

**Zeitschrift:** Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique  
**Herausgeber:** Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique  
**Band:** 22 (1976)

**Artikel:** Some recent interpretations of Alexander  
**Autor:** Badian, E.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660708>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 25.05.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## VII

E. BADIAN

### SOME RECENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ALEXANDER

A survey of this kind inevitably has to be very selective. In English alone, books on Alexander have been appearing at the rate of at least one a year: modest books for the student or the general reader; glorious tomes for the coffee-table; works of journalism, launched with all the skill and resources of Madison Avenue or its London equivalent<sup>1</sup>. Why this should be so, at this particular time—whether it is merely in keeping with the general proliferation of books, or whether there are socio-psychological causes for the phenomenon—is a question that must be left to future historians to investigate, from the perspective of distance<sup>2</sup>. At any rate, the size—or the sale—of a volume is not usually a measure of the author's competence, or of the intrinsic value and probable influence of his contribution. Nor must we forget that not all important interpretations appear in full-length biographies. Articles, nowadays, are perhaps even more likely than books to exert their influence

<sup>1</sup> Like, most recently, the μέγα βιβλίον of Robin LANE FOX (on which, see my review in *JHS* 96 (1976), forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> For the same reason, I have refrained from detailed evaluation of the *most* recent work on Alexander, except for F. Schachermeyr's, which can and must be fitted into the development of his views. Perspective is necessary for historical evaluation, and contemporary events are best left for journalists to analyse.

on the specialist, and thus, at a long remove, on the general public.

A survey of interpretations of Alexander for any period is no dreary exercise in *Forschungsgeschichte*. It is a mirror of changing modes of thought and historical interpretation, as formed by the history and experience of the generations and the individuals surveyed. Not only has every scholar (as Wilcken said)<sup>1</sup> his own Alexander, but ever since antiquity the figure of the great Macedonian has been a universal symbol—as A. Heuss put it<sup>2</sup>, a bottle (“Schlauch”) that can be filled with any wine: it attracts and embodies the philosophy of a person or of an age as no other ancient figure has—not even Caesar—and perhaps none at all.

# I

As we all know<sup>3</sup>, J. G. Droysen, early in the 19th century, marked an epoch in Alexander studies, not only by first applying proper critical method in the use of the sources to fashion a narrative, but by his general interpretation: he saw Philip and Alexander of Macedon as the divinely preordained creators of Hellenic unity and propagators of Hellenic *Kultur* among the lesser races, in accordance with a divine plan that ultimately led up to the spread of Christianity, and on the model of a wishfully interpreted Prussian monarchy in the hoped-for future of Germany and the world. This (with the Christian influence somewhat lessening) provided a framework for over a century of German dreams of fated aggrandisement—initially, as Professor Schachermeyr has splendidly termed it, under the spell

<sup>1</sup> U. WILCKEN, *Alexander der Grosse* (Leipzig 1931), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> In *A & A* 4 (1954), 102.

<sup>3</sup> See all the standard accounts of *Alexanderforschung*, e.g. (recently) the surveys by P. Green and F. Schachermeyr and, for a detailed analysis, A. Demandt, cited in the Bibliography to this paper. I am concerned with these early interpretations only as background to my proper subject.

of a "respektvollen Hochschätzung der Majestät des Herrschers"<sup>1</sup>. J. Kaerst and Ed. Meyer adapted Droysen's vision, each to his own temperament and the changed *Zeitgeist* of the Second Empire. J. Beloch, committed to a belief in the primacy of forces over individuals, could only *react*—one of the greatest of German historians of antiquity was so caught up in the historiographic tradition against which he rebelled that he was unable to find a positive interpretation of his own. He produced an Alexander who is a mirror image, lacking life and solidity and simply devoid of qualities.

The explosion that shattered the spell of the Hohenzollern dynasty and, to a large extent, of royalty as such, did not significantly change the nature of the German dream. Just as the attitude of Athenian intellectuals in the 4th century B.C., who preached the Hellenic Crusade against Persia, did not basically change through the explosions that shattered their faith in the Greek city and its citizen—they merely turned to tyrants and kings as destined to realise their vision—so German intellectuals changed from adoration of Prussia and its dynasty to a more generalized messianic *Führerprinzip*. Wilcken was too old, and perhaps too much of a scholar, to be caught up in this. His biography, as Schachermeyr has stressed, still stands under the spell of royalty as such, refraining from analytical probing. The change is first fully apparent in H. Berve.

For him<sup>2</sup>, Alexander, opposed only by the "verengte Polisgeist des vierten Jahrhunderts", felt called upon, "dem eingengten Griechentum ein weites, neues Feld zu eröffnen, seinen herrlichen Geist sieghaft gegen die Barbaren vorzutragen als eine die Waffen heiligende Idee.... So erschienen seinem hellenisch schauenden Sinn Ideale in mythischem Bild". One

<sup>1</sup> (3), p. 615.

<sup>2</sup> *Griechische Geschichte* II (Freiburg i. Br. 1933), 167 ff. On Berve as a National Socialist writer, see the brief sketch (collecting only some obvious facts) by A. MOMIGLIANO, *Terzo Contributo* II (Roma 1966), 699 ff.



needs no leap of mental agility to think of a contemporary who, somewhat earlier, had written: "Wer ein Volk retten will, kann nur heroisch denken." In the second edition (1953), although the *Weltmission* of the Hellenic spirit is retained, this passage is considerably adapted. But Berve, recognising the predestined new leaders in the reaction they aroused in those not suffering from the *verengte Polisgeist*, went on to paint an unforgettable contemporary picture: "Die archaisch aktive Persönlichkeit ihrer Führer ... kam dem Individualismus der Gebildeten eigentümlich entgegen. Naive Kraft und zivilisierter Geist entsprachen sich in seltener Weise." In the changed Germany of 1953, this passage was to be entirely deleted.

Here the history of the interpretation of Alexander inevitably becomes entwined with the history of Schachermeyr's interpretation, which (as we shall see) is in its present form the leading one of our age. I should stress at the outset that the early views from which we are bound to start have been entirely repudiated by their author<sup>1</sup> and are of interest only, like the intellectual errors of other great men, as historical examples. Schachermeyr, at the time a young and already brilliant scholar who had absorbed within himself the spirit of Berve's "Gebildeten" at Jena, tried to lay the foundations of an interpretation of history in the racial terms of National Socialism, in his work *Lebensgesetzlichkeit in der Geschichte* (Frankfurt 1940). I am not concerned with the racial theories in any detail. Their author has sufficiently shown that they were mistaken in their over-emphasis on the hereditary as opposed to the cultural and environmental factors in both national and individual behaviour, ignoring (as he now stresses) the fact that we have all seen nations change under our very eyes. They also—and this is worth adding, perhaps above all—shared one of the major scientific errors of the nineteenth century (and by no means only in Germany), that of equating language with "blood" and

<sup>1</sup> Last in (3), 630 f.

racial heredity (see, e.g., *op. cit.*, ch. 8)—ignoring, in this instance, the simple fact, known to all of us, that millions of human beings of all kinds of races and colours speak (say) English or French as their native tongue, and in antiquity spoke Greek or Latin. The equation of language and race is a scientific error that has caused a great deal of harm, in the scientific field and well beyond. It is, unfortunately, still a commonplace in many of our books.

