhynchos Chronicle* (FGrH 255 F1.7) and Hieronymus (F 206F, Helm) attribute to Alexander the founding of the city of Paraitonion. This attribution, although accepted by some modern scholars (Jones 1971, 305), is probably fictitious (Cohen 1995, 349), especially the fact that Hieronymus places it on the occasion of Alexander's (spurious) second visit to Siwah: *Alexander Hyrcanos et Mardos capit reuertensque in Ammone condidit Paraetionium*. For evidence on Paraitonion see Cohen 1995, 348–349.

2 Ταφώσιριν ... τάφον Ὀσίρεως εἶναι τὸ ἱερόν: Taposiris Magna was a small town, some 45 km to the west of Alexandria, now Abusir, founded by Ptolemy II on a stretch of land between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Mareotis. Plutarch (*Mor.* 359c) says that a tomb of Osiris could be seen in Taposiris whose name reportedly reflects this fact. Recent archaeological excavations conducted by a Hungarian team have identified the temple in Taposiris usually called the

temple of Osiris as the temple of Isis. The Hellenistic tower in Taposiris, earlier believed to be a smaller version of the lighthouse of Pharos, was probably a cenotaph of Osiris (Vörös 2001).

(τς') κώμαις: various versions of the *Alexander Romance* give different versions of the number of villages seen by Alexander: 12 in rec. β, Arm. and in Byzantine versions, 15 in Leo and Syr, 16 in Val. and this number is accepted by Kroll. They cannot be identified with any known place, and only the name Rhakotis is attested in other sources. This of course does not preclude that this list relates somehow to the pre-Greek settlements in the area of Alexandria (Fraser 1972, I, 5–6).

ἡ δὲ Ῥακώτις ἦν ἐπίσημος· ἐτύγχανε γὰρ μητρόπολις οὖσα: both classical (Str. XVII 1.16; Plin. *Nat.* v 62; St. Byz., s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια; Malalas VIII 1) and Egyptian sources (*Satrap stele*: R'qd and stele of Psherenptah a.k.a Harris stele: R'-kdt/ Rakoti: hieroglyphic text and English translation: Reymond 1981, 136–150 and the demotic with translation: 150–164, at 146, 148, 158, 159, 161, 162) name Rhakotis as the village/ place on whose territory Alexandria was founded. Although this name means in Egyptian “construction site” and for some modern scholars (Chauveau 1999; Depauw 2000) the word R'qd was used in the *Satrap stele* precisely in the meaning “the construction site (of Alexandria),” the more likely hypothesis, also on the grounds of Egyptian language, is that it was always used as a toponym (Mueller 2006, 15–21), especially given that it survived until the late first c. BC (Psherenptah/ Harris stele of ca. 41 BC). The unusual name of Rhakotis may in fact refer to the fact that this village was housing a construction yard for the Egyptian navy predating Alexander (Baines 2003). Rhakotis was probably a town (μητρόπολις) with a military garrison and a sea harbour prior to the foundation of Alexandria (Fraser 1972, I, 5–6).

3 ποταμούς ιβ': in all probability these rivers are artificial channels whose precise location is mostly unknown; it is not certain whether their names belong to the Ptolemaic or to the Roman age (Fraser 1972, I, 6; II 7–8).

4 Ῥακωτίτης ποταμός, ὃς νῦν δρόμος τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ Σαράπιδος τυγχάνει: there was indeed a canal, used for transportation of goods, fully operational in the Ptolemaic period. In the Imperial age it was filled up and a ceremonial street was eventually built in its place. The *Alexander Romance* relates here the state of affairs in Alexandria after the monumental program of Serapeum was completed under Hadrian (Fraser 1996, 216).

Ἀσπενδία: it is attested also in Athenaios (IV 75) as a Ptolemaic toponym (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Ἀσπενδία; cf. Fraser 1972, II, 110).

εἴτα διώρυξ, οὗ τὸ Τυχάιον: οὗ means here “where” thus referring to the Tychaion (Fraser 1972, II, 393) and not to the name of the channel (as proposed by Ausfeld 1900, 367 and Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Τυχάιον), which would have required an emendation (οὗ [τὸ ὄνομα]) to the perfectly understandable text. Tyche was worshiped in Ptolemaic Egypt and her temples are attested by papyri in the Arsinoite nome (Calderini, s.v. Τυχάιον). The Tychaion in Alexandria is known only from late sources, the earliest being the *Alexander Romance* (for the evidence see: Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Τυχάιον). The Tychaion described by Nikolaos of Myra (Ps.-Lib., *Descr.* 25) as a magnificent building in the central part of Alexandria, close to Museion, is a late-Imperial temple. The *Alexander Romance*, ostensibly referring to a structure erected under Alexander, mentions in fact the same building (Fraser 1972, II, 392–393). It housed statues of Tyche and Alexander (Nikolaos of Myra: Ps.-Lib. *Descr.* 25.6: καὶ μέσον ἐκ μέσου Τύχης ἔστηκεν ἄγαλμα στεφάνῳ δηλοῦν Ἀλεξάνδρου τὰς νίκας. καὶ στέφεται μὲν ὑπὸ Τύχης ἢ Γῆ, στέφει δὲ αὐτὴ τὸν νικήσαντα. Νίκαι δὲ τῆς Τύχης ἐκατέρωθεν ἀνεστήκασιν καλῶς τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τῆς Τύχης δηλοῦντος τὴν δύναμιν, ὡς πάντα νικᾶν οἶδεν ἢ Τύχη), and was by some believed to be Hellenistic of the second c. BC (Stewart 1993, 244; Stoneman 2007, 529). Based on Palladas (*Anthologia graeca* IX 180–183) some modern scholars think that in the late-fourth c. the temple of Tyche was turned into a tavern (Jacobs 2014, 137). If so, it surely happened after the visit of Nikolaos of Myra.

μέγιστος ποταμὸς Κοπρωνικός: it must have been the principal sewage canal of Alexandria, from κόπρον or “excrement” (*LSJ*, s.v.; Ausfeld 1900, 368; Stoneman 2007, 529) the precise location of which cannot be identified.

ποταμὸς Νεφερώτης † τὰ νῦν ἐκθέματα, οὗ ἐστὶ καὶ Ἰσιδος τῆς Νεφερών (ἱερὸν) πρωτόκτιστον Ἀλεξάνδρειας: in Arrian's account Alexander ordered a temple of Isis to be built in the newly-founded Alexandria (Arr. *An.* III 1.4–5) and the *Alexander Romance* refers to this temple. The temple of Isis in Alexandria is well attested in classical sources (Plu. *Ant.* 74; Ach. Tat. v 14.2; Sym. *Metaphr.* PG CXVI, 640A). It is not possible to determine whether the second-c. AD dedication to Isis Plousia (*IGR* I 1044) found in Nabi Daniel street in Alexandria attests the proximity of the site of this temple of Isis, since more than one shrine of this goddess is known to have existed in Alexandria making her probably the most commonly worshiped deity in this city (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Ἰσιδος ἱερὸν; Haas 1997, 149–150). The word *nfr-ḥr*, in Greek Νεφερός (“of beautiful face”) was a popular epiclesis for Egyptian deities, profusely attested in the Ptolemaic age (Quaegebeur 1982). The word ἐκθεμα in its usual meaning (“public notice, edict,” *LSJ*, s.v.) does not fit the context, unless it is used metonymically for a place to display edicts or merchandise (*LSJ Suppl.*, s.v.).



μέγιστος πάντων (τῶν) ποταμῶν Ἀργέος καλούμενος, οὗ ἐστὶν Ἀργεῖον: this is the only place where these names appear. It is difficult to say if it was any connection between the River (channel) Argeos in the *Alexander Romance* and the Ἀργέου νῆσος known from Stephanus (s.v.).

διῶρυξ κατὰ τὸν Κανωπικὸν (ποταμὸν) ἐκβάλλουσα κατὰ τοῦ Ζεφυρίου: this channel, parallel to the sea coast, is known also from Strabo (xvii 1.16). Zephyrion is a promontory between Alexandria and Kanopos, famous for the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite (Poseidippos, in: Page, *Select Papyri*, III 104b; Str. xvii 1.16; Ath. vii 106; St.Byz., s.v. Ζεφύριον, after Callimachus). The Kanobic (Herakleotic) branch of the Nile was its westernmost distributory channel; now it is silted and no longer carries water to the sea.

5 Ἡράκλειον στόμα: the westernmost branch of the Nile was called either Kanobic or Herakleotic: Τοῦτο δέ τινες τὸ Κανωβικὸν στόμα τοῦ Νείλου καὶ Ἡράκλειον καλεῖσθαι φασί (Eust. *Com. in Dion. Periegetae* 11). The no longer existing mouth of the Kanobic/ Herakleotic branch of the Nile was in the place known as Ἡρακλεῖον because it housed a temple of Herakles (Ausfeld 1900, 371; Calderini, s.v. Ἡρακλεῖον 2).

ἀπὸ ... Πανδύσεως ἕως τοῦ Ἡρακλείου στόματος: Pandysis (omitted by Calderini) is a place to the west of Alexandria. A third-c. AD dedication reads: θεᾷ καλῇ ἐν Πανδοίτ[η] καὶ συννάοις κτλ. (Breccia 1911, no. 117 = SB 1.4528). Since there are examples of spelling οἰ instead of υ, the inscription may make a reference to Pandysis (Ausfeld 1900, 371; Breccia 1911, 73, n. 3). The area represented in this passage is much too big for a city and thus what is meant is not the city of Alexandria but rather its rural territory (Thiel 1974, 175).

Μενδησίον: a place in the outskirts of Alexandria, probably on the eastern side of the city, tentatively identified by Calderini (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Βενδίδειον. Cf. Adriani 1966, 210; Fraser 1972, II, 5; Stoneman 2007, 530) as the location of the temple of the Thracian goddess Bendis (Βενδίδειον).

μικρὰς Ἑρμοῦπόλεως. οὐ καλεῖται δὲ Ἑρμούπολις, ἀλλ' Ὀρμούπολις: Hermopolis Parva (for evidence see: Calderini, s.v. Ἑρμοῦ πόλις) was a town 70 km to the south-east of Alexandria on the canal linking the Kanobic Branch of the Nile with Lake Mareotis, now Damanhur. Here it is introduced as a word-play on the verb ὀρμέω ("to be moored, to lie at anchor," LSJ, s.v.) leading to the slightly transformed name Hormopolis, or "the place to moor (a ship)."

ὁ κατερχόμενος ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου (καὶ ἀνερχόμενος) ἐκεῖ ὀρμεῖ: in antiquity Alexandria was believed not to be in Egypt but by Egypt (e.g. Str. v 1.7: ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τῇ πρὸς Αἰγύπτῳ; sim, here 1.34.9. Calderini I, 62; Bell 1946). Therefore this sentence is referring to people going by boat from the upper parts of Egypt to Alexandria, as if they were coming from a different country. All merchandise

coming from the rest of Egypt and passing through Alexandria would normally be transported by a barge on the Nile and reloaded to a sea-going vessel in a harbour in Lake Mareotis (Haas 1997, 42–43).

6 Συνεβούλευσε δὲ αὐτῷ ... μὴ τηλικαύτην πόλιν κτίζειν: the advice given to Alexander on the desired size of the city he was about to found, whether historical or literary, only reflects the views of Aristotle on the ideal polis: below five thousand citizens, small enough for its citizens to know each other, with Babylon given as an example of a city too big for a good government (Arist. *Pol.* 1265a, 1325b. Chuska 2000, 70–75; Polignac 2005, 310).

Κλεομένης ὁ Ναυκρατίτης: Kleomenes of Naukratis most probably was an officer of the Persian administration of Egypt, appointed by Alexander to run the country's finances, due to his skills and experience. Among his responsibilities was overseeing the construction works at Alexandria (Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1352a; Just. XIII 4.11). Even if he never rose to the position of satrap, a title mistakenly attributed to him by some authors (Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1352a; Paus. I 6.3) and subsequently followed by some modern scholars (Burstein 2008; Baynham 2015a), he was undoubtedly the top person in Egypt in Alexander's lifetime. Through his able administration and ruthless financial measures Kleomenes was able to ensure the financing of Macedonian garrisons in Egypt, to pay for the building and renovation projects in Egyptian temples commissioned by Alexander and the construction works at Alexandria, and on top of this to amass 8,000 talents in the provincial Treasury (Le Rider 1997).

Δεινοκράτης ὁ Ῥόδιος: Deinokrates (by Plutarch mistakenly called Stasikrates and by Pliny Dinocharēs) was an architect employed by Alexander to draw the blueprint of Alexandria (Str. XIV 1.23; Vit. II pr. 4; Plin. *Nat.* v 62; Solinus 40.5); famous for his extravagant idea of carving Mount Athos into the shape of a gigantic statue of Alexander (Str. XIV 1.23; Vit. II pr. 1–4; Plu. *Mor.* 335c and *Alex.* 72.5–8).

7 ἀπὸ τοῦ Δράκοντος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ταφοσιριακὴν ταινίαν μέχρι τοῦ Ἀγαθοδαίμονος: Drakon was probably a canal from Lake Mareotis to the sea cutting through the Taenia, or the narrow strip of land between the Lake and the sea, at its eastern end, while Agathodaimon is in this context either a canal or a temple to the east of Alexandria, close to the city of Kanopos (now Aboukir, 25 km to the east of Alexandria). These toponyms are probably the limits of the *chora* or rural territory of Alexandria in the Imperial age (Adriani 1966, 219; Fraser 1972, I, 4–5; II, 5).

Εὐρυλόχου καὶ Μελανθίου: these are toponyms (of villages?) to the south of Alexandria, with Eurylochos attested in a papyrus containing a lease of a

papyrus-marsh (*BGU* 1121), so it must be located in the immediate vicinity of Lake Mareotis (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Εὐρυλόχου καὶ Μελανθίου; Fraser 1972, II, 251–252).

καὶ κελεύει τοῖς κατοικοῦσι κωμαίοις μεταβαίνειν ἀπὸ λ' μιλίων τῆς πόλεως: ancient sources state that Alexander ordered inhabitants of adjacent villages and towns to resettle in Alexandria (Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1352a; Curt. IV 8.5). Even if not all inhabitants of this area were indeed successfully resettled, in principle this tradition is reliable and it implies that the majority of the original inhabitants of Alexandria were native Egyptians (Scheidel 2004, 22, 25).

8 ἀρχέφοδοι: these are police chiefs (*LSJ*, s.v.) attested in Egyptian villages (e.g. Derda 2006, 198, 213).

9 Κρατερὸν Ὀλύνθιον: the name Κρατερὸν is Kroll's emendation after Arm., in the place where ms. A has Κραταῖον. Probably Κρατερός is not meant, but instead Krates of Olinthos, a famous engineer of the age of Alexander, noted for water works at Lake Kopais in Boeotia (Str. IX 2.18; St.Byz., s.v. Ἀθήναι). Diogenes Laertios (IV 23) mentions him as ταφρωρύχος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ("sapper of Alexander"), possibly referring to his involvement in a building project at Alexandria, referred to here also (Berve 1926, 227).

Ἡρώνα ὀνόματι Λιβυκὸν τῷ γένει: no Heron is attested in Egypt in the age of Alexander the Great. Probably the *Alexander Romance* names here Hero of Alexandria, a first-c. AD mathematician and engineer, famous for measuring the time difference between Rome and Alexandria by observing the eclipse of the Moon. His name may have been entered here because of his reputation for works on surveying (Folkerts 2005).

καλοῦνται δὲ ὑπόνομοι διὰ τὸ (τόν) ὑποδείξαντα Λιβυκὸν Ὑπόνομον: word-play, as the Greek word for underground channel is ὑπόνομος; the name of the reputed architect was surely fabricated to pretend that he gave his name to underground channels (Bounoure 2004, 236).

10 Οὐ μέντοιγε ἑτέρα πόλις ἐστὶ μείζων Ἀλεξανδρείας no precise verifiable data on the population of ancient Alexandria are extant and the estimates of modern scholars range from 200,000 to 1,500,000 (for a summary of the discussion see: Fraser 1972, II, 171–172; Delia 1988; Scheidel 2004). According to Diodorus (XVII 52.6, allegedly after an official census) its free population in the second half of the first c. BC totaled 300,000, but Diodorus does not say what this meant: the total free population of the city or of the city and its *chora*, or only adult males (Delia 1988, 283–284; Scheidel 2004, 27–28). In the absence of precise date all estimates of the size of the population have to rely on demographic

models. Demographic models applied by Scheidel (2004) suggest rapid population growth in Alexandria from the end of the fourth c. to the second half of the third c. BC, reaching a population peak of ca. 300,000 by 200 BC, with a second peak of no more than 400,000 in the Imperial age. These are certainly low figures considering the concept of Alexandria as a “consumer city” espoused by Scheidel, while Alexandria was also a major production and trade centre (Haas 1997, 32–44). The influential paper of Delia (1988) puts the upper limit of the population of Imperial Alexandria at 500–600,000, while Haas (1997, 45–47) argues that in the late antiquity its population stood at ca. 200,000, well below Rathbone’s (1990, 120) and Manning’s (2003, 47–48) estimates of 750,000 under the Empire. Alston’s estimates based on the number of households in Alexandria are between 187,000 and 368,000 (Alston 2002, 161). Diodorus and the *Alexander Romance* compare Alexandria with Rome claiming that the Alexandria of the second half of the first c. BC and (presumably) of the second half of the third c. AD was bigger than Rome. This is generally disbelieved by modern scholars (Nicolet 1999; Scheidel 2004, 28) and the maps of Rome and Alexandria superimposed by Nicolet (1999, 124) demonstrate clearly how much bigger the area of Rome, inhabited and uninhabited, was. But the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael bar Elias maintains, after a source unknown to us, possibly of the second-fourth c. AD (Alston 2002, 161), that there were 47,790 houses in Alexandria (v 3), a comparable figure with the number of houses recorded for Rome of the fourth c. AD: 48,392 (*Curiosum Urbis Romae*; Fraser 1951). If both figures refer in fact to the number of houses recorded in Alexandria and in Rome one would have to admit, not trying to take the praises of Alexandria at face value, that at one point ancient Alexandria must have been a city of comparable size (if not population) with Rome. However, the figure 47,790 may record the number of households and not houses in late antique Alexandria making it a city of a few hundred thousand and not about a million, as Rome (Haas 1997, 45–47; Nicolet 1999).

Οὐ μέντοιγε ἑτέρα πόλις ἐστὶ μείζων Ἀλεξανδρείας: extolling the size was but a factor in praising a city, known, inter alia, from Libanios in his *Antiochikos* speech in which the size of Antioch is the central feature of his eulogy of the city (196–229). In the Imperial age praises of Alexandria were a popular literary feature, not necessarily limited to people attached to Alexandria by birth or long residence, beginning with Diodorus who so concludes his story of the foundation of Alexandria: καθόλου δ’ ἡ πόλις τοσαύτην ἐπίδοσιν ἔλαβεν ἐν τοῖς ὕστερον χρόνοις ὥστε παρὰ πολλοῖς αὐτὴν πρῶτην ἀριθμεῖσθαι τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην· καὶ γὰρ κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει καὶ προσόδων πλήθει καὶ τῶν πρὸς τρυφὴν ἀνηκόντων πολὺ διαφέρει τῶν ἄλλων or “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" (D.S. XVII 52.5, tr. C.H. Oldfather. See: Calderini, I, 77–79; Vergin 2013, 184–204).

Ἀλεξάνδρεια σταδίων ις' καὶ ποδῶν τριακοσίων ἐνενήκοντα πέντε: unfortunately the *Alexander Romance* does not say what size is meant by these 16 stadia and 395 feet. The size of the city in the second half of the first c. BC as related by Strabo (XVII 1.8), who lived there, is 30 stadia east to west and 7–8 stadia north to south, while Josephus (*BJ* II 386 has a similar figure of 30 to 10 stadia) and Stephanus (s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια) has 34 by 8 stadia (other measurements: Calderini I, 77). The measurements listed in the so-called *Laus Alexandriae* (*GLM* 140) should be disregarded, since this is but a passage from Iulius Valerius erroneously believed by some to be an independent evidence (for the discussion of it see: Nicolet 1999, 114). The measurements known from the majority of ancient authors seem to correspond well to the archaeological remains of ancient Alexandria (Fraser 1972, I, 13; II 26–27; Delia 1988, 278). Since the size of Alexandria in the *Alexander Romance* is significantly smaller than in other ancient sources and much smaller than the maximum size of the city attested archaeologically, the figures listed there may reflect Hellenistic sources (Stoneman 2007, 532) and hence the size of Alexandria in the early stage of its development. The reason they are mentioned in the *Alexander Romance* is not for the purpose of recording historical reality, but to praise the city as a manifestation of civic pride.

## Chapter 32

2 Φάρος· Πρωτεὺς δὲ αὐτόθι κατώκησεν: this refers to fulfillment of the prophetic dream of Alexander in I 30.6.

4 Οἱ δὲ ἄλευρον βαλόντες ἐχωρογράφησαν: the story of marking the borders of Alexandria with flour is attested profusely in ancient sources: *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.11; Str. XVII 1.6; Curt. IV 8.6; Plu. *Alex.* 26.8–10; Arr. *An.* III 2.1–2; V. Max. I 4 ext. 1; Amm. XXII 16.7; Jason of Argos ap. St. Byz., s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια; *It. Alex.* 49; Eust. *Comm. in Dion. Periegetem* 254. According to Curtius it was a Macedonian custom but the validity of this statement is difficult to assess (serious doubts: Le Roy 1981, 400–401). Even if it is impossible to say whether the story of marking the border of the city with flour conveys the actual truth, it certainly belongs to the early-Hellenistic stratum of creating the foundation myth of Alexandria. It, just like the story of Agathos Daimon (I 32.6–7), was meant to convey the impression of the particular protection of the gods enjoyed by Alexandria (Le Roy 1981).

6–7 δράκων ... ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος: the aitiological story of the cult of Agathos Daimon (Agathodaimon) in Alexandria. Agathos Daimon was a “deity of blessing,” attested in private cult in Greece from the fifth c. BC (Ar. *Eq.* 85, 106) but rarely, if ever, represented in the form of a snake (Dunand 1981, 278, no. 6; Graf 2002), quite unlike the Agathos Daimon of Alexandria. Agathos Daimon attained an enormous following in Alexandria and in the western Delta, attested profusely in coins, Greek inscriptions and papyri of the Imperial age. His origin in Alexandria is a matter of dispute, with two conflicting views either painting Agathos Daimon as a Greek cultural importation later identified with Serapis and with Egyptian gods Šai (Shai), Knephis, Khnum, Soknopis (for this view see: Fraser 1972, I, 209–212) or as a Hellenized native Egyptian household god (Quaegebeur 1975, 170–176). Quaegebeur points out the near absence of Greek sources of the Ptolemaic age for the cult of Agathos Daimon, contrasted with the abundance of Egyptian attestations of the god Šai in this age and the poignant evidence of the *Oracle of the Potter* which predicts the desertion of Alexandria accompanied by local gods Knephis and Agathos Daimon leaving the city for Memphis, thus ending the age of chaos brought to Egypt by the Macedonian invaders (see Dillery 2004). Since the *Oracle of the Potter* is an epic of retribution expressing anti-Greek sentiments, it provides strong evidence for the Egyptian nature of Agathos Daimon. In all probability the cult of the Egyptian household god Šai achieved very early prominence in Alexandria, either already in Alexander’s lifetime or in the early Ptolemaic age, while the Hellenizing feature of the name Agathos Daimon and the *Oracle of the Potter* attests that it was prominent in Alexandria by the end of the third c. BC (Ogden 2009a, 158–159), with a peak in popularity in the Imperial age (Fraser 1972, I, 209, II, 356–357). This god was represented as a serpent, often with a beard or with the double crown (*ps šhmtj* or *pschenet*) or sometimes with a human head crowned with a *kalathos* like Serapis (Dunand 1981). The elaborate story about the origin of the cult of Agathos Daimon related in the *Alexander Romance* may represent the local tradition told by priests and believers (Jouguet 1941–1942, 160).

7 τῆς νῦν καλουμένης Στοᾶς: this generically-named Stoa was in the central area of the city called *Meson Pedion*, the place of the episode of the snake-killing (III 32.5). The reference is probably to the papyrologically-attested τετραγώνος στοά in the place called Τετράπυλον (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Στοά, Τετράπυλον; Fraser 1972, I, 209). This temple of Agathos Daimon, the protective hero or *Genius* of Alexandria, is attested as late as 361 AD (Amm. XXII 11.7: *speciosum Genii templum*. Calderini s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος τέμενος). The most famous building in the area of *Meson Pedion* was the tomb of Alexander (on

it see commentary to III 34.6). Whether the tomb of Alexander or the temple of Alexander and the temple of Agathos Daimon had anything in common is a matter of scholarly hypothesis (Taylor 1927; Chugg 2003; Chugg 2004, 229–256).

8 Κοπρία: this place, known from Philo (*Flacc.* 56) and Theophanes (*Chronographia*, PG CVIII, 292A), was somewhere in the eastern part of Alexandria (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια: Κοπρία).

9 ΑΒΓΔΕ: the division of Alexandria into five quarters or “letters” (γράμματα) is well attested in ancient evidence, literary (J. *BJ* II 494–495; Philo *Flacc.* 55–56), epigraphic (Breccia 1911, 71) and in papyri (*BGU* 1151, 1127; *M. Chres.* 107; *P. Oxy.* 46.3271 and 55.3756), see Calderini, I, 79–80; Alston 2002, 157–160. On the basis of this evidence we cannot, however, determine which section of the city belonged to which “letter” (Haas 1997, 142). Here these letters introduce a riddle, paralleled by those known from the *Life of Aesop* (28–30). The ability to devise tricks and to handle intellectual challenge are the prime virtues of Alexander in the *Alexander Romance* (Stoneman 1995, 166–167).

10 καθιδρυμένου δὲ τοῦ ἡρώου: certainly a heroon or temple of Agathos Daimon is meant here (see commentary to I 32.7).

11 ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος καθίδρυσεν Τύβι κε' (τὴν πόλιν) καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἡρῶν: 25 Tybi fell on 7 April in 331BC and this day certainly remained the official holiday of Alexandria until the date of composition of the *Alexander Romance*, as one may read from the custom of feeding snakes on 25 Tybi surviving “to this day” (I 32.13: ὅθεν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ δεῦρο τοῦτον τὸν νόμον φυλάττουσι παρ' Ἀλεξανδρεῦσι). An April date is corroborated by a horoscope of the city of Alexandria in the third c. AD surviving in a codex Batavus (Leid. B.P.Gr. 78: Weinstock 1953, 178) which puts γέννησις Ἀλεξάνδρειας at 16 April, even if mistakenly dating the foundation of Alexandria to 330BC (Weinstock 1953, n. 2 to p. 178, referring to O. Neugebauer; cf. Fraser 1972, II, 3). Thus the tradition of the foundation of Alexandria puts the date firmly in April, most probably on 7 April 331B.C. (Jouguet 1940; Jouguet 1942, 172–174; Bagnall 1979). This date of the foundation of Alexandria is concomitant with the version of events known from Diodorus (xvii 52), Curtius (iv 8.1) and Justin (xi 11.1) that Alexander established the city after the expedition to Siwah and not prior to it (so Plu. *Alex.* 26.3–10; Arr. *An.* III 1.5). Since the founding of Alexandria was an elaborate endeavour which had to be well-prepared, one can imagine Alexander visiting the place on his way to Siwah and postponing the actual ceremony until the return from Siwah

(Bosworth 1980, 263–264; Nawotka 2010, 207–208), and in fact until April 331 BC. The heroon is the temple of Agathos Daimon known as the protective spirit (heros/*Genius*) of Alexandria (Amm. XXII 11.7. Fraser 1972, II, 356–357).

θυσία τελεῖται αὐτῷ τῷ ἥρωι (ὡς ὀφιογενεῖ): the text is here (purposely) ambiguous, switching from the aitiological story of Agathos Daimon and the custom of feeding snakes on 25 Tybi to a “serpent-generated (ὀφιογενής) hero.” Since this statement appears in the context of the foundation story, this hero is probably the *ktistes* of Alexandria, Alexander sired by a snake. This would mean that in the Alexandria of the late antiquity at least, Alexander was identified with Agathos Daimon (Taylor 1927; Jouguet 1940; Chugg 2004, 154–147).

### Chapter 33

1 Ἡλίωνος στῦλοι α: few other sources mention the columns or gates of Helios: Ach. Tat. V 1.1; Sophr. Patr. ss. *Cyri et Joanni mir.* PG LXXXVII, 2593C; *PJews* 1914 (fourth c. A.D.); Malalas XI 280. This structure was situated in the eastern part of Alexandria (Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξανδρεῖα: Ἡλίου πύλαι).

ἐξήτει (δέ) καὶ τὸ Σαραπεῖον: here the prophecy of Serapis (I 3.5–6) comes to fruition: Alexander, the reborn Nektanebo (i.e. his son) returns to Egypt. In this chapter Ammon’s prophecy directs Alexander to Serapis via the temple of Aion Ploutonios who, by virtue of the shared epiclesis, may be identified with Serapis (on Serapis see commentary to I 3.4). Serapis, through his origin from Osiris was a chthonic god, frequently identified in Greek writings with Pluton-Hades, beginning with Manetho (*FGrH* 609 T3, ap. Plu. *Mor.* 362a). In the Imperial age at the latest, Serapis became the principal, tutelary god of Alexandria and this alone necessitated close links between this deity and the founder of the city. The importance of Serapis for the identity of the people of Alexandria can hardly be overestimated, a vivid testimony to that being an ironic passus in the late-Roman apocryphal letter of Hadrian: “illic qui Serapem colunt, C(h)ristiani sunt et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se C(h)risti episcopos dicunt, nemo illic archisynagogus Iud(a)eorum, nemo Samarites, nemo C(h)ristianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes. ipse ille patriarcha cum Aegyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare, ab aliis cogitur Christum” (*HA Firmus* 8.2) The (Great) Serapeum of Alexandria was the principal temple of this city (sources on the Serapeum: Calderini, s.v. Ἀλεξανδρεῖα: Σαραπεῖον), on the evidence of the foundation inscriptions, erected by Ptolemy III Euergetes, although some works may have begun under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, if not under Ptolemy I Soter (McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes 2004). There is no archaeological evidence for any works at the site of the Great Ser-



apeum conducted under Alexander, while the testimony of Malalas (VIII 1: ἔκτισε δὲ καὶ ἱερὸν τῷ Σεράπιδι Ἡλίῳ; also Suda, s.v. Σάραπις) possibly follows the *Alexander Romance*. In the Imperial age the Ptolemaic structure was replaced by the magnificent temple which survived until the end of fourth c. AD, still praised in the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* of 359–360: “Et dii coluntur eminenter et templum Serapis ibi est, unum et solum spectaculum nouum in omni mundo: nusquam enim terra aut aedificium <tales> aut dispositio templi <talibus> aut religio talis inuenitur” (35). The Great Serapeum stood in the place now marked by so-called Pompey’s Pillar. Its demolition by the Christian mob in 391 marked a turning point in the history of Alexandria, symbolically ending its pagan history (Torok 2005, 90–91). The Great Serapeum is the only Ptolemaic-age temple in Alexandria properly studied archaeologically. The vast modern literary corpus on Serapis and the Great Serapeum is conveniently summarized by Fraser (1972, I, 246–276; II, 83–91; also Stoneman 2007, 534–537).

The *Alexander Romance* is very selective in its description of the temples of Alexandria, naming only four: the heroon of Agathos Daimon (*supra*), and the temples of Zeus and Hera, of Helios and of Serapis out of many hundreds of temples and private chapels in the city. According to the *Syriac Chronicle* (V 3) of Michael bar Elias of the late twelfth c., but based on good sources of late antiquity, there were as many as 2478 of them in existence in Alexandria in the fourth c. AD (Fraser 1951; Haas 1997, 141–142; Torok 2005, 88).

4 αἰφνιδίως δὲ μέγας ἀέτος καταπτὰς ἤρπασε τὰ σπλάγχνα: a story similar to those conveyed by Malalas (VIII 12) about the foundations of Seleukeia and Antioch-on-the-Orontes (Stoneman 2007, 537–538).

5 ξόανον: a cult statue of Serapis. Under the Empire, as attested by Pausanias, the word *xoanon*, was used with the restricted meaning of very old and venerable cult statues made of wood (Vincent 2003), although in the archaic age this word applied to all kinds of cult statues (Neudecker 2010). Clement of Alexandria calls *xoanon* the famous statue of Serapis, a masterpiece of Bryaxis made of metal and stone (Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.48.2; about the authorship of Bryaxis: 4.48.5); and τὸ ξόανον τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου θεοῦ Σεράπιδος is known from an undated inscription from Ostia (*I.Porto* 18). It seems that the restrictive usage of Pausanias was not the norm in later antiquity. Very likely, therefore, a reference is made here to the statue of Bryaxis (the exhaustive study of it is Hornbostel 1973; on *xoanon* see 46–47).

κόρης ἄγαλμα: if the previously mentioned statue (*xoanon*) is of Serapis, the one who accompanies it is that of Kore or Persephone (Nock 1934, 91–94).

6 τοὺς ὀβελίσκους ἐθεάσατο τοὺς μέχρι νῦν κειμένους ἐν τῷ Σαραπείῳ: these obelisks were attested also in Aphthonios' description of the Great Serapeum (*Progymnasmata*, p. 40, Raabe = 12.10 in Patillon 2008) who states that they were located in the central section of the temenos, close to the temple. They were most probably put in this place in later antiquity, as they are not named in Pliny's list of Egyptian obelisks (*Nat.* XXXVI 69. Fraser 1972, II, 84). If Aphthonios relates what he saw with his own eyes, the obelisks were still in place in the last quarter of the fourth c. AD (the date of the *Progymnasmata*: Patillon 2008, 49–52).

γράμμασι ἱερατικοῖς: priestly (hieratic) writing, which in Egypt developed parallel to hieroglyphic writing, prior to Demotic, used for most everyday life purposes and for religious texts, but primarily written in ink, rarely carved in stone (Satzinger 1977). Egyptian stone inscriptions were usually executed in hieroglyphic scripture and in fact the rec. β has in this place an emendation over the archetype text preserved in ms. A: γράμματα ἱερογλυφικά. It is impossible to say whether the author of the *Alexander Romance* appreciated the difference between the hieroglyphic and hieratic writings. He is, however, quite realistic in presenting the scene: Alexander does not read the Egyptian inscriptions by himself but needs here and in I 34.3–4 local experts to explain the inscriptions to him (Stoneman 1995, 165).

Βασιλέως κοσμοκράτορος Σεσογχώσεως: the name Sesonchosis (or Sesonchis) is sparsely attested in Greek sources, the earliest being in Dikaiarchos of the late fourth c. BC who names an Egyptian king of this name (fr. 58a, Mirhady, ap. *Sch. vetera in A.R.* IV 267). Also Manetho names such a king in the list of the Dynasty XII (*FGrH* 609 F2, ap. Syncel., p. 110), with the name again mentioned in the *Alexander Romance*. But there is another figure in Greek literature of the name Sesostri/Sesosis, a great king of Egypt whose conquests of lands up to Thrace, Skythia, Ethiopia, Arabia and India overshadowed those of Kambyses, as we learn from Herodotus (II 101–110) and later from Greek authors (Hecat. *FGrH* 264 F25; D.S. I 53–58, 94; Str. XVI 4.4 and 7; J. *AJ* VIII 254; Isidorus, *Hymni in Isim* 4.31), also called kosmokrator (Tzetzes, *Chiliades* IV 761). Notwithstanding spelling, all these names refer to the same character borrowed by the Greeks from Egyptian culture. Sesonchosis/Sesostri very early became a character of Egyptian literature, attaining popularity during the First Persian Rule as a national hero counterbalancing the exploits of the Achaemenid kings. He was a composite figure ultimately drawing upon the features of a number of historical kings of Egypt: Sesostri I and Sesostri III in the first place, but also of Ramesses II and Shoshenq I of Dynasty XXII known in the Bible as שִׁשְׁקִי (Shishak: 1 *Reg.* 11.40, 14.25, and 2 *Ch.* 12.2–9). At some point the Egyptian Sesonchosis/Sesostri became utterly Hellenized, featuring in a conventional

Greek novel of love and adventure known from papyri fragments of the third and fourth c. AD, known as *Sesostris Romance* (Braun 1938, s. 1–34; Lange 1954; Ruiz-Montero 1989; Stephens and Winkler 1995, s. 245–246; Stoneman 2007, 538–540; Stephens 2008, 68–69). For *kosmokrator* see above ad 1.12.7. As we learn from the *Oracle of the Potter*, there was a strong native anti-Alexandrian resentment in Ptolemaic Egypt, since the new city created a powerful contender for the former pharaonic capital Memphis. The story of the foundation of Alexandria in the *Alexander Romance* may reflect the ideological conflicts of the Ptolemaic age, trying to mitigate the anti-Alexandrian sentiments by making the national Egyptian hero Sesonchosis a proponent of the most important cult of Alexandria, that of Serapis (Dillery 2004, 257–258).

10 αὐξηθήσεται ἀγαθοῖς Ἀλεξάνδρεια: the ideology of Alexandria being abundant in goods can be found both in classical authors (D.S. XVII 52.5; Plu. *Alex.* 26.10) and in the anti-foreigner *Oracle of the Potter* (Koenan 1968, 206, l. 37: αὐτὴ πόλις ἦν πάντροφος εἰς ἣν κατοικήσθη πᾶν γένος ἀνδρῶν, or “all-nurturing was the city in which every race of men settled,” tr. Burstein 1985, 137).

11 This section contains a lengthy response that Alexander receives in a dream from Serapis. Serapis declines Alexander’s request to reveal to him the time and circumstances of his death and informs Alexander that, although he will conquer many peoples, he will earn the greatest glory through founding Alexandria. This idea was certainly present in Alexandria in later antiquity as the *Alexandrian World Chronicle* gives Alexander the nickname “founder” (scil. of Alexandria: *ELB* I 6.6; I 8.4, 5, 6; II 5.2, 6; II 6.1, 4: *Conditor*). The idea of a person asking a god or oracle about the date of his death is common in ancient literature (Stoneman 2011a, 8–11).

νότον δὲ θαμβῶν μὴ πνέειν δυσήμερον: Notos is the Greek name of the south wind, in Egypt particularly unpleasant because of dust storms and heat. But Alexandria enjoyed the reputation of a most enjoyable climate, with winds bringing much-needed relief in the summer (e.g. D.S. XVII 52.2; Str. XVII 1.7; Amm. xxii 16.8. Cf. Scheidel 2004, 18–19).

τάφον γὰρ ἔξεις αὐτὸς ἦν κτίσεις πόλιν: here and later in III.24 a reference is made to Alexander’s tomb in Alexandria. In a way it reflects the Greek tradition of burying the founder of a city within its limits. On the other hand the magnificent tomb of Alexander in Alexandria served to enhance the prestige of the Ptolemies, the first of whom made every effort to hijack the body of Alexander so that it might be entombed in Egypt and not in Macedonia. This passage espouses the discernible pro-Ptolemaic tendency in the *Alexander Romance* (Payne 1991).

12 λιβάνου δὲ πλήθος καὶ ἀρωμάτων παντοίων: a reference to a famous anecdote of Alexander rebuked as a teenager by his tutor, the strict disciplinarian Leonidas for overusing frankincense in sacrifice: “Alexander when thou hast conquered the spice-bearing regions thou canst be thus lavish with thine incense” And, the story goes, Alexander having taken the depot in incense trade in Gaza send to his tutor fifty talents of frankincense (Plu. *Alex.* 25.6–8, quoted in B. Perrin’s translation; also Plu. *Mor.* 179e; Plin. *Nat.* XII 62).

13 Παρμενίωνι ἀρχιτέκτονι: Parmenion, or rather Parmeniskos, as he is called later in this section, is known from other sources as is the temple built by him, the so-called Serapeum of Parmeniskos. Both versions of his name are attested: Παρμενίων (*Sch. vetera in Call.: Diegesis in Iambos*, fr. 191) and Παρμενίσκος (*P.Cair.Zen.* III 59355 of 243 B.C.). The Serapeum of Parmeniskos is not to be confused with the Great Serapeum. This was built by Parmeniskos outside of the city walls, while the Great Serapeum was in Rhakotis (Fraser 1972 I, 270–271).

### Chapter 34

1 Ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος ... ἐπείγετο εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον: as in I 31.5 and in I.34.9, the regular Greek perception of Alexandria being *by* Egypt, not *in* Egypt. Hence Alexander, making a trip to Memphis from the newly-founded Alexandria, does not move within Egypt but goes to Egypt.

λίβερνα: see commentary to I.26.3

Τρίπολιν: see commentary to I.35.9

2 ἐνεθρόνιζον αὐτὸν ... ἐστόλιζον ὡς Αἰγύπτιον βασιλέα: this is the only piece of evidence to directly mention the Egyptian coronation of Alexander. The issue of historicity of the pharaonic coronation of Alexander has been much debated in modern scholarly literature, with some influential voices rejecting it as allegedly incompatible with the impetuous nature of Alexander who did not have time for lengthy Egyptian rituals and who adopted only as many of the trappings of Egyptian monarchy as necessary, including only a small selection of royal names and titles (Badian 1985, 433; Bosworth 1988, 70–71; Burstein 1991; Stewart 1993, 174). The Egyptian evidence, however, corrects this undue skepticism: unlike many pharaohs of the Late Period, Alexander is known to use all five Egyptian royal names and what ends this part of the discussion is a recently published inscription with all five pharaonic names of Alexander: Bosch-Puche 2008; Ladynin 2014. Alexander’s building program in Egypt,



FIGURE 8 *Properly crowned in the temple of Ptah in Memphis Alexander was legitimate pharaoh, as represented here in relief in the Temple of the Barque build on his orders in Luxor. God Montu holds Alexander by the hand.*

PHOTO K. NAWOTKA

his religious policy and his conscious treading in the footsteps of the kings of Dynasty XXX leave no doubt that he made every effort to be accepted as a legitimate pharaoh (El-Raziq 1988; Bosch-Puche 2014; Ladynin 2014b; Pfeiffer 2014; Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2016). The corroborating evidence speaks therefore to the historicity of the pharaonic coronation/enthronement of Alexander. The *Alexander Romance* correctly mentions the temple of Hephaistos (i.e. of Ptah) in Memphis as the place where a new pharaoh was inaugurated, as is attested as late as the coronation of Ptolemy V (Bergman 1968, 93–94, 110–119). The culmination of the ceremony, which lasted *in toto* a few days, should have taken place on 1 Tybi, i.e. it can be dated tentatively to 14 March 331 BC, long after Alexander came back from Siwah and some three weeks prior to the foundation of Alexandria (Wojciechowska and Nawotka 2014).

Ἡφαίστου ἱερὸν: to the Greeks, Hephaistos was the name of the Egyptian god Ptah whose temple in Memphis was the usual coronation place of pharaohs of the Late Period, including Alexander (*supra*) and the Ptolemies. Nigidius Figulus of ca. 45 BC (fr. 98, Swoboda: “Typhon interficitur in temple Aegypti Memphi, ubi mos fuit solio regio decorari reges, qui regna ineunt”) provides a testimony that the knowledge of this function of the temple of Ptah was not alien to the classical world (Bergman 1968, 92–120).

θροनिστήριον a hapax, perhaps rather in the meaning “Intronisationsstätte” rather than “place for a throne” (*LSJ* Suppl., s.v.); very likely a Greek rendition of an Egyptian word used to describe the place in the temple of Ptah pertinent to coronation ceremonies (Bergman 1968, 93–94). In general, Bergman shows, the language of the coronation passus exhibits distinctly Egyptian cultural features. This suggests a rendering of the authentic Egyptian tradition of the coronation/ enthronement of Alexander in Memphis.

3 ἀνδριάντα μέλανος λίθου: the statue was surely made of basalt as were many Egyptian royal statues (Stoneman 2007, 548).

5 Σινωπείου: the Sinopeion is a metonymy for the Serapeum, built upon the legend of the statue of Serapis coming to Egypt from Sinope (see ad I 3.4). And indeed Arm. (96) has “Sarapean temple” in this place.

6 Οὗτος ἐμὸς πατήρ ἐστιν· τούτου ἐγὼ υἱὸς τυγχάνω: an exact Greek rendition of the Egyptian formula used in coronation ceremonies, as e.g. *it.i pw ntj, ink s3.f* (“He is my father and I am his son”) of Thutmose III (Sethe, *Urk.* IV, 156.17–157.1; Bergman 1968, 94).

τείχη ... ἀχειροποίητα: unusual usage of the rare word ἀχειροποίητος (“not made by hands,” *LSJ* s.v.) which in most other attested cases is applied to

abstract/spiritual qualities. Here it refers to the branches of the Nile, expressing the general idea of Egypt being easily defensible because of its geography (cf. Stoneman 2007, 549).

9 Ἀλέξανδρος ἤτησε παρ' αὐτῶν φόρους, οὓς ἤτοιμάκασι Δαρείῳ: the plural φόρους correctly used here to express the multiplicity of taxes exacted by the Persian Empire from its subject peoples, commonly called “tribute” in modern scholarship. While making administrative arrangements, upon defeating the satraps of Asia Minor on the Granicus, Alexander decided to keep tribute at the same level as in Achaemenid times (Arr. *An.* I 17.1). In Asia Minor Alexander surely wanted to proclaim that, by virtue of victory in a pitched battle, he was the rightful heir to Darius III who was keeping taxes in his lands properly unchanged. Here tribute collected in Egypt is to be used to meet the expenses of the building of Alexandria. Indeed, these must have been the principal sources of income which Kleomenes of Naukratis used to pay for construction works there.

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν πρὸς Αἰγύπτῳ μητρόπολιν οὔσαν τῆς οἰκουμένης: again the idea of Alexandria as the leading city in the world is expressed. Even if this claim is somewhat exaggerated, Alexandria's reputation spread beyond the Mediterranean to reach even India and China (D.S. XVII 52; *P.Berlin* 13045 = Koerte 1923, 240, no. 634. Levi 1936; Payne 1991, 173).

ἐξέπεμψαν αὐτὸν διὰ τοῦ Πηλουσίου: although the historical context (see next chapter) is presented out of the chronological sequence, in the spring of 331 BC the historical Alexander took the road from Memphis to Pelusium where he crossed the Nile over a pontoon bridge (Arr. *An.* III 6.1), and then continued to Phoenicia. Alexander considered Pelusium a fortress important enough to have a commanding officer appointed by him and not by his satrap, and thus, presumably, accountable to the king alone (it was Polemon: Arr. *An.* III 5.3. Heckel 2006, 224, s.v. Polemon [1]).

## Chapter 35

1 ἐπὶ Συρίαν ὁδὸν ἐποιεῖτο: the historical Alexander visited Syria twice: in 332 BC after the Battle of Issos while marching to Phoenicia where he besieged Tyre, and then in 331 BC on his way from Egypt to Mesopotamia. Chapters 35–37 conflate these two sojourns in Syria, placing the Siege of Tyre in the period after Alexander's stay in Egypt, while his first visit to Syria is altogether omitted since in the *Alexander Romance* he comes to Egypt from the West. The word Συρία is used here in the meaning of the Persian satrapy of Eber-Nāri (“Be-

yond the river (Euprates)”), i.e. the land encompassing modern Syria (including its Turkish part), Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Palestine (Dandamayev 2011a).

**καταφράκτους:** cataphracts were heavy armed cavalry used as a prime offensive force, well-known in Iran long before Alexander, as attested by archaeological sources and iconographical evidence from Central Asia (Olbrycht 2004, 143–148). The very word **κατάφρακτοι** started to be used from the beginning of the second c. BC, initially for the (Iranian) heavy cavalry Antiochos III fielded against Rome (Liv. xxxv 48.3: *cataphractus*). The cataphract cavalry became a common feature in the Parthian Empire and in later antiquity it was used both on the Persian and on the Roman sides (Mielczarek 1993; Mielczarek 1996). The *Alexander Romance* uses here an idiom of the late antiquity. Alexander was noted for the very effective use of his crash cavalry, the “companion cavalry (*hetairoi*)” using long spears like the cataphracts but not as heavily armed.

**Τύρον:** Tyre was a great city in southern Phoenicia (today Sūr in Lebanon). In Achaemenid times Tyre, like other Phoenician cities, was ruled by a local dynasty accountable to the satrap of Eber-Nāri. Alexander reached the outskirts of Tyre in February 332 BC, of course prior to his expedition to Egypt. On account of the (seemingly) impregnable position of Tyre on an offshore island, a powerful navy and a memory of successful resistance to all past attempts to take the city by siege, the Tyrians refused Alexander’s request to enter the city to sacrifice to Melqart, who for Alexander was identical with his mythological ancestor Herakles (Melqart/Herakles and Alexander: Bonnet 1988, 51–59). This resulted in a six-month long siege and storming of Tyre by Alexander’s army followed by a massacre of reportedly as many as 6–8,000 inhabitants (Amitay 2008; Nawotka 2010, 184–193 for reference).

2 **μὴ ἐὼντες αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς πόλεως εἰσελθεῖν κατὰ τινα χρησμὸν ἀρχαῖον:** this “ancient oracle” is otherwise unattested. The Tyrians believed that no one but the king could lead a procession to lay offerings to the city’s god Melqart/Herakles. Therefore, had Alexander been allowed to sacrifice, this would have been tantamount to recognizing him as King of Tyre and thus renouncing the sovereignty jealously guarded for centuries (Moscatti 1968, 26; Amitay 2010, 18–19; for reference: see Nawotka 2010, 186, n. 117).

3 **περιτειχίσαντες ὅλην τὴν πόλιν:** it is impossible to establish whether this is just a conventional statement about the defenders offering resistance to Alexander, or a reflection of the fortification works conducted by the Tyrians to strengthen the walls, especially on the side facing the mole constructed by Alexander’s



army and known from other sources too (D.S. XVII 43.3–7; Curt. IV 3.13; Arr. *An.* II 21.3–4).

4 ὁρᾷ τινὰ κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους λέγοντα αὐτῷ· ‘Μὴ γένη σεαυτοῦ ἄγγελος εἰς Τύρον.’: Alexander regularly receives advice from gods, either in prophetic dreams (I 35.4, 7, II 13.5) or through prophecy. Here he is warned not to impersonate his envoy: this was Alexander’s trick of choice, later in the book tried in Persepolis (II 13–15) and in the kingdom of Kandake (III 20–23); to John Malalas (VIII 3) this was known as Alexander’s *modus operandi*. Curtius records on this occasion Alexander’s dream in which he is led by the hand of Herakles to Tyre, which was interpreted that the city would be taken but only after the long hard struggle foretold in the twelve labours of Herakles (Curt. IV 2.17; Herakles in Alexander’s dream also in Plu. *Alex.* 24.5–6).

5 [Ἐπιστολὴ Ἀλεξάνδρου Τυρίοις.]: Alexander is known to have negotiated with the Tyrians and this certainly involved sending them letters but this one is fictitious.

Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος Μακεδόνων, υἱὸς Ἀμμωνος καὶ Φιλίππου βασιλέως παῖς καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ βασιλεὺς μέγιστος Εὐρώπης, Ἀσίας καὶ Λιβύης this is a peculiar combination of pedigree and titles of Alexander, although many a Greek reader would not be surprised that someone had two fathers, a god and a mortal. Among mythological figures Herakles with Amphitryon and Zeus and from among mere mortals Seleukos I with Antiochos and Apollo would be prime examples. The remaining titles bear some resemblance to the titles of Persian kings whose most important title was Great King. The king of Asia was the expression commonly used in Greek sources in the meaning king of Persia and Alexander had himself proclaimed king of Asia on the battlefield of Gaugamela showing that from this moment on he was the legitimate king of the Persian Empire (Nawotka 2012).

6 πρωτόβουλοι: the *Alexander Romance* is the only literary work to attest this late word (“leaders of the council”), unknown to *LSJ*. Used not as a personal name but as a title, it is attested only once in Greek epigraphy: *Hesperia* Suppl. 4 (1940) 138 (Athens, second/third c. AD). Presumably it is a Greek equivalent to the Latin *principales curiae*, who exercised the real leadership in city councils in the West of the later Roman Empire (Kotula 1982). This is an anachronistic usage in this context, although in the Phoenician cities kings had to share power with “assemblies of elders” i.e. with wealthy civic leaders (Bondi 1988). This was in particular true in the case of Tyre in 332 BC, since they, in conjunction with the crown prince, had to deal with Alexander in the absence of King

Azemilcus (‘Ozmilk) who was at that time leading the Tyrian squadron in the Persian fleet of Autophradates.

πρέσβεις μαστίζεσθαι ... ἀνασταυροῦσιν αὐτούς: also Curtius (IV 2.15) states that the Tyrians killed Alexander’s envoys. Since crucifixion was a punishment known both in Achaemenid Persia and in Carthage, a colony of Tyre, it is likely that death was also inflicted on offenders in this way in Tyre. The *Alexander Romance* may convey the authentic tradition here. Killing Alexander’s envoy was a point of no return: Alexander had to besiege and storm Tyre to punish it for this flagrant crime (Amitay 2010, 19).

7–8 ὁρᾷ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους ... Σάτυρον ἐπιιδόντα αὐτῷ τυρόν: Alexander’s prophetic dream is reported also, albeit in a different version, by Plutarch (*Alex.* 24.8–9) who has Alexander catch a Satyr and his dream interpreters reading this, through a word-play (σὰ γενήσεται Τύρος, or “Tyre will be yours” by dismembering the word Σάτυρος), as a prophecy of Alexander taking Tyre.

9 Τρίπολιν ὠνόμασεν: Tripolis was a Phoenician city (now in the suburbs of the city Trāblos or Tripoli in Lebanon). Its name is probably of Phoenician origin, either an ethnic name *tarp<sup>e</sup>lāyē* or *ṭarpol* (“virgin soil”). But on account of similarity to the Greek word Τρίπολις (“three cities”) an etymology was born of Tripolis as a joint foundation of three major Phoenician cities: Sidon, Tyre and Arwad (Str. XVI 2.15; D.S. XVI 41.1; Plin. *Nat.* v 78; St.Byz., s.v. Τρίπολις; Eust. *Com. in Dion. Periegetem* 914. Elayi 1990; Röllig 2009). The *Alexander Romance* goes a step further in this pseudo-etymology, attributing the act of *syniokismos* (uniting of the three original settlements) and thus the creation of the new city of Tripolis, to Alexander.

### Chapters 36–38

**Chapters 36–38** contain letters of Alexander and Darius III. They indeed exchanged letters on three occasions although the exact form of these works is not known to modern scholarship. The first letter of Darius reached Alexander at Marathos (today Amrit in Syria, in antiquity a town in the Phoenician kingdom of Arwad) in January 332 BC, the second one during the Siege of Tyre, i.e. both much earlier than in the *Alexander Romance*, and the third prior to the Battle of Gaugamela. The historical Darius presented in his letters peace offers, each time making a better bid. The first letter offered to Alexander peace and friendship (i.e. recognition of his status as a king *de facto* equal to Darius) and some ransom for his family captured at Issos. Alexander turned down the offer

in response, blaming Darius for conspiring to kill Philip II (Curt. IV 1.7–14; D.S. XVII 39.1–2; Arr. *An.* II 14; Just. XI 12.1–2; *It. Alex.* 39–40). The second letter of Darius, delivered to Alexander in the spring of 332 BC, on top of a peace proposal contained the offer of a ransom of 10,000 talents and the cessation of Asia Minor to the west of the River Halys (D.S. XVII 39.1–2, XVII 54.1; Curt. IV 5.1–8; Plu. *Alex.* 29.7–8; Arr. *An.* II 25.1–3; Just. XI 12.3–5; *It. Alex.* 43–44; V. Max. VI 4, ext. 3). This one was rejected too (Nawotka 2010, 181–183, 194, with references). The letters in Chapters 36–38 are obviously fictitious, without any attempt to approximate the contents of the authentic diplomatic exchange between the two kings. They instead paint a conventional picture of the Persian/Oriental/barbarian insolence and arrogance. In contrast Alexander is accredited with sober wit, playing a philosopher-king who dominates the debate thanks to his intelligence and rhetorical training. Plutarch, in his *De fortuna seu virtute Alexandri*, paints much the same picture of Alexander. Alexander's response to Darius looks very much like an implementation of handbooks of rhetoric, not denying the obvious truth (e.g. the riches of Darius), and attacking credible but unproven claims (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 174–176). Apart from being fictitious, the letter of Darius seems out of place here, since by that moment Darius must have been aware of Alexander's military might. Therefore Merkelbach in his hypothetical reconstruction of the epistolary novel places it before the Battle of the Granicus (Merkelbach, Trumpf 1977, 118).

## Chapter 36

1 κιβωτόν: rec. β and γ have here κιβώτιον χρυσίου and since Arm. and Syr. have it too, this may have been the reading of the archetype (α).

