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Author(s): C. L. Murison

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DARIUS III AND THE BATTLE OF ISSUS

It is one of the small coincidences of history that both the organisation of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and the dissolution of that Empire were presided over by a man named Darius. Darius III, the man with whom we shall be concerned in this paper, was, however, very different from his illustrious predecessor, and the contempt with which he has been regarded by historians may even reflect an unconscious comparison with Darius the Great, to the inevitable disadvantage of the later king. A few examples will suffice to show just how unfavourable opinion of Darius III has always been; Arrian's summation at the time of his death is: *τοῦτο τὸ τέλος Δαρείῳ ἐγένετο . . . ἀνδρὶ τὰ μὲν πολέμια, εἴπερ τινὶ ἄλλῳ, μαλθακῷ τε καὶ οὐ φρενήρει, . . .*¹ Of the British historians, Tarn says: "Darius 'great and good' is a fiction of legend. He may have possessed the domestic virtues; otherwise he was a poor type of despot, cowardly and inefficient."² The German historian Berve is even more scathing: "... to western sentiment and judgement, the immensely overweening opinion of oneself, the confidence in victory pompously asserted before the event, the complete failure in the moment of crisis, and the total freedom from restraint after failure, must seem both cowardly and petty."³

However, there are certain passages in the ancient sources which are favourable to Darius: for example, Diodorus tells us *ἡξιώθη δὲ τῆς βασιλείας ὁ Δαρεῖος δοκῶν πολὺν προέχειν ἀνδρείᾳ Περσῶν*, Curtius describes him as *sanctus et mitis*, and the one great act of cruelty in the events leading up to the battle of Issus, the massacre of Alexander's sick and wounded when

¹ Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.22.2 (all subsequent references to "Arr." are to the *Anabasis*). To some extent the traditional picture of the Persians as craven orientals may have coloured Arrian's conception of Darius, cf. Alexander's "speech" to his men before the battle of Issus (Arr. 2.7.3-9) where Medes and Persians are spoken of as *ἐκ πάντων πολλοῦ τρυφῶσιν*, and contemptuous reference is made to *τὰ ἀπονότατά τε καὶ μαλακώτατα τῆς Ἀσίας γένῃ*. (This is pure cliché, and it is noteworthy that Arrian seems to be unaware of the self-contradiction when, a few lines further on, he has Alexander tell his men that the battle will be fierce since they will be fighting against the Great King in person and the crack troops of the Medes and Persians and their subject peoples in Asia.)

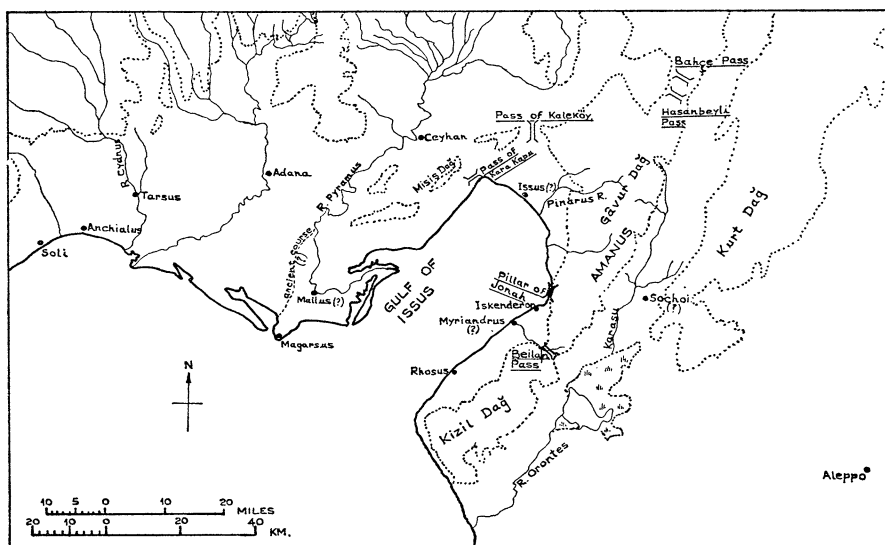
² W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (henceforth simply "Tarn") I (Cambridge, 1948) 58.

³ H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich* (München, 1926) II s.v. *Δαρεῖος* p. 129; for a more charitable view of Darius cf. now R. D. Milns, *Alexander the Great* (London, 1968) 150-151.

the Persians arrived in Issus, is said by Curtius to have been done *instinctu purpuratorum*.⁴

But in spite of such generally favourable comments⁵ the main thrust of our sources is critical, and the criticisms of Darius are based not only on his physical cowardice in running away from the battlefields of Issus and Gaugamela, but also on his generally inferior leadership and strategy. My purpose in this paper is to try to test the validity of such assertions, particularly with regard to strategy, by examining in some detail the events leading up to the battle of Issus. However, before we can do this, we must set the battle of Issus in its general context of the events of the year 333 B.C., and in order to do this I present in summary form what I hope is a fair conflation of the types of account which may be found in modern histories of Alexander.

By the end of 334, the first year of the invasion of the Persian Empire, Alexander had made a momentous decision: he had dismissed his fleet and had declared that he would conquer the Persian fleet by land – that is, by moving round the Mediterranean coast, he would capture its various bases one after the other, by this means create disaffection among those serving in its ships, and so ruin its effectiveness as a fighting weapon.⁶ There was, of course, a considerable risk that the Persian fleet might attempt



⁴ Diod. 17.6.1; Curtius 3.8.4, 3.8.15.

⁵ Tarn, II. 72, 105, cites passages which he claims are favourable to Darius, but he does this for ulterior motives (the “mercenaries’ source”) and in several cases he reads too much into the sources.

⁶ It will be noticed that this decision predetermined Alexander’s route in 333 B.C.

to stir up trouble for Alexander in the Aegean, as indeed it did; however, Alexander correctly estimated that it would be unable to raise any sort of revolt in Greece proper, since in the various League contingents in his army, he had what were, in effect, hostages from the various Greek states.

At the end of 334, with the onset of winter, he sent the newly married men from his army home on leave, with orders to rejoin him in the spring; the less mobile parts of his army he sent to Gordium in Phrygia while he himself spent the winter campaigning in the mountains of Lycia and Pamphilia, and after a winter of almost continuous fighting, he arrived at Gordium and rejoined the rest of his army. The men on furlough rejoined him there, and brought reinforcements with them from Macedonia. It was now 333, and the Persian fleet under Memnon launched its expected offensive in the Aegean. Alexander's lines of communication across the Hellespont seem to have been the principal target, and the Persians clearly realised that Alexander would have to detach men to deal with any threat in that quarter. However, soon after the attack in the Aegean was launched, Memnon fell sick and died – a considerable stroke of luck for Alexander. But the threat from the Persian fleet was not yet over. Chios had been captured, and Mytilene was being besieged when Memnon died: his nephew Pharnabazus took over the command, and finished subduing the island of Lesbos. He then moved northwards and captured the island of Tenedos, which is only about 50 miles from Abydos, Alexander's main bridgehead and communications centre on the Hellespont. The threat was clear and indeed Alexander had already been forced to act: he sent two of his officers back to the Hellespont with orders to re-establish the allied fleet; at the same time, Antipater, his viceroy in Greece, assembled as large a fleet as he could muster in Greece, to face the possibility of sea-borne raids on the coastal regions of the Greek mainland; and there was actually a naval skirmish off the island of Siphnos. At this point, however, the Persian naval counter-offensive came to an almost total standstill. The main strength of the fleet had been a large body of Greek mercenaries:⁷ the bulk of these Darius now ordered to Tripolis in Phoenicia, since he had decided to come in person to deal with the Macedonian invaders. In the late summer of 333 he arrived with his

⁷ The actual number is far from certain and cannot be determined with accuracy. Our ancient sources are remarkably unanimous in giving a total of 30,000 Greek mercenaries (Callisthenes *ap.* Polyb. 12.18.2, Arr. 2.8.6, Curt. 3.2.9, 3.9.2), while modern accounts almost invariably reduce the number sharply: e.g. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (hereafter "Beloch") III. 2^a (Berlin, 1923) 357–359, concludes that the largest possible number is about 10,000; J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (London, 1958) 155, argues for "over 10,000 men"; and Tarn I 26 states "as at least 10,000 Greeks got away, there must have been something over that number". W. Judeich in J. Kromayer and G. Veith, edd. *Antike Schlachtfelder* IV (Berlin, 1929) 356 is, I think, alone among modern scholars in arguing that the number 30,000 must be accepted.

army at a place called Sochoi on the N. Syrian plain, and there on a field of his own choosing, where there was plenty of room for his cavalry to manoeuvre, he settled down to await the arrival of Alexander.

Meanwhile Alexander had left Gordium, passed through Ancyra and then, veering south towards the sea,⁸ had pushed with all speed, probably via Tyana, towards the so-called Cilician Gates, a normally impregnable pass (the modern Külek-Böğazi) which leads from Cappadocia to Cilicia, just north of Tarsus. Alexander raced towards this pass at such a speed that he caught its few defenders unawares and they fled without a blow being struck. With his cavalry he then galloped to Tarsus and arrived in time to prevent Arsames, the satrap of Cilicia, from destroying the place, as he had intended to do, if forced to flee.

