Alexander III's Empire: Macedonian, Achaemenid or Oecumenic Greek?

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ABSTRACT
In less than twelve years (334–323 BC) Alexander the Great built a vast empire stretching from Macedon in the West to Ancient India in the East. Alexander united the then known world and its different populations under a single political institution, but he did not create deep intercultural connections among the Macedonians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the many populations of the Achaemenid Empire, nor did he establish a long-lasting universal administrative system for all provinces. Scholarship has often excused Alexander's lack of interest in renovating the political fabric of the Persian Empire as the inevitable consequence of the shortness of his rule; it has interpreted his actions as those of a brutish conqueror when he rejected or took down Achaemenid institutions, or as those of the 'last of the Achaemenids' – after Pierre Briant's expression – when he adopted Oriental etiquette.

The aim of this paper is to assess the nature of Alexander's statesmanship, specifically with regard to his impact on the local populations of the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia. Undeniably, Alexander was more a conqueror and a general rather than a political leader; however, his politico-administrative choices, which combined conservation and transformation, show acute political awareness and a strong instinct for adaptation in line with the different ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the empire. This is especially noteworthy if we consider his fourth-century BC context. In fact, from the ancient Greek sources it appears that Alexander fostered some intercultural exchanges, but also wanted to keep ethnic identities and their role in the empire distinct.

The paper also seeks to challenge ancient and modern scholarship's 'Hellenocentric' view and to investigate how local societies in Iranian Plateau and Central Asia actually responded to Alexander's leadership.

KEYWORDS
Alexander the Great; Achaemenid Empire; Macedonian Imperialism; administration; Iranians; unity of mankind.

INTRODUCTION

In less than twelve years (334–323 BC) Alexander the Great built a vast empire stretching from Macedon in the West to India in the East, and uniting the then known world and its different peoples, with their own languages, religious beliefs, and traditions.[1] Among these peoples were the Macedonians, Greeks, Egyptians and many populations of the Achaemenid Empire, such as the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Areians, Scythians, Arachosians, Bactrians, Sogdians, Gedrosians, and Indians. This political entity, which we label 'Alexander's Empire'[2] or the 'Macedonian Empire', was a complex, multiform system understood in different ways by the peoples living in it: Alexander tried to accommodate the different peoples' needs, but

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1   For Alexander's ecumenical empire, reaching the entire *oecumene* (i.e. the Hellenocentric inhabited world, the world known to the Greeks), see Mavrojannis 2017, 133–138.
2   Cf. Berve 1926.

he was not able to establish a long-lasting administrative system or a cultural programme that worked for every province.[3] Various factors destabilised Alexander's rule: for example, the absence of a central, homogeneous, cultural or religious identity that could have made all subjects feel as though they were inhabitants of a single (Macedonian, Greek, or Persian?) empire, as Zoroastrianism did for the Achaemenids.[4] Moreover, there was the absence of administrative unity, which did not simply entail that there was no *unitary political system*, but also not a *definite way for Alexander to present himself* to his peoples, and for those *peoples to perceive the role* of Alexander as their political, religious, and military leader.[5] This absence of administrative unity and of a common understanding of the role of the leader has also impacted our assessment of his government skills.

However, both Iranians and Macedonians appear in principle to have been open to social, linguistic, artistic, and religious plurality.[6] An example of Persian openness[7] toward *the other* is provided by Herodotus in book III of the *Histories*, where he says that Darius I allegedly showed to the Greeks and the Indian Callatiae that their different ways of taking care of their dead – cremation and consumption respectively – were both acceptable, as the *use and wont is lord of all* (νόμον πάντων βασιλέα; Herodotus, III, 38.4).[8] This sentence has become famous in scholarship as representative of Darius' cultural 'relativism' and revealing of the freedom given to the subjects of the Achaemenid Empire to follow their own traditions (REDFIELD 2002, 27; ROOD 2006, 296–300). The Macedonians were exposed to the different languages and customs of their non-Greek neighbours, the Illyrians, Thracians, and Paeonians. For example, Audata, the first or the second of Philip II's wives, was Illyrian (For Audata, see CARNEY 2000, 57–58; HECKEL 2006, 64. Cf. KOULAKIOTIS 2008, 26), and Langarus, king of the Agrianians,[9] was chosen by Alexander as his military associate in the Balkans (Arrian, *Anab.* I, 5.2–5). Their Greek

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3   For a theoretical approach to Alexander's empire as a 'short-term empire', see ROLLINGER – DEGEN – GEHLER 2020, 15–19.

4   Cf. BROSIUS 2003, 173: 'Alexander failed to understand the ideological issues underlying Persian Kingship'; FREDRICKSMEYER 2003, 253–278. Brosius and Fredricksmeyer particularly stress Alexander's incapability to understand, appreciate and adopt the key elements of Achaemenid kingship, culture and religion that made the subjects feel part of the same empire, notwithstanding their local traditions and cultural background. *Contra*: BRIANT 2002a, 876: Alexander as the 'last Achaemenid'. See also: LANE FOX 2007, 267–311; WIEMER 2007, 281–309; OLBRYCHT 2010, 342–369: Alexander understood Persian imperial culture; DEGEN 2019, 53–95: adoption of Persian strategies of representation.

5   See also WIESEHÖFER 1994/2001, 29–30: the Achaemenid 'Royal protocol insists on the point that kingship is firmly rooted in Persia, and requires descent from one family: the one of Achaemenes. It appears to have been this the stumbling-block that caused Alexander, who was thoroughly familiar with Achaemenid conduct, to fail in his attempt to […] gain the support of the Persians for himself until the death of his antagonist'.

6   On multiculturalism and multi-religiosity as key elements of the Achaemenid Empire, see ROLLINGER 2014b, 149–192. For the plurality of Persian religious landscape, see HENKELMAN 2008, 427–452. Cf. also BRIANT 2002a, 178: the titulature of Darius I in his inscriptions and iconography 'eloquently attest to the royal desire to depict every country of the Empire united in harmonious cooperation organised by and surrounding the king'; e.g., DNa (= LECOQ 1997, 219–221; KUHRT 2007, 502) 'King of countries containing all kind of men'; DPg (= LECOQ 1997, 229–230; KUHRT 2007, 483) '[Ahura Mazda bestowed on Darius] kingship over this wide earth, in which there are many lands... the lands of other tongues'.

7   Or, at least, the *Histories* serve as evidence that Alexander would expect the Persians to be open to other cultures, or that they had that reputation among the Greeks.

8   KINGSLEY 2018, 37–58. Cf. Plutarch, *De Alex.* I, 5 (= *Mor.* 328C–329A): Alexander the civiliser.

9   The Agrianians were probably a Paeonian tribe; Langarus: BERVE 1926, II, 230, n. 460; HECKEL 2006, 145.

neighbours also had a major impact on the Argead court: the presence of a number of Greek cities inside Macedon influenced the social and cultural fabric of the kingdom, and Philip II invited the Greek philosopher Aristotle to tutor his son Alexander (Bosworth 1970, 407–413).

As a ruler, Alexander III occupied numerous, contextual, overlapping roles (Cf. Stewart 1993, 86). In the Greek-speaking world, he was the king of the Macedonians: their political, military and religious leader.[10] But he was also the ἡγεμών (civil and military leader) of the Corinthian League and στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ (commander-in-chief) of the Panhellenic campaign:[11] this made him the *leader* of the Greeks in the mainland and the *liberator* of those in Asia Minor. Within mainland Greece, Alexander was not only the leader of the Panhellenic campaign, but also, from some perspectives, a tyrannical enemy and the destroyer of Thebes (Squillace 2004; Wiemer 2011, 179–204). In Macedon itself, people certainly regarded Alexander as a successful general fighting in the East but, since he had spent only two years ruling the country before leaving for Asia, they probably considered the regent Antipater as their ruler.[12] The complexities related to the definition of Alexander's power become more obvious in the eastern provinces, and scholarship has often excused his disinterest in reforming the political fabric of the Persian Empire because of the brevity of his rule (Cf. Brosius 2003, 172). In Egypt Alexander was welcomed as emancipator and pharaoh (Arrian, *Anab.* III, 3; Curtius IV, 7. 4. Pfeiffer 2014, 89–106); in Mesopotamia (van der Spek 2003, 340–342) and in the Iranian Plateau he presented himself as the lawful successor of the Achaemenids (Wiemer 2007; Olbrycht 2014). In Bactria, Sogdiana, and the Indian regions of the Persian Empire, where the Achaemenid suzerainty had always been light touch, he was perceived as a foreign tyrant seeking to establish his authority (cf. Howe 2016, 151–182). Thus, Alexander's actions were sometimes interpreted as those of a brutish conqueror (O'Brien 1994; Worthington 1999, 39–55; Grainger 2007, 81–82), in those incidents where he rejected or took down Achaemenid institutions, or as those of the 'last of the Achaemenids' (Briant 1982b, 330; Briant 2002a, 876) – after Pierre Briant's expression – when he appropriated Oriental etiquette (Tuplin 1990, 21–22: 'Persian Decor').

