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Propaganda as 'Knowledge' production: Alexander the Great, piety, portents and persuasion

Abstract

Propaganda deployed as 'information warfare' is an increasingly common trend in 21st century conflicts. However, the sophisticated manipulation of images, records, and ritual are well-attested in the historical record for over four thousand years. The ancient world is worth careful study because its use of propaganda was aimed as the fundamental generation of knowledge that would then be handed down as the valid historical record of kingdoms, rulers and peoples. One of the most fascinating examples of this was Alexander the Great's effort to build a transnational empire cemented by formulating an elevated religious status for himself that could appeal to Greeks, Macedonians, Egyptians and Persians. Alexander's agendas were complex, and if ultimately unsuccessful in his own lifetime, nonetheless shaped dominant historical accounts for over two millennia. They were far more sophisticated than President Trump's populism or President Putin's effort to build a Eurasian civilizational-identity that can transcend Russian particularism. Propaganda is not just about spreading particular truths or falsehoods, but is engaged in the generation, deletion and shaping of transmitted 'knowledge' that influences national identities and political power.

Keywords

ancient, world, Russia, Hellenistic age, royal, religion, ruler, cult, religious, politics, transnational, empires

Propaganda as 'Knowledge' Production:***Alexander the Great, Piety, Portents and Persuasion*¹***By Dr R. James Ferguson*²

Abstract: Propaganda deployed as 'information warfare' is an increasingly common trend in 21st century conflicts. However, the sophisticated manipulation of images, records, and ritual are well-attested in the historical record for over four thousand years. The ancient world is worth careful study because its use of propaganda was aimed as the fundamental generation of knowledge that would then be handed down as the valid historical record of kingdoms, rulers and peoples. One of the most fascinating examples of this was Alexander the Great's effort to build a transnational empire cemented by formulating an elevated religious status for himself that could appeal to Greeks, Macedonians, Egyptians and Persians. Alexander's agendas were complex, and if ultimately unsuccessful in his own lifetime, nonetheless shaped dominant historical accounts for over two millennia. They were far more sophisticated than President Trump's populism or President Putin's effort to build a Eurasian civilizational-identity that can transcend Russian particularism. Propaganda is not just about spreading particular truths or falsehoods, but is engaged in the generation, deletion and shaping of transmitted 'knowledge' that influences national identities and political power.

Keywords: Propaganda – Ancient World; Propaganda – Russia; Alexander the Great: Hellenistic Age; Royal propaganda; Hellenistic Religion; Ruler Cult; Religious politics; Transnational empires.

In the 21st century, propaganda has moved into a new age of sophistication. False media stories, rumour-based social-media networking, fake-twitter accounts, automated chat-bots, and disinformation-campaigns designed to confuse rather than educate are just the 'thin edge of the wedge' of new technologies available to those who seek to manipulate decision-makers as well as the general public. This is not just an issue of enhanced public diplomacy or the ability to shape new forms of 'soft

¹ The views expressed in *The Culture Mandala* are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views, position or policies of the *Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies*. Bearing in mind the controversial debates now occurring in International Relations and East-West studies, the editors publish diverse, critical and dissenting views so long as these meet ethical and academic criteria.

² Dr R. James Ferguson is Director of the *Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies*, and Assistant Professor of International Relations, FSD, Bond University, QLD, Australia.

power'. In some cases it is an integral part of new information conflicts that constitute evolving types of psychological or hybrid warfare.³ This can be seen in the media frenzy over the status of Vladimir Putin as the new arch-villain of a global disorder, as well as in Russian efforts to sway public opinion, ethnic groups, media sources, and voting lobbies, not just in Russia, but increasingly in Europe and the US.⁴

From Propaganda to Knowledge

'Propaganda' comes from the root concept of propagating information, ideas, values or ideologies, whether 'true' or 'false', to target audiences or populations. It has increasingly taken on the denotation of the dissemination of biased, distorted, false, or at least partisan viewpoints, directed both at enemies and allies.⁵ Its linkage to soft power comes from its ability to persuade or attract support without the use of economic inducements or hard-power sanctions, or to undermine the legitimacy of those it is directed against. In an age of populist leadership, whether in the US, in several Europe states, or the Philippines, it also involves the ability to link into trending prejudices and mass misperceptions, undercutting rational decision making and informed debate.

However, the modern age was not the birth-place of such techniques. Sophisticated manipulation of images, texts and oral narratives are well-attested in the historical record for some four thousand years.⁶ Indeed, the ancient world is worth

³ KRAMER, Reggie "Transnistria Primer –Analysis," *Eurasia Review*, 5 October 2016 [<http://www.eurasiareview.com/05102016-transnistria-primer-analysis/>]; WHITMORE, Brian "Why Eastern Ukraine Could Become Russia's Next 'Frozen Conflict'", *The Atlantic*, 28 August 2014 [<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/why-eastern-ukraine-could-become-the-next-frozen-conflict/379304/>]. For limitations of hybrid war approaches, see CHARAP, Samuel (2015) "The Ghost of Hybrid War," *Survival*, Vol. 57 no. 6, December 2015-January 2016, pp51-58.

⁴ GORBUNOVA, Yulia et al. *Online and On All Fronts: Russia's Assault on Freedom of Expression*, Amsterdam, Human Rights Watch, 2017; OLIKER, Olga "Putinism, Populism and the Defence of Liberal Democracy," *Survival*, Vol. 59 no. 1, February March 2017, pp7-24; CONLEY, Heather et al. *The Kremlin Playbook: Understanding Russian Influence in Central and Eastern Europe*, Washington D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016; GAOUETTE, Nicole "Russia Outguns US in Information War," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2015 [<http://www.smh.com.au/world/russia-outguns-us-in-information-war-20150402-1mdyj7.html>].

⁵ TAYLOR, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, 3rd edition, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, pp1-16.

⁶ See for example LEPROHON, Ronald J. "Ideology and Propaganda" in Hartwig, Melinda K. (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art*, Malden MA, Wiley Blackwell, 2015, pp309-327; TAYLOR, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, 3rd edition, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003; ERCIYAS, Deniz Burcu *Wealth, Aristocracy and Royal Propaganda Under the Hellenistic Kingdom of the Mithradatids in the Central Black Sea Region of Turkey*, Colloquia Pontica Volume 12, Leiden, Brill, 2006; SAYLES, Wayne *Ancient Coin Collecting III: The Roman World-Politics and Propaganda*, Iola, Krause Publications, 1997.

careful study because the use of propaganda was in some ways more fundamental than current digital means of misdirection. Their methods were fundamental in that they were aimed as the generation of knowledge that would then be handed down as the valid historical record of kingdoms, rulers and peoples. Special castes, as first scribes, sculptors and masons, then later on historians and story-tellers, would shape the versions of truth we now use as the known 'history' of the world and its nations. Though not fully 'hegemonic', since these historical accounts would at times be contested and challenged, they nonetheless demonstrate a masterful ability to shape later perceptions of reality by controlling the main sources of transmission.

However, this was not a simple task even for autocratic rulers. Persian kings, for example, claimed to be servants of truth and perpetually opposed to 'followers of the lie', a view not appreciated by their Greek, Macedonian or Roman opponents.⁷ Likewise, Alexander the Great is reputed to have stated that a king should always speak the truth to his subjects and his words should never be held in doubt, but nonetheless engaged in systematic political lies and strategic manipulation of both his own troops and enemy forces.⁸ This can be seen clearly in the mix of propaganda and aspiration found in the images we have of Alexander the Great, the founder of the Hellenistic Age, the creator of a model of leadership influential down at least to the time of Napoleon, and now variously viewed as either a hero or a brutal tyrant.⁹

Piety as Propaganda

The religious attitudes of a king such as Alexander the Great cannot be taken as typical of the earlier Macedonian line. Although utilising sacral and monarchical traditions derived from Macedonia, Alexander developed unique approaches which have been a matter of considerable controversy.¹⁰ These ideas had a strong influence

⁷ See for example FERGUSON, R. James *Rome and Parthia: Power Politics and Diplomacy Across Cultural Frontiers*, Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies, Research Paper No. 12, December 2005 [http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cewces_papers/10/].

⁸ See BOSWORTH, Brian "Truth and Falsehood in Early Hellenistic Propaganda," in Turner, Andrew J. et al. *Private and Public Lies: The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Graeco-Roman World*, Leiden, Brill, 2010, pp39-49.

⁹ For these issues, see ROBINSON, C.A. "Alexander's Brutality", *AJA*, 56, 1952, pp169-70 and BOSWORTH, A.B. *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996, p19, pp133-165.

¹⁰ For a small sample of the enormous literature on this topic, see Bosworth, A.B. *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare and Propaganda under the Successors*, Oxford: OUP, 2002; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991; HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, pp198-202;

on the successor kings of the Hellenistic Kingdoms, as well as affecting later mentality through the oral and written literary traditions that sprang up about Alexander.¹¹ There is considerable modern debate over the character, motives and religious belief of Alexander the Great, a debate which cannot be avoided in discussing Alexander's more specific policies. In the main, this discussion will critically focus on our synthetic extant sources rather than assuming that the products of source criticism are entirely secure in establishing the origins of our Alexander traditions.¹² At the same time, the surviving traditions concerning Alexander are highly polarised along a wide range of issues, and likely sources of bias, vested interests and special pleading need to be assessed.¹³ The relationship between self-glorification and propaganda is a complex one in the Greco-Roman world, with

BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, 1981, pp27-71; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, pp62-100; THOMAS, C.G. "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind", *CJ*, 63, 1968, pp258-60; ROBINSON, C.A. "Alexander's Deification", *AJPh*, 64, 1943, pp286-301; HEUSS, A. "Alexander der Grosse und die politische Ideologie des Altertums", *Antike und Abendl.* 4, 1954, pp65-104; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *AJAH*, 4, 1979, pp1-9; EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, pp363-91; TODD, Richard "W.W. Tarn and the Alexander Ideal", *The Historian*, 27, 1964, pp48-55; WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volumes I & II*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979; HAMMOND, N.G.L. *Alexander the Great: King, Commander and Statesman*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1981; FOX, Robin Lane *The Search for Alexander the Great*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1980; BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, pp363-388; BADIAN, E. "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind", *Historia*, 7, 1958, pp425-444; MILNS, R.D. *Alexander the Great*, Hale, 1968; HOGARTH, D.G. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", *English Historical Review*, 1887, pp317-329.

¹¹ See BOSWORTH, A.B. *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare and Propaganda under the Successors*, Oxford, OUP, 2002. The main ancient sources remain Arrian's *Anabasis*, Quintus Curtius and Plutarch's biography, along with cautious usage of material from Diodorus Siculus, Justin and the various Alexander Romances. For the relationship of the Greek Alexander Romance to possible Egyptian sources, see JASNOW, Richard "The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature", *JNES*, 56 no. 2, 1997, pp95-103. A range of inscriptional evidence is also useful for Alexander's policies, especially in Asia Minor, HEISSERER, A.J. *Alexander the Great and the Greeks: The Epigraphic Evidence*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. A range of fragmentary historical sources has been collected in ROBINSON, Charles Alexander Jr. *History of Alexander the Great*, 2 vols., Providence, Brown University, 1953.

¹² This caution has also been adopted by GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pxi, contra the over-confident attribution to lost or fragmentary sources throughout HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997. See also the critical comments in BOSWORTH, A.B. "The Death of Alexander the Great: Rumour and Propaganda", *CQ*, n.s. 21, 1971, pp129-130.

¹³ See STONEMAN, Richard *Alexander the Great*, London, Routledge, 1997, pp1-9; HAMMOND, N.G.L. *Three Historians of Alexander the Great: The So-called Vulgate Authors: Diodorus, Justin and Curtius*, Cambridge, CUP, 1983, pp166-169; PEARSON, Lionel *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, Chico, Scholars Press, 1983, pp1-21; LYTTON, Randolph *Justin's Account of Alexander the Great: A Historical Commentary*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Pennsylvania State University), 1973, pp1-6; BOSWORTH, A.B. "Arrian and the Alexander Vulgate",

sophisticated use of coinage, icons and images not automatically ruling out patterns of religious affiliation.

The strong piety evinced in our sources for Alexander may suffer from later contaminations, but even including these considerations and the political motives for many of Alexander's actions, we are still left with the likelihood that he had a deeply religious nature which was reinforced by his experiences in Egypt and during his eastward expeditions.¹⁴ The complexity of these mixed influences is suggesting by R. Errington:

With Alexander, because of the nature of the late accounts, some aspects of religious matters are emphasized in the sources, whereas others remain very obscure. Alexander's regular offering of sacrifices and his honouring of all kinds of gods, including foreign divinities, which culminated with his private audience with the priests of Zeus-Ammon at the Egyptian oasis of Siwah, seem to indicate a genuine religious conviction, though it is difficult for us to comprehend it exactly; under the continual stresses of his long campaign it seems to have driven him to the paranoid belief that he was superhuman.¹⁵

A somewhat more pragmatic interpretation has been suggested by John O'Brien:

It was uncommon for Alexander to violate a sacred tradition. If anything, he was punctilious in observing religious protocol. When necessity caused a conflict between action and orthodoxy, however, he would seek a solution that would accomplish his objective while keeping any religious penalties to a bare minimum.¹⁶

The use of the term 'paranoid belief' demonstrates how alien some Macedonian and Hellenistic concepts are to the modern mind. Nor should we assume a straightforward balancing between ritual observance and the dictates of self-interest. In ancient Greek thought the very notion of being a hero was to have a special fate that could not be deflected or defeated by ordinary human actions. Likewise, Macedonian kings, even in the fourth century, still retained rather archaic elements in their royal way of life. On the tumulus of Philip II's tomb, for example, the men associated with the assassination of the king, along with the sons of Pausanias, were executed, while 'the burnt trappings of horses, two burnt swords . . . and a burnt spearhead' were laid there as well.¹⁷ N.G.L. Hammond has suggested that 'the Macedonian kings of the fourth century B.C. were practising a form of burial which even in its *minutiae* had been

in BADIAN, E. et al. *Alexandre le Grand: Image et Réalité*, Genève, Fondation Hardt, 1976, pp1-33. Such bias will be briefly assessed during discussion of particular issues.

¹⁴ WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, p239.

¹⁵ ERRINGTON, R. Malcolm *A History of Macedonia*, trans. C. Errington, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, p228.

¹⁶ O'BRIEN, John Maxwell *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy - A Biography*, London, Routledge, 1992, p46.

¹⁷ HAMMOND, N.G.L. "Philip's Tomb' in Historical Context", *GRBS*, 19, 1978, p349.

inherited from the Heroic Age of the Greek epic and had been used through many centuries. The reason that they did so was native to Macedonia: the kings and their companions were still living in a heroic age, complete with the beliefs of that age.¹⁸ Another way to conceive of this is to suggest that the Macedonian kings needed the legitimation of early ritual to reinforce dynastic claims that went back through Argos to Heracles himself. Alexander inherited this tradition, replete with a detailed knowledge of the works of Homer, something which Aristotle and his other tutors were unlikely to discourage.¹⁹ According to Strabo, a special recension of Homer, replete with annotations, was kept with Alexander on his campaigns. This was called the 'Recension of the Casket' and Plutarch tells us that Alexander kept it with him under his pillow, along with a dagger.²⁰

From this perspective, only the gods or *moirai* (the fates) could interfere with a heroic mission, and Alexander generally felt that the omens indicated that the gods were with him. The heroic destiny was either to be victorious, or to be defeated in glorious combat. The hero, in fact, demonstrates a kind of hubris which sets him

¹⁸ Ibid., p350. See also EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p370; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p81; TARN, W.W. *Hellenistic Civilisation*, 2nd ed., London, Edward Arnold & Co., 1930, p44.