At Tarsus, Alexander fell seriously ill after bathing in the River Cydnus, and it was necessary for the advance to halt. That the illness was a serious one can be seen from Arrian's statement (2.4.8) that his life was despaired of by all his doctors except one. After his recovery from this illness, Alexander decided to secure that part of Cilicia which lay to the west of Tarsus: accordingly he moved south-west from Tarsus to Anchialus and Soli and from there he campaigned for seven days against the Cilicians who inhabited the nearby mountains. And before leaving Tarsus he had sent Parmenion with a strong force, amounting in all to approximately half the army, to reconnoitre the land ahead and, as Arrian tells us (2.5.1) to occupy the Gates "which divide the land of the Cilicians from that of the Assyrians", i.e. presumably, the pass known as the Syrian Gates.

After completing his operations Alexander returned to Tarsus and, further dividing his army, he gave the cavalry to Philotas, Parmenion's son, to lead to the river Pyramus by an inland route, while he himself with the remainder of the army went first to Magarsus on the coast and then to Mallus by the R. Pyramus: at Mallus he learned that Darius was not far off, at Sochoi, and he hurried forward to do battle with him. He covered the approximately seventy-five miles from Mallus to a place called Myriandrus, near the site of the modern Iskenderon, in 48 hours, leaving his sick and wounded in a field hospital en route at Issus on the coast at the head of the Gulf.

A serious rain storm and violent gale made him rest his troops at Myriandrus, and, while he was there, he learned to his astonishment that Darius was in his rear. Because of the various delays in Alexander's advance, Darius had come to believe that Alexander would advance no further; accordingly, eager to bring matters to a conclusion, he had sent his family,

⁸ There is nothing remarkable about this change of direction: Alexander had to reach the coast of Cilicia, if he wished to secure the bases of the Persian fleet; cf. n. 15 below.

harem, treasure and heavy baggage to Damascus for security, and had then advanced from Sochoi over the Amanus mountains to seek Alexander in Cilicia. He crossed the mountains by a pass (called the Amanid Gates) lying some way to the north of the plain of Issus – a pass which both Alexander and Parmenion had ignored as a potential source of danger. He then swung south into the plain of Issus⁹ and, upon entering the town of Issus, he discovered that Alexander was now to the south. On hearing that the Persian army was behind him, Alexander was astonished, but after sending a ship up the coast and receiving confirmation of the report, he turned his army northwards and advanced to the R. Pinarus (almost certainly the modern Deli Tchai)¹⁰ where the Persian army was drawn up. Thus it was that the battle of Issus was fought with the two armies in what one may think of as the wrong position: clearly Alexander had to win this battle, since a draw would for him have been as serious as a defeat.

The above, then, is a somewhat conventionalised account of events leading up to the battle of Issus: it represents a fairly uncritical conflation of the main outlines of the accounts in Diodorus, Curtius, Plutarch and Arrian,¹¹ and is in fact primarily derived from Tarn's account in the *Cambridge Ancient History* and General Fuller's book *The Generalship of Alexander the Great*.¹²

It may be wondered what, if any, are the problems connected with the preliminaries to this battle, since the account just given seems reasonably straightforward. In fact, the problems are numerous and I propose to examine them under three headings: chronology, topography and motivation.

⁹ This southwards swing is significant cf. n. 73 below.

¹⁰ Cf. the attached map. Identification of the R. Pinarus was at one time a matter of considerable controversy. The two possibilities are: the Deli Tchai, about 19 miles north of Iskenderon, and the Payas Tchai, about twelve and a half miles north of Iskenderon. For a sample of the various arguments cf. (for the Deli Tchai) A. Bauer, "Die Schlacht bei Issos", *Öst. Jb.* II (1899) 105–128 esp. 105–120; A. Janke, *Auf Alexanders des Großen Pfaden* (Berlin, 1904) 53–74; Janke's subsequent article, "Die Schlacht bei Issos", *Klio* 10 (1910) 137–177; and Judeich (above, n. 7) 368–371; (for the Payas Tchai) W. Dittberner, *Issos, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* (Berlin 1908) Chapter 4 (Dittberner was a pupil of H. Delbrück, who had argued in favour of the Payas Tchai in the 1st edition of his *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* I: in the 3rd edition of this work (Berlin, 1920) pp. 185–206 he maintains his own position and on p. 185 n. 1 he stresses that Dittberner's is the definitive work on the subject); M. Dieulafoy, "La bataille d'Issus" *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr. et belles-lettres* 39 (1914) 41–76.

It would appear that Janke's careful work has led to a scholarly consensus in favour of the Deli Tchai; cf. Fuller (above n. 7) 154–157; F. W. Walbank, *Historical Commentary on Polybius* II (Oxford, 1967) on Polyb. 12.17.3.

¹¹ Diod. 17.22.5–23.3; 17.29.1–33.1; Curt. 3.1.1–3.8.17; Plut. *Alex.* 18.1–20.4; Arr. 1.20.1; 1.24.1–2.7.2.

¹² W. W. Tarn in *C.A.H.* VI (Cambridge, 1927) 363–368; T. F. C. Fuller (above n. 7) 96–99; cf. U. Wilcken, *Alexander the Great* (New York, 1967) 96–101.

With regard to chronology, our accounts of Alexander's movements are nowhere in the sources synchronized with those of Darius – we tend to see first one and then the other, and it is well-nigh impossible, for example, to determine precisely when Darius set out from Babylon, and when he reached Sochoi.

Let us attempt to examine Alexander's movements first, since we are somewhat better informed about them. The first thing we must notice is that the sources give us very little in the way of events for the year 333: it will be recalled that Alexander had spent the winter of 334/3 campaigning in Lycia and Pamphylia and had joined Parmenion and the rest of his army at Gordium in the spring of 333 (above, p. 401). When was this, exactly? According to the Naval Intelligence Division: *Geographical Handbook on Turkey*, in the Ankara area, which is quite close to Gordium, snow falls on about 27 days during the winter and frosty days are usually over by mid-April.¹³ Let us therefore assume that the meeting of Alexander and the rest of his army took place at the end of April. The battle of Issus is usually thought of as occurring either at the end of October or at the beginning of November, i.e., the Attic month Maimakterion, as Arrian tells us:¹⁴ this then leaves six months to be accounted for, and the events described in our sources can scarcely have covered half that time. Alexander's advance from Gordium to Tarsus through Cappadocia appears to have been very rapid: to allow him more than a month for this would, I think, probably be to err on the generous side.¹⁵ Now, working *back* from the battle, which apparently occurred on the 6th day after Alexander in Mallus received word of Darius' presence at Sochoi,¹⁶ we have to consider how long Alexander's lightning

¹³ *The Geographical Handbook Series: Turkey* (in two volumes) is part of a remarkable series of works produced by the Naval Intelligence Division of the British Admiralty during the second World War: this work was published c. 1942 and contains more useful information on Turkey than any other work I have found. The reference in this instance is Vol. I pp. 216, 226.

¹⁴ Arr. 2.11.10; cf. Curt. 3.8.8: *tantae enim multitudini, utique cum iam hiems instaret . . . non suffectura alimenta*, and at 3.13.7, describing Parmenion's dash to Damascus a few days after the battle of Issus, Curtius adds: *quippe et procella subito nivem effuderat et humus rigebat gelutum adstricta*.

¹⁵ cf. Arr. 2.4.1–6. F. Miltner, "Alexanders Strategie bei Issos", *Öst. Jb.* 28 (1933) 70, rightly emphasizes that, because of the danger posed by the Persian fleet in the Aegean, Alexander had in 333 to push ahead with his plan of conquering the Persian fleet by land: "Er mußte daher trachten, so rasch als möglich die Südküste Kleinasien in seine Hand zu bringen und weiterhin ebenso die syrisch-phönikische Küste . . . Es galt, auf dem kürzesten Wege die kilikische Küste zu erreichen."

¹⁶ This can be worked out from Arrian 2.6.1–2, 2.7.1–2, and 2.8.1ff: Day 1 – Alexander at Mallus heard that Darius was at Sochoi; Day 2 – "the next day" he set out; Day 3 – "in two days" he passed "the Gates" and encamped near Myriandrus; Day 4 – he was kept in camp because of bad weather; Day 5 (or possibly in the night between Days 4 and 5) – word came that Darius was behind him; Alexander then sent a ship back towards Issus, since it was important for him to

campaign in south-west Cilicia may have lasted; and here we may use Beloch's calculations: he argues that including stops in Soli and Mallus it probably took Alexander one month from the time he left Tarsus until he received the news at Mallus that Darius was encamped at Sochoi.¹⁷ This still leaves four months unaccounted for, if we accept the end of October as the time of the battle. Beloch himself argued that the battle took place at the end of September and that the October/November date had come about through an erroneous conversion of details relating to the Macedonian calendar into the terms of the Athenian calendar, as found in our sources.¹⁸ If, for the sake of argument, we accept this, we still have *three* months unaccounted for.¹⁹

I think there are two possible explanations of this difficulty, and the reality may partake of both. First, it is clear that Alexander's illness was much more serious, as regards its duration, than any of our sources indicate.²⁰ The physician Philip, who performed a lightning cure with the aid of powerful drugs, can only have broken the fever: Alexander must thereafter have spent a considerable time convalescing from the overall effects of the illness, and in this connection it is possible that his brief campaign to the south-west of Tarsus may have represented a final practical test of his recovery. The second point is that Alexander may have lingered in the neighbourhood of Gordium much longer than we previously recognized as being possible, doubtless because of his anxieties about the Persian naval activity in the Aegean, and the chance that he might have to go back in person.²¹

know whether this was the entire Persian army or merely a strong reconnaissance force. At nightfall he headed north; Day 6 – advance towards the R. Pinarus, and the battle.

