

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE MIDDLE
ENGLISH ALEXANDER ROMANCES

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
LUANN MARIE KITCHEL
1973



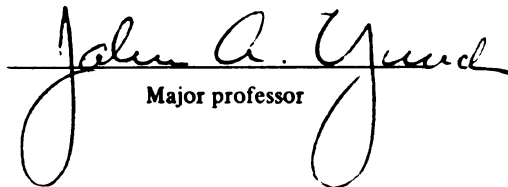
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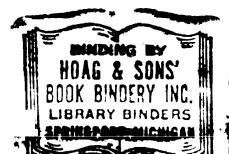
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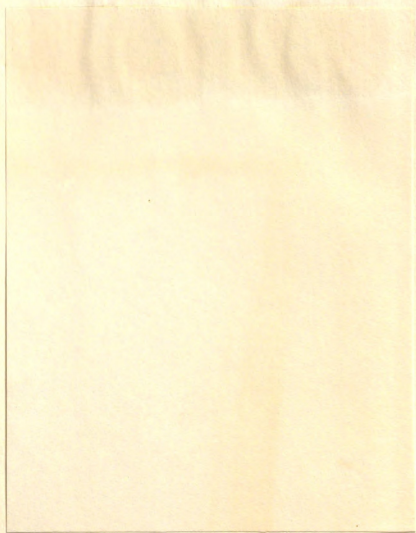
Ph.D. degree in English


Major professor

Date May 4, 1973

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE MIDDLE ENGLISH ALEXANDER POEMS

Lucretia Maria Kuehn

The purpose of this study is to examine and estimate the five major Middle English Alexander romances as independent works of literature. Since the romances considered (*Young Alexander*, *The Wars of Alexander*, *Alexander A*, *Alexander B*, and *The Prose Life of Alexander*) are more or less closely based on Latin and French works, the negligible scholarship that has been produced is mostly of a literary matter, avoiding close critical analysis. This study, therefore, attempts to fill that gap by facing these romances directly and endeavoring to ascertain the intentions of the authors and assess their success in carrying out these intentions, to formulate the conception of Alexander as it informs the structure of the individual works, and, treating them as their material, to determine the authors' artistic achievement within their chosen media. The degree of emphasis given to each of the above aspects varies with the particular romance under consideration; the unique qualities of each work have been allowed to determine the mode and focus of the analysis.

Chapter I presents a brief survey of the development of the Alexander legend, concentrating on the derivation of the Middle English romances from the French and Latin sources. Chapter II

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ABSTRACT

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By

Luann Marie Kitchel

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the five major Middle English Alexander romances as independent works of literature. Since the romances considered (Kyng Alisaunder, The Wars of Alexander, Alexander A, Alexander B, and The Prose Life of Alexander) are more or less closely based on Latin and French works, the negligible scholarship that has been produced focusses on extra-literary matters, avoiding close critical analysis. This study, therefore, attempts to fill that gap by facing these romances directly; it endeavors to ascertain the intentions of the authors and assess their success in carrying out these intentions, to formulate the conception of Alexander as it informs the structure of the individual works, and, granting them their material, to determine the authors' artistic achievement within their chosen media. The degree of emphasis given to each of the above aspects varies with the particular romance under consideration; the unique qualities of each work have been allowed to determine the mode and focus of the analysis.

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English Alexander romances. The Dublin Epitome, normally included in the canon of independent Alexander romances, is found to be no more than a copy of a portion of Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers' Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers as printed by Caxton. An interlinear comparison of the Epitome and Dictes is given in an appendix.

Chapter II examines Kyng Alisaunder, giving primary emphasis to demonstrating that the "headpieces," previously considered ornamental excrescences, are actually integral portions of the romance. The Kyng Alisaunder poet unifies his essentially didactic work by presenting a dual portrait of Alexander: on the one hand, an idealized medieval knight and king, on the other, a less-than-perfect man subject to the forces of nature. The headpieces, as well as the lengthy descriptions of the marvels of the East, support and develop this duality.

Chapter III focusses primarily on the stylistics of The Wars of Alexander, while also noting that the poet works within epic rather than romance conventions. Support is offered for the quatrain theory of composition, but the analysis concentrates on elucidating the poet's gradual mastery of his poetic form.

Chapter IV is devoted to the two fragments Alexander A and Alexander B. While neither poet shows much skill in handling the alliterative line, the A-poet is found to be more successful with material such as battle scenes where he most likely had a stock of formulas to fall back on; the B-poet handles dialogue more successfully than narrative.

Chapter V presents a primarily structural study of The Prose Life of Alexander, demonstrating that the writer employs two basic methods to control his sprawling material. First, he develops a

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Luann Marie Kitchel

number of motifs, principally the father-son relationship in which Alexander's role varies in accord with the progress of his career. Secondly, he approaches Alexander from a fundamentally humanistic, practical stance, viewing him as an embodiment of the qualities which make a man a great leader.

While none of these works can be judged great literary achievements, the authors of Kyng Alisaunder and The Prose Life exhibit considerable skill in structure and style; only Alexander A and Alexander B merit the almost total disregard and condemnation generally accorded this group of romances.

A THESIS

Submitted to

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Department of English

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation, and the doctoral program, is the gift of many persons. It is mine only because of them, their efforts, and their support.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to Professor A. Yench, my advisor. His generous advice and criticism were outweighed only by the advice, encouragement and persistent good humor during the dark days. I wish also to thank

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William W. Hiest and Arlene Williams for serving on the committee and for their assistance in adding the regarries of my thought and style.

Finally, my debt to my husband Don - family advocate, rhetorician, proofreader, and tolerant sympathizer in residence - is immeasurable. It is because of him, and the willing support of my parents, that the "someday" has arrived.

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CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTORY

II. KYNG ALI

III. THE WAR

IV. ALEXANDER

V. THE PRO

VI. CONCLUSIONS

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arises in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages, in fact, bring to a close the literary interest in the Alexander legend, at least in England. The tradition of Alexander which medieval authors inherit, and for all practical purposes terminate, reaches back to the fantastic biography of the third century A.D.⁴ known as the Pseudo-Callisthenes. Seven, and possibly eight,⁵ of the Middle English Alexander romances can be traced to this ultimate source. The route from the Pseudo-Callisthenes to the Middle Ages is a circuitous one, however, because other writings have played a role in the gradual development of the legend into the forms it takes in the medieval works.

Five major Middle English Alexander romances survive:⁶ the three alliterative fragments which Skeat named Alexander A,⁷ Alexander B,⁸ and Alexander C,⁹ the last of which is better known as

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of the Alexander legend in medieval England is attested to by Chaucer's Monk, who believes it necessary to apologize for treating material so well-known.

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That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somewhat or all of his fortune.¹

This popularity, which continues well into the fifteenth century² is, however, a phenomenon quite unlike that of Arthur; it neither confines itself to the literature (and pseudo-history) of Western Europe³ nor arises in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages, in fact, bring to a close the literary interest in the Alexander legend, at least in England. The tradition of Alexander which medieval authors inherit, and for all practical purposes terminate, reaches back to the fantastic biography of the third century A.D.,⁴ known as the Pseudo-Callisthenes. Seven, and possibly eight,⁵ of the Middle English Alexander romances can be traced to this ultimate source. The route from the Pseudo-Callisthenes to the Middle Ages is a circuitous one, however, because other writings have played a role in the gradual development of the legend into the forms it takes in the medieval works.

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The Wars of Alexander; the Prose Life of Alexander; ¹⁰ and the metrical Kyng Alisaunder. ¹¹ Also extant are the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder," ¹² a fragment of 417 lines in couplets which adds a portion of "Alexander's Letter to Aristotle" to Kyng Alisaunder, and the Dublin Epitome ¹³ which condenses the entire story of Alexander into four and a half pages of prose. These seven romances all derive from the Pseudo-Callisthenes. Not in the Pseudo-Callisthenes tradition are two other surviving Middle English Alexander romances: a part of Pseudo-Methodius' Revelationes or De consummatione saeculi which relates the enclosing of Gog and Magog ¹⁴ and "The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle." ¹⁵

Since the original Pseudo-Callisthenes is unfortunately no longer extant, source studies must rely on the four major redactions made of it, commonly referred to as α , β , γ , and δ , each of which represents a different manuscript tradition. ¹⁶ The β and γ - traditions have no influence on the Middle English romances and therefore will not be considered. ¹⁷ The α - tradition has as its most important derivative the Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonis, a Latin prose translation made by Julius Valerius about 300 A.D. Julius' translation seems not to have enjoyed great popularity. The opposite is true of the Zacher Epitome, a condensation made in the ninth century which survives in 77 MSS. ¹⁷ Thomas of Kent (c. 1280) ¹⁸ based his Anglo-Norman Roman de Toute Chevalerie on the Zacher Epitome, also incorporating the Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem and borrowing extensively from various other legendary and historical sources. ¹⁹ Thomas' as yet unpublished Roman de Toute Chevalerie served as the immediate source for the

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best of the Middle English Alexander romances--Kyng Alisaunder.

The "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder" is also based on the Roman, although Bülbring weakly argues that the author also used a Latin Epistola ad Aristotelem.²⁰

The Dublin Epitome, while it does not properly belong in the canon of Alexander romances,²¹ also traces back to the Pseudo-Callis-thenes but follows quite a different path. Its immediate source is the condensed translation made by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers of the French Dits Moraulx of Guillaume de Tignonville (late fourteenth century). The French Dits, in turn, goes back, through Latin and Spanish versions, to an eleventh century Arabic work by Abul Wafar Mubasschir ibn Fâtik, who took part of his material about Alexander from an Arabic version of the α -recension of the Pseudo-Callis-thenes.

No Greek version in the * δ MS tradition survives, but the former existence of one is attested to by its most important translator, Archpresbyter Leo of Naples. Leo, in his Prologue, states that while on a trip to Constantinople, about 950, he copied a Greek manuscript and later, at the command of Duke John III of Naples, translated it into Latin prose.²² Leo's work, which he or a copyist entitled Nativitas et Victoria Alexandri Magni, is more popularly known as the Historia de Preliis, a title first given to the work in the fifteenth century incunabula. Leo's translation has not survived in its original form; instead we have three independent Latin textual traditions: the Bamberg MS (Ba), the fragmentary Lambeth MS (L), and the lost MS which served as the source for the first interpolated recension, I¹. Only the I¹ recension of the Historia de Preliis has importance for this survey;

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Alexander A, Alexander B, The Wars of Alexander, and the Prose on Life derive from it; no English version stems from the other traditions. Such a recapitulation of sources and derivations may appear

superfluous. A useful aid in following the tortuous path from Leo to the English romances is provided by Pfister's stemma.²³

The obvious one of summarizing the currently accepted "facts." On the positive side, it makes evident the immense popularity of the Alexander legend in the Middle Ages, outside strictly theological, philosophical, and moral works.²⁴ Its popularity in England, despite the testimony of Chaucer's Monk, might be estimated from the nine Middle English. The I¹ recension, made in the eleventh century, adds a good deal of material to Leo's original,²⁴ but more importantly serves as the basis for two later recensions, I² and I³, the former of uncertain date and the latter probably of the twelfth century. The I² recension,²⁵ which borrows extensively from Orosius' Historiarum adversum Paganos as well as drawing on other material, is the immediate source for Alexander A and Alexander B, and the "Expanded Prose Alexander," I³, which adds new moralizing material, is a separate recension of I¹, unconnected to I², and may or may not be the direct source for The Wars of Alexander and the Prose Life. G. L. Hamilton postulated the existence of a separate redaction of I³, containing interpolations from I² and Julius Valerius. Dating this redaction, appropriately dubbed I^{3a}, before 1150, Hamilton urged it as the immediate source for both The Wars of Alexander and the Prose Life.²⁶ Most recent editors and commentators have accepted, in principle, Hamilton's arguments, although one has challenged the dating.²⁷ Duggan, however, argues cogently that the I^{3a} recension never existed and

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Such a recapitulation of sources and derivations may appear superfluous since Magoun, Cary, and Ross, among others, have treated the subject more fully. Yet it serves a number of functions besides the obvious one of summarizing the currently accepted "facts." On the positive side, it makes evident the immense popularity of the Alexander legend in the Middle Ages, outside strictly theological, philosophical, and moral works.²⁹ Its popularity in England, despite the testimony of Chaucer's Monk, might be underestimated since the nine Middle English Alexander romances survive in a total of only 13 MSS, most fragmentary.³⁰

Secondly, such a survey indirectly illuminates the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of attempting anything like a detailed comparison of the English romances with their respective sources. No edition of the Roman de Toute Chevalerie exists to serve as a basis for an examination of Kyng Alisaunder or the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder"; moreover, the surviving Roman de Toute Chevalerie seems not to be the version actually used by the author of Kyng Alisaunder.³¹ Hilka's edition and Magoun's text of I², both based on the best manuscript, do not present the version utilized by the poet or poets of Alexander A and Alexander B; that text is now lost.³² The I^{3a} recension, posited as the source for The Wars of Alexander and the Prose Life, is a hypothetical construct, while I³, which might be the source for these two romances, remains unedited.³³ At the present, then, editors and commentators are forced into the position of making generalized statements about the relationship of the English romances to

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Perhaps it is this lack, or inaccessibility, of sources which has led scholars to avoid literary study of the various romances. They rarely proceed beyond the necessary, but still preliminary, work of establishing texts.³⁴ One, to be sure, does come across scattered discussions or erudite squabbles concerning not only sources but date, authorship, and dialect. A tenacious search will also turn up summary editions and discussions of newly discovered fragments and piecemeal, often haphazard, elucidations of a word or line. Finally, some or all of the major English Alexander romances are usually mentioned, generally in passing, in the longer surveys of Middle English literature.

The most recent edition of A Manual of the Writings in Middle English provides a more than fair example of the treatment afforded these romances in general surveys. Yet, in what purports to be an exhaustive compilation of the Alexander romances in English, Lumiansky fails to mention the British Museum and Worcester Cathedral fragments and does not recognize the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder" as a separate version. His critical assessment, which follows an enumeration of such essential details as length, source, date, authorship, and, at times, a brief plot summary, is limited to short impressionistic comments, generally apologetic in tone.³⁵ The romances also receive brief attention in more limited studies of Middle English literature, but only occasionally are they employed to illuminate discussions of the medieval romance.³⁶

Excepting literary historians, George Cary remains the only scholar who attempts to deal with all the main English Alexander

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romances. The focus of his study is not, however, primarily literary; indeed, since his main concern lies in elucidating the general opinion of Alexander current in the Middle Ages, his discussion of the romance forms only a minor portion of the work, and even here an assessment of artistic ability is only peripheral. His comments on the English Alexander romances, aside from his source studies, cover less than three pages, with literary evaluation inserted among some very general statements on the concept of Alexander developed in these romances. Thus, on Kyng Alisaunder, to which he devotes most space:

It is an excellent piece of work, the most individual and imaginative of the English Alexander-books. Like Rudolf von Ems, the writer used his imagination not for the portrayal of the Alexander of courtly fantasy, but to give a clear portrait of Alexander as a mighty conqueror, a man apart. The book breathes, within the trammels of a fairly close adherence to its source, the spirit of Gautier's Alexandreis in vernacular feeling and expression.³⁷

Perhaps Cary's brevity in his treatment of these romances should stand as a favorable comment. Cary states that the best method for determining the main stream of thought in a given period is to examine not its good writers but its mediocre ones; yet such unspoken, and therefore unsupported, praise has little value.

French epic J. P. Oakden in Alliterative Poetry in Middle English naturally discusses only Alexander A, Alexander B, and The Wars of Alexander. His metrical and dialectal analyses are useful, but understandably sketchy, considering the amount of material he attempts to cover. In the second volume, devoted to a rapid survey of the individual poems giving a brief summary of the plot and "spirit" which informs the works, his main emphasis is historical: the survival of Old English traditions and the causes behind the alliterative revival. Thus his

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consideration of the three Alexander poems centers around a classification of them as "Chronicles in the Epic Manner." He touches, now and again, on technique in the three poems, but only in the most general terms, commenting in conclusion that The Wars of Alexander is "one of the greater products of the alliterative school."³⁸ Vague praise, like unspoken praise, holds little value.

Most of the editors of the various poems offer a few comments on the literary quality of their respective works; these comments are usually brief and often apologetic.³⁹ Consequently, Magoun, right or wrong, is refreshing:

The poems edited [Alexander A and B] are, as it happens, of trifling literary merit; their authors were versifiers not poets, and an historically-minded editor need not for a moment concern himself with aesthetic appraisals.⁴⁰

From a critical point of view, however, one would appreciate the reasons for his appraisal of them as "third-rate productions."⁴¹

Smithers alone among editors devotes some time to a literary consideration of his text, Kyng Alisaunder. But, he tends to deal not so much with it as an independent and highly successful work, although he considers it such, as to place it in the tradition of the Old French epic.⁴² Tuve and Enkvist also consider Kyng Alisaunder in the light of a tradition; that of the "seasons" motif in English poetry;⁴³ consequently both limit themselves to an examination of the "headpieces" of Kyng Alisaunder. Since both conclude that the headpieces are more ornamental than integral, serving at most to indicate the passage of time between the various exploits of Alexander, they ultimately pass judgment on the entire poem. Nevertheless, critical investigation and assessment of the poem as a whole are clearly not their

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Frederick Moorman also discusses the headpieces of Kyng Alisaunder and selected nature descriptions in The Wars of Alexander as part of his broader consideration of The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare. Once again, then, the emphasis falls on the tradition of a small element in the poems. In distinguishing between the descriptions of the marvelous, which he interprets as the result of a "craving for whatever is mysterious," and those descriptions based on "actual observation,"⁴⁴ he places the headpieces in the latter category. In his terms, they are "pleasing" although they have "no connection with the story, [and] are of the nature of excrescences," a product of the appeal which the familiar English landscape had for the poet.⁴⁵ He makes the same distinction for the various descriptions in The Wars of Alexander, finding successful only those which are "realistic." A romantic bias thus permeates and distorts his view of the poems.

One can conclude, then, that outside the discussion of particular, often minute, details the Alexander romances have held little interest for scholars; they have simply never been fashionable enough to inspire extended literary analysis. Still, one opens Kane's Middle English Literature with the hope that the neglected gap will be somewhat filled within the limits that a general survey, even one confined to poetic romances, imposes.

While it is self-evident that the study of the Middle English verse romances must begin with relating them to the historical and social circumstances in which they originated, it is less obvious but equally true that the preoccupation with their backgrounds interferes with an evaluation of the romances themselves; for if we make

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sufficient allowances of a historical and social kind we explain away and excuse every one of their shortcomings and find them all equally interesting [or one might add, uninteresting] as illustrations of the past while we remain little the wiser about their relative literary value. . . . I propose to consider them . . . not so much out of their historical context as without primary reference to it.⁴⁶

Kane promises much and, unfortunately, delivers little. His treatment of the romances seldom advances beyond the sketchy, often fading into a simple citation of "great" or "terrible" passages. One might understand these limitations, if not forgive them, were it not for the growing realization that Kane, like Moorman but in a different vein, has preconceived literary values and criteria verging on the eccentric. One of his predilections is for rapid narrative movement, another for the "realistic," human conception and motivation of characters. He often takes an either/or approach to the romances--they must be either total fantasy or total realism--although he is not consistent and eventually admits that a romance can be successful if it is a mixture of the two; he also admits that most romances involve a "heightening" or "idealization" of character and situation. Somewhat more disturbing are his unwarranted generalizations: the romances have "the common end of entertainment," alliterative verse is a "medium inclined to extravagance," Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is marred by its "marked stylistic idiosyncrasy," and a content "of no great moment," for the life or death of only one man is at stake, and The Franklin's Tale is ultimately more successful than The Knight's Tale because, unlike the latter, it contains something more than "show" and "spectacle," namely "the essential fineness of character, which we would call decency, of Arveragus and Dorigen."⁴⁷ This last quotation illuminates

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rather well one other disturbing note in Kane's discussions: a delicately phrased and hollow-sounding moralism which causes him to praise the "uprightness" of certain characters and point with reprobation at anything remotely "horrific," immoral, or amoral; no romance which has any of the last three qualities is placed in the superior category, while moral rectitude saves many another hopeless romance from complete condemnation.

One therefore finds it rather difficult to accept Kane's comments on the headpieces of Kyng Alisaunder since they so clearly echo some of these predilections:

These verses, lyrical, gnomic and bucolic by turns like the illuminations in some books of hours, are commonly unrelated to the story, and are put without compunction not only to a mechanical but also to an external, decorative use. . . . It cannot have been difficult to make pretty verses when, as here, their length and theme were unrestricted.⁴⁸

His thinly veiled condescension, evident above, is equally apparent in his general comment on the romance, which he groups with other mediocre works, including Alexander A and Alexander B:

Its author has lost his heart to the hero, and is carried without flagging through an enormous, sprawling account of his life by his unflinching enthusiastic devotion to him.⁴⁹

One closes Kane's volume with the discouraging realization that subjectivism and the finely turned phrase have usurped objective, incisive commentary.

This general survey of criticism shows clearly that the popularity of Alexander in the Middle Ages, which resulted in the production of the English Alexander romances, has not continued, or even been reborn, in modern criticism. Perhaps this results from an acceptance

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of nineteenth and early twentieth century opinion that these romances, with the possible exception of Kyng Alisaunder, are of little literary merit. Vinaver suggests the reasons behind such an opinion and the consequences which follow, consequences and attitudes evident in the concerns of those scholars who approach the Alexander romances at all:

Naturalism [after the mid-nineteenth century] had established its rule over much that was alive in contemporary fiction, and the view that literature was, or ought to be, the mirror of life was prevalent at all levels of critical opinion On the basis of the critics' initial assumptions, very few, if any, medieval romances qualified as literature The predictable result of this attitude was the conviction that these works had lost their original quality in the process of transmission. Hence the time and energy spent in the last three quarters of a century on what Talbot Donaldson has described as "salubrious vacations from the business of facing the poem directly."⁵⁰

The "vacation" from many medieval works is over; witness the recent resurgence of interest and literary comment on Chrétien de Troyes,

Malory and the other English Arthurian poems, the consideration of the artistic qualities of Chaucer's fabliaux. The Alexander romances, however, have not yet been "faced directly." The indifference may be justified for the Dublin Epitome. Certainly four and a half small pages offer fewer possibilities than the thousand odd lines of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. At least, however, it should receive enough attention to be removed from the canon of independent Alexander romances

since it is nothing more than a copy of the Alexander portion, with a few minor and insignificant rewordings, of Caxton's edition of Anthony Woodville, Early Rivers' Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers.⁵¹

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Alexander outright dismissal seems unwarranted and a few paragraphs on selected aspects seem insufficient.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine the five major English Alexander romances: to look at them as independent works of literature, to attempt to perceive the intentions of the authors and their success or failure in carrying out these intentions,⁵² to understand the conception of Alexander as it informs the structure of the individual works, and, granting them their material, to determine the success or failure of the authors in the artistic handling of it within their chosen media. The following pages, then, will concentrate little on a comparison with sources. Since all five romances under consideration--Alexander A, Alexander B, The Wars of Alexander, Kyng Alisaunder, and The Prose Life of Alexander--are translations or versions of other works, a danger undoubtedly exists in offering such a literary analysis; one might attribute "success" to the writer in precisely the places he has followed his source closely. On the other hand, it becomes evident from the comments and notes of various editors that none of the romancers has followed a text verbatim: indeed, how could they, especially when working within a poetic form? Must we, moreover, assume that medieval writers were earlier day computers with no freedom of choice and absolutely no sense of what they wished to accomplish, even when they failed miserably? Chaucer and Langland alone belie that position.

One assumption of this study, then, will be that expressed by R. S. Crane:

. . . the problem, in any given poem, is what actually was, for its poet, the primary intuition of form which enabled him to synthesize his material into an ordered whole.⁵³

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The same can easily be said of a prose work. Bédier presents essentially the same view in a slightly different way, stating that each literary work is "un phénomène obéissant à ses propres lois."⁵⁴ To make such an assumption for the study of medieval literature is not revolutionary. One needs only to observe the vast amount of critical commentary and assessment of Chaucer and Malory, both translators and borrowers. What ultimately matters is not so much where a medieval writer gets his material--originality is a modern invention--but what he does with it in his own language and medium. It is here that his abilities should and can be judged. Consequently, a particular aspect may demand special attention in one romance, but require little notice in another. I have allowed the unique qualities of each work to determine the mode and focus of my analysis. By taking this approach with the Middle English Alexander romances, if they are judged and found wanting, at least they will have been given a hearing; if they are found worthy of praise, so much the better.

Definitely in the Pseudo-Calisto tradition are Alexander A, Alexander B, The Wars of Alexander, The French Life of Alexander, Kyng Alisaunder, the Expanded Epic Alexander, and the Dublin Epitome. The Middle English version of Pseudo-Methodius may or may not be a descendant of the Pseudo-Calisto. Abel's description of the derivation of this version leaves it open whether or not it actually originates with Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypsis* c. 675, pp. 34-35.

⁵¹ I have not included the two Scottish romances, *The Scottish Alexander Buke* and Gilbert Hay's *Boik of King Alexander*. (Cited in J. Burke Severs, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English: Literature 1: Romances* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 141-142.) These are two other romances noted in Severs, pp. 141-142. I omit *The Scots bridge Alexander-Fragment*, which is connected to the *Apocalypsis* legend only by the names of some of its characters, and the two are Cleopas, which is connected only by the mention of some characters, and by the mention of Alexander's name in one line. Finally, with the exception of the Dublin Epitome, I have not considered the numerous accounts of Alexander which appear as parts of longer works by

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FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1957), p. 196.

²See Francis P. Magoun, Jr., The Gestes of King Alexander of Macedon (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 56; George Cary, The Medieval Alexander, ed. D. J. A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 226-259; William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 68-93.

³The surveys of Magoun, pp. 15-16, 22-62 and Cary, pp. 7-74 indicate the vast popularity of the Alexander legend in Europe, Africa, and Asia. D. J. A. Ross, Alexander Historiatus (London, 1963), in his even more comprehensive survey, lists well over 100 versions stemming from the Pseudo-Callisthenes in more than 25 languages, excluding the oriental versions. Armand Abel, Le Roman d'Alexandre (Brussels, 1955), pp. 55-89, deals briefly with the oriental tradition. Ultimately it remains impossible to form a clear picture of the extent of this material since no complete bibliography of Alexander-books exists.

⁴Reinhold Merkelbach, Die Quellen des Griechischen Alexanderromans, Zetema IX (Munich, 1954), p. 59. Magoun, p. 23, gives the date as "uncertain," i.e., 220 B.C.-A.D. 200.

⁵Definitely in the Pseudo-Callisthenes tradition are Alexander A, Alexander B, The Wars of Alexander, The Prose Life of Alexander, Kyng Alisaunder, the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder," and the Dublin Epitome. The Middle English version of Pseudo-Methodius may or may not be a descendant of the Pseudo-Callisthenes. Ross's description of the derivation of this version leaves in doubt whether or not it actually originates with Pseudo-Methodius' Revelationes (c. 675), pp. 34-35.

⁶I have not included the two Scottish romances, The Scottish Alexander Buik and Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander, listed in J. Burke Severs, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, Fascicule 1: Romances (New Haven, 1967), pp. 110-111. Also excluded are two other romances noted in Severs, pp. 108-109, 111-112: The Cambridge Alexander-Fragment, which is connected to the Alexander legend only by the names of some of its characters, and Amoryus and Cleopes, which is connected only by the borrowing of some incidents and by the mention of Alexander's name in one line. Finally, with the exception of the Dublin Epitome, I have not considered the innumerable accounts of Alexander which appear as parts of longer works by

medieval English authors. I have noted the *Dublin Epitome*, however, only to show that it should be excluded from the canon of Alexander romances; see below, p. 12.

⁷E. Magoun, *Gests*.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Ed. Walter W. Skeat, Early English Text Society, E. S. 47 (London, 1886). A portion has been more recently edited by Hoyt N. Duggan, "A Critical Edition of The Wars of Alexander--Passus I-XIV" (Unpubl. diss., Princeton Univ., 1969). All citations in my text will be from the Skeat edition.

¹⁰Ed. J. S. Westlake, Early English Text Society, O. S. 143 (London, 1913). Hereafter to be referred to as the *Prose Life*. The romance has been more recently edited by Marjorie Neeson, "The *Prose Alexander: A Critical Edition*" (Unpubl. diss., University of Calif., Los Angeles, 1971). All citations in my text will, because of accessibility, be from the Westlake edition.

¹¹Ed. G. V. Smithers, Early English Text Society, 227 (Vol. I: Text) and 237 (Vol. II: Introduction, Commentary, Glossary) (London, 1952, 1957).

¹²Ed. Karl D. Bülbring, "Vier neue Alexanderbruchstücke," *Englische Studien*, XIII (1889), 145-153. The text is also printed in Smithers, I, 288 ff.

¹³Ed. Walter W. Skeat in *The Wars of Alexander*, pp. 279-283.

¹⁴British Museum, Add. 37049, fols. 11-16v. Unpublished.

¹⁵Worcester Cathedral Library MS. 172, fols. 138-146v. Unpublished.

¹⁶Magoun, pp. 22-44; Merkelbach, pp. 61-74. Ross, p. 6, gives a more complete and less misleading summary of the relationship between the lines of transmission.

¹⁷Ross, p. 86.

¹⁸The debate over the name of the author--Thomas or Eustache--which began with Paul Meyer's declaration in favor of Eustache, seems now to be settled in favor of Thomas, with Eustache as the author of an interpolated portion known as the *Fuerre de Gadres*. See Paul Meyer, *Alexandre Le Grand*, II (Paris, 1886), 281-283; B. Foster, "The Roman de Toute Chevalerie: Its Date and Author," *French Studies*, IX (1955), 156; M. D. Legge, "Discussions I: Thomas of Kent," *French Studies*, IX (1955), 348-349.

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¹⁹Magoun, p. 33; Ross, p. 25; Cary, p. 35. Meyer, II 274-294 *passim*, cites the French Roman d'Alexandre as a primary source, but this error is explained by the fact that he regards the Fuerre de Gadres, which is taken from the Roman d'Alexandre, as an original portion of the Roman de Toute Chevalerie rather than as a later interpolation.

²⁰Bülbring, p. 152. A crux exists here. It is difficult to understand why Bülbring turns to the Epistola rather than to the immediate source, the Roman de Toute Chevalerie (hereafter RTC), which is, in part, based on the Epistola as Meyer notes, II, 290. A number of possibilities present themselves: 1) Bülbring was not aware that RTC was the immediate source for Kyng Alisaunder and the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder"; this is hard to accept since Meyer pointed out the dependency in 1886. 2) Bülbring was aware of the RTC as the source but could not or did not, for whatever reason, consult the RTC. 3) RTC does not contain this particular portion of the Epistola. 4) RTC does contain this portion, but the author of Kyng Alisaunder has omitted it in his free adaptation, a fact which one might assume Smithers, the most recent editor, would have pointed out. Without access to RTC this question cannot be answered.

²¹See below, p. 12.

²²This account is contained in the Prologue of the Bamberg MS. See Friedrich Pfister, Der Alexanderroman des Archipresbyters Leo (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 44-46 for text and pp. 5-6 for discussion.

²³Friedrich Pfister, "Eine Neue Handschrift Des Alexanderromans," Classica et Mediaevalia, XXI (1960), 211. Z and X represent at least two lost versions between Leo and I¹.

²⁴See Magoun, p. 50; Cary, p. 44; Ross, p. 50.

²⁵Alfons Hilka, Der Altfranzösische Prose-Alexanderroman (Halle, 1920). The I² text is printed in parallel columns with that of the Old French Prose Alexander. Portions are also printed in Magoun, Gests.

²⁶"A New Redaction (J^{3a}) of the Historia de Preliis and the Date of Redaction J³," Speculum, II (1927), pp. 113-146.

²⁷D. J. A. Ross, "The I³ Historia de Preliis and the Fuerre de Gadres," Classica et Mediaevalia, XXII (1961), 218-221.

²⁸Duggan, pp. 36-48.

²⁹See Cary, pp. 77-162, 226-274 *passim* for a discussion of this material.

³⁰In contrast, Piers Plowman, to cite one example, survives in 45 MSS. No Middle English Alexander romance is represented by more than the four MSS of Kyng Alisaunder, and only two of these

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are complete. It is noteworthy, however, that the only surviving copy of Alexander B is found in Bodley MS. 264 where it has been interpolated into the Roman d'Alexandre to fill a supposed omission.

³¹He used a version which did not contain the interpolated Fuerre de Gadres.

³²Magoun, p. 116.

³³The fact that more than 45 MSS exist make the preparation of a useable edition extremely difficult. See A. Hilka and F. P. Magoun, "A List of Manuscripts Containing Texts of the Historia de Preliis Alexandre Magni," Speculum, IX (1934), 84-86.

³⁴Even here a good deal remains to be done. The most recent edition of The Wars of Alexander is that of Skeat. The Prose Life, published by Westlake in 1913, lacks commentary and apparatus, as do Skeat's text of the Dublin Epitome and Smithers' text of the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder." As noted above, p. 16, n. 14 and 15, two other fragments remain unpublished.

³⁵Severs, pp. 105-112.

³⁶Dorothy Everett, "A characterization of the English Medieval Romance," Essays and Studies, XV (1929), 101, touches briefly upon Kyng Alisaunder in her attempt to reach a descriptive definition of the English romance. She notes that Alexander "is transformed into a knight and conforms to the medieval ideas of knightly behavior." Ojars Kratins, "Treason in the Middle English Metrical Romances," Philological Quarterly, XLV (1966), 670, mentions Kyng Alisaunder, II, 4008-09, in pointing out the importance of the feudal vow in these romances. Derek Pearsall, "The Development of the Middle English Romance," Medieval Studies, XXVII (1965), citing Kyng Alisaunder as "technically . . . the most accomplished of all the English popular romances," notes the impressive manipulation of the "seasons head-piece" and the use of fine amour in the Candace episode as indications that the romance was intended for a more sophisticated audience than most popular romances. Margaret Schlauch, English Medieval Literature and Its Social Foundations (Warsaw, 1956), p. 182, mentions Kyng Alisaunder and Alexander B in her treatment of romance and finds Kyng Alisaunder a "spirited adaptation" of the French narrative. More interesting is her observation on Alexander B: "Though distorted and indirectly conveyed, this impression of Indian wisdom and the Indian doctrine of non-resistance was the first to be reflected in English literature." Evidently not all the Indians knew of non-resistance; for example, Porus and his army in The Wars of Alexander and Kyng Alisaunder; on the other hand, the doctrine was not confined to India but found widespread acceptance, most significantly among the Jews and Amazons in these same two works.

³⁷Cary, p. 242.

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³⁸J. P. Oakden, Alliterative Poetry in Middle English, II (Manchester, 1935), 32.

³⁹See Skeat, The Wars of Alexander, p. xxi; Walter W. Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, Early English Text Society, E. S. 31 (London, 1878), pp. xii, xx; Neeson, pp. 49, 55 although she offers well-supported accolades in other places, esp. p. 68.

⁴⁰Magoun, p. vii.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Smithers, II, 28-40, esp. 36-40.

⁴³Rosamond Tuve, Seasons and Months: Studies in a Tradition of Middle English Poetry (Paris, 1933). N. E. Enkvist, The Seasons of the Year: Chapters on a Motif from Beowulf to the Shepherd's Calendar (Helsingfors, 1957).

⁴⁴Frederick Moorman, The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare (Strassburg, 1905), p. 71.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 59, 73.

⁴⁶George Kane, Middle English Literature (London, 1951), p. 1.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 85 et passim.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 45-46. It is interesting to note that these "unrestricted" verses are, at most, 11 lines long; most have 8 or fewer lines.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 44.

⁵⁰Eugene Vinaver, "Critical Approaches to Medieval Romance," Literary History and Literary Criticism, ed. Leon Edel (New York, 1965), pp. 17-18.

⁵¹Cary's statement, p. 60, that the "Dublin fragment is an abridged English version" of the long translation of Tignonville's Dits Moraux, commonly known as The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers is thus misleading. I have not been able to examine Caxton's second edition of Rivers' Dictes, but a comparison with the first edition shows the almost complete identity of Rivers and the Dublin Epitome. A comparison with the second edition would, however, probably contain very few differences since those who have described the second edition emphasize that it differs from the first only in orthography and lineation. See William Blades, The Life and Typography of William Caxton, II (London, 1861-63), 36-41, 77-78. An examination of the second edition would be of interest at least in determining the terminus a quo of the Dublin MS., but there is a good deal of disagreement as to

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whether Caxton's first edition was really the "first" and the "second" the "second," See Curt F. Bühler, "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," *The Library*, XV (1934), 316-326. Therefore, although completeness would ask that both first and second edition be examined, I have felt it worthwhile to print, in an Appendix, an interlinear transcription of Skeat's text of the Dublin Epitome and the appropriate section of Caxton's first edition of Rivers' work.

⁵²In some cases this task is less difficult than in others; for example, there are prologues to Kyng Alisaunder and *The Wars of Alexander* which assist in understanding the authors' intentions. In neither case, however, is the author's meaning fully visible from the prologue alone; rather it emerges from his structuring and developing of events, character, and commentary throughout the work.

⁵³The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry (Toronto, 1953), p. 146.

⁵⁴Quoted in Eugene Vinaver, Hommage à Bédier (Manchester, 1942), p. 24.

teams with the kind of errors which might originate as a result of oral transmission, and the shape of the MS suggests that it may have been a minstrel's copy.³ Nothing definite is known of the author, but he gives evidence of being well-read, well-traveled, and possibly a cleric.⁴

In actual narrative content, Kyng Alisaunder differs little from the other Middle English Alexander romances. Only five important episodes which appear in The Wars of Alexander or the Prose Life receive no mention here: Philip's victory in battle through the aid of a flying dragon, the Forgetting of Gane, Alexander's meeting with the gods Synches and Serapis, his exploration of the other world, the drawn chariot, and his attempt to drown himself in the Euxine. On the other hand, except for Alexander's slightest mention late before camp and his forced single combat within the enclosed city of the East, Kyng Alisaunder adds no episodes of any consequence to the basic narrative of the English romances. Kyng Alisaunder, of course, does have its own peculiarities, but these are differences in detail, development,

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CHAPTER II

KYNG ALISAUNDER

Kyng Alisaunder, the earliest of the Middle English Alexander romances, was written between 1250 and 1330¹ in the London area. The romance survives in four MSS,² two of which--Laud and Lincoln's Inn--are complete. The Laud MS is clearly the best although Lincoln's Inn holds some interest because, as the most recent editor explains, it teems with the kind of errors which might originate as a result of oral transmission, and the shape of the MS suggests that it may have been a minstrel's copy.³ Nothing definite is known of the author, but he gives evidence of being well-read, well-traveled, and possibly a cleric.⁴

In actual narrative content, Kyng Alisaunder differs little from the other Middle English Alexander romances. Only five important episodes which appear in The Wars of Alexander or the Prose Life receive no mention here: Philip's victory in battle through the aid of a flying dragon, the Foraging of Gaza, Alexander's meeting with the gods Synches and Serapis, his exploration of the skies in a griffin-drawn chariot, and his attempt to drown himself in the Euphrates. On the other hand, except for Alexander's disguised venture into Porus' camp and his forced single combat within the enclosed city of the East, Kyng Alisaunder adds no episodes of any consequence to the basic narrative of the English romances. Kyng Alisaunder, of course, does have its own peculiarities, but these are differences in detail, development,

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and emphasis. In general, episodes and scenes are presented in more detail in Kyng Alisaunder than in the other romances. The poet strives for completeness rather than for the rapidly paced narrative. For example, although the descriptions of battle scenes--whether between armies or individual knights--move quickly, conveying the violent activity, rapid movement, and confusion of man and beast, at the same time they are developed in an almost leisurely way. The poet dwells on the details of slaughter, the feats of specified knights, and the metaphoric comparisons that the battle or combatants might elicit.

Similarly, in non-battle episodes, the poet is not only concerned with action but with the details that put deeds in perspective. He therefore places a good deal of emphasis on character motivation or on the aspects of setting and atmosphere which illuminate character and lend significance to the action. He will also intervene, in his own voice, to focus his audience's attention on a particular element or to draw a specific conclusion. Simply, the particulars that add concreteness, emphasis, or dramatic conflict are not to be sacrificed. Perhaps because his immediate source is the Anglo-Norman Roman de Toute Chevalerie the poet's narrative method and pace resemble the French romances more than the popular English romances, though one must remember that many of the details, particularly those connected with character portrayal are original with this poet. The copious descriptions of the marvels of the East and the use of the lyrical headpiece stand out as the most distinctive features of Kyng Alisaunder. The poet's interest in the unusual and his desire for precision may partially account for the lengthy treatment afforded the strange peoples and animals Alexander encounters during his

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journeys; yet, while these marvels are often criticized because they add but little to the narrative line, the poet does integrate them into the thematic structure of his poem. His leisurely approach to his material is once again evident here and the somewhat static quality of these descriptions, although not entirely congenial to modern taste, provides an interesting contrast to the more violent episodes which surround the marvels. His extensive use of the homely metaphor--comparisons of the strange creatures to the most common of animals--echoes the mundane metaphors of animals and rural activity found in the battle descriptions.

The headpieces, so called because they were once believed to form chapter headings, are an extremely unusual characteristic. Of the English romances, only Arthur and Merlin and Richard Coeur de Lion contain anything comparable. Mainly on the basis of this similarity one or another of these romances has, at times, been attributed to the same author.⁵ The headpieces most often seem to be little more than ornamental set pieces, for only occasionally are they connected to the narrative line by content or statement; moreover, they are formally separated from the rhymed couplets of the poem proper by the virtue of a sustained single rhyme.⁶ Primarily descriptions of courtly activity, often coupled with seasonal or diurnal references and sententious auctorial comment, these brief passages are not only the most striking elements of the poem but also those which have attracted most critical attention and argumentation.

Excepting the descriptions contained in the headpieces and the homely metaphors which appear occasionally throughout the poem, the poet's style is noteworthy by its lack of ostentation. Working

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within the octosyllabic couplet, a form not particularly congenial to a narrative poem, the poet nonetheless handles his form well. His success is perhaps attributable to the fact that he treats the couplet with great freedom; the line ranges anywhere from six to ten syllables and there are almost as many "irregular" as regular lines. One encounters some padding, mainly in the use of the poet's favorite tags--"saunz faile" and "saunz fable"--but generally the couplet conveys the content without drawing attention to itself.