However, what concerns us much more here is that Schachermeyr even at that stage had difficulty fitting the creative element into the tight biological scheme, and even greater difficulty in defining the proper attitude of the individual and of society towards this element, and in particular towards the person of the leader. In ch. 5 he develops the theory of the relationship between the mass and the leader in the proper sense of the term. His chief criterion for the leader is that he must be free from selfishness, eager to serve the community, and rooted in it. "Blind cult of personality" is vigorously condemned (p. 69), and the surrender of the individual to an alien ego is described as "erbärmlich". Hence (he concludes) it was not the worst men who opposed Alexander or Caesar, both of whom cut themselves off from their "blutsverwandten volkhaften Gemeinschaft" and were thus "autarke Titanen" and not true leaders.

Of course, much more is contained in that work, most of it erroneous; and it is not my business here to pursue it. But the principles of the theoretical work were applied and further developed in *Indogermanen und Orient* (1944): only the Nordic race is described as truly creative, the rest descend a scale down to the "Armenoid", which is wholly parasitic. The decline of Greece and of Persia is accounted for by the "Entnordung" and "Armenoidisation" of the former and the admixture of inferior blood in the Iranian barons in the latter, until the relatively pure Nordic Macedonians conquered both. Even though Alexander is said to aim at universal tolerance and well-being (a view we shall meet again!), and this is duly explained as conditioned by his

Nordic racial heredity, he was ultimately guilty of "biological sacrilege" by his encouragement of race mixture ("Chaos des Blutes" is the memorable phrase) and by his abandonment of his own national tradition ("Volkhaftigkeit").

## II

*Indogermanen und Orient*—which (I repeat) is a work now repudiated by its author—is perhaps the most illuminating example of the interaction of the Alexander image with the world around the scholar and the dreams within him: an effect against which no brilliance of intellect or of historical judgment seems able to act as a safeguard. Within a year of the publication of the book, that particular dream had been thrown by history on the scrap-heap of disastrous absurdities. But the tradition out of which it arose retained its vigour. National Socialism had turned out a dead end, but Alexander the beneficent (though possibly imperfect) world conqueror remained a symbol with which German intellectuals (and especially the older among them) could readily identify. H. Bengtson incorporated it into the standard history of Greece, and E. Kornemann—totally unaffected, for all one can see, by the events of 1933-45—expresses it in a surprisingly naive form in his last work<sup>1</sup>.

Schachermeyr himself had learnt the lesson. He took a great deal of time to reflect, but then he developed a fundamentally new approach, which we shall soon notice. Meanwhile, however, he was taken to task for his earlier views by some post-War reviewers<sup>2</sup>. But the worst was yet to come. F. Altheim<sup>3</sup>, in an excess of embarrassing zeal, defended

<sup>1</sup> See Bibliography. It should be noted that Kornemann's work was posthumously edited by Bengtson.

<sup>2</sup> As more recently by J. SEIBERT (64 ff.), who does not notice the later retraction.

<sup>3</sup> (2), 316 f.

Schachermeyr against the reviewers : if he had not (by then) retracted *Indogermanen und Orient* and all it stood for, that was because his new, very different, treatment was complementary to the earlier one, and *both* remained valid ! Schachermeyr was no doubt more embarrassed by the defence (which he never endorsed) than by the attacks. His disciple, as we shall soon see, did him little credit in other ways.

The end of the War was clearly a traumatic experience, especially for scholars committed to an ideology that had led to disaster. It could now be recognised that the theoretical errors of academics cannot be divorced from practical consequences. The shock and its results are embodied in Schachermeyr's "second Alexander". In 1949, five years after the earlier work and with Vienna still partly occupied by Soviet armies, the book appeared. It was the author's first post-War publication. The "Titanic" figure remains, this time at the centre of the stage : a Nietzschean superman, beyond good and evil, beyond human moral judgment. The *Weltreichsidee*, inherited from over a century of German tradition, is retained, but it is no longer biologically conditioned : it is the fruit of Alexander's own creative genius. However, that genius, unlike the pure genius of the artist, is contaminated by unlimited power, which adds the extreme of horror to the extreme of achievement. To the scholar now revolted by politics and autocracy, Alexander has become a poetic symbol, and the author strains language to the limit as (on his own admission) he strives to match it to his vision. Under the impact of war and disaster, Alexander the world conqueror may be seen turning into Alexander the artist.

That view was at once seized on and carried to its extreme by a scholar we have already met—one who was nothing less than a prodigy in his combination of vast and genuine erudition with deplorable lack of judgment. Franz Altheim, when writing the first volume of his *Weltgeschichte Asiens* (1947), had already dealt with Alexander in a fairly orthodox account, which



predictably asserted the dream of universal empire ; and, basing himself (as some people always do) on a selection of reported speeches in the sources, he moved its origins back to Alexander's youth <sup>1</sup>: "Vermutlich hat er es immer getan [i.e. dreamt of universal empire]. Denn was wäre ein Alexander ohne Weltherrschaft und ohne Weltherrschaftsträume !" His special study, *Alexander und Asien*, which had grown out of the earlier work, was published in 1953. Alexander is only its starting-point, and it has many interesting things to say (though often in a very odd manner) about the *Kulturgeschichte* of Asia after Alexander's death. As far as Alexander is concerned, the relationship to the earlier work is close and the sentence quoted is repeated almost verbatim (p. 105). But Schachermeyr's vision had intervened ; Altheim had found a symbol for his own romantic longings, and the effect on the conception of Alexander is startling : "Hier [i.e. in the "Reichsgedanke"] wie nirgends sonst tritt hinter dem Feldherrn und Staatsmann Alexanders Eigentliches hervor : der verborgene Künstler oder Dichter, den das gottähnliche Bewusstsein des Schaffens und Gestaltens treibt. Seine Gesichte [*sic* !] und die übermenschliche Grösse dessen, was er anrührt, lassen nur einen Vergleich aufkommen : Michelangelo" <sup>2</sup>.

Alexander the creative artist corrupted by power has been freed of the deep flaw that Schachermeyr had always felt in him and had twice honestly tried to account for, from two very different premises. The transformation of the German-Nordic world conqueror into the superhuman artist is thus complete : a terrifying latter-day monument (for this is 1953 !) to one—regrettably—significant aspect of German cultural tradition, seeing creativity in terms of violence and worshipping supreme power as supreme art. Schachermeyr's ardent disciple had thoroughly misunderstood him.

<sup>1</sup> (1), I 205.

<sup>2</sup> (2), 103.

## III

Meanwhile, the British Alexander found his final expression in 1948. W. W. Tarn (who, as a matter of fact, did not read German easily) was repelled by the conception of Alexander as a primeval force, incomprehensible to the rational Victorian mind. Tarn is one of the best examples of what Peter Green finds characteristic of a school of Victorian interpreters of history: to them, men "of whom they approved were reasonable in the same way as themselves"<sup>1</sup>. Yet his Alexander, the beneficent conqueror, stands fully within the German tradition we have noted. Indeed, in a way we have already come across him. Tarn merely substituted the ideals of his own environment for those of German *Kultur* as the precise content of the benefit conferred on the conquered. As I have put it elsewhere<sup>2</sup>: Tarn's Alexander is Droysen's, "translated into the King's English". He is an immoderately moderate and unreasonably reasonable creature, no believer in his divine birth or even in heroic *mimesis*: his march through Gedrosia has nothing to do with rivalry with Semiramis and Cyrus, as his friend Nearchus reported—no, "his object was to support the fleet ... by digging wells and forming depots of provisions" (I 106); not to mention his own divinity: to explain the demand for deification (which he accepted), Tarn had to have recourse to an absurd fantasy of Ed. Meyer's, claiming that divinity would give him legal power to override the statute of the League of Corinth<sup>3</sup>. Tarn's Alexander knew no orgies or drunkenness: he went to parties for social reasons; and though, of course, he was never impotent, he knew no sex except in

<sup>1</sup> *The Shadow of the Parthenon* (London 1972), 61.

