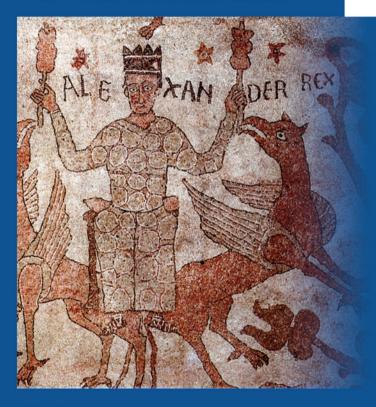# *A COMPANION TO*
ALEXANDER LITERATURE
IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Edited by

Z. DAVID ZUWIYYA

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A Companion to Alexander
Literature in the Middle Ages

Edited by

Z. David Zuwiyya

BRILL

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

For my wife Sara

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	*Alexander A also known as The Romance of Alisaunder* or *Alexander of Macedon*
AB	*Alexander B also known as Alexander and Dindimus*
AEF	*Anuario de estudios filológicos*
AdP	*Alexander de Paris*
AHDLMA	*Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*
AJS	*American Jewish Society*
AlGdlLOPO	*Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales*
Alex.	*Alexandreis*
BA	*The Buik of Alexander*
BAE	*Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*
BHS	*Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*
BJRULM	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BKA	*The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*
BRAE	*Buletín de la Real Academia Española*
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*
CHI	*Cambridge History of Iran*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
Dicts	*The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosphers*
EETS	*Early English Text Society*
GE	*General Estoria*
HAC	*Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem*
HD	*Hadith Dhulqarnayn* (ed., García Gómez)
HNAM	*Historia novelada de Alejandro Magno*
HR	*Hispanic Review*
HSMS	*Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies*
ILA	*Investigaciones sobre el* Libro de Alexandre
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSSEA	*Journal for the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
KA	*Kyng Alisaunder*
KoA	*Konung Alexander*

LDECETM	*La difussione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Il "Romanzo di Alessandro" e altri scritti*
Met.	*Metamorphosis*
MFRA	*Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre*
MGH.SS	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica : Scriptores*
MusHelv	*Museum helveticum*
NIB	*Name-ye Iran-e Bastan: The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies*
OEO	*Old English Orosius*
OEL	*Old English Letter*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*
PC	*Pseudo-Callisthenes*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PLA	*Prose Life of Alexander*
QD	*Qissat Dhulqarnayn* (ed., Zuwiyya)
RdTCh	*Roman de toute chevalerie*
REJ	*Revue des Études Juives*
RF	*Romanische Forschungen*
RFE	*Revista de filología española*
RILCE	*Revista del Instituto de Lengua y Cultura Españolas*
RFH	*Revista de filología hispánica*
RPh	*Romance Philology*
Rrek.	*Rrekontamiento del rrey Alisandre* (ed., A.R. Nykl)
SS	*Secretum Secretorum*
TPAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
WA	*The Wars of Alexander*
ZDMG	*Zeitshchrift der Deutschen Morgenländendischen Gesellschaft*
ZFRP	*Zeitschrift für romanische philologie*

PRIMARY SOURCES FROM THE CLASSICAL AND EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIODS

Richard Stoneman

Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, was born in Pella in 356 B.C. Acceding to the throne at the age of 20 following the assassination of his father Philip II, he prosecuted his father's plans for a campaign of conquest and revenge against the Persian Empire. With the Greek states secure behind him, and many Greek soldiers added to his Macedonian army, he defeated the Persian king Darius in three great battles, at the River Granicus (May 334), at Issus (November 333) and at Gaugamela (Arbela: October 331). An interlude in Egypt (332–331) resulted in the foundation of the city of Alexandria and his recognition as Pharaoh. Becoming ruler of the Persian Empire on the death of Darius in summer 330, he spent three years suppressing residual opposition in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and then went on to campaign against India (modern Pakistan, to the Indus valley). The conquest of these regions was accompanied by much bloodshed and no attempt on the king's part to secure his rule in these regions, which lay beyond the Persian Empire. At the River Hyphasis he turned back (mid-326), sailed down the Indus and marched through the Gedrosian desert to the Persian heartland (a detachment was taken by sea under the command of his admiral Nearchus, and the whole army was reunited in autumn 325. Bad omens awaited the king at Babylon, but he entered the city regardless in spring 323. Three months later he was dead, probably of typhoid, though rumours immediately spread that he had been poisoned. He had made no preparations for his succession, and his death plunged his empire into twenty years of war between his generals before the shape of the Hellenistic kingdoms emerged—Egypt under Ptolemy I, the eastern empire under Seleucus, Thrace under Lysimachus and Macedon under Alexander's short-lived heirs.

The legend of Alexander was already in formation before the conqueror's death in Babylon in 323 B.C. His campaign of conquest was on a scale that had not been seen before, and the king's personality, which drove him to such heights of ambition, made him a figure of

fascination for contemporaries and those who came after. Contemporary writings about Alexander are all lost apart from what is preserved in excerpts and summaries in the later Greek and Latin authors who wrote about him.[1] The first histories were the solid factual accounts of Aristobulus and Ptolemy, which were the main sources for Arrian's account written some 400 years later.[2] The historian Callisthenes, who was executed before the end of Alexander's Indian campaign, wrote an adulatory history of the first part of the campaign, and Cleitarchus, who was probably with Alexander in the last days in Babylon, wrote an account full of marvels. Onesicritus wrote about India from the perspective of a Cynic philosopher and enjoyed describing the wonders of India. Nearchus also wrote a book which covered India and the events of the voyage along the southern coast of Iran.

The most enduring of these early accounts was the Alexander romance, which was attributed in some medieval MSS to Callisthenes and has thus come to be known as *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (*PC*).[3] The formation of this work is complex. It includes several separate strands of writing: a novella about the birth of Alexander in which his father is the exiled Pharaoh Nectanebus II; a military narrative, in which the topography and chronology are highly garbled; a series of letters between Alexander and Darius, which once existed as a separate work (parts have been found on papyrus); the 'Letter to Aristotle about India,' which is full of encounters with fabulous beasts and monstrous races of human beings; the account of the meeting with the Naked Philosophers or Brahmans in Taxila, which started as an independent novella and went on to an independent career through a number of rewritings; a novella about his meeting with the Queen of Meroe, Candace; and the Will of Alexander, which emanates from a Ptolemaic milieu and bolsters Ptolemy's claim to the rule of Egypt. The date at which these elements were welded into a single work is disputed. The present author is of the view that something like the existing earliest recension of the *Romance* was completed in the reign of Ptolemy II, but the traditional view has been that the composition of the work as

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[1] The standard survey is Pearson, 1960.

[2] For a recent edition and study of Arrian's work, see J. Romm (ed.) and P. Mensch (trans.), *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander* (New York, 2010).

[3] There is a translation, with brief introduction and further bibliography in Stoneman, 1991. See also Stoneman, 2007 and 2008, and R. Merkelbach, 1975 for a study of the genesis of this *PC*.

an entity did not take place until the third century A.D., shortly before its translation from Greek into Latin by Julius Valerius. The arguments are discussed in detail in Stoneman 2007.

The Alpha Recension

The first recension (α) is represented by a single MS, A. This recension provides the narrative structure on which the later versions are based. It begins with the story of the last Pharaoh of Egypt, Nectanebus, who, seeing through his magic arts that his country will fall victim to Persian conquest, flees in disguise to Pella in Macedon. Here he becomes the confidant of Queen Olympias, who is anxious that her husband Philip may reject her if she does not produce a son. Nectanebus promises to make her conceive a son by the god Amon (I.4). He sends her dreams in which Amon appears to her and promises her a son. However, Nectanebus plays a trick on her and, after obtaining the key to her room, disguises himself as Amon in order to have intercourse with her (I.7). When in due time a son is born Nectanebus uses his astrological calculator to establish the best moment for birth: he gets her to delay until the most auspicious moment, which will make her son a world-ruler. (I.12. This passage is heavily corrupt in A and is omitted or abridged in all subsequent recensions).

Alexander is looked on with some suspicion by Philip because of the difference of his looks; however, he accepts him as his son, has him educated by Aristotle, and is impressed when he tames the man-killing horse Bucephalus (sic; the correct historical name is Bucephalas). At the age of twelve, Alexander asks Nectanebus to give him a lesson in astronomy (I.14); the magician takes him to a hill outside the city whereupon Alexander pushes him over a cliff. His reason is not given. The dying Nectanebus reveals that Alexander is his son. At fifteen, Alexander attends the Olympic Games at Olympia (I.18–20: in the Gamma recension, the location is changed to Rome) and defeats his opponents in the chariot race. On his return he finds Philip taking a new wife, Cleopatra: a quarrel breaks out, which ends when Alexander reconciles his parents (I.20–22).

Alexander takes part in various military campaigns. Presently a neighboring king, Pausanias, makes an attempt to carry off Olympias, and then murders Philip (I.24). Alexander, on succeeding to the throne, assembles a great army to continue Philip's planned campaign

against the Persian Empire. The historical chronology is very garbled here: after the campaign against Sparta, Athens, and Thebes, Alexander moves immediately to Egypt (via Rome in later recensions), where he founds the city of Alexandria and establishes the cult of Sarapis (I.30–34). He then moves in reverse to besiege Tyre (I.35–37), where he begins an exchange of boasting letters with Darius (I.38), and back again to Asia Minor (I.40). After defeating Darius in a battle which must be that at Issus, he is next found campaigning back in Troy, northern Greece, and Thebes (again). A long set piece contains the appeal, in verse, by the local musician Ismenias for clemency to his city (I.46). This passage is much abridged in later versions.

Book II begins with a debate in Athens about how to react to Alexander's campaigns: this is not found in any later recension. Then Alexander is found in Cilicia (II.8, picking up from I.41), where he is cured of illness by the doctor Philip. Further exchanges of letters with Darius are followed by Alexander's visit in disguise to the Persian court; he is recognised but escapes over the frozen River Stranga, which thaws as soon as he has crossed, so that his pursuers are swept away (II.13–15). A second battle with Darius (based on that of Gaugamela) is followed by the death of Darius, murdered by his own commanders. Alexander finds him dying and is told to marry the king's daughter Roxane and succeed him as king (II.20). Alexander exchanges letters with Darius's mother, wife, and daughter and becomes king (II.21). Book II ends here in A, but the Beta recension continues with a letter to Alexander's mother Olympias describing his adventures (II.23) and then his travels into the Land of Darkness (II.32–41; there are no chapters 24–31 in this recension). The Lambda manuscript extends chapters 39–41 with the stories of Alexander's construction of a diving bell and a flying machine, and his search for the Water of Life. Chapters 42–44 occur in Gamma only: 42–43 repeat the events of chapters 24–41, with some additional episodes, and chapter 44 describes an encounter with pygmies.

Book III (returning to A, which all the versions again follow) begins with the Indian campaign: Alexander marches against Porus the Indian king and defeats him in single combat. He then encounters the Naked Philosophers or Oxydracae of Taxila and interviews them about their customs. A inserts at this point the whole of Palladius's monograph, 'On the Life of the Brahmans' (III.7–16), and then the 'Letter to Aristotle about India' (III.17). This letter exists in two Latin versions (there are 67 MSS of the earlier one) as a much longer free-standing work.

It is clearly translated from a (lost) Greek original, which has been heavily abridged for inclusion in the A-text. This episode is considerably expanded in later versions, especially Beta and L, which (alone) includes the famous episodes of the diving bell and the flying machine. In A, the lacunose text focuses on strange beasts and the 'Night of Terrors' when the army is attacked by monstrous animals, and culminates in a visit to the oracular trees of the sun and moon, which predict Alexander's early death.

Book III continues with Alexander's visit to Queen Candace of Meroe (III.18–24). Either Meroe (Ethiopia) is conceived as an extension of India, or this story has become misplaced in the narrative. He goes to her in disguise but is recognised because she has secretly had his portrait painted. After some tense moments, they part as friends. Candace's son takes Alexander to visit the cave of the Gods, where he sees the dead Phararoh Sesonchosis, and then the god Sarapis, who again warns him of his early death but refuses to answer the direct question of when Alexander is to die.

Alexander then exchanges letters with the Amazons, who describe their way of life and offer their submission (III.25–26). A letter to his mother describes some of Alexander's adventures which have already been told, and also his visit to the City of the Sun (III.28). Ch. 29 occurs in the Gamma recension only. He arrives in Babylon (III.30), where omens foretell his death. He is taken ill at a dinner after swallowing poison sent by Antipater, the regent of Macedon. He tries to drown himself but is prevented by Roxane. He writes his will, outlining the disposition of his empire after his death (III.33). He dies and his body is taken to Memphis, and then to Alexandria, for burial: so "the city he founded becomes his tomb," as Sarapis had foretold in Book I (III.34).

The only MS of this recension is in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.[4] It dates from between 1013 and 1124 and forms the last portion (from f.395) of a very large codex containing several other historical works. The scribe seems to have been tired by the time he reached the Alexander romance: the writing is slovenly and he was obviously working from a poor exemplar from which he at times copied meaningless strings of letters. All subsequent copyists of the Greek Romance, as well as Julius Valerius in Latin, seem to have been working from this text,

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[4] Parisinus 1711: A.

or something like it, and many of their alterations can only be seen as attempts to restore sense to something that made no sense in A.[5]

The Alpha version of the Romance (something close to A, but without the long astrological section in Book I) was translated into Latin by *Julius Valerius Alexander Polemius*, almost certainly to be identified with the Flavius Polemius who was consul in 338 A.D. and *comes* of the East in 345. The MSS give it the title 'Deeds of Alexander translated from Aesop the Greek.' His translation is into flowery and mannered post-classical Latin: it refers to the Aurelian Walls, built in 270, and describes Rome as the capital of the empire, which it ceased to be in 330, so those dates provide the time frame in which it was written. It thus belongs to a time when Alexander was becoming a symbol for the late antique 'pagan revival' in opposition to the newly dominant Christian religion.[6]

A text related to A was translated into Armenian about the year 500, possibly by the great historian Movses of Khoren: the earliest MS is of the 12th century. The translator worked from a much better text than A: the Armenian not only often makes clear what the original Greek actually said, but offers several additional episodes, including the correspondence of Alexander's parents with Zeuxis in Book I and the Letter to Aristotle about India (in fuller form than in A) in III.

Two of the MSS are beautifully illustrated and the iconography probably goes back to the late antique tradition: one is in the John Rylands Library,[7] the other San Lazzaro, Venice.[8]

A version close to Alpha, now lost, was translated into Syriac probably in the seventh century, the golden age of Syriac writing, centered around the churches of Syria (Brock, 1983). The source text was related to A but differs so considerably that it has generally been reckoned a witness for a lost Greek recension known as Delta*. It includes the episode of Alexander's visit to the emperor of China which became a standard feature of the Persian versions. Other episodes only in Syriac are Aristotle's advice to Alexander about the building of Alexandria;

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[5] Editions of A: Kroll, 1926; Stoneman, 2007 (Book I; II, and III forthcoming). Translations: Haight, 1955 (English), Pfister, 1978 (German), Tallet-Bonvalot, 1994 (French), Franco, 2001 (Italian).

[6] Edition: Rossellini, 2004 (2nd edition).

[7] Armenian 3, 14th century.

[8] Cod. 424, 13th–14th century. For mondern edition, see (Armenian) by the Mekhitarists in Venice, 1842. Greek retroversion (translation from Armenian into ancient Greek): Raabe, 1896. English translation: Wolohojian, 1969.

Nectanebus's and Olympias's discussion of Philip's disaffection from his wife (I.14); the metaphor of the golden eggs (I.23); and the jokes about the mustard seeds (I.36 and 39). The commissioning of a painting of Alexander by the ambassadors from Darius is properly motivated only in this version, where it is shown to Darius's daughter. But there is a large lacuna at II.6–14, presumably the result of a defective Greek original.

It used to be thought that this translation was made from a Pehlevi (Middle Persian) version, but Ciancaglini (1998) has disproved this and shows that it was made directly from the Greek.[9]

The Beta recension

The author of Beta wrote some time after the Latin translation of A was made by Julius Valerius (by 330), but he was apparently not aware of the variants in the Greek source of the Armenian version. Beta wrestles with the text of A and frequently rewrites and rephrases his model to make better (or any) sense of it, but he also includes new material. The end of Book I and the first six chapters of Book II (the debate in Athens) are missing from Beta, but Beta has the end of Book II which is not in A.

The four main MSS are Parisinus gr. 1685 (B), a finely written MS completed in Otranto in 1468; Vaticanus 1556 (V: 15th–16th century); Laurentianus 70.37 (F: a palimpsest of the 13th century); Mosquensis 436 (298) (K, 14th–15th century). The earliest MS is Parisinus suppl. 690 (S: 11th century), which contains only III.30–35. Some MSS contain additional material, for example K, which has part of the Epsilon recension also.[10]

The Lambda recension

A variant of Beta preserved in five MSS: Bodl. Barocc. 23 (O, 14th century, incomplete); Vaticanus 171 (W, 16th century); Bodl. Holkham Gr. 99 (H, 15th century); Ambrosianus O 117 sup. (N, a faithful copy

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[9] Translation: Budge, 1889, based on British Museum Add MS 25, 875 (A.D. 1708), with readings from four other MSS. Van Bladel (2007) casts doubt on Ciancaglini's conclusions.

[10] Edition of Beta: Bergson 1965, with full details of all the MSS.

of H, 16th century); and Bodl misc. 283 (P, 1516). The most substantial additions are in Book III.[11]

L.[12] This is a unique variant of Beta. Its version of the story, written before the eighth century, expands the Beta version with several new adventures, most notably the diving bell and the flying machine. It has therefore been a popular choice for translators.[13]

The next text that should be mentioned is the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius. This pretends to be the work of Methodius, bishop of Patara in A.D. 311, but was, in fact, written in the seventh century, in Syriac and soon translated into Greek; like the slightly earlier seventh-century Syriac works, the Poem of Jacob of Serugh, and the 'Christian legend of Alexander' (Budge, 1889) it is concerned in part with Alexander's enclosure of the Unclean Nations.[14] It presents a history of the world from Adam and Eve to the present, based on the presupposition that the end of the world is imminent: Alexander's role in enclosing the Unclean Nations, who will be released on the coming of Antichrist, is a crucial part of this progression. Because of this, the story was incorporated into subsequent rewritings of the Alexander romance.

Pseudo-Methodius was translated into Greek within twenty years, and into Latin about the same time; the Latin version was then translated into most western languages by 1500, and there are 220 MSS of the European versions.[15]

THE EPSILON RECENSION. *(MS BODL. BAROCC. 17, 13TH CENTURY: Q)*

The importance of this abridged rewriting of the story was only recognised by Jürgen Trumpf who edited it in 1974. Trumpf argued for a

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[11] Edition of Lambda: van Thiel 1959.
[12] Leiden Vulcanius 93, 15th c., Sicily.
[13] Editions: van Thiel, 1983. Translations: van Thiel, 1983 (German); Dowden, 1989 (English); Stoneman, 1991 (English); Centanni, 1991 (Italian); Bonoure and Serret, 1992 (French).
[14] Edition of 'Poem': Reinink, 1983; German translation: Hunnius, 1906.
[15] MS of the Syriac text: Cod. Vat. Syr 58; see further Aerts and Kortekaas, 1998, p. 37. Translations: Reinink, 1993 (German). The only modern English translation is Budge 1889; for the Middle English version, see D'Evelyn, 1918. Of the fifteen Greek MSS, four are fundamental: Cod Vat Gr 1700, Cod. Laud. Gr 27, Pii II Gr. 11, Vindob. Med. 23: see Aerts and Kortekaas, 1998, p. 38. Editions: Aerts and Kortekaas, 1998 (Greek and Latin recensions); Lolos, 1983 (Greek).

seventh-century date, but because the source text for the episode of the Unclean Nations, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius, is now dated around 692, the traditional eighth century date remains likely.

Epsilon narrates this episode in chapter 39, towards the end of its account of Alexander. The other episodes in this version are mostly the same as in the previous ones, but the order is changed so substantially that the text requires a different numbering. The other main additions are a campaign to conquer Rome (ch.13) and a visit to Jerusalem (ch.20) where Alexander is converted to Judaism and subsequently preaches it in Alexandria. This episode is clearly influenced by the milieu of Byzantine Christianity, with its strong interest in Judaism.[16]

The Gamma recension

This is the longest of the Greek recensions. It follows the basic structure of A and Beta but incorporates the new material from Epsilon described above; as a result, the sequence of the narrative becomes quite confusing, and some episodes that are in the first person in the earlier recensions are told in the third person in Gamma. It contains much that is clearly of Jewish origin such as the visit to Jerusalem and the preaching of one god in Alexandria, and some elements also seem to be Christianized, though the main 'theological' elements remain pagan (Sarapis, Amon, Heracles, and Dionysos). III.29 is devoted to the construction of the gate to enclose the Unclean Nations, from Pseudo-Methodius via Epsilon. There is some absurd over-writing, not least the episode after Alexander's death where his horse, Bucephalus, enters the room where Alexander lies, identifies the murderer, and tears him to pieces: "bits of him flew all over everyone like snow falling off a roof in the wind."

There are three MSS: Parisinus suppl. 113 (C: of 1567); Bodl. Barocc. 20 (R: 14th century); and Venice, Hellenic Institute gr. 5 (D; 14th c.), a beautifully illustrated MS whose pictorial tradition probably goes back to late antiquity.[17]

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[16] Edition of Epsilon: Trumpf, 1974.

[17] Editions: Lauenstein, 1962 (bk I); Engelmann, 1963 (Bk II); and Parthe, 1969 (Bk III); Stoneman, 2007 (Book I; II and III forthcoming). Translation: none. Facsimile edition: Trahoulias, 1997.

It is perhaps unfortunate that this recension was the first to be edited, by Carolus Müller in 1846, since that edition established the book and chapter numbering which subsequent editors have perforce followed: this results in some at first sight puzzling jumps from one chapter number to another in the other recensions (e.g. the omission of II.1–6 in Beta, and of III.29 (the Unclean Nations) in all other recensions).

This concludes the survey of the Greek Romance texts which became known to the Latin Middle Ages. In addition, the following Greek text was known:

PALLADIUS, *On the Life of the Brahmans*

This originally independent treatise is a 5th c. Christian rewriting of a Cynic *diatribe* written before the second c. A.D. (the date of the papyrus),[18] with an additional preface describing the adventures of a Theban scholar who is the writer's informant. It was incorporated into the Alpha and Gamma versions of the Romance (III.7–17) because of its similarity in theme to the episode of Alexander's interview with the Brahmans or Naked Philosophers. It describes the way of Life of the Brahmans, and the second part is given over to the teaching of Dandamis, the leader of the philosophers, who tries to turn Alexander from his career of conquest to a life of quietude. There were three Latin translations, one of which was falsely attributed to St Ambrose.[19] It also had a considerable progeny in another Latin text, the *Correspondence of Alexander and Dindimus*, which was known in the eighth century to Alcuin, who sent a copy to Charlemagne.[20]

LATIN TEXTS

The Latin texts surviving from antiquity, which had an influence on writing in the Middle Ages, are as follows:

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[18] Martin, 1959; Photiades, 1959.

[19] A. Wilmart (1933), "Les texts latines de la lettre de Palladius sur les moeurs des Brahmanes," *Revue Benedictine* 45, 29–42, identifies three versions: B, the *Commonitorium*, found in the Bamberg M; this is an abridgement of V, the Vatican MS; the third is S, the text attributed to Ambrose, an arbitrary recension, probably composed by a humanist, in which the character Ambrose replaces the narrator, and Moses replaces the Theban scholar.

[20] Editions: Derrett, 1960; Berghoff, 1987; Stoneman (forthcoming). Translation: Stoneman, 1994e. Literature: Stoneman, 1999a.

The earliest Latin text, though the latest to become known, is the *History of Alexander* by Quintus Curtius Rufus. Written in the early Imperial period (scholarly opinion ranges from the reign of Tiberius to that of Claudius, with a renegade suggestion that it might be as early as Augustus),[21] its first two books are missing; and thus any preface there may have been, which would give some information about the author and his date, is also lost. The narrative as we have it begins with Alexander at Celaenae in Phrygia (333 B.C.). It continues with a chronological account of the rest of the campaign up to Alexander's death. The events of these ten years do not diverge in essentials from the accounts in Arrian (2nd century A.D.) and Diodorus (around 1 B.C.), or any modern textbook, though details may differ between the ancient writers. Curtius, like Diodorus, based much of his account on the history of Cleitarchus, while the later Arrian followed Ptolemy and Aristobulus, whom he regarded as more sober and reliable.[22]

The main distinguishing feature of Curtius's history is its rhetorical color. Stylistically he has much in common with the Augustan historian Livy, in whose pages we find a hostile view of Alexander developing (9.5.21): Alexander would not have been so successful if he had encountered Romans. Curtius enjoys lurid details and, for example, makes Alexander's liaison with the Amazon queen Thalestris (6.6.1–6) the turning point in his moral decline—just as Mark Antony's liaison with the oriental queen Cleopatra had proved his downfall. Pride, tyranny (i.e. cruelty) and drunkenness were the main points of the hostile view of Alexander developed in the Stoic philosophers before and after Curtius, and these are given full rein in Curtius's account. But his final judgment is encomiastic: "It is obvious to anyone who makes a fair assessment of the king that his strengths were attributable to his nature and his weakness to fortune or his youth" (10.5.26–37). A character like this is an epic hero, flawed but magnificent, and this made Curtius's Alexander a suitable subject for epic in the Middle Ages.

But his work was not known until the Middle Ages were well advanced. It survived antiquity by the skin of its teeth: a single incomplete MS of the ninth century is the archetype of all the surviving

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[21] See Stoneman, 1999a.

[22] For a complete narrative of the important events in Alexander's life by the four ancient writers, see J. Romm (ed. and trans.) and P. Mensch (trans.), *Alexander the Great: Selections from Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Quintus Curtius* (Indianapolis, 2005).

123 MSS.[23] Three of the MSS were interpolated with additional material to fill the gap, and this must have been done before the twelfth century when Walter of Chatillon made it the basis of his epic poem *Alexandreis*.

ITINERARIUM ALEXANDRI

This is a broadly historical work based on Arrian's authoritative history, but it also makes use of Julius Valerius's *Res Gestae*. It can be dated to 340–345 since it is addressed to Constantius on the eve of his departure for an eastern campaign. It survives in one MS in the Ambrosiana in Milan. It was, in turn, used by the author of one MS of the *Res Gestae* (Parisinus 4880), so it is possible that both it and the variant version of the *Res Gestae* are also by Julius Valerius.[24] It survives in a single MS in Milan (Ambrosiana P 49 Sup.) plus a couple of fragments, and is unlikely to have been widely known in the Middle Ages.[25]

The texts relating to the Romance tradition were however familiar in the early Middle Ages and consequently exercised a far wider influence on medieval literature.

THE METZ EPITOME

In the fourth or fifth century a breviary of Alexander's career was made. This probably derived ultimately from Clitarchus, one of the earliest Alexander historians, and was combined with a separate work known as the *Liber de Morte Alexandri Testamentoque Eius*, and preserved in a single MS in Metz, hence known as the Metz epitome (MS Mettensis 500). This MS was destroyed by fire following a bombing raid on Metz in World War II, but fortunately two copies (apographs) had been made and published by the scholars Dietrich Volkmann (1886) and Otto Wagner (1901), as well as a third, by the French scholar Quicherat, which was not published, but which was discovered in the 1960s in the Bibliotheque Nationale. The epitome contains some historical information not known from elsewhere, such as the death in infancy

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[23] Baynham, 1998, pp. 2–3.
[24] As argued by Romano, 1974 and Lane Fox, 1997.
[25] Edition: Tabacco, 2000.

of a son born to Roxane in the far east. The *Liber de Morte* is a Latin version of a lost Greek original which also provided the substance of Book II.31–33 of the Greek *Romance*.[26]

The last writer of antiquity to write at any length about Alexander, and the first to use the Romance,[27] is Fulgentius in his *De aetatibus mundi et hominis* of the late fifth century. Fulgentius drew most of his information from some version of the Romance, and tells the Nectanebus story as well as that of Candace and the wonderstone—but not the episodes of the diving bell, the flying machine or the unclean nations, which must have entered the romance tradition after this date.[28] Fulgentius's other works were quite well known in the Middle Ages, with numerous MSS existing from the ninth century onwards; but the *De Aetatibus* (which is possibly by a different Fulgentius) is known in only two MSS from the 12th and 13th centuries. By contrast, Orosius, Otto of Freising's main source, survives in about 250 MSS, indicating a much wider distribution in the Dark Ages of the sixth to tenth centuries.[29]

In the eighth century the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister incorporated several of the stories from the Romance: the encounter of Alexander with the Unclean Nations, Gog and Magog; his construction of a diving bell; as well as information about the monstrous races and strange beasts of India, and the Amazons, without specific reference to Alexander. He also mentions the supposed location of the Garden of Eden or Earthly Paradise in India. (According to a Talmudic story which entered the Latin tradition in the twelfth century, Alexander was supposed to have visited there). Aethicus is the pseudonym of an Irish cleric, Virgil (i.e. Fergal) of Salzburg, who attributed his work to a pseudonym in order to deflect criticism of his heretical ideas. His cosmographical ideas led him to fall foul of Pope Zacharias, as we know from the latter's letter to St Boniface:[30] "as to the foolish

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[26] Edition: Thomas, 1966 (2nd edition). Concerning the *Liber de Morte*, see literature: Cary, 1956, pp. 59 and 355–357; Ruggini, 1961; Heckel, 1988; Baynham, 1995.

[27] Except, of course, its translator, Julius Valerius.

[28] Stöcker, 1979.

[29] An Old English translation of Orosius is attributed, with little plausibility, to King Alfred (ed. H. Sweet, 1889, EETS 79). The Middle Irish *Alexander*, belonging possibly to the eleventh century, derives mainly from Orosius, with the addition of some material from the *Letter to Aristotle* and the *Collatio*. See Meyer, 1949. For the text of the Middle Irish work, with German translation, see Stokes and Windisch, 1887; another German translation in Peters, 1967.

[30] Letter LXIV (80), p. 121 in E. Emerton's translation of the Letters (Emerton, 2000).

and sinful doctrine which he teaches: if it should be made clear that he believes there is below this earth another world and other men, and also a sun and moon, then summon a council, depose him from the office of priest, and cast him out of the church." Virgil/Aethicus's heresy consisted in believing that the world is a sphere and that there were Antipodes where the monstrous races dwelt, outside our world and thus outside God's plan of salvation.[31]

The Zacher Epitome of Julius Valerius

Made not later than the ninth century and known as the Zacher Epitome from its first editor. MSS: Hagensis 830 (9th c.), and 65 others: Cary, 1956, p. 25, n. 2. It is drastically abridged and seems to have been designed as a prologue for the *Letter to Aristotle* with which it often appears together. It provides the main source for Thomas of Kent and Vincent of Beauvais, and was translated into French in the 14th century. There were two other similar epitomes (Oxford-Montpellier and Liegnitz-Historia),[32] but from the 12th century onwards the popularity of these was eclipsed by the *Historia de Preliis*.[33]

The *Letter to Aristotle* about India

The Greek original of this is lost though it is preserved in abridged or truncated form in all the Greek versions of the Romance. The first Latin translation belongs to the seventh century (or earlier); a second was made, into a Latin which is already becoming Italian, in the tenth century. It purports to be written by Alexander and to describe his adventures after the conquest of Porus. It is thus the source for most of the wonder stories so familiar in the tradition. In the later Greek recensions (Epsilon and Gamma), the contents are told in the third person as part of the continuous narrative of the Romance, which causes some dislocation of the chronological relations.

The *Letter to Aristotle* resists summary for it is too long and colorful, but the following is a brief outline. It starts with the conquest of Porus in July 326 B.C., and a description of the palace of Porus. Alexander

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[31]   Edition of Aethicus: Prinz, 1993.
[32]   Both in Hilka (ed.), 1911.
[33]   Edition: Zacher, 1867. See Cary, 1956, pp. 24–26.

then advances to the Caspian Gates (see below for discussion of the geography) and proceeds through sandy wastes of extreme danger, led by unreliable guides. The river they discover is bitter and undrinkable, but eventually they observe an island in the river inhabited by Indians in a castle built of reeds. Alexander sends some of his soldiers to swim to the island, but hippopotamuses emerge from the water ('they are called hippopotamuses because they are half men and half horses') and devour the men. So Alexander has the guides thrown into the river where they too are devoured by the beasts, which "swarm like ants." Presently, some Indians in a boat appear and guide them to a lake of sweet water. But when the army has pitched camp, they have to endure a 'Night of Terrors.'[34] First there are huge serpents and giant crabs; next to arrive are white lions, bigger than bulls, followed by giant pigs and huge bats with human teeth. Biggest of the lot is "a beast larger than an elephant, with three horns on its forehead. In the Indian language it was called Odontotyrannus or Tooth-tyrant. It looked a bit like a horse and its head was black." It kills several dozen Macedonians before they overcome it. Before dawn arrives they have to face shrews the size of foxes and bright red vultures with black beaks. It is a relief to be able to strike camp, tired as they are, and march onwards.

The letter continues with the campaign against Porus and his elephants, storms, and a visit to a cave where "Father Liber lies sleeping." The expedition visits the oracular trees of the sun and moon, which predict Alexander's early death, the valley of serpents which have emeralds in their necks, and more strange peoples. The letter concludes with Alexander erecting two golden statues, 25 feet high, in Babylon and Persis, bearing an account of all his deeds.

There are 67 MSS of the Latin text in European libraries, dating from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, and a further five in the USA. This was the first 'fabulous' Alexander text to be translated into a medieval western language:[35] the translation into Old English forms part of the unique codex (British Library Cotton Vitellius A XV), which also contains *Beowulf* and *The Wonders of the East*, suggesting perhaps that the scribe, or patron, was interested in monsters).[36]

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[34] The episode is borrowed by Umberto Eco, *Baudolino*, 2002, pp. 341ff.

[35] The Irish Romance is not an exception to this generalization as it is not based on the romance tradition but on Quintus Curtius (Meyer, 1949; Peters, 1967).

[36] For monsters, see Sisam, 1953; Tolkien, 1983. Editions: Boer, 1973; Feldbusch, 1976. For the Middle English translation: DiMarco and Perelman, 1978. Translation:

The Letter of Pharasmanes (On the Wonders of the East)

This purports to be a letter from Pharasmanes, the King of Iberia (modern Georgia) to the Emperor Hadrian. The historical Pharasmanes, King of Chorasmia in Central Asia, had sent ambassadors to Alexander offering to lead him to the land of the Amazons;[37] so his name came to be attached to this account of eastern wonders, which in one MS brings in Alexander. But this is not strictly an Alexander text as the king does not feature in most of the widely varying versions. It draws on earlier lore including the *Memorabilia* of Solinus, the *Letter to Aristotle*, the *Etymologies* of Isidore and Augustine's *City of God*, describing the strange races including the pygmies, the Sciapodes and the Dog-heads.

The earliest MS is of the 8th century, but material from it was also used in the anonymous *Liber Monstrorum*,[38] which was composed in the seventh or eight century, so the Latin version must be some time earlier than that; furthermore, the Latin derives from a lost Greek original of uncertain date. Because *Pharasmanes* supplemented the Alexander texts so nicely, it was pressed into service in the composition of the later versions of the *Historia de Preliis* (see below).[39]

This was one of the small number of sources known to Otto of Freising when he wrote his *Two Cities* in 1147. In writing his pages on Alexander his aim was to write credible sober history, but he was hampered by the limited sources available. Apart from a couple of allusions in Cicero and the brief account of Orosius (which he follows closely in some portions of his history),[40] the main lines of his account follow the narrative given in the Alexander romance.[41] He tells several stories known from the Gamma recension of the Greek *Romance*: the visit to Jerusalem, the preaching in Alexandria, the single combat with Porus, as well as the visit to the oracular trees and the poisoning (common

[37] Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.15.4.

[38] Ed. F. Porsia (Bari, 1976).

[39] Edition: Lecouteux, 1979.

[40] The contemporary John of Salisbury (1115–1180) likewise drew mainly on Cicero (possibly via Augustine, but probably direct) for his allusions to Alexander: Cary, 1956, p. 95.

[41] It is certain that he did not use Orosius alone, since he knows the story that Alexander was the son of Nectanebus, which is not in Orosius.

to all recensions). He also knew the *Letter to Aristotle*, as the following passage makes clear:

> If anyone desires to know about Porus's golden house and the silver-and-gold vine with clusters of grapes made of precious stones, let him read the letter of Alexander to his teacher, Aristotle the philosopher. Therein the careful student of events will find the perils he endured, and the images of the sun and moon that foretold his death, and many matters so strange that they seem actually beyond belief.

Such skepticism befits one of the founders of modern historiography, but it shows vividly what kind of material a writer in the twelfth century had to work with.

But the following work, which marks the turning point of knowledge of Alexander in the Middle Ages, was beyond his ken. With the work of Leo the Archpriest we come to the text which was the fountainhead of almost all the Alexander books of the Middle Ages.

Leo the Archpriest

In the tenth century a cleric named Leo was sent by the Duke of Naples on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople. He brought back a MS of the Greek Romance (perhaps A) and made a new translation in unawareness of the earlier version by Julius Valerius. This translation ended up in the cathedral library at Bamberg, founded by the Emperor Henry II in 1007 (Bambergensis E.111.4, circa 1000): presumably he brought it back from his campaigns in Southern Italy along with many others. This MS also contains the *Commonitorium Palladii;* Palladius on the Brahmans; the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo* and the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle about India.* There is a second, partial copy of Leo in Lambeth Palace Library, MS 342. The scribe had clearly made a compilation of Alexander works for the Bamberg library. Leo's version of the Romance does not correspond exactly to any of the known Greek recensions, though it is close to the Alpha recension as known from the Syriac. It is evident that the Greek work was still being copied and adapted in Byzantium when Leo went there, though in Byzantium it was Epsilon that was to become the dominant influence.[42] This work,

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[42] Leo does not include the text of Palladius which forms chpts. III. 7–16 in A. But, like Beta, it stops halfway through Book II. The letter to Aristotle is given in the first person as in A and Beta. The story of the diving bell and the flying machine appears,

through its successive rewritings as the *Historia de Preliis*, is the foun-
dation stone of the whole medieval European tradition.[43]

Somehow Leo's work became well known, and three expanded ver-
sions of Leo's work were made in the course of the twelfth century.

The *Historia de Preliis*

The oldest MS of this work is Bodleian Rawlinson B 149 and bears
the title *Liber Alexandria Philippi Macedonum qui primus regnavit in
Grecia et de proeliis eiusdem*, hence its usual designation as *Historia de
Preliis* or *HP*. There are three recensions:

HP J[1], before A.D. 1100. This is a combination of Leo's text with
elements from Josephus, Jerome, Orosius, Solinus, Isidore, the Letter
of Pharasmanes, the Indian treatises and the Letter to Aristotle.

MSS: Graz, Universitätsbibliothek MS 1520 (12th c.), Innsbruck
Universitätsbibliothek 525 (A.D. 1304); Editio princeps Cologne (ca.
1471); two Dutch editions probably from Utrecht (ca. 1475).[44]

HP J[2], The 'Orosius recension', so-called because of its heavy use
of Orosius. It also borrows material from Valerius Maximus, Pseudo-
Methodius, Josephus (the visit to Jerusalem), Pseudo-Epiphanius *de
Gemmis* and the Indian works. It was the source of the Old French
Prose Alexander[45] and of two Middle English poems.[46]

HP J[3], completed by 1236 when it became the basis of the Latin
verse version by Quilichinus of Spoleto. It is a reworked version of J[1]
and also includes the episode of the Sages at the Tomb of Alexander.
There are very many MSS and it was printed at Strassburg in 1486,
1489, and 1494.[47]

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but in the first person, in the course of the Letter to Olympias (III. 27–29), not as part
of the narrative as in the Greek version of L. The story of the trees of the sun and
moon does not appear.

[43] Editions: of Leo: Pfister, 1913 (Bamberg MS); Ross (Lambeth MS). For the other
works in the Bamberg MS: Pfister, 1910. Translation: Stoneman, 1994a (of the minor
works, not Leo). Kratz, 1991 includes translation of Leo.

[44] Edition of J[1]: Hilka and Steffens, 1979. English Translations Pritchard, 1992;
Kratz, 1991 (with portions of J[2] and J[3], the Letter to Aristotle, the Journey to Paradise
and Leo).

[45] See Hilka, 1920.

[46] Edition of J[2]: Hilka, Bergmeister, and Grossman, 1976–77.German translation:
Kirsch, 1991, with miniatures taken from the Leipzig MS.

[47] Editions of J[3]: Kirsch, 1971 (with Quilichinus); Steffens, 1975. Synoptic edition of
all three recensions (books I–II only); Bergmeister, 1975.

The third recension was the one that became best known, and was the source of an enormous number of translations into the vernacular languages of Europe, not least the verse reworking by Quilichinus of Spoleto, whose date of 1236 provides a terminus ante quem for its creation. Not only are there numerous MSS, but it was printed several times from 1471 onwards. (It should be noted that all of these recensions draw on Latin sources for their elaborations of the original: there was no further use of Greek after Leo's initial, one might say epochal, act of translation).

During the next three centuries the Romance would be translated more frequently than any other work except the Gospels. The figure of Alexander would be incorporated into Arthurian legend and into sacred scripture and he would take his place in the *Universal Histories* of Vincent of Beauvais, Peter Comestor, Alphonse X the Wise and Ranulph Higden. He would become an example for moralists and theologians and a vehicle of the scientific knowledge of the age, a model for kings and emperors and an emblem of the life of man equal, sometimes, even to Christ.

QUILICHINUS OF SPOLETO

Quilichinus, who was connected with the court of Frederick II, wrote a Latin poem of 3914 lines in elegiac couplets about the career of Alexander: it is based on the J³ version of the *HP*. He may have been inspired to compose his poem by the Emperor's known interest in Alexander's career. Not only did the king like to be compared with Alexander,[48] but his court astrologer, Master Theodore of Antioch, who had been sent to Frederick some time before 1236 by the Sultan of Egypt, had received from his oriental contacts a mythical account of Alexander's conquests as well as other romance material.[49] This was perhaps the source of the third recension of the Latin *HP*, which formed the basis of Quilichinus's poem.

The final Latin version that needs to be mentioned is the one that formed the basis for Johan Hartlieb's German *Alexander* of ca. 1444.[50]

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[48] Kantorowicz, 1931.
[49] Haskins, 1927, p. 254.
[50] Besides the 19 MSS of Hartlieb, there were 18 printings from 1472–1670. It was used as a source by Hans Sachs and was translated into Danish in 1584.

This is the Latin *Liber Alexandri Magni,* preserved in a unique MS in Paris, BN n.a.l. 310. This MS dates from the second half of the twelfth century, the age when the outlines of the Alexander tradition were still being forged. Its author set out to create a compendious account of all the available versions of the story, using Leo, the *Epitome* of Julius Valerius, Orosius, Peter Comestor, both the *Collatio* and the *Correspondence* for the Brahmans episode, and the *Letter to Aristotle.* One result of this is some repetition: the episode with the Brahmans occurs twice, introducing them first as gymnosophists (1147ff) and then as Brahmans (1349ff). Some other MSS of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries similarly contain compendia of Alexander texts,[51] but none attempts to weld them into a single narrative as this author does.

Alexander's Journey to Paradise

This 12th-century Latin text is perhaps the work of a Jewish author, as it derives from the Talmudic story, and the story was therefore current by about A.D. 500. The Latin version was composed before 1175, when it was incorporated in the German Alexander poem of Pfaffe Lamprecht, also known as the Strassburg Alexander. It describes Alexander's voyage up the Ganges and arrival at a building with high mossy walls. An old man looks out and gives Alexander's messengers a stone resembling a human eye. Alexander takes this back to Susa, where an aged Jew interprets its meaning by placing it on a set of scales: it outweighs all the gold that can be piled on to the other pan of the scale, but a handful of dust easily outweighs it. Like the eye of man, it is never satiated by gold, but instantly overwhelmed by the dust that covers it in death. This parable encapsulates the moral that Alexander brought, above all, to the Middle Ages: limitless conquest does not provide an escape from death.[52]

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[51] Montpellier H 31 (13th c.); Bamberg MS Hist 3 (13th c.); Madrid 9783 (mid 13th c.). See Schnell's (1989) edition of the *Liber*, and pp. 31–32 on these MSS.

[52] Text: Hilka, 1935. English translation: Stoneman, 1994a. It forms an important episode of Gilbert Hay's *Buik of Alexander* (1460), which is derived from the *Historia de Preliis*.

CHAPTER TWO

ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN MEDIEVAL HEBREW TRADITIONS

Saskia Dönitz

Of all non-Jewish material that entered Jewish tradition, the story of Alexander the Great more than any other found its way into Hebrew literature. Alexander "as a gentile king and exemplary world conqueror who journeyed to places beyond human imagination"[1] captured the imagination of Jewish authors since Antiquity.

The medieval Jewish Alexander tradition as well as other material in Hebrew literature was translated from Greek (sometimes via Arabic). This translation activity began in Late Antiquity and continued to flourish during the Middle Ages.[2] Narratives and texts of philosophy, science, medicine, astrology, and astronomy found their way into the Hebrew tradition by means of translations from Greek and Arabic. Beside the Alexander romance, the *Tales of Sendebar, Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, the *Thousand and One Nights*, and the legend concerning the famous king Arthur were translated into Hebrew. These texts were meant to amuse and to instruct in moral matters. Thus, the medieval Hebrew Alexander romance belongs to the genre of medieval Hebrew didactic literature.

The tradition about Alexander in Jewish literature is very old. We find accounts of his life in the Bible, in the works of Flavius Josephus, and in rabbinical literature. In the Book of Daniel 8:20–22 he is not mentioned by name, but his coming into power as well as his decline is foreseen in these verses.[3] Thus, the rule of Alexander was adapted into the concept of the four empires in the Danielic vision. Alexander the Great became part of God's plan for the salvation of the Jewish people.

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[1] W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance According to MS London, Jews' College no. 145* (Louvain, 1992), p. 12.
[2] See M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin, 1893; reprint Gratz, 1956).
[3] See also Dan 8:5 and 11:4.

A clearly negative view of the Greek ruler is expressed in the First Book of Maccabees: "Alexander of Macedon, the son of Philip, marched from the Land of Kittim, defeated Darius, King of Persia and Media, and seized his throne, being already King of Greece. In the course of many campaigns he captured fortified towns, slaughtered kings, traversed the earth to its remotest bounds, and plundered innumerable nations. When at last the world lay quiet under his rule, his pride knew no limits" (I Macc 1:1–3).

This is the beginning of the First Book of Maccabees, which tells the story of the Jewish rebellion against the wicked Greek king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who tried to eliminate the Jewish religion. Already in the Book of Daniel there are parallels in the description of Alexander and Antiochus.[4] Thus, a direct line is drawn from Alexander to Antiochus, and Greek rule is clearly seen as hostile to the Jews. Similar negative views on Alexander are found in the Sibylline Oracles (3:381–392; 4: 88–94). He is described as a greedy conqueror bringing the end to several empires, especially characterized by his hubris, vanity, and pride. This view changes with Flavius Josephus's description of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem in Antiquitates 11.317–345.[5] The fictional visit is placed in the context of the discussions between the Samaritans and the Jews about the legitimacy of the temple on Mount Garizim.[6] Alexander supported the Jews. He even prostrated himself before the high priest of Jerusalem and sacrificed to the Jewish God. Finally, the high priest showed Alexander the Book of Daniel in which the prophecy concerning his victory over Darius is written. Josephus changed the negative biblical view into a positive conception of Alexander the Great. The king recognized the power of the Jewish God and granted the Jews the right to keep their own laws. In Contra Apionem 2.35 Alexander is said to have given civil rights and religious freedom to the Jews of Alexandria. In Josephus's works, the

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[4] U. Rappaport, *The First Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Hebrew Translation, and Commentary* (Jerusalem, 2004), commentary to I Macc 1:3, p. 94 (Hebrew); see Dan 8:4 and Dan 11:36.

[5] For more references to Alexander in Josephus's writings see Antiquitates 2.347.

[6] A. Momigliano, "Flavius Josephus und Alexanders Besuch in Jerusalem," in A. Momigliano (ed.), *Die Juden in der Alten Welt*, (Berlin, 1992), pp. 57–66.

Greek ruler Alexander is described as a supporter and friend of the Jews.[7]

Rabbinic literature shows an ambivalent attitude towards Alexander. The parallels to the story of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem also emphasize Alexander's favorable attitude toward the Jews in the conflict with the Samaritans.[8] The historical context however is lost. The name of the high priest in the Talmud is Simon the Just, referring to two historical high priests who actually served after Alexander's time, whereas in Josephus it is Jaddus (Jaddua) who was high priest during the rule of Alexander. The rabbinic versions seem to be independent from Josephus, maybe both stem from a common oral source. Two other versions tell the story of a meeting between Alexander and Gabiah, son of Qosem, at the temple in Jerusalem.[9] The idea conveyed here is that even a great ruler like Alexander is not allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple. On another occasion, these texts depict Alexander as a Solomonic judge who listens to the discussion between Jews and Ishmaelites, Canaanites and Egyptians. It is again Gabiah, son of Qosem (in the Talmud he is called Gabiah, son of Pesisa) who represents the Jewish side.[10]

Tractate Tamid, 31b–32b, in the Babylonian Talmud narrates four episodes about Alexander the Great. First, Alexander holds a dialogue with the elders of the south concerning several philosophical questions. Alexander is described as a typical Greek philosopher. The "elders of the south" are identified with the Brahmans.[11] The *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (*PC*) gives a different version of the dialogue between Alexander and

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[7] R. Stoneman, "Jewish Traditions on Alexander the Great," *Studia Philonica Annual* 6 (1994), pp. 49–52. For more discussion about Alexander and the Jews see R. Marcus, "Alexander the Great and the Jews," in R. Marcus (ed.), *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities: Books XIX–XI*, (Cambridge Mass., London, 1937; reprint 1995), pp. 512–532; S.J. Cohen, "Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest according to Josephus," *AJS Review* 7–8 (1982/83), pp. 41–68; C.T. Fletcher-Louis, "Alexander the Great's Worship of the High Priest," in L.T. Stuckenbruck and W.E.S. North (eds.), *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, (London, New York, 2004), pp. 71–102.

[8] Babylonian Talmud, tractate Yoma 69a. See also the medieval scholium to Megillat Taanit, chapter 9.

[9] Genesis Rabbah 61.7, and the medieval scholium to Megillat Taanit, chapter 3.

[10] Babylonian Talmud, tractate Sanhedrin 91a; Genesis Rabbah 61.7 and the medieval scholium to Megillat Taanit, chapter 3.

[11] Already Plutarch mentions Alexander's meeting with the Gymnosophists of India; see Plutarch, Lives 4.241–242.

the wise men of India (Book 3.6).[12] Second, Alexander travels into the Land of Darkness. The third story refers to Alexander meeting the Amazons. In the last part, Alexander arrives at the gate of the Garden of Eden and is given an eyeball symbolizing the human being that is never satisfied (Prov 20:27).[13] The message of all the stories in the tractate Tamid seems to be that Alexander tries to push the limits of human capability by traveling to forbidden places on earth and is reminded of his hubris and mortality.

More accounts of Alexander's experiences are found in rabbinic literature. The Palestinian Talmud mentions Alexander's ascent into the sky as an example that only God rules over land and sea.[14] Alexander tries to explore the depths of the ocean with a diving bell, a story that Midrashic sources tell about Hadrian.[15] It is also found in Arab history books as well as in the Latin *Cosmographia* by Aethicus Ister (8th century), and in the Latin translation of Leo the Archpriest, the German *Annolied* (11th–12th century), and the Old French Prose Alexander (12th century). The relation of this motif in the Latin, German, French and Midrashic versions is still under discussion.[16] Both stories demonstrate Alexander's hubris and his arrival at the limits of human power.[17]

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[12] I. Lévi, "La Légende d'Alexandre dans le Talmud," *REJ* 2 (1881), p. 293; I. Lévi, "La Légende d'Alexandre dans le Talmud et le Midrash," *REJ* 7 (1883), p. 78; L. Wallach, "Alexander the Great and the Indian Gymnosophists in Jewish Tradition," *PAAJR* 11 (1941), pp. 48–52; compare now S. Bowman, "Alexander and the Mysteries of India," *Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies* 2 (1999), pp. 71–111.

[13] See *PC*, Book 2.39; the question about the relation between the Talmud and *PC* is answered with a common source. Lévi argues that the story about Alexander's arrival at the Gate of the Garden of Eden is of Jewish origin stemming from a text that is anterior to the Talmud; see I. Lévi, La Légende (1881), 293–300. In the twelfth century it is elaborated in the Latin *Alexandri Magni Iter ad Paradisum*; see Stoneman's Introduction to this book, and R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*, pp. 164–169 as well as pp. 218–226. Whether or not the author of this Latin text indeed was Jewish needs further discussion; see W.J. van Bekkum, "Alexander the Great in Medieval Hebrew Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986), 218–226.

[14] Palestinian Talmud, tractate Avodah Zarah 3:1 (42c); similar stories are found in Numeri Rabbah 13.14; Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 11.

[15] Yalqut Shimoni, Ps. 93; Midrash Psalms 93:6.

[16] F. Pfister, "Alexander der Große und die Würzburger Kiliansfahne," in F. Pfister (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman,* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), pp. 292–295, R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven, Conn., 2008), pp. 112–114.

[17] The story of Alexander's flying machine is one of the most widespread motives in iconography; see I. Michael, *Alexander's Flying Machine: the History of a Legend*

Also in the Palestinian Talmud, Alexander's greed for gold is evoked: he visits King Katzia and listens to his decision concerning a dunghill that is sold containing a treasure not known to its former owner. In the course of the narration Alexander is shown the worthlessness of the love of gold.[18] Two more stories are told in later midrashic literature about Alexander bringing important Jewish relics to Egypt. In the Targum Sheni to Esther Alexander removed the throne of Solomon from Babylonia to Egypt.[19] In Midrash Aggadah he buried the bones of the prophet Jeremiah in Alexandria.[20]

In sum, it seems as if the Rabbis included the narratives of Alexander into their teachings because, on the one hand, they wanted to show the greatness and wisdom of a Greek ruler who supported the Jews. Moreover, he was an exemplary king and conqueror. On the other hand, Alexander's journeys served as illustrations for moral lessons: even to a king like Alexander the Great the limits of power and mortality are shown.

Several versions of the Greek *PC* include anecdotes and stories parallel to those in the rabbinic sources. Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, the story about the bones of Jeremiah, his meeting with the Amazon women, his journeys into the Land of Darkness and to paradise as well as the flying machine and the diving bell are found in manuscripts of recension γ of the *PC* written in the eighth century (in the letter concerning the wonders of India in Book 2.23–44; Alexander's meeting with the Amazons is told in Book 3.25–26).[21] In the foundation story of Alexandria Alexander proclaims monotheism and dismisses the pagan religions.[22] The text in the *PC* is very elaborate, while in the Talmud the stories are short. Therefore it was supposed that recension

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(Southampton, 1974); F. Pfister, "Alexander der Große in der bildenden Kunst," in F. Pfister (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman*, (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), pp. 165–172; R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*, pp. 114–120.

[18] Palestinian Talmud, tractate Bava Metziah 2:5 (8c); see also the versions in Genesis Rabbah 33.1; Leviticus Rabbah 27.1; Pesiqta de Rav Kahana 9.24; Midrash Tanhuma, Emor 6; Yalqut Shimoni, Ps 36, section 727; I.J. Kazis, *The Book of the Gests of Alexander of Macedon* (Cambridge Mass., 1962), pp. 20–23.

[19] Targum Sheni 1.2.

[20] Midrash Aggadah II, Numeri 30.15 (ed. Buber, Vienna, 1894), p. 157. This story has a parallel in Ps-Epiphanius' Vitae Prophetarum; see Kazis, *The Book of Gests of Alexander*, p. 24; R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*, pp. 57ff.

[21] R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans: Zweite neubearbeitete Auflage unter Mitwirkung von Jürgen Trumpf* (München, 1977), pp. 132–138; see Stoneman's Introduction to this book.

[22] *PC*, recension ε 2.24; recension γ 2.28.

γ, or at least the section in Book 2.23–44, was written by a Jewish author who worked the stories into the *PC* by extending the motifs of the Talmud.[23] But since the discovery of recension ε, which also has these motifs, this view is no longer held, because it was shown that the redactor of recension ε formed the text on the model of Christian hagiography.[24] Yet, the problem of the relationship between the Greek romance and the rabbinic sources will remain difficult to answer.

Medieval Alexander Traditions

The medieval Hebrew traditions show a broad interest in the life and deeds of Alexander. As a gentile king, a world conqueror, and a traveler to fantastic places in heaven as well as on earth, he occupies a special position in Hebrew literature. His personality is described in various ways. On the one hand, his wisdom and justice as well as his friendliness toward the Jews is emphasized. On the other, he is depicted as a proud and greedy conqueror of far away countries. While the rabbinic stories tend to reveal a moralizing intention, some of the medieval versions show a special interest in the marvelous places and fantastic figures that Alexander encounters during his extensive journeys.

It is possible to divide the medieval texts on Alexander into groups. First, there are the exegetical texts which continue the rabbinic discussions.[25] Since their relevance was discussed in the first part of this essay we will not pursue them here. The second group contributes traditions representing Alexander as a Greek philosopher. The Hebrew translation of Hunayn Ibn Ishaq's *Book of the Sayings of the Philosophers* by the Spanish poet and translator Judah al-Harizi [Heb. Sefer Musere

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[23] A. Ausfeld, *Der griechische Alexanderroman* (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 8–23; F. Pfister, "Eine Gründungsgeschichte Alexandrias und Alexanders Besuch in Jerusalem," *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 11. Abhandlung* (1914), pp. 17–19; 30–32; see summary in I.J. Kazis, *The Book of Gests of Alexander*, p. 3, 17f. Lévi thought that either the talmudic stories derive from *PC* or both from a common source; cf. I. Lévi, La Légende (1881), pp. 293–300; I. Lévi, La Légende (1883), pp. 78–93.

[24] J. Trumpf, *Anonymi Byzantini Vita Alexandri regis Macedonum (Alexandri Magni)* (Stuttgart, 1974); W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, p. 14. The narrations of the diving bell and the flying machine even appear in recension λ; for a detailed analysis see R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans*, pp. 132–138.

[25] Yalqut Shimoni on Ps 93, section 848; Yalqut Shimoni on I Kg 18, section 211; Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 11, 28b–29a; Midrash Tanhumah, Emor 6.

ha-Philosophim] in the 13th century belongs to this group.[26] It contains apothegms and contemplations of life. Even more popular was the Hebrew translation of the Arabic *Secret of the Secrets* [Heb. *Sefer Sod ha-Sodot*], which functions as a *Fürstenspiegel* dealing with the art of government as handed down from Aristotle to Alexander. It was also attributed to Judah al-Harizi, because it was often transmitted together with the *Book of the Sayings of the Philosophers* and because of similarities in style and language.[27]

Third, there are translations of the Greek Alexander romance. We can distinguish four different types of translations: The first (type 1) is represented by three manuscripts of an Alexander romance based on different recensions of the Greek *PC* and its medieval Latin or Arabic translations. Closely related texts were integrated as interpolations into the medieval Hebrew paraphrase of Flavius Josephus, the so called "Sefer Yosippon" [Book of Yosippon]. A second version (type 2) was written by Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfils in France. The third medieval Hebrew Alexander romance concentrates on the fantastic and legendary aspects of the story and is transmitted in the large collection of Hebrew narratives called "Sefer ha-Zikhronot" [Book of Memories] compiled by Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi and in two more manuscripts (type 3). The fourth version (type 4) is only transmitted in two fragments that were recycled as book bindings.[28] In the following, we will focus on these translations of the Greek Alexander romance.

I. *Authorship, Dating and Sources*

Manuscripts Parma 2457, London 145 and Paris 657 contain translations of the Alexander romance into Hebrew belonging to type 1. MS Parma 2457 was translated from the Greek; the *Vorlage* of the anonymous

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[26] A. Loewenthal (ed.), *Honein Ibn Ishak: Sinnsprüche der Philosophen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1896); M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen*, pp. 248–253.

[27] M. Gaster, "The Hebrew version of *Secretum Secretorum*," in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology. Collected and Reprinted by Moses Gaster,* vol. 1 (New York, 1971), pp. 246–278; M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen*, pp. 245–259; I.J. Kazis, *The Book of Gests of Alexander*, pp. 37–39. While Gaster argues in favor of al-Harizi, Steinschneider rejects the view that he translated this text.

[28] E. Yassif, "Hebrew Traditions about Alexander the Great: Narrative Models and their Meaning in the Middle Ages." *Tarbiz* 75 (2006), pp. 359–407 (Hebrew).

translator was recension β of the *PC*.[29] The manuscript presents a shortened version of the Alexander romance. The final pages contain a chronicle which enumerates the kings that ruled after Alexander until the emperor Augustus, probably citing from Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon*.[30] Then the scribe copied the end of a text that dealt with the rites of the Brahmans—Palladius's text was possibly the source—as well as an excerpt of the story about Alexander's arrival at the Garden of Eden told in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Tamid 32a.

Manuscripts of the *Book of Yosippon* contain two interpolations about Alexander's life (Interpolations A and B). There was a lively discussion concerning the question whether MS Parma 2457 was the source for Interpolation A inserted into the *Book of Yosippon* or whether it was an excerpt from the book.[31] The fact that MS Parma 2457 is more complete than the text of the Interpolation may be an argument in favor of Flusser who states that the source for Interpolation A in the *Book of Yosippon* was the Parma manuscript. If this is the case, it must have been written before the 12th century, because a recension of the *Book of Yosippon* including Interpolation A was known by this time. Flusser assumes that MS Parma 2457 was written in southern Italy in the 10th or 11th century.[32]

The version of Alexander's life in MS London 145 and MS Paris 657 goes back to an Arabic translation of the J[2] recension of the *Historia de preliis* (*HP*), probably made in Spain. This can be shown by Arabic terms and names that were left in their Arabic form in the Hebrew text.[33] A terminus post quem for the Arabic translation can be derived from the fact that the J[2] recension was composed in the 12th century.[34]

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[29] D. Flusser, *The Josippon [Josephus Gorionides]: Edited with Introduction, Commentary and Notes* (Jerusalem, 1980–81), vol. 2, pp. 237–241 (Hebrew); D. Flusser, "An 'Alexander-Geste' in a Parma MS," *Tarbiz* 26 (1956–57), pp. 165–184 (Hebrew).

[30] This chronicle is also integrated into the *Book of Yosippon* as well as into Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfils' text.

[31] M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen*, pp. 490ff.; D. Flusser, *The Josippon*, vol. 2, pp. 229–231.

[32] D. Flusser, *The Josippon*, vol. 2, pp. 232–236; see also my forthcoming Ph.D. on Sefer Yosippon.

[33] W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, pp. 30–34.

[34] A shortened version of this text entered the *Book of Yosippon* described as Interpolation B; see W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, p. 17.

In the colophon of MS London 145, Samuel ben Judah Ibn Tib-
bon (1150–1230), the famous translator of Maimonides works into
Hebrew, is mentioned as a copyist of the text.[35] Since MS London 145
was a source for the reworking of the interpolations about Alexander
in recension C of the *Book of Yosippon* which was dated before 1160,
Samuel Ibn Tibbon's authorship was highly disputed.[36] Yet, recent
research has shown that recension C of the *Book of Yosippon* was
probably composed only in the 14th century. Thus, it actually could
have been Samuel who copied MS London 145 or even translated the
life of Alexander into Hebrew at the end of the 12th or beginning of
the 13th century.[37] Unfortunately, nothing is known about the writers
of MS Parma and MS Paris.

The Hebrew Alexander romance of type 2 was written by Immanuel
ben Jacob Bonfils, a physician, mathematician, and astronomer living
in France in the middle of the 14th century. His name is not men-
tioned in MS Paris 750, the only surviving manuscript of this ver-
sion. There was another manuscript lost due to a fire that destroyed
the library in Turin in 1904. Fortunately, the title on the first folio of
this manuscript was transcribed by Israel Lévi before its destruction
and there Immanuel is said to have written this text.[38] Immanuel used
recensions J^1 and J^2 of the *HP*, the *Book of Yosippon* as well as the Old
French Prose Alexander Romance and the *Book of the Sayings of the
Philosophers* to create his version of the Alexander romance. Especially
in numbers and translations that deviate from the Latin, the Hebrew
text shows parallels to the Old French version.[39]

Type 3 of the Hebrew Alexander romance is included in the *Book of
Memories* compiled by Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi (also 14th century)
who lived in the Rhineland. This book is a collection of antique and
medieval texts telling the story of the Jews from the creation to the

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[35] W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, pp. 204–
205.
[36] Lévi thought that he could have been the author/translator of this version,
but Steinschneider and van Bekkum believed that this is a case of Pseudepigraphy,
see I. Lévi, "Les traductions hébraïques de l'histoire légendaire d'Alexandre," *REJ* 3
(1881b), pp. 238–275; M. Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 899; com-
pare W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, p. 28.
[37] See my forthcoming Ph.D. on Sefer Yosippon.
[38] I. Lévi, "Les traductions, p. 245. The colophon of the Paris manuscript says that
it was copied by Hayyim and his grandfather Josef in the year 1428; see I.J. Kazis, *The
Book of Gests of Alexander*, p. 53.
[39] I.J. Kazis, *The Book of Gests of Alexander*, pp. 204ff.

messianic days, the largest compilation of Hebrew narrative texts in medieval times.[40] Since the book was finished by 1325, this Hebrew Alexander had to be composed before that year. Some of its motifs are found in rabbinic literature as well as in recension ε and γ of the *PC*. There are also parallels to the Syriac and the Ethiopian Alexander romance, but most of the narrative shows many alterations and changes, therefore it is not easy to determine its sources.[41] While Lévi and Steinschneider date this composition between the 11th and the 13th century, Gaster argues that this version of the Alexander romance represents one of the oldest known traditions about Alexander out of which all other traditions grew.[42]

The Hebrew Alexander romance of type 4 represents a very fragmentary translation from the French *Roman d'Alexandre* composed by Alexandre de Paris which was very popular in the 12th century. It is striking that the anonymous translator decided to transliterate some verses in Old French into his work. When Roxane grieves over Alexander she speaks a line in Old French written in Hebrew characters.[43] This way the source could be identified.

II. *Manuscripts*

In the following list are given: the name and place of the hosting library, the number of the microfilm in the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew manuscripts, as well as the date and provenance.

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[40] For the special character of this manuscript and its content in medieval Hebrew literature see E. Yassif, "The Hebrew Narrative Anthology in the Middle Ages," *Prooftexts* 17 (1997), pp. 153–175; E. Yassif, *The Book of Memory: that is the Chronicles of Jerahme'el* (Tel Aviv, 2001) (Hebrew) and E. Yassif, "Hebrew Traditions about Alexander the Great: Narrative Models and their Meaning in the Middle Ages," *Tarbiz* 75 (2006), pp. 359–407 (Hebrew).

[41] M. Gaster, "An Old Hebrew Romance of Alexander," in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology: Collected and Reprinted by Moses Gaster,* vol. 1 (New York, 1971), pp. 814–878; J. Dan, *Alilot Alexander Moqdon* (Jerusalem, 1969) (Hebrew); R. Reich, *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* (New York, 1972).

[42] M. Gaster, "An old Hebrew Romance of Alexander," in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology,* vol. 1 (New York, 1971), pp. 819f.

[43] E. Yassif, "Hebrew Traditions about Alexander" *Tarbiz* 75 (2006), pp. 359–407, especially p. 402 (Hebrew).

Type 1

London, Jew's College, No. 145 [F 4806][44] 15th century, Byzantine,
    fol. 1b–35b.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Héb. 671 [F 11550] 12th–13th century,
    Oriental/Byzantine, fols. 241r–280a.

Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Codex Parma 2457 (de Rossi 1087) [F
    13461] 14th century, Italian, fols. 12a–19b.

Manuscripts of the *Book of Yosippon* containing the Alexander
    romance:[45]

Budapest, Kaufmann Collection A 355 [F 15131] 15th–16th century,
    Ashkenazic, pp. 18–34.

Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, I 67 Inf [F 41181] 15th–16th century,
    Sefardic, fols. 9b–19a.

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, ebr. 408 [F 08636] 1443, Fano/ Italy,
    fols. 20b–29ª.

Vatican, Borgiana ebr. 1 [F 11654] 15th century, Ashkenazic-Italian,
    fols. 55b–66a.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Héb. 1280 [F 30898] 1472, Italian, fols.
    53a–62b.

Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 70 inf, 15th century, Ashkenazic,
    fols. 29a–35b.

Type 2—Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfils

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Héb. 750.3 [F 24842] 1428, Oriental,
    fols. 24a–90b.

Turin, (lost).

Type 3—Book of Memories

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hebr. 11 (Neubauer 2797/1) [F 16716] 14th
    century, Ashkenazic, fols. 265a–277b.

Modena, Estense Library, MS 53, Italian.

Damascus, (lost).

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[44] This is the number of the microfilm of the manuscript in collection of the Insti-
tute for microfilmed Hebrew manuscripts in the National Library in Jerusalem.

[45] For a detailed analysis of these manuscripts see PhD by S. Dönitz (forthcoming).

III. *Fragments*

Type 1
Genéve, Genizah Fragment 34 (same version as MS Parma), Oriental.

Type 4
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex Hebr. 419XX [F 31432]
    14th–15th century, Byzantine, folios

IV. *Modern Editions (and Translations)*

Today most of the medieval versions of the Alexander romance are
available in a modern edition. The introductions by Wout van Bek-
kum and Israel Kazis provide detailed surveys concerning sources and
scholarly discussions.

Type 1
W.J. van Bekkum (ed.). *A Hebrew Alexander Romance According to
    MS London, Jews' College no. 145*, (Louvain, 1992). Including Eng-
    lish translation.
——. (ed.). *A Hebrew Alexander Romance According to MS Heb. 671.5:
    Paris Bibliothèque Nationale*, (Groningen, 1994). Including English
    translation.
D. Flusser (ed.). *The Josippon [Josephus Gorionides]: Edited with Intro-
    duction, Commentary, and Notes* (Jerusalem, 1980–81). See pp.
    461–491 for MS Parma 1087. In Hebrew.

Type 2
I.J. Kazis. *The Book of the Gests of Alexander of Macedon*, (Cambridge,
    Mass., 1962). Including English translation.

Type 3
I) MS Oxford Heb. 11 (Neubauer 2797) [Book of Memories]:
J. Dan. *Alilot Alexander Moqdon*, (Jerusalem, 1969). In Hebrew.[46]
M. Gaster. "An Old Hebrew Romance of Alexander." In *Studies and
    Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha,*

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[46] The work contains a version of type 1 as well. At the end the reader finds the
Talmudic stories about Alexander.

and Samaritan Archaeology: Collected and Reprinted by Moses Gaster, vol. 1. (New York, 1971). pp. 814–878.

R. Reich. *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian*, (New York, 1972). Including English translation.

II) MS Modena 53:

I. Lévi. "Sefer Alexandros Mokdon." In *Festschrift zum achtzigsten Geburtstage Moritz Steinschneiders.* (Hildesheim, 1896 and reprint 1975), pp. 142–163.

Type 4

E. Yassif (2006). "Hebrew Traditions about Alexander the Great: Narrative Models and Their Meaning in the Middle Ages." *Tarbiz* 75: 359–407. In Hebrew.

V. *Structure and Plot*

Most of the research concerning the medieval Hebrew Alexander versions has concentrated on philology. There are few literary studies on the content and character of the various types of the Hebrew Alexander. Since such a proposal as a whole is beyond the scope of this article, we will focus on general assumptions concerning alterations of types 1, 2, and 3 compared to the sources and on the image of Alexander the Great in these texts.

Type 1

MS London 145 and MS Paris 657 represent translations of their Latin-Arabic source with some omissions, expansions, and changes.[47] These alterations were made with the intention to purge the text of its pagan characteristics. But not everything was removed: the names of the gods and the description of the rituals as well as the talking statues were not deleted although these must have presented a challenge for the rabbis.[48] Alexander makes offerings in the temples of Serapis, Apollo, and Diana and each of the these gods answers his requests or appears

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[47] W.J. van Bekkum (ed.), *A Hebrew Alexander Romance MS London*, pp. 24–27.
[48] Ibid., pp. 6, 40.

in dreams.[49] On the other hand, on several occasions Alexander refers to his belief in the Judeo-Christian God.[50]

The first part of the romance describes Alexander's birth, youth, and his first wars, especially the conflict with the Persian king Darius.[51] Repeatedly, rulers deliver a warning to Alexander about the dangers of power, vanity, and arrogance.[52] The second part describes the more miraculous adventures of Alexander until his own death by poison.[53] In general, the structure conforms to the plot of the Latin *HP*.

Compared to the Greek source, the Alexander romance in the MS Parma is shortened and the order of the events is changed. It starts with the death of Philip and the beginning of the rule of Alexander omitting Alexander's birth. After Alexander makes war with Darius he sets out for his fabulous travels. First, he meets animals with very long necks, then he comes to the giants. After that, he arrives at the *kynokephaloi* where he sees trees that grow only in the sun and acephalous human beings with five legs. At the end of this journey he comes to the Land of Darkness and to the house of God.[54] The next part describes the war with the Indian king Porus and the dialogue with the Gymnosophists. A letter to Aristotle about the wonders of India follows. The last three chapters tell about Alexander's meeting with Candace and the Amazons, and finally Alexander's death. This manuscript represents a summary of Alexander's life and emphasizes his miraculous journeys. Most of the pagan elements are omitted.

Type 2
The Alexander romance by Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfils consists of three parts. The first contains a description of Alexander's life from birth to death. The second part is a collection of apothegms taken from the *Book of the Sayings of the Philosophers*. The chronicle recording events from the time of Alexander's death to the capture of Jerusalem under Pompey, which is found in a longer version in MS Parma

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[49] Ibid., pp. 58, 78, 96.

[50] Ibid., pp. 54, 84, 114, 116.

[51] Ibid., pp. 36–116.

[52] E.g. ibid., p. 112, here the words of Darius to Alexander in the Hebrew version remind us of biblical wordings.

[53] Ibid., pp. 116–204. The Hebrew text is structured by numbers of the chapters not identical to the Latin chapters; part one of the Hebrew text comprises chapters 1–36, part two chapters 36–70.

[54] See Babylonian Talmud, tractate Tamid 32a–b.

2457, forms part three. The story of Alexander's life is told with a lot of omissions and changes in the arrangement of the events compared to the Latin source. On the other hand, there are rhetorical and material embellishments, especially a tendency toward judaization of the story. The punishment of the assassins of Darius does not consist of crucifixion but of hanging. In the discussion with Dindimus, Immanuel integrates an anti-Christian note on the confession of sins.[55]

Type 3

This Hebrew Alexander romance differs widely from the Greek source. The anonymous author integrated new motifs showing a special interest in the miraculous parts of Alexander's life while the historical context is mainly neglected. We will give a survey of the plot: the narrative is set in Egypt, i.e. Philip is depicted as King of Egypt, and starts with the seduction of queen Galopatra / Golofira (Olympias)[56] by the wizard Bildad (Nectanebus)[57] and the birth of Alexander.[58] Bildad comes to the queen in disguise as the god Digonia who has two horns, one of silver and one of gold.[59] Philip realizes the fraud and seeks out the wizard everywhere, but Bildad flees into a cave where he dies.

The queen intends to kill Alexander, but Philip adopts him as a son. After Philip's death Alexander's brothers want to kill him, but instead he becomes king because of a prophecy made by magicians and astronomers.[60] The episode recalls the biblical narrative of Joseph and his brothers. The story immediately continues with Alexander's journeys and completely omits his war against Darius and Porus.

Alexander's mother advises him to put together an army and set off to make war, still thinking of how she can rid herself of her illegitimate son. Starting his journey, Alexander encounters the dwarf king Antalonia who helps him to find traitors among his people.[61] On a mountain, Alexander meets an old man who watches a fabulous fortress where

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[55] See I.J. Kazis, *The Book of Gests of Alexander*, pp. 40–48, and Appendix II, pp. 206–210.

[56] The names Galopatra and Golofira—both are found in the manuscript—go back to a misreading of the name Cleopatra whose story is not mentioned in this version.

[57] The name Bildad is derived from Job 2:11, he is one of the three friends of Job.

[58] See Reich, pp. 22–30; Gaster, pp. 828–831.

[59] Here the influence of the Islamic tradition of the two-horned Alexander is felt.

[60] Reich, p. 30; Gaster, p. 832.

[61] Reich, pp. 32–34; Gaster, pp. 833–835.

strange beasts live. There Alexander sees the grave of King Altinos
who was anointed with balsam from Jericho. Alexander touches the
corpse, becomes ill and is healed.[62] After that he travels through several
countries (Quatrigonia, Altzil, Armenia, and Ofla)[63] and fights their
inhabitants.[64] Again he meets King Antalonia who sends him to the
mountains of darkness where he will see trees telling him his future,[65]
referring to the trees of the sun and moon. On the way back through
the mountains of darkness, Alexander encounters a king. Herein, fol-
lows the Talmudic story of the treasure that was hidden in a piece of
land that was sold.[66] Alexander arrives at Afriq and Anishq where he
meets the Amazons.[67] Alexander threatens the King of Hagar with war
unless he pays him tribute,[68] then travels on to Jerusalem.[69] Later he
meets the wise people from Kardonia and writes down information
about the medical power of herbs and plants in the Book of Remedies
[*Sefer ha-Refuʾot*].[70] He arrives at the land of Quartinia and hears the
story of a woman who was seduced by the priest Matan disguised as
a god.[71] His wife dies in childbirth and Alexander tries to commit sui-
cide.[72] In the land of Ofrat he finds the Water of Life.[73] Having traveled
to the most remote region of the earth, he arrives at the gate of the
Garden of Eden where an human eye is given to him after he is cir-
cumcised.[74] Then he ascends into the sky and descends into the ocean.[75]
It is an old man who asks him not to harm the Jews and brings him
back to his army.[76] Next, he arrives at a land where the inhabitants
look like dogs.[77] He crosses the sea and is threatened by a giant fish

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[62] Reich, pp. 36–44; Gaster, pp. 836–840.
[63] A thorough analysis of the names of the countries mentioned in this version is
highly desirable.
[64] Reich, pp. 44–48; Gaster, pp. 841–843.
[65] Reich, pp. 48–52; Gaster, pp. 843ff.
[66] It is the story of King Katzia, see above.
[67] Reich, pp. 54–62; Gaster, pp. 845–850.
[68] Reich, p. 62; Gaster, p. 850.
[69] Reich, pp. 62–70; Gaster, pp. 851–854.
[70] Reich, pp. 70–72; Gaster, p. 854ff.
[71] Reich, pp. 72–78; Gaster, pp. 855–858. This is a common motif; see the seduction
of Alexander's mother.
[72] Reich, p. 78; Gaster, pp. 858ff.
[73] Reich, p. 80; Gaster, p. 859.
[74] Reich, pp. 82–86; Gaster, pp. 860ff.
[75] Reich, pp. 86–88; Gaster, pp. 861ff.
[76] Reich, pp. 88–90; Gaster, p. 863.
[77] Reich, p. 90; Gaster, p. 863.

that sinks some of his ships.[78] A storm drives them into the Dead Sea. Alexander fights with the king of Togira and defeats him. He travels to the land of Yovila, whose people have the custom by which the father and mother lay in bed after a child is born.[79] On a mountain Alexander is attacked by a lion with human hands and feet. He is healed by a snake that anoints him with an herb.[80]

Alexander declares his nephew Tikosa to be King of Egypt in his absence.[81] In the land of Qalila Alexander and his army fight first against the men, then against the women.[82] After traveling through the lands of Amrisa and Lapish, Alexander's army comes to the region of the Ten Tribes.[83] They travel on to the land of Sidonia where manna keeps them alive and Alexander sees his end in the stars.[84] The cup-bearer Afiq poisons the king and he dies. Alexander's bones are brought to his mother who manages to reign after him for fifteen years before the country is divided.[85]

Some of the wondrous adventures do not have a parallel in the Greek or Latin versions of the *PC*, but are derived from Jewish motifs: Menahem, a Jewish scribe, is chief secretary of Alexander. The king prays to God and becomes circumcised. Alexander arrives at the Dead Sea and meets the ten lost tribes. His army is kept alive by manna. These deviations from the source material show the intention of the anonymous author: he wanted to recast Alexander's life into a Jewish framework. Moreover, the story is penetrated with prophecies and one appreciates the special interest in herbs and healing. Alexander becomes ill or is slain and heals or resuscitates several times. But at the same time, we also find some of the motifs from known rabbinical sources: Alexander comes to the Land of Darkness, he meets the Amazons, Alexander visits Jerusalem (designed after the version in the *Book of Yosippon*), he talks with the sages, he arrives at the Garden of Eden, he explores

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[78] Reich, p. 92; Gaster, p. 864.
[79] Reich, pp. 92–96; Gaster, p. 865.
[80] Reich, pp. 96–98; Gaster, pp. 866–868.
[81] Reich, p. 100; Gaster, p. 869.
[82] Reich, pp. 104–108; Gaster, pp. 870–872.
[83] Reich, pp. 108–114; Gaster, pp. 873–875.
[84] Reich, pp. 116–118; Gaster, pp. 875ff.
[85] Reich, pp. 118–120; Gaster, pp. 876–878.

the sky and the depth of the sea.[86] The anonymous author merged
stories about Alexander that are found in the Talmud and the Midrash
with fantastical motifs based on the romance of Alexander. Still the
typical characteristics of Alexander as a greedy conqueror and a man
of *vanitas* are present, but the moralizing intention seems to recede
into the background while the author takes delight in inventing more
fabulous and sometimes satirical elements.

Type 4
Only a very small portion of this Hebrew text is left thanks to the
recycling of two folios of the manuscript as book bindings. The folios
contain the end of an Alexander romance. It starts with a description
of the speech that was given by Alexander upon his death. Thereby
he divides his kingdom among five of his military leaders.[87] After his
death, his wife Roxane and the military leaders mourn over the king. A
statue of Alexander erected on his grave shows an apple in the king's
hand symbolizing his dominion over the whole world. The twelve
towns that he founded are enumerated. Antipater and Andoinos, the
murderers of Alexander, are sought, but they escape and build a for-
tress called Arondil. There they are caught and tortured. The kingdoms
that follow Alexander make war against one another until the rising of
Judah the Maccabee.[88]

VI. *Style*

As is the case with most other medieval Hebrew narratives, the Hebrew
Alexander romances are all composed in the narrative style of the
rewritten bible called *melitzah*. The most important characteristic of
this style is the integration of biblical verses into the narrative. More-
over, the verbs are used in the grammatical form of the *Imperfectum
Consecutivum* which recalls the narrative style of the bible. Type 3 of
the Alexander romance shows several parts that seem to use parody or
satirical elements, e.g. after Alexander is healed by the snake he sneezes

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[86] R. Reich, *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* (New York, 1972), pp. 52–71,
84–90. The stories of the exploration of the sea and the sky follow the versions in the
rabbinic sources.

[87] There could have been more because the text of the fragment begins at this
point.

[88] E. Yassif, "Hebrew Traditions about Alexander," pp. 403–407. In Hebrew.

three times.[89] The different versions of the Hebrew Alexander romance range from translations that follow the original with few alterations to reworkings of the romance with strong elements of Judaization. The reworkings do not focus on the personality of Alexander, but rather stress the many wonders of Alexander's fabulous adventures.

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[89] R. Reich, *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* (New York, 1972), p. 98; M. Gaster, "An Old Hebrew Romance," p. 868.

CHAPTER THREE

ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN
THE SYRIAC LITERARY TRADITION

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala

While many literary works translated into the Syriac did not have much of an impact on Syriac literature in general, the texts dealing with the figure of Alexander, together with other works of Persian origin such as *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, raised a great deal of interest not only in the West,[1] but also in the East,[2] which gave rise to several textual traditions. In Syriac literature, different genres developed around the figure of Alexander, ranging from the wisdom literature of the "Sayings"[3] to the narrative of the "Romance," without forgetting the recensions and poetry in the manner of the homiletic hymns known as *mēmrē*. All these textual traditions, drawing on the figure of Alexander the Great, became run of the mill in the Syriac context within the Christian communities from the 7th century A.D. forward.

In the pages below, while we make reference to the so-called *Alexanderlied* (the *mēmrā* attributed to Jacob of S^erūgh) and to the "Exploits of Alexander" [Neṣḥānā d-ʾAleksandrōs] we shall focus mainly on the Syriac version of the Alexander romance (Tašʿītā d-ʾAleksandrōs), a version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes (*PC*) which has been preserved in several MSS and no doubt represents the most influential of all oriental versions,[4] harking back to the 7th century itself.

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[1] See, for instance, L. Braccesi, *L'Alessandro occidentale. Il macedone e Roma* (Roma, 2006).

[2] See R. Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes Orientalis and the Problem of *Ḏu l-qarnain*," *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991), 223–264.

[3] For example S.P. Brock, "The Laments of the Philosophers over Alexander in Syriac," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15 (1970), 205–218. Cf. J.P. Monferrer-Sala, "Alexandri magni de anima dictum fictitium apud philosophos enuntiavit," *Ḥikma* 5 (2006), pp. 155–169.

[4] S. Gero, "The Legend of Alexander the Great in the Christian Orient," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 75 (1993), 1, 5.

I. AUTHORSHIP AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Alexander romance and the so-called *Alexanderlied*, anonymous
in both cases, are two different texts in Syriac literature. The origi-
nal Greek of the Alexander romance is traditionally attributed to an
author from the late Hellenistic age.[5]

Regarding the identity of the translator of the Syriac version of the
PC, we have scarcely any knowledge. The most logical thing to be
inferred from the Syriac production of the seventh century would be
that the translator was a monk in one of the Nestorian monasteries
lying in the northern area of Mesopotamia. The interpolated Christian
elements, frequently inaccurate, make us think that this could have
been the case.[6]

Far from being a translation of an Arabic text done between the
7th and 9th centuries, as Wright and Budge suggested, for whom the
Syriac version seemed to have been made from the Arabic translation
of a Greek text by a Christian priest,[7] the Syriac Alexander romance,
stricto sensu, spawned from the Greek version of the *PC* through a
translation done from a Middle Persian (Pehlevi) *Vorlage* in the early
7th century,[8] which must have been in fact a Nestorian[9] product from
north Mesopotamia belonging to the period ca. 628 A.D. Such a text
must have been done with purely propagandistic purposes shortly
after the winning campaigns of Heraclius against the Persians.[10]

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[5] K. Czeglédy, "The Syriac Legend concerning Alexander the Great," *Acta Orien-
talia* 7 (1957), 231–232.

[6] See E.A. Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac
Version of the Pseudo Callisthenes* (Cambridge, 1889, reed. Piscataway, NJ, 2003),
lviii–lx.

[7] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. lx–lxii.

[8] Th. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geshichte des Alexanderromans* (Vienna, 1890), pp.
11–17. A still valuable lengthy review of Nöldeke's *opusculum* is S. Fraenkel "Th.
Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*," *Zeitschrift der deutschen mor-
genländischen Gesellschaft* 45.2 (1891), 309–330.

[9] Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, p. 17. See A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*
(Bonn, 1922, reed. Berlin, 1968), p. 125; K. Czeglédy (1957), pp. 231–249; N.V. Pigu-
levskaya, "Sirijskaya legenda ob Aleksandre Makedonskom," *Palestinskii Sbornik* 3
(1958), 75–97. See also H. Stoks, "Ein Alexanderbrief in den Acta Cyriaci et Julittae,"
Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 31 (1910), 1–47, and P.G. Bulgakov, "Arabskaya par-
allel k 24 glave III knigi sirijskoj versii romana ob Aleksandre," *Palestinskii Sbornik*
2 (1956), 53–57.

[10] G.J. Reinink, "Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-
religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios' Kirchenpolitik," in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz
and L. van Rompay (eds.), *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History*,

However, with respect to the famous *mēmrā* which has given us a version of the "History of Alexander," some scholars have wrongly attributed this verse homily on Alexander the Great to a small poetic composition, carried out around the character of the "Legend," attributed to the prolific writer Jacob of Sᵉrūgh,[11] as is noted in the Syriac MSS which have been handed down to us. According to some, this legend, variously repeated thereafter, gave rise to later amplified versions.[12]

Thus, while we do not know who the authors might have been of either the Alexander romance or of the reworking of it known as "Exploits of Alexander," we do know something about the clergyman who is the alleged author of the *mēmrā* of the "History of Alexander," Jacob of Sᵉrūgh (d. 521). He was a monophysite bishop of the town of Sᵉrūgh (of modern Turkey), who died in 521 A.D. We know of three biographies of this man, namely, one written by Jacob of Edessa,[13] a second one anonymous, and the third ascribed to one of his disciples called George, while others attribute the third biography to an 8th century writer called George of Sᵉrūgh who died in 708.[14] Born in Kurtam, a town on the Euphrates river, he was educated in the "Persian School" of Edessa, against whose Christologic postulates he argued, being ordained 'chorepiskopos' for the region of Sᵉrūgh, more specifically in Ḥawrā, to the west of Edessa. Later, in the year 519,

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Offered to Professor Albert van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday (Louvain, 1985), pp. 263–281. See S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kotayyam, India, 1997), p. 51.

   [11] Regarding the content of this text, see C. Hunnius, *Das syrische Alexanderlied* (Götingen, 1904, Inaugural-Dissertation); E. Nestle, "Zum syrischen Alexanderlied in Heft I," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 50 (1906), 401–402; A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate. Gog and Magog and the Enclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass, 1932); K. Czeglédy, "Monograpfs on Syriac and Muhammadan Sources in the Literary Remains of M. Kmosko," *Acta Orientalia* 4 (1955), 19–90; and K. Czeglédy (1957), "The Syriac Legend," pp. 231–249.

   [12] C. Hunnius, "Das syrische Alexanderlied," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 60 (1906), 170–171. See also R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque des origines jusqu'à la fin de cette littérature après la conquête par les arabes au XIIIᵉ siècle* (Paris, 1907, reed. Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 321–322; A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Orients. I. Das christlich-aramäische und das koptische Schrifttum* (Leipzig, 1911), p. 103; C. Brockelmann, "Die syrische und die christlich-arabische Litteratur." In C. Brockelmann, F.N. Fink, J. Leipoldt, E. Littmann, *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients* (Leipzig, 1909, reed. Leipzig 1979), p. 26, n. 1. See K. Czeglédy, "Monographs on Syriac and Muhammadan sources," *Acta Orientalia* 4 (1955), 35.

   [13] Josephus Simonius Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana. I. Sriptoribus Syris Orthodoxis* (Rome, 1719, reed. Piscataway, NJ, 2002), p. 286.

   [14] R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, p. 352.

he was ordained bishop in Baṭnān d-Sᵉrūgh. The fame achieved by this author lies basically in the great number of *mēmrē* he composed on various topics using the dodecasyllabic metre, in some of which the influence of Theodore of Mompsuestia as learned in the "Persian School" of Edessa can be traced. Additionally, he composed six homilies in prose (*turgamē*), of which 43 epistles sent to the Christians of Naǧrān survive, as well as several *madrāšē* (odes) and *sugyāṭē* (hymns). Moreover, the Maronite baptismal service is also attributed to him.[15]

II. Dating

As we have argued above, the dating of the textual tradition ascribed to the Syriac versions of the Alexander romance and the *Alexanderlied* differ. The latter, as noted, harks back to a metrical discourse (*mēmrā*) concerning Alexander by Jacob of Sᵉrūgh and belongs to the epoch of this monophysite bishop, i.e. the 6th century.

On the other hand, the Syriac Alexander romance is a translation from a lost Neo-Persian *Vorlage* in the early 7th century.[16] This Syriac version seems to have been translated in Nestorian circles[17] in the northern part of Mesopotamia in the late sixth or the early seventh century according to Nöldeke,[18] although Brock has recently proposed a more plausible date around the year 629–630, shortly after the victorious campaigns of Heraclius against the Persians in the heyday of the Arab-Islamic expansion,[19] as can be inferred from the seventh-century Syriac works on Alexander the Great.[20] However, the several copies that have come down to us, as we can see in the following section, date from a later period.

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[15] Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, pp. 148–158. See also R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, pp. 352–354; William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), pp. 67–72; W. Stewart McCullough, *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (Chico, CA, 1982), p. 79; Brock, *A Brief Outline*, pp. 36–37.

[16] Nöldeke, *Beiträge…*, pp. 11–17.

[17] Nöldeke, *Beiträge…*, p. 17. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 125.

[18] Nöldeke, *Beiträge…*, p. 16.

[19] Brock, *A Brief Outline*, p. 51.

[20] G.J. Reinink, "Alexander the Great in Seventh-Century Syriac 'Apocalyptic' Texts," *Byzantinorossica* 2 (2003), 150–178.

III. Manuscripts

The textual tradition of the metrical discourse (*mēmrā*) concerning Alexander by Jacob of Seᵣūgh, the so-called *Alexanderlied*, consists of five Syriac MSS grouped in three recensions, as shown by Reinink some time ago when surveying the textual tradition of this work.[21]

Recension I:[22]
1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. *Paris syriaque 13*. Fols. 177r–187v. 18th–19th century.
2. Mingana Collection at Selly Oak. *Birmingham Mingana syr. 88*. Fols. 16r–24v (with a lack of 4 fols. after fol. 19). 15th century.
3. *Berlin 169* (*Sachau 192*). Fols. 65v–99v. From Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, 18th century.

Recension II:[23]
4. British Library. *Add. 14624*. Fols. 20v–34r. 9th century.

Recension III:[24]
5. BnF. *Paris syriaque 243*. Fols. 299v.–318r. A Maronite MS from Rome dated in 1610.

This western Syriac tradition of the *Alexanderlied* has given rise, in turn, to an Arabic version documented in at least two MSS written in *ġaršūnī* [25] characters, which originated, therefore, in an Arabic-Syriac context.

On the other hand, the manuscript tradition of the Alexander romance shows several interesting aspects from a textual viewpoint. It is an anonymous work of which there is written evidence in six MSS preserved in Syriac. These MSS are written in Nestorian script of recent date: the oldest, kept in the British Library, dates from the 18th century. Five of these MSS (known by the letters A, B, C, D,

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[21] G.J. Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied. Die drei Rezensionen*, 2 vols. (Louvain, 1983), 1,1–3. See also Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. lxxix.

[22] On recension I, see G.J. Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied…*, 1,12–15.

[23] On recension II, see G.J. Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied…*, 1,15–16.

[24] On recension III, see G.J. Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied…*, 1,16–17.

[25] S. Khalil Samir, "Les versions arabes chrétiennes du Roman d'Alexandre." In R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 234–235.

E according to Budge's edition) correspond to catalographic features that can be summed up as follows:

A = BL. *Add. 25875*. Paper. 36 quires. 362 leaves divided in two columns of 28 lines, about 8 7/8 in. by 6 1/8 in. Good *strangelā* writing with numerous vowel points. Dated in 1708–9 A.D. (= AG 2020–21).[26]

B = American Oriental Society. Paper. 18 quires. 185 leaves with 20 lines per page, about 8 3/8 in. by 6 5/8 in. Good *strangelā* writing with numerous vowel points. Dated in 1844 A.D. (= AG 2155). It is a copy made by the Rev J. Perkins in Urmia from an unknown older MS.[27] The MS B El MS B has several glosses in *fellīḥī*, the neo-Aramaic dialectal variety in Urmia.

C = Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft. Paper. 20 quires. 196 leaves paginated in Syriac graphemes (ʾ-*šfz*) with 18 lines per page (except two pages: *šmd* has only 15 and *šnd* 19), about 8 7/8 in. by 6 5/8 in. Carefully *strangelā* writing with vowel points till page *šmg*, but after this page the two hands writing is less good. Page ʾ*ālaph* has an illuminated heading. Dated in 1851 A.D. (= AG 2162). This MS, acquired by J. Perkins in Urmia in 1850, was later owned by Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft in 1852.[28]

D = Owned by E.A. Wallis Budge. Paper. 12 quires. 123 leaves paginated in Syriac graphemes (ʾ-*rkg*) with 22 lines per page, about 14 in. by 8 ½. Accurated bold *strangelā* writing with numerous vowel points. The text is the copy ordered by Budge in 1886 to a scribe called ʾŌšaʿnā from a MS dated in 1848 A.D. (= AG 2159), whose errors were corrected by the copyist at several places.[29]

E = Owned by E.A. Wallis Budge. Paper. 15 quires. 160 leaves with 20 lines per page, about 9 ¼ in. by 6 ¾. It is another copy of a text ordered by Budge, also from 1886, from an old Nestorian MS, kept in the Library of Alqōš. The copy, made by a "first-rate scribe" was contrasted with the original and corrected by the Chaldean Patriarch.[30] It is another text whose copy was commissioned by Budge, also in 1886, starting from an old Nestorian MS that remains in the

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[26] W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1872), 3:1064, No. DCCCCXXII.

[27] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xvii.

[28] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. xxv–xxvi.

[29] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. xxix–xxxii.

[30] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. xxxii–xxxiii.

