

# I: ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE CREATION OF THE HELLENISTIC AGE

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“The name of Alexander marks the end of one age of the world, the beginning of another.” This lapidary and much-quoted apophthegm is the starting point of Johann Gustav Droysen’s revised *Geschichte des Hellenismus*. It appeared in 1877, when Droysen was in his seventieth year, at the peak of his powers and reputation, and the republication was a tribute to the notoriety that his work had achieved at the time of Germany’s unification. His vision of the Macedonia of Philip and Alexander was not intended as a political manifesto for the present, but it was eagerly seized upon as foreshadowing what could be achieved by the German states united under the leadership of the Prussian monarchy.<sup>1</sup> An autocratic regime, based on enlightened cultural and political principles, had first conquered and then civilized the world, and the process might be repeated in the modern era. Under those circumstances, it was easy to accept the picture of Alexander as the inaugurator of a new age, and Droysen’s conceptual model, despite some protests, has been almost universally accepted. Alexander, consciously or unconsciously, created a new world informed by Greek culture and absolute monarchy, which lasted until the dominance of Rome as a world power, and Droysen termed the process “Hellenismus.” This was not entirely novel, for the term had been in vogue as a label for the Greek *koine* as spoken and written by non-Greeks in the eastern Mediterranean after Alexander,<sup>2</sup> but Droysen extended it from a merely philological concept to encapsulate what he saw as the essence of a whole epoch.

Droysen’s view of Alexander took shape early in his life. In 1833, at the tender age of 25,<sup>3</sup> he published his *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*. This is a highly rhetorical portrait, which explicitly presents Alexander as

an Aristotelian superman, a prime example of living law.<sup>4</sup> But Alexander is not autonomous. He is an instrument of history and of God himself. His conquests inculturate the barbarian east, but at the same time, they hasten the degeneration of the native inspiration of the Greek world. A levelling process takes place, a fusion (“Verschmelzung”) of east and west encouraged by the overarching monarchy of Alexander and his Successors. The crucial aspect of the fusion was religious syncretism, the tendency to see all divinities as related manifestations of a single godhead.<sup>5</sup> It was a process that created a predisposition to monotheism, but at the same time there was a universal loneliness and desperation, a yearning for a redeemer. Hence, the spread of Christianity was the result of the general levelling that Alexander had inaugurated. He was a tool in the hands of a personified history, pursuing predetermined ends beyond his comprehension. In this model, Rome is an irrelevancy, except insofar as the Romans absorbed Greek culture and promoted its international dissemination. The culmination of the process is not Augustus and the end of the Ptolemaic regime but the ministry of Jesus.

This general vision is strongly influenced by Hegelian idealism and reflects Droysen’s student years in Berlin, but he remained true to it in his old age and retained the key passages in the second edition. In particular, he did not tone down the denigratory references to the eastern peoples under Persian domination<sup>6</sup> and continued to represent Athens’ history in the fourth century as progressive degeneration. Neither view is acceptable in current thinking, nor would many scholars accept the religious determinism that underlies Droysen’s model. Yet, Alexander remains entrenched as the inaugurator of a new age. One might query the utility of the blanket label. It encourages a dangerous disregard of political and cultural continuity, and underestimates the reaction against Alexander after his death.

Reaction there certainly was. That can be seen in the sphere that Alexander made most his own: military conquest. Alexander’s reign witnessed a practically unlimited series of campaigns, which saw the annexation of the Persian Empire as it existed at his accession and then the conquest of the old Persian satrapies in the Indus valley. He planned to advance east to the Ganges plain and the outer ocean, but was frustrated by his men who wished to enjoy the benefits of conquest rather than fight endlessly in the monsoon rains. On his return to the west, he turned his energies to expansion to the south and west, preparing a naval expedition against the spice lands of Arabia and constructing a vast arsenal on the Cilician coast in anticipation of a major offensive

in the west against Carthage and perhaps Southern Italy.<sup>7</sup> The extent and indeed the historicity of these last plans are in dispute, but there can be no doubt that Alexander was credited with an unlimited urge for conquest. Arrian expresses the opinion that he would never have ceased campaigning, competing with himself if there were no rivals left to surpass,<sup>8</sup> and that was the impression Alexander's marshals attempted to propagate. Immediately after his death, the regent Perdikkas produced and had read memoranda that proposed enormous expenses for conquest in the western Mediterranean, including a military road across North Africa to the Straits of Gibraltar. The troops who were apprised of the project were impressed by its ambition but not by its practicality and voted to quash it.<sup>9</sup> Marshals and men were in agreement, and nothing more was heard of world conquest.

The empire was expanded, but not outwards. In 322, Perdikkas fought a campaign against the Cappadocian dynast Ariarathes, but it was a tidying exercise. Ariarathes had been a vassal of the Persian King, sending forces to Ochos' invasion of Egypt, and in 333, he had been spared invasion by Alexander.<sup>10</sup> He became *de facto* independent and refused to accept Macedonian sovereignty; and in what Alexander must have seen as exacerbated rebellion, he had sent a contingent to Gaugamela.<sup>11</sup> Perdikkas's campaign, then, was not an extension of the empire; it was containment of insurrection, and the punishment meted out to Ariarathes (mutilation and impalement) was that suffered by rebels against the Persian throne. This was consolidation, not expansion. Indeed, what we find in the years after Alexander is a certain contraction, best illustrated in Seleukos' treaty with the Mauryan king Chandragupta. The occupation of the Indus lands was proving unsustainable even under Alexander, and there was pressure on the provinces adjacent to the Hindu Kush as early as 316.<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, after a show of force, Seleukos conceded the eastern satrapies of his kingdom to Chandragupta in return for 500 war elephants.<sup>13</sup> The transaction would be unthinkable under Alexander or any of his Persian predecessors, but Seleukos was under threat from his fellow dynast Antigonos and was prepared to sacrifice territory for military advantage. Somewhat earlier, Antigonos himself had sanctioned an attack on the Nabataean Arabs, which the contemporary historian Hieronymos denounced indirectly,<sup>14</sup> and Alexander's own aggression against the Saka tribes north of the Syr Darya was represented as pointless waste by the Alexandrian historian Kleitarchos.<sup>15</sup> The same pattern of thought recurs in Plutarch's story of the debunking of Pyrrhos's aspirations by the Epicurean philosopher and diplomat, Kineas, whose message is that one can enjoy all

the advantages of conquest by remaining at peace.<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, external conquests were extravagant indulgences, and Alexander's example was to be avoided.