<sup>2</sup> In *New York Review of Books*, Sept. 19, 1974, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> All sorts of misinterpretations of our sources and of Greek law and custom were necessary to make it even technically possible to assert this: for a partial refutation, see J.P.V.D. Balsdon (cited in the Bibliography).



legitimate marriage : that "Alexander never had a mistress" is perhaps the funniest statement ever made by an Alexander historian. He specially abhorred pederasty<sup>1</sup>; and he was innocent of all violence except for two murders<sup>2</sup>, both argued to be almost excusable.

As so often in the history of Alexander portraits, things were not what they seemed. The rationality was deceptive. Tarn's Alexander is in fact a visionary as Romantically conceived as its German model. His "dream", however (the word is Tarn's), was that of the admirable Christian public-school Englishman whose ideal he embodied. As no English-speaking scholar can fail to be aware, he conquered Asia not only to *pacis imponere morem*, but in order to unite all his subjects in the bond of human brotherhood. It was with regret—for Tarn, though he often deceived himself, seems to have been basically honest—that Tarn had to reject the German view of Alexander's striving for world conquest : there was much to be said (he admitted) for the idea that the King who "dreamt of the unity of mankind" ought to have tried to extend the benefit of that dream to the *whole* of mankind<sup>3</sup>.

Needless to say, the step was soon taken. C. A. Robinson, perhaps the shallowest and least original of recent academic Alexander historians, while in most respects merely parroting Tarn, added this further dimension to the "dream" as his most significant original contribution. His work was rhetorically subtitled "The Meeting of East and West in World Government and Brotherhood". His naiveté is delightfully illustrated by the way he explains his method of using the sources<sup>4</sup>: "I have relied chiefly on Arrian, but I have also included stories

<sup>1</sup> On all this see II 319 ff. : "Alexander's Attitude to Sex".

<sup>2</sup> See II 262 : Parmenio and Clitus.

<sup>3</sup> II 397 f.

<sup>4</sup> P. 14. Unlike Plutarch, on whom the criterion is ultimately based (see *Alex.* 1), C. A. Robinson was claiming to write history !

from Plutarch and others . . . I have tried, however, to choose from the mass of conflicting stories certain ones which delineate true qualities of Alexander and those about him." Approaching his subject with this intellectual and methodological equipment, he had no difficulty in concluding (p. 17): "Alexander's insistence not only on spiritual values but also on the solidarity of the world constitutes his challenge to posterity."

For the moment, this will suffice to demonstrate Tarn's overpowering influence. No other Alexander portrait in history, surely, has been so remote from the reality of the Macedonian conqueror, so modelled almost to its total exclusion by a scholar's personal vision. The baronial savagery of the Macedonian court, barely kept in check by Philip II, controlled by Alexander through intrigue and terror, and emerging after his death to tear the kingdom to pieces; the pomp and luxury of the Persian court, accepted and practised (not unwillingly) by Alexander in his quest for legitimacy in the East—all this is brushed aside, together (usually) with the abundant testimony on the heroic and mystical elements in the King's character, except to the extent that they can be channelled into the unifying vision. Yet this portrait, lucidly perceived and presented by a trained barrister, was astonishingly successful.

It was fortunate in its historical moment. Some scholars have connected it with faith in the League of Nations. Such faith was certainly widespread after 1918, as faith in the United Nations was after 1945; and British "enlightened" circles clung to it even in the thirties, as naive optimists have always clung to their hopes and dreams. But *that* dream was one of voluntary co-operation and self-restraint on the part of sovereign nations. It is worlds removed from that other vision of benevolent imperialism and the White Man's Burden, which in Britain both in principle and in fact most often conflicted with it. What is more: though Tarn's view was developed in the twenties and thirties, his real dominance follows the publication of his two-volume work in 1948, after the Second World War. That work

(or the narrative part of it) was sold as a successful academic paperback and was translated into several foreign languages (especially German), thus becoming accessible to the numerous scholars and other intellectuals whose reading is mostly confined to their own language. Coming at a time when the British Empire was disintegrating and the new American power was at its zenith, it embodied the proud nostalgia of the British ruling classes, and at the same time appealed to the sentimental internationalist imperialism characteristic of American intellectuals in those days Before the Fall. Despite one or two scholarly voices raised in protest, it so imposed itself that all derivative works were based on it wherever English was written, and some even beyond; and in the U.S.A. (where academic interpretations have always tended to be imposed and upheld by powerful and intolerant Establishments) publication of opposing views for a time became academically hazardous, if not impossible. The traces still linger, especially in second-rate encyclopaedias and the work of those who use them as their source <sup>1</sup>.

It is of some interest to follow the effects of Tarn in Germany, if only because, as we have seen, his view is largely an adapted German one, substituting British for Prusso-German imperial ideals as the basis of interpretation. A little Academy lecture by W. Kolbe in 1936, in fact an epideictic display rather than a piece of serious scholarship <sup>2</sup>, had already tried to weave the idea of the "unity of mankind" into the traditional German Alexander worship. But it was again after the Second World War, with the appearance and translation of Tarn's book, that this interpretation seemed to provide a respectable ready-made alternative to discredited National Socialist views, for scholars

<sup>1</sup> The time-lag between scholarship and popularisation, although it has been greatly cut down, is still significant, especially in a field where the average person is less aware than he is (e.g.) in physics or in medicine of the fact of changing interpretations.

<sup>2</sup> See F. SCHACHERMEYR (3), 624: "eine panegyrische Neigung".

unable (like Schachermeyr) to go forward in original enquiry. Two outstanding examples are worth mentioning.

H. E. Stier, most famous for an immediate reaction to political events in his *Grundlagen und Sinn der griechischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1945)—a mystical interpretation in which Greek freedom, conceived in largely racial (“Indo-Germanic”) terms, is ultimately victorious through the Roman conquest—and later to gain notoriety through his *Roms Aufstieg zur Weltmacht und die griechische Welt* (Köln 1957), perhaps the most impassioned defence of conquest and empire, and of the principle that in human history success is all that matters (that “Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht”), ever produced by an ancient historian in any country—H. E. Stier first tried his hand at the interpretation of Alexander in a brief sketch in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (vol. I, 1950). Unaware even then (and that has remained sadly characteristic of that scholar) of almost all work done outside Germany, he had nonetheless come across Tarn, but the influence is not yet fully absorbed. That was to come, after many years of reflection, in a lecture to an Academy in 1972. Tarn had by then long been available in German, and thoroughly digested. K. Kraft (see below) had just been published. The attitude proved congenial. Stier’s Alexander is a creature very much after Stier’s own heart: the worship of successful imperialism, which he had revealed in his earlier works, made respectable by a great moral purpose, and the stark features of the Prussian or “Nordic” world-conquering superman (for we must remember that up to this point the portrait is well within the old German tradition) softened for the benefit of post-Nazi Europe into the likeness of an English gentleman: the decisive new element, for the German Alexander-worshipper, is in fact “the instincts of an English gentleman”, “die denen des historischen Alexander eben erheblich näherstehen, als mancher Moderne wahr haben möchte”<sup>1</sup>. Tarn—

<sup>1</sup> *Welteroberung und Weltfriede* . . . , 29, n. 82 (p. 30).



to give him his due—might well have been shocked by the product of this incestuous marriage of the German tradition that he detested to its British offspring that he had created: it helps to show us how little divides them.

