

LITERARY INFLUENCES AND ADAPTATION
IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH *KYNG ALISAUNDER*

By

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Abstract

This dissertation traces the literary influences that affect the *Kyng Alisaunder* from their origination in the decades following Alexander the Great's 323 BCE death to their expression in the fourteenth-century CE Middle English romance. This work examines the Middle English author's mediation of the intertextual influences of its immediate sources and the ancestral texts from which medieval Alexander literature descends. The *Kyng Alisaunder* resists the drift towards fantasy embraced by the overall literary Alexander tradition by grounding its narrative in human agency and in a particularized, concrete world.

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Notes on Chronological Terms and Translations

The text discussed in this project span many centuries and languages, and therefore have occasioned many decisions as to chronological terminology and translation practices. The chronological terms employed in the following chapters require definition since I apply them in a manner that may differ from their usage in classical or historical scholarship.

I refer to texts prepared between the end of Alexander's life (just before 323 BCE) and Octavian's victory at Actium (31 BCE) as "Hellenistic." "Imperial Roman" texts were produced in the long period between the first century BCE and the third century CE. "Roman," in contrast, refers to the broader literary and cultural contexts of Republican and Imperial Rome, a period from the fifth century BCE to the second century CE. "Late Antique" and "Late Antiquity" designate the third to seventh centuries CE that bridge the classical period (the broadest term that I apply to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and that includes both) and the medieval period (roughly the ninth to fifteenth centuries CE).

The primary texts discussed in this project were originally written in one of the following five languages: Classical Greek, Classical Latin, Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English. I have presented direct quotes from the Greek texts in Greek script. I use the transliterated form of Greek words, such as *polis*, when such words are not part of a direct quote and are recognizable in transliterated form from common scholarly usage. Names appear in their most common anglicized spelling in my discussion, a spelling that may differ from what appears in direct

quotes. Thus my discussion uses “Nectanebo” as the name of Egypt’s last indigenous pharaoh but the same name appears as “Nectanebus” in the translation of the *Alexandreis*.

I have used published translations for all of the texts except for those instances where I preferred my own translation. The Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*, as of this writing, have yet to be published in Modern English translation. I therefore rely on a modern French translation of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and translate the Middle English myself. All translations not my own are identified with their translator’s name; translations not attributed to a named translator are my own. Errors of transcription and translation are also my own.

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Preface:

This project began with a seemingly innocuous question: What literary and intellectual influences shaped the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*? In other words, I wanted to understand why the first Alexander romance to be written in English seemed distinctly different from other examples of Middle English Alexander romance. My initial question of course led me directly to the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the twelfth-century text that is the source of the fourteenth-century *Kyng Alisaunder*. The Anglo-Norman text, however, did not fully answer my initial question. My search moved ever further backward in time from the fourteenth century CE to the fourth century BCE and the originators of Alexander literature. I at last saw that the primary literary influences that shaped the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* could be schematized as a family tree of interrelated texts that lead directly from Hellenistic historiography and romance to the Middle English romance, passing through and including Roman and Late Antique texts. The influences upon the *Kyng Alisaunder* therefore originate in and descend from each historic period that produces Alexander literature within that family tree.

Accordingly, although the focus of this project remains the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*, the following chapters move chronologically from the earliest to the latest literary influences upon that romance. Not until Chapter 4's analysis of the Middle English author's translation of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* to the *Kyng Alisaunder* do I return to the subject of this project and the answer to my initial question. Following a chronological framework in tracing the development of the

family tree that leads to the *Kyng Alisaunder* makes clear not only those influences that the Middle English author retains, but also those influences that the author rejects from his sixteen-hundred year tradition of Alexander literature. The chronological organization of this project reveals the drift towards the fantastic in which the antecedent texts participate, and also clearly demonstrates the reverse movement towards a more worldly sensibility that the Middle English *Kyng Alexander* accomplishes.

Chapter 1: The Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* and the *Kyng Alisaunder*

System

Alexander, son of Philip II of Macedonia and Olympias of Epirus, was born in 356 BCE; ascended to the Macedonian throne after his father's assassination in 336 BCE; invaded Persia in 334 BCE, winning the Persian empire at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE; and continued his conquest of Asia until forced by his army's mutiny to retreat from India at the Hyphasis River, known in the ancient histories as the Beas River, in 326 BCE.¹ He fell ill in May of 323 BCE and succumbed to fever on June 10 of that year. Ptolemy redirected Alexander's body from Babylon to Egypt and entombed the young conqueror in Alexandria, but Alexander's march across the world did not end with his death. Through the literary traditions that developed around his expedition to the East, Alexander the Great conquered the world's imagination after his death as completely as he had conquered its territory during his life.

One instance of Alexander's post-mortem literary conquests is the anonymous Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*, an 8,000-line romance of rhyming octosyllabic couplets reworked in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century from the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* blends the bare outlines of Alexander's most well-known historical deeds with non-historical incidents, literary borrowings, fantastic ethnography and miraculous feats. Rather than the son of Philip and Olympias, for example, Alexander in the *Kyng Alisaunder* is the putative son of the Egyptian god Ammon

but the actual son of Nectanebo, the last native pharaoh of Egypt, conceived through trickery with Olympias.² Rather than dying from a fever, in the *Kyng Alisaunder* Alexander dies from poisoned wine sent by Antipater, who had seized power in Macedonia. Between his invented birth and historically inaccurate death, this literary Alexander meets mighty armies, fabulous races, monstrous animals and duplicitous women.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* departs so far from historicity precisely because it descends from and follows a tradition of romance writing on Alexander the Great that originated in the decades after his 323 BCE death. That tradition of romance writing produced *The Greek Alexander Romance* by an anonymous author now known as Pseudo-Callisthenes. This amalgamation of local legend, propaganda, wonder tales and a few biographical facts of Alexander's life was in its complete form sometime between 200 BCE and 200 CE.³ *The Greek Alexander Romance* proved widely popular, with translations from Greek into Syriac and Latin in turn engendering vernacular reworkings in "English, Scots, French, German, Swedish, Italian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Rumanian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Magyar, Spanish-Arabic and Hebrew" (Stoneman, *Romance* 7).⁴ Twelfth-century France, for example, saw numerous versions of Alexander romance, including the dodecasyllabic *Roman d' Alexandre* by Alberic; the alexandrine *Roman d'Alexandre* by Alexandre of Paris; and the Medieval Latin *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon.⁵ Also from the twelfth century is the alexandrine *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, an Alexander romance produced in Norman England by Thomas of Kent. This Anglo-

Norman romance was itself translated into the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* by 1340.⁶

Because it can be considered simply one specimen of a vigorous medieval Alexander romance tradition, scholars often consider the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* only within that context. This Middle English romance therefore is viewed either as inexorably tied to its Anglo-Norman source or as but the first of five English Alexander romances produced between 1340 and the mid-fifteenth century.⁷ While the *Kyng Alisaunder* admittedly cannot be severed from the influences of its Anglo-Norman antecedent nor its connections to its English fellows, the influences and connections that affect it reach across more historical periods and intellectual fields than the narrower context recognizes. The influences of the Alexander romance tradition descend from the Hellenistic period to the fourteenth century, echoing more than fifteen hundred years later in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. History texts about Alexander are also part of the literary Alexander tradition, and so the qualities of that genre also influence the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Finally, medieval theories of translation and rhetoric affect the compositional choices the *Kyng Alisaunder* author makes as he moves the story from the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* to the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

Viewing the *Kyng Alexander* as situated within historical periods and intellectual fields broader than its Anglo-Norman antecedent or other English Alexander romances rightly highlights the intertextual forces exerted on this Middle English romance by its literary and intellectual ancestors. The *Kyng Alisaunder*

displays its intertextual nature more overtly than medieval literature in general because the romance is part of a closely related system of limited texts successively reused over centuries. The number of source texts available to authors composing Alexander literature narrows over time as the majority of Hellenistic and Roman Alexander texts are lost and as individual authors privilege some sources over others. By the fourteenth century, the successive reuse of sources over time and the choices that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author makes among the texts available to him create a compact web of textual relationships that I term the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author employed many of the same sources that Thomas of Kent used in writing the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the Anglo-Norman romance reworked into the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*, the twelfth-century Medieval Latin romance used as a secondary source by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author, also employed some of the same sources consulted independently by Thomas of Kent and the *Kyng Alisaunder* author. All of the source texts used independently by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author, Thomas of Kent and Walter of Châtillon derived from common sources that ultimately reach back to the Hellenistic period and the beginning of writing on Alexander the Great.

This dissertation traces the line of Alexander sources that echo in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* from their Hellenistic origins through their reception and adaptation by the authors of Imperial Rome and Late Antiquity to their effect upon the *Kyng Alisaunder*'s immediate sources in twelfth-century France and

Anglo-Norman England and then, finally, to their expression in the *Kyng Alisaunder*. I do not aim in this process merely to enumerate already well-known sources nor to note simple correspondence of episodes in the *Kyng Alisaunder* with other examples of Alexander literature. Rather, tracing the chronological development of these ancestral and immediate source texts demonstrates the extent that the characteristics of the earlier texts dominate the later texts, including the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. The limits of that domination also become clear since the modifications that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author makes to his material stand out against the similarities repeated across the sources.

I focus my analysis on the three components found in all examples of the Alexander texts that comprise the *Kyng Alisaunder* system: the depiction of Alexander's life and deeds, the interpretation of Alexander's personality and the philosophical or literary themes interwoven by each author into his particular Alexander text. Before turning to that analysis in the remaining chapters, however, I first detail the texts within the *Kyng Alisaunder* system and the literary and intellectual traditions that affect the production of those texts within their respective periods of production.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* System:

The *Kyng Alisaunder* and its immediately related sources comprise a compact subset of the larger tradition of Alexander literature that spread from the ancient to the medieval world. That larger Alexander tradition began within decades of

Alexander's death in 326 BCE and created two overlapping literary traditions based on the factual details of his life. Modern scholarship distinguishes between these two traditions according to the perceived historicity of the texts within each. The historical tradition contains those texts that scholars judge to present a realistic account of Alexander's life and deeds while the legendary tradition contains texts that emphasize fraudulent biographical details and fantastic adventures. Although this modern distinction sometimes ignores the blurring of the factual and the fantastic that occurs within the literary Alexander tradition overall—some of the histories, for example, contain fantastic elements at the same time that the legendary texts are themselves based loosely on historical sources—the separation of the two traditions offers a convenient model to discuss the complex interactions within and between the traditions, interactions that created both continuity and change in the three components of Alexander literature analyzed in the following chapters.

The Historical Alexander Tradition:

Those who had personally known Alexander the Great began the tradition of histories on his life and deeds. The histories and biographies these men wrote no longer survive in their entirety, but fragments of their works remain embedded as quotes or paraphrases in the works of later Greek and Roman authors. Men like Callisthenes, Ptolemy and Aristobolus recorded their experiences with Alexander's court and army in the East, and in so doing codified the fundamental facts of his life and achievements. These first generation historians, however, gave less attention to

Alexander's personality than to his deeds, leaving it to later authors to interpret his motives and essential character from the records of Alexander's actions. Through the secondary Roman histories on Alexander the Great, the stylistic and thematic characteristics of the first generation Hellenistic histories were passed on to the medieval West, along with biographical information and tales of Alexander's conquests.

Modern scholars do not view all historical Alexander texts equally, as some of these texts are more "historical" than others. The texts of the main tradition, which includes the works of Diodorus Siculus (first century BCE), Plutarch (first century CE) and Arrian (second century CE) relied on first generation historians like Aristobulus and Ptolemy. The first generation historians of the main tradition wrote pedestrian accounts of the events they had witnessed with Alexander during his expedition into the East. In contrast, other first generation Alexander historians like Callisthenes and Cleitarchus wrote accounts highly colored by rhetorical exaggeration and invented deeds. Trogus Pompeius (first century BCE) Quintus Curtius Rufus (d. CE 53), Justin (by 400 CE) and Orosius (fl. 414-418 CE)—the historians of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system of texts—followed the more fanciful first generation Alexander historians and are therefore grouped with the more fanciful first generation authors in the vulgate tradition.

The classical sources available to the author of the *Kyng Alisaunder* were only a small percentage of the histories actually produced about Alexander in the centuries between his death and Late Antiquity. Many histories produced between

the earliest written and the earliest to survive were also lost. In addition, the earliest histories that did survive to the medieval period were written in Greek. The histories produced by Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and Arrian remained unknown in the West until their translation during the Renaissance. The historical sources from the Roman and Late Antique periods therefore available to the medieval West were the three extant Latin sources of the *Gesta Alexandri Magni* (*The Deeds of Alexander the Great*) by Quintus Curtius Rufus, the *Historiae Philippicae* (*Philippic History*) of Trogus Pompeius via its *Epitome* by Justin and the Late Antique *Historiae adversum paganos* (*History Against the Pagans*) by Orosius.⁸

These Latin histories transmitted their own influences to the *Kyng Alisaunder* author in addition to acting as carriers of the vestigial Hellenistic tradition. The absence of a fully developed portrait of Alexander's personality in the first generation of historians allowed the later historians great freedom in introducing portraits from their interpretation of his actions, interpretations founded in part in the philosophical school that each followed. The medieval period therefore had available in the Latin sources depictions of Alexander that were either sympathetic or hostile, and that integrated Alexander's life and military career into the political and religious contexts of either Imperial Rome or Late Antiquity.

The Legendary Tradition:

More texts were produced in the legendary Alexander tradition than in the historical Alexander tradition, and more of the legendary than historical texts

survived to serve as sources for the medieval period. The most important of these legendary sources for the *Kyng Alisaunder* was *The Greek Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes, available in the West in the form of the Julius Valerius translation into Medieval Latin known as the *Res Gestae Alexandri Macedoniais* (*The Deeds of Alexander of Macedonia*, early fourth century CE). A later *Epitome* (c. 200 CE), or summarized version, of the Julius Valerius translation was also available as a source for use by various medieval authors.

Leo the Archpriest of Naples made a second translation of *The Greek Alexander Romance* into Latin in the tenth century. This translation is titled according to the first line of the work as *Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni* (*The Birth and Victories of Alexander the Great*). Leo's translation then underwent revisions in the eleventh century, the twelfth century and late twelfth to early thirteenth century. These revised forms of Leo's translation are known by the common name as the *Historia de Preliis Alexandri Magni* (*History of the Battles of Alexander the Great*), but distinguished by their redaction, or revision, designations as I¹, I², and I³.⁹

A second early legendary text critical to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system of texts was the *Epistola Alexandri Magni ad Aristotelem magistrum suum de situ et mirabilibus Indiae* (early fourth century BCE). The title of this fictitious text, *A Letter from Alexander the Great to his Tutor Aristotle on the Geography and Wonders of India*, describes both its literary form and its content. Known by the abbreviated title of the *Epistola*, the influence of this legendary text is greater than its

relative shortness would suggest. Because the *Epistola* circulated as an independent text, as an interpolation embedded within *The Greek Alexander Romance* and as a shorter text separate from but accompanying some versions of the *Res Gestae Alexandri Macedoniais*, the *Epistola* could influence medieval authors through two different sources.

Medieval Europe received the Alexander traditions of the classical and Late Antique periods and transformed the source texts into new Alexander romances written in Medieval Latin and in the vernaculars. The examples of medieval Alexander romance that directly influence the *Kyng Alisaunder* are Thomas of Kent's Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and Walter of Châtillon's verse epic in Medieval Latin, the *Alexandreis*. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* is the source translated into the Middle English *Kyng Alisuander*, and the *Alexandreis* is a secondary source that the Middle English author consulted and sometimes followed in preference to Thomas of Kent's romance. Obviously the close use of these two romances as the immediate and secondary sources of the *Kyng Alisaunder* produces much stronger effects than the influences felt from the inherited and more distant Greek and Roman sources. The *Kyng Alisaunder* takes its main storyline from the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, for example, but often follows the *Alexandreis* instead when faced with contradictions between the Anglo-Norman romance and other Alexander sources.

Intellectual Traditions:

The content of the texts written about Alexander the Great and transmitted to and throughout medieval Europe comprises the most obvious influence on the author of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, but intellectual influences were transmitted with the facts and legends of Alexander's life. Each period that produced historiography or legendary Alexander texts did so in accordance with the prevailing theories, influences and tastes of its time. The understanding of history as a chain of events through time alters throughout the various periods. The way that history as the record or interpretation of that chain of events therefore also alters. The Hellenistic authors thus focused on Alexander as a prime mover of world events, events that rose and fell in a cyclical pattern, while the Roman authors fit Alexander's life into their Rome-centered view of the past. Late Antique and medieval authors, in contrast, adapted Alexander's life to mesh with their Christian view of the past.

The writing of historiography is also subject to literary and cultural influences within each period of production. Vogues in styles came and went, with some early historians fulfilling the contemporaneous taste for highly rhetorical histories, a rhetorical style that some later historians scorned as antithetical to the tastes of their own times. More constant influences carried across historical texts in the form of intertextual allusions to poets, dramatists and other historians.

The literary Alexander tradition also carries with it the influence of genre, seen clearly in the legendary tradition. The distinction between "serious" and "frivolous" literature is one that remains surprisingly constant, but to which category an individual example of Alexander literature is assigned changes from period to

period. What a Roman historian may judge to be legendary and therefore unacceptable as a source, for example, a medieval romance writer accepts as historically accurate. The medieval romances carry their own generic expectations, with Walter of Chatillon's Medieval Latin epic distinct in genre from Thomas of Kent's vernacular romance, and each distinct from the translation that is the *Kyng Alisaunder*.

That the *Kyng Alisaunder* translates the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* from Anglo-Norman to Middle English raises considerations as to the effect of medieval theories and practices of translation. A learned author, the writer of the *Kyng Alisaunder* clearly knew and applied the rhetorical techniques expected in such an endeavor. His Christian view of history and his understanding of the purpose of translation also affected the choices he made in the translation process.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* Text:

The *Kyng Alisaunder* survives in three manuscripts in varying degrees of completeness and correctness. The Auchinleck Manuscript (MS Advocates 19.2.1) of the National Library of Scotland securely establishes the early fourteenth-century date for the *Kyng Alisaunder* as the manuscript was created between 1330 and 1340. Only 410 lines from the end of the *Kyng Alisaunder* remain in the Auchinleck MS, but fragments of the manuscript were later (1949) found in the binding of a 1543 edition of Horace. These fragments, identifiable by the inclusion of ornamental capital initials, are now printed in *The Bagford Ballads*.¹⁰ Of the two remaining

manuscripts, MS Lincoln's Inn 150 is the later, dated by G. V. Smithers to the late fifteenth century based on its hand. MS Laud Misc 622 of the Bodleian Library was produced around 1400. Of the three manuscripts, the Laud offers both the most complete and the most correct text of the four manuscripts.¹¹

Summary of the *Kyng Alisaunder*:

The *Kyng Alisaunder* relates Alexander's complete life story, from conception to death, and includes descriptions of the wonders he encounters in India and throughout the East. The romance's story begins with Philip leading a contingent of kings against Nectanebo (lines 91-119), the pharaoh of Egypt. After his defeat, Nectanebo flees in disguise to Macedonia, where he seduces Olympias in the form of Ammon to engender Alexander as an act of revenge upon Philip (145-402). The romance recounts Alexander's birth, attended by signs (605-648), and childhood (649-794). When Alexander attacks and mortally wounds Nectanebo, who acts as one of Alexander's tutors while continuing his affair with Olympias, both Alexander and Olympias learn the truth of Alexander's paternity (711-750). Philip names Alexander his heir (751-794), dubs Alexander and his companions knights (801-838), and dispatches Alexander against Nicholas of Carthage (839-991).

Alexander conducts two more expeditions for Philip. During the first, against Mantona (1161-1278), Philip sets Olympias aside to marry Cleopatra of Assyria, but Alexander successfully restores his mother as queen of Macedonia (993-1160).

During the second of Alexander's later expeditions on behalf of Philip, Olympias joins with Pausanius to murder Philip (1331-1336). Alexander returns from the unnamed city in time to kill Pausanius over Philip's body, and is crowned king (1337-1408). The remainder of the *Kyng Alisaunder* takes place in the East. Alexander leaves Macedonia to make war against Darius, but will die before he can return to his home.

The romance describes the many treaties and battles through which Alexander conquers the East, including Alexander's winning of Rome (1474-1492), Tyre (1585-1660) and Thebes (2635-2891). The three battles against Darius (2057-2565; 3577-3955; 4355-4470) naturally receive greater attention than the preceding or following battles.¹² Darius, despite the importance of his combat with Alexander for the throne of Persia, dies at the hands of traitors instead of in battle (4547-4680). After establishing his rule over Darius's kingdom, Alexander moves into the East to face Porus of India (5539-5560), a move that allows the author to turn the romance fully to the Wonders of the East (4747-7445).

After Alexander defeats Porus and restores the Indian king to his throne—but in service to Alexander—the *Kyng Alisaunder* details the geography, peoples, monsters and marvels observed by Alexander in India, Ethiopia and Egypt. The most famous of these wonders include the land of the Brahmins or *gymnosophists* (5905-6054), where Alexander meets two Amazon queens and their troops (6040-6045); Alexander's voyage in a watertight vessel beneath the sea (6159-6200); his enclosure of the tribes of Gog and Magog, the followers of the Antichrist, to protect

mankind (6055-6289); and his visit to the oracle of the Tree of the Sun and the Tree of the Moon, where he hears the prophecy of his approaching death by poisoning (6774-6987).

The romance turns from the Wonders of the East to describe the founding of Alexandria (7136-7169), Alexander's defeat of the rebelling Porus (7170-7434), and Alexander's love affair with Queen Candace (7446-7765). After his interlude with Candace, Alexander returns to India and makes preparations to invade Africa in the following year (7766-7809). These plans are destroyed when Antipater orchestrates from Macedonia the Alexander's poisoning (7810-7889). The *Kyng Alisaunder* ends after Alexander bequeaths his kingdom and goods to his generals (7890-7965) and dies (7966-7972), leaving his generals in active war against each other (8010-8021).

Critical Reception and History of Scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder*:

The legendary Alexander tradition in medieval England, as throughout Europe, was much more popular than the historical Alexander tradition. In England, the Alexander romance tradition begins with the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by Thomas of Kent (twelfth century). The Middle English Alexander romances include the *Kyng Alisaunder* (late thirteenth to early 14th century); the *Prose Life of Alexander* (c. 1440) and the fragmentary poems of the fourteenth-century alliterative revival referred to as *Alexander A*, *Alexander B* and *Alexander C*.

The earliest of the Middle English Alexander romances, the *Kyng Alisaunder* also stands as the only non-fragmentary romance in Middle English that covers

Alexander's life from conception to death. It also enjoys the best critical reception of the Middle English Alexander romances. Recent scholarship views the *Kyng Alisaunder* as notable mainly for its nearly unique employment of seasonal headpieces.¹³ The headpieces provide short breaks in the romance's narrative that compare, at critical moments, the action of the story to scenes from nature and aristocratic life. Some scholars also single out the evident education of its author and the romance's quick narrative pace for praise. Such praise can only be considered scant, however, because even the scholars friendliest to the *Kyng Alisaunder* consider it as but the best of a bad lot of English Alexander romances.

That the *Kyng Alisaunder* offers the earliest and most complete example of Middle English Alexander romance, and that it evokes the most positive scholarly response of the five Middle English Alexander romances, makes the history of its scholarship all the more surprising. To date, no scholarship beyond G. V. Smithers' foundational edition considers the *Kyng Alisaunder* in its entirety. Instead, analyses and evaluations of the *Kyng Alisaunder* appear in surveys of medieval English literature or in narrower treatments of medieval English romance. A scattering of collected essays on specific themes within Alexander romance do occur in which the *Kyng Alisaunder* receives some attention. Monographs on Alexander romance are rare, and none have been written on the *Kyng Alisaunder* alone. Shorter works of scholarship on Alexander romance can be found, but these journal articles concentrate on specific questions of translation, scene or motif rather than on any of the Alexander romances, including the *Kyng Alisaunder*, in whole. There simply is

too little current scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* to provide a well-rounded, active study of this romance.

Modern scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* begins with Smithers' two-volume edition of the text (1952-1957), still the only edited version of the romance available. The first volume presents the edited texts of all three extant manuscripts while the second volume contains Smithers' critical apparatus. Smithers collates information on the manuscripts of the romance, its sources and its language in addition to providing commentary and a glossary. He also offers a stylistic evaluation of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, calling it "the best of the Me. metrical romances" because of the authors ability to meld "native vigour and liveliness" (40) with a learned approach and sophisticated treatment.

Smithers' edition remains the starting point for any investigation of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, and most succeeding scholars adopt his evaluation of the romance. Succeeding scholars also follow Smithers in his approach to the *Kyng Alisaunder*, which is inherently if not explicitly intertextual. The notes of the second volume point out some of the significant deviations from Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the active use of Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* as well as passages that indicate use of other sources. Smithers does not explicate the entire text of the *Kyng Alisaunder* nor record every modification the author makes to the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, but his examination of the Middle English romance in relation to its Anglo-Norman source is as influential on later scholars as is his critical evaluation.

George Cary begins the scholarly pattern of considering the *Kyng Alisaunder* strictly in relation to other medieval Alexander romances with his monograph *The Medieval Alexander* (1956). In this seminal study of medieval English Alexander traditions, Cary aims to find “the general underlying conceptions of Alexander the Great . . . current in the Middle Ages” (2). Cary’s monograph surveys the various examples of theology and mysticism, exempla and sermons, anecdotes and other secular writings in an attempt to determine the unified perception held in medieval England of Alexander the Great. Cary finally concludes that that no single “conception” of Alexander the Great dominates medieval English literature, but that varying conceptions or depictions appear in texts depending upon an individual text’s genre working in concert with the moral viewpoint and goal of a particular text’s author.

Cary devotes only one paragraph of twenty-one lines specifically to the *Kyng Alisaunder* as his larger purpose of integrating that romance’s presentation of Alexander into a “conception” takes precedence over a more in-depth treatment. The *Kyng Alisaunder* nonetheless receives Cary’s positive evaluation as the “most individual and imaginative of the English Alexander books” (241), an evaluation that relies heavily on the romance author’s characteristic seasonal headpieces. Cary’s interest in the various depictions that medieval authors created of Alexander leads him to note that the *Kyng Alisaunder* presents Alexander as an “idealized” but not “heroicized conqueror” (242).

No substantial scholarship on medieval English Alexander romance in general or on the *Kyng Alisaunder* specifically occurs after Smithers and Cary until Gerrit H. V. Bunt's *Alexander the Great in the Literature of Medieval Britain* (1994). Bunt covers much of the same ground previously explored by Cary, but does so to provide a concise introduction to the eight Alexander texts of medieval English literature.¹⁴ The *Kyng Alisaunder* receives greater attention from Bunt than from Cary, but that attention comes in a chapter grouping the *Kyng Alisaunder* with its Anglo-Norman source, *The Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. Bunt too praises the *Kyng Alisaunder*, seeing it as "easily the most attractive full-length treatment of Alexander's career in Middle English" (21). Bunt evaluates the *Kyng Alisaunder* without bias, pointing out the romance's flaws, such as its reliance on "feeble tags" (26), but also acknowledging that its "lively and varied style and its combination of a light tone and didactic seriousness" (26) create strong entertainment value. Bunt also directly responds to Cary's search for a unified concept of Alexander the Great in medieval England by updating Cary's findings in the "Conclusion" of *Alexander the Great in the Literature of Medieval Britain*.

That Smithers' edition of *The Kyng Alisaunder* and Cary's *The Medieval Alexander* still dominate scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* when Bunt writes demonstrates as much the academic disinterest in Alexander romance as the importance of the scholarship of Smithers and Cary. Succeeding scholars rely entirely on Smithers and Cary for information on textual transmission, the manuscript tradition and sources for the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Scholars also generally

accept the evaluation Smithers and Cary offer on the *Kyng Alisaunder*, and primarily contribute new arguments only on specific aspects of the romance.

Surveys of medieval English literature do often include the *Kyng Alisaunder*, although the attention it receives varies. In *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (1968), Dieter Mehl groups the *Kyng Alisaunder* with other romances of five to twelve thousand lines as a “verse novel” (207). Mehl considers these longer romances as a group less creative than shorter romances, seeing them as fairly unoriginal adaptations of French and Anglo-Norman models. The *Kyng Alisaunder*, however, stands out as a “completely new and in several ways original work” (228). The twelve pages of description and criticism that Mehl gives the *Kyng Alisaunder* single out its headpieces, the author’s learning and the romance’s didactic theme. *The Popularity of Middle English Romance* (1975) by Velma Bourgeois Richmond grants the *Kyng Alisaunder* nearly as much attention as Mehl, but employs the romance as an example supporting her monograph’s argument that medieval English romance as a whole contains “moral intention and significance of meaning” (35). The *Kyng Alisaunder* is therefore a didactic work for Richmond, with its theme of “the transitoriness of earthly life, the transience of worldly attainments” (35) developed over its 8,000 lines by the headpieces and an emphasis on the contrast of Alexander’s achievements with his early death.

Derek Pearsall’s *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (1977), in contrast to Mehl and Richmond, condenses much of the same opinion into a few sentences.

Like Mehl and Richmond, Pearsall emphasizes the romance's headpieces and the author's "education and taste" (116). Pearsall also considers the *Kyng Alisaunder* a highly original work and an enhancement of its source, *The Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The five pages given to the *Kyng Alisaunder* in *Middle English Literature* by J. A. W. Bennett (1986) follow the pattern of Mehl and Pearsall. Again the headpieces are discussed and again the author's learning noted.

