



ALEXANDER'S LEGACY

ATTI DEL CONVEGNO, MILANO UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA
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a cura di

Franca Landucci Gattinoni

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Alexander's Legacy
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PREFACE

Recently, the history of Alexander and his Successors has attracted growing attention of modern academia. The Hellenistic world is not viewed anymore as a moment of decadence after the splendour of the Greek Classical age, enlightened by Athens' bright star, but as an engaging example of *ante litteram* "globalization", the essential premise to the development of the Roman Empire. We have consequently considered opportune and significant to organise a conference meeting devoted to *Alexander's Legacy*.

We would like to thank all of the Italian and foreign Colleagues who have so valuably contributed to the success of our project. We would also like to thank the young scholars who have promptly examined through their posters some specific matters.

A heartfelt thanks to the Dipartimento di Storia, Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte of our University, as well as to the Department Chair, Professor Giuseppe Zecchini. Without the support of the Department, nothing would have been possible.

Finally, we are grateful to our Colleague Alberto Barzanò and to Dr. Monica D'Agostini, who have effectively helped us to overcome the unavoidable linguistic difficulties.

CINZIA BEARZOT
FRANCA LANDUCCI

ALEXANDER'S PRESENCE (AND ABSENCE) IN HELLENISTIC POETRY¹

I. POETRY AS A VEHICLE FOR ALEXANDER'S *KLEOS*.

I.1. THE SEMA OF ALEXANDER AND THE HOMERIC REQUISITES FOR THE SURVIVAL OF GLORY.

In the Homeric poems is articulated for first time the belief that the only way for a human being to gain eternal glory, and therefore a sort of immortal status, is to perform extraordinary deeds, beyond the limits of human nature; for the survival of glory through time, two conditions are required: 1) an easily recognizable tomb or funerary monument (σῆμα), which could preserve the physical remains of the hero for religious worship, or simply function as a geographic-historical landmark; and 2) an oral tradition which could leave to the posterity a detailed account of the hero's deeds.² The ability of poetry to promote exceptional human beings to an heroic level is strengthened in the Hellenistic period by the development of the book culture: not only traditional poetry committed to memory could travel by word of mouth throughout the Greek-speaking world, but also papyrus roll could accompany travelers, diplomats, merchants and soldiers in their journeys, like the Aristotelian *Iliad* which was for years the faithful companion of Alexander during his military campaigns, reaching as far as Bactria and India.

Since his early youth, according to all sources, Alexander had Homer as a source of inspiration and *Iliad's* main hero, Achilles, as a model for his behavior.³ Ptolemy I, even before being crowned king of Egypt, sought to legitimize his control over this land by connecting himself as closely as

¹ This paper is meant as an introduction to a catalogue of Hellenistic poetry on Alexander that for reason of space was not possible to add here: an expanded version of this article will be published in *Studia Hellenistica* 31 (2017).

² Everlasting glory and burial: *Od.* IV 584; *Od.* XXIV 80-84; *Il.* XVI 456-57. Fame surviving to the posterity: *Il.* VI 357-59; *Il.* XXII 305-6; *Od.* XXIV.93-94. On the topic of *kleos*, poetry and graves also see BARBANTANI forthcoming 1, and BARBANTANI forthcoming 2.

³ STRABO XIII 1, 27; DIO CHRYS. IV 39; PLUT. *Alex.* 8 and 26; Alexander as new Achilles: ARR. *Anab.* VII 14, 4. See e.g. EDMUNDS 1971, pp. 372-73; MÜLLER 2006. On Alexander's Homeric *philotimia* see ROISMAN 2013. On education and élite culture in Macedonia at the time of Alexander see CARNEY 2015, pp. 191-205.

possible with the hero-founder Alexander;⁴ Alexandria, established by the Macedonian king in 332, became, thanks to a clever move of the first Ptolemy, also the site of his burial: since the city preserved the mortal remains of its divinized founder, the Ptolemies could claim that Alexandria was the only site where his legacy – in terms of legitimacy of power and ideals – was treasured.⁵ Once the body of Alexander was laid to rest in Egypt, the ruling Macedonian dynasty also had any interest in stressing the close connection between the man who was presented by Ptolemy Soter as the founder of his dynasty, and Homer, the symbol of the Hellenic culture and alleged co-founder of Alexandria.⁶ Ptolemy I and his son created and developed the Library as one of the main sources of legitimation of their own rule both in the eyes of the Greek subjects and allies, and of the rival monarchies: the aim of the Ptolemies was to cast themselves to the Hellenic-speaking world as the main (or only) keepers of the Greek literary tradition (through preservation and collection of books in the Library) and at the same time as sponsors of the best poets, scholars and scientists (hosted in the Museum). Both the Library and the Museum were annexes to the Royal palace. Sponsorship of poetry was not just a secondary interest for Hellenistic monarchs: the precept that the glory of a ruler depends from his generous sponsoring of poetic singers had been already elaborated by Pindar and his colleagues hired by tyrants and aristocrats,⁷ and was later enhanced by the Hellenistic development of book culture.⁸ From the 5th century BC onwards the strong Homeric connection between praise poetry as the only giver of *kleos* and the commemoration of deceased soldiers was reinforced mainly by Simonides. The poet refreshed the ancient cultural relation between the tomb of heroic warriors and the persistence of the memory of their deeds adapting the concept to contemporary heroes: the fallen at the Thermopylae and at Plataea.⁹

⁴ See ERSKINE 2002 and ERSKINE 2013; MORI 2008, pp. 24-25, 109. On the role of the cult of Alexander in the legitimation of the Ptolemies see LIANOU 2010, pp. 125-27.

⁵ The cult of Alexander as a hero-founder was established by Ptolemy I once he secured his body in Alexandria (DIOD. XXVIII 3, 5). For recent bibliography on the burial of Alexander in Alexandria see BARBANTANI 2014a; GRIEB 2014; ŁUKASZEWICZ 2014; KLÉCZAR 2014. As for the Egyptian cult, apparently Alexander was never thoroughly integrated as a divinity into it: see DUMKE 2014.

⁶ PLUT. *Alex.* XXVI 3-7: Homer, quoting *Od.* IV 354-55, appears in a dream to Alexander giving him indications on where to found his city: Alexandria is a “product of Homer”, as it is all Greek *paideia*. Cf. A.P. XVI 295, a list of places claiming to be Homer’s homeland, including Egypt. See BARBANTANI 2014a for further references.

⁷ See THEOCR. *Id.* XVII 5-8; THEOCR. *Id.* XVI 42-59; 73-75.

⁸ See SH 969, 5: “glory in books” (BARBANTANI 2001, pp. 101-106).