A free handling of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, Kyng Alisaunder is generally regarded as the best of the English Alexander romances;⁷ not extremely high praise since the others are usually roundly condemned. On the negative side, the poem is most often criticized, either directly or indirectly, for a failure in structure. First, the headpieces are normally viewed as ornamentation, delightful but non-integral set pieces; their connection to the poem seen as, at most, superficial.⁸ Secondly, scholars view the poem as falling into two halves--the first 4739 lines recounting Alexander's birth, early years, and defeat of Darius and the last 3282 lines dealing with the marvels of the East and Alexander's death and burial--unified only by the presence of Alexander in both parts.⁹ Often connected with the latter position is the belief that the "marvels section" has little to recommend it, since Alexander himself almost disappears from the poem; he serves merely as a hook upon which the poet may hang descriptions of strange peoples and beasts. Thus, although this section adds the element of the fantastic normally accepted as one quality of the romance,¹⁰ its primary value is a non-literary one: a demonstration of medieval interest in the marvelous in general and the marvels of the East in

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particular.¹¹ I suggest that neither of these criticisms are valid. The poem, first of all, has a unity beyond that supplied by the continuing presence of Alexander. The poet makes it clear that he deals with serious material: Achilles' anger, his nou3th romaunce of skof, deliuerance of deathe. This Ac storye ymade of maistres wyse, Of pis werlde of mest pryse. (668-670)

Moreover, while he suggests that the account of Alexander's birth, his conquests, wanderings, and death are worthy of attention for their own "marvelous" sake (15-16, 38), he also wishes to employ them as a vehicle for the edification of his audience: "Opere mannes lijf is oure shewer" (18). His poem, therefore, needs to be considered didactic as opposed to mimetic.

Whereas didactic poetry assumes that if we can be made to feel a certain way in the presence of certain objects we shall be able to make certain moral distinctions, mimetic poetry assumes that if we make certain moral distinctions we shall feel a certain way in the presence of certain objects. Didactic is antecedent to the formation of moral character; mimetic subsequent. The former assumes that the reader is imperfect and requires to be perfected; the latter, that the reader is perfect and may enjoy a virtuous pleasure.¹²

The didacticism of much, if not most, medieval literature is so generally accepted as to require no comment; the Kyng Alisaunder poet, even if one considers only his insistence on finding guidance in the lives of other men,¹³ plainly falls into the didactic category.

As one method for achieving his didactic end, the poet presents a dual characterization of Alexander. He concentrates, as might be expected in a romance, on the portrayal of Alexander as ideal knight and king; but he also develops a less-than-ideal--that is, an

essentially human--side to Alexander. As Bowra points out, the great epic hero is precisely that because he is not a god but a man elevated to the superhuman; he has qualities possessed by all men; in him they are simply heightened.¹⁴ Consequently, purely human traits or, morally speaking, faults, can become heroic qualities; for example, Achilles' anger, Roland's pride, Gilgamesh's defiance of death. The less-than-perfect qualities of Alexander, on the other hand, do not become, by emphasis or importance, superhuman traits which add to his stature as the ideal heroic or tragic figure. They remain on the mundane level and tie Alexander to the human rather than elevating him to the superhuman.

The tension established by the two-sided, ideal-human portrayal of Alexander is in itself artistically satisfying. The completely perfect and therefore inhuman hero often becomes boring; witness Malory's Galahad. But such characterization has more than purely aesthetic purposes. It forms a basis for the poet's didactic commentary. Neither of these qualities receive direct mention in the long narrative of

An examination of the poem will show, secondly, that the headpieces and marvels are integral to the poem. They develop and qualify the ideal-human duality found in Alexander and draw out the didactic ramifications of this duality in Alexander's life and death. To fully see the structural and didactic unity of the poem it is necessary first to examine the dual characterization of Alexander in some detail.

The heroic, as opposed to courtly, elements in the portrayal of Alexander, and indeed the entire poem, are often emphasized. According to Margaret Schlauch, most of the content is "warlike"¹⁵ and Cary finds this Alexander "a mighty conqueror, a man apart" rather

than an Alexander of "courtly fantasy."¹⁶ But while the courtly element is well-nigh non-existent in the narrative, Alexander is transformed into a medieval knight and feudal lord embodying the chivalric virtues. Even in the battle scenes, where he seems most like his earlier heroic counterparts, medievalization is evident. The poet announces early in the poem two of the main virtues possessed by Alexander.

3ee shullen heren noble geste,
Of Alisaundre, þe riche kyng,
þat dude by his maistres teching,
And ouercom, so J fynde,
Darrye of Perce and Pore of Ynde,
And many opere (30-35)

It is not surprising that Alexander should be extolled as a mighty and wise warrior-king since, as Curtius points out, these two qualities are knight become points of emphasis as he soon faces his growth and quite commonplace in the medieval presentation of the ideal hero:

Medieval topics . . . took over the formula
sapientia et fortitudo for laments for the dead
and eulogies of rulers as well as for short nar-
rative poems and the epic.¹⁷

While neither of these qualities receive direct mention in the long narration of Alexander's conception and birth, general predictions about his future greatness, which will be based on these virtues, are forthcoming. Neptanabus predicts that Alexander will be "þe best" (315) of all kings. Disguised as Amon, Neptanabus asserts that Alexander will be "maisterlyng" (400) of Philip, himself a "man of m3t3ty honde" (97), and

On erþe worþe non hym yliche--
He shall conquere many kyng-riche. (401-402)

The interpreters of Philips' dream predict that Alexander will be "a sterne strenne" above "kynges alle . . . Bitwene þis and heuen-roue"

(512-514). The dragonette which comes from the egg dropped near Philip is said to signify that Alexander "shal habbe seignourye / Of his rounde myddelerd" (596-597). Although Philip takes the portent which appear at Alexander's birth as a sign that Alexander is "an yuel fode" (646), the earthquakes, the darkening of the sun and moon, the change in the color of the sea, and the thunder should be seen in the context of Neptanabus' statement at the time of Alexander's carefully planned birth:

King Philip, who Doo, dame, now lete come pi strene (offspring)
 For he shal be master of londes,
 Gode werroure, miztty of hondes,
 be hardyest of lyuyng man--
 Shal hym no foo stonde azein. (630-634)

The hardiness and skill--the fortitudo-- of Alexander as a knight become points of emphasis as the poem traces his growth and career. This "childe of mayn" (657) quickly learns to ride and fight, as well as mastering the other activities befitting a future medieval king:

Now can Alisaundre of skirmyng, (sword-handling)
 As of stedes derayeyng,¹⁸
 Vpon stedes of justnyng,
 And wip swerdes turneeyeing,
 Of assailying and defendyng,
 In grene-wood and of huntynge,
 And of ryuer, of haukyng,
 Of bataile and of alle ping. (673-680)

Alexander's taming of Bucephalus is not, as in many versions, presented as a sign that even lower creatures recognize his supremacy and destiny, for here Bucephalus does not bow to Alexander. Rather, attention is directed to Alexander's skill as a rider and his bravery:

Noman ne durst pere-on ycome
 Bot Alisaundre, be gude gome.
 Ne most noman it bistride

overcoming his Bot Alisaundre, ne on hym ride. Nicholas' armor makes
 To hym he wolde wel obeye--
 more than a sing He most on hym ride and pleye. (705-710)

In the test between the two possible heirs to the throne, Philip and Alexander, Alexander's bravery is once again uppermost in the poet's mind. He does not stress Alexander's "predestination" to become king, although a "god" announces that whoever may ride Bucephalus must wear the crown. Suspense, moreover, receives little consideration. We already know that Alexander rides Bucephalus, although King Philip, who has looked askance at Alexander because of the humiliation his birth has caused him, is unaware of this fact and needs to be convinced that Alexander should be heir. The poet's concern is to emphasize that Alexander earns the right to be king over the cowardly Philip: himself will enter the fray (1158-75, 3760, 9379), but more often

he fights side by For a pousande pounde of golde (2133, 4141) he advances first, if not
 Phillippoun it neizen wolde,
 vances first, if not Ac Alisaundre lep on his rygge-- at least leading his
 So a golfynche doop on þe hegge . . .
 forced into battle Nys he bot of twelue 3er olde-- he therefore stands
 His dedes weren stronge and bolde. (779 ff.)

After Alexander's knighting, which follows the proper medieval ceremony (807-817), the poet quickly presents him in actual combat; he proceeds to avenge his father on the annoying King Nicholas of Carthage. Since this is Alexander's first battle, the poet gives it a full-blown treatment: a verbal confrontation between Alexander and Nicholas in which Alexander maintains his aplomb in the face of Nicholas' insults and a long, difficult battle between the two armies. The individual combat between Nicholas and Alexander is left to the end, in a position of emphasis, and Nicholas has shown himself to be no mediocre combatant (959-962). Alexander has little difficulty in

overcoming his opponent, however, even though Nicholas' armor makes more than a single blow necessary.

He mette wiþ Nicholas.
 Heize he bare his sharp spere--
 borouþ þe shelde he gan hym bere,
 Ac þe armes weren so stronge
 þe spere nolden hij nouþ fonge.
 Alisaunder þe spere forlete,
 And drouþ his swerd, also skeete.
 Nicholas he took in þe swere,
 þat he leide his heued to hyre. (966-974)

After this first trial Alexander's hardness, might, strength, and bravery remain constant points of reference. The poet, however, takes pains to emphasize these qualities in varying ways. Alexander kills Lesyas, who taunts him about his illegitimacy, by striking him a single blow with a cup. When his knights have difficulty in battle, Alexander himself will enter the fray (1258-75, 3780, 5379), but more often he fights side by side with his men from the outset (2130, 4444) or advances first, if not actually striking the first blow at least leading his forces into battle (2147, 3237-38, 3778-79, 4365). He therefore stands in contrast to Darius who hangs back until one of his lords accuses him of cowardice, comparing him to Alexander:

pou seist soþ, sir: [he is] hardy and hard,
 And pou art also a few on ward. (cowardly in battle)
 He is þe first in vche bataille:
 pou art bihynde ay in þe tayle
 He is þe first wiþ swerd þat remeb-- (clears a space)
 pou art þe first wiþ hors þat flemeþ. (3335 ff.)

Alexander's conduct in battle is always exemplary; yet the poet introduces, quite successfully, variation in the battles while still making clear that Alexander has no equal. In most cases, Alexander fells his opponents with a single blow,¹⁹ but, upon occasion, he will mow them down en masse.²⁰ In but two instances does Alexander

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enter into extended and laborious battle. The first (5805-93) occurs during his travels in India when he chances upon a city where he hopes to find sorely needed provisions. The gates to the city are closed against him, however, and Alexander, having climbed the walls to determine the situation within, is pulled inside with hooks. Assailed on all sides and severely wounded, he nevertheless puts up a magnificent fight; yet, as the poet points out, he would have been slain or captured had not Perdicas come to the rescue. The poet here is obviously of two minds. He revels in presenting Alexander as the underdog, battling against outrageous odds in spite of his numerous injuries. But this episode, as it appears in other versions, has quite a different intention, one which the poet has not completely erased. In these versions, Alexander leaps into the city rather than being pulled in and his foolishness or rashness in doing so is the point emphasized. Despite the fact that the English poet eradicates the rashness of Alexander by changing his manner of entrance, stressing his strength and valor, and developing the comradeship of Perdicas and Alexander, the influence of the previous versions is left evident, perhaps intentionally, in the poet's closing lines:

Tohardy man wel ofte is fole!
 So had þe kyng yben heiȝ,
 Ac God hym sent help from heiȝ.

The poet's hedging comment cannot outweigh the overall impression of the episode--Alexander as mighty warrior--yet it strikes a note of humanity; Alexander is not indestructible; he may need, and will welcome, divine assistance--here in the form of Perdicas. The other extended battle-description involving Alexander is his meeting, in single combat, with Porus (7372-7415). The poet of

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varies the normal description of his individual combats by dealing not with particular deeds on the part of Porus or Alexander, but by taking the panoramic view:

Her aïer gynneb oþer seche, golden King Darris of Alb-
 Wip assailyng, wip smytynge, his hardynesse, his
 And kepen hem wip wrieynge.
 Wel hij fiztten on þe pleyn,
 Wip tresget, wip reremeyn, (transverse stroke; back-handed blow)
 Wip ouerheued and wip stook, (thrust) (7385-90)

The impression given by the description is that Alexander has at last met a worthy opponent. Other details add to this impression. Alexander kills Porus only when the Indian king turns to find why his troops have begun to "jangle," not because Alexander is the superior fighter. In the midst of the combat, moreover, the author comments that

Nyste noman hem bitwene
 gut who shulde maister bene. (7392-93)

One other element strengthens the impression that the two men are equal; before the battle both have supreme confidence in themselves: Porus in his greater size and strength, Alexander in his "chivalry" and his knowledge that he will not suffer death until an already determined date. One thus feels that Alexander wins not because he is the greater warrior, but because fate is on his side. Yet given the overall picture, other elements create quite the opposite impression: the great emphasis placed on Alexander's offering the single combat to prevent unnecessary bloodshed, on Porus' snivelling acceptance, on Porus' role as traitor, and on Alexander's generous treatment of the Indian troops after Porus' death. In the poet's mind, and ultimately in the reader's, Alexander deserves the victory; he is the noble knight and king.

Other devices are also employed to enhance the picture of

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Alexander as ideal knight. He receives continuing praise, from friend and foe alike.

His foes:

[The messangers] tolden Kyng Darrie of Alisaunder 3engþe,
His boost, his pride, his hardyness, his strengþe. (1321-22)

Lordynges, Alisaunder þe kyng
Hap on erþe non euenyng.
Hardy is his flesshe and blood. (3003-05)

Wonder Ich habbe of his mi3th--
Ne sei3 Ich neuere so hardy kni3th. (3317-18)

Forsope, we witeþ alle wel
þat Alisaunder is stronge and fel. (3371-72)

His friends:

Often bymened his prowessse,
His 3ingþe, and his hardynesse. (7878-79)

The poet:

He þorou3-þerled euey presse--
Was þere non to his prowessse. (2397-98)

Alisaundres hardyness may noman seye. (4890)

Similar, in effect, to these brief laudatory comments are the short statements which indicate the ease with which he wins so many battles and conquers whatever lies before him (1414-20, 1425-29, 5549-52).

The metaphor is yet another method used by the poet to stress Alexander's ability in battle. Although Alexander is at times metaphorically connected with the lion, an appropriate association for nobility, in times of battle he becomes the wolf. He is found to be not merely a skilled warrior, but a ferocious one. He possesses the audacia so often admired in the knights of romance; his sheep-like adversaries can hardly be a match for him.

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Alisaunder ferde on vche half
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 When he comeþ amonges shepe--
 Wiþ teeþ and clowes he gynneþ hem
 strepe. (2179-82)

Salome sei3 at þat on half
 Hou Alisaunder, as a wolf
 þat fele dawes had yfast
 þe shep todraweþ in þe wast,
 So Alisaunder amonge his men
 Slou3 down-ri3th, by sex and ten. (2413-18)

An-hatt is Alisaunders blood.
 He hete his folk so a wode wolf
 Assailen hem on þe cee half. (3266-68)

And Alisaunder on vche half
 Sleep doune-ri3th so dooþ a raged wolf. (4463-64)

For all of Alexander's ferocity as a knight, the poet takes great care to avoid portraying him as rash. Only twice in the poem is Alexander guilty of what might be considered rashness in battle, although in one instance the poet manages to excuse this aspect while stressing the valor Alexander exhibits.²¹ No extenuating circumstances absolve Alexander in the other episode (3463-3518). The troops of Alexander and Darius are lodged on opposite sides of a river with Alexander remaining there in order to observe Darius' dispositions. Alexander plunges fully armed into the river apparently to obtain an even closer look, but the poet does not explicitly identify this as the motivation. As a result, Alexander, who almost drowns, appears foolhardy, although he is said to be "stronge and bolde" (3483). Without distinct motivation for this action his plunge into the river seems only a pointless, rash escapade.

It cannot be suggested, however, that this is an intentional attribution of rashness, for the poet has evidently over-looked the lack

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of motivation because his concentration is directed elsewhere; he wishes to avoid a contradiction he finds in his source. The swimming episode is, in other versions, merely a means of bringing Alexander close to death so that his trust in and knowledge of the true worth of his physician can be brought forward. Yet because it is Parmenion who attempts, out of envy, to discredit the physician Philip and is hanged for his intrigue, the poet has discarded this part of the episode. He saw the contradiction in having this same Parmenion later appear not only alive but loyal (3506-16). But in removing the contradiction, he removes even the narrative excuse for Alexander's swim. This situation, coupled with the lack of motivation for Alexander's act, casts a shadow of rashness over Alexander. It is an interesting failure on the poet's part not only because he is elsewhere so careful to provide appropriate motivation for all his characters but because he so obviously wishes Alexander not to appear rash, even in the pursuit of glory.

The poet's desire to portray Alexander as other than a rash, unthinking, albeit skillful, knight and leader becomes evident early in the poem. If Alexander's defeat of Nicholas establishes his reputation as a knight, his second conquest is intended to show that he possesses wisdom, sapientia, as well as bodily strength and bravery. When the king of Mantona revokes his allegiance to Macedonia, the reaction of Philip--the leader of the forces which conquered Egypt and caused the flight of Neptanabus--seems strange unless one recognizes that its purpose is the elevation of Alexander as wise and thoughtful leader:

þe kynges veynes wexen chelde,
And nyst what he done miȝth,
Ac by conseil of his kniȝttes.

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He takeþ Alisaunder þis disray,
 Forto amende it 3if he may.
 Alisaunder it haueþ aflonge,
 Wharfore at table hym þinkeþ long. (1174-80)

Only after pondering the situation does Alexander take action. Then it is immediate: "After mete, demeyntenaunt, / To mouþe he sett his olyfaunt" (1181-82).

The poet often links these two qualities of Alexander. Unlike the classical epic, where one character often possesses fortitudo and another sapientia, Alexander combines both. He is successful as both knight and leader precisely because he has both valor and wisdom, and the balance between the two becomes almost formulaic:

And in þat grete regioun
 Nas castel, cite, ne toun
 þat man bi loue oiþer miȝtte
 Lesse þan in fourtene niȝtte. (1495-98)

Jt [Alexander] is an hardy flumbarlyng, (firebrand)
 Wijs and war, in al þing. (1788-89)

Alisaunder was wijs and war;
 Now he was here, now he was þar,
 And bad hem be hardy and noþing drede-- (2129-31)

Wonder Ich habbe of his miȝth--
 Ne seiȝ Ich neuere so hardy kniȝth,
 So queynt (3317-19)

Alisaundres hardynesse may noman seye,
 þe which, oiþer bi strengþe or elles
 by sum gynne,
 Al þat he seep þencheþ forto wyne. (4890-92)

Aside from finding mention in conjunction with his hardiness, Alexander's wisdom, sagacity, and cunning²² are developed independently. Although this Alexander is no scholar, as is the Spanish Alexander, nor a philosopher-king, as is the Alexander of Dicts and Sayings, he does, upon occasion, indulge in a bit of moralizing (1287-93, 1657-58), and his primary means of relaxation seems to be chess

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(3129, 2096). The poet also devotes a few lines in the "catalogue of education" to Alexander's mastery of scholarly pursuits:

þe seuenþe maister techēþ his pars
And þe wytt of þe seuen ars.
Aristotle was on þerof. (665-667)

While the connection between Aristotle and Alexander, and the influence which Aristotle had upon him, had early been established in the Alexander legend, some effort is made to stress this relationship and to find in it a partial explanation for Alexander's success as a conqueror. At the outset of the poem, the poet notes that Alexander "dude by his maistres teching" (32); later he makes the same point more strongly:

He doop by Aristotles conseile;
By hym he is so full of gynne
þat alle men he may wynne. (3008-10)

But Alexander is no puppet of Aristotle; he merely gains stature by his association with the "maister." The sagacity and wisdom he exhibits are meant to redound to his own glory. Aristotle may be mentioned twice as a source of Alexander's overall success; Alexander in person appears innumerable times as the source of concrete, individual successes.

The poet finds numerous ways of portraying Alexander's cunning in battle, his "battle-knowledge." In the first encounter with Darius, Alexander does not attack the forward guard but moves through, hoping to reach Darius, knowing that if the head is slain the body will have little heart to fight. In the same battle, he keeps twenty thousand knights hidden as a reserve force. To defeat Thebes he has erected by "cunning," a runway of timber up the wall of the city so that his chivalry may ride into the attack. He has his men tie boughs to the tails of their horses to create the impression of a great attack

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and cause his opponents to retreat to a less favorable position. He orders his men to pretend to flee so that Darius' troops will cross a river and be trapped with their backs against the water. When the all-out frontal attack on the enclosed city of Mantona fails, he turns to the seige, to force starvation or open battle. He uses fire-brands to drive off the giant crabs which cannot be pierced by swords. When he cannot defeat the nations of Gog and Magog, because of their advantage in position, he has his men create a diversionary attack while he encloses the barbarians with the marvelous bitumay.

A rather different type of cunning, coupled with valor, is apparent in two episodes which have little to do with winning any kind of battle or gaining much advantage for a forthcoming battle, except perhaps a psychological one. His two forays, in disguise, into the encampments of Darius and Porus emphasize Alexander's personal bravery and cleverness of mind. The situations themselves attest to his fearlessness, and, consequently, the poet focusses on developing Alexander's cleverness. The poet obviously enjoys relating Alexander's "queynt gyle" (5456) in convincing Porus that Alexander is old and feeble. He also develops the irony of the situation to the fullest, for the episode begins with the statement that Porus had great desire to know Alexander's "estre and his beyng" (5459). During Alexander's conversation with Porus and his counselors, the irony is again played up, as the Indians agree that the weak Alexander is surprisingly bold and hardy, although he would not dare approach Porus face to face. The final irony is that Porus enlists the disguised Alexander as a messenger to deliver a challenge inspired by the false impression that the same all-too-helpful stranger has given him of his enemy's strength

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and age; the challenge is, of course, to be delivered to none other than Alexander himself. Porus rewards his newly-enlisted messenger with gold and silver, and the messenger, perhaps amply rewarded already, casually bestows the gifts upon the porter as he leaves Porus' camp.

The same enjoyment of irony appears in Alexander's meeting with Darius (4105 ff.), but the tone of the incident never takes on the lightness of the encounter with Porus. Alexander appears before Darius as a noble messenger from Alexander, not as a mud-spattered merchant, the disguise he assumed to meet Porus. Darius commands that he take a return message, rather than asking as does Porus. The more serious atmosphere of this meeting, culminating in Alexander's having to fight his way out of the city, is appropriate in the larger scheme of the poem. Darius is Alexander's major civilized opponent, a more formidable enemy than Porus--whose armies are defeated in a mere four lines--and less easily duped. In fact, Darius almost immediately guesses Alexander's true identity and Alexander must quickly talk himself out of a difficult position. Similarly, the stealing of the cup contrasts sharply with the reward openly given by Porus. Alexander must defend himself against the charge of thievery and the threat of hanging to an extremely angry Darius, so that the skill of his defense--accusing Darius of being less generous and noble than Alexander--is not merely intellectual play but necessity. The defense he gives, however, is an effective one; Alexander clearly understands that Darius will not allow himself to be thought less gracious and generous than his enemy. The poet thus manages to convey not only Alexander's personal bravery and sagacity, but sets these qualities in a context appropriate to a meeting of the two formidable enemies.

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The understanding of human nature apparent in Alexander's psychological defeat of Darius is also evident in Alexander's actions after the trees of the sun and moon have predicted his death. Alexander twice cautions his men to secrecy, noting the necessity of preventing Porus from gaining knowledge of the prediction, for

All þoo men þat ben of Ynde
 Wenen me a god to fynde;
 þerfore hij nyllen, saunz fayle,
 A3eins me taken batayle.
 3if hij wenden þat Ich man ware,
 A3eins me fi3tten hij were 3are. (7008-13)

Alexander's assessment of the situation proves true:

Here herd Pore to hym unwreen
 þat Alisaunder ne shulde Grece seen.
 . . . þorou3 þis ilk tydyng
 He forsook Alisaunder þe kyng. (7024 ff.)

One final example of the understanding of human nature which forms a part of Alexander's wisdom is found in the method he uses to trap Darius' murderers. He makes no attempt to hunt them down, but instead appeals to their pride. He promises the unknown slayers great honor:

Jch wolde auauncen her corps,
 And setten hem on Hei3e hors,
 And 3iuen hem stole and baudry,
 As men don þe kynges amy--
 Leden hem þe cite aboute,
 And don þe folk to hem loute. (4687-92)

They naturally take the bait. The poet is here more skillful than some others who deal with this episode. In The Wars of Alexander, for example, Alexander is confronted by the two murderers and accused of going back on his word by not giving them the riches he had promised. In Kyng Alisaunder, however, Alexander's offer is so worded that he need not make lame excuses; they get exactly what he has promised:

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He dud quyk herneysen hors,
 And setten þere-on her cors.
 Hynt-anforþ hij seten, saunz fail,
 And hadden in her honde þe tail.
 Of pese-bu3th was her coroune.
 Hij waren led aboute þe toune;
 A wipþe was her stole, cert, (halter)
 And wip an opere hij weren girt.
 As men hem ladden aboute þe toun,
 Men shewed þat folk her traisoun.
 Men hem þrew wip drytt and dunge. (4699-4709)

Although sapientia et fortitudo are Alexander's two most prominent qualities, the poet also stresses other virtues which Alexander, as medieval knight and king of excellence, possesses, principally his justice and regard for law, loyalty, and liberality. All of these might legitimately be said to be aspects of his wisdom, but they are better handled separately since they receive independent emphasis in the poem.

Alexander does not merely conquer nations and then move on, leaving them in a state of chaos and anarchy, seemingly the policy of his counterpart in The Wars of Alexander. As a lord who receives fealty from those he has subdued, by whatever means, Kyng Alisaunder leaves behing a reign of order and law:

þere he sette his owen assises,
 And made baillifs and justises. (1421-22)

And to þe opere he 3iueþ law3e. . . .
 Alisaunder sett þere his baillyf. (1770 ff.)

Whan he had ystabled þe lay. . . .

Ironically, Alexander's attempt to maintain law and justice in his lands causes his death. Since Antipater, one of his justices, has perverted the law and "don shame" (7813) to many men, Alexander, at the request of the people, has him removed and ordered to court. Out of fear, Antipater determines that Alexander "shal abygge are He (7843) and sends him the poisoned wine.

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A more politically-minded poet would make a great issue out of the treason of Antipater, but this poet allows it to pass without comment. In fact, the treatment afforded traitors throughout the poem is used not to discuss the political aspects of assault upon a lord, but to demonstrate Alexander's sense of justice and the value he places on loyalty.

As one commentator points out, loiutee, as employed in the fourteenth century, takes in a wide range of meanings:

It is a quality of the soul It implied fidelity to the pledged word, or loyalty to an individual owing to a transient relationship such as that of guest and host . . . or loyalty to an individual because of love or friendship.²³

The two murderers of Darius are humiliated and hung not simply because they have killed a king, but because they have betrayed a generous lord. The fact that, for the poet, loyalty is a "quality of the soul," a quality that can belong only to those of noble birth, explains his admonition after Darius has been mortally wounded:

Fundelynges were þai two
þat her lorde biseiȝen so.
þerfore ne shulde no gentil kniȝth
Neuere norissh no founden wiȝth,
Ne beggers blood brynge in heiȝe wyke, (office)
Bot he wolde hym-seluen biswyke. (4595-4600)

Men of low birth cannot possess or comprehend the loyalty due the man who has raised them in his own court.

Loyalty also forms the basis for the judgment Alexander gives to the knight who, in disguise as one of his own men, has attempted to kill Alexander. Alexander's peers believe that the act itself makes the knight guilty of greason. Alexander considers his motivation:

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Darrie was my ri3th lorde--
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On this basis, Alexander frees and rewards the knight:

. . . Knizth, he were wood
 þat wolde þee don ou3th bot good!
 Trayson þou ne dedest ne feyntise,
 Ac hardy dede in grete queyntise. (4044-47)

Nor does the poet allow Alexander's decision to pass unnoticed. As with the warning after Darius' murder, he obviously feels strongly about loyalty and its meaning, which evidently only he, Alexander, and the "traitor-knight" can fully comprehend, at least at this moment:

Non ne spaak hym on word fore,
 Bot þat he shulde be forlore.
 þoo Alisaunder sei3 al þis,
 Yhereþ what he dude, jwis!
 It is ywrite þat euery þing
 Hym-self sheweþ in þe tastyng.
 So it is of lewed and clerk--
 Hym-self sheweþ in his werk. (4034-40)

Demonstrations of loyalty by Alexander of a kind similar to that of Darius' knight are of necessity not found in the poem since he is lord rather than vassal. The poet, does, however, dwell at length on Alexander's loyalty to his mother when she is cast aside by Philip in favor of a new queen. Alexander, as is proper, often demonstrates his loyalty to his followers by vowing to protect and defend them. If, in the line of duty, his knights are slain, they are at least buried, and, upon occasion, revenged. Thus when two hundred young knights are devoured by hippopotamuses while trying to swim to a castle, Alexander has the guides who did not warn him of these beasts thrown into the water to be similarly destroyed.

If Alexander knows that his followers owe him service, he knows that he owes them reward:

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3ee shullen habben after battaile	
All þe bi3ete, saun faile.	(booty)
	(3133-36)

When Perdicas saves Alexander during his lone battle in the enclosed city in the East, Alexander promises to make him his heir. On his deathbed, Alexander keeps his vow, making Perdicas king of Macedonia, as well as rewarding all the other peers who have served him faithfully.

Alexander's rewarding of his peers, knights, and troops, however, might better be seen as an expression of his liberality, a quality attributed to him conventionally throughout the Middle Ages.²⁴ What Paul Meyer says about the Alexander of the Roman d'Alexandre also applies to this English Alexander:

Alexandre est devenu le type idéal du seigneur féodal, ne cherchant point à amasser pour lui, mais distribuant généreusement à ses hommes les terres et les richesses gagnées avec leur aide.²⁵

The poet often notes Alexander's liberality, generally in the context of generous payment for services rendered:

Coupes, pelles, broches, rynges,	
Herneys, armes, oþer þinges,	
Alisaunder freli di3ttes	
After werþe amonge his kni3ttes.	
þere nas knaue ne quystroun	(scullion)
þat ne had his warisoun. ²⁶	(2503-08)

On other occasions, however, Alexander's distribution of gifts is not presented as just payment, but simply as open-handedness. It indicates, in a positive way, his freedom from avarice or the desire to amass treasures and riches for whatever reason. How highly such liberality was regarded can be seen in Darius' shame and vexation when Alexander--however unjustly--accuses him of niggardliness.

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At the time of his knighting, Alexander receives from Philip seven pack horses laden with gold.

And departed on gentyle wyse,
 Sum to kniȝttes of heize seruiſe,
 Sum mareschales, and botlers,
 To ȝoman, page, and joglers.
 All þoo þat fongen woulde
 Ynouȝ hadden of rede golde.
 Alisaundes gode loos
 Of þat ȝuyng first aroos. (831-838)

The least that can be said of Alexander's generosity on this and other similar occasions (1389-90, 4668-74) is that he is insuring the loyalty of his followers, but he never seems to fall victim to a conscious seeking after the popularity that such giving may bring.

C. B. West states that in medieval times, Alexander's largesse tended to eclipse his other qualities;²⁷ yet such is not the case in Kyng Alisaunder. His liberality certainly receives notice; this virtue is a requisite for any medieval king of excellence; nonetheless, it does not acquire the prominence that his wisdom and hardiness do. Thus he wins Darius' men to his service by cunning as well as gifts (4673-74); and in the final summary of his virtues, largesse is not even mentioned, although it would easily have fulfilled the requirements of the rhyme:

[They] Often bymened his prowesse,
 His ȝingþe, and his hardynesse,
 His gentrise, and his curteisie. (7878-80)

While "curteisie" appears in this final catalogue, it does not actually receive much emphasis in the poem. West points out the numerous meanings and associations which the term collected in medieval times,²⁸ but since Kyng Alisaunder is not only relatively late, but also English, its use is extremely restricted. The term "curteisie," as applied to Alexander, appears only four times, excluding the final catalogue, and in only two different contexts. Twice the term is

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applied to Alexander's treatment of Darius' wife and mother after their capture and indicates little more than politeness and generosity.²⁹

The context here, however, suggests that "curteisie" is little more than a conventional rhyme-formula:

pere dud Alisaunder curteisie--
He kept hem from vche vilenye. (2495-96)

[He] faire lokep my meyne,
Jn chamber, at boord, wip curteisie,
Wipouten vche vilenye. (3314-16)

The other two uses of the word occur in another context, but here the term has such vague meaning as to be almost indefinable:

Sir, als pou art gent and curteys,
Lete vs libbe in grippe and pays. (2947-48)

Kyng Alisaunder was hym [Porus] curteys,
And graunted hym his loue and pays. (5555-56)

The rhyme with "pays" again suggests a formulaic pattern. At most, its use can suggest the same opposition to "vilenye" and the generalized behavior appropriate to a man of nobility and gentle birth.

In spite of Derek Pearsall's belief that the Candace episode can be viewed as an example of fine amour,³⁰ there is little evidence of courtoisie in Alexander's relationship with the queen. The affair starts out promisingly enough:

Of al þe werlde she was richest;
Of alle wymmen she was fairest.
She loued Alisaunder pryuelik,
And he hire, sikerlyk.
Ac non of hem ne had opere yseie. (6650-54)

But Alexander is hardly a Lancelot; because of "suspicion" and "treason" he does not go to visit her. Candace, for her part, is no unapproachable courtly lady. When she finds that he has passed by her land, her "frenzy of love" propels her into action; she declares her

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love and proposes marriage in a letter.³¹ But love of Candace need not be its own reward for Alexander; she promises him unbelievable riches if he will fulfill her desires. Clearly, he will have the "maistrie," if not the initiative, in this affair:

Jch wil þee serue to honde and to fote
By ni₃th and day, 3if Ich mote. (6716-17)

Although Alexander later takes the initiative in venturing, in disguise, into her city, his visit seems motivated more by daring than by love. For one who has loved her secretly, his emotional involvement, even accepting the fact that he might be subdued by the trickery she has accomplished, is not at all worthy of the courtly lover:

þoo Alisaunder gan ysee
þat it most so nedes be,
He dude al þe lefdyes wille
Under couertoure stille. (7718-21)

When practical considerations intervene, namely danger from Candace's son, Alexander and Candace part company. We are told that he takes his leave with "mournyng," (7770), but no details or conversation between the two are given. From all we can tell, Alexander never thinks of her again; Babylon quickly replaces Candace and her bed-chamber in his thoughts. In this situation, Alexander is clearly the heroic rather than the courtly hero.

Pitie, which by the fourteenth century is little more than "a compassion . . . which finds expression in immediate action"³² is simply and overtly attributed to Alexander as he attempts to solace his knights for the loss of their comrades or grieves because they are dying of thirst (1653-60, 5086). Yet this quality is best not considered in isolation, but in conjunction with Alexander's tendency toward anger, since the two so often appear side by side in Kyng Alisaunder. The

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poet seems not at all bothered by Alexander's at times immoderate anger. Considering that all the kings of the Alexander romances become "wroth" at the drop of a hat, Alexander's anger would best be seen as a conventional attribute of nobility. From a moral point of view, his anger occupies neutral ground, deserving neither approbation nor condemnation. The poet, nevertheless, seems cautious; Alexander's wrath normally results from provocation, as by the insults of Nicholas, Lesyas, or the Thebans. In other cases, his anger arises from the pity he feels for knights who have been slain; thus, in anger, he casts the guides to the hippopotamuses and later, again in anger over the death of young knights, kills "wipouten pite" (5700) the warriors who have slain them with poisoned weapons.

While Alexander's anger may sometimes be motivated by pity, it may also be tempered by pity. When the nobles of Athens send a deprecating letter and refuse to yield to him, Alexander answers with extreme wrath and vows revenge. Yet when Demosthenes begs for mercy, Alexander grants it, not, however, without receiving the obeisance and ransom he desires. Later, when another Greek city defies him, the outcome is similar. Knowing that they cannot resist forever, the people of the city slip the keys to Alexander and beg his mercy:

. . . þe kyng it herd.
 He hete vche man don jn his sward;
 He vnderfenge her fewte
 þe kyng afongeþ her mone,
 And wipouten more tale
 Makeþ hem alle his speciale. (3276 ff.)

Alexander is first a conqueror and feudal lord; only secondly is he a merciful conqueror.

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Friedrich Heer states that "wrath and displeasure" (ira et malevolentia) were legitimate royal traits It was the wrath of God that manifested itself in the wrath and displeasure of the king."³⁴ But in only one instance, the battle of Thebes, can Alexander's wrath be seen as an expression of the wrath of God, and therefore as a distinctly positive quality. Thebes, moreover, is the only city not granted mercy and spared when the people beg for it, simply because in this case Alexander becomes an instrument for divine punishment. One should not suppose that Alexander is aware of his role as instrument of God; rather he himself assumes the role of divine judge. He hears of the great men and gods the city has nurtured and of the iniquity of Oedipus and other Thebans. His judgment is for destruction since, as the poet points out, the evil outweighs the good:

þat was city of mest werþe,
Of all þat weren in erþe.
For her synne and dede on-hende
Nou is it brouȝth out of mynde. (2887-90)

At one other point in the poem Alexander again becomes a representative of the divine will. One motivation in his decision to conquer the lands of Gog and Magog is to prevent the spread of evil (6134 ff.). Although he cannot defeat them, for such is not the divine plan, he can enclose them until, at doomsday, they are freed by the Anti-Christ. What needs to be stressed is that Alexander never becomes a conscious representative of the Christian God; Alexander's instrumentality in the divine plan, as well as the occasional assistance he receives from God, are imposed by the poet in his own commentary. Thus, in enclosing Gog and Magog, Alexander indeed receives "rede" from "heuen" (6155), but as a result of offering pagan sacrifice; this Christian coloring comes in the poet's summary (6279 ff.).

Nonetheless, it is impossible to accept in toto Cary's pronouncement that outside Germany "Alexander was either always a pagan unprotected by God or he was a courtly hero thickly overlaid with the courtly conventions of Christian chivalry."³⁵ The latter half of the statement is acceptable. Alexander scarcely qualifies as a courtly hero, although he is, to an extent, medievalized. He is generally a consistent pagan, although on one occasion he is shriven by a bishop before approaching the trees of the sun and the moon; and he once swears by God. Normally, however, he offers pagan sacrifices, swears by "Dans Mahouns" (3170), and believes in the will of "þe goddes" (6873) or "Chaunce" (1658). Furthermore, it is not true that he is unprotected by God. The poet either implies or makes it perfectly clear that Alexander receives divine aid in his conquests (1408), in healing his poisoned men (5079-80), and when Perdicas comes to his rescue (5896). After his death a messenger from God designates his burial place (7993). Coupled with the refusal of the poet to see Alexander's death as a result of a pride or overweening ambition which angers God, the effect of this presentation of Alexander is to elevate and idealize him. He becomes, in the eyes of the poet, the noble pagan whose anger at the purveyors of iniquity is justified, and with Thebes and Magog an echo of divine wrath, whose personal courage and compassion for his men may be divinely rewarded. The fact that God withholds assistance at the time of Alexander's death is not a mark of disfavor. He has been aided before, as part of the divine plan. Now he receives no aid and must submit to the divine plan as it is contained in the natural workings of the world. The point is not that Alexander dies young because of divine punishment, but simply that, because he is human, he dies.

Alexander's treatment of the Thebans and his enclosing of Gog and Magog bring up the question of the motivation behind Alexander's conquests. These two episodes might suggest that the poet wishes to make Alexander something of a religious crusader even though he is acknowledged to be a "hepen kyng" (8006). But subduing the forces of evil or establishing a reign of "goodness" are by no means his primary intentions. The motivations behind his conquests, adventures, and explorations are purely secular, although not for that reason deserving of condemnation. The poet, in fact, twice points out that whatever the intention, Alexander's conquests and hardy deeds are admirable in themselves (30-36, 4748). Revenge, the desire for fame, and conquest for the sake of conquest have impelled many a knight and king--Arthur among them--even though Alexander alone among the great romance heroes is motivated, at times, by nothing more than curiosity.

Alexander's early conquests, before he assumes the throne, are motivated almost entirely by his desire for revenge. He will battle Nicholas to "wreke his fader of his fon" (844), although it is not made very clear exactly what Nicholas has done. He will "amende" (1178) the disturbance caused by the King of Mantona's rebellion against Philip. Later, in his final excursion before Philip's death, he goes to "a-dresse" (1330) a city that will not follow Philip's command. At only one point in the narration of Alexander's early deeds does a motivation other than the desire for revenge appear. When Darius' messenger demands the tribute due "by vsage" (1284), Alexander refuses payment on the interesting grounds, in light of his future actions, that wood, water, and land belong equally to all men. In refusing to pay

the tribute, Alexander makes his "boast":

3if Darrie haueþ þorou3 his meynes
 Don Philippe, my fader, wrong,
 Jch am elde ynou3 and strong
 A3eins Darrie hym so to wreke
 þat þe werlde shal pere-of speke. (1294-98)

The young Alexander no longer merely strives to right wrongs against his father; his own desire for fame has now become a factor. Since these last two lines are repeated almost verbatim later (2515-16, 2977-78), they might be considered a mere formulaic filler. There are, however, other statements and incidents to support the conclusion that one of Alexander's motivations is the desire for earthly glory.

No clear reason is provided for Alexander's first conquests as king. He seems interested merely in subjugating lands, but the context does suggest that his primary objective is to amass a great army (1396-1510). When Darius sends him the insulting presents--the whip, ball, and purse--Alexander's answer indicates his wish to be conqueror of the world. But whether this aspiration results from the desire for earthly fame, or from a belief that he is thus destined,³⁶ or from the pleasure he finds in conquering--all of which are possible and appear in one or another of the Alexander romances--we cannot at this point tell.

As the narration progresses, Alexander's conquests now and again center around his need to avenge wrongs perpetrated against him, but often the vengeance becomes secondary. He sets out to conquer a city and the revenge motif enters only when its inhabitants resist. The city of Thebes offers the most complicated example, but it places in perspective the role that revenge takes once Alexander has assumed the throne. When he approaches Thebes, the Thebans insult

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him and refuse to yield; Alexander therefore declares that he will be avenged. It is only after he has conquered the city that he decides, on the basis of the evil in their past and present history, that the city should be razed. The resolve to destroy evil ranks third in Alexander's list of priorities.

By the time Alexander is well-launched in his activities as king, three motives have taken precedence. First, there is the desire to be conqueror of the world; this drive stands behind his constant subduing of cities and nations.³⁷ That Alexander is concerned about his ability to conquer the world becomes evident in his conversation with the miraculous trees; his first question to them is whether he will rule the world. Alexander's second motive is his driving desire for earthly fame, but not simply the fame that would come from being the leader of the forces which subjugate all nations. Certainly Alexander expects to gain renown as the mighty conqueror; in one of the battles with Darius we are told:

Boþe kynges þere, saunz doute,
Beep in dassht wiþ al her route,
þe on to don men of hym speke,
þe opere his harmes forto wreke. (3842-45)

The surrounding context of these lines makes clear that Alexander is the king who hopes to cause men to speak of him. The enclosing of Gog and Magog also begins on this note. A marvelous man challenges Alexander's reputation, stating that if he desires to win the most renown of the world, he must conquer these nations (5978-79). Alexander takes up the challenge on this basis; only later does the resolve to destroy evil enter (6134-39). Furthermore, Alexander wishes to be esteemed for his personal bravery and cleverness off the field of battle. These

are qualities Alexander hopes to demonstrate through his excursions into the camps of Darius and Porus.

