

THE
GREEK ALEXANDER
ROMANCE



TRANSLATED WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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PENGUIN BOOKS

BOOK III



I. Alexander then took his army and continued the march against Porus, the king of the Indians. After they had been marching for a long time through barren and waterless country, full of ravines, the officers addressed the men of the army: 'We did enough when we brought the war as far as Persia and subdued Darius for demanding tribute from the Greeks. Why are we wearing ourselves out with this expedition to India, a land full of wild beasts and having nothing to do with Greece? If Alexander's great ambition leads him to go on making war and subduing barbarian peoples, why should we go along with him? Let him go on alone and fight his own wars.' When Alexander heard this, he addressed the Greeks and Macedonians, having separated the Persian troops from their number.

'Fellow-soldiers and allies, Macedonians and all you leaders of the Greeks (after all, these Persians are enemies of yours and of mine), why are you grumbling now? You demand that I go alone and make war on my own against the barbarians. But let me remind you that I won those former wars on my own, and I shall win more if I take with me only the Persians I require. My will alone spurred you on to fight when you were quaking before the forces of Darius. Was I not in the forefront of the army with my sword? Did I not go as my own emissary to Darius? Did I not despise every danger? Well, make up your minds and go back to Macedon on your own; save yourselves and try not to quarrel with one another. Then you will learn that an army can do nothing without a king's intelligence.'

After this speech of Alexander, they begged him to calm his anger, and to keep them with him to the bitter end.⁹⁶

2. Soon he and his whole army arrived at the border of India.⁹⁷ Here messengers met him with a letter from Porus, the king of the Indians. Alexander took it and read it out to the army. It ran as follows:

'King Porus of the Indians to Alexander the looter of cities. I command you to retreat. What can you, a man, do against a god? Why do you concoct such misfortune for those who are with you? You think that you are stronger than me, but in fact your forces are inferior. I am invincible. I am king not only over men but over gods: Dionysus is here on my side, whom you call a god. Therefore, I do not merely advise you, I command you to depart as swiftly as possible for Greece. Your battles against Darius and the other peoples do not frighten me, because your success was the result of their weakness. Your strength is only a matter of appearance. Depart for Greece! If we had wanted Greece, we would have conquered it long before Xerxes did, but because it is a worthless country and does not deserve to be looked at by a king of ours, we have not troubled it. Every man desires only what is better than his own.'

When Alexander had read to the army this letter from Porus he said, 'Fellow-soldiers, do not be disturbed by Porus' letter which I have just read out to you. Remember how Darius used to write. Truly the only sense one can get out of barbarians is their own insensibility. Just as animals – tigers, lions, elephants, which pride themselves on their own strength – are easily brought to heel by human nature – even among barbarians – so the kings of barbarians who exult in the size of their armies are easily worsted by the intelligence of Greeks.'

Alexander heartened his men with this speech, and then he wrote to Porus, as follows:

'King Alexander greets King Porus. By saying that Greece is not worth a king's looking at it, while you have all the cities and regions of India, you have made us even more eager for battle with you. I know that every man desires what is better than his own, not what is less. Well, since we Greeks do not have these things, and you barbarians have got them, we are eager for the better and would like to wrest them from you.'

'You write to me that you are king over gods as well as all men,

and that you are more powerful than a god. I, however, am going to make war against a boastful man and a barbarian, not a god. The whole world cannot withstand the weapons of a god, the rumble of thunder, the flash of lightning and the anger of the thunderbolt. The nations I have already defeated did not overawe me, and your boastful words do not frighten me either.'

3. When Porus read this letter from Alexander he was very angry, and at once assembled the barbarian hordes, as well as the elephants and other beasts that fought alongside the Indians. When the Macedonians and Persians approached, Alexander saw the Indian forces and was frightened, not by the men but by the beasts. The strange sight filled him with amazement; he was used to fighting men, not wild animals.

So Alexander once again became his own messenger and went to the city where Porus was, dressed as a soldier, as if he was going to buy provisions. When the Indians saw him, they brought him before King Porus, who said to him, 'How is Alexander?'

'He is alive and well,' came the reply, 'and eager to see such a great king as Porus.'

Then the king went out with Alexander and showed him the troops of elephants. 'Go to Alexander,' he said, 'and tell him that I am bringing wild beasts like himself to fight against him.'

'King Porus,' Alexander replied, 'before I return to Alexander he will himself have heard what you have said about him.'

'From whom?' asked Porus.

'From Porus,' was the reply. 'As son of a god, he is ignorant of nothing that is said.'

Then Porus gave him gifts and sent him away.

As Alexander was leaving, he saw the regiment of Porus' animals. He racked his brains and thought hard, and what do you think the cunning fellow did? He had all the bronze statues he possessed and all the armour he had taken as booty from the soldiers heated up thoroughly until they were red-hot, and then set up in front of the army like a wall. The trumpets sounded the battle-cry. Porus ordered his beasts to be released. As the beasts

rushed forward, they leapt on to the statues and clung to them; at once their muzzles were badly burnt and they let go immediately. That is how the resourceful Alexander put an end to the attack of the beasts. The Persian mounted archers were superior to the Indians, and drove them back. There was a fierce mêlée, soldiers both killing and being killed.

[Supplement H]

In the course of the battle Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, collapsed from exhaustion. At once Alexander lost interest in the battle; the armies went on fighting for twenty days, but at the end of that time Alexander's men began to lose heart and give ground.

4. When Alexander realized that they were on the point of defeat, he ordered a cessation of the fighting and sent a message to Porus, as follows:

'It does not befit the power of a king to allow one or other of us to gain the victory only by the destruction of our armies; but it will be a mark of our personal bravery if each of us puts a stop to the general fighting and comes forward to decide the victory by single combat.'

Porus was delighted — he had noticed that Alexander was no match for himself in physical size — and promised to fight him single-handed. Porus was 8 feet tall and Alexander less than 5. Both sides stood around to watch the fight. Suddenly there was a tremendous noise in Porus' camp. Porus was startled, and turned round to see what the cause of the noise was. At once Alexander knocked his legs from under him, jumped on to him and drove his sword through his ribs. That was the end of Porus, king of the Indians.⁹⁸

Then both the armies began to fight again. Alexander called out to the Indians, 'Wretched Indians, why do you go on fighting when your king is dead?' But they replied, 'We fight so as not to be made prisoners of war.' Then Alexander said, 'Stop fighting, turn round and return to your city as free men. It was not you who made this audacious attack on my army, but Porus.' He said this because he knew that his army was no match for that of the Indians.

Immediately he ordered that Porus be given a royal burial. He took all the treasure from the royal palace and marched on to the Brahmans, or Oxydorkai. These were not for the most part warriors, but naked philosophers who lived in huts and caves.⁹⁹

5. When the Brahmans learned that King Alexander was on his way to them, they sent their best philosophers to him, bearing a letter. Alexander took and read the letter, and this is what was in it:

'We the naked philosophers address the man Alexander. If you have come to fight us, it will do you no good. There is nothing that you can take from us. To obtain from us what we do have, you must not fight, but ask humbly, and ask it not of us but of Providence above. If you wish to know who we are — we are naked and we have devoted ourselves to the pursuit of wisdom. This we have done, not by our own decision but through the agency of Providence above. Your business is war, ours is wisdom.'

