

# Alexander in the Hellenistic world

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## IV

R. M. ERRINGTON

### ALEXANDER IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

Alexander's *Nachleben* in the hellenistic period has not attracted much attention from historians in recent times. The basic reason is perhaps not far to seek : as for so much hellenistic history, the sources are woefully inadequate. With the single exception of Polybius the Greek historiography of the hellenistic period, from which we might conceivably have been able to collect some relevant material, has virtually vanished : the fragments of Hieronymus of Cardia, of Phylarchus, of Poseidonius, Agatharchides and Timagenes offer only the most superficial and haphazard information on their views about or attitudes towards Alexander ; the philosophical literature, which is supposed by many modern writers, doubtless correctly, to have been richly stimulated by experiences and ideas, real or imaginary, of Alexander, is also lost.

Despite these difficulties I have not seen it as the task of my contribution merely to complain that what I have undertaken to do is impossible. Nor have I seen it in an attempt to show merely in general terms what Alexander's career achieved for the Greek world : that has often enough been done, and a repetition of obvious and widely accepted generalities would not be very constructive. I shall also try to avoid discussing merely the idea (or ideas) that those who lived longer or later

had of Alexander, which allows me in general to avoid discussing the early Alexander-historians. What I have tried to do is more practical, and I hope more original : it is to survey the available material in an attempt to assess the extent to which Alexander remained, broadly speaking, an active factor in various ways in the hellenistic period ; how Alexander himself and people's experiences and ideas of him contributed to their politics, their attitudes, their way of life. There is no single source which can here be regarded as central or basic, no single obvious approach to this theme. The material which I shall discuss is inevitably all already familiar ; I can only hope that a rather different point of view might lead to some differences of emphasis, to some new (or forgotten) perspectives.

## I ALEXANDER'S RELICS

The immediate political importance of Alexander did not end with his death. Too many people owed too much power and influence solely to their companionship or contact with the dead king to be prepared (or able) to stand alone without the crutch of his influence after his death. The most important of these immediately was Perdikkas to whom, if we may follow a now normally accepted tradition, Alexander, shortly before his death, entrusted his signet ring <sup>1</sup>, which marked out Perdikkas as being the king's chosen chief administrator, if not his actual successor. Alexander's disposition thus inevitably played a major role in the initial discussions of the generals after his death.

Curtius' account of these discussions <sup>2</sup> is the fullest we have and, as I have argued elsewhere <sup>3</sup>, in broad outline probably goes back to Hieronymus of Cardia, hence to Eumenes who

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XVII 117, 3 ; XVIII 2, 4 ; Curt. X 5, 4.

<sup>2</sup> X 6 ff.

<sup>3</sup> In *JHS* 90 (1970), 72-5 ; cf. also P. BRIANT, *Antigone le Borgne* (Paris 1973), 112 ff.

was present at Babylon and who, we may assume, as the chief secretary of the dead king and close supporter of Perdiccas, knew intimately what was going on, even if his Greek birth prevented his active participation in the discussions. The whole scene-setting in Curtius' account therefore, in so far as it is not merely rhetorical padding, may well be reliable. Curtius reports a deliberate immediate exploitation of Alexander's relics and the influence which they were expected to have on the mass of the soldiers who came to the meeting—though it was officially merely a meeting of Alexander's officers<sup>1</sup>—to see what was going on and ended up by taking over the proceedings: Alexander's throne was set up in a conspicuous place; on it rested Alexander's diadem, Alexander's clothing and Alexander's arms; and to these Perdiccas added Alexander's signet ring<sup>2</sup>. Alexander's presence and influence therefore were immediately apparent, and from the point of view of the scene-setters, Perdiccas and his friends, were clearly expected to dominate the deliberations of the meeting in Perdiccas' favour; and they might indeed have done so, had not other more immediate considerations finally proved more important for the mass of the troops—already an indication that immediate problems were more important to them than the apparent wishes and lingering influence of the dead king.

That Perdiccas' initial failure at Babylon was not merely a result of inadequate scene-setting, but rather stemmed from immediate political factors is perhaps confirmed by the use which Eumenes between 318 and his death made of a similar idea—so similar, indeed, that it is difficult to believe that it was not directly influenced by his experience of Perdiccas' stage-management at Babylon. Indeed, Eumenes was not the only one who seems to have been impressed by these possibilities. Already at Babylon, if we may believe Curtius, Ptolemy had

<sup>1</sup> This is rightly emphasised by P. BRIANT, *op. cit.*, 240 f.

<sup>2</sup> Curt. X 6, 4.



advocated a 'committee solution' to the immediate problem of imperial government. But not just any committee: specifically a committee of Alexander's friends meeting as frequently as necessary in the presence of Alexander's empty throne. And Ptolemy's subsequent exploitation of Alexander's name and body rules out *a priori* considerations of unlikelihood as far as the reliability of the tradition about this suggestion is concerned<sup>1</sup>. In the end, of course, immediate need expressed in terms of force ruled at Babylon, and Ptolemy's suggestion seemed to have died an inevitable death when Eumenes unexpectedly, and with some success, resuscitated it. In 318, after his release from Nora, Eumenes received an appointment as representative of the central authority of the empire, in practice Polyperchon, to wage war in Asia against Antigonus. He was empowered to make use of the Cilician treasury at Cyinda, but found difficulty in co-operating with the Macedonian officers Antigones and Teutamus, the commanders of the Silver-Shields, who were guarding the Cyinda treasury. Eumenes' solution was straightforward: wrapped up in the mystical wrapping-paper of an alleged appearance of Alexander to him in a dream, the essentials of Ptolemy's disdained suggestion of Babylon were presented: that a royal-style tent with a throne in it should be set up, and that this should be where common deliberations about future policy took place. Antigones and Teutamus were apparently convinced, and the so-called "Alexander Tent" served fairly successfully as an immediate unifying factor for the very disparate elements of the Macedonian resistance to Antigonus in Asia<sup>2</sup>. Thus a *mise en scène* with real relics of Alexander on the day after his death at Babylon failed to solve an immediate difficult crisis for Perdiccas; but a similar *mise en scène* with purely imaginary relics of

<sup>1</sup> Curt. X 6, 13-15; cf. *JHS* 90 (1970), 74-5.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. *Eum.* 13; Diod. XVIII 60-61. On this from the point of view of cult see Ch. PICARD, in *Cahiers Archéologiques* 7 (1954), 1 ff.

Alexander nevertheless was employed by Eumenes, despite his personal experience of the collapse of the real thing at Babylon, with success more than five years after Alexander's death. We do not know enough about the feelings and motives of Teutamus and Antigenes and of the other officers who in the next few years allowed themselves to be influenced by this arrangement to be able to interpret accurately the precise influence of the Alexander-motif on their thinking. But it is clear that an Alexander theme, though deliberately stylised for the occasion, helped to solve a practical crisis among some of those who had personally known Alexander and who claimed to be representing the interests of his son.

The most important relic of Alexander was, of course, his body, the possession of which, from the moment of his death onwards, was a major priority for Perdiccas. Already at Babylon, during the first troubles with Meleager, the possession of the dead king's body had been at risk: early in the proceedings Perdiccas and his supporters had barricaded themselves into the hall where Alexander's body was being kept and determined to make that the scene of their resistance to the infantry and Meleager<sup>1</sup>; and even when a compromise had brought the fighting to an end, Meleager's reluctance to let his supporters abandon Alexander's body, once having got it<sup>2</sup>, was the critical sign for the leading nobles and the cavalry to leave the city and start the blockade, which led in due course to the final settlement.

Alexander had apparently expressed the wish to be buried at Siwah—it was a wish which was at least as well known as his giving his ring to Perdiccas<sup>3</sup>; and if it were to be carried out, instead of a traditional burial in the burial-place of the Macedonian

<sup>1</sup> Curt. X 7, 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Curt. X 5, 4; cf. E. BADIAN, in *HSPb* 72 (1967), 185 ff.

kings at Aigai, it meant ultimately the sacrifice of possession of the body to the satrap of Egypt, for no central government which could be envisaged for the whole empire by a Macedonian could ever have had its central administration in Egypt. It may therefore have been partly an attempt to win time when the manufacture of Alexander's funeral chariot was made so extravagantly complicated that its completion took nearly two years<sup>1</sup>; it was in any case convenient that Alexander himself, in connection with Hephaistion's tomb<sup>2</sup>, had made such expense (and hence delay) not only respectable but actually almost a political necessity. The time won by the inevitable delay in building the chariot might at least be sufficient for it to become clear whether the new satrap of Egypt was reliable enough to be entrusted with the supervision of the tomb, and to allow a firm decision on whether it would not after all be better to ignore Alexander's wishes and to follow Macedonian tradition.

When the nearly two years of construction were over Ptolemy in Egypt had indeed begun to show himself unreliable; but at the same time Perdiccas had found it impossible to remain himself in Babylon, and therefore had been compelled to leave Arrhidaeus, who had been put in charge of the construction, behind in Babylon. In 321 Arrhidaeus in his turn proved unreliable, and the result was the famous body-snatch on the road from Damascus, which Perdiccas was unable to prevent<sup>3</sup>.

For the second time in two years the question of the control of Alexander's body directed events. For Perdiccas the loss was critical; whether he had wanted to continue to wait or had decided to try to return to Macedonia with the new kings at

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XVIII 26 ff. (especially 28, 2).

<sup>2</sup> Arr. *Anab.* VII 14, 8; Diod. XVII 115; cf. F. SCHACHERMEYR, in *JÖAI* 41 (1954), 127 ff. (= G. T. GRIFFITH (ed.), *Alexander the Great: the Main Problems* (Cambridge/New York 1966), 331 f.).