¹⁹ It must be remembered that by this time the Macedonian court was saturated with mainstream Greek culture. From the late fifth and fourth centuries onwards we hear of important Greek scholars and artists being attracted to the Macedonian court, CAWKWELL, George *Philip of Macedon*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, pp51-55; EDSON, Charles F. "Early Macedonia", in LAOURDAS, Basil & MAKARONAS, Ch. (eds.) *Ancient Macedonia: Papers Read at the First International Symposium Held at Thessaloniki*, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1970, p39; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp9-10; HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p55. Pindar, Bacchylides, and the painter Zeuxis received patronage there, as did other poets, Herodotus V.22; Thucydides II.99.3 & IV.124.1; Pausanias VII.25; Athenaeus VIII.345; Plutarch *Moralia* 177b. Euripides, Aristotle and Anaximenes of Lampsacus were drawn to court. Later on Alexander the Great was to attract a wide range of talented Greeks, not just philosophers such as Callisthenes, but administrators and soldiers, ERRINGTON, R. Malcolm *A History of Macedonia*, trans. C. Errington, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, p111. Eminent mercenary soldiers from all over Greece would form part of Philip's army, Diodorus XVI.8.7; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p39. At the same time, this cultural influence did not tame the Macedonians. Demosthenes had attempted to undermine the reputation of these troops who 'had a reputation for being supermen and for possessing superb discipline' by using the propaganda line that Philip's jealousy had led to the better ones leaving, so that he was only left with 'bandits, flatters and the sort of men who get themselves blind drunk and then indulge in such dances as I shrink from naming', Demosthenes *Olynthiac II*, 17-19.

²⁰ Strabo XIII.1.27. For Alexander's love of Homer and the Athenian tragedians, CAWKWELL, George *Philip of Macedon*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, p56. See also HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p64. For Callisthenes as an editor and commentator on the *Iliad*, see BROWN, T.S. "Callisthenes and Alexander", *American Journal of Philology*, 70, 1949, pp232-233; Plutarch *Alexander* 8 & 26.

outside normal human limits.²¹ This theme of superhuman striving for glory and achievement is found in the heroes Alexander sought to imitate, parallel or excel in his victories, especially Achilles, Heracles, and to a lesser extent Dionysus.²² Alexander was certain that he would not find a normal defeat at the hands of his enemies.²³

It must be emphasised that such a role cannot be passively assumed. A set of related actions are needed to fulfil such a focus of human expectation: thus we find reports of Alexander sacrificing upon the tomb of Protesilaus, the first man of Agamemnon's army who had set on the soil of Asia,²⁴ of him offering sacrifice for Priam,²⁵ and travelling to Troy where he offered sacrifice to Athena and exchanged his armour for an ancient set found in the temple of Trojan Athena.²⁶ Other traditions preserved in Arrian have him laying a wreath of the tomb of Achilles, but since this

²¹ GREENE, William Chase *Moirai, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought*, N.Y., Harper Torchbooks, 1963, pp32-33, pp74-75, pp82-86.

²² Arrian *Anabasis* I.11-12; III.3.1-2; IV.10.6-7; V.3.2-4; Pseudo-Callisthenes *The Romance of Alexander the Great By Pseudo-Callisthenes: Translated from the Armenian Version*, trans. Albert Wolohojian, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1969, 122; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp78-81; BRUNT, P.A. "The Aims of Alexander", *Greece & Rome*, 12, 1965, pp208-209. The kings of Macedonia, of course, claimed descent through Temenus from Heracles, whose cult remained important in Aegeae and Pella, see HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, p3, p13, p152, p155, p164; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, pp303-305. For the images of Heracles on Alexander's coinage, see PRICE, Martin Jessop *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus: A British Museum Catalogue*, London, British Museum Press, 1991, vol. I., pp31-32. For the influence of Dionysus themes on the myths surrounding Alexander, especially on his Indian campaign, see GOUKOWSKY, Paul *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre: II*, Nancy, l'Université de Nancy II, 1981; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996, p98, pp121-127.

²³ The issue of his death from disease or poisoning greatly reflects on his posthumous status. On these issues and the distinct possibility that he was murdered, or at least that his death was prepared for, see BOSWORTH, A.B. "The Death of Alexander the Great: Rumour and Propaganda", *CQ*, n.s. 21, 1971, pp112-36. N.G.L. Hammond, on the other hand, suggests that the symptoms of his last days are compatible with a severe case of *malaria tropica*, HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p198. Fever is a noted feature in Plutarch's description, while the possibility of poisoning is regarded as unlikely, Plutarch *Alexander* 75-77. For the controversial role of excessive drinking in the onset of his illness, and its impact on the historical tradition, see BOSWORTH, A. B. *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, pp175-176; O'BRIEN, John Maxwell *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy - A Biography*, London, Routledge, 1992. For the invincible Alexander, see BOSWORTH, A.B. *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996, pp166-167. For the possibility of death being due to a complication of typhoid fever, see OLDACH, David W. et al. "A Mysterious Death: Presentation of Case", *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 338 no. 24, 11 June 1998, pp1764-1770.

²⁴ Arrian *Anabasis* I.11. For this as a propitious rite, hoping that Alexander's landing would work out better than that of Protesilaus, see FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. *The Religion of Alexander the Great*, Diss. Univ. Wisconsin, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1958, p300.

²⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* I.11.8.

²⁶ Arrian *Anabasis* I.11.7-8; Diodorus XVII.17-18.

includes an account of the later-to-die Hephaestion doing the same over the tomb of Patroclus,²⁷ this may be a later romantic invention. Likewise, W. W. Tarn²⁸ has shown that no proper parallel can be drawn between the supposed execution of the commander at Gaza, Batis, and Achilles' treatment of Hector's body as preserved in Curtius IV.6.29, referring to parallels from Homer *Iliad* XXII.395. Arrian does not record this episode, though the defenders of Gaza were wiped out and their wives and children sold into slavery.²⁹

In spite of the limits to these parallels, Alexander is often presented as a typical Hellenic hero and as an inheritor of the heroic traditions of Achilles.³⁰ The other hero who received his special attention was Heracles, whom H. A. Shapiro assesses as 'the only true pan-hellenic hero, worshipped with equal fervor in many parts of the Greek world, with cults as numerous and in their own way as important as those of most members of the Olympian pantheon'.³¹ Lowell Edmunds argues, plausibly, that 'Alexander consciously and wilfully gave himself a certain ideality through conceiving of his life as a reenactment of myth'.³² It is interesting to note that once again Alexander's actions are in contrast to those of Xerxes, who in Greek tradition had visited Troy to sacrifice for Trojan heroes,³³ and who had dared to 'lash' the Hellespont.³⁴

The propaganda value of such conceptions, as well as direct morale value on the battlefield, can be highly significant in the type of hand-to-hand combat which dominated ancient confrontations, and in which the charisma and 'luck' of a commander were significant factors in the mind of ordinary soldiers. Although such heroic myths and legendary parallels might be used cynically to justify unpleasant or unpopular policies, the fact that they were used repeatedly indicates that they still

²⁷ Arrian *Anabasis* I.12.1-2. Note that the symbolism of such acts remains even if 'famous sites' were unlikely to be the genuine ones, see GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p167.

²⁸ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p269. Likewise rejected in HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p96.

²⁹ See Arrian *Anabasis* II.27. See also Plutarch *Alexander* 25; ELLIS, Walter M. *Ptolemy of Egypt*, London, Routledge, 1994, pp5-6.

³⁰ Correctly interpreted in FOX, Robin Lane *The Search for Alexander*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1980, pp138-9; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp82-85. Diodorus speaks of Alexander having acquired a reputation similar to that of heroes and demigods, Diodorus XVII.1.4

³¹ SHAPIRO, H.A. "Heros Theos: The Death and Apotheosis of Heracles" *CW*, 77, 1983-4, p9.

³² EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p390.

³³ GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p167.

³⁴ Herodotus VII.35.

retained some persuasive value, even if not quite 'a living reality'.³⁵ They retained a dramatic and charismatic appeal which saturates the literature and political philosophy of the period, and would also form lasting influences on the representation of kings and emperors in coinage and other forms of iconography.³⁶ The path was well prepared by divine symbols associated with the name of Alexander as a conquering king. There was an early use of symbols associated with the victories of Alexander, including images of a helmeted Athena, Heracles wearing the skin of the Nemean lion (which he had slain), seated Zeus images and winged Nikes, as indicated by the coinage issued by prominent mints at Sidon and Ake.³⁷ These types were found from the early part of Alexander's reign, with a reform of Macedonian coinage circa 336/5 B.C.³⁸ John Anthony notes that the representation of Heracles on these coins shows the hero, rather unusually, as a young and beardless man. Between 330 and 320 B.C. the image of Heracles on these coins seems to converge on the representation of the young Alexander himself: on this basis John Anthony argues that Alexander is the first Hellenistic king to place his portrait onto coins.³⁹ The point is a contested one.

³⁵ As argued by GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp40-41.

³⁶ DAVIS, Norman & KRAAY, Colin M. *The Hellenistic Kingdoms: Portrait Coins and Their History*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1973, pp271-77; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp55-56; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p187; BIEBER, Margarete *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art*, Chicago, Argonaut, 1964, pp15-16, pp50-82; NEWELL, E.T. *Royal Greek Portrait Coins*, N.Y., 1937; PERLMAN, S. "The Coins of Philip II and Alexander the Great and their Pan-Hellenic Propaganda", *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1965, pp57-67; BELLINGER, A.R. *Essays on the Coinage of Alexander the Great*, N.Y., Thompson, 1963 (Numismatic Studies II); ALFÖLDI, Andrew "From the *Aion Plutonium* of the Ptolemies to the *Saeculum Frugiferum* of the Roman Emperors", in *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory*, KINZL, K. H. (ed.), Berlin, de Gruyter, 1977, pp1-30; ANTHONY, John *Collecting Greek Coins*, London, Longman, 1983, pp90-135; MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermark, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, pp23-4; BIEBER, Margarete *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, Rev. ed., N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1961, p84, pp90-91; HAVELOCK, Christine Mitchell *Hellenistic Art: The Art of the Classical World from the Death of Alexander the Great to the Battle of Actium*, London, Phaidon, 1971, 24-26; HAZZARD, R.A. *Ptolemaic Coins: An Introduction for Collectors*, Toronto, Kirk and Bentley, 1995, pp72-75. For the huge volume and widespread impact of Alexander's coinage, see ROSTOVITZ, M. *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, London, OUP, 1972, Vol. I, p186; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p85, p91.

³⁷ Noted in NEWELL, Edward T. *The Dated Alexander Coinage of Sidon and Ake*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1916, Plates I-X. See also BELLINGER, A.R. *Essays on the Coinage of Alexander the Great*, N.Y., Thompson, 1963, pp5-6.

³⁸ MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermark, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, pp42-3.

³⁹ ANTHONY, John *Collecting Greek Coins*, London, Longman, 1983, pp90-91. See also EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p375.

The understanding of these images remains complex and interpretive.⁴⁰ Otto Morkholm, though admitting changes in the representation of Heracles, notes that he has 'never been convinced by the argument that Alexander was actually portrayed as Heracles on the tetradrachms during his lifetime'.⁴¹

However, at least one coin type does seem to represent an image of a divine Alexander, or at the least of Alexander as a suprahuman leader wielding divine attributes. This coin shows the combat against the Indian king Porus on his elephant, while the reverse shows a figure 'wearing a Macedonian cloak, a Persian headdress and Greek armour' and 'carrying a thunderbolt'.⁴² Even if the coin was 'privately' struck by the Indian prince Taxiles, it does indeed show that at least in some parts of the new empire Alexander's claims to divinity were publicly displayed.⁴³ The thunderbolt is definitely a divine attribute,⁴⁴ while it is difficult to fit the mixture of Macedonian, Greek, Persian and Indian images onto anyone but Alexander. Certainly by 321-19 B.C. Ptolemy in Egypt was willing to issue coins with the head of a deified Alexander, including an elephant headdress, the ram's horns of Zeus Ammon, the

⁴⁰ A clear outline of the protagonists on both side of the debate is found in BELLINGER, A.R. *Essays on the Coinage of Alexander the Great*, N.Y., Thompson, 1963, pp14-20.

⁴¹ MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermark, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, p52. See also STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p48, p159; HOGARTH, D.G. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", *English Historical Review*, 1887, p327. For later portraits on Ptolemy I's coinage, see STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp233-234.

⁴² MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermark, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, p53, see Plate III, no. 44. This interpretation is partly supported in PRICE, Martin Jessop *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus: A British Museum Catalogue*, London, British Museum Press, 1991, vol. I, p34.

⁴³ GOUKOWSKY, Paul *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre: II*, Nancy, l'Université de Nancy II, 1981, pp3-5; MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermark, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, pp53-55; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p196. See HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, Plate 13. N.G.L. Hammond interprets these images in a more limited way: 'The diadem proclaimed Alexander as King of Asia, and the thunderbolt implied that Alexander was the vicegerent of Zeus', HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p167. It is difficult to know what 'a vicegerent of Zeus' would mean in the context of this period, especially since a figure carrying a thunderbolt seems to imply at least divinely-sanctioned kingship.

⁴⁴ This attribute was also used in portrait of Alexander, reportedly painted by Apelles for the temple of Artemis at Ephesos, Pliny *Natural History* XXXV.92; Plutarch *Concerning Isis and Osiris* 24; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p191. Of course, it can be argued that no number of divine attributes necessarily mean that the subject is really regarded as divine rather than merely sending a message of divine power controlled by a mortal, but on this basis no notion of apotheosis, nor the hellenistic notion

royal diadem and with the aegis of Zeus tied around his neck.⁴⁵ This coinage may parallel Ptolemy's seizure of the body of Alexander and burying it in state, first in Memphis, then in Alexandria.⁴⁶

It seems likely that the Heracles coinage at least was designed to allow a certain parallel to be drawn between the ancient hero and the contemporary conquering king.⁴⁷ They may be more subtle forms of propaganda⁴⁸ than straightforward portraits, suggesting an idea through a combination of associations. Hellenistic propaganda was often an unsystematic attempt to publicise the achievements, prestige or fame of a ruler. Such portraits, including divine emblems, were used soon after his death in Hellenistic coinage and statues, suggesting that the symbols were understood in this way by contemporaries, with Andrew Stewart

of the 'divine man', could ever be developed visually, contra STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp193-194.

