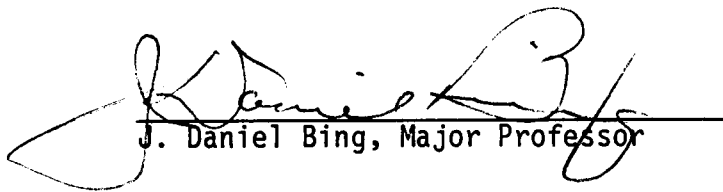
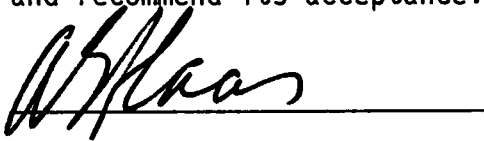
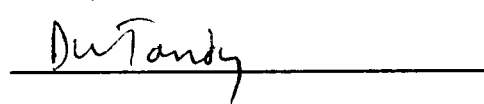


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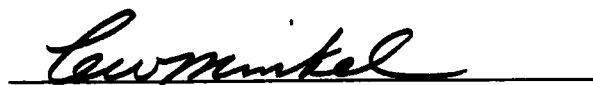
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J. Daniel Bing, Major Professor

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THE ALEXANDER-ORACLES: THEIR LITERARY
AND HISTORICAL FUNCTION

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
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ABSTRACT

The major extant narratives describing the life of Alexander the Great--those of Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian--contain evidence of oracles associated with Alexander. This thesis examines these oracles' functions within both their literary and historical settings.

The reported oracles' functions within the literary accounts are illustrated by comparing them with oracles of earlier Argead kings and with Homeric epic. The comparison indicates that the Alexander-oracles continue an Argead oracular tradition and introduce topics paralleling Homeric motifs. The historical function of one group of reported oracles is assessed by examining testimony in the narrative accounts. The examination indicates that these Alexander-oracles were composed to promote ideas and ideals of Alexander and his court, and the findings suggest that other oracles within the tradition could be employed as historical evidence of the court's concerns.

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INTRODUCTION

Many studies have been offered to explain religious interests and religious practices of Alexander.¹ Here, the attempt is made once more, but with a different starting point: the recorded oracles. This is a group of passages in the surviving accounts of Alexander which have not received a thorough and separate treatment. I have gained much in this attempt from the study of Delphic oracles by H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell and from the more recent study by J. Fontenrose, although the focus of these works is not Alexander.² No similar studies have been made of oracles from sites other than Delphi, and I have relied instead upon articles addressing some of the problems these oracles pose. The oracles have attracted little attention from scholars tracing the sources of our main sources for Alexander and little has been added by these studies to our understanding of the oracles' function. For example, J.R. Hamilton traces to Cleitarchus the accounts of a Pythian oracle concerning Alexander's invincibility and concludes that "the story was invented after Alexander's death."³ In a separate discussion, Hamilton determines

¹A select bibliography of studies written on these topics can be found in E. Badian, "Alexander the Great, 1948-67," Classical World 65 (1971) 77-78. The list of works at the end of this paper includes more recent studies and others omitted from that listing.

²H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, The Delphic Oracle, 2 vols. (Oxford 1956) and J. Fontenrose, The Delphic Oracle (Berkeley 1978).

³J.R. Hamilton, Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary (Oxford 1969) 34.

that the second of the two Pythian oracles recorded in the sources, the oracle concerning a Lycian guide, is also "an invention."⁴

L. Pearson, in one of his several studies aimed at tracing the extant histories' sources, is similarly inconclusive about the oracle attributed to Sarapis, which he calls "a 'romantic' addition" of uncertain date.⁵ In this paper, the recorded oracles have been taken outside of a narrow historiographical focus so that within a wider focus more might be learned both about the oracles and about Alexander's relationship to them. The specific aims of this study have been to describe the oracular tradition presented in the major extant histories, to examine its relationship to other selected traditions, and to suggest what significance it might have to the study of Alexander.

In Chapter One are presented the twenty passages from Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian which contain oracles associated with Alexander. It will be seen that often two or more writers have described the same oracle with some slight difference in detail. These differences are discussed, and from among the variant reports have been assembled the attested oracular inquiries and responses. These details are taken to constitute the literary bases underlying the passages, and are here designated the Alexander-oracles.

⁴Ibid., 97.

⁵L. Pearson, "The Diary and Letters of Alexander the Great," Historia 3 (1955) 439, reprinted in Alexander the Great:

In Chapter Two, the Alexander-oracles are examined within the context of Argead oracular traditions. All known oracles associated with early and mythic Argead kings and with Philip II are described, particular attention being given to the less often discussed, early Argead oracles, and characteristics of these and of the Alexander-oracles are compared. The objective in the chapter is to determine how far the Alexander-oracles are consistent with Argead tradition and at what points they depart from it.

Several topics found in the Alexander-oracles are shown in Chapter Two to have no parallels in Argead oracular tradition, and in Chapter Three, Homeric epic is examined as a possible source of these. Recent scholarship, in particular the studies of W. Donlan and J.M. Redfield, have been used as guides toward textual interpretation of the Iliad and the Odyssey. There is no intention here to suggest that Homeric tradition was a necessary model for topics addressed in the Alexander-oracles; rather, on the basis of parallels between the Siwah oracles and Homer, it is suggested that Homer was a possible model for the later tradition.

Following the examination of the Alexander-oracles in relation to Argead and Homeric literary tradition, in Chapter Four one group from among them is examined as a possible source for historical evidence. It is argued here that the Siwah oracles may represent contemporary claims of Alexander's court, and implications of this for

study of the period are raised. In the final chapter, some conclusions are offered about both the literary and historical functions of the Alexander-oracles.

Excepting the examination of the Homeric tradition, the research presented in this thesis depends primarily upon evidence from ancient sources. No modern studies have specifically addressed the topics raised here. It is hoped that the fresh approach to the study of the Alexander-oracles and the gathering together of the primary evidence will provide a useful basis for continuing inquiry into the history of oracles and of Alexander.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ALEXANDER-ORACLES

Twenty passages in the main surviving accounts of Alexander's life describe oracles concerning Alexander. Two in the form of direct quotations have the appearance of verbatim reports of oracular pronouncements.⁶ Yet, it would be incautious to assume that any of the passages contain exact transcriptions of attested oracles. C.W. Fornara has argued that direct quotation of sources was not a goal in ancient historiography and that speeches in ancient texts having the appearance of direct quotations "masquerade as such."⁷ His observations seem to hold true for oracles recorded in the ancient texts. In the passages under discussion, variants of attested oracles suggest a disinterest in direct citation; similarly, in a wider survey of Greek literature, H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell find many examples in which "the kernel of an oracle was detached from its shell."⁸ For oracles in ancient texts as well as for speeches, the semblance of direct citation is deceiving.

⁶Diodorus Siculus 17.51.1-3 and Plutarch, Alexander 14.7.

⁷C.W. Fornara, The Nature of Historiography in Ancient Greece and Rome (Berkeley 1983) 142.

⁸Parke and Wormell (op. cit., footnote 2) 1: xxii. The authors refer in this discussion to those oracles cited by the ancient authorities in direct statement which are introduced by the subordinating conjunctions *ἀλλὰ* and *δέ*. None of the Alexander-oracles has this precise form, but the examples show that the reporting of oracles in incomplete form was a frequent ancient practice.

The passages under study, then, cannot be accepted as the ipsissima verba of any ancient oracles. Moreover, it is idle to search the texts for possible traces of underlying historical oracular pronouncements. Attempts to separate fourth-century oracles from those originating in later reports will fail us precisely because they might not have failed an ancient writer: if an oracular response seems to follow a conventional formula and to be historically plausible, it might either be authentic or have been made to appear so.⁹ Under J. Fontenrose's test for Delphic responses, none of these reported oracles would be classed as "genuine"; none is presented by nor ascribed to contemporary witnesses.¹⁰ Whether or not Fontenrose's criteria are suitable to the oracles at hand, his classification points again to an inescapable qualification of reported oracles: they are not sources for authentic oracular responses but for a literary oracular tradition.

The ancient testimonia containing the oracles are presented below. The excerpts include descriptive narrative which helps to establish the oracles' attested historical contexts and for ease

⁹Ibid., 1: xxiii. Discussing the format of Greek oracles, Parke and Wormell point out that well-counterfeited responses reflect the conventional style.

¹⁰Fontenrose (op. cit., footnote 2) 7-8. Arrian ascribes his account of the oracle of Sarapis to αἱ βασιλικοὶ ἐφημερίδες (7.25.1 and 26.1). If one accepts the existence of these royal journals and their contemporaneity to Alexander, the oracle is arguably "genuine." But the evidence for their dating is inconclusive; see Pearson (op. cit., footnote 5) 432-439, 455.

of reference, the oracular responses are underlined. In the ancient accounts, the writers sometimes report an oracle when they describe it being delivered from a god, and at other times, when they describe it being recollected. In the listing below, the oracles are grouped according to the sites from which they are said to have originated regardless of whether they were given in like contexts in the histories, and the sites are arranged in order of their attested dates of consultation. The resulting organization allows comparison of responses attributed to each site and a survey of their development over time.

The passages include variants of all but two of the oracles, and my commentary identifies these variants by pointing to similarities and discrepancies among the responses and by noting the setting, petitioners, and recipients associated with each. The occurrence of very similar responses among the passages suggests that they might sometimes derive from a common literary source.¹¹ However, a tracking down of sources is not the focus here. Texts containing very similar responses are examined together in order to bring together the ancient testimony, and the goal is to present as full a description as possible of each of the Alexander-oracles.

¹¹This is the conclusion reached by C.A. Robinson (The History of Alexander the Great, vol. 1 (Providence 1953; reprint edition, New York 1967) 2-3) who asserts that when "two authors offer the same opinion at the same place . . . [they] therefore have copied, not each other probably, but a third person."

The Oracles at Delphi

1. Curtius 5.4.4, 10-11 and Plutarch 37.1-2.
2. Diodorus 17.93.4 and Plutarch 14.6-7.

1. Curtius 5.4.4, 10-11.¹² He gave orders that the prisoners whom he had lately taken should be called. Among these was a man well versed in the Greek and Persian tongues, who declared that it was hopeless for the king to try to lead the army into Persia over the ridge of the mountains . . .

When the prisoner had made his reply, on being asked by the king whether he had learned this by hearsay or by observation, he replied that he had been twice captured, once by the Persians in Lycia, again by Alexander. The king was reminded of the prediction given by an oracle; for when he consulted it, the reply was made that a citizen of Lycia would be his guide on the road leading into Persia.

Plutarch 37.1-2.¹³ Persis was difficult of access, owing to the roughness of the country, and was guarded by the noblest of the Persians (for Dareius had taken to flight); but Alexander found a guide to conduct him thither by a circuit of no great extent. The man spoke two languages, since his father was a Lycian and his mother a Persian; and it was he, they say, whom the Pythian priestess had in mind when she prophesied, Alexander being yet a boy, that a "lycus," or wolf, would be Alexander's guide on his march against the Persians.

2. Diodorus 17.93.4.¹⁴ Alexander saw that the campaign against the Gandaridae would not be easy, but he was not discouraged.

¹²Translations of Quintus Curtius in this paper are from the edition of J.C. Rolfe (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London; vol. 1, 1946, reprint edition 1971 and vol. 2, 1946, reprint edition 1976), hereafter referred to as "Curtius."

¹³Translations of Plutarch, Alexander, in this paper are from the edition of Bernadotte Perrin (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1919; reprint edition 1971), hereafter referred to as "Plutarch."

¹⁴Translations of Diodorus Siculus 17 in this paper are from the edition of C.B. Welles (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1963), vol. 8, hereafter referred to as "Diodorus."

He had confidence in the fighting qualities of his Macedonians, as well as in the oracles which he had received, and expected that he would be victorious. He remembered that the Pythia had called him unconquerable (*ἀνίκητος*) . . .

Plutarch 14.6-7. And now, wishing to consult the god concerning the expedition against Asia, he went to Delphi; and since he chanced to come on one of the inauspicious days, when it is not lawful to deliver oracles, in the first place he sent a summons to the prophetess. And when she refused to perform her office and cited the law in her excuse, he went up himself and tried to drag her to the temple, whereupon, as if overcome by his ardour, she said: "Thou art invincible (*ἀνίκητος*), my son!"

1. Curtius 5.4.4, 10-11 and Plutarch 37.1-2. Curtius and Plutarch report this earliest oracle Alexander is said to have received. In similar language, Diodorus also relates that Alexander found no passable route into Persia until a Lycian captive led his way but mentions no oracular prediction of the incident.¹⁵ Curtius and Plutarch provide few and disparate details about the circumstances of the oracle. Curtius states that Alexander had consulted the oracle himself (*consulenti*), but does not indicate when nor from what site the oracle was given. Plutarch, on the other hand, places the oracle in Alexander's boyhood and at Delphi, but does not state whether Alexander was present at the questioning.¹⁶ It may be fortuitous

¹⁵Diodorus 17.68.1-6. According to all three accounts, the man spoke two languages; it would appear that there is a common source.