¹⁷ Beloch, III. 2^a. 362: this seems reasonable, given that Alexander spent some time in Soli (τριβή . . . οὐκ ὀλίγη . . . ἐν Σόλοις: Arr. 2.6.4) and an indeterminate length of time at Mallus (Arr. 2.5.9–6.1); Judeich (above, n. 7) 358 n. 2 recalculates the time and concludes “mindestens drei bis vier Wochen . . .”

¹⁸ Beloch III. 2^a 310–313; cf. M. J. Fontana, “Sulla cronologia del XVII libro di Diodoro”, *Kokalos* 2 (1956) 37–49 esp. 48–49, where there is a very useful chart comparing the various calendars.

¹⁹ But I do not think we can accept it; cf. n. 14, above. Beloch's explanation of part of this three month period will be examined below (pp. 410–414).

²⁰ Our sources are extremely vague as to when Alexander's illness began: neither Plutarch nor Arrian gives any indication at all; Diodorus 17.31.4 mentions the relief that Alexander felt at hearing of Memnon's death, and then continues: μετ' ὀλίγον δὲ εἰς ἀρρωστίαν βαρυτέραν ἐμπεσὼν . . . Curtius 3.5.1. begins his elaborate description of Alexander's almost fatal bathe in the R. Cydnus with et tunc aestas erat, cuius calor non aliam magis quam Ciliciae oram vapore solis accendit: this should probably indicate some time in June or July, or possibly August.

²¹ Miltner, (above, n. 15) 71, points out that Alexander was on the line of the R. Halys when he received the news of Memnon's death; cf. Curt. 3.1.21 and Plut. *Alex.* 18.3. Beloch (III. 2^a 311–312) will not accept that Alexander lingered near Gordium at all: “sondern er ist von dort abmarschiert, sobald die Verstärkungen aus Makedonien angekommen sein müssen.” This he

On the chronology of Darius' movements, we are even less well informed: Curtius tells us of the assembling of the Persian army at Babylon (3.2.1–9), and also mentions that contingents from the further parts of the Empire were not summoned because of Darius' haste. There is no date given for this, but we are told that Darius decided to go and fight in person only after he received news of Memnon's death: this decision therefore was probably not taken until early to mid-July. Again, we have no knowledge of the speed of Darius' march: the distance covered from Babylon to Sochoi would be about 600 miles or a little more. Perhaps if we allowed 2 months from late July or early August, since the army was very slow moving having with it Darius' family, harem, and a great deal of treasure and heavy equipment, we would not be far wrong in placing its arrival at Sochoi at about the end of September.

Having established a very rough chronology for the movements of the two armies, we must now examine certain topographical problems relating to the general area of the battle. First, the location of certain places: the exact positions of Issus, Myriandrus and Sochoi are unknown. From general indications Issus was probably very close to the head of the Gulf;²² Myriandrus and Sochoi involve us in a further topographical problem, which must be dealt with first. This concerns the pass known as the Syrian Gates: we have already seen (above p. 402) that Parmenion was sent from Tarsus with approximately half of Alexander's army "to the other gates which divide

places in May. Regarding Memnon, Beloch suggests that his death occurred in spring or early summer. However, we should note that Arrian (2.1.1–3) places Memnon's campaign *after* Alexander's newly married men returned from Macedonia and joined him in Gordium. (1.29.4; Book 2 begins: *ἐκ δὲ τούτων* . . .). This will probably mean that Memnon's campaign did not begin until late April or even early May (cf. above p. 404). His death will then have occurred about the beginning of June or even somewhat later; and word of this may not have reached Alexander until quite late in the month. Judeich (above, n. 7) 355 may therefore be correct in placing Alexander's arrival in Cilicia in "Spätsommer 333".

²² In both Curtius (3.8.13–14) and Arrian (2.7.1) Issus is the first place Darius reached when he arrived on Alexander's route after coming south through the pass of Kaleköy: it might therefore be argued that Issus lay due south of the pass on the coast. Also, it should be quite close to the R. Pinarus, given the name of the battle which ensued. A. von Domaszewski, "Die Phalangen Alexanders und Caesars Legionen", *Heidelberger Sitz. - Ber. Phil. - hist. Kl.* XVI (1925/26) 58, has a useful chart showing the comparative distances between various places in this area given in ancient authors and itineraries. The most valuable single piece of evidence for the site of Issus is to be found in Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.4.3–4, where the distance between Issus and the "Gates between Cilicia and Syria" is given as five parasangs. At the usual figure of 30 stades to the parasang, this gives a total of 150 stades. The *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* (K. Müller, *Geographici Graeci Minores* I, [Paris, 1855, repr. 1965]) §§ 154 and 155 gives the same total, if a manuscript corruption is corrected to make the distances from Issus to other places of known location correct. (The *Stadiasmus* gives sea-measurements but this should make no difference between the Gates and Issus, as the road runs along the coast.) 150 Stades is equal to approx. 16.1/4 miles, and I have indicated the position of Issus accordingly on the accompanying map.

the land of the Cilicians from that of the Assyrians, to seize and guard the passage" (Arr. 2.5.1). There are two passes which may be said to fit this description – a narrow coastal defile about six miles north of Iskenderon referred to by modern authors as the Pillar of Jonah, and the Beilan Pass (2,230 ft.) which leads over the Amanus mountains into the interior, and which today carries the main road from Iskenderon to Antioch and Aleppo: it is about nine miles south of Iskenderon. Arrian is somewhat vague about these passes, apparently knowing of only one, and that one must be the Pillar of Jonah for the following reasons: at 2.6.1. he says that Darius was encamped at Sochoi two marching days' distance from the "Syrian Gates"; at 2.6.2 he tells us that Alexander passed the "Gates" and camped at Myriandrus (the precise location of Myriandrus is not known, but it was certainly situated on the coast, since from there Alexander sent a ship back to Issus);²³ the Beilan Pass is south-east of this, so the only "Gates" Alexander can have passed in reaching Myriandrus are the Pillar of Jonah. Finally, if Sochoi lay 2 days march to the east of the Pillar of Jonah, the distance (via the Beilan Pass) would be about 40 miles, or roughly the position I have indicated on the map, in the valley of the modern Karasu.

Having fixed the positions of these places, we must now consider other mountain passes and other distances: to arrive in Alexander's rear, Darius must have moved north from Sochoi up the valley of the Karasu and crossed

²³ The most valuable testimony regarding Myriandrus is to be found in Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.6–7, where we learn that it was five parasangs from the "Gates between Cilicia and Syria", i.e. the Pillar of Jonah. Xenophon describes it as a place settled by Phoenicians, a trading centre and adds that many merchant ships were anchored there.

However, we should remember that in Xenophon the distance covered in a *σταθμός* may vary considerably, but it never seems to be less than five parasangs (cf. *LSJ s.v. σταθμός* (5): "in Persia, of *stations* or *stages* on the royal road . . . : hence in reference to Persia, of distances, a day's march (about 5 parasangs or 150 stades), X. *An.* 1.2.10." It is clear from Xenophon's narrative that the army of Cyrus marched from Myriandrus over the Beilan Pass and east towards the Euphrates (*Anab.* 1.4.9–11), and therefore Myriandrus cannot have lain much south of the entrance to the Beilan Pass: as a sea-port and entrepôt for caravans crossing the mountains and heading towards the Euphrates it was the obvious spot for a staging-post. It was probably not the full 5 parasangs of an average *σταθμός* to the south of the Pillar of Jonah, but perhaps lay at or near the mouth of the torrent which flows down from the Beilan Pass.

It seems to have declined in importance with the establishment of Alexandria ad Issum, which probably drew away its trade: among the Hellenistic and Roman itineraries, only the *Stadiasmus* mentions it (§§ 151–152, and some of the distances given are obviously corrupt cf. Müller's commentary); apart from this, it seems to have survived mainly as part of the Alexander story (cf. Pomp. Mela 1.69–70), or simply as one of a list of places along the coast line (cf. Agathemerus 15 [*Geographici Graeci Minores* II], Pliny *N.H.* 2.243, Strabo 14.676, and Ptolemy *Geogr.* 5.15.2.) However, if Xenophon's distances are at all accurate, Myriandrus cannot have been on or very close to the site of Alexandria ad Issum, *pace* Dittberner (above, n. 10) 108–112, and von Domaszewski (above, n. 22) 60: "Auf diesem Lagerplatz ist dann später Alexandria ad Issum begründet worden". See also below pp. 413–418 also n. 57.

the main Amanus range (the modern Gâvur Dağ) somewhere to the north of Issus. Modern road and rail routes probably give us useful pointers, since with even a fairly small army it would be highly inconvenient to cross a mountain range by a sheep track;²⁴ there are two passes which would seem suitable for Darius' purposes – the Hasanbeyli Pass, which carries a modern motor road, and the Bahçe Pass, just to the north of it, which carries the modern Baghdad Railway.²⁵ The height of these passes is about 4,000 feet. Darius may have used either of them – let us assume the Hasanbeyli, the more southerly one. To get into the plain of Issus, he must have moved through another smaller pass, nowadays called the Pass of Kaleköy,²⁶ which provides a route between an eastern spur of the Misis Dağ²⁷ and a western spur of the Gâvur Dağ. The majority of modern writers name the Pass of Kaleköy as the “Amanid Gates”,²⁸ but I cannot believe that this is correct: Arrian says: *ὑπερβαλὼν δὴ τὸ ὄρος Δαρεῖος τὸ κατὰ τὰς πύλας τὰς Ἀμανικὰς καλουμένας ὡς ἐπὶ Ἴσσοῦ προῆγε*. (2.7.1). Surely the “Amanid Gates” take one over the Amanus range.²⁹ This point, however, is not crucial for our understanding of Darius' moves.