<sup>3</sup> Sources and discussion in E. BADIAN, in *HSPb* 72 (1967), 185 ff. On the general development after Babylon see *JHS* 90 (1970), 59 ff.

the head of the funeral-procession of Alexander—an arrangement which even an entrenched Antipater supported by Craterus might perhaps have had difficulty in successfully opposing—the continued possession of the corpse was vital and, it seems, worth fighting for<sup>1</sup>. The result is well-known: the bungled invasion of Egypt by Perdiccas, the continued resistance of Ptolemy, Antipater and Craterus (who did not want Alexander's body on their hands, if not in their hands), the death of Perdiccas and the effective neutralisation for immediate political purposes of the value of Alexander's body. Only in the hands of the 'central government' (or of those who aimed to set up or control a 'central government') of the empire was the body a potential political weapon. Once the decentralists Antipater and Ptolemy had defeated Perdiccas Alexander's body was, doubtless to the satisfaction of both, at last buried.

A certain symbolic value of course inevitably remained, but even this could hardly be adequately exploited if the body were left in the remote oasis: firstly then, burial in Memphis, where as Pharaoh Alexander could in any case appropriately rest; then some time later, probably still in the reign of Soter, in Ptolemy's new city of Alexandria<sup>2</sup>. The symbolism attaching to the great king's body was now essentially limited to his role within the Ptolemaic kingdom, more particularly to his dual role as founder of the kingdom and of the capital city Alexandria, which the golden sarcophagus, which Ptolemy constructed for him, duly emphasised and honoured<sup>3</sup>. Alexander's position in Alexandria remained therefore rather special—as we shall also see later in looking at his cults—but not so special that it could not be affected by some typically Ptolemaic administrative

<sup>1</sup> So explicitly in the Vatican palimpsest of Arrian, *De hist. succ.*, *FGrH* 156 F 10, 1.

<sup>2</sup> It is not quite certain that it was Soter who brought Alexander to Alexandria; but I follow here P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972), I 15-16; II 31-32 (n. 79), who has a full discussion of the sources, in preferring the version of Strabo, XVII 1, 8, p. 794, that Soter was responsible. See also below p. 170 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Strab. XVII 1, 8, p. 794.



rationalisation. By the end of the third century B.C. the organisational problem of accommodating the bodies of the dead Ptolemies and at the same time drawing attention to their connexion with Alexander was troubling the minds of Alexandrian court architects : the solution, which Philopator eventually blessed in stone, was the creation of a single new building, in which all the dead kings, including now Alexander, might be accommodated (the *soma* or *sema*)<sup>1</sup>. This arrangement will probably have meant in practice to some extent a levelling of the prestige of Alexander in relation to that of the Ptolemies—which would doubtless become more noticeable as the numbers of Ptolemies occupying the new mausoleum grew—and the measure doubtless reflects the lack of immediacy of the Alexander influence by the reign of Philopator.

Rationalisation of organisation did not of course imply official reduction in the status of Alexander's tomb. The gold sarcophagus remained to be inspected by those entitled to do so in the *sema* for some hundred more years, surviving the increasing chaos of the second century, only to fall victim to the chaos of the first. Ptolemy X removed the gold sarcophagus in a raid on Alexandria from Syria sometime in the early years of the first century ; but, in significant contrast to events after Alexander's death, he left the body behind. No political capital, it seems, could now be made, even in a limited Egyptian political context, by possessing the body of the founder of the kingdom and of the city of Alexandria : the whole point of the exercise was merely to steal the gold. The mummified body was therefore left behind, and was in due course laid in a new sarcophagus. This time however, the responsible persons, accepting at least partially the reduced estimate of the relic's importance which Ptolemy X had given, did not feel the need to replace the

<sup>1</sup> Zenobius, III 94 (in *Corpus Pseudoep. Graec.* I 81), cited by P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, II 33 (n. 80).

original gold : a more modest glass model was Alexander's resting place when Strabo visited the city <sup>1</sup>.

The general development in attitudes to Alexander's immediate relics, therefore, seems fairly clear. At first, immediately after his death, not only his body but his equipment, even in a purely imaginary or imitative form, as Eumenes discovered, could be employed politically in favourable circumstances to good effect. In the course of time, however, as it became increasingly clear that new problems were here to stay and as the new kingdoms emerged, we hear no more of active political employment of Alexander's relics outside the limits of the new Ptolemaic kingdom. His body found a symbolic and extravagant resting place in its gold sarcophagus in the symbolic and extravagant city which Ptolemy built as his capital. But even here, once the immediacy of the foundation years was past, the dead Ptolemies received equally honourable burial beside Alexander in Philopator's new building ; and by the first century Alexander's tomb had become little more than a source of booty and a curiosity for tourists.

## II RELATIONSHIP TO ALEXANDER

The chief difficulty in this section is that of distinguishing the importance after Alexander's death of members of Alexander's family who owed their influence to him alone from that of those who owed their influence chiefly to Philip. The problem crops up immediately at Babylon in connection with the succession. So far as Perdiccas was concerned, the only conceivable heir to Alexander was Alexander's son, should the pregnant Roxane bear a son <sup>2</sup>. For him therefore and for his

<sup>1</sup> Strab. XVII 1, 8, p. 794 ; cf. H. VOLKMANN, in *RE* XXIII 2, 1743 sqq. For discussion of the site, form and later history of the tomb, see now P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, I 16 f. ; II 33 f.

<sup>2</sup> Curt. X 6, 9 ; cf. my discussion in *JHS* 90 (1970), 49 f.



supporters, direct descent from Alexander and an acknowledged, official wife—an attitude doubtless deeply influenced by the facts that the Perdiccan group owed its own pre-eminence to Alexander and that it had control of Roxane—was to take precedence over any other possibility. That this was to a great extent a sectional political point of view became immediately clear, since the Macedonian troops, supported by Meleager, evidently saw no problem of loyalty in returning to the direct line of Philip and successfully promoting Arrhidaeus<sup>1</sup>. Perdiccas' group maintained its point of view until it was no longer tenable and finally had to compromise by accepting Arrhidaeus, but managed to set up the baby Alexander as king also<sup>2</sup>.

Surprisingly, a mere two years later, Perdiccas repeated his mistake of underestimating the importance to the Macedonians of blood relationship to Philip. When he was at Sardis in 321 Cynnane, daughter of Philip and the Illyrian Audata, arrived together with her daughter from Amyntas, son of Perdiccas III, whom Alexander had had murdered at the beginning of his reign. The purpose of the journey was that this daughter, Adeia, should marry Arrhidaeus, a scheme which Perdiccas bitterly opposed: he accordingly arranged for Cynnane to be murdered, only to be faced with a mutiny of his troops, which compelled him to allow the marriage to take place after all<sup>3</sup>.

From these two incidents therefore we must conclude that direct blood-relationship to Alexander was at first less important in practice to influential sections of Macedonian opinion than the general factor of relationship to the royal house of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Curt. X 7, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *JHS* 90 (1970), 54 ff.; Chr. HABICHT, in *Akten des VI. internationalen Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik* (München 1973), 367 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, *De hist. succ.*, *FGrH* 156 F 9, 22-3. For other sources see H. BERVE, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* II (München 1926), nos. 23 (Adeia), 61 (Amyntas), 456 (Cynnane). For discussion see *JHS* 90 (1970), 64-5; P. BRIANT, *op. cit.*, 177 f.

Argeads, in particular with Philip. The Macedonians who took this view were quite happy to see Philip's mentally deficient son sharing the representation of the kingdom and the formal loyalty of the people with the baby son of Alexander. It is thus quite clear that many Macedonians were unwilling to accept Perdiccas' view that close blood-relationship to Alexander was the only thing that mattered; the same people were however quite happy to follow Perdiccas and to acclaim the baby Alexander IV also as king <sup>1</sup>, thus proclaiming an unprecedented joint kingship which Olympias, who also had her own highly personal view of what factors ought to matter in Macedonia, clearly felt was nothing other than a diminution of the rights of her grandson (in practice, of course, more particularly of those who looked after him); and she took the first convenient opportunity to get rid of both Philip and Adea/Eurydice and many of their supporters with a brutality which paved the way for Cassander's overthrow of Olympias, despite her undoubted control of the little king Alexander IV and his mother <sup>2</sup>.

The immediate political importance of blood relationship to Alexander seems therefore to have been significantly less than its most committed promoters would have liked to think. Indeed, even Perdiccas himself was selective in his patronage of the blood of Alexander: Alexander's son Heracles, the fruit of an early relationship with the Persian Barsine (who subsequently became Nearchus' wife) was in the earliest phase of the succession struggle never seriously considered, although Nearchus is supposed to have drawn attention to him at the Babylon conference <sup>3</sup>. Moreover Heracles was allowed to live on at Pergamum, cannot therefore have been regarded by Perdiccas or by anybody else as an immediate threat or as a feasible alternative to the young Alexander (or, for that matter, to Philip

<sup>1</sup> Arr. *De hist. succ.*, FGrH 156 F 9.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XIX 11, 3 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Curt. X 6, 10-12; cf. Iust. XIII 2, 6 ff.

Arrhidaeus)<sup>1</sup>. The same evident lack of urgency in monopolising control of or influence over Alexander's blood relations, which again helps to put the immediate importance of mere relationship into perspective, may perhaps be illustrated by the career of Cleopatra, Alexander's full sister. During the early part of Alexander's reign she had been usefully employed in holding together the link between Epirus and Macedonia as wife of her mother's brother, Alexander of Epirus. After his death in Italy the tyrant Dionysius of Heracleia Pontica had found that paying court to Cleopatra might save him some unpleasantness with Alexander<sup>2</sup>.

After Alexander's death however, oddly enough, Cleopatra seems at first to have been almost completely neglected by the generals, and was indeed herself the first to take the initiative in proposing for herself a new marital connection, firstly with Leonnatus, who after Babylon was made satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, an important but not central function in the post-Alexander imperial government<sup>3</sup>; and only after this move ended as a result of Leonnatus' sudden death did Olympias think it worthwhile to send her to Perdiccas—who refused her. The reason is interesting: Perdiccas, allegedly after long pondering and being advised by Eumenes to accept Cleopatra, chose to take Antipater's daughter Nicaea, who had been his first choice and whose hand he had sought almost immediately after Alexander's death<sup>4</sup>. Thus from the beginning Perdiccas' view of the political realities seems to have been that Antipater would

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XX 20, 1. W. W. TARN's arguments that Heracles was a propagandist fiction invented by Polyperchon (in *JHS* 41 (1921), 18 ff.; *Alexander the Great* II (Cambridge 1948), 330 ff.) have rightly failed to convince; cf. H. BERVE, *Das Alexanderreich* ... II, no. 206 (Barsine); also my comments in *JHS* 90 (1970), 74; P. A. BRUNT, in *RFIC* 103 (1975), 22-34.