Alqōš library. The copy made by a 'first rate scribe' was contrasted with the original and corrected by the Chaldean Patriarch.

MS A, as we have noted, is the oldest and is textually related to the MS E,[31] although philologically the corrections and changes made in this copy pose quite a few textual drawbacks.[32] The MSS B–C in turn belong to a different textual tradition than the MSS A–E, with slight variations, a fact that led Budge to believe that the MSS B–C were copies of the same text.[33] Two more MSS must be added to the five MSS referred to, also found in Alqōš: Syr. 203, dated in 1745 A.D. and Syr. 204, dated in 1902 A.D.[34]

The edition of the Syriac text made by Budge is based on the older MS (A), taking advantage of the four remaining MSS in the critical part so as to note the variants contributed by them. The Syriac text, mistakenly considered by Budge as the translation of a Greek original via an Arabic version,[35] belongs to the family α of the *PC* textual tradition (recension δ). However, taking into account the textual reasons noted above, the Syriac version cannot be considered a translation of any of the *PC* texts. The relationship of the Syriac version to a Greek text, far from being direct, was established through a Persian version, the linguistic register of which, rather than Middle Persian as claimed by Nöldeke, must be adscribed to Neo-Persian, as Ciancaglini rightly noted.[36]

The sixth MS we have referred to above is registered under the call number Rn/H62, a copy in paper-format with a binding, which is currently kept at Yale's Beineke Library in the collection of the library of the American Oriental Society.[37]

Finally, a seventh recension—much older than the others—is also known under the title "A Brief Life of Alexander," which has an

[31] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xxxiii.

[32] C.A. Ciancaglini, "Gli antecedenti del *Romanzo* siriaco di Alessandro." In R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, p. 55.

[33] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xvii.

[34] Brock, "The Laments," p. 215.

[35] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. lxi–lxii.

[36] Ciancaglini, "Gli antecedenti," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 61–90.

[37] J.T. Clemons, "A Checklist of Syriac Manusripts in the United States and Canada," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 32 (1966), nº 232. See also L. Depuydt, "Classical Syriac Manuscripts at Yale University: A Checklist," *Hugoye* 9.2 (2006), nº 6 available at http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol9No2/HV9N2Depuydt.html.

accurate summary of the main episodes concerning the life of Alexander the Great, and which is preserved in a MS:[38]

– British Library (*Add 12154*). Fols.153v–154v. Dated to the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century, this MS was edited by P. de Lagarde.[39]

IV. Fragments

In actual fact, we cannot speak of proper fragments of the Alexander romance, unless we make concrete reference to the extracts contained in the chronicles.[40] We may, however, refer to a "Summary" and a recension belonging to the same textual tradition of the metrical discourse of Jacob of Sᵉrūgh, different therefore, from the textual tradition to which Alexander romance belongs.

The "Summary" actually refers to a brief text that gathers the main data concerning the Alexander romance, such as it appears in MS *Add 12154* of the British Library mentioned in the previous section, with the addition of a number of moral reflections. Thus, in this summary Alexander is viewed as the illegitimate son born out of the adulterous union of Nectanebus and his mother, which is followed by an account of his conquests and building of cities, ending with a summary of his last will where he hands down the Empire to his twelve generals.

The text in turn that contains the so-called "Exploits of Alexander"[41] is an abridged prose text[42] harking back to a more extensive original. This original belongs to the same textual tradition as the metrical discourse of Jacob of Sᵉrūgh, which means that the so-called "Exploits of Alexander" has both structural and content parallelisms.

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[38] W. Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 984, col. 1.

[39] P. de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca* (Leipzig, 1858), pp. 205–208. See also Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. lxxix.

[40] On this, see the detailed information provided by Brock, "The Laments…," p. 218.

[41] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. lxxvii–lxxix and 144–158 (English version).

[42] G. Knös, *Chrestomathia Syriaca* (Göttingen, 1807), pp. 66–107.

V. Modern Editions

The list of the editions on Alexander the Great traditions that are available in Syriac, and the translations as well, are gathered in the following seven sections:[43]

1. PC *(recension δ)*

– Editions: Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great…*, pp. 1–254 (Syriac section).

   The book includes the edition of five oriental Syriac MSS after the *codex optimus* (MS A). The remaining four MSS were used to register the extant variants. A recent reedition of this work has been done by Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ, 2003. The text of the "letter" written by Alexander to Aristotle (III,7) was reproduced by A. Rödiger, *Chrestomathia Syriaca* (Halle, 1868, 2nd ed.), pp. 112–120.

– Translations: A partial English edition was provided by the Rev. Justin Perkins. The complete English version is the work of Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 1–143. The edition made by Budge was used by V. Ryssel to make the German translation, *Die syrische Übersetzung des Pseudo-Callisthenes* (Braunschweig, 1893). Two translations, one into English and another into German of MS B both used by Budge in his edition, were done by Theodore D. Woolsey, "Notice of a Life of Alexander the Great translated from the Syriac," *JAOS* 4 (1854), 359–440, and by F. Ensell, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kritik der Alexandersage. Auszug aus der syrischen Uebersetzung des Pseudokallisthenes mit Beziehung auf den Text der griechisches Codices, sowie der lateinischen und armenischen Versionen* (Hersfeld, 1873). Other minor translations can be found in Eberhard Nestle, *Grammatica Syriaca* (Berlin, 1889, 2nd ed.), p. 35 of the "Chrestomathy" (= "Litteratura Syriaca").

2. *"Life of Alexander"*

– Edition: This MS (British Library *Add. 12154*) dated to the 8th/9th c., was edited by P. de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca* (Leipzig, 1858), pp. 205–208.

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[43] See Brock, "The Laments," pp. 215–218.

– Translation: An English translation is by Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 159–161.

3. *"Sayings of Alexander"*

– Edition: A passage on Alexander from two MSS of the British Library dated to the 7th/8th centuries (*Add. 14618*, fols. 26b–27b, and *Add. 14614*, fols. 119a–121a),[44] which is included in a short collection of "Sayings of the Philosophers on the Soul," was edited by E. Sachau, *Inedita Syriaca* (Halle, 1870), pp. ʿē-ḥēṯ, lines 9–15. This work has been reedited by Georg Olms, Hildesheim, 1968.
– Translation: An English version is available in Sebastian P. Brock, "The Laments of the Philosophers over Alexander in Syriac," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15 (1970), 216.

4. *"Sayings on Alexander"*

– Edition: A Syriac text of sayings/laments over Alexander from Mingana syr. 47 (fol. 267a–b), copied in 1907 in Alqōš, has been edited by Brock, "The Laments," pp. 209–211.
– Translation: An English version, together with the Arabic text of Eutychius of Alexandria, is provided by Brock, "The Laments," 211–214. A Spanish translation with a study is provided by J.P. Monferrer-Sala, "Alexandri magni de anima dictum fictitium apud philosophos enuntiavit," *Ḥikma* 5 (2006), pp. 155–169.

5. *"Christianized Alexander Legends"*

5.1. *"Exploits of Alexander"*

– Edition: The edition of this text included in the same MSS which provide the Syriac *PC* was edited by Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 255–275 (Syriac section).
– Translation: The English version of this legend was published by Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 144–158.

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[44] B.H. Cowper, *Syriac Miscellanies* (London, 1861), p. 45. See also E. Sachau, *Inedita Syriaca*, pp. VII and ʿē-wāw; Brock, "The Laments…," p. 216.

5.2. *Alexander's* excerptum *included in the "Chronicle" of the Pseudo-Dionysios of Tell-Mahrē*

– Editions: The text from the ninth/tenth-century MS Vat. Syr. 162 provided by the "Chronicle" has been edited respectively by the following scholars: O.F. Tullberg, *Dionysii Telmahharensis Chronici liber primus e codice mss. Syriaco bibl. Vaticanæ transcriptus* (Uppsala, 1850), pp. 54–59; C.A. Hedenskog, *Berättelse om Alexander den Store* (Lund, 1868), pp. 26–37; J.-B. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum pseudo-Dionisyanum vulgo dictum* (Louvain, 1927), I, p. 41, line 15, p. 46, line.
– Translations: A Latin version is available in F. Tullberg, *Dionysii Telmahharensis Chronici liber primus*. A Swedish version can be found in Carl Axel Hedenskog, *Beraettelse om Alexander den Store, Oefversaettning fraan syriskan med anmaerkningar. Ett bidrag till Alexandersagan och dess historia* (Lund, 1868). The most recent Latin version is provided by J.-B. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum...*, II, pp. 33–36.

5.3. Excerptum *of an Alexander prophecy concerning Christ*

– Edition: In Mingana Syr. 369 a MS has been preserved from the Syrian Monastery of Dayr al-Zaʿfarān, dated in 1473–4 A.D., in which an *excerptum* containing a short prophecy of Alexander concerning Christ is provided. This short text has been edited by Brock, "The Laments," p. 216.
– Translation: An English translation is available in Brock "The Laments," pp. 216–217.

5.4. *The verse history* (mēmrā) *attributed to Jacob of Sᵉrūgh*[45]

– Editions: A faulty early edition from a West Syrian MS (Paris Syr. 13) is available in G. Knös, *Chrestomathia Syriaca* (Göttingen, 1807), pp. 66–107. A later edition based on a ninth-century MS from the British Library (*Add. 14624*), collated with variants from MS Paris Syr 13 is by E.A. Wallis Budge, "The Homily on Alexander the Great attributed to James, Bishop of Baṭnān," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 6

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[45] See Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied*, 1,3–4.

(1891), 357–404. A third edition, based on Knös and Budge's for-mer editions can be found in H. Gismondi, *Linguae Syriacae Gram-matica et Chestomathia* (Beirut, 1900, 2nd ed.), pp. 80–93. Another faulty edition is by Carl Hunnius, "Das syrische Alexanderlied," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 60 (1906), 169–209, 558–589, 802–821.[46] Hunnius's edition provides an eclec-tic text taken from the British Library *Add. 14624*, Paris Syr. 13 and Paris Syr. 243, the former being a Maronite MS from 1611 A.D.[47] This *mēmrā* is also included in a West Syrian MS from 15th c. (Min-gana Syr. 88, fols. 16a–24b) which still remains unpublished[48] till the last edition of this text by Gerrit J. Reinink in the first volume of his *Das syrische Alexanderlied. Die drei Rezensionen* (Louvain, 1983).

– Translations: We have three faulty translations into Latin and German respectively by G. Knös, *Carmen syriacum de Alexandro Magno* (Uppsala, 1826); A. Weber, *Des Mar Yaqūb Gedicht über den gläubigen König Alexandrūs* (Berlin, 1852) and Pius Zingerle, *Ein altes syrisches Alexanderlied* (Brünn, 1882). Better versions are those provided by Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 164–200 and Carl Hunnius, "Das syrische Alexanderlied," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 60 (1906), 169–209, 558–589, 802–821. The best translation into German has been ren-dered by Gerrit J. Reinink, *Das syrische Alexanderlied*, vol. 2.

6. *Alexander and the Bones of Jeremiah*

– Editions: The oldest extant recension of this apocryphal episode has been published from three MSS kept at the British Museum, in the complete edition of the "Vitae prophetarum" by Eberhard Nestle, *Gramatica Syriaca*, pp. *pē/wāw-kāf/zayn* (435 lines).
– Translations: There is no available translation of this episode.

7. *An* excerptum *from Palladius's* De gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus

– Edition: The edition of this excerptum entitled "Concerning DDMWS, a certain philosopher who was naked and was dwelling in

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[46] For a critical review of this edition, see C. Peeters, "Die Berliner Handschrift des syrischen Alexander-Liedes," *Le Muséon* 51 (1938), 277–283.
[47] See Reinink, *Das Alexanderlied*, 1, 4–11.
[48] Brock, "The Laments," 217, n. 2.

the wilderness" is provided by Sebastian P. Brock, "Stomathalassa, Dandamis and Secundus in a Syriac Monastic Anthology," in G.J. Reinink & A.C. Klugkist (eds.), *After Bardaisan. Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han W. Drijvers* (Leuven, 1999), 41–42, apparatus in 43.

– Translation: An accurate English translation is by Brock, "Stomathalassa…," in G.J. Reinink & A.C. Klugkist (eds.), *After Bardaisan*, 43–44.

VI. Sources

The complex framework in which the ecdotics is placed, i.e. the manner in which a text is transmitted and received, proves essential to determine the source of a work. With the case in point of the Syriac Alexander romance, the differences shown with respect to *Alexanderlied* or to the "Exploits of Alexander" in all its hand-written complexities, renders the ecdotic task most relevant for tracing the hermeneutic work done by the receptors of the text in Syriac.[49]

Textually speaking, the Alexander romance is affiliated with the oldest Greek recension, but it also shows some interesting additions. We may, in the text that concerns us here, address two types of sources:

1. A primary, the result of the causal relation of the Syriac translation with respect to the original Greek through the Neo-Persian intermediate text, which shows the apparent primary connections of two interrelated texts;
2. A secondary, which can be inferred from various parallelisms (structural, thematic, tropological, etc.) established among different texts as produced by a number of influences. Logically, this second type can be further extended depending on the number of relationships established between the Syriac Alexander romance and other works.

As Nöldeke had shown, the Syriac version of the *PC* was not made directly from a Greek text, but through a Pehlevi version.[50] The original

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[49] See an approach in R. Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes Orientalis," pp. 225–232, 239–241.

[50] Th. Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, pp. 11–17.

source framework of the Alexander romance, and that of *Alexanderlied*, is, therefore, that of the translation of lay works. In the first instance, the source of the Alexander romance, as we have already mentioned above, is that of the Greek *PC*, whose original dates back to the late Hellenistic age, in the 3rd century A.D. The *terminus post quem* of the origins of the work, according to some scholars' opinion, would be the 2nd century A.D., and the *terminus ante quem* the year 240.[51]

An interesting stage in the Greek context is the step forward leading from the "History of Alexander" to the Alexander romance. This step was a consequence of the narrative view of today's historiography towards the original factual material included in the fictional correspondence attributed to Alexander and his contemporary correspondents. The so-called "Epistolary Romance" was the *corpus* that enabled that several Greek recensions from imperial times successfully transmitted the "Legend of Alexander" attributed to Callisthenes (*PC*), together with a version in vulgar Latin by Julius Valerius at the end of 3rd century A.D. At the base then of the *PC* two different textual types can be found: narrative materials of an epistolary genre from *circa* 100 B.C. and a "History" originated in Hellenism. The *PC* sought to rewrite the materials from those two *corpora*, but made glaring mistakes in tying together the materials thus provoking some distortion of the original information.[52]

On the other hand, some scholars, drawing mainly on two short references, believe that the Hellenistic Jewish author called Josephus (first century A.D.) was the one who assembled the two narrative elements which, in the long run, would develop into various general traditions hinging around the figure of Alexander.[53] However, this hypothesis, valid for the so-called *Alexanderlied*, not only fails to explain the genesis and initial evolution of the Alexander romance, but also, in the case of Syriac tradition, leaves the origins of the Syriac version unexplained.[54]

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[51] K. Czeglédy, "The Syriac Legend,"pp. 231–232.

[52] R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans* (Munich, 1977 and 1954).

[53] F. Pfister, *Alexander der Grosse in den Offenbarungen der Griechen, Juden, Mohammedaner und Christen* (Berlin, 1956).

[54] K. Czeglédy, "The Syriac Legend," pp. 233–240.

The Syriac version of the Alexander romance is the translation of the *PC* starting from the Neo-Persian version in the early 7th century.[55] This Syriac version, judging by the copies of the MSS that have reached us, seems to have been generated in Nestorian circles from north Mesopotamia.[56] The Alexander legend ("A Christian Legend Concerning Alexander," according to the title given by Budge in his edition)[57] is a substantially reshaped form of the Alexander romance, amplified with the apocalyptic *topos* of Gog and Magog, which is of great importance to the study of apocalyptic literature of the Middle Ages.[58]

Thus, for instance, besides the interpolations made by a Christian hand, the origins of which do not seem to be other than a Christian work, we have the two most famous legends of the Greek recension, such as the "Legend of the Water of Life"[59] and the "Legend of the Bronze Gate in the Frontier of Gog and Magog."[60] Neither of them appears in the Syriac version, but they have been added at the end of the work as if they belonged to another cycle. The reason that they were kept apart from the whole body of the work does not seem to be other than the fact that, while the main character is a pagan king in Alexander the Great, it is either a Jewish king or a Christian king in the two legends, and their acts are guided by God. The first witness to

[55] Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, pp. 11–17. See also C.A. Ciancaglini, "Gli antecedenti del *Romanzo* siriaco di Alessandro," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 55–93, and F.A. Pennacchietti, "*Qundāqōr*: un *hapax* siriaco del *Romanzo di Alessandro* tra filologia e archeologia," in M. Lamberti and L. Tonelli (eds.), *Afroasiatica Tergestina. Papers from the 9th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) Linguistics, Trieste, April 23–24, 1998* (Padua, 1999), pp. 71–82.

[56] Nöldeke, *Beiträge…*, p. 17. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 125; Czeglédy, "The Syriac Legend…," pp. 231–249; N.V. Pigulevskaya, "Sirijskaya legenda ob Aleksandre Makedonskom," *Palestinskii Sbornik* 3 (1958), 75–97. See also H. Stoks, "Ein Alexanderbrief in den Acta Cyriaci et Julittae," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 31 (1910), 1–47, and P.G. Bulgakov, "Arabskaya parallel k 24 glave III knigi sirijskoj versii romana ob Aleksandre," *Palestinskii Sbornik* 2 (1956), 53–57.

[57] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. 255 (Syriac text) and 144 (English translation).

[58] G.J. Reinink, "Political Power and Right Religion in the East Syrian Disputation between a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē and an Arab Notable," in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, and D. Thomas (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden – Boston, 2006), p. 163.

[59] G.J. Reinink, "Alexander der Große und der Lebensquell im syrischen Alexanderlied," *Studia Patristica* 18 (1990), 282–288.

[60] Czeglédy, "Monographs on Syriac and Muhammadan Sources…," pp. 31–39; P.J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (California, 1985), pp. 185–192.

this process of monotheization of the character seems to be none other than Josephus's *Antiquitates judaeorum*.[61]

We are here faced with two legends that hark back to the beginnings of our era, and they constitute the framework of the famous metrical discourse (*mēmrā*) attributed to Jacob of Serūgh,[62] also received by the Qur'ān in the *sūrat ahl al-kahf*,[63] as well as by the Syriac chronistic texts.[64] In the particular case of the legendary cycle of Gog and Magog[65] this is mentioned both by Josephus and by Jerome, but it is redone by the Syriac writer-cum-translator by using the technique of rewriting with the purpose of adapting the legend to the current new historical framework. In fact, this extremely influential text is found in the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, and was soon rendered into Greek and Latin. With regard to the episode narrated in the "Legend of the Water of Life," its origin has been set in relation to the Assyrian-Babylonian epic poem *Gilgamesh* of the 12th century B.C. through the epic poem included in *Mahābhārata* I, 17–19.[66]

Obviously, as we are faced with a translation, the sources of the Syriac version of the Alexander romance, setting aside the variants inserted by the Syriac translator-writer referring in turn to Christian sources, are the same as for the recension δ of the *PC*. The sources of this Greek recension sprang from the Alexandrian context and are no less interesting than varied, and they can, *grosso modo*, be classified either with regard to the historical or pseudo-historical view of them,[67] or with regard to two concrete source contexts: the 'Egyptian' material and the 'Babylonian' material.[68] Thus, for instance, in the case of what

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[61] M. Simon, "Alexandre le Grand juif et chrétien," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse* 21 (1941), 177–191.

[62] Duval, *La littérature syriaque…*, pp. 320–322.

[63] V. Poggi, "Alessandro Magno, dal 'Romanzo' alla sura 'della caverna'," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 197–201.

[64] A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, introduced, trans. and annotated by A. Palmer, including two seventh-century Syriac apocalyptic texts introduced, trans. and annotated by Sebastian Brock with added annotation and an historical introduction by Robert Hoyland (Liverpool, 1993), pp. 223, 246.

[65] Budge, "Alexander the Great and Gog and Magog," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 6 (1891), 357–404.

[66] C. Dognini, "Il sogno di Alessandro Magno," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 130–134.

[67] See Merkelbach, *Die Quellen der griechischen Alexanderromans*.

[68] See the information gathered by Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes Orientalis…," pp. 225–232.

we could regard as showing Egyptian influence, we have the cycle of Nectanebus, which seems to draw directly from a demotic source.[69]

It proves a more complex matter of identification for the material known under the label of "Babylonian"[70] which gathers the exploits of Alexander in Persian territory.[71] A case of Babylonian influence that can be called descriptive *topos* is that of Alexander's triumphal entry into a conquered city where a series of descriptive motifs occur which are characteristic of various chronistic traditions. However, in the concrete case of Alexander, we recall a previous Babylonian example mentioned in the known work "Cylinder of Cyro," as well as in the "Nabonides' Chronicle."[72] There we may read about Cyro's triumphal entry into Babylon after Nabonides's surrender, a city where Alexander would enter two centuries later after dethroning Xerxes. The entry of Alexander into Babylon and the ceremonies that go with it seem to have been copied down directly from the "Nabonides' Chronicle," as it is confirmed by the statements included in a Babylonian astronomy little tablet.[73] A second case deals with Cyro's dynastic prophecy, which can also be applied in part to Alexander as a further element of the myth building involving that character.[74]

VII. Structure

The Alexander romance text we know in the current MSS consists of three neatly differentiated sections that coincide in turn with the tripartite division of Codex A of the Greek textual tradition of the PC, as well as with the Latin translation by Julius Valerius. In spite of such structural similarity, the Syriac translation, as we have noted above, was not made directly from a Greek text. The first section consists of

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[69] R. Jasnow, "The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature," *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 56.2 (1997), 95–103.

[70] See, for example, P. Briant, *Histoire de l'Empire perse. De Darius à Alexandre* (Paris, 1996), pp. 739–747, 881–884.

[71] See for instance A. Abel, "La figure d'Alexandre en Iran," in *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano* (Rome, 1966), pp. 119–134.

[72] A. Kuhrt, "Alexander in Babylon," *Achaemenid History* 5 (1990), 121–130.

[73] P. Briant, "Alexandre à Babylone: images grecques, images babyloniennes," in L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler, F. Suard (eds.), *AlGdlLOPO* (Nanterre, 1999), pp. 28–29.

[74] P. Briant, "Alexandre à Babylone," in L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler, F. Suard (eds.), *AlGdlLOPO*, pp. 30–32.

forty-seven chapters whereas the second consists of fourteen and the third, in turn, of twenty-four chapters.

The Syriac Alexander romance has no proper prologue. The very *incipit* of the work consists of a very brief *introitus* whose central element is the title itself ("The History of Alexander the Son of Philip King of the Macedonians," *Tašʿītā d-ʾAleksandrōs bar Fīlīpōs, malkā d-māqdūniyē*). We do have a conclusion, nonetheless, represented by the genre of "discourse of the adieu" that appears in chapter XXII of Budge's edition,[75] and ending up with a brief account of his death and his bequest.[76]

The format of the narrative material of the Syriac version of Alexander romance, as can be seen, proves quite arbitrary in some cases. Nevertheless, the apparent lack of balance of the three sections is a consequence of the narrative imbalance that results from the incoherent division set up by the editors. The actual division of texts, as was the custom amongst ancient writers, is dictated by the actual development of the events narrated.

Those events, assembled by *topoi* of various kinds (battles, geo-anthropological information, biographical elements, etc.) shape the sub-thematic elements that serve to give form to the cycle of Alexander. Therefore, the sequence of those narratological elements represents the narrative units by means of which the author designed the textual order preserved in the Syriac version, together with the shifts and variations involved in all translation and textual development.

In this sense, the textual design of the narrative material in the first section of the Syriac version differs from the Greek text of the *PC*. Also, in the second section eight chapters are missing, probably due to a bowdlerization suffered in the Syriac version as a consequence of the loss of two signatures of the Syriac translation which originated in the Greek textual tradition. The third section, however, follows the order of the Greek text while omitting even the ten chapters inserted in the Greek text of Codex A.

On the other hand, the metrical discourse (*mēmrā*) upon Alexander of Jacob of Sᵉrūgh, according to the typical features of the homiletic technique, shows an epic song with a varied thematic typology. The

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[75] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 247–251 (edition), 139–141 (English version).

[76] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 251–254 (edition), 141–143 (English version).

text begins with a religious introduction (verses 1–30) followed by the presentation of the character as a hero or a wise man raised to fight against evil (verses 31–78), exemplifying through a number of legendary battles and journeys, like the quest for the Water of Life, (an interesting topic typology as far as sources are concerned),[77] the elements that give shape to the core of the discourse (verses 79–410). The denouement of this metrical discourse attributed to Jacob of Serūgh is apocalyptic and consists of several sections: the dream vision of an angel, typical of an apocalyptic text, that reveals the hidden, evil, and terrible things that will eventually come as Judgment draws near (verses 411–538), urging Alexander to write down the vision (verses 539–662). The discourse concludes with a long colophon that maintains an apocalyptic typology that extols the soteriological power of divinity.

In addition to the textual variants of a narrative type that occur in the Syriac Alexander romance compared to the Greek text of the *PC*, two aspects of the Syriac are worth noting: the first is the insertion of the letter by Aristotle.[78] We are faced here with the inclusion of a text that belongs to the apocryphal genre, addressed by the Stagirite philosopher to Alexander where he begs him not to begin the construction of the large city of Alexandria. The text of the letter does not appear either in the Greek or in the Latin text, but it has been received by medieval Hebrew literature through Arabic.[79]

The second aspect of the text is quite large in size and may have derived from a Greek version later to be amplified or reduced in the Syriac translation.[80] It tells about the expedition carried out by Alexander beyond the river Oxus, in Central Asia and China, and the adventures undergone by his troops.[81] This material also appears in the

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[77] Reinink, "Alexander der Große und der Lebensquell," pp. 282–288.

[78] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 70–74 (edition), 42–43 (English version).

[79] G. Tamani, "Un epistolario: le lettere ebraiche di Aristotele e di Alessandro," in R.B. Finazzi and A Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 301–309. See also J. Bielawski, "Lettres d'Aristote à Alexandre le Grand (et lettres d'Alexandre à Aristote) en version arabe," *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 28 (1964), 7–34; J. Bielawski, "Lettres d'Aristote à Alexandre le Grand (et lettres d'Alexandre à Aristote) en version arabe," *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 29 (1965), 7–12.

[80] Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, p. 22.

[81] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. 190–208 (edition), 107–117 (English version).

Islamic Arabic versions, implying that the Syriac text was suitable for assimilation[82] through a number of recensions into Arabic culture.[83]

Looked at in this way, in its present state the work needs a re-ordering of its structure as determined by Budge. This reordering where the tripartite division in three books is maintained, could be done in the following way:

First section

– Prologue (chapters I–XI). Egypt, a traditional country associated with practical magic and power, is the ruler of the world through its visible head, Nectanebus. The appearance of Nectanebus's enemies, as a result of the treason plotted by the Egyptian gods against him, make him flee to Macedonia where Olympias and Philip beg for Nectanebus's interpretative skills so that he could interpret two dreams for them concerning their love relationship and her pregnancy.
– Youth (chapters XII–XIII). Birth of Alexander under the sign of a favorable star, the early years of the young man and his education.
– Adulthood and first exploits (chapters XIV–XVII). At twelve, Alexander is educated in the arts of horseback riding and war, as well as in astronomical secrets. Fate leads him to make his first decisions.
– First victory (chapters XVIII–XIX). The first cart race in which Alexander takes part ends in Alexander's competitive victory.
– Family problems (chapters XX–XXII). The repudiation of Alexander's mother by Philip, her husband who wishes to marry a woman called Cleopatra, is the cause of an initial mutual confrontation, but their reconciliation also brings about the reunion of Philip and Olympias.
– First war exploits and the death of Philip (chapters XXIII–XXIV). The first war descriptions of Alexander show him as peacemaker of

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[82] J.A. Boyle, "The Alexander Romance in the East and West," *BJRULM* 60.1 (1977), 21.

[83] Z.D. Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends Concerning Alexander the Great Taken from Two Medieval Arabic Manuscripts in Madrid*. Introduction, edition, trans., and notes by Z. David Zuwiyya (Binghamton, NY, 2001), pp. 16–20. For the Arabo-Islamic tradition, see also M.M. Mazzaoui, "Alexander the Great and the Arab Historians," *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991), 33–43; and M. Marín, "Legends on Alexander the Great and the Arab Historians," *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991), 71–89. For the Christian Arabic tradition, see Samir, Samir Khalil, "Les versions arabes," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, pp. 227–247, with an extensive bibliography.

internal rebellions, as he put down the rebellions both in Meṯone and in Armenia. Upon his return from the second campaign he arrests one Theodosius, a rich dwarf who is in love with his mother Olympias, and he delivers him to Philip who kills him with a sword. After this Philip dies and is buried by Alexander.

– Uprising against Persian domination (chapters XXIII–XXIV). This block includes a series of sagas around the topic of the war of Persia that can be structured in a related yet also independent way:

  – Exhortation to war and building of an army. (chapters XXV–XXVI)
  – Sea voyage of Alexander and his army across the Mediterranean until the founding of Alexandria. (chapters XXVII–XXXII)
  – Letter of Aristotle to his disciple Alexander so as to persuade him not to build Alexandria, not being heeded by him. (chapter XXXIII)
  – Alexander claims in Egypt that he is Nectanebus's son and incites the Egyptians to rebel against Persian rule. (chapter XXXIV)
  – He arrives in Syria through the port of Tyre and after a second battle he beats the Tyrians and founds Tripoli. (chapter XXXV)

– First contact of Alexander and Darius through mail correspondence (chapters XXXVI–XLI). Darius, informed of Alexander's skills, writes him a letter threatening him with crucifixion. This generates an epistolary relationship full of invectives and insults, only interrupted when Alexander has to come back to Macedonia where Olympias is seriously ill. Alexander promises to destroy Darius upon his return.
– Alexander comes back to Macedonia where his mother recovers her health (chapters XLII–XLIII)
– Peace-making, conquest, and reconstruction of the Greek territory (chapters XLIV–XLVII)

Second section

– Problems in the Athens religious-political structures under the rule of Alexander (chapters I–V)
– Alexander marches against Darius's army and beats it (chapters VI–XI)

– Darius's death at the hands of two hired assassins. Alexander buries
   him with emperor's honors and avenges his death by crucifying his
   assassins (chapters XII–XIII)
– Alexander becomes protector of Darius's family and marries his
   daughter (XIV)

Third Section

– War against Porus's Indian army (chapter I–V). Porus (also named
   Pōl in some Syriac sources),[84] King of Indians, who received a call to
   help from Darius, thinks that there is no sense in fighting Alexander
   now that the Persian king is dead. He returns to India.[85] Alexander
   gathers his powerful army, now formed by Macedonians and Per-
   sians and marches against Porus and his fearful army. After twenty
   exhausting days of fierce fighting Alexander challenges Porus to
   decide victory in a hand-to-hand combat between the two. Porus
   accepts and is defeated by Alexander, and is later buried by him.
– Description of the Brahman way of life (chapters V–VI).
– Letter to Aristotle where Alexander tells about his exploits (chapters
   VII–VIII/1). It is a long digression and serves to summarize the
   exploits of Alexander through the lands of the Far East.
– The episode of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, and Alexander (chap-
   ters VIII/2–XIII), gathers in five and a half chapters a narrative saga
   with its correspondent sub-topic variations.[86]
– Serapis's oracle (chapter XIV), through which Alexander learns about
   his return to Alexandria, is a transition in the narrative thread.
– Alexander and the Amazons (chapters XV–XVII/1) is a brief descrip-
   tion concerning the search and discovery of these fierce women.
– Letter of Aristotle to Alexander and letter in turn of the latter to
   his mother Olympias where he tells about what happened after his
   arrival to Asia (chapters XVII/2–XVIII).

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[84] E. Sackur, *Sybillinische Texte und Forschungen. Pseudomethodius, Adso und die
tiburtinische Sibyle* (Halle, 1898), pp. 29–30.
[85] Concerning this journey, see R. Stoneman, "Romantic Ethnography: Central Asia
and India in the Alexander Romance," *Ancient World* 25 (1994), 93–107.
[86] Regarding this episode, see E. Sackur, *Sybillinische Texte und Forschungen…*,
pp. 28–29.

– Alexander's death prophecy (chapter XIX) begins a final narrative saga around the death of Alexander as a conclusion to the work.[87]
– The conspiracy plot to kill Alexander that leads to an uprising of the Macedonian army who believes him dead, is eventually put down by Alexander himself (chapters XX–XXI).
– Alexander's testament (chapter XXII).
– Alexander's death whereupon his body is brought to Alexandria and buried by Ptolemy[88] (chapter XXIII).
– Appendix (chapter XXIV): Alexander's chronology, the battles, the cities founded by him, and the day of his death.

VIII. Plot

As we have noted in the previous section, the structure of the Alexander romance is clearly unbalanced in the three sections in which the whole of the text is divided. The complex topic variation provided by the sagas yields a text that may be called pluri-thematic.

We are not then faced with a single plot. Obviously all the events that make-up the narrative hinge around the central figure of Alexander. This character is the mover of the thematic cycle generated by his legend. He is referred to in each action of the text and it is only through him that the work's development makes sense. The very sequence of descriptive types (e.g. the Amazons's saga) or argumentative types (e.g. the letter to Aristotle), among others in the work, are mere digressions that fulfil the function of restating the narrative plot by introducing new sagas in such a way that the different cycles follow one another to produce an integral whole.

Three are, in sum, the *horae narrativae* that indicate the thematic *ductus* of the text: 1. Alexander's youth and education; 2. Alexander's military endeavours: against Macedonians and Greek, Persians and Indians; 3. Alexander's testament and death. These three thematic elements, as can be seen in the structure of the work we have noted above, are linked through a series of narrative sequences functioning

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[87] L. Depuydt, "The Time of Death of Alexander the Great," *Die Welt des Orients* 28 (1997), 117–135.

[88] Concerning Alexander's tomb according to Arabic sources, see V. Christides, "The Tomb of Alexander the Great in Arabic Sources," in I.R. Netton (ed.), *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth. I. Hunter of the East: Arabic and Semitic Studies* (Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2000), pp. 165–173.

as transitions. They can be thought of as sub-thematic elements that belong to various textual categories, from digressions to epistolary and descriptive fragments.

Nectanebus, the Egyptian king-magician, goes to Macedonia because the gods have plotted treason. There he enters into contact with Philip and Olympias. Pretending to be Amon, Lybia's god, Nectanebus leaves Olympias pregnant with the child that his adoptive father, Philip, calls Alexander.

Educated by the wisest of men, young Alexander must soon face various political and military situations, also demonstrating his skill in a horse racing competition, so relevant for an ancient hero.

The high quality instruction Alexander received, together with the best co-occurring political circumstances, leads him to set his sights on building an empire unrivaled in the whole of history. Thus the central axis of this work is narratively constituted by the exposition of control of the cities and of Macedonian and Greek territories, the settling of political-religious institutions (very briefly dealt with, but apparent) and the occupation and administration of the Persian Empire[89] unified by Darius. All the sub-themes that shape out each of these cycles are articulated by means of the war topic dealing with the conquest-expansion Alexander undertook to build his empire.

The unwinding of the plot is provided by a narrative modality that underwent an increasing development in late antiquity, namely, the "farewell discourse." The prophecy that foresees Alexander's death opens a cycle by means of the *vaticinium ex eventu* itself and the conspiracy plot to kill Alexander.[90] The central section of this cycle of the death of Alexander is formed by his last will and his death. He is eventually buried in the great city he founded and to which he gave his name.

This plurality of contents or sub-themes seem to be structured around an eschatological concept of great relevance in the Syriac context of the 7th century, which to a great extent gives shape to the literary production of the period. Thus, for instance, the Alexander

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[89] A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Iranians and Alexander," *American Journal of Ancient History* 2 (2003), 5–38.

[90] On the development of the motif of Alexander's death in the various medieval versions, see the ten articles included in W.J. Aerts, Jos. M.M. Hermans, E. Visser (eds.), *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages. Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writing, Symposium Interfacultaire Werkgroep Mediaevistiek, Groningen 12–15 October 1977* (Nijmegen, 1978).

Romace, in this eschatological, apocalyptical environment, becomes one of the main sources of eschatological texts among which the well-known "Apocalypse" by Pseudo-Methodius stands out.[91]

As happens with other Syriac works belonging to the apocalyptic genre, but above all in the recension of "Exploits of Alexander" to which we have referred above, the Alexander romance has an important programmatic content of propagandistic typology so as to vindicate the prestige of emperor Heraclius as defeater of the Sassanide Persian army,[92] by resorting to the identification of Heraclius with Alexander. The latter represents then the paradigm of the emperor, who for the Syriac translator-writer, is obviously the Christian emperor guided by God's inspiration in his earthly actions. Thus, Alexander represents, as happens in the *mēmrā* attributed to Jacob of Sᵉrūgh, the pious emperor who is entrusted with the divine mission of founding a universal empire ruled by divine law.[93]

In agreement with this portrayal of King Alexander, the varied thematic structure that shapes the Alexander romance represents a type of redemptive history (*historia salutis*) where the events that occur, either of a political, warlike or moral nature, are in fact actions triggered by the divinity. In the Alexander romance the divine element is represented by Nectanebus, whereas in the christianized "Exploits of Alexander" it is obviously none other than the Christian God. In the case of the Alexander romance we are faced with a vision of the concept of history that is soteriological rather than political, and therefore utopic. The "story" opens and closes with Alexander as a model to be imitated: a faithful king who imposes divine will on earth. This soteriological frame reaches its climax in the "Testament" (III,22). In this chapter, in imitation of Christ sending his apostles to spread the good news throughout the world, Alexander gives out his empire to his collaborators so that they can continue the work he had started.

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[91] G.J. Reinink, "'Rede über das Ende' und die syrische eschatologische Literatur des siebenten Jahrhunderts," *Aram* 5 (1993), 437–463. See also F.J. Martínez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1996), pp. 18–19, and Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, pp. 223, 239.

[92] Reinink, "Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende…," in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz and L. van Rompay (eds.), *After Chalcedon…*, pp. 263–281.

[93] G.J. Reinink, "Alexandre et le dernier empereur du monde: les développements du concept de la royauté chrétienne dans les sources syriaques deu septième siècle," in L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler, F. Suard (eds.), *AlGdlLOPO*, pp. 152–154.

The figure of Alexander, therefore, though a non-Christian hero, was liable to be converted into a model for Christian legends[94] that the format of the recensions cleverly adapted in the Syriac tradition. In this process, the translation of Alexander romance had, no doubt, a first order value.

IX. Narrative Techniques and Style

The Alexander romance is, through a translation, the product of a textual crossroads: an original Greek text through the mediation of a Neo-Persian version. The original textual conventions adopted in recension δ of the Greek *PC* are recast in the Neo-Persian version, and, in this way, the basic elements of its constitutive character, such as those of "originality," "convention," and "influence," are re-defined.

This "archaeology of the text" plays a most relevant role throughout the work, since the structural plurality underlying the text and representing a previous version from a different language and culture, is present in the mind of the translator and requires him or her to negotiate between textual traditions contained within the text at hand as well as between these and his or her own language and culture. The translator's work on the Alexander romance demands that he or she undertake an *imitatio* on the text that will lead, inescapably, to its regeneration.

Even if only by means of insignificant elements, all translation does, to some extent, perform an adaptation through which the translator contributes to the themes underlying the work. In this sense, a characteristic feature of the Syriac translation is the misreading of the spellings of proper names, since these can only be accounted for by assuming a Neo-Persian source. On the other hand, the specific use of neologisms and semantic calques are a direct result of the translator exercising his or her art on the text.

The elements that the translator gradually modifies through amalgamation, amplification, or elision of components throughout the text are numerous: they amount to a succession of descriptive and monological frames, typically epistolographic (i.e. the correspondence between Alexander and Darius), as well as dialogic sequences that cre-

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[94] See A. Abel, "Dû l-Qarnayn, Prophète de l'universalité," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 11 (1951), 5–18.

ate a narrative atmosphere suitable for a varied use of figurative and tropological elements.

As in many other works, the Alexander romance ignores Aristotle's division between fiction and didactic literature, as the boundaries of the literary genres were not yet well defined during that period. Although it is a structurally repetitive work, the thematic variations provide a particular narrative dynamism, lacking, however, in well crafted transitions between the different narrative frames, which sometimes gives the reader the impression that the episodes have been haphazardly thrown together. For example, on the journey from Prasiake through Asia, the most common bridge between episodes is the equivalent of a simple "then we saw" or "when we left that land" (Budge, 1889, pp. 96–101). Additionally, the linearity of the story itself lacks a rigorous chronology. This causes the work to be inserted in an atemporal textual space that neutralizes places and historical times.

In the Alexander romance, rather than dealing with a narrator properly speaking we should be referring to a discursive modality known as *narratio*. This technique, an essential element in the development of the romance's content, properly addresses the organization and exposition of the narrative material. The *narratio*, in fact, adjusts constantly to the changing narratological frames within the work: digressions of a historical nature, epistolary sequences, prefaces and introductions to specific episodes. Thus the text uses a 3rd person narrator with limited omnisicience during the Nectanebus episode in Book 1 and also a first-person narrator during Book 3, Chapter 7 for the well-known letter to Aristotle concerning the wonders of India.

In the concrete case of the Syriac version of the Alexander romance, the translator/narrator of the Syriac Alexander romance is not interested in history in and of itself, but rather as a means to carry out his purpose of modeling the figure of Alexander as a hero in all his legendary dimensions: in the human, political, and military aspects, etc. This is the reason why he chooses the narrative segments that best contribute to modeling the archetype of the hero's character from among a variety of source texts. To be sure the reader grasps his intentions, the translator/narrator reworks the literary commonplaces, which as far as the Syriac is concerned derive from the Hellenistic and Persian historiographical tradition.

It is in this sense that the digressions, the value judgments or the discursive argumentation of typology of which the narrator avails himself, emerge in his narratological model. For example, Budge writes in

his 1889 translation of the Nectanebus episode that Olympias "for a long time played a harlot with a man, thinking he was a god" (p. 8), by which the narrator condemns the queen's conduct as reprehensible. Elsewhere, the narrator compares Alexander to Ulysses, by which he praises the hero (p. 29). The narrator handles the presentation of Alexander's childhood, by using motifs and authentic topics from the socio-historical frame typical of the sources consulted in the composition of the work. The first educative period was followed by his political performance and later on his military achievements, and to that end he makes use of known *topoi* of biographical typology, such as the prodigious signs accompanying his birth (p. 12), his comparison with a lion (p. 13), his skill as horseman (p. 14), his act of patricide (p. 15).

It is a commonplace to say that the Alexander romance became one of the most-read books of the Middle Ages because of its artistic value. Alexander himself, the main character of the romance, became a superhuman being in the eyes of his contemporary readers, invading in turn other literary genres. The Alexander romance, in a way, allows for the reconstruction of social and cultural canons of the time, and their contemporaries regarded the work as an accurate portrayal of its historical context.

The main characters protagonizing the different episodes of the Alexander romance are part of a microcosm. Those characters have been shaped by means of *topoi* that gather various traits: geographical, historical, cultural, etc., like threads of a structural tapestry woven *ad hoc*. Their stories form part of a historiographic-narrative tradition that harks back to the Hellenistic period, with conflations of autobiography and the epistolary narrative of the heroes through monologic and dialogic devices. As seems apparent, this classical tradition has concrete interferences with regard to characters by means of the technique of *contaminatio*, e.g. the Christian interpolation at the moment of the death of the Persian king Darius.

The narrative product generated by the narrator as far as characterization is concerned proves very interesting, as we are faced here with an acute observer of character, and further still, with an excellent designer of human archetypes. The dialectic relations between the characters created by the narrator by dint of polarizing descriptions of their moral status generate symbolic associations that draw and define the characters' traits and mold their eventual narrative development. Whereas Alexander is treated like a mythical character who possesses

all virtues, the other characters are variously rated according to the social station each one occupies, inspired by human archetypes which lie beneath Alexander himself. Thus, we offer here a classification of the main characters grouped according to the function they fulfill in the work.

A) Main characters
    a) in favor: Nectanebus (representing Amon, Heracles, Dionysus), Olympias, Philip
    b) against: Darius, Porus, Qerātōr, Antipater, Iollas, Cassander.

B) Secondary
    a) Transitional: Pythia, Zintōs, Nicolaus, Cleopatra, Lysias, Theosidos, Guštāzaf, Sābānṭār, Clitomachus, Aeschines, Demades, Demosthenes, Pasargēs, Bāgīz, ʾĀnābdēh, Gundāfār, Paryōg, Prīsqōs, Ptolemy.
    b) Authoritative: Aristotle.
    c) Digressive: the Brahmans, the Amazons, Candace.
    d) Prophetic: Antiphon the augur, the woman with the four-headed monster (III,19).
    e) Residual: Rōšnāq, Yirāndūḵt, ʾEṣṭehar (Darius's daughter, mother, and wife, respectively).

Characterization aside, the most outstanding stylistic features in the work relate to the the aura of tragedy that pervades the scene at every moment. Within this setting, parallelism as a rhetorical figure plays a constant role by linking the sequential episodes from the beginning to the end of the story. This procedure determines the structure of the work, thus establishing a kind of logical subordination in the text that provides it with a symmetric internal arrangement in which the linearity of the story is laid out through a process of parallel thematic actions. Thus the conquests of Persia, India, China, the Amazons, etc. begin with epistolary correspondence, follow with confrontation (sometimes preceded by a disguised visit) and submission, and ultimately end with some act of kindness or generosity on the hero's part.

    Alongside this continuous succession of episodes of the Alexander romance, historiography and biography frequently mix and conflate. Both of them require abundant description of objects, things, and places. So we are constantly provided with descriptions of the integral parts of machines (e.g. the battering ram, p. 57), the qualities of beasts

(e.g. the phoenix, p. 101), the circumstances of remote tribes (e.g. the barbarians who killed Philon, pp. 94–95), etc. as if the narrator were describing with figurative livelihood those elements he has previously experienced.

The description is completed with other elements such as prosopography, thanks to which the narrator offers interesting external descriptive frames of groups such as the Brahmans. The ethopeia, or inner description, is less frequent and describes the moral qualities of peoples such as the Gog and Magog. By joining the elements of prosopography and ethopeia, in one single element, one gets a portrait, such as that of Candace or Darius, wherein the narrator reveals a physical and moral profile of the characters.

One other descriptive element of great repercussion in this work is topography. It has been used by the narrator to describe places such as the darkness (pp. 131–132). In these descriptions he includes traits such as color ("white horses"; p. 132), smell ("foetid odour"; p. 18), taste ("more bitter than bitter herbs"; p. 96), weights ("I commanded that the shavings from the borings should be weighed, and they weighed 1300 mithkals of gold"; p. 131), which stem from empirical historiography and which provide authentic data from the socio-historical substratum of the work. Thus, descriptive *topoi* such as the rapid and brief enumeration of objects and ideas are very frequent in the text. The purpose of these figures is to endow the enumerated objects with a visual reference encompassing the qualifying and the quantifying, always with the aim of historiographic realism.

The pathos of the work is evident in the figures that describe the emotion in the text. In this sense, the apostrophes ("O good king"; p. 130 or "O ruler of men"; p. 135) normally interrupt the narrative development so as to emphasize an element or a character, or to isolate the speaking character from the narrative frame. Also present in the work, are other dramatic figures: for example, the augury ("Now thou hast vanquished Nicolaus; so also wilt thou vanquish all nations…"; p. 28 and also the oracle of Apollo, p. 5), the oath (Iollas and Cassander; p. 136), the urging ("Be not distressed, O Roshnak"; p. 137), and the insult (he calls the Thebans "effeminate men who live in cages" and says they should "die like young girls"; p. 57).

Rhetorical figures belonging to the lexical-semantic level are the hyperbole (e.g. the mashkelath or odontotyrannus bigger than an elephant, pp. 97–98) and the personification (i.e. trees of the sun and

moon; p. 105), both present in narrative frames that we may classify as supra-natural. Also, the narrator uses logical figures, such as the sentence or maxim that on occasion close off discourse as an epiphonema ("They are many but tasteless" said Alexander upon chewing the sesame seeds and Darius's parallel response "They are small buy very pungent"; p. 54 or "Horses may be found in many places, but Macedonians cannot be found everywhere"; p. 56). Quite frequent is the simile ("arrows and missiles…fell like lightning" pp. 57–58), which provides the text with some narrative dynamism.

Figures like synecdoche and metonymy, metaphor, allegory, prophecy are part and parcel of the translator's repertoire. They aid in enlivening the enumeration, conveying meaning, foreshadowing, and creating symbolic associations. Metaphors like the sea and the land, for instance, play a relevant role in creating dynamism in Alexander's constant travels. As pure metaphors, the sea and land become archetypes of the movement in the hero's life. Above all, they should be understood as pointing towards a change of model: from the *polis* to empire, from chief or ruler to emperor. The sea also has a bivalent sense: it is, simultaneously, the place of death and the return to life. Land and sea, constantly ploughed through by Alexander become key plot elements that signal a non-return point in history. They are the incessant progress of the narrative thread towards the final anagnorisis.

The work may be viewed, through the prism of the historiographical-legendary narrative model, on two levels: one moral and the other historical. Exemplified through Alexander's performances, the two together project a dual historical dimension: that of Hellenism as a new historical, geographic, political and cultural framework and that of the new monarch as a supra-dimensional character who gathers together ethical and moral perfection.

This new historical dimension implies a progressive break with the prior model: there is a passage from the milieu of the *polis* to empire in all its potential: geographic, political, religious and cultural. As the narrator depicts the gradual process of colonization, he not only changes the geographic environment, but also the political register and in doing so gives shape to the so-called "spiritual culture of Hellenism."

From the geographic viewpoint, the narrator does not rely on an exact topography.[95] Undoubtedly, the East is the romance's point of reference, but the physical and ideological core is Alexandria (Book 1, Chapters 31–33), which represents the supra-dimensional model of the new archetypes: big buildings as the model of a gigantic empire, the very image of its emperor.

The main thrust of the work is didactic. Nevertheless, its didacticism is only part of the apparatus brought together in support of a fictional historiographic type whose ultimate purpose is to obtain a dramatic story. In the romance, "historical faithfulness" is constantly at the service of historical drama that performs history through the character of Alexander.

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[95] A.R. Anderson, "Alexander at the Caspian Gates," *TPAPA* 59 (1928), 130–163; F. Pfister, "Studien zur Sagengeographie," *Symbolae Osloenses* 35 (1959), 22–28.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ALEXANDER ROMANCE IN THE ARABIC TRADITION

Z. David Zuwiyya

Introduction

Alexander's story permeated many genres of medieval Arabic litera-
ture including history, geography, wisdom literature, Quranic exe-
gesis, and stories of the prophets. For some he was considered *nabī*
[prophet], while for others he was *walī Allah* [friend of God]. They
called him Dhulqarnayn—the Two-Horned—and al-Iskandar. Some
authors joined the two figures while others treated them separately.
Al-Ṭabarī, a ninth-century author, reflects the dichotomy surround-
ing the Macedonian conqueror by narrating Dhulqarnayn's life and
deeds in his *Tafsīr*, an exegetical study of the Quran, and Alexander's
story in his *Ta'rīkh* [annales], an historical work. News of Alexander
may have reached Arabia from the Syriac as early as 514 A.D.[1] and
circulated orally in Mecca and Medina before the revelation of the
Quran since it is included in sura 18:83–98. Fahd says that a second
version of the Alexander romance was translated directly from Pehlevi
into Arabic and used by the early historians (30). Given the nature
of the Quranic account, it was probably not Quintus Curtius, Arrian,
or Plutarch who contributed to the original Arabian conception of
Alexander, but rather the legendary material that spawned from the
Alexander romance. With the expansion of the Islamic empire, Ara-
bic authors gathered legends concerning Alexander from Persia in
the east to al-Andalus in the west and blended them with material
from the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (*PC*). As part of the adoption process,

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[1] A.R. Nykl (ed.), *Rrekontamiento del rrey Alisandre*, in *Revue Hispanique* 77
(1929), pp. 444–445. See also K.F. Weymann, *Die aethiopische und arabische Ueber-
setzung des Pseudo-Callisthenes* (Kirchain, 2001), pp. 64–65. On the other hand,
F. Corriente says that the translations from the Syriac into Arabic must have ocurred
between the seventh and eighth centuries. See "Dos elementos folklóricos comunes
en la versión etiópica de la leyenda de Alejandro y la literatura árabe." *Al-Andalus* 32
(1967), p. 225.

Western-Arabic authors gave Alexander a lineage tying him to Spain or North Africa, while an Arab author of Persian origin like al-Ṭabarī claimed he was the son of King Darius.[2]

This essay makes observations on the authorship, dating, language, and theme of a group of representative texts from the medieval Arabic Alexander tradition. In the second part of the essay, we highlight the episodes that define the Arabic Alexander tradition. Where appropriate we point out important distinctions between the numerous versions as well as their commonalities.

The Quran

The Muslim holy book transmits a fragmentary version of Alexander's story in the sura titled Al-Kahf [The Cave] (18:83–98).[3] He is called Dhulqarnayn, a nickname for which the most diverse explanations have been invented. In light of the beginning episodes in the *PC*, it seems most reasonable that the name 'Two-Horned' is attributable to his relationship with the two-horned Egyptian god, Amon,[4] although the Arab texts seem to prefer to attribute the nickname to his arrival in the lands of sunrise and sunset.[5] In the aftermath of Muhammad's revelation and with the first attempts to understand the allusive words

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[2] For his Andalusian origin see I. Friedlaender, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman*, (Leipzig, 1913), p. 276; for his Persian origin see al-Ṭabarī below.

[3] For a comparison of the Alexander material in sura 18 Al-Kahf [The Cave] with another narrative fragment in this sura concerning Moses, al-Khiḍr, and the Water of Life, namely 18:59–64, where Alexander appears as Moses, who is also reputed to have two horns, see V. Poggi, "Alessandro Magno, dal 'Romanzo' alla sura 'della caverna'," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM* (1998), pp. 197–208.

[4] T. Fahd gives a numismatic explanation and says that the nickname comes "en raison de sa représentation sur les monnaies hellénistiques avec les cornes d'Amon," in "La version arabe du roman d'Alexandre," *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991), 27. He bases his opinion on R.S. Poole, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. The Ptolemies Kings of Egypt*, vol. 1, (London, 1883), pp. 1–10. Poole's book is available at http://www.archive.org/stream/cataloguegreekc02medagoog.

[5] See, for example, Nykl (ed.), *Rrek.*: "¿Por que se lombra [i.e., nombra] a-Dzu-l-qarneini? Disso: Rrekontome Hisam, hijo de Kaʿbi, disso: ke tenia dos kuernos ke ligaba sobrellos sus tokas. Disso: enpero lonbrolo Allah a-Dzu-l-qarneini porkel llego a los kabos de la tierra, a sol saliente i-a sol poniente" (475). García Gómez gives eleven reasons that Arabic authors offer for his nickname in *Un texto árabe occidental de la leyenda de Alejandro Magno*, (Madrid, 1929), p. xlviii, n. 1. In *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, Ibn al-Jawzī gives twelve reasons for the nickname (f. 77v) each according to a different authority. An excellent study of Alexander's nickname is A.R. Anderson, "Alexander's Horns," *TPAPA* 58 (1927), 100–122.

of the Quran, there was some debate among scholars of *tafsīr* [Quranic commentary] as to Dhulqarnayn's identification with Alexander the Great because of the discrepancy between the exemplary moral character of the Quranic Dhulqarnayn and the overly ambitious Greek Alexander. In the full-length Arabic Alexander romances, the pious Quranic king and the excessively proud pagan conqueror were for the most part reconciled[6] by evoking the humanity of Alexander and developing the episodes in Alexander's life from which he learned to overcome arrogance and materialism, such as the death of Darius and the expedition through the Land of Darkness to the Water of Life. Because Dhulqarnayn appears in the Quran, Muslim scholars were obliged to show not only his moral rectitude but also how he fit in the line of prophecy. As a result of these discussions, Dhulqarnayn was assigned to the ambiguous category of a "friend of God."[7]

The content of Alexander's versicules in sura 18 may be summarized as follows: God has granted Dhulqarnayn the means to all ends. He travels to the land of the setting sun where he witnesses the sun set in a pool of mud. Nearby are some tribes that resist the sun's intense heat. Subsequently, he arrives at the land of the rising sun whose people are in an uproar against their unruly neighbors. God has omitted to give any protection to the inhabitants of the land of the rising sun so that they might shield themselves from the blazing sun. Finally, Dhulqarnayn arrives at a narrow gap between two mountains. He builds a barrier to enclose the Gog and Magog and at the same time predicts that they will break out and swarm the earth on Judgment Day.

The only version of the Arabic Alexander legend for which a source has been positively identified is that of the Quran. Nöldeke in his *Beiträge* showed definitively that Muhammad's news on Alexander derives from the Syriac legend (32).

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[6] This reconciliation of the dual identity is evident at the beginning of the *Rrek.*: "Era Dzu-l-qarneini, ke su lombre era Aleçkandar" (p. 467).

[7] When asked directly if Alexander was a prophet, Muhammad responds in the *Rrek.* that he was not a prophet but was rather an "amigo de sus amigos" (p. 470), probably a translation of *walīy min auliyāʾ Allah*. Alexander is called "walī de Allah" in *Rrek.* (p. 471). The narrator of the *Rrek.* goes on to explain that if he had been a prophet he would have had to come from either Mecca or Jerusalem (p. 470). *QD* (p. 162) also requires provenance from one of these two holy cities for prophethood. Abel says that, by the eleventh century, Dhulqarnayn "était parvenu, au terme de ses aventures ultra-terrestres, au rang de Prophète de la Vraie Religion," in "Du'l Qarnayn, Prophète de l'Universalité," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 11 (1951), 15.

Rrekontamiento del rrey Ališandre (Rrek.)

The *Rrek.* is an anonymous full-length Alexander romance written in Aragonese Spanish using characters of the Arabic alphabet. This type of writing is called aljamía or aljamiado.[8] Works of aljamía are generally translations of Arabic texts so literally rendered that the resulting language can be at times difficult to comprehend. According to Nykl, the editor of the only scholarly edition of the *Rrek.* (1929), the anonymous Morisco translator of the Arabic original for the *Rrek.* may have been a "half-learned alfaqui" (443), with a limited knowledge of both Castilian and Arabic.[9]

The *Rrek.* is preserved in a sole manuscript consisting of 129 folios in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (Colección Gayangos 48). At the end of the manuscript we find some notes written in Aljamiado among which there is a reference to the new moon of Ramadan in the year 1588, which suggests the date of the copy. The manuscript has 32 epigraphs in red, written in both Aljamiado and Arabic, that describe miniatures that were displayed in the Arabic original, which suggests that the Aljamiado-Morisco translation was made from a valuable and probably well preserved Arabic manuscript.[10]

Of the Arabic original, Friedlaender surmises a North African authorship due to the fact that at the head of the work the primary source is identified as ʿAbd al-Rahmān ibn Ziyād, who we believe to be a cadi in Ifrīqīa (i.e. Libya) who died in 778 A.D.[11] According to Ibn Ḥajar, the consensus among scholars of the 12th century was that this ʿAbd al-Rahmān was an untrustworthy transmitter because his hadith were often based on suspect sources, potentially of Judeo-Christian

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[8] Aljamía may also use the Hebrew alphabet and may include texts in other languages such as Portuguese. See the above chapter on the Jewish Alexander tradition for an example of Old French being transliterated in the Hebrew alphabet. For a historical study of aljamía in Spain, see G.A. Wiegers, *Yça Gidell (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors: a Historical Study of Islamic literature in Spanish and Aljamiado*, (Leiden, 1991).

[9] We owe the first edition to Guillén Robles (1888).

[10] A typical epigraph reads as follows: "*Sūratu* la fegura Dzi-l-qarneini *wa quddāmahu* i delante del *jamāʿtun* konpannaš de loš de Jūji wa Mājūji *wa huwa* i-el *qad rafaʿa* ke ya abia *yadahu* su mano *bi çeifihi* kon su spada *li yiḍrabahum* para ferirlos *bihi* kon el" (p. 480, italics mine to indicate Arabic words).

[11] "Fue rrekontado por ʿAbdu-r-Raḥmāni fijo Beni Ziyādi-bn fijo Anʾumin…" (*Rrek.*, p. 466). See Nykl, p. 576; Friedlaender, *Chadhirlegende*, p. 174.

origin.[12] We believe that the *Rrek.* represents a very complete version of the Arabic Alexander romance dating back to as early as the eighth century, according to the sources mentioned in the text such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d. ca. 652), Ibn ʿAbbās[13] (d. ca. 687), and Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 757). While it is possible that the chains of transmitters found in the text are fictitious, one must question why a later author or scribe would falsely attribute a manuscript to authorities who had become widely discredited by the 12th century.[14]

The scribe/translator's attempt to write in Castilian—the dominant language of his day—is often undermined by the seeping influence of Aragonese, belying the origin of the text, as well as by his desire to preserve the text's Arabic character in the interest of which he leaves sporadic words untranslated. Thus one finds Aragonesisms such as "lor" for the possessive "su," the future "morrán" for "morirán," the verbs "amuchecer" and "apoquecer," the deviant verb stem "siguirán," "vencita" for "triunfo" and "fuir" for "huir."[15] Other examples are "fer" for "hacer" (232), "fiyos" for "hijos" (235), "salimiento" for "salida" (234), "enemiganza" for "enemistad" (245), and "se te ha decamiado tu color" (243) where "decamiar" stands out as an Aragonesism. Arabic words remaining in the text after the translation often have religious connotation such as *lauḥ* [tablet] referring to Adam's book, *ar-rakʿa* [prostration], or *šayṭān* [devil]. But this is not always the case as in *naʿam* [yes] or *khaleqar* [to create], the latter of which is a hybrid composed of Arabic root and Spanish morpheme.

With respect to the religious convictions of the 16th century Morisco translator, we recognize traces of his resistance to Christianity, which he is forced to profess. For example, he states that Allah has no children, equals or companions, which is probably a reaction to the Christian doctrine of the trinity.[16]

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[12] Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 6, (Beirut, 1968), pp. 173–176.

[13] For an excellent study of Ibn ʿAbbās's impact on early Quranic commentary see I. Goldfeld, "The Tafsīr of Abdallah b. ʿAbbās," *Der Islam* 58 (1981), 125–135.

[14] For a possible relationship between the Aljamiado *Rrek.* and the Syriac, see K. Van Bladel, "The Syriac Sources of the Early Arabic Narratives of Alexander," in H. Prabha Ray and D. Potts (eds.), *Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia* (New Delhi, 2007), pp. 54–75.

[15] All the previous examples from Guillen Robles's edition, p. 231, MS fol. 83. Following examples are also from Guillén Robles's edition.

[16] "…ke no konbiene en kaya a el fillo, ni igwal, ni konpannero en su reismo…" (*Rrek.*, p. 522).

Qiṣṣat Dhulqarnayn

The transmitter mentioned above, ʿAbd al-Rahmān ibn Ziyād, is also identified at the beginning of *Qiṣṣat Dhulqarnayn* (*QD*), another full-length Arabic Alexander romance similar to the *Rrek.*, but at the same time distinct from the Morisco text because of its inclusion of numerous Islamic legends not found in the *Rrek.* The text of *QD* begins: "This book contains the story of Dhulqarnayn […] which is transmitted by ʿAbd al-Rahmān ibn Ziyād."[17] Another transmitter mentioned frequently in *QD* is the eighth-century North African ʿAbd al-Malik al-Malshūnī.[18] From the number of times that the listed author ʿAbd al-Rahmān cites ʿAbd al-Malik al-Malshūnī, it is possible that former received substantial parts of his text through the "samʿ method"[19] from ʿAbd al-Malik al-Malshūnī. At the same time, numerous ascriptions in *QD* suggest that ʿAbd al-Malik received many episodes through the mediation of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, including the introductory hadith that serves as frame story.[20] *QD* is represented by two manuscripts, MS 5379 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid and MS Árabe 61 of the Colección Gayangos (Real Academia de la Historia). For a modern edition and English translation, see Zuwiyya (2001).

The language of *QD* may be characterized as Classical Arabic with regular interference from the Middle Arabic of a Spanish Arabic scribe, whose origins are also evident in his use of a Western Arabic script. The scribe reveals his linguistic background by using frequent vocalizations at a time when short vowels in determined contexts were disappearing from the spoken language. Furthermore, he deployed an extensive system of negation, maintained the dual, and failed to maintain contrast between consonants, all of which point to hypercorrection, and an unsuccessful attempt to write in Classical Arabic.[21]

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[17] Z.D. Zuwiyya (ed.), *Islamic Legends concerning Alexander the Great*, (Binghamton, NY, 2001), p. 62.

[18] See Yāqūt ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥamawī. *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut, 1957), vol. 5, p. 192.

[19] See Chapter Three of J. Pederson's *The Arabic Book*, G. French (trans.), R. Hillenbrand (ed.), (Princeton, 1984).

[20] See the model for the evolution of *QD* in Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, p. 46. See also p. 68, n. 15 for a complete list of occasions on which ʿAbd al-Malik al-Malshūnī cites Muqātil ibn Sulaymān in *QD*.

[21] For a more in-depth linguistic study, see Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, pp. 48–57.

Alexander's character is marked by his predestination to play a role in God's plan for the earth.[22] His lineage ties him to Abraham (75),[23] hence he belongs to a long line of prophets. His ascent into the heavens beneath the wing of the angel Raphael links the deeds of Alexander with those of Muhammad in a prefigural relationship, as does his mounting of the Alborak (81), the same fabulous animal the Prophet mounted for his *miʿrāj* [ascent]. The nature of Alexander's worldly temptation in *QD* is slightly different than in western versions. Rather than a rise to power and wealth with the accompanying growth of the hero's pride, in *QD* Alexander is tempted by the limits of his geographical explorations and by the immortality he seeks in the Water of Life located at the heart of the earth's darkness. The moral lesson he learns brings on a great purge in his character and we believe that it has been strategically placed just after he emerges from the darkness, but before he triumphantly conquers Persia, India, China and the west.[24] His character after this pivotal point is decidedly more ascetic. The narrator symbolically represents this asceticism in the episode relating Alexander's abstention from the collecting of jewels in the riverbed (137).

Hadīth Dhulqarnayn (HD)

Another anonymous text from the Arabic Alexander tradition is *HD*.[25] The author of *HD* may have identified himself at the beginning of the manuscript. However, the manuscript containing *HD* is acephalous, missing the first five folios. Anderson (1931) believes that *HD* may be the very same Arabic text used to make the Ethiopian, however a close comparison reveals substantial differences that might rule out a direct relationship. Regarding the scribes,[26] García Gómez says that their Arabic was of the Andalusian dialect and that it is full of vulgarisms and errors indicative of the decadence of Morisco knowledge of

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[22] These comments on Alexander's character serve as well for the *Rrek.*
[23] All references are to page numbers in the Zuwiyya edition of 2001.
[24] For the catharsis Alexander undergoes, see Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, pp. 136–137.
[25] García Gómez takes the title from the text itself wherein the narrator closes the work by saying that "This is what has come down to us inasmuch as concerns the Hadith of Dhulqarnayn" (f. 47v; trans. mine).
[26] There are two clearly distinguishable handwritings in the manuscript.

their linguistic heritage.[27] The orthography is characteristic of Western Arabic.[28] The final hamza is suppressed. Final *waw* is occasionally followed by *alif*. One finds assimilation of long vowels and of consonants. Frequent are the substitutions of one letter for another, such as /d/ for /dh/ and /s/ for /š/.[29] Short vowels become long vowels to assure their pronunciation; other times it is the reverse. One finds simple errors in the formation of plurals, in the inflections, and in concordance, all probably more characteristic of a decadent knowledge of Classical Arabic on the part of a scribe writing in Middle Arabic than of a particular dialect or region.[30] *HD* is preserved in MS number 27 of the former Manuscritos árabes y aljamiados de la Biblioteca de la Junta now held in Madrid at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC).[31] The Alexander legend occupies folios 1–51r.[32] The manuscript containing *HD* is from the 15th century, says García Gómez, with a possible date suggested in the text of 1459–1460.[33] For a modern edition and Spanish translation, see García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental de la leyenda de Alejandro Magno* (1929).

HD begins in mid sentence, "Y tú posees las cualidades propias de los reyes. Que Alá te ayude a cumplir la misión que te ha encomendado y colme tus aspiraciones."[34] Since we do not have the beginning of *HD*, it is impossible to say whether or not this version includes Olympias' relationship with Nectanebus and Alexander's illegitimate birth. However, given the pious tone of the rest of the work, it would

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[27] García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, p. lxxxviii.

[28] I follow the excellent study of García Gómez for the linguistic features of *HD* (*Un texto árabe occidental*, pp. lxxxvii–xcv).

[29] I. Ferrando, *Introducción a la historia de la lengua árabe: Nuevas perspectivas.* (Zaragoza, 2001), p. 163.

[30] See Ferrando's comments on *HD* in *Introducción a la historia de la lengua árabe*, pp. 154–155.

[31] The collection once called Manuscritos de la Junta has been moved to the Biblioteca del Instituto de Filología del CSIC in Madrid. It has been digitized in a four cd-rom set with title *Colección de manuscritos árabes y aljmiados de la Biblioteca del Instituto de Filología del CSIC*. Madrid: CSIC, 1998.

[32] Missing are folios 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12. García Gómez edits through f. 47v after which point he says one finds an "absolutamente vulgar" version of the episode of al-Khiḍr to the Water of Life (p. lxxxvi).

[33] See García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, pp. lxxviii–lxxxiv. The text prophecizes that the enclosure of Gog and Magog will fail in the year 864, which García Gómez says "corresponde a los años 1459–1460 de J.C.; fecha que puede aludir a algún acontecimiento del islam español, o a la época en que se escribía el códice, para cuya datación sirve desde luego," in *Un texto árabe occidental*, p. cxxxviii.

[34] García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, p. 3.

be difficult to imagine that the author would include such a scandalous episode at the outset of a story concerning one of Islam's holy men. At the conclusion of the work, one finds a unique account of Alexander's death by poison in Yemen at the hand of Juman, the Queen of the Amazons.[35] There is no condemnation of Alexander for the sin of pride. To the contrary, the work concludes with Juman regretting having killed Alexander.[36] At each of the narrative moments in which one finds criticism of Alexander's pride and ambition in the *Rrek.* and in *QD*, the author of *HD* has apparently toned down or removed altogether any negative language. Darius issues no warning to Alexander before his last breath, as he does elsewhere,[37] nor does the old man in the cemetery or the king of the jinn criticize Alexander. The King of China hints at his growing pride by attributing the Macedonian's success to God's will ("no es este poder un beneficio que tú posees, sino un castigo de Alá y una prueba que Alá inflige mediante ti a quienes quiere perder" (*HD*, trans., pp. 28–29), but his words never directly question Alexander's ambitions of knowledge or conquest. The angel of the mountain comes closer than others in *HD* to criticism of Alexander's aspirations:

> Sabe, Dulcarnain, que tú has recorrido lugares que nadie recorrió antes que tú; mas no te glories ni te ensoberbezcas; que si hiciste eso, fue porque Alá te dio fuerzas,…, y Alá puede quebrar tus aspiraciones, en menos de un abrir y cerrar de ojos" (*HD*, trans., p. 33).

Even during the culmination of the episode to the Water of Life, where in other versions Alexander experiences a catharsis upon receiving the terrible lesson that God has sent to him in the form of a mysterious stone, the author of *HD* dissipates the emotional charge of al-Khiḍr's interpretion of the stone as Alexander responds only, "Verdad dices" (*HD*, trans., p. 51) without the wrenching sobs one finds in other versions. The author portrays Alexander early in the narrative during his coronation scene as one who is committed to conquering the earth but who at the same time is totally submissive to Allah. The crowds cheer him on:

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[35] García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, pp. 103–108.

[36] "Esto es lo que ha llegado a nosotros de su historia, así como que aquella mujer al cabo se arrepintió de haberle matado," in García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, p. 108.

[37] See García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, pp. 12–13.

¡Alá haga durar tu dicha! ¡Alá te conceda la victoria sobre tus enemigos y te someta a los reyes del mundo entero, y te permita conquistar las tierras, y enseñorearte de ellas hasta que estés satisfecho!" Entonces él les dijo: "Ya he oído vuestros discursos. Pidamos ahora a Alá el alto que me conceda su ayuda, vuestra compañía y la justicia. Yo espero de la ayuda de Alá que no he de someterme a ningún rey de la tierra. Yo espero que Alá me dé su auxilio y su ayuda. No temáis que haya en mí debilidad, si Alá quiere, pues, en verdad, Alá obra como le place (*HD*, trans., pp. 3–4).

In sum, Alexander's character is pious throughout *HD*, even more so than in the *Rrek.* and *QD*. He never approaches the arrogance and ambition one finds, for example, in the Spanish *Libro de Alexandre*. At the same time, his desire for knowledge is comparable to the *Libro de Alexandre*,[38] and one finds in *HD* some of the same episodes that marked his excessive pride in other texts, for example, a fully developed episode of his ascent into the air and his descent into the sea, although with different intentions.

ʿUmāra ibn Zayd. Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar wa ma fīha min al-ʿamr al-ʿajīb [The story of Alexander with all its extraordinary things]

ʿUmāra ibn Zayd is identified as the author of *Majmuʿ qiṣṣat al-Iskandar wa ma fīha min al-ʿamr al-ʿajīb*, a full-length Alexander romance of some 80 manuscript folios preserved in MS Add. 5928 held at the British Library.[39] After the appropriate praise to God the author identifies himself at the beginning of the text ("ʿUmāra ibn Zayd transmits to us on the authority of Muhammad ibn Isḥāq…" f. 2r).[40] He cites himself on folios 3r, 3v, 5r, 7r, 8r, 9v, etc. and cites other sources such as Ibn Isḥāq (2r), al-Kalbī (8r), Kaʾb al-Aḥbār (9r), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ("qala al-Ḥasan fī khabrihi" 13v), Ibn ʿAbbās (3v), Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (9v). Given the frequency with which ʿUmāra relies upon Muqātil, al-Ḥasan

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[38] Upon his departure to explore the seventh world ("tierra séptima"), Alexander says: "Tengo que ver este mar que circunda el mundo, cuál es su condición, quién es su rey y lo que hay encima y debajo de él," in García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*, p. 57.

[39] MS in London: British Library, Add. 5928.

[40] The manuscript has no indication of folio numbers. Our enumeration begins after the table of contents written in Roman alphabet and after the Arabic title page with facing page intentionally blank but later filled in by a different hand. Where the next folio begins in clear regular handwriting *Bisma Allah al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm* etc., we count this as folio 1.

al-Baṣrī, and Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, we concurr with Nykl (448) and Fried-
laender (139) in that ʿUmāra must have been a younger contemporary
of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 767).[41] The manuscript itself would appear
to be a copy from July 7th 1504 A.D. by a scribe named Muhammad
b. ʿAbd al-Munʿam b. Muhammad al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Mālikī who
claims to have written the book ("katabahu") on the said date (f. 80
r–v). His claim is found at precisely the close of the Alexander narra-
tive just before the beginning of the narration of the Boys of the Cave,
which follows Alexander's story in the MS.[42] ʿUmāra's text is important
because it contains a broad spectrum of hadith episodes and human
geography common to the Arabic Alexander similar to *QD*, *HD*, and
the *Rrek.*, except that in ʿUmāra the accounts are more extensive and
less corrupt. In addition to episodes from the western Alexander tradi-
tion such as the campaigns against Darius of Persia, Porus of India, the
Brahmans, Candace, China, and the Amazon women, ʿUmāra offers
well developed accounts of Alexander's relationship with his mother
and with his so-called cousin al-Khiḍr. There is a long description of
the geography of the Land of the Darkness including Mt. Qāf and Mt.
Šamikhān, lengthy dialogues with the angels of the mountain and the
sea, excursions to Jabarsā and Jabalqā including the temple with the
red sulphur, and Alexander's visit to Mecca to meet Abraham where
he became the first hadji. Unique to ʿUmāra's text is the account of
Alexander's death apparently by consumption [sulāl].[43]

   ʿUmāra's manuscript has not been edited and consequently there is
not a proper study of its linguistic features. Such a study is beyond the
scope of this chapter and at this time we cannot say more than that the
text is written in an Eastern Arabic script and that the scribe attempts
to write in Classical Arabic.

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[41] Friedlaender studies ʿUmāra's text inasmuch as it concerns the figure of al-Khiḍr,
in *Chadhirlegende*, pp. 129–162. He also reproduces in Arabic a selection of ʿUmāra's
manuscript that deals with al-Khiḍr, in the same *Chadhirlegende*, pp. 308–316.

[42] One also finds another handwritten note haphazardly scribbled on f. 2r stating
the following: *fī sinat fī 20 jumāda al-akhīra 1014 layla al-arbaʿāʾ* [on Wednesday
evening of the 20th day of the sixth muslim month of the year 1014 hijra (1605 A.D.)].
Given the irregularity of the hand, almost illegible, this would appear to be added by
someone later on who made a note on the 1504 manuscript.

[43] The episode of his death has been translated into English and added as an appen-
dix to Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends,* pp. 163–166.

*Abū Isḥāq Ibrahîm bin Mufarrij al-Ṣūrī. Kitāb taʾrīkh al-Iskandar
Dhi al-Qarnayn al-Rūmī wa wazīrihi al-Khiḍr, ʿalayhi al-salām,
saḥbatahu taʾlīf al-ʿallāmat al-shaykh Ibrahim bin Mufarraj al-Ṣūrī
[The history of Alexander Dhulqarnayn the Rumi and his minister
al-Khiḍr, bless him, written by the very learned sheikh Ibrahim bin
Mufarrij al-Ṣūrī]*

Al-Ṣūrī's history[44] of Alexander-Dhulqarnayn[45] composed towards the
end of the thirteenth century is preserved in a clearly written copy in
naskh script from 1685 A.D.[46] contained in MS Add 7366 of the British
Library. Little is known of the author other than that he presumably
originates from Tyre in southern Lebanon. Of all the Arabic Alex-
ander romances this is perhaps the longest with some 305 folios, or
more than 600 pages! As the title suggests, one distinguishing feature
of al-Ṣūrī's text is the prominence given to Alexander's companion
and advisor al-Khiḍr, who participates in all the adventures, not just
the expedition into the Land of Darkness as is the case with other
versions.[47] Another distinguishing feature of al-Ṣūrī's text is his omis-
sion of chains of transmission. Where the authors of the *Rrek.* and
QD provide authorities for most of their episodes, al-Ṣūrī prefers the
expression *qāla al-rāwi* [the narrator says] for narrative transitions.
However, al-Ṣūrī does cite Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bakrī (f. 2r) and Wahb b.
Munabbih from whose work *Hadīth al-Iskandar* he says he transmits
a large portion of the first part of his history.[48]

The work begins with a fabulous account of the birth of Dārāb, father
of Alexander's future rival Darius, called Dārinūš (e.g. f. 202r) in al-Ṣūrī.

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[44] F. Doufikar-Aerts calls al-Ṣūrī's work the *sīrat al-Iskandar* [Life of Alexander]
in "The Last Days of Alexander in an Arabic Popular Romance of al-Iskandar," in
The Ancient Novel and Beyond (Leiden, 2003), pp. 23–35, here p. 24. In this article,
Doufikar-Aerts says that she is preparing an edition of the the first part of al-Ṣūrī's
manuscript (p. 24, n. 7).

[45] H. Chambert-Loir says that al-Ṣūrī's text is the likely source for a Malaysian version
of the legend titled *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* from the beginning of the fourteenth
century. See "Les sources de la modernité II. A la Recherche des Modèles," in *Annu-
aire: Comptes rendus des cours et conference 2004–2005*, (Paris, 2006), pp. 204–205.
Available on-line at http://www.ehess.fr/fr/enseignement/enseignements/2004/.

[46] See Friedlaender, *Chadhirlegende*, p. 179, n. 4.

[47] Friedlaender has masterfully studied the role of al-Khiḍr in al-Ṣūrī. See his *Chad-
irlegende*, pp. 179–191, and pp. 316–319.

[48] *Qāla ṣāhab al-ḥadīth wa hadhā mā balaġanā min hadīth al-iskandar ʿalā riwāya
Wahb b. Munabbih wa naḥnu naʿūda ila ṭarīqa kitābinā riwāya Abū al-Farij [sic]
al-Ṣūrī* [So says the author of this hadith. This is what has come down to us regard-
ing Alexander's story by Wahb b. Munabbih. Now we return to our narration of Abū
al-Farij al-Ṣūrī's story], f. 111v.

As a result of an incestous affair, the Persian queen Humānī has her baby placed into a sealed crate filled with money and jewels and then released into the river.[49] The current carries him downstream towards the sea (folios 9v–10r). He is found by a couple, who calls him Dārāb (f. 10v). Humānī eventually recognizes her son from his bravery in battle and abdicates in his favor (see 18v). Dārāb then negotiates the collection of tribute from Philip of Macedonia [Fīlafūs]. Al-Ṣūrī's narration of these events suggestions an interest in lending Alexander a Persian origin.

Alexander's mission in al-Ṣūrī is similar to other Arabic romances, that is, to carry the message of Allah to the kings of the earth and to demand that they utter the *tawḥīd*, i.e. the profession of the unity of God. As a thirteenth-century writer, al-Ṣūrī is perhaps more aware than our other authors of Arabic Alexander texts that Alexander lived almost a millenium before Muhammad. Thus Alexander's *tawḥīd* does not mention Muhammad: "there is no god but Allah and Abraham is his messenger and dear friend" (trans. mine, f. 198r).[50] Al-Ṣūrī's narrative takes Alexander on campaigns against Persia and India. He explores the Land of Darkness and visits the remote villages of the Mansik, Tāriš, and Tāwīl whose names one recognizes from *QD*, ʿUmāra, and the *Rrek*. The narration of Alexander's excursions to these tribes in a thirteenth-century text, composed several hundred years after the earliest Arabic texts (eighth or ninth century) suggests that the material of Arabic geographers was firmly embedded in a long Arabic Alexander tradition. At the same time, al-Ṣūrī's version gathers numerous adventures involving peoples not mentioned in other Arabic romances such as al-Ajšām King of Kāšik (f. 198r–199v), the minister Tabrīk (200v–201r), the people of Aymān (f. 205r), the tribes of al-Lān (198v–205v).[51]

The end of al-Ṣūrī's history begins when Alexander's sages and engineers construct the lighthouse in Alexandria and the king uses it to store great treasures (f. 299r). Soon thereafter a sorceress [sāḥḥra]

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[49] A similar story is related in P. Teixeira, M. Khvand, and M. ibn Khavandshah, *The History of Persia. Containing, the Lives and Memorable Actions of its Kings from the First Erecting of that Monarchy to this Time*, (London, 1715), pp. 77–80. See also J. Malcolm, *The History of Persia 1* (London, 1815). pp. 54–55.

[50] The text reads *Lā ilāh illā allah waḥdihi lā šarīk lahu wa in Ibrahīm nabīhi wa khalīlahi*. See also later "There is no god but Allah alone without companion and Abraham is his dear friend and messenger [rasūlihi]," (trans. mine), f. 201v.

[51] Among the conquered tribes incorporated into the army of Alexander and fighting in the fierce battle against Darius are the above mentioned together with the Jāburṣā [sic] and the al-Andalus (f. 206r).

arrives and engraves a talisman on the lighthouse. She visits the king
at his tent and tells him he should leave Alexandria. Thereupon he
makes a pilgrimage to Mekka (f. 299v) where he receives the proph-
ecy that he will not die until he lies on ground made of iron and is
covered from above with gold (f. 299v). Shortly after a long march he
falls asleep wearing a coat of mail made of iron and his troops protect
him from the sun with a shield made of gold. God sends the angel
of death to take his soul, but Alexander wakes up and asks the angel
to hold on, literally 'to proceed slowly' [amhalanī] with him (f. 300r).
The angel obeys and returns his soul [rajaʿ ilāyhi rūḥahu] (f. 300r), so
that Alexander has time to take care of his affairs. He receives a let-
ter from his mother Rūqīa instructing him to send her his treasures
with a single man on horseback (f. 300r). This strange request reflects
an anecdote found in other Arabic romances.[52] The king obliges his
mother by making lists of the treasures and sending these. Subse-
quently, he writes again to his mother to inform her of his imminent
death. The letter is a hybrid of the two well-known letters the dying
king writes to his mother discussed below. Finally, he makes some
arrangements for his sarcophagus and passes away (f. 301r) allowing
al-Khiḍr to become king. Reluctant to commit to any one version of
the story, al-Ṣūrī includes a second account of Alexander's death in
which the king dies after drinking poison [wa fīhi dhālika al-samm
fašarabahu] (f. 303v).[53]

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[52] See Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, p. 158; ʿUmāra, f. 74r.
[53] There are several other Arabic manuscripts narrating the Alexander romance
that have been studied by F. Doufikar-Aerts. She calls one such text 'Quzman' accord-
ing to the nickname of its scribe (p. 197) and briefly describes its contents in "Alex-
ander the Flexible Friend. Some Reflections on the Representation of Alexander the
Great in the Arabic Alexander Romance," *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*
55.3–4 (2003), 195–210 . See also her study of Alexander's last days in a group of
texts she calls "Sīrat al-Iskandar" in "The Last Days of Alexander in an Arabic Popular
Romance of al-Iskandar," in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 23–35.
Also, see her "*Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* Arabica," in C. Baffioni (ed.), *La dif-
fusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Filología, storia, dottrina*,
(Alessandria, 2000), pp. 35–52. Unfortunately, we only recently discovered the work
of professor Doufikar-Aerts, too late to include a summary of these works in this
chapter. We look forward to the publication of her book *Alexander Magnus Arabicus.
A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: from Pseudo-Callisthenes
to Suri*, which is forthcoming with Peeters.

Alexander among Arabic Historians and Quranic Commentators Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad b. Jarīr (839–923 A.D.)

Al-Ṭabarī has two important works each with a chapter on the figure of Alexander. There is his *Taʾrīkh* [history] and his Quranic *Tafsīr*[54] [commentary]. Al-Ṭabarī treats separately the material associated with each personage such that Alexander/al-Iskandar is subject of his historical work and Dhulqarnayn his commentary. Corriente explains that al-Ṭabarī's version of events in Alexander's life as per his *Tarʾikh*, suggests that he was familiar with an Arabic translation of the *PC* (224–225).[55] In his history, al-Ṭabarī principally narrates the episode of Alexander against the Persians, with emphasis on his lineage and his treatment of Darius' assassins. Allusions to the campaigns against India and China are brief and seem intended to criticize Alexander's arrogance and his destruction of all the lands through which he passed,[56] which is understandable given the author's Persian roots. Mazzaoui says that Arabic historians of the Middle Ages such as Al-Ṭabarī, Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr, and Ibn Khaldūn refrained from using material from the Alexander romance (34). Al-Dīnawārī is a noted exception among historians in that he merges material from the *PC* tradition such as the submission of Candace [al-Qindāqat] (35) with Arabian legends such as Alexander becoming hadji.[57]

In his *Tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī comments the Quranic episode verse by verse. He begins by attributing the introductory hadith one finds, for example, in the *Rrek.* and *QD* to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ziyād al-Anaʿm. The gloss of the versicule 18:83 "They ask thee concerning

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[54] We follow the electronic version of the *Jāmʿ al-bayān fi tafsīr al-Qurʾān* of al-Ṭabarī available at www.altafsir.com. Search by sura and versicule.

[55] Corriente points out that al-Ṭabarī's version of the encounter between Alexander and Porus is sufficiently close to the Ethiopic version to conjecture that they used a common Arabic source, in "Dos elementos folklóricos comunes en la versión etiópica de la leyenda de Alejandro y la literatura árabe," *Al-Andalus* 32 (1967), p. 222. See also Wallis Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great* (London, 1896).

[56] See Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Tabari*, pp. 87–95. Mazzaoui cites a passage in which al-Ṭabarī says Alexander was "inexperienced and conceited, hot-headed, malicious, and tyrannical," in "Alexander the Great and the Arab Historians," *Graeco-Arabica* 4 (1991), p. 34; cited from Muhammad Abū al-Fadi Ibrahīm (ed.), *Tarīkh ar-rusūl wa al-mulūk*, (Cairo, 1960). vol. 1, p. 572.

[57] *wa ḥajja al-Iskandar bayt Allah al-ḥirām*, in Al-Dīnawārī, *Kitāb al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl* (Cairo, 1960), p. 34.

Dhulqarnayn…"[58] is illustrative of al-Ṭabarī's treatment of Alexander in his *Tafsīr*. He comments that some say those who approached the Prophet at his hut to pose questions about Alexander were polytheists. Others say they were People of the Book. Al-Ṭabarī reports further that Muhammad says that when Alexander grew up an angel came to him and carried him high above the earth and asked what he saw. He said that he saw his city and flying higher he responded again that he saw his city and flying still higher he repeated the same until finally he said that he saw the whole earth. This is a typical Oriental account of Alexander's ascent that is well known among readers of western texts.[59]

Al-Ṭabarī further transmits that Alexander called his people to Allah and they killed him. Allah then revived him. This is perhaps an attempt to tie Alexander typologically to other prophetic figures who were also resuscitated from death.[60] With this he ends his commentary of 18:83. He continues with the following episode concerning the fountain of mud in which the sun sets, which he attributes to Ibn ʿAbbās and Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, and in this fashion he comments each versicule through Quran 18:98. Al-Ṭabarī bases other episodes, such as Dhulqarnayn's journey to the people living at the ends of the earth (the Tāwīl, Hāwīl, Mansik) and the inclosing of the Gog and Magog, on the eighth-century figure Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), author of the *Sīrat rasūl Allah* [Life of the Messenger of God], the first part of which *Kitāb al-mubtadaʾ* [Book of beginnings] dealt with the line of prophets leading to Muhammad.[61]

MUBAŠŠIR IBN FĀTIK (D. 1053/54)

This eleventh-century physician from Cairo includes Alexander's story in his work *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa muḥāsin al-kalim* [The choicest maxims and most beautiful words]. The first episode in the chapter titled

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[58] We use the edition and translation of the Quran by ʿAbdallah Yusuf ʿAli (Brentwood, Maryland, 1989).

[59] See Polignac (1996) and Millet (1923).

[60] For a study of typology in the Arabic Alexander material and in Aljamiado texts, see Zuwiyya, "A Typological Approach to Aljamiado-Morisco Literature," *Qurtuba* 6 (2001), 187–212.

[61] See Newby (1989), Introduction, for an excellent discussion of Ibn Isḥāq's *Kitāb al-mubtadaʾ* and pp. 193–200 for Newby's reconstructed version of Ibn Isḥāq's chapter on Alexander.

Akhbār al-Iskandar[62] concerns Fawis' assassination of Philip. Soon after his father's death, Alexander refuses to pay tribute to Darius' messengers. He tells them that the hen that laid the golden egg has died.[63] Nearly half of Mubaššir's text is then dedicated to the Persian campaign, which he narrates in considerable detail. Subsequently, he includes versions of the campaign against India and Dhulqarnayn's visit to the Brahmans both of which have been substantially abridged. He mentions the famous letter relating the wonders of India, but omits its contents. Included are some of the maxims of the sages surrounding Alexander's coffin. He makes a passing allusion to the letter of consolation to Olympia but it too has been cut.

Conspicuously missing from Mubaššir's epitome is the expedition into the Land of Darkness, or any mention of the peoples of Jabarsā and Jabarsā living at the ends of the earth, or of the building of the barrier of Gog and Magog, from Quran 18:83–98. One might infer from their omission in the epitome that this material is not found either in his "larger and more complete work" to which he refers.[64] It would seem that Mubaššir, as historian possibly working with a translation of a Syriac text,[65] was sufficiently knowledgeable of the Arabic Alexander romance to know that the interpolated material stemming from Quranic *tafsīr* did not fit in the same tradition as the Greek Alexander legend familiar to historiographers. Thus, in his *Akhbār* 'annals', and also likely in his *Taʾrīkh* 'history' to which he refers, he was careful to distinguish between the prophetic figure of Dhulqarnayn of the Quran and the Macedon conqueror of the *PC*. Such a distinction may hark back to a sentiment among erudites of earlier epochs that there were two Dhulqarnayns:[66] one the pious Quranic saint, and another, the ambitious Macedonian conqueror. It is to be noted that other medieval Arabic historians such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Masʿūdī, as well as the

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[62] Published in Meissner (1896).

[63] For another version of Alexander's invocation of the golden hen, see al-Dīnawārī (p. 30).

[64] *wa huwa kitāb tawīl wa qad dhakartuhu wa ghairahu min kutubihi fī taʾrīkhī al-kabīr ʿalā al-tamām* [It is a long letter and I mentioned it and other letters of his in my larger history in their complete form] (trans. mine from Meissner, 1896, p. 601).

[65] Fahd says that Mubaššir used a Syriac version for his abridgement (p. 30).

[66] García Gómez summarizes the position among Islamic traditionists concerning the existence of two distinct Alexander figures, one named al-Iskandar and another named Dhulqarnayn. See *HD*, pp. xxxix–xlvii.

geographer Yāqūt[67] also separate the legendary material dealing with
the prophetic figure of Alexander.[68]

Al-Masʿūdī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. ca. 956)

In his *Murūj al-dhahab*, Masʿūdī sketches a broad historical summary
of Alexander's life and deeds.[69] He traces his genealogy back to Abra-
ham on the one hand, and on the other, to Qahṭān, ancestral leader
of the South Arabians, whose descendants he says settled the lands
of Rūm. He attributes Alexander's nickname to two tufts of hair on
his head "from [his ties to] the People of the Book [min ahl al-kitāb].
Masʿūdī tells us that Alexander's teacher was Aristotle and that he
conquered Darius of Persia, Fūr of India, China, and Khurasān. The
famous lighthouse of Alexandria with its fantastic mirror also receives
due attention.[70] Upon his death at the age of thirty-six, thirty sages
gathered to pronounce words of wisdom over his sarcophagus. The
only episode on which he dwells is Alexander's encounter with the
India sage Kand, with whom Alexander exchanges correspondence
and riddles.[71] Masʿūdī's brevity is in keeping with the encyclopedic

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[67] Yāqūt says that "the one who built Alexandria was the first al-Iskandar, Dhul-
qarnayn the Rūmī, and his name was Ašik bin Salūkūs, and he was not al-Iskandar
son of Philip. The first al-Iskandar was the one who circumnavigated the earth and
reached the Darkness and he was a companion of Moses and al-Khiḍr…" (trans. mine
of vol. 1, p. 184).

[68] For an excellent study of Mubassir's translation techniques from the Greek, see
D. Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation. A Study of the Graeco-
Arabic Gnomologia* (New Haven, 1975). I thank Emily Cottrell for this reference. See
Dr. Cottrell's entry on Mubaššir in the forthcoming (2011) *Encyclopedia of Medieval
Philosophy* (ed. H. Lagerlund). See also, K. Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: from Pagan
Sage to Prophet of Science* (New York, 2009), pp. 184–195.

[69] Masʿūdī deals with Alexander in vol. 2, pp. 8–23. See Barbier de Meynard and
Pavet de Courteilled (eds.), *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawahir [Les Praires d'or]*.
7 vols. (Beirut, 1979). Originally published in Paris 1861–1867.

[70] For Alexander's role in the construction of Alexandria and the lighthouse, see
vol. 2, pp. 99–109. See also Yāqūt 1:182–188 for Alexander and Alexandria.

[71] See vol. 2, pp. 14–23. There is a similar story of Alexander's meeting with an
Indian king other than Fūr (i.e., Porus) and his philosopher at the end of ʿUmāra's
text (fols. 74r–81v). He is called Qaydar in ʿUmāra rather than the Kand of Masʿūdī.
This curious passage is also available in translation in Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*,
pp. 163–166.

nature of his work and the fact that he tells us that elsewhere he has
dealt more extensively with Alexander's story.[72]

IBN AL-JAWZĪ, SIBṬ (D. 1257)

The thirteenth-century author of *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī tārīkh al-aʿyān*[73]
was grandson of the famous Baghdadi author and traditionist by the
same name. He wrote a universal history in which he treats Alexander
after the Quranic prophet Lūṭ in an abridged version consisting of
seventeen lengthy manuscript pages.[74] Ibn al-Jawzī begins by glossing
Quran 18:83 to explain that the question posers to which Muhammad
refers in this versicule were the Jews. He goes on to list twelve reasons
for the name Dhuqlarnayn. With regards to epoch, this Arab historian
places Alexander during the time of Abraham. Indeed, Alexander meets
Abraham in Mecca. Further Quranic glosses include the sun setting in
a pool of boiling mud. He deviates from Quranic commentary when
he narrates Dhulqarnayn's journey through the Land of Darkness in
the company of his advisors Afšakhīr and al-Khiḍr. Ibn al-Jawzī sug-
gests Dhulqarnayn is pushing the boundaries of man's domain in his
narration of the hero's encounter with the bird of the castle and the
angel of the horn. For Ibn al-Jawzī, Dhulqarnayn vindicates himself
spiritually when his ministers weigh the famous rock given to him by
the angel of the horn. Symbolically, his rejection of material wealth
comes when he refrains from collecting jewels at a river crossing, as
we mentioned above. Upon emerging from the darkness, he encoun-
ters the people of Hāwīl and Tāwīl, and the reader finds that God
has granted Dhulqarnayn the power to control the light and darkness,
which he wields against his enemies. He meets the ascetic people who
live with their graves over the doors to their houses. Dhulqarnayn cries
as he departs. Further repented and ready now for death, he writes

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[72] He says that in his other work, *Kitāb al-awsaṭ* he deals with the conquests in
more detail (vol. 1, p. 8). Unfortunately, this work is not extant. He also says that
in his *Akhbār al-zamān*—lost as well with the exception of vol. 1—he includes more
details concerning Alexander's encounter with Kand, King of India (vol. 2, p. 22).
See also Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends* for Masʿūdī's account of the story of Alexander
(pp. 43–44).