When Alexander had read this, he approached them in a peaceable manner. He saw great forests and tall trees, beautiful to look at and bearing all kinds of fruit. A river ran round the land, with clear water as bright as milk. There were innumerable palm trees, heavy with fruit, and the vine stock bore a thousand beautiful and tempting grapes. Here Alexander saw the philosophers themselves, entirely without clothing and living in huts and caves. A long way off from them he saw their wives and children, looking after the flocks.

6. Alexander asked them some questions. 'Do you have no graves?' was the first.

'This ground where we dwell is also our grave,' came the reply. 'Here we lie down and, as it were, bury ourselves when we sleep. The earth gives us birth, the earth feeds us, and under the earth when we die we spend our eternal sleep.'

'Who are the greater in number?' he asked next. 'The living or the dead?'

'The dead are more numerous,' they replied, 'but because they no longer exist they cannot be counted. The visible are more numerous than the invisible.'

Next he asked, 'Which is stronger, death or life?'

'Life,' they replied, 'because the sun as it rises has strong, bright rays, but when it sets, appears to be weaker.'

'Which is greater, the earth or the sea?'

'The earth. The sea is itself surrounded by the earth.'

'Which is the wickedest of all creatures?'

'Man,' they replied.

And he, 'Why?'

'Learn from yourself the answer to that. You are a wild beast, and see how many other wild beasts you have with you, to help you tear away the lives of other beasts.'

Alexander was not angry, but smiled. Then he asked, 'What is kingship?'

'Unjust power used to the disadvantage of others; insolence supported by opportunity; a golden burden.'

'Which came first, day or night?'

'Night. What is born grows first in the darkness of the mother's womb, and at birth it encounters the light of day.'

'Which side is better, the left or the right?'

'The right. The sun rises on the right and then makes its way to the left-hand side of the sky. And a woman gives suck first with her right breast.'

Then Alexander asked them about themselves. 'Do you have a king?'

'Yes, we have a leader,' they replied.

'I should like to meet him.'

So they showed him Dandamis, who was lying on the ground on a thick couch of leaves. Beside him lay some melons and other fruit. Alexander greeted him at once, and he replied, 'Greetings.' He did not stand up, and made no attempt to treat him like a king.

Then Alexander asked him if they had any property.

'Our possessions,' Dandamis replied, 'are the earth, the fruit trees, the daylight, the sun, the moon, the chorus of the stars, and water. When we are hungry, we go to the trees whose branches hang down here and eat the fruit they produce. The trees produce fruit every time the moon begins to wax. Then we have the great river Euphrates, and whenever we are thirsty we go to it,

drink its water, and are contented. Each of us has his own wife. At every new moon each goes to mate with his wife, until she has borne two children. We reckon one of these to replace the father, and one to replace the mother.'

Then Alexander said to them all, 'Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you.' At once they all burst out, 'Give us immortality.' But Alexander replied, 'That is a power I do not have. I too am a mortal.'

Then they asked him, 'Since you are a mortal, why do you make so many wars? When you have seized everything, where will you take it? Surely you will only have to leave it behind for others?'

'It is ordained by Providence above,' replied Alexander, 'that we shall all be slaves and servants of the divine will. The sea does not move unless the wind blows it, and the trees do not tremble unless the breezes disturb them; and likewise man does nothing except by the motions of divine Providence. For my part I would like to stop making war, but the master of my soul does not allow me. If we were all of like mind, the world would be devoid of activity: the sea would not be filled, the land would not be farmed, marriages would not be consummated, there would be no begetting of children. How many have become miserable and lost all their possessions as a result of my wars? But others have profited from the property of others. Everyone takes from everyone, and leaves what he has taken to others: no possession is permanent.'

After this speech, Alexander gave Dandamis gold, bread, wine and olive oil: 'Take these things, old man, in remembrance of me.' Dandamis laughed and said, 'These things are useless to us. But in order not to appear proud, we will accept the oil.' Then, building a great pile of wood, he set it alight and poured the oil into the fire before Alexander's eyes.¹⁰⁰

[Supplement I]

17. After these events, Alexander departed from the naked philosophers and returned to the proper road towards Prasiake, which is regarded as the capital city of the land of India and was the site of Porus' palace. Here Porus' men received Alexander. He

organized all Prasiake's affairs properly, and the Indians enthusiastically committed themselves to him. Some of them said to Alexander, 'Great king, you will capture wonderful cities and kingdoms, and mountains on which no king of the living has ever set foot.'

Some of the wise men of the kingdom came to Alexander and said, 'Your majesty, we have something to show you which deserves your special attention. We will take you to the trees that speak with a human voice.' So they brought Alexander to a place where there was a sanctuary of the Sun and the Moon. There was a guardpost here, and two trees closely resembling cypresses. Around these stood trees that resembled what in Egypt is called the myrrh-nut, and their fruits were also similar. The two trees in the middle of the garden spoke, the one with a man's voice, the other with a woman's. The name of the male one was Sun, and of the female one Moon, or in their own language, Moutheamatous.¹⁰¹ The trees were surrounded with the skins of all kinds of wild animals, male ones around the male tree, and female ones around the female tree. In their neighbourhood there was no iron, bronze or tin, not even potter's clay. When Alexander asked them what sort of animals the skins came from, his companions told him that they were those of lions and panthers.

Alexander wanted to learn more about these trees. They told him, 'In the morning, when the sun rises, a voice issues from the tree of the sun, and again when the sun is in the middle of the sky, and a third time when it is about to set. And the same applies to the tree of the moon.' The priests, as they evidently were, of the place came up and told Alexander, 'Enter if you are pure, make obeisance and receive an oracle. And, Alexander,' they went on, 'no iron may be brought into the sanctuary.' So Alexander ordered his men to leave their swords outside the perimeter wall. A number of men went in with Alexander, and he ordered them to explore the enclosure in all directions. He kept some of his Indian companions with him as interpreters, swearing solemnly to them that if the sun set and no oracle was heard, he would have them burnt alive.

Just then the sun set; at once an Indian voice was heard in the tree. The Indians who were with him were afraid and did not

want to translate its words. Alexander became anxious and took them aside one by one. They whispered in his ear, 'King Alexander, soon you must die by the hand of one of your companions.' All those who stood around were extremely disturbed, but Alexander wanted to question the oracle again. As he had heard what was going to happen to him, he went in and requested that he might once more embrace his mother, Olympias. When the moon rose, its tree spoke in Greek: 'King Alexander, you are to die in Babylon, by the hand of one of your companions, and you will not be able to return to your mother, Olympias.'

Alexander was amazed, and wanted to bedeck the trees with the finest garlands, but the priests stopped him, saying, 'This may not be. If you insist, do as you will; a king can make every law unwritten.' Then Alexander was very melancholy.

At dawn he rose with the priests, his friends and the Indians, and went back to the sanctuary. After praying, he approached with one of the priests and laid his hand on the tree of the sun, and asked it if the full span of his life would be completed. That is what he really wanted to know. As the sun rose and the first rays fell on the top of the tree, a resonant voice came forth: 'The span of your life is completed now, you will not be able to return to your mother, Olympias, but must die in Babylon. A short time afterwards, your mother and your wife will be horribly murdered by your own people. Ask no more about these matters, for you will be told no more.'