⁹ For the actualization of the concept of ἄσβεστον κλέος see e.g. TYRT. fr. 12, 23-37 West; [SIMON.] A.P. VII 251 (Ἄσβεστον κλέος οἶδε φίλη περὶ πατρίδι θέντες/κυάνεον θανάτου ἀμπεβάλοντο νέφος/οὐδὲ τεθναῖσι θανόντες, ἐπεὶ σφ’ ἀρετὴ καθύπερθε/κυδαίνουσ’ ἀνάγει δόματος ἐξ Αἰδέω). Simonides as the new Homer for contemporary heroes: SIMON. *Elegy for Plataea* fr. 11,13-21

In the case of Alexander, the first material reminder, *post mortem*, of his life-long affiliation with Homer is the so-called Exedra of the Poets in Memphis. It is a rare case, in Egypt, of a group of limestone statues,¹⁰ following the tradition of the Macedonian family groups, and later developed into the majestic Tychaion group in Alexandria, focused on Alexander and Ptolemy Soter.¹¹ The Memphis group, centered on Homer and featuring other poets dear to Alexander and fragmentary figures which can be identified as Ptolemies, dates most probably to the early 3rd century BC:¹² one of the few recognizable historical characters is Demetrius of Phaleron, the Peripatetic philosopher and politician who, after 307, was a guest of Ptolemy I and supposedly collaborated with him in founding the Library. Since Demetrius fell in disgrace with the second Ptolemy, most likely the group pre-dates Philadelphus' reign. The ideal poetic rendering of this kind of royal *Familiengruppe* is to be found in Posidippus' *Hippikà*;¹³ in the *Greek Anthology* epigrams on individual poets have also been set by the compiler(s) in series, so as to create a literary version of men-of-letters statuary groups.

The location of the Memphite exedra perfectly illustrates the strong link perceived in the Greek culture between poetry, glory and place of burial. It is positioned right in front of the shrine (a templar religious com-

West²: τοί δὲ πόλι]ν πέρσαντες αἰοίδιμον [οἶκαδ' ἵ]κοντο /]ων ἀγέμαχοι Δαναοί [/ οἷς ἐπ' ἀθά]νατον κέχυται κλέος ἀν[δρῶς] ἔκητι / ὅς παρ' ἰοπ]λοκάμων δέξετο Πιερίδ[ων/ πάσαν ἀλλ]ηθείην καὶ ἐπώνυμον ὄπ[λοτέρ]οισιν/ ποίησ' ἡμ]ιθέων φύκμορον γενεή[ν./ ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲ]ν νῦν χαῖρε, θεᾶς ἐρικυ[δέος νιέ] / κούρης εἰν]αλίου Νηέος· αὐτὰρ ἐγώ[/ κικλή]ησκω] σ' ἐπίκουρον ἔμοί, πολυώνυμ]ε Μοῦσα./ εἴ περ γ' ἀν]θρῶπων εὐχομένω]ν μέλει· / ἔντυον] καὶ τόνδ[ε μελ]ίφρονα κ[όσμον ὄ]οιδῆς / ἡμετέρ]ης, ἵνα τις [μνή]σεται ὕ[στερον αὐ] / ἀνδρῶ]ν, οἱ Σπάρτ[η] τε καὶ Ἑλλάδι δοῦλιον ἡμ]ια[ο/έσ]χον] ἀμνυόμενοι μὴ τιν' ἰδεῖν φανερ]ῶ[ς]. The connection between the tomb and the glory (enhanced by poetry) is the core of SIMON. fr. 531 *PMG*: τῶν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις θανόντων/ εὐκλεῆς μὲν ἅ τύχα, καλὸς δ' ὁ πότμος./ βωμὸς δ' ὁ τάφος, πρὸ γῶν δὲ μνάστις, ὁ δ' οἶκτος ἔπαινος./ ἐντάφιός δὲ τοιοῦτον οὔτ' εὐρῶς / οὔθ' ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἀμαυρῶσει χρόνος. (5) / ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅδε σηκὸς οἰκέταν εὐδοξίαν / Ἑλλάδος εὐλετο· μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ Λεωνίδας, / Σπάρτας βασιλεύς, ἀρετὰς μέγαν λελοιπῶς / κόσμον ἀέναόν τε κλέος.

¹⁰ See MARIETTE-MASPERO 1882; LAUER-PICARD 1955.

¹¹ For the Tychaion KOSMETATOU 2004, p. 243 suggests a high date, following Stewart: the figure of Ptolemy Soter was probably the focus of the group, not (or not only) Alexander. The elaborated statuary group only survives in the ekphrasis by Nikolaos of Myra (= ps. Libanius, *Progymnasmata* 25, ca 400 AD; see GIBSON 2008, pp. 487-91; STEWART 1993, pp. 243-46; 383-84). Surrounded by niches with the statues of the twelve Olympian Gods and the effigy of Ptolemy Soter, the statue of Alexander, at the center of the exedra, was crowned by Ge (the personification of the spear-won land), in turn crowned by Tyche, flanked by two Nikai.

¹² The statues are eleven and include Plato, Heraclitus, Thales, Protagoras, some unidentified Ptolemies, a singer, Hesiod, Orpheus/Ptolemy, Demetrius of Phaleron. At the centre of the complex there is Homer, the favorite poet of Alexander; Pindar was respected by Alexander when he spared Thebes; Plato was the master of his teacher, Aristotle, who is also possibly among the mutilated statues, according to Lauer and Picard.

¹³ See FANTUZZI 2004; FANTUZZI 2005; KOSMETATOU 2004b; THOMPSON 2005, pp. 269-83; BARBANTANI 2012.

plex) where the Apis bull was were buried, and that has been recognized as the planned resting place of the last Egyptian Pharaoh and alleged father of Alexander in the *Alexander Romance*,¹⁴ Nectanebo II: the sphinxes on the *dromos* leading to the temple in fact bear the cartouche of this king.¹⁵ When in 321 Ptolemy seized the royal hearse with the body of the Macedonian king moving from Babylon to Aegae, given that the monumental complex of Alexandria was still a workshop, he had Alexander buried “in Macedonian/Greek style” (καὶ τὸν μὲν νόμῳ τῷ Μακεδόνων ἔθαπτεν ἐν Μέμφει: PAUS. I 6, 3) in Memphis, the former royal capital of Egypt: since also most of the Macedonian royal tombs were underground chambers, probably, it was precisely the unused burial chamber of Nectanebo the first tomb of Alexander.¹⁶ To further underline Alexander’s heroic status, Ptolemy I organized funerary games in his honor (DIOD. XVIII 28, 3-4, ignoring the phase of the Memphis burial, places them in Alexandria).¹⁷

When the corpse of Alexander was finally moved to his namesake city, a few years later, he was laid to rest in a prominent spot at the centre of it (possibly already denominated Σῆμα), then, under the fourth Ptolemy, moved to a mausoleum¹⁸ used for dynastic cult in the area of the royal palace (STRABO XVII 1, 8), enclosing also the bodies of the previous Ptolemies: one of Posidippus’ epigrams of the Milan papyrus, 35 A.-B., seems to play on this connection between Alexander and the power of σημαίνειν¹⁹. Possibly in the same area of the royal quarter Ptolemy IV

¹⁴ See IONESCU 2014, pp. 367-76. Even if the legend of Nectanebo’s paternity of Alexander could be a later development, certainly Ptolemy had an interest in stressing the continuity between the last legitimate pharaoh and the new Macedonian ruler; in terms of paternity, on the other hand, Ptolemy validated (or, at least, never denied) the gossip that wanted him illegitimate son of Philip II, therefore half-brother of Alexander. The legend of Ammon/Nectanebo shape-shifting into the “famous” snake for love returns in a catalogue of gods (mis)behaving as ingenious lovers, by ANTIPATER OF THESSALONICA, A.P. IX 241, 1-2: βουκόλος ἔπλεο. Φοῖβε, Ποσειδάων δὲ καβάλλης, κύκνος Ζεὺς, Ἄμμων δ’ ὠμπίβητος ὄφις... “You were a shepherd, Phoebus, Poseidon a horse, / a swan Zeus, and Ammon the famous snake...”

