

Selections from
Arrian, The Campaigns of Alexander
trans. A. de Sélincourt (London: Penguin, 1958)

BOOK ONE

WHEREVER Ptolemy and Aristobulus in their histories of Alexander, the son of Philip, have given the same account, I have followed it on the assumption of its accuracy; where their facts differ I have chosen what I feel to be the more probable and interesting.¹ There are other accounts of Alexander's life – more of them, indeed, and more mutually conflicting than of any other historical character; it seems to me, however, that Ptolemy and Aristobulus are the most trustworthy writers on this subject, because the latter shared Alexander's campaigns, and the former – Ptolemy – in addition to this advantage, was himself a King, and it is more disgraceful for a King to tell lies than for anyone else. Moreover, Alexander was dead when these men wrote; so there was no sort of pressure upon either of them, and they could not profit from falsification of the facts. Certain statements by other writers upon Alexander may be taken to represent popular tradition: some of these, which are interesting in themselves and may well be true, I have included in my work.

If anyone should wonder why I should have wished to write this history when so many other men have done the same, I would ask him to reserve judgement until he has first read my predecessors' work and then become acquainted with my own.

Philip of Macedon died when Pythodelus was archon at Athens.² He was succeeded by his son Alexander, then

1. On Ptolemy and Aristobulus see the Introduction, pp. 21ff.

2. Philip was stabbed to death in the summer of 336. His assassin was a young nobleman named Pausanias, who some years before had been grossly outraged by Attalus, whose daughter Philip had recently married. He is said to have resented Philip's failure to take action against Attalus. Alexander and his mother, Olympias, now estranged from Philip, were suspected of being implicated, although the brothers of Alexander of Lyncestis were executed for alleged complicity (p. 92 below), and later King Alexander accused the Persian King of boasting that he had bribed Pausanias (p. 127 below). For the circumstances see Diodorus 16.93–4; Aristotle *Politics* 1311b2. E. Badian, *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 244ff., provides the best recent discussion. See, however, A. B. Bosworth, *CQ* 1971, 93ff.

about twenty years of age.³ The story goes that Alexander, upon his succession to the throne, went into the Peloponnese, where he assembled all the Greeks in that part of the country and asked them for the command of the campaign against Persia, which they had previously granted to Philip. The only people to refuse his request were the Lacedaemonians, who declared that the tradition of their country forbade them to serve under a foreign commander; it was their prerogative to lead others. At Athens, too, there was a certain amount of trouble; but resistance collapsed the moment Alexander approached, and he was granted even greater honours than his father Philip before him.⁴ This settled, he returned to Macedonia and prepared for his Asian campaign.

* * *

Meanwhile events were taking place in Thebes.¹⁶ Certain persons, with a view to overthrowing the government, had invited a number of political exiles to return; these men, having slipped into the city during the night, had seized and murdered Amyntas and Timolaus, two of

3. Plutarch *Alexander* (3.5) dates Alexander's birth to about 20 July 356.

4. Arrian's summary is so brief as to be misleading. From Diodorus' account (17.3-4) it appears that Alexander, faced with widespread unrest in Greece, secured recognition of his position as 'Leader' of the League of Corinth from the Thessalian League and the Amphictyonic League at Delphi, as well from the individual states both inside and outside the Peloponnese. Finally, he summoned a meeting of representatives to Corinth and was appointed 'Captain-General' of the League.

16. Diodorus (17.8-14) gives a more detailed account of events at Thebes, considerably less favourable to Alexander.

the men who were holding the Cadmeia and had no suspicion of any danger outside.¹⁷ They then presented themselves in the Assembly and incited the Thebans to rebel against Alexander, making great play with the grand old words 'liberty' and 'autonomy',¹⁸ and urging them at long last to throw off the burden of the Macedonian yoke. They made their appeal more attractive to the Thebans in general by insisting that Alexander had died in Illyria – which was, as it happened, a common rumour at the time and fairly widely disseminated, because he had been long absent without communicating with them.¹⁹ In these circumstances they did what most of us do, and, being ignorant of the truth, persuaded themselves into believing what they wished to believe.

The news of these events caused Alexander considerable concern. For a long time past he had had doubts about Athens, and now had come this attempt from Thebes. He could not but take it seriously, for the danger clearly was that the spirit of disaffection might spread to the Lacedaemonians, who already, in any case, silently resented Macedonian control, and to other states in the Peloponnese, and even to the Aetolians, who were by no

17. Since 338 the Cadmeia, the citadel of Thebes, had been occupied by a Macedonian garrison. Timolaus was a leading partisan of Macedon (Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 295). For Amyntas we should perhaps read Anemoitas, whom Demosthenes mentions with Timolaus as a Theban traitor.

18. The words 'and autonomy' do not occur in the manuscripts, but a second noun is clearly required. 'Freedom of speech' has been suggested (but 'autonomy' appears preferable). 'Freedom' and 'autonomy' are very frequently coupled, and the Greek states were explicitly guaranteed these rights in the 'Charter' of the Corinthian League (see Pseudo-Demosthenes 17.8).