Alexander was very unhappy when he heard this. He went out and departed from India at once, making for Persia.

18. He was very eager to see the world-renowned palace of Semiramis. The whole of her country was ruled by a woman of remarkable beauty, in her early middle age. So Alexander wrote her a letter, as follows:

'King Alexander greets Queen Candace of Meroe¹⁰² and the princes who are her vassals. When I was travelling in Egypt I heard from the priests there about your houses and tombs, and that at one time you had been queen of Egypt. That is why I am writing to you. [Bring the temple and the image of Ammon to your borders, so that we may sacrifice to him. If you are unwill-

ing to come with him, we shall soon meet in Meroe and discuss the matter together. Send me here what you think proper. *A-text]* Take counsel and send me news of your decision. Farewell.'

Candace's reply was as follows:

'Candace, queen of Meroe, and all her vassal kings, greet King Alexander. At that time Ammon ordered us by an oracle to march into Egypt; but now he orders that he is not to be moved and that no one else is to enter the land. We are to defend ourselves against all comers and treat them as enemies. *A-text]* Do not despise us for the colour of our skin. In our souls we are brighter than the whitest of your people. We have eighty flame-throwers ready to do harm to those who attack us. My messengers will bring you 100 solid-gold ingots, 500 young Ethiopians, 200 sphinxes,¹⁰³ an emerald crown made of 1,000 pounds of gold, 10 strings of unweighed¹⁰⁴ pearls, [10 staters], 80 ivory chests, and all kinds of animals that are common among us: 5 elephants, 10 tame panthers, 30 bloodhounds in cages, 30 fighting bulls; also 300 elephant tusks, 300 panther skins, 3,000 ebony wands. Send immediately people to collect all these goods, and send further news of yourself, when you have made yourself king of the whole world. Farewell.'

19. When Alexander had read Candace's letter, he sent an Egyptian named Cleomenes to collect the gifts. But as Candace had heard how Alexander had defeated the mightiest kings, she called one of her courtiers, a Greek painter, and told him to go to Alexander and to paint his portrait without his realizing it. He did so. Candace took the portrait and put it in a secret hiding-place.

Some days later the son of Candace, by name Candaules, accompanied by a few horsemen, was attacked and beaten by the king of the Bebryces. He ran for safety to Alexander's tents. At once the sentries seized him and brought him to Ptolemy Soter, who was Alexander's second-in-command.

'Who are you, and who are your companions?' Ptolemy asked him.

'The son of Queen Candace,' replied Candaules.

'Why have you come here?'

'I was on my way,' explained Candaules, 'with my wife and a few troops to take part in the annual mysteries held by the Amazons. But the king of the Bebryces saw my wife and came down with a great army to seize her, and killed most of my soldiers. Now I am on my way home to collect a larger force and overrun the land of the Bebryces with fire.'

When Ptolemy heard this, he went to Alexander, woke him up, and told him all that he had heard from Candace's son. Alexander got up at once, took his crown and set it on Ptolemy's head, threw his cloak around his shoulders and said to him, 'Sit on the throne as if you were Alexander and tell the secretary, "Call Antigonus, my chief bodyguard." When I come, tell me what you have just told me and say, "Give me your advice, what shall we do?"'

So Ptolemy took his place on the throne, dressed in the royal robes. The soldiers were puzzled when they saw this, and asked one another what Alexander was up to now.¹⁰⁵ But when Candace's son saw Ptolemy in the royal robes, and supposed him to be Alexander, he was afraid that he might order him to be killed. Then Ptolemy said, 'Call Antigonus, my chief bodyguard.' Alexander came in, and Ptolemy went on, 'Antigonus, this is the son of Queen Candace. His wife has been carried off by the king of the Bebryces. What do you advise me to do?'

'I advise you, King Alexander,' replied Alexander, 'to arm your men and make war against the Bebryces, so that we can free his wife and hand her back to him. This will be a mark of respect towards his mother.'

Candaules was delighted when he heard this. 'If you wish, Antigonus,' went on Ptolemy, 'you may do this yourself, as my chief bodyguard. Give the army orders to get ready.'

20. These were the orders Ptolemy gave to Antigonus, while pretending to be Alexander; and so they were carried out. Antigonus and Ptolemy arrived in just one day at the tyrant's city. Then Antigonus said to Ptolemy, 'King Alexander, we should not let the Bebryces see us by day, in case the tyrant discovers us and kills the woman. Let us invade the city at night and set fire

to the houses; the people themselves will then rise up and give back the wife of Candaules. After all, we are not fighting for a kingdom but for the return of a wife.'

Then Candaules threw himself at Antigonus' feet, and said, 'Oh, how clever you are, Antigonus! If only you were Alexander, and not just his chief bodyguard.'

When night came and everyone was asleep, they invaded the city and set fire to the suburbs. When the people woke up and began to ask what was the cause of the fire, Alexander had an announcement made in a loud voice: 'Here is King Candaules with a great army. I order you to give back my wife, before I burn down the whole of your city.' The people, seeing that they were caught, burst into the king's palace in great numbers and opened the gates. They dragged out the wife of Candaules from the tyrant's bed, and handed her over to Candaules; and they killed the tyrant.¹⁰⁶

Candaules thanked Antigonus for his clever advice and plan, embraced him, and said, 'Entrust yourself to me, and I will bring you to my mother, Candace, and give you many gifts good enough for a king.'

Alexander was delighted and replied, 'Ask Alexander for permission for me to go; I would very much like to see your country.'

So Alexander gave Ptolemy the task of sending him with Candaules as his envoy. Ptolemy said to Candaules, 'I wish to send your mother a letter of greetings. Take my messenger Antigonus with you, and bring him back safely to me, so that I can restore you and your wife safely to your mother.'

'Your Majesty,' Candaules replied, 'I will take responsibility for this man as if he were Alexander himself. I will send him back to you with royal gifts.'

21. So Candaules set off with Alexander, taking a number of troops, beasts of burden, wagons and plentiful gifts. As Alexander travelled along, he marvelled at the spectacular mountains of the Crystal Country, which reached up to the clouds, and at the foliage on the tall trees, laden as they were with fruit; they were strange and wonderful, nothing like the trees of Greece. There

were apple trees which gleamed like gold, weighed down with fruit like Greek lemons; there were vines with enormous grapes, nuts as big as melons, apes the size of bears, and many other animals of diverse colours and unfamiliar shapes.

'Antigonus,' said Candaules, 'this place is known as the Dwelling of the Gods.'¹⁰⁷

They continued their journey and came to the palace, where they were met by the mother and brother of Candaules. As they were about to embrace him, Candaules stopped them:

'Do not embrace me until you have greeted my saviour and the benefactor of my wife, Antigonus the messenger from King Alexander.'

'What did he save you from?' they asked him.

Then Candaules described the rape of his wife by the king of the Bebryces and the help Alexander had given him. After that Candaules' brothers and his mother, Candace, embraced him. A magnificent meal was served in the palace.