The aim of this paper is to assess Alexander's statesmanship and his impact on the local populations of the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia. Undeniably, he was more a conqueror and a general rather than a political leader;[13] however, his politico-administrative choices, characterised by conservation and transformation,[14] show an acute political awareness and

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10 For a discussion on Macedonian kingship and Alexander's leadership in Macedon, see Taietti in print. Cf. also Greenwalt 2010, 151–163.

11 For Alexander's role as ἡγεμών of the Corinthian League, see Wallace 2016, 251–255; Richardson 2019, 42–59.

12 Antipater acted as a general already during Philip's reign and enjoyed favour among the Macedonians (see Berve 1926, II, 46–51, n. 94); Diodorus (XVII, 118.1) states that Antipater was left by Alexander as the leader of Europe (Ἀντίπατρον ἐπὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης στρατηγὸν) and that after the king's death he had great power (μετὰ δὲ τὴν τελευτὴν πλεῖστον ἰσχύσαντος τῶν κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην); Arrian (*Anab.* I, 11.3) writes that Antipater was in charge of Macedonian and Greek matters (τὰ μὲν κατὰ Μακεδονίαν τε καὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας Ἀντιπάτρῳ ἐπιτρέψας).

13 Borza 1990, 248: Alexander was 'a kind of military chief or warlord'; Stewart 1993, 86: Alexander 'created an Empire of domination that retained many characteristics of a chiefdom'; Gilley – Worthington 2010, 194: 'there is consensus that Alexander was a great military leader, however, few historians today would agree that his leadership abilities as king and his personal ambitions as a man were also great'.

14 Briant 2009, 168: 'there are continuities and adaptations that mark the transition from the administration of the Great Kings to that of Alexander'. Cf. King 2010, 388: 'One must conclude that Alexander's travelling court necessitated changes to Macedonian traditions'.

an instinct for adaptation to the different cultural and social backgrounds of the empire (cf. Fuller 1958, 264–265; Hammond 1981, 257–264). Alexander's leadership becomes more noteworthy if we consider his fourth-century BC historical context. From the ancient sources, it appears that the Macedonian conqueror maintained a careful balance in administering the empire: fostering some intercultural exchanges, while keeping the ethnic identities and their role in the empire distinct.

ALEXANDER III'S ADMINISTRATION

A survey of the administrative choices that Alexander made during the Asiatic expedition (334–323 BC) can help us evaluate the nature of his political leadership and ability to govern. These twelve years can be divided into four periods, according to the political *agenda* of the Macedonian king: i) May 334–333 BC, the beginning of the Asiatic campaign; ii) late 333–331 BC, the annexation of Levant, Egypt, and Mesopotamia; iii) end 331–330 BC, the march in Iran; iv) late 330–323 BC, Central Asia, the Indian campaign, and the return to Babylon.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ASIATIC CAMPAIGN

The first period goes from May 334 BC, the time of the start of his Asiatic campaign, to the battle of Issus in November 333 BC. Alexander led his army in accordance with his position as king of Macedon and commander-in-chief of the Greeks: he promoted Panhellenic freedom and campaigned with the aim of freeing Hellenic cities in Asia Minor from the Persian yoke.[15] The Macedonian conqueror constructed his propaganda around his descent from Achilles,[16] who provided him with the necessary link between his own eastward expedition and the glorious past of the Greeks and the Trojan War.[17] Furthermore, as Homer's Protesilaus, Alexander was the first of his flotilla to leap on Asian soil after crossing the Hellespont (Diodorus, XVII, 17.2; Arrian, *Anab.* I, 11.7). Arrian (*Anab.* I, 11.5) informs us that Alexander paid homage to Protesilaus' spoils, which he justified as a propitiatory action for a better outcome of his own campaign. This homage is highly symbolic, as it links the Macedonian to both the Trojan and the Persian Wars: Alexander becomes the reverse of Xerxes, who allowed the desecration of the Homeric soldier's tomb (See Taietti 2016, 159–178).

After the victory at the Granicus River (May 334 BC), in the Greek cities the tyrannical governments favourable to the Persians were overthrown (Arrian, *Anab.* I, 18.1–2), and new democratic and pro-Macedonian authorities were established.[18] Asia Minor was the place where Alexander's propaganda of Panhellenic freedom had to bear fruit: he opted for a dual system, allowing freed Greek cities to restore their laws and administer themselves independently (Diodorus, XVII, 24.1; Plutarch, *Alex.* 34.2; Arrian, *Anab.* I, 18.2.), and he placed Macedonian garrisons and Macedonian satraps in charge of political administration where needed (cf. Badian 1965b, 167–169; Bosworth 1988, 251–258). In reality, the Greek cities un-

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15 Plutarch, *Alex.* 34.2: 'all the tyrannies were abolished and the Greek cities might live on their own laws' (τὰς τυραννίδας πάσας καταλυθῆναι καὶ πολιτεύειν αὐτονόμους).

16 Plutarch, *Alex.* 2.1: Alexander was the descendant of Achilles via Olympias and of Heracles through Philip II.

17 Flower 2000, 108. For a discussion on Panhellenism and propaganda before Alexander, see Squillace 2010, 76–80; Mitchell 2017, 49–100; and Pownall 2020, 199–213.

18 As Tarn 1948, I, 17 has pointed out, 'Persia's foes (the Greek democratic cities in Asia Minor) were (Alexander's) best friends'. See also Wallace 2018, 50–52.

derwent only a superficial change. There was no political liberation, but simply a change of despot: the pacts were unilateral and Alexander awarded freedom to the cities as a gift.[19] The Greek cities had to obey him instead of the Achaemenid King, and the other subjects living in Asia Minor had to report to a Macedonian rather than to a Persian satrap, but the result was that they still had a foreign ruler.[20]

In Hellespontine Phrygia, Alexander appointed Calas (Arrian, *Anab.* I, 17.1. See BERVE 1926, II, 189, n. 398; HECKEL 2006, 74–75) son of Harpalus of Elimiotis, leaving intact the administrative system of the region: the only change was that the satrap was a Macedonian and not a Persian. In Caria, he appointed the Hecatomnid Ada, who adopted him as her son (Diodorus, XVII, 24.2–3; Arrian, *Anab.* I, 23.7–8. See BERVE 1926, II, 11–12, n. 20; HECKEL 2006, 3, n. 1); in this case Alexander followed his father's example of admitting worthy foreigners to his inner circle and, again, left the satrapy as it was before his passage. The only difference between the rule of the Macedonian and that of the Persian Orontobantes was that the Carian population saw Alexander as one of them, as Ada's legitimate heir (Cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 22.4; Diodorus, XVII, 24.2–3). Once in Lycia, Alexander did change the administrative status of the region, joining it to the neighbouring Pamphylia and creating a new satrapy under the control of Nearchus of Crete; however, this change was geographical rather than political. Alexander redesigned the boundaries of the 'joint-satrapy', but he modelled its administration on the pre-existing Achaemenid satrapal system. Furthermore, it was a provisional change: Nearchus was in fact called back to court in 330/329 BC (Arrian, *Anab.* I, 24.4–5).[21]