19. Demosthenes is reported to have produced at Athens a soldier who asserted that Alexander was killed in the same battle in which he himself had been wounded.

that these men were as responsible for the rebellion as were the Thebans themselves, who had actually carried it out.³⁴ The Athenians, instead of giving the men up, sent again to Alexander and begged him to relent – which he did, perhaps out of regard for Athens, perhaps simply because he was in a hurry to proceed with his Asian campaign and unwilling to leave behind him in Greece any cause for mistrust. He did, however, give orders that one of the men whose surrender he had unsuccessfully demanded – Charidemus – should be exiled. The sentence was carried out, and Charidemus took refuge in Asia at the court of Darius.³⁵

Alexander now went north again to Macedonia, and offered to Olympian Zeus the form of ceremonial thanksgiving which had been in use since the time of Arche laus.³⁶ He also celebrated the Olympian games at Aegae, and, according to some accounts, held games in honour of the Muses. During the ceremonies a report came from Pieria that the statue of Orpheus, son of Oeagrus of Thrace, had been constantly sweating, a phenomenon which was variously interpreted by the seers; one of them,

names preserved vary. Those mentioned by Arrian are all orators except the generals Chares, Charidemus, and Ephialtes. Arrian is perhaps thinking of the dedication by Demosthenes of a shrine to Pausanias, Philip's murderer (Aeschines 3.160), and of his correspondence with the Macedonian General, Attalus, who with Parmenio had opened the campaign against Persia early in 336.

34. Demosthenes had supplied the Thebans with arms and the Athenians had voted to support them but had taken no action.

35. Others too left Athens. Chares met Alexander at Sigium in 334 (p. 67 below), while Ephialtes and Thrasybulus (whose name some think has fallen out of Arrian's list) fought on the Persian side at Halicarnassus (Diodorus 17.25.6).

36. King of Macedonia from 413 to 399. He was renowned as a patron of art and literature, and it was at his court that Euripides spent his last years during which he wrote the *Bacchae*.

however – Aristander of Telmissus – told Alexander that he had no cause for alarm: it merely signified that the writers of odes and the epic and melic poets had hard work coming to celebrate Alexander and his exploits in verse and song.³⁷

At the start of the next campaigning season Alexander left Antipater in charge of affairs in Macedonia and Greece, and made for the Hellespont with a force composed of not much more than 30,000 infantry, including light troops and archers, and over 5,000 cavalry.³⁸ His route lay past lake Cercinitis, in the direction of Amphipolis and the mouth of the Strymon, which he crossed, and proceeded by way of Mount Pangaeum towards Abdera and Maroneia, two Greek settlements on the coast; continuing from there to the Hebrus, which he also crossed without difficulty, he marched through Paetica and across the river Melas to Sestus, which he reached twenty days after leaving home. At Elaeus he offered sacrifice upon the tomb of

37. This phenomenon, caused by the condensation of moisture, is frequently mentioned in classical literature. It is said to have occurred at the moment of Alexander's arrival at Thebes. Aristander was Alexander's (and perhaps Philip's) chief seer, who is frequently recorded in Arrian to have made correct prophecies. The inhabitants of Telmissus in Caria were noted as early as the middle of the sixth century for their skill in divination (Herodotus 1.78; cf. p. 104 below).

38. Antipater was left with 12,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry. Arrian's figures are confirmed by Diodorus who (17.17) gives a list of Alexander's forces after the crossing into Asia totalling 32,000 infantry and 5,100 cavalry. The higher figures for infantry (43,000; 40,000) given by other writers may include the 10,000 troops who were in Asia in 335, although the majority of these may well have been withdrawn by this time. No satisfactory explanation has been found for their lower figures for cavalry. See, most recently, P. A. Brunt, *JHS* 1963, 33ff., and E. W. Marsden, *The Campaign of Gaugamela* (Liverpool, 1964), 24ff.

Protesilaus, who was supposed to have been the first man of Agamemnon's army to set foot upon the soil of Asia when the Greeks sailed against Troy. His purpose in performing the ceremony was to ensure better luck for himself than Protesilaus had.³⁹

The task of getting the mounted troops and most of the infantry across the Hellespont from Sestus to Abydos was entrusted to Parmenio, and the crossing was carried out in 160 triremes and a large number of merchant vessels. It is generally believed that Alexander sailed from Elaeus to the Achaean harbour,⁴⁰ himself at the helm of the admiral's ship, and that half way over he slaughtered a bull as an offering to Poseidon and poured wine from a golden cup into the sea to propitiate the Nereïds. There is a further tradition that, fully armed, he was the first to leave the ship and set foot upon the soil of Asia, and that he built an altar on the spot where he left the shore of Europe and another where he landed on the other side of the strait, both of them dedicated to Zeus, the Lord of safe landings, Athena, and Heracles.⁴¹ Once ashore, he travelled inland to Troy and offered sacrifice to Athena, patron goddess of the city; here he made a gift of his armour to the temple, and took in exchange, from where they hung on the temple walls, some weapons which were still preserved from the Trojan war. These are supposed to have been carried before him by his bodyguard when he went into battle.⁴² He is also said to have offered sacri-

39. Homer, *Iliad* 2.701; Herodotus 9.116.

40. North-west of Troy, near Cape Sigeium.

41. Diodorus (17.17.2) relates that Alexander, before leaping ashore first, threw his spear to claim Asia as a 'spear-won' prize. If this is true, it suggests that Alexander had already determined to conquer the Persian Empire.

42. The shield was carried by Peucestas in the attack on the citadel at the Malli town (p. 313 below).

fice to Priam on the altar of Zeus Herceius, to avert his anger against the family of Neoptolemus,⁴³ whose blood still ran in his own veins.