¹⁶Plutarch's early dating for the oracle, to when Alexander was "yet a boy," is historically plausible if there were Argead plans to invade Persia as early as the 340s; G.T. Griffith has argued that there were. See N.G.L. Hammond and G.T. Griffith, A History of Macedonia. II: 550-336 B.C. (Oxford 1979) 458-463.

that these two accounts are compatible, but the similar wording and subject of the reported oracular responses suggests more strongly that they are variants of a single attested oracle.¹⁷

2. Diodorus 17.93.4 and Plutarch 14.6.7. For the second pair of oracles attributed to Delphi, Plutarch again provides information about the date of consultation. His ordering of events places Alexander's trip to Delphi shortly before the troops' eastward departure from Greece (14.8 ff.) and thus early in 334. The writers' dissimilar descriptions of the oracular consultation and of the context in which Alexander recalled it tends to obscure their essential agreement: both state that an oracle from Delphi called Alexander *ἀνίκητος*.

The Oracle at Gordium

Curtius 3.1.14-16, 18, Plutarch 18.2-4, and Arrian 2.3.1, 6-8.

Curtius 3.1.14-16, 18. Alexander, after reducing the city into his power, entered the temple of Jupiter. There he saw the wagon in which it was known that Gordius, the father of Midas rode, and it was in no way more elegant than ordinary ones in everyday use. The noteworthy feature was the yoke, which was made fast by a great number of thongs, closely tangled with one another and concealing their interlacings. Thereupon, since the natives declared that the oracle had predicted that whoever should loose the intricate fastening would rule over Asia, the desire entered Alexander's mind of fulfilling that prophecy . . .

¹⁷ Both oracles have been assigned to Delphi in the list here. Although Curtius does not name a site for the oracle, it seems that he and Plutarch have described the same oracle, and they have been assigned to Delphi on the basis of Plutarch's authority; Parke and Wormell (op cit., footnote 2, 2: 110) discuss the two texts together, but do not explicitly attribute Curtius' to any site.

After having struggled for a long time without effect against the hidden knots: "It makes no difference," said he, "how they are loosed," and cutting through all the thongs with his sword, he either tricked the oracle or fulfilled it.

Plutarch 18.2-4. After he had taken the city of Gordium, reputed to have been the home of the ancient Midas, he saw the much-talked-of waggon bound fast to its yoke with bark of the cornel-tree, and heard a story confidently told about it by the Barbarians, to the effect that whosoever loosed the fastening was destined to become king of the whole world. Well, then, most writers say that since the fastenings had their ends concealed, and were intertwined many times in crooked coils, Alexander was at a loss how to proceed, and finally loosened the knot by cutting it through with his sword, and that when it was thus smitten many ends were to be seen. But Aristobulus says that he undid it very easily, by simply taking out the so-called "hestor," or "pin," of the waggon-pole, by which the yoke-fastening was held together, and then drawing away the yoke.

Arrian 2.3.1, 6-8.¹⁸ When Alexander reached Gordium, he was seized with a longing to ascend the acropolis, where the palace of Gordius and his son Midas was situated, and to see Gordius' waggon and the knot of the waggon's yoke. . . .

There was a legend about the waggon, that anyone who untied the knot of the yoke would rule Asia. The knot was of cornel bark, and you could not see where it began or ended. Alexander was unable to find out how to untie the knot but unwilling to leave it tied, in case this caused a disturbance among the masses; some say that he struck it with his sword, cut the knot, and said it was now untied--but Aristobulus says that he took out the pole-pin, a bolt driven right through the pole, holding the knot together, and so removed the yoke from the pole. I cannot say with confidence what Alexander actually did about this knot, but he and his suite certainly left the waggon with the impression that the oracle about the undoing of the knot had been fulfilled.

Curtius 3.1.14-16, 18, Plutarch 18.2-4, and Arrian 2.3.1, 6-8.

Arrian's account of the army's operations places Alexander's trip

¹⁸Translations of Arrian, *Anabasis*, in this paper are from the edition of P.A. Brunt (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London; vol. 1, 1976 and vol. 2, 1983), hereafter referred to as "Arrian."

to Gordium in the second spring of the expedition, in 333.¹⁹ The accounts describe a procedure very different from those reported at Delphi, Siwah, and Babylon, but Curtius clearly calls the prediction an oracle, referring once in the passage to the sors and twice to the sors oraculi; Arrian similarly refers to "the oracle (λόγιον) about the undoing of the knot"; and Plutarch's statement that the lot of the man who untied the knot "had been decreed by fate (εἰμαρμένη)" is consistent with the other accounts.²⁰ Diodorus does not mention the excursion to Gordium, but the three who record the incident are essentially in agreement. Each states that whoever should undo the knot of Midas' wagon would rule (or, Plutarch, "become king") over Asia (or, Plutarch, "the whole world").²¹ Though the

¹⁹ According to Arrian, Alexander was in Lycia for the first winter of the expedition (1.24.5); his trip to Gordium fell at the end of the following spring's campaigns (1.26.1-1.29.3).

²⁰ Curtius and Arrian provide information which may offer clues to the ancestry of the oracle from Gordium. Curtius places the wagon of Midas in the temple of Jupiter (Iovis templum), and perhaps considered the oracle to have come from that temple. I have found no other ancient attributions of oracles to the temple. Arrian's use of λόγιον in his account might suggest an association of the oracle with Midas. According to Liddell and Scott, the use of λόγιον in reference to an oracle denotes "esp. one preserved from antiquity," and is used in this way by Herodotus and in Plutarch, Theseus and Lysander; H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, 9th edition (Oxford 1940; reprint edition, Oxford 1985) s.v. λόγιον. Compare Arrian's use of μαντεία in relation to an oracle of Ammon (7.23.6).

²¹ See Hamilton's argument (op. cit., footnote 3, p. 46) that the sources do not differ significantly on these points.

oracle is not Alexander-specific and though how Alexander undid the knot is uncertain, all three agree that he did.²²

An Oracle from an Unspecified Site

Curtius 4.2.2-3.

Curtius 4.2.2-3. Tyre, noteworthy both in size and in fame among all the cities of Syria and Phoenicia, seemed more inclined to accept an alliance with Alexander than to submit to his rule. Therefore envoys were bringing him the gift of a golden crown and the Tyrians had sent him from the city provisions in abundance and in a spirit of hospitality. Alexander gave orders that the gifts should be received as a token of friendship, and addressing the envoys courteously, said that he wished to offer sacrifice to Hercules, whom the Tyrians specially honoured; that the kings of Macedon believed that they derived their descent from the god, and that moreover he had been advised by an oracle to do that thing.

Curtius 4.2.2-3. This is the only oracle described in the histories to whose site of origin the writers give no clue.²³ Diodorus and Arrian also state that Alexander wished to sacrifice to Tyrian Heracles, but neither points to an oracle as his incentive.²⁴ This is the

²²How the knot was loosened has been argued frequently. See A.B. Bosworth, A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander, vol. 1 (Oxford 1980) 186-187 for the bibliography and for his comment about its futility.

²³Of the oracles whose texts are given in the histories, only one other (Curtius 5.4.4 ff.) is not attributed to a site; reasons for attributing it to Delphi are discussed above, pages 9-10, footnote 17. Arrian refers vaguely to "other oracles" given at Alexander's death and afterward (7.30.2); their texts and sites of origin are not given.

²⁴Diodorus 17.40.2 and Arrian 2.16.7. Although only Curtius mentions the oracle, the three use similar language in reporting Alexander's desire to offer sacrifice (*βουλομένου θύσαι* in Diodorus, *sacrificare velle* in Curtius, and *ἐθέλειν θύσαι* in Arrian) and it would appear that they have consulted a common source.

first of two references in the passages under study to oracular advice concerning sacrifice, the second being Arrian's account of an Ammonian oracle (7.14.7), and in the absence of evidence for this oracle's site of origin, it may be that it also came from Ammon. Yet Alexander's arrival at Tyre was in 332, prior to his visit to Siwah, and his receipt of Ammonian oracles from envoys this early is nowhere attested. No attribution for the oracle seems certain.

The Oracles at Siwah

1. Diodorus 17.51.1-4 and 93.4, Curtius 4.7.25-28, and Plutarch 27.5-9.
 2. Arrian 6.18.2, 19.4.
 3. Diodorus 17.112.5, 115.6, Plutarch 72.1,3, and Arrian 7.14.1,7 and 23.1,6.
1. Diodorus 17.51.1-4. When Alexander was conducted by the priests into the temple and had regarded the god for a while, the one who held the position of prophet, an elderly man, came to him and said, "Rejoice, son: take this form of address as from the god also." He replied, "I accept, father; for the future I shall be called thy son. But tell me if thou givest me the rule of the whole earth." The priest now entered the sacred enclosure and as the bearers now lifted the god and were moved according to certain prescribed sounds of the voice, the prophet cried that of a certainty the god had granted him his request, and Alexander spoke again: "The last, O spirit, of my questions now answer: have I punished all those who were the murderers of my father or have some escaped me?" The prophet shouted: "Silence! There is no mortal who can plot against the one who begot him. All the murderers of Philip, however, have been punished. The proof of his divine birth will reside in the greatness of his deeds; as formerly he has been undefeated, so now he will be unconquerable (ἀνίκητος) for all time."
- Diodorus 17.93.4. Alexander saw that the campaign against the Gandaridae would not be easy, but he was not discouraged. He had confidence in the fighting qualities of his Macedonians,

as well as in the oracles which he had received, and expected that he would be victorious. He remembered that . . . Ammon had given him the rule of the whole world.

Curtius 4.7.25-28. At the time we are describing, as the king drew near, the eldest of the priests called him son, declaring that his father Jupiter gave him that name. Alexander indeed said that he accepted and acknowledged it, forgetful of his human condition. He then asked whether the rule of the whole world was destined for him by the fates. The prophet, equally disposed to flattery, answered that he would be the ruler of all lands. After this the king went on to inquire whether all the murderers of his father had paid the penalty. The priest said that his father could suffer from no man's crime, but that for the crime against Philip all had suffered punishment; he added that Alexander would be invincible (invictus) till he departed to join the gods. Then, after sacrifice had been offered, gifts were given both to the priests and to the god, and the king's friends also were allowed to consult Jupiter. They asked nothing more than whether the god authorized them to pay divine honours to their king. The prophets replied that this also would be acceptable to Jupiter.

Plutarch 27.5-9. When Alexander had passed through the desert and was come to the place of the oracle, the prophet of Ammon gave him salutation from the god as from a father; whereupon Alexander asked him whether any of the murderers of his father had escaped him. To this the prophet answered by bidding him be guarded in his speech, since his was not a mortal father. Alexander therefore changed the form of his question, and asked whether the murderers of Philip had all been punished; and then, regarding his own empire, he asked whether it was given to him to become lord and master of all mankind. The god gave answer that this was given to him, and that Philip was fully avenged.

. . . . This is what most writers state regarding the oracular responses, but Alexander himself, in a letter to his mother, says that he received certain secret responses, which he would tell to her, and to her alone, on his return. And some say that the prophet, wishing to show his friendliness by addressing him with "O paidion," or O my son, in his foreign pronunciation ended the words with "s" instead of "n," and said, "O paidios," and that Alexander was pleased at the slip in pronunciation, and a story became current that the god had addressed him with "O pai Dios," or O son of Zeus.

Arrian 6.18.2, 19.4. Round Patala the stream of the Indus parts into two large rivers, both of these retaining the name Indus till they reach the sea.

For the time being, they returned to the river island, and anchoring by its headland Alexander sacrificed to the gods, to which, he used to say, Ammon had enjoined him to sacrifice. Next day he sailed down to the other island in the sea, put in there, and sacrificed there too, performing different sacrifices to different gods with different ceremonial; these sacrifices also, he said, he offered in accordance with the oracle given by Ammon.

3. Diodorus 17.112.5, 115.6. . . . He now entered Babylon with his army.

In keeping with this magnificence and the other special marks of honour at the funeral, Alexander ended by decreeing that all should sacrifice to Hephaestion as god coadjutor. As a matter of fact, it happened just at this time that Philip, one of the Friends, came bearing a response from Ammon that Hephaestion should be worshipped as a god.

Plutarch 72.1,3. . . . He came to Ecbatana. . . .

An oracular response from Ammon came bidding him honour Hephaestion as a hero and sacrifice to him.

Arrian 7.14.1,7. At Ecbatana . . . when Alexander heard that Hephaestion was seriously ill, he left the course and hurried to him, but found him no longer living.