κομίζοντες καὶ σκῦτος καὶ σφαῖραν καὶ κιβωτόν: “ball and whip” were popular playthings for children in Greece (Fittà 1998, 76–78, 98–105; Stoneman 2006, 554) and this gift of Darius is interpreted here as an attempt to humiliate Alexander. But it is not how this passage was understood in many Oriental and even some Occidental versions. Leo has *curvam virgam* in the place of σκῦτος and in Oriental versions this curved stick becomes a mallet used in the polo game, a popular pastime in Iran, a mastery of which was deemed indispensable for young royalties. Casari (2012, 187–190) holds that this episode in the *Alexander Romance* might convey the Persian traditional story of the upbringing of a young prince, Alexander in this case, who will inherit the throne, having become an accomplished polo player, like Šāpūr son of Ardašīr in the Persian legends of the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* or of the *Šāhnāme*. This may be difficult to prove since most of the earliest versions of the *Alexander Romance*

have here a “whip,” not a “mallet” (ms. A, Val., β, Arm., Syr.) indicating that the archetype (α) most probably had σκῦτος here. If this story does not have an Iranian, factual or ethnographic substratum, its later Oriental and Occidental interpretations as a reference to the polo game may have been anchored in the tremendous popularity of the ball game as a royal attribute in Mesopotamia and Iran (Anus and Sarv 2015).

Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ θεῶν συγγενῆς σύνθρονός τε θεῷ Μίθρα καὶ συνανατέλλων ἡλίῳ, ἐγὼ αὐτὸς θεὸς Δαρεῖος: these titles of Darius have much more to do with the titles of Sassanian kings contemporary with the author of the *Alexander Romance* than with attested titles of the Achaemenids, although among Sassanian royal titles excerpted by Huyse (2006) from Western and Eastern sources there is no example exactly paralleling this one. Among the Persian royal titles only βασιλεὺς βασιλέων (king of kings or OP *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām*) was in use in Achaemenid times, but so it was under the Arsakids, not later than from Mithridates II (Shayegan 2011, 41–46, 228–247), and in the Sassanian era (*Šāhān Šāh*). The most prominent bilingual inscription of this age, the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, displays a number of features similar to the self-representation of Darius in this chapter: apart from being “kings of kings” both Darius and Shapur I belong to the lineage of gods (θεῶν συγγενῆς/ ἐκ γένους θεῶν) and both are gods (θεὸς Δαρεῖος / θεὸς Σαπώρης), as was found in the coin titularies of all early Sassanian kings from Ardashir I to Yazdgerd I (Huyse 2006, 182–185). The early Sassanians expressed their aspiration to divinity, unknown in the case of the Achaemenid kings (Daryaee 2008). Their coins show them symbolically in the center of the world with the Sun and the Moon revolving around the king (Daryaee 2009, 41–42). Sassanian royal inscriptions do not convey any reference to the sun nor any other heavenly bodies in respect to Persian kings, but the letters of the Sassanian kings quoted by a Roman author contains this element: “Rex regum Sapor, particeps siderum, frater Solis et Lunae” in the letter of Shapur I to Constantius (Amm. xvii 15.3) or Khusrō II to Wahram VI: Χοσρόης, βασιλεὺς βασιλέων ... ἡλίῳ συνανατέλλων (Theophylactus Simm. 4.8.5), with this phrase directly paralleling Darius’ title in the *Alexander Romance*. Even if the letters of Sassanian kings quoted by Roman authors are literary fiction (Huyse 2006, 195), the motive of a Persian king rising together with the Sun, at least in his official titulary, belonged to the stock of late Roman representations of Sassanian kings.

ἐμῷ θεράποντι τάδε προστάσσω καὶ κελεύω: this formula echoes the epistolary style of the Achaemenid royal chancellery (Schmitt 1998, 264–265).

### Chapter 37

The historical Alexander indeed revealed to his army the contents of the letters of Darius III, at least to the degree which suited the aims of his propaganda, and of those which he wrote in reply (for the discussion of this issue see: Nawotka 2010, 181–183). The events presented in this chapter are fictitious and aim at building the image of Alexander the philosopher-king.

2 τινες τῶν κυνῶν ἀδυναμοῦντες τῇ ἀλκῇ τοῦ σώματος μάχεσθαι μέγα ὕλακτοῦσιν: a proverb, allegedly Baktrian, related also by Curtius: “quod apud Bactrianos vulgo usurpabant, canem timidum vehementius latrare quam mordere” (VII 4.13. Cf. Stoneman 2007, 555).

### Chapter 38

7 σφαιροειδῆς γὰρ καὶ στρογγύλος ὑπάρχων ὁ κόσμος: the ball sent to Alexander symbolizes the Earth, thus containing a prophecy of the world dominion. This is the second prophecy to this effect, after the sign first received by Philip II (I 11) about the conquest of the world fated for Alexander (Stoneman 2007, 555). The letters are fictional, that of Alexander juxtaposes the Macedonian's temperance to Darius's self-aggrandizement and his witty answer reinterprets the mocking gifts of Darius: the ball symbolizes his conquests and the gold the tribute the Persians are about to pay him (Rosenmeyer 2001, 177–180).

### Chapter 39

3–5 Darius' (fictitious) letter to his satraps, known also from *P.Hamb.* 129. This letter, the first in the *Alexander Romance* written by Darius to his satraps, gives an account of the situation shortly after

Alexander's invasion of Asia, when the Great King has not yet made the decision to take the field. Orders as to the conduct of war are given to the satraps “beyond the Taurus”, i.e. in Asia Minor, and this means that Darius is somewhere to the south of the Taurus, presumably in one of his capital cities. This reflects the historical situation of the spring of 334 BC, before the Battle of the Granicus in May 334 BC (Merkalbach and Trumpf 1977, 11–12). In the *Alexander Romance* this letter is placed in the context of events after the Siege of Tyre (after August 332 BC).

4 κρόταλα καὶ ἀστραγάλους: *astragaloi* made of bone, bronze, marble etc. are perhaps the most commonly-attested gamepieces of antiquity (about the game see: Fasnacht 1997), while *krotaloi* was an equally popular clapper.

5 στρατιώτας ... εἰς ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν οἰκῆσαι: forced settling of POWs and granting land to refugees in lands far off from their places of origin were well-known facets of Achaemenid policy (Kulesza 1994).

7 Ὑδάσπης καὶ Σπινθήρ: no satraps of these names are attested. Hydaspes is the ancient Greek name of a river in Pakistan (modern Jhelum) but here it may be a misspelling for Hystaspes as a high-ranking Persian commander of this name is attested in the age of Alexander (Curt. VI 2.7; Arr. *An.* VII 6.5. See: Heckel 2006, 142). Spintner is believed to be a transformed version of Spithridates and the satrap of Lydia and Ionia bearing this name was killed by Alexander in the Battle of the Granicus (D.S. XVII 20.3–5. See: Nöldeke 1890, 5; Jouanno 2002, 148; Bounoure 2004, 241; Heckel 2006, 254–255; Stoneman 2007, 556).

8 Δαρεῖος: after the name of Darius rec. β and γ have ἐν Βαβυλῶνι τῆς Περσίδος. It is not possible to say which was a reading of the lost archetype (α). Although of course Babylon was in southern Mesopotamia and not in Persis, the reading of rec. β and γ would correctly state where Darius was in the earliest part of the war with Alexander.

## Chapter 40

1 Πινάρω: Pinaros is the ancient name of a river in Kilikia, now most probably the Payas in Turkey (Lane Fox 1973, 169–170; Engels 1978, pp. 131–134; Hammond 1996, 97–101). In November 333 BC on the Pinaros Alexander defeated Darius III for the first time in the battle commonly known as the Battle of Issos. The first paragraph in this chapter refers to maneuvers of the Persian and Macedonian armies preceding the battle.

2–5 Another fictitious letter of Darius to Alexander.

2 Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων θεὸς μέγας Δαρεῖος καὶ ἐθνῶν ρκ' κύριος: another set of bombastic imaginary titles for Darius. Among them θεὸς μέγας (“great god”) may be the amplified variant of βασιλεὺς μέγας (“Great King”), the most commonly attested title of Achaemenid monarchs. The ἐθνῶν ρκ' κύριος (“lord of 120 peo-

ples”) may echo another Achaemenid royal title *xšāyaθiya dahyūnām* (“king of the countries/ peoples”). About Achaemenid royal titles see: Wiesehöfer 1996, 56–57.

5 προσκυνεῖν: Darius demands from Alexander *proskynesis* or a ceremonial bow performed by everybody admitted before the Great King. This was a sign of respect and obedience practiced throughout the Near East, difficult, however, to accept by the Greeks to whom it resembled the gesture reserved in worship of their gods (Frye 1972; Briant 1996, 234–235; Chosky 2002; Spawforth 2007, 102–104).

## Chapter 41

**Chapter 41** contains a description of the first battle between Darius and Alexander. Since it follows the information about Darius marching in the direction of the River Pinaros (I 40.1), the Battle of Issos is almost certainly meant here. The description contains, however, some elements of the Battle of Gaugamela attested in other sources (*vide infra*).

1 ἐπιστολῆς ἀναγνοσθείσης: in antiquity letters and other texts were as a rule rendered aloud. A letter delivered to a king would be read out by his secretary.

διὰ τῆς Ἀραβίας: this part of the *Alexander Romance* is presented in reverse chronological order and with an utter disregard for geography. The historical Alexander never set foot in Arabia, although in 324–323 BC he was planning a conquest of Arabia: scouting missions were dispatched in the Red Sea and in the Persian Gulf, while a powerful navy was built in Babylon and Alexander’s army underwent a reform to make it more suited for fighting in Arabia (see Nawotka 2010, 349–350, 368–369 for reference, Macdonald et al. 2015, 64–65). Alexander marched to the battlefield of Issos from Myriandros in Syria (near modern Iskenderun in Turkey), broadly speaking in the south-west direction.

Here rec. β contains a description of Alexander’s march through Kilikia and of the Battle of Issos. Most probably it is an emendation introduced by the author of the rec. β after mainstream Alexander historians, rather than a witness of the original text of the lost archetype (Stoneman 2007, 559). All other early versions (Val., Arm.) have text similar to ms. A, so this seems likely to match the original contents of the archetype (α).

2 *δρεπανηφόροις ἄρμασι*: the scythed chariots are attested in Darius' army at Gaugamela (D.S. XVII 53; Curt. IV 9.3–5; Arr. *An.* III 8.6, III 13.5; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.12), not at Issos.

3 *διήγεν τῆς φάλαγγος*: a maneuver attested in the beginning of the Battle of Gaugamela. Alexander, having noticed that the left wing of the much more numerous Persian army was stretching dangerously far behind his right wing, moved his right wing further right which prompted Darius to order a corresponding movement of his left wing and eventually to attack the Macedonians (Arr. *An.* III 13; Polyæn. IV 3.17).

*πολὺ τῶν ἀρμάτων διεφθείρετο*: again a detail of the Battle of Gaugamela: on Alexander's orders the well trained and disciplined phalanx moved so as to let the Persian chariots through, thus reducing the number of losses inevitably caused by chariots and their blades while other Macedonian soldiers hurled javelins at the passing chariot horses and slingers and the Agrianians finished off the charioteers (D.S. XVII 57.6, 58.4; Arr. *An.* III 13.6).

4 *ποιήσας ἐξ ἴσου τὸ τῶν Περσῶν εὐώνυον ἐπὶ τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας*: making the Macedonian right wing equal in length to the Persian left wing was the end result of the maneuver ordered by Alexander at the beginning of the Battle of Gaugamela. Here this maneuver begins in I 41.3 and its end result is misplaced since in the historical Battle of Gaugamela it preceded the attack of the Persian scythed chariots.

7 *οὐδὲν δὲ ἦν ὄραν ... ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ κονιορτοῦ*: clouds of dust obfuscating the view of the battle is a detail recorded for the Battle of Gaugamela (D.S. XVII 60.4–61.3; Curt. IV 15.32). Dust raised by combatants was a common feature in battles in antiquity, even if it is not always recorded by ancient authors (Echols 1952).

8 *Ἀμύντας*: Amyntas son of Antiochos was a Macedonian aristocrat associated with Amyntas IV, son of Perdikkas III, nephew of, and joint ruler with, Philip II, attested as *euergetes* of Oropos in Boeotia (IG VII 4250 = *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 258). After the death of Philip II, Amyntas son of Antiochos almost certainly was one of the Macedonians about whom Plutarch (*Mor.* 327c) writes “All Macedonia was festering with revolt and looking towards Amyntas and the children of Aeropos.” Once Amyntas IV lost the power struggle with Alexander the Great and was executed or assassinated (by 335 BC) Amyntas son of Antiochos fled to the Persian side (D.S. XVII 48.2; Curt. III 11.18), being attested in Ephesos in the moment of the democratic revolution in the aftermath of the Granicus (Arr.



*An.* I 17.9). In 333 BC Amyntas was maintaining contacts with the Macedonian opposition to Alexander, acting as a liaison between Alexander of Lynkestis and Darius III (*Arr. An.* I 25.3). Next Amyntas was in Sochoi advising Darius III before the Battle of Issos (*Curt.* III 7.1, III 8.1–11; *Plu. Alex.* 20.1–4; *Arr. An.* II 6.3–7. Cf. Heckel 2006, 23–24). He fought at Issos on the Persian side and then he fled to Cyprus with 4,000 Greek mercenaries eventually to arrive in Egypt which he tried to conquer, finding death before Memphis at the hands of soldiers led by the satrap Sabakes (*D.S.* XVII 48.2–5; *Curt.* IV 1.27–33; *Arr. An.* II 13.1–3).

ἦδε γὰρ τὸ πρὸς ἐσπέραν ἦν: the Battle of Issos lasted until the late hours of the day but so did the Battle of Gaugamela (Stoneman 2007, 560).

9 Δαρεῖος ...ἵππον ἀναβάς ἔφυγεν: this description of Darius' flight from the battlefield of Issos is contradicted by some other sources who say that Darius changed from his royal chariot to a mare at the battlefield (*Curt.* III 11.11; *Ael. NA* VI 48; *It. Alex.* 35). The ultimate source of Aelian and the anonymous late *Iter Alexandri* is unknown; Curtius may have relied on the mercenary's sources originating amongst Greek soldiers on Persian pay and therefore he often gives well-informed statements about events in the Persian camp. Diodorus (XVII 37.1) simply says that Darius fled on horseback, indirectly supporting Curtius. Only Arrian (*An.* II 11.5) has the same colorful and obviously untrue version as the *Alexander Romance* of Darius leaving the battlefield in his chariot and changing to a horse later on. The spare mount was kept on purpose next to his chariot to allow Darius a quick disengagement because the Great King should not have been killed or captured by enemy (Nylander 1993; Briant 1996, 239–242). In this story the *Alexander Romance* follows the tradition of all other ancient sources that Alexander was frustrated in his attempt to capture Darius.

10 ἄρμα ... κατέλαβεν: unable to take Darius III prisoner, Alexander captured his chariot and other royal insignia (*Curt.* III 11.23; *Plu. Alex.* 20.10; *Arr. An.* II 11.5–7; *It. Alex.* 35) and his immediate family members who accompanied the Great King to the battlefield (*D.S.* XVII 36.2–4; *Curt.* III 11.24–26; *Plu. Alex.* 21.1; *Arr. An.* II 11.9; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.5; Apion, ap. Gel. VII 8.1–3; *Just.* XI 9.11; *It. Alex.* 35).

σταδίους ξ' διώξας: this is the only ancient piece of evidence to state that Alexander pursued Darius over a distance of 60 stadia (ca. 11 km). This figure does not seem unlikely, bearing in mind that Darius had a head start of four to five stadia (*Plu. Alex.* 20.10). Since any road Alexander was likely to take was clogged with fleeing Persians making an effective pursuit impossible, he wisely turned back at dusk (*Curt.* III 12.1; *Arr. An.* II 11.5–6).

11 Δαρείου σκηνήν καταλαβών: at the end of the Battle of Issos the Persian camp was captured and robbed by the victorious Macedonian army but the property of Darius became Alexander's, including the Great King's tent or, to be more precise, his movable palace. The episode of Alexander taking over the tent of Darius III is widely featured in sources: D.S. XVII 36.5; Curt. III 11.23; Plu. *Alex.* 20.11–13; *It.Alex.* 35. Apart from the obvious material gains, taking over the tent of the defeated enemy had a poignant symbolic value: in the "itinerant" Persian Empire the tent of the Great King was his symbolic residence and seat of power; thus taking over it augured well for the victor. The practice of sealing one's military triumph with appropriating the loser's tent was well known in the history of Iran: some two hundred years before Issos, Cyrus the Great, having defeated the King of the Medes, Astyages, took over his tent and throne and symbolically his empire, as Alexander was now doing with the empire of Darius III (Briant 1996, 200–201, 267–268).

Ms. A states that the text copied lacks two folia; the editor (Kroll) fills the lacuna (I 41.12–44.2) after rec. β and Arm. Stoneman (2007) omits the emendated part. I comment here upon the text established by Kroll after these two early testimonies, disregarding passages surviving only in Val.

12 εὐγενεῖς τῶν Περσῶν τετελευτηκότας ἐκέλευσε θάπτεσθαι: the episode of burying not only Macedonian but also (select) Persian dead is sparsely attested in ancient sources (*It.Alex.* 36) but it is not unlikely, bearing in mind Alexander's desire to become the legitimate king of the Persian Empire for whom a respectful burial of the brave Iranian soldiers must have been all but natural.

τὴν δὲ μητέρα Δαρείου καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἤγαγεν ἐντίμως: female Persian POWs at Issos were brutalised and raped by Alexander's soldiers (Curt. III 11.21–22). Alexander receives, however, universal praise from ancient authors for the respectful treatment of the family of Darius III, including his mother Sisygambis, his wife Stateira, his daughters Stateira and Drypetis and his son, Ochos: D.S. XVII 37.3–38.7; Curt. III 11.24–12.26; Plu. *Alex.* 21; Plu. *Mor.* 338d–e; Arr. *An.* II 12.3–8; V. Max. IV 7 ext. 2; Apion, ap. Gel. VII 8.1–3; Just. XI 9.13–16; *It.Alex.* 37. Arrian (*An.* II 12.6) reveals that the story of the honorable treatment of the family of Darius originates with Ptolemy and Aristobulos, thus belonging to the official court historiography of Alexander. This does not make it fictitious but reflects its importance for Alexander's image. Although later it became an exemplum of Alexander's restraint and noble nature, in 333 BC Alexander's behaviour seems to reflect his understanding of the Oriental ideology. The women of the royal family could symbolically transfer the legitimacy of power from the defeated king to the victor. The victor should have shown a

kingly respect for his opponent's women, particularly for his mother. Therefore Alexander's dignified treatment of Darius III's family can be understood as a step towards gaining recognition among the Persian elites as the rightful successor to the Achaemenids (Brosius 1996, 21–22).

13 τῶν δὲ πεσόντων Μακεδόνων ἦν τὸ πλῆθος πεζοὶ πεντακόσιοι πεντήκοντα καὶ ἱππεῖς ἑκατὸν ἐξήκοντα ... τῶν δὲ βαρβάρων ἐτελεύτησαν ἱβ' ἑκατομύριοι: in battles in antiquity the real losses on the losing side were disproportionately higher than those on the victor's side, while ancient authors tend to exaggerate the enemy losses. There is a noticeable disagreement among ancient sources on casualty figures at Issos, especially among the Macedonian infantry, which seems to testify to a very complex original source tradition. The Macedonian losses at Issos are: 550 infantrymen and 160 cavalrymen (*Romance*), 32 infantrymen (sometimes emended to 300: Hedicke in Teubner edition) and 150 cavalrymen (Curt. III 11.27), 300 infantrymen and 150 cavalrymen (D.S. XVII 36.6), 120 prominent Macedonians killed (Arr. *An.* II 10.7: ἄλλοι ἐς εἴκοσι μάλιστα καὶ ἑκατὸν τῶν οὐκ ἡμελημένων Μακεδόνων), 130 infantrymen and 150 cavalrymen (Just. XI 9.10), 1200 killed (*POxy.* 1798 = *FGrH* 148 F44, col. IV), the last figure being the most likely on account of the fierce fighting raging for a long time. There is much more agreement as to the Persian losses estimated at: 100,000 (Arr. *An.* II 11.8) or 110,000 (Curt. III 11.27; D.S. XVII 36.6; Plu. *Alex.* 20.2) killed, with 61,000 killed according to Justin (XI 9.10) and 53,000 killed according to *POxy* 1798 (= *FGrH* 148 F44, col. IV); again the last figure probably being the closest to the truth. The figure of the *Alexander Romance* (120,000 killed) is only slightly above those listed in the majority of other ancient sources.

ἐλαφυραγώγησε δὲ χρυσοῦ τετρακισχίλια τάλαντα: the figure of 4000 talents of gold mentioned here is significantly higher than 3000 talents, presumably of silver known from Arrian (*An.* II 11.10).

## Chapter 42

2 συναθροίζοντα στρατὸν τὸν Δαρεῖον ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐφράτου ποταμοῦ: indeed, after Issos Darius III moved very fast to the north-east, crossing the Euphrates at Thapsakos (Curt. IV 1.3; D.S. XVII 39.1; Arr. *An.* II 13.1) from where he retreated to Babylon (on the Euphrates) to gather a significantly larger army than that lost in the Battle of Issos.

Ἀλέξανδρος γράφει Σκαμάνδρῳ τῷ στρατηγῷ αὐτοῦ: no general of Alexander of the name Skamandros is attested. Either this person is completely fictitious, bearing the name of a river in Troad, or the author of the *Alexander Romance*

makes a reference to Asander, a satrap of Lydia appointed by Alexander after the Battle of the Granicus (Bounoure 2004, 239).

4 Ἀλέξανδρος ... ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὴν Ἀχαΐαν: at this point the storyline of the *Alexander Romance* moves back to before the Battle of the Granicus, with Alexander's real and fictitious adventures in continental Greece dominating the narrative from 1 42 until 11 6. The historical Alexander never led any expedition to Achaia and sources generally considered trustworthy never show him fighting in the Peloponnese. *Itinerarium Alexandri* (16) mentions, however, Alexander's diplomatic efforts, but no war, in the Peloponnese in the beginning of his rule in the Spring/Summer 335 B.C.: "Is igitur magnus usu sibi Peloponnesi vires viritim oppidatimque multa benivolentia pigneratus est" or "There was a great strength in the Peloponnese, and this Alexander won over, to his own advantage, man by man, and town by town, with conspicuous displays of good will" (tr. I. Davies 1998). A tradition of these diplomatic dealings in the Peloponnese may have contributed to the notion of a war fought by Alexander in Achaia. The Achaians took quite an active part in the wars of the 330s BC, always allied with enemies of Macedonia: in 338 BC they fought at Chaironeia and in 331 BC they supported Agis III of Sparta against Antipater, Alexanderes viceroy in the Balkans. After Chaironeia Philip II conducted a quick expedition to the Peloponnese to punish the enemies of Macedonia. Possibly, a reference to these events also contributed to the story of the war fought in Achaia by Alexander.

ὑπερπεράσας τὸν καλούμενον Ταῦρον καταπήξας δόρυ μέγιστον εἰς τὴν γῆν: again the events are related in reverse chronological order. Alexander crossed the Taurus twice in October 333 BC, just before the Battle of Issos and again after the battle on the way from Kilikia to Syria and Phoenicia, while his driving a spear into the earth is attested in the spring of 334 BC. Alexander did this just prior to landing in Asia (D.S. XVII 17.2; Just. XI 5.10; *It. Alex.* 18) to declare his intention of conquering Asia and becoming, by virtue of conquest, its legitimate king (about the meaning of Alexander's gesture and the Hellenistic concept of *doriktetos chora* or "land conquered with a spear" see: Instinsky 1949, 23, 31–38; Schmitthenner 1969; Mehl 1980; Briant 1980, 40. About the historicity of the event see: Seibert 1998, 56–57). From this point on, Chapter 42 echoes the historical events of the beginning of Alexander's expedition to Asia, from the crossing of the Hellespont to the visit to Troy in the late April/ early May 334 BC.

6 Παραγίνεται οὖν εἰς τὴν Πιερίαν πόλιν τῆς Βεβρυκίας: Pieria was a land in Macedonia. Bebrykia was not a city but the land of mythological Thracian Bebrykes, somewhere in Bithynia, perhaps near Lampsakos (App. *Mith.* 2;

Charon ap. *Sch. in A.R.* II 2). Historical Alexander passed by Lampsakos on his way to the Granicus in May 334 BC (*Arr. An.* I 12.6) but the story related in this chapter does not have much in common with historical events. The impossible geography of this passage underscores its fictitious nature, further strengthened by including the mythological seer Melampus in this episode.

9 *Καὶ παραγίνεται εἰς Φρυγίαν καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς αὐτὴν Ἴλιον τὴν πόλιν*: Alexander paid a visit to Troy just after he had landed in Asia in late April 334 BC. This visit may be construed as retracing (in the opposite direction) the steps Xerxes had taken in 480 BC, when he also came to Troy to sacrifice a thousand oxen to Athena (*Hdt.* VII 43). Alexander's visit to Troy was thus meant to underline the Panhellenic nature of his war with Persia (Flower 2000, 108–110). In 334 BC Troy was a small town in satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia, frequented by kings and generals on account of a glory enshrined in myth and poetry (*Erskine* 2001, 226–234).

*ἔθυσεν Ἑκτορι καὶ Ἀχιλλεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἥρωσιν*: this is a celebrated episode in Troy: Alexander sacrifices at the tombs of Achilles, Ajax and Priam (*D.S.* XVII 17.3; *Plu. Alex.* 15.7–9; *Plu. Mor.* 331d–e; *Arr. An.* I 11.8, I 12.1; *Ael. VH* 12.7; *Just.* XI 5.12; *It. Alex.* 18). The *Alexander Romance* is the only source to mention Alexander sacrificing to Aeneas. Almost certainly Aeneas, the mythological ancestor of Rome and of the Julian dynasty in particular, was added to the list of heroes to whom Alexander sacrificed in Troy only in the Imperial age when the similarities between Alexander and Caesar were obvious to many (on that see: *Spencer* 2002, 169–170).

12 *Μακάριοι ὑμεῖς οἱ τυχόντες τοιούτου κήρυκος τοῦ Ὀμήρου*: the anecdote of Alexander and his envy of Achilles, whose deeds became immortal thanks to Homer, must have been quite popular from the first c. BC at the latest, as Cicero quotes it in the *Pro Archia* (24): “Atque is tamen, cum in Sigeo ad Achillis tumulum astitisset: ‘ο fortunate,’ inquit, ‘adulescens, qui tuae virtutis Homerum praeconem inveneris!’”. It is known also to Plutarch (*Alex.* 15.8) and Arrian (*An.* I 12.1).

## Chapter 43

Sections 2–3 contain an episode of Abdera closing its gates before Alexander. It is a much confused echo of events in Asia Minor in the late April/ early May 334 BC when two large Greek cities, Lampsakos and Kolonai, refused to admit Alexander's army (*Arr. An.* I 12.6). For all the rhetoric, words attributed

to the Abderitai in the *Alexander Romance* about their fear of Persian reprisals (I 43.3: Ἡμεῖς ἀπεκλείσαμεν τὰς πόλεις οὐχ ὡς ἀντιτασσόμενοι τῷ σὺ κράτει, ἀλλὰ δεδαικότες τὴν τῶν Περσῶν βασιλείαν) certainly reflect the real feelings of citizens of Lampsakos and Kolonai when faced with the mortal danger of making a wrong choice in the early stages of the war between two great powers. Abdera was a city in Thrace on the Aegean Sea, in 334 BC under Macedonian control. Alexander. Alexander's army surely passed through Abdera on its way to the Hellespont.

### Chapter 44

1 Καὶ παρεγένετο ἐν δυσὶν ἡμέραις εἰς τὴν Βοττίαν καὶ τὴν Ὀλυνθον: another fictitious episode: Bottiaia was a region in the central part of lower Macedonia with the cities of Aigai and Pella. Alexander left Pella in the early spring of 334 BC never to come back, and never had to wage war there. By including Bottiaia after the events of crossing the Hellespont, the *Alexander Romance* again makes Alexander army march in the opposite direction to historical reality. Olynthos was a city in Chalkidike, besieged and destroyed by Philip II in 348 BC and never rebuilt. The *Alexander Romance* here attributes Philip's deeds to Alexander.

κάκειθεν ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν Εὐξείνιον πόντον καὶ πάσας τὰς πόλεις ἔσχεν ὑπηκόους: in 339 BC Philip II defeated Atheas, the King of the Skythians in Dobruja and probably on this occasion subdued some or all Greek cities on the western coast of the Black Sea (Just. IX 2; Dio ap. Jord. *Getica* 66. Musielak 2003, 53–56). Alexander accompanied his father on this expedition (Did. *In D.* col. 13.3–7). The Macedonian overrule in the western Pontus continued under Alexander with his governors Memnon and Zopyrion, attested from 328 BC (Curt. X 1.44–45: *Thraciae praepositus*; Just. XII 2.16: *praepositus Ponti*; also: Just. XXVII 3.2; Macrobian. *Saturn.* I 11.33. Heckel 1997, 196–198). Any of these events may be echoed in this passage.

2 πάντας τοὺς ἵππους τῶν ἱππέων ἀπέσφαξε: in their descriptions of the sufferings of the Macedonian army in the desert of Mekran in the autumn of 325 BC Arrian (*An.* VI 25.1) and Curtius (IX 10.12) quote the story of Alexander feeding his soldiers with the meat of slaughtered horses and mules. Curtius (VII 4.25) attributes to Alexander's soldiers living on the meat of slaughtered pack animals while crossing the Hindu Kush in May 329 B.C. Any of these stories meant to illustrate the huge hardships endured by Alexander's army in distant places may be echoed here.

## Chapter 45

1 ἦλθεν εἰς Λοκρούς ... ἦλθε παρὰ τοὺς Ἀκραγαντίνους: another example of confused geography—Lokroi can refer either to a region in Central Greece or to a Greek city in Italy (so-called Epizephyrian Lokris in Calabria), while Akragas was a Greek city on the southern coast of Sicily. The last two places were never visited by the historical Alexander and this whole passage is fictitious.

1–4 Plutarch (*Alex.* 14.6–7) also knows the anecdote of Alexander asking for an oracular response in Delphi and, when refused, trying to extract it from Pythia by force. The stories of Plutarch and of the *Romance* differ much in detail, but convey the same idea of Alexander's invincibility. Plutarch places his anecdote in the context of the events of the autumn of 335 BC, after the destruction of Thebes, while in the *Alexander Romance* the anecdote precedes this event, but the chronology of Ps.-Callisthenes is always unreliable. Alexander's visit to Delphi is almost certainly historical: he is recorded as having donated 150 gold *philippeioi* to the temple of Apollo (*FD* III 5.50 = *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 251) and Plutarch, a priest at Delphi, possibly reported the local tradition on Alexander's visit (Howe 2013, 61). For the discussion of historicity of this story see: Tarn 1948, II 338–346; Hamilton 1999, 34–35; Poddighe 2009, 101–102; Demandt 2009, 96; Scott 2014, 164. It is hard to imagine that the pious, in fact superstitious Alexander did not ask for the oracle on this occasion. Possibly at that time Alexander was proclaimed invincible by Pythia (D.S. XVII 93.4), albeit probably without the threats and use of force related by Plutarch and Ps.-Callisthenes, relying simply on the privilege of *promanteia* or precedence in questioning the oracle, which was awarded to Philip II in 346 BC in recognition of the services he rendered to Apollo's temple during the Third Sacred War (D. 9.32. Arnush 2000, 298).

## Chapter 46

This chapter relates the destruction of Thebes by Alexander's army in September 335 BC. Earlier in that year, when Alexander was waging a war in the northern Balkans, anti-Macedonian Theban political leaders, previously expelled from their polis, returned to convince the Thebans to break the alliance with Macedonia and to attack the Macedonian garrison stationed in Kadmeia, the acropolis of Thebes. Alexander's speedy return from the north surprised the Thebans and the Athenians who voted to support Thebes militarily but could not deliver on time. The Thebans bravely faced Alexander's army in a pitched battle but lost due to the overwhelming numerical superiority of Macedonians

and their allies from Boeotia and Phokis. As a result the Macedonians breached the gates, took and destroyed Thebes, killing many of their inhabitants and selling most of the rest at slave markets. The ruthless destruction of the great city profoundly shook the public opinion, terrorizing Greece into submission to Alexander (Nawotka 2010, 100–106 with reference). The *Alexander Romance* relates the story of the fall of Thebes differently to other surviving accounts, lacking the most important feature of this event: the pitched battle before the walls of Thebes. The account of this abominable deed of Alexander, the destruction of Thebes, in the *Alexander Romance* ought to be read in conjunction with the following Song of Ismenias (I 46a) which relates a large number of mythological stories, very often of betrayal, madness and godless curiosity, thus showing Thebes as a city full of grave (mythological) faults, almost a seat of evil on Earth. From this point of view the destruction inflicted on Thebes by Alexander can be understood as an act of just repayment for crimes committed by the Thebans in the past and indeed, according to Justin (XI 3.11), stories of the past wickedness of the Thebans known from tragedy were used by Greek allies of Alexander to justify the destruction of the city (Jouanno 1993). Some, perhaps rightly, notice juxtaposition of the stories of the two cities in the *Alexander Romance*: Thebes eliminated for its past evils and Alexandria founded with the blessing of the gods (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 25; Braccini 2004, XXXI–XXXII).

1 αἰτοῦντος τοὺς Θηβαίους στρατεύεσθαι ἄνδρας δ' ἀρίστους: Alexander's demand to field for him the 4,000 best Theban soldiers is not recorded in any other ancient source. It is certainly fictitious. The historical Alexander instead demanded from the Thebans that the anti-Macedonian leaders be handed over to him (Plu. *Alex.* 11.7. Hamilton 1999, 30).

5 μακροτάτοις ὄνυξι ὄνυξ: this is “claw, talon, anything like a claw” (*LSJ*, s.v.); but in the context of a siege works as a large ὄνυξ used to destroy walls, like a crowbar or a wrecking bar.

τοὺς ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀμφίονος καὶ Ζήθου λύρας ἀρμολογηθέντας λίθους: “stones joined together with lyres of Amphion and Zethos” are the walls of Thebes. Amphion and Zethos were the twin sons of Zeus and Antiope, daughter of a Theban Nykteus (this version of their genealogy is in I 46a.8). In myth, on Apollo's orders they built the walls of Thebes (Hyg. *Fab.* 9); the most celebrated part of their work being stones moved by the sounds of Amphion's lyre (A.R. I 740–741; Hor. *Ars* 394–396; Hor. *Carm.* III 11.2; Apollod. 3.44; Paus. VI 20.18, IX 5.7; *Sch. in A.R.*, ad I 740; Nonn. *D.* XXV 413–428. Without Amphion's name mentioned: Prop. III 2.5–6).



τοὺς καλουμένους κριοὺς: the battering ram was perhaps the most common siege engine of antiquity, in the West attested for the first time during Pericles' Siege of Samos in 440/439 BC (D.S. XII 28.3). It consisted of a heavy log tipped with a bronze ram's head and slung from a wooden frame. This section contains a fairly accurate description how battering rams operated.

8 σφενδοναρίων καὶ λογχοβόλων: these are both *hapax legomena* (the first unknown also to *LSJ*), translated usually as “slingers and spearmen” (*LSJ* Suppl., s.v. λογχοβόλος and Haight 1955, 56). But the narrative of the Siege of Thebes in the *Alexander Romance* draws the reader's attention to the attack on defenders from a distance, also with javelins (further in this section: δοράτων ἀκμαὶ ἤκοντιζοντο). Therefore λογχοβόλοι may mean here in fact “javelin throwers”, as one of the attested meanings of λογχή is “javelin” (*LSJ*, s.v. II).

9 ἡ Καδμεία πύλη: no gate of the name Kadmeia is attested in Thebes (Symenoglou 1985, 35; Stoneman 2007, 167). Kadmeia was a fortified acropolis of Thebes, the place where the original settlement was founded, in a myth by Kadmos.

11 ἔχαιρέ τε Κιθαιρών: in mythology, Kithairon was a king of Plataiai who gave his name to a mountain between Thebes and Plataiai (Paus. IX 1.2), a seat of the Erinyes (Ps.-Plu. *Fluv.* 2.2). The reason for Kithairon's rejoicing at the destruction of Thebes is not clear. The hypotheses trying to explain this draw upon the mythology and history of Thebes and Plataiai. Jouanno (1993, 253) believes that Kithairon was rejoicing because the destruction of Thebes brought punishment on the city of Kadmos for slaying a dragon. Gargiulo (2004) noticed strong ties between Mount Kithairon and Plataiai to whose rural territory it belonged. Plataiai was destroyed more than once by Thebes and in 335 BC it was amongst the staunchest allies of Alexander in his war with Thebes, advocating strongly the most severe punishment for Thebes. Therefore the rejoicing of Kithairon is, *pars pro toto*, a celebration of Plataiai, the mortal enemy of Thebes.

κατέπιπτε γὰρ οἰκία πάντα: the destruction of every house in Thebes is a rhetorical amplification. On Alexander's orders, temples, the Kadmeia and the house of the poet Pindar were spared (Plin. *Nat.* VII 109; Arr. *An.* I 9.9–10; D.Chr. 2.33; Ael. *VH* XIII 7; Lib. 20.22; *Sch. in Aesch.* 3.156; *Vita Pindari*, p. 5; *Suda*, s.v. Περὶ Πινδάρου; Ps.-Callisth., rec. β, γ, I 27; Tzetzes *Chiliades* VII 402–405). Diogenes Laertios (VI 88) says that Alexander stayed in the house of the Cynic philosopher Krates, but does not state on what occasion. To Stoneman (2007, 571) this is evidence that this house was spared too. Descendants of Pindar, priests, guest-

friends (*xenoi*) of Philip and Alexander, friends of Macedonia and those who spoke at the Theban Assembly against the war were also saved from being sold in slavery with the rest of the Thebans (Plin. *Nat.* VII 109; Plu. *Alex.* 11.12; Arr. *An.* I 9.9–10; Ael. *VH* XIII 7).

### Chapter 46a

Most of this chapter is filled with a choliambic poem, now accessible in Braccini's critical edition (2004) which I follow in this commentary. Braccini comments profusely on various philological aspects of the text. Not to repeat unnecessarily his commentary, I focus here on the historical.

1 Ἴσμηνίας τις Θηβαῖος: Ismenias son of Ismenias, a famously rich anti-Macedonian politician, was a renowned *auletes* and a collector of gems (Plin. *Nat.* XXXVII 6, 8, 86, 101; Plu. *Per.* 1.5; Plu. *Dem.* 1.6; Plu. *Mor.* 174f, 1095e; Apul. *Soc.* 21; Ael. *VH* XIV 16), known from numerous anecdotes (Plu. *Mor.* 334b, 632d; Luc. *Ind.* 5; Him. *Or.* 160.16–23).

2 ὅπως ... εἰς ἔλεος καταγαγεῖν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον: no other source credits Ismenias with a musical performance aimed at inducing in Alexander pity over Thebes, although after Alexander's death he allegedly was sentenced for playing the *aulos* in the hour of the destruction of Thebes (Aps. *Rh.* 341). Tzetzes (*Chiliades* VII 397–401, X 404–405), most likely following Ps.-Callisthenes, refers to this performance too. In general *auletai* were credited by ancient authors with a particular ability to inspire their audience with strong feelings and a few anecdotes on *auletai* influencing Alexander's behavior with their performance are conveyed by ancient sources (Plu. *Mor.* 335a; D.Chr. 1.1–2. Chaniotis 2009, 78). Possibly the scene of Ismenias singing and playing the *aulos* before Alexander related in this chapter draws upon the episode in which an otherwise unknown Kleadas (Just. XI 4; originally perhaps also in the lost Book I of Curtius; see Heckel 1997, 96–97) was beseeching Alexander for mercy over Thebes using arguments which drew heavily on mythology and history (Ausfeld 1907, 150–151; Braccini 2004, XXXVII). Some scholars believe that the story of Kleadas originates in Kleitarchos (Jacoby, commenting upon *FGRH* 142 F14, vol. IIB, 530; Heckel 1997, 96–97), even if no evidence of it can be induced. The *Alexander Romance*, or perhaps an intermediate source used also by the third c. AD rhetorician Apsines (*Rh.* 341) replaces in this story Kleadas with a better known Ismenias (Jouanno 1993, 250–251). His song is a *sui generis* guidebook of Thebes which lists mythological stories associated with many places within

the city. Among a plethora of gods and heroes named by Ismenias, Dionysos and Herakles take pride of place.

6 βούκτιστον ἄστυ: “the city founded where the heifer lay” (tr. Haight) is a reference to the foundation myth of Thebes established by Kadmos who was searching for his sister Europa abducted from Tyre by Zeus. Kadmos was instructed in Delphi to stop searching for his sister and to found a city in a place where a heifer lay, and this happened in the place predestined to become Thebes (Ov. *Met.* III 1–13; Apollod. 3.21–22; Paus. IX 12.1–2). The word βούκτιστος is a hapax; it resembles βούκτιτος (*DGE*, s.v.) attested in a fifth c. AD author Nonnos in the story of Amphion and Zethos building walls of Thebes (*D.* xxv 413–415):

τοῖα μὲν εἰς μέσα νῶτα σοφὸς τεχνήσατο χαλκεὺς  
ἀσπίδος εὐτύκτοιο· χαριζόμενος δὲ Λυαίῳ  
τεῦξε λυροδμήτοιο βούκτιτα τείχεα Θήβης.

Such were the designs which the master-smith worked on the back of the wellwrought shield, in the middle; and to please Lyaïos he wrought also the harpbuilt walls of cowfounded Thebes.

tr. W.H.D. ROUSE

Braccini (2004, 144) believes that the text of rec. α is in places so late that its author could draw upon Nonnos. But the text we have surely came into being in the second half of the third c. AD, so it is more likely that Nonnos, himself native of Panopolis (Akhmim) in Egypt, made use of the *Alexander Romance*.

Λυαῖον: Lyaïos is an epiclesis of Dionysos: Corn. *ND*, p. 58; Ph. *Legatio* 96; Ath. VIII 64; *Sch. in S.* III 5; Eun. I, p. 253.

8 ἀφρογενὴς Κύπρις: Aphrodite “foam-born,” called here Kypris after the island of Cyprus, in the earliest written version of the myth (Hes. *Th.* 188–199). She is born there from the foam created from the genitals of Uranos, severed by the sickle of Kronos (about her epiclesis see: Braccini 2004, 63–64). Some of the most important temples of Aphrodite were in Cyprus, in Amathus and in Paphos.

κλεψικώϊτη Θρηκίω: Müller’s emendation after Arm. in place of garbled κλεψοκύτει of ms. A. In principle it is correct, referring to Ares seeking illicit love in the bed of Hephaistos, although the word κλεψικώϊτης is otherwise unattested and thus uncertain, perhaps pseudo-Greek invented by a modern German scholar.

Ἡρακλῆος τέμενος: the temple of Herakles known from Pausanias (IX 11) was a splendid fifth-c. BC structure built to the south of the Kadmeia, in the area of particularly heavy fighting between the Thebans and Macedonians in September 335 BC (Arr. *An.* I 8.35. Symenoglou 1985, 133–134, Braccini 2004, 73).

Εἰραφιώτην ... Αἰναιῖον: emended after Arm. (see Braccini 2004, 81). These are names of Dionysos. Ismenias tells the birth story of the god, son of Zeus and Semele, the daughter of Kadmos and Harmonia. Semele, when pregnant with Dionysos, asked Zeus to visit her not in human guise but in his true divine form, on Hera's misadvice. As the story goes, also in this section, Zeus, the god of heaven and storm, revealed himself in a thunderbolt, incinerating Semele. He managed, however, to save Dionysos, still in fetal form, not ready yet to be born. Therefore for a few months Zeus sewed the fetus into his tights, hence the nickname of Dionysos Εἰραφιώτης, or "insewn": Arr. *Bithynicorum fragmenta*, fr. 42, Roos, ap. Eust. *Com. in Dion. Periegetem* 939; Nonn. *D.* IX 23–24; *Et. Gud.* s.v. Εἰραφιώτης, [Zonar.] s.v. Εἰραφιώτης: A second nickname.

Αἰναιῖος: a common nickname of Dionysos, according to Diodorus (III 63) derived from ληνός ("wine-vat") as Dionysos taught humanity how to make wine, hence *LSJ* translates Αἰναιῖος as "belonging to the wine-press." But in fact λήνη is another word for "maenad," Dionysos Lenaïos is "Dionysos of the maenads" (Valdés Guía 2013).

Μεγάρων: in the most popular version of the myth known from Euripides (*Herakles*) and Seneca (*Hercules Furens*) and accepted here, Megara was a daughter of Kreon King of Thebes and wife of Herakles. Hera sent temporary madness on Herakles after his return from the expedition to fetch Kerberos from Hades, and in this state Herakles killed his children and Megara.

Ἡρακλῆς ... Φιλοκτήτου: Ismenias summarizes here the tragic end of the mythological story of Herakles: his wife Deianira induced him into putting on a chiton daubed with the blood of Nessos (the so-called "tunic of Nessos") which started to burn his body, causing insufferable pain. Herakles mounted his funeral pyre on Mount Oita and his friend Philoktetes was the only person willing to set it on fire. For this act of mercy he received Herakles' bow and arrows.

Φοίβου λόγια, Τειρεσίου δῶμα: the "oracle of Apollo" is equated here with the house of Teiresias, since he was a renowned mythological seer and the oracular craft is associated with Apollo (Braccini 2004, 92–93). Indeed an oracle operated in the temple of Apollo Ismenias in Thebes (Symenoglou 1985, 96–97). Teiresias played an important role in Theban myths amongst other things because of his exceptional longevity allowing him to participate in events for seven generations, from the age of Kadmos until the Epigonoï. The Song of Ismenias follows the popular mythological story of Teresias transformed

from man to woman for seven years and then transformed back into a man (e.g. *Ov. Met.* III 321–331; *Apollod.* 3.71; *Hyg. Fab.* 75; *Ant. Lib.* 17.5; *Dicaearch. fr.* 37). Apart from the *Alexander Romance*, Tzetzes (*Sch. in Lyc.* 683) is the only source to credit Athena (here called Tritonis) with this transformation of Teiresias. The enormous popularity of the *Alexander Romance* in Byzantium may have resulted in Tzetzes borrowing this version from Ps.-Callisthenes. It is possible that attributing the transformation of Teiresias to Athena lies in the contamination of two mythological stories: the transformation of Teiresias and the blinding of Teiresias as punishment for having seen the naked Athena taking a bath (Braccinni 2004, 92–93).

Τριτωνίς: quite a rare nickname for Athena (*A.R.* I 109, III 1183; *Anthologia Graeca* XVI 8; *Q.S.* IV 152–154, XIII 417; *Scyl.* 110; *Nonn. D.* V 73; *Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos, De sententiis* 252; cf. *Eust. Com. in Dion. Periegetem* 267; *Lyd. Mens.* IV 22). It is also the name of a nymph of a lake in Libya, who was, in some versions of the myth, the mother of Athena (*Hdt.* IV 180; *Paus.* I 14.6).

Ἀθάμας: in myth, Athamas was a king in Boeotia, either of Koroneia or, as here, of Thebes, husband of Ino, daughter of Kadmos, and father of Learchos and Melikertes. Hermes entrusted to him and his wife Dionysos (son of Semele, sister of Ino) which brought on Athamas the wrath of Hera, traditionally hostile to the illegitimate offspring of her husband Zeus. Hence Hera struck Athamas with madness, causing him to kill his son Learchos with an arrow. Ino, also in a fit of madness sent by Hera, killed her other son Melikertes and jumped from a cliff into the sea holding his dead body. They were both transformed into minor sea gods: Leukothea and Palaimon (*Apollod.* 1.80, 1.84, 3.28; *Paus.* IX 34.5–8; *Hyg. Fab.* 2; *Servius* V 241.3; *Sch. in Pi.* I hyp. A9; Tzetzes *Sch. in Lyc.* 22).

πηρὸς Οἰδίπους ...ὃ τὸ βᾶκτρον Ἰσμῆνη: about the word πηρὸς in the meaning “blind” see Braccini, 98. Ismenias makes a reference here to the myth of Oedipus who blinded himself having uncovered that he had killed his father and had an incestuous relation with his mother. In opposition, however, to the best known rendition of the story in the Theban plays of Sophocles, the Song of Ismenias names Ismene and not Antigone as the daughter who accompanies the blind father in exile.

Ἰσμηνός ἐστι Βάκχιον φέρων ὕδωρ: Kroll emendates the name Ἰσμηνός after *Arm.* A stream of the name Ismenos, now the Agianni (*Symenoglou* 1985, 14), in the vicinity of Thebes, in the majority of sources derives its name not from Ismene daughter of Oedipus but from another mythological character, Ismenos (*D.S.* IV 72.1–2; *Paus.* IX 10.6; *Ps.-Plu. Fluv.* 2.1. Cf. Braccini 2004, 102). Its water is called Βάκχιος, meaning “violent.”

θεῶν πηγὴ: the spring of the gods belongs to the story of Akteon, a mythological hunter turned into a stag and torn apart by his dogs for having seen a

naked Artemis taking bath. In antiquity it was identified either with a spring by the road from Eleutherai (on the border between Boeotia and Attica) to Plataiai (Paus. 11 2.3; for identification with a modern source see Braccini 2004, 116) or with a spring near Plataiai (Hyg. *Fab.* 181).

κυσὶν ὠμοδαίτοις: an emendation of Radermacher in the place of the κυρινομοδιαίτοις of ms. A, accepted by Kroll and by the subsequent scholarship (Braccini 2004, 124–125). The otherwise unattested word ὠμοδαίτοις is a pseudo-hapax. Hesychius lists, however, a similar sounding word: ὠμοδάϊκτον· ὠμοσπάρρακτον, and ὠμοσπάρρακτος is “torn to pieces raw” (*LSJ*, s.v.). Perhaps then, this locus should read: κυσὶν ὠμοδάϊκτος or “torn to pieces raw by dogs.”

ἐνθα Πολυνείκης ἤρξεν Ἀργεῖου λεῶ: this verse introduces the story of the Seven against Thebes, one of the most celebrated Theban myths. Once two sons of Oedipus, Eteokles and Polyneikes, quareled and Eteokles refused to pass over the rule to Polyneikes as agreed before, Polyneikes organized an armed expedition against Thebes led by seven heroes, each attacking a gate of Thebes. The Song of Ismenias tells the story gate by gate. These are all gates of the inner walls of Thebes protecting the Kadmeia, although not all belonged to the same circuit of fortifications (Symenoglou 1985, map 2.7 on p. 37).

πύλας ... Ἡλέκτρας: in ms. A this verse is corrupt and Kroll emendates ὕλοκῦρας to Ἡλέκτρας after Arm., as indeed in the canonical version of the myth known from Attic tragedy Kapaneus attacks the Elektran gate (A. *Th.* 423; E. *Ph.* 1129). According to Pausanias (1X 8.4, 8.7) a road to Plataiai and Eleutherai, i.e. to the south, was leading through the Elektran gate. This gate lies in the south-eastern corner of the wall of the Kadmeia, now under Amphion Street in Thebes (Symenoglou 1985, 234–236). In September 335 BC, Alexander selected the place opposite the Elektran gate as his position during the Siege of Thebes (Arr. *An.* 1 7.9. Braccini 2004, 131).

Πύλαις ... Προίτισιν: in ms. A the text is corrupt and the sense has to be grasped from Arm. (Kroll app.; Braccini 2004, 131–132). This gate is attested also in Euripides (*Ph.* 1109–1111) and in Ps.-Apollodoros (3.68). The Proitides gate, the second gate of Thebes, according to Pausanias (1X 8.4, 1X 18.1) was so named after Proites a “native” Boeotian, i.e. allegedly living before Kadmos. It lies in east section of the wall of the Kadmeia (Symenoglou 1985, 239).

Ὠγυγίαις πύλεσιν: the Ogygian gate, in tradition so named after Ogygos, mythological king of Boeotia in the primeval age, before Kadmos. The tomb of Ogygos reportedly could be seen next to the gate (Paus. 1X 5.1, 8.5; *Sch. in E. Ph.* 1113. Symenoglou 1985, 36). This gate can be tentatively located in the east section of the Kadmeia wall, between Proitides and Elektran gates (Symenoglou, map 2.7 on p. 37).

Νηίσταισι ... πύλαις: the name of this gate is an emendation by Sitzler, accepted by Braccini (2004, 137). The gate of this name is attested also in Aeschylus (*Th.* 460), Euripides (*Ph.* 1104–1106), Statius (*Theb.* VIII 354) and Pausanias (IX 8.4–5) who says that it was named after Neis son of Zethos. The actual location of this gate is uncertain; some try to identify it with archaeological remains of the Mycaenean age uncovered in the north-west section of the wall of the Kadmeia, by the road to Pyri (Symenoglou 1985, 268–269).

Ὁμολώϊσι πύλαις: in ms. A the line is corrupt; based on Arm. Müller and Kroll tentatively establish the sense of it (see Braccini 2004, 139) and the gate originally named here probably was the Homoloid gate, in the north-eastern part of Thebes, to the north of the Ogygian gate (Symenoglou 1985, 36–37). Ancient authors differed in opinion as to its etymology: to Pausanias (IX 8.6–7) it was derived from Mount Homole in Thessaly (in the Ossa mountain range) conquered by the Thebans who came back to their city through this gate. Scholia to Aeschylus (ad *Th.* 568) claim that the gate was named after Homolois, daughter of Niobe, while scholia to Euripides (ad *Ph.* 1119) say that the name was derived from the name of the son of Amphion. In Boeotia (Thebes, Orchomenos) and in Euboea, Zeus and Demeter with cult names Homoloios/Homoloia were worshiped (Ister, fr. 10; Arisotdem., fr. 2 ap. Phot.; *Sch. in Lyc.* 520; *IG* VII 2456, XII.9.268) and there was an agon called Homoloia (*IG* VII 3197. Grainger 2011, 173–174). In Boeotia (Chaironeia, Oropos, Tanagra), Lokris, Thessaly there was the profusely attested month of the year named Homoloion (for reference on Homoloia see: Frazer 1898, 39). The name of the gate must be tied to this spectrum of cult names too.

μή πρὸς πολίτην ἀποκαταστῶμεν: this phrase belongs to the ironic speech of Alexander who complains that for all his words about (the mythological) affinity between Alexander and Thebes, Ismenias failed to tell the Thebans in advance not to oppose their fellow-citizen and this is the sense of this line. But, Braccini (2004, 167) correctly remarks, the verb ἀποκαθίστημι (“to re-establish, restore, reinstate, hand over”; *LSJ*, s.v.) does not fit the context. Therefore he emends the word to ἀντιταχῶμεν “may we not oppose our fellow-citizen.” The anger and irony of Alexander in the Song of Ismenias fits the historical reality of the age of Philip II and Alexander. For a long time Thebes, unlike Athens, was allied with Macedonia, only breaking with it in 339 BC. In that year Thebes agreed to join a coalition with Athens and a large group of smaller states of central and southern Greece. In the following year this coalition faced Macedonia at Chaironeia. Philip II found this “betrayal” of Thebes more offensive than the long-standing enmity of Athens, which contributed to the severe treatment of Thebes after their defeat at Chaironeia. To Alexander the anti-Macedonian uprising in Thebes in September 335 BC proved troublesome, forcing him to

break a victorious war in the Balkans and making it impossible to start the expedition to Asia in the autumn of 335 BC (Nawotka 2010, 51–52, 105–107).

Ἰσμηγνὸς αὐτὸς αἰμόφυρτος (ῆν) ῥεύσας: a reference to an obscure version of the myth of Kadmos in which he killed the dragon by the stream of Ismenos which, on this occasion, flowed with the dragon's blood (Braccini 2004, 157–159). Again the Song of Ismenias refers to a little-known version of the myth, proving its authors' erudition.

† τὴν Πινδάρου κάτανα τύμβον: the dagger marks a passage incomprehensible to editors and commentators. The original text must have been conveying, in agreement with the anecdotal tradition (see above comm. to I 46.11) the notion of Alexander sparing the house of Pindar from destruction. The *Alexander Romance* is the only source to credit Alexander's decision to his fond memories of education received from Pindar. For obvious chronological reasons Alexander (born in 356 B.C.) could not have met Pindar (died ca. 446 B.C.), yet we can never be sure how versatile in chronology the author of the *Alexander Romance* was (Stoneman 1991, 192, n. 53). Alexander's father Philip II spent three years in Thebes as a hostage, guaranteeing the good behaviour of his brother Alexander II. Later legend claimed that he studied philosophy together with the famous (and much older) Theban general Epaminondas (D.S. XVI 2.2–3). Possibly in the later tradition Alexander was conflated with Philip and his father's (fictitious) educational episode was in a way attributed to him, with Pindar introduced in the place once occupied by Epaminondas. Another hypothesis claims that the *Alexander Romance* (or its source) conflated Alexander III the Great with his ancestor Alexander I, praised in an encomium of Pindar (Franco 2001, 221; Braccini 2004, 195–196). A reflection of this tradition can be found in Tzetzes (*Chiliades* VII 402–405) who states that Alexander left the house of Pindar undamaged because the poet was praising an ancestor of Alexander.

