

TRANSGRESSING LIMITS

Alexander the Great's chase of the Impossible

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The exceptional is not always easy to define. In the era of limitless scientific possibilities and technological advantages, of which we are part, achievement in any field seems at least provisional. For the inquisitive mind and the restless desire to excel, there are today the means to assist the process of fulfilling one's ambitions. Therefore, it might be hard to fathom the uniqueness of the circumstances that informed the achievements and the magnitude of a personality as Great as Alexander the Third of the royal dynasty of Argeadai, the heir of Philip the Second of Macedonia.

Alexander's birth in 356 B.C. was the third good news Philip II had heard that year. His chariot had just won at the Olympic Games and his second-in-command, Parmenio, had defeated the neighboring Illyrioi, who had always questioned the borders of the realm that Philip had established with much difficulty. Parmenio's victory meant for Philip the securing of his state, at least geographically. His victory at Olympia not only meant that Philip was undisputedly Greek, but that he also surpassed in excellence many of his compatriots. This, combined with the good news of an heir for the throne of Pella, meant that Philip could now lead the Greeks to a Panhellenic war against Persia. It also meant for some, that this newborn child would be thrice invincible.¹ No one could have predicted the course that history would run and the way things would turn for Philip and his son.

Alexander's whole life course has been a tribute to the exceptional, as if he had dedicated himself to the service of the impossible – or rather, the surpassing of what others considered impossible. It is partly due to the lack of contemporary source material for his reign and partly due to the enigmatic nature of his personality that he is established as one of the most fascinating personages in the history of mankind.² His intentions, regarding politics and new-world ethics have fascinated researchers from a long time ago. C. A. Robinson, Jr.,

¹ Plutarch, *Alexander* 3: . Φιλίππῳ δ' ἄρτι Ποτειδαίαν ἠρηκότι τρεῖς ἤκον ἀγγελίαι κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον, ἡ μὲν Ἰλλυριοῦς ἠττήσθαι μάχῃ μεγάλην διὰ Παρμενίωνος, ἡ δ' Ὀλυμπίασιν ἵππῳ κέλῃτι νενικηκέναι, τρίτη δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου γενέσεως. ἐφ' οἷς ἠδόμενον ὡς εἰκόσ ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ μάντιες ἐπῆραν, ἀποφαινόμενοι τὸν παῖδα τρισὶ νίκαις συγγεγεννημένον ἀνίκητον ἔσεσθαι.

² Cf. the introduction of Earl I. McQueen to Spyros D. Syropoulos, *The Goat's Skin. The Other Side of Alexander the Great's Power*, (in Greek: *To Δέρμα του Τράγου. Το άλλο πρόσωπο της εξουσίας του Μεγάλου Αλεξάνδρου*).d. Herodotus, Thessaloniki 2003, p. 13.

stressed this, stating that “examining Alexander's attitude toward the oecumene or “inhabited world,” the one thing in his entire life which doubtless has the greatest fascination and value for our mid-twentieth century society. We must ask ourselves, what was Alexander's motive in ordering his deification, what plans of world conquest did he have, what was his constitutional relationship to Greeks and barbarians, and what, especially perhaps, were his feelings toward race and race mixture and the idea that the world is one?”³

His achievements were, indeed, so illustrious, that conscious propaganda regarding his exceptional origins was undertaken by various people, perhaps without little personal gain for themselves. Thus his earliest biographers, garmented the account of the future emperor's birth by the manifestation of impressive physical phenomena, such as lightings, thunderstorms and the inexplicable collapse of temples in distant places, which meant the collapse of the Persian Empire:

Ἐγεννήθη δ' οὖν Ἀλέξανδρος ἰσταμένου μηνὸς Ἑκατομβαιῶνος, ὃν Μακεδόνες Λῶον καλοῦσιν, ἔκτη, καθ' ἣν ἡμέραν ὁ τῆς Ἐφεσίας Ἀρτέμιδος ἐνεπρήσθη νεῶς· ὧ γ' Ἡγησίας ὁ Μάγνης ἐπιπεφώνηκεν ἐπιφώνημα κατασβέσαι τὴν πυρκαϊάν ἐκείνην ὑπὸ ψυχρίας δυνάμενον· εἰκότως γὰρ ἔφη καταφλεχθῆναι τὸν νεῶν, τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἀσχολουμένης περὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου μαίωσιν. ὅσοι δὲ τῶν μάγων ἐν Ἐφέσῳ διατρίβοντες ἔτυχον, τὸ περὶ τὸν νεῶν πάθος ἠγούμενοι πάθους ἐτέρου σημεῖον εἶναι, διέθεον, τὰ πρόσωπα τυπτόμενοι καὶ βοῶντες ἄτην ἅμα καὶ συμφορὰν μεγάλην τῇ Ἀσίᾳ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην τετοκέσαι.⁴