And Alisaunder hym biþouȝth
Hou he miȝth do sum þing
Of to speke wiþouten endying. (4174-76)

He the refore steals the cup from Darius and, returning to his troops, "telleþ hem his auenture" (4270). He also enjoys recounting his "auenture" (5533) after he has returned from the confrontation with Porus.

Alexander's third prominent motivation, curiosity, while hinted at in his desire to "see þe countenaunce / Of Darries court" (4116-17) and know who Porus is, ³⁸ appears mainly in those portions of the poem devoted to the marvels of the East. The poet insists, in what becomes almost a refrain, on Alexander's intellectual curiosity, only once suggesting that it might be tied to a desire for fame:

He wolde wende þorouȝ desert,
þise wondres to seen apert. (at first hand) (4799-4800)

Forþ went þe kyng wondres sekynde. (5707)

Forþ he went ferr in to Ynde,
Moo merueiles forto fynde. (5753-54)

Forþ went þe kyng and all his folk apert
Wondres to seen in þe desert. (5771-72)

þo þe kyng was hool and wel ydouȝth,
Mo wondres he haþ ysouȝth. (5897-98)

He shipped swiþe in to Ethiope,
Forto seen þat folk selcoup
Jn wyde londes þat weren coup. (6289-91)

Certes, Lordynges, Alisaunder þe kyng
Wolde yseen al þing,
Were it open, were it yleke,
þat he miȝth here of speke. (6504-07)

Wyten ȝee ouwhare, by any waies,
Any merueiles in þis countreyes
þat Ich miȝth don in storrye. (6744-46)

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Yet, even in this section, no single motivation prevails. In several cases the pursuit of marvels is connected with conquest or may even take second place to it:

Now went Porus, so J fynde,
 Wiþ Kyng Alisaunder ouere al Ynde,
 To shewe hym þe merueilynges
 Of men, of bestes, of oþer þinges,
 And helpen wyne vnder his honde
 All þe naciouns of þe londe. (5561-66)

Now þe kyng haþ al þis in his rope,
 He shipped swiþ in to Ethiope,
 Forto seen þat folk selcoup. (6288-90)

Now haþ Alisaunder agrope
 All þe merueiles of Ethiope,
 And taken feute of þo men.³⁹ (6632-34)

When Alexander investigates the wonders of the sea, under the tutelage of the Meopantes, it is not his curiosity which is stressed, but his hardness in making the descent.

These shifting combinations of motivations for Alexander do not necessarily indicate confusion on the part of the English poet; rather, they suggest that he wishes to motivate not only Alexander but the entire narrative. Thus the marvels, which seem almost an excrescence, are tied to the narrative line through Alexander's curiosity and resultant wanderings in the East. But this curiosity, which has support, albeit minor, in some of Alexander's other exploits, can take second place to or be combined with other drives, those more conventionally associated with a great hero. The poet, therefore, most often relies on the desire for fame, conquest for the sake of conquest, and revenge. Yet he will choose from among these one or more which will be appropriate to the particular situation. In two cases, moreover, he will add a Christian coloring, by having Alexander punish or contain evil. Such

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may not seem a very artistic approach, but it is effective. The poet successfully motivates the various episodes, and, at the same time, the motivations ascribed to Alexander befit the ideal knight or king. Alexander is elevated to the ranks of the great heroes simply by having stock motivations assigned to him.

What may be ultimately more important is that at no time does the poet condemn Alexander by attributing degrading motives to him. Alexander's desire to conquer and his successes in conquest do not lead him to pride, nor does his desire to investigate the world suggest outrageous ambition or the aspiration to become a god. In fact, Alexander, who is always aware that he is no more than a man, stands in contrast to Darius, who claims descent from a god. Alexander's ambitions remain within conventional bounds, and the only suggestion of pride appears in his refusal to answer Darius' plea for mercy immediately because of concern for his prestige. All in all, Alexander's motivations, if not clearly virtuous, are always acceptable; they are appropriate accessories to the great medieval knight and king.

The Kyng Alisaunder poet, then, presents Alexander within the conventional framework of the idealized medieval hero. He possesses the virtues and qualities befitting such a figure: wisdom and valor, liberality, loyalty, pity, the desire for fame and conquest, a generally regal anger, and, in a typically restricted English manner, courtesy. More exceptionally, he is partially motivated by intellectual curiosity and, on certain occasions, becomes the ally of good, if not of God, and the recipient of divine assistance. His ambitions are not considered immoderate, and, unlike the Alexander of some other versions, he is not accused of attempting to challenge divine power.

Consequently, his early death is not presented as a punishment for violating the natural order.

Yet this does not mean that the poet finds Alexander's death puzzling or leaves it unexplained, for there are two sides to Alexander. Besides being the ideal knight and king inhabiting the ideal chivalric or heroic world, Alexander is also a man, part of the ordinary world and subject to the laws of nature. The poet therefore explains Alexander's death and makes it an integral part of his narrative by presenting, particularly early and late in the poem, the non-ideal sides to Alexander. He gives him motivations and emotions, commits him to actions, which are typically human.

The first evidence of the poet's humanization of Alexander comes at the death of Neptanabus. The Kyng Alisaunder poet is exceptional in the motivation he attributes to Alexander for his killing of Neptanabus;⁴⁰ in many versions no reason is given; in a few versions Alexander murders him for falsely claiming to be a seer. It is true that this Alexander follows the traditional line in stating that Neptanabus is a false magician who cannot predict fortunes by the stars as he has stated he could; thus his death will prevent him from beguiling others. But the first reason which Alexander gives for casting Neptanabus into the pit is not only original with this poet but is reiterated in future portions of the poem:

Ouer al so zede þe sclander
þat þou haddest biȝetten me. (726-727)

The humiliation of being illegitimate and therefore, on a practical level, of not being Philip's proper heir, continue to torment Alexander. The poet does not, however, emphasize the political aspect so much as

the personal shame which Alexander feels.

When Olympias is put aside as an adulteress and Cleopatra installed as the new queen, Alexander becomes incensed, but not only out of loyalty and love for his mother. To be sure he rebukes Philip for casting her aside, yet seems not about to do anything until Lesyas "ramproned hym of Olympias" (1099). He kills Lesyas and then, after receiving Philip's assurance that he is his son and heir and lessening the "sklauder" (1142), he frees his mother and brings accord between Philip and Olympias.

Nonetheless, the humiliation of illegitimacy haunts him, undoubtedly because Neptanabus had stated that Alexander was indeed his son. Thus, after he becomes king, Alexander journeys to Tripolyn where he sees the statue erected by Neptanabus and hears the story behind the flight of that king. Although Alexander seems moved, his real desire is to quell the slander and know for certain who his father is. He therefore asks the bishop--in such a way, it seems, as to receive the right answer:

"Bisshope," he seide, "þere is a sklauder
Yleide on me Kyng Alisaunder,
þat J shulde ben biȝ eten amys.
Telle me who my fader is,
Pryuely bituene þee and me--
þi trauaile shal J quyte þee." (1551-56)

The bishop proceeds with all the appropriate motions of "longe sacrifyeyng" (1561) and returns with the answer that "his fader hiȝth kyng Philippe" (1564). Alexander has finally heard what he has wanted to hear:

Kyng Alisaunder vpon hym louȝ,
And in herte was bliȝe ynouȝ
þoo alþerfirst he vunderstood
þat he was riȝth of kynges blood. (1565-68)

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Alexander is satisfied. No further mention is made of his concern over his scandalous birth.

Historians often suggest that Alexander really never loved anyone other than his mother Olympias. Perhaps this view, probably known to medieval writers,⁴¹ accounts for Alexander's continued loyalty and devotion to her in Kyng Alisaunder. Nevertheless, the poet makes Alexander's devotion a blind thing, and for that reason, more human. Admittedly a certain difficulty exists in determining whether this was a purposeful accomplishment or not since the mode of Alexander's dedication to her does not differ from the other romances; what does differ is the characterization of Olympias. Unlike the Olympias of The Wars of Alexander, for example, the Olympias of Kyng Alisaunder is a proud, vain, willing accomplice of Neptanabus, although she does believe the father of her child to be the god Amon. On the other hand, she is a distinctly unfaithful wife, actively enjoying, rather than passively submitting to, the will of a god in her association with Amon and later conspiring with her lover Pausanias to kill Philip.

The poet, in his portrayal of the queen, has two goals. First, he clearly wishes to make Olympias more human by giving her some motivation. Even though her characterization rests heavily on the conventional qualities of the courtly lady, the poet succeeds in enlivening the stock figure of the other English Alexander romances. Secondly, the poet is committed to a moral approach; he wants to condemn her for her unfaithfulness to Philip and is too much the rationalist to believe that she could be "seduced" by Neptanabus/Amon without a certain willingness or availability on her part. He therefore carefully structures the episode to make Olympias a consistently motivated

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character worthy of condemnation by the moralist. Olympias desires to gain the praise of men and rides through the city decked in her finest. She sees the stranger Neptanabus in the street and looks at him "unabashedly" (220), but will not linger to talk with him, afraid that "he shulde tell / þing of shame" (229-230). She seems not to have been the devoted wife even at this point. Curious about his declaration that he has "ycome to telle þe soop" (228), she finds the whole situation a "game deliciouse" (243), but the context suggests that love is the game she finds most interesting. There is, then, true consistency in that she does not refuse Amon's "game" (392) and in fact desires a continuing relationship with her lover. Her amiability gives the moralist his opening:

Olympyas stant tofore Neptanabus
 Of her nywe loue wel desirous.
 So doop womman after mysdoynge,
 Ne can no shame ne no repentyng,
 Er she be lauztte in her folye
 So in þe lyme is þe fleize.
 She seide to hym "of maistres floure,
 Hou shal J take on wiþ myne amoure?
 Shal J any more hym yseen,
 Shal J anymore aqueynte hym ben?
 3if he is god, he is kiynde,
 And wil me often come hende.
 His loue is also swete, jwys,
 So note-muge oþer lycorys.
 Erpelich kni3th ne erpelich kyng
 Nys so swete, in none þing." (415-430)

Lines 417-420 and 427-430 have no basis in the Roman de Toute

Chevalerie; they are the poet's own.⁴²

The poet works within a conventional medieval approach and attack on women; he later picks up this motif when Candace, after trapping Alexander, catalogues the noble men deceived and ensnared by women. Whether he really wishes to attack women or simply feels

that such an attack is a rhetorically appropriate inclusion, the overall effect of the Olympias/Neptanabus episode is the humanization of Olympias and a consequent humanization of Alexander. Admittedly, it is possible that Alexander never knows the willing role Olympias has played in his birth; but he clearly knows of her unfaithfulness to Philip with Pausanias. When Alexander returns from battle to discover Philip mortally wounded,

Fonde he stonde Pausanias
By þe quene dame Olympias. (1351-52)

Even though he helps Philip kill Pausanias, he takes no action against Olympias. Perhaps, like the poet, Alexander considers such action typical of women--"Wommans hert is wip þe werst" (1341)--and therefore to be dismissed. Whatever the case, his devotion to her continues undiminished. One of the questions Alexander puts to the magical trees is "'3if he shulde to Grece a3ein wende / To seen his moder and his frende" (6844-45). Since Olympias is not more sinned against than sinning and since, in Kyng Alisaunder unlike The Wars of Alexander, Philip and Alexander do not attempt to excuse her by saying "after all it was a god," Alexander's continuing loyalty to Olympias is an attachment in spite of her imperfections. Somewhat like Arthur's devotion to Guenevere, it makes Alexander more human.

Alexander's involvement with Candace serves the same humanizing purpose, but accomplishes this end in a different manner. Although it is typically English for the poet to de-emphasize even the few courtly aspects of the relationship found in his source, it needs to be recognized that such de-emphasis makes the episode more coherent. Instead of having, as in the Roman de Toute Chevalerie, an Alexander

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who wavers between the courtly lover--in the Anglo-Norman poem he sends the first letter and has the aura of a man who will die should he not see Candace⁴³--and a man trapped by a clever woman, in Kyng Alisaunder he remains consistently the latter. Kyng Alisaunder is caught not by Cupid's arrows but by his own rashness and overconfidence. He does not venture into her city as a result of burning, or even smouldering, love. Through Tholomeu, who at this point is impersonating Alexander, we receive the following motivation, although we can, at most, only hypothetically attribute it to Alexander:

She is yhote dame Candace;
 Fair and bri3th is hir face--
 Nis in þis werlde so fair quene.
 Fayn Ich wolde hir ysene,
 Her castels and ek her toures,
 3if hij weren to myne honoures. (7580-85)

J wil hir send loue-drurye,
 And her estres ek aspye. (7604-05)

The offering of the love-token falls within the courtly convention, but he seems as interested in the glories of her city as in Candace herself. Even if we accept Tholomeu's words as a reflection of Alexander's desires, and admit a certain acceptable or required restraint, we must also realize that the desire to see another's "estre" was the superficial motivation given for Alexander's disguised meeting with Porus. In fact, since by this time Alexander has attempted, and been successful at, three disguises in which he entered into a dangerous situation ultimately out of the desire for fame--to have a good adventure to tell and to show off his bravery and cleverness--one strongly suspects that the same motivation underlies his actions here. In support of this suspicion one can note that his meeting with Candace follows, up to the point the reversal occurs, exactly the same pattern as the meeting

with Darius and presents Alexander employing the same irony he had used with both Darius and Porus. Thus, as with Darius, after the initial greeting, he is accused of being Alexander himself:

"Do way!" quop quene Candace,
 "Jch vnderstonde by pi face
 pat pou Alisaunder be
 "Nay," he seide "by Goddes ore!
 Alisaunder is wel more,
 Redder man on visage,
 And sumdel more of age,
 And pou shalt certeyn ben,
 Sunday whan pou shalt hym sen!" (7640 ff.)

Since Candace now drops the subject, Alexander is allowed to believe that his cunning has once again out-witted his "opponent," just as he out-witted Darius and Porus with the false descriptions of Alexander. His victory is short-lived; Candace soon reveals the image she had made of him and revels in her conquest:

O, Alisaunder, of grete renoun!
 pou art ytake in my prisoun!
 Al pi strengþe ne gayneþ þe nauȝth,
 For a womman þee haþ in her laas! (7688-92)

Although the anti-feminist convention plays a part, there is still no doubt that Alexander has been trapped by his own overconfidence. He has trusted in his own cunning mind, as he did successfully with Darius and Porus, left his armor behind, as he was not rash enough to do with Darius so that then he was able to fight his way out when finally recognized, and forgotten the ways of women, which he might have learned from Olympias' treatment of Philip.

"O!" quop Alisaunder, "Allas,
 pat J nere y-armed wel,
 And had my swerd of broun steel.
 Many an heued wolde J claue
 Ar J wolde in prisoun laue.
 Ac noman ne may hym waite
 From þise wymmens dissaite." (guile) (7693-99)

The last two lines seem a bit limp as an excuse, though conventional enough, but Candace supports his words. As she catalogues the heroes betrayed by women--indirectly condemning herself in the mode of the Wife of Bath--she makes the point that, like Adam, Sampson, David, and Solomon, Alexander may be a great man but not a perfect man. Her catalogue, moreover, emphasizes the betrayal by women, not the "vice" which brought these men into the snares of women. Consequently Alexander is not accused of any major sin, but simply of the weakness inherent in being a man. And, like the others she names, Alexander's weakness takes the form of overconfidence; he trusts too much in his own position and abilities and is therefore not wary enough of those around him, in this case a woman. But he can equally well allow himself to be betrayed by a man--Antipater. Here Alexander is once again not cautious enough; he drinks the poisoned wine "er þan he sholde" (7851). Overconfident, he forgets the guile of which men, as well as women, are capable. The poet could have made Alexander's overconfidence into the sin of pride; he does attribute that sin to Olympias (284). But his intention is not to morally debase or degrade Alexander, simply to humanize.

When Alexander hears the prediction of his early death from the tree of the sun, his reaction is conventional. He suffers great woe, but attempts to solace his knights by telling them he must submit to the gods' will and by giving them possessions and rank. Yet Alexander must know more; he returns to learn where and when he will die. His sorrow is compounded; "his wytt he forȝate for sorouȝ" (6898). Philotas must confront the sequestered Alexander to remind him of the dangers of a foreign land and secret foes unless he puts in an appearance

and raises the morale of his troops. Alexander has forgotten his duty. It takes a strong rebuke to make him aware of what he must do: "Ne hastou herte and flesshe hardy?" (6915). Such dereliction in duty for personal reasons is conventional enough in the romance, but the poet develops it as evidence of the human side of Alexander. He also successfully conveys the facade which Alexander puts on as he returns to hearten his army:

Kyn Alisaunder, þou3 hym were woo,
þoo took gode herte hym too . . .
Eteþ and drynkeþ, plaieþ and scoff
Als he ne 3af noþing þerof. (6918 ff.)

The poet's final step--he has now presented the derelict Alexander and the anguished but duty-bound leader--is to show Alexander making one last attempt to find a way out of his predicament. Alexander's third trip to the trees is to find out exactly when he will die and at whose hand. The tree, knowing Alexander's plan to remove his murderer ahead of time, will give him only half the information. But hope springs eternal:

He wil fonde 3if he may,
þei3 it be to hym yshape,
On sum manere forto a-skape. (6969-71)

Nonetheless the attempt to defy death never takes on heroic proportions; this is its only appearance.

The poet cites one other human trait in Alexander. Although the mention is brief, it takes on importance for it specifies the one thing that Alexander is at the mercy of: nature. In all the battles with men and ferocious, marvelous beasts, Alexander always appears in the front lines, heartening his fearful soldiers. But once he himself succumbs to fear. Ironically enough, the fear arises after his dangerous

escapade in Darius' court. When he has escaped the clutches of Darius' entire army, only a river remains between him and his troops. It is a swift, broad, and deep river, but not a marvelous one. He has only to contend with common nature. As he swims, however, he is "sore adrad of his dep" (4260). He reaches safety, not by his own efforts, but because his horse--an ordinary one and not the wondrous Bucephalus--is good. Alexander is at the mercy of nature in this scene; he will either be destroyed by it or saved by it.

We have also seen that Alexander is, in another sense, at the mercy of nature. Ideal as he may be as knight and king, the poet stresses his humanity. Alexander is subject to the weaknesses, errors of judgment, and emotions imposed by human nature. He remains, for all his great cunning and ability, a man; in ways perhaps a superman, but nonetheless a man. Ultimately, then, as a man he must be subject to the laws which govern man and the natural world: the unchanging laws of mutability and transitoriness. Even if we can explain Alexander's death in terms of human weakness, and the poet suggests that we may do so, the poet also forces his audience to find an explanation in the broader, unvarying laws of nature. It is the function of the headpieces, and to a lesser extent the marvels, to develop the duality of ideal-human presented in the characterization of Alexander and to make the didactic application of this duality by showing the underlying dominance of nature and the laws which govern it.

Rosamond Tuve and G. V. Smithers have dealt most completely with the headpieces of Kyng Alisaunder.⁴⁴ Tuve argues that the "seasons" motif can be traced back to Lucretius. As used in English poetry, the motif represents an attempt to deny the "outrageousness of

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fortune" and find in "the cycle of the seasons the immutable law of mutability."⁴⁵ But she insists that the headpieces of Kyng Alisaunder do not stand within this essentially moral and philosophical tradition. They are closer to the descriptions of French courtly poetry; "more like the record of a society where lovers sang songs within a paled green and sighed because the birds were gay and the ladies proud."⁴⁶ The headpieces, then, serve as a rhetorical decoration, not moral commentary; at most they function as indicators of the passage of time between Alexander's adventures.⁴⁷

Smithers, in finding the immediate source for the headpieces in the Old French epic, correctly points out Tuve's failure to see the variation in the headpieces and states that her conclusions about them are unacceptable.⁴⁸ Smithers' description of their import in the overall structure of Kyng Alisaunder does not, however, go beyond Tuve's:

The lyrical headpiece let in to a long narrative serves, as an arabesque might, to catch and relieve the eye as it attempts to take in the effect of a large fabric.⁴⁹

In fact, he groups the headpieces under the category of "stylistic ornament."⁵⁰ His examination of the headpieces, moreover, is less than satisfactory. He ambiguously states that there are "no less than 27"⁵¹ when in fact there are 29. His discussion of the "at least five varieties" is filled with confusing distinctions or lacks distinctions when they should be made.⁵² For purposes of reference and clarification I have listed below the 29 headpieces of Kyng Alisaunder. This list is followed by a schematic representation of the important elements contained in each headpiece. The column headings indicate the type of reference made in the headpiece; the numbers are those given the headpieces in the preceding list.

8. Noyse is gret wiþ tabour and pype,
 Damoysels playen wiþ peren ripe.
 Ribaudes festep also wiþ tripe;
 þe gestour wil oft his mouþe wype. (1573-76)
9. Mery it is in June and hoot firmament;
 Fair is þe karole of maydens gent,
 Boþe in halle and ek in tente.
 In justes and fizttes nys opere rente
 Bot bones knusshed and hard dent. (1843-48)
10. In tyme of Maij hoot is in boure.
 Diuers in mede spryngep suete floure,
 And þe lefdy þe kni3th honureþ.
 Trewe herte in loue dureþ.
 At gode nede coward byhynde coureþ;
 At large 3ift þe hungry loureþ.
 Gentyl-man his lemman doop honoure
 Jn burgh, in cite, in casetel, in toure. (2049-56)
11. In tyme of Maij þe ni3ttingale
 Jn wood makeþ mery gale.
 So done þe foules, grete and smale,
 Summe on hylles and summe in dale. (2543-46)
12. Mery is þe blast of þe styuoure;
 Mery is þe touchyng of þe harpoure. (bagpipe player)
 Swete is þe smellyng of þe floure;
 Swete it is in maydens boure.
 Appel swete bereþ fair coloure;
 Of trewe loue is swete amoure. (2567-72)
13. Mery it is in sonnes risynge--
 þe rose openep and wile vpspringe.
 Wayes faireþ, þe clayes clyngeþ,
 þe medes floureþ, þe foules syngeþ.
 Damoysels makeþ mournyng
 Whan her leues shullen make partyng. (2897-2902)
14. Whan nutte brounep on heselrys,
 þe lefdy is of her lemman chys.
 þe persone wereþ fow and grys--
 Ofte he setteþ his loue amys.
 þe ribaude plaieþ at þe dys;
 Swiþe selde þe fole is wys. (3289-94)
15. Lordynges, after mete ariseþ pleie.
 þe coward is wel loop to deie;
 Late slowe man keuereþ preie. (3439-41)

16. Horses strengþe and hardynesse
 Shewþ many faire prowessse.
 Nis non so fair þing, so Crist me blisse,
 As kniȝth y-armed in queyntise,
 Bot þe preest in Goddes seruyse. (3579-83)
17. Mery it is in þe day graukyng, (grey light of dawn)
 Whan þe foules gynneþ synge,
 And jolyf herte so gynneþ spryng.
 To sone it þencheþ þe slow gadelyng!
 Jn mychel loue is grete mournyng;
 Jn mychel nede is grete þankyng. (4056-61)
18. Jn a morowen-tyde it was,
 þat dropes hongen on þe gras,
 And maidens loken in þe glas,
 Forto atyffen her faas. (beautify) (4101-04)
19. Day-spryngyng is jolif tyde.
 He þat can his tyme abide,
 Often hym shal his wille bitide.
 Loop is gentil-man to chide. (4283-86)
20. Mercy, Jesu! þou vs socoure!
 Jt fareþ wiþ man so dooþ wiþ floure--
 Bot a stirte ne may it dure;
 He glyt away so dooþ þessure. (a puff of wind)
 Fair is lefdy in boure,
 And also kniȝth in armoure. (4313-18)
21. Faire ben tales in compaignye;
 Mery in chirche is melodye.
 Yuel may þe slow hye,
 And wers may blynde blynde siweye.
 Who þat haþ trewe amye
 Joliflich may hym disgye. (conduct himself, live (?))
 Jch woot þe best is Marye--
 She vs shilde from vilenye! (4739-46)
22. Jn somers tyde þe day is long--
 Foules syngeþ and makeþ song. (4791-92)
23. Mery tyme it is in Maij!
 þe foules syngeþ her lay.
 þe kniȝttes loueþ þe turnay;
 Maydens so dauncen and þay play. (5201-04)
24. þe sonne ariseþ, þe day spryngþ,
 Dewes falleþ, þe foules syngeþ. (5447-48)

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25. In tyme of heruest mery it is ynou₃--
 Peres and apples hongep on bou₃,
 þe hayward blowep mery his horne,
 In eueryche felde ripe is corne,
 þe grapes hongen on þe vyne.
 Swete is trewe loue and fyne! (5745-50)
26. Mery it is in halle to here þe harpe;
 þe mynstrales synge, þe jogelours carpe. (5980-81)
27. Averille 3iues mery shoures;
 þe foules syngen and springen floures.
 Many hokett is in amoures! (shabby maneuver)
 Stedfast seldom ben lecchoures.
 Hote loue often after wil soure.
 Fair juel is gode nei₃boure.
 þe best þyng is God to honoure. (6988-94)
28. Good it were to ben kni₃th,
 Nere tourneyment and dedly fi₃th.
 Wiþ marchaundes to ben it were hende,
 Neren þacountes at bordes ende.
 Swete is loue of damoysele,
 Ac it askep costes fele.
 Better is litel to habbe in ayse
 þan mychel agh₃tte in malayse.
 Who-so is of dedes vntrewe,
 Ofte it shal hym sore rewe. (7352-61)
29. In 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.
 þe leuedyes shene als þe glas,
 And þise maidens, wiþ rody faas,
 Passen sone als floure in gras;
 So strong, so fair, neuere non nas
 þat he ne shal passe wiþ "allas!" (7820-30)

<u>Season</u>	<u>Time*</u>	<u>Court</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Aphoristic Comment</u>	<u>Ideal plus Human*</u>
1		1	1		
			2		2
3		3	3	3	3
4		4	4		
	5	5	5	5	5
		6			
	7			7	7
		8	8		
9		9	9		9
10		10	10		10
11			11		
		12	12		
	13	13	13		13
14		14	14		14
		15			15
		16			
	17		17	17	17
	18	18	18		
	19	19	19	19	
		20	20	20	20
		21		21	21
			22		
23		23	23		
	24		24		
25		25	25		
		26			
27		27	27	27	27
		28		28	28
		29	29	29	29

* "**Time**" indicates a reference to the passage of time not connected with the seasons. "**Ideal plus Human**" indicates that the headpiece describes or includes situations/activities which are less than perfect, generally human activity which is less than pleasant or virtuous.

An examination of the headpieces in context shows that Tuve's statement on their function--to indicate the passage of time between Alexander's adventures--at least needs modification. The first three headpieces, for example, occur before Alexander's birth. Twelve (nos. 2, 6, 8, 12, 15-16, 20-22, 26, 28-29) mention neither season nor time of day.⁵³ One might make her generalization acceptable by stating that the headpieces serve to indicate any kind of break in the narrative regardless of the character involved. More precisely, the headpieces signal that some indefinite amount of time (from an instant to months) has passed, whether or not they actually make a specific time reference; therefore they function as a method for 1. bridging gaps between discreet episodes (nos. 1, 4, 6, 13, 17, 21-25, 27-28); 2. covering a smaller break within a single large episode (nos. 2-3, 5, 7, 9-12, 16, 18-19, 28-29); 3. making the transition from one character or scene to another within the same narrative episode (nos. 14-15, 20, 26). In the last, the time element can be non-existent, equivalent to our "meanwhile." Such a broadening of Tuve's description is not only required, but illuminates the variation in the poet's use of the headpieces as fillers for narrative pauses.

The poet can, however, indicate any of these types of break, or the pure and simple passage of time, without resorting to the headpiece. For example, a clear lapse of time occurs between Philip's discovery, in Egypt, that Olympias is pregnant and his arrival in Macedonia, yet no headpiece appears (518 ff.).⁵⁴ Further, the poet makes specific references to the passage of time, once again without incorporating his direct statements into the formal headpiece.⁵⁵ On the other hand, headpieces such as #6 or #15 occur at points where no

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time lapse exists, but they do serve to mark a new episode or change in scene. Finally, some of the headpieces which appear to be indicators of time are actually redundant if looked at only in this light.

Headpiece 5 is typical. It seems to occur simply as a signal of the passage from the events of the night before to the day of the battle with Nicholas, but the poet accomplishes this time transition outside the headpiece:

þe nizth þæ restep litel, forsoþe,
 Bot as men þat ben wrope.
 Wel warded þæ weren boþe þat nizth,
 Al forto spronge þe dayes liȝth. (907-910)
 [Headpiece]
 Alisaunder in þe daweyng
 Quyk had armed al his gyng--
 Wiþ mychel ost he is comyng. (920-922)

Similarly, the changes from episode to episode or the change of scene can be achieved without headpieces⁵⁶ or, as with #14, the headpiece is again redundant:

And þere he ordeyneþ his wendying
 Toward Darrye þe riche kyng.
 Now listneþ, wiþouten gyle,
 Hou Darrie doop þerwhile. (3285-88)
 [Headpiece]

The conclusion must be that the headpieces are not used consistently as transition pieces.

One commentator mentions that the headpieces "foreshadow death on the battle-field"⁵⁷ but at most headpieces 5, 7, 9, 10, 15, and 28 suggest impending battle; even fewer suggest death in battle. It is perhaps possible to see most of the headpieces as foreshadowing some ensuing event, but this is occasioned by the fact that their descriptions are so general that they could be applied to almost any situation. Only a very few (nos. 2, 9, 29) are precise enough in reference to be

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considered intentional foreshadowings. What can be said is that the headpieces are always appropriate to the context although only occasionally do they have any direct connection, either by statement or imagery, with what follows.⁵⁸ Their primary function is to be found in terms of the entire poem and not in terms of any immediate situation or episode.

As the most important function of the headpiece, Flynn cites the fact that "their imagery is all of the court and the city. . . . As constant reminders of the social life of man and woman at court, knight and tradesman in town, they emphasize the contrast between the civilized, inhabited world and the wasteland."⁵⁹ Such a contrast is only partially evident. There are certain problems in fitting the "hayward" (no. 25), for example, into courtly society, though he would indeed belong to the civilized world. Moreover, the contrast between the civilized world and the wasteland would be more evident should the headpieces appear primarily in the second half of the poem; in fact, only five appear there. The rest occur in the opening half where Alexander never ventures far from court and city; even in the latter half, the headpieces generally immediately precede Alexander's meeting with civilized people. Wherever he is, Alexander often takes a kind of battlefield court with him. The pavillions, nobles, feasts, and chess games scarcely indicate, in spite of the battles and hardships, that he carries on a solitary knightly quest across the wasteland, though some such aura surrounds the marvels section. Finally, it is difficult to find the headpieces "expressive of the safe world the hero leaves behind."⁶⁰ A number of the scenes presented in the headpieces and most of the sententious comments they contain make it clear that no part of life or the world is entirely

"safe." The dangers may not be as violent or obvious as those of the battlefield or wilderness, but they are just as treacherous. Alexander, after all, succumbs in the midst of his court.

The primary function of the headpieces, then, is not to be discovered in their individual placement or relationship to individual, or even groups of, events. Rather they offer a running commentary on the life of Alexander by implicitly mirroring the ideal-human contrast set up in his characterization. In an explicit way, they present the major didactic commentary on his life and death. This didactic commentary has as its basis the well-known, well-worn medieval theme of the transitoriness and mutability of human life.

Admitting that the lyrical descriptions contained in the headpieces are similar to the descriptions of the courtly poet and are, for the most part, conventional, general, abstract, and often proverbial in content as opposed to highly original and detailed, certain generalizations can be made. Most of the headpieces combine descriptions of natural events with those of courtly activity. Approximately half present a clear idealization of life, whether it be through pictures of courtly life or natural events or the combination of both (nos. 1, 4, 6, 8, 11-12, 16, 18-19, 22-26). The others temper the idealized pictures with descriptions of less noble human activity or with generally negative aphoristic commentary. We have then the same combination as in the presentation of Alexander: the ideal placed against the less ideal, the perfect moderated by a recognition of the less-than-perfect activity which typifies human life.

While only a few more than half of the headpieces make time references--either seasonal or diurnal--and thereby create a

background of temporal movement or change, a number more (nos. 2, 15, 20-21, 29) make reference to the transitoriness and mutability of earthly existence.⁶¹ The preponderant emphasis of the headpieces, then, is to place the events of the poem in the context of a life which is essentially brief and changeable at any moment. These qualities of life add perspective to the mighty conquests and hardness of Alexander. Just as the ideal Alexander is qualified by less-than-ideal human qualities, ideal life--courtly or natural--is qualified by less-than-perfect activities. All life is seen in the context of what is, for the poet, its most apparent characteristic: the immutable laws of mutability. Insofar as Alexander partakes in this life he is subject to the same laws.

The quality of mutability, like Alexander's human traits, receives particular emphasis at the beginning and end of the poem, to identify the framework within which Alexander's life, marvelous as it may appear, is to unravel. Thus, although the poet in his prologue seems to be addressing his audience, his opening statements apply to the overall narrative and introduce the didactic theme which the poet applies to Alexander's life:

Djuers is þis myddellerde
 To lewed men and to lerede.
 Bysynesse, care and sorowþ
 Js myd man vche morrowþe,
 Somme for sekeness, for smert,
 Somme for defaut oþer pouert,
 Some for þe lyues drede
 þat glyt away so floure in mede.
 Ne is lyues man no so sleiþe
 þat he ne þoleþ often ennoyþe
 Jn many cas, on many manere,
 Whiles he lyueþ in werlde here.
 Ac is þere non, fole ne wys,
 Kyng, ne duk, ne kniþth of prys,
 þat ne desireþ sum solas
 Forto here of selcouþ cas;
 For Caton seiþ, þe gode techet,
 Oþere mannes lijf is oure shewer.

The image of the fading flower (7-8) or its equivalent is an insistent one in the poem,⁶² but it finds its longest development in the final headpiece, the one which introduces Alexander's death. Although the poet mentions, immediately after this headpiece, that fortune has turned against Alexander, this is the only clear appearance of Fortune personified; more importantly, because of the insistence on instability as an essential aspect of earthly life, "chaunce" (7831-32) is really only an extension of this instability.

The placement of the headpieces also warrants notice.⁶³ Twenty occur in the first half of the poem, and headpiece 21 serves as the dividing "interlude" between the two halves. Thus only eight occur in the second section which is devoted mainly to the marvels of the East. One might suggest that this imbalance results from purely aesthetic considerations, primarily the already extensive amount of description in the marvels section which might be over-burdened by a number of headpieces. The headpieces appearing in this section do not introduce Alexander's wanderings and viewing of marvels, but rather those episodes which are similar to the first half of the poem: Alexander's search for and conflicts with Porus (nos. 22, 24, 27, 28) or the nations of Gog and Magog (no. 26), his active and formidable battle with a series of wild beasts (no. 23), and finally his death in Babylon (no. 29). Only headpiece 25 introduces Alexander's journeying and the strange people and wonders he passively encounters; even here the headpiece precedes a general battle, quite like other city-battles, by only 50 lines.

The poet therefore sets the marvels section aside and avoids headpieces near the description of these marvels, but not simply

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because he shies away from excessive description. The poet accepts these marvels; for all his use of "wondrous" and "extraordinary" he views these creatures and people as an acceptable, real part of the world (4763 ff., 4836-40). They may be heightened nature, but they are still nature, subject to the laws of their kind. He conveys their connection with "ordinary" nature through his description; they may be "larger" or "bigger" but they are still very much like the most common animals: hogs, fish, dogs, deer, horses, and sheep. Like ordinary nature, they may not escape the natural laws which govern them:

Ac no womman o þat contrey
Ne lyueþ no lenger, par ma fey,
þan she be of twenty wyntres age. (4999-5001)

And so ay, by þe ten 3ere,
þe coloure chaunges of her here. (5025-26)

Eueryche man and eke womman
Of þe londe of Taproban
Of an hundreþ wyntres full-libbeþ
þe dawē,
Bot hij ben of fomen yslawe. (5645-48)

Weren hij yladde oīper ybore
Out of her londe, hij weren ylore. (6488-89)

þus is þe cokedrille ysshant
And yslaw3e of þe delphyn. (6613-14)

The Alexander who seeks these wonders generally has the role of passive observer, if he is in evidence at all. The observing Alexander is simply submerged in nature. Even when actively engaged in conflict, he is more often vanquished by nature than victorious over it. When victorious he usually has received help from nature, for example the small adders, the giant dogs, the large birds, the shrieking hogs, or the bitumay from the sea-people of Meopante. We are told

that Alexander brings all these lands of the East under his rule, but except for the containment of Gog and Magog, we do not see the subjugation being accomplished.

The marvels section, then, achieves the same effect as the headpieces. First, it indicates that all life is subject to the laws of nature. Second, the inability of Alexander to cope, without outside help, with heightened nature makes concrete his essential powerlessness at the hands of ordinary nature. Such powerlessness is made explicit through the commentary in the headpieces; in the marvels section it is made explicit through Alexander's ineffectuality or passivity in his encounters with heightened nature. In both the didactic point of the author remains the same. Nothing in this world--Alexander included--is indestructible, no matter how extraordinary its strength or cunning. Everything falls before the laws of transitoriness and mutability which govern this world. There is for him, as for the poet's audience, only a moment's solace, a moment's victory before life "darts away as a flower in the mead."

Now man leig³ep, now man wepeþ!
 Now man is hool, now man is seek;
 Nys no day oþer ylyk.
 Noman þat lyues haþ borowe
 From euene libbe forto amorowe.

(6983-87)

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FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Smithers, II, 44. A more precise date has not been agreed upon although W. H. French, "Dialects and Forms in Three Romances," *JEGP*, XLV (1946), 130, would date it 1275-1300 on the basis of linguistic form and word usage.

²Laud Misc. 622 of the Bodleian Library; Lincoln's Inn 150; Advocates' 19.2.1 of the National Library of Scotland; the St. Andrews Fragments of the University Library of St. Andrews which originally formed a part of the Auchinleck MS. The surviving fragments of the "Expanded Kyng Alisaunder" are found in the collection known as The Bagford Ballads held by the British Museum. All citations in my text will be from the Laud MS. as printed by Smithers, I.

³Smithers, II, 11-12.

⁴Smithers, II, 58-60. The suggestion that he was in orders is based on extremely tenuous evidence. The poet praises the priestly vocation in l. 3583 of Kyng Alisaunder, but Smithers' conjecture that he was a cleric is based primarily on the prologue of Arthour and Merlin which he believes to be another of the Kyng Alisaunder poet's works.

⁵Eugen Kölbing, in his edition of Arthour and Merlin (Leipzig, 1890), lx ff., states that Kyng Alisaunder, Arthour and Merlin and Richard Coeur de Lion are all by the same author. G. V. Smithers, "Notes on Middle English Texts," in London Medieval Studies, ed. R. W. Chambers et al., Vol. 1, Pt. ii (London, 1938), 209 urges a single author for Arthour and Kyng Alisaunder. Karl Brunner, Der Mittelenglische Versroman Über Richard Lowenherz (Wien, 1913), pp. 67-68, suggests the common authorship of Richard and Kyng Alisaunder. W. H. French, "Dialects," pp. 128-129, however, argues for separate authorship but states that "all must have had a common training or followed a prevailing mode," and all wrote in the same dialect and period. See also Dieter Mehl, The Middle English Romances of the 13th and 14th Centuries (London, 1968), pp. 231-232 and Smithers, II, 58-60.

⁶See the list of headpieces, below pp. 68-71, for examples of the rhyme scheme. In a few cases the rhyme of the headpiece is carried into the first couplet of the narrative, but these are exceptions and no pattern is evident.

⁷The judgment is not unanimous. Kane finds Alexander A and Alexander B better and French, "Dialects," p. 127, states that Kyng Alisaunder is the work of a "hack without any instinct for style beyond occasional deference to commonplace rhetorical ornament."

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⁸See below, pp. 66-67.

⁹Mehl, p. 230.

¹⁰Everett, p. 107.

¹¹Elizabeth Flynn, "The Marvellous Element in the Middle English Alexander Romances" (Unpubl. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968), p. 65 et passim.

¹²Elder Olson in Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago, 1952), p. 67.

¹³See ll. 17, 241, 3025-26, 3035-36.

¹⁴C. M. Bowra, "The Hero," in The Hero in Literature, ed. Victor Brombert (New York, 1969), pp. 26-28.

¹⁵English Medieval Literature, p. 182.

¹⁶Cary, p. 142.

¹⁷Ernst Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), p. 175.

¹⁸As Smithers, II, 77, points out, the normal meaning of "derayeyng"--throwing into disorder--does not seem satisfactory here; the line is probably corrupt.

¹⁹1265-71, 1353, 2151-53, 2421-23, 2741-46, 3784-89, 3795-99, 4365-70, 4449-53.

²⁰2395-98, 5379-80.

²¹See above, pp. 30-31.

²²The three terms are used synonymously.

²³Gervase Mathew, "Ideals of Knighthood in Late-Fourteenth-Century England," in Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke, ed. R. W. Hunt et al (Oxford, 1948), p. 358.

²⁴Cary, pp. 358-368.

²⁵Meyer, II, 373.

²⁶See also 1569-71, 5998-6003, 2133-36.

²⁷Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature (Oxford, 1938) p. 73.

²⁸West, pp. 1-16.

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²⁹Cf. 2561-64 where "curteisie" itself is not used, but the type of behavior it implies is catalogued.

³⁰"Development," p. 101.

³¹As H. L. Creek points out, the woman as woer is an attribute of the *chanson de geste*. "Love in Medieval Romance," Sewanee Review, XXIV (1916), 92.

³²Mathew, p. 359.

³³See also 1893-97.

³⁴The Medieval World (New York, 1963), p. 349.

³⁵Cary, p. 189.

³⁶Alexander's reaction to the ease with which he pulls out the magical sword (2621 ff.) is the only incident which would lend support to this view.

³⁷See 4892, 5905-06, 5932 ff., 6842.

³⁸Because of the poet's sometimes loose use of pronouns, this line (5464) admits of two interpretations. "He wolde wite who was he" may mean simply that Alexander wishes to know who Porus was or it may be an ironic statement by Alexander, to the effect that indeed Porus will know who Alexander is.

³⁹See also 5605 ff., 6632-34.

⁴⁰Smithers, II, 28.

⁴¹Many medieval writers, however, preferred to stress his incontinence. See Cary, pp. 99-100.

⁴²Smithers, II, 73.

⁴³West, p. 75.