Susan Crane's *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith and Culture in Anglo-Norman Romance* (1986) limits its scope to Anglo-Norman romances and their Middle English translations, such as the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Crane characterizes both the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* as secular romances centered on a militaristic but pious Alexander who serves as an *exemplum* for audiences. Treatment of the *Kyng Alisaunder* is brief at two pages, and inextricable from Crane's treatment of its Anglo-Norman antecedent. In fact, Crane treats the two romances nearly as the same text, employing examples from both romances in support of observations that apply equally to both. *English Medieval Romance* by W. R. J. Barron (1987) groups the *Kyng Alisaunder* in its traditional "Matter of Rome" classification. Barron, in four pages, includes the standard praise for the headpieces and authorial learning, but concentrates on the romance's didactic theme. The headpieces and learned rhetorical devices, for Barron, create and support the romance's message of life's mutability.

Only two unpublished dissertations offer extensive treatments of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, and these treatments occur as chapters rather than as the sole subject of the dissertations. Luann Kitchel's 1973 dissertation, *A Critical Study of the Middle English Alexander Romances*, devotes one chapter of six to the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The discussion focuses on the structure and role of seasonal headpieces, demonstrating the close thematic connection between the headpieces and the passages that follow each headpiece. *Re-Writing Alexander the Great: Literary Adaptations of Alexander's Life in Medieval England* (2000), by Karen Girard, also devotes only one chapter to the *Kyng Alisaunder*, with the remainder of her unpublished dissertation examining historical accounts on Alexander's life written by Hellenistic and Imperial Roman authors. Girard sees the *Kyng Alisaunder* as a fusion of themes present in the Hellenistic and Roman authors, themes used by the anonymous author of the *Kyng Alisaunder* to critique crusading ideology.

Two recent monographs make extensive use of Middle English Alexander romances, including the *Kyng Alisaunder*, as examples of particular arguments. David Salter's *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature* (2001) explores the role of nature and animals in medieval English literature generally. Salter includes the *Kyng Alisaunder* because of the romance's description of fantastic beasts of the East and animal portents associated with Alexander's birth and death. *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (2005), by Frank Grady, examines the *topos* of the virtuous pagan who merits salvation. The monograph naturally includes Alexander the Great, who was

often viewed exactly as a virtuous pagan in the medieval period. Neither of these monographs concentrates on the *Kyng Alisaunder*, even in their discussions on Alexander romances. Instead, Salter and Grady make use of all five of the Middle English Alexander romances.

Scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* includes short articles, some appearing in published collections and some appearing in journals. Few of these articles concentrate solely on the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Those that do, like G. H. V. Bunt's "Alexander's Last Days in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*" (1978), apply to the *Kyng Alisaunder* a theme taken for a collection of essays on Alexander romance. As is the case in all of the scholarship reviewed to this point, save Smithers, most of these short articles treat the *Kyng Alisaunder* briefly, as but one of the five Middle English Alexander romances in which a motif appears or a common thread can be followed. Martin Camargo in "The Metamorphosis of Candace and the Earliest English Love Epistle" (1980), for example, traces the development of the "love letter" in medieval literature by noting the changes that Candace's letter to Alexander undergoes in the various English Alexander romances.

Finally, Richard Stoneman's *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (2008) contributes a new monograph to the study of the legendary Alexander tradition. Stoneman surveys the major themes of the Western and Eastern legendary traditions, giving particular attention to the development of those themes over time. Unfortunately, the *Kyng Alisaunder* receives no specific discussion in Stoneman's

monograph, but the survey remains valuable for its exploration of themes that appear in the legendary Alexander tradition, including the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

The above overview of the scholarly tradition on the *Kyng Alisaunder* demonstrates that this Middle English romance lacks an energetic, actively engaged tradition of ongoing research. Even considering scholarship from the widest perspective, a perspective that admits into the discussion scholarship that does not focus solely on the *Kyng Alisaunder*, still produces a surprisingly short bibliography. The relatively small amount of scholarship done on the *Kyng Alisaunder* presents a consistent evaluation of the romance as an important example in the medieval English Alexander tradition, yet the state of scholarship has advanced little beyond Smithers and Cary in the fifty years since their initiation of the modern scholarly tradition on the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The recent publication of Richard Stoneman's *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (2008) indicates the need for new perspectives on Alexander romance in general while the absence of the *Kyng Alisaunder* from Stoneman's discussion highlights the scholarly oversight from which the Middle English romance suffers.

That scholarly oversight suggests that scholars see the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* as simply one more example, albeit a superior English specimen, of a genre-bound tradition that changes little across historic periods and languages. That the *Kyng Alisaunder* is a translation of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* also limits enthusiasm for inquiry into the Middle English version. Even though scholars praise this reworking into Middle English as equal to or better than its Anglo-Norman

source, continental and Anglo-Norman romance have often been viewed as superior to English romance, with translations seen as inferior versions of the French chivalric romance model.

The lack of recent scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* could be seen as consensus that the romance is fully understood. It is as if scholars believe that little cause for major study exists because the romance's sources are known, the manuscripts are edited and general agreement has been reached as to the literary qualities and themes of the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The nearly static condition of scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder* would seem to indicate that most scholars believe no major work remains to be completed on this, the first Middle English Alexander romance.

I decidedly do not approach the *Kyng Alisaunder* as already fully understood and therefore requiring only limited investigation into a particular motif, or only to be situated in the context of the other Middle English Alexander romances. Nor do I approach this romance as but one text working with several to support or illustrate an argument that derives from the broader field of medieval English literature. In contrast to the current state of *Kyng Alisaunder* scholarship, I approach this romance as still lacking a full and explicit evaluation of how the fifteen hundred-year tradition of writing on Alexander the Great produced the first Middle English example of Alexander romance.

Goals, Methodology, and Outline of Chapters:

The *Kyng Alisaunder* is as most scholars characterize it: a didactic romance that employs the life and deeds of a heroic Alexander the Great to comment on the transience of mortal life. Scholars do not recognize, however, that the seeds of the Middle English author's ability to craft his romance to that purpose originate in and descend from the Alexander traditions of the Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique periods.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author had available not only the text of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the Anglo-Norman romance translated to produce the *Kyng Alisaunder*, but also influences of other historical periods that offered alternate episodes and character interpretations. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author creates the didactic theme of his romance by choosing among his sources and then variously adopting, rejecting or revising the influences transmitted by those sources. Because many of the influences mediated by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author originate not in the immediate sources but in "ancestral texts," the ancestral texts also must be counted as part of the system that bears on the Middle English romance.¹⁵

This project approaches the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* as the recipient of influences from its ancestral texts as transmitted through the romance's immediate sources. This approach allows analysis of all the major sources that contribute influences to the *Kyng Alisaunder*, ancestral as well as immediate. By analyzing all the major sources that influences the *Kyng Alisaunder*, this project demonstrates the manner in which the *Kyng Alisaunder* author adheres to and departs from both his

immediate sources and the larger system of texts in which he participates. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author primarily follows his legendary sources in his depiction of Alexander's life and personality. The author also remains firmly in the traditions of Alexander literature by employing Alexander's life and personality to support a didactic theme, in this case the theme of life's mutability and transience.

In creating that didactic theme, however, the *Kyng Alisaunder* anchors the romance's story in the mortal world by privileging human agency over fate, the pragmatics of empire over pure adventure and the known world over exotic fantasy lands. The chronological analysis of texts that comprises the following chapters demonstrates how much the *Kyng Alisaunder*'s focus on the mortal world departs from the traditions of Alexander literature, both historical and legendary, that precede and influence the Middle English romance. The historical and legendary Alexander texts that influence the *Kyng Alisaunder* demonstrate a movement towards non-historicism and fantasy against which the Middle English author works when mediating his sources.

Although the *Kyng Alisaunder* descends directly from the legendary tradition originating in *The Greek Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, that Hellenistic romance was based on an already vigorous historical tradition. The following project therefore begins in Chapter 2 by examining the effects on the *Kyng Alisaunder* of the historical Alexander tradition before turning to the effects of the legendary Alexander tradition in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 moves to the immediate influence of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the effect that contemporaneous

expectations for the process of translation and the uses of rhetoric exerted on the creation of the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Chapter 4 also presents a more in-depth analysis of the didactic theme contained in the *Kyng Alisaunder* than is presently available in the current scholarship on the *Kyng Alisaunder*. This analysis of the didactic theme of the *Kyng Alisaunder* can be arrived at only through understanding the intertextual process that, in conjunction with fourteenth century intellectual practices, produced this first Middle English Alexander romance.

Notes

¹ Throughout this work BCE (Before the Common Era) dates will be identified as such. CE (Common Era) dates are identified only where possible confusion may result from leaving those dates unspecified. All unspecified dates are CE. The dates for this outline of Alexander's life are from p. xxix-xxx of the "Introduction" in Heckel and Yardley. Modern historical studies of Alexander the Great abound, including Robin Lane Fox's *Alexander the Great*; Peter Green's *Alexander of Macedon, 256-323 BC: A Historical Biography* and *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age: A Short History*; and A. B. Bosworth's *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* and *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph*.

² "Nectanebo" is the anglicized spelling of the name. The name is spelled "Neptenabus" in the *Kyng Alisaunder*.

³ This is the widest date range assigned to *The Greek Alexander Romance* per Bunt, 5. Chapter 3 of this work discusses the dating of the Pseudo-Callisthenes text in more detail.

⁴ Cary's *The Medieval Alexander* and Ross's *Alexander Historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature* catalogue the manuscripts of Alexander literature important to the English tradition.

⁵ The "alexandrine" is the poetic line of six iambic feet, with a caesura after the third foot. It is so named because of its common use in medieval French Alexander verse romance.

⁶ Medieval "translation" is not limited to a strict rendering of a text's sense from one language to another. My fourth chapter will discuss the effects of medieval translation theory and practice on the *Kyng Alisaunder*.

⁷ In addition to the *Kyng Alisaunder*, medieval English Alexander romance includes *Alexander A* (also known as *Alexander of Macedon*) (1336-1361); *Alexander B* (also known as *Alexander and Dindimus*) (1338-1344); *Alexander C* (also known as *The Wars of Alexander*) (mid to late 15th century) and *The Prose Life of Alexander* (c. 1440). This number of Medieval English Alexander romances excludes two Old English and two Scottish texts. The additional examples of Alexander literature produced in England are the *Old English Orsious* (late 9th century); the *Old English Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* (late 10th century); the Scottish *Buik of Alexander* (1438) originally but erroneously attributed to Sir John Barbour and the Scottish *Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour* (1499) by Sir Gilbert Hay.

⁸ "Philippic" in the title of Trogus' work refers not to Philip of Macedonia, Alexander's father, but to the biting tone that Trogus adopts. The use of "philippic" in this sense follows from both oratorical attacks against Philip made by the Athenian Demosthenes and from likewise harsh attacks against Philip in the (written) *Philippica* by Theopompus of Chios. See p. 24-5 of Yardley's "Introduction" to *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, Volume I, Books 11-12: Alexander the Great* for scholarly opinion on Trogus' title.

⁹ *Proeliis* rather than *Prelis* is sometimes used, and the redactions can be indicated by a "J" in place of the "I." The title is commonly shortened to the *Historia de Prelis*, or *The History of [Alexander's] Battles*.

¹⁰ Some scholars identify *The Bagford Ballads* leaves as a separate manuscript and therefore count the number of *Kyng Alisaunder* manuscripts at four.

¹¹ Because the Laud Ms. offers the most complete and correct text of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, all references to the romance will be based on that manuscript as edited by Smithers. All translations will be my own.

¹² Historically, Alexander fought three battles against Darius before winning the Persian Empire. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the *Kyng Alisaunder* departs from the texts of the historical Alexander tradition and from many of the texts of the legendary Alexander tradition in reducing the number of battles between Darius and Alexander.

¹³ The only Middle English romance other than the *Kyng Alisaunder* to employ seasonal headpieces is *Arthour and Merlin*, also of the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century. Scholars believe the same author composed both romances.

¹⁴ Bunt includes the Old English and Scottish Alexander texts and also provides an introduction to the use made of Alexander the Great by Chaucer and Lydgate.

¹⁵ I apply the term “ancestral texts” to those Alexander texts that were produced in historical periods earlier than the fourteenth-century production of the *Kyng Alisaunder* but that either were not available to or not consulted by the Middle English author.

Chapter 2: The *Kyng Alisaunder* and the Historical Alexander Tradition

Two distinct but related lines of textual traditions form the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* system: the historical tradition and the legendary tradition. Pages eight to twelve of Chapter 1 detail the major characteristics of the two textual traditions, with the most important difference being that the historical tradition ostensibly records actual events in the life and military career of Alexander the Great whereas the legendary tradition offers fanciful reinterpretations of Alexander's life and deeds. The historical tradition develops before the legendary tradition and is therefore the first subject in my larger project of understanding how the *Kyng Alisaunder* system of texts produces the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

The historical Alexander texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system originate during Alexander's lifetime and shortly after his death. The "First Generation Authors," as I term them, exert a collective effect on the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. These Hellenistic authors wrote the texts that initiated the historical Alexander tradition during Alexander's life and within a generation after his death. The first generation historical texts began with the court documents that include the *Ephemerides*, or *Royal Journal*, and the "

~ □□□ □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ " (hereafter *The Deeds of Alexander*), the encomiastic biography by Alexander's official historian Callisthenes (Pearson 33). The Hellenistic origins of the historical tradition also include eyewitness accounts by contemporaries who accompanied Alexander on his Eastern campaigns. Other contemporaries who did not personally experience the Eastern

campaigns nonetheless produced histories on Alexander's life and military career by relying on the official documents, the earlier eyewitness accounts, rumor and imagination. Even further removed from the immediacy of Alexander's life are the pamphleteers, propagandists and forgers who produced attacks and spurious documents against Alexander and Macedonian hegemony in that first generation after Alexander's death.

The official documents, eyewitness histories, second-hand histories, propaganda and fraudulent material produced in the first fifty to seventy years after Alexander's death comprise the primary sources of the historical Alexander tradition. The later Roman authors Pompeius Trogus (also referred to as Trogus) and Quintus Curtius Rufus relied on the first generation authors as sources for the Latin histories written four centuries after Alexander's death. In addition to the first generation authors, Curtius also relied on Trogus' earlier history when composing the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*. These two Latin histories in turn served as sources for Late Antique and medieval authors in both the historical and legendary traditions. Pompeius Trogus wrote his *Historiae Philippicae* in the first century BCE. Trogus' history did not survive to the medieval period, but a rewritten abridgement of the work known as Justin's *Epitome* was well known in the medieval West. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author used Justin's *Epitome*, named after its author Marcus Iunianus Iustinus, as a source for his fourteenth-century CE romance. The influence of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae* therefore reaches the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* in vestigial form by way of Justin's *Epitome*.

Trogus' influence through Justin's *Epitome* also descends to the *Kyng Alisaunder* through a second path, by way of the Late Antique author Paulus Orosius. Justin's *Epitome* served as the main source for Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos*, a universal history of the world from creation to Orosius' time. Although scholars have not identified Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* as a direct source consulted by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author, Orosius' history was interpolated into the legendary tradition as an inclusion in a twelfth-century redaction, or rewriting, of the *Historia de Preliis*. The *Historia de Preliis*, including the interpolated content originating from Orosius' history, has been identified as a source for the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* and thereby a vehicle for the transmission of Trogus' influence.

In contrast to Trogus, the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* by Quintus Curtius Rufus (also referred to as Curtius) survived to the medieval period. Although Curtius' history descends nearly intact to the medieval West, its influence on the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*, like the influence of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, is indirect. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author did not directly consult the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*, but Curtius' influence descends to the *Kyng Alisaunder* through the twelfth-century CE *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon. Walter based this Medieval Latin epic of the legendary tradition on Curtius' history, and transmitted Curtius' influence to the *Kyng Alisaunder* when the Middle English author in turn used the *Alexandreis* as a check on the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*.

This chapter investigates the historical Alexander texts that partake in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system and their influences on the composition of the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*, focusing on how the historical texts depict Alexander's life and deeds, construct his personality and develop literary characteristics. In originating the historical Alexander tradition the primary sources of the first generation authors create a canonical treatment of the major events of Alexander's life and deeds. In addition to creating an agreed-upon biographical outline of Alexander's life, the first generation historians introduce variant strands of details and episodes that allow later secondary authors freedom of choice between more or less fantastic depictions of Alexander's activities.

In contrast to their founding of a generally agreed-upon depiction of Alexander's actions, however, the first generation historians fail to create a canonical construction of Alexander's personality. The later Alexander system could therefore adapt the personality of Alexander the Great to the purposes of each author. The first generation Alexander historians also introduce themes and motifs borrowed from genres other than historiography that remain active in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system for use by the fourteenth-century *Kyng Alisaunder* author.

The discussion will then turn to Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus. By depending upon fewer sources than were available to them, these Roman authors narrow the historical Alexander tradition of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system to the more legendary vulgate tradition of the original first generation sources, and thereby begin the general movement towards the fantastic seen in the

Kyng Alisaunder system. The vulgate texts of Callisthenes and Cleitarchus, in Roman hands, emphasize Alexander's foibles and transforms him into an exemplar for Roman audiences. The Roman authors also introduce literary themes by emphasizing the particularly Roman interests of *regnum* ("kingship") and the role of *Fortuna* ("Fortune") in Alexander's life and death. These literary themes, as well as the theme of *translatio imperii* (the movement of imperial authority from East to West), become especially attractive to medieval authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

The Late Antique Justin and Orosius transplant Alexander from his pagan to their Christian context by reworking Alexander's military career into one that accords with a Christian worldview of the divine purpose of history. Justin's *Epitome* exaggerates the negative qualities associated with Alexander's actions and personality; Orosius then exaggerates those negative qualities even further. In Orosius' reinterpretation, Alexander's life and deeds become even more ferocious and his personality even more venal than as depicted by Justin. Both authors emphasize Alexander's role in *translatio imperii*, but the originally Roman literary theme takes on Christian meaning as Justin and Orosius reinterpret the movement of imperial authority from the old empires of the East to the new empire of the West to be part of God's plan for the history of man.

Tracing and analyzing the development of the historical Alexander texts within the *Kyng Alisaunder* system allows the identification of components that remain in the system from the Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique periods. In

addition, the following analysis will demonstrate the gradual movement towards non-historicism that the historical Alexander tradition makes across time, a movement that the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* works against.

The First Generation Alexander Authors:

Alexander the Great entered literature during his life and shortly after his death in the accounts of his life and deeds as written by the men who had served him administratively and militarily. The *Ephemerides*, daily accounts of Alexander's activities, were maintained first by Eumenes of Cardia and then by Diodotus of Erythrae, his royal secretaries (Jacoby 117 T1).¹ An official document more important to the Alexander tradition than the *Ephemerides* was *The Deeds of Alexander*, the biography recorded by Callisthenes. Alexander's official historian, Callisthenes maintained a running account of Alexander's Eastern campaign from its beginning until his execution by Alexander in 327 BCE.

Other men who knew Alexander and wrote histories of him include Ptolemy, Alexander's general and later founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt; Nearchus, a ship's captain on the expedition to the East; Onesicritus, the steersman on Alexander's ship; Aristobulus, an engineer and Chares, Alexander's chamberlain in Persia. Cleitarchus also knew Alexander, but did not accompany the expedition to the East. His slightly later history was therefore based on second-hand knowledge gained from histories already written by those, like Callisthenes, who had witnessed the events of which they wrote. Finally, a great deal of hostile

F3).³ Although historically inaccurate, Ephippus depicts Alexander adopting the Persian practice of appearing in the guise of a god, in one case as Dionysius, as an example of Alexander's orientalizing. Alexander's adoption of Eastern practices, or orientalizing, became a quality intensely criticized by propagandists during Alexander's life and after his death, and Ephippus' fabrication of the Dionysian appearance makes the reliability of his entire tract questionable. Callisthenes' *The Deeds of Alexander*, in contrast, was written as Alexander's official court history and so depicts Alexander as Alexander himself presumably wished to be perceived. In a depiction as propagandistic as that of Ephippus, Callisthenes emphasizes Alexander's "Greekness" by constructing an Alexander who echoes the feats of mythological heroes, as when Alexander visits the Egyptian shrine to Ammon in imitation of Hercules and Perseus (Jacoby 124 F14a).⁴

The questionable authenticity and biases of the first generation authors require that modern historians approach the earliest accounts of Alexander's life and deeds skeptically, but the literary scholar does not suffer the same constraint. The literary scholar analyzing the depiction of Alexander the Great in the fourteenth-century *Kyng Alisaunder* need only understand how the first generation authors contribute to that depiction, not how the first generation authors do or do not reflect the actual Alexander. Because some Imperial Roman, Late Antique or medieval authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system were not always as discriminating in their acceptance of earlier texts as are modern scholars, many of the fraudulent and highly biased accounts of the first generation authors become part of the *Kyng*

Alisaunder system. Much of the standard account of Alexander's final illness and death that appears in many historical texts and nearly all the legendary texts, including the fourteenth-century *Kyng Alisaunder*, for example, derives from the now-discredited *Ephemerides*.

More problematic for modern historians than the authenticity and biases of the first generation authors is their state of textual preservation. None of the written accounts of the first generation Alexander authors survived in their entirety beyond the Roman period. Their texts, like the majority of material written in the Hellenistic period, were lost to the whims of literary taste and the vagaries of textual transmission. These texts exist now only as *testimonia* (descriptions of the first generation authors and their texts) and fragments (summaries of or quotes from the now lost texts) embedded in the works of authors who wrote centuries after the first generation authors.

The fragmentary nature of the first generation texts limits their use and the conclusions that they can generate. With no fragment longer than several pages at best, their brevity disallows thorough understanding of an author's overall focus or style. Moreover, the later authors who preserve the *testimonia* and fragments shape the first generation authors to their own literary goals, and therefore may take the first generation texts out of context. A modern scholar therefore cannot know with certainty what percentage of the original text a fragment represents, how closely a fragment follows its original text, or how much the later author may have modified the original.

Again, these limitations of textual incompleteness imposed on the use of the first generation authors do not weigh as heavily on the literary scholar as they weigh on the modern historian. The diligent work of twentieth-century historians has identified the first generation authors and their now lost texts, made reasonable estimates of the content and style of the lost texts, and traced the use made of those authors by extant Hellenistic and Roman historians. Felix Jacoby collected and Charles Robinson, Jr. translated the *testimonia* and the fragments scattered throughout the corpus of surviving classical literature in *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* and *The History of Alexander the Great, Vol. 1*, respectively. Additionally, Lionel Pearson offers an in-depth analysis of the first generation authors in *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*. The foundational scholarship of these three modern historians provides ample information for the literary scholar to determine the effect that the first generation authors exerted on the *Kyng Alisaunder* system in its development of Alexander's life and deeds, personality and literary characteristics.

The first important effect that the first generation authors have on the *Kyng Alisaunder* system is their concomitant standardization of Alexander's biography and introduction of variant details and episodes. The loss of the first generation texts precludes their serving as direct evidence of that effect, but the general agreement among the extant historians as to the basic facts of Alexander's life indicates that general consensus did exist. The extant histories of Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Arrian and Quintus Curtius Rufus all drew from first generation

authors still available centuries after Alexander's death. Although the extant historians noted differences of detail or questioned the veracity of some episodes among particular first generation authors, the extant authors recognized and drew from an accepted historical record that documented Alexander's life and deeds. Comparing the accounts of the extant historians produces, as Carol G. Thomas details, an accepted narrative of episodes that make up Alexander's historical actions.⁵ This modern agreement on the basic outline of Alexander's life and deeds would be impossible without the standardization of Alexander biography established by the first generation authors.

To claim that a number of independent authors writing about an individual man's life achieved general consensus as to his activities seems an obvious assertion. But the first generation authors wrote their histories, pamphlets and forgeries in a context of changing historiography that had only lately promoted narrative consensus.⁶ Greek historiography as a genre originally developed according to the models established by Herodotus (480-425 BCE) and Thucydides (c. 460-400 BCE), wherein historians wrote about important deeds of the relative near past in order to teach and inspire citizens of the *polis*, the Greek city-state. The selection of sweeping events critical to the *polis* as a topic of historiography metamorphosed under the influences of diminishing autonomy and power of the *polis*, increased contact with the non-Greek world and the literary form of biography to center on the life of a singular individual.

Histories about Alexander the Great contributed to and benefited from this change in the writing of history. The narrower focus on Alexander's life that the first generation authors followed better suited historiography produced in a period when Alexander alone dominated the Greek view of world events than did the more sweeping history of the many leaders involved in the longer conflicts between Persia and the Greek city states examined by Herodotus. The importance of Alexander and his army on the world stage increased general appetite for information about his deeds. The histories, memoirs, stories and gossip produced by the men who had known Alexander, however tangential their relationship to him might have been, satisfied public appetite and reinforced the change in focus that historiography underwent in the fourth century BCE. The production of so many texts so soon after Alexander's life ensured a large body of textual evidence documenting and standardizing Alexander's life and deeds.

That standardization of Alexander's life and deeds accomplished in the first generation after his death passes to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system the basic narrative upon which all later authors build. Texts written after the first generation histories emphasize or minimize particular episodes, delete episodes considered less important or even invent and import new episodes, but such manipulations occur mainly for literary or didactic purposes. The manipulations to the basic narrative of Alexander's life that occur throughout the *Kyng Alisaunder* system remain changes to the accepted, canonical narrative inherited from the Hellenistic period rather than

the wholesale invention that would have been required had the first generation authors not established the historical Alexander tradition.

The Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* fundamentally follows the narrative of Alexander's life and deeds as initiated by the first generation authors, although the influence of the legendary Alexander tradition changes many of the historical episodes to more fanciful depictions. The *Kyng Alisaunder* includes the canonical events of Alexander's education by Aristotle (line 665), his taming of Bucephalus (775-794), and the conflict between Philip and Alexander over Philip's new wife (1091-1125). The *Kyng Alisaunder* includes the basic military deeds recorded by the first generation authors in Alexander's destruction of Carthage (839-991), Tyre (1585-1660) and Thebes (2635-2891); his defeat of Darius (3401-4476) and capture of Darius' family (2491-2498); and the battle against Porus (5539-5560). Also included, although following the exaggerated legendary tradition, are Alexander's historical exploration of the Indus (4747-6987), consultation of oracles (1510-1571) and unexpected death (7890-8021).

Although the first generation authors instituted the canonical narrative of Alexander's life and deeds, the same authors also introduced competing details and variant episodes into the historical Alexander record. The impulse behind both the standardization and the variation created by the first generation authors lies in concurrent developments in Greek historiography.⁷ As the focus of Greek historiography narrowed from sweeping events of the near past to the actions of great men, the purpose of historiography widened from teaching and inspiring

citizens of the *polis* to include political propaganda and entertainment. The greater acceptability of employing historiography for propaganda and entertainment then allowed the greater incorporation of expanded rhetorical techniques, highly subjective biases and amusing episodes. Each first generation author therefore enjoyed great freedom of composition when writing his text, a freedom that produced variation of detail and tone depending upon the purpose for which an individual author wrote and the rhetorical style he employed to suit his purpose, taste and literary training.⁸

The confluence of purpose, taste and literary training produced first generation Alexander texts that could variously be pedestrian but factually based records of what the author experienced, factually based narratives shaped to place the author in the best light possible, highly rhetorical literary histories intended either to glorify or vilify Alexander, outright falsehoods and forgeries created to substantiate or obviate later political and dynastic claims, or collections of episodes about court life written to fulfill public demand for entertaining “inside” details of Alexander’s life. The extant Greek and Roman historians themselves recognized that the competing purposes and styles of many first generation authors created significant variants in biographical detail. The surviving *testimonia* and fragments of the first generation authors often appear in the texts of extant historians precisely because extant authors note discrepancies among their sources and weigh the conflicting evidence to arrive at what seems the most correct account. The

testimonia and fragments, therefore, provide the textual evidence for determining how these variants contribute to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

The mix of authorial purpose and literary style among the first generation authors creates significant variation of detail and episodes in the otherwise standardized account of Alexander's life and deeds. These variations become as important to the development of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system as the standardization accomplished by the first generation authors since the more fanciful variations introduced by the authors writing in the rhetorical style lay the foundation for the legendary Alexander tradition, the tradition from which the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* directly descends. In addition, the continuation of variant details and episodes throughout the *Kyng Alisaunder* system allows later authors, up to and including the *Kyng Alisaunder* author, to choose among the variants as each constructs an Alexander the Great appropriate to his later period.

A first generation author's political purpose, in simple terms, was either to flatter or to denigrate Alexander and, by extension, the hegemony he and his successors exerted over Greek and Barbarian peoples.⁹ A detail as minor as the death of Bucephalus, Alexander's famed horse, varies among the first generation authors depending upon the style in which an author wrote. Both Arrian and Plutarch note that most sources describe Bucephalus' death at thirty years of age as caused from wounds received during battle against Porus of India. Both of these extant authors, however, also provide the variant detail from an identified first generation author that Bucephalus died merely from old age. Arrian explains that

Indus. Cleitarchus nonetheless wrote an extravagantly rhetorical history of Alexander's life and deeds in Alexandria during Ptolemy's reign, possibly before the histories by Ptolemy and Aristobulus appeared. Cleitarchus therefore based his "ἱστορίαι . . . περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου" (hereafter *About Alexander*) on the first generation texts available to him as sources rather than on personal experience, often embellishing the accounts he borrowed to heighten the emotional impact of Alexander's deeds.¹¹

In amplifying the deeds by which Alexander won his empire, Cleitarchus sanctions both Alexander's empire and Ptolemy's rule in Egypt after Alexander's death. Cleitarchus also included outright inventions that aggrandized Ptolemy directly, even to the point of contradicting Ptolemy's own slightly later history. Both Arrian and Plutarch note that Cleitarchus includes in *About Alexander* an episode in which Ptolemy saves Alexander's life during a battle with the Malli while Ptolemy describes himself in his own history as absent from that battle. Curtius also records that "Ptolomaeum, . . . huic pugnae adfuisse auctor est Clitarchus et Timagenes. sed ipse . . . afuisse . . ." (Jacoby 137 F24).¹² ("Cleitarchus, as well as Timagenes, represents Ptolemy . . . to have been present at this assault, but Ptolemy . . . records that he was absent"; Robinson 197). Cleitarchus' rhetorical style of historiography in concert with his goal of legitimizing Ptolemy leads to an entirely invented episode. Assuming of course that Ptolemy records the historically accurate version of the battle of Malli,

Cleitarchus not only places Ptolemy at Alexander's side in battle but heightens Ptolemy's personal heroism by depicting him as saving his dynastic precursor.