Alexander showed from an early start the innate desire to prove himself in any circumstances rendered impossible. Alexander's father was a fine huntsman and horseman – a notion reinforced by the archaeological excavations at Vergina that unearthed the ritual killing of horses in a pyre believed to be the funeral pyre of Philip II. Thus, Demochares from Thessaly, wishing to placate Philip offered him a fine, yet unbroken in, steed, for the great sum of 13 talents. To the king's disappointment, no man could ride the horse. No man, but Alexander, that is. The sixteen-year old heir of the throne realized that the horse was agitated by its own shadow cast on the ground. Alexander turned its head against the sun and mounted the steed to everyone's surprise. “This kingdom is too small for you”, exclaimed Philip in admiration, “you must search for another”.⁵ Alexander made sure he obeyed the paternal advice. It is said, that his only concern, while still an heir to the throne, was that his father's achievements would leave little things for him to do, few places for him to conquer. Little could he have known that he was soon to lead the expedition against Persia – an expedition that was devised by Philip himself long ago.

Only his untimely death by a mysterious assassination put a halt to Philip's plan of invading Persia. For many Greeks, it was presented as an avenging war, to punish the Persians for the burning of the temples in the invasion of 480 B.C. For others, it was the only way to eliminate the ever-present threat from the East. However, this war was dictated by the

³ Robinson, C. H. Jr., “Alexander the Great and the Oecumene”, *Hesperia Supplements*, Vol. 8. Commemorative Studies in Honor of Theodore Leslie Shear (1949), pp. 299-304, 299.

⁴ Plutarch, *Alexander* 3.

⁵ Plutarch, *Alexander* 6.

need to subterfuge internal political strife, caused mainly by economical dead-ends at the end of the classical period in Greece.⁶ The expedition was a unifying process for the Greek cities, albeit not a political panacea, as it was to be proved soon.

Putting aside the obvious, that is liberation of the Greek cities of Asia Minor and revenge for the Greek losses during the Persian war, more than a century and a half earlier⁷, Alexander's motives are a mystery to all⁸. «There is no way of knowing the extent of Alexander's ambition when he crossed to Asia in 334 BC, but it is a good guess that it was not modest. Back of him, at the end of the fifth century, lay the amazing fact that 10.000 and more Greeks had been able to march with Xenophon and the young Cyrus to the very gates of Babylon and, though defeated, return alive. Earlier in Alexander's own century, the Spartan King Agesilaus, had enjoyed considerable success in Asia Minor, and, of course, Philip, Alexander's father had been ready to march against the Persian empire at the time of his murder (336 B.C.).⁹

Accomplishments of predecessors seemed only to spur him on. For Alexander, such an expedition was the chance to transgress the geographical limits of his country and seek glory by attempting feats that no man, or indeed, god, had achieved before. The latter is evident in an account by Quintus Curtius Rufus: in the autumn of 333 BC, the Macedonian army's encountered the Persian forces under the command of King Darius III himself at a mountain pass at Issus in northwestern Syria. 30,000 Greeks again formed a sizable addition to the Darius' army as elite fighters and were positioned directly against the Macedonian phalanx. Describing the atmosphere before a battle, the Roman historian Curtius explained how Alexander raised the morale of the Macedonians, Greeks, Illyrians, and Thracians in his army, one at the time:

“Riding to the front line he (Alexander) named the soldiers and they responded from spot to spot where they were lined up. The Macedonians, who had won so many battles in Europe and set off to invade Asia ... got encouragement from him - he reminded them of their permanent values. They were the world's liberators and one day they would pass the frontiers set by Hercules and Father Liber. They would subdue all races on Earth. Bactria and India would become Macedonian provinces.”¹⁰

Darius's army greatly outnumbered the Macedonians, but the Battle of Issus ended in a big victory for Alexander. Tens of thousands of Persians, Greeks, and other Asiatic soldiers

⁶ S. Syropoulos, *Τα μετά τον Αλέξανδρο. Οι φυγόκεντρες δυνάμεις των ελληνιστικών βασιλείων*, ΗΡΟΔΟΤΟΣ 2005 (*The things after Alexander. The centrifugal potencies of the Hellenistic Kingdoms, 323-381 BC*), pp. 74-75.