¹⁵ Nectanebo II fled from Egypt into Ethiopia when the Persians invaded his country in 341 (DIOD. XVI 51); he probably had already commissioned his tomb, like other pharaohs of the 30th dynasty: a vaulted subterranean chamber in the courtyard of a religious complex. Memphis was the royal capital, and also his father Nectanebo I invested time and money in restoring and building temples in Memphis, esp. in honor of the Apis bull: Alexander, unlike the Persians, honored this Egyptian tradition visiting the Apis bull (ARR. *Anab.* III 1, 4).

¹⁶ Body in Memphis: PAUS. I 6.3; CURT. X 7,13-19; Ps.-CALLISTH. *Alex Rom.* III 34,158; *Parian Marble* under year 321-320, *FGrHist* 239. In the Beta *recensio* of the *Alexander Romance* III 34,5, the resting place of Alexander is meant to be Memphis, but a local high priest ordered instead that the body must be laid to rest “in the city he founded”, that is Alexandria: see BARBANTANI 2014a, p. 223. For the Memphis tomb also see SCHMIDT-COLINET 1996, figs.1-3; CHUGG 2004, pp. 57-67 (fig. 2.7 and 2.9, plan of the tomb, fig. 2.8a, 2.8b exedra); THOMPSON 1988, pp. 13-16, 96. KOTTARIDI 1999 omits the stage of the Memphis burial.

¹⁷ STEWART 1993, p. 230.

¹⁸ For ZENOB. *Prov.* III 94 (2nd-3rd AD) the name σῆμα is given to this second shrine (he defines it “μνημα”). On the σῆμα built by Ptolemy IV see MCKENZIE 2007, p. 64.

¹⁹ See BARBANTANI forthcoming 2. The semantic ambiguity of the verb σημαίνειν (l. 3: σημήνατο),

created a Homereion, a shrine for Homer (AEL. V.H. XIII 22), emphasizing the significance of this poet for the Alexandrians as a sort of *genius loci* and hero-founder *paredros* of Alexander (see above note 6). Meanwhile, the accounts of Alexander's conquest written by Ptolemy I and other historians had begun to circulate in Egypt and elsewhere. Therefore, the Homeric requirements for *kleos* were apparently fulfilled, and benefited the Ptolemies, as a form of legitimation, as well as, posthumously, the ego of Alexander himself.

I.2. ALEXANDER IN PTOLEMAIC POETRY

What is missing in the picture, however, is poetry; epic poetry, to be precise. Tyche, who was so generous to Alexander in many respects, did not grant him a personal Homer, or even a personal Simonides, the role that later Theocritus would advocate for himself in *Id.* XVI, prior to his coming to Alexandria (see ARR. *Anab.* I 12, 1-4).²⁰ The conqueror's grandiose and ferocious endeavours in fact did not find a worthy match in the compositions of the versifiers accompanying him in his march towards the East. Alexander himself was painfully aware of that; a famous anecdote, referring once to the poetaster Choerilus and once to his colleague Anaximenes, has the Macedonian exclaim over the tomb of Achilles, with the flatterer standing by: "I would rather be Thersites in Homer than Achilles in your poem!"²¹ Although during his lifetime Alexander did not

"signifying", "giving an omen", "providing a σῆμα", referred to Alexander may suggest here a *double entendre* of the word σῆμα, "sign" and "tomb, place of burial" (GUTZWILLER 2005, pp. 287-319 notes that Alexander, like a god -as he has become after death- here creates a "sign"). Apparently, Alexander did sometimes act as an interpreter of signs (like the Achaemenid kings): see KOULAKIOTIS 2013. Ancient sources denominate the tomb of Alexander "Σῆμα" only after the creation of a special shrine for him and the Ptolemies by Ptolemy IV, but probably already the first place where Alexander was laid to rest in Alexandria, at the time of Posidippus and Ptolemy II, was known under this name (see ŁUKASZEWICZ 2014 and MATTHEY 2014 for the location of Alexander's tomb in Alexandria prior to the moving into the *Sema* built by Ptolemy IV inside the palace).

²⁰ ARR. *Anab.* I 12, 1-4: ...οἱ δὲ, ὅτι καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέως ἄρα τάφον ἐστεφάνωσεν· Ἡφαιστίωνα δὲ λέγουσιν ὅτι τοῦ Πατρόκλου τὸν τάφον ἐστεφάνωσε καὶ εὐδαιμόνισεν ἄρα, ὡς λόγος, Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀχιλλέα, ὅτι Ὀμήρου κήρυκος ἐς τὴν ἔπειτα μνήμην ἔτυχε. (2) καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος οὐχ ἡκιστα τοῦτου ἔνεκα εὐδαιμονιστέος Ἀχιλλεύς, ὅτι αὐτῷ γε Ἀλέξανδρος, οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην ἐπιτυχίαν, τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο ἐκλιπὲς ξυνέβη οὐδὲ ἐξηνέχθη ἐς ἀνθρώπους τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔργα ἐπαξίως, οὔτ' ὄν καταλογάδην, οὔτε τις ἐν μέτρῳ ἐποίησεν· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν μέλει ἦσθη Ἀλέξανδρος, ἐν ὧν Ἰέρων τε καὶ Γέων καὶ Θήρων καὶ πολλοὶ ἄλλοι οὐδὲν τι Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐπεοικότες, ὥστε πολλὸ μείον γινώσκεται τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἢ τὰ φανυλότατα τῶν πάλαι ἔργων.

²¹ Choerilus of Iasus: *SH* 333 (*FGrHist* 153 F 10a; PORPHYR. *ad* HOR. *Ars Poet.* 357); Anaximenes: *SH* 45; *FGrH* 72, 27. The editor princeps of the anonymous epic fragments *SH* 913-921 (*P.Oxy.* XXX 2520, 2nd AD), E. Lobel, first suggested as author Anaximenes: the poem mentions the Arcadians, a "Philip" and

enjoy an epic version of his story which could be satisfactory and have his seal of approval, many names have survived of mediocre authors who wrote “poems on Alexander”,²² but the information about them given by *scholia* or by later lexicographers, like Stephanus of Byzantium and the *Suda*, are scarce and puzzling. Probably we have not lost too much; it would be very interesting, however, to know more about a certain Phaestus, whose only surviving fragment can be interpreted in the context of Alexander’s visit to the oracle of Ammon (Ζεῦ Λιβύης Ἄμμων κερρατηφόρε κέκλυθι μάντι), possibly also featured in Apollonius’ *Ktisis of Alexandria*;²³ but no information is given by the extant sources.²⁴

When his body was enshrined in the heart of Alexandria, near the royal palace and the Library, Alexander did indeed become a source of inspiration for court poets, but not in the way we may expect. First of all, the heavy job of propaganda, directed to an audience not necessarily cultivated or even alphabetized, was assigned by the Ptolemies to figurative art, either in the form of coinage (whose symbology is recalled by Posidippus *Ep.* 31 A.-B),²⁵ or in the shape of statuary or reliefs both in the Egyptian and in the Greek

a “Hieronymus” who could be Hieronymus of Menalus, a sympathizer of Philip II. FANTUZZI in ZIEGLER 1988, p. LX-LXI hypothesized that Anaximenes, being a generation older than Alexander and having written a history of Philip in prose, may have composed also a poem about him, or at least may have included a short history of Philip in a poem on Alexander; but is more inclined to think that *P.Oxy.* 2520 may rather belong to Phaestus’ *Makedonika*, a poem on Macedonian history down to the times of Alexander. CAMERON 1995, p. 278, however, excludes any connection with Alexander and proposes to identify the “Philip” of the fragment with Philip V, and “Hieronymus” with the tyrant of Syracuse. See PARSONS and LLOYD-JONES 1983, pp. 421-22.