ἄπολιν αὐτῶν τὴν πόλιν γενεθῆναι: a word-play on the word ἄπολις, obviously derived from the word πόλις. The word ἄπολις ("no city") has multiple attested meanings, referring to outlaws stripped of the right to reside in their *polis* of birth as punishment, to regions emptied of their cities, like Sicily of the first half of the fourth c. BC rendered *apolis* by wars and tyranny (Plu. *Tim.* 1.3) and to cities utterly ruined like Troy in the words of Orestes in *The Eumenides* (457–458) of Aeschylus rendered *apolis* by Athena and Agamemnon:

ξὺν ᾧ σὺ Τροίαν ἄπολιν Ἰλίου πόλιν  
ἔθηκας

along with him, you made Troy, the city of Ilion, to be no city.

tr. H.W. SMYTH



All these possible meanings of the word ἄπολις apply to the situation of Thebes destroyed by Alexander, and this made the Theban state or πόλις bereft of the city (also πόλις).

## Chapter 47

1 Οἱ δὲ καταλειφθέντες Θηβαῖοι ἔπεμψαν εἰς Δελφοὺς χρησμὸν λαβεῖν: the embassy of the Theban survivors to Delphi is not attested directly in any other source. Only Tzetzes (*Chiliades* VII 410–414; also *Scholia* to VII 425) writes about an oracle delivered to the surviving Thebans, but he most likely borrows it from the *Alexander Romance* together with the story related in Chapter 47 (Tzetzes *Chiliades* VII 410–432).

Ἑρμῆς: the oracle repeated twice in this chapter names three mythological characters associated with the three disciplines in which Kleitomachos won at the Isthmian Games. Polydeukes was a boxer (*infra*). Alkeides (= Herakles, *infra*) an accomplished athlete, traditionally associated particularly with wrestling since he defeated the giant Antaios. Hermes was associated with pankration, in a myth recorded in the second/ third c. AD (Philostr. *Im.* II 32.1–2) invented by his daughter Palaistra.

Ἀλκείδης: a descendant of Alkaios is Herakles whose earthly father was Amphytrion (his heavenly father was Zeus) son of Alkaios. The hidden message of the oracle, ambiguous as oracular pronouncements in Greek literature usually are, is that Alexander can also be referred to as a descendant of Alkaios since in the court tradition of Macedonia enshrined in Herodotus (VIII 137; also Th. II 99) the Argead dynasty descended from Temenos, son of Herakles.

ἰμαντομάχος: “fighting with the *caestus*” (*LSJ*, s.v.) is a very rare word, attested only in the *Alexander Romance* and in Tzetzes (*Chiliades* VII 413) who borrows it, along with the whole story of the rebuilding of Thebes, from Ps.-Callisthenes. Polydeukes, mythological son of Zeus and Leda, was a famous boxer, hence a man fighting with a battle glove (*caestus*).

2 Ἰσθμίων τὸν ἀγῶνα: the Isthmian Games were major Panhellenic games held in April or May in the second and fourth year of every Olympiad. They were, as shown here, administered by Corinth and held in the Isthmus of Corinth. Alexander did visit Corinth a few times, the most celebrated of these visits being that of 336 BC when Alexander is reported to have met the Cynic philosopher Diogenes (Nawotka 2010, 95 with reference). The first Isthmian Games after the destruction of Thebes were held in April or May 334 BC and by then Alexander was in Asia, never to return to Greece. Chronology alone makes the

story related in this chapter fictitious. In tradition the Isthmian Games were celebrated in memory of Melikertes, son of Ino (Paus. I 44.8, II 1.3; Apollod. 3.29; Eus. *PE* II 6.10) whose cult was attested at the Isthmian Sanctuary by the time of Pindar (Pi. fr. 6.5(1), Snell. Gebrard and Dickie 1999), to be re-instituted in the mid-first c. AD with magnificent sacrifices (Ekroth 2002, 1–80, 124–125). Melikertes, mentioned in the Song of Ismenias (I 46a.8), was a Theban hero, hence the selection of the Isthmian Games as the scene of this fictional episode in which Alexander announces the restoration of Thebes is a carefully selected pendent to the episode of destruction inflicted on the city by Alexander (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 174).

3 Θηβαίος τῷ γένει, Κλειτόμαχος ὀνόματι: Kleitomachos of Thebes was a famous athlete (Plb. XXVII 9.7–13; *Sch. in Pi.* 48.3, 48b.2), an Olympic victor of 216 BC, celebrated for his triumph in three disciplines at the Isthmian Games (Paus. VI 15.3; Suda, s.v. Κλειτόμαχος. Ausfeld 1907, 151) about a hundred years later than the scene represented in this chapter. Apart from being an accomplished athlete, Kleitomachos was also a paragon of self-restraint (σωφροσύνη; see Scanlon 2002, 231–232, 234, 273), much like Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*.

7 Ἀνακτιζέσθωσαν Θῆβαι: this chapter and Book I of the *Alexander Romance* ends with Alexander's decision to rebuild Thebes; the decision is ahistorical. It was Kassander, the noted enemy of Alexander, who in 316 BC announced his decision to rebuild Thebes and this earned him much sympathy in Athens and throughout the Greek world and the actual rebuilding proceeded with the support of Greek poleis, including Athens (*Marmor Parium*, IG XII.5.444 II 7 = *FGrH* 39 B14; D.S. XIX 53–54; Paus. IV 27.10, IX 3.6 and 7.1. Cohen 1995, 119–120; Habicht 1999, 61–62). Attributing this decision to Alexander was surely aimed at diminishing the negative picture of Alexander as the destroyer of Thebes. Some see it as an example of the *Alexander Romance* being inconsistent and somewhat unable to handle heterogenic evidence (Jouanno 1993, 253–254).

# Book Two

## Chapters 1–6

**Chapters 1–6:** the story of Alexander's adventure in Greece is fictitious, although it certainly draws upon historical tradition and is set in the context of events marked by the destruction of Thebes and by the beginning of Alexander's expedition to Asia.

## Chapter 1

1 εἰς Πλαταιάς, πόλιν Ἀθηναίων: Plataiai was a town in southern Boeotia, bordering Attica, which for most of its documented history in the late-Archaic and the Classical ages had allied with Athens against Thebes, the dominant power within the Boeotian League (for a concise account of the history of Plataiai: Hansen 2004). In 490 BC Plataiai was the only polis to assist Athens in the Battle of Marathon. At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War Theban and Spartan forces starved Plataiai into surrendering, destroying the city; the surviving inhabitants found refuge in Athens where they were granted citizenship in a rare gesture of Athenian generosity (D. 59.103–104; Isoc. 12.94; Lys. 23.2–3). This incident may have contributed to the birth of a legend which held Plataiai as an Athenian city, preserved in this chapter. The Plataians rebuilt their city when the Theban threat eased after the King's Peace of 386 BC, only to see it destroyed again by Thebes in 373 BC when the Plataians had to flee to Attica once more (D.S. XV 46.6; Paus. IX 1.8). Seen by Macedonia as its staunch ally against Thebes, Plataiai was restored by Philip II after Chaironeia (Paus. IV 27.10, IX 1.8), although the rebuilding of the city extended well into the age of Alexander (Plu. *Alex.* 34.2; Plu. *Arist.* 11.9; Arr. *An.* I 9.10. Hamilton 1999, 91). The tradition of strong ties between Plataiai and Athens must have given origin to the untrue picture of Plataiai in the *Alexander Romance*, in which the leading official of Plataiai is an Athenian *strategos*, and an Athenian is the priestess of the principal goddess of Plataiai (Prandi 1988, 97–145, 173–174). The episode of Alexander intervening in Plataiai and the subsequent debate in the Athenian assembly is fictitious, but built out of historical episodes and notions. The underlying theme of it is one of Alexander as a champion of Hellenism. Incidentally, the assistance given by Athens to the Plataians, unrelated to them by blood as Boeotians, is for Isokrates a prime example of the Panhellenic attitude (Isoc. 4.96. Hall 2002, 207–209). Alexander, edu-

cated by Athenian teachers and defending an Athenian priestess against the unjust *strategos*, acts within the traditional Athenocentric premises of Panhellenism.

Κόρην ...τὸ τέμενος: a temple of Demeter Eleusinia and of Kore is attested in the rural territory of Plataiai, in the foothills of Kithairon (Plu. *Arist.* 11.6–7; Paus. IX 4.3–4). Probably another temple dedicated to these goddesses was inside the city of Plataiai but so far it has not been convincingly identified. It would be sheer speculation to say which of these temples is referred to in this chapter (Schachter 1981, 152–153, 158–159; Prandi 1988, 52).

3 Στασαγόρας ὁ τῶν Πλαταιέων στρατηγός: Stasagoras (Berve 1926, II, n. 73) as a character is fictitious, as is the whole scene. The spelling of his name (Stasagoras) is Doric: in Attica the name Stesagoras is well attested (Trail lists nine of them). The only one Stasagoras attested in Athens in the fourth c. BC (Trail, 832320) was a private individual, and surely had nothing to do with the Stasagoras of the *Alexander Romance*. The name of the fictitious Athenian *strategos* of Plataiai was possibly coined after Stesagoras, the Athenian tyrant of Thracian Chersonesos (Hdt. VI 38–39; Marcellin. *Vit.Thuc.* 9. Trail, no. 834960).

Προφητείας: the priestess in the temple of Kore in Plataiai bears the title of prophetess, a word unattested for this temple outside of the *Alexander Romance*. In Hellenistic and Roman times a *prophetes* (*prophetis* in the feminine) was the leader of a temple housing an oracle, with the office holders perhaps best attested in the Great Sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma (Günther 1971, 118–119; Fontenrose 1988, 45–56). Since in this story the priestess pronounces statements about future events, the title *prophetes* is fitting. In temples belonging to a polis, as is this one, prophets and other temple officials were appointed either by a vote in the popular assembly or, in the late Imperial age, by the boule. So, both by the usage of correct terminology and by pointing to the dependence of priests on the political authorities of a polis, this fictitious story broadly speaking reflects the realities of Greece in the Imperial age.

4 διὰ σημείων: ascertaining the will of the gods through signs was common in Greek divination, although the method shown in this chapter (using the state of fabric on the loom) is not otherwise attested (Stoneman 2012, 378).

8–11 Another fictitious letter by Alexander, this time to the Athenians. This letter, in keeping with Chapters I 44–47 and II 1–6, describes the events preceding Alexander's expedition to Asia.

11 ἡ κρείττονες γίνεσθε ἢ τοῖς κρείττοσιν ὑποτάσσεσθε: this veiled threat, issued by Alexander to the Athenians, conveys the same idea—although with no verbal echo—as in the words attributed to Phokion in the debate in the Athenian Assembly on Alexander’s request to supply ships for war with Persia: “λέγω τοῖνυν ὑμῖν” εἶπεν “ἢ τοῖς ὅπλοις κρατεῖν ἢ τοῖς κρατοῦσι φίλους εἶναι” or “I tell you, then,” he said, “Either to be superior in arms or to be friends with those who are superior.” (Plu. *Phoc.* 21.1; tr. B. Perrin). In the *Alexander Romance* Alexander speaks similar words to the Carthaginians (I 30.2, see commentary ad loc.).

καὶ δώσετε φόρους κατ’ ἔτος τέλαντα χίλια: Alexander’s request of tribute of a thousand talents per year is otherwise unattested and almost certainly fictitious, as there is no evidence for tribute extracted by Alexander from Athens or any other city in continental Greece. The amount listed here is excessive anyway, almost equaling the greatest ever recorded income of Athens. After Chaironeia the financial administration of Lykurgos reportedly managed to increase the income of Athens to 1,200 talents (Ps.-Plu. *Mor.* 842f). This amount, although based on the dubious authority of Ps.-Plutarch is generally accepted (Habicht 1999, 22–23; Harris 2001, 156) and in fact the tradition of the revenue of Athens in the age of Alexander amounting to 1,200 talents may have been the source of the similar amount listed as Alexander’s request for tribute in this chapter.

## Chapter 2

1 Ἀθηναίων ἡ πόλις καὶ οἱ ἄριστοι δέκα ῥήτορες: II 2.1–2 contains a fictitious letter from the Athenians to Alexander. Its unhistorical nature is underscored by the heading: the letter is written in the name of the polis of the Athenians and the ten orators, while the historical letters of the Athenian polis were written in the name of the ruling entities of the democratic polis: boule and demos. In the autumn of 335 BC Alexander negotiated with Athens after the fall of Thebes which was supported by Athens in its anti-Macedonian uprising (Nawotka 2010, 106–107), and a fictitious version of these negotiations is related in II 2–5. That ten orators were named among the authors of the list is a literary device of modest quality reflecting the basic cultural standards of the Imperial age, when an educated man was expected to know “canons” of leading poets, tragic authors or orators. Although the earliest list known to us of ten Athenian orators of the fourth c. BC was recorded by the Second Sophistic author Hermogenes (*Id.* 2.11) in the second c. AD, it was surely known to Quintilian (*Inst.* x 1.76) and possibly also to the first c. BC author Caecilius of Kaleakte, who wrote a treatise named *On the Styles of Ten Orators*

(*Suda*, s.v. Κεκίλιος. Worthington 1994); it probably originates in Hellenistic Alexandria (Smith 1995).

2 Λέοντα, ἵνα τὰς γλώσσας ὑμῶν ἀποτεμῶν κομίσῃ: in various versions of the *Alexander Romance* Alexander declares in this fictitious letter to have dispatched Leon (ms. A., Val.), Proteas (Arm.) or Prodis (Syr.), while Leo, another witness of rec. \*δ, lacks this place altogether. Clearly the archetype version, unknown to us, was emended either in the line of transmission which produced ms. A and Val., or in that which led to Arm. and Syr. There were two historical characters of the name Leon associated with Alexander. The better known, and more likely to be meant by Ps.-Callisthenes, is Leon of Byzantium, possibly a student of Aristotle who wrote on the Sacred War, on Philip II and on the history of Alexander (*Suda*, s.v. Λέων, Λέοντος). *Suda*'s description of Leon misbehaving on an embassy to Athens, although resulting from conflating him with another Leon—an anti-Macedonian political leader of Byzantium known to have been an envoy to Athens in the age of Philip II (Philostr. vs 1.2. Heckel 2006, 146)—may belong to the same tradition of Leon the ambassador to Athens, as represented here. The less likely Leon is a priest (Egyptian?) who reportedly was Alexander's source of information on Egyptian gods (Aug. *Civ.D.* VIII 5 and 27; Aug. *De Cons. Evang.* I 33. Berve 1926, II 44). But there is also one spurious Leon named in the testament of Alexander in the *ELB* (I 8.5) as the person appointed by Alexander to rule Pontus. The *ELB* conveys a contorted version of the Last Will of Alexander known from the early Hellenistic *LDM* and from the *Alexander Romance* (III 33, *vide infra*), in which it is Leonnatos whom Alexander appoints to the satrapy of the Hellespont, i.e. of the Hellespontine Phrygia. Therefore the Leon named in this chapter may in fact be Leonnatos, a prominent Macedonian general of the royal family of Lynkestis (Heckel 2006, 147–151; Garstad 2012, 217). If, however, the archetype version was Proteas/Prodis, it may be a reflection of the name of the Macedonian officer Proteas (Heckel 2006, 233). The punishment of cutting the tongues of Athenian orators is probably a topos of the cruel punishment inflicted on an orator, born out of the tradition of the fate which in 322 BC had befallen Hypereides, an anti-Macedonian Athenian politician so punished on the orders of Antipater once he defeated in the Lamian War the coalition led by Athens (Plu. *Dem.* 28.4. Stoneman 2012, 380).

4 παράδοτε οὖν τοὺς πρωτεύοντας δέκα ῥήτορας: in the autumn of 335 BC the Athenians congratulated Alexander on his recent victories, including Thebes, and his reply to this show of political hypocrisy was to demand they hand over to him the Athenian anti-Macedonian political leaders. The number of

Athenian leaders requested by Alexander was either ten (Idomeneus *FGrH* 338 F11; Duris *FGrH* 76 F39; D.S. XVII 15.1; Plu. *Dem.* 23.3–5), or nine (Arr. *An.* I 10.4–5), or eight, and the last figure was based, according to Plutarch (*Dem.* 23.4), on better authorities. The *Suda* (s.v. Ἀντίπατρος) names, albeit in the wrong context of a settlement after the Lamian War, eleven leaders demanded by Alexander (about the lists see: Bosworth 1980, 93–95). Not all of them were orators, and in fact the only person forced to leave the city was Charidemos, a general who fled to Persia (Din. 1.32; Arr. *An.* I 10.6; Curt. III 2.10), where he is known to have advised Darius III in matters of the war with Alexander (D.S. XVII 30; Curt. III 2.10–19. Atkinson 1980, 108–114; Heckel 2006, 84). The *Alexander Romance* surely conflates the number of orators in the canon of the best speakers of Greece with the number of political leaders whose handing over Alexander demanded, to end up with his demand of surrendering the ten best orators—as does the *Suda*.

5 ἐκκλησίαν ποιῶσι βουλευόμενοι: Diodorus also shows the discussion conducted by the Athenians at the assembly meeting (D.S. XVII 15.1; also Plu. *Phoc.* 17.3) but the first to speak was Phokion who advised the people to accept the demands of Alexander, to which the leading politicians should have consented for patriotic reasons, saving the country through their sacrifice (D.S. XVII 15.2). Demosthenes was the next speaker, understandably arguing with Phokion (D.S. XVII 15.3; Plu. *Dem.* 23.5–6, after Aristobulos *FGrH* 139 F3) and the last one to speak was Demades (D.S. XVII 15.3). In the *Alexander Romance* the tone of Phokion's speech is ascribed to Aeschines, the essence of the speech of Demosthenes to Demades, and that of Demades to Demosthenes (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 123). The most striking is the second speech, full of praises for Alexander, having in mind that its alleged author, Demosthenes, a leader of the anti-Macedonian party in Athens, never lacked venom while speaking about Philip II and Alexander. Perhaps his speech in the *Alexander Romance* results from the reinterpretation of the past typical of popular history writing in the late Hellenistic age (Franco 1999, 77).

Αἰσχίνης: Aeschines was a leading Athenian orator in the age of Philip II and Alexander, rivaling Demosthenes in foreign policy issues. Although Aeschines in most cases, especially after 346 BC, spoke in support of maintaining peace with Macedonia, there is no proof to support accusations of his accepting bribes from Philip launched against him by Demosthenes, most notably in *On the Crown*, even if this speech caused the crushing defeat of Aeschines in the court, his exile and ultimate downfall. On a few occasions Aeschines was elected Athenian ambassador to Philip, most notably to conduct negotiations after the Battle of Chaironeia in the autumn of 338 BC. The words of

moderation attributed to him in this chapter, although fictitious, seem to fit the political attitude of the historical Aeschines (Harris 1995, especially at 149–154).

8 Δημάδης: an Athenian orator, younger than Demosthenes and Aeschines, active in the same age of conflict with Macedonia of Philip II and Alexander. After Chaironeia at the request of Philip II he played a pivotal role in Athens' negotiations with the king of Macedonia and in 335 BC he spoke against assisting Thebes against Alexander. The close ties of the historical Demades with Macedonia are in sharp contrast to the belligerent tone of his fictitious speech in this chapter (Stoneman 2012, 380).

9 ὁ προτρεψάμενος Ἀθηναίους πολεμεῖν πρὸς τὸν τῶν Περσῶν βασιλέα: although war against Persia was the professed aim of Philip and Alexander as leaders of the League of Corinth, no direct involvement by Aeschines in encouraging Athenians to fight the king of Persia is attested (Harris 1995, 108–109).

10 οἱ Πέρσας διώξαντες καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους ἡττήσαντες καὶ Κορινθίους νικήσαντες: rhetorical praise for the past victories of the Athenians. The most obvious is the first one, of pursuing Persians in the Persian wars of the first half of the fifth c. BC. No single Athenian victory over the Spartans of any importance can be listed here and the whole phrase is played in the field of rhetoric through invoking a concept of victory over the Spartans, famous for their military prowess. The most likely candidate for the Athenian victory over the Corinthians is that of 433 BC when, thanks to the assistance of an Athenian naval squadron, Korkyra defeated Corinth and its allies in the Battle of Sybota (Th. I 46–55). Of course, this reference could also relate to the fictional war between Athens and Corinth mentioned later in the *Alexander Romance* (II 5.5).

ἔτι δὲ Μεγαρεῖς φυγαδεύσαντες καὶ Φωκεῖς πολεμήσαντες καὶ Ζακυνθίους πορθήσαντες: even more rhetoric than historical reference can be found in the next section, in praise of the Athenian military achievements. The banishment of the Megarians may allude either to the sixth-c. BC war in which Peisistratos distinguished himself (Hdt. I 59; Plu. *Sol.* 8–10; Just. II 8), or to the economic sanctions imposed on Megara by Athens prior to the Peloponnesian War, in the so-called Megarian Decree sponsored by Pericles (on this decree see Sealey 1991). Less probable would be a reference to an Athenian expedition under Phokion who, ca. 343 BC, prevented the establishment of a pro-Macedonian government in Megara (D. 19.294–295; Plu. *Phoc.* 15.1. Legon 1981, 289–294). The Athenians never fought a war with the Phokaians and in fact, shortly before the events suggested in this chapter, Athens had avoided the anti-Phokaian coali-



tion led by Thebes and Thessaly in the Third Sacred War, in some ways taking the side of the Phokaians (Buckler 1989, 69–71). The plundering of Zakynthos, an Ionian island, by the Athenians is utterly fictional; a little later the *Alexander Romance* calls Zakynthos an ally of Athens against Philip II (II 5.5).

11 Κίθωντα... ἀρχιστρατηγόν: a fictitious character. There was no *archistrategos* in Athens and the word itself is late, attested mostly in Jewish and Christian sources, very often in reference to Archangel Michael.

13 Πελοποννησίους ἐξηχμαλώτισεν: the phrase about taking the Peloponnesians in captivity may refer either to the fictitious expedition of Alexander against Sparta covered in II 6, or to the historical events of 336 and 331 BC. In late 336 BC Alexander re-established the Macedonian supremacy in the Peloponnese after the death of Philip II. Although no war was fought, he nevertheless left behind a small garrison led by one Korragos, notorious for imposing a tyrant on the small town of Pellene in Achaia ([D.] 17.10; Paus. VII 27.7; Ath. XI 119. Bosworth 1988a, 194). In 331 BC Alexander's viceroy Antipater fought a war in the Peloponnese with Agis III of Sparta and his allies (Nawotka 2010, 219–225 with reference), and since this was the most serious war the Macedonians fought in the Peloponnese under any of the Argead kings, the *Alexander Romance* may well be making a reference to it here.

14 Ξέρξης ἐξήρτησε τὴν θάλασσαν ναυσί: the regular usage of the verb ἐξαρτάω (“to hang upon, stretch out, to be adjacent,” *LSJ*, s.v.) does not fit the context (cf. Kroll, app. ad loc.) which surely refers to the story of Xerxes allegedly joining the European and Asiatic shores of the Hellespont with a bridge made of ships anchored next to each other (Hdt. VII 33–35. Hammond and Roseman 1996). Stretching the regular meaning of the verb, this passage is usually translated as “Xerxes bridged the sea with ships” (Stoneman 1991, 89), or “Xerxès a construit un mur de vaisseaux sur la mer” (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 91), or “Poi Serse coprì il mare di navi” (Gargiulo 2012, 13), in keeping with a rarely attested meaning of ἐξαρτάω as “ligarse” (*DGE*, s.v. II). The author of the *Alexander Romance* likes easy word-plays—see: Ξέρξης ἐξήρτησε here or λοιμός καὶ λιμός αὐτοὺς διέφθειρεν (“hunger and famine destroyed them,” tr. E. Haight) in the preceding sentence.

ἐσκέπασε τοῖς ὄπλοις τὸν ἀέρα: an obvious reference, although with carefully-avoided verbal echoes, to Herodotus (VII 226) who, within his story of the Battle of Thermopylae, reports the words of a Dienekes about the multitude of Persian troops and says: ὡς ἐπεὰν οἱ βάρβαροι ἀπίωσι τὰ τοξεύματα, τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθεος τῶν ὀϊστῶν ἀποκρύπτουσι (“when they shot their missiles, the sun was

hidden by the multitude of their arrows," tr. AD Goodley, Loeb). This became standard in ancient rhetoric: Cic. *Tusc.* I 101; Plu. *Mor.* 225b; Luc. *Rh.Pr.* 18; V.Max. III 7. ext. 8; Stob. III 7.45.

ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεδιώξαμεν καὶ τὰς ναῦς ἐπρήσαμεν: chasing Xerxes away and burning down his ships must be a rhetorically contorted reference to the Battle of Marathon in which the Athenians and Plataians defeated the Persian troops dispatched by Darius I, who preceded Xerxes on the Persian throne.

Κυναίγειρου καὶ Ἀντιφώντος καὶ Μνησοχάρους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀριστέων μαχησάμενων: Kynaigeiros or Kynegeiros (this version of his name e.g. in Hdt. VI 114) was the brother of Aeschylus who fought at Marathon. He is named by Herodotus (VI 114) as an example of a heroic death, suffered when he grabbed onto a Persian ship and had one arm (or both) severed by an enemy blow; this is how he was remembered by posterity (Plu. *Mor.* 347d; Luc. *Demon.* 53; D.L. I 56; Lib. *Decl.* 19.1.13; Heraclid.Pont., fr. 97, Schütrumpf = fr. 170, Wehrli; Just. II 9; Stob. III 7.63; Chor. 40.1.94 and 95; *Suda*, s.v. Κυναίγειρος). Kynegeiros was an Athenian general (*strategos*) at Marathon ([Plu]. *Mor.* 305b–c) and indeed, in the painting of the Battle of Marathon created for the Stoa Poikile in the next generation after the battle, reportedly he was represented among the Athenian leaders (Plin. *Nat.* xxxv 57). Kynegeiros was a topical hero of ancient rhetoric: Polemon's *Declamation I* is devoted to Kynegeiros; on Kynageiros as a topos see V.Max. III 2.22; Sen. *Suas.* 5.2; Favor. fr. 96.22, Barigazzi; Luc. *Rh.Pr.* 18; Lib. *Decl.* 14.1.14; Max.Tyr. 23.3d (Reader and Chvála-Smith 1996, 33–40). This probably explains why he is mentioned here. Antiphon and Mnesochares are otherwise unknown.

δέκα ῥήτορας ... δέκα κύνες: the speech attributed here to Aeschines reflects the tone of the historical debate in the Athenian assembly in the autumn of 335 BC, when, upon taking Thebes, Alexander demanded from the Athenians that they hand over leading Athenian politicians, or "*strategoi* and *rhetors*" in the political parlance of the age (Hansen 1991, 268–271). A few lists of the politicians requested by Alexander have survived in ancient sources (see above ad II 2.4) but none names Aeschines, a key figure in the peace party in Athens, often incorrectly called pro-Macedonian. Plutarch (*Dem.* 23.5) relates an anecdote reportedly presented by Demosthenes on this occasion about sheep surrendering their dogs to the wolves. The words attributed to Aeschines in this section echo Demosthenes' anecdote.

### Chapter 3

1 **Δημοσθένην**: Demosthenes, the greatest orator of classical antiquity, was active in Athenian politics from 355 until 322 BC, almost always advocating the cause of the Athenian Imperial power and this meant, from 351 BC onwards, taking the anti-Macedonian stance. The only noteworthy divergence in Demosthenes' career from his usual belligerent position was in 331 BC, when he either made the faintest effort to support Agis III of Sparta in war with Antipater, or refrained from taking the anti-Macedonian position at all (D. 3.164–167; Din. 1.34–36; Plu. *Dem.* 24.1. Lintott 2013, 72). Here his two speeches, full of moderation and praise for Alexander, contradict the position usually taken by the historical Demosthenes. At the price of disregarding historical accuracy, the *Alexander Romance* unites here the greatest Greek orator, Demosthenes with Alexander, the greatest Greek military leader and champion of Greek culture, as he was interpreted in later antiquity.

3–4 **Αίσχινης ... ἄνθρωπος γέρων ... Δημάδης δὲ νέος**: the debate in the Athenian Assembly shown in the *Alexander Romance* draws upon the conventional belief of human life, in which risk-taking is typical of youth and prudence is the domain of the old. In reality none of the orators represented in these chapters was young enough to be called νέος and in terms of political activity all three belonged to the same generation: in 335 BC Demades was ca. 45 years old, Demosthenes ca. 50 and Aeschines slightly more than 60.

6 **Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐστὶν Ἕλλην**: (sim. in II 4.3) the question of whether Alexander and all Macedonians were Greeks or a separate ethnos has been one of the most hotly debated issues of classical scholarship in which politics plays an unusually important role, since in the modern age Alexander has been considered the exclusive national hero of both the Greeks and of modern Macedonians, and thus ancient Macedonia has been proclaimed a part of the exclusive historical identity of each side in this bizarre modern ideological conflict (see e.g. Danforth 2010). The extreme paucity of pre-Hellenistic written sources in Macedonia, with only one inscription considered by some to be proof of Macedonian as a dialect of Greek (a mid-fourth c. BC curse tablet from Pella: *SEG* 43.434. Masson 1996), alongside a small number of words quoted by classical authors as Macedonian, makes it impossible to determine whether ancient Macedonians spoke a distinct dialect of Greek (Panayotou 2007) or a language in its own right, akin to Greek but separate from it (for a review of evidence and of opinions: Engels 2010; see also Danforth 2010). We know, however, that in the Classical and early Hellenistic ages neither did Greeks perceive Macedo-

nians as Greeks, nor did Macedonians harbor this opinion. Therefore we can surmise that the ethnic identity of Macedonians of the age of Alexander the Great was not Greek (Badian 1982; Borza 1990, 91–95; Borza 1994; Borza 1996; Nawotka 2010, 5–8. For a summary of the opposite view, that Macedonians were Greeks, see: Hatzopoulos 2011). Nevertheless, Philip II and Alexander successfully advertised their Greekness through sponsoring Greek artists and intellectuals, befriending members of the Greek elite, and, in the case of Philip, even participating in Panhellenic games (Engels 2010; Anson 2010, 16–20). For the Greeks of the early Empire, the age which we call Hellenistic was referred to as the “Macedonian times,” and the principal kingdoms of this time were commonly referred to as Macedonian (D.S. I 3.3; Juba *FGrH* 275 F87, ap. Ath. VI 15; Eus. *Comm. in Isaiam* I 72; Eus. *DE* VIII 4.14; Clem.Al. *Strom.* I 21.128.3). In Hellenistic kingdoms the Macedonians, ethnic or adopted members of the “Macedonian” type military, enjoyed a privileged position and some Greek cities of the early Empire claimed to be Macedonian in origin. This was all due to the unique reputation of Alexander, an affinity with whom was claimed not only by the kings of the great Macedonian dynasties of the Seleukids and Ptolemies, but also by the Hellenized Iranian dynasts of Kappadokia and Kommagene (Spawforth 2006). Alexander and the Macedonians became accepted as Greeks by Greek intellectuals no earlier than the early second c. BC when hardship caused by the Roman conquest and rule drew Greeks and Macedonians closer together, putting to rest earlier differences (Borza 1996). But this acceptance was not universal: treading in the footsteps of Demosthenes, Aelius Aristides presents Philip II as barbarian, not Greek, being also much more reserved than most towards Alexander (Asirvatham 2008, especially at 211–216). The phrase Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐστὶν Ἕλληγν, attributed in this chapter to Demosthenes, seems both to reflect the evolution of the perception of Alexander in the Greek world of the later Hellenistic and Imperial age, and to refute firmly any dissent, such as that of Aelius Aristides.

τρισκαίδεκα πολέμους: thirteen campaigns of Alexander is an obvious exaggeration, taking into account that the scene in this chapter is set in 335 BC and that by that time the historical Alexander had fought two wars of his own: one in the north of the Balkans against the Thracians, Getae and Illyrians and the other against Thebes.

7 οἱ Τύριοι πρὸς Ξέρξην ναυμαχῆσαντες καὶ νικήσαντες τὰς τούτου νῆας ἐνέπρησαν: contrary to what the *Alexander Romance* says here, the Tyrians never fought Xerxes nor did they burn down his ships. Tyre, thanks to its seemingly impregnable position on an island and its powerful navy, more than once was able of resist major powers in Western Asia, most famously resisting a thirteen-

year siege by Nabuchadnezzar II (J. AJ x 228. Schaudig 2008). In 351BC Tyre took part in a revolt of Phoenician city-states against the Great King Artaxerxes III (Markoe 2000, 59–60). Since the two names, Artaxerxes and Xerxes, were often confused in ancient sources, it is possible that the passage discussed here draws ultimately upon an account which confused Artaxerxes III with Xerxes II.

8 Ἀντιγόνου ... σατράπου: the satrap Antigonos is most probably Antigonos Monophthalmos (“the One-Eyed”), appointed by Alexander as satrap of Phrygia in 333BC. After Alexander’s death until his own in the Battle of Ipsos in 301BC, he was the dominating figure among the Successors (Billows 1990; Heckel 2006, 32–34).

9 σίτον ... μὴ λιμῶ: Alexander decides to help his enemies in the Peloponnese with food over the objections of his satrap Antigonos, in a show of noble magnanimity by the king, who prefers to win the war in the field rather than starving his enemies into surrender (Stoneman 2012, 382).

## Chapter 4

1 Λυσίας ... Πλάτων ... ἡ ῥακλίας: this passage, if read literally, is confused and obviously anachronistic if set in 335BC, as Lysias died in 380BC and Plato in 347BC; hence none could have backed Demosthenes in 335BC. The name of the third supporter of Demosthenes was restored by Radermacher as Περικλῆς (Kroll, app.) but perhaps Ἡράκλειτος should be accepted here after Syr. (Stoneman 2012, 382). Of course Herakleitos of Ephesos (fl. ca. 500BC) could not have been present at this debate either. Possibly the *Alexander Romance* attempts to demonstrate a conventional erudition by naming some of the greatest Greek intellectuals on the one hand and building an impression of the impeccable Greek cultural credentials of Alexander (by showing towering figures of Greek civilization approving of the pro-Alexander speech of Demosthenes) on the other. This follows in the footsteps of Plutarch for whom Alexander is the paradigm of paideia, here defined in the traditional Athenocentric sense (see in general Hall 2000, in reference to Alexander at 220–221). To a degree a similar tradition is traceable in the *ELB*, which lists Demosthenes, Aristotle, Aeschines, Demades, Plato, Lysias and Demokritos as leading philosophers of the age of Alexander (I 8.4), even if some were much earlier than Alexander. In addition, Lysias’ presence in this fictitious scene may result, to a degree, from his contribution to building the Panhellenic ideology based on the idea of a joint Greek

war effort against the barbarian Persians, an idea quite influential in the age of Philip II and Alexander and employed by them in their dealings with the Greek states on more than one occasion (Kleinow 1987).

Ἀμφικτύονες ἐψηφίσαντο: from the fifth c. BC the name “Amphiktyones” was applied to the members of the council of the Delphic Amphiktyony. In classical antiquity twenty-four Amphiktyones represented twelve “tribes” united in the Delphic Amphiktyony, among them the Ionians whose two seats on the council were split between Euboea and Athens. From the reforms of Hadrian onwards, and well into the age when the *Alexander Romance* was written, the number of Amphiktyones grew to thirty, with Athens still holding one seat on the council, hence at any one time there could be one Athenian Amphiktyon, not many, as here. In the Roman age the Delphic Amphiktyony, although devoid of any political importance, was believed by many authors to be the embodiment of the old Hellas (Sanchez 2001, 32–41, 432–433, 461–463); this must be the reason why the Amphiktyones vote in the debate at the Athenian Assembly in the *Alexander Romance*, supporting Alexander, the champion of Hellenism.

3 τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὐεργετῶν, τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς φίλους ποιῶν: the traditional Greek morality enshrined in drama and in philosophical writings espoused the idea of helping one’s friends and harming enemies (Dover 1974, 180–184; Blundell 1989, especially 26–59); the idea of turning one’s enemy into a friend is not nearly as popular (Stoneman 2012, 382). The pronouncement of the intention to benefit his friends and to turn his enemies into friends attributed here to Alexander again promotes an idealized image of his magnanimity and, set in the Athenian context, shows him again as the champion of Hellenism.

5 Οὐδείς τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλέων ἐπέβη τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ εἰ μὴ ὁ μόνος Ἀλέξανδρος: strictly speaking alleging that Alexander was the only Greek king to go Egypt is ahistorical, as prior to Alexander the famous king of Sparta Agasilaos spent a few years in Egypt as a mercenary general. Again, this statement belongs not to history but to the Alexandrian ideology of the *Alexander Romance*, prone to stress the uniqueness of everything Egyptian.

6 φρενῆρης παῖς: in the *Alexander Romance* the adjective φρενῆρης (“sound of mind,” *LSJ*, s.v.) is the most common epithet of Alexander who wins more through qualities of his mind than with arms (Jouanno 2002, 206–207).

Ἀμεινότερόν ... Αἰγυπτίους ... γεωργίαν: the Alexandrian author of the *Alexander Romance* reminds the reader of the well-known fertility of the Egyptian soil and productivity of Egyptian agriculture (Bowman and Rogan 1999; Stoneman 2012, 383).

8 πόσα στρατόπεδα θρέψει ἐκείνη ἡ χώρα;: having questioned the ability of Egypt to provide foodstuff for armies, the *Alexander Romance* further exploits the theme of the exceptional agricultural riches of Egypt. Surely Egypt provided much-needed supplies to Alexander's army in the late 332–331 BC (cf. Stoneman 2012, 383–384).

## Chapter 5

1 νικητικὸν στέφανον λιτρῶν πεντήκοντα: in the late-Classical, Hellenistic and Roman ages, the crown was a popular, even coveted, prize in contests, granted to athletes and other performers, as well as a reward for *euergetai* (benefactors). Crowns were made of leaves or of metal, usually of gold and if the weight is listed, surely a crown made of metal, presumably of gold, is meant. Kings and emperors accepted and indeed expected cities to send them golden crowns or crown gold (*aurum coronarium*) on accession and on various other occasions. Ancient sources, mostly inscriptions, list the value of crowns in silver drachmae rather than their weight in gold, a typical value being 500 (in Athens in e.g.: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 223, 410, 415, 1156, 1187, 1200, 1247) or 1000 (in Athens in e.g.: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 103, 207, 212, 223, 233, 330, 336, 338, 360, 1186, 1256) drachmae. At the exchange rate most favorable to silver of 10:1, as it was ca. 330 BC, a typical heavy crown would come to around 50 drachmae of gold (Lewis 1997, 43) or 0.2185 kg. If in this passage a weight of 50 pounds is meant, as is most likely since the *litra* or pound was a weight measure, not currency unit, the crown voted for Alexander would be ca. 16.37 kg. Incidentally this was also the size of a golden crown sent to Rome by Antiochos IV (Plb. XXVIII 22.3), and one wonders whether perhaps the *Alexander Romance* was inspired here by the figure listed by Polybius. Of course in antiquity the recipient of a golden crown did not have to wear it and it is assumed that often the actual crown was never executed with the recipient, particularly if a king or emperor, often accepting its monetary value instead (Klauser 1948; Lacombrade 1949). Curtius reports that the historical Alexander received crowns from Tyre (IV 2.2), from the Greeks assembled at the Isthmian Games (IV 5.11), and he himself awarded golden crowns to his companions (VIII 12.15, IX 1.6). Crowns of gold were offered also to the Great King by his subjects (*Ju.* 3.7–8; D.S. XIX 48.7. Briant 1996, 204–205).

3 Ἀλέξανδρος ... οὔπω γὰρ ἐρῶ βασιλεύς: the Macedonian monarchy, unlike the Persian one, was very simple in its protocol, with very little social distance between the king and his subjects, who addressed him by name, not by using the word βασιλεύς. This was combined with a deep commitment from the

Macedonians towards their monarchy (Errington 1974; Errington 1990, 219–220; Badian 1996, 11–12; overview of kingship in Macedonia: King 2010). Although here the story of Alexander refraining from using the title βασιλεύς (king) serves primarily to illustrate the modesty of young Alexander before his Athenian teachers, it inadvertently perhaps reflects historical reality. Alexander is the first king of Macedonia known to use officially the royal title and in fact his royal style changed only after he had defeated Darius: he changed the way he addressed almost all people in his letters, he started to mint gold coins and started to use the title βασιλεύς on official occasions and on his coins (Price 1993, 174; Le Rider 2003, 170–188; Nawotka 2005).

5 ὅσα καιροῦ λαβόμενοι διέθεσθε Μακεδόνας: this locus in ms. A is incomprehensible. Two other early versions render this place in a dissimilar way: *explorantes idoneum tempus quo meos Macedonas infestaretis* (Val. 11 4 320) and “I for once have decided to work with the Macedonians” (Arm. 146 in Wolohojian’s translation). Leo, derived from the lost early version \*δ, has here: *et vos contrarium cogitantes de me manifestando indignationem vestram* (11 5 72L). The words are far from what other versions have, but the meaning is congruous with Val. and this must be the essence of what was once in the archetype (α). For a discussion of possible emendations see: Kroll app.; Stoneman 2012, 384.

πολεμοῦντος γὰρ τοῦ πατρός μου Φιλίππου πρὸς Ζακυνθίους: possibly the author of the *Alexander Romance* or his source confused two kings of Macedonia—Philip 11 father of Alexander, and Philip v who fought in Zakynthos in 209 BC. (Ausfeld 1907, 153; Stoneman 2012, 384). The relative prominence of the marginal Ionian island and the polis Zakynthos (mentioned here and in 11 2.10) is hard to explain. Zakynthos was an ally of Athens both in the Peloponnesian War and in the Second Athenian League (Gehrke and Wirbelauer 2004) but all in all its minuscule historical importance does not give an obvious reason why it was included in the narrative of the *Alexander Romance*.

6 καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ... καθηρήσατε: something is missing in this phrase in ms. A. Other early versions speak here about destroying/ removing a statue of the father (Val. 11 5 (330); Arm. 146) or mother (Syr.) of Alexander. On the testimony of the majority of early versions one may surmise that the sense of the archetype version was something like in Val.: *nobis Minervae simulacrum ritu vestro erigentibus in Macedonia vos simulacra et imagines patris mei e templis vestris deponendas esse duxistis* (Ausfeld 1907, 63; Kroll., app.; Stoneman 1991, 57). Stoneman (2012, 384–385) believes that this passage may refer to the cessation of honors to Philip from Kynosarges in Athens (Clem.Al. *Protr.* 4.54.5), although no other source directly mentions Philip’s statue there.



7 αὐτὸς Ἀθηναῖος: on purely rhetorical grounds, Alexander is called Athenian here as earlier, in the Song of Ismenias, he is a Theban (I 46a). This Athenian identification of Alexander opens a section in which misdeeds of the Athenians against their famous fellow-citizens are enumerated. This of course shows the moral superiority of Alexander, the adopted Athenian, over native-born Athenians who in the end have to submit to his will.

8 Εὐκλείδην ἐν φυλακῇ ἀπεκλείσατε: Eukleides of Megara was a philosopher and a pupil of Socrates (D.L. II 106–112). There is no other evidence of his imprisonment in Athens but Aulus Gellius conveys an anecdote that in the period of the Athenian blockade of Megara, when no Megarians were admitted to Athens on pain of death, Eukleides, dressed as a woman, used to sneak into Athens to listen to Socrates (Gel. VII 10.2–4). This is possibly a variant of this story.

Δημοσθένην ἐφυγαδεύσατε πρεσβεύσαντα ὑμῖν τὰ συμφέροντα πρὸς Κῦρον: the story of the exile, self-imposed and not mandated by the Athenians, of Demosthenes is well-known: Demosthenes had to leave the city because of his dealings with Harpalos, the fugitive treasurer of Alexander, notorious for distributing bribes to many Athenian politicians, Demosthenes included ([D.] 17.108.8, 18.13; Din. 1.8, 40, 61, 108; Just. XIII 5.9–10. Blackwell 1999, 133–144; Heckel 2006, 111). His embassy to Kyros (Cyrus the Great? Cyrus the Younger?) is, however, apocryphal and certainly because of that it was omitted in the translations of Iulius Valerius and Arm. The version of ms. A most probably follows the archetype (α), as also Syr., derived from rec. \*δ, mentions this spurious embassy. This is an example of the pseudo-erudition of the *Alexander Romance* which brings together two characters, whose names were known to the educated audience, even if they could never have met for obvious chronological reasons.

Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐξυβρίσατε: Alkibiades, the famous Athenian general and political leader of the age of the Peloponnesian War, was exiled twice and from Xenophon onwards his misadventures were often mentioned as an example of how unjust democracy can be, not unlike tyranny (Forsdyke 2005, 267–271).

Σωκράτην ἀνείλατε, τὸ παιδευτήριον τῆς Ἑλλάδος no criticism of Athenian democracy could go without a reference to the trial and death of Socrates. Here Socrates is called παιδευτήριον τῆς Ἑλλάδος or “the school of Greece.” It is most unusual to call a human being “school,” unless a late, mostly Christian, usage of the word παιδευτήριον is applied, something like “an example to follow, teacher” (as e.g. Ioannes Chrysostomos, *De Joseph* PG LVI 588; Basilios, *Sermones* XLI, p. 47). The *Alexander Romance* surely wants to show erudition here, ironically blaming Athens, in Thucydides called “the school of Hellas” (II 41.1, in the speech attributed to Pericles: τὴν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι),

for persecuting Socrates who is in this passage also “the school of Hellas” (παιδευτήριον τῆς Ἑλλάδος).

11 ἐλευθερίας θέατρον Ἀθήνας καθαιρῆσαι: again an indirect reference to the praise of Athens in the speech attributed to Pericles by Thucydides (11 35–46. Stoneman 2012, 385–386).

## Chapter 6

Conventional sources never mention a naval encounter between Alexander and Sparta. Some modern scholars want to see in this chapter a reflection of the war fought in 195 BC by a coalition of Rome, the Achaean League and some other allies with Nabis, the tyrant of Sparta (Ausfeld 1907, 153–154; Merkelbach and Trumpp 1977, 124). However, the grounds for this are tenuous. It is perhaps better to relate this chapter to the age of Alexander. If it reflects historical events, it must be referring to the war between the coalition of Peloponnesian states led by Agis III of Sparta and that of Macedonia and her allies led by Antipater, Alexander’s viceroy in the Balkans (see above comm. to 11 2.13) in which indeed Sparta was defeated, albeit in the land battle of Megalopolis. Its importance was variously assessed by ancient authors with Plutarch skipping it altogether, Arrian limiting his attention to short remarks and Curtius attributing great value to the demise of Agis III (Noethlichs 1987). There is, however, an obscure tradition of Alexander’s naval victory over the Spartans surviving in the *Suda*: ὁ μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος κάκεινῃν νικήσας ναυμαχίαν Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τειχίσας τὸν Πειραιᾶ καὶ ἐκατόμβην θύσας πάντας εἰστίασεν Ἀθηναίους (s.v. Ἀθηνάιος, repeated s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος). This passage is obviously a misquotation from Athenaios, conflating Alexander with Konon, an Athenian admiral on the Persian pay, who crushingly defeated the Spartans in the sea battle of Knidos in 394 BC. Athenaios, in a statement on magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία) reads: τοιοῦτος ἦν τῇ μεγαλοψυχίᾳ ὁ μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος. Κόνων δὲ τῇ περὶ Κνίδον ναυμαχίᾳ νικήσας Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τειχίσας τὸν Πειραιᾶ ἐκατόμβην τῷ ὄντι θύσας καὶ οὐ ψευδωνύμως πάντας Ἀθηναίους εἰστίασεν (1 5). At one point, either in a ms. of Athenaios accessed by the *Suda* or in an intermediate source, five words (Κόνων δὲ τῇ περὶ Κνίδον) were dropped, which resulted in the disappearance of Konon from the narrative and subsequently attributing the naval victory over Sparta to Alexander. Since Athenaios came much later than the *Alexander Romance*, his text could not have influenced that of Ps.-Callisthenes.

## Chapter 7

This chapter relates to a council of war convened by Darius. Since the only meeting of Darius with his adviser otherwise recorded is that convened in Babylon in the summer of 333 BC (D.S. XVII 30; Curt. III 2), prior to the Battle of Issos, reported here in I 40–42, Ausfeld believes that II 7 was a later interpolation, absent in the archetype (α). But it does not have to be so, having in mind the contorted chronology of the *Alexander Romance* with the conquest of Egypt preceding the Battle of Issos. Placing the council of Babylon after Issos belongs to the realm of fanciful chronology attested so often in the *Alexander Romance*. The historic council of Babylon was convened by Darius III upon the news of the death of Memnon of Rhodes, the best Greek general on Persian pay who at that time was waging a highly successful war on Alexander in the Aegean. His death meant a serious setback for Darius forcing the Great King to rethink his strategy. The speech of Darius in this chapter (II 7.1–4) reflects the anxiety of the King known also from Curtius (III 2.1).

2 ὥς ἔχοι παίζειν καὶ παιδεύεσθαι, αὐτὸς τελείως παιδευθεῖς: a word-play on the double meaning of παιδεύω, first used as “to correct, discipline,” and then as “to educate.” What is intended here is the expression of Darius’ admiration for Alexander: Darius at first showed his disregard for Alexander by treating him as a spoiled child to be disciplined, while Alexander soon overtook his Persian mentor in military prowess.

4 μὴ ζητοῦντες τὴν Ἑλλάδα λυτρώσασθαι: the slogan of liberating the Greeks was used both by the Macedonian kings, Philip II and Alexander (see e.g. Nawotka 2003a), and by their enemies, most notably in September 335 BC when, upon Alexander’s invitation to all Thebans to leave the city and to join him in taking advantage of the benefits of the common peace, the Thebans mockingly responded by inviting to Thebes all in Alexander’s army who wanted to fight on the side of the Great King and the Thebans in defense of the freedom of the Greeks against the Macedonian tyrant (D.S. XVII 9.5: τὸν βουλόμενον μετὰ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως καὶ Θηβαίων ἐλευθεροῦν τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ καταλύειν τὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος τύραννον παριέναι πρὸς αὐτούς). Most certainly during his campaign in the Aegean in 333 BC, and especially in his propaganda preceding the planned invasion of continental Greece, Memnon of Rhodes was using the slogan of liberating Greece (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 124–125). The words with which Darius concludes his speech here may serve as a sign of recognition that the policy of “liberating” the Greeks came to an end with Memnon’s death.

5 Ὁξιάθρης δὲ (ὁ) ἀδελφὸς Δαρείου: Oxyathres was the younger brother of Darius III. He distinguished himself in the Battle of Issos. After his brother's death Oxyathres was enrolled in the Companion Cavalry and accepted to Alexander's inner circle by becoming one of his bodyguards. In 329 BC he administered the death penalty to the regicide Bessos, handed over to him by Alexander (Heckel 2006, 188). Although we do not have other sources to corroborate this, Oxyathres almost certainly took part in the council of Babylon in the summer of 333 BC. In their depiction of the council, the classical authors concentrate on the outspoken Greek participant the Athenian Charidemos, a proponent of waging war with a comparatively small army of a hundred thousand troops, a third of which were mercenary, whom he would lead. The opposite opinion of Persian notables, here expressed by Oxyathres, was that Darius should assume the supreme command in the war (D.S. XVII 30; Curt. III 2). In all our sources this opinion carried the day. Charidemos not only lost the debate but was executed for questioning the courage of the Persians. A reflection of the words attributed to him by Curtius (III 2.11–16), where Charidemos compared superior Macedonian and inferior Asiatic troops can be found in the statement of the last recorded participant in the debate in this chapter expressing the same idea (II 7.11).

8 ἐπέμφθην ὑπὸ σοῦ ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ Φίλιππον: this statement is fictitious as Philip II was not liable for tribute to the Great King. If any historical Persian noble who had been to Macedonia in the age of Philip II is meant here, it could be Artabazos, a satrap of Hellepontine Phrygia who rebelled against Artaxerxes III and then fled the country, to find refuge at the court of Philip II in 352 BC and return in the 340s. Artabazos was a loyal supporter of Darius III with whom he stayed until Darius' arrest by Bessos in the summer of 330 BC (Berve II 82–84, no. 152; Stoneman 2012, 387).

9 ἔστι γάρ σοι ἔθνη Περσῶν καὶ Πάρθων καὶ Ἑλυμαίων καὶ Βαβυλωνίων: the Persian Kingdom was a universal empire and Persian royal inscriptions list the peoples subject to the Great King in the moment when the inscription was commissioned or at any preceding date. This list goes even further, also including peoples of the empire of Darius III, Indians who were no longer Persian subjects, Illyrians who were never Persian subjects and inhabitants of the mythological Semiramis. Apart from Persians, Babylonians and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, the lists contain peoples who rose to prominence in the Hellenistic age, rather than in the Achaemenid Empire: Parthians and Elymians.

11 κύων Λακωνικός: the Lakonian dog, by some in antiquity believed to be a cross-breed of a dog and a fox (Arist. *HA* 607a), was one of the most famous hunting dogs in Greece, employed also to guard cattle (Pi., fr. 106, 107a, Snell; S. *Aj.* 8; Pl. *Prm.* 128c; x. *Cyn.* 10.4; Call. *Dian.* 93–97; Var. *R.* 11 9.5; Hor. *Epod.* 6.5; Verg. *G.* 3.405; Ov. *Met.* 111 208, 223; Plin. *Nat.* x 177–178; Luc. IV 441; Sen. *Phaed.* 35–36; Arr. *Cyn.* 3.6; Opp. *C.* 1 372; Nemes. *Cyn.* 107. Kamerbeek 1963, 21; Anderson 1985, 42, 93; Diggle 2004, 238).

## Chapter 8

This chapter contains the story of Alexander's bath in the River Kydnos in Kilikia, here called the Okeanos, and of the treatment administered by his physician Philippos. The story is known from a plethora of sources: Plu. *Alex.* 19; Arr. *An.* 11 4.7–11 (after Aristobulos); Luc. *Dom.* 1; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F.1.6; VMax. 111 8, ext. 6; Just. XI 8.3–9. Diodorus (XVII 31.4–6) skips the bath, relating just the story of illness. The fragmentary *POxy.* 1798 (*FGrH* 148 F44) belongs to this story too. The *Alexander Romance* keeps most of the essential elements of this story as they are known from other sources.

1 Ἀλέξανδρος ὁδεύσας τὴν Κιλικίαν: to provide context for the story of Alexander's bath in the River Kydnos, he was at that time (the late summer of 333 BC) waging a campaign in central Anatolia and in Kilikia. Alexander crossed the Kilikian Gates to reach Tarsos (Curt. 111 4.1–7; Arr. *An.* 11 4.3–6; *It.Alex.* 26–27), the residential city of Arsames the satrap of Kilikia, in a rapid movement, allegedly covering a distance of 500 stadia or 90 km within one day (Just. XI 8.2).

Ὠκεανόν: the *Alexander Romance* applies the name of the mythological Ocean-stream to the river known from other sources as the Kydnos, now the Tarsos River or Berdan Çayı. Stoneman (2012, 388) ingeniously explains this misnomer as a result of scribal errors in the majuscule manuscripts of the *Alexander Romance*: KYΔNON > KYANON > (Ω)KEANON.

4 Φίλιππος ... ἰατρός: Philippos from Akarnania was Alexander's trusted physician. Yet for all his reputation he is attested in mainstream sources only twice: when curing Alexander in Tarsos and treating his arrow-wound at Gaza (D.S. XVII 31.5–6; Curt. 111 6.1, IV 6.17; Sen. *Dial.* IV 23.2–3; Plu. *Alex.* 19.4–10; Arr. *An.* 11 4.8–10; VMax. 111 8, ext. 6; Just. XI 8.5–9; *It.Alex.* 30. Heckel 2006, 213–214, s.v. Philip [9]). For his alleged presence in the house of Medios in Babylon see commentary to 111 31.8.

5 καταπότιον: the usual meaning of this very well attested word is “small pill” (*LSJ*, s.v.) but here it seems to be used with the meaning of “medicine,” since a little later in this chapter Alexander drinks τὸ πόσιμον φάρμακον or a “medicinal drink” (II 8.6).

ἐπαγγειλάμενος δοῦναι αὐτῷ ἀδελφὴν ἰδίαν πρὸς γάμον ὀνόματι Δαδιφάρταν: the promise to betroth Darius’ sister or daughter to Philippos is known also from Curtius (III 6.4), Plutarch (*Alex.* 19.5) and an anonymous history from Oxyrynchos (*P.Oxy.* 1798 = *FGrH* 148 F44). The *Alexander Romance* is the only source to give her name as Dadipharta in ms. A or Gagipharta in Arm. (155). Even if no name is listed in other early versions (β, Val.), its survival in ms. A and in Arm. probably means that the name Dadipharta/ Gagipharta is derived from the archetype (α). The name is otherwise unattested in ancient sources.