⁴⁴Enkvist actually only refines Tuve's general findings. He does stress the influence of French poetry on English after the twelfth century in contrast to Tuve, who insists on the antipathy of the French poetry to the spirit of the English. His view on the headpieces does not differ from Tuve's and Smithers'.

⁴⁵Tuve, p. 13.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 32 et passim.

⁴⁸Smithers, II, 35-39, esp. 37.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 39

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 36.

⁵²For example: "A third type adds to the seasonal references (a) gnomic elements . . . some of the more pleasing of which are pictures of courtly or aristocratic society, or (b) sententious elements, or uses both," p. 36.

⁵³Tuve never indicates that she is dealing only with the seasons-headpieces; if, because of the title of her work, that is to be assumed, the twelve I have mentioned as exceptions to her statement would have to be eliminated from consideration. In any case, the first objection stands.

⁵⁴See also 656 ff., 710 ff.

⁵⁵For example, 605, 1019-20, 1067, 3956 ff.

⁵⁶For example, 1325, 1435-39, 1661-66.

⁵⁷Flynn, p. 81.

⁵⁸Mehl, p. 239, insists on the individual structural, thematic, or stylistic importance of the headpieces but does not clearly suggest any overall, general function.

⁵⁹Flynn, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 81

⁶¹Those headpieces which do not (6, 8, 12, 16, 26, 28) all concentrate on an idealized description of courtly activity, but even one of these (28) does present both the "good" and "bad" sides of this life.

⁶²See, for example, 718, 4314-15, 6982-87, 7828.

⁶³Mehl, p. 235, states that they are evenly spread through the poem. A brief look at the line numbers shows the unacceptability of such a statement.

CHAPTER III

THE WARS OF ALEXANDER

The Wars of Alexander, the longest of the Middle English alliterative Alexander romances, is preserved in fragmentary form in two MSS: Bodleian Ashmole 44 and Trinity College Dublin D.4.12. Although Ashmole is the better manuscript, the two generally supplement one another, with Dublin filling a gap of some 145 lines in the Ashmole; unfortunately, both lack the conclusion of the poem. The date and provenance of the original are difficult to determine because of the distance of the MSS from the original; but the poem is generally ascribed to the first half of the fifteenth century and to the North or Northwest Midlands.¹ Much discussion has centered on the possible common authorship with other alliterative poems such as the Morte Arthure and The Destruction of Troy, but the arguments offered are generally tenuous.²

Aside from artistic considerations, the poem is of interest since of the three alliterative fragments it alone offers evidence of possible oral presentation. Not only is Wars divided into passus of more or less regular length,³ a division contributed by its author, but also contains numerous references to a poet-audience situation:

I sall rehers, & 3e will, renkis rekyn 3our tongis,
A remnant of his rialte & rist quen vs likis. (21-22)

Bot will 3e herken hende now sall 3e here
How he kide him in þe courete & quayntid him with ladis. (212-213)

And if 3ow likis of þis lare to lesten any forthire,
 Sone sall I tell 3ow a text how it be-tid efter.⁴ (523-524)

However, since the poem is quite late, such references may represent nothing more than rhetorical or stylistic convention.

Estimates of the poem's artistic merit vary greatly and critical assessments are generally confined to the metrical skills of the poet. Andrew states that "the best work in [Wars] frequently reminds one of the Gawain-poet In spite of his rather dull subject matter . . . his work is alive and shows that he has mastered his art." Oakden, as noted earlier, finds the poem a noteworthy product of the alliterative revival. Skeat, on the other hand, considers it little more than a translation, and Elliot finds the lushness of some descriptive passages the only redeeming aspect of the poem. Kane, in grouping all three fragments together, believes that they "are the most successful of the attempts at adjustment between ancient classical material and the alliterative long line."⁵ These evaluations, excepting that of Oakden which is based on detailed metrical analysis of the alliterative line, fall short since they are unsupported and usually the product of cursory overviews, if not critical prejudice.

One generally accepted view of Wars is that most succinctly stated by Oakden. In his view the poem is a "drama in chronicle form-- a rapid narration of events centered around a mighty hero," an epic rather than romance hero.⁶ Indeed, little medievalization has been undertaken by the poet. Alexander's "kighthood" may be referred to; he may encounter the "bishop" of Jerusalem and even bow to the name of the one God. Yet beneath the most superficial level, chivalric or romance aspects are all but non-existent. Alexander has his twelve

"peers," along with many "knights" and "squires," but his captains are more thanes than lords. Alexander and his troops fight, albeit in medieval armor; they do not joust. There is no knighting ceremony for Alexander. He is interested in meeting Candace, but no suggestion of love enters the picture. He receives tribute from the conquered cities and nations, but not fealty. Olympias is the honorable but subordinate queen with no courtly qualities. The list could be continued, but the point is clear. The poet serves as the historian/biographer of the epic Alexander.

In the prologue, again an original contribution, the poet suggests that his work is meant simply as entertainment. He will present a "remnant" of the life of an "Emperoure þe a3efullest," the "athill Alexandire," for

When folk ere festid & fed fayn wald þai here
Sum farand þing efter fode to fayn þare hert. (1-2)

As will be seen,⁷ entertainment is not the poet's sole purpose; he is also a didactic writer. Yet, insofar as his concern lies with the presentation of the life of the conqueror Alexander, the work exhibits a consistent unity. The structure and movement of the poem are controlled by the author's concept of Alexander and his desire to keep his hero always in the limelight. Although one cannot accept Oakden's statement that the narration is, without qualification, "rapid," and that no digressions are admitted into the narrative,⁸ the account of Alexander's feats is straight-forward. The episodes are unified not merely by the presence of Alexander, but by the author's commitment to the portrayal of Alexander as a superman. Alexander's virtues and motivations are consistent with such a picture, and the characterizations

of those closest to him--Olympias and Philip--are molded to fit it. Unlike Kyng Alisaunder, this poet allows no intrusion of mere human qualities in Alexander.⁹ Moreover, the individual episodes, as well as serving to offer a clear-cut presentation of the noble qualities of the superhuman hero, center around or reflect back upon the figure of Alexander. He is constantly front and center; all action is designed to bring out the epic nature of the warrior and king Alexander. Such a single-minded approach can result in a certain monotony.

The method of the poet is evident in the battle scenes, which are fewer in number, briefer, and less varied than those of Kyng Alisaunder. In fact, the only battle which approaches the extensiveness of those in Kyng Alisaunder is that of Tyre, which actually combines two episodes: the siege of Tyre itself and the Foraging of Gadirs. The poet does not allow himself to become interested in developing battles for their own sake, nor is he interested in showing Alexander overcoming his foes even in the face of extreme difficulty. His goal is a simple one: to stress Alexander's heroic bravery and cunning, and he chooses the most straight-forward approach. In Kyng Alisaunder, formidable foes at times confront Alexander; in overcoming them, his abilities are elevated. At other times, his enemies cause him only minor inconvenience; again Alexander is elevated. But the poet of Wars chooses not to elect this variation; he works by accumulation. One after another Alexander's opponents fall to his hand and no one offers him much in the way of opposition. His opponents are as nothing compared to Alexander; therefore the poet presents them as little more than names accompanied by stock epithets, if they are given even that particularization. The poet achieves his purpose; no one stands in the way of the

invincible Alexander, but the artistic result is a certain sameness, a certain monotony in the battle scenes.

Although the poet's battle descriptions indicate that he possesses a facility in this area, they are handled in a very conventional way, are quite rigidly structured, and show little of the freedom in the use of the line which the poet introduces into straight narrative and dialogue.¹⁰ One might attribute this to the fact that the long tradition of the battle description has caused it to become merely a convention and is used as such by the poet; yet other evidence indicates that he is more constrained by his desire to keep Alexander in the forefront whenever possible and continually emphasize his invincibility.

A schematic presentation of the battle episodes in Wars, set next to those of Kyng Alisaunder for purposes of contrast, makes evident that the Wars poet not only includes fewer battles, which can be simply attributed to his source, but more importantly devotes less time to most of the ones he does present and treats all of them in the same general way. It should be first noted, however, that the overall format of the battle episodes is the same in both poems; this pattern, of course, is not peculiar to these two poems but coincides with the set form in many medieval romances. I present merely the most general pattern rather than including all the individual details which may go to form such an episode.¹¹ This overall pattern contains six basic elements:

1. Motivation: rebellion, demand for tribute, insult either verbal or in a letter, refusal to open the gates to Alexander. One or more of these may appear, and, in situation such as the extended conflict with Darius, the motivation may appear hundred of lines before the actual combat.

2. Preparation: the gathering of troops, arrival at the battle field, the arraying of the men. Obviously if Alexander or his opponent is already in the field the first of these will not be included for that army.
3. The boast. This element is very flexible; it may appear immediately after the motivation or during the battle as well as in this position. Moreover, it may occur more than once.
4. The battle. The form of the actual battle will be considered below.¹²
5. The defeat, yielding, or flight of the opponent.
6. Cleaning up: mercy is granted or denied to the survivors, law is established, fealty received, booty seized, the dead buried, Alexander offers comments on what has occurred. Again, one or more may appear.

Both poems incorporate all of these elements in approximately the same way, but a great difference exists in their respective treatments of "the battle" and "the cleaning up." The differences are attributable to each poet's view of Alexander and the aspect of character which he wishes to emphasize. Leaving the battle aside for the moment, Kyng Alisaunder devotes a relatively large amount of time to the "cleaning up"; in Wars it receives little, if any attention; when it is present, the burial and, in one case, Alexander's comments, receive most consideration. The Kyng Alisaunder poet consistently presents Alexander not only as conqueror, but as law-giver, liberal lord, and generally merciful king. In Wars the emphasis falls more consistently on Alexander as conqueror, on the sheer quantity of lands subdued. He is a man driven to conquer rather than rule. The contrast between the medieval outlook of Kyng Alisaunder and the more heroic approach of Wars is, of course, also evident here.

In the following chart, the battles are designated as simply

as possible, by the name of the opposing king or city, given in the first column. In the second and third columns the first number indicates the total lines devoted to all the elements listed above (pp. 89-90). The second number, then, denotes the lines given to the battle proper, whether it be the mass encounter of the two armies, Alexander against numerous opponents or a single specified opponent, some other identified knight in single or mass combat, or, as in most cases, combinations of these. The count for the battle does include certain elements besides actual fighting; for example, Alexander or his opposing king often "sees what is happening to his forces and prepares to enter himself." There seems no reason for excluding such material from the count, but for purposes of the overall view these short interludes or interruptions, which are, however, intimately connected with the battle, have not been given particular mention. I have also separately indicated, since they are particularly relevant for the approach of Wars, the lines devoted to letters between Alexander and his opponents; these letters actually form a part of the motivation. Thus the count for the letters, as for the battles proper, is included in the overall count for that episode.

The battles considered here are those which have been deemed "major": more than 20 lines are devoted to each and they contain actual battle description; the importance of the second requirement will be made clear later, for there are "battles" or at least "conquests" where the battle is mentioned but not actually presented. I have excluded from this list those battles in each poem which are primarily devoted to Alexander's confrontations with non-human opponents. An examination of these battles would yield the same results; they have been omitted for the sake of brevity.¹³

<u>Major Battles</u>	<u>Kyng Alisaunder</u>	<u>Wars</u>
1. Nicholas battle	153 61	124 24
2. Mantona battle	112 45	7 none ¹⁴
3. Tyre battle	84 38	135 88
		Foraging 148 41
4. Araby battle	58 15	28 20
5. Thebes battle	248 171	59 9
6. Macedonia battle	70 42	(Lacedemonia) 47 none
7. Darius - three battles early motivation ¹⁵	34	24
First Battle	574	274
battle	330	8
letters	73	236
Second Battle	567	60
battle	230	none
letters	none	48
Third Battle	332	120
battle	104	14
letters	32	44
8. Porus - two battles		
First Battle	22	124
battle	none	34
letters	none	36
Second Battle	206	66
battle	44	14
9. "City in the East" battle	86 69	---- ----
10. Gog and Magog ¹⁶ battle	232 37	18 none
<u>Totals</u>	<u>2778</u>	<u>1219</u>
battle	1186	252
letters	105	364

Approximately one third of Kyng Alisaunder is devoted to the presentation of major battle episodes and 1186 lines to the battle scenes themselves. On the other hand, the poet of Wars devotes only about one fifth of his poem to the major battle episodes and only 252 lines to battle scenes. Besides the obvious fact that he is not as interested in a detailed depiction of the conquests of Alexander and his knights, certain other observations are also relevant. First of all, the battle of the "City in the East" does not appear in Wars. Four other battle scenes-- Mantona, Lacedemonia, the second battle with Darius, and Gog and Magog--receive no direct description; the occurrence of the battle is simply reported. In Kyng Alisaunder only the first battle with Porus is indirectly reported. Only the battle of the "City in the East" does not appear at all in the source of Wars; the poet himself, therefore, has chosen not to develop the others. Five battles are presented extensively in Wars: Nicholas, Tyre, the first and third battles with Darius, and the first battle with Porus. But it is interesting that the encounter with Nicholas, and the battle scene in particular, is approximately the same length as the encounter with Darius, if one discounts the numerous letters contained in the Darius episode. And the two battles with Porus, again omitting all letters, are equivalent to the three with Darius. Finally, the battle of Tyre, even excluding the Foraging, receives more attention than any other in terms of actual battle description and is the only one that reaches the development quite common in Kyng Alisaunder. This general overview, then, suggests that the poet of Wars does not differentiate or weight Alexander's conquests on the basis of physical conflict by giving more attention to his battles with his most important foes. A closer examination of the five fully

developed episodes reveals the poet's method of differentiation, a certain variation in his method, and makes clear some of his major concerns.

The battle with Nicholas, just as in Kyng Alisaunder, receives quite extensive development, undoubtedly for the same reason. This is Alexander's first battle and the battle scene itself concentrates on his single combat with Nicholas. Once Alexander has proven himself, as he does through his speedy defeat of Nicholas, the poet sees no reason for continuing the detailed presentation of Alexander in the same mode: individual combat. Thus, although there are other individual combats involving Alexander, only Alexander's defeat of Porus approaches the 16 lines given to that with Nicholas. The method here is typical of the poet. He develops a single important scene or episode to make one particular point about Alexander and then allows this aspect to fade into the background while he develops another major scene for another major point. His only violations of this method occur in his constant emphasis on the philosophical side to Alexander and, to a much lesser extent, Alexander's foreordained conquest of the world and early death.

The episode of Tyre, which is interlaced with the Foraging of Gadirs would seem to belie this point, since the battle description receives so much attention; but the difficulty is only a superficial one. Much of the episode is devoted to showing Alexander's ingenuity in constructing "towers" with which to attack the city (1155-60, 1360-76), and he conquers Tyre as much by cunning as by brute force. The fact that he is destined to take the city also receives emphasis as Alexander recounts, and a seer interprets, the dream in which he crushes a handful

of grapes (1343-60). Most importantly, Tyre-Gadirs is the single episode in which the poet spends an extensive amount of time showing Alexander's peers as they engage in battle. From one point of view, the poet, in focussing on Alexander's nobles, varies from his usual approach of keeping Alexander himself in the limelight; yet the poet's goal is the same. In turning from Alexander his real concern is not to show the bravery and skill of Alexander's loyal lieutenants, although the situation parallels that of Roland. The final emphasis of the entire episode is still directed toward Alexander in his function as the heart, head, and hand of his army. The siege of Tyre proceeds well until Alexander leaves to aid his men at Gadirs; in his absence the king of Tyre manages to nearly devastate his army. At Gadirs, in spite of a splendid fight, Alexander's peers cannot destroy their enemies until Alexander appears on the scene; then the peers fade into the background while Alexander seemingly single-handedly mows down their enemies, easily vanquishing them (1315-36). Upon his return to Tyre, he recoups the losses suffered in his absence and brings the city to its knees (1377 ff.). Thus, although a gigantic army accompanies Alexander, the focus must ultimately return to his own accomplishments and his direction of his peers and troops. The seeming dismissal of Alexander from the immediate action is simply a means to the regular elevation of Alexander, here as the cunning, "predestined" warrior.

The battles with Darius offer another approach to Alexander and his conquests. Here are presented two generals who hardly fight each other; only 22 lines describe actual battles. In fact, of the 478 lines apportioned to the conflict between Darius and Alexander, 328 of these involve the exchange of letters. The real interest of the poet is

not, then, with physical warfare, but with the more or less philosophical dialogue between the two kings. For all practical purposes, Alexander meets and defeats Darius off the battlefield. This conflict serves to bring to the fore Alexander as philosopher and moralist, extremely knowledgeable in the nature and workings of pride. The letters not only spell out what pride is, and its connection with fortune, but because Darius has succumbed to this deadly sin, his downfall is traced through the debate. The battlefield losses only echo his final ruin. The poet, as will be seen more fully later,¹⁷ is also looking ahead to Alexander's downfall; it likewise results from pride and can be traced particularly, but not exclusively, in his later letters.

The fifth extensively developed battle episode is the first engagement with Porus. Taken with the second battle it neatly balances, in placement and approach, the early battle with Nicholas. The poet is wise enough not to overwork the philosophical debate and therefore presents Porus as Alexander's most important single physical enemy, just as Darius was his most important philosophical opponent. In the first battle with Porus, the poet offers an extensive general battle as preparation for the culminating single combat between Porus and Alexander. This is the same approach followed, on a smaller scale, in the Nicholas episode, where the individual combat of some 16 lines is preceded by 8 lines of general battle (785-808). The poet achieves variation from the battle with Nicholas by here concentrating on a few individual acts (3992-4002) rather than giving a panoramic view and by insisting not on Alexander's physical abilities but his internal qualities, after Porus has delivered his equivalent of Nicholas' challenge:

Thus porrus in his hiȝe pride to oure kyng spekis,
 For he [Alexander] was littill & laghe him lythly dispices.
 For quen he wan to wax þe writte me recordis,
 Thre cubettis fra þe croune doun his cours had a lenghte.
 þe person of ser Porrus past him þat hiȝt twyse,
 He feetis him forth in his force & in his faire hiȝte.
 Bot þe prowis & þe prouidens & of þe pure thewis
 þat lurkis with-in þis lede full litill he kennes. (3984-91)

These five major battle episodes, then, stand out in different ways and stress different aspects of Alexander's greatness and heroic qualities. The rest of the major battles have a general sameness, not merely in their perfunctory presentation, but in the fact that they work by simple accumulation to support the various qualities of Alexander which elsewhere receive individual attention. As Alexander continually leads his army to victory, the poet concentrates on the general, panoramic battle scene. Lacedemonia and Thebes, respectively, are quite typical of his descriptions:

With þat þe kyng & his kniȝtis vm-clappis þe cite,
 Settis all þe gailis on gledis & girdis doun þe wallis;
 þe citizens & seriantis at vne-slayne ware
 Bowis þan to þis baratour bodis & lyuys. (2473-76)

Now ere his seggis all sett & þe saute neȝis,
 Were wakens be-twene werbild in trompis;
 Oure pepill with payns pressis to without,
 Halis vp hemp cordis hurled out arrowis;
 Othire athils of armes Albastis bendis,
 Quirys out quarrels quappid thurȝe mayles.
 Sum with gunnes of þe grekis girdis up stanes,
 To tene þe Tebis folke þat on þe touris feȝtis;
 Som braide ouir þe barrers in blasand wede,
 And faire fest on a fire all þe foure ȝatis;
 All þe burȝe at a braide was on a bale kyndild,
 And þa þat sounde ware vnslayn als sottes þam ȝeldis;
 (2221-32)

The brevity with which the poet treats these discrete episodes, and particularly their battle scenes, is a clear indication that they hold only passing interest for him. Moreover, even the more detailed of the two--Thebes--scarcely differs from the first battle with Darius, where

appropriately the battle receives little emphasis since the real battle takes place elsewhere:

Bathe þe two batails bremely assemblis,
 And aithire segg with his sowme soȝt vn-to othire.
 Kniȝtis on cursours kest þan in fewtire,
 Taches in-to targetis tamed þaire brenys.
 þare was stomling of stedis sticking of erles,
 Sharpe schudering of schote schering of mailles,
 So stalworthly within a stond sterid þaim þe grekis,
 þat of þe barbryne blod all þe fild flowis.

(2619-26)

Looking more closely at battle scenes themselves, the general format of those in Wars is much less complicated than those in Kyng Alisaunder. In Wars four of the major battle scenes--Tyre, Araby, Lacedemonia, and the first battle with Darius--are simply general battles, that is, battles panoramic in approach, involving the mass combat of the opposing armies. The battles with Nicholas, the third battle with Darius, and the first battle with Porus have again the general battle, but also include Alexander entering into single combat or engaging in the general attack, so that there is some complication: an alternation in focus between the general battle and Alexander's feats or at least his presence on the battlefield. The battle of Tyre is the most full developed and the most complicated battle description, even aside from the time devoted to the deeds of Alexander's peers in the Foraging of Gadirs. After the return from Gadirs and the erection of the new tower, there is the complicated (and at times not terribly clear) alternation between the deeds of Alexander and those of the two armies (1377-1444).

Kyng Alisaunder, in contrast, has much longer battle descriptions and--perhaps this is not exclusive but inclusive of that fact--they almost all exhibit more complexity. Only two of the major

battle scenes--Tyre and the very brief first battle with Porus, present the simple general battle. All others at least include retreats, rests, and new attacks; more frequently the poet switches back and forth between a panoramic view of the armies and the feats of Alexander as he confronts a single opponent or engages in mass slaughter. The poet includes in this alternation the individual and mass deeds of Alexander's knights or gives a good deal of attention to an opponent's deeds, following this with Alexander or a peer taking on that hearty foe. Since these battles are too lengthy to quote, the pattern of one--Thebes--must suffice:¹⁸

(Approach, insult, boast	2679-99)
Alexander vs. a duke	2700-02
General battle	2703-10
Madan vs. many	2711-39
Alexander vs. Madan	2740-46
(mourning	2747-55)
General battle	2756-2815
Parmenion vs. many	2816-30
General battle	2831-37

A comparison with the most complex of the battles of Wars, the final attack on Tyre, will show the relative simplicity of the poet's approach in that poem:

(Alexander heartens troops,	
enters city	1377-83)
General battle	1384-1400
Alexander fights	1401-04
General battle	1405-24
Alexander vs. Balan	1425-32
General battle	1433-44

The approaches of both poems have their particular strengths. Kyng Alisaunder, with its many long battle scenes, achieves a depth of presentation while avoiding monotony by using different combinations and shifting focus from the general to the individual; the resulting pace is a leisurely one. In Wars the brief battles keep the narrative moving. The approach of Wars might by analogously compared, to use E. M.

Forster's distinction, to the employment, in novels or the drama, of several "type" characters who speed the plot along and, by their relative simplicity, bring into sharper focus the "round" characters,¹⁹ in this case the five extended battle episodes. Moreover, the brevity of the battle scenes, even those in which Alexander does not himself partake personally, keeps Alexander in the spotlight, for he is on the scene in person or by report immediately before or after; and since these scenes are short we are not distracted from the hero for any length of time. Three differing examples, again in abstract form, can illustrate the refusal of the poet to turn the audience's attention away from Alexander for an extended period:

He [the duke of Arabia] girdis him with a ging
 þe grekis he asailles,
 With Alexander all day asperly feztis. (2038-39)

[22 lines: general battle, flight]
 And slike a pas, sais þe prose to Persy he [the
 duke of Arabia] ridis,
 þat 3it þe selfe sandismen he in þe sale fyndis,
 þat fra þe streme of struma were apon stedis wysid
 Fra Alexander & his ost with his [Alexander's]
 athill pistill. (2062-65)

[Letter of Alexander to the Lacedemonians]
 With þat þe kyng [Alexander] & his kni3tis
 vm-clappis þe cite (2473)
 [4 lines: general battle, defeat]
 [Alexander's comments on the victory]

Sire Alexander þe hathill armed on blonkis (2612)
 [24 lines: general battle]
 [Attempt on Alexander's life]

The brevity of many of the battle scenes, as well as the dispatch with which Alexander--upon once entering--puts an end to the conflicts in the relatively longer battle descriptions, serves to emphasize the ease with which Alexander and his legions conquer city after city, nation after nation. The extreme example of this rapidity, which

points out that no one can stand in his way and the foolishness of trying to do so, appears in the second battle with Darius. Here, after much preparation on both sides, in one line (2671), Darius and his troops enter the field and flee.

The poet may also make this point in a slightly different way, using accumulation to achieve the desired effect. Once again a contrast with Kyng Alisaunder is helpful in seeing the poet's method. In both poems there are a number of "conquests" achieved without any battle at all or with a mention of a battle but no description given. Some of these, termed "Easy Conquests," are, then, actually little different from the second battle with Darius, except that all of these episodes are much shorter than the "Major Battles" listed in the earlier chart. In the schematic representation below I have simply listed the "Easy Conquests" which appear in both poems, again excluding those against non-human opponents. Each conquest is followed by the line count and, since these episodes are not scattered or broken up, it has been possible to include the actual line numbers. I have omitted the one-line, vague accounts of generally indistinct conquests. The first two conquests in the list are the only ones parallel in the two poems; for that reason they appear first; no parallelism is suggested in the succeeding conquests, except for the inclusion of Pausanias where the more heroic Alexander of Wars defeats him in battle while Kyng Alisaunder simply kills him in the palace. It should also be noted that four conquests in Wars--Mantona, Lacedemonia, the second battle with Darius, and Gog--actually belong here, as does the first battle with Porus in Kyng Alisaunder; but these have not been included since they are longer episodes and have been given in the preceding chart of "Major Battles" (p. 92).

Easy Conquests

<u>Kyng Alisaunder</u>			<u>Wars</u>		
Rebellion against Philip	5	1329-29		9	905 ff.
Rescue of Candulek's wife	21	7945-65		7	5215-21
(not in battle)			Pausanias	9	951-59
Thrace	5	1416-20	Calcedonia	13	1025-37
Sicily	11	1426-37	Italy-Europe	8	1039-46
Lombardy	18	1439-56	Africa	8	1047-54
Rome	7	1474-80	Egypt	4	1121-24
Libia	6	1493-98	Syria	4	1137-40
"land"	5	1501-05	Damascus, Sidon	2	1141-42
"many lands"	4	1581-84	Gaza	2	1451-52
"many lands"	7	2904-10	Sicily	6	2102-07
Yperoun	22	5633-54	Asia	2	2114-15
city of Upper India	28	5679-5706	Abandra	20	2130-49
"all fall"	3	5929-31	Acra	16	4721-36
			Babylon	2	5611-12

Including the four given in the chart of "Major Battles," there are, then, 19 "easy victories" in Wars and 14 (including the first battle with Porus from the previous list) in Kyng Alisaunder, a poem some 2500 lines longer. It might also be noted that in Wars many of these conquests are treated more summarily than those of Kyng Alisaunder. What is achieved is not only rapidity of narration, but an impression of the effortlessness--to the point of incredibility--with which Alexander defeats whatever lies in his path. Most of his "easy conquests" are not merely cities, but entire nations; in fact, he subdues all of Asia in two lines and all of Africa in eight. The whole pattern of these victories, as well as most of the earlier more extended battles, is to make all of Alexander's foes about equal, and none much of an opponent for Alexander.

The narrative method and effects achieved by the poet are also evident outside the battle episodes. Any of the many major episodes might be examined, but the length, complexity, and combination of elements in the confrontation of Alexander and the Athenians makes it a logical choice. Once again it has seemed useful to present an abstract of the episode and to set its presentation in Wars beside that of Kyng Alisaunder. The overall pattern of events is the same in both poems, but the Wars poet deals with each element more briefly and rapidly, keeping the focus on Alexander as much as possible and carefully stressing only his nobler qualities.

<u>Athens Episode</u>	<u>Kyng Alisaunder</u>	<u>Wars</u>
1. Alex. 's letter: demands tribute of	money 2919-38	philosophers 2319-42
2. Athenians angered	2939-42	2343-46
They reply with an in- sulting let- ter	2943-65	
Alex. sends an angry reply	2966-90	
3. Athenians' council	2999-3119	2347-98
Emperor: agree to Alex. 's demands	2999-3036	Aeschylus: do not give in 2347-50
Dalmadas: do not give in	3037-70	
People de- cide to fight	3071-78	
Demosthenes: agree to Alex. 's demands	3080-3104	Demosthenes: agree to Alex. 's demands 2351-90
Dalmadas: rebuttal of Demosthenes	3105-12	
People agree with Demos- thenes	3113-19	People agree with Demos- thenes 2391-98
4. Athenians send pre- sents and beg for peace	via Demosthenes 3119-58	via messengers 2399-2406

<u>Athens</u> <u>Episode</u>	<u>Kyng Alisaunder</u>	<u>Wars</u>
5. Alex.'s reaction to envoy(s)	anger; revenge 3159-70 Demosthenes reasons with Alex. 3171-79 Alex. recants 3179-80	pleased; aware of debate 2407-12
6. Alex.'s letter to Athenians	no revenge if reparation made 3181-92	warns them to obey; forgives them 2413-36
7. Athenians' reaction	send tribute 3193-96	rejoice 2437-38

The typical condensation appears as the Wars version in some 58 lines shorter than the version of Kyng Alisaunder; the heroic Alexander does not linger quite as long before moving on to his next conquest. Of more importance, however, is the weight given to various aspects in the respective poems. Kyng Alisaunder builds the entire episode around the motif of anger. Both Alisaunder and the Athenians, rightly or wrongly, become enraged, and the responses and actions of each result from the give and take of anger. In Wars, on the other hand, Alexander does not become the angry man. In this episode at least he does not allow himself to be provoked by the insulting letter from the Athenians. More importantly, although he knows of their debate and original unwillingness to send the tribute he demands, he does not stoop to a display of outrage when the envoys deliver the Athenians' peace offering. The Wars poet hints at Alexander's displeasure in the letter the king sends to the Athenians near the end of the episode; but the emphasis falls on showing that Alexander is not a man who nurses a grudge. Alexander's reaction befits the magnanimous man: slow to anger and quick to forgive. His treatment of the messengers and his grateful reception of the gifts they bring, while he is completely aware of the Athenians' reluctance in sending them, is consistent with the earlier episode with Nicholas (749-752). In both cases the poet brings out the continuing control Alexander maintains over his temper even when great provocation is offered. The Alexander of Wars is the stern heroic figure and not to be trifled with, but not one to seethe with useless or unwarranted anger. Also in line with one clear emphasis in Wars is the tribute demanded: while Kyng Alisaunder demands money, Alexander, much more the philosopher himself, asks for several

philosophers to accompany him on his journeys.

In the interests of keeping the spotlight on Alexander and the narrative moving, the council scene at Athens occupies less space in the Wars version, resulting in the loss of a good deal of drama. Aeschylus' exhortation to fight Alexander has little impact since it is only briefly, and indirectly, reported. Demosthenes' speech, entirely appropriate to the eloquent man, appears in full and quickly wins over the Athenians. In Kyng Alisaunder the speeches, more numerous in themselves, are all given in full, with the crowd's opinion swaying back and forth with each speech. The changing opinions of the people, coupled with the hot-headed, biting words of Dalmadas make the scene a spirited one. Dalmadas, in his anger, moreover, echoes and forecasts the anger of Alexander, thereby adding a nice balance, developing the motif of anger, indirectly reflecting on Alexander's own somewhat unreasonable anger, and looking ahead to the debate between Alexander and Demosthenes. The Wars poet foregoes the confrontation between these two men. Not only is the meeting superfluous since Alexander has such a magnanimous spirit, but the poet perhaps desires to avoid taking the spotlight off Alexander at that point. No messenger can, as Demosthenes could, steal the scene from Alexander.

The poet's refusal to commit Alexander to anything but the most necessary displays of temper also becomes evident in the Candace episode. In all versions, Alexander comes off least admirably in his entrapment by Candace, with the possible exception of his loss of the debate with Dindimus. The Kyng Alisaunder poet attempts to mitigate Alexander's responsibility through Candace's enumeration of other great men unknowingly ensnared by less than reputable women. In

Wars, Alexander, upon learning of his predicament, permits himself a display of anger, directed only at himself. His outburst remains within the heroic framework as he bemoans his foolishness in leaving behind his armor, making him unable to take his revenge on those around him before killing himself (5325-30). This Alexander, unlike Kyng Alisaunder, does not demean himself by admitting that a woman has outwitted him and that he, like other men, is at the mercy of the unscrupulous sex; he rebukes only his own rashness. The Wars poet, moreover, quickly turns out attention away from this low point in Alexander's career and gives Alexander, the cunning and wise man, the chance to redeem himself. He quickly settles the dispute between Candace's sons, convincing Cartros that there is no point to killing this "messenger from Alexander" merely to gain revenge on Alexander for the death of Porus (5368-78). The Alexander of Wars, however politic it might be, is not one to sneak away in the dead of night to avoid the wrath of the outraged son. His role is to re-establish peace and gain the heartfelt thanks of Candace:

"Had I 3ow ay with me here happy ware I þan,
 þan wald I wene with 3our witt to wast all my fais."
 With þat scho kende him a croun clustrid with gemmes,
 With Amatists & Adamands & an athill mantill,
 Sterind & stigt full of stanes sithin stelis to him cussis,
 With othire preuates him plesis bad pas on with hele.
 (5381-86)

This quotation is also noteworthy in that it contains the only reference to the affair between Alexander and Candace. This epic Alexander has no time for love affairs: not even a hint of romantic involvement underlies his visit to Candace; she is merely something else for Alexander to see. Perhaps this extremely moral poet, who wishes to stress only Alexander's nobler qualities--except for the pride which

leads to his destruction--has consciously avoided all suggestions of the courtly code. Even the possibility that Alexander might enjoy the romantic company of Candace is glossed over: "preuates" or "secret kindnesses" is certainly vague enough to exempt Alexander from more than an ambiguous involvement in an illicit affair. More probable, however, is that in the Candace-Alexander relationship the poet simply follows the heroic mode. All in all, women hardly exist for Alexander except on the level of loyalty or duty. He remains dedicated to his mother Olympias, herself deserving of that loyalty since she plays no active part in the seduction by Amon/Neptanabus. Alexander marries Roxana out of duty, to fulfill the request of the dying Darius; she, of noble birth, is the appropriate mate for the new emperor. The marriage also suggests the conventional symbolism of many romances; Roxana is the reward of victory and finalizes Alexander's assumption of Darius' throne. The other woman in Alexander's life--Candace--is compared to his mother (5256), thereby participating in that platonic relationship. Since Alexander shows not even a glimmer of love for Candace, either from a distance or after their meeting, Candace functions mainly as a vehicle to exhibit Alexander's bravery, wisdom, heroic anger, and, secondarily, his descent into pride.²⁰

What the battle episodes, the Athens episode, and the meeting with Candace make evident is the picture of the basically epic hero consistently presented. Nothing, except his pride, can stop Alexander. In his encounters with the beasts of the East, many of his men may be killed; but under his leadership, his army always manages to finally kill the beasts, capture them, or at the very least drive them off. These feral opponents serve merely as something else for Alexander to

conquer; in the last analysis they do not cause him the problems that the corresponding beasts of Kyng Alisaunder cause its hero. He never requires outside help in defeating or containing them and the beasts do not, as in Kyng Alisaunder, cause such depletion of Alexander's forces that he feels danger from Porus.

As the episodes of Athens and Nicholas make clear, Alexander's anger remains under control. So do all his emotions. He never mourns excessively, even after hearing the prophecies from the magic trees, although the number of times the prophecy appears in the poem would serve to prepare Alexander so that no single prophecy delivers a stunning blow. Alexander, nevertheless, is the balanced man. The poet does not permit him to seem overly liberal; he is not seen doling out rewards and booty to his followers even as just payment for their services. He does consistently reward messengers and is generous in his gifts to Jaudas of Jerusalem (1660-87). Nonetheless, this de-emphasis of Alexander's liberality may not result so much from an attempt to moderate Alexander so much as to, once again, rely on the one important scene to bring out a particular virtue of Alexander. His liberality is therefore strongly stressed as he opens his coffers to Jaudas. His loyalty to Olympias is noted in passing a number of times, but receives direct and extended attention in his restoration of his mother to her proper place as queen. Alexander's loyalty to Philip appears, in the heroic mode, as he wounds Pausanias in battle and brings him before Philip to exact the final revenge. His loyalty to his army stands out in his refusal to drink the few drops of water offered him by one of his knights; if his men die, he will die.

Alexander's wisdom, eloquence, and cunning receive

continual emphasis. The battle episodes, the continuing correspondence with Darius, Dindimus, and, to a lesser extent, with Porus, his peace-making mission to Candace's sons, and his treatment of the disguised traitor illustrate the interest of this poet in an intellectual, philosophical hero; and, as might be expected, even this side of Alexander assumes heroic proportions. The pride to which Alexander succumbs is not only appropriate to the superhuman figure, but, as the debates with Darius and Dindimus are meant to suggest, Alexander's sin of pride results as much from his intellectual accomplishments and desires as from his physical ones.

From the moment he assumes the throne of Macedonia, Alexander is found to be the philosophical ruler, who, while not disdaining physical abilities, has a greater respect for wisdom and cunning. As he receives the oath of loyalty from his nobles and prepares to engage in conquests, he refuses to accept the resignation of the older knights:

Nay, be my croune . . . my couatyng is elder
 þe sadnes of slike men þan swyftnes of childir;
 For barnes in þar bignes it baldis þam mekill,
 Oft with vnprouednes in presse to pas out of lyfe;
 For-thi ouer-sigt of alde men I anely me chese;
 Be connyng & be consaile þai selcuthely prayse. (1016-20)

On a higher plane, Alexander's respect and desire for wisdom are evident not only in his questioning of Dindimus in order to learn about other possible approaches to life (4225-28) but in his response to Doctoneus:

"Mekill dere," quod ane Doctoneus "of 3ow I deme sall,
 And he of þe takyng of Troi tald all his lyue."
 "Nay, I wald more worth," quod þe wee "a wyse man
 . . . disciple,
 þan þe honour þat Acheles a3t all his time." (2122-25)



The poet prepares his audience for this aspect of Alexander by devoting some attention, at least more than is given in Kyng Alisaunder, to Alexander's mastery of scholarship under the guidance of Aristotle:

Sone wex he witter & wyse & wonder wele leres,
 Sped him in a schort space to spell & to rede,
 And seþen to gramere he gase as þe gyse wald,
 And þat has he all hale in a handquyle.
 In foure or in fyfe 3ere he ferre was in lare
 þa othire at had bene þare seuynthe wynter. (629-634)

Alexander's wisdom and eloquence are first evinced (in his homily to Nicholas on pride (843*-728)) while he is still a "child" (824*).²¹ Alexander's reply to Darius when the initial demand for tribute is made varies little from that in most versions; but in line with this poet's tendency to stress only the most noble side to Alexander and to bring all forces to bear in exhibiting that side, the messengers recognize Alexander's abilities. In Kyng Alisaunder they accuse him of foolishness and rashness in thwarting Darius; here their response is quite the opposite:

þen merualid þam þe messangirs mekill of his speche,
 His witt & his wisdom wonderly prayسد. (897-898)

One could, since Alexander is so strongly intellectualized in this poem, point out almost innumerable examples of his wisdom. Perhaps worthy of notice, however, is the poet's treatment of Alexander's wisdom in the handling of the "traitor knight" (2655-67). Here, as in Kyng Alisaunder, Alexander's decision is based on his understanding of the need for loyalty to one's lord. The Wars poet, however, keeps the scene brief and the focus remains on Alexander. Consequently he sacrifices dramatic conflict since he permits no lengthy debate among the peers about what to do with the man. Only two lines (2657-58) are

devoted to indirect reporting of the peers' judgments, obviously with none of their reasoning given, just as the traitor knight is not given the opportunity to state the principle of loyalty upon which he has acted. The enunciation of that principle is left to Alexander. Alexander thus seems wise and just enough, but the impact is lessened since we have no noble peers acting as foils, presenting purely military and practical reasoning. Alexander does not stand out by contrast.

Alexander would much sooner conquer by cunning than by force, but not because battle means the loss of troops or engaging in a difficult enterprise. He attempts to persuade Athens and Lacedaemonia, for example, to submit; and, in the latter instance, after defeating them by burning their ships and thereby rendering them helpless, he cannot resist offering philosophical commentary:

3e knaw wele. . . my comyng was esye;
 Bot for 3e fangid me no3t faire fired is 3our schippis,
 3our bur3e is bretind & 3our bernis I bed 3ow my-selfe,
 3e suld no3t stody ne stem þe sternes for to handill. (attempt)
 For he þat steppis on a stee quen þe staues failis, (ladder)
 þan fautis him festing to his fete & fall him be-houes; (lacks)
 So, ri3t as Sexis was slayn sum time with 3our eldirs,
 So ettild 3e ser Alexander bot þare 3oure ame failes.
 (2477-84)

Alexander's use of the shrieking pigs to turn back the charging elephants--and it is he who devises this method, not Porus--as well as his killing of the basilisk by means of a mirror and the erection of towers to defeat Tyre are admittedly all prompted by necessity; yet they also provide good examples of the number of times Alexander relies more on cunning than outright force. The poet's concentration on the wise, intellectual, and philosophical Alexander also accounts, partially, for the reduction in emphasis on Alexander's purely military victories, evident in his generally perfunctory treatment of the battle

scenes. This poet's characterization of Alexander, then, allies him with the approach of the Dublin Epitome, that is, The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers where Alexander appears as pure philosopher.

Although the poet concentrates on the rapid narration of the events which trace Alexander's career, and at the same time delineates the virtues which make him the superhuman hero, he does admit digressions. The most lengthy of these are the opulent descriptions of Jerusalem (1513-73), the palaces of Porus (3660-3703) and the "sun-god" (4891-4920), closely followed by the lush vegetation encountered on the way to the trees of the sun and moon (4968-90), Candace's palace and the revolving room (5265-96), and the throne in Babylon constructed by Alexander to mark all that he has conquered (5631-77). Also to be included as digressions from the narrative line are the diagrammatic analogies of the steps of Darius' throne (3336-91) and Dindimus' attribution of the various parts of the body to particular gods (4494-4517) followed by his delineation of the respective sacrifices to each of these gods (4521-43). All of these are typically medieval in orientation or interest, but more importantly, while not all are organic elements in the overall structure of the poem, none can be called mere excrescences. At the very least the descriptions are fitting in a poem devoted to the "noble Emperor" Alexander. Alexander displays continuing interest in the marvelous, be it natural or man-made, thus giving the poet reason to introduce such descriptions; moreover, no superman would be concerned with less than the most extravagant, thus almost requiring the poet to describe those things which particularly attract Alexander's attention. These cities and palaces, after all, form a part of Alexander's conquests and the descriptions always begin or

follow central adventures.