Stier's lecture is worth mentioning merely as a recent historical curiosity. Totally unaware of the massive work done on Alexander in the last twenty years or so (especially since most of it was in foreign languages, which he does not seem to read) and totally indiscriminating and fanciful in its use of evidence, it is a reiteration of the political and perhaps personal apologia that he had been presenting, in various forms, since 1945—an outdated private vision as remote from the historical Alexander as from the present-day world. Far more real interest—despite its equal remoteness from the historical King of Macedon—attaches to the “rational” Alexander of Konrad Kraft, as filtered (after his death) through the devoted labours of his pupil Helga Gesche<sup>1</sup>. Full of astonishing faults of argument and even basic linguistic interpretation, it has not a single point that is both new and valid in its (approximately) 120 pages. It is remarkable chiefly for its stridency of polemical tone (so unlike the author's usual style), and for a continuous series of misrepresentations of other scholars' views combined with personal attacks on them. Written under severe psychological strain, the book shows a serious and usually competent scholar converting Alexander into a highly personal symbol, embodying (in this case) not a dream of conquest or a civilising mission, but—much more weird and incredible still—a desperate man's vision of human “rationality”, in a world that he felt had abandoned it. Alexander the Macedonian has to be vicariously defended against the Radical students shouting their professor down, who were joined in this (as the author well knew) by

<sup>1</sup> I have reviewed that strange work, unintelligible unless one knows something of the circumstances of the author's life and death, in *Gnomon* 47 (1975), 48 ff., where detailed evidence for the judgment here expressed will be found.

many of the professor's colleagues. There is truly no end to the variety of wine that can be poured into the bottle.

#### IV

Tarn, in his own way, both reacted against the Romantic German view and at the same time adapted it to his own national and social tradition. The extreme of uncompromising reaction, however, came from R. Andreotti, a scholar who had a "first Alexander" of his own in his past: in 1933 he had published a little book<sup>1</sup> in which Alexander's greatness and achievement were compared to their disadvantage—in a tradition that went back to Livy and beyond—with those of Caesar, who had the inestimable advantage of *Romanità* on his side. A world war later there was no explicit recantation: we do not know what Andreotti's post-War views on Caesar were, and on that *syn-krisis*. But the actual interpretation of Alexander (originally trivial) was developed into a powerfully argued minimalist view in a critical *Forschungsbericht* (1) and two articles, (2) and (3)<sup>2</sup>. They are difficult reading, but worth the effort, indeed essential.

The survey, while mainly reporting, already ventures on some suggestive comments, e.g. that administrative arrangements before Gaugamela must not be regarded as systematic (588 f.); that it was the necessarily increased use of Iranians for military purposes that brought about concessions to the Iranian aristocracy; above all, that the ascription of idealistic motives "may sometimes appear abstract and superfluous" where "una fredda ed acuta considerazione della realtà contingente"

<sup>1</sup> *Il problema politico di Alessandro Magno* (Torino 1933).

<sup>2</sup> Now that F. SCHACHERMEYR, in his survey of Alexander scholarship ((3), 637 ff.), has accepted the term "minimalist", which I originally proposed for this interpretation, I feel justified in using it without quotation marks, as presumably recognised and understood.



will suffice (596). The final conclusion (599) was that the only clear profile is that of the soldier—a view that, on a strict interpretation of clarity, is both reasonable and persuasive, and that recurs in such a very different work—sane yet exciting—as Peter Green's (487 f.). After rejecting the idea that Alexander was responsible for the theory of the "unity of mankind", by an examination of that theory in its historical and philosophical context (2), Andreotti finally (3), in an article of almost monograph length, followed "tradition" and "reality" through the whole of Alexander's career, systematically excluding all Romantic and most ideological explanations, ancient and modern, in favour of rational and immediate considerations, as called for in the earlier survey. In the extreme and outstanding instance, the "crisis at the Hyphasis" is ascribed to our rhetorical sources: in fact, Alexander, far from wanting to go on, was glad not to continue his march, for fear of becoming an instrument in the political struggles of Indian princes; and the return via the Indus and Gedrosia was not due to any desire for conquest or exploration, not to mention heroic *mimesis*, but to the political "necessities" of avoiding the appearance of retreat and the risk of moving through areas where the Iranian contingents had connections and might become dangerous. For Andreotti, Alexander is a fully rational military and political planner at all times. If scholars have tried to make Alexander a visionary or a philosopher king, "so geht dies vielleicht auf das instinktive Bestreben zurück, die Leiden, das Blut und den Kampf von Millionen von Menschen durch die Gewissheit einer Idee aufzuwiegen"<sup>1</sup>.

Andreotti, among major writers on Alexander, is probably the one who has most escaped emotional involvement; though the conclusion quoted may give a hint of where he stands. It is most instructive to compare *this* "rationality" with the impassioned hymn to a very different "reason" sung by K. Kraft.

<sup>1</sup> (3), 161: conclusion.

Partial attempts at a minimalist interpretation had been seen before: Tarn's was one, in many ways, although it finally takes off into the thinnest air of Romanticism. On a small front, J.P.V.D. Balsdon, a scholar in the same tradition and of the same cast of mind as Tarn, had provided an exemplary minimalist treatment of the question of Alexander's deification<sup>1</sup>. But Andreotti's extension of it over the whole field is an outstanding *tour de force*. This extreme view provides a permanent standard of reference and a limit of interpretation. It will never again be possible for one who has read it (alas, as we have seen, not every scholar expounding views on Alexander has) to write Romantic fiction with a clear conscience, or to accept it from others without scrutiny. The trouble with Andreotti's interpretation, however, is that in the last analysis it is somewhat akin to philosophical rationalism<sup>2</sup>. Though it avoids "metaphysics", in the logical-positivist sense, it is not based on a principle of strict adherence to the best sources in each instance: it proceeds from an *a priori* view of Alexander's character (a man of truly "professorial deliberation", as Schachermeyr has beautifully said)<sup>3</sup>, to discard even the best attestation where it does not fit in with that view—as in the accounts of the Hyphasis or the march through Gedrosia. I am personally all in favour of one kind of minimalist position—the historian (as one unfortunately has to keep repeating) is not in the business of producing Romantic fiction or adolescent *Schwärmerei*. But we must surely find our basis of interpretation in the sources, critically evaluated, and not in our personal vision: Andreotti's method ultimately meets, as extremes so often do, the very method followed by the wild Romantics and the Alexandrolaters.

Among very recent works, it is perhaps J. R. Hamilton who has most closely practised a minimalism of this more desirable

<sup>1</sup> See Bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Rather than (as I once thought: see *Phoenix* 28 (1974), 371) to logical positivism.

<sup>3</sup> (3), 640.

sort. Some of his reviewers have found his Alexander dull; but I suspect that this is due to the sober, balanced, academic and unrhetorical manner of presentation, rather than to the character, finally approaching megalomania, that is actually depicted. Though there is no one "correct" interpretation, this is at least a truly professional one, and we must take it seriously.

## V

In what we may call the "post-imperialist" age, Tarn's Alexander began to look like a mere historical curiosity, while younger scholars searched for methods and interpretations appropriate to their own age. As far as general interpretation is concerned—if I may speak with all the caution requisite in one still so close to what he is discussing—there was a general revulsion (actually, traceable well beyond Alexander scholarship) against "charismatic" leaders and the price paid for their ambitions, and (perhaps for the first time) an attempt to write the history of Alexander with proper regard for the point of view of the victims as well as that of the victor.