⁷ Arrian, II, 25, 3.

⁸ His intentions were definitely not to bind the newly liberated cities of Asia Minor to the Corinthian League, to which he presided as general. Instead of doing that he declared them as free and independent allies of him. Cf. Flower, M., “Alexander the Great and Panhellenism”, in Bosworth A. B. & Baynham, E. J. (edd.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, Oxford, OUP 2000.

⁹ Robinson, C. A. Jr., “The Extraordinary Ideas of Alexander the Great”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Jan. 1957) 326-244, 327.

¹⁰ Q. Curtius Rufus 3.10.4-10.

were killed and king Darius fled in panic before the Macedonian phalanx, abandoning his mother, wife, and children behind. Alexander treated them with the respect out of consideration for their royalty.¹¹

One particular episode from the vast collection of anecdotes that surround him is his meeting with the cynic philosopher Diogenes the Dog (*Kyn* in Greek), who preached that happiness is attained by satisfying only one's natural needs and by satisfying them in the cheapest and easiest way. Alexander was fond of philosophy, his interest cultivated by his teacher, Aristotle. It is also a fact that philosophers, such as Anaxarchus, accompanied him to the depths of Asia. When Alexander visited Athens, he wished to be acquainted with the famous Diogenes, who lived in extreme poverty and rejecting all conventions. He stood in front of him and asked him what he could do for him. Diogenes, unfazed, asked Alexander to move aside, for he was blocking the sun, in which he was basking. Impressed by his attitude, Alexander declared that were he not Alexander, he would have wanted to be Diogenes.¹² This is the declaration of Alexander's wish to differ by reaching the edge. Diogenes represented the ultimate abandonment, whereas Alexander served the other extreme, the ultimate motivation. In any case, Aristotle's tutoring was not enough to manipulate Alexander's independent spirit. It is known that Aristotle was an advocate of a certain natural selection of people¹³. He had advised Alexander to treat the "barbarians" of the East, as if they were animals. Alexander did not adhere to his tutor's advice.¹⁴ Not only he respected the nations he conquered, but also he allowed Persian nobles to be part of his military and administrative system, something that would have been otherwise impossible.¹⁵

Phenomenal difficulties seemed only to spur him forward. In the spring of 334 B.C., he had reached the river Granicus, after a successful and relatively untroubled march through hostile territory. The Persian army was lined along the high bank of the river and Alexander would have to cross it vertically, against enemies who had the apparent advantage as they stood on higher ground. The experienced general Parmenio, Philip's and Alexander's second-in-command, advised the young king to avoid the crossing of the Granicus, at least until the following morning. "I cannot do that", answered Alexander, saying that "if the Hellespont did not deter me, a little ditch will not stop me". He spurred his horse and jumped first into the water¹⁶. The result of the battle was a vital victory for Alexander, who escaped death only by the intervention of his friend Cleitus, who intercepted an enemy lance with his own body. This attitude is indicative of his whole course. Alexander always fought in

¹¹ Murison, C. L., "Darius III and the battle of Issus", *Historia* 21 (1972) 399-423.

¹² Plutarch, *Alexander* 14. Cf. Laërtius, *Diogenes* (1972) [1925]. "Διογένης". *Βίοι και γνώμαι τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ εὐδοκίμησάντων* [*Lives of eminent philosophers*]. Volume 2. translated by Robert Drew Hicks (Loeb Classical Library ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

¹³ For example, he does not reject the idea of slavery and the fact that some people were meant to be slaves. Aristotle, *Politics* VII, 1328b and 1330a. Just like Plato, he thought that "barbarians" are slaves by nature (Aristotle, *Politics* I, 1252b).

¹⁴ Merlan, P., "Isocrates, Aristotle and Alexander the Great", *Historia* 3 (1954) 60-81.