In general, the descriptions emphasize or support the regal Alexander. All which surrounds and interests him must be regal; such is part of the poet's consistency of approach to the character of Alexander. Just as with the battle scenes, he works by accumulation rather than by variation or opposition. This Alexander is not the type to wear merchant's dirt-spattered clothes to visit a king or even one to go as a mere royal messenger, as he does in Kyng Alisaunder; in Wars he visits Darius disguised as an angel. Thus the palaces he conquers and inhabits, the men who meet and guide him, the wonders he finds most interesting, are also regal, beyond the ugly or ordinary. It is only proper that not an ugly bishop but a sun-god, physically elegant and noble, living in opulent surroundings, conduct Alexander to the magical trees. This Alexander, in fact, has the greatest disdain for even the ordinary; he rebukes his men for their concern over the horses which are dying of thirst (2159-64), since any number of beasts of burden can be secured. In contrast, he can mourn and build a temple for the dead Bucephalus. Outright ugliness may merit brief interest, but his ultimate desire is to destroy it. The non-human "peasant," who is, interestingly, roused to action only by the beautiful woman, is the single truly ugly creature more than sketchily described; and he is quickly slain (4740-62). Finally, it appears at times as if Alexander simply cannot comprehend anything but glory, beauty, and elegance; he cannot understand the meagre "low life" of the Gymnosophists and Brahmins. In Alexander's view, for one to live in less than splendor suggests not wisdom but stupidity or the inability to accomplish more, as he finally points out to Dindimus (4695-4706). Thus Alexander surrounds himself with marvelous

things, is enraptured by his possession of the great palaces of Darius and Porus, is awed by the adorned Jerusalem, and builds magnificent cities and monuments to mark his conquests. All these are described in full. For the poet, the glories within Alexander are to be reflected by the glories without.

Yet at least some of these descriptions have a closer connection with the narrative line than either reflecting Alexander's own magnificence or marking his important conquests and adventures. While the poet allows himself to be carried away with the description of the decorations of Jerusalem and the procession of the chief priests and people, it is only through this extravagant welcome for Alexander that Jaudas can forestall Alexander's anger and vowed destruction of the city, actually luring Alexander into granting the city's freedom and domination of other people. Candace, in a somewhat similar manner, uses her revolving chamber to ensnare Alexander; while he marvels at the glories of her machine, the *pièce de résistance* in an all together wonderful palace, she isolates him and makes escape impossible.

The poet is generally in control of the placement, if not always the length, of these descriptions. Thus while the description of Jerusalem is unconscionably long, and somewhat repetitious, it is not inappropriate. The description of Darius' palace (3220-25) is kept to a minimum, perhaps because the poet realizes that the entire scene clashes with its immediate context. Although one would expect Alexander to marvel at the greatness of the palace and enjoy the thought that he now possesses such magnificence, the moment he picks to indulge in these thoughts is jarring. Alexander has come to the palace having heard of Darius' mortal injury at the hands of traitors. Perhaps it is

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fitting that the new emperor first receive the homage of the people and then somewhat leisurely survey his new possession before seeking out Darius. Yet his display of emotion at the condition of Darius makes his earlier delay seem rather callous and self-centered or this display somewhat false; yet the poet gives no indication that such is intended:

Sire Alexander him avysis & authly him thinke;
 þe pure pete of his [Darius] payn persid his hert.
 þan nymes he fra his awyn neke an emperoures mantill,
 And þat he couirs ouire þe kyng & clappis him in armes,
 With grym gretynge & gro & gryselly terys;
 Bad: "comfurth þe, ser conquirour & of þi care ryse,
 Don azayne þe dignite þe diademe of Pers,
 And all þe riȝtis of þi rewme resayue as before. . . ."
 þis saȝe sobband he said. (3234 ff.)

The poet does not emphasize the incongruity of the scene by extending the description, but neither does he manage to resolve the conflict. On the other hand, he should perhaps not receive so much credit for keeping the description to a minimum, since he does devote extensive time to the presentation of Darius' throne, the real symbol of Alexander's victory over the Persian emperor.

Of the two extended diagrammatic analogies in the poem, only one--that of the steps leading to Darius' throne and the virtues each represents--seems truly functional. As already noted, the poet spends much time developing many of Alexander's virtues. This particular description, in effect a kind of catalogue of virtues, enables the poet to summarize the virtues of Alexander--virtues which we have seen or are to see demonstrated in the individual actions of Alexander--and to attribute other virtues to him which the poet does not portray through action. Outside its connection with the portrayal of Alexander, the description of the stones and their powers suits the didacticism of the poet by allowing him to spell out the proper virtues for the great and

good king. Coming immediately after Alexander has reached the high point of his career by defeating his most formidable enemy and earning the name of Emperor, this description also provides a touchstone against which the audience can measure Alexander's future actions, particularly his descent into pride and the ultimate downfall that such pride presages, just as it did for Darius. While the enumeration of the kingly virtues is rather stilted, with each stone and meaning receiving about the same amount of attention and little variation of presentation being offered, this description is neatly balanced by the other diagrammatic analogy, which in itself has little to recommend it.

Like the description of Jerusalem, the diagrammatic analogy presented by Dindimus seems overly long. But as Dindimus condemns the pagans by showing their dedication of each part of the body to a particular god with a consequent commitment to various vices and by enumerating their false sacrifices, the poet is perhaps required--by the number of members to the body and, to a lesser extent, by the number of important gods--to carry it through to completion. The poet is also not only indulging in his enjoyment of the diagrammatic analogy (a device common in literature in the allegorical modes), but is confined by his moralism. Although it is fitting that Alexander, who at this point has fallen prey to pride, should meet his match in the philosopher Dindimus, the force with which the poet allows the Brahmin to disparage and demean the activities and attitudes of Alexander may be attributed to the poet's preference for the essentially Christian outlook of Dindimus. He therefore does not condense these two descriptions since they contain two of Dindimus' most telling arguments: the dedication of the pagan Greeks, including Alexander, to false gods and their

resultant foolishness, sin, and materialism. As with the description of the steps to Darius' throne, then, these catalogues are inherently didactic, but approach the material from a negative rather than a positive side, stressing the failures of the pagans rather than the virtues of the good and wise king.

The lengthy description of Darius' throne also attributes, in a general way, one quality to Alexander which is otherwise little stressed in the poem: his ability as ruler. Unlike the Alexander of Kyng Alisaunder this Alexander has only a minor interest in bringing order to those lands which he conquers. We do not see him setting up laws and magistrates, establishing a stable, loyal realm which he can leave securely behind; instead, he conquers--perhaps destroying--and then simply moves on, although upon occasion he may overtly return the city or land to its people.²² Only after taking the throne of Persia does he deal with matters of law and order (3406-18, 3440-43). This Alexander, then, in action is not ruler, but conqueror.

Alexander's most compelling motivation reflects such action. He desires to be conqueror, not really ruler, of the world, thereby gaining fame for himself and, secondarily, Greece. He himself enunciates the desire for fame which lies behind his conquests:

For with þe graunt of my god I gesse, or I dye,
 þat all the Barbare blode sall bowe to my-self.
 þare is na region ne rewme ne renke vnder heuen,
 Ne nouthire-quare na nacion bot it sall my name loute.
 For we of grece sall haue þe gree with grace ay to wild,
 And anely be ouer þe werd honourd & praysed. (990-995)

And quen all kynd was on colis & kast apon hepis,
 þan airis he on with his ost mare honour to wynn. (2247-48)

Bees liȝt & laches ȝow a lose it is a lord gamen.
 For I make a-vow at Messedone we sall na mare see,
 Till all þe barbres vs bow þan may we blith turne. (2604-06)

I sall neuir graithe me to grece gase quen 3ow likis,
Or mare wirschip I haue won for wathe vndire heuen. (3522-23)

Once Alexander has conquered the world, he turns his sights to the sky and the sea (5511 ff.). Although he cannot possess these areas, he can, in a sense, conquer them by personally investigating and thereby understanding their natures. He thus builds the marvelous flying machine and the diving bell, ascends briefly to the stars, and views the wonders of the sea; he never speaks of the latter since no other man can believe or comprehend them(5550-52).

Alexander's desire for fame and later his secondary desire for knowledge--whether it be of the strange peoples and beasts of this world, the modes of life of people like the Gymnosophists and Brahmins, or the nature of the stars and the sea--are his personal motivations. His need to conquer the world is a driving force implanted by exterior powers, for this Alexander is emphatically a "predestined" man; moreover he is constantly aware of his destiny. Alexander's fate, and the consequent backing he receives from God or the gods, is one of the most insistent elements of the poem:

An angel to Jaudas:
For he mon ride þus & regne ouire all þe ronde werde
Be lordschip in ilka lede in-to his laste days,
And þe be di3t to þe deth of dri3tins ire. (1502-04)

Demosthenes:
Wate 3e no3t wele þur3e all þe werd how wirdis
with him cheues? (2379)

Darius:
þe grace of þe grete god I ges, will him help,
Of prise þe hi3e prouynce vn-to þis prince leues. (2507-08)

Alexander:
Ne we prid vs for na prouwis predestayned we ere,
Oure gods gayn vs þare-to þat gretly þou spises. (2745-46)

Darius' mother:

For godis prouidence apert ay prestly him helpis,
Sauys & sustenes him-selfe & socurs him auire. (2833-34)

Candace:

For it was purveid a-pert of þe kyng of heuen,
Pre-desteyned of his prouydence & of his pure miȝt,
þat 3e suld pas in-to Pers & prese it with armes.²³ (5107-09)

Because Alexander's destiny is to be conqueror of the world the actual physical acts of conquest do not, appropriately, take as much precedence in this poem as the various expressions of Alexander's wisdom and cunning. From this point of view, one feels compelled to liken the Alexander of Wars to Virgil's Aeneas, whether or not the poet consciously established the parallelism. In any case, the qualities of wisdom and cunning belong to the man; his victories ultimately belong to the powers beyond him. The fact of Alexander's foreordained victory, known to many of the peoples he encounters, also reduces, in a very practical way, the number of all-out battles; these people simply acknowledge his destiny and bow to the inevitable. Further, since Alexander has the assistance of the gods, either explicitly or implicitly, no one can long resist him if a battle does occur. If this is kept in mind, Alexander's almost single-handed defeat of the forces of Gadir and Tyre seems not quite so unbelievable.

Whether Alexander is to be viewed as the instrument of the pagan gods or God depends on the particular moment, and, more precisely, on whether he is being seen from the pagan point of view or the poet's Christian outlook or the Christianized Jewish view of Jaudas. Alexander himself is the consistent pagan who receives help from pagan gods. He constantly sacrifices to, and is granted visions of, Amon, Serapis, and Apollo. Although Alexander does, in Jerusalem, bow to

the name of God, it is only sketchily suggested at this point that he believes in God or even recognizes one superior god; this ambiguity results from the dream which he recounts (1621-43).

While the Wars poet is more the realist than, for example, the poet of Kyng Alisaunder since he does not elaborate as extensively on the strange peoples and animals found in the East, he is less the realist in the number of prophesying dreams and appearances of gods which he presents. The Kyng Alisaunder poet views Alexander as a man driven and directed by powers beyond him, but he generally puts this in as his own interpretation. In this poem, the poet may rationalize an unbelievable situation by stressing that nothing is impossible for God,²⁴ but on the whole he tends to supernaturalize events. He thereby elevates Alexander to the superhuman level; yet, at the same time, he diminishes Alexander's personal accomplishments. Alexander rides Bucephalus not because he has great skill in horsemanship and possesses great bravery but because the horse recognizes Alexander's destiny, bows and submits to him. Further, Bucephalus remains evident in this poem as a reminder of the power given Alexander by the gods. Alexander's opponent, in one instance, is told by a seeress that Alexander will defeat him; such is fated (2305-09). Although Alexander has not yet devised a means for defeating Tyre, he has the dream which predicts his victory over that city (1345-60). Early in the poem, Serapis predicts that Alexander's deeds will be remembered until the day of judgment (1093-95). Alexander and Jaudas both believe that the prophecy of Daniel--understood in medieval times to refer to the Greeks' conquest of the Persians as a preparation for the coming of the Roman Empire--applies specifically to Alexander (1655-58). Alexander's foray into

Darius' camp affords no real danger; Amon has promised him protection and he goes disguised in the form in which Amon appears to him, as an "angel" (2863, 2893). Alexander's closeness to the gods is most strongly evident as his sacrifice to stop the violent storm receives an immediate answer (4183-86). Alexander's conversations, awake or in dreams, with his gods, in which they continually remind him of his destiny, culminate in his statement to Dindimus:

Sire, be my croune . . . þe cause at I haue
 Is purly gods prouidens predestayned it is before.
 3e se, wele seldom is þe see with himself turbild²⁵
 Bot with þir walowand windis; my will war to rifte,
 Bot a-nopir gast, & no3t my gast þar-of my gast lettis.
 (4061-65)

One can suggest, therefore, that while the poet is the entertainer intent on presenting the adventures of the mighty and wise conqueror Alexander--and allowing nothing to sidetrack him from the consistent picture of the heroic figure--he has also a didactic purpose. He uses his hero to demonstrate the qualities of the wise king. He also presents Alexander in two other lights: as the instrument of God, whose conquests fulfill the divine plan and are ultimately the result of divine aid and, secondly, as a man who, in his later years, falls prey to and is destroyed by pride.

Although Alexander's conquest of the world must be seen as the result of the assistance he receives from God, the cause of his downfall is his alone. Since the conclusion of the poem does not survive, one cannot, of course, see exactly how the poet has handled Alexander's death. But enough of the poem is extant to make it obvious that the poet intends his audience to see Alexander bringing about his own death. The gods, or God, and Fortune do not suddenly turn against Alexander

and capriciously destroy him; neither does Alexander die simply because he is a man: the entire portrait of Alexander as the Wars poet presents it militates against such a view. Much of the poem, in fact, is devoted to the preparation for Alexander's death, as he brings the wrath of God, and His instrument Fortune, down upon him.

It has already been noted that the correspondence between Darius and Alexander is an appropriate way for the intellectualized Alexander to defeat his major opponent. Their battle is one of minds; Alexander's battlefield victory over Darius' army simply echoes his philosophical conquest. Yet this debate also serves the poet's didactic intent. In showing the cause of Darius' downfall--his pride--the debate defines the relationship between pride, the will of God, and Fortune. Furthermore, it sets up the means for seeing Alexander's very similar descent into pride.

Darius, regarded by others as a descendant and associate of the gods,²⁶ as is Alexander,²⁷ allows himself to believe these views. Thus, in his letter to Alexander, he not only states that he has the protection of the gods (1748) but that he is "peere to þe sonn" (1723) and that the gods fear him (1964-65). To the medieval mind, a man who believed such would necessarily have succumbed to the greatest of all sins, pride. Shortly before his defeat, Darius' mother warns him of his foolish pride (2835-36). As he feels his position crumbling Darius finally recognizes his mistake, acknowledging that he is no more than a man (3092) and that he has indeed destroyed himself by his pride:

So grete I grew of my gods & gold in my coffirs,
 þat kindly gods creatoure I kend noȝt my-selfe,
 Bot for his feloȝe and his fere faithly me leued,
 þus prosperite & pride so purely me blyndid,
 I couthe noȝt se fra my sege to þe soile vndire,
 þat at me failed þan to fynd fast at my eȝen.

(3280-85)

In a similar way Porus also comes to believe himself a god (3544-45, 3555), yet he never recognizes his sin.

In the early letters of Darius and Alexander, the connection between Fortune, the wrath of God, and the sin of pride is not of principal interest. Although Darius continually accuses Alexander of foolish pride and vanity and discusses the mutable ways of Fortune in the affairs of men, he does not associate the two. The only conclusion he can draw is a restatement of Alexander's earlier words (1850-65): that since Fortune is by nature fickle, quickly elevating the low and debasing the high, one must not become proud:

For-þi þi mynd neuir þe mare lat mounte in-to pride
 For chance of na cheualry þat þou a-cheued hase.
 For vertue ne no victori ne vant noght þi-self;
 He þat enhansis him to he₃e þe heldire he declynes.²⁸ (2711-14)

Ironically Darius does not apply the same lesson to himself. Yet, that a connection between pride and Fortune exists has been implied early in the poem, during Alexander's confrontation with Nicholas. Alexander warns Nicholas against pride, for nothing in this life is secure:

For it was wont . . . as wyse men tellis,
 Full hi₃e þingis ouer-heldis to held oper-quile.
 Slike as ere now brouzt a-bofe now þe bothum askis,
 And slike at left ere on lawe ere lift to þe sternes. (*725-728)

Later, writing to Darius, Alexander states that since his "prouwis" comes from the gods he and his men do not "prid" themselves on their victories (2745-46). He also recognizes that pride is punished:

Sire, vanity & vayne-glori & vices of pride
 þa ere þe gaudis, as I gesse þat all gods hatis,
 And ilka dedly douth þai driffe þam to punesch,
 þat has dri₃ten of vnedlynes drazen þaim to name. (2731-34)

After receiving the warning from his mother to turn from pride and futile conflict with a man who has the gods' protection, Darius understands the connection between pride and the destruction of great men:

Quen he þis rawis had rede he rewfully wepid, (letter)
His eldire & his ancestris als he remembris;
þoʒt how pride þaim depriued. (2843-45)

Sire, I knowlage me a creatour & come of a woman,
 Heues no₃t 3our hert vp to hize take hede to 3our end. . . .
 Was no₃t Sexes him-selfe þe souereynest in erth,
 And cheued him of cheualry chekis out of nombre? (victories)
 3it for his will out of worde was won into pride,
 In þe lede here of Elanda lithirly he feyned. (3093 ff.)

As Alexander embraces the dying Darius, this once proud king finally makes clear the association between God's plan and the role of Fortune. Fortune, the servant of God, is changeable to prevent man from succumbing either to pride or to the despair which would cause him to forget or reject God. Darius' words are best quoted at length:

All werdly þing, I-wis þurȝe þe will of oure lord,
In-to þe contrare clene is at a clamp turned.
For had he worȝt ay to wees welth & na nothire,
So grete had bene vayn glorie glotony & pride,
Suld nane haue gessid þat grace come of god,
 bot of þaim-self;
So far þe makare o mold suld many man haue erryd.
And had he shapyn Ay to shalkez shend-ship & illys,
So feyle had bene þe frelettis folowand oure kynd,
We had bene drawen all bedene in-to disspaire clene,
And of þe godness of god noȝt a grew traisted.
For-þi he wald of his will his werkis to be changand,
þat, quen a hathill ware ouire hiȝe in happ & in welthe,
þat he knew noȝt his creatour bi-cause of his pride,
In-to þe dike of debonerte droune bud him nede.

(humility)
(3262-74)

Ultimately, then, Fortune is not an independent force, but the instrument of God which may bring about a change in man's condition to prevent pride or, as Darius stated earlier, punish that pride. Although the poet points out, in discussing the meaning of the stones in Darius' throne, that Fortune will eventually turn against all men for they are by nature doomed to return to dust (3360-67), Alexander's early death results from the fact that he forgets his proper role and his humanity;

consequently Fortune "all his dignite bedene driues in-to poudire" (3367), just as Darius is "dreuyn all to dust" (3305). Fortune brutally reminds Darius of what he is: a man and no more.

The correspondence between Darius and Alexander, then, sets up the role of Fortune in the lives of men and makes the poet's didactic point about punishment for pride. It is necessary for man to remember his precarious position in the world, to recognize that his successes come from God, and not to presume to be more than a man. Alexander fails primarily in the last point.

It hardly seems a coincidence that we are informed quite early in the poem that it is not only God's will that Alexander conquer the world but also that he is to be "di3t to þe deth of dri3tins ire" (1504). This prediction comes, moreover, not from a pagan god, but from an angel. Alexander himself demonstrates why the anger of God will descend upon him. Although the conclusion to the poem is missing, one can with a fair degree of certainty surmise that Fortune will be instrumental in his demise since the connection between God's punishment for pride and the workings of Fortune has been made so forcefully. Interestingly, Alexander insists, in letters and in conversation, that he is no more than a mortal man:

Bot I knaw I am corruptible & caire 3ow agaynes,
Als with a dedly duke to do my bataill. (1878-79)

[The people of Persia] Sayed: "þou ert
Duke of ilk dome & dri3tin þi-selfe!"
þan was he fraid in his flesche bad,
"feyne of 3our wordis!"
I am a corruptible kyng & of clay fourmed!" (3457-59)

The form of the salutation in all his early letters supports this view of himself:

Alexsaundere þe athill aire oute of grece,

þe son of Philip þe fers & of his faire lady,
 Honored Olimpadas þe oddest vndire heuyn,
 To þe, ser Dari, on þi dese þis dities I write.²⁹ (2006-09)

Even though he will insist on his mortality late in the poem, once he has conquered Darius and assumed the throne, the form of salutation changes:

þe kyng with-uten compere of kyngis othire,
 Of all þe lordis now þe lord þat lefis apon erth,
 Sire Alexander, athill son of Amon his dri3ten,
 And als of Olimpades anyly consayued.³⁰ (3396-99)

Only once in the poem after the defeat of Darius does Alexander refer to Philip as his father, not in a letter but in the inscription on a pillar which records his conquests (4711).

A further progression is also to be noted. While the latter salutation is never entirely rejected, late in the poem it alternates with one in which Alexander omits all mention of Olympias. Thus, in his greeting to the Amazons, he acknowledges only his divine parentage:

Alexander, athil child of Amon oure dri3tin,
 To Calistride þe conquirese comfurth & ioye!³¹ (3710-11)

Alexander has fallen prey to the same sin as Darius. Although he knows clearly that he is the son of Neptanabus and has accepted Philip's acknowledgment of him as his son,³² he comes to believe that he is the son of a god, having, in some instances, nothing human in him.

In light of this change, other occurrences and statements in the poem assume significance. Alexander suggest to Candace that she meet him so that they may sacrifice together. Her answer demonstrates her own pride and failure to recognize not only the duty she owes to the gods but her rejection of her humanity:

We at ere voide ay of vice & vacant of syn,
 Quat suld we moue in-to þe montts? þat mysters bot litill,
 Outhire Appole to adoure or any othire dri3tins. (5116-18)

While Alexander does not make any statement to the same effect, he also makes no effort to contradict her or insist on carrying out the sacrifice.

When Alexander, disguised as Ptolemy, accepts Candoile's invitation to visit Candace because he "had list on hire to loke many lang wintir" (5228) and is consequently trapped, the poet does not himself accuse Alexander of pride, rashness, or overconfidence. It is noteworthy, however, that Alexander has engineered this disguise himself; he does not, as in his meeting with Darius, have the protection of his gods. More importantly, Candace, as she exults in her conquest of him, notes that Fortune has indeed turned against the king:

Ser, wete it wele 3oure worthenes þat for na wele here
 Suld neuire no hathill vndire heuen be to hi3e losed;
 For all þe welthe of þe werd ware it a wee grantid,
 It witis a-way at a wapp as þe wynd turnes. (5315-18)

Since the connection between the change in fortune and man's pride has been established earlier, Candace's attribution of "pride" (5324) to Alexander cannot be dismissed as a merely spiteful or unwarranted accusation. The poet, admittedly, does not wish to debase Alexander too thoroughly and does allow him to reassert his nobility and regain his heroic position by bringing peace between Candace's two sons. On the other hand, it is significant that the Candace episode is enclosed by two major predictions of Alexander's early death: that offered by the trees of the sun and the moon and by Serapis. The earlier of the two has both positive and negative sides; while Alexander will die young, he will also conquer the world. But the meeting with Synches and Serapis after the Candace episode has only negative aspects. Alexander, first of all, is accused of having forgotten to worthily honor the god (Synches)

who has all the world in his power (5401-03) and, secondly, he does not even recognize Serapis (5408); Alexander, not blind to the powers beyond himself, identified him immediately in that god's earlier appearance (1084-1100). Finally, this dialogue with Serapis includes only a discussion of Alexander's death.

Shortly after his meeting with these gods, Alexander, having for all practical purposes subdued or investigated the world's men and beasts, finds this world too small for him. He therefore desires to explore the sky, enticed by the thought that a mighty mountain is "gaynir to god þan to þe grounde vndire" (5512). From the poet's point of view Alexander is pursuing a "forned fantasy" (5513). Alexander manages to ascend to great heights in his wondrous machine, but "þe vertu of þe verray god enviounis him swythe" (5527) and he falls. Whether this statement means that God actually causes the fall or whether Alexander, in reaching beyond the human sphere, cannot withstand, in a human construction, the power of God exuded at these heights is not made clear, but it matters little. Alexander is now engaging in the kind of activity which has doomed so many Alexanders in other versions. He is reaching beyond his proper realm, and in doing so, challenging God. He escapes unharmed, for the present, and is permitted to explore the bottom of the sea where he encounters wonders which are beyond description, unbelievable to any man. The poet makes no comment about this escapade; perhaps it is not as foolish as attempting to invade the traditional realm of God--the skies. The two episodes together, however, indicate Alexander's unwillingness to accept his human limitations.

Whether Alexander fully believes that he is not only

descended from a god, but truly god-like himself can only be ascertained from the salutations of his letters. Aristotle, in answering Alexander's letter recounting his "auntours . . . angwisch and . . . athill werkis" (5618), states his belief that "sum grayne of godhede" has grown within Alexander (5622). This can be taken as no more than a marveling response to all the things which Alexander has accomplished and thus merely another commendation; yet a certain ambiguity exists in Aristotle's words. He states that "I wex all affraid" (5621) when looking on Alexander's works and thus thinking that this godhead has grown within. He may fear because such greatness is not natural for a man; as such his fear is merely an expression of awe. Or he may be afraid of what Alexander's reaction will be to his accomplishments, "for þou has said þat neur did segge ne saȝe bot þine ane" (5623). At the very least he recognizes that Alexander has broken the limits normally accepted by men. In light of Alexander's "forned" exploration of the skies, the statement has ominous implications.

In examining the correspondence between Dindimus and Alexander one must recognize that the poet, because of his Christian outlook, allows his hero to come off particularly badly. Originally Alexander had the better of Dindimus in the debate,³³ but since Dindimus' otherworldliness, like that of the Gymnosophists, was particularly acceptable to the Christian writers, the opposite eventually occurred. Thus in the debate between an essentially active versus a contemplative like and, secondarily, a Christian versus a pagan outlook, Dindimus, in many versions, not only wins the argument but has the final word. Here Alexander does send the last letter, but his last words to Dindimus only make him look worse (4695-4706). Although the

Gymnosophists also get the better of Alexander by trapping him into admitting that he really cannot give them anything they desire (4053-58), there he has the sense not to press a useless, petulant attack. Thus, while the poet is not original in his handling of the Alexander-Dindimus debate, his inclusion of it at a point where Alexander has clearly become the proud man, forgetful of his nature, is appropriate. Alexander, at the opening of the correspondence, is, in spite of his declaration that he wishes to learn wisdom and thereby improve himself (4215-20, 4225-27), already on edge, having heard that the Brahmins despise the laws and customs of the Greeks. He also appears a bit condescending in assuring Dindimus that they will not lose anything by explaining their mode of life to Alexander, just as a flame is not diminished by giving light to another candle (4228-32). Dindimus' main arguments, aside from his condemnation of the Greeks for worshipping false gods, center on the failure of Alexander and the Greeks to recognize their end and their dependence on God. His point is thus the same one that is made, albeit less strongly, elsewhere. Alexander does not recognize his proper place nor have the proper attitude toward his maker; he lives only for this world, is self-serving, and proud rather than humble. Alexander, in spite of his renowned wisdom, simply cannot answer the accusations. Ironically, the man who had earlier responded that he desired wisdom more than fame can only conclude the discussion by damning himself. He closes his eyes to the bitter attacks of Dindimus and asserts that were he able to enter their land he would teach them to be knights and gain fame (4701-06).

No single one of these episodes can be said to show Alexander succumbing to pride, but coupled with the opening of his letters

and seen in the framework of the correspondence with Darius they clearly suggest what would be the poet's treatment of Alexander's death. Just as Alexander has virtues or qualities which raise him above the human, he falls prey to an appropriate vice: the sin of pride in the form of a failure to recognize his human limitations. Thus he will be destroyed by "God's ire" as a punishment and a reminder by superhuman powers-- Fortune as the servant of God--that he has dared to challenge these powers by going beyond what is properly human. The poet, therefore, presents a consistent picture: the epic hero in strength, wisdom, and interests destroyed by the single defect of a superhuman pride. The poet is particularly effective in showing the decay of Alexander's intellectual powers and wisdom. What he had perceived so clearly in Darius he is blind to in himself. He perverts his greatest strength--his mind--by seeking improper knowledge so that he cannot understand the words of Candace and Dindimus; and they repeat only what he had once told Nicholas and Darius: pride can lead only to destruction.

Several studies of the poetic technique of Wars have appeared, most of them confined to an examination of the alliterative line. Oakden's previously mentioned analysis and classification is helpful, but his concern lies mainly with demonstrating the continuance of the Old English tradition. His statement that the original poem was probably very simple in its use of the possible metrical types³⁴ and the general praise he gives to the poem do little to indicate concretely the ability of the poet; that is, how successfully he handles the alliterative line in a primarily narrative poem. Steffens' metrical study is also useful in presenting an organized classification of the various types of lines and alliteration, but much of the value of his work is vitiated by his attempt

to fit the line into the seven-stress pattern, a tactic which necessitates the emendation of more than a few lines.³⁵ His interest, moreover, does not include a consideration of the larger artistic use of the alliterative line.

Approaching Wars on a broader scale, Max Kaluza has stated that the poem is composed in strophes of 24 lines.³⁶ His theory, which also involves the assumption of a number of interpolated or missing lines, has nevertheless found renewed support from a recent editor on the basis of a re-examination of the manuscript.³⁷ Kaluza, however, does not go into the artistic import of such a division. An examination of the poem, as printed by Skeat, does suggest that the poet was attempting to divide it into passus which were multiples of 24, since 16 of the 26 complete passus are, in fact, divisible by 24.³⁸ Yet it is difficult to see that the poet could have been interested in anything more than a mechanical process, especially since a number of the passus divisions are extremely arbitrary. To cite only the most striking examples, Passus 7 ends by introducing a letter from Darius; the letter itself is presented in Passus 8. Exactly the same is true of the break between Passus 8 and 9, 9 and 10, 20 and 21. Passus 18 and 19 end in the middle of Dindimus' letters to Alexander and Passus 24 concludes with Alexander entering Candace's magical chamber. These and other breaks suggest that the poet was actually more concerned with dividing his poem into units which could be recited in a single sitting and maintaining his audience's interest by stopping at a suspenseful point in the action.

There is also a good deal of evidence to contradict Kaluza's theory that the poet consistently composed in strophes of 24 lines, if

one looks at the poem not from the point of view of manuscript markings but from that of narrative content. For example, with Passus 6, in itself a multiple of 24, one can blindly count off units of 24 lines in succession and find that some kind of break or pause occurs at the end of each unit; on the other hand, to note only one case, while there is a pause at line 1144, as Alexander lies in siege around Tyre, this line is by narrative repetition connected to the following line, and the next unit describes what occurs during the siege. Even more clearly--and such occurs more and more frequently as the poem progresses--a break should occur at line 1624 or Passus 7; but while Alexander pauses at this point, lines 1624-25 actually fall in the middle of his speech.

Mabel Day, among others, has rejected the hypothesis of the 24-line stanza and posited composition in quatrains:

Hence it seems that a more accurate way of describing the structure of these poems is to say that they were written in quatrains, but that their authors . . . saw to it that each Passus should contain a multiple, in the case of the Wars of Alexander perhaps the same multiple, of four lines.³⁹

Day's theory, of course, would account equally well for the pauses in Passus 6 noted above. This theory enjoyed a good deal of popularity and has been applied to a number of other poems, including Alexander A and Alexander B.⁴⁰ Once again, however, the proponents have not considered the poet's use of, or ability within, this set form. Such is my intention. In showing that the poet has some poetic skill--that only seldom does he fall into needless or senseless repetition merely to fill out his set number of lines--and in showing that his use of the form changes as the poem progresses, the evidence will also make clear that Day's theory, here assumed rather than directly proven, is valid

for Wars.

Certain clarifications are required at this point. To state that the poet's basic compositional unit is the quatrain does not mean that four lines is necessarily the minimal thought-unit; that is, that each independent thought is expressed in exactly four lines and no more. Although there are many instances of thought-units which are exactly four lines in length, there are more which are two lines, or three lines, or one line. What quatrain composition does mean, although certain qualifications apply even here, is that, in an overwhelming number of cases, there is a pause or thought-break after each series of four lines; furthermore, almost without exception, all major breaks occur at the end of a four-line unit. To put it somewhat differently, the poet may present a single thought-unit in four lines or he may combine sequentially two thought-units of two lines or two thought-units of one and three lines, or although it is rare, a series of four one-line units in order to convey a single thought.⁴¹ Furthermore, quatrain composition does not mean that the quatrain is the maximum unit: that any particular thought, idea, speech, event, or description must be conveyed in four lines and no more. Obviously such would be impossible in a narrative poem of any length. What this type of composition does mean is that, in the majority of cases, the poet will present a description, for example, in no less than four lines or, if he requires more than four lines, the total number of lines which make up the description will be divisible by four.

As might be expected, the poet has few difficulties in handling the quatrain in descriptive passages; it is easy enough to add another line of description to reach the desired four-line unit or multiple of

four. In a letter or dialogue the difficulty is increased; but again he can embellish, clarify, or define in order to fill out the quatrain. The real test comes in narrative portions. Here only so much is to be said, and yet the poet must find a way of expanding or squeezing it into the quatrain form. Obviously, then, redundancy, inane or useless repetition are also quite easy to detect in the narrative portions; and the fact that such occur actually lends support to the quatrain theory.

The most interesting aspect of the poet's use of the quatrain, from an artistic point of view, is the development which it undergoes. To oversimplify for the moment, in the early portions of the poem the poet adheres very closely to the quatrain form--in fact is very constrained by it--with the result that the narrative becomes extremely rigid. As he progresses, however, he uses the quatrain more freely with the significant exception of Passus 15 which marks, by the poet's own comments (3468-75), the beginning of the second half of Alexander's life and adventures. In general, it can be said that in the early part of the poem the quatrain form controls the narrative; as the poet progresses, however, narrative content gradually comes to control poetic form. One result, although not the most striking, is that the later portions of the poem contain fewer unnecessary repetitions. The poet allows violations of the quatrain when dictated by narrative content. On the other hand, a non unexpected consistency is to be found in the descriptive portions. As has been suggested earlier, the poet regards descriptions, whether they be of battles, cities or palaces, or marvelous personages, as secondary supportive material for the development of Alexander. Consequently, of all the matter in the poem, they continue to be most rigidly presented within the quatrain structure. The greatest freedom,

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on the other hand, develops in dialogue and straight-forward narrative.

Although it certainly would not be impossible, it would be extremely tedious to consider exhaustively each of the 26 complete passus in order to show this use and development of the quatrain; moreover, the law of diminishing returns would apply. I have therefore examined six passus in detail: two each from the beginning, middle, and end of the poem.⁴²

It has been deemed expedient, for purposes of reference and clarification, to present the passus under discussion in graphic form. In the following charts, I have first divided each passus into its large episodes. It might be argued that all of Passus 1, for example, is in reality only a single episode which introduces Neptanabus and relates the events which bring him to Macedonia. On this principle, however, the entire poem could hardly be divided into more than a score of episodes. Not only would such be unmanageable, for critical purposes, but, to refer again just to Passus 1, it seems clear that it is composed of a number of separable episodes or scenes: Neptanabus' flight, the plight of the Egyptians, and Neptanabus' arrival in Macedonia. These episodes are placed under the heading "Major Episodes" in the following charts.

Secondly, I have further broken down these "Major Episodes" into smaller components, again primarily for purposes of clarity and manageability. These components, designated "Smaller Units," will in some cases correspond to the "Major Episodes"; such is the case with the Prologue in Passus 1. In some ways, the division into "Smaller Units" is admittedly somewhat arbitrary. Each of the smaller units satisfies the criterion of being an independent portion, but this

does not mean that it is necessarily or easily separable from what immediately precedes or follows it. Also, because I desired neither to make these "Smaller Units" so small as to obscure obvious connections nor so large as to be unmanageable and obscure distinctions, the basis for division may not always be consistent. For example, in Passus 1 the dialogue between the warden and Neptanabus has been divided into two units. Obviously they are closely connected, but because of the length of these speeches and because there is a rather definite break after the warden's comments, I have separated them. On the other hand, in Passus 2, the dialogue between Neptanabus and Olympias after the conception of Alexander has not been separated into a series of extremely small units. Ultimately, the use of the "Smaller Units" is to facilitate reference and the further breakdown into what I consider to be the smallest "Thought-Units" of the poem. This breakdown is given on the pages with the heading "Thought-Units."

What should be obvious is that the process of dividing the poem is a progressive one: from the largest episodes of the poem, which might span more than one passus, to the largest episodes within the individual passus, to the division of these episodes step by step into their smallest parts--the individual thought-unit. I have not tried to be comprehensive in doing this; such would not serve the purposes of this study and would, I believe, simply result in graphic confusion with subdivision upon subdivision. My listing of the "Major Episodes" and "Smaller Units" and finally the breakdown into "Thought-Units" will make it possible for the reader to carry such a process through should he so desire. It should be emphasized that all divisions have been made without reference to the quatrain system and that I have

included all of Skeat's interpolations of lines from the Dublin manuscript, although these have been noted.

In a few places I have purposely violated my principle of listing only the smallest "Thought-Units" in the charts of the designation, especially in Passus 1 and 2. Because I felt it to be illuminating, in certain places where there is a description or catalogue I have allowed this to stand as a unit and, after specifying whenever appropriate whether it is a general description (designated gen.) or specific details of description (spec.) or simply catalogue (cat.), I have then broken it down into thought- units. Certain other abbreviations have also been used: I indicates an introduction, in narrative form, to a speech or letter. S indicates that those particular lines, or, if a longer section is divided off, that all within the horizontal lines belong to that single speech. L, used in a similar way, designates a letter. A single line or less which serves as a transition between units or episodes, but cannot strictly speaking be separated from its preceding episode is designated trans. The asterisk consistently indicates that a line is probably missing from the MS at this point.

Line numbers from Skeat's edition are included for the "Major Episodes" and the "Smaller Units." In a separate column, mainly to show the reliance on quatrains or multiples thereof, I have given the simple count for each "Major Episode" and "Smaller Unit." The "Thought-Units" are grouped under numbers in parentheses which refer to the corresponding "Smaller Unit," given in the preceding chart for that pasus. Without making the charts chaotic and in effect paraphrasing the poem I could not indicate the content of each "Thought-Unit" or even give the line numbers from the poem. Thus a simple

numeral represents the number of lines in each "Thought-Unit." The reader is therefore unfortunately compelled to refer back to the "Smaller Units" and ultimately to the poem itself to study the content of these "Thought-Units."

Finally, I have printed, again for purposes of easy reference, the lines from each of the passus discussed which are clearly repetitious in the sense that they either add nothing to the content of the poem or are simply redundant. Such repetitions indicate that their presence is merely for the purpose of filling out the quatrain. These lines have been placed in a brief context to indicate their repetitiveness and are marked by the symbol "##."