22. Next day Candace came out resplendent in a royal diadem. She was above normal human size and almost godlike in appearance, so that Alexander could have taken her for his mother, Olympias. He saw over the palace, which sparkled with golden-ceilinged halls and walls of marble. There were coverlets woven of silk shot with gold by the most exquisite art, laid across couches with golden feet; even the straps on which the mattresses were slung were made of gold. The tables were inlaid with ivory, and there were Persian columns whose capitals gleamed with ebony. There were countless bronze statues; scythed chariots carved out of porphyry with galloping horses to match, looking as natural as if they were really alive; elephants carved out of the same stone, trampling their enemies with their feet and rolling their opponents over with their trunks; whole temples carved, columns and all, from a single stone. Alexander was amazed at all he saw. Then he had dinner with the brothers of Candaules. The latter called his mother and asked her to give the messenger gifts worthy of Alexander's cleverness and to let him return.

Next day Candace took Antigonus by the hand and showed him rooms with transparent walls made of an unidentified stone,

which allowed one to tell, even when inside, when the sun rose. In one of the buildings was a dining-room of imperishable wood, and a house which did not rest on the ground but stood on gigantic square columns, and was pulled about on wheels by twenty elephants. When the king or queen went out to make war on a city, he or she travelled in this.

'All this would be amazing,' said Alexander, 'if it were found among the Greeks and not here, where there are such fine and varied sources of stone.'

'Yes, indeed, Alexander,' cried Candace angrily.

But he, hearing himself addressed by name, retorted, 'My name is Antigonus, my lady; I am the messenger of Alexander.'

'Yes,' replied Candace, 'be Antigonus if you will, but not here; as far as I am concerned, you are Alexander. Now I will show you how I was able to recognize you.'

She took him by the hand and led him into a room, where she showed him the portrait she had had made.

'Do you recognize your own features?' she asked him.

Alexander was distressed when he recognized the picture, and he trembled.

'Why are you trembling, Alexander? Why are you so upset? You who have destroyed the Persians and the Indians, who have taken trophies from the Medes and Parthians, who have subdued the whole East – now, without a single battle, you have become the prisoner of Candace. Know this then, Alexander, that no matter how clever a man may be, another will be able to outwit him. Now Candace's cunning has outstripped even Alexander's intelligence.'

Alexander was furious and began to gnash his teeth.

'Why are you gnashing your teeth?' asked the queen. 'What can you do? You who were such a great king have now fallen into the hands of a single woman.'

Alexander was all ready to stab himself and Candace with his sword.

'That would be a brave and noble act,' said Candace. 'But do not fret, child Alexander. Because you saved my son and his wife who had been captured by the Bebryces, I will save you from the barbarians, by calling you Antigonus. If they discover

that you are Alexander, they will kill you immediately, because you killed Porus, the king of the Indians. The wife of my younger son is the daughter of Porus. Therefore I will call you Antigonus, and will keep your secret.'

23. With these words Candace went outside with him and addressed her son and daughter-in-law:

'Candaules, my son, and Harpisa, my daughter, if you had not encountered the army of Alexander at just the right moment, I should never have got you back, nor would you have found your wife again. Let us repay Alexander's messenger worthily and give him gifts.'

Then her younger son¹⁰⁸ spoke to her.

'Alexander saved my brother and his wife, but my wife is still grieving for her father Porus who was murdered by Alexander. She wants to put his messenger Antigonus to death, now that she has him in her power.'

'What good will that do, child?' countered Candace. 'If you kill this man, will you thereby overcome Alexander?'

'He saved me and my wife,' said Candaules to his brother. 'So I will send him safe home to Alexander. Shall we fight each other over this man?'

'I do not want to, brother,' replied the other. 'But if this is what you want, I am more than ready to go along with you.' So they went off to prepare themselves for a duel.

Candace was very worried about her sons and their decision to fight. She took Alexander aside and said, 'You are a clever man, and have carried out so many plots. Can you not think of some way to prevent my sons from fighting each other?'

'I will go and make peace between them,' Alexander promised. So he went and stood between them.

'Now listen,' he said, 'Thoas and Candaules; if you kill me here it will be of no concern to Alexander, because my name is Antigonus, and messengers are not accounted of much value in war. If you kill me, Alexander has plenty of other messengers. But if you want to take your enemy Alexander prisoner with my help, promise to give me a share of the gifts, so that I can stay here and induce Alexander to come here too, on the pretext

that you wish to give him in person the gifts you have prepared for him. Then you will have your enemy in your power, and you can take your vengeance at your pleasure.'

The brothers trusted him and gave up their quarrel. Candace was amazed at Alexander's cunning.

'Antigonus,' she said, 'I wish you were my son, for then I should have conquered every nation. It is not by fighting that you have overcome so many enemies and cities, but by your cleverness.'

Alexander was delighted at the protection he received from Candace's determination to keep his secret.

Ten days later he departed. Candace gave him royal gifts, including a very valuable diamond crown, a breastplate decorated with pearls and beryls, and a cloak of purple threaded with gold, which twinkled like the stars. She sent him off with a large escort of her own soldiers.

24. After marching for the stated number of days he came to the place where Candaules had told him that the gods dwelt. He entered with a few soldiers, and saw indistinct phantasms and flashes of lightning. Alexander was afraid at first, but waited to see what would happen next. Presently he saw some men lying down with light flashing out of their eyes as if from lamps.

One of them said to him, 'Greetings, Alexander. Do you know who I am? I am Sesonchosis, the Lord of the World. Yet I was not so fortunate as you. [I, who subdued the whole world and enslaved so many races, am now without reputation; but you will be favoured because you have founded in Egypt the city of Alexandria, which the gods love. But enter: you will behold the creator and champion of all Nature.'

The king went in, and saw a mist glowing with fire, and seated on the throne the god whom he had once seen in Rhacotis being worshipped by men, namely Sarapis.

'What is this,' he asked, 'incorruptible Lord, source of all Nature? I saw you sitting on your throne in the lands of Libya, and now I see you again here.'

Sesonchosis stood close by Alexander and said, 'This god can be seen everywhere though he remains in one place, just as

heaven may be seen everywhere though it remains in one place.
A-text; restored from the Armenian]

'How many years have I left to live?' asked Alexander.

'It is best for a living man not to know when his end will come,' was the reply. 'As soon as he learns the hour of his death, from that moment he is as good as dead. But if he remains in ignorance, this helps him to forget about his death, even though he must die one day.'

'But the city which you have founded will be famous the world over. Many kings will come to destroy it. But you will dwell in it, dead and yet not dead; the city you founded will be your tomb.'

After hearing this speech, Alexander went out again.

25. He took his own soldiers and set off back to his camp. The satraps came to meet him and presented him with royal clothing. Then Alexander and his men marched against the Amazons. When they were close, Alexander sent the Amazons a letter, as follows:

'King Alexander greets the Amazons. I imagine you have heard of my victory over Darius. After that I made war on the Indians, defeated their leaders and enslaved them with the help of Providence above. Then we visited the Brahmans, the so-called naked philosophers. We accepted tribute from them and left them to dwell in their own place, as they requested; we passed on in peace. Now our expedition has brought us to you. Come to meet us rejoicing, for we have not come to harm you, but to see your country and to do you good. Farewell.'