There is strong evidence that Alexander largely used Persian structures because he had realised that the Achaemenid Empire was not as weak and decadent as Classical authors had made out; after all, it had been able to absorb crises and rebellions for over two centuries without collapsing (OLBRYCHT 2017, 195). As Dominique Lenfant has pointed out, the trope of the decadence of the Achaemenid King and of his Empire was constructed in the 5th century BC to serve Cyrus the Younger's political propaganda against his brother Artaxerxes II, and it became a *topos* in Greek literature and historiography (LENFANT 2001, 407–438). It does not seem to be borne out in contemporary Achaemenid evidence; furthermore, if Darius III was as feeble as Arrian wants us to believe, then Alexander's achievements have been severely overestimated. However, Arrian's negative description of the Persian King actually aims at emphasising the Macedonian's superiority as a political and military leader.[22]

Alexander needed a quick solution to the administrative issues posed by the annexation of the Achaemenid Empire (or part of it), and the adoption of the satrapal system allowed him to focus on his main goals: territorial conquest and the confrontation with Darius. The small

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19   Miletus (Diodorus, XVII, 22.4–5; Plutarch, *Alex.* 17.1; Arrian, *Anab.* I, 19.6) and Halicarnassus (Diodorus, XVII, 27.6; Arrian, *Anab.* I, 23.4–6) are clear examples of Alexander's upper hand in the administration of the area: as they opposed to his passage, they were besieged and taken by storm. However, Miletus was granted freedom as the Milesians surrendered at last, whereas Halicarnassus was destroyed.

20   Cf., e.g., Alexander's letter to the Chians (HEISSERER 1980, 79–95): the Chians have to change their laws into 'democratic' (pro-Macedonian) ones, accept the exiles, provide twenty fully-armed triremes, and, when problems and tentions arise, obey to the Macedonian garrison.

21   Bosworth (1988, 230–231) suggests that the satrapy was created by Alexander upon the Lycians' request, as they did not want to be under Carian control any more due to the unpopularity of Hecatomnid rule. For Nearchus, see BERVE 1926, II, 269–272, n. 544; HECKEL 2006, 171–173.

22   Whether we agree or not with the designation of Alexander as 'Great', there is no doubt that the Asiatic campaign was a large and unprecedented endeavour. Cf. BRIANT 2002b, 193–210; BROSIUS 2003, 170.

changes Alexander implemented in the Achaemenid administration in Asia Minor, such as the introduction of Macedonian garrisons or any replacement in the satrapies' management, were due to the need to secure the territories already conquered and show his presence as the new legitimate ruler. It is also worth mentioning that at the beginning the Asiatic campaign was ostensibly a mission of liberation, so Alexander had probably not thought about the creation of a new administrative system (Cf. Arrian, *Anab*. II, 14.4–6: in his letter to Darius III, Alexander presents the Macedonian campaign as a response to Persian offence; BRUNT 2003, 50). On the other hand, by playing the role of the freedom-fighter for the Hellenic cause, Alexander felt free to make changes (FULLER 1958, 268; BOSWORTH 1988, 230–231; FLOWER 2000, 107–124: Alexander took up the Panhellenic campaign from his father and adapted it to his needs) and to keep only what he deemed useful in order to secure his power. As a result, he appointed Macedonians as satraps to replace the nobility connected to the Achaemenid royal house.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE LEVANT, EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

During the second period of his Asian campaign, Alexander reshaped his political agenda: in fact, although he had already gained more territory than initially planned with the 'war of freedom', he decided to carry on with the campaign, seeing that only a decisive victory over Darius III would secure his achievements and his sovereignty in Asia Minor.[23] It is worth noting that Alexander retained the original form of his Panhellenic propaganda but, in order to justify the extension of his campaign, he added a new spin to it: the 'war of revenge' for Xerxes' wrongdoings in Greece during the second Persian War.[24] The new political goal of Alexander's campaign is outlined in his answer to Darius III's letter, which was received at Marathus in Syria in 332 BC (Arrian, *Anab*. II, 14.4).

In the period after Issus (late 333–331 BC), the Macedonian army passed through the Levant, Egypt, and went up to Mesopotamia. For the most part, the local populations of these regions, distressed by oppressive Achaemenid rule, warmly welcomed Alexander as their liberator and new ruler. The two exceptions were Tyre and Gaza, and in the case of Tyre resistance to Alexander was due to a cultural misunderstanding: the Macedonian had failed to comprehend that for the Tyrians no foreigner was allowed to sacrifice to Melkart/Heracles in the shrine on the old Acropolis in the mainland.[25]

When the Macedonian army arrived in Egypt, the satrap Mazaces[26] immediately surrendered as he had no time to gather an army and was aware of the lack of support among Egyptians. In his place Alexander appointed two locals, Doloaspis and Petisis, flanked by two Macedonian generals, Peucestas and Balacrus.[27] Furthermore, he granted the government of the neighbouring country of Libya to the Greek Apollonius, son of Charinus, and the part of Arabia near Heroöpolis to Cleomenes of Naucratis.[28] Cleomenes was also appointed as the financial superintendent and was ordered by Alexander to collect the tribute due to him from the governors,

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23 The battle of Issus in November 333 BC (and also the battle of Gaugamela in October 331 BC) had not provided Alexander with the decisive victory and recognition he was looking for, since Darius III fled the battlefield.

24 However, according to Diodorus, XVI, 89.2 already Philip did so.

25 For a description of the siege of Tyre, see Diodorus, XVII, 40.2–46; Plutarch, *Alex*. 24.2–25.2; Arrian, *Anab*. II, 16.7–24. Cf. Curtius, IV, 2.1–4.18. See also HECKEL 1997, 189–227.

26 BERVE 1926, II, 245–246, n. 485.

27 Doloaspis: BERVE 1926, II, 147, n. 286; Petisis: BERVE 1926, II, 317–318, n. 633; Peucestas: BERVE 1926, II, 319, n. 635; Balacrus: BERVE 1926, II, 100, n. 199.

28 Apollonius: BERVE 1926, II, 56, n. 104; Cleomenes: BERVE 1926, II, 210–211, n. 431.

while allowing them to rule their respective districts as per their ancient custom. According to Arrian (*Anab.* III, 5), Alexander divided the administration of Egypt among numerous men 'because he was surprised at the natural strength of the country, and he thought it unsafe to entrust the rule of the whole to a single person'. Thus, Alexander kept the Persian administrative structure of the satrapy, but he opted for a more decentralised system (Bengtson 1985, 159), a trend that had started with the division of political and military powers in Asia Minor. The two novel aspects of this approach were a growing interest in cooperation with chosen and well-disposed non-Macedonians (Greeks as well as individuals of the local aristocracy), and, from that time on, the division of three types of powers – civil, military and financial (See Harpalus, the royal treasurer at Ecbatana; cf. Badian 1961, 16–43; Howe 2020, 195–212).

THE MARCH IN IRAN

In the third period (end 331 BC–330 BC), the Macedonian army marched through Iran, in territories without a Greek cultural background, and at the core of the Persian Empire. Alexander was already collaborating with selected members of the local Iranian aristocracy, but it is only after Darius III's assassination and Bessus' claim to the Achaemenid throne (summer 330 BC) that the Macedonian started systematically to choose satraps from the defeated Persian nobility (Briant 1982a, 358). In fact, in Asia Minor and in Mesopotamia (specifically Caria and Babylon) Alexander had appointed non-Macedonians, but they were isolated examples of people whom he trusted and wanted to add to his own inner circle, following his father Philip II's example, who had also expanded the Companion circles by adding people from outside the Macedonian aristocracy (Bosworth 2003, 28–29). In the territories to the east of Asia Minor, which were more 'Persianised', Alexander sought more support from the locals because he had no time to acquaint himself with the regional customs and traditions of each province, and he was aware that he needed the favour of the Iranian nobility to be accepted as the new king (and for his rule to be respected by the local populations).[29]

Moving into these regions necessitated another evolution in the Macedonian's brand: in addition to the parallels with Olympic divinities and Homeric heroes, such as Zeus, Heracles, Achilles, and Protesilaus, Alexander and his entourage also emphasised his similarities with Persian cultural milieu *via* Cyrus the Great, described in the Greek literary tradition as the virtuous founder of the Persian Empire.[30] Moreover, after Darius' death, the Macedonian conqueror made a further gesture to his Iranian subjects and presented himself as the avenger of the Great King, who was unjustly assassinated by the usurper Bessus / Artaxerxes V (Diodorus, XVII, 73.4. Cf. Lane Fox 2007, 277; Squillace 2015, 109; Greenwalt 2015, 109–110).[31] This new propaganda was supported by his new image (Olbrycht 2014, 40–56),[32] which entailed the

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29   Bosworth 2002, 2: 'that was too short a time to create institutions of empire other than those he inherited from the Persians'. See also Strootman 2007, 131–132.