Passus 1

Major Episodes:

1. Prologue	1- 22	22
2. Description of the seers of Egypt	23- 38	16
3. Neptanabus: introduction, sorcery, flight	39-146	108
4. Egyptians: mourning, appearance of Serapis, erection of the statue of Neptanabus, defeat by Persians	147-209*	63
5. Neptanabus' arrival in Macedonia	210-213	4

Smaller Units:

(1) Prologue	1- 22	22
(2) Description of the seers of Egypt	23- 38	16
(3) Introduction of Neptanabus	39- 46	8
(4) Neptanabus learns of invasion	47- 70	24
(5) Wardens of Egypt; one warns Neptanabus	71- 94	24
(6) Neptanabus' answer to the warden	95-110	16
(7) Neptanabus conjures and sees defeat	111-118	8
(8) Neptanabus prepares and flees	119-146	28
(9) Egyptians seek Neptanabus	147-158	12
(10) Egyptians offer to Serapis	159-166	8
(11) Serapis' speech	167-189*	23
(12) Erection of the statue of Neptanabus	190-205	16
(13) Persians conquer Egypt	206-209	4
(14) Neptanabus arrives in Macedonia		

Repetitious Lines:

And þe sotellest vndere son segis in þaire lyfe, ##þus ware þai breued for þe best as þe buke tellis.	34- 35
Gales & grete schipis full of grym wapens, And full of breneid bernis bargis a hundreth, ##Of slik a naue is noy to here or to tell	65- 67
For þer is comyn with him kny3tes of landis dyuerse, ##Segis of many syde oute of sere remys.	85- 86
Full wele he wist, or he went quat suld worþe efter, ##And all þe fourme of þe fare þat fall 3ow be-houys.	171-172
Sen it is set to be soo & slip it ne may ##Ne schewid to be na nopire schap ne we to schount nouthire . . .	179-180
Quen it was perfite & pi3t a place þai it wayted, ##And stallid him in a stoute stede & sti3thed him faire.	194-195
þare gan þai graithly þam graue in golden lettirs, All þe wordis at he þaim werpid of þaire ware kynges. ##þare þai wrate þam I-wis as þe buke tellis.	201-203

Passus 1 Thought-Units

- (1) 22
 3
 2
 2
 3
 1
 1
 4
 4
 2
 2
- (2) 16
 2 (gen.)
 8 (spec.) (2's)
 2 (gen.)
 4
- (3) 8
 2 (gen.)
 4 (spec.) (2's)
 2 (gen.)
- (4) 24
 4
 4 (gen.) (2's)
 4 (spec.) (2's)
 4 (gen.) (2's)
 5 (spec.) (3, 2)
 3 (gen.)
- (5) 24
 4
 2
 2
 $\frac{1-I}{1 \text{ S}}$
 2
 2
 2 (gen.)
 8 (cat.) (1's)
- (6) 16
 $\frac{2-I}{3 \text{ S}}$
 2
 1/2
 1/2
 3
 1
4
- (7) 8
 4
 4
- (8) 28
 4
 4
 4
 4
 4
 4
 4
- (9) 12
 4 (gen.) (2's)
 6 (spec.) (2's)
 2 (gen.)
- (10) 8
 4
 4
- (11) 23*
 $\frac{1-I}{3 \text{ S}}$
 2
 2
 4
 3*
 1
 3
4
- (12) 16
 2
 2
 2
 2
 5
 3
- (13) 4
 2
 2
- (14) 4
 2
 2

Passus 2

Major Episodes:

1. Neptanabus and Olympias meet	214-333	120
2. Olympias's dream	334-349	16
3. Meeting of Neptanabus and Olympias	350-373	24
4. Conception of Alexander	374-393	20
5. Meeting of Neptanabus and Olympias	394-405	12
6. Philip dreams of a dragon which appears in battle	406-453	48
7. Philip returns to Macedonia	454-477	24
8. Feast: first marvel--dragon--appears	478-500*	23
9. Second marvel appears: bird and egg	501-524	24

Smaller Units:

(1) Philip leaves Macedonia	214-217	4
(2) Neptanabus and Olympias meet and greet	218-237	20
(3) Neptanabus "identifies" himself	238-261	24
(4) Conversation between Olympias and Neptanabus	262-273	12
(5) Description of Neptanabus' instruments	274-285	12
(6) Concluding dialogue between Olympias and Nept.	286-333	48
(7) Neptanabus conjures up dream	334-349	16
(8) Meeting of Neptanabus and Olympias	350-373	24
(9) Alexander conceived	374-393	20
(10) Meeting of Neptanabus and Olympias	394-405	12
(11) Neptanabus conjures up dream for Philip	406-417	12
(12) Philip's dream; interpretation; dragon appears in battle	418-453	36
(13) Philip returns to Macedonia	454-477	24
(14) Feast: dragon appears	478-500*	23
(15) Second marvel appears: bird and egg	501-522	22
(16) Poet's transition	522-523	2

Repetitious Lines:

Quen he was boune oute of burȝe & his bake turned,
##As tite as Anec him amed out of his awyn kythe. 218-219

##Sone as him selfe was in þe sale & saȝe hire with eȝe,
He beheld Olympadas þat honourable lady. 222-223

And þar hire spakid with his speche & spird of him wordis.
##Quen he was sete in his sete þat semely qwene
Ai of Egipt erd enquirid if he were. 237-239

With þat rysis vp þe renke & his rowme lefys,
##Laȝt leue at þe qwene for a litill quile,
Gase him doune be þe grecis a-gayn fra þe sale. 330-332

Sire, chese þe a chambre quare þe chefe þinkis,
Nowþire myne awen ne na nothire god lat þe noȝt spare,
##Or any place at ȝow plece my palas with-in. 363-365

Qwen it was metyn to þe merke þat men ware to ryst,
 ## And folke was on þaire firste slepe & it was furth euyns . . .374-375

Sone as hire bele gun bolne all hire blee changis,
 So was scho ferd & a-friȝt a ferly ware ellis.
 ## To be bonden with barne mekill bale to hire neȝehis. 394-396

Quat dose now þis diuinour bot to desert wendis,
 ## Airis on all him ane out of þe cite. 406-407

All þat was done þe bedene was me be dreme schewyd,
 ## I saȝe it surely as my-selfe slepe in my tentis. 474-475

Passus 2 Thought-Units

(1) 4	(7) 16	(13) 24
(2) 20	4	4
4	4	<u>2 S</u>
2	4	2
2	2	<u>1-I</u>
2	2-S	3-S
1-S	(8) 24	4
2	4	<u>2 S</u>
3	<u>4 S</u>	2
4	4	1
(3) 24	<u>1-I</u>	2
4	<u>3 S</u>	1
<u>1 S</u>	4	(14) 23*
3	<u>4</u>	4
2	(9) 20	4
2	4	3*
2	4	4
2	2	1-I
2	2	3-S
2	2-I	(15) 22
2	2-S	1
4	2	1
(4) 16	2	2
4	(10) 12	2
2-I	4	2
2-S	1-I	2
<u>2 S</u>	<u>1 S</u>	2
2	2	3
(5) 12	<u>4-S</u>	1-I
4 (gen.)	(11) 12	4-S
8 (spec.) (2, 1, 1, 2. 2)	4	2
(6) 48	4	(16) 2
1-I	4	
3-S	2	
4-S (2's)	2	
4-S (2's)	(12) 36	
4-S (2's)	4	
4	4	
4-S	2	
4-S	2-S	
<u>1 S</u>	4	
3	<u>2 S</u>	
4	2 (gen.)	
2	12 (spec. (4, 4, 4))	
2		

Passus 10

Major Episodes:

1. Alexander's letter to Athens	2319-2342	24
2. Athenians' council	2343-2394	52
3. Athenians send tribute; Alexander's letter	2395-2438	44
4. Lacedemonia	2439-2486	49 ⁴³
5. Darius' council	2487-2534	48
6. Alexander's sickness	2535-2582	48
7. Transitional interlude	2583-2584	2
8. Crossing of the Euphrates	2585-2606	22

Smaller Units:

(1) Alexander's letter to Athens	2319-2342	24
(2) Athenians' reaction	2343-2346	4
(3) Athenians' council: Aescylus' speech	2347-2350	4
(4) Athenians' council: Demosthenes' speech	2351-2390	40
(5) Decision to send tribute	2391-2402	12
(6) Alexander receives tribute	2403-2412	10
(7) Alexander's letter to the Athenians	2413-2436	24
(8) Athenians rejoice	2437-2438	2
(9) Alexander approaches Lacedemonia; council	2439-2448	10
(10) Lacedemonians prepare for battle	2449-2460	12
(11) Alexander's letter to Lacedemonia	2461-2470	10
(12) Preparation and battle	2471-2476	6
(13) Alexander's commentary on battle	2477-2486	10
(14) Alexander rides forth; Darius calls council	2487-2510	24
(15) Darius' council: debate	2511-2534	24
(16) Alexander falls sick	2535-2552	19
(17) Alexander cured; treason of Parmenion	2553-2582	20
(18) Alexander conquers Media and Armenia	2583-2584	2
(19) Alexander crosses Euphrates	2585-2606	22

Repetitious Lines:

Ane Eschilus in erde & ernstly he spekis,
 ##þe douth & all diuinours be-dene he comaundis,
 þat þai suld corde be na cas vn-to þe kingis hestis. 2348-50

þan amed þai to ser Alexander onane for to send
 A croune all of clere gold clustrid with gemmes,
 Of fifty ponde with þe payse as þe prose tellis,
 ##þe tresoure tire þae him to & tribute him hetes. 2395-98

þan mourned all þe Messedons as meruail ware ellis
 ##þai saȝe him so to be seke said ilkane to othire . . . 2547-48

Passus 10 Thought-Units

(1) 24	(7) 24	(14) 24	
<u>4 L</u>	<u>2-I</u>	2	1
6	<u>4 L</u>	<u>2-I</u>	1
2	2	<u>3 S</u>	<u>1/2</u>
4	2	3	<u>1/2 S</u>
4	2	2	1
<u>4</u>	2	2	<u>2</u>
	2	2	<u>1 S</u>
(2) 4	2	2	1
	1	3	<u>2-S</u>
(3) 4	1	3	2
2	2	2	
2	<u>2</u>		(18) 2
		(15) 24	(19) 22
(4) 40	(8) 2	<u>2-I</u>	4
3		<u>2 S</u>	2
<u>1-I</u>	(9) 10	2	2
<u>2 S</u>	4	<u>1-S</u>	2
4	1	<u>1 S</u>	2 1/2
2	<u>3 S</u>	1	1 1/2
2	2	1	1
2		<u>1/2 S</u>	<u>1 S</u>
3	(10) 12	<u>1/2</u>	2
1	2	<u>2 S</u>	1
3	1	1	1/2
1	2	4 (cat.)(1, 2, 1)	1/2
4	1	1	<u>2</u>
1	2	1	
1	2	2	
1	2		
1		(16) 19 (1 extra Dublin)	
1	(11) 10	3	
1	2	2	
2	<u>5 L</u>	3	
<u>4</u>	3	1	
		2	
(5) 12	(12) 6	2	
4	2	1	
3	2	1-I	
1	2	2-S	
1		2	
2			
1	(13) 10		
	<u>1 S</u>	(17) 20	
(6) 10	1 1/2	2	
4	1 1/2	2	
1	2	2-S	
3	2	4	
2	<u>2 (trans.)</u>	1-I	
		3-L	

Passus 17

Major Episodes:

1. Alexander's army: thirst and consequences	3780-3847	68
2. Attack by beasts	3848-3947	100
3. Alexander in Bactria	3948-3961	14
4. Battle with Porus	3962-4018	48 ⁴³

Smaller Units:

(1) Alexander told of Porus' preparations; rides forth	3780-3789	10
(2) Alexander and army tortured by thirst	3790-3827	38
(3) Attack on castle	3828-2847	20
(4) Alexander finds water	3848-3863	16
(5) Attack by beasts (adders, dragons)	3864-3891	28
(6) Attack by beasts (crabs)	3892-3899	8
(7) Attack by beasts (miscellaneous)	3900-3919	20
(8) Attack by "Adanttrocay"	3920-3931	12
(9) Attack by beasts (mice, bats, birds)	3932-3947	16
(10) Alexander in Bactria	3948-3961	14
(11) General battle with Porus	3962-3971	10
(12) Porus proposes single combat	3972-3991	20
(13) Alexander fights Porus	3992-4002	12
(14) Alexander wins Persians over	4003-4018	16

Repetitious Lines:

Oure kniztis at þe first come clenly þaim slo3e,
 ##Alto-bretind þaim on bent & bro3t þaim on fli3t. 3904-05

A3t & tuenti men of armes onone scho delyuird,
 ##Bernes was di3t þe deth with dintis enoghe. 3930-31

Passus 17 Thought-Units

(1) 10	1	1	2-S
4	2	1	<u>1 S</u>
4	1	1	1
2	1 (trans.)	4	1
			1
(2) 38	(5) 28	(10) 14	<u>1</u>
1	4	1 (trans.)	1
1	4	2	2
1/2	1	1	
1/2	1	3	
3	2	1	
2	1-I	2	
1	<u>1 S</u>	2	
1	2	2	
4	<u>4</u>		
1-I	1	(11) 10	
<u>2 S</u>	1	2	
1	2	2	
<u>1-S</u>	2	2	
<u>1 S</u>	2	1	
1	2	1	
<u>1</u>		2	
2	(6) 8	(12) 20	
2	4	2-I	
2	2	<u>2 S</u>	
1/2	2	1	
1 1/2		2	
5	(7) 20	1	
2	2	2	
1	2	1	
	2	2	
(3) 20	2	2	
4	3	<u>2</u>	
1	3	2	
1	1	1	
2	3	1	
2	2	2	
1	2		
1		(13) 12	
1	(8) 12	1	
3	4	1	
4	2 1/2	2	
	1 1/2	2	
	1	2	
(4) 16	1	4 (1 extra Dublin)	
1	2		
1		(14) 16	
2	(9) 16	2	
2	2	1-I	
2	2	<u>1 S</u>	
3	3	2	
	1	<u>2</u>	

Passus 25

Major Episodes:

1. Alexander trapped by Candace	5291-5386	96
2. Alexander's meeting with gods	5387-5419	33
3. Attack by miscellaneous beasts	5420-5458	39
4. Sojourn in a country of wealth	5459-5482	24

Smaller Units:

(1) Description of revolving room	5291-5298	8
(2) Entrapment by Candace	5299-5338	40
(3) Alexander makes peace between Candace's sons	5339-5379	41
(4) Parting of Candace and Alexander	5380-5386	7
(5) Alexander's meeting with gods	5387-5420	33 1/2 ⁴⁴
(6) Encounter with adders	5420-5430	10 1/2
(7) Attack by wild boars	5431-5438	8
(8) Attack by vultures	5439-5458	20
(9) Crossing of a river	5459-5464	6
(10) Sojourn in a country of wealth: gifts	5465-5474	10
(11) Sojourn in a country of wealth	5475-5482	8

Repetitious Lines:

The room Quirland all on queles quen þe quene entres.
 Quen þae ware sett þar in samen on silkin webbis,
 ##Sone begynnes it to gaa & gretly he wondres. (5294-96)

Passus 25 Thought-Units

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (1) \quad 8 \\
 1 \\
 3 \\
 2 \\
 2-S
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (2) \quad 40 \\
 1 \\
 1-S \\
 2 \\
 1 \\
 2 \\
 1-S \\
 2 \\
 \hline 1 \quad S \\
 5 \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 \hline 1 \\
 1 \\
 2 \\
 \hline 1 \quad S \\
 1 \\
 \hline 2-S \\
 2-S \\
 2-S \\
 \hline 1 \quad S \\
 3 \\
 2 \\
 2
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (3) \quad 41 \\
 4 \\
 \hline 3-S \\
 1 \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 \hline 2-S \\
 2-S \\
 2-S \\
 1 \\
 1-I \\
 2-S \\
 2 \\
 \hline 1 \quad S \\
 1 \\
 \hline 1-I
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1 \quad S \\
 2 \\
 1 \\
 3 \\
 4 \\
 \hline 1
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (4) \quad 7 \\
 1 \\
 2-S \\
 2 \frac{1}{2} \\
 1 \frac{1}{2}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (5) \quad 33 \frac{1}{2} \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 2 \frac{1}{2}-S \\
 1 \frac{1}{2} \\
 4 \\
 1 \\
 1-S \\
 1/2-S \\
 \hline 1/2 \quad S \\
 1 \\
 1 \\
 \hline 1 \frac{1}{2}-S \\
 1/2 \quad S \\
 1/2 \\
 1/2 \\
 \hline 2
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1/2-S \\
 1 \frac{1}{2}-S \\
 2-S \\
 2 \quad S \\
 3 \\
 \hline 2 \frac{1}{2} \text{ (trans.)}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (6) \quad 10 \frac{1}{2} \\
 2 \frac{1}{2} \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 4
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (7) \quad 8 \\
 2 \\
 1 \\
 2 \\
 1 \\
 2
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (8) \quad 20 \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 6 \text{ (1/2-S)} \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 2 \\
 2
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (9) \quad 6 \\
 3 \\
 1 \\
 2
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (10) \quad 10 \\
 2 \\
 8 \text{ (cat.)} \\
 (2, 2, 1, 1/2, 1, 1 \frac{1}{2})
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 (11) \quad 8 \\
 2 \\
 4 \\
 2
 \end{array}$$

Passus 26

Major Episodes:

1. Enclosure of Gog and Magog	5483-5502	19 1/2 ⁴⁴
2. Various travels of Alexander	5502-5510	8 1/2
3. Alexander's exploration of the sky	5511-5530	20
4. Alexander's exploration of the sea	5531-5554	24
5. Travels; encounters with beasts	5555-5578	24
6. Death of Bucephalus	5579-5594	16
7. River Detiraty	5595-5598	4
8. Palace of Xerxes	5599-5610	12
9. Alexander conquers Babylon	5611-5614	4
10. Exchange of letters	5615-5626	12

Smaller Units:

(1) Enclosure of Gog and Magog	5483-5502	19 1/2
(2) Various travels of Alexander	5502-5510	8 1/2
(3) Alexander's exploration of the sky	5511-5530	20
(4) Alexander's exploration of the sea	5531-5554	24
(5) Attack by horned beasts	5555-5562	8
(6) Attack by adders	5563-5568	6
(7) Attack by "devil-beasts"	5569-5578	10
(8) Death of Bucephalus	5579-5594	16
(9) River Detiraty	5595-5598	4
(10) Palace of Xerxes	5599-5610	12
(11) Alexander conquers Babylon	5611-5614	4
(12) Exchange of letters	5615-5626	12

Repetitious Lines:

And foure Griffons full grym he in þat graythe festes;
 He makis to hinge ouir þaire hede in hokis or iren
 Flesch on ferrom þaim fra at þair miȝt noȝt to reches,
 To make þaim freke to þe fliȝt þat foded for to wyn,
 ##For þai ware fastand be-fore halden for þe nanes. 5518-22

Passus 26 Thought-Units

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|------|----------------|
| (1) | 19 1/2 | (7) | 10 |
| | 2 | | 2 |
| | 1 | | 2 |
| | 1 | | 2 |
| | 14 1/2 (cat.) ⁴⁵ | | 1 |
| | 1/2 | | 1 (1/2-S) |
| | 1/2 | | 1 |
| | | | 1 |
| (2) | 8 1/2 | (8) | 16 |
| | 2 1/2 | | 2 (trans.) |
| | 2 | | 2 |
| | 2 | | 4 |
| | 2 | | 1 |
| (3) | 20 | | <u>2 1/2</u> S |
| | 2 | | 1/2 |
| | 2 | | <u>2 1/2</u> |
| | 3 | | 1 1/2 |
| | 1 | | |
| | 4 | (9) | 4 |
| | 1 | | 2 |
| | 3 | | 2 |
| | 3 | | |
| | 1 | (10) | 12 |
| (4) | 24 | | 2 |
| | 4 | | 2 |
| | 4 | | 4 |
| | 2 | | 4 |
| | 2 | (11) | 4 |
| | 2 | (12) | 12 |
| | 1 | | 4 |
| | 1 | | 1 |
| | 2 | | <u>1 L</u> |
| | 2 | | 2 |
| | 2 | | 1 |
| | 2 | | 1 |
| (5) | 8 | | <u>1</u> |
| | 2 | | 1 |
| | 2 | | |
| | 2 | | |
| | 2 | | |
| (6) | 6 | | |
| | 1 | | |
| | 3 | | |
| | 1 | | |
| | 1 | | |

An examination of Passus 1 and 2, through references to the charts on these passus, reveals that the poet holds closely to the quatrain, fitting speeches, descriptions, and straight narrative into four-line units and multiples thereof. This rigidity is reflected by the presence of more unnecessary repetition than in the later passus. The stringent maintenance of the quatrain form causes the poetry to assume a static neatness. Except for the Prologue--the first 22 lines of Passus 1--all of the major episodes and smaller units within these episodes are controlled by the quatrain form; this is made evident by the fact that the total number of lines devoted to the major episode or smaller unit is consistently divisible by four. The poet allows only one exception to this practice of presenting his narrative material in groupings of four lines or multiples of four lines: at the conclusion to Passus 2 he adds a two-line transition into the next passus. In other words, extraneous lines, lines which cannot be made to fit into the underlying quatrain pattern, are almost non-existent; narrative units are neatly and continually bundled into multiples of four lines. Within the "Smaller Units" the poet does not stray far from the quatrain. There exist a great many four-line thought-units; a single-line thought-unit is quite rare and then generally serves as an introduction to a three-line speech, as at the beginning of P 1. 11⁴⁶ and in P 2. 6, P 2. 8, and P 2. 13. If one compares the Prologue with the rest of the first two passus, the relative freedom of the Prologue, in contrast to the rigidity of the rest of these opening sections, becomes very evident. In the Prologue, the poet takes six thought-units to reach a multiple of four; that is, a group of lines divisible by four. In the remainder of these two passus the greatest number of thought-units required to reach the 4-multiple is four (in P 1. 6,

P 2.2, and in the catalogue of P 1.5). In five other cases the poet takes three thought-units to attain the multiple of four.⁴⁷ There is nothing, then, in these two passus that approaches the freedom of the Prologue in breaking from the underlying quatrain form. The most free, in taking four thought-units to reach the multiple of four, are P 1.6 and P 2.2, the first of which is a speech and, in the use of half-line units, shows some flexibility in the treatment of the individual line. Although the poet later achieves his greatest freedom in the speech or dialogue, at the beginning of the poem most of the speeches are confined to a quatrain or two and are constrained by that poetic structure. The extreme in regularity can be found in the dialogue between Neptanabus and Olym-pias in P 2.6 where, for all practical purposes, they speak in alternating quatrains. Simply, then, in these passus poetic form dictates the presentation of narrative content.

Passus 10 and 17 demonstrate the change in the poet's handling of his verse form. Content gradually takes priority, and the quatrain is molded to fit the content. It is noteworthy, however, that the relative flexibility usual in the middle of the poem is much more restricted in Passus 15 where the poet begins, with a formal introduction, the second half of the poem. It is as if, in starting the second portion of Alexander's life and adventures, the poet himself is starting over, once again staying rather strictly within the confines of the quatrain.

Although the quatrain cannot be discarded as the basic unit of composition, an examination of Passus 10 and 17 indicates that the poet treats the four-line unit less as a constraining measure and more as a background pattern. It has already been noted that in the first two passus, excepting the Prologue of Passus 1, the poet at most

requires four thought-units to reach a multiple of four lines, and on only seven occasions requires even three thought-units. In Passus 10 and 17, however, there are 27 cases where three thought-units are needed to reach the multiple of four (thus asserting the underlying quatrain),⁴⁸ 6 cases of four thought-units,⁴⁹ 4 cases of five thought-units,⁵⁰ 3 cases of six through-units,⁵¹ and 1 case each of seven and eight thought-units.⁵² To a much larger extent the quatrain has given way to the narrative. A not unexpected result is the many fewer unnecessary repetitions. In fact, the last two instances of useless repetition in Passus 17 both occur in battle scenes which, as previously noted, the poet treats more like non-essential description than required narrative.

On a larger scale, it is obvious that the "Smaller Units" no longer fall neatly into multiples of four lines. Four examples, P 10.6 (Alexander's receiving of the Athenian tribute), P 10.11 (Alexander's letter to the Lacedemonians), P 10.16 (the debate in Darius' council), and P 10.19 (Alexander's crossing of the Euphrates) are not multiples of four. Certainly many others are. But the "Smaller Units" are not consistently self-contained as they were earlier. One must either combine two "Smaller Units," i. e., P 10.12 and P 10.13, or what is truly the case, look at the entire "Major Episode" to find a multiple of four. In other words, the narrative unit within which the poet works has become much larger and the quatrain foundation ultimately holds up primarily in the extremely large major episode. Passus 17 exhibits the same tendency, although the attacks of the various beasts, as I have presented them, somewhat obscure the situation. Alexander's "riding forth" and the episode of Bactria must obviously be seen in terms of

what precedes or follows them; while one can go in either direction, the only consistent approach is to combine all of the smaller units up to the battle with Porus (P 17.11); these smaller units are merely a serial-time recounting of the adventures Alexander encounters on the way to his meeting with Porus.

Also important are the four transitions (in P 10.13, P 10.18, P 17.4, and P 17.10), each of which is only one or two lines in length. In earlier portions of the poem these linking passages, which might make mention of a large campaign or briefly tie up the preceding episode (as with P 10.8) would have been developed into at least a full quatrain.⁵³

If one includes, as earlier, the one or two-line introduction, long speeches still work with the multiple of four lines, yet they are much freer in terms of the single quatrain. In dialogue, the quatrain does not necessarily predominate. As in P 10.15, P 10.17, and P 17.14, characters no longer speak in quatrains; rather, brief and rapid exchanges occur. The difference is quite evident if these conversations are compared with those in P 2.10 or P 2.16 or even the somewhat less rigid P 2.13.

Even the single line is no longer self-contained, as is normally the case in the Middle English alliterative tradition. While one might suggest that the poet looks back to the Old English use of the run-on lines, it seems more probable that, influenced by narrative content, he has simply broken away from the strict confines of the single-line unit. Although the run-on line and its complementary broken line occur most commonly in direct speech, they also appear in straight narrative. The poet employs this form occasionally in the early

sections of the poem, for example P 1. 6, but a glance at the charts will show that he uses it much more extensively later in the poem. Once again, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the narrative content now dominates and controls the poetic structure.

Passus 25 and 26 indicate that the poet has further extended the limits of the quatrain. Passus 25, which continues, without any break or comment from the poet, the Candace episode begun in Passus 24, demonstrates the poet's linking of episodes not merely by separate transitional quatrains or, as in Passus 10 and 17 by one or two lines of independent transition, but by at times merging one episode with the next through a continuing motif or description. Thus the description of Candace's palace flows into the description of her marvelous private chamber to link Passus 24 and 25. At the end of the Candace episode (5386-87) one has difficulty finding a clear point of transition to the meeting with the gods in the cave since Candoile accompanies Alexander to the cave and briefly describes it to him. After Alexander's conversation with Synches and Serapis, Candoile is not simply forgotten; a short parting scene is offered as Alexander prepares to rejoin his troops. Yet even this portion of the narrative blends with the next (P 25. 6) to the extent that the division can only be said to fall in mid-line. One might argue that the division of P 25. 2 and P 25. 3 or P 25. 5 and P 25. 6 are false ones: that the two smaller units should be grouped together and seen as one large episode; but a comparison with earlier passus makes the difference obvious. Even if the poet elects, as he does in the middle of the poem, to use something less than a quatrain as a transition or divider, he consistently keeps different adventures separate. Here, on the other hand, they merge, to the point that the

quatrain and even the independent line occasionally disappear, as linking is accomplished by content rather than poetic form. The major episodes also begin to flow together. One is forced, if one wishes to find the multiple of four--and thus the underlying quatrain structure--to group together not only "Smaller Units" but even "Major Episodes."

In Passus 26, which is not as free as Passus 25, the two very different episodes relating the enclosing of Gog and a miscellaneous collection of travels by Alexander are not treated in multiples of four lines, as they so clearly would have been early in the poem. Possibly my division of these two passus is most open to criticism, on the charge of subjectivism; but it has become, at times, almost impossible to divide the poem at all. The very fact that breaks fall in mid-line supports the view that the poet will now permit narrative content to over-ride not only the quatrain but the line itself. Indicative of the poet's method is the almost complete lack of repetitive lines in Passus 25 and 26. Those which I have listed might even be challenged: the repetition extends to only a half line, and one must look at a much larger context to even notice what repetition does exist. In any case, repetitious lines do not appear simply because the poet has other concerns besides simply filling out the quatrain. He will now "violate" the quatrain structure to obtain narrative continuity.

The developing flexibility in speeches and dialogue is also noticeable in these late passus, particularly in P 25. 5 and P 26. 8. But the poet also extends this freedom in treatment to include the letter (P 26. 12), plain narrative (P 25. 10, P 26. 6), and, most surprisingly, the normally stiff catalogue (P 25. 8).

The gradual development in the poet's use of the quatrain

thus shows his ability to vary and escape the monotonous rigidity of form. The poet of Wars is quite often praised for his skill in presenting battle-scenes, but an examination of even the few battles which occur in these six passus indicate that while he shows competency in this type of description, he generally treats these scenes as formal, non-organic entities, as he works quite stringently within the quatrain, particularly in battles with beasts. The general battle with Porus in Passus 17 which takes up only ten lines, while still building quickly to the four-line multiple, is the exception rather than the rule, as a comparison with the battles with Nicholas (770-818), at Tyre (1377-1448), and with Amonta (2034-61) show. In fact, the poet's ability to manipulate the quatrain and the line really becomes evident only outside battle scenes and most other descriptions. While his straight narration and his presentation of dialogue or monologue are not as striking or colorful, his strength as a poet, in terms of his material, shows itself when he handles these portions well. Once he allows himself to concentrate on his content, rather than on his set form, he presents a rapidly moving narrative, broken up by more rigid and leisurely, but appropriate, descriptions. The effect of the quatrain form balanced against narrative emphasis produces an artistically satisfying tension.

One must therefore offer qualified praise for the poet's handling of his poetic form; the same applies to his treatment of his subject matter. His dedication to the one-sided, heroic Alexander of philosophical bent certainly results in a consistent portrait, but at the same time causes the poet difficulties in characterization as well as narrative plausibility.

The poet wavers in his characterization of Neptanabus.

Rather than successfully integrating the two sides of Neptanabus--wise seer and cohort of demons--he alternates between the two, presenting the side which corresponds to the situation at hand as he wishes to develop it. When Neptanabus is introduced as one of the "wysest wees of the werd" (24) he is acclaimed as a "clerke noble, / þe athelest ane of the werd" (39-40) and commended for his wisdom (41-46). Yet when he flees Egypt, the poet offers a debasing comment about his magic,⁵⁴ which, while not efficacious in defeating the Persians, has correctly predicted the defeat of the Egyptians. One is thus at a loss in how to interpret the poet's intention when Neptanabus displays his "trammys" or divining equipment to Olympias (276-286), whether to view them as a certification or abasement of Neptanabus' magical powers. The poet's Christian outlook and his decision to present a totally sinless Olympias cause him to inveigh against Neptanabus for deception (417) and involvement with devils (342). At the same time the poet hesitates in totally condemning the true father of Alexander. His prediction that his own son will be the cause of his death proves true and, somewhat surprisingly, it is Alexander who receives a slight rebuke for killing Neptanabus: "þus shamesly of hys awne childe hym chevyd such end" (739*).

Olympias, on the other hand, is a consistently noble character. Before Alexander usurps the stage, leaving Olympias to be no more than a concerned mother, abused wife, and the woman against whom Alexander measures Candace, she is characterized in a somewhat stock but nonetheless interesting manner. Her extreme naivete and innocent modesty form the basis of her portrait and are her most engaging qualities. Although Alexander indirectly accuses her of folly (735-736*, 874-875), he and Philip willingly excuse her role in

Alexander's conception. She is viewed as no more than a vehicle or pawn and, in their terms, her sin is the less because no one may refuse a god (470-477). The poet's presentation of her character and actions perfectly accord with this judgment; she is indeed, given her personality, a helpless instrument. Neptanabus, in a convincing scene, overwhelms the "myld" (234), "semely" (238) queen by his bearing, his eloquence, and his declaration that he can predict the future (214-233). His intent staring puts her off balance and her innocent wonderment gives him the opening to ply her with flattery and a display of his equipment. Olympias is clearly not an unfaithful wife; her first questions to test the prophecy of Neptanabus concern the "bald kyng þat I best lufe" (289). She honestly fears that Philip will put her aside for another wife (294-297). Thus Neptanabus' promise that "Ane of þe grettist of oure godis" (307) will aid her in her plight, plus a most marvelous description of this god (315-321), strikes exactly the right note. Her innocent mind, coupled with her fear of the future, makes her an easy prey for the wily Neptanabus. She manages to put the dangers of even unwilling consort with a god out of her mind, with the aid of Neptanabus' reassurances, until her pregnancy becomes obvious (362-405). Even then Neptanabus can calm her fears so that she greets the returning Philip with joy and utter unconcern (455-457). This scene (454-477) of the jovial, teasing Philip confronting the silent, blushing Olympias is not only successful in itself, but brings to its culmination the naivete and innocence of the queen.

Although not as much attention is paid to Philip, his characterization offers some interesting parallels with that of Olympias and Neptanabus. He suffers somewhat the same fate as Olympias. Once

the focus of attention has shifted to Alexander, both Olympias and Philip serve merely as tools for the presentation of one aspect or another of Alexander's personality and virtues. Olympias actually fares better than Philip; she remains encased in her nobility, mainly suffering unjustly so that Alexander may save her. Philip, on the other hand, vacillates between fierceness and degeneracy. At one moment he is the king who fights and conquers many lands (214-217, 454), at the next moment a man who cannot defeat Pausanias and, moreover, is wounded as he turns his back to flee the battlefield (925-935); first a jovial, understanding husband, then the speechless man who, for no stated reason, puts aside Olympias (821 ff.). He acts in whatever manner is appropriate to show off Alexander at a particular time. One could suggest that Philip's wavering attitude toward Alexander, and, secondarily, Olympias, is the poet's attempt to make him the somewhat believable husband: a man who, in spite of his real feelings, while "proof" is at hand accepts the will of the gods with equanimity and then, as time passes, forgets the dreams and marvelous apparitions to reject Alexander as his heir and Olympias as his queen. Yet the attention is so clearly on Alexander in all these later scenes--as with divine help he restores his mother (825-880) or by his own prowess defeats Pausanias (940-969)--and Philip changes so quickly into the precisely appropriate position that we must see Philip as acting so that Alexander may react.

The poet's most severe problems, however, lie in narrative plausability. Unlike Kyng Alisaunder no attempt is made in this poem to straighten out certain contradictions in the story. This poet allows Parmenion to be hanged for treason and later appear alive and faithful. When Alexander arrives at the land of the Brahmins he cannot personally

visit Dindimus because the river is uncrossable; yet, rather quickly, a bridge is constructed capable of carrying a messenger back and forth with the correspondence. No explanations are offered for Alexander's not going himself and it is, of course, not in line with the character of Alexander to assume that the danger of crossing deters the king. More probable is the fact that the poet wishes to give an explanation for retaining the traditional exchange of letters rather than presenting a face-to-face confrontation. The poet is also hampered by the fact that some of Alexander's arguments against Dindimus are based on the isolation of the Brahmins from the rest of the world. Alexander's parting words re-emphasize that fact: if he could reach their land he would teach the Brahmins to be great knights (4695-4706).

In one episode (5159-5210) the poet seems caught between the requirements of his narrative and his continuing desire to stress Alexander's control over every situation. When Candoile ventures into Alexander's camp to gain assistance in recovering his wife, he first meets Ptolemy. Ptolemy then reports to Alexander. The king conceives the plan of having Ptolemy impersonate him and gives his peer detailed instructions on the proper way to act. The poet directs his attention to the cunning of Alexander and seems most interested in Alexander's efforts to teach Ptolemy the appropriate behavior for a king and overcome Ptolemy's reticence in treating Alexander as a subordinate. When Alexander and Ptolemy, who have not been properly attired, carry out the impersonation, Candoile evidently does not find it strange that "Alexander" failed to identify himself at their first meeting. In his concentration on Alexander the poet never thinks of simply substituting another peer for Ptolemy during the impersonation scene. Kyng Alisaunder

handles the situation more successfully by clearly explaining Alexander's policy of sifting all visitors through a deputy. This Candulek in that poem does not by chance encounter the impersonator before that peer takes on the role of Alexander.

While no narrative improbabilities result, the poet's attempt to keep Alexander in the forefront and keep the story moving weakens the effectiveness of certain other episodes. The battles, as noted, are normally brief and somewhat monotonous. Alexander's invincibility makes his easy conquest of the most marvelous and ferocious beasts not only monotonous but almost ridiculous, even within the conventions of the romance. Because the wisdom of Alexander is to be accentuated, there is no extended debate among the peers over what should be done with the traitor knight. The Athens episode is similarly condensed, but the poet effectively builds to and from this confrontation by having Alexander overtly compare Athens to Tyre and Thebes (2319-2448) and, later, by having the knights of Lacedemonia contrast themselves to the cowards of Athens (2444-48).

Although accumulation, as seen in the use of the Athens episode, may be an effective device, it may also be monotonous, particularly when indicative of an inability or unwillingness to break from a pattern. The over-abundance of letters in the poem provides a good example. The correspondence between Darius and Alexander, central to the motif of Fortune and pride and appropriate to the philosophical Alexander, is handled well. The letters not only develop, in a logical progression, the philosophical and moral principles of the two kings, but the exchange is broken up by other incidents; further, the letters are kept to a reasonable length. In contrast, the extremely long letters of

Dindimus, in which he often makes the same point several times, demonstrate the willingness of the poet to sacrifice not only narrative movement but the heroic character of Alexander--who becomes merely petulant--to ideas which are congenial to his Christian bias.

Perhaps even this correspondence would be acceptable to the reader if he were not inundated with letters by that point. Rather than sacrifice the sage words of Alexander to indirect reporting, the poet gives in full the king's letters to everyone; and their replies are generally also recorded. Likewise we are presented with Darius' requests for aid and supplies, often with the negative answers of his allies. Admittedly a certain ironic parallelism is worked out at times through the correspondences. Darius begs for assistance from Porus and receives a "Northumberland" excuse (2799-2819). Early in the poem, before Alexander has gained much notoriety, Jaudas denies his requests (1170-88), but later his commands are seemingly fulfilled; at least he receives no negative reply (2755-70). But most of the time Alexander simply does not have to request reinforcements. In another instance the Queen of the Amazons, in her letter, convinces Alexander not to attack by explaining that his defeat of women would do nothing for his glory while their victory would mean ignominy for Alexander (3754-57). This is precisely the argument, with adjustments befitting the sender, that Alexander had used earlier with Darius (1880-85). Nonetheless, these relatively successful parallelisms are swallowed up by the endless succession of reiterative letters which vary only in the names of the writers.

The poet thus allows himself to be overly constrained, at one point or another, by his poetic form, a particular narrative method,

his concept of Alexander, or his Christian bias. His greatest weakness is his tendency to use one device, to make one point, not wisely but too well.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Skeat, The Wars of Alexander, p. xxiii; Oakden, II, 95; J. R. Hulbert, "The West Midland of the Romances," Modern Philology, XIX (1921), 16. Hereafter the poem will be referred to as Wars.

²William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 38-67. S. O. Andrew, "The Wars of Alexander and The Destruction of Troy," RES, V (1929), 270.

³The passus range in length from 119 to 335 lines.

⁴See also 1455-56, 1718-19, 2317-18, 3465-66.

⁵Andrew, p. 271; Skeat, Wars, p. xxi; Ralph W. V. Elliott, "Landscape and Rhetoric in Middle English Alliterative Poetry," Melbourne Critical Review, No. 4 (1961), 75; Kane, p. 59. The rest of Kane's discussion of the three poems is difficult to follow. He believes Wars to be the least successful because of its subject matter--a problematical distinction at best since Alexander A and Alexander B cover material, with certain expansions, also treated in Wars. Moreover, his convoluted prose makes it almost impossible to tell to which poem (or poems) he is referring when he praises the "moderation" in style and the avoidance of "embroidery and elaboration," p. 60.

⁶Oakden, II, 29.

⁷See below, pp. 123-133.

⁸Oakden, II, 29.

⁹Oakden, II, 31, states that Alexander is sometimes a human person, "capable of mercy and pity." But these qualities are not stressed and when they do appear they are heightened and made appropriate to the superman.

¹⁰See below, pp. 158-159, 160.

¹¹Albert C. Baugh presents a similar, but more detailed outline for the battles of King Horn, Havelok, Beves of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Athelston in "Improvisation in the Middle English Romance," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, CIII (1959), 440-453. The pattern, however, is quite different since these are individual combats between clearly medieval knights.

¹²See below, pp. 98-100.

¹³I have not included citations of line numbers from the poem since this becomes impossibly unwieldy for, in particular, the extended and interrupted battles with Darius and Porus.

¹⁴In Wars the brevity of this episode precludes its consideration as a "major" battle. I have included it here, however, for the sake of parallel.

¹⁵This early demand for tribute really belongs to no particular battle; it is therefore kept separate here.

¹⁶The count here includes 42 lines of catalogue of the conquered people in Kyng Alisaunder and 15 lines in Wars.

¹⁷See below, pp. 123-133.

¹⁸This battle is by no means the most complex of those in Kyng Alisaunder.

¹⁹Aspects of the Novel, (New York, 1927), pp. 67-68.

²⁰See below, pp. 128-130.

²¹Line numbers followed by an asterisk follow Skeat's convention of marking lines interpolated from the Dublin manuscript.

²²See, for example, 2293-96, 2485-86.

²³See also pp. 122-123.

²⁴For example, 635-636.

²⁵"Rifte" is an obvious error; the word should be "riste" or "reste."

²⁶1748-51, 1935, 2690, 2775.

²⁷3457.

²⁸See also 3245-56.

²⁹See also 1838, 2415, 2463, 2721, 2756.

³⁰See also 3375-77, 4212, 4570.

³¹See also 3762, 4690.

³²Although Alexander gratefully receives Philip's dying acknowledgement of him as his son (960-975), nothing is ever made of a possible conflict in Alexander over his illegitimate birth.

³³For a discussion of the mutation of the Alexander-Dindimus debate see George Cary, "A Note on the Mediaeval History of the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo*," Classica et Mediaevalia, XV (1954), 124-129.

³⁴Oakden, I, 154-155.

³⁵Heinrich Steffens, "Versbau und Sprache des Mittelenglischen Stabreimenden Gedichtes 'The Wars of Alexander'," Bonner Beiträge Zur Anglistic, Heft IX (1901), 1-104.

³⁶"Strophische Gliederung in der Mittelenglischen Rein Alliterierenden Dichtung," Englische Studien, XVI (1892), 169-180.

³⁷Duggan, pp. 58-64.

³⁸Passus 4-8, 11-13, 15-18, 24-26. It is worth noting, however, that even those passus which are not multiples of 24 all miss it by no more than two lines.

³⁹"Strophic Division in Middle English Alliterative Verse," Englische Studien, LXVI (1932), 248.

⁴⁰J. R. Hulbert, "Quatrains in Middle English Alliterative Poems," Modern Philology, XLVIII (1950), 76-77.

⁴¹Nothing, other than the traditional form of the Middle English alliterative line which tends to be a single unit and end-stopped, prevents a combination such as 1 1/2-2 1/2. In fact, late in the poem, the poet works with this type of division.

⁴²These have not been selected completely at random. Passus 1 and 2 and 25 and 26 are obvious choices, since they begin and end the poem. (Passus 27 is easily eliminated by its incompleteness). The choices of Passus 10 and 17, however, was first prompted by the desire to select two passus which were spread across the middle of the poem. I excluded 8, 19, 20, and 21 because they were entirely letters, 6 and 9 because of their extreme length, 16 because of its brevity and 14 because of its great concentration on description (also a factor in rejecting 16). I therefore decided to count inward from the beginning and end of the poem, an equal number in each direction. On the basis of those ruled out, I was forced to count in either 10 or 12 passus from either direction. (To select a higher number would nullify the desire to span the mid-section of the poem). Since Passus 15 is not representative of the mid-portion of the poem, but rather reverts to the opening form, I opted for a count of 10, thus selecting Passus 10 and 17.

⁴³The subtraction is not incorrect here. This passage contains an interpolated line from the Dublin manuscript which is not reflected in Skeat's numbering of the lines.

⁴⁴The episode break comes in the middle of the line.

⁴⁵The catalogue is simply a series of names; thus no line division is evident.

⁴⁶This form of abbreviation is to be read as: Passus 1, "Smaller Unit," (11).

⁴⁷P 1.3, P 1.4, P 1.5, P 1.12, P 2.2.

⁴⁸P 10.5 (2 instances), P 10.7 (2 instances), P 10.9, P 10.13, P 10.14 (2 instances), P 10.15 (3 instances), P 10.16, P 17.2, P 17.3 (2 instances), P 17.4 (2 instances), P 17.5 (3 instances), P 17.7, P 17.8 (2 instances), P 17.10, P 17.11, P 17.12, P 17.16.

⁴⁹P 10.4, P 10.15, P 10.17, P 10.19, P 17.9, P 17.16.

⁵⁰P 10.4, P 10.6, P 10.10, P 17.2.

⁵¹P 10.4, P 10.19, P 17.1.

⁵²Seven: P 17.2; eight: P 10.17.

⁵³For example, Passus 1, 210-213; Passus 2, 214-217; Passus 5, 1117-20.

⁵⁴Although Skeat, *Wars*, p. 288, and Duggan, p. 300, both point out the difficulty of l. 126, Duggan agrees with Skeat that the line is meant to suggest the poet's contempt.