<sup>2</sup> Sources in H. BERVE, *Das Alexanderreich*... II, no. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *Eum.* 3; cf. *JHS* 90 (1970), 60.

<sup>4</sup> Arr. *De hist. succ.*, *FGrH* 156 F 9, 21; 26; Diod. XVIII 23, 1-3; 25, 3; cf. Iust. XIII 6, 4-7.

be a more useful ally than any support which he might be able to arouse from a personal connection with Cleopatra. And this remained his view, even when Cleopatra was present, willing and able. It was indeed alleged later that he had changed his mind and intended after all to marry Cleopatra—but it was alleged by Antigonus, whose sole interest at that time was to awaken Antipater's suspicion of Perdiccas; and the rumour certainly never came to anything <sup>1</sup>.

Cleopatra never thereafter succeeded in playing the central role to which she aspired, in this respect sharing the fate of Alexander's son, the king Alexander IV who, after Olympias' attempt to exploit him had ended with her death, was shut up in Amphipolis together with his mother Roxane by Cassander and thus excluded from playing any further significant role <sup>2</sup>, beyond serving as a dating mechanism for the disparate parts of his empire (for which purpose, as it ultimately turned out, he did not even need to remain alive!) <sup>3</sup>. Cassander thus firmly prevented more than token exploitation by his rivals <sup>4</sup> but seems

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XVIII 25, 3. Perdiccas' motives, as described by Diod. XVIII 23, 3, that Perdiccas was by this hoping to become king and therefore wanted to marry Cleopatra may indeed go back (through Hieronymus of Cardia) to Antigonus' version of these events which he used to shock and stimulate into action Antipater and Craterus against Perdiccas.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XIX 52, 4; 61, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Documents from Babylon and Egypt continued to date by regnal years of Alexander IV even after his death: the Babylonian chronicle published by A. J. SACHS and D. J. WISEMAN, in *Iraq* 16 (1954), 202-12, reaches year 6 S. E. (306-5) for Alexander's reign; in Egypt *P. Dem. Louvre* 2427 and 2420 are dated in Hathyr of Alexander's 13th Egyptian year (Jan.-Feb. 304 B.C.).

<sup>4</sup> Antigonus tried to use Cassander's treatment of Alexander to create some propaganda for himself among the Macedonians in his declaration at Tyre: Diod. XIX 61, 3; and in the agreement of 311 Cassander was only (officially) recognised by the other dynasts as στρατηγός τῆς Εὐρώπης until the young Alexander came of age: Diod. XIX 105, 1. That this latter provision was merely pro-forma seems to emerge from Diodorus' comment, doubtless reflecting Hieronymus (Diod. XIX 105, 3-4) that the death of Alexander shortly afterwards was regarded as a relief also by Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Antigonus. Was the murder of Alexander perhaps secretly agreed to by the dynasts at the peace conference?



to have found no way of making practical use of him himself. The murder of the young Alexander in 310 lent a certain rarity value to Heracles son of Barsine, which in competent hands might conceivably have been exploited to the embarrassment of Cassander. But in the hands of the old Polyperchon Heracles' artificially inflated and misplaced pretensions to the throne of the Argeads amounted to no more than a delayed death sentence: Cassander found no difficulty in making sufficient formal concessions to Polyperchon to persuade him to have the boy killed <sup>1</sup>.

Cleopatra remained in Sardis even after Perdiccas' death and was still there in 308; but she played no traceable part in the events which led to her mother's murder of Philip, to the enforced suicide of Eurydice and eventually to the death of Olympias herself. In 308 she is mentioned by Diodorus as attempting to leave Sardis to join Ptolemy; the discovery by Antigonus' governor of this attempt led to her murder, though Antigonus took measures, including the arrangement of a royal funeral, to evade the appearance of responsibility for the murder <sup>2</sup>. It seems fairly clear therefore that it must have been Antigonus who prevented Cleopatra from playing any role in politics, after he came into control of Sardis in 320, as is explicitly attested by Diodorus for 308: for between 320 and 308 Sardis had remained in Antigonus' possession. In connection with Cleopatra's death Diodorus, in a famous passage, relates that Cassander, Lysimachus, Antigonus, Ptolemy "and all the most distinguished generals after Alexander's death" had courted her because of her relationship to Alexander. The dates of these various courtship attempts (if Diodorus' passage is more than a fabricated *elogium*) cannot be firmly fixed. The fact that Cleopatra, shortly before her death, was trying to escape to Ptolemy suggests that his offer at least may have been

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XX 20, 1; 28, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XX 37, 3-6.

fairly recent. It would at least fit in with the Greek policy which he was pursuing at the time <sup>1</sup>. For Lysimachus not even a convincing guess is possible; and the same applies to Antigonus, though sometime in the early period, possibly soon after the death of Antipater, at the beginning of his serious attempt to influence events in Greece and Macedonia, would perhaps be the most likely <sup>2</sup>. Cassander however is perhaps the most interesting of these names: his attempt, if authentic, must surely be placed early, perhaps shortly after the death of his father, when he went straight to Asia Minor and was clearly prepared to seek help wherever he could find it; and it may suggest an attempt to torpedo Polyperchon's contemporary attempt to co-operate with Olympias, perhaps by playing the daughter's influence against the mother's <sup>3</sup>.

Perhaps the most important aspect, from our point of view, of these attempts to win Cleopatra—although in no single instance do we have any further details—is that even without her, so long as she remained shut up in Sardis and prevented from playing any active political role, the *diadochoi* were not in practice particularly affected in their decisions by her existence. Cassander, who would inevitably have been most concerned by any attempt to exploit Cleopatra, decided to build his influence and power on Philip and the Argead house in general rather than on Alexander in particular—which may indeed, have possibly been the attraction of Cleopatra all along <sup>4</sup>. His lasting

<sup>1</sup> So J. SEIBERT, *Historische Beiträge zu den dynastischen Verbindungen in hellenistischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden 1967), 23-4, with older literature.

<sup>2</sup> I am not sure why J. SEIBERT, *op. cit.*, 23 takes the view—which nothing in the text supports—that Antigonus courted Cleopatra not for himself but for Demetrius (his age is irrelevant if political advantage was the essence of the offer).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Diod. XVIII 53, 3; J. SEIBERT, *op. cit.*, 21-2.

<sup>4</sup> Diod. XX 37, 4 does not actually mention Alexander when he gives the motives of the *diadochoi* in courting Cleopatra, merely the distinction of her birth; but his explanation of this distinction (*ibid.*, 3) puts the fact that she was Alexander's sister before the fact that she was daughter of Philip.



marriage with Philip's daughter Thessalonice <sup>1</sup>, his restoration of Thebes <sup>2</sup>, and his treatment and finally murder of Alexander IV and Roxane <sup>3</sup> after Olympias had already been removed, his honourable burial of Philip Arrhidaeus, Eurydice and Cynnane <sup>4</sup> all point in the same direction. His policy, in its developed form, was clearly directed towards destroying the possibility of exploiting Alexander's name, family or achievements in his own sphere of power; paradoxically his anti-Alexander policy relied nevertheless very heavily on the reputation of Philip!

Our conclusion from this material is not very flattering for Alexander. The attempts to create an exploitable importance for his baby son, for his sister or finally for his son Heracles all in the last resort failed to produce the kind of support among the influential Macedonian troops which their promoters were hoping for: the influence of Alexander IV and hence of his guardians from the very beginning was limited by the decision that Philip should also be king; Perdiccas preferred an alliance with Antipater through Nicaea to one with Olympias through Cleopatra; Cassander could successfully murder Olympias, Roxane and Alexander IV, and Heracles without causing the sort of disastrous rioting and loss of confidence which Perdiccas' murder of Cynnane at Sardis and Olympias' murder of Philip and Eurydice had caused. There can therefore be little doubt that in Macedonia the influence of Philip and his non-Alexander family, even after Alexander's Asiatic achievements, remained the most potent traditionalist political influence in Macedonian affairs. We must not however exaggerate. It is perfectly clear that after the first years, perhaps as soon as the death of Antipater, the critical factor in the affairs of the *diadochoi*

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XIX 52, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XIX 53, 2 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Diod. XIX 52, 4; 105, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Diod. XIX 52, 5.

was increasingly the personal loyalty of the troops to their commander and the ability of the commanders to reward them in terms of pay, booty and land. Connections with the old Macedonian royal house, which in themselves made no contribution to pay, booty or land, could be no more than a dispensable decoration.

Once the new dynasties were established evidence nevertheless suggests that the Antigonids and Ptolemies chose to advance the official view that they were connected with the Argead royal house. The Antigonids however seem to have claimed no special relationship with Alexander; they seem not to have emphasised relationship to him over and above the other members of his house. The epigrams of Samus from the time of Philip V draw attention merely to Philip's Heraclid descent<sup>1</sup>; the 'progonoi' monument of Antigonus Gonatas (or Doson) at Delos may have begun its group of statues with a god, if so then presumably Heracles<sup>2</sup>. There is certainly no reason for thinking that the single outsize statue of the series may have been Alexander. Similarly, the much-emphasised 'special relationship' between Philip V and Peloponnesian Argos is a direct reference to the alleged Argead origins in Argos<sup>3</sup>; Polybius accused Philip V of not imitating the beneficial actions of Philip and Alexander, though he claimed to be their συγγενής<sup>4</sup>—but the mention of Philip along with Alexander here makes it clear that the specific *exempla* are Polybius' own, and that what Philip is supposed to have claimed is merely a relationship with the Argeads. Indeed, his interest in his great namesake is well attested by the fact that he had Theopompus' *Philippica* abbre-

<sup>1</sup> *Anth. Pal.* VI 114; 115; 116; on this see C. F. EDSON, in *HSPb* 45 (1934), 213 ff.