¹⁵ Cf. the appointment of satrapies to Persians, Arrian I, 23, 7; II, 4,2. Also, Badian, E., "The administration of the Empire", *G&R* 1964) 192-205; Griffith, G. T., "Alexander the Great and an experiment in government", *PCPA* 190 (1964) 23-39; Cartledge, P., *Alexander the Great. The Hunt for a New Past*, 2004 (here utilized the Greek edition, by Livanis editions, 2005) pp. 243-244

¹⁶ Hammond, N.G.L., "The battle at the Granicus river", *JHS* 100 (1980) 73-88.

the first ranks, often running the risk of being fatally injured. It was his generals' biggest fear. If Alexander was killed, not only the expedition would fail, but also internal strife would break up in the Macedonian royal court once again, just like the bloody period that followed Philip's death. Alexander had not married and had not left a legal heir to the throne before he departed from Macedonia. The success of the expedition and the political stability of Macedonia depended upon this fearless, almost reckless young leader, who never held back when danger was present. And he seems often to have done the impossible. Until his death, his army had marched 18.000 km in 8,5 years. To lead and sustain an army on hostile ground is not easy, especially back then. But Alexander did it. First, he changed the very image of his army. Heavy and dysfunctional carriages were abolished. The armour became lighter and every man carried his own provisions and weaponry. This was an idea of Philip, who had tried it to invade his neighboring mountainous regions, but it had never been tested in such an extent. Alexander made sure he created a whole system of secure military posts, to secure provisions and reinforcements as he moved along. He also studied carefully the climate and the weather conditions of each unknown region before he marched, so that he always could anticipate the size of the crop that the locals could spare to sustain his army, as he was passing through. His military genius enabled him to lead a formidable army to a distance that was never covered by a single army before – the noted failure being that of the mercenary army of Xehophon.

One of the reasons that he has been most accused of is his deification. Many a close friend (i.e. Philotas and Cleitus) turned against him, once he declared that he had transgressed the very limits of human nature and he was to be looked upon as a god. The divine lineage of his family lead back to very distinguished ancestors.¹⁷ His father was a descendant from the line of the Argean semi-god Hercules, and his mother an offspring from the line of Neoptolemus, son of the famous Achilles. However, it seems that it was his own mother, Olympias, who instilled in him the idea of divinity when he was very young, telling him that he was the son of Zeus, not of Philip. When Alexander reached Egypt in 331 B.C., he took a long detour in order to visit the temple of Ammon, in the oasis of Sheba. Ammon was a god often identified with the Greek god Zeus. Plutarch describes how the priest of Ammon went out to greet Alexander, addressing him as “son of Zeus”, which could have been a mere slip of tongue or bad Greek accent, as the replacement of a single consonant in the Greek, changes the meaning of the phrase in “Hi, child” – a more appropriate and plausible greeting.¹⁸ Of course, for Alexander it was the proof of his divinity. He immediately sent an edict to the Greek cities, ordering them to worship him as a god. Some say that he demanded from his Macedonians to kneel before him. This caused grievances and fierce accusations, as kneeling in front of mortal kings were not the custom of Macedonia. However, it seems that further proofs for his divinity were served to him. Diodorus informs us that when Alexander had asked the god whether he had indeed punished his father's murderers, he was answered that *“he who fathered him could not be murdered, since he was a god”*.¹⁹

¹⁷ Curtis says that these divine honours were bestowed upon him, only to equal him to gods and thus inspire godly honor (10.5.33). Cf. Arrian, 7.23. 2. For negative views on his deification cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 187E, 842D and the rather sarcastic Spartan remark on his deification in *Moralia* 219 E; Hyperides, 6. 20-21; 5.31-2.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Alexander* 27. 9.

¹⁹ Diodorus, XVII, 51. 3.