The Successors did not, of course, renounce war. Military operations were constant, but they took place within the context of a contracting and fragmenting empire, as regional dynasts contended for pre-eminence. Two factors came into play: first, the murderous struggle for supremacy that had plagued the Macedonian aristocracy for the duration of the Argead monarchy and, second, the system of provincial government that Alexander inherited from the Achaemenids. It had created a network of satraps, local despots who could exploit the military and financial resources of their territories.<sup>17</sup> There was little, if any, central supervision, and Alexander was forced to impress his regal authority on satraps who had proved unreliable. On two occasions, after the rebellion in the central satrapies instigated by Bessos (330–327) and on his return from the Indus lands (325–324), he extensively purged his Iranian governors and replaced them by relatively low-ranking Macedonians. That was a marked change from the early years of the campaign, when the satraps he appointed tended to be Macedonians of the highest distinction, like the royal Bodyguard Balakros, who was married to a daughter of the regent Antipatros,<sup>18</sup> or Antigonos himself, who came from the nobility of the capital.<sup>19</sup> Part of the motivation was political, to detach men who had been prominent in his father's reign, so that he could impress his own will on the remaining army commanders. That was a continuing process. By the end of 330, he had disposed of Parmenion, his father's senior general, after securing the condemnation of his son Philotas for alleged complicity in a court conspiracy.<sup>20</sup> Two years later, he personally drove a spear into his senior cavalry commander, Kleitos, after Kleitos had drunkenly criticized the increasingly absolutist tendencies of the monarchy.<sup>21</sup>

A highly significant episode occurred in late 325 when Alexander purged the European military commanders in Media. They were accused of exploitation and misgovernment, no doubt with some justification, and Alexander allegedly claimed that they had acted on the assumption that he would never return from India.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, there was a nationalistic insurrection in Media, led by a pretender who had assumed the upright tiara, the exclusive headdress of the Kings of Persia. The leaders of the rebellion were captured and brought before Alexander.<sup>23</sup> However, the success is accredited, not to the European commanders of the holding army, but to the Iranian satrap of Media, who was unwilling to see a competitor usurp power. His European

colleagues seem to have taken no action, and it is possible that they had no objection to an oriental rival to Alexander. If that were widely believed, it is hardly surprising that Alexander had them tried and executed. The senior commander was Kleandros, brother of the great marshal Koinos, who had represented the cause of the common soldier against Alexander's imperialist ambitions in India. Kleandros was also connected with the administrator of the central treasuries, Alexander's boyhood friend Harpalos. Both originated in the once independent principality of Elimiotis in the south west of Macedonia,<sup>24</sup> and together they dominated the military and financial administration of the Iranian heartland. There must have been a fair degree of collaboration, and it was prudent of Harpalos to take flight back to the Greek mainland once he heard of Kleandros's execution.<sup>25</sup> From Alexander's viewpoint, it appeared that his commanders were in league with native insurgents and harbored ambitions of creating an independent regime. He removed the immediate threat and ensured that any further satrapal appointees were men of relatively humble pedigree. The crushing of dissent at court was paralleled by denial of the resources for revolt in the satrapies.

Once Alexander was dead, the situation changed radically. The first act of the drama was near civil war, with Macedonian infantry and cavalry playing off against each other and the Macedonian marshals intriguing for supremacy. It was only with the utmost difficulty that Perdikkas achieved the regency, and he did so against the forthright opposition of Ptolemy and others.<sup>26</sup> He could only keep his hold on the kings and the army if he surrounded himself with men personally loyal to himself, like his brother Alketas and his brother-in-law Attalos, or Aristonous, who had given him valuable support at his accession to the regency.<sup>27</sup> Other marshals he assigned to the satrapies by a skillfully manipulated process of sortition. Ptolemy received Egypt, a world in itself, conveniently isolated from the central capitals of the empire. In contrast, Lysimachos and Leonnatos had the satrapies on either side of the Hellespont, where they would be in constant friction. In effect, Perdikkas was reversing the trend of Alexander's last years, which was to minimize the risk of disorder in the satrapies and consequently to consolidate the absolute power that he had acquired. Perdikkas' aim was to set his rivals at each others' throats, sacrificing regional stability in the search for a personal predominance that he never acquired.

The process continued two years later, when the new regent Antipatros made a secondary distribution in the name of the kings and then, in 319, returned to Macedonia with the kings, who were never again to set foot in Asia.<sup>28</sup> This marked the real beginning of the new age.

Alexander had exercised sovereign power over the whole of his empire and did all he could to reduce the local power of the satraps. Thanks to Antipatros, central control gradually disappeared. The satraps were formidable men who had either received their satrapies from Alexander or saw them as their proper reward for their part in the conquest of the Persian empire. It was impossible to control them from Macedonia, and they would not easily accept the authority of the guardian of the kings, especially if (like Antipatros and his son Kassandros) they had not participated in the war of conquest. Satrapies accordingly became dynastic holdings, as Seleukos was to inform Antigonos when he demanded to audit the accounts of his administration: "he was not obliged to undergo scrutiny with regard to the country which the Macedonians had given him because of the services they had received from him in Alexander's lifetime."<sup>29</sup> The name of Alexander was used to justify a power base independent of the monarchy, a situation that he would have regarded as anathema. Universal kingship based on conquest of an ever-expanding empire was replaced by regional ambition that fed on and diminished the territories he had acquired.