When they had received and read this letter, the Amazons replied as follows:

'The leaders of the Amazons greet Alexander. We are writing to give you some information before you come into our country, lest you afterwards return without glory. This letter will inform you about our country, and about us and our way of life. We live in the hinterland across the river Amazon. Our country is completely encircled by a river, and it takes a year to travel around it. There is only one entrance. We, the virgins who dwell in it, number 270,000, and we are armed. There is no male

creature in our land. The men live on the other side of the river and farm the land. We hold an annual festival at which we sacrifice a horse to Zeus, Poseidon, Hephaestus and Ares; the festival lasts six days. Any of us who have decided to be deflowered¹⁰⁹ move to the men's territory. Any female children are returned to us at the age of seven. When enemies attack our country, 120,000 of us ride out on horseback; the rest remain to defend the island. We join battle at the frontier; the men accompany us, drawn up in battle formation in the rear. If any of us is wounded in battle, she receives great honours in our revels; she receives a garland and her memory is preserved for ever. If any of us is killed in battle, her nearest relative receives a considerable amount of money. If any of us brings the body of an enemy on to the island, she is rewarded with gold and silver and dines at public expense for the rest of her life. That is how we fight for our reputation. If we conquer the enemy or put them to flight, that is regarded as a humiliation for them for the rest of time; but if they conquer us, it is only women that they have defeated.

'Now beware, Alexander, that the same thing does not happen to you. Take counsel, write to us again; you will find our camp at the frontier.'

26. When Alexander received this letter, he smiled and wrote back to the Amazons, as follows:

'King Alexander greets the Amazons. We have made ourself lord of the three continents and we have not failed to set up trophies of all our victories. It would be seen as shameful in us if we did not campaign against you too. If you are ready to be destroyed and to see your land made uninhabitable, remain at your frontiers. But if you would rather dwell in your own land without risking the fortunes of war, cross your river and let us see you. Let the men also show themselves in the open. If you do this, I swear by my father and my mother, Olympias, that I will do you no harm, but will accept from you whatever tribute you care to give, and I will not attack your country. Send us as many horsewomen as you think fit. We will pay each of them wages of a gold stater every month, and their food and drink in addi-

tion. At the end of a year these shall return to you and you shall send others. Take counsel and inform me of your decision. Farewell.'

When the Amazons received Alexander's letter, they held an assembly and wrote to inform him of their decision, as follows:

'The leaders of the Amazons greet King Alexander. We give you permission to come to us and to see our country. We undertake to pay you 100 talents of gold each year, and we have sent 500 of our strongest warriors to meet you, bringing with them the money and also 100 pure-bred horses. They will remain with you for one year. If any of them is deflowered by any foreigner, she may remain with you. Write and tell us how many choose to remain with you, send us back the remainder and we will send you replacements. We will obey you whether you are near or far. We have heard of your bravery and generosity. We dwell beyond the edges of the world, but still you have come to be our lord. We have determined to write to you and to dwell in our own land, obeying you as lord. Farewell.'¹¹⁰

[Supplement J]

27. After this exchange of letters, Alexander wrote to his mother, Olympias, to tell her everything he had done. His letter ran as follows:¹¹¹

'King Alexander greets his sweet mother, Olympias. [As far as concerns my first achievements up until we reached Asia, I am sure that you are fully informed by my previous letters. I thought it would be best to tell you about our journey to the interior also. We made a journey to Babylon, taking with us 150,000 soldiers. And then we made another journey . . . arriving at the Pillars of Heracles in ninety-five days. The local inhabitants told us that Heracles, in order to mark the limits of the lands he travelled, had set up two columns, one of gold and one of silver; and each of them was 20 feet high and 3 feet broad. I did not believe that they were solid, so I decided to sacrifice to Heracles and to make a hole in one of them. Then I discovered that it was of solid gold. So I filled up the hole again, which turned out to contain the equivalent of 1,500 gold pieces.]

'Then I marched on through a deserted and craggy land,

where it was impossible to see the person standing next to one because of the fog. Enough about these places. *A-text]*

'We mounted an expedition against the Amazons and marched as far as the river Prytanis. When we reached the edge of the city, we saw a river full of wild beasts. The soldiers were very downhearted. Although it was midsummer it rained without ceasing, and many of the infantry had painful feet. There was also a tremendous amount of thunder, flashes of lightning and thunderbolts. While we were waiting to cross the river Prytanis, which I mentioned, many of the natives were killed by our soldiers.

'Then we came to the river called Thermodon, which flows through a level and fertile country. Here dwell the Amazons, who are larger than other races of women, and remarkable for their beauty and strength. They wear flowery garments and carry silver weapons and axes: iron and bronze are unknown among them. They are notable for their intelligence and quick wits. As we approached the river where the Amazons live – it is a very wide river, hard to cross and full of wild animals – they crossed over themselves and lined up against us. But we persuaded them by a series of letters to submit to us.

28. 'We took tribute from them and continued towards the Red Sea as far as the river Tenon. Next we came to the river Antlas, where we could see neither land nor sky. A great variety of races dwelt there. We saw dog-headed men, and men without heads who had their eyes and mouths in their chests; we saw men with six hands, others with bulls' heads, and troglodytes and the wild strap-legs; still others were hairy like goats and had heads like those of lions. There were strange-looking animals of every kind.

'We sailed on from that river to a large island, 14 miles from the shore. There we found the City of the Sun. It had twelve towers built of gold and emeralds. The wall of the city was built of an Indian stone. In the centre was an altar constructed also of gold and emeralds, with six steps leading up to it. On top of this were a horse-drawn chariot and charioteer, yet again of gold and emeralds. It was hard to see these things because of the fog. The

priest of the Sun was an Ethiopian, and was dressed in pure linen. He told us in a barbarian tongue to depart from there. After we had left, we marched for seven days until we came to a place of darkness where there was not even a fire to give light.

'We left there and came to the harbour of Lyssos. Here there was a very high mountain, which I climbed and saw beautiful houses full of gold and silver. I also saw a perimeter wall of sapphire, with 108 steps. On top was a circular temple ringed by 100 columns of sapphire. Within and without were carved images of almost divine artistry: bacchants, satyrs, maenads playing pipes and raving in trances, and the old man Maron¹¹² sitting on his mule. In the middle of the temple was a couch of polished gold, covered with cushions, on which a man lay, clothed in thin muslin. I could not see his shape because he was covered up, but I could see his strength and the size of his body. Also in the middle of the temple hung a golden chain weighing 100 pounds and a golden crown. Instead of a fire there was a precious stone that lit up the whole place. There was a golden birdcage hanging from the ceiling, and in it was a bird somewhat like a dove, which called to me in a human voice, in Greek, and said: "Alexander, desist now from struggling against the gods; return to your own palace and do not strive to climb the paths of heaven." I wanted to take down the cage and the candelabrum to send them to you, but then I saw the man on the couch move as if he were about to get up. My friends said, "Stop now, your majesty; this is sacred property." When I went out into the temple precinct I saw two engraved golden mixing bowls, each holding sixty measures — as we discovered at dinner time. I ordered the army to pitch camp there and enjoy themselves. There was a very large mansion, which contained the finest goblets imaginable, carved from precious stones. As we and the army settled down to dinner, there was a sudden tremendous sound, loud as thunder, of pipes and many cymbals, of fifes and trumpets and drums and lyres. The whole mountain began to smoke as if we had been struck by lightning.