Most authorities have recorded that he ordered that the kind of sacrifice appropriate to a hero should always be offered to Hephaestion; some say that he sent to the oracle of Ammon to enquire of the god if he permitted Hephaestion to receive the kind of sacrifice appropriate to a god, but that the oracle refused permission.

Arrian 7.23.1,6. On his return to Babylon . . . the sacred envoys from Ammon also arrived, whom Alexander had sent to enquire what honour it was lawful to pay Hephaestion; they reported that Ammon said that it was lawful to sacrifice to him as a hero.

1. Diodorus 17.51.1-4 and 93.4, Curtius 4.7.25-28, and Plutarch 27.5-9. All four of the writers report that Alexander interrupted his activities in Egypt to travel to Siwah, and all report that he consulted the oracle of Ammon at the oasis.²⁵ Arrian alone omits

²⁵ Alexander's activities in Egypt are presented in Diodorus 17.49.1-17.52.6; Curtius 4.6.30-4.8.10; Plutarch 26.4-29.1; and Arrian 3.1.1-3.6.1; in each account, the visit to Siwah falls in the midst of Alexander's Egyptian activities.

details of the oracles received on this excursion.²⁶ Plutarch offers an alternate interpretation of the prophet's salutation; Curtius adds to his account that a second oracle from Ammon permitted Alexander's companions "to pay divine honors to their king." But the three agree in their reports of the prophet's statements to Alexander: after calling Alexander a son of Ammon, the prophet said that Alexander had avenged Philip's death and would obtain world rule.²⁷ Diodorus uses the term *ἀνίκητος* here, recalling its use by him (17.93.4) and by Plutarch (14.7) in their reports of a Delphic oracle; the Latin equivalent, *invictus*, appears in Curtius' account. These wordings suggest that the oracle at Siwah was considered to have granted Alexander a second affirmation of his invincibility.

2. Arrian 6.18.2, 19.4. According to Arrian, Alexander recalled oracular instructions regarding sacrifice during his second Indus excursion. Describing Alexander's activities at "the river island," Arrian states that Ammon had designated the gods to whom Alexander sacrificed; reporting Alexander's "different sacrifices to different gods with different ceremonial" at a second island, he states that Ammon had specified these, too. It is unclear whether the second

²⁶In his brief account of the consultation at Siwah, Arrian states that Alexander "received the answer his heart desired" (3.4.5). But perhaps Arrian later gives more details about this oracle; see the discussion of Arrian 6.18.2 and 19.4, pages 17-18 of this paper.

²⁷Brunt (op. cit., footnote 18, 1: 470-471) notes this consensus among the accounts of the oracle in his "Appendix V: The Visit to Siwah."

set of instructions again designated appropriate gods, as the earlier instructions, or designated types and manners of sacrifice, and Arrian's description of the directions leaves doubt as to how many oracular pronouncements he recounts. He names Ammon as the god who gave Alexander the instructions, and because Ammon is not attested as an oracular god anywhere other than Siwah, he is presumably referring to the god at that site. Arrian's silence about the conditions under which the oracle was received is suggestive: he does not state that envoys carried this response as he does, for example, concerning the Ammonian oracles about Hephaestion, and the implication would seem to be that Alexander had received these instructions during his visit.

3. Diodorus 17.112.5, 115.6, Plutarch 72.1,3, and Arrian 7.14.1,7 and 23.1,6.²⁸ The oracles of Ammon concerning the status of the dead Hephaestion present a confusing assortment of decrees. The oracles are not reported by Curtius, but a lacuna in his narrative stretching from events before Hephaestion's death well into Alexander's stay in Babylon might account for the absence. The extant accounts suggest that Alexander sent emissaries to the oracle in order to

²⁸Plutarch's reference at 75.3 to oracular responses regarding Hephaestion surely is to be associated with these oracles. He places Alexander at Babylon and says that the response caused Alexander to abandon his mourning. Plutarch gives no wording for the oracle, and so I have not included the passage in the listing of oracles.

learn in what manner the god permitted Hephaestion to be honored.²⁹

The writers disagree about whether Alexander received the response at Ecbatana or at Babylon and whether Hephaestion had been granted the rank of hero or god; perhaps they preserve the texts of several oracles. Although it is clear that the writers are not in agreement here, the texts are alike in addressing the topic of Hephaestion's status after death, and they indicate that at least one oracle associated with Alexander treated that topic.

The Oracles at Babylon

1. Diodorus 17.112.1-4, Plutarch 73.1, and Arrian 7.16.5.
 2. Plutarch 76.9 and Arrian 7.26.2-3.
1. Diodorus 17.112.1-4. After the conclusion of his war with the Cossaeans, Alexander set his army in motion and marched towards Babylon. . . . While he was still three hundred furlongs from the city, the scholars called Chaldaeans, who have gained a great reputation in astrology and are accustomed to predict future events by a method based on age-long observations, chose from their number the eldest and most experienced. By the configuration of the stars they had learned of the coming death of the king in Babylon, and they instructed their representatives to report to the king the danger which threatened. They told their

²⁹Arrian, in both passages cited, states that Alexander had sent (ἐπέμπευ, ἐστάλκεν) men to Siwah to ask the god's opinion. Diodorus says that one of Alexander's subordinates carried the message to the king; it would be a reasonable assumption that Alexander had instructed the man to make the inquiry. Plutarch's statement that "an oracle . . . came" (ἦλθε φαντασία), while ambiguous, does not disallow the possibility that Alexander made inquiry of the oracle by proxy. For an example of an oracle presenting comparable confusion about its originator, see Parke and Wormell (op cit., footnote 2, 1: 66) and their conclusion: "One can take it that the initiative had not really come from Delphi. . . ."

envoys also to urge upon the king that he must under no circumstances make his entry into the city; that he could escape the danger if he re-erected the tomb of Belus which had been demolished by the Persians, but he must abandon his intended route and pass the city by.

The leader of the Chaldaean envoys, whose name was Belephantes, was not bold enough to address the king directly but secured a private audience with Nearchus, one of Alexander's Friends, and told him everything in detail, requesting him to make it known to the king. . . . Alexander, accordingly, learned from Nearchus about the Chaldaeans' prophecy.

Plutarch 73.1. As he was on his way to enter Babylon, Nearchus (who had joined him again after sailing through the ocean into the Euphrates) told the king that certain Chaldaeans had met him and advised that Alexander should keep away from Babylon.

Arrian 7.16.5. On his march towards Babylon, Alexander was met by the Chaldaean seers, who drew him aside from the Companions and begged him to stop the march to Babylon; it is said that they had an oracle from their god Belus that his entry into Babylon at that time would do him harm.

2. Plutarch 76.9. Python and Seleucus were sent to the temple of Sarapis to enquire whether they should bring Alexander; and the god gave answer that they should leave him where he was. And on the twenty-eighth, towards evening, he died.

Arrian 7.26.2-3. The royal journals say that Pithon, Attalus, Demophon and Peucestas, with Cleomenes, Menidas and Seleucus, slept in the temple of Sarapis enquiring of the god whether it would be more desirable and better for Alexander to be brought into the temple of the god and after supplication to receive care from the god, but that an oracle was given from the god that he should not be brought into the temple, and that it would be better for him to stay where he was, and that, shortly after the Companions announced this, Alexander died. . . .

1. Diodorus 17.112.1-4, Plutarch 73.1, and Arrian 7.16.5. The warning of the Chaldaean seers is recorded by Diodorus, Plutarch, and Arrian, and a lacuna probably accounts for its absence in Curtius. The writers agree that Alexander was warned not to enter Babylon on his approach to the city shortly before his death. Arrian alone

refers to the warning as an oracle, calling it a *λόγον* from the god Bêl (Marduk); Diodorus calls the warning a prediction of astrologers, and Plutarch calls it "advice." The literary tradition about the warning is divided, then, about whether or not it was oracular, but Arrian's testimony supports its inclusion among the Alexander-oracles. None of the writers states that Alexander had solicited an oracle from the god; the oracle might have been a response to a question posed, but the question and questioner's identity are not known. Arrian's use of the term *λόγον* here, as in his account of the oracle at Gordium, might indicate his belief that the prophecy had been preserved from a much earlier time; he elsewhere uses the term *χρησμός* when he refers to oracles contemporary to Alexander.³⁰

2. Plutarch 76.9 and Arrian 7.26.2-3. Only Plutarch and Arrian cite the oracle which they say was given shortly before Alexander died; the fragmentary state of Curtius' final book might explain why he does not mention the oracle.³¹ Diodorus' silence is more curious; his account of Alexander's last days is thin on several points. There is no substantial disagreement between the oracles reported by Plutarch and Arrian: both oracles advise that Alexander stay where he was. Neither Plutarch nor Arrian states explicitly

³⁰See footnote 20 above (page 12) for a discussion of the term *λόγον*. Arrian calls oracles given at Alexander's death and afterwards *χρησμός* (7.30.2).

³¹Following the large lacuna in book ten, the narrative resumes after Alexander has fallen ill and only shortly before his death.

whether Alexander ordered the inquiry to be made, and neither reports whether Alexander himself was told the response. They agree that the oracle was from the god Sarapis, but this is a point which has been much disputed by recent writers. The dispute centers on the date at which the cult of Sarapis arose, and two opposing arguments are well-presented by W.W. Tarn and C.B. Welles. Tarn maintains that the cult began under Ptolemy I while Welles argues that Alexander found the cult active in Egypt and carried its worship eastward; both positions have loyal adherents.³² Whether or not it is necessary to dismiss the name "Sarapis" as anachronistic, Plutarch and Arrian attest that a Babylonian oracle shortly preceded and addressed Alexander's death.³³

³²The continuing controversy is noted by Hamilton (op. cit., footnote 3, 212), who himself follows Tarn and claims that "few . . . would disagree." For the bases of the dispute, see Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, 3rd edition (London 1952) 356 and Alexander the Great, vol. 1 (Cambridge 1948, reprint edition 1966) 120, and Welles, "The Discovery of Sarapis and the Foundation of Alexandria," Historia 11 (1962) 298. Ptolemy's establishment of the cult is defended again, and particularly against Welles, by P.M. Fraser, "Current Problems Concerning the Early History of the Cult of Sarapis," Opuscula Atheniensia 7 (1967) 23-45, in which he predicts that "the debate will certainly continue" (p. 35). Against a Ptolemaic origin of the cult, R. Stiehl argues for the existence in 323 of a Sarapeion in Babylon ("The Origin of the Cult of Sarapis," History of Religions 3 (1963) 23-27); she argues that the cult was originally either Sinopeian or Babylonian (pp. 28-33). (Fraser, op. cit., page 45, calls Stiehl's article "uncritical and fanciful"; its very awkward translation into English would lead one, perhaps unfairly, to this conclusion.) The continuing lack of certainty about the cult's history is reflected in the study of B. Gallotta, who considers a Babylonian Sarapeion in Alexander's lifetime "quite unlikely" (del tutto improbabile); ("Serapide a Menfi," La Parola del Passato 167 (1976) 135).

³³In his study of the Royal Journals which are cited by Plutarch

The comparison of the twenty oracular texts suggests that they represent probably fewer than a dozen oracles. They are arranged into nine groups in the listing and in the discussion above, but because of often scanty information about an oracle's context, there can be no precision about the number of the Alexander-oracles; assessing the significance of similarities and discrepancies among the texts must depend upon subjective judgment, and it is possible that similar texts have been taken wrongly to record a single oracle while discrepancies may have been given too much significance.

and Arrian in these passages, L. Pearson maintains that the references to Sarapis and to a dream-oracle in Babylon are anachronistic and concludes that "there cannot have been such a temple in Alexander's lifetime" (*The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (n.p. 1960) 260). Others who consider the name Sarapis an anachronism do not find it necessary to dismiss completely the testimony in the passages: L. Edmunds concludes that the companions visited a Babylonian god ("The Religiosity of Alexander," *GRBS* 12 (1971) 370-371) and Fraser raises the possibility that an "interpretatio graeca" might account for alteration of the god's name (op. cit., footnote 32, 33-34). Elsewhere, Pearson grants that the anachronism can be overlooked; he then provides a second argument against Arrian's account: "Even if we ignore the Ptolemaic name Sarapis and imagine the story told of some Babylonian god, it is still unlikely that the Babylonian priests allowed Macedonians to sleep in the temple, because 'dream-oracles' were not a Babylonian institution at all" (op. cit., footnote 5, 438). There is, however, no ancient testimony that the Babylonian priests forbade the companions to sleep in the temple, nor does it seem likely that they would have; Alexander had entered Babylon as a victor (Arrian 7.26.19) and neither his nor his companions' actions would likely have been circumscribed by its residents. Moreover, it is plausible that Arrian's identification of the oracle as a dream-oracle is his own interpolation about the procedure of consultation based upon his knowledge of Sarapis. I do not find that Pearson's objections warrant dismissal of the ancient testimony that an oracle was sought and received.