For Droysen, the real beginning of the new age was the famous episode at the Babylonian city of Opis when Alexander crushed the unrest in his army and turned towards his Iranian troops. He could dispense with the tool that had brought him world conquest and could rely on an ecumenical army that had replaced any regional affiliation with loyalty to himself.<sup>30</sup> Now the world literally revolved around his absolute monarchy. There is a good deal of truth in this picture. In particular, Droysen laid proper stress on the levying of the *Epigonoï*. These were Iranian adolescents who had been conscribed in the eastern satrapies and trained in Macedonian weaponry and discipline. By early 324, the first contingent, said to have been around 30,000 strong, appeared in Susa and joined Alexander's military establishment, giving an impressive display of parade ground discipline.<sup>31</sup> They were intended to supplement the native Macedonian troops, who had thwarted his ambitions in India and in extremity could be used against them, as Alexander spectacularly did at Opis.<sup>32</sup> However, for Droysen, the Macedonians had lost many of their national characteristics and had become impregnated by the culture of the peoples they had conquered, and the assimilation foreshadowed a more general fusion, which was to be the basis of the Hellenistic state.

This takes things much too far. Alexander certainly used the new Iranian recruits to intimidate his Macedonians, and for a few tense days, he threatened to replace them *in toto*, giving the distinctive Macedonian

unit nomenclature to the Iranians. This was traditional Argead policy, to use military titles for political purposes, and was reminiscent of the extension of the once elite terms of “Companion” and “Foot Companion,” to the entire body of cavalry and infantry.<sup>33</sup> Alexander was doing the same on a much greater scale. However, once the Macedonians had given way and accepted the mass demobilization, there is little further reference in the sources to the Iranian troops. The *Epigonoí* stayed with Alexander, but they are not explicitly mentioned. Instead, a few days before his death, we hear of a mixed phalanx, in which Macedonians, paid at special rates, formed the front and rear, while Persian light infantry, armed with bows and javelins, filled out the twelve inner ranks.<sup>34</sup> It was intended for use against disciplined heavy infantry, the barrage of missiles from the Persians creating breaks in the enemy line, which the Macedonians could open out with their eighteen-foot *sarisai*. It is interesting that Macedonians were used as the front line troops and not the *Epigonoí*, who were more closely related to the Persian light armed in language and culture. The privileged soldiers, paid at premium rates, were Macedonians, and it looks as though the troops that Alexander retained at Opis were treated as elite. Rightly so. Alexander’s veterans had an expertise honed by years of continuous campaigning, which the *Epigonoí* for all their flashy drill could not match. The Macedonians scoffed at them as “war-dancers,” and they were to prove their point at the Battle of Paraitakene (late 317), when the 3,000 Silver Shields (the survivors of Alexander’s foot guard) routed the mass of mercenaries and Macedonian-trained Asiatics with minimal casualties.<sup>35</sup>

The *Epigonoí* enjoyed only a brief prominence. They were quickly absorbed into a broader mass of Macedonian trained infantry, with Alexander’s veterans taking a preeminent position as the men who had conquered the world under Alexander. The same applies to the Persian aristocracy. At Opis, they had been pivotal in bringing Alexander’s men to heel, when the king presented them with military commands and created a select group of “Kinsmen” who were given the privilege of the royal kiss.<sup>36</sup> At the banquet of reconciliation, he made a solemn prayer for Macedonians and Persians to enjoy concord and partnership in the empire,<sup>37</sup> but there is little evidence of partnership. After the disturbances while he was away in India, Alexander replaced most of his Iranian satraps with Greeks or Macedonians. Those who were retained in office were the handful who had shown outstanding loyalty and had put down rebellion (Phrataphernes and Atropates) and his father-in-law Oxyartes, who held sway in the remote Kabul valley.<sup>38</sup>

The famous mass marriage at Susa fits well into this context. It was celebrated in the spring of 324, after Alexander concluded his march from the Indus to Mesopotamia. In scenes of unprecedented splendor, Alexander married two princesses of the Achaemenid royalty, and around ninety of his Companions took brides from the Iranian nobility.<sup>39</sup> This could be viewed as a continuation of traditional Argead policy, which saw marriage as a means of consolidation. Philip himself had notoriously married for war, taking two Thessalian brides after he had acquired control over Larisa and Pherai: There were also Illyrian and Getic wives, not to mention Alexander's own mother Olympias, who came from the royalty of neighboring Molossia.<sup>40</sup> Alexander himself was little more Macedonian than the children he planned to engender with his Persian wives. The rationale was the same as Philip's, to create pockets of loyalty within the conquered territory, and hopefully the offspring of his mixed marriages would be as acceptable to the families of both parents as he himself (and still more his sister, Kleopatra) was in Molossia. There was perhaps another factor at work. The Argead house had allied itself with the Persian nobility in the distant past, when the sister of Alexander the Philhellene had been given to the son of the Persian commander in Thrace after Macedonia became a vassal state.<sup>41</sup> Now the roles were reversed. The scale of the Susa weddings was something extraordinary, but its rationale goes back to previous Macedonian history and Macedonian diplomatic procedure. It was not a revolutionary experiment in cultural fusion. Nor was it a model that his Successors followed. The Macedonian bridegrooms were not (as many have thought) reluctant to marry Persian ladies,<sup>42</sup> but the dynasties that succeeded Alexander tended to exchange brides among themselves. There was no conscious attempt to intermarry with the native aristocracy, even in the house of Seleukos, whose heir was the son of his Iranian bride Apame.