It is easy to stretch a smile hearing Alexander's self-proclaimed divinity. However, things are different when we consider the political aspects of this divinity. As a divine figure, Alexander would be easier to pass for a legitimate successor of the divine-like rulers of the Persians, who would thus tolerate easier a non-Persian King²⁰. Irrespective of his actual belief in his divinity, Alexander was considered the reincarnation of Dionysus after his death, and he was thus worshipped in many Hellenistic kingdoms.²¹ The fact remains that during his life only in Egypt he was proclaimed a god; Fuller believes that this would not have shocked the Greeks, since it was an axiom of Greek political theory that geniuses were above the conventional law.²²

Alexander's ultimate plan seems to have been an unimaginable task: the creation of an empire with prospects of longevity and continuity. The mere size of his conquests, at the time of his death, accounts for the impressive achievement of such an empire's creation. A vast country that was his own creation stretched from the Danube to the sides of the Himalayas and the coasts of the Nile. For many modern interpreters his death revealed the impossibility of the continuity that Alexander had anticipated of his empire. Fierce revolts and endless strife amongst his successors gradually broke down into pieces the formerly unified state, proving (as in the example of the recent breaking down of former Yugoslavia) that the state was held together only thanks to the unifying effect of a central figure.²³ From this point of view, this is the ultimate failure of Alexander and his most notable conformation to the expected and conventional, as no man could have done the impossible and create a new world, that would go on existing after his death.

However, such a statement is partially correct. One should take into consideration two important factors. The first factor is Alexander's sudden death. Until the year 331 Alexander had managed to bring into completion only the biggest part of his military plans and he had, indeed, managed to subdue nations that informed a multifarious cultural mosaic in his new country. As for his cultural politics, he had only managed to create the basis for what was to follow. Alexander was an exceptional mind – not only a military genius, but also a gifted person of unique political perception. He had soon realized that such a vast empire was more difficult to be maintained than conquered. As long as the Macedonians felt that they were the superior governors and the Persians felt that they were the unfortunate oppressed ones, peace would never prevail in the new kingdom. So, Alexander attempted to

²⁰ Fredricksmeyer, F. A., "On the background of the Ruler Cult", in *Studies in Honour of C. F. Edson*, Oxford 1981.

²¹ Badian, E., "The deification of Alexander the Great", in *Studies in Honour of C.F. Edson*, Oxford 1981; Baldson, J. P., V. D., "The divinity of Alexander", *Historia* (1950) 363-388; Edmonds, L., "The Religiosity of Alexander" *GRBS* 12 (1971) 363-392. F

²² Plato, *Politics* 294A, 296 ff; Cf. Fuller, J. F. C., *The Generalship of Alexander the Great*, da Capo Press 1960 [here utilized the translation in Greek by Editions Ποιότητα & Wordsworth Editions, 2004], p. 260.

²³ Syropoulos, S., "The European Policy of Unity and Alexander's Policy of Omonoia". In ALEXANDER, THE GREEK COSMOS - SYSTEM AND CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SOCIETY. Series, *Greek Thought*. Minutes from the International Symposium, 2012. Academy of Institutions and Cultures (http://www.academy.edu.gr/files/prakt_alexandros/praktika_alexandros_B.pdf), Vol. B, pp. 484-493., 2013.

unite the Greek and Persian element of his kingdom and from them to create a new cast of rulers, or people who would rule equally in the empire²⁴.

This sounds deceptively like the ancient echo of the model of a multicultural, global society.²⁵ It was not Alexander's plan, though, to create an ecumenical empire. Only the Greeks and Persians, the two peoples he admired, were to rule. The rest of the nations of this vast empire would be just the consisting cultural elements of the kingdom, but of lesser status. In order to achieve this, he tried techniques that were not tested before, at least not to such extent. He encouraged his men to marry local women (never the opposite, however), he established a vast number of cities, populated by mixed marriages and he created military academies, where young Persians received the best training, in order to enrich the Macedonian army and to be placed in vital military and administrative posts. To further reinforce the unifying process, he established a common monetary system based on coinage with his figure and promoted the common use of a single language based on the Attic dialect, the so-called *Hellenistic koinē* (common, popular).²⁶ He also backed up the local businessmen with financial aid, when necessary and eagerly financed expeditions for the discovery of new sources and trade routes.

This brings us to the second factor for the account of his policies' failure. Alexander's plan was, indeed, so much ahead of his times, that none of his closest associates could have shared in his vision. It was difficult for the noble Macedonian patriots who accompanied him, to envisage that they were to rule a new world side by side to the people they considered their inferiors.²⁷ Alexander never solved this problem. The saddest part is his bloody confrontation with his former second in command Parmenio, and his son Philotas²⁸, who were executed on the grounds of alleged conspiracy.²⁹ This might have not been true, however, it is indicative of the reaction that Alexander met from his own generals, as well as his official *ephemeredographos* Callisthenes,³⁰ when they thought that he had ceased to serve the glory of Macedonia and he had turned into what they saw as "pro-Persian" politics.