While Bucephalus' death or Ptolemy's participation in a single battle remain minor concerns in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, or even for modern historians unraveling the historical truth of Alexander's life, some variants clearly lay the foundation for the legendary tradition that will lead to the fourteenth-century *Kyng Alisaunder*. The story of Alexander meeting the Amazons who had traveled to him, for example, occurs in several first generation authors. Other first generation authors omit the episode or deny that it ever happened. Callisthenes, the only first generation author who wrote during Alexander's life, probably originated the Amazon episode; Cleitarchus, Onesicritus, Polycleitus and Antigenes repeated the story while Aristobulus, Ptolemy, Chares and Anticleides rejected it. Cleitarchus, the first generation author who produced the most highly rhetorical text of Alexander's life, developed the episode more fully than the other authors by claiming that Thalestria, the Amazon queen, had traveled to Alexander expressly to conceive his child.

Variant details and episodes among the first generation authors, like Bucephalus' death or the story of the Amazons, lay the foundation of the legendary Alexander tradition. Once established as a variant among the first generation historians, stories like that of Alexander and the Amazons remain in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system in the historical and legendary texts. Chapter 3 will focus on the development of the legendary tradition, where the discussion will detail how

heightened emotional scenes and fantastic elements contained in the rhetorical histories of Callisthenes and Cleitarchus are used as the raw historical source for Pseudo-Callisthenes' *The Greek Alexander Romance*. The Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* descends directly from the legendary Alexander tradition, making the variant details and episodes of the first generation authors essential to the eventual production of the fourteenth-century romance.

In broader terms, the variation of details introduced into the historical Alexander tradition during the production of the first generation texts allows later authors in both the historical and legendary traditions to adapt Alexander's life and deeds to their own purposes. The later authors work within the outline of Alexander's life as standardized by the first generation authors, but also enjoy a range of options from which they choose when they create their own narratives of Alexander's biography. Many variants continue in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, with episodes like Alexander's meeting with the Amazons surviving seventeen hundred years to appear in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

The variants repeat and multiply as the later authors consult the earlier texts, deciding between competing narratives and choosing the details that construct Alexander's life in a manner that best suits each author's purpose. Eventually even the *Kyng Alisaunder* author explicitly acknowledges the range of details allowed in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system when, at 3506-3516, he ponders the discrepancy between Walter of Châtillon and Thomas of Kent in their depictions of Philip, Alexander's physician.

The life and deeds of Alexander the Great alone did not conquer the imagination of the ancient and medieval worlds. Fascination with Alexander's "inner being and personality" (Thomas 3), a desire to understand how his essential nature drove his actions, also captivated later audiences. The first generation Alexander authors instituted this fascination because they failed to establish a "comprehensive interpretation of [Alexander's] character" (Pearson 17) that would have standardized Alexander's personality and motives in the way that those authors had generally standardized the narrative of Alexander's life and deeds. The later authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system would focus on questions of Alexander's heroism, liberality, anger and dissipation as the main characteristics of his personality, but the inconsistent portraits inherited from the first generation authors created antithetical images of Alexander that made his personality much more amenable to successive reinterpretation than would be possible for his life and deeds.

Fourth-century BCE Greek historiography may have centered on exceptional figures, but that focus did not necessarily include careful or consistent delineation of the figure's personality. The differences in authorial goals and rhetorical style that contribute to the variations seen in the narratives of Alexander's life and deeds also contribute to the type of portraiture, or delineation of personality, achieved in the individual first generation texts. As seen in the discussion of the variant details and episodes incorporated in accounts of Alexander's life and deeds, an individual author's goal of either magnifying or

maligning Alexander leads to differences of portraiture. Authors who flatter Alexander emphasize his virtues, justify his questionable actions and ignore his vices; those who denounce Alexander do the opposite. The depictions of Alexander's personality would therefore be entirely different depending upon the author who created the portrait.

First generation authors could also create inconsistent portraits of Alexander within their individual texts depending upon the rhetorical style of historiography within which they wrote.¹³ The early Alexander authors could follow Xenophon (428-354 BC), whose *Anabasis* constructed a consistent and balanced portrait of Cyrus in non-rhetorical style. Alternatively, the early Alexander authors could follow the flagrantly rhetorical Theopompus (born ca. 387 BC), whose *Philippica* extravagantly but inconsistently both praised and excoriated Philip, Alexander's father. A skilled rhetorical historian sought emotional impact through enhanced drama of particularized scenes and presented whatever character interpretation fulfilled the goals of the literary moment at hand. The rhetorical style of Theopompus did not prioritize a consistent and thorough examination of Alexander's character, and the first generation author who followed the rhetorical style of historiography modeled by Theopompus often included extreme inconsistencies of Alexander's character.

Lastly, stylistic borrowings from other literary genres affect how an individual first generation author depicts Alexander's personality. Authors could include generic borrowings from ethnography, geography, natural science, tragedy,

epic and mythology depending upon personal taste, literary training and interests. Which characteristics from literary genres other than historiography a particular author incorporated could create a more flattering or more critical portrait of Alexander. Authors who borrowed from mythology or epic, for example, often constructed Alexander as a new Hercules or Achilles even if their individual goal was not outright flattery.

The intermixing of authorial aim, rhetorical style and generic borrowings creates Alexander portraits that vary in both degree and kind, with some authors neglecting portraiture, some portraying Alexander favorably and others unfavorably. Judging from the *testimonia* and fragments contained in the extant authors, Ptolemy seems to have presented the most restrained Alexander portrait. The fragments identified as originating from Ptolemy's history indicate that he wrote what we would call military history, concentrating on the technical business of battles and sieges. The extant historians rely mainly on Ptolemy for information on field formations, troop strengths, casualty numbers and individual battle actions for Alexander's Persian and Indian campaigns, and often favor Ptolemy's usually understated description over the more exaggerated accounts of the other first generation authors

Following the non-rhetorical model of historiography, Ptolemy allowed Alexander's life and deeds to suggest his personality and so did not offer an explicit portrait. The image of Alexander that does emerge from Ptolemy's fragments is the most human left by the first generation authors. Ptolemy's

carried out. Ptolemy therefore allows Alexander to exhibit legitimate rather than unwarranted cruelty.

Before his execution, Callisthenes recorded Alexander's Eastern campaigns in his running official history, written in fully developed rhetorical style. The rhetorical style of historiography favored by Callisthenes, in conjunction with his purpose as Alexander's official historian to present Alexander in the most glorious light possible, resulted in a mythically heroic if slightly inconsistent portrait. Callisthenes fulfilled Alexander's political needs by glorifying his deeds as parallel to mythological and Homeric heroes, and generated interest in Alexander's persona by adopting a the style of tragedy (Jacoby 124 F14a), as allowed in rhetorical historiography.²⁰

Callisthenes' Alexander, in contrast to Ptolemy's, was more heroic superman than mortal. Modern scholars agree with the extant Alexander historians who, relying on the accounts of first generation authors, record that Alexander traveled to the temple of Ammon, identified with Zeus by the Macedonians, located at Siwah in Egypt. The priest of Siwah recognized Alexander as the son of Ammon/Zeus, and thus provided Alexander with justification for his later assumption of divine and royal Persian honors like *prokynesis*, the act of making obeisance before the king.

Callisthenes' account of the historical pilgrimage to Siwah differs slightly from the accounts of other first generation authors by exaggerating Alexander's separateness from his fellow Macedonians and therefore emphasizing his now-

Chares, Alexander's chamberlain in Persia, constructs a more ambivalent Alexander. Chares wrote his *ἱστορίαι* (hereafter *Stories of Alexander*) to satisfy public appetite for entertainment, and so included salacious gossip and details of Alexander's extravagant Eastern practices.²⁴ To entertain and to fulfill the stylistic characteristics of rhetorical historiography, Chares included scenes that both heroicized and denigrated Alexander.

Many fragments of Chares' *Stories of Alexander* survive in the extant authors, indicating the attraction his entertainingly presented details held for later authors. Chares' Alexander exhibits extremes of personality: heroically brave but also exceedingly cruel, charmingly boyish but also dissolute. As discussed previously, Chares is one of the "others" who ascribes Bucephalus' death to battle wounds, the version that most aggrandizes Alexander by extension.²⁵ Chares also depicts Alexander as suffering a wound from single combat with Darius and relating that Alexander

“ἴσθι ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐπὶ πολέμῳ ἀλλὰ ἐπὶ ἑλίῳ ἀνέστημεν ἅπαντες ἵνα σώσωμεν τὸν διδάσκαλον ἡμεῶν Λυσίμαχον” (Jacoby 125 F7) (“risked his life to save his tutor, Lysimachus”; Robinson 82).²⁶

The two “stories” above construct one of the bravest Alexanders seen in the fragments, but Chares also gives his readers an almost boyish Alexander. A tale ascribed to only Chares, although of course other first generation authors may also have recorded the incident but not been credited, highlights Alexander's sense of

contribute to first generation biographical narratives and portraiture. In borrowing genre characteristics from mythology, Homeric epic, ethnography, geography and natural science, the first generation authors also inject literary themes and motifs into the beginning of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Still other themes and motifs that later authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system develop occur from the interests of individual authors or from the episodes of Alexander's life.

The epic style of Homer applied to history, as modeled by Herodotus, allowed first generation authors to transfer many recognizably Homeric characteristics from epic to the historical Alexander tradition. The Alexander authors who incorporate Homeric touches do so by including dramatized conversations, speeches and conferences; incorporating a sense of impending disaster; connecting the events of Alexander's expedition in the East to Greek mythology and early history by identifying Eastern sites as mythological or Homeric; and emphasizing parallels between Alexander's actions and those of Homeric and mythological heroes.

Some of these Homeric characteristics cannot be securely ascribed to the first generation authors since the fragments that include such examples may display the extant authors' compositional choices rather than those of the original authors. A rare example of a contrived declamation that seems to originate in the first generation source occurs in Plutarch. He credits to Onesicritus the story of Alexander having exclaimed

“ . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος
 ~ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος .
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος .
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . ” (Jacoby 134

F19) (“O Athenians, can you possibly believe what perils I am undergoing to win glory in your eyes?; Robinson 158) at the crossing of the Hydaspes River in India.³⁰ Plutarch indicates that he disbelieves Onesicritus’ account with the introduction

“ ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος
 ~ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ” (Jacoby 134 F19) (“here it was that he is said to have cried”; Robinson

158), thereby shifting responsibility for the story’s veracity to the source. Plutarch thereafter offers a differing account of the river crossing contained in letters purportedly written by Alexander himself that supports Plutarch’s contention that the previous description of the crossing and Alexander’s exclamation,

“ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ” (Jacoby 134 F19) (“is the story of Onesicritus”; Robinson 158).

Other mythological and Homeric characteristics appear frequently in the fragments and can be more certainly ascribed to the first generation authors. Many of the first generation authors, for example, draw broad parallels between Alexander’s actions and those of mythological heroes. The numerous accounts of the Amazons’ embassy to Alexander place him in the company of that mythological race as well as in parallel to Hercules.³¹ Alexander’s consultation of

the oracle at Siwah also compares him to mythological heroes in that Callisthenes claims the journey was undertaken in imitation of Perseus and Hercules (Jacoby 124 F14a).³²

Scenes inspired by epic motifs abound in the fragments. Alexander, like epic heroes, engages in *monomachia* (“single combat”) against Darius in Chares’ *Stories About Alexander* (Jacoby 125 F6)³³. Depicting Alexander as personally visiting Darius’ captured family is but one example of Alexander demonstrating *aristeia* (“worthy behavior”) by exhibiting compassionate behavior towards defeated enemies. Other examples of *aristeia* include Alexander’s concern with and demonstration of prowess in battle, in statecraft and in his personal relationships with friends and companions. Emphasizing the wounds Alexander receives in battle, as when Chares depicts Alexander happy to have been wounded in the thigh by Darius, also mimics epic technique. Indeed, the epic emphasis on bodily injury may lie behind the probable invention that Bucephalus died of battle wounds since, as discussed above, the horse Alexander rides in battle represents Alexander himself and therefore Bucephalus’ physical maiming would symbolize Alexander’s.

Some of the episodes of Alexander’s life and deeds even echo specific scenes from the *Iliad*. Chares describes Alexander making a nighttime raid on a Barbarian campfire and killing two of the enemy during the siege of Tyre (Jacoby 125 F7) much as Odysseus led the nighttime raid on the plains of Troy (Book 10).³⁴ Ptolemy describes a battle in India wherein Alexander and his men fought for, and

retained, the corpse of the Indian leader killed by Ptolemy (Jacoby 138 F18).³⁵

Such battles between the Greeks and Trojans for the bodies of fallen warriors occur often throughout the *Iliad*, most importantly for Patroclus (Book 17). Finally, the first generation authors echo the *Iliad*'s description of the funerals of Patroclus and Hector (Book 23 and Book 24) when describing funerals that Alexander organizes, especially the funeral for Hephestion.³⁶

Even more numerous, and more significant in the development of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, than the generic borrowings from mythology and Homeric epic are the inclusions of ethnography, geography and the natural sciences that occur in the first generation authors. Many of the first generation authors record descriptions of the peoples, local customs, lands, animals, plants and minerals seen in Alexander's march across the East. Many of these accounts served as authorities for later authors like Pliny who created encyclopedic texts on history and natural history. The fragments of Nearchus, Alexander's steersman, are among the most complete because his *Circumnavigation of India* provides a great deal of varied information on the lands through which he sailed (Jacoby 133).³⁷ The group of surveyors that worked for Alexander on the expedition to the East, known collectively as the Bematists, rightly recorded their professional expertise in the geography of the lands through which they traveled (Jacoby 119-123).³⁸

The local curiosities recorded by many of the first generation authors become some of the most popular stories associated with Alexander. Later authors of the legendary tradition expand upon the weird tales contained in the first

generation authors, eventually separating them entirely from their original context to circulate independently in the *Epistola*. Other episodes separate even further, such as the description of the *gymnosophists* in Onesicritus, for one (Jacoby 134 F17-18).³⁹ Ascetic Brahmins of India, the “naked philosophers” become highly expanded in the later *Kyng Alisaunder* system to the point of becoming a separate text that sometimes is also included in the romances. Other wonders remain nearly intact as late as the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* in the fourteenth century. Aristobulus’ accounts of Indian dogs trained to attack lions (Jacoby 139 F40) and the battles between dolphins and crocodiles (Jacoby 139 F38) still appear in the *Kyng Alisaunder*.⁴⁰

The final contribution made by the first generation authors to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system through the historical Alexander tradition did not derive from the fusing of epic and historiography (Pearson 148). Nearchus, Alexander’s steersman, introduces the theme of *pothos* into the historical Alexander tradition that, because of its specific use in relation to Alexander, becomes one of the most important themes of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Nearchus was the first historian to discuss Alexander’s *pothos* (“longing,” or “yearning”) to explore unknown lands as a motivation to press ever further into the East. Later authors in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system continue Nearchus’s theme, although some endow Alexander’s yearning or longing to see and do what has not yet been seen or done a hubristic interpretation. Late Antique and medieval authors Christianize Alexander’s *pothos*

by using it to support their presentation of Alexander's worldly accomplishments as merely transitory.

As seen in this extensive discussion of the first generation authors, the earliest authors of the historical Alexander tradition establish the lasting elements of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. The biographical narrative that the first generation authors standardized provides the foundation for all the later Alexander texts while the variant details and episodes allow later authors alternatives in shaping their own narratives. The inconsistent and dualistic Alexander portraits presented across the corpus of first generation Alexander texts bequeath to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system a malleable Alexander, a figure that can be easily adapted to reflect the cultural values and literary purposes of the succeeding authors. The first generation authors also originate literary themes and motifs that persist in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Authors in both the historical and legendary traditions will continue, manipulate and contribute to these first generation themes and motifs as they produce Alexander texts. Later authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system will transform many of the elements received from the authors who wrote in the first generation after Alexander the Great's death, but not engage in wholesale invention. Because the Roman and Late Antique authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system manipulate the Alexander they receive from their source texts rather than create Alexander anew, the remainder of this chapter analyzes the continuations and changes that the later historical authors contribute to the system.

Roman Alexander Historiography:

Even though Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus wrote some three to four hundred years after Alexander the Great's death, the corpus of Alexander texts produced by the first generation authors was still largely intact for consultation. Using these received texts as sources for their own histories, Trogus and Curtius created new histories of Alexander the Great and contributed particularly Roman elements to the line of texts that eventually results in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. The contributions each makes to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system are similar, but each author differs significantly in the format, approach and literariness of their histories.

Trogus and Curtius perpetuate the standardized biographical narrative of Alexander's life and deeds established by the first generation authors, but use exclusively the more fanciful rhetorical history of Cleitarchus.⁴¹ Although drawing from the same original source, Trogus limits the scope of Alexander's life and deeds in comparison to Curtius' amplification of the same episodes. Each author likewise narrows the depiction of Alexander's personality available to them from the first generation authors, but do so in different manners. Where the first generation authors offered a wide range of Alexander portraits, the Roman authors reduce their Alexander portraits to a mainly negative depiction. Trogus constructs a strongly and consistently negative portrait of Alexander throughout his text. Curtius, however, criticizes the transition of personality that Alexander underwent,

depicting Alexander as a man of conflicting traits who allowed his success to overwhelm his better nature.

Trogus and Curtius differ most in the literary character of their respective texts, with Curtius by far the more ornamented. Both authors continue some of the themes inherited from the first generation authors, such as Alexander's mythological parallels and his *pothos*, but Trogus adopts a plainer, more straightforward style as compared to Curtius' rhetorical expansiveness. Trogus, for example, avoids invented speeches while Curtius liberally includes them.⁴² Both authors include in their texts varying degrees of interest in the role of *Fortuna* ("Fortune"), qualities of Alexander's *regnum* ("kingship") and the historical process of *translatio imperii*. The respective development of these themes in the *Historiae Philippicae* and the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* dictate how each author depicts Alexander, since Trogus and Curtius both construct Alexander's life and personality to support the themes and moral *exemplum* each assigns to Alexander.

Scholars know little of either Pompeius Trogus or Quintus Curtius Rufus. Justin's *Epitome* relates that Trogus was a Romanized Gaul whose family originated in Gallia Narbonensis (Provence) and received citizenship from Pompey the Great. With his uncle and father having served under Julius Caesar, Trogus must have written his *Historiae Phillipicae* in Rome by the end of the Augustan period (35 BCE-14 CE). Scholars know even less about Quintus Curtius Rufus. Curtius wrote the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* sometime during the Roman Imperial period, but his identity and exact date remain a contentious issue. The date adopted

for this discussion places Curtius in the Claudian period, the time most often identified by scholars, but the question is far from settled.⁴³

The histories that Trogus and Curtius produced survive to the medieval period in very different forms because of the types of historiography each wrote and their states of preservation. Trogus originally composed his *Historiae Phillipicae* as a universal history in Latin, containing forty-four books that related the history of the Eastern world from the Assyrian Empire to the beginning of Augustan rule. This universal format allowed only a condensed narrative of Alexander's career, contained in Books XI and XII. Trogus' brief treatment of Alexander was condensed further by Justin, the author who summarized Trogus' massive text into the form of the *Epitome*. Unfortunately, no copy of Trogus' original text survived beyond Late Antiquity as Justin's *Epitome* supplanted Trogus' original in popularity. Only a few fragments preserved in later authors, Justin's reworked *Epitome* and the even later summaries of chapters, the *Prologues*, provide clues to the content, scope, themes and style of Trogus' original text. Curtius, in contrast, created in the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* a specialized history of ten books about Alexander the Great. Compared to Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, the text of Curtius' *Gestae Alexandri Magni* survives in an excellent state. Books I and II have been lost, as have portions at the end of Book V to the beginning of Book VI and a portion of Book X, from 1.45 to 2.1.

Curtius' text offers no difficulties, other than the *lacunae*, in determining its effect on the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Analyzing Trogus' history is, however, in

some ways even more problematic than analyzing the lost texts of first generation authors. Fragments of Trogus do exist and have been collected in *Pompei Trogi Fragmenta* by Otto Seel, but the preserved fragments of Trogus are far fewer than the preserved fragments of the collective first generation authors. In addition, getting to the vestiges of Trogus' original language and content lying beneath the overlay of the later authors in which the fragments are embedded is much more difficult than is the case for the first generation authors. Most of the later authors who rely on the texts of the first generation authors clearly identify by name the particular source of the information presented; Roman authors containing the Trogan fragments do not so clearly identify their borrowing. When authors like Vallerius Maximus or Quintus Curtius Rufus individually borrow the same material from Trogus, each later author shapes the original material in very different manners. It therefore becomes difficult to ascertain which of the preserved fragments among the extant authors, if any, most closely resembles the shape and tone of Trogus' original.

Attempting to determine the effect of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae* on the *Kyng Alisaunder* system from Justin's *Epitome* produces only limited results, particularly in regard to the depiction of Alexander's life and deeds. Justin seems to have reworked the original text so thoroughly as to obscure Trogus' presentation of the biographical episodes.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, what can be glimpsed of Trogus' original text through the *Epitome* indicates the broad traits of Trogus' *Historiae Phillipicae* and its effect upon the later texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system,

especially when Trogus' history is analyzed in conjunction with Curtius' *Gestae Alexandri Magni* and in the general context of Roman historiography.

Trogus produced in the *Historiae Philippicae* a universal history slightly outside the main tradition of Roman historiography.⁴⁵ Roman historiography had always centered on the distant and near past of Rome to the exclusion of other lands and peoples except as such lands and peoples intersected with or allowed comparison to Rome's own past. Although Greek historians writing in Greek under Roman rule connected Rome's past to the pasts of their own peoples, Roman historiography always remained philosophically grounded in the view that the Roman state marked the practical beginning of universal history. In contrast to the usual focus of Roman historiography, the *Historiae Phillipicae* includes references to the Roman past only insofar as it intersected with the pasts of the Eastern empires that were Trogus' subject.

The compositional choices Curtius made in the *Gestae Alexanderi Magni* more closely follow the general trends of Roman historiography than did Trogus' choices. In an age dominated by the rule of individual men rather than the collective rule of the Senate, biographical history that focused on a single individual grew in popularity over universal history. Curtius' history of Alexander further followed the trend of interpreting biographical history through the lens of philosophical schools to provide *exempla* of past lives either lived well or badly. Roman historiography in the Empire also demonstrated a growing reluctance to explore the near past of the civil wars that resulted in Augustan rule, a reluctance

that made Alexander an attractive topic for Curtius. The *Gestae Alexandri Magni* still departed from more common Roman historiography by turning to the life of a non-Roman, but Curtius' thematic and moralizing treatment transforms Alexander into a Roman cultural symbol for the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

Because Trogus wrote a universal history, he treated the life of Alexander the Great as but one period within his larger subject. Books VII through IX detail the early history of Macedonia, including Philip's rise and fall, but do not offer a full narrative of Alexander's birth and youth. After a brief explanation of pertinent Persian history in Book X, Trogus takes up Alexander's rule in Books XI and XII. Although Trogus allows Alexander only two of his forty-four books, he manages to include the standardized episodes that the first generation authors had established as Alexander's biographical narrative. The limited space devoted to Alexander's career in the *Historiae Philippicae* required briefer treatment of the biographical episodes than could be included in a history focused entirely on Alexander. Curtius too neglects a detailed narrative of Alexander's birth and youth, apparently opening the history in the two lost books with Alexander's growing role under Philip.⁴⁶ The extant books begin after the battle of Guagemala but before the battle of Issus, the first and second battles between Darius and Alexander. The remaining books contain nearly all the important episodes that make up Alexander's biography. Curtius' undivided focus on Alexander permits fuller development of the moral and didactic purpose common to Roman historiography.

Both of the histories by Trogus and Curtius contain the familiar biographical episodes standardized by the first generation authors. Alexander conquers Thebes (Trogus XI.3.6-4.8 and Curtius *Book I) and Tyre (Trogus XI.10.10-14 and Curtius IV.iv.26-xvi.33), wins three battles against Darius (Trogus XI.6.10-13; XI.9.1-10; XI.14 and Curtius *Book II; III.ix-xi; IV.iv.26-xvi.33) and visits Darius' captured family (Trogus XI.9.12-16 and Curtius III.xi.24-xii.26).⁴⁷ Alexander advances into India to battle Porus (Trogus XII.8 and Curtius VIII.xiv), consults the oracular priests at Siwah (Trogus XI.11 and Curtius IV.vii.6-32) and returns to Babylon to die after attending Medius' banquet (Trogus XII.13.8 and Curtius end *Book X). Trogus and Curtius also contain many of the episodes that become favorite motifs in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, such as Alexander cutting the Gordian Knot (Trogus XI.7.4-16 and Curtius III.i.14-18) and being saved from illness by Philip, his personal physician (Trogus XI.8 and Curtius III.v.1-vi.20).

Some of the biographical episodes that Trogus and Curtius include obviously derive from the more fanciful narrative supplied by Cleitarchus, the primary source for both Roman authors. The Amazons, for example, make their appearance in the *Historiae Phillipicae* and the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*, Thalestria having journeyed to Alexander to conceive his child (Trogus XII.3.5 and Curtius VI.v.24-32). What appears to be the death of Bucephalus in battle against Porus also appears in each text (Trogus XII.8.4 and Curtius VIII.xiv.34). In fact, Curtius

follows Trogus so closely in the depiction of the horse's death that scholars have identified the episode as a Trogan fragment preserved in Curtius' later history.

The resemblance between the two descriptions of Alexander's charge against Porus offers a rare glimpse of a biographical episode that appears very close to Trogus' original, and so illustrates the extent to which Curtius amplified episodes he adopted from other authors. Trogus does not identify the horse killed in the battle against Porus as Bucephalus, and does not mention the animal other than that "sed prima congressione vulnerato equo cum praeceps ad terram decidisset, concursu satellitum servatur" (XII.8.4) ("but at the first clash his horse was wounded and the king was thrown to the ground, to be saved only when attendants rushed to his aid"; Yardley 116). Shortly after the battle, however, the *Epitome* records that Alexander founded two cities, with "alteram ex nomine equi Bucephalen vocavit" (XII.8.8) ("the other called Bucephala, after his horse"; Yardley 116). The close proximity of Alexander's horse being killed beneath him in the battle, Alexander's fall and the naming of a city in honor of Bucephalus replicates the sequence of the first generation narratives that describe Bucephalus as having died in battle, and therefore suggests Trogus relied on the more pathetic variant of Bucephalus' death..

Curtius's treatment of Bucephalus' death largely mirrors the version contained in Trogus.. Curtius also does not name Alexander's horse in the battle against Porus, and ignores the fate of the animal killed from beneath Alexander in the charge. Curtius writes: "sed equus eius, multis vulneribus confossus

deficiensque, procubuit, posito magis rege quam effuso” (VIII.xiv.34) (“but the king’s horse, which had been pierced by many shafts and was giving out, fell under him, rather dismounting him than throwing him off”; Rolf, *Vol. II* 355). After being “posito” (“dismounted”) from the animal, Alexander changes horses and continues his charge against Porus. Curtius delays Alexander’s founding of Bucephala until IX.i.6, and here only mentions the founding of the two cities without naming them. Not until IX.iii.23 does Curtius specify that:

quorum alterum Nicaeam appellavit, alterum Bucephala, equi quem amiserat memoriae ac nomini dedicans urbem.

He also founded two towns, of which he called one Nicaea and the other Bucephala, dedicating the latter to the name and memory of the horse which he had lost. (Rolf, *VII. II* 395)

The passages between the death of the horse Alexander rides against Porus and the specific reference to the founding of Bucephala contain no mention of Bucephalus, suggesting that the reader would understand “equi quem amiserat” (“the horse which he had lost”) as the horse killed against Porus.

In following Trogus, Curtius replicates the sequence of the variant version of Bucephalus’ death in battle. Curtius, however, rhetorically amplifies the more straightforward Trogan account and thereby creates a more heroic Alexander. In Trogus, Alexander is thrown to the ground and must be rescued by his men in a naturalistic and believable battle scene. In contrast, Curtius explicitly denies both the fall and the rescue. The horse’s almost reverential placement of his rider on the

ground emphasizes Alexander's extraordinary status. Alexander also is able to change horses and continue battle under his own volition, without the need for the rescue that would diminish his excellence.

Justin's epitomizing of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae* precludes further in-depth analysis of Trogus' own presentation of Alexander's life and deeds. Too few of the episodes can be assigned with any confidence to Trogus' original text, and so one runs the risk of attributing to Trogus what might actually be Justin's presentation. Curtius' *Gestae Alexandri Magni* provides a nearly complete example of his presentation of Alexander's life and deeds, but additional discussion of that depiction would add little more to the analysis. The example of Bucephalus' death in Trogus and Curtius demonstrates the individuality with which each author approached the narrative of Alexander's life. Despite their use of a common source, and despite Curtius' additional use of the *Historiae Philippicae*, Trogus succinctly depicts Alexander's actions while Curtius rhetorically enlarges Alexander's actions.