⁴⁵ MORKHOLM, Otto *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, edited by Grierson, P. & Westermarck, U., Cambridge, CUP, 1991, p63, see Plate VI, no. 90.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p63. For the acquisition of the body, perhaps with the corruption of the official in charge of preparing it, see Strabo XVII.1.8; Arrian *Events After Alexander*, frag. 1.25, translated in STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p374; ELLIS, Walter M. *Ptolemy of Egypt*, London, Routledge, 1994, pp34-35; BILLOWS, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, p61; HECKEL, Waldemar *The Last Days and Testament of Alexander the Great: A Prosopographical Study*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988, pp23-24. For the great symbolic and political significance of the body and the elaborate hearse designed to convey it, see STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp216-223. For the burial sites, see Pausanias I.6.3 & I.7.1 and Diodorus XVIII.26-28. It is possible that the body was only moved to Alexandria during the time of Ptolemy II. The search for Alexander's tomb has since sparked considerable efforts among archaeologists, with a range of final resting places aside from Alexandria being suggested. For the most recent, newspapers have reported that the archaeologist Ms. Liana Souvaltzi has suggested a site somewhere near a Doric temple at Al-Maraki, 16km north-west of Siwah: "Dig at Possible Burial Site of Alexander Approved", *The Weekend Australian*, February 4-5, 1995, p18. Such a location is not entirely impossible since Alexander may have at one stage hoped to have his tomb at Siwah, not far from the famous oracle, see WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, pp270-1. However, Souvaltzi's claims can also be interpreted in the light of 'political/nationalist passions', see STEVENSON, T.R. "The 'Discovery of the 'Tomb' of Alexander the Great", *Classicism*, 23 no. 1, April 1997, pp8-15. See also BIANCHI, Robert S. "Alexander's Tomb . . . Not!", *Archaeology*, 48 no. 3, May-June 1995, pp58-60. For the efforts to manipulate symbols such as a tent and throne that might be set up in remembrance of Alexander, see BILLOWS, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, p85, following Diodorus XVIII.60.1-62.3 & Plutarch *Eumenes* 13. It has also been suggested that Ptolemy I may have allowed rumours to circulate that he was the illegitimate son of Philip II and therefore Alexander the Great's half brother, a view that may have been suppressed by the time of Ptolemy II, see COLLINS, N.L. "The Various Fathers of Ptolemy I", *Mnemosyne*, 50 no. 4, August 1997, pp436-476.

⁴⁷ BELLINGER, A.R. *Essays on the Coinage of Alexander the Great*, N.Y., Thompson, 1963, p21.

⁴⁸ See STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp49-50. For the difficulties in positive identification of the personal features of the Heracles and Alexander portraits in order to confirm a date of convergence, see

suggest that they became an integral part of the 'technology of power'.⁴⁹ Early Seleucid coin types included images of Heracles, Zeus, Apollo, Athena, and Nike, along with distinctive emblems such as the anchor (associated with Apollo and the royal household) and elephants reflecting Seleucus' eastern campaigns and his use of elephants at the battle of Ipsos.⁵⁰ In sum, these iconographical images display a willingness to use the imagery of divinity in support of political claims, even if they do not at first generally represent Alexander as a divine being.

Beyond this, historical accounts contain numerous cases where Alexander made sacrifices or drink offerings, and where he takes a keen interest in prophecies, especially those of Aristander, and later on of Pithagoas, a seer who practised divination by the entrails of sacrificial animals.⁵¹ Arrian records Alexander sacrificing to Zeus 'the Preserver', to Olympian Zeus, to Zeus the King upon his return to Memphis from Siwah (along with athletic and musical games), to Heracles, to Athena at Troy, to have sent 300 suites of Persian armour as an offering to Athena at Athens in honour of his victory at the Battle of the Granicus River, conducting a yearly sacrifice to Dionysus (and did not conduct it on one occasion, to his misfortune), making special sacrifices and celebrations for Dionysus shortly after crossing into India, and to Poseidon before the fleet travelled out onto the Persian Gulf.⁵² Likewise, he apparently had a strong desire to offer sacrifice to Heracles in Tyre, though this may have been a clever piece of propaganda to attack a 'neutral' city which he could not leave at his back (see further below).⁵³ He also paid particular attention to sacrifices and rituals before major battles, e.g. before the encounter at Issus, during operations against Gaza and before Gaugamela.⁵⁴ Ceremonial military parades,

PRICE, Martin Jessop *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus: A British Museum Catalogue*, London, British Museum Press, 1991, vol. I, pp33-34.

⁴⁹ SCHWARZENBERG, Erkinger "The Portraiture of Alexander", in BADIAN, E. et al. *Alexandre le Grand: Image et Réalité*, Genève, Fondation Hardt, 1976, pp47-79; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p43; Plutarch *Alexander* 4. For a listing of Alexander statues with divine attributes, see STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp60-63, 380-383.

⁵⁰ GRAINGER, John D. *Seleukos Nikator: Constructing a Hellenistic Kingdom*, London, Routledge, 1990, p166.

⁵¹ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.18.

⁵² Arrian *Anabasis* I.4.5; I.11; I.16.7; III.5.2; IV.8; V.3.6; VI.19.5.

⁵³ Arrian *Anabasis* II.16.7; II.17. For his dream of Heracles leading him into the city, see II.18.1. Curtius records that Tyrian envoys told Alexander that there was a temple to Heracles outside the city which he could use, which obviously did not meet Alexander's requirements, see Curtius IV.2.4.

⁵⁴ Curtius III.8.22; IV.6.10; IV.13.14-16. For the plausibility of Alexander sacrificing to local Cilician gods before the Battle of Issus, see BING, J.D. "Alexander's Sacrifice *dis praesidibus loci* before the Battle of Issus", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 111, 1991, pp161-165.

athletic games and literary contests were held at several key points during his campaigns, perhaps in part to help bolster his troops' morale.⁵⁵

Alexander was also reported to make sacrifices of a non-habitual kind before important steps were undertaken, e.g. on the night before the battle at the River Pinarus, near Issus, he climbed nearby mountain in the region and made sacrifice to 'the tutelary deities of the region'⁵⁶ while special sacrifices were made to several Indian rivers (the Indus, the Hydaspes and the Acesines) before the return journey of the army down to the Ocean.⁵⁷

We can gain some idea of this serious attitude to sacrifice when we note that just before his death, when he fell ill with fever, he is reported as still completing the sacrifices, and even on the next day did not neglect his religious duties.⁵⁸ In summary, Arrian seems to making a correct judgement when he notes that Alexander excelled in his 'care for religion'.⁵⁹ Although this may reflected some of Arrian's own historiographical preoccupations,⁶⁰ such piety would be expected both of a Macedonian king and of a person imitating the heroic tradition.

The Use and Abuse of Oracles

Likewise, Arrian suggests that like many leaders of his own time, he took omens seriously, especially when they complied with his strategic interests. Aristander of Telmessus on several occasions was requested to interpret unusual events, and in many cases Alexander takes direct and positive action in relation to the prophecy, e.g. the swallow indicating the treachery of a friend,⁶¹ and the spring bringing up a bronze

⁵⁵ For example, Arrian *Anabasis* III.5; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p126.

⁵⁶ GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p227.

⁵⁷ Arrian *Indica* 18.11-12.

⁵⁸ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.25.3-5; Plutarch *Alexander* 75-76.

⁵⁹ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.28.1.

⁶⁰ STADTER, Philip A. *Arrian of Nicomedia*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980, pp73-74, pp113-114, pp168-169; BOSWORTH, A.B. "Arrian's Literary Development", *Classical Quarterly*, 22, 1972, pp163-185; BOSWORTH, A.B. "Arrian and the Alexander Vulgate", in BADIAN, E. et al. *Alexandre le Grand: Image et Réalité*, Genève, Fondation Hardt, 1976, pp1-33; STADTER, P.A. "Flavius Arrianus: The New Xenophon", *GRBS*, 1967, pp155-61; HAMILTON, Jim "Review Article: Recent Work on Arrian", *Ancient History*, 20 no. 1, 1990, pp51-59. For the subtle interests which would have influenced but not necessarily dominated Ptolemy's historical writings, see ROISMAN, Joseph "Ptolemy and His Rivals in His History of Alexander", *Classical Quarterly*, 34 no. 2, 1984, pp373-385.

⁶¹ Arrian *Anabasis* I.25.6-8.

tablet bearing an ancient inscription which Aristander managed to read.⁶² We also have an account of Aristander interpreting Alexander's dream where Heracles invites him into Tyre, where the god was worshipped as Melkart.⁶³ There were practical reasons for taking Tyre, but a large amount of effort was required to breach such a well-defended city. We might also note that Alexander found the nearby shrine to Melkart at the older city of Tyre on the mainland insufficient for his purposes.⁶⁴ Likewise, according to Quintus Curtius, Alexander delayed his attack on Gaza in response to an omen which suggested that although the city could be taken on that day Alexander himself would sustain injury.⁶⁵

On one occasion Alexander refused to listen to an omen by Aristander which portended great danger,⁶⁶ needing a victory against the troublesome Scythians. Quintus Curtius⁶⁷ gives a variant account whereby Aristander, perhaps under royal pressure, read the entrails a second time and declares that they are now extremely favourable for military operations. It must be remembered that though the sacrifices were interpreted by experts, the outcome was public, and would have had a strong impact on troop morale. Curtius' version generally suggests a more cynical use of omens and religion in Alexander's rule.⁶⁸ This is not surprising considering the fact that Curtius himself regarded much of this behaviour as little more than superstition, and certainly as a fault in a leader.⁶⁹ Arrian goes on to note that the operations against the Scythians, though successful, led to heat exhaustion, shortages of good water and dysentery for the Macedonians, with even Alexander falling ill for a time. Arrian concludes that Aristander had prophesied truly after all.⁷⁰

A similar case where Alexander overrode an omen occurred during an attack on one of the cities of the Malli. The seer had declared that the omens before the

⁶² GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p202 following Plutarch *Alexander* 17.2-3.

⁶³ Arrian *Anabasis* II.18.1; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p247.

⁶⁴ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p37. It is possible that the Tyrian attempt to determine who could and could not enter their city would indicate a claim of neutrality and independence, which Alexander could not tolerate, let alone the possibility of a city to his rear that might swing back to the Persian side, see GRAINGER, John D. *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1991, pp35-36.

⁶⁵ Curtius IV.6.10-13.

⁶⁶ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.4.2-4.

⁶⁷ Curtius VII.7.24-29.

⁶⁸ See also Curtius V.4.1-3. Plutarch also notes a growing obsession with the supernatural and an excessive use of soothsayers towards the end of Alexander's life, Plutarch *Alexander* 75.

⁶⁹ See Curtius VII.7.8 & X.5.33

⁷⁰ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.4.9.

second attack indicated danger to Alexander's life, but Alexander refused to be interrupted.⁷¹ Alexander was probably worried that the seer's words would dampen the morale of his soldiers. However, the omen came true with Alexander being seriously wounded.⁷² It is possible that the trouble here was that the seer lacked Aristander's standing, and had intervened during the battle rather than making his pronouncement before it. Furthermore, the strategic situation was such that Alexander felt he had no choice but crush the Mallians before they linked up with other tribes such as the Oxydracae and became a considerable threat.⁷³

In spite of an emergent cynicism by some individuals towards the value of oracles and soothsayers, these experts could sometimes be held to public account for failing to predict events accurately. Philip II's seer, who on the day of Philip's assassination had declared the omens propitious, was immediately handed over to the Macedonians for judgement, who promptly had him crucified.⁷⁴ For those who had some public reliance on the reading of omens, this seer was *ipso facto* either incompetent or gave a false reading to the king in order to mislead him. Such dangers were part and parcel of the expert's profession.

Soothsayers could also have other social functions: in interpreting dreams, for example, they not only took stock of omens concerning the future, but acted in therapeutic and advisory roles to the leaders and kings they tended. Omens or portents could also be core elements in propaganda campaigns. The fulfilment of an oracle at Gordion (usually phrased as the 'Gordian knot') gives us an insight into how a 'divine portent' could influence local populations. The pole of an ancient wagon, dedicated by Midas to the temple of Zeus Basileus, was fastened by an unusual knot. An oracle had foretold that whoever undid the knot would rule Asia.⁷⁵ Apparently a sizeable group of the local Phrygians and Macedonians followed Alexander up into the acropolis of Gordion for a public answer to this oracle.⁷⁶ Arrian preserves two ancient

⁷¹ Curtius IX.4.26-33; Diodorus XVII.98-99.

⁷² Arrian *Anabasis* VI.9.5-10; Strabo XV.1.33.

⁷³ Arrian *Anabasis* VI.11.3.

⁷⁴ Based on a restoration *P. Oxy.* 1789 fr. 1, see HAMMOND, N.G.L. "'Philip's Tomb' in Historical Context", *GRBS*, 19, 1978, p348.

⁷⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* II.3.2-6; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p213.

⁷⁶ Arrian *Anabasis* II.3.7; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp213-4. It is possible that the local population already had significant contact with Hellenic culture. The Greek alphabet, though not necessarily Greek language, was used from the early fourth century onwards, and emerged as the dominant writing system by the later third century, ROLLER, L.E. "Hellenistic Epigraphical Texts from Gordion", *Anatolian Studies*, 37, 1987, pp106-7.

traditions recording that Alexander either drew out the pole peg and thereby undid the knot,⁷⁷ or that he cut the knot with his sword, perhaps using an ambiguity in the phrasing of the ancient oracle. The later option, though the most effective story, is the least likely: W.W. Tarn notes that Arrian, Plutarch, Quintus Curtius and Justin state that the knot was supposed to be untied, and Alexander's respect for oracles would have mitigated against too cavalier an approach.⁷⁸ W.W. Tarn therefore argues that the account in Arrian,⁷⁹ based on Aristobulus, must be correct and that Alexander drew 'out the pole to find the end of the cord; he must then have untied the knot, for he sacrificed to the gods who had shown him how to untie it'.⁸⁰

The detailed nature of the story and its discussion in several sources suggests it is something more than a post-hoc *bon mot*. It is interesting that Alexander would allow such a public display to affect local attitudes towards him. In doing so, however, he may have undermined local opposition and enhanced his reputation. It is not impossible that he had his strategy prepared in advance in case he was unable to untie the knot in the normal manner. It is likely that Alexander himself had some genuine belief in oracles⁸¹ and sufficient confidence in himself to face such trials. Charisma effects the mind of its source as well as its audience. Curtius is quite explicit about the fact that Alexander's Macedonian companions were most alarmed about his over-confidence and the possibility that he would fail to 'untie' the knot, thereby demonstrating that he was not destined to achieve the overlordship of Asia.⁸² It was natural that Alexander would visit this relatively important centre on the Persian royal road. At the same time, he was probably aware of how the Phrygians

For Hellenisation after the time of Alexander, see ROLLER, Lynn E. "The Great Mother at Gordion: The Hellenization of an Anatolian Cult", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 111, 1991, pp128-144.

⁷⁷ A version going back to Aristobulus, Arrian *Anabasis* II.3.7-8; Plutarch *Alexander* 18; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p214.

⁷⁸ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p263. The relevant sources are listed in GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p537, footnote 48. See in particular Arrian *Anabasis* II.3; Curtius III.1.14-18; Plutarch *Alexander* 18.1-2; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander, Midas and the Oracle at Gordium", *Classical Philology*, 56, 1961, pp160-168; O'BRIEN, John Maxwell *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy - A Biography*, London, Routledge, 1992, p72.

⁷⁹ Arrian *Anabasis* II.3.8.

⁸⁰ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p264. See also HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p83.