²² Apart from the two poets mentioned above, poems on Alexander were attributed to Agis of Argo (*SH* 17 = *FGrHist* 72 T 26-27; ZIEGLER 1988, p. LVII), Aeschriion of Mitylene (*SH* 2-3; ZIEGLER 1988, p. LVIII), Cleon of Sicily (*FGrHist* 153 F 10a = PORPHYR. *ad HOR. Ars Poet.* 357; ZIEGLER p. LXXI), Nestor of Laranda (*Suda s.v.* Νέστορος, v 261 ADLER; on the poet see MA 2007; KEYDELL 1935, p. 308; JACOBY, *FGrHist* 153 F 13). PARSONS and LLOYD-JONES tentatively attributed to a poem on Alexander two very fragmentary poems: *SH* 937 (*P.Oxy.* XXXVII 2814, 2nd AD = CHOERILUS SAMIUS fr. 23 RADICI COLACE = fr. 22 BERNABÉ), according to Lobel, its *editor princeps*, could refer to a war involving Athenians (Miltiades, Cimon); PARSONS and LLOYD-JONES 1983 suspected that the fragment could belong to Choerilus of Samos’ *Persica* (*SH* 814), but in the end suggested a different context (“*nos de bellis Macedonum cogitamus: Philippo II mortuo succedit Alexander filius: versus fort. Agidi vel Anaximeni vel Choerilo lasio* (17, 46, 888), *fort. epigono cuidam tribuendi*”). As for *SH* 950 (*P.Genav.* inv. 326, 5th AD = CONCOLINO MANCINI 1978, nr. 1 = fr. 24, 25a, 25b BERNABÉ), mentioning Xerxes, PARSONS and LLOYD-JONES suspected again an attribution to Choerilus of Samos (*SH* 314), or to an “Egyptian poetaster”.

²³ BARBANTANI 2014a.

²⁴ *SH* 670 = POWELL 1925, p. 28; CAMERON 1995, p. 301. The fragment quoted is identical in all the three sources: *schol. ad PIND. Pyth.* IV 28 II p. 100s. DRACHMANN; *schol. ad PIND. Pyth.* IX 90 II p. 228s. DRACHMANN; *Tractatus Graeci de Re Metrica Inediti*, KOSTER 1922, p. 117). The poet is mentioned as author of Μακεδονικά, with the variant Λακεδαιμονικά in *schol. PIND. Pyth.* IX; PARSONS and LLOYD-JONES 1983, p. 317 prefer the title Μακεδονικά, also because “Λακεδαιμονικός *forma adiectivi inusitata est. eandem FGrH* 772 F 1 v. 19 *corruptelam adducit Jacoby*” (= *FGrH* 593 F 1 III b Komm. Not. p. 365).

²⁵ For full discussion on the epigram see BARBANTANI forthcoming 2. For previous readings see BASTIANINI-GALLAZZI-AUSTIN 2001, pp. 144-45; GRONWALD 2001; LLOYD-JONES 2003; BAUMBACH-

style. Official political statements were conveyed to the general public by multilingual prose inscriptions using a standardized lexicon. Court poetry produced by *poetae docti* was not meant to be a pompous and long-winded form of encomium to the reigning kings and queens in the way an epic poem could be (this task was left to prose encomia, or to the works of professional *technitai*): Alexandrian poetry was is a lighter, often tongue-in-cheek, refined form of praise, to be collected and enjoyed as a precious gem. Allusive, multi-layered *docta poesis*, although occasionally recited or otherwise performed, was also inextricably linked to the written form, and produced mainly for the refined, selected, prevalently Hellenic, but also culturally assorted, audience composing the royal court.²⁶ While in public pageants and ceremonies, in figurative arts, in multilingual inscriptions, and possibly other prose works, the Ptolemies exhibited, like other contemporary rulers, their military power,²⁷ their martial side is not displayed so shamelessly in surviving court poetry, which insist on other aspects of the royal ideology:²⁸ in the *Encomium of Ptolemy* by Theocritus the greatest military deeds have already been accomplished by the divinized Alexander and Ptolemy Soter; Ptolemy II, although defined a “warrior” (in Homeric terms, “spearman”) like his father,²⁹ is presented not as an active conqueror (although he waged some wars he did not have direct experience of warfare, unlike the Soter), but as a ruler who already has many lands and many allies under his control: the core of the *laudatio* is rather his successful management of the dynastic family and the ability to keep the *maat*, the equilibrium, in his empire. The young king could rely on his predecessors’ effective warfare to be able to devote his attention to more peaceful engagements.

The picture I just draw may explain why, in spite of its fundamental role for the Ptolemaic dynasty, the figure of Alexander, so ubiquitous in artistic iconography, does not appear so often in the extant Alexandrian poetry. Even if Homer was still at the core of the Greek education and philological studies of the Library, the debate on the obsolescence of the traditional epic style was heated among Alexandrian poets,³⁰ as we know

TRAMPEDACH 2004, pp. 148-49; LAPINI 2007, pp. 218-22; MÜLLER 2015, pp. 152, 156. On the symbols on coins see OGDEN 2011, ch. 4, pp. 79-110 (esp. 84, for the eagle); pp. 7-28 (for the thunderbolt); LIANOU 2010, pp. 129-30 (on the Argead models for Ptolemaic coin iconography, esp. the eagle).

²⁶ See WEBER 1992; BARBANTANI 2001; STEPHENS 2004; STROOTMAN 2009 and STROOTMAN 2014; BARBANTANI 2014c.

²⁷ See BARBANTANI 2001; MÜLLER 2015, pp. 137-38.

²⁸ Battle scenes and gory imagery are, surprisingly, very rare also in military epitaphs (BARBANTANI 2014c); MÜLLER 2015, p. 157 remarks that they are absent also in poetry regarding Alexander: war is suggested rather than depicted.

²⁹ See BARBANTANI 2007.

³⁰ Bibliography on the theme is immense. See at least CAMERON 1995; on the role of Aristotle in the debate over poetry see *status quaestionis* in BARBANTANI 2015.

from Callimachus' prologue to the *Aitia*: it is not surprising, then, if Alexander does not emerge as the protagonist of an old-style epic poem, but makes his appearance in the new hybrid poetic genres like: *a*) the Hymn-Encomium (THEOCR. *Id.* XVII, in praise of Ptolemy II); *b*) the Epinician in elegiac couplets (Callimachus' *Victoria Sosibii*, SH 384,23-24); *c*) the literary epigram, a new genre which developed from the inscriptional one, conceived to be read in series and in an intertextual dialogue with other authors' pieces³¹.

The epic genre obviously did not die, but was translated into a new, shorter and more refined version by Apollonius Rhodius: however, Alexander does not appear in the *Argonautica*, if not "through a glass darkly", in complex series of allusions; his shadow lingers on the short passage about his Egyptian predecessor Sesostris.³²

It remains to be assessed if and how the figure of Alexander was introduced in another, new poetic genre in hexameters also developed by Apollonius, the Foundation Poem or *Ktisis*. In a recent article on the only surviving fragment of the *Ktisis of Alexandria* (featuring snakes, an essential element of the Egyptian side of Alexander's legend),³³ I have suggested that in this epyllion could have been developed some episodes which were, in the same period, forming the early Hellenistic core of what was later called the *Alexander Romance*.³⁴ The occasion for the composition of the *Ktisis* could have been the transfer of the body of Alexander from Memphis to the new "royal capital" Alexandria, which occurred, according to some sources, under the second Ptolemy.