The portrait that Trogus constructs of Alexander in the *Historiae Phillipicae* is even more difficult to separate from Justin's reworking than the biographical narrative, yet many of the biographical episodes that Trogus includes demonstrate that a tyrannical Alexander existed in the original, as does the comparison between Philip and Alexander that closes Book IX. Trogus includes examples of Alexander's unwarranted anger against his own men when Alexander unjustly orders Parmenion's execution (XII.5.1-8) and personally murders Cleitus in a fit of

anger (XII.6). Trogus also depicts Alexander readily accepting the priest's confirmation of his divine paternity at Siwah (XI.11.6-.12), instituting *proskynesis* as part of his adoption of royal Persian habits (XII.3.8-.12 and XII.7.1-.3) and forcing large numbers of his men to marry Eastern women in mass wedding ceremonies (XII.4.1-.7). Trogus' inclusion in the *Historiae Philippicae* of these episodes, the same that the first generation authors hostile to Alexander employed to damn him, offers strong evidence that Trogus did indeed depict Alexander at least as negatively as the first generation propagandists.

The *Epitome* definitely constructs a condemnatory Alexander through explicit authorial comment, but how much of that comment originates in Trogus and how much in Justin is difficult to ascertain. The transitional sentence that occurs at the beginning of XII.5, "Interea et Alexander non region, sed hostili odio saevire in suos coepit" ("Alexander began in the meantime to terrorize his men with an animosity characteristic of an enemy, not of one's own king"; Yardley 112), could easily belong to Justin rather than to Trogus. The comparison between Philip and Alexander at the end of Book IX, however, appears to have been adapted from Trogus' original text:

Iram pater dissimulare, plerumque etiam vincere; hic ubi exarsisset, nec dilation ultionis nec modus erat. . . . patri mos erat etiam de convivio in hostem procurrere, manum consere, periculis se temere offerere; Alexander non in hostem, sed suos saeviebat. Quam ob rem saepe Philippum vulneratum proelia remisere, hic amicorum interfector convivio frequenter

excessit. Regnare ille cum amicis nolebat, hic amicos regna exercebat.

Amari pater malle, hic metui. (IX.8.14-.17)

The father could hide, and sometimes even suppress, his anger; when Alexander's flared up, his retaliation could be neither delayed nor kept in check. . . . It was the father's habit to rush from the dinner-party straight at the enemy, engage him in combat and recklessly expose himself to danger; Alexander's violence was directed not against the enemy but against his own comrades. As a result Philip was often brought back from his battles wounded while the other often left a dinner with his friends' blood on his hands. Philip was unwilling to share the royal power with his friends; Alexander wielded it over his. The father preferred to be loved, the son to be feared. (Yardley 92)

The language of the passage could owe more to Justin than to Trogus, but the biographical progression of Alexander's actions throughout the *Historiae Philippicae* towards greater acts of violence against his army and greater degrees of orientalizing enacts in the narrative the claims stated in IX.8.

In contrast to what can be gleaned of Trogus' Alexander portrait, Curtius fully develops a complex portrait of Alexander through rhetorically expanded biographical episodes and explicit authorial commentary. Curtius' Alexander initially displays mixed characteristics but allows his success eventually to release his pride and temper. Curtius makes Alexander's degeneration from moderation to

excess one of the primary themes of the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*, and so provides abundant material that constructs Alexander's portrait.

Curtius presents many episodes early in the first half of the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* that illustrate Alexander's positive characteristics and inserts authorial commentary about the change Alexander will undergo. When Alexander visits Darius' captured wife and mother, Darius' wife mistakes Haphaestion for Alexander, prompting Alexander's famous response: "Non errasti, mater; nam et hic Alexander est" (III.xii.17) ("You were not mistaken, mother; for this man too is Alexander"; Rolf, *Vol. I* 143). Curtius immediately follows the episode with an excursus on the "continentia" (III.xii.18) ("moderation") that Alexander displays to the captured women but that he will forfeit in the future. If he had only maintained such "continentia" throughout his life, Curtius explains, Alexander would have more successfully governed his innate "superbiam atque iram, mala invicta" (III.xii.19) ("pride and anger, faults which he did not conquer"; Rolf, *Vol. I* 143).

The seeds of Alexander's change in personality are, according to Curtius, always present. The "superbiam atque iram" ("pride and anger") that were always part of Alexander's personality but which he could never control eventually gain full expression once Alexander's military excellence results in winning Darius' Persian Empire. Alexander's military excellence therefore earns Curtius' praise but causes Alexander's degeneration in that those martial skills gain the peace that destroys Alexander's personality.

Curtius details many of the martial skills that allow Alexander to win the Persian Empire. Alexander displays shame appropriate to a warrior-king when he must leave his dead unburied (V.iv.3) or loses men to his own rashness in battle (IV.ix.12). He knows how to motivate his men “ut cuiusque animis aptum erat” (III.x.4) (“such as were appropriate to the feelings of each”; Rolfe, *Vol. I* 1230). Alexander’s address to his men before the battle of Issus provides one of several examples that Curtius provides of Alexander “haudquaquam rudis pertractandi militares animos” (IV.ii.17) (“by no means inexperienced in working upon the minds of soldiers”; Rolfe, *Vol. I* 183). That Alexander understands “militares animos” (“the minds of soldiers”) earns him the intense love of his men (III.vi.17-20). He ensures that his soldiers see him behaving as one of them in his “exercitation corporis inter ipsos, cultus habitusque paulum a private abhorrens, militaris vigor” (III.vi.19) (“bodily exercise in their company, dress and bearing differing but little from those of a man in private station, a soldier’s vigour”; Rolfe, *Vol. I* 105).

His soldiers love him even for the very rashness in committing his troops that Alexander sometimes regrets and for his disregard of personal danger (such as at III.xi.7, IV.vi.14, and IV.xiii.25), since these qualities earn Alexander his victories. But once his victories are settled, as roughly the second half of the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* details, Alexander’s inability to remain as moderate in peace as he had been in war causes his degeneration of personality. That degeneration manifests in the same traits represented by the first generation

propagandists as examples of Alexander's profligacy. Because Alexander possesses "animus militarium rerum quam quietis otiique patientior" (VI.ii.1) ("a mind which was better qualified for coping with military toil than with quiet and ease"; Rolfe, *Vol. II* 17), he adopts hubristic Persian honors and falls into drunkenness after winning Darius' empire.

Curtius relates the controversy of Alexander's demand for *proskynesis* with sympathy for Callisthenes and the other Macedonians who balk at paying Alexander divine honors (V.iii.9-24). Curtius also insists not only that Callisthenes was innocent of involvement in the assassination plot against Alexander, but that Alexander was at fault "quod praeditum optimis moribus artibusque, . . . , non tantum occiderit, sed etiam torserit, indicta quidem causa" (VIII.viii.22) ("because he had not only put to death a man endowed with noble character and accomplishments, . . . , but had even tortured him, and that without a trial": Rolfe, *Vol. II* 303). Callisthenes' innocence and worthiness thus stand in sharper contrast against Alexander's excessive pride and anger, and emphasizes the degeneration of personality upon which Curtius builds his Alexander portrait.

Alexander's drunkenness occasions Curtius' frequent authorial commentary. Curtius takes from Cleitarchus the episode of Alexander burning Persepolis at the instigation of Thais, the "Ebrio scorto" (V.vii.3) ("drunken strumpet"; Rolfe, *Vol. I* 387).⁴⁸ That episode serves not as an entertaining example of court life but as an illustration of the degeneration that Alexander

undergoes. Before telling the story of Thais and Alexander, Curtius lists the positive traits that Alexander had demonstrated in war:

Cetreum ingentia animi bona, illam indolem qua omnes reges antecessit, illam in subeundis periculis constantiam, in rebus moliendis efficiendisque velocitatem, in deditos fidem, in captives clementiam, in voluptatibus permissis quoque et usitatis temperantiam haud tolerabili (V.vii.1)

But Alexander's great mental endowments, that noble disposition, in which he surpassed all kings, that intrepidity in encountering dangers, his promptness in forming and carrying out plans, his good faith towards those who submitted to him, merciful treatment of his prisoners, temperance even in lawful and usual pleasures (Rolfe, *Vol. I* 386-387)

The passage ends with Curtius' assertion that these admirable qualities "vini cupiditate foedavit" ("were sullied by an excessive love of wine"). As Alexander turns from winning his empire to administering it, he indulges in excessive drinking at banquets, and finally loses not only all self-control but also the qualities for which he had been loved by both his companions and his common soldiers.

Modern scholars often see philosophical influences upon the Alexander portraits that Trogus and Curtius create. Peripatetics, adherents of Aristotle's teachings, wrote with great hostility against Alexander across many genres. The Peripatetics condemned Alexander for, as they saw it, failing to follow the training Aristotle had provided Alexander during his youth in Macedonia. That Alexander executed Callisthenes, who was Aristotle's nephew, elicited personal animosity

from Peripatetic authors. The later Peripatetics believed that Callisthenes had been wholly innocent of involvement in the assassination attempt against Alexander, and had been executed only for his staunch opposition to Alexander's insistence upon *proskynesis*. Scholars have not identified Trogus as a Peripatetic, his *Historiae Philippicae* being much too fragmentary to allow such attribution, but the unremitting hostility of his Alexander portrait certainly mirrors the attacks of Peripatetic writers.

Where the Peripatetic criticism of Alexander's personality originated in his associations with Aristotle and Callisthenes, Stoic criticism derived from the philosophy itself. For Stoics, right living entailed freeing oneself from the vices that originate in human passion since such passions lead to incorrect, or immoderate, choices made in response to external forces.⁴⁹ The goal for a Stoic would therefore be to achieve virtue by correctly judging and responding to the world outside of the individual rather than allowing "the passions to betray the mind into error" (Colish 43). As Colish explains, internal judgment and external behavior merge in the virtues, as "Courage is the correct judgment as to what must be endured. Temperance is the correct judgment in the choice of things. Justice is the correct judgment in the use of things" (44). Stoicism therefore obviously influences Curtius' Alexander portrait in the depiction of both Alexander's early virtues and his degeneration into vice. Curtius' summation of Alexander's traits, reproduced above from V.vii.1, details his traits in terms of the Stoic virtues of courage, temperance and justice. Alexander's degenerative behavior also follows

Stoic philosophy in that it results from Alexander's inability to control his passions of pride and anger.

Philosophy is but one of the influences that makes Roman historiography in general a highly literary genre. Trogus and Curtius participate in the expectation held by their Roman audiences that a history display the author's literary style, a style that included many of the same stylistic features seen in the first generation historians. Both incorporate rhetorical features to intensify the drama of their histories, although Trogus differs from Curtius, and nearly all Roman historians, in eschewing invented speeches.⁵⁰ Curtius follows the more common rhetorical feature of inventing not only speeches but also letters as part of his literary style.⁵¹ Such invented discourse, in addition to showcasing Curtius' talent for his audience, helps construct his Alexander portrait by providing access to what Curtius presented as Alexander's interior personality.

Both Trogus and Curtius also include poetic and mythological echoes as part of their fulfillment of audience expectation. Although Yardley and Heckel are themselves not convinced of all the echoes of other historians and poets found in Trogus, "Appendix V" of their translation presents the evidence of Trogus' intertextuality pointed to by modern scholars. Curtius' intertextuality is more easily identified because of the better textual preservation, a state that allows Baynham to center her monograph on "Curtius' literary context" (15). Their borrowing from other authors and genres includes comparing Alexander to mythological and Homeric figures. Trogus, for example, portrays Alexander as

surpassing Hercules by capturing a defended mountain city that the mythic hero had failed to take (Trogus XII.12-.13) while Curtius depicts him as imitating Achilles when Alexander dragged Betis, the governor of the defeated city of Gaza, behind his chariot (IV.vi.29).

The two Roman authors also incorporate Alexander's *pothos*, his characteristic "yearning" instituted by the first generation author Nearchus. In Trogus, Alexander commits himself to capture the mountain stronghold because he was "Captus . . . cupidine Herculis acta superare . . ." (XII.7.13) ("overcome by an urge to better Hercules' exploits"; Yardley 115). Curtius too refers to Alexander's *pothos*, in Latin "cupido" ("desire"), as the cause of many of his actions. Curtius even links Alexander's drinking to the same *pothos* that drives him to move ever further East, as the phrase "vini cupiditate foedavit" ("were sullied by an excessive love of wine") of V.vii.1 employs "cupiditate" to indicate Alexander's "passion" or "eagerness" for wine.

In addition to continuing motifs from the first generation authors, Trogus and Curtius meet the literary characteristics expected of Roman historiography by integrating thematic topics of interest to a Roman audience. The themes of *regnum*, *translatio imperii*, and *Fortuna*—themes new to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system—are the most important literary contributions that Trogus and Curtius make to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, as is the subordination of such themes in supporting a moral view and didactic use of the past.

While themes analogous to *regnum*, *translatio imperii* and *Fortuna* appeared in Greco-Roman historiography before Trogus and Curtius, their use of these themes in the *Historiae Philippicae* and the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* are developed in the context of Imperial Roman views of the past and of the purpose to which history should be put.⁵² Roman historiography in the time of Trogus and Curtius maintained an interest in the kings of Rome's legendary past and the emperors of its Imperial present. In the histories of Trogus and Curtius, that interest was expressed in the thematic development of concepts of *regnum*, using Alexander as an example—both negative and positive—of kingly qualities and use of power.

While the Greeks had viewed the past as cyclical and therefore kings as part of the repeated rise and fall of empires, Romans viewed the past as a process of teleological movement towards the establishment of an enduring Rome. From this perspective, Rome did not partake in the cycle of rise and fall, whether Republic or Empire. Instead, the authority of world-empire moved progressively from East to West in the process of *translatio imperii* until Rome assumed its world role. Part of that teleological view held that Rome assumed world-empire because *Fortuna* favored Rome as the final imperial authority in *translatio imperii*. For Trogus and Curtius, then, the three themes of *regnum*, *translatio imperii* and *Fortuna* worked together, and Alexander's life and personality provided examples to illustrate that working.

The purpose to which Imperial Roman historiography was aimed, unlike the public and civic purpose of Greek historiography, was private and moral.⁵³ Because Roman historians generally did not view Roman history as participating in the cycles of empires rising and falling, they foresaw no fall in Rome's future; Rome could decay due to the decay of personal morality, but the state would endure. Roman historiography offered the possibility of moral *exempla* drawn from the past, *exempla* that could illustrate either proper or improper models of personal behavior. Alexander the Great therefore became in the hands of the Roman historians primarily a lesson to be applied to how one lived. The attention given to each of the three themes and their combined use in creating the moral *exemplum* each author constructs differs between Trogus and Curtius. Trogus emphasizes *regnum* and *translatio imperii* through a consistently negative Alexander; Curtius emphasizes *regnum* and *Fortuna*, first through the contrast of Darius' fall with Alexander's rise and later through Alexander's degeneration of personality.

For both Trogus and Curtius, moderation or restraint is the most important quality of *regnum*. Trogus may construct restraint as one of the fundamental requirements of an able king, yet he details no examples of that quality in Alexander, other than a statement, possibly Justinian, as to Alexander's initial restraint when succeeding Philip (XI.1.10).⁵⁴ Trogus' Alexander may demonstrate appropriate restraint upon his accession to the Macedonian throne, but his own anger and pride definitely overwhelm that better quality. Alexander's death

destroys his empire, and Trogus continues his universal history in the following books with the wars of Alexander's successors and the fates of their empires. Alexander therefore becomes in Trogus an opportunity to develop the author's moral lesson on fit kingly behavior through Alexander's negative example.

The negative portrait that Trogus creates of Alexander supports his moralizing presentation of kingship and his theme of *translatio imperii*. The broad focus of Trogus' history indicates his interest in *translatio imperii*, a thematic development that is stronger in the *Historiae Philippicae* than in most Roman historiography because of that text's focus on the Eastern kingdoms. The *Historiae Philippicae* moves ever westward in topic, beginning with the Assyrians and ending with Rome. Each book details the rise and fall of the empires under consideration until ending with Rome, the empire under which Trogus wrote. Trogus details the rise and fall of the kingdoms that Alexander's generals carved out of his conquests, including the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms. The Parthians replaced all the successor kingdoms and moved *imperii* westward, as Trogus narrates in Books 42 and 43, only to be supplanted in turn by Rome.

Authorial commentary on the account of Darius' death emphasizes that world-empire rightly moves from East to West. Darius had been captured by traitors and held in a Parthian village, prompting the comment “. . . credo ita diis immortalibus iudicantibus, ut in terra eorum, qui successuri imperio errant, Persarum regnum finiretur” (11.15.2) (“It was, I suppose, the decision of the immortal gods that the Persian Empire should come to an end in the land of those

destined to succeed to it!"; Yardley 106). The first person speaker of "credo" ("I believe") could be Trogus or Justin, but the authorial intrusion nonetheless explicitly renders the eastward movement of imperial authority that is implicit in the scene.

Curtius also places moderation or restraint, as one of the pivotal qualities of appropriate kingly behavior, developing *regnum* through Alexander's portrait.⁵⁵ Little need be said at this point of Alexander's degeneracy into excess since the discussion above of Curtius' Alexander portrait details both Alexander's initial possession and his subsequent loss of that quality. Curtius also applies the loss of restraint seen in Alexander to Darius, who also apparently loses restraint over the course of his life. Upon being advised by Charidemus to separate his forces against Alexander's inferior numbers, Darius ". . . hospitem ac supplicem, tunc cum maxime utilia suadentem, abstrahi iussit ad capitale supplicium" (III.ii.17) ("ordered a guest and a suppliant to be dragged off to execution, at the very moment when he was giving most salutary advice"; Rolfe, *Vol. I 79*). Curtius singles out Darius' execution of Charidemus, a Greek banished by Alexander, as an example of Darius' "mite ac tractabile ingenium"(III.ii.17) ("mild and tractable disposition"; Rolfe, *Vol. I 77*) being perverted by "*Fortuna*."

That *Fortuna* perverts Darius' natural restraint emphasizes personal moderation as a key feature of proper *regnum* and the role of *Fortuna* in its loss, and mirrors the same relationship that affects Alexander's biographical narrative and portrait. Curtius' interweaving of *Fortuna* with Alexander's biographical

narrative, with his portrait and with *regnum* throughout the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* results in a varied depiction of *Fortuna* much too complex to detail here.⁵⁶ Rather than attempt to present all the complexities of Curtius' development of the theme, at this point it is only necessary to briefly outline *Fortuna*'s relation to Alexander's life, personality and his *regnum*.

Curtius' thematic development of *Fortuna* is explicit and ubiquitous throughout the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*, and involves three expressions of *Fortuna*: Alexander's personal good luck, fate and the corrupting nature of fortune (Baynham 111). *Fortuna* in the first sense works for Alexander and against Darius in that nearly everything Alexander attempts succeeds. He wins victory over Darius even against greater numbers or when taking excessive risks. In essence, Alexander rides a personal lucky streak to the Persian throne. *Fortuna* as fate or destiny also benefits Alexander. In this sense, *Fortuna* operates as a set of circumstances external to Alexander and separate from his personal luck. In some instances this sense of *Fortuna* projects determinism, as if somehow Alexander is meant to establish his Eastern empire; in other instances *Fortuna* as fate simply connotes that circumstances turn out as they do for no obvious reason.

Luck can change or fate can work against an individual, as happens to Darius in the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*. Curtius uses such changes in *Fortuna* to demonstrate how, as is true for Darius, the capriciousness of *Fortuna* can destroy one's moderation. Curtius' main relationship between *Fortuna* and restraint, however, is expressed through Alexander's good fortune and his resulting excesses.

Alexander's personal luck and fate unerringly bring him the Persian Empire and peace. Persian luxury and the idleness of peace then seduce Alexander, unleash his pride and vice, and finally cause him to fall into excess. Alexander's process of degeneration occurs from *Fortuna* that is too favorable, rather than unfavorable, because "qui orientem tam moderate et prudenter tulit, ad ultimum magnitudinem eius non cepit" (III.xii.20) ("he who bore her stream so temperately and wisely when it was rising, at the last was not able to contain her flood when it became great"; Rolfe, *Vol. I* 143).

Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius Rufus bridge the historical Alexander sources of the first generation authors and the medieval West. By relying on one of the most rhetorical first generation historians as a primary source for Alexander's biographical narrative, Trogus and Curtius begin the shift towards non-historicism that characterizes texts within *Kyng Alisaunder* system. The widespread popularity of the *Epitome* that Justin will form from Trogus' history ensures that the more fanciful Alexander biography takes precedence over more historically correct, if duller, versions of Alexander's life. The two Roman authors also narrow depictions of Alexander's personality for the later authors who consult the *Historiae Philippicae* and the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*. Both authors condemn Alexander's flaws, although Curtius' portrait at least allows Alexander initial greatness of character before falling into excess and degeneracy.

The succeeding authors of Late Antiquity and the medieval West in large part maintain the narrative biography transmitted by Trogus and Curtius. Some

authors also continue the condemnatory portrait found in Trogus and Curtius, although the medieval romance authors draw their more positive depictions of Alexander from the legendary tradition. The thematic interests contributed by Trogus and Curtius become, in some ways, even more important to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system than their narrowing of Alexander's biography and personality. Later authors continue using Alexander as an example of the qualities of *regnum*, but Christianize *translatio imperii* and *Fortuna*, integrating Alexander into a specifically Christian view of history.

Walter of Châtillon bases his twelfth-century *Alexandreis* almost entirely upon Curtius' *Gestae Alexandri Magni*, thereby transmitting the Roman influences to the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae* exerts a more direct influence on the *Kyng Alisaunder* through Justin's *Epitome*, which acts as the basis of Orosius' Alexander history in *Historiae adversum paganos* as well as a source directly consulted by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author. These two latest historical Alexander texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system are the subject of this chapter's final analysis.

Late Antique Alexander Historiography:

Late Antiquity produced the first texts that exert a direct influence on the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. Justin's *Epitome* of the *Historiae Philippicae* and Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* become two of the most widely read texts of the medieval period, as the number of extant manuscripts attest. Both texts

were universal histories that medieval readers consulted for facts of the past. The two texts make specific but narrow contributions to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system that can be discussed together because of their derivative natures. As a compressed reworking of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, Justin's *Epitome* reproduces the skeletal framework of the earlier Roman Alexander biography and portrait. In compressing and reworking the earlier text, however, Justin confuses Trogus' historical chronology and intensifies his negative Alexander portrait. Orosius then takes his own Alexander history from Justin's *Epitome* with little change to the same biographical narrative and portrait. In fitting Alexander's career into the larger framework of his theory of Christian universal history, however, Orsosius transfers Alexander from his originally pagan context into a decidedly Christian context.

M. Iunianus Iustinus, known to later ages as Justin, wrote the *Epitome* in his spare time while in Rome on official business around 200 CE.⁵⁷ As Justin himself explains in the *Praefatio*, he came upon Trogus' forty-four volume history and "excerpsi" ("excerpted") the best material. Justin reduced Trogus' text to between one-fifth and one-tenth of its original size, omitting material that "nec cognoscendi voluptate iucunda nec exemplo errant necessaria" (*Praefatio* .4) ("did not make pleasurable reading or serve to provide a moral"; Yardley13). Because the material that Justin determined to be both "iucunda" ("pleasurable") and "exemplo . . . necessaria" ("provide a moral") also is exceedingly dramatic and rhetorically useful, modern scholars hypothesize that Justin was an orator or teacher of rhetoric.

In pursuit of the best material from Trogus, Justin seems to do more than merely epitomize, or summarize, the *Historiae Philippicae*. Scholars once believed that Justin directly and faithfully copied large portions of Trogus' original text, but now most believe that Justin worked more actively with Trogus' material. Yardley and Heckel provide a list of "Justinisms" that detail the distinctive verbal usages that originate from Justin rather than from Trogus, usages that indicate Justin's hand upon the material (337-341). Despite the intrusion of Justin upon Trogus' original material, the *Epitome* remains highly derivative of the *Historiae Philippicae* and so makes few original contributions to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Justin replicates the biographical narrative and portrait of Trogus, but in compressing the *Historiae Philippicae* Justin hopelessly confuses Alexander's deeds.

In reducing Trogus' original material, Justin omits details and foregoes transitions that would have maintained chronological regularity. At XI.9.12-.16, for example, Justin relates Alexander's visit to Darius' captured family. The passage depicts only one visit by Alexander rather than the successive visits by first Leonnatus and then Alexander. Justin apparently conflates the two visits, including some details that occurred on Leonnatus' visit and some that occurred on Alexander's visit. Justin also seems to rewrite the cause of Alexander's death, being the only Alexander historian to assert without reservation that Alexander died from poison (XII.13-.14). Other historians included the rumor that Alexander died from poison rather than from natural causes, but few believed the rumor and none

other than Justin replaced a natural death with the assertion of a conspiracy to assassinate Alexander by poisoning. Justin therefore introduces faulty chronology and non-historical events into the *Kyng Alisaunder* system that would otherwise not be contained in the historical sources consulted by the medieval author of the *Kyng Alisaunder*.

Conflation, chronological irregularities and simple mistakes occur throughout the *Epitome*, either because Justin omits material he deems unworthy of inclusion or because he misunderstands Trogus' original text in some way. The resulting *Epitome* becomes useless as an Alexander source for modern scholars but serves as a favorite universal history in Late Antiquity and the medieval period, as attested by the two hundred surviving medieval manuscripts (Yardley/Heckel 8). The *Epitome* becomes the source of Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* two hundred years after Justin, and one of the secondary sources of the *Kyng Alisuander* another twelve hundred years later.

In the *Historiae adversum paganos* Orosius created the first universal history written in Latin since Pompeius Trogus had written the *Historiae Philippicae*. Although derivative of Trogus by way of Justin, Orosius created his universal history for very different reasons than those of Trogus.⁵⁸ Asked by Augustine to compile proof that the fifth-century CE suffered no worse disasters than had occurred before the Christian era, Orosius responded with a full history of the world from Adam to his present day. Orosius fills the *Historiae adversum paganos* with examples of suffering, mainly caused by the slaughter of war, to

disprove the charge that abandoning the traditional pagan gods for Christianity had caused the sack of Rome in 410. Orosius fulfilled Augustine's intention with a long list of disaster and suffering endured in previous ages, but he exceeded Augustine's request by connecting Rome's rise to God's divine plan for the dissemination of Christianity.

Alexander's life, contained in III.16-.20, is but one example of the suffering endured by previous ages, a suffering worse than what Orosius' contemporaries endured in the fifth century. Orosius adopts Alexander's biographical narrative directly from Justin's *Epitome*, making no changes to the life and deeds contained therein other than for even further compressing. The remnants of episodes like Thalestria's visit to Alexander remain in the biographical narrative nearly four centuries after Trogus first wrote the *Historiae Philippicae*. Also still present is Alexander's death by poisoning, an episode derived directly from Justin. Orosius' purpose causes him not only to choose the most venial episodes from Alexander's life, but also to insert authorial commentary on those episodes. Alexander therefore becomes more savage, crueller and more capricious than in any of the previous historical Alexander texts. Orosius highlights any killing ordered or carried out by Alexander, labeling them all unjust murders and describing them in stark terms. During Cleitus' murder, for example, Orosius notes that "commune convivium . . . cruentavit" (III.18.9) ("the blood of Cleitus stained the entire banquet hall"; Raymond 136).

These episodes support Orosius' Alexander portrait, which is explicitly evil. Several times Orosius states that Alexander is "humani sanguinis inextinguibilis" (III.18.10) ("insatiable as he was for human blood"; Raymond 136) and "sanguinem sitiens" (III.20.4) ("ever thirsty for blood"; Raymond 138). Orosius' commentary on the life of Alexander clearly demonstrates his purpose of explicating the evil of the world prior to the Christian era. At the end of III.20, in closing his excursus on the suffering of those conquered by Alexander, Orosius exclaims:

Quolibet haec gesta talia nomine censeantur, hoc est sive dicantur miseriae sive virtutes, utraque prioribus comparata in hoc tempore minora sunt, atque ita utraque pro nobis faciunt in comparatione Alexandri atque Persarum: si virtus nunc vocanda est, minor est hostium; si miseria, minor est Romanorum.

By whatever names such deeds as these are known, whether as sufferings or acts of bravery, when compared with former times, both are less numerous in our own age. In either case comparison with the times of Alexander and the Persians points to our advantage. If "bravery" is the proper word, the valor of the enemy is less marked; if "suffering" is the word to use, the distress of the Romans is less acute. (Raymond 140)

Orosius' fundamental message that no greater calamities afflicted the present generation than had afflicted previous generations concurs with general theological and philosophical precepts of Late Antiquity.⁵⁹ Augustine, who had

directed Orosius to compile examples of past disasters, stated the same in his *De civitate Dei*. Orosius and Augustine also agree that most suffering endured by humanity originates from wars. Orosius links the peace attained by Rome under Augustus with the birth of Christ and the peace that Christianity ultimately will bring. War in the *Historiae adversum paganos* therefore loses its epic nobility and becomes unremittingly savage for both the combatants and the conquered peoples.

Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* differs significantly from Augustine and his followers in the text's overall interpretation of history.⁶⁰ Fusing long-standing interpretation of the *Book of Daniel* with Trogus' emphasis on *translatio imperii* as transmitted through Justin and mixing in tortured numerology, Orosius argues a divinely-ordained movement of empire from East to West, teleologically moving towards an eternal Christian Rome that will carry Christianity to the world. Orosius' interpretation of Rome as both eternal and as God's ordained cradle of Christianity departs from Augustine's interpretation of history, and is an original contribution to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system and to the intellectual climate of Late Antiquity in general.

Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* also offers the first integration of Roman historiography with a Christian world view, and so is the first text of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system to integrate Alexander the Great into a thoroughly Christianized interpretation of the working of the past. Alexander is no longer a singular figure to be admired or—as is the case in Trogus and Justin—vilified, but

one of the long line of emperors to whom God denied lasting world empire on its progression towards its final expression through Rome.

The *Historiae adversum paganos* became the standard historical text of the medieval period, surpassing even Justin's *Epitome* of the *Historiae Philippicae* in popularity and dispersion. Several hundred extant manuscripts in various languages survive from the medieval period, and its influence reaches as far as Dante and Petrarch (Rohrbach 148-149). Orosius' text becomes interpolated into one of the redactions of the *Historia de Preliis*, a legendary Alexander text that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author consulted when composing the Middle English romance. That interpolation thus provides the *Kyng Alisaunder* author his most explicitly Christianized Alexander and an understanding of Alexander in God's divine plan for man.

Chapter Conclusion:

The discussion of this chapter indicates the complex nature of the historical texts that make up the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, both within their own historical periods and across the range of historical periods that transmit their influences to the *Kyng Alisaunder* author. The authors of each period contribute characteristics to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system that derive from the period of production, and thus pass on to later ages echoes of former times that become fixed in the later texts. As texts are produced in each successive period, authors also adapt their received sources to the contexts of their own times, slowly moving the historical Alexander

tradition further away from a mimetic representation of the historical Alexander to a more fantastic Alexander who fulfills the needs of the successive periods.

The first generation authors create a standardized narrative of Alexander's life that is interspersed with variants of more fantastic elements, create a wide range of Alexander portraits and establish the foundational literary themes of Alexander literature. The Roman authors transmit the vulgate tradition of historical texts—the tradition that accepts a more fanciful biography—derived from Cleitarchus' rhetorical history and limit Alexander's personality to a negative interpretation. They also emphasize *regnum*, *translatio imperii*, *Fortuna* and the general use of Alexander for didactic and moral purposes. Finally, the authors of Late Antiquity hopelessly muddle the historical facts of Alexander's life, intensify his flaws and integrate Alexander into their Christian world view.

In the fourteenth century, the Middle English author of the *Kyng Alisaunder* will consult several historical Alexander sources still available to him. He will use Justin's *Epitome* directly, and receive the indirect influence of Curtius' *Gestae Alexandri Magni* and Orosius' *Historiae adversum paganos* through intermediaries. All of these historical sources will transmit to the *Kyng Alisaunder* author a depiction of Alexander's life that verifies fantastic biographical episodes as historical truth. The "historical" Alexander drawn from these texts will be at best a cautionary tale of the destructive power of one's passions and at worst one of the cruelest, most debauched tyrants of the past. He will be an *exemplum* of kingly behavior, a beneficiary and victim of Fortune and a way station in the progression

of imperial power moving by design towards Rome. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author will preserve many of these qualities, but will also modify the characteristics drawn from the historical Alexander tradition by drawing from the second line of texts that produce the Middle English romance. It is that second line of texts, the legendary Alexander tradition, that is the focus of the following chapter.

“□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □” is key to understanding Strabo’s characterization of Callisthenes’ style, meaning as it does to “exaggerate in tragic style” (Liddell and Scott 1528).

²¹ =Strabo XVIII 1, 43

²² See also Pearson, 33-35 for another translation and discussion of the philological problems associated with the text.

²³ =Athenaeus III 91 p. 120

²⁴ Chares’ title is found in Jacoby 125 F3 = Athenaeus III 45 p. 93 CD; Robinson 78-9. The title is also sometimes translated as *History of Alexander*, as in Robinson p. 78 of Jacoby 125 F2 = Athenaeus XII 9 p. 514 EF. See Pearson, p. 50, for his use of “Stories” over “History” to translate □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ in Chares’ title.

²⁵ For example Jacoby 125 F18, = Gellius V 2, 1-5; Robinson 85. This account is by far the most exaggerated depiction of Bucephalus’ death in battle, and includes descriptions of the wounds the horse received as well as its almost human desire to save Alexander from the dangers of the battle.

²⁶ For the single combat with Darius, see Jacoby 125 F6 = Plut. De Alex. fort. II 9 p. 341 C; Robinson 82. The reference to saving Lysimachus = Plutarch Alex. 24 (p. 662, l. 18).

²⁷ = Athenaeus VIII 4 p. 277.

²⁸ = Athenaeus X 49 p. 437; Robinson 85-86.

²⁹ = Plutarch Alex. 55.

³⁰ = Plutarch Alex. 60.

³¹ On the construction of Alexander upon the models of Hercules as well as Achilles, see Pearson, 12-13.

³² = Strabo XVII 1, 43; Robinson 62-3.

³³ = Plutarch De Alex. fort. II 9 p. 341 C; Robinson 82.

³⁴ = Plutarch Alex. 24; Robinson 82-3.

³⁵ = Arrian Anab. IV 24, 1-25, 4; Robinson 193.

³⁶ Although the fragments of Ephippus that survive do not include the description of Hephæstion’s funeral, the title of his work—*On the Funeral of Alexander and Hephæstion*—demonstrates the centrality of funerary imagery passed on to the extant Alexander historians. See Pearson p. 61-68 for a discussion of Ephippus, Jacoby 126 for the *testimonia* and fragments and Robinson p. 86-88 for translations.

³⁷ Robinson 100-149. The title of Nearchus’ work has been lost, but scholars commonly use *The Circumnavigation of India* (Pearson 112).

³⁸ Robinson 35-45.

³⁹ Robinson 155-158.

⁴⁰ For the dogs, see Plutarch Pro nob 19; Robinson 221; *Kyng Alisaunder* 5275. For the crocodiles and dolphins, see Strabo XV 1, 45; Robinson 220-221; *Kyng Alisaunder* 6605.

⁴¹ For Cleitarchus as Trogus’ primary source see Heckel’s “Part II. History and Historiography,” p. 30-32 of the “Introduction” in *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus: Volume I Books 11-12: Alexander the Great* by Yardley and Heckel.

⁴² See p. 9 of Robert Develin’s “Introduction” to Justin’s *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, translation by J. C. Yardley, for a discussion of Trogus’ preference for indirect over direct speech.

⁴³ See “Appendix: The Problem of Curtius’ Date and Identity,” p. 201-219, in Baynham for a synopsis of the scholarly debate. Baynham assigns Curtius to the Vespasian period.

⁴⁴ Develin’s introduction to Justin’s *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* discusses Justin’s role in reshaping Trogus’ text, as does p. 15-19 of Yardley’s “Introduction” to his translation of Books 11 and 12.

⁴⁵ See Breisach, p. 40-76 and Mellon for overviews of Roman historiography.

⁴⁶ See Rolfe’s “Introduction,” p. ix-x, for a description of the text and supplements that replace the *lacunae*.

⁴⁷ An asterisk indicates a lost portion of Curtius’ text.

⁴⁸ See Pearson, p. 216-219, for a discussion of Cleitarchus' account of Thais and the burning of Persepolis.

⁴⁹ See Colish, p. 42-51.

⁵⁰ As asserted by Justin in the *Epitome* at 38.3.11. The passage and Trogus' avoidance of direct speech are discussed on p. 9 of Yardley and Develin.

⁵¹ See Mellor p. 187-190 for the literary style of Roman historiography.

⁵² See Bresaich, p. 40-76 and Mellor for an overview of Roman historiography, and Baynham p. 11-12 for *regnum* in Roman historiography.

⁵³ Breisach summarizes the shifts in purpose that Roman historiography undergoes through time on p. 75-76.

⁵⁴ See Heckel's note (1.9) in "Commentary," p. 79 for discussion of "restraint" and kingship in Trogus.

⁵⁵ Curtius' thematic use of *regnum* is one of Baynham's primary points.

⁵⁶ Baynham offers a concise overview of *Fortuna* in p. 104-111.

⁵⁷ Justin's gives his name in the *Epitome*, but its exact spelling is unknown since the name appears in the genitive. Scholars believe M. Iustianus Iustinus to be the more likely name, but it could also be M. Iunianus Iustinus. Justin's date also remains the subject of continued conjecture, with estimates ranging from 145 CE to 395 CE. I follow Develin's date of 200 CE. See the "Introduction" of *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, Volume I Books 11-12: Alexander the Great*, by J. C. Yardley and Waldemar Heckel for full discussion of Justin and his relation to Trogus. R. Develin's "Introduction," of *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, transl. by J. C. Yardley, differs in his preference of Iunianus over Iunianus.

⁵⁸ For overviews of the early Christian historiography of the Late Antique period, see Breisach, p. 77-106; Rohrbacher, p.150-206; Croke and Emmet, p. 1-12, and Judge, p. 13-29.

⁵⁹ See Zecchini, p. 317-345.

⁶⁰ Zecchini, p. 322-329, and Rohrbacher, p. 135-149.

Chapter 3: The *Kyng Alisaunder* and the Legendary Alexander Tradition

As a romance, the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* belongs generically to and descends directly from those texts within the *Kyng Alisaunder* system identified by modern scholars as the legendary Alexander tradition. The texts of the historical Alexander tradition may, as seen in Chapter 2, contain varying degrees of fabulous incidents, but those incidents remain firmly rooted in an otherwise clearly historical framework of the time and geographical space of Alexander's career. The texts of the legendary Alexander tradition, in contrast, replace realistic time and space with confused chronology and an imagined world only tenuously attached to the most important actual events of Alexander's life and death. Although modern historians now prefer the historical tradition as sources for Alexander the Great's life, the legendary tradition was more important for transmitting stories of Alexander's life and deeds from the Hellenistic to medieval period. The widespread popularity of the translations and redactions of various versions of the legendary texts ensured their greater dissemination and use throughout the medieval West in comparison to the historical Alexander texts.

The texts that form the legendary portion of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system are no less complex in development and transmission than the texts that make up the historical portion of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Discussing the legendary texts, however, will prove far easier than was the case for Chapter 2's discussion of the historical texts. The origins of the legendary texts are fully studied, textual transmission is better understood and textual preservation is much more complete

than for most of the historical texts. More important, the contents and characteristics of the legendary texts remain much more constant across time, languages and redactions than was seen in the highly variable texts of the historical tradition.

The legendary Alexander tradition descends to the medieval world from two Hellenistic sources: *The Greek Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes and the anonymous *Epistola Alexandri Magni ad Aristotelem magistrum suum de situ et mirabilibus Indiae* (*The Letter of Alexander the Great to His Teacher Aristotle on the Lands and Marvels of India*), generally known as the *Epistola*. Neither of these two texts survives in their original form, although late manuscripts of various versions of *The Greek Alexander Romance* still preserve the text in Greek. The Greek form of an abbreviated version of the *Epistola* survives as an interpolation in *The Greek Alexander Romance*, while a fuller version of the *Epistola* exists as an interpolation in Julius Valerius' Latin translation of the Pseudo-Callisthenes romance and independently in Latin redactions. Stoneman places *The Greek Alexander Romance* within a generation after Alexander's death while Gunderson narrows the *Epistola's* composition to the end of the fourth century or beginning of the third century BCE (Stoneman, *Life* 2; Gunderson, "Early Elements" 360).¹ Definite dating for the two works remains elusive without the original texts, although their composition appears contemporaneous.

The West, including the *Kyng Alisaunder* author, received *The Greek Alexander Romance* through two translations into Latin: the fourth century CE *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* (*Deeds of Alexander the Great*) by Julius Valerius and the

tenth-century CE *Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni* (*The Birth and Victory of Alexander the Great*) by Leo, Archpriest of Naples. Each of these Latin translations underwent further reworking over the centuries. Julius Valerius' *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* was abbreviated not later than the ninth century into the form now known as the *Zacher Epitome*, a name derived from the text's editor. This shorter version of the *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* proved more popular than Julius Valerius' original translation, yet influenced few later authors outside the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.² In the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, Thomas of Kent relies on the *Zacher Epitome* as his main source for the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. Thomas of Kent's reliance on the *Zacher Epitome* for the story of Alexander's life passes the influence of that rarely used text to the *Kyng Alisaunder*. In addition, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author appears to have consulted both the full translation of Julius Valerius' *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* as well as its *Epitome* (Smithers, Vol. 2 16).

The Greek Alexander Romance also descends to the *Kyng Alisaunder* through the various reworkings of the *Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni*, the Latin translation made by Leo of Naples in the tenth century. Like Julius Valerius' translation, Leo's translation exerted greater influence through reworked versions than through the original translation. The first reworking of Leo's translation occurred in the eleventh century and produced the text known as the I¹ redaction of the *Historia de Preliis* (*History of [Alexander's] Battles*). Later unknown authors then twice reworked the I¹ redaction, in the second half of the twelfth century (the I² redaction) and again between 1185 and 1236 (the I³ redaction).³ The *Historia de*

Preliis I² redaction, the version used as a secondary source by the *Kyng Alisuander* author, includes extensive interpolations from the Alexander chapters from Orosius's *Historiae adversum paganos*. The *Historia de Preliis* I² redaction therefore provides a second line of transmission for *The Greek Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes to the *Kyng Alisaunder* author as well as a vehicle for the transmission of the *Historiae adversum paganos* by Orosius.

The *Epistola*, the second Hellenistic text that founds the legendary Alexander tradition, originally was part of a series of letters supposedly exchanged between Alexander and other correspondents, including Olympias and Aristotle. Of the original series of fraudulent letters composed by an anonymous author or authors towards the end of the second century BCE, only the single example of the *Epistola* remains extant as an independent text (Gunderson, *Letter* 33). Seventy-two Latin manuscripts of the *Epistola* still survive; a number that indicates the text's widespread popularity and influence throughout the medieval world (Stoneman, *Life* 38).

The *Epistola* exerts its influence on the *Kyng Alisuander* system through an intact version and an abbreviated version interpolated into other texts. The unabbreviated version of the *Epistola* circulated as an independent text and accompanied the *Historia de Preliis* in some manuscripts. The abbreviated version of the *Epistola* was included in *The Greek Alexander Romance* at the romance's composition. Thomas of Kent and the *Kyng Alisaunder* author each used the unabbreviated version of the *Epistola* as sources for their romances, and the *Kyng*

Alisaunder author also consulted the I² redaction of the *Historia de Preliis* that contained the brief version of the letter. The *Epistola* therefore is the text most consulted by medieval authors of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

The medieval legendary Alexander tradition directly affecting the *Kyng Alisaunder* consists of only two texts, both composed in the twelfth century: the *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon and the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by Thomas of Kent. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author employed both of these medieval romances as sources, with the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* being the basis of the Middle English romance and the Medieval Latin *Alexandreis* used fairly extensively as a check on the Anglo-Norman. These two medieval sources exert a stronger influence upon the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* than that exerted by the ancestral texts of the Hellenistic and Roman periods because the *Kyng Alisaunder* author directly consulted the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the *Alexandreis*.

The legendary Alexander tradition, like the historical Alexander tradition, preserves and transmits to the *Kyng Alisaunder* echoes of earlier cultural moments that the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* author variously adopts, rejects and transforms while creating his version of the Alexander story. The legendary Alexander texts influence succeeding Alexander literature within the *Kyng Alisaunder* system in much the same manner as the historical Alexander texts: in how the historical texts depict Alexander's life and deeds, construct his personality and include literary characteristics. The legendary Alexander texts of the Hellenistic period originate a standardized depiction of Alexander's biographical narrative in

keeping with the historical Alexander texts. The biographical narrative of Alexander's life in the legendary texts, however, consists primarily of non-historical events and fabulous adventures. The Hellenistic texts also originate an excessively flattering construction of Alexander's personality, making him a heroic superman that directly contrasts the portrait contained in the historical texts.

Modern scholars view the majority of the texts in the legendary Alexander tradition as poorly written and containing few literary qualities of worth, with the Pseudo-Callisthenes romance and its derivatives receiving especially strong condemnation. The Greek texts, however, instigate thematic interests that remain consistent throughout the legendary tradition, although these thematic interests adapt to the cultural pressures of each successive period. By contrasting Alexander's search for self-identity and his obsession with lasting fame and immortality against his early death, *The Greek Alexander Romance* originates the legendary tradition's thematic preoccupation with the mutability of life and transience of human accomplishments. The *Epistola* originates the legendary tradition's focus on the Wonders of India, the detailed descriptions of peoples, places and animals contained in the legendary texts that prove some of its most popular content.

Few substantial modifications occur to the characteristics described above as *The Greek Alexander Romance* and the *Epistola* descend from the Hellenistic period to the medieval period. These characteristics change more from the successive manipulations made to the text by later redactors than through adapting Alexander to the cultural and intellectual climate of the succeeding periods. Across time and

historic periods, then, the legendary texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system remain much more constant than the historical texts, which saw distinct reinterpretations of Alexander's life and personality. The later legendary texts Christianize Alexander and expand upon his fabulous adventures, but otherwise remain close to the earlier legendary texts in depicting his biographical narrative and personality. The literary qualities of the later legendary texts also remain consistent, evidencing manipulations to the themes inaugurated by the Hellenistic texts but few original contributions. Because later redactors duplicate the Wonders of India and include other fabulous adventures, the legendary texts across time shift what began as decidedly non-historical depictions of Alexander ever further towards fantasy.

The medieval *Alexandreis* and *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* likewise demonstrate little change in the legendary characteristics inherited from earlier texts. The biographical narrative and personality of Alexander contained in the medieval romances of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system largely correspond to their antecedents. Genre accounts for the most significant literary characteristics of the legendary Alexander texts. The authors of the historical Alexander tradition imparted various characteristics to their historical texts by drawing from genre other than historiography. The legendary Alexander texts fuse genres rather than simply borrow from other literary fields, and so evidence an even greater blending of genre characteristics than do the historical Alexander texts. The *Alexandreis*, a text unique in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system for its participation in both the historical and legendary traditions, was written as an epic poem based on the *Gestae Alexandri*

Magni of Quintus Curtius Rufus, while the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* most closely resembles the *romans antique*. The characteristics of these two genres bring specialized qualities, such as an increased interest in erotic entanglements, to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, but again no wholesale reinterpretation of Alexander's life and personality.

Tracing the chronological development of the legendary Alexander texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system demonstrates the strength of the influences these texts exert on the composition of the Middle English romance. The chronological treatment of the legendary texts demonstrates how the translations and adaptations that occur to these texts across time trend towards a greater degree of fantastic, non-historical presentations of Alexander, just as is true for the historical texts.

The Greek Legendary Texts and Their Derivatives:

The legendary Alexander tradition descends from two widely read pieces of ancient popular fiction originally written in Greek: *The Greek Alexander Romance* and the *Epistola*. The common generic features that descend from these two founders of the legendary Alexander tradition include a decidedly non-historical biography, excessively flattering description of Alexander's personality and character, fantastic adventures, wonder tales associated with the East and Alexander's preoccupation with immortality,. This chapter's discussion of the legendary Alexander portion of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system begins with *The Greek Alexander Romance*, the source from which nearly European Alexander romances descend (Krantz x).⁴

The Greek Alexander Romance was in the form now known no later than 340 CE, when it was translated into Latin by Julius Valerius. Its composition, however, could have occurred at any point from the third century BCE to the mid-third century CE, most likely in Alexandria.⁵ Later manuscripts attribute the work to Callisthenes, Alexander's court historian, but modern scholars recognize that because *The Greek Alexander Romance* narrates Alexander's entire life, including his death, it could not have been written by the historian whom Alexander executed during the Persian expedition. Modern scholars preserve the long-standing but erroneous association of *The Greek Alexander Romance* with Callisthenes by adopting the name "Pseudo-Callisthenes" for the original but anonymous author.

No single, unified version of *The Greek Alexander Romance* exists. Rather, a now-lost original *□ text spawned a variety of recensions, or re-worked versions, that can differ significantly in content and style.⁶ The *□ recension, the oldest of the five versions of *The Greek Alexander Romance*, is represented by a single manuscript made between 1013 and 1124 (Stoneman, *Life* 230).⁷ Called the □ manuscript, this is a later version of *The Greek Alexander Romance* that served as Julius Valerius' source for his *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni*.⁸ Although it includes material not originally contained in *The Greek Alexander Romance*, most notably an expanded interpolation of Alexander's contact with the Brahmins or *gymnosophists*, the □ manuscript more closely approaches the romance's original form than do the various manuscripts of the other recensions. The Julius Valerius translation lacks episodes contained in the extant □ manuscript and therefore, in concert with a fifth-

century translation into Armenian that also originated from an early form of the
□ manuscript, allows confident reconstruction of the lost *□ recension from
which the extant □ version descended. The *□ recension also closely approximated
the original *□ recension of *The Greek Alexander Romance* since *□ was based on
either an early version of the □ manuscript or on the *□ recension itself. Leo of
Naples used a manuscript of this *□ tradition as the basis of his *Historia de Preliis*.

Although the title

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□□□ (*The Life and Deeds of Alexander of Macedon*) occurs in several later
manuscripts, scholars apply the title *The Alexander Romance* to the manuscripts and
recensions that make up the textually-related group. I, however, follow Richard
Stoneman's use of the title *The Greek Alexander Romance* to make clear the
distinction between the romance of Pseudo-Callisthenes as represented by the
reconstructed *□ recension and the common scholarly use of "Alexander romance"
in referring to the genre of texts that derives from Pseudo-Callisthenes' romance.

The original Alexandrian author now called Pseudo-Callisthenes did not
independently create a wholly original fiction in *The Greek Alexander Romance*, but
joined a number of freely circulating materials with original material to form a
single, unified romance. *The Greek Alexander Romance* draws from either a first
generation historical text in the rhetorical vein of Cleitarchus or perhaps from
Cleitarchus' work itself, fictional letters purportedly exchanged between Alexander
and various correspondents, a rhetorical recreation of the debate among the

Athenians on their response to Alexander's hegemony, a philosophical tract depicting Alexander's meeting with the *gymnosophists* or Brahmins, the tradition of Alexander's will and indigenous Egyptian folktales about the last native pharaoh of Egypt. In integrating these disparate materials with his own contributions to create *The Alexander Romance*, the anonymous author also integrates the genre characteristics of those materials into the romance. The resulting fiction transforms Alexander's life and deeds into fantastic adventures, presents a heroically positive portrait of Alexander and wrestles with personal and cultural anxieties about identity and death.

The Greek Alexander Romance founds the legendary biographical episodes that comprise Alexander's life in the romance tradition, including many episodes that occur in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. The later title contained in some manuscripts indicates the text's emphasis on Alexander's *□ □ □ □* ("life") and *□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □* ("deeds"), an emphasis manifested in the stories of Alexander's birth, career and death. In *The Greek Alexander Romance*, however, Alexander's "life" becomes a series of prophetic signs and wondrous events while his "deeds" are more adventure than military career. From Pseudo-Callisthenes' romance come the depiction of Nectanebo as Alexander's father (I.7), Alexander's participation in the Olympic games (I.18-.19), his presiding over the Isthmian games (I.47), his visits in disguise to Darius (II.14-.15) and Candace (III.20-.23) and his death by poisoning (III.31-.32).⁹

historical death. As noted in Chapter 2, even if authors of the historical Alexander tradition raised the question of Alexander being poisoned none other than Justin authoritatively asserted the truth of the rumor. The Pseudo-Callisthenes romance not only includes a death by poisoning for Alexander, it elaborates the scenes of the poison's preparation, the joining of the conspirators in the plot, Alexander's ingestion of the poison and its effects upon him. Because the historical sources available to the medieval West remained limited, the events depicted in *The Greek Alexander Romance* became accepted as historical fact, including the 'fact' that Alexander was poisoned by his own men.

The portrait of Alexander's personality contained in *The Greek Alexander Romance* differs as much from the historical tradition as does his biography. Many of the historical texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system present an extremely condemnatory portrait of Alexander the Great, but the legendary texts present a portrait so positive as to be unblemished. Authorial insertions ensure that Alexander's portrait be read as an exemplar of the consummate kingly qualities that he exhibits, specifically pointing to Alexander's self-control, generosity and wisdom as his characteristic qualities. His actions demonstrate additional personality traits that contradict the historical tradition, including lack of superstition, preference for diplomacy over conflict and resistance to the trappings of divinity.

In direct contrast to the Alexander presented in even the most sympathetic historical texts, the Alexander of Pseudo-Callisthenes is a paragon of self-control throughout his life. When Nicolas, prince of the Archarnanians and Alexander's rival

With this more humble portrayal *The Greek Alexander* rewrites the most damning criticism of Alexander contained in the historical texts, that he displayed excessive pride in his demand to be treated as a god. Instead of demanding such honors, the legendary version of Alexander neither seeks nor accepts them.

The Greek Alexander Romance owes its non-historical depiction of Alexander's life and its positive portrayal of Alexander's personality in part to the blending of genres accomplished by its author when combining the pre-existing material with original contributions during the romance's composition. The first generation historical text that provided the core biographical narrative of Alexander's life contributed what historically-correct material the romance contains. The rhetorical style of that historical text, however, ensured that the biographical frame of the romance included the non-historical variants of the historical Alexander tradition as well as a tendency to flatter Alexander.

The bulk of the material incorporated into *The Greek Alexander Romance* was more historically inaccurate than even the most flagrantly rhetorical texts of the historical Alexander tradition. The letters, the debate in Athens, the meeting of Alexander with the *gymnosophists* and the Egyptian material all used a kernel of historical truth as the starting point for rhetorical exercises, imaginative literature, propaganda or nationalistic myth. Despite the kernel of historical truth hidden within these materials, the non-historical content outweighs the romance's historical foundation and shifts *The Greek Alexander Romance* fully into its romance mode.

The Greek Alexander Romance as a whole belongs to the genre of the Greek novel, and this genre influences its presentation of Alexander's life and personality.¹² Even though the canonical Greek novel centered on the "[love], separation, and reunion" of a pair of lovers (Gunderson, *Letter* 24), most scholars nonetheless classify the Pseudo-Callisthenes romance as part of the genre, if in the "margin, or hinterland" (Reardon 143) of the Greek novel.

As a Greek novel, *The Greek Alexander Romance* would be expected to offer entertainment over didactic instruction, and to achieve that purpose by presenting Alexander's life in as exciting a manner as possible. The wholesale shift of Alexander's life from one comprised of military deeds to one of narrow escapes, disguises and fantasy adventures corresponds to the characteristic plots of Greek novels, especially those that focus on fantastic travel (Holzberg 12-14). In some travel novels, characters undergo strings of dangerous and exotic adventures while passing through fantasy landscapes nominally labeled as places like Egypt or Phoenicia. The inclusion of biographical episodes like Nectanebo's fathering of Alexander or Alexander's journey to Queen Candace simply add sensational details or another exciting adventure, and thereby provide all the more entertainment. Inconvenient historical facts about Alexander's temper and drinking are either rewritten or ignored to allow *The Greek Alexander Romance* to present Alexander as a combination of an idealized warrior and a *picaro* who encounters adventures one after another.

With Alexander's biography and personality in *The Greek Alexander Romance* differing so widely from the biography and personality presented in the various historical sources, it is no surprise that the literary qualities of the Pseudo-Callisthenes romance also contrast with the historical tradition. As a Greek novel, *The Greek Alexander Romance* took part in a genre that, even at the time of the romance's composition, was considered a low, non-literary form (Hagg 140-141). Created for entertainment, a Greek novel incorporated the excitement and imaginative appeal that would please a popular audience rather than the poetic skill and moral purpose that would ensure the approbation of a highly educated audience.

The quick narrative pace, salacious family conflict, thrilling adventures and exotica that make up *The Greek Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes create an entertaining if perhaps disposable product, but the romance displays few literary qualities that would earn it critical approval. *The Greek Alexander Romance* nonetheless presents several thematic programs in the passages that were adopted from pre-existing materials. Because the author created *The Greek Alexander Romance* from pre-existing material that he joined to his original contributions, the pre-existing materials bring to the romance the rhetorical interests and themes that they already contained. *The Greek Alexander Romance* therefore displays interests in contrasting the personalities of Darius and Alexander, in Alexander's quest for immortality, in responses to empire and in the entertainment value of the strange lands through which Alexander traveled.

Convinced that Alexander cannot withstand the military force of the Persian Empire, Darius promises to punish him “*ἄνευ λόγου θάνατον*” (I.40.5) (“with an unspeakable death”), specifically to be “*σταυρωθῆναι*” (I.36.5) (“crucified”).

Darius progressively softens his tone as Alexander gains victories against the Persians, demonstrating Darius’ awareness of his diminishing status. In the third letter, Darius omits his titles and instead employs an unadorned greeting that reads only “*ἄνθρωπε*” (II.10.6) (“Darius speaks to Alexander”). Finally, in the fourth letter Darius capitulates and recognizes Alexander as “*κύριε*” (II.17.2) (“my master”). Darius’ progressively changing tone throughout the letters underscores his defeat and, when contrasted against the tone constructed for Alexander’s letters, verifies Alexander as the more kingly of the two men.

The tone that Alexander adopts in the two letters he sends Darius clearly contrasts the personality that Darius presents in his letters to Alexander. Alexander refers to himself simply as “*ἄνθρωπος*” (I.38.2) (“King Alexander, father Philip and mother Olympias”). Alexander’s simple designation stands all the more sharply against Darius’ divine titles when Alexander addresses Darius as

“*θεῶν υἱὸς*” (I.36.5) (“son of the gods”).

Aristotle, a text that Gunderson dates to 316-308 BCE (“Elements” 360).