Nonetheless, the Alexander-oracles constitute evidence for the oracular tradition which came to be associated with Alexander. In the following chapter, this tradition is examined alongside the oracles associated with previous Macedonian kings so that the extent to which it is consistent with the broader Argead tradition can be assessed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORACULAR TRADITIONS OF THE EARLY ARGEADS, PHILIP, AND ALEXANDER: A COMPARISON OF THEIR FUNCTIONS

Ancient and later sources preserve oracles associated with Macedonian kings other than Alexander, and although these oracles are collectively fewer in number than the Alexander-oracles, they are sufficient to testify that oracular traditions about the Argead kings were not unique to Alexander. These oracles associated with the earlier Macedonian monarchs come from scattered sources. Their dispersion may stem in part from a lack of extant biographies of the earlier Argead kings, a lack which is probably not due entirely to accidents of survival: there are no extant fragments of biographies of Argead kings prior to Philip II, and although the supposition that there were no histories of the earlier kings rests upon an argument from silence, the lack of any later references to such histories suggests that the supposition is valid.³⁴ Although the oracles under discussion pertain to Macedonian kings who ruled prior to Alexander,

³⁴Diodorus' references to Amyntas III serve as an illustration of the paucity of information about Macedonian kings prior to Philip II. He names Amyntas' father (15.60.3) and sons (15.60.3, 71.1; 16.1.3, 2.1), relates his means of accession (14.89.2) and length of reign (14.89.2, 15.60.3), and briefly notes his hostilities with the Olynthians (14.92.3; 15.19.2-3, 20.3) and the Illyrians (14.92.3, 15.19.2-3, 16.2.1). If Diodorus' brevity here is inconclusive, his statement that "Philip started from the most insignificant beginnings" (16.1.3) suggests that Philip's predecessors had no Diodorus. Translation from the edition of C.L. Sherman (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1952).

most cannot be shown to have appeared in literature earlier than the Hellenistic period. Thus, the oracles concerning earlier Macedonian kings, with some exceptions, are not "earlier oracles," and are poor sources for what the kings themselves did; they illustrate, instead, the tradition which came to be associated with some of the kings. Those recorded oracles mentioning Argead kings prior to Philip pertain exclusively to the ancestry of the royal line and to the founding of the kingdom, the second topic one familiar from foundation oracles associated with Greek colonization. I turn first to this early Argead tradition.

Three founders of Argead Macedonia are named in the recorded oracles: Perdiccas, Archelaus, and Caranus. Of these, only Perdiccas is a demonstrably historical figure; N.G.L. Hammond places his reign in the mid-seventh century.³⁵ In Herodotus' sketch of Perdiccas, the king is depicted as a Temenid from Argos who, with his brothers, subdued Macedonia, settled near Mount Bermion, and began the dynastic line later to include Alexander I.³⁶ The vague allusion to the site of Perdiccas' settlement makes its identification uncertain; Vergina (Aegae), Edessa, and at least a handful of towns later important in Macedonian history lie near the Bermion range.³⁷ Herodotus does

³⁵Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 4.

³⁶Herodotus 8.137-139.

³⁷After M. Andronikos' important discoveries at modern Vergina in 1977, according to E.N. Borza, "virtually everyone agrees that . . . the modern village of Vergina lies on the site of Aegae" ("The

not mention oracles associated with Perdiccas; two later writers who do report such oracles describe Perdiccas' actions much as Herodotus does. Diodorus records an oracle given by the Pythia to this Perdiccas, who went or sent to Delphi "wishing to increase his own kingdom."³⁸ According to Diodorus, the Pythia in her response first confirmed the greatness of the noble Temenidae, apparently numbering Perdiccas among them, and then informed him of Zeus' will that he go to Bottiaea and, at the site where he saw goats sleeping, that he sacrifice to the gods and found the town of a state.³⁹ The Pythia's inclusion of Perdiccas among the Temenidae agrees with Herodotus' statement that Perdiccas was an Argive Temenid. The disagreement between the texts, concerning what Perdiccas founded in Macedonia, does not seem significant: Herodotus has him settling a town and founding a new Macedonian dynasty, and the recorded oracle has him founding "the town of a state" (ἄστυ πόλιν) and presumably, ruling over town and state. The recorded oracle departs in one major

Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina: Some Cautionary Notes," Archaeological News 10 (1981) 73). For information about the area of Mount Bermion, I have referred to the map of T. Kotsoni in Philip of Macedon, eds. M.B. Hatzopoulos and L.D. Loukopoulos (Athens 1980) 14, which incorporates information from the Vergina excavations.

³⁸Diodorus 7.16 (my translation).

³⁹Bottiaea (also Bottiaeis) was a region of Macedonia including the area around Pella. According to G.T. Griffith, Bottiaea was taken under Macedonian control in the sixth century and a second Bottiaea (properly Bottike) in Chalcidice was settled by the displaced Bottiaeans. See Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 368.

respect from Herodotus' account, and this is in the sanction given Perdiccas. According to Herodotus, Perdiccas and his brothers subdued (*κατεσρέφοντο*) the land and thus claimed it by right of force; according to the oracle, he was to found the state by a grant of Zeus confirmed by the Pythia.⁴⁰

Eusebius is the second writer to state that an oracle was given to Perdiccas. Eusebius says only that "Perdiccas wanted to increase his kingdom (regnum) and therefore sent to Delphi."⁴¹ He does not give any wording for the oracle. Eusebius in this same passage names Perdiccas as a king of the Macedonians, a detail implicit in Diodorus.⁴² Significantly, though, Eusebius does not name Perdiccas as a founder. He states, rather, that Perdiccas was a king of Macedonia before he sent to Delphi, and he explicitly names Caranus as the Argive who first obtained land in Macedonia, united the inhabitants, and passed his reign on to his son. Caranus is discussed more fully below. The oracles recorded by Diodorus and

⁴⁰A. Dascalakis states that it is "comme un volonté des Dieux" that Herodotus depicts Perdiccas' settlement ("L'Origine de la Maison Royale de Macédoine et les Légendes Relatives de l'Antiquité," *Ἀρχαία Μακεδονία* (1968) 155). But Herodotus' use of *κατεσρέφοντο* belies this. The oracle recorded by Diodorus, on the other hand, states clearly that "aegis-bearing Zeus so grants" (7.16).

⁴¹Eusebius, *Chronicorum* 1, ed. A. Schoene (Dublin 1875; reprint edition 1967) 1: 229 (my translation).

⁴²Eusebius 1: 229 lists the twenty-four kings of Macedonia a Karano . . . usque ad Alexandrum [III], including the Perdikas mentioned here. Parke and Wormell (op. cit., footnote 2) 2: 93 point out no discrepancies between the oracles as they are reported by Diodorus and Eusebius.

Eusebius largely reiterate Herodotus' depiction of Perdiccas; a detail they present which is absent from Herodotus is that there was divine sanction for Perdiccas' claim over Macedonia.

An Archelaus is a second figure acclaimed in recorded oracles as a founder of Argead Macedonia. Modern scholars agree that this Archelaus was not an historical figure, and his origin in tragedy is generally assumed.⁴³ The invented Archelaus appears first in Euripides' Archelaus; written for the historical Archelaus I, the play centered about "the early days of the royal house."⁴⁴ One fragment from the play records an oracle of Dodonan Zeus in which Archelaus' birth was foretold to his father, the Heraclid Temenus.⁴⁵ The oracle seems to have functioned to establish the mythic Archelaus' lineage, but its greater import appears in the context provided by a second fragment from the play. This second fragment describes the division of the Peloponnesus among the three Heraclids and notes Temenus' receipt of Argos; although the lines succeeding the story

⁴³For the consensus that the early Archelaus never existed, see W. Greenwalt, "The Introduction of Caranus into the Argead King List," GRBS 26 (1985) 44; he cites N.G.L. Hammond and E. Badian in his support. The Archelaus fragments are our earliest literary sources for this Archelaus, and thus many have assumed that he was invented by Euripides for the purpose of flattering Archelaus I; see, for example, Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 5. M. Grant has pointed out that "whether Euripides got the story orally from some Macedonian, or invented it himself, is not known" (The Myths of Hyginus (Lawrence, Kansas, 1960 157).

⁴⁴Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 11.

⁴⁵C. Austin, ed., Nova Fragmenta Euripidea in Papyris Reperta (Berlin 1968) 14 = Euripides, Archelaus 2.19-25.

are badly damaged, the name Archelaus is legible in the text.⁴⁶ Here, then, Temenus and Archelaus were apparently once again linked. Taken together, the recorded oracles attest that the mythic Archelaus was an Argive Temenid, and because Euripides almost certainly depicted this Archelaus as an ancestor of Archelaus I, the recorded oracles imply that the Macedonian dynasty was founded by Argead kings.

The fragments from the Archelaus do not make it clear whether Archelaus ever went to Macedonia or whether one of his descendants first made the move from Argos; two other ancient writers explicitly name this Archelaus as founder and record a second oracle naming him. According to Hyginus, "Archelaus, son of Temenus, when driven into exile by his brothers, came to Mygdonia."⁴⁷ There, Hyginus continues, he overthrew the reigning king and

he fled from there, in accordance with an oracle of Apollo, to Macedonia, a she-goat leading him, and founded a town called Aegeae from the name of the goat. From him Alexander the Great is said to have sprung.⁴⁸

It is not possible to sort out the specific instructions of the oracle from Hyginus' summary. The oracle may have commanded only that

⁴⁶C. Austin, 12 = Euripides, Archelaus lines 117-126.

⁴⁷The translation is from M. Grant (op. cit., footnote 43) 156-157 = Hyginus, Fabulae 219.

⁴⁸Ibid. Grant notes that Hyginus is assumed by many to be summarizing Euripides' Archelaus. Hyginus, however, adds details not found in fragments from the play, including the goats and the Apolline oracle, and the attribution of all of Hyginus' passage to Euripides is not certain. I have therefore treated the passages separately.

Archelaus go to Macedonia; it may have added that he should follow a she-goat and it may have given instructions to found a town. The implication of Hyginus' summary is at least that Archelaus, a Temenid, began Argead rule in Macedonia under Apollo's ordinance. A narrative of Dio Chrysostom's parallels that of Hyginus. He records a conversation between Diogenes and Alexander III in which Diogenes speaks of Alexander's ancestor Archelaus:

"Was not Archelaus a goatherd and did he not come into Macedonia driving goats?"⁴⁹

Alexander responds by asking whether Diogenes has related τὰ περὶ τὸν χρησμόν.⁵⁰ Because neither the god nor the site of this oracle's origin is specified in the passage, it is not clear whether Dio records a variant of Hyginus' story. The two passages, though, support a similar conclusion: an oracle prescribed Archelaus' actions in Macedonia.

The third figure reported to have been oracularly confirmed as Argive founder of Macedonia is Caranus. Unlike the invented Archelaus, Caranus is mentioned outside of reports of oracles; Plutarch traces Alexander III's descent to "Heracles through Caranus."⁵¹ Caranus is considered by modern scholars to have been

⁴⁹Dio Chrysostom 4.71.

⁵⁰Dio Chrysostom 4.72.

⁵¹Plutarch 2.1. Eusebius (op. cit., footnote 41), in his list of Macedonian kings, also names Caranus as the first king, qui

a figure of legend.⁵² His first known appearance in an oracle is in Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus in the first century A.D. According to Justin, Caranus "had been ordered by a responsum of an oracle to seek a home (sedes) with a great multitude of Greeks in Macedonia."⁵³ Justin does not state Caranus' point of origin, but says that Caranus went to Macedonia accompanied by Greek troops.⁵⁴ Caranus then seized (occupavit) a city and "when he recalled an oracle by which he had been ordered to seek dominion under the leadership of goats, he established the seat of his kingdom."⁵⁵ By Justin's

primus in unam conflatam (coactum) tenuit Makedoniorum potestatem; like Plutarch, he does not mention an oracle associated with Caranus' rule.

⁵²See, for example, Greenwalt (op. cit., footnote 43, page 47), who surveys the scholarship concerning Caranus.

⁵³Justin, Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi, ed. O. Seel (Teubner ed., Stuttgart 1985), 7.1.7 (my translation).

⁵⁴Justin 7.1.7-10.