At Troy his sailing-master, Menoetius, crowned him with gold, as did Chares the Athenian, who came from Sigeium with a number of others, either Greeks or natives. One account says that Hephaestion laid a wreath on the tomb of Patroclus; another that Alexander laid one on the tomb of Achilles, calling him a lucky man, in that he had Homer to proclaim his deeds and preserve his memory.⁴⁴ And well might Alexander envy Achilles this piece of good fortune; for in his own case there was no equivalent: his one failure, the single break, as it were, in the long chain of his successes, was that he had no worthy chronicler to tell the world of his exploits.

No prose history, no epic poem was written about him; he was not celebrated even in such choral odes as preserve the name and memory of Hiero or Gelo or Thero, or many other men not in the same class as Alexander, with the result that the wonderful story of his life is less familiar today than that of the merest nonentities of the ancient world.⁴⁵ Even the march of the Ten Thousand under Cyrus against Artaxerxes, the fate of Clearchus and his fellow prisoners, and the return under Xenophon's command to the sea, are, thanks to Xenophon's history, much

43. The son of Achilles and founder of the Molossian dynasty. Alexander claimed descent from him through his mother, Olympias.

44. Hephaestion had been Alexander's dearest friend from boyhood. The crowning of the tombs of Achilles and Patroclus symbolizes their relationship. For Alexander's extravagant grief at his death see p. 371 below.

45. Hiero and Gelo ruled Syracuse and Thero Acragas (Agrigento) in the early fifth century. Their achievements were celebrated by Pindar and Bacchylides.

better known than the grand achievements of Alexander⁴⁶; yet, unlike Xenophon, Alexander did not hold a mere subordinate command; he was not defeated by the Persian King, or victorious only over the force which tried to stop his march to the sea. On the contrary, there has never been another man in all the world, of Greek or any other blood, who by his own hand succeeded in so many brilliant enterprises. And that is the reason why I have embarked upon the project of writing this history, in the belief that I am not unworthy to set clear before men's eyes the story of Alexander's life. No matter who I am that make this claim. I need not declare my name – though it is by no means unheard of in the world; I need not specify my country and family, or any official position I may have held. Rather let me say this: that this book of mine is, and has been from my youth, more precious than country and kin and public advancement – indeed, for me it *is* these things. And that is why I venture to claim the first place in Greek literature, since Alexander, about whom I write, held first place in the profession of arms.

From Troy, Alexander marched to Arisbe, where his entire force had taken up its position after crossing the Hellespont; next day he proceeded to Percote, and the day after passed Lampsacus and halted by the river Prac-tius, which has its source in Mount Ida and flows into the sea which connects the Black Sea with the Hellespont. From there his route led past Colonaë to Hermotus. On the march he had scouts ahead of the army, under the command of Amyntas, son of Arrabaeus, with the squadron of Companion cavalry from Apollonia under Socrates, son of Sathon, and four squadrons of what were known as advanced scouts. The town of Priapus, which lay on

46. The *Anabasis* of Xenophon. The fate of Clearchus is related in the second book.

his route, surrendered to him, and he sent a party under Panegorus, son of Lycagoras, one of his Companions, to take it over.

The Persian forces were commanded by Arsames, Rheomithres, Petines, and Niphates in association with Spithridates, the satrap of Lydia and Ionia, and Arsites, the governor of northern Phrygia. They had taken up a position near the town of Zeleia with the Persian cavalry and the Greek mercenary troops. On receiving the report that Alexander had crossed into Asia, they met to discuss the situation. Memnon of Rhodes advised against risking an engagement: the Macedonian infantry, he pointed out, was greatly superior in numbers; Alexander was present in person, while Darius was not. It would be better, therefore, to proceed at once to burn all growing crops, trample down and destroy grass and horse-feed, and even gut the towns, to prevent Alexander, by lack of supplies, from remaining in the country. Arsites, however, is said to have replied to this proposal that he would not consent to the destruction by fire of a single house belonging to any of his subjects. The other commanders supported him – no doubt because they had their suspicions of Memnon, and guessed that he was afraid of losing the position he held from Darius, if fighting started too soon.⁴⁷

Alexander meanwhile was advancing in battle order upon the river Granicus. His infantry was massed in two groups, both wings protected by cavalry, while all transport had orders to follow in the rear. The reconnaissance

47. Memnon was not a mere *condottiere*, but had become one of the ruling class of Persia, married to the sister of Artabazus. In 335 he had succeeded in checking the Macedonian advance in Asia Minor, and at this time advocated carrying the war into Europe (Diod. 17.18.2). On his subsequent activities and death, see below p. 101. The satraps were (perhaps) actuated partly by jealousy in rejecting his plan.

intention of putting the river between himself and Alexander as soon as he could.³¹ Four men who had deserted to Darius – Amyntas son of Antiochus, Thymondas son of Mentor, Aristomedes of Pherae, and Bianor the Acarnanian – fled to the hills with the 8,000 troops under their command³² and reached Tripolis in Phoenicia; finding hauled ashore there the ships which had brought them from Lesbos, they launched as many as they thought would serve their purpose, burnt the rest as they lay in the yards, to delay pursuit, and sailed first for Cyprus and thence to Egypt – where not long afterwards Amyntas was killed by the Egyptians for meddling in what did not concern him.³³