On top of featuring, even though *en passant*, in the most revolutionary poetic genres created in Alexandria, the Macedonian king, in his bronze avatar produced by Lysippus (the Alexander *aichmephoros*), was also celebrated as a model of innovative sculptural style in epigrams by Asclepiades and Posidippus (ASCLEP. *A.P.* XVI 120; POSID. *Ep.* 65 A.-B.),³⁵ which were the inspiration for later compositions on the same topic. In epigrams

³¹ All the passages are discussed in full in BARBANTANI forthcoming 2.

³² *Arg.* IV, 265-281. The name of Sesostris is not mentioned by Apollonius, thus implying a familiarity of the audience (including the Egyptian and Greek-Egyptian court aristocracy) with this tale; another, subtler reason, for not spelling Sesostris' name in the summary of his travels could be the aspiration to make this passage more obscure, and subtly evocative of Alexander – probably the first historical figure his audience would have thought of while reading or listening to this passage. See HUNTER 1993 p. 164. On the political agenda of Apollonius in the *Argonautica* see MORI 2008; cf. also CANEVA 2013, pp. 192-94. More allusions to Alexander and to the travels of Dionysus have been underlined by Pietro Massari in his PhD dissertation on the geography in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (Milano, Università Cattolica, 2016).

³³ See OGDEN 2011, ch.2; OGDEN 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015.

³⁴ BARBANTANI 2014a.

³⁵ For a full discussion of both epigrams and previous bibliography see BARBANTANI, Forthcoming 2. See also PRIoux 2007, pp. 66-67; SENS 2005, pp. 209, 213-15.

Alexander, as an historical and political character, is praised for being the conqueror of Asia and defeater of the Persians, like in other passages of Hellenistic poetry, but in the series of the *Andriantopoiika*, tracing a sort of “history of figurative art”, the conqueror as reimagined by Lysippus is mainly considered a blueprint for a new way (defined by STEWART 2005 “phenomenal idealism”) of portraying heroic or semi-divine beings, a style completely different both from the Classic one – exemplified by Polycleitus’ *Doryphoros*– and from the contemporary, realistic one – embodied by the *Philitas* created by Hecataeus, in POSID. *Ep.* 63 A.-B.³⁶ As I have stressed above, Alexander himself, who was a great admirer of Homer, was never satisfied by the contemporary epic poets flattering him, and certainly could not have imagined that in the near future (especially by the 1st century AD) the main poetic encomia in his honor would have been in the miniature form of the epigram.

To sum up, Alexander in early Alexandrian poetry is connected both with tradition (Homer) and with innovation (new genres in poetry, new styles in sculpture).

I.3. ALEXANDER IN SELEUCID AND ATTALID POETRY

The figure of Alexander was used as a source of legitimation by the Diadochi and by the second generation of the Successors, who were busy with creating a tradition linking themselves as strong as possible with the Conqueror of Asia (as is shown in the epigram of Craterus).³⁷

Due to the loss of most of the literary production from antiquity, we are completely missing any explicit reference to Alexander in court poetry outside the Ptolemaic kingdom. Although it is clear that early Seleucid kings sponsored learned poets like the Ptolemies (Aratus, Euphoriion among others), the culturally composite nature of their vast kingdom, and lack of a unique, centralized cultural capital (like Alexandria or Pergamon

³⁶ See PRIOUX 2007 and PRIOUX 2008. Bibliography on this epigram is abundant, see at least ZANKER 2004, pp. 66-67; ESPOSITO 2005; LAPINI 2007, pp. 264-68. Rightly PRIOUX 2007, pp. 71-72 pointed out that in the same period Posidippus and Asclepiades were debating a new approach to the ‘heroic’ and divine portrayal in figurative art; other Alexandrian poets were animatedly arguing on the opportunity to use the Homeric style and compositional model for encomiastic poetry, and, more specifically, on new ways to praise human beings who presented themselves as divine or semi-divine, the Hellenistic rulers (on the new encomiastic poetry developed in Alexandria and on the debate over literary genres and style see e.g. CAMERON 1995; BARBANTANI 2001 and BARBANTANI 2015).

³⁷ *FD* III 4:137; PEEK 1961, p. 298. MORETTI 1975, nr. 73 suggests that the author of the epigram could be the same Alexinus who composed a paean to Craterus (*ATHEN.* XV, 52, 696ef). On this and on other dedicatory epigram referring to Alexander see more bibliography in BARBANTANI, Forthcoming 2.

for the Ptolemies and the Attalids) as far as we know prevented them from developing a systematic patronage of book production and a unitarian, ground-breaking cultural policy (comparable, e.g., to the development of philology in Alexandria).³⁸ The only possible reference to the Macedonian king, the poem entitled *Alexander* (STEPH. BYZ. s.v. Σόλοι)³⁹ by Euphorion, appointed chief of the royal library at Antiochia, is more likely referring to a contemporary governor of Corinth and of Euboea,⁴⁰ or, according to others, was titled after the Alexandrian poet Alexander Etolus,⁴¹ or even after Alexander-Paris, as a form of emulation of Lycophron's *Alexandra/Cassandra*.⁴² More in tune with Alexander's endeavours could have been Euphorion's poem on Dionysus' travels, only known through fragments (fr. 14-19 VAN GRONINGEN), as already the poets flattering Alexander compared him to this god (Agis and Cleon in CURT. VIII 5, 8).⁴³ After all, only a few years after his death, the episodes of Alexander's campaign were already presented as legendary and miraculous, so much that they could even become an object of parody: in an unidentified fragment (fr. 751 KÖRTE–THIERFELDER, from PLUT. *Alex.* 17),⁴⁴ Menander elaborates on a paradoxographic episode among the many interspersed in the contemporary accounts of Alexander's journey, the Cilician sea allegedly opening up to let the king pass after the battle of the Granicus:

ὡς Ἀλεξανδροῶδες ἦδη τοῦτο· κὰν ζητῶ τινα, αὐτόματος οὔτος

³⁸ See BARBANTANI 2014b. Of course in the Seleucid kingdom there were many flourishing cultural centres, like Antiochia.

³⁹ The only fragment is on the etymology of the city of Soli from "Solon". Alexander did stay for a while in Soli, according to ARR. *Anab.* II 5, 6 (cf. SCHEIDWEILER 1908, pp. 15-16). See FANTUZZI in ZIEGLER 1988, p. LXVII.

⁴⁰ Euphorion was his guest, and lover of his wife Nicea, according to *Suda* s.v. Εὐφορίων, ε 3801 ADLER. See SKUTSCH 1907, c. 1180.

⁴¹ See MEINEKE 1843, pp. 15-16.

⁴² See VAN GRONINGEN 1977, p. 21.

⁴³ See CANEVA 2013 for the association of Alexander and his entourage with Dionysus.