⁵⁵Justin 7.1.8 (my translation). The motif of goats appears in several oracles and stories associated with the early Argeads; note its appearance, already described, in Diodorus 7.16 (referring to Perdiccas), and in Hyginus, Fabulae 219 and Dio Chrysostom 4.71 (referring to Archelaus). N.G.L. Hammond suggests several associations prompted by the Greek αἰξ (particularly in its oblique cases) which might explain its inclusion in the accounts: most convincing of these is the early capital of Macedonia, Aegae. See Hammond's discussion (op. cit., footnote 16, page 8). Hammond explains the reference to goats in the oracle concerning Caranus as its author's attempt not to "clash with the older oracle" concerning Perdiccas (op. cit., page 12). Perhaps it is not necessary to attribute this motive to an unknown author; it is likely that those concepts associated with αἰξ when the first oracle was composed were still recognized at the later date. It is a more striking characteristic of the early Argead oracular tradition that although some motifs persist, the names of the founders are changed--this is the topic addressed at length by Greenwalt (op. cit., footnote 43).

account, Caranus had oracular sanction to settle in Macedonia and oracular instructions about where he should found his reign. A scholion to Clement of Alexandria's Protrepticus preserves a fragment from Euphorion, a third-century B.C. writer of epic, which contains some detail additional to Justin. The oracle is assigned by Euphorion to Apollo at Delphi, and explicitly orders Caranus to depart from Greek Argos, to go to the Haliacmon, and to dwell (valelv) where goats graze.⁵⁶ The Byzantine writer Georgius Syncellus provides still further detail, and again brings out Caranus' Heraclid lineage. Caranus, "eleventh after Heracles and seventh after Temenus," the brother of the king of Argos,

attacked the districts throughout Macedonia. He took Macedonia and built a city in it in accordance with an oracle. Beginning from this place, he acquired a Macedonian kingdom which his successors inherited from him.⁵⁷

Syncellus does not specify the oracle's origin. The three accounts, though they contain some variation in detail, agree that Caranus' entry into Macedonia and his site of settlement were oracularly ordained.

Much of the wording of the early Argead oracles is difficult to ascertain because of their fragmentary excerption in the later

⁵⁶The Greek text of the oracle is in Parke and Wormell (op. cit., footnote 2) 92-93 = PW 225, cited as "Sch. Clem. Al. Protr. 2.11."

⁵⁷Georgius Syncellus, Chronographica. In W. Dindorf, ed., Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn 1829) 373 (my translation).

narratives. Nonetheless, the accounts provide an indication of the range of topics addressed in the oracles associated with early Argead kings: they refer often to the lineage of the Macedonian founder, tracing the royal line from Heracles or later Heraclids, and frequently credit the founders with Greek or specifically Argive origin. The writers who preserve the oracles describe the means of Argead takeover variously, as military conquest or as simple settlement, but unanimously report that the means were divinely sanctioned. Frequently, the reported oracular instructions sent the founder to a specific Macedonian site: to Bottiaea, to goat pastures (presumably Aegae), or to the Haliacmon, and instructed him to found a town, a seat of power, or a dynasty. The effect of the oracles seems to be a justification of Argead rule in Macedonia both by right of birth and by grant of the gods. Why the oracles have justified that foundation by three separate figures is uncertain.⁵⁸ W. Greenwalt argues that "the revisions could not have gained acceptance without the support of subsequent Macedonian kings."⁵⁹ If this is true, the recorded

⁵⁸An excellent attempt to account for the different names given the Argead founders has been made by W. Greenwalt (op. cit., footnote 43). He suggests that after Archelaus' death, the name "Caranus" was inserted in the Argead king list ahead of Perdiccas' name to support the succession rights of "collateral branches" of Argeads against those of Perdiccas' direct descendents; when members of the collateral branches gained the throne, the retention of Caranus' name was assured. Greenwalt concedes that his conclusions are "beyond proof" (p. 47), but he has made sense out of this puzzling interpolation of the king list.

⁵⁹Greenwalt, 45.

oracles are evidence that it was important in several periods of Argead rule to reconfirm the dynasty's authority. When we pass to the oracles associated with Philip II, we see that the oracles in the Argead tradition could serve other functions as well.

In addition to reflecting a change in function, the oracles associated with Philip II are much more numerous than those addressing the earlier figures. Chance survival or ancient writers' greater attention to Philip might account for some of the increase, but it is also possible that Philip himself played a role in securing more oracles than his predecessors. This role is suggested by the exclusively Delphic origin of the "Philip-oracles."⁶⁰ For whether or not the Pythia "philippized," as Demosthenes claimed, Philip certainly directed much of his attention to Delphi and would thus be expected to have solicited or inspired her oracles.⁶¹ Seven Delphic

⁶⁰Although Philip participated in games at Olympia and planned the construction of the Philippeum there, there is no evidence for his consultation of its oracle of Zeus. For Philip's activities at Olympia, see Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 664, 690-695. An oracle fashioned in Sibylline style comparing Philip II and Philip V is more appropriately associated with the later king; for the text and discussion, see Hammond and Griffith, 29.

⁶¹In estimating Philip's sway at Delphi, it is important to distinguish between his relations with the Amphictiony and with the priests of the oracle. Parke and Wormell delineate the functions of the two bodies and conclude that "there is no indication that the delivery or framing of the Pythia's prophecies came in any way under the control of the Amphictiony. The Delphic priesthood maintained their hold on this" (op. cit., footnote 2, 1: 109). Philip's influence over the Amphictiony was officially established no earlier than 346, when he convened and presided over the Amphictionic Council (Hatzopoulos, op. cit., footnote 37, 88-89). But Philip had received the support of the oracle, and hence of the priesthood, a decade

oracles reported to have been delivered to Philip are preserved.⁶²

Three of the oracles deal with matters of war, and each of these grants a verdict favorable to Philip: the Pythia sanctioned an alliance between Philip and Chalcidice in 356, predicted his success before he headed the Amphictionic War against Amphissa, and stated that he would "win everything" by purchasing

before. To Parke and Wormell, this early oracle is convincing evidence that Philip "could occasionally make use of the oracle for political purposes" (1: 234). The independence of the two bodies is illustrated, again, in the case of Alexander I, who had no influence over the Amphictiony, but was granted "particular favor" and "honours" by the Delphic priesthood (A. Dascalakis, The Hellenism of the Ancient Macedonians (Thessalonika 1965) 44, 183).

⁶²These have been collected and annotated by Park and Wormell (op. cit., footnote 2, vol. 2) and by Fontenrose (op. cit., footnote 2). The numbers assigned the oracles in these two collections, and their sources (here taken from Fontenrose) are:

- | | | |
|-----|------|---|
| PW | F | |
| 260 | H19 | = Inscription of Olynthus, Tod, <u>Greek Historical Incriptions</u> 2.158. |
| 265 | H22 | = Aeschines 3.130, Cic. <u>Div.</u> 2.57.118, Plut. <u>Dem.</u> 19.1, 20.1. |
| 266 | Q213 | = Diod. 16.91.2, Paus. 8.7.6. |
| 267 | Q214 | = Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 9, Poseidonius <u>ap.</u> Cic. <u>Fat.</u> 3.5, Ael. <u>VH</u> 3.45. |
| 268 | Q215 | = Suda <u>A3788</u> , Makar. 2.29, Mant. Prov. 2.23, Diogen. 2.81, Apost. 3.91. |
| 269 | Q211 | = Plut. <u>Alex.</u> 3.1. |
| 507 | Q212 | = Ps.-Callisthenes <u>Alex.</u> p. 36 Raabe. |

The oracles given to Philip, and their role in his policy, are discussed by Parke and Wormell, I: 233-240. The collections of Parke and Wormell and of Fontenrose contain separate commentaries of each of the oracles within the catalogue entries.

alliances.⁶³ The first two of these oracles also include commands instructing that sacrifices be made to particular gods, and sacrifices are prescribed again in a fourth oracle, which also predicts injury of Philip's eye.⁶⁴ A fifth oracle answers Philip's questions regarding the succession to his rule and describes the signs by which he would recognize his successor, and two final oracles predict the circumstances of his death.⁶⁵

The Philip-oracles address topics which would have had great importance for the king and the kingdom, matters of warfare, health, succession, and death, which had importance extending beyond Philip's personal interests. Although in addressing the affairs of his kingdom they would of course touch at all times upon the affairs of the king, the stability of Macedonia could have depended upon the favorable resolution of each of these concerns. G. Cawkwell notes that "the situation that confronted Philip at his succession was grave." The army had been weakened under Perdiccas III, border wars threatened, and the forces of pretenders were en route; "Philip, like Caesar, would have to do everything at once."⁶⁶ Under such circumstances,

⁶³For discussion of the Chalcidian alliance's advantage to Philip, see Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 245. In Fontenrose, the oracles concerning war are H19, H22, and Q215; I have followed his interpretation of Q215, that the oracle "refers to Philip's policy of purchasing treason or surrender. . . ."

⁶⁴Fontenrose Q211.

⁶⁵Fontenrose Q212, Q213, Q214.

⁶⁶G. Cawkwell, Philip of Macedon (London and Boston, 1978) 29.

failure in early battles, grave disability, instability following his reign (such as preceded it), or death very early in his reign could have created confusion and weakness sufficient to undo Philip's steady advances. If the Macedonian king were seen as the "conductor of sacrifices for the community," as Hammond suggests, an equally weighty significance might be argued for the procedures of sacrifice directed in three of the recorded oracles.⁶⁷ The Philip-oracles clearly do not deal with sanctioning the dynasty's authority as did those addressing his predecessors--they deal with maintaining Macedonia's recently acquired stability. They reflect the preoccupations of a king no longer concerned with justifying his right to rule but very concerned about the country's security. The oracular tradition recognizes and records these concerns and illustrates, significantly, the satisfactory conclusion of each: although Philip would be wounded in battle and he would die, Macedonia's military supremacy and Alexander's succession were divinely ordained. The extent to which the Philip-oracles represent a tradition akin to that of the Alexander-oracles can be shown by examining their treatment of topics common to the two.

By far the most frequent of the topics addressed by the Philip-oracles and the Alexander-oracles is that of war. Three of the Alexander-oracles are exclusively concerned with Alexander's military capability; the first from Delphi treats his entry into Persia, the

⁶⁷ Hammond and Griffith (op. cit., footnote 16) 31.

second deems him ἀνίκητος, and the oracle from Gordium sanctions his world rule. In the longest oracle assigned to Siwah, he is again declared ἀνίκητος. These pronouncements differ from those given Philip primarily in their concern with the extension of Argead rule: Philip, too, had been told that he would "win everything," but his question to the Pythia about war with Persia had been answered by prediction of his death. Sacrifice is a second topic in the Alexander-oracles which had also been addressed to Philip; from Siwah and from an unspecified site, Alexander had received instructions such as Philip received at Delphi. The matter of physical health which the Pythia broached for Philip has a possible parallel in the warning the Chaldaean seers gave to Alexander. They told him that his entry into Babylon "would do him harm," and although it is not clear whether the recorded oracle refers to his illness or to his death, it is at least an admonition concerning his health. The oracle attributed to Sarapis provided more certain indications about his death, as had those attributed to the Pythia regarding the death of Philip. The Alexander-oracles depart little from Philip's in their treatment of topics of war, sacrifice, health, and death. Yet, other recorded oracles addressed to Alexander raise new topics, and suggest that Alexander inspired a novel oracular tradition.

There are three topics treated in the Alexander-oracles which are new to the Argead traditions and all come from the oracles given at Siwah. The first is raised in the prophet's address to Alexander. The three writers who report the address state in similar language

that Alexander was called the god's son; E. Badian has called the priest's greeting "the god's declaration or confirmation of Alexander's divine sonship," and I will borrow this terminology to describe the topic of that address.⁶⁸ This topic, "divine sonship," is treated again in the oracles given during Alexander's consultation at Siwah, and seems distinct from any topic in other Argead oracles. Vengeance for murder is another matter arising first in the Alexander-oracles. Such vengeance did not attract notice in the rest of Argead oracular tradition although the family suffered murders other than Philip's.⁶⁹ The oracles about Hephaestion introduce a third topic new to the traditions; no oracles given to the earlier Argeads specifically treat a companion of the king. What seems a shared characteristic of these issues is their very personal import to the king: they treat his relationship to a god, his vengeance, his friend. Any or all of these concerns could of course have had ramifications for men other than him alone; surely if the *κηδεύω* carried with it some assurance of his divinity, the oracle would have been significant for many other people, and his success in avenging Philip's death would have been of some importance to men other than Philip's son. Concerns of Alexander probably never had a significance exclusively

⁶⁸E. Badian, "The Deification of Alexander the Great," in Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson, ed. H. J. Dell (Thessalonika 1981) 45.

⁶⁹Philip's father had died of "old age" (Cawkwell, op. cit., footnote 66, p. 25), and his death would not have incited Philip to revenge. But at least two other Argead kings were assassinated. See Charles Edson, "Early Macedonia," in Philip of Macedon (op. cit., footnote 37) 18, 26.

for him alone. But there is a peculiarly personal flavor, or character, to the three concerns these oracles address.

It is with the introduction of these three topics that the Alexander-oracles break from the preserved oracular tradition of earlier Argead kings. Other kings, and their affairs of state, were the subject of oracles. But treatment of an Argead king's peculiarly personal affairs is not otherwise represented in recorded oracles. One source long linked with Alexander which might have encouraged the introduction of these topics is explored in the following chapter: the epic tradition of Homer.