All this time Pharnabazus and Autophradates had been hanging about in Chios. Now, after garrisoning the island, they dispatched a part of their fleet to Cos and Halicarnassus, and themselves put to sea with the hundred fastest ships they had; at Siphnos they were met by the Spartan King, Agis, who with a single trireme had come to raise money for the war and to ask that as many ships and men as possible should be sent to him in the Peloponnese. It was at this moment that the news of the battle of Issus came. The effect of it was shattering; Pharnabazus, fearing defeat might lead to trouble in Chios, at once sailed for

31. Many of the Persian cavalry escaped to Cappadocia, where they were joined by local troops in an attempt to recover Phrygia but were defeated by Antigonus. (Curtius 4.1.34–5, where ‘Lydia’ is a slip for ‘Phrygia’.)

32. Greek mercenaries.

33. Diodorus (17.48.2–5) and Curtius (4.1.27–33) give more details of events in Egypt. As they mention only Amyntas and 4,000 mercenaries, it is probable that the force split up. Possibly the other 4,000 found their way into the service of Agis, the Spartan king; he is recorded to have hired 8,000 mercenaries who escaped from Issus. See E. Badian, *JHS* 1963, 25–6.

the island with twelve ships and 1,500 of the mercenaries, while Agis dispatched Hippias to Taenarum to deliver to his brother Agesilaus the ten ships and thirty talents of silver which he had received from Autophradates, adding instructions that he should tell Agesilaus to pay the seamen in full and sail immediately to secure Crete. Agis himself remained for a time in the islands, but subsequently joined Autophradates at Halicarnassus.³⁴

Leaving Menon, son of Kerdimmas, as governor of Lowland Syria with the allied cavalry to keep the country under control, Alexander marched for Phoenicia. On the way thither he was met by Straton, the son of Gerostratus, who was the prince of Aradus and its neighbouring peoples; Gerostratus himself had sailed with Autophradates, as had the other petty kings of Phoenicia and Cyprus, so it was left to Straton to present himself before Alexander and to crown him with a gold crown, yielding him the sovereignty of the island of Aradus together with the large and prosperous town of Marathus on the mainland opposite, and Sigon, Mariamme, and everything else under his control.

While Alexander was at Marathus, envoys from Darius came with a request for the release of his mother, wife, and children. They also brought a letter from him, of which the substance was as follows:³⁵

34. Undeterred by the result of Issus, Agis continued his preparations, and in spring 331 he ‘issued an appeal to the Greeks to unite in defence of their freedom’ (Diodorus 17.62.6). After initial successes he was finally defeated by Antipater at Megalopolis in the autumn of 331. For the evidence see Diodorus 17.48.1–2; 62.6–63.4; 73.5–6; Curtius 6.1; and, for a modern account of Agis, E. Badian, *Hermes* 1967, 170ff.

35. Diodorus (17.39.2) has a curious story that Alexander suppressed Darius’ letter and substituted another ‘more in accordance with his interests’ which he put before his Companions to secure

Philip and Artaxerxes were on terms of friendship and alliance;³⁶ but upon the accession of Artaxerxes' son Arsēs, Philip was guilty of unprovoked aggression against him.³⁷ Now, since Darius' reign began, Alexander has sent no representative to his court to confirm the former friendship and alliance between the two kingdoms; on the contrary, he has crossed into Asia with his armed forces and done much damage to the Persians. For this reason Darius took the field in defence of his country and of his ancestral throne. The issue of the battle was as some god willed; and now Darius the King asks Alexander the King to restore from captivity his wife, his mother, and his children, and is willing to make friends with him and be his ally. For this cause he urges Alexander to send to him, in company with Meniscus and Arsīmas who have brought this request, representatives of his own in order that proper guarantees may be exchanged.

Alexander, having written his reply, ordered Thersippus to accompany Darius' envoys on their return, giving him strict instructions to deliver the letter to Darius but to discuss no question whatever which might arise from it. This was the letter:

the rejection of a negotiated peace. G. T. Griffith (*Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* 1968, 33ff.) suggests that the letter in Arrian is this forged letter. He points out that, e.g., Darius offers no financial or territorial inducements (as he does in the letters of Diodorus 17.39 and Curtius 4.1.7), and that to raise the question of war-guilt would be bad policy for one in Darius' position. For Griffith's other arguments see the next two notes.

36. No such alliance is known to us in what is a relatively well-documented period. Demosthenes, for example, does not mention it.

37. Artaxerxes III (Ochus) ruled from 359–338, his son Arsēs from 338 to 336. Darius refers to the Macedonian invasion of Asia Minor in spring 336. This was not unprovoked, since Persia had aided Perinthus against Philip in 340; Philip, however, had been the aggressor in 342 by making an alliance with Hermeias of Atarneus and one might expect a mention of this.