⁴⁴ PLUT. *Alex.* 17: τούτοις ἐπαρθείς ἠπέιγετο τὴν παραλίαν ἀνακαθήρασθαι μέχρι τῆς Φοινίκης καὶ Κιλικίας, ἣ δὲ τῆς Παμφυλίας παραδρομὴ πολλοῖς γέγονε τῶν ἱστορικῶν Ὑπόθεσις γραφικὴ πρὸς ἐκπληξίν καὶ ὄγκον, ὡς θεῖα τινὶ τύχῃ παραχωρήσασαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τὴν θάλασσαν... δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ Μένανδρος ἐν κωμῳδίᾳ παίζων πρὸς τὸ παράδοξον κτλ. "His rapid passage along the coasts of Pamphylia has afforded many historians material for bombastic and terrifying description. They imply that by some great and heaven-sent good fortune the sea retired to make way for Alexander, although at other times it always came rolling in with violence from the main, and scarcely ever revealed to sight the small rocks which lie close up under the precipitous and riven sides of the mountain. And Menander, in one of his comedies, evidently refers jestingly to this marvel [follows the fr.]. Alexander himself, however, made no such prodigy out of it in his letters, but says that he marched by way of the so-called Ladder, and passed through it, setting out from Phaselis." (Transl. B. Perrin). Cf. ARR. *Anab.* I 26, 1: ἔστι δὲ ταύτη ἡ ὁδὸς οὐκ ἄλλως ὅ τι μὴ τῶν ἀπ' ἄρκτου ἀνέμων πνεόντων. εἰ δὲ νότοι κατέχοιεν, ἀπόρως ἔχει διὰ τοῦ αἰγιαλοῦ ὁδοιπορεῖν. τότε δὲ ἐκ νότων σκληρῶν βορέαι ἐπιπνεύσαντες, οὐκ ἄνευ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς αὐτός τε καὶ οἱ ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἐξηγοῦντο, εὐμαρῇ καὶ ταχεῖαν τὴν παροδὸν παρέσχον.

παρέσται, κὰν διελθεῖν δηλαδὴ διὰ θαλάττης δέη τόπον τιν', οὔτος ἔσται
μοι βατός.

How Alexander-like, indeed, this is; and if I seek someone, /Spontaneous he'll
present himself; and if I clearly must/Pass through some place by sea, this will lie
open to my steps (Transl. by B. Perrin).

It has been suggested that the strategic town of Apamea on the Orontes, associated very early with Greek and Macedonian cultural traditions, was presented already in the 3rd century BC poetry as a theatre for Heracles' exploits.⁴⁵ For his qualities and his early association with Alexander and the Macedonian royal house, Heracles, like Dionysus, could have been a good subject for Seleucid and Attalid court poetry; for sure he was very prominent in the dynastic pantheon of the Ptolemies: in the Adulis decree, *OGIS* I 54.5-6, Ptolemy II lists among his ancestors Heracles and Dionysus (cf. THEOCR. *Id.* XVII 26-27). Also the epic image of Alexander-Heracles, in his less flattering version (that of the hero *epitrapezios*), was taken over very early on by comedy: in a scene of the *Kolax* (*The Flatterer*), Strouthias, the title's fawner, engages in conversation with Bias, a veteran soldier who, like many of Menander's contemporaries, has served in the East and has enjoyed his moments of Oriental *tryphé* (represented here by "the golden beaker") and wild "booze"; the adulator comments on Bias boasting his symposiastic prowess: "You drank more than king Alexander!"⁴⁶

The *Alexandra* of Lycophron offers too much space for speculation about its dating and its context to be analysed in depth here. The simplest scenario is to consider the poem as a unity, acknowledging the existence of just one Lycophron, stepson of the historian Lyco of Rhegium, active at the court of Ptolemy II;⁴⁷ some scholars lower the date of the poem to the 2nd BC and attribute it to a second Lycophron, generally contextualized in a Ptolemaic or Attalid⁴⁸ framework, or just consider some key passages interpolations by a later author. What finds the agreement of most scholars is that in the famous passage at ll. 1435-50⁴⁹ the image of

⁴⁵ See BARBANTANI 2014b, with further bibliography: scholars have hypothesized that a passage of the *Cyngetica* attributed to a 3rd century AD poet, Oppian of Apamea, could have been inspired by earlier sources, e.g. Euphorion. Also Daphne (near Antiochia) was said to be founded by Heracles.

⁴⁶ Fr. 293 KOCK; = ATHEN. x, 434bc; ATHEN. xi, 477f; cf. PLUT. *Mor.* 57a (*Quom. adul. ab amico intesc.* 13).

⁴⁷ See FUSILLO 1991, pp. 20-27 (25) for a useful synopsis of all the theories. HURST 1996 identifies Lycophron in the poet of the Alexandrian Pleiade (3rd BC), the lion is Alexander, the Argives the Persians, the relative a Roman allied of Ptolemy II.

⁴⁸ ANDREAE 1989: Lycophron would be a Rhodian ambassador to Rome in 177 BC; KOSMETATOU 2000 links the poet to Attalus I.

⁴⁹ Πολλοὶ δ' ἀγῶνες καὶ φόνοι μεταίχμοι / λύσουσιν ἀνδρῶν οἱ μὲν Αἰγαίαις πάλας/δίναισιν

Alexander should be recognized in the lion “Thesprotian and Chalas-traean” (1441):⁵⁰ this character appears in the poem as a bridge between Asia and Europe; the fruits of this pacification (and of the spear-won spoils) will be reaped by the Roman/Trojan kinsman of Cassandra.⁵¹ The stress here is on the composite genealogy and identity of Alexander, himself a synthesis between East and West: the conquest of the West in fact was in the plans of the Macedonian before he died. In spite of the key role of Alexander as a mediator of mixed ancestry, in the *Alexandra* a big relevance is given to his Trojan ancestry, especially embodied by the hero Hector,⁵² and to the future glory of the “Trojans” (Romans; Epirotes?), while in the poem Achilles, the hero-model of the Macedonian conqueror, is portrayed in an uncomplimentary way. DURBEC 2008 points out that Hector is the only character defined “hero” in the *Alexandra* (1204-5): he is being given great relevance as a protector of the city, and his remains, like those of other heroes (HDT. I 67-68: Orestes; PLUT. *Thes.* 36 and *Cim.* 4: Theseus) would keep away from the city the plagues and the enemies (ll. 1204-11). It is worth remarking that this is the role assumed by the deceased Alexander in the Ptolemaic culture: the body of the hero-founder/*genius loci* is a talisman which protects the city of Alexandria from evil; his cultic statue as a founder shows him as a Palladium-holding, aegis-clad substitute of Athena.⁵³ A recent paper by Kenneth JONES⁵⁴ places the mysterious *Alexandra* by Lycophron in the context of the Roman-Seleucid war, during the expansion of Antiochus III (192-188), dis-

ἀρχῆς ἀμφιδηριωμένων, / οἱ δ' ἐν μεταφρένοισι βουστρόφοις χθονός/ ἕως ἂν αἴθων εὐνάσῃ βαρὴν κλόνον /ἀπ' Αἰακοῦ τε καὶ Δαρδάνου γεγώς (1440)/ Θεσπρωτὸς ἄμφω καὶ Χαλαστραῖος λέων/ πρηνὴ θ' ὁμαίμων πάντα κυπώσας δόμον /ἀναγκάσῃ πηξάντας Ἀργείων πρόμους/ σᾶναι Γαλάθρας τὸν στρατηλάτην λύκον/ καὶ σκῆπτρ' ὀρέξαι τῆς πάλαι μοναρχίας. (1445)/ὅ δὴ μεθ' ἔκτην γένναν αὐθαίμων ἐμὸς /εἷς τις παλαιστής, συμβαλὼν ἀλκὴν δορὸς /πόντου τε καὶ γῆς κείς διαλλαγὰς μολών/ πρέσβιστος ἐν φίλοισιν ὑμνηθήσεται/ σκύλων ἀπαρχὰς τὰς δορικτήτους λαβών (1450).