30   See Strabo XI, 11.4: Alexander is φιλόκυρος (fond of Cyrus) and, in the first instance, he wants to spare Cyropolis. At Pasargadae Alexander orders Cyrus' tomb to be rebuilt (Arrian, *Anab.* VI, 29.4–11). Cf. Briant 1982a, 388.

31   Greenwalt 2015, 109–110: 'his political and military aims changed, and so too the ideological themes useful for justifying them […] after 330 BC the slogan of revenge and freedom remained but Alexander [and his supporters] adapted it to new military aims. Whereas in 336 BC the theme of revenge was addressed to the Greeks, now Alexander directed the revenge theme to the Macedonians and, above all, to the Persian nobles'.

32   See Diodorus, XVIII, 48.5: (Alexander) became an admirer of Persian customs (τῶν Περσικῶν νομίμων ζηλωτὴς ἐγένετο).

adoption of some features of the Persian court etiquette, such as the dress (Diodorus, XVII, 77.5; Plutarch, *Alex*. 45.1–2; *De Alex*. I, 8 (= *Mor*. 329 F–330 A). Cf. Collins 2008; 2012, 371–402)[33] and the paraphernalia of the Great King, and, gradually, the courtly pomp[34] and the μηλοφόροι (the Persian royal guards; Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 29.4).[35]

Alexander's adoption of Persian etiquette is the quintessential example of his pragmatic approach to cultural matters; it did not imply *Verschmelzungspolitik* – there was no holistic plan of acculturation and fusion between the peoples. Rather we have a conciliatory *policy*,[36] one that arose from Alexander's recognition of the importance of political and military collaboration between Macedonians and Asians (Hammond 1997, 187–188; Olbrycht 2017, 195–199),[37] and entailed adoption of only the most obvious and ostentatious characteristics of the Achaemenid court – those that would attract the attention of Iranians, but also built on his and the Macedonians' sensitivity (Lane Fox 2007, 269). Moreover, Alexander III assigned only the administration of the satrapy to locals, leaving the control and the defence of the territory in the hands of trustworthy Macedonian generals. In the same way, although Iranians started being enlisted in the army, the highest positions of command were still held by the Macedonians (Bosworth 1988, 236).

The pairing of Iranian administrators with Macedonian garrisons suggests that Alexander's primary purpose was the smooth management and defence of his empire: he was less keen to foster Hellenisation. This is not to say that Alexander did not endorse cultural exchanges at all or did not envisage them in the long run: he actually praised Peucestas for having learnt Persian and won the sympathy of the Persian nobility (Arrian, *Anab*. VI, 30, VII, 6; Diodorus, XIX, 14). However, at this stage of the campaign, cultural exchanges were not Alexander's priority, as he focused on his military and political goals: first, the chase of Darius III; secondly, the pursuit of Bessus; and, third, his formal recognition as King of the Persian Empire, i.e. a recognition of his conquests, of his *spear-won* land. In this respect, Alexander was an able, crafty, and pragmatic leader, but definitely not (at least intentionally) a cultural merger or the father of 'brotherhood and unity of mankind'.[38]

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33 On Alexander wearing Persian apparel and hunting in ancient Near Eastern style, see Spawforth 2012, 169–207.

34 On *proskynesis*, cf. Matarese 2013, 75–85, who interestingly suggests that Alexander wanted to introduce *proskynesis* as a kiss between equals, not as an act of prostration. See also Müller 2019, 227–229 for recent treatment of the topic, with relevant literature.

35 Among Alexander's endeavours to be accepted by the Iranians, there should be added the marriage with Rhoxane: Strabo XI, 11; Curtius, VIII, 4.23–26; Plutarch, *Alex*. 47.4; Arrian, *Anab*. IV, 19.5–6.

36 Cf. Fuller 1958, 272: policy of partnership; Heckel 2008, 52: policy of inclusion; Anson 2015: 97–98: plan of amalgamation; the union of Europe and Asia to be intended as 'universal allegiance to Alexander'. I call Alexander's policy 'conciliatory', as he was trying to conciliate Macedonian-Greeks and Iranians, i.e., to make them work together and cooperate without aiming at distributing equal rights to them. See also Hammond 1997, 187–190: Alexander's Asian policy interpreted as an equal share between Macedonians and Asians in the administration of the empire. For a discussion of the term 'policy of fusion' cf. Wiesehöfer 2016, 355–362.

37 Cf. also Mullen 2018, 244–245 for his interesting views on Alexander's Persianisation: 'regardless of whether or not it was successful, these developments (the adoption of Persian elements at court) were calculated to appeal to the Persian nobility, in their own terms, that Alexander was the New King. [...] In face of this overwhelming power, the Persians accepted Alexander in this role in an effort to receive their own estates and status as gifts from the new king'.

38 Tarn 1948, I, 116–117: all the people of the empire might be partners in the commonwealth and live in unity of heart and mind; II, Appendix 25, ch. VI: 'Alexander at Opis', 434–449; De Mauriac 1949, 107–114; Robinson 1949, 304. Cf. Borza 2012, 317: there was a largely ethnic Macedonian imperial

CENTRAL ASIA, THE INDIAN CAMPAIGN AND THE WAY BACK

The fourth period of Alexander's rule (late 330–323 BC) which comprised of the campaigns in Central Asia, the Indian Campaign and the return of the Macedonians to Babylon, is characterised by Alexander's emulation of Hercules, Dionysus, Perseus, Cyrus, Darius I, and Semiramis, in order to validate his ambition to continue marching East and then South in Gedrosia.[39] This period is characterised by the strongest resistance to the passage of Alexander's army since the beginning of the Persian campaign (Plutarch, *Alex.* 59.3–4, 63–64.1).[40] However, as Anson (2015, 94–106) and Howe (2016, 151–177) have correctly pointed out, this resistance was not different in military terms (there was no 'savage guerrilla fighting'[41]), but was more persistent and diffused, essentially because the locals were defending the *status quo*: the freedom they enjoyed during the Achaemenid rule. In Bactria and Sogdiana Alexander did not change his political and administrative plans: he still sought to be recognised as king of Asia, he carried on pairing locals with the Macedonians, founding cities, and promoted marriage-alliances. On the other hand, in the last years of the campaign these aspects of Alexander's policies were exacerbated, as he was growing impatient, his Macedonians were tired, and the locals refused to see him as a lawful successor of the Achaemenids.[42]

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administration from beginning to end. Alexander summoned Greeks at court for cultural reasons and had Greek troops for limited tasks, often under Macedonian command. Therefore, Alexander did not have a plan of brotherhood or a policy of fusion. For the detractors of the theory of Alexander's *Unity of Mankind*, see: BADIAN 1958, 425–430; THOMAS 1968, 258–260; BOSWORTH 1980, 2–18; WORTHINGTON 1999, 51–52; BRUNT 2003, 50; GILLEY – WORTHINGTON 2010, 195–197. For the unity of mankind in Greek thought, see BALDRY 1965, esp. 113–140 for Alexander.