⁸¹ WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. Richards, G., Norton, N.Y., 1967, p98. For a listing of Alexander's use of portents and divinations, see FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. *The Religion of Alexander the Great*, Diss. Univ. Wisconsin, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1958, pp232-240.

⁸² Curtius III.1.17.

were represented in the *Iliad* XVI.717-719 as allies of the Trojans.⁸³ Since he had clearly attempted to establish an analogy between himself and Hellenic heroes by his visits to sites associated with the Trojan War, this would have added a certain relish to the conquest of the Gordion knot. Furthermore, it is possible that Alexander believed the god at Gordion to be equivalent to Zeus, and the prediction that he would conquer Asia would be a preparation for expectations which would be confirmed in his subsequent visit to the oracle of Ammon at Siwah.⁸⁴

Negative omens and the 'anger of gods' could also fulfil a useful social and political role. After Alexander's murder of Cleitus the soothsayers began to suggest that Dionysus was angry because Alexander had failed to offer him sacrifice. Alexander was willing to share some of the responsibility for this divine wrath.⁸⁵ Later on, when the reluctance of his men forced Alexander to turn back from further conquests in India, oracles served a face-saving function. It was when the omens were against him, or stated to be against him, that he could at last agree to turn back towards Babylon.⁸⁶ He proceeded to build twelve large altars on which to place thank-offerings to the gods, then held games and contests.⁸⁷ W.W. Tarn implies that the use of such a negative omen would allow him to give in to the will of the army without losing face: rather, he 'yielded to the gods'.⁸⁸

Perhaps one of the clearest summaries of Alexander's generally accepting attitude towards oracles can be seen in the story of the Syrian woman who followed Alexander, apparently uttering true oracles. She was at first ridiculed by the Macedonians, but soon she had access to Alexander 'day and night', even watching over him while he slept.⁸⁹ The story, originally told by Aristobulus, goes on to explain how this woman saved Alexander from the plot of the royal pages, who attended to the daily needs of the king, to murder him. She did this by convincing him to return and continue drinking all night long rather than sleep in his usual place.⁹⁰

⁸³ ROLLER, L.E. "Hellenistic Epigraphical Texts from Gordion", *Anatolian Studies*, 37, 1987, p108.

⁸⁴ BRUNT, P.A. "The Aims of Alexander", *Greece & Rome*, 12, 1965, p208; EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p379.

⁸⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.9.5-6; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp364-365.

⁸⁶ Arrian *Anabasis* V.28.4-5.

⁸⁷ Arrian *Anabasis* V.29.1-2.

⁸⁸ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p100. See also GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp410-1.

⁸⁹ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.13.5.

⁹⁰ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.13.3-6.

The question for Alexander was not whether prophecies and oracles might work, but whether a particular seer or prophet indeed had the skill and if their particular interpretation was valid. According to Plutarch it was only after he had returned to Babylon from India that Alexander became obsessed with supernatural omens to the point that any unusual event, no matter how insignificant, had to be assessed by one of the hoard of soothsayers he kept at his palace.⁹¹ A range of examples from our relevant ancient sources suggests that since oracles are often ambiguous, the *interpretation* is crucial,⁹² thereby turning these soothsayers into important resources for propaganda purposes.

Emerging Doctrines of Kingship and Hellenistic Ruler Cults

These actions in the face of an uncertain future might be taken as little more than rationalisation of both hopes and fears. However, for the Macedonians the king was their main sacerdotal figure. Both the rewards and punishments of the gods could be visited upon a people for the fault of their kings. We see here, too, part of what would later on emerge in the Hellenistic doctrines of kingship, where the position of King, both by providence and by necessity, lifts the person of the ruler into a new level of responsibility. It is not certain to what extent this new ideology is consciously being thought out during Alexander's reign, though the influence of the sophist Anaxarchus and Callisthenes cannot be entirely discounted, nor should the general ideas of Aristotle on the personal *arete* (excellence and virtue) required by a king be ignored.⁹³ Arrian recounts 'a story' which provides a view of Anaxarchus' use of traditional ideas concerning the elevated nature of kingship, which even in the Homeric works is

⁹¹ Plutarch *Alexander* 75.

⁹² See Curtius IV.2.14 & 17; IV.8.6; IV.10.1-8; IV.15.26-28.

⁹³ Aristotle *Politics* III.13 1284a, 10-13; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp57-8, contra their dismissive treatment in BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, pp363, 369-70, who fails to note the clear parallels between the line of thought developed here by Aristotle and in Arrian *Anabasis* IV.9.7, a point of sufficient importance to be attacked by Arrian himself in *Anabasis* IV.9.8-9, as discussed below. Balsdon, however, has adequately demonstrated that the idea of divinity was not suggested to Alexander by either Isocrates *To Philip*, or by Isocrates Letter number 3, which may very well be a forgery, see BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, pp366-368. For an effective outline of Anaxarchus and Callisthenes, see BORZA, Eugene N. "Anaxarchus and Callisthenes: Academic Intrigue at Alexander's Court", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1981, 73-86.

regarded as a human model of the functions of Zeus.⁹⁴ This story is recorded by Arrian in the following way:

“Don't you know,” he [Anaxarchus] said, “why the wise men of old made Justice to sit by the side of Zeus? It was to show that whatever Zeus may do is justly done. In the same way all the acts of a great king should be considered just, first by himself, then by the rest of us.”⁹⁵

Anaxarchus' recorded views on this point are entirely consistent with the 'conventionalist' viewpoint, whereby human actions are the criterion by which issues such as right, justice and religious values are to be judged.⁹⁶ The sophistic ambiguity of Anaxarchus is clearly outlined by Arrian himself.⁹⁷

That Arrian should bother to record and discuss this story is significant. Even if the variant is a later invention built around the incident of Cleitus' death, or a rhetorical construction of an interaction between two known historical characters and influenced by later political theory as applied to the Roman emperors,⁹⁸ it still shows that there was a real concern to explore the problem of whether the kingship was defined in terms of justice, or whether the king's acts by definition were just, even if arbitrary. Alexander, with both his magnanimity and his harsh actions in dealing with Cleitus, Callisthenes and Parmenio (all of whom in the end he had killed), was a fruitful example of this dilemma for the ancient world. Even an Alexander admirer like W.W. Tarn has to admit that in such circumstances 'life was cheap and you took your chances'.⁹⁹ Arrian's refrain that although many kings do evil, Alexander was one of the few who repented¹⁰⁰ is a rather thin apology for a man painted elsewhere as a great humanitarian and civilising force.

One way out of this impasse, of course, was exactly that offered by Anaxarchus: to attempt to raise the religious status of the king beyond that of other

⁹⁴ Homer *Iliad* II.196-197, 'their honour is from Zeus'. For the special role of the royal sceptre, *Iliad* II.84-86 & II.100-109. Thus, Odysseus, trying to establish unity among the Achaeans, noted that there should be (only) one king to whom Zeus has granted the sceptre and the right to make judgement, Homer *Iliad* II.204-206.

⁹⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.9.7, translated by Aubrey de Selincourt, *The Campaigns of Alexander the Great*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971.

⁹⁶ EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p389. For related views, see Plato *Gorgias* 491E-492c and Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* 343-345. See BOSWORTH, A.B. *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996, pp104-106.

⁹⁷ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.9.8-9.

⁹⁸ See for example the younger Pliny's *Panegyric* and the *De Clementia* of Seneca. For the later development of Stoic criticism of Alexander, see STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p14.

⁹⁹ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p75.

¹⁰⁰ Arrian VII.29.1 & IV.9.6; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p75.

human beings. Alexander was in part following, in part extending, the traditional role for a Macedonian king and war leader. Philip II, in his building of the commemorative structure at Olympia, in honour of his victory at Chaeronea, was already paving the way for a special status for his dynastic line, though it is not certain that it can be interpreted in any sense as a temple or hero's shrine.¹⁰¹ However, at the very least, the sacrifices and ritual surrounding the funeral of Philip II suggest the establishment of a hero cult.¹⁰² As noted by Peter Green, such a cult had already been accorded the Spartan general Lysander at Samos, supported there by oligarches who were no doubt grateful for the eclipse of Athenian power, a view derived from Duris of Samos.¹⁰³ There is some debate as to whether Lysander was honoured in his life-time, though if the cult at Samos, which involved the renaming of their national festival to the *Lysandreia*, was celebrated in the early fourth century it would be only be very shortly after his death. A.B. Bosworth argues that the 'worship must have been during his lifetime'.¹⁰⁴ The tyrant of Heracleia Pontica, a certain Clearchus (in power 364-352 B.C.) also is 'claimed to have disported himself as a son of Zeus, naming his son Keraunos; and one tradition notes that he was worshipped and exalted with Olympian honours'.¹⁰⁵ W.W. Tarn denies with some exaggeration that either example can be interpreted as genuine deifications,¹⁰⁶ while J.P.V.D. Balsdon suggests that our main source for the Lysander deification may have 'projected into the past some of the

¹⁰¹ HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, pp691-694; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p3, p8; MILLER, Stella G. "The Philippeion and Macedonian Hellenistic Architecture" *AM*, 88, 189-218; Pausanias V.20.10. His tomb also showed distinctive features, HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p184, & HAMMOND, N.G.L. "'Philip's Tomb' in Historical Context", *GRBS*, 19, 1978, pp331-50.

¹⁰² HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, p157.

¹⁰³ Plutarch *Lysander* 18; Pausanias VI.3.14; Athenaeus XV.696e; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p81; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p89.

¹⁰⁴ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p280. See also Plutarch *Lysander* 18.5-6; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p89, contra BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1981, pp33-8. L.R. Farnell argues that at first hero cults for historic personages were only accorded posthumously, but that this began to blur from the time of Lysander onwards, though forms of worship for heroes verses Olympian gods tended to remain distinct, FARNELL, L.R. *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921, p2, pp360-371, p402.

¹⁰⁵ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p280, following Memnon *FGrH* 434 F 1 (1.1); Justin XVI.5; Plutarch *Moralia* 338b.

Hellenistic practices of his own lifetime'.¹⁰⁷ The point with respect to Clearchus can be conceded, but the precedents established by the Lysander cult are difficult to ignore, even if only as extensions of honours given to a benefactor. Aristotle notes that elements of honour accorded individuals include sacrifices, sanctuaries, statues and 'barbarian practices, such as genuflection and standing back'.¹⁰⁸ These trends begin to establish a strong precedent for the supra-human status of recent historical figures. What is clear is that the notion of apotheosis, a difficult concept for earlier Greek thought, had emerged as a viable concept for figures that had existed in recent historical memory, though it is not certain whether such cults were awarded before death.¹⁰⁹

Philip II, claiming descent from Heracles, may have felt his victories to be more significant than Lysander's,¹¹⁰ and as such, even more worthy of special honours. At Ephesus, after it threw off Persian control, a statue of Philip had been set alongside that of Artemis in her temple.¹¹¹ It is not clear whether this is an early case of genuine temple sharing, or whether this was a kind of extended version of a dedicatory object, that is, an *eikon* (sacred image) without the intention of being a cult statue for offerings (not an *agalma*).¹¹² A.B. Bosworth argues that this was 'honorific but not an act of deification'.¹¹³ The ceremonies conducted at Aegae shortly before his death suggests that Philip hoped he would be at least associated with the Olympians, a

¹⁰⁶ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p360.

¹⁰⁷ BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p364.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle *The Art of Rhetoric* I.5 [1361a].

¹⁰⁹ Diodorus IV.38.5; SHAPIRO, H.A. "Heros Theos: The Death and Apotheosis of Heracles" *CW*, 77, 1983-4, pp9-10; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p98.

¹¹⁰ GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p81, pp98-104.

¹¹¹ Arrian *Anabasis* I.17.11; CAWKWELL, George *Philip of Macedon*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, p177; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p98.

¹¹² For this distinction and its limitations, see WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, pp87-8. Andrew Stewart argues that though 'there is some evidence that Hellenistic *eikones* could receive cult, this practice was not attested before the second century B.C.', STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p208.

¹¹³ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p281. Note examples of bronze portrait statues as dedications within temples, including images of Alcibiades, Lysander and other Spartans, as well as Konon and Timotheos, see Pausanias VI.3.15-16.

definite lift in status even for the Macedonian king,¹¹⁴ though once again it is uncertain whether 'worship or homage' was intended.¹¹⁵

A more concrete piece of evidence are the altars inscribed by the city of Eresus (on the south-western coast of Lesbos) 'to Zeus Philippios', once again destroyed by anti-democratic elements, with subsequent charges being brought against the anti-Macedonian tyrant Agonippus, including, in events paralleling the revolutionary *stasis* at Ephesus, the charge that he pillaged and fired the city and its temples, which involved the burning to death of some citizens.¹¹⁶ In this case, the very fact of their overturning and the way this becomes part of the charge against the tyrant, suggest that the honours accorded Philip begin to place him in a very special status. Since Philip II probably helped overthrow the tyrants of Eresus, this homage is not surprising.¹¹⁷ The association of King Philip with the most powerful of the gods would also have propagated his claims of justice, stability and good rule.

F. W. Walbank suggests that although these cases cannot be dismissed, they are rare and limited mostly to Macedonia rather than Greece. In other words 'this

¹¹⁴ Diodorus XVI.92.5 & 95.1; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, pp308-309; HAMMOND, N.G.L. "'Philip's Tomb' in Historical Context", *GRBS*, 19, 1978, p333; CAWKWELL, George *Philip of Macedon*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, p179; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, pp103-105; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "On the Final Aims of Philip II", in ADAMS, W. Lindsay & BORZA, Eugene N. (eds.) *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1982, pp85-98; HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p25, p194. See C.B. Welles' comments in Diodorus *Library of History*, in twelve volumes, trans. by C.H. Oldfather, Russel Greer, Francis Walton, Charles Sherman, C. Bradford Welles *et al.*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1933-1967, Vol. VIII, p101, no. 3, contra TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p360, footnote 3. For the idea that Philip II's aims may have been much more ambitious than normally supposed, including the conquest of the Persian Empire and a subsequent programme of autocratic kingship leading eventually to a divine cult, see FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "On the Final Aims of Philip II", in ADAMS, W. Lindsay & BORZA, Eugene N. (eds.) *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1982, pp85-98.

¹¹⁵ WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, pp682-3, pp692-5. E.A. Fredricksmeier suggests that Philip II the second may have been preparing the way for divine cult, which would only be achieved after significant victories against the Persians, FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "On the Final Aims of Philip II", in ADAMS, W. Lindsay & BORZA, Eugene N. (eds.) *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1982, pp95-98.

¹¹⁶ TOD, Marcus N. (ed.) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions, Vol. II: From 403 to 323 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1948, no. 191, lines 4-15. Note Marcus Tod's comments *Ibid.* pp258-260. See also BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p281; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90.