11 εὐρὼν αἴτιον τὸν Παρμενίωνα ἐκόλασεν αὐτόν: other sources (listed above) agree that Alexander did not follow Parmenion’s warning and drank the medicine prepared by Philippos. The statement of punishing Parmenion by Alexander is surely an invention of the *Alexander Romance*.

## Chapter 9

1 ἐπὶ Μήδους ἡπείγετο καὶ τὴν μεγάλην Ἀρμενίαν: at this point the narrative moves two years ahead, from the autumn of 333 BC in Chapter 8 to the late summer-autumn of 331 BC when Alexander set out from Syria for the heartland of the Persian Empire to fight the Battle of Gaugamela. The geography is confused, since in historical reality Alexander’s army first crossed the Euphrates, then marched through the foothills of Armenia to cross the Tigris. Alexander never waged war in Armenia, although while in Babylon he appointed Mithrenes as satrap of Armenia and dispatched a general named Menon to conquer this land (Nawotka 2010, 215–217, 242–243, with reference. Menon: Heckel 2006, 166, s.v. Menon [3]).

διὰ τῆς Ἀρειανῆς παραγίνεται εἰς τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμόν: no Areiake is attested in ancient sources and no obvious solution can be found. Already in rec. β this word was emended to Ἀρειανῆς, making Alexander march through Areia (or Haraiva), a satrapy to the south of Baktria, in modern Afghanistan where Alexander arrived about a year later. In light of the usual sloppiness in geography of Ps.-Callisthenes, some scholars believe that indeed he had this Areia in mind (Thiel 1974, 182). But rec. β is prone to emendate the archetype (α) in places where it diverges from the perceived historical truth and this might

be the case here too. The name Areiake may also be a reflection of Ἀριᾶκή, a land in India (Ptol. *Geog.* VI 10.3, VI 14.14, VII 1.6, VII 1.82; *Peripl.M.Eryth.* 14, 41, 54. Sircar 1960, 225–227). If the *Alexander Romance* got the geography right this time, it may be derived from the name of the River Arkani in Armenia which, according to the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance* (158), Alexander crossed on the way to the Euphrates (Stoneman 2012, 390).

2 τοῦτον γεφυρώσας ψάλισιν καὶ σιδηρέαις κνήμαις there are two ancient traditions of Alexander crossing the Euphrates. What is generally accepted as the standard version of his route to Gaugamela is that he crossed the Euphrates at Thapsakos, a place which cannot be identified with certainty, but which was probably between modern-day Qal'at Najim and the confluence of the Balikh and the Euphrates, both in modern Syria, over two pontoon bridges (Arr. *An.* III 7.1–8; Curt. IV 9.12; Str. XVI 1.21; *It.Alex.* 54. For a summary of the discussion of the location of Thapsakos see: Nawotka 2010, 215–216 and Kennedy 2015. On pontoon bridges see Rollinger 2013, 67–73). The parallel tradition suggests that Alexander crossed the Euphrates upstream at Zeugma (near Birecik in Turkey) by means of a bridge constructed with a huge iron chain: Plin. *Nat.* XXXIV 150; Hdn. *De prosodia* III 1, p. 352; D.C. XL 17; St.Byz. s.v. Ζεύγμα. The construction of the bridge is differently rendered in early versions of the *Alexander Romance*, with Val. having a pontoon bridge, Leo (most likely after \*δ) planks and an iron chain, and ms. A, β and Arm. arches and iron beams. The last one, the most unusual version (*lectio difficilior*), is almost certainly the *lectio* of the archetype (α). The *Alexander Romance* belongs, broadly speaking, to the tradition of Alexander's army crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma, with the rhetorical device of amplifying the construction material from iron chain to arches and iron beams.

3 Τίγρις ... καὶ Εὐφράτης ... εἰς τὸν Νεῖλον: since the digression on the Tigris and the Euphrates as tributaries of the Nile is absent from some early versions (β and Val.), Stoneman (2012, 390) believes that it was a marginal commentary incorporated into ms. A, and not a part of the archetype (α). But it can be found both in the Armenian version (159, the names of the Mesopotamian tributaries of the Nile are Dklat' and Arkani) and in Leo which is derived from rec. \*δ. Therefore it seems more likely that this digression was present in the archetype (α) and it was dropped by the learned authors of two early versions, Iulius Valerius and the editor of rec. β, because of its fictional nature. The idea of the Euphrates flowing into the Nile, although not generally shared by most authors, was known nevertheless to some in antiquity (Paus. II 5; Philostr. *VA* 1.20). Making both the Euphrates and the Tigris tributaries of the Nile is surely

a token of the feeling of superiority of the original Egyptian author of the *Alexander Romance* (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 125–126).

5 ἐκέλευσεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος πάντα τὰ ζεύγματα τοῦ Εὐφράτου ἐκκοπήναι: this is the only evidence of Alexander's order to destroy the bridges over the Euphrates to make retreat impossible. There was, however, a tradition of Alexander burning bridges behind him, attested in the *Sylloge tacticorum* attributed to Emperor Leo VI (on the author, probably not Leo VI, see Dain 1938, 8): 'Ο Ἀλέξανδρος τοὺς Μακεδónας πρὸς τὸν περσικὸν ἀποδειλιῶντας ὁρῶν πόλεμον τὰς τῶν μεγίστων ποταμῶν γεφύρας μετὰ τὴν τῆς στρατιᾶς διάβασιν καθαιρῶν τολμηροτέρους αὐτοὺς δι' ἀπόνοιαν παρεσκεύασεν, or "Alexander, having noticed that the Macedonians were fearful of a battle with the Persians destroyed bridges over great rivers once the troops had crossed them, so as to make them braver out of desperation" (102.3). Stoneman interprets the burning of ships by Agathokles in Africa (D.S. XVII 23.2–3, XX 7) and by Emperor Julian on the Euphrates (Amm. XXIV 7.3–4) as imitations of Alexander's gesture (Stoneman 2012, 390–391). It is also possible that the *Alexander Romance* was the ultimate source of the remark in the *Sylloge tacticorum*, which would render this otherwise unsupported anecdote an exemplum of Alexander's daring only.

8 ἐκάθηντο δὲ καὶ τὰ Δαρείου στρατόπεδα ἐπάνω τοῦ Τίγριδος ποταμοῦ: from the point of view of an army marching from the west, the Persian camp was, broadly speaking, on the other side of the Tigris. In reality, the distance between the Tigris and Gaugamela where the battle was fought is ca. 35 km. Nevertheless, the reference to the Persian camp beyond the Tigris indicates that the historical Battle of Gaugamela is meant, even if many details of the battle depicted in this chapter are confused, and despite the fact that neither the name of Gaugamela, nor that of Arbela, is ever mentioned here.

οἱ προηγούμενοι σατράπαι πέντε: in historical reality, Darius III commanded the Persian army at Gaugamela.

9 τις τῶν Περσῶν: as it happens the only feature of the battle by the Tigris (presumably the Battle of Gaugamela) in the *Alexander Romance* is an anecdote of a Persian soldier disguised as a Macedonian who struck Alexander from behind, wounding him in the head. It combines anecdotal details known from other sources on two episodes: the episode of two Persian nobles attacking Alexander in the heat of the Battle of the Granicus—Rhoisakes who struck Alexander on the head breaking his helmet and possibly wounding him, and Spithridates who raised his sword on Alexander from behind only to have his arm severed by a blow from Kleitos "the Black" (D.S. XVII 20.6–7; Plu. *Alex.* 16.8–12; Plu. *Mor.*



326f; Arr. *An.* I 15.7–8; *It.Alex.* 22), and that of an Arab on Persian pay who, during the Siege of Gaza, tried to assassinate Alexander pretending to be a defector (Curt. IV 6.15–16. Stoneman 2012, 391).

## Chapter 10

1 βάρβαροι ... συστροφήν ἐποιοῦντο εἰς τὴν Βακτριανῶν χώραν: this chapter is concerned with events after the Battle of Gaugamela and before the death of Darius. Even if some Persian troops may have headed to Bactria after the Battle of Gaugamela, both Darius and Bessos, the satrap of Bactria, spent the winter of 331/330 BC in Ekbatana in Media, and no war was fought in Bactria until the spring of 329 BC. Mixing the conquest of Bactria into the narrative of events of the late 331 BC is another example of the loose geographical and chronological standards of the *Alexander Romance* (Thiel 1974, 182).

1–3 ἕτερος δέ τις σατράπης Δαρείου: the anecdote of a Persian traitor offering to hand over Darius to Alexander is known also from the third book of the *Makedonika* of Aretades of Knidos, quoted in [Plu.] *Mor.* 308c (= *FGrH* 285 F1). In Aretades it is not a satrap but a son of Darius of the name Ariobarzanes who was exposed and executed by Darius. There is enough of a difference between Aretadas and Ps.-Callisthenes not to assume that one drew from the other: more likely they used the same sources, unknown to us. This alone does not make the story of the plot against Darius genuine (Heckel 2006, 44–45, s.v. Ariobarzanes [1]), nor does the presumed intention of Aretades to belittle the memory of Darius (Briant 2003, 225–226) make it untrue. In the *Alexander Romance* this anecdote is transformed to illustrate the magnanimity of Alexander, unwilling to conspire with a traitor (Ausfeld 1907, 157). An answer similar in sense, if not in words, to Alexander's is attributed to Philip II, who allegedly rebuked and executed traitors willing to betray Amphipolis to him: *Schol. in D.* 1.40a: εἰ τῶν ἰδίων πολιτῶν οὐκ ἐφείσασθε, πόσω γε πλέον οὐ μέλλετε περὶ ἐμὲ ὕστερον τοιοῦτοι γενήσεσθαι ("if you do not have consideration for your fellow-citizens, would you not behave even worse towards me in the future?").

4–5 The letter from the satraps contained in these two sections is surely misplaced by Ps.-Callisthenes since it belongs to the period preceding the Battle of Granicus, and an earlier letter of Darius (I 39.8–9) is the King's answer to the plea of his satraps (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 126).

6 Ὑδάσπης καὶ Σπινθήρ: on these satraps see above commentary to I.39.8.

6–8 A version of this letter of Darius to Alexander is known also from a papyrus PSI XII 1285 IV 17–41 of the first half of the second c. AD (text and date: Giuliano 2010, 209–212; English translation: Arthur-Montagne 2014, 164). The two versions stem from the same sources but were transmitted in a much different way. The papyrus version is longer, it uses more difficult language and more sophisticated rhetoric. The *Alexander Romance* version of the letter retains more qualities of non-literary correspondence. It was probably copied to the *Alexander Romance* from a collection of Alexander's letters in the belief that it was an authentic document (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 163–166).

6 Ἄρρεϊος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ λέγει: there is a striking difference in the titles of Darius in this letter to Alexander and in the previous two (I 36 and I 40): now it is only the name of Darius mentioned in the heading, while in earlier letters Darius was “king of kings” and a “great god.” Although these letters are fictitious they follow (inadvertently?) in the footsteps of the Babylonian way of recording the titles of kings, as exemplified by the *Astronomical Diaries* whose scribe, in the space of one tablet, demotes Darius from the “king of the world” to just a king once he lost the Battle of Gaugamela, while elevating Alexander to the position once occupied by Darius (Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 330, obv. 14–18, rev. 11: *A-lek-sa-an-dar-ri-is* LUGAL ŠÚ “Alexander king of the world.” Cf. Briant 2003, 78–84).

δοξάζω ... γυναῖκα (δὲ) μὴ ἐσχηκέναί: “I presume ... you did not possess my wife” (tr. E. Haight). In the prevailing tradition of classical authors Alexander treated the family of Darius captured at Issos in a dignified and noble way, affording them the same honors and privileges they had enjoyed at the court of Darius III (D.S. XVII 37–38; Curt. III 12, IV 10, V 3, V 7; Plu. *Alex.* 21 and 30; Plu. *Mor.* 338e; Gel. VII 8.3; Arr. *An.* II 12; Just. XI 9.11–16; *It.Alex.* 37). Among other things, this meant refraining from sexual exploitation of the family of Darius III, thus exhibiting the virtue of *sophrosyne* or restraint by Alexander (Keaveney 1978; Briant 2003, 395–426). Darius' wife Stateira, however, died in childbirth shortly before the Battle of Gaugamela, ca. two years after she had been taken prisoner of war at Issos (D.S. XVII 54.7; Curt. IV 10.18–34; Plu. *Alex.* 30.1), hence, in all probability, she was pregnant with Alexander's child (Bosworth 1980, 221; Heckel 2006, 255–256, s.v. Stateira [1]). The *Alexander Romance* must be making a reference here to this issue, no doubt devastating to Darius' pride. Some modern scholars rightfully juxtapose Alexander's sexual conquest of his enemy's wife with burning the palaces of Persepolis, both acts of war designed to damage the morale of Darius III and of the Persian people (Carney 1996, 57–571; Shahbazi 2003, 24–25, n. 100). Darius' preoccupation with his wife's inviolability rather than with the safety and well-being of his

son and heir apparent, also kept prisoner by Alexander, is a striking feature of ancient Alexander historians (Jamzadeh 2012, 30–35), and the *Alexander Romance* treads the same line of tradition.

9–10 Letter known also from a papyrus PSI XII 1285 IV 42–48 of the first half of the second c. AD (text and date: Giuliano 2010, 214).

## Chapter 11

1–3 Alexander's (fictitious) letter refers to the situation preceding the Battle of Gaugamela, since it contains Alexander's orders in issues of stockholding war supplies in Syria, i.e. in the staging area of his army en route from Egypt to Mesopotamia in the summer of 331 BC. At that moment the logistics of Alexander's army experienced unexpected problems, forcing Alexander to appoint a new satrap of Eber-Nāri (for discussion see: Nawotka 2010, 214–215). This fictitious letter may reflect Alexander's real concerns with logistics before and during the Gaugamela campaign.

2 σατράπαις ... Συρίας (καί) Κιλικίας καὶ Καππαδοκίας καὶ Παφλαγονίας (καὶ) Ἀραβίας: not all of the lands named in this letter were indeed governed by Alexander's satraps in 331 BC, with the most tenuous Macedonian rule in Kap-padokia and Paphlagonia, still contested by Alexander's General Antigonos and the Persian armies left in inland Asia Minor. The only Arabia ever in Alexander's power was the Sinai Peninsula governed by Kleomenes of Naukratis, sometimes called a satrap in our sources (Bounoure 2004, 241).

ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ [καὶ] τῆς Συρίας; Antioch in Syria or Antioch-on-the-Orontes, one of the biggest and most important cities of the ancient world, was founded by Seleukos I in 300 BC (Cohen 2006, 90–93). Therefore this passage is anachronistic, although Libanios (*Or.* 11.72–77, 87, 250) relates a story of Alexander passing through this area and being prevented from founding a city (i.e. Antioch) only by the necessity of waging war. The story is apocryphal, invented in order to give additional grandeur to Antioch through its links to the most famous name of the man who almost became its founder, but in the summer of 331 BC Alexander's army was marching from Phoenicia inland through the Valley of the Orontes, passing through the place in which some thirty years later Antioch was founded (Downey 1961, 54–55; Engels 1978, 65–66; Nawotka 2010, 215–216).

3 κάμηλοι: since most early versions have here 3,000 camels either in the letter quoted directly (β and Arm. 167) or indirectly (Val.), the *lectio* of the archetype

(α) must have been here κάμηλοι τρισχίλιοι, with the word τρισχίλιοι probably missing in \*δ, as neither Syr. nor Leo have it. The number of camels listed in this fictitious letter may have been inspired by numbers of pack animals used in transporting Persian treasures captured by Alexander's army in Persepolis to Susa and Ekbatana, known from our sources as 20,000 mules and 3,000 camels (Plu. *Alex.* 37.4), or a multitude of mules and 3,000 camels (D.S. XVII 71.2. Cf. Thiel 1974, 182; Bounoure 2004, 241).

4 Οἰμητάδης: the name of the satrap is otherwise unattested and it must have become corrupt early in transmission of the text of the *Alexander Romance*, as some early versions do not have it at all (Val., β, Syr.), while others have it in a different form than ms. A: Notareses (Arm.), Nostades (Leo). Hoimetades of ms. A may be derived from the name of Madates, a relative of Darius III and a satrap who led the brave resistance of the Uxioi in the late autumn of 331 B.C. (D.S. XVII 67.4–5; Curt. V 3.1–11. Ausfeld 1907, 158; Jouanno 2002, 148).

5 μεγιστάνοι διέβησαν πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον: although the first Iranian noble on record to side with Alexander is Mithrenes who surrendered Sardis in 334 BC, the defection en mass did not happen before the death of Darius III in July 330 BC. Thus this passage in the letter of Hoimetades seems to be referring to the events of the summer of 330 BC.

Ὀλυμπιάδα τὴν τοῦ Μιθριδάτου ἀδελφὴν: Mithridates was a well-known Iranian name, in the age of Alexander attested for a son-in-law of Darius III (Heckel 2006, 168), but it is impossible to establish whether this Mithridates is meant here. The name of Olympias for a sister of a Persian noble, known from ms. A only and otherwise unattested, is highly unlikely (Stoneman 2012, 394).

7 Κοβάρζην: Kobarzes may be a corrupt version of the name of Ariobarzanes, a satrap who in the winter of 331/330 BC bravely resisted Alexander in the Battle of the Persian Gates (Ausfeld 1907, 158; Jouanno 2002, 148).

## Chapter 12

1 Πῶρος: two Indian dynasts, cousins of the name Poros, are attested in the age of Alexander (Heckel 2006, 231–232, s.v. Porus [1, 2]). The better known of them, certainly referred to here, was a king of Paurava in Punjab (now in Pakistan), between the Akesines (Chenab) and the Hydraotes (Ravi); he fought Alexander in the Battle of the Hydaspes in April 326 BC. Other sources do not record Darius' request of military assistance from Poros; here almost

certainly it is a literary fiction aiming at introducing an exotic character into the story of Alexander. In the fourth c. BC some rajas from Punjab did, however, recognize the suzerainty of the Great King and it must have been thanks to them that Darius III was able to field fifteen elephants in the Battle of Gaugamela (*Fragmentum Sabbaiticum* FGrH 151 F.1.12–13. Briant 1996, 774–778; Karttunen 1997, 37–38).

3 Ῥοδογούνη μήτηρ Δαρείω τέκνω χαίρειν: mainstream sources give the name of the mother of Darius III as Sisygambis (Heckel 2006, 251). Rhodogoune is the Greek rendering of \*Vardagauna (Shahbazi 2012), a name amply attested for Iranian (Persian and Parthian) queens and princesses. The first-second c. AD *Lexikon* of Harpokration reads: Ῥοδογούνη: γυνή μὲν Ὑστάσπου, Ξέρξου δὲ καὶ Δαρείου μήτηρ (“Rhodogoune: wife of Hystaspes, mother of Xerxes and Darius”), with the same text surviving also in the *Suda* (s.v. Ῥοδογούνη) and in the *Lexikon* of Photius (s.v. Ῥοδογούνη). This entry obviously refers to Vištāspa (Hystaspes) and his son Darius I. The *Alexander Romance* possibly drew on Harpokration, confusing Darius I with Darius III, either from a lack of knowledge of the name Sisygambis, or in search of a novel approach to history, not wanting to repeat information transmitted by other authors.

### Chapter 13

4 Περσίδος ...τὰ τῆς πόλεως τείχη: Persis is the Greek name of a land in south-western Iran, roughly corresponding to the modern Iranian province of Fars. Its name is pre-Persian, attested already in Assyrian sources as Parahše and this name, as Pārsa, was assumed by the Iranian tribe(s) which settled this land at the end of the second millennium BC. Fars or Pārsa was the core province of the Achaemenid Empire and the name of the Iranian tribe inhabiting it (Persai) was often taken by the Greek authors as synonymous with the whole kingdom the Achaemenids ruled (de Planhol 1999; Wiesehöfer 1999). The Greek authors of the Classical age (Ctes. FGrH 688 F36; Arist. *Mir.* 838a), however, applied the name Parsa/Persai to the city, later called Persepolis in Western sources (Shahbazi 2010). Here also Persis, the Greek rendition of Pārsa/Persai, is the name of a city, presumably of Persepolis. Alexander's diplomatic mission to Persepolis, related in II 13–15, is fictitious, as is his second embassy in disguise, to Kandake, in III 20–23.

2–3 τὰ (δὲ) δένδρα συρόμενα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κόνιν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἀνήγειρεν: the stratagem of giving the enemy a false impression of the numerical strength of

one's army by creating a cloud of dust is attested for Ptolemy fighting Perdikkas (Fron. *Str.* IV 7.20. Stoneman 2012, 395–396).

## Chapter 14

1 σατράπην Εὐμήλον: no person of the name Eumelos is attested at Alexander's court. Possibly Alexander's secretary Eumenes is meant here under the name Eumelos (Bounoure 2004, 242).

Στράγγαν ποταμόν: outside the *Alexander Romance*, the River Stranga is attested in Greek literature only three times by fourth-c. Christian authors (*Acta Archelai* 1432.4 and 1522.55; Epiphanius of Salamis, *Adversus Manicheos* 5 = *Panarion* 111 3, p. 25), who, for obvious chronological reasons, could not be a source for the *Romance*. Nor was this historical Stranga an intermittent river. The testimony of these authors indicates, however, that a river by the name Stranga lay in the north-east of Mesopotamia; it has been variously identified with the upper Tigris, the Great and Little Zab, the Khabur, sometimes even with the Pasitigris (Karun) or the Kor (Pennacchietti 1999). If the earlier identification with the Tigris, Great or Little Zab or the Khabur is followed, the Battle of the Stranga (1116) would have taken place near the Battlefield of Gaugamela. If the Kor was meant, the Stranga would have been a river close to Persepolis. Although the idea of fast-freezing sea was known to the Greeks (Luc. *vh* 2.1. Stoneman 2012, 396), no intermittent river is ever recorded in Greek literature. Almost certainly the name Stranga is derived from the Persian Arang/Raṅhā. The Raṅhā is a mythical river known from the *Avesta* and akin to the Rasā, the river or ocean of the *Rig Veda* which surrounds the earth. In the *Avesta* the Raṅhā flows in the far north, in a land affected by severe winter (*Vd.* 119) which also freezes in winter (Brunner 1986/2011; Pennacchietti 1999). Because of this quality of the river Arang/Raṅhā, quite unobvious to the author of the *Alexander Romance* who was most probably a native of Alexandria in Egypt, the Stranga of the *Romance* is rather a reflection of the mythical river of the *Avesta*, and not just a record of an obscure local tradition of a river-name in Mesopotamia or Persis. The way of transmission of the knowledge of the Avestan river to Ps.-Callisthenes is obscure but see the perceptive remarks of Stoneman (2012a) on the circulation of Oriental/Iranian stories in Greece from Achaemenid times on.

4 ὑπενόουν θεὸν εἶναι: in antiquity, pagan and Christian alike, epiphany was an experience reported on more than one occasion (Lane Fox 1986, 98–167) and an important motive in ancient literature and art (Platt 2011). For example, while



FIGURE 9 *In the age when the Alexander Romance was written Mithras was among the most popular gods in the Roman empire, conventional represented as a young man dressed in trousers and a “Persian” cap, as here in the limestone cult relief of Mithras slaying the bull from Dura-Europos, ca. AD 170–171.*

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in Lystra, Paul and Barnabas were recognized as gods (Hermes and Zeus) by the local population: *Act.Ap.* 14.11–13 (Stoneman 2012, 397). No wonder that in Persepolis Alexander, dressed like Hermes, was taken for a god.

5 ὁ δὲ ἀθρήσας τὸ πολὺ θαῦμα Δαρείου: the splendor of the Great King’s dress, jewelry and of his person is a topos known also from the apocryphal *Additions to the Book of Esther* (*Add.Esth.* 15.6–7. Stoneman 2015, 73, 193).

Μίθραν: Mithra was an Iranian god, a personification of the concept of “moral obligation” or “contract,” associated with the Sun, but scholarly opinions vary as to whether he was a Sun-god or not. In the Iranian pantheon Mithra was second in importance only to Ahura Mazda, and his role as protector of contracts was perceived crucial to the moral foundation of the society. Mithra, both as god and as a common noun (*mitrá*, OP “contract”) is attested profusely in the *Avesta* and in Achaemenid monumental inscriptions, as he was worshiped by late Achaemenids and by other Iranian dynasties, including those in Pontus and Kommagene, alongside Ahura Mazda (Lentz 1970; Frye

1984, 120–124; Clauss 2000, 3–8; Schmidt 2006). In the age when the *Alexander Romance* came into being Mithraism was an enormously important religion in the Roman Empire, worshiping the Sun-god Mithras (Clauss 2000). Without trying to solve the perennial question of the alleged Iranian origins of the Western Mithraism (a useful survey of the wide range of opinions in the scholarship is Beck 1984), it suffices to say that for its Roman believers the mysteries of Mithras came from Persia where they were founded by Zarathustra (Porph. *Antr.* 6) and, as attested by numerous monuments assembled by Vermaseren (1956–1960), the god donned a garment believed to be Persian (Beck 2002). The phrase Μίθραν ... τοῖς βαρβάροις πέπλοισιν ἐγκοσμηθέντα (“Mithras ... dressed in barbarian robes,” tr. E. Haight) must be referring to the conventional Roman images of Mithras: a young man dressed in trousers and a “Persian” cap, both conventionally Oriental, i.e. non-Roman pieces of garment.

11 δεύτερος δὲ ἀδελφὸς ἦν Ὁξυάθρης: although this banquet is fictitious, some guests are identifiable historical characters, among them Oxyathres, the brother of Darius III (see commentary to 11 7.5).

Ὡχος σατράπης Ὁξυδράκων: Oxydrakai (*Kśudraka*) were an Indian people living in the Punjab, to the south of the Hydraotes (Ravi), near modern Multan in Pakistan. Certainly there was no satrap of the Oxydrakai under Darius III but they paid tribute to the Persian satrap (Eggermont 1993, 42). The name of the alleged satrap, Ochos, is the same as the name of a son of Darius III, taken prisoner at Issos (Curt. IV 11.6, IV 14.22; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum FGrH* 151 F1.5. Heckel 2006, 181).

Ἀδουλίτης ὁ ἐπὶ Σούσης: Adulites is surely Abulites who in December 331 BC surrendered to Alexander Susa with the treasury of the Great King (D.S. XVII 65.5–66.3; Curt. V 2.8–12; Arr. *An.* III 16.6).

Φραόρτης ... Μιθριδάτης ... Τιριδάτης: Phraortes is perhaps a corrupt name of Phrasaortes, who was appointed by Alexander as satrap of Persis (Arr. *An.* III 18.11). Mithridates is either a satrap of Ionia and son-in-law of Darius III, killed by Alexander in the Battle of the Granicus (Arr. *An.* I 15.7 and 16.3; *It. Alex.* 22), or Mithridates son of Ariobarzanes, a Persian aristocrat and descendent of a companion of Darius (I) in the fight against the Magi, who distinguished himself in the Battle of Gabiene in 316 BC on the side of Eumenes. He later founded the Kingdom of Pontus (D.S. XIX 40.2. Ausfeld 1907, 160–161). The name of Tiridates was borne by three prominent Persians in the age of Alexander (Heckel 2006, 268, s.v. Tiridates [1, 2, 3]); the *Alexander Romance* most likely refers to the royal treasurer at Persepolis (D.S. XVII 69.1; Curt. V 5.2), who would have surely participated in a royal banquet in this city.



Κανθαύλης ὁ νυκτίχροος: the “dark-skinned” Kandaules is not attested in mainstream sources in the age of Alexander. It probably is the same Kandaules whom the *Alexander Romance* later (III 19–20) introduces as son of Kandake, disregarding Kandake’s statement about the skin hue of her and her family: ἐσμέν γάρ λευκότεροι καὶ λαμπρότεροι ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν παρὰ σοῦ λευκοτάτων or “We are whiter in skin and more shining in soul than the whitest with you” (III 18.6; tr. E. Haight).

Μένωπος ... Δελεάλλιδες: all these names are otherwise unknown in the age of Alexander; most probably no historical characters are referred to here (Stoneman 2012, 398).

## Chapter 15

1 σώματος σμικρότητα: this is one of many statements in ancient sources about Alexander’s less than impressive height, often noticed by those who saw him for the first time, e.g. by the Skythian envoys: “Admissi in tabernaculum iussique considere in vultu regis defixerant oculos: credo, quis magnitudine corporis animum aestimantibus modicus habitus haudquaquam famae par videbatur” or “Being admitted to the tent and invited to be seated, they had fixed their eyes on the king’s face, because, I suppose, to those who estimated spirit by bodily stature his moderate size seemed by no means equal to his reputation” (Curt. VII 8.9; tr. J. Rolfe. Also: D.S. XVII 37.5, XVII 66.3; Curt. III 12.16, V 2.13–15, VI 5.29; *It.Alex.* 14). Some modern scholars, inadvertently perhaps, share the Skythians’ view on a link between military fame and tall stature, claiming that Alexander was of average height and therefore—based on measurements of skeletons found in contemporary Macedonian graves—of ca. 1.7 m tall (Stewart 1993, 72–73). But the sources leave us with no doubt: Alexander was short, perhaps as short as 1.55 m to fit the armor found in Tomb II in Vergina (for identification of this piece of armor as Alexander’s see: Borza 1990, 261–265; Pelagia 2000, 191).

3 σκύφους ... ἔκρυβεν: the Macedonian habit of showering the banqueters with gifts of goblets made of silver and gold is well attested for Karanos (Ath. IV 2), Kleopatra VII (Socr.Rhod. *FGrH* 192 F1, ap. Ath. IV 29) and one “Lysimachos the Babylonian,” imitating the royal habit (Posid. fr. 65, Kidd, ap. Ath. XI 115). Both the very usage of vessels made of precious metal (and not of clay) and especially making gifts of golden or silver vessels to guests at a banquet are prime examples of Hellenistic *tryphe*, or in modern terms, conspicuous consumption, possible, *inter alia*, thanks to the influx of precious metals into the Mediterranean as a result of Alexander’s conquests (Vössing 2004, 70–71, 174–178). The

historical Alexander reportedly gave a gold libation *phiale* to each of the nine thousand guests at the wedding in Susa in the spring of 324 BC (Plu. *Alex.* 70.3). Cf. Stoneman 2012, 399.

6 Παρασάγγης: the *locus* is corrupt, with ms. A having ἀσαργάς, Val. Pasarges, Leo Anepolis, Syr. Pûsâk (11 7). The name Παρασάγγης was deduced from Arm. (181) by Kroll. The name Παρασάγγης for a noble Persian of the age of Alexander is not attested otherwise and is surely fictitious. Used as a common noun, it designates a Persian unit of length of ca. 4.75 km (Bivar 1985, 628–629). A fourth-third c. BC historian Nymphis (*FGrH* 432, F12) says that Persian royal messengers or *sangandai* were called *parasangai* by Sophocles and Euripides (fr. 477 and 686, Nauck). Also Hesychius (s.v. παρασαγγιλόγω) claims that the Persians called royal messengers παρασαγγιλόγω. Possibly then either the *Alexander Romance* or its source gave a royal messenger or *parasanges* the name Parasanges.

11 εἰκὼν γὰρ Ξέρξου τοῦ ὀρόφου κατέπεσε: perhaps an indirect allusion to an episode of Alexander reflecting upon a statue of Xerxes overthrown by Macedonian soldiers in a palace in Persepolis (Plu. *Alex.* 37.5. Stoneman 2012, 399).

## Chapter 16

This chapter depicts the battle on the Stranga. Historical Alexander fought Darius III twice: at Issos and at Gaugamela. The historic Battle of Gaugamela seems to have been split in the *Alexander Romance* into two encounters: the battle by the Tigris (11 9) and the battle on the Stranga (Nawotka 2017c).

1 εἶρε μυριάδας ἱβ': no sources can be identified for the 120,000 troops in Alexander's army at this stage of the war, i.e. in the late 331 BC, before or after Gaugamela but certainly before taking Persepolis. Arrian claims that Alexander had some 47,000 soldiers at Gaugamela and this figure is believable (*An.* III 12.5. Bosworth 1980, 303–304).

2 ἐθάρσυνε τὴν στρατείαν: since the battle on the Stranga is fictitious, so is Alexander's speech, even if he certainly addressed his soldiers on many occasions, also at Gaugamela (D.S. XVII 56.4; Curt. IV 13.38–14.7; Plu. *Alex.* 33.1; Arr. *An.* III 9.5–8; Just. XI 13.8–11). Generals' exhortations to soldiers on the eve of a battle were a distinct genre in ancient historiography (Pritchett 1994; Yellin 2008, Chapter 1; Stoneman 2012, 400).

3 ἦν μὲν Περσικὸν πλῆθος ἄμετρον καὶ ἄρματα δρεπανηφόρα ἐτύγγανε: the multitude of Persian soldiers and the presence of scythed chariots are among the stock features of descriptions of the Battle of Gaugamela in mainstream sources, with Diodorus (XVII 53.3) listing 800,000 infantry and 200,000 cavalry, Curtius (IV 12.3) 200,000 infantry and 45,000 cavalry, Plutarch (*Alex.* 31.1) and *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum* (FGrH 151 F1.12) a million, Arrian (*An.* III 8.6) a million infantry and 40,000 cavalry, and Justin (XI 12.5) 400,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry, repeating his numbers for Issos; even Curtius' figures were inflated (Bosworth 1980, 293). For scythed chariots at Gaugamela, see: D.S. XVII 53; Curt. IV 9.3–5; Arr. *An.* III 8.6, III 13.5; *Fragmentum Sabbaiticum* FGrH 151 F1.12. They are both strangely absent in the account of this battle in the *Alexander Romance* (II 9). This gives the impression that the *Alexander Romance* splits the Battle of Gaugamela into two: partly by the Tigris and partly on the Stranga.

6 οἱ δὲ τοῖς βέλεσιν ἐσκέπασαν τὸν ἀέρα: the idea of covering the sky with arrows is best known from the account of the Battle of Thermopylae (Hdt. VII 226), although Ps.-Callisthenes is careful not to use the same words as Herodotus (βάρβαροι ... τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ τοῦ πλῆθεος τῶν οἴστων ἀποκρύπτουσι).

8 πλῆθος ... κάτωθεν διελύθη (τὸ) κύμα καὶ ἤρπασε πάντας: the scene of the Stranga unfreezing to devour the retreating Persian troops may have been inspired by the *Persae* (500–512) of Aeschylus in which the Persian troops sank in the Strymon which melted in the sun's rays (Ieranò 1996; Stoneman 2012, 400).

9 Δαρεῖος φυγὰς γενηθεὶς καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὰ βασίλεια: in historical reality Darius III fled from the battlefield of Gaugamela not to this palace (presumably in Persepolis) but to Arbela, some ninety kilometers to the south-east, and from there to Ekbatana in Media where he stayed over the winter of 331/330 BC, attempting to gather an army for another battle with Alexander.

## Chapter 17

2–4 A fictitious letter of Darius III to Alexander known also from *P.Hamb.* 129, 31–56. A fragment of the letter survived also in a broken inscription (*SEG* 33.802) dated rather to Tiberius (Burstein 1989 and others) than to Trajan (Stoneman 2012, 401). It reads, in Burstein's restoration:

[— — κ]αὶ γὰρ Ξέρξης ὁ τὸ φῶς μοι δοὺς ὑπερφ[ρονήσας [— —]  
 [— — ἦ]δη οὐ κατανόησας καὶ τοῦ φρονήματος [τὸ μέγα αἰδοῦμενος — —]  
 [— — τοῦ]ς θησαυροὺς δεῖξειν τοὺς ἐν τῇ Μινυά[δι χώρᾳ — —].

Even if the exact wording of this fragment shows more affinity with *P.Hamb.* 129, 31–56 than with the *Alexander Romance*, all three texts are close enough to prove that this letter of Darius was circulating over two hundred years earlier than the earliest date of archetype (α) of the *Romance*, belonging, in Burstein's words, to the prehistory of the *Alexander Romance*.

This letter contains, for the first time, an offer of ransom for the family of Darius III, in this respect corresponding to the first or the second historical letter of Darius to Alexander (on the letters of Darius see Nawotka 2010, 181–183, 194, with reference), delivered soon after the Battle of Issos or during the Siege of Tyre, or, more likely, contaminating the two.

4 Ξέρξης: Darius III was the son of Arsanes/Arsames (OP Aršāma) and a member of the collateral branch of the Achaemenid dynasty ultimately descending, in the sixth generation, from Xerxes I, the most famous Achaemenid king to bear this name (Badian 2011). But here surely no direct reference to the stemma of the Achaemenid dynasty is meant; Xerxes is named most probably because of the notoriety he enjoyed in Greek literature as the king who led the invasion of Greece in 480–479 BC.

5 τοὺς θησαυροὺς δεῖξαι τοὺς ἐν Μινυάδι χώρᾳ καὶ Σούσοις καὶ Βάκτροις: one of the principal treasuries of the Achaemenid Empire was in Susa and in December 331 BC its satrap Abulites handed it over to Alexander with some 40,000 talents in bullion and 9,000 talents in coined money (D.S. XVII 65.5–66.1; Curt. v 2.8–11; Plu. *Alex.* 36.1; Arr. *An.* III 16.6–7; Just. XI 14.9). No Persian treasury in Bactria is recorded. Minyad land is the most mysterious of the three. Ausfeld (1907, 162) tried to identify it with the land of the Minaei in Arabia (Plin. *Nat.* XII 54), but it could also be the great mountain Minyas in Armenia on which allegedly Noah's Ark came to rest (Nic.Dam. *FGrH* 90 F72, ap. J. *AJ* I 95), perhaps identical with the kingdom of מִינִי or Minni (*Jer.* 51.27, but not in the Septuagint). Another possibility, perhaps the most obvious, is that the name of the land allegedly housing a Persian treasury had derived from the name of Minyas, the mythological founder of Orchomenos, and was therefore aptly added into this (fictitious) letter of Darius. Minyas had reportedly built a spectacular treasure house (Paus. IX 38.2).

6–7 The peace proposals contained in the second letter of Darius were a matter of discussion among Alexander's advisors, related in most mainstream sources. Parmenion reportedly declared that he would have accepted it had he been Alexander, and Alexander's sarcastic reply was also recorded here (Plu. *Alex.* 29.8; Arr. *An.* II 25; VMax. VI 4, ext. 3; *It.Alex.* 33; Zonar. IV 10; also Curt. IV 11.13–15, although in slightly different words). In Arrians's account (*An.* II 25.3) Alexander expressed the idea of being the rightful owner of what used to belong to Darius: "He had no need, he wrote, of Darius' money, nor was there any call upon him to accept a part of the continent in place of the whole. All Asia, including its treasure, was already his property" (tr. A. de Sélincourt. Similarly in: Just. XI 12.4). The same idea is contained in Alexander's letter in the later part of this chapter.

11 μείνας δὲ τὸν ἀκμαιότατον χειμῶνα καὶ ποιήσας τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις θεοῖς θυσίας προσέταξεν ἐμπρησθῆναι τὰ Ξέρξου βασίλεια ὄντα κάλλιστα κατὰ τὴν χώραν· μετὰ δὲ μικρὸν μετανοήσας σβεσθῆναι ἐκέλευσεν: this is a factual account of the events of January–May 330 BC. Alexander spent this time in Persis, mostly in Persepolis but paying a visit in Pasargadai too, trying in vain to win over the inhabitants of the central province of the Achaemenid Empire. These efforts are most likely alluded to in the phrase of sacrificing to the native gods. Alexander failed in his designs and the people of Persis and their elite remained loyal to the rightful Achaemenid King Darius III. Alexander reacted with a campaign of terror, culminating in the burning of palaces in Persepolis, the Achaemenid capital in their native land (Kosmin 2013, 672–673). Some ancient sources (Str. XV 3.6; Arr. *An.* III 18.12; *It.Alex.* 67. Hamilton 1999, 101) convey what probably was the official version of Alexander's propaganda, namely that palaces were burned in revenge for the sacrilege committed by Xerxes in Greece (for discussion of these events see Nawotka 2003b; Nawotka 2010, 249–255, with reference; largely agreeing with Briant 1980). The phrase commented upon here refers to this incident as "he ordered the palace of Xerxes to be burned". Indeed, the traces of conflagration were identified in, amongst other places, the Throne Hall and the Hundred Columns Palace constructed under Xerxes and Artaxerxes I and in the Palace of Xerxes (Schmidt 1953, 78–79, 239, 263; Balcer 1978, 119–120; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1993). Alexander's remorse at burning the palaces and his order to extinguish the fires are recorded by some other sources too (Curt. V 7.11; Plu. *Alex.* 38.8. Bosworth 1980, 332).

## Chapter 18

1 Περσῶν τάφους ... Κύρου τάφος τοιοῦτος, πύργος δεκάστεγος λίθινος: this succinct account seems to blend together descriptions of two different places. One is of a place with a number of Persian tombs with rich grave goods, presumably royal, and if so, this must be Naqsh-e Rostam, 12 km from Persepolis, famous for four rock tombs of Achaemenid kings and the fifth, unfinished one, perhaps executed on the orders of Darius III. The second place is Pasargadae, ca. 43 km from Persepolis, with the free-standing tomb of Cyrus the Great built in the shape of a roofed chamber put on top of six broad stone steps. The *Alexander Romance* borrows the incorrect description of the tomb ("ten stories high") from Onesikritos (*FGrH* 134 F34, ap. Str. xv 3.7). A better description of the tomb was produced by Aristobulos (*FGrH* 139 F51a, ap. Arr. *An.* vi 29.4–11 and F51b, ap. Str. xv 3.7). He provides the information about the golden sarcophagus or golden bed of Cyrus, although the *Alexander Romance* is the only source for the translucent cover of the sarcophagus (Stoneman 1995, 161).

2 τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄνδρες τεχνίται λελωβημένοι: this episode is attested in other sources too: D.S. xvii 69; Curt. v 5.5–24; Just xi 14.11–12; Ioannes Antiochenus fr. 29, Mariev. If it is historical, it most probably happened before taking Persepolis (as in Diodorus and Curtius) rather than after this event (Heckel 1997, 173–175). This episode serves the purpose of provoking the readers' hostility towards the Persians, barbaric in their behavior, which might provide justification for the destruction that Alexander inflicted on Persepolis. Hence, many modern scholars doubt its historicity (Heckel 1997, 174; Jamzadeh 2012, 62–63).

## Chapter 19

Another fictitious letter of Darius to Poros, King of India. About Poros see commentary to II 12.1.

1 Ἦδη δὲ πάλιν ὁ Δαρεῖος ἐστέλλετο πρὸς ἑτέραν συμβολήν: this approximates the designs of the historical Darius, who spent the winter of 331/330 BC and the spring of 330 BC in Ekbatana trying in vain to gather a new army with the assistance of his Skythian and Kadusian allies (Arr. *An.* iii 19.3. Bosworth 1980, 334).

2 ἔχει καὶ θαλάσσης ψυχὴν: if indeed Leo transmits here correctly the version of \*δ (*tempestatur animus eius sicut maris*); Merkelbach (Merkelbach and Trumpf

1977, 240) might be right in emendating the text: θαλάσσης (ἀνέμου κινουμένης) ψυχὴν. But the second witness of \*δ, Syr. has here “it casts itself into the sea, and loves battle by water” (II 11, tr. E.A.W. Budge). This does not make much sense, testifying only to textual problems, either in \*δ or in transmission from archetype (α) to later versions.

3 ἐπὶ τὰς Κασπίας πύλας: in antiquity this name was applied to three different defiles or passes, variously associated with Alexander the Great (for the discussion see: Anderson 1928; Anderson 1932; Kolendo 1987; Stoneman 1994). In July 330 BC the historical Alexander, while pursuing Darius III, passed through the Caspian Gates, one day’s march to the east of Rhagai or modern Ray (Arr. *An.* III 20.2). These Caspian Gates have been convincingly identified with Tang-e Sar-e Dara, 82 km east of Rhagae (Jackson 1911, 127–137; Bosworth 1988, 94–95; Hansman 1990). In antiquity, however, the same name was often applied to mountains, in contrast to our own geographical perception. With this understanding the name “Caspian Gates” was given to two passes in the Caucasus: a pass in Dagestan (Russia) between the Caspian Sea and the Tabasaran Mountains (the eastern spur of the greater Caucasus) housing the city of Derbent and thus called the Pass of Derbent or the Gates of Alexander, and the Dariel Pass (Georgia) further west in the central Caucasus, on the Georgian Military Road between Tbilisi and Vladikavkaz. The *Alexander Romance* gives no clue as to which of these passes is meant, yet the Caspian Gates mark the location of one of the most celebrated legendary deeds of Alexander. In later sources, beginning with the *Syriac Alexander Legend* of 629–630 (van Donzel and Schmidt 2010, 16–21), and later reappearing in the rec. γ (III 26A) of the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander encloses Gog and Magog behind the bronze or steel gate built in the Caspian Gates, in this case the Dariel Pass (Anderson 1932, Stoneman 1994, 99–105), and this story, although absent in the archetype, gained an enormous following in medieval Christian and Islamic literature (van Donzel and Schmidt 2010). In antiquity the Caspian Gates marked one of the termini of the inhabited world and the area on the other side belonged more to the realm of legend than to conventional geography (Stoneman 2008, 77–81).

ἀνδρὶ εὐζώνῳ χρυσοὺς τρεῖς, ἱππεὶ δὲ χρυσοὺς πέντε: the *Alexander Romance* is not quite specific about the gold coins promised to an infantryman and to a cavalryman by Darius in this fictitious letter to Poros. In order to assess the hypothetical amount of military pay advertised by Darius one might take into consideration the typical gold coins of the Achaemenid era, the darics. The daric was a one shekel or 8.4g coin of very high quality gold, valued at 25 Athenian drachmae. Therefore Darius of the *Alexander Romance* was offering 75 drachmae to an infantryman and 125 drachmae to a cavalryman per month,

on top of food and fodder. With a fourth-c. BC rate for mercenary infantryman of 30 drachmae per month or even less (Krasilnikoff 1993; English 2012, 13–17), his offer is hugely exaggerated, surely to underscore Darius' precarious position, unable to raise another army without Poros' assistance.

5 τὰς ἐν Σούσοις [τούτοις] παλλακὰς ρη': 108, given in ms. A as the number of the King's concubines promised to Poros by Darius, is odd. Most other early versions have here 180: Val. and Arm and Leo, probably repeating it after \*δ, even if Syr., the other witness to the \*δ line, has an unexplainable 170 (11 11). Thus the text should be emended to read ρπ' (Merkelbach and Trumppf 1977, 241). The Great King enjoyed the company of 360 concubines (Dicaearch. fr. 64, Wehrli, ap. Ath. XIII 5; Curt. III 3.24; Plu. *Art.* 27.2. Briant 1996, 292–296), so by offering 180 concubines to Poros, Darius symbolically shares his kingdom and household with him (Ausfeld 1907, 164; Stoneman 2012, 406). Susa was for the Greeks the principal capital of the Persian Empire (Tuplin 1996, 138–140) and it is also attested in the *Bible* as the place to which maidens of marriageable age selected for the King should be delivered from all Persian provinces (*Es.* 2.3. For the meaning of this as a token of the universal character of the Persian Empire see Briant 1996, 216).

6 ἀνέξευξεν ἐπὶ τὴν Μηδίαν ... Δαρεῖον εἶναι ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις: Sections 6–7 contain a factual narrative of events in the late spring-summer of 330 BC, in line with mainstream sources: Alexander left Persepolis in May 330 BC to capture Darius who had spent the winter of 331/330 in Ekbatana. In Arrian's account (*An.* III 19.3) Alexander indeed heard stories about Darius' preparation for battle, albeit not with the assistance of Poros as in the *Alexander Romance*, but with Skythian and Kadusian troops, who in fact never showed up.

7 βασιλεύειν τῆς Ἀσίας: Asia is not a continent here but the Persian Empire, as was common in Greek political language of the Classical age. Indeed, having defeated Darius at Gaugamela, Alexander immediately proclaimed himself King of Asia (Plu. *Alex.* 34.1. For a discussion of this name and this political act see: Nawotka 2004 and Nawotka 2012).

Βαγιστάνου (δὲ) τοῦ εὐνούχου: Bagistanes is known from other sources (Curt. v 13.3; Arr. *An.* III 21.1–2) as a deserter from the Persian camp, Babylonian in origin, who in the summer of 330 BC informed Alexander about the arrest of Darius by Bessos. Bagistanes is otherwise unattested (Heckel 2006, 67) and, strangely for a Babylonian, his name is Iranian, akin to the name of the sacred place in Media, \**Bagastāna* (Mt. Bisutun), or Βαγίστανον ὄρος (e.g. Ctes. *FGrH* 688 F1b; D.S. II 13.1. Schmitt 1989)



## Chapter 20

1 **Βήσσοις**: Bessos was the satrap of Baktria and Sogdiana and almost certainly a member of the Achaemenid family (Heckel 2006, 71–72). At Gaugamela he commanded the Baktrian cavalry on the Persian left and after the battle Bessos accompanied Darius to Media (Curt. v 8.4). The *Alexander Romance* accuses Bessos and Ariobarzanes of a plot to kill Darius, while in fact a group of Persian nobles led by Bessos tried to convince Darius to step down temporarily (Curt. v 9.3–11). This probably resulted from their conviction that a series of military defeats suffered by Darius was a clear sign that he no longer enjoyed the grace of gods. The conspirators wanted to appoint someone in the place of Darius, perhaps as a substitute king to avert bad omens from Darius (Nylander 1993, 151–152). Since Darius firmly refused, the conspirators deposed him and placed him under arrest, while Bessos took over power, assuming the dynastic name Artaxerxes v (Arr. *An.* III 25.3; *ME* 3, *It.Alex.* 69. Bosworth 1980, 355–356).

**Ἀριοβαρζάνης**: this is certainly Nabarzanes whose name was mistakenly substituted with the name Ariobarzanes, much more often attested in Greek literature. Nabarzanes was the top court official (*hazarapatiš* or *chiliarchos* in Greek sources) of the Persian Empire (Briant 1996, 269; Heckel 2006, 171). The title satrap assigned to him in the *Alexander Romance*, although usually borne by governors of great Persian provinces, was also applied to other prominent officials of the Achaemenid Empire (see commentary to I 23.4). Following Ps.-Callisthenes, some late sources, the *Metz Epitome* (3), and Tzetzes (*Chiliades* III 355) mistake Ariobarzanes for Nabarzanes too.

**ἐβουλεύσαντο τὸν Δαρεῖον ἀναιρῆσαι, οἰόμενοι γέρας λαμβάνειν παρὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου**: the noble Persian conspirators certainly were not planning on killing Darius: quite the contrary, they carried him in a wagon over a long distance, only to kill the deposed king when faced with the immediate danger of Alexander taking him prisoner (Curt. v 9.2). Our sources blame three conspirators: Bessos, Nabarzanes/Satibarzanes and Barsaentes with stabbing Darius to death (D.S. XVII 73.2; Curt. v 13.16; Arr. *An.* III 21.10; *ME* 3; *It.Alex.* 69; *Suda*, s.v. Δαρεῖος). Alexander had gone to enormous efforts to capture Darius alive, almost certainly in order to make him abdicate in favor of the Macedonian conqueror (Badian 1985, 448–449; Badian 1996, 20–21). Yet there must have been a story attributing to the conspirators the idea of using Darius as a bargaining chip in their dealings with Alexander, either in the version preserved in this section or as Arrian writes: “Darius’ captors had determined to hand him over if they heard that Alexander was after them, and thus get favorable terms for themselves” (*An.* III 21.5; tr. A. de Sélincourt). The most extreme version of the story of the conspirators killing Darius in order to please Alexander is in John of

Antioch who writes that Bessos killed Darius and brought his severed head to Alexander (26, Mariev).

3 Ὁ ἐμοῦ δεσπότης οἱ τὸ πρὶν μου δοῦλοι: Greek authors commonly called all subjects of the Great King, including generals and satraps, his slaves. But in the feudal Iranian society aristocratic leaders, such as satraps and the high court officials accompanying Darius in the last months of his life, were his *bandaka* or “(loyal) servants, vassals” (Eilers and Herrenschildt 1988; Briant 1996, 316, 350–351). In this fake quotation the *Alexander Romance* repeats a common misconception of Iran in Greek literature.

5 Ἀλέξανδρος εἰσεπήδησεν εἰς τὰ βασίλεια Δαρείου: in the *Alexander Romance* the conspirators mortally stab Darius in his palace, presumably in Persepolis, since it is not far from the Stranga. The historical Darius was killed in Hekatompylos, ca. 200 km from the Caspian Gates, near the modern site of Shahr-i Qūmis (Bosworth 1980, 342–343).

Ἀλέξανδρος καταλαμβάνει Δαρείον ἡμίπνουν: the mainstream sources are positive that Darius had died of his wounds shortly before Alexander reached the Persian camp and the only thing Alexander could do was to cover his enemy's body with his cloak: D.S. XVII 73.2–3; Curt. V 13.16–17; Plu. *Alex.* 43.1–5; Plu. *Mor.* 332f; Arr. *An.* III 21.10; Just. XI 15. Diodorus mentions, however, and rejects, an alternative version of events in which Alexander found Darius dying but conscious (XVII 73.4): “Some, however, have written that Alexander found him still breathing and commiserated with him on his disasters. Darius urged him to avenge his death, and Alexander, agreeing, set out after Bessos, but the satrap had a long start and got away into Baktria, so Alexander suspended the chase and returned” (tr. C.H. Oldfather). The *Alexander Romance* clearly follows this version, ahistorical but attractive in a narrative sense. It is known also to Orosius (III 17.6).

10 κηδευσάτωσαν Μακεδόνες <με> καὶ Πέρσαι/ μία γενέσθω συγγένεια Δαρείῳ: this should be read in the context of the following lines in which Darius betroths his daughter Rhoxane to Alexander. The hope of making Macedonians and Persians kinsmen by marriage, out of the historical context of 330 BC, brings to the reader's mind the mass marriages arranged by Alexander in the spring of 324 BC in Susa between his Macedonian and Greek companions (as many as 92 according to Chares, *FGrH* 125 F4, ap. Ath. XII 54) and Iranian princesses. In Plutarch's account (*Mor.* 329e): “He himself [scil. Alexander], crowned with garlands, was the first to raise the marriage hymn as though he were singing a song of truest friendship over the union of the two greatest

and most mighty people” (tr. F.C. Babbitt, Loeb). The theory of Berve and Tarn on the brotherhood of nations allegedly advanced by Alexander aside (for the discussion of it see Nawotka 2010, 344–347), the strikingly similar idea expressed in the words attributed to Darius in the *Alexander Romance* may mean that Ps.-Callisthenes merges here the events of the summer of 330 and the spring of 324 BC. From the spring of 324 BC he borrows the notion of Alexander marrying Stateira (in Arr. *An.* VII 4.4 mistakenly called Barsine), the elder daughter of Darius (D.S. XVII 107.6; Plu. *Alex.* 70.3; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F4.4; Just. XII 10.9; Zonar. IV 14; Phot., p. 224a, Bekker. Heckel 2006, 256–257), who in the *Alexander Romance* is somehow amalgamated with his first wife Rhoxane.

11 **Ῥωξάνην**: Rhoxane is here the daughter of Darius, with the same assertion to be found in Synkellos (*Ecloga chronographica*, p. 319), Malalas (VIII 3) and the *Suda* (s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος), possibly quoting John of Antioch (25, Mariev. On the attribution see: Sotiroidis 1989, 54 and Mariev 2008, 37, n. 1). Other sources agree that Rhoxane was the daughter of Oxyartes, a Baktrian noble: D.S. XVIII 3.3, XIX 48.2; Str. XI 11.4; Curt. X 3.11; Plu. *Mor.* 332e; Arr. *An.* IV 19.5, IV 20.4, VI 15.3, VII 4.5; Paus. I 6.3; *ME* 29, 118 and 121 (*LDM*); *It.Alex.* 101; Porph. *FGrH* 260 F3.1, 3.2, 4.1; Phot. *Bibl.*, p. 64b, 68a, 71b, Bekker; *Suda*, s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος; and also the *Alexander Romance* in the section reproducing the so-called last will of Alexander, albeit with Oxydrakes as the name of her father (III 33.21). The erroneous information of the pedigree of Rhoxane proved to be long living, with Marco Polo claiming that Alexander and the daughter of Darius were ancestors of the kings of Balascan (Badakhshan province in Afghanistan), possibly relating a local legend ultimately derived from the *Alexander Romance*.