CHAPTER THREE

DIVINE SONSHIP, VENGEANCE, AND FRIENDSHIP IN THE SIWAH ORACLES AND IN HOMER

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how far the three personal topics treated in the Siwah oracles, divine sonship, vengeance, and friendship, are consistent with their portrayal in Homer, an aim limited to a description of the topics' treatment in the oracles and in the poems. No conclusions about borrowing from Homer can be based on the small sample of topics to be compared, and no such conclusions are attempted here. If the motifs were in fact borrowed from an earlier literary tradition, Homeric epic presents itself as only one such possible source: classical drama, and tragedy in particular, offers some parallels to the motifs in the Siwah oracles, and oracular tradition other than that of the Argeads might have suggested such topoi. Non-literary sources, such as local legend and custom, could certainly have encouraged the inclusion of these three motifs. In this chapter, Homer is studied as one possible source for topics in the Siwah oracles, and comparison is made between the treatment of topics in the oracles and in the epics.

Divine Sonship

The topic of Alexander's divine sonship is reported to have been raised at two points during his visit to Siwah: in the greeting of the priest and in the oracular responses given afterward. The

greeting, described four times in our three sources for the events at Siwah, shares characteristics of the Pythia's cry to Alexander outside her temple: it is not an oracular response, because no question is said to have preceded it, but is a fortuitous statement, or *κληδών*, made by the spokesman of the oracular site.⁷⁰ Such a "prophetic sign" seems to have carried no less weight than an oracular response, and the distinction between the two was apparently not rigidly drawn in antiquity.⁷¹ In one version of the address, in Plutarch, the priest is said to have called Alexander ὦ ἄλκιμος accidentally, through a slip of the tongue. Plutarch himself does not indicate that he subscribes to this explanation; he is perhaps skeptical of the oracles given afterward, but not of the priest's greeting.⁷² When he describes the greeting in a preceding passage, he expresses no doubt about the report, and Diodorus and Curtius provide accounts of the welcome as well.

Diodorus presents the greeting as a direct citation of the priest's words: "Rejoice, son; take this form of address as from

⁷⁰See W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, vol. 2 (Cambridge 1948, reprint ed. 1950) 347. A good discussion of *κληδόνες* in ancient Greek literature can be found in R. Flacelière, *Greek Oracles*, tr. D. Garman (London 1965) 9-10.

⁷¹Flacelière, for example, finds evidence of cledonistic oracular spokesmen, who "would only answer those who consulted them in 'cledonistic' terms." He cites the Pythia's exclamation as an example of a *κληδών* accepted as a prophetic sign (op. cit., footnote 70).

⁷²E. Badian reports a growing consensus that the explanation Plutarch describes in this passage is untenable (op. cit., footnote 68, p. 45, footnote 20).

the god also."⁷³ Curtius and Plutarch affirm that the priest claimed to speak for the god: "The eldest of the priests called him son, declaring that his father Jupiter gave him that name," and "The prophet of Ammon gave him salutation from the god as from a father."⁷⁴ According to all three writers, the priest claimed to be the mouthpiece of the god, and claimed that the god called Alexander his son.⁷⁵

Further reference to Alexander's divine sonship is made by each of the three writers when they report Alexander's inquiries about Philip's murder. Alexander had asked the priest whether the murderers of "his father" had been punished, and the prophet, in his answer, clarified for Alexander that his father was not Philip:

There is no mortal who can plot against the one who begot him.

His father could suffer from no man's crime.

His was not a mortal father.⁷⁶

⁷³Diodorus 17.51.1.

⁷⁴Curtius 4.7.25 and Plutarch 27.5. The god of the site is variously called Ammon, Zeus, and Jupiter in our sources. For the purposes of the present discussion, the name of the god is not significant; it is significant only that he is a god.

⁷⁵Tarn, in a summary of Wilcken's arguments, contends that the priest was merely confirming Alexander's title as "son of Ammon" which was his due as coronated Pharaoh (op. cit., footnote 70, 347-348). He admits, though, that the evidence for Alexander's coronation "is not actual evidence" (p. 346, footnote 3), and few accept the interpretation. What the greeting signified is still debated. I follow Badian's interpretation, which acknowledges that we do not know the priest's intent: "The main outcome of the visit was the god's declaration, or confirmation, of Alexander's divine sonship" (op. cit., footnote 68, p. 45).

⁷⁶Diodorus 17.51.3, Curtius 4.7.27 and Plutarch 27.6.

In each case, the priest continues his response by contrasting Alexander's father with Philip, resuming his speech with an approximation of "Philip, on the other hand" In these responses, the priest restates the point that he had made in his welcome: that Alexander was the son of a god.

Numbering heroes and gods in their ancestries is one characteristic which sets Homeric heroes apart from other men; it is one feature of what W. Donlan calls the "Homeric aristocratic ideal."⁷⁷ Most frequently, the heroes recall ancestors who were heroes themselves, setting forth these ancestors as models in their own actions.⁷⁸ But many heroes present genealogies which include divine ancestors as well. M.I. Finley, describing the characteristics of heroes in Homer, states that although mortal themselves, "they had divine ancestors."⁷⁹ In fact, divine ancestry is not explicitly claimed for all heroes in Homer, but the claim is frequent enough that it seems to be a characteristic mark of the hero.

An Homeric hero's divine descent is indicated by several different epithets and phrases in the poems. The adjective *διογενής*, which Perry called a generic epithet, or a catchword for Homeric heroes,

⁷⁷W. Donlan, The Aristocratic Ideal in Ancient Greece (Lawrence, Kansas, 1980) 24.

⁷⁸In his summary of the Homeric aristocratic ideal, Donlan states that "descent from gods or from other great warriors was both proof of ability and incentive to excel further" (ibid.).

⁷⁹M.I. Finley, The World of Odysseus (New York 1954, 2nd revised ed. 1978) 135.

accompanies the names of Achilles, Odysseus, and five others.⁸⁰ It is translated variously as "sprung from Zeus," ordained and upheld by Zeus," and "illustrious"; by the first of these interpretations, it would denote a hero's divine descent.⁸¹ In several passages in the *Iliad*, a hero's descent from a god is stated without ambiguity; in the Catalog of ships, Polypoetes is called υἱὸς Περικλοῦ, τὸν ἀθάνατος τίκετο Ζεὺς, and Achilles exclaims on the battlefield, "αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γενεὴν μεγάλου Διὸς εὖχομαι εἶναι." Again in the Catalog of Ships on the Greek side alone, Ascalaphus and Ialmenus are called υἱὲς Ἄρῃος, Elphenor, Podarces, and Leonteus ὄζου Ἄρῃος, and Tlepolemus the descendant of an ὄζου Ἄρῃος.⁸³ Some of the heroes,

⁸⁰Concerning the use of *διογενής* as an epithet, see M. Parry, "The Traditional Epithet in Homer," in A. Parry, ed., *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford 1971) 91-93, 145-146. The other heroes bearing the epithet are, in the *Iliad*, Patroclus, Telamonian Ajax, Eurypylus, Agamemnon, and Menelaus; in the *Odyssey*, only Odysseus is called this. See A. Gehring, *Index Homericus* (Leipzig 1981), s.v. *διογενής*, p. 215.

⁸¹The first two definitions are given in Liddell-Scott (op. cit., footnote 20) s.v. *διογενής*. The third is used by R. Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago 1951, reprint ed. 1961); see, for example, 1.337 and 4.488. Citations of the *Iliad* in this paper which are followed by his name are from this edition.

⁸²*Iliad* 2.741, 21.187. Citations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, unless otherwise noted, are from the editions of A.T. Murray (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. and London; *Iliad* vol. 1, 1924, reprint ed. 1978 and vol. 2, 1925, reprint ed. 1976; *Odyssey* vol. 1, 1919, reprint ed. 1984 and vol. 2, 1919, reprint ed. 1980).

⁸³*Iliad* 2.512; 2.540., 2.704., 2.745; 2.661-663.

then, are clearly linked to divine ancestors, and the repetition of phrases such as ὅζος Ἀπόης seems to generalize the characteristic so that it becomes a mark of the Homeric hero and a feature of the Homeric aristocratic ideal.⁸⁴

These examples from the poems suggest that divine descent rather than divine sonship is the ideal of heroic lineage; a hero's ancestor, rather than the hero himself, is more often identified as the son of a god. But in either case, some member of the hero's family--the hero himself or one of his ancestors--assured his descendants' claims to divine ancestry by being identified himself as the son of a god. It seems to matter little in the poems whether the link to divine ancestry occurred in the generation of heroes at Troy or in an earlier generation. A claim to divine sonship at some point in the genealogy fulfilled the heroic ideal.

Vengeance

In all three of our sources for the visit to Siwah, the inquiry about whether Philip's murder had been avenged is one of only two questions Alexander posed to the priest; in Plutarch, the inquiry is given as the first he made. In both cases, the accounts suggest that revenge for Philip's death was among Alexander's primary concerns.⁸⁵ The matter of vengeance for Philip involved retribution

⁸⁴My understanding of the generalizing of a term through repetition is dependent upon Parry (op. cit., footnote 80) 145-150. He lists ὅζος Ἀπόης as a generic epithet (p. 91).

⁸⁵The other question reported in the three accounts concerns

for a death within Alexander's own family, and was on that account a matter of some personal concern to him.⁸⁶ Diodorus and Plutarch emphasize the very personal nature of Alexander's vengeance, recording that Alexander asked: "Have I punished all those . . .?" and "whether any . . . had escaped him."⁸⁷ According to the wording of the questions, Alexander took personal responsibility for carrying out the revenge and was concerned about whether he himself had succeeded in that goal.

In Homer, there are many examples of personal retribution for actions against one's relatives, and many incidents of violence in the Iliad and Odyssey have their beginnings in such acts of vengeance: it was Agamemnon's vengeance for a wrong against his brother which began the war itself.⁸⁸ Vengeance for the murder of a relative is

the extent of Alexander's future rule, which was clearly a matter of importance to him.

⁸⁶According to Badian, Alexander's urgency to avenge Philip's death was supported by Macedonian convention ("The Death of Parmenio," Transactions of the American Philological Association 91 (1960) 325). Support of vengeance in law or custom might well have played a role in Alexander's actions, but it would not exclude the operation of personal motive.

⁸⁷Diodorus 17.51.2 and Plutarch 27.5. The inquiry recorded in Curtius 4.7.27 does not reflect who would have been responsible for taking vengeance: "The king went on to inquire whether all the murderers of his father had paid the penalty." The passage indicates, however, that Alexander was interested in whether vengeance had been carried out, and possibly his role as avenger is assumed.

⁸⁸Finley (op cit., footnote 79, p. 77) discusses Agamemnon's vengeance as evidence of the Homeric family's responsibility for avenging crimes.

one form of vengeance depicted as current and acceptable in the poems. Such vengeance takes many forms, including the demanding of blood price, of the killer's exile, or of others' lives, but it is repeatedly portrayed as the responsibility of the wronged man's family.⁸⁹ Donlan points out that a departure from the family's responsibility for vengeance is hinted at in an illustration on the Shield of Achilles, where townsmen seem to have assembled to decide what a fitting blood price will be.⁹⁰ It may be that both the victim's family and community had some share in determining proper recompense for murder, but the statements and actions of men and women in Homer illustrate that it was a victim's family who normally carried out the act of revenge. When Ajax chides Achilles in book nine, he contrasts him with a man who has taken revenge by means which he suggests are conventional:

And yet a man takes from his brother's slayer
the blood price, or the price for a child who was killed,
and the guilty
one, when he has largely repaid, stays still in the country,
and the injured man's hurt is curbed, and his pride, and
his anger
when he has taken the price. . . .⁹¹

⁸⁹Donlan (op. cit., footnote 77) 12.

⁹⁰Ibid., 13. The illustration on the shield is described at *Iliad* 18.497-508. Exactly what the illustration depicts and to what extent it reflects Homeric conventions is uncertain. Murray (op. cit., footnote 82, p. 324, footnote 1) discusses several problems in the passage and some possible interpretations. Giving the illustration less weight than Donlan does, Ian Morris finds that in the poems, and in Greek society into the fourth century B.C., "homicide remained a private rather than a public matter" ("The Use and Abuse of Homer," *Classical Antiquity* 5 (1986) 102).

⁹¹*Iliad* 9.632-636 (Lattimore).

Here, the dispute is between families, and the revenge is carried out with no outside arbitration. Throughout the poems, these are the conditions under which vengeance for murder is most often portrayed.

Hector's mother Hecuba offers an example of how strong the impetus to avenge a relative's death appears in the Iliad. She says of Achilles:

I wish I could set teeth
in the middle of his liver and eat it. That would be vengeance
for what he did to my son. . . .⁹²

The violent form revenge can take is one cause of Andromache's fear for Astyanax. Because Hector is dead, she tells Astyanax, he might be enslaved

or else some Achaian
will take you by hand and hurl you from the tower into horrible
death, in anger because Hector once killed his brother,
or his father, or his son. . . .⁹³

Such rage for revenge occurs also among the gods in Homer. Ares, intent upon taking vengeance for his son Ascalaphus' death, expects the other gods to understand his responsibility:

you must not blame me
for going among the ships of the Achaians, and avenging my
son's
slaughter. . . .⁹⁴

⁹²Iliad 24.213-214 (Lattimore).