[73] Ibn al-Jawzī's *Mirʾāt al-zamān* has been edited (Beirut, 1985). However, the
modern edition was not available to me. My references are from the manuscript in
the British Library Or. 4215, ff. 77–85.

[74] See fols. 77v–85v for the story of Dhulqarnayn in Ibn al-Jawzī.

twice to his mother. Ibn al-Jawzī includes both of the famous episto-
lary themes. The prophecy regarding his death is fulfilled as he lies on
the ground and is shaded from the sun by a soldier's shield. Soon, he
becomes sick in Babel. Upon his mother's request Dhulqarnayn makes
an inventory of all his wealth and sends it to his mother with a man
on horseback, echoing the episode from the *Rrek.* and *QD.* The author
concludes with the sages who pronounce aphorisms over Dhulqar-
nayn's sarcophagus.

What is missing from Ibn al-Jawzī's account is the material one asso-
ciates with Alexander, such as the campaigns against Darius and Porus,
which suggests that for the author of *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, the Quranic
Dhulqarnayn and Alexander were not one and the same person.

Al-Thaʿlabī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (d. 1035)

In accordance with his position that Alexander was a prophet,[75]
al-Thaʿlabī ties Dhulqarnayn to Abraham in genealogy and includes
the Two-Horned's life and deeds in his collection of stories of
the prophets, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyaʾ*. True to his passion for anecdotes,
al-Thaʿlabī begins by transmitting the story about Alexander's mother
being forced to use the sandarūs wood to make her scent more appeal-
ing to her husband, Darius.[76] He includes an abridged account of the
Persian episode, but eliminates the campaign against India, as well
as all material dealing with Candace, the Amazons, the Brahmans, in
short, anything that would link the story of this prophet-like figure to
the hero of the pagan romance. Instead, he aligns himself with Arabic
legendary tradition, by this time well-embedded, and includes what
one might call human geography[77] by describing the nations of the
Mansik and Nāsik inhabiting opposite ends of the "length" of the earth
[ṭawl al-ʾard], and the Hāwīl and Taʾwīl occupying opposite ends of the

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[75] The truth, says al-Thaʿlabī on the authority of Wahb ibn Munabbih, is that Alex-
ander was a prophet, but one without a message! See Brinner's translation (Leiden,
2002), p. 609.

[76] This story evidently comes from Firdawsī's *Shahnāmeh*. See Grignaschi (1993),
p. 228, n. 57. Al-Dīnawarī says that Alexander's mother had a terrible smell so that
his father, Dārā b. Yahman, ordered she be washed with a grass called *al-sandar*, "AL"
meaning 'strong' in Persian joined the grass "SANDAR" (29).

[77] See A. Miquel 1967 for the topic of human geography among the Arabs.

earth's "width" [waṣt al-ʾard].[78] Additionally, to lend the work the aura of Quranic commentary, he cites Quranic versicules concerning the pool of mud into which the sun sets as well as the barrier of Gog and Magog each with its respective commentary. One outstanding feature of al-Thaʿlabī's account is that Dhulqarnayn is reputed with building the first mosque (*masjid*).[79] Perhaps the most significant variation in al-Thaʿlabī's version is Alexander's motive for seeking out the Land of Darkness. During his dialogue with the angel Raphael, Dhulqarnayn asks how angels worship in heaven. As he listens to Raphael's response, Dhulqarnayn is struck by their dedication and sacrifice in praise of God. He desires to live long enough to match the angels in their devotion and so Raphael tells him that, if this is indeed the case, then he can seek out the Water of Life. The Two-Horned's motives for seeking eternal life suddenly become almost pious, that is, if one considers it permissible to strive to equal angels in their devotion.[80] In any case, the episode proceeds in the most typical fashion until its end with the test Alexander receives in the form of a mysterious stone. Despite the author's attempt to moderate Dhulqarnayn's transgression, the episode of the journey into the darkness ends with the hero's catharsis and redemption as he refrains from collecting jewels at the river. Al-Thaʿlabī uses this episode to mark the contrast between the ambitious younger Alexander and the more ascetic wise king. The narrator explains that "at the beginning of his career, he would not have left any of it behind, but would have brought it back to his people because he desired the world."[81] According to al-Thaʿlabī on the authority of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, Dhulqarnayn died in Dūmat al-Jandal.[82]

AL-ṢAʿB DHULQARNAYN

In 1893, M. Lidzbarski edited the anonymous history relating the life and deeds of al-Ṣaʿb Dhulqarnayn from codex Or. 2424 of the British

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[78] See al-Thaʿlabī 19–, p. 362; 2002, p. 610. These four tribes also mentioned in Ibn Isḥāq's *Kitāb al-Mubtadaʾ* in Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, p. 195. Newby recreates the lost first book of *Sīrat rasūl Allāh* [Life of the Prophet] from extant sources such as al-Ṭabarī.

[79] See 19–, p. 362; and Brinner's trans. (2002), p. 611.

[80] See translation in al-Thaʿlabī (2002), pp. 616–617; or in Arabic in al-Thaʿlabī (19–), p. 397.

[81] See al-Thaʿlabī (ed. Brinner, 2002), p. 621.

[82] See al-Thaʿlabī (ed. Brinner, 2002), p. 621.

Library (ff. 98a–115a).[83] The text we are calling *Al-Ṣaʿb Dhulqarnayn* is not a full-length romance, but its thirty-three print pages make an important contribution to our knowledge of the medieval Arabic Alexander that has been undeservedly neglected. The narrative begins by citing Wahb ibn Munabbih who asked ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbbās, Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, and ʿAbd Allah ibn Salām about al-Iskandar al-Rūmī: "Was Dhulqarnayn the one who God mentions in his book?" They responded, "No, the one called Dhulqarnayn is the one who built the two lighthouses."[84] The author also claims to have taken several passages from Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Hišām (d. 833), author of an epitome of Ibn Isḥāq's famous eighth-century biography of the Prophet.

The work begins by making an interesting distinction between Alexander the Rūmī called Dhulqarnayn because he built two lighthouses (in Alexandria and in the "land of Rūm") and the Quranic Dhularnayn. The author refutes the anachronistic identification of the Alexander who led the Greek expansion with the one said to have met Abraham, who lived much earlier. The story of al-Ṣaʿb will be that of the latter figure—the one who lived earlier—whom the author takes to be the Quranic Dhulqarnayn, and who is said to be the Himyarite king, al-Ṣaʿb ibn Dhī Marādith al-Ḥimyarī.[85] His story begins with the interpretation of a sequence of dreams over four nights that trouble the young sultan soon after his success on the battlefield brought about a tremendous expansion in his empire. In the first dream, he ascends to the top of a mountain where he sees kings humble themselves to God and then suddenly he finds himself descending into hell where he observes the arrogant being tormented by fire. In the second dream, he flies into the heavens and hangs his sword on the constellation Pleiades, then takes the sun with his right hand, the moon with his left, and descends back to earth dragging behind the canopy of stars. In the third dream, he becomes extremely hungry and gobbles up the mountains and lands one after another, and then to satisfy his great thirst he drinks the seas. In the last, all the men of the earth, together

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[83] Lidzbarski does not date the text in his introductory study.

[84] Lidzbarski, pp. 278–279, (trans. mine).

[85] This is a perfect example of the doubled figure of Dhulqarnayn that Quranic interpeters invented upon discovering the personality conflict between the pious Quranic Dhulqarnayn and the headstrong pagan conqueror Alexander, as García Gómez discusses (*HD*, pp. xxxviii–xlvi).

with the jinn, the animals, and the wind submit to him. The following morning, Dhulqarnayn is perplexed, but none of his wise men are able to interpret the meaning of the dreams. They tell him to go to Jerusalem to find a prophet there more knowledgeable than they. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Dhulqarnayn meets the prophet Mūsā al-Khiḍr, to whom the author attributes the first use of the nickname Dhulqarnayn. Al-Khiḍr's interpretation is that the new Rūm king with God's aid will come to dominate the earth and spread His word among the people of even the most remote lands. In *QD*, Alexander's divine mission is revealed to him through the angel Raphael. Referring back to the series of dreams in Lidzbarski's text, his ascension to the mountain brings to mind a similar episode from *QD* and the *Rrek.* in which Dhulqarnayn ascends above the earth with the angel Raphael. Alexander's miraj foreshadows the Prophet's ascent on the Alborak, but here it is converted into a dream.[86] Also, the episode of the Pleiades, which takes place in the 'real world' in *QD* and the *Rrek.*, is rendered a dream. The substitution of the dream motif for Dhulqarnayn's personal relation with the angel reduces Alexander's status as prophet to make way for al-Khiḍr to serve as his replacement. The 'Green-One' figures as prominently in *Al-Ṣaʿb Dhulqarnayn* as he does in al-Sūrī.

Alexander as explorer of the earth is an important theme in the Alexander romance both in the east and the west. In *Al-Ṣaʿb Dhulqarnayn*, Ibn Hišām reports about the earth's geographical divisions. The whole of the earth may be traversed in a journey of five hundred years: three hundred of these would be through the seas, one hundred would be through deserts, and one hundred through populated regions. Of the one-fifth portion of the populated earth, eighty percent belongs to the Gog and Magog, nineteen percent belong to the 'sūdān' (i.e. blacks) and only one percent belongs to the remaining creatures (286). The division shows minor variation from *QD*: here there is no mention of the snakes that get land equivalent to a one hundred year journey in *QD*.

Dhulqarnayn's domination of the earth begins with the destruction of the Sūdān. From there he comes to another tribe of black men with

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[86] Some Islamic scholars consider Muhammad's miraj to have been a dream. Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), author of the first biography of Muhammad, was one among them. It is well know that Ibn Hišām, an important source for Lidzbarski's text, took much material from Muhammad's earliest biographer. Thus Alexander's ascension may have been converted into a dream to mirror Muhammad's experience.

blue eyes. *Al-Ṣaʿb Dhulqarnayn* is a notably crueler text than some of
the other legends because the king's predisposition is to kill everyone
except the believers rather than to take tribute. Next he submits the
land of Mārīʿ ibn Kanʿān ibn Ḥām ibn Noah and al-Andalus populated
by the descendants of Yāfith ibn Noah called al-Baskunis (Basques!),
al-Qurṭ, al-Afranj, al-Jalāliq (Gallicians!), al-Barbar, al-Zaġd (290).
Continuing along his western path, he builds a series of lighthouses
until he reaches the mud spring into which the sun sets. Here he
finds a riverbed and orders two Ḥimyarī generals to cross with a large
numbers of troops, which brings them into the darkness. The entire
episode concerning the darkness (found in *QD*, the *Rrek.*, *HD*, Thaʿlabī
and others) has been abridged.

Just beyond the riverbed of gems at the fringe of the darkness is a
great boulder so white that those who look at it are blinded. On top is
an eagle. Wondering what this bird is doing in such a forsaken place,
Dhulqarnayn turns to al-Khiḍr and asks: "What is it, dear friend of
God?"[87] More important than the answer is the fact that Dhulqarnayn
asks al-Khiḍr and not the angel. Noteworthy also is al-Khiḍr's epithet,
'friend of God,' used in other romances such as *QD* to refer to Dhul-
qarnayn himself, and the use of the dual verb in Arabic. For example,
the narrator says "the two of them headed towards the rising sun."[88]
The effect is to place al-Khiḍr and Dhulqarnayn on the same level. At
one point in Lidzbarski's text we see Dhulqarnayn obeying al-Khiḍr's
command: "and he did what al-Khiḍr commanded him to do" (trans.
mine, 286). This stands in stark contrast to their relationship in other
texts where Dhulqarnayn is unquestionably the superior figure. One
recalls that in many Arabic texts Dhulqarnayn refuses to pay heed to
al-Khiḍr's warnings about the dangers of entering the darkness.[89]

Dhulqarnayn's next destination is the white castle near Mt. al-Ṣakhra
built by ʿĀbar ibn Šālaj ibn Arfḥašid ibn Sām ibn Noah during the
era of Babel and the confusion of tongues (299). ʿĀbar was the one
commanded to copy the leaflet containing Arabic writing from Noah.
Consequently, ʿĀbar was the first to speak Arabic. His interlocutor
was his son, the prophet Hūd. From here, the narrator continues his
digression on how the Arabs came to be the bearers of prophecy. Of

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[87] *Mā huwa yā walī allah?* (p. 289).
[88] Lidzbarski, p. 289, (trans. mine).
[89] See, for example, *QD*, p. 128.

this material, we recognize, among other things, the name Arfḥašid, as Arfšaḥīd, Dhulqarnayn's advisor in the *Rrek.* and *QD*, said to possess knowledge from the ancient books, and the prophet Hūd.

Upon leaving the castle he takes a road leading to Jabarṣā and Jabalqā whose people he submits before continuing on to the lands of Gog and Magog and defeating the barbarians in battle. In Armenia, he meets ʿAljān ibn Yāfith ibn Noah and his people, who will come to be known as the Turks after Dhulqarnayn says "atrukuhum" [leave them] (301). His string of successful conquests grows as he takes the mountainous region of Syria and the flatlands of al-Hāmada, always seeking to wipe out the pockets of the Gog and Magog that infiltrate the civilized world. He comes to the lands of the rising sun where the people have small eyes and monkey-like faces and leave their caves only at night. He calls them to God in their own tongue, as the Lord has given him command of all tongues (302).

On the authority of Wahb, we learn that Dhulqarnayn sets sail into the Ocean heading south until he passes through the darkness and comes upon a snow white land on which nothing grows. The light there is blinding with an intensity of white unknown to mankind. He leaves behind his troops and walks till he arrives at a lone white house with two angels standing at the door, one of them holding a horn in his mouth and looking up into the heavens as if waiting for the moment to blow the horn. We recognize this scene from *QD*, the *Rrek.*, *HD* and al-Thaʿlabī's text: it is the angel who will sound the horn on Judgment Day. The angel reprimands him for his ambition and sends him back to his camp with a magical bunch of grapes that will feed him and his army. He also hands him an egg-like stone, said to contain a valuable lesson. The details sound very familiar and show how integral Alexander's trip to paradise was to the romance throughout the Muslim world.

Another of Dhulqarnayn's voyages is to India where he meets a pious people called Turjamanīn who are said to be from the tribe of ʿArjān ibn Yāfith ibn Noah. Conspicuously missing from the Indian episode is the confrontation with Porus. We recognize the name Turjamanīn from the *Rrek.* and al-Thaʿlabī's texts. Upon leaving the Turjamanīn, he comes to Samarqand, where he kills the Kurds, who refuse to believe, and accepts the submission of those who believe. From here he sets sail towards Pakistan and China, whose people belong to the tribe of Ḥām ibn Noah. He kills their disbelievers and moves on to Iraq and

a place called Ḥinū Qarāqar. Dhulqarnayn knew that he would die here as a voice had announced to him near the Water of Life that he would "die in a place known as Ḥinū Qarāqar."[90] Al-Khiḍr is also aware and says: "Dhulqarnayn, your hope for the future has run out, as your appointed time of death draws near. What remains now is what you have done."[91] Al-Khiḍr's foreknowledge of the hero's death is another example of the augmented powers he is given in *Al-Ṣaʿb Dhul-qarnayn*. Ibn Hišām on the authority of Wahb reports that Alexander fell ill in Ḥinū Qarāqar for a period of eight days and then died. After his death al-Khiḍr disappeared and never again appeared to anyone except Musā ibn ʿAmrān.

A fundamental way to distinguish between Arabic Alexander romances is to view how the author approaches the contradictory character of the hero: is he an overzealous conqueror, worthy of repri-mand, as often depicted in the *PC* and its tradition, or the pious 'friend of God' represented in the Quran. The authors of texts such as the *Rrek.* and *QD* resolve this issue by developing the theme of personal growth. His ambition is checked by the lessons he learns from Darius, the King of China, al-Khiḍr, and the angels. The author of Lidzbarski's text–like al-Ṭabarī—altogether eliminates the contradiction by assum-ing that the Quranic Dhulqarnayn is not the same person as Alexander the Rūmī. He gives the Quranic Dhulqarnayn the name of a Himyarite king, al-Ṣaʿb ibn Dhī Marādith al-Ḥimyarī, and cuts material from the heart of the Alexander romance, namely the hero's youth and tutelage under Aristotle, his campaigns against Darius and Porus, his relation-ship with his mother. While one cannot say for certain when the dual identity for Alexander was created, one may assume that it is present in the commentary on the Quranic Dhulqarnayn done by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Hišām, who is cited as the source for much of the material in Lidzbarski's text.

The Alexander Romance among Christian Arabs

Samir (1998) briefly describes numerous Christian Arab versions of the Alexander legend, mostly from the seventeenth through nine-teenth centuries. However, he mentions two Christian historians from

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[90] Lidzbarski, p. 309, (trans. mine).
[91] Lidzbarski, p. 309, (trans. mine).

the ninth century, the famous Melkite patriarch of Alexandria Saʿīd
Ibn Baṭrīq (d. 940 A.D.), called Eutychius, who is author of an Arabic
Alexander romance[92] and Maḥbūb Ibn Qusṭanṭīn al-Manbijī (d. ca.
945) author of a history that contains a chapter titled *Qiṣṣat al-malik
Iskandar Dhi-al-qarnayn* (pp. 237, 239).[93] Samir does not describe
the content of the manuscripts in greater detail. A detailed descrip-
tion would be a very valuable contribution to the field of Alexander
studies.

EPISODES AND THEIR SOURCES: THE FRAME STORY

In the *Rrek.* and in *QD* Alexander's story is placed in the mouth of
the prophet Muhammad as a hadith.[94] After the commonplace of
prayers in praise of God and the Prophet, the story begins as Saʿd b.
Abī Waqqās approaches Muhammad's cane hut (called *al-khayzuran*)
to inform him that some people have come to see him. They are Jews
in the *Rrek.* and Christians in *QD.* They have some books and want
to ask Muhammad three questions to verify his messengership: about
the boys of the cave, about he who has traveled to the far east and
west, and about the coming of Judgment Day. Muhammad tells them
that he will answer their questions tomorrow. As the angel Raphael[95]
explains to him later, his mistake is that he fails to say *In shāʾ Allah*
[God willing], and, as punishment, God withholds revelation from
him for fifteen days. Eventually, he responds to the question posers.

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[92] This romance may be included in his chronicle. See L. Cheikho, B. Carra de
Vaux, and H. Zayyat, *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, Corpus Scriptorum
Christianorum Orientalium 50–51 (Scriptores Arabici ser.3 nos.6–7), 2 vols. (Paris,
1906–1909; reprint Louvain, 1962). Arabic text only, based on inferior copies, says
Samir; and M. Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien: ausgewählte
Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Said ibn Batriq um 935 A.D.*, Corpus Scrip-
torum Christianorum Orientalium 471–472, 2 vols., (Louvain, 1985). Arabic text, Ger-
man translation. The first edition based on the author's autographed manuscript.

[93] Samir says the manuscript for Ibn Baṭrīq is Sinaï arabe 582 and for al-Manbijī
it is Sinaï arabe 456.

[94] *Rrek.*, pp. 466–472; *QD*, pp. 63–68. In *QD*, Qatāda and Mujāhid give interpreta-
tions of the episode, p. 65.

[95] The angel's name is corrupted. It appears in the *QD* as Zayāqīl, in the *Rrek.* as
Zayāfīl, and in ʿUmāra as Dharāfīl (see 47v). The variants from the form Raphael
are easily explainable because Arabic *zāʾ* and *dhāʾ* are similar, while Arabic *rāʾ* and
zāʾ differ by only one dot as do Arabic *fāʾ* and *qāf*. Al-Thaʿlabī, on the other hand,
has Raphael's name correct: *wa kāna lahu khalīl min al-malāʾik ismuhu Rafāʾīl* (19–,
p. 367).

When he turns to the topic of Alexander, he begins with his name and genealogy. Only in the *Rrek.* does the author return to the frame story and mention that the Jewish question posers converted to Islam (473). The genealogy given in the *Rrek.* connects Alexander to Abraham through Isaac (472) and the same in *QD* (75). Both genealogies are equally fictitious and corrupt.[96]

YOUTH, CORONATION, AND CONSOLIDATION OF POWER IN HIS KINGDOM

The narrator of the *Rrek.* (still the 'mensajero de Allah' at this point) begins by telling us that Alexander was the son of Christian kings and that his father was an excessively proud Christian who abhorred his son from infancy because of his devotion and humility (467). Ostensibly, the Aljamiado-Morisco Aleçkandar showed more Muslim than Christian character and thus drew anger from his Christian father. *QD* says that the Rum scholars found in their books that God would send among them a man whose name would be Dhulqarnayn and whose rule would reach to the ends of the earth.[97] When the arrogant father died, the crown passed to Aristotle, who knew God well. Similar to the western versions, Aristotle raised Alexander with "sençia y saber."[98] *QD* adds that not only did Aristotle examine the young prodigy, but a panel of the brightest clergymen posed questions to Alexander.[99] His responses exceeded all expectations and he was given the crown ("rrenunçióle el rreismo").[100] In *QD* upon coronation (69), Dhulqarnayn writes a letter to the governors and to his people in which he claims to be the fulfillment of prophecy.[101] He invokes the "religión de Islam" and monotheism citing Quran (2:26 and 12:18) to obey and to break the idols. His second letter is addressed to the kings of all the lands and in it Dhulqarnayn requires their profession of God's unity—in

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[96] Al-Ṭabarī offers an alternative provenance for Alexander stating that he was the son of Darius through a union of the Persian king with a woman who had a terrible stench that could only be cured with the leaves of the sandarus tree (al-Ṭabarī 4, p. 89). See also al-Thaʿlabī above.

[97] *QD*, p. 68; *Rrek.*, p. 497.

[98] *Rrek.*, p. 467.

[99] "The clergymen and monks from among the Rum sages went to see him. When they were all present they examined him to determine how wise he was…" (*QD*, p. 70).

[100] *Rrek.*, p. 467

[101] Compare *Rrek.*, p. 497.

marked contrast to the Christian trinity—and that they embrace the religion of the "profeta Mahoma."[102] The author of *HD* in this case is unconcerned with the anachronism that results from the Greek king invoking Muhammad who lives 900 years after Alexander. In the *Rrek.*, Alexander writes a similar letter invoking monotheism, but without the explicit mention of Muhammad as in *HD*.[103]

ALEXANDER'S REVELATION AND DEFINITION OF MISSION

After building Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile with its famous mirror, and painting its walls white, as described in the *Rrek.*, Alexander who was said to be called in Arabic Ahmad b. Asas,[104] pondered his future. He sought the advice of the "scholars of Rumia, from the people of the Covenant, the clergymen, and the monks."[105] His master Aristotle told him to seek guidance in prayer: "ask Him to guide you to the highest level on the straight path for He is the one who inspired you to build the city."[106] In the midst of prayer, the angel Raphael visits him. With Alexander beneath his wing, Raphael ascends above the earth[107] and delivers God's message: "I have made you to dominate the people of the world and sent you to the children of Adam."[108] He explains God's mission, which is for Alexander to preach submission to the one and only God to all the people of the earth so that they do not say on Judgment Day that they did not know.[109] Alexander is overwhelmed and responds: "Why is it, my God, that you have asked me to do something which is beyond me?"[110] In response, God again sends Raphael who explains that God has broadened his understanding and given him special powers to understand foreign languages and to know the lands of all the earth.[111] *QD* adds that God as "Provider" will give Alexander a sufficiently large army, horses, and will put love

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[102] *HD*, p. 5.
[103] Compare *Rrek.* (pp. 496–499) with *HD*.
[104] The surname "meaning ʿAbbās" (*QD*, p. 79).
[105] *QD*, p. 71.
[106] *QD*, p. 71.
[107] "enbio Allah a el un al-malak [angel] kabia por lombre Zayafil; y púsolo debasso de su ala y subialo enta el cielo" (*Rrek.*, p. 469).
[108] *QD*, p. 73.
[109] *Rrek.*, p. 470.
[110] *QD*, p. 73.
[111] *Rrek.*, p. 470.

for him (and fear of him) in the hearts of the people.[112] These passages may be seen as a commentary to Quran 18:84 ("…and We give him the ways and means to all ends"). The guardian angel Raphael is nowhere present in *HD*. Given the angel's omnipresence in the *Rrek.* and in *QD*, the absence in *HD*, together with many other details, as we point out in this study, suggests that *HD* belongs to a different branch of the Arabic Alexander romance than the *Rrek.* and *QD*.

On the day of departure, with the troops amassed on the seashore, Dhulqarnayn marches across the surface of the water followed by his troops. At the end of the day, they make camp on the water and miraculously drive their tent pegs into the sea.[113] With the favor of God at their backs, their march of twelve days across the water took them a distance equivalent to a march of twelve years. In front of them is the spiraling castle, which Dhulqarnayn manages to enter. Inside he discovers a chest containing a letter stating that God will send Muhammad as the seal of prophecy.[114] With this discovery Dhulqarnayn becomes the first man since the time of Sitrūn, a contemporary of the first prophet Noah, to receive this prophecy concerning Muhammad. The angel Raphael explains that it is a sign that Alexander is meant to dominate the earth.[115]

With the troops poised to undertake their military campaigns, the narrator of the *Rrek.* gives a catalog list of the important leadership figures of Alexander's army. Alexander turns first to Afšakhīr, who is the most knowledgeable in those things that can be found in books.[116] If he cannot get a satisfactory answer from Afšakhīr, he turns to al-Khiḍr, i.e., the Green One, whose knowledge of science comes from divine inspiration. At the same time, there is also the angel Raphael with whom the Macedon often consults. His two most trusted generals are Ptolemy and Philon, each commanding large batallions.[117] *QD* adds

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[112] *QD*, p. 74; *Rrek.*, p. 471.
[113] *QD*, pp. 74–75, 78. The *Rrek.* places these words in the mouth of the Prophet Muhammad: "Disso: antes iba sobre la kara del awwa con sus westes, i las oras ke era de noche bassaba [posaba] el i sus westes sobre la kara del awwa" (p. 471).
[114] *QD*, p. 76.
[115] *QD*, pp. 77–78.
[116] The name Afšakhīr is likely a corruption of Arpachshad, son of Aram, son of Shem, son of Noah (Genesis 10:21). See Friedlaender, *Chadhirlegende*, pp. 165, 175. Al-Ṭabarī says that "from the descendants of Arpachshad came the prophets and apostles and the Best of Mankind [i.e., Muhammad] and all the pharoahs of Egypt" (2, p. 13).
[117] See *Rrek.*, p. 472.

that his "first paternal cousin" Antigonus leads the rear guard and the Rum generals Shaqariš, Shamamis, Qawmaš, Qatuš and Nahuš each have a brigade (79).

ISLAMIC LEGENDS INTERCALATED INTO THE ARABIC ALEXANDER ROMANCE

HD, *QD*, and the *Rrek.* state that the first king that Alexander attacked was Darius of Persia.[118] This must have been in the original Arabic source made from the *PC*. However, one finds several episodes intercalated before the Persian campaign in the *Rrek.* and *QD*, with those of *QD* being especially long and well developed. Among these is his expedition marching across the face of the water to Jabarsā, located in the land of the setting sun. The city has twelve doors set apart at a distance of three parasangs. Each door is guarded by twelve thousand men.[119] This material comes as a *tafsīr* to Quran 18:86–89 ("Until, when he reached/ the setting of the sun,/ he found it set in a spring of murky water:/ near it he found a people…"). Leaving behind his troops in the city of Jabarsā, Dhulqarnayn mounts the mythical *al-Buraq* [Alborak][120] and explores a city never before seen by human eyes, and then witnesses the sun set with a roar in a "spring of black mud."[121] Upon his return he curiously orders his troops to hang their weapons on the Pleiades, with the consequence that when the constellation moves, the weapons disappear for one full year.[122] Another motif defining this episode is his encounter with the old man who refuses to be impressed by the pomp of Dhulqarnayn's army. Among the topics in their discussion is the sheikh's daily salary of one dirham, which he spends in thirds: one third goes to his parents, one third to his

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[118] "Dixo Içḥāq: el primero de los rreyes kenpeçó a guerrear fue el rrey Darius, rrey de Furçe" (*Rrek.*, p. 495) and "Éste [Darius] fue el primero a quien hizo la guerra Dulcarnain" (*HD*, p. 6). In *QD*: "'Abd al-Mālik said that the first king that Dhulqarnayn declared war against was Darius" (p. 115).

[119] *QD*, p. 79.

[120] Meaning, 'lightening.' This is the creature that transported Muhammad from Mecca up through the heavens during his miraj as related in *Sahih Bukhari* (vol. 5, Book 58, Number 227). Alexander's mounting of the same creature creates a typological relationship between the two. See Zuwiyya, "A Typological Approach to Aljamiado-Morisco Literature," *Qurtuba* 6 (2001), 187–212.

[121] *QD*, p. 81.

[122] *QD*, p. 84; *Rrek.*, pp. 149–150.

children, and one third is reserved for daily expenses.[123] For the sheikh's wisdom, Dhulqarnayn makes him governor. From Jabarsā, Dhulqarnayn travels east to arrive in Jabarsā, land of the rising sun,[124] which is a twin city to Jabarsā on the other side of the earth. The similarity between the names causes the two to be often confused. Generally, the narrator digresses to tell the "story of the two cities."[125] Along the way, we read the stories of Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, the Thamūd, and the etymology of the toponyms Jabarsā and Jabarsā. Dhulqarnayn undertakes journeys to the people of Yāwīl, Tāwīl, Banī Mansik, and al-Naghaš, before arriving in Jabarsā. The people of Jabarsā inform Dhulqarnayn that the only thing beyond them to the east is the Land of Darkness.[126] Little or none of this material is found in the *Rrek.* or *HD*. It is likely an addition of the transmitter ʿAbd al-Malik al-Malshūnī principally on the authority of Muqātil b. Sulayman and Mujāhid and it reflects the Islamic legends of Arabian origin to which García Gómez refers.[127]

Having read in the Book of Eçkenderius that there is a Darkness on earth containing the Water of Life,[128] Alexander summons his advisors, the angel Zayāqīl, Afšakhīr, and al-Khiḍr to learn about the nature of the darkness.[129] The episode that follows is in some sense the heart of the Arabic Alexander romance. At the outset, we find Alexander bent on the idea of conquering the darkness and drinking from the fountain despite the amonestations of his sages. He is dominated by unrefrained ambition. Upon his exit from the Land of Darkness Alexander comes to a river full of precious stones, but he does not take a single gem. The narrator cites the prophet Muhammad and states that

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[123] *QD*, p. 86; *Rrek.*, pp. 151–157.

[124] *QD*, pp. 124ff.

[125] See especially *QD*, p. 88.

[126] The location of the Land of Darkness in the east has its logic: as the sun and daylight comes from the east, so does the darkness.

[127] *HD*, lv; cxliv–cxlviii.

[128] From the masterful study of Friedlaender, we know that the origin of Alexander's journey to the Water of Life—together with the trip to Paradise with which the episode is sometimes confused—is ancient and goes back to the Greek legend of Gauco through the Jewish Talmud (*Chadirlegende*, pp. 31–46).

[129] *Rrek.*, p. 482. In *QD*, it is the people of Jabarsā who inform Dhulqarnayn of the darkness (p. 127). Zayāqīl confirms this (128) and then Afshakhīr who found the reference in the Book of Seth (p. 129). Al-Thaʾlabī (367) says that this knowledge comes from a book titled Adam's Commandments or Adam's Testament (cited in Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, p. 129). In the Ethiopic version, it is the "'Book of Creation,' which is called 'El-Musika,' that is to say, the 'Book of the Law of the Histories of Books'" (Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander*, p. 264).

had he arrived at that river before overcoming his worldy ambition he would not have left a stone in that riverbed behind.[130] The role of the darkness in the Alexander romance then is to unite the proud hero of the *PC* tradition with the pious hero of the Quran 18:82–98. This is achieved through character transformation. By the luminesence of a stone inherited from Adam through the prophets, Alexander penetrates the occult darkness, but his desires are misdirected. He cannot achieve immortality. God reserves the Water of Life for Al-Khiḍr, who coincidentally is the one that carries Adam's stone to illuminate the way. Alexander's conversations first with a righteous bird and then with the angel poised to blow the horn on Judgment Day do not dissuade him in his pursuit of the forbidden. However, another stone made in his image given to him by the Hornblower contains a sufficiently strong message for the blinded hero. On the balance scale, the stone weighs more than piles of rocks but can be balanced by a handful of dust. Al-Khiḍr explains that Alexander's ambition has taken such a grip on him that he will only be satisfied when he is dead and the gravediggers throw dirt over his corpse.[131]

In this purged state, Dhulqarnayn is now ready to participate in God's plan for mankind. His role is to inclose the unclean nations of Gog and Magog until Judgment Day. This episode is from Quran 18:93–94. In the gloss found in the Alexander romance, again narrated as a hadith, the barrier that Alexander makes is composed of a mixure of iron and copper[132] thus able to thwart the boring of the Gog and

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[130] In the form of a hadith: *Rrek.*, p. 181; *HD*, p. 51; *QD*: "The Prophet […] said: Dhulqarnayn marched into the valley with a feeling of asceticism after what he had heard from al-Khiḍr […] Had he entered the river before that, he would not have left anything in the riverbed. But now he hated wealth" (p. 137).

[131] *Rrek.*, p. 179; *HD*, p. 51; *QD*, p. 134.

[132] *Rrek.*, pp. 181–185; *QD*, p. 97. *HD* places the full-length episode of Gog and Magog before the expedition to the Darkness. But at the beginning, the narrator says that Dhulqarnayn departed from the darkness, walked across the water, and emerged into the land of sun, near the Gog and Magog: "…partió Dulqarnain de vuelta por las tinieblas y caminó entre ellas, sobre el agua, doce días con sus noches, hasta llegar a la luz del sol, por la región de Yachuch and Machuch" (p. 45). In other words, before the text became corrupted, the episode of the Darkness was meant to preceed the episode of Gog and Magog in *HD*. *QD* states on the authority of Muqātil b. Sulaymān that the people of Tariš were the same as the Gog and Magog and hence the Marib Barrier built to inclose the Tariš is the same as the one that incloses the Gog and Magog (p. 95). With respect to the order of episodes, *QD* relates that as Alexander left the darkness and crossed the river of jewels he came to the land of Gog and Magog (p. 137). However, the narrator is aware that earlier (pp. 96–98) he had already told their story so he says "commentators differ as to whether he built it [the barrier of

Magog who spend their days trying to break through. An anecdote attached to the end of this episode is that a number of the Gog and Magog ended up on the wrong side of the wall, to which Alexander said "turkuhum" meaning in Arabic 'leave them' and so those tribes became known as the Turks.[133]

THE PERSIAN CAMPAIGN[134]

Once Alexander consolidated his power at home,[135] he amasses an army and writes to all the kings of the earth demanding that they profess monotheism, submit to and obey God, and (in *HD*) that they practice the religion of Muhammad.[136] The confrontation with Darius is, in general, reminiscent of the *PC* tradition with the same deviation in the proper nouns which have suffered irreversible deformations. Alexander's motive for threatening Darius is no longer Greek liberation from Persian domination, but rather monotheism and the unity of God. In *HD*, Alexander says that it would be wrong to leave a polytheist in peace.[137] Darius scoffs and calls him a thief. They exchange letters and gifts whose number[138] and nature vary from one version to another. In *QD*, for example, Darius sends sesame seeds, a pearl, a jewel, and a chest filled with gold.[139] The interpretation of these gifts contains little novelty. After the first defeat, Darius flees. During his pursuit Alexander makes numerous side excursions the most noteworthy of

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Gog and Magog] before or after entering the darkness[…] When Dhulqarnayn built the barrier and events developed as mentioned above at the beginning of this book…" (i.e. on p. 137).

[133] *Rrek.*, p. 184; *QD*, pp. 137–138.

[134] *Rrek.*, pp. 187–213; *QD*, pp. 113–141; *HD*, pp. 6–16.

[135] In *QD*, the narrator refers here to the lands of Rum (pp. 113–115), and even to Rome (p. 113), when it would seem clear that Alexander's home is first in Macedonian and second in Greece. In the *Rrek.*, the narrator refers to the land of "cristianos" (p. 185). See M. Marin "'Rum' in the works of three Spanish Muslim Geographers," *Graeco-Arabica* 3 (1984), 109–119.

[136] In *QD* the narrator says that Alexander's advisors told him to wage holy war on Jerusalem (p. 115). However, immediately afterwards begins the Persian campaign. The episode to Jerusalem must have been in the source material and perhaps in an earlier Arabic version, but was not conserved in these Arabic romances.

[137] "¡Oh Darnux! Marcharé hacia ti, para combatirte, porque no es justo que deje en paz a quien practica el politeísmo" (p. 8).

[138] The two kings exchange four letters in the *Rrek.* and *QD*, but in *HD* there are only two.

[139] *Rrek.* adds a "gallina clueca" among the gifts (ed. Guillén Robles, p. 197).

which are the one marked by the hunger the Macedonians endure and Dhulqarnayn's arrival at a temple where he receives a prophecy assuring him that his fame will remain until the end of the world. After his second defeat, Darius makes one last act of resistance which is to send Porus, King of India, a letter imploring help. This letter derives from *PC*, II, 19.[140] Darius escapes to a frozen river called Tarjux in *HD* and Satrados in the *Rrek.*, but soon thereafter is murdered by unnamed ministers as his flight continues. Near death, he asks Dhulqarnayn to protect his mother Zareyib, his wife, his brother, and to take the hand of his daughter Rashiqa in marriage.[141] The Arabic legends narrate a moving speech in which Alexander offers to restore Darius to his throne if he overcomes his wounds and stands up.[142] The royal burial given Darius serves to win the love of the Persian people: "Cuando los súbditos de Darnux supieron lo que había hecho con su rey, y cómo le había enterrado sin cometer con él abominación, se regocijaron asaz, y cuantos estaban cerca se convirtieron a la obediencia de Dulcarnain."[143] The final step in the consolidation of power in Persia is to marry Darius' daughter in fulfillment of his promise. He writes to Darius' mother to inform her of her son's death, and asks for her to prepare her daughter for marriage.

Indian Campaign

The conquest of India varies little from the version in the *PC* tradition. The Indian king—Porus in the *PC*—is Fuz[144] in *HD*, Lion in the *Rrek.* and Labūr in *QD*. In *HD*, the episode falls in a spot in the manuscript corresponding to a lacuna of five pages; so it is lost.[145] After his victory in Persia, Dhulqarnayn writes to Porus and demands that he "recognize God's oneness, and bow before the truth by converting

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[140]   *HD*, p. 123.

[141]   Her name is 'Rashīqa' in *QD* and in *Rrek.* The form Uxaica in *HD* is explainable by confusion of the letters *waw* and *raʾ*. See *HD*, p. 16.

[142]   "Darnux, si te levantases de tu lecho, ten por seguro que te restituiría en tu reino…" (*HD*, p. 12). See also *QD*: "If you get up from this spot we will add another country to your lands, and another reign to your kingdom…" (p. 138).

[143]   *HD*, p. 13; see also *QD*, p. 139.

[144]   "Fuz" derives from *Bur* where a confusion of the diacritical marks swaps /f/ for /b/ and /z/ for /r/.

[145]   See *HD*, where the narrator refers back to the "triunfos and victorias" against Darius and Porus (p. 28).

to God's religion."[146] Porus is not intimidated and refuses to become
"Muslim."[147] In the preparations, Dhulqarnayn passes through the
river valley called al-Mukhadib, where he finds pepper plants, cinam-
mon and clove trees, and learns the process of how these Indian tribes
produce their spicy pepper.[148] The two armies meet at the Valley of
al-Nahrān.[149] In the ensuing battle, which in the Arabic romances is
the most complete in combat details, Dhulqarnayn sets afire brazen
images with tar, pitch, and sulphur to slow the onslaught of the Indian
forces. But Dhulqarnayn is worried and devises a strategy. He alone
will fight Porus to decide who will be lord of the kingdom of India.
Distracted by noise among his own troops, Porus turns away from
his opponent, and Dhulqarnayn lunges forward to decapitate him. In
the end, there did not remain a "single idol worshipper to offend the
Almighty God [in India]…and they [the Indians] made a pact with
Dhulqarnayn to pay a kharaj tax,"[150] in this way satisfying the condi-
tions Dhulqarnayn established before the war.

Having traversed Persia in the First Clime and continued east across
India in the Second Clime, Alexander enters the Third Clime in the
Rrek., which is under the influence of the goddess Venus, and it is
here that he meets Candace. From the Third Clime he makes his way
to the lands of the Amazon women, to the Barbars and the Ifriqīyūn,
constituting the Fifth Clime.[151] At this point in his journey, Alexander
has traversed the Mediterranean basin, he turns north into Spain and
passes through the land of the Franks. Now again he turns toward the
Orient, passing first through eastern Europe and through the heart
of Asia. In order to complete the trip around the world, he needs to
reach China. To achieve this he must head south. But first his path
approaches the limits of human civilization. He climbs Mount Qāf and
observes the savages of Gog and Magog on the far side of the moun-
tain. According to Yāqūt, Gog and Magog are the inhabitants of the
Sixth Clime. For both Yāqūt and Masʿūdī, the Seventh Clime is China.
Only the *Rrek.* and *QD* place the Chinese campaign at the end of nar-

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[146] *QD*, p. 142. Also, "what we want is for you to enter our religion," (*QD*, p. 145)
says Dhulqarnayn in follow-up letter.
[147] *Rrek.*, p. 215.
[148] *QD*, p. 143.
[149] *QD*, p. 145.
[150] *QD*, p. 147.
[151] The Fourth Clime contains the lands of Rum including Macedonia. Thus his
journey begins in the Fourth Clime.

rative. Within his reach is the outerbounds of the known world. He approaches the *baḥr al-muḥiṭ* [the Ocean that surrounds the world].[152] The people at the shore speak the language of birds and they have heads like horses, according to *HD* (18). God has given Dhulqarnayn the means to all ends and so he is able to understand their language. Upon learning of his desire to push forward beyond them, they point to a hill in the midst of the sea. Alexander sends two men (Ifliyūn and Moguanis in *HD*) to explore.[153] But the hill turns out to be the back of a sea monster and he eats the members of the expedition.[154] The passages that follow are from the *De Indiae Miraculi*, identifiable by the seemingly arbitrary switch to the first person plural ("Después partimos de aquella ínsula y caminamos").[155] The most notable excursion Alexander relates to his teacher is the trip to a lake in the midst of a terrible drought. The water at the lake is "sweeter than honey," and the surroundings recall the most ancient of civilizations, as they find a column with an image of a man who was the King of the World in the first epoch.[156] The blessing of the water comes at a terrible price because at the third hour of the night wild beasts attack the troops and Dhulqarnayn spends the night hearing his men scream in terror. The next day the Macedonians encounter a beast that eats two bulls every day.[157] It closely recalls the *PC* episode especially inasmuch as Dhulqarnayn defeats the monster with gunpowder.

Campaign to China

In one form or another, all the Islamic legends concerning Dhulqarnayn include the expedition to China—in the Seventh clime—and the submission of the Chinese king. In *HD*, Alexander disguises himself as his own messenger, which recalls the *PC* (II,14–15; III,19ff.). This

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[152] In *HD* it is called *Baḥr al-Qamqum* and the nearby mountain is Mount Judi. See *HD*, pp. 73–84, and 85–87.

[153] *HD*, pp. 18–19.

[154] See Book 3.114 in Pritchard's translation of the *HP* (Toronto, 1992, p. 114). Sometimes the beast is a bunch of crabs (J¹), a lobster (the Armenian), or simply a beast as in recension A of the *PC*.

[155] *HD*, p. 19.

[156] "Esta figura fue construida en el tiempo antiguo" (*HD*, pp. 19–21). See similar accounts in *Rrek.*, p. 544; *QD*, p. 150.

[157] *HD*, pp. 22–23.

motif is also found in *Rrek.* (fols. 124ff.) and in ʿUmāra (f. 50v).[158] It is in the Ethiopic text as well, so one must assume that it was in the Arabic original used for the elaboration of that text. Alexander uses the name Qanbarush in *HD* and Qīnādūs in ʿUmāra; in the *Rrek.* Alexander becomes Febus as he approaches a nosey chamberlain on his way to meet with the King of China. The ʿUmāra version is the most extensive.[159] The king's chamber is protected as well-armed guards stand around the king's bed. The mysterious statues with which the king communicates in whispers never threaten the visitor. When Alexander disguised as his messenger approaches the golden bed covered with jewels, the king does not rise to meet him. He responds to Alexander's call to submission by acknowledging Alexander's chosen place on earth. But he warns that this success is God's doing and that he should look to save his soul because his time on earth, like that of the other kings before him, is fleeting. He removes the crown from his head and gives it to the messenger along with copious gifts of gold, silver, tapestries, fine clothing, and horses. The tone of the warning suggests that the episode belongs at the end of Alexander's journey rather than at the beginning as in *HD*.

Other Episodes from Hadiths and Texts of Diverse Muslim Origin

Perhaps originating in geographical compendiums, in *QD* one finds an account of Alexander's construction of Alexandria as a "shelter for the weak, for our friends, and also as a center of communications"[160] with its spiral-shaped lighthouse. After building Alexandria, Alexander asks Aristotle to direct him towards the road he should take to begin his journeys. Aristotle advises him to consult with God. At this point, Alexander meets his guardian angel, Raphael,[161] who explains

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[158] In *QD*, the episode to China has been omitted. After Dhulqarnayn's letter to his mother in which he alludes to an enumeration of all his treasures, the narrator tells us that "his soldiers penetrated deep into the lands of China" (p. 156), but then without any other mention of the matter of China the narrator says that "following Alexander's conquest of China, and upon his return, he felt ill…" (p. 157).

[159] See ʿUmāra, fols. 50v–53r.

[160] p. 69. See also *Rrek.* (pp. 467–469) where the narrator additionally describes the contrast betweens the city's white walls and its inhabitants' dark clothing.

[161] See *QD*, p. 70, notes 26 and 27 for the attribution of Raphael as Alexander's guardian.

his divine mission and flies with him high above the earth to show him
the lands he will soon conquer, as mentioned above. The hero-angel
dialogue is an important motif in the Arabic Alexander tradition. Alex-
ander converses with the angel seated on top of Mt. Qāf who holds the
reins to the mountains of the earth and provokes earthquakes by pull-
ing on his ropes.[162] In the *Rrek.*, Alexander has a similar conversation
with the angel poised to blow the trumpet on Judgment Day.

In a separate digression of Muslim origin, *HD* narrates as hadith a
long comparison between Alexander and Solomon, which is unique
to *HD*. Its direct source has not been identified, but it would seem to
be fruit of a tradition among Islamic scholars of comparisons between
the great kings of Islam.

Episodes from Islamic Wisdom Literature

Omnipresent in the Islamic legendary material concerning Alexan-
der is the episode of the Macedonian king's encounter with an old
man who pays little attention to the pompous parade of Alexander's
troops in front of him because he is unimpressed.[163] The elderly man
is often described to be stirring bones in order to distinguish between
the bones of nobles and paupers, freemen and slaves. In some ver-
sions Dhulqarnayn asks the old man how he spends his money, to
which he responds in thirds, as metioned above.[164] Ultimately, this
material comes from the *PC* in which Alexander converses with the
gymnosophists.[165] A similar dialogue develops between the Brahmans
and the Macedonian king, when Alexander arrives to conquer their
lands in India. These episodes are common in medieval Arabic wis-
dom literature, and their incorporation into the Alexander romance
is due in part to their transmission by ninth-century author Hunayn
Ibn Isḥāq, author of the Arabic original for the *Libro de los proverbios*,
and by eleventh-century author Mubaššir ibn Fātik and his *Akhbār*

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[162] *QD*, pp. 154–155; *HD*, pp. 36–44. See García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental*,
pp. cxlvi–cxlvii for similar conversations with angels in other Islamic texts.
[163] See, for example, *HD*, pp. 56–57.
[164] Ibn al-Jawzī cites Wahb b. Al-Munabbih as his source (f. 83v).
[165] See *PC* in Wolohojian edition.

Al-Iskandar preserved in both Arabic and in the Castilian translation in *Bocados de oro*.[166]

The letter that Alexander writes to his mother on his deathbed has two different forms. The first, characterized by its words of consolation, ends when Alexander orders his mother Olympias to invite everyone to a banquet. Once the banquet is underway she should announce that only those who have not lost someone dear may sit down to eat. Thus, Olympias is consoled by the fact that no one eats because everyone present has lost someone dear. The second letter ponders the transitory nature of human life in beautiful language.

HD ends with the second of these letters. García Gómez explains that the most complete version of both letters comes from Hunayn Ibn Isḥāq's ninth-century "Sentencias de filósofos."[167] However, the circulation of these letters probably took on an independent life as is suggested by their presence in innumberable Arabic works making it difficult to ascertain which version represents the original.[168]

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[166] For the Arabic see Meissner (1895). For Medieval Castilian, see *Bocados de Oro* in Knust, *Mittheilungen aus dem Eskurial*, Chpt. XIV, pp. 277ff.

[167] Manuscript of the Escorial number 760, fols. 31v–34v.

[168] See García Gómez, pp. cliv–clviii for a broader study of the letters in Arabic literature. See a shorter version of letter two in ʿUmāra translated in Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, p. 166. Both letters are found in Ibn al-Jawzī (fols. 83v–84r), but neither is present in al-Thaʾlabī's abridged version.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE 'ACCURSED' AND THE 'ADVENTURER': ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN IRANIAN TRADITION

Josef Wiesehöfer*

I. Introduction

Then [the dying] Dara[1] spoke quickly, going over his wishes and omitting nothing. He began by saying, "You have achieved fame, but see that you fear the world's Creator, who has made the heavens and the earth and time, and the strong and the weak. Look after my children and my family, and my veiled wise women. Ask for my daughter's hand in marriage, and keep her gently and in comfort in the court. (…) It may be that you shall have a son with her, and that the name of Esfandyar[2] will be renewed in him, that he will preserve the fires of Zoroastrianism and live by the Zend-Avesta, keeping the Feasts of Sadeh and No-Ruz and preserving our fire temples. Such a son will honour Hormozd and the sun and moon, and wash his soul and face in the waters of wisdom; he will renew the ways of Lohrasp and Goshtasp, treating men according to their station whether it be high or low; he will make our faith flourish and his days will be fortunate." Sekandar [Alexander] answered him, "Your heart is pure and your words are wise, O king. I accept all that you have said, and I shall not stray from your words while I am within the borders of your kingdom. I shall accomplish the good deeds you recommend, and your wisdom will be my guide."

   He [the first Sasanian king Ardeshir] addressed his followers: "Illustrious and righteous as you are, there is no one here who has not heard what the malevolent Sekandar, out of the baseness of his heart, did on this earth. One by one he killed my ancestors and unjustly grasped the world in his fist. I am descended from Esfandyar, it is right that I cannot recognize Ardavan [the last Parthian/Ashkanian king] as king here."

   (Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, trans. D. Davis, pp. 468–469, 538–539)

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   * English Translation by Cornelia Oefelein.
   [1] The last Kayanid king.
   [2] A Kayanid prince, the son of king Goshtasp. Lohrasp, mentioned below, was also a Kayanid king.

It has long been known that two different Alexander traditions exist in Iran, the first of which, greatly influenced by the ancient Alexander romance, presents Alexander as a Persian prince and mighty king, a Muslim sage or even a prophet, whereas the second one characterizes him as evil incarnate, the 'devil's' henchman and a person who, like no-one else, brought death and destruction to Eranshahr.[3] Thus, the first tradition, found in the works of Muslim poets, writers and histori-ographers of Iranian and non-Iranian origin, stands in sharp contrast to the second, Middle-Persian one found in religious (Zoroastrian) and didactic literature, and its Arabic and Persian versions. However, both traditions may also converge within one and the same work, as the quotations from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* illustrate. Those two tra-ditions became rivals in late Sasanian and early Islamic times, after a version of the Alexander romance had been translated into Syriac and Middle Persian.

The primary aim of this article, then, will be to examine the nature, the circumstances of origin and the roots of these two traditions, as well as their intended objectives in the light of recent research, and to briefly illuminate how they continue to exert influence even upon the present.

II. Iranian Literature and Iranian Historical Tradition

As previous scholarship has frequently and convincingly illustrated, pre-Islamic Iran was a world in which orality dominated, in which the

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[3] See A. Abel, "La figure d'Alexandre en Iran," in *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano* (Rome, 1966), pp. 119–134; M.S. Southgate, "Portrait of Alexander in Persian Alexander-Romances of the Islamic Era," *JAOS* 97 (1977), 278–284; *Iskandarnamah. A Persian Medieval Alexander-romance*, trans. M.S. Southgate (New York, 1978); J. Wiesehöfer, "Zum Nachleben von Achaimeniden und Alexander in Iran," in *Achae-menid History VIII: Continuity and Change* (Leiden, 1994), 389–397; C. Ciancaglini, "Alessandro e l'incendio di Persepoli," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, (Alexandria, 1998), pp. 59–81; M. Casari, *Alessandro e Utopia nei romanzi persiani medievali* (Rome, 1999); P. Briant, *Darius dans l'ombre d'Alexandre* (Paris, 2003), pp. 443–521; M. Gaillard (ed.), *Alexandre le Grand en Iran: Le Dârâb Nâmeh d'Abu Tâher Tarsusi* (Paris, 2005), pp. 13–73; P. Gignoux, "La démonsation d'Alexandre le Grand d'après la littérature pehlevie," in M. Macuch, M. Maggi, and W. Sundermann (eds.), *Iranian Languages and Texts from Iran and Turan. Ronald E. Emmerick Memo-rial Volume*, (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 87–97; R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven, 2008), pp. 27–48; E. Venetis, *The Iskandarnama (Book of Alexander): An Analysis of an Anonymous Persian Prose Romance* (in press).

spoken word took precedence over the written word, notwithstanding a body of administrative writings and royal texts of legitimization not to be underestimated. Thus, it is only for the (late) Sasanian period that we should speak of Iranian 'literature,' then written in Middle Persian.[4] Evidence for this precedence is provided by the Old and Middle Persian vocabulary containing many indigenous words for "to remember," "to memorize," "to recite,"[5] "to hear," and "to question (the recited text)," but also by the fact that the Old Persian terms for "script" and "to write" are borrowed from other languages in the Near East. Similar to Plato's *Phaidros* (275c–279b), the Avestan tradition was deeply skeptical of the written word, giving preference to the memorized text. Thus it is not surprising that the early Muslims did not recognize the Zoroastrians as "People of the Book," despite the latter's attempts to ascribe the written version of their relatively young canon of sacred writings, the Avesta,—dating from around the 6th century A.D.—, to the prophet Zoroaster.

As far as Zoroastrian literature is concerned, the most important religious-literary accomplishment of the Sasanian period was the compilation, codification, and canonization of the Avesta with its 21 nasks, along with the collection's translation into Middle Persian and the exegesis, commentary and interpretation of the sacred writings (Zand).[6] Some time later (7th–9th century A.D.?),[7] new religious-didactic texts were composed, in which excerpts from the Avesta and the Zand were compiled into religious anthologies, as it were, devoted to one or more specific topics, as well as including new thoughts and concepts. In addition, apocalyptical and mystical texts from the late Sasanian and early Islamic period are preserved, and texts pertaining to wisdom literature, as well as historical and political works of fiction and treatises, law books and shorter didactic works of prose, glossaries, and

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[4] See, in particular, M. Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, part 1, vol. 4, section 2 (Cologne, 1968), pp. 31–66, here pp. 31–32 and Ph. Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society between Orality and Literacy," in V.S. Curtis, S. Stewart (eds.), *The Idea of Iran III: The Sasanian Era*, (London, 2008), pp. 140–155.

[5] Regarding the famous minstrels at the courts of the Iranian nobility and kings, the *gosanan*, cf. Boyce, "The Parthian *gōsān* and Iranian Minstrel Tradition," *JRAS* (1957), 10–45; Boyce, "Gōsān," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 11.2 (2002), pp. 167a–170b.

[6] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," 34–35.

[7] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," 38ff.

many other works similar in content to the Avesta or from a similar religious context.[8]

The problems inherent in the long dominance of the spoken word in Iran for the continuity of tradition are obvious: first, many of the preserved written compositions contain older material, so that the age of a specific text, i.e. the age of its transcription is not as significant as it might appear at first glance.[9] Second, the individual phases of the evolutionary process of this literature are difficult to discern, as in most cases of orally transmitted tradition written down at a later time.[10] Third, only part of this tradition, most of it religious-didactic in nature, has been passed down to us directly, although the bulk of Iranian literature from the Sasanian period (224–651 A.D.) definitely belonged to the non-religious sector.[11] Fourth and finally, the long dominance of the oral tradition and oral recitation also offers an explanation for the predominant role images play in the preservation of Iran's 'historical' traditions, on bas-reliefs, on paintings and on vessels, on tapestries, coins and other pictorial carriers, in addition to the inscriptional heritage of the historical Iranian kings and the administrative records and documents.

However, the epigraphic and archaeological testimony obviously never determined the Iranians' views of their neighbors and enemies in the west. This follows from the fact that soon after the fall of the Sasanian Empire in the 7th century A.D., the inhabitants of Fars no longer considered the rock reliefs as being the works of Shabuhr I (240–272 A.D.) and his successors. They were associated instead with characters of the Iranian legendary cycles like Rostam. What were the

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[8] This rough classification of the writings may be found in Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature" and similarly in J. de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi Writings," in *CHI*, vol. 3.2 (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1166–1195. Cf. however the recent definitive history of Pehlevi literature by C.G. Cereti, *La letteratura pahlavi* (Milan, 2001); and R.E. Emmerick and M. Macuch (eds.), The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran (London, 2009).

[9] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," 33ff.

[10] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature." The significance of oral tradition scholarship for the Iranian literary tradition is emphasized in Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society," p. 152 and Huyse, *Histoire orale et écrite en Iran ancien entre mémoire et oubli* (Paris, in press).

[11] See Cereti, *La letteratura pahlavi*; and M. Macuch, "Pahlavi Literature," in R.E. Emmerick and M. Macuch (eds.), *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran*, pp. 116–196.

main features of this powerful tradition, and what caused the displacement of historical tradition by the legendary?[12]

In late Sasanian or even Islamic times, Middle Persian texts existed that were either related in a sense to the Avesta as a kind of commentary literature or that, in epic form or as poetic songs, belonged to a courtly context. From the time of the reign of Khusrau I (531–579 A.D.) onwards, a kind of 'Iranian National History,' later entitled *X^waday-namag* ('Book of Lords'), based primarily on oral traditions, offered a semi-official written account of the complete history of Eran-shahr, starting with the first world king Kayumars[13] and ending with the rule of Khosrau himself.[14] Probably designed to meet the subjects' longing for a collective remembrance of Iran's glorious past in view of a rather depressing present, this work, which has come down to us only in excerpts, translations and later versions, is structured around the reigns of fifty kings and queens. It is also characterized by specific 'legendary cycles;' here we intend to focus primarily on those of the Pishdadian, the Kayanid and the Sasanian dynasties. It is interesting to note that 'heroic' times in the legends are usually followed by periods when seers, holy people or 'prophets' raise moral questions, forcing wars into the background. As far as literary genres are concerned, the 'Book of Lords' is a mixture of heroic tales, quotations of kings and sages, priestly disputations, philosophical treatises, moral instruction, and royal testaments and speeches, all of which try to answer questions concerning justice, religiosity and exemplary behavior. The *X^waday-namag* was not only a kind of semi-official history book, but also a means of literary entertainment and social education. It was

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[12] The following statements rely heavily on the observations of E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History," in *CHI*, vol. 3.1 (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 359–477. See also Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society," and Huyse, *Histoire orale*.

[13] In this article I use the names transmitted by Ferdowsi. For the traditions on Kayumars/Gayomard, see Yarshater, "Iranian National History," pp. 416–420.

[14] Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society," p. 151 rightly postulates a first compilation of 'historical' material during the reign of Khusrau I. Khusrau II would then have been responsible for important additions to and revisions of that material (See A.Sh. Shahbazi, "On the *Xwadāy-nāmag*," in D. Amin, M. Kasheff (eds.), *Iranica varia. Papers in Honor of Prof. E. Yarshater*, [Tehran, 1990], pp. 208–229, here p. 214). There are even later additions from the time of Yazdgerd III (Th. Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos* [Strassburg, 1896], pp. 12–13, §13). The first Sasanian attempt to collect all the legendary material circulating in Iran is probably to be dated to the early 5th century A.D., when the Sasanian kings radically changed their royal titulature, not least by introducing the term 'Kayanid.' The first real Kayanid name of a Sasanian king is that of Kavad I (488–496, 499–531); see Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society," p. 151.

meant to propagate the moral and socio-political ideals and virtues of kings and royal subjects, upon which the Sasanian kings tried to rely, and with the aid of which they hoped to perpetuate their rule. The lives of the kings, heroes and sages were meant to illustrate those ideals; therefore, the distinction between myth, saga and historical fact became secondary.

The 'Book of Lords' conjoined the traditions of world history and, particularly, Iranian history into a kind of semi-official Sasanian version. These had probably circulated previously independently, with each region of Iran undoubtedly possessing regionally specific versions of Iranian history, differing in part from those of other regions. Some, perhaps of an eastern Iranian provenance, must have been so popular that, in the end, they were able to displace or absorb the historical and partly legendary tradition of Southwest Iran—a fact suggested by Sasanian ignorance of their Achaemenid (ca. 550–330 B.C.) antecedents. Since it may be ruled out that the Arsacids-Parthians (ca. 250 B.C.–224 A.D.) consciously sought to erase the Achaemenids from tradition, the loss of all memory of the names of Cyrus (559–531 B.C.) and his successors might be explained as being the result of a gradual process resulting from the oral character of Iranian tradition. Its fascinating and entertaining traits are possibly attributable in part to eastern traditions of historical interpretation that place particular emphasis on the saving grace of the gods. Oral tradition is characterized by: (a) the special attention given to the beginning and the contemporary end of history, while only little information is made available for the so-called floating gap, which bridges long spans of time; (b) the filling out of existing story patterns with new historical or mythical figures and themes. This subordinating of historical characters, events, and details to the framework material, apart from other factors of deformation or transformation in oral cultures, might explain why popular knowledge of Cyrus and his successors faded or became transformed.[15] The Parthians, who had epic and poetic material performed at their courts,[16] are said to have contributed to this process by collecting and preserving the religious tradition of Iran. King Valakhsh [Vologeses I ?] (ca. 51–80 A.D.) might be mentioned

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[15] For the rules of oral tradition and the characteristics of Iranian oral tradition, see Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society" and Huyse, *Histoire orale.*

[16] See Boyce, "The Parthian gōsān" and Boyce, "Gōsān" with the remarks of Huyse, *Histoire orale.*

as one example.[17] Even if eastern Iranian epic cycles made up the core of Iran's national saga and national history in (early) Sasanian times, as has rightly been stressed, this does not mean that the inhabitants of Fars ('Kings,' Magi, etc.) had not made their own contributions to the Sasanian version(s) of the 'National History.'[18] Their version of the Avestan tradition, for example, retained its formative strength in Southwest Iran during the Parthian dominion and was finally canonized under the Sasanians. We find proof of this (partly older) southwest Iranian orientation of the Avesta in the throne names Ardakhshir, Darayan and Manuchihr of Parthian Fars and probably even in the Achaemenids' use of Avestan names and concepts for their own needs and purposes.[19] This special 'Persian' development is also exemplified by the Sasanians' recollection of Achaemenid 'Ariyanism,' the affinity of Sasanian royal ideology for its Achaemenid counterpart, and the thematic and linguistic parallels in the Achaemenid and Sasanian royal inscriptions.[20] A sense of a special 'Persian,' i.e. southwest Iranian, history and tradition (which differed from the Parthian one) was probably perpetuated from late Achaemenid times through the time of the Frataraka (2nd century B.C.) and the sub-Parthian kings into the early Sasanian period, with the aid of the 'holy places' at Naqsh-i Rustam, Persepolis and elsewhere, including their iconography. When Shabuhr I 'worships' his 'forebears' (who, like his 'father' and his 'ancestors,' maintains a special relationship to Fars), when he derives his own claims from their achievements and possession rights, when he emphasizes the special position of Eranshahr in his empire (see below), when a Sasanian prince as King of the Sacas prays for the builder of Persepolis at the beginning of the 4th century A.D. (though the names of the place and the builder are unknown to him), all these acts stand in causal conjunction with the impressive inheritance of

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[17] *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard*. D.M. Madan (ed.), 2 vols., (Bombay, 1911), pp. 412, 5–11.

[18] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," pp. 390–391.

[19] Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society" and Huyse, *Histoire orale* try to show that the Kayanid legendary cycle(s) already played an important role in Achaemenid Fars (and even among the Medes).

[20] Huyse, "La revendication de territoires achéménides par les Sasanides: une réalité historique?" in *Iran. Questions et connaissances. Actes du IVe congrès européen des études iraniennes organisé par la Societas Iranologica Europaea*, vol. 1: *La période ancienne*, Ph. Huyse (ed.), (Paris, 2002), pp. 297–311.

the 'ancestors' and 'forebears.'[21] This can only mean that the Sasanians saw themselves as proud heirs to a glorious Iranian past of either a Kayanid-legendary or an obscure 'historical' model.

As previously mentioned above, 'Iranian National History' is shaped by a succession of dynasties. Among the mythical world rulers of the Pishdadian line, King Feraydun is for us the most significant. He not only defeated the monster-demon King Zahhak, but also divided the world among his three sons Salm, Tur and Iraj. This triggered the disastrous strife between the Iranian kings (heirs of Iraj, who were called Kayanids) and the descendants of Salm and Tur, both from the East and bearing Iranian names. The Kayanid epic tradition shows a strong eastern Iranian legendary and religious slant, although some scholars claim to be able to recognize allusions to western Iranian historical characters like Cyrus the Great. The end of the third and last phase of Kayanid rule is heralded by the malevolent deeds of the conqueror Alexander of Rum. In the 'Book of Lords' tradition, Alexander kills the last Kayanid king Dara or schemes to have him assassinated; furthermore, the 'Roman' is said to have slain many members of the Iranian aristocracy along with many priests and scholars, to have destroyed fire temples or to have extinguished Holy Fires, to have razed cities and fortresses to the ground, to have robbed, burned or scattered the Holy Scriptures, and to have divided the empire into realms of powerless and quarrelling petty kings (see below).

Presumably, in the Parthian version(s) of the 'National History' the Arsacids (Ashkanians) came after the Kayanids. After consciously displacing their predecessors in late Sasanian times, the Sasanians took their place, systematically revising the entire tradition and presenting themselves as Iranian kings par excellence, as if the history of Iran had culminated in their rule by law of nature. It is no wonder that for many Muslim authors, the Arsacid era was the result of Alexander's misdeeds and a time of instability and chaos, when the numerous rivalries between petty kings jeopardized their predecessors' triumphs, affording Iran's enemies the opportunity to take advantage of the situation and exploit its treasures. From the point of view of the late Sasanian compilers of the 'National History,' the outstanding qualities of

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[21] J. Wiesehöfer, "Gebete für die 'Urahnen' oder: Wann und wie verschwanden Kyros und Dareios aus der Tradition Irans?" in E. Dąbrowa (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient World*, (Cracow, 2002), pp. 111–117.

King Ardashir I (224–240 A.D.) were required, to restore Iran's former greatness and power. The extent to which the conflicts between Khosrau I and his successors on the one side and the high nobility on the other—in particular the battle for the throne between Khosrau II and Vahram Chobin—were responsible for promoting a positive image of the founder of the Sasanian empire while belittling his Arsacid predecessor Ardavan IV, has already been fully analyzed.[22] That the Sasanian view of the Parthians was originally more favorable, is suggested not only by the historically loyal Parthian clans of early Sasanian times, but also by the remnants of a favorable assessment of the Arsacids in Muslim tradition. Arsacid kings, for example, are genealogically affiliated with the Kayanid dynasty, and some are portrayed as having concerned themselves with the promotion of scholarship, culture, and religion.[23]

With respect to Iran's enemies, 'Iranian National History' was subject to particularly conspicuous changes and tendencies of updating in Parthian and Sasanian times. Under the Arsacids, the eastern Iranian portion of the legendary material increased and displaced western Iranian tradition, and the tradition was systematically adjusted to the needs and purposes of the new Sasanian dynasty. As for the emphasis on the special position of Iran in world history, both dynasties introduced obvious new trends that affected the role of their neighbors to the west as well. Thus, in the course of time, the sons of Feraydun became the 'progenitors' of the royal dynasties of Iran, and of Turan and Rum, the foreign archenemies of Iran. Many factors speak in favor of the notion that the tripartition of Feraydun's empire was an Arsacid 'invention,'[24] and that particular emphasis was placed on the antagonism between Iran and its neighbor to the west (now called Rum) during the second half of the Parthian rule, when the conflicts between the Arsacids and the Romans became increasingly severe. It was a time in which more attention was generally paid to the Iranian foundations of Arsacid rule, a time when the already existing zoroastrianized and negative view of Alexander gained increasing significance, and when Iranian heroes and kings were said to have campaigned against Rum (i.e. the Graeco-Macedonian and Roman world). This becomes

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[22] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 474.

[23] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," pp. 475–476.

[24] A. Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique* (Paris, 1936), p. 29.

particularly apparent in the case of Afqur Shah (Pacorus), who, the
Muslim author al-Thaʿlabī tells us, not only won back the Kayanids'
banner but also was able to avenge Alexander's victim Dara by launch-
ing successful attacks against Rum. Such a tale can hardly be of Sasa-
nian origin; it must be a surviving relic of the Parthian view of the
conflict between East and West.[25] The eastern Iranian and Zoroastrian
character of the 'National History,' and not so much the historical
invasions of eastern Iran by nomadic peoples, may have been respon-
sible for Turan evolving into a more serious foe of Iran than Rum in
late Parthian times.

The early Sasanians made reference to both the legendary and the
historical Parthian opposition to Rum, as illustrated by their inscrip-
tions and bas-reliefs mentioned above, most likely because they con-
sidered southwestern Iran their homeland and the Romans their worst
enemies. We are unable to determine the 'National History's' histo-
ricity regarding this period, since the late Sasanian version is more
or less the sole extant testimony of this tradition. However, in light
of the character of this tradition, there is much to suggest that (as in
Parthian times) at a very early stage, the history of events gave way
to the didactic and entertaining parts of this tradition, not only dur-
ing the 4th–5th[26] or even the 6th–7th centuries. This may be deduced
from the disregard for the historically highly relevant Armenian issue,
from the rather casual treatment of the problem of social or religious
minorities, and from the absence of any reference to the battles for the
throne at the end of the 3rd century A.D.[27] It is hard to believe that
the Sasanian compilers from the reign of Khosrau I and his successors
are the only ones to be held responsible for expunging such historical
information, since the 'National History' does not even provide infor-
mation about the western campaigns of Khosrau II.[28]

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[25] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 475.
[26] T. Daryaee, "National History or Keyanid History? The Nature of Sasanid Zoro-
astrian Historiography," *Iranian Studies* 28 (1995), 129–141; Daryaee, "Memory and
History. The Reconstruction of the Past in Late Antique Persia," in *NIB* 1.2 (2001–02),
1–14; Shahbazi, "Early Sasanians' Claim to Achaemenid Heritage," in *NIB* 1.1 (2001),
61–73.
[27] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 477.
[28] The question remains, however, whether or not the early Sasanians' claim to
legitimation encompassed the Kayanids, since Narseh's Paikuli inscription is devoid
of all allusion to the dynasty's Kayanid origin, and Kayanid names do not enter royal
nomenclature until the late 5th century A.D.

Although the 'Iranian National History' contains more information about royal affairs from the reign of Yazdgerd I (399–421 A.D.) onwards, we cannot speak of a true history of events, since these generally present analyses of the motives of those involved or of the general political situation. Details of foreign, administrative or military affairs are only mentioned when of an entertaining nature or possessing a narrative quality. The anecdotes that take center stage are those depicting life at court: the coronation of kings, their inaugural speeches, royal banquets, processions and merriments, as well as hunts and gift exchange, diplomatic contacts and military parades. Great victories of Iranian kings over their enemies in the west appear alongside those over the Turanians and are presented in part as campaigns to avenge Alexander's misdeeds; non-Iranian forebears of Iranian kings and heroes are increasingly assessed as an apparent genealogical defect. In other words, the account of Romano-Sasanian relations in the X^waday-namag and its oral forerunners did not aim at determining the exact reasons for the conflicts between Iran and Rome. Where allusions to historical events are at all discernible and events and characters not totally confused, the entire narrative is dominated by the effort to portray Rum as the arch-enemy of Iran and to tell entertaining and didactic stories about the encounters between East and West. One good example is the account of the life of the famous Sasanian king Shabuhr II (309–379 A.D.) in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. The biography is nothing more than a description of the king's (unhistorical) rescue from Roman captivity with the help of a pretty young maiden of Iranian descent, his punitive Arabian war, as well as two campaigns against the Romans, which prove to be a combination of the wars of Shabuhr II and those of Shabuhr I. It is also during the reign of Shabuhr II that the prophet Mani is said to have reportedly been killed on his way home from China.

Initially unwilling to draw attention to themselves at the cost of their royal Parthian predecessors, the new kings, in the course of time and in collaboration with the Zoroastrian clergy, lent the 'National History' a special Sasanian touch. This is particularly true of the second half of their reign, with clearly anti-Parthian intentions. Rum, metaphor for the neighbors and the historical as well as contemporary enemies in the west, now included the East Romans. As with the Romans, we receive little reliable historical information about them. The special character of the Sasanian view of history becomes particularly evident in the episodes relating to East Rome, but which are

anachronistically transposed back to Kayanid times. Thus, Kay Kavus is said to have dispatched an envoy to the Kaisar, the young Goshtasp to have journeyed to Rum and to have married an East Roman princess.[29] However, the late Sasanian revision of the 'National History' led to two remarkable changes with regard to the enemies of Iran: on the one hand, probably as a result of the disastrous invasions of Hephthalites and Turks, the role of Turan became more significant than that of Rum (finally leading to an identification of Turanians and Turks); on the other hand, within secular tradition, the Pseudo-Callisthenian Alexander in Iranian form supplemented the Alexander as destroyer of Iranian greatness; he thus became a son of Darab and the daughter of the king of Rum (see below).

III. Alexander *Gizistag* [Accursed]

In the 'Book of Lords' and in many other Middle Persian works, but also in the Modern Zoroastrian tradition, in the Manichaean-Sogdian literature, even in some of the Persian Alexander romances, as well as in Persian-Arabian historiography and elsewhere, the Roman Alexander 'of Rum' is accused of ruthlessly persecuting the Zoroastrian religion and the land of Iran.[30]

The individual 'accusations' are as follows: 1. Alexander slays the Kayanid Dara or instigates his assassination; 2. Alexander slays the

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[29] Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 403.

[30] A comprehensive disquisition of the accusations may be found in Briant, *Darius dans l'ombre*, pp. 451–521. One typical example of this kind of negative Alexander portrayal is provided by the *Arda Wiraz Namag*: "then the accursed Evil Spirit, the sinful, in order to make men doubtful of this religion, misled the accursed Alexander the Roman, resident of Egypt, and sent him to the land of Iran with great brutality and violence and fear (?). He killed the Iranian ruler and destroyed and ruined the court and the sovereignty. That wicked, wretched, heretic, sinful, maleficent Alexander the Roman, resident of Egypt, took away and burnt those scriptures, namely all the Avesta and Zand which had been written with gold water on prepared cowhide, and deposited in Staxr i Pabagan in the Fortress of Writing. He killed many of the high priests and the judges and Herbads and Mobads and the upholders of the religion and the able ones and the wise men of Iran. And he threw hatred and enmity among the dignitaries and lords of Iran, one against another, and he himself was defeated and ran off to Hell. Afterwards there were confusion and strife among the people of Iran and because they had no lord, ruler, leader or priest well versed in the religion, they were doubtful with regard to the matter of gods, and there appeared in the world, doctrines, faiths, heresies, and doubts and disagreements of all kinds" (Arda Wiraz Namag: *The Iranian* 'Divina Commedia,' F. Vahman (ed.), pp. 76–79 [text], p. 191 [translation]).

Iranian aristocracy; 3. Alexander slays the priest(s) (and wise men); 4. Alexander destroys the fire temple(s) or extinguishes the fire(s); 5. Alexander destroys cities and fortresses in Iran; 6. Alexander 'carries off' the sacred texts or books; 7. Alexander has Iranian books translated; 8. Alexander burns books or the Avesta; 9. Alexander disperses the literature causing instability; 10. Alexander divides the empire. Inherent in accusations six to nine, of course, is the issue of the history of Zoroastrian literature, i.e. the question as to when a written Zoroastrian tradition became established, in particular a written version of the Avesta. The consensus among scholars today is that no written version of the Avesta, or portions thereof, existed during Alexander's time.

If, in fact, there were no sacred written texts for Alexander to burn or carry away, does this mean that, for whatever motive, the Zoroastrian tradition falsely accuses the Macedonian king of such nefarious actions? Or is there some kernel of historical fact hiding behind all the exaggerations and distortions? There is hardly any basis to substantiate the suggestion that Alexander was not stigmatized as an evildoer until the Sasanian or even the Muslim period.[31] What would have been the point in representing Alexander as one of Ahriman's breed, a figure that had, on the one hand, been dead for centuries? On the other hand, this view had been complemented, as we know, by the image of Alexander the exemplary king (see below) as propagated by the Alexander romance, which had become quite attractive to certain circles in the Sasanian Kingdom as well.[32] No, the emergence and the broad and enduring effect of the negative Alexander-image may only be understood, if the Zoroastrian allegations, despite all

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[31] See, for example, the erudite essay by Ciancaglini, "Alessandro e l'incendio di Persepoli," in R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (eds.), *LDECETM*, (Alessandria, 1998), pp. 59–81. This does not mean, however, that the allegations against Alexander might not have been 'updated' in later (particularly late Sasanian-early Muslim) times, or that further accusations might not have been added, accusations actually directed against the Muslims or other enemies of Iran, but which could aptly be redirected against the 'archenemy.' Examples of such later additions are the *Arda Wiraz Namag* quote about the "Roman" Alexander, the reference to Istakhr as the depository of the texts, and the use of Sasanian terminology for the priesthood.

[32] In view of the Sasanians' unfamiliarity with the names of Achaemenid kings and Achaemenid history, it would be most astonishing if Alexander of all people (the one hostile to Iran, not the legendary figure) were to have been established in Iranian tradition in the late Sasanian period, but not the historical Iranian figures Darius I, or Darius II or III, who bear only slight similarity to the legendary Darab and Dara.

exaggerations and elaborations, could be substantiated by the histori-
cal fact of atrocities committed by Alexander in Iran. This does not
mean that the concrete allegations had to have their respective origin
in Alexander's own time; it only means that the image of Alexander
as evildoer had to have arisen in Zoroastrian circles in Iran during his
lifetime. Which atrocities did Alexander commit to provoke the hate
of the Zoroastrians?

The first possibility would be the events at the tomb of Cyrus in
Pasargadae, culminating in the torture[33] of the Magi;[34] the second, the
plundering and partial destruction of Persepolis, which must have
encompassed the holy places and living quarters of "priests," along
with the palace buildings on and residential buildings below the
terrace;[35] the third, similar plundering and destruction in Ecbatana;[36]
the fourth, the bloody clashes with mass killings and mass enslave-
ment in East Iran;[37] fifth and finally, the chaotic conditions during the
early Diadochi period, for which Alexander certainly was given the
blame in later times.[38] This calls to mind that Diogenes Laertius pres-
ents his account of the demise of Zarathustra's successor(s) within the
context of the "Fall of the Persians by Alexander."[39] Is it presumptuous
to surmise that perhaps a 'chief' of the Magi, whatever form he might
have taken or recognition he might have received as such, lost his life

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[33] Arrian 6.29.9–10; See also Plutarch Alex. 69.3.

[34] One should keep in mind that the Magi were not men with exclusively 'priestly'
duties, but were also tutors of the princes, and keepers and guardians of (not only the
religious) tradition and, as the tomb of Cyrus proves, of the 'holy places' of Iran.

[35] Q. Curtius Rufus 5.6.4–8; Diodorus 17.70.1–6. On the partial destruction of
Persepolis, see H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Alexander and Persepolis," in J. Carlsen
et al. (eds.), *Alexander the Great. Reality and Myth*, (Rome, 1993), pp. 177–188.
G. Widengren ("Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptik," in D. Hell-
holm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, [Tübingen,
1983], pp. 77–162, here p. 93) would like to associate the account of the burning of the
abestag in Stakhr with the arson in Persepolis. Recall also K. Hoffmann's surmise that
there was some kind of academy for the cultivation and transmission of the Avesta in
Persis ("Das Avesta in der Persis," in J. Harmatta (ed.), *Prolegomena to the Sources on
the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, [Budapest, 1979], pp. 89–93).

[36] Polybius 10.27.6ff.; cf. Arrian, 7.14.5 as well as Iustinus [Justin], 42.3.5.

[37] See A.B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East. The Tragedy of Triumph* (Oxford,
1996), pp. 133–165.

[38] See also for similar contexts in Babylonian tradition during this period (negative
image of Alexander in the 'Dynastic Prophecy') S.M. Sherwin-White, "Seleucid Baby-
lonia: A Case Study for the Installation and Development of Greek Rule," in A. Kuhrt,
S.M. Sherwin-White (eds.), *Hellenism in the East*, (London, 1987), pp. 10–16.

[39] Prooemium 2.

during Alexander's campaign?[40] These plausible historical factors are by no means indicative of any deep religious hatred Alexander might have nurtured for the Zoroastrian faith, but tangible consequences of his politics in Iran.[41]

Of greater significance than the destruction wrought by the Macedonian was the accusation of the destruction or scattering of the sacred texts, which is why special emphasis is placed on this misdeed. Though the Zoroastrians did not yet possess a written tradition of the Avesta at the time that could be either 'burned' or 'stolen,' the death of 'priests,' who functioned as "living books of faith"[42] in a period in which tradition was transmitted orally, had the very same disastrous effect as a total loss of tradition by fire and theft: with the 'priests,' part of religious tradition 'died.'[43] The Middle Persian testimonies give exhaustive accounts of how difficult it was to recompile the sacred canon of prayers, rules, and other texts.[44] In view of the Avesta's history, it goes without saying that the accusation of destroying sacred texts can only have originated in the Sasanian period; the reference to texts in the sources must have occurred within the context of the Zoroastrian efforts to prove themselves to Christians, Manichaeans, and especially Muslims as being 'possessors of writing' ("People of the Book") by citing their own long-standing tradition of sacred literature.[45]

In view of the strong Zoroastrianization of the 'National History' it is not surprising that the image of Alexander as a persecutor of religion evolved into that of arch-enemy of Iran, one who assassinates the legitimate king or has him assassinated; who decimates the Iranian priests and nobility; who razes the cities, fortresses and fire temples to the ground. In all likelihood, these additional negative elements were not incorporated into the Alexander-image until the Sasanian or the early Muslim period: first, because the Arsacids never displayed any

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[40] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 2, (Leiden, 1982), pp. 228ff.

[41] That the allegations against Alexander are so central to Zoroastrian tradition might be an indication that they are not influenced by southwest-Iranian religious tradition alone, but have common Iranian-Zoroastrian origins. This is supported by the fact that texts of 'non-Persian' origin also contain similar accusations.

[42] Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 2nd ed. (London, 1984), p. 79.

[43] Quite descriptive: *Abdih ud sahigih i Sagistan*, Jamaspji D.M. Jamasp-Asana (ed.), *Pahlavi Texts*, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1897–1913), reedition Teheran n.d., pp. 13–15.

[44] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p. 79.

[45] See H.W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in Ninth-Century Books*, (Oxford, 1943), 149ff.; Ciancaglini, "Alessandro e l'incendio," p. 68.

hostility towards the Greeks and Macedonians; second, because of the well-founded hypothesis that Sasanian 'historiographers' did not learn of the figure Dara b. Darab until it was transmitted to them by way of the Alexander romance;[46] third, because of the significance invested in fire temples during the Sasanian period.

One allegation against Alexander remains to be discussed: the partition of the empire among the so-called 'petty kings.' Scholars have been able to prove that the Sasanian "Ardashir's Testament to his Successors," found in Arab translation in Ibn Miskawaih's *Tajarib al-umam*, was familiar with this accusation. This indicates beyond doubt that the charge was not put forth until Sasanian times. Scholars were able to establish as well that the claim postulated by most authors that Alexander acted on recommendations he received in a letter from Aristotle, did not emerge until the Islamic period.[47]

IV. Alexander, Conqueror of the World

A second, distinctly positive image of Alexander prevailed in the Sasanian Empire, enjoying great popularity not among the clergy but among the nobility, as we mentioned above. This can be traced back to a Syrian recension of the Alexander romance—most likely composed during the reign of Khosrau I or II—and later translated into Middle Persian.[48] These versions, along with their translations into Arabic and Modern Persian were the principal factors contributing to advancing

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[46] See M.G. Grignaschi (1973), pp. 98–99.

[47] Grignaschi, "Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Istanbul," *Journal Asiatique* 254 (1966), 1–142, here 71.

[48] Here I am going by Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version of the Alexander Romance," *Le Muséon* 114 (2001), 121–140 (See as well R.N. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes," in *Papers in Honour of M. Boyce*, vol. 1 [Leiden, 1985], pp. 185–190). Nöldeke (*Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* [Vienna, 1890]), on the other hand, had emphasized that the Syrian recension followed a (lost) Middle Persian version. Indications for dating the text to the reign of the two Khusraus are for one, the lively cultural exchange between India, Iran, and the West at the time (Wiesehöfer, "King, Court and Royal Representation in the Sasanian Empire," in A. Spawforth (ed.), *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies*, [Cambridge, 2007], pp. 58–81, here pp. 74–78; U. Hartmann, "Wege des Wissens. Formen des Gedankenaustauschs und der kulturellen Beeinflussung zwischen dem spätantiken Rom und dem Sāsānidenreich," in A. Luther, R. Rollinger, J. Wiesehöfer (eds.), *Getrennte Wege? Kommunikation, Raum und Wahrnehmung in der Alten Welt*, [Frankfurt, 2007], pp. 50–107); second, in the Syrian recension of the Alexander romance the name Xerxes from the Greek version is replaced by Khusrau. See Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version," pp. 138–139.

a lasting positive image of Alexander in Iran. Among the medieval Persian Alexander romances we may distinguish between those in which Alexander appears as Egyptian Pharao Nectanebus's son from a relationship with Olympias (Greek and Syrian Alexander romance tradition),[49] and those in which Alexander is the son of Darab and the daughter of Filqus and therefore an Iranian hero. It is also possible to distinguish between Alexander romances in epic verse (probably for an educated courtly audience) and prose (probably intended for broad sections of society).[50]

In Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* the by then Islamicized versions of the Alexander romance with a positive Alexander-image collide with the anti-Alexander 'Iranian nationalist' tradition of the "Book of Lords" (*X*^{w}*aday-namag*, by then translated into Arabic and Modern Persian). The poet's inability to resolve the resulting tension might be ascribable to his loyalty to the sources:[51] in the center of the opus is the accursed spawn of Ahriman (for example, in the self-portrayal of the first Sasanian, Ardeshir Babakan[52] who, together with Zahhak and Afrasyab, will not escape his just fate at the Last Judgement. Just before, however, at the end of the section on the Kayanids, Alexander still appears as the legitimate Iranian ruler[53] and conqueror of the world, whose outstanding characteristics are wisdom, love, and generosity, and who even visits the Kaaba in Mecca. The *Shahnameh* has rightfully been characterized as the opus of an Iranian patriot very conscious of tradition, for whom Iran is the center of the universe, but who nevertheless exhibits a deep, all-embracing compassion for humanity, recognizing and weighing the good and the evil in each individual regardless of

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[49] On the Egyptian background of the Middle Persian version and its revision in the early Islamic period, see R.M. Macuch, "Egyptian Sources and Versions of Pseudo-Callisthenes," in L. Criscuolo, G. Geraci (eds.), *Egitto e storia antica dall' Ellenismo all' età araba*, (Bologna, 1989), pp. 503–511.

[50] W.L. Hanaway, "Eskandar-Nāma," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 8 (1998), pp. 609a–612b. See also A. Mango, *Studies on the Legend of Iskandar in the Classical Literature of Islamic Persia, with Special Reference to the Work of Firdausi, Nizami and Jami*, unpublished dissertation (London, 1955).

[51] A.S. Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi. A Critical Biography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 132. See Y. Yamanaka, "Ambiguïté de l'image d'Alexandre chez Firdawsī: les traces des traditions sassanides dans le Livre des Rois," in L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler, F. Suard (eds.), *AlGdlLOPO*, (Paris, 1999), pp. 341–355.

[52] *Shahnameh*, Davis (trans.), p. 216. See also the chapter on Khusrau Parviz; and the introductory quotation to this essay above.

[53] According to Ferdowsi, Alexander is the child of Darab and Nahid, the daughter of Filqus (Philip II), and is therefore Dara's half-brother.

language, religion and color of skin, that preserves him from succumbing to flaming fanaticism.

 Ferdowsi's influence is manifest in later versions of the Alexander theme, such as Abu Taher Tarsusi's (11th–12th century) work of prose *Darabnameh*,[54] Asadi Tusi's (11th century) epic *Garshaspnameh*,[55] or the Great Mongolian *Shahnameh* from the 1330s,[56] even though the individual portrayals of Alexander in these works are quite distinctive. The most well-known Iranian adaptation of the Alexander theme in Iran is without doubt Nizami's (1140–1203) *Iskandarnameh*.[57] The first part of this epic, the "Sharafnameh," describes Iskander's life and adventures, while the second part (the "Iqbalnameh" or *Khiradnameh*), a kind of Fürstenspiegel [mirror for princes], recounts Iskander's conversations with the Greek and Indian philosophers at his court on statesmanship and other topics. In this impressive work, Alexander is presented as the model ruler who overthrows his former overlord, the evil King Dara, explores the world, vanquishes his enemies, and eradicates the Zoroastrian religion thereby paving the way for Islam's victory in Iran.[58] Finally, there are Iranian Alexander romances to mention as well, such as *A'ina-ye Iskandari* by Amir Khosrow Dehlavi (1253–1325) and the 15th century poetic work *Khiradnameh-ye Iskandari* [Book on the Wisdom of Alexander] by Abd ar-Rahman Jami, who takes Nizami's "Iqbalnameh" as his model, presenting a fully Islamicized Alexander,[59] as well as the anonymous 14th century work of prose *Iskandarnameh*,[60] which identifies Alexander with Dhulqarnayn of the Quran (18:83), portraying him, however, in a much more 'worldly' manner with his weakness for women and sex, than the other Alexander romances.

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[54] Gaillard, *Alexandre le Grand* (cited above).

[55] F. de Blois, "Garšāsp-Nāma," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 10 (2001), pp. 318b–319b.

[56] R. Hillenbrand, "The Iskandar Cycle in the Great Mongol *Shahnama*," in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, M. Bridges, J.C. Bürgel (eds.), (Bern: 1996), pp. 203–229.

[57] de Blois, "*Eskandar-Nāma* of Nēžamī," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 8 (1998), pp. 612b–614a.

[58] J.C. Bürgel, *Das Alexanderbuch*. Iskandarname (Zurich, 1991); K. Talattof, J.W. Clinton (eds.), *The Poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: Knowledge, Love, and Rhetoric* (New York, 2000).

[59] Southgate, "Portrait of Alexander" (see above); See also Hanaway, "Eskandar-Nāma" (see above).

[60] *Iskandarnamah*, trans. Southgate (see above).

The early Islamic historiography, composed in part by authors of Iranian descent who also shaped historiography in Iran, was itself greatly influenced by the *PC* tradition, along with other Syriac traditions, the Quran and Arabic legends of Dhulqarnayn, as well as by Middle Persian-Arabic traditions since lost.[61] Here Alexander lives on as a member of the Kayanid Dynasty (for example as Darab's son and Dara's half-brother) and/or as the just adversary of the tyrannical king Dara; ultimately, after being identified as the figure Dhulqarnayn and thereby establishing a link with the Quran, he becomes at once Persian, Muslim, and world conqueror. The measures he took against the Zoroastrian religion are transformed, as in Nizami, into acts to combat idolatry and initiatives towards establishing the true faith.[62]

V. Prospect

It is in no way surprising that during the period of 're-Iranization' instigated primarily by the last Shah, in which the Achaemenid and Sasanian eras received particular attention,[63] Persian scholars and authors began to rediscover Alexander *gizistag* of the Zoroastrian tradition (to the disadvantage of Alexander Dhulqarnayn). Some were even so presumptuous as to denounce great—pro-Alexander—Iranian poets like Nizami.[64] One incident, imparted by Cynthia Helms, wife of the American ambassador of those years, illustrates to what extent the Shah himself must have internalized historical mythologems. On one occasion, while visiting the Shah at his winter palace on Kish Island, Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller compared him to Alexander. The monarch was aghast: "To the Shah, Alexander represented a rapacious

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[61] *Iskandarnamah*, trans. Southgate, pp. 190–201.

[62] See M. Springberg-Hinsen, *Die Zeit vor dem Islam in arabischen Universalgeschichten des 9. bis 12. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1989), especially pp. 114–118. On the intellectual-historical context of this development see H. Busse, "Fürstenspiegel und Fürstenethik im Islam," *Bustan* 9.1 (1968), 12–19; and B.G. Fragner, *Die "Persophonie" in Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens* (Berlin, 1999).

[63] See Wiesehöfer, "Kyros, der Schah und 2500 Jahre Menschenrechte. Historische Mythenbildung zur Zeit der Pahlavi-Dynastie," in S. Conermann (ed.), *Mythen, Geschichte(n), Identitäten: Der Kampf um die Vergangenheit*, (Hamburg, 1999), pp. 55–68.

[64] P.J. Chelkowski, "Nizami's Iskandarnameh," in *Colloquio sul poeta persiano Nizami e la leggenda iranica di Alessandro Magno* (Rome, 1977), pp. 11–53, here 20–21.

invader who destroyed Persepolis and stole Persian wealth. I watched
the Shah's face as his eyes opened wide at the words of his old and
good friend."[65] The critical Alexander-tradition was also the one offi-
cially 'favored' outside the palace walls.[66] In his memoirs, however, the
Shah characterizes Alexander as a foreign ruler, who imitated Cyrus
and adopted Persian civilization.[67]

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[65] C. Helms, *An Ambassador's Wife in Iran* (New York, 1981), p. 83.
[66] H.-P. Drögemüller, *Iranisches Tagebuch* (Hamburg, 1983), p. 46.
[67] R. Schah Pahlewi, *Antwort an die Geschichte. Die Schah-Memoiren* (Munich, 1979), p. 15.

THE COPTIC ALEXANDER ROMANCE

Daniel L. Selden

Horus- Rē, Protector of Egypt.

The Perfect God, Son of Amon, Lord of the Two Lands, Lord of Ceremonies, *Stp-n-Rᶜ-mrj-Jmn*, the bodily son of Re, whom He loves, Lord of Crowns, ALEXANDER, given life, like Rē.

—The Great Temple of Luxor

Hellenic and Hebraic versions of the Alexander romance tell the story of Alexander's relationship to Egypt twice. At the opening, both claim that Alexander was not the son of Phillip II of Macedon, but rather the adulterous offspring of Phillip's Greek queen, Olympias, and Nectanebus, the last indigenous pharaoh of Egypt. Subsequently, once Alexander has come of age, both versions relate that he marched his troops from Greece, down the coast of Palestine where he paid reverence to YHVH in his ascent to Jerusalem, before crossing at Pelusium over into Egypt. Here he freed the Two Lands from Persian occupation and—acclaimed by the oracle of Zeus-Amon at Siwah—assumed his father's throne as pharaoh. Following Egyptian protocol, moreover, he founded a new capital, "Alexandria by Egypt"—a city that effectively linked the commerce of the Nile Valley with trade in the Aegean, and in which he explicitly invited Egyptians, Greeks, and Palestinians to settle. Thereafter, Alexander set forth on the king of Egypt's traditional campaign to "smite the Asiatics," where his victories proved greater than those of any pharaoh who had come before him: not only did he defeat Darius, King of Kings; he subjugated the entire Persian empire from the Bosporus to Bactria—with one refractory domain. In Gedrosia, on the southeastern edge of the Iranian plateau, the desert hills

brought him closer than any of his forebears to absolute defeat: thus, having first realized Egypt's politico-religious ambitions in the East, his campaign ultimately faltered on the brink of ruin, in lands which, according to the traditional Egyptian vision of the world, were the province of Seth, the god of confusion.