39 Plutarch, *De Alex.* I, 10 (= *Mor.* 332AB): Ἡρακλέα μιμοῦμαι καὶ Περσέα ζηλῶ, καὶ τὰ Διονύσου μετιὼν ἴχνη (I imitate Hercules, emulate Perseus, and follow in the footsteps of Dionysus). See also Strabo XVII, 1.43: ὁ γοῦν Καλλισθένης φησὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον φιλοδοξῆσαι μάλιστα ἀνελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ χρηστήριον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ Περσέα ἤκουσε πρότερον ἀναβῆναι καὶ Ἡρακλέα (For example, Callisthenes says that Alexander was very ambitious to go to the oracle, because he heard that also Perseus and Hercules went there before). Perseus plays a very important role in Alexander's attempt to be perceived as a worthy heir to the Achaemenid throne, since, according to Herodotus (VII, 61.3), he is the hero linking the Greeks and the Persians. Arrian, *Anab.* VI, 24.3: '[Alexander betook himself] to rival Cyrus and Semiramis (ἔριν ἐμβαλεῖν πρὸς Κῦρον καὶ Σεμίραμιν)'; Strabo XI, 11,4: ὄντα φιλόκυρον ([Alexander] being fond of Cyrus). For the similarities between Alexander and Darius I, cf. TAIETTI 2016, 161–169.

40 For example, Satibarzanes in Aria at first submitted to Alexander's passage but, as soon as he left, he massacred the Macedonian garrison. Alexander counter-reacted harshly: he set the forest alight and appointed Arsaces as satrap. In Sogdia, the seven fortresses north of Marcanda and Jaxartes opposed strong resistance to Alexander, led by Spitamenes. Alexander was particularly fortunate because, after the Massagetae cut off Spitamenes' head, all resistance in the Hindu Kush area collapsed. In India (Chenab and Indus area) various independent rajahs blocked the passage of Alexander's army; two bloody incidents were the massacre of the Malli and of the Oxydracae. Cf. HOLT 2005, 45–65: Alexander's invasion in Bactria and Sogdiana is described as a 'desperate struggle'.

41 On the misuse of the term 'guerrilla fighting', see ANTELA BERNÁRDEZ 2014, 77–83.

42 Referring to the last year of campaign, Arrian says that Alexander was growing harsher (*Anab.* VII, 4.4: καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος ὀξύτερος) and was not as tolerant towards the Macedonians as he used to be, since the barbarian attendance had spoiled him (*Anab.* VII, 8.3: Ἀλέξανδρος [ἦν γὰρ δὴ ὀξύτερός τε ἐν τῷ τότε καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς βαρβαρικῆς θεραπείας οὐκέτι ὡς πάλαι ἐπιεικὴς ἐς τοὺς Μακεδόνας]); cf. Curtius, III, 12.18–21. On the other hand, the Macedonians were growing weary too (*Anab.* VII, 8.2. Cf. Diodorus, XVII, 17.94, 109.2; Curtius, IX, 11).

In India, since people were used to light Achaemenid suzerainty, it would have been difficult to establish Macedonian rule.[43] These regions were also far-removed from the centre of power in the Iranian Plateau and their climate and landscape were challenging for the Macedonians (Plutarch, *Alex*. 66). Thus Alexander had to settle for formal recognition of his power by Taxiles and Porus, who became his client kings and were left in charge of all administrative tasks – a policy that Darius I previously applied to these territories (GOUKOWSKY 1978, 57; BOSWORTH 1988, 130–138. For Indo-Iranian cultural and political relations, see CALLIERI 2004, 10–13). Alexander also felt genuine admiration for Porus and thought of him as a useful ally in India: Porus was a representative of Alexander's rule after the locals and a counterpart to Taxiles (GREEN 1971, 220; BOSWORTH 1988, 131. Cf. Diodorus, XVII, 88.4–5, 89.6; Plutarch, *Alex*. 60.8; Arrian, *Anab*. V, 18.6–7, 20.4).

Alexander's reshuffle and reorganization of his army in this fourth period are a clear example of his social and cultural policy. In 330 BC, he had already ordered 30.000 youths from the Iranian aristocracy – the so-called *Epigonoi* – to be trained 'Macedonian way', so that they would join his army afterwards (Diodorus, XVIII, 108.1; Plutarch, *Alex*. 71.1; Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 6.1); later, in 327 BC, he decided to recruit Asians in order to proceed with the Indian campaign (Curtius, VIII, 5.1).[44] Initially the *Epigonoi* and the Persian cavalry formed separate units; there was no integration with the Macedonian soldiers and they were commanded by one of Alexander's trusted generals. Full-scale integration of the Asians in the army did not occur until 324 BC, when Bactrian, Sogdian, Arachosian horsemen, the Zarangians, Areians, and Parthians together with the *Euacae*, the sons of prominent Persian satraps and generals, were incorporated in the Companion Cavalry, and a fifth hipparchy, mainly composed of Iranians, was formed (Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 6.3-5. See BRUNT, 1963, 43–45; GRIFFITH 1963, 68–74; BADIAN 1965a, 160–161; HAMMOND 1983, 139–144; HECKEL 2008, 140). Alexander integrated them because he needed to raise new troops after the heavy losses suffered during his campaign, and probably also to counterbalance the power of the Companions who were growing weary of his Orientalising policies and of the protracted campaign (Diodorus, XVII, 108.3: Epigonoi as ἀντίταγμα).

The Iranians who joined the army underwent Macedonian training and had to learn the Greek language (Plutarch, *Alex*. 47.3). This suggests that, although Alexander did not set out for his campaign or found cities to Hellenise Asia, when required, he could envisage a programme of Hellenisation at least of the new recruits in the army and presumably of the Iranians in his administration. It was a pragmatic use of acculturation, borne of the need to keep the empire and the army efficient, and not some plan of universal Hellenisation, fusion of peoples, or brotherhood.[45] The Macedonian-Greek element was still to be considered the predominant one in Alexander's empire: for example, in 324 BC he sent Craterus and the veterans back to Macedon, but asked Antipater to bring new Macedonian levies to Asia (Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 12.4; Justin, XII, 12.9). This measure shows that his mind was still turned towards Macedon and that until the very end of his reign he envisaged his empire to be substantially Macedonian, with the Macedonians in a position of superiority.

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43   For the possible reasons of Alexander's conquest of India and its difficulties, see STONEMAN 2019, 36–79.

44   HAMMOND 1990, 276–277: Epigonoi created in 330 BC; OLBRYCHT 2015, 196–210, following Curtius, suggests that the 'Epigonoi' recruited in 330 BC were actually the sons of Macedonians and Asian women, whereas in 327 BC the 'Epigonoi' were Iranian boys trained in Macedonian fashion.

45   Plutarch (*Alex*. 47.3) states that Alexander had understood that his authority would be more secure if based on the mixture and community of practice (ἀνακράσει καὶ κοινωνίᾳ) of his subjects (Macedonians and Iranians) rather than force.

Although Alexander privileged Macedonian-Greek culture, he also cared about his Iranian subjects. In this regard, scholars have lamented Alexander's disinterest in Persian religion or lack of understanding of such features of the Persian Empire as the King's change of capital[46] or the gift-system. It is true that during the twelve years of his campaign Alexander had no time to get involved in the complexities of the Persian and Iranian culture; however, it is worth considering that, as a Macedonian, Alexander had a fairly good knowledge of Persian matters. As a consequence of different historical factors, such as the kingdom of Macedon's submission to the Achaemenid Empire during the Persian wars (492–479 BC), and Philip II's plans for a campaign in Asia, during the fourth century BC the court of Macedon showed a particular interest in works related to Persia, such as Herodotus' *Histories*, Xenophon's *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia*, and Ctesias' *Persica* (Taietti 2016, 171; Müller 2015, 464–466; Wiesehöfer 2017).[47] Therefore, Alexander deliberately chose to adopt only those aspects of Persian-Iranian etiquette that would make him a recognisable symbol of power in front of both the Iranians and the Macedonians. Religion was not less important to him – Alexander was indeed very religious[48] – but he opted for the *interpretatio graeca*, which was the natural way in the Hellenised world to understand foreign religions.[49] Moreover, Alexander also tried to accommodate the religious beliefs of non-Iranian subjects; for example, he ordered the reconstruction of the Etemenanki in Babylon (Lane Fox 2016, 103).