Your ancestors invaded Macedonia and Greece and caused havoc in our country, though we had done nothing to provoke them. As supreme commander of all Greece I invaded Asia because I wished to punish Persia for this act – an act which must be laid wholly to your charge. You sent aid to the people of Perinthus in their rebellion against my father; Ochus sent an army into Thrace, which was a part of our dominions; my father was killed by assassins whom, as you openly boasted in your letters, you yourselves hired to commit the crime;³⁸ having murdered Arsēs with Bagoas' help,³⁹ you unjustly and illegally seized the throne, thereby committing a crime against your country; you sent the Greeks false information about me in the hope of making them my enemies; you attempted to supply the Greeks with money – which only the Lacedaemonians were willing to accept,⁴⁰ your agents corrupted my friends and tried to wreck the peace which I had established in Greece – then it was that I took the field against you; but it was you who began the quarrel. First I defeated in battle your generals and satraps; now I have defeated yourself and the army you led. By God's help I am master of your country, and I have made myself responsible for the survivors of your army who fled to me for refuge: far from being detained by force, they are serving of their own free will under my command.

Come to me, therefore, as you would come to the lord of the continent of Asia. Should you fear to suffer any indignity at my hands, then send some of your friends and I will give them the proper guarantees. Come, then, and ask me for your mother, your wife, and your children and anything else you

38. There is no other evidence for this.

39. Alexander (or Arrian) is mistaken. Bagoas poisoned Arsēs and his children and secured the throne for Darius. Later, when he attempted to poison Darius, the king turned the tables on him. See Diodorus 17.5.3–6.

40. Aeschines (*Against Ctesiphon* 239) claims that Darius sent 300 talents to the Athenians who refused them, but that Demosthenes got his hands on 70 talents.

please; for you shall have them, and whatever besides you can persuade me to give you.

And in future let any communication you wish to make with me be addressed to the King of all Asia. Do not write to me as to an equal. Everything you possess is now mine; so, if you should want anything, let me know in the proper terms, or I shall take steps to deal with you as a criminal. If, on the other hand, you wish to dispute your throne, stand and fight for it and do not run away. Wherever you may hide yourself, be sure I shall seek you out.

Such were the terms of Alexander's answer.

BOOK THREE

ALEXANDER now made for Egypt, which was the original object of his southerly march, and a week after leaving Gaza arrived at Pelusium, where the fleet which had accompanied him, coasting along from Phoenicia, was already at anchor. Mazaces, the Persian governor of Egypt under Darius, had no native troops under his command, and this, added to the report of the battle of Issus and of Darius' ignominious scramble for safety, and the fact that Phoenicia, Syria, and most of Arabia were already in Macedonian hands, induced him to receive Alexander with a show of friendship and to offer no obstacle to his free entry into Egypt and its cities.¹

Alexander garrisoned Pelusium² and, after giving orders to the fleet to proceed up the Nile to Memphis, set out southward along the east bank of the river, and, crossing the desert, arrived at Heliopolis. All the country along his route he secured without any native opposition. From Heliopolis he crossed the river to Memphis, where, among the other gods, he offered a special sacrifice to Apis and held Games with both athletic and literary contests.³

1. The previous governor, Sabaces, was killed at Issus. According to Curtius (4.7.4) Mazaces handed over the treasure amounting to 800 talents.

2. A very strong border fortress, the key to Egypt, where the Egyptians several times met invading armies.

3. Apis was the calf of Memphis, sacred to the god Ptah. Alexander treated the religion of the Egyptians (and other conquered peoples) with respect, and was enthroned as Pharaoh at Thebes. By contrast Cambyses had actually stabbed the Apis (Herodotus 3.27-8).

The tomb was in the royal park at Pasargadae; a grove of various sorts of trees had been planted round it; there were streams of running water and a meadow with lush grass. The base of the monument was rectangular, built of stone slabs cut square, and on top was a roofed chamber, also built of stone, with access through a door so narrow that only one man at a time – and a little one at that – could manage, with great difficulty, painfully to squeeze himself through. Inside the chamber there was a golden coffin containing Cyrus' body, and a great divan with feet of hammered gold, spread with covers of some thick, brightly-coloured material, with a Babylonian rug on top. Tunics and *candyes* – or Median jackets – of Babylonian workmanship were laid out on the divan, and (Aristobulus says) Median trousers, various robes dyed in amethyst, purple, and many other colours, necklaces, scimitars, and inlaid earrings of gold and precious stones. A table stood by it, and in the middle of it lay the coffin which held Cyrus' body. Within the enclosure, by the way which led up to the tomb, a small building had been constructed for the Magi who guarded it, a duty which had been handed down from father to son ever since the time of Cyrus' son, Cambyses.⁶¹ They had a grant from the King of a sheep a day, with an allowance of meal and wine, and one horse a month to sacrifice to Cyrus. There was an inscription on the tomb in Persian, signifying: 'O man, I am Cyrus son of Cambyses, who founded the empire of Persia and ruled over Asia. Do not grudge me my monument.'

Alexander had always intended, after his conquest of

61. The Magi were a Median priestly class, taken over by the conquering Persians. Besides the duty of guarding Cyrus' tomb, they were interpreters of dreams and when a Persian wished to sacrifice, he had to employ a Magus. See Herodotus 1.120.132.

Persia, to visit the tomb of Cyrus; and now, when he did so, he found that all it contained except the divan and the coffin had been removed. Even the royal remains had not escaped desecration, for the thieves had taken the lid from the coffin and thrown out the body; from the coffin itself they had chipped or broken various bits in an attempt to reduce its weight sufficiently to enable them to get it away. However, they were unsuccessful and went off without it.