Egyptian literary traditions concerning Alexander have come down to us in pieces. A Coptic version of the Alexander romance survives in a unique codex from the White Monastery at Sohaj, now divided between Paris, London, Moscow, and Berlin.[1] Moreover, an earlier Egyptian redaction of this material in Demotic—no longer extant but legible through later Greek translation—circulated in Egypt perhaps as early as 275 B.C.: it evidently included the Nectanebus story, as well as an account of Alexandria's foundation. As befits Alexander's mixed heritage, moreover, the redactor of the Coptic romance has drawn not only on indigenous Egyptian material, but intertwined this with Hellenic and Palestinian traditions too. Originally a codex of some 220 pages and roughly 37 chapters, nine manuscript folios survive, in addition to one unattached fragment whose relationship to the narrative remains uncertain. Half of the six surviving episodes are familiar from other recensions of the romance: Alexander's sojourn to the streams of Paradise on the borders of the Land of Darkness [frag. 7]; his conversation with the Brahmans [frag. 8]; and his poisoning at Babylon [frag. 9]. The remaining three, however, as well as many details of the unattached fragment, find no parallel in redactions of the Alexander romance outside Egypt: one episode, evidently set in Elam, records a conversation between Alexander—disguised as his own messenger—with "Eleazar, the old geezer of the Persians" [frag. 1], subsequent to which Alexander's forces take possession of the city [frag. 2]; in another, Selpharios composes his Last Will and Testament, in which he commits his son to Alexander's care [frag. 6]. The third—by far the longest extant portion of the narrative—concerns Alexander's escape from Chaos in Gedrosia (frags. 3–5), an episode not only central to the worldview of the Coptic romance as a whole, but whose remains prove extensive enough to provide us with a clear picture of the Egyptian redactor's major interests and his working methods.

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[1] Critical Edition: O. von Lemm, *Der Alexanderroman bei den Kopten* (St. Petersburg, 1903).

At first, Gedrosia appears an odd vantage point from which to view what was overall a celebratory account of Alexander's life and deeds. Among Greek and Roman historians, in fact, Gedrosia (less commonly "Kedrosia") figures as an exception in Alexander's Persian expedition, "the one hiccup in his career."[2] After the Macedonian ranks mutinied on the banks of the Beas in 326 B.C., refusing to proceed further East, Alexander, the Greco-Roman sources tell us, sailed with his company down the Indus River. Some of his troops he then sent to sea under the admiralty of Nearchus, while others he marched West into Boluchistan: along the Makran coast, through the Kolwa depression, and across the Dashtiari plain. This may have been the most direct route back to his operational base at Babylon, but Gedrosia turned out to be a desolate wilderness where, for lack of adequate provisions, the casualties to the troops not only proved enormous—modern historians reckon that as much as 80% of the entire cohort died: Alexander himself, who shared the hardships of his men without special supplies, barely escaped the rigors of Gedrosia alive. Diodoros of Sicily, writing in the mid-1st century B.C., provides the most succinct account of the debacle:

> Alexander entered a country that was desert and lacked everything necessary for sustaining life. When many died of hunger, the army of the Macedonians lost heart, and Alexander sank into no ordinary grief and anxiety. It seemed a dreadful thing that they who had excelled all others in arms should perish ingloriously from want of sustenance in a wasteland. Accordingly, Alexander sent swift messengers...to areas bordering the desert, ordering them to load racing camels and pack animals with food and other provisions. The messengers hurried to the [neighboring] provinces and had supplies transported in large quantities to the designated place. Nonetheless, Alexander still lost many of his soldiers, first because the shortages were not entirely alleviated, and then some of the Oreitai who happened to be in the region attacked them...inflicting severe losses before they retreated back to their own country.[3]

Arrian, whose *Anabasis* (ca. 100 A.D.) supplements Diodorus's account,[4] describes Gedrosia as filled with "high hills of deep sand" into which Alexander's men "sank as they stepped in, like liquid mud or, better still, untrodden snow." The shifting dunes, he reports, obliterated

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2 A.B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East* (Oxford, 1996), p. 169.
3 Diodoros of Sicily, *Library of History* 17.105.6–7.
4 Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.22–24.

every track, and without trees or rocks to mark the trail, Alexander's guides eventually lost their bearings. Pressed by hunger and fatigue, and having eaten their pack animals for food, the troops had no choice but to abandon their dying comrades along the way. Finally, realizing that the situation had turned desperate, Alexander steered the army "straight through the middle until they reached the provincial capital [at Pura]." There, to celebrate the soldiers' victory over the terrain, Alexander refreshed his troops with a week of licensed dissipation. So, Diodoros notes: "For seven days, he advanced with his troops in festive dress, while he himself lead a Dionysian *komos*, feasting and drinking with them as they progressed."[5] In this way, Alexander turned what had been a fiasco into a triumphal procession, whose glory ultimately redounded upon his royal person. Their spirits renewed, the army then pushed on as planned to Babylon such that, in the end, Alexander's reign effectively proceeded without noticeable disruption.

To capture the spirit of this catastrophe—both the character of the threat that hung over the enterprise and the significance of Alexander's victory—the Coptic romance remythologizes the adventure. The three fragmentary folios that survive (frags. 3–5 Lemm), although too extensive to reproduce in full, run summarily as follows:

> The king (ⲡⲉⲣⲣⲟ) of Gedrosia has ordered that Alexander be "thrown into Chaos" (ⲉⲛⲟⲭⲉϥ ⲉⲡⲉⲭⲁⲟⲥ), a deep black hole that threatens certain death. Andilochos, however, Alexander's comrade, devises a plan to save him. Bribing the "Guardian of Chaos" (ⲡⲉⲧϩⲓⲭⲉⲛⲡⲉⲭⲁⲟⲥ), Andilochos conducts Alexander to the brink of the pit where, bidding farewell to the sun, he selects a stone approximately his own size, hurls it as a substitute into the abyss, shrinks back from the edge, and screams as the stone goes tumbling down into oblivion. The ruse works, and so the rumor circulates throughout the region that "Alexander has died in Chaos" (ⲁⲗⲩⲝⲁⲛⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲁϥⲙⲟⲩ ϩⲉⲙⲡⲉⲭⲗⲟⲥ). Disguised as a simple soldier, Alexander makes his way back to his troops, whom he finds deep in mourning. Suddenly, he throws off his cloak, and revealing himself before the army says, "I am Alexander whom they put to death…Andilochos brought me back to life" (ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲗⲩⲝⲁⲛ-ⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧⲉϥϯ . . . ⲁⲛⲇⲓⲗⲟⲭⲟⲥ ⲁϥⲧⲁⲛϩⲟⲓ). At that moment, the herald immediately calls out, "King (ⲡⲉⲣⲣⲟ) Alexander is come."

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[5] Diodoros, *Library* 17.106.1.

This account, which predates the Arab conquest of 642 A.D., figures the debacle in Gedrosia as the black hole of Chaos, from which Alexander successfully escapes, partly through his own resources and partly through the help of his companions. In fact, all the salient details of the Greco-Roman historical accounts recur here, though refashioned in the logic of a dream: the condensation of the diverse labors of Gedrosia into one; the personification of the desert as the King who condemns all marauders on his land; the hole that swallows up the trespasser; the displacement of the troops' rescue onto the moment when Alexander reveals himself before them—"We saw your face, and we lived" (ⲀⲚⲚⲀⲨ ⲈⲠⲈⲔϨⲞ ⲀⲚⲰⲚⲈϨ); and so forth.

At the same time, however, the Coptic redactor has so overdetermined the adventure that it intertwines three distinct motivic strands, each drawn from one of the three principal traditions that had come to shape Egyptian culture from the Macedonian conquest through the Byzantine era: Egyptian, Greek, and Palestinian. Coptic culture in Late Antiquity constituted an amalgam of all three, for which Alexander—both by virtue of his Egypto-Hellenic heritage and in view of his reverence for YHVH—served as its faithful image. It is principally, then, through the multiple negotiations between Egyptian, Greek, and Hebrew-Aramaic matter that the episode evolves—that is: as a set of narrative differences that both resist homogenization and work synergistically within a coherent whole.

A. ALEXANDER: 𓏤𓈖𓅯 [PHARAOH]

To begin with, the notion of "falling into Chaos" has deep resonance with traditional notions of Egyptian kingship. The evidence for whether Alexander III of Macedon was actually crowned pharaoh is ambiguous; reliefs at Luxor, however, portray him unequivocally as the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, while the accompanying inscriptions endow him with a traditional panoply of royal epithets: the "Perfect God," "Lord of the Two Lands," "Son of Re," etc. Amon-Rē greets Alexander, who is adorned with the Blue Crown: "I give you the Black Land and the Red Land. I set all foreign countries [beneath] your sandals."[6] So the Coptic of the romance heralds the king not according

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[6] M. Abd el-Raziq, *Die Darstellungen und Texte des Sanktuars Alexanders des Großen Tempel von Luxor* (Mainz, 1984), p. 33.

to his Greek title *basileus*—a term with different implications—but rather as ⲡⲉⲣⲣⲟ, i.e. "pharaoh."[7] In this capacity, moreover, Alexander's principal function would have been to ensure order and justice (*m3ˁ.t*) for the Beloved Land (*t3 mry*): this is the point of Amon-Rē's remark that he has placed not only Egypt but all foreign, and hence potentially refractory, peoples under Alexander's feet. As the Egyptian state coalesced out of the Predynastic period, the challenge that confronted each new claimant to the throne was that the order of the world might degenerate into lawlessness, or political and moral confusion, which it was the pharaoh's duty through cult, right governance, and war, perennially to stave off. Erik Hornung observes:

> Terms contrasting with *Maˁat* are *isf.t*, a word whose root meaning is unclear, but which connotes "injustice, disorder, unreason" (de Buck proposed to render the word outright as "chaos"); in addition, *gereg*, "lie," and *khab*, "the crooked." Alongside these terms of opposition, *Maˁat* takes on the meaning "truth, justice, authenticity, correctness, order, and straightness." It is the norm that should govern all action, the standard against which everything is to be measured.[8]

So a royal hymn from the New Kingdom reads: "Re has placed [pharaoh] in the land of the living…to administer humankind and satisfy the gods, to realize justice (*m3ˁ.t*) and eradicate confusion (*isf.t*)."[9] Within this cosmologic framework, then, the idea, in the Coptic romance, that Alexander as ⲡⲉⲣⲣⲟ should "be cast down into Chaos" (*isf.t*) is by no means a trivial concern. The danger here not only threatens Alexander's person: symbolically, "falling into Chaos," as an ever-present possibility, promises to unravel the entire cosmic disposition that the goddess *Maˁat* had established with the creation of the world. As such, it betokens the complete overthrow of everything that Alexander could have stood for, or as he who "endows Order for his father, Amon-Rē" should have achieved in his capacity as pharaoh.[10] It is no accident of Egyptian historical memory, then, that Alexander's ability to elude "Chaos" should be linked in the Coptic romance to his campaign against "Akrikōlaos" (< Lat. *agricola*, "cultivator" + Grk. *laos*,

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[7] The basic syntax of Coptic is Egyptian, but as much as 25% of its lexicon is Greek, with a smattering of Hebrew and Aramaic words.

[8] E. Hornung, *Geist der Pharaonenzeit*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf, 1999), p. 136.

[9] J. Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg in der Schweiz, 1999), pp. 98–99.

[10] El-Raziq, *Darstellungen*, p. 18 et passim.

"soldiers"), the macaronic pseudonym that the Coptic redactor has ascribed to the Macedonians' hereditary enemy, Darius. On the plane of Egyptian political ideology, then, Alexander's extrication from "Chaos" and his success in "striking down the Asiatics" are convertible figures for his commitment to retain the order of *Ma'at* as king.

Within Egyptian mythography, moreover, the malefactor thrown into the dark pit recalls traditional teachings about the Netherworld, whose tortuous geography—envisioned as a distorted mirror of the Nile valley—was filled with a myriad of menacing holes, places of darkness and destruction, to which those guilty of misconduct were consigned for punishment. Already in the Pyramid Texts of the Sixth Dynasty there are passages in which the determinative for "dead man" is drawn as a circle filled entirely with black paint [⊚],[11] an icon for the abyss of destruction, from which the king boasts of his narrow escape: "It is your son Horus, whom you bore, who has snatched [Menthesuphis] from the brink of the dead!"[12] A more elaborate image of the same conceit appears in the *Amduat*, the great New Kingdom account of the Sun's night journey through the Netherworld to be reborn anew each day, reproduced in royal tombs from Thutmosis I on, and widely copied on coffins and papyri through the Late and Greco-Roman periods. Here, in the nethermost register of the Eleventh Hour, we find a series of dark cavities, into which the bodies of recreants have been hurled. Beside each stands an executioner, holding the knife of punition, who bears such names as: "She who is over her pits." The inscription that surmounts the scene describes the absolute annihilation that the individual will suffer in this "second death":

You shall not exist. You shall be turned on your head. You have not arisen, for you have fallen into the pit! You have not escaped, you have not fled![13]

Both the falling man and the pit are iconically visible in the hieroglyphic text. The *Book of Gates*, moreover, a reworking of the *Amduat* composed some half a millennium later, conveys this fate by

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[11] N. Grimal, et al. *Hieroglyphica: Sign List*, 2nd ed., rev. J. Hallof, et al. (Utrecht, 2000), 3–1: "O".

[12] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptische Pyramidentexte*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1908–22), 969a.

[13] E. Hornung, *Das Amduat*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1963), 1:189.

actually inserting a gap into the text of the Second Hour, a vacant space that opens up amid the otherwise unbroken line of hieroglyphs. This blank is not, as in modern orthography, the mark of a word boundary or the completion of a colon. Rather, for magical purposes, a term has been omitted, or intentionally effaced—precisely, in fact, the set of signs that would have read: "he who has been annihilated":

> To confine the soul of Rē says, "Behold, I have bedecked myself…"[14]

Here the enemies of the cosmic order are not even allowed the fragile status of a representation; or rather, their nihility is indicated by the hole. The miscreant has effectively been swallowed up in the vacuity of the graphic abyss.

Like Menthesuphis, however, this is a fate that Alexander manages—though just barely—to forestall. In fact, much of the Egyptian Netherworld literature, from the Old Kingdom through the Greco-Roman period, consists of spells intended to preclude the king from falling into the pit of annihilation, in order to ensure that he will travel safely through the Netherworld to be reborn at dawn in the Bark of the Sun. So the great *Litany of Rē* entreats: "May you decree for me…[that I] come out of the chasm…Rescue [me] from the executioners with sharp knives, the butchers who tear hearts out, and carry off [the dead] to their cavities!"[15] This explains why, as he enters the house of Chaos, Alexander apostrophizes Rē:

> Alexander…came to the place of Chaos (ⲠⲘⲀ ⲘⲠⲈⲬⲀⲟⲤ) and saw it with his eyes. [His] rule (ⲀⲢⲬⲎ) had ceased and his power (ϬⲟⲘ) had left him. He raised his eyes to heaven and spoke to the men who held him bound: "Allow me, my brothers, to see the Sun." Then Alexander wept and said, "O sun (ⲠⲢⲎ), who illuminates [the world], will I see you again at dawn?" [After this] they escorted him inside.

According to the same logic, the romance specifies the exact moment of Alexander's successful return: "When morning came, Alexander reappeared before his troops and set himself upon the throne of his kingship." The episode thus follows quite precisely not only the three

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[14] E. Hornung, et al., *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1979–1984), 1:28 and 2:60 n.7.

[15] E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1975–1976), 1:140ff.

millennia-old tradition regarding the geography of the Netherworld, but the plot of pharaoh's deliverance from Chaos (*isf.t*) and his passage along the night journey of the Sun.

B. ALEXANDER: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ [*BASILEUS*]

Pagan religious survivals into Coptic Christianity are sufficiently numerous and detailed to make it clear that this material remained alive to educated readers of Late Antiquity. So, in the *Repose of St. John the Evangelist*, the apostle now apostrophizes Christ in place of the Sun: "It was you who delivered me from the second death…Let the darkness withdraw and chaos (ⲡⲉⲭⲁⲱⲥ) become enfeebled."[16] Within this conspicuously Egyptian field of ideas, however, the key term *chaos* stands out as a learned borrowing from Greek, as does the ruse of the stone by which Alexander finagles his escape when the King of Gedrosia attempts to precipitate his rival into the bowels of the earth. This complex of motifs derives from Hesiod's *Theogony*, a hymnal prelude of the 8th century B.C., perhaps the oldest piece of extant poetry in Greek, which played a crucial role historically in forging the identity of classical Hellenic culture over and against other societies in the Mediterranean East. The Coptic redactor's recourse to Hesiod, therefore, bears considerable weight in his portrayal of Alexander not only as an Egyptian pharaoh (ⲡⲉⲣⲣⲟ), but concomitantly—though differentially—as a Greco-Macedonian king (*basileus*). Among the demands that he makes upon his readers, then, is a critical awareness both of the *Theogony's* place within the history of Greek letters and of what distinguishes Hesiod's poem, over and against Egyptian politico-religious texts, as quintessentially Hellenic.

At the beginning of the Bronze Age (ca. 3300 B.C.), the Aegean peoples formed part of a richly integrated East Mediterranean world, which had close political, commercial, religious, and artistic ties both to Balkan Europe and to the great kingdoms of Anatolia, North Africa, Egypt, and the Near East. Indo-European migration to the Greek peninsula, completed by 1600 B.C., did not substantially alter this texture of international relations, though locally it modified Helladic culture in decisive ways. The Mycenaean palace-centered state

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[16] E.A. Wallis Budge, ed. *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London, 1913), pp. 56–57.

developed as a hybrid, which superimposed Kurgan social institutions upon a substratum of indigenous Old European and Minoan traditions: a trifunctional class system (sovereign-priests; warrior nobility; agricultural producers); cult offerings to a resplendent sky-god; and pit-graves hollowed into rock or soil—all hallmarks of Indo-European settlement—enter the archaeological record of the mainland and the islands at this point. In the latter half of the 13th century B.C., however, the collapse of Mycenaean power effectively suspended Greek relations with Europe and the Levant, and isolated the disparate geographic regions of the mountainous Helladic peninsula from one another. At those sites which the survivors of this catastrophe did not abandon, the discrete communities turned in upon themselves, though the costs of this dissociation were considerable—depopulation, a sharp decline in living standards, vast tracts of desolated land. Insularity, however, had one historically productive effect: it afforded the scattered Helladic towns the opportunity to inflect their common Bronze-Age heritage as they saw fit, in ways that not only diverged considerably from the centralized and hierarchical societies such as Egypt that flourished elsewhere in the Middle East, but showed remarkable ingenuity of character from place to place. When, in the 8th century B.C., Greek cities resumed regular communication with one another, and growing prosperity enabled them to reestablish politico-commercial exchange with the Near East, it became increasingly apparent to the "Panhellenes" that, despite the kaleidoscopic diversity of their institutions, they had come to share a set of collective and historically unprecedented social forms—what Herodotus, in retrospect, would call *to Hellēnikon*. Much of the distinctiveness of this emergent "Hellenicity" derived from its internal dialectic: on the one hand, the rise of the *polis*, a set of discrete corporate communities which vested power—legislative, judicial, military, religious—in a closed and privileged set of indigenous free citizens, conceived over and against foreigners and slaves; on the other, the concurrent organization of intercity athletic competitions (Olympic games), supranational sanctuaries (Delphi, Delos), memorialization of a shared heroic past (*Iliad, Odyssey*), the diffusion of alphabetic scripts, and secret sodalities, alongside public festivals, that a single *polis* supervised but accorded access to all participants who could speak Greek (Eleusinian mysteries, the Greater Dionysia).

The received text of Hesiod's *Theogony* constitutes one of the fundamental expressions of this Hellenic ethnogenesis. A highly innovatory reflex within the Indo-European poetic tradition, the burden of the *Theogony* is to subordinate pre-Hellenic cults, along with local Greek

traditions, to the supersession of the Olympian gods, through a lineal narration of Zeus's rise to power. As such, Hesiod's account is not only a dynamic synthesis of Old European, Anatolian, West Asiatic, and Egyptian mythical motifs within the governing framework of Kurgan religious tenets: Norman O. Brown has stressed the extent to which Hesiod's *Theogony* is "systematic[ally] concern[ed] with showing how Zeus integrates older powers into his new order: [Zeus] is essentially only the ultimate coordinator of a plurality of [forces] not of his own making, his distinctive attribute [being] not strength but statesmanship."[17] With Hesiod, then, the historical becomes the mutable: as opposed to Egyptian cosmologic speculations, in which all events festally repeat the phenomenology of the "first occasion" or where every pharaoh's duty is to return *Maʿat* to her proper place, the *Theogony* portrays the current state of the universe—and hence its ultimate potential—as the processual outcome of purposeful growth, selectivity, and change. The poem therefore not only posits the self-generating emergence of the cosmos—physical, divine, and human; ideologically, it recasts the trifunctionality of the communal Indo-European heritage into the set of hierarchized binary oppositions that would come to structure classical "Greek thought": truth vs. lie, knowledge vs. ignorance, good vs. evil, permanence vs. change, Greek vs. barbarian, and so forth. Thus—as Hellenic writers from the Archaic period through the Imperial era repeatedly acknowledged—Hesiod's poem laid substantial portions of the foundation upon which later Greek literature, politics, philosophy, and science were erected.

Within the sphere of theology and ritual, in particular, where the Greek states neither maintained professional priesthoods nor recognized orthodox scripture comparable to the *Amduat* or the Torāh, Hesiod's *Theogony* provided a synthetic account of Hellenic religion as a system with its own peculiar logic and coherence. Herodotus, in fact, goes so far as to claim that it was Hesiod who "composed (*poiein*) for the Greeks a genealogy of the gods, assigned them names, distributed their functions, and described their forms."[18] Written in a hybrid idiom that, while predominately Ionic, artificially combined lexical features drawn from all the major dialects of post-Mycenaean Greek, Hesiod's *Theogony* thus served as one of the principal agents of classical Panhellenism. Not only, as Louis Gernet remarks, did "the

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[17] N.O. Brown, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Upper Saddle River, 1953), pp. 11, 10 and 44.
[18] Herodotus 2.53.

representation that Hesiod offers of the world of the gods…continue to govern whatever ideas the [Helladic city- states] were able to formulate collectively on this matter:"[19] for Greeks scattered across the diaspora of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine eras, the *Theogony* remained a defining point of ethnic reference well into the first millennium A.D., particularly, it seems, among Greeks resident in Egypt. For the Coptic redactor to evoke the *Theogony*, then, is not simply to allude to one Greek literary composition among others: the story that the *Theogony* has to tell is precisely the origin and evolution of Hellenic culture as distinct from Egyptian or other Near Eastern formations. It is to this end, then, that the redactor of the Coptic romance draws on three cardinal moments from the *Theogony* which stand out as quintessentially "Greek": the inception of the Hesiodic cosmos; the climax of the Succession Myth, which spares Zeus Kronos's murderous designs; and the Olympian gods' collective triumph over the Titans, whereupon they elect Zeus "king (*basileus*) of gods and men" (923). What the Hesiodic subtext provides the Coptic romance, then, is not only an alternate cosmogony, but a progressive view of history and an oligarchic politics that were, in fact, quite foreign to traditional political protocols in Egypt or Palestine.

The *Theogony* is the earliest extant Greek poem to name its poet: in fact, the proëm to the narrative represents *Hēsíodos* (< *hēsi-* "hurler" + (*w*)*odē* "human speech" = "he who emits a [beautiful/ immortal] voice") as having learned his craft directly from the Muses —that is, as the Greek poet par excellence. When "Hesiod" turns to the body of his composition, then, he begins authoritatively with Chaos, the beginning of all (poetical) beginnings.

> First of all Chaos came into being…[and] from Chaos there arose Erebos and black Night. [116/123]

According to M. West, Chaos is defined as follows:

> *Khaos*: best translated Chasm. It is a yawning space ([cf.] *khaskō*); it is dark and gloomy; and it appears from 736–45 and 807–14 that it is beneath the earth. But it is more than empty space, it is stuffed with darkness.[20]

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[19] L. Gernet and A. Boulanger, *Le génie grec dans la religion*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1970), pp. 97 and 235.
[20] M. West, *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), p. 192.

No independent documents are old enough in Greek to substantiate what *chaos* actually meant for Hesiod. Indic and Old Norse parallels, however, indicate that the notion of an originary void was part of the Indo-European legacy to Greece. Whereas Egyptian cosmogonies portray primeval waters "unique and without second,"[21] and Mesopotamian creation accounts personify a first begetter (*rēštû zāriu*), or life force (*mummu*),[22] the *Ṛg-Veda* contends that "in the beginning…there was neither non-existence nor existence," only the "potential" (*ābhū*) of an "empty" (*ābhu*) and "formless black abyss (*ābhvam*)."[23] Similarly, in Sturluson's *Edda*, Hár cites a poetic reflex from the *Völuspá* to answer Gylfi's question, "What came first?":

> It was the beginning of the ages when nothing was (*þat er ekki var*). Sand was not, nor sea nor chill waves. Earth was not found, nor above it heaven: a mighty gap was there (*gap var ginnunga*), but no growth.[24]

"Etymologically speaking," U. Dronke comments, "[*Ginnungagap*] is…a Gordian knot of ancient verbal elements signifying 'gaping,' 'vacuous,' 'vast,' 'potent.' The poet gives a fresh vitality to the old name by reversing its elements and making of it a positive statement: at that time the void existed—*gap <u>var</u> ginnunga*—in strong contrast to the negatives around it."[25] In Hesiod, this antinomy achieves resolution in two complementary ways. Teleologically, within the trajectory of the *Theogony* per se, as the firmament bodies forth around Chaos, the abyss comes to assume its "proper" place (ⲡⲙⲁ ⲙ ⲡⲉⲭⲁⲟⲥ): the primordial gap anchors as a cleft cut deep into the Earth (*chasma*), which reaches down beyond the "roots" of Ocean to murky Tartarus beneath (814). Within the Hesiodic tradition, moreover, Classical writers came to refigure Chaos as inchoate matter—Anaxagoras's συμμιξισ παντων κρηματων, Ovid's *discordia semina rerum*[26]—that is, the primal, indeterminate confusion of raw elements out of whose ordering the *kosmos* took shape. Both senses of Hesiod's term remained current through Late Antiquity: Plotinos, for example, equates Chaos with "place and space" (κωραν και τοπον) while, for his near contemporary Loukian,

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[21] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 7 vols. (Chicago, 1935–61), 6:343j = CT 714.

[22] *Enūma eliš* 1.3–4.

[23] *Ṛg-Veda* 10.129.1/3 and 1.92.5.

[24] S. Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 4.

[25] U. Dronke, *The Poetic Edda*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1997), 2:33. Edited.

[26] Anaxagoras, 59 B 4 DK; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.9.

the word connotes an "indistinct and jumbled lack of shape (αφανουσ
και κεξυμενησ αμορπηιασ)."[27] Characteristically, however, the Byzan-
tine redactor declines to choose between them. Thus, on the one hand,
Chaos functions in the Coptic romance as a synecdoche for the wilder-
ness of the Gedrosia that the Greek and Roman Alexander historians
describe—a place of absolute material disorder and maximum disar-
ray. At the same time, however, Chaos retains its cosmogonic conno-
tations: it stands in the romance for "the nothing that is," an existential
vacuum which, in its capacity to swallow up King Alexander—who
like Zeus successfully integrated older powers into a precariously bal-
anced world regime—threatens not only to undo whatever historical
progress he had achieved, but even to return the order of the world to
the state *þat er ekki var*, i.e. when nothing was. Ultimately, then, his-
tory here encounters myth: refusing the katabasis that the epic heroes
whom Alexander emulates (Odysseus, Aeneas) had undergone, the
great world conqueror shudders at the void, evading Chaos—an ever
present possibility—as the dark light against which Alexander contin-
ues on its way.

The centerpiece of the *Theogony* is the Succession Myth, and it is
from this well- known sequence that Alexander comes by his supposi-
tious stone. Out of Chaos, the *Theogony* traces three generations of
familial struggle among the immortals for the "Kingship of Heaven":
first Ouranos thrusts the children Gaia bears him back into the recesses
of the Earth, prompting Kronos to castrate his father and usurp his
place. Family romance then repeats itself:

> Rhea was subject in love to Kronos and bore him splendid chil-
> dren…These great Kronos swallowed as each came forth from their
> mother's sacred womb…with this intent: that none of [his] proud sons
> should hold the office of king among the immortals…But when Rhea
> was ready to bear great Zeus, the youngest of her offspring, [she went
> to Crete,] where prodigious Earth received him from [his mother] to
> nourish and bring up…To the great lord [Kronos], however, the earlier
> king of the gods, she gave a great stone wrapped in swaddling clothes.
> He took it in his hand and thrust it down into his bowels, oblivious
> (*skhetlios*)! He did not perceive with his wits that in place of the stone
> his son was left behind, unconquered and without care, who was soon
> to overpower [his father] by force, drive him from his office, and lord it
> among the immortals himself. [453–491]

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[27] Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.8.11 and [Lucian], *Amores* 32.

The trigenerational framework of this filial revolt, the castration, and the omophagia derive from Hurrian sources; a Hittite redaction has survived, perhaps transmitted to Greece through Phoenicia, though the myth is most likely Babylonian in origin. What stands out in the Hesiodic version of the episode, however, as typically Hellenic is the implicit value that it places on "cunning"—that peculiar form of mental suppleness that the Greeks called *mētis*. In competitive contexts from Homer to Oppian, Hellenes recognized two alternative ways for securing the upper hand: success could come from superiority in force, or the combatant might prevail through manipulative savoir-faire. *Iliad* 23 supplies the classic exemplar: in the funeral games held for Patroclus, Antilochus bests his fellow charioteers not because his horses are the swiftest; rather, he steals the first place by conniving "gain" (τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' Ἀντίλοχος Νηλήϊος ἤλασεν ἵππους, | <u>κέρδεσιν, οὔ τι τάχει γε, παραφθάμενος Μενέλαον</u> [v.515])—as the race course narrows around the turning post, he strategically outflanks the competition, "his mind filled with every guile (*mētis*)" [v.313–314]. The *Odyssey*, likewise, frames the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, the "best of the Achaeans," in terms of the respective merits of heroic might (*biē*) over against calculated machination (*mētis*). Thus the celebrated cunning by which Odysseus blinds the inebriated Cyclops, or Penelope nightly unweaves Laertes's never-to-be-finished shroud, are of the same ingenious order as Rhea's foresight to serve Kronos up a swaddling stone in order to spare their late born son. According to a logic, then, that is particularly Greek, when Alexander's power (ϭⲟⲙ) fails him, the companion who bears the Iliadic name "Andilochos" advises the captive king to repeat the Hesiodic ploy of hurling a boulder, in place of his body, into the Gedrosian abyss. Virgil had cautioned the increasingly Hellenized world to be "wary of Danaans, even when they are bearing gifts":[28] once Kronos disgorged the rock, the *Theogony* relates that Zeus erected it "to be a sign (*sēma*) and marvel (*thauma*) for mankind at holy Delphi" [498–500], where, in the second century A.D., Pausanias still found the admonitory emetic the recipient of daily cult in what remained—for the Levantine imaginary—the Panhellenic sanctuary par excellence, even after the Edict of Theodosius (391 A.D.) officially closed the shrine.

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[28] Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.49.

As a subtext to the Gedrosia episode, then, the *Theogony* inflects the Coptic romance according to a logic that Greeks and non-Greeks alike recognized as characteristically Hellenic: faced with his annihilation in the depths of Chaos, Alexander—like Hesiod's Rhea—employs *mētis* rather than *biē* (force), to escape the void that threatens to engulf his being. It is, moreover, by reference to a third passage in the *Theogony* that the Byzantine redactor brings the Gedrosia encounter thematically to a close. In the sequel of Hesiod's poem, the Olympian gods' bid for universal power culminates in their clash with the Titans, a battle that Zeus wins by hurling Typhoeus down into Chaos. This concludes the Titanomachy, which Hegel—recapitulating the Hellene's vision of their own cultural development—identified as the decisive moment in the constitution of Greek thought: "The old gods or Titans are cast down by the new deities and banished to the brink of the Earth, banished into darkness, while the new gods have erected their hegemony in the clear daylight of human consciousness."[29] In fact, from the Imperial era through the Late Antique, Greek audiences regularly read the Typhoeus episode—if not the whole of the Titanomachy—as an allegory of the triumph of an enlightened Hellenism over local religious cults and archaic modes of thinking. That the victorious gods, moreover, collectively "urge far-seeing Olympian Zeus to reign and rule over them" [883–884] both puts an end to divine tyranny and ushers in the oligarchic and electoral politics that so distinguished the aspirations of classical Greece. From a Hellenic point of view, then, the Coptic Alexander's ability to avoid Typhoeus's fate not only serves as a synecdoche for the supremacy of Greek over "barbarian" culture—which in this case would also include Egypt; it emblematizes Aristotle's pupil's larger politico-cultural designs, which more fully extant versions of the romance narrativize as his ability to subjugate the entirety of the inhabited world—in some instances by force, but also as part of his Peripatetic quest for knowledge. Hence, Kandake remarks in the α-recension of the Greek romance, "Not by war alone have you subdued the world and its people, but by great wisdom."[30] In fact, the Macedonian *basileus* was not traditionally a monarch, but ruled as primus inter pares, a politics—reflected elsewhere in the Cop-

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[29] G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. W. Jaeschke, 3 vols. (Hamburg, 1993–95), 2:636ff.

[30] A.M. Wolohojian, *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes* (New York, 1969), p. 139.

tic romance—that dovetails with the collaborative spirit of Alexander's scientific interests in precisely such things as bottomless black holes. In the end, then, it is not the least of the Coptic redactor's achievements to have woven into the Gedrosia episode the beginning, climax, and denouement of Hesiod's *Theogony*, a Freudian *Verdichtung* ("condensation") that both epitomizes Isocrates's fantasy that the Greeks had become the schoolmasters of the world, and parodies it.

C. ALEXANDER: משיחא [MESSIAH]

In part, the irony here emerges from the overall Palestinian plotting of the episode whereby Alexander, in his putative descent and resurrection from the abyss, functions as *figura Christi*, an allegorical framework not only alien to classical Pharaonic and Helenic traditions, but one which puts the authority of each directly into question. Christian communities sprang up early on along the Nile, originally among Jewish sectors of the population who, alongside their Egyptian and Greek neighbors, constituted the third principal demographic component of Late Antique Egypt. Classical Egyptian and Hellenic culture, in different ways, both laid stress on the survival of the soul (*bꜣ*, *psukhē*), but Old Israelite religion evidently proscribed speculations of this sort, perhaps as one of the inversions that set the Mosaic covenant apart as oppositionally distinct. Thus, a well-known injunction from the Mishnāh states: "Whoever reflects on three things would have been better off had he not been born: what is above, what is below, what is before, and what is beyond."[31] Accordingly, the earlier strata of the Hebrew Bible remain reticent on the subject of the hereafter, though by the time of the Babylonian captivity, the etymologically ambiguous She'ol (שאול), commonly taken to mean "grave", had come to designate a shadowy region in the underworld to which the God of Israel regularly consigned souls upon death. So Ezekiel, in an admonition specifically addressed to "Pharaoh, the King" recalls the punishment that YHVH had meted out to 'Aśśur and its dependents:

> All are delivered unto death, to the nethermost regions of the earth, amidst the children of men, to them that go down to the Pit…On the

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[31] Ḥagigāh 2:1.

day of [their] descent to She'ol, [the Lord God] closed the deep over it
and covered it. [31:14–15]

Proverbs similarly refers to "the shades which are *there* in the depths
of She'ol" (9:18), which suggests that this is their abiding state. From
the Hasmonean period on, however, mainstream currents within
Second-Temple Judaism came to espouse a restorationist eschatol-
ogy. Extrapolating from an agrammatical chiasmus in Isaiah (26:19),
as well as later Biblical passages derived therefrom, exegetes claimed
not only anagogic restitution for the Land of Israel, but also corpor-
eal resurrection of the dead. Pharisaic circles, in particular, vigorously
promoted such beliefs, and even altered Temple liturgy specifically to
reflect this tenet.

Whatever survival Egyptian and Hellenic cultures credited to the
soul after death, the road down to their underworlds only ran one way:
"Resurrection," as N.T. Wright has underscored, "[was] not part of the
pagan hope."[32] Thus Egyptians held that a transfigured spirit (*ȝḫ*) might
return from "the West" to admonish those abiding in this world and
on occasion transitorily assume embodied form. At no point, how-
ever, did the Egyptian religious imagination seriously entertain the
possibility that a mummified corpse (*sˤḥ*) ever had or would see rea-
son to return to a permanently animate state among those "living on
the earth." Similarly, in the Greek world, the few dead who ostensibly
returned from Hades—e.g. Persephonē, Theseus, Alkestis—constitute
exceptions that prove the rule. Rather, J. Neusner argues, the resur-
rection of the dead only became conceivable within the framework of
the Palestinian monotheism that ultimately prevailed among the vari-
ous competing "Judaisms" that flourished just prior to the turn of the
Common Era. The "monotheistic system," Neusner explains,

> requires the doctrine of personal resurrection, so that the life of this
> world may go onward to the next. Indeed, without the conception of
> [bodily] life beyond the grave, the system as a whole yields a mass of
> contradictions and anomalies…[Eschatologically], the last things are
> to be known from the first. In the just plan of creation, humanity was
> meant to live in Eden, and Israel in the land of Israel in time without
> end. The restoration will bring about that long and tragically-postponed
> perfection of the world order, sealing the demonstration of the justice
> of God's plan for creation…Israel for its part, when it repents and con-

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[32] N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, 2003), pp. 81 and
85.

forms its will to God's, recovers its Eden. So the consequences of rebellion and sin having been overcome…God's original plan will be realized at the last.[33]

The logic here presupposes the entirety of Hebrew scripture. Excerpted from this context, however, the resurrection of the body tended to impress pagan intellectuals as risible, if not revolting. Porphyry, for example, a native of Syria who studied in Athens before joining the circle of the Egyptian-born Plotinus in Rome around 262 A.D., found the notion that the Divinity would reconstitute and raise the dead to be—as Celsus had put it before him—"thoroughly ridiculous":[34]

> It is preposterous to think that when the universe (το παν) is destroyed, there follows a resurrection; that [God] raises with a wave of his hand a man who died three years [ago] with those like Priam and Nestor who lived a thousand years before, along with those who lived when the human race was new. Nevertheless, you say, "He will raise up the rotten and stinking corpses of men." What an unpleasant sight that will be! For even if God should refashion the dead bodies, making them more tolerable than before, there is still this: it would not be possible for earth to accommodate all those who have died from the beginning of the world if all should be raised from the dead.[35]

Writing specifically *contra Christianos*, Porphyry's dismissal illustrates the radical nature of the challenge that Christian belief initially posed to Levantine-Mediterranean pagan cultures. To judge by Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, however, bodily resurrection also proved a conceptual challenge for many early Christians too:

> To begin with, I handed over to you what I also received: that Christos (< χριστός, "annointed") died for your sins, in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; and that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Kēphas, and afterwards to the Twelve…Now, if Christos is declared (*kērussetai*) to have been raised from the dead, how can some you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there be no resurrection, then Christos was not raised; and if Christos was not raised, then our proclamation (*kērugma*) is empty and empty is your faith…you are still in your state of sin.[36]

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[33] J. Neusner, "Death and the Afterlife in the Later Rabbinic Sources" in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, 3 vols, ed. J. Neusner, et al. (Leiden, 2001), 3: 267–268.
[34] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ed. M. Marcovich (Leiden, 2001), p. 489.
[35] Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus* 4.24; condensed.
[36] 1 Corinthians 15.

Here Paul hazards his entire proselytic mission on the resurrection of
a single individual: the charismatic Yēshuaa ha-Notzrī. The wager con-
firms D. Boyarin's contention that, however critically Paul castigated
the Pharisaic culture to which he originally ascribed, he nonetheless
remained a "Jewish thinker … [who] lived and died convinced that he
was a Jew living out Judaism."[37] In fact, what Paul seized upon was
precisely the most idiosyncratic—and hence least readily assimilable—
tenet of contemporary Palestinian Judaic thought, i.e. the resurrection
of the dead, which he in turn deployed as the main dialectical lever
in his cosmopolitan bid to supersede the ethnic, class, and gender dif-
ferences that heretofore had structured Mediterranean societies under
Roman rule. The association was, in fact, so vital to the foundations
of the orthodox faith, that the life *According to Iōannēn* goes so far as
to have Iēsous identify himself completely in the predicate: "I am the
resurrection" (*egō eimi hē anastasis*) [11:25].

Despite numerous differences in detail, the formulaic language of
the earliest resurrection accounts (*apethanen—etaphē—anestēsen—
ōphth*) ["He died—He was buried—He arose—He was seen"]) con-
firms both that the tradition pre-dates Paul and that it had its origins
in Palestine. Similarly, the earliest creed that Irenaeus records for the
faith—perhaps in use by 150 A.D.—jointly professes: "*both* the pas-
sion *and* the resurrection of the dead" (καὶ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν
ἐκ νεκρῶν).[38] When and through what channels this kerygma reached
Egypt remains uncertain, though as the Coptic Church elaborated the
gospel of Christophany, Egyptians inflected the precept in accordance
with local culture. For example, Coptic writers regularly render the
New Testament's *anistanai / egeirein* ("to rise" [*scil.* from the dead])
as ⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ (*tōoun*), a verb that first appears in Late Egyptian as *dwn*,
and remains widely attested from the New Kingdom on in various
mutually reinforcing senses: "to stretch out" [*scil.* one's limbs], "to get
up" or, in medical contexts, "to recover"; nominalizations of the stem
connote "reward." What is conspicuous by its absence in the Cop-
tic works, however, is the vocabulary of the Pharaonic funerary cor-
pus—that is, Coptic derivatives of such verbs as *prj* [> ⲡⲉⲓⲣⲉ], *ḥfd* [>
ⲌⲰϤⲦ > ⲌⲈϤⲦ-], or *jꜥr* [> ⲁⲗⲉ], which from the Pyramid texts

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[37] D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*: *Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 2.
[38] Iranaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I.10.

through papyri and inscriptions of the Roman period had traditionally designated the ascent of the deceased's spirit to the vault of heaven.

The Coptic ⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ, then, bore with it definite corporeal connotations which, in distinction to classical Egyptian and Hellenic teachings about death, served to emphasize that the Christian promise—originating out of Palestine—specifically entailed resurrection of the flesh. Hence, Coptic writings on the resurrection often turn explicitly on the pair ōnḥ, var. ⲀⲚⲂ ("life") ‖ ⲞⲨⲰⲚⲂ ("[bodily] apparition"), the latter a syncopated form of the classical Egyptian wn-ḥr [> Dem./Copt. *ⲞⲨⲰⲚ-ⲂⲞ], "to reveal or disclose the face". The Fourth Tractate of the Jung Codex, for example, which concerns "the signs and images of the resurrection," affirms that Iēsous' ability to "raise himself up" (ⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ) served not only as the "origin of life" (ⲰⲚⲂ), but simultaneously represented a "revelation (ⲞⲨⲰⲚⲂ) of the real."[39] Coptic accounts of the resurrection, then, generally rely upon a triadic hypogram—that is, the underlying narrative patterning: ⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ | ⲰⲚⲂ | ⲞⲨⲰⲚⲂ ["He rose—He lived—He appeared"], whose chiastic assonance (ōo | ō | oō) passes acoustically by way of the Cross. So a Coptic homily *On the Passion*, attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, stresses, regarding "the manner of his resurection" (ⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ), that Iēsous revealed (ⲞⲨⲰⲚⲂ) to all that, despite his death, he nonetheless returned to life (ⲰⲚⲂ):

> Iēsous went to his disciples and said to them: "Peace be with you." Seeing their faces troubled and incredulous of so much joy, he said to them, "Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and my feet, and the nail wounds that are in them: these signs will never disappear, and on the day when I judge the whole world, I will show them to the Jews and to all peoples, since the body that was dead a little while ago has risen (ⲠⲤⲰⲘⲀ ⲚⲦⲀϤⲘⲞⲨ ⲂⲀⲐⲎ ⲚⲞⲨⲔⲞⲨⲒ ⲠⲀⲒ ⲞⲚ ⲠⲈⲚⲦⲀϤⲦⲰⲞⲨⲚ), and it is the same.[40]

This pastiche of Luke 24 and John 20 makes it clear that the Coptic redaction of the Alexander romance employs the same triadic hypogram at the conclusion of the Gedrosia episode. Alexander's apparent execution in Gedrosia plunges his troops into mourning: the King of Makedonia has died in Chaos. Some days later, however, much to the astonishment of his comrades, Alexander reappears among them,

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[39] H.W. Attridet, et al., *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 123–157.

[40] Ps.-Cyril of Jerusalem, *Omelie Copte*, ed. A. Campagnano (Milan, 1980), pp. 70 and 60–62.

revealing his presence by—and here the text is quite specific on this point—disclosing his previously concealed face: literally, that is, *wn-ḥr* > ⲞⲨⲰⲚⲌ. Like the resurrected Christ, Alexander gives his soldiers to believe that, through salvific agency, his body has risen and returned to join them from the grave: "I am Alexander whom they put to death (ⲘⲞⲨ)…Andilochos restored me to life (ⲀⲚⲌ)." The scene breaks off as Alexander's herald—echoing Coptic 2 Kingdoms 19—trumpets forth before the Macedonian forces: "The king (ⲠⲈⲢⲢⲞ) is come."

The catch here is, of course, that Alexander's death and resurrection in the Coptic romance, unlike Iesous's, are a novelistic hoax, a *Scheintod* ("false death") after the manner of Charitōn's *Kallirhoē*, and other Greek imperial fictions. In Christian terms, however, this is precisely what allows Alexander to stand as a type of Christ: the defective mimicry involved in the Macedonian king's execution and return adumbrates—in good Alexandrian allegorical tradition—the reality of their future fulfillment in the person of Iesous. Overcoming chaos, cheating death, pacifying the world, and uniting the sum of mankind, Alexander comes as a figure for the Messiah (משיחא), cast into the future. At the same time, however, the polycultural context of the Coptic romance begs questions about the credibility of the Palestinian kerygma. While the option that M. Smith sets out between trickster and Messiah is indubitably reductive, there remains abundant evidence that Palestinians of all persuasions considered Iēsous to be "a magician from Galilee…whose disciples stole his body by night from the tomb where it was laid, and now try to deceive people by claiming that he arose from the dead."[41]

"Literature," Paul Valéry famously remarked, "is, and can be nothing but, a kind of extension and application of certain properties of language."[42] We would not be unwarranted, then, to see the Gedrosia episode of the Coptic Alexander romance as a thematic projection of the three principal linguistic reserves—Egyptian, Greek, and Semitic—that made up the Coptic vernacular in its classical phase. Each projection unfolds alongside the others through the creative motivation of sememes embedded in Sahidic idiom that the Coptic redactor—without the least recourse to originary invention—reactivates in re-

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[41] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 108.
[42] P. Valéry, "De l'enseignement de la poétique au Collège de France," *Variété* 5 (1949), 289.

composing the romance. The Gedrosia episode is, therefore, not only celebratory of the different cultural formations that, in Alexander's wake, flourished side-by-side in Byzantine Egypt; the relationship between these different strands remains dialogic, in Bakhtin's sense of that term: thus, Alexander stands simultaneously here as Pharaoh (𓉐𓏏𓉐), King (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ), and Messiah (משיחא), all competing notions of divine kingship which do not dovetail but remain distinct, though always in such a way that each relativizes the claims of the others. Thus, the Pauline reading—wherein the Pharaonic victory of *m3ꜥ.t* over *isf.t*, Zeus's deliverance through the ruse of the stone, and Alexander's escape from Chaos all stand subordinate as so many types of the resurrection of Christ—always finds itself displaced by the motivic hierarchy of the romance proper, which sets Pharaoh and Zeus *alongside* Christ as analogues for Alexander, and not the other way around. Moreover, the parallels that the redactor draws between Pharaoh and Christ must have begged questions for pagan communities in the vicinity of the White Monastery who still availed themselves of monks in the scriptorium as ritual practitioners of traditional Egyptian magic. Viewed from an indigenous perspective, for example, the apparition (ⲞⲨⲰⲚϨ) which Coptic scribes in the White Monastery regularly credited to I̅C̅ X̅C̅ Π̅Ⲣ̅Ⲣ̅Ⲟ ("Iēsous the Anointed, Pharaoh") effectively maintained one of the traditional epithets of the Egyptian king: "Lord of Appearances" (*nb ḫꜥ.w*). Examples could be multiplied, but the principle remains the same: the Coptic redactor allows no understanding of the Gedrosia episode to assert itself as final, thereby assuring that the potential contexts for the narrative's cross-cultural dialogue—like the millennial destiny of the vast text network that we call the Alexander romance—remain historically open, within Egypt and throughout the literary world at large.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ETHIOPIC ALEXANDER ROMANCE

Peter Christos Kotar

INTRODUCTION

The Ethiopic Alexander romance is written in the old Ethiopic language Ge'ez, a Semitic language, belonging to the south-Semitic branch.[1] Ge'ez has been used in literature from the 4th century on in the northern part of Ethiopia (Eritrea). Center of the Ethiopic culture after 100 A.D. was the city of Aksum. Shortly after 340, the kingdom of Aksum was Christianized.[2] In the 13th century, beginning with the so-called "Salomonian dynasty" (1270–1285), founded by Jekuno Amlak, a new orientation of Ethiopic literature took place with a strong dependence on the Christian-Arabic literature of the Coptic church of Egypt.[3] In this golden era of Ethiopic literature, at the end of the 14th century, falls the *Zēnā Eskender* [history of Alexander the Great], a genuine creation of Ethiopic literature, not to be confused with the Alexander romance of Pseudo-Callisthenes (*PC*).[4] Later, both the 16th and 17th centuries were further high points of Ethiopic literature. During this period, the monastery of Dabra Libanos was the most important center of Arabo-Ethiopic translation.[5] It can be assumed that the

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[1] J. Tropper, *Altäthiopisch. Grammatik des Ge'ez mit Übungstext und Glossar.* pp. 1–3; F. Prätorius, *Äthiopische Grammatik mit Paradigmen, Litteratur, Chrestomathie und Glossar.* pp. 3–4; T.O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Classical Ethiopic (Ge'ez)*; S. Procházka, *Altäthiopische Studiengrammatik.* Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Subsidia linguistica 2; O. Raineri, *Introduzione alla lingua Ge'ez.*

[2] Ge'ez as language of the clergy is still used in the Ethiopic church as language of the scripts and liturgy.

[3] E. Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura Etiopica*, p. 67: The oldest translation from Arabic into Ethiopic is the "Legend of the Prophet Habakuk," from the end of the 13th century.

[4] J. Assfalg, P. Krüger (eds.), *Kleines Wörterbuch des christlichen Orients*, pp. 66–70; E. Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica*, pp. 58–62.

[5] A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Orients II*, pp. 36–61.

literary production during these centuries was much richer than what the remains lead one to believe.[6]

Ethiopic literature in general, whether hagiographical, historical or theological, has always been marked by its fantastic, miraculous, and visionary elements, which reveal an attitude among the authors of Ethiopia similar to the Copts' preference for magic.[7] Translations of non-Christian material from popular Arabic fiction mainly centered around the legend of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, the *Enbâqôm* (translated in 1553) and the Alexander romance of Pseudo-Callisthenes. In addition to the translation of the Alexander romance, the genuine Ethiopic Alexander legend transforms the figure of the conqueror Alexander into a man of God, according to the conception of oriental Christian monks.

Within the Alexander romance tradition, the Ethiopic text belongs to the δ recension of the Alexander romance. The stemma of the various recensions has been put together by F. Pfister.[8] The δ recension is directly derived from the Greek α recension, which W. Kroll has tried to reconstruct.[9] The δ recension consists of two branches, one established by the Latin version of the Archpresbyter Leo of Naples from the 10th century, the other by the lost Middle-Persian (Pehlevi) version of the Alexander romance. The Persian Alexander romance was translated during the last years of the Sasanidian empire, around the middle of the 7th century. Shortly after that, around 670, the Syriac translation was made, based on the Persian Alexander romance.[10] Again, the

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[6] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, p. 1: One of those witnesses is the Alexander romance of Pseudo-Callisthenes.

[7] A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Orients II*, p. 46.

[8] F. Pfister, *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman*, (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), p. 30.

[9] W. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni* (Pseudo-Callisthenes) vol. 1, based its α version on the Latin version of Julius Valerius Polemius (before 330, B. Kübler, ed., Leipzig, 1888), the Armenian version of the fifth century (retranslation into Greek by R. Raabe, *Historia Alexandrou*, Leipzig, 1896; an English translation by A. M. Wolohojian, *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes*) and the codex A (cod. Paris. 1711; *Historia Alexandri Magni*, W. Kroll, ed., Berlin, 1926).

[10] Th. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, pp. 17, 34; About the discussion regarding whether the base text of the Syriac Alexander romance was a Pehlevi or Neo-Persian Alexander romance, see the chapter on Alexander The Great in the Syriac Literary tradition in this book.

Syriac Alexander romance was the basis for a lost Arabic translation, which in turn, was the model for the Ethiopic Alexander romance.[11]

On the other hand, based on a comparison with the other versions of the romance, Karl Friedrich Weymann postulated that the Ethiopic version belongs to the β branch of the romance tradition. It is closely related to the Armenian, but also to the Latin version of Valerius and the MS B and belongs therefore to the β branch.[12]

The relationship of the Ethiopic Alexander romance to the Syriac is very close, but even closer to the version contained in Mubaššir's *Akhbār al-Iskandar*. A direct comparison shows that Mubaššir and the Ethiopic version correlate where the Syriac deviates. Therefore, there is little doubt that the Ethiopic and the Mubaššir version are descendants of an Arabic version of the romance.[13]

I. Authorship and Biographical Information

Little is known about the authorship of the Ethiopic Alexander histories consisting of the version of the *PC*, the *Christian Romance of the Life of Alexander*, and some smaller works. All texts are anonymous translations. The Arabic base text of the Alexander romance is also of unknown origin.[14] The translations were probably the work of monks in Ethiopian monasteries in the 16th or 17th century. The Arab or Ethiopic translator of the Ethiopic version of the *PC* seems to have been

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[11] Either the Arabs borrowed from the Persians, or the Persians from the Arabs, or both Arabs and Persians drew their information from some common source, perhaps the Pehlevi version, See Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, p. vii.

[12] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallsithenes*, p. 11; Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, p. 53: The base at the beginning of the Ethiopic romance is the α version, later mixed with β or γ.

[13] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, pp. 28–29; B. Meissner, *Mubašširs Ahbār el-Iskender, ZDMG* 49, (1895), 583–627. Weymann also mandates that the lost Arabic translation of the Syriac *PC* was itself the source of the Alexander material in the Persian history of Dīnawarī and Firdawsī. This Arabic translation also formed the nucleus of the Ethiopic version. Differences in Dīnawarī, Firdawsī, the Ethiopic romance and Mubaššir are hints that they are not directly derived from the Arabic translation of the Syriac romance but have gone through the hands of several editors. But the major part of the Syriac text has been incorporated into the Arabic text, with several additions, see Weymann, pp. 70–78.

[14] Often translations into Ethiopic were made from Coptic originals, but the Coptic fragment of the version of the History of Alexander has shown nothing in common with any Ethiopic version, Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. lxxxix; O. von Lemm, *Der Alexanderroman bei den Kopten*, (Petersburg, 1903).

a Christian priest, as several elements stemming from the Bible and the Christian language are clear indicators.[15] The authors of the Arabic "Universal Histories" by Al-Makīn and Abū Shākir, and of the *History of Alexander* by Joseph ben-Gorion, are known, as their titles indicate.

II. Dating and Manuscripts

Budge has dated the Ethiopic translation of the *History of Alexander the Great* by Pseudo-Callisthenes to between the 14th and 16th century.[16] Several MSS dating mainly from the 17th century preserve this Ethiopic version of the *PC*:

1. The most important is the *Zēnā Eskender* edited from a single MS, British Museum Oriental 826ff. 2a–147a,[17] no variant readings are available. It is of vellum and contains 148 leaves. The MS was written at the expense of one Abraham, of whom nothing is known. The age of the MS, from which the copy was made, is unclear. Judging from the writing of the copy, it is a work of the 19th century.[18] The text is faulty in many places, such that words and names are spelled differently, even on the same page.

2. The *History of Alexander* by Al-Makīn
   Taken from the MS of his "Universal History," it is in MS British Museum Orient. 814, fol. 69bff,[19] of vellum containing 188 leaves. It is from the 17th century.

3. *The History of Alexander* by Abū Shāker
   Contained in Ethiopic MS No.146, fol. 189ff. of the Bibliothèque Nationale,[20] Paris. The British Museum possesses a copy in MS Orient. 819, which was given to the Ethiopian Prince Kasa, later crowned as King John in 1872.[21]

4. The *History of Alexander* by Joseph ben-Gorion

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[15] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xc.

[16] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xc.

[17] W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1847*, (London 1877), p. 294, No. ccclxxxix; This MS was once in the possession of king Theodore of Magdala, destined for the library of the church of the Saviour of the World, brought to England in 1869, see Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xc.

[18] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol. I, pp. I–II.

[19] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 293.

[20] Described by Zotenberg, *Catalogue des MSS. Ethiopiens*, pp. 243ff.

[21] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 297, cccxci.

Contained in MS British Museum Orient. 822, fol. 12bff,[22] narrating the Ethiopic version of "the History of the Jews." It is of vellum and contains 136 leaves, probably written in the 17th century.

5. *The History of the Death of Alexander*
   Contained in MS British Museum Orient 24990, fol. 97ff.[23]

6. *The Christian Romance of the Life of Alexander*
   Taken from:
   A = MS British Museum Orient. 827, fol. 4ff.[24]
   P = Bibliothèque Nationale MS Ethiopiens 146, fol. 168ff;[25] Vienna Codex Aethop. XIX. This codex is in close accordance with the MS in the Bibliothèque Nationale, but not related to it.[26]

7. *The History of the Blessed Men*
   Contained in MS Ethiopiens 146, fol. 162ff. of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.[27]

8. Mubaššir's *Ahbār al-Iskandar*
   Taken from MS arab. Handschriften 785 q⁰ in Berlin.[28]

We are not aware of any fragments other than the above-mentioned MSS.

III. Modern Editions

The Ethiopic Alexander history is available in one edition:

> Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge. *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great; Being a Series of Ethiopic Texts. Edited from Manuscripts in the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, with an English Translation and Notes.* 2 vols. (London, 1896; reprint New York, 1968). Volume 1: Ethiopic Text. Volume 2: English Translation and Index. This work was initiated and paid for by Lady Meux of Theobalds Park. The edition was limited to 250 copies, which have been presented to great national libraries in England, America and on the Continent. In a short time, the edition was exhausted. No new edition of the Ethiopic text has been made.[29]

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[22] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 288, ccclxxviii.

[23] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 12, xiii.

[24] Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 294, cccxc.

[25] Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 243.

[26] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, p. VI.

[27] Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, p. 243.

[28] B. Meissner, *Mubašširs Ahbâr el-Iskender*, *ZDMG* 49 (1895), 583–627.

[29] 500 paperback copies of the translation in the second volume of the large edition above were later printed and published by Lady Meux, issued as "The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great," C.J. Clay & Sons, Cambridge University Press, (London,

In addition to the Ethiopic version of the *PC*, without variants, the first volume contains:

> the History of Alexander by Al-Makīn,
> the History of Alexander by Abū-Shākir,
> the History of Alexander by Joseph Ben-Gorion,
> an anonymous History of the Death of Alexander,
> a Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,
> the History of the Blessed Men Who Lived in the Days of Jeremiah the
>   Prophet, and an appendix with
> the Prophecy of Daniel concerning Alexander's Kingdom,
> an extract from the Book of Maccabees 1.1–6, and
> an extract from the Chronicle of John Mudabbar.

Volume II contains the English translations of the above Ethiopic texts.

IV. Sources

The Ethiopians first learned about Alexander the Great and his conquests from the Ethiopic translation of the Bible in the 5th and 6th century, made by Syrian monks.[30] Alexander, although not mentioned by name in the Book of Daniel 8:20–21,[31] was recognized by the translators. Alexander is mentioned by name in Maccabees 1:1–6. A limited number of historical facts have been learned from Coptic or Arabic versions of the Chronicle of the bishop John of Nikiu from the 7th century, translated in the year 1602 by the Egyptian Gabriel.

In the 16th century, the Arabic histories of Al-Makīn and Abū Shākir[32] were also translated into Ethiopian.[33] Not satisfied by those

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1896). This edition sold rapidly within a year. Budge prepared a modified, abridged edition of this English translation, with the text of the Ethiopic version of the *PC*, the historical summary of Al-Makīn, the Christian Romance, the story of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem by Joseph Ben Gorion, and a few stories about Alexander and his master Aristotle collected by Gregory Bar-Hebraeus. All the other stories printed in the large volume II of the edition were omitted.

[30] Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, p. xxiii.

[31] 20: The ram with the two horns is the king of Media and Persia, 21: The he-goat is the king of Greece. The big horn between his eyes is the first king.

[32] Al-Makīn (died 1273/4), originally a monk, later secretary under the great Saladin, provided a pre-islamic history and a history of the near-east world from the Islamic conquest till the year 1260. Abū Shākir flourished in Cairo in the middle of the 13th century, mainly with Arabian ecclesiastical literature.

[33] A. Baumstark, *Die christlichen Literaturen des Orients II*, p. 51.

works, Ethiopian scholars began to compose two kinds of Alexander histories: the older kind had a considerable stratum of historical facts, mixed with a lot of fiction; these were therefore termed "historical romances." The younger kind contained very few historical facts, but was more plainly imaginative fiction, with the inclusion of moral and pious observations and quotations from the Scriptures, for the purpose of edifying monks and nuns.[34]

The Ethiopic versions of the History of Alexander the Great can therefore be divided into two classes:[35]

    i. those with a stratum of historical fact mixed with a lot of fiction—the historical romance
    ii. those that are works of pure imagination—the fabulous history

The best example of the historical romance is the *PC*, while the best example among the Ethiopic texts of the fabulous history is the "Christian Romance" of Alexander the Great, in which Alexander turns into a Christian king, whom the Holy Spirit instructs in the mystery of the Trinity. The Holy Ghost is his companion, and Christ himself informs him about his Incarnation. But Alexander's prayer are those of a Muslim, i.e. Alexander is a pious Christian and Muslim, which reveals the Ethiopic text's Arabic original.

Translations of the History of Alexander came into existence some time between the 14th and 16th century when many translations from the Arabic or Coptic were made. It is probable that an Ethiopic version of the Alexander story was made during the revival of Ethiopic literature in the 13th century, but the destruction of monasteries and their libraries by the Muslim Arabs makes it unlikely that any manuscripts survived.[36] Therefore, the several histories, reports, fictions, and sagas about Alexander the Great that exist in Ethiopic are from later times. Of these, the Ethiopic histories of Alexander published by Budge in the edition of 1896 contain:

    I. the Ethiopic version of the *PC*,
    II. the extracts from historical works by Al-Makīn and Abū Shākir,
    III. extracts from the *History of the Jews* of Joseph ben-Gorion,

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[34] Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.
[35] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version*, p. lxxxix.
[36] Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, p. xxiii.

IV. *A Brief Summary of the Life and Death of Alexander* by an anony-
     mous author,
 V. the "Christian Romance,"
VI. and the *History of the "Blessed Men."*

The Ethiopic histories of Alexander do not represent pure translations
of the Arabic texts, but rather contain a Christian-Ethiopic viewpoint,
showing qualities the king and conqueror should possess. Alexan-
der became a Christian teacher, preaching the Christian doctrine of
the Resurrection, and having knowledge of the Old Testament. He is
finally described as a saint worthy of receiving revelations from the
Divine Spirit of God. The historical facts of his birth, life, and death
were free inventions by the translator.[37]

A Brief Summary of the Life and Deeds of Alexander the Great is a
translation from Abū Shākir. The conquest of Persia and India and
the other most important expeditions are concisely recorded, but the
fantastic elements are almost wanting in this work.[38]

The Arabic biography of Alexander given by Mubaššir in his *Ahbār
al-Iskandar* should also be taken into account as a source for the Ethi-
opic romance because of their close relationship. Mubaššir's is derived
from different sources and combined in such a way that does not allow
us to trace the sources. However, we do know that Mubaššir's source
was very close to the Greek MS A, because he does not mention any
material that is specific to MSS B and C.[39] The need for a living source
of expositors explains why literal translations from Greek into Arabic
never caught on.[40] Where the Greek and Syriac texts show differences,
the Arabic text coincides with the Syriac version. But one must not
wrongly assume that Mubaššir directly based his text on the Syriac.
There are also differences, where the Syriac and Arabic text of Mubaššir
contradict each other and Mubaššir follows the text of the Greek *PC*.[41]
The main difference between Mubaššir's text and the Syriac is with
the theological discussions. One can only say that the main source

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[37] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol. 1., p. xi.
[38] E.A.W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, pp. lxxxix–xc.
[39] B. Meissner, Mubašširs Ahbâr el-Iskender, *ZDMG* 49 (1895), 620.
[40] S. Brock, *Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity*, p. 74.
[41] For an overview of the relationship of Mubaššir and the Ethiopic text with the
Syriac version, cf. K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des
Pseudocallisthenes*, pp. 31–55.

Mubaššir used was a reworked text of the *PC* closely related to the Syriac version, with theological additions.[42]

The Arabic *PC*, translated from the Syriac, incorporated several additions of Muslim origin, which have been reworked by a Christian hand into the Ethiopic version. The translation of the Arabic text may have been done between 800 and 850.[43] Nevertheless, the most important of all Ethiopic versions of the History of Alexander the Great is the Ethiopic version of the *PC*.[44]

V. Structure

Like its Syriac base text, the Ethiopic Alexander romance of the *PC* is not a homogenous literary composition. Parts of it are not at all related to the base stratum of Alexander's story, but are rather new intercalations. If one takes these out for the moment, three main parts of the Alexander Romance remain:[45] 1.) The beginning of the story up to Alexander's accession to the throne; 2.) the campaign against Darius up to the letter of Aristotle; 3.) the end of the letter to Olympias up to the end of the romance. Of these three parts, only the beginning and end seem to belong together. The nucleus appears to be autonomous when compared to what precedes it and what follows. Such a non-cohesive structure of the whole was caused, over the course of time by subtraction, addition, and modification of several parts of the history. Different hands, each with its own taste, each with a different intention and different background, all unrelated to one another, have worked on the material and formed this type of mosaic of the romance.

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[42] As one example may be taken the Christian saying, taken from Job 1:21 when Alexander meets the Brahmans. This is only in the Syriac version and the Arabic text of Mubaššir, see B. Meissner, Mubašširs *Aḫbār el-Iskender*, *ZDMG* 49 (1895), 622–625.

[43] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, pp. 78–79, 82. The genesis of the Arabic romance may be peformed; in three stages: the first stage accurately contained the Syriac text. In the second stage, the nucleus was preserved, but the beginning was replaced by the text from the Persian historical tradition. This was more in the interest of the Muslim author to replace the pagan birth of Alexander by a more historical Persian one, which could be accepted by the Muslim faith. Finally, the end was replaced by the story that Alexander died due to a disease, rather than by poison.

[44] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xc.

[45] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, p. 5.

For example, the beginning, the end, and the main part of the Ethi-
opic version originally did not belong together. The beginning and end
were added later in order to complete the Arabic original's main part
because it lacked the introduction and conclusion the Ethiopic author
desired. The original beginning was replaced with what we have now.
The original ending of the romance was kept in the Ethiopic romance,
but abridged, and new text was attached to the end. Whether or not
both parts, the beginning and the end, originate from the same writer
and the same Arabic MS, cannot be said. But the beginning belongs to
the younger β version, the end to the older α version. The testament
at the end is very mutilated. The oriental translator treated this mate-
rial in a very free way, as if he was not much interested in the details
of Alexander's legacy. What remained from the original testament is
in accordance with the text in MS A and the Armenian romance, but
not with the Syriac. It belongs to the oldest versions of the romance.[46]
The translations of names, i.e the spelling of the names in the Ethiopic,
leads to the assumption that the translation was made directly from
the Greek into Arabic and from Arabic into Ethiopic. Evaluation of
the mutilated names of the hostile peoples at the beginning also hints
that no other link between the Greek and Ethiopic ever existed except
a work in Arabic.[47]

The content of the letters between Darius and Alexander are very
different. The second pair of letters has been identified as a later inter-
polation, taken from Eutychius, but inserted in the Ethiopic.[48]

At the beginning of the Brahman episode, an ascetic called Zosîmâs
is mentioned. This well-known figure leads to the assumption that
the additional parts in this chapter, compared to other versions, were
taken from the Book of Zosîmâs. One of the various versions of this
book is also given at the end of Budge's the "Life and Exploits of Alex-

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[46] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallsithenes*,
pp. 13–15.

[47] K. F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallsithenes*,
pp. 16–17, 20; Th. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, p. 54.

[48] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallsithenes*,
pp. 20–24. The chronicle of Eutychius was well known in Christian circles in Egypt
and probably incorporated by an Ethiopian into the Ethiopic Alexander romance.
Other insertions may also be attributable to this interpolator.

ander the Great" with the title "The History of the Blessed Men Who Lived in the Days of Jeremiah the Prophet."[49]

After the episode of the Amazons and the letter of Aristotle to Alexander, a version of the "Christian Legend" was inserted by the translator. In this text, the origin of the Dead Sea is explained in a curious way: it "stinks horribly" because it is full of the dead bodies of men, women, and beastly cadavers.

In the Land of Darkness, Alexander meets an angel who holds the earth in place. The angel describes heaven according to ideas described in the Old Testament. Alexander responds to the angel with a citation from the 77th Psalm. Again, the translator portrayed the Macedonian king as an intimate adept of the Scriptures. The insertion in the Ethiopic text of the history of the man who flies through the air on an eagle's pinions up into the heavens goes back to a very ancient story about the Babylonian hero called Etanna. This story also appears in the "Christian Romance," where Alexander tamed the eagles by feeding them. The Ethiopian translator received the story through the Arabic from the Greek, while the Greek acquired it through Semitic languages.

Over time, the description of the life of Alexander became distorted and then enlarged. When the story reached the point of being merely a pure memory detached from its historical roots, it was used as a base text to absorb new stories, legends, and myths. The details were modified to adapt to the ideas of peoples and countries, where the translators lived and to convey national views of each country through which the history passed. The Egyptians made him a son of an Egyptian king, the Persians made him a Persian, the Arabs a servant of Allah, the Syrian made him a Christian and the Ethiopian made him a believer in the Christian Trinity and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. But this all came at an expense: the Arabs and Ethiopians omitted many facts, which Greeks and others considered to be essential parts of his characterization.[50]

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[49] K.F. Weymann, *Die äthiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes*, pp. 26–27.

[50] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol. 1, pp. xliv–xlv.

VI. Plot

The Ethiopic History of Alexander the Great

As the Ethiopic version of the History of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes is the most interesting and important work within the Ethiopic tradition of the Alexander romance, a short overview will be given.

It is not structured as the Greek and Syriac versions into three books with chapters. A kind of structure by headlines according to the main theme (e.g. Alexander and the Brahmans, Alexander visits the talking trees, etc.) is given in the English translation of Budge.[51] For the purpose of comparison, in his introduction to the Syriac version, Budge has provided references to the vellum leaves of the Ethiopic version (e.g. fol 4a)[52] which are noted as well in "The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great."[53] Thus one can collate the two texts with relative ease. As it turns out, in places the Ethiopic version follows the Syriac almost word for word. The forms of Greek proper names agree often with the Syriac transcription of them. However, a large number of the proper names of the Syriac version are not present at all in the Ethiopic. The Arabic or Ethiopian translator seems to have omitted the most difficult passages, like the speech and computation of the stars by Nectanebus before the birth of Alexander. Other passages of the Greek[54] and Syriac are very much amplified, some are abridged, some are translated twice in different words.[55] In the following, an overview of the most important differences between the Syriac and the Ethiopic text will be given to get an impression of the Ethiopian's pecularities.

At the beginning, the scribe implores God's mercy. By the help of God he will write an account of Alexander according to the histories written by wise men. The romance begins with the same story as the

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[51] Budge, *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*, p. *xi.*

[52] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great,* pp. *xci–cix.*

[53] Budge*, The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol.1*;* Weymann in his *Die aethiopische und arabische Übersetzung des Pseudocallisthenes* has referenced the page numbers and lines of Budge's Ethiopic edition, rather than the leaves*.*

[54] Greek is mentioned here as the base of the Syriac version since the Pehlevi version is missing and, effectively, we do not know anything about it.

[55] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. xc; e.g. Philip takes Aristotle as teacher of Greek science for Alexander, later Alexander himself takes Aristotle as teacher. One could think that Aristotle appears for the first time in the narrative, see Weymann, p. 7.

Syriac in the first five chapters. Nectanebus, in Ethiopic Bektânîs, is king and magician in Egypt. He never fights against his enemies but defeats them by magic. He takes a brass vessel filled with water and forms wax figures, representing soldiers and ships and speaks secret words and names of demons to destroy them.

When armies of innumerable multitude once again come against him, his magical powers have no effect upon the gods and his rule over Egypt has come to an end. The list of hostile peoples coming against Egypt is different in the Ethiopic version: In the Syriac version, more or less historical known peoples are listed (Turks, Arabs, Medianites, Alanes, people from Tabaristan, Gurgan, etc.), the Ethiopic shows mutilated names, e.g. Sargîyâwîyân, Kîmanâwîyân, Halabâwîyân, and others, all corrupted and unknown.[56]

After Bektânîs has left Egypt he crosses the sea and comes to the city (sic!) of Macedonia. Chap. IV: Bektânîs encounters Lĕmbayâs (Olympias). The plot more or less follows the Syriac, with some confusing parts. Chap. VI: After the sexual intercourse of Lĕmbayâs with the God, i.e. Bektânîs in chapter V, the description of the God as in the Syriac is wanting. Chap. VII–XIII is nearly identical. In chapter XIII the gift of horses by the Cappadocians to Philip is missing. The departure of Philip to another city and the sending for Bektânîs by Lĕmbayâs is omitted in Chap. XIV.

Alexander (Eskender) throws his father Bektânîs from the top of a mountain, whereas in the Syriac version he throws him in a hole. Like a Christian, Eskender calls his father "priest of idols." Chapters XV–XXII follow the Syriac text in principle. But starting with chapter XV, the Ethiopic version deviates considerably. One could also say that the narrative becomes disturbed. Philip is used to give tribute to the king of Persia who ruled the empire of Nimrod, who worshipped fire and established the priests, who are magicians. Eskender talks with the ambassadors of Dari (Darius), his message to Dari is not given in the Ethiopic version. Eskender mentions that his horse was "born with me," and he promises to go to Persia riding upon Bukephalos [Bucephalus]. Darius sends another messenger with gifts for Alexander, including a golden box with sesame and a jewel, as in the Syriac. Alexander sends an insolent message back.

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[56] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol 1., p. 3, fol. 3b.

Bukephalos, born in the house with Alexander, was kept in chains day and night (fol. 13b). Alexander tames Bukephalos. This is again different from the Syriac. Then Alexander and his army march off to Asia. Alexander prays to God and advises his nobles not to commit sin. He speaks of the redemption of man's soul. He writes a letter to the people of his land (fol. 18 a). His title is the "Two-horned,"[57] which is explained by saying that "he ruled in the two horns of the Sun, the East and the West." In fols. 19b–21b he writes to all the kings on the earth, saying that God has given him the world. A copy is sent to Dari, King of Persia. Dari writes a letter to the men of Tiberius Caesar (fol. 23b). From fols. 24b–27b the epistolary exchange between Dari and Eskender starts, as in the Syriac. Then Eskender returns to Egypt and founds the city of Alexandria (fol. 28b). All Egypt, except Ethiopia, Tâkâtelô and Nôbâ, submits to him. People of Africa come to pay homage to him. Then Eskender passes through Syria and comes to Palestine. The chief priests of the temple of Jerusalem decline to submit to Alexander (fol. 29a), as they are under the rule of Dari. When Alexander marches into Jerusalem, the city submits to him. The priests bring him the book of the Law and the prophecy of Daniel concerning Alexander's kingdom. Alexander enters the temple and worships God. Alexander receives a copy of the prophecy of Daniel (fol. 30b), also quite different from the Syriac version.

Then Alexander goes eastwards, crosses the river, builds a city called Baratâ. For forty-five days Alexander fights against the Persian army, led by Ardeshir, the general of Dari. Dari gained some military advantage over Eskender, who wants to go back to his own country and asks for a truce, but Dari refuses (fols. 31a–32a). Eskender makes a dangerous attack upon him, Dari manages to escape and takes refuge in the house of the idols (fol. 32b) and laments his fate (fol. 33a). Meanwhile Eskender has captured the family of Dari, who writes to entrust them to his clemency. When Eskender has slain all the nobles of Dari, Dari writes a letter to Puz (Poros, the Indian king) asking for help (fols. 34b–35a). Two Persians, Hâshîsh and Arsalâs (in Syriac II 20 they are named Bagiz and Anabdeh), kill Dari to get a reward from Eskender (fol. 35b).

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[57] "Two horned" is the literal translation of the Egyptian words *sept abun*— "provided with two horns," one of the titles of Amen-Ra, see Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol. 1, p. xviii.

In the following (fols. 36a–42b) the story follows the Syriac with the burying of Dari, the punishment of the murders, and the care for the mother Saragô and Rasîk [Roxane]. Then the story continues with the fight against Puz (Poros), with some minor differences (fols. 42a–50b). Puz collects lions and rhinoceroses (fol. 48b), but not elephants as in the Syriac version, to fight against Eskender. He then sets out to go to see the Albaragânâwîyân (Brahmans), who write him a letter and mention Baal Peor (fol. 51b). Alexander reads the letter and goes to them for consultation, as in the Syriac version (fols. 52a–54b). He writes a letter to Aristotle (fol. 56b). Then, after a march of twelve nights, Eskender with 800 men comes to the city, located between two rivers, and sees the pillar with the inscription of Sesonchosis (fols. 57b–59a). Eskender comes to a country with men like ravens (fol. 60b), killing six thousand of them. He sees people with "legs like a camel" (fol. 61a), men with heads of a lion (61a), trees which grow and diminish (fol. 61b), and a river full of birds (fol. 61b), again different from the Syriac. Then they come to the sea called Pontus, where his men are killed by a beast. After a march of sixty five nights, they come to a place where two birds live. One of them says: "O two-horned one, you are marching through a land, which no man has ever before entered" (fol. 62b). Eskender enters the temple of a nameless god, who says that he will bring him to a place where Enoch, Elijah, Abraham, Issac, Jacob, and others dwell (fol. 64a). In the "city of India" (Prasiake in the Syriac version), Eskender stays thirty nights because of the snow. The Indians tell him of two talking trees, which speak "in all tongues." After a journey of ten days he reaches the garden with the trees and the altar, where the sun and moon rise. The trees give him the prophecy about his dead (fols. 64b–67a). After the killing of the serpent (a dragon in Syriac) he arrives in Sîn [China] (fol. 70b). Leaving China, he comes to the people with heads of wolves (fol. 74b).

At this point follows the story of Eskender and Candace (fols. 77a–86b). Eskender marries her (fol. 84a), which is again specific to the Ethiopic version. The names of the sons of Candace are Kandarôs and Kanîra (in Syriac Candaules and Kerator). On the way back to Persia, Aristotle writes to instruct him to do some good things before he dies (fol. 88a). In the Ethiopic version, the expedition against the Huns, the "eleven bright seas," the foetid sea with waters like pus are part of the Alexander romance (fols. 89b–90a), whereas it is part of the Syriac "Christian Legend" and not of the romance. Eskender goes to Egypt to obtain 7000 skilled workmen and sets out with all his forces. After a

journey of four months they arrive at a land "behind the twelve great seas" (fol. 91b). He passes through the lands called Târakes, Martakut, Rûkêl, Dafâr, Tarmât, Kânem, Hûr and Marak, through the mountain of Mûsâs and arrives at a place called Nalhemyâ, where three hundred sages come to him (fol. 93b) to tell him that they are subjects of Akseyûs the Persian (fol. 94a). They tell him that the kingdoms in this land are Mâgûg, Yâgûg (Gog and Magog in the Christian legend in Syriac) and others. The Ethiopic translator mentions, that he has seen in another book a description of these kingdoms and gives their 22 names and describes their manners and customs (fols. 94a–95b). The people called Nagâshâwîyân have faces like dogs (fol. 96a). Eskender asks the old wise men about Paradise and its four rivers Sêhun, Gihon, Euphrates and Tigris (fol. 96a). Eskender then gathers 3000 men and they make a gate to inclose the Gog and Magog. He writes a prophecy on the gate to the effect that these nations shall go forth in the eight hundred and sixty-fourth year (fol. 98a) and when they have gone forth, twenty thousand Greeks, Persians and Arabs shall be gathered together under four thousand kings (fol. 98b).

Alexander then sets out for the Land of darkness (fol. 99a). A god in this country tells him that the throne of God is supported by an angel having the faces of a bull, a lion, an eagle, and a man, which is a Christian motivated allusion to the apostles. Beneath it flows the river of life (fol. 101a). Beyond the Land of Darkness are seventy other lands, and beyond them are seventy more lands. In the Land of Darkness, there is no distinction between day and night (fol. 106a). Eskender prays to God to be able to proceed. He travels into the Land of Darkness for two years. (fol. 110a). Finally, he comes to a place, beyond which, there is nothing. Eskender wants to leave his troops and continue. The king of the land gives him a precious stone, which was taken from Paradise by Adam. This stone shows Eskender the way (fol. 111a), leading him to the Water of Life. Alexander throws a dried fish into the water to see if it will live. As soon as the fish touches the water, it comes to life (fol. 111b). When Mâtûn, i.e. El-Khidr [Elijah] sees that the fish is alive again, he bathes in the Water of Life, "in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (fol. 111b). The sixty thousand kings that live in that land contend with El-Khidr, who asks permission for Alexander to pass through the land, because he is doing God's will (fol. 112a). Meanwhile, Eskender comes to a place with clear water, thinking it is the Water of Life. He sees there emeralds, jacinths, and other precious stones together with a bird with

a ring in its nose that speaks to him. He finds gold and makes a crown in which he sets the stone from Paradise (fol. 115a). He sets up a great furnace and casts a door and walls of iron to keep out Gog and Magog, the children of Adam (fol. 116a). He flies through the air with the help of three eagles (fol. 116b). Having crossed the sea, Eskender sets out for Babylon where he seeks out the seven wonders of Salomon (fols. 118b–120b). He writes to his mother and receives a second letter from Aristotle (fols. 121a–127b).

Then, a long passage is interpolated with a discourse on the names of Pharaoh and Job (fols. 129–139). Eskender's second letter to his mother tells her that he has left Babylon and come to the pillars of Herakles. There he finds a door of gold, and one of silver and 2500 crowns of gold which he takes. He comes to the land of beautiful women (fol. 139b), and to the city of sun (here the Ethiopic romance coincides with the Syriac), where there is a palace of gold. Near the palace was a great darkness (fol. 140 a). Eventually, he comes to the river Yôrdânôs, on the confines between Asia and Armenia. He also sees golden objects in the city of Dios, which the Persians brought from Egypt. Then he sends another letter to Olympias (fol. 141a). Alexander makes a feast as Yôlyôs [Jollas] suggests and immediately invites twenty-one friends. Yôlyôs then gives him a cup of poisoned wine and, although he knows that he is going to be poisoned, he drinks the wine (fol. 142a). Eskender leaves the feast and during the night he tries to jump into the Euphrates, but his wife Roxana stops him (fol. 142b). On the following day, Bardaksa [Perdiccas], Kâbâs [Lysias] Abatlemîs [Ptolemy] and Lîsîmikos [Lysimachus] write his testament (fol. 143a). Bûkelâs and seventy of his soldiers want to die with him (fol. 143b). Esekender donates twenty thousand dinars to the Christian temple of Egypt and to the temple of Amon (fol. 144a). The names of the provinces, listed as in the Syriac version, are corrupted in the Ethiopic. His body is brought from Babylon to Egypt. The nobles of the city of Memphis come out to meet the procession, but refuse to allow Alexander to be buried there. They give advice to Ptolemy to bury him in Alexandria (fol. 146b). The rest is again as in the Syriac version.

Highlights from the Other Works

The historical works of Al-Makīn and Abū Shākir, are very much related, as one is based on the other. In a very curious episode, focus is centered on Aristotle, who is making talismans, amulets and

astronomical calculations. The famous philosopher is even making a number of wax models of his foes for Alexander and placing them in a box to defeat his enemies. In this way, Aristotle takes the role of Nectanebus.

The "History of the Jews" by Joseph ben Gorion describes Alexander's dealings with the Jews. The episode of Alexander's visit to the sanctuary is the same as in Josephus. Alexander also visits Nablus and is received by the Samaritan Sanballat. The rest of the story is equivalent to the Ethiopic.

The History of the Death of Alexander is a brief summary of his life and death, and gives twenty sayings of the sages of Alexandria over his body.

The "Christian Romance" is the most curious work written about Alexander. It is a relatively modern work rather than a translation of an older work. The writer was probably a monk who tried to Christianize every act of Alexander's life.[58]

VII. Narrative Technique and Style

As can be seen from the Ethiopic version of the *PC*, the Ethiopic text reproduces the principal story as in the Syriac. Whether the omission of chapters is caused by the Arabic or Ethiopic translator cannot be said. It is a Christian influenced work, and Eskender communicates with Christ. Like Elijah, he preaches sermons on the advantage of living in chastity and continence. When Parmenion suggests to him that Persian women should share the usual fate of female captives, Alexander replied that it would be disgraceful for the Greeks to be vanquished by women. This behaviour impressed the Oriental peoples such that they celebrated Alexander's chastity. Therefore, the Ethiopic Christian translator had no difficulty to transform the king/hero/conqueror into a Christian king, who abolishes the worship of idols. Having become a Christian king, Alexander must also proclaim Christian ideas and sentiments and use all occasions to provide the Christian doctrine to the reader. Otherwise, the history would be pure amusement rather than a means for edification.[59]

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[58] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol. 1, pp. xlix–liv.
[59] Budge, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, vol.1, pp. xxix–xxxi.

The accounts of his travels are based on the Indian journeys as in the Syriac version, but with a Christian impact. He meets the prophets Elijah and Enoch in the desert. The Holy Ghost instructs him about the virtue and the six doors of the heart and tells him that his father will be one of the martyrs. He learns the mystery of the Holy Trinity.[60]

The Ethiopians, after having adopted the Alexander material, may have been influenced by the reference to their country through the Candace-story, and subsequently reworked it with their literary spirit. Such interpretations of the Alexander history can also be seen in the adoption of the Alexander romance by other peoples, who brought in their specific thinking and visions. But the modeling of Alexander by the Ethiopians is quite different from other versions in other languages, in which Alexander is a Christian. The Ethiopians have formed a religious and theological outline of Alexander. This was mainly driven by the Ethiopian preference for religious literature. In their view, Alexander is a prophet and teacher, a figure like one from the Old Testament. Such an evolution of the picture of Alexander culminated in the "Christian Romance," a work of a native Ethiopian, written in a monastery, for the purpose of the edification of monks.

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[60] Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. cix.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WALTER OF CHÂTILLON'S *ALEXANDREIS*

Maura Lafferty

I. Authorship and Biographical Information

We are lucky to know far more about Walter of Châtillon than many
of his peers, such as the mysterious Archpoet. In addition to auto-
biographical details attested in his works, we have several lives and
lengthy glosses with biographical information. Glosses accompanying
his lyrics often give details about the circumstances of their composi-
tion or presentation. Our sources, however, are not consistent and are
sometimes demonstrably wrong. Poets' lives, moreover, are particu-
larly susceptible to the biographical fallacy, and the more striking the
anecdote, the more suspicious we should be.

The account that follows is a modified version of the general con-
sensus. It cannot be conclusive: Carsten Wollin is in the process of
producing a new edition of Walter's saints' lives for the Corpus Chris-
tianorum, and his existing publications indicate that he is reviewing
the manuscript evidence for Walter's life, with results that will chal-
lenge the current narrative.[1] The following account is based mainly on
the lives and glosses edited by Marvin Colker in the introduction to
his edition of the *Alexandreis* and the scattered biographical evidence
contained in the works themselves.[2] Walter was born in the vicinity

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[1] *Gaulteri de Castellione carmina*, CCCM 167/1: *Vitae sanctorum rhythmicae* (Turn-
hout, forthcoming). See C. Wollin, "Das Festgedict Si de fonte bibere für den Glos-
sator Martinus Gosia und seinen Sohn Wilhem—ein unbekanntes Frühwerk Walters
von Châtillon?" *Zeitschift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 110 (2002), 266–68,
for example, where he argues that we can date the prosimetrum delivered at Bologna
to 1175/76 or even as late as 1177.

[2] Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis*, M.L. Colker (ed.), (Padua, 1978): *Vita* 1 (Oxford,
Exeter College, 69, A.D. 1290), p. xii; *Vita* 2 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France,
lat. 8359, s. 13), pp. xii–xiii; *Vita* 2a (Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 401, s. 13), p. xiii;
a biographical note in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat 8359 at the end of
the *Alexandreis*, pp. xv–xvi, and a fourth *Vita* (Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemein-
bibliothek der Stadt Erfurt, Amplon. 8° 90, s. 13[1]), p. xvii. Despite the attribution to
the poet by *Vita* 2a, the apparently autobiographical poem reported by *Vita* 2a was

of Lille, one life specifying Ronchin as the town of his birth.[3] Wal-
ter studied in Paris under Stephen of Beauvais; one life adding that
Walter studied with him at Rheims as well.[4] Walter taught at a place
called Castellio, probably Châtillon-sur-Marne, just south of Rheims.
Here Walter wrote his treatise against the Jews, and according to one
life, poetry (*quedam ludicra*).[5] One life adds that he taught at Laon,
again, not far from Rheims.[6] Walter abandoned teaching the liberal
arts to study law at Bologna.[7] One life asserts that he was discour-
aged by the excess of effort and lack of practical reward involved in
the liberal arts.[8] He entered the service of the archbishop of Rheims,
the first *vita* identifying the archbishop more precisely as William of
Sens and Walter's position as *notarius* and *orator*. This is William
of Champagne (a.k.a. Guillaume des Beaux Mains), from the pow-
erful house of Champagne-Blois, son of the count of Champagne,
brother-in-law of Louis VII and uncle of Philip II Augustus, regent
of France during the third crusade. William had been bishop of Sens
before being elected to the see of Rheims in 1176. The *Alexandreis* is
in fact dedicated to him (*Alexandreis* 1.12–26) after he had accepted
the see of Rheims (*Alex.* 1.17). The lives note that Walter wrote the
Alexandreis in honor of William or at his behest. The first letters of
each book of the *Alex.* spell William's Latin name, Guillermus. Two
lives agree that William then made Walter a canon, according to one
of Amiens, to another of Beauvais.[9] He also wrote a lyric (*Ver pacis
aperit, Saint-Omer* 30)[10] to commemorate the coronation in 1179 of

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more likely written after his death by an admirer, like most of the medieval imita-
tions of the Vergilian epitaph reported by Donatus, *Mantua me genuit*. See A.S. Pease,
"Mantua me genuit," *Classical Philology* 35 (1940), 180–82 and note 4, 740–741.

  [3] Walter of Châtillon, *Tractatus sive Dialogus contra Judaeos*, prol., PL 209:424–
425; *Vitae* 1, 2, and 2a. *Vita* 1 specifies Ronchin.

  [4] For a possible identification of Stephen of Beauvais, see J. Williams, "The Quest
for the Author of the 'Moralium Dogma Philosophorum'," *Speculum* 32 (1957), 740–
41. For Rheims, see *Vita* 2a.

  [5] *Tractatus* 3.4, PL 207:450, "Est quidam apud nos Castellione Iudaeaus…"; *Vita* 2.

  [6] For Laon, see *Vita* 2a.

  [7] C. Wollin, "Das Festgedicht *Si de fonte bibere* für den Gloassator Martinus Gosia
und seinen Sohn Wilhem," *Zeitschrift für Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 110
(2002), 247–268, and H. Kantorowicz, "The Poetical *Sermo* of a Medieval Jurist," *Jour-
nal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1938), 22–41. *Vita* 2.

  [8] *Vita* 2.

  [9] Amiens: *Vita* 2; Beauvais, *Vita* 2a.

  [10] *Die Lieder Walters von Châtillon in der Handschrift 351 von St. Omer*, K. Strecker
(ed.), (Berlin, 1925).

Philip II Augustus at the hands of William of Rheims, perhaps in his capacity as William's orator. In addition to the lyrics and hymns and the *Tractatus contra Iudaeos*, three further poems have been attributed to Walter: lives of saints Brendan, Alexis, and Thomas à Becket. The life of Brendan, a Latin version of the Anglo-Norman *Voyage de Saint Brendan*, is dedicated to Pope Alexander III. Carsten Wollin dates this poem to *c.* 1163–64, a period during which Alexander was in exile and holding his *curia* at Sens.[11] Two of the lives assert that Walter died of leprosy, an assertion repeated in some of the manuscripts of John of Garland's *Equivoca*, that say his leprosy was the inspiration for *Versa est in luctum cythera mea* (*Moral.-sat.* 17).[12]

 This last detail raises the question of the degree to which medieval biographers and glossators may have been afflicted by the temptations of the biographical fallacy. Quite possibly Walter suffered from leprosy (or from one of the diseases that went under that name in the 12th century). In several of his poems his persona is ill (*Versa est in luctum, Moral.-sat.* 17; *Dum Galterus egrotaret, Moral.-sat.* 18; *Licet eger cum egrotis, Saint-Omer* 27). Leprosy was common in 12th-century France, and by the 13th century Rheims had two particularly elaborate leper houses for the sequestration of lepers (one for men and one for women) as required by the Third Lateran Council in 1179.[13] Walter's only specific reference to leprosy, however, is in *Licet eger cum egrotis*, where the illness of the speaker reflects the moral illness afflicting the entire church, and leprosy stands in for sin, specifically

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[11] For the life of Brendan, see G. Orlandi, "San Brendano, Gualtiero di Châtillon e Bernhard Bischoff," in *Rendiconti dell'Istituto lombardo: Classe di lettere e scienze morali e storiche* 125 (1994 [1995]), pp. 425–440. For Brendan, Alexis and Thomas à Becket, see C. Wollin, *Saints' Lives by Walter of Châtillon* (Toronto, 2002). Wollin does not explain his dating of the *Vita S. Brendani*. Presumably he will supply them in his forthcoming CCCM edition.

[12] Walter of Châtillon, *Moral-Satirische Gedichte Walters von Châtillon aus deutschen, englischen, französischen und italienischen Handschriften*, K. Strecker (ed.), (Heidelberg, 1929). See *Vita* 2, *Vita* 2a. The passages in John of Garland are in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 1093, fol. 31ʳ and Lat. 8447, fol. 5r. See F. Chatillon, "*Flagello sepe castigatus vitam terminavit*: Contributions à l'étude des mauvais traitements infligé à Gautier de Châtillon," *Revue du Moyen Âge latin* 7 (1951), 154–155.

[13] S.N. Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, 1974), pp. 64–65 for the requirement of the Third Lateran Council, canon 23; and pp. 74–76 for the *leprosaria* of Rheims. See F.-O. Touati, *Maladie et société au Moyen âge: la lèpre, les lépreux et les léproseries dans la province ecclésiastique de Sens jusqu'au milieu du XIVᵉ siècle* (Brussels, 1998), for an in-depth study close to Walter's time and place.

simony.[14] Leprosy, however, is a suspiciously appropriate disease for a poet: simultaneously the sign of God's grace, a guarantee of heaven, and the external manifestation of sin, particularly sexual sin.[15] François Chatillon exclaims:

> "La maladie":…vénérienne et sacrée tout ensemble, facteur poétique à la deuxième puissance. La lèpre convenait à une époque de culture biblique; on la gagnait parfois en Terre Sainte. Maladie honteuse tout de même, qui étalait les stigmates d'un contact impur, peut-être d'un plaisir coupable dont elle entretenait également le souvenir et le visible châtiment. Le clerc et le ribaud…pouvaient mêler tout naturellement dans leurs cris les plus sincères l'accent profane et le chrétien, le rire insolent de Golias et las cantiques de Job ou de David.[16]

Should we consider the possibility that the leprosy attributed is simply (despite Chatillon) too good to be true, befitting the poet's persona more than his historical reality?

The lives and manuscript notices give a number of different motivations for the composition of the *Alexandreis*, most focusing on archbishop William. The three lives printed by Colker, for example, say that Walter wrote the poem in honor of William, upon gaining a position in his household. The second and third say that he wrote it at William's request. A 13th century gloss provides two further motivations. First, Walter was jealous of William of Rheims's sexual relationship with a certain master Berter. When the archbishop sent Berter to speak on his behalf before the pope, Walter gave Berter a sealed envelope, instructing him not to open it until he was in the presence of the pope. The verses, which have the form of a letter of introduction, present Berter as a *contemptor mulierum*, who had often buggered his master.[17] William's anger at being so exposed was such that he dismissed Walter

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[14] "Donum dei non donatur, / nisi gratis conferatur; quod qui vendit vel mercatur, / lepra Syri vulneratur." See Brody, *Disease of the Soul*, pp. 128–129, for the association of leprosy and simony. For the many sins called "moral leprosy," see the index of C. Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 409–410, under "leprosy (sprititual)."