There is a similar pattern with Alexander's city foundations. This is the area in which he is thought to have been most revolutionary, and his fame as a city founder is only second to his fame as a general. One of Plutarch's most fervid and inspirational passages (*Mor.* 328e) rhapsodizes over the civilizing effect of the new settlements: "by establishing more than seventy cities among barbarian races and sowing Asia with Hellenic governance Alexander overcame their uncivilized and bestial way of life. . . . Those who avoided Alexander were less fortunate than those who were conquered by him; for the latter had no one to put an end to the misery of their existence, while the others were compelled by their conqueror to enjoy happiness." This was a passage that



underpinned Droysen's concept of the Hellenistic world. The inculturation of Greek values was a necessary condition for the blending of east and west to fulfill the divine purpose, and Droysen took over Plutarch's panegyric almost verbatim.<sup>43</sup> But there is little trace of a cultural mission in the source tradition for the actual foundations. Most of the attested Alexandrias were in the east of the empire. They were envisaged as military foundations, as is explicit in the foundation of Alexandria Eschate (Chodzhent) on the south bank of the river Iaxartes. The area appeared to have the resources capable of supporting an expanding city and was well placed for a possible invasion of the lands of the nomad Saka peoples and also to repel a nomad incursion.<sup>44</sup> It is the military aspect that is stressed, to the exclusion of any economic, let alone cultural, motives. The intention was to have a garrison population of Greek mercenaries, superannuated Macedonians, and perhaps friendly natives, who would be supported by an agrarian population already established in the area. That can be seen in the one excavated foundation, the site of Ai Khanum on the Oxus River. There, the surrounding plain had been cultivated for centuries and had an elaborate network of irrigation canals when the westerners arrived.<sup>45</sup> There is no trace of urban settlement, and it must be the case that a new foundation was imposed on a comparatively rich agricultural system that could generate the surplus required by the superimposed military population.<sup>46</sup>

It is not surprising that Alexander's plans to found Alexandria Eschate led to a local revolt that rapidly spread through the vast territory north of the Hindu Kush. His foundation was not seen as a cultural benefaction but as a sinister parasite, exploiting the local agricultural resources and depressing the lifestyle of the agrarian population, which now had to provide for many thousand more mouths. And these cities were very populous. According to Diodorus,<sup>47</sup> the Alexandria which was founded by the Hindu Kush (Begram?) accommodated 3,000 Greeks and Macedonians and 7,000 natives. Presumably, the natives were the existing population who had to support a very substantial garrison population, which was expanded two years later by an additional influx of military settlers. The expansion was a natural result of the revolt that had broken out at the time that Alexandria Eschate was established and had taken two years (329–327) to suppress. The reprisals involved considerable dislocation of the natives, who were allocated to garrison foundations, sometimes at a considerable distance from their original domicile. The grim pattern continued as Alexander moved through Bajaur and Swat, putting down local resistance as he went. The cities were a means of containing rebellion in the future, and they were inevitably seen as

garrison centers. Nothing could be further from a policy of cultural diffusion. The settlers were seen as aliens and viewed themselves as aliens, as was demonstrated after Alexander's death, when more than 20,000 of the Greeks in the upper satrapies made common cause and attempted to return to the Aegean.<sup>48</sup> Their motive was allegedly "longing for Greek culture and mode of life,"<sup>49</sup> and the conditions under which they lived were profoundly non-Greek. They were reluctant settlers, kept in place by fear of the living Alexander. That fear was reinforced by Alexander's marshals at Babylon, who sent a large expeditionary force to block their passage back to Greece. After a pitched battle, the settlers were worsted and agreed to return to their settlements – only to be massacred by the Macedonians who disregarded the sworn pact. Nothing could make it clearer that the settlements were to be permanent garrison establishments and service there was a life sentence.

The parallel for Alexander's eastern foundations was provided by Philip himself. After several campaigns in Thrace, he established a number of cities, the most famous being Philippopolis (Plovdiv), which he established with a population of 2,000 immigrant settlers.<sup>50</sup> They were later thrown open to destitute Athenians after Antipatros deprived them of their citizen rights at the end of the Lamian War.<sup>51</sup> Like Alexander's settlers, they were reluctant colonists, implanted "to put a curb on the Thracians' boldness" (Diod. 16.71.2). There was no conscious attempt to Hellenize the Thracians, and by all accounts, Philip's colonists would have been very incongruous cultural apostles (Philippopolis was facetiously nicknamed Poneropolis, "Crook City").<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the populations of Alexander's cities will have been originally very rough and ready. However, once the settlers saw themselves as fixtures, they gradually introduced the amenities of civilized life and used the income from the land to install the theatres and gymnasia, which were the infrastructure of Hellenic culture. By the early third century, the inhabitants of remote Ai Khanum were visited by the leading peripatetic philosopher Klearchos of Soloi, who brought with him an authorized copy of Delphic maxims, some of which were inscribed in the precinct of Kineas, the Thessalian officer who had supervised the original foundation and was posthumously honored as a hero.<sup>53</sup> The peripatetic influence was further – and most remarkably – displayed in the remnants of a speculative treatise on metaphysics, which was scraped off the treasury floor by archaeologists (and so preserved in mirror image).<sup>54</sup> Hellenic culture had indeed penetrated, but it was the culture of the immigrants, which they recreated in Bactria after they were denied return to their actual homelands. There is no indication that it percolated to the

indigenous agrarian population. The children of Persia, Susiana and Gedrosia did not, as Plutarch claimed, learn to recite the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles. Instead, in Babylon at least, the Hellenic and Babylonian communities remained separate; one had its social and cultural center in the Greek theatre, the other in the great sacral complex of Esagila.<sup>55</sup>