¹¹⁷ TOD, Marcus N. (ed.) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions, Vol. II: From 403 to 323 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1948, p258.

evidence does not add up to a great trend towards deification of human beings during the period before Alexander'.¹¹⁸ However, the significance of these rare cases, rare *by definition* due to the *exceptional* status of individuals claiming or accorded to them, at the very least suggests a trend towards *synthronos*, a partial sharing of the authority of the gods.¹¹⁹ If so, it is likely that this precedent was not lost on the young Alexander, and he certainly wished to go beyond the limits set by his father in this as in other things.¹²⁰

More specifically, Alexander had every right to view himself as the founder of cities and the creator of an empire which superseded Philip's. Therefore, he was a person worthy of at least heroic, if not (yet) of divine honours. Alexander had no need, then, to borrow from Egyptian or oriental ideas of ruler cults,¹²¹ though he was willing to allow these forms to be used of him in the East, e.g. the visual representations of him in Egypt.¹²² However, these merely conform to the normal iconography associated with the pharaoh within Egypt, just as such forms had been used there for earlier conquering Persian kings and later Ptolemaic rulers. Alexander already had precedents in Greek and Macedonian thought from which to build up a suprahuman status. Indeed, founders of cities were often the recipients of a heroic cult and an annual festival, e.g. Battus at Cyrene, Hagnus and Brasidas at Amphipolis.¹²³ Alexander was not just the founder (*ktistes*) of several individual cities and colonies,¹²⁴ but of a huge empire which he hoped would surpass that of Persia.

¹¹⁸ WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90.

¹¹⁹ As noted by BADIAN, E. "Alexander the Great and the Greeks of Asia", *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg*, Oxford, 1966, p41; BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1981, p71; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p281.

¹²⁰ Plutarch *Alexander* 5-7. See FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, pp300-15.

¹²¹ WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, p274, contra cf McEWAN, Calvin W. *The Oriental Origin of Hellenistic Kingship*, 1934.

¹²² See OLMSTEAD, A.T. *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1948, p512.

¹²³ Pindar *Pythian* V.93-5; Thucydides V.11.; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p278. In general see GRAHAM, A.J. *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece*, 2nd ed., Chicago, Ares, 1983, pp29-39; MALKIN, I. *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1987, pp189-240.

¹²⁴ Direct evidence for this is limited to Alexandria in Egypt and possibly Alexandra-in-Arachosia, STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p94, p230. See for example Pseudo-Libanios (Nikolaos Rhetor) *Progymnasmata* 27, in *ibid.*, pp397-400.

To accord even a hero-cult, or its equivalent status, to a living being, was still exceptional. In Greek thought simply being the son of a god, even Zeus or Ammon, was not enough in itself to be accorded divine status.¹²⁵ Even Heracles could only receive divine status after specific god-like actions, and in some cases a dual cult, both as a hero and as a god, were maintained for him.¹²⁶ Indeed, the fact that Heracles, though already the son of a god, managed to become divinised by his heroic actions would have helped favour him in Alexander's worship and the use of his emblems on coinage (as noted above). Yet simply a heroic cult, as distinct from a heroic life replete with *arete*, was probably not enough for Alexander. The entire course of campaigns suggests that Alexander did believe in a heroic *arete* which could lift him above other mortals, and 'through which the hero attained a certain divinity of his own'.¹²⁷ It was this notion of *arete* which could allow a blurring between the otherwise separate conceptions of hero and god, and the different ritual honour given them.¹²⁸

Precisely what sort of status this implies needs to be further explored. Alexander, after Siwah, may have begun to accept some more direct relationship between himself and Ammon or Zeus.¹²⁹ He was already a founder of cities, a victor in battles, and a conqueror of heroic proportions, and could claim to have accomplished feats, at least towards the end of his career, of which neither a Dionysus nor a Heracles would be ashamed.¹³⁰ If it is not certain that Alexander truly thought himself physically immortal or sought actual deification, as argued by D. G. Hogarth

¹²⁵ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p283; TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p362; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p95.

¹²⁶ SHAPIRO, H.A. "Heros Theos: the death and apotheosis of Heracles" *CW*, 77, 1983-4, pp10-17. See for example Herodotus II.44 & Pindar *Nemean* III.22.

¹²⁷ EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, pp368-369. This then, helps explain the deep 'longing', *pothos*, Alexander to burst through all limits, EHRENBERG, Victor *Alexander and the Greeks*, tr. R. F. Von Velsen, Westport, Hyperion Press, 1938, pp52-61; STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p13, pp20-21, p141.

¹²⁸ EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, pp383-4. For a summary of the different sacrificial procedures for a god and hero, see SHAPIRO, H.A. "Heros Theos: The Death and Apotheosis of Heracles" *CW*, 77, 1983-4, p10.

¹²⁹ Curtius IV.7.8 & 25; Diodorus XVI.50.1-51.4; EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p380.

¹³⁰ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.10.6-7; Curtius VIII.5.11-12; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p286.

and W. W. Tarn,¹³¹ it is at least clear that he felt that his actions warranted him the honours due a god.

Honour and Status: The Correlates of Political Power

In part, Alexander's expectations were met by the needs and adulation of contemporaries. Alexander was the happy recipient of the cults offered by the Greek cities which he had liberated from Persian rule in Asia Minor, including cities of 'the Ionian League, Priene, Ephesus, Erythrae, Bargylia, Magnesia-on-the-Meander and Ilium, and from the islands of Rhodes and Thasos'.¹³² Unfortunately the dates for these cults are not certain. They may have been initiated after 327 B.C., since Callisthenes' speech of that time against *proskynesis* (prostration before the king) does not mention them,¹³³ that is, after the supposed request of Alexander for divine honours made to the Greeks of the mainland in 324/3 B.C.¹³⁴ Other cults would have been established after Alexander's death, remembering that the cities of Asia Minor often had a very different attitude to Alexander than that found in Athens or Sparta. The dispute about the status of Alexander was not a purely academic one: it is one of the main background causes of the execution of Callisthenes and was based on that philosopher's resistance to this blurring of the boundaries between the divine and human.¹³⁵

It is not necessary to impute to Alexander a clear-cut ideology on these issues. In classical Greek thought, although there were differences between men, heroes,

¹³¹ HOGARTH, D.G. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", *English Historical Review*, 1887, pp317-329; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, pp140-141.

¹³² WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90, footnote 95. For a complete listing, see STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp419-420.

¹³³ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.11.1-9; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90, footnote 95. *Proskynesis* was a term which implied profound obeisance in worship, and may have derived from the original Greek devotional meaning, whereby a worshipper would 'round their thumb and first finger, bring their hand to their mouth, and so blow the god a kiss', BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p374. Hence it is no accident that Alexander's attempt to introduce *proskynesis* first involved the act of obeisance, followed by a kiss bestowed by Alexander, see *ibid.*, pp381-2. See further below.

¹³⁴ WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p90. For the difficulties of connecting any such request to the Exiles Decree, see below. For the view that no such request was made, as distinct from the claim to be the son of Ammon, see CAWKWELL, G. L. "The Deification of Alexander the Great: A Note", in WORTHINGTON, Ian (ed.) *Ventures into Greek History*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, pp293-306.

daimons and gods, there was a complex set of relationships between them whereby one type might take on, or move towards, the honours given to a higher category.¹³⁶ In this context, even heroes would need deification to attain the status normally accorded a god.¹³⁷ There were, moreover, very good extrinsic reasons why Alexander might need such unique honours. Alexander hoped to establish his foremost status as one way of controlling all the disparate elements in the empire he was now creating.¹³⁸

Here we have a genuine problem with the character of Callisthenes, who in Arrian is reported as adamantly against *proskynesis* and resists according Alexander divine status.¹³⁹ However two fragments ascribed to Callisthenes state that the oracle at Didyma called Alexander the son of Zeus, and in a description of a journey along the Pamphylian coast Callisthenes suggests that the waves made obeisance to Alexander as if he were a god. It is possible that the priests of the newly-working oracle at Didyma were willing to allow such pronouncements to ensure Alexander's support for the rebuilding of their temple.¹⁴⁰ Similar motives may have driven Callisthenes. W. W. Tarn suggests this flattery was driven by Callisthenes' desire for Alexander to rebuild his home city of Olynthus.¹⁴¹ Callisthenes' role as a propagandist for Alexander is supported by the accounts of the king's expedition which he regularly dispatched back to Greece. Callisthenes was willing to use these terms of Alexander in a metaphorical way, but when it came time for Macedonians and Greeks, including

¹³⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.11-13. For an overview of Callisthenes' career, see BROWN, T.S. "Callisthenes and Alexander", *American Journal of Philology*, 70, 1949, pp225-248.

¹³⁶ For sensible comments on these boundaries, e.g. the tendency for hero's influence to be based on his tomb or otherwise localised, see DIETRICH, B.C. *Death, Fate and the Gods: The Development of a Religious Idea in Greek Popular Belief and in Homer*, London, Athlone, 1965, pp24-26, p31, p34, p39, p49.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp40-41.

¹³⁸ See BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p278. The problem, but not its solution, is clearly appreciated by BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, pp372-373. It does not seem to have been sufficient merely to maintain two separate roles as King of Macedonia and King of Asia, contra HAMMOND, N.G.L. *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, London, Duckworth, 1997, p201. In the Hellenistic period, divinisation was one method to signal the permanence, acceptance, and institutionalisation of the monarchy as the dominant political form, ISAGER, Signe "Kings and Gods in the Seleucid Empire: A Question of Landed Property in Asia Minor", in BILDE, Per et al.(eds.) *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus, Aarhus UP, 1990, p88.

¹³⁹ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.11.2-6.

¹⁴⁰ FONTENROSE, Joseph *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult, and Companions*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988, pp15-17. In fact the building work went on intermittently for centuries.

¹⁴¹ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p77 & Vol. II, p358. See also BROWN, T.S. "Callisthenes and Alexander", *American Journal of Philology*, 70, 1949, p233.

himself, to actually prostrate themselves before Alexander, he refused to carry sycophancy so far. Tarn argues that he had been 'playing with fire'.¹⁴²

The attitudes of another philosopher who attended Alexander on his campaigns can help enlighten us. Anaxarchus' views supporting a unique status for Alexander need not be taken merely as cynicism or sophistry. For a leader who claimed to be more than an ordinary king the status of not *being above the law* but *being the law* was one of the few resolutions to the problem of achieving a suprahuman authority, though Aristotle did not seem to consider this possible in the city-states of his time.¹⁴³ In a theoretical sense, Aristotle noted that an ideal king could almost appear to be a god among men.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, Alexander was in some sense inheriting the laurel offered Philip if he conquered the Persians, that there 'would be nothing left him but to become a god'.¹⁴⁵ This view of special status was already hinted at by the poet Pindar, who argued that 'human life does in some way approach the immortals by greatness of mind or nature', though such achievements remained ephemeral.¹⁴⁶

In early Greek thought heroes and even the gods have passions and commit horrible actions - they are simply not held to task for them in the same way as ordinary mortals. Their actions may be regarded as terrible, for example the sinister role of Apollo in *Oedipus Rex*, or his slaying (by flaying him alive) of the flute player

¹⁴² TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p81. Tarn dismisses too quickly the possibility that the fragments ascribed to Callisthenes may have become corrupted, or have been ascribed incorrectly - Tarn's arguments on this matter already assume that these fragments are genuinely by Callisthenes, *ibid.*, pp80-1.

¹⁴³ See Aristotle *Politics* III.13. 1284a 10-13; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p75; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds.) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p76. See also a similar formulation in Appian *Syrian Wars* 61. For the ideal of superhuman arete contained in the conceptualised image of Heracles, see GOUKOWSKY, Paul *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre: II*, Nancy, l'Université de Nancy II, 1981, p5.

¹⁴⁴ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p279. Note the development of this idea in later thinkers such as Diotogenes in Stobaeus IV.7.61. These trends can be summarised: 'In brief, it has appeared that in politics the conception of the king as himself the state, its constitution and its link with the world order seems early to have influenced the thinking of the Greeks, but to have been developed to great significance only during the Hellenistic age', GOODENOUGH, E.R. "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship", *Yale Classical Studies*, I, 1928, p101. For a general account, see WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas", in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds.) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, pp62-100.

¹⁴⁵ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p79. See also GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p82.

¹⁴⁶ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p279 discussing Pindar *Nemean* VI.1-6 & *Pythian* VIII.88-92. It must be remembered that Alexander had a liking and respect for the poetry of Pindar - his was the one private house left standing after the destruction of Thebes.

Marsyas who had challenged the god's pre-eminence in music. Yet these actions are not traditionally regarded as crimes but as a form of 'dark justice'. Likewise, the revenge of Odysseus upon the suitors, even the relatively innocent Amphinomous, is horrible, but is portrayed in the *Odyssey* as just in a retributive sense.¹⁴⁷ It was only through such extremes of courage and will that a hero might even temporarily transgress the bounds set for him by normal human fate.¹⁴⁸ By an elevation in status Alexander could also avoid some of the human judgements upon his actions. This kind of excuse for Alexander's actions in massacring individuals or cities is already implicit in Arrian's appraisal of his character.¹⁴⁹ This may be as much an assimilation of various divine attributes as an outright claim to divinity.¹⁵⁰ It must also be noted that since Alexander intended to set up a hero cult for the dead Hephaestion, having asked approval for the cult from the oracle at Siwah and instructing Cleomenes to insure that these shrines were looked after,¹⁵¹ then Alexander would surely have viewed himself as deserving more, at least posthumously, and probably in his own lifetime.

Later sources such as Arrian, Plutarch, Appian and Quintus Curtius, if anything, already demonstrate a certain level of scepticism,¹⁵² or at least ambiguity, towards Alexander's aspirations. Quintus Curtius is most scathing when he describes this desire for elevated status, at least in relation to the imposition of *poskynesis*, as a 'depraved idea'.¹⁵³ That Alexander wished to be viewed and treated as more than human is indicated by his publication of the episode at Siwah (see more on this below), by his desire that people should make acts of prostration before him,¹⁵⁴ by his resentment towards Callisthenes, and the fact that in 324 B.C. the Greek states sent

¹⁴⁷ Homer *Odyssey* XVIII.112-157 & XXIV.162-189.

¹⁴⁸ DIETRICH, B.C. *Death, Fate and the Gods: The Development of a Religious Idea in Greek Popular Belief and in Homer*, London, Athlone, 1965, p287.

¹⁴⁹ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.29.

¹⁵⁰ See TONDRIAU, J.L. "Alexandre le Grand assimilé a différentes divinités", *Rev. de Phil.*, 23, 1949, pp41-52.

¹⁵¹ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.23.68; Plutarch *Alexander* 72 & 75; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p171; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p82.

¹⁵² HAMILTON, J.R. "Introduction" to ARRIAN *The Campaigns of Alexander the Great*, trans A. de Selincourt, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971, pp32-33. See for example Curtius VI.9.18 & X.5.33; Plutarch *Alexander* 22.

¹⁵³ Curtius VIII.5.5-6.

¹⁵⁴ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.9-12.

sacred envoys, *theoroi*, to him at Babylon, along with a golden crown.¹⁵⁵ E. Fredricksmeyer has studied Arrian's usage of terminology and suggested that the key passage in Arrian concerning the *theoroi* should be translated with the following connotation: '... their ambassadors, themselves crowned, approached Alexander and crowned him with golden crowns, as *sacred envoys* (mistakenly, as it turned out) who had come to honor a god'.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, for the Hellenistic period it is not valid to divide religious and political issues in the way W. W. Tarn sometimes does in suggesting the political expediencies of Alexander's claim to divine status. It is true that a king is not necessarily divine in the ancient Greek world, but kingship in Macedonia had a sacred function for the state (as noted above), while in the political theory of both Plato and Aristotle kingship had a distinct ethical role which lifted it above notions of mere political pragmatism. While 'kingship was an eccentric institution in Greek thinking in the middle of the fourth century' it came to be 'accepted as the central political phenomenon by the end of the century'.¹⁵⁷ This reflects a real shift in power away from the city-state towards political systems based on the *ethnos*,¹⁵⁸ centred on armies following the Diadoche, funded by the territorial domains and wealth controlled by conquering kings.¹⁵⁹ It is no accident that as the power of kings grew in the early Hellenistic Age, a range of Stoic, Peripatetic and Neo-Pythagorean philosophers would seek to 'promote the idea of meritocracy in kingship'.¹⁶⁰ It was one of the few paths whereby such thinkers could effectively influence the public behaviour of rulers. If kings now dominated political and social life, then at least the philosophers could try to influence them in the direction of benevolent forms of governance.