[15] Brody, *Disease of the Soul*, pp. 101–106. Leprosy was often thought to be transmitted sexually. See Erfurt, Amplon. 8° 90, "habuit concubinam que comulsa fiebat a milite quod admitteret leprosum et immediate Galtherum. Hoc factum est et ita factus est leprosus."

[16] Chatillon, "*Flagello sepe castigatus*," pp. 156–157.

[17] Here I follow the reading of C. Wollin, "Die Lebenswelt der mittelalterlichen Intellektuellen im Spiegel der laterinischen Epigrammatik," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 40 (2005), 225–261, who has *Berterum* in the place of *Galterum*.

from his company, and, according to the glossator, Walter wrote the poem in order to regain his love. This glossator asserts, in an interpretation not considered by any of the modern critics, that Walter compared William's virtues to Alexander's, and this was his reason for choosing Alexander as his hero. This salacious account may represent more the ideas that medieval readers had about how poets behaved, than any historical reality.

To the second motivation the glossator gives shorter shrift, it being far less interesting, if far more plausible: the reason for the composition of the *Alexandreis* was a competition with Matthew of Vendôme to see which was the better poet. Matthew's contribution was the *Thobias*. Whether we accept either of these explanations as having historical validity, they both reflect the atmosphere suggested by Walter's satirical lyrics, a context in which poetry could be used effectively as a weapon in a very tangible way.

II. Name and Dating

We are fortunate again to know the author's title for his epic, for he addresses his *Alexandreis* in his prologue: *O mea Alexandrei* (3). Walter's name for his poem signals his desire to claim a place for his epic along with those of the classical period, Vergil's *Aeneid* in particular.

The dating of the *Alexandreis* has vexed scholars in recent years. The *Alexandreis* gives us one firm *terminus post quem* for the publication of the poem: its dedication to William of Champagne after he obtained the see of Rheims in 1176 (*Alex.* 1.12–26). Walter says that he worked on it for five years and hesitated to publish it, even thinking of having it destroyed, for fear of hostile criticism (*Alex.*, prol., pp. 3–4). A firm *terminus ante quem* is provided by the allusions to and imitations of the *Alexandreis* in Johannes de Hauvilla's *Architrenius*, published in 1184–85.[18]

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[18] The traditional *terminus ante quem* is Alain of Lille's *Anticlaudianus*, with its explicit criticism of the *Alexandreis* at 1.166–70. The *Anticlaudianus* has been dated in relationship to the *Architrennius*, and their relative dating is not certain. On these issues, see Paul Gerhard Schmidt (ed.), *Architrenius* by Johannes de Hauvilla (Munich, 1974), pp. 84–86; W. Wetherbee (ed.), *Architrenius* by Johannes de Hauvilla, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. xxx–xxxii.

Up until 1990, when the debate was reopened by A.C. Dionisotti, the dates 1178–82 received general consensus.[19] Dionisotti pointed to an apparent allusion to the *Alexandreis* in Walter's prosimetrum, *In Domino confido* (*Moral.-sat.* 3), then believed to have been delivered at the University of Bologna sometime in 1174–76, and argued that the composition of the epic should be dated to earlier in the 1170s.[20] Giovanni Orlandi, however, argues that the Alexander referred to here is not the Great but the pope, Alexander III, to whom Walter dedicated the most ambitious of his early works, the life of Brendan. If we accept this possibility, then this disentangles the dating of the *Alexandreis* from the date of 1174, allowing us to return to a date in the later 1170s and early 1180s. This period fits more comfortably than the early 1170s for a number of reasons, not least because a period looking forward to (or back upon) the coronation of Philip II Augustus in 1179, the potential leader of a Crusade to the East, fits well with the content and themes of the *Alexandreis*. Arguments for a more precise dating of the *Alexandreis* have depended on individual scholars' interpretations of particular passages and their understanding of likely contemporary response to them.[21]

We should, perhaps, broaden our view. Philip Augustus is not the only figure of the period comparable to Alexander. Indeed, one gloss asserts that Walter chose Alexander as his story in order to comple-

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[19] See H. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied Walters von Châtillon* (Halle, 1905), pp. 4–13.

[20] Walter of Châtillon, *Moral-sat.* 3.8, "ille, quem Castellio latere non patitur, / in cuius opusculis Alexander legitur." See A.C. Dionisotti, "Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks," in P. Godwin and O. Murray (eds.), *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 73–96. C. Wollin, "Das Festgedicht Si de fonte bibere für den Glossator Martinus Gosia und seinen Sohn Wilhelm—ein unbekanntes Frühwerk Walters von Châtillon," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 119 (2002), 266–269, argues that In Domino confido should be redated to between 1175 and 1177.

[21] Orlandi, "San Brendano, Gualtiero di Châtillon e Bernhard Bischoff," pp. 434–440. See C. Wiener, *Proles vaesana Philippi totius malleus orbis: Die Alexandreis des Walter von Châtillon und ihre Neudeutung von Lucans Pharsalia im Sinne des typologischen Geschichtsverständnisses* (Munich, 2001), pp. 91–109, who links the Corinth and the coronation of Alexander to Rheims and the coronation of Philip. She settles for a date of *c.* 1180; N. Adkin, "The Proem of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*: Si…nostros uixisset in annos," *Medium Aevum* 60 (1991), 207–221; "The Date of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*," *Bolletino di Studi Latini* 22 (1992), 282–888; "Alan of Lille on Walter of Châtillon: *Anticlaudianus* 1.167–170," *Classica et mediaevalia* 43 (1992), 298–300; "The Date of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* Again," *Bolletino di Studi Latini* (1993), 359–364; and M.K. Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's* Alexandreis: *Epic and the Problem of Historical Understanding* (Brepols, 1998), pp. 183–189.

ment the dedicatee, William of Rheims, comparing his virtues (*probitates*) to Alexander's.[22] William was, of course, a great temporal lord as well as a spiritual one, whose later regency of France would allow his nephew to go on crusade.

Herkenrath points to *Moral-sat.* 15, an attack on the emperor Frederick and his anti-popes, where Walter compares Pope Alexander III explicitly to Alexander the Great:

> Alexander the Macedon, who tamed the world, defeated the prince of the Persians three times. Alexander, pope and leader of souls, has already conquered the emperor, the king of shadows, three times.[23]

While Claudia Wiener has shown that we cannot directly apply these verses to an interpretation of the epic, whose events do not resemble the conflict between emperor and pope, it is worth mentioning that the most pressing advocate for a crusade during the 1160s was Alexander's namesake and the dedicatee of Walter's *Vita S. Brendani*, Pope Alexander III.[24]

III. Manuscripts

It has become a commonplace to assert that Walter of Châtillon was a best seller. It certainly became a staple of the schoolrooms of the 13th and 14th centuries, and was read throughout Europe from Spain to Hungary, from Scandinavia to Sicily. In his edition, Colker lists 179 manuscripts, of which he uses six early ones as the basis for his edition.[25] This number, however, is not comprehensive: George Greenia has informed me that he has come across several other manuscripts in Spain.

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[22] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8358, fol. 91v, Colker (ed.), *Alexandreis*, p. xv.

[23] *Moral.-sat.* 15.18, "Alexander Macedo, domitor terrarum, / tribus vicit vicibus principem Persarum; /Alexander pontifex et dux animarum / iam ter vicit cesarem regem tenebrarum."

[24] E. Herkenrath, review of *Moralicsh-satirische Gedichte Walters von Châtillon*, by K. Strecker, in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 26 (1931), 849–870. On Alexander III, see M.W. Baldwin, *Alexander III and the Twelfth Century* (Glen Rock, NJ, 1968), pp. 163–166, and E. Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading 1095–1274* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 51–53.

[25] For Colker's complete list of the manuscripts, see his edition of the *Alexandreis*, pp. xxxiii–xxxviii.

IV. Modern Editions and Translations

The *Alexandreis* has been available in print since before 1500, having been printed at Rouen by Guillaume de Tailleur, perhaps in 1487. The Patrologia Latina reprinted the 17th century St. Gall edition of A. Gugger (1659) in 1855, an edition based on only two manuscripts, making the *Alexandreis* widely available for the first time. In 1863 F.A.W. Mueldener published a Teubner edition. He used only a handful of manuscripts and earlier printed editions, and his principles of editing are not clear. The first true serious edition of the *Alexandreis* had to wait until 1978 for Marvin Colker to publish his *Galteri de Castellione Alexandreis*. While not perfect, it is a vast improvement on what scholars had before, having taken into consideration 179 manuscripts, and its appearance has led to an upsurge in Galterian scholarship.[26]

Colker makes no attempt to establish a stemma, let alone the relationship between these six manuscripts, pointing to the use of the text in the schools, the extent of contamination among the manuscripts at a very early date, and the likelihood that more than one authorial version circulated. Rather he chose early manuscripts as the basis for his edition:

> Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek der Stadt Erfurt, Amplon. 8º 90, "apparently German," ca.1200.
> Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, lat. 98, in a 12th c. hand.
> Copenhagen, Bibliotheca Regia Hafniensis, Gl. Kgl. S. 2146, in two German hands, the first s. 12ᵉˣ, the second ca. 1200.
> Princeton, Princeton University, Garrett 118, an English hand, s. xiii.
> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. Auct. F.2.16 (SC 2077), in an English hand of ca.1200.
> Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque de Saint-Omer, 78, a French hand, 13th c.

This edition includes both an extensive *apparatus criticus* and an extensive *apparatus fontium*. One unusual and useful aspect of the edition is Colker's inclusion of a selection of glosses from four manuscripts, one from the 12th century with glosses in the main scribe's hands, two commentaries copied in the second half of the 13th century, and another with glosses from the 14th century. This allows us to consider

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[26] See F. Chatillon's extensive critiques of Colker's edition in "*Alexandréide Épluchée*," *Revue du Moyen Âge latin* 42 (1986), 15–24, and "Sur quelques éditions récentes de l'*Alexandréide*," *Revue du Moyen Âge latin* 43 (1987), 137–140.

both the growth of the commentary tradition and to gain some sense of how medieval readers approached the work.

The work has been translated into English three times, first by William Jolly (1968) as part of his doctoral thesis for Tulane University, first into prose by R. Telfryn Pritchard (1986) and then into verse by David Townsend (1996), and into German by Gerhard Streckenbach (1990). Jolly's translation includes some commentary.

V. Sources

Walter of Châtillon was both an extremely well educated reader and a reader actively engaged with a wide range of classical and medieval texts, both sacred and secular. Like the classical epics on which he models his poem, the *Alexandreis* is characterized by a high degree of intertextual allusion. The main source for the content of his epic is a classical history, Quintus Curtius Rufus's *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, probably written in the 1st or 2nd century.[27] Not only does Walter largely follow the narrative line of the history, but many portions of the *Alexandreis* repeat Curtius's wording almost verbatim, in so far as is possible in hexameter. The opening of Curtius's history does not survive and was already missing in the 12th century. Smits has shown that Walter's text of Curtius was one of those supplemented with material drawn from a variety of sources, including Justinus and the Latin Josephus, largely to fill in the early parts of Alexander's life.[28] Walter does not use the Alexander romance in any of its many manifestations, and so limits the "marvels" of the Alexander matter to those that suit the more sober tone of a Latin epic.

The major poetic model for the Alexander of the *Alexandreis* is Lucan's Julius Caesar, but a glance at Colker's *apparatus fontium* or Otto Zwierlein's *Das prägende Einfluss des antiken auf die "Alexandreis" des Walter von Châtillon* (1987) shows that the other classical epics, particularly Vergil's *Aeneid*, are also very present in the work.[29]

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[27] For a discussion of the evidence for the identity and dates of Curtius Rufus, see J. Yardley (trans.), *The History of Alexander*, (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp. 1–4.

[28] E.R. Smits (ed.), "A Medieval Supplement to the Beginning of Curtius Rufus' *Historia Alexandri*: An Edition with Introduction," *Viator* 18 (1987), 89–124.

[29] O. Zwierlein, *Das prägende Einfluss des antiken Epos af die "Alexandreis" des Walter von Châtillon*, (Mainz, 1987), pp. 8–20. See also H. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied Walters von Châtillon* (1905; repr. Hildesheim, 1969), pp. 14–75 and 76–101.

There is an interesting circularity here, for Lucan's Julius Caesar is based in large part on Curtius's Alexander.

Finally, there are some sections of the *Alexandreis* that are completely novel. Nature's appearance in book 10, for example, and her *katabasis* to Hell where she challenges Leviathan to do something about Alexander is nowhere else in the Alexander source material, although Walter's Nature clearly owes much to Bernard Silvester and Alain of Lille.

VI. Structure

Like Lucan's *Pharsalia*, the epic is divided into ten books. Walter adds to these a paratextual apparatus resembling that which would accompany classical epic in the 12th century. Thus, each of his books is prefaced by a ten-line hexameter poem summarizing the contents that follow.[30] Walter also includes a prologue, in which he raises the likelihood of criticism and follows the model of Jerome, who would respond to his critics in individual poems.

VII. Summary of the Text

After the dedication to William of Rheims, the *Alexandreis* begins with a lecture by Aristotle to Alexander, frustrated because his youth does not allow him to prevent Darius from oppressing the Greeks (for Walter, Alexander is a Greek). Aristotle's lecture is, in effect, a mirror of princes, although it puts more emphasis on war and military leadership than such a mirror typically does (49 of the 100 lines of the speech). The ethical content, in contrast, is unusually reduced (8 lines). Aristotle concludes, "if thus you live, your name will stretch forever through eternity" (1.182–83), an Achillean goal that will appeal, as we shall see, to Alexander, here compared explicitly to Achilles' son Neoptolemus (1.199). The coronation of Alexander at Corinth follows (his father's death mentioned only in passing), and his first act is a reorganization of the army. The Athenians and the Thebans withdraw

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[30] See B. Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classique latins aux xii et xiii siècles* (Paris, 1982) for the ancilllary material accompanying classical epics in this period. On Walter's use of form (which he calls *capitula*), see M. Lafferty, "Walter of Châtillon's *Capitula*: Aids to Reading?," forthcoming.

their support, but, while the Athenians negotiate and are allowed to devote themselves to study and renounce warfare, the Thebans incur Alexander's anger, and their city is destroyed. Alexander then prepares a fleet to pursue his early desire to challenge Darius' domination over the Greeks. Arriving in Asia, Alexander goes first to Troy, where he seeks out the grave of Achilles, whose achievements, he announces to his army, he will surpass: he lacks only a poet to ensure his immortal fame. He then explains that his confidence is due to a vision in which he saw a divine figure dressed in a barbarian and unreadable fashion, who promises to subject all nations to him, if, when he sees a man dressed this way, he spares that people. Walter then describes Alexander's treatment of Jerusalem, although this episode is chronologically out of place: the high priest comes out, prostrates himself to Alexander, and Alexander spares Jerusalem and makes offerings to the Temple.

Alexandreis 2 introduces Darius, who, hearing rumors of Alexander's arrival in Asia, sends Alexander reins, a ball, and money to cover the expenses of his journey, along with a letter telling him to go home and play like the child he is. Alexander re-interprets these gifts as an orb foretelling his conquest of the world, the reins with which he will check the Persians, and the ancient Persian treasures that will be his. Darius summons his troops, while Alexander enters Gordium and cuts the Gordian knot. Bathing while overheated in the cold Cignus, Alexander collapses, to the shock of the army, but Fortune with her wheel allows him to recover. While recovering, Alexander receives a letter accusing his doctor of having been bribed by Darius to poison him. Despite this warning, he drains the cup prescribed, the doctor is proven innocent, and the king immediately regains his health. The battle of Issus is the next major episode. It begins with the normal classical convention, in which each leader makes a speech of encouragement to his army. Darius' speech, however, is interrupted by a report that the Greeks were in flight, and Darius immediately sets out in pursuit only to find Alexander's army advancing against them. Alexander goes throughout the army encouraging his men, and only now do we hear his speech of exhortation. The book ends with an ecphrasis in which the shield of Darius is described, elaborately decorated with images of his ancestors and their accomplishments.

Alexandreis 3 begins with the actual battle, described in classical epic fashion as a series of combats between individual warriors. The battle ends with the flight of Darius and his army, while the Greek

army loots and rapes the Persian women. Alexander, however, protects Darius' household, his mother, wife, and son, an act displaying his virtue. The narrator at this point looks ahead to the time when, corrupted by good Fortune, Alexander will turn from clemency to his enemies to treating his friends like enemies. Alexander's siege of Tyre follows, and since the Tyrians had killed the envoys sent to offer peace, Alexander ordered a brutal sack of the city. The next major episode is the journey to the sanctuary of Jupiter Amon in the desert of Libya, where Alexander consults the oracle (the narrator does not give the response). In the meantime, Darius summons the whole eastern world to join its diverse forces against Alexander. An ill omen, a blood-red moon, moves Alexander's troops to mutiny for the first time. Alexander summons seers and astrologers to explain to the army the true meaning for this omen, that it foretells the destruction of the Persians.

Alexandreis 4 begins with the death of Stateira, Darius' wife, from sorrow and the strain of travel. Alexander had treated her with respect, wanting a reputation for defending her chastity. Darius receives the news of her death with great grief, assuming that she had killed herself lest she be raped by Alexander. When he learns, however, that not only had Alexander treated her well, but had buried her befitting her rank, he gives thanks for an enemy like Alexander, a worthy successor to rule Asia. Darius then attempts to negotiate peace, sending a legation to offer his daughter's hand, a large part of Asia as dowry, and his son as hostage. Alexander calls a council. Parmenion recommends acceptance and return to Greece, a course of safety that Alexander rejects. The extensive passage that follows is an ecphrasis of Stateira's tomb, the product of a Hebrew sculptor, Apelles, decorated with images from the Hebrew scriptures from Genesis to the prophets. Alexander prepares to renew battle against Darius and takes council. Parmenion recommends a night attack to take the enemy by surprise, a proposal accepted by most, but not by Alexander, who sees such a procedure as ignominious. When Alexander cannot sleep, Victory (whose palace receives an ecphrasis), sends Sleep to Alexander, who sleeps in, much to the amazement of the soldiers, and claims that he had no cares to keep him awake. An epic topos follows: Alexander arms himself, and then, following a convention of classical history, addresses his men at length, inviting them to take himself as an exemplum of military prowess and courage.

The battle of Arbela occupies much of *Alexandreis* 5, which begins by linking Alexander to the he-goat of the Book of Daniel. The battle

begins with a series of individual combats between Alexander and individual warriors, among them Geon, a boastful descendent of the giants, who is appropriately dispatched by a spear through his tongue. Other soldiers receive their own *aristeiai*, including Clitus and Nicanor, one of Parmenion's sons, who dies fighting valiantly. Darius, an increasingly sympathetic figure, loses hope and flees. The book concludes with Alexander's triumphal entry into Babylon, and the narrator's wish that God grant the French people a king as great as Alexander, who could bring the entire world into the Catholic faith.

Alexandreis 6 returns to Daniel 8, again linking Alexander to the he-goat of Daniel 8. The narrator marks his capture of Babylon as the turning point in Alexander's character: he had begun as a clement conqueror and just ruler, but Babylon's wealth and luxury instigate his corruption. The vigorous reorganization of his army and his clemency to Susa that follow, however, belie these words. Alexander then sets out to track down Darius, capturing and brutally looting Persepolis along the way. Alexander's anger is aroused by the arrival of 3000 Macedonian captives, who had been mutilated and branded by the captors. Alexander offers them return home, and a debate among the *mutilati* ensues: which is the lesser evil, to return home to meet the shock and pity of their families or to remain in unknown places where their wretchedness is already known and accepted. We then return to Darius, whose attempts to marshal his men's resolve fail. Bessus and Narbazanes had plotted to betray Darius, to capture him to gain Alexander's favor, or, if they should succeed in evading Alexander's armies, to kill Darius and to rule in his place. Narbazanes urges Darius to abdicate his throne in favor of Bessus, who would restore it to Darius (he says) when possible. Darius recognizes treachery but is unable to combat it. The next day the traitors pretend repentance and beg for mercy. Patron, the loyal leader of Darius' Greek men, warns Darius in private that Narbazanes and Bessus are still plotting against him, and offers the Greeks as his body guard. Darius, however, sees this as a failure of loyalty to his own countrymen, and chooses rather to face death.

Alexandreis 7 focuses on Darius' death. Prevented from committing suicide, he is seized by the traitors and put in chains. Alexander, in pursuit, hears of Darius' capture, is horrified and determines to save his life. Bessus and Narbazanes stab the uncooperative king, and, leaving him for dead, flee in different directions. After defeating the remnants of the Persian army, Alexander searches for Darius in vain.

Polystratus, a Macedonian soldier, comes upon him dying. Darius sends him to Alexander with a message asking for vengeance upon the traitors and an honorable burial. Alexander is his rightful successor. Alexander commissions a tomb for Darius from Apelles, and an elaborate description of the tomb follows. The inscription alludes to Daniel 8, "here is placed the figurative ram, whose two horns Alexander, the whole world's hammer, crushed." Rumor then spreads through the joyous army that Alexander will now return home. Alexander, however, persuades his soldiers that they must avenge Darius in order to gain the glory owed them.

Alexandreis 8 begins with Alexander's encounter with the queen of the Amazons, who has sought out Alexander to be the father of her child. Bessus claims the throne of Persia, summons his army, and prepares to fight. Alexander's army, however, is weighed down by their spoils and Alexander, angry, has them piled together and set on fire. Philotas, the son of Parmenion, Alexander's most trusted advisor, "without whom Alexander did nothing worthy of song," is charged with treason for having concealed a plot to kill the king. Much of the book is devoted to trial of Philotas. Having summoned the whole army, Alexander speaks in anger of Philotas's guilt and the need for punishment to ensure Alexander's personal safety. Having made the desired outcome known, he then orders Philotas to be judged in his absence. Philotas pleads innocence and describes the long and difficult service of his family to Alexander. Alexander then has Philotas tortured until he reveals the murder plot. The narrator leaves open the question whether his confession is genuine or forced. Alexander then captures Bessus and tortures him to death, before moving against Scythia. A Scythian legate accuses Alexander of an insatiable desire that will never be sated, contrasting him with the Scythians themselves, who live content with what little nature gives them. He concludes by warning Alexander that a conquered people will never be a reliable ally. Alexander ignores this warning and subdues the Scythians.

In Alexandreis 9, Alexander then moves against the Indians. Many cities, hearing of Alexander's conquest, surrender of their own accord. Porus, who towers in body and wisdom over the other Indians, forms the resistance. Two of the Greek soldiers, lovers, Nicanor and Symmachus, decide to pursue immortal glory by swimming across the river and leading a charge against the enemy. Overwhelmed by the superior force of the Indians, they are quickly killed, pierced by a single spear. When Porus is finally defeated, Alexander asks Porus what madness

led him to oppose him. Porus answers that he believed himself able to withstand Alexander, an error he now acknowledges. He offers himself as an *exemplum* to Alexander of the consequences of pride, urging him to stop while he is ahead. Surprised by Porus's courage, Alexander grants him a larger realm than he had before and treats him as a friend. Alexander continues subjecting peoples left and right, including the Sudracae, one of the few peoples to resist him. During the siege on their city, Alexander leaps into the city alone. The narrator argues that this act was both brave and rash, but that Fortune still protected Alexander. Despite her aid, he is wounded and near death when his men finally break into the city and save him. The army's joy at the news that Alexander has survived is without measure, since they believe their own lives to be wholly dependent on his. Within a few days, Alexander prepares to invade the people of the Ocean. Rumor spreads the news, and the Greek soldiers beg Alexander to reconsider, to make the safety of his men his priority over continued conquest. Alexander insists however, that he is close to having conquered the entire world (which is, in fact, too small to satisfy his desire). He intends, indeed, to cross the Ocean to the Antipodes and to conquer the unknown peoples that "Nature has set apart from the known world." Inspired by his speech, the book ends with the soldiers' cheers.

At the beginning of *Alexandreis* 10, his ships set sail in search of the peoples of the Ocean. This is the last straw for Nature. She sets aside her works of creation and enters Hell, where she urges Leviathan to stop Alexander, whose quest will ultimately lead him to besiege Hell itself. Leviathan recalls a prophecy about a "New Man" and applies it to Alexander. In consequence, he decides to destroy him before he can attack Hell, and sends *Proditio* to Antipater, who will poison the king. In the meantime, Alexander, who had already "broken the Ocean," now prepares to conquer the rest of Africa and then Europe, ending with Rome itself. The narrator now apostrophizes Alexander as a madman whose ambitions will end with treachery and death. He blames Fortune for abandoning her former darling. Rumor and Fortune nevertheless ensure Alexander's supremacy over the *orbis terrarum*, for all the lands of Africa and Europe, having heard of Asia's conquest, acknowledge Alexander's rule and send him tribute. Alexander returns to Babylon, where the world's tribute shows him to be the "king of kings." Alexander is still not content, when he is suddenly struck with paralysis. Alexander, realizing that he is dying, announces that he is being summoned to Olympus, where he will share Jupiter's throne and

help him control the rebellious giants. A brief *exemplum* follows his death: a five-foot home of marble suffices to contain the man for whom the whole world was not enough. The book ends, rather abruptly, with an address to William of Rheims, asking that he accept this poem. Unlike Alexander, Walter (and William) will live on even after death through the glory of his poem.

VIII. Narrative Techniques and Style

The *Alexandreis* is a strongly classicizing Latin epic in form. It is written in dactylic hexameters, rather than in the elegiac couplets that were the fashionable choice for long narrative poems, and it avoids rhyme, another popular element in contemporary narrative poetry, but uses elision, which most Latin poetry of the period avoided. In general, Walter follows the prosody of Ovid and the poets of the Silver Age rather than that of Vergil.[31]

The epics of Homer and Vergil are characterized by omniscient third person narrators who rarely, outside of the opening invocations, call attention to themselves. Speeches in their epics are usually kept short, rarely exceeding twenty lines (with the exception of flashback in the voice of Odysseus or Aeneas, in which their voices are not perceptibly different from that of the narrator). The narrator of the *Alexandreis* is far more like that of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. He constantly interrupts his narrative to praise or blame, to address the characters or the readers, and to interpret (not consistently) the events unfolding in the epic. The epic, in consequence, has a very rhetorical feeling. This rhetorical aspect shows up in other ways as well: lengthy speeches and even debates are found throughout the epic from Aristotle's lesson on kingship at the beginning of *Alexandreis* 1 to Alexander's dying speech in *Alexandreis* 12. Although Lucan's rhetorical *Pharsalia* no doubt has a part in influencing this stylistic choice, Walter's major source, Curtius's history played the decisive role: many of the speeches and debates of the *Alexandreis* are based directly on their counterparts

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[31] On meter, see J. Hellegouarch, "Gautier de Châtillon, poète épique dans l'*Alexandréide*: Quelques observations," in H. Roussel and F. Suard (eds.), *Alain de Lille, Gautier de Châtillon, Jakemart Giélée et leur temps*, (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1980), pp. 229–248, and F. Pejenaute Rubio, "Observaciones a la fijación de la cesura pentemímera en el hexámetro latino," *Archivum* 48–49 (1998–99), 417–443.

there, including the lengthy speeches of the commanders before the major battles, the debate over the fate of the mutilated men in *Alex.* 6, the trial of Philotas with its speeches by Alexander and Philotas, and the speech of the Scythian elder at its end. Other speeches, such as the one with which Nature persuades Leviathan to take action against Alexander (*Alex.* 10.82–104), are Walter's own creations.

Walter draws on the full range of stylistic features typical of the classical epic, but often alters them to reflect contemporary taste and concern. For example, one of his ecphrases, the description of Darius' shield (*Alex.* 2.496–439) has its clear precedent in the shields of Achilles and of Aeneas; its content, however, is largely biblical. The two tomb ecphrases, that of Stateira (4.176–274) and that of Darius himself (*Alex.* 7.380–97) have no parallel in classical epic. They have, however, many parallels in 12th-century French romance, and the fantastical architecture of Darius' tomb, in which the relationship between the various parts described is very difficult to visualize, has much in common with the typically fantastical architecture of the romance tombs.[32] Stateira's tomb, which draws on the Scriptures to display the history of the Hebrews from the creation through the prophets, evokes the kind of carving that one might find in a medieval cathedral. The individual scenes are arranged in a series of *ordines*, rows, one placed above another, and the brief descriptions recall the typical iconography of medieval art: thus, the description of the exile of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

> *Exclusis patribus primaque a matre receptis,*
> *ignea custodit uirgulti romphea limen.* (*Alex.* 4.192–93)
> Our ancestors shut out [from paradise] and welcomed by their first
>   mother [earth],
> a fiery sword guards the entrance [against them].

Though typically terse, these words evoke the common image of Adam and Eve, naked but covering their genitals, being driven from Paradise by an angel with a flaming sword. This aesthetic, however, is quite different from the traditional aesthetic in ecphrasis, which normally strives to create a verbal painting as vividly visual as possible. Here, the

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[32] Examples include the tomb of Blancheflor, *Le conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, J.-L. Leclanche (ed.), Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 105 (Paris 1980), lines 553–566, and the tombs of Pallas and Camille in the *Eneas*, J.J. Salverda de Grave (ed.), 2 vols. (Paris, 1925–29), lines 6409–6528 and 7531–7724.

Alexandreis relies on the readers' knowledge of the text to which he alludes and on medieval iconography to evoke a visual image of something *not* described at length. Indeed, the entire ecphrasis, like this brief passage, is an exercise in almost riddling intertextual allusion and *abbreviatio*.[33]

Another feature of the classical epic, the extended simile, is often used throughout the *Alexandreis.* Although many of these are very similar in form and function to classical similes (comparing warriors to animals or natural phenomena), others are quite surprising in their content. For example, at *Alex.* 3.431–45, Alexander is amazed at the resurgence of the Persian army:

> *Non secus Antheum Lybicis Ioue natus harenis*
> *Post lapsum stupuit maiorem surgere donec*
> *Sublatum rapiens 'uana spe duceris,' inquit,*
> *'Huc, Anthee, cades' uel cum tot cede suorum*
> *Fecundam capitum domuit Tyrintius Ydram.*

> Not otherwise was [Hercules] the son of Jove amazed on the Libyan sands at Antaeus rising after his fall, greater still, until he said, "you are drawn here by a false hope—you will fall here, Antaeus." Or when Hercules tamed the fertile Hydra by the slaughter of so many of her heads.

This simile (or rather double simile) is not just a comparison to a mythological figure: it is a mini-narrative, complete with dialogue. I can think of nothing comparable in classical epic. Although the narrative of Antaeus is not complete, by putting together the episode of Antaeus with that of the Hydra, Walter in effect finishes the story, moving from a moment in which Hercules is challenged, and momentarily fears defeat, to a moment of triumphal victory, thus looking forward to Alexander's defeat of the Persian army.

Another unusual simile is found in the trial of Philotas at *Alex.* 8.168–171, where Philotas, a prisoner in filthy clothing with bound hands and a mournful face, is compared to Burkard of Flanders:

> In this guise once Flanders saw Burkard, paying the deserved penalties for having killed a count, whom the punishing wheel tortured for so great a crime and broke all of his limbs, when Louis took vengeance.[34]

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[33] See D. Townsend, "'Michi barbaries incognita linguae': Other Voices and Other Visions in Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*," *Allegorica* 13 (1992), 21–37.

[34] "Hoc habitu quondam Burchardum Flandria uidit / Soluentem meritas occiso consule penas, / Quem rota penalis tanto pro crimine torsit / Totaque confregit Ludewico uindice membra."

Charles the Count of Flanders was killed in 1127 by his vassals "in a holy place, and in holy prayer, and in holy piety of spirit, and in the holy time of Lent, and in the holy act of almsgiving, and before the sacred altar and the sacred relics of the saints," an event recorded by Galbert of Bruges.[35] Louis VI avenged his death. This event had wide ramifications for Flanders and western Europe, but Walter is chiefly interested in the punishment of the guilty assassin. There are a number of interesting things about this simile, the first being the anachronism. Anachronism is, of course, not absent in classical epic, but it tends to be carefully placed in a context such as prophecies, Aeneas's shield or Anchises's underworld speech that ease the departure from the narrative time of the epic into the future. It is frequent even in the main narrative in the *Alexandreis*, and often serves to remind the readers of a specifically Christian future (see, for example, Paul's appearance in the description of Corinth, *Alex.* 1.205–209). The second is the striking lack of parallelism between this simile and the events it is supposed to illuminate. We are not presented with Burkard as prisoner awaiting trial, as Philotas is here, but with the torture of the condemned prisoner. It does, indeed, anticipate Philotas's ultimate fate, for like Burkard, he will suffer torture and death. The surrounding narrative, however, depicts a rather different situation: Philotas has not been accused of assassinating his ruler (who is very much alive), but of failing to reveal the plot once he became cognizant of it. Moreover, his actual culpability is never made clear, while Alexander's angry railroading of the trial process is. Indeed, this is one of the few places in the *Alexandreis* where Alexander is in clear violation of Aristotle's recommendations: the last injunction in his speech at *Alex.* 1.181–82, is to put off vengeance until anger passes, nor to hold onto hatred after the punishment. Even at the very end of the episode, the narrator continues to express his doubts. Philotas confesses under torture, but the narrator comments that it is doubtful whether he confessed to the crime in order to put an end to his pain. The narrator's final comments draw attention not to Philotas's guilt but to the enormous

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[35] Galbert of Bruges, *Histoire du meurtre de Charles le Bon comte de Flandre (1127–1128) par Galbert de Bruges*, ed. H. Pirenne (Paris, 1891), as cited by J.B. Ross, "Rise and Fall of a Twelfth-Century Clan: The Erembalds and the Murder of Count Charles of Flanders, 1127–28," *Speculum* 34 (1959), 637. The other substantial account is Walter of Therouanne, *Vita Karoli comitis Flandriae*, R. Köpke (ed.), MGH.SS 12:537–561.

change in his fortune, and Philotas becomes an *exemplum* illustrating
Fortune's fickleness.

The divine apparatus of the *Alexandreis* is again like and unlike that
of classical epic. The classical gods continue to mark the passing of time:
Phoebus rises and sets with epic regularity, his demeanor often estab-
lishing the emotional tenor of what follows (see, e.g. *Alex.* 4.301–305).
Not surprisingly, the gods of war are prominent as well. While these
are often clearly personifications (Furor, Ira), they sometimes take
direct action: Victory leaves her palace, populated by its own set of
allegorical personifications in another ecphrasis modeled on Ovid's
House of Fame (*Met.* 12.39–63), to send Sleep to ensure that Alexan-
der gets enough sleep before the battle of Arbela (*Alex.* 4.401–444). In
the battle itself Mars sends Bellona to order Alexander to leave Darius
to his fate and to take his help where it is needed against Mazaeus, a
command which Alexander defies, both in words (*Alex.* 5.241–55) and
in action (*Alex.* 5.307–318).

As had Lucan's Julius Caesar, Alexander devotes his attention to the
goddess Fortune. She even makes an appearance in the epic. When
Alexander's men rebuke her for allowing Alexander to die from the
shock of the chill of the Cignis, Fortune, blindfolded and worn out
from turning her wheel, rises to the occasion and saves Alexander,
doing, as usual, the unexpected (*Alex.* 2.186–203). The figure of For-
tune, however, moves us towards a larger Christian framework. In the
Alexandreis, Fortune and Fate have much the same role that they do
in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and are subsumed into Divine
Providence. This Christian framework, though present throughout the
poem, is most clearly manifest at the beginning and end of the epic, at
the end of *Alex.* 1, when Alexander recounts his encounter with God
(to him, a god), and at the end when Natura, as in Alain of Lille's *De
planctu Naturae*, a force under God's direction, arouses Leviathan to
prevent Alexander's efforts to move beyond the human world. Alex-
ander dies, but only after accomplishing the role set out for him in the
Divine Economy.

The humor of the past is often elusive, particularly when we are
dealing with a highly conventionalized genre like classicizing epic. As
any reader of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* knows, epic language and con-
vention easily move from seriousness into parody, even burlesque.
Like Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Walter's *Alexandreis* often seems poised on the
edge between "straight" epic and excess, between "high" language and
hyperbole. Certainly there are moments in which we might be meant

to smile, when, for example, the Amazon Talestris, who has come to have Alexander's baby, runs her eye over the king and is surprised that Alexander's puny stature does not match his fame. The narrator chalks her surprise up to her barbarian simplicity, which does not recognize that a great soul may be found in a body of moderate size. This passage looks ahead, of course, to the final moments of the poem, when the narrator describes how the man not content with the world is now confined in a five-foot tomb. Still, whether we laugh with Talestris or, like the narrator, at her, this scene offers a rare light moment.[36]

Are we to laugh, however, when Leviathan misreads the prophecy of the New Man and mistakes Alexander for Christ? I find this moment funny, even as I see it as one of the most important in the epic. Should we push further with Dennis Kratz and see the entire *Alexandreis* as a mocking attack on Alexander?[37]

I have postponed to this point a discussion of Alexander's character because it has been the most strongly debated part of the poem, and most scholars have seen this issue as being central to our understanding of the whole poem. Indeed, the *Alexandreis* regularly invites our reading of Alexander and other characters in the poem as *exempla*, and medieval *exempla* were normally used to illustrate a moral. Not surprisingly, then, much of the scholarly debate on the poem has largely focused on the *Alexandreis* as an exemplary tale writ large. For some critics, Walter's Alexander is God's tool and a positive model for the crusading king, perhaps specifically Philip II Augustus.[38] Dennis Kratz, the author of the first English monograph on the *Alexandreis, Mocking Epic*, challenged this reading, arguing rather that the *Alexandreis* is an attack against the pagan king. Similarly Christine Ratkowitsch and Glynn Meter see Alexander as a warning *exemplum* against *hybris*.[39]

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[36] See D. Townsend, "Sex and the Single Amazon in Twelfth-Century Latin Epic," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 64 (1995), 255–273.

[37] D. Kratz, *Mocking Epic: Waltharius, Alexandreis, and the Problem of Christian Heroism*, (Madrid, 1980).

[38] H. Harich, *Alexander Epicus: Studien zur Alexandreis Walter von Châtillon*. (Dissertationen der Karl-Franzens-Universitäts Graz) 72 (Graz, 1987).

[39] See also J.-Y Tilliette, "L'Alexandréide de Gautier de Châtillon: Enéide médiévale ou 'Virgil travesti'?" in L. Harf-Lancner, C. Kappler and F. Suard (eds.), *Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales: actes du colloque de Paris, 27–29 novembre 1999 [i.e. 1997]*, (Paris, 1999), pp. 275–288. See C. Ratkowitsch, *Descriptio Picturae: Die literarische Funktion der Beschreibung von Kunstwerken in der lateinischen Grossdichtung des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1991), pp. 132–135; and Wiener, *Proles vaesana Philippi*, pp. 9–18, for summaries of the varying positions.

Despite its repeated appeal to the exemplary, the *Alexandreis* is a full-scale epic, not an *exemplum*, and its presentation of Alexander is correspondingly more complex. Recent treatments of the *Alexandreis* have attempted to move beyond a black-and-white Alexander to a more complex understanding of the poem. Maura Lafferty (1998) has seen the *Alexandreis* as a nuanced response to classical antiquity and an effort to think through the different ways offered by ancient literature, the Hebrew Scriptures, and Christian universal history for understanding the past. She argues that the poem's response to Alexander is as complex as 12th-century classical humanism, pointing to the poem's inconsistency in its characterization of the hero. Alexander represents for the humanist Walter a highpoint in human development, achieved in large part through the love of learning promoted by classical antiquity as represented by the figure of Aristotle. At the same time, Alexander, like the Roman emperors (and Walter's contemporaries, Frederick Barbarossa and Henry II Plantagenet), put his learning and greatness to the wrong ends, striving for the worldly power and dominion that would inevitably lead to his own destruction. Alexander is the greatest possible human being, with great virtues and great vices, yet he remains a human being and he is ultimately defined by the greatest of human limitations, his subjugation to death. Although he performs the task assigned him by the Divine Economy, achieving the transition from the Persian to the Greek empire, nevertheless, limited by the way that he understands his world and his place in history, he has no hope of salvation.[40]

Claudia Stiener (2002) strives to open up our understanding of the epic by reading it in the light of medieval exegetical theory, according to the senses of the scripture. She argues that on the historical level Walter strove to keep as close to his historical sources as possible, avoiding the accretions of the Alexander romance, in order to show

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[40] Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's* Alexandreis. See also M. Pérez, "Alexandre le Grand dans l'Alexandréide," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* 6 (1986), 45–76; N. Wright, "'Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt': Virgil and Twelfth-Century Epic?" *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 24 (2001), 11–29; and E. Fenzi, "Seneca e Dante: Da Alessandro Magno a Ulisse," in *Studi sul canone letterario del trecento per Michelangelo Picone*, J. Bartuschat and L. Rossi (eds.), (Ravenna, 2003), pp. 67–78, who have all emphasized the ambivalence of the epic towards Alexander. For Walter's humanism, see V. Epp, "Sicht der Antike und Gegenwartsbewußtsein in der mittellateinischen Dichtung des 11./12. Jahrhunderts," in *Hochmittelalterliches Geschichtsbewußtsein im Spiegel nichthistoriographischer Quellen*, H.-W. Goetz (ed.), (Berlin, 1998), pp. 295–316.

that the *veritas* of ancient history is in harmony with *Heilsgeschichte*. According to the *sensus moralis*, Walter offers the various characters and their behavior to the judgment of his readers. Before his death in book 6, Darius can clearly be read as a model king. Alexander's character is more complex; however, Wiener argues that Walter has consistently created a better Alexander than that of his sources. Walter's main interest in Alexander, however, is not so much his character but his role in the Divine Economy. In the allegorical sense, Alexander must be read primarily as the tool by which God accomplishes the transition from the Persian empire to that of the Greeks, in the light of the Book of Daniel, to which the *Alexandreis* repeatedly alludes. Typologically, Alexander is the type *sub lege* of the Crusader king so that Philip Augustus may become the type *sub gratia*.

In her 2005 dissertation Sylvia Parsons explores the *Alexandreis* both in view of modern critical theory on the body and as a contribution to that theory in its own right. The *Alexandreis*, Parsons argues, shows us Alexander's struggle for narrative control over his life, a life that he self-consciously strives to shape as an epic. At the same time, however, Walter's narrative consistently "looks through, at, and around Alexander's own narcissistic narrative program."[41] The limitations of Alexander's body repeatedly thwart his abilities to construct himself as an epic hero. Alexander comes to an ignominious end and burial in a conspicuously inconspicuous tomb, by comparison to those of Stateira and Darius. The *Alexandreis* itself, in contrast, provides Alexander with a permanent verbal structure, the immortality that his body failed to achieve.

Clearly Galterian studies have taken on steam since the publication of Colker's edition. There is, I believe, much more to be done. We are only beginning to understand the complexity of the *Alexandreis* as a sophisticated epic combining the aesthetics and concerns of the classical world and the Middle Ages. A major desideratum is a commentary on the epic, or at least on its most important books. Such a commentary would make the epic accessible not only to experts in the field, but also to advanced students and scholars in other areas. An expanded readership of the *Alexandreis* in the original can only lead to greater understanding and appreciation.

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[41] S. Parsons, *The Representation of the Body in Twelfth-Century Latin Epic: The* Alexandreis *of Walter of Châtillon and the Ylias of Joseph of Exeter* (Thesis [PhD]: University of Toronto, 2005), p. 18.

CHAPTER NINE

MEDIEVAL FRENCH ALEXANDER ROMANCES

Laurence Harf-Lancner*

I. Le *Roman d'Alexandre* and the Birth of the Romance

The dawn of the 12th century saw the development of the knightly class and, at the same time, a literature in the vernacular destined for lay people, who did not know Latin. This literature found its subject matter in the warrior and Christian legends from the beginnings of medieval society (the *chansons de geste*), but also in the *mise en roman*, that is to say the translation into French of the texts of Latin Antiquity: it is the birth of the romance genre.[1] Around 1150, the author of the *Roman de Thèbes* recounted in octosyllabic couplets, following the *Thebaid* of Statius, the history of the two sons of Oedipus, a history reserved for clerics and knights, who alone were worthy of hearing it. It is one of the first French romances (*romans*), in the medieval sense of the term (text translated from Latin into French), but also in the modern sense, because it joins arms and love.[2] Around 1160, the *Roman d'Enéas* translated Virgil's *Aeneid* and around 1165, Benedict of Sainte-Maure based his *Roman de Troie* on the authority of two text-sources, the *De excidio Trojae* of Darius the Phrygian and the *Ephemeris belli Trojani* of Dictys.[3] The French romance was born of this practice of *translatio*, of the adaptation of Latin texts into a Romance tongue. The 12th-century writing of the *Roman d'Alexandre*'s vast assemblage in verse, which has as its principal sources Julius Valerius and his *Epitome*, formed part of this literary movement, but at the same time distinguished itself by its profound originality.

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* Translated by Martha Krieg.
[1] See A. Petit, *Naissances du roman*, (Paris, 1985); F. Mora, *Les romans antiques du XIIᵉ siècle et leur postérité*, Paris, 2008.
[2] *Le Roman de Thèbes*, A. Petit (ed.), (Paris, 2008; in press). Bilingual edition.
[3] *Le Roman d'Enéas*, A. Petit (ed.), (Paris, 1997), bilingual edition; Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, E. Baumgartner et F. Vielliard (eds.), (Paris, 1998), bilingual edition.

The Texts of the Romance of Alexander

The first layer consists of a fragment of 105 octosyllables in mono-rhymed *laisses*, written in a dialect of the south of France during the first third of the 12th century by Albéric of Pisançon. Well before the *Roman de Thèbes*, medieval narrative *en roman* was attached to a different type of hero: putting aside the saint or the knight who put his prowess at the service of Christianity (as Roland did), it chose a pagan hero from the ancient world. One can get an idea of the text from the German adaptation of it done by Lamprecht around 1155 in his *Alexanderlied*.[4] The extant fragment does not transmit more than the birth and education of Alexander. Lamprecht's narrative stopped at the victory of Granica and the preparations of Darius for his revenge. This first version of the romance thus limited itself to the infancy of the hero. After a prologue, which placed Antiquity among the ranks of the noblest subjects and celebrated the immortal glory of the greatest of its kings (Alexander), Albéric related the first years of the hero. The principal themes of the French romance were announced beginning with this first portrayal: the astonishing superiority of Alexander in the domains of prowess and learnedness over all kings of the past and those to come, his predestination to a super-human glory, signified from his birth by supernatural signs. But there appeared also the stain that marked the medieval destiny of the Macedonian and which the writers of romances tried vainly to efface: the accusation of bastardy: "Certain makers of tales claimed that Alexander was the son of a sorcerer. They lied, the wicked calumniators."[5] The descent from the god Amon, on which Alexander had built his myth when he was alive, and from Nectanabus, the last of the pharaohs in the Alexandrian legend of which the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (*PC*) is an echo, served only to enhance the glory of the hero in the ancient world, attaching to him that supernatural origin which characterized, in all mythologies, the birth of the hero. But in the medieval imagination, the royal figure could not be soiled by the suspicion of bastardy. Albéric only mentioned the legend in order to immediately relegate it among the lies of the *losengetours*,

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[4] The reader will find the presentation, text and translation of that fragment, with the translation of the *Alexanderlied,* in the third volume of the *Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre* (*MFRA*), A. Foulet (ed.), (Princeton, 1949), pp. 2–8 and 37–60.

[5] Albéric, v. 27–32, *MFRA* 3, pp. 38–39.

the *losengiers* of lyric poetry, the calumniators who were enemies of courtesy, who attacked the honor of women.

Around 1160, a Poitevin cleric adapted Albéric's work in decasyllabic *laisses*. Once again, this was a book about the infancy of Alexander, of which only the beginning has been preserved, up to the defeat and death of king Nicholas of Caesarea. It survived in two manuscripts, the Arsenal manuscript (Arsenal 3472, *A* in Paul Meyer's classification), and the Venice manuscript (Museo civico, VI, 665, *B* in the same classification), which juxtaposed a first part of the narrative in decasyllables, and the rest of the romance in dodecasyllables by Alexandre de Paris.[6] The 800 verses preserved relate three days in the life of the Macedonian: the first day, the training of Bucephalus, the fabulous horse who killed all men who dared approach him until his meeting with Alexander, in whom he spontaneously recognized his master; the magnificent dubbing which sealed the metamorphosis of the ancient hero into the perfect knight, and the challenges to Darius and to Nicholas. Already the hero's insatiable thirst for conquest manifested itself, when Alexander refused the title of king, which he had not yet merited: "Lord barons, why do you call me king, when I do not possess the length of my finger of land? But I will possess lands, I am sure, if God protects the young folks who surround me!"[7] The second day, Alexander met Samson, Darius's rebellious nephew, who declared himself his vassal; finally the third day was marked by the victory over Nicholas, in single combat, and the taking of Caesarea.

In the 1170s, three new French poems in dodecasyllables appeared. We no longer have them in their original form. The first, due to a certain Eustache, is *Le Fuerre de Gadres (The Raid on Gaza)*. During the siege of Tyre, Alexander sent a troop of seven hundred knights to make a raid in the valley of Josaphat, under the command of Emenidus, one of the twelve peers. The raiders were attacked by Duke Bétis of Gaza and thirty thousand men. Emenidus wanted to ask Alexander for help, but one after the other, the peers refused to leave the field of battle. The Greeks were in a bad position. Aridès at last bore the message to Alexander, who rushed to the aid of his men. This recitation constructed on the opposition of *fortitudo* and *sapientia* (bravery and wisdom) has a resolutely epic tonality. At the same time, Lambert le

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6 Manuscrits A and B (Arsenal et Venise) are edited in *MFRA,* vol. 1.
7 *Alexandre décasyllabique*, v.318–321, *MFRA* 3, p. 78.

Tort of Châteaudun prolonged the history of Alexander beyond his struggle against Darius. From the *Epitome* of Julius Valerius and from the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, he recounted the expedition in India against King Porus, the crossing of the deserts, and the discovery of the marvels of the Orient. Finally a third independent poem reported the death of Alexander, traitorously poisoned, the laments pronounced over his body, and his funeral rites. Very quickly these texts were gathered and joined to the stories of the infancy of Alexander to constitute a complete biography of the hero.

It was left to Alexandre de Paris, born at Bernay in Normandy, to give a true unity to all these disparate stories, shortly after 1180, by compiling and rewriting the earlier texts to create a long romance of 16,000 verses in *laisses* of monorhymed alexandrines, which constituted the Vulgate of the *Roman d'Alexandre*.[8] The author of this patchwork did not seek to hide the seams of the narrative fabric: I want to renew for you the history of Alexander…I want to tell you this history of Alexander in verse and in French, so that lay people may benefit from it.[9] The first two *laisses* juxtapose the commonplaces characteristic of the prologues of *chansons de geste* and of the verse romances of the 12th century; it is a vindication of the didactic value of the work, of its striking superiority over that of the poets who (poorly) treated the same subject. Like Benedict of Sainte-Maure in the long prologue to the *Roman de Troie*, the author posed as the translator of a Latin text, which he "put into Romance" and in verse to make it available to lay people who did not know Latin. The version that he produced around the year 1180 rested on the gathering of earlier narratives, and their insertion in an overall plan that evoked the successive stages of the biography of the hero: infancy–the conquest of the Persian empire–the victory over Porus and the discovery of the wonders of India–the death of Alexander. These four stages correspond to the four branches of the romance. The division into branches was introduced by Paul Meyer, who based this enumeration on the narrative content, Alexandre de Paris's allusions to his sources (Eustache for the *Fuerre de Gadres*, which became branch 2, Lambert for *Alexandre en Orient*, which became branch 3), as well as on codicological criteria.[10]

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[8] *MFRA*, vol. 2.
[9] Alexandre de Paris (AdP), 1, v.11, 30–31.
[10] P. Meyer, "Etude sur les manuscrits du *Roman d'Alexandre*," *Romania* 11 (1882), pp. 213–332.

The *Alexandre décasyllabique* is done in alexandrines and amplified so as to constitute a first branch, the infancy of Alexander. There we find the birth and education of the hero, completed by a dream (which came from the *Epitome*). At five years of age, Alexander dreamed that he was going to eat an egg and it broke on the floor. Out of the egg came a serpent that circled the bed three times before going back into the eggshell and dying. Only Aristotle was able to see in that dream Alexander's designation as the future master of the universe. After the training of Bucephalus and the dubbing of the hero came the war against Nicholas, the challenge to Darius, and the beginning of the expedition into Asia: he laid siege to Tyre.

Branch 2 inserted the *Fuerre de Gadres* among the events of the siege of Tyre, followed by the battle of the Prés de Paile (Issos). It closed with the mention of the names of both Alexandre de Paris and of Lambert: "Alexander told us, he who was born at Bernai and whose surname is Alexandre de Paris, who has joined here his verses to those of Lambert."[11] This mention is made clear from the beginning of branch 3: "The true history, just as the king performed it, a cleric of Châteaudun, Lambert le Tort, has written down: he translated it from Latin and put it into French."[12]

The third branch by itself occupies half the romance: the triumphs over Darius the Persian and Porus the Indian; the discovery of the marvels of the Orient (symbolized by the struggle against the reptiles of the deserts, the overcoming of the Pillars of Hercules, the imprisonment of Gog and Magog), the meeting with Queen Candace, and the prophecy of the trees of the sun and the moon, which announced to Alexander his coming death. All this part of the narrative was clearly attributed to Lambert le Tort, who "put it into Romance," and Alexandre de Paris identified himself as the coordinator of the different branches of the work.

He named himself one last time at the end of the fourth branch, which was dedicated to the death of Alexander, to the laments of the twelve peers, to the transportation of the body to Egypt and the construction of the tomb. Alexander of Macedonia slept forever in his sumptuous tomb, while his namesake finished his narrative and meditated on the turns of Fortune: "There the verses end, the history goes

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[11] AdP, 2, v.3098–3100.
[12] AdP, 3, v.1–15.

no further. Here is what Alexandre of Bernay near Eure, to whom destiny was never favorable for long: one day would be white, the next black and bitter."[13]

Continuations and Interpolations

Alexandre de Paris put the different narratives which were circulating about Alexander into a cycle, to draw from them a complete biography of the hero, from birth to death. After Alexander de Paris, continuations and interpolations completed the cycle. In branch 4, the dying Alexander demanded vengeance and deplored the flight of the two traitors who had poisoned him.[14] From the end of the 12th century, the theme of Alexander's vengeance gave birth to two continuations: the *Venjance Alixandre* by Jean le Nevelon (around 1180) and the *Vengement Alixandre* of Guy de Cambrai (before 1191).[15] According to Jean le Nevelon, Alior, son of Alexander and Candace, succeeded his father and put Antipater to death. In Guy de Cambrai, Antipater and Divinuspater took refuge in a castle in Greece. The twelve peers organized an expedition, captured, and executed the traitors. Another version of the revenge is due to the compiler of the version gathered in the Venice manuscript (*A*).[16] The three versions vie with one another in imagination of the ferocity of the tortures inflicted on the traitors.

Besides a *Vengeance of Alexander*, most manuscripts added some interpolations to the text of Alexandre de Paris. The *Duc Melcis* or the *Prise de Defur* (13th century) told of Alexander's new adventures, notably amorous ones.[17] Coming to the aid of the young Gratian, Alexander seized the town of Defur and killed Duke Melcis of Chaldea. On his way, he found a human eye on a stone, which Aristotle said symbolized the man who desired everything that he saw.

Following the *Prise de Defur*, a second interpolation is often found, the *Voyage d'Alexandre au paradis terrestre*, the French adaptation of a Latin narrative of the 12th century of Jewish origin. On the way

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[13] AdP, 4, v.1698–1701.
[14] AdP, 4, v.586–595 and 1047–1058.
[15] Guy de Cambrai, *Le Vengement Alixandre*, ed. B. Edwards, Princeton, 1928; Jean le Nevelon, *La Venjance Alixandre*, ed. E.B. Ham, Princeton, 1931; *La Venjance Alixandre*, ed. E.B. Ham (Five Versions of the *Venjance Alixandre*), Princeton, 1935.
[16] Venise, *MFRA* 1, v.10315–601.
[17] *La Prise de Defur* et *le Voyage au Paradis terrestre*, L.P.G. Peckham and M.S. La Du (eds.), (Princeton, 1935).

to Babylon, the hero discovered a city closed on all sides. At a small window there appeared a very beautiful man, whiter than snow, who revealed that that city was the terrestrial paradise and offered the hero a stone shaped like a human eye. Placed on a scale, that stone was a counter-weight to all the treasures of the world; when covered by a bit of earth, it became lighter than a feather. It symbolized the man and particularly Alexander who while alive desired everything that he could see. Thus Alexander's pride was again censured.

Jacques de Longuyon wrote the *Voeux du paon* before 1312. Therein he told of battles, but also of banquets, and of gallant conversations that ended in marriages. We find the tradition of vows pronounced over a noble bird (the peacock).[18] It is in this text that the first mention occurs of the theme of the Nine Valiant Knights (*les Neuf Preux*): the nine heroes are presented in the order in which they would always be remembered: three pagan heroes, Hector, Alexander, and Caesar; three Jewish heroes, Joseph, David, and Judas Maccabeus; three Christian heroes, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon.

The *Vœux du paon* were themselves the object of continuations: the *Restor du paon* of Jean le Cort dit Brisebarre, before 1338, itself followed by the *Parfait du paon* of Jean de la Mote (1340).[19] Between two battles, the imprisoned heroes occupied their leisure time in amorous and poetical jousts (which accounted for lyrical insertions) with their jailers. In spite of the form, which remained epic, Alexander and his companions metamorphosed into courtly heroes.

The Roman de toute chevalerie *of Thomas of Kent*

But the narrative literature dedicated to Alexander was not limited to the romance cycle formed around Alexandre de Paris. Between 1175 and 1185, Thomas of Kent, of whom we know only the name and his English origin, recounted in *laisses* of dodecasyllables, like Alexandre de Paris, the *Roman de toute chevalerie*, relating the adventures of Alexander, taken from the *Epitome* and from the *Lettre d'Alexandre à Aristote*, to which he was very faithful.[20] The illegitimate conception

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[18] *Les Voeux du Paon*, ed R.L.G. Ritchie, in *The Buick of Alexander*, by J. Barbour, Edinburg and London, 1921–1929, t. 2, 3, 4 (Scottish Text Society).

[19] Jean le Court, *Le Restor du Paon*, ed. R. Carey, Geneva, 1966; Jean de la Mote, *Le Parfait du Paon*, ed R. Carey, Chapel Hill, 1972.

[20] Thomas de Kent, le *Roman de toute chevalerie*, C. Gaullier-Bougassas and L. Harf-Lancner (eds.), (Paris, 2003). Bilingual edition.

of Alexander, son of the magician Nectanabus, was there narrated without beating around the bush, as was the murder of the magician, who revealed to Alexander the truth about his birth. The conquest of the Orient is preceded by that of Lombardy and the submission of Rome and Greece. Alexander triumphed in succession over Darius and Porus before going on to discover the marvels of India and then dying at Babylon.

Thomas of Kent did not bequeath a monumental text in the history of the literary transmission of the *geste* of Alexander. That narrative nevertheless was adapted in the 13th century into Middle English by the author of *King Alexander*. Thomas of Kent's work was undoubtedly the victim of the success of the version of Alexandre de Paris. The three complete manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman *Alexandre*, which date from the second quarter of the 13th century and from the first half of the 14th century, furnish proof of that: the copyists inserted two long sequences from the romance of Alexandre de Paris: branch 2 (the *Fuerre de Gadres*) and branch 4 (the death of the hero). The *Roman de toute chevalerie*, through its long descriptions of India, must have satisfied its audience's tastes for exoticism. But its evocation of the monsters and marvels of the Orient, based on ancient treatises, such as that of Solinus, gave the expedition to India an allure that was more encyclopedic than romantic.

From the 1170s, the romances of Alexander made use of dodecasyllabic verse, which appeared elsewhere from the middle of the 12th century in *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* and, in 1174, in the *Vie de saint Thomas Becket* of Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence. But it was really the success of the romance of Alexandre de Paris, together with the renewal of the literary myth of Alexander in the 15th century, around the court of Burgundy, that incited the authors of the treatises of second rhetoric to invent a name for the dodecasyllable borrowed from that of Alexander, the alexandrine. The term appeared for the first time in the anonymous Rules of second rhetoric in 1411 and 1432: "Rime alexandrine, pour faire romans, et pour le present de douse silabes chascune ligne en son masculin et de XIII ou feminin." And Baudet Herenc stated in the *Doctrinal de seconde rhétorique* (1432): "Sont dites lignes alexandrines pour ce que une ligne des fais du roy Alexandre fu faite de ceste taille."[21]

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[21] M.E. Porter, "The Genesis of Alexandrin as a Metrical Term," *Modern Language Notes* 51 (1936), pp. 528–535.

The Manuscripts and Editions

There is a detailed description of the manuscripts of the *Roman d'Alexandre* in the article by Paul Meyer already mentioned. Three manuscripts occupy a place by themselves because they go back to a text earlier than that of Alexandre de Paris:

A (Paris, Arsenal 3472, from the beginning of the 13th century, gives a first branch which is shorter and in decasyllables; the *Fuerre de Gadres* (br. 2) is not there.
B (Venice, Museo Civico Correr, VI 665), an Italian manuscript from the beginning of the 14th century, gives a reading close to that of manuscript *A*, but it has the *Fuerre de Gadres*.[22]
L (dated in 1280 on folio 218) offers a very original version of the narrative followed by the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai.[23] Besides the *Roman d'Alexandres*, it contains the *Prise de Defur*, the *Voyage au Paradis*, the *Vengeance d'Alexandre* of Guy de Cambrai, and the *Histoire de Judas Machabee* by Gautier de Belleperche.

The romance of Alexandre de Paris is preserved by seventeen manuscripts and several fragments: all (except *CDE*) insert at the end of the third branch, between the meeting with the Amazons and the arrival of the two traitors who will poison Alexander, the *Prise de Defur* and sometimes also the *Voyage au Paradis terrestre*. These are grouped into family *a* (*DGFMPQRSTY*) and family *b* (*CEHIJKN*).

C, BNF fr. 15095, is a manuscript from the middle or the second half of the 13th century which contains only the romance of Alexandre de Paris.
D, BNF fr. 15094, is in part from the end of the 13th century, in part from the end of the 14th, and contains the *Vengeance* de Guy de Cambrai in addition to the romance.
E, BNF fr. 787, dates from the last third of the 13th century and contains the romance, incomplete.

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[22] The texts of *A* and *B* are found in volume I of *MFRA*. See also the facsimile of *B*: *Le Roman d'Alexandre*, Riproduzione del ms. Venezia, Biblioteca Museo Correr, Corr 1493, a cura di R. Benedetti (introduction by E. Baumgartner; R. Vattori ed.), (Udine, 1998).
[23] Concerning *L*, see *MFRA* 3 (*laisses* 1–72).

F, Parma, Bibl Palatina 1206, is an Italian manuscript from the 14th century, complete at the beginning and the end, and offers the romance and the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai.

G, BNF fr. 25517, dates from the second half of the 13th century; it is composed of the romance and the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai.

H, BNF fr. 786, is a Picard manuscript of the fourth quarter of the 13th century which contains, besides the romance, the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai and the cycle of the crusade.[24]

I, BNF fr. 375, is a well-known Picard manuscript composed of two parts.[25] The first (f. 1–33) contains some didactic works in prose and has obviously been added to the rest of the collection. The second is composed of a collection of romances in verse. A first fascicle contains the romances of *Thèbes* and of *Troie, Athis et Prophilias*, the *Congés* of Jean Bodel; a second contains the *Roman d'Alexandre*, the *Signification de la mort d'Alexandre* by Pierre de St Cloud and the *Vengeance Alexandre* of Guy de Cambrai, followed by a genealogy of the counts of Burgundy. The third fascicle offers the third part of the *Rou, Guillaume d'Angleterre, Floire et Blanchefleur*, the *Roman de Blancandin, Cligès, Erec et Enide, La Viellete* (a fabliau), *Ille et Galeron* of Gautier d'Arras, the *Miracle de Théophile* of Gautier de Coinci, *Amadas et Ydoine, La Chastelaine de Vergi*, le *Cantique de St. Etienne* (with music), the *Vers de la mort* of Robert le Clerc, the *Louanges de Notre Dame, La Viellete* (already copied in another hand), nine *Miracles de Notre Dame*. One of the scribes (Jean Madot, nephew of Adam de la Halle), named himself at the end of the *Roman de Troie* and gave the date of 2 February 1288 (1289 in the modern system).

J, BNF fr. 24366, from the middle or the second half of the 13th century, presents a farce after the romance[26] and the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai.

K, BNF fr. 792, a Parisian manuscript from the end of the 13th century, contains the *Florimont* of Aimon de Varennes and the *Roman d'Alexandre* followed by the *Vengeance* of Guy de Cambrai.

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[24] K. Busby, "Mythe et histoire dans le ms. Paris, BNF français 786: la conjointure du Cycle de la Croisade et du *Roman d'Alexandre*," in *Guerres, voyages et quêtes au Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Jean-Claude Faucon*, (Paris, 2000), pp. 73–81.

[25] Concerning this manuscrit see K. Busby, T. Nixon, A. Stones, L. Walters (eds.), *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*, (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 83–90.

[26] P. Meyer, art. cit., p. 269.

M, BNF fr. 24365, from the first quarter of the 14th century, perhaps comes from the south of France. It contains the romance, the *Vengeance* of Jean le Nevelon and the *Vœux du paon*.

N, BNF fr. 791, a Parisian manuscript from the middle of the 14th century, gives the romance, the *Vengeance* of Jean le Nevelon and the *Vœux du paon*.

O, BNF fr. 1375, a manuscript of the 15th century, close to N, also offers the romance, the *Vengeance* of Jean le Nevelon and the *Vœux du paon*.

P, Oxford, Bodleian Library 264, is one of the most beautiful manuscripts of the Bodleian library. This magnificently illuminated English manuscript reunited a *Roman d'Alexandre* (with the *Vengeance* of Jean le Nevelon) of Flemish origin copied in 1338 and illuminated between 1339 and 1344 by Jean de Grise, and (copied around 1400–1410) at the same time the meeting of Alexander and Dindymus the King of the Brahmans (in English verse) and the *Devisement du monde* of Marco Polo.[27]

Q, BNF fr. 790, dates from the middle of the 14th century for the first 191 folios, which offer the romance, the *Vœux du paon* and the *Vengeance* by Jean le Nevelon; folios 192–199, which contain the *Restor du Paon*, are later.

R, BNF fr. 368, This large book from the first half of the 14th century contains, besides the *Roman d'Alexandre* and the *Vœux du paon*, *Partonopeu de Blois*, the *Chanson des Saxons* of Jean Bodel and part of the *geste* of Guillaume d'Orange.

S, BNF fr. 1590, a Parisian manuscript from the first quarter of the 14th century, incomplete at the beginning, is composed of three fragments, the first two of which were inverted when it was rebound: it contains the romance, the *Vengeance* of Jean le Nevelon and the *Vœux du paon*.

T, BNF fr. 1635, from the end of the 13th century, breaks off before the end of the third branch.

U, BNF fr. 12567, an Italian or French manuscript from the first half of the 14th century, offers the romance with the *Vœux du paon* and the *Restor du Paon*.

Y, Vatican, Reg. 1364 is a manuscript from the 13th century.

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[27] M.R. James, *The Romance of Alexander*, (Oxford, 1933). Facsimile of the *Alexandre* portion.

A first edition of the romance was produced in 1846 by H. Michel-ant, but it does not meet the criteria for a modern critical edition. The reference edition was published under the direction of Edward C. Armstrong from 1937 to 1976, in seven volumes, by the University of Princeton Press in the *Elliott Monographs* collection, and reprinted in New York in 1965 (for the first six volumes). There is also a paper-back version of a large part of the romance in Armstrong's edition, accompanied by a translation into modern French, an introduction, and notes by L. Harf dating from 1994. We also possess two precious facsimiles: that of manuscript *P* (Bodley 264) and that of the manu-script from Venice *B*).[28]

II. Chanson de geste or Romance?

An Epic Form

In contrast to the ancient trilogy *Thèbes, Troie, Enéas*, and to other romances in verse of the 12th and 13th centuries, the romances of Alexander were written in epic *laisses* (strophes), which tended to become longer from one text to the next. The text of Albéric is written in assonating octosyllabic *laisses*, the decasyllabic *Alexandre* is written in *laisses* of monorhymed decasyllables, while Lambert le Tort and Alexandre de Paris opted for monorhymed *laisses* of alexandrines, just as Thomas of Kent did. This lengthening of the verse followed the formal evolution of the *chanson de geste* during the course of the 12th century: could it be that the romances of Alexander in effect picked up the epic aesthetic?[29] From the *laisse* in octosyllables, we passed to the decasyllable, the epic verse form par excellence until the end of the 12th century. And during the years 1170–1180, when the romances of *Enéas* and *Troie*, following Wace's *Brut* and the *Roman de Thèbes*, made the octosyllabic couplet the specific form of the romance genre at its beginnings, Lambert le Tort and Alexandre de Paris remained faithful to the epic *laisse*, this time in alexandrines.

The *Roman d'Alexandre* again found the stereotypical writing of the *chanson de geste*, with its motifs and formulas, in particular in branch 2 (*Le Fuerre de Gadres*), the most epic of the four branches: moments

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[28] For the references for all these editions, see the bibliography.
[29] C. Gaullier-Bougassas, *Les Romans d'Alexandre: aux frontières de l'épique et du romanesque*, (Paris, 1998).

of great emotion and dramatic conclusions, parallel *laisses*, motifs, and formulas. Among the narrative motifs, we could cite the dubbing of Alexander, and the battle scenes; among the rhetorical motifs, the arming of the knight, the sword fight, and the pitched battle.[30] The plot of the romance is also in part modeled on the *chanson de geste*. The amorous theme is absent (with the exception of the courtly episode of the Amazons and the so very uncourtly meeting of Alexander and Candace), entirely supplanted by that of war. And far from celebrating the exploits of Alexander alone, the poets presented collective combats which stress the value not only of the bravery of the king, but also that of his companions. The construction of the combats is the same in the *Roman d'Alexandre* and in the *Chanson de Roland*: the king of Macedonia set his battalions against those of the Persians or the Indians, just as Charlemagne arrayed his companies before those of Emir Baligant.

A Romance Plan

But the special nature of the romances of Alexander resides in the fusion of an epic form and a romance plan. First of all, let us consider the ancient material and the vision of Antiquity. As in the romances of Thebes, Eneas, and of Troy, the representation of Antiquity, which the *Roman d'Alexandre* draws for us, modeled on the realities of feudal society in the 12th century, is anachronistic.[31] But the clerics of the 12th century were perfectly aware of the differences that separated their social and mental universe from that of Antiquity. The anachronism becomes evident from the dual objectives of assimilating the ancient world to the medieval world, while at the same time marking some differences. Thus Alexander is solemnly dubbed and receives the arms of a knight. Darius and Porus are equally presented as feudal lords who, in order to wage war, raise the levee of their vassals and sub-vassals. But the ambiguity is palpable in the religious domain. Alexander offers prayers to the gods and to God.[32] At the hour of his death, he prays that his soul might enter into Paradise, while the twelve peers beg God to protect him from Satan.[33] The deliberate anachronism corresponded to an appropriation of Antiquity and, put in the service of Alexander's glory, sustained the ideology at work in the romance.

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[30] J.P. Martin, *Les Motifs dans la chanson de geste*, (Lille, 1992).
[31] A. Petit, *L'anachronisme dans les romans antiques*, (Lille, 1985).
[32] AdP, 3, v.5103 and 4, v.561, 675.
[33] AdP, 3, v.2550, 4 v.266, 561, 1223.

Around 1170, in the prologue of *Erec et Enide*, Chrétien de Troyes proclaimed his desire to create "a very beautiful joining" from an "adventure story,"a narrative whose meaning is to be sought in its own design. The narrative incorporated an individual adventure and, beyond that, it was supposed to be a quest for a transcendence that challenged the values of the chivalric world. The hero did not struggle alongside his relatives for a collective cause, as in the *chanson de geste*, but alone, for certain personal ideals. Far from worrying about the fate of Greece, through his conquests Alexander realized his own personal destiny. The stages of that destiny were carefully arranged, each of them marked by a victory and the death or submission of a royal figure:

- infancy and the victory over Nicholas, King of Caesarea;
- the conquest of Persia and the defeat of Darius;
- the entry into the Indian other world, an unknown place, and victory over its king, Porus;
- the return to Persia, the conquest of Babylon, and the death of the emir;
- the submission of the queen of the Amazons.

In branch 3, which alone constitutes half the romance, the fantastic wandering of Alexander in the deserts of India was framed by two symmetrical episodes: the voyage under the sea, and the flight into the sky. The exploration of horizontal space, taken to the frontiers of the beyond (the Pillars of Hercules) was thus associated with that of vertical space, and the symbolism of space is linked to the hero's desire for power.[34] The narrative did not content itself with following the stages of a biography, but rather espoused the meanderings of a quest like the romances of Chrétien de Troyes. Alexander is truly a character of romance.

It also incarnated a new ideal. In contrast to the epic hero, he was not reducible to his warlike exploits. He was certainly a paragon of chivalry, and the *romanciers* do not cease to recount his prowess in battle, his duels (against Nicholas, Porus, the emir of Babylon). But he incarnated above all the new values of 12th century civilization, the courtly values with which the clerics impregnated the romances that they composed for the noble courts. "The character of Alexander seemed to place himself in an exemplary and perfectly imaginary

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[34] F. Dubost, *Aspects fantastiques de la littérature narrative médiévale*, (Paris, 1991), pp. 256–282.

coherence among the three hyperbolic attributes that were granted him: universal conquest, knowledge, and generosity."[35]

The Flaw

As for the birth of Alexander, only two texts, over the entire collection of French romances, remained faithful to the *PC* and admitted the adultery of Olympias and the illegitimate birth of Alexander: the *Roman de toute chevalerie* of Thomas of Kent and the *Roman d'Alexandre* in prose from the 13th century. They faithfully followed their Latin source and recounted the disguise of Nectanebus as the god Amon before Olympias. In contrast, the other *romanciers* violently rejected the bastardy of the hero. Alexandre de Paris, like Albéric de Pisançon, attributed the calumny to *losengiers*, following a recurring theme of lyrics and romances. Nevertheless in all the texts, the accusation of bastardy, explicit or masked, weighs like a curse on the hero. It is the only flaw that pursued Alexander the whole length of his career and played, as a destabilizing element, the role of amorous passion that strikes us by its absence. Curiously in effect, in the work of Alexandre de Paris, this accusation, pushed back to the beginning of the romance like a calumny, sprang up again in the mouth of Porus and, above all, in the prophecy of the trees of the sun and the moon, which announces to the hero both his imminent death and the dishonor of his mother.[36]

The oscillation of Alexander between three father figures, Philip, Aristotle, and Nectanebus, his fruitless search for the limits of the world, following the steps of Hercules, his mythic ancestor, traced with a sure hand the contours of a romance destiny. If we accept the dating of Albéric's narrative, composed in the first third of the 12th century, Alexander was at the same time the hero of the first French text of a secular nature and the first hero of a romance in French literature.

III. The Medieval Myth of Alexander

A literary myth was constructed around Alexander in medieval romances. It corresponds to the definition which Philippe Sellier

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[35] F. Suard, "Alexandre est-il un personnage de roman," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* 7, (1989), pp. 77–87, here p. 84.
[36] AdP, 3, v.3817–3821.

proposed, in offering the three indispensable elements for the exis-
tence of a literary myth: symbolic saturation, metaphysical perspective,
and a closed framework which one finds from one text to the next. It
highlights, like those of Caesar, Louis XIV, and Napoleon, politico-
heroic myths: "with those great political myths the heroic model of the
imagination always functions in the prevalent fashion: dream of one or
more supermen, confronted with all sorts of trials (monsters, countless
enemies) and promise—in spite of the death at the apotheosis."[37]

A Mirror of Princes

Alexander first presented an image of ideal royalty. He survived into
the modern epoch as the emblematic figure of the conqueror. But the
Roman d'Alexandre intended above all to propose a model of govern-
ment, a "mirror of the prince" like those that flourished throughout
the entire Middle Ages and of which the most famous, in the 12th
century, is the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury (1159). Alexandre de
Paris, in his prologue, underscored his didactic intentions: "If you
want to hear a beautiful story in verse, to find there the example of
prowess, to know what you must love and hate, how to keep your
friends and cherish them, how to cause your enemies irremediable
losses, avenge yourself for offenses and repay benefits, know when to
hurry and when to slow down, listen attentively to the beginning of
this narrative!"[38] The hero was in effect a model of prowess, but also
of generosity (it was the quality that bound him to his friends), and of
justice: he knew how to reward the good and punish the bad. Multiple
anecdotes illustrated those traits. He drew the murderers of Darius by
a ruse and killed them pitilessly without breaking his word: hanged
on the gibbet, they are in fact placed, as promised, above all others. In
the crossing of the desert, he preferred to suffer thirst with his men
and to throw away the water that a soldier had found in the crevice
of a rock; but he magnificently repaid that gesture. Magnanimous and
clement, he spared Porus and turned over his realm to him while giv-
ing him a lesson in political morality: the true wealth of princes does
not reside in the treasures that they amass in their caves, but in the
love of their men.

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[37] P. Sellier, "Qu'est-ce qu'un mythe littéraire ?," *Littérature* (1984) 55, pp. 112–126,
here p. 117.
[38] AdP, 1, v.1–8.

From his journey to the depths of the waters, the Macedonian also drew a lesson: the law that rules under the sea as well as on land is that of the strongest (big fish eat the little ones), and that where force fails, trickery can win the day. The hero would remember that on the battlefield. Alexander was also a founder of cities, and the romance, following the *PC*, Julius Valerius, and the *Epitome*, mentioned the foundation of twelve Alexandrias. But the main political lesson of the romance, stressed as a leit-motiv, was a warning against the danger of delegating power to servants who were not noble and qualified as serfs. While still an infant, Alexander refused to allow himself to be approached by a mere servant: he required a noble maiden to serve him and a noble lady to nurse him. Aristotle taught him this instinctive wariness of common people: "Finally, he gave him a judicious counsel: never to surround himself with serfs, with low-born people, because many men in doing so have died, been tortured, calumniated, assassinated, poisoned."[39] Those verses foretold two deaths: that of Darius, defeated and killed because he had given power to his serfs and humiliated his noble vassals, and that of Alexander himself, dead by poison administered by the two serfs in whom he had had the bad judgment to trust.

The *romancier* successively pitted Alexander against several royal figures who function as counter-examples: Philip, the weak king who preferred to live "at ease and at rest" with his wife, who would have yielded to Nicholas and to Darius without the intervention of his son; Nicholas, proud and a traitor, who sought to seduce Alexander's messenger; Darius, victim of the bad servants to whom he had entrusted power; Porus, attached to his riches; the emir of Babylon, who wrongly trusted in his evil gods. Against these bad kings are placed two idealized figures: Solomon, under whose biblical authority are placed the lessons of political morality, and Alexander himself. Nevertheless the sage Solomon was a victim of the perfidy of a woman and Alexander, who rejected servants of low birth, died at the hand of two lowborn servants. This antipathy for villeins certainly has a historical background. In feudal society, the lord, outside the vassalage system, had some non-noble servants and often trusted these closer and more docile servants. Besides, the epilogue clearly defined the public for whom this program was designed: "The king who wants to govern his realm according to

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[39] AdP, 1, v.342–345.

justice, princes and dukes who have a land to defend and those who
want to make conquests thanks to their prowess, those are the ones
who ought to heed the life of Alexander."[40]

Aristotle's pupil was above all a king who was at once conqueror and
wise man, who united in himself wisdom and power, in keeping with
the ideal of the mirrors of princes. The new ideal expressed itself first
of all by the alliance of the clerical and knightly classes, symbolized
by the pair Aristotle-Alexander, but also by Alexander himself, whose
education drew from all the realms of knowledge. The story of the
Greek prince was written in the double movement by which the intel-
lectuals of the Middle Ages saw the evolution of humanity and which
was defined in the prologue of *Cligès* by Chrétien de Troyes: a prog-
ress, from east to west, of power (*translatio imperii*) and of knowledge
(*translatio studii*). Was not the father of Cligès another Alexander?

The close bond between the clerical and knightly classes, between
knowledge and conquest, clearly appeared in the description of Alex-
ander's pavilion and the paintings that adorned the insides of its four
walls.[41] The first wall represented the seasons, the months of the year,
and the stars. The second pavilion wall was a world map in three parts,
with Asia, Europe, and Africa. The presence of Hercules on the third
pavilion wall revealed a great deal: Hercules, who reached the west-
ern and eastern limits of the world, and whom Alexander wanted to
imitate and even surpass. Finally the fourth pavilion wall, which dis-
played the Trojan war, aroused in Alexander the desire to renew the
exploits of the Greek warriors against the barbarians of Asia. Alexan-
der was truly a hero of knowledge: explorer of horizontal space up to
the Pillars of Hercules (the *bornes Arcu*), eastern border of the known
world. He also explored vertical space using a bathyscaphe to explore
the submarine depths, then a cage carried into the air by griffins to lift
himself into the sky.

Another value was also attached to the Macedonian that during
the course of the 12th century became indissolubly linked with the
romance personage: largesse. Alexander's generosity was not simple
royal liberality: it implied conquests. The hero conquered land upon
land in order to distribute them immediately to his friends. Ceasing
to be interested in a land once he had conquered it, he always turned

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[40] AdP, 4, v.1675–1678.
[41] AdP, 1, v.1948–2064.

towards the countries that did not yet know his law. The Alexander of the romance of *Cligès* shared with his namesake the quality of largesse, which was indissolubly linked with his name. And the prologue of the *Conte du Graal*, founded on the comparison of Alexander the Great and Count Philip of Flanders, corresponded with that of *Cligès*. If the count was better than Alexander, it is because the two of them incarnated two opposing types of largesse: worldly largesse, inseparable from vainglory, and Christian charity. Alexander remained a pagan hero, even if he invoked, in the French romances, sometimes God, sometimes the gods.

The Mirages of the Orient

In Latin literature there existed a legendary tradition of the wonders of India, represented in particular by Pliny the Elder (first century A.D.) and book six of his *Natural History*, and the *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* of Solinus in the third century. Those legends were spread during the Middles Ages by numerous writings: encyclopedias, following the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville, but also the *Letter of Hadrian on the Marvels of the Orient*, and above all the famous letter which Alexander is supposed to have written to Aristotle to tell him about his campaign against Porus and his discovery of India.[42] This letter, redacted around the ninth century, integrated with the *PC* in several versions, circulated throughout the Middle Ages in the form of an independent writing of which numerous manuscripts still exist. It was also inserted in the *Epitome* of Julius Valerius in the majority of the existing manuscripts and was translated from the 11th through the 17th centuries throughout Europe.[43] It presented itself as an encyclopedic text in which Alexander crafted a description of India for his tutor Aristotle. It was a land of fabulous riches and the palace of Porus consisted of nothing but gold, ivory, pearls, and precious stones. But the deserts were infested with savage animals and monsters which the Greek army had to confront before a lake where all of them came to quench their thirst: horned serpents, sand serpents, white lions, tigers,

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[42] E. Faral, "Une source latine de l'*Histoire d'Alexandre*: la *Lettre sur les merveilles de l'Inde*," *Romania* (1914) 42, pp. 199–215 and 332–370; *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, M. Feldbusch (ed.), (Meisenheim 1976).

[43] D.J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus: a Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature*., (London, 1963) pp. 9, 27–30, and note 39, p. 86.

and panthers, huge Indian mice the size of foxes with a deadly bite, griffins, and the "tyrant tooth," the *dentityrannus*, "a beast of a sort unknown until then, larger than an elephant, armed with three horns on its face and bearing a black head, resembling that of a horse," which seemed to refer to the rhinoceros. There were also troops of elephants there and of big cats with a back armed with teeth and with the double head of a lion and a crocodile. The humans were as monstrous as the animals: the Ichthyophages, covered with hair, the Cynocephales, and those naiads of marvelous beauty, who attracted men in order to drown them.[44] There was also the sanctuary of the trees of the sun and the moon, which revealed to Alexander the imminence of his death.

In the Middle Ages, the Indian Ocean was "the dreamlike horizon of Western people in the Middle Ages," who saw it as a circular river surrounding the world.[45] India designated a mythic space which covered a great part of Asia: if greater India corresponded nearly to modern-day India, upper India engulfed all of northern Asia, lesser India corresponded to the south-eastern Asiatic peninsulas, and meridian India at the same time Ethiopia and the coast of the Asiatic southwest. The *Roman d'Alexandre* reencountered this traditional representation of the wonders of India, which, according to Jacques Le Goff, oscillated between dream and nightmare. A dream of infinite luxuries and riches: the palace of Porus with its vine of gold, the treasures that the Indian king offered to Alexander only to see himself disdainfully rejected, together with the myth of the noble savage and the meeting with the gymnosophists. A nightmare of endless deserts where the army endured the worst sufferings: hostility from men and monstrous animals, but also from the elements, which deprived the men of water or drowned them under torrents of snow and mud. Here is one of the first exotic texts in French literature. But for Alexandre de Paris (and Lambert le Tort), India was above all the space where the hero was initiated into his destiny and his death. Alexander's principal Indian adventures are foreign to the tradition of the marvels of the Orient. After having made an about-face before the Pillars of Hercules, the army found itself imprisoned in the perilous valley from which it

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[44] P. Ménard, "Femmes séduisantes et femmes malfaisantes; les filles-fleurs de la forêt et les créatures des eaux dans le *Roman d'Alexandre*," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* (1989) 7, pp. 5–17.

[45] J. Le Goff, "L'Occident médiéval et l'orient indien: un horizon onirique," in *Pour un autre Moyen Age*, (Paris, 1977), pp. 280–298.

could not depart without sacrificing one of its members. Alexander insisted on remaining as hostage and discovered the secret of the valley: a demon was imprisoned there under a rock and revealed to him, in exchange for his freedom, the hidden path which would permit him to rejoin his men. That curious episode evoked at the same time the oriental folkloric motif of the genie in a bottle and the wall of air, which, in the Breton romances, protected the other world (as in the enchanted orchard of the Joy of the Court in *Erec et Enide*).[46] A microcosm of the Indian land, the perilous valley was a space placed under the sign of the demoniac and Alexander only escaped from it by agreeing to die for his men, thus becoming a redeemer hero. Alexander however was not saved either by his prowess or by his virtue, but in fact by his knowledge and his ruse, which triumphed over those of the demon. The discovery of the three magic fountains was a new confrontation with death. Of these three fountains, one resuscitated the dead, another gave back youth, and the third conferred immortality. The hero had no trouble finding the fountain of resurrection and the fountain of youth. But the only one that mattered to him, the fountain of immortality, remained inaccessible. It only appeared one day per year and showed itself to a Greek, Enoch, who dove into its waters and would pay dearly for his presumption: having become immortal, he was "entombed" alive, sealed into a pillar for all eternity. And immortality escaped Alexander. Finally the enchanted orchard of the flower-maidens was also placed for him as a sign of precariousness and death, that terrestrial Paradise was not guarded by angels but by two automatons, who barred access to it. The two old Indians who guided the Greek army broke the enchantment, displaying its diabolical character: one of the automatons fell into the water and was devoured by a fish; the other was carried off by a demon. After three days and three nights of delights with the beautiful inhabitants of the orchard, the Greeks left the forest that cast its shadow over it. Alexander wanted to take his beautiful lady with him, but he learned her true nature: "When winter came, to resist the cold, they all entered the earth and metamorphosed. And when the summer came again,

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[46] P. Ménard, "Le diable emprisonné," *Mélanges Charles Méla*, (Geneva, 2002), pp. 405–424.

with the fine weather, they were reborn in the form of white flowers, according to their custom."[47]

The flower-maidens died when they crossed the shadows of the trees of the enchanted forest. Alexander did not know how to seize the secret of immortality from them: "The Orient could not be 'transplanted' or opened to full daylight. It remained the shadowy part where man had some chance of assuaging his desires, but without ever perpetuating them and rooting them elsewhere."[48] At the end of his quest, the hero would hear from the two magic trees a verdict with no appeal: death in Babylon. The voyage to India was thus a symbol of the foolish wandering in search of immortality, ending in a prophecy that consecrated the inanity of the hero's efforts and introduced the theme of tragedy into the romance which came to dominate the last branch.

Lack of Moderation

Another trait revealed the fascination that was attached to an ambiguous hero: lack of moderation, revealed by recurring motifs, which all expressed the ambivalence of the hero. It was attached first to the symbolism of space. Alexandre de Paris underscored the hero's obsession with conquering the universe as a whole: Alexander first attacked horizontal space, with the search, toward the east, for the bounds of the known world, but also vertical space, with the exploration of the sea and of the sky. The Macedonian did not stop affirming that the world was too small to satisfy his appetite for power.[49] For the people of the Middle Ages, the conquest of the Orient by Alexander reversed the sense of the *translatio imperii et studii*, the transfer of power and wisdom, which went from east to west, from Greece to France or to England while passing through Rome: it was therefore unsettling. The hero wanted to reach the oriental boundaries of the world, the famous Pillars of Hercules. In the French romance, the boundaries of Hercules (*les bornes Arcu*) became the Pillars of Arthur (*les bornes Artu*). This frontier was the dreamlike horizon of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, a symbol of the Orient and of its mysteries but also of the hero's lack of moderation.

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[47] AdP, 3, v.3531–3534.

[48] E. Baumgartner, "L'Orient d'Alexandre," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* (1988) 6, pp. 7–15, here p. 12.

[49] AdP, 2 v.3085–3089.

Lack of moderation was equally attached to the conquest of vertical space, with two episodes issuing from the *PC* and amplified by the French romances: the violation of the submarine depths and the aerial immensity.[50] Those two episodes, developed at length in the vernacular, framed branch 3, opening and closing the adventures of Alexander in the Orient. At the beginning of this branch, after the death of Darius and the punishment of his murderers, Alexander pursued his route toward India. It was then that after having explored the land, he decided, in spite of the opposition of his men, to explore the sea. He had a glass barrel made, which was lowered into the depths of the waters, fixed on a chain remaining in the hands of his men; he could thus observe the habits of fish. From his descent by submarine, he would derive the lesson that the larger fish ate the smaller ones and that the law that reigned upon the land reigned as well under the sea.

Then at the very end of the voyage and of the narrative of Alexandre de Paris, the hero approached Babylon, the goal of his quest. He saw griffins and conceived the plan of crowning his conquest of space by the exploration of the sky and of secrets forbidden to men: "I want to climb up into the sky to see the firmament."[51] He had a cage constructed of wood covered with leather, then captured a few griffins. Seated in the gondola, to which were attached the griffins, he held some quarters of meat above his head on a lance. The famished griffins launched themselves into the sky, ever higher. Above the clouds, the heat became burning and the king lowered his lance; the griffins regained the earth.

Another place symbolized Alexander's lack of moderation: that is Babylon-Babel, the city which would see the coronation and the death of the hero, Babel where men mad with pride wanted to construct a tower that would reach the sky and whom Alexandre de Paris also compared with the giants who constructed the edifice to reach Olympus and Jupiter.[52] The fascination that Alexander aroused was attached to an ambiguous hero, whose incompletion, that is paganism, betrayed itself for the people of the Middle Ages because of his lack of moderation, which would lead to his death.

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[50] C. Settis-Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri elevati per gryphos ad aerem*, (Rome, 1973); V.M. Schmidt, *A Legend and Its Image: the Aerial Flight of Alexander the Great in Medieval Art*, (Groningen, 1995).

[51] AdP, 3, v.4969–4975.

[52] AdP, 3, v.6237–6239.

IV. The Descendants of the Romance. From Verse to Prose

In the course of the 13th century, the *Roman d'Alexandre en prose* would become the second French Vulgate on the life of the Macedonian king and without any doubt would compete with the work of Alexandre de Paris.[53] Dating from the first part of the 13th century,[54] the numerous surviving manuscripts[55] suggested to Ross that the work was "read to pieces" in the later Middle Ages in France.[56] The *Roman d'Alexandre en prose* was freely adapted from the J2 version of the HP, as is clear from the numerous details added by the translator to mold the text to his 13th century French audience, who would have found this text to be very readable. Besides the borrowings from the *Roman d'Alexandre* in alexandrines, Ross shows that the Epilogue is taken from the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*.[57] Ross also suggests that the interpolation of the Prophecy of Daniel may have been made directly from the Old Testament.[58] The translator also omitted certain passages which may not have been to the liking of the period, including the campaigns of Alexander in Greece, and much of the correspondence between Alexander and the king of the Brahmans.[59] It was situated on the border between two conceptions of literature: the verse romances of the 12th century and the vast Burgundian prose romances of the 15th century. The 15th century in effect saw the birth of the prose settings of the romance verse cycle: the *Fais et concquestes du noble roy Alexandre* and the *Histoire du bon roy Alixandre* by Jean Wauquelin, composed before 1448 for Jean de Burgundy, count of Etampes.

The *Fais et conquestes du noble roy Alexandre* is in fact a prose version of the *Vœux du paon* of Jacques de Longuyon, amplified by episodes such

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[53] Concerning the prose *Alexandre*, see P. Meyer (1886), vol.2, pp. 305–313. See also the dissertation of M. Perez-Simon, *Mise en roman et mise en image: les manuscrits du Roman d'Alexandre en prose* (Paris, 2011).

[54] Both Hilka (p. vi) and Meyer (*Alexander le Grand*, p. 307) take 1252 as the *terminus a quo* for the *Alexander en prose*. Ross (1952a, p. 147) suggests moving this date back to 1230 or earlier.

[55] For a bibliography of Mss, see Ross (1952a), p. 137, and the bibliography of the Medieval Alexander Project at http://www.library.rochester.edu/camelot/alexander/alexfrbib.htm. For early print editions see the Bibliography of this volume. See also Perez-Simon, *op. cit.*

[56] Ross (1952), p. 54.

[57] Ross (1952a), pp. 139–142.

[58] Ross (1952a), p. 147.

[59] Ross (1952a), p. 136. See also Hilka, pp. xxvi–xxxvii.

as the *Prise de Defur*, the *Fuerre de Gadres*, the death of Alexander (these two episodes according to Alexandre of Paris) and his vengeance.[60] We do not know the precise origin of this manuscript from the end of the 15th century, wherein Alexander incarnated a model of an ideal king, warrior, and courtly knight, who effaced himself behind his companions. Jean Wauquelin (see following chapter) preserved the biographical structure of the narrative and gave the hero a more complex image.

The most original of the three narratives composed about Alexander in the 15th century in Burgundy is the translation into French prose of the *Alexandreis* of Gautier de Châtillon (itself a descendant of the *History of Alexander* by Quintus Curtius) by the Portuguese Vasco de Lucena in 1468 for Charles the Bold, new proof of the importance of the myth of Alexander at the court of Burgundy in the 15th century.[61]

If Jean Wauquelin placed himself in the prolongation of the romance tradition, Vasco de Lucena intended to rejoin the historiographical tradition with a return to the sources, in this case Quintus Curtius. The biography by Vasco de Lucena, the *Faits du grand Alexandre* broke completely with the romance. It figured alongside that of Jean Wauquelin in the library of the dukes of Burgundy with the other biographies of Alexander, but unlike the others does not form part of the lineage of the *PC*. The prologue affirmed several traits: first a will of realism and rationalization, which explained the rejection of romance sources. It was not a question of making the hero fly through the air or descend to submarine depths to accomplish superhuman exploits like those of Renaud de Montauban, Lancelot, Tristan, or Rainouart. The Portuguese author had returned to the source that he judged the most reliable, the biography of Quintus Curtius. Citing his source, Vasco noted a wish to return to the ancient sources that announced the humanist movement. He adopted a scientific approach, since he filled the gaps in the text of Quintus Curtius (the two first books) with the texts of other ancient historians: Plutarch, Justin, and Valerius Maximus. To prove the historical existence of Alexander, he based himself on the Bible, recalling the famous prophecy of Daniel and the

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[60] *Les Faits et conquestes du noble roy Alexandre*, from ms 836 of the BM de Besançon, R. Nicolet-Liscinsky (ed.), (Ann Arbor, 1980).

[61] Concerning Gautier de Châtillon and the *Alexandreis*, see Chapter Eight. Vasco de Lucena, *Les Faitz d'Alexandre*, extracts translated and presented by O. Collet in *Splendeurs de la cour de Bourgogne*, (Paris, 1995); R. Bossuat, "Vasque de Lucène traducteur de Quinte-Curce," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 8 (1946), pp. 197–245.

beginning of the first book of Maccabees, as well as Flavius Josephus, Augustine, Eusebius, and Orosius.

It was no longer a question of idealizing Alexander, who was compared, to his disadvantage, with Charles the Bold, in matters of devotion, of moderation, and even of prowess. The glorification of the commander was equally present but in another register: if Alexander was able to conquer the Orient with his army, the princes of Burgundy could do so as well, and we find in the background the myth of the crusade of the 14th century. Alexander was no longer a hero of romance but became again a historical figure.