²⁴ Full details of all the minor tracks and paths are given by A. Janke, *Auf Alexanders des Großen Pfaden* (Berlin, 1904) 34–36, and this question is well summed up by Judeich (above, n. 7) 359: “Die anderen zwischen beiden liegenden Übergänge . . . eigneten sich wenig oder gar nicht für ein marschierendes Heer.”

²⁵ I here use the spellings given in the *Geographical Handbook Series: Turkey* (above, n. 13) I 157; the passes are described in detail in Janke (above n. 24) 36, items (k) and (l): he refers to them respectively as “Hassanbeili”, and “Baghtsche” or “Arslan Boghas” or “Löwenpaß”.

²⁶ *Geographical Handbook Series: Turkey* (above, n. 13) I 153. Janke (above, n. 24) 37–44 describes this pass in detail: he calls it “Toprak Kalessi”. Judeich (above, n. 7) 359 calls it “Toprak Kale”. There is a superb aerial photograph of it in the *National Geographic Magazine* 133, 1 (Jan. 1968) 22–23, which is reproduced in the National Geographic Society's book *Greece and Rome: Builders of Our World* (Washington, D.C.: 1968) 204–205.

²⁷ The Misis Dağ is not an important range: it never rises higher than 1,000 ft., but it is a sufficient obstacle even today to divert through the Pass of Kaleköy both the rail and road links from Adana and Ceyhan to Iskenderon.

²⁸ Janke, (above n. 24) 37–40, is the most scrupulous and points out that “Toprak Kalessi” is what *most* of the sources mean when they speak of “Amanid Gates” (Polyb. 12.17.2, Curt. 3.8.13, Arr. 2.7.1), but that Strabo (14.5.18) obviously means the coastal Pass of Kara Kapu when he speaks of the Gates.

²⁹ The reason for the identification of the Pass of Kaleköy as the “Amanid Gates” is basically Curtius 3.8.13: *forte eadem nocte et Alexander ad fauces quibus Syria aditur, et Dareus ad eum locum quem Amanicas Pylas vocant, pervenit*. If this statement is true, Curtius is almost certainly referring to the Pass of Kaleköy. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Polybius is, or Arrian; in fact, if Polybius means the Pass of Kaleköy when he says: *φησὶ (Καλλιस्थένης) . . . Δαρεῖον . . . χρῆσάμενον τῇ διὰ τῶν Ἀμανίδων λεγομένων Πυλῶν πορείᾳ κατ'αῖραι μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως εἰς Κιλικίαν*, then he has a strange idea of where Cilicia begins.

Incidentally, the map in Fuller (above, n. 7) 155 shows the “Bogtche P.” facing east-west, in roughly the position of the Pass of Kaleköy: this is quite useless; cf. Milns (above, n. 3) 75.

As regards distances, the important ones are those from Mallus to Myriandrus,³⁰ which Alexander covered in two days,³¹ and from Sochoi to Issus and then to the R. Pinarus, which Darius covered, though we do not know how long it took him. Mallus to Myriandrus I calculate to be approximately 75 miles, so Alexander was clearly in a hurry when he covered this distance with his army in 48 hours;³² Sochoi to Issus would also be about 75 miles and 2 mountain passes have to be crossed en route, one of them about 4,000 feet high (cf. above, p. 408), so Darius would be lucky to have covered this distance within 72 hours.³³ From Issus to the R. Pinarus is about four or five miles more.

So far, we have discussed problems of chronology and problems of topography: we must now look at something much less comprehensible. I refer to the actions of Darius, as reported in our sources. Darius left a carefully prepared battle-site of his own choosing on open, level ground, and ended up fighting in a small, rough, and even hilly enclosure by the sea. Why should he have done such a thing? A consensus of our ancient sources would seem to be that because of the delays caused by Alexander's illness and his campaign in south-west Cilicia, Darius decided that Alexander

³⁰ The distance from Mallus to Myriandrus cannot be defined exactly, since the precise location of both places is uncertain. However, as with Myriandrus (cf. above, n. 23) the general location of Mallus can be worked out from ancient evidence: Scylax (*Geographici Graeci Minores* I) § 102 mentions in Cilicia ποταμός Πύραμος καὶ πόλις Μαλλός, εἰς ἣν ὁ ἀνάπλους κατὰ τὸν ποταμόν (this is going west to east); Strabo 14.5.16: μετὰ δὲ τὸν Κύδνον ὁ Πύραμος . . . πλησίον δὲ καὶ Μαλλός; Curt. 3.7.5: Pyramo amne ponte iuncto, ad urbem Mallum pervenit (Alexander). As Müller points out in his commentary on *Stadiasmus* § 162: Hinc colligis Mallum ab orientale fluvii latere, non tamen ad ipsam fluminis ripam fuisse positam. In spite of Müller's strenuous efforts thereafter, it is probably not possible to fix the position of Mallus with much more accuracy: the position shown on the map is a guess, but it is probably not far wrong. The only figure worth using in a tentative calculation of the distance is the 25 parasangs given by Xenophon as the distance from the R. Pyramus to Myriandrus (*Anab.* 1.4.1–6): on a "straight" conversion this gives a distance of something over 82 miles; this figure may, however, be a little too large, and I would guess that the distance was approximately 75 miles.

³¹ Arr. 2.6.2: δευτεραῖος δὲ ὑπερβαλὼν τὰς πύλας ἐστρατοπέδευσε πρὸς Μυριάνδρῳ πόλει.

³² Scholars have been somewhat reluctant to accept this figure; cf. Bauer (above, n. 10) 123: "Alexander aber war von Mallos bis Myriandros 5, vielleicht 6 Tage unterwegs"; Dittbner (above, n. 10) 79 argues very persuasively for three days; while both von Domaszewski (above, n. 22) 60–61 and Judeich (above, n. 7) 360 n. 2 agree on four days, though for slightly different reasons. However, Dieulafoy (above, n. 10) 58–59 accepts Arrian's figure and cites the famous example of Masséna's corps in 1797 (quoted by Fuller [above, n. 7] 156 n. 1), to which Lammert in his review of Dieulafoy (*BPhW* 1914 No. 19 cols. 594–595) adds examples of long marches achieved by German troops! Miltner (above, n. 15) 73–74 also accepts Arrian's figure and gives examples of other rapid marches achieved by Alexander.

³³ Darius had made his army mobile and it now consisted of cavalry and crack infantry regiments and Greek mercenaries: that he should have covered this distance in three days need occasion no surprise.

intended to advance no further;³⁴ Curtius even has Darius accuse Alexander of cowardice and so he goes to root him out of Cilicia:³⁵ this was in spite of the advice of his Greeks, who assured him that Alexander would come to meet him. Fortune or Fate then led him to throw away his chances of victory.

Several modern authorities have, in the main, accepted these accounts: Fuller, for example, says that Darius' assumption that Alexander would not come further East was "reasonable . . . because the Taurus range would make a nearly impregnable eastern frontier for the Macedonian empire."³⁶ Tarn says: "Darius . . . had waited some time, and had concluded that Alexander, of whose illness he was ignorant, meant to halt in Cilicia."³⁷ Wilcken comments: ". . . the Great King lost all patience, and believing with his followers that Alexander was afraid and did not dare to advance, he determined to look for him in Cilicia."³⁸

To some extent, the question here hinges on whether Darius knew of Alexander's illness or not. Tarn, as we have just seen, is sure that Darius did not. Fuller and Wilcken are silent on this point, but at least one of our sources specifically mentions that Darius *had* heard of Alexander's sickness: at Dareus, *nuntio de adversa valetudine eius accepto . . .* (Curtius 3.7.1), and he goes on to say that this made Darius hasten on the *last* part of his journey, that is, from the Euphrates to Sochoi. From this we may surmise that he intended to rush his army into Cilicia in the hope either of attacking the Macedonians while their leader was incapacitated, or, if Alexander died, of falling upon them while they were leaderless and in confusion. However, by the time he reached Sochoi, he must have received word of Alexander's recovery, since he sat down there to wait on a battlefield of his own choosing for what he was assured would be Alexander's inevitable advance.

If then Darius did know the reasons for Alexander's delay, and if he also knew that Alexander *would* come to meet him, his action in leaving the level ground at Sochoi seems even more foolish and headstrong than it did at first sight. Furthermore, prior to leaving Sochoi, Darius did something perhaps even stranger still: he sent his baggage train and war treasure to Damascus,³⁹ which is about 200 miles due south of Sochoi. Our sources do not explain why this was done and the whole business seems decidedly odd.⁴⁰ At this stage we are left with the impression that these actions of

³⁴ Arr. 2.6.3–7; Plut. *Alex.* 20.1–2; Diod. 17.32.3.

³⁵ Curtius 3.8.10–11; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 19.1; Diod. 17.32.3.