## Chapter 21

1 **Ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος τὸ τούτου σῶμα βασιλικῶς θάψαι καὶ ἐγχωρίως ἐκέλευσε**: other sources attest Alexander's decision to afford a royal burial to Darius: the body of the Great King was transported to Persepolis and properly buried in a royal tomb (D.S. XVII 73.3; Plin. *Nat.* xxxvi 132; Plu. *Alex.* 43.7; Plu. *Mor.* 343b; Arr. *An.* III 22.1; Just. XI 15.15; *It.Alex.* 69). We do not know whether Darius was laid to rest in the tomb which he ordered to prepare for his own death but which was never finished, or in some other tomb (Bosworth 1980, 345; Briant 2003, 39–52). It is, however, highly unlikely that Alexander himself participated in the burial ceremony. Almost certainly Darius was buried in Persepolis or in Naqsh-e Rostam shortly after his death, while Alexander is attested to



FIGURE 10 Alexander's noble gestures towards the dead or dying Darius III were frequent subjects of miniature illustrations in medieval and early modern Iranian manuscript, as here: "Alexander mourns the death of Darius", folio from a 16th c. Safavid manuscript of Nizami.

WALTERS MUSEUM OF ART, MANUSCRIPT W.610

have travelled from Hekatompylos to Hyrakania and then to Baktria, not to return to Persis before 325 BC.

2 νόμον τε καὶ πρόσταγμα ἔθετο Πέρσαις: this document does not find support in other sources of the history of Alexander and is almost certainly a literary fiction. Some modern scholars argue that the Alexandrian author of the *Alexander Romance* drew his inspiration in this case from edicts issued by the Ptolemaic (or perhaps also the Seleukid) kings on inauguration of their rule (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 51–53; Stoneman 2012, 408–409). However, the stern tone of this edict and frequent references made to Persian laws (νόμος) and customs is reminiscent of the wording and ideology of the inscriptions of Darius I, whose laws (OP *dāta*) were holding his lands under his rule (Jamzadeh 2012, 140–142). This does not make Alexander’s decree authentic but it may indicate that an attempt was made by the author of the *Alexander Romance* to approximate Persian royal documents.

3 Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος ἐκ βασιλέως θεοῦ Ἀμμωνος: Alexander is the son of Ammon and Olympias also in his fictitious testament in III 33.2 (also in its Latin version: ME 115 (*LDM*)). Aulus Gellius (XIII 4) says that Varro quotes a letter from Alexander to his mother beginning: “Rex Alexander Iouis Hammonis filius Olympiadi matri salutem dicit.” It is not to say that this letter is authentic but only that in the first c. BC this was a way of perceiving Alexander’s claims to divine parentage as demonstrated in his letters, believed to be authentic (Pridik 1893, 88–89). The *Alexander Romance* draws upon this (late-?) Hellenistic epistolary tradition.

5 προσχρήσασθαι δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις νόμοις ὑμᾶς οὐ κωλύω ταῖς τε ἑορταῖς καὶ πανηγύρεσι καὶ ὅσα ἐμφύλια ἦν: Alexander proclaims here a cultural and religious tolerance for the Persians. This and other tolerant measures contained in this spurious edict correctly reflect Alexander’s attempt to win over the inhabitants of the Achaemenid heartland and, in the first place, of the aristocratic and priestly elite, much in the same way as he did in other parts of the Persian Empire. His measures proved ineffective and during his first stay in Persis he had to resort to a campaign of terror culminating in the burning of Persepolis palaces (see above commentary to II 17.11). The ideological response of the Persians was understandably hostile. Both Western and Iranian sources convey a very negative image of Alexander, blamed for destroying fire temples, killing magi and aristocrats, stealing/burning the *Avesta*, and robbing the Persians of their privileged place within the Empire. Alexander is the only human to earn the nickname *guzastag* or “accursed,” normally reserved for Ahriman,

God's adversary in the Zarathustrian religion. The positive image of Alexander as the just ruler and legitimate successor to Dara (Darius) later grew in Iran thanks to the influence of the *Alexander Romance*, to become immortalized in the *Šāhnāme* of Ferdowsi (Shahbazi 2003).

11 ἡμισχοίνου ... σχοίνου: *schoinos* was an Egyptian measure of length, variously converted by Greek authors into *stadia*, the Greek measure: between 30 and 120 stadia (Hdt. II 6; Str. XVII 1.24 and 1.4). The average equivalent calculated by modern scholarship is 10.5 km (Jansen-Winkeln 2008). The usage of *schoinos* as the measure of length, seemingly out of place in Persia, is yet another sign of the Egyptian origin of the *Alexander Romance*, for whose author the Egyptian measures were something obvious.

13 Κύρου γενεσίων: in principle Alexander was noted for admiring Cyrus the Great, which earned him the nickname φιλόκυρος in Strabo (XI 11.4. Kosmin 2013, 675). Replacing the official celebration of the birthday of Cyrus in favor of that of Alexander, however, seems to refer obliquely to the Hellenistic custom of celebrating the king's birthday. It is known, *inter alia*, from 2 *Maccabees*, in which it was a source of dismay for the Seleukids' Jewish subjects due to the (pagan) religious nature of it. The origin of this habit seems to be Egyptian, adopted by Antiochos IV on the Ptolemaic pattern (2 *Macc.* 6.7. Van Henten 2007, 276–277). Nothing of this kind is attested for Alexander and the *Alexander Romance* seems to attribute to him what was typical of Egypt.

Μοσχύλῳ τῷ σατράπῃ: no satrap or any other dignitary or officer of the name Moschylos is attested in the age of Alexander. He appointed first Phrasaortes and then Peukestas as satraps of Persis. In Ausfeld's (1907, 77, 165–166) opinion the archetype (α) had here σατράπῃ μου Αἰσχύλῳ which was then transfigured to its present form. In this case Aischylos would have been a Rhodian officer appointed to a command in Egypt (Curt. IV 8.4; Arr. *An.* III 5.3), later to become a naval commander, as attested in 319 BC (D.S. XVIII 52.7. Heckel 2006, 6). Strangely enough, the name of this satrap is nowhere to be found in other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* which all have a much shorter version of Chapter 21. It looks, therefore, that it is equally likely that there was no satrap Moschylos/Aischylos in the archetype and that ms. A has substantial interpolations here.

16 ἄρματι πολεμιστηρίῳ ... ἵππῳ πολεμιστῇ: a very limited selection of sporting disciplines in which Alexander sets up prizes, only for races of war chariots and war horses. War chariot races (ἄρματι πολεμιστηρίῳ) are attested principally for Hellenistic Athens, e.g.: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 957, 2316, 2317; *SEG* 41.114.

17 *στολή Περσική*: the Persian costume as a prize in the horse races may reflect the high prestige of the Persian dress in Classical Greece and in the age of Alexander. Apart from adopting a substantial part of the Persian royal costume for himself, Alexander awarded his companions with gifts of the Persian dress (D.S. XVII 77.5–6; Curt. VI 6.7. Kosmin 2013, 675). On one occasion a soldier received Persian dress as a prize for winning single combat (Eratosthenes, *FGrH* 241 F29, ap. Plu. *Alex.* 31.5).

19 *Μοσχύλος δὲ ὁ κτίσας τὸ Ἀλεξανδρινὸν ἱερὸν φέρει στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ στολὴν πορφυρὰν, καὶ μάλιστα ταῖς ἐπισήμοις ἡμέραις*: a golden crown and purple cloth is surely the ceremonial dress of the (high) priest of Alexander in Alexandria in Egypt (Taylor 1927, 163–164), with some apparent confusion inserted into the alleged edict of Alexander issued to the inhabitants of Persis.

20 *κατὰ πάντα δὲ τρόπον ἐξοίκιστον ἦτω τὸ Μηδικὸν γένος*: the order to expell the Medes, presumably from their native land, comes as a surprise in the context of the otherwise tolerant tone of Alexander's edict. The letter of Aristotle to Alexander, probably genuine even if surviving only in Arabic rendition (Plezia and Bielawski 1970), contains some of Aristotle's advice to Alexander on the forced resettling of Persians to Europe.

24 *Βήσσοι καὶ Ἀριοβαρζάνης ... δεθῆναι αὐτοὺς καὶ παρὰ τὸν τάφον Δαρείου ἀνασταυρωθῆναι*: the story of the punishment of Bessos related here differs from that conveyed by mainstream sources. The trick that captured the Persian regicides attributed in the *Alexander Romance* to Alexander is a literary fiction. Some sources attribute deceit to Spithamenes in capturing Bessos (Curt. VII 5.21–22; *ME* 5–6) and perhaps this version inspired Ps.-Callisthenes to have Alexander trick the regicides into surrendering voluntarily. The historical Bessos was handed over to Alexander in Bactria by his allies, Spithamenes in the first place, who was hopeful to earn the conqueror's graces (D.S. XVII 83.7–9; Arr. *An.* III 29.6–30.3; Just. XII 5.10–11; *ME* 5–6; *It.Alex.* 78). Alexander in turn handed him over to Oxyathres, the brother of Darius, for punishment (D.S. XVII 83.9; Curt. VII 5.40; Just. XII 5.11). In the most likely version Bessos was tortured and crucified in Ekbatana (Curt. VII 10.10; Arr. *An.* IV 7.3–4. Bosworth 1980, 376; Heckel 1994, 70), suffering the death penalty in a way well-attested in the Persian Empire (Jamzadeh 2012, 93–97). A different version of his death, known chiefly from Plutarch, is that his body was bound to two bent trees which, when released, tore it to pieces (Plu. *Alex.* 43.6; Zonar. IV 11; indirectly: D.S. XVII 83.9).

## Chapter 22

1 βασιλέα Ἀδουλίτην Δαρείου πατράδελφον: no person of this name is otherwise attested. In all probability Adulites is a corrupt form of Abulites (Ausfeld 1907, 79, n. 1). Abulites, the satrap of Susiana, is mentioned in II 14.11, also as Adulites (see comm. ad loc.).

2 Ἀλέξανδρος Στατεῖρα καὶ Ῥοδογούνη χαίρειν: this letter is not only spurious but also impossible. Two noble Persian women of the name Stateira are attested in the age of Alexander: the wife of Darius and his daughter whom Alexander married in 324 BC. But in the *Alexander Romance* (also in this chapter) Rhoxane is the daughter of Darius and wife of Alexander (see commentary to II 20.10), hence Stateira named in this chapter can only be wife of Darius taken prisoner by Alexander at Issos in the autumn of 333 BC. She died, however, prior to the Battle of Gaugamela (see commentary to II 10.6) which of course makes this letter impossible. The *Alexander Romance* is again mistaken in giving the name Rhodogune to the mother of Darius (see commentary to II 12.3).

14 Κάρανον: the only Karanos attested in the age of Alexander was a soldier of the Companion Cavalry and a Macedonian officer (Heckel 2006, 78, s.v. Caranus [2]).

## Chapters 23–44

In some early and later versions of the *Alexander Romance* the narrative continues past the end of Chapter 22, in two variant renditions: one in β and γ, the other in Arm. (209) and in the Byzantine poetic *Romance* (4138–4475). For Stoneman (2012, 414–415) this means that the archetype (α) contained Chapters 23–44. However, they are missing not just in ms. A but also in some other early versions: Val., and in the derivative versions of \*δ: Syr. and Leo. There are clearly two lines of transmission from α: the one surviving in earlier versions (ms. A, Val., \*δ line) and the other attested in later versions derived from the archetype (Arm., β). This may testify to an early emendation to the archetype. Therefore this commentary skips Chapters 23–44, as probably not authentic.



# Book Three

The first part of Book III (1–6 and 17) deals with Alexander’s expedition to India, skipping altogether the conquest of eastern Iran. Both ancient sources and modern scholarly literature use the name India in the historical meaning of this word, not in reference to the modern nation of India. The expedition of Alexander was limited to the north-west of historical India, mostly to what is now Pakistan, with an inroad of no more than 12 km into what is now India. Because of its geographical position on the edge of the world known to the Greeks, for many an ancient author India, alongside Africa to the south of Egypt, was perceived to be a land of fabulous wonders, while real geographical knowledge was scarce (Romm 1992, 82; Szalc 2014, 390). The same truth applies to the *Alexander Romance*, where, as this commentary will show, Indian episodes are scattered, with little relation to the geography and chronological progress of the historical Alexander’s expedition. India introduces the fabulous into the plot of the *Alexander Romance*, and the recensions later than  $\alpha$ -derived ms. A greatly increased the number of fabulous episodes, later to become a core element of Alexander legends both in the East and the West. It begins with  $\beta$  which borrowed freely from the Indian mythology including the episode of the search for the water of life (Szalc 2012). Having acknowledged this development, I will not comment upon  $\beta$  here, as it goes beyond the framework of the original text of the *Alexander Romance*, best represented by ms. A.

## Chapter 1

1 Πολλὴν ἔρημον ὁδεύσας: the idea of marching through the desert over a long distance reflects the contemporary Greek notion of Alexander’s expedition moving beyond all known borders. Thus referring to the events of 331 BC, years before the expedition to the (far) East, Aeschines (3.165) said: ὁ δ’ Ἀλέξανδρος ἔξω τῆς ἄρκτου καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὀλίγου δεῖν πάσης μεθιστήκει, or “Meanwhile Alexander had withdrawn to the uttermost regions of the north, almost beyond the borders of the inhabited world” (tr. C.D. Adams).

4 δώδεκα γὰρ ἔτη διήνουν [τὸ] τοῖς πολέμοις: read literally the twelve years of war (under Alexander) would give a date in 323/322 BC, i.e. some two years after the return from India, while in the *Alexander Romance* the grumbling of Macedonian soldiers is placed in the context of the beginning of the expedition to India, since Alexander’s other adventures in India, most notably the

battle with Poros, are related in subsequent chapters of Book III. The number of years stated here, and the whole sentence containing it, is missing in other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* (β, Val., Arm., and Syr. and Leo, derived from \*δ). It is very likely, therefore, that it has crept into the text in transmission from the archetype (α) to ms. A. At any rate no chronological precision can be expected of Ps.-Callisthenes and therefore the “twelve years” in the ms. A text should be understood simply as a “long time.” The same erroneous number is given in the anonymous fourth c. *Itinerarium Alexandri* (113), possibly influenced by the same branch of the Ps.-Callisthenes tradition as represented by ms. A. In principle the account of the soldiers’ discontent and the words they use best fit the events on the Hyphasis (the River Beas in Pakistan) in September 326 BC (D.S. XVII 93–95; Curt. IX 2.10–13, 19; Plu. *Alex.* 62; Arr. *An.* v 25–29; Just. XII 8.10–17; *ME* 68–69; *It.Alex.* 93), usually referred to as a mutiny (about these events see: Roisman 2012, 32–40) but perhaps better understood as an expression of the grievances of soldiers without a complete loss of discipline (Brice 2015). The stand-off on the Hyphasis was staged by soldiers indeed weary of eight years of war, as Diodorus says (XVII 94.1). Prior to the mutiny, Alexander’s army fought a difficult campaign in the Punjab, having to cope with incessant monsoon rain, reportedly lasting for seventy days and resulting in damage to weapons, clothing and tents used by soldiers (D.S. XVII 94.3). This may be reflected in the following reference to damaged weapons and clothing: ὅπλα ἐπεδείκνυσον τεθραυσμένα καὶ δεδαπανημένα ἐσθῆτάς τε τριβείσας ἡμφιεσμένους or “they showed their broken, useless weapons and the ragged garments they were wearing” (III 1.4, tr. E. Haight).

5 Ἀλέξανδρος ... στήσας (τὸ) Περσικὸν στράτευμα χωρὶς: this reference to placing the Persian troops aside correctly reflects the growing number of Iranians among Alexander’s troops during wars in eastern Iran and in India. In 326 BC (the purported year of the events related in III 1) more than half of Alexander’s army was non-European, although its main fighting force were still Macedonians (Olbrycht 2004, 77–204). Also in Arrian’s account (*An.* v 25.3) Alexander addresses Macedonians and allies, presumably Greeks.

6–8 Alexander’s speech to his mutinous soldiers is recorded also in Curtius (IX 2.12–34) and Arrian (*An.* v 25.3–26.8).

8 Οὕτως αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἰκέτευσον αὐτὸν παῦσαι τῆς ὀργῆς: the *Alexander Romance* either invents a different ending to the story of his army’s mutiny than that conveyed in other sources or (less likely) adheres to a tradition otherwise unattested, in which the soldiers plead with Alexander upon listening to his

speech. Other sources record the silence which met Alexander's speech (Curt. IX 3.1; Arr. *An.* V 27.1) followed by a respectful but firm reply from a Macedonian senior officer, Koinos, who summarized the grievances of the Macedonians, pleading with Alexander to end the expedition and to lead his troops home (Curt. IX 3.5–15; Arr. *An.* V 27.2–9). Soldiers shouted in support of this speech (Curt. IX 3.16; Arr. *An.* V 28.1), and pleaded with Alexander to break the expedition (Plu. *Alex.* 62.6; Just. XII 8.10–15); on the third day of the stand-off he finally relented and changed his marching orders (Curt. IX 3.19; Arr. *An.* V 28.3. On the mutiny see now: Anson 2015).

ἐπέτρεψε δὲ τοῖς γεγηρακόσιν ἀπιέναι ἀποπεμπόμενος αὐτούς: nothing of this kind is otherwise recorded to have happened on the occasion of the mutiny on the Hyphasis. Much later, in the summer of 324 BC, Alexander, while in Opis in Babylonia, announced the discharge of soldiers no longer capable of service on account of age or incapacity, and this announcement sparked another mutiny: D.S. XVII 109.2–3; Curt. X 2.8, X 2.12–30; Plu. *Alex.* 71.2–9; Arr. *An.* VII 8–11 (discharging veterans: VII 8.1); Just. XII 11.4–12.10. The *Alexander Romance* seems to amalgamate the two episodes of mutiny: on the Hyphasis in 326 BC and in Opis in 324 BC, and to place them inaccurately at the beginning of the expedition to India, i.e. to 327 BC.

ἐπέστειλε δὲ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν: Alexander released his Greek allies, including Thessalians in 330 BC, most probably upon the death of Darius III which symbolically marked the end of the Panhellenic war of revenge: D.S. XVII 74.3–5; Curt. VI 2.17; Plu. *Alex.* 42.5; Arr. *An.* III 19.5–6. The phrase quoted here echoes this event, as the *Alexander Romance* conflates four episodes: the mutinies on the Hyphasis and in Opis, the release of Macedonian veterans and of Greek allies.

## Chapter 2

1 γραμματηφόροι Πώρου: letter-carriers dispatched by Poros arrive, marking the beginning of the Indian adventures of Alexander. For the letter-carriers Ps.-Callisthenes uses here the word *grammatophoros*, a regular Hellenistic name for this kind of service (Ceccarelli 2013, 12–13). Out of two Indian dynasts, cousins, of the name Poros attested in the age of Alexander (Heckel 2006, 231–232, s.v. Porus [1, 2]), the king of Paurava in the Punjab (now in Pakistan), between the Akesines (Chenab) and the Hydraotes (Ravi) is referred to here. He fought Alexander in the Battle of the Hydaspes in April 326 BC, some ten months into the Indian expedition of Alexander, and not in its beginning, as in the *Alexander Romance*.

2–5 A distant version of the letter from Poros to Alexander survives in *P.Hamb.* 129 of the second c. BC (date: Messeri 2010, 32). This papyrus contains two other letters corresponding to those in the *Alexander Romance*: in lines 1–30 one from Darius to his satraps (I 39.3–5); in lines 31–56 Darius' letter to Alexander (II 17.2–4). *P.Hamb.* 129 seems to show that some letters known to us from the *Alexander Romance* circulated, possibly considered as authentic documents, as early as the high Hellenistic age (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 166).

2 Βασιλεὺς Πῶρος ... Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ... προστάττω: the letter from Poros to Alexander does not begin with the usual greetings of χαίρειν (on greeting in official Greek letters see Ceccarelli 2013, 94–98) but with the order προστάττω or in Latin versions (Val., Leo) *mando*. Thus Poros fits the pattern of an insolent barbarian established in earlier letters from Darius, who also begins by ordering Alexander to withdraw from his land (I 36.2: Δαρεῖος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐμῷ θεράποντι τάδε προστάσσω καὶ κελεύω). The tradition of an arrogant letter from Poros to Alexander survives also in the *Metz Epitome*, with no trace however of borrowing from the *Alexander Romance*: “Rex Indorum Porus Alexander dicit ...” (*ME* 56).

3 Διόνυσον ἀπήλασαν τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει οἱ Ἴνδοι: Dionysos is the figure of Greek mythology perhaps most closely associated with India, and the Indian Triumph of Dionysos was a scene frequently represented in Roman Dionysos art of the high and later Empire, often in sarcophagi (Buccino 2013). Although the wanderings of Dionysos through Asia were known already to Euripides (*Ba.* 13–20, but India is not named here), his Indian adventures are not attested in Greek literature prior to the expedition of Alexander. During this expedition the first and most pronounced Dionysiac episode is attested in the autumn of 327 BC in a city called, in Western sources, Nysa (Clitarch. *FGrH* 137 F17; Megasth. *FGrH* 715 F20 (9); Thphr. *HP* IV 4.1; Curt. VIII 10.7–18; Eratosthenes ap. Str. XV 1.7–9; Plu. *Alex.* 58.6–9; Plu. *Mor.* 332a–b; Arr. *An.* V 1.1–3.4, VI 2.3; *ME* 36–38; Just. XII 7.6–8; Orosius III 19.1), by the same name as that of the country in which Dionysos was reared under the protection of the Nymphs. Both the similarity of name and the cultural and natural features of the land by Mount Meros, or Meru in Sanskrit (probably Koh-i-Mor on the river Panjkora in Punjab), such as ivy growing naturally or the wine-making and drinking of the local population, facilitated Bacchic revelries of the Macedonian soldiers and may have contributed to associating the local god Indra with Dionysos, ultimately to give origin to the myth of the Indian adventures of this god (Goukowsky 1981, 21–33; Bosworth 1996; Buccino 2013, 51–61). In myth, Dionysos conquered India, imposed his peace and introduced wine-making and drinking there (most

amply described in Nonn. *D.* XIII–XV). Here, Poros, a boastful barbarian, falsely claims that Dionysos was repelled by the Indians.

8–11 Alexander's reply to Poros demonstrates his superiority in rhetoric, as Alexander accepts the premises of Poros' letter against his opponent, agreeing that India is better than Greece and hence even more worthy of conquest.

10 γράφεις ... τῶν θεῶν μείζονά σε δύνασθαι: Alexander rejects and derides Poros' claims to divinity. Earlier in the text (I 38) and in a more developed form he rejected similar claims of Darius. When read against the background of the official political culture of the high Empire, these words of Alexander may be understood as the voice in the debate on the divinity of emperor. Roman emperors, beginning with Augustus, were revered by cities, provincial assemblies representing urban elites, associations and private individuals and thousands of inscriptions and coins attesting to that have survived to this day. Serving as a municipal or provincial priest of the Imperial cult was a dignity sought by many ambitious notables throughout the Roman Empire and for some a way to advance to the ranks of the Imperial aristocracy (see e.g. Price 1984; Fishwick 1987–2004; Ando 2000; Kantirea 2007; Horster 2013), although papyri seem to indicate that the Imperial cult was in some decline in Egypt in the third c. AD (De Jong 2011). Some Greek intellectuals expressed critical opinions about the divine worship of man, including emperor, most notably Dio Cassius in the speech attributed to Maecenas (LII 35.3–4) or, in much harsher words, an anonymous author of *P.Oxy.* 13 1612 (Harker 2008, 169–170). The consistent criticism of claims to divinity by the barbarian kings Darius and Poros voiced by Alexander, the champion of Hellenism, may mean that Ps.-Callisthenes agreed with these authors.

### Chapter 3

1 Μακεδόνες καὶ Πέρσαι ... ἐφοβήθησαν ... τοὺς θήρας: this and the next chapter contain a largely fictitious description of the battle between the troops of Alexander and Poros. Their only significant encounter was on the Hydaspes (Jhelum in Pakistan) in the late spring of 326 BC. The battle, preceded by Alexander's successful stratagem in crossing the Hydaspes, lasted one day and was a regular clash of Macedonian and Iranian cavalry and infantry with an Indian army of cavalry, infantry, chariots and elephants (D.S. XVII 87.4–89.3; Curt. VIII 13.17–14.46; Fron. *Str.* I 4.9; Plu. *Alex.* 60.1–15; Arr. *An.* V 11–19.3; Polyæn. IV 3.9, 3.22; Just. XII 8.1–7; *ME* 58–62). The *Alexander Romance* is

vaguely correct, however, in making reference to the terror caused by animals fighting for Poros: Alexander's losses on the Hydaspes more likely amounted to over 980 soldiers as recorded by Diodorus (XVII 89.3), or to the 1200 in the *Metz Epitome* (61) than to the 310 in Arrian's account (An. v 18.3. See Bosworth 1995, 304 for the greater veracity of Diodorus and the *Metz Epitome* than Arrian's), and a large proportion of the casualties must have been inflicted by Poros' elephants, much feared by Alexander and Macedonians (Curt. VIII.14.12; Plu. *Alex.* 60.10: φοβεθείς δὲ τὰ θηρία).

2 χαλκέους ἀνδριάντας: Alexander's stratagem of employing heated bronze statues as a weapon against Poros' animals is utterly fictitious, certainly invented as an illustration of Alexander's intelligence/cunning (in this paragraph, as in many other places in the *Alexander Romance*, he is referred to by his principal epithet φρενήρης, or "sound of mind").

3 Πέρσαι μᾶλλον καταδυναστεύουσι τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς καὶ τούτους ἀπεδίωκον τοξοβολίαις καὶ ἵππομαχίαις: by that time Iranians made up a substantial part of Alexander's army. It seems they were recruited mostly in eastern Iran, largely from amongst the Bactrians, Sogdians, Skythians/Massagetai and Dahae (Olbrycht 2004, 158–164), even if the *Alexander Romance* uses the conventional name "Persai" for them. Other sources attest the prominent role of Skythians and Dahae in defeating Poros' chariots (Curt. VIII 14.5) and of mounted archers, presumably Iranian, in fighting Indian cavalry (Arr. *An.* v 12.2, 14.4, 16.4, 18.3; *ME* 60. Bosworth 1995, 279, 298–299). The *Alexander Romance* is no less precise than any other source in acknowledging the role played by the Iranian mounted archers and other cavalry in the Battle of Hydaspes.

4 πίπτει δὲ ὁ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἵππος ὁ Βουκέφαλος διαληφθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Πύρρου: ancient sources agree that Boukephalos, the famous horse of Alexander, died in the battle of Hydaspes, either because of old age and exhaustion (Onesikritos *FGrH* 134 F20, ap. Plu. *Alex.* 61.2; and Arr. *An.* v 19.4–5, probably following Onesikritos, Bosworth 1995, 313), or wounds suffered in the battle (Chares *FGrH* 125 F18, ap. Gel. v 2.1–5; Plu. *Alex.* 61.1, "as most writers say"; *ME* 62), with some authors listing no specific cause of death (Str. xv 1.29; D.S. XVII 95.5; Curt. ix 3.23). The *Alexander Romance* embellishes the well-known story by adding a dramatic detail about Poros capturing Boukephalos, and Alexander rescuing it from captivity.

## Chapter 4

1 Κε' οὖν ἡμέρας ἔμειναν πολεμοῦντες: twenty-five days of battle is a rhetorical amplification, as in the light of mainstream sources (*supra*) the Battle of the Hydaspes lasted one day. Different numbers of days are listed for the battle in various early versions: seven (Arm.), twenty (β, Val., Leo, Syr.), and twenty-five (A). Since twenty is the number best supported by the various lines of transmission derived from the archetype (β, Val., and perhaps \*δ, unless twenty in the surviving \*δ-line versions result from a contamination from β), this was most likely the reading of α, wrongly transmitted in ms. A and Arm. In all versions but ms. A, the information about the length of the battle belongs to the previous chapter (either 3 β, Val., Leo, Syr in or section 217 in Arm.).

1–2 Alexander's address to Poros in the heat of the battle is fictitious, although Alexander may have encountered Poros in a single combat. The *Alexander Romance* and Orosius (III 19.3) are the only sources to say this expressly, and Orosius is certainly independent of Ps.-Callisthenes, as he concurs with other sources and not with the *Alexander Romance* on a number of details, among them that Poros was taken prisoner, not killed by Alexander. There must have been a (spurious) tradition of Alexander killing Poros with a single blow, evidenced indirectly by Lucian (*Hist. Conscr.* 12) deriding the idea of Alexander killing an elephant with a single throw of his spear, and by Nonnos, in Book XL of the *Dionysiaca*, who shows Dionysos killing King Deriades with a single jab of his thyrsus and their duel is modelled on that of Alexander and Poros (Djurslev 2016). A commemorative silver dekadrachm (the so-called "Poros Medallion") carries a scene of a Macedonian cavalryman attacking an Indian riding an elephant with a sarissa. In one interpretation, this is the scene of the single combat of Alexander and Poros (Miller 1994; Holt 2003). For all the fiction in the single combat scene in the *Alexander Romance*, bent on showing more of the cunning than the heroic bravery of Alexander (much in line with his usual epithet φρενήρης), there is nothing inherently unbelievable in the tradition of this encounter: in his previous major battles Alexander attempted to capture or kill the enemy leader, no matter how dangerous it was for him. Later in India he showed the same inspired and reckless leadership in the city of Mallians (below in this chapter), so it would be no surprise to learn that he also attacked the enemy general on the Hydaspes, despite his seemingly stronger position on the top of an elephant.

3 ἦν γὰρ ὁ Πῶρος πηχῶν ε', ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος πηχῶν γ': ancient authors agree that Poros was very tall indeed, giving him over four (Plu. *Alex.* 60.12) or five cubits

(D.S. XVII 88.4; Curt. VIII 14.13; Arr. *An.* V 19.1; *ME* 54; Eustathius, *Com. in Dion. Periegetem* 1107). The cubit, an Egyptian measure of length used also in Greece, corresponded to 1.5 feet, i.e. to 0.44–0.525 m. The five cubits listed here means that Poros was 2.2 to 2.65 m tall, with even the lower figure being exceedingly tall, much above ancient and even modern averages. Ancient authors agree that Alexander was short (see commentary to II 15.1), perhaps as short as three longer cubits (1.575 m), but there is no reason to believe in three shorter cubits, which would make Alexander a midget of just 1.32 m.

7 οὐκ ἀνηλόγει τὸ στράτευμα αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς: other ancient authors also claim that Poros had numerical superiority over Alexander in the Battle of the Hydaspes (D.S. XVII 87.2; Curt. VIII 13.6; Arr. *An.* V 15.4; *ME* 54). But this could not be true: he ruled over a medium-sized kingdom and the only component of his army stronger than in Alexander's corps which crossed the river, were his elephants, not counting antiquated chariots easily disposed of by Alexander's soldiers (Bosworth 1996a, 8–11).

κελεύσας δὲ θάπτεσθαι τὸν Πῶρον βασιλικῶς: Alexander's alleged order to honor Poros with a royal burial is an exemplum of his magnanimity and it follows on the earlier claim in this chapter that Poros was killed by his Macedonian opponent on the battlefield. On the agreement of all other sources, Poros was not killed in this encounter but taken prisoner and allowed to keep his kingdom, which grew in time through Alexander's largess: D.S. XVII 88.6–7; Curt. VIII 14.35–39; Plu. *Alex.* 60.14; Arr. *An.* V 19.1–3; Just. XII 8.5; *ME* 61; *It.Alex.* 111; Malalas VIII 3; Georgios Kedrenos I, p. 266. Some authors convey an anecdote in which Alexander asked Poros how he wished to be treated and got the answer: βασιλικῶς (Plu. *Alex.* 60.14–15; Plu. *Mor.* 181e, 332e, 458b; Arr. *An.* V 19.2; *ME* 60–61; Zonar. IV 13; Them. VII 88d). Perhaps Ps.-Callisthenes transforms here this well-known account to fit the storyline of Alexander killing Poros in a single combat on the one hand, and to retain Poros' dignified laconic βασιλικῶς on the other, albeit in reference to his fictitious burial only.

8 ἐχειρώσατο δὲ καὶ τοὺς ὑπὸ Παυσανίαν Ἰνδοὺς: no Indian king of a name even vaguely resembling Pausanias is attested in the age of Alexander.

Ἀόρνην: in classical sources (Megasth. *FGrH* 715 F20 (10), ap. Arr. *Ind.* 5.10; Str. XV 1.8; D.S. XVII 85; Curt. VIII 11; Plu. *Mor.* 181c, 327c; Arr. *An.* IV 28.1–30.4; Luc. *DMort.* 12.6, *Herm.* 4, *Rh.Pr.* 7; Philostr. VA 2.10; *It.Alex.* 102; Oros. III 19.2; Just. XII 7.12; *ME* 46–47; *It.Alex.* 107–108; *Suda*, s.v. Ἀορνος; Georgios Kedrenos I, p. 266) Aornos is the name of a mountain on top of which was a stronghold captured by Alexander during the campaign of the Swat River (in the Punjab, to the west of the Indus) in the winter of 327/326 BC. Modern scholar-



ship mostly follows Sir Aurel Stein (1929, 46–48, 53–61, 113–154; Bosworth 1995, 178–180) in identifying the Aornos of classical sources with Pir-sar, a mountain 2,670 m high, some 40 km to the east of Udegram in Pakistan. Its name, meaning in Greek “without birds [on account of its height]” (*LSJ*, s.v.; so: Aglaosthenes/Agathosthenes, *BNJ* 499 F8; Luc. *Rh.Pr.* 7; Philostr. *VA* 2.10; [Zonar.] s.v. Ἄορνος), is usually rejected as a pseudo-etymology and the Greek name Aornos is thus understood as a corruption of the Sanskrit *avarana* or “stronghold” (Stein 1929, 536–537; Bosworth 1995, 180). Recently, however, Rollinger has noticed that the “birdless mountain” or a mountain so high that even birds could not fly above it, was, in his words, “a travelling concept,” known to the *Avesta* and to Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, describing the most difficult, inhospitable terrain, the crossing and conquering of which was perceived as a heroic deed. The mountain stormed by Alexander’s troops in the Swat is one of the places to which this “travelling concept” may apply, on account, *inter alia*, of its position at the edge of the known world. Thus the name Aornos may well be a Greek rendition of the near-universal Eastern idea of a birdless mountain (Rollinger 2014).

9 Ἀόρνην ταύτην καὶ ὁ Διόνυσος στρατευσάμενος ἡδυνάτησεν ἐλεῖν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ἡρακλῆς: rivalry with his (mythological) ancestor Herakles and his kinsman Dionysos was a prominent theme throughout Alexander’s exploits in India, in the case of Aornos attested also in: Megasth. *FGrH* 715 F20 (10), ap. Arr. *Ind.* 5.10; Str. *XV* 1.8; Arr. *An.* V 16.5; Luc. *DMort.* 12.6; Oros. *III* 19.2 (see Rollinger 2014, 599–600). It is possible that at Alexander’s court a local story, be it one of Indra fighting Vṛitra, often represented as a rock, or that of Krishna or Śiva, was translated into Greek as a story of Herakles frustrated in his attack on Mount Aornos (Dahlquist 1962, 120–130; Karttunen 1989, 211–212; Bosworth 1995, 180–181; Nawotka 2010, 302).

10 πασσάλους σιδηρούς: Alexander’s order to produce iron pegs to be used by soldiers climbing Mount Aornos is not otherwise attested. Since this was a likely device used in climbing, it is possible that the *Alexander Romance* conveys, based on an undisclosed source, a genuine detail of the battle. It is, however, also possible that it contaminates the stories of Aornos with accounts of Alexander’s seizing of the Rock of Ariamazes and the Sogdian Rock, in which his soldiers made use of iron pegs (Curt. *VII* 11.13; Arr. *An.* *IV* 19.1. Jouanno 2002, 150).

11 ἀκούων ... ἔχοντα [μὲν] πολὺ πλῆθος στρατοῦ καὶ ἐλεφάντων: this short passage of Alexander learning of a kingdom to the east of the Hydaspes, well-endowed

in soldiers and elephants, and his wish to wage war on it, only to be frustrated on account of the Macedonians being less brave than their king, surely echoes the episode of the mutiny on the Hyphasis, covered in a somewhat contorted way in III 1. The king who commanded many troops and elephants was a Nanda ruler of the Empire of Magadha, whose army allegedly consisted of 200,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000–8,000 elephants. His kingdom on the Yamuna, a tributary of the Ganges, could be reached marching for twelve days due east from the Hyphasis (D.S. XVII 93.2; Curt. IX 2.2–8; Plin. *Nat.* VI 68; Plu. *Alex.* 62.2–5; Just. XII 8.10; *ME* 68–69; Solinus 52.8. See Karttunen 1997, 35–37). Even if these figures are inflated, they testify to generally good intelligence on the Nandas being supplied to Alexander (Bosworth 1996, 186–200). The reluctance of the Macedonian soldiers to fight the Nandas led to the mutiny on the Hyphasis, related earlier in III 1. In that passage Alexander wins over his troops, and here the real outcome is alluded to in a brief sentence in III 4.12: ἦν δὲ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τολμηρότερος καὶ παραβολώτερος (“Alexander was more daring and reckless (than his troops)”). It seems that Ps.-Callisthenes did not want to hide the truth, while at the same time trying not to say expressly that Alexander had to give way to his troops and to abandon his plans to conquer all of India down to the outer ocean.

12 πόλις τῆς Ἰνδικῆς: from here on, this chapter relates more accurately than in most other cases the celebrated story of Alexander taking the city of the Mallians or *Malava*, a people inhabiting the land between the Hydraotes and the Akeshines (Ravi and Chenab in the Punjab) in the winter of 326/325 BC. The final stage of the battle, the storming of the citadel of the city of the Mallians, is covered profusely in all our major sources: D.S. XVII 98.2–99.4; Curt. IX 4.26–5.29; Plu. *Alex.*, 63.2–12; Plu. *Mor.* 343e–345b; App. *BC* II 152; Arr. *An.* VI 9–11; *ME* 75–78; Just., 12.9.4–13; Oros. III 19.7–10.

13 κλίμακες, ἐκλάσθησαν: in other sources the ladder which Alexander used to climb the walls broke once he mounted the wall and the Macedonian soldiers hurried to follow their king: D.S. XVII 98.5–6; Curt. IX 4.30–33; Plu. *Alex.* 63.3; Arr. *An.* VI 9.3–4. The next step Alexander took was to jump inside the citadel in the midst of enemy.

14 Ἀλέξανδρος ... εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν μετὰ δύο φίλων Πευκέστου καὶ Πτολεμαίου: there is general agreement in our sources that Peukestas accompanied Alexander (so Arr. *An.* VI 11.7), but ancient authors differ in their opinion of who else was with the king in the citadel: “several others” (D.S. XVII 99.4), Timaios, Leonnatos, Aristonos (Curt. IX 5.14–15), Limnaios (Plu. *Alex.* 63.7), Limnaios,

Leonnatos, Ptolemy (Curt. IX 5.21; Plu. *Mor.* 327b, 344d), Leonnatos and Abreas (Arr. *An.* VI 9.3, 11.7), Leonnatos (*ME* 77). Since Peukestas and Leonnatos are named as the first (i.e. most important) recipients of gold crowns for bravery in India (Arr. *An.* VII 7.4), they must have distinguished themselves in the city of the Mallians (Hamilton 1999, 177). Arrian expressly rejects the claim that Ptolemy was with Alexander in the citadel and says that this claim was not substantiated by Ptolemy's writings (Arr. *An.* VI 11.8). This claim originally comes from Timagenes and Kleitarchos (Curt. IX 5.21), who, in Hazzard's (2000, 8, 16–17) view, introduced it on the prompting of Ptolemy II in order to provide a justification for the epiclesis Soter or Saviour (scil. of Alexander in the city of the Mallians) invented for Ptolemy I by his son in the period of 263–259 BC (cf. commentary to I 17.2). Arrian attests the story of Ptolemy gaining his epiclesis Soter precisely from this event (VI 11.8: Πτολεμαῖον γὰρ τὸν Λάγου ἔστιν οἱ ἀνέγραψαν ξυναναβῆναι τε Ἀλεξάνδρῳ κατὰ τὴν κλίμακα ὁμοῦ Πευκέστα καὶ ὑπερασπίσαι κειμένου, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε Σωτήρα ἐπικληθῆναι τὸν Πτολεμαῖον), and even if he does not name Kleitarchos as his source, he probably had it in mind. From amongst such divergent traditions, the Alexandrian author of the *Alexander Romance* selects as a companion for Alexander in this daring exploit Ptolemy, the later king of Egypt, giving him here and in some later places, a position of prominence which paved the way for his future role in Egypt.

## **Chapters 5 and 6**

**Chapters 5 and 6** relate to one of the most celebrated episodes of Alexander's expedition to India: the encounter with Indian sages, variously named in our sources as Brahmans, naked philosophers, gymnosophists. There are two basic variants of the story: the first that on the orders of Alexander Onesikritos paid a visit to a group of Indian sages, and the second that Alexander met them and had a conversation with them directly, albeit through interpreters, perhaps as many as three (Str. XV 1.64; Arr. *An.* VII 1.5. Gehman 1914). Apart from the *Alexander Romance* the second variant of the story is known from: *PBer.* 13044; Plu. *Alex.* 64; Clem.Al. *Strom.* VI 4.38; *ME* 79–84; *Anecdota Graeca* I 145–146. Half-naked ascetics were in antiquity and still are a common feature of the social landscape of India. The Macedonians surely encountered them in many places, and the sheer fact of Alexander's meeting with Indian sages should not be put in doubt on the testimony of sources quoted above in this lemma. On the contents of their conversation with Alexander see comments to III 6.

## Chapter 5

1 ὁδοιπορίαν πρὸς Ὀξυδράκας ἐποιεῖτο: Oxydrakai, the variously spelled name of a warlike tribe in the Punjab, inhabiting an area to the south of the Hydraotes, probably *Kśudrakas* in Sanskrit. Here, however, the Oxydrakai are equated with naked philosophers or Brahmins (below). Alexander reached the territory of the Oxydrakai in the second half of his expedition to India, while marching from the Hyphasis to the sea, i.e. in the winter of 326/325 BC. He detailed a corps under his best general Krateros to fight them, and he simultaneously launched an attack on the city of Mallians (above III 4.12–14). Thus the *Alexander Romance* places Alexander's conversation with the naked philosophers late in the expedition. It is possible, however, that this conversation took place much earlier, in the spring of 326 BC in Taxila (Hamilton 1999, 179). Companions of Alexander recorded a colony of fifteen ascetics some twenty stadia from Taxila, and Alexander's meeting in Taxila with two Indian sages (Aristobul. *FGrH* 139 F41, ap. Str. XV 1.61; Onesikritos *FGrH* 134 F17, ap. Str. XV 1.63; also Plu. *Alex.* 65.1. Hamilton 1999, 179–180). Clearly two major episodes are contaminated here: the former of Alexander's meeting with the naked philosophers and the latter of the campaign in the land of the Oxydrakai, with a hint at the destruction of the city of the Brahmins. The same contamination can be spotted in the *Life of Apollonios of Tyana* by Flavius Philostratus, usually dated to about a generation before the *Alexander Romance*. This means that either Flavius Philostratus accessed the earlier, nascent version of the *Alexander Romance* or that both he and Ps.-Callisthenes relied on a source responsible for this contamination (Stoneman 1995a, 102).

2 The letter of the gymnosophists to Alexander does not even pretend to be an authentic document, espousing qualities typical of *ethopoieia* (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 172–173).

Βραχμᾶνες γυμνοσοφισταί: in India the Macedonians saw both ascetics (*śramaṇas*) belonging to various schools of Indian religion and Brahmins or priests and members of the highest *vrana* of Hinduism. Our sources do not allow us to identify the naked-philosophers of Alexander historians with a particular Vedic school. However, during the campaign against the Mallians and the Oxydrakai, Alexander attacked and destroyed a city of Brahmins (Arr. *An.* VI 7.4–6. Bosworth 1996, 94–97; Bosworth 1998). The *Alexander Romance* seems not to differentiate between Indian ascetics, Brahmin priests/sages and Brahmins (on Greek terminology used for Indian religious schools in general see: Karttunen 1997, 56–60).

## Chapter 6

This chapter contains the dialogue between Alexander and the Indian naked philosophers. In Plutarch's (*Alex.* 64.1) version of the story Alexander threatens the gymnosophists with death for giving an incorrect answer; the *Alexander Romance* describes an amicable conversation, fitting the image of Alexander, a philosopher-king. Our sources (above) contain six versions of the dialogue, with most questions, however, very similar in all versions (a useful comparison is in Szalc 2011, 8–14). The prevailing opinion in modern scholarship is that this dialogue was in fact written in the shape of a Cynic diatribe by Onesikritos, himself a follower of the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Synope who wanted to add some weight to the doctrine of his master by presenting it in the guise of Indian philosophy (Schwartz 1896, 85–95; Wilcken 1923, 173–180; Brown 1949, 47; Karttunen 1989, 91; Bosworth 1998, 173). But recently Szalc (2011) has shown convincingly that there is really nothing specifically Cynic in this dialogue and that the traditional associations with the Cynic diatribe are due exclusively to the fact that information about Alexander's meeting with Indian philosophers, albeit not about the celebrated debate, was transmitted by Onesikritos, known for his interest in Cynic philosophy. The riddle-dialogue is, on the other hand, well-attested in Indian literature, both predating Alexander and later. Although no direct borrowing from extant ancient Indian dialogues can be demonstrated in Alexander's dialogue with naked philosophers, some of the questions show an affinity to issues typical of Indian literature and philosophy (Dumézil 1976; Szalc 2014). The surviving dialogue of Alexander with the gymnosophists may, therefore, not only document the fact of such a meeting but also convey the gist of what was debated.

Chapters 7–16 of ms. A contain an essay *De gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus* attributed to Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis in the fourth-fifth c. (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 142; Stoneman 2008, 97–99). Obviously these chapters did not belong to the archetype ( $\alpha$ ) and Kroll rightfully skips them in his edition of the *Alexander Romance*.

## Chapter 17

The lengthy letter of Alexander to Aristototele is the most prominent example of what Merkelbach (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 40–41) calls the “Wunderbriefe” or “miracle letters,” and it is, as all other letters in the *Alexander Romance*, a literary fiction attributed to Alexander. Antiquity knew of collec-

tion(s) of letters between Alexander and Aristotle, and one survived in an Arabic translation of the early eighth c., transmitted perhaps via a Middle Persian intermediary (Maróth 2006; Gutas 2009, 65; Fowden 2012, 133–135). This letter survives in two different basic forms in various versions of the *Alexander Romance*. The longer is a Latin version, the shorter Greek (Gunderson 1980, 35–47; synoptic edition: Feldbusch 1975). The text in ms. A is corrupt, with a much better rendition of the archetype in Arm. and even in Val., both frequently used by Kroll for emendations (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 142–143, 193–198). The surviving later Greek versions, β and γ, transmit the letter in abridged form, shifting from the first person of ms. A (and surely of the archetype) to the third person. The \*δ version certainly conveyed the letter in the first person, as Syr. and Leo have the letter in the first person too, although Leo with omission of some passages. Since there are also two Latin versions of this letter, both independent of ms. A, Gunderson (1980, 34–35) remarks that the Greek original of the letter probably circulated prior to the date of composition of the *Alexander Romance* whose archetype (α) contained the abridged version of the original. This commentary accepts the Greek version of ms. A with Kroll's emendations.

4 εἰς τὴν Πρασιακὴν πόλιν: Prasiake is a Greek rendition of the Sanskrit name *Prācyā* (“inhabitants of the East”) referring to inhabitants of the kingdom of Magadha (Nanda Empire) on the Ganges and the Yamuna (Arora 2005, 43). The ancient authors refer to the Nanda Empire as: Prasiake (Megasthenes *BNJ* 715 F21b, ap. Ael. *NA* XVII 39; Ptol. *Geog.* VII 1.53), Prasi (*Curt.* IX 2.3; Plin. *Nat.* VI 68), Prasioi (Megasthenes *BNJ* 715 F21a, ap. Str. XV 1.37; Plu. *Alex.* 62.4; Ael. *NA* II 13.8, XVI 10.1). Alexander was planning to pass through the territory of Magadha on the way to the outer ocean, surely conquering the Nanda Empire, but was frustrated in his design by the mutiny on the Hyphasis (above III 1). The letter to Aristotle is introduced in the *Alexander Romance* in the context of winding up the expedition to India. The last point reached by Alexander in India was Pattala in the Indus river delta. Since Prasiake is here a coastal town, it may have been confused with Pattala by the original source from which all surviving versions of the letter drew.

5 ἰχθυοφάγους ἀνθρώπους: in the early stages of the march through Mekran, from Pattala to the West, Alexander's soldiers encountered on the coast of the Arabian Sea people whose ethnic name is not recorded in our sources and who are identified simply as *ichthyophagoi* (“fish eaters”): Str. XV 2.3; Arr. *Ind.* 29.8–16, 31.8, 32.2, 37.8.

3–7 This section with much corrupt text contains a story of a giant whale mistaken by the Macedonians for an island. There is a lacuna in the beginning of Section 6 (after διαβαίνειν) and the missing text must have conveyed information about soldiers who took the boat(s) to the putative island which turned out to be a whale, something like in Arm. (similar is in Syr.): “first with those twelve boats, in which 100 men embarked. The sailing was easy and they drew near to the island, for the evil barbarians had said it was an island, but it was a whale” (see Kroll app. ad loc. and Stoneman 1991, 182). The fabulous story of the giant whale may reflect the real encounter with a school of whales by the Macedonian fleet under Nearchos on their way from Pattala to Persis: Nearchos *FGrH* 133 F1, ap. Str. XV 2.13; Curt. X 1.11–12; Arr. *Ind.* 31. This episode in turn could be a template for the story of the “Island of the Blessed” in Lucian’s *A True Story* (Aerts 1994, 36–37).

6 Φείδωνος τοῦ γησιωτάτου μου φίλου: no Pheidon is attested among the companions of Alexander, unless a Demetrios nicknamed Pheidon is meant (Chares *FGrH* 125 F14, ap. Plu. *Alex.* 54.6). He enjoyed the reputation of a flatterer (Plu. *Mor.* 65d. Bosworth 1995, 89–90; Heckel 2006, 109, s.v. Demetrius [3]). No obvious reason for calling him “the most genuine friend” of Alexander can be identified. The only deed of Demetrios/Pheidon worthy of account was his role in the proskynesis affair in which he called Alexander’s attention to Kallisthenes not performing proskynesis (Chares *FGrH* 125 F14, ap. Plu. *Alex.* 54.6; Arr. *An.* IV 12.5), which contributed to the downfall of the historian.

Ἡφαίστιωνος: on Hephaestion see commentary to I 18.5.

7 Κρατεροῦ: Krateros was the best general of Alexander’s army during the expedition to India, very popular with rank and file Macedonians for his military talents and for his respect for the Macedonian way of life which meant, too, some opposition to Alexander’s orientalizing policy (Plu. *Dem.* 13.2). Very early in the war in Asia Krateros was entrusted with independent command, beginning with the Siege of Tyre which he and Perdikkas conducted during the temporary absence of Alexander. In Baktria and India he was clearly the second in command, leading major operations, sometimes with more troops than in Alexander’s corps. In the summer and autumn of 325 BC Krateros successfully led a major column of troops, elephants and a baggage train from the Punjab through the Multan Pass to what is now Quetta (Balochistan, Pakistan) and from there through the valley of the Helmand River to Karmania where he joined with Alexander’s forces. In contrast to the forces led from India by Alexander, the column of Krateros is not recorded to have suffered losses of any size (Heckel 1992, 107–133). Because of this command Krateros could not

be present at the sea coast which, of course, makes the episode represented here even more fictitious.

10 νικήσαντες γὰρ Δαρείον τὸν τῶν Περσῶν: at this point the letter comes back to the events preceding those described earlier, perhaps to 330 BC, the year in which Darius III died, having suffered a defeat at Gaugamela by Alexander in the previous year.

ἑκαστος κρατὴρ † ἓνα ἥμισυ: in this corrupt place a capacity of the krater must have been stated. Very likely it was something like “each urn held ninety servings” (Arm. 224) or “some of them held ninety measures” (Syr. III 7). And servings/ measures could be originally rendered as ἡμίνας (Ausfeld 1907, 90), which is the Greek rendition of the Roman measure of capacity *hemina* (0.274 liter).

11 ἀπὸ (πυλῶν) Κασπιακῶν ὠδεύσαμεν: the word πυλῶν is missing in ms. A and restored by Kroll after Val., Arm., Syr. With the Caspian Gates (see commentary to II 19.3) the letter comes back to the events in India.

12 ἔρπετῶν: we learn from Nearchos (*FGrH* 133 F10a, ap. Arr. *Ind.* 15.10–12 and *FGrH* 133 F10b, ap. Str. xv 1.45) that snake bites were a problem for Alexander’s soldiers in India and that Alexander commissioned Indian physicians to treat his troops. Hence one would expect protective measures, such as wearing body cover, to be implemented in the army too, and although the details related in this paragraph are otherwise unattested, they are not unlikely. The *Alexander Romance* may be conveying the authentic sources’ tradition here.

13 κάλαμοι πηχῶν λ': with a cubit at 0.44–0.525 m, a reed 30 cubits long is ca. 15 m high. The *Alexander Romance* says in the following sentence that the city later attacked by Alexander’s soldiers was built on giant reeds. This may be either a reflection of a real encounter of the Macedonians with Indian stilt-houses, perhaps in the Indus delta, or a case of survival of the stories told of such houses to Greek/ Macedonian travelers, to this day well-attested in the Ganges-Brahmaputra area, in modern India and Bangladesh. In these cases piles used as a substructure supporting houses may have been made of bamboo. The Greek word κάλαμος means both reed and bamboo (*LSJ*, s.v.). Bamboo grows up to 40 m high and its high strength-to-weight ratio makes it a material of choice for construction in South Asia. Thus pales made of bamboo 15 m high as described here would be perfectly feasible in supporting houses in a lake or river. The West learned about bamboo from Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F45) and from Megasthenes (*FGrH* 715 F27b, ap. Str. xv 1.56), a companion of Alexander



and a source for Pliny (*Nat.* XVI 162) whose “harundo (Indica)” is correctly translated as “bamboo” in the Loeb edition (H. Rackham, Loeb; Stoneman 1994, 97; Karttunen 1989, 189–190).

16 λίμνη ... γλυκέος ὕδατος, ὥστε δοκεῖν μέλιτος διαφέρειν: water as sweet (or sweeter) than honey was a feature of the idealized, utopian image of India in Greek literature, known already to Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F45.29, ap. Phot. *Bibl.* 72).

17 Σεσόγχωσις κοσμοκράτωρ: on Sesonchosis see commentary to I 33.6.

18 Ἐπέταξα οὖν παρεμβολὴν γενέσθαι: Alexander’s order to pitch camp begins an episode on the shore of the sweet-water lake often referred to as the “night of horrors.” It has some qualities of a nightmare during which the Macedonian army repels, but barely, the attacks of dangerous animals and fantastic beasts. This may on the one hand belong to the tradition of folklore story telling of far-away strange lands and on the other it shows that the principal hero (Alexander) is now at the edge of the world where nothing is quite like the lands familiar to him and to the reader. Nature is no longer a tame element to be put to the use of humanity as a source of wealth, as it was in lands better known to the Greeks, but rather a hostile force kept at bay with utmost difficulty. The story also makes Alexander painfully conscious of his mortality and the very unpleasant prospect of the demise of his line (Romm 2008, 122–124). Some scholars see the famous Alexander’s hunt in the hunting reserve of Persian kings in Bazeira in Sogdiana in the autumn of 327 BC (hunt: Curt. VIII 1.11–19. Tuplin 1996, 100–102) as the template for the night of horrors (Ausfeld 1907, 183; Gunderson 1980, 102). However, apart from the killing of animals being present in both stories, they have really nothing in common (Stoneman 1994, 96–97). If the episode of the night of horrors reflects any historical elements, these would be a reminiscence of the stories surely told by Alexander’s veterans about clashes with exotic people covered in animal skins and scalps at the battlefield. Composite beasts, so common in this episode, are known also from other Greek accounts of exotic lands, hence it is not very surprising that they are found in the Indian sections of the *Alexander Romance* (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 66–68; Aerts 1994, 34).

19 ὕλης τῶν καλᾶμων: by analogy to III 17.13 this is a bamboo forest.

20 ταυρελέφαντες: bull-elephants are composite beasts almost certainly borrowed by the *Alexander Romance* or its sources from Indian art in which it is attested from the civilization of Harappa (Allchin and Allchin 1982), while in a

first-c. BC relief in Sanchi it became even more complex with wings added to its body or antlers added to its head (Krishna Murthy 1985, 17, 28–29).

ἄνδρες τε ἑξαχειρες: the word ἑξαχειρες (“six-handed,” *LSJ*, s.v.) is rare and late, attested otherwise only in Lucian (*Tox.* 62), Ammonios (*in Porph.*, p. 16), and in magic papyri. In India Alexander’s soldiers doubtless saw many images of the god Śiva, represented in art with multiple (four to 32) arms. This passage is the only attestation of this occurrence in the history of Alexander (Stoneman 1994, 98).

κυνοπέρδικες: ms. A has here κυλιοπέρδικες, a word otherwise unattested and of no meaning. The place must have become corrupt quite early, since the \*δ family versions either skip it altogether (Leo) or transform into “teeth like dogs” (Syr.). Some other early versions have, however, a comprehensive rendition: “dog partridges” (Arm.) and *cynoperdices* (Val.). This last one is certainly a Latin transliteration of the original κυνοπέρδικες, a word otherwise unattested but of obvious meaning, like in Arm. (Kroll, app. ad loc., after Ausfeld).