At the heart of Droysen's concept of Alexander, the inaugurator of the new age is his vision of the god king. Absolute monarchy was the basis of Alexander's regime, and it was underpinned by promotion of his godhead. This was a purely political process. The worship of the ruler, which Alexander explicitly requested from the cities of Greece, was designed to inculcate a universal veneration for monarchy, and in an age where there was little deep-seated religious conviction, it provided a focus for displays of loyalty to the ruling dynasty and, more importantly, a foundation for the universal monotheism that was to come with Christianity.<sup>56</sup> The religious determinism, again, shapes the historical vision, and it is difficult to accept Droysen's conviction that the absolute monarchy of Alexander was a brand new development. Once again, Philip is at the background. There is little doubt that he presented himself as something superhuman. Comparatively early in his reign, he had acquired the city of Krenides, with its access to the prodigiously productive mines of Mt. Pangaion, and renamed it after himself.<sup>57</sup> It was now Philippoi, the plural form deliberately reminiscent of the great divine foundations of Athens and Thebes. The implication was clear. By the end of his reign, Philip was more explicit. A few days before his death, he is alleged to have displayed his own image along with the twelve Olympians and did so before an audience of envoys and well-wishers from the entire Greek world (Diod. 16.92.5). Shortly before that, he had begun the building of the celebrated Philippeion at the entrance to the sacred area of Olympia, a circular construction that accommodated statues of gold and ivory (the traditional materials for cult images).<sup>58</sup> What exactly he envisaged is uncertain, for the building was completed after his death, but the three male images were of himself, his father Amyntas III, and his son Alexander.<sup>59</sup> This was clearly what Alexander wished to be on display: three generations of quasi-divine rulers, culminating in himself.<sup>60</sup>

Alexander had an example in his father to follow. He was clearly predisposed to think himself divine, however incongruous it may appear to modern scholars prone to project their own skeptical rationalism on Macedonian monarchs. Alexander could trace his lineage back to Herakles through his father and to Achilles and even Priam through

the Molossian royal house to which his mother belonged; and he was to celebrate the connection at the site of Troy when he set foot on Asian soil.<sup>61</sup> His mother had, it seems, given him reason to believe that his natural father was Zeus rather than Philip. It was an attractive suggestion, recalling the dual paternity of his ancestor Herakles,<sup>62</sup> and the visit to the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon in the Libyan Desert confirmed his belief. His first historian, Kallisthenes, depicted him on the eve of Gaugamela praying to the gods for victory on the grounds of his divine sonship, and his father duly complied. Divine sonship was enhanced by achievement. Alexander's military successes were unparalleled, and he could be viewed as an Aristotelian superman, so far above the rest of humanity that he could be regarded as a being of a different sort.<sup>63</sup> The rivalry with Herakles and later Dionysos became an obsessive game as Alexander's court flatterers found evidence of their presence as far afield as Uzbekistan, Nuristan, and the Indus valley, and in every case, Alexander matched or bettered them. It was a natural step to suggest that he was of the same essence as his divine models and would be translated to another sphere once his mortal existence was terminated.

His marshals too could be seen as more than human. His favorite Hephaistion was given heroic honors, the traditional reward of city founders (Hephaistion had been active in such foundations in the northwest), and his worship was sanctioned by the oracle at Siwah and actively promoted empirewide. The most spectacular celebration of the new hero was in Egypt, where the governor Kleomenes established a shrine and had Hephaistion's name embedded in commercial contracts, but evidence of the cult has been found as far afield as Macedonia,<sup>64</sup> and in Athens, the orator Hypereides (*Epitaphios* 21) was to claim that it was forced on a reluctant population. Alexander considered his own cult should be equally ecumenical, and it was suggested that it would be proper to establish it. Even in Athens, there was a debate about the introduction of cult honors.<sup>65</sup> Its chief proponent, the orator Demades (F 12 de Falco) claimed that the decree was framed by war, using the spear of Alexander, and there is a late tradition that its content was to worship Alexander as the thirteenth Olympian.<sup>66</sup> The parallel with Philip could not be clearer. The king was literally added to the pantheon.

The contrast with his Successors is striking. What in Alexander was passionate belief in his divinity became a matter of polite diplomatic interchange, as when the little city of Skepsis voted Antigonos a precinct, altar, and cult statue in recognition of his defense of Greek liberty.<sup>67</sup> It was recognition of the immense power of the ruler, not unlike the votes for Alexander in Athens and elsewhere. But there is no

parallel to Alexander's self-conscious promotion of his own divinity, the inspiration for Apelles' famous portrait of him with the thunderbolt of Zeus,<sup>68</sup> which he himself imitated in the great victory coins that he had struck after his Indian campaigns (once again there is nothing in later iconography to compare). There is a faint echo in Seleukos' claim to double paternity, as the son of Apollo,<sup>69</sup> but Seleukos, it seems, never attempted to emulate the achievements of the gods. In that Alexander was unique.

His uniqueness was underscored by his posthumous reputation. From the moment of Alexander's death, his marshals attempted to recreate themselves in his image. His Bodyguard Leonnatos imitated his characteristic hairstyle and took over the trappings of monarchy: Nesaean horses (the perquisite of the Persian kings) and a cavalry guard of Companions.<sup>70</sup> The attributes of Persian and Macedonian royalty were blended, but the scale was almost absurdly different. Leonnatos was the satrap elect of Hellespontine Phrygia, appointed by his previous colleague Perdikkas. His authority was confined to a comparatively small territory in northwest Asia Minor; yet, he assumed the airs and trappings of a universal monarch. The ambition was clear, but the resources were lacking.

Nowhere is the contrast clearer than in Macedonia itself. By the time of Chaironeia, the kingdom was a superpower, enjoying a supply of trained manpower and an economic strength that was unrivalled in the Greek world. The situation had changed for the worse during Alexander's reign. When the Lamian War broke out in 323, Antipatros, viceroy in Macedonia, was embarrassed by the lack of available troops and promptly suffered the first battle defeat an army from Macedonia had experienced since Philip's setback at the hands of the Phokian condottiere Onomarchos long ago in 353.<sup>71</sup> The situation was exacerbated when further troops left Macedonia during the war against Perdikkas. Antipatros' deputy, Polyperchon, was so denuded of resources that he was unable to prevent the Aitolians from annexing most of the Thesalian cities.<sup>72</sup> Further disruption occurred in 319, when Polyperchon and Antipatros' son Kassandros came into conflict over the control of the kings and the government of Macedonia. The upshot was that the political situation regressed to what it had been in the early part of the fourth century B.C. The conflicting dynasts used the Greek cities of the south for military and political purposes, fomenting constitutional change and promoting friendly political factions, exactly as had happened after the King's Peace, when the Spartans encouraged oligarchic regimes that would be dependent on them to stay in power,