³⁶ Fuller (above, n. 7) 98.

³⁷ Tarn I 24.

³⁸ Wilcken (above, n. 12) 100.

³⁹ This is mentioned by all our principal literary sources: Diod. 17.32.3; Curtius 3.8.12; Plut. *Alex.* 20.6; Arr. 2.11.9–10.

⁴⁰ Some of the modern accounts leave us as much in the dark as do the ancient sources: e.g. Tarn I 24 simply mentions Damascus without comment; Wilcken (above, n. 12) 100 says: "In order to make his gigantic army more mobile, he sent to Damascus the treasure and main part of his baggage train . . .," which is simply a paraphrase of Diod. 17.32.3; finally, Fuller

Darius, presented as they appear in our sources, add up to more than merely folly or stupidity: they are the acts of a lunatic. And doubtless this is the impression that was intended when Callisthenes wrote up the official, the “approved” version of events leading to the battle of Issus.

If any sense is to be made of Darius’ actions, we must examine with care the moves made by both the Macedonians and the Persians, always bearing in mind the topography of the area from Tarsus to Sochoi.

As will by this time be apparent, most of the detailed critical analysis of the source material pertaining to this question has been done by German scholars and, in general, they have not been prepared simply to swallow the Macedonian propaganda. I propose now to discuss the theories of three men: Karl Julius Beloch, Franz Miltner, and Wilhelm Judeich.⁴¹ I shall then conclude this paper with a few observations of my own.

In the second edition of his *Griechische Geschichte* Beloch formulated a new theory concerning the events leading up to the battle.⁴² Arguing that, until the time when he arrived in Mallus, Alexander knew nothing of Darius’ movements – for otherwise he would not have undertaken his campaign in south-west Cilicia – he then asserts that, at that same time and for the same reason, Darius must just have arrived at Sochoi.⁴³ Beloch also

(above, n. 7) 98 says of Damascus, “an extraordinary spot to select, as both Aleppo and Thapsacus lay on his communications and either would appear to have been more suitable”: this may be true, but it is hardly helpful.

All accounts of the battle must ultimately go back to Callisthenes; cf. Beloch III 2² 354–356.

⁴¹ These represent the main heterodox theories about events leading up to the battle of Issus. There is one other, by A. Gruhn, propounded in a pamphlet entitled *Das Schlachtfeld von Issus: eine Widerlegung der Ansicht Jankes* (Jena, 1905). Briefly summarised, Gruhn’s argument is that Issus lay to the south, and not the north, of the Pillar of Jonah, and was in fact on the site of the later Alexandria ad Issum. While Alexander was at Myriandrus, Darius came over the *Beilan Pass* and marched northwards towards Cilicia to meet him; when he reached Issus – Alexandria he learned that Alexander was behind him at Myriandrus, but dared not return towards the south for fear of being attacked while attempting to recross the Beilan Pass. Accordingly, he continued towards the north and turned at the Payas Tchai, which represented for him the first suitable place for a battle.

The ingenuity of this theory far outweighs its points of contact with the traditions preserved in our sources. Gruhn’s pamphlet was savagely reviewed by E. Lammert in *BPbW* 1905 No. 50 cols. 1596–1604, which in turn led to an acrimonious correspondence in the same journal (*BPbW* 1906 No. 8 cols. 253–256). Furthermore, the theory was subjected to a detailed and devastating analysis by Dittberner (above, n. 10) 89–99, and has been effectively dead and buried since then: it is, however, an interesting curiosity and the pamphlet is quite rare, being printed on very poor quality paper which is now extremely fragile.

⁴² Beloch (above, n. 7) III 2² 354–365; cf. the first edition of the same work II 634 n. 3: “Daß Dareios die Umgehung des Feindes mit voller Absicht ausgeführt hat, scheint mir unzweifelhaft. Es wäre doch ein gar zu merkwürdiger Zufall, wenn der Großkönig . . .”

⁴³ Beloch III 2² 362: “In Mallos erfuhr Alexander, daß Dareios in Sochoi angelangt sei . . . und das muß richtig sein, denn hätte Dareios schon längere Zeit dort gestanden, so würde

argues that Alexander must have hurried to Myriandrus with his cavalry only, because he covered the distance from Mallus within 48 hours (cf. above, n. 32). Curtius, differing from our other sources, has a reference to Alexander waiting for the enemy among the mountain passes:⁴⁴ this Beloch seizes upon and says that Alexander moved to Myriandrus, and then used the storm which kept him in his camp simply as an excuse, since he did not wish to face Darius on the Syrian plain at Sochoi. Darius, on the other hand, would not have gone to Sochoi, but rather would have headed directly for Cilicia, had he not had the intention of waiting for Alexander on the plain of Sochoi. Beloch continues: "If then he altered his plan and decided upon an advance, his motive can only have been that Alexander had not done him the favour of descending into the plain, as is explicitly stated in our sources. From this it follows that Darius remained at Sochoi for a considerable time, as our sources likewise stress. Now, since Alexander marched from Mallus immediately upon hearing of Darius' arrival in Sochoi, he must have arrived at Myriandrus while Darius still remained at Sochoi and the latter's advance came later."⁴⁵ Darius therefore was not close behind Alexander at Issus, and the report that the two armies missed each other in the night is "palpably absurd".⁴⁶

This situation of the two armies facing each other across the Beilan Pass persisted for some time, and then Darius, leaving part of his army at Sochoi, marched round by the Amanid Gates with the deliberate intention of forcing a battle.⁴⁷ In support of this idea of Darius shutting Alexander up in the mountains Beloch quotes Aeschines' speech *Against Ctesiphon* § 164, a speech delivered in 330 B.C., only three years after these events, in which the orator addressing Demosthenes says, "but when Darius came down to the coast with all his forces and Alexander was penned up in Cilicia lacking all resources, as you yourself said, and was, according to your account, on the point of being trampled underfoot by the Persian cavalry . . .": Beloch argues that there must have been a stalemate lasting quite some time for such a report to gain currency.

This theory is ingenious, but it is perversely ingenious. Its basis is one idea, which Beloch blithely assumes is strengthened by repetition, namely

Alexander nicht nach Soloi gegangen oder doch wenigstens nicht länger als unbedingt notwendig dort geblieben sein." Cf. also *op. cit.* 364: "denn Dareios ist . . . erst nach Sochoi gelangt, als Alexander bereits in Mallos stand, oder frühestens wenige Tage vorher . . ."

⁴⁴ Curtius 3.7.8–10.

⁴⁵ Beloch III 2^a 364.

⁴⁶ Beloch *ibid.*; he goes on to add: ". . . es ist nicht abzusehen, warum Alexander und Dareios zu gleicher Zeit einen Nachtmarsch gemacht haben sollten." But see below, pp. 420/421.

⁴⁷ Beloch argues that Darius arrived in Syria at about the end of August and that the battle took place at the end of September: this stalemate therefore persisted for approximately one month (Beloch III 2^a 365).

that Alexander reached Mallus and Darius reached Sochoi at the same time, give or take a very few days.⁴⁸ If we accept this, indications of Darius' long stay at Sochoi and his growing impatience at Alexander's failure to appear take on a very different aspect. However, there is simply no evidence to support Beloch's basic idea.

Furthermore, we should note that Curtius alone of our sources shows Alexander deciding to wait for the enemy among the narrows of the mountains. But, if we examine this passage in Curtius (3.7.8–10) with care, we note that it was at *Issus* that Alexander made this decision, and that apparently he did not move towards the Pillar of Jonah until the same night as Darius came to the Amanid Gates.⁴⁹

As for the Aeschines passage, it surely makes better sense if we regard it as pertaining to Alexander's general situation in *Cilicia*, as indeed Aeschines specifically says, which is ringed by high mountains and which is difficult of access from the west, but which has sufficient plain land for the Persian cavalry to operate on. It was probably known in Greece that Alexander had been in Tarsus (i.e. in Cilicia) for some considerable time and also that Darius was advancing westwards. Demosthenes' general hostility to Alexander is well known and it is not surprising that he should have said that Alexander was trapped in Cilicia and that, if Darius caught up with him, the Persian cavalry would simply run his army down. (Also we may note that this is not really the situation which Beloch envisages.⁵⁰)

So far then, we have seen that neither Curtius nor Aeschines lend much support to Beloch's theory. A final point, which in my view demolishes it completely, was stressed by Keil in 1924,⁵¹ who reminds us that the account

⁴⁸ Cf. above, n. 43; the idea is also expressed in Beloch III 1² 631–632.

⁴⁹ Curtius 3.8.13: *forte eadem nocte et Alexander ad fauces quibus Syria aditur, et Dareus ad eum locum quem Amanicas Pylas vocant, pervenit*. Beloch (III 2³ 363) saw this difficulty and after mentioning that Curtius left Alexander standing at Issus, dismisses this by saying, "was dann freilich mit seiner eigenen Schlachtbeschreibung in Widerspruch steht". Beloch had to get rid of this awkward detail because his theory required that Darius marched over the mountains only when he was sure of not finding any Macedonians at the exit from the Pass of Kaleköy into the plain of Issus, that is, after he had received information that Alexander had arrived at Myriandrus (Beloch III 2³ 364).

We may also note that Curtius does not seem to understand clearly that Darius came *behind* Alexander (3.8.13–19). My opinion of this account is that Curtius has misunderstood and somewhat scrambled a source which did understand the topography. (If this source is Cleitarchus, then Cleitarchus himself may have scrambled Callisthenes or some other primary source.)