⁵⁰ That is, Epirote (from his mother's side) and Macedonian (from his father's side); from Olympias' side moreover Alexander descends from Eacus (through Neoptolemus son of Achilles) and Dardanus (through Helenus who married Andromache). The Macedonian/Molossian heritage is highlighted by AMIOTTI 1982 and AMIOTTI 1984 (she see in the wolf Alexander the Molossian, setting an alliance with the Romans). The lion is a recurrent metaphor for the Macedonian king, and often associated to Alexander.

⁵¹ Lycophron assigns to the descendants of Aeneas and allies of the Ptolemies, the Romans, the ability of conquering the power over land and sea with the help of their spears (*Alex.* 1226-30): the dominion *terra marique* was attributed by Theocritus and Callimachus to the Ptolemies (THEOCR. *Id.* XVII 91-2, CALL. *H.* IV 166-69).

⁵² DURBEC 2007 and DURBEC 2008.

⁵³ Alexander *Aigiochos*, wearing the aegis like Athena Alkidemos and holding an Athena-Palladion in his hand, in the capacity of *ktistes*-protector of the city: see STEWART 1993, pp. 238-239, 247-50, fig. 83; MORENO 2004, pp. 255-263; OGDEN 2013b, p. 289. On the role of Alexander as *genius loci* see BARBANTANI 20014a.

⁵⁴ JONES 2014.

carding other hypotheses contextualizing the so-called “Roman passages” (1226-82 and 1446-50) at the time of Pyrrhus (Momigliano) or of the second Macedonian War:⁵⁵ during the clash between Rome and the Seleucid king, the rhetoric of the opposition Europe-Asia was dramatically revived, as well as the prophecy of an extension of the control of only one power over land and sea. While in the “Lion” scaring the Persians (the “Argives”, progeny of Perseus) Jones recognizes Alexander (like almost all the commentators before him), the “Wolf of Galadra”⁵⁶ should be identified, according to him, as Seleucus I, the founder of his dynasty, while his descendant, clashing six generation later with Cassandra’s Roman kinsman, P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus, would be Antiochus III. The new interpretation is appealing; however, Jones does not provide an identity and clear cultural and political context for the author of the poem. Since there are too many elements of uncertainty relative to the date, interpretation and context of the poem to allow us to make an assessment on the political use of the figure of Alexander, I shall not proceed with further assumptions on this passage.

Alexander as the Theocritean god “Πέλοσσαι βαρύς” would probably be out of place in poems produced in kingdoms which were set in continuity with the defeated Achaemenid empire; an Alexander stepping into the shoes of the universal Persian king and completing his task of submitting the world probably would have been more in tune with Seleucid royal propaganda. Unfortunately, we are not able to verify this hypothesis, as we have completely lost all the Seleucid-sponsored and Attalid-sponsored poetry, composed during and after the Galatian wars and portraying the kings as barbarian-slayers: Simonides of Magnesia praised the exploits of Antiochus I or III (*SH* 723);⁵⁷ on the Attalid side, Musaeus of Ephesus celebrated Perseus and the *res gestae* of Attalus I and Eumenes (*SH* 560-61),⁵⁸ and Leschides (*SH* 503) followed the military expeditions of Eumenes I or II (against the Galatians?).⁵⁹ My curiosity in the poetic portrayal of Alexander in the Seleucid area is motivated by the use of Alexander’s campaign against the Persians in Ptolemaic royal ideology. In the inscriptional decrees, like the Decree of Adulis, but also in poetic compositions like Callimachus’ *Coma Berenices*, the Ptolemies are im-

⁵⁵ JONES 2014, p. 48 note 32.

⁵⁶ The wolf of Galadra (a Macedonian town) at l. 1444 has been interpreted in turn as Demetrius Poliorcetes, Pyrrhus, Alexander the Molossian, Antipater: see FUSILLO 1991, p. 25; AMIOTTI 1984.

⁵⁷ *Suda* σ 443 ADLER. On the hypothetical relationship between LUC. *Zeux.* 8-11 and this poem see COŞKUN 2012; NELSON forthcoming. Euphorion too named the Galatians in a fragment of his *Polichares* (fr. 42 VAN GRONINGEN; see BARBANTANI 2001, p. 184), but we are missing its context.

⁵⁸ See FANTUZZI in ZIEGLER 1988, p. LXXIII.

⁵⁹ BARBANTANI 2001, pp. 214-33.

plicitly depicted as heirs of Alexander, in that they fight against the new “Persians”, the Seleucids, repeating some propagandistic gestures of the Macedonian king, e.g. bringing back from Asia the spoils once robbed by the Persians in Egypt (as Alexander did for Greece).⁶⁰ In 2001 I proposed the hypothesis that in an anonymous elegiac fragment of Alexandrian poetry, *SH* 958, where a king compares his two enemies, the Galatians and the Medes, the “Medes” could be an allusive reference for the Seleucids in the frame of a Syrian War.⁶¹ In the royal ideology and in the Hellenic political discourse of the 3rd century BC, the place of the 5th century “Medes” was taken over by the Galatians, that is the new barbarian threat for the Hellenistic kingdoms (as exemplified by Callimachus’ *Hymn to Delos*). Nonetheless, the theme of the “revenge on the Persians”, embodied by Alexander was still very appealing for the Greek as well as for the Egyptian subjects of the Ptolemies; it became fashionable again, especially among the Romans, at the time of the rise of Antiochus III, as underlined above in the discussion on Lycophron. In this cultural environment, it would be interesting to know if and how the Seleucids played the “Alexander card”, at least in the court-sponsored poetic production.

I.4. ALEXANDER IN 1ST BC-6TH AD EPIGRAMS

Alexander remained a popular subject in poetry, especially in the epigrammatic genre, in the late Hellenistic and early imperial period. Some of these epigrams, including the inscription on the Chigi shield (*IG* XIV 1296 = *IGUR* IV 1628),⁶² introduces Alexander as the invincible, universal conqueror who extends his power *terra marique*, and who could be a good model for Augustus and his generals and relatives, like Gaius (previously, Piso, in the epigrams of Antipater of Thessalonica *A.P.* VI 335 and *A.P.* IX 552).⁶³ The last epigram of the *Planudean Anthology* quoting him (6th AD) is *A.P.* XVI 345, flattering a famous champion, the Libyan charioteer Porphyrius, whose statues were standing in the hippodrome of Constantinople, near the ones of Alexander and Nike.⁶⁴ while in Hellenistic epigrams the young conqueror was considered the embodiment of the military and cultural triumph over the barbarians, here the Macedonian king is banally reduced to a symbol of agonistic victory – which is ironic,

⁶⁰ BARBANTANI 2001, pp. 167-76; BARBANTANI 2014b.

⁶¹ BARBANTANI 2001, pp. 116-79.

⁶² See PETRAIN 2012; BARBANTANI, Forthcoming 2.

⁶³ For Alexander in the epigrammatic genre, see BARBANTANI, Forthcoming 2.

⁶⁴ See BARBANTANI, Forthcoming 2.

given that he, unlike his father, never took part in such competitions himself.