Having started out from history with the ancient biographies of Alexander, the medieval narratives dedicated to the Macedonian returned to history with Vasco de Lucena after passing through the *chanson de geste* and the romance. The matter of Alexander, because of its diversity, gave to medieval clerics the opportunity to try out all possible literary forms. It offered them the biography of a historic personage, already transformed into the hero of a romance by Pseudo-Callisthenes and inscribed in the mythico-encyclopedic body of the marvels of the Orient. It permitted them to exploit all the resources of verse and prose from the beginnings of literature in French to the end of the Middle Ages.

V. Brief Summary of the Romance

For the convenience of the reader, we offer in conclusion, a brief summary of the main lines of the romance:

BRANCH 1: *The Infancy of Alexander*
After a prologue (*laisses* 1–3), the narrative opened with the birth and first years of Alexander (4–8). The child had a dream, which Aristotle interpreted as the announcement of his future grandeur and his early death (9–14). Alexander became Aristotle's pupil and put Nectanebus to death, the magician some claimed was his father (15–16). His first exploit was taming Bucephalus (17–22), before being dubbed along with three hundred other young noblemen (23–25).

The hero answered the challenge of King Nicholas of Caesarea with an attack that ended in Nicholas's death. Upon that occasion, Aristotle chose the twelve peers, and they went on to distinguish themselves during the war and would follow Alexander thereafter in all his adventures (26–74). Athens, threatened with destruction by Alexander, was

saved by a ruse of Aristotle (75–82). The hero returned to Macedonia to stop his father Philip from repudiating Olympias and marrying Cleopatra (83–87).

Darius, King of Persia, challenged Philip and sent his derisory gifts to the young Alexander to show him his contempt: the hero departed to wage war on him with his army; the narrator described his pavilion with the marvelous paintings (88–104). After having taken the proud Rock (105–114), Alexander almost died after a bath in the icy water of Nidele (115–120). He crossed the enchanted mountain that turned the courageous into cowards and the cowards into courageous men (121–123). He discovered in Élite [Eslite] a statue of Nectanebus (124–125) and having conquered the city of Tarsus, gave it to a musician (125–127). He laid siege to Tyre, built on an island. He had a jetty constructed and, on the riverbank, the castle of Scandalion. Duke Balés of Tyre met with a bloody reversal during a first confrontation and called Duke Bétis of Gaza to his aid. The Greeks built a castle in the sea, before Tyre, to block the port (128–157).

BRANCH 2: The Victory over Darius
The second branch opened with the raiding of Gadres (Gaza), a purely epic episode. Alexander sent a troop of seven hundred knights to raid the valley of Josaphat, under the command of Emenidus, accompanied by the twelve peers (minus Clin and Ptolemy) and Samson. When they seized some livestock, the raiders were attacked by Bétis of Gaza and thirty thousand men. Emenidus wanted to ask Alexander for reinforcements. But one after the other, Licanor, Filote, Lioine, Perdicas, Caulus, Aristé and Antiochus, Antigonus, then Samson refused to leave the field of battle. Emenidus then appealed to Corineüs, Festion, a young vassal, and finally to Aridès of Valestre, who agreed to go in search of help, when he had battled to the end of his strength. The struggle with the army of Gaza began and Samson was killed. The Greeks were in a difficult position, but Aridès finally transmitted the message to Alexander, who flew to the aid of his men. The army of Gaza was crushed (1–78). At Tyre, the castle that blocked the port was destroyed. Alexander had a belfry [siege tower] built upon a bridge of ships, from which, by a prodigious jump, he was the first to penetrate the city. Tyre was conquered and its duke killed (79–85). Alexander then received the surrender of Araine (86–90) and conquered Gaza (91–109). Then followed the entrance into Ascalon (Ashkelon) and Jerusalem (111–112).

Darius sent Alexander a gift of grain, symbolic of his power; and Alexander replied (112–117). Alexander haughtily refused any idea of an alliance with Darius, against the advice of Perdicas, and won the battle of the Prés de Paile (118–143). He showed himself magnanimous toward the family of Darius, who had fallen into his power, and rushed in pursuit of the king of Persia (144–149).

BRANCH 3: The Marvels of the Orient
After a prologue and several pieces of advice from Aristotle, the narrative proceeds with the death of Darius, traitorously killed by two of his non-noble servants and revenged by Alexander (1–17). The hero visited the submarine depths in a glass barrel (18–29). He inflicted a first defeat on Porus, King of India, and discovered the marvels of his palace (30–51). There followed the long crossing of the Indian desert further complicated by a monster who harassed the army. In front of the army tormented by thirst, Alexander poured out on the ground the water that the soldier Zephyrus had offered him (52–85).

Alexander disguised himself and played a trick on Porus before inflicting a second defeat on him. Subsequently, he received his surrender and returned him his lands (87–123). He had a wall constructed to imprison Gog and Magog behind the mountains of 'ice' (124–128). He taught Porus a lesson on the duties of a king (129–136).

The hero crossed the Pillars of Hercules, the eastern limit of the known world, but had to make an about-face (137–147). He allowed himself to be sickened in the perilous valley to save his men, but succeeded in leaving it by triumphing through his ruse over the demon, who was imprisoned there (148–163). He discovered some other wonders of India: the redoubtable water-maidens (164–166), the fountains of immortality and resurrection (167–178). He met two old men who proposed to lead him to the prophetic trees of the sun and moon (179–186). He crossed the forest of the flower-maidens (187–200) and found the fountain of youth (201–206). The two magical trees announced to him his imminent death in Babylon (207–216).

Porus rebelled against Alexander, who killed him in single combat (217–240). Antipater and Divinuspater began to plot against the king (241–245). Alexander yielded to the love of Queen Candace before leaving for Babylon (246–273). He explored the heavens in a basket carried into the sky by griffins (274–282). He waged a second battle for Babylon (283–344). The second battle saw his victory and the death of the emir (384–424). The meeting with the Amazons resulted in the

surrender of their queen (425–450). But Antipater and Divinuspater wove a second plot (451–457).

BRANCH 4: The Death of Alexander
The birth of a monster in Babylon was interpreted as the sign of the imminent death of the king (1–3). Alexander was poisoned (4–11). Before dying, he divided his empire among the twelve peers (12–33). After the laments of Roxana, the twelve peers, and Aristotle (34–59), the body was transported to Alexandria, where a sumptuous tomb was built for him (60–70). The narrative closed with an epilogue by the author, Alexandre de Bernay.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ALEXANDER TRADITION IN SPAIN

Z. David Zuwiyya

INTRODUCTION

If news of Alexander's life and deeds did not already circulate in Roman or Visigothic Spain, it almost certainly arrived in the Peninsula during the first hundred years of Arab rule (beginning in 711). This is because the figure of Alexander was closely scrutinized among Muslim scholars as protagonist of a Quranic episode.[1] Furthermore, two of the surviving Arabic Alexander romances cite important sources from North Africa, pertaining to the eighth century,[2] suggesting that the legend traveled from east to west with the expansion of the Islamic Empire and the flow of oriental culture from Baghdad to Cordoba. Quranic commentaries, legends, and fiction associated with Alexander as a sort of Islamic sacred figure constituted a major body of literature present in Spain from the ninth through the seventeenth century. At the same time, we do not find definitive intertextual relationships between this literature of Arab Spain and the surviving romances in the vernacular, which show a strong influence of literature traveling south from France. The two most important romances concerning Alexander in medieval Christian Spain are the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Historia novelada de Alejandro Magno*. The first is an anonymous poem, much more famous than the second work of prose, which remained buried in the unpublished Part 4 of Alfonso X's *General Estoria*, only fairly recently printed.[3] The first pages of our essay will discuss the *Libro de Alexandre* and then we will turn our attention to Alfonso X's version. Finally, we give an overview of Spanish wisdom literature concerning Alexander wherein we do indeed find the influence of the Arabic tradition.

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[1] See the above chapter on the Arabic tradition of Alexander.

[2] See Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends concerning Alexander the Great*, (Binghamton, NY, 2001), p. 45.

[3] The *General Estoria: Cuarta Parte* has still not been printed.

PART I. THE *LIBRO DE ALEXANDRE*

I. *Authorship*

Despite many efforts to attribute authorship to the *Libro de Alexandre*, the work remains anonymous.[4] One position identifies the clergyman Juan Lorenzo de Astorga as author based on the fact that in manuscript O, the *explicit* reads

> Se quisierdes saber quien escreuio este ditado
> Johan Lorenço bon clerigo & ondrado
> Natural de Astorga: de mañas bien temprado
> El día del Iuyzio: Dios sea mio pagado Amen

Menéndez Pidal argued as late as 1961 for Juan Lorenzo's authorship.[5] Lida de Malkiel (1952) accepted Menéndez Pidal's position. However, Michael's discovery[6] of a scribe by the name of Juan Lorenzo in the Leonese Monasterio of Otero de las Dueñas between the years 1286 and 1297 is strong support for the opinion that Juan Lorenzo was the copyist.[7] One of the pillars of Menéndez Pidal's argument was that the *Libro de Alexandre* was originally written in the Leonese dialect. But the discovery of manuscript P led most modern editors to agree that Leonese was not the original language.[8] Undeniably, the work has characteristics from the Leonese dialect, but these are from the scribe.[9]

A second position, stronger than the first, draws from the explicit of the 15th-century manuscript P, which reads

> Sy queredes saber quien fiço esti ditado
> Gonçalo de Berçeo es por nonbre clamado
> Natural de Madrid en Sant Myljan criado
> Del abat Johan Sancheç notario por nombrado.

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[4] Michael reviews the scholarship on authorship as well as on other points of contention regarding the *Alexandre* (1965): 581–595. For authorship see pp. 585–586.

[5] I am indebted to J. Casas Rigall for the part of this study dealing with the authorship and, more broadly, for the present chapter in very many ways.

[6] Michael, "The Alexandre 'Enigma': A Solution," p. 120.

[7] See Ware, N.J. "Gonzalo, Lorenço, Lorente, an Alexandre enigma," *BHS* 44 (1967): 41–43.

[8] Casas Rigall, "Introduction," *Libro de Alexandre*, pp. 30–37.

[9] For a survey of Leonisms, see Llorach (1948), pp. 17–38.

The rediscovery of this manuscript in 1888[10] led scholars such as Dutton (1960), Imondi (2001) and principally, Nelson (1979 and 1991) to attribute the *Alexandre* to the Riojan poet. Nelson published the poem in 1979 with Gonzalo de Berceo's name on the cover, but then in 1999 modified his position to join Uría[11] for whom the *Libro de Alexandre* was composed in two stages by a team of authors to which belonged both Juan Lorenzo and Berceo and which was associated with the University of Palencia.[12] This theory has its root in an inexplicable chiasmus between manuscripts O and P in stanza 1548.[13] In his monumental edition, J. Casas Rigall summarizes the arguments for and against the authorship of Berceo and, ultimately, rejects them[14] as he concurs with Cañas for whom the work is of a single anonymous author.[15] The extensive use of diverse sources and the complexity of the structure seem to suggest that Gonzalo de Berceo could not have been the author.

Faced with the impossibility of a positive identification for the authorship, scholars like Alarcos have attempted to ask about the author's personality.[16] His vast knowledge would suggest that he is a learned cleric with a solid university preparation. Rico considers him to be among the "scholares clerici."[17] Although this individual has evidently traveled to universities and cathedral schools in France and Italy, the allusions to place names in and around Burgos and Soria suggest that this was his home. The language of the text belies "los más típicos rasgos del castellano"[18] with occasional Riojan inflections,

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[10] Pedraza, *Manual de literatura española*, vol. 1, p. 295.

[11] See Uría *Panorama crítico*, (Madrid, 2001), pp. 193–196, and also her "El *Libro de Alexandre* y la Universidad de Palencia," *Actas del I Congreso de Historia de Palencia*, vol. 4. (Palencia, 1987), pp. 431–442 and pp. 421–433.

[12] On multiple authorship, see Uría, "El *Libro de Alexandre* y la Universidad de Palencia," pp. 431–442.

[13] Michael (1986) explains the chiasmus in 1548 as a misunderstood joke the anonymous author played on his principal scribe Walter of Châtillon whose name—Galter—he says is the original that the scribes mistook as Lorente in MS P and Gonzalo en MS O.

[14] Casas Rigall (2007), pp. 21–23.

[15] As per Casas Rigall (2007, p. 24, n. 7), of this opinion are, Alarcos (ed. 1948), Gorog (1970), Echenique (1978), Goldberg (1979–1980), Cañas (ed. 1987), Rico (ed. 1985), Michael (ed. 1986), Greenia (1989), Arizaleta (1999a).

[16] Alarcos, *ILA*, pp. 54–57.

[17] Rico, "La clerecía del mester," pp. 7–8.

[18] Alarcos, *ILA*, p. 45.

which would confirm that the *Libro de Alexandre* originates in this part of Old Castile.[19]

Closely related to the authorship of the *Libro de Alexandre* is the question of the language of the original. The underlying stratus of the *Alexandre*, would seem to be Castilian with eastern elements.[20] This is because many features of oriental dialects present in the poem, such as *esleer* 'escoger,' *mege* 'médico,' *lur* 'su,' *piedes* 'pies,' *pujar* 'subir,' suggest Riojan origin, where the language of Berceo's homeland developed as a bridge between Castilian (center) and Aragonese (east). Rhymes such *morrer* 'morir' with *pereçer* (st. 78) might have suggested the romance of western Spain, but we believe that these are perhaps attributable to poetic license. The arguments are summarized in studies by Alarcos (1981), Nelson (1991), García López (2005), and most completely in Casas Rigall (2007).[21]

II. *Date of Composition*

Another unknown is the date of composition. Long debated among critics, several hypotheses are possible based on verses from the *Alexandre*. For Baist, the praise in st. 2522 for the "señor de Sicilia" in reference to Federico II, who was involved in the Crusade of 1228, suggests the year 1228.[22] The allusion to Damietta in st. 860, a port city near the Nile conquered by Frisians with Spanish participation in 1219, suggests to Alarcos 1219 as a possible date although he leaves his opinion open.[23] Willis and Ware have dated the work according to st. 1778 where the poet gives a date for Darius' death and another date for the moment when he is writing. But the calendar the poet uses as his base has not been identified. Willis has converted them to the Gregorian calendar and has come up with 1201–1202[24] and Ware's calculations give 1204 as the year of composition.[25] Cañas provides an excellent review of all the above arguments and comes to the

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[19] See Casas Rigall (2007, pp. 24–25) for biographical information on the anonymous author.

[20] Casas Rigall (2007), p. 39.

[21] See especially pp. 30–39.

[22] Baist, "Die spanische Litteratur," p. 403.

[23] Alarcos, *ILA*, p. 16.

[24] Willis, *The Debt of the Spanish* Libro de Alexandre, pp. 73–74.

[25] See Ware's "The Date of Composition of the *Libro de Alexandre*," pp. 252–255.

conclusion that the safest bet is to date the *Alexandre* from the first half of the 13th century.[26]

III. *Manuscipts and Fragments*

There are two important manuscripts of the *Libro de Alexandre*. The first, MS O in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid under "signatura" Vit. 5–10, is probably attributable to the scribe Juan Lorenzo de Astorga, from the end of the XIII century. The other, MS P, said to be the most correct,[27] is in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, MS Esp. 488. It is from the XV century. Additionally, Casas Rigall describes three very short fragments.[28] Casas Rigall has transcriptions of the fragments as well as MS O and MS P on his personal website (http://web.usc .es/~fejcr/index.html).

IV. *Sources*

The author of the *Alexander* consulted a variety of sources, both oral and written, and selected the material that best fit his purposes. Often cited are verses 281cd from the *Alexandre*:

> Dexemos de las otras, de Asïa contemos
> A lo que començamos en esso nos tornemos;
> Lo uno que leyemos, el otro que oyemos
> De las mayores cosas recabdo vos daremos.

The method of compiling a narrative from diverse sources is the same as the one adopted by Alfonso X, and which was already being used in Castile by 1252.[29] The source that served as base for the plot of the *Alexandre* was Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis*, as demonstrated by Morel-Fatio (1875) and Willis (1934). The *Roman d'Alexandre*,[30] the *Historia de Preliis* and the *Ilias latina*,[31] in this order, are the three texts to which the author most frequently returns for material. The long digression concerning the Troy material comes from the *Ilias latina*,

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[26] Cañas Murillo, "Didacticismo y composición," pp. 24–31.

[27] Deyermond, *Historia y crítica*, p. 132.

[28] Casas Rigall, *Libro de Alexandre*, pp. 74–75.

[29] Cañas Murillo, "Didacticismo y composición," p. 67.

[30] Willis concludes that the Spanish poet did not use the Alexander de Paris version of the *Roman d'Alexandre*. He says "we may conclude that a version of the B type, alone of the four extant versions of the RAlix, served as a source for the Alexandre" (1935, p. 54).

[31] Casas Rigall, *Libro de Alexandre*, p. 15.

which is the only borrowing from this work. Other works such as the
Etimologías of Saint Isidore, Quintus Curtius, Flavius Josephus, Ovid,
and Caton show the author's rigor in using all available sources.[32] At
the same time, the diverse sources show a solid preparation in the
material and make it possible that anecdotes came to the author as
he wrote without necessarily having to consult a source every step of
the way.[33]

V. *Characterization*

The author portrays the hero through his words and deeds as a man
of both action ("guerrero natural" st. 2184) and wisdom ("sabidor e
letrado" st. 2160). His dual nature is the subject of many verses: "El
prínçep Alexandre que fue rey de Greçia, / que fue de grant esfuerço e
de grant sapiençia" (st. 6) or "El rëy Alexandre, thesoro de proeza/ arca
de sapïença,…" (st. 1557).[34] His passion for wisdom, manifest early in
his youth, evident to Aristotle (st. 52) and to Darius (st. 151) is more
than a personal adornment. According to Rico, as integral part of his
personality, Alexander's wisdom operates at the structural level,[35] and
drives him to explore the most remote confines of the earth, whether
by ship or in submarine or flying machine to "saber el sol dó naçe, el
Nilo ónde mana" (st. 2270) or to find the antípodas (st. 2269, 2291d).
Knowledge is a motivation in itself (st. P 2289ff.) because through
knowledge one gains a place in books and therein attains the true
goal of immortal fame.[36] In this respect, the Spanish author deviates
from his source Gautier de Châtillon to highlight the scholarly goal
behind his conquests: "por descobrir las cosas que yazién escondidas"
(st. 2291).[37] For some scholars, Alexander's academic preparation goes
beyond the conventional quadrivium and largely reflects the medieval
poet's own education.[38] Alexander's passion for geographical explo-
ration and discovery is inspired by the 13th century Spanish cleric's
own thirst for knowledge in the university setting. For Uría (1996), the

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[32] Cañas, *Libro de Alexandre*, p. 34.
[33] For an episode-by-episode list of sources, see I. Michael, *The Treatment of Clas-
sical Material in the* Libro de Alexandre (Manchester, 1970), pp. 287–293.
[34] See also stanza 17.
[35] Rico, *El pequeño mundo*, p. 51
[36] Lida de Malkiel, *La idea de la fama*, pp. 183–184.
[37] See Lida de Malkiel, *La idea de la fama*, p. 184; Rico, *El pequeño mundo*, p. 52.
[38] See Arrizabalaga, "La clerecía de Alexandre," p. 182; Michael, 1970, pp. 41–45.

anonymous author of the *Alexandre* uses the hero's pursuit of knowledge to set up the theme of the fall through overweening pride.

Despite the unique nature of Alexander, the poet's characterization follows an archetype based on traditional kingly qualities such as justice and courage, together with the achievements of the sage.[39] He is the quintessential Spanish epic hero in his amalgamation of honor and fame. At the same time, Alexander nearly perfectly represents the ideals of a knight of Spanish chivalry[40] and his thirst for adventure rivals Amadis de Gaula (Cañas, pp. 60–63). He gains the obedience of those he subjugates through generosity ("franqueza"; O 151cd) and respect for their property and belongings ("¡dávales, por do ivan, firmes seguridades!" (st. 877d).

Regarding the *Alexandre*, there is some disagreement about the whether or not the poet condemns the hero. Willis (1957) and Lida de Malkiel (1962a) maintain that Alexander saves himself in the end through humility and repentance. Lida de Malkiel argues that the immortality Alexander gains through fame, upon which the poet insists to the very end of the poem (st. 2668), functions as a true counterpoint to the cleric's obligatory condemnation of Alexander's excessive pride (1952, p. 184). Michael (1960, 1965, 1970) argues that Alexander is, in fact, condemned for having "reached the ultimate in his sin of pride" (1960, p. 213) and so "we must regard him as consigned to Hell" (1970, p. 280). Willis in a review from 1974 of Michael's book moderated his position but still maintained that "the poet avoided stating without equivocation that Alexader was damned" (39). Similarly, Arizaleta's position (2000) is that "si bien resultaría erróneo afirmar que la figura de Alejandro…es en todo positiva.., sí parece injusto asegurar que el macedonio ha sido firmemente condenado por su soberbia" (11). Another moderate position suggests that the poet chooses to sidestep the problem, and that Alexander's fall is more of an example of the "caída de las glorias mundanas" (Deyermond, p. 134). In the end, we must also recognize the argument that the poet refrains from explicitly resolving the question of his salvation, because, as cleric, he knows that, ultimately, this decision is left to God. The Christianization and medievalization have been studied by Michael (1970).[41]

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[39] Rico, "Sylvae," p. 145.

[40] Lida de Malkiel, *La idea de la fama*, p. 167.

[41] For the Christianization in particular, see Michael, *The Treatment of Classical Material*, pp. 88–142.

VI. *Narrative Techniques and Style*

For the genre of the *Alexandre*, one may first turn to the concept of *mester de clerecía*,[42] which we understand as the duty (*ministerium*) of the educated clergyman[43] whose "purpose is to instruct."[44] With the suggestion that "deve de lo que sabe omne largo seer," the poet acknowledges his duty to share what he learned from study probably at the University of Palencia.[45] The poem's opening verses do not necessarily constitute a manifesto of a new poetic form as was once believed. With his opening words, the author stands apart from what he perceives as the common minstrel, but on occasion shares the minstrel's art and praises him (as in Píndaro st. 232). One does not have to look hard to find features of the minstrel's art, such as epithets ("el rey Alexandre, de la barva onrada" 828a), epic formulas ("llorando de los ojos díxoles su rencura" 401b), and discourse directed at the audience ("sabet que en las pajas el cuer non tenïé" 18d). Cañas studies further epic themes and imagery that the *Alexander* has in common with the *Cantar de mio Cid*.[46]

  The famous mention of the *cuaderna vía* in stanza 2 is the poet's acknowledgement of the poetic form—the quatrain—adapted from well-known verses in Middle Latin and French.[47] The *cuaderna vía* may also refer to the quadrivium, a branch of medieval study, as well as to a book of the quarternary size.[48] From the outset then, the poet playfully defines his genre as he challenges the reader to catch his multiple meaning.[49] The rhyme scheme of the *cuaderna vía* is consonance, although on occasion the poet does use assonance (e.g. st. 2419). As a rule, the rhyme changes with each new stanza, although with exceptions (i.e. st. 2614–2615). The meter is tetradecasyllabic composed of

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[42] Willis calls the *mester de clerecía* a "quasi-genre" ("Mester de clerecía," p. 212).

[43] The *clerecía* the poet of the Alexander possesses is in a sense a double *clerecía*: one ecclesiastic and the second academic. See Arizaleta (2000, pp. 4–5) and Michael (1965, p. 581). According to Willis, *clerecía* is not just erudition "but something closely identified with the *studium* of school or university" ("Mester de clerecía," p. 214).

[44] Willis, "Mester de clerecía," p. 214.

[45] For a survey of the Alexander poet's education at University of Palencia, see C. Arizabalaga, "La clerecía de Alexandre" *RILCE: Revista de filología hispánica* 19:2 (2003): 161–192, especially pp. 162–166.

[46] Cañas, *Libro de Alexandre*, pp. 53–59.

[47] See Gómez Moreno 1988; Rico 1985; Arizaleta 1999.

[48] Rico, "Sylvae," p. 144.

[49] Willis, "Mester de clerecía," p. 217.

two hemistiches, with accent on the sixth syllable, a pause, and after the last tonic syllable one always counts another syllable.

Among the tools that the poet uses to construct this verse are diere-sis, syneresis and apocope,[50] as pointed out by Alarcos in his edition (1948). The consensus now seems to be that synalepha was not a pre-ferred device of this poet.[51] Enjambment is not frequent.[52] The display of poetic mastery also includes amplificatio, abbreviatio, apostrophe (st. 2456–57), prosopopoeia in the personification of doña Natura, abundant descriptio, and ecphrasis (st. 2324: "quierovos la materia un poquiello dexar…").

In a poem of 10,000 verses, it is not unusual that one finds irregular verses.[53] This, despite the fact that the poet tells us that his "mester es sen pecado," which one may understand to mean 'without metri-cal errors.'[54] Thus the poet aspired to metrical regularity but did not achieve it satisfactorily.[55] Other positions state that some irregularities are attributable to scribal error,[56] but in other cases the broken meter is from the author[57] and should not be thought of as mistakes. Before coming to the conclusion that the poet of the *Alexandre* was incapable of producing a regular meter, Cañas Murillo sugggests that we need a better understanding of the expectations a poet of the 13th century imposed on him or herself with respect to metrical regularity (91).

More than half of the *Libro de Alexandre*[58] consists of digressions[59] in which the poet displays his knowledge of the branches of clerecy (grammar, logic, rhetoric, medicine, music, astronomy, *física*) listed in the poem's opening (st. 39–46). Some scholars are hesitant to use the word digression and prefer to see these passages as an integral part of

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[50] On the importance of apocope for the dating of the work, see E. Franchini "El IV Concilio de Letrán, la apócope extrema y la fecha de composición del *Libro de Alexandre*."

[51] Rico, "La clerecía del mester," pp. 20–23.

[52] Casas Rigall, *Libro de Alexandre*, p. 53.

[53] See Baldwin, "Irregular Versification in the *Libro de Alexandre*," pp. 298–313.

[54] Rico, "Sylvae," p. 144.

[55] Henríquez Ureña, "La cuaderna vía," p. 46.

[56] See Arnold, "Notes on the Versification of the *Libro de Alexandre*," p. 245.

[57] Pellen, "Le Métier de clergie," p. 223.

[58] For Michael, "the digressive material constitutes a third of the whole poem" (1970, p. 274).

[59] Willis, "Mester de clerecía," p. 219.

the plot line.[60] For example, the interpolation of the Trojan material serves to motivate the Macedonian troops for battle.

The poet draws in his audience by using metaphors and similes from the countryside: "Mas el mesturador es de mala farina" (st. 909d) "más negra que la graja" (st. 869d), which he says in reference to a Persian custom. He also endears himself to the reader with colloquial expressions: "…non les valió tres figas" (st. 337c) and "…de can que mucho ladra nunca vos d'él temades" (st. 787d). The play on words is a common technique to maintain the reader's interest: "Por ojo lo veemos que somos aojados" (st. 835d). On occasion he uses irony, as in Alexander's comment, "Grant honrra me acresçe en tal dona tomar" (P st. 1281) when the king means exactly the opposite, i.e. that marrying her would diminish his renown. Another favorite recourse of the poet is the hyperbole: "¡Más valién los aniellos en que omne los ata / que non farién las rendas de toda Damïata!" (st. 860cd) or "non vos podrién dar cuenta tales diez escrivanos" (st. 871d).

VII. *Narrative Structure*

The poem may be divided into three basic sections: the introduction consisting of six stanzas in which the poet invites the audience to lend an ear to an ostensibly beautiful recitation of Alexander's gests delivered in a highly polished art form that will benefit him/her in the way of pleasure and worldly knowledge; the extensive main body of the poem; and the conclusion—also consisting of six stanzas—in which the poet exhorts the audience to use Alexander's example for their own salvation and thanks them for listening and begs of them to pay him for his efforts with an Our Father in his name. The main exposition itself may be organized into three parts. The first—Alexander's birth and youth—ends with his coronation. The narration of Alexander's conquests of Persia and India along with everything along the way, marked by great battle scenes, constitutes the second part. The poem reaches its culmination as Alexander moves beyond conquest to exploration of the heavens, the seas, and the most remote corners of the earth. Ambassadors from all the nations of the earth converge in Babylonia to pay homage to Alexander precisely as Nature's conspiracy against Alexander reaches its climax. Each of these narrative

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[60] For example, Rico in his *Pequeño mundo*; Cañas, and Deyermond.

units may then be subdivided in three parts corresponding to a well defined beginning, middle, and end so that, in its composition, the poem reflects the 13th-century perception of divine order on earth as Cañas brilliantly argues.[61]

VIII. *Meaning*

From the moment of his birth, aligned with the stars to occur at the propitious moment, Alexander appears destined to be the ideal monarch. Legitimate in the eyes of his people, and favored by God, Alexander expands his kingdom, enriches his men, and gains respect—if not love—among those he conquers. Willis (1956) and later Michael (1970) saw many positive qualities in the hero and suspected that the poet conceived of the *Alexandre*, at least in part, as a *speculum principum*. The portrayal of the perfect king is developed to the point that Alexander's own humanity betrays him. He makes mistakes. His temerarious behavior alerts his men that he is at the edge of self-destruction. He puts to death at least one subject unjustly. He fails to punish Darius's second assassin. His success in conquest drives him to the physical limits of the earth wherein he threatens Nature with his arrogant belief that nothing shall be withheld from him. Unable to respect human boundaries, he sets himself up for defeat and death at the hand of treason.

Medieval didacticism is articulated in the theme of *contemptus mundi*: when the hero places all his efforts in this life at the expense of the afterlife, he finds himself poisoned and forced to renounce his former life ("arrenuncio el mundo, a Dios vos acomiendo" st. 2645d). Although the consensus among critics is that the main thrust of the poet's orthodox Christian message is *contemptus mundi*, there is no denying the poet's own admiration for Alexander's career, which one perceives in his sympathy and validation of the hero's overall conduct.[62]

The act of reading itself can be viewed as an important theme. According to Agnew, the protagonist of the *Alexandre* misreads many "texts," taken in the broadest sense, from inscriptions, to historical examples, to events in his own life and images in his own tent.[63] In light of Alexander's inability to fully interpret a text ("se queda a

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[61] Cañas, *Libro de Alexandre*, pp. 36–49.
[62] Lida de Malkiel, "*La idea de la fama*," p. 196.
[63] Agnew, "'Commo en libro abierto,'" p. 174.

medias," says Agnew),[64] as one would expect of a brilliant student, the genius often associated with the famous pupil of Aristotle is cast into doubt. Agnew's argument implies an ironic perspective on behalf of the poet who, in his praise of Alexander's intellect, is aware, and expects the reader to be aware, that Aristotle's prized student is essentially an academic failure.

Bly and Deyermond (1972) see the poem's complex structure as an orchestration of *figura* that unites the poem typologically within the themes of treason, fallen greatness, *cobdiçia* [covetousness]. They point to a number of components—Troy, Babel, the bestiary, Darius, imagery on tent panels and on shields—that function as figural types that the hero could have recognized, but, tragically, fails to perceive because he has become overpowered by *cobdiçia*.

Part 2: Other Spanish Medieval Texts dealing with Alexander

Version of the Alexander Romance in the General Estoria (GE)

Alfonso X el Sabio includes in Part Four of his *GE* a full-length version of the Alexander romance in prose. It merits special attention because it comes to us in an autographed manuscript straight from the royal chambers. It is archived at the Biblioteca Vaticana as MS *Urb. Lat. 539 (olim 679).* Alfonso's text, which has come to be known as the *Historia novelada de Alejandro Magno (HNAM)* consists of 96 chapters and is present in manuscripts U V X Y Z of the *GE*.[65]

The modern editors of *HNAM* have shown in their monumental edition, including both Castilian and corresponding Latin texts,[66] that Alfonso used principally a J[2] version of the *Historia de preliis* that was contaminated with the J[1], while at the same time using the *Alexandreis* of Gautier de Châtillon for some parts such as chapter 29 dealing with Alexander's battle with Darius and chapter 49, which relates Alexander's first letter to the queen of the Amazons (*HNAM*, pp. 28–29).

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[64] Agnew, "'Commo en libro abierto,'" p. 171.

[65] See *HNAM*, pp. 24–25 for manuscript locations, reference numbers, and folios.

[66] For a study of Alfonso's translation, see Zuwiyya "The Modernization of a Prose Alexander in the *General estoria* of Alfonso X, el Sabio," *MIFLC Review* 13 (2007): 81–94.

Solalinde says that Alfonso also consulted an Arabic source entitled *Estoria de Egypto* by Ibrahim Ibn Wasif Šah al-Misri.[67]

Given its source material, the *HNAM* is similar in content to other well-known versions of the *Historia de preliis*. The events surrounding the Egyptian king Nectanebus and Olympias are well developed. The morally conservative Spanish king portrays Olympias as an honest victim of Nectanebus' trickery. The night of Alexander's conception, the narrator tells us that the two slept apart "cada uno en su cama" (53). Following the *Historia de preliis* tradition, Alfonso's version includes all of the major episodes that one would expect, that is, Alexander's youth up until the death of his father Philip, the campaigns against Darius of Persia and Porus of India, the Amazon women, the events associated with the *De Indiae Miraculis*, the visits with the gymnosophists and the Brahmans, the encounter with Candace, his arrival and death by poison at the hand of Jobas in Babylonia, etc. Some common episodes have been shortened because the king says they are not to be believed ("eran cosas que no creeríen los omnes" (211), such as the descent into the sea in the bathosphere and the ascent into the sky with the griffons.

At the same time, there are some episodes that set Alfonso's version apart from the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Historia de preliis*. The arrival of Alexander into Jerusalem is very well developed. It begins with the vision of the bishop of the Jews named Jado who commands his clergyman to dress in white and to open the doors to the city for Alexander. From Alexander's perspective, this reception in Jerusalem, together with a reading from the book of Daniel, confirm a dream he had by which he says he came to know the "obispo del cielo" (87) in reference to a monotheist God. But by no means is the Spanish monarch stripping the Alexander tradition of its pagan roots. The *HNAM* ties Alexander closer to his Egyptian demi-god father than other Spanish texts. For instance, in one dream Amon visits Alexander to advise him to go to Darius dressed as his own messenger (101), and in another, he tells him to protect his troops from the poison arrows of king Albira by using a special herb as cure (210).

The characterization of the hero in the prose *HNAM* also diverges from the *Alexandre* poem. In the *HNAM*, God bestows upon Alexander his favor. For example, after surviving a terrible bout with thirst,

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[67] A. Solalinde (ed.), *General estoria* (Madrid, 1930), vol. 1, p. 13, n. 3.

God showed Alexander many of his hidden secrets "por provar qué quisiera el que en punto nasciesse Alexandre, que venciesse a todas las cosas del mundo con que se tomasse, e que el so poder de Dios en todas cosas es egualmente tan muy poderoso que non ay más mester" (175). The much longer passage in *HNAM* (but absent from the Latin source) providing divine interpretation of the strange events that happened to Alexander in the Indian wilderness is an intercalation on the part of Alfonso X.[68] However, as we said, the incipient Christian perspective of events is not consistent throughout the *HNAM*. After all, Alexander calls himself "fijo del dios Amón e de la reyna Olimpias" (194) and, soon after the above commentary, the narrator writes that upon Poro's death, Alexander "fizo ý sus sacrificios grandes a sos dioses" (179) without comment.[69]

With respect to the approval or condemnation of Alexander's life and deeds, one finds that the narrator occupies a neutral position, perhaps deriving from the historical perspective offered by *HNAM*'s setting in a work of universal history. The Macedon's achievements speak for themselves: "metió so el so señorío veynte e siete yentes de los bárbaros," (221) as the narrator comments at the conclusion of the work without feeling obliged to judge. The moralizing tone one finds in the *Libro de Alexandre*, if present at all in the *HNAM*, is underplayed. At the same time, one occasionally finds comments pointing to the protagonist's weaknesses such as "vencedor fue de todos los omnes, mas él fue vençudo d'una poca de poçón" (221).

Libro de los buenos proverbios

Manuscripts
1) MS L-III-2 library of the Escorial, which Kasten says is early 13th century, earlier than the other MS by "perhaps a century."[70] The *Buenos proverbios* is found on fols. 26c–67d.
2) MS h-III-1 library of the Escorial. 15th century.

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[68] "Mostráronse aquella noche al grand Alexandre cerca aquel estanco muchas de las maravillas, que nuestro señor Dios tenié encubiertas…e porende nuestro señor Dios mostról aquella noche allí aquellas maravillas," González Rolán (ed.), *HNAM*, pp. 173, 175.

[69] See also the description of the fairies Cloto, Láchassis, and Antropos and pagan order in the episode of the trees of the sun and moon (*HNAM*, 198).

[70] Kasten, "Poridat de las poridades," p. 30.

Modern Editions

H. Knust published the *Buenos proverbios* in 1879,[71] and H. Sturm in 1970.

The *Libro de los buenos proverbios* is an anonymous Castilian translation of the Arabic *Kitāb adab al-falāsifa* by the ninth-century author Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (808–873),[72] with a family background tied to the Nestorian Syriac church.[73] It is similar in content to another well-known work of wisdom literature, the *Poridat de las poridades* but not directly related, according to Sturm.[74] Of Hunayn's life we have extensive knowledge because he was one of the most famous intellectuals of the ninth century.[75] Of particular pertinence to the *Buenos proverbios*, we know that Hunayn was the head of a ninth-century Baghdadi school of translators, Bayt al-Ḥikma, a post to which he was appointed by the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmun (d. 832) for his experience translating Greek works into Syriac and Arabic.[76] Hunayn had access to the Alexander romance at least in the form of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, from where he drew the correspondence between Alexander and his tutor. Drawn up in this light, the *Buenos proverbios* depicts a wise king Alexander surrounded by sages such as Aristotle. Because this image appealed to citizens during the reign of Alfonso X, the Wise King used the *Buenos proverbios* in his version in the *GE* Part 4.[77] The sections most relevant to the study of the Alexander romance fall in the third part of the work in which, according to Gómez Redondo, the reader perceives the utility of wisdom as embodied in the figure of Alexander.[78] In epistolary form, Hunayn transmits instruction—the quest for *saber* and its applications—both in the form of proverbs and straight narrative, wherein the subject

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[71] In Knust's edition the chapter dealing with Alexander material begins on p. 36.

[72] For a study of the relationship of the *Buenos proverbios* with other wisdom texts, see B. Taylor, "Old Spanish Wisdom Texts: Some relationships" *La corónica* 14.1 (1985), 71–85.

[73] In the Castilian his name appears as "Joaniçio, fijo de Ysaacc," from Sturm's edition, p. 43.

[74] Sturm, *Libro de los buenos proverbios*, p. 13.

[75] See G. Strohmaier's article on Hunayn b. Isḥāq in the *Encylopaedia of Islam*. vol. 3. (Leiden, 1971), pp. 598–601.

[76] See G. Bergsträsser, *Hunain ibn Ishak und seine Schule* (Leiden, 1913) for a listing of the school's translations.

[77] Kasten, "Poridat de las poridades," p. 182.

[78] Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, p. 451.

concerns everyday human relations and governance. The theme turns to the "arte consolatoria" in the two letters that Alexander writes to his mother, which serve as prologue to Alexander's well-known death scene in which philosophers surround the king's tomb and offer their meditations upon death. Throughout these passages we find material from the Alexander romance. The nature of the Spanish proverb in *Buenos proverbios* and the enrichment of Spanish proverbial material through translation has been studied by Mettman. As stated above, Knust and Sturm published the *Buenos proverbios*, but the Arabic manuscripts remain unpublished.[79]

Alexander's chapter in the *Libro de los buenos proverbios* begins "Estos son los ensennamientos de Alixandre."[80] But some of the letters between Alexander and Aristotle are located in Aristotle's chapter immediately preceding and are set apart with the phrase "Este es el escripto [de las cartas] que embiava Aristótiles a Alexandre."[81] Hunayn offers several explanations as to why he is called el "sennor de los dos cabos."[82] Without a frame story, Hunayn enters directly into question/answer between Alexander and Aristotle, apparently in random order. Sometimes, it is Alexander who outwits his master, as in why he chooses to personally enter into combat rather than sending his men (37). Other times, Alexander tells anecdotes to his men, as in why the poor man makes a better husband (38), or asks a question of Plato (38). Some of the material is common in the Alexander romance, such as when Alexander meets the king stirring bones in the cemetery and finds that there is no difference between the bones of kings and paupers (39). Alexander writes two letters to his mother to comfort her upon his death (40–41). The first letter is the one in which he tells her to organize a dinner to be attended only by those who have not lost someone dear. The second is more lyrical than the first with metaphors about trees, flowers, the moon, the stars, etc. (42). The language is sometimes very awkward suggesting that the scribe is

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[79] A. Lowenthal published an edition and translation of the Hebrew version, *Sefer Musre ha-philosophim ("Sinnsprüche der Philosophen") Aus dem Arabischen des Honein ibn Ishak ins Hebraische übersetzt von Jehuda ben Salomo Alcharisi* (Frankfurt, 1896) and *Honein Ibn Ishak Sinnsprüche der Philosophen. Nach der hebräischen Übersetzung Charisi's ins Deutsche übertragen und erlautert* (Berlin, 1896).

[80] Knust, *Mittheilungen*, p. 36. Sturm divides the *Buenos proverbios* differently than Knust. In Sturm's edition, the Alexander material occupies chapters XIV–XXVI, pp. 93–137.

[81] Knust, *Mittheilungen*, p. 33.

[82] Knust, *Mittheilungen*, p. 36; see also Sturm edition, p. 99.

probably translating from an Arabic text that has difficult passages.[83] The conclusion of the work is long and somewhat repetitive. Alexander's coffin, prepared in Babylonia, arrives in Alexandria where his mother receives it (45). Standing around the coffin, the philosophers take turns exchanging words of wisdom (45–50). Eurapica, daughter of King Adaramis, together with some members of Alexander's entourage and more philosophers pose some rhetorical questions (51–53). Upon his burial, the philosophers direct their words to Alexander's mother. Aristotle also writes to her (54–56). Before ending, the narrative repeats the scene of the philosophers around the coffin, this time mentioning that there are eighteen philosophers (56–59).

Bocados de oro o Bonium

The Castilian *Bocados de oro* is a translation of *Mujtar al-Hikam wamahasim* [select maxims and the best sayings] by the Syrian physician and philosopher Abu l-Wafaʾ Mubaššir b. Fātik's (1019–1097).[84] Knust, the work's first editor (1879), and later scholars date the *Bocados* to the beginning years of Alfonso X's reign.[85] Each chapter in Mubaššir's *Mujtar* is divided into two parts: in the first, and more historical part, he describes the life of a given philosopher, and in the second, much expanded, one finds maxims and sayings attributed to the philosopher. Alexander is presented as one of the philosophers and he is given the most extensive biography, but the part corresponding to his wise sayings is comparatively brief. Gómez Redondo divides the work into three parts according to theme (*saber, mundo*, and *seso*).[86] Alexander's chapter, XIV, falls in the second part. Together with Aristotle's chapter (XIII), it constitutes the nucleus of *Bocados*.[87] As the paradigm of the virtuous monarch, Alexander culminates a progression of

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[83] See Knust, *Mittheilungen*, p. 44.

[84] Meissner published the Arabic original with German translation and notes. Abd al-Rahman Badawi published the Arabic text with title, *Mubaššir Ibn Fātik, Los bocados de oro (Mujtar al-Ḥikam)*, (Madrid, 1958). Chapters 13–15 concern Aristotle and Alexander in Badawi's Arabic edition (pp. 178–251).

[85] Those agreeing with Knust are: Amador de los Ríos (*Historia crítica de la literatura española*, vol. 3, Madrid (facsimile ed.), 1969, 544, n. 2; W. Mettmann in "Neues zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der sogenannten *Bocados de oro*," in *Wort und Text. Festschrift für F. Schalk*, (Frankfurt am Main, pp. 115–132.) Crombach dates the work slightly later to ca. 1280 (1971, p. 21).

[86] Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, p. 460.

[87] Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, p. 466. Chapter XIV corresponds to Knust, pp. 277–316, and Crombach, pp. 117–138. Alexander also appears in dialogue with Diógenes in Chapter X, Knust, pp. 143–156.

philosophers who show how one realizes knowledge. Mubaššir used
the *PC* (δ recension)[88] as his source. [89]

The chapter in *Bocados* titled, "De los dichos y castigamientos de
Alexandre, el filósofo y sabio, que fue rey de todo el mundo,"[90] begins
with the treason of Caus, who fell in love with Alexander's mother,
and subsequently murdered Philip. Little information is provided
about Alexander's schooling with Aristotle. Upon his father's death
Alexander gives an impressive coronation speech in which he aligns
himself with the disenfranchised Macedonians. Following are several
of Alexander's letters, such as the one to the "adelantados" or gover-
nors throughout his reign in which he urges them to abandon their
traditional idols and embrace monotheism. Then he sends letters to
his knights commanding them to unite and to arm themselves. His
attention turns to Darius and he sends the Persian king's messengers
back with the famous saying, 'the hen that lays the golden eggs has
died." Soon he conquers all the lands of Occident and in the seventh
year of his reign he founds Alexandria in Egypt. He moves on to Sem
and Armenia and confronts Tyre whose people have received threats
from Darius. Then he exchanges letters and gifts with Darius. He takes
mountain villages among them Quila, whose obedience he assures
without entering the village. The first battle against Darius takes place
at an unnamed frozen river. After his defeat and escape, Darius enters
one of his temples and considers surrender. As Darius flees towards
Porus in India, Alexander approaches, but not before Beso and Naba-
zenes kill the Persian king. Alexander embalms Darius' body and gives
him a royal burial. Respecting Darius' wishes he arranges to marry
Darius' daughter and places Darius's brother on the Persian throne.
He burns all the books of the gentiles and orders translations into
Greek of the books of astronomy, science (física), and philosophy and
sends them home. He kills the priests of the gentiles and populates
the Orient.

During this campaign a letter from his mother, Requia, arrives in
which she warns him against falling into the sin of arrogance, and, at

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[88] González Rolán, *HNAM*, p. 16.
[89] González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte offer a collation of the Castilian
version taken from the Crombach edition with a Latin text pp. 7–59, "El castellano
como puente," pp. 7–59.
[90] Chapter XIV, Knust edition, pp. 277–316. See also Knust, pp. 416 and ff. for a
comparison of Alexander's chapter with a Latin text (MS 123 of the Arundel manu-
scripts of the British Library).

the same time, requests an inventory of his wealth to be sent to her by way of a knight on horseback.

His next campaign is against Porus, King of India. The translation of Mubaššir reproduces Alexander's letter to Porus, but only alludes to Porus' "dura e brava" answer. Porus attacks with elephants and Alexander defends himself with brazen images. Finally, Alexander kills Porus in single combat after the Indian king is distracted by his own men. Together with Darius, Porus functions as a negative model of conduct with focus on his excessive pride ("soberbia"), from which sin Alexander is spared in Mubaššir's version, perhaps through his interaction with sages, as in the next scene wherein we find Alexander in philosophical conversation with the "barhemios" [Brahmans]. The letter concerning the wonders of India appears only in brief mention. The next episode is Alexander's encounter with the tribes of Çuy, whose king sends Alexander his throne along with extravagant gifts. But Alexander insists that they follow the laws ("derechas leyes"), which refer to monotheism. He travels from there through the lands of the Orient and the Turks and establishes villages and assesses each one annual tribute before he returns west. Another episode tells how Alexander observed a judge in a small village. The plaintiffs were two men arguing over a treasure, which neither of them wanted.[91] Later, after visiting another people who lived with their graves above their heads, Alexander foresees his own death after a nosebleed seems to fulfill the prediction of his astrologers. With this news he writes to his mother to console her upon his death. It is the letter at the conclusion of which he tells her to organize a meal intended only for those who have not lost someone dear. Following is his death—by natural causes—and burial with brief sayings of philosophers. When the coffin arrives in Alexandria, his mother delivers a final speech praising her son's wisdom. Attached to the end is the episode of the old man stirring bones who refuses to pay attention to the passing army of the world conqueror. The narrator closes with an enumeration of statistics concerning Alexander's life and death. He describes Alexander as short and blond, with one blue eye and one black, possessing sharp teeth and a face like a lion.

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[91] The episode of the novel sentence imposed by this judge is also present in *Islamic Legends* (Zuwiyya, 2001), p. 159.

In Crombach's edition one finds a chapter break with new title, "Los castigos de Alexandre." However, in Knust's edition there is no break. This second part of the chapter is not presented as a narrative but rather as a list of forty-six sayings attributed to Alexander.[92]

Poridat de las poridades

Manuscripts

Kasten says that the best manuscript is MS M Library of the Escorial L.III.2 on fols. 1a–26b. MS M also contains the *Libro de los buenos proverbios*, the *Ensennamientos de Alexandre*, and the *Ensennamiento de Diogenis*. There is also MS L of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisbon, Ilum. MS No. 46. Both M and L are later 13th century. Grinaschi says that the oldest manuscript of the *Poridat* is the illuminated MS 46 in Lisbon.

MS N of the Escorial H.III.1, 15th century; and O of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, 6545, and a 14th-century fragment found in the *Bocados de oro*.[93]

Alfonso X el Sabio in his *General Estoria*: Cuarta parte apparently copies a version of the *Poridat* and gives it the title "*Libro de los enseñamientos y castigos que Aristóteles envió a Alejandro*, llamado también *Poridat de poridades*"[94] (emphasis mine).

The *Poridat de las poridades* and the *Secretum secretorum* both go back to the Arabic *Sirr al-asrar*. The Arabic *Sirr* is available in English translation (Steele, 1920) and in an Arabic edition (Manzalaoui, 1977).[95] According to Manzalaoui (1974), the first Arabic version emerged from a series of texts deriving from Classical culture. It is generally attributed to Yahya ibn al-Batrik (d. 815; sometimes written Yuhanna ibn al-Batrik for Johannes), a Nestorian Christian translator working in the court of Khalif al-Ma'mun at the beginning of the

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[92] *Flores de filosofía* contains similar material to the *Bocados de oro*, but Alexander is not mentioned, and thus the *Flores* is not within the scope of this study. See Knust for description of MSS and fragments of *Flores de filosofía*. For a modern edition, see *Dos obras didácticas y dos leyendas* (Knust, 1878), pp. 11–83.

[93] See Kasten, "Poridat de las poridades," p. 187 as well as the Introduction to his 1957 edition for a list and description of three other MSS (pp. 186–190).

[94] Kasten explains that the Alfonso's title is inexact and that work he reproduces is, in fact, the *Libro de los buenos proverbios*. Kasten (1957) says it is unlikely that Alfonso had a text of the *Poridat* in front of him when writing this part of the *GE* (p. 12).

[95] For an in-depth study of the early Arabic versions and their interrelationships, see M. Grignaschi (1976).

ninth century.[96] Yahya suggests in one passage that he is translating into Arabic from a Syriac translation of a Greek text (Kasten, 1952). The chain of transmission is typical for early ninth-century Arabic literature: Greek to Syriac to Arabic. Grignaschi casts doubt on the claim that Yahya b. al-Batrik's translation represents the original Arabic version—the archetype—of the *Sirr* because for him the date cannot be other than 950–975, some one hundred and fifty years later.[97] Kasten describes the literary descendants of the *Sirr al-asrar* as forking into two main branches, each from a different variant of the *Sirr*.[98] One is the Latin translation done by Philip of Tripoli, *Secretum secretorum*, known to follow the original closely. This is the so-called "Eastern" and "longer" version widely dispersed throughout Europe, which Steinschneider and Grignaschi call the B redaction. It is found in most of the Arabic manuscripts. Roger Bacon was the first editor[99] of the B version and more recently Badawi published it.[100]

The second branch is the shorter "Western" version to which Steinschneider assigns the letter A. This text was translated into Latin during the first half of the 12th century (probably between 1135–1153) by the converso Johannes Hispalensis (originally Ibn Dawud) who worked for Dominicus Gundisalvi in the context of the Toledo school

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[96] More information on this translator is available in D.M. Dunlop (1959), "The Translations of al-Bitriq and Yahya (Yuhanna) b. al-Bitriq," *JRAS*, 145–150.

[97] "Nous considérions que le KS [*Kitab as-siyasah*] et le SS ne pouvaient dater que de la période 950–975" (1976, p. 12). See also his "L'origine et les métamorphoses du *Sirr al-asrar*," p. 87, in which Yahya does not appear.

[98] For the relationship of the two manuscript branches amongst themselves and with their hypothetical original, see Grignaschi 1976, pp. 11–12, where he summarizes the diverse opinions.

[99] *Opera hactenus inedita*. Fascicule V., ed. Steele.

[100] Adapted from Grignaschi, the contents of the B redaction are

Book One: On the different types of kings

Book Two: On the condition of being a King, his traits and manners, how he should conduct himself in all circumstances

Book Three: On Justice, and how the King perfects it, and uses it to govern

Book Four: On the ministers, and how to govern them

Book Five: On the secretaries and their ranks

Book Six: On the ambassadors, their traits, and how to manage their missions

Book Seven: On how to tax one's subjects, and regulate the customs' agents

Book Eight: On how to govern in general, the nobles, the knights, and their subordinates

Book Nine: On how to wage war, the stratagems and the precautions, on battle preparations, on how to choose the propitious moment to begin a war

Book Ten: On the science of talismans, the mysteries of the stars, the properties of stones, plants and other useful things

of translators. Johannes chose passages for his translation that dealt specifically with dietetics. Judah al-Harizi translated the A version into Hebrew also in Spain as the *Sod-ha-sodot*[101] at the beginning of the 13th century. The Castilian translation is from the middle of the 13th century (Kasten, 1957, p. 11) and was most likely based on an Arabic original.[102] It is a didactic prose work that we know as the *Poridat de las poridades*, the first translation of the *Secretum* into the vernacular. Amador de los Ríos studied the work in 1863, as did Knust in 1869. Kasten edited the *Poridat* in 1957.[103] Of the *Poridat* it is purported that perhaps James the Conqueror himself made a translation into Catalán called *Libro de la saviesa* at some point before 1276, so this date serves as a tentative *terminus ad quem* for the Spanish *Poridat* (Kasten, p. 182).

The content of the *Poridat* is divided into an introduction and eight books or *tractados*. The work pretends to be Aristotle's response to Alexander's request for advice on how to rule the kingdoms he has conquered. The letter, originally in Greek, was written in letters of gold and encoded so that only Alexander would understand. Aristotle discusses kingship, kingly conduct, justice, royal administration, and ambassadors of the king, the waging of war, and the virtues of precious stones, among other things.[104] In two manuscripts of the *Poridat* (M N) the last chapter, dealing with lapidary, has been glossed and

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[101] Edited and translated by Kasten.

[102] Kasten in his 1957 edition says that the language would place the work at the end of the reign of Fernando III or the beginning of Alfonso X. No page number given.

[103] S.G. Armistead reviews Kasten's edition and offers some corrections in *RPh* 14.1 (1960), 99–102.

[104] Adapted from M. Grignaschi, who is following the A redaction in the Warn MS (1976, p. 30)

Book One: On the types of kings

Book Two: On the condition of the King, his manners and personal traits, how he should conduct himself in all circumstances concerning him

Book Three: On Justice, through which the King obtains perfection, and which he uses to govern

Book Four: On his ministers, secretaries, assistants, soldiers and how the King should govern them

Book Five: On ambassadors and their messengers, how to regulate their missions

Book Six: On how to govern, in general, the soldiers and knights and all those of inferior ranks

Book Seven: On how to conduct war, how to make stratagems, and how to take precautions. How to amass armies and how to choose the moment according to the constellations

Book Eight: On the esoteric sciences, such as the secrets of talismans, the spirits, the properties of stones, plants and animals, medicine and how to use anti-venoms

reflects similar enumerations in the *Libro de Alexandre*. In synopsis, Kasten compares the contents of tractado VIII across the manuscripts and includes the Arabic and Hebrew texts.

Secreto de los secretos

Manuscripts

Manuscript 9428. Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. Post 1369. Fols. 32–52 contain the Secreto material.[105] Edited by Jones as *The* Secreto de los secretos: *A Castilian Version* (s.d.).

According to Jones, Philip of Tripoli's "Eastern" longer version of the *Secretum secretorum* appears in versions in the four main dialects of the Iberian Peninsula: Castilian, Catalán, Aragonese, and Portuguese (9).[106] The recommendations that Aristotle sends to Alexander concerning all aspects of kingship and kingly conduct, subject of the entire work, are similar to other versions. In fact, there is little in this version of the *Secreto* that does not also appear in the other peninsular texts of the *Secreto* as Jones demonstrates in his very useful tabulation of the results of his four manuscript collation (11).[107] Aristotle addresses his letter to Alexander and frequently invokes the king in apostrophe, but Alexander never appears as subject or character in any narrative part and never speaks, so we will not concern ourselves further with the *Secreto*.

Juan García de Castrojeriz and Other Anecdotal Material

Lida de Malkiel says that Juan García de Castrojeriz's *Glosas al Regimiento de príncipes* is "el más rico anecdotario de Alejandro en lengua castellana medieval" (1962b, pp. 413–414).

There are also 20 'exemplos' pertaining to Alexander in the *Libro de los exemplos por a.b.c.* edited by Sánchez de Vercial. To a lesser extent there are anecdotes in *Espéculo de los legos*, in *Tratado de moral*, and in *Flor de virtudes*.

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[105] Jones, p. 8.

[106] See Jones for a description of the manuscripts and their contents, as well as a comparison (pp. 10–56).

[107] The Castilian MS 9428 stands apart from the other peninsular texts only in that the elderly Aristotle begs to be excused for being unable to travel to give Alexander his advice in person.

ALEXANDER LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AND SCOTS

David Ashurst

> But fortune ys so varyaunte, and the wheele so mutable, that there ys no constaunte abydynge. And that may be preved by many olde cronycles, as of noble Ector of Troy and Alysaunder, the myghty conquerroure, and many mo other; whan they were moste in her royalté, they alyght passyng lowe. And so faryth hit by me.[1]

Thus Sir Thomas Malory, in what is commonly known as the *Morte Darthur* and is surely the most magnificent work of literature produced in England towards the end of the Middle Ages, makes Sir Lancelot invoke the name and fate of Alexander to comfort himself for being forced to leave Britain. Through the very brevity of this passing reference we glimpse Alexander as he was most characteristically seen in Malory's day: it is an image of a tremendous loss that may have its ethical complexities, just as the predicament of Lancelot has its ethical dimension, but which cannot adequately be explained other than by recourse to the caprice of fortune; and beyond the image of loss, taking logical priority and chiming with Lancelot's sense of himself as a worshipful knight, is the overarching image of Alexander's power and majesty.

Almost at the other end of the timeline of medieval literature in English we find a similar passing reference to Alexander's majesty, in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Widsið*. Here the fictional narrator presents us with a list of the mighty kings about whom he has heard:

> Þara wæs [H]wala hwile selast
> ond Alexandreas ealra ricost
> monna cynnes, ond he mæst geþah
> þara þe ic ofer foldan gefrægen hæbbe.[2]

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[1] Vinaver (1971), p. 697. *preved* [demonstrated], *her royalté* [their magnificence], *alyght passyng* [fell extremely], *faryth hit by* [it goes with].

[2] *Widsið* ll. 14–17, in Hill (2009), pp. 31–36. "Of those, Hwala was for a time the best and Alexander was the mightiest of all mankind, and of those about whom I have learned on earth, he prospered the most."

Widsið is found only in the 10th-century manuscript known as the Exeter Book,[3] but the poem itself, in its original form, is likely to be a good deal older than the manuscript and is perhaps from as early as the 7th century (Chambers 1912, p. 178, and Malone 1962, p. 116). The fact that this passage names Alexander at the start of a list of Germanic rulers and their peoples may suggest that the lines are an interpolation, but there is no reason to conclude that the addition, if it is such, must have been effected in the late Anglo-Saxon period: as Fulk and Cain (2005, p. 219) remind us in connection with this poem, the Age of Bede in the early 8th century is at least as likely a time as the 10th century for a monkish poet to have culled names from Latin as well as other sources. In any case, it is certain that by the time of the Exeter Book, and perhaps much earlier, there is an English reference that presents Alexander, free from any taint of criticism, in all his power and glory. The unusual spelling of the name, perhaps conflating the forms "Alexander" and "Andreas," may prompt the thought that the poet or scribe knew little of the Macedonian king (Hill 2009, p. 96); but the one thing he did know and communicated to his audience is that Alexander was the mightiest and most successful of all human beings.

Alexander and the literature about him, in fact, form a strong thread running through the fabric of English and Scots poetry and prose from near the beginning (certainly from the beginning of English literary prose) to the very end of medieval productivity, although it temporarily disappeared when the English language itself was in abeyance after the Norman Conquest. Alexander is treated in negative terms at various times, both early and late: the Alfredian *Orosius* vilifies him in the 9th century; Trevisa's translation of Higden takes a dim view of him in the 14th century; and in the same century Gower criticises him somewhat patchily, as does Lydgate in the 15th. The stronger tradition, however, is largely positive and admiring though often complex in its moral judgements, and includes the following: the Old English *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* (but see the discussion below); the anonymous Middle English poems *Kyng Alysaunder, Alexander A, Alexander B*, and *The Wars of Alexander*; the Middle English prose works known as the Thornton *Life of Alexander* and *The Dicts and*

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[3] See Krapp and Dobbie (1936) or Muir (1994) for editions of this manuscript, the catalogue citation for which is Exeter, Exeter Cathedral Library, 3501.

Sayings of the Philosophers; and the Middle Scots poems, *The Buik of Alexander* and *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*.[4]

The Anglo-Saxon Period

In the early 5th century, when Rome had been sacked by Goths and Vandals, an idea gained currency that this catastrophe and other disasters had come upon the Roman world because of the abandoning of pagan worship in favor of Christianity. It was in response to this idea that the Christian polemicist Paulus Orosius wrote his *Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem* [Seven Books of History Against the Pagans], the purpose of which was to demonstrate that the pagan centuries had been at least as miserable as the Christian era. The result is an exceptionally jaundiced and skewed overview of history, which condemns Alexander as a tyrant driven by bloodlust (III.18.10) but praises the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus, father and son, for killing 1,100,000 Jews who had offended the Father and the Son (VII.9.7–8).[5]

William of Malmesbury, in his 12th-century history *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* [Concerning the Deeds of the Kings of the English], listed the Old English prose paraphrase of Orosius among the works of Alfred the Great, king of Wessex (reigned 871–899). This attribution was long accepted, but scholars in recent decades have concluded on the basis of linguistic and stylistic analysis that Alfred himself could not have written it if he was the author of other works more firmly associated with him, and also that the text shows some signs of having been dictated by a Celtic speaker, perhaps Alfred's biographer Asser, a Welshman.[6] It is clear in any case that the work belongs to Alfred's circle, as indicated above because of its treatment of the first of Orosius' seven books, which is a geographical preamble that has been substantially re-written and includes eye-witness accounts, narrated to Alfred in audience, of voyages around Scandinavia and northern Europe (13–18).[7] This being so, although there is some possibility that

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[4] For a fuller survey of the literature than is possible here, see Bunt (1994), to which the present work is indebted in very many ways.

[5] The standard edition is Zangemeister (1889).

[6] See Bately (1980), p. lxxv, Kitson (1996), and Fulk and Cain (2005), p. 65.

[7] All references to the *Old English Orosius* are to the edition by Bately (1980).

the paraphrase belongs to an earlier part of the king's reign, the likelihood must be that it was undertaken in the period 890–899, when Alfred, concerned at the apparent decline of Latinity among his clergy, was promoting the translation of the key Latin works available to him. Further, it may be possible to narrow the range of dates to 890–891, as Bately points out (1980, p. xcii), since a brief passage not found in the original Orosius refers to short-lived foreign incursions in a way that suggests Viking raids (83) and may imply that the paraphrase was completed before the arrival of the Danish Great Army in 892 posed a more serious threat to Alfred's kingdom.

Four medieval manuscripts are extant.[8] London, British Library, Additional 47967, known as the Tollemache or Lauderdale Manuscript, is dated to the 10th century. Apart from a lacuna after fol. 8, now filled in with eight paper sheets from the 17th century, it offers a complete version of the *Old English Orosius* (*OEO*). London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. i, contains a complete version of *OEO* on folios 3–111v written in four hands of the 11th century. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that these manuscripts are independent although it has been argued that the Cotton text is a poor copy of that in the Tollemache. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Hist. e. 49 (30481), is a fragment consisting of two separate leaves dated to the 11th century. Rome, Vatican City, Reg. Lat. 497, f. 71, is a fragment consisting of one leaf dated to the 11th century. The relationship between these fragments and the longer texts is not clear.

The standard edition of *OEO* is Bately (1980), which is based chiefly on the Tollemache manuscript. Campbell (1953) offers a facsimile edition of the same manuscript. A Modern English translation together with an Old English text based on the Cotton manuscript can be found in Thorpe (1853).[9]

In the *Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem* (*HAP*) the account of Alexander's career occupies III.16.1 to III.20.13 continuously, and there are important comments on him at III.7.5 and III.15.1. In *OEO*, which is numbered differently and which reduces the Latin books V

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[8] See Bately (1980), pp. xxiii–xxxix, from which the details here have been abstracted.

[9] Other editions are Sweet (1883), based on the Tollemache manuscript and offering relevant but incomplete sections of Orosius' Latin in parallel with the Old English, Barrington (1773) and Bosworth (1859). The last two are based on the Cotton manuscript.

and VI to a single book, the main account is given a section of its own, III.ix (pp. 67–74), and the comments corresponding to those just mentioned are at III.v (p. 58) and III.vii (p. 66). The narrative in both works follows the outline of actual history: Alexander's accession, his battles with the Persians, the visit to the oracle of Amon, the defeat of Darius, the expedition to India and the return to Babylon where Alexander dies—in this account he is poisoned by some of his men. Just before his death Alexander receives peace emissaries from the entire world and thus effectively becomes a universal monarch, which was widely regarded as historical fact in the Middle Ages.

The paraphrase as a whole adds to the Orosian text a wealth of details drawn, directly or otherwise, from an impressive range of sources.[10] In the section on Alexander a detail may descend from Quintus Curtius,[11] but the most notable addition is that the name of Alexander's supposed father, which is not supplied in *HAP*, is given as Nectanebus (*OEO*, p. 69) in accordance with versions of the Alexander romance. This occurs in the passage outlining Alexander's dealings with the oracle of Amon, which also gives us evidence of an interesting alteration to the depiction of Alexander: in the Latin text (III.16.12) Alexander displays a self-centered wish for the oracle to rid him of the ignominy of an unknown father and the infamy of an adulterous mother, but in the Old English version Alexander's desire is specifically to exonerate (*beladian*, p. 69) his mother.[12] This is one point among several where the Old English text is more sympathetic towards Alexander, or at least mitigates the ferocity of Orosius, another example being the comment at *HAP* III.7.5, mentioned above, where Alexander is introduced as *ille gurges miserarium atque atrocissimus turbo* [that abyss of miseries and most terrible whirlwind], which *OEO* (p. 58) renders more simply and a little more temperately as *an micel yst* [one great whirlwind]—though it is a single whirlwind that covers the whole earth.

Despite what has just been said, it must be recognized that *OEO* generally preserves the criticisms aimed at Alexander by Orosius and sometimes intensifies them, as is the case with the other comment mentioned above, where *HAP* III.15.1 remarks that the narrative of the evils caused by Philip of Macedon might have sufficed as examples

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[10] See Bately (1980), pp. lxi–lxxii.
[11] See *OEO* p. 70, line 10, and commentary.
[12] See Bunt (1994), p. 15.

of misery, even if Philip had not been succeeded by Alexander, and
OEO, in the corresponding place (p. 66), says that Philip's evil might
to some extent have been thought moderate before the drunkard, his
son Alexander, succeeded him[13]—where the reference to Alexander as
a drunkard is an addition. Orchard (2003, pp. 121–125) has listed and
analysed several of what he sees as similar points at which *OEO* accen-
tuates or adds to Orosius's negative portrayal of Alexander. Orchard's
statement that "at every point, Alexander is depicted in the vernacu-
lar translation as much more bloodthirsty and unreasonable than in
the Latin original" (p. 122), however, must not go unchallenged, for
OEO shows a markedly greater admiration than does the Latin text for
the kind of bloodthirsty and unreasonable behavior that accompanies
courage and heroic prowess, for example in the passage where Alexan-
der finds himself cornered and alone in a hostile city and is wounded
by an arrow but manages not only to defend himself until help arrives
but to fight his way through crowds of enemies in order to kill the
man who had shot him. Here the Old English text (p. 73) considerably
expands the Latin (III.19.9–10) in order to emphasize not only the loy-
alty of Alexander's men and their love for their lord but also Alexan-
der's own courage, resilience, and pugnacity. The need for courage and
pugnacity, furthermore, is the theme with which the Alexander section
ends in *OEO*, as distinct from *HAP*; for *HAP* (III.20.5–13) draws the
moral that people suffered more in the past than in the present, whilst
OEO (p. 74) notes that whereas people in the past feared Alexander
so much that they were willing, shamefully, to travel from the West to
the East in order to sue for peace, people in the present are too afraid
either to travel far or to defend their farms, even when enemies come
upon them at home. Thus Alexander may be condemned for rapacity,
but those who negotiated a tactical surrender when danger was far off
are condemned more, and those who give up when war is on their
doorstep receive the greatest condemnation of all.

   A very different prose work is the anonymous Old English trans-
lation of *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* [Alexander's Letter to
Aristotle], in which the Macedonian king gives his erstwhile teacher
information about his campaign in India, with much emphasis on the

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   [13] *Philippuses yfel mehte þeh þagiet be sumum dæle gemetlic þyncan, ær se swelgend
to rice feng, Alexander his sunu.*

strange and dangerous beasts to be found there. It is in fact the earliest vernacular rendering of this widely disseminated Latin text.

The sole medieval copy of the *Old English Letter* (*OEL*) survives in one of the most important of English literary manuscripts, the late 10th-century Nowell Codex, which contains the unique medieval attestations of the Old English poems *Beowulf* and *Judith*, besides two further Old English prose works, *Wonders* (or *Marvels*) *of the East* and a *Life of St Christopher*. The Nowell Codex is dated to around the year 1000. In the 16th century, it was bound together with another manuscript to form what is now London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A xv; *OEL*, which occupies folios 107r–131v, follows *Wonders of the East* and precedes *Beowulf*.

The standard edition of *OEL* is in Rypins (1924), which includes an introduction and a version of the Latin *Epistola*, but where the presentation of the text is forbidding. Much more accessible is the edition in the appendices to Orchard (2003), which include a Modern English translation of the *OEL* plus a text of the *Epistola*; it should be noted, however, that the section numbering is Orchard's own and that the analysis of the letter's presentation of Alexander (pp. 135–139) needs to be viewed with circumspection.[14]

The extant West-Saxon copy of *OEL* shows many signs of descent from an Anglian precursor, but there is no evidence for the age of the original.[15] Nor do we possess a manuscript of the Latin *Epistola* that corresponds precisely to the Old English text, which omits several passages normally found in the Latin. There are also several apparent misunderstandings, but it is possible that at least some of these readings and omissions reflect features already present in the Latin text from which the translator was working. That the writer had a sense of style, however limited or misplaced, is shown by the fact that the Old English prose is marked, and perhaps marred, by the presence of many doublets where only one word is used in the Latin. Of the omissions, the most significant is the one at the end of the work, which drops the narrative episodes that follow the passage where the trees of the sun

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[14] Superseded editions of *OEL* are Cockayne (1861), pp. 1–33, and Baskervill (1881), pp. 139–167. The standard edition of the Latin *Epistola* is Boer (1973).

[15] Concerning the Anglian element, see Rypins (1924), p. xli, and Sisam (1953), pp. 88–93; cf. Fulk and Cain (2005), p. 161. As regards dating, Sisam (1953, p. 85) takes the view that "a certain uncouthness in the translation" points to an early date; however, the problems with such reasoning are obvious.

and the moon utter prophecies concerning Alexander's death and his prior subjugation of the whole earth (*OEL*, pp. 250–252).[16] The effect of ending in this way, with the prophecies followed only by Alexander's reaction to them, is to highlight the conqueror's greatness and the tragedy of his sudden fall, a topos familiar from later medieval passages such as the quotation at the start of this chapter. No doubt it also leaves the reader musing on the transitory nature of worldly power, as suggested by Scragg (2008, p. 271); but this thought, to which every medieval Christian could give assent, is hardly damaging to Alexander since he is portrayed at the end of *OEL* (p. 252) as a mortal king who is able to look calmly on his impending death while taking reasonable satisfaction in his great achievements.

Satisfaction at being the most powerful of all earthly kings cannot be far removed from pride, so it need come as no surprise that *OEL* has been interpreted as a condemnation of Alexander's egotism. The fullest, and perhaps most extreme, treatment of the work in this light is by Orchard (2003, pp. 135–139),[17] who concludes that the alterations to the Latin text are such that Alexander comes across in the Old English version as "a monstrous figure of pride, a monster-slayer who, in Christian eyes, is every bit as outlandish and inhuman as the creatures he fights" (p. 139). Since a full rebuttal of Orchard's view would take much more space than is available here, one example must suffice in answer: concerning the passage in which Alexander exults in the splendor of the army (*OEO*, p. 230), Orchard says (p. 136) that the addition of many more first-person references—*my* thegns, *my* troop etc.—than in the Latin text turns Alexander's joy into "disturbing arrogance in his own esteem." If these added pronouns have any significance at all, however, they could just as well be taken as evidence for the intensification of Alexander's sense of wonder that all this has come to *him*; seen this way they indicate a simultaneously humble and proud acknowledgement of the contingencies that have made him great. Alternatively, they could simply be another indication among others that the translator, as Sisam suggests (1953, p. 86), felt the leader should be more important than the army. In any case, to speak of monstrous pride, on the basis of evidence such as this, is

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[16] The edition referred to, here and below, is Orchard (2003).

[17] See also Tristram (1989 and 1990), and Butturff (1970–1971). A renewed discussion of the unity of the Nowell codex, and a modification of Orchard's views, can be found in Powell (2006).

to lay too heavy an interpretive burden on details whose significance, if any, is not clear. A better course would be to let *OEL* remain as what it first appears to be, an entertainment that takes deep and sometimes whimsical delight in presenting an extraordinary man amid the extraordinary circumstances of fabulous India.

The anonymous *Wonders of the East*, which precedes *OEL* in the Nowell Codex and is written in the same hand on folios 98v–106v, is not specifically about Alexander and so will not be discussed at length here. It should be noted, nevertheless, that it mentions Alexander three times, always in a favorable light as a builder of monuments, monster-slayer, and gracious lord. A further medieval copy, roughly contemporary with the Nowell Codex (i.e. ca. 1000), is found in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B v, folios 78v–87r. In both manuscripts, *Wonders* is illustrated with miniatures, which in the case of the Nowell Codex are poorly executed watercolors, whereas those in the Tiberius volume are done in oils and are of high quality. Written before each section of the Old English text in the Tiberius codex is a copy of the Latin source, a version of which is also found on folios 36r–48r of a manuscript dated to the early 12th century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614. The Latin work is an adaptation, apparently produced in England, of the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian*.[18] Editions of *Wonders* can be found in Rypins (1924) and Orchard (2003): both use the Nowell version as the base text and both provide the Latin text as found in the Tiberius codex, for which Orchard indicates the variants found in the Bodleian manuscript; Orchard also offers a Modern English translation of the Old English material.[19]

Middle English Verse Romances

Following the Norman Conquest and the eventual end of literary productivity in Old English, works of imaginative literature in the English language are relatively scarce until around 1300;[20] it is not surprising, therefore, that there is no more Alexander literature in English before the appearance of *Kyng Alisaunder* (*KA*) in the early 14th century.

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[18] See Bunt (1994), p. 16, and Sisam (1953), pp. 74–80.
[19] Superseded editions of *Wonders* are Cockayne (1861), pp. 33–39, and Knappe (1906).
[20] The great exceptions are *The Owl and the Nightgale* and Laȝamon's *Brut*.

This important verse romance, however, is largely based on a major Alexander poem known as *Le roman de toute chevalerie*, written in Anglo-Norman towards the end of the 12th century by one Thomas of Kent, who is otherwise unknown.[21] Thus Alexander's temporary absence from English was by no means an absence from the literature of England.

Of the anonymous author of *KA* nothing is known except the little that can be inferred from the poem itself, which contains no autobiographical information: the language of the extant versions points to London as the place of origin, and the range of allusions demonstrate that the poet's reading had gone "far beyond anything of which the authors of ME romances normally show any knowledge."[22]

The earliest attestation of *KA* is in the so-called Auchinleck manuscript, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.1, which is dated to ca. 1340. Unfortunately the state of this once splendid manuscript is now such that most of *KA* has been lost from it, although some leaves have been recovered from the bindings of later volumes. In consequence the best extant text of the romance is found in a manuscript written in the late 14th century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 622; the poem is intact and occupies folios 27v–64r. Another version is in a manuscript from ca. 1400, London, Lincoln's Inn, 150, where it occupies folios 28r–90r; here the copy is intact but the poem has been abridged by the omission of a section corresponding to lines 4763–5979 of the Laud text (there is no break in the Lincoln's Inn manuscript at the point where the omission occurs, between lines 4713 and 4714). Whereas the Laud text is "a relatively very good one" in point of detail, the Lincoln's Inn text "teems with gross blunders and often makes utter nonsense of a word, line, or couplet."[23] In addition the collection known as *The Bagford Ballads*, held in the British Library (STC 321), contains six sheets from a blackletter text of *KA* printed ca. 1525; they constitute vol. 1 item 27, where they have been mounted in the wrong order.[24] The standard edition of the poem (in fact, the only viable edition) is Smithers 1952–1957; it is

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[21] Editions of Thomas of Kent are Foster (1976–1977), and Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner (2003). The latter presents Foster's text with a French translation and notes.

[22] Smithers (1952–1957), vol. 2, pp. 42 and 60.

[23] Smithers (1952–1957), vol. 2, pp. 8 and 11, respectively.

[24] For further information on the manuscripts and the printed sheets, see Smithers (1952–1957), vol. 2, pp. 1–8, and Bunt (1994), pp. 20–21.

of high quality, prints all the texts and fragments in full and offers an extensive introduction and commentary.

Kyng Alisaunder may reasonably be called a fairly free adaptation of the *Roman de toute chevalerie* (*RdTCh*), though at times it follows the Anglo-Norman text closely. All the extant versions of *RdTCh*, however, contain interpolations from the *Roman d'Alexandre* and other sources; these are not present in *KA*, which suggests that the Middle English poem depends on a version of *RdTCh* that antedates the surviving redactions. Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* has been used as a minor source either for material used as decoration or as a check on the veracity of *RdTCh*: although it is not named in *KA* it is invoked as *þe latyn* in line 3511 and probably as *þe liif of Alisaunder* in line 4787.[25] Smithers (vol. 2, p. 16) suggests that the author may also have had independent recourse to the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, to Julius Valerius in the full version and in the *Epitome*, and to *Li Fuerre de Gadres*; he notes, however, that the authorities named in lines 4767–84 were not used directly, most of the list having been taken over from passages in *RdTCh*. Bunt points out, in addition, that an allusion to Alexandria and the bones of Jeremiah, lines 7996–8, may go back to the J[2] version of *Historia de Preliis* or to Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*.[26]

The poem is written in rhyming couplets that are predominantly octosyllabic although, as one would expect in a Middle English romance of this kind, scansion is far from regular and the actual rhythms are quite rough. It falls into two main sections, the first of which takes us to the death of Darius and its immediate aftermath, while the second, which is announced at line 4747, deals largely with Alexander's adventures in the distant east and contains much material on the wonders to be found there. The long list of strange peoples may strike the modern reader as tedious, a judgement that was perhaps shared by the redactor of the version represented by the Lincoln's Inn manuscript, where an extensive cut, mentioned above, has been made to this section of the poem; most medieval audiences, however, would have enjoyed the wealth of fabulous detail, and in fact the section has been expanded in the fragments preserved in the *Bagford Ballads*.[27] Elsewhere in the

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[25] All line references to *KA* are to the Laud text in Smithers (1952–1957).
[26] Smithers, vol. 2, pp. 15–28, especially 15–16; Bunt (1994), p. 22.
[27] See Bunt (1994), p. 21.

poem the narrative is lively and engaging, with many a deft stroke in
characterization and descriptions; and while the delivery is not exactly
funny, the poet often has a twinkle in his eye. Especially attractive,
and unusual in Middle English verse, are the so-called head-pieces,
i.e. brief passages of mixed description and comment that introduce
the many sub-sections of the work and may or may not be relevant to
what comes next in the story.

In his prologue the poet, perhaps half in jest, draws attention to his
serious purpose by disparaging those who would prefer *a ribaudye* [a
lewd tale] or *to drynk a copful ale* rather than to hear the *noble geste*
of Alexander that he is about to tell (ll.21–31). Throughout the sub-
sequent tale the poet, in fact, takes a stance that is moral and some-
times disapproving but essentially humane in perspective; when he
has narrated the adulterous begetting of Alexander by Neptanebus, for
example, he makes the following remark (ll.459–61) in the head-piece
to the next section:

> Synne it is and shame to chide,
> For shameful dedes springeþ wide.
> Kniȝttes willeþ on hunting ride.[28]

When he tells the story of Alexander's affair with Candace, further-
more, there is no overt suggestion that Alexander is involved in
shameful deeds. To be sure, Candace is seen as an example of those
guileful women who ensnare great men (ll.7700–09); but in this case it
is a benevolent entrapment, and once Alexander has shown a warrior's
proper reluctance towards sexual intercourse he accepts the inevitable
in ways that the poet clearly enjoys (ll.7722–5):

> Many niȝth and many day
> Þus hij duden her play—
> Jn halle at table he sat hire by,
> Jn chaumbre gest, in bed amy.[29]

As regards Alexander's career as a conqueror, the poet's approval is
unequivocal, as is shown by one of the most delightful of the head-
pieces (ll.1573–82), too long to be quoted here, where the sequence of
thought is that there is banqueting, the story-teller is well-fed, Alex-
ander is a noble man, and lots of kings surrender to him. Darius, in

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[28] *Synne* [sin]. Cf. Scattergood (2004).
[29] *hij duden her play* [they enjoyed themselves], *gest* [a guest], *amy* [a lover].

contrast, is occasionally portrayed in terms of comic extravagance, as when he upturns a table in his anger on hearing of Alexander's conquests (ll.1805–9). His death scene, however, is played for maximum emotional impact, for Alexander weeps

> Þat euere hateden hem so fendes,
> Now hij ben in deþ frendes.
> Alisaunder his clothes taar
> And todrouȝ his ȝelewe haar.[30]

Here the poet displays his technique to good advantage, for his irony serves to deepen the pathos, and the addition of the single adjective "blond" makes all the difference between poetry and mere statement.

Pathos is also at a premium in Alexander's own death scene, which has been prepared for in a head-piece that emphasises the simple fact that all power and beauty passes away (ll.7829–30):

> So strong, so fair, neuere non nas
> Þat he ne shal passe wiþ 'allas!'[31]

As Alexander feels his death's approach he laments for the effect this will have on the world, on his mother and sister, and above all on his men (ll.7853–61). These are surely the thoughts of a loving and responsible ruler; but if the reader is inclined to view the lament for the world as an example of Alexander's arrogance, the poet rebuts this with his brief account of the *woo and cuntek ynouȝ* [sufficient woe and conflict] (l.8012) that ensues, and by this final remark (ll.8018–9):

> Whan þe heued is yfalle,
> Acumbred ben þe membres alle.[32]

Thus, in his very last comment, the poet sums up both the strength and the weakness of Alexander's empire.

KA is not only the earliest Middle English verse romance on Alexander to have come down to us, it is also the only one that is complete. There are, however, three substantial fragments in alliterative verse, two of which are often associated with each other and are generally

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[30] Ll.4647–50, *hateden hem so fendes* [hated each other as enemies], *ben* [are], *todrouȝ* [plucked out], *ȝelewe* [blond].
[31] *neuere non nas* [never was any], *ne shal* [shall not].
[32] *heued is yfalle* [head has fallen], *acumbred* [in distress].

known as *Alexander A* (*AA*) and *Alexander B* (*AB*).[33] Magoun (1929)
presents the two works together in a single volume, which remains
the standard edition for both works and offers an extensive introduc-
tion. The reason for the association of the fragments is that they tell
different parts of the Alexander story in broadly similar styles, and
both are likely to have originated in the South West Midlands during
the middle third of the 14th century: on the face of things, therefore,
they could be separate sections of the same poem by a single author.
On the basis of metrical and other stylistic considerations, however,
Magoun concludes that the fragments are the work of two different
poets.[34] Skeat, for his 1867 edition of *AA*, started from the same posi-
tion but changed his mind just before the volume went to press, and
his 1878 edition of *AB* maintains that the fragments are from a single
long poem by one author.[35] Skeat's introductory discussions have been
superseded but his texts are reliable and are accompanied by running
summaries—often charmingly worded—in the margins.

AA, consisting of 1247 lines, is found in a unique manuscript,
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Greaves 60, which was probably a school
notebook written ca. 1600; linguistic details suggest that the text had
been transcribed in the north of England before being worked on by
the Elizabethan copyist, who wrote different sections of the fragment
at various times and in a different order from that of the narrative
sequence. When the sections are re-ordered there is found to be a
break in the narrative after line 1034. The main source of *AA* is the J^2
version of the *Historia de Preliis*, but this has been interspersed with
sections of historical information drawn from Orosius.[36]

The beginning of *AA* certainly announces itself as if it were the start
of a full account of Alexander's life, and nothing in the fragment sug-
gests otherwise; but if the narrative was ever completed and carried the

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[33] *AA* is also known as *The Romance of Alisaunder* or *Alexander of Macedon*; in the
unique manuscript it is headed 'Þe Gestes of þe Worþie King and Emperour, Alisaun-
der of Macedoine'. *AB* is also known as *Alexander and Dindimus*.

[34] For the dating of the poems, see Magoun (1929), pp. 100–101; for their place
of origin, see pp. 78, 87 and 89; for authorship, see pp. 112–113. Regarding metrical
issues, Magoun concludes that "the alliterating practice in both poems is quite nor-
mal, but it is likewise quite different," p. 99. See also Bunt (1994), 27–29, for a general
discussion of the works.

[35] Skeat (1867), p. xxx, and (1878), title page and p. xi. An earlier edition of *AB* is
in Stevenson (1849), but it is very faulty; Skeat (1867) was the first edition of *AA*.

[36] For details of the manuscript, see Magoun (1929), pp. 3–4; for sources see pp.
22 and 70.

story forward at the speed of *AA*, it must have been a huge poem. The author's attitude towards Alexander is declared in forthright terms (ll.8–10):[37]

> I shall sigge forsothe ensaumples ynow
> Of one þe boldest beurn and best of his deedes,
> That ever steede bestrode or sterne was holden.[38]

Unfortunately there is not enough of the poem left for us to see much of how this promise would have been fulfilled, for large parts of the fragment in fact concern the campaigns of Philip, Alexander's presumed father, and the trickery that leads to the begetting of Alexander by the magician Nectanabus, the erstwhile king of Egypt. Of Alexander himself we see how, at the age of fifteen, he tames a man-eating horse (Bucephalus, not named in the poem), thus proving that he is to be Philip's successor (ll.1148–1201); and before this we see him kill Nectanabus, an act construed as one of righteous wrath prompted by the magician's meddling with astrology and divine secrets (ll.1045–91). Faced with the truth that it is his real father whom he has killed, Alexander behaves like any self-respecting boy and blames his mother (l.1102):

> It is thy foule fowlye þat this fare wrought,
> Your carefull conscience yee casten so large
> That yee wern no wyght but wyrch as yee lyst.[39]

The vigor of this accusation is by no means atypical of the poet. Although it must be admitted that his versification can be mechanical, in places he is able to strike sparks, as when Nectanebus has told Alexander's future mother that a deity (actually himself in disguise) will come to her bed, and she answers that, if it proves true, she will honor Nectanebus (ll.704–705)

> Noght praise þee as a prophet þat passeth in londe,
> But as a gracious godde greate I þee thynk.

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[37] Citations of *AA* refer to the Magoun edition.

[38] *sigge* [tell], *ynow* [enough], *beurn* [man], *sterne was holden* [was considered brave].

[39] "It is your foul folly that brought this about. You give so much room to your anxious conscience that you refuse no man but do as you please." This expands the Latin, which Magoun gives at the foot of the page: *Quemadmodum stultitia tua fecit, ita est.*

Here the alliteration, together with the fleeting allusion to the Bible verse that says a prophet shall have no honor in his own land, nicely points up the irony that is already present in the Latin text.

AB, consisting of 1139 lines, is also found in a unique manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 264. The present codex is a composite, the first part of which is Continental, dates from the first half of the 14th century and contains a version of the French *Roman d'Alexandre*, with very fine illustrations, on folios 3–208; the second part, which dates from the 15th century and is English, contains *AB* and nine rather crude illustrations on folios 209–217, followed, on folios 218–274, by a French translation of the travels of Marco Polo. The scribe who copied *AB* added a note to a blank column on folio 67r of the *Roman*, to the effect that an episode is missing at this point and that the reader could find it "at þe ende of þis bok ywrete in Engelyche ryme."[40] As a matter of fact the episode related in *AB*, which tells of Alexander's dealings with the Gymnosophists and the Brahmans, never was part of the *Roman*, and it does not in any case fit the part of the narrative reached on folio 67; nevertheless the note indicates the *raison d'être* of the composite manuscript and the justification for preserving the Middle English text. The source of *AB* is the *Historia de Preliis* in its J² redaction, of which it is "an almost slavishly faithful translation" according to Magoun[41]—but this statement is only correct in that the Middle English poem paraphrases and amplifies (but occasionally contradicts) the Latin text sentence by sentence in its treatment of the material, first in the exchange of views with the naked philosophers, then in the removal of the army to the banks of the Phison, then in the *Collatio* (the exchange of five letters, three from Alexander and two from Dindimus, king of the Brahmans), and finally in the erection of a pillar to commemorate Alexander's presence; but the poetry, such as it is, and much of the interest reside in the amplifications and contradictions.

In the opening section of the fragment, for example, the poet twice calls the Gymnosophists "proude" (ll.5 and 11), thus going flat against

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[40] *ywrete* [written], *ryme* [verse].
[41] Magoun (1929), p. 72. Skeat (1878), p. xiii, is mistaken in saying that *AB* is a free adaptation of the Latin; the error stems from the fact that Skeat was not aware of the J² tradition and used for comparison a Latin text that belongs to the J³ group. For details of the manuscript, see Magoun, pp. 8–14. For more general comments see Grady (2004).

what is said in the Latin text.[42] "Proude" is not necessarily a term of opprobrium, but its presence here does prompt the attentive reader to think of several possible lines of criticism against naked men who specialize in lowliness. In the same section the poet calls Alexander "schamlese": here the adjective, which is an addition to the Latin, is part of an alliterative phrase and probably has the positive meaning of "unsullied by any shameful deed," paralleling the term "makelese" ("peerless") in line 1130, which is similarly an addition partly governed by the needs of alliteration; as such, "schamlese" probably indicates the poet's approval for Alexander, but its allusion to shame also throws into an interesting perspective the fact that the Macedonian has just received an embassy of nudists. Given the constraints of space, one more example of an astute amplification must here suffice to indicate that while no one would make great claims for *AB*, the poem does repay careful study. In his second letter to Dindimus, when he has been roundly criticized and abused by the Brahman king from an extreme back-to-nature standpoint, Alexander says (ll.872–3):

> ȝif we lengede in ȝoure land—ful loþ were oure bestus
> To ben so simple as ussilf and suffre þat tene.[43]

This remark about animals, which is an addition to the Latin, serves as a stinging riposte to the many insults Alexander has received, but it also gets to the heart of the intellectual debate, for it acts as a reminder that, to a man of the Active Life, ascetic saints only succeed in making themselves less, not more, than human.

One further alliterative romance remains to be discussed. Sometimes called *Alexander C* but more generally known as *The Wars of Alexander* (*WA*), it is a substantial work by any standards, running to 5803 lines of high poetic quality and telling almost all the Alexander story but breaking off when the king has returned to Babylon from India.

There are two manuscripts, the more important of which is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 44. This contains only *WA* on 97 paper folios. The hand is of the mid 15th century, the dialect of the scribe

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[42] Magoun (1929) prints the Latin at the foot of each page of *AB*. For a discussion of the *AB* poet's divergence from the Latin text, different from the one found above, see Göller (1989).

[43] "If we lived in your land, our animals would be extremely reluctant to be as poor as us and to suffer that affliction." Magoun's dash in the first of these lines is otiose.

being Northern, perhaps of County Durham or southern Northumberland. There is a break in the text between lines 722 and 846 of the standard modern edition. The second manuscript is Dublin, Trinity College, MS 213, formerly known as D.4.12; it consists of 72 paper folios. *WA*, lines 678–3424 and 3485–3553, is contained on folios 27r–66v, where it follows a copy of an A text of *Piers Plowman*; in addition to some accounts and other short items of a non-literary nature, the manuscript also contains, on folio 68v, an episode from the life of St Remegius in Latin prose, and an extract from the Caxton edition of *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* appears on folios 70v–72r. Since Caxton's volume appeared in 1477, this gives us the earliest date for the completed manuscript, all the major items of which, in fact, are copied in the same hand from the last quarter of the 15th century. The dialect of the scribe is again Northern and this time there are firm connections with the area around Durham, established by the names that appear in the list of accounts and elsewhere.[44]

Skeat (1886) presents the texts of both manuscripts, complete and on facing pages where the fragments coincide, in highly accurate transcriptions (although there are a few errors). This edition therefore remains valuable even though in most respects it has been superseded by Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989), which takes the Ashmole version as its base text.[45]

Linguistic analysis has not fully determined the original dialect of *WA* but suggests that it was North West Midland, perhaps of Merseyside or the area around Manchester. Nor can the poem be dated confidently except by noting that it must have originated before ca. 1450, the approximate date of the Ashmole manuscript, but not before the middle of the 14th century since it refers to the noble, a coin that was first minted then. The Latinity of the poem suggests its anonymous author may have been a cleric, but nothing is known of him beyond what is implied by the above statements.[46]

WA is a fairly close rendering, with abbreviations and amplifications as one would expect, of the J³ version of the *Historia de Preliis* in a form related to that of a group of manuscripts produced in England.[47]

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[44] For a full discussion of the manuscripts see Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989), pp. ix–xii and xxv–xxxvi.

[45] The edition found in Stevenson (1849) is not reliable.

[46] Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989), pp. xxxvi and xlii.

[47] Duggan (1976).

In addition to this major source, the poem makes some use of Isidore of Seville, who is mentioned in line 3811, and of some other encyclopedic material for which the specific source has not been identified. Phrases and vocabulary shared with the work of the *Pearl*-poet have been the cause of much comment, but it is impossible to say whether either poet used the other as a source. Many of the similarities may stem from the fact that the two men utilized the same alliterative tradition. However, since both poets may have lived in roughly the same region of England, it is not unlikely that at least one knew the work of the other.[48]

The poem is divided into two parts, the second of which has its own prologue (ll.3596–3603) stating that the remainder will tell of the latter end of Alexander's life. Alliterative and metrical practice throughout is rather strict, and sentences tend to fall into four-line units; there is strong evidence, furthermore, that the poet wrote in paragraphs of twenty-four lines each, although this fact has become blurred in the versions transmitted by the manuscripts.[49] Almost any page of the work will reveal that the poet had a great love of names—a consequence of his general bookishness perhaps. It is also evident that he relished the many letters that pass between Alexander and several other personages in the source, since he gave them much space and took over from them, in particular, the philosophical and moral preoccupations that are characteristic of J[3], chief among which is the idea that pride goes before a fall. Likewise he made room for frequent omens and prophecies in adopting from his source the portrayal of Alexander as a self-consciously mortal and fallible man divinely ordained to fulfil the mission of universal conquest.[50]

Something of the poetic quality of *WA* can at least be indicated here by reference to the scene in which Alexander finds Darius lying amid his palace, with terrible wounds "Gird[and] out as gutars in grete gill-stremes" [pouring out like rivers in great streams from a gorge].[51] At the sight the Macedonian's heart is pierced with compassion (ll.3364–7):

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[48] Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989), pp. xvi–xvii and xlii–xliii.

[49] Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989), pp. xviii–xxiv. The edition restores the division into paragraphs of twenty-four lines.

[50] For a discussion of prophecy in the poem, see Crawford (1992).

[51] Line 3359. All quotations from *WA* follow Duggan and Turville-Petre (1989). See Dronke (1997) for a discussion of the poetic qualities of *WA*.