Aristobulus tells us that he himself received orders from Alexander to put the monument into a state of thorough repair: he was to restore to the coffin what was still preserved of the body and replace the lid; to put right all damage to the coffin itself, fit the divan with new strapping, and to replace with exact replicas of the originals every single object with which it had previously been adorned; and, finally, to do away with the door into the chamber by building it in with stone, covered by a coat of plaster, on which was to be set the royal seal. Alexander had the Magi who guarded the monument arrested and put to the torture, hoping to extort from them the names of the culprits; but even under torture they were silent, neither confessing their own guilt nor accusing anybody else; so, as they could not be convicted of any sort of complicity in the crime, Alexander released them.

He then went to the palace of the Persian kings, which on a previous occasion he had set on fire, as I have already related.⁶² I remarked, when I mentioned this act, that I could not commend it, and Alexander himself regretted it when he saw the place for the second time.

As for Orxines, who took charge of Persian affairs after Phraortes' death, a number of damaging stories were told about him by the Persians, and he was convicted of

62. i.e. Persepolis; see p. 179.

robbing temples and royal tombs and of illegally putting many Persians to death. He was accordingly hanged by Alexander's agents.⁶³ Peucestas, of Alexander's Personal Guard, was appointed governor, in recognition of his exceptional loyalty on all occasions – and especially on the occasion of his heroic act during the fight with the Mallians, when at the risk of his own life he helped to save Alexander. Apart from this, he was also a suitable Person for the post, as he liked Oriental ways. He showed this clearly enough immediately he was appointed, being the only Macedonian to adopt the Median dress; he also learned the Persian language, and in all other ways took to living as the Persians lived. Alexander thoroughly approved of this conduct, and the Persians themselves were gratified to find that he preferred their manner of life to that of his own country.⁶⁴

63. Curtius (10.1.22–38) has a different story. According to him Orxines was guiltless and his death was brought about by Alexander's eunuch favourite, Bagoas, who poisoned Alexander's mind against him and bribed accusers to supply false testimony. E. Badian (*CQ* 1958, 147 ff.) argues in favour of this version.

64. The Macedonians, however, resented Peucestas' growing orientalism (p. 356).

* * *

Here at Susa he held wedding ceremonies for his Companions; he also took a wife himself – Barsine,¹⁴ Darius' eldest daughter, and, according to Aristobulus, another as well, namely Parysatis, the youngest daughter of Ochus.¹⁵ He had already married Roxane, daughter of

14. This is her official name, but she is generally called Stateira.

15. Thus linking himself with both branches of the Persian royal family. Artaxerxes III Ochus ruled Persia from 359 to 338 B.C.

Oxyartes of Bactria. To Hephaestion he gave Drypetis, another of Darius' daughters and sister of his own wife Barsine, as he wanted to be uncle to Hephaestion's children; to Craterus he gave Amastrine, daughter of Darius' brother Oxyatres, and to Perdikkas a daughter of Atropates, governor of Media. The bride of Ptolemy (of the Guard) was Artacama, daughter of Artabazus, and Eumenes, the King's secretary, had her sister Artonis; Nearchus was given the daughter of Barsine and Mentor, Seleucus the daughter of Spitamenes of Bactria. Similarly, the other officers – to the number of eighty all told¹⁶ – were given as brides young women of the noblest Persian and Median blood. The marriage ceremonies were in the Persian fashion: chairs were set for the bridegrooms in order of precedence, and when healths had been drunk the brides entered and sat down by their bridegrooms, who took them by the hand and kissed them. The King, who was married just as the others were, and in the same place, was the first to perform the ceremony – Alexander was always capable of putting himself on a footing of equality and comradeship with his subordinates, and everyone felt that this act of his was the best proof of his ability to do so. After the ceremony all the men took their wives home, and for every one of them Alexander provided a dowry. There proved to be over 10,000 other Macedonians who had married Asian women; Alexander had them all registered, and every man of them received a wedding gift.

This also seemed a fitting occasion to clear off the men's debts, and Alexander ordered a detailed schedule to be

16. Chares, the Royal Chamberlain, who described the festivities in detail, gives 92 as the number of bridegrooms; see Athenaeus 12.538b–539a.

For Alexander's purpose see Wilcken, *Alexander* 208.

prepared, with a promise of settlement. At first only a few entered their names, suspecting that the order might be a scheme of Alexander's for detecting the spendthrifts who had failed to make do with their army pay. Alexander was annoyed when he learned that most of the men were refusing to enter their names and concealing their possession of covenants to pay, and told them in no uncertain terms what he thought of their suspicions; a King, he declared, is in duty bound to speak nothing but the truth to his subjects, who, in their turn, have no right to suppose that he ever does otherwise. He had tables set up in the army quarters, with money on them, and instructed the clerks in charge to pay off the debts of every man who produced an I.O.U. without even registering their names. After that the troops could not but believe in Alexander's good faith, and they were even more grateful for the concealment of their names than for having their debts paid. This gift to his men is said to have amounted to 20,000 talents.¹⁷

He also made a number of other money awards for distinguished conduct in the field, or in recognition of a man's reputation for good service generally. A special decoration consisting of a gold crown was granted to certain officers for conspicuous bravery: the recipients were Peucestas – for saving the King's life; Leonnatus – also for saving the King's life, for hard service in India, for his victory in Oria, for facing and defeating in battle, with the forces left under his command, the rebellious Oreitae and their neighbours, and his satisfactory settlement of affairs in general in Oria;¹⁸ Nearchus (now also arrived

17. cf. Diodorus 17.109.1–2; Curtius 10.2.9–11; Plutarch, *Alexander* 70.3. Plutarch and Curtius both give a figure of 9,870 talents, while Diodorus says 'a little less than 10,000'.