⁹³Iliad 24.734-737 (Lattimore).

⁹⁴Iliad 15.115-116 (Lattimore).

Ares is stopped from his revenge by Athena, because Zeus had forbidden the gods to enter the battle at this point.⁹⁵ But the killing of his son had put thoughts of that command far from his mind, and the drive to avenge family had taken precedence.

There is evidence in the Iliad that it falls to family to avenge even the threat of murder: Agamemnon kills the two sons of Antimachus, who he says

once among the Trojans assembled advised them
that Menelaus, who came as envoy with godlike Odysseus
should be murdered on the spot. . . .⁹⁶

Menelaus had not been killed; it is because of Antimachus' intent to murder that Agamemnon claims to kill the sons. Agamemnon appears to be exceptional in avenging intent, but his feeling of responsibility is surely derived from the conventions of avenging murder. Why vengeance is portrayed as incumbent upon a victim's family is perhaps revealed by one of the suitor's fathers in a passage from the Odyssey. When the relatives of the suitors rush to avenge the suitors' deaths, he explains their responsibility for vengeance: "For this is dishonor even for those who come after to hear, if we do not avenge the murder of our sons and brothers."⁹⁷

⁹⁵Iliad 15.72-74.

⁹⁶Iliad 11.139-141 (Lattimore).

⁹⁷Odyssey 24.433-435. The translation is that of Finley (op. cit., footnote 79, p. 77), who discusses the revenge for the suitors' deaths as evidence that "homicide . . . remained largely a private affair."

To sum up, revenge for murder is repeatedly portrayed as the responsibility of the dead man's family. In the most prominent example of vengeance in Homer, that of Achilles for Patroclus, the familial tie is absent; although their childhood together in Peleus' house made them very much like brothers, it did not make them brothers in fact.⁹⁸ But Achilles' revenge is not a typical type: his passion and violence are unequalled and his sense of responsibility is from a different cause. By acting out the role normally reserved for relatives, he does not disprove the rule, but proves instead the exceptional strength of his ties to Patroclus, a topic taken up, below, in the discussion of friendship.

Friendship

The oracles sent from Siwah to Alexander after Hephaestion's death support a tradition, noted frequently in our sources, that Alexander and Hephaestion were close friends. Hephaestion is known to have been among Alexander's select *ἑταῖροι*, his "companions" or "friends," and even from among them is said to have had special rapport with Alexander.⁹⁹ The oracles point once again to the strength of that friendship. Reported by Diodorus, Plutarch, and Arrian, they deal exclusively with what type of honors Hephaestion was to

⁹⁸Their childhood together is described at *Iliad* 23.84-90.

⁹⁹Alexander's *ἑταῖροι* are described and discussed by Badian, "The Administration of the Empire," *Greece & Rome* (2nd ser.) 12 (1965) 175-176. For Hephaestion's special place in Alexander's affections, see in the same fascicle J.R. Hamilton, "Alexander's Early Life," p. 118. The friendship is described often in the ancient sources, e.g., Diodorus 17.114.1-3.

be given, and in each account Hephaestion is said to have been awarded special honors. That Hephaestion is shown to have figured in the Alexander-oracles at all, and that he figured in them so favorably, suggests that he was a special concern of Alexander's. Moreover, the writers indicate in their accounts that Alexander had himself requested the god's decision about Hephaestion's honors, and they agree that Alexander approved of the reply: Arrian says he was pleased, Diodorus that he was delighted, and Plutarch that he relented from his grief.¹⁰⁰ J.R. Hamilton points to this grief and to these oracles as two indications of Alexander's trust in Hephaestion: both illustrate that he had valued his friend greatly.¹⁰¹

In Homer, friendship is shown both in people's actions and words to hold a very important place in the society. W. Donlan finds that the society's structure of authority, encouraging dependence within small circles of supporters, gave rise to "the great importance of 'friendship,' *φιλότης*, as a value and as a motive for behavior."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰See above, footnote 29, page 19, for the argument that Alexander had solicited a response from Siwah on what honors Hephaestion was permitted. The evidence for Alexander's reaction to the response is Arrian 7.23.6, Diodorus 17.115-6, and Plutarch 72.3. Arrian 7.14.7 adds the information that Alexander had asked permission to have Hephaestion honored as a god, but was denied this: his is the only account which suggests the form Alexander's inquiry took.

¹⁰¹Op. cit., footnote 99, p. 124. Hamilton, stating that Hephaestion's death "affected him so deeply that he wished him to be deified," follows Arrian 7.14.2-7 and Diodorus 17.114.1-115.6. Cf. Plutarch 72.3, who does not record Alexander's wishes, but notes that he was pleased that heroic honors were approved; whether Alexander wished Hephaestion to be deified or heroized does not seem certain.

¹⁰²Donlan (op. cit., footnote 77) 9.

He consequently includes "friendship" among the features of the Homeric aristocratic ideal.¹⁰³ In the Iliad, Ajax points disparagingly to Achilles' disregard for friends and friendship: "He is hard, and does not remember that friends' affection / wherein we honored him by the ships, far beyond all others."¹⁰⁴ Ajax suggests that *φιλότης* and *ἑταῖροι* were expected to be important to a man and to influence his actions, and that Achilles was renouncing both.¹⁰⁵ When Achilles again "remembers" and accepts the duties it demands, he demonstrates how high a value and how compelling a motive *φιλότης* could be.

When Achilles hears that Patroclus has died, his grief is such that Antilochus thinks he might kill himself; instead, in vengeance, he returns to battle.¹⁰⁶ Both Antilochus' expectation and Achilles' decision illustrate Achilles' affection for Patroclus, which C.M. Bowra has called "the only real affection in his life. He loves him on his own admission more than his old father or his young son."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³Ibid., 23. In the ideal of the "Homeric proto-aristocrat," Donlan says, "responsibility and loyalty were directed towards his immediate family and the corporate household (*οἶκος*), extending outward to a small circle of friends and companions (*φίλοι, ἑταῖροι*)."

¹⁰⁴Iliad 9.630-631 (Lattimore).

¹⁰⁵J.M. Redfield notes that although Achilles does not yield to Ajax' speech, he is "shaken" by the reminder of his disloyalty, and that both men recognize the priority *φιλότης* is due (Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago and London, 1975) 106).

¹⁰⁶Antilochus restrains Achilles because of this expectation, Iliad 18.32-34. Menelaus knew that Achilles would want to avenge Patroclus (Iliad 17.709-711) but thought he would be kept from it by his lack of armor.

¹⁰⁷C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad (Oxford 1930, reprint ed. 1968) 197.

Achilles reenters the battle for the sake of this affection alone, and reenters it with a vengeance which shows how strong the friendship was: "He acts," says Redfield, "as if his own life were over."¹⁰⁸ His grief and his actions stemming from that grief testify to the value he placed on the friendship. This friendship is unrivalled in the Iliad: just as Achilles is the greatest hero, his friendship with Patroclus is the greatest friendship and the greatest expression of the ideal.

The oracles attributed to Siwah treat personal topics paralleled in Homer: divine sonship and friendship have been shown to be Homeric ideals, and vengeance an Homeric convention. In the oracles, these motifs are attached to Alexander: he is declared to be the son of a god, is shown to be concerned with revenge, and is shown to be grieved for and devoted to his friend. It is possible that the coincidence is intentional, that through the oracles Alexander has been purposefully portrayed as an Homeric man. But many other possibilities exist. Here, the aim has been to determine whether the epics were a possible source of the motifs in the oracles, and it seems that they were. But perhaps the declaration of Alexander's divine sonship stems from Egyptian tradition, and the acceptability of vengeance

¹⁰⁸Redfield (op. cit., footnote 105) 107. That Patroclus' death was Achilles' sole motive for returning to battle, see also Donlan (op. cit., footnote 77) 15. Achilles himself names this as his motive several times, e.g., Iliad 18.333-335, 21.133-135, 23.19-23.

from Macedonian: it would be worthwhile to consider sources of the oracles other than Homer.¹⁰⁹

The similarity of motifs in the oracles and in Homer raises several questions about the oracles' composition: When were the motifs included in the oracles? By whom? And why? Pursuing answers to these questions could help to establish whether the motifs presented in the oracles are Homeric by design or by chance, or whether they are derived from other sources altogether. In the following chapter, the oracles reported to have been given at Siwah are examined again in an attempt to answer these questions.

¹⁰⁹Tarn, seeing Egyptian influence behind the priest's greeting, and Badian, conjecturing that Macedonian precedent spurred Alexander to vengeance, suggest sources which might have influenced the motives discussed here; see the citations for their views in footnotes 75 and 86, above, pages 44 and 48.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORACULAR TRADITION AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE:

THE ORACLES AT SIWAH

Alexander's association with oracles in the ancient literature places him firmly in Argead tradition. Because so many of our sources for all of the oracles date from after Alexander's death, it is not certain when each of the oracles entered the tradition nor how many of the early Argead and Philip-oracles appeared in accounts earlier than the Alexander-oracles. Two Philip-oracles antedate Alexander and the oracles associated with him: the early Argead oracle from Euripides' Archelaus and the Philip-oracle concerning the Chalcidian alliance.¹¹⁰ On the evidence of the dates of these, it is clear that the Alexander-oracles lie somewhere in the midst, rather than at the beginning or end, of Argead oracular tradition.

To employ the Alexander-oracles as historical evidence would of course require that they be more precisely dated. But few of the Alexander-oracles can be given even approximate datings. The Pythian oracle which J.R. Hamilton places "after Alexander's death"

¹¹⁰If the fragment ascribed to Euripides' Archelaus is correctly dated--and I have not seen this disputed--it would be late fifth-century. The Delphic oracle approving Philip's Chalcidian alliance could of course have been post eventum, but appeared no later than 356, to which year Tod dates the Olynthian inscription recording it (M.N. Tod, ed., A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions. Vol. II: From 403 to 323 B.C. (Oxford 1948, reprint ed. 1962) 171).

has achieved a more specific dating than most.¹¹¹ Both the very late dates of our sources for the oracles and our incomplete understanding of the writers' own motives make it impossible to prove when the oracles first entered the tradition. We are left with determining what time period the evidence best supports. In the present chapter, it is argued that one group of the reported oracles, those said to have been received by Alexander at Siwah, more likely entered the tradition in his lifetime than after his death, and that they provide evidence for the study of Alexander and his court.¹¹²

Our authorities for the visit to Siwah reflect doubt themselves about when the oracles they report first arose. Plutarch says that Alexander claimed to have kept the oracular responses, though not the priest's greeting, to himself and had promised in a letter to his mother to tell them "to her alone, on his return."¹¹³ Plutarch's statement is frequently taken to mean that Alexander never offered details about the oracles, since he never made his return to Macedonia.¹¹⁴ But this is not what Plutarch said. He reported what

¹¹¹For this dating, and examples of oracles for which no dates have been assessed, see above, page 1.

¹¹²It perhaps merits repeating at this point that we cannot hope to determine whether the reported oracles were actually given to Alexander; see the discussion above, pp. 5-6. The aim here is to determine whether the reported oracles were current in Alexander's lifetime.

¹¹³Plutarch 27.8.

¹¹⁴For example, Tarn (op. cit., footnote 32) 43, and J.P.V.D. Balsdon, "The 'Divinity' of Alexander," *Historia* 1 (1950) 371, reprinted in Alexander the Great: The Main Problems, ed. G.T. Griffith (Cambridge 1966).

Alexander said in a letter to his mother, not what Alexander in fact did or did not divulge about the oracles. In the same context, Plutarch relates that "most writers" reported the oracular responses which he has just himself reported. He is puzzled: he has obtained accounts of information Alexander promised his mother he would tell only her. P.A. Brunt points out that it is Alexander's promise, and not the reported oracles, which evidence discredits: "In fact he did make it public that the oracle had instructed him on the gods to whom he should sacrifice (Arrian 6.19.4; Indica 18.11)."¹¹⁵ Explaining why Alexander might have revealed this and other oracles, Brunt reasons that he "would not have kept silent on any responses that might encourage his men." In fact, Diodorus suggests that on another occasion Alexander made oracles public for just this end. He says that Alexander, having steeled himself for a difficult battle by recalling the oracle from Delphi proclaiming him unconquerable and the one from Siwah granting him world rule, then turned his

¹¹⁵Op. cit., footnote 18, 1: 472. See above, pages 17-18, for Arrian's suggestion that Alexander received this oracle during his visit to the site and not at a later time. Tarn notes (op. cit., footnote 32, p. 43) that Alexander revealed this information, but insists nonetheless that Alexander carried out his promise to his mother:

Naturally, many stories of what passed became current, but he himself divulged nothing except that he was pleased; he wrote to his mother that he would tell her alone, but he did not live to do so. Later he disclosed that Ammon had told him to what gods to sacrifice, as Apollo told Xenophon. . . .