'We were afraid and left the place at once, and came to the royal palace of Cyrus. We came across a great many deserted cities and one very fine city, in which there was a large building

where the Persian king himself used to conduct business. They told me that a bird was there that spoke with a human voice. When we entered the building we saw a great many things worth seeing. It was built entirely of gold. In the middle of the ceiling hung a golden birdcage, like the previous one, and in it was a bird like a golden dove. They said that this bird could speak to the kings in tongues. There I also saw, inside the palace of Cyrus, a large engraved golden mixing bowl, which held 160 measures. The craftsmanship was amazing: on the rim it had statues, and on the upper band of decoration a relief of a sea battle. Inside the bowl there was an honorific inscription, and the exterior was adorned with gold. They said that this vessel had once been in the Egyptian city of Memphis, and had been brought here when the Persians conquered that city.

'There was also a house built in the Greek style, where the king used to conduct his business. In this was depicted the sea battle fought by Xerxes. There were also a throne of gold and precious stones, and a lyre which played of its own accord. Around the throne was a sideboard 24 feet long, and standing at the top of a flight of eight steps. Above it was an eagle of gold which spanned the entire circuit with its wings. There was also a golden vine with seven branches, all made of gold. But why should I tell you so much about all the other sights of the palace?¹¹³ They are such that their very quantity prevents us from describing their astonishing excellence. Farewell.'¹¹⁴

30. Alexander also wrote another letter to his mother, Olympias, after he had reached Babylon, and was close to the end of his life. It ran as follows:¹¹⁵

It is said that the gods have great powers of foresight. One of the women here bore a child whose upper body was human as far as the flanks, but from the hips downward it had the legs and paws of a wild beast; it resembled the monster Scylla. The paws were those of a lion and of a wild dog. These extremities moved and could be clearly seen, so that their distinctive forms could be recognized; but the upper body of the baby was lifeless. As soon as the mother had given birth, she wrapped the child in a cloth and went to Alexander's palace, saying to his servant, 'Tell

King Alexander of a great wonder; I have come to show him something.' Alexander happened to be having his afternoon rest in his room. When he woke up, he was told of the woman and ordered her to be brought in. He told all those who were with him to leave. Then the woman showed him the prodigy and explained that she had given birth to it.

When Alexander saw it, he was amazed and at once sent for his magicians and his interpreters of omens. When they arrived, he asked them to give a judgement about this miraculous birth, and threatened them with death if they did not tell him the truth. They were the most famous and learned of the Chaldaeans, in number five;¹¹⁶ but the one whose skill was greater than that of any was not at that time in the city. Those who were there told Alexander that he would be stronger than all men and overcome all his enemies, and be lord of all the world. For, they said, the savage beasts in the lower part of the human body represented the nations who had been subdued; and that was their interpretation of the omen.

But later the other Chaldaean came to Alexander. When he saw the form the omen had taken, he cried out and wept and tore his clothes, in a frenzy of grief. Alexander, seeing him in this state, was extremely disturbed and told him to pull himself together and explain the significance of the omen. 'King,' came the reply, 'you may no longer be numbered among the living.' Alexander asked him to explain the omen in detail, and the Chaldaean replied: 'Mightiest king of all the world, you yourself are the human part, and the animal elements are those around you. If the upper part were alive and moved like the animal parts below, so would you, O king; but just as the animal parts are, so are those around you: they have no understanding and are savage towards men, and just so are those around you disposed to you.' Then the Chaldaean went out, ordering that the child be burnt. After he had heard this, Alexander began to put his affairs in order.¹¹⁷

31. In Macedonia Antipater had taken over the reins of power and was treating Alexander's mother Olympias just as he liked. Olympias wrote frequently to her son about Antipater, as she was

very angry about this. Finally, when she was planning a trip to Epirus, Antipater forbade her to go. Alexander, having received his mother's letter and learned what a difficult position she was in, sent Craterus to Antipater in Macedonia to take charge of the country. When Antipater learnt of Alexander's plan and of the arrival of Craterus, who had brought an army with him to Macedonia and Thessaly, he was afraid. He decided to murder Alexander. Otherwise, he feared, he would be imprisoned because of the way he had treated Olympias. He had heard that Alexander had far exceeded his earlier arrogance as a result of his great successes. So he laid a plot, and prepared a poison which could not be carried in any vessel of bronze, glass or clay, because such a vessel would shatter instantly. Antipater put the poison in a jar of lead, and placed this in another jar of iron; then he gave it to his son and sent it to Babylon to Alexander's cupbearer Iolaus.¹¹⁸ He explained to him the ferocity and fatal power of the poison, so that if any of his enemies met him in battle he could take it and make an end of himself.

When Antipater's son arrived in Babylon, he spoke secretly to Alexander's cupbearer, Iolaus,¹¹⁹ and asked him to give the king the poison. Now Iolaus was nursing a grudge against Alexander because some days earlier he had made some mistake and Alexander had hit him over the head with his stick, injuring him severely. So Iolaus in his anger was very willing to become accomplice to Antipater's son in the crime. Iolaus also took into his confidence a certain Medius who had likewise been assaulted by Alexander. They discussed how they would get Alexander to drink the poison. One day Alexander was sleeping off a large dinner. Medius came to him the following morning and invited him to his house as a guest.

Alexander accepted the invitation and came to dinner; there were several other guests besides him. They included Perdiccas, Ptolemy, Olcias, Lysimachus, Eumenes and Cassander.¹²⁰ None of these knew anything about the planned crime; but the others present at the dinner were in the secret of the poison and had sworn oaths to each other and to Iolaus the cupbearer. All of them had reason to be angry at Alexander's acts.

When Alexander was reclining at table, Iolaus brought him

first an uncontaminated cup. As the conversation grew general, and, as a result of their drinking, had been going on for some time, Iolaus brought another cup, this time containing the poison. Alexander, to his misfortune, accepted it and drank it down. At once he gave a loud yell as if he had been pierced by an arrow through the liver. He remained conscious for a time, and fought down the pain enough to return to his own house. He asked the guests to continue with their meal.

32. [They were very upset and at once broke up the party; then they went out to see what would happen next. Alexander wanted to bring up the excess of wine and asked for a feather, for that was how he usually made himself vomit. Iolaus smeared one with some of the poison and gave it to him. In this way the poison infected him all the more quickly, spreading unchecked throughout his body. Alexander was racked with cramps and doubled up with pain. He endured a night of agony with great fortitude. On the next day, seeing how ill he was, unable even to speak clearly because his tongue was swollen, he sent everyone out, hoping to get some rest and to talk privately about the affairs that concerned him. Cassander¹²¹ conferred with his brother and departed by night. He removed to the mountains of Cilicia and waited there for Iolaus to arrive. He had made a pact with Iolaus, that if Alexander died, he would not be implicated. He sent the husband of their nurse by sea to his father in Macedonia, carrying a coded message indicating that the affair was concluded.