Public attacks on Tarn's overpowering position in the English-speaking world were slow in coming, since difficult to make acceptable to the academic Establishment. When they came, they necessarily and rightly first concentrated on the scholarly underpinning. Hamilton and I, among others, in various detailed investigations, exposed some of Tarn's emotionally based methods of dealing with the sources<sup>1</sup>. One of my own early attacks concentrated on Tarn's final vision of "Alexander the Dreamer" of the unity of mankind<sup>2</sup>. Written before I saw Andreotti's quite differently conceived treatment, it followed Tarn's argument step by step, showing its basic

<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary for me to give full references here. They will be found in my *Forschungsbericht* (see Bibliography).

<sup>2</sup> In *Historia* 7 (1958), 425 ff.

unsoundness in almost every detail of logic, source analysis and understanding of Greek. One would have hoped that this job of painstaking demolition would not have to be done again : in some ways it is already becoming hard to realise how necessary it seemed at the time. But as Stier's case has recently shown, those who will not read cannot be convinced, and for some of them Alexander the Dreamer will remain a psychologically based reality.

## VI

The main problem in any serious interpretation of Alexander is, of course, that of the sources. It is well known that they are mostly late and literary, all in themselves unsatisfactory as historians, and that two strands of tradition tend to be represented in them : a court tradition fairly reliable (though selective) in its facts, but conceived as *apologia*<sup>1</sup>, and a tradition reasonably free from consistent bias, but contaminated with romance. Neither can mechanically be used to correct the other, as A. B. Bosworth has again made clear to us ; and it has always been the principal error of Alexandrolatry of various kinds that it has presented the apologetic version as the sole vehicle of truth, in content and even in omission. There is no easy answer. I myself tried to construct a method that aimed (as far as seemed possible) at neutralising faults of the primary sources and making use of their merits : it was to collect actual facts reported in the apologetic tradition and rearrange them in patterns not intended by the sources transmitting them, then to add facts that fitted into the pattern from the other ("Vulgate") tradition, where their omission in the apologetic sources could be adequately explained by *apologia*. This was the theoretical framework that I used, in particular, in disengaging some

<sup>1</sup> I use the word in its widest sense, to include both *κολακεία* (or *pietas*) towards Alexander and a variety of possible personal and political interests on the part of the authors.



of the political background of Alexander's murderous and intrigue-ridden court: on that, indeed, we have an amount of reasonably reliable information that constantly surprises those who limit their investigations to uncritical reading of Arrian or Tarn<sup>1</sup>. Naturally, judgment and conjecture must be employed, as in every historical investigation, and later work has often revised the details; but the method, I think, has not been invalidated, and those of my colleagues who have understood it have, on the whole, accepted and developed it and practised it themselves. It is to be hoped that sources altogether outside the literary tradition will in due course come to serve as a check, as they have (e.g.) for Classical Greece and Imperial Rome. So far, unfortunately, there has been no major contribution of this sort.

As far as Alexander's character is concerned, I have refrained from attempting an overall and all-embracing interpretation, in the sense of that advanced by the various schools of Romantics and Rationalists. This is because it has always seemed to me that the very attempt is worthless. What I tried to do was to pick out individual strands and *motifs* that had been ignored by those interminably rehashing "The Main Problems", like world conquest, or *Verschmelzung*, or the unity of mankind—with the result that they were forced into constructing ever more simplified models. Thus I followed a strand of insecurity and suspicion, not unjustified in the climate of the court at which Alexander grew up and which he took with him; and I found that power as such never provided a cure for it, but by the isolation with which power surrounded its holder, tended to aggravate it into something close to paranoia<sup>2</sup>. I have also consistently tried (with the "Rationalists") to trace a strain of pragmatism in Alexander's practice, military, administrative,

<sup>1</sup> The method was paradigmatically displayed in *CQ* 8 (1958), 144 ff., and used on a much larger scale in *JHS* 81 (1961), 16 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford 1964), 192 ff.

political and (if you will) propagandist: at least one of the secrets of his success was surely that he took full advantage of situations as he found them, αὐτοσχεδιάζων τὰ δέοντα; and his few failures (the Hyphasis, Gedrosia, perhaps *proskynesis*, spring to mind) are chiefly due to his surrender to what one might call "ideological" motives—aims due to dreams or ambitions not practically related to the actual situation. The characteristic pattern of careful general planning, followed by the bold and ruthless stroke precisely when the opportunity offered; and the ability to see that opportunity perhaps better than anyone else in history ever has—this turns out to be as distinctive in his political actions (say, against Philotas and Parmenio) as in his campaigns and battles. I am well content if I have helped to isolate some of these traits relevant to his success and failure, to strip some of the mythology from him, to show him actually at work, as a soldier, administrator and politician. If I have helped to set him into a line with other great conquerors, successful or finally defeated—Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler—whose methods and (to some extent) aims are better attested, this is because the species is well known in human history; and although individuals always have their individual traits, specific features may surely be legitimately disengaged, and usefully noted by the historian. Response to this approach has constantly made it clear how shocked the Romantic in search of a hero is by it; but then, the historian has little in common with him in any case, and it is the peculiar curse of Alexander scholarship that he has been so strongly entrenched in it.

It is fitting to conclude with Schachermeyr's "third Alexander"—the work of 1973, subtitled "The problem of his personality and his achievement". The basic features have survived: the Titanic figure, immense yet flawed; perhaps no longer thought of as beyond human judgment, but certainly beyond human sympathy, even beyond full understanding. Schachermeyr, reaching a truly patriarchal age, had learnt from all of his colleagues, and in our much more complex world his



Alexander is now the most subtle and varied and (rightly) self-contradictory of the principal interpretations. It is characteristic of the naiveté common in this corner of historiography that some reviewers have actually complained of the contradictions.

## VII

But let me now come to my final and perhaps principal point. I would suggest that it is time to declare a moratorium on comprehensive books and on all-embracing interpretations. We have had too many brews in Heuss's bottle. There is real work to be done. As in other cases we know (e.g. Herodotus), it is easier and more pleasant to write another book embodying a private vision than to do the actual scholarly work that may make a general interpretation more valid. It is perhaps noteworthy that French scholarship has not produced a major interpretation of Alexander since the rather trivial one of G. Radet. French scholars have been busy piling up the leading record in actual historical investigation in the field of Hellenistic history.

Detailed problems as well as general questions in the interpretation of the sources for Alexander and of the actual events certainly remain<sup>1</sup>. It is almost incredible that Arrian, our main source, is only now beginning to receive competent and significant treatment as an author in his social and cultural

<sup>1</sup> It must not be forgotten that German scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries laid much of the foundation of detailed study on which our work is still based. Their general interpretation of Alexander, however, often distorted their findings, especially in the realm of *Quellenforschung*, and the actual methods and criteria of what one might call the great Romantics of *Quellenforschung* often appear unsatisfactory today.

milieu, rather than as a mere source for history<sup>1</sup>. We have only recently had the first proper commentary on Plutarch's *Life*<sup>2</sup>. Curtius and Diodorus are still practically untreated, and comments on them tend to be either limited or highly arbitrary<sup>3</sup>. The coins have yet to make their proper contribution (it is a pity that M. G. Le Rider is not here to expound on this); and archaeological investigation in most of the countries through which Alexander passed, from Turkey to India (not to mention the vast regions in between), is in its infancy. Historians, and human beings, are what they are, and there will inevitably be more grandiloquence and verbosity, more straining after trivial and inappropriate originality. We have already had threats of psychohistory—which, whatever its (debatable) merits in other situations, is surely the height of absurdity where the sources are as we have them in this instance. But alongside all this, which will come and go and be forgotten, the basic work must continue, until—perhaps many years hence—the time will be ripe for a really new synthesis. We cannot guess what it will look like, but we can be sure that, on a much more solid basis than we yet have, it will still be closely connected with the state of the world as a whole, and of the interpreter's society in particular, as they will be at the time. If all history is (inevitably) contemporary history, as R. G. Collingwood recognised, the history of Alexander seems always to be more so than any other.