18. See Arrian, *Indica* 23.5; Curtius 9.10.19.

at Susa) for his voyage from India along the coasts of the Indian ocean; Onesicritus, master of the royal galley; and, finally, Hephaestion and the other members of the Personal Guard.

Here in Susa, Alexander received the various officials in charge of affairs in the newly built towns and the governors of the territories he had previously overrun. They brought with them some 30,000 young fellows, all boys of the same age, all wearing the Macedonian battle-dress and trained on Macedonian lines.¹⁹ Alexander called them his *Epigoni* – 'inheritors' – and it is said that their coming caused much bad feeling among the Macedonians, who felt it was an indication of his many efforts to lessen his dependence for the future upon his own countrymen. Already the sight of Alexander in Median clothes had caused them no little distress, and most of them had found the Persian marriage ceremonies by no means to their taste – even some of the actual participants had objected to the foreign form of the ceremony, in spite of the fact that they were highly honoured by being, for the occasion, on a footing of equality with the King. They resented, too, the growing orientalism of Peucestas, Governor of Persia, who, to Alexander's evident satisfaction, had adopted the Persian language and dress, just as they resented the inclusion of foreign mounted troops in the regiments of the Companions.²⁰ Bactrians, Sogdians, Arachotians; Zargians, Arians, Parthians, and the so-called Euacae from Persia were all introduced into the crack Macedonian cavalry regiments, provided they had some outstanding

19. Curtius (8.5.1) dates the formation of this force to 327; so probably Plutarch (*Alexander* 47.6). Diodorus (17.108) appears to place it after the mutiny at the Hyphasis.

20. On the remainder of this paragraph see Appendix A, pp. 401–2.

personal recommendation, such as good looks, or whatever it might be. Besides this, a fifth mounted regiment was formed; it did not consist entirely of oriental troops, but the total cavalry strength was increased and a certain number of foreign troops were posted to it.²¹ Foreign officers were also posted to the special squadron – Cophen son of Artabazus, Hydarnes and Artiboles sons of Mazaeus, Sisines and Phradasmenes sons of Phrataphernes, the satrap of Parthia and Hyrcania, Histanes son of Oxyartes and brother of Alexander's wife Roxane, Autobares and his brother Mithrobaeus. The command over them was given to Hystaspes, a Bactrian, and the orientals were all equipped with the Macedonian spear in place of their native javelin. All this was a cause of deep resentment to the Macedonians, who could not but feel that Alexander's whole outlook was becoming tainted with orientalism, and that he no longer cared for his own people or his own native ways.

21. A slight emendation of the text (see E. Badian, *JHS* 1965, 161) would read 'it consisted almost entirely of oriental troops, for when the total cavalry strength was increased foreign troops were added'.

The accounts of both Ptolemy and Aristobulus end at this point. Other writers have added that the high officers most closely in his confidence asked him to name his successor, and that Alexander's reply was 'the best man'.¹⁰⁹ There is also a story that he went on to say that he knew very well there would be funeral 'games' in good earnest after he was dead.

I am aware that much else has been written about Alexander's death: for instance, that Antipater sent him some medicine which had been tampered with and that he took it, with fatal results.¹¹⁰ Aristotle is supposed to have made up this drug, because he was already afraid of Alexander on account of Callisthenes' death, and Antipater's son Cassander is said to have brought it. Some accounts declare that he brought it in a mule's hoof,¹¹¹ and that it was given Alexander by Cassander's younger brother Iollas, who was his cup-bearer and had been hurt by him in some way shortly before his death; others state that Medius, who

109. This may equally well be rendered 'the strongest'. See Diodorus (17.117.4–5) and Curtius (10.5.4–5), who relate that he handed his ring to Perdiccas.

110. See Diodorus 17.118; Curtius 10.10. 14ff; Plutarch, *Alexander* 77.2ff.

111. Nothing else could contain the poison. This was often said to be water from the R. Styx, which rose near Nonacris in the north of Arcadia; see, e.g., Pliny, *Natural History* 30.149; Pausanias 8.17.6.

The story that Alexander was poisoned is not generally believed. See, however, R. D. Milns, *Alexander the Great* (London, 1968) 255–8, who suggests that the poison was a low-level dose of strychnine.

was Iollas' lover, had a hand in it, and support that view by the fact that it was Medius who invited Alexander to the drinking-party – he felt a sharp pain after draining the cup, and left the party in consequence of it.¹¹² One writer has even had the face to declare that when he knew his death was imminent he went out with the intention of throwing himself into the Euphrates, in order to disappear without trace and make it easier for posterity to believe that one of the gods was his father and he had gone away to join them. His wife Roxane, this writer continues, happened to see him as he left the building, and stopped him, whereupon he gave a great cry and bitterly reproached her for grudging him the eternal fame of divine birth. I do not wish to appear ignorant of these stories; but stories they are – I put them down as such and do not expect them to be believed.