When night fell, Alexander ordered all the girls and boys who were attending him to leave the house, including Kambobaphe and Roxane his wife. There was a door leading out of the house towards the river Euphrates, which runs through the middle of Babylon. He ordered this to be opened, and that no one was to stand guard by it, as was usual. When they had all left, and it was the middle of the night, Alexander rose from his bed, extinguished the lamp, and left the house on all fours, heading for the river. As he approached, he looked around and saw his wife Roxane running towards him. She had guessed, when he sent everyone away, that he was going to attempt some deed

worthy of his great audacity, and had followed him out by a secret door into the darkness, guided by the sound of his groans, faint though they were. He stopped, and she embraced him and said, ‘Alexander, are you leaving me to kill yourself?’ He replied, ‘Roxane, it is small benefit to you to take away my glory. Let no one else hear about this.’ Then, with her support, he made his way back secretly to the house. *A-text*

The next day he summoned Perdiccas, Ptolemy and Lysimachus. He instructed that no one else should enter the room until he had made his will. Suddenly there was a great outcry from the Macedonians, who all ran to the courtyard of Alexander’s palace, ready to kill his guards if they would not let them see the king. When Alexander asked what the commotion was about, Perdiccas told him what the Macedonians were saying. So Alexander ordered his bed to be positioned where all the army could march past and see him, going out again by another door. Perdiccas did as Alexander commanded, and the Macedonians alone came in and saw Alexander. There was not one among them who did not weep to see their great king, Alexander, lying on his bed at the point of death. One of them, a good-looking man but only a private soldier, came close to the bed and said, ‘Your father, Philip, your majesty, ruled as a good king, and so have you done. You are leaving us now; it would be good that we should die with you, for you made Macedon a free country.’ Alexander wept, and stretched out his hand with a consoling gesture. [The horse Bucephalus ran into their midst and, standing close to Alexander, began to water the bed with his tears. Both the Persians and Macedonians exclaimed in amazement when they saw the horse weeping. *y-text*]

[When the Macedonians had filed past, he called back those who were with Perdiccas. He took Olcias by the hand and ordered him to read out the will. What follows is a copy of the will’s dispositions, as taken down from Alexander by Olcias.

Alexander’s Will ¹²²

King Alexander, the son of Ammon and Olympias, greets the Rhodian generals and their rulers, the council and people.

Since we have crossed the boundaries marked by the Pillars of Heracles our forefather, and, by the will of Providence above, have reached our fated day, we have decided to send and inform you of our decisions, in the belief that you of all the Greeks will be the most suitable guardians of our achievements, and because we have always loved your city. Therefore, we have written to order that the garrison be removed from your city. Thus you will be able to enjoy free speech and preserve your freedom for ever. Also, we wish you to guard my treasure among you. We know that your city is generous and deserves to be remembered: therefore, we shall make plain that we think no less of it than of our own country, but as a city worthy of us. We have made the following disposition of our affairs, giving each his land with freedom, beginning with the land where we were born to this glory.

We have commanded the administrators of the regions to send 1,000 talents of coined gold from the satrap's palace to the temples in Egypt, and have ordered our body to be conveyed thither. As for the arrangement of our tomb, we shall concur with whatever the Egyptian priests decide. We have ordered Thebes to be rebuilt with royal money, in the belief that it has suffered enough and its people have now repented of their misdeeds. Grain is to be given by the Macedonians to the Thebans who will come from Thebes, until the city's strength is restored. We have commanded that you be given for the adornment of your city 350 talents of gold and 77 triremes to protect your freedom; you are to receive from Egypt in grain 20,000 bushels of wheat a year, and from the stewards of Asia and the regions near you 20,000 of barley. Land is to be allotted to you, so that in future times you shall be self-sufficient in grain and shall lack for nothing, and can live as your city deserves.

I have appointed Craterus the ruler of Macedon, Ptolemy the satrap of Egypt, and Perdiccas and Antigonus¹²³ to rule the regions of Asia. I instruct you to take this letter from Olcias who will give it to you, and not to neglect these dispensations, because it has been made your responsibility to guarantee these matters, in order that your city shall prosper. I am quite sure that you will obey my instructions. Ptolemy my bodyguard will take

care of you: we have indicated to him what he must do for you. Do not think this legacy was made to you lightly. The administrators of the kingdom will ensure that there is no deviation from the instructions.

King Alexander, the son of Ammon and Olympias, appoints Arrhidaeus, the son of Philip, to be king of Macedonia for the present.¹²⁴ But if Roxane bears a son to Alexander, he is to be king of Macedonia and to be given whatever name the Macedonians please. But if Roxane's child is female, let the Macedonians elect as king whomever they choose, if they do not want Arrhidaeus, the son of Philip. Whoever is elected, let him preserve the rule of the Argeads, and let the Macedonians pay tribute to the Argeads in the accustomed way. It shall be permitted to Olympias, the mother of Alexander, to dwell in Rhodes, if the Rhodians are agreeable. But under no circumstances is this to be done without their consent. If she does not want to live on Rhodes, let her live wherever she likes, and receive the same income as she received while her son Alexander was alive.

Until the Macedonians decide to appoint a king, King Alexander, the son of Ammon and Olympias, appoints as administrators of all his kingdom of Macedonia Craterus and his wife Cynane, the daughter of Philip the former king of Macedonia; as ruler of Thrace, he appoints Lysimachus with his wife Thessalonike, the daughter of Philip the former king of Macedonia; he gives the satrapy of the Hellespont to Leonnatos and his wife Cleodice, the sister of Olcias, and he gives Paphlagonia and Cappadocia to Eumenes his secretary. The islanders he leaves free, with the Rhodians as their masters. Pamphylia and Cilicia go to Antigonus, who is to rule all that country as far as the river Halys. Babylon and its territory go to the warrior Seleucus. Phoenicia and Hollow Syria, as it is called, go to Meleager. Egypt goes to Perdiccas; Libya to Ptolemy and his wife Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander. The regions beyond Babylon are to have as general and administrator Phanocrates and his wife Roxane the Bactrian.¹²⁵

I command the administrators of the kingdom to build a golden sarcophagus, weighing 200 talents, to hold the body of Alexander, the king of Macedonia. Those of the Macedonians

who are old or feeble are to be sent to Macedonia, as are the Thessalians in the same condition; and they are to be given 3 talents of gold. The armour of Alexander is to be sent to Argos, along with 50 talents of coined gold as first-fruits of the war for Heracles. The elephants' tusks and the snake-skins are to be sent to Delphi along with 130 gold cups, first-fruits of the expedition. The Milesians are to be given 150 talents of coined gold for the adornment of their city, and [the same] for the Cnidians.

I wish Perdiccas, whom I leave as king of Egypt in the city I have founded named Alexandria, to keep it in good fortune and pleasing to the great Sarapis, ruler of all. There is to be an administrator of the city, who will be known as the priest of Alexander and will attend all the city's great festivals, adorned with a golden crown and a purple cloak; he is to be paid 1 talent per annum. His person is to be inviolate and he is to be free of all civic obligations; the post shall be the preserve of the man who excels all in nobility of family, and the honour shall remain in his family thereafter.