<sup>2</sup> F. COURBY, *Exploration archéologique de Délos, V: Le portique d'Antigone* (Paris 1912), 74-83 (cited by C. F. EDSON, *art. cit.*, 218).

<sup>3</sup> *Liv.* XXVII 30, 9; XXXII 22, 11, repeating an Argead tradition which was already known to Herodotus (VIII 137, 1).

<sup>4</sup> *Plb.* V 10, 10.

viated for easy consumption<sup>1</sup>. Philip's coinage, as much of the Antigonid coinage, made deliberate play with the Heracles motif; but of a special connection with or extra emphasis on Alexander in the Antigonid house we have nothing at all<sup>2</sup>.

The situation in Egypt was, of course, quite different. In Macedonia the established Antigonids, in particular, it seems, Philip V, might propound their claim to traditional legitimacy by asserting a connection with the Argead royal house in general: for them Alexander played no particularly important role. For the Ptolemies, who possessed Alexander's body, whose capital city was the greatest of Alexander's foundations—indeed, the only one of Alexander's foundations which achieved more than provincial importance—the connection with Alexander personally was of great importance and was indeed subtly emphasised by Soter himself in his *History of Alexander*<sup>3</sup>. It is thus clear that from the beginning the figure of Alexander, in cult and propaganda, had to play a major part in the ideology of the Ptolemaic kingdom<sup>4</sup>. It was nevertheless not finally personal descent from Alexander—which would in any case have been impossible to impose on the first generations after Alexander, who knew the relative ages of Alexander and Ptolemy Soter—or even an alleged close personal blood-relationship with Alexander that the Ptolemaic propagandists apparently chose to advance as a claim to Ptolemy's legitimacy among the Greco-Macedonian population of Egypt. Again, as with the Antigonids in Macedonia itself, a much more generally formu-

<sup>1</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* 176, p. 121 a 35 = *FGrH* 115 T 31.

<sup>2</sup> The source situation is not adequate to provide a firm check on C. F. EDSON's arguments (*art. cit.*, 220 ff.) that there was real substance to the Antigonid claim to blood relationship with the Argeads, going back to the fifth century; but if it were true we might have expected that Antigonus in his propaganda campaign against Cassander, in particular in the Tyre declaration (Diod. XIX 61), would have made use of it. That he did not seem to tell against C. F. Edson's view.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. M. ERRINGTON, in *CQ* 19 (1969), 233 ff.

<sup>4</sup> On this see above p. 143 f.; below p. 170 ff.

lated claim to connection with the Argead house seems to have been promoted. Two accounts were eventually in circulation: that Ptolemy was of Heraclid descent and related—at some distance, admittedly—to the Argeads through his mother Arsinoe<sup>1</sup>; the second, that Arsinoe was already pregnant with Ptolemy Soter by Philip II when Lagos married her, that Ptolemy was thus in fact a natural son of Philip but acknowledged by Lagos as his<sup>2</sup>; and Plutarch tells a tale according to which Ptolemy allegedly knew nothing to tell about his father Lagos' origins<sup>3</sup>.

W. W. Tarn attempted to prove that this second version was at first officially accepted by Soter, but already by 279 (W. W. Tarn's date for the *pompe* described by Callixenus, in which he claimed to be able to trace the Heraclid claim) was abandoned for the descent through Arsinoe. This was totally demolished by F. Jacoby<sup>4</sup>. But what is informative for our investigation is that in all this mythologising about Ptolemaic

<sup>1</sup> *OGIS* 54, 5; Satyrus, fr. 21, in *FHG* III p. 165. If it is this relationship which Theocritus (XVII 26-7) had in mind in his references to Heraclid ancestry (so W. DITTENBERGER, ad *OGIS* 54 n. 5) a date before 270 for the propagation of the relationship can be established. Theocritus is the only source to make the explicit point that Ptolemy shared this Heraclid ancestry with Alexander.

<sup>2</sup> Curt. IX 8, 22; Paus. I 6, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *De cobib. ira* 9, 458 A-B.

<sup>4</sup> W. W. TARN, in *JHS* 53 (1933), 57 ff.; F. JACOBY, in *Hermes* 69 (1934), 214 ff. H. BERVE, *Das Alexanderreich* ... II, no. 668 had already guessed that the legend about Ptolemy's being a natural son of Philip belonged to the earliest period of the Ptolemaic kingdom, which W. W. Tarn found convenient; but as F. JACOBY points out (*FGrH* 138, *Kommentar*: II D p. 498) it is unlikely, in view of Diod. XVII 106, 6 f. that Cleitarchus knew of such an alleged relationship; we may add that although Ptolemy himself was happy enough to emphasise his own closeness to Alexander (as the Alexandrian Cleitarchus in the Diodorus passage cited also does) in his propaganda and his *History of Alexander*, the rumoured blood-relationship mentioned by Curtius and Pausanias was not known to Arrian and therefore can have played no part in Ptolemy's work. Nor does it play any part in the actual politics of the succession to Alexander. It is thus difficult to believe in an early origin of the tale, even more difficult to believe (with W. W. Tarn) that it was both early and officially propagated.



origins Alexander himself played a part only in Theocritus' conceit, that both were Heraclids, that is, I suppose, strictly speaking related in myth only<sup>1</sup>. In any case the point of the story about Arsinoë's pregnancy by Philip seems to be not so much that thereby Ptolemy became a natural half-brother of Alexander: it is quite simply that he thereby became a son of Philip and had the blood of the Argeads in his veins; and the same basic point is made more clumsily by Satyrus' genealogy of Euergetes.

The third of the Macedonian successor kingdoms, the Seleucid kingdom, despite the fact that it, just as much as Ptolemaic Egypt, owed its very existence as a Macedonian kingdom to Alexander's expedition, seems to have made no attempt at all to use the Alexander-name for political or mythologising purposes in direct connection with the family of Seleucus. The references to the Seleucid kingdom in later writers no more than reflect contemporary usage: the kingdom is *Macedonicum imperium*—not Seleucus's, certainly not Alexander's<sup>2</sup>. M. Rostovtzeff indeed argued that the Seleucids may have officially counted Alexander as their first king<sup>3</sup>—but his evidence is unconvincing: in the only surviving list of Seleucid kings from Seleucid times<sup>4</sup> he is not mentioned, and this seems decisive in view of the inadequacy of other arguments. Indeed, even a mythical connection with the royal house of Macedon

<sup>1</sup> Theocritus makes no attempt to suggest that the two kings had anything more in common than their common mythological ancestry and their acceptance at the time of writing ἐν Διὸς οἴκῳ (XVII 17). The depictions of Alexander and Ptolemy in the Alexandrian *pompe* described by Callixeinus do not seem to me to be interpretable as references to any claimed blood-relationship between Alexander and Soter: Athen. V 201 d; 202 a. What the εἰκόνας βασιλέων (*ibid.*, 201 f) were, which W. W. TARN (in *JHS* 53 (1933), 60) with a rush of imagination, interpreted as "the pedigree of the Ptolemies (and probably of Alexander) back to Dionysus, as Satyrus gives it," is quite obscure.

<sup>2</sup> See the material collected by Ch. EDSON, in *CPb* 53 (1958), 153-70.

<sup>3</sup> In *JHS* 55 (1935), 56 f., followed by A. HEUSS, in *A & A* 4 (1954), 67.

<sup>4</sup> *OGIS* 246 (from Teos).

for the Seleucids lacks contemporary testimony<sup>1</sup>. Zeus Olympios was of course widely worshipped and occupied an important place in Seleucid religion: but the claimed line of descent for the founder of the kingdom (in the earliest extant version) seems to have run through Apollo, not through Heracles<sup>2</sup>.

What all this seems to amount to, therefore, is that in the official (or semi-official) mythologising propaganda of the successor kingdoms Alexander himself, even in Egypt, played no

<sup>1</sup> M. ROSTOVITZ, in *JHS* 55 (1935), 63 ff. draws attention to Libanius, *Or.* XI 91, who, in connection with the founding of Antioch, mentions among the settlers τῶν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους, οἷς ἦν, οἶμαι, συγγένεια Σελεύκῳ κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν Τήμενον. If this reflects more than imaginative embroidery by Libanius (which the obscurity of the reference, coming after specific mention of Argives and Cretans might suggest) the most that can be extracted from it is an alleged Heraclid connection—which for a prominent Macedonian noble would not in itself be very surprising. It is entirely fanciful to see in the *demotikon* Ὀλυμπιεὺς at Seleucia-in-Pieria (M. HOLLEAUX, *Etudes d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques* III (Paris 1942), 199 ff. = *BCH* 57 (1933), 6-67; text also in C. B. WELLES, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934), no. 45) a reference to Alexander's mother Olympias. This possibility M. HOLLEAUX mentions only to dismiss (*op. cit.*, 250 n. 8) but it was tentatively revived by M. ROSTOVITZ, *art. cit.*, 64-5. M. HOLLEAUX (*op. cit.*, 250) mentions a sufficient number of more likely explanations for the origin of the name.

W. W. TARN, in *CQ* 23 (1929), 139, draws attention to the fact that Antiochus I of Commagene seems to have regarded Alexander as one of his ancestors on his mother's side (*OGIS* 398) through the Seleucid house. He explains this by assuming a fiction whereby Seleucus Nicator's wife Apama was regarded as a daughter of Alexander. This explanation is entirely fanciful, still more W. W. Tarn's view that the "legend" already existed and was known in the Peloponnese by late third century B.C. (he uses it to explain why Alexander of Megalopolis called his daughter Apama, *Liv.* XXXV 47, 5). In fact we have no idea why Apama of Megalopolis received her name; nor how Antiochus I of Commagene traced his Seleucid wife's ancestry back to Alexander: by his time a mythical descent for Seleucus Nicator himself from Alexander would doubtless be as easy to invent as a fictitious descent from Apama. More important however for our theme is that nothing supports the view that this myth had anything to do with the Seleucid kingdom or with the official pedigree of the house of Seleucus. At most it sheds a side-light on how a fringe-monarch like Antiochus of Commagene as late as the first century B.C. found an active use for a dynastic myth about Seleucid origins, which the Seleucids themselves had apparently not used.