Alexander died in the 114th Olympiad, in the archonship of Hegesias at Athens.¹¹³ He lived, as Aristobulus tells us, thirty-two years and eight months, and reigned twelve years and eight months.¹¹⁴ He had great personal beauty, invincible power of endurance, and a keen intellect; he was brave and adventurous, strict in the observance of his religious duties, and hungry for fame. Most temperate in the pleasures of the body, his passion was for glory only, and in that he was insatiable. He had an uncanny instinct for the right course in a difficult and

¹¹². For the 'cup of Hercules' see Diodorus 17.117.1–2 (with Welles's note in the Loeb edition). The story is explicitly denied by Plutarch (*Alexander* 75.5).

¹¹³. His death is now known to have occurred on 10 June 323 B.C.

¹¹⁴. More probably, he was nearly 33 – Plutarch (*Alexander* 3.5.) dates his birth to about 20 July 356 – and reigned about 13 years. For the date of his accession – probably June 336 – see Welles's note on Diodorus 17.117.5.

complex situation, and was most happy in his deductions from observed facts. In arming and equipping troops and in his military dispositions he was always masterly. Noble indeed was his power of inspiring his men, of filling them with confidence, and, in the moment of danger, of sweeping away their fear by the spectacle of his own fearlessness. When risks had to be taken, he took them with the utmost boldness, and his ability to seize the moment for a swift blow, before his enemy had any suspicion of what was coming, was beyond praise. No cheat or liar ever caught him off his guard, and both his word and his bond were inviolable. Spending but little on his own pleasures, he poured out his money without stint for the benefit of his friends.¹¹⁵

Doubtless, in the passion of the moment Alexander sometimes erred; it is true he took some steps towards the pomp and arrogance of the Asiatic kings: but I, at least, cannot feel that such errors were very heinous, if the circumstances are taken fairly into consideration. For, after all, he was young; the chain of his successes was unbroken, and, like all kings, past, present, and to come, he was surrounded by courtiers who spoke to please, regardless of what evil their words might do. On the other hand, I do indeed know that Alexander, of all the monarchs of old, was the only one who had the nobility of heart to be sorry for his mistakes. Most people, if they know they have done wrong, foolishly suppose they can conceal their error by defending it, and finding a justification for it; but in my belief there is only one medicine for an evil deed, and that is for the guilty man to admit his guilt and show that he is sorry for it. Such an admission will make the consequences easier for the victim to bear, and the guilty man himself, by plainly showing his distress at

¹¹⁵. For examples see Plutarch, *Alexander* 39.

former transgressions, will find good grounds of hope for avoiding similar transgressions in the future.

Nor do I think that Alexander's claim to a divine origin was a very serious fault – in any case, it may well have been a mere device to magnify his consequence in the eyes of his subjects.¹¹⁶ In point of fact I account him as great a king as Minos or Aeacus or Rhadamanthus, whose claims to be sons of Zeus were not felt by the men of old to be in any way dangerously arrogant; and the same may be said of Theseus' claim to be the son of Poseidon and Ion's to be son of Apollo. Surely, too, his adoption of Persian dress was, like his claim to divine birth, a matter of policy: by it he hoped to bring the Eastern nations to feel that they had a king who was not wholly a foreigner, and to indicate to his own countrymen his desire to move away from the harsh traditional arrogance of Macedonia. That was also, no doubt, the reason why he included a proportion of Persian troops (the so-called 'Golden Apples', for instance) in Macedonian units, and made Persian noblemen officers in his crack native regiments. As for his reputed heavy drinking, Aristobulus declares that his drinking bouts were prolonged not for their own sake – for he was never, in fact, a heavy drinker – but simply because he enjoyed the companionship of his friends.¹¹⁷

Anyone who belittles Alexander has no right to do so on the evidence only of what merits censure in him; he must base his criticism on a comprehensive view of his whole life and career. But let such a person, if blackguard

¹¹⁶. Plutarch (*Alexander* 28.6) attributes the same motive to Alexander in his claim to be son of Zeus. See, however, *CQ* 1953, 151 ff. for the significance of Alexander's letter to the Athenians quoted by Plutarch in the same chapter.

¹¹⁷. Arrian has earlier (p. 214) remarked on Alexander's 'barbaric' drinking.

Alexander he must, first compare himself with the object of his abuse: himself, so mean and obscure, and, confronting him, the great King with his unparalleled worldly success, the undisputed monarch of two continents, who spread the power of his name over all the earth. Will he dare to abuse him then, when he knows his own littleness and the triviality of his own pursuits, which, even so, prove too much for his ability?

It is my belief that there was in those days no nation, no city, no single individual beyond the reach of Alexander's name; never in all the world was there another like him, and therefore I cannot but feel that some power more than human was concerned in his birth; indications of this were, moreover, said to be provided at the time of his death by oracles; many people saw visions and had prophetic dreams;¹¹⁸ and there is the further evidence of the extraordinary way in which he is held, as no mere man could be, in honour and remembrance. Even today, when so many years have passed, there have been oracles, all tending to his glory, delivered to the people of Macedon.

In the course of this book I have, admittedly, found fault with some of the things which Alexander did, but of the man himself I am not ashamed to express ungrudging admiration. Where I have criticized unfavourably, I have done so because I wished to tell the truth as I saw it, and to enable my readers to profit thereby. Such was the motive which led me to embark upon this History: and I, too, have had God's help in my work.

¹¹⁸. See the stories told by Plutarch (*Alexander* 2).