Alexander’s vision of the god Sarapis that concludes Book I’s extended description of the founding of Alexandria and his consultation of Sesonchosis at the cave of the gods in Book III did not circulate independently, but are part of the Egyptian material incorporated into the romance. Finally, Alexander’s visit to the oracle of Apollo at Lokroi appears to be an original contribution made by the romance author. By incorporating these five disparate episodes into the text of *The Greek Alexander Romance* the author implicitly contrasts Alexander’s glorious life against his early death.

Of these five episodes that develop the romance’s theme of immortality, four occur as oracular responses that either assure Alexander of his lasting fame or forecast his approaching death. Alexander expresses his interest in his immortality partly through his concern that his life not be forgotten after his death. Alexander receives oracular responses at three sites—the temple of Sarapis (I.33), the oracle of Apollo (I.45) and the cave of the gods (III.24)—that reassure him of lasting fame.¹⁶ The god Sarapis confirms to Alexander through a dream vision that the newly-founded city of Alexandria will always bear Alexander’s name (I.33.10) while Apollo, through Apollo’s priestess, promises Alexander that

“□ ã □ □□□□ □ ã □□□□ □

□□□□□□□ ã □□□□” (I.45.4) (“[you] shall be remembered through the ages”; Haight 55). Sesonchosis, a legendary pharaoh, tells Alexander that despite Sesonchosis having

“Who are more numerous, the dead or the living?” (III.6.2) (“Who are more numerous, the dead or the living?”; Haight 101); and “Which is stronger, death or life?” (III.6.3) (“Which is stronger, death or life?”; Haight 102). Even though the interview is patterned on the folk motif of a questioner requiring correct answers to save the life of the person being questioned, these first three questions nonetheless establish the episode’s thematic exploration of life and death.

After asking three more questions, Alexander concludes the interview by allowing the Brahmins to make a request of him. They ask Alexander for “Immortality” (III.7.1) (“Immortality”; Haight 102), forcing Alexander to admit that

“This power I do not have. For I am but a mortal” (III.7.1) (“This power I do not have. For I am but a mortal”; Haight 102). This admission makes clear that Alexander, for all his power, like all men has no power over death. The episode of the Alexander's meeting with the Brahmin proves so popular to later readers that it is greatly expanded by later authors, and takes on independent form in many manuscripts.

The oracular responses about Alexander’s fame and his approaching death in combination with the Brahmin episode create the first of only two sustained thematic developments contained in *The Greek Alexander Romance*. That the romance’s author created that sustained development by joining disparate materials with his

own contributions suggests a conscious striving for literariness even in this piece of popular fiction. The romance’s attention to empire—the second example of the sustained thematic developments—may not be as consciously developed, but it is more widespread.

The Greek Alexander Romance demonstrates a concern with empire through Alexander’s attention to establishing his rightful authority over Darius’ former empire and local responses to that authority. In Book I, several gods appear to Alexander in dreams and authorize his victories and rule. After asking for a sign of his divine paternity, Alexander receives a dream in which he observes Ammon and Olympias engaged in intercourse, a vision that confirms Alexander as the son of the god (I.30). He also sees Sarapis in a dream vision (I.33), who confirms that Alexander enjoys the god’s protection. Sarapis, as discussed above, also tells Alexander that his lasting fame is assured because Alexandria, the city that Alexander founds, will retain Alexander’s name after his death. Dionysus also legitimizes empire in a dream. A satyr confirmed in the text as

“ὁ ἄλλος <ὁ ἄλλος> ἄλλος ἄλλος .
 ἄλλος ἄλλος ἄλλος ἄλλος ἄλλος” (I.35.7) (“one of the attendants of Dionysus”), signifies that the city of Tyre will fall to Alexander by trampling on a “ἄλλος ἄλλος ἄλλος” (I.35.7) (“cheese”).

With the gods legitimizing his right to the conquered empire, Alexander exerts his authority throughout the romance. As discussed above, Alexander punishes cities that reject his hegemony but offers leniency to those that accept his

rule. He recognizes that his authority must be acknowledged as legitimate to be accepted, and so agrees to bypass the city of Abdera until he defeats Darius. Abdera, in return, agrees to submit to its rightful ruler, whether Alexander or Darius. Once he wins the Persian Empire from Darius, Alexander marries Roxane, in *The Greek Alexander Romance* the daughter of Darius instead of the historically correct daughter of a Bactrian chieftain, and thereby makes himself Darius' rightful heir (II.22). He also administers the empire by choosing and communicating with his own satraps (at II.11, II.22). These episodes confirm Alexander as the rightful ruler of Darius' kingdom, and also confirm Ptolemy as the rightful ruler of Egypt after Alexander's death.

Even as the text legitimizes Alexander's rightful rule, it includes episodes that demonstrate the underlying chafing against that empire felt at the time of the romance's composition. The Debate in Athens (II.2-.5), another of the portions of *The Greek Alexander Romance* that originated as a separate rhetorical exercise, details the Athenian response to Alexander's requirement that they submit to his hegemony. Alexander's demand that the recalcitrant Athenians turn over their ten leading orators attacks Athenian identity, since the orators not only represent leading citizens but also the cherished sense of themselves as a democratic city-state.

The debate that follows Alexander's demand brings together famous Athenian statesmen of various historical periods to engage in an imaginary demonstration of oratorical skill. Taking part in the debate are Aeschines (390-314 BCE), Demades (338-318 BCE), and Demosthenes ((384-322 BCE) alongside

Endowing Alexander with Egyptian paternity certainly bolsters a sense of nationalistic identity for the Alexandrian readers of *The Greek Alexander Romance*, but that change in paternity also introduces a conflict of identity in regard to Alexander. *The Greek Alexander Romance* asserts three identities for Alexander: the accepted son of Philip, the nominal son of Ammon and the actual son of Nectanebo. Alexander must be accepted as Philip’s legitimate heir to rightfully rule Macedonia and then, having established himself within that legitimate framework, to rightfully rule the Persian Empire that he conquers. Yet Alexander must also be the rightful ruler of Egypt to allow the romance’s original audience a sense of national connection to the new Ptolemaic Dynasty.

The Greek Alexander Romance acknowledges that Alexander and others see him as Philip’s legitimate heir. As discussed previously in this chapter, Alexander identifies himself in his letter to Darius as Philip’s son, and Darius references Alexander’s parentage when writing to him. Nicolas of the Acarnanians, Alexander’s competitor at the Olympics, also recognizes Alexander’s legitimate status by identifying him as

“φίλιππου μακεδόνος υἱὸν φιλίππου μακεδόνος” (I.18.8) (“the son of Philip of Macedon”). The text therefore clearly establishes Alexander’s right to rule Macedonia and, by extension, the Persian Empire that he conquers in his role as king of Macedonia.

Yet the text also clearly asserts that Ammon, not Philip, fathered Alexander. Nectanebo convinces Olympias and Philip that the Egyptian god is the father of her

engendered by Ammon's divine essence acting through the previous pharaoh's physical body. Acting in his capacity as pharaoh, Nectanebo would have produced a son that could claim descent from both the human father and the god's divine essence.

The Greek Alexander Romance clearly demonstrates that Nectanebo acts only in his human capacity rather than as pharaoh when engaging in sexual intercourse with Olympias. Nectanebo employs magic to create the prophetic dreams sent to Olympias and Philip as part of his seduction of the Macedonian queen. He also identifies himself to Alexander as the boy's father, a claim that Alexander accepts as true. Most damning, though, is the authorial commentary that

“ὁ θεὸς ἄλλοθεν ἔρχεται
καὶ τὸν ἀνθρώπου σώματι
ἐπιβάλλεται, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν
Νεκτανεβὸν ἐγένετο, ὅτε
ἐπὶ τὸν φαραῶνα ἐβίβηκεν
καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀνθρώπου
σώματι ἐβίβηκεν.”

(I.7.4) (“So Olympias strayed, for she met a human adulterer as a god, not the Egyptian king”; Haight 16). Here the text explicitly acknowledges that Nectanebo acts as a man rather than as a pharaoh and physical host for Ammon's divine presence. Nectanebo therefore cannot pass Ammon's divinity to Alexander, and Alexander must be a fully-human bastard.

That sense of Egyptian nationalism that provides Alexander an Egyptian father also finds expression in the lengthy section devoted to the construction of Alexandria (I.31-33). The romance details the city streets and canals, the city

The letter that Alexander writes to Aristotle contained in *The Greek Alexander Romance* preserves an abbreviated version of the *Epistola* that was incorporated into that story at III.17. A longer version of the *Epistola*, the source of the abbreviated form of the *Epistola*, continued to circulate independently from the Hellenistic period of its composition until the medieval period. No Greek text of the independent form survives, but Latin translations of the seventh and ninth centuries made the *Epistola* available in its independent form to the West. The sixty-seven manuscripts of the *Epistola*, ranging in date from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries, testify to its widespread popularity and its influence on Alexander romance in general (Stoneman, *Life* 238).

Lloyd G. Gunderson dates the original composition of the *Epistola* by the inclusion, in the independent form of the text, of an oracle's prophecy specifying that Olympias will die after Alexander but that his sisters will live happily ("Elements" 360). That prophecy is only half correct, as Olympias and Alexander's sisters were all murdered after Alexander's death. Gunderson therefore places the *Epistola*'s original composition in the period when Olympias' 316 BCE death would be well known but before the sisters' murders of 308 BCE and 296 BCE.

Gunderson follows Merkelbach in determining that the *Epistola* was one of a series of purported letters between Alexander and his tutor Aristotle that formed, with additional letters supposedly exchanged between Alexander and his mother Olympias,¹⁸ either a single or two epistolary novels (Letter 33). As part of at least one epistolary novel, the *Epistola* was produced for popular entertainment rather

than as a rhetorical exercise, as was the case for the letters exchanged between Alexander and Darius also incorporated into *The Greek Alexander Romance*.

In the *Epistola*, Alexander reports to Aristotle the expedition into India that Alexander made with King Porus. The *Epistola* includes descriptions of dangerous beasts, strange peoples and the dangers of deserts, forests and rivers. Alexander travels to the ocean that marks the end of the world, and then turns back to India. He then narrates his visit to the oracular Tree of the Sun and Tree of the Moon that occurs during his return to India. Here he learns that he will die of poisoning in the following year, after returning to Babylon. This episode of the Tree of the Sun and the Tree of the Moon also contains the historically correct ‘prophecy’ of Olympias’s murder but the non-historical pronouncement that Alexander’s sisters will “*felices erunt fato diu*” (K216.1, p.51) (“be happy a long time because of divine will”; Gunderson, Letter 154). After leaving the Tree of the Sun and the Tree of the Moon, Alexander continues traveling towards India, and ends the letter after telling how he rejoiced Porus and ordered gold pillars erected to memorialize his accomplishments.

The plot of the *Epistola*, such as it is, acts as a skeletal framework upon which to hang the wonders seen in India rather than as a narrative of Alexander’s deeds. The *Epistola*’s anonymous author ignores opportunities to detail Alexander’s deeds or personality, and instead uses Alexander’s historical attempt to penetrate and conquer India as little more than an excuse to present exotic geography, ethnography and zoology.

With so little attention given to Alexander's biography, the *Epistola* makes no significant contribution to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system in regard to depictions of Alexander's life and deeds. The text's focus on describing the Wonders seen in India also supplants all but the barest depiction of Alexander's personality. Despite the text's disinterest in constructing an Alexander portrait, the *Epistola* participates in the same positive presentation of Alexander's personality observed in *The Greek Alexander Romance*. The Alexander of the *Epistola* emerges from the actions that he relates to Aristotle as modest instead of hubristic, an effective leader, sternly decisive when required, not cruel and personally brave.

The characteristics that define Alexander in the *Epistola* mainly develop from the adventures that Alexander encounters. His willingness to admit his own errors, for example, occurs during his narration of the army's desert passage. Alexander knows that he is to blame for his army losing its way in the desert "quia utilia consilia spreveram amicorum pariter et Caspiorum" (K.194, Boer 7) ("my responsibility, since I had rejected the expedient advice of my friends"; Gunderson, *Letter* 142). The desert passage also demonstrates the qualities that endeared Alexander to his men. The *Epistola* presents Alexander earning the loyalty of his Macedonian soldiers by sharing their experiences, just as Curtius had described in the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*. When a soldier brings Alexander the only water found in the area, Alexander relates that he "palam effudi" (K.195, Boer 9) ("publicly poured it out"; Gunderson, *Letter* 143) before the assembled army. Alexander does not perform this act of personal courage unthinkingly, though. As he tells Aristotle,

he performed the action “ne me bibente magis satire miles inciperet” (K.195 Boer 9) (“so that the soldiers would not begin to feel greater thirst while I was drinking”; Gunderson, *Letter* 143).

The beasts that appear in the *Epistola* also provide both the entertainment of spectacle and opportunities for Alexander to demonstrate his character. When hippopotami with “Maires elephantorum corporibus” (K.197, Boer 13) (“bodies larger than elephants”; Gunderson, *Letter* 144) eat two hundred of Alexander’s soldiers, he orders the treacherous guides who had led the Macedonians into the desert thrown into the river. Alexander’s action is a death sentence, as “invicti rursus hippotami dignos iusta poena affecere” (K.197, Boer 13) “the invincible hippopotami again justly afflicted those worthy of punishment”; Gunderson, *Letter* 144). This execution of the guides shows Alexander’s decisiveness and his appropriate use of punishment. Authors of the historical Alexander tradition like Justin constructed Alexander as a bloodthirsty tyrant who lashed out at his own men, but the *Epistola* presents an Alexander whose anger falls only on “dignos iusta” (“those worthy of punishment”).

The greatest collocation of dangerous beasts in the *Epistola* occurs during the episode known as the “Night of Terrors” (Gunderson, *Letter*). Waves of terrifying animals attack Alexander’s army throughout a single long night. Scores of Macedonians die in these attacks by lions, bears, scorpions, water snakes, crabs, boars, frogs, foxes and the *dentityrannus*. Alexander organizes the camp’s defenses, encourages the men and participates in the battles against the beasts, again

demonstrating his abilities as general in addition to his personal bravery. The struggles during the Night of Terrors also infuses the *Epistola* with the excitement of Alexander and his army facing yet more danger, and increases the entertainment that is the text's primary purpose.

The weird races that Alexander describes from his journey through India become the *Epistola*'s most popular content. The medieval period received these descriptions of the exotic races as ethnographical fact, and passed that belief in the accuracy of the descriptions to even later periods. Christopher Columbus, for example, noted in his diary his certainty that he had seen some of the races described in the *Epistola*, races of which he knew from intermediary sources that had absorbed the lore originally contained in the *Epistola* (qtd. Stoneman, *Legend* n. 51 p. 62).

The Greek Alexander Romance would have remained unknown in the medieval West had it not been translated into Latin. Pages 107 to 109 of this chapter briefly outline the process of translation, redaction and recension by which *The Greek Alexander Romance* became available to the West. Of the various translations and reworkings that moved the *The Greek Alexander Romance* from its original Greek to Latin, only the *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* by Julius Valerius, the *Zacher Epitome* of Julius Valerius' text and the *Historia de Preliis I*² recension participate in the *Kyng Alisaunder* system of texts. Walter of Châtillon consulted the *Zacher Epitome* in composing his twelfth-century *Alexandreis* while the *Kyng Alisaunder* author consulted Julius Valerius' *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni*, the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Historia de Preliis I*² redaction.

The *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* contributes a fairly close translation of the *Greek Alexander Romance* to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Julius Valerius translated *The Greek Alexander Romance* with few changes to the original (Stoneman, “Metamorphoses” 609). The *Zacher Epitome*, in contrast, drastically reduced the content of the second and third books (Bunt 6). The *Historia de Preliis* I² descends from a poor translation of the *The Greek Alexander Romance* made by Leo of Naples.¹⁹ The first redaction of Leo’s translation reinstated a great deal of content that Leo had omitted, and included content from additional sources. The I² redaction inherits the content of the first redaction, and contains in addition material from Orosius’ *Historiae adversum paganos* as well as the episode of Alexander’s enclosure of Gog and Magog. The popular stories of Alexander’s flight and his underwater adventure were, however, omitted from the I² redaction despite their popularity in other texts.

The production of the various versions of the *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* and the *Historia de Preliis*, with the *Epistola*, comprise the source texts for the medieval period of the legendary Alexander tradition. The two final texts that influence the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* date from the twelfth century. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* is discussed in the final chapter in conjunction with the *Kyng Alisaunder*, and so the final topic of this chapter is Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreis*.

Medieval Epic:

Walter of Châtillon's lyric poems and his *Alexandreis* achieved widespread popularity, yet little can be pieced together concerning his identity. He was born in 1135, studied at Paris and Reims before teaching in Châtillon and then studied canon law at Bologna. Walter composed the *Alexandreis* between 1176 and 1184 in ten books that contain a total of five-thousand hexameter lines. His fluid Medieval Latin, as Pritchard notes, "dispenses the myth of the poor Latinity of even the best medieval writers" (25). In 1189, Henry II's epitaph was modeled on lines 10.448-.450 of Walter's epic, indicating the wide dispersion and popularity the *Alexandreis* achieved (Townsend 14). The text survives in two hundred manuscripts, many of them glossed from their usage as school texts. In addition to serving as a model for rhetorical composition, the *Alexandreis* became the primary source for several vernacular Alexander romances. In the *Kyng Alisaunder* system, Walter's *Alexandreis* serves as a significant if secondary source for the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

In the *Alexandreis*, Walter of Châtillon composed an epic biography of Alexander the Great based primarily on the *Gestae Alexandri Magni* of Quintus Curtius Rufus. Walter also drew, in more limited fashion, from Justin's *Epitome* of the *Historiae Philippicae* and the *Zacher Epitome* of Julius Valerius' *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni*. In combining these sources with others outside of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system and with his original contributions, Walter blends many of the characteristics of the historical and legendary Alexander texts with the literary conventions of epic and the political concerns of his day. Alexander's life and deeds

in the *Alexandreis* mainly follow Curtius' presentation, yet also acknowledge some of the biographical details contained in the legendary Alexander tradition.

Walter also adopts Curtius' portrait of Alexander as a man whose personality degenerates with success. The epic treatment of the *Alexandreis*, however, softens Curtius' presentation of Alexander's degeneration and also overrides Justin's unrelenting condemnation of Alexander's personality. The Alexander constructed in the *Alexandreis* remains a more positive, heroic figure throughout his life than Curtius' Alexander, and becomes the instrument of a Christian god. Curtius' theme of *Fortuna* finds fuller expression in the *Alexandreis* than the Alexander portrait that Curtius constructed, but Walter Christianizes the theme and expresses it in the cultural terms of his medieval period. Walter's literary treatment of Alexander's life relies on the characteristics of epic, yet also evidences chivalric qualities and explicitly admits the political concerns of its twelfth-century production.

Walter's multiple sources for the *Alexandreis* produces a composite biography that primarily follows the historical source of Curtius but that also incorporates variant biographical episodes descended from the first generation Alexander authors. Some episodes drawn from the legendary Alexander tradition also appear in the *Alexandreis*, along with episodes originating in sources outside of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system. Following epic convention, the *Alexandreis* reduces its focus to a single if complex action: Alexander's conquest of Persia. The *Alexandreis* therefore does not offer a full biography of Alexander's life like that contained in Curtius' original text or in *The Greek Alexander Romance*. Instead, Walter begins

with an Alexander so young as to yet have grown his beard reacting to Darius' demand for tribute from Macedonia. Upon Philip's death, to which the text refers but which it does not detail, Alexander assumes his role as king of Macedonia and attacks Darius. After winning the Persian Empire, Alexander moves to engage Porus of India, and then dies after being poisoned.

The ten books of the *Alexandreis* fill in this brief synopsis. The standard episodes of Alexander's life appear: the three battles against Darius, Alexander's physician Philip saving the king's life after a swim, the capture of Darius' family and Alexander's noble treatment of them, Darius' death at the hands of traitors and Alexander defeating then pardoning Porus. Variant episodes descended from the more rhetorical first generation authors also appear in the *Alexandreis*. These episodes include Bucephalus' death in battle and Thalestria, queen of the Amazons, meeting and conceiving a child with Alexander.

Despite the mainly historical flavor of this biography, Walter incorporates details from the legendary Alexander tradition that he gained from consulting the *Zacher Epitome*. The text refers to Nectanebo as Alexander's father (1.46, 2.333, 3.167) and depicts Alexander planning an attack on Rome (10.322). Finally, Walter includes extended references to Aristotle's tutelage of Alexander derived from the *Secretum Secretorum* and a reference to Alexander moving the bones of Jeremiah that ultimately originated from Josephus.

The inclusion of so many biographical episodes from a wide range of sources indicates both Walter's learning and his willingness to draw from whichever of his

sources suited his purpose at hand. That Walter's purpose remains epic rather than strictly historical or legendary shows in what episodes he chooses to omit. Walter departs from Curtius' emphasis on troop strengths, battle formations and tactics to depict single combat between various battle participants. Walter also either omits or elides episodes that would illustrate Alexander's temper and drunkenness, such as the burning of Persepolis instigated by Thais, his Achilles-like dragging of Betis behind a chariot and the murders of Cleitus and Callisthenes. Female entanglements remain largely absent from the *Alexandreis*, with Thalestria's visit the only sexual encounter specified in the text. Roxane, Candace and even Olympias make no appearance.

Why Walter chooses to include or exclude particular biographical episodes depends largely on his construction of Alexander's personality. His choices allow Walter to construct Alexander as a positive, heroic figure that demonstrates *aristeia* throughout his life. As an epic hero, Alexander displays excellence on and off the battlefield. Walter depicts Alexander in the forefront of battle with his men as well as engaged in single combat, often against odds so extreme as to be preposterous. Alexander leads the assault against the Sudracae, climbing the wall "cunctantibus illis" (9.344) ("While others hesitated"; Townsend 9.401) and motivating his army by leaping into the city. Alone in the city and seriously wounded, Alexander still repulses and kills several defenders before the Macedonians arrive.

Alexander faces even greater odds at the battle of Arbela, bringing down an elephant with a single arrow and decapitating its rider (Townsend 5.18-.24) before

felling a Giant (Townsend 5.44-.89). Walter, however, makes clear that Alexander is no blood-stained tyrant bent on war. Having conquered Cilicia, Alexander protects his new territory from raiders and “Conciliatque pii clementia principis” (1.448) (“with the clemency/of a mild prince made peace”; Townsend 1.526-.527). Walter’s construction of an Alexander “agitque/ Paces vices belli” (1.451) (“as skilled in peace as war”; Townsend 1.529) echoes the Alexander constructed in the legendary tradition, with which Walter was obviously familiar, who leaves the city of Abdera in peace.

Walter adopts several of Curtius’ methods for developing Alexander’s character, but minimizes Curtius’ theme of Alexander’s degeneration. The comparison between Alexander and Darius that Curtius uses to predict Alexander’s inability to maintain his better qualities becomes in the *Alexandreis* simply one more illustration of Alexander’s positive characteristics. Darius resorts to hubris out of fear rather than self-importance, since “experientia Martis/ Qua dissuetus erat et pax diuturna labantes/ Impulerat regis animos” (2.8-10) (“long peace and Mars’ infrequent usage/suppressed the king’s faint spirits”; Townsend 2.10-.11). He orders his army to assemble not from eagerness to fight Alexander but “Ne depressa tamen terrore minusque rigoris/ Regia maiestas videatur habere” (2.13-14) (“lest his royal majesty should seem/to have less strength as terror weighed him down”; Townsend 2.15-.16). That same concern with how others perceive him prompts Darius to send his first insulting letter to Alexander, an action Darius undertakes “ne nil fecisse videri/ Possit” (2.18-19) (“lest he appear to stand by idly”; Townsend 21). This

Darius is simply the lesser man when compared to Alexander, not an equal and mirror of Alexander's own deterioration.

Walter even adopts Curtius' authorial assertion that Alexander could not maintain his nobler qualities, but never develops the portrait. The consistent assertion of a degeneracy that Walter never demonstrates maintains the positive Alexander constructed in the *Alexandreis* despite the text's derivation from the historical Alexander tradition. Alexander protects Darius' family, and Walter comments on the action in language familiar from Curtius' same point: "si perdurasset in illo/ Ille tenor, non est quo denigrare valeret/ Crimine candentem titulis infamia famam" (3.242-244) ("Had he endured/in that same disposition, infamy/had never known the means to denigrate/a reputation splendid in its honors"; Townsend 3.293-296). Walter's elision of the signs of Alexander's degeneracy, however, contradicts the authorial construction of that degeneracy. Several passages mention the murders that demonstrate Alexander's inability to control his anger, but in a manner that openly minimizes Alexander actions. Walter by-passes Alexander's drunken murder of Cleitus, for example, by conceding "sed quae provenerit illi/ Talia pro meritis magis arbitror esse silendum" (5.78-79) ("I judge it better/to pass over in silence what reward/he [Cleitus] gained for all his merits"; Townsend 5.91-.93).

The Curtian construction that peace contributes to Alexander's deterioration also explicitly appears in the *Alexandreis* in authorial commentary. In Book 6, after noting the splendors of the conquered Babylon, the text asserts that:

Hos tamen a tenero schola quos impresserat aevo

Ornatus animi, poliendae schemata vitae,

Innatae virtutis opus solitumque rigorem

Fregerunt Babylonis opes luxusque vacantis

Desidiaie populi: (6.16-20)

The schooling that impressed once-tender youth

had taught the true adornment of the soul,

the lineaments of life's perfection. Yet

wealth of Babylon, the slothful pleasures

its populace enjoyed, made slack the workings

of inborn virtue's rigour. (Townsend 6.19-.24)

With this passage, Walter seemingly agrees with Curtius' assessment of the change in Alexander's personality. The following lines, however, move the degeneration created by peace from Alexander to his men by asserting that:

Ad Veneris venale malum, cum pectore multo

Incaluere mero: si tantum detur acerbi

Flagitii pretium non uxores modo sponsi,,

Sed prolem hospitibus cogunt prostare parentes. (6.22-25)

unmixed wine

warmed every heart to Venus' venal evils.

Men pimped their wives, and parents their own children.

(Townsend 6.24-.26)

Walter then notes that “exercitus . . . / Debilior fuerat” (6.30-31) (“his troops . . . were weaker/for such a stay”; Townsend 6.33-.34). Walter therefore makes Alexander’s men demonstrate the specific effects of enforced idleness rather than Alexander and thereby fails to develop the Curtian theme included in the text.

The *Alexandreis* also modifies the construction of Alexander as a trickster-figure that the legendary Alexander tradition developed. The only disguise that the *Alexandreis* associates with Alexander occurs at Book 9.170-.204, when Alexander must cross a river to meet Porus in battle. Alexander instructs Attalus to stand in plain view dressed as Alexander, a trick that distracts Porus and allows Alexander to lead his forces across the river. This episode conflates two episodes from the legendary Alexander tradition: Alexander’s visit in disguise to Porus and his visit in disguise to Darius that necessitates crossing the Stranga River. The *Alexandreis*, however, re-writes the figure of Alexander developed through these legendary episodes from a prankster enjoying his trick to a skilled military commander deploying a diversionary tactic and bravely leading a small force into battle.

The fusing of sources and genres accomplished in the *Alexandreis* produces a composite Alexander biography and portrait; that fusing also produces a composite literary style. Literary qualities characteristic of epic, historiography and romance appear in Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreis*, and the work expresses themes modified from its sources and contributed by its author. Epic remains Walter’s primary mode, with examples of *monomachia*, descriptions of battlefield slaughter, *ecphrasis*, addresses exchanged between combatants and Homeric similes occurring

throughout the *Alexandreis*. The speeches declaimed on the battlefield and in war councils have their origin in epic, but their tenor and length reproduce the style of contrived speeches found in rhetorical historiography (Townsend 18).

Walter also modifies the literary themes that he inherits from his sources.

The Greek Alexander Romance constructs an alternate paternity for Alexander as the son of Nectanebo, introducing conflicting identities for Alexander and reader alike.

The *Alexandreis* acknowledges the legendary tradition's change of Alexander's paternity several times (at 1.46, 2.333 and 3.167) but treats Alexander's illegitimacy as rumor that creates anxiety for Alexander and contempt from others. The text immediately raises Alexander's concern with his paternity in Alexander's first appearance. The heir to the Macedonian throne muses over his position with the thought "Semperne putabor/ Nectanabi proles? Ut degener arguar absit!" (1.46-47) ("Shall I always/be thought the offspring of Nectanabus?/Let no man call me bastard to my face!"; Townsend 1.58-.60). Others also know the rumor of Alexander's illegitimate parentage and think of him in those terms. Darius silently considers Alexander's questionable paternity, incensed at losing his empire to "Spurius ille puer" (2.333) ("That bastard boy"; Townsend 2.387); Zoroas of Memphis uses the rumor as a battlefield taunt, calling Alexander "Nectanabi no infitianda propago,/ Dedecus aeternum matris" (3.167-168) ("Whelp of Nectanabus, and endless shame/of your own mother"; Townsend 3.200-.201).

Although these passages indicate the serious repercussions that affect Alexander because of his mother's rumored infidelity, the *Alexandreis* reduces the

theme of Alexander's paternity to a secondary concern. That Alexander never receives confirmation whether his father is Philip or Nectanebo keeps his paternity in question and transforms it to a subject of private anxiety or public ridicule. The original function of Alexander's change in paternity, to offer Alexandrian readers a sense of cultural identification with their Greek rulers, becomes in the *Alexandreis* a method to deepen Alexander's personal angst through literary characteristics associated with courtly romances. Heroes of courtly romances spend considerable time in self-analysis, although their usual topic of contemplation is the travails of love.²⁰ Walter applies the interiority of the courtly hero to the *Alexandreis* but maintains Alexander's epic qualities by keeping Alexander's self-analysis on his legitimacy, a concern that could deconstruct Alexander's right to the throne and his public reputation.