The satraps' purge in 325/324 BC demonstrates that the admission of Iranians to the administration did not work out as expected by Alexander, and that his attempt to create grounds for collaboration between the Macedonians and the Iranians was a failure: neither the Macedonians nor the Iranians were eager to cooperate (Arrian, *Anab.* VI, 27; Bosworth 1988, 240–241; Brosius 2003, 188–190).[50] The Iranians took advantage of Alexander's absence during the Indian Campaign, enrolling mercenaries and acting as independent rulers (Diodorus, XVII, 106.2; Plutarch, *Alex.* 68.2; Arrian, *Anab.* VI, 26, 29–30). In fact, they were too attached

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46 See footnote 4. On the migrations of the Achaemenid Kings, see Tuplin 1998, 63–114.

47 Müller 2015, 464–466: 'Macedonia and Persia: no strangers'; Wiesehöfer 2017, 62: 'the Achaemenid Empire served the Argead dynasty in many ways as a yardstick, for practical, but also for reasons of legitimisation and the safeguarding of power'.

48 For example, Arrian insists on Alexander's piousness and diligence in sacrificing to the gods before crossing a river, a battle, or in response to a positive outcome: Alexander sacrifices to Zeus, Heracles, and Istros (the river god) on the banks of the Danube (*Anab.* I, 4.5); he sets altars to Zeus, Athena, and Heracles after the crossing of the Hellespont (*Anab.* I, 11.7); at the Hyphasis River, denying the real cause of the end of the campaign (the mutiny of his soldiers), he asserts that the omens are not favourable for a further march (*Anab.* V, 28.4–5); at Ecbatana, he sacrifices 'as he usually did after some successful event' (*Anab.* VII, 14.1: Ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις δὲ θυσίαν τε ἔθυσεν Ἀλέξανδρος, ὥσπερ αὐτῷ ἐπὶ ξυμφοραῖς ἀγαθαῖς νόμος). On Alexander's religiosity, see Fredricksmeyer 2003, 253–278.

49 Cf. Curtius III, 8.22: Alexander offers sacrifices to local deities before the battle of Issus (*dis praesidibus loci*) and erects an altar for them to commemorate his victory (III, 12.27: *Jovi atque Herculi Minervaeque*). Noegel 2007, 32: 'During the Hellenistic period, Hellenes began to equate the gods of foreign lands with their own native deities in a process often referred to by scholars as *interpretatio* or translation. A Hellene could, without any apparent theological dilemma, worship any foreign god that most closely resembled his own native deity'.

50 Bosworth 1988, 240–241: only two Macedonians – Cleander and Sitalces – were sentenced to death because of their misgovernment; the majority of the victims were Iranians: Astaspes in Carmania, Orxines in Persis, Abulites in Susiana and Oxathres in Paraetacene.

to the situation they knew before Alexander's conquest.[51] Thus, after this failed attempt of collaboration, Alexander must have realised that not only the idea of brotherhood but also a policy of fusion – if he ever conceived of either in such a holistic or conceptual sense – were a mere fantasy, impossible to pursue in the real world.

The purge also points to the fact that Alexander was a proactive ruler and, in terms of culture and allegiance, still an Argead king: the Iranians were replaced by Macedonians and, as a result, they lost their active role in the political scene of the empire.[52] Alexander changed the satraps because of their 'misgovernment', or rather, their open hostility to his power; it is also likely that, after this incident, he lost confidence in the viability of balancing the division of power between Macedonians and Iranians (Arrian, *Anab.* VI, 27, VII, 4.1–3).[53] In other words, Alexander initially tried to make Iranian-Macedonian collaboration work but, after facing major issues, he decided to cut the problem to the root. Alexander acted as a politician with foresight, and he also realised that Bactrians, Sogdians and Indians were not savage guerrilla fighters, nor did they dislike his *type of government*. They reacted against his conquest because they were being loyal to their leader, Bessus, who was one of them, or loyal to the Persians, who, after all, had allowed them a great degree of freedom.[54]

In general, it is difficult to assess the extent of Alexander's impact in the East as the narratives of the Alexander-historians are often dictated by their own very specific *agenda* (Cf. Albaladejo Vivero 2019, 109–126). The descriptions of the strongholds in Sogdiana and India by ancient authors are characterised by fictional details that help cast Alexander in a mythological light, to portray him as an invincible conqueror who could outmatch his heroic ancestor Heracles, or as a sort of new Jason passing with the Argonauts through the clashing rocks on the Thracian coast of the Bosphorus.[55] However, before the account of the attack against the Sogdian Rock held by Oxyartes the Bactrian in spring 327 BC, Arrian and Curtius insist on the competence of the Macedonians for this task: Alexander had at his disposal a group of 300 men who, having gained experience in previous sieges, were now well trained in rock climbing and 'able to fly' as if they had wings (See Arrian, *Anab.* IV, 19.1: soldiers experienced in πετροβατεῖν (rock climbing); Curtius, VII, 11.24: soldiers have wings (*pinnas*). Harrison 2004, 27–28). This means that the siege of the Sogdian Rock was no different from the sieges that the Macedonians had experienced before, as they were prepared for it. Moreover, the description of the capture of seventh Sogdian fortress offers a clear example of the misrepresentation and bending of the historical facts by the Alexander-historians in order to fit a specific narrative:

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51 Similarly, Thebes and Athens had rebelled during Alexander's absence in the Balkans. Cf. Howe 2016, 166: the inhabitants of the Persian Empire – Bactrians and Sogdians included – 'did not raise an insurgency against an accepted and recognized ruler, but rather they resisted a foreign conqueror'.

52 About a dozen satraps were purged and replaced by Macedonians, who, once again, constituted the majority of Alexander's satraps. See Badian 1961, 16–20.

53 Arrian, *Anab.* VII, 4.1–3: Abulites and Ozathres rebelled because they thought that Alexander would not return from the Indian campaign and were arrested and killed; Arrian also admits that Alexander had become more suspicious and quicker in giving harsh punishments (Ἀλέξανδρος ὀξύτερος λέγεται γενέσθαι ἐν τῷ τότε ἐς τὸ πιστεῦσαί [...] καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τιμωρήσασθαι μεγάλως τοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ μικροῖς ἐξελεγχθέντας).

54 Cf. Howe 2016, 151–177.

55 Cf., e.g., Diodorus, XVII, 85; Plutarch, *Alex.* 58; Arrian, *Anab.* IV, 28–30.4; Curtius VIII, 11 for the capture of the Aornus Rock, whose height was so great that even Heracles failed to conquer it. Moreover, the geographical name Aornus, 'without birds' in Greek, conveys the idea of an unreachable, hostile place or of a steep mountain; see Rollinger 2014a, 606–607. For a discussion of the fantastic and exotic elements in the Alexander-historians' descriptions of India, see Xydopoulos 2007, 19–27.

Ptolemy claims that the besieged Sogdians surrendered immediately, while Aristobulus says that Alexander captured this city by force (Cf. Aristobulos, *BNJ* 139, FF 26, 27, 51).[56] Similarly, Curtius (VII, 6.17–23) attests to strong resistance by the city and the campaign is presented as difficult and bloody. It is likely that Aristobulus' account is the most accurate one, whereas Ptolemy's is propagandistic, aimed at highlighting Alexander's invincibility. Surely tiredness and prolonged hardships led the Macedonians to overreact on some occasions during the Eastern and Indian campaigns; however, the harshness of the fights between Alexander and the Iranians was also purposely amplified in the ancient accounts. In fact, Curtius wished to represent the East as a subversive place, as the land of tyranny and corruption, and the Iranians as cruel barbarians who fight against (or corrupt) Alexander the civiliser.[57]

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Among the textual evidence that can inform on the nature of Alexander's statesmanship and cultural plans in the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia, I have singled out the so-called *Last Plans* reported by Diodorus, an excerpt from Plutarch's *Moralia*, and three passages in Arrian's *Anabasis*.

Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica*
       The *Last Plans* (Diodorus, XVIII, 4.3–5) attest that Alexander envisaged migration of peoples from Europe to Asia and vice versa (πρὸς δὲ τούτοις πόλεων συνοικισμοὺς καὶ σωμάτων μεταγωγὰς ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ κατὰ τοὐναντίον ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν). Scholars are divided regarding the authenticity of the last plans[58] and, unquestionably, there are some fictional additions. However, it is not unlikely that Alexander planned for a future population exchange to integrate Asians into a Greek cultural milieu and Greeks into Asian political and social traditions. In fact, a general understanding of each other's customs and a common (Hellenic) education would have eased internal communication, the process of reaching common agreements (Diodorus, XVIII, 4.4: κοινὴν ὁμόνοιαν), and the administration of such a vast empire. Moreover, a population exchange would have helped repopulate Macedonia, which had sent out most of its men fit for military service during Alexander's Persian campaign; and provided some relief to over-populated mainland Greece (Bosworth 1986, 1–12; Bosworth 2002, 1–3; Worthington 2003, 96–98).[59]

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56   Aristobulus' description of the capture of the seventh Sogdian fortress (Aristobulos, *BNJ* 139, F 26 = Arrian, *Anab*. IV, 3.5 = Ptolemy, *BNJ* 138, F 15) is quite indicative of his free stance on political matters. Cf. Hammond 1983, 142; Bosworth 1995, 20–21; Pownall 2013, commentary to Aristobulus, *BNJ* 139, F 26. *Contra*: Pearson 1960, 166–167. For Ptolemy's account, cf. Ptolemy, *BNJ* 138; Howe 2015, 166–195; 2018: commentary to Ptolemy, *BNJ* 138.

57   As Igor Yakoubovitch (2016, 212) has pointed out, 'Curtius' representation of the East is typical of conservative Romans. However, his use of common *topoi* is creative: built within the framework of Roman contemporary politics, Curtius' image of Alexander and the East appears to symbolise, beyond clichés, a general pattern of transgression and paradoxical inversion of standards and values […]'. In his narrative, Alexander becomes 'a case for political study of power, in which the East, as well as tyranny, is an aberration of Nature that challenges the order of the world'.

58   Schachermeyr (1954, 398) and Badian (1968, 191–198) are in favour of their authenticity; against it are Tarn (1948, II, 378–398) and Pearson (1955, 450–454; 1960, 261–262).

59   See also Milns 1999, 769: 'In the longer term, however, the Asian campaign of Alexander had a beneficial impact on prices by creating the means whereby an over-populated Greek peninsula

Plutarch, *Moralia*

Plutarch's description of Alexander as a civiliser in *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* (*De Alex*. I, 5 = *Mor*. 328 B–329 A) is highly rhetorical and dictated by the author's philosophico-political agenda. Alexander fostered Greek education of the Iranians in the case of the *Epigonoi*, but it was functional in creating a common culture in his army and a *lingua franca* to communicate with his subjects. It is however difficult to assess how deeply Alexander envisaged his Iranian subjects being Hellenised. City-foundations in the East surely brought about some Hellenisation, but their main purpose was not cultural: above all, they were fortresses built to control the eastern areas of Alexander's Empire.[60]

Arrian, *Anabasis*

One of the most informative descriptions of Alexander's cultural plans is Arrian's narration of the wedding ceremony at Susa (*Anab*. VII, 4.6–8).[61] In Arrian's version, the celebrations followed Persian customs (νόμῳ τῷ Περσικῷ) and the Macedonians were given Iranian women. Alexander had a twofold aim: the establishment of better relations between the two populations and the reinforcement of the Macedonian ruling-class by introducing 'new generations' who would also have a link with the Iranian environment (HECKEL 2008, 137). The mass-wedding ceremony was clearly not meant as the foundation for a broader policy of fusion: Alexander used only the visual elements of Persian wedding celebrations, and the sources do not report any marriage between Macedonian women and Iranian men. Alexander evidently did not consider his Iranian subjects socially equivalent to his Macedonians (BOSWORTH 1980, 11–12; WORTHINGTON 1999, 39–55).

The second passage of the *Anabasis* under examination is Alexander's emotional and propagandistic speech after the soldiers' mutiny at Opis in 324 BC (Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 7.9–11).[62] The mutiny was caused by the king's decision to send the veterans and the unfit soldiers home to Macedon. Although all the Alexander-historians report the events at Opis, I shall focus on Arrian's version, since it is the most complete among the other extant accounts. Crucially, Arrian (*Anab*. VII, 8.2) shows how the Macedonians in Alexander's army felt about the changes that occurred in his court and, at the same time, what they deemed to be the general impact of the Persian campaign on the Macedonian court and kingship. The Macedonians were vexed by Alexander's Persian dress and his claims of divine descent from Ammon; they were offended by the equipment of the barbarian *Epigonoi* in Macedonian style and the introduction of foreign horsemen into the ranks of the Companions; and last, they feared that Alexander privileged the Iranians over them.

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could rid itself of a huge number of mouths (via a large scale migration to the conquered lands of Asia) that had to be fed'.

60 With few exceptions, the majority of Alexander's city-foundations is in the Eastern regions of his Empire. For a complete list of Alexander foundations, cf. FRASER 1996.

61 Cf. Chares, *BNJ* 125, F 4 (= Athenaeus, XII, 54, 348 B–359 A); Diodorus, XVII, 107.6; Plutarch, *Alex*. 70.2; *De Alex*. I, 7 (= *Mor*. 329EF); Aelianus, *VH* VIII, 7.

62 Cf. Diodorus, XVII, 108.3–109.3; Plutarch, *Alex*, 71.1–5; Curtius X, 2.8–4.2; Justin, *Epit*. XII, 11.5–12.10. For the mutiny, see WÜST 1954, 418–425; OLBRYCHT 2008, 232–251. For the scholarly discussion over the term mutiny, see HOWE – MÜLLER 2012, 21–38; ROISMAN 2012, 36; BRICE 2015, 69–76; CARNEY 2015, 27–59.

Arrian describes the Macedonians' reaction as abrupt and loud,[63] and undoubtedly Alexander's men were not always keen to adapt to the 'extravagances' of their king's Orientalising policies. However, the reasons outlined by Arrian do not explain alone such discontent among the Macedonians, especially if we consider that, like every Macedonian king, Alexander was deemed Zeus' offspring via Heracles, and that Iranians started joining the Macedonian army long before and surely in 327 BC before the start of the Indian campaign (cf. Curtius, VIII, 5.1; Olbrycht 2015, 197–198). A more likely explanation is that the discharge of the Macedonian veterans, rather than the introduction of the Iranian troops, deeply offended Alexander's generals, as they felt that they were becoming a minority in the army and that their military and political role in the Empire would be secondary to that of the Iranians. Macedonian society was a military one and depriving the Macedonians of their military role meant stripping them of their political power too.

As an answer to his men's reaction, Alexander gave a speech (Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 9–10) built upon three key aspects: a) a catalogue of Philip's civilising actions, b) a longer and more significant list of Alexander's achievements, and c) the need for the barbarians' help.[64]

In the speech, Alexander praises Philip as an exemplary king who transformed Macedon from a pastoral country into a great power in Greece and in the Balkans, by educating its inhabitants for their civil and military duties, annexing new territories, and securing its borders. To the long list of his father's benefactions, Alexander adds an extensive description of his own greater deeds: he presents himself as a father-king who sleeps, eats, and fights together with his Macedonians, sharing the toils and every victory in the campaign; but also as a good and fair leader, who was deserted by his own troops and thus forced to turn to the barbarians for protection (a point much stressed by Curtius).

The third passage is Arrian's description of the banquet at Opis (*Anab*. VII, 11.8–9), which took place after the mutiny and the king's speech. The term ὁμόνοια (concord, oneness of mind) points to Alexander's awareness of his need for the support of both Macedonian soldiers and Iranians to proceed with his campaign and maintain his empire in order. Moreover, the expression κοινωνία τῆς ἀρχῆς (communion of power) supports the idea that Alexander was trying to foster a conciliatory policy – a pragmatically and selectively deployed series of political, administrative, and military measures that neither entailed brotherhood, nor required any systematic plan of racial fusion (Cf. Thonemann 2012, 23–36). In fact, the right to participate in the administration of the Empire was based on the principle of meritocracy: only Asians who demonstrated a particular virtue (ἀξίωσιν ἤ τινα ἄλλην ἀρετήν) were recruited.[65] Therefore, according to this purpose, the king pleased all his soldiers with a symposium, but he shared a libation only with his friends 'around him' (οἱ ἀμφ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀρυόμενοι ἔσπενδον τὰς αὐτὰς σπονδὰς). Since the Macedonians were given a position of prominence (ἀμφ᾽ αὐτὸν μὲν Μακεδόνων) and all the other peoples followed after (ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐφεξῆς τούτων Περσῶν ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν) there was no room for any broader notion of the unity of mankind.