> Þan nymes he fra his awyn neke an emperoures mantill,
> And þat he couirs ouire þe kyng & clappis him in armes,
> With grym gretyng & gro[ne] & grysely terys,
> Bad, 'Comfurth þe, sire conquirour, & of þi care ryse.'[52]

What might strictly be called the absurdity of Alexander's behavior here, as in an equivalent passage from *Kyng Alisaunder* discussed above, serves to heighten the pathos of the scene, but in this case the irony is sharpened by the added detail of the *emperor*'s mantle, which emphasizes what Darius has lost to Alexander, even as Alexander tries to give it back; and the fact that Alexander seeks to encourage Darius by addressing him as "Sir Conqueror" reminds us that the Persian king was indeed a conqueror until the greater man appeared. The death speech that Darius then makes is the inevitable meditation on mutability, wordy overall perhaps but well able to exploit the resources of alliterative verse for maximum effect (ll.3433–4):

> I þat was ʒustirday so ʒape & ʒemed all þe werld,
> Today am dreuyn all to dust, to dolour & paynes.[53]

Even though it was chiefly Alexander who drove him to dust, Darius makes him his successor, rousing himself, as death comes upon him, with a thought for the business of his realm (l.3440): "Lat þan oure kyngdomes acorde & cock we na langir" [Let our kingdoms then be in accord, and let us fight no longer]. This is surely a line to warm the heart of anyone inclined to look favorably on the ideals of empire and of nation states; in the poem it prepares the reader for the moment, not twenty lines farther on, when the warriors of Macedon join with the lords of Persia to place the crown of Darius on Alexander's head.

Middle English Prose Works

Closely related to *WA* insofar as both are renderings of J³, albeit in versions belonging to different manuscript traditions,[54] is the anony-

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[52] "Then he takes from his own neck the mantle of an emperor, and places that over the king and takes him in his arms, with fierce weeping and groaning and ghastly tears, [and] bade, 'Be comforted, Sir Conqueror, and arise from your sickness.'"
[53] "I who was yesterday so vigorous and ruled all the world, today have been driven totally to dust, to grief and pains."
[54] Duggan (1976).

mous *Prose Life of Alexander* (*PLA*) found uniquely in a codex that was compiled ca. 1440 by Robert Thornton, a country gentleman from Yorkshire. This manuscript, Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, 91 (formerly A.5.2 or A.1.17), is generally known as the Thornton Manuscript although it is in fact one of two surviving volumes for which Thornton was responsible;[55] it contains several romances, with *PLA* taking pride of place at the start of the volume. Since the codex has lost its first leaves, *PLA* is fragmentary and begins at a point in the story of how Alexander came to kill his natural father; a further leaf has dropped out between what are now folios 18 and 19, and a third between folios 19 and 20, but otherwise the text is complete. It occupies folios 1r–47v, which include several spaces for miniatures that were never executed although there are some inhabited initials.[56] The translation itself probably dates from the early 15th century and was written in the Northern dialect.[57]

Bunt 1992 (and 1994, pp. 31–4) discusses the sources of *PLA*, as summarised here. Although for most of its length the romance is a fairly close translation of J³, there are readings that derive from J¹ or J², perhaps the most significant of which, for the presentation of Alexander, comes in a letter from Aristotle, where the J³ text suggests that Alexander has an element of the divine in his nature; here *PLA* translates the corresponding lines from J¹ or J², which do not contain this suggestion, but then switches back to J³ for the end of the letter—and thus avoids another reference to Alexander's supposed divinity found at that point in J¹ and J².[58] The treatment of the episode that tells how Alexander enclosed Gog and Magog, furthermore, represents a major departure from J³ in that it follows quite closely the account in the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor.[59]

The standard edition of *PLA* remains Westlake (1913), not least because it is widely available; but there is no introduction, commentary or glossary because the editor fell ill before he could finish the

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[55] The other is London, British Library, Additional 31042.

[56] The positions of the spaces and initials are noted in Westlake (1913).

[57] Bunt (1992), pp. 147 and 156.

[58] See Westlake (1913), p. 108, and compare with *WA* ll.5748–51. See also Steffens (1975), p. 186, Hilka and Steffens (1979), p. 248, and Hilka (1976–1977), vol. 2, p. 174. The substitutions could, of course, reflect what was found in the particular Latin manuscript from which the translator of *PLA* was working.

[59] Westlake (1913), pp. 104–105; Comestor in Migne (1855), *Liber Esther*, cap. v.

work, and for the same reason the later stages of seeing the edition
to press were attended to by others. Westlake did, however, provide
Modern English translations of the Latin source to fill out the lacu-
nae in the Middle English text. Chappell (1992) provides a diplomatic
transcription of *PLA* preserving the letter forms and lineation; there
is also a parallel translation in Modern English (though the original
language is not difficult). The edition also contains an introduction
discussing issues relating to the manuscript but not to *PLA* as a work
of literature.

The literary quality of *PLA* is by no means negligible. As already
indicated, the substance, moral outlook and portrayal of the main
characters are in all essentials those of J³, from which *PLA* also inherits
the emphasis on omens and prophecy noted in *WA*. Unlike *WA*, how-
ever, it does not seek to heighten the style of the source text; rather it
replaces the complex syntax of the Latin with plainer, more paratactic
constructions that are eminently suitable for Middle English prose. In
fact, it may reasonably be said that no translated prose in Middle Eng-
lish surpasses it, for readability and pleasing rhythms, until Malory.
A suitable though brief example of the style, and one that contrasts
revealingly with a passage of *WA* quoted above, may be found in the
section that describes Alexander's discovery of the Persian king near
to death (Westlake 1913, p. 54):

> And than he went to þe chambre þare Darius laye halfe dede. And alsone
> als he saw hym he hadd grete rewthe & compassion of hym, and he tuke
> off his awenn mantill & couerd [hym] þarewit, & went and graped his
> wondes and wepid for hym riȝt tenderly, & said un-til hym. 'Rise vp,
> sir Darius,' quoþ he, '& be of gude comforthe. And als frely as euer þou
> reioysede thyn Empire, so mot þou ȝitt do, And be als myghty, & als
> gloryouse as euer þou was.⁶⁰

The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosphers (*Dicts*) deserves a place in this
survey of English Alexander literature because the longest of its twenty-
three sections is entirely devoted to him, and he appears regularly in
two others. A work with "virtually no regard for historical accuracy,"⁶¹
Dicts belongs to the medieval tradition of wisdom literature and offers

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⁶⁰ *þare* [where], *alsone als* [as soon as], *graped* [investigated], *wondes* [wounds],
reioysede [enjoyed].

⁶¹ Sutton (2006), p. 7. The information on *Dicts* given here is largely abstracted
from Sutton's introduction and notes, and from Bühler (1941), pp. ix–lxii. See also
Bunt (1994), pp. 71–74.

supposed biographical details of a range of wise men, together with lists of sayings attributed to them. The book entered English literature via an usually long chain of translations: originally composed in Arabic, probably in the mid 11th century, it was translated into Spanish, as *Bocados de Oro*, during the first half of the 13th century; in the second half of the same century the Spanish text was rendered into Latin as *Liber Philosophorum Moralium Antiquorum*, and this in turn was done into French, partly abridged and partly amplified, by Guillaume de Tignonville, provost of Paris and a chamberlain to the king, in the late 14th century. The Latin version had considerable influence in its own right, being used by Vincent of Beauvais and John Gower amongst others, and some of the adages from it were translated into English verse by George Ashby in the 15th century; but it was the French version, *Dits Moraulx*, that made the greatest impression on mid 15th-century England, where three prose translations were produced, by Earl Rivers, Stephen Scrope (revised by William Worcester), and an anonymous translator whose work is found in the so-called Helmingham Hall manuscript. The popularity and importance of the work is further indicated by the fact that the Rivers translation was edited by Caxton and became, almost certainly, the first book ever to be printed in England.

Details of the manuscripts of the English versions–there are thirteen manuscripts in all, excluding short fragments such as the one mentioned above in connection with *WA*—are given by Bühler (1941, pp. xix–xxxvii). Ashby's metrical extract is contained uniquely in Cambridge, University Library, Mm. IV. 42. Two manuscripts of the Rivers translation have been copied from Caxton's printed version, but a third, Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Ry. 20, contains substantial deviations from Caxton's text; unfortunately it is incomplete, breaking off in the section on Galen. The Scrope translation and its various revisions are represented by eight manuscripts, of which the most important, insofar as it is used by Bühler for his base text, is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 943, which is dated to the second half of the 15th century; it has lost a leaf between current folios 55 and 56, and a quire after folio 85; twenty-six inhabited initials survive in the fragment, of which eight relate to Alexander.[62] The remaining,

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[62] The same pictures are found in two other manuscripts of *Dicts*, and similar ones occur in a third. See Bühler (1941), p. xxi.

anonymous, translation is found uniquely in what was formerly known as Lord Tollemache's Manuscript or the Helmingham Hall Manuscript, now New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS G.66, which is dated ca. 1460 and contains the *Dicts* complete on 70 folios.

The standard edition of George Ashby's work is Bateson (1899). Blades (1877; repr. 1974) offers a facsimile edition of Caxton's printed version of the Rivers translation. Schofield's 1936 edition of the Scrope translation remains useful, especially for the discussion of the material. The standard edition of *Dicts*, however, is Bühler (1941), which offers the Scrope and Helmingham Hall versions on facing pages and appends an abbreviated text based on Scrope. Sutton (2006) presents the Helmingham Hall version alone, with glosses, explanatory notes and a pithy introduction.

In point of style and accuracy, the literary quality of the various translations is variable. The Rivers version, used by Caxton, is in many ways the poorest, often being too literal in its rendering of the French but either incomplete or greatly abbreviated; the Scrope version is fuller but again too literal and frequently unwieldy; William Worcester's revisions of Scrope are mainly additions that have no warrant in the French.[63] The Helmingham Hall translation is the best, achieving accuracy and fluency, and hence became the choice for Sutton's (2006) edition.

The section of *Dicts* devoted to Alexander,[64] at least in the Helmingham version, is undeniably a good read, not least because of the delightful anecdotes: when he knows that death is upon him, for example, Alexander dictates a letter to his mother, asking her to make a funeral feast in his memory but commanding the guests not to eat if they had ever felt angered or troubled by adversity; at the feast no one eats, and so his mother understands that he left this instruction as a means of comforting her in her loss (pp. 209–213). Apart from such unexpected episodes, however, the story of Alexander's life clearly relates to that in the romance, although the conqueror's death, in this narrative, comes through natural causes and not through poison; but the Alexander presented here is a deeply pious and moral king, marked by his Islamic origins though doubtless informed also by crusading

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[63] Sutton (2006), pp. 9–10.
[64] Bühler (1941), pp. 177–225 (Helmingham version, odd numbered pages only). All references to *Dicts* are to this edition and version.

ethics. Accordingly he tells Porrus, i.e. the Indian Porus, that God has enabled him to subdue many lands in order to avenge unbelief, to which the reply of Porrus is "right euel and sharpe" (p. 197), as well it might be; and to the Brachemos, i.e. the Brahmans, he says, "My God hathe sente me to enhaunce his lawe in this worlde and to destroye the mysbeleuers" (p. 201). His piety nevertheless has its limits proper to a man of action, as shown by his remark on hearing a sermon that goes on too long: "The predycacion is nat to be allowed that is ouer the powere of the herers" (p. 221).[65] Above all, the Alexander portrayed here is a noble lord to his men, as we understand when he is asked what aspect of conquest has pleased him most, and he answers, "I haue hadde wherof to recompense hem that haue done me seruyce" (p. 219).

This is the portrayal of Alexander in the part dedicated to him, but it is not constant throughout *Dicts*. In the section on Aristotle (pp. 149–177), which precedes that on Alexander, the future king is suitably presented as the boy who must grow, under the philosopher's tutelage, into the wise monarch; but in the section on Diogenes (pp. 63–73), Alexander is presented, briefly, as a rich and powerful lord who must be told that his love of riches and power effectively make him a servant, whereas Diogenes—according to Diogenes himself—is "lorde aboue all couetise" [lord over all covetousness] and needs nothing that Alexander could give him (pp. 63–65). In addition to this single passage of direct criticism there are a few anecdotes that could be taken to reflect badly on Alexander by implication: Diogenes reminds him that good works matter more than good looks (p. 67); he tells him that he can gain the grace of God by doing good deeds (p. 73); and he refuses to listen to a minstrel who is praising Alexander too fulsomely (p. 69). This is an aspects of *Dicts* picked up on by several moralising writers, most notably by Gower and Lydgate, and since it appears to be at odds with the portrayal of Alexander in the subsequent part of the work, it has prompted the question whether there is an underlying unity in the book's message. Sutton (2006, p. 127) has suggested that *Dicts* presents us with a perpetual "Alexander-in-progress," evolving from a vain tyrant into a wise king and thus acting as an example of how we should receive the book's wisdom. This surely overstates the case, and another view of the matter would be that *Dicts* simply uses different aspects of the Alexander tradition to make different moral points at

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[65] *predycacion* [sermon], *herers* [listeners].

different times—thus typifying the way in which many moralists in the late Middle Ages availed themselves of the Alexander legend, piecemeal, without implying a unitary judgement of the man.

A minor prose work, though one entirely focused on Alexander, is the Middle English version of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*. It offers an extremely literal translation of the Latin in an unidiomatic style that compares unfavorably with that of *PLA* or the better renderings of *Dicts*. The standard edition is DiMarco and Perelman (1978), which declares the translation to belong, most probably, to the 15th century (p. 37); the text is found on folios 138r–146v of the unique manuscript, Worcester Cathedral F. 172, which is dated to the third quarter of the 15th century (p. 1).

Several other works of Middle English prose have something to say about Alexander, but since he plays a lesser role in them they will not be treated in full here. The most important is the *Secretum Secretorum* [The Secret of Secrets] (*SS*), which purports to be educational material offered by Aristotle to Alexander. The standard edition of several Middle English and Early Modern English versions of the book is Manzalaoui (1977), which prints nine translations from the 15th and 16th centuries, with a significant introduction but no notes or glossary. Three other English versions are in Steel (1898); a translation by John Lydgate and Benedict Burgh is in Steele (1894); and a further translation found in Sir Gilbert Hay's prose manuscript is in Glenn (1993–2005). As explained in Manzalaoui's introduction, *SS* appears to have been translated from Syriac or Greek into Arabic, where it is found in a short and a long form; both forms were translated into Latin, the short in the 12th century and the long in the 13th. It enjoyed lasting success and was rendered into several vernaculars.[66] Alexander himself appears in only two episodes of *SS*, apart from which he functions merely as the recipient of Aristotle's wisdom, which ranges across kingship, military leadership and various medical issues. Much of the material will strike the modern reader as whimsical, though a medieval audience would doubtless have seen things differently: for example, we are told what a king should do about his genitals "yf any superfluyté be gadered in tham" (p. 61);[67] but even a medieval reader would surely find it amusing to learn that a king, as part of his state-

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[66] See Manzalaoui (1977), pp. ix–l for an extensive discussion. Cf. Bunt (1994), pp. 69–70.

[67] All references to *SS* are to Manzalaoui (1977).

craft, should regularly hold a feast at which he ought to get his men drunk while staying sober himself—"and than shalt thow here and see many secretes" (p. 39). A good deal of Aristotle's advice, however, is of all too familiar a kind: "O Alexandre, coveyte not þat thynge that is corruptible and transitorye" (p. 38).

It should at least be mentioned that Alexander is referred to several times in various Middle English versions of *Mandeville's Travels*, which was originally composed in French ca. 1380. In particular, he is mentioned in connection with the Brahmans, the Gymnosophists, the peoples identified with Gog and Magog, and the trees of the sun and moon (all of which Mandeville claims to have visited), and the Earthly Paradise (which Mandeville does not reach). The chief purpose of the references is manifestly to lend ancient authority to the accounts of the various peoples and places described.[68]

Alexander features in a few *exempla* found in English translations of the *Gesta Romanorum*, the Latin version of which was originally compiled ca. 1400, and in *An Alphabet of Tales*, based on the Latin *Alphabetum Narrationum* compiled ca. 1380.[69] The standard editions of the four manuscripts of the Middle English *Gesta* are Herrtage (1879) and Sandred (1971) (the latter offering texts from the manuscript missed by the former); that of *Alphabet* is Banks (1904–1905). Ten out of more than 800 *exempla* in *Alphabet* concern Alexander; several criticize him for greed, pride and bellicosity, but some others are neutral or imply faint praise. Only three *exampla* from the English *Gesta* relate to Alexander, of which two treat him as a symbol of the Christian everyman, and in the third he represents God the Father. It can be seen, therefore, that there is no consistent treatment of him in these collections; in fact, as mentioned above in connection with *Dicts*, moralists simply used some facet of Alexander tales to reinforce whatever the lesson of the moment was.

Brief mention should also be made of the universal chronicles in which Alexander appears. Ranulf Higden's very successful Latin *Polychronicon*, finished ca. 1362, was translated into English by John Trevisa in 1385–7, the English version being printed by Caxton in 1482.

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[68] Seymour (1993) offers a survey of the many versions of the *Travels*; for a discussion of the Alexander connection, see Bunt (1994), pp. 75–78. The standard editions of the Middle English *Travels* in its several versions are Warner (1889), Hamelius (1919–1923), Seymour (1963), and Seymour (1973).

[69] For a discussion of Alexander and the *exempla*, see Bunt (1994), pp. 79–85, from which the brief account here has been abstracted.

Another English translation was made in the 15th century by an anonymous author. Higden's Latin original and both English translations are available in Babington and Lumby (1865–1886). The main account of Alexander's career comes in chapters 27–30 of Book III and displays a critical tone taken over from Justin, one of Higden's major sources; references to Alexander in other parts of the work, however, do not always reveal a negative attitude. In the 15th century another universal chronicle was produced in English by John Capgrave: the *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* was probably completed in 1462–3; it contains a brief account of Alexander free from the negative tone characteristic of Higden. The standard edition is Lucas (1983).[70]

Middle Scots Verse Romances

Les Vœux du Paon, a chivalric tale involving Alexander marginally, was written in 1312–13 by Jacques de Longuyon, effectively to be a sequel to *La Prise de Defur*, to be a relative of *Li Fuerre de Gadres* (with which it shares some characters) and to be included in the *Roman d'Alexandre*. Two very small fragments of a Middle English alliterative verse translation exist and can be found in Turville-Petre (1979); a longer Middle English passage, the *Cassamus Fragment*, amounts to 566 lines in eight-line stanzas of low quality and is available in Rosskopf (1911). By far the most important contribution of the *Vœux* to Alexander literature in Britain, however, is as the source of substantial sections of two large-scale romances in Middle Scots verse, *The Buik of Alexander* and *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*.

Before moving on to discuss these major romances it would be well to mention that the *Vœux* is the work that introduces the concept of the Nine Worthies into European literature: in the standard list Alexander takes his place beside Hector and Julius Caesar among the three pagans, while Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus make up the three Hebrew worthies, and the Christian group is comprised of Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon.[71] The idea became commonplace but occurs notably in the Middle English *Parlement of the Thre Ages*

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[70] For a discussion of historical writing on Alexander, see Bunt (1994), pp. 35–42, from which the above information is taken.

[71] An edition of the *Vœux* is in Ritchie (1921–1929); see ll.7484–579. For a general survey of the concept, see Schroeder (1971); Bunt (1994), pp. 53–60, examines the topos in Middle English and Scots.

(ll.300–583, Thornton text), *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (ll.3408–45) and Caxton's preface to Malory; in Earlier or Middle Scots it occurs in "Ane Ballet of the Nine Nobles," Barbour's *Bruce* (I.529–60, mentioning only Alexander, Julius and Arthur) and Blind Hary's *Wallace* (XII, 833–46, which omits the three Hebrew Worthies), besides *The Buik of Alexander* (ll.9895–10012 of the section corresponding to the *Vœux*).[72] The topos does not occur in *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*.

The Buik of Alexander (*BA*), written in rhymed octosyllabic couplets, is anonymous; in the standard edition, Ritchie (1921–1929), it is argued at great length (vol. 1, pp. lxi–cclxvii) that the poem is the work of John Barbour, who died in 1395, but more recent analysis of Barbour's *Bruce* has indicated that this cannot be so.[73] There is no compelling reason to dismiss the testimony of the epilogue to *BA*, which gives the date of composition as 1438.

No manuscript of *BA* exists, the poem having survived in a unique copy of a version printed in Edinburgh, ca. 1580, by Alexander Arbuthnet. A quire has dropped out, leaving a gap in the Middle Scots text corresponding to ll.513–904 of the *Vœux*; a section of narrative corresponding to ll.3064–169 of the *Vœux* is also absent, although there is no apparent break in the printed text.[74]

Since the title page is missing, the modern designation of the work stems from the heading to the first section, which says, "Heir beginnis the first parte of this buik of the most noble and valiant Conquerour Alexander the grit. Callit the Forray of Gadderis." What follows, amounting to 3304 lines, is a translation of *Li Fuerre de Gadres*. The remainder of the book is a translation of *Les Vœux du Paon*: first comes a section of 8329 lines entitled "The Avowis of Alexander," which has its own added prologue; then comes a third section, "The Great Battell of Effesovn," totalling 2756 lines numbered continuously with the "Avowis" in Ritchie's edition; and finally there is the added epilogue already mentioned. The translation throughout stays close to the French originals and is rendered in plain language with a lower percentage of line-fillers than is often encountered in medieval verse.

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[72] The cited editions of the English works are Offord (1959), Benson (1994) and Vinaver (1971) respectively; those of the Scots are Ritchie (1921–1929), vol. 1, pp. cxxxiv–cl (even numbered pages), McDiarmid and Stevenson (1980–1985), McDiarmid (1968–1969), and again Ritchie (1921–1929).

[73] See McDiarmid and Stevenson (1980–1985), vol. 1, pp. 27–30.

[74] All references to *BA* are to Ritchie (1921–1929), which prints the French source texts and the Middle Scots translation on facing pages.

Alexander plays only a small role in *BA*, as he does in the source texts—a fact that seems to belie the heading that has given rise to the modern title. Any suggestion that Arbuthnet's printed edition gives only two episodes from what must have been a much longer poem truly focused on Alexander, however, must overcome the objections that French texts of the *Fuerre* and *Vœux* are frequently found together in manuscripts,[75] and that there is no positive evidence, within *BA* or outside of it, for the existence of the longer poem.

To the extent that *BA* deals directly with Alexander, it presents him in a very favorable light. The epilogue (which could be a late addition, of course) urges the reader to do good.

> As quhylum did this nobill King,
> That ȝit is prysed for his bounte.[76]

The translation itself presents Alexander and his sudden death in the following terms, which can well stand as an example of the poem's style (ll.11133–8 corresponding to *Vœux* ll.8679–82):

> To Babylon syne can he ga.
> Allace! Allace! quhy did he sa?
> He deit thare throw poysoning;
> It was great harme of sik ane thing,
> For neuer mare sik an lord as he
> Sall in this warld recouerit be.[77]

The scribal epilogue to the later verse romance, *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour* (*BKA*), gives the information that the work was originally translated by Sir Gilbert (the) Hay, who spent twenty-four years in France, where he was in the service of the king (ll.19319–23).[78] If the attribution is correct, the poem is likely to have been composed ca. 1460, after Hay had completed his prose works in 1456.[79] Its concerns, which can be summed up as exemplary knighthood combined

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[75] Cartwright (1986), p. 232.

[76] Epilogue, ll.32–3; *quhylum* [once], *ȝit* [still], *prysed* [praised], *bounte* [generosity, or goodness].

[77] *syne* [afterwards], *quhy* [why], *deit* [died], *sik* [such], *recouerit* [found again].

[78] All references to *BKA* are to the standard edition, Cartwright (1986–1990).

[79] See Cartwright (1986), p. 229. The standard edition of Hay's prose works is Glenn (1993–2005). "The Buke of the Law of Armys" gives biographical information in agreement with that in the *BKA* epilogue, adding that Hay was "maister in arte and bachilere in decreis" (Glenn, 1993–2005, vol. 2, p. 2); he probably graduated from the University of St Andrews in 1414–19 (Martin, 2006, pp. 75–76).

with thoughtful and responsible kingship, certainly fit with the topics Hay addressed in his prose, which falls into three sections called "The Buke of the Law of Armys," "The Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede" and "The Buke of the Gouernaunce of Princes," the last being a version of *SS*. The epilogue also tells us, however, that the work of copying *BKA* in its present form was done in 1499 (ll.19354–9) and that the scribe at least retouched the poem (ll.19311–4 and 19342–4). Whether the retouching amounted to a full rewriting is unfortunately not clear, but the possibility is sufficiently strong for at least one recent scholar (Martin, 2006, p. 77) to speak guardedly of "an anonymous Scottish poet" as the author of the extant poem, without denying the involvement of Hay.

BKA has survived in two manuscripts, London, British Library, Additional 40732, and Edinburgh, Scottish Register House, GD 112/71/9, the latter of which is probably a direct copy of the former. In the London manuscript, there are 33 blank folios followed by 282 of written text and another 21 blank sheets, all of paper. Since the text begins in the middle of a sentence at the top of fol. 34r, it is likely that the initial 33 leaves were left blank so that a missing portion of text could be filled in if it was found; likewise a space has been left on fol. 275 for a section of the poem missing between lines 18939 and 18940; several individual lines are missing and there is some dislocation on folios 258v–264r. The three hands in which the text is written belong most probably to the 1530s. The Edinburgh manuscript is written in two late 16th-century hands; in the codex, which is of paper, the text of *BKA* begins at the same point as in the London manuscript, preceded by 35 blank sheets; a space for the text missing between lines 18939 and 18940 has again been left but the dislocation in the London text has been repaired. The only complete edition of *BKA* is Cartwright 1986–1990, from which the above information on the manuscripts has been taken (pp. vii–xv). Since the intended first of three volumes has not appeared, the edition lacks a commentary and there is only a short introduction.

The *Historia de Preliis* in its J² redaction is one of the sources for *BKA*, another being a full version of the *Roman d'Alexandre* including the *Fuerre*, much abridged in *BKA* but allotting Alexander a more prominent role, and the *Vœux*, likewise much abridged; the poem's account of the journey to the Earthly Paradise, which is the only extended treatment of this episode in medieval English or Scots, includes elements not found in the *Roman* version, and the criticism

of Alexander associated with this story is greatly mitigated. The third
major source is *SS*, which Hay translated in his prose works as men-
tioned above; the ideas found in its treatment of Alexander are no
mere adjuncts to the narrative of *BKA* but are used to give the poem a
sense of unity and to inform its many reflective remarks.

The poem is composed throughout in rhyming decasyllabic couplets.
Often rough, frequently lumbering over inverted syntax, and with a
tendency to be garrulous rather than concentrated in expression, it
nevertheless "tells a good story with obvious enjoyment, suiting its style
to battle, courtly dalliance, moral comment, lament, etc." (Cartwright,
1986, p. 236). The section in which Alexander finds Darius at the point
of death can again be used to exemplify the poem's qualities—the vivid
enjoyment of the tale, the wordiness and the awkward syntax. Here is
the response of Darius to Alexander's noble words (ll.6892–8):

> Than Dare, þat hard him spek [sa] graciusly,
> Recomfort was, and previt him swetelie
> To lift his armes, þe king for till embrace,
> Bot, for his handis baith of cuttit was,
> With baith the stompis he colard him so fast,
> And kissit his mouth, and said him at þe last,
> "God thank þe, lord."[80]

In connection with the portrayal of Alexander, Cartwright (p. 233) has
noted that the poet is engaged in re-examining the nature and impor-
tance of knighthood by presenting us with the greatest of all knights,
the conqueror of the known world. Likewise Martin (2006, pp. 78 and
81) has observed that the Alexander of *BKA* does not suffer any moral
deterioration under the influence of the East but remains a good king
who is righteous and compassionate as occasion demands; Martin
nevertheless perceives a limited occlusion of the picture in connection
with Alexander's adulterous relationship with Candace and through
the poet's decision to include the episodes of Diogenes and the pirate,
which are taken over from the anecdotal tradition (p. 84). Concerning
the thirst that causes Alexander to drink what turns out to be poison,
the poet in fact passes judgement by saying that this sort of thing may

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[80] *hard* [heard], *recomfort* [strengthened], *previthim* [tried], *till* [to], *baith* [both], *of*
[off], *stompis* [stumps], *colard* [held].

be related to a certain *welthful wontones*[81]—he is prepared to go so far, but not much farther, in censuring his hero.

With *BKA* the medieval tradition of Alexander narratives in Britain comes to an end. In many ways this is appropriate because the poem offers the longest and fullest account of Alexander written in English or Scots during the Middle Ages, and it is simultaneously one of the most moral and one of the most positive, this side idolatry, in its treatment of the protagonist.

Canonical Poets

What this survey of medieval Alexander literature in English and Scots has omitted so far is a discussion of references to Alexander in the works of the canonical, or near-canonical, Middle English poets who are not anonymous: Gower, Chaucer, Hoccleve and Lydgate. Considerations of space forbid a full treatment of this subject; in any case these are poets about whom much has been written, and their own writings on Alexander occupy only a small space in their large outputs. Some remarks, nevertheless, will be now offered by way of bringing this chapter to a close.

The main point to be made is that these writers used the available Alexander material opportunistically: they borrowed and adapted themes to suit their immediate purposes within much larger structures, and in doing so they were not concerned to present a unified picture of Alexander. They can be said, at best, to have praised and censured different aspects of Alexander in different places, and at worst to have shown self-contradictory attitudes towards the idea of the man—if indeed they had such an idea in their minds.

Lydgate is perhaps the most extreme case. As noted above, he collaborated on a translation of *SS* (ed. Steele, 1894), with all this implies concerning a positive attitude towards Alexander as Aristotle's devoted student, and in his "Ballade to King Henry VI" (ll.61–2, in MacCracken, 1934) he prays for the king to be given Alexander's magnanimity, conquests and victory; but he makes use several times of the Diogenes anecdote, most notably in his huge poem *The Fall of*

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[81] "wealthful wantonness" (l.17948). The terms could be rendered in several ways and their connotations are hard to pin down.

Princes (I.6224–79 and VII.1300–06, ed. Bergen, 1924–1927), which also dwells with great vehemence on Alexander's killing of Callisthenes and Clitus (IV.1107–449). In the *Fall*, which was probably composed in the 1430s, the section on the wars with Darius (IV.1604–2002) naturally places the emphasis on the downfall of the Persian king, this being the theme announced by the title of the poem, but Alexander is not spared censure for unprovoked aggression (IV.1804–06) and for claiming divine status (IV.1870–83); yet in this same section Lydgate admires Alexander for being peerless in knighthood (IV.1818), calls him "this manli kyng" (IV.1863) and makes Darius thank him for "his hih noblesse" (IV.1926). Later the poisoning of Alexander is called "that horrible deede" (IV.2073) and becomes the occasion for a reflection on mutability IV.2311–17), a theme that Lydgate also uses, in connection with Alexander, in several minor poems.[82]

A similarly split attitude towards Alexander (if we insist on seeing an attitude at all) is exhibited by Gower, whose poem "In Praise of Peace" condemns Alexander as a warmonger like all the Nine Worthies (ll.36–49 and 281–4) yet whose *Confessio Amantis* praises him as the worthiest man ever known, with regard to conquest and chivalry (VI.2087–9).[83] The *Confessio*, written in the late 14th century, also makes room in its vast bulk for a good deal of criticism of Alexander, particularly in the summary of his wars and death (III.2438–80), which emphasises his greed, pride and unreasonable nature, and in the episodes that recount Alexander's meetings with Diogenes and the pirate (III.1201–330 and 2363–437 respectively); but Book VII is devoted to an exposition of the supposed advice of Aristotle to Alexander, and thus presents Alexander as the disciple who received the wisdom of the greatest among pagan philosophers.

Hoccleve, in his *Regiment of Princes*, written ca. 1411, likewise makes frequent mention of Aristotle's advice to Alexander—one of his major sources for the work is in fact *SS*. On several occasions the poet seems determined to put the best interpretation—sometimes in a double-edged way—on the anecdotes he tells: when a courtier vehemently upbraids Alexander for lechery, for example, and the king meekly

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[82] For a more detailed discussion of Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate and Hoccleve, see Bunt (1994), pp. 43–52. The section on Lydgate (pp. 48–50), however, does not give full weight to Lydgate's praise of Alexander.

[83] All references to Gower's works are to Macaulay (1900–1901).

concedes that he is in the wrong but will mend his ways, the poet is able to condemn Alexander implicitly for lust while pointing to him as an example of patience, i.e. the willingness to be rebuked (ll.3494–512); and when he tells the story of how a wise man saves his city by asking Alexander to destroy it, after Alexander has sworn not to grant what is requested, Hoccleve notes that the situation was provoked by Alexander's wrath and moodiness, but he makes it his moral that oaths must be kept (ll.2300–31).[84] A story exemplifying Alexander's compassion (ll.3249–67, however, is free of irony and entirely positive; but another, in which Alexander is rebuked for greed that will not be satisfied by all the world, is such that the poet says he has no comment (ll.4047–74).

Finally we come to Chaucer, who makes a passing reference to Alexander as a paragon of excellence in *The Book of the Duchess* (ll.1059–60), brackets him with Hercules in *The House of Fame* (l.1413), and makes a mere jest of his encounter with the pirate in "The Manciple's Tale" (*Canterbury Tales*, IX.226–34).[85] Apart from these fleeting remarks, Chaucer's contribution to Alexander literature resides entirely in what is said in the series of "tragedies," i.e. stories of how the good fortune of the great suddenly turns bad, that makes up "The Monk's Tale." Here, in a mere forty lines (*Canterbury Tales*, VII.2631–70), Chaucer touches on very many of the issues that make up the fabric of the literature investigated in this book: everyone has heard of Alexander's fortune (Chaucer says); he subdued the world either by conquest or because people were glad to submit in the face of his power; he brought low the pride of men everywhere; there was no one like him; he was the acme of knighthood and generosity; nothing could weaken his resolve except wine and women; he defeated Darius and many other kings, bringing them to grief; he reigned for twelve years after succeeding Philip; he was poisoned by his own men, and thus Fortune, in the game of dice, changed his six to a one. In this way, as is fitting, the greatest poet of the age has bequeathed to us the pithiest summing up of medieval attitudes towards Alexander; it is therefore fitting, also, that we leave to him the final word (ll.2663–7):

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[84] All references to *The Regiment of Princes* are to Blyth (1999).
[85] All references to the works of Chaucer are to Benson (1987).

Who shall me yeven teeris to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise,
That al the world weelded in his demeyne,
And yet hym thoughte it myghte nat suffise?
So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.[86]

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[86] *yeven* [give], *gentillesse* [nobility], *franchise* [generosity of spirit], *corage* [heart],
emprise [knightly courage].

GERMAN ALEXANDER ROMANCES

Danielle Buschinger*

The classical Middles Ages were already familiar with the lofty deeds of the great Macedonian, as the *Song of Alexander* by the cleric Lamprecht and the Alexander of Rudolf von Ems reveal. However, the myth of Alexander did not attain its apogee until the end of the Middle Ages, with some verse poems and prose romances.

Classical Middle Ages (1150–1250 A.D.)

The German *Song of Alexander* is the first example of the influence exercised by French literature of the Middle Ages on medieval German literature, which makes the work so important. The poem of Albéric of Pisançon, written around 1100 was adapted into German around 1150 by a cleric who was originally from Trier, named Lamprecht. It is the oldest text about Alexander written in the vernacular, and of it there remains nothing more than a fragment of a hundred or so verses. Albéric's most important sources are Julius Valerius and recension J[1] of the *Historia de preliis Alexandri magni* (*HP*) of archpriest Leo (11th century), as well as an interpolated version of Quintus Curtius. This German version has come down to us in Vorau's version, close to the original (V; around 1150), but it broke off with the second battle against the Persians and the death of the Persian king Darius (at Alexander's hands). It is the first text of an extremely rich German tradition of poems about Alexander. There exists a later adaptation of this version by the same Vorau. Within the Fifth Branch itself, there are two versions, *Alexander of Strasbourg* (S) and *Alexander of Basel* (B; 13th century), which relate the entire life of the hero. The version of Basel was inserted in a compilation of a universal chronicle, and transmitted in a manuscript of the 15th century. It should be noted that the succession of texts and their relationship to the versions of

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* Translated by Martha Krieg.

Vorau, Strasbourg, and the original Lamprecht are questions strongly disputed in research.[1]

As far as the version of Strasbourg is concerned, it lies between 1170 and 1187. Nevertheless, after the recent discovery of a copy of the first page of the manuscript of Strasbourg-Molsheim, burned in 1870, in which redaction S of the *Alexander* was transmitted, we can situate the manuscript around 1210, or even 1220, for paleographic reasons. In this light, there is no major objection to formulating a hypothesis according to which the text transmitted by S is later than was believed up until now. As E. Schröder underscored,[2] the language of the manuscript also does not exclude a date in the first or even the second decade of the 13th century. For the portion that goes beyond V, the S redaction goes back to an uninterpolated version of the *HP* and to the *Epistola ad Aristotelem* (10th century), as well as to the *Iter ad Paradisum* (first half of the 12th century). Alongside the Latin tradition issuing from the Greek *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (*PC*) by which we are referring to the Latin translation by Julius Valerius Polemius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis* (ca. 330), and to the *Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni* by the archpriest Leo, a work known by the title *Historia de preliis Alexandri magni*, of which there are three recensions: J^1 = 11th century, J^2 = second half of the 12th century, J^3 = end of the 12th/beginning of the 13th century); I repeat, alongside this tradition, there are the *Alexandri Magni historiae* by the Latin historian Quintus Curtius. Taken together these works constitute the essential foundation of medieval texts in the vernacular. Beyond that, let us cite the *Itinerarum Alexandri* (fourth century), the *Iter ad Paradisum* (first half of the 12th century) and the letter from Alexander to Aristotle about the marvels of the Orient, transmitted independently in a Latin version (the oldest manuscripts date to the ninth century).

I am going to dwell on the most curious aspect of the *Alexander* of Lamprecht or *Alexander* of Vorau,[3] Darius' death at the hand of

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[1] See C. Mackert (1999), *Die Alexandergeschichte in der Version des 'Pfaffen Lambrecht,* p. 13ff.; see also T. Ehlert (1989), *Deutschsprachige Alexanderdichtungen des Mittelalters*, p. 23ff., and J. Cölln (2000), "Arbeit an Alexander. Lambrecht, seine Fortsetzungen und die handschriftliche Überlieferung."

[2] See E. Schröder, "Die Strassburg-Molsheimer Handschrift," in *Nachr. D. Ges. d. Wiss. Zu Göttingen*, (Berlin, 1926), pp. 148–160. Cited by Ehlert (1989), p. 55.

[3] See D. Buschinger, "Die Tyrus-Episode in den französischen und deutschen Alexanderromanen des 12. Jahrhunderts," in *Herrschaft, Ideologie und Geschichtskonzeption in Alexanderdichtungen des Mittelelaters,* U. Mölk (ed.), in collaboration with K. Börst,

Alexander, and I am going to attempt to justify this fact, unique in the literature about Alexander. Upon the death of King Philip, his son Alexander, only twenty years old, mounted the throne. Lamprecht underscored that, in spite of his youth, he governed with wisdom and intelligence, but also forcefully, and that he maintained order in his country. In doing so he revealed himself to be a perfect sovereign. His only concern was to do everything he could to increase the glory of Greece, and first of all to disencumber himself from a tribute that Darius had imposed on the Macedonians. From that point on, all was justified, in particular the episode of Tyre, where Alexander was on the one hand an exemplary war chief, who knew to perfection the technique of war and sieges, a perfect strategist, an ingenious general, who, for example, invented Greek fire. On the other hand, because of his pride or *superbia* (*ubermûtecheit*) (v. 723), he destroyed the city of Tyre and sometimes showed himself to be cruel with respect to the inhabitants of that city. This is comprehensible if we bear in mind that they were subjects of Darius and that they did not want to betray their king, and that in that war numerous Greeks died for which Alexander felt responsible. To arrive at his goal, he swept away all those who supported the Persian king. Darius himself fell victim when Alexander eliminated him single-handedly. In the last battle against the Persian king, Alexander threw him down and said "*ir sult zins hie infâhen,/ dâ ir vil manegen tach habeth nâch gesant,/ den hân ich iu brâht in diz lant!*" [V 1521; now you must receive the tribute which you have claimed many times; I have brought it here into this land], and then cut off his head.

R. Finckh, I. Kuschke and A. Schneider (Göttingen, 2002), pp. 162–177; D. Buschinger, "Alexander im Orient," in *Raumerfahrung—Raumerfindung—erzählte Welten des Mittelalters zwischen Orient und Okzident.* L. Rimpau and P. Ihring (eds.) (Berlin, 2005), pp. 57–70; D. Buschinger, "Réalité et imaginaire dans l'Alexandre de Strasbourg," in *Réalité et imaginaire. Textes réunis et présenté par Anna Kukulka-Wojtasik* (Torun, 2003), pp. 55–70; D. Buschinger, "L'Orient dans l'Alexandre de Strasbourg," to appear in *Mélanges Jean Dufournet* (Paris, 1993); D. Buschinger, "Traduction et adaptation dans l'*Alexandre de Strasbourg*, La réécriture du roman d'Alexandre," in P. Andersen (ed.), *Pratiques de Traduction au Moyen Age.* Actes du Colloque de l'Université de Copenhague. 25 et 26 octobre 2002, (Copenhagen, 2004), pp. 82–95; D. Buschinger, "L'épisode des Filles-Fleurs dans le *Parsifal* de Richard Wagner. Ses sources médiévales et bouddhiques," *Mélanges offerts à Danielle Aubriot,* in press; D. Buschinger, "Filles-Fleurs et amazones dans le *Roman d'Alexandre,*" *Actes du Colloque de Pavie,* in press.

Vorau's entire narrative was constructed in view of this death. That is evident when we consider the fact that the moment the question of this tribute arose for the first time in the work the narrator announced the death of Darius: 483–484 *Darius wart umbe den selben zins erslagen/ daz ich iu sal wâre sagen* [it is because of that tribute that Darius was slain: I am telling you the truth]. We ought to see here the proof that Vorau's version has not been truncated, as certain commentators maintain, but that it actually ended with the death of Darius.

The *Alexander* of Lamprecht or of Vorau offers us a nuanced image of the Macedonian. With his problems such as anger and his crises of conscience, he is not a "superman." That is the reason certain commentators drew a negative portrait of him, and others a positive portrait. Let us take for example verses 949–952: *wande die burgêre brâchen si durch/ unt wichen aber wider in die burch./ dâ verlôs er manegen dûren chneht,/ Alexander tet in grôz unreht* [the inhabitants of Tyre broke through and reentered the fortress. He (Alexander) lost numerous brave men at arms there, doing them great wrong], where it is said that Alexander acted unjustly toward his own men by provoking the death of many Greeks, which was designated as "mort" [murder] (v. 959). The redactor of V blamed his hero, whose reaction was anger. Alexander launched himself angrily in the direction of a gate of the city, but had to pull back because of the resistance of Tyre's inhabitants. Nevertheless, one might think that this anger was a positive trait. Indeed, the hero was irritated on account of the fact that several of his compatriots were dead, and subsequently, he showed compassion for their ill fate. In this way, the author toned down the criticism that he had just expressed against his hero. At the deepest level, Alexander found himself obliged to act in this way, since his intention was perfectly legitimate: he wanted to rid himself of an unjust tribute, but his behavior brought with it great losses among his men. He could not act otherwise, given that the inhabitants of Tyre, allies of Darius, put up a violent resistance, protected by their fortress, which was described as almost impregnable. His fits of rage show that the death of his warriors was not a matter of indifference to him. It seems that if we consider the episode of Tyre, on which the detractors of the Macedonian base their opinion, in the general framework of the action, we ought to see in Alexander a positive figure, for whom Lamprecht had a great deal of admiration ("im ne gelîchet nehein ander" v. 46 'he was like no other'), an admiration tempered however, as in the *Roman d'Alexandre*

of Alexandre de Paris[4] (*AdP*) IV 1679, by his pagan origin ("wande Alexander was ein heiden" v. 70 'because Alexander was a heathen'). In this way, the conquest of the city by Alexander could be considered as part of the history of salvation[5] and proof that Alexander acted according to the will of God (v. 467–478). Such is the case in both the *Alexander* of Vorau because of the express reference to the first book of Maccabees and to the book of Daniel with Daniel's dream of the four empires of the world, as well as in the *Alexandre décasyllabique* and the *AdP*, in which the conquest of Tyre depended exclusively on divine assistance.[6] In short, we could see here a stage in the destruction of the Persian empire, which according to the theory of *translatio imperii* ought to be replaced by the Macedonian empire (Dn. 7):[7] Alexander, *instrumentum Dei*,[8] provoked the collapse of the second empire. For the rest, within the manuscript of Vorau, *Alexander* is situated exactly at the place where, according to the theory of the empires of the world, the third empire ought to succeed the second.

The *Alexander* of Strasbourg is, as far as it is concerned, a very good example of adaptation, notably of Latin sources. That is the reason I will dwell on the expedition of Alexander in the East, for which the redactor of the S version of the German *Alexander* based himself both on the *Epistola* and the *HP*. Nevertheless, he had equal recourse to some supplementary sources, for example some *Bestiaries* and doubtless also to the *Physiologus*, but also perhaps to a romance source (for the episode of the flower-maidens). He chose some elements from within those different sources, and most often he proceeded linearly and placed the episodes in the order in which they existed in the sources. Occasionally, he also moved or transposed some episodes and put them in another context. Like the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* (*RdTCh*) of Thomas of Kent and *AdP*, the Strasbourg *Alexander* is a

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[4] Editions: *Lamprechts 'Alexander,'* Kinzel (1885); *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre,'* Armstrong (1937); *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*. Volume II: Version of Alexandre de Paris, Armstrong et al. (1937); *The Anglo-Norman 'Alexander' (Le Roman de Toute chevalerie) by Thomas of Kent,* Foster (1976); Alexandre de Paris, *Le Roman d'Alexandre*. Harf-Lancner (1994). *Die Basler Bearbeitung von Lambrechts Alexander*, Werner (1881).
[5] Ehlert (1989)*,* pp. 38ff.
[6] Gaullier-Bougassas (1998), p. 292.
[7] Gaullier-Bougassas*,* pp. 292–293.
[8] Ehlert, p. 45.

patchwork, where elements taken from different sources are assem-
bled, which the redactor of S selected from his models and which, for
the most part, he translated from Latin into German. He proceeded
like Ulrich von Zatzikhoven in the *Lanzelet* or Wimt von Grafenberg
in the *Wigalois*, two works written during the first two decades of the
13th century, with the difference however that those two poets took
the elements of their poems from some classical German works. The
technique of composition of the S version is therefore very modern
and would strengthen the hypothesis that it was written at a date later
than that at which it is currently placed.

I am going to attempt to show at what point the character of
Alexander was remodeled by the S redactor basing my opinion on the
episode of the voyage to the East and on the conclusion of the work.
It was only for the sake of intellectual curiosity that Alexander went in
search of marvels (S 5161 *und wolden wundir besehen*), and he believed
that what he wrote in his letter to Aristotle would seem to his tutor
so unbelievable that he did not dare to write anything else out of fear
that people would mock him (5816–17 *daz waz sô unmâzlîchen grôz,/
daz his nit ne tar sagen./ ir mohtis uberen spot haben,/ wandiz dûhte
û ungeloublîch*). For this reason, Alexander kept his distance from the
narrative, and with him the S redactor. At the same time, the descrip-
tion of the eastern world and its miracles showed that Alexander was
totally lacking in self-interest. After his victory over Porus and after
the Indians had submitted to his authority, he did not want to conquer
anything more for the time being. Thus it was that he approached
the Occidrates in a completely peaceful way (4611–4738) and left the
country called Brasiacus without making war there (S 5489: *daz lant
liez ih mit fride stân*, he wrote). He was equally content to admire the
magnificent palace on the high mountain and out of respect for the
old man asleep there, he refused even to wake him, although he would
have preferred to know who he was: *gezogenlîch ih ime neich*, S 5469).
At Candace's, he was ready to render aid to another: he freed the wife
of Candaulus (son of Candace): in that way, he avenged the humili-
ation of Candaulus.[9] The quite numerous additions in the middle of
a text translated rather or even very faithfully, sometimes literally, or
the developments of the S redaction, in comparison with the *HP*, had a
very precise function in the episode of Candace: the S redactor wanted

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[9] It is an episode that exists also in *AdP* (III 250ff.).

to show Alexander in the best light, intelligent and sensitive. Among the Amazons, he said that, although he had come into their country to demand a tribute from them, he did not want to harm them, but wished to see the marvels that people told of them (S 6564–6573); in *AdP* III 7266ff. he also demanded a tribute from the Amazons and in the end the queen actually rendered fealty and homage to Alexander and promised him her help; in the *PC* 152,36 Alexander subjected the Amazons to a tribute. Thus it was that the S redactor toned down this traditional trait, to Alexander's benefit, implying that he undertook the entire expedition to the East only because of the desire for discoveries and thirst for knowledge. This perspective contrasts with the *AdP*, where the voyage to the East was rather deceptive, which was shown by the fact that the flower-maiden that Alexander wanted to take with him to the West to crown her as queen (III, 3492ff.) could not leave the shadow of the forest without dying: the East could not be transplanted into the West: "Alexander's East seemed only to produce its marvels to display their deceptive character," wrote Emmanuèle Baumgartner.[10]

Now Alexander was master of the world, his career as a warrior was finished (S 6449–6464). Nonetheless, that was not sufficient for him. He wanted to conquer Paradise and demand a tax from it (S 6465ff.). The S redactor who suppressed both the voyage to the bottom of the sea and the voyage in the air, went on then, certainly of his own free will, instead of recounting the two battles of Babylon and expanding on the death of Alexander, like *AdP*.[11] From that point, to the *Iter ad Paradisum*: the redactor wanted to show the transformation of his

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[10] Baumgartner, (1988), p. 13.

[11] Foulet (*The Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre*, 6:1) wrote concerning this: "Stanzas 345–457 (second battle of Babylon, the Amazons, second plot of Antipater and Divinuspater) represent material introduced by Alexandre de Paris, though he does not seem to have composed these three episodes. They may have been part of a rival Alexander romance which aimed at supplanting the earlier *ABL* narrative, since the second battle and second plot duplicate the *ABL* accounts." Foulet attributed the first battle of Babylon to a continuer of Lambert le Tort, Lambert 2, (6:14ff.), because "we have no less than some sixty stanzas corresponding to hardly more than a dozen words of the *Epitome*." In the *HP* the text is a little longer and more detailed (6:71). As for the episode of the Amazons, Foulet (6:80) thinks that "The author of the Amazons episode seems to have derived the framework of his narrative […] from the J³ redaction of the *HP* [which came into being between 1185 and 1236], and the betrothal of the two Amazon girls from the *Roman de Thèbes*." We underscore that this episode of the Amazons, which is also found both in *AdP* and in the Strasbourg *Alexander*, is found in the tradition of *PC*.

hero. First of all, Alexander was severely condemned by the S redactor: he was accused of *hôhmûtes* [overconfidence] (S 6614), of *tumpheit* [lack of experience, even of stupidity] (S 6620), of *giricheit* [greed] (S 6483), and he was called *der tobende wûterich* [a furious and enraged man] (S 6671). He arrived at the gate of Paradise and failed: he had to leave without having done what he wanted, although his warriors pushed him to conquer Paradise using violence. But in the end, the S redactor, who Christianized the figure of Alexander, showed him in a favorable light. Alexander, who with his expedition to Paradise wanted to surpass the limits assigned by God to men, to set foot on God's own territory, had a change of heart: he followed the instructions exactly—a sort of *memento mori*—of the Jewish sage who interpreted the stone which someone offered to him from Paradise,[12] and he became an ideal sovereign (7260–69), who no longer made war and restored justice within his empire. In short, he became a *rex iustus et pacificus*, and remained so for twelve years. In contrast to what was recounted in *AdP*, he did not die at the end of his expedition to the East, a fact that also contributed to interpreting that expedition in a much more favorable way than in *AdP*, in which the voyage to the East resembled a foolish wandering in search of immortality.[13]

The *AdP* in Old French at the end of the work effectively placed in question everything positive that had existed in the life of the hero: it condemned his *desmesure*, which caused him to lose everything: *Cil qui se desmesure si puet molt tost chaïr* [one who is immoderate may quickly fall] (IV 1642), or *Quit trestout veut tenir tout pert a abandon; / Souvent I perd grant chose par amalvaise achoison* [one who wants to hold everything soon loses everything; often one loses a great deal through one's own fault] (IV 1673–74), which cancelled out the dithyrambic eulogy which had previously been made for Alexander (IV 1535–41) and was equivalent to a condemnation of Alexander. One thinks here of the interpretation of the dream of the young Alexander at the beginning of the work: *Mais ja de riens qu'il vuelle ne porra esploitier,/ Car tuit cil li faudront qui li devront aidier,/ Et molt malvaisement l'estovra repairier,/ si com fist li serprens quei retorna arrier* [But none of his desires would be realized, because those who ought to have helped him failed him and he had to turn back miserably exactly

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[12] For the stone, see Hertz (1905), "Aristoteles und der Wunderstein," pp. 103–107.
[13] Alexandre de Paris, *Le Roman d'Alexandre*, Harf-Lancner (ed.), p. 57 ("Le voyage en Inde fait donc figure de folle errance en quête de l'immortalité")

like the snake who comes back over his trail] (I 305–308).[14] The S redactor certainly summed up the *vita* of Alexander by that warning: *niwit mêr er behîlt/ allis des er ie beranc,/ wene erden siben vôze lanc,/ alse der armiste man,/ der in die werlet ie bequam* [Of all that he had obtained, there remained to him nothing but seven feet of ground, like the poorest man who had ever come into the world] (S 7274–7278), and he ended his whole work with a new *memento mori* addressed to the public.

The entire voyage into the East as well as the conclusion with the conversion of Alexander showed that the S redactor had conceived the figure of Alexander as a positive character, which contrasted with his condemnation by the French *Roman d'Alexandre*.

To reach his goal, the redactor did not choose his elements at random, but in a very thoughtful way. In the S redaction of *Alexander*, there is neither a voyage to the bottom of the sea nor a celestial ascension, no perilous valley nor Pillars of Arthur, no fountain of youth through which the *AdP* "approached the fictional writing of contemporary romances."[15] Even if its geography is rather fuzzy, nevertheless there are a certain number of geographical points of departure that permit the representation, more vaguely, we must concede, than in the *RdTCh*, of the itinerary of Alexander as far as Paradise, situated by medieval people in India. In short, one can detect in the S redaction, in contrast to *AdP*, who accentuated the marvelous dimension of his version and led his narrative into fiction, a certain desire to avoid the episodes and scenes that merely concerned marvels; that is the reason there were among the animals no eels provided with arms in contrast to *RdTCh*, or griffons in contrast to *AdP*, and this even more since Alexander, in contrast to Hercules, was not in a position to overcome savage and monstrous animals. The S redactor had the manifest desire to anchor the narrative in reality. Even the conclusion of the completely supernatural, completely imaginary episode of the flower-maidens, where there was no miraculous rebirth in the spring-time, bears witness to that desire. Furthermore, there was a tendency to develop, sometimes in important proportions, the descriptions of objects and palaces quite in the realm of the real which, created by the artistic and technical ability of man, gave witness to the intelligence

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[14] Alexandre de Paris, *Le Roman d'Alexandre*, Harf-Lancner (ed.), pp. 50–53; Gaullier-Bougassas (1998), p. 511ff.

[15] Gaullier-Bougassas (1998), p. 252.

and power of those who made them, such as those of Candace. These complemented the redactor's recourse to bestiaries and the *Physiologus*. Lastly, the S redactor introduced, at the end of the work, an episode which was not present in the French versions, that of the *Iter ad paradisum*. The S redactor, who Christianized the character of Alexander, selected an episode which, even if it carried with it, even more than others, something of the marvelous, of the imaginary, nevertheless permitted him to show the conversion of the hero Alexander who, after having wanted to transgress the limits imposed by God on man, scrupulously followed the teaching of the Jew who interpreted for him the stone which was given outside of Paradise. That episode permitted the S redactor to show the transformation of Alexander into an ideal sovereign (7260–9). The Macedonian hero, who, already in his voyage to the East, had shown himself to be, otherwise than in *AdP*, completely lacking in self-interest and who carried out his expedition only for thirst for knowledge, thereafter renounced making war, and restored justice in his empire.

In short, in becoming *rex iustus et pacificus*, he realized the ideal of the Staufen and of Barbarossa in particular. In place of the two battles of Babylon and, above all, in place of the death by poisoning of Alexander, which, although historic (except that in reality, Alexander probably died of malaria), cast a totally negative light on the expedition of the hero in the East, the S redaction showed that Alexander could draw a lesson from the adventures he experienced. His admirable reign of twelve years, while being contrary to historical reality, belonged to a completely different reality, an ideological reality, a political reality, that of Frederick Barbarossa and the Staufen. The imaginary was at the service of reality.

As for the version of Basel, for the beginning it was based doubtlessly on a J^2 recension of the *HP* and included at the end a more extended version of the adventures of Alexander in the East, which had numerous resemblances to the description of those adventures by Jans Enikel (13th century). The poet spoke of the legendary origin of Alexander (he would be the son, not of Philip of Macedon, but of Nectanebus) and of his fantastic adventures which he borrowed from the *HP* (Gog and Magog; Alexander's voyage to the bottom of the sea and into the air which he made while conquering the world, conquering it equally from the land and from the sky; the suicide by drowning in the Euphrates of the hero weakened by the poison which his sworn manservant had given him). Due to the very fact that Alexander was

the son of Nectanebus, the author of the Basel version could not make reference to Christian or aristocratic norms (like conjugal fidelity), nor could he integrate the hero into salvation history. The profane historiography could, at the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century, be recounted independent of biblical references and the B redactor gave priority to marvelous and exotic details.[16]

Rudolf von Ems

Rudolf von Ems (first half of the 13th century), a native of the region of Lake Constance, left a work that is very important because of its thematic breadth: his real field of activity was historiography. In particular, he wrote, after 1230, a romance of Alexander, left unfinished, and around 1250 a *Universal Chronicle*, which also remained unfinished. Rudolf utilized first the *HP*, then the *Historiae Alexandri Magni* of Quintus Curtius, as well as auxiliary sources. The acrostic which was discovered at the beginning of the books that have come down to us (*R*[uodolf] *ALEXA*) showed that the poet had the intention to divide his work into ten books, since the fragment broke off in the middle of book 6, before the combats of the Macedonian against King Porus of India.

Rudolf, who did not name any sponsor, most likely wrote his *Alexander*, a true "mirror of princes", at the court of the Hohenstaufen, for the son of Emperor Frederick II, in particular, for the young Conrad IV. In effect, the poet placed Alexander in salvation history and in universal history. The Macedonian hero, who was an exemplary sovereign and ideal prince, was represented explicitly as the founder of the third of the four empires of the world; his reign was nevertheless relativized to the extent that other sovereigns would come after him and a fourth universal empire would succeed his. Even if this view is currently controversial,[17] it is tempting to think that that sovereign would be a Hohenstaufen. In that case, Rudolf would have written his *Romance of Alexander* in accord with the imperial interests of his masters.

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[16] See Ehlert, pp. 84ff.
[17] See in particular S. Schmitt (2002), "Alexander *monarchus*. Heilgeschichte als Herrschaftslegitimation in Rudolfs von Ems *Alexander*."

The Late Middle Ages

Ulrich von Etzenbach

Ulrich von Etzenbach was the first poet of the German language in Bohemia of whom we know with certitude that he was born and that he lived in that country, specifically at the court of Prague. There, where he was the court poet, between 1270 and 1286 he wrote the most monumental "poem of Alexander"[18] of the end of the Middle Ages in Germany (twenty-eight thousand verses) to the glory of the king of Bohemia Ottokar II (1253–1278) and, after Ottokar's death, to the glory of Wenceslas II, to whom the work is dedicated. From the eleven manuscripts and fragments surviving of Etzenbach's poem it is clear that it enjoyed a wide diffusion. The poet named his principal source: *meister Walther* (v. 155): this was Walter of Châtillon and his *Alexandreis*, a Latin work which was written in the last third of the 12th century for the archbishop of Reims, William of Blois-Champagne, and which Ulrich received from the hands of the archbishop of Salzburg, Frederick II von Walchen. This principal source was most likely transmitted in a manuscript provided with very numerous glosses; the poet drew from that manuscript the structure of his work in ten books. It is not certain that the eleventh book (written later) belongs to Ulrich. The poet also invoked an *historie*: it is Leo's *Historia de preliis*. From time to time he used this secondary source to complete the first nine books. We do not know if Ulrich used, as he stated, other sources (the Bible, Homer, Ovid, Seneca, Valerius, the *Lucidarius*, Albertus Magnus, Lucan, etc.), because it is possible that he borrowed those references from his sources. He was very cultivated: he knew the German poets of the classical epoch, above all Wolfram von Eschenbach, the author of *Parzival.*

The Alexander romance of Ulrich von Etzenbach was oriented to the taste of a courtly audience and had as its goal the evocation of courtly and princely life. The violent combats of its source were transformed into sumptuous tournaments, just as Ulrich paid a great deal of attention to the descriptions of feasts or displays of pomp and magnificence. Antiquity was largely effaced from the narrative; in exchange, Ulrich integrated into his history of Alexander elements of the service of love

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[18] Ulrich von Eschenbach, *Alexander,* Wendelin Toischer (ed.), (Tübingen, 1888) (Reprint: Hildesheim/New York, 1974).

so that Alexander appeared not only as a conqueror of the world, but also as a knight of courtly love.

Ulrich intended to glorify Ottokar II, who was without doubt the principal and the recipient, because Alexander wore Bohemian coats of arms. Apparently, the power politics of Bohemia needed to find a literary legitimization. To give one example among many: Pope Innocent IV twice invited Ottokar II of Bohemia to go to the aid of the Teutonic knights (1254/55 and 1267/68). After a first check of the Teutonic armies in 1253, the grand-master Poppo d'Osterna went himself to Bohemia to convince, with the aid of the papal legates, the king of Bohemia, margrave of Moravia and duke of Austria, Ottokar II Přemsyl, sovereign of the largest territory of the Empire, to undertake a crusade in order to conquer Sambia. Ottokar took command of the crusaders. In 1254, an army of 60,000 men invaded Sambia, whose inhabitants, surprised by the great number of invaders, did not put up any resistance. They promised to be baptized and to submit to the Teutonic knights. On 12 January 1255, Ottokar II made his way back. In his honor they gave the castle constructed by the Order on the site of the Prussian town of Tuwangste the name of Königsberg ("King's Mountain"). The campaigns of Prussia were not viewed in the same way by contemporaries. Thus it is that two German political poets of the 13th century, who practiced sung discourse (or *Sangspruchdichter*) and who were contemporaries of the campaigns of the Order in eastern Europe, expressed themselves concerning these matters, notably those undertaken by the king of Bohemia, one in a positive way, the second initiating a lively controversy against the Order. It was not in any way a religious act of liberation, but purely and simply an act of conquest, an augmentation of power and extension of territory, because the Bohemian sovereign had received from the pope the promise that he could keep the conquered territories. That is what stands out from two strophes by the poet Sigeher (second half of the 13th century, probably originally from Tyrol), who said clearly that it was a campaign of conquest that would serve to enlarge the Empire:

> A Bohemian of high worth,
> Ottokar, who ought to extend again the heritage of the Empire,
> if he so desired.[19]

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[19] F.H. von der Hagen (ed.), *Minnesinger. Deutsche Liederdichter des XII., XIII. und XIV. Jahrhunderts.* 4 parts, 3 volumes, vol. II, n° 363: VII 5 (translated from D. Buschinger's French translation).

and Sigeher gave Ottokar Alexander the Great as a model. That Ottokar should appear as the savior of Christianity before the pagans was no more than a second-class motive:

> The pagans are pressing hard
> …
> If Ottokar does not win, we are lost[20]

It is the political thought that is at the forefront, all the more because Sigeher invited Ottokar to mount the German throne and conquer the Empire:

> Lord king, would you want to mount the throne
> And also conquer the Empire?[21]

Ottokar conquered Sambia, as we have seen, in 1255; however he expanded not the Empire, which he did not have the right to do, but Christianity. He could in effect boast of having "pushed the limits of Christian space in such a way that the waters of the Baltic were linked to the Adriatic, as it is said in a chronicle of Bohemia".[22] But he did not become emperor as the poet had invited him to. Sigeher had first served Wenceslas I (1230–1253), then he had Ottokar II as a patron (1253–1278), and he no doubt wrote his poems at Ottokar's command, which explains his enthusiasm.

"Le Chancelier" 'The Chancellor,' a poet of the last third of the 13th century, native of the Germanic domain, on the contrary, for his part condemned without reservation the "crusaders," that is to say the Teutonic Knights, who committed atrocities:

> Pillage and fires on the road of God.[23]

As the poet said, it was greed for booty and increase of power that were from then on the only motivating forces of those who passed themselves off as knights of God.

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[20] F.H. von der Hagen, *Minnesinger*, n° 361: II 1 (translated from D. Buschinger's French translation).

[21] F.H. von der Hagen, *Minnesinger*, n° 362: VI 1 (translated from D. Buschinger's French translation).

[22] See D. Zimmerling (1990), *Der Deutschen Ritterorden* (Munich), p. 139.

[23] C.V. Kraus (ed.), *Deutsche Liederdichter des 13. Jahrhunderts*. 2nd edition, revised by G. Kornrumpf (Tübingen, 1978), 1:209, n° XVI 8 (translated from D. Buschinger's French translation).

In a word, Sigeher, who was writing for the king of Bohemia, and who was in his service and did propaganda work for his sovereign, for an understandable reason justified the expeditions of Ottokar II of Bohemia against the Prussians, even supported them. On the contrary, the Chancellor criticized them to the point of condemnation: those expeditions were not prompted by the idea of a crusade, but were undertaken with a goal of conquest.

Those controversies explained why at the end of the fifth book (14691–14720), Ulrich von Etzenbach also identified Ottokar with Alexander, which clearly showed that the poet intended to write a "mirror of princes" and a "eulogy of the prince," which in the final account must have served to legitimize the power of the king of Bohemia and equally to satisfy his desire for ostentation. In consequence, as in Gautier de Châtillon, in whom Alexander was neither a sanguinary tyrant nor a conqueror haunted by the folly of his great deeds, but a character gifted by God with a salvific mission, a sort of *miles Christi*, Alexander was an absolutely positive character. He possessed all the good qualities (good education, generosity,[24] and mercy, among others) and could be put on an equal footing with the heroes of the Old Testament. Ulrich even gave him Christian traits: Aristotle advised him to read the Bible. He was a man of war, head of the army and courtly sovereign, and in these three domains he was an example in every respect. His essential quality was his ambition to extend his powerful empire, which he governed to perfection. All his negative character traits, such as presumption or irascibility, were either excused or carefully eliminated. The death of Ottokar in 1278 led to a rupture in the conception of the character of Alexander and a change of direction in the intentions of the author. Ulrich could not hold onto his original conception to the end, because Ottokar's son, Wenceslas II, to whom the poem was dedicated, was not as brilliant an army head as his father. Thus it is that in book 10, Ulrich renounced the identification of Ottokar with Alexander, and at the same time, the unconditionally exemplary nature of the hero. He placed him in a fairy-like world populated by fabulous beings and monsters, and he added some episodes that came

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[24] This generosity is legendary. We know that Hartmann von Aue compared the generosity of Erec with that of the Macedonian sovereign, and that in one of his poems, Walther von der Vogelweide (around 1170–1230) contrasted the avarice of King Philip with the generosity of Alexander.

first from this new tendency: the voyage to the bottom of the sea in a
diving bell (in which Alexander wanted to discover the mysteries of the
sea, v. 24173ff.), the flight into the sky (carried by griffons, Alexander
wanted to discover the mysteries of the sky, v. 24681ff.), and finally
the *Iter ad Paradisum*. All these episodes proved within the literary
tradition of Alexander's thirst for knowledge, interpreted as *superbia*,
as lack of measure, in such a way that his death became an *exemplum*
for the vanity of everything human.

   With his work, Ulrich created a poem of Alexander that, of all the
German testaments to this matter, was the most strongly linked to the
courtly literary tradition, but which, at the same time, distanced itself
from the original conception of the legend. Even though he displayed
great erudition, the author offered his public an engaging diversion,
which explains the work's success.

Seyfrit

In 1352, an Austrian poet, who called himself *armer Seyfrit* [poor
Seyfrit] completed a new adaptation of the *HP*,[25] to which he made
a certain number of additions, notably the expedition to Paradise.
He cited other sources, such as the *kronika* of Eusebius, the *Historia
scholastic*, and Boethius, but those sources are fictitious because it is
apparent from the use of the motifs and the disposition of the differ-
ent episodes that he closely followed a single source. Seyfrit abridged
the descriptions of battle and added courtly feasts. Alexander appeared
here as the symbol of the just and powerful sovereign, as the equi-
table judge sent by God (he is the "*obrist gottes richter*" 'God's highest
judge' v. 80). The defects that are present in some other works (such
as his *superbia*) were repressed. The episode of the stone of Paradise
was interpreted as proof of his world hegemony. The idea of *transla-
tio imperii* was expressly formulated: Alexander received the imperial
apple in such a way that one might posit a link with the imperial ide-
ology of the Emperor Charles IV. As a consequence of the *translatio
imperii*, the theme of *translatio studii* appeared. In fact, Alexander was
able to make himself understood in all countries, because in his epoch
Greek was spoken everywhere, just as after the Romans took over the
empire Latin came to be spoken everywhere. A rational conception

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[25] See edition by P. Gercke (1932).

predominated, since the fantastic adventures of Alexander were called into question. The large number of manuscripts preserved, as well as the ten printed versions (first edition 1473), testify to the popularity of this version.

Alexander of Wernigerode

The last rhymed version of Alexander is the *Großer Alexander* (*Alexander the Great*) (6500 verses), called the *Alexander of Wernige-rode*[26] (the manuscript is currently in Cracow). The Germanic original of the poem was written in the 14th century, the extant Bavarian copy was finished in 1397. The unknown author used as a source the poem written in Latin couplets by Quilichinus of Spoleto (1236–38), which was based on recension J³ of the *HP*. On one hand, Alexander appeared as an exemplary sovereign sent by God, to whom the entire world must submit, who conquered among other countries Persia and India, who sounded the depths of the ocean as well as the heights of the sky, and, on the other hand, he appeared as a knight of love. The *Alexander of Wernigerode* thus followed the tradition of the courtly romances of Alexander. Nevertheless, in the end, Alexander appeared equally in this work as the perfect example of the vanity of all worldly things and as a warning against human *superbia*. The author showed himself a skeptic faced with the high warlike deeds of his hero and considered the conquest of the world to be absurd. He portrayed Alexander's last actions as a foolish course, and the monument which he had erected for his own glory as the work of a madman. Alexander's entire life progressed under the sign of a precocious death.

Alongside the verse versions there were also prose romances. The first was the *Chronique de meister Wichbolt* (formerly Babiloth), written at the beginning of the 15th century.[27] It was a much-abridged translation in prose of the *HP*. The abridged version of the legend of Alexander was preserved in a Low German catechism called *Der große Seelentrost* (*the great consolation of the soul*) (second half of the 15th century, 25 printed copies from 1474 on, translations in Swedish, Danish, and Middle Low Frankish). In a dialogue between confessor

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[26] See edition by G. Guth (1908).
[27] See partial edition by S. Herzog (1897 and 1903). See also the new edition of the *Alexander of Wichbolt*, by P. Andersen (2001).

and penitent, this work contained two hundred *exempla* which, taking as their subject the Ten Commandments, served for edification, but above all as warnings against *gyricheit* [avarice] and *houerdicheyt* [*superbia*]. The narrative intended to illustrate the Tenth Commandment occupied the final position: it was the longest *exemplum*. It was however limited to three episodes from the life of Alexander: the history of his youth, the combat with Darius and the visit to Queen Candace. The source of the portion dedicated to Alexander was perhaps a Middle Low Frankish (or Middle Low German) historiated Bible.

The *Großer Seelentrost* gave rise to a very interesting adaptation: a richly represented historiated Bible. In the manuscripts, the *Alexander* was inserted between the book of *Esther* and that of *Maccabees*. The author of this historiated Bible had recourse to other sources for a series of interpolations. The text itself was a fairly faithful adaptation of the *Alexander* from the *Großer Seelentrost*. Among the major modifications, let us note that the introduction in the form of a dialogue was replaced by a brief transition, allowing the narrative to be inserted in the universal history.

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One of the prose romances most crowned with success was the *Alexander* of Johann Hartlieb,[28] which was written shortly after 1450 and from which the Middle Ages took its knowledge of ancient history. The burgher Johann Hartlieb, personal physician, diplomat, and man of letters in the service of Duke Albrecht III of Bavaria, who was at the same time a member of the ducal court, wrote his work at the command of the duke and of his wife Anna von Braunschweig. His most important source was a Latin compilation of the *Nativitas et victoria Alexandri Magni regis* by Leo and the epitome of Julius Valerius with some fragments of the *Historiae adversus paganos* of Orosius and Peter Comestor, of which we have been able to identify the manuscript (manuscript Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris Nouv. Acq. Lat. 310). In conformity with the wish of his patron, Hartlieb conceived the work to be a "mirror of princes," but he added some scientific, medical, geographic, theological, and philosophical digressions. In Hartlieb's interpretation, Alexander is on the one hand an example to be followed (he had all the qualities, aptitudes, and knowledge that a prince ought

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28 See R. Pawis (1991).

to have), but at the same time the author remained faithful to the traditional, negative, and moralizing conception. In fact, the biography of Alexander offered both perspectives: the hero gradually became the ideal sovereign and then confirmed the qualities he had acquired, while at the same he compromised them by his lack of moderation and his *superbia*. In a word, the work of Hartlieb was essentially an edifying work.

The work was very successful, as witness the eighteen manuscripts and the eighteen printed volumes between 1473 (first edition at Augsburg by the famous printer Johan Bämler, followed by nine other incunabula) and 1670. In 1584, the *Alexander* of Hartlieb was translated into Danish by the crown prince of Denmark. It was on the basis of Hartlieb's work that Hans Sachs wrote a tragedy in 1558 where the moralizing tendency dominated, as is usual with this author. He denounced Alexander's tyranny, against which the herald warned in the epilogue. In 1560 he wrote a brief play, with the same moralizing tendency, *Das gesprech Alexandri Magni mit dem philosopho Diogeni* [The interview between Alexander the Great and the philosopher Diogenes]. There were other dramatic interpretations of the matter of Alexander. Among the representations of the Carnival plays at Lübeck (which treated serious subjects) one finds for the year 1446 *Alexander und Anteleo*, for 1467 *Alexander und die Könige von Morland* [Alexander and the kings of the lands of the Moors] and for 1471 the play *Alexander wollte das Paradies gewinnen* [Alexander wanted to conquer Paradise]. Of the plays, only the titles are known; the texts themselves have disappeared.

Another work deserves mention, *Alexander und Antiloye*, of which two versions are preserved: a brief version found in an appendix to the *Alexander* of Ulrich von Etzenbach, and a long version appearing as an independent poem in a collection of the 15th century at Dresden. It was recounted that during the course of an expedition Alexander encountered the king of the dwarfs at the edge of a fountain. The dwarf related that his people, rendered invisible by certain stones, were in the midst of celebrating a marriage. Then he warned Alexander against disloyal courtiers. To unmask them, he struck them violently the next day, protected by his invisibility. This text perhaps goes back to an *exemplum* of the 12th century. The oldest version is found in a romance of Alexander in Hebrew.

Finally, Alexander was present in numerous historiated Bibles of the Middle Ages as well as in the universal chronicles *Annolied* from

around 1100 and the *Universal Saxon Chronicle* of Eike von Repgow (1231), which deals with the foundation of Alexandria and of the locking up of the Jews by Alexander. Eike also mentioned the legend according to which the Saxons and the Swabians descended from soldiers of Alexander. The *Universal Chronicle* of Jansen Enikel related the expedition to Paradise, the dive under the seas, the flight in the air, and the conversation of Alexander with the talking trees. We also draw further attention to Jakob Twinger von Königshofen who, in his *Universal Chronicle of Strasbourg* (begun in 1382), spoke of the ascendance of Alexander, of his youth and of his military campaigns up to the victory over Poros. Jakob indicated to his audience that there were other works dedicated to Alexander.

Let us recall that Richard Wagner also was interested in the character of Alexander. As we read in the *Tagebücher* of Cosima Wagner on the date April 1, 1878,[29] the composer proposed an opera about Alexander: "Alexander ist denn doch zu groß für das Epos gewesen, seine Taten in den 10 Jahren zu enorm. Ich hatte ein Drama 'Alex.' entworfen, der erste Akt war die Ermordung des Kleitos, der II. der Entschluss, von Asien zurückzukehren, der III. sein Tod" [Alexander was however too great for his age, his high deeds during the ten years (of his reign) too enormous. I conceived a drama "Alex", the first act was the murder of Kleitos, the second the decision to come back from Asia, the third his death]. In addition, Wagner possessed in his library in Dresden the parallel lives of Plutarch,[30] as well as the history of Alexander the Great and the history of Hellenism of Johann Gustav Droysen (*Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* and *Geschichte des Hellenismus*), books which he read in 1847, as he said himself in the *Braunes Buch*.[31] The libretto of the projected opera about Alexander would have been drawn from the last part of Droysen's work *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen*,[32] and would have begun with the marriage of Alexander and Roxana and the departure of the conqueror for India (pp. 335–584). One could truly say that the character of Alexander

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[29] Cosima Wagner, *Die Tagebücher 1878–1883,* ediiert und kommentiert von Martin Gregor-Dellin und Dietrich Mack (Munich/ Zurich, 1977), 2:76.

[30] *Des Plutarchs von Chäroneia vergleichende Lebensbeschreibungen.* Aus dem Griechischen übersetzt mit Anmerkungen von Jo.H. Friedr. Sal. Kaltwasser. Achter Theil (Magdeburg, G.Ch. Keil, 1804).

[31] Richard Wagner, *das Braune Buch.* Tagebuchaufzeichnungen (Zürich and Freiburg im Breisgau, 1975), p. 111.

[32] See J.G. Droysen, (1833).

had accompanied him his entire life. Nevertheless, even if he did not realize his project of writing the libretto, nor even a sketch, much less the opera itself about the famous Macedonian, he used the medieval works relating the marvelous adventures of Alexander. It is from the medieval tradition of Alexander that he drew the flower-maidens of his last opera, *Parsifal*. Those beings of unbridled sexuality, undoubtedly of oriental origin,[33] appeared for the first time[34] in the *Roman d'Alexandre de Paris* (v. 3333–3387, 3457–3550; 147 verses in total), as well as in the Venice version of the *Roman d'Alexandre* (laisses 357–368), and that during the description of the Macedonian conqueror's voyage to the Orient. They lived in a forest, were "well made, with small breasts,/ clear and laughing eyes and a luminous complexion" (v. 3338–3339); "at the sight of them, one had a heart more burning with love than if it had been kindled by a spark" (v. 3340–3341), "they love men more than anything else in the world" (v. 3358). It goes without saying that Alexander and the soldiers that he urged on gave themselves over with a joyful heart for three days and nights during which: "each one chose a soldier without hiding herself/ and far from preventing him from fulfilling his desire,/ encouraged him repeatedly" (v. 3460–62). But if they left the shadow of the trees, they immediately died (v. 3503–3504).

The German song of Alexander, the *Alexanderlied* in the version of Strasbourg,[35] which Wagner possessed in his library at Bayreuth,[36] mentioned them also (5157–5358). The episode is longer in the German text than in the French (201 verses) and above all richer in descriptions. Nevertheless, in spite of dissimilarities that I will not dwell on, it presented some great similarities. Alexander and his men entered a splendid forest where they heard delightful songs and sweet tones of lyre and harp which, like the small bell of the little magic dog Petitcriu in the *Tristan* of Gottfried (15845–15873), made Alexander and his men forget all their worries and all their pains and relieved them of every affliction and sadness. Later, the poet explained that astonishing phenomenon. At the beginning of the summer, when nature became

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[33] Cf. P. Meyer (1862), 2:182.

[34] Concerning the flower-maidens, see Ph. Ménard, "Femmes séduisantes et femmes malfaisantes," in *Bien dire et bien aprandre. Autour d'Alexandre* 7 (1989), pp. 5–17.

[35] See K. Kinzel (1885).

[36] We are speaking of *Lamprecht der Pfaffe*, ed. by H. Weismann (1850). See 1. Bd.: Urtext und Übersetzung nebst historischer und sprachlicher Einleitungen und Erläuterungen. See 2 Bd.: Übersetzung des Pseudo-Kallisthenes nebst den Auszügen.

green again, beautiful and luminous flowers sprang up in the forest, red and white, from which came, when they opened, young maidens of a matchless beauty. As in the French text, they had to remain in the shadow of the trees, or they could not remain alive. Like the sirens, the flower-maidens drew men by their delightful songs, so beautiful that Alexander and his soldiers were irresistibly drawn by them, and tasted love. Never in their lives had they experienced such amorous joy, underscored the poet (5307; 5317–5325). They remained there, longer than in the text of Alexandre de Paris: three months and twelve days, and they knew with the young girls an unmixed joy. But in the autumn, when the trees lost their foliage and the birds stopped singing, the flowers withered and the beautiful women died (5343–5347). In the French text, at the beginning of winter the women all entered the earth to protect themselves from the cold and at the beginning of summer were reborn in the form of white flowers (3532ff.); thus the cycle began again, "on the model of the eternal return of the seasons."[37] In the Strasbourg text, on the contrary, the situation is irreversible as in Wagner's *Parsifal* later. Wagner certainly called them only "Mädchen," [maidens], who sang to enchant Parsifal, but they were "entirely dressed in flowers, and resembled flowers themselves."[38] Parsifal called them "Ihr wild holdes Blumengedränge" [O charming disorder of flowers].[39] Finally, they themselves said that they were flowers that "the Master" gathered in the spring, that they flourished voluptuously, and that they wilted and died if no one filled them with love.[40] When Parsifal vanquished Klingsor, the garden dried up and became a desert ("der Garten verdorrt zur Einöde") and the maidens lay scattered on the ground like wilted flowers ("die Mädchen liegen als verwelkte Blumen am Boden gestreut").[41] We have therefore a very great likeness with the *Song of Alexander* in the Strasbourg version.[42] But it remodels

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[37] See Gaullier-Bougassas, (1998), pp. 451–452.

[38] Richard Wagner, *Parsifal, Avant-Scène,* 38–39 (Jan. and Feb. 1982), p. 133.

[39] Wagner, *Parsifal*, p. 137.

[40] Wagner, *Parsifal*, pp. 135, 137.

[41] Wagner, *Parsifal*, p. 162.

[42] As Philippe Ménard underscored ("Femmes séduisantes," p. 11), the differences between the *Roman d'Alexandre de Paris* and Wagner's text are fairly great, since in the composer's text there is no "periodic alternation" nor "constant transmutation which threaten the existence of the forest maidens at the whim of the seasons." The resemblances are greater between Wagner's libretto and the *Alexanderlied.*

the whole in being inspired by Buddhism, creating in its own way the myth of the Grail and Parsifal.

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To sum up: The fabulous destiny of Alexander, dead in the full flower of youth after having carried off quantities of successes and having conquered half of the then-known world, haunted the Middle Ages. The judgment of Alexander's life and deeds is only rarely objective. The majority of poets made use in their texts of the historical character with the goal of making a eulogy of the prince or even a "mirror of princes" for their patrons and sponsors, and with that in mind, they vindicated him, minimizing or completely wiping out the bad sides of his character.

Redactor V justified certain exactions of Alexander by putting them in relation to the fact that the hero wanted to be rid of the unjust tribute that Darius had imposed on his father. He went even farther. Supporting himself on the Bible, the redactor made the hero an instrument of God who, in the framework of the *translatio imperii*, provoked the collapse of the second empire. The S redactor for his part certainly accused Alexander of *superbia*, of lack of experience, even of stupidity or avarice. Nevertheless at the end of the work, without having recourse to the Bible and to the dream of Daniel,[43] he Christianized the figure of Alexander and showed him in a completely favorable light. Alexander, who with his expedition to Paradise set foot on God's own territory, became an ideal sovereign, a *rex iustus et pacificus*, corresponding to the ideal of the *Hohenstaufen*. Without being able to know to whom the Vorau version and that of Strasbourg were addressed nor who commissioned them, the link with imperial ideology is remarkable. In contrast with V who inserted the history of Alexander into salvation history and in contrast with S who pursued goals of religious and political edification, the history of Alexander in the Basel version which is integrated into a historiographical compilation was recounted for itself, apparently without didactic intention.

Following both V and S, but doubtless independently of those two redactions, while going back to the same sources, the majority of the other authors of biographies of Alexander integrated the *vita* of the

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[43] Nevertheless, those references, which are absent from redaction B, can be found in S in the large gap between verses 508 and 959.

hero with salvation history at least giving the Macedonian a particu-
lar role to play, and they also made of Alexander a model to follow.
Thus it is that Rudolf von Ems, for example, judged that the exemplary
perfection of Alexander legitimated him as sovereign and that, like the
hero, the person for whom the work was intended, Conrad IV most
likely, was fit to play a role in salvation history.

It is nevertheless interesting to note that, most often, the poets did
not fail to warn against the *superbia* and lack of moderation of the
Macedonian king, and to consider his destiny as an example of the
vanity of all human things. In this vein they continued thus to make
use of the biography of Alexander to denounce the overconfidence of
the age. In closing, let us underscore that this theme (the voyages and
military campaigns of Alexander the Great) satisfied the needs of the
public of the end of the Middle Ages for distraction and adventures.

ALEXANDER LITERATURE IN SCANDINAVIA

David Ashurst and Francesco Vitti

Three medieval works about Alexander belong to the Scandinavian world. Two of these are major literary achievements in their respective languages: the first is the Old Norse *Alexanders saga* (*AS*), which is a close paraphrase, in prose, of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*; the second is the Old Swedish *Konung Alexander* (*KoA*), a metrical version of the *Historia de preliis* in its J² form. The remaining, less significant, piece is the *Bréf Alexandri Magni* (*Bréf*), an Old Norse adaptation of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*.

Alexanders saga [The saga of Alexander the Great]

In the older manuscript tradition (see below), *AS* is anonymous, but the younger tradition, which must date from no later than 1350–60 (Jón Helgason 1966, p. xxvii), names the author as Brandr Jónsson. In the principal manuscript of the younger tradition the saga is accompanied by a redaction of *Gyðinga saga* [The Saga of the Jews], at the end of which we find further information to the effect that the priest Brandr Jónsson, *er sidan var byskup at holum* [who was later the bishop of Hólar], translated the saga of the Jews *ok sua alexandro magno. eptir bodi virduligs herra. herra Magnusar kongs. sonar hakonar kongs gamla* [and likewise that of Alexander the Great, at the behest of the worthy lord, the lord King Magnús, son of King Hákon the Old].[1] The validity of this information may be doubted, not least because of stylistic differences between the two sagas;[2] the current scholarly consensus, however, is that there is insufficient evidence to reject the attribution of *AS* to Brandr, given the relative antiquity of the tradition and the

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[1] Wolf (1995), p. 219.
[2] See Widding (1960) and Hallberg (1977).

fact that the stylistic differences can be accounted for by the strong differences in style and content between the Latin sources.[3]

There are accounts of Brandr Jónsson by Tryggvi Þórhallsson (1923) and Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1953, pp. 129–132, 141–142, 150, and 155–156).[4] He was born into the Svínfellingar, one of the great families of medieval Iceland, sometime between 1204 and 1212. As a young man he made a journey abroad, from which he returned in 1232. By 1238 he had become a priest and in 1247 was made abbot of the Augustinian house at Þykkvabœr, where he established a school. In 1262 he was proposed as bishop of the northern Icelandic diocese of Hólar and traveled out to Norway, where he was consecrated in March 1263. This was an important event because it was then several decades since an Icelander had held either of the Icelandic bishoprics, due to the influence of the Norwegian king and the archbishop of Niðaróss (Trondheim). The year 1262, significantly, was also the date at which the Icelandic chieftains began to swear fealty to the Norwegian crown, ending the almost four hundred years of Iceland's history as a non-centralized republic. Having taken up residence at Hólar in 1263, Brandr died in May of the following year. During his time as bishop he was a champion of clerical celibacy, a sure sign of his wish to bring the Icelandic church into line with the church in mainland Europe. Contemporary, or near contemporary, accounts of him indicate that he was a man of learning and a gifted teacher who played a prominent role in Icelandic politics, especially as a conciliator in the violent struggles that marked the last decades of the Icelandic commonwealth; the same sources also suggest that he had a keen sense of his family's high social status and felt, but resisted, the pull of blood feud as a means of dealing with offenses against the family honor.

If *AS* was commissioned by King Magnús of Norway the likely date of its composition is 1262–63, since Brandr is known to have been the king's guest during Christmas 1262. The reference to Brandr as a priest rather than an abbot, however, and a certain ambiguity in the medieval punctuation of the statement quoted above, which could be read

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[3] See Jón Helgason (1966), pp. xxviii–xxix; Wolf (1988), and Würth (1998), pp. 208–209.

[4] The description of Brandr on p. 48 of Tryggvi Þórhallsson's article is a mistake: in the medieval source it is actually a description of Brandr's pupil Árni Þórláksson, who became bishop of the southern Icelandic diocese of Skálholt. See Jón Helgason (1966), p. xxviii, Wolf (1995), pp. lxxxiv–lxxxv, and Würth (1998), pp. 206–208.

as implying that only *Gyðinga saga* was commissioned by Magnús, leave open the possibility that *AS* had been written at an earlier date.

There are four medieval vellum manuscripts, all at Copenhagen in Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling.[5] AM 519a 4to (A1) was copied ca. 1280 and consists of 37 folia with a lacuna after fol. 18, where a bifoliate sheet has dropped out. It has always been regarded as the most important manuscript of the saga and forms the basis for all existing editions. Norwegian influence on the orthography is observable and increases through the course of the work, suggesting that the copyist was an Icelander working in Norway. AM 655 XXIX 4to (A2) consists of four folia from the last part of the saga, containing about one sixth of the whole. It is contemporary with A1 and close to it in textual detail, but neither is a copy of the other. AM 226 fol. (B1) contains a complete though abridged version of *AS* on fols.129r-146v, copied ca. 1350–60. AM 225 fol. contains *AS* on fols.88v-101r, copied ca. 1400. It is a close, and therefore textually insignificant, copy of B1 except that it has new chapter headings. A fifth early, and in this case significant, manuscript (B2) is at Stockholm in Kungliga biblioteket: perg. 24 4to contains *AS* on fols.1–20r, but there are three large lacunae. It is now judged to have been copied ca. 1520–60 but was previously thought to date from ca. 1450. Textual comparisons indicate that A1 and A2 are independently derived from a lost manuscript A; similarly B1 and B2 stem independently from a lost B. The A-texts are in general closer to the Latin original whilst the B-texts begin close to the A-texts but then show a tendency to abridge material; hence A is not derived from B. The B-texts, however, are closer to the Latin in certain particulars where the A-texts show variants, so B is not likely to stem from A. An earlier manuscript X is therefore posited as the source for both A and B. Since there are some apparent errors common to all the manuscripts, and which must have been present in X, the likelihood is that X was not the translator's original (though this does not necessarily follow), in which case A1 would be a fourth-generation manuscript despite its early date. There are many post-medieval paper copies of *AS* but only one is textually significant: Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, papp. 1 fol., copied in the 17th century,

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[5] The manuscripts are discussed at length in Jón Helgason (1966), pp. vi–xxvii, which forms the basis of the treatment here. They are also listed in Würth (1998), pp. 101–103. For datings see *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose. Indices* 1989, pp. 25–26 and pp. 432–494.

contains, embedded in a general history of Alexander, an extract of independent A-type text (A3) and an independent B-type extract (B3) as well as an extract related to B1.

The edition by Finnur Jónsson (1925) remains the best version for study of the saga. It presents a diplomatic transcription of AM 519a 4to with the lacuna filled in from AM 226 fol. and contains a limited *apparatus criticus* showing some of the variant readings in several manuscripts, but no literary commentary. Jón Helgason's facsimile edition (1966) offers an excellent introduction. The edition of MS AM 519a 4to by Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen (2009) is exceptionally rigorous and offers extensive analysis of the language used in the manuscript, together with a transcription that preserves the lineation and abbreviations; the accompanying CD-ROM provides a facsimile of the manuscript, a diplomatic transcription of the text, and a version in normalised spelling; since its focus is on AM 519a 4to, however, it does not show variants from other manuscripts, and there is no literary commentary. Plans to publish the saga in the 18th century did not come to fruition, so the first edition is that by Unger (1848). The modern-spelling version by Halldór Laxness (1945) is inaccurate but shows that the saga was able to enthuse a great novelist. A German translation of the saga is in Würth (1996a). An English translation by Ashurst is expected.

The main source for *AS* is Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* (*Alex.*), which the saga follows section by section with no major additions except in the first few pages, where Brandr briefly provides some information about Alexander's parentage and early days, in the manner of a traditional saga narrative.[6] Walter's text makes two glancing, retrospective references to Neptanebus as Alexander's possible father (1.47 and 3.167),[7] without any elucidation; Brandr (p. 1) mentions Neptanebus in the chronologically appropriate place when introducing Alexander, adding that Neptanebus was able to sleep with the queen, Alexander's mother, through the use of magic. This information descends from the Alexander romance, but since Brandr gives no further details it is not clear which version, if any, he had access to; and he immediately contradicts the romance by saying that Alexander's subsequent

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[6] Since the medieval attribution of the saga to Brandr Jónsson has not been rejected even though it may be doubted, Brandr's name will be used here as a convenient means of referring to the author of the work.

[7] All references to *Alex.* are to the Colker edition (1978); those to *AS* are to the edition by Finnur Jónsson (1925).

deeds show incontrovertibly that he was a king's son and not Nep-
tanebus' bastard,[8] which suggests that Brandr was not aware that, in
the romance, Neptanebus is himself a king. Similarly Walter makes an
imperfectly explained reference to Pausanias, who killed Alexander's
father (1.503); Brandr's expansion (p. 8) again relates to the romance
in saying that Pausanias lusted after the queen, but the account of
Alexander's revenge is too brief and vague to be linked to any par-
ticular version of the story. On the whole it seems best to suppose that
Brandr did not have a version of the romance before him but was per-
haps working from brief glosses in his manuscript of the *Alex*. Some
small details throughout *AS* have been added from biblical sources, for
example the reference to snakes in Babylon (p. 1), the mention of St.
Paul in connection with Corinth (p. 9) and the remark concerning the
size of the Maccabean armies (p. 23). At one point (p. 8) it is noted
that Achilles was the greatest hero *íTroiomanna sogo*: this could be a
reference to *Trójumanna saga*, the Old Norse version of Dares Phry-
gius, with which *Alexanders saga* shares a few turns of phrase, but the
phrase could also be rendered "in the history of the Trojans," without
reference to a particular book. A certain Historia Thebana (perhaps the
Thebais of Statius) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, called Ovidius Magnus,
are mentioned but not used (pp. 12 and 48).

Apart from the opening section, the intention of which is to set
linear narrative in place of Walter's retrograde allusions, *AS* is struc-
tured like the *Alex*. The division of the Latin poem into ten books
is preserved; many of the books are also divided into sub-chapters,
but the number of these differs between the various redactions. The
capitula at the start of each of Walter's books are omitted, as are his
prologue, his initial invocation of the muse, and his dedication to
William, Archbishop of Reims. Other omissions include the descrip-
tion of Asia (*Alex.* 1.396–426) and many shorter passages that do not
carry the narrative forward. On the evidence of Finnur Jónsson's edi-
tion, books 2, 3, 4 and 6 were most fully translated, but elsewhere
in the saga there is a tendency to abridge the Latin text, mostly by
thinning; books 1, 5 and 10 show the greatest abridgement. The B ver-
sion is more drastically abridged throughout, except for the first three
books, but in AM 226 fol., the main manuscript of the B tradition,

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[8] It is a common topos in Old Norse literature that a true king's son will be coura-
geous but also acquisitive and somewhat aggressive.

the *Bréf Alexandri Magni* has been inserted into the account of Alexander's death scene (see the next section).

Since the plot of *AS* follows that of the *Alex.* it will not be summarized here. Likewise the characterization is that of Walter in all essentials although some small details have been changed in ways that affect the political implications of the work, as discussed below.

The translation is in idiomatic Old Norse prose, generally free of Latinisms.[9] There is occasional and restrained use of alliteration and very infrequent use of rhyme. Many of Walter's similes have been translated even though elaborate similes are unusual in saga prose, but many more have been removed in the process of thinning. In general the prose is plainer but arguably more dignified than the highly rhetorical Latin verse. In addition to the robustness expected of saga style, *AS* has a splendor of its own, not least because it employs a great deal of unusual vocabulary.[10] Allegorical passages such as the Somnus episode (*Alex.* 4.401–53, *AS* pp. 69–70) have been reproduced in a way that suggests the audience was expected to be familiar with this manner of writing, but Walter's cultural references to the ancient world, especially those to classical mythology, are often explained briefly in the body of the text. Hence we find, for example, a reference to the goddess of love, *er Venus heitir* [who is called Venus; p. 7]. An equivalence between classical and Old Norse deities is occasionally stated or implied: the oasis of Siwah, for instance, is said to contain a temple of Þor (p. 50) though the text goes on to explain that it was called the temple of Ammon.