<sup>2</sup> *Iust.* XV 4, 3.



very important role—in Macedonia itself and the Seleucid kingdom perhaps even no role at all, although the Ptolemies and at least some of the Antigonids encouraged the propagation of the view that their line was directly related to the Argead house. The reason for the modesty of Alexander's role must go back to the early days of the *diadochoi* where, as we have seen, only in the brief period immediately following the death of Alexander were Alexander's own living relatives regarded as particularly important political objects: in the end all the leading *diadochoi* acquiesced in (or encouraged) their neutralisation and eventual execution. There must have seemed therefore no particular point in artificially resuscitating memories of an obscure or fabricated connection, the value of which the successors themselves had done so much to enfeeble.

### III ALEXANDER'S FAME

Nobody from the early hellenistic period whose opinion is extant seems to have been aware of or willing to admit the extent to which the creation of the Macedonian empire was the personal responsibility of Alexander. So far as I can see, even in that personality-loving period nobody seems to have given a personalised name to what we nowadays tend to call Alexander's empire. In the coverage of the history of the *diadochoi* by Diodorus and Plutarch—who must in this respect reflect the usage of their common source, the contemporary Hieronymus of Cardia—those of the *diadochoi* who were interested in asserting a central power struggled, as has often been remarked, for possession of τὰ ὅλα or ἡ τῶν ὅλων ἡγεμονία<sup>1</sup>; and this was indeed more than Alexander's achievement alone: it included the domination of Thrace and the southern Balkans, that is, explicitly Philip's European empire as well as Alexander's Asi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Diod. XVIII 50, 2; 5; 54, 4; XIX 41, 1; XX 37, 4; Plut. *Eum.* 12, 1; cf. *Demetr.* 15, 3.

atic<sup>1</sup>. It was therefore, if anything, the empire of the Macedonians; and it is accordingly not very surprising that the name Macedonian Empire (*Macedonicum Imperium*) seems to have lingered on in general usage, even into the late Roman Empire, as the normal description of the successor kingdom of the Seleucids<sup>2</sup>. In view of this it is hardly surprising that the monarchy in Macedonia itself seems to have also remained quite unpersonalised, beyond the name of the current ruler. In the period of the *diadochoi* it is normally described as ἡ Μακεδόνων βασιλεία or ἡ κατὰ τὴν Μακεδονίαν ἡγεμονία or variations on the same theme<sup>3</sup>. Thus Alexander, despite his later reputation, seems to have had no immediate recognised existence as the founder of the empire which now goes under his name.

In contrast to this, personal contact of individuals with Alexander or personal experience of Alexander's expedition were recorded by the same Hieronymus as distinguishing facts worth mentioning for their own sake or even as arguments worth using and preserving. Damis of Megalopolis, Diodorus records, had been with Alexander and thus knew how to handle elephants<sup>4</sup>; the remnants of the Perdiccan officers with Attalus are described as being "outstanding for boldness and dexterity as a result of their service with Alexander"<sup>5</sup>; "the *betairoi* who had made the expedition with Alexander" are singled out for mention among the participants in Perdiccas' feast at Persepolis in 316<sup>6</sup>; Pithon, satrap of Media, was allegedly difficult for Antigonus to remove "since he was a man who had had advancement under Alexander and was currently satrap of Media"<sup>7</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> This is clear from Diod. XIX 41, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Amply demonstrated by Ch. EDSON, in *CPh* 53 (1958), 153-70.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Diod. XVIII 52, 1; 54, 1; 56, 2; XIX 52, 1; 61, 2; XX 20, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Diod. XVIII 71, 2. See the discussion of this material also in J. SEIBERT, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Ptolemaios' I.* (München 1969), 152 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Diod. XIX 16, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Diod. XIX 22, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Diod. XIX 46, 2.

Andronicus of Olynthus and Philip, who were "older men who had made the whole campaign with Alexander" and Pithon "who had campaigned with Alexander" were appointed by Antigonus to be advisers for Demetrius at Gaza<sup>1</sup>; and finally Ophellas is described as "one of the friends who had campaigned with Alexander"<sup>2</sup>. In all these cases the companionship of Alexander on the expedition is positively evaluated, and Hieronymus seems to have taken the view that his readers would share his own positive assessment of the value or interest of these men's experiences.

Other incidences of this type are more dynamic and demonstrate that Alexander's companionship, employed in political argument as a measure of personal value or claim to influence and esteem was regularly used as a weapon of political propaganda in the struggles of the successors. Polyperchon is described by Diodorus, at the time of his appointment as *epimeletes*, as "practically the oldest of those who made the expedition with Alexander and respected by the people of Macedonia"; and it seems clear that Diodorus (Hieronymus) regards these as the reasons for Polyperchon's appointment<sup>3</sup>. It is well-known that Eumenes had great difficulty in holding his crisis-ridden Asiatic coalition together for the fight against Antigonus. As the armies collected in Susiana in 316 Peucestas, the local satrap, argued that he himself should be awarded the overall command because of the size of his troop contingent "and because of his position with Alexander"; Antigenes, the commander of the Silver Shields, argued against him that his men should have the right to choose the overall commander "since they had conquered Asia with Alexander and their bravery had made them unconquered". Neither argument convinced, since Eumenes once again succeeded in persuading everybody to accept

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XIX 69, 1 (Andronicus and Philip); 82, 1 (Pithon).

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XX 40, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Diod. XVIII 48, 4.

his Alexander-tent as a compromise ; but the tone and direction of the arguments is clear enough <sup>1</sup>. The Silver Shields tried to make further use of the same argument as propaganda against Antigonus' troops before the final battle of Gabene, when they pointed out that Antigonus' men would be opposed in the battle by the men who had conquered under Philip and Alexander. The argument did not win them the battle, but their fame and assertiveness ensured that after they came into Antigonus' hands their unit was deliberately broken up, perhaps partly reflecting the potential influence of their claims and experience <sup>2</sup>.

Reputation won by service under Alexander is alleged by Diodorus as the main reason for Cassander's murder of Aristonous, though other more immediate considerations will almost certainly have predominated <sup>3</sup>; and Seleucus represented to Ptolemy a similar motive for Antigonus' policy in the east: that Antigonus was particularly concerned to expel from their satrapies those who had served with Alexander—Seleucus mentioned in particular Pithon, Peucestas and himself; and indeed, while still in Babylon Seleucus had refused to recognise Antigonus' right to interfere with him, "since he had acquired his post from the Macedonians for services during Alexander's lifetime" <sup>4</sup>. Moreover, if we may believe Diodorus, it was by precisely an appeal to the experience and spirit which his men had acquired from their service with Alexander that the same Seleucus was able to encourage them to accompany him to Babylon after Demetrius' defeat at Gaza (312) <sup>5</sup>. Thus Seleucus, despite his failure to attribute any special place to Alexander in his new kingdom once he felt himself to be established there, was glad enough in the earlier phases of his career to take what-

<sup>1</sup> Diod. XIX 15, 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Diod. XIX 41, 1; 48, 3; Plut. *Eum.* 19, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Diod. XIX 51, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Diod. XIX 56, 1; 55, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Diod. XIX 90, 3.

ever advantages he could from the employment of Alexander's name.

The last reference of this kind occurs much later. Probably in 285, when Lysimachus was setting out to take over the part of Macedonia which Pyrrhus then controlled he first tried a diplomatic approach to the Macedonians in Pyrrhus' part of the land and won over many of the leading men. If we may believe Plutarch's account, among the arguments which he used was, that by supporting Pyrrhus the Macedonians "were rejecting from Macedonia the friends and confidants of Alexander", that is, himself and his supporters<sup>1</sup>. The long gap in our evidence, from 312 to 285, in which no instance of an *argumentum ad Alexandrum* is attested, is no doubt to be attributed to two factors: firstly, the rapidly deteriorating quality of our source material for this sort of thing after 312; and secondly, the effectiveness of the argument in the course of time will doubtless have diminished. That Lysimachus found it useful even at that late date (if Plutarch's record is authentic) must be attributed to the fact that he was opposed by a non-Macedonian and he was operating within Macedonia itself, where such notions, particularly in the light of recent experience of the house of Cassander and of Demetrius, might retain their effectiveness longer than elsewhere. And the argument was by then in any case exclusive: Lysimachus was the only one in the area who could advance it.

#### IV HONOURS AND CULTS

Strabo comments, in connection with Lysimachus' renaming of Alexandria Troas, that the successors thought it εὐσεβές first to found cities named after Alexander and only then to name

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Pyrrh.* 12, 7.



them after themselves<sup>1</sup>. Appian, in a famous passage of his *Syriaca*, in discussing the city foundations of Seleucus Nicator, says that some of the cities were named ἐς τιμὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως; but in his detailed list only two Alexander-names are mentioned, Alexandropolis in India and Alexandreschate in Scythia<sup>2</sup>. Since Alexandria Eschate (Chojend) was actually founded by Alexander himself, the most which can come into consideration for Seleucus is a technical re-founding or perhaps an addition to the facilities, which was remembered and got wrongly into Appian's list<sup>3</sup>. Alexandropolis in India is of dubious authenticity, being (as such) quite unidentifiable<sup>4</sup>. W. W. Tarn argued that the form of the name Alexandropolis, in contrast to Alexandria, indicates merely a military colony (which many of the other so-called *poleis* of Appian's list certainly were)<sup>5</sup>. But for our present purpose the precise technical character of the settlement is unimportant, (although it is clear that Seleucus' bestowing a name derived from Alexander merely on a military colony, and an obscure Indian frontier colony at that, has a certain value as evidence for his attitude to Alexander). If Appian's information here is correct, this Alexandropolis in India constitutes the only evidence for use by any Seleucid of the Alexander name in this kind of capacity (since he is wrong about Alexandria Eschate); and were it not for Strabo's comment, the balance of probability would seem to be tilted against its authenticity.