<sup>1</sup> Chiefly in various studies by A. B. Bosworth; cf. also G. WIRTH, in *Historia* 13 (1964), 209 ff. Much of this is in the context of a general revival of interest in the Second Sophistic: cf. G. W. BOWERSOCK's editorial Introduction to *Approaches to the Second Sophistic* (University Park, Pa. 1974). For an interesting attempt at "historische Ortsbestimmung", see G. WIRTH, "Arrian und Traian", in *StudClas* 16 (1974), 169 ff.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. HAMILTON, *Plutarch Alexander. A Commentary* (Oxford 1969).

<sup>3</sup> The continuing debate on the date of Curtius' life and work is, on the whole, best forgotten. Serious studies of Curtius as an author, such as that by W. Rutz, in *Hermes* 93 (1965), 370 ff., are all too rare. There is no 20th-century commentary on either author, none at all on Diodorus.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MAIN WORKS CITED

- F. ALTHEIM : (1) *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter* I-II (Halle a.S. 1947-48).  
 (2) *Alexander und Asien* (Tübingen 1953). Many of the numerous later works of this scholar, some written in collaboration with R. Stiehl, deal with Alexander in relation to various parts of Asia.
- R. ANDREOTTI : (1) "Il problema di Alessandro Magno nella storiografia dell'ultimo decennio", in *Historia* 1 (1950), 583 ff.  
 (2) "Per una critica dell'ideologia di Alessandro Magno", in *Historia* 5 (1956), 257 ff.  
 (3) "Die Weltmonarchie Alexanders des Grossen in Überlieferung und geschichtlicher Wirklichkeit", in *Saeculum* 8 (1957), 120 ff.
- J. P. V. D. BALSDON, "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", in *Historia* 1 (1950), 383 ff.
- H. BENGTON, *Griechische Geschichte von den Anfängen bis in die römische Kaiserzeit*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, Section III, Part 4 (München 1950; fourth edition: München 1969).
- J. G. DROYSSEN, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* (Hamburg 1833). (Second edition as the first volume of his *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, 2. Ausg. (Gotha 1877).)
- P. GREEN, \**Alexander of Macedon* (Harmondsworth 1974).
- J. R. HAMILTON, *Alexander the Great* (London 1973).
- E. KORNEIMANN, *Weltgeschichte des Mittelmeer-Raumes*, hrsg. von H. BENGTON, I-II (München 1948-9).
- K. KRAFT, *Der "rationale" Alexander*, hrsg. von H. GESCHE, Frankfurter Althistorische Studien 5 (Kallmünz 1971).
- C. A. ROBINSON, *Alexander the Great* (New York 1947).
- F. SCHACHERMEYR : (1) *Indogermanen und Orient* (Stuttgart 1944).  
 (2) *Alexander der Grosse. Ingenium und Macht* (Wien 1949).  
 \*(3) *Alexander der Grosse. Das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens* (Wien 1973).
- J. SEIBERT, *Alexander der Grosse*, Erträge der Forschung 10 (Darmstadt 1972). A survey of all work on Alexander, from J. G. Droysen's first edition. Essential for reference. See *Gnomon* 46 (1974), 517 f.

H. E. STIER, *Welteroberung und Weltfriede im Wirken Alexanders des Grossen*, Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge G 187 (Opladen 1973).

W. W. TARN, *Alexander the Great* I-II (Cambridge 1948).

U. WILCKEN, *Alexander the Great*, transl. G. C. RICHARDS, second edition, with pref., introd. to Alexander studies, notes & bibliogr. by E. N. BORZA (New York 1967). This paperback edition has an Introduction and notes by one of the leading Alexander scholars in the U.S.A. It is particularly useful as the contrast between U. Wilcken's interpretation—a classic of the German tradition—and some present-day interpretations is brought out by detailed comparison at many points, as well as in a general discussion.

\* F. SCHACHERMEYR ((3), chapters 14 and 15) gives a long critical survey of changing interpretations of Alexander, P. GREEN (482 ff.) a short and penetrating sketch in his usual incisive style.

A. DEMANDT, "Politische Aspekte im Alexanderbild der Neuzeit", in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 54 (1972), 325 ff., gives a detailed survey of the period up to the Second World War (which I have briefly sketched in as "prehistory" in this paper), followed by a "kurzen Ausblick" (pp. 355-7) past 1945. He analyses each major scholar, starting with Niebuhr and Droysen, in detail, against the political and philosophical background of his work, with some help (at times) from biography. He concentrates on the various interpretations (interesting in view of nationalist, later turning into National Socialist, race theories) of Alexander's policy towards Orientals, and on historical "identification" with a man or a people. Among many illuminating observations, perhaps his most interesting is his brief summary (pp. 335-6) of the transformation of ruler-worshipping interpretations over the ages in the light of the current *Herrscherideal*. A "systematische Zusammenfassung" (pp. 357 ff.) tries to set out categories for the analysis of interpretations of Alexander and (rather speculatively) for their propagandist use. Despite occasional reference to work in English and a shrewd comment on Clemenceau's *Démosthène* (pp. 337 f.), the article deals mainly with the development of German interpretations up to 1939<sup>1</sup> and is the best discussion of this subject at present available.

For a critical survey of work on Alexander over twenty-one years, see *CW* 65 (1971), 37 ff., 77 ff.

My own contributions to Alexander scholarship are about to appear in a German translation to be published by Teubner (Stuttgart).

<sup>1</sup> My comments (p. 290 above) on scholars "whose reading is mostly confined to their own language" is surprisingly illustrated by Demandt's statement (p. 360) that Tarn "noch 1968 betont ...", at a time when that author had long been dead. Inspection of footnotes reveals that this is the date of the German translation used by Demandt.

## DISCUSSION

*M. van Berchem* : M. Badian vient de nous tenir en haleine, en évoquant, dans un exposé lumineux, mordant parfois, toujours spirituel, les images d'Alexandre données successivement depuis Droysen. On regrettera que le doyen de ce colloque, le professeur Schachermeyr, obligé, pour des raisons de famille impérieuses, de regagner Vienne, ne soit plus là pour lui donner la réplique. Mais si je me réfère aux chapitres XIV et XV de son dernier ouvrage, je crois qu'avec l'ouverture d'esprit et la sérénité que nous avons admirées en lui, il aurait assez largement souscrit aux vues de M. Badian. Il était bon que fût illustrée, au terme de ces entretiens, la place prépondérante qu'a prise, dans les préoccupations des historiens, le problème de la personnalité d'Alexandre. En cela, ils sont restés dans la ligne des historiens antiques, attachés davantage à la peinture des caractères qu'à l'analyse des faits. Or si l'action d'Alexandre a profondément modifié l'aspect du monde méditerranéen, les mobiles de cette action continuent de nous intriguer. Je me rallie volontiers au vœu de M. Badian quand il demande que l'accent de la recherche se porte pour un temps sur une nouvelle appréciation des sources existantes et sur un élargissement de nos moyens de connaissance. Il a justement souligné l'importance des informations que nous sommes en droit d'attendre des numismates. Il me semble en outre que si la Grèce et la Macédoine au temps d'Alexandre ont fait l'objet d'études assez poussées, il n'en va pas de même de toutes les régions d'Asie et d'Afrique affectées par sa conquête. Un nouvel examen, par exemple, des conditions de vie des cités grecques d'Asie Mineure, de l'état de culture des royaumes ou des principautés de Chypre et de Syro-Phénicie, faciliterait peut-être l'intelligence du comportement d'Alexandre et de la réaction des peuples subjugués par lui.