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63   Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 8.3: Consequently, they did not endure in silence (οὔκουν σιγῇ ἔχοντες ἐκαρτέρησαν), but called on him to discharge them all from the army, and to campaign himself in company with his father, referring in mockery to Ammon (τὸν Ἄμμωνα δὴ τῷ λόγῳ ἐπικερτομοῦντες).

64   For the speech, see Wüst 1953, 177–188; Nagle 1996, 151–166.

65   Cf. Arrian, *Anab*. VII, 6.3: 'the incorporation of the Bactrian, Sogdian, Zarangian, Areian and Parthyaean cavalrymen and of the Persian troopers called Euacae in the Companion cavalry, in so far they seemed specially distinguished by rank, physical beauty or any other good quality'.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I discussed the multiform nature of Alexander's leadership and how he evolved it in response to the events of the Persian campaign. I have argued that Alexander III probably always thought of his empire as culturally Macedonian and Hellenic,[66] although he understood that Graeco-Macedonian military training of Iranians, adoption of some features of Oriental etiquette, and partnership in the administration were a *sine qua non* for the stabilization of his power. However, the Asians only apparently enjoyed 'communion of rule' (Arrian's κοινωνίαν τῆς ἀρχῆς) in fact, by the division of power and governance – the administrative function to the Iranians, and the lead of the military and financial sectors to the Macedonians or Greeks – Alexander pursued more of a 'policy of division' rather than one of fusion.

In a previous paper, 'The *Herodotean* Alexander' (TAIETTI 2016, 159–178), I argued that, before his campaign in the East, Alexander had gained a general knowledge of the Persian Empire's geography and socio-political composition from Herodotus' *Histories* and from his first-hand experience of Persian influence on Macedon. One may also recall the Persian ambassadors at Philip II's court, whom the young Alexander purportedly questioned about their King's character and prowess in battle, and about the roads of their Empire (Plutarch, *Alex.* 5.1–2). Alexander's adoption of Oriental etiquette demonstrated in practice the necessity of being accepted by the Iranians, who initially looked upon him as an enemy and the destroyer of the harmony and prosperity guaranteed by the power that Ahura Mazda had bestowed upon the Achaemenid King Darius III. The Macedonian's appropriation of recognisable traits of the two brightest examples of Great Kings, Cyrus and Darius I, also helped him to be accepted by the Iranian population and convinced his fellow countrymen of the rightness of his choices.

It is worth noting, however, that even toward the end of his campaign Alexander had in mind Argead policies, which he adapted to the Iranian cultural and political environment. His father Philip II had welcomed among his *hetairoi* worthy Macedonians from non-aristocratic families and Greeks; similarly, Alexander welcomed Iranians in his entourage and army. Like the *Basilikoi Paides* in Macedon, the *Epigonoi* were trained from childhood to fight as Macedonians and were educated according to Greek standards. They constituted a group of loyal youth and served as 'hostages', allowing the king to keep control of the Iranian aristocracy.

I consider the years following Alexander's adoption of Oriental décor and application of conciliatory policy as particularly indicative of his ability to adapt to, and negotiate with, the local authorities in order to establish his power, while always keeping in mind his Macedonian background. Alexander exploited the similarities between the Macedonians and the Persians in order to reach his goals (TAIETTI 2016, 176–177; see also FULÍNSKA 2016, 244); Philip II was a model for Alexander's conservation and transformation of his style of kingship,[67] and from his father he had learnt to adopt other people's customs. Because of his flexible political and bureaucratic programme,[68] modern scholars have valued and described Alexander's person-

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66 Cf. also HAMMOND 2000, 141–160; STROOTMAN 2007 for the continuity of Macedonian institutions in Macedonian kingdoms during the Hellenistic era.

67 BOSWORTH 2003, 28: 'The Macedon that Alexander inherited was the creation of his father. The army he led was forged by Philip. The material resources of the Macedonian throne were acquired by Philip. The system of alliances which turned the Balkans into a virtual annexe of Macedon was Philip's development, and the war against Persia was launched at the end of Philip's reign. In his first years, at least, Alexander was continuing a process begun by his father'; WORTHINGTON 2003, 94–95. On Philip's transformation of Macedonia, see ANSON 2008, 17–25.

68 TARN 1948, I, 9: 'Alexander certainly did not cross the Dardanelles with any definite design of conquering the whole Persian Empire; he was guided by events'.

ality and statesmanship in contrasting ways. In this paper I have highlighted the incidents during the Asian Campaign that urged Alexander to create a new regal figure:[69] a pragmatic leader with a strong Macedonian cultural background, but at the same time able to freely blend together Persian, Macedonian, and Greek traditions in response to personal needs in different circumstances.

ABBREVIATIONS

BNJ = Brill's New Jacoby. Editor: Ian Worthington [online]

SOURCES

Aelianus, *VH* = Aelian: *Historical Miscellany.* Transl. G. Wilson. Loeb Classical Library 486. Cambridge, MA. 1997.

Aristobulos = F. Pownall: Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139). In: *BNJ.* Accessed on July 31st 2020 from URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1873-5363_bnj_a139

Arrian, Anab. = Arrian: *The Campaigns of Alexander*. Transl. P. A. Brunt. Loeb Classical Library 236, 269. Cambridge MA. 1976–1983.

Athenaeus = Athenaeus: *The Learned Banqueters* VI: *Books 12-13.594 b.* Ed. and transl. S. Douglas Olson. Loeb Classical Library 327. Cambridge, MA. 2010.

Chares = S. Müller: Chares of Mytilene (125). In: *BNJ.* Accessed on July 31st 2020 from URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1873-5363_bnj_a125

Curtius = Quintus Curtius: *History of Alexander* I. *Books 1-5;* II. *Books 6-10.* Transl. J.C. Rolfe. Loeb Classical Library 368–369. Cambridge, MA. 1946.

Diodorus = Diodorus Siculus: *Library of History* VIII. *Books 16.66-17.* Transl. C. Bradford Welles. Loeb Classical Library 422. Cambridge, MA. 1963.

Herodotus = Herodotus: *The Persian Wars*. Transl. A.D. Godley. Loeb Classical Library 117–120. Cambridge MA. 1920–1925.

Plutarch, *Alex.* = Plutarch: *Lives* VII: *Demosthenes and Cicero. Alexander and Caesar.* Transl. B. Perrin. Loeb Classical Library 99. Cambridge MA. 1919.

Plutarch, *De Alex.* = Plutarch: *Moralia IV. Roman Questions. Greek Questions. Greek and Roman Parallel Stories. On the Fortunate of the Romans. On the Fortunate or the Virtue of Alexander. Were the Athenians more famous in War or in Wisdom?* Transl. F. Cole Babbit. Loeb Classical Library 305. Cambridge, MA. 1936.

Ptolemy = T. Howe: Ptolemy (138). In: *BNJ.* Accessed on July 31st 2020 from URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1873-5363_bnj_a138

Strabo = Strabo: *Geography* V: *Books 10–12.* Transl. H.L. Jones. Loeb Classical Library 211. Cambridge, MA. 1928.

69　Cf. Bosworth 1988, 229: 'when Alexander invaded Asia, he was literally on a new ground. There were no precedents for the administration of the territories he annexed, no system inherited from his father'. For the 'revisionist interpretation' of Alexander's rule, see Hammond 1986, 73–85; Fredricksmeyer 2000, 136–166; Lane Fox 2007, 286–288; Weber 2009, 97–98. For the idea of 'continuity' between the Achaemenid and Alexander's empire, see Briant 1979, 1402–1414; for the idea of 'rupture', cf. Droysen 1880, I, 360–361.

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