21 There is a major lacuna in this section of ms. A. To the near-universal agreement of all early versions, except β which has an abridged version of the letter lacking this section too, another animal attacked the Macedonians: *odontotyrannus* (Val., sim. Leo) or *Maškelath* (Syr.), “unicorn” in Wolohojian’s translation of Arm., in late Greek versions rendered Ὀδοντοτύραννος. And this must have been the version of the archetype (Kroll, app. ad loc.). If it is so, the third-c. archetype of the *Alexander Romance* would be the first Greek attestation of it. The word is rare, attested only in late versions of the *Alexander Romance*, in Palladius (*Gent. Ind.* 1.14) and in some Byzantine authors of the ninth and twelfth c. (Georgios Monachos, *Chronicon*, p. 37, *Chronicon breve*, p. 77; Michael Glykas, *Annales*, p. 270). Attempts to explain the *odontotyrannos* as an Indus crocodile (*LSJ*, s.v.; followed by *LBG*, s.v.) or a rhinoceros are wrong (Stoneman 1991, 196, n. 137). All crocodilian species inhabiting the Indian subcontinent (gharial, mugger crocodile, saltwater crocodile) are much too small, with a top recorded length of 6.3 m, whereas to approximate the size of the *odontotyrannos*, it was so big that it required the combined effort of 300 soldiers to pull its dead body. Rhinoceros were well-known to the Greeks and in fact this animal is mentioned in the “night of horrors” episode (III 17.19: ῥινοκέρωτες), so it could not be mistaken with the *odontotyrannos*, even if it had one horn too. The *odontotyrannos* was a huge animal, bigger than an elephant, with one horn, spreading fear on account of its strength and size. It is most likely a borrowing from Indian mythology which knows the powerful composite beast Makara (Krishna Murthy 1985, 44–48). Either this or some other Indian mythological beast is rendered as the *odontotyrannos*, and even the Greek name of this beast

may be a translation of a Sanskrit word *dvijarāja* ("king of serpents," Goossens 1927–1928). Indian art, from at least the fourth c., developed an image of a fantastic animal with one horn, a *monokeros*, according to Kosmas Indikopleustes (11.7), perhaps with an affinity to the Indian predecessor of the *odontotyrannos* in the *Alexander Romance* (Gunderson 1980, 102–103; Stoneman 1994, 97; Stoneman 2008, 75–76).

νυκτάλωπες: "suffering from night-blindness" does not make sense in this context. Kroll (app. ad loc.) correctly emendates the corrupt place after Arm., Val. (*nyctalopecas*), Syr. and Leo to νυκταλώπεκες or "night foxes."

23 μηνὶ Δίῳ ἡμέρᾳ τρίτῃ: Dios was a Macedonian month in the autumn (September/ October). But in Egypt, where the *Alexander Romance* was composed, Dios was equated to the Egyptian month of Pachon, and then to Thoth. In Roman times Thoth (or Dios) began on 29 or 30 August (Samuel 1972, 149–150). By this measure, the third of Dios would give 1 or 2 September. But if the date in the passage was not made up by Ps.-Callisthenes but borrowed from some sources, the third of Dios would fall later in September, in accordance with the Macedonian calendar.

Ms. A. has a major lacuna after εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος καταπεσεῖν. Some other early versions tell here about a heavy snowstorm lasting for a few days (Arm., Val., Syr.) which caused seventy casualties among Macedonian soldiers. Although in the *Alexander Romance* this (fictitious) episode appears in the context of the final stage of the expedition to India, it may reflect a historical fact: in the winter of 328/327 BC Alexander's army, while moving in the direction of winter quarters in Nautaka in Sogdiana (probably near Shahrisabz, some 100 km to the north of Termez in what is now Uzbekistan: Bernard 1990, 27; Bosworth 1995, 121; Harmatta 1999), experienced a violent snowstorm coupled with fast declining temperatures and lost reportedly as many as two thousand men (Curt. VIII 4.3–20; ME 24–27).

24 σὺν Πώρῳ: a little earlier (III 4.7) Poros is killed by Alexander in a single combat, only to accompany Alexander to Prasiake. The historical Poros not only was not killed by Alexander but having been confirmed king, gradually with the kingdom much enlarged due to Alexander's largess, becoming the principal ally of Alexander in India. He accompanied Alexander all the way to the Hyphasis, to be granted with the land up to this river on Alexander's departure in the direction of the ocean (Plu. *Alex.* 60.15; Arr. *An.* v 29.2). The *Alexander Romance* returns to the historical tradition, bringing Poros back to life, although mistakenly includes him on a journey to Prasiake with Alexander.

25 καί μου τὰ περίξ κατὰ φύσιν οἰκονομήσαντος: Ausfeld (1907, 93) emendates κατὰ φύσιν into κατὰ Ὑφασιν, thus making the *Alexander Romance* refer to the (temporary) arrangements Alexander, in September 326 BC, imposed on the conquered land in India up to the Hyphasis. If Ausfeld is right, this phrase would be in line with the historical narrative in the previous paragraph.

27bis ἱερὸν ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης: in ms. A this phrase is preceded by a lacuna. If the text surviving in Arm. and Syr. reflects what was once in the archetype (α), we would read here a short description of a garden in the midst of a desert, surrounded by dense shrubs or trees, with a temple in the middle of it (Kroll, app. ad loc.). The idea of an Indian desert sanctuary may have been borrowed from Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F45.17. Gunderson 1980, 111–113; Stoneman 1994, 97; Karttunen 1989, 220).

δένδρα ... παρόμοια τῇ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ μυροβαλάνῳ: the Greek word μυροβάλανος designates a few different plants. What is meant here may be the Indian/Bengal/Malabar almond (*Terminalia catappa*), a tree growing to 35 m tall and producing edible fruit, typical of the tropical area from Africa to East Asia (Karttunen 1997, 160), or the Egyptian myrobalan (*balanites Aegyptiaca*), a small, up to 10 m tall, tree typical of the arid zone of Africa, from Kenya to Egypt and Mauritania, because of its thorny branches often planted in fences, also producing edible, if bitter fruit, rich in oil.

28 ὄνομα δὲ ἦν τοῦ ἐνὸς ἡλίου, τῆς δὲ θηλείας σελήνης, (ἃ) ἔλεγον τῇ ἰδίᾳ φωνῇ μούθου ἐμαούσαι the two prophetic trees, male of the Sun, female of the Moon, bear the strange names *mouthou* and *emaousai*, designated as native. Ausfeld advanced a hypothesis that these names are a corrupt Greek rendition of the Iranian, Baktrian to be more precise, names of Sun and Moon gods (Ausfeld 1907, 186). The Baktrian versions of these names are Mihro and Maho, as attested in Kushan inscriptions (Harmatta et al. 1999, 314). There is no obvious way to get from these names to *mouthou* and *emaousai*, a lesser problem being that in Baktria and in India the Moon deity was male, not female as in the *Alexander Romance* and indeed in Greek mythology. Stoneman (2016) thinks that the recorded names are an elaborate corruption of the original Indian Vasu and Ma. But there is another possible explanation too: μούθου is a common element in Egyptian compound names in the genitive (460 attestations in the PHi disk #6/7), such as Ἀριμούθου, Γεμούθου, Ἴμούθου, Παμούθου, Πατερμούθου, Πετειμούθου, Σενμούθου, Ταϊμούθου, Ψενθερμούθου, and the most often attested Ἴμούθου. This name in the nominative (Ἴμούθης) is the Greek rendition of the Egyptian name Imhotep, borne among others by the famous architect and physician working for King Djoser of Dynasty III. The element μούθου is

probably derived from the name of the Egyptian goddess Mut. It is possible that the Alexandrian author of the *Alexander Romance* borrowed the common Greco-Egyptian compound *μουθου* to create the exotic sounding name of an Indian desert deity of the Sun. Although no tree oracles are attested in India, the idea of communicating with trees or with spirits inhabiting trees is not alien to Indian tradition and folklore, hence the story of oracular trees may betray an influence of genuine Indian tradition (Stoneman 2016).

31 τοὺς φίλους Παρμενίωνα: this is an odd list of Alexander's friends, even for a fictitious episode. In ms. A only eight names are listed, while ten are announced as the number of friends going to the temple with Alexander. The whole episode is fictitious with some names of companions of Alexander in the temple belonging to historical characters of the age of Alexander. The first named is Parmenion, once the senior Macedonian general, second in command to Alexander, assassinated on Alexander's orders in 330 BC, so he could not have accompanied Alexander to the temple in India a few years later (Heckel 2006, 190–192).

Κρατερών: for Krateros see commentary on III 17.5. Since this episode can be roughly dated to the time after the taking of Prasiake (= Pattala?), Krateros could not have accompanied Alexander, having marched with a major part of the Macedonian army to Karmania.

〈Φίλιππον〉: this name is absent in ms. A and in most other early versions of the *Alexander Romance*. Kroll is certainly right to restore it on the basis of Syr. since Philippos is shown in the company of Alexander a little later in III 17.38.

Ἰόλλαν: this is another emendation of Kroll of the name Ιουλον in ms. A. The emendation is certainly valid, as no Ioulos is attested in the age of Alexander, while three Macedonians of this time bore the name Iollas/Iolaos (Heckel 2006, 143). The most likely Iolaos to have been in the company of Alexander was the son of Antipater (see commentary on III 31).

ἄνδρας 〈τ'〉: various early versions of the *Alexander Romance* list a differing number of friends accompanying Alexander to the temple: 10 (Arm.), 11 (ms. A), 12 (Syr.). Kroll is probably right in selecting the lowest figure.

32 'Βασιλεῦ, σίδηρον οὐ καθήκει εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν εἰσελθεῖν': for the religious order not to bring any iron object into the temple may have been borrowed by Ps.-Callisthenes from some real temple, inadvertently testifying to its antiquity, as this taboo seems to have originated in the pre-iron age (Bounoure 2004, 253).

42 ἀπὸ τῆς Πρασιακῆς παρεγενόμην (εἰς Περσίδα): Kroll restores εἰς Περσίδα on the basis of other early versions: Arm. and Val. Having completed the fic-

titious episode of Alexander's visit in the sanctuary of the prophetic trees, Ps.-Callisthenes returns to the, broadly speaking, historical narrative of Alexander's journey from Prasiake (= Pattala) to Persis, in the winter of 325/324 BC.

ἐπὶ τὰ Σεμιράμεως βασιλεια: Semiramis is a figure of Greek and Armenian legends, created in reference to the Assyrian queen Shammu-Ramat, wife of Shamshi-Adad V, mother of Adad-Nirari III, and the regent of Assyria 811–806 BC before her son came of age. In coining and transmitting legends of Semiramis, Greek authors combined the tradition about Sammu-Ramat with those of two other Assyrian queens: Naquia wife of Sennacherib and mother of Esarhaddon, and Atalya, wife of Sargon II. For ancient authors (principally Diodorus but also Ktesias, Valerius Maximus, Justin, Orosius) Semiramis was semi-divine, daughter of the Syrian goddess Derketo or Atargatis of Ashkalon and wife of Ninos, the eponymous king of Nineveh, who, among other things, built the waterworks and famed walls of Babylon (Dalley 2005). The historical Alexander in some of his exploits tried to rival great figures of history and mythology and stories of Cyrus the Great and Semiramis trying to pass through the desert of Mekran with armies and losing almost all their soldiers (save seven and twenty, respectively) may have influenced Alexander's decision to march with his army through Mekran, rather than to take the easier route through the Multan Pass or transporting the army by sea (Str. XV 1.5; Arr. *An.* VI 24.2, following Nearchos, *FGrH* 133 F3a–b. Nawotka 2010, 331–332). For all the terrible losses incurred on this route especially among camp followers, Alexander could convincingly claim victory in this contest, having led most of his troops to the safety of Karmania. Since Semiramis was credited with founding or at least embellishing Babylon (D.S. II 7–8, after Ktesias; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* IX 553–597, also after Ktesias), this city reportedly also hosted her two palaces on opposite sides of the Euphrates near the bridge constructed on her orders (D.S. II 8.3; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* IX 590–598). The legend related by Diodorus applies to real palaces in Babylon, both commissioned by Nabuchadnezzar and both used by Alexander during his stays in Babylon. As the next chapter states, the palace of Semiramis was inhabited by her descendant Kandake, the Queen of Meroe (*infra*), not of Babylon, but no geographical precision can be expected of Ps.-Callisthenes. Thus this section brings Alexander in one stride from Persis to Africa.

## Chapter 18

1 τὴν Ἑλλάδα περιφύμισα: after this statement there is a lacuna in ms. A. Other early versions (Arm., Syr., Val.) have a short description of the stone-built city of Kandake, surrounded by a stone wall.

2 <χήρα, τριῶν παίδων μήτηρ, ὄνομα Κανδάκη>, Σεμιράμεως τῆς βασιλίδος <ἀπόγονος>: ms. A is much corrupted in this place but Kroll's emendations based on all other early versions, except for β, are obvious. In the *Alexander Romance* and in the classical tradition in general Kandake is Queen of Meroe or the kingdom of Kush with the capital in Meroe, a Nubian city some 200 km to the North-East of Khartoum (Sudan). The name Kandake is sometimes attested as a name of African queens (e.g. Bion, *FGrH* 668 F5) without specific individual traits (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 167–168). In the historical reality of Meroe Kandake (*kdke/ktke* or “mother of king/ sister of king”) was a title of the queen. Between the second c. BC and the first c. AD Meroe was ruled mostly by female rulers in the matrilineal tradition of the Kushite monarchy (Wenig 1980; Török 1988, 226–233; Jouanno 2002, 88). The historical Alexander never visited nor invaded Nubia and even the tradition of his journey up the Nile to the Thebaid is not certain (Curt. IV 8.3–4). He took, however, some interest in Meroe as the important and potentially dangerous southern neighbour of Egypt, in the fourth c. BC a successor state of Dynasty XXV (Kushite) of Egypt. In all probability during his sojourn in Egypt Alexander dispatched a diplomatic mission to Nubia headed by Aristobulos and perhaps also sent Kallisthenes to Ethiopia ostensibly in search of the sources of the Nile (Aristobul. *FGrH* 139 F35, ap. Str. XV 1.19; Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F12a. Burstein 1995; Malinowski 2014). If the Ethiopians in Arrian's (*An.* VII 15.4) account about embassies paying visits at Alexander's court in Babylon in the spring of 323 BC (about embassies to Alexander: Alessandri 1997) are in fact envoys from Meroe, this would be a testimony to Alexander's constant interest in the lands to the South of Egypt. Ptolemy, who in this story impersonates Alexander, probably fought a war in Nubia ca. 312–311 BC (Burstein 2015).

For all Alexander's interest in Nubia and Arabia (Högemann 1985), the Kandake episode is entirely fictitious. It enjoyed a great following in later Arabic literature (e.g. in Tabari), assuming new meaning as an example of the sexual conquests of Alexander. The original account of the *Alexander Romance* is free of sexual overtones. It is built around two principal motifs: Alexander the trickster, playing again the game of impersonating his ambassador (as in the episode of the embassy to Darius in II 13–15) and Alexander searching for answers about his future and his imminent death (Stoneman 1994, 102–103; Stoneman 2008, 138). For all the traditional African identity of Kandake, some sources name her in the context of the Indian campaign of Alexander (*Suda*, s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος) and some say that she was an Indian queen (Ioannes Antiochenus 28, Mariev). The description of her land combines nominal African with prevailing Indian details (Szalc 2014) which will be referred to further in this commentary. The

*Alexander Romance* is not only ambiguous with geography, making it easy for Alexander to travel from Prasiake to Meroe and back, but also seems to conflate Africa and India, much in line with those classical authors who tacitly assumed that all dark-skinned people (Aethiopes) lived in Africa (Szalc 2014, 379–381).

3 παραγενάμενος εἰς Αἴγυπτον: Alexander's second visit to Egypt is a literary fiction, necessary from the narrative point of view, since he was to visit Meroe in Chapter 21.

ἐκυριεύσατε Αἰγύπτου: the Kushite kings of Meroe indeed ruled all or parts of Egypt as its Dynasty XXV from 760 to 565 BC. Their rule was known to Herodotus (II 137–139), a probable source of Ps.-Callisthenes here.

Ἄμμων μεθ' ὧν ἐστράτευσε: although the *Alexander Romance* does not differentiate between Amun of Thebes and Ammon of Siwah, the reference to Ammon (i.e. Amun) is historically correct. In the city of Meroe archaeology has identified a temple of Amun-Re built in the seventh c. BC on a small hill opposite the royal palace (Török 1997, 20–32), the imagined place of Alexander's encounter with Kandake.

5–9 Letter of Kandake. Since the whole episode is fictitious, so is the list of Kandake's gifts to Alexander. In terms of the narrative strategies of the *Alexander Romance* the detailed enumeration of various categories of gifts to Alexander may be construed as an attempt to convince the reader, inundated with excessive details, of the authenticity of the pseudo-document (Arthur-Montagne 2014, 168–169). Some modern scholars point to lists of exotic animals and objects shown in Hellenistic parades, or to a list of gifts sent to Ptolemy II from Ethiopia and displayed at a *pompe* probably of 275–274 BC, as possible sources of inspiration for Ps.-Callisthenes (*pompe*: Callix. *FGrH* 627 F2, ap. Ath. V 32. Foertmeyer 1988; Schneider 2004, 321, 346–347; Malinowski 2007, 578–579. 262 B.C. as an alternative date of Ptolemy's *pompe*: Hazzard 2000, 60–66).

## Chapter 19

1 Κλεομένην Αἰγύπτου ἐπιμελητήν: Kleomenes of Naukratis, see commentary on I 31.6

2 ἀγνωστὶ ζωγραφῆσαι τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον: the story of Kandake commissioning a portrait of Alexander, although included in Stewart's list of testimonies of



the representations of Alexander (Stewart 1993, 379–380, T89, T90) is utterly fictitious. With it the first shots are fired in the battle of wits between Alexander and Kandake, one in which Alexander, untypically of the *Alexander Romance*, is not a clear winner.

3 ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Κανδάκης ὀνόματι Κανδαύλης: the best known Kandaules of Greek literature is the last king of Lydia of the Heraklid dynasty, portrayed by Herodotus (I 7–13) in the story of Gyges who succeeded him, although the earliest author to write about Kandaules is probably Xanthos in the fifth c. BC. The Herodotean story of Kandaules, who showed his naked wife to his courtier Gyges only to be killed by him on her instigation, was very popular with ancient readers, in later antiquity making its way also to the rhetorical exercises of Libanios (*Progymnasmata* 2.16.1). Kandaules or Myrsilos is a historical character who reigned Lydia at the end of the eighth c. BC and who bears a well-attested Lydian name (Evans 1985). The only feature common for the Kandaules of Herodotus and Kandaules of the *Alexander Romance* is that they both have beautiful wives. This must be the reason why P.-Callisthenes borrowed from Herodotus the name Kandaules for the son of Kandake (Kroll 1919, 1717). The story of Kandaules and Alexander was read also in Christian antiquity, e.g.: Ioannes Damaskenos, *Epistula ad Theophilum*, p. 369.

τῷ σωτήρι Πτολεμαίῳ ἔχοντι τὰ δεύτερα τῆς βασιλείας: Ptolemy, later the King of Egypt Ptolemy I Soter (see commentary on I 17.2), is second in command here. The historical Ptolemy rose to the position of second in command only once, in the winter campaign of 324/323 BC against the Kossaians (Arr. *An.* VII 15.1–3. Seibert 1969, 25–26). However, the phrase commented upon here does not have to be read as a reference to this campaign: ancient sources, largely under the direct or indirect influence of Ptolemy's writings and his propaganda, tend to exaggerate his position in Alexander's inner circle of power, especially in his last years (Heckel 2006, 237–238). As earlier, in the episode in the city of the Mallians (III 4.14), Ps.-Callisthenes gives preference to a version of events which extols Ptolemy, the future king of Egypt. Indeed, a little bit later in this chapter (III 19.7), Alexander crowns Ptolemy with his diadem and dresses him in his royal costume, here to hide his identity from Kandaules, but in a way foretelling Ptolemy's kingship.

5 τελέσαι μυστήριον παρὰ τὰς Ἀμαζόνας. ὁ δὲ τύραννος τῶν Βεβρύκων: the whole episode is fictitious with liberal usage of names otherwise attested in classical sources. Bebrykes are a Thracian tribe in Mysia and Troad in Asia Minor (e.g. A.R. II 2–3; Str. VII 3.2; Arr. *FGrH* 156 F81; *Sch. in A.R.*, p. 198; St.Byz., s.v. Βεβρύκων ἔθνη. Prêteux 2005), by some identified with the Trojans (*Sch. in Lyc.* 516;

[Zonar.] s.v. Βέβρυκες). They are perhaps best known from an episode in the story of the Argonauts in which their king, Amykos, was defeated by Polydeukes in a boxing match and they lost a battle to the Argonauts (A.R. II 1–154). Amazons (see commentary on III 25.1) were often believed to live in Asia Minor. Thus, the three constituent elements of this episode, the Kandaules, Bebrykes and Amazons, are connected with Asia Minor, which may indicate that Ps.-Callisthenes borrowed a mythological story from this area, transforming it to serve as an introduction to the episode of Alexander and Kandake (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 182).

7 Ἀντίγονόν μου τὸν παρασπιστὴν φωνήσατε: Antigonos, whom Alexander summons, is here a bodyguard (see commentary on I 24.6), presumably one of the king's *somatophylakes*. But no one of this name is attested, and if Ps.-Callisthenes had in mind a historical character, he must have meant Antigonos Monophthalmos ("The One-Eyed"), a senior Macedonian officer of the generation of Philip II. In 333 BC Alexander appointed him satrap of Greater Phrygia, giving him an independent command in a war against the Persian satraps who continued to resist the Macedonian onslaught after Granicus and Issos. After Alexander's death Antigonos was the towering figure of the first half of the Age of Successors, surpassing all other Macedonian generals in military talent and charisma, until he found death in the Battle of Ipsos in 301 BC, defeated by a coalition of other successors, most notably Seleukos and Lysimachos (on Antigonos see e.g. Billows 1990). Alexander's idea to visit Kandake disguised as Antigonos follows the narrative techniques of the ancient novel (Stephens 2008, 68).

## Chapter 21

1 ποικίλα ὄρη τῆς χρυσταλλοφόρου: even if Alexander makes his way in Africa, to the south of Egypt, he passes through a landscape rarely associated with this part of the world. "Mountains of various colors, gleaming with crystal" would fit best India, as a country famous for crystal, deemed superior to that of the West (Plin. *Nat.* xxxvi 66, xxxvii 30). This is the first of many Indian features in the Kingdom of Kandake in the *Alexander Romance* (Szalc 2014, 382).

2 δένδρα τὰ ὑψιπέτηλα καρπῶν καταγέμοντα: "lofty trees heavy with fruit" and the features that follow in this section give the impression of travelling through a land abundance in nature (oversized fruits, large lizards and apes etc.), a typical feature of India in ancient Western accounts (Szalc 2014, 382).

4 τόποι ἑνθεοὶ καὶ κοῖλοι πετρῶδεις: “holy places and caves”—although seemingly there is nothing unusual in this, holy caves with rich carvings, lining major roads, were a distinct feature of the Indian landscape from Aśoka at the latest. Since among worshipers were also Yavanas or Indian Greeks, the knowledge of these caves must have been circulating in Greek cultural circles and this motive may be an Indian cultural borrowing too (Szalc 2014, 382–383).

τὰ ὧδε θεῶν οἰκητήρια καλεῖται: already Homer (*Il.* 1 423–424) shows gods frequenting the land of the Ethiopians, believed by the Greeks to be the first people in the world and those who introduced the cult of the gods (Malinowski 2007, 224–231). With this phrase Ps.-Callisthenes brings African elements back into his description of the land of Queen Kandake.

## Chapter 22

1 Κανδάκη ... ὑπερμεγέθη ... τὴν ὄψιν ἡμίθεον: Greek gods were anthropomorphic but taller than humans (Burkert 1985, 187). Thus Kandake may seem semi-divine on account of being tall.

2 κλιντήρες δὲ οὐνιώνων καὶ βηρύλλων τὰς βάσεις ἔχοντες: this place is corrupt with ms. A having *ωνίων*, emendated by Kroll (app.) to *οὐνιώνων*, and most early versions (Val., β, Syr.) skipping it altogether. Kroll’s emendation is risky, since the word he proposes to insert in the text is attested exclusively as a name, *Οὐνίων* (e.g. *IEph* 2231; *IG* x.2.1.929; *SEG* 28.1041), probably after the Latin *Unio* (Robert, *BÉp* 1948.102). An emendated name does not make much sense here. Perhaps a better emendation would be *δόνυχων*, agreeing with Arm. (237: “onyx”) and Leo. (*ex lapide oni[c]hino*). If this emendation is correct, we have here “couches with supports of onyx and beryl,” i.e. made of stones typically associated with India (Szalc 2014, 385–386).

3 ὅλοι τε ναοὶ σὺν τοῖς κίοσιν ἐκ μιᾶς ψήφου γεγλυμμένοι: “complete temples with columns, carved from one stone”; megalithic temples is a distinctly Indian feature, best represented by the Kailasa temple (cave 16 in Ellora) of the late-eight c. AD, too late to be referred to in the *Alexander Romance*. But the megalithic temples of Karle and Junnar were much earlier, of the first c. AD. A memory of an Indian megalithic Hinduist or Buddhist temple survives in this passage, as another Indian characteristic of the land of Kandake (Szalc 2014, 384–385).

βαρβάρων θεῶν ἀγάλματα τοῖς ὀρώσι μετὰ τινος φόβου ἐκφαίνοντα τὴν ὄψιν εἰς τὸ αἵματηρόν: the statues of barbarian gods with faces covered with blood could



FIGURE 11 *Megalithic stone temples are a common feature in India, with the best surviving example of Kailasa temple in Ellora of the 8th c. Earlier structures of this kind may have provided inspiration for the description of the kingdom of Kandake in the Alexander Romance.*

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as well be a reference to statues of Indian gods, semi-anthropomorphic as they often are, frequently painted with red ochre (Edwards 1969, 47; Szalc 2014, 384).

5 ποταμός ... γένος Πακτωλού: Paktolos is a river in Lydia (Asia Minor), now Sart Çayı which flows through Sardis, famous for gold and electrum (a natural alloy of gold and silver) which were commonly found in its bed in antiquity. In myth Midas was relieved of the burden of his golden touch upon washing in the Paktolos which in turn provided an explanation for the gold-bearing characteristic of the river (Ov. *Met.* XI 134–145; Hyg. *Fab.* 191). The Paktolos simile in the description of Kandake's palace is not significant since the knowledge of this gold-producing river was an element of general education in late antiquity, alongside the myth of Midas.

δένδρον στιχηρόν πίπερος: pepper trees are native to the tropical forests of South Asia and in antiquity they were cultivated in Southern India which was the only source of pepper for the West in classical antiquity. Hence pepper trees in Kandake's palace are perhaps the most unquestionably Indian feature of this episode (Szalc 2014, 385).

7 ἐξ ἀερίτου λίθου, ὥστε τὸν ἥλιον διὰ τῶν μαρμάρων ὑπονοεῖν ἐνδοθεν ἀνατέλλειν: the ἀερίτης λίθος is a translucent stone through which light shines, although not necessarily a precious stone (so *LSJ*, s.v.). One possibility is calcite alabaster, a translucent stone of a structure resembling marble, in antiquity quarried and worked in Egypt; due to its semitransparent qualities, it was also used for windows, drawn into sheet form.

8 οἰκία δὲ ὠκοδόμητο ... ἐπὶ τροχῶν συρομένη ὑπὸ εἴκοσιν ἐλεφάντων: a movable palace drawn by twenty elephants is a unique feature of the Kingdom of Kandake. Huge chariots or movable temples of South India, up to thirty cubits high, were observed by the Chinese traveler Fâ-Hien and were known also to Athenaios (v 28). Kandake's palace is, therefore, a transposition of the Indian motif of the movable temple (Szalc 2014, 386–388).

10 ἀληθῶς εἶρηκας, Ἀλέξανδρε: these words of Kandake introduce the scene of exposing Alexander disguised as Antigonos. This story occurs, after the *Alexander Romance*, also in John of Antioch (28, Mariev).

12 ὁ Περσολέτης, ὁ Ἰνδολέτης: “Persian-killer” and “Indian-killer” are both very rare words. The latter is attested as an epiclesis of Dionysos (*AP* IX 524.10) and from this attestation it was most probably borrowed by Ps.-Callisthenes, while the former may have been coined by Ps.-Callisthenes on the pattern of Ἰνδολέτης.

ὁ καθελὼν τρόπαια Μήδων καὶ Πάρθων: the *tropaion* was a distinctly Greek mark of victory, originally in the form of an enemy armor set upon a stake planted on the battlefield and, from the fourth c. BC onwards, often in the form of permanent commemorative buildings decorated with motifs of enemy arms. A *tropaion* should have been erected only as a sign of clear-cut victory demonstrated by possession of the battle field. In this case a *tropaion* was inviolable. Overthrowing or destroying a *tropaion* was a very rare event, attested only when a *tropaion* was set up by the side which did not possess the battlefield. From the testimony of Pausanias (IX 40.7–9) we are quite sure that Alexander did not erect *tropaia* upon his victories over Darius or Indians, although his father Philip II and later Macedonian kings followed this Greek custom (Pritchett 1974, 246–275). The historical Alexander defeated the Persians, often designated as Medes in classical sources. He also waged war in Parthia (Plu. *Alex.* 45.1; Arr. *An.* III 25.1), but the Parthia of his age was an undistinguished satrapy of the Persian Empire, not an enemy in its own right. The Arsakid Parthian Empire was, however, the principal enemy of the early Roman Empire with Augustus naming among his achievements regaining the spoils and standards

taken by the Parthians from the army of M. Licinius Crassus crashed in the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC (*RGDA* V 29; cf. Verg. *A.* VII 606) and trophies erected by Roman emperors after or during numerous wars with the Arsakids feature prominently in Latin poetry (e.g. Prop. III 4.6) and in coin iconography (e.g. *RIC* 54a, 63, 65, 176ef, 324, 1438; *SNG Lev* 1055). This phrase is therefore anachronistic, reflecting the ideological reality of the age of the early Roman Empire rather than that of Alexander. It testifies also to the ideological reality of the age of the Arsakids, i.e. before AD 226, giving evidence either to the early date of the *Alexander Romance* or to the persistence of ideological clichés well past the demise of the Arsakid Parthian Empire.

### Chapter 23

1 θυγάτηρ Μάρπησσα: Marpessa daughter of Kandake is also a fictitious character bearing the name of a granddaughter of Ares, who in myth either rejected Apollo or was abducted and raped by him (Paus. V 18.2; Apollod. 1.61; [Plu.] *Mor.* 315e; *App. Anth.* 4, a1; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.32.3; Eust. *Comm. Hom. Il.* II, p. 809; *Sch. vetera in Il.* IX 561–562).

2 ὁ υἱὸς αὐτῆς ὁ δεύτερος (Κάραγος): the name of the son of Kandaules is restored by Kroll after Arm. (Karagos) and Val. (Choragos), in the place of the “Καραβος” of the ms. A., with other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* having also a slightly different spelling: Kĕrâtôr (Syr. III 13), Carator (Leo) and no name in β. This Karagos is a fictitious character who may have been created in reference to either of two historical Macedonians of similar names attested in the age of Alexander. One was Korragos, a general commanding a garrison in the Peloponnese, in 331 BC defeated by Agis III of Sparta (Aesch. 3.165; *Sch. in Aesch.* 3.133. Bosworth 1988, 194). The other was Koragos, a foot soldier of Alexander’s army who in 325 BC challenged the Athenian athlete Dioxippos to single combat and was soundly defeated fighting as a Macedonian phalanx soldier against the enemy, naked and armed with a club, in the pattern of Herakles (Curt. IX 7.15–16; D.S. XVII 100–101; Ael. *VH* X 22).

10 δῶρα βασιλικά, στέφανον ἀδαμάντινον πολυτάλαντον καὶ θώρακα δι’ οὐνιώνων: on ἀδαμάντινος see commentary on I 4.6. Again, as in III 22.2, οὐνιώνων is Kroll’s emendation and, for similar reasons as there, it should read ὀνύχων.



FIGURE 12 *Sacred caves lining major roads in India already in the mid-third c. BC may have been a template of the cave of gods visited by Alexander en route from the kingdom of Kandake. A later example of an Indian cave-temple is in Ellora.*

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## Chapter 24

1 ἐν σπηλαίῳ ... θεοὺς διαιτᾶσθαι: most scholars believe that the motif of the caves of gods was drawn by Ps.-Callisthenes either on the pattern of Egyptian royal tombs, like those in the Valley of the Kings in Thebes, dug into the slope under the New Kingdom (Ausfeld 1907, 192) or that he used the Homeric banquets of the gods among the Ethiopians (*Il.* 1 423–424) as his point of reference (Bounoure 2004, 257). But, since Indian imagery is so prominent in the description of the Kingdom of Kandake, one may think also of the sacred caves lining major roads in India already in the mid-third c. BC as a possible template for this motif (Szalc 2014, 382–383).

2 Σεσόγχωσις κοσμοκράτωρ βασιλεύς: on Sesonchosis see commentary on 1 33.6, on *kosmokrator* see commentary on 1.12.7. In Nubia Sesostriis III, a powerful pharaoh of Dynasty XII and a historical predecessor of the literary Sesonchosis, enjoyed divine worship initiated by his son Thutmose III but attested as late as under Taharqa of Dynasty XXV (el-Enany 2004). The presence of the Egyptian/Nubian god Sesonchosis adds to the composite nature of the Kandake episode in the *Alexander Romance*.

3 ‘πῶς, κύριε’: in ms. A there is a lacuna after these words until εἶπε Σεσόγγωσις. The contents of it in the archetype (α) must have been something like in Arm. (348–349), Val., Syr (III 14), Leo: a conversation between Alexander and Sesonchosis in which Alexander enquires about how many years he will live. A little earlier in the text (III 17.36) Alexander learned from the oracular trees that his end was soon to come. The conversation with Sesonchosis is the second prediction of the imminent death of Alexander.

## Chapter 25

1 ἄγγελου: although the basic meaning of the word ἄγγελος is “messenger, envoy” (since Hom. *Il.* II 26; *LSJ*, s.v.), in pagan later antiquity, from the second c. AD on, *angeloi* became semi-divine beings or lesser gods in the service of a supreme god or his manifestations (Cline 2011, definition: 3–4). Sesonchosis says of himself in the previous chapter: συνδίαίτος θεῶν γενόμενος (“now becoming a companion of gods,” III 24.2). Thus he is a semi-divine being or a lesser god, fitting this definition well.

Ἀμαζόνες: the remaining part of this chapter and most of the next one is concerned with Alexander’s dealings with the Amazons, one of the most celebrated episodes in the stories of his adventures. Amazons were a race of warrior-women, known from copious literary evidence beginning with Homer (*Il.* II 814, III 189 VI 186) and from a myriad of vase paintings, reliefs, sculptures, coin images etc. (in art: von Bothmer 1957). Their seat was variously identified: most commonly in the land of the River Thermodon in northern Asia Minor, with its capital in Themiskyra, but also in Skythia and Libya. For all the perceived parallels between the myth of the Amazons and archaeological evidence on nomadic people in the Black Sea region, Sauromatians and Kimmerians, there is no obvious explanation of any historical people influencing the birth of this myth among the Greeks (on Amazons in general: Tyrell 1984; Dowden 1997; Pöllauer 2010). Reportedly in the summer of 330 BC Alexander’s camp in Hyrkania witnessed a visit of Thalestris, the Amazon queen, accompanied by three hundred female warriors, who came to Alexander with the express aim of having a child sired by him. Despite the thirteen days that Thalestris spent with Alexander, no issue was ever recorded by ancient authors. Plutarch lists a few first-generation Alexander historians writing about this event: Kleitarchos, Polykleitos, Onesikritos, Antigenes, Ister, with, however, a larger number of those who say that it was a fiction (Plu. *Alex.* 46). This episode appears in Alexander historians of later generations too: Curt. VI 5.25–32; D.S. XVII 77.1–3; Str. XI 5.4; Plu. *Alex.* 46; Just. XII 3.5–7. The story of Thalestris and Alexander



is of course fictitious and this was understood already in antiquity (Plu. *Alex.* 46.4–5 quoting Lysimachos' sarcastic comment on it), even if some modern scholars try to find a rational element in it, seeing an alleged encounter with Dahae women-warriors as the template for the Amazon story (Lane Fox 1973, 276; Bosworth 1995, 102–103; Baynham 2001). The *Alexander Romance* has nothing of this sexual encounter: as always Alexander is the asexual hero (Hägg 1991, 131; Stoneman 1994, 125–127; Stoneman 2008, 128–136) and the Amazons discuss with him only the details of their military alliance.

10 σίτησις διὰ βίου: in the world of polis, *sitesis* was a high civic honour voted by the people to particularly deserving citizens and foreigners, deemed *euergetai* of the polis, and very exceptionally to their descendants. The name *sitesis* applied to a meal served on a regular basis usually in the *prytaneion*, the dining hall of the city council. A *sitesis* for life was an even greater honour (on *sitesis* mostly in Athens see: Osborne 1981; Henry 1981; Rhodes 1984; MacDowell 2007). The Amazons imitate here an aristocratic polis with civic honours and a large dependent (male) population who till their land and fight in war in an auxiliary role, much like the helots in Sparta.

11 στεφανοῦμεν δέ σε κατ' ἐνιαυτόν, ὅσον ἔαν σὺ τάξης: a part of the deal the Amazons proposed to Alexander was a crown offered to him every year. This is in fact tribute by a different name, following upon an established habit in the Roman Empire (on crowns to kings and Emperors see commentary on II 5.1).

## Chapter 26

4 δίδομεν δὲ κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἑκάστη χρυσοῦ μνᾶς ε': Alexander offers five minas of gold per month to each Amazon mounted warrior. Since one mina equals one hundred drachmas, each warrior was to receive five hundred drachmas per month, and these would be drachmas of gold. Since in classical antiquity prices and wages were usually expressed in silver, the monthly pay for each Amazon would amount to 6,000 silver drachmas at the conversion rate of gold to silver 1:10, recorded for the fourth c. BC. Modern scholars estimate that in Greece in the age of Alexander a mercenary cavalryman received two or three drachmas per day or ca. 60–90 drachmas per month (Krasilnikoff 1993; English 2012, 4–5). Thus Alexander of the *Alexander Romance* would be paying his Amazon warriors over sixty times more than the running rate of the day! The amount is highly exaggerated, even considering the exceptional quality of the Amazon warriors, but fitting the context of this part of the *Alexander*

*Romance* with its air of the miraculous and the unreal. Incidentally, Xenophon (*An.* I 4.13) reports that Cyrus the Younger promised to his Greek mercenaries a bonus of five minas of silver each once they reached Babylon, of course having defeated his brother Artaxerxes II first. Although these are minas of silver, the idea of paying five minas to each soldier is the same and it might have inspired Ps.-Callisthenes here.

7 Ταῦτα δὲ συντάξας τὴν ὁδοιπορίαν ἐποιεῖτο εἰς τὴν Πρασιακὴν γῆν: with this phrase the narrative returns to India for half a chapter, disregarding what was said earlier, in the last sentence of Alexander's letter to Aristotle in which he announces his return to Persis.

θέρους γὰρ μεσάζοντος Ζεὺς οὐκ ἐπαύσατο ὕων ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα: the forty-day long rain in mid-summer is a monsoon rain. Thus the *Alexander Romance* returns to the events narrated earlier in this book (III 1.1–4). In Diodorus' account in 326 BC the Macedonians experienced rain lasting for seventy days and resulting in damage to weapons, clothing and tents used by soldiers (D.S. XVII 94.3). This passage names, although with no verbal echo, similar features as Diodorus: long-lasting rain, frequent lightning and thunder, and rotting equipment on account of high humidity. This may indicate either the dependence of Ps.-Callisthenes on Diodorus or both authors making use of the same source. Since Ps.-Callisthenes mentions a shorter period of rain than Diodorus, the original source may have indeed had a forty-day rain.

Ὑπανιν ποταμόν: this place is corrupt in all versions of the *Alexander Romance*: Ὑπανιν (A), Πάρτανιν (B), Hypanim (Val.), Zûtâ (Syr.), with a lacuna in Leo and no river name in Arm. What is surely meant is Ὑφασιν. The Hyphasis (Beas) marked the easternmost end of Alexander's expedition in India, stopped by his soldiers' mutiny in September 326 BC, related earlier in this book (III 1, see commentary for reference). The *Alexander Romance* splits the story of the events on the Hyphasis into three parts: the account of the harsh weather conditions in Chapters 1 and 26, information about the forces of the potential enemy in Chapters 4 and 26, plundering of the land on the Hyphasis in Chapter 26, and the mutiny in Chapter 1.

ἐλέφαντες ... πεντακισχίλιοι καὶ ἄρματα μύρια καὶ ἀνθρώπων πολλὰ μυριάδες: this is the roll call of army of the Nanda empire, fairly consistent with the data conveyed by mainstream sources (see commentary on III 4.11).

Ἀλέξανδρος προνομήσας τὴν παραποταμίαν: the factual account of the events of September 326 BC. Having noticed his soldiers' discontent with the prolonged campaign fought in adverse weather conditions, Alexander allowed them to plunder the land adjacent to the Hyphasis (D.S. XVII 94.4) and this phrase surely refers to this episode. If one agrees with Goukowsky's read-

ing in the Belle Lettre edition of Diodorus, this passage reads: διόπερ λεηλατεῖν μὲν αὐτοῖς συνεχώρησε τὴν παραποταμίαν χώραν, even if more manuscripts have πολεμίαν for παραποταμίαν (and this the reading of Fischer's edition for Teubner), it would further point to a common source of Diodorus and Ps.-Callisthenes.

γράμματα παρὰ τοῦ σοφοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους: this (fictitious) letter of Aristotle was written in answer to the letter of Alexander quoted in III 17.

πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἶδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω: quotation: Hom. *Od.* I 3.

οἱ Αἰθίοπες καὶ οἱ Σκύθαι: the Ethiopians and the Skythians, although very real people with whom the Greeks had reasonably frequent interactions, were all the same treated in Greek literature as semi-mythological peoples inhabiting the edges of the world. Therefore even the historicity of their embassies to Alexander in Babylon in the spring of 323 BC is sometimes questioned (Arr. *An.* VII 15.4. About embassies: Alessandri 1997). Aristotle mentions them in his letter without a reference to any adventures of Alexander known from the *Alexander Romance* but metonymically, expressing the idea that Alexander had reached the ends of the inhabited world.

οἱ μὲν δυσσομένου Ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος: quotation: Hom. *Od.* I 24.

ἐπορεύθη εἰς Βαβυλῶνα: Alexander returned to Babylon very early in 323 BC. But this phrase may also refer to the beginning of his march west from India in the late summer of 325 BC, already alluded to in Alexander's letter to Aristotle (III 17.3).

## Chapter 27

3 ποιησάμενος γὰρ πορείαν ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα καὶ ... ἐποίησάμην ἄλλην πορείαν: the historical Alexander did not make any long journeys from Babylon, where he died on 11 June 323 BC, a few months after his return to the place. But the letter to Olympias seems to be using the name Babylon without any chronological precision, coming back to the events of Alexander's expedition to eastern Iran and to India.

Ἡρακλέους στήλας: this seems to be a contamination of a story of Alexander's exploits with the mythological motive of the Pillars of Herakles. First is the story of Alexander's brief encounter with the Skythians. In the second half of 328 BC he attacked the Skythians on the northern side of the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) and pursued the enemies up to the place called in our sources the "border marks" of Dionysos (Curt. VII 9.15): a column of Dionysos (*ME* 12) or the altars of Herakles and Dionysos (Plin. *Nat.* VI 49). A somewhat similar motif of the Pillars of Dionysos in the East appears in D.P. 623–626, as a reconfiguration of the



FIGURE 13 *Herakles, the mythological ancestor of Alexander, features prominently in the Alexander Romance. The head of Herakles, covered by scalp of the Lion of Nemea, is the most common obverse image of coins of Alexander. The reverse of this coin, a silver tetradrachm from the mint of Damascus of 330–319 BC, has the image of Zeus, the tutelary god of Macedonia and the divine ancestor of Alexander.*

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better known Pillars of Herakles in the West, both marking lastness and finality. This concept was adopted by Byzantine authors (Lightfoot 2014, 404–405). Here we have a further elaboration of this motive, perhaps reflecting the story of Apollonios of Tyana who reportedly saw golden and silver pillars of Herakles, i.e. of the Phoenician Melquart identified by the Greeks with Herakles, in a temple on an island close to Gades/Gadeira (Philostr. *VA* 5.5. Ausfeld 1907, 196; van Berchem 1967; Burkert 1985, 210; Bonnet 1988, 203–230). Herakles was Alexander's (mythological) ancestor, whom the Macedonian worshiped and whose exploits he sought to rival throughout his life (on Herakles in Alexander's life and reign see: Huttner 1997, 86–123; Amitay 2010, 9–77). Therefore Ps.-Callisthenes, contaminating all these motifs, led Alexander to the golden and silver pillars of Herakles, somewhere in (Central?) Asia, which in this passage were marking the outmost ends of Herakles' travels, just as altars set up on the Hyphasis or altars of Dionysos and Herakles to the north of the Jaxartes were marking the farthest points reached by the historical Alexander.

5 εὐρέθησαν χρυσοὶ ἀφ' ἀναλωθῆναι: Alexander discovers that he needs to spend 1,500 pieces of gold to fill up the hole in the golden pillar of Herakles created by the drill. Here as in *III* 26.4 value is expressed in gold coins, not in silver, as would have been the case in the age of Alexander. This gold standard reflects the reality of the second half of the third c. AD when the denarius ceased to be coined any longer, having lost real value on account of its debasement to less

than 3 % of silver and the only Roman coin with any purchasing power was the gold aureus (Carlà 2009, 33–36).

6 *Θερμώδοντα ποταμόν*: the letter of Alexander to Olympias returns to the encounter with the Amazons, covered already in Chapters 25–26. On Amazons see commentary on III 25.1. Now, for the first time, the reader learns that they live on the other side of the Thermodon, now Terme Çay in northern Turkey, which flows into the Black Sea near Samsun. But not much can be made of the precision of mythological geography here, as we soon learn (III 28.1) that, having collected tribute from the Amazons, Alexander departed for the Red Sea, over 1300 km away, as the crow flies.

7 *Ἀμαζονίδες γυναῖκες τῷ μεγέθει (καὶ κάλλει) ὑπερέχουσαι ... τῶν λοιπῶν γυναικῶν*: Kroll emendates in ms. A *καὶ κάλλει* after most other early versions: Val., Arm. (257), β, Syr. (III 17). Amazons have semi-divine qualities here, being more beautiful and taller than other women.

## Chapter 28

This chapter comes back to the account of the marvels of India, in a way resuming the narrative of Alexander's letter to Aristotle (III 17).

2 *θύσαντες δὲ τῷ Ποσειδῶνι [ἵππους] πώλους ι'*: in myth Poseidon is the father of the first horse, and horse sacrifice is typical in cults of this god (Burkert 1985, 138).

*Ἀτλанта ποταμόν*: in this context the River Atlas is probably the Atlantic Ocean. The name Atlas and a reference to high mountains would lead the reader in the direction of north-west Africa where the dwelling of the giant Atlas is usually located (from Hdt. iv 185 on). However, no precise geographical location is meant here, as the following description of the land by the River Atlas names marvels usually associated with India (Tallet-Bonvalot 1994, 182).

*εἶδομεν γὰρ κυνοκεφάλους (καὶ ἀκεφάλους) ἀνθρώπους, οἵτινες τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς εἶχον ἐπὶ τῷ στήθει*: if there is truth to the sequence of historical events, this passage surely relates to Alexander's adventures in India. It should be thus read as an account of the marvels of India, listing phantastic monsters known from Ktesias and forming the standard lore of Greek accounts of India (Karttunen 1997, 176–177); some of them, like *kynokephaloi* or “one-eyed men” were present in Indian culture as well, independent of Ktesias (Felton 2012, 124–126).

πόλιν τοῦ Ἡλίου: the City of the Sun is probably reminiscent of an episode from the journey of Nearchos in the late 325 BC in the island of Nosala, beyond the land of the Ichthyophagoi, housing a sanctuary of the Sun (Arr. *Ind.* 31.1. Ausfeld 1907, 197); with parallel stories in other authors, e.g. Plin. *Nat.* VI 79; Pomp. Mela III 71; Solinus 33.11, 44.4 (Biffi 2000, 211–213; Dognini 2002, 119–121).

3 πύργοι δὲ ἦσαν ἰδ' χρυσῷ καὶ σμαράγδω ὡκοδομημένοι: for the meaning of σμαράγδος see commentary on I 4.6. As a building material, it would most likely be green basalt, green porphyry or malachite. Gold and *smaragdōs* combined as building materials are known to Greek literature, beginning with Herodotus who allegedly saw two pillars of gold and *smaragdōs* in the temple of Herakles (Melqart) in Tyre (II 44; with the rationalizing explanation of Theophrastos *Lap.* 25. Bonnet 1988, 101–102). Gold and *smaragdōs* are also attested among the building materials of (celestial) Jerusalem in the Septuagint version of the *Book of Tobit*: ὅτι οἰκοδομηθήσεται Ἱερουσαλημ σαπφείρῳ καὶ σμαράγδῳ καὶ λίθῳ ἐντίμῳ τὰ τεῖχη σου καὶ οἱ πύργοι καὶ οἱ προμαχώνες ἐν χρυσίῳ καθαρῷ, καὶ αἱ πλατεῖαι Ἱερουσαλημ βηρύλλῳ καὶ ἄνθρακι καὶ λίθῳ (13.17, cod. Vat.). The differences between this text and the *Alexander Romance* are, however, too substantial to claim any direct influence. Similarities between passages in Herodotus, *Tobit* and Ps.-Callisthenes may result from some intellectual perception in the Levant of gold and *smaragdōs* as building materials proper for holy, distinguished buildings.

5 εὗραμεν σκοτός: Jouanno (2002, 146) believes that this may be a reflection of historical data on the night marches of Alexander's army in a desert environment.

6 τὸν Τάναϊν ποταμόν, ὃς παρέρρει τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ τὴν Εὐρώπην: in the age of Alexander two rivers were called by the name Tanais: the Don and the Syr Darya (also Jaxartes). In 328 BC the historical Alexander crossed the Tanais/Jaxartes/Syr Darya, then the border between Persian Sogdiana and the land of the Skythians, to attack the Skythians. But what is meant here is the Don, never seen by the historical Alexander. In antiquity the Tanais/Don was generally believed to mark the border between Europe and Asia (Str. XI 1.1 and 1.5; Curt. VI 2.14; Plin. *Nat.* III 3; Scyl. 68; Arr. *An.* III 30.9; D.P. 14; Mela I 8; *Periplus Ponti Euxini* 43; Marcian. I 4; Procop. *Aed.* VI 1.8; Olymp. *in Mete.*, p. 108. Herrmann 1932, 2165–2166; Bosworth 1980, 379).

ἤλθομεν ἐπὶ τὰ Κύρου βασιλεια καὶ Ξέρξου: this passage is also known, albeit in a shorter form, from a papyrus from the first c. BC: *P.Hal.* 31 (Luppe 1991; Huys and Wouters 1993; Messeri 2010, 37, no. 91 and 38, no. 95).

9 Ἐπὶ δὲ ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις τοῖς ἐν Σούσοις ἔστιν κρατὴρ ἀργυροῦς χωρῶν μετρητὰς τεξ': the reference to the palace in Susa does not necessarily mean that the previous episode, with the talking bird, is set up there. The capacity of the silver krater of Susa is 360 *metretai*, or more the 13,600 liters, with a *metretes* corresponding to ca. 37.4 liters. This capacity is vastly exaggerated, bearing in mind that the Krater of Vix, the largest surviving metal vessel of antiquity, has a capacity of ca. 1100 liters. Capacity apart, a golden krater was kept in the bedchamber of the Great King (Amyntas *FGrH* 122 F6, ap. Ath. XII 9). This phrase begins a topical description of the luxuries and conspicuous wealth of Persian kings, exemplified by the golden objects reportedly encountered by Alexander in his palace (on this topos see: Stoneman 1995, 163; Stoneman 2008, 44–46).

θρόνος χρυσοῦς: the golden throne with bejeweled columns was a well-known feature of the palace of the Great King (Heraclid., ap. Ath. XII 8).

10 ἡ Γλαύκου τέχνη, ἐναρμόνιος λύρα αὐτομάτως κρουομένη: "the skill of Glaukos" (Γλαύκου τέχνη) is a Greek proverbial phrase, but not a proverb, not being a full sentence (definition after Russo 1983). It is attested profusely from Plato well into the Byzantine age (e.g. Pl. *Phd.* 108d; Lib. *Or.* 64.20; Stob. I 49.58; Apostolius Paroemiographus 5.45, s.v. Γλαύκου τέχνη) and its fullest definition is: ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ ῥαϊδίως κατεργαζομένων ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν πάνυ ἐπιμελῶς καὶ ἐντέχνως εἰργασμένων ("either about things not easy to make or about those altogether carefully or skillfully executed": *Sch. in Pl. Phd.* 108d = Zen. 2.91 = Phot., s.v. Γλαύκου τέχνη). The etymology most commonly found in the authors (Hsch., s.v. Γλαύκου τέχνη) claims that this phrase commemorates achievements of a Glaukos, certainly Glaukos of Chios (Diogenian. 4.8) of the seventh c. BC, but often mistakenly called Glaukos of Samos (e.g. Plu. *Prov.* 2.25; Lib. *Or.* 64.20; Eus., *Contra Marcellum* I 3.6; *Suda*, Σιδηρέαν ψυχὴν etc.), who according to Herodotus (I 25) invented welding metal (Robert 1910). Another etymology derives this phrase from the deeds of Glaukos of Rhegion, a fifth-c. BC musician and musical author who was first to make music with discs (Aristox., fr., ap. *Schol. in Pl. Phd.* 108d. 90. Barker 1989, 30–31). The second etymology is less common but this is most probably what Ps.-Callisthenes had in mind since he uses this proverbial phrase in reference to an automated lyre.

12 ἀναδενδράς ἐπτάκλαδος, ὅλη χρυσή, ...καὶ πλάτανος καὶ μυρσίνη: a golden vine and a plane tree were luxury items in the possession of the Great King, most often referred to by Greek authors, beginning with Herodotus who names them as gifts from Pythios of Lydia to Darius I (VII 27). As objects in the possession of the Great King they are further referred to by Xenophon (*HG* VII 1.38),

Phylarchos (ap. Ath. xii 55), Chares (ap. Ath. xii 9) and Amyntas (ap. Ath. xii 8); later they passed to Alexander and then to Antigonos (D.S. xix 48.6–7). The relative importance of this, inconspicuous in size (X. HG vii 1.38), golden plane-tree, may lie in its presumptive relation to the sacred trees of the Assyrians or the Elamites whose culture much influenced that of the Achaemenid Persia (Kuhrt 2007, 540).

### Chapter 29

This chapter contains the story of Alexander building a wall against Gog and Magog. Most certainly it was not a part of the archetype ( $\alpha$ ) and for all its enormous popularity in the Middle Ages, this episode first appeared in Alexander legends quite late, for the first time in a *Syriac Alexander Legend* composed in 629–630 (van Donzel and Schmidt 2010, 17–21). In the Greek text, Chapter 29 is a late Christian interpolation (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 148–149), rightfully disregarded by Kroll.

### Chapter 30

Most of this chapter (2–15) contains a story of the “baleful birth in Babylonia” (the name after Baynham 2000), i.e. of a hybrid monster delivered by a native woman in Babylonia, brought to Alexander’s attention and interpreted by a Chaldean as the prodigy of Alexander’s imminent death. Omina preceding the death of Alexander are recorded in a number of mainstream sources (e.g. Cic. *Div.* i 47, i 65; D.S. xvii 114, 116; V.Max. i 8 ext. 10; Plu. *Alex.* 69.6–7, 73.1–74.1; Arr. *An.* vii 16.5–18.6, 22, 24.1–3; Just. xii 13.2–5; Zonar. iv 14), in the universal belief in antiquity that the death of an eminent person could not happen without divine signs and prophecies predicting it. The story of the hybrid monster is known only from the *Alexander Romance* and from the *Liber de Morte Testamentoque Alexandri Magni* (LDM), attached to the *Metz Epitome* but not an original part of it. They both stem from a political pamphlet, variously dated by modern scholars to: 322–321 BC (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 75–77, 164–192), 317 BC (Heckel 1988), after the death of Olympias (Carney 2006, 116), 309–308 BC (Baynham 1995a; Baynham 2000; Bosworth 2000; Zambrini 2007). Although these dates are hypothetical, based on modern readings of prosopographical details and on modern reconstructions of historical events and political factions in the age of the Successors, there is little doubt as to the early date of this piece of writing being broadly stated as the first half of the age



of the Successors (for the discussion of the date see Nawotka 2017a and here in commentary on III 33). Most of Chapters 30–33 are anchored in this pamphlet, thus conveying the authentic early Hellenistic tradition. This is not to say, of course, that all we read there meets the standards of historical accuracy as we understand it.