⁵⁰ Beloch comments: "Wenn wir das ἀπειλημμένος wörtlich nehmen wollten, müßte Darcios längere Zeit bei Issos im Rücken Alexanders gestanden haben; das stände aber nicht nur in Widerspruch mit den Angaben Arrians, sondern wäre auch an und für sich höchst unwahrscheinlich, und wir werden die Worte eines Redners nicht pressen wollen" (III 2³ 363 – italics mine). Precisely.

⁵¹ J. Keil, "Der Kampf um den Granikosübergang und das strategische Problem der Issos-schlacht", *Mitt. Ver. Klass. Phil. Wien* I (1924) 18.

of the battle of Issus by Callisthenes, the official historian of Alexander's expedition, is preserved by Polybius, who states, "Callisthenes says that Alexander had already made his way through the narrows and the so-called 'Gates in Cilicia', while Darius, making use of the passage through the so-called 'Amanid Gates', had come down into Cilicia with his army. Learning from the natives that Alexander was heading in the direction of Syria, he followed, and as he drew near to the narrows camped by the River Pinarus".⁵² The point of this is, that Callisthenes could not have said this in a history which was published, like a Dickens novel, in instalments, if Alexander and Darius had faced each other across the Beilan Pass for a month.

In general, we should remember that Alexander was an impulsive young man, whose dash and vigour frequently led him into trouble: the idea of him lurking amid narrow places like some suicidal Quintus Fabius Maximus, is so unlike the character we are familiar with, that we must reject it, unless it is proved to the hilt.⁵³ Finally, we note that Beloch has nothing to say about Darius' sending of his heavy equipment and baggage to Damascus.

In a well-argued paper published in 1933,⁵⁴ Franz Miltner, arguing from Alexander's known intention of conquering the Persian fleet by land, and from his anxiety in 333 about events in the Aegean which made haste in reaching the coasts of Cilicia and Syria-Phoenicia of paramount importance, expressed the view that the seaports of Phoenicia, and not Darius, were Alexander's prime target in the latter part of 333.⁵⁵ Given the need for haste, Alexander's actions in Cilicia are the more surprising, and the contrast between on the one hand his leisurely progress from Soli to Magarsus and Mallus, along with the delays in these places, and on the other his forced march from Mallus to Myriandrus is most striking.⁵⁶

Accordingly, by marching along the coast of the Gulf of Issus to Myriandrus,⁵⁷ Alexander was demonstrating that he had no intention of meeting

⁵² Polybius 12.17.2-3. The "so-called Gates in Cilicia" must be a reference to the Jonah Pass, and the "narrows" (twice mentioned in this passage) the approach to it from the north.

⁵³ As Keil (above, note 51) 19 points out: "Dieser Alexander kann doch wohl nicht der wirkliche Alexander sein!"

⁵⁴ F. Miltner, "Alexanders Strategie bei Issos", (above, n. 15) 69-78.

⁵⁵ Miltner (above, n. 15) 71: "Alexander mußte also auch jetzt noch in erster Linie bestrebt sein, Phönicien zu gewinnen . . ."

⁵⁶ Miltner (above, n. 15) 74: "Aber das mehrere Tage währende Siegesfest in Soloi und der Aufenthalt in Magarsos und schließlich noch Mallos erscheinen nicht durch militärische Erfordernisse geboten und stehen in schärfstem Gegensatz zu dem folgenden Gewaltmarsch . . ."

⁵⁷ Myriandrus was, according to Miltner (above, n. 15) 73, at least ten kilometres *south* of the entrance to the Beilan Pass, which would indeed make it a strange destination if Alexander intended to go through the Pass. For this assertion no evidence is given, and on p. 75 we learn that in fact, Alexander had advanced *beyond* Myriandrus (" . . . sein Vormarsch über Myrian-

Darius in this area; had he really wished to meet him at Sochoi, he would have taken the direct route over one of the northern Amanus passes.⁵⁸ These passes, then, were deliberately left unguarded, in the hope of enticing Darius into Cilicia; in the meantime Alexander would slip into northern Syria by the coast route. (It was necessary to entice Darius away northwards from Sochoi because otherwise he would have been able to take Alexander on the flank as he crossed the Orontes near its mouth.) This then was the reason for Alexander's lingering in Cilicia, and when Parmenion's men stationed at the Beilan Pass sent word that Darius was ready to move northwards, Alexander had to move at top speed from Mallus past Issus to avoid having his army cut in two. As "express confirmation" of his theory Miltner quotes Arrian's words (2.6.2) [*προῆγεν*] *ὥς ἐπὶ Δαρειόν* [*τε καὶ τοὺς Πέρσας*], and argues that, because of the *ὥς ἐπὶ*, Darius and the Persian army are explicitly designated as "a merely fictitious goal".⁵⁹

This is a most ingenious theory, since it explains, among other things, why Darius sent his heavy baggage to Damascus: he knew what Alexander was up to, and he had therefore realized that if he could not bring about a decisive battle in northern Syria, he would have to move south and try again. In fact, the sending of the heavy baggage to Damascus shows that Darius expected to have to move his campaign towards the south: the hope apparently was that even if the northern coast of Syria were lost, Phoenicia could still be retained and with it the connection between Mesopotamia and Egypt. However, Darius left his position in Sochoi because Alexander with his guard down was too tempting a target to resist.⁶⁰

But, in spite of this, the theory falls down on at least two counts: the route Miltner thinks Alexander was intending to follow, and the meaning of the phrase *ὥς ἐπὶ Δαρειόν*. I shall consider these separately.

With regard to Alexander's route, it is obviously important to determine whether or not there is a road which he could have taken along the coast beyond Myriandrus and either over or round the end of the Kizil Dağ. Miltner has absolutely no doubt about this and speaks of the advantages

dros . . ."): again, there is no evidence. We should, however, remember that Cyrus led his men to Myriandrus in 401 B.C. and then proceeded to cross the mountains by the Beilan Pass (Xen. *Anab.* I 4.6ff.); cf. n. 23, above.

⁵⁸ Miltner tacitly assumes that Alexander must have known of these passes; he simply says (above, n. 15) 73: "Hatte er von vornherein geplant, die Entscheidungsschlacht mit dem Großkönig herbeizuführen . . . er wäre doch bequemer auf der Straße Tarsos-Adana-Arslan-Boğaz-Sochoi marschiert . . ."

⁵⁹ Miltner (above, n. 15) 77. He adds (n. 39) that the *ὥς ἐπὶ* is not merely an expression of Arrian's but belongs to the original tradition, and he cites Callisthenes *ap.* Polyb. 12.173: *προάγειν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον ὥς ἐπὶ Συρίαν*.

⁶⁰ Miltner (above, n. 15) 77: ". . . man sich durch Umgehung des Amanosgebirges über den Arslan Boğaz bei Issos zwischen Alexander und Parmenion zu schieben bemühte."

of the route “beyond Myriandros and Rhosus” which led to the mouth of the Orontes: this route, we are told, rises to a height of only a little above 400 metres, as opposed to the Beilan Pass which was at an altitude of about 700 metres.⁶¹ As evidence to support this description of a convenient route avoiding the Beilan Pass, Miltner cites Miller’s *Itineraria Romana*:⁶² this section of the *Itineraria* is closely based on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, and there is a print of the appropriate part of the *Tabula* at the top of col. 635. This shows a road running in a series of zig-zags along the coast and reads “Alexandria catisson – XXVIII – Rosos – XV – Seleucia”. “Seleucia” is, of course, Seleucia in Pieria and, like Antioch, it simply was not in existence in Alexander’s day. Furthermore, Miller points out that the figure “XV” (*sc. m.p.*) on the *Tabula* between Rhosus and Seleucia is more appropriate to the distance between Seleucia and Antioch, while the true distance between Rhosus and Seleucia is about 25 m.p.⁶³ The general accuracy of the *Tabula*, then, is not such as would inspire much confidence – for this area at least, and we would do well to remember Ramsey’s comment: “In general, we find in the Table that sometimes the right names are mentioned in the wrong order, frequently an entirely false set of names is placed on a road, and sometimes true and false names are put side by side among the stations. Frequently an important Roman route is represented in mere fragments, or appears as a set of disjointed zigzags across the map, while fragments of two or three roads are united into a single straight line.”⁶⁴

What we have in this case is probably a wholly fictitious road joining points which are fairly close to each other. A road between Rhosus and Seleucia may conceivably have existed during the Hellenistic or Roman periods, but even this is made quite uncertain by present day testimony: “The Gâvur Dağ . . . forms a prominent range from the sea cliffs just west of Antakya (Antioch) . . . ,” and “where cut off in the south by the sea

⁶¹ Miltner (above, n. 15) 75. The site of Rhosus is not as controversial as the site of Myriandrus. Müller, *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* (above, n. 22) Commentary on § 151, quotes a considerable body of ancient testimony on Rhosus (Grk. ‘Ρωσός or ‘Ρῶσσος; cf. also *R.E. s.v. Rosus, Rossus*) and adds: Rhosum cum hodierno *Arsus* componendum esse recte censent plurimi. The site may originally have been settled by Phoenicians, and subsequently the town was the seat of a Christian bishop: W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (Supplementary Papers of the Royal Geographical Society, London, 1890) 383, cites evidence of this which can be dated at perhaps A.D. 600 or a little later. Modern Arsuz is situated on a bay about 22 miles down the coast from Iskenderon on a plain somewhat broader than the three mile width of the plain of Iskenderon. Cf. *Geographical Handbook Series: Turkey* (above, n. 13) I 153.