However, Alexander sought more than a narrowly moral basis for his leadership, focused on normative concepts such as *arete*. By the time Alexander

¹⁵⁵ Arrian *Anabasis* VII.23; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p472; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p120; cf Hamilton 1971, p33.

¹⁵⁶ FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *AJAH*, 4, 1979, p5. The mistake, of course, was that Alexander would soon die, as noted in HAMILTON, J.R. "Introduction" to *ARRIAN The Campaigns of Alexander the Great*, trans A.de Selincourt, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971, p33. The passage suggests a certain irony in Arrian's historical viewpoint, not in the action of the ambassadors.

¹⁵⁷ HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p180.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* For traditional tribal and ethnos-based states and leagues, see EHRENBERG, Victor *The Greek State*, London, Methuen, 1969, pp22-25, pp120-131.

¹⁵⁹ Bosworth, A.B. *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare and Propaganda under the Successors*, Oxford: OUP, 2002, p250.

sailed down the Indus he had already begun to associate his religious actions with instructions from Ammon, offering sacrifice in accordance with the god's oracular utterances.¹⁶¹ Even in the light of these trends it is still possible to agree with W.W. Tarn that Alexander did not claim 'to be the divine ruler of the inhabited world'.¹⁶² But Alexander did not need to go so far in order to promote a special charisma and unique place for himself which might resolve some of the complex problems which emerged in the new empire he had conquered.¹⁶³ While it may be true that Alexander 'never called himself son of Ammon' and 'never called himself son of Zeus; but allowed others so to call him',¹⁶⁴ this distinction misses the crucial point. Such propaganda is more effective from the mouth of others, and even more so if the ruler protests a little.

W. W. Tarn states of Alexander that 'he did not believe it; he was occasionally sarcastic on the subject, and in public regularly alluded to his father Philip'.¹⁶⁵ Tarn's assumptions here are numerous; first that our sources are sufficient for a direct analysis of Alexander's positive beliefs, second, that we can understand sarcasm without noting the specific audience to which such statements are made, and last that a person claiming divine descent in the Greek world does not also accept a physical father. All these hypotheses are suspect. Even direct quotations of Alexander's speeches when recorded in our major sources need to be regarded with caution. Speeches often reflect the special concerns of later historians. Many of these quotations in fact have the structure of moral lessons or of rhetorical re-working. At the very least, they are influenced by the tension between earlier positive and negative accounts of Alexander. Tarn himself rejects much evidence found in major sources as 'obviously' later malicious inventions.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ GREEN, Peter *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p189.

¹⁶¹ Arrian *Anabasis* VI.19.4.

¹⁶² TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p140.

¹⁶³ Simplified as the impetus towards 'inventing new systems for control' in ELLIS, Walter M. *Ptolemy of Egypt*, London, Routledge, 1994, p1.

¹⁶⁴ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p78. For an opposing view, see FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *AJAH*, 4, 1979, p5, who argues that Alexander in his last years 'cherished and propagated his divine filiation with undiminished and even increasing fervor'.

¹⁶⁵ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p78. See also TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p354. For the opposing view, see FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, pp300-15.

¹⁶⁶ For example see TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p67.

In claiming a divine father there was no need to disown a physical father; as noted by Ulrich Wilcken, in many cases 'mysticism and reality ran thus on parallel lines'.¹⁶⁷ By making it an either-or situation, Tarn himself is following a tradition which seeks to trade off Philip against other possible fathers in an effort to locate Alexander not as a full-blood Macedonian, but as the physical son of another (such as the Egyptian Pharaoh Nectanebo II).¹⁶⁸ Alexander may have been at pains to emphasise Philip as his real father simply to react against the rumours which had circulated when, shortly after the Battle of Chaeronea, strong tensions existed over Philip's taking of a new Macedonian wife, Cleopatra, and when there may have been some doubt as to whether Alexander would remain the designated heir.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, an emphasis on Alexander as the son of Philip of Macedon would have heartened some of the older rank and file as well as many ordinary Macedonian soldiers¹⁷⁰ who would become cautious at the signs of orientalisation which began to emerge in Alexander's dress, behaviour and policies.

E.A. Fredricksmeier makes a strong argument that later in his career Alexander was willing to promote himself as a son of Ammon, but once again takes the argument too far in suggesting a repudiation of Philip 'as his father in favor of Zeus Ammon', even though admitting that in this late phase 'Alexander *occasionally* referred to Philip as his father', especially when dealing with his Macedonian troops and commanders.¹⁷¹ In this context it may have been more effective and prestigious to excel Philip rather than disown him. The clearest example of any public policy for disowning Philip II is found in a letter recorded in Plutarch *Alexander* 28. Here

¹⁶⁷ WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, p127. See also BRUNT, P.A. "The Aims of Alexander", *Greece & Rome*, 12, 1965, p210. The Armenian version of the Alexander Romance is happy to speak of Alexander as 'the son of Ammon, and son of King Philip', Pseudo-Callisthenes *The Romance of Alexander the Great By Pseudo-Callisthenes: Translated from the Armenian Version*, trans. Albert Wolohojian, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1969, 100.

¹⁶⁸ For example, *The Greek Alexander Romance*, Book I.1, trans. by R. Stoneman; Pseudo-Callisthenes *The Romance of Alexander the Great By Pseudo-Callisthenes: Translated from the Armenian Version*, trans. Albert Wolohojian, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1969, 9-33; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p144. For the propaganda value of such stories, see Jamzadeh, Parivash *Alexander Histories and Iranian Reflections: Remnants of Propaganda and Resistance*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp36-38.

¹⁶⁹ Plutarch *Alexander* 9; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p82, p88, p102; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, pp300-302.

¹⁷⁰ See STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p97, p197.

¹⁷¹ FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, p310.

Alexander indeed does speak of his 'so-called father'.¹⁷² However, the entire letter, even if genuine,¹⁷³ is written in the context of Alexander trying to distance himself from Philip's policy of allowing Athens to control the island of Samos and cannot be taken as a comprehensive and exclusive attitude.

Our ancient sources, of course, are influenced by later Hellenistic and Roman trends, but Alexander would have known full-well the implications of most of his policies. He would have known the difficulties of *proskynesis* for a Greek or Macedonian¹⁷⁴ - that he should ask it or allow it to be asked for on his behalf suggests that he was willing to blur the distinction between Hellenic and Persian practises for his own purposes. There were real differences between Greek and Persian forms of worship, and educated Greeks and Macedonians by this stage are likely to have known that for Persians acts of *proskynesis* did not imply the real worship of the Great King as a god.¹⁷⁵ However, this does not mean that the act was without some cultic significance. Though not viewed as a living god, it is possible that cultic recognition of the king's divine double, the *fravashi*, was concealed in the traditional Persian act of *proskynesis*.¹⁷⁶ L.R. Taylor draws parallels between this and the respect paid to the *agathos daimon* in Greek banqueting, and suggests that in Alexander's army such honours may have been paid to the statuette of the king which was placed on the altar or hearth of the household gods.¹⁷⁷ Though plausible, the argument rests entirely on whether such an image was found on the altar or hearth at this early period, when this

¹⁷² Plutarch *Alexander* 28.

¹⁷³ See FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Alexander and Philip: Emulation and Resentment", *CJ*, 85, 1989-90, p312. In favour of authenticity, see HAMILTON, J.R. "Alexander and his So-called Father", *Classical Quarterly*, 3, 1953, pp151-57, contra ROSEN, K. "Der 'göttliche' Alexander, Athen und Samos", *Historia*, 27, 1978, pp20-39.

¹⁷⁴ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p79. It was little better liked in a Roman source, see Curtius VIII.5.5-6. See also HECKEL, Waldemar "Leonnatos, Polyperchon and the Introduction of *Proskynesis*", *American Journal of Philology*, 99, 1978, pp459-461. The Persepolis freezes also show a custom of respect whereby the hand is poised before the lips, see WILBER, Donald N. *Persepolis: The Archaeology of Parsa, Seat of the Persian Kings*, N.Y., Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969, p84, p86. It is not certain whether this represents part of the Persian form of *proskynesis*.

¹⁷⁵ BRUNT, P.A. "The Aims of Alexander", *Greece & Rome*, 12, 1965, p210; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p284. See FRYE, R.N. "The Charisma of Kingship in Ancient Iran", *Iranica Antiqua*, 6, 1964, pp36-54.

¹⁷⁶ TAYLOR, L.R. "The 'Proskynesis' and the Hellenistic Ruler Cult", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 47, 1928, pp61-62. For this idea of the winged image being the destiny or soul angel of Persian king, see BOYCE, Mary *History of Zoroastrianism*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975, II, pp103-104; COOK, J.M. *The Persian Empire*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1983, p149.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp54-61.

form of equivalence with the gods would have been extremely controversial.¹⁷⁸ E.A. Fredricksmeier suggests that the Persian king was honoured as being of divine descent, 'to be possessed of a divine quality, and to hold an intermediate position between god and man.'¹⁷⁹

There were political usages to this growing intercultural awareness, e.g. in an early text such as Aeschylus *The Persians*, compulsory tribute, prostration and reverence to the Persian king by the cities of Asia minor are soon to be dispelled (see lines 588-9). Likewise, Isocrates states that the Persians 'fell on their knees before a mortal man, addressing him as a divinity, and thinking more lightly of the gods than of men'.¹⁸⁰ Isocrates uses the act of *proskynesis* as one of the signs of the weakness and decadence of the Persian spirit, but the description is imbedded in a propaganda attack on the Persians and seeks to mobilise popular prejudice rather than inform it. Since the *Panegyricus* was designed to help motivate a pan-Hellenic campaign against the 'barbarian' we would expect it to use and distort information for this purpose. Strabo also speaks of the reverence befitting a god paid by Persian subjects to their kings,¹⁸¹ but elsewhere acknowledges that obeisance was the normal greeting made from a low rank to a high rank Persian.¹⁸²

Moreover, the implications of *proskynesis* as the honouring of a great man by a humble one is already understood in Herodotus I.134 where he describes Median and Persian customs. By the late fourth century B.C. there was a considerable degree of contact and mutual awareness between the Greek and Persian cultures, and between Macedonian and Persian court systems.¹⁸³ Hence Themistocles, admittedly under very

¹⁷⁸ For other cautions on L.R. Taylor's interesting hypothesis, see BROWN, T.S. "Callisthenes and Alexander", *American Journal of Philology*, 70, 1949, pp240-241, footnote 77. A strong attack on this concept is put forward in BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1981, pp49-50.

¹⁷⁹ FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "On the Final Aims of Philip II", in ADAMS, W. Lindsay & BORZA, Eugene N. (eds.) *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1982, pp97. For the debate over the possibility that some of the small winged images, found blessing the king at Behistun for example, may be images of Ahuramazda, see ROOT, Margaret Cool *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1979, pp169-181; ZAEHNER, R.C. *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961, p75.

¹⁸⁰ Isocrates *Panegyricus* 151.

¹⁸¹ Strabo XI.13.9.

¹⁸² Strabo XV.3.20.

¹⁸³ BALCER, J.M. "The Greeks and the Persians: The Process of Acculturation", *Historia*, 32, 1983, pp257-67; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "On the Final Aims of Philip II", in ADAMS, W. Lindsay & BORZA, Eugene N. (eds.) *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Lanham, University Press of America, 1982, pp93-94; ROSTOVITZ, M. *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, London, OUP, 1972, Vol. I, p127. Contra the general statement in

difficult conditions of exile and further prosecution from Athens, was willing to offer *proskynesis* in order to be able to meet Artaxerxes.¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the issue was not a purely logical one. Hellenes generally and Macedonians in particular still found such profound obeisance shameful, comic, or humiliating¹⁸⁵ and, even when committed by a Persian, potentially ridiculous. Some Greek diplomats and envoys, such as Conon, Sperchias, Boulis and Ismenias either refused, or found ways to avoid or excuse the action.¹⁸⁶ Hence the Macedonians were generally opposed to it and a certain Leonnatus, a member of the Companions, made fun of one of the Persians who had made his obeisance awkwardly before Alexander.¹⁸⁷ This viewpoint continued through to the later Hellenistic period and contributed one element in the criticism of Alexander's policies. For example, Appian could critically note that Tigranes prostrated himself 'in the barbarian fashion' before Pompey the Great.¹⁸⁸

In general Greek worshippers would stand with hands raised up towards the heavens,¹⁸⁹ or perhaps with palms towards a cult image. In its original Greek meaning, *proskynesis* may have included the notion of sending forward a kiss, i.e. touching the lips as if to send a kiss to the god.¹⁹⁰ However, the real resistance in Greek and Macedonian culture was to the notion of complete prostration, which would have implied 'servility rather than impiety'.¹⁹¹ Even bending on one knee was regarded as rather extreme,¹⁹² though it might be customary in specific shrines for particular purposes and in cases of abject supplication.¹⁹³ It is only in this context that

BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p375. For the sizeable number of Greek artists and sculptures who influenced Achaemenid art, see RICHTER, G.M.A. "Greeks in Persia", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 1, 1946, pp15-30.

¹⁸⁴ Plutarch *Themistocles* 28.

¹⁸⁵ BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p375; BROWN, T.S. "Clitarchus", *American Journal of Philology*, 71, 1950, p155.

¹⁸⁶ BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p376, footnote 69.

¹⁸⁷ Arrian *Anabasis* IV.11.1 & IV.12.2. In this context, the attempt to introduce *proskynesis* was indeed a fiasco, BOSWORTH, A.B. *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996, p22.

¹⁸⁸ Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 104.

¹⁸⁹ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p284. Greek ritual gestures and greetings to the dead also usually did not involve *proskynesis*, see GARLAND, Robert *The Greek Way of Death*, London, Duckworth, 1985, p12.

¹⁹⁰ TAYLOR, L.R. "The 'Proskynesis' and the Hellenistic Ruler Cult", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 47, 1928, p53.

¹⁹¹ BROWN, T.S. "Callisthenes and Alexander", *American Journal of Philology*, 70, 1949, p241.

¹⁹² VAN STRATEN, F.T. "Did the Greeks Kneel Before Their Gods?", *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*, 49, 1974, pp159-89; BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p374; TAYLOR, L.R. "The 'Proskynesis' and the Hellenistic Ruler Cult", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 47, 1928, p60.