while Athens espoused the cause of Greek liberty and autonomy. The same process took place under Macedonia, except that the protagonists on both sides were Macedonians. Oligarchy was Antipatros' preferred method of government, as it was for his son, who supported the regime of Demetrios of Phaleron in Athens, and democracy (in name at least) was necessarily the political system espoused by Polyperchon and later by Demetrios Poliorketes.<sup>73</sup> The background was one of continuous military activity, with Macedonian led armies (predominantly of mercenaries) attempting to outmaneuver each other for the military control of southern Greece. The complicated situation was even more precarious when the dynasts east of the Balkans impinged on Greek politics. For a brief spell in 312, two nephews of Antigonos, Telesphoros and Polemaios, originally commissioned to protect the freedom of the Greeks, had turned against each other and were fighting a campaign in the Peloponnese; at the same time, Polyperchon himself was active in a little enclave his son had created around Corinth, and all were theoretically at war with Kassandros.

This fragmentation contrasted totally with the situation at the end of Alexander's reign, when as ruler of Asia he received a plethora of embassies from almost all the western world and dictated his will to them. There were dissenters, notably the Athenians, who were threatened with the loss of the island of Samos, where as much as a third of their population may have been domiciled,<sup>74</sup> but even Athens stopped short of military resistance and resorted to flattery, conceding Alexander divine honors. The reason was simple: the overwhelming force that Alexander could command. No one subsequently was to dispose of such vast resources. Antigonos came close in 316, after he disposed of Eumenes and commanded a united army comprising 50,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, but he immediately embarked on a costly war against the other dynasts and was never able to deploy his army as a whole. There were always other contenders for supremacy, and the unique coercive force that Alexander could apply at the end of his reign was never matched. His Successors were absolute kings in the areas they could control, but there were always checks in the shape of other aspirants. In contrast, Alexander had been the great collector. He had under his direct or indirect control most of the armed forces of the Macedonian and Persian regimes, and the accumulated reserves of the Persian Empire were his to dispose of. The combination of ships, men, and money was irresistible during his lifetime, but was dispersed by his death. His career, it can be argued, was a continuous acquisition of power, with the resources of Macedonia enlarged by the vast reserves of bullion and

manpower afforded by the Persian Empire. That was the foundation of an absolute monarchy that had practically no limits. But it was a monarchy based on external conquest and existed largely for conquest. It created a stage on which rival dynasts could compete for a supremacy none of them could achieve, and the military basis of it, the combination of Macedonian, Asiatic, and mercenary forces, was dispersed between the contenders. Alexander remained a symbol of invincibility and world empire, but in practice, he had little concrete effect on the regimes that succeeded him. If there was a new age, it began in 319, when Antipatros returned to Macedonia with the two kings, one an infant, the other mentally incompetent, and in effect separated the Argead kingship from Alexander's conquests in Asia.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Droysen's initial work on Alexander was published by G. Finke (Berlin, 1833), entitled *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*. It was reprinted, with an Introduction by Helmut Berve in 1931 (Alfred Kröner Verlag, Leipzig). The expanded second edition appeared as the first volume of Droysen's *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (Gotha 1877–8), and was reprinted in 1952 (shorn of many of the footnotes) under the editorship of Erich Bayer. There is now a new edition, under the auspices of the Alpha Bank, which contains Droysen's footnotes, expanded by bibliographical references compiled (originally in Greek) by Renos, Herkos, and Stantes Apostolides. The German text, edited by Armin Hohlweg, was published in 2004 by ars nova (Neuried).<sup>75</sup> Droysen's concept of Hellenismus has been fully discussed, with exhaustive bibliography, by Reinhold Bichler (Bichler 1983). For details of the initial reception of his Alexander history, see also Bosworth (2003a) 187–95.

There is a never-ending output of monographs on Alexander. For general surveys see, *exempli gratia*, Wilcken (1967); Bosworth (1988a); Hammond (1989); Green (1991). Those who wish to delve deeper should consult the standard editions of the primary sources: P. A. Brunt's two-volume Loeb text of Arrian (1967–83), J. C. Yardley and W. Heckel's Penguin Classics edition of Curtius Rufus (Harmondsworth, 1984), C. B. Welles's Loeb edition of Diodorus Siculus, Book XVII (1963), and Yardley and Heckel's translation and commentary on Justin XI–XII (Oxford, 1994). The fragments of the non-extant historians have been amassed by Jacoby, *FGrH* 117–153, accessible, in translation, in Robinson (1953). They have been discussed

by Pearson (1960). For brief overviews of the source tradition, see Bosworth (2000) and Baynham (2003). There have been numerous collections of essays with a direct bearing on the themes of this chapter. See in particular Griffith (1966); Bosworth & Baynham (2000); and Roisman (2003). Bosworth (2002) deals in detail with the history and source tradition of the period after Alexander.