⁶² K. Miller, *Itineraria Romana* (Stuttgart 1916, reprint 1964) “760; vgl. *Strecke* 219”. Miltner is obviously here referring to “*Karte* 219” and *Strecke* 100 (and 92 also).

⁶³ Miller (above, n. 62) col. 760; I would also point out that the distance between Alexandria catisson (Iskenderon) and Rhosus (Arsuz) is about 22 miles (above, note 61) and not the XXVIII m.p. of the *Tabula*.

⁶⁴ W. M. Ramsay (above, n. 61) 63–64.

it stands up at İkiz Tepe to 5,580 feet, the southern height of Kizil Dağ. It is first passable without great difficulty south-east of Iskenderon by the motor road over the Beilan Pass.”⁶⁵ The source of Miltner’s information about the maximum height of this “route” is nowhere indicated, and its very existence must remain extremely dubious.

With regard to *ὥς ἐνὶ Λαρεΐον*, which was probably the starting-point of his theory, Miltner is overly subtle. As Weir Smyth points out,⁶⁶ “*ὥς* often indicates the thought or the assertion of the subject of the principal verb . . .”: its use in our sources may be justified on the grounds that they were written under the influence of hindsight; that is, Alexander set off to meet Darius, but did not: Darius, as we know, came instead by another route and met him.⁶⁷

Finally, we may also consider that Miltner’s theory falls down simply because of its inherent improbability: that Alexander should have sought to avoid a battle which he knew he would have to fight sooner or later is hard enough to accept; that the only result which such a manœuvre could bring about would be to place the Persian army firmly across his lines of communication makes the whole thing incredible.

In the article on the Battle of Issus contributed to Volume IV of the monumental work *Antike Schlachtfelder*,⁶⁸ Wilhelm Judeich suggested that in the spring of 333, Alexander advanced eastward from Gordium along the old Royal Road which ran from Susa to Sardes; his sudden change of direction towards Cilicia was due to information that Darius was approaching by a more southerly route.⁶⁹ Darius, on the other hand, when he

⁶⁵ *Geographical Handbook Series: Turkey* (above, n. 13) I 157; elsewhere the same work refers to a “rough path” following the coast from Iskenderon to the mouth of the Orontes (p. 101). This may well be the sort of thing referred to by A. Bauer (above, n. 10) 121; when speaking of other ways across the Amanus mountains and the difficulties involved in even considering taking an army across by them, he adds: “Sie werden auch heute noch vorwiegend nur von Schmugglern benutzt.”

⁶⁶ H. Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956) § 2996.

⁶⁷ The same will apply to Callisthenes’ *ὥς ἐνὶ Συρίαν* (cf. n. 59, above): Alexander was intending to go to Syria, but had to turn round. In spite of all this, I suspect that Arrian uses *ὥς ἐνὶ* as a variant form of *ἐνὶ* cf. 2.7.1: Darius crosses the Amanus range and *ὥς ἐνὶ Ἰσσοῦν προῆγε*. We are surely not to imagine that Darius too was engaging in some elaborate pretence?

⁶⁸ W. Judeich, (above, n. 7) 354–371, esp. 355–361.

⁶⁹ Judeich (above n. 7) 355: “Dieser rasche Wechsel der Marschrichtung des Königs ist kaum anders zu erklären als daß Alexander die Nachricht erhalten hatte, das persische Reichsheer nahe nicht vom Tigris her, sondern auf einer südlichen Straße . . .” He forgets two things: Alexander’s intelligence was very poor (cf. E. W. Marsden, *The Campaign of Gaugamela* [Liverpool, 1964] 2) and, more important, his overall strategy of conquering the Persian fleet

arrived at Sochoi, took pains to conceal his position and straddled the approaches to *all* the Amanus crossings with small units posted there for purposes of observation: the aim was that he would have exact information about Alexander's movements and so would be able to strike him with the maximum surprise no matter which route he took over the Amanus mountains.⁷⁰

Alexander divided his army at Tarsus and sent Parmenion on to reconnoitre the route ahead: Curtius tells us (3.7.7) that Parmenion, advancing from Issus, dislodged those of the barbarians who were besetting places in the mountains further inland – a reference to the Beilan Pass, it would seem.⁷¹ This gave Darius a clear clue as to the future direction of Alexander's advance: he would come over the Beilan Pass. As mentioned above, the Persian plan hitherto had been to fall upon the Macedonians as they emerged from whichever pass they took over the Amanus: a new plan was now suggested, in view of the Macedonians' apparent choice of the Beilan Pass, and their lack of interest in the northern passes. This was to allow the Macedonians to cross the Amanus range and then to cut off their line of retreat by coming round via the north. (Presumably by closely following Alexander's army, Darius would be able to force him into the plain of Sochoi where he could be finished off at leisure.)⁷² This plan was adopted and the king crossed the mountains by one of the northern passes; thereafter he turned south and waited just north of the Pass of Kaleköy until Alexander had passed, and so came to Issus shortly after him.⁷³ However,

by land, which made a descent upon the coast of Cilicia absolutely essential. Clearly, this was known to Darius also, and he expected that his confrontation with Alexander would occur in Cilicia or northern Syria; for when he ordered the Greek mercenaries, formerly under Memnon's command, to join him, he had them land at Tripolis in Phoenicia (cf. Arr. 2.2.1 with Arr. 2.13.2–3; see also Curtius 3.8.1).

⁷⁰ Judeich (above, n. 7) 357: no evidence is cited for this supposition, which is crucial for the subsequent dénouement. We may, however, surmise that it is based on a conflation of Diod. 17.32.2, Curtius 3.7.7, and Arr. 2.5.1, and as such seems perfectly acceptable.

⁷¹ Though Judeich (above, n. 7) 358 takes *interiora montium* to refer to the coastal defile: the distinction is, however, not crucial.

⁷² Wilcken (above, n. 12) 101 follows this part at least of Judeich's theory, as does J. R. Hamilton in his Commentary on Plutarch: *Alexander* (Oxford, 1969) on *Alex.* 20.5; cf. J. Keil (above, n. 51) 16, who envisages a slightly different possibility; “. . . es ist aber auch nicht ganz ausgeschlossen, daß er den Makedonenkönig . . . vielleicht mit Hilfe einer auf dem Bailanpasse zurückgelassenen Verteidigungsgruppe in den Engen südlich von Issos einschließen, von jeder Zufuhr abschneiden und mit seinem ganzen Heere vernichten wollte.”

⁷³ As Judeich points out (above, n. 7) 359, if the Greek tradition is correct that Darius' aim was to intercept the Macedonians whom he believed to be giving way before him, he should, after crossing the mountains, have followed a route leading towards the valley of the R. Pyramus and then towards Adana and Tarsus, where he would have had to look for Alexander.

the storm which delayed Alexander at Myriandrus enabled news of Darius' new position to reach him: this was a lucky stroke, since by his rapid reaction to the news, he was able to bring Darius to battle on ground which was much more convenient for himself.

There are several features of this theory which I find very attractive – especially the items concerning Persian reconnaissance and occupation of the passes. The general question of reconnaissance is of considerable importance in any consideration of the moves of the two armies. As we have seen, it was from Tarsus that Alexander sent Parmenion on ahead to reconnoitre, just before he himself headed south-west towards Soli (above p. 402). Beloch calculated that, with Alexander's delays in various places, it was about one month from the time of Alexander's westwards departure from Tarsus and Parmenion's slightly earlier *eastwards* departure, until Alexander arrived in Mallus, where he received news of Darius' position at Sochoi (above p. 405 and n. 17 – the true figure may be slightly less). I envisage Parmenion advancing very slowly and cautiously across the Cilician plain,⁷⁴ possibly covering both sides of the Pass of Kaleköy, capturing Issus, and then proceeding slowly southwards, past the Pillar of Jonah, and so to the Beilan Pass and the plain of Sochoi, where his forward patrols will ultimately have made contact with the Persian army.⁷⁵ All this is reflected in Arrian's statement: *ἔτι δὲ ἐν Μαλλῶ ὄντι αὐτῷ* (Alexander) *ἀγγέλλεται Δαρεῖον ἐν Σώχοις ξὺν τῇ πάσῃ δυνάμει στρατοπεδεύειν* (Arr. 2.6.1).⁷⁶

This most important observation leads to an equally important conclusion: Issus was Darius' original target, and when von Domaszewski (above, n. 22) 58 speaks of Darius crossing the mountains "in der Erwartung, die Macedonen im ebenen Cilicien nördlich des Pyramus zu finden", he is reading into the evidence something which simply is not there.

⁷⁴ Judeich (above, n. 7) 358 n. 2 thinks that Parmenion carried out his reconnaissance quickly, took only four to five days to cover the distance from Tarsus to the "Amanid Gates", and then spent the rest of the period simply sitting in his new positions. However, as Dittberner reminds us (above, n. 10) 75–76, the size of Parmenion's force makes it highly unlikely that reconnaissance was his sole mission: at the same time he would have had the job of securing to the Macedonian cause the territory through which he passed.