The story of the monster baby is a birth omen, a genre of ascertaining the future practically unknown to the Greeks with no examples listed in standard compedia on Greek divination (e.g. Burkert 2005; Johnston 2008). In Babylonia of the fourth c. BC, however, birth omens were second in importance only to astrological omens and to extispicy. Some two thousand cases of abnormal birth with the appropriate explanation are known from a collection called *Šumma izbu* surviving in twenty four clay tablets (standard edition: Leichty 1970). Although no exact parallel to the story of the monster baby in the *Alexander Romance* and in the *LDM* survives, enough similarities exist, including the distinct story pattern, to identify the baleful birth in Babylonia as an omen story of the *Šumma izbu* type. The sheer awkwardness of the story, unexplainable on Greek cultural grounds, speaks to its basic authenticity, both as an original Babylonian story and as the representation of the real omen shown and read to Alexander in the spring of 323 BC. Since it survives in the writing of the age of the Successors, it may be traced to an eye-witness account (Nawotka 2017b).

1 ὄντος αὐτοῦ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι καὶ μέλλοντος μεταλλάττειν τὸν βίον: Alexander's final sojourn in Babylon began in the spring or the late winter of 323 BC and ended with his death on 11 June 323 BC.

2 Σκύλλη: in the *Odyssey* (XII 245–259) Skylla was a sea-monster who seized and devoured six of Odysseus' companions. In the fifth c. BC at the latest, Skylla was depicted as a hybrid monster: a woman in the upper body with a monstrous lower body and four to six dogs' heads attached to her waist (Jentel 1997). Ps.-Callisthenes follows this representation of Skylla, standard in later antiquity.

3 καὶ τούτων μὲν ἦσαν αἱ μορφαὶ κινούμεναι καὶ εὐδηλοὶ πάσιν ...: there is a lacuna in ms. A here which can be filled after β: ἡ δὲ τοῦ παιδίου προτομή ἦν τεθνηκυῖα (sim. Also Arm., Val.). *LDM* has here: *omne (autem) puerile corpus mortuum erat et lividum*.

ἅμα δὲ τῷ τεκεῖν τὴν γυναῖκα τὸ προειρημένον βρέφος ἐμβαλοῦσα αὐτὸ εἰς τὸ προκόλπιον καὶ κατακαλύψασα παρεγένετο εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου: this is a typical story pattern of *Šumma izbu*: a malformed baby or in fact any omen had to be brought to the king's attention, either directly or through a *bārû* priest, qualified in reading omina (Leichty 1970, 12; Veldhuis 1996, 162, n. 13).

6 Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐθαύμασε: Alexander is understandably stupefied by this monster baby and cannot read the omen of his death, although earlier in the *Alexander Romance* he is perfectly capable of understanding prophetic signs. This adheres to the pattern popular in Greek literature that a person can interpret correctly only these omens which bode well for him (Stoneman 1995, 164).

τοὺς μάγους καὶ τοὺς Χαλδαίους συγκαλεσάμενος: the Chaldeans (*Kaldu*) were a West Semitic people, like Arameans, but unlike Arameans they were mostly sedentary and Babylonian sources clearly distinguish between the two. The Chaldeans are known as inhabitants of southern Babylonia from the ninth c. BC and between the eighth and the sixth c. BC they dominated the region politically, quickly assimilating to the Babylonian culture. Chaldean kings are known to have occasionally ruled Babylon from the late-eight c. BC in rivalry with the politically dominating Neo-Assyrian Empire, and the great Chaldean dynasty, founded by Nabopolassar and culminating under Nabuchadnezzar, rose to prominence in the Middle East in the late-seventh and much of the sixth c. BC. Chaldean rule in Babylon surely contributed to identifying Chaldeans with Babylonians, at least in Greek eyes (Arnold 2005, 87–99; Fales 2007), even if Chaldeans were but a part of the population of Babylonia (Dandamayev 2011; van der Spek 2008, 288–290). Herodotus (1 181, 183) and many other ancient authors use the name “Chaldeans” for priests of Zeus Belos, i.e. of Marduk, and for Babylonian priests in general, believed by the Greeks to be experts in magic, astrology, omen-reading and fortune-telling (Beaulieu 2006; van der Spek 2008, 288–290); one of the most important pagan sacred books of later antiquity is the *Chaldean Oracles*, no matter whether its authors were real Babylonians/Chaldeans or not (Stoneman 2011a, 182–183). The Babylonians avidly collected and inscribed in clay tablets heavenly signs and omens, both in dedicated documents and in astrological diaries. Interpreting the future of their kings and princes based on astronomical observations, hepatoscopy (extispicy) and birth omens was an important job of Babylonian priests/scholars (Maul 2007). Classical sources show that in the last months of Alexander’s life Babylonian priests (Chaldeans in our sources) noticed some deeply disquieting signs and tried in vain to save their King Alexander using the usual tools of their trade (Smelik 1978–1979; Huber 2005; Nawotka 2015). About μάγοι see commentary on 1 4.3. In this phrase (μάγους καὶ Χαλδαίους) Ps.-Callisthenes either proves his understanding of the difference between *magoi* and Chaldeans or uses these two names as synonyms for the same idea: that they were Oriental divination experts.

ἀπειλήσας αὐτοῖς θάνατον ἢ ζημίαν: quite a similar storyline can be found in the *Book of Daniel*, commonly dated to the second c. BC: King Nabuchadnezzar

summons *magoi* and Chaldean sorcerers to explain his dream on pain of death (*Dan.* 2.9).

15 Οὕτως ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἐξῆλθεν ἔξω, τὸ δὲ βρέφος κατακαῦσαι ἔκρινεν ὁ Χαλδαῖος: burning a monster is a typically Greek way of disposing of it, attested in the only birth omen story in Greek literature, in the second-c. AD *Book of Marvels*, written by Phlegon of Tralles (Hansen 1996, 88–89). In Babylonia a portent, the monster baby in this case, had to be destroyed as part of the release ritual (*namburbi*) ordered by a *bārû* priest. The Babylonians were not fatalistic and they believed that omens only indicated what might happen if no action were taken. Here we have a typically Babylonian storyline: an omen, obscure in character to onlookers, is interpreted by an expert who next prescribes an appropriate release ritual, a part of which was destroying the portent by throwing it into a river (Leichty 1970, 12–13; Maul 1999; Stol 2000, 165; Annus 2010, 3). Substituting burning the portent for drowning it is the Hellenizing stratum of this complex story.

### Chapter 31

1 Τῆς δὲ μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Ὀλυμπιάδος πλεονάκις γραφούσης περὶ τοῦ Ἀντιπάτρου: this section conveys an image, known also from other sources, of tension among the leading figures in Macedonia in the absence of Alexander: his viceroy Antipater and his mother Olympias (D.S. XVII 118.1, XIX 11.9; Plu. *Alex.* 39.12–13; Plu. *Mor.* 180d; Arr. *An.* VII 12.5–7). Some modern scholars interpret this situation as rivalry between two power centers which resulted in diminished prestige and weakened Macedonian control in Greece in the last years of Alexander, most apparent in the spring of 324 BC when Athens largely ignored Olympias and Antipater, who demanded that Harpalos, the refugee treasurer of Alexander, be handed over to their envoys (Blackwell 1999).

Ἀλέξανδρος ... μεταπέμψασθαι τὸν Ἀντίπατρον πρὸς αὐτόν εἰς Μακεδονίαν ἀπέστειλε Κράτερον: a fairly accurate, if much abbreviated account of the events in the summer of 324 BC when Alexander, having reconciled with his mutinous soldiers at Opis, appointed Krateros to lead some 10,000 veterans to Macedonia and to replace Antipater as the viceroy in the Balkans. Krateros was appointed precisely because of the reputation he enjoyed as the most senior and best of Alexander's generals, and a person of conservative Macedonian views. At the same time, he had the most regal image after Alexander, thus being the most acceptable to the veterans and to Macedonians at large (Arr. *Succ.* F19, Ross, ap. *Suda*, s.v. Κρατερός): to put in Anson's (2012) words he was

“the Macedonian patriot.” Antipater was ordered to come to Babylon as the head of the new levies destined to replace the veterans (D.S. XVIII 4.1; Curt. X 10.15; Arr. *An.* VII 12.4; Just. XII 12.7–10), some believe in order to be appointed Alexander’s viceroy in Asia for the duration of the war Alexander planned to wage in the West (Ashton 2015).

2–3 this covers the story of hatching a plot to poison Alexander. The premature death of Alexander, barely 33 years old in 323 BC and ostensibly very fit, made many people think that the cause of his death was poison. This is mentioned by a plethora of authors, even if not all of them shared this view: D.S. XVII 117.5–118.2; V.Max. I 7, ext.2; Curt. X 10.14–19; Plin. *Nat.* xxx 149; Arr. *An.* VII 27; Plu. *Alex.* 77.2–4; [Plu.] *Mor.* 849f; Paus. VIII 18.6; Just. XII 13.7–14.9; *ME* 88–89, 96 (*LDM*); Oros. III 20.4; Zonar. IV 14; *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 322. The person generally blamed for poisoning Alexander was Iolaos, son of Antipater and Alexander’s cup-bearer (D.S. XVII 118.1–2 and XIX 11.8; Curt. X 10.14–17; Plu. *Alex.* 77.2–3; [Plu.] *Mor.* 849f; Arr. *An.* VII 27.1–2; Just. XII 14.6–8; Phot. 266, p. 496a, Bekker) and the strength of these accusations was great enough to make Olympias overturn his grave or scatter his ashes in 317/316 BC, not being able to exact vengeance on this son of Antipater (D.S. XIX 11.8 and 35.1; Plu. *Alex.* 77.3). Arrian and Plutarch, however, relying on good sources, firmly disagree with the rumors that Alexander had been poisoned (Plu. *Alex.* 77.2 and 5; Arr. *An.* VII 27.3). Plutarch states even that these started circulating just five years after Alexander’s death. This alone makes the story of poisoning utterly unbelievable since it is extremely unlikely that nobody present in Babylon in June 323 BC would have noticed anything had Alexander been poisoned. Hence serious modern scholarship does not believe in poison as the cause of Alexander’s death (e.g. Lane Fox 1973, 470–471; Heckel 1988, 2; Bosworth 1988, 172–173; Hamilton 1999, 213–215; Borza and Reames-Zimmermann 2000, 25; Demandt 2009, 343–345), although it will probably always be attractive to some (recently: Cartledge 2004, 191–192; Schep 2009; Waterfield 2011, 2–4; Schep et al. 2014). Poisoning excluded, we may be pretty sure that Alexander died of natural causes, most likely of typhoid fever (Oldach, Borza and Benitez 1998; Borza and Reames-Zimmermann 2000; Nawotka 2010, 376–377). The ultimate source of the story of poisoning is probably the political pamphlet upon which the *LDM* and the final chapters of the *Alexander Romance* are based. Blaming political opponents, in this case the family of Antipater, was potentially a powerful weapon in wars of the age of the Successors (Bosworth 1971; Heckel 1997, 283–288; Hamilton 1999, 213–215). Aristotle is sometimes blamed for fashioning poison for Alexander, although in general ancient authors write about that with disbelief: Plin. *Nat.* xxx 149; Plu. *Alex.* 77.3; Arr. *An.* VII 27.1; Zonar. IV 14.

The *Alexander Romance* skips this detail altogether, no doubt not to sour the picture of cordial relationships between the greatest philosopher and his best student.

3 ἐμβάλων εἰς ἡμίονου χηλὴν: the anecdotal detail about an ass' hoof as the only vessel strong enough to withstand the strength of poison which killed Alexander is known from a variety of sources who claim that water from the Styx was used to make it: Plin. *Nat.* xxx 149; Arr. *An.* vii 27.1; Paus. viii 18.6; Just. xii 14.7; Stob. i 49.51; Zonar. iv 14. It most likely belongs to the original poisoning story and already Theophrastos (fr. 213b, Fortenbaugh et al., ap. Antig. *Mir.* 158) seems to have been familiar with this peculiar property of horn as being resistant to (the poisonous) water of the Styx.

Κασάνδρῳ τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐξαπέστειλε ποιῆσαι ξένια Ἀλεξάνδρῳ: Antipater did not heed Alexander's order to come to Babylon, effectively relinquishing his power in the Balkans, but dispatched his son Kassander instead (Badian 1961, 37). The *Alexander Romance* is the only source to state directly that Antipater sent Kassander to Babylon shortly before Alexander's death, although we know from Plutarch (*Alex.* 74.2) that Kassander had been in Babylon for a short time only. Since there is little doubt as to the diplomatic mission of Kassander to Babylon, Ps.-Callisthenes surely conveys a good tradition of gifts from Antipater brought to Alexander on this occasion. In some sources Kassander is blamed for poisoning Alexander, prompted by his father Antipater (V.Max. i 7, ext.2; Just. xii 14.1 and 6; Suda, s.v. Ἀλέξανδρος).

4 Ἰόλλα, ἀρχισινοχός: Iolaos is generally described as Alexander's ἀρχισινοχός ("chief cup-bearer" *LSJ*, s.v.); Plu. *Alex.* 74.2; or simply οἰνοχός (Arr. *An.* vii 27.2). Latin sources are more periphrastic referring to him as *inter ministros* (Curt. x.10.14), *praeministro Alexandri* (*ME* 89: *LDM*), or *ministrare regi solebat* (Just. xii 14.6). Iolaos was the youngest son of Antipater, with some scholars maintaining that he was still one of the king's pages while serving as the cup-bearer (Heckel 2006, 143).

5 τὸν δὲ Ἰόλλαν ἔτυχεν ὀλίγαις ἡμέραις πρότερον Ἀλέξανδρος ῥάβδῳ καθιγμένος κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς: among anecdotes about disagreements between Alexander and Kassander, Plutarch (*Alex.* 74; *Mor.* 18of) quotes, after an unknown source, a particularly nasty episode: Kassander, fresh from his arrival at Babylon, burst out in laughter seeing Oriental courtiers performing proskynesis before Alexander. The outraged king grabbed his head and struck it against the wall. Much later Kassander reportedly trembled at the very sight of Alexander's statue (Plu. *Alex.* 74.3 and 6). Although an indirect confirmation of the veracity

of this story are opinions about Kassander's hatred for Alexander (Paus. IX 7.2), the anecdote of the violent encounter in Babylon is not universally accepted, with Tarn (1948, 11, 299) and Goukowsky (1978, 105–111) rejecting it and the majority of later scholarship accepting it: Hamilton 1999, 206; Green 1974, 473; Bosworth 1988, 162; Stewart 1993, 149. Ps.-Callisthenes transforms this story to explain why Iolaos was angry with Alexander and we also learn from Arrian about this reaction (*An.* VII 27.2). Here Alexander punished Iolaos for a lack of discipline, since in the *Alexander Romance* Alexander never loses his temper, as he obviously does in Plutarch's anecdote of striking Kassander's head against the wall.

παρέλαβε Μήδιον Θεσσαλὸν Ἀλεξάνδρου μὲν ὄντα φίλον, ἑαυτοῦ δὲ ἐραστήν: Medios of Larissa was a prominent Thessalian aristocrat and a *hetairos* (Arr. *An.* VII 24.4), friend (D.S. XVII 117.1) and companion-in-arms of Alexander (Str. XI 14.12), noted as a flatterer (Plu. *Mor.* 65c). Arrian also (*An.* VII 27.2) states that he was a lover of Iolaos. After Alexander's death Medios had a successful military career in the service of Perdikkas and then of Antigonos and his son Demetrios. He wrote a historical work, known only from the testimony of Strabo (Str. XI.14.12–15 = *FGrH* 129. Heckel 2006, 158). Some modern scholars believe that the real purpose of Medios' writing was to dispel accusations of his involvement in the poisoning of Alexander (Zambrini 2007, 214–216).

6 Ἀλεξάνδρου ἡδέως γενομένου μετὰ τῶν παρόντων φίλων καὶ τεχνιτῶν [καὶ] (τῶν) περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον: Dionysiac *technitai* (artists) were a near universal phenomenon of the Hellenistic age. They were guilds of professional actors, organized as democratic associations, acting both as trade unions of stage performers and partners of cities and kings with whom they negotiated their privileges and to whom they voted honors, much as cities did (Le Guen 2001; Lightfoot 2002; Aneziri 2003). Dionysiac artists continued to prosper in the Early Empire, enjoying renewed or new privileges under Hadrian and other emperors (e.g. Boatwright 2000, 102–114; Aneziri 2009). The earliest evidence for the Dionysiac *technitai* is of 279/278 or 278/277 BC (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1132. Aneziri 2003, 28–30) and almost certainly these associations did not exist under Alexander, but he was nevertheless a noted employer of the best Greek stage performers and almost certainly a number of actors and musicians were present at Alexander's court in Babylon in 323 BC. Yet the name “Dionysiac *technitai*” in this passage reflects much better the realities of the time when the *Alexander Romance* was composed than of the age of Alexander.

πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀπήντων εἰς ἄνεσιν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον στεφανώσαντες: both on his march to Babylon and during his final stay in this city Alexander received many embassies from subject and allied states and from peo-

ples far outside his empire, including Romans, Celts, Ethiopians, Skythians (Nawotka 2010, 365–367 with reference). Diplomatic customs of the day necessitated bringing gifts to the king, certainly very often in the form of golden crowns/wreaths. Presumably this passage alludes to crowns received by Alexander on this occasion.

προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ Μήδιος: these are the events of the last days of Alexander. In the last days of May 323 BC Alexander spent all night at a banquet celebrating the oracular response from Siwah in which Ammon had accorded Hephaistion a heroic cult. When he was about to get home, Alexander was accosted by Medios who invited him to his house for another drinking party, the last one on record in Alexander's life (D.S. XVII 117.1; Plu. *Alex.* 75.3–4, with 72.3; Arr. *An.* VII 24.4; Ael. *VH* III 23; *ME (LDM)* 97; Just. XII 13.7. The last banquet of Alexander: Nikobule *FGrH* 127 F2, ap. Ath. XII 53). There is a lacuna before this passage, surely once containing an account of the earlier banquet, preceding that in the house of Medios.

8 ἦσαν δὲ οἱ παρόντες κ': neither the number of guests nor their names are attested in all early versions of the *Alexander Romance*, with ms. A and Arm. being the closest to twenty, while Syr. lists twelve names without stating the number twenty, Leo has fifteen names or their parts without stating the number twenty, β has a lacuna in this place, Val. skips it altogether. The place is corrupt but quite obviously the archetype (α) had a number of names here and most probably it mentioned that there were twenty guests. The same number of guests in the house of Medios is known from Nikobule (*FGrH* 127 F1, ap. Ath. x 44. On Nikobule see: Auberger 2005, 101). Possibly both the early Hellenistic pamphlet on which Ps.-Callisthenes draws here and Nikobule made use of the *Ephemerides* or the *Royal Journal* kept by Eumenes, Alexander's secretary, and that therefore this number reflects the historical reality (Ausfeld 1907, 206–207. On the historicity of the *Ephemerides* see: Goukowsky 1978, 199–200; Pédech 1984, 246–251; Bosworth 1988a, 171–172; Chugg 2005). The list of guests must have been circulating quite widely, as Onesikritos is blamed for *not* listing the names of guests (*FGrH* 134 F34, ap. *ME (LDM)* 97). Ms. A lists here sixteen names, some which are known from other sources to have been in Babylon in May 323 BC.

Περδίκκας: Perdikkas was a Macedonian aristocrat of the royal family of Orestis. He was a gifted officer, after the death of Hephaistion promoted to the command of the Companion cavalry. Since in May 323 BC Krateros was in Kilikia leading Macedonian veterans home, Perdikkas was the most senior general in Alexander's army in Babylon and thus, the second only to the king. Unsurprisingly then, the dying Alexander appointed Perdikkas guardian of

Rhoxane and in a highly symbolic gesture gave him his ring. After Alexander's death Perdikkas won the power struggle among the generals in Babylon, defeating Meleager, and the Macedonian generals elected him *chiliarchos* and guardian of Philip III Arrhidaios and soon of Alexander's posthumous son Alexander IV (Bosworth 2002, 43–63; Roisman 2012, 61–86). Despite his initial success Perdikkas lacked the charisma and military talents to control all other ambitious Macedonian generals in the longer term. In 321 BC he led an expedition to Egypt to punish Ptolemy for abducting the hearse and body of Alexander which constituted an open challenge to Perdikkas' authority. The failed attempt to take Memphis and the losses incurred by his soldiers ruined the reputation of Perdikkas who soon fell victim to a conspiracy and was murdered by Seleukos (Heckel 1992, 134–163). Perdikkas and Meleager were two protagonists in the first stage of the age of the Successors and perhaps for this reason they were given a position of prominence at the top of the list of guests in the house of Medios.

**Μελέαγρος:** Meleager was an infantry officer with a good, if not exactly distinguished career under Alexander. He won a position of prominence in June 323 BC, espousing the cause of Arrhidaios as successor to Alexander against the wishes of the majority of aristocratic officers and the Macedonian cavalry sympathetic to the yet unborn child of Alexander and Rhoxane. Meleager thus demonstrated the conservative view, in opposition to the Orientalizing policy of Alexander. His candidate indeed became king as Philip III but Meleager lost out in a confrontation with Perdikkas whom in vain he tried to assassinate, and in consequence he was killed on the orders of Perdikkas (Heckel 1992, 165–170).

**Πύθων:** no Python is otherwise attested in the age of Alexander but four Macedonians bore the name Peithon/Pithon/Pitho at that time (Heckel 2006, 194–197); the name Python may be a corrupt version of Pithon and indeed this is the reading of Arm. (265), with another corrupt version *Prîṭōn* in Syr. Peithon son of Krateuas, a *somatophylax* of Alexander, in 323 BC a supporter of Perdikkas and the satrap of Media (Heckel 2006, 195–196, s.v. Peithon [2]) is the only person (roughly) of this name attested in Babylon in May/June 323 B.C. when he, with Peukestas, Seleukos and three other Macedonians, allegedly slept in the temple of Serapis with the intention of aiding Alexander's recovery (Arr. *An.* VII 26.2, after *Ephemerides*). It is this Peithon/Pithon who is most likely meant here (Ausfeld 1907, 207; Merkelbach and Trumpf 1077, 172).

**Λεόννατος:** an important Macedonian aristocrat of the royal house of Lynkestis, related to the mother of Philip II (Curt. x 7.8; *Suda*, s.v. Λεόννατος), a boyhood companion of Alexander. He was a *somatophylax* of Philip II and of Alexander; he distinguished himself defending Alexander in the city of the



Mallians (see commentary to III 4.14). Leonnatos was in Babylon in June 323 BC; after Alexander's death he was a key player in the power struggle, together with Perdikkas and Ptolemy leading the faction supported by the Macedonian cavalry against the party of Meleager. He wanted and received the satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia, only to get involved in the Lamian War in which he was killed by the Athenian troops while leading an army to relieve Antipater (Heckel 2006, 147–151; Lane Fox 2015, 17–171).

**Κάσανδρος:** see above in this chapter.

**Πευκέστης:** this is the slightly corrupt name of Peukestas. Peukestas was named earlier as Alexander's friend who accompanied him to the city of the Malians in India (III 4.14, see commentary ad loc.). As a reward for bravery in this incident he was made the king's *sompatophylax* and in 324 BC he was appointed satrap of Persis and by June 323 BC he had come to Babylon leading Kossaian and Tapurian soldiers (Arr. *An.* VII 23.1). Later Peukestas was an important military leader at the beginning of the age of the Successors (Heckel 2006, 203–205).

**Πτολεμαῖος:** Ptolemy, son of Lagos, a later king of Egypt, a *somatoophylax* of Alexander. In 323 BC he was present in Babylon, soon to play a significant role in the power struggle after the death of Alexander (Heckel 2006, 235–238).

**Λυσίμαχος:** Lysimachos was Alexander's *somatoophylax* and later a *strategos* of Thrace and king, playing an important role in the age of the Successors (Heckel 2006, 153–155).

**Φίλιππος ὁ ἰατρός:** on Philippos, Alexander's physician, see commentary on II 8.4. He is never attested after 332 BC, and possibly his name was included in the list of guests at Medios (here and in ME 97 (*LDM*)), most of whom joined in with the conspiracy against Alexander, because he was earlier unjustly accused by Parmenion of attempting to poison Alexander (Heckel 2006, 213–214, s.v. Philip [9]).

**Νέαρχος Κρής:** Nearchos was a friend of Alexander and admiral of his navy on the Indus and then in the Arabian Sea. In 323 BC he is attested in Babylon, after Alexander's death championing the cause of Herakles son of Alexander and Barsine as Alexander's successor (Bosworth 2002, 38–40). In the age of the Successors Nearchos was allied with Antigonos. His name on the list of conspirators is quite surprising. If the original source of the last chapters of the *Alexander Romance* was indeed written by a partisan of Ptolemy ca. 309/308 BC, Nearchos was probably included in it in order to blame Ptolemy's foe Antigonos, by charging his ally with conspiracy to poison Alexander (Bosworth 2000, 214). An alternative, if less likely explanation is that inclusion of the name of Nearchos in the list simply reflects the rumors swirling in Babylon after 11 June 323 BC (Zambrini 2007, 214).

Στασάνωρ: Stasanor of Soloi in Cyprus was a companion of Alexander, in 329 BC the satrap of Areia, in 328/327 BC also satrap of Drangiana and he seems to have kept his satrapy to the end of Alexander's life, to be reappointed by the Macedonian generals in Babylon after Alexander's death. The *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* (97) are the only sources for Stasanor's presence in Babylon in May 323 BC but this does not necessarily speak against the veracity of this information, as in 325–324 BC; Stasanor certainly moved more than once between his satrapy and Alexander's court (Heckel 2006, 255).

Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Θρᾷξ: no Thracian of this name is attested in Alexander's army or court outside of the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* (97). Heckel thinks that this is a real person of high position on Alexander's entourage (Heckel 2006, 137, s.v. Heracleides [4]).

... Εὐρώπιος: the surviving word means "from Europolis," with no name of the guest extant. The name must have been lost in an early stage of transmission as it is missing from all other versions too, with Arm. having "Europpeos" here (265). Most probably Seleukos is meant, as he originated from Europolis in Macedonia, in ancient sources confused with Oropos, a town in Boeotia, on the border with Attica (St.Byz., s.v. Ὀροπός; App. Syr. 298. Ausfeld 1907, 207). Seleukos was present in Babylon in May–June 323 BC, being attested as one of six Macedonians to have slept in the temple of Serapis to bring about Alexander's recovery (Arr. An. VII 26.2, after *Ephemerides*). He participated in the turbulent decision-making process after Alexander's death on the side of Perdikkas. Hence his presence in the house of Medios is not unlikely, although there is no other evidence as to his alleged participation in the plot against Alexander (Heckel 2006, 246–248).

Ἀρίστων Φαρσάλιος: outside of the *Alexander Romance* three persons of the name Ariston are attested in the age of Alexander: a commander of an *ile* of the Companion cavalry (Arr. An. III 11.8) and possibly a person entrusted with bringing the ashes of Krateros to his wife Phila (D.S. XIX 59.3. Billows 1990, 375); a member of the royal house of Paionia, in Alexander's expedition to the East commanding an *ile* of the Paionian cavalry (Heckel 2006, 48–49, s.v. Arsiton [3]); an actor performing at the wedding of Susa in 324 BC (Chares *FGrH* 125 F4, ap. Ath. XII 54). No Ariston of Pharsalos is otherwise attested. Heckel suggests that the Ariston of the *Alexander Romance* may be identical with Ariston the officer of the Companion cavalry (Heckel 2006, 48, s.v. Ariston [2]).

Φίλιππος (ὁ) μηχανικός: no engineer called Philippos is otherwise attested in the age of Alexander. Shortly before the events related here a Philippos, a companion of Alexander, returned from Siwah bringing the news that Ammon had agreed to a heroic cult for Hephaestion (D.S. XVII 115.6. Ausfeld 1907, 207). Since this oracular response was of the utmost importance to Alexander, the

presence of this Philippos at a banquet attended by the king would not be unusual. Yet Berve's identification of him with Philippos, the guest of Medias is still tenuous, as is Heckel's identification of Philippos *mechanikos* with Philippos appointed by Antigonos Monophthalmos an advisor (*symbolos*) of his son Demetrios and a *phrourarchos* of Sardis in 302 BC (D.S. XIX 69.1. Berve 1926, II, 389, no. 789; Heckel 2006, 215, s.v. Philip [14] and Whithead 2015, 76 in agreement with him).

**Φιλώτας:** out of eight or nine persons bearing this name attested in the age of Alexander, this Philotas is most probably the satrap of Kilikia appointed in 323 BC by Alexander and confirmed by the Macedonian generals in Babylon (D.S. XVIII 3.1; Arr. *Succ.* 1.5; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8; Just. XIII 4.12. Heckel 2006, 219, s.v. Philotas [6]).

**Μένανδρος:** probably a Macedonian officer and satrap of Lydia from 331 BC. In the spring of 323 BC Menander brought troops from Lydia to Babylon and almost certainly stayed there for some time, after the death of Alexander being confirmed in his satrapal power by the Macedonian generals in Babylon (D.S. XVIII 3.1; Curt. X 10.2; Arr. *Succ.* 1.6; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8; Just. XIII 4.14. Heckel 2006, 163).

9 **Περδίκκας τε καὶ Πτολεμαῖος Ὀλκίας Λυσίμαχος Εὐμένης Ἄσανδρος:** the list of the guests of Medios now surviving is not complete: there are only sixteen out of twenty names. Three of them are repeated in a shorter list of six prominent companions of Alexander who did not participate in the plot: Perdikkas, Ptolemy and Lysimachos. Presumably all six were also named in the list of twenty. With the three additional names (Holkias, Eumenes, Asander) we know nineteen participants of the banquet in the house of Medios.

**Ὀλκίας:** Olkias or Holkias is a little known officer of the age of Alexander, outside of the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* attested only in Polyainos (IV 6.6) as a leader of the mutiny of three thousand soldiers against Antigonos in 319 BC. Some modern scholars make him a member of the Illyrian royal family, educated at the court of Philip II (Heckel 2006, 140–141), but there is no real evidence to support this reconstruction. He was, however, the most likely author of the political pamphlet on which the last chapters of the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* are based (Heckel 1988, 79–81; Heckel 2006, 140).

**Εὐμένης:** Eumenes of Kardia was the secretary of Philip II and Alexander and thus the most influential Greek in Alexander's inner circle of power. One of his responsibilities was keeping the *King's Journal* or *Ephemerides*, for us the most important, if indirect source for the last days of Alexander. Its testimony is most probably accurate in the sense of listing real events but perhaps not all of them, if Wilcken and Bosworth are right in attributing to Eumenes the

intention of editing the *Ephemerides* in such a way as to dispel rumors of the poisoning of Alexander (Wilcken 1967, 267; Bosworth 1988a, 172). Eumenes was closely allied with Perdikkas, and after the death of Alexander was assigned to Paphlagonia and the yet unconquered Kappadokia as satrap. Eumenes was a very active participant in the Wars of the Successors fighting against Antigonos and his allies until he died in 316, sold by his Macedonian soldiers to Antigonos (Schäfer 2002; Heckel 2006, 120–121).

**Ἀσανδρος:** Asander was a Macedonian officer, after the death of Alexander attested as the satrap of Karia and confirmed in this position at Triparadeisos (D.S. XVIII 3.1, XVIII 39.6; Curt. X 10.2; Arr. *Succ.* 1.6, 1.37; *Dexipp. FGrH* 110, F8. Heckel 2006, 57, s.v. Asander [2]). Asander was Ptolemy's ally, opposed to Perdikkas and Antigonos, who defeated him in 312 BC. Although elected a *stephanephoros* of Miletos (*Milet* 1.3.122, l. 100), Asander was obviously so much hated that the overthrowing of his power by soldiers of Antigonos and the Milesians opened a new epoch in this city (*Milet* 1.3.123, ll. 1–4. Nawotka 2012a).

**11** ἐξαίφνης ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἀνεβόησεν ὡς τόξῳ πεπληγὼς εἰς τὸ ἦπαρ: since the story of the poisoning of Alexander is apocryphal, so is the description of Alexander's reaction to the wine laced with poison, comparing the pain he suffered to that caused by a spear, or by an arrow (*ME* 99 (*LDM*)). This episode was known to other ancient authors too: Plu. *Alex.* 75.5; Just. XII 13.8 (with less detail also D.S. XVII 117.2) but Plutarch, surely on his knowledge of many sources unknown to us, says that it was invented (Hamilton 1999, 209).

## Chapter 32

**1** Ἀλέξανδρος ἀπερᾶσαι βουλόμενος τὸ πολὺ τοῦ οἴνου ᾗτησε πτερὸν: the *LDM* (99) is the only other source to claim that the deadly poison was administered to Alexander through a feather used to induce vomiting. It resembles, however, the story of the Emperor Claudius allegedly poisoned by Agrippina using a mushroom and by his physician Xenophon applying a feather laced with poison (Tac. *An.* XII 67), incidentally story of dubious credibility too (Aveline 2004). The episode with the feather from the story of the poisoning of Claudius may have been borrowed in the transmission from the original early Hellenistic pamphlet to the story we have now in the *Alexander Romance* and in the *LDM*.

**2** λαλοῦντα ἀσαφῶς διὰ τὸ τὴν γλῶτταν ἤδη συνοιδᾶν: on Plutarch's (*Alex.* 76.7) and Arrian's (*An.* VII 25.6) testimony the *Ephemerides* state that in the course of his terminal illness Alexander was rendered voiceless (without a reference to

the *Ephemerides* also Just. XII 15.12). Here the sequence of events is disrupted, with Alexander voiceless not in the end but in the beginning of his fatal illness.

3 Κάσανδρος ... ὑπὸ νύκτα ἀπῆλθεν: the sudden departure of Kassander, known only from the *Alexander Romance* and from the *LDM*, is an invention of the author of the early Hellenistic pamphlet, surely meant to further inculcate Kassander by providing “evidence” of the premeditated wrongdoing in his flight from Babylon under the cover of darkness. The historical Kassander stayed on in Babylon where, after the death of Alexander, he was appointed by the Macedonian generals as commander of the *hypaspistai* or the royal guards, replacing Seleukos after he was promoted to chiliarchy (Just. XIII 4.17–18). He left Babylon later, most likely once he could assure his father Antipater that Perdikkas was willing to cooperate with him (Heckel 2006, 79).

4–7 The story of the attempted suicide of Alexander, and his suffering of excruciating pain. The story is almost certainly fictitious, although it was known to Arrian (*An.* VII 27.3) and Zonaras (IV 14). Possibly the original source for Arrian was the early Hellenistic pamphlet reproduced in the *Alexander Romance* and in the *LDM*. This seemingly bizarre story may have originated in the Iranian milieu: if Alexander disappeared having thrown himself into the Euphrates unseen by anybody, this would be the evidence of his immortality, but he was prevented from that by Rhoxane acting in the capacity of the Iranian water goddess; thus the goddess deserted him and he would not be perceived immortal (Jamzadeh 2012, 148). Alexander is clearly disappointed at the lost chance, having addressed Rhoxane: ὦ Ῥωξάνη, μικρὰ ἢ εἴη σεαυτὴν χάρις τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν ἀφαιρεῖσθαι, or “O Rhoxane, I give you scant thanks for taking away my glory” (III 32.7, tr. by E. Haight).

4 ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου μετελθεῖν: the story of the attempted suicide is set in the house of Alexander in Babylon, on the Euphrates. In Babylon the historical Alexander resided in the palace of Nabuchadnezzar II, later augmented by the Persian kings who added an *apadana* to them, so that it may have served as the official residence of the satrap of Babiruš and of the Great Kings. This was a large complex composed of two palaces in fact, the southern, inside the original city walls of Babylon and the northern one, directly to the north of the city walls. The southern palace occupied the space between the Euphrates and the processional way leading from the Ishtar Gate to the temples of Nabu and Marduk (Esagila). Both palaces, built on an eight-meter high terrace and surrounded by an additional wall, formed a powerful citadel dominating Babylon. Since

the palaces bordered the Euphrates, one could imagine Alexander contemplating suicide the way described in the *Alexander Romance*, from a topographical point of view at least. The palaces of Babylon housed a huge number of soldiers, officials and courtiers (Kuhrt 2001). Hence the purported order of Alexander would have resulted in a massive evacuation and chaos.

**Καμβοβάφην:** the *LDM* gives here no name and the only other early version of the *Alexander Romance* to name a person dismissed by Alexander, Arm. names this character Kombaphe (268). Neither a person in Alexander's household named Kambobaphes/Kombaphe nor these names in general are otherwise attested. Faced with the silence of sources some scholars think that this is a fictitious character (Jouanno 2002, 147). The name sounds Oriental, resembling that of a Syrian boy Κομβάβος, featured in Lucian's *De Dea Syria* (cf. Kroll, app. ad loc.). If no real character is meant here, the Oriental-sounding name may well have been introduced to give the appropriate coloring to the scene set in the palace in Babylon.

**9 Κομβάρην και Ἑρμογένην ἄνηβα παιδάρια:** Kombares and Hermogenes are unattested outside the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* (103) in which Kombares becomes Combaphus. Indeed the archetype (α) might have here something like Κομβάρην, since Arm. reads "Kombaphe" in this scene (269), the same name as in the attempted suicide scene. For Heckel (2006, 94, s.v. Combaphes and 138, s.v. Hermogenes) both are slaves, Kombaphes an Oriental one. This is of course possible, since one meaning of the word παιδάριον is "young slave" (*LSJ*, s.v. II). But having two words ἄνηβα παιδάρια to express the notion of "young slaves" seems superfluous, and Heliodorus (x 8.1) uses this expression with emotional coloring for young children ("enfants impubères" in J. Maillon's translation, Belles Lettres). Kombaphes and Hermogenes are persons trusted by Alexander to the extent that in the *LDM* one of them actually writes down Alexander's last will. Their position of prominence in the scene in which only Perdikkas, Ptolemy and Lysimachos, the closest companions of Alexander, participate, may mean that they were Alexander's pages or βασιλκοὶ παῖδες: well-born teenagers serving the king and training for adult life as the king's companions. Their presence at Alexander's court in Babylon is well-attested (Heckel 1992, 237–244) in May–June 323 BC. (Curt. x 8.3–4). If the names of real characters were introduced here, Kombaphes and Hermogenes may have been royal pages and not slaves.

**ὕπερ τῆς Πτολεμαίου γενέσεως ...ἦν ἐκ Φιλίππου:** on the evidence of early Hellenistic sources Ptolemy could belong to a corollary branch of the Macedonian royal dynasty as he was referred to as a scion of Herakles, as the Argeads were (Satyr. fr. 21; Theoc. 17.26; *OGIS* I 54, ll. 4–6), at least in the official version of

his ancestry. Some ancient authors also preserve information or gossip about Philip II being the father of Ptolemy (Curt. IX 8.22; Paus. I 6.2) with Aelian alluding to it (Ael. fr. 285 = *Suda*, s.v. Λάγος), but this was probably an invention of the age of the Successors when a blood connection with Philip II and Alexander was valued very highly indeed (Errington 1976, 155–156; Heckel 2006, 235; Lianou 2010, 128–130).

12 ἐκ τῶν Μακεδόνων πάντων ἐγένετο βοή: the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* (104), surely after the early Hellenistic pamphlet, follow the same storyline as other sources relating, after the *Ephemerides*, the great clamor of the Macedonian soldiers at the rumor of Alexander's death, their demands to be admitted to his palace and threats towards his guards, as well as the farewell, with the soldiers parading through Alexander's bed chamber: Curt. X 5.3; Plu. *Alex.* 76.8; Arr. *An.* VII 26.1; Just. XII 15.2–3.

σωματοφύλακας: *somatophylakes* were an elite unit of seven, exceptionally eight, bodyguards of the Argead Macedonian kings, selected from among the most trusted aristocrats. The core of Alexander's *somatophylakes* were people raised with him, like Hephastion, Leonnatos or Perdikkas and the tried and trusted Ptolemy. They were not just bodyguards of the king but high-ranking army officers too, often assigned with important tasks. In 323 BC the seven *somatophylakes* were Aristonous, Leonnatos, Perdikkas, Ptolemy, Lysimachos, Peithon and Peukestas, all present in Babylon (Heckel 1978; Heckel 1992, 237, 257–279). This is the first and only place where the *Alexander Romance* uses the word σωματοφύλακες for bodyguards of a king. In other places it departs from this term, technically for the bodyguards of Philip II and Alexander, replacing it with παρασπισταί, used much in the same meaning as σωματοφύλακες (I 24.6, I 25.3, II 2.6, II 9.3, II 15.4, III 19.7, 9 and 11, III 20.4). The usage of the proper term σωματοφύλακες surely reflects a direct borrowing from the early Hellenistic pamphlet.

Πευκόλαος: Peukolaos is attested only here and in the *LDM* (105) and nothing can be said about the historicity of the man (Heckel 2006, 205–206, s.v. Peukolaus [3]).

Μεταλαβὼν τὴν φωνὴν Μακεδονιστὶ: this is the only place in the *Alexander Romance* in which anybody speaks Macedonian. No matter whether the ancient Macedonian was a language in its own right or a dialect of Greek (see e.g. Borza 1994 and Panayotou 2007 for conflicting views on this hugely discussed topic; cf. commentary on II 3.6), our sources show people, Alexander included, speaking Macedonian (Μακεδονιστὶ), often in a state of emotional stress. This alone makes this scene credible and suggests the historicity of Peukolaos.

15 σοι τῷ ποιήσαντι Μακεδονίαν ἄξιαν τοῦ Διός: an expression fitting the religious reality of the fourth c. BC: Zeus was the principal tutelary god of Macedonia and indeed the last major event in Macedonia in which Alexander took part prior to his expedition to Asia was the feast of the Olympian Zeus in Dion, celebrated in the autumn of 335 BC for nine days, including banquets for dignitaries and for the Macedonian soldiers (D.S. XVII 16; Arr. *An.* I 11.1. Bosworth 1980, 96–97).

### Chapter 33

Most of Chapter 33 (Sections 2–25) contains the last will of Alexander, a parallel but not identical version of which survives in ME 107–123 (*LDM*). A fragmentary papyrus of the first c. BC–first c. AD (*P.Vindob.* 31954. Segre 1933) contains the text very similar to, although not identical, with Ps.-Callisth., III 33.11–12 (ME 116 (*LDM*)), thus proving that the last will of Alexander, most probably in the shape we know it, was circulating two-three hundred years prior to the date of composition of the *Alexander Romance*. This further validates the early Hellenistic date of the political pamphlet on which the final chapters of the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* are based. This last will of Alexander should not be confused with his “last plans” known from Diodorus (D.S. XVIII 4; Plu. *Mor.* 343d), even if the question of whether Diodorus here followed the reliable early Hellenistic author Hieronymos of Kardia, a friend and associate of Eumenes of Kardia, remains unanswered (Hornblower 1981, 87–90 but with Bosworth’s yes: Bosworth 2002, 24–27). At any rate, if this document was authentic, it was most probably written down by Eumenes, Alexander’s secretary. The “last plans” was a document (*hypomnemata*) Perdikkas claimed to have found among Alexander’s papers. It was submitted to the soldiers in Babylon who voted it down, probably because an important part of the “last plans” was another war which they clearly did not want. But this does not deny its authenticity as a genuine document by Alexander (Wilcken 1937; Schachermeyr 1954; Badian 1968; Bosworth 1988, 207–211; Nawotka 2010, 379–381; Waterfield 2011, 11–12).

It is a generally accepted truth that Alexander died without leaving a last will and that the decisions as to the fate of his empire were taken by the council of his mostly Macedonian (with some Greeks among them) generals in Babylon in June 323 BC. The mainstream authors (D.S. XVIII 2–3; Curt. X 5–10 Arr. *Succ.* *FGrH* 156 F1; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8; Just. XIII 1–4) show that they elected Alexander’s mentally disabled half-brother Arrhidaïos to be their next king under the name of Philip III, agreeing also that Alexander’s posthumous child by his Baktrian wife Rhoxane would become king too, if it turned out to be a boy. Since indeed Rhoxane bore a male child Alexander (IV), the Macedonian



Empire had two kings entrusted to Perdikkas as their guardian. In addition, the generals split among themselves satrapies and other positions of authority in the seemingly unitary Macedonian Empire (Errington 1970; Bosworth 2002, 29–63; Meeus 2008; Waterfield 2011, 9–10, 16–29; Roisman 2012, 61–70).

But direct and indirect reference to Alexander's last will is frequently made amongst ancient authors (Curt. x 10.5; D.S. xx 81.3; Malalas viii 3–10; Georgios Monachos *Commentarium in Danielelem* iv 3.8; Moses Khorenatsi ii 1 (1978, 129); Jord. *Getica*. 66). The clearest evidence is Curtius', who disbelieves the historicity of the division of Alexander's empire allegedly stemming from his last will: "Credidere quidam testamento Alexandri distributas esse provincias; sed famam eius rei, quamquam ab auctoribus tradita est, vanam fuisse comperimus" (x 10.5). The *Alexandrian World Chronicle* conveys Alexander's last will too (*ELB* i 8.5–6. Garstad 2012, 374, n. 242), albeit with only a trace of the Rhodian interpolation (see below) which may indicate that its author accessed the Hellenistic pamphlet directly, not relying exclusively on the *Alexander Romance* or *LDM*. The ultimate source of this tradition was in all probability the early Hellenistic political pamphlet on which the final chapters of the *Alexander Romance* and the *LDM* are based (Nawotka 2017a). We do not know its exact original form since almost certainly it underwent some transformation in the course of the so-called Rhodian interpolation (see below in this chapter). The general agreement as to the date of Alexander's last will is that it was written before 305 BC. The document is apocryphal, likely written to lend support to one faction among the Successors by showing that its claims were anchored in the decisions of Alexander, and also by laying blame on its rivals. Some scholars read in it primarily the stipulations favoring Antipater, assigned with all lands in Europe and in Asia to the West of the Halys (*LDM* 117), and Perdikkas, governing the East of the Empire (*LDM* 118) and entrusted with marrying Rhoxane after Alexander's death. These arrangements would reflect the political reality of the years of close cooperation of Antipater and Perdikkas, i.e. 323–321 BC (Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 75–77, 164–192; Bounoure 2004, 285–286). But to some the accusations of Antipater and his sons Kassander and Iolaos poisoning Alexander exclude the pro-Antipater position of the pamphlet and in fact suggests a later date. To E. Carney the sympathetic way in which Olympias is referred to in the last will points to a date after her death (Carney 2006, 116). The most thorough prosopographic study ever performed on the last will of Alexander has led Heckel towards the hypothesis of a date somewhere between 319 and 316 BC and to assume the political inclination of the author towards Polyperchon (Heckel 1988). Other scholars have suggested a Ptolemaic inspiration with a date of ca. 309–308 BC (Seibert 1984 and 1990; Baynham 1995 and 2000; Bosworth 2000; Zambrini 2007).

2 Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος υἱὸς Ἀμμωνος καὶ Ὀλυμπιάδος Ῥοδίων τάγμασι καὶ ἄρχουσι βουλῇ δῆμῳ χαίρειν: the last will of Alexander is conveyed in a letter to the Rhodians. Its address is, however, most unusual, with Alexander greeting military units, magistrates, and the council and people of the Rhodians. Greetings of this kind are unattested in any surviving royal or imperial letter as Hellenistic kings or Roman emperors writing to Greek cities conventionally began with greetings to the boule and the demos or to magistrates and to the boule and the demos. The first type of greetings was more typical of the Hellenistic age, when the democratic bodies of a polis, the boule and the demos, stood for the polis they governed, e.g.: βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος Μιλησίων τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δῆμῳ χαίρειν (*Didyma* 424 = Welles 5, Miletos, 288/287 B.C. Numerous examples of this heading are known, e.g. Welles 2, 4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 22, 25, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38, 48, 62, 66, 67). In the Roman age both the Roman epistolary habit and the more pronounced position of magistrates within the government of the Greek polis resulted in initial greetings in a letter directed to the magistrates, the boule and the demos, e.g.: Καίσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς ἀρχιερεὺς δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥοδίων ἄρχουσι βουλῇ δ[ή]μῳ χαίρειν (*Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 810, Rhodes, AD 55). The *LDM* has in this place “Rex Alexander senatu et populo Rhodiensi salutem” (*ME* 107). This, in the Greek rendering would read Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος Ῥοδίων βουλῇ δῆμῳ χαίρειν, reflecting the epigraphic habit of the early Hellenistic age. Hence it was most probably the original version of the pamphlet upon which the *LDM* and the final chapters of the *Alexander Romance* are based. Probably in the archetype (α) of the *Alexander Romance* it was transformed in keeping with the epistolary habit of the third c. AD to include the word ἄρχουσι, a reflection of it being Arm. quite garbled in this place: “King and monarch, Alexander, son of Amon and of Olympias, greets the generals of the Rhodians, rulers of an intelligent people” (272). The word τάγμασι was probably added in transmission from the archetype to ms. A., but it is not to say that the version in the archetype is a genuine letter of Alexander. Most likely the letter to the Rhodians did not originally belong to the last will of Alexander, apocryphal as it ever was. A trace of it is in the provision recorded in Syr. III 22: “I also command that Archelaus take this testament and carry it to the temple of the god Ammon,” not to Rhodes.

The letter to the Rhodians is the prime example of the so-called Rhodian interpolation in the last will of Alexander. Its date is even more uncertain than that of the pamphlet upon which the *LDM* and the final chapters of the *Alexander Romance* are based, but the interpolation is certainly later than the Siege of Rhodes by Demetrios Poliorketes in 305–304 BC, probably no earlier than the age of the great political strength of Rhodes in the late third c. BC (Jouanno 2002, 18–19). It may have even been introduced at the beginning of

the second c. BC, as it best fits the political circumstances of this age: Rhodes as the major sea-power in the Eastern Mediterranean, consolidating its empire in Karia and in the Cyclades, with allusions to all of these visible in the last will of Alexander (see commentary below). The interpolation would have legitimized the newly acquired political power by anchoring it in the last will of Alexander. The Rhodians are known to have demonstrated their ties to Alexander in the first half of the second c. BC when the cult of Alexander is first attested epigraphically in Rhodes (Habicht 1970, 26–28).

The tradition of the last will of Alexander deposited with the Rhodians survives in Diodorus, which is not to say that it was genuine (D.S. XX 81.3. Merkelbach and Trunpf 1977, 167, 177–178, 188–189; Billows 1994, 33–44). The Rhodian interpolation is most visible in the first four paragraphs of the last will, distinguished on stylistic grounds (Stoneman 1991, 195) and containing a list of Alexander's gifts to Rhodes (Fraser 1952, 202–203).

4 ἐγράψαμεν τὴν φρουρὰν ἐξαγαγεῖν τῆς πόλεως: in the first half of 332 BC Rhodes surrendered to Alexander (Curt. IV 5.9; Just. XI 11.1; Oros. III 16.12) who then installed a garrison in Rhodes. The garrison is attested in 331 BC when the Rhodians complained about it (Curt. IV 8.12. Heckel 1997, 150–151) and it stayed on the island until Alexander's death when the Rhodians expelled it (D.S. XVIII 8.1. Fraser 1952, 200–201). In Alexander's lifetime Rhodes remained firmly under Macedonian control and although democracy was introduced in this polis around this time we cannot be sure whether this happened due to Alexander's decision or if it came into being after Alexander's death when Rhodes liberated itself from Macedonian troops (Fraser 1952, 199–200; Berthold 1984, 34–36). Later the Rhodians cherished the memory of Alexander, even affording him divine worship, whose origin is generally dated to the period immediately following the death of Alexander, although the epigraphic evidence for it is much later, from the first half of the second c. BC (Fraser 1952, 202–204; Habicht 1970, 26–28). It is, therefore, no surprise that the Rhodian interpolation in the last will doctors the story of the removal of the Macedonian garrison from its expulsion by the Rhodians to the friendly withdrawal at Alexander's will.

7 ἐνετειλάμεθα δὲ καὶ Θήβας [ἂς] ἐπανορθοῦν ἐκ τῶν βασιλικῶν χρημάτων: it was Kassander, a noted enemy of Alexander, who in 316 BC announced the refounding of Thebes, earning much praise in Greece (*Marmor Parium*, 1G XII.5.444 II 7 = *FGRH* 239 B14; Paus. IV 27.10, IX 3.6 and 7.1. Habicht 1999, 61–62). Book One of the *Alexander Romance* ends with Alexander's decision to rebuild Thebes (I 47.7) but no account of it is made here, as if Ps.-Callisthenes had forgotten what he had written earlier in the text. Attributing the decision to rebuild

Thebes to Alexander can be interpreted either as favorable to Kassander who was in fact treading the path of Alexander the Great, or as a sign of a subservient position of Kassander, degraded to the role of a mere subcontractor for Alexander (Goukowsky 1976, 277, commenting on D.S. XVII 118.2; Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 190–191; Franco 1999, 64; Bounoure 2004, 286).

8 συντετάχαμεν δὲ καὶ ὑμῖν δοῦναι εἰς τὴν ἐπισκευὴν τῆς πόλεως χρυσοῦ τάλαντα τε<sup>9</sup> καὶ τριήρεις οὕς, ὅπως ἀσφαλῶς ἐλεύθεροι ᾗτε, καὶ σίτου † ἐλευθερίας ἐξ Αἰγύπτου δωρεάν κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν πυροῦ μεδίμνους β' καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας διὰ τῶν οἰκονόμων καὶ ἐκ τῶν σύνεγγυς ὑμῖν χωρῶν πυροῦ μεδίμνους β'· καὶ χώραν ὑμῖν καταμετρήσαι, ὅπως ἔχητε ἐν τῷ (λοιπῷ) χρόνῳ αὐτάρκη σίτον καὶ μηδενὸς δέησθε, ἔχητε δὲ τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν ἀξίως: an obviously apocryphal gift to Rhodes (Fraser 1952, 203) of 305 talents of gold, 77 triremes, 2000 medimnoi of grain from Egypt, another 2000 from Asia and some land. The stated aim of this is to assist Rhodes in defending its liberty and to make it self-reliant. The phrase about a gift of land surely refers to the so-called Rhodian Peraia, or land in the mainland Asia Minor, mostly in Karia, directly and indirectly controlled by Rhodes. Apart from some land (Karian Chersonese) acquired by Rhodes probably as early as the fifth c. BC and firmly integrated into the polis of the Rhodians in the campaigns of 301–286 BC, later Rhodes came into possession of some other land in Karia and offered unequal alliance to the cities and peoples in the area (Gabrielsen 2000). For an island polis like Rhodes, with its arable land insufficient to feed the large population, one aim of having mainland possession was to acquire the necessary agricultural resources and the phrase ὅπως ἔχητε ἐν τῷ (λοιπῷ) χρόνῳ αὐτάρκη σίτον reflects this ideology of desired autarchy, at least at the level of providing food to the people. The whole phrase should be read as an ideological justification of the Rhodian conquests and hegemony in Karia as being anchored in the last will of Alexander. The Rhodian possession of (a part of) Karia was disputed by Philip V in 201–197 BC. If the Rhodian interpolation or at least this portion of it is as late as this date, this could be construed as countering the claims of one Macedonian king, Philip V, with the stated will of his greatest predecessor, Alexander the Great. The number of triremes is also very high, even by the standards of Rhodes, a major sea-power of the Hellenistic age. The highest recorded number of Rhodian ships deployed in war is seventy-five, with the standing fleet estimated at ca. forty ships (Berthold 1984, 42–43).

10 Πτολεμαῖος ... καὶ ὑμῶν φροντίσει: Ptolemy I assisted Rhodes militarily during the famous siege conducted by Demetrios Poliorketes in 305–304 BC (D.S. XX 81–88, 91–100; Plu. *Demetr.* 20.9–21. Berthold 1984, 66–80). This phrase almost certainly reflects these events suggesting that the alliance between

Ptolemy and Rhodes was anchored in the last will of Alexander. Strictly speaking it is fiction but while celebrating the Rhodian victory over Demetrios (and Antigonos) the historical Ptolemy made offerings to Athena Lindia replicating gestures of Alexander's celebration after his victory over Darius (Squillace 2013). Both the Rhodian interpolation and Ptolemy's celebrations belong to the same ideological milieu of anchoring the current political movements in the tradition of Alexander.

11 Ἀποδείκνυσι βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος ... βασιλέα Μακεδονίας ... Ἀρριδαῖον τὸν υἱὸν Φιλίππου: in many issues the last will of Alexander replicates the decisions taken by the council of generals at Babylon, including the selection of Arrhidaios as the next king of the Macedonian empire. This provision is also in *ELB* 1 8.5. In later tradition his name survives in the line of succession to Alexander as the last Argead king after whom the Successor generals took over (Nawotka 2017a).