Courtly attributes also appear in the *Alexandreis* from including a passage that functions as a "Mirror for Princes," an instructive discourse on governing created for young kings upon ascension. The first book includes a lengthy discourse from Aristotle to Alexander on the appropriate qualities that Alexander should practice as king. Aristotle's opening address of "Materiam virtutis habes, rem profer in actum,/ Quoque modo id possis, aures adverte, docebo" (1.3-84) ("You have the stuff of virtue; bring its matter/to actuality. Lend me your ear—I'll teach you how you may accomplish it"; Townsend 1.96-.99) formally sets the instruction apart from the surrounding narrative and identifies the following lines as a Mirror for Princes. The depiction of Aristotle imparting his wisdom to Alexander specifically

recalls the *Secretum Secretorum* (“*Secrets of Secrets*”), a fictitious letter from Aristotle to Alexander on governing and the most well-known Mirror for Princes of the medieval period.²¹ Townsend points out that Aristotle’s advice in the *Alexandreis* “loosely” follows the *Secretum Secretorum* despite the Latin translation becoming available in the West only during the twelfth century (34, n. 1).

Walter develops the theme of Fortune in Alexander’s life, a theme adopted from Curtius’ historical text, much more extensively than he develops modified thematic interests borrowed from the legendary Alexander tradition and from courtly romance. Walter’s references to “Fate” and “Fortune” in the *Alexandreis* are nearly as ubiquitous as Curtius’ use of *Fortuna* in the *Gestae Alexandri Magni*. Two examples of the numerous references throughout the *Alexandreis* refer to Alexander’s “fiducia fati” (1. 443) (“confidence/in Fate”; Townsend 1.519-.520) and “fortuna potenter” (9.375) (“amazing Fortune”; Townsend 9.435) protecting Alexander in battle.

Although Walter’s development of Fate or Fortune as a theme nearly matches Curtius’ development of *Fortuna*, Walter alters the Roman context of his Curtian inheritance to accord with the common medieval image of the Wheel of Fortune. Twice in Book 8 Walter constructs Fortune as a wheel that at times lifts individuals to fame and power, only to lower them to ruin. Both instances follow the torture and death of traitors, first Parmenion’s son Philotas and then Bessus, one of Darius’ murderers. After Philotas’ execution for a plot against Alexander’s life, Walter inserts a moralizing passage that laments:

O quam difficili nisu sors provehit actus

Lubrica mortals, et quos adscendere fecit ,

Quam facile evertit! (8.323-325)

With what laborious strife does fluid chance

advance the deeds of mortals! With what ease

it casts down those whom it has let ascend! (Townsend 8.375-.377)

Only six days later Alexander captures and executes Bessus, allowing Walter a second opportunity for moralization with his observations that “Exitus hic Bessi: qui dum conscendere tentat,/ Labitur” (8. 355-356) (“while Bessus strove to rise,/he fell into the depths”; Townsend 8.410-411). Both images, as Townsend points out rely on “the Wheel of Fortune *topos* ubiquitous in medieval literature” (173 n. 2).

Using the Wheel of Fortune to express Curtius’ thematic development of *Fortuna* allows Walter to include authorial commentary on the mutability of life and the transience of human accomplishments. The Wheel of Fortune image that accompanies Philotas’ death ends with the exclamation “Quam frivola gloria rerum,/ Quam mundi fugitivus honor, quam nomen inane!” (8.332-333) (“How meaningless the glory of all things,/how fleeting worldly honor’s empty titles!”; Townsend 8.386-.387). Moralizations like these surrounding the Wheel of Fortune and the transience of the mortal world take on a Christian tone when read with Walter’s other Christian references. Walter identifies Corinth in Christian terms as “Hanc, evangelico propulsans idola verbo” (1.207) (“This town,/its idols cast out by the Gospel’s word”; Townsend 1.245-.246) instead of through classical allusion. The *Alexandreis*

also makes Alexander the appointed champion of Christianity when God appears to Alexander in a dream vision. Taking the form of a Hebrew High Priest, God orders Alexander to undertake the expedition against Darius and gives him “omnemque tibi pessumdabo terram” (1.533) (“dominion of each race”: Townsend 1.621) with the instruction to “Parce meis” (1.535) (“spare my people”; Townsend 1.622).

Walter makes Alexander a hero for his medieval Christian readers and aligns him with crusading, two examples of the *Alexandreis* admitting references to the political anxieties of its own time into its text.²² Alexander’s role as God’s champion becomes clear when the text summarizes his role as the protector of Jerusalem. Remembering the instructions he had received in the dream vision, Alexander pays homage to the High Priest of the Temple and leaves the city in peace. A Christianized Alexander taking but respecting Jerusalem clearly stands in for Western nations retrieving the Holy Land, while Walter’s closing to Book 9 openly calls for a new Alexander to rise up and lead the West in a successful conquest of the East (Townsend 5.570-.604). Despite its roots in Classical epic, the *Alexandreis* fully integrates Alexander the Great into Walter of Châtillon’s twelfth-century Christian world view.

The Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*:

The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by Thomas of Kent belongs to the twelfth-century flowering of Anglo-Norman romance that occurred during the ascendancy of the Anglo-Norman dialect in England.²³ The Anglo-Norman romances gained wide-

spread popularity in England but generally found few readers across the English Channel. Their limited appeal to readers in France evinces the weakening of political and cultural ties between England and the continent, with the Anglo-Norman romances reflecting the now-separate political and cultural concerns of their insular audience.

Thomas of Kent composed the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* between 1170 and 1200 in *laissez* comprised of the dodecasyllabic alexandrine line.²⁴ A *laisse* is the traditional structure of the Old French epic, the *chanson de geste*, in which terminal assonance joins groups of lines.²⁵ No prescription rules the length of individual *laissez*, resulting in groupings that vary from a few lines to a hundred or more lines. An author working in *laissez* changes terminal assonance to begin a new grouping at will or when the possible combinations of terminal assonance have been exhausted.

The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* originally numbered some eight thousand lines, but later interpolations extended that length to twelve thousand lines. All three of the extant manuscripts exhibit the later interpolations, a state that forces scholars to reconstruct the original text by excising the accreted material. A vigorous tradition of Alexander romance already existed in Continental France when Thomas wrote the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, but the Anglo-Norman romance did not directly participate in that tradition.²⁶ Thomas of Kent made no use of Continental French sources in writing his romance, and manuscripts of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* did not appear in France until the thirteenth century (Kelly 7).²⁷ The

Anglo-Norman romance therefore is an independent insular treatment of Alexander the Great's life and deeds.

The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* displays no innovation in its depiction of Alexander's life and deeds or portrait, as Thomas of Kent adopts these features wholesale from his sources in the legendary Alexander tradition.²⁸ In literary characteristics, the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* eschews the philosophical treatment of Alexander's glorious but short career usually associated with legendary Alexander texts in favor of Thomas of Kent's concentration on the Wonders of the East. In Thomas' hands, the story of Alexander the Great becomes the frame for exotica and arcane knowledge.

Thomas of Kent relied on the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Epistola* for information on the life of Alexander the Great (Smithers, *Vol. 1* 15-16). The *Zacher Epitome* transmits to the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* the fundamental legendary biography of *The Greek Alexander Romance*, but in a reduced state that abbreviates Alexander's adventures in India. Thomas therefore turned to the long-form version of the *Epistola* for the legendary account of Alexander's life after he had won the Persian Empire from Darius. Thomas' focus on the Wonders of India demanded more content than contained in either the *Zacher Epitome* or in the *Epistola*, and so much of the Wonders of the East in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* originates from the *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (*Collection of the Marvels of the World*) by Solinus (fl. 250) and the *Cosmographia* (fifth or sixth century) of Aethicus Ister (Bunt 20). The *Cosmographia* also supplies the episode of Alexander's enclosure of

Gog and Magog, a story about the barbarian supporters of the Anti-Christ often seen in vernacular Alexander romances but a story that never found its way into the Julius Valerius translation of *The Greek Alexander Romance* or the *Zacher Epitome*.²⁹

Thomas provides in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* a standard biographical narrative derived from the legendary Alexander tradition. The fleeing Nectanebo engenders Alexander on Olympias and attends his birth to the accompaniment of signs (lines 46-457). Alexander tames Bucephalus (775-794), kills Nectanebo (476-509), reconciles his parents after Philip's second marriage (631-826), avenges Philip's death (996-1011) and ascends the throne (1042-1082). The Anglo-Norman romance also largely corresponds to the legendary Alexander tradition in the events of Alexander's Persian expedition. Alexander defeats Darius in three battles (1752-2097, 3055-3473, 3480-3580), witnesses Darius' death (3658-3709), and battles Porus (4021-4164, 4239-4260, 7350-7457). Alexander also meets the Amazons (6170-6211), travels underwater (6362-6388) and consults the oracular Tree of the Sun and Tree of the Moon (7075-C98).³⁰ Thomas interpolates the story of Alexander enclosing the tribes of Gog and Magog (6488-6581) and includes the sexual interlude with Candace (7480-7831). After his tryst with Candace, Alexander returns to Babylon, where he dies by poisoning (7899-7983).

Thomas's depiction of Alexander's portrait also derives from the legendary tradition, from which he adopts the positive presentation found in the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Epistola*. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas and Laurence Harf-Lancner ascribe the "coherence du portrait" (xix) ("coherence of portrait") that Thomas

creates for Alexander to his faithful use of these two main sources. Since the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Epistola* construct their Alexander portraits through the presentation of biographical episodes, Thomas imports the same portrait into the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* when he reuses the biographical episodes of his sources.

The Alexander of the *Roman de Toute Chevalier* demonstrates diplomacy in reconciling his parents (797-826) and self-control when Nicolas spits on him (590-594). Alexander demonstrates his ability to command in the episodes of refusing the only water found in the desert (4772-4792), leading the defense against the attacking beasts during the Night of Terrors (4990-5139), and punishing the treacherous guides by feeding them to the man-eating hippopotami (5140-5170). The many examples of Alexander engaging in single combat, as against Porus (7410-7457), attest to his personal bravery while his visit in disguise to Darius' camp (3325-3428) mirrors the trickster-figure of the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Epistola*.

As the above outline demonstrates, the biographical narrative and portrait contained in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* earn Weiss's description of Thomas of Kent as "not especially inventive" (2). The romance's literary characteristics also remain largely uninventive, and originate in Thomas' fusion of epic and romance. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* combines epic characteristics with romance by adopting the form of the *chansons de geste* to relate the legendary version of Alexander the Great.

In its fusion of epic and romance, the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* resembles the *romans antiques*, romances that take their subjects, settings and some literary

characteristics from classical roots.³¹ The *Roman d'Enéas*, the *Roman d'Thèbes* and the *Roman de Troie* (1150s-1170s) form the corpus of the *romans antiques*, and all fuse epic with romance by joining the epic emphasis on war and the hero's preoccupation with personal honor to the romance's interest in courtly setting and the psychological motivation of love. The blending of epic and romance in *romans antiques* tilts towards epic qualities, making them "popular history with a strong admixture of fiction, related to the romance proper in the preponderance of love and war as recurring themes" (Beaton 136). The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* demonstrates its ties to the *romans antique* in its adoption of *laissez* to order the narrative, its emphasis on Alexander's various battles and its depiction of those battles as sequences of single combat between various participants. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* departs from the *romans antique*, however, by eschewing the intense preoccupation with love that derives from romance.

Thomas' only original contribution to the line of texts that lead to the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* lies in his use of Alexander's life to collect and present exotic, fabulous information. This fascination with knowledge prompts Thomas to expand the Wonders of India section into a "lengthy and repetitive" catalogue wherein "monoceroses (unicorns) appear at least three times, and dragons are two a penny" (Weiss 2).

Although the Wonders of India most clearly display Thomas' fascination with exotica and encyclopedic knowledge, the description of Nectanebo in Egypt (called "Libya" in the text") also displays that fascination at work. Thomas repeats

the construction of Nectanebo as a magician inherited from *The Greek Alexander Romance*, including Nectanebo's use of hydromancy to defend against invaders.³²

Lines 53 to 60 detail Nectanebo's magical practice at length:

Si alcun roy se prist envers sa region,
Adonc alast cocher sus en sa meson;
Ewe en un bacin prist ou en un poton
E de cire feist une conjunccion
En semblance d'omes par ymaginacioun,
L'une semblance a ly, l'autre a son compaignon.
En chescune escriveit donc son proper non;
Combater les feseit par simulacion.
If some king attacked his territory,
He lay down on the top floor of his house;
He took water in a basin or small jar
And modeled wax figures,
Which, with skill, he gave human form;
The first was in his image, the second that of his opponent.
On each he inscribed the appropriate name;
Then he simulated battle between them.³³

The passage's length and detail privilege the magic over the magician by turning Nectanebo's hydromancy into a defined procedure instead of a mysterious act.

Thomas' greater interest in the action than in the pharaoh casts Nectanebo's activity

almost as a lesson in hydromancy and the scene as an opportunity to present arcane knowledge.

The description of Nectanebo's hydromancy also demonstrates Thomas' "l'amplification des descriptions" (xxxv) ("the amplification of descriptions") that Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner identify as one of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*'s most notable stylistic features. In the hydromancy passage, the amplification supports Thomas' thematic interest in exotic knowledge, but his amplification of details can also create setting, especially if that setting can be constructed as belonging to a world distant from Thomas' in geography, time or culture.

Thomas of Kent's choice to write the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* in the *laissez* of a *chansons de geste* creates an episodic quality that concentrates on the scene or moment at hand.³⁴ Thomas applies that episodic quality to the exotic locations, peoples and beasts that Alexander encounters and thereby makes his Alexander romance an encyclopedic record of Alexander's adventures rather than a unified narrative of Alexander's life. The concentration on the moment at hand also promotes an absence of narrative connections between episodes that, over the course of the entire romance, creates the sense of chance or sheer accident controlling mortal life. Finally, Thomas' primary interest in collating and presenting the episodes of Alexander's life in encyclopedic fashion relegates moral didacticism to a secondary concern. Any lessons that the audience might draw from Alexander's life

as presented in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* are therefore only implicitly contained in the romance.

Chapter Conclusion:

The legendary Alexander tradition may originate in part from the historical Alexander tradition, but its aims and characteristics contribute to the *Kyng Alisaunder* system qualities distinct from the historical Alexander tradition.. Like the texts of the historical Alexander tradition, the texts of the legendary Alexander tradition pass on echoes of earlier historic periods to the authors who will write successive Alexander literature. Those later authors of the legendary tradition, like the authors of the historical tradition, adapt their received sources to express the literary tastes and philosophical concerns of their own periods. Although the Hellenistic texts contain a greater degree of the fantastic than the historical texts in their depictions of Alexander's life and his exotic adventures, the legendary tradition still demonstrates the movement towards greater degrees of fantasy across time. The wondrous elements of the legendary texts prove so popular that more episodes successively accrete to the texts.

The originating texts of *The Greek Alexander Romance* and the *Epistola* create the romance biography of Alexander's life and establish the excessively positive portrait of his personality. The Hellenistic texts also initiate thematic developments of personal and collective anxiety of identity in addition to their inclusion of spectacle as entertainment. The Late Antique legendary texts of the

Kyng Alisaunder system function much as their counterparts from the historical tradition. The translations, recensions and redactions that make the Greek sources available in Latin to the medieval West confuse the contents of their originals, intensify Alexander's positive qualities and integrate Alexander into their Christian world view. The medieval *Alexandreis* descends primarily from the historical Alexander tradition but nonetheless draws from and contributes to the legendary Alexander tradition. Walter of Châtillon modifies and transmits Curtius' historical biography and literary themes to the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* while also incorporating elements of courtliness and crusade rhetoric. The author of the *Kyng Alisaunder* will base his Middle English romance on Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, but the Anglo-Norman romance contributes little to the *Kyng Alisaunder* not already contained in the other texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

All of these texts will transmit to the *Kyng Alisaunder* depictions of Alexander that many medieval readers accept as truth. The Alexander created in the legendary texts of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system will be a conqueror, a trickster, an explorer and a lover. He will exhibit the best of human qualities and act as God's champion to protect the world from evil. Most of all, this Alexander will demonstrate the futility of life's achievements in the very achievements that he earns. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author will draw upon the other texts of the legendary tradition in his process of translating the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* from Anglo-Norman to Middle English. The next, and final chapter, analyzes this Anglo-Norman text and

the process by which the anonymous Middle English author transforms it into the *Kyng Alisaunder*.

between Darius and Alexander from which the content incorporated into *The Greek Alexander Romance* was taken.

¹⁴ □□ □□□□ □ □ as a term recognized to apply specifically to the king of Persia is used in Greece after the Persian War. See Lidell & Scott, p. 309 #3.

¹⁵ Merkelebach's *Die Quellen Des Griechischen Alexanderromans* establishes the independent sources that make up *The Greek Alexander Romance*. Further discussions of the composite parts of the romance can be found in Stoneman (*Romance* 11-14) and Gunderson ("Elements" 354-355).

¹⁶ The cult of Sarapis was instituted by Ptolemy I in Egypt to offer a fusion of Greek and Egyptian religious elements that could be worshipped by Greeks living in the new Ptolemaic kingdom. See Stoneman's *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* p. 60-62.

¹⁷ See Stoneman's discussion of the Brahmin episode in *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* p. 91-97.

¹⁸ Traces of a letter from Alexander to Olympias remain in some manuscripts of the *Greek Alexander Romance*.

¹⁹ Stoneman's "The Metamorphoses of the *Alexander Romance*" describes the changes that occur between Leo's translation and the various redactions that descend from that translation.

²⁰ See William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England*, for a thorough study of courtly themes and characteristics.

²¹ See Bunt, p. 69-70, for a discussion of the *Secretum Secretorum*, including a brief textual history and its relation to the legendary Alexander tradition in the medieval period.

²² See p. 21-22 of Townsend's "Introduction" for a full discussion of Walter's contemporaneous references.

²³ For an overview of the development of Anglo-Norman romance see Judith Weiss and Susan Crane's "Introduction" (p. 1-12).

²⁴ The composition date of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* is securely established and provokes no disagreement among scholars. Bunt's discussion of the romance's date (p. 19) follows that scholarly agreement.

²⁵ See the "Introduction" of *The Old French Epic: An Introduction* by Aland Hindley and Brian J. Levy for a description and history of the *chanson de geste* and its *laisse* structure.

²⁶ See Douglas Kelly's *Medieval French Romance*, p. 6-8, for a brief outline of French Alexander romance. Pages xiiv-xxiii of Kelly's text provide a chronological list of French romances, including the Alexander romances and the *romans antique*.

²⁷ Kelly defines *chanson de geste* as "French epic narrative, usually written in *laisse*s and relating the deeds of great warriors" (158); he designates *roman antique* as "romances based on Greek, Roman, or Byzantine subject matters" (157).

²⁸ As Judith Weiss also points out on page 2.

²⁹ Andrew Runni Anderson traces the development of the legend of Gog and Magog, including its interpolation into the legendary Alexander tradition, in *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations*. Pages 33-57 detail the history of the interpolation in *The Greek Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes and its derivatives.

³⁰ A lacuna occurs in the main manuscript of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* during the episode of the Tree of the Sun and the Tree of the Moon. Foster's edition supplies material from a second manuscript to fill that *lacuna* and thus changes line numbering to the "C" manuscript.

³¹ See Weiss p. 28-29 and Cooper p. 24-27 for the characteristics of the *romans antiques*.

³² Smithers identifies Nectanebo's similar practice in the *Kyng Alisaunder* as "lekanomancy, which was a form of hydromancy" (*Vol. II* 66).

³³ I rely on the Modern French translation of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner and provide their translations in the footnotes. "MdF" in the citations indicate the "Modern French." "Si quelque roi s'attaquait à son territoire, il allait s'allonger au dernier étage de sa maison; il prenait de l'eau dans un bassin ou un petit pot/et modelait des figurines de cire./auxquelles, avec habileté, il donnait forme humaine:/la première était à son image, la seconde à celle de son

adversaire./Sur chacune il inscrivait alors le nom adéquate;/puis il simulait des combats entre elles.” (MdF 53-59).

³⁴ Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner detail the generic and thematic characteristics of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* throughout the introduction (vii-lxxxii) to their translation.

Chapter 4: Inheritance and Adaptation in the Middle English *Kyng*

Alisaunder

The Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* was translated from the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* no later than 1340, the terminal date for the production of the Auchinleck Manuscript in which one copy of the Middle English romance is contained. The production of the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* at the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth century occurs within the period of transition in England between Anglo-Norman and English, and makes the story of Alexander the Great contained in the Anglo-Norman romance available to an audience less and less familiar with that disappearing dialect. The eventual displacement of Anglo-Norman by English prompted the translation of nearly every Anglo-Norman romance into English (Crane 6).

Transforming the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* into the *Kyng Alisaunder* was not simply a process of producing a slavish crib or even of creating an elegant, learned reproduction of the Anglo-Norman in Middle English. Medieval translation followed classical practice in viewing translation as a creative art rather than as a faithful reproduction of an original text.¹ The medieval translator acted more as an independent author with the goal of discovering and illuminating a meaning intrinsic to but overlooked in the original text. After discovering a new meaning overlooked in the original text, the translator illuminated that new meaning through the rhetorical and poetic techniques in common usage.²

The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, however, was not the only source that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author employed when translating the Anglo-Norman romance. Smithers notes throughout his commentary on the *Kyng Alisaunder* the observable uses that the Middle English author makes of the *Historia de Preliis*, the *Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonias* by Julius Valerius, the *Zacher Epitome*, the *Epistola* and Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*. Although the Middle English author most often follows the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* over his other sources, he sometimes prefers details or depictions gained from his additional sources. Furthermore, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author introduces changes not traceable to his direct influences and thus demonstrates a degree of originality in his handling of the material.

The process of translating the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* into the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* was therefore a process of combining elements from the various sources and the Middle English author's original contributions to support the author's thematic purpose. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author works fully within the medieval conception of translation by approaching his task as a creative art, transforming the meaning of his Anglo-Norman model in the process of translating its language. The Middle English author effects that transformation of meaning by adopting Thomas of Kent's Alexander biography and Alexander portrait but rejecting Thomas' thematic interests. The resulting Middle English romance refashions Thomas' scientific didacticism into an overt, highly moralized didacticism that emphasizes the mutability of the human world.

In creating that moral didacticism, the author of the *Kyng Alisaunder* recasts Thomas' fascination with exotica and encyclopedic knowledge into a recognizable world anchored in human activity. The *Kyng Alisaunder* also rejects the implicit acceptance displayed in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* that chance or accident orders life, favoring instead an insistence that individual actions cause events. In making these changes during the translation process, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author produces a text that resists the drift towards fantasy demonstrated in both the historical and legendary Alexander traditions of the *Kyng Alisaunder* system.

The life and deeds of Alexander the Great presented in the *Kyng Alisaunder* mainly parallel the biographical narrative presented in Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, which had relied on the *Zacher Epitome* and the *Epistola* for the outline of Alexander's biography. The *Kyng Alisaunder* therefore includes most standard episodes of the legendary Alexander tradition. As outlined more fully on pages 15-17 of Chapter 1, the *Kyng Alisaunder* relates Alexander's complete life story from conception to death. Nectanebo fathers Alexander and oversees his birth (lines 91-648). During his youth, Alexander tames Bucephalus (521-532), kills Nectanebo (711-750), and reconciles his parents after Philip's second marriage (993-1160). Alexander then ascends the throne (1367-1390) after punishing Philip's assassin (1347-1358).

The *Kyng Alisaunder* also adopts the majority of its biographical episodes from the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* for Alexander's Persian expedition and

exploration of India. Alexander defeats Darius in three battles (2057-2565, 3577-3955, 4355-4470) and witnesses Darius' death (4605-4641). The *Kyng Alisaunder* depicts Alexander's battles against Porus (5539-5560, 7321-7433), meeting the Amazons (6040-6045), traveling underwater (6160-6199) and consulting the Tree of the Sun and Tree of the Moon (6734-7015). The *Kyng Alisaunder* adopts from the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* the interpolation of Alexander enclosing the tribes of Gog and Magog (5949-6288) but treats the episode in an independent manner (Smithers, *Vol. I* 27). The Middle English romance also follows its Anglo-Norman model by depicting Alexander's interlude with Candace (7445-7766) and death by poisoning in Babylon (7831-8016).

Despite the Middle English author's adoption of Thomas of Kent's depiction of Alexander's life and deeds, not all of the standard biographical episodes of the legendary Alexander tradition appear in the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The Middle English author, for example, omits the story of Bucephalus' death and Alexander's refusal of water in the desert even though Thomas of Kent includes both episodes. Both of these episodes were favorites of the legendary Alexander tradition and often contributed to the construction Alexander's personality in the derivatives of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *The Greek Alexander Romance*. By omitting these two episodes, the Middle English author relinquishes the opportunity to develop Alexander's portrait through entertaining set pieces.

Omitting Bucephalus' death also forces the *Kyng Alisaunder* to rearrange other details essential to a later episode and therefore demonstrates the author's active engagement with the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. In the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, Bucephalus' death in battle against Porus occurs within approximately 500 lines, a passage that is almost entirely absent from the *Kyng Alisaunder*.³ The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* includes in that passage (*laissez* 195-230) an introduction to Alexander's adventures in India, a letter from Porus to Alexander, Alexander's reply to Porus, Bucephalus' death in battle, the founding of the city named for Bucephalus, a meeting between Alexander and the Albanian king, the defeat of Porus in a second battle, Alexander's capture of Facen and inspection of Porus' palace.⁴ Of this material, the *Kyng Alisaunder* includes only the introduction to India at lines 4747-4762. The author reduces the remaining material to a short narrative bridge:

In somers tyde þe day is long—
 Foules syngeþ and makeþ song.
 Kyng Alisaunder ywent is,
 Wiþ dukes, erles, and folk of pris,
 Wiþ many kni3th and dou3tty men,
 Toward þe cite of Facen,
 After kyng Porus, þat flowen was
 Into þe cite of Ba[u]da. (4791-4798)
 In summer time the day is long—

Birds sing and make song.
King Alexander is gone,
With dukes, earls, and men of worth,
With many knights and doughty men,
Toward the city of Facen,
After King Porus, who has flown
Into the city of Baghdad.

The loss of the remaining biographical episodes contained in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* reduces the Wonders of India contained in the *Kyng Alisaunder* by excising the description of Porus' palace. That loss also requires the *Kyng Alisaunder* author to creatively rearrange one of the beastly attacks during the Night of Terrors to maintain logical continuity within the romance. In omitting the meeting between Alexander and the Albanian king, the *Kyng Alisaunder* also omits the detail of that king's gift to Alexander of two lion-hunting dogs.⁵ These dogs are crucial to the defense of Alexander's camp during the Night of Terrors, however, because one attacks the beasts that beset Alexander and his men. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author both preserves the exciting scene of the hunting dogs killing first a lion and then an elephant (KA 5289-5299) and prevents possible discontinuity caused by omitting the earlier lines by briefly interrupting the narrative to recount how the Albanian king had sent the dogs to Alexander (5259-5281).

The Middle English author's attention to continuity in connection to an elided biographical episode also surfaces in the episode of Philip, Alexander's physician. The story of Alexander trusting Philip to cure him by a potion despite being warned that Philip was untrustworthy appears in both the legendary and historical Alexander traditions, but each literary Alexander tradition differs in the important detail of Parmenion's death. Both the legendary and the historical traditions name Alexander's general Parmenion as the writer of the false accusation against Philip. The legendary Alexander tradition, upon which Thomas of Kent bases his depiction of the episode, relates that Alexander executed Parmenion for the false accusation while the historical Alexander tradition makes no such claim.⁶ The sources upon which the *Kyng Alisaunder* author most relied each derive from a different Alexander tradition and so contain conflicting accounts of Parmenion's fate: the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* recounts Parmenion's death as contained in the legendary Alexander tradition but the *Alexandreis*, which is based on the historical Alexander tradition, presents Parmenion as living well after the episode.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author includes an episode in which Philip saves Alexander from a near-drowning (3592-3505), but omits the letter accusing Philip of treachery and the subsequent problem of how to depict Parmenion's fate. Yet the *Kyng Alisaunder* author does not simply ignore the inconsistency between his two sources. Instead, the author intrudes into the narrative to clarify the textual problem, explaining that:

Now þe gest telleþ here
[Of] þis leche Philippoun,
[An]d of a baroun Permenyoun—
Of [h]is onde, of [bi]wreyeyng,
Pat shulde ben seide to þe kyng.
Ac for þe latyn seiþ þere-a3an,
Ne wil ich [hit s]hewe þ[is] b[o]re[l] man,
For [in] þis book fer J fynde
Of Permenyoun and of his kynde,
Pat þorou3 her noble rest
Þe kynges dedes weren honest. (3505-3516)

Now the gest tells here
Of this physician Philip,
And of a baron Parmenion—
Of his malice, of accusation,
That should be made to the king.
But the Latin says there against,
I will not depict him an unlettered man,
For in this book further I find
Of Parmenion and his kin,
That through their noble decision
The king's deeds were honorable.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author accounts for the missing passage by explaining that the “gest” (the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*) contains a story about Parmenion’s treachery against Philip that the “latyn” (the *Alexandreis*) contravenes (“seip þere-a3an”). The virtuous behavior of both Parmenion and his family recounted later in the *Alexandreis* convinces the *Kyng Alisaunder* author that the Anglo-Norman version of the episode is spurious, and so he deletes it. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author obviously finds the deletion worthy of an authorial intrusion to explain his choice of which source he follows, perhaps to justify the absence of the well-known story. Most important, the authorial intrusion definitively displays the author actively managing his sources and choosing among variants based on what appears most logical and accurate. This author therefore creatively and intelligently refashions the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* in keeping with the practice of medieval translation by choosing among the biographical episodes at his disposal to create a logically ordered narrative from his sometimes conflicting sources.