⁷⁵ Both Diod. 17.32.2 and Curtius 3.7.7 mention that, during his advance, Parmenion dislodged troops, apparently from the Pillar of Jonah. The mere presence of Persian troops meant nothing, as far as Parmenion was concerned: Arsames, the satrap of Cilicia, had abandoned Tarsus when Alexander stormed through the Cilician Gates, and had fled to King Darius (Arr. 2.4.6). However, he still had forces and that these should have occupied the passes between Cilicia and Syria would give Parmenion no information as to the location of Darius and his army.

⁷⁶ That the Persians deliberately "leaked" information about Darius' position to the Macedonian advance guard, *after* Darius had started his advance to the north, as Judeich (above, n. 7) 359 suggests, seems improbable; that a definitive message should have been sent to Alexander without the information being verified, is incredible.

What of *Darius'* intelligence in the meantime? In considering this question, we should remember that Alexander was operating at this time in what was enemy territory. The inhabitants of this region were not Greeks, and do not seem to have been particularly enthusiastic about being "liberated" by the newcomers. Both Diodorus (17.32.4) and Curtius (3.8.24) state that the locals were loyal to the Persian cause, and even actively supported it. Arrian (2.5.5) tells us that when Alexander reached Soli, he fined the inhabitants 200 silver talents because they were still inclined towards Persia. The case of Soli is especially interesting: a glance at the map will show that it is on the coast; it would be the easiest thing in the world for Persian agents to slip in and out by boat, and to sail across to the mouth of the Orontes, and report Alexander's position to Darius.⁷⁷

The picture then from Darius' viewpoint would be as follows: he would know that Alexander with a considerable force was operating in south-west Cilicia; some time subsequent to this, he would learn that his "pass-watchers" had been ejected from the Beilan Pass by Parmenion's advance guard (cf. n. 75, above). He would doubtless also get some estimate of the size of Parmenion's force. Meanwhile, he would receive no report of Macedonian activity near the Hasanbeyli or Bahçe Passes, and then suddenly he would realise that the Macedonian army was currently split into two roughly equal parts, and that he had an opportunity to interpose himself between these two parts. Of course he would realize that Parmenion must have sent word back to Alexander that he had found the Persian Army, and his putative sources in Soli may by this time have warned him that Alexander had departed towards Tarsus. However, he knew from the battle of the Granicus that the Macedonians were formidable opponents, and so the opportunity of dealing with them piecemeal was too good to resist. With all possible haste therefore he marched the bulk of his army north, with the deliberate intention of cutting the Macedonian army in two. I would emphasize that Darius had to move as fast as was humanly possible for his army: if he could reach the plain of Issus via the Pass of Kaleköy before Alexander reached it via the Pass of Kara Kapu, he would have achieved his purpose and could afford to take his time thereafter. This then is why Plutarch (*Alex.* 20.3) tells us that Darius was making a night march when his army passed close to Alexander's. Alexander, now fully restored to vigour after his campaign in south-west Cilicia, was at the same time mar-

⁷⁷ Minor naval activity of this type is not mentioned in our sources, but the various coastal towns on the Gulf of Issus almost certainly possessed fishing fleets and Alexander had no difficulty in finding a ship at Myriandrus to verify the report he received about Darius' position (Arr. 3.7.2).

ching by night at full speed in order to come to grips with his enemy, whom he thought to be on the plain of Sochoi. It is therefore not surprising that both armies should have been marching by night and Plutarch's remark *ἐν δὲ τῇ νυκτὶ διαμαρτόντες ἀλλήλων* (*Alex.* 20.3) should not be dismissed as "palpably absurd".⁷⁸

At this point I would stress again the significance of Darius' turn to the south and to Issus after his emergence from the Hasanbeyli or Bahçe Pass (cf. above, p. 418 and n. 73) and to this we may now add a remark of Plutarch which follows immediately on the one quoted just above: . . . *αὐθις ἀνέστρεφον, Ἀλέξανδρος μὲν ἡδόμενός τε τῇ συντυχίᾳ καὶ σπεύδων ἀπαντῆσαι περὶ τὰ στενά, Δαρεῖος δὲ τὴν προτέραν ἀναλαβεῖν στρατοπεδεῖν καὶ τῶν στενῶν ἐξελῖξαι τὴν δύναμιν. ἤδη γὰρ ἐγνώκει παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον ἐμβεβληκῶς ἑαυτὸν εἰς χωρία θαλάττη καὶ ὄρεσι καὶ ποταμῶ δύσιππα, καὶ διεσπασμένα πολλαχοῦ, καὶ πρὸς τῆς ὀλιγότητος τῶν πολεμίων ἔχοντα τὴν θέσιν* (*Alex.* 20.3). Darius wished to get back to Sochoi; for he had come to realize that he had acted contrary to his advantage, i.e. that he had made a mistake, in throwing himself into broken country which favoured the Macedonians. And yet we do not hear of Darius hesitating or lingering on the way during his march to Issus: so what can have prompted this extreme change of attitude; what single item caused his realization that he was now in danger, an item which cannot have weighed with him before he left Sochoi? Obviously this is the fact that the Macedonian army was now united: his plan to cut it in two had failed, and his realization of this fact will have come only when he reached Issus and found Alexander's field hospital.⁷⁹

One can easily imagine his reaction, or at least the reaction of his senior officers, upon discovering that the brilliant plan had failed by a few hours: the unfortunate Macedonian sick and wounded were the most convenient victims of the Persian anger. His army must have been exhausted after its long forced march, and so, making the best of a bad job, Darius advanced to the River Pinarus, took up a defensive position, and waited to see what

⁷⁸ Beloch III 2² 364 (cf. above, pp. 412–413). Hamilton's comment on this phrase in Plutarch (above, n. 72) p. 51 – "Plutarch perhaps thinks of the two armies passing close to each other. In fact, Darius' route lay 30 miles or so to the east of the coastal road with the Amanus mountains between" – is perhaps more deserving of Beloch's epithet.

⁷⁹ The question arises whether we can accept Plutarch's remark about the armies missing each other in the night as well as Curtius' *forte eadem nocte et Alexander ad fauces quibus Syria aditur, et Dareus ad eum locum quem Amanicas Pylas vocant, pervenit* (3.8.13). I think we can, if we remember that an army on the march forms a very long column indeed: Bauer (above, n. 10) 122 n. 13 points out that a "modern army corps" (1899) of 30,000 men, with artillery but without its supply train, has in column-of-route a length of 22.5 km (almost 14 miles).

would happen: lying as he did across the Macedonian supply and communications lines, he was still in a fairly strong position, and if Alexander had carried on across the Beilan Pass, Darius could have followed him and done battle according to his original plan.

There is one other point to clear up: Darius' sending of his family, his baggage train and his war treasure to Damascus gives us a clue to his subsequent intentions. After crushing Alexander in Cilicia, he had intended to move south and deal with Parmenion's troops in the area of the Pillar of Jonah and the Beilan Pass; thereafter, he would have advanced into Phoenicia with a view to strengthening Persian authority there.⁸⁰

What I take to be Darius' plan prior to the battle is, from a strategical point of view, extremely sound, and had Darius made up his mind to overrule the opposition among his officers and march north from Sochoi even one day earlier, he might well have reached Issus before Alexander.⁸¹ We can only conclude that he had extremely bad luck: even so, he emerges from this episode not as a wilful and petulant fool, but with his reputation as a strategist at least considerably enhanced.⁸²

As for Alexander, his carelessness in keeping his army divided for so long and his failure to secure the northern passes show that, although

⁸⁰ Phoenicia was at this time seriously disaffected and had been a source of trouble to Persia almost continuously since c. 385 B.C. Cf. W. W. Tarn, "Persia from Xerxes to Alexander", in *Cambridge Ancient History* VI (Cambridge, 1927) 20–22; A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 1960) 432, 434–7. We may also surmise that there were problems of commissariat for Darius at Sochoi, doubtless intensified by the long wait there; had he sent the harem and baggage train eastwards from Sochoi, they would have hindered communications with Mesopotamia and might have made the problem of supplies at Sochoi even more acute; cf. Curtius 3.8.8 and Dittberner (above n. 10) 90–91.

⁸¹ Tarn may latterly have toyed with the idea that Darius tried deliberately to cut the Macedonian army in two; however, he seems to have avoided the full implications of this, perhaps because of his preconceived ideas about Alexander and Darius; cf. *Alexander the Great* I 24: "He had come right across Alexander's communications, whether by accident or design will never be known . . ."; cf. *CAH* VI 367 where the latter words do not appear; cf. also Dieulafoy (above, n. 10) 60, and Milns (above, n. 3) 75–76.

⁸² Some words of Marsden (above, n. 69) 5–6 may serve to put Darius in a truer perspective: "one generally tends to accuse Darius of cowardice. This view, however, is certainly not supported by the most vigorous and self-sacrificing efforts made in Darius' defence by his officers at Issus. They were protecting their king, not a coward masquerading under that title. Nor does this view help much when we try to explain how Darius subsequently managed to raise another grand army with such proud and independent spirits as Bessus under his command Darius was joined by 4,000 men . . . who had also made good their escape Among these were about 2,000 Greek mercenaries who thereafter remained with him to the bitter end. It is plain that a feeling of mutual respect existed between Greeks and king To the last, Darius enjoyed their loyalty"

he may have been a brilliant tactician, he had yet much to learn about the importance of sound strategy and thorough and careful reconnaissance.

University of Western Ontario,
Canada

C. L. Murison