¹⁹³ BLESSINGTON, Francis "Paradise Lost and the Apotheosis of the Suppliant", *Arion*, 6 no. 2, Autumn-Winter 1998, pp88-89.

we can understand that the cynic Diogenes thought a women kneeling before the gods ungraceful - indeed, according to a late source Diogenes dedicated 'a bruiser' to the task of beating up anyone who dared to fall on their faces in worship.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, one tradition records the execution of the ambassador Timagoras for performing *proskynesis* before a Persian king.¹⁹⁵ Plutarch, too, in his essay on superstition, could place uncouth prostrations alongside other disgraceful rituals.¹⁹⁶

It should also be remembered that in the times just before Alexander's campaigns, Greeks in Asia Minor would have been forced to perform *proskynesis* before Persian officials,¹⁹⁷ indicating both their loyalty and obedience. *Proskynesis*, then, indicated an extreme form of servility which was not normal for Greek worship but was suitable for the slaves of a despotic king.¹⁹⁸ With these factors in mind, we can see that the request for *proskynesis* was actually a more extreme demand than that of requesting a heroic cult, and one that presaged a radical change in relations between Alexander and his Greek and Macedonian subjects. D. G. Hogarth had understood import of *proskynesis* in levelling Macedonians and Persians by 'the assimilation of the habit of two peoples before their king',¹⁹⁹ but otherwise underestimates the political significance of this programme.

It is useful compare this demand for obeisance with the general conduct of earlier Macedonian Kings among their Companions, officers, relations and soldiers of the realm. This traditional conduct included a high degree of direct access, uncensored speech, shared banquets and drinking sessions,²⁰⁰ all of which aided group cohesion in an otherwise highly competitive culture. Likewise, down to and including the time of

¹⁹⁴ Diogenes Laertius *Vitae Philosophorum* VI.37-38 = EDELSTEIN, Ludwig & E.J. *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1945, Vol. I, no. 580; EDELSTEIN, Ludwig & E.J. *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1945, Vol. II, p185. A negative interpretation is also found in a Christian source, Arnobius, who speaks of those who were not healed by the gods even though 'they prostrated themselves before the gods, and swept the very thresholds with their lips', Arnobius *Adversus Nationes* I.49 = *Ibid.*, Vol. I, no. 584.

¹⁹⁵ Athenaeus VI.251b, 253; TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, pp359-360. See also Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 22.

¹⁹⁶ Plutarch *Superstition = Moralia* 166B. See also *ibid.* 171B where these rituals in general are placed in the context of 'barbarous and outlandish penances'.

¹⁹⁷ BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p375, following Xenophon *Agésilas* I.22 & I.34.

¹⁹⁸ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 918-20; Euripides *Orestes* 1508; Aristotle *Art of Rhetoric* 1361a36; Herodotus VII.136; Isocrates *Panegyricus* 151; Xenophon *Hellenica* IV.1.35; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, pp284-5.

¹⁹⁹ HOGARTH, D.G. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", *English Historical Review*, 1887, p319.

²⁰⁰ HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, pp152-153, p392 following Curtius IV.7.31 & Polybius V.27.6.

Philip II, the Macedonians kings used their own personal names and 'did not call themselves *basileus* or expect to be called this by their people'.²⁰¹ The term *basileus* was not used on the coins of Philip, nor Alexander's coins at first intended for circulation in Europe, though the royal title was added after victories in Asia.²⁰² After Alexander this tradition of the king as *primus inter pares* was not entirely lost: Antigonas Gonatas, perhaps partly under the influence of Stoic ideas, refused to allow 'pomp and circumstance' to interfere with the effective rule of the Macedonian court.²⁰³ N.G.L. Hammond and G.T. Griffith rightly note that *proskynesis* went against the grain of Macedonian custom and traditional law - such a custom of obeisance, even if not understood as worship, does suggest a move from loyal consent to enforced subservience.²⁰⁴

The general trend in Arrian confirms a heightened sense of personal power in the later years of Alexander's campaigns,²⁰⁵ a trend which only the disinclination of his army for continued conquest and exploration managed to dampen. It is not certain that Alexander consciously believed himself a god - it is not possible to probe his innermost beliefs with the sources at our disposal. At the least, however, he was willing to use signs and symbols of a suprahuman status to further his conquests and ambitious policies. There were not just elements of positive propaganda but signs supporting Alexander's claims to an exceptional destiny.²⁰⁶ Tarn accepts that this is the case and argues that Alexander asked the cities of the League of Corinth for his deification in order to secure the authority to pass a decree for the return of exiles to

²⁰¹ Ibid., p387.

²⁰² STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp93-94; HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p92, footnote 1 p94 & footnote 4 p143. For the dangers in the use of this term, see PRICE, Martin Jessop *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus: A British Museum Catalogue*, London, British Museum Press, 1991, Vol. I, pp32-33.

²⁰³ GREEN, Peter *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p199. Too much should not be made of this philosophical bent. Hammond and Walbank caution against assuming the influence of Stoic theories on his policies, see HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, p316, contra TARN, W.W. *Hellenistic Civilisation*, 2nd ed., London, Edward Arnold & Co., 1930, pp48-49.

²⁰⁴ HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, p386.

²⁰⁵ See Balsdon's assessment of 'growing signs of megalomania', BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p378.

²⁰⁶ As accepted by TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p79, supported most elegantly in EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, pp363-91.

their home cities.²⁰⁷ Although the exiles decree has been well-supported by correlated inscriptional evidence, the sources for this request for deification are much more limited. J.P.V.D. Balsdon has correctly noted that related inscriptional evidence from Tegea and Samos does not include any hint of divine titles.²⁰⁸ Indeed, the inscription from Mytilene simply refers to Alexander as the 'king'.²⁰⁹ These factors have led D.G. Hogarth, J.P.V.D. Balsdon and E. Badian to challenge the reality of any such request for deification on the part of Alexander, and at the most such trends might have come from the more sycophantic pro-Macedonian elements in some Greek cities.²¹⁰ Peter Green rejects Tarn's idea that any such deification was needed on legal grounds as an 'unreal pedantry' which is in no way compatible with on the trends of *Machtpolitik* in the period.²¹¹ E. Badian also rejects completely Tarn's legalistic interpretation of the need for divine status to pass such laws.²¹²

Our evidence makes it impossible to be certain on this subject, but it seems likely that requests for deification, even if not made directly by Alexander, were allowed to go unchecked as they fitted in with his general policy of establishing a unique status which would enable him to retain effective leadership of an expanding empire. The idea of deification seems to have caused considerable political debate, but at the religious level was received with a rather weary cynicism by

²⁰⁷ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, pp112-114; TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p370. Accepted also in BALOGH, Elemer *Political Refugees in Ancient Greece: From the Period of the Tyrants to Alexander the Great*, Roma, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1972, p81. Interestingly enough, only those under a curse were not to be returned, i.e. those who had committed acts of murder or sacrilege, GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p451; Diodorus XVII.109 & XVIII.8; Justin XIII.5. For the legal and practical complexity involved in such returns, see BRUN, Patrice "Les exilés politiques en Grèce: l'exemple de Lesbos", *Ktèma*, 13, 1988, pp260-261.

²⁰⁸ BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p387, following *OGIS* 2; *SIG*³ 306; TOD, Marcus N. (ed.) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions, Vol. II: From 403 to 323 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1948, no. 201 & 202; *SIG*³ 312. See also BALOGH, Elemer *Political Refugees in Ancient Greece: From the Period of the Tyrants to Alexander the Great*, Roma, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1972, p68-74, following *IG* V 2, *OGIS* I,2, *Syll.* ³ 312, 333, *OGIS* 8, & *IG* XII Suppl. p.3 no. 6.

²⁰⁹ See the partial translations in BALOGH, Elemer *Political Refugees in Ancient Greece: From the Period of the Tyrants to Alexander the Great*, Roma, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1972, p71-74.

²¹⁰ HOGARTH, D.G. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", *English Historical Review*, 1887, pp322-326; BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, pp387-8; BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1981, pp55-59.

²¹¹ GREEN, Peter *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p197.

²¹² BADIAN, E. "Harpalus" *JHS*, 81, 1961, p29. It is also possible that the original formulation of the League of Corinth, as instituted under Philip II, may have included provisions against executions and exiling of persons which went against the current constitution of the member states, CAWKWELL, George *Philip of Macedon*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, p171. If so, the return of exiles may not have been so large an extension of the hegemon's power as to require divinisation.

Demosthenes²¹³ and by Damis at Sparta, who stated that 'since Alexander wishes to be a god, let him be a god'.²¹⁴ Demades moved the degree according divine honours in Athens, which resulted in a later prosecution after Alexander's death.²¹⁵ It is insufficient to reject these diverse sources as merely clever epigrams which might have been made up after the fact - such humour had direct political consequences.²¹⁶ It seems clear that Alexander's contemporaries thought that he wished to be viewed as deserving the honours accorded a god, regardless of to what degree this was carried out as a sustained political agenda.

Even if a request to deify Alexander was indeed passed by the League, this would largely have been a matter of expedience by the states involved,²¹⁷ rather than based on any real sense of veneration. Few (if any) cult statues of Alexander are recorded for central and southern mainland Greece in Pausanias. One shrine to him in Megalopolis seems at a later date to have been converted to a private residence.²¹⁸ Bearing in mind the attitude of the regent Antipater and Cassander, it is likely that after Alexander's death few of the city-states in Greek would be in a position to mark their loyalty to Alexander's cause so blatantly. If the report in Pausanias is accurate, then Megalopolis would have been the only posthumous cult of Alexander and therefore 'unique in mainland Greece'.²¹⁹ Likewise, Macedonia itself would not at first accord Alexander divine honours after his death.²²⁰ Pausanias records the statues of

²¹³ 'All right, make him the son of Zeus - and of Poseidon too, if that's what he wants', GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p464. See the biting anecdotes recorded in Plutarch *Moralia* 804B & 842D; Hyperides *Against Demosthenes* Col. 31.

²¹⁴ See Athenaeus 419c-d; Aelian *Historical Miscellany* II.19; Plutarch *Moralia* 219E; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p289. I am not sure that we can go so far as to say that it was generally regarded by the 'Greeks themselves as a joke', as does GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p451, since precedents for a cult of divine honours already existed, as noted above, and Alexander was certainly of equal fame to some of these mythic and historic precedents.

²¹⁵ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, pp288-9. See references in GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p560, footnote 45; Plutarch *Moralia* 219E.

²¹⁶ Contra BALSDON, J.P.V.D. "The 'Divinity' of Alexander", *Historia*, 1, 1950, p383.

²¹⁷ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p371.

²¹⁸ Pausanias VIII.32.1; FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *AJAH*, 4, 1979, pp1-2; CAWKWELL, G. L. "The Deification of Alexander the Great: A Note", in WORTHINGTON, Ian (ed.) *Ventures into Greek History*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, p299.

²¹⁹ FREDRICKSMEYER, E.A. "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *AJAH*, 4, 1979, p2. Though it does seem that Alexander cults emerged more quickly and endured longer in Asia Minor than on the mainland, it must also be noted that Pausanias may be somewhat biased in his reporting since 'his sympathies lay with the free Greece of the years before Philip and Alexander', STEWART, Andrew *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p39. See also *Ibid.*, p53.

²²⁰ HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, pp93-4.

Philip and Alexander in the Rotunda of Philip in Olympia, but these were established after the victory of the Macedonians at Chaeronea.²²¹ Pausanias also records a dedicatory statue of Alexander on horseback, alongside Philip and Seleucus and Antigonos,²²² but this is clearly not a cult statue. Although this request for deification does not seem to have been made to the cities of Asia Minor,²²³ he was in fact more favourably honoured there. As noted by A.B. Bosworth, at Thasos 'Alexander was honoured with a festival in the first generation after his death and Erythrae had a priesthood by 270 B.C. At this time the Ionian *koinon* had a regular annual festival, apparently celebrated on Alexander's birthday . . . Nearly three centuries later the festival was still observed, now in a permanent precinct west of Teos.'²²⁴ It is also likely that part of this gratitude was based on the fact that Alexander had allowed the city to be autonomous and tax-free, though this policy was also continued under Antigonos, as attested in a letter of Antiochus II to Erythrae, sometime after 261 B.C.²²⁵

We can note at this stage that counter-traditions in the *Alexander Romance* explicitly treat Alexander as a man who refused deification. This is not a decisive problem for the thesis that Alexander sought to establish a suprahuman status for himself as a living ruler.²²⁶ In the *Romance* Alexander's reasons for refusing to be a *synthronos* of Zeus are that as a mortal he must be cautious of such honours since they 'endanger his soul'.²²⁷ This is precisely the kind of philosophical reasoning we would expect from the following Hellenistic period, a time when Stoicism, Neo-Platonism and religions of personal salvation all emphasised the saving of the individual soul

²²¹ Pausanias V.20.9-10.

²²² Pausanias VI.11.1.

²²³ Presumably outside the League, at least formally, TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p371.

²²⁴ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p289; SIG³ 1014, 111; BADIAN, E. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in DELL, H.J. (ed.) *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honour of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki, 1981, pp59-63.

²²⁵ WELLES, C.B. *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy*, Chicago, Ares Publishers, 1974, no. 15, lines 23-4. See also WELLES, C.B. *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy*, Chicago, Ares Publishers, 1974, p319.

²²⁶ Contra TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, pp364-5.

²²⁷ TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, p365. In STONEMAN, Richard (trans.) *The Greek Alexander Romance*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991, I.45 he is described as mortal yet addressed as 'Heraclēs, O Alexander'. The Armenian version also contains several sections where he is viewed as a mortal hero, but not a god, Pseudo-Callisthenes *The Romance of Alexander the Great By Pseudo-Callisthenes: Translated from the Armenian Version*, trans. Albert Wolohojian, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1969, 125, 206, 223. The key point was

through conforming to its true nature. Ironically, Alexander can only become the 'philosophical hero' of Plutarch by remaining fully human. Within the confines established by the Romance genre, it also acts as counterpropaganda to the gruesome historical realities of Alexander's desire for *proskynesis* and his treatment of those who opposed him (see above).

Here we can once again make a useful comparison with Philip's program for self-promotion. As with Philip, Alexander's actions seem to have been aimed at establishing a particular political and social pre-eminence, not a new religion or a new faith. Furthermore, although it is true that no 'official cult of himself' was firmly established during Alexander's lifetime on his own direct orders,²²⁸ he allowed the cities and factions which supported him to accord him statues whose treatment (noted above) seem to approach those accorded a god. However, Alexander died too soon for the various trends of a special status to develop into a genuine 'imperial' cult. What is clear is that he was happy to have his status raised beyond that of an ordinary king. Peter Green is correct to argue that such a move would not have been merely a political device - its practical benefits would have been too small²²⁹ for the opposition that such a proposal would have created. We should not think of this religious impulse, then, as simply a move to have politically useful honours paid to him while he lived.

However, Alexander did not find heroic honours sufficient: he felt he had already surpassed all legendary men, as well as those of recent memory. Lowell Edmunds provides a sensible approach to this issue:

The heroes of poetry are spoken of as half-divine; the heroes of cult are often closely connected in worship with deities; some cult figures were worshipped as either heroes or gods. If we set Alexander against the background of such beliefs, what is most striking is that he never sought heroic honours. Our sources contain many references to emulation of heroes but nothing concerning heroization. Alexander sought heroism as distinct from heroization, since heroism implied divinity. Alexander's feelings in these matters can be seen in the fact that he wished to heroize his friend Hephaestion. A hero cult would suffice a lesser man than Alexander. He himself sought something more.²³⁰

Yet this was not a matter of Alexander's wishes alone. This impulse towards suprahuman honours should not be placed solely on Alexander's head. Although it is

that he was to exceed all other men, though a mortal. Other sections in *The Greek Alexander Romance* treat him as the son of Ammon and 'as a god', see I.30 & I.33.