<sup>1</sup> Strab. XIII 1, 26, p. 593: ... ἔδοξε γὰρ εὐσεβὲς εἶναι τοὺς Ἀλέξανδρον διαδεξαμένους ἐκείνου πρότερον κτίζειν ἐπωνύμους πόλεις, εἰθ' ἑαυτῶν.

<sup>2</sup> App. *Syr.* 57, 297.

<sup>3</sup> Sources in H. BERVE, *Das Alexanderreich* ... I 293; cf. W. W. TARN, *Alexander the Great* II 235-6.

<sup>4</sup> See V. TSCHERIKOWER, *Die hellenistischen Städtegründungen von Alexander dem Großen bis auf die Römerzeit* (Leipzig 1927), III.

<sup>5</sup> *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge 1951), 7; *Alexander the Great* II 248-9.



The implications of the Strabo passage seem however to have been neglected<sup>1</sup> by investigators of hellenistic city-foundations which, as we shall see, affects our view of Antigonos as well as of Seleucus. The context of the passage, Lysimachus' renaming Antigoneia as Alexandria Troas, seems to imply, if Strabo was not simply inventing the information on which he based his comment, that Antigonos also had already made his act of εὐσέβεια to Alexander before founding Antigoneia in the Troad. Moreover, Lysimachus and Antigonos can scarcely be the only *diadochoi* whom Strabo had in mind here: he mentions them both by name, but nevertheless uses the imprecise general form οἱ Ἀλέξανδρον διαδεχόμενοι for the practicans of the Alexandria foundations. Now Cassander cannot here be considered. As we have already seen, his policy was not merely to annihilate Alexander's heirs in practice but he made no attempt to show any goodwill even in propaganda towards Alexander or his achievements. For him an Alexander-foundation certainly cannot be considered. For Ptolemy the development of Alexandria in Egypt may have been regarded by Strabo as an adequate token of representative εὐσέβεια. But for Seleucus no general or particular considerations rule it out, especially in the early years of his rule when, as we have seen, Alexander's reputation was in fact in some ways exploited by him<sup>2</sup>; and for Strabo's comment to be meaningful any Alexander foundation of Seleucus must in any case belong to his early years. In this case, despite the lack of other good arguments for its authenticity, the Alexandropolis in India of Appian's list may indeed be the Seleucid foundation which helped to justify Strabo's comment.

There is, in fact, from the whole of the hellenistic world only one further Alexandria certainly known, which was not

<sup>1</sup> In W. W. TARN's case, wilfully obscured: see his hopelessly selective treatment, *Alexander the Great* II 239 f., based on his groundless assertion (*ibid.*, 238) that none of the *diadochoi* ever used the Alexander name.

<sup>2</sup> Above p. 161 f.

explicitly founded by Alexander himself, Alexandria Troas. The city was founded by synoecism by Antigonus and named Antigoneia. When Lysimachus got control of the area after Ipsus he changed its name to Alexandria, thus providing the specific occasion which provoked Strabo's general comment <sup>1</sup>. This comment has already given us occasion to reconsider the authenticity of Alexandropolis in India; and in the light of it we should clearly examine the possibility of an earlier Alexander foundation (or re-naming, Lysimachus-fashion) for Antigonus. Of all the attested Alexandrias only one seems a real possibility (though others now unknown may have existed). Stephanus of Byzantium includes in his list of Alexandrias an Alexandria πρὸς τῷ Λάτμῳ τῆς Καρίας <sup>2</sup>. This puzzled Tarn so much that he suggested a complicated transmission confusion with a Heracleia in Media, the foundation of which is also attributed to Alexander; but he was himself dissatisfied with his wild explanation and inclined to the view that some lost word hides behind Λάτμῳ <sup>3</sup>. This however would not solve the difficulty, since Stephanus explicitly adds τῆς Καρίας. A. H. M. Jones without argument but possibly correctly assumed the identity of this Alexandria by Latmus of Stephanus with the well-known Heracleia by Latmus; but he also presumed that its naming as an Alexandria had been by Lysimachus, after the fall of Cassander's brother Pleistarchus, who had called it Pleistarcheia <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Strab. XIII 1, 26, p. 593; cf. V. TSCHERIKOWER, *Städtegründungen...*, 16; L. ROBERT, *Etudes de numismatique grecque* (Paris 1951), 5 f. Cf. W. W. TARN, *Alexander the Great* II 239 ff. for a typically bad-tempered attitude to an awkward source (quite unreliable).

<sup>2</sup> Steph. Byz. s.v. 'Αλεξάνδρεια (10).

<sup>3</sup> *Alexander the Great* II 242 f.

<sup>4</sup> *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* <sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1971), 43 and n. 23; cf. V. TSCHERIKOWER, *Städtegründungen...*, 28-9. On Pleistarcheia see Steph. Byz. s.v. Πλειστάρχεια. A. H. M. Jones says that Pleistarchus had rebuilt the city but Stephanus does not offer any confirmation and the archeological evidence for the building of the walls of Heracleia cannot be dated sufficiently accurately (cf. Fr. KRISCHEN, *Milet* III 2 (Berlin 1922); L. ROBERT, *Le sanctuaire de Sinuri*

However, if Strabo's comment is to be taken seriously it should perhaps imply also that none of the unnamed successors whom he has in mind founded or named more than one Alexandria; since Lysimachus was unquestionably responsible for Alexandria Troas, A. H. M. Jones's guess that he was also responsible for Alexandria by Latmus cannot be regarded as very probable. The town must however be a clear candidate for Antigonos' pious foundation (if there was one). It cannot be a foundation of Alexander himself; and the attribution to Antigonos would also offer us another example of Cassander's hostility towards both Alexander and Antigonos: sometime after Ipsos Cassander's brother Pleistarchus took control of Heracleia by Latmus which he re-named Pleistarcheia<sup>1</sup>. There was no particularly good reason for this, though the practice was common enough not to call for comment. However, had the town sometime

*près de Mylasa I* (Paris 1945), 60 n. 1.; J. M. COOK & G. E. BEAN, in *ABSA* 52 (1957), 138-40; F. M. WINTER, in *AJA* 67 (1963), 374 n. 38; *ibid.*, 75 (1971), 417 n. 28). A. H. M. Jones is followed now by R. A. HADLEY, in *JHS* 94 (1974), 63, who misleadingly states that Lysimachus refounded "several cities which he renamed in Alexander's honour. These include Alexandria Troas ... and Alexandria-by-Latmus, the former Heracleia-by-Latmus". In fact one instance only is certain and more perhaps unlikely (see text above).

This whole line of argument rests of course on the unproven identification of this Alexandria with Heracleia-by-Latmus. J. G. DROYSEN, *Geschichte des Hellenismus* III 2, 198-9, suggested an identification with Alinda which, as L. ROBERT pointed out at length (*op. cit.*, 59 n. 3), is not to be rejected out of hand. It would however imply a re-naming by Ada in 334 (cf. Arr. *Anab.* I 23), and must in this case be the first of all the Alexandrias—and not founded by Alexander. We might have expected to have heard about this in some source, a fact which perhaps argues against it.

The modern theory that Pleistarchus controlled a "buffer zone" stretching from Cilicia to Caria as a result of Ipsos has been exploded by L. ROBERT, *op. cit.*, 55 ff.; cf. H. SCHAEFER, in *RE* XXI 1, 196 ff. His presence in Caria however is now well enough attested: L. ROBERT, *op. cit.*, no. 44, published an inscription from Sinuri dated by him; R. MERKELBACH, in *ZPE* 16 (1975), 163, says that he has seen an inscription at Euromus dated by Pleistarchus (though he prints no text); and he draws attention to the inscription from Tralles for a Pleistarchos Antipatrou published by A. E. KONTOLEON, in *BCH* 10 (1886), 455-6, no. 6. He also clearly had something to do with Heracleia-Pleistarcheia.

<sup>1</sup> Steph. Byz. s.v. Πλειστάρχεια.

earlier been re-named Alexandria by Antigonus, then there may have been a very precise reason for the new change of name: the name of Alexander was to be removed together with the memory of Antigonus' act of εὐσέβεια.

Even if we are right to take Strabo's comment seriously as a formal statement of the facts, the εὐσέβεια of the successors in this respect was not particularly impressive; and it certainly does not seem to have stretched into the second generation. We know of no further Alexandria foundations or re-namings; and indeed, some existing Alexandrias were refounded under different names. We have noticed the possibility that Alexandria by Latmus became Pleistarcheia; in the Seleucid kingdom several cases of re-foundings of earlier Alexandrias as Antiocheias seem probable. If W. W. Tarn's arguments are right, Alexandria-Merv, Alexandria on the Oxus and Alexandria Eschate were refounded in each case by Antiochus I as Antiocheiai, perhaps having been destroyed by nomad invasions<sup>1</sup>; a century later Alexandria in Persis was re-founded for unknown reasons and renamed Antiocheia by (probably) Antiochus IV<sup>2</sup>. *Eusebeia* towards Alexander thus did not run very deep in the city-founding activities of the successor kingdoms. In this sphere, as in others, the traces which bound the kingdoms to Alexander were very rapidly thrown off and the chief pre-occupation of the successors seems to have been much more to find independent justification for their existence: thus while Seleucus may conceivably have founded or re-founded one obscure Alexander-city (or community of some sort) Appian knows to relate of no less than sixteen Antiocheias, five Laodiceias, three Stratoniceias and one Apameia<sup>3</sup>; and even if the authenticity of all the attributions to Seleucus I may be doubted,

<sup>1</sup> Evidence and discussion in W. W. TARN, in *JHS* 60 (1940), 89 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Nat.* VI 31, 139; cf. V. TSCHERIKOWER, *Städtegründungen* ..., 178; O. MØRKHOLM, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (København 1966), 169.