However, one should notice, that after his death, the ones who thought that it was their chance to shake off the Macedonian oppression were not the nations of the East, but the

²⁴ Badian, E., "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind", *Historia* 7 (1958) 425-444; Mauriac du, H. M., "Alexander the Great and the Politics of Homonoia", *JHI* (1940) 104-114.

²⁵ Plutarch (*Alexander* 27, 6) reports that in Egypt Alexander was taught by the philosopher Psammon, that all mankind are under the kingship of God. Cf Plutarch *Alexander* 27.10-11. However, Plutarch further explains, that although god is father to all mankind, he makes his own only the best. Cf. Arrian VII 11, 9. Also, Tarn, "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XIX.

²⁶ Syropoulos (2013) op.cit. pp. 487-490.

²⁷ Badian, E., "Orientals in Alexander's army", *JHS* 85 (1965) 160-161; Bosworth, A. B., "Alexander and the Iranians", *JHS* 100 (1980) 1-21.

²⁸ Cauer, F., "Philotas, Kleitos, Kallisthenes", *Jahrbücher für klassische Philologie*, Spplbd. 20 (1894) 8-38; Heckel, W., "The conspiracy against Philotas", *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 9-21; Rubinson, Z., "The Philotas affair: a reconsideration", *Archaia Makedonika* I (1977) 414 ff.

²⁹ Syropoulos, (2003) op.cit.; Badian, E., "The death of Parmenio", *TPAPA* 91 (1960) 324-338;

³⁰ Borza, E. N., "Alexander and Callisthenes. Academic Intrigue at Alexander's Court", in *Studies in Honour of C. F. Edson*, Oxford 1981; Brown, T. S., "Callisthenes and Alexander" *AJPh* 70 (1949) 225-248; Robinson, C. A., Jr., "The arrest and death of Callisthenes", *AJPh*, 53 (1932) 353-357.

Greeks, notably the Athenians. This is the biggest proof that his eastern politics were well planned. This is the biggest proof that his empire had the potential to function properly, even after his death. Unfortunately, he had not left behind an heir unanimously accepted by all of his associates. The centrifugal potencies of his empire were expressed by successors not unworthy of their leader, but definitely not able or willing to maintain its unity.³¹

The apparent collapse of his empire is only one side of the coin. The other side is the successful spreading of a unifying language and a common cultural code that enabled the forthcoming establishment of another two major invasions: the Roman Empire and Christianity. In a sense, Alexander achieved the most successful cultural conquest of all times and he earned himself the eternal fame that he had so much desired, like that of the Homeric hero Achilles, whom he admired the most. Thus, Alexander transgressed the ultimate limits: Time and cultural perspectives, as he is a recognizable figure in Greek, Muslim³², Persian³³, Egyptian, Indian and even Eastern culture and a figure that remains contemporary and intriguing until today³⁴.

³¹ Syropoulos (2005) op.cit.

³² Alexander is mentioned in the Koran XVIII 59-62, 82-101, XIX 57-58.

³³ For the admission of Alexander in Persian literature see Buerger, Chr., *Nizami's Iskandarnama "das Alexanderbuch" erster Teil "Sharaf-Name" (Buch des Adels), zweiter Teil "Ikbalname" oder "Kheratname" Buch des Segers oder Buch der Weisheit*. Übersetzung vom persischen Text Dastgerdi's, Manesse Bibliothek der Weltliteratur Zürich, 1991; Vaccha, P.B. "Firdousi and the Shahnama". *A study of the great Persian Epic of the Homer of the East*, LLB Bombay 1950, Bew Book Company, pp1-128; Witzleben von, Uta, *Firdausi: Geschichten aus dem Schahnameh*, Düsseldorf-Köln 1960; Iatropoulou-Theocharidou Marianna, *Ο Μέγας Αλέξανδρος στην επική ποίηση Σαχ-Βαμέ του Φερντοσί & Εσκεντέρ-Ναέ του Νιζαμί*, εκδ. Έλλην, Αθήνα 2007.

³⁴ An interesting account of his influence from antiquity until now, in Bosworth A. B. & Baynham, E. J. (edd.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, Oxford, OUP 2000.