## NOTES

- 1 See the remarks of his son Gustav [Droysen (1910) 111], bitterly contrasting the chequered initial reception of the work with its three reprints after Prussia's victories over her "old enemy."
- 2 For a detailed discussion of the evolution of the concept, see Bichler (1983) 33–54, discounting the influence of Herder, which had been advocated by (among others) Momigliano (1955).
- 3 Which, coincidentally, was the age at which Robin Lane Fox published his *Alexander the Great* (1973), a work of an avowed atheist to set against that of a deeply devout Lutheran!
- 4 The crucial passage (Arist. *Pol.* 3.1284<sup>a</sup>:10–1, 13–4) appears on the frontispiece, and the first pages define Alexander as one of the elect of history, a passage of fervid rhetoric that was deleted in the second edition.
- 5 This is expounded in the first edition [Droysen (1931) 486–7], insisting that the Hellenistic centuries were the period of godlessness and an increasingly strident cry for a redeemer. The passage is reshaped more elegantly, but with essentially the same content in the second edition [Droysen (1952) 444–5].
- 6 See, for instance, the naive paraphrase of Plutarch's celebrated encomium (*Moralia* 328c) of Alexander the universal civilizer [Droysen (1931) 485], expanded in Droysen (1952) 443. The predominant task of "Hellenismus" was to shatter the fetters of superstition among the eastern peoples, "in short, to emancipate them for life in history." The wording is essentially the same in both editions.
- 7 On the source tradition, see Högemann (1985) with Buraselis (1988); Bosworth (1988b) 187–202.
- 8 Arr. 7.1.4, a verdict of the Alexander historian Aristoboulos, which Arrian repeats in his own name (Strab. 16.1.11 (741) = *FGH* 139 F 56; so Arr. 7.19.6).
- 9 Diod. 18.4.2–6; Badian (1967); Heckel (1992) 151–3; Bosworth (2002) 58–63.
- 10 Diod. 31.19.3–4; 18.16.1–2. Cf. Hieronymos. *FGH* 154 F 2–3 with Hornblower (1981) 239–45. On Alexander's attitude to past vassals of Persia who failed to acknowledge his sovereignty, see Bosworth (1996) 133–65.
- 11 Arr. 3.8.5 with Bosworth (1980b) 291–2; Curt. 4.12.12.
- 12 Bosworth (1996) 118–20; (2002) 164–6.
- 13 Strab. 15.2.9 (724); Plut. *Alex.* 62.4; Just. 15.4.12, 21; App. *Syriaca* 55.282. See Schober (1981) 156–93.
- 14 Diod. 19.97.3–6. Cf. Hornblower (1981) 47–9, 144–50; Bosworth (2002) 187–209.
- 15 This comes through the medium of the Roman author Curtius Rufus (7.8.11–30). Cf. Baynham (1998) 87–9; Bosworth (2002) 195–6; Ballasteros-Pastor (2003).



- 16 Plut. *Pyrrhos* 14.4–14, on which see Lévêque (1957) 288–92.
- 17 On the satrapal system, see Briant (2002), esp. 697–728, and for a brief discussion of Alexander’s arrangements, Bosworth (1988a) 229–45.
- 18 Arr. 2.11.10; on Balakros’s background, see Heckel (1987), Badian (1988), Bosworth (1994).
- 19 Billows (1990) 17, 399–400; contra Heckel (1992) 50–1.
- 20 This is a hugely controversial episode: cf. Badian (1960); (2000) 64–9; Heckel (1977); Bosworth (1988a) 101–4. But whatever view one takes of Philotas’s guilt, there is no doubt that his removal resulted in a major restructure of Alexander’s high command.
- 21 The details are variously transmitted, but the objection to despotism is a common element (Arr. 4.8.4; Plut. *Alex.* 51.2; Curt. 8.1.33–4).
- 22 Curt. 10.1.7; cf. Arr. 7.4.2–3. Allegations of misgovernment in Arr. 6.27.4; Curt. 10.1.2–4. For detail, see Badian (1961) 19–25.
- 23 Arr. 6.29.3. On this and other local insurrections see Badian (2000) 89–95.
- 24 For the evidence, see Heckel (1992) 58, 213.
- 25 On this much-vexed issue, see Badian (1961); Jaschinski (1981); Bosworth (1988a) 149–50, 215–20; Habicht (1997a); Blackwell (1999).
- 26 For full discussion with bibliography, see Bosworth (2002) 29–63.
- 27 All three played significant roles and held independent commands under Perdikkas during the First Coalition War. For details, see Heckel (1992) 150–1, 172–4, 181–2, 275–6.
- 28 On the background, see Billows (1990) 69–73; Bosworth (2002) 14–9.
- 29 Diod. 19.55.3 with Bosworth (2002) 212–3. Compare Arr. *Succ.* F 1.36: the Indian kings Taxiles and Porus were retained in office at Triparadeisos “because it was not easy to displace them, commissioned as they were with their realms at the hands of Alexander” (cf. Diod. 18.39.6; 19.48.2).
- 30 “Das Werkzeug, mit dem das Werk der neuen Zeit geschaffen war, von der mächtigen Hand des Meisters zerbrochen wurde”: Droysen (1931) 458, repeated verbatim in the second edition [Droysen (1952) 418].
- 31 Arr. 7.6.1. 8.2; Plut. *Alex.* 71.1; Diod. 17.108.1–2. For the training and later history of these troops see Hammond (1990).
- 32 Arr. 7.11.1–3. Diod. 17.108.3 explicitly terms the *Epigonoi* a “counter-formation”; cf. Briant (1982) 32–9; Bosworth (1980a) 17.
- 33 See, for instance, Milns (1976) 89–96; Hammond and Griffith (1979) 705–13; Errington (1990) 243–4.
- 34 Arr. 7.23.3–4, 24.1 = Aristoboulos, *FGH* 139 F 58. For discussion, see Bosworth (2002) 79–80.
- 35 On “war dancers,” see Plut. *Alex.* 71.3. For the encounter at Paraitakene, see Diod. 19.28.1, 29.3, 30.5–6 with Bosworth (2002) 134, 138–9, 151–5.
- 36 Arr. 7.11.1, 7; cf. Briant (2002) 309–10, 780–3.
- 37 Arr. 7.11.8–9, a passage that was crucial to Sir William Tarn’s hypothesis that Alexander envisaged a universal brotherhood of man [Tarn (1948) ii 440–9]. For a more realistic interpretation, see Badian (1958) 428–32.
- 38 On Atropates’s services see previous mention. Phrataphernes also arrested a usurper [Curt. 10.1.39; cf. Badian (2000) 91–2]. On the disappearance of Iranian satraps, see Bosworth (1988a) 240–1; Brosius (2003) 190–3.