3

CHAPTER IV

ALEXANDER A AND ALEXANDER B

The two other Middle English alliterative Alexander poems--Alexander A and Alexander B¹--have attracted more attention as historical documents than as literature. A number of factors have contributed to this justifiable specialization. Believed to have been composed between 1340 and 1370 in or near Gloucestershire,² Alexander A and Alexander B stand very near the beginning of the alliterative revival. Magoun's edition of the poems was thus prompted not by literary concerns³ but by the interest expressed in Skeat's comment on Alexander A: "It may fairly claim to be the oldest existing specimen of English alliterative verse, unmixed with rime, and of the usual type, since the Conquest."⁴ It is not surprising, then, that Oakden devotes a good deal of attention to these fragments, pointing out the simplicity of the alliterative patterns employed and emphasizing elements of continuity with the Old English tradition, while also stressing its differences from Wars, a poem written near the end of the alliterative movement.⁵

Correspondence in date and provenance, certain similarities in style and vocabulary, and, naturally, the fact that both fragments deal with the Alexander legend have occasioned an understandable free-for-all on the question of common authorship. Although the argument has probably not been settled, Magoun's position, while based on the always less-than-conclusive criteria of style and language, seems

most sound and offers something of a compromise:

. . . in diction . . . style . . . and in alliterative practice, the technique displayed in the two poems seems incompatible with a single author. . . . While it is entirely possible that we have to do with two separate and distinct poems, composed independently by poets unaware of one another's undertaking, an alternate theory of composition may be proposed, namely, that Alexander B is part of a continuation of the no longer extant poem of which Alexander A is the beginning. Such a continuator would of course be more or less intimate with the work of his predecessor and in reading over his predecessor's work would have caught from him such turns of phrase as might be illustrated by the above-mentioned recurring words and lines.⁶

One might suggest, however, that the author of Alexander A might very well be the "continuator." Alexander A deals with the traditional episodes of Alexander's conception, birth, and early life, breaking off just before he reaches adulthood. But almost half of the fragment treats Alexander's ancestors, in particular the conquests of King Philip. This historical material, based on Paulus Orosius' Historiarum aduersum Paganos,⁷ is an exceptional inclusion in the English Alexander romance. The Alexander-Dindimus debate, the focal point of Alexander B, on the other hand, appears at length in both Wars and the Prose Life and is known to have circulated as an independent episode.⁸ Moreover, the means by which the Alexander B fragment has been preserved testifies to the widespread popularity of this episode and the belief, at least on the part of one scribe, that the Alexander-Dindimus correspondence formed an essential part of the romance. The English scribe, who was copying the French Li Romans d'Alexandre by Lambert Li Tors and Alixandre de Bernay, inserted a note in the midst of his text explaining that a "prossesse" or episode was missing from

the French and was to be found "at þe end of þis bok ywrete in engelyche ryme."⁹ It thus seems equally probable, if not more so, that the A-poet was expanding a romance of which Alexander B is a part. That the A-poet is less adept in handling the alliterative line¹⁰ of course proves nothing.

What tends to justify scholarly concentration on historical aspects such as these, to the exclusion of more literary considerations, is the incompleteness of the poems. The fragments are relatively long, as fragments go--1247 lines to Alexander A and 1139 lines to Alexander B--although Alexander A is often interrupted by missing lines; yet the fragments present only small portions of the legend. The content of Alexander A has already been noted. Alexander B deals primarily with the Alexander-Dindimus debate but also includes Alexander's meeting with the Gymnosophists and a brief description of the marvelous trees which grow during the day and disappear at night. It is therefore hardly possible to pass judgment on the poets' overall plans or structures. Nonetheless, the poems have some interesting features, and some observations of a literary nature are relevant in light of comments made by Oakden, Skeat, and Magoun.

Alexander A opens with a ten-line Prologue in which the poet specifies the controlling elements in his treatment of the Alexander legend. His purpose is not to entertain, but to instruct; the "deedes" (9) of Alexander are to serve as a model for "lordes and ooper, / Beurnes or bachelers" (1-2). But the Christian moralism which permeates the didacticism of Kyng Alisaunder and, to a lesser extent, Wars is not primary in Alexander A. The system of values basic to the didacticism of this poet is the more primitive Germanic heroic code. Alexander's

life will provide "ensaumples" (8) for those who wish to live "wightly" (3), gain "loose in hur lifetime" (4), and prove themselves in "deedes of armes" (5). Alexander stands as the norm for such men since he is one of the "boldest beurn . . . That ever steede bestrode or sterne was holden" (9-10). The fundamental morality of Alexander A, then, is that which underlies Beowulf, "The Wanderer," and "The Seafarer." At one point the poet links the heroic morality to the Christian (40-44), but this connection receives no further mention.

Since the poem breaks off before we see many of the brave deeds of Alexander himself, we can hardly tell if the poet will carry his poem through in this mode. But the heroic frame of reference outlined in the Prologue does partially explain, if not justify, certain troubling aspects of the poem, particularly the characterization of Philip. A full discussion of this point requires prior consideration of a few other matters.

The inclusion of what at least purports to be historical background material, that is, certain of the deeds of the hero's ancestors, is a time-honored convention. Whether it is included to supply a proper context or contrast for the hero himself, add the element of veracity or seriousness, or simply provide an appropriate introduction or buildup for the appearance of the hero depends on the individual work; but such material can be found in the epic--Beowulf, for example--in pseudo-history such as Layamon's Brut, and the romance--Wolfram's Parzival. Skeat has suggested that in introducing the material from Orosius' Historiarum aduersum Paganos the poet was engaging in the last of these--providing the proper introduction or buildup for the great hero--and there seems no conclusive reason to object to his judgment.

The poet, however, may have intended more.

The use of historical material, however modified to conform to the heroic mode, tends to historicize or deromanticize Alexander. It seems possible that such was also the poet's intention: to treat Alexander not so much as a romantic character, as a great historical figure.¹² Even when he has turned from Orosius to the traditional legendary material, the poet states, in the manner of the historian, that he wishes he could give Neptanabus' geneology (456-458). Such a view coincides with the poet's tendency to "demarvelize" as much as he can, even though the rationalization of miraculous events often characterizes medieval English romancers. The poet carefully points out that Olympias' first dream of Amon is not really a dream; Amon/Neptanabus is really present although Olympias, asleep, believes she has dreamed it (715-729). Neptanabus seems only to be arrayed as Amon (710), not really transformed into the god, when he visits Olympias on this occasion. On the other hand, marvels enough exist. Neptanabus, by his necromancy (981), does appear to actually transform himself into a dragon on several occasions (780 ff., 881 ff., 980 ff.), although the poet uses the ambiguous "deraide" (883) and "attires" (981) for two of these, and the latter term is not required by the alliteration. Not quite in the same category, but also of interest, is the poet's attempt to keep Olympias somewhat believable, that is, not overly blind, naive, or prescient. The poet adds an explanation for Olympias' fear concerning Philip's future actions toward her (656-674). Neptanabus explains to Olympias that the dragon will appear only in a dream (765) and then will show himself as a man. She should, moreover, not be surprised that the transformed dragon will look very much like Neptanabus

(766-767). The poet, through these events and explanations, insures that the audience knows that Neptanabus is Alexander's father; he does not leave that point to be finally clarified only in a revelation scene between Alexander and Neptanabus at the time of Neptanabus' death, as does his source.¹³ Actually it appears that Alexander knows of his parentage some time before Neptanabus' death since the topic never comes up when Alexander kills Neptanabus (1072-94).

If the poet added the material from Orosius only to provide a proper introduction for Alexander, his source is hardly compatible with his estimation of Alexander. Orosius unequivocally condemns not only Alexander's progenitors, especially Philip, but Alexander himself:

"Quibus diebus etiam Alexander Magnus, vere ille gurgis miseriarum atque atrocissimus turbo totius Orientis, est natus."¹⁴ If, on the other hand, the poet wishes to add historical veracity, as seems possible, or set up a contrast between Philip and Alexander, his use of Orosius as a basis for Philip's adventures and character poses no real problems.

The fragmentary nature of Alexander A precludes a definitive judgment on the possibility that such a contrast is being developed. We can note, however, that the poem breaks off shortly after Alexander has asked to be allowed to prove himself as a "prince in pres" (1198) and while Philip is besieging Byzantium with little success. It may be that Alexander will secure the victory, thereby providing a contrast with the impotent Philip, at least on this point. Also, if the poet continued to follow the traditional story, Alexander would be reconquering many of those lands and cities subdued by Philip in the Orosius interpolations. The more respectable methods and motivations of Alexander, again as given even in the traditional legend, would supply, in places, a contrast to Philip's

underhanded approach.

The A-poet does not accept in toto the unflattering picture of Philip painted by Orosius. He both softens and increases the condemnation. This would suggest a certain inconsistency; yet the basis upon which the changes are made remains consistent. The poet develops motivation, only generally given in Orosius, in accord with the heroic mold and then judges Philip by the implicit standards of the heroic code. Moreover, the alterations or additions made by the poet in matters not directly related to Philip are, with a few exceptions, the results of an attempt to bring them into line with the heroic framework set up in the Prologue.

Support for these statements can only be offered through a detailed comparison of Orosius and Alexander A. I must, therefore, deviate from my previously stated principle of not engaging in source studies. More than one factor has influenced the decision. First, Orosius, clearly the source used by the poet, is readily available and, more importantly, the content of the Historiarum aduersum Paganos does not differ very appreciably from MS to MS as does the other source of Alexander A--the I² version of the Historia de Preliis.

Secondly, Magoun's discussion of the poet's handling of Orosius does not do justice to the changes effected by the poet. Magoun points out, correctly, that the major departures from Orosius are the account of Philip's accession to the throne (56-99) and the two extremely conventional and colorless battle descriptions during the attack on Methone (256-275, 287-310),¹⁵ although one should also include the description of Olympias (178-199) which Magoun treats only in a brief note.¹⁶ Magoun generally denigrates these additions as the fumbling

attempts of a school-book rhetorician and poet of inexplicable motives.¹⁷ Such a judgment may be warranted for the description of Olympias. It carefully follows the prescribed head-to-toe pattern and includes, besides the repetitious, vague assertions that she is "well-shaped," such traditional details as hair like "gold-wire" (180), grey eyes, and white skin. But the description is not a completely superfluous inclusion. It sets the stage for Philip's decision to have this woman, however he must get her (209), even though one must admit that the portrait is disproportionately long in comparison to the lines devoted to Philip's attraction and consequent love (201-202). The poem, at this point, is rather a pastiche of the courtly and the heroic.

While the two battle descriptions may also have been included for the sake of convention, they do seem functional within the heroic framework which controls the poem. Finally, the account of Philip's accession to the throne, which Magoun attributes to the poet's desire to reintroduce, at all costs, Epaminondas, the Theban king,¹⁸ befits a poem in the heroic mode. Not only is a struggle for the throne more interesting than the peaceful accession briefly described in Orosius,¹⁹ it enables the poet to introduce two brief battle scenes (84-86, 94-97). This episode also prepares the way for Philip's desire to amass an army once he has become king (133-139); it was his lack of troops which forced him to seek the aid of Epaminondas. The fact that Philip turns to Epaminondas rather than someone else indicates that the poet has some sense of narrative continuity. Epaminondas had raised Philip in his court (45-53), quite in line with medieval, and earlier, practice. Philip later reciprocates the assistance given him by the Thebans when he leads them to victory against the Lacedemonians and

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Phocians (400-451). The poet here, keeping in mind the basis of the relationship between Philip and the Thebans (329-332), omits Orosius' suggestion that Philip has fostered this dispute to gain power.²⁰ He further removes Orosius' condemnation of the Thebans: that their unrestrained despotism ("immoderate Thebanorum dominatio")²¹ lay behind the enormous fines levied against the Phocians and Lacedemonians (351-377). Unfortunately, then, when Philip turns his forces against the Thebans, venting on them the anger engendered by his inability to defeat the Athenians (910-938), Philip seems particularly despicable. The poet's tone and language suggest that he accepts Philip's actions as an expression of the inexplicable but normal wrath of kings.²² He simply follows Orosius at this point, omitting only the historian's direct reference to Philip's razing of Theban temples.²³ At least he does not worsen the situation by mentioning Philip's early years in the Theban court.

Magoun implies that these three additions are the only truly noteworthy changes made by the A-poet:

Besides those already discussed, there are . . . a number of passages in which one may readily detect minor elaborations and occasional rearrangements of Orosian material. These are discussed passim in the notes to the English text.²⁴

Since Magoun fails to mention many of the elaborations and alterations actually made by the poet, it seems desirable to note them, not so much to show that the poet is "original" (a virtue quite foreign to the medieval mind), as to point out that his changes generally conform to the approach he has outlined in the Prologue.

Many of the A-poet's adaptations of the Historiarum aduersum Paganos are designed to fit Philip into the heroic mold. Philip, under the tutelage of Epaminondas, a "full hardy" king (52), grows

"full wecle and wyght of his deede, / For to abyde any beurn in battle or eles" (54-55). Orosius states only that Philip was educated ("eruditus est") by Epaminondas, "strenuissimum imperatorem et summum philosophum"²⁵ When Philip gains the throne of Macedonia, he begins waging war, not as in Orosius out of political necessity,²⁶ but because "swipe hardie is hee happes too fonde" (107); he wishes "too fonden his myght" (108). Once Philip has won a number of victories, the A-poet adds a summary (155-170) enumerating the cities conquered and elaborating upon Orosius' statement that Philip had formed an unsurpassable army.²⁷ The poet concludes the summary in particularly heroic terms:

Philip for his ferse folke in fale oper landes
Doughtye men douten, for dreedfull he seemes.
By every koste þat hee com kid was his might,
For, when he medled him moste, þe maistrie
 hee had. (167-170)

Philip thus quickly gains the reputation for might and fierceness in battle.²⁸ The desire to maintain that esteem motivates some later actions:

. . . lysten to more
How Philip chases as cheefe chaunces to fonde,
To bee adouted as deth in diverse londes. (245-247)

This is the stated reason for Philip's attack on Comothonham (Methone), an attack not given any specific motivation in Orosius.²⁹ In this way the A-poet adapts Orosius, in these early section, to develop Philip in heroic terms as he sets out to conquer not so much for the sake of power as to prove his might and gain recognition as a warrior.³⁰ From one point of view, such a man would by nature fight everyone, friend and foe alike. His attack on Erubel, the father of Olympias, after an alliance has been made (215-244) could be explained in this way. Unfortunately, the poet does not follow this possible line of reasoning.

Instead he relies on Orosius and condemns Philip for betraying the trust of Erubel (223) by "unfaithfully" seizing his father-in-law's castles and country (239).³¹ The standards of the heroic code, coupled with the facts as given by Orosius, censure Philip. Actually, the A-poet makes Philip look worse. In Orosius, Erubel agrees to the alliance, based on the marriage of Olympias and Philip, in order to extend his own empire: ". . . imperium suum se dilataturum putaret. . . ." ³² In Alexander A Erubel, knowing he cannot deny Philip, desires only to have Philip's help when he is in need and through an alliance with the mighty Macedonian king, discourage others from troubling the peace of his reign (216-222).

In the long expansion of the battle of Methone (255 ff.) the poet introduces the traditional motif of vengeance. As Magoun notes,³³ the poet stresses Philip's wrath over the loss of his eye, while Orosius mentions the wound only in passing.³⁴ But Magoun does not point out that the poet uses Philip's anger, and concomitant desire for revenge, to unify the episode. Philip is losing the battle when he is wounded (274-276); it is his implacable wrath which drives him to embolden his troops (281-290) and gain the victory.

The poet attempts to carry through Philip's loss of an eye as his motivation for coming to the aid of the Thebans in their battle with the Lacedemonians and Phocians, but does not succeed. When Philip has defeated the enemies of the Thebans, the poet states that

Lorde of Lacedemoine was þe lud þanne,
And Phocus by fin strokes freelich hee walte,
And hathe all Grece at his graunte for his grete yie. (449-451)

The poet, however, has failed to imply at any point in his account of this conflict (329-451) that Philip agrees to take the leadership of the Theban

forces and join the war because he is still angry over the injury. In fact, when Philip agrees to aid the Thebans (409) no reason is given for his action. Furthermore, the episode, as introduced, (329 ff.) seems totally unconnected with the battle of Comothonham, particularly since it does not immediately follow upon that battle but is preceded by an 18-line general description of Philip's successes.

The poet's treatment of the internecine warfare of the Thebans, Phocians, and Lacedemonians considerably expands, with heroic elements, the Orosian material. Alexander A develops Orosius' subordinate statement recounting the Thebans' initial victory³⁵ into a full-fledged fattle (339-352), a description at least as "lively"³⁶ as those in the siege of Methone. The poet also ennobles the Lacedemonians and Phocians by developing, perhaps too extensively (365-386 passim), the motivation behind Orosius' statement that because of the imposition of exorbitant fines they were forced to take refuge in arms:³⁷

For they kende þe case and kneew eche one,
But thei prestly payde that precious summe,
þei sholde leesen hur life þei þem lothe thought. . . .
As goode thought hem go till they grounde sought,
To meete with hur fomen and manlich deie,
As bee cowardly killd for cateles want. (367 ff.)

The victory of the Phocians and Lacedemonians is explained by the poet in the same terms:

þei rought lite of hur life and laiden on hard.
For fere ne fantasie faile they nolde,
þei were so hardie too harm, happes to fonde,
þat þei þat stint at hur stroke stirred no more. (383-386)

As previously noted, the A-poet does not follow Orosius in mentioning Philip's trickery ("dolus")³⁸ in fomenting disputes such as those between the Thebans, Phocians, and Lacedemonians. This is consistently the approach of Alexander A. When Philip conquers

Cappadocia, he accomplishes it through battle, and a difficult one at that (939-953). Orosius explains the victory in a different way:

Post haec in Cappodociam transiit ibique bellum
 pari perfidia gessit, captos per dolum finitimos
 reges interfecit totamque Cappadociam imperio
 Macedonia subdidit.³⁹

Perhaps the poet merely wishes to simplify the episode, but it is relevant that trickery and wiliness are generally not admired in heroic poetry.

The poet may not condone Philip's actions, particularly against the Thebans, but he does not debase him as thoroughly as Orosius. He reintroduces the acceptable, if not admirable, heroic qualities of wrath and desire for revenge to explain Philip's attack on Thebes (905-914).⁴⁰ He omits Orosius' mention of Philip's murder of his brothers.⁴¹ The controlling force behind this omission is probably simplicity of narration; but it also seems possible that the poet is simply interested only in what Philip, a warrior-king, accomplishes by feats of arms. The effect of this omission, however, is to elevate Philip from the baseness of the Orosian portrait. Finally, Philip attacks Byzantium not because, as Orosius states, he needs its wealth to carry on his looting of other cities and intends to use the city as a base of operations for piracy.⁴² Instead, the Philip of Alexander A wants that "holde"

For too keepe in that kith cumlich and riche
 All his tresour ytryed; for, in tresoun or gyle,
 That none robbed þe rink of þe riche thynges. (1230-32)

The A-poet has obviously taken his cue from Orosius in working with the idea of treasure, but Philip's motives are altered for the better. The desire to amass wealth, as previously noted,⁴³ is a vice in the

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medieval romance and earlier epic heroes are likewise never seen grubbing for riches.

As a poet writing in the heroic mode, the author seems willing enough to adapt Orosius' treatment of Philip to fit that mold, in the process masking or removing most of Orosius' condemnations of the king. Yet, in the final analysis, the good effects he achieves through the heroic framework are diminished by the inconsistency that framework causes in the portrait of Philip. Viewing himself as something of a historian, the poet feels compelled to include certain facts presented by Orosius--namely the betrayal of Erubel and the Thebans. But these actions, since they are treated in heroic terms and implicitly judged against the heroic standard already set up, force the poet to condemn Philip--who is in all other situations the conventional fierce warrior possessing the conventional admirable qualities--according to the same standard.

The poet's handling of the legendary material--the introduction of Neptanabus, Alexander's conception, birth, and early years--is generally unremarkable; however, he demonstrates noticable skill in weaving the historical material from Orosius into the legendary material, especially when he blends the flying dragon who assists Philip in battle with the historical battle against the Phocians and Lacedemonians (875-899). Oakden quite rightly states that the poet proceeds rapidly, introducing no digressions.⁴⁴ The heroic element generally fades into the background after Neptanabus' speech to his Warden (487-523). Alexander's academic rather than soldierly achievements receive emphasis in the brief account of his education (1146-51), and he rides Buccephalus not because he is fearless but because the horse becomes as

meek as a lamb or faithful dog in Alexander's presence (1177-81). The comparison of Bucephalus to a gentle god, incidentally, is the only distinctive use of figurative language in the fragment. It would appear, however, that the heroic will be revived; Alexander, shortly before the poem breaks off, asks for the opportunity to prove himself in battle.

One element stands out in Neptanabus' death scene (1072-94). The poet considerably expands and changes the emphasis of the Latin source as printed by Magoun.⁴⁵ The poem seemingly subtracts all discussion of Alexander's parentage from the scene,⁴⁶ thus allowing the emphasis to fall on Alexander's long condemnation of Neptanabus for seeking to know things not proper to man. In the light of other versions, it is possible that the poet is preparing, ironically, for Alexander's own attempt to challenge God and for his consequent death.

Oakden, in his study of the alliterative line in Middle English, and Magoun, in his edition of Alexander A and Alexander B, observe that both of these poems are particularly simple in the alliterative patterns they employ: an overwhelming number of lines follow the aa/ax form.⁴⁷ They also note that the two poets often violate the natural stress for the sake of alliteration, permitting the alliteration to fall on an unstressed word or syllable.⁴⁸ The latter fact is one of Oakden's bases for judging the A-poet "unpractised."⁴⁹ While one cannot quibble with Oakden's conclusions and judgment, a re-examination of the material indicates that the poet has less than "considerable difficulty in writing alliterative verse"⁵⁰ when handling certain material; his results are well-nigh disastrous when dealing with other material. This is not to say that his language ever achieves much more than limited colorlessness or ever escapes the extensive use of

tags, only that, at times, the A-poet can write metrically adequate alliterative poetry.

Since Oakden gives only a few examples of the lines in which alliteration falls on normally unstressed words or syllables,⁵¹ i. e., prefixes, pronouns, auxiliaries, prepositions, and the second element of a compound, I print below a complete list. Those lines which occur in direct Speech are marked "S." Some provide clearer examples than others. A number of lines could be equally explained as following the xa/ax pattern or some other (for example, 439, 576), with the unstressed alliterating syllable not functional. Magoun prefers to explain many of the lines in this manner,⁵² but it seems more probable that the poet, who follows the aa/ax pattern with such diligence, felt that these lines, which are so prevalent, would fit his favorite pattern. I have not included the quite numerous lines where extra, purely ornamental alliteration occurs, that is, lines where a naturally unstressed word alliterates but does not carry stress.⁵³

23 And Sir Philip forsoothe his frobroder hight.⁵⁴
 34 Eurydice hue hight, unkinde of her deedes;⁵⁵
 52 Epaminondas hee hyght, full hardy to meete.⁵⁵
 61 Men to holden of hym þat hed was of all.
 63 To receiven his right and reigne on his londes;
 68 For hee þat reigneth in rhyght resheveth troth.
 107 And swiþe hardie is hee happes to fonde.
 117 What he had so them hollich ifenked,
 124 Or deraine it with dintes and deedes of armes.
 156 And many mightfull menne may with hym leade.
 312 And þe menne of þat marche misproude were;
 327 To be holden of hym holly the raigne,
 355 That amounted more than they might paye
 375 To meete with hur fomen and manlich deie,⁵⁶
 396 3if þei ne have none help hem to avenge.
 406 þei to holden of hym, þe hye and the lowe,
 407 With þat hee wolde with hem wend in an haste,
 439 But Philip with his wight men þe werre gan 3eme,
 446 Of Phocus þe ferse men forthoughten hem all
 457 In no buke þat I bed when I beganne here
 469 And tolde this tydyng to þe kyng soone,
 487 What hee had þat happe hollich awaited,
 508S þat is take too þee truly too 3eme.
 512S With all þe might of hur maine mee too distroie;
 527 Hee wraught shippes of wax and rain-water hentes;
 529 Hee helde hard in his hond and his art kipes.⁵⁷
 536 Hee bihelde how þe god þat heried was in Barbre

543 His berd-heire and his hedde hett he to schave;
 555 What his menskfull menne might nought fynde
 565S Hee shall hye hym againe and help you faire
 573 In mynde that mo folke myght it arede.
 576 Too looke on Olympias þe onorable queene,
 605 When hee þese tales her till had tolde soone,
 608S What thing thurlude thy thought þo þou mee bihelde?
 618 In this blisfull borde beholde men myght
 625 Was craftely conteined þe course of þe sonne;
 629 þat wraught was of ivory wonderly faire;
 632 þe bern couth þerby boldely tell
 636 Many thinges of man myght hee showe,
 648 All þe burth of þe bern by his art one,⁵⁷
 651S "Maister," saide þat menskfull, "mee likes to knowe
 653S Wil wirch by mee; for weies mee tolde
 656 For yee ne have noght iherd holly þe wrath,
 684S When Philip þe ferefull forsake mee thynkes,
 686S Too make hym maugre his menne mee for too take
 689S Shall busk too thy borde bed by þee too ligge
 692S "Which dereworthe dright desires mee to have?"
 699S With here on his hedde and his berd also.⁵⁷
 709 Farre fro þe paleis hee fares all alone
 730 þen was Amon ywis of worship alosed
 751 þe queene tolde hym till þe tales too þe ende,
 767S Mich liche too mee by mark of my face.
 791 þis rink or þe sonnerist romes a-morrowe
 793 And far-forthe on þe daye, whan þe faire burde

807 Danne ferd Nectanabus forthe from þat place,
 811 þan fetches hee a sea-foule, faire of his wynges,
 831 þe cast of þe sonne-course was corve þerin;
 840 And what it might bee too meane þe menne gan hee ask.
 848S As mich amounteth to meane, as I may tell,
 855S And right to þe sonnerist his raigne shall last;
 869S How hue conceived had þe help of hur teene,
 871S þat is wisly too witte hee will you defend
 873S Of this mirie meting well may þou lyke,
 883 Deraide as a dragoun dreedfull in fight,
 884 Hee wendes too þe werre with Philip too holde;⁵⁷
 903 þei wern ware of his comme and his waie stoppes.
 929 And all went too wo þat they with mett.
 931 Whan he fought for þem and Phocus distriede,
 958 Of hym þe queene was ware and wendes with joye
 959 And romed right too þe rink, received him faire.
 964S þou hast medled amis, mefhynk by thy chere.
 969S I had minde on my slepe by meting of sweven;
 970S Againes mee and all men þat may thee biholde
 988 And hee holdes his hed right in hur lappe
 996S þat I was holpe by hym hem to distrie."
 1005 Philip wondred was of this werk quainte
 1031S Or hee may too his marche with his maine wende
 1034 Of hym þat hight Alisaunder holly þe birth
 1035S "Master, on molde what may mee befall?
 1050S "Father, wherfore is þat--farly too tell--
 1065S And I shall wend thee with when þe well lykes.

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- 1095 Alisaunder annone-ryght armed in hert,
1141 That on his bedsyde satt and þis sawe tolde:
1163 Hee layed þe neck oute-along and lycked his handes
1177 But meeke was of maneres without mischance.
1181 þen was þe blonk to þe beurn þat hym bistint.
1189 And his blonk behelde abated of wrath,
1193 Iche had mynde in my slepe, by metyng fownde:

A simple count of these lines establishes the poet's weakest area. Of the 88 lines which violate natural stress for the sake of alliteration, 26 appear in direct speech--either monologue or dialogue. The other 63 lines occur in description or straight narrative. Thus, while only approximately one-fifth of the poem (254 lines) is devoted to direct speech, more than one-third of the unacceptable lines fall into this area. The most noticeably defective dialogue is that between Nep-
tanabus and Olympias (675-706) where six lines violate natural stress. The poet is least practiced in rendering speech in alliterative form.

Determining the poet's strongest area also presents few problems. In those sections of the poem where he has very freely expanded or originally added to Orosius the poet has, with one exception, only minor difficulties in aligning stress and alliteration. The description of Olympias (177-199), the Comothonham episode (255-310), the battle between the Thebans, Lacedemonians, and Phocians (337-352), and, less significantly, the poet's Prologue (1-10) are all exempt from violations of natural stress. In fact, the entire episode of the war between the Lacedemonians, Phocians, and Thebans (329-392), which is a very free handling of Orosius, contains only two defective lines.

The first conclusion suggested by the preceding is that the poet, when working on his own rather than attempting to follow closely a given text, manages the alliterative line with relative success. This conclusion, however, requires modification. The poet's narration of Philip's accession to the throne of Macedonia (47-107), another addition to Orosius, contains five faulty lines. This is little better than the only comparable episode in the poem⁵⁸ where he follows the 12 Historia de Preliis quite closely: Alexander's taming of Bucephalus (1138-99).

In fact, it is somewhat less effective than a passage which follows Orosius quite closely (900-953). In the 62 lines of the Bucephalus episode 6 of the lines handle the alliteration poorly.⁵⁹ Narrative is not necessarily his strong point.

All of this data indicates that the poet's forte is actually description, but only description of a particular kind. An examination of a distinctly non-heroic description--that of Neptanabus' astrological implements (614-637)--uncovers five lines which violate stress to achieve alliteration. On the other hand, in those passages which are primarily or entirely devoted to descriptions of battle, even within the relatively unsuccessful narration of Philip's accession, no violations occur (77-86, 89-99, 255-310, 337-352). The portrait of Olympias is also free of awkward lines. The conclusion is obvious. When the poet presents conventional descriptions, where he most probably has available to him a set of formulas, he has no difficulty with the metrics of the alliterative line. When handling material outside this area, that is, material in most cases outside the heroic tradition, he is forced back on his own devices and does not do as well. This also explains why his treatment of Philip's attack on Thebes and Cappadocia (900-953), quite indebted to Orosius, is better than his treatment of Philip's accession (47-107), his own addition, and Alexander's taming of Bucephalus (1138-99), which follows the Historia de Preliis. How much he owes to his source has little to do with his success; the significant factor is that lines 900-953 deal with more conventional heroic material than the other two episodes.

To generalize, then, the poet is often more adept at conjoining alliteration and stress when presenting material he himself has

added to his sources. But he is consistently better only when he probably has at hand a store of formulas, particularly for heroic descriptions, though also for the conventional portrait of Olympias, to fall back on.

Alexander B is even less amenable to literary consideration than Alexander A. The B-fragment, relating events from the middle of Alexander's career, is singularly free of auctorial comment, direct or indirect, which might provide a clue to the poet's intentions. Also, concerning the poet's interpretation of Alexander's life, we of course have no indication of where he has been or where he is going. The poet simply narrates Alexander's encounters with the Gymnosophists, the disappearing trees protected by flaming birds, and Dindimus, king of the Brahmins. The fragment, then, presents a series of three episodes but a well-unified, balanced narration results: the magical trees function as an interlude between the face-to-face debate of Alexander and the Gymnosophists and the epistolary debate of Alexander and Dindimus. Furthermore, each of the three sections is surrounded by a few lines in which Alexander, who is accused by both his opponents of being a narrowly worldly man, is seen "riding forth" from land to land. It comes as no surprise, then, that the scribe who inserted what we now call Alexander B into the French Li Roman d'Alixandre himself viewed it as a "prossesse" of single episode.⁶⁰

Thematic content also unifies the fragment, but not on the basis advanced by one commentator:

All three episodes of this fragment are concerned with nature. Dindimus argues for nature, Alexander for the active man's pleasure in change of seasons, bright clear weather.⁶¹

While this explanation would also take care of the magical trees and the life led by the Gymnosophists as well as the Brahmins, it hardly focusses on the thrust of the arguments presented by the representatives of these two peoples. Alexander, moreover, hardly confines his rebuttals of Dindimus to lyrical revelling in the joys of the weather, and he never mentions nature, except metaphorically, in speaking to the Gymnosophists. It is true that all three episodes have connections with the natural, but the natural is continually connected with or defined by the supernatural. The Gymnosophists, Alexander, and Dindimus all take the position that their mode of life is justified by supernatural goals or injunctions. The marvelous trees are supernatural in two senses: on the one hand, they are literally supernatural in that they are beyond the natural; on the other hand--and analogous to the arguments proffered in the other episodes--their activity is protected by a supernatural power:

And siþen sent was a vois sone fro hevene,
þat non trinde þe tres last þei taried were. (131-132)

The Gymnosophists, like the Brahmins, lead a purely natural life:

We ben sengle of ussilt and semen ful bare,
Nouht welde we now but naked we wende;
And þat we happili her haven of kynde
May no man but God maken us tine. (33-36)

In answer to Alexander's "cortais" (64) offer to give them whatever boon they desire, the Gymnosophists ironically ask for eternal life upon earth. When Alexander explains that such lies beyond his power, for he has "no lordschipe of life to lengþe. . . daies" (76) even his own, the Gymnosophists clarify the reasons behind their mode of life:

Seg . . . syn þou so knowist
þat þe is demed þe dep to dure nouth longe,

Whi farest þou so fihtinge folk to distroie,
 And for to winne þe word wendest so romme?
 How miȝht þou kepe þe of sckape with skile
 and with troupe
 Aȝeins ryht to bireve rengnus of kingus? (77-82)

Not only is Alexander going "aȝeins ryht" in conquering other nations, he is misusing his time, storing up things of this world instead of preparing for the next. Alexander counters in the same terms. While he would prefer to cease his conquests and return home (92-94), to do so would "wrapede Drihten" (88) who has ordained that he be emperor of the world (85-90) and from whom he receives all that he has (84). Alexander uses a metaphor from nature to explain his condition; he is like the sea which would remain calm but is stirred by the winds (91-98).

Alexander further justifies his life by arguing that it is also a "natural" one, completely in accord with the design of God. If God had made all men equal, then men could live without a ruler. But God has chosen some men to be masters over "mene peple" (108), those given less "wordlich wisdame and wittus" (102). Alexander has been "marked to be most of all opure" (109), and in fulfilling this destiny he acts only as a "servaunt hende" (100). His actions are thus endorsed, indeed commanded, by the divine plan, and his "natural life" is correct when seen in terms of the supernatural.

The arguments of Dindimus are, in essence, a detailed expansion of those presented by the Gymnosophists. Alexander, on the other hand, shifts his focus. Although the basis of his defense continues to be the principle of following God's decrees, he no longer concentrates on justifying his own actions; his defense broadens to vindicate the way of life of the Greeks, that is, the life of action. On the basis of "unnaturalness" he directly attacks the life of the Brahmins, as he had

not done earlier with the Gymnosophists.

Dindimus' arguments constantly revert to the supernatural:

We bredde breþurne in God, Bragmanus pore,
Leden clanliche our life and libben as simple.
We ne wilne in þis world to wolde no more,
But as we simpleliche our life sostaine mowe. (287-290)

What so we worchen in þis worlde or waken or slepe,
Or in erþeliche ese eten oþur drinke
For His sake þat it sente soþle we worchin,
To sustaine His servantis as Himsilf likus.
We hopen have þe lif þat come schal heraftur,
And derely wipoute deþ dure schal evere. (359-364)

For be he burn oþur burde þat hure bodi hihten
Oþirwise þan it was in þis word schape,
þey gaynsain hure Saviour þat hem so made
And ben aschamed of His schap and schewen hem
ellus. (418-421)

Sin we ben breþeren of brod brouht into þis worde,
Alle corven of a king þat kid is in blisse,
Whi scholde any schalk þat God schop on erþe
Have maistrie of men more þan anopir? (430-433)

Godus worþliche Word, as we wel trowen,
Is Sone soþliche of Man þat in Himsilf dwelleþ,
By which molde is ymaad and man upon erþe
And al þat weiþes in þis word scholde wip fare;
Al bestur þerby þat lif bere mowe
Ben soþliche isustained as Himsilf likus;
þat ilke worþliche Word we worschipen alle,
And Hit lelliche loven as our lif likus.
God is spedful in speche and a spryt clene,
Boþe blessed and blyþe þat blendep alle sorwe.
He clameþ nouht but clenness and clepeþ to is joie
Clene-minded men þat meke ben founde. (615-626)

We do þe, mankouþe king, to keene and to here
þat in þis wastinge word we ne wone nouht evere;
For erþe is nouht our eritage þat evere schal laste,
Ne we ne ben nouht ibor to abide þerinne. (979-982)

The natural life of the Brahmins is the only proper one because it reflects the will of God, enables them to avoid sin, and gains its adherents everlasting bliss as a reward for a life free from worldly concerns. The Brahmins are the Biblical lilies of the field.

Dindimus condemns Alexander and the Greeks on precisely this same principle, a supernatural one. Their lives, directed toward subduing the things of this world, take no cognizance of the next life:

For sake of 3oure Savyour 3e ne soffre no paine
But liven in 3oure likinge and lupurlicie wirchen.
3e waken for wikkedness and wirchen but ille. (784-786)

For 3e ben covaitouse kid and kunne nouht blinne,
But evere wenden to winne wordliche godus,
And al is, burnus, aboute 3our body for to fede.⁶² (803-805)

Although the Greeks' worship of many gods is wrong on theoretical grounds for it denies the existence of only one true God (641-642), it is still more to be condemned because it leads to the unnatural sacrifice of living beings (540-543, 607-608) and draws the Greeks into all possible sins:

As many mihtese godus as 3e on mold serve,
As fale painus in fir 3our fallus to drie;
For 3our ydil idolus don 3ou ille wirche:
Summe to lechorous lust 3our likinge turneþ,
Summe 3our strenkþen to strive and straiten
3our minde,
And somme eggen in ese to eten and to drinke.⁶³ (752-756)

This "unnatural" life will result in eternal punishment:

þanne [after death] schulle 3e for 3our sinne
soffre paine. (635)

But, burnus, be 3e ful sur, þo bostful dedes, --
Wherfor 3e hold 3ou her hiest on erþe, --
Schal 3ou procre to pryde and to no profit ellus,
But skaþe for 3oure unskile whan 3e skapen
hennus. (1017-20)

Although Alexander is angered because Dindimus has attacked his gods (814-815), he answers the Brahmin ruler in Brahmin terms. It is the Brahmin's life which is "unnatural," against the decree of God:

Forþy us kenneþ our kinde to accorde in trowþe,

In swiche lawus to live þat longen to Gode,
 For to sowe and to sette in þe sad erthe
 And oþur wordliche werk wisly to founde. (910-913)

The Brahmins, by not sowing, hunting, and generally enjoying the possible gifts of the earth, are the ones who actually "gaynsain" (418) God:

And 3if 3e wonde of þat won to winne 3our fode,
 3e schulle be demed þat 3e don dispit to þo kindus.
 þanne schewe 3e to hur Schappere schame for His
 sondus. . . . (957-959)

Indeed, the fact that they live in poverty indicates God's displeasure with them (960-966, 1120-21).

Alexander also incorporates a more humanistic approach into his arguments. The Brahmins live unnaturally in the sense that they fare no better than beasts (858-867) and make no attempt to improve their lot (872-875). Yet, they can be "exkused" (851) since they have no iron to make tools and thus must live a life of "wante and . . . nede" (850-857). Even this line of reasoning takes a supernatural turn. Because a life of poverty is forced upon them, they should not believe that God will praise them for it, especially since they revel in their sorrowful life (876-879). Similarly, their freedom from sin, in particular lust, does not redound to their credit; their poor food makes them chaste. Since no free will is involved, their sinlessness deserves no commendation (882-895). Alexander, in stressing free will here and elsewhere (930-944), anticipates Dindimus' argument that the Brahmins have chosen the better way of life (996-1004).

Alexander summarizes and forcefully sets forth his point of view as he concludes his last letter:

But lawe lereþ us and skile þat 3e ben leþur alle
 And mow for 3oure mischef no mede have;
 For it comeþ 3ou of kinde in care to libbe--

Sin 3e wonen in þat won þere wante is of goodus--
 þanne, seggus, semeþ hit nouht þat 3e so wirchen
 For sake of þe same God þat sittus in blisse.
 þerefor to wo þat is wers wenden 3e schulle
 Whanne 3e parten fro þis paine þat pinncheþ 3ou here.
 þanne be 3e men upon molde most to bewepe,
 þat here to schame ben schape and ay schulle aftur. (1100-09)

Mede mow 3e of God in no manere fonge.
 3e ben unbled of lif; for, burnus, y warne
 þat 3e holden so her holsome dedes
 Gret wante is of wo and wikkede paine,
 þe which þe heie godus haten and hure hole peple. (1123-27)

Alexander's arguments reflect the parable of the talents and the Biblical injunction to go forth and subdue the earth. His defense is as supernaturally oriented as Dindimus' attack.

While some of the individual points made by Alexander and Dindimus are at times confused and self-contradictory, probably because of misplaced lines,⁶⁴ the arguments as a whole are quite cogent. The correspondence between the two men is certainly more successful as a debate than the parallel on in Wars since they answer each other's claims from a logical or theological point of reference. This is particularly true of Alexander who, in contrast to the Alexander of Wars, does not engage in condescension, name-calling, and purely petulant outbursts. While he employs a bit of sarcasm (828-839), so does Dindimus (255-286). Because the two opponents, and their arguments, are quite evenly balanced, it seems reasonable to view at least this portion of the fragment as belonging to the debate tradition, rather than as functioning in a purely didactic manner. Both positions have had proponents. Wells states that this section of the poem is "contention literature" and that "Without doubt the original intention was to instruct."⁶⁵ Certainly, in essence, the material in the Alexander-Dindimus exchange is didactic, but the balanced method of presentation suggests that Skeat's

opinion on the intention of the author is the more correct one:

There are two leading ideas in it. The former is, the common and favourite contrast between the Active Life and the Contemplative Life, which so often meets us in mediaeval literature; and the latter, the contrast between the Christian life and that of the heathen worshippers of idols. The arguments are so managed that the bias of one counteracts that of the other The author of this ingenious arrangement strove rather for oratorical effect than sought to inculcate a lesson. To regard the various arguments in this light is to regard them rightly. It is merely a question of seeing what can be said on both sides.⁶⁶

With regard to metrics, Oakden finds Alexander B more accomplished than Alexander A, although on the basis of alliterative patterns--primarily the extensive use of the aa/ax type--and stress patterns he concludes that they are the work of the same author.⁶⁷ He evidently does not consider the great difference in the frequency of the aaa/ax pattern--eighty times in Alexander A versus twenty-eight times in Alexander B--a stylistic characteristic significant enough to suggest different authorship.⁶⁸

In technique it [Alexander B] is superior to Alexander A. There is a greater control over the metre and less use of tags to fill out the lines; there are fewer otiose adjectives and the epithets are in general not so vague and colourless.⁶⁹

One finds no reason to quibble with most of Oakden's judgments, but the subject matter--logical moral or theological argument--militates against tags and ineffective adjectives, and simply produces fewer epithets. On the other hand, a re-examination of Alexander B shows that in terms of the violation of natural stress--the main basis for judging Alexander A unpracticed--the poet of Alexander B fares little better. There are seventy-one instances in 1139 lines (6.2 percent) where the poet alliterates on normally unstressed words and syllables, almost

exactly comparable to the eighty-eight cases in 1247 lines of Alexander A. The only possible significant difference is that while the A-poet seems less adept at rendering speech (twenty-six instances in 254 lines or 10.2 percent) than narrative (sixty-two instances in 933 lines or 6.2 percent),⁷⁰ the B-poet handles them about equally well: sixty-one cases in 981 lines of speech (6.3 percent)⁷¹ and ten cases in 158 lines of narrative (6.2 percent). In Alexander B, however, the lines devoted to narrative do not provide a good sample since about half are brief, quite repetitive preludes and conclusions to the debates. There is, however, a passage of some sixty-four lines (111-174)--the episode of the magical trees and Alexander's entry into the land of the Brahmins--which is uninterrupted narrative. In this passage there are some six cases of alliteration on unaccented words (9.4 percent).⁷² One might suggest, from this very scanty evidence, that the A- and B-poets are more adept at what they do most, respectively, narrative and speech, although, as noted above,⁷³ other factors are relevant for judging the A-poet's work.