*M. Wirth* : Der brillanten Darstellung der Dinge Herrn Badians hätte ich gerne einen ergänzenden Gedanken zugefügt, dies von einer gleichsam deutschen Perspektive aus.



Alexander in Rezeption und Deutung als Medium des Geistesgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jhdts. wäre ein dankbares, bisher kaum gebührend beachtetes Forschungsobjekt : Anlass und Ursache ergäbe dabei für Zeitsituation wie Biographie einzelner Forscher neue Möglichkeiten eines Verständnisses. So ist für den jungen Droysen etwa neben der Zeitsituation der späten Romantik als Anlass und Anstoss das Napoleonenerlebnis wichtig ; gerade das weitere Lebensschicksal Droysens selbst liesse sich von hier aus gleichsam als natürliche Konsequenz solchen Jugenderlebens und Bekenntnisses verstehen.

So scheint denn auch für die Generationen nach ihm die Alexander-Geschichte als spektakulärster Abschnitt der alten Geschichte schlechthin nicht weniger von der eigenen Zeit einzelner Historiker bestimmt und, gleichsam Mittel ihrer Verarbeitung, als solche vielleicht am ehesten verständlich. Ich möchte meinen, die Bismarcksche Reichsgründung übe gerade hier etwas aus, was sich schwer mit Worten umreißen und wohl kaum immer als direkte Kausalität nachvollziehen lässt, indes wohl — man verzeihe mir falsche Plazierung und vielleicht Missverständnis des Termins — mit "Prussian Imperialism" nicht erschöpfend zu umschreiben ist. Aufgabe und Zielsetzung deutscher Universitäten im 19. Jhd., an denen und für die die einschlägigen Zeugnisse entstanden, die im Referat so treffend umrissen werden, erklären wohl vieles. Im Gegensatz etwa zu den verschiedenen Epochen der griechischen und römischen Geschichte hat es seit Droysen gerade für diesen Zeitraum etwa nennenswerten Zuwachs des Interpretationsmaterials kaum gegeben, so dass Forschung sich umso mehr als zur Deutung berechtigt fühlen mochte. Kurz, was diese Epoche kennzeichnet, scheint die immense Arbeit der Fundierung philologisch-antiquarischer Voraussetzung (Ed. Schwartz, F. Jacoby), anderseits aber auch das persönliche, zeitgeschichtliche Engagement einzelner Forscher, das deren wissenschaftliche Objektivität im Untergrunde mitbestimmt (e.g. Ed. Meyer, K. J. Beloch, auch Ed. Schwartz). Der erste Weltkrieg bedeutet Bruch von unabsehbarer Folge ; das Aufkommen etwa der biologistischen Betrachtungsweise — längst vorbereitet durch Darwin, sich von ihm



ableitende Pseudodarwinismen und die gängige philosophische und pseudophilosophische Geschichtsdeutung des späten 19. Jhdts. — erklärt sich als Suchen nach neuen, wohl auch wirksamen Verständnismöglichkeiten. Hieraus resultierende Betonung und Überstrapazierung der Rassenproblematik ist wie für die gesamte Alte auch für die Alexandergeschichte nicht hinwegzuleugnen: Ich glaube nicht, dass ihre Bedeutung und auch keineswegs die aus ihr sich entwickelnde, nur als weitere Trivialisierung selbst Zeitgenossen begreifbare nationalsozialistische Ideologie allein es war, die in diesen Dingen nunmehr den Ausschlag gab. Ähnliches müssen wir selbst für Persönlichkeitsdeutung und Geniebild, die andere Komponente des Gesamtbildes, annehmen, für die ja Herr Badian einen recht drastischen *Conceptus* aufzeigt: Mythifizierung als Versuch, die Folgen erwähneter Enttäuschung zu überwinden, ist nicht allein für Alexander nachzuweisen. Sie charakterisiert m.E. weitgehend die ganze Geschichtswissenschaft der Zeit zwischen 1914 und 1945.

Die Vulgarisierung der Inhalte einer geistesgeschichtlichen Entwicklungsstufe durch die bekannten politischen Zeitströmungen mit den bei ihrer Inauguration ins Auge gefassten katastrophalen Konsequenzen scheint mir weniger Wechselwirkung als unglückseliges Verhängnis. Man wird sorgfältig und äusserst behutsam nach Kriterien und Hintergründen zu suchen haben: Wie die Forschung von der Woge unfassbarer politischer Entwicklung überrollt wurde, lässt sich an einer ganzen Reihe wirklich tragischer Forscherschicksale nicht zuletzt in unserem Bereich beweisen. Auf der anderen Seite schrieb mir Sir W. W. Tarn zu Anfang der fünfziger Jahre, er habe die Arbeit an der Vertiefung *seines* Alexanderbildes immer als einen Protest gegen die wachsende Brutalisierung seines Zeitalters gesehen. Dies macht m.E. einiges begreiflich von dem, was hier in anderem Zusammenhang kritisch gesehen werden müsste.

Mir scheint, das Trauma dieses Erlebnisses sei bis auf den Tag noch nicht völlig überwunden. Für das Alexanderproblem bedeuten Neuerkenntnisse — gerade bezüglich etwa für die Fragen nach Rasse, Rassenpolitik, Kultur, Stammes- und Staatsbildung, Lebensformen Ansatzpunkt der Korrektur: Bezüglich des Problems der Persönlich-

keit als historisch wirksamer Kraft ist, besonders in Arbeiten auf kleinerem Raume, Unsicherheit und gewisse Hilflosigkeit immer noch zu erkennen. Allgemeines Ergebnis ist denn wohl auch die von F. Schachermeyr apostrophierte minimalistische Alexanderdeutung, die die Forschung unserer Tage so sehr bestimmt. In ihrer Weise von den Perspektiven mitgeformt, die das 20. Jhdt. leider lehrte, sind denn m.E. auch die Ansätze der Arbeiten Herrn Badians selbst.

Ich möchte nicht glauben, dass sich, auf solchen Perspektiven der Deutung aufbauend, Ansätze einer Versachlichung abzeichnen, die gefördert von anderer Seite durch neues Verhältnis zu Quellen und Überlieferung, weiter führt. Sich soeben abzeichnende, wünschenswerte epigraphische und besonders numismatische Neuerkenntnisse bleiben abzuwarten. Nahe liegt, dass die damit bedingte Komplizierung nunmehr ein Auseinanderklaffen von Forschung und Deutung bedingt — bezeichnenderweise wehrt sich Herr Badian gegen ein eigenes Alexanderbild. Und sicher hätte die Alexanderforschung, jetzt weltweit geworden, ein Moratorium nötig, die erwähnten Neuansätze weiter auszubauen. Indes, was seit einigen Jahren den Büchermarkt kennzeichnet, scheint ein wachsendes Interesse gerade am Phänomen Alexander. Sollte dies nicht erneut der Reflex einer diesmal weltpolitischen und geistesgeschichtlich zu verstehenden Situation sein, die erneut denn auch verstärkt nach Deutung verlangt? Man möchte uns allen von Herzen wünschen, dass sich Herrn Badians Hoffnungen erfüllen.