I.5. ALEXANDER AS LEGENDARY HERO IN PROSE AND IN ORAL TALES

The *kleos* of Alexander was not destined to be enhanced and diffused exclusively by poetry. Once again, the pioneering figure of the Macedonian must be associated with the blossoming of a new literary genre: the prose novel. Recent studies on the *Imitatio Alexandri* in the Egyptian prose⁶⁵ show that ancient tales of legendary characters belonging to the pre-Alexandrian Egyptian tradition, like Sesostris, Nectanebo or the descendants of Inarus, were modified in the Hellenistic period in order to make these characters appear like precursors of Alexander – *de facto*, emulators *ex-post*; traces of this phenomenon remain in the few lines on Sesostris as a primeval conqueror and hero-founder in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. It has been widely recognized that the nucleus of the Greek Alexander romance is Hellenistic, probably already forming in the generation of Ptolemy I:⁶⁶ a further hint to this could be possibly be recognized in an epigram by Posidippus on the *omina* for Alexander.⁶⁷ The saga of Alexander not only lived on in the many prose versions of the *Romance* (in the Hebrew, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic languages), but found a new life in later, non-Greek epic poems, like the *Shahname* by Firdowsi (X-XI AD), and some Greek, French and English versions of the *Romance* in prose and in verse elaborated in the Byzantine period and the Middle Ages.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See RYHOLT 2013.

⁶⁶ See main bibliography in BARBANTANI 2014a, p. 224, esp. STEPHENS 2003, pp. 64-73; JASNOW 1997.

⁶⁷ FRANCHI 2005 pointed out that in the *Alexander Romance* 3, 33 the same three *omina* of victory listed by Posidippus' *Ep.* 31 A.-B. (eagle, falling star/lightning and moving statue) appear all together at the moment of Alexander's death, a sort of 'last victory' over mortality, when the king is meant to be assumed into the realm of the gods: it should not be excluded that Posidippus could have been inspired for this epigram by one of the legends circulating, in oral or written form, at his time and forming the core of the later *Alexander Romance*.

⁶⁸ STONEMAN 2008, STONEMAN–ERICKSON–NETTON 2012; ZUWIYYA 2011. Medieval Alexander biography: <http://www.library.rochester.edu/robbins/medieval-alexander>. King Aulisander: *Database of Middle English Romance*, University of York, 2012: <http://middleenglishromance.org.uk/mer/31>. On Alexander in European literature between the XI and the XVI century see GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS 2015. A Byzantine metrical rendering of a version of the *Alexanderroman* is copied on a Venetian manuscript and accompanied by an epigram in *politichoi stichoi*: *Bibl. Naz. Marc. gr. Z.* 408 (coll. 672), f. 16r (1388), see <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrence/view/id/6110/>; on the Byzantine poem see also AERTS 2001, JOUANNO 2000-2001. Another epigram in *politichoi stichoi* introducing the *Romance* presents Alexander as *kosmokrator*: Διήγησις ἔξαιρέτο καὶ ὄντως θαυμάσια/ τοῦ κοσμοκράτορος(ος) Ἀλεξάνδρου(ου) τοῦ βασιλέως: see <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrence/view/id/3891/>.

The most striking element in the afterlife of Alexander, however, is that his legend survived disembodied from any literary or textual codification, through oral tales from Iran to Afghanistan, India and China, often associated to σήματα, signs of material culture (walls, city foundations, bas-reliefs etc.), as perfectly demonstrated by recent studies on the reception of Alexander's legend in travellers' diaries and memoirs. In the words of Omar Coloru: "Iskander... creates real *lieux de mémoire* with which local people can build their own identity or affirm it in the face of other groups".⁶⁹ We have come back full circle to the interdependence between a material sign and fame, and to the Homeric concept of *kleos*: while in the West Alexander's legend was mainly transmitted through books, in the Oriental side of his empire the memory of his deeds travelled through time and space also thanks to oral traditions, even when they were not shaped into poetry, and, growing its roots into material signs, like landscapes and ancient buildings, became part of the Oriental collective imagery, unrelated to official interpretation influenced by Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine court poetry and history, and more in touch with the collective "identitarian" processes of different ethnic and cultural groups.⁷⁰

An epigram by the Macedonian Adaeus,⁷¹ an author of the *Garland of Philip*, on the οἴμα of Alexander, elaborates on the concept of the Macedonian ruler as a unifier of the entire Earth both as a conqueror and as a scion of Eastern and Western dynasties (like in LYCOPHR. *Alex.* 1440: ἀπ' Αἰακοῦ τε κἀπὸ Δαρδάνου γεγώς). This simple but effective elegiac couplet recalls the famous epitaph of Christopher Wren in Saint Paul's cathedral, London: *si monumentum quaeris, circumspice*.

Τύμβον Ἀλεξάνδροιο Μακεδόνος ἦν τις ἀείδη,
ἠπείρους κείνου σῆμα λέγ' ἀμφοτέρως .

If one would sing of the tomb of Alexander of Macedon,
let him say that both continents are his monument.

(*A.P.* VII 240; transl. by W.R. Paton)

The reference to the entire Earth as a "monument" to Alexander's *kleos* finds a parallel in Alpheus' epitaph for Homer, *A.P.* IX 97: οὐ μίᾳ πατρί

⁶⁹ COLORU 2013, p. 406.

⁷⁰ See COLORU 2013, pp. 405-7.

⁷¹ GOW-PAGE 1968, II, p. 8, and WALTZ 1938, p. 159 attribute it to Adaeus, while the lemma in the *Planudaean Anthology* ascribes it to Parmenion. On Adaeus' Macedonian origin see GOW-PAGE 1968, II, p. 3, 13 and GULLO 2015, p. 60. On the sequence to which this epigram belongs see GULLO 2015, pp. 33-34, n. 229.

αοιδὸς κοσμεῖται, γαίης δ' ἀμφοτέρης κλίματα (while the real monument of Homer is the *Iliad*).⁷² Both Homer and Alexander shaped the European and Middle Eastern culture for centuries. Although his material σῆμα may be lost by now,⁷³ Alexander's wish for immortality couldn't have been fulfilled better.⁷⁴

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⁷² The poet belongs possibly to the 1st AD. Cf. ANT. THESS. A.P. VII 369, 5, on the tomb of the orator Antipater: Ἀντιπάτρου ὀνητήρος ἐγὼ τάφος· ἡλικία δ' ἔπνει / ἔργα, Πανελλήνων πύθεο μαρτυρίας. / κείται δ' ἀμφήριστος, Ἀθηνόθεν, εἴτ' ἀπὸ Νεῖλου / ἦν γένος· ἠπείρου δ' ἄξιος ἀμφοτέρων. / ἄσπεα καὶ δ' ἄλλως ἐνὸς αἵματος, ὡς λόγος Ἴελλην / κλήρω δ' ἦ μὲν αἰεὶ Παλλάδος, ἦ δὲ Διός. Anon. A.P. VII 45,1-2 (*FGE I* 1052-1055), on the tomb of Euripides: Μνάμα μὲν Ἑλλάς ἄπασ' Εὐριπίδου, ὄστέα δ' ἴσχει / γῆ Μακεδών, ἤπερ δέξατο τέρμα βίου; see GULLO 2015, p. 170.

⁷³ The location of the tomb of Alexander, the *Sema*, is a riddle now, as in the antiquity, at least after the 4th century AD; the last official imperial visit to it was by Caracalla, 215 AD.

⁷⁴ In the alternative, hyperbolic universe of *The Golden Vine*, a graphic novel by Jai Sen (SEN 2003), which is the last example of the cultural adaptability of the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander even manages to discover and submit the Americas, China and Japan – and to unify the world, mainly by diplomacy, after a first part of his life devoted to military conquest.

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