12 ἐφειμένον δὲ ἔστω Ὀλυμπιάδι τῇ μητρὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου κατοικεῖν ἐν Ῥόδῳ, ἐὰν Ῥόδιοι συνδοκῇσωσιν: the historical Olympias never visited Rhodes, let alone decided to live there. Nevertheless, the alleged will of Alexander to designate Rhodes as a place of residence for his mother, and this on condition of the consent of the Rhodians, is a great honour to Rhodes. This passage is a prime example of the Rhodian interpolation.

13 ἐπιμελητὰς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείας πάσης Μακεδονίας μὲν Κρατερὸν καὶ γυναῖκα τοῦτ' αὖ Κυνάνην τὴν Φιλίππου θυγατέρα τοῦ γενομένου βασιλέως Μακεδονίας: Alexander indeed appointed Krateros viceroy of Macedonia in place of Antipater, yet not in his (spurious) last will but a few months earlier while summoning Antipater to Babylon and dispatching Krateros to Macedonia as the head of the Macedonian veterans; this earlier order of Alexander is related a few chapters back in the *Alexander Romance* (III 31.1). In 324 BC, no doubt on Alexander's instigation, Krateros married Amastris daughter of Oxyathres, the brother of Darius III (Arr. *An.* VII 4.5), only to repudiate her two years later when he sealed the political alliance with Antipater by marrying his daughter Phila (D.S. XVIII 18.7). Kynane, daughter of Philip II and half-sister of Alexander, married Amyntas IV (Arr. *Succ.* 1.22) and after his execution on Alexander's orders and the death of her second groom, King Langaros of Agrianians (Arr. *An.* I 5.4), she stayed unmarried (Polyaen. VIII 60.1) living throughout her half-brother's reign in relative obscurity. In 322/321 BC Kynane managed, however, to let her daughter Adea/Eurydike marry Philip III Arrhidaios and thus to jump to the center of power in the Macedonian Empire (Arr. *Succ.* 1.12; Polyaen.

VIII 60. Carney 2000, 129–131). This passage seems to freely mix the accounts of Krateros, Kynane and her daughter. The *LDM* lacks this completely, and hence we cannot be sure whether this passage was inserted by Ps.-Callisthenes for the sake of originality in handling historical material, or if it was a part of the Hellenistic pamphlet, perhaps reflecting some designs of Krateros on marrying into the Argead family.

Λυσίμαχον δὲ ἐπὶ Θράκης καὶ γυναῖκα τούτῳ Θεσσαλονίκην τὴν Φιλίππου τοῦ βασιλέως γενομένου Μακεδόνων θυγατέρα: the last will of Alexander repeats again a provision of the council of Babylon at which Lysimachos was appointed satrap or perhaps a *strategos* of Thrace (Curt. x 10.4; D.S. XVIII 3.2; Arr. *Succ.* 1.7; Paus. I 9.5; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.3; Just. XIII 4.16; *ME* III (*LDM*). Lund 1992, 54; Heckel 2006, 155). Lysimachos never married Thessalonike, daughter of Philip II and Nikesipolis and half-sister of Alexander. In 315 BC Thessalonike became wife of Kassander for whom this meant marrying into the Argead dynasty (D.S. XIX 52.1 and 61.2; Paus. VIII 7.7; Porph. *FGrH* 260 F3.4; Just XIV 6.13, who, however, mistakenly calls her the daughter of Arrhidaios. Carney 2000, 123–128).

14 δίδωσι δὲ τὴν ἐφ' Ἑλλησπόντῳ σατραπείαν Λεοννάτῳ καὶ γυναῖκα τούτῳ Κλεοδίκην τὴν ἀδελφὴν Ὀλκίου: on Leonnatos see commentary on III 31.8. Kleodike is otherwise unattested; Heckel (2006, 88, s.v. Cleodice) believes that this is a historical character.

Παφλαγονίαν δὲ καὶ Καππαδοκίαν Εὐμένει τῷ ὑπομνηματογράφῳ: on Eumenes see commentary on III 31.9. Eumenes bears here the title ὑπομνηματογράφος (“recorder,” *LSJ*, s.v.), rendered in *ELB* I 8.5 as *scriba memoratus*. Eumenes is never called *hypomnematographos* in mainstream sources and in fact this title seems not to have existed yet in his times. From the early Ptolemaic period *hypomnematographos* was among the top offices in Egypt, supervising the royal chancery, just as Eumenes did for Alexander. In Roman times, but perhaps even earlier, *hypomnematographos* became a municipal magistrate in Alexandria where this (high) office survived until late antiquity (Fraser 1972, II, 182 n. 54, 189 n. 82; Whitehorne 1987; Drecol 1997, 103–104). Here we have most probably a case of transposition of the name of the Ptolemaic/ Alexandrian institution known to Ps.-Callisthenes to describe the parallel responsibilities of Eumenes in the age of Alexander.

τοὺς δὲ νησιώτας ἀφίησιν ἐλευθέρους καὶ ἐπιτρόπους αὐτῶν Ῥοδίου εἶναι: this is a reference to the (Second) Nesiotic League or the League of the Islanders, an alliance and later a federal state of small island states, centered on Poseidon's sanctuary on Tenos, established by Antigonos Monophthalmos in 315/314 BC. Because of the strategic position of the Cyclades on the crossroads of important

maritime routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, Antigonos and his descendants vied for control of the Nesiotic League with the Ptolemies for the rest of the fourth and much of the third c. BC. Rhodes was active in the Cyclades from the beginning of the third c. BC but did not prevent the (first) Nesiotic League from fading away in the mid-third c. BC. From the 200s B.C. Rhodes intervened militarily in the Cyclades, fighting pirates who were secretly supported by Philip V. Rhodes gained full control over the islands during and immediately after the Second Macedonian War (De Sanctis 1933; Sheedy 1996). Ca. 200 BC the Nesiotic League was re-invigorated or re-established under the Rhodian leadership (Gabrielsen 1997, 56–58). In the third c. BC the Rhodians even had a special officer [ναύα]ρχος ἐπὶ τῆς φυλακῆς τῶν νήσων καὶ ἐπὶ σωτηρίαι τῶν Ἑλλήνων (“nauarch in charge of guarding the islands and of security of the Greeks,” *IG* XI.4.596), whose very title reflects the same ideology as this phrase: protecting the freedom of the islanders. The Rhodian tutelage over the Islanders established in accordance with the last will of Alexander is an element of the Rhodian interpolation into this document and having in mind the history of the Nesiotic League, this component of the interpolation can hardly be earlier than the late-third, or, even more likely, the early-second c. BC. This proviso is known also from *ELB* I 8.5.

Παμφυλίαν δὲ καὶ Κιλικίαν Ἀντιγόνῳ: ms. A is corrupt here and Kroll restored the original reading. It is quite uncertain bearing in mind what other versions say: “Antigonos Cariae praesit” (Val.), “Licie et Pamfilie atque Frigie sit princeps Antigonos” (Leo III 33), “and over Pamphylia and Lykia Antigonos shall rule” (Syr. III 32). Most early versions agree that Antigonos received Pamphylia, with Lykia being more likely assigned to him as the second land rather than Kilikia. *ELB* I 8.5 lends support to this reading too: “Pamphilia et Lucya Antigonom ordinavit regnare.” On Antigonos, in historical reality satrap of Greater Phrygia, see commentary on III 20.7.

15 τῆς δὲ Βαβυλωνίως καὶ τῆς προσηκούσης αὐτῇ Σέλευκον ὀπλοφόρον: the last will of Alexander usually repeats the decisions taken by the council of generals at Babylon, but not in this case: Babylonia was assigned by them to Archon (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Just. XIII 4.23), while Seleukos was on that occasion promoted to the most distinguished hipparchy of the Companion cavalry, also called the chiliarchy (D.S. XVIII 3.4; Just. XIII 4.17. Heckel 2006, 247). He received Babylonia at the conference in Triparadeisos (320 B.C.). The spurious decision of Alexander related in this passage may reflect Seleukos’ intention to ground his legitimacy in the heritage of Alexander (Nawotka 2017). The epithet ὀπλοφόρος for Seleukos is otherwise unattested, but there is no reason to doubt that it belongs to the archetype, as both ms. A and Syr. have it (“clothed in armour”).

Apart from the most often meaning (“bearing arms, warrior, soldier,” *LSJ*, s.v.), the word ὅπλοφόρος is listed by lexicographers as equivalent to δορυφόρος (e.g. [Zonar.] s.v.). This may be a reference to the previous commission of Seleukos as commander of the hypaspists or guards of Alexander (*Arr. An.* v 13.1). *ELB* I 8.5 reads: “Babylonia autem Seleucum praecepit regnare.”

Φοινίκην δὲ καὶ Συρίαν τὴν κοίλην καλουμένην Μελεάγρω: depending on the version which transmits it, the last will of Alexander either mentions only one governor of Syria (Meleager: ms. A) as in this quotation, or two: one of Syria (major) to the border of Mesopotamia (Pithon: Leo, *ME* 117 (*LDM*); Pythôn: Syr.; Yton: Val.; Tapithon: *ELB* I 8.5), the other of Syria Koile and Phoenicia (Meleager/Meneager). The overwhelming evidence of almost all versions seems to indicate that the original reading of the last will had two appointments: for Syria and for Koile Syria/Phoenicia. This is troubling in more than one way: the mainstream sources indicate that there was only one satrap of Syria, Laomedon (D.S. XVIII 3.1; Curt. x 10.2; *Arr. Succ.* 1.5; App. *Syr.* 263; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.2; Just. XIII 4.12), in keeping with the spatial organization of the Achaemenid Empire, inherited by Alexander, which had a major satrapy in the Levant: Eber-Nāri (“Beyond the river (Euphrates),” see commentary on I 35.1). The name Koile Syria is the Greek rendition of Aramaic כּל אַרַם (*kol Aram*) meaning “all of Syria” (Sartre 1988; Sartre 1991, 310–311), thus approximating the Persian administrative nomenclature Eber-Nāri, while in the late Hellenistic age the meaning of the name Koile Syria narrowed to designate Syria without Phoenicia. An administrative entity Coele Syria came into being with Septimius Severus who divided the province of Syria into two: Coele Syria and Syria Phoenice (Sartre 1991, 53). The names used in the last will of Alexander correspond much more to the administrative situation in the third c. AD than in 323 BC. The names of the purported governors/satraps of both Syrias are not attested in this capacity in any other source. If Meleager (see commentary on III 31.8) is meant, he could not become satrap of Syria, since in June 323 BC he was killed on the orders of Perdikkas.

Αἴγυπτον δὲ Περδίκκα καὶ Λιβυκὴν Πτολεμαίῳ καὶ γυναῖκα τούτῳ Κλεοπάτραν τὴν ἀδελφὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου: this is arguably the most surprising provision of the last will of Alexander: assigning Egypt to Perdikkas and not to Ptolemy. It contradicts not only the historical truth but it also stands in opposition to the generally pro-Ptolemaic attitude of the *Alexander Romance*. The reading is very unsure here as other witnesses of the last will have in this place: “Aegyptum Perdiccae, Libyam Ptolomaeo, cui etiam Cleopatram coniugari oportebit, sororem meam” (Val.); “Egypt goes to Ptolemeos, and let him be given as wife Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander, ruler of the brave” (Arm. 274); “Egyptum Ptolomeo; detur ei uxor Cleopatra et sit princeps super omnes satrapas Baby-



lonie et usque Bactriam" (Leo); "and over Egypt Ptolemy, and Cleopatra the sister of Alexander's wife shall be given to him" (Syr.); "Aegyptiorum regnum Ptolemaeo trado et Cleopatram, sororem meam, uxorem do" (*ME* 117 (*LDM*)); "Egyptum autem et quae circa eum usque superior Lybia Filippo qui vocabatur Ptolomeus donavit" (*ELB* I 8.5). The attested readings split into two basic versions: Perdikkas appointed satrap of Egypt (ms. A and Val.) and Ptolemy appointed satrap of Egypt (Arm., Leo, Syr., *LDM*, *ELB*) with equally divergent ideas as to whom of the two Kleopatra was to marry. There is little doubt that the second version is the original reading of the last will. Perhaps the *ELB* conveys a trace of the Ptolemaic image-building in which Ptolemy was a son of Philip II (see commentary on III 32.12) and then Ausfeld's emendation (Kroll, app.) should be accepted: Αἴγυπτον δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὴν μέχρι τῆς ἄνω Λιβύης Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Φιλίππου. Kleopatra never married Perdikkas or Ptolemy, although there were talks about her marrying first Perdikkas (Arr. *Succ.* 1.26; *Epitome Heidelbergensis FGrH* 155 F4) and then Ptolemy (D.S. xx 37.3; *Epitome Heidelbergensis FGrH* 155 F4. Heckel 2006, 90, s.v. Cleopatra [2]) and one source states incorrectly that she indeed married Perdikkas (*Epitome Heidelbergensis FGrH* 155 F4. Carney 2000, 124–125). Perdikkas could not marry Kleopatra as he was invited by Antipater to marry his daughter Nikaia and he could not refuse without a grave insult to the most powerful man in Macedonia (D.S. xviii 3.2–3). Marrying Kleopatra, sought after by most Successors, was clearly perceived as a vehicle to legitimize the power of a successful general. The provision of the last will that Ptolemy should marry Kleopatra, Alexander's only full sister, further ratifies Ptolemy's position in the *Alexander Romance* as the trusted friend of Alexander and the person most faithful to Alexander's memory (Meeus 2009).

τοῖς δὲ ἐπάνω [τῇ] τῆς Βαβυλωνίας χώρας στρατάρχην καὶ ἐπιμελητὴν Φανοκράτην καὶ γυναῖκα τούτῳ Ῥωξάνην τὴν Βακτριανήν: this is yet another place with fundamental discrepancies between different versions of the last will. Two basic variant readings are attested. One assigns Babylonia or the lands beyond Babylonia to an otherwise unknown Phanokrates who is also to marry Rhoxane. Apart from ms. A it is attested also in Val.: "regionum porro quae supra Babyloniam sunt curam Phanocrati permitti praecepi eique uxorem Rhoxanen Bactranam dari." The second one makes Perdikkas the supreme ruler of all lands from Babylonia to the East and asks him to marry Rhoxane. It is attested in Arm. 274 "And let them bring forth Perdikkas as governor and guardian of the land of Babylon as far as Baktria. And let his wife be Roxiane, the wife of Alexander"; with variants in Syr. "and my wife Rôshnâk shall rule from this Babylon of mine to the country of Adôrbaijân and Persia and Media, and I command that she shall be given to Prîskôs (Perdikkas) to wife" and in Leo with Ptolemy

receiving all of this (quoted above). The second variant with Perdikkas marrying Rhoxane and supervising the satraps of the eastern part of Alexander's empire is attested also in the *LDM*: "Regiones, quae inter Babyloniae <et> Bactrianae fines intersunt, satrapes, quas quisque obtinet, habeat; hisque omnibus summum imperatorem Perdiccam facio, eique uxorem Rhoxanem, Oxyartis filiam Bactrianem; quae mihi uxor fuit, trado" (*ME* 118) and, in a variant version without Perdikkas' marriage with Rhoxane, in *ELB* I 8.5: "Quae autem de superior Babylone usque Caspicas portas, principes quidem in eas et satrapes, archistratigum autem eorum Perdicum ordinavit." This is most probably the original version of the Hellenistic pamphlet, later corrupted in more than one stage of transmission within the *Alexander Romance* tradition (Kroll, app. ad loc.; Merkelbach and Trumpf 1977, 278).

16 Προστάσσω ... κατασκευάσαι πύelon χρυσάν από τάλάντων σ': the disposition to make a golden sarcophagus for Alexander's body survives, in variant versions which differ in the amount of gold to be used, in most recensions of the *Alexander Romance*: "magnorum talentorum sex" (Val.), "golden tomb worth 200 talents" (Arm. 274), "two hundred and fifty talents [in weight]" (Syr.). The original version of the Hellenistic pamphlet was certainly two hundred talents, as it is also attested in the *LDM* "auri talentis CC" (*ME* 118). Alexander's embalmed body was indeed deposited in a golden sarcophagus (D.S. XVIII 26.3, based on Hieronymos of Kardia). The amount of gold used to make this sarcophagus, 200 talents or ca. 5,200 kg, seems excessive for a sarcophagus, but we know from Diodorus that Alexander's body was transported on an elaborate and very heavy hearse drawn by sixty-four mules (for the discussion and reconstruction of this see: Miller 1986; Stewart 1983, 215–220). Since much of its decoration was also made of gold, the amount of it listed here may correspond to the real figure, certainly widely known by the time of composition of the Hellenistic pamphlet.

ἀποστείλει δὲ καὶ Μακεδόνας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ ἡσθηνηκότας εἰς Μακεδονίαν καὶ Θεσσαλῶν τοὺς ὁμοίως διακειμένους· δοθήτω δὲ χρυσοῦ τάλαντα γ': this reflects the earlier decision of Alexander to send home 10,000 Macedonian veterans led by Krateros. Alexander's order to Krateros to go to Macedonia is related earlier in the *Alexander Romance* (III 31.1 and III 33.13, with commentary). At the moment of Alexander's death the Macedonian veterans were in Kilikia (D.S. XVIII 4.1), not even half way home. We learn from Arrian that Alexander decided they be paid regularly for the duration of the march to Macedonia and gave each of them a bonus of one talent (Ar. *An.* VII 12.1–2; Plu. *Alex.* 71.8: δωρησάμενος μεγαλοπρεπῶς). The bonus of three talents of gold listed here would amount to at least thirty talents of silver or ca. 200 years of a

foot soldier's salary. Using gold and not silver as the measure of value reflects here, as in earlier places in the text, the reality of the second half of the third c. AD when the *Alexander Romance* was written (see commentary to III 27.5).

17 ἀποστείλαι δὲ εἰς Ἄργος τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως πανοπλίαν: the habit of dedicating both spolia taken from the enemy or the victor's arms to the gods is well attested in Greece both because of its intrinsic, symbolic and decorative value (Pritchett 1991, 369–378; Jackson 1991; Barringer 2010, 167–173; Baynham 2015), with the two most significant examples being the helmet of Miltiades dedicated to Zeus at Olympia (*SEG* 49.481) and 300 Persian panoplies dedicated by Alexander to Athena in Athens after the Battle of the Granicus (Plu. *Alex.* 16.17–18; Arr. *An.* I 16.7). Although there is no independent confirmation of the spoils allegedly ordered by Alexander to be dispatched to Argos and Delphi, there is nothing unusual in this arrangement. The Macedonian royal dynasty, the Argeads, claimed Argos as the place of their origin and the ties of the historical Argeads with Argos are attested from 425 BC at the latest (Kyle 2007, 232).

18 δοθήτω δὲ καὶ Μιλησίοις εἰς ἐπισκευὴν τῆς πόλεως χρυσοῦ νενομισμένου τάλαντα ρν': both in the age of Alexander and in the early Hellenistic age the most pressing financial consideration for Miletos was securing funds for construction works in the great temple of Apollo at Didyma. In 331 BC the Milesians approached Alexander by embassy, bringing to him the first oracle of Apollo after almost one and a half centuries of silence, proclaiming him son of Zeus (Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F14, ap. Str. XVII 1.43), but Alexander did not provide them with any funds in return. Probably Alexander was still holding a grudge to Miletos because of the resistance paid to his troops in the spring of 334 BC (Nawotka 2010a). This phrase may be a trace of the entreaties made by the Milesians either to Alexander shortly before his death, or to some Successors. In historical reality it was Seleukos I and his son Antiochos (I) who made a significant donation to Miletos which in turn allowed the Milesians to finance construction works at Didyma. About the same time Seleukos learned that Apollo was his divine father, which obviously strengthened his ties to Miletos, on account of kinship (συγγένεια) through the tutelary god of the city (see Nawotka 2018 for reference).

19 ἱερεὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ προσελεύσεται ἑταίρῳ μεγίσταις πόλεως δόξαις, κεκοσμημένος χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ καὶ πορφυρίδι, λαμβάνων ἐνιαύσιον τάλαντον: by virtue of being founder of Alexandria under Ptolemy (I), Alexander received the heroic *ktistes*-cult in this city and a magnificent mounted statue of Alexander-

*ktistes* could be seen in Alexandria as late as the end of the fourth c. AD (Nikolaos of Myra, ap. Ps.-Lib., *Progymnasmata* 27; Habicht 1970, 36; Stewart 1993, 247). Ptolemy I had probably already established the second, divine cult of Alexander and his temple and this cult were linked with the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies (Fraser 1972, I, 212–226; Stewart 1993, 247–252). A golden crown and purple cloth is surely the ceremonial dress of the (high) priest of divine Alexander in Alexandria in Egypt described earlier (II 21.19) and here in the same way (Taylor 1927). The last will of Alexander stipulates that the (high) priest of Alexander should be a high-born person, endowed with important personal and financial privileges, such as release from liturgies. High priests of Alexander were indeed persons of high position in Ptolemaic Egypt, a testimony to which is the practice of invoking their names in the dates of royal edicts and of contracts, as in Alexandria they were eponymous officials (Habicht 1970, 36; Clarysse, van der Veken and Vleeming 1983).

21 Ἀποδείκνυσι βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος Ἰνδικῆς βασιλέα ... Ταξίλην: Taxiles or Ambhi (Omphis/Mophis in classical sources: D.S. XVII 86.4; Curt. VIII 12.5; *ME* 49–52) was an Indian king of Taxila (now in Pakistan), closely allied with Alexander (Heckel 2006, 260–261). The last will of Alexander, as known from the *Alexander Romance* (see ms. A, and with corrupt names of the Indian kings: Arm. 274 and Val.), *LDM* (*ME* 121) and *ELB* (I 8.6. But see Garstad 2012, 374, n. 244), repeats the decision of Perdikkas (D.S. XVIII 3.2) to confirm Taxiles and Poros in their kingdoms. They were both further confirmed at the conference in Triparadeisos in 320 BC (D.S. XVIII 39.6; Arr. *Succ.* 1.36).

ἐπὶ δὲ Παροπανισαδῶν Ὀξυδράκην τὸν Βακτριανὸν τὸν Ῥωξάνης πατέρα τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου γυναικός: some versions of the last will of Alexander wrongly name Rhoxane's father "Oxydrakes" (ms. A, *ELB* I 8.6) or "Oxydarkes" (Arm. 274) instead of Oxyartes, and Val. gives no name. The original version of the Hellenistic pamphlet was surely Oxydrakres, as *LDM* reads (*ME* 121). Mainstream sources attest that Oxyartes was indeed confirmed as satrap by Perdikkas in 323 BC (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.5; Just. XIII 4.21), re-confirmed at Triparadeisos (D.S. XVIII 39.6) and retained by Antigonos (D.S. XIX 48.2).

22 Ἀραχωσίαν ... καὶ Δραγγηνήν ... τὴν Βακτριανὴν καὶ Σουσιανὴν Φιλίππῳ: this place is very uncertain, not only because the surviving reading in ms. A assigns to Philippos four lands in divergent parts of Alexander's empire, while mainstream sources attest in 323 BC Philippos as satrap of Baktria and Sogdiana (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.6. Heckel 2006, s.v. Amyntas [9]). In 323 BC the satrap of Areia and Drangiana was Stasanor (see commentary on III 31.6), and Sibyrtios was satrap of Gedrosia and Arachosia (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100

F8.6; Just. XIII 4.22). Other versions of the last will of Alexander also convey different assignments for Philippos than ms. A: Val. details the equally impossible Arachosia, Baktriana and Susiana, Syr. Sôd or Samarḳand, Arm. (274) “the land of Soš and the land of the Parthians to the South,” *LDM* Baktria (*ME* 121), and *ELB* (I 8.6) “Ogdianiam,” i.e. Sogdiana. It seems therefore that the original version of the Hellenistic pamphlet had Baktria and Sogdiana as Philippos’ satrapy, and this underwent a complex process of corruption in transmission. His original assignment was split into two in the two best witnesses (*LDM* and *ELB*). Possibly at one point in transmission from the Hellenistic pamphlet to the archetype of the *Alexander Romance* the names of Stasanor and Sibyrtios were dropped and all their satrapies were assigned to Philippos, as attested by ms. A and Val., with authors of other early versions picking and choosing from this collection of lands.

τὴν <δὲ> Παρθυαίαν καὶ τὰ ἐχόμενα τῆς Ὑρκανίας Φραταφέρνῃ: under Darius III Phrataphernes was satrap of Parthia and Hyrkania (Arr. *An.* III 8.4) and he retained his satrapy under Alexander and again by the decision taken by Perdikkas and the Macedonian generals in Babylon in 323 BC (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.6: Ῥαδαφέρνους, Hyrkania only; Just. XIII 4.23, Hyrkania only. Heckel 2006, 223). Although Val. assigns to Phrataphernes (misspelled as Artaphernaes) only Hyrkania and other early versions of the *Alexander Romance* do not have this name at all, ms. A most probably conveys the correct version of the Hellenistic pamphlet, since *LDM* has the same reading too: “Parthyaeam et quod proximum est Hyrcaniae, do Phratepherni” (*ME* 121).

Καρμανίαν δὲ Τληπολέμῳ: the *Alexander Romance* and other witnesses to the last will of Alexander (*ME* 121 (*LDM*) and *ELB* I 8.6 with “Germaniam” instead of “Carmaniam”) relate here the arrangements made in Babylon where Tlepolemos was confirmed in his satrapal position in Karmania (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Just. XIII 4.23; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.6: Ὑρκανία καὶ Νεοπτολέμου instead of Τληπολέμου), to which Alexander appointed him in 325 BC (Arr. *An.* VI 27.1. Heckel 2006, 268–269).

τὴν δὲ Περίδα Πευκέστη: again the *Alexander Romance* and other witnesses to the last will of Alexander (*ME* 121 (*LDM*): “Peucestes” and *ELB* I 8.6 with “Perco” instead of “Peucestae”) repeat what was decided in Babylon in June 323 BC, where Peukestas was confirmed as satrap of Persis (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Dexipp. *FGrH* 100 F8.6; Just. XIII 4.23)

† σατράπῃ Ὀξύνην μεταστήσαι ἐπὶ τῆς Μηδίας: this corrupt place is omitted by most early versions of the *Alexander Romance* (Val., Arm., Syr, Leo), with little help from the *LDM*: “ex †eis† imperiis omnibus excedat Oxydates, et pro Medis imperator sit Craterus” (*ME* 121) and none from *ELB*, which skips this place. This phrase certainly refers to arrangements for Media: in the winter

of 328/327 BC Alexander removed the satrap of Media, Oxydates, and replaced him with Atropates who had been satrap of Media previously under Darius III (Arr. *An.* IV 18.3; Curt. VIII 3.17 with “Arsaces” instead of “Atropates”). On the fall of Oxydates and the success of Atropates see: Hyland 2013. Hence Gutschmid’s restoration of Ἀτροπάτην in the place of σατράπη is probably correct (Kroll, app.). In 323 BC in Babylon Atropates was confirmed as satrap but only of Lesser Media, i.e. of the north-western part of his original satrapy (D.S. XVIII 3.3; Just. XIII 4.13: “Pitho Illyrius Mediae maiori, Atropatos minori, socer Perdiccae, praeponitur”; Heckel 2006, 61–62). Atropates eventually became king in his own right (Str. XI 13.1) and the country which he and his dynasty ruled became known as Media Atropatene, later to become Ādurbādagān/Ādarbāyjān, today Azerbaijan (Chaumont 2011; Gasanov 2017, 29–44).

23 Ἀποδεικνύει βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος βασιλέα τῆς Ἰλλυρίδος Ὀλκίαν: on Holkias see commentary on III 31.8.

24 δίδωσι ... τάλαντα γ’· ἀπὸ δὲ τούτων κατασκευασάτω ἱερὸν καὶ ἀναθέτω ἀνδριάντας Ἄμμωνος Ἡρακλέους Ἀθηνᾶς Ὀλυμπιάδος Φιλίππου: the data listed here differ in various versions of the last will of Alexander with ms. A having five statues and Arm. (274) and *LDM* (*ME* 122) six, adding a statue of Alexander to the five named here. With divergent traditions it is easy to build a case either for five or for six statues in the Hellenistic pamphlet. The amount of money budgeted for this undertaking, in ms. A marked as γ and in Val. written out as “auri drachmarum tria milia” is surely three thousand (,γ) and not three (γ’) talents, as the last amount would be absolutely inadequate for the tasks. And indeed *LDM* reads: “argenti signati talenta MMM do” (*ME* 122). Retaining silver and not gold as the measure of value adds to the authenticity of the text of the *LDM* since in an early Hellenistic pamphlet silver and not gold coins would be naturally listed. Among the so-called last plans of Alexander (D.S. XVIII 4. See commentary at the beginning of this chapter) was the building of six major temples, at a cost of 1,500 talents each. Although the “last plans” were voted down by the assembly of the Macedonian soldiers and never implemented, this provision seems to be relating to them somehow, as we read about Alexander ordering a temple to be constructed and five statues (not cult statues) to be put up. *LDM* (*ME* 122) stipulates that they are to be erected in the Olympic temple: “eas in fano Olympico ponat.” The decision to put up these statues in Olympia and following discussions as to whether to erect gilded statues in Delphi and bronze statues either in an unspecified location (ms. A, Val.) or in Egypt (*LDM*), although otherwise unattested and usually perceived as fictitious (Stewart 1993, 23, 215), may in fact reflect the designs of some of the Successors,

perhaps Perdikkas whose name is expressly stated in the version of the last will of Alexander surviving in ms. A and in Val.

26 Ἐλθὼν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν Πτολεμαῖος εἶπεν· Ἀλέξανδρε, τίνι καταλείπεις τὴν βασιλείαν; λέγει· Τῷ ἰσχύοντι θέλοντι σῶζοντι συντελοῦντι: this is a celebrated scene of the last minutes of Alexander who, while questioned by his companions for dispositions as to who should rule his empire after his imminent death, was to answer: τῷ κρατίστῳ (D.S. XVII 117.4; Arr. *An.* VII 26.3), or τῷ ἀρίστῳ (D.S. XVIII 1.4), or in Curtius' account: "Quaerentibusque his, cui relinqueret regnum, respondit ei, qui esset optimus" (X 5.5) and in Justin's account "Cum deficere eum amici viderent, quaerunt, quem imperii faciat heredem. Respondit dignissimum" (XII 15.8). Ps.-Callisthenes, as almost always, does not quote directly what the earlier authors say but renders the original τῷ κρατίστῳ by τῷ ἰσχύοντι. The detail is anecdotal and incongruous with the information conveyed by ancient authors, who wrote that Alexander was rendered speechless by his illness some time prior to his death. This typically laconic and witty answer of Alexander circulated widely, quoted by various authors for divergent reasons. Those who say (correctly) that he died without making a last will use it as an explanation of the power struggle after the death of Alexander when not only Perdikkas thought of himself as most worthy of the kingdom of Alexander, but other *kratistoi* too. The *Alexander Romance*, which lists detailed dispositions as to who should rule after Alexander's death, quotes this anecdote because it fits the general image of Alexander, the witty and cunning.

26–27: these sections contain a description of the mysterious signs accompanying the death of Alexander. They are otherwise unattested and in all probability they were fabricated by Ps.-Callisthenes based on examples of signs accompanying the death of famous Romans and marking their apotheosis, beginning with Caesar: a great comet (*sidus Iulium*) and aerial phenomena obfuscating the Sun (Hor. *Carm.* I 12.46–48; Verg. *G.* 1.463–468; Ov. *Met.* XV 745–851; Sen. *Nat.* VII 17.2; Plin. *Nat.* II 93–94; Suet. *Iul.* 88; Plu. *Caes.* 69.4–5; D.C. XLV 7; Servius, VI 790). It is immaterial that the *sidus Iulium* was an astronomical reality only interpreted as a sign of Caesar's apotheosis. Later the sighting of an eagle was taken as similarly symbolic and often accompanied the apotheoses of Roman emperors (Beard and Henderson 1998; Zanker 2009, 297–300; Pandey 2013).

## Chapter 34

1 Οἱ δὲ Πέρσαι ἐμάχοντο βουλόμενοι τὸν βασιλέα εἰς τὴν Περσίδα ἀνακομίσασθαι καὶ ὡς θεὸν Μίθραν προσκυνῆσαι: Alexander's death certainly shocked those present in Babylon in June 323 BC, as vividly attested by Justin in the first sentence of Book XIII: "Extincto in ipso aetatis ac victoriarum flore Alexandro Magno triste apud omnes tota Babylonia silentium fuit." The most detailed account of the public reaction to the news is Curtius': "silence" (x 5.7), "Persians and Macedonians remembering Alexander" (x 5.9), "Persians having their heads shaven were bewailing Alexander" (x 5.17), "mother of Darius mourning Alexander" (x 5.19–24; also D.S. XVII 117.3; Just XIII 1.5). But the Persians' will to worship Alexander as the god Mithra is rhetorical exaggeration. It may, however, dimly reflect the real worship of Alexander's *fravaši* (his protective spirit, after his death associated with his soul: Boyce 2012) in Babylon after his death, known from Plutarch (*Eum.* 13.3–4 with Jamzadeh 2012, 169–171).

2 "Ἔστι μαντεῖον τοῦ Βαβυλωνίου Διός: the Babylonian equivalent of Zeus was Marduk, the highest god of Babylon whose temple, Esagila, was the seat of Babylonian science, including all kinds of prophecy and giving appropriate advice to kings. But the whole paragraph is apocryphal, meant to further illustrate the truth, exhibited many times in the *Alexander Romance*, that Alexander receives divine guidance, here even after his death.

3 ἔστι πόλις πρὸς Νεῖλῳ ἐπὶ Ὠκεανοῦ ρεῖθροις ...τοῦνομα Μέμφις: the oracular answer is full of erudition, if somewhat misguided: indeed Memphis was a city on the Nile and in Greek mythology Memphis was the daughter of Neilos, the god of the River Nile (Apollod. 2.10; *Sch. in Pl., Ti.*, p. 24e). Diodorus (III 52) relates a story about Amazons living in Libya, i.e. fairly close to Memphis. Reportedly Memphis was the name of an Amazon (Iulius Valerius, fr. 8.4: "nomine Amazonidos quae dicitur inclyta Memphis"). The five royal fields are most obviously associated with the *chora* of Alexandria, not with Memphis. It seems that in this show of erudition Ps.-Callisthenes confused Memphis with Alexandria (Dillery 2004).

This apocryphal oracle reflects the fact that originally Alexander was buried in Memphis, the seat of the satrap of Egypt, who in 321 BC was Ptolemy. This is attested primarily by the *Parian Chronicle* (*Marmor Parium*, 1G XII.5.444 II 2a = *FGRH* 239 B11) of 263/2 B.C. which relates the events of one year, 321/320 BC: Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς Μέμφιν ἐτέθη καὶ Περδίκκας εἰς Αἴγυπτον στρατεύσας ἐτελεύτησεν ("Alexander was buried in Memphis and Perdikkas died having invaded Egypt"). Corroborating evidence comes much later through Curtius (x 10.20)





FIGURE 14 *Many Hellenistic coins bear the image of Alexander with horns of Ammon and this image may have given origin to the notion of Dhu'l-Qarnayn or "two-horned" as the name of Alexander in the Quran. Silver coin of Lysimachos, mint of Teos, 300–281 BC. YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY*

and Pausanias (1 6.3). Our sources do not say where exactly in Memphis Alexander's body was buried. One hypothesis holds that it was in the Serapeum in Saqqara near the subterranean gallery of mummified Apis bulls. Alexander is known to have sacrificed to the Apis bull and to have financed burial of the Mother of the Apis. His reverence for the zoomorphic gods of Egypt is of great significance, as evidence of Alexander's acceptance of the responsibilities of a legitimate pharaoh (see Nawotka and Wojciechowska 2016 for reference). Saqqara houses also the temple of Nektanebo II, once linked through an alley of sphinxes with the so-called philosophers' circle, an early Ptolemaic semi-circular monument decorated with images of Greek intellectuals and scenes of the Indian Triumph of Dionysos. The decoration of it is frequently read as a reflection of Alexander's expedition to India and of his Hellenizing mission in the East. All of these things make the area of the temple of Nektanebo II a perfect site for the tomb of Alexander in Memphis. Some scholars even think that it was located in a chamber added to the south wall of the temple of Nektanebo in whose footsteps Alexander trod in Egypt and who is his father in the *Alexander Romance* (Pietrzykowski 1976 is the fundamental work on the Serapeum in Memphis; also Schmitdt-Colinet 1996; Erskine 2002; Chugg 2002; Chugg 2004, 47–65; Demandt 2010, 350).

βασιλέα κερασφόρον: the common adjective κερασφόρος ("horned," *LSJ*, s.v.) is very rarely applied to Alexander, apart from this place only found in Clement of Alexandria, who, however, gives the rationale behind this epiclesis of Alexander: ἐβούλετο δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀμμωνος υἱὸς εἶναι δοκεῖν καὶ κερασφόρος ἀναπλάττεσθαι πρὸς τῶν ἀγαλαματοποιῶν, τὸ καλὸν ἀνθρώπου πρόσωπον ὑβρίσαι σπεύ-

δων κέρατι, or “Alexander wished to be thought the son of Ammon and to be modelled with horns by the sculptors, so eager was he to outrage the beautiful face of a man by a horn” (*Protr.* 4.54.2. Cf. Stewart 1993, 41 and 411, for translation). In Ehippos’ account Alexander used to sport Ammon’s horns, probably towards the end of his life (*FGrH* 126 F5, ap. Ath. XII 53). Innumerable representations of Alexander, especially on coins, show his head with the ram-horns of Amun, with whom Ammon of Siwah, the divine father of Alexander, was identified by the Greeks (Stewart 1993, 231–234, 318–319; Dahmen 2007, 16–17, 36–37; Fulińska 2014; Sheedy and Ockinga 2015). Alexander’s epithet κερασφόρος is attested also for Dionysos who gained it probably through his assimilation to Alexander in Hellenistic and Roman literature and mythology (Djurslev 2016). The horned image of Alexander found its way to the *Quran* which, under the ultimate influence of the *Alexander Romance*, features Alexander under the name Dhu’l-Qarnayn or “two-horned” (18.83–98, 21.95–96. Anderson 1927; Nagel 1978, 76–77; Southgate 1978, 1–5, 196–201; Waugh 1996; van Donzel and Schmidt 2010, 50–52), although in Islamic tradition Alexander was not the only person to bear this epithet (Cottrell 2016).

4 ἐκόμισεν αὐτὸν Πτολεμαῖος εἰς Αἴγυπτον: Alexander wanted to be buried in Siwah (D.S. XVIII 3.5; Curt. x 5.4; Just. XIII 4.6), but Perdikkas ordered the body to be transported to Macedonia to be laid to rest in the burial grounds of Macedonian kings in Aigai (Paus. I 6.3). It took almost two years to craft the elaborate hearse to transport Alexander’s body and it set off from Babylon no earlier than 321 BC, only to be intercepted in Syria by Ptolemy who diverted the convoy to Egypt (D.S. XVIII 28.2–6; Str. XVII 1.8; Paus. I 6.3; Ael. VH XII 64; Arr. *Succ.* fr. 1.25 and 24, Ross = *FGrH* 156 F9.25 and 10.1), even if this meant an open challenge to Perdikkas. Ptolemy surely understood the ideological importance of Alexander’s body and of his tomb, both for Macedonians and for Egyptians. In fact the later consideration was probably of greater importance for Ptolemy if he wanted to acquire legitimacy in Egypt. Any new pharaoh’s primary responsibility was to perform proper a burial ritual for his predecessor, thus acquiring legitimacy while impersonating Horus who had performed funeral rights for his father, Osiris (Spencer 1982, 54). Since Alexander was the previous proper pharaoh, Ptolemy could acquire legitimacy in Egypt by performing appropriate burial rituals for Alexander in Memphis (Rotroff 1997, 225). Even when Ptolemy’s seat, and that of his dynasty, was in Alexandria, Memphis retained much of its earlier importance, the best example being the priesthood of Ptah kept throughout the Hellenistic age within one family, which incidentally belonged to the highest elite of Ptolemaic Egypt (Thompson 1988, 138–154; Bergmann 2010, 122–125).

ἔλαβε δὲ λάρνακα μολυβδίνην καὶ ἐνέθηκεν αὐτῇ μέλι νησιωτικὸν καὶ ἀλόην καὶ μύρραν Τρωγοδυτικὴν: this detail about the lead coffin of Alexander being filled with honey, aloes and myrrh is unknown to other sources. In Diodorus' account, probably taken from Hieronymos of Kardia (Chugg 2004, 35), Alexander's embalmed body was deposited in a golden anthropomorphic sarcophagus filled with spices meant to give a fragrant smell to the body and to prevent its decomposition (D.S. XVIII 26.3).

4–6 The *Alexander Romance* is quite uncertain as to where Alexander's body was buried in Egypt. Ancient sources convey two versions of it. One, which is certainly correct and anchored primarily in the early-Hellenistic *Parian Chronicle*, has Alexander's body buried in Memphis (see commentary on Section 3 in this chapter), from where it was transferred to Alexandria, probably under Ptolemy II (so Paus. I 7.1. Fraser 1972, I, 15–16, II, 31–32; Habicht 1988; Schlange-Schöningen 1996; Chugg 2004, 47–57), although some try to make a case for the transfer of Alexander's body to Alexandria from Memphis earlier than this by Ptolemy I, during whose reign the cult of Alexander is attested in Alexandria (Hazzard 2004, 54). The second version holds that Alexander's body was buried in Alexandria, without an interim internment in Memphis (D.S. XVIII 28.3; Str. XVII 1.8; *Ael.* VH XII 64; *Epitome Heidelbergensis*, FGrH 155 F2). The second version is wrong, as in 321 BC Alexandria was still a building site and not the seat of a satrap, and depositing Alexander's body there would have been of no benefit to Ptolemy (Chugg 2004, 47–49), while the proper funeral of the legitimate pharaoh Alexander performed in Memphis might be of tremendous importance to strengthen the legitimacy of his successor in Egypt. Ps.-Callisthenes was aware of these two versions of the burial of Alexander and he tries to include both, perhaps in an attempt at reconciling them: earlier in this chapter the apocryphal oracle of Babylonian Zeus points at Memphis as the burial site of Alexander, hence the body is taken first to Memphis and only there the high prophet of Ptah/Osiris? in Memphis orders it to be taken to Alexandria, thus balancing the earlier prophecy. The usage of the regular Egyptian name for Alexandria, Rhakotis (cf. commentary on I 31.2), is probably meant to make this statement more authentic and thus more credible.

6 Ἀλεξάνδρου σῆμα: obviously already Ptolemy II (or even Ptolemy I) must have had some sort of tomb of Alexander constructed in Alexandria to house his body, but the reference is made here to the famous tomb of Alexander, in later times frequented by every visitor to Alexandria (Saunders 2006, 79–94; Venit 2012, 109). It was constructed in 215 BC on the orders of Ptolemy IV as an element of the royal necropolis (Zen. 3.94. Stewart 1993, 224; McKenzie, 64–



FIGURE 15 *The so-called Alabaster Tomb, unearthed in the Old Latin cemetery in Alexandria, i.e. in the area once occupied by the Ptolemaic Royal Quarter may be the only remaining trace of the Sema of Alexander.*

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65). The monumental tomb of Alexander is referred in our sources as σῆμα ("tomb") or σῶμα ("dead body, corpse"); ms. A uses the first of these names, while β and Arm. use the second one. The exact location of the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria is unknown; what can be learned from ancient sources is that it was placed in the middle of the city (Zen. 3.94), within the Royal Quarter (Str. xvii 1.8). Despite extensive efforts by archaeologists and enthusiasts of Alexander alike, no certain trace of the tomb has been found in Alexandria

(Saunders 2006, 191–205; Łukaszewicz 2014). So far the only somewhat likely candidate for a trace of Alexander's tomb is the so-called Alabaster Tomb (*tomba di alabastro*), an early Ptolemaic antechamber of a monumental tomb, originally covered by a tumulus, as were Macedonian royal and aristocratic tombs, excavated in 1907 by E. Breccia in the Old Latin cemetery. The splendor of the antechamber, constructed of enormous slabs of alabaster, the uniquely Macedonian character of the tomb, and its location within the area once occupied by the Royal Quarter, show that it must have been a royal monument (Venit 2002, 6–9) and its early Ptolemaic age makes it possible that it is the remaining trace of the Sema of Alexander of 215 BC (this idea comes from Adriani 2000; cf. the critical assessment of this identification and of later archaeological research in the area: Saunders 2006, 163–172).

### Chapter 35

1 ἐβίωσε μὲν οὖν Ἀλέξανδρος ἔτη λ': the historical Alexander was born in July 356 BC and died on 11 June 323 BC, so his lifespan was just short of thirty three years. Various versions of the *Alexander Romance* list different numbers of his years of life and of his achievements in a way which made Kroll comment in desperation: "Numeros absurdos corrigere est operam perdere." Nevertheless a few words of commentary are necessary with regard to figures listed in this chapter. His lifespan is 32 in β, 33 in Val., Arm., Leo, 32 years and seven months in Syr., while the Ps.-Callisthenes derived *ELB* (1 8.6) has 36. There seems to be universal agreement amongst all versions and the derivative *ELB* that the number in the archetype (α) was anything but 30, the odds being 33, since this figure is attested both in Val., the earliest version after ms. A, and in some versions of the \*δ family. If the original version was written as λγ, there are two ways in which it degenerated to λ in ms. A. Either a careless scribe dropped the final γ by mistake or it was a decision to round up the number of years in the early stage of copying. One needs to remember that rounding-up of ages was not unknown in antiquity; in fact, Egyptian documents of the Ptolemaic and Roman age, both inscriptions, mummy labels and private documents, show widespread age rounding to multiples of five years (Duncan-Jones 1979). Attributing an age of thirty to Alexander at his death may reflect this habit too.

ἀπὸ ιε' ἐτῶν ἀρξάμενος πολεμεῖν ἐπολέμησεν ἔτη ζ', μέχρι κ' ἐτῶν γεγένηται· τὰ δὲ ἄλλα λ' ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀμεριμνίᾳ καὶ εὐφροσύνῃ ἔζησεν: again figures vary from one version to the other, with a few years of peace and quiet after the period of war serving as a common feature. This feature is not altogether

fictional, since there was no major war under Alexander after the end of the expedition to India (in the autumn of 325 BC), but it lasted less than two years and was interrupted by smaller military endeavors, most notably by the expedition against the Kossaians after the death of Hephaistion. Ms. A suggests that Alexander began his involvement in wars at fifteen which is about correct. In 340 BC, at 16, Alexander was regent of Macedonia during his father's absence and in this capacity he fought and defeated the Thracian Maidi, of course aided by the best Macedonian generals, ending the war with the founding of Alexandropolis at 17 (Plu. *Alex.* 9.1; St.Byz., s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρειαι. Bosworth 1988, 245–246). Other versions have: 18 (Val., Arm., Leo), 20 (β), but Val., Arm. and β refer to the beginning of his rule, not of military activity.

ὑπέταξεν ἔθνη βαρβάρων κβ', Ἑλλήνων ι': there is better agreement between the various versions as to the number of conquered barbarian peoples than in previous phrases: β, Val., Arm., Syr. and *ELB* have 20 barbarian peoples and only Leo lists 27. There is more disagreement about conquered Greek tribes: 13 (Syr., *ELB*), 14 (β), 16 (Val.).

ἔκτισε δὲ πόλεις ιγ': most versions attribute to Alexander the founding of twelve cities (Val., β, Arm. (285), Leo, *ELB*, *Chronicon Paschale*), rather than thirteen (ms. A, Syr.). This is far less than the number of foundations attributed to Alexander by Plutarch: seventy (*Mor.* 328e). The *Alexander Romance* (ms. A) lists just nine names of the cities founded by Alexander, and all ancient sources combined give fifty-seven names, but in a very critical analysis by Fraser, Alexander founded with certainty just six cities (Fraser 1996, at 201 and 240–243). Seven out of the nine cities named in this chapter are in the East and by the time the *Alexander Romance* was composed, most were under Sasanian rule, some no longer existed, the others were impoverished and depopulated. Some of them were in fact Seleukid foundations, falsely attributed to Alexander. Thus this list has little relevance either for the age of Alexander or for the third c. AD when the *Alexander Romance* took its final shape. It seems therefore that the substantial part of this list of Alexander's foundations was copied from a Seleukid-inspired book, perhaps written in the third c. BC, in the age of intensive rivalry between the Seleukids and the Ptolemies (Fraser 1996, 40–46). Nevertheless in Alexandria at least Alexander was worshiped as *ktistes* ("founder"), as attested, among others, by the way he is referred to in the *ELB* (*conditor*), no doubt reflecting the language of the *Alexandrian World Chronicle*, and by the equestrian statue of Alexander *ktistes* known to us from the ecphrasis of Nikolaos quoted in Ps.-Libanios' *Progymnasmata* (27; Stewart 1993, 40, 172–173, 397–400). In their rivalry for fame, cities of the Roman East were eager to point to famous characters of mythology and history as their real or invented founders and few people could rival Alexander as a

person to whom foundations were attributed (Leschhorn 1984, 203–223, 353–354; Swain 1996, 10–11).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐπὶ Βουκεφάλῳ Ἰππῶ: Alexandria Boukephala: Alexander founded a city named after his horse who died in the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC, Boukephala (Str. XV 1.29; D.S. XVII 95.5; Curt. IX 3.23; Plin. *Nat.* VI 77, VIII 154; Arr. *An.* V 19.4; Ael. *NA* XVI 3; Just. XII 8.8; *ME* 62; Orosius III 19.4; Solinus 45.5), sometimes misspelled Boukephaleia (Herodianus, *De prosodia catholica* III 1, p. 277; St.Byz., s.v. Βουκεφάλεια). It was instated on or near the battlefield of the Hydaspes, and is one of the very few real foundations of Alexander. On the testimony of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (47) it survived until the first c. AD (Fraser 1996, 161–162; Cohen 2013).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν πρὸς Πέρσας: this is probably a city better known as Antiochia in Persis, attested in a letter inscribed by Antiochos III in Magnesia on the Maeander (*OGIS* 231 = Welles 31; *OGIS* 233). Its hypothetical location is in or near Bushehr on the Persian Gulf (Fraser 1996, 31–32, with reference; Cohen 2013, 185–187; Kosmin 2013, 681–683).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐπὶ Πώρῳ: this Alexandria “in the land of Poros” is attested in the *Alexander Romance* tradition: ms. A, β, Val., Arm., Syr., *Analecta Syriaca*, *ELB* and in the *Chronicon Paschale* (p. 321). It is usually omitted by modern scholars and even Fraser does not include it in his list of Alexandrias. Tarn (1948, II, 243; cf. Cohen 2013, 317–318) suggested that it may be the same as Nikaia, the city Alexander founded to commemorate the battle with Poros, opposite Boukephala (Arr. *An.* V 19.4).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐν Σκυθίᾳ: a city of the name Alexandria in Skythia is known exclusively from the *Alexander Romance* tradition: ms. A, β, Val., Arm., Syr., Leo, *Analecta Syriaca*, *ELB*, *Chronicon Paschale* (p. 322). Arrian, however, says about Alexander establishing a city on the Tanais (Syr Darya): Αὐτὸς δὲ πρὸς τῷ Τανάϊδι ποταμῷ ἐπενόει πόλιν οἰκίσαι, καὶ ταύτην ἑαυτοῦ ἐπώνυμον. ὃ τε γὰρ χώρος ἐπιτήδειος αὐτῷ ἐφαίνετο αὐξήσαι ἐπὶ μέγα τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐν καλῷ οἰκισθῆσθαι τῆς ἐπὶ Σκύθας, εἴποτε ξυμβαίνει ..., or “It was his intention to found a city on the Tanais and to name it after himself. The site, he considered, was a good one, a settlement there would be likely to increase in size and importance, and would also serve both as an excellent base for a possible future invasion of Skythia ...” (Arr. *An.* IV 1.3; tr. de Sélincourt). This description of the foundation of Alexandria Eschate (today Khojend) is firmly set against the Skythian background and Tarn (1948, II, 243–244; but see the critical assessment of Cohen 2013, 250–253 who stresses that this identification is hypothetical) is probably right in taking it as the equivalent of Alexandria in Skythia. It was the most significant city established by Alexander outside of Egypt and its foundation was important enough to be recorded by the *Parian Chronicle* (*Marmor Parium*, IG XII.5.444

18a = *FGrH* 239 B7. Fraser 1996, 151–153). Alexandria Eschate was most probably soon destroyed by the Skythians and then rebuilt by Antiochos I under the old name (App. *Syr.* 298. Bosworth 1995, 17).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ Τίγριδος ποταμοῦ: Alexandria on the Tigris is known exclusively from some versions of the *Alexander Romance* (ms. A, β, Val., Leo). Arm. (285) lists an Alexandria on the Dklat' River; since Dklat' is Armenian for Tigris (Potts 2006), the city is Alexandria on the Tigris. The question arises as to whether Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν περὶ Κυπρίδος ποταμόν known from the *Chronicon Paschale*, *ELB* and β is an (apocryphal) Alexandria in Cyprus (so St.Byz. s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια. Fraser 1996, 27), or if the name of the river is a corruption of Τίγριδος into Κυπρίδος. At any rate the Alexandria on the Tigris is most likely Seleukeia on the Tigris, a great city founded by Seleukos I and the eastern capital of the Seleukid Empire. It is immaterial here that by the time the final version of the *Alexander Romance* was composed Seleukeia was way past the peak of its prosperity, overshadowed by Ktesiphon, although it survived at least until the sixth c. AD (Fraser 1996, 31–32; Cohen 2013, 157–173).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνος: Alexandria in Babylonia is attested exclusively in the *Alexander Romance* tradition (ms. A, Val., Arm., Syr., Leo, *ELB*, *Chronicon Paschale*). It may again be a Seleukid foundation, known as Seleukeia on the Hedyphon (Str. XVI 1.18; *SEG* 4.504. Fraser 1996, 32–33), identified with the archaeological site Jānešīn on the Jarrāhī in Kūzestān in Iran (Hansman, 1978; Cohen 2013, 192–193).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν πρὸς Τρωάδα: this was a city in Troad, opposite the island of Tenedos (Bozca Ada), founded by Antigonos Monophthalmos after 311 BC as Antigoneia (Str. XIII 1.33) and, after the death of its founder in the Battle of Ipsos in 301 BC, re-founded by Lysimachos as Alexandria, eventually to become a Roman colony, probably under Augustus (Plin. *Nat.* v 124). It survived into the Middle Ages as Alexandria, although its foundation did not have anything to do with Alexander (Leschhorn 1984, 254–255; Cohen 1995, 145–148). Nevertheless, the iconography of its coins and allusions in Menander Rhetor (388, 426, 428–429) suggest that in the Imperial age Alexander was perceived as the real founder of Alexandria Troas (Weiß 1996).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν ἐπὶ Σούσοις: this is most probably Seleukeia on the Eulaios, a major city founded, probably by Seleukos I, in Susa as a Macedonian military colony and surviving with Greek/Macedonian municipal institutions well into the Parthian age. Since it was a polis adjacent to Susa, one of the residential cities of the Achaemenids, Seleukeia on the Eulaios was an important Hellenistic outpost and one of the biggest Greek/Macedonian cities of the East (Fraser 1996, 33; Cohen 2013, 194–199). The alternative solution, proposed by Tarn (1948, II, 43–44), is that it was Samarkand, which requires emendation of Σούσοις into



Σόγδοις, on the dubious authority of Syr. which has “Alexandria which is in the country of Sôd, that is to say, Samarḳand.” This emendation of the perfectly readable place was rejected by Kroll (app. ad loc.) and there is not much to support it (Cohen 2013, 180–181).

Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὴν πρὸς Αἴγυπτον: this is *the* Alexandria, in Egypt.

Ἐγγενήθη μὲν οὖν Τύβι τῇ νεομηνίᾳ ἀνατολῆς οὔσης, ἐτελεύτησε δὲ Φαρμούθι τετράδι δύσεως: the first of these dates is 1 Tybi which in 356 BC fell on 20 March. This is far from the date of birth generally recognized for Alexander, but it does have much significance if read in the Egyptian cultural context, as do all stories of the birth of Alexander earlier in the *Alexander Romance*. 1 Tybi was the Egyptian New Year, the day on which a new king was crowned, the day of renewal (Altenmüller 1977; Derchain-Urtel 1986) and thus, symbolically, the best date on which a new king could be born. According to the calendar of Alexandria in 323 BC, 4 Pharmouthi fell on 13 June, but some scholars try to stretch the date to obtain 10 June (Spalinger 1992). The date of Alexander's death recorded in the very reliable *Babylonian Astronomical Diary* is 11 June 323 BC (Sachs and Hunger 1988, 322; Depuydt 1997), so most likely the source used by Ps.-Callisthenes contained a mistaken date.



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