- 39 Arr. 7.4.4–7; Ath. 12.538b–39a (from the eye-witness, Chares of Mytilene: *FGrH* 125 F 4); Plut. *Alex.* 70.2, *Mor.* 338c; Diod. 17.107.6. On the detail, see Brosius (1996) 77–9; Ogden (1999) 43–8.
- 40 The prime text is a fragment of the Peripatetic philosopher Satyros (quoted by Athenaios 557b–e), on which, see Tronson (1984); Ogden (1999) 17–26; Carney (2000) 52–81.
- 41 Hdt. 5.21.2, 8.136.1; Just. 7.3.7–9. On the political context, see Badian (1994b) 108–16.
- 42 According to Arrian (7.6.2), the marriages were not to the taste of “some” of the bridegrooms, but they were clearly in the minority. The only bride known to have been divorced (Amastris, the daughter of Darius’s brother and wife of Krateros), fully consented to the arrangement, which transferred her to the bed of Dionysios, the ruler of Pontic Herakleia [*Memnon*, *FGrH* 434 F 1 (4.4)].
- 43 Droysen (1931) 485, (1952) 442, both passages rather unhappy elaborations of Plut. *Mor.* 328c.
- 44 Arr. 4.1.3–4, on which, see Bosworth (1995) 15–7; Fraser (1996) 151–3, noting that Alexandria Eschate is the only eastern foundation of Alexander to appear in a documentary record of the third century B.C. These cities did not make an impact as cultural centers.
- 45 Gardin (1980).
- 46 On this, Just. 12.5.12 is explicit for Alexandria Eschate, and Curt. 7.6.27 agrees. Arrian 4.4.1 describes the native population as “volunteers.” On the tradition, see Briant (1982) 244–8; Bosworth (1995) 26–7.
- 47 17.83.2; cf. Curt. 7.3.23. The city was expanded in 327 with another influx of locals and discharged mercenaries, and the community was placed under the direct rule of one of the Companions [Arr. 4.22.5; cf. Bosworth (1995) 143].
- 48 Diod. 18.4.8, 7.1–9. See also Sachs and Hunger (1988) 211. For discussion, see Schober (1981) 32–7; Holt (1988) 87–92; Bosworth (2002) 61–2. There had been an earlier, premature attempt to return in 325, after a false report that he had died in India (Diod. 17.99.5–6; Curt. 9.7.1, 11).
- 49 Diod. 18.7.1. Compare 17.99.5: “they had long resented their settlement among the barbarians.”
- 50 Details in Theopompus, *FGrH* 115 F 110. Cf. Hammond & Griffith (1979) 557, 673.
- 51 Habicht (1997a) 44–5; Poddighe (2002) 66–73.
- 52 The twin foundation of Kabyle was back under Thracian rule before 300 B.C. [Calder (1996)].
- 53 Robert (1968); Fraser (1996) 155–6.
- 54 Bernard (1978) 456–60, suggesting an early third-century date. There is an accessible photograph in Green (1990) 334.
- 55 The relevant documents are conveniently assembled by van der Spek (2001).
- 56 Droysen (1931) 461–2: essentially the same, with the rhetoric modified, in Droysen (1952) 423–4.
- 57 For the historical context, see Hammond and Griffith (1979) 358–61, acknowledging that the name is unprecedented, but declining to hazard a guess at what it was advertising.
- 58 See Lapatin (2001), esp. 115–9.

- 59 Paus. 5.20.9–10. According to another, corrupt passage of Pausanias (5.17.4) Olympias and a Eurydike were also honored with chryselephantine statues, but were transferred to the nearby temple of Hera. The date and circumstances of the removal are uncertain, but it seems as though some Argead ladies were invested with the attributes of divinity.
- 60 There is a rather dubious tradition that Amyntas received a cult at Pydna during his lifetime, and its sanctuary, the Amynteion, was still in existence early in Philip's reign [Habicht (1970) 11–3; contra Badian (1981) 39–40].
- 61 Arr. 1.11.8, 12.1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.8–9. See Bosworth (1988a) 38–9. Some skepticism in Badian (2002) 37–8.
- 62 Thanks to Herodotus (6.69), a similar story was in vogue about the Spartan king Demaratos. For the tradition (which goes back at least to Eratosthenes) that Olympias encouraged the rumor, see Plut. *Alex.* 2.5–3.4 with Hamilton's commentary [Hamilton (1968) 4–7]; Fredricksmeyer (2003) 271–4.
- 63 I have presented this interpretation at length elsewhere: see Bosworth (1996) 88–132.
- 64 Arr. 7.23.7–8 (Kleomenes). On the cult in Macedon, see Voutiras (1990).
- 65 Hyp. *Dem.* 31–2 with Whitehead (2000) 370, 455–60; Din.1.94 with Worthington (1992); Ath. 6.251b.
- 66 Ael. *VH* 5.12. He is also said to have proposed the same decree for Philip (F 81 de Falco).
- 67 OGIS 6 [translated by Austin (1981) 59–60]. Cf. Habicht (1970) 42–44.
- 68 Plin. *NH* 35.92; Plut. *Alex.* 4.3; cf. Stewart (1993a) 193–7. On the coins, see Bosworth (1996) 6–8; Lane Fox (1996).
- 69 Just. 15.4.2–10; App. *Syr.* 56.284–5; Habicht (1970) 85–6; Ogden (1999) 118–9.
- 70 Arr. *Succ.* F 12 (Roos). Krateros is also attested to have dressed exactly like Alexander, omitting only the diadem; his troops (in 322) treated him openly as a king [Arr. *Succ.* F 19 (Roos)].
- 71 Bosworth (2002) 75–9 contra Badian (1994a) 267; Billows (1995) 193.
- 72 Diod. 18.38.5–6; cf. Bosworth (2002) 82.
- 73 On the background see Habicht (1997a) 44–81.
- 74 Habicht (1996). For the political situation see Bosworth (1988a) 220–28; Worthington (1994b); Blackwell (1999) 121–4.
- 75 I acquired this work too late to use in my footnotes, which I would have done in preference to Bayer.