<sup>3</sup> App. *Syr.* 57, 297.



the family ideology of the Seleucids contrasts strongly with the virtual absence of the Alexander name. And the same dynastic attitude is clear in the practices of the other *diadochoi*, though not in such an extreme form. Cassander may even have set the trend with Cassandreia as early as 315; and he followed it in due course with Thessalonike and Pleistarcheia. But in this aspect his avowed hostility towards Alexander's house did not distinguish him at this superficial level from the other *diadochoi*, who in other respects followed less extreme policies. Whatever the truth about Alexandreia in Caria, Antigoneiai are known from Bithynia, from the Troad and from Syria, which demonstrate the trend clearly enough. Lysimachus, despite his renaming of Alexandreia Troas, had no hesitation in founding his Lysimacheia in Thrace; nor did he shrink from renaming such distinguished cities as Smyrna and Ephesus Eurydiceia and Arsinoeia, after his wife and daughter respectively <sup>1</sup>.

When we come to examine Alexander's cult *Nachleben* we find the same sort of general pattern. We know of no city cult, the origin of which need be later than Alexander's death; all seem likely to go back to the benefits which Alexander brought, in theory or in practice, to the Greek communities in Asia Minor by defeating the Persians <sup>2</sup>. The cults lived on, some, as at Erythrae and Bargylia, into the third century A.D. <sup>3</sup>. But this was remarkable only in the length of time involved. After his initial invasion Alexander had never returned to Asia Minor, the cities of Asia Minor had therefore never in his lifetime had significant cause to hate him; and the cult celebration quickly assumed a regular position in the normal life-pattern of the communities. So, for instance, we find the decaying Alexandreion at Priene being restored towards the end of the

<sup>1</sup> Sources and discussion in V. TSCHERIKOWER, *Städtegründungen*...

<sup>2</sup> See in general Chr. HABICHT, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte* <sup>2</sup> (München 1970), 17 f.

<sup>3</sup> Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, nos. 10 d and 10 f.

second century B.C. by a group of private individuals who are praised by the community for their munificence<sup>1</sup>; the Alexandria, an *agon* of the Ionian *koinon*, were still celebrated at a grove sacred to Alexander in Strabo's day<sup>2</sup>. The administration of the cult might in the course of time be rationalised, as at Ephesus, where it seems to have been amalgamated by the second century A.D. with the cult of the Roman emperors and Gaius and Lucius Caesar<sup>3</sup>, at Rhodes already by 129 B.C. with Dionysus<sup>4</sup>. The relative importance of the cult of Alexander at Erythrae is traceable for the third century B.C. in the great inscription about the sale of priesthoods, where the ἐπώνιον, the tax on the price paid for the priesthood, although not fully preserved on the stone, cannot be restored as being less than that of the most expensive priesthoods of the list, the group which cost more than 2000 dr., of which only three others, Hermes Agoraios, Artemis Aithopia and Aphrodite ἐν Δαφναίῳ[ι are preserved on the stone<sup>5</sup>. This fact suggests that at Erythrae at least the standing of the Alexander cult was, presumably from the beginning, deliberately intended to be equal to or greater than that of the richest city cults. The later conflation of the Ephesian cult with that of the Caesars argues that its status also remained high.

The fact that these cults continued to exist for so long should not however in itself be regarded as particularly remarkable. It is entirely in keeping with normal hellenistic

<sup>1</sup> *Inscr. Prien.* 108; cf. Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, no. 10 b.

<sup>2</sup> Strab. XIV 1, 31, p. 644; cf. Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, no. 10 a.

<sup>3</sup> *SEG* IV 521; cf. Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, no. 10 c.

<sup>4</sup> Evidence and discussion in Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, no. 11.

<sup>5</sup> F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris 1955), n° 25, to which add the fragment published by W. G. FORREST, in *BCH* 83 (1959), 513 ff. An incomplete version was published by W. DITTENBERGER, *Syll.* 3 1014, many of whose interpretative comments however remain useful. The most expensive priesthoods are: Alexander (line 109), Hermes Agoraios (lines 105 & 115), Artemis Aithopia (line 6 of W. G. FORREST's fragment), Aphrodite ἐν Δαφναίῳ[ι (*ibid.*, line 11).

practice that such cults continued to be observed long after the person honoured had died, so long as before his death he had given no reason, by a change in his attitude to the honouring city, for the cult's being abolished. In this respect Alexander's cult was little different from the cults of a range of later hellenistic kings, whose cult was also maintained in many cases for several generations after the death of the king concerned: once part of the festival calendar of a city, the new cults seem to have remained so long as nothing intervened to change the general situation <sup>1</sup>.

We have already noticed that two of the three major Macedonian monarchies of the hellenistic age, the Seleucids and the Antigonids, made no traceable attempt to work Alexander into their pedigrees or to pay any particular attention to him, despite the later Antigonids' wish, for obvious reasons, to attach themselves to the traditions of the Argead house. The situation in this respect was in Ptolemaic Egypt different, though the role of Alexander even here should not be exaggerated. In Alexandria itself Alexander was honoured with a city-cult as *ktistes*, as he was doubtless also in his other foundations, though evidence, and that surprisingly late and modest, has survived only from Alexandria: a papyrus of A.D. 120/1 mentions a priest of Alexander *ktistes* of the city and the 'age groups' (ἡλικειῶν) <sup>2</sup>; it is a reasonable assumption that this cult went back to the foundation of the city, though the positive earlier evidence which P. M. Fraser has assembled is far from conclusive <sup>3</sup>. On the other hand our evidence about Ptolemaic Alexandria as a whole is too haphazard and fragmentary to attach very much weight to the fact that our only piece of positive evidence is so late. The quantity of evidence however contrasts very strikingly with that for the state cult of Alexander,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chr. HABICHT, *op. cit.*, 185 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Sammelb.* 6611.

<sup>3</sup> P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I 212 & notes.

to which the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies was in due course added ; and the conclusion suggests itself that the government took no particular pains to promote the cult of Alexander *ketistes* (which nevertheless managed to survive until at least the reign of Hadrian).

The official Ptolemaic state cult of Alexander was almost certainly founded by Soter ; a papyrus from Elephantine of 285/4 is dated in an approximation to later style : "Year 40 of the reign of Ptolemy, in the month Gorpaios, in the priesthood of Menelaos son of Lagos"—that is, Soter's brother. Alexander is not himself mentioned, but the style nevertheless so closely resembles the later official dating by the eponymous priests of Alexander and the dynasty that any other alternative is difficult to envisage <sup>1</sup>. Soter's cult of Alexander then became a peg on which Philadelphus could hang his own particular development : apotheosis of himself and Arsinoe as Theoi Adelphoi ; and the eponymous priest of Alexander and the ever-growing dynasty thus became by royal ordinance the legal (though incredibly cumbersome) method of dating contracts <sup>2</sup>. We must surely assume that in making this rule Philadelphus was more deeply concerned with the propagation of his newly founded dynastic addition to the longer-standing Alexander cult than with the propagation of the Alexander-cult as such ; and that the Alexander-cult thus became little more than a respectably veiled vehicle for putting his own dynastic cult into practice. This view seems to be confirmed by the fact that, although there is plenty of evidence from Egypt for dedications to (or on behalf of) the Ptolemaic royal house, there is as yet no single instance known of any private dedication to (or on behalf of) Alexander ; and although there is evidence of games and processions in

<sup>1</sup> *PEleph.* 2. See in general for this and what follows P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I 215 ff. and notes, with comprehensive discussion and citation of earlier literature.

<sup>2</sup> The first known instance : *PHib.* 199 of 272-1.



connection with the dynastic cult, there are no games or festivals of any kind known for the official cult of Alexander <sup>1</sup>.

One might be inclined to attribute this extraordinary-seeming neglect of Alexander to the inadequacy of our evidence, but I tend to regard it as more fundamental: by the reign of Philadelphus Alexander was long dead and could not help anybody; members of the living dynasty were for this immediate reason more likely to receive private dedications. The situation of Soter in this respect had been quite different. Soter had known Alexander intimately; his early career owed everything to Alexander; his security in Egypt in the early critical years after Alexander's death was enhanced by the short-term critical importance of his possessing Alexander's body (or, at least, of preventing anyone else from possessing it); and once it became clear that he would survive in Egypt, Alexander's body could be ceremoniously moved from the old Egyptian capital Memphis to the new Ptolemaic capital Alexandria, thus symbolically emphasising the break with the old regime. In this context, conceivably in connection with the removal of Alexander's body to its final burial-place in Alexandria, the foundation and promotion of a cult of Alexander, parallel to but separate from the (presumably) already existing city-cult of Alexander-*ketistes*, under the royal auspices, to mark the particular importance which Ptolemy Soter claimed that Alexander had for him, would make sense. Once this cult existed, a cult which, essentially, we may perhaps see as a personal creation of Soter and which in itself had little meaning to his successors, it could clearly not be abandoned; but it could usefully be developed and employed as a vehicle to bear the message that the rulers had officially become gods. In this capacity Alexander's cult survived, despite the accretions of late Ptolemaic protocol, to the end of the dynasty.

<sup>1</sup> So P. M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I 228.

## V LITERATURE

Alexander's expedition stimulated the production of a flood of literature such as had never before been experienced in the Greek world. Much of it was written by men who had themselves accompanied Alexander and who were not in the first instance *littérateurs*. The general uncompleted official history of Callisthenes was followed by a mass of memoir writers, each anxious to tell his own story, or Alexander's story from his own point of view. Of many nothing is known after Alexander's death—of Chares, for example, whose inside anecdotes survived to be read by Athenaeus; of Ephippus, whose apparently hostile account also survived to entertain Athenaeus. Others are known to have remained politically and militarily active—Ptolemy, above all, but also Nearchus and Medeios of Larisa, who are well-known as aides of Antigonus; Onesicritus may have attached himself to Lysimachus, if a surviving anecdote that Lysimachus as king sarcastically criticised Onesicritus' story about the Amazon may serve as evidence; Aristobulos is said to be from Cassandreia, which suggests that he may have attached himself to Cassander; Cleitarchus, whether or not he was with Alexander, wrote as an Alexandrian and at least early enough to have been able to be in touch with survivors of the expedition<sup>1</sup>.