King Alexander appoints Taxiles king of India as far as the river Hydaspes, and Porus king of the part of India beyond the Hydaspes; he appoints Oxydrakes of Bactria, the father of Alexander's wife Roxane, king of the Paropanisadae. Arachosia goes to . . ., Drangiana to . . ., Bactria and Susiana to Philip, Parthyaea and the parts of Hyrcania which we hold to Phrataphernes, Carmania to Tlepolemos, Persis to Peucestas . . . is to replace Oxyntes in Media.

King Alexander appoints Olcias king of Illyria; he is to have 500 horses from Asia and 300 talents. With these he is to construct and dedicate statues of Ammon, Heracles, Athena, Olympias and Philip. The administrators of the kingdom are to set up statues of Olcias *(at Olympia)* and golden statues at Delphi. Perdiccas is to set up bronze statues of Alexander, Ammon, Heracles, Olympias and Philip.

Witnesses of these provisions shall be the Olympian gods, and Heracles the first ancestor of King Alexander.

Then Ptolemy came to him and said, 'Alexander, to whom do you leave your kingdom?'

'To him who is strong, who is willing, who can keep it, and who can maintain it,' was the reply. *A-text]*

33. Then he dictated the following letter to his mother:

'King Alexander greets his sweet mother. When you have received this, my last letter, prepare a fine banquet in honour of Providence above which gave you such a fine son. But if you wish to honour me, go out by yourself and invite all, both great and small, both rich and poor, to the banquet, and tell them, "See, the banquet is prepared; come in and enjoy yourselves. But let no one come who knows of past or present sorrow; for I did not make this banquet for sorrow but for joy." Mother, farewell.'

Olympias did as she was bidden; but no one could be found, great or small, rich or poor, who had known no sorrow, and so no one came. Then Olympias perceived Alexander's wisdom, and realized that Alexander had written this as a consolation to those whom he was leaving, so that they should realize that what had happened was nothing unusual, but something that had happened and would happen to everybody.

[When he had finished greeting everybody, Charmides the son of Polycrates came in. He was a strong lad, well-reputed even among his enemies, and Alexander was in love with him. He embraced Alexander and did not want to leave him. He wailed terribly and poured forth a long lament. Even the earth seemed to mourn with him. At last the boy turned to the horse Bucephalus, and addressed him tearfully, 'You too, I imagine, are just as unhappy; you are a Pegasus who has lost his Bellerophon; but you were stronger than Pegasus among horses, just as Alexander is mightier than Bellerophon. Alas, who will ride you now? Who could look Bucephalus in the eye with another rider on his back?' So said Charmides, weeping as he spoke; and the crowd beat their breasts. Alexander did not want to let the lad go, but flung his arms around his neck. On the point of death, Alexander made the following speech:

'I, who crossed all the inhabited earth,
And the uninhabited places, and the places of darkness,
Was unable to evade fate.
A small cup can yield a man to death,
And send him down among the dead with a drop of poison.'

The army, seeing me compelled to die,
Wish to help and are powerless.
For the rest – I shall lie buried in Hades.'

Then he called everyone and asked them to have him buried in Alexandria, and to accompany him to his grave, and after the funeral to depart, each of them, to his allotted kingdom. He called them and made them swear an oath not to disregard any of his dispensations, if he was in charge of Macedonians and was troubled in his soul about them. All the while he clung to Charmides.

Alexander stroked Bucephalus, who was standing at his feet, and said, 'You were born to share my fate, and now you suffer ill-fortune on my account. You were always my companion in war; but now you cannot fight for me in this my last battle with death. You look as if you wish to help me, but you cannot.'

When Alexander spoke like this to Bucephalus, the whole army howled, making a tremendous noise. The treacherous slave who had prepared the poison and who had plotted against their lives thought that Alexander was dead, and came running to see. When Bucephalus saw him, he cast off his morose and dejected look, and, just as if he were a rational, even a clever man – I suppose it was done through Providence above – he avenged his master. He ran into the midst of the crowd, seized the slave in his teeth and dragged him to Alexander; he shook him violently and gave a loud whinny to show that he was going to have his revenge. Then he took a great leap into the air, dragging the treacherous and deceitful slave with him, and smashed him against the ground. The slave was torn apart; bits of him flew all over everyone like snow falling off a roof in the wind. The horse got up, neighed a little, and then fell down before Alexander and breathed his last. Alexander smiled at him. *y-text]*

Then the air was filled with mist, and a great star was seen descending from the sky, accompanied by an eagle; and the statue in Babylon, which was called the statue of Zeus, trembled. When the star ascended again to the sky, accompanied by the eagle, and had disappeared, Alexander fell into his eternal sleep.

34. There followed a struggle between the Persians and the Macedonians: the former wanted to bring him to their country and honour him as Mithras; the latter, on the contrary, wanted to bring his body back to Macedonia. Then Ptolemy addressed them:

'There is in Babylon an oracle of the Babylonian Zeus. Let us consult the oracle about the body of Alexander; the god will tell us where to lay it to rest.'

The god's oracle was as follows:

'I tell you what will be of benefit to all. There is a city in Egypt named Memphis; let him be enthroned there.'

No one spoke against the oracle's pronouncement. They gave Ptolemy the task of transporting the embalmed body to Memphis in a lead coffin. So Ptolemy placed the body on a wagon and began the journey from Babylon to Egypt. When the people of Memphis heard that he was coming, they came out to meet the body of Alexander and escorted it to Memphis.¹²⁶ But the chief priest of the temple in Memphis said, 'Do not bury him here, but in the city that he founded in Rhacotis. Wherever his body rests, that city will be constantly troubled and shaken with wars and battles.' So Ptolemy at once brought the body to Alexandria and built a tomb in the temple, which is now called Alexander's Monument; and there he deposited Alexander's mortal remains. [They set up there a statue of moonstones, representing Alexander as he laughed at the moment of his death, leaning his arm on Charmides. It was so like him that Alexander himself seemed to be displaying his fear and sorrow.

So Alexander, in his wars and battles, was elevated in glory, wisdom and bravery above all the race of kings. But in his journey through life he was unable to anticipate his death. The greatest king of the greatest kingdom abandoned the honours attaching to his glory, and departed this life. *γ-text*]

35. Alexander lived thirty-two years. His life ran thus: he was king for ten years; he made war for twelve years, and was victorious in his wars. He overcame twenty-two barbarian nations and fourteen Greek peoples. He founded these twelve cities: Alexandria-in-Egypt, Alexandria-among-the-Horpaean,

Alexandria-the-Strongest, Alexandria-in-Scythia, Alexandria-on-the-river-Crepis, Alexandria-Troas, Alexandria-Babylon, Alexandria-in-Persia, Alexandria-for-the-horse-Bucephalus, Alexandria-by-Porus, Alexandria-on-the-Tigris, Alexandria-among-the-Massagetae.

Alexander was born in January at the new moon, at the rising of the sun; he died in the month of April at the new moon, at the setting of the sun. The day of his death was called Neomaga,¹²⁷ because Alexander had died young. He died in the year of the world 5176,¹²⁸ in the last year of the 113th Olympiad.¹²⁹ (One Olympiad is four years, and the first Olympiad began in the fourth year of King Ahaz.) From the death of Alexander to the Incarnation of the Word of God by the Virgin is 324 years.

[Supplement K]