*M. Badian*: I very much welcome Mr. Wirth's striking development of some of the points in my paper, particularly about German scholarship against the background of *Zeitgeschichte*. Naturally, the paper had to sacrifice refinement of detail to clarity of outline, in its treatment of German scholars as in that of (e.g.) Tarn. Racial theories were certainly by no means confined to Germany, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We know names like H. S. Chamberlain (himself with strong German sympathies and intellectual roots) and J. Gobineau, and the history of the French

Right in its influence on certain currents of thought and political events in France. But, of course, all this flowed into the stream of National Socialist theory, with the theoretical contradictions not even reconciled, but with the practical consequences we all know. It would be paradoxical to maintain that the works of German scholars, embodying, preaching and applying such theories, which appeared under Nazi rule, were the outcome of an independent and parallel European development. As for "Prussian Imperialism", no one would ever dream of describing any historical current — in fact, hardly even any concrete political event — "exhaustively" in those terms. But there is little doubt that the arrogant romantic nationalism of German intellectuals found its symbol in the Prussian monarchy, and Droysen (however complex his personal background, what with Fr. Hegel, the Lutheran Church, even—as we have been reminded—Napoleon) is a particularly clear example of this, which happens to be a particularly important one for our subject. Nor can there be any serious doubt that the intellectuals in that tradition, desperately fighting against the trauma of admitting error (let alone guilt), turned to National Socialism as their new ideal with fairly wide acceptance and even enthusiasm. The splendid German record of scholarship in what one might call its antiquarian aspects is duly praised in my Notes, but it must not blind us to the wider aspects that formed the subject of my paper. Needless to say (and as I insisted), I regard all of this merely as a matter for serious historical enquiry, not as an instrument for facile moral condemnation.

*M. Spoerri*: Herr Wirth hat noch einmal darauf hingewiesen, wie sehr das jeweilige Alexanderbild von der zeitgenössischen Geschichte geprägt wurde. Ein anderes, sehr instruktives Beispiel, auf das gerade in diesem Zusammenhang verwiesen werden darf, sind die verschiedenen, widersprüchlichen Demosthenesbilder, die das 19. und das 20. Jhdt. hervorgebracht hat. In der Demosthenesdeutung spiegeln sich immer wieder, mehr oder weniger stark, zeitgenössische politische Erfahrungen und Wünsche wieder.

*M. Schwarzenberg* : Die Gestalt an der sich der Wandel der Interpretation am besten ablesen lässt, ist Sokrates, wohl deshalb, weil wir so gut wie nichts über ihn wissen. Nichts hat die Philosophen und die Gelehrten daran gehindert, sich und ihre Zeit in ihm zu spiegeln. Dieses γνῶθι σαυτόν ist das nicht beabsichtigte aber auch nicht unerwünschte Ergebnis der sokratischen Lehre ; deswegen hat der Meister nichts Schriftliches hinterlassen.

*M. Milns* : Mr. Badian has demonstrated very clearly how historians in the 19th and 20th centuries have been influenced in their interpretations of Alexander by their own experience and their own hopes and aspirations. This, I believe, could be regarded as an indictment of these historians. For, though it may be the task and duty of the historian to isolate the facts and to interpret them, it is also his duty to do so from as objective a standpoint as possible ; and to be ever on his guard against allowing his interpretations to be influenced by the attitudes that have been built into him by his own society and times. He must strive, on the basis of the evidence, to project his mind back to the times he is describing ; and this so many modern writers have not done. In their hands Alexander has become an object for artistic creativity, as we can see from the expressions we use about the different writers : we talk of "das Alexanderbild" of so and so, of a "portrait", a "picture" of Alexander—terms which are more appropriate to the writer of creative fiction than to the historian. In what ways does the Alexander of the historical novels of Mary Renault differ from the creations of such scholars as Droysen or Tarn, if these scholars twist, distort and interpret the ancient evidence to fit their own preconceived—and desired—view of the man?

*M. van Berchem* : Il est naturel que chaque génération repense l'histoire des siècles écoulés à la lumière des expériences qu'elle fait. Ce phénomène n'a toutefois pas que des effets négatifs. Ainsi, par exemple, le développement récent de l'histoire économique s'expli-



que-t-il par une réflexion plus poussée sur l'importance des conditions matérielles de la vie.

*M. Errington*: I should like to express my agreement with M. van Berchem, and would like additionally to point out that classical studies in modern times, from the Renaissance on, have usually justified their existence by offering positive values for the societies in which they have been carried out. The interrelationship between classical studies and contemporary experience is thus not something unique to historians of the 19th and 20th centuries, but has been an immanent factor in classical studies from their beginning. If the connection between study and society is lost, history degenerates to arid antiquarianism.

*M. Bosworth*: Perhaps we may draw a distinction between biographies of Alexander in the strict sense and more general histories in which the reign of Alexander is part of the whole and the figure of the king is not central. Mr. Badian has brought up the example of Beloch, whose picture of the king is peculiarly colourless. Partly this is due to his reaction against the literary *proskynesis* of Droysen and Kaerst, but also, I think, Beloch was more remote from the figure of Alexander and treated the evidence in a more detached manner. The same type of portraiture emerges from the work of George Grote, who certainly wrote from the standpoint of his age and was repelled by Alexander whom he considered the destroyer of most of what was admirable in Greek city culture. Nevertheless the portrait of Alexander is as colourless as that of Beloch. The general histories, I think, are closer to the texts and preserve the contradictions inherent in the extant sources. As Mr. Schachermeyr repeatedly pointed out to us, a coherent and consistent interpretation of Alexander must necessarily depart from the texts and either explain away or ignore some of the essential evidence. If we remain with the texts, there are necessarily contradictions, and, as Mr. Badian has well emphasized, contradictions are inherent in any valid history of the reign. The more precise our questions, the closer our focus

on the sources, the more remote the figure of Alexander himself becomes. In this case the closer we come to reality, the more blurred and confused the image becomes.

*M. Schwarzenberg:* Es wird oft von Droysen behauptet, er sei der Begründer einer "modernen" Alexanderforschung, ähnlich wie J. J. Winckelmann als dem Vater der Archäologie gehuldigt wird. Herr Bosworth hat G. de Sainte-Croix erwähnt. J. C. Freinsheim nimmt für das 17. Jhdt. eine ähnliche Bedeutung ein.

Man hat sich in den 16.-18. Jhdten weniger für die Eroberungen und Leistungen Alexanders als für seine Person, für den βίος, für das Porträt interessiert. Weil die Gelehrten noch Renaissance-Menschen waren, weil das Spezialisieren innerhalb der Altertumskunde unbekannt war, waren sie vielleicht besser in der Lage, Alexander zu verstehen.

*M. Wirth:* Man wird zwischen Renaissance und Droysen vielleicht doch den Werdegang der Altertumsgeschichte ein wenig mehr differenzieren müssen. Freinsheims Curtiusergänzungen sind im wesentlichen Rekapitulation anderer, allgemein bekannter Quellen; ähnliches gilt für die Historiographie. Die Aspekte Winckelmanns zu untersuchen lohnte sich sicher, einen Einfluss auf die von ihm beeinflussten Vertreter des zweiten Humanismus vermag ich bezüglich ihres Alexanderbildes nicht zu erkennen. Für das 17. und 18. Jhdt. scheint das plutarchische Bild bestimmend; dies wird aus der Begründung der Historie als vorwiegend moralisches Exempel zu verstehen sein.

*M. Badian:* We might well at this point glance at B. G. Niebuhr's definition of the two poles between which the historian has to move and the extremes he must avoid. First, there is "confusion with the present", characteristic (according to him) of the Middle Ages: "In Dante's eyes, Vergil was a Lombard". At the other extreme there is "pedantry, that yawning chasm, where (the scholar) would be buried in dust and dead leaves as soon as he took a false step". It is still the mark of the historian to avoid both.