All these writers, none of whose works has survived for us, were available for consultation at least into the second century A.D., when some who had remained unpopular and little read, in particular Ptolemy and Aristobulos, were findable and were again used, at least by Arrian. I have no intention here of dealing with these writers in detail; but I should like to emphasise that in contrast to the comparative lack of actual political

<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to give detailed references here: the fragments and testimonia may be found in F. JACOBY, *FGrH* II B with commentary; cf. also L. PEARSON, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York/Oxford 1960), *passim*.

enthusiasm for Alexander at high levels, writers of histories, even those who had certainly been present with Alexander, deluged the reading public with a mixed mass of fact and myth—the Amazon episode may be taken as a typical example of the sort of nonsense which was propagated—about the strangest peoples and places, such as nobody had hitherto experienced. It is thus no wonder that later rhetors like Hegesias of Magnesia<sup>1</sup> found the Alexander story an attractive vehicle for displaying their self-advertising talents, or that elements of the Alexander-romance seem to go back to early hellenistic material.

What I am more concerned with, however, is to try to explore the extent to which serious hellenistic writers, the historians, made use of Alexander and the Alexander literature in works which were not primarily (or at all) concerned with telling the Alexander-story, how they were influenced by the available information. The chief difficulty is that the only hellenistic historian who survives in more than the slightest fragments is Polybius, and for lack of adequate comparative material our conclusion here will inevitably be one-sided. The surviving fragments of Duris, Phylarchus, Agatharchides, Poseidonius, Timagenes and Timaeus offer very little useful information about their attitude to Alexander. When Curtius writes that both Cleitarchus and Timagenes said that Ptolemy was present at the battle with the Malli<sup>2</sup> we are probably right to assume that Timagenes took his false information from Cleitarchus, and we have thus identified in Timagenes a Cleitarchus reader (which does not take us very far); similarly Timaeus' praise of Alexander because he conquered Asia in less time than Isocrates took to compose the *Panegyricus*<sup>3</sup> or his criticism of Callisthenes for his 'unphilosophical' treatment

<sup>1</sup> *FGrH* 142.

<sup>2</sup> Curt. IX 5, 21 (= Timagenes, *FGrH* 88 F 3).

<sup>3</sup> Timaeus, *FGrH* 566 F 139.

of Alexander <sup>1</sup> tell us little about his own attitude to Alexander or the sources (beyond the fact that he had read Callisthenes). We know that Phylarchus, Agatharchides and Poseidonius commented variously on the luxurious living of Alexander's companions—the fragments are preserved without exception by Athenaeus <sup>2</sup>—but a more serious aspect of their interest or reference to Alexander cannot be expected from Athenaeus, and nobody else whose work has survived thought their views worth quoting <sup>3</sup>.

A broadly-based comparison with Polybius is thus not possible. But it is immediately striking that, whereas we have for the most part merely trivial details, anecdotes or frivolous comments preserved from the other writers, in the surviving portions of Polybius we have nothing like this at all. Now it is perfectly clear that the selection of quotations by our sources for fragments—particularly Athenaeus and Plutarch—has made this contrast quite so sharp; nobody would seriously suggest that we can draw any general conclusion about these writers' views on Alexander from the preserved fragments, preserved with a misleading casualness by writers whose interest lay in the story, not the context. But the fragments do let us know that such *trivia* played some part in the works of these writers; and to this extent the contrast with Polybius retains a certain validity. Polybius is never trivial in this way.

Polybius' single most frequent Alexander-theme, mentioned altogether five times in the preserved parts of the work, is the destruction of Thebes: in 220 Philip V was advised "to make an example of Sparta just as Alexander made an example of

<sup>1</sup> F 155.

<sup>2</sup> Phylarchus, *FGrH* 81 F 41; Agatharchides, *FGrH* 86 F 2; F 3; Poseidonius, *FGrH* 87 F 14.

<sup>3</sup> Since *FGrH* lacks an index it may be helpful if, for the sake of completeness, I list here the Alexander references in the fragments of the above-named historians which I have not already mentioned: Duris, *FGrH* 76 F 40; F 46; Phylarchus, *FGrH* 81 F 11; F 77; Poseidonius, *FGrH* 87 F 39; Timaeus, *FGrH* 566 F 150.



Thebes at the beginning of his reign" <sup>1</sup>; in Chlaeneas' speech at Sparta Alexander's destruction of Thebes is listed among other Macedonian horrors <sup>2</sup>; in a discussion of Philip V's character resulting from his sack of Thermum Alexander is offered as an example of showing respect to the gods although he destroyed Thebes <sup>3</sup>. When he comes to the reply to the speech of Chlaeneas which he gives to Lyciscus of Acarnania at Sparta, he finds no excuse for the destruction of Thebes, chooses merely to argue that the services of Alexander and his successors had not been mentioned by Chlaeneas <sup>4</sup>. The example of Thebes crops up for the last time in the introduction to book XXXVIII, where Polybius discusses the greatness of disasters in the context of the Achaean War: Thebes was destroyed, but since everybody pitied the Thebans nobody tried to justify Alexander's action; and in a short time they were back home! <sup>5</sup>

It is clear from this that the destruction of Thebes was for Polybius a favourite *topos*, capable of varied use and emphasis as suited his occasion. Nor is Polybius entirely ungrudging of credit to Alexander: in a discussion of causes of war taken from the context of the Second Punic War, he observes that Alexander's crossing to Asia was not the cause of the war with Persia, but Philip's decision; and he repeats the same argument in discussing the causes of the Third Macedonian War, which (in his view) Philip V planned and Perseus carried out, just as Philip II planned and Alexander carried out the war against Persia <sup>6</sup>. And when he takes issue with Theopompus' version of the activities of the companions of Philip II he grudgingly admits some credit to Alexander for beating the Persians, but

<sup>1</sup> IV 23, 8.

<sup>2</sup> IX 28, 8.

<sup>3</sup> V 10, 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> IX 34, 1.

<sup>5</sup> XXXVIII 2, 13 ff.

<sup>6</sup> III 6, 4-14; XXII 18, 10.

heavily emphasises the roles of those old companions of Philip whom Theopompus had smeared <sup>1</sup>. Other aspects of Alexander are less emphasised in the surviving passages of Polybius: as destroyer of Persia, of course <sup>2</sup>; and, in contrast to Philip V, in particular as a respecter of religion <sup>3</sup>. But in general two things are striking: first, the number of allusory references to Alexander which go into some detail implies that Polybius expected his readers to know at least the outline of the history of Alexander; secondly, the extremely limited range of incidents which he chooses to comment on.

This latter point may reveal something about what Polybius had read. It seems likely that he had made use only of "the classics"—for general history Ephorus and Timaeus, for earlier Greek and Macedonian history Theopompus, Callisthenes and Phylarchus. There is nothing in his preserved knowledge of Alexander which could not be accounted for by these authors and his own intelligent thought. In particular, that Callisthenes was his main source of information on Alexander seems likely from the fact that he is the only Alexander historian to be mentioned at all. Callisthenes is named three times: in the first passage Polybius seems to criticise Timaeus for unjust attacks on Callisthenes, but the point at issue seems really to be that Timaeus should not attack those who make the same sort of mistakes as he himself does; and the positive point about Callisthenes, if there was one, gets lost in the attack on Timaeus <sup>4</sup>. The second passage is the famous criticism of Callisthenes' military reporting as instanced by his account of the battle of Issus <sup>5</sup>. What

<sup>1</sup> VIII 10, 8.

<sup>2</sup> IX 34, 1 (pro-Macedonian speech of Lyciscus of Acarnania); XVIII 3, 5 (speech of Alexander Isios at the Nicaea negotiations: Philip V is contrasted unfavourably with Alexander).

<sup>3</sup> V 10, 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> XII 12 b.

<sup>5</sup> XII 17-22.

is interesting here for our purpose is the character of Polybius' argument: he does not cite another more reliable source to prove his point, but rests content to show that what Callisthenes wrote, from Polybius' own practical common-sense point of view, is either impossible or improbable. The third passage again concerns Timaeus' criticism of Callisthenes, and again is more an attack on Timaeus than a defense of Callisthenes (though he ends the passage by claiming to have defended adequately not only Callisthenes but also Aristotle, Theophrastus, Ephorus and Demochares from Timaeus' attacks—which merely confirms that we have lost a lot in the present gaps in book XII)<sup>1</sup>.

Callisthenes then was for Polybius worth defending (at least against Timaeus), but also worth attacking. No other Alexander historian is mentioned by Polybius. The conclusion seems reasonable, in view of the nature of the other references of Polybius to Alexander, that his chief, perhaps sole, informant was indeed Callisthenes. Polybius was of course too intelligent simply to swallow Callisthenes' official interpretation: his own varied use of the destruction of Thebes for different arguments shows how he interpreted and used in typical fashion what he knew. But the fact remains that, for all the writing about Alexander which by this time existed, the learned man of politics seems to have confined his reading to a single major work written by a man with a literary reputation, and moreover a reputation which did not depend solely on his history of Alexander.

Polybius may have been untypical both in the authors he chose to follow and in the consistent seriousness of purpose with which he employed his references to Alexander. But this short examination of hellenistic historians' use of Alexander and Alexander themes has shown at least one thing clearly: that the career of Alexander quickly had become a standard topic of literary reference among serious writers, as well as for

<sup>1</sup> XII 23, 4.

mere rhetors, whether or not their use of the theme was serious ; and that by Polybius' time a historian could expect his Greek readers to be sufficiently familiar with the Alexander story for his polemic against Callisthenes for his inadequate account of the battle of Issus to be meaningful. The literary importance of Alexander has brought us to the sphere, perhaps indeed the only sphere, where Alexander seems to have enjoyed an active *Nachleben* in the hellenistic period. The evidence at our disposal, however—and this comment applies to the poor fragments of the philosophical tradition just as much as the literary and historical—does not suggest that the hellenistic world was the time or place where this *Nachleben* enjoyed a significant development : for this the attitudes created by Rome's expansion in the east seem to have been responsible.