Tarn does not resolve this contradiction. This passage from Tarn

thoughts to his soldiers.¹¹⁶ According to the account, Alexander saw that "it was necessary to raise their spirits by an effective appeal" and so "delivered a carefully prepared speech about the expedition"; it is reasonable to expect that he included there the recollections which had raised his own spirits.

There is no compelling evidence, then, that Alexander kept the Siwah oracles forever secret, and some evidence that he did not. Moreover, there are indications in three of our sources that Alexander encouraged dissemination of details from the oracles. Curtius, admittedly a hostile source, claims that this was Alexander's reason for undertaking the trip to Siwah:

A great longing plied spurs to the king's purpose of visiting Jupiter, whom he, not content with mortal eminence, either believed, or wished men to believe, to be the founder of his race.¹¹⁷

In a passage which shows Alexander to be less a megalomaniac than an astute propagandist, Curtius has Alexander say:

Have I control even of the responses of the gods? He offered me the title of son; to accept it was not unfavorable to the very plans in which we are engaged. Would that the people of India may believe me to be a god. For wars depend upon reputation, and often even what has been falsely believed has gained the place of truth.¹¹⁸

well illustrates the common interpolation from Plutarch's statement, which is argued above, pages 58-60, to be mistaken.

¹¹⁶Diodorus 17.93.4-94.1.

¹¹⁷Curtius 4.7.8.

¹¹⁸Curtius 8.8.14-15.

Plutarch and Arrian concur in the suggestion that Alexander could publicize the oracles to his profit:

It is clear that Alexander himself was not foolishly affected or puffed up by the belief in his divinity, but used it for the subjugation of others.

He set out for Ammon with this idea, hoping to secure more exact knowledge of his affairs, or at least to say he had secured it.¹¹⁹

There are indications, then, that Alexander intended to publicize the oracles from Siwah and that he was believed to have done so. There are indications, too, that he had the means: chief among these was Callisthenes.

Callisthenes has often been charged with having originated much of the flattering and fabulous material written about Alexander.¹²⁰ His contributions could account for some of the oracles setting Alexander in an heroic light. According to L. Pearson, Callisthenes' writings described events occurring as late as 331; this would exclude the Hephaestion-oracles from his authorship, but not those associated with Alexander's visit to Siwah.¹²¹ Pearson points out, however, that we do not know whether someone else edited Callisthenes' writings

¹¹⁹Plutarch 28.6 and Arrian 3.3.2.

¹²⁰See, for example, H.W. Parke, The Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon (Oxford 1967) 226, and Badian (op. cit., footnote 68) 45, footnote 20.

¹²¹Op. cit., footnote 33, 48-49.

before publication, and that some of what we attribute to him may be the later work of another.¹²² But there were others on the expedition who wrote to flatter Alexander--what Balsdon has called a "sycophantic literary circle"--and it would not require any stretch of the imagination to suppose that they passed on or invented oracles which flattered Alexander.¹²³ Balsdon also notes that it may have been Alexander's troops who spread rumors of the events at Siwah, and perhaps they were responsible for much of what the sources preserve.¹²⁴ If anything in what we possess of the oracles was popularized by the writers and soldiers accompanying Alexander, which seems likely, it is hard to imagine that Alexander himself played no role in that activity. Tarn notes that Alexander "permitted" publicity of his divine sonship, and "allowed others" to address him as the son of the god, because, as Tarn says, "he may have thought that someday it might have its uses."¹²⁵ He also points out how Alexander could have influenced publicity from his court even when he did not act as censor. Describing Callisthenes, he says:

The so common statement that he was Court historian and wrote under Alexander's eye, and could only therefore write what Alexander wished, is entirely devoid of any serious foundation; he wrote

¹²²Ibid., 22-23.

¹²³Op cit., footnote 114, pp. 373, 378.

¹²⁴Ibid., 373.

¹²⁵Op. cit., footnote 32, pp. 78-79 and op. cit., footnote 70, p. 358. Tarn elsewhere calls the stories of Alexander's divine sonship "his own propaganda," which seems to suggest that Alexander

what he himself wished to write, but he wanted to write what he thought Alexander would like, a very different matter.

Others in Alexander's entourage probably took similar steps to gauge what Alexander would have liked, and in this way Alexander would have been ultimately responsible for publicity from his court.

Further indication that the required oracles came from Alexander's entourage is suggested by the absence of any obviously unfavorable responses. According to the reported oracles, Alexander was the son of a god, had avenged his father's death, would obtain world rule, and was responsible for giving sacrifices to the gods. Conceivably, one or two of these could provide cause for reproaches against him, as the declaration of his divine sonship is reported to have done.¹²⁶ But there is no inherently negative statement made of Alexander in the reported oracles. Instead, Alexander is shown to be heroic, if not "Homeric," an image suggested repeatedly in the extant ancient histories to have been one of Alexander's own making.¹²⁷ We cannot determine what Alexander's own thoughts were, but there seems no reason to doubt that these are characterizations he would have allowed.

played a more active role than usual in promoting this particular idea (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd ed., ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (Oxford 1970) s.v. "Alexander III," p. 40).

¹²⁶E.g., for Philotas (Curtius 6.9.18-19) and Cleitus (Plutarch 50.11).

¹²⁷See, for example, Arrian 1.12.1 and 7.14.4. Important discussions of Alexander's emulation of Homeric heroes include H. Bengtson, The Greeks and the Persians: From the Sixth to the Fourth Centuries,

Given the reinterpretation of Plutarch 27.8 (above, pages 58 to 60), the conclusion that the oracles were not known during Alexander's lifetime, and hence must have been later inventions, has no support in the ancient authorities. The argument here is that Alexander had a role in publicizing and perhaps in editing the responses he received at Siwah. Plutarch's statement that the oracles were "secret," or heard by Alexander alone, might even suggest that Alexander had given some thought before the consultation to controlling reports of the responses given.¹²⁸ Arguments that the oracles are of later date, in part or in whole, must deal with the evidence that Alexander had the intent and means to apply this control as well as with the evidence that he successfully applied it.

If, as has been argued above, the Siwah oracles under discussion originated in Alexander's lifetime and under his supervision, they could be evidence for ideals which Alexander himself wished to promote. His own self-image has often been deduced from actions he is reported to have made; his actions are of course some of the strongest evidence we have for his intentions and ideals. By pointing to one or another of Alexander's activities, historians have detected periods of change in the image he chose to present and in his own plans. Through such analyses, for example, different dates have been proposed for the

tr. J. Conway (New York 1968) 308, Edmunds (op. cit., footnote 33) 369-372, and Hamilton (op. cit., footnote 99) 118.

¹²⁸ Strabo 17.1.43 also states that Alexander went alone into the shrine at Siwah, but adds that others heard the responses from outside; see Brunt's summary and commentary (op. cit., footnote 18) 1: 468.

period when Alexander first envisioned himself as heir to Asia. Bengston notes this change as early as 334, when Alexander first adopted Persian administrative form, appointing a Macedonian to the office of satrap.¹²⁹ To Brunt, on the other hand, the change is first apparent in the questions Alexander asked at Gordium, before Issus, and is first made explicit in his letter to Darius after the battle.¹³⁰ In the same way, the oracles reported from the visit to Siwah, if they are evidence of what was publicized from Alexander's entourage, illustrate concerns and plans current at his court as late as 332. By publicizing his predicted world rule, the reported oracles reiterated the oracular claim Plutarch attributed to Gordium; or, according to Curtius' and Arrian's accounts of the Gordium oracle, they widened his projected realm now even beyond Asia. At the same time, the reported oracles proclaimed his successful vengeance for Philip, his divine sonship, and his responsibility for sacrifice, all images of himself which were apparently thought desirable or even necessary. It can only be guessed why these images would have been promoted after the visit to Siwah: the claims in the oracles suggest, for example, that as late as 332 there was still doubt about how large the conspiracy behind Philip's murder had been and that a need was felt to end the speculation.

¹²⁹Op. cit., footnote 127, p. 308.

¹³⁰Op. cit., footnote 18, p. lxiii. Brunt states in his discussion that Alexander sent this letter from Tyre, but according to Arrian (whom he cites), Alexander wrote from Marathus before moving on to Tyre (2.14.1-2.15.6).

While the questions and responses reported in the Siwah oracles do not tell us what oracles Alexander received at Siwah, which is something we cannot hope to know, they might tell us something much more important to the study of Alexander: the image he encouraged and the plans he envisioned. We cannot tell precisely when each of the claims was publicized; Arrian suggests that Alexander did not mention the instructions for sacrifice until he reached the Indus. But by the time of Hephaestion's death in 324 it was necessary for Alexander to send to Siwah again. The claims about his world rule, his vengeance for Philip, and his divine sonship had almost certainly been reported by then. For the period between 332 and 324, then, the Siwah oracles illustrate solutions, under the aegis of Siwah, of concerns which were current at his court.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the Alexander-oracles' function in the narratives where they are found. An underlying assumption is that the oracles constitute a literary tradition and that it cannot be determined whether they report authentic oracular responses. Viewing the Alexander-oracles from this perspective raises questions about the oracles which are not considered in studies focusing on Alexander or the Alexander-historians: what the oracles say about Alexander, whether they resemble other literary traditions, and what value they might have as historical evidence. This concluding section contains some answers to these questions and acknowledges other questions which the study raises.

The Alexander-oracles purport to give information to and about Alexander, and in both instances have something to say about Alexander himself. The discussion of the Siwah-oracles in Chapter Four shows that those oracles present a positive image of Alexander, and other oracles in the tradition support this depiction. The oracles assigned to Delphi and Gordium, in particular, contain statements which place Alexander in a favorable light. It is more difficult to see what characterizations the remaining oracles suggest. Those addressing the topic of sacrifice might serve to enlarge Alexander's role as sacrificer or to link him more closely to particular gods. Whatever the significance of these oracles, they do not seem to carry any negative connotations of Alexander. The oracles from Babylon provide

the only arguably negative statements about him, and even they seem open to other interpretations. A. K. Grayson suggests that the oracle telling Alexander not to enter the city is "not necessarily anti-Alexandrian. One could just as easily regard it as concern on the part of the diviners that Alexander have the favor of the gods."¹³¹ The oracle stating that Alexander should not be moved to Sarapis' temple presents similar ambiguities: although it implies that Alexander's death was imminent and that the god could not, or would not, intervene, it does not offer any criticism of Alexander himself. There are oracles outside of the tradition of Alexander-oracles which contain overtly hostile responses: Fontenrose points to several in Greek literature which "insult" and give "rebukes."¹³² None of the Alexander-oracles takes this form. There are statements unfavorable to Alexander throughout other parts of the narrative accounts, but the Alexander-oracles convey the impression that Alexander had the gods' favor and concern.

Closely connected with the Alexander-oracles' depiction of Alexander is their reflection of motifs found in other literary traditions. Comparison of the Alexander-oracles to Argead oracular tradition and Homeric epic indicates that oracles were associated with the earliest Argead kings and with Philip II, and that by being

¹³¹A. K. Grayson, Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts (Toronto 1975) p. 20, footnote 29.

¹³²Op. cit., footnote 2, p. 293.

associated with oracles himself, Alexander shared in this Argead tradition. Whether Argead kings other than the five discussed here were the subjects of oracles or whether these five were exceptional in having oracles attached to them cannot be determined from the extant evidence, but it is clear that Alexander was not unique among Argeads in being the subject of oracles. What does distinguish the Alexander-oracles from preserved Argead tradition is their introduction of topics treating his personal affairs. In Chapter Three it is noted that many sources could have influenced the choice of these motifs, and Homeric epic was examined as one of the possible sources. The many statements linking Alexander with Homer, both in the narratives under discussion and in others as well, suggested the selection of Homer for this study: Plutarch reports, for example, that Alexander had an Iliad revised by Aristotle, and that he kept it "lying with his dagger under his pillow."¹³³ Whether the motifs were borrowed from Homer is not decided in this thesis, but parallels between the traditions confirm its consideration as a possible source and attest to links between Alexander and Homer not previously presented.

In Chapter Four it is argued that the Siwah-oracles said to have been received by Alexander in 332 probably entered the tradition through Alexander's entourage between 332 and 324. These oracles could be evidence for ideas which Alexander or members of his court

¹³³Dio Chrysostom 4.39.

sought to promote. The interpretation of Plutarch 27.8 presented here and the supporting testimony of Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian prompted the examination of this one group of oracles. Extended to other Alexander-oracles, the argument could uncover more about Alexander's involvement in producing the oracular tradition associated with him.

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