Extensive interventions by the narrator in his own voice are not conventional in saga narrative. It is probably for this reason that Brandr, although he allows himself a few short comments of his own, typically prefaces Walter's many long addresses to the reader with a phrase such as *segir meistare Galterus* [says Master Walter; pp. 32, 39, 56 etc.]. On occasion, however, he is clearly using this approach as a means of distancing himself from Walter's sentiments, as can be seen

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[9] A limited study of the techniques and style of the translation can be found in Würth (1996 reprised 1998, 107–17), and in Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1972); a book-length study is Pettersson (2009).

[10] Árni Magnússon, the great collector of manuscripts, admired the language and style of *AS* so much that he considered making an edition, as we know from a letter that his friend Hans Gram wrote to Johann Albert Fabricius in 1709, on the basis of which Fabricius, in 1712, referred to the saga as *incomparabile antiqvitatis septentrionalis monumentum* "an incomparable monument of northern antiquity". Cf. Jón Helgason (1966), pp. xix–xx.

in the passage that remarks on how the friendship of kings is impermanent (*Alex.* 9.7–8, *AS* pp. 129–30).

A greater respect for kings, on the part of Brandr in contrast with that of Walter, is apparent in small changes that relate to the characterization of Alexander and Darius. For the sake of brevity, only Alexander will be discussed here. In the episode in which Alexander has to have an arrow withdrawn from a deep wound and makes the important remark that a king must not let himself be restrained, Brandr omits Walter's doubts about whether the patient could in reality have kept still during the operation (*Alex.* 9.474–79, *AS* p. 142); in the saga the passage contains nothing that undercuts Alexander's heroism or the political point he is making. For readers familiar with both the Latin and the Old Norse versions of the episode, this point is weakened by the fact that it depends on an omission in a text that abridges its source material, but the positive view of kingship exhibited by the saga version at this point agrees with other details, some of which are additions rather than omissions. It has already been mentioned, for example, that in his freely composed introduction to the narrative, Brandr remarks that Alexander's deeds prove him to have been a true king's son. Unless this remark is ironic, which is highly unlikely in the context, it is effectively an endorsement of Alexander's career as a conqueror, and likewise of kingship as an honorable estate.

Despite the remark just referred to, Brandr does not draw back from censuring particular acts that placed Alexander in the wrong according to medieval Christian ideas. That he does so reluctantly but in the interests of truth is shown by the way in which he introduces a reference to the supposed fact that Alexander claimed to be the son of Jupiter: the subject is raised, Brandr declares (p. 45), *þviat segia verðr bæðe livft oc leítt* [because one has to say both that which is pleasant and that which is unpleasant]. This direct statement of obligation, which replaces a rhetorical question in Walter's text (3.253–54), needs to be borne in mind when considering the overall meaning of the narrative. The need is especially pressing in connection with the account of Alexander's death, which follows from his decision to seek the lands of the Antipodes (*Alex.* 9.562–70 and 10.312–17) or, as the saga puts it, *annarr heimrinn* [the other world] (*AS* pp. 144 and 151).[11]

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[11] For a discussion of the saga's problematical treatment of this topic see Ashurst (2000) and (2009), where it is argued that the use of the phrase *annarr heimrinn* involves a sophisticated play on words.

Whatever the moral judgement on Alexander's decision may be, and whatever his death at the hands of the infernal powers may mean, the political message of the saga is nevertheless clear, and belongs to "that which is pleasant," for as long as Alexander's attention is fixed on the northern hemisphere, the world of mankind. This fact is evident above all at the point when the Macedonian king has defeated the Scythians, whose spokesman portrays them as the champions of liberty and who curiously resemble the Icelanders in some details.[12] Here Brandr offers a remark concerning the amity that Alexander shows towards the defeated. He picks up some ideas from his source (*Alex.* 8.511–13) but he fashions them into a statement of his own (*AS* p. 129):

> eige geck honom grimleicr til er hann villde allar þioðer undir sec leggia. helldr þviat íollom heiminom. villde hann øngan vera lata. sva at millde sem at rike sinn iafningia.[13]

If the saga was indeed presented to King Magnús of Norway by an Icelander in the circumstances of 1262–63, sentiments such as these, along with its outstanding literary quality, made it a magnificent gift, though one that contained a broad hint concerning what the king's policy towards his new subjects should be.

Bréf Alexandri Magni [The Letter of Alexander the Great]

A minor Old Norse text that became, in effect, a pendant to *Alexanders saga* is the *Bréf Alexandri Magni*, an abridged translation of the Latin *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* [The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle.]

An extensive discussion of the manuscripts and textual issues may be found in the edition by Skårup (1991), which is authoritative and has been used as the basis for the treatment in the next paragraph below. A slighter edition by Finnur Jónsson (1925, pp. 156–66) accompanies his version of *Alexanders saga.*

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[12] Cf. Ashurst (1997).

[13] It was not on account of cruelty that he wished to subjugate all peoples but because he did not wish to let anyone in all the world be his equal, in mercy just as in power (trans. Ashurst).

Bréf is likely to date from the middle or second half of the 13th century or even later; but it cannot be from later than ca. 1350, the date of the earliest manuscript. The versions we possess appear to have undergone abridgement, or further abridgement, at a later date than when the original translation was made; this work will have been done in Iceland, but it is not known for certain whether the original translation was Icelandic or Norwegian. In the medieval manuscripts, Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 226 fol., and Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, perg. 24 4to, it accompanies the shorter (B) version of *Alexanders saga*, and has in fact been inserted into the saga in AM 226 fol. See above for details of these manuscripts. These two versions of *Bréf* are independent of each other; a third independent text, now lost, must have existed, from which descend passages from *Bréf* contained in several manuscripts written in the 17th and 19th centuries. The manuscript versions of the Latin *Epistola* to which *Bréf* is closest are Cambridge, Trinity College, 1335, and London, British Library, Sloane 1785; an edition based on these manuscripts is offered in parallel with the Old Norse text in 'Skårup 1991'. Of the two complete medieval versions of *Bréf*, that contained in the Stockholm manuscript is closer to the original and has accordingly been used as the basis for Skårup's edition; Finnur Jónsson's edition follows AM 226 fol.

The abridgement of the text as compared with the Latin source appears to involve one substantial cut, when the Tree of the Moon has prophesied Alexander's death and the Old Norse narrative jumps to the closing matter; this shows a fine sense of climax, but the cut may already have been present in the Latin version that was used. Otherwise *Bréf* proceeds by thinning the Latin text section by section. Occasionally the omissions result in some loss of sense, as when Alexander's reasons for making his hot and thirsty men march in full armour are not given (p. 61) or when the use of pigs against elephants is not clearly explained (p. 75).[14] Alexander's gratitude towards his men, however, and his piety towards Aristotle are nicely rendered (p. 55). His piety towards the gods, furthermore, is accentuated: in the Old Norse text Alexander himself orders golden statues of Hercules and Liber to be erected (p. 73), whereas in the Latin version he finds the statues and has holes drilled into them to see whether they are solid.

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[14] Citations of *Bréf* refer to Skårup (1991).

Konung Alexander [King Alexander]

The Old Swedish poem *Konung Alexander* (*KoA*) is anonymous, but it is known from its epilogue (lines 10571–79)[15] that it was translated from Latin on behalf of *Riksdrots* [Chancellor of the Realm] Bo Jonsson (Grip), which implies that the translator probably belonged to the chancellor's circle. It can be dated between 1375, the year Bo Jonsson was nominated *riksdrots*, and 1386, the year of his death. In fact, the epilogue indicates that the *riksdrots* was still alive when the work was finished (lines 10576–9). On the basis of dialectal evidence, Ronge (1957: pp. 223–80) identifies eastern Småland or the island of Öland as the translator's likely place of origin.

KoA is preserved in a unique manuscript, Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, Cod. D4, consisting of 294 paper leaves and a parchment insert containing the index. Some fifty leaves are missing, three of them (E xi, E xxvi, and F xxix in the numberings used for this codex) from the section containing *KoA*, and part of the text on a few leaves has been ripped away. The date of the manuscript has been a debated question but most scholars agree that the copying was done in the first half of the 15th century, probably at the monastery of Vadstena.[16]

There are only two editions, the first of which was produced by Johan Hadorph in 1672 with the title *Alexandri Magni Historia*. The second was by J.A. Ahlstrand (3 vols., 1855–62) but on the title page G.E. Klemming is incorrectly named as editor. Ahlstrand's edition is the more reliable, but its *apparatus criticus* is too limited, missing important information. It therefore needs to be used in conjunction with Ronge (1957), pp. 74–85, which lists and corrects its errors.

That *KoA* is a translation of the Latin *Historia de preliis* in its J[2] version is demonstrated by the fact that all the additions introduced in J[2] are present in *KoA* and that the names of places and characters almost always agree in the two works. In all essential aspects there is a strict correspondence between the Latin prose and the Old Swedish poem.[17] For this reason the plot will not be summarized here. *KoA*, which consists of 10584 lines, is not organised in chapters but the narration presents a clear sequence of events. It begins with an intro-

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[15] All references to *KoA* are to the Klemming, i.e. Ahlstrand, edition of 1855–62.

[16] Cf. Klemming (1848), p. 587, Noreen (1929), p. 270, and Ronge (1957), pp. 70–71.

[17] Cf. Ronge (1957), pp. 87–88.

duction in which Alexander's greatness is praised, and ends with the translator's words that give us important information about the text's origin, as mentioned above.

The verse form of *KoA* is *knittel*, which is typical of medieval Swedish romances, ballads and chronicles. In *knittel* every line is divided by a caesura and contains three or, more usually, four stressed syllables. It requires rhyme or assonance. *KoA* employs full rhyme in couplets, and alliteration is frequent but not systematic.

It is a widely held opinion that *KoA* has finer literary qualities than its Latin source, in particular that its translator shows an ability to transform an often quite dry style of narration into something richer and more detailed.[18] Blanck (1929) believed that he could see a precise political purpose behind this enrichment, arguing that the discrepancies between the Latin and the Old Swedish versions of the romance were introduced by the translator in order to portray Alexander as a symbol of Bo Jonsson, and Darius as a symbol of his political adversary Albrekt of Mecklemburg. This point of view, however, has generally been rejected by other scholars.[19] The elaboration and deepening of the Latin text is in any case appropriate and can be accounted for by the demands of transposing prose into rhymed verse; the literary ability of the Swedish author, furthermore, is vindicated by his satisfying of the stylistic requirements. In addition, the translator strives towards a stylistic unity throughout the whole romance by accentuating the description of the protagonists' feelings. This is especially noticeable in the letters that pass between the main characters, where argumentation and feelings are much more detailed than in the Latin original.

In line with the characterization of Alexander in the source text, *KoA* reveals a conqueror who is militarily and intellectually superior to the emperors of the orient, and who displays an endless thirst for knowledge. The oriental world is not only a military target for Alexander but also an object of study. Darius and Porus, on the other hand, are depicted in *KoA* as weak and pompous: they are barbarians without reason and judgement (Jonsson 2008, p. 202), who are therefore doomed to be defeated by Alexander. It is noticeable that two oriental women—Talafrida, Queen of the Amazons, and Cleophilis,

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[18] Cf. Blanck (1929), Ståhle (1955), pp. 89–93, Ronge (1957), pp. 118–125, and Jonsson (2008), p. 199.

[19] Cf. Ståhle (1955), p. 92, Ronge (1957), p. 23, and Jonsson (2008), p. 192.

who is called Candace in other versions of the romance—are depicted as strong, independent, intelligent and courageous, but in other contexts the Old Swedish text introduces a typically medieval misogyny. This can be seen, for example, when Olympiadis is easily seduced by Nectanabus (lines 233–40) and when Darius compares Alexander to a woman in order to despise him (lines 1418–21). This apparent contrast can be explained by the fact that Cleophilis and Talafrida are women belonging to the unknown world, and as such are attractive but dangerous. As Jonsson (2008, pp. 202–8) points out, Alexander can only try to neutralize the threat they represent.

A harsh humor is present throughout *KoA* and it serves a special purpose, which is to mark the contrast between Alexander and his enemies, particularly Darius. In fact, the Persian king is often depicted as a vain and ridiculous adversary. Many passages make him appear more interested in the so-called *dandz*, a magnificent and luxurious way of life, than in fighting against Alexander (Blanck 1929, p. 9).

Two aspects of *KoA* give it special importance in Swedish literature: these are its anticipation of certain Renaissance ideals, and its introduction of the idea of an East-West split.[20] It is notable that the Swedish author shows a strong engagement with the argumentation of the values that Alexander considers as fundamental to the life of a human being in his confrontation with Dindymus, king of the Braghmanis [Brahmans]. These values, such as the importance of the search for knowledge, the love of artistic beauty, and the affirmation of passion and desire, which to some extent represent an anticipation of the Renaissance vision of the world, had probably not been so strongly depicted in Swedish literature before (Ståhle 1955, p. 92). In the exchange with Dindymus and elsewhere, furthermore, the upholding of these values serves to emphasize the difference between Alexander's western homelands and those aspects of the orient that characterize it as the place of an ascetic view of life. The alterity of the orient is futher emphasized by another aspect of the narrative amplified by the Swedish translator, which is the attractiveness of the marvelous. A comparison between the Latin and Swedish texts reveals a strong difference between the often concise descriptions of marvelous events and creatures in the original and the very rich and detailed accounts in the translation (Jonsson 2008, pp. 199 and 210).

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[20] Cf. Ståhle (1955), pp. 89–93, and Jonsson (2008), pp. 191–212.

Despite the rejection of Blanck's idea, mentioned above, that *KoA* fulfils a precise political function in the way it adapts its source, it must remain likely that its account of Alexander offered some kind of ideal to *Riksdrots* Bo Jonsson and the other contemporary Swedish readers belonging to the court, who would no doubt have identified themselves to some extent with Alexander as a political and military genius (Ronge 1957, p. 22). Beyond this, however, the significance of *KoA* is rather to be found in the fact that it brought into Swedish literature a representation of the orient as an ascetic, mysterious, marvelous and threatening world. In doing so *KoA* widened the cultural horizon of medieval Sweden, but at the same time it showed how the representation of the east could be adapted successfully to Swedish cultural and stylistic patterns.

Manuscripts

Alexanders saga

Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 519a 4to.
Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 655 XXIX 4to.
Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 226 fol., fols. 129r–146v.
Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 225 fol., fols. 88v–101r.
Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, perg. 24 4to, fols.1–20r.
Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, papp. 1 fol., fols.111–204 (passages from the saga are dispersed in this).

Bréf Alexandri Magni

Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling, 226 fol., fols. 145r–146v.
Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, perg. 24 4to, fols. 20r–22r.

Konung Alexander

Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, Cod. D4, fols.D xxv recto—G xxvii verso.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE ALEXANDER ROMANCE IN ITALY[1]

Roberta Morosini

ALEXANDER REX is the inscription that presents the image of the king of Macedonia, Alexander, in the enigmatic mosaic on the floor of Otranto cathedral in the Puglia region of Southern Italy. The cathedral was built around 1088, the year of its consecration, while the mosaic was made around 1163–1165, according to inscriptions on the floor. The image of Alexander stands out on the animated floor: he is pictured sitting on a throne carried by two giant griffins, while holding two sticks of meat as bait to make the fantastic creatures go faster toward his destination: the celestial vault. A believer might be surprised to find this fantastic scene of the pagan king on the floor of a church, moreover in the midst of an unusual crowd of imaginary creatures and legendary figures, like King Arthur, who also is portrayed riding a mysterious beast.[2]

The tale of Alexander's ascent into the sky by means of griffins is first told in the *Historia de Preliis* (*HP*) that the archpriest Leo brought to Naples from Constantinople in the 10th century (ca. 951–968/9). Leo was active at the court of the dukes of Naples John III (928–963) and his son Marino II (963–969) and he informs us that he himself made additions to his translation from Greek into Latin, entitled *Nativitas*

[2] For a full description of this mosaic, see Ch. Settis Frugoni (1968 and 1972).

et victoria Alexandri Magni regis, from the first words of the *HP* codex
from Cologne (1492).[3]

In the prologue to the *HP*, Leo explains how he found a book
containing the story of Alexander the Great in Constantinople and
that without wasting any time he translated the text and brought it
to Naples. It was not the first time that Alexander's adventures were
rendered in Latin. Before Leo, we know of Julius Valerius's *Res gestae
Alexandri Macedonis* (III–IV ca. 270–330 A.d.). However, the *HP* con-
tained more legendary accounts of Alexander's life and had a greater
impact on the artistic and literary imagination during the 13th and
14th centuries. Among the legends in Book III of Leo's *Historia* (III,
27) are Alexander's celestial and submarine adventures, which together
comprise one of the main focuses of this essay.

As Vandelli (1898) shows, the *HP* became the main model Italian
writers used to narrate Alexander's adventures, although the first ref-
erence in Italy to the legend of Alexander is by an anonymous writer
known as "Geografo di Ravenna," who, searching for the location of
Earthly Paradise, mentions a "Book of Alexander." We do not know
when the writer lived and therefore we are not able to establish what
'book' he had as model. He probably lived in the 10th century and the
Book of Alexander he mentions could be the version by Julius Valeri-
us.[4] On the other hand, since the "Geographer of Ravenna" mentions
the Alexander-book in the context of Earthly Paradise, one might
think of the *HP* where the episode of Alexander's ascent is narrated.
On this point, Carraroli concludes that "it is a question difficult to be
resolved," but he does not consider the possibility that the "Geogra-
pher of Ravenna" might have been familiar with both texts and com-
bined the two traditions.

The *Abecedarian Poem* dates from the mid-ninth century and is
from Northern France and not from Northern Italy as Norberg has
brillantly demonstrated,[5] although the only existing manuscript of
the poem is kept in Italy at the Verona Library (Bibl. Capitolare, MS

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[3] More on Leo's *HP* in G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, D.J.A. Ross (ed.) (Cam-
bridge, 1965), p. 38, note 2. See also, L. Olschki, *Monumenta Typographica*, p. 461,
n. 1343 (Florence, 1903) and Lazzerini (2006), pp. 76–87.

[4] See Berengo (1852).

[5] D. Norberg, *La poésie latine rhytmique du haut Moyen âge*, (Stockholm, 1954),
pp. 79–81 and in particular pp. 73–74 where Norberg claims that the poem is not
Italian but rather contains "une variante du Roman d'Alexandre qu'on racontait à
Alexandrie à l'époque imperiale."

LXXXVIII [83], fol. 64). Written in Latin in stanzas of three verses, each stanza was to begin with a different letter of the alphabet but, since it is incomplete, it only arrives at the letter I. Of the 27 verses 24 remain of which Boitani (1997) writes, "il personaggio Alessandro entra, con questo poemetto, nel *cuore dell'alfabeto* […] Questo personaggio-conquistatore, già totalmente inscritto nella memoria della Grecia e dell'Oriente, conquista *per forza di scrittura* anche l'universo occidentale" (p. 570). The poem must be earlier than Leo for the reference to Alexander's ascent was not present in Julius Valerius and appeared for the first time in Leo's *HP*. Zarncke (1877), who first discovered the poem of the alphabet, is particularly intrigued by its opening where Alexander is called "puer Magnus" just as at the beginning of Leo's *HP*.[6]

In this short poem, says Boitani, Alexander is the man who "circumvit patriam," the one whose verb is "circumire," to travel, to go through, to conquer around the globe.[7] But he is also human, with his all his weakness. When Alexander took his flight, he feared death and asked God to return him to earth:

> Hic in altum <cum> subisset, mox mori aestimavit,
> Ad Dominum deprecates est, ut potuisset reverti (v. 23)

The *Abecedarian Poem* and the "Geographer of Ravenna," both of which contain a reference to the celestial flight preceding the *HP*, help to determine a point of departure for the diffusion of the legends of Alexander in Italy. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the enormous impact Leo's *HP* had on the imagination of Italian writers, nor alter the fact that the *HP* became the model for Alexander-books through a process that was never dull, but enriched by interpolations from other traditions, namely, travel literature and French courtly romances.

The *HP* for various reasons would go on to inspire artists and writers of 13th- and 14th-century Italy to transmit numerous legends concerning Alexander the Great: the encounter with the trees of the sun and moon,[8] Alexander's arrival in Paradise with the episode of the old man (an angel or Adam) and the stone that seemed light but

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[6] See Cary, p. 59. Quotes from the *Abecedarian Poem* are from Boitani (1997), pp. 118–119.

[7] An interesting essay dedicated to Alexander the traveler is by Infurna (1995).

[8] More on the episode of the trees of the sun and the moon in Casari (2007), pp. 177–201 and (2003), pp. 459–498.

was extremely heavy, sometimes shaped like a human eye, as in the *Epistola ad Aristotelem*; the account of how Alexander enclosed, with heavy iron doors,[9] the ten (or nine) lost tribes of Israel, cannibals and savages, as claimed in Latin and French sources and by Jacopo di Carlo's *Alexandreida in rima* (ca. 1420; p. 44).[10]

The celestial journey, though, would be the most successful episode in the religious iconography of the early Middle Ages in Italy and in particular in the region of Puglia. The image on the floor of the cathedral of Otranto is the most ancient and intriguing example in Italy of the legend of Alexander's flight, although it is not an isolated case of visual representation of such a legend in a religious context. But it is the most impressive of the thirty-two images that R. S. Loomis recorded of this peculiar journey in visual arts,[11] since on the floor of Otranto cathedral the tower of Babel is in a chiasmic position with respect to Alexander's ascent. According to Settis Frugoni, the model for this representation is the French Alexander romance: the king has a western crown, sits on a kind of throne on the back of two griffins that are eagerly trying to reach their food, always just out of reach. Three stars indicate that the adventure is now unfolding in heaven.[12] There is another mosaic, again on the floor of a church and again in the region of Puglia, in the cathedral of Trani, where Alexander is clearly guilty of the sin of pride, given that his ascent is associated

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[9] For Gog and Magog and Western cartography, see the *Catalan Atlas* (ca. 1375) at the BnF in Paris *MS Esp. 30* and the *Hereford Map* (1283). On geography and cartography in 14th century Italy, see R. Morosini, *Boccaccio geografo* (Florence, 2010) and the extensive bibliography on the topic. For visual representation of Gog and Magog, see D. Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, 2003), p. 228ff.

[10] The number of Jewish tribes that Alexander enclosed behind the heavy iron Caspian gates varies: Quilichino of Spoleto talks about nine tribes (*Alexandreis*, Laurenziana Library, Plut. LXXXIX, Inf. 46, c. 67). In general, see the study by A. Anderson (1932) and also A. Graf (1883; pp. 520ff.).

[11] On Alexander's ascent, besides the outstanding study by Settis Frugoni, see also Boffito (1920–1921; and 1921–1922). See also Schmidt (1995); Dimitrokallis (1967), pp. 214–222, reviewed as "Note sur l'ascension d'Alexandre en Italie," *Cahiers d'Architecture*, 17 (1967), 247–248. Out of 32 representations of Alexander's aerial flight recorded by R.S. Loomis, six belong to Italy; however, Loomis does not take into account the illumination and drawings, including a mosaic once existing in the cathedral of Taranto, mentioned by O.M. Dalton, *Ivory Carvings in the British Museum* (London, 1909), p. 75ff., and now lost. See Loomis (1918), pp. 136–140 and 177–185.

[12] Settis Frugoni informs us that in the Byzantine ring of the *Collection Statathos* and on the cloth of Regensburg there is only one star (1973, p. 289ff.).

with Adam and Eve. In general, it is true, as Cary claims, that Italy has never produced a native theological attitude toward Alexander (p. 263). However, one finds that the number of representations of this legend in religious settings in Southern Italy proves to stem from a moralistic approach and a sharp condemnation of Alexander's presumption to challenge God, perhaps founded textually upon Orosius and the place he is given in Daniel (2.7–8) and in the first Book of the Maccabees. This approach, only distinctive of visual arts in Southern Italy, recalls Hugh (or Richard) of Saint Victor in the *Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum* (*PL* CLXXV), and 12th-century theologians. They had transmitted the idea of Alexander as the Anti-Christ, or even the seducer of Adam and Eve, the *radix peccati*.[13]

It cannot be a coincidence that in the region of Puglia in the 13th century, a capital in the cathedral of Bitonto represents Alexander's ascent, for the first time, in its two different phases: the king is in the act of showing food to the griffins to tempt and cheat them, but, interestingly enough, the failure of his ambitious plan is also represented. There is, in fact, a sudden return to earth of the king without crown (he wore it on his ascent); the stick with the bait is now turned down and the griffins too have their bodies turned downwards.[14] In the corners of the capital there are sirens who, according to ancient iconography, recall those anthropomorphic birds that in the Greek version of the romance stop Alexander's flight and make him return to earth. Forced to follow their command, Alexander is represented on the capital with his sudden return to earth. Settis Frugoni believes that since there was no biblical plan on which to insert Alexander's attempted flight to heaven, the episode was repeated, once showing his triumphal beginning and again his humiliating return (1973, p. 290). It is the only capital in this church related to a precise event—Alexander's ascent- while the other capitals bear mostly sculptures of real or legendary animals, most probably in order to recreate the 'fantastic' surrounding of the places visited by the king in his trip to India as narrated in the *Epistola*.

Why was Alexander's ascent so popular in devotional spaces in Southern Italy and why was the legend interpreted in moralistic terms

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[13] A commentary on Hugh of Saint Victor's *Allegoriae* is in Boitani et al. (1997), pp. 532–534. On Alexander as an Anti-Christ see Cary, pp. 118–142.

[14] Bertaux dates it to the 13th century in *L'art dans l'Italie méridionale* (Paris, 1903), vol. II, 491 and p. 653, image 302. See also Settis Frugoni (1973), pp. 289–290.

there?[15] Boffito says that it was just a common decorative motif made for the people. It carried with it all the elements one would want in a medieval tale: geography, curious information about other parts of the world, history, fiction (pp. 322–324). Moreover, in another essay on the same legend, Boffiti appears to be troubled by Loomis's criticism of the genesis and literary vicissitudes of the legend of Alexander the Great, since he believes that the British scholar tries to represent Alexander, "the hero of the laymen," as a victim of the persecution of the Church who saw in him the AntiChrist, a figure of evil, and would expose him in the churches as an example of punished arrogance (p. 271). For Loomis the bas-relief on the external wall of the cathedral of San Marco in Venice, in Greek marble and of oriental manufacture, although dating back to the 10th century, as Bertaux claims,[16] presents a "degeneration of the traditional motif of the Alexander romance, since Alexander is represented standing still quite unnaturally on a 'quadriga,' a cart, drawn by two griffins."[17]

Loomis is not alone since Settis Frugoni also believes that Alexander's ascent is offered as an "example" of evil, while Willemsen argues that it is only in Otranto that the representation of the legendary episode is complete and faithful to the original in that it betrays any didactic purpose, as the "impression generated is rather of an apotheosis of Alexander and his audacious deed" (p. 116 and n. 259).

Finally, the fact that on five occasions, as Settis Frugoni notes, the ascent of Alexander was chosen in the region of Puglia, land of the Normans, to decorate a holy site, implies that the ascent denotes not only the exemplarity that the Church attributed to this profane theme as an illustration of the sin of pride (with the exception of the case of the church of Santa Maria della Strada in the region of Molise where the success of Alexander's flight is positive as in some French churches), but also seems to suggest the influence of Norman culture. The ambivalence that the Norman court had toward the Byzantine world could explain such a massive presence of the episode in Puglia. Puglia was a land still sought after by the Byzantine emperors and Alexander,

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[15] Besides the cases mentioned in Southern Italy, other representations in the visual arts of Alexander's ascent in Narni and Fidenza are discussed in A.K. Porter, *Lombard Architecture* (New Haven, 1967) IV, tav. XXIX and, the mentioned studies by Settis Frugoni.

[16] E. Bertaux, *L'art dans l'Italie Méridionale* (Paris, 1903) I, p. 490.

[17] Cited in Boffito, "La leggenda aviatoria," p. 327.

"a constant model of the *basileís*," could have contributed to maintaining the Normans' hostility toward the Byzantines, as a failed king.

Traces of the legend of Alexander's flight in visual arts remain on tapestries made in Tournai in 1460 in the Duchy of Burgundy. The tapestries illustrate stories and legends of the *Roman d'Alexandre*,[18] including Alexander's flight with the griffins and his descent into the sea in what looks like a barrel.

From Leo's *Historia de Preliis* to Falugio's *Triompho Magno*: from the Marvelous to the Adventurous

In the high Middle Ages, Alexander became a hero dear to all Italians, laymen, clerks, nobles, and people in general. However, despite what Cary says of a persistent secular attitude toward Alexander in Italy even before the late Middle Ages, when a progressive decline of the moral and theological conception of Alexander took place (p. 260), the presence of Alexander's ascent in visual art in the early Medieval period is proof that he was seen as an ambitious man and his ascent an evil challenge to God.

In what follows, we shall see how the moral conception of Alexander did indeed exist, but only in the visual religious arts between the 12th c. and the beginning of the 13th c. and was to be found nowhere in the accounts of Italian writers narrating the legends of Alexander, where the fantastic element of Alexander's story prevails. Cary is right when he says that the marvelous element in the Alexander-book has been 'rationalized,' but his criteria of dividing medieval from Renaissance approaches to Alexander on the basis of two elements, the rationalization of the fantastic element and its adherence to one source, seems quite hazardous (p. 56).

Furthermore, an examination of the corpus of Alexander-books in Italy between the 13th and 14th centuries reveals they are more than mere imitation. In fact, Storost's work on the Italian repertory of Alexander books constitutes a history of a process of re-writing and underscores the expectations of different generations of writers and reconstructs the intellectual, social, and cultural context that generated those re-writings.

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[18] See Durand's "Légende d'Alexandre le Grand," in *Annales Archéologiques par Didron aîné* (Paris, 1865), t. XXV, pp. 141–158, here p. 150. For more on the iconography of Alexander in tapestry, see Stagno (2008 and 2006).

Writers during the 13th and 14th centuries were mainly fascinated by Alexander's marvelous encounters for their exotic nature and their belonging to the 'unknown and far East' that lent itself, because of its distance, to the oneiric. The tendency that Cary claims to be a feature of the Renaissance and which is also present in the high Middle Ages, is confirmed in a closer analysis of the Italian repertory of Alexander-books.

Italian writers were irresistibly attracted to Leo's narration of Alexander's journey to India in the J² and J³ recensions:[19] his encounter with fabulous animals, with the Amazons and the Gymnosophists, and also Alexander's flight into an "ingenium" (a "cancellis ferries"), built with his friends (III, 27, 4–5) or made by his finest architect (as in the Venetian codex) and his descent into the sea to visit the abyss in a closed vessel (a "vascello") made of glass by real masters of "geometry,"[20] to see the world from above and below, surrounded by colorful fish, while he stayed in his clear glass 'bowl.'

In fact, it is not enough simply to record who wrote about these legends, but rather one must take into account the "horizon of expectations" of those writers, which can be understood in the context of a tendency among 14th-century Italian writers toward the marvelous, which spawned by the travel literature of *Il Milione* or *Dou Devisement du Monde* that Marco Polo (1254–1324) had dictated to Rustichello da Pisa (1298), and with the more or less realistic accounts by Franciscan and Dominican missionaries, in whose work all that was far from the Mediterranean, namely the East, converged into a marvelous dream where geography is mixed with a fantastic or religious toponomy. As Stoneman writes in his 2007 Italian edition of the Greek Alexander Romance,[21] a geographer such as Pliny (23/24–79 A.D.) gathered a lot of information from the writers who accompanied Alexander. Stories concerning Alexander became "The" story for many writers and people curious about the world beyond the Mediterranean. One recalls

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[19] On the roles of Alexander and Aristotle, see Bologna (1999).

[20] On the legends of Alexander visiting the abyss of the sea, see Warburg (1987); Settis Frugoni (2006) and see "Introduction" to Stagno (2006), pp. 1–15 and again Stagno (2007). For more on Alexander's adventure in the sea, see D.J.A. Ross (1967).

[21] Centanni (2005) also studies the impact that the Greek Alexander Romance had on the elaboration of the legends of Alexander and a recent translation of Plutarch's lives.

Marco Polo, Mandeville's *Travels* (1356–1357),[22] one of the most popular books of the time, but also the encounter of the exotic 'other' world with the "franceschi romanzi," as the heroine of one of Boccaccio's works called the French tradition that had permeated the Italian imagination in the 14th-century after the defeat of Benevento in 1260 and the Angevin influence in Naples. Boccaccio himself and Brunetto Latini before him in his *Trésor*, Fazio Degli Uberti and Domenico Scolari in the 14th century and Jacopo di Carlo in the 15th century all proved to be familiar with the French tradition of Alexander legends. This is the context that welcomed Alexander to Italy and where his legends found a new home.

Italy was not France and, consequently, had no courtly interpretation of Alexander as knight, and it was not Germany with its deeply rooted, sacred and profane historiographical tradition, which elaborated a strong devilish image of Alexander. Nevertheless, despite what Cary maintains, the corpus of Italian Alexander-books is more than the sum of its sources, as we shall try to show below.

Another factor should be taken into account in a study of the reception and influence of those legends: the debate that was also taking place in Italy from the 13th century and which was discussed systematically by Dante in his treatises and Boccaccio (*Genealogiae*, XIV) concerning the *fabulae* and their role in the face of the truth of philosophy and theology. This debate made Italian writers in the post-Dante era turn their attention to the 'truth' and the rational foundation of fantastic accounts, which points to what Cary terms the "rationalization" of the marvelous element in Medieval accounts of Alexander stories.[23]

When one considers these factors affecting the Italian reception of the *HP*, we concur with Dronke in that it becomes difficult to agree completely with Cary.[24] We would say that to categorize Italian authors as imitators is a dramatic oversimplification. While we are indebted to Cary (and Storost) for studying the Italian corpus of legends on Alexander the Great, he seems to have ignored any creativity in the process of re-writing on the part of 14th- and 15th-century Italian writers and

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[22] On the legend of Alexander's ascent in relation to Marco Polo's story, see R. Wittkower, *Allegoria e migrazione dei simboli* (London, 1977).

[23] Cf. *Il meraviglioso e il verosimile tra antichità e medioevo*, D. Lanza and O. Longo (eds.) (Florence, 1989) and Morosini (2006).

[24] P. Dronke, Introduction to Boitani (1997), pp. XIII–LXXV.

must have been influenced by Grion and Carraroli who in their studies
gave a strong negative assessment of authors of Alexander's stories in
Italy, defining them as dry imitators of Leo's *HP* and, subsequently, of
Quilichino's *Alexandreis*.

According to Carraroli, our chivalric poems were not the result of a
national consciousness or a deeply rooted faith among the people, but
were like an open field in which worthy poets "sbizzarrirono la loro
fantasia," [freed their fantasy]. For this reason, we Italians, Carraroli
claims, have no poem to compare to the French *Alexandreide*, or to
the epic cycles of other cultures (pp. 244–245). Our works on Alexan-
der, in prose or poetry, are either simple translations from Latin, or
cold imitations, isolated references ("accenni isolate"), scattered frag-
ments without 'calore di vita' and without unity" (p. 246).

Leo's HP: Three main versions exist of the *HP*, J[1], J[2], J[3], all edited
by Bergmeister (1975). J[1] is an 11th-century version of Leo's *HP* to
which have been added the Indian treatises and the letter to Aristotle.
J[2], edited by Hilka, is a revision of the first recension, of uncertain
date, but probably from the 12th century. It has interpolations from
Orosius, Valerius Maximus, pseudo-Methodius, Josephus, pseudo-
Epiphanius, the letter of pseudo-Pharasmanes to Hadrian and the
Indian treatises.

It is the J[3] version, dated before 1236 and probably from around
1150, since 1236 was the year Quilichino of Spoleto put his *Alex-
andreis* into hexameters, that finally made the *HP* popular in Italy.[25]
To confirm that this and also J[2] were known in Italy, is the *Epistola
Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, absent from the J[1] and included in Julius
Valerius's work.[26]

According to Cary, the following Alexander-books confirm that J[2]
and J[3] were widely known in Italy: a manuscript at the Riccardiana
Library in Florence (Q. II. 12), namely the *Zibaldone* attributed to
A. Pucci; the 15th-century *Liber Alexandri Magni*, also in an Italian
version and kept at the Marciana Library in Venice (It. Cl. VI, 66,
Sign.6033); the *Alexandreida in Rima* (ca. 1420); a *History of Alexan-
der*, kept in Florence at the Biblioteca Nazionale, II.i. 363, that Cary
says is of no special interest, and finally the so-called *Libro del Nasci-*

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[25] See the edition by Steffens (1975).
[26] The *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* is in Julius Valerius's *Res Gestae Alexandri*,
Book III, chapters xiv–xxvii.

mento published in Venice by Andrea Paltasischi, 28, VII, in 1477 with
the title *Historia Alexandri Magni* now at the Biblioteca Nazionale in
Florence (P. 6. 6.).[27] While from Quintus Curtius Rufus's *Gesta Alex-
andri Magni* would derive, but not without interpolation from other
texts and in particular the Renaissance *burlesque*, represented by the
15th-century *Morgante* by Luigi Pulci, Domenico Falugio's *Triompho
Magno* and a codex containing a fragment in vernacular Italian of an
Alexander-romance composed in "ottava rima," kept at the Biblioteca
Nazionale in Rome, Ms 1751 (M0. M 10).[28]

   For Grion, the diffusion of Alexander legends in Italy originates
mainly in the city of Bamberg where Leo's *HP* was kept until it came
back to Italy. Bamberg was where the Italian Godfrey of Viterbo stud-
ied. From there, in the years 1185–1190, he returned to his native
Viterbo where he wrote the *Pantheon*.[29] In this work, half in prose
and half in verse, the chaplain at the Swabian court and preceptor for
Henry VI, recalls some of the legends related to Alexander: the episode
of Nectanebus, the Amazons, the prophecy of the trees of the sun and
the moon. Godfrey also tells about Alexander's courage against the
monsters in India and about the mountains near the tribes of Gog
and Magog, behind whose walls, by the will of God, he would enclose
the eleven tribes of Israel; in general, Alexander seems to appear as a
man of God. However, as Braccesi rightly says, Alexander seems to be
a man of God in the *Pantheon* in the same way as he is for Dante in
De Monarchia: he is a man of God in the East where he defeats the
presumptuous Darius, the king of the pagans.[30] But for Godfrey of
Viterbo, Alexander remains an unclean pagan.

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[27] For Storost's studies of the Riccardiano codex, see pp. 126–132; for the *Liber
Alexander Magni*, see pp. 133–144; for the *Alessandreida in rima*, see pp. 180–230;
for the *History of Alexander*, see pp. 145–167; for the *Libro del Nascimento*, see
pp. 168–179.

[28] A description of *Triompho Magno* printed in Rome by Marcellus Silber in 1521
is by Storost, pp. 231–282, where he also studies the fragment in Rome (*ms 1751*).
We studied the edition of the *Triompho Magno* kept at the Biblioteca Universitaria
in Bologna.

[29] See Goffredo da Viterbo (1559).

[30] L. Braccesi, *L'Alessandro occidentale* (Roma, 2006) pp. 226–230. Braccesi also
brings out the roles of Godfrey's pages on Alexander and on Dante's *Monarchia*
(2,8,8) where the poet of the *Commedia*, shares the same thoughts as the author of
the *Pantheon* on the providential death of Alexander at the moment he dared to chal-
lenge the Romans. According to Godfrey, Alexander wrote to the Romans saying "if I
come, I come" and the Romans answered "If you come, you will find us" (*Pantheon*,
II pars 224).

Finally, there would be nothing else of interest in the Italian treat-ment of Alexander's relationship to God until the 14th century when Domenico Scolari, who follows the courtly tradition in his adapted translation of Quilichinus, puts Christian invocations and prayers into the mouths of his heroes, and makes them move in an atmosphere of Christian convention. This is due, according to Storost and Cary, less to originality on the part of Scolari than to the natural expression by a careless writer of the conventions of his age.[31]

In the 13th c., around the time of Godfrey's death, Tommasino de' Cerchiari was born in Cividale del Friuli. He wrote *L'Ospite Romanico* in 1215–1216, consisting of ten books written in a German called "romanico" probably referring to Italian.[32] Here he gives some excerpts from the two works he wrote in the romance language that can be dated back to 1209, on courtesy, loyalty, and the practice of virtue, as we read in chapter IV:

> Qui dico che ho mostrato a ragione che il vizio non ci condurrà a Dio, e mostro poi che nessuno arrivò a Dio se non per via della virtù; e spongo poi che nessuno può avere la virtù totalmente che Iddio solo; e do anche esempio di quelli che per vizio sono corsi all'inferno.

Therefore, to educate the young generation in courtesy, he recom-mends that they read "Buoni romanzi," good stories, among which is the story of Alexander, together with the heroes of Troy, Charlemagne, and the knights of the Round Table: "Non isciupate la vostra gioventù, recatevi a mente la virtù d'Alessandro, e in cortesia, seguite Tristano, Sagramoro, Kalogriant. […] Garzoni, non vi rilassate, e seguite gli ammaestramenti de' buoni, onde veniate a grande onore."[33]

Tommasino was clearly familiar with chivalry and Alexander, but there are no traces of the two works he wrote in "romanico." Given his knowledge of German, we can suppose, as Carraroli did, that Tom-masino must have been familiar with a German version of Alexander's story since it is only later in the same century that Quilichino of Spo-leto would largely contribute to the introduction of the story of Alex-ander to Italy, including his celestial and underwater adventures.

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[31] Storost, pp. 4ff and Cary, note 4, p. 188 .

[32] *Der Wälsche Gast des Thomasin von Zirclaria* (Quedilinburgo, 1852) and Toma-sino de Cerchiari, *Der Welhisch Gast, l'Ospite romanico* (Udine, 1893). See also G. Grion (n.d.).

[33] Grion (1872), pp. CXXXIV–CXXXVI.

Quilichino's *Historia Alexandri Regis Macedonum*
Quilichino iudice ciue spolentio [sic][34]

Quilichino was from Spoleto (or Arezzo) and worked as a judge at the court of the Emperor Frederick II, but composed his work in the city of Recanati in 1236.[35] His *Historia Alexandri Regis* must have been very well known during his day since twenty manuscripts are extant,[36] four dating from the 14th century and the rest later, which makes his editor, Pfister, think that he was not just an imitator of the J[3] recension, but rather an adapter in verse of Leo's *HP*.[37] For Grion, this poem in Latin is of little value as he tries to show by quoting passages of Quilichino's text only to demonstrate how closely he followed his model.[38] It is also surprising that Cary, while discussing the irrelevance of the Italian tradition of Alexander books, included Quilichino's *Alexandreis* among those texts of no interest, lacking artistic merits, when historically, as T. Ferri has proven, it is Quilichino's *Historia Alexandri* that had a great impact on Alexander legends inside and outside of Italy.[39] Dronke also praised Quilichino's work in terms that are worth quoting: "Se da una parte è vero che la narrazione non presenta motivi o particolari radicalmente nuovi, è altrettanto vero che egli accompagna la storia con riflessioni sulla material di Alessandro che a mio parere sono sia originali nella forma che sottili nel contenuto. Esse rendono il poema assai più prezioso di quanto non si sia finora compreso."[40] Quilichino moves in a different stylistic direction from Leo and divides his

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[34] This work is now held at the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.

[35] More on Qulichino by F. Novati who died before he could publish his work on the poet and his works. Novati's study on Quilichino is kept in *R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Lombardia* (Milan, Fondo Novati, folder 94).

[36] On the MSS of the *Alexandreide* see S.H. Thompson (1935); S. Ferri (1915), adds two more manuscripts to the 15 listed by Thompson: *MS C 323*, ff. 32–102 in the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence (XIV Century) and *MS 136* of the Biblioteca del Seminario di Santa Caterina in Pisa from the 15th century (ff. 1–27). See also the useful notes by T. Ferri (1936, pp. 244–245) that remind us of the discovery made by R. Ortiz of another manuscript in the BN of Naples: see Ortiz's "La materia epica nella lirica italiana delle origini," *Giornale Storico della Letteratura italiana* 85 (1925), p. 82.

[37] On Quilichino's sources, see F. Pfister (1911), p. 249ff. and also T. Ferri (1936).

[38] G. Grion, *I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno. Romanzo storico tradotto dal francese nel buon secolo ora per la prima volta pubblicato sopra due codici magliabechiani* (Bologna,1872), pp. 1–7, 12, 35, 140–143, 160–161. See also the essays by Bologna and Boitani in Boitani (1997).

[39] T. Ferri, "Appunti su Quilichino," p. 239.

[40] Dronke, from his Introduction to Boitani (1997), pp. LXXIII–LXXV.

account into four books in a way that emphasizes Alexander's many kingdoms and so suggests a parallel with Frederick, king of Germany, Italy, and Sicily.[41] The fact that he decided to versify history made his *Alexandreis* accessible to many, unlike his other work, a "ritmo" called "Preconia Federicis." Quilichino's *Historia Alexandri* was very popular not only during his time, but also later since it found many imitators up to the 16th century: in Italy in the 14th century Domenico Scolari (1355) and Jacopo di Carlo would both base their re-writings of Alexander's story on Quilichino's poem. Moreover, two German writers prove to be familiar with Quilichino's work: the scribe of *MS 231* in Darmstadt included whole pieces from Quilichino's poem in his copy of *HP*, and, around 1380, an anonymous poet from Wernigerode translated the same poem into German verse.

The criticism directed at Quilichino was for having narrated one of the most legendary episodes related to Alexander, his celestial flight, "con un'uniformità desolante, con pochissime varianti," showing a lack of fantasy that is typical of all Italians when dealing with the "leggendario."[42] Even Grion, writing about Quilichino's *Alexandreis*, said that "the poem is unedited, and there is no reason to be wishful for its edition" (CXXXVII). According to Grion, it was not worth publishing Quilichino's work as it was a mere translation of the *HP*, therefore, he limited himself to publishing the rubrics of Quilichino's work at the end of his edition of *I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno* (end of the 14th century).

In 1237 Dino Compagni wrote the allegorical poem *Intelligenza* to evoke "I propri intagli ed atti/di tutta la sua vita quanta fue."[43] *Intelligenza* is not a book on Alexander and the stories related to him are part of cycles of heroes, protagonists of Arthurian legends and Roman deeds in a long ecphrasis of the decoration of the palace where Madonna lives: 138 stanzas are dedicated to Cesar, 23 to Alexander and 46 to the Trojan war. Then a section follows on the Round Table. As Everson says, the poet is not interested in the stories of the heroes themselves, but rather he concentrates on listing battles and deeds in

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[41] See the entry on "Quilichino of Spoleto" in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, C. Kleinhenz (ed.) (London and New York, 2003), vol. 2.

[42] A. Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 1 (Florence, 1878), p. 170.

[43] D. Compagni, *Intelligenza*, V. Mistruzzi (ed.) in *Collezione di opera inedite e rare* (Bologna, 1928). Legends on Alexander are in stanzas 216–239.

no logical order, mixing history and legend in the same stanza and passing from one legend to another without any clear criteria, as in the section where the battle against Darius is placed alongside Alexander's journey to the abyss of the sea.

Another 13th c. work that touches on the legends of Alexander without a moralistic approach is Marco Polo's *Il Milione*. Speaking of Georgia, Marco Polo describes the Gog and Magog, according to what the "book of Alexander says," while at the same time distancing himself from his source. He says that the tribes kept behind the iron gates were the Çumanni and not Tartars. Their identity would later be revealed by Andrea da Barberino, who in the 15th century finally states in his work of fiction, *Guerrin Meschino* (1410), that Alexander ruled much earlier than the Diaspora:

> Queste grandissime Alpi che ttu vedi sono le montagne che fanno tre gironi dove Allesandro fece serrare la bocca di questi tre giri di montagne. E dicono molti che vi serrò dentro dieci tribi d'Israele perchè gli trovò stratti da tutta l'altra umana natura. Ma questo non è vero, imperò che Allesandro fu molte centinaia d'anni innanzi che' Giudei perdessero el loro regno di Gerusalemme" (*Guerrin Meschino*, II 22, 8 e 10).[44]

Polo did recognize that the iron doors were not the Caspian doors (*Il Milione*, pp. 23, 178 and 30), but he confused a poplar tree that does not produce leaves with the tree of the sun as transmitted by the Alexander-books. Polo quotes again from a book of Alexander when he mentions "l'albero solo," that is the dry tree or the tree of the sun of the Christians, as Quilichino had narrated (*Alexandreis*, fol. 57) and as Dino Compagni recalled: "e gli alberi che di sotterra usciero, poi ritornavano là donde veniero, quando lo sol partiva da loro" (*Intelligenza*, 216–239). As for the creative re-writing of the Alexander legends in Italy, which in our opinion is never 'dry,' it is the eponymous hero of Andrea da Barberino's *Guerrin Meschino*, who gives new meaning to several major motifs of the Alexander tradition, one being the encounter with the trees of the sun and moon. He evokes Polo and Alexander's travels and, as he reads from both, his Meschino encounters the tree of the sun:

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[44] G. Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry* (Gainsville, 1997).

> a voler andare agli Alberi del sole questa non è la tua via, imperò che
> il grande Alessandro macedonico andò per la Soria—Assiria-e per la
> Persia, ed entrò nell'India; ed ivi al mare d'india, chiamato mare Indi-
> cum, gli fue insegnato trovare gli Alberi del Sole e della luna (*Guerrin
> Meschino* II 5 27).[45]

We don't agree with Carraroli when he discounts Barberino's parody
of Alexander's story as the spontaneous expression of his day and age:
"considerando il modo della narrazione, e come questo simulacro di
epopea popolare era sparso tra i volghi, si comprende che il racconto
è l'ingenua espressione dell'età in cui fu scritto" (211).

Interest and fascination for Marco Polo and Alexander's fabulous
account flows into a *Zibaldone* kept at the *Riccardiana num. 1922*
(olim. Q. II. N. XII) attributed to the poet Antonio Pucci (1310–1388).
Although in red ink we are told to learn about Marco Polo's travels,
("questo è il libro che compose mess Marco Polo da vinezia quando
ando per lo mondo e tute cose notabile scrise," p. 3), the account Pucci
gives has nothing to do with the *Milione* itself, from which only few
passages are taken. The manuscript offers a version of the *HP*[46] (from
folios 3r to 28r) in very bad condition, full of blanks and fragments,
mixed with legends on Asia, from Polo, and the journey to Paradise
by the three monks.[47] Pucci's pages show in fact to what extent it was
unfair of Cary to quickly conclude that Italians had no poetic and
imaginative merit as they were "nourished on no romantic heritage"
(261). Pucci's interpolation of the Alexander story into many other
legends proves to be a very creative and poetic re-writing in its revival
of several traditions, including Marco Polo and the story of the three
monks' journey to Paradise. Folio 20r[48] describes India and the four
rivers that flow directly from the Earthly Paradise, quenching the thirst
of humans on earth. Pucci is impressed by the inhabitants of the lands
beyond India, where "ci sono parti molto salvatichi e abitanti di ogni
condizione e gienti assai contrafatti di loro corpo e si a noi di qua
paiono favole e appaiono impossibili a credere pure cosi secondo degli
autori delle leggiende." Pucci seems to be particularly interested in

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[45] Carraroli, pp. 276–277.

[46] A. Graf, "Il Zibaldone attribuito a Antonio Pucci," *Giornale storico della lettera-
tura italiana* 1 (1883), 284–285.

[47] Zambrini edited the text of the *Three monks, Viaggio di tre santi monaci al para-
diso terrestre. Opere inedite e rare, dei secoli XIV e XV*, vol. 1 (1861), pp. 165–179.

[48] Corresponds to f. 22 in the new foliation.

the different kinds of fantastic human creatures Polo or Alexander encountered, but also in wonders, like the river of sands, the Amazons, and other mythical passages taken from Alexander's stories and explicitly remembered by Pucci in his *Zibaldone* (folio 22r and from folios 52v–57v):

> Che visito' molti strani paesi brievemente diroi alessandro molto maravigliosa cosa ricordandomi chelsommo poeta Dante disse cosi vero che faccia di menzogna.

Pucci's reference to "a very wondrous thing about Alexander," in connection with Dante's concern about representing creatures (*gerione*) that are hardly believable,[49] proves that he, like his contemporaries, was torn apart: on the one hand, the fabulous is all there, including the account of Alexander's celestial flight and his descent into the sea but, on the other hand, Pucci makes an attempt to rationalize the marvelous by showing that he is fully aware that he is telling a marvelous story, full of fantastic elements, just as Dante did with the three-headed *gerione*.

He tells us of Nectanebus, an astrologer and a necromancer, who left Egypt to flee the king of Persia ("fu re de gitto e tu fu grande strolago & maestri darte magica e per paura del re di persia parti d'egitto"), he also narrates Alexander's death and says that he was Aristotle's pupil; he tells how Nectanebus was killed by his son Alexander, who in fact "lo sospinge nel cupo fosso pieno d'acqua." Pucci also tells of a moved and tearful Alexander burying Nectanebus with all the honors (f. 53v).

The account is fairly complete, despite some inconsistencies. We find references to Alexander's marriage to Darius's daughter "Rosanella" (f. 55r) and Darius's burial; and the throne of seven precious stones made just for Alexander and accompanied by a final didactic message on human frailty, 'as dust we are and dust we become' (f. 55v). When Pucci moves to Alexander's journey to India, with elephants carrying towers of wood on which rode thirty men with weapons, and to his visit to the beautiful palace of Poro, one realizes that Pucci tends to abbreviate the description of the battle to focus instead on the anthropological, namely the 'otherness' that fascinated his generation.

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[49] "sempre a quel ver ch'a faccia di menzogna/de' l'uom chiuder le labbra fin che el puote" (*Inferno* XVI, vv. 124–25).

The legendary Alexander explored many 'other' spaces and met many other 'races,'[50] such as the Gymnosophists:

> Partissi per tema di quella aria poi arrivano a dive huomini E femmine vanno ingnudi alloro chase e sono chaverne sotto le grotte de quali venne il signore ad alesandro disse tu non potresti connoi guadagnare nulla perche non abiamo altro chettu veggia e allesandro disse che adimandassero gratia e disse fa che nnoi non muano mai, disse allesandro questo non posso io fare…" (f. 56).

Alexander arrived at the pillars of Hercules:

> due state che fece ecule luna doro e laltra dargiento alte dodici braccia poi apui di arrivo a uno fiume chaldissimo quy trovato femmine armate dargiento perche nonanno fe(r)o in quel posto… (f. 57v)

Women with long beards down to their chests and the trees that would pop up with the sunrise and disappear at sunset appear in Quilichino's *Alessandreis* (f. 55):

> Loste molto temette onde Allesandro fece accendere molte fiacchole e cosi cavalcava forte e uscito da questa valle arrivo in uno parte che come il sole palesava albori nascevano della terra e mentre il sole alzava alzavano asicome il sole abassava si bassavano gli albori e quando il sole ricoverava ricoveravano sotterra e poi uscivano fuori" (f. 58).

In the 13th c., Alexander legends became part of the encyclopedic knowledge Brunetto Latini transmits in his *Trésor*, written in French (1220–1295), suggesting that he may have known some of the French Alexander romances. Despite his interest in the historical more than the legendary, as he himself says (36), Latini writes at length of Alexander legends.[51] And the *Trésor* was popular; almost 50 MSS exist. We rely on Chabaille, who first edited the text, and on D'Ancona for his detailed studies of both the A and B versions.[52]

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[50] Bologna wrote an excellent chapter on "Alessandro e i mondi altri" where he mentions P. Zumthor, *La mesure du monde, Répresentation de l'espace au Moyen Age*, in which Zumthor explains how for the medieval mind, 'other' spaces coincide with encounters with the "other." See Boitani (1997), pp. 267–269.

[51] D'Ancona (1888) deals with the legends of Alexander in the *Trésor*, pp. 134–142.

[52] J. Chabaille, *Li livres dou Trésor* (Paris, 1863), p. 27. See Carmody (1948) for all quotes from *Li Livres dou Trésor de Brunetto Latini*.

Brunetto tells of Nectanebus's fleeing from Cyrus, of Alexander's birth, his chivalrous and amorous deeds, his aventures in the sky and in the depths of the sea.[53]

Thus in the Italian verse *Tesoro*, especially the B version (ca. 1310), as D'Ancona calls it, we read:

> Alesandro fu huomo di gran coraggio/E conquistò per suo baronaggio/ Tutta Grecia e Schiavonia/E tutte due nationi di Bereberia,/E sogiugò tutta Giudea/E cercò il diserto con tutti i suoi baroni/E feciesi portare inn aria a due grifoni/E legiesi che tanto in alto andò/Che quando la terra giù guardò,/*Parveli la terra uno greto di ghiaja,/Grande come fa il bifolco di un'aja,/che fosse un luogo de'lago plagajo,*/E nolli parve il lago per verso un migliaio" (c. 78r, col. 1)

However, the A version, the older version of the *Tesoro*, only states that:

> Alexandro fue home di grande coraggio,/E conquistò per suo baron-aggio/Tutta Grecia et Schiavonia,/Et XXVI nationi di Barbaria,/Et sob-jogò tutta Judea,/Sorìa et Persia et Caldea,/Et cercò il diserto in grande conditioni,/*Et fecisi portare in aria a due grifoni:/Poi in una ampolla vide i fatti del mare/Et second che si trova, vi stette dua settimane* (c. 98r).

Very intriguing too is the account that the B version offers of Alexander's visit to the abyss of the sea in an "anpolla," a big round-bottomed bowl, in the company of a female cat, a dog and a cockerel

> Anche, in una anpolla in mare sott'acqua cercò,
> E le schiere de' pesci inparò,
> E misse nell'anpolla fuoco di galla, la gatta e 'l cane,
> E, secondo che si truova, vi stette tre settimane[54]

Only in the *Alessandreide* by Jacopo di Carlo, is Alexander in the same 'unusual' company in his underwater adventure. It is 'unusual' for the Italian tradition since the cockerel, the cat, and the dog only appear in Brunetto and Jacopo di Carlo, while the cat, by itself, is present in Scolari, in whose *Istoria* Alexander is placed in an "ampolla," a round-bottomed glass bowl, accompanied by a female cat and a sponge.

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[53] D'Ancona, Il Tesoro, p. 82.
[54] We quote from D'Ancona, p. 137.

Poi mise dentro la gatta e la spogna
Con altre cose asai che gli besogna.
(§145)
Arrivato in fondo al mare:
Tutti gli pessi coreano a l'*ampolla*
Poi che tocava el vetro si fugivano,
Quando Alexandro sta che no se
crolla

E quegli intorno a lui tutti venivano
A schiere fatte tutti a lui sazolla
C'ordenatamente l'asalivano
De lì Alexandro, se 'l libro non erra,
Imprese asai de suoi fatti de guerra
(Scolari's *Istoria*)

In contrast, in 1420 Jacopo di Carlo writes of Alexander's shiny glass bathysphere:

Tanto che stando dentro si vedea
Di fuora, tutto, ogni cosa che fasse;
Ivi una gatta dentro ci metteva
E uno gallo che l'ore cantasse,
Anche un cane domestico ch'aveva.
& quel cane accio che se magnasse
Quel che ad alexandro esce di sua
corpatura & anche de li altri
ciascuna brutura

Misece il gatto perche raccogliesse
El fiato putrido el altro come appare
Poi fe di ferro catene longhe e spesse
Co le quale quel vaso fe calare
E victovaglia dentro si ce messe
Fi che dui di li podesse bastare
Puoi intro dentro la porta impeciata
Fo molto bene racconcia e serrata
Quel vaso fo messo poi in vna nave
& dentro in mare alquanto fu portato[55]

Scolari and Di Carlo's accounts of the underwater trip offer further proof of their ability to use more than one source, which, according to Cary's criteria, would suggest that they are not 'medieval' because they consider several models in the composition of their Alexander-books. Moreover Di Carlo uses the term "vaso" instead of "ampolla," as "vascello" is used in other texts closer to the *vasculum* of Leo's *HP*.[56] In the *Nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno*, the anonymous author, probably recalling "the cage of Alexander's ascent," made the king descend in "*una gabbia di vetro*," while in the C version Alexander requests "*una palla di vetro* molto risprendiente" and later on in the same C version we find again the "*gabbia del vedro*."[57]

Everson in her study of Scolari's *Istoria* cannot find an explanation for the presence of the cat in the "ampolla," ignoring that a female cat, together with a dog and a cockerel, had accompanied Alexander on

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[55] From Canto XI, p. 45ff. The editing of this text in Italian is ours. The *Alessandreida in rima* we consulted at the University Library in Pisa is incomplete and 108 "ottave" in total are missing: 29 are missing from canto XI and the rest from canto XII.

[56] Cf. "uno vaso de clarissimo vedro," (*Libro del Nascimento*, LXXXV).

[57] Grion, p. 160 and Bologna, in Boitani (1997), p. 636 and note 5.

his sea trip and that the cat already appeared in accounts of Alexander's journey under water, including Brunetto's *Trésor*. According to Casari, the motif of the three animals accompanying Alexander may be explained by the 11th-century vernacular German versions. In this tradition, Alexander brings three animals in what literally looks like a barrel: a cockerel that tells the time of day, a cat whose breath purifies the air in the barrel, and a dog that could attack in case of danger. In fact, according to an old belief, the sea rejects the impurity of blood and expels anybody who smells of blood. Sometimes the dog is absent and the cat replaces it, but mainly it is a hen that Alexander brings along to sacrifice in order to emerge safely from the abyss (Seneca, *Nat. Quaest*, III, 26,7).[58] Frugoni believes that the adventure in the abyss is the counterbalance or "pendant" of the ascent into the sky. Additionally, one could argue that the presence of the sponge that Alexander brings along in Scolari's account of his descent into the sea reflects the author's choice to be innovative and to use a motif present in Alexander's ascent for the underwater adventure as well. He knew how clear Alexander wanted the glass to be because, as Bologna says about the underwater adventure in Alexandre de Paris (III, 381–577), "la conoscenza passa attraverso la vista, che attiva la riflessione" and, in order see as much as possible in the abyss, it could be that he made his Alexander bring a sponge.[59] It is obvious that Scolari was using different sources but, like a self-conscious author, he also wished to distance himself from them, trying to be 'original' by removing some elements such as the cat, but maintaining the dog and the cockerel.

Finally, the verse *Tesoro* also offers an unusual account of two other episodes: first that of Queen Candace's maiden who tries to poison Alexander but ends up poisoning herself. This episode is in Julius Valerius and is repeated by other 14th-century authors, but D'Ancona was unable to find a source among Western legends for the tale of the girl raised on snake venom. The earliest mention of this girl is in the *Secretum secretorum*.[60] Secondly, Brunetto tells of Alexander's ingenious military strategies, which will require more attention here below.

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[58] Casari (1999), pp. 51–52. More on the abyss in Ross (1967) and Boitani (1997), p. 663.

[59] Boitani (1997), p. 636, note 4.

[60] D'Ancona (1888), p. 33. See the following for material from the Alexander legend in the *Tesoro* in prose: I 26.3; 27.3; 4, 5; 28.4; 42.2; 122.13, 14, 15, 19, 24; 183.4, 186.3, 187.3; also D'Ancona, pp. 249–251.

ALEXANDER'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE BASILISK IN BRUNETTO LATINI
AND OTHER MEDIEVAL ITALIAN AUTHORS

In his prose *Tesoro* we read that to defeat the basilisk whose gaze kills
he orders his men to make big round-bottomed flasks in which he
and his soldiers can protect themselves and use, as in the bestiary and
Alexander traditions, a mirror to kill the beast. Here he is probably
freely using, rather than confusing, the glass diving-bell of the under-
water adventure, but with a different purpose:

> Et sachiez que Alixandres le trova et fist fere granz ampoules de voire, ou
> homes entroient dedenz qui veoient le basilisque, mes il ne veoit ceaus
> qui les ocioient a trait de seetes, et par tel engine en fu deliver il et son
> ost (I, 140)[61]

Other Alexander-books in Italy use just the mirror to kill the basilisk
following Aristotle's teachings in the *Secretum secretorum*. So Jacopo
di Carlo in his *Alessandreide in rima*, aware of Brunetto's *Tesoro*, says
that Alexander defeated the basilisk with a mirror as stated in the *HP,*
in Quilichino's *Alexandreis* and in Scolari's "cantare" or *Istoria*. Sco-
lari adds that the basilisk is defeated by holding a big shield in front
of which stands the mirror. Di Carlo used the "cantare" as one of his
models, but enriches the text with little bells around the mirror that
ring when the basilisk is dead (p. 39).

ALEXANDER AND THE STONE IN THE FORM OF A HUMAN EYE

To close Brunetto's century and to point out once again the heavy
influence of the French romances on the Italian tradition, is a vernacu-
lar Italian legend related to Alexander and the old guardian of Para-
dise in the translation from French of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à
César*.[62] Titled *I fatti di Cesare* it contains the episode where Alexander
arrives at the end of the world, by the Gihon River, and attempts to
enter the palace there. It is not Alexander himself who encounters the
old man living in the marvelous castle, but two of his soldiers. The old
man hears the two soldiers talking about Alexander's desire to con-

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[61] Compare the similarity of Pierre de Beauvais's *Bestiaire* in F. Zambon, *L'Alfabeto simbolico degli animali* (Roma, 2003), pp. 175–177 and the *Tesoro*, pp. 185–186.

[62] *I Fatti di Cesare. Testo di lingua inedito*, Banchi (ed.) (Bologna, 1863), p. 116. We read *I fatti di Cesare*, in Grion, p. CXLIII.

quer the world and gives them a stone as big as a hazelnut in the form of a human eye together with a message for Alexander: "Tell your lord that this is what the world that he wants to conquer looks like." Alexander does not understand and calls his tutor Aristotle for help. Aristotle weighs the stone and some gold coins and the stone always weighs more. Only when Aristotle puts saliva mixed with dust over the eye does the balance tip the other way. Aristotle explains the meaning: when Alexander is dead, even the lightest things will weigh more than him. Consequently, Alexander throws the stone into the river.

A similar episode takes place in the palace of the sun. It features Alexander's encounter with the old man (not his soldiers), and only in two cases, in *I fatti di Cesare* and in the 16th-century *Triompho Magno* by Domenico Falugio, is the stone involved.[63] Moreover, in both cases it is a sick Aristotle who explains in person the meaning of the precious stone, although with some differences. In the *Triompho Magno* Aristotle is not called right away and when he eventually comes to Alexander's aid, he does not mix saliva with dust as in *I fatti di Cesare*, but straw ("paglia"). Also, in the *Triompho Magno*, the real challenge is to understand the meaning of the eye-shaped diamond, and Falugio dwells on it for many stanzas before having Alexander understand: they had to squeeze their brains ("cervelli stillare"). The message is that in order for Alexander to understand everything ("perché lui tutto comprenda"), he needs to recognize that there is a king more powerful than he. In the *Triompho Magno* the episode focuses on Alexander's ability (or lack thereof) to understand the meaning of the eye-shaped stone. It represents the first failure of a greedy Alexander who, in the vein of epic heroes and in contrast to his character in 14th-century Alexander-books, seems to be looking for adventures, things *ad-venire*, but has no desire or curiosity for knowledge. Adventures such as the exploration of remote lands and seas that were narrated to show Alexander's thirst for knowledge now have become a mere excuse for action. He does not understand what the old guardian wanted to tell him with the stone and nobody could interpret it: "Ma sopra quel diamante non vi fu /Alcun che mai potessi interpretare/Il suo significato…" (84). Falugio finds some aspects of his story difficult

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[63] Alexander encounters the old man of the "Palace of the sun" in *I Nobili fatti di A.* and receives the prophecies from the trees of the sun and the moon, but there is no stone (see Grion, pp. 140–141). More on Falugio's *Triompho Magno* by Storost, pp. 231–282.

to believe, such as the stone's levitation about which he says "ma questo non approvo & falso pare" (82).[64]

Domenico Scolari's *Istoria Alexander regis*

The *Istoria Alexander regis*, "un mediocrissimo poema," according to Boffito,[65] is found in the unedited Magliabechiano MS II, II, 30 in Florence. It is comprised of 94 folios, the first six pages contain the rubrics of the four books.[66] It is a poem in "ottava rima" that Follini[67] believed to be even earlier than Boccaccio's *Teseida*, considered the first poem of the genre, since Scolari ended his "Zibaldonesca fatica letteraria" in 1355 in the city of Treviglio.[68] Everson (2006) studied the *Istoria* within the context of the 14th-century Italian "cantare" on the cycle of Rome, a genre composed in the vernacular and probably destined to be sung in the main squares.

Unlike other "cantari," Scolari's *Istoria* is not derived from an Italian version in prose, but from Quilichino's Latin poem in hexameters. Instead of versifying a story from the first years of the 14th century, Scolari uses two older sources. Moreover, different from the repertory of "cantari" on the cycle of Rome, Scolari does not seem to consider French romances, like the *Roman d'Alexandre*. While we can date the Latin prose versions of the cycle of Aeneas or "Fatti dei Romani" from 1315–1325, it is more difficult to date the "cantari" genre and the manuscript of the *Istoria* represents the only example of the cycle of Rome in Italian. Scolari is also the only Italian author to write a vernacular verse version of the story of Alexander before Falugio in the 16th century. He sets himself apart from the typical creator of "cantari" and shows that he expected an audience able to read in the vernacular, a sign that he wrote for Florentine readers and, in any case, his work was not conceived to be 'sung' by *canterini*. Concetta Meri Leone who devoted her dissertation to Scolari's *Istoria*, also agrees on

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[64] Cf. Jacopo di Carlo, pp. 40–41.

[65] Boffito, p. 325.

[66] For a detailed description of the manuscript see Storost and Cary. An edition of the poem, unpublished, is by Emanuela Bariani, dissertation at the University of Padua, 1981.

[67] V. Follini, Dissertation defended on September 9, 1807 and now in *Collezione di opuscoli scientifici e letterarii*, Del Furla (ed.) (Florence, 1808) vol. 5, pp. 26–57.

[68] In the Milan area according to Follini, in the Venetian area according to Carraroli (261) and for Concetta Meri Leone in the area of Padua-Treviso in the Veneto region.

the expertise of the writer in his use of narrative techniques derived not from the "cantare" tradition, but from the Latin source, namely Quilichino: "più che ad un generico popolo di illetterati che ascoltava in piazza, Domenico Scolari pensava probabilmente di destinare ad un ambiente di corte, dove, si sa, erano frequenti anche letture publiche a scopo didattico o semplicemente ricreativo, quello che preferisco chiamare il suo poema."[69] One can point out differences in his *Istoria* not only in relation to the "cantare" tradition, but also to details from the Alexander romance. For example in Quilichino, Bucephalus is a gift to his father Philip, while Scolari's Alexander found the horse in chains and tamed it (Book I) and, above all, Scolari clearly uses the word "leggenda" when he refers to Alexander's story, almost striving to let his audience know that he is aware, and that he distances himself from the legend (Book II, 44), or even from "diceria" [gossip] (Book II, 40). In Book III, after having described the Macedonian's battles, Scolari returns to "le belle storie" (III, 8) and the word "leggenda" assuredly returns "Ancor segue la legenda/chiara perchè ogn'om la 'ntenda" (III 20 and 34). In the same book, he refers to his own work as a "libro arguto" (III, 220). Scolari is fully aware of his own authorship and we see this when at the end of his *Istoria*, he recognizes "chi fe' el libro e chi 'l rimò, /e 'l luogo e 'l tempo che correa/ e 'l papa e lo 'imperio che vivea." Clearly he is anxious to have his book and name remembered. It is difficult to agree with Boffito, who claimed that Scolari based his text on Quilichino, without always understanding what he was saying,[70] and with Grion, who described the *Istoria* as a "lungo indigesto lavoro che non s'ingrazia né per l'invenzione, né per la lingua, né per lo stile" (CLIII).

Despite the marginal drawings in the manuscript, especially in relation to the fantastic section in the *Istoria*, that feature animals, instruments, a wild man and a basilisk with the head of a cock (c. 70), Scolari, as noted by Everson, focuses on historical elements rather than the fantastic aspects of the legend and there is more attention to chronology, which is rather unusual for Italian Alexander-books. After having narrated the battles against Darius in the first two books, in Book III Scolari turns to the legends: the mythical animals Alexander encountered, his celestial and marine adventures, without forgetting the historical facts that are mixed in with the fantastic from the ancient

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[69] C. Meri Leone (2007), pp. 65–79.
[70] Boffito, p. 327.

accounts of Alexander's saga. This might be what Cary refers to as the rationalization of the wonderful element that, together with the adherence to one source, points to a text "belonging to the late medieval treatment of the Alexander story" (p. 56).

Furthermore, the fantastic is treated differently than in the previous narrators of Alexander's story and more like Pucci in his *Zibaldone*, since he prefers unusual human beings to absurdly fantastic creatures. Thus we find that Scolari gives more attention to peoples like the Gymnosophists, and the hairy men (see Chap 21). In places where the antagonist is a monster, like the basilisk, we see the narrator focus more on the strategy to defeat it than on its description.

At the same time, Scolari's description of the earth as an "ara […] dove se batte el grano" is also noteworthy:

> Lo re intrò nel carro franchamente
> Li grifon lo levaron suso in alto;
> Alexandro guarda e ponea mente,
> Vedea la terra e tutto lo suo smalto;
> *Un'ara gli parea propiamente*
> *Dove se batte el grano*, tant'era alto,
> Lo mare gli parea com'una serpe
> La terra cinge intorno e tutta aderpe. (§144)

The reference to "ara" and "un'ara dove se batte el grano," comes from Leo's *HP* when he says that Alexander flew so high "ut sicut *area* videbatur esse terra sub me," and recalls the Dantesque "aiuola" in *Paradiso*, XII, 151. However, as Bologna has stated, the term is indeed from Leo's *HP* and therefore precedes Dante. The metaphor of the earth as an "aiuola" in Dante, comes from the 'little field' in the *HP*, the "area" mentioned by Leo in order to convey the insignificance of human beings and the frailty of material things. In fact, in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* the word "aiuola" refers to the Tuscan translation, *I nobili fatti di Alessandro*: "così portarono la gabbia con tucto Allexandro su in nell'arie sì alto che Allexandro che guardava in verso *la terra li parea come una aia o come una piccola piazza* e l'acqua li parea ch'auolgesse la terra come uno dragone (159).[71]

Among Italian authors of Alexander-books, it is Jacopo Di Carlo once again who surprises us with a precious detail that stands out in such a well-known legend as Alexander's ascent. He alone does not

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[71] See the entry "aiuola" in *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Rome, 1970), p. 86. Settis Frugoni, (1973), p. 7; also Boitani (1997), p. 641 and Schmidt (1995), pp. 73–125.

conceive the Latin "area" as a field of wheat (*grano* or *biave*) but as a "piccolo praticello" [little green field]: "Tanto in aiere andar feroce-mente/Che Alexandro la terra col mare/Vede ad un tracto se libro nn mente/Vede li parue un piccolo praticello" (Book XI).

The *Liber Alexandri Magni* in the Marciana Library translates the "ara dove se batte el grano" as "biave" from the Venetian: "si comen-çaron de levarsi suso ĭ aire e andaron tanto ĭ alto li Grifoni che Alex li parea essere ĭ celo e si vedea tutta la terra a modo duna *ara ĭ la quale si mette li biave* e vede lo mare" (39).

The same term "biave" is in the *Libro del nascimento* (BN Florence, 1477) which points to a closer link between these two Alexander-books. For Cary the *Libro del Nascimento* and the Marciana codex are of no interest because they constitute merely prose translations of the J[3] recension of the *HP*. But the language of both writers is defi-nitely Venetian and the translation is fairly free. Even though they do not present a new or original conception of Alexander, we disagree that they lack interest. The Marciana manuscript is the only Alexander romance in the Veneto region so close to the *Libro del Nascimento*, and as we suggested above, it does not merely follow J[3]. In fact, it shares features with the Venetian manuscript and the 15th-century *Triompho Magno*, but these connections need to be studied further. We limit ourselves here to observing that the Marciano MS both in style and content is heavy and lacks fluidity such that reading it can be difficult. Moreover, the moralistic tone prevails at all levels and the episodes are constantly used with religious and didactic aims ("Gesù e Maria" even appears in pencil on the first page).

I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno

Dating from the end of the 14th c. is the vernacular Italian *I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno* edited by Grion. It is contained in two manu-scripts at the BN in Florence, both from the 15th c. and following the J[2] recension: II.IV. 29 (cl. VI, n. 14) and N. II. I 62. Grion thought the text derived from an unidentified 13th-century French source. He concurs with Carraroli in that the *Nobili fatti* is a translation from the *HP* with some borrowings from Quilichino's text.[72]

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[72] Boffito, p. 324, note 1; Carraroli, p. 260.

I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno is not particularly interesting when compared to Scolari's *Istoria* and Di Carlo's *Alessandreida*, but an in-depth study of a few details pertaining to legends narrated in the *HP*, such as Alexander's ascent into the heavens and his descent into the sea, would show that the text is more than a literal translation in Tuscan. We previously mentioned some of the interesting features in Grion's edition, such as the underwater expedition, and the episode of Alexander's flight. For the latter, we note here that where, in Leo's *HP* (III, 27), it is by divine intervention that the griffins begin their descent, in *I nobili fatti* it is Alexander himself who points the baited spears downwards, so that the griffins return to earth (p. 160).

FAZIO DEGLI UBERTI'S *DITTAMONDO*

According to Carraroli, French influence is also visible in the *Dittamondo* (1350) by Fazio degli Uberti.[73] In this imaginative poem, the poet is guided by the Latin geographer Solinus around the three continents. Upon arriving in Macedonia, he is inspired by some marble carvings illustrating Alexander's deeds in the loggia of an empty castle. Fazio quotes Orosius and in Book IV, Chapter I there are traces of Justin and a cruel Alexander capable of killing friends and relatives. The following chapters relate material from the *HP* and the French tradition, such as Alexander's birth and youth, the epistolary exchange with Darius, the encounter with a poor man who received a city in exchange for some "bisanti," the inclosing of the Gog and Magog, and the lesson of the stone shaped like a human eye.[74]

In chapter III of Book IV, concerning Alexander's successors, Fazio is again staring at the loggia images to see if any represent a vice of Alexander's:

> Fiso mirava per avere indizio
> se fosse in quella grande e ricca storia
> del magnanimo re alcun suo vizio.
> Ma, poi ch'io vidi ch'alcuna memoria
> di quel non v'era, mi volsi a Solino (IV, III, 1–4)

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[73] Fazio Degli Uberti, *Il Dittamondo e le rime*, G. Corsi (ed.) (Bari, 1952).

[74] Other Italian romances that contain this episode, with differences, are the *Fatti di Cesare*, and the anonymous *Alessandro Magno in Rima* (printed in "Vinegia 1550"). See Carraroli, pp. 262–263.

Therefore he asks Solinus about Alexander's vices, highlighting the sources he used: "Livio, tu e Giustino/e molti scrivono che costui fu vinto/che vinse tutto, da ira e da vino." Fazio's surprise is at the absence in the carved scenes of the "mortal furia, che si vide in lui/quando da questi vizi [i.e. ira e vino] era sospinto" (IV, III, 7–12).

More interesting than the *Dittamondo* itself is the Commentary of Fazio's text made in the 15th century by Guglielmo Cappello, a preceptor at the Estense court in Ferrara. Cappello mentions Giacomo of Fiesole, author of a *Gioco di scacchi* that would have been another source for Fazio.

> Questo non scrive Justino ma si lege in altre hystorie per agrandire la fama di alexandro ne ancora curtio la scrive. Fra iacomo da fiesoli in quel libreto chel fe del giocho di scachi scrive questo de alexandro quando stravistiti ando in corte di re dario e in lo convito si puose la taça di seno e ripreso disse che cosi era usança fare in corte di alexandro pero che non apregiava richeçe. (c. 132r.)

In general, Cappello dislikes the imaginative French romances and continuously criticizes Fazio when he gives an account of "non hystorie vere" (c. 168r).[75]

Boccaccio and Alexander

Fazio Degli Uberti was not the first to represent scenes depicting Alexander by means of an ecphrasis in the manner of Dino Compagni's *Intelligenza*, Boccaccio in the *Filocolo* has a description of the royal room of Florio's father's palace where "si vedeano ne' rilucenti marmi intagliate l'antiche storie da ottimo maestro" (II 32). The writer of the *Filocolo* was a 'young' Boccaccio who must have already been familiar with legends of Alexander. Boccaccio the narrator was not indifferent to the enormous impact of the Alexander material and he proved to be familiar with it when he took up the theme again later in his career, but then he adopted a different approach. In his earliest work Boccaccio admired Alexander for his generosity (*Comedia delle ninfe* I 3 and *Amorosa Visione* VII 76–81), whereas in the later works such as *Genealogia*, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia* (*Commentary to Dante's Inferno*) and in the letter XXI to Cavalcanti, Boccaccio appears more

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[75] I discuss Guglielmo Cappello's reading of Fazio's *Dittamondo* in Morosini (2006).

influenced by Dante's *Inferno* (XII 107), although the doubt remains
as to whether the reference is to Alexander the Great or the tyrant of
Fere.[76] Writing his commentary to *Inferno* XII, Boccaccio does not
hesitate to condemn Alexander as an ambitious and presumptuous
tyrant, based on his readings of Orosius, Justin's *Historiae Philippicae*
(IX 6–7; XI 6–8 and 11; XII 9–14) and Quintus Curtius Rufo's *Historiae
Alexandri Magni.* In his literal commentary to Inferno canto XIV (*Esp.
Letterale* 28), Boccaccio explicitly mentions Curtius and a "Guglielmo
d'Inghilterra," who is probably Walter of Châtillon: "come io abbia
non una volta ma piu' veduto Quinto Curzio,/che di lui pienamente
scrive, e Guglielmo d' Inghilterra *e altri.*"[77] Boccaccio knew the legends
on Alexander but his readings, especially of Curtius and Justin, led
him from the fascination with Alexander's generosity (*Comedia delle
Ninfe* I, 3; *Corbaccio*, 136 and 345; *De casibus* IV 7, 9, 12) to the idea
of the tyrant Alexander:

> quantunque vittorioso e magnifico signore, come assai apare nelle sue
> opere, occupatore non solamente delle piccole fortune degli uomini ma
> de'regni e delle liberta' degli uomini violentissimo, oltre a cio' crudelis-
> simo ucciditore non solamente de' nemici, ma ancora degli amici, de'
> quali' gia' caldo di visono e di vivana, ne' conviti e atrove, fece ucci-
> dere: per le quali colpe si puote assai convenientemente credere l'autore
> aver voluto s'intenda lui in questo ardentissimo sangue esser dannato.
> (Padoan, pp. 939–940)[78]

In *Genealogia* (XIII 71) Boccaccio criticizes the 'fabulous' birth of
Alexander and his attempt to make himself divine, while in the *Amo-
rosa Visione* VII 82 he refers to Nectanebus as Alexander's father on
the basis of his familiarity with Alexander romances. He also devoted
some attention to Olympias in *De mulieribus claris* (CXI, 8). His
response to the legends of Alexander is that of a narrator who loves
stories and who loves to amplify his sources; but never does he pre-
tend it is historiography. Boccaccio, who had led a 'battle' against the
fabulous, could never have believed nor narrated Alexander's flight or
his underwater adventure.

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[76] For more on Dante and Alexander see Carraroli (1973), pp. CL–CLI; and Armour
(1997).

[77] Padoan (1965), pp. 939–940. See also Padoan's important commentary in note 94.

[78] See *Boccaccio's Exposition on Dante's Comedy*, Toronto, 2009, p. 486 for English
translation by M. Papio.

Dante and Boccaccio are followed by Francesco da Barberino (1370–1431) who in his *Ugone d'Alvernia* (Book IV chapter LXII) tells of Ugone's journey to Hell. Guided by Aeneas, Ugone enters Hell and arrives at a lake ever boiling with blood, in which are immersed the souls of tyrants who enjoyed cruelty and murder:

> Allor s'accorse Enea ch'io era vago/saper di questi, e disse: fur tiranni; nuotan nel sangue come porci in brago: […] Vedi Alessandro uscir del sangue, armato/Sun'un cavallo, e tre dimoni il mena/Nel fuoco in un palagio, a un altro affanno,/tre volte il dì; po' torna alla sua pena.[79]

Alexander's punishment shows that the author was familiar with Alexander-books: he was extremely cruel. He killed his father and, when drunk, would kill his best friends.[80] Thus, Da Barberino presents a bloody Alexander taken to a palace on horseback, in a fire, where punishment is meted out three times a day. When Ugone saw Alexander returning to the bloody lake he asked Saint William to let him talk to Alexander. William waved at Alexander and Ugone was finally able to inquire as to the sins for which he was condemned. The answer—wine and greed—yet again illustrates Da Barberino's extensive knowledge of the legends. Plain greed explains why, according to *Ugone D'Alvernia*, Alexander told a poor man who questioned the appropriateness of the king's gift that "io non guardo a quello che si convegna ricevere, ma a quello che a me si conviene"[81] (pp. 149–150).

Such legends of Alexander went on to form part of the most successful poem on Alexander in Italy, judging from the number of copies printed in the 16th century. This is the *Alexandreida in rima*, sometimes attributed to Jacopo di Carlo, a Florentine priest and 'printer,' though more likely the author was a writer from Gubbio, Umbria who composed it at the end of the 14th century or around 1430. It is a chivalric poem on Alexander's deeds still very popular in the 16th century as it was published in Venice in 1512 and 1521 and then several other times.[82] In the copy held at the University Library in Pisa the *Alexandreida* opens with the title

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[79] Zambrini (1968), Book IV, pp. 149–150.

[80] Because of the excess of wine he killed Cleitus, who was singing of Philip on his lyre. The episode is narrated by Curtius and also by Falugio, p. 140.

[81] See Bologna, (1989), p. 391. See also Carraroli, pp. 276–277.

[82] Thanks to Roberta Cella and the Director, we were able to consult the text at the University library in Pisa, but a copy is also held at the Biblioteca Braidense in Milano. For the latter, see Alessandro Cutolo, *I romanzi in prosa e in rima del fondo Castiglioni*

> Alexandreida in cauata dallatino: nelaquale se tracta el nascimento: pueritia: adolescentia & giouentu de Alexandro Magno: con tutte lesoi fatiche…(In Venetia: per Comino de Luere, adi xxi. febrero 1512).

The poem opens with "l'Onnipotente Dio e la sua madre" and is in 12 "ottave." Canto XI narrates Alexander's solitary voyage across the Ocean and his arrival at the Red Sea, which is followed by the description of Alexander's celestial flight.

Toward the end of the 14th century, one Bertoccio was also said to have written of Alexander's celestial flight, Bertoccio[83] being the manner in which Jacopo di Carlo would have called Domenico Scolari whom he considered to be a bad poet. According to Grion, "Bertoccio" would indeed be a pejorative and satirical name, were it not for Domenico Falugio and his *Trionfo Magno*.[84]

Libro del Nascimento

Tales of Alexander continued to proliferate throughout the 15th century, but with a new emphasis on the portrait of the hero and his values, rather than on the marvelous encounters that had fascinated the previous century. The so-called *Libro del Nascimento* and the manuscript at the Marciana Library in Venice illustrate the tendencies of the century in their approach to Alexander legends. The *Libro del Nascimento* was first published in Treviso with this title in 1474. We have examined the copy at the BN in Florence, Venezia 1477 (P.6. 6.) titled: *Tavola nela historia de Alexadro magno. Zoe, del Suo nascimento e de le sue prosperose battaglie & de la morte soa infortunata. Commenza el Libro Del Nascimento. De la vita con grandissimi fatti. Et della morte infortunata de Alexandro Magno.* The hero's flight is narrated in Chapter Lxxxv "*Como Alexandro se fe portare in aere con quatro grifoni:*"

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presso la B. Braidense di Milano (Milan, 1944). The Frontespice of the Pisa edition says "Alessandro Magno in Rima: nel quale tratta dele gran guerre et fatti che lui fece: et come conquisto tutto il mondo : novamente con le sue historie stampato."

[83] The attributed author of the *Alexandreida in rima* is the one who names "Bertoccio" and describes him as a "bad poet." Boffito (1920–1921, p. 328, n.1) believes that the text is referring to Scolari. The last *ottava* of the poem, in fact, follows another *ottava* in which he thanks God for having "sì bel canto suscitato—volgarizzando il latin del dottore."

[84] Grion, "I nobili fatti," p. CLXI.

> Poi caminando Alexandro per la riva del mar […] *se penso' de ordin-*
> *are un INZEGNIO che el se potesse levar tra quattro grifoni.* E desceso
> del monte fe chiamare mastri ingegneri e comando' che fosse fatto un
> carro di ferro che fosse legato con cadene di ferro dove esse podesse star
> securamente. Poi se menar quattro grifoni e con cadene di ferro piu forte
> che se podesse se fe ligar al carro […] Et ascese li grifoni in tanta alteza
> chel pareva ad Alexandro che tutto el mondo fosse *una ara dove se bate*
> *le biave et el mar pareva chel fosse un drago tortuoso chi fosse intorno la*
> *terra. Allora li grifoni per virtu divina credendo di montare in alto decli-*
> *navano a terra.* (c. 84r)

His ascent is followed by his dive into the sea, *"Como Alesandro serato*
in un vaxello di vetro si fece buttare nel profondo del mare:"

> Poi venne pensiero A. de vedere il profondo del mar per poder intendere
> quante generazioni di pesci si trovano in eso. E subito fece venire da se
> coloro che lavoravano il vetro e comandoli che dovesseno fare *uno vaso*
> *de clarissimo vedro per lo quale siandodentro el podesse vedere tutte le*
> *cose de fora.* E poi comando che con cadene di ferro el fosse ligato e chel
> fosse tenuto da fortissimi cavalieri. Et intrato dentro fece serrar la porta
> donde era intrato con fortissima pegola. E fece se calare nel profondo del
> mare e vede le diverse figure di pesci […] *E vede le altre cose meravigli-*
> *ose le quali non volle rivelare perche pareva a lui che sarebbero state cose*
> *incredibili agli uomini.* (c. 84v)

More interesting, in order to grasp the changes in the reception and
diffusion of legends on Alexander in Italy in the 15th century is the
Quadriregio by Federico Frezzi from Foligno (1350–1416). This is not
an Alexander-book, but references to Alexander in this text serve to
illustrate how the secular approach to Alexander had evolved from the
14th to the 15th century. From what Cary defined "a rationalisation"
of the marvelous to the Renaissance portrait of Alexander as a hero,
a leader, a champion of generosity or, better still, of courtly *largesce*
as it also appears in Italy in the 14th-century portraits of the *Nine*
Worthies.

Published for the first time in 1481, the *Quadriregio*[85] mentions
Alexander four times, together with Caesar (five times) and Hector
(three times), and narrates a journey into the kingdoms of Love, Satan,
Vices and Virtues. We meet Alexander in the kingdom of Vices (III
vv. 154–155, p. 377), where Alexander generously helps one of his

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[85] Federico Frezzi da Foligno, *Quadriregio. Un viaggio nei quattro regni*, E. Laureti
(ed.) (Foligno, 2007).

thirsty soldiers. But in the *Quadriregio* Alexander turns out to be known for his "scatti d'ira irrefrenabili e pericolosi, salvo poi pentirsene amaramente" (*Quadriregio*, p. 377) despite the praise he frequently receives, as in Chapter VII, for being among the "magnanimi e valentissimi, ne' quali risplende la virtù della fortezza." Frezzi da Foligno places Alexander not in Hell, but in a position close to God saying that if death had not killed him, he would have conquered Rome (libro IV, cap. VII vv. 49–54). In book IV, chapter XIII Alexander is recognized as one of the great legislators ("valenti canonisti e legisti").

The *Quadriregio* occupies an important position between the Medieval and the Renaissance approaches to Alexander. It clarifies what Cary argued about the passage from Medieval secular approaches to Alexander to Renaissance portraits of his *largesce*, a courtly feature, which, in 15th-century Italy, encountered the new cultural and social climate, thus reintroducing a courtly Alexander. Bologna shows that Alexander is the model for the new man of the late 15th and early 16th centuries possessing eternal renown (1998, pp. 393–401). Among the other nobles and knights known for their *largesce* and power, Alexander held the "Oriente tutto intero" and almost conquered Rome. This image of him is portrayed in the frescoes in Manta Castle, in the region of Piedmont, together with the other eight Worthies in a Palace-Romance.[86] The frescoes and verse descriptions on the walls of Manta Palace, made between 1410–1430, represent one of the best examples of a recollection of past heroes. The Palace of Memory gives its final salute to a *chevalerie* doomed to live on only in the pages of books. Alexander is the "knight," but also the courtly "signore." A new portrait of the king emerged from the urban and communal city in the late 13th c. as witnessed in the "Fiore di Virtù" (Cap. XXXVII)[87] and the *Novellino* (1281–1300) and confirming what Cary said of the late period: "the general medieval secular approach to Alexander was represented in Italy in the late Middle Ages only by dry Alexander-books as drier references to his conquest" (p. 262). But, as Cary goes on to say, the courtly tradition did not disappear, and eventually came to inspire the Renaissance secular conception of Alexander.[88]

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[86] Bologna (1989), p. 401. See the same author (1987), and also Cary, p. 344.
[87] See Bologna (1989), p. 393.
[88] See also Bologna (1989), p. 370, note 9.

When Domenico Falugio wrote his *Triompho Magno* on Alexander he would have us believe that he looked to history rather than to poetry. He mentions Quintus Curtius or "Ruffo romano" who never lies and whose love for the truth he himself emulates, pretending to be more historiographer than narrator. Several times in his poem he promises that "non direi nella storia bugie" (e.g. 94). Even if some "cichaloni" [fools] may not believe what he is going to say, the important thing is that "il mio triompho resti vero." Falugio says that although he did not want to write about Alexander's excesses with wine and lust, he feels obliged to do so: one night Alexander "fe venire/tante donzelle chio nol potre dire" (103v), and then he asked continuously for more wine until "ma il vino comincio' il dovere/a fare e travagliar la fantasia" (104). Drunk, he lept, danced, sung and bragged about his celestial flight. He had lost control of himself and become vulnerable. A woman named Thais then instigated him to burn Persepolis, a reprehensible and dramatic display of vice.

Alexander was sick with lust and extreme behavior, which some said was because "he had had too much sexual intercourse the night before" (*Triompho Magno*, p. 141). Thus we move from the nostalgic revival of Manta's verses and images to the malicious and satirical smile of Falugio who in his *Triompho magno* celebrates himself and his art of writing (more than he celebrates his hero). On the one hand, he invokes his readers' trust by promising to tell only the truth, and on the other hand he condemns Alexander for his vices. Moreover, the repetition of the verb "errare" in his poem plays on the double meaning of the term in Italian epic literature: it is both 'to make a mistake' and 'to wander.' Falugio's protagonist will never be knight-errant like Orlando, nor the noble Alexander celebrated by Jacopo Di Carlo as the great hero of generosity. Falugio made Alexander into little more than a fool, who becomes a ridiculous and depraved drunkard and womanizer seeking adventure merely as action, with no thirst for knowledge. Action follows action in a rush toward nothingness that is, as in Pulci's *Morgante*, a means of denouncing the changing times. According to Falugio, Alexander leaves home at age 16 and wanders for months not to rectify injustice but merely to "*dacquistar fama: & riscardasi el pecto.*" Along the way, Alexander meets a wise old man who warns him of a threatening giant and discourages him from continuing his journey. But Alexander decides to challenge the giant Violante for no other reason than to acquire fame (18). He is "soletto" and would not

look for "ne guida ne scorta" but proudly goes on his way, concerned only with not getting lost, which suggests a moralistic intention on Falugio's part that corrupts the very meaning of the quest.

Let us consider his encounter with the giant Violante who talks so nicely that "he would have made a heretic believe." Violante proposes to Alexander that they go to sleep and get back to the confrontation the next morning. But a wise Alexander tells the giant the fable of the lion cub and the fox to show that he is not a fool and would never sleep in such circumstances so as not to end up like the lion. Now and then Falugio introduces a fantastic element like the encounter with the "brava cornuta," a fantastic beast that looks like a lion from the waist up, has two horns like a devil and looks like a dragon from the waist down (f. 20v). But it is obvious that the *Triompho Magno* is all about Alexander: it is Alexander's triumph. This Alexander, however, has little curiosity for the unknown and no love for anybody,[89] proving a decline of the epic and the courtly tradition transmitted by the Italian Alexander-books, thus making the reader almost nostalgic for the Alexander among lyophants, snakes wearing diamonds, deer, basilisks, underwater exploration and celestial flights.[90]

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[89] Such is also the hero's character in MS *1751* (*Mo M 10*), which exists in a lone MS at the BN in Rome (see above). It is a poem of the *cantare* type in *ottava rima* that, like Falugio's *Triompho Magno*, features a satirical burlesque but with the focus on Alexander's amorous adventures. See Storost, pp. 283–304 and Cary, p. 272.

[90] The Legend of Alexander still fascinates Italians. See the bestseller by V. M. Manfredi, *Aléxandros* (Milano, 1988) and a song by the composer Roberto Vecchioni, *Alessandro e il mare*, in his compilation *Milady*, CDG, 1989. See also R. Vecchioni, *Trovarti, amarti, giocare il tempo, Tutte le canzoni*, V. Pattavina (ed.) (Torino, 2002).

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[2] For a more complete listing of early print editions of the *Roman d'Alexandre en prose*, see D.J.A. Ross, "The Printed Editions of the French Prose Alexander Romance," *The Library* (1952) 7.1, 54–57, from where we take these bibliographic notes.

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