The omissions and rearrangements seen in Alexander’s life and deeds create only minor effects in the 8,000-line biographical narrative of the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Such changes remain noticeable mainly for their departure from the author’s otherwise faithful reproduction of the biographical narrative contained in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. Those departures do affect the Alexander portrait that the Middle English author constructs in his romance since the biographical episodes delineate Alexander’s personality.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author incorporates the broad personality traits associated with Thomas of Kent's Alexander portrait by incorporating most biographical episodes from the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. Like the Alexander of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the Alexander constructed in the *Kyng Alisaunder* demonstrates reconciles his parents (1159-1160) and maintains control despite Nicholas' insult (889-900). He defends against the attacking beasts during the Night of Terrors (5251-5450) and throws the false guides to the man-eating hippopotami (5155-5171). As in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, Alexander in the *Kyng Alisaunder* engages in single combat with Porus (7362-7434) and visits Darius' camp in disguise (4105-4270). These biographical episodes construct an Alexander portrait in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* that parallels the qualities of the Alexander constructed in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by displaying diplomacy, self-control, personal bravery and a love of tricks.

The primary difference between the Alexander portraits of the *Kyng Alisaunder* and the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* occurs because the Middle English author omits biographical episodes that add depth to the portrait created by Thomas of Kent. Thomas of Kent adds to his Alexander portrait in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* by depicting Alexander's emotional attachment to Bucephalus, Alexander's willingness to share his men's privations and Alexander's confidence in the face of a reported assassination plot by his physician. Again, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author causes only minor repercussions to his Alexander portrait because of the changes in biographical episodes. The

Alexander of the *Kyng Alisaunder* remains a bit flatter than the Alexander of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, but otherwise is recognizable as the Alexander constructed in the texts of the legendary Alexander tradition.

The changes that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author makes in the biographical narrative and Alexander portrait of his Anglo-Norman model remain slight. Indeed, the minimal discrepancies in Alexander's biography and portrait would justify the opinion of some scholars that the *Kyng Alisaunder* is little more than a Middle English version of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The differences of literary characteristics between the Middle English *Kyng Alisuander* and the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* are comprised primarily of distinctions in "detail, development and emphasis" (Kitchel 21-22).

The differences between the *Kyng Alisaunder* and the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* in their literary characteristics may hinge on "detail, development and emphasis," but the effects of those differences are striking. The *Kyng Alisaunder* differs from the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* in that the Middle English romance joins the theme of life's transitory nature traditional to legendary Alexander texts with a moral outlook. In addition, the *Kyng Alisaunder* constructs its world of Alexander romance as a concrete, knowable location and places responsibility for actions in human cause. These three qualities join to extend the didactic lesson of the Alexander's short life from applying only to Alexander himself to apply to all.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* develops its primary thematic meaning, the mutability or transitory nature of human life, mainly through its seasonal

headpieces. The twenty-nine headpieces contained in the *Kyng Alisaunder* (Kitchel 67) occur at natural narrative breaks in the story and depict scenes of nature and human activity.⁷ Placing the headpieces at natural narrative breaks divides the larger story into more manageable narrative units and allows the headpieces to interact with the preceding or following narrative units. The headpieces thus allow the *Kyng Alisaunder* author to insert didactic commentary on the brevity of human life throughout the romance.

The first headpiece occurs at lines 139-144, at a natural break between the introduction that brings Nectanebo to Macedonia and the first meeting between Nectanebo and Olympias:

Averylle is mery and langeþ þe daye:
Leuedyes dauncen and þai playe.
Swaynes justneþ, kni3ttes tournay,
Syngeþ þe ni3ttyngale, gradeþ þe jay;
þe hote sunne clyngeþ þe clay,
April is merry and long of day:
Ladies dance and they play.
Young men tilt, knights tourney,
Sings the nightingale, cries the jay;
The hot sun hardens the clay;

The seasonal character of the headpiece originates in both its opening reference to the month of “Averylle” (“April”) and its inclusion of birds and the “sunne”

(“sun”). The aristocratic flavor of the human activity described—ladies, swains and knights all enjoying themselves—matches the description of the public festival that follows (149-212). Olympias organizes the festival as an opportunity to present herself for public acclaim and sees Nectanebo among the crowd, a meeting that leads eventually to Alexander’s conception. The first seasonal headpiece therefore marks the end of the action that propels Nectanebo to Macedonia and introduces the succeeding events in appropriately courtly terms.

Mutability and the transience of life appear thematically in the first headpiece only implicitly, in the understood connection between the inevitable passing of time as spring moves to summer. Other headpieces, though, contain clear expressions of these themes. One such example occurs just before Alexander’s second battle against Darius. As the armies move to engage each other, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author interrupts the story to exclaim:

Mercy, Jesu! Pou us socoure!

Jt fareþ wiþ man so dooþ wiþ floure—

Bot a stirte ne may it dure;

He glyt away so dooþ þe[ss]ure. (4313-4316)

Mercy Jesus! [Give] us succor!

It fares with man as it does with the flower—

But a fleeting moment it lasts;

He flies away as does a puff of wind.

The placement of the headpiece again proves apt, coming as it does immediately before the *Kyng Alisaunder* author details the gruesome deaths of so many men in battle. This headpiece eschews the aristocratic flavor seen in the first headpiece in favor of undisguised commentary on the shortness of human life, which “glyt away so doop þe[ss]ure” (“flies away as does a puff of wind”).

Like nearly all of the other twenty-eight headpieces, the headpiece of lines 4313-4316 remains generic in its reference to the passing of life. Even though this headpiece occurs before the approaching battle between Alexander and Darius, it applies to the general condition of humanity rather than to either of the kings. The headpiece generalizes that life ends for all men by refusing to name any particular man. This generalization of the *Kyng Alisaunder* author’s theme enhances the romance’s didactic purpose, since the reminder that life will end more readily applies to all when no particular application is mentioned.

Only one seasonal headpiece references specific persons in connection with human mortality, but this example is also constructed to apply the didactic lesson of life’s transience in general rather than specific terms. The last headpiece of the *Kyng Alisaunder* occurs at lines 7820-7830, immediately after Alexander removes Antipater from power in Macedonia but immediately before Antipater, in retaliation, sends the poison that will kill Alexander:

Jn þis werlde falleþ many cas,

Gydy blisse, short solas!

Ypomodon, and Pallidamas,

And Absolon, þat so fair was,
Hij lyueden here a litel raas,
Ac sone for3eten vchon was.
Pe leuedyes shene als þe glas,
And þise maidens, wiþ rody faas,
Passen sone als foure in gras;
So strong, so fair, neuere non nas
Þat he ne shal passe wiþ “allas!”
In this world falls many circumstances,
Frivolous bliss, short solace!
Hippomedon, and Pallidamas,
And Absolon, that so fair were,
They lived here a little space,
But soon forgotten each one was.
The ladies shine as a glass,
And these maidens with rosy face,
Pass soon as flowers in grass;
So strong, so fair not ever there was
That he shall not pass with an “allas!”

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author again displays his talent for appropriate placement and content in this final headpiece. The author takes advantage of the tension created by Alexander’s approaching poisoning and death, placing the

headpiece to delay narrative progression from Antipater's dismissal to the assassination plot and thereby generating even greater tension. Alluding to Alexander's short life by referencing other well-known men who died young occurs only as the *Kyng Alisaunder* nears its climax and end. That Alexander is about to die therefore enrolls him the company of Hippomedon, Pallidamas and Absolon as an example that death comes to even the best of men.

This final headpiece of the *Kyng Alisaunder* continues another five lines and extends the didactic theme to all humanity. The second half of the headpiece returns to the generic examples of life's mutability contained in the other headpieces: beautiful "leuedyes" ("laidies") and "maidens" who themselves will "Passen sone als foure in gras" ("Pass soon as flowers in grass") transfer the headpiece's lesson from Alexander to humanity at large.

Mutability and the transience of mortal life were often a theme of Alexander literature, especially literature of the legendary Alexander tradition. Walter of Châtillon included images of the Wheel of Fortune, a favorite medieval *topos*, in his *Alexandreis* to highlight the philosophical possibilities inherent in the story of Alexander's glorious but brief life. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author therefore works within established literary practice of both Alexander literature and medieval literature in general when he thematically develops mutability in his Middle English romance. Although the *Kyng Alisaunder* author is the first author in England to incorporate mutability as a theme in an example of Alexander literature (Bunt 87), he also contributes an original thematic development by

joining a moral tone to his didactic development of mutability. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author develops the moral tone throughout the romance through gnomic statements that comment on the story's action and also includes moral commentary in some of the romance's headpieces.

The Middle English author develops the *Kyng Alisaunder*'s moral tone mainly through gnomic statements commenting on the romance's action, as seen in the following three examples. The author considers Olympias' adultery in lines 240-241: "Me wondreþ þat men ne beep a-gaste,/And þat somme hem by opere ne chasteþ" ("I wonder that men are not sobered,/And that some to others are not chaste"). After the barons send for Philip, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author forecasts Olympias' future unhappiness by announcing: "Yhereþ now hou selcouþ lijf/Comeþ to shame, sorou3, and strijf" (455-456) ("Hear now how an irregular life/Comes to shame, sorrow and strife"). The author also comments on Alexander's murder of Nectanebo, moralizing that Nectanebo earned his death since: "Soop it is, vpe al þing,/Of yuel lijf yuel endyng" (751-752) ("True it is, invariably/From an evil life [comes] an evil ending").

All three examples are pithy and memorable, being contained in just two lines and, in two of the three instances, joined by end rhyme. The example of lines 240-241 communicates the gravity of falling into sin while the second and third examples point out the cost of sin: "shame, sorou3, and strijf" or an "yuel endyng." Expressing his moral commentary as gnomic statements allows the

Kyng Alisaunder author to extend his moral didacticism to his entire audience rather than as specific to, in these examples, Olympias and Nectanebo

Several of the seasonal headpieces contain the same moral tone displayed in the gnomic statements. The fusion in the headpieces of the romance's development of mutability and moral tone creates undisguised religious instruction on proper human behavior. The twenty-eighth headpiece contains such an example of moral instruction, insisting that:

Good it were to ben kni3th,
Nere tourneyment and dedly fi3th.
Wiþ marchaundes to ben it were hend,
Neren þacountes at bordes ende.
Swete is loue of damoysele,
Ac it askeþ costes fele.
Better is litel to habbe in ayse
Pan mychel agh3tte in malayse.
Who-so is of dedes vntrewe,
Ofte it shal hym sore rewe. (7352-7361)
Good it is to be a knight,
Near the tournament and deadly fight.
With goods approaching,
The sums are not due at the table's end.
Sweet is the love of a damsel,

But it asks many costs.
Better it is to have little in ease
Than many possessions in misery.
Whoever is in deeds untrue
Often shall he it sorely rue.

The twenty-seventh headpiece also merges the *Kyng Alisaunder*'s theme of mutability with moral didacticism:

Averille 3iues mery shoures;
Pe foules syngen and springen floures.
Many hokett is in amours!
Stedfast seldom ben lecchoures.
Hote loue often after wil soure.
Fair juel is gode nei3boure.
Pe best þing is God to honoure. (6988-6994)
April gives merry showers;
The birds sing and spring flowers.
Many shabby deeds there are in love!
Seldom steadfast are libertines.
[What is] called love often afterwards sour.
Fair evil is a good neighbor.
The best thing is God to honor.

Both of the above headpieces offer a warning about the dangers of worldly entanglements followed by advice to follow a more moral life. The twenty-eighth headpiece warns that pleasure in life is not worth its cost, and then counsels restrained living. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author's concern with mutability emerges in the headpiece's suggestion that life can quickly change in that "ayse" ("ease") can be followed by "malayse" ("misery"). The passage's insistence that fewer possessions are better than many and closing gnomic statement construct its moral tone. The twenty-seventh passage follows the same pattern. In this headpiece, the opening lines introduce an allusion to the passage of time through by bringing in seasonal change and the later lines emphasize mutability in the warning that love can wane. The first warns against the "hokett" ("shabby deeds") undertaken in pursuit of sexual conquest and then avows that "Țe best þing is God to honoure" ("The best thing is God to honor").

Joining a moral tone to the romance's thematic development of mutability and the transience of human life allows the *Kyng Alisaunder* author to communicate a specific didactic message: the importance of appropriate earthly behavior in the face of certain death. This dual thematic development of mutability and morality extends the theme of life's shortness from Alexander to all of humanity and constructs morality in religious terms. Since all humans will face death, the *Kyng Alisaunder* insists, it is better to live a moral life in this world and escape the consequences of hell in the next world.

A final literary characteristic developed in the *Kyng Alisaunder* supports the romance's moral didacticism and demonstrates the *Kyng Alisaunder* author's contribution to the system of sources that lead to this Middle English romance. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author both grounds his moral lesson in the human world and works against the movement towards fantasy observed in the historical and legendary texts that influence his own romance by constructing the romance world of the *Kyng Alisaunder* as a historicized, knowable location subject to understandable processes. The differences of details between the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* to which Luann Kitchel referred create this original contribution in the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author chooses the most logical and likely alternative when presented with conflicting episodes, supplies geographical and character names throughout the romance, demystifies supernatural pagan actions and ascribes responsibility for actions to human causes.

That the *Kyng Alisaunder* author mediates conflicting sources was demonstrated in relation to the biographical episode of the physician Philip saving Alexander's life.⁸ The *Kyng Alisaunder* author chooses Walter of Châtillon's account of Parmenion's fate in the *Alexandreis* over Thomas of Kent's account in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The explanation provided by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author for that choice demonstrates his concern for logical consistency and historical accuracy. The *Kyng Alisaunder* also relies on the *Alexandreis* to provide character names left unspecified in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*.⁹

Smithers enumerates some of the character names that the *Kyng Alisaunder* author appropriates from the *Alexandreis* for part of the description (2213 and following) of Alexander's battle against Darius (*Vol. II* 22). This additional reliance on Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* further demonstrates the *Kyng Alisaunder* author's historicizing tendency in that the incorporation of character names adds realism to the accounts of the single-combat that occurs during the battle.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author borrows character names from Walter of Châtillon for the description of the battle between Alexander and Darius, but he supplies a far greater number of original names for geographical locations, characters and unknown races throughout the Middle English romance. The *Kyng Alisaunder* specifies that Alexander is crowned Philip's heir in Corinth (769 and 806) and invents names for Darius' wife (3310), daughter (3872) and brother (3329). Several of the strange races of India left unnamed in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* are identified in the *Kyng Alisaunder*, with the "Faraugos" (4920) and the "Orifine" (6433) being only two examples.¹⁰

Smithers makes clear that "It was a conventional device of technique in late medieval epic to embellish the account of a battle . . ." (*Vol. II* 24), often accomplished through the invention of character names. Yet the amount of inventions included by the *Kyng Alisaunder* author draws Smithers' attention in his acknowledgment that "It is the author's policy to supply names in other circumstances (presumably to give an impression of actuality)" (*Vol. II* 24). The

“policy” of providing names for any place, person or race left unnamed by the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* indeed creates “an impression of actuality,” an impression that anchors the moral didacticism of the *Kyng Alisaunder* in the known world rather than in a fantasy world.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author not only places his characters in a particularized world made to seem concrete through the use of geographical and character names, he also makes that world seem more recognizable by demystifying the supernatural activities associated with the pagan Nectanebo. When first told by, falsely, Nectanebo that the god Ammon desired to conceive a son by her, Olympias refuses to accept the false prophecy:

For folye al it helde þe queen,
And seid soþe it mi3th nou3th bene,
And swore, by Adam and by Eue,
She ne wolde it neuvere yleue,
Ac 3if she hym sei3 in metyng
She wolde leue in swich þing.(323-328)
As all fantasy the queen it held,
And said truth it might not be,
And swore, by Adam and by Eve,
She would never it believe,
But if she saw him [Ammon] in a meeting
She would believe in such a thing.

In this passage, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author manipulates audience knowledge to underscore that Ammon will not be the father of Alexander. The *Kyng Alisaunder* had previously depicted Nectanebo in his traditional legendary role of magician and illustrated both his magical abilities and disguised arrival in Macedonia. The audience therefore recognizes Nectanebo as a pagan magician willing to deceive. Olympias' initial refusal to accept the false prophecy of Ammon's love corresponds to the audience's view of Nectanebo and allows disbelief in regard to Alexander's supposed divine paternity.

Despite her initial skepticism, Nectanebo convinces Olympias of his veracity by sending her a magical dream. When Nectanebo arrives to impregnate Olympias in the guise of Ammon, however, the *Kyng Alisaunder* mocks even his successful seduction of the Macedonian queen. Described as wearing the form of Ammon from the shoulders up and a dragon from the shoulders down, Nectanebo approaches Olympias and “Ouere hire bed twyes he lepeþ,/Pe þrid tyme and jn he crepeþ” (389-390) (“Over her bed twice he leaped/The third time and in he creped”). The couplet thoroughly demystifies any divine bearing the false Ammon or even a true pharaoh might command, casting Nectanebo instead as rather silly man prancing about the bed of his sexual conquest.

Finally, the *Kyng Alisaunder* author makes his romance world more even more logically ordered and recognizable by placing the responsibility for outcomes in human actions, supplying cause for events where none exists in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The Middle English author's introduction of cause

appears at the outset of the *Kyng Alisaunder*. The story proper begins with Nectanebo forced from Egypt by an alliance of thirty kings. Thomas of Kent does not name any of the kings in that alliance, but the Middle English author specifies that “Kyng Philippe, of grete þede, /Maister of þat felawrede” (95-96) (“King Philip, of a great nation, /Was master of that army”). In the *Kyng Alisaunder*, Nectanebo purposefully flees Egypt for Macedonia because:

Neptanabus sore is annoyed,
For Philippe haþ his londe destroyed,
And he is in Philippes cite,
And þinkeþ 3elde his iniquite. (129-132)
Neptenabus is sore annoyed,
For Philip has his land destroyed,
And he is in Philip’s city,
He [Nectanebo] thinks to repay him [Philip] his iniquity.

The Middle English author grounds Nectanebo’s arrival in Macedonia in hatred and vengeance whereas Thomas of Kent specifies no reason for Nectanebo going to Macedonia. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* simply notes that “A Macedoine vient a la cité tut dreit” (85) (“He arrived directly in Macedonia”) with no reason offered as to why Nectanebo chose that destination.¹¹

The Middle English author continues injecting cause throughout Nectanebo’s residence in Macedonia and to Nectanebo’s actions while in the city. Nectanebo is able to seduce Olympias because “Phillipe is in Netenabus londe,”

(146) (“Philip is in Nectanebo’s land”), apparently concluding the invasion of Egypt that had propelled Nectanebo to Macedonia. Thomas also notes that Philip is absent from the city, but suggests a degree of coincidence in that absence by stating that:

Ore est Nectanabus a dreit port arivé,
Car le roy Phelippe n’ert pas en la cité:
Ainz est alé en l’ost ou mult ert demoré. (92-93)
Nectanebo arrived at the right moment,
For King Philip was absent from the city;
He was engaged in a country that kept him a long time.¹²

With no specific reason given for either Nectanebo’s presence in Macedonia or Philip’s absence, Thomas allows the suggestion that events simply occur coincidentally, by chance.

The Middle English author continues inserting reasons for Nectanebo’s actions throughout the story of Alexander’s conception and early life in the *Kyng Alisaunder*. In the *Kyng Alisaunder*, when Nectanebo first attempts to convince Olympias that Ammon will engender her son, Olympias’ disbelief causes Nectanebo to become “wel yrous” (330) (“well enraged”) as he leaves to prepare the potion that will cause her dream of Ammon. When Olympias awakes from the dream that Nectanebo conjures, she “. . . was a-grised for þe nones” (357) (. . . was afraid as a result”). Philip returns from Egypt because “þe lefdy greted wip new bon./þe barouns hadden suspecioun” (452-453) (“the lady grew great with

child./The barons had suspicion”). The text confirms that Nectanebo seduces Olympias as an act of revenge against Philip after signs convince Philip of the unborn child’s divine paternity. Philip accepts Olympias’ claim that Ammon impregnated her, but remains visibly angry at her infidelity. The text then indicates Nectanebo’s satisfaction at events with: “Þei3 Neptenabus nold speke,/Wel he þou3th hir awreke” (529-530) (“Though Nectanebo would not speak,/Well he thought himself avenged”).

The *Kyng Alisaunder* author continues supplying reasons for actions throughout the Middle English romance. Thomas of Kent leaves unspecified any reason why Philip set Olympias aside in favor of a second wife. The *Kyng Alisaunder* author, however, details that:

Comen folk of Grece and Alisaundre,
And on Olympyas leiden skanundre,
And seiden wiþ wrong she was queen,
For she hore had ybene;
And sworn, and seiden veire
Alisaundre was false ayre.
For þis sklaundre þat was so vyle,
And also of grete peryle,
Kyng Philipp, by al his regioun,
Of-sent erle, duk, kni3th, and baroun,
Pat juggeden all hem bitwene

Olympias ne shulde be queen. (995-1006)

Came people of Greece and Alexandria,

And on Olympias laid slander,

And said with wrong she was queen,

For a whore she had been;

And swore, and said truly

Alexander was a false heir.

For this slander that was so vile,

And also of great peril,

King Philip, to all his country,

Sent for earl, duke, knight, and baron,

Who judged all of them between

That Olympias should not be queen.

Pressure from Philip's own subjects force him to replace Olympias as queen of Macedonia, but ultimately the cause of Olympias' removal rests on her own adulterous affair with Nectanebo. The *Kyng Alisaunder* not only insists that events be rooted in human causes, in this passage the romance plays out the moral warnings contained in the gnomic statements and headpieces scattered throughout the text.

All of the examples described above of the Middle English author providing a reason for the events of the story have no correspondence in the Anglo-Norman romance. Further examples occur not only in Alexander's

conception but throughout his life. The text supplies a reason why Alexander kills Nectanebo (725-727) and why Philip sends Alexander on his first battle expedition against Nicolas (839-840). Again, Thomas of Kent ascribes no cause to any of the same events contained in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*.

The insertion of cause into the *Kyng Alisaunder* occurs throughout the romance. Yet the examples drawn from just the first part of the *Kyng Alisaunder* effectively demonstrate the ubiquity of the author's insertion of cause, the effect that insertion produces in the Middle English romance and the corresponding effect of the absence of identifiable cause produces in the Anglo-Norman romance. The *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* all but ignores any reason for why events occur in the story of Alexander's life, and therefore suggests that chance rules human life. Nectanebo simply turns up in Macedonia while Philip happens to be away in some unidentified location. The pharaoh happens to see Olympias, seduces her and engenders Alexander. No one sends for Philip because Olympias is pregnant and Philip marries another wife for no apparent reason. The *Kyng Alisaunder*, in contrast, pays inordinate attention to the reasons that lie behind events. Nectanebo engenders Alexander because the pharaoh wants vengeance on Philip for Philip's command of the army that overthrew Nectanebo. Human agency alone is responsible for Alexander's conception rather than coincidence, chance or even Ammon.

The Middle English author expresses the romance's explicit didacticism in moral terms and concentrates on the human actions that cause the events of

Alexander's life. The author's inclusion of specific reasons for why events occur removes chance as the controlling agent of mortal life and instead makes humans responsible for their own lives. The romance's explicit moral didacticism and its emphasis on human agency join with the theme of life's transience inherited from the legendary Alexander tradition to emphasize the immortal cost of concentrating too much on mortal life.

Conclusion:

This chapter's discussion of the *Kyng Alisaunder* demonstrates that although the first Middle English Alexander romance often suffers from scholarly oversight because it seems little more than a translation of the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the Middle English romance actually contributes distinct differences to the production of Alexander romance in England. Where its Anglo-Norman model contributed little that was original to the long-standing and wide-spread tradition of Alexander literature other than the author's fascination with encyclopedic and arcane knowledge, the Middle English version actively engaged with a variety of sources to illuminate a moral didacticism that had remained implicit in the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. In the process of mediating the many sources that influenced the *Kyng Alisaunder*, the Middle English author also created a more particularized world inhabited by characters whose actions result from specific causes.

Much of this larger project relies on widely accepted scholarship in a variety of disciplines. For example, the sources of the *Kyng Alisaunder*, the influences on Quintus Curtius Rufus, the composition of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *The Greek Alexander Romance* and the descent of the legendary Alexander tradition from Pseudo-Callisthenes to the medieval West have been so thoroughly studied that the same conclusions reproduced in this project appear in nearly any discussion of Alexander literature. What occurs first in this project is not the identification of sources for or influences on particular Alexander texts, or even an examination of the *Kyng Alisaunder*. Rather, what occurs in this project that has yet to be accomplished is the chronological examination of the most significant Alexander texts that both directly and indirectly influence the production of the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*.

This chronological investigation uncovers two previously overlooked features of the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder* in relation both to its main source, the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, and the larger system of texts that influence the Middle English romance. In comparison to the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, the *Kyng Alisaunder* contributes the moral didacticism and particularization that is the subject of this chapter. In so doing, the *Kyng Alisaunder* also resists the trend towards fantasy seen in the historical Alexander tradition and in the legendary Alexander tradition.

The *Kyng Alisaunder* is the most important Middle English example of one of the most popular genres of both the ancient and medieval worlds. More

vernacular Alexander romances descended from Pseudo-Callisthenes' *The Greek Alexander Romance* than any other translated or reworked text. More copies were made of Pseudo-Callisthenes' foundational romance than any other text save the Gospels (Stoneman, "Metamorphoses" 602). All literate persons and most unlettered persons of the medieval period knew of Alexander the Great. The *Kyng Alisaunder* is the first, most complete and most literary of the Middle English Alexander romances. As such, it should be viewed from multiple perspectives: as the product of medieval translation practices, as an original contribution to the popular genre of Alexander romance, as the recipient of ancient and contemporaneous influences and as the end product of but one line of Alexander literary traditions that stretch back to the historical but ultimately unknowable Alexander the Great.

Notes

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- ¹ Jeanette Beer's "Introduction" to *Medieval Translators and Their Craft*, p. 1-7, distills the medieval attitudes towards texts, translating, and the translator's role.
- ² Chapter 2 of James J. Murphy's *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (p. 135-193) concisely traces the developments in the medieval period in the application of the rhetorical arts to the writing of verse.
- ³ See Smithers, *Vol. II* p. 25 for a discussion of this omission from the *Kyng Alisaunder*.
- ⁴ I give *laisses* in the citation because the line numbering in this passage relies partly on a secondary manuscript. The corresponding line numbers are P44 (from the secondary manuscript) to 4416 (from the primary manuscript).
- ⁵ Smithers details the full changes made to the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* surrounding this episode on page 26 of *Vol. II*.
- ⁶ Smithers, page 26 of *Vol. II*, cites Julius Valerius and the *Epitome* as two sources of the legendary Alexander tradition that depict Parmenion's execution; Smithers names Walter of Châtillon and Quintus Curtius Rufus as authors of the historical Alexander tradition who depict Parmenion as alive well after the Philip episode.
- ⁷ Smithers lists the number of seasonal headpieces in the *Kyng Alisaunder* at twenty-seven on page 36 of *Vol. II*, and discusses the headpieces fully on pages 35-39 of *Vol. II*.
- ⁸ See pages 176-178 of this chapter.
- ⁹ As Smithers details on pages 22-23 of *Vol. II*.
- ¹⁰ See *Vol. II* of Smithers, page 25 and throughout the commentary, for a more detailed account of the *Kyng Alisaunder* author's invention of names.
- ¹¹ "Il gagna directement la cite de Macédoine" (MdF 85).
- ¹² "Nectanabus était arrivé au bon moment,/car le roi Phillip était absent de la cité:/il s'était engagé dans une campagne qui le retenait depuis longtemps" (MdF 92-95).

Afterword

Alexander romance was the most popular literary form of the ancient world, with more copies made of Pseudo-Callisthenes' founding version than any other text except the Gospels (Stoneman, "Metamorphoses" 602). All literate persons and most unlettered persons of the medieval period knew of Alexander the Great. Despite the popularity of Alexander romance, the form did not cross from the medieval period into the Renaissance, and the genre lost its appeal for scholars and the general public alike (Stoneman, "Metamorphoses" 612).

Oliver Stone's 2004 film *Alexander* briefly resurrected Alexander romance for a post-modern audience. The film displays many of the same characteristics of literary Alexander romance contained in the Middle English *Kyng Alisaunder*. Standard biographical episodes drawn from the non-rhetorical first generation Alexander authors share the screen with variant episodes recorded by the rhetorical first generation authors and with biographical myths from the legendary tradition. Stone's Alexander marries a Bactrian, Roxane (historical fact), but loses Bucephalus in battle against Porus (non-historical embellishment) and dies from poison (myth).

This film version of Alexander romance also joins long-standing themes developed in the literary Alexander traditions with motifs from its time of production. Alexander displays his characteristic *pathos*, temper and drunkenness inherited from the literary traditions but also visits his wounded in the manner of George C. Scott's film incarnation of Patton.

Stone's film *Alexander* romance suffered the same poor reception that its literary forebearers now endure. Considered too non-historical by historians and too inartistic by film critics, Stone's *Alexander* was dismissed as an "extremely weird, if absurdly expensive, movie" in one of the kinder reviews (Hunter). Like literary Alexander romances, Stone's film may be a flawed representation of the 'real' Alexander and mere popular entertainment, but entertainment it is. And that is the essence of Alexander romance.

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