²²⁸ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p140.

²²⁹ GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p452.

²³⁰ EDMUNDS, Lowell "The Religiosity of Alexander", *GRBS*, 12, 1971, p383.

possible that he did not like his court members to refer to him as the son of Ammon, this does not mean that he rejected the idea itself. His encounter at Siwah, where he was either addressed as the son of the god, or at least sought confirmation that he was descended from Ammon, remains controversial in interpretation²³¹ but the stories which emerged from it certainly were not suppressed by Alexander.²³² The audience for such propaganda may have not been so much Egyptians as Greeks throughout the known world. Greek legend recorded that both Perseus and Heracles had visited Siwah, which by the time of Alexander was regarded as one of the most prominent oracular centres in the world, 'to be mentioned beside Delphi'.²³³ The political and propaganda significance of the visit to Siwah is underscored by the fact that shortly after embassies returned from Miletus stating that the oracle at Didyma had become active for the first time since the Persian Wars, and confirmed Alexander's 'descent from Zeus'.²³⁴ He was also accepted as such by the Sibyl of Erythrae.²³⁵ It was not surprising that the 'liberated' cities of Asia Minor would be among the first to flatter their liberator and effective master.²³⁶ The encounter at Siwah would bolster Alexander's claim to be a king preminent over all others, leading to an echoing of such claims at other religious centres.²³⁷

The flattering inflation of Alexander's image may have been of advantage to some of his chief advisers and 'courtiers'. The chief of these flatters was the

²³¹ See Arrian *Anabasis* III.3.1-2; Curtius 4.7.5-30; Plutarch *Alexander* 26-27; Diodorus XVII.49-52, Strabo XVII.1.43; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p272; TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p43; BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p73; WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, pp124-6; FOX, Robin Lane *The Search for Alexander*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1980, pp202-208; KUHLMANN, Klaus P. *Das Ammoneion: Archäologie, Geschichte Und Kultpraxis Des Orakels Von Siwa*, Mainz am Rhein, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, 1988, pp141-157; LARSEN, J.A.O. "Alexander at the Oracle of Ammon", *Classical Philology*, 27, 1932, pp70-75; MILNE, Joseph Grafton "Alexander and Ammon", *Ancient Egypt*, 3, 1929, pp74-78; WILCKEN, U. "Alexanders Zug zum Ammon: ein Epilog", *SPAW*, 1930, pp159-176; BELGRAVE, C.D. *Siwah: The Oasis of Jupiter Ammon*, London, The Bodley Head Ltd., 1923, pp75-89.

²³² See Curtius VI.10.27 & VI.11.23-24.

²³³ FOX, Robin Lane *The Search for Alexander*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1980, p197.

²³⁴ Strabo XVII.1.43; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p277.

²³⁵ WILCKEN, Ulrich *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. Richards, Norton, N.Y., 1967, p128.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Contra TARN, W.W. *Alexander the Great, II: Sources and Studies*, Cambridge, CUP, 1948, pp358-9. See BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p283, following Ephippus, *FGrH* 126 F 5. Bosworth also states that incense, according to Ephippus, was burnt before Alexander, *ibid.*, p287. Generally, the type of receptions reported by Phylarchus also demonstrate an extremely heightened status for Alexander, *ibid.* Athenaeus 539e-f reports an incredibly luxurious pavilion and Alexander holding court in the grand style with hundreds of attendants.

philosopher Anaxarchus, but there were others who were willing to follow the new demands of the times. His close friend Hephaestion would not have opposed Alexander's search for suprahuman status, nor did one of the Companions, Demetrius son of Pythonax.²³⁸ W. W. Tarn argues that there was a general blurring during the late 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. between being the son of a god and actually being a god, and that certain flatters were willing to use both these terms of Alexander.²³⁹ Robin Lane Fox provides a somewhat different formulation when he argues that after Siwah Alexander's 'conviction of a kinship with the gods had deepened his confidence and the sense of the possible'.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, despite Arrian's agnosticism on this issue, it is possible that his record of the attitudes of Eratosthenes of Cyrene is relevant. Eratosthenes, later on the great scholar of the library of Alexandria, speaking of Alexander's entry into India, reported that everything was attributed by the Macedonians to the divine influence in order to please Alexander and that the soldiers invented or augmented local tales to flatter their king.²⁴¹ Specifically, parallels were drawn between Dionysus' journeys and Alexanders' campaigns. For individual soldiers to bolster their leader's dreams was not uncommon, and a numerically small army deep in foreign territory might build up unusual bonds of flattery, illusion and fearful dependence upon their brilliant young commander. In this sense the army had become a state in a rather different way to that usually conceived of in the constitutional interpretation of the army assembly of the Macedonians.²⁴² It had some of the features and politics of a moving city partly cut off from its traditional roots in Macedonia.²⁴³ As noted by Edward Anson, after 324 B.C., as a

²³⁸ See Arrian *Anabasis* IV.12.5.

²³⁹ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979 p78 & II, pp350-354.

²⁴⁰ FOX, Robin Lane *The Search for Alexander*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1980, p211.

²⁴¹ Arrian *Anabasis* V.3. See also Arrian *Indica* I.7; V.10-13; VI.7; Strabo XV:1.9.

²⁴² N.G.L. Hammond and G.T. Griffith provide one of the strongest interpretations for the effective traditional rights of the assembly of the Macedonians, but note both that this body cannot be strictly equated with just the military assembly, and that its prerogatives implied a contractual arrangement between the people and the king in only the most theoretical sense, see HAMMOND, N.G.L. & GRIFFITH, G.T. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. II, 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1979, pp160-161, pp385-386, pp389-390. These traditional prerogatives, however, form an important aspect of the historical interpretation in HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, pp99-102, p124, p192. See further, with critical examination of the use of the term 'Macedones', HAMMOND, N.G.L. "Connotations of 'Macedonia' and 'Macedones' until 323 B.C.", *Classical Quarterly*, 45, 1995, pp120-128. For doubts concerning the degree to which constitutional procedures can be detected in the history of the fourth century, see BORZA, Eugene N. *In the Shadow Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp232-236, p298.

²⁴³ TARN, W. W. *Alexander the Great, Volume I*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979, p84; GREEN, Peter *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p381; ROSTOVITZ, M. *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Vol. I, London, OUP,

'result of their long and most often continuous service, Alexander's soldiers had developed a corporate identity based on mutual self interest'.²⁴⁴ These factors help account for the strongly emotional ploys repeatedly used by both Alexander and the troops when they had disagreements, usually followed by public reconciliations.

It is significant that shortly following this period Hellenistic leaders were able not only to claim royal status but to set up ruler cults, though here Greek and Macedonian modes of thought remained more important than 'eastern' models.²⁴⁵ Antigonos Monophthalmus may have been one of the first to receive widespread cult honours during his lifetime.²⁴⁶ Even Ptolemy II, with a direct route for divinisation available through Egyptian models of divine kingship, would find associations with Zeus and Apollo more palatable for his Greek subjects (as outlined in the hymns of Callimachus).²⁴⁷ As noted by A.B. Bosworth:

Alexander's characteristic blend of the *kausia* (the Macedonian hat) and the diadem became virtually a badge of royalty, while the pomp and ceremonial of the court in his later days inspired subsequent dynasts to emulate his conspicuous waste. His relations with the gods were also imitated. Seleucus claimed Apollo as his heavenly father and maintained that his kingship had oracular sanction (from Branchidae). On a less lofty sphere the Lagids of Egypt claimed descent back to Heracles and his wife, Arsinoe to Dionysus. Deification of the living ruler was now established. As early as 311 B.C. Antigonos was honoured at Scepis with the full trappings of altar, cult statue, sacred precincts and an annual festival (OGIS 6), and four years later both he and his sons received a veritable cornucopia of cults honours at the hands of the Athenians. The reigning king was indeed a god among men, with no practical constraints upon his freedom of action. It became almost a philosophical commonplace that as monarch he was *nomos empsychos*, law incarnate.²⁴⁸

1972, pp143-7. For the unusual sociological aspects of ancient armies deep in enemy territory, see NUSSBAUM, G.B. *The Ten Thousand: A Study in Social Organization and Action in Xenophon's Anabasis*, Leiden, Brill, 1967, pp2-3. For a forceful attack on the idea that the Macedonian army 'traditionally possessed the right to elect kings and judge case of treason', see ANSON, Edward M. "The Evolution of the Macedonian Army Assembly: (330-315 B.C.)", *Historia*, 40, 1991, p230. For the way the Successors relied on their soldiers being 'well-disposed' towards them, see ROSTOVITZ, M. *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, London, OUP, 1972, Vol. I, pp144-5. For the importance of the 'baggage trains' of these armies, which soon came to include children, wives and other relatives, see Diodorus XIX.43.7-9.

²⁴⁴ ANSON, Edward M. "The Evolution of the Macedonian Army Assembly: (330-315 B.C.)", *Historia*, 40, 1991, pp234-5. Hence it is dangerous to interpret the 'mutinies' under Alexander through the narrow lens of the soldiers acting as citizens, contra CARNEY, Elizabeth "Macedonians and Mutiny: Discipline and Indiscipline in the Army of Philip and Alexander", *Classical Philology*, 91 no. 1, January 1996, pp19-44.

²⁴⁵ WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p64. p66. Note, for example, the emphasis on Heracles and Dionysus as found in Satyrus, *FGrH* 631 F I and *OGIS* 54, lines 1-5.

²⁴⁶ See BILLOWS, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, pp235-236.

²⁴⁷ GREEN, Peter *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p172, following Callimachus I, lines 78-87 & II, lines 26-27.

²⁴⁸ BOSWORTH, A.B. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, CUP, 1988, p176.

Bosworth has slightly exaggerated his case here: it is one thing to claim a divine or heroic lineage and to allow a minor centre to vote you a cult, quite another to proclaim oneself the centre of a cult in major cities, or throughout the kingdom via temple-sharing.²⁴⁹ It is true that both Antigonus Monophthalmus and his son Demetrius did receive exceptional honours and were accorded honours as Saviours (*Soteres*) of Athens, while 'new tribes were named after the two generals and the cult of the *Soteres* must link with their role as tribal eponyms'.²⁵⁰ However, this seems to accord more with notions of them being living heroes, while notions of Demetrius as 'the god who steps down' (*theos kataibates*, in 304 B.C.)²⁵¹ represented an extreme example of Athenian sycophancy. Likewise, the infamous hymn praising Demetrius as 'son of the most mighty god Poseidon and of Aphrodite' used mainly 'hyperbole' in its expressions, though if sung as a public hymn it is indeed unique.²⁵² At the same time this hymn is a meaningful indicator of the social tensions of the period. It springs out of the dangers and anxieties experienced during the uncertain wars of the Successors. Moreover, this honouring of great leaders was not pure formalism, but sprung out of 'attitudes which led to ruler-worship in a time of need and uncertainty'.²⁵³ It is also possible that such excessive praise was combined with a more practical demand - that Demetrius put down the 'thievish' Aetolians.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ As emphasised in WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p96. For later trends in temple-sharing, which remained rare outside Ptolemaic Egypt, see NOCK, A. D. "Synnaos Theos", in NOCK, A.D. *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, pp204-215, pp235-237, pp246-247.

²⁵⁰ WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p91. See also WOODHEAD, A.G. *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1981, pp357-67; SCOTT, Kenneth "The Deification of Demetrius Poliorcetes", *American Journal of Philology*, 49, 1928, pp137-66, pp217-39.

²⁵¹ Plutarch *Demetrius* 10; WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p91.

²⁵² WALBANK, F.W. "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas" in WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p91; Athenaeus VI.253b-f.

²⁵³ WILL, Édouard "The Formation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms", WALBANK, F.W. et al. (eds.) *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VII, Part I: The Hellenistic World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, CUP, 1984, p101. See also HAMMOND, N.G.L. & WALBANK, F.W. *A History of Macedonia: Vol. III, 336-167 B.C.*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1988, pp181-182. For an outline history of Greek *euergetism*, which provides the platform on which the Hellenistic ruler cults were established, see VEYNE, Paul *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 1990, pp70-156.

²⁵⁴ GREEN, Peter *Alexander to Actium: the Hellenistic Age*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p127. See the colourful description of the Aetolians in Athenaeus VI.253e-f.

Alexander and the Capture of the Historical Imagination

In so far as we can probe the working of Alexander's 'grand strategy', it seems clear that the political benefits of religious prestige were mobilised as part of a wider propaganda campaign that aimed to lift him to a unique status that would have suited the new empire he was beginning to forge. Alexander mobilised traditional Macedonian and Greek beliefs, but extended these by the gradual adoption of elements drawn from Persian and Egyptian custom. Their uneven reception demonstrates the opportunities and temptations of autocratic power operating during a period of social crisis and religious turmoil. The subsequent evolution of Hellenistic kingship was as much a reaction to the unique life of Alexander as it was the legacy of his political agenda. The social forces thus released would continue to operate after his death, profoundly influencing the political culture of both the Hellenistic age and early Roman Empire.

The subsequent images of Alexander have permanently shaped the historical record down into the twentieth century:

The very fact that Alexander remains one of the greatest figures in history bears witness not just to the success of his propaganda during his lifetime but to the cult of personality developed around his war record by later historical figures. He provided the model for others to follow. Regardless of the reality, it was the image which captured the imagination.²⁵⁵

Alexander's ability to fascinate later generations is a demonstration of the dangers of assuming that knowledge is a simple portrayal of 'truth', unconstructed and unmediated. Alexander's strategy of building a transnational religious identity that might engage Greeks, Macedonians, Egyptians and Persians was daring but risked alienating his companions and the conservative sources of his authority. Nonetheless, this early effort at political legitimation across cultural barriers was one of the most enduring aspects of the following Hellenistic Age. Alexander's agendas were complex, and if ultimately unsuccessful in his own time, nonetheless shaped the historical record for over two millennia. They were far more sophisticated than President Putin's current effort to build a Eurasian civilizational identity that can transcend Russian particularism.²⁵⁶ Propaganda is not just about spreading particular

²⁵⁵ BOSWORTH, Brian "Truth and Falsehood in Early Hellenistic Propaganda," in Turner, Andrew J. et al. *Private and Public Lies: The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Graeco-Roman World*, Leiden, Brill, 2010, p34.

²⁵⁶ LO, Bobo *Russia and the New World Disorder*, Washington, Brookings Institution Press, 2015; POMERANTSEV, Peter *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*, N.Y., Public Affairs, 2015. See further FERGUSON, R. James *China's Eurasian Dilemmas:*

truths or falsehoods, but at a more sophisticated level is the process engaged in the generation, deletion and shaping of transmitted knowledge, influencing later cultural and national identities.²⁵⁷

Roads and Risks for a Sustainable Global Power, Cheltenham, Edward Elgard, forthcoming August 2018.

²⁵⁷ See further MINAROVA-BANJAC, Cindy *Collective Memory and Forgetting: A Theoretical Discussion*, The Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies, Research Paper No. 16, February 2018 [http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cewces_papers/14/]