Ultimately no hard and fast statements can be made about Alexander A and Alexander B. We have only small portions of what must have been an extremely long poem (or poems) upon which to judge. As they stand, these fragments are not very remarkable as poetry. They remain of interest as minor monuments to the widespread popularity of the Alexander legend in medieval England.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹The fragments are preserved in unique MSS of the Bodleian library; Alexander A in MS. Greaves 60 and Alexander B in MS. Bodley 264. Alexander B is sometimes known as Alexander and Dindimus.

²Magoun, pp. 78, 100-101; Skeat, William of Palerne, Early English Text Society, E.S. 1 (London, 1867), p. xxx; Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, pp. xx, xxix.

³Magoun, p. vii.

⁴Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, p. xxx. While it may seem that Skeat has forgotten Layamon's Brut (c. 1200), his qualifications--"unmixed with rime" and "of the usual type"--do fairly exclude that poem since it employs rhyme in places and contains a number of half-lines with three or even four stresses. Hulbert, "Quatrains," p. 81, also remarks on the significance of the early date of composition for Alexander A and Alexander B.

⁵Oakden, I, 131-182 passim; II, 24-28.

⁶Magoun, pp. 112-113. Skeat, in his edition of Alexander A, argued for common authorship with William of Palerne, pp. xxx-xxxiii. In his edition of Alexander and Dindimus, however, he rejected that theory in favor of common authorship for the two Alexander fragments, following M. Trautmann, Über verfasser und entstehungszeit einiger alliterierender gedichte des altenglischen (Halle, 1876), pp. 3-17. Oakden, I, 248 takes the same position, while Cary, Alexander, p. 49, follows Magoun.

⁷Magoun, p. 18, gives evidence that Orosius was indeed the source.

⁸Cary, Alexander, pp. 13-14, 91-92.

⁹Magoun, pp. 12-13. For a further discussion of the preservation of the MS see Magoun, pp. 11-13 and Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, pp. vii-x.

¹⁰Such is the judgment of Oakden, II, 28 and Magoun, pp. 110-111.

¹¹Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, p. 239.

¹²Oakden, II, 24 notes the poet's historical outlook but does not develop it.

¹³See the I² *Historia de Preliis* as printed by Magoun, p. 163. As Magoun notes, p. 116, this is, however, not the MS used by the poet.

¹⁴Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos*, ed. Carolus Zangemeister (Vindobonae, 1882), III, 7.5.

(In those days, also, Alexander the Great, truly that whirlpool of afflictions and most cruel eddy in all the East, was born.)

¹⁵Magoun, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶Magoun, p. 221.

¹⁷Magoun, pp. 20-21 and notes passim.

¹⁸Magoun, p. 20.

¹⁹*Ipsa autem Alexandro scelere Eurydices matris occiso, quamvis ea iam commisso adulterio et altero primum filio interfecto filiaque viduata generi nuptias mariti morte pepigisset, compulsus a populo regnum, quod paruo occisi fratris filio tuebatur, suscepit. Orosius, III, 12.3.*

(Moreover, when Alexander the brother of Philip and ruler of Macedonia before Philip himself had been killed through the wickedness of his mother Eurydice--although, after she had already committed adultery and had first killed one son and had made her daughter a widow, she had contracted marriage with her cousin on the death of her husband--Philip, being forced to do so by the people, took over the kingdom which he was guarding for the son of his murdered brother.)

²⁰*Quarum dum insanas conuersationes Phillippus ueluti e specula obseruat auxiliumque semper inferioribus suggerendo contentiones, bellorum fomites, callidus doli artifex fouet, uictos sibi pariter uictoresque subiecit. Orosius, III, 12.11.*

(While Philip, as from a watchtower observed their foolish associations and always, as a skillful contriver of trickery, favored the weaker by fostering disputes, the kindling wood of war, he subjected to himself both the conquered and the conquerors alike.)

²¹Orosius, III, 12.12.

²²See above pp. 47-48.

²³. . . *templa quoque uniuersa subuertit spoliauitque. . . .*
Orosius, III, 12.17.

²⁴Magoun, p. 21

²⁵Orosius, III, 12.2. (. . . a most vigorous general and a very distinguished philosopher. . .)

²⁶Qui cum foris concursu exsurgentium undique hostium, domi autem deprehensarum saepe insidiarum metu fatigaretur, primum bellum cum Atheniensibus gessit. Orosius, III, 12.4.

(He, since he was harrassed from without by the attack of the enemy arising on all sides and at home by fear of plots which he often detected, waged war first with the Athenians.)

²⁷Ita Thessalis ex inproviso praeoccupatis atque in potestatem redactis, iungendo equitum peditumque fortissimas turmas et copias inuictissimum fecit exercitum. Orosius, III, 12.7.

(Thus, after taking the Thessalians by surprise and reducing them under his power, he formed an invincible army by joining the strongest divisions and forces of their cavalry and infantry.)

²⁸See 115-116, 201, 217, 323-324, 400-401.

²⁹Deinde Philippus, cum Methonam urbem oppugnaret, ictu sagittae oculum perdidit. Orosius, III, 12.9.

(Then Philip, when he was besieging the city of Methone, was struck by an arrow and lost an eye.)

³⁰See also 939-942.

³¹Qui Aruba cum per hoc, quod societatem Macedonum ad finitatem regis paciscebatur, imperium suum se dilataturum putaret, per hoc deceptus amisit priuatusque in exilio consenuit. Orosius, III, 12.8.

(This Arubas, although he thought by this action--namely, making an alliance with the Macedonians through his martial relationship with the king--that he would extend his own empire, was deceived and failed in this, and spent his old age as a private citizen in exile.)

³²Orosius, III, 12.8.

³³Magoun, p. 21.

³⁴See n. 29 above.

³⁵Huic autem ad obtinendam totius Graeciae dominationem

immoderata Thebanorum dominatio facultatem dedit, qui vuictos Lacedaemonios ac Phocenses, caedibus etiam rapinisque confectos, cum insuper in communi Graeciae concilio tanta pecuniae multa onerauisent, quantam illi soluere nullo modo possent, ad arma confugere coegerunt. Orosius, III, 12.12.

(Moreover, the unrestrained despotism of the Thebans gave Philip the opportunity to obtain power over all Greece; for after conquering the Lacedaemonians and the Phoceans, who were already crushed by slaughter and rapine, in addition the Thebans, in the common council of Greece, had burdened them with such a great pecuniary fine as they were in no way able to pay, that they forced the Lacedaemonians and Phoceans to take refuge in arms.)

³⁶Magoun, p. 21.

³⁷See n. 35 above.

³⁸Orosius, III, 12.11. See above, p. 205, n. 20.

³⁹Orosius, III, 12.18.

(After these accomplishments, Philip crossed over into Cappadocia and there carried on war with equal perfidy. Through trickery, he captured the neighboring kings and killed them, and brought Cappadocia under the rule of Macedonia.)

⁴⁰Orosius offers no clear motivation for the attack.

⁴¹Inde post caedes incendia depraedationesque in sociis urbibus gestas parricidia in fratres conuertit, quos patri ex nouerca genitos cum coheredes regni uereretur, interficere adgressus est. Eum autem unum ex hic occidisset, euo in Olynthum confugerunt: quam mox Philippus hostiliter adgressus urbem antiquissimam et florentissimam, caedibus ac sanguine repletam opibus hominisque uacuauit, abstractos etiam fratres supplico et neci dedit. Orosius, III, 12.19.

(Then, after carrying on slaughters, conflagrations, and plunderings in the cities of the allies, he turned murder upon his brother whom, since he feared them as co-heirs of his kingdom (for they were born to his father from his stepmother), he attempted to kill. But when he had killed one of these, two fled to Olynthus, which Philip at once approached with hostile intent. After felling this most ancient and flourishing city with slaughter and blood, he emptied it of its resources and population; and he also carried off his brothers and gave them over to torture and death.)

⁴²Sed haec cum per alizuantas Graeciae ciuitates exerciusset et tamen omnes metu premeret, coniciens ex praeda paucorum opes omnium, ad perficiendam aequalem in uniuersis uastationem utili emolumento necessariam maritimam urbem ratus, Byzantium, nobilem ciuitate, aptissimam iudicauit, ut receptaculum sibi terra marique fieret, eamque obsistentem ilico obsidione cinxit. Orosius, III, 13.1

(When he had carried on these operations in a goodly number of Greek cities and nevertheless was pressing them all with fear, estimating the wealth of all from the booty of a few and thinking that a maritime city of profitable wealth was necessary to carry out a similar devastation in all the cities, he judged Byzantium--that noble and endowed city--to be the most suitable base for his operations by land and sea; and, when it resisted, he immediately surrounded it with a siege.)

⁴³See above, pp. 44-45.

⁴⁴Oakden states that the poet "tells the story with gusto and zest nowhere pausing to moralise," II, 25. There is, however, one very brief moralizing comment:

Whoso weldes a wrong, þe worsse hym betides,
For hee þat reigneth in ryght resheveth troth. (87-88)

⁴⁵Magoun, p. 163. Once again it is necessary to remark that the source actually used by the poet may have differed.

⁴⁶There is a break in the fragment at this point, but it seems to fall at a point where such discussion would not be included.

⁴⁷Oakden, I, 182; Magoun, pp. 96-97.

⁴⁸Oakden, I, 178, 248; II, 27; Magoun, p. 98.

⁴⁹Oakden, II, 27. Magoun, p. 96, refuses to pass judgment.

⁵⁰Oakden, II, 27.

⁵¹Oakden, I, 178-179.

⁵²A few lines, noted in the text, are explained by Magoun, pp. 96-97, as having no connecting alliteration in the second half-line. One can agree that this is as possible as adding an extra weighted syllable to the second half-line, but in either case the line is faulty. I have preferred the latter course, again on the basis of the poet's fondness for the aa/ax pattern.

⁵³For example, 309, 410, 535.

⁵⁴In all cases (e. g. 278) the poet, properly, alliterates on the "s" of "forsoothe."

⁵⁵The poet normally alliterates "h" only with "h"; for example, 61, 117, 119.

⁵⁶Compare 97.

⁵⁷Magoun, p. 97, prefers to see this line as having no alliteration in the second half-line.

⁵⁸It is comparable in the sense that it is the only single episode of approximately the same length not riddled with speech or description, although some speech does occur.

⁵⁹Although twelve of the lines are devoted to speech, only one of the lines which strain stress--1193--appears in the speech section.

⁶⁰See above, pp. 174-175.

⁶¹Flynn, pp. 144-145.

⁶²See also 1007-20, 1054-63.

⁶³See also 550-567, 631-636, 645-706.

⁶⁴Magoun, pp. 234-240 passim.

⁶⁵John Edwin Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English (New Haven, 1916-1952), p. 104.

⁶⁶Skeat, Alexander and Dindimus, p. xviii; cf. Oakden, II, 28.

⁶⁷Oakden, I, 247-248.

⁶⁸Oakden, I, 181-182.

⁶⁹Oakden, II, 28.

⁷⁰I have included passages of description as part of the 993 lines.

⁷¹"Speech" includes the letter.

⁷²128, 133, 148, 155 (the poet always alliterates "h" with "h"; for example, 51, 863), 163.

⁷³See above, pp. 193-195.

CHAPTER V

THE PROSE LIFE OF ALEXANDER

The only major non-poetic Middle English Alexander romance is The Prose Life of Alexander, sometimes referred to as the Thornton Alexander because of its unique preservation in the Thornton Manuscript, A. 5. 2.¹ Composed about 1425 in the North of England, possibly East Yorkshire,² the Prose Life shares a common source with the alliterative Wars of Alexander: the I³, or possibly I^{3a}, version of the Historia de Preliis. While the Prose Life follows its Latin source quite faithfully⁴--a cause for criticism by some⁵--a number of details are changed and some additions and deletions made;⁶ but, more importantly, the author renders his original into clear, effective Middle English prose.

Scholarship, of any kind, on the Prose Life is negligible. Until Marjorie Neeson's as yet unpublished critical edition of 1970, which includes a thorough study of structure and style, the work had been ignored, except for passing mention in surveys of Middle English literature or studies of the Alexander tradition in literature. This neglect may be attributable to the fact that no complete critical edition existed before Neeson. J. S. Westlake edited the text for the EETS in 1913, but the proposed introduction and notes, in fact all apparatus, were never completed. Cary's statements summarize well the general consensus of opinion on the Prose Life and explain why no one, for

some fifty years, felt inclined to complete Westlake's work. In Cary's view, the Prose Life is "an uninteresting translation of the I^{3a} Historia de Preliis it is close to its original, and there is little indication of imagination or originality on the part of the translator."⁷

Neeson's summary, supported by intensive critical examination,⁸ shows the wrong-headedness of such a judgment based, as it is, on the very non-medieval requirement of originality:

The prose is simple, direct, and stamped with a masculinity in both its diction and rhythm. Though virtually unadorned, it is by no means monotonous or unartistic; it is rhythmical without accidentally slipping into verse forms. It belongs to that long tradition of English prose depicted by R. W. Chambers in his famous essay and thus reflects the style that fashioned prose that went before it It avoids those prevalent weaknesses that mar the prose of the period, i. e., the faults resulting from an elementary and often hurried approach and a tendency to treat each clausal unit separately. It is a prose that is balanced and decorative without becoming precious or overworked. It is a clean clear style, sturdy and strong in character. It is a prose that is weighty enough to support the grandeur of its imperial subject, yet flexible enough to hold the reader's attention while an excellent narrative is told and an exciting yarn is spun.⁹

The Thornton MS. is a miscellany, containing primarily romances, short English and Latin poems which are mainly religious in nature, saints' lives, moral treatises, charms, and medical remedies.¹⁰ The Prose Life, the first selection in the MS, seems to have been considered of a kind with the other romances included--The Morte Arthure, The Romance of Octavian, The Romance of Sir Isambrace, The Romance of Diocletian, Sir Degrevant, Sir Eglamour, The Awntyers of Arthur, and The Romance of Sir Percival--since these all appear at the beginning of the MS, with only a few scribblings and five very short selections interrupting the sequence; no romances are found after

this group ends. Moreover, with the exception of Sir Isambrace, the romances immediately following the Prose Life all deal with major "historical" figures--Arthur, Octavian, and Diocletian. This latter grouping lends indirect scribal support to the most noticeable feature of the Prose Life: while modern scholars classify it as a romance, the author's handling of Alexander and his adventures is altogether more in the mode of biography and history. Such is not surprising. Both the history and the usage of the terms "roman" and "romance" in the Middle Ages indicate that no great weight was consistently placed on a distinction between biographical, historical, and purely "romantic" subject matter and treatment.

The opening of the Prose Life--up to the point that Alexander pushes Neptanabus into the ditch to kill him--is missing. Consequently we have no "title" or prologue which might suggest the author's explicit intention and approach. We do, however, have the conclusion:

Alexander was a man bot of a comon stature, wit a lange nekke, Faire eghne & glad, his chekes ruddy, and all þe remenant of his lymmes ware faire & semely & lyke vn-till a lorde. He ouercome all men & neuer was ouercomen. The lenthe of his lyffe was xxxij 3ere, twa & thritty 3ere & seuen monethes. Fra þe twentyd 3ere of his birthe he gaffe hym to werre, and in twelue 3ere he conquered all þe werlde, and made subiect untill hym alkyn nacyonns. Seuen monethes he ristede hym. He was borne on þe vij kl of January, and dyed on þe vij kl of August. He byggid also in his lyfe xij grete citee3 þat hider-to-warde3 bene enhabyt, and þis are þaire names. First Alexander þat es called yprysilicas, þe secund Alexander es called Bepyporum, þe thrid Alexander es callede Sithia, þe ferthe Alexander es called Bicontristi, þe fifte Alexander es called Deraucton, þe sext Alexander es called Buctiphalon, þe seuent es called vnder þe ryuer of Tygre, þe aghtend New Babiloyne, þe nyend Aptreadam, þe tend Messagetes, þe elleuend Ypsyacon, þe twelfed es called Egipt.

Explicit vita Alexandry magni conquestoris.

Here ende3 þe lyf of gret Alexander conquerour of all þe worlde.

(pp. 114-115)¹¹

These concluding words have the ring of historical biography and remind one strongly of the Old English Chronicles.

No suggestion that the Prose Life is historical and biographical in approach should be taken to mean that the author has excluded romance material. He retains those elements which have come to be considered necessary parts of the romance: marvelous, exotic events and descriptions, wondrous feats and adventures, and the setting in a remote, or at least non-realistic, land.¹² In fact, the Prose Life, in content, differs in no significant way from the other two major Middle English Alexander romances, Kyng Alisaunder and Wars.¹³ We follow, from the point that the MS takes up, the early adventures of Alexander and his ascension to the throne of Macedonia, his several meetings with or dreams of various gods, his campaigns against Darius and Porus, his various encounters with the strange animals and people of the East--particularly Dindimus, leader of the Brahmins--and finally his death by poisoning, which has been prophesized from the very beginning of his career. The treatment of his death includes Alexander's attempt to drown himself in the Euphrates, his last will and testament, and his splendid burial in Alexandria by his heart-broken, loyal, and now leaderless and therefore doomed followers. All that differs is the mode of handling this material. While the marvelous, miraculous, and exotic are not deleted, the focus of the work falls on recording the life of a great man; but Alexander does not become, as he does in Wars, an epic superman. He is brave, magnanimous, loyal, and wise, yet he remains just a man and is treated as such. He has been selected by Providence to accomplish great things; in that way the prophecies, dreams, visions, and omens are all relevant and functional.

Nonetheless, Alexander does not appropriate to himself more than the normal abilities of a great man. The author keeps his portrayal on the realistic level and, furthermore, emphasizes one particular, practical aspect of Alexander: his great leadership and the qualities which lie behind it.

Although the author of the Prose Life retains the "predestination" of Alexander, both to be conqueror of the world and to die an early death, this element of the legend is somewhat de-emphasized. There are no fewer meetings with gods, no fewer omens, no fewer dreams than in Wars; but the ever-present comments of leaders and peoples in Wars, to the effect that to stand against Alexander would be foolhardy because he is destined to conquer all nations, are missing from the Prose Life.¹⁴ Moreover, the author does not in any consistent fashion apply the theme of pride and Fortune, which forms the basis for the Darius, Porus and, to a lesser extent, Dindimus sections, to Alexander himself and his fated early death. The author commits himself to no moral comment on this topic, even when Alexander decides to explore the sky.¹⁵ Many of the suggestions, also found in Wars, that Alexander has fallen prey to pride appear here, but no overt pattern develops. Undoubtedly a medieval audience would recognize the challenge to divine prerogative offered by certain actions of Alexander, but the author allows the irony to remain latent. In fact, by differing in some details from Wars, the moralistic interpretation and condemnation of Alexander fades into the background. Such is the effect of the poet's offering no comments on Alexander's investigation of sky and sea, having Candace send presents to Amon instead of simply denying the need for either Alexander or herself to sacrifice to higher powers

(p. 97), toning down the inscriptions on pillars erected by Alexander to make them seem less boastful, and omitting entirely Aristotle's ambiguous letter to Alexander. The conclusion of the poem, with its insistence on the bond between Alexander and his men, suggests that the author's real interest lies not in the moral ramifications of Alexander's deeds but in the more practical, humanisitic sphere of Alexander's abilities as a leader of men.

All the major departures of the Prose Life from Wars are in details. Although Flynn states that the author of the Prose Life tends to condense his source while the poet of Wars expands it,¹⁶ this is not always the case. In a number of places the Prose Life, perhaps simply because it has the freedom of prose rather than the confining form of alliterative poetry, enlarges upon the source, at least further than Wars. The Prose Life thereby clarifies some points which remain puzzling in the alliterative poem. Thus we are given Lesyas' actual insult to fully explain Alexander's mortal attack on him (p. 10). We learn that Jaudas of Jerusalem refuses to send Alexander the requested provisions because he cannot break his solemn oath to Darius (p. 16). Alexander meets the god Senochosis in a cave for that is where the gods eat and take council; further, this god rebukes Alexander for failing to build a temple to him not merely because he deserves it as a god but because it has been through his power, as divine ruler of earth, that Alexander has conquered the world (p. 102).

But the added, or in some cases modified, details function in a more important way. They lend the aura of factual, historical recording. In doing so, they illuminate the attitude of the writer; he serves not only as biographer, but historian, and, to a certain extent,

geographer. Neeson points out that the author's history and geography are confused;¹⁷ yet that is hardly the point. However faulty his information, he strives to be accurate and detailed whether dealing with a battle, a journey, a country, or a person. Consequently he often names people and places which remain anonymous in the other English romances. Arttes is named as the messenger to Alexander who reports the difficulties of Melager and the troops, after the death of Sampson, during the Foraging of Gadirs (p. 16); the identification of these two peers is likewise peculiar to this work. The Prose Life specifies that Primus and Antyochus are the lords Darius asks for help to fend off Alexander (p. 25). The minstrel who sings for the salvation of Thebes is called Hismon (p. 30), and Darius's murderers acquire individual identity by being named (p. 53).

Geographical locations are also often specified. Darius ascends the mountain Taurisius to prepare for battle with Alexander (p. 41). Whenever Alexander camps by a river, its name is given. The author also seems desirous of keeping his audience aware of directions and movement. At times Alexander may only, rather vaguely, travel in a certain direction for a specific number of days; but often we are informed that, for example, he has traveled inland for forty days until he reaches the Red Sea (p. 105) or that he has reached a wilderness between the Red Sea and Arabia (p. 107).

For a portion of the narrative, the author uses a single geographical location as a point of reference for Alexander's wanderings. After crossing a mountain, in the process undergoing a number of adventures, Alexander and his army enter "a grete playne of whilke þe erthe was wonder rede" (p. 91). They march through the plain for

forty days, finally reaching a point at which they must turn East or West. Alexander selects the eastern passage, goes as far as possible, and then returns to take the western route. After traveling in this direction for fifteen days, he finally meets the sun-god and hears the predictions of the trees of the sun and moon. The sun-god will not permit Alexander to proceed further, and thus, after a march of fifteen days, he returns to the red plain (p. 95). Here he erects the pillar which instructs those who follow to go West, since the eastern route is impassable. Finally, the author notes once again that Alexander now leaves the red plain to march toward Macedonia (p. 96). Whether or not such a place exists, the Prose Life gives its readers a sense of direction and continuity by using the plain as a jumping-off point; Alexander's movements, moreover, seem purposeful, more than a series of aimless, confused wanderings.

The author's itemizing of days spent marching or camping,¹⁸ or, in other situations, the number of men in an army,¹⁹ the length of a battle,²⁰ or the number of men killed in a battle²¹ demonstrate his desire for precision and, to some degree, verisimilitude. He often alters his Latin source to shorten the length of a march or changes the number of men killed to bring these figures into line with his estimate of what should be, taking into account that Alexander leads this army.

The attempt at verisimilitude, clarity, and accuracy extends further. When the trees of the sun and moon speak, the author first records their words in Latin and then translates them into English, since these trees, as Alexander has been informed, speak in Latin. The entire history of the nations of Gog and Magog is related, albeit briefly, to make clear the reason for their enclosure (pp. 104-105). In

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fact, spelling out the reasons behind actions is generally important to the author. When Alexander falls sick after bathing in the river Mociona, we learn not merely that his men are afraid but specifically why: they fear that Darius, knowing that Alexander cannot lead his troops, will attack (p. 39). Alexander's men are not simply afraid of crossing the Euphrates; they fear that the bridge Alexander has constructed will break (p. 39). Candeolus extends the invitation to the disguised Alexander to visit his mother Candace because she will want to reward Alexander for rescuing Candeolus' wife (p. 99). As far as possible, the Prose Life leaves nothing unexplained, particularly when dealing with explicable human actions or reactions. This eye for detail, also present in treating the character of Alexander, adds a depth often lacking in the other English romances, particularly Wars.

It should be noted, however, that auctorial interest lies mainly in the human element. The author is distinctly the "rationalist." He liberally describes the wondrous works of man--palaces, cities, thrones--but seems less concerned, or perhaps more skeptical, about strange beasts. These are described, but only briefly. The focus of attention continually centers on the human: what man can achieve or build. Yet, as with the adorning of Jerusalem (p. 19) or the allegorical description of Darius' throne (p. 57)--both of which are more briefly presented than the corresponding episodes in Wars--the author does not allow the description to get out of hand or halt the movement of his narrative. In fact, the writer seldom bogs down in details; they are not important solely for their own sake. Ultimately, he includes details only insofar as they assist him in presenting his main theme--the life and travels of the great leader, Alexander.

The main thrust of the work, then, particularly in terms of the portrait of Alexander, is to delineate the qualities which make him a successful leader. It is the concentration on this aspect which unifies all the traditional virtues of Alexander--his nobility, largesse, bravery, and loyalty to his men. While Alexander's philosophical bent is in evidence during his debates with Darius, Porus, the Gymnosophists, and Dindimus, his wisdom and quickness of mind, like his other virtues, are mainly directed toward the practical business of leading men in the conquest of the world.

Alexander does not stand out as the heroic superman. Naturally he is an extremely good warrior, as his early individual effort against Nicholas makes clear, but his feats of arms never progress beyond the readily believable. Unlike Wars, during the Foraging of Gadirs Alexander does not mow down innumerable men, single-handedly saving his beleaguered forces. Instead, upon his arrival at the valley of Josaphat, the Prose Life states simply that Alexander "fand his men ri3te harde by-stadde wit þaire enemys. And he and his Ost vmbylapped alle þaire enemys, and daunge þam doun & slew þam ilke a moder son" (p. 17). Although Alexander's troops note his love for war and the deeds of war (p. 60), Alexander's actual participation in combat is secondary, a means rather than an end. Alexander consistently leads his forces into battle, not because he seeks personal glory or desires to prove his bravery, but because such is the proper role of the leader. Darius' counsellor, in setting up the traditional contrast between Darius and Alexander in the respective absence and presence at the frontline during a battle, makes this very point. His comparison of the two leaders is not meant, as in Wars, to emphasize the difference

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men fight hard by standards with brave enemies. And he and his first

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God *Alexander* does not now show himself more, mightier, or

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a successful leader. It is the

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The main thrust of the

in their relative bravery, but to indicate that Alexander's presence at the head of his troops accounts for the continuing victories of the Greek army (p. 37).

In the same vein, Alexander's heartening of his men becomes a prominent element, much more noticeable than in Wars. Alexander always steps forward to give the necessary encouragement. His words either calm the fears of his men when they are confronted with the boasts of Darius and Porus or spur them on to victory during a difficult battle. Certain metaphors added by the author support this emphasis, especially the comparison of troops to sheep:

Wate 3e no3te wele that thare na gouvernour
es þe folke are sparpled be-lyfe als schepe
þat ere wit-owtten ane hirde. (p. 72)

In a number of situations Alexander performs courageous deeds, but mainly as a means of encouraging or instructing his army. He crosses the Euphrates first, as an example to his terror-struck men (p. 39). When water is not to be found, Alexander simply and reasonably states that they must move to a better place rather than attempt to subdue, by force, and unfriendly castle (p. 69). Wisdom is the better part of valor; as Alexander points out, physical strength is common to beasts; men who trust not in reason cannot overcome (p. 61). When Alexander and his forces are attacked by dragons, against whom normal methods of fighting are useless, Alexander devises a net and shows his men how to ensnare and kill the beasts. They are apt pupils, quickly mastering the new art of warfare (p. 70).

Not only reason but caution characterizes Alexander's actions and commands. In traveling through dangerous country, he warns his men to arm themselves fully, even though this increases their

in their relative poverty, but to indicate that Alexander's army (p. 37).

In the same vein, Alexander's reputation is mentioned in the same vein. A prominent element, much more noticeable in the text, is the fact that Alexander always steps forward to give the necessary orders, and that he is the one who either calm the fears of his men when they are in a difficult position, or the boats of Lariss and Borne or even the boats of Lariss and Borne. Certain metaphors added to the text, such as the use of the word "battle", especially the comparison of the battle to a "war", are also mentioned.

Water is not only a source of life, but also a source of death. It is a source of life, as the text says, "the water is the source of life" (p. 37).

In a number of situations Alexander's army is mentioned, but mainly as a means of encouraging or inspiring his army. He crosses the Euphrates first, as an example to his army, and then the Tigris. When water is not to be found, Alexander simply and reasonably states that they must move to a better place rather than attempt to subdue, by force, and not to build castles (p. 37). Wisdom is the better part of valor; as Alexander points out, physical strength is common to beasts; man who trust not in reason cannot overcome (p. 37). When Alexander and his forces are attacked by dragons, against whom normal methods of fighting are useless, Alexander devises a net and shows his men how to ensnare and kill the beasts. They are not only, quickly mastering the new art of warfare (p. 37).

Not only reason but caution characterizes Alexander's actions and commands. In traveling through dangerous country, he warns his men to arm themselves fully, even though this increases their

suffering from the intense heat (p. 68). When the deadly basilisk must be destroyed, Alexander's preparations for "combat" receive detailed attention. He carefully surveys the situation and constructs not only the mirror to destroy the ugly monster, but a huge shield to protect himself. Because the episode typifies the approach of the author, I quote at length:

Alexander went bi hym ane vppon an
 heghe cragge, where he myghte see
 on ferrome fra hym. And þan he saw
 this pestellencius beste þe Basilisc
 lygg slepande in myddes of þe pas-
 sage When Alexander had
 sene hym, Be lyfe he went dounne of
 þe cragge, and gart sett a merk þat
 na man sulde passe. And þan he gart
 a pavysee be made seuen cubites of (convex shield)
 lengthe & foure on brede; and on þe
 vtter syde þareoffe he gart sett a
 grete Mirroure, And a large. And
 at þe nethir ende of þe pavisse he
 gart nayle a burde þe lenthe of a cubit
 for to couere wit his legges, and his
 fete, so þat na party of hym my3te be
 sene. And þan Alexander tuk þis
 pavisse in his handis, and went to-
 warde this Basilisc, and warned his
 men þat nan of þam sulde passe his
 termes. And when he come nere þe
 basilisc, þe basilisc opynde his eghne.
 And of þe refleccion of þe bemes of his
 sighte strykande appon hym-self Sudan-
 ly he was dede. And when Alexander
 knewe wele þat he was dede, he called
 till his knyghtis; And bad þam come
 see hym þat slewe þaire felawes. And
 when þay come till hym, þay saw þe
 Basilisc dede. And þan þay comended
 & prayssed gretly his hardynesse and
 his hye witt, And went & brynde þe Basi-
 lisc at þe commandement of Alexander. (pp. 91-92)

The actual "battle receives least consideration. The author's concentration, in every encounter, focusses on the events which precede and follow the battles themselves. The physical aspects or battle scenes

follow the battles themselves. The physical aspects or battle scenes
 treated, in every encounter, focuses on the events which precede and
 The actual "battle receives least consideration. The author's concern-

(pg. 31-32)

that at the commandment of Alexander,
 his wit and prudence he had
 & prevailed greatly his indymenee and
 Hestias dead. And had pay commended
 when pay come till him pay saw be
 see him but slowe paine followes. And
 till his invincible; And had pay come
 knowne woe but he was dede; he called
 ly he was dede. And when Alexander
 alighte strykinge upon hym-well sudden-
 And of the reflection of his woundes
 basties, he basties uponde his woundes
 tennement. And when he come care be
 men put him of paine could quene his
 woundes this basties, and woundes his
 quene. And had Alexander tak his
 letes, so put he party of hym my the be
 int to couerte wth his legges, and his
 gart sayles a brude he brude of a cubit
 as he neyther end of be, / / / / /
 quene Mistrour. And a large, and
 vices sayles parcell he gart wth
 targhe & turre on brude; and on his
 a payse he made wth his legges, and
 na man wth his woundes. And had he
 be craggie, and gart he woundes
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 lygg sayles in sayles, / / / / /
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the mirror to destroy the ugly monster, and / / / / /

attention. He carefully surveys the situation and / / / / /

be destroyed. Alexander's preparations for / / / / /

collecting from the intense heat (p. 551). / / / / /

are generally described only to the extent necessary to indicate the means used to defeat the enemy. Tyre's geographical placement, for example, is given in detail, thereby explaining Alexander's building of gigantic towered barges by means of which the city may be successfully attacked and subdued. The actual fighting takes very little time (pp. 16-18). The same is true at Lacedemonia (p. 35), although here Alexander's warnings and comments after victory, pointing out the foolishness of trying to withstand one wiser and greater, receive full treatment. Emphasis thus falls continually on the wit and wisdom of the leader Alexander, not on the physical force possessed or expended by either Alexander or his men.

A number of Alexander's actions, left unmotivated or unexplained in Wars, are clarified, in these same terms, in the Prose Life. Alexander moves his troops to Susa in order to survey the territory as a possible battle site for a final encounter with Darius (p. 45). Alexander goes disguised as a messenger to issue a challenge to Darius and discover the reason for Darius' delay in proposing battle (p. 45). While Wars similarly states that he goes as a messenger, what message he carries is never explained and, consequently, the expedition seems motivated only by a desire to prove his personal bravery.

Alexander does not devote his powers of leadership simply to achieving a victory. He remains a leader after subduing a foe. Unlike the Alexander of Wars, he shows concern for those whom he has conquered. After the defeat of the Persians, for example, the Prose-Alexander captures and punishes the murderers of Darius, just as does the Alexander of Wars and Kyng Alisaunder. The prose episode follows the same pattern as that of the poems and leaves unchanged

Alexander's primary motive--to revenge Darius, as he had promised the dying emperor. But more emphasis falls onto the new emperor's desire to care for the Persian people. He knows that the Persians, still devoted to Darius, long for the punishment of the traitors. Moreover, he explains that these men must be destroyed "For þay þat slaes þaire awenn lorde it es a taken þat þat will hafe na conscience to sla anoper man" (p. 59). Perhaps Alexander merely wishes to prevent difficulties and win the people to his side, yet this action corresponds to other noble and generous gestures. He consistently rewards messengers very liberally, gives conquered nations their autonomy as long as they recognize his supremacy, allows conquered princes to keep their property, and often fulfills the will of conquered people in choosing their immediate governor. Whatever Alexander's ultimate motives, and no base designs are ever hinted at, he succeeds in securing the love and admiration of those he has conquered and, at the same time, leaves order and peace in his wake.

While most of these actions might still be judged as self-serving, others clearly indicate that Alexander's leadership is founded on justice. His refusal to allow Darius' men to turn against their own leader is presented in more detail in the Prose Life than in Wars or Kyng Alisaunder (p. 23). But the episode involving Scrassageras provides the most striking example (pp. 32-34). In Wars this prince and governor simply falls before Alexander, deprived of his lands because it is so fated. In the Prose Life Alexander removes him from his position because, as Alexander and others point out, Scrassageras has ruled unjustly and traitorously.

In a different context, Alexander's sense of justice overrides

his traditional maternal loyalty. He berates Philip for taking Cleopatra as his new queen, for such action is "unleful" (p. 10). Yet he also maintains that Olympias must share some of the blame because of her relationship with Neptanabus: "Be no3te ferde . . . ne be no3te heuy to my fader, for if alle thi trespas be preuee, & no3te knawen, neuer-þe-lesse þou erte in party to blame" (p. 11).

The single point at which Alexander appears less than just is in his burning of Thebes (p. 30). Since the author omits the song of the minstrel and the accusations of the surrounding peoples concerning the sins of the Thebans, Alexander's razing of the city seems wanton, vindictive destruction.

Alexander, finally, functions as a leader even of those he does not directly command or rule. Concerned for others, he erects a monument to give directions to those who might follow after him. Although the inscription also serves to remind others of his conquests, the context suggests that he is not so much boasting as adding weight to the advice he offers:

I, Alexander, Phillipp son of Macedoyne,
sett thir pelers here, after þe dedd of
Darius kyng of Perse and of Porus kynge
of Inde. What man so will passe forþer
late hym tourne one þe lefte hand. For
wha so tourne3 one þe ri3te hande he
sall fynde many obstacle3 & greuance3
þat sall perauenture lett his agayne-
commynge.

(pp. 95-96)

The emphasis on Alexander's leadership culminates in the extensively developed death scene. The author focusses on the extent to which his successful leadership is, and has been, based on true concern and compassion for his followers. After being poisoned, Alexander attempts to fulfill the external role of leader by at first suffering in

her attempts to fulfill the external role of leader by at first suffering in care and compassion for his followers. After being poisoned, Alexander attempts to fulfill the external role of leader by at first suffering in care and compassion for his followers. The author focuses on the extent to which his successful leadership is, and has been, based on true concern and compassion for his followers. The emphasis on Alexander's leadership culminates in the

(pp. 92-96)

commence.
but still perseverance left his agony-
call forth many obstacles & grievance
who so torments one he right hands he
late pain torments one he left hand. For
of mind. What man so will pass for poor
Bactrian king of Persia and of Ptolemy Kyros
sell their beliefs here, after he died of
I. Alexander, Philip's son of Macedon.

to the advice he offers:
the context suggests that he is not so much boasting as adding weight
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The single point at which Alexander's response to the Theban women is

less powerful in part to blame.

my leader, for it is his responsibility to lead. Alexander's response to the
relationship with Thebans: "The Theban women, Alexander's response to the
maintains that Alexander's response to the Theban women is not a direct
as his new queen, for such action is a direct result of his new queen.
his traditional maternal loyalty. He is not a direct result of his new queen.

silence and then trying to reassure his knights (pp. 110-11). As the scene continues, the internal qualities of the great leader evince themselves. In many ways this episode echoes the earlier death scene of Darius. The father-son relationship which climaxes the final meeting between Darius and Alexander (p. 53) is here paralleled in the human affection displayed between Alexander and Roxana (p. 111) and the surrogate father-son relationship between Alexander and his soon-to-be-leaderless princes who seek final guidance from their king (pp. 111, 113). Just as Darius left a last testament, willing all earthly powers and possessions to Alexander, so Alexander, in greater detail, divides his kingdom and settles the fortunes of his wife and children. Yet the ultimate difference between the two scenes lies in the fact that, unlike Darius, Alexander has no one of equal ability to pass his power to. If Alexander's death has a tragic dimension, it rests not in his early death, but in the fact that a nation, because of his passing, must fall into dissolution. Hence the pathetic attempt of Alexander to calm and guide the Macedonians by asking them to keep peace with each other and allowing them to select the man who will rule them (pp. 112-13). Nonetheless, as Alexander knows, nothing can prevent their decline. His lament, repeated by his knights, becomes the final refrain for this scene:

A, A, my dere Macedoynes . . . fra
 this tyme forwarde sall neuer your
 name have lordchipe ouer þe Barbarenes. (p. 113)

Without the shepherd, the sheep cannot survive:

Waa es vs wrechis! whatt schall we
 now do after þe ded of oure lorde
 Alexander? Whedir sall we now gaa
 or whate partye may we now chese?
 Whare schall we now get any help
 till oure lyfelade? (p. 114)

All our life's
 Where shall we now get help
 or what part may we now share
 Alexander? Where shall we now get
 now do after he died of our lord
 Was as we wished? what shall we
 Without the shepherd, the sheep cannot survive:
 name hate forshape once be partisans. (p. 113)
 One turn forward all over you
 A, A, my dear Macedonians . . . (p. 114)

scene continues, the attempt to find a way out of the
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 his lament, repeated by his knights, becomes the final refrain for this
 scene.

The death scene is also of interest in that the predestination of Alexander--either as conqueror of the world or as a man fated to die young--never receives mention. The attention of the audience remains focussed on the loss of a great leader and on an overview of his accomplishments. Nor is it more than fleetingly suggested that, as in Kyng Alisaunder, Alexander's rashness or, more particularly here, a violent temper--in other words, some human defect--has brought this downfall. It is true that Jacobas agrees to his father Antipater's scheme to poison Alexander because once, in anger, Alexander struck the loyal, admiring Jacobas. But the author only mentions this fact in passing (p. 110), and Antipater's hatred for Alexander is given no foundation in any action of Alexander. Nor is Alexander's death connected with the punishment by Fortune, instrument of God, for pride, with the vagaries of Fortune in earthly existence, or with the inexorable law of mutability. In this sense, the author of the Prose Life prefers to leave Alexander's death unexplained and unmotivated. The author is not a moralist, as the total lack of commentary in the work indicates. He is recorder--biographer and historian. Just as his interest has been concentrated, throughout the narration of Alexander's career, on the achievements of leadership, at the conclusion of the work his emphasis falls on the consequences of the loss of leadership. His artistic stance remains humanistic and practical.

Alexander himself is thus presented as having no real flaws or submitting to any decisive human or superhuman weaknesses, except unmotivated anger when he burns Thebes and strikes Jacobas and incautious trust when Candace entraps him. Yet these are all quickly passed over without much notice. This almost unequivocally positive portrait

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flows from the author's pen. Yet these are all quickly passed
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punishment by Fortune, instrument of God, for pride, with the attainment
any action of Alexander. Nor is Alexander's death caused by any
(p. 110), and Antigone's hatred for her father, given to her by her
admirer Jacob. But the author only pretends to be a novelist, as
to poison Alexander because of his pride. It is not a novel, the legend,
downfall. It is true that Jacob's hatred for his father, given to him
a violent temper--in other words, when the author is not a novelist,
Ryan Alexander, Alexander's treatment of his father is not a novel.
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the young--never receives mention. This is the legend of the legend
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The death scene is also of interest in the work, as it is the

results in a certain flatness, but other factors more than redeem the work. The author never allows his hero to descend into pomposity. The clear, rapid, engaging narrative, enlivened at times by homely, down-to-earth metaphors, stresses the variations, rather than the monotonous similarities, in Alexander's conquests. Somewhat paradoxically, the author also achieves a greater depth in his portrait of Alexander. Alexander is not the stock heroic figure, nor even the stock semi-chivalric king, but, most essentially, but humane and human. He exhibits emotion, more vividly and compellingly presented than in the other English Alexander romances. The author manages to convey Alexander's compassion for his wife, his "fathers," his princes, and his foot soldiers. Alexander's expressions of sorrow and concern never seem only a required and hollow kingly gesture. Moreover, Alexander's sincere expressions of affection for his succession of fathers, until finally he himself is the recipient of the same affection, provides a motif which nicely structures the life of Alexander.

Neeson maintains that the prophecies, omens, and miracles, which appear before every important event, serve as primary structuring elements in the Prose Life.²² Most abundant before Alexander's birth and death, they provide a framework for the events of his life as well as signaling the high points within the narrative. The poet also proficiently structures smaller units and ties them to the larger unifying elements of the work. The Darius-Alexander confrontation is unified not only by the discussion of pride, but by Darius' insistence on calling Alexander a "thief" and, more often, a "child."²³ This "childhood" motif, mentioned only once or twice in the other romances, is here carried through with persistent emphasis, until Darius and

Alexander meet at the time of Darius' death. Ironically, at this point, they embrace as father and son. Thus the "child" motif becomes a part of the larger structure of father-son relationships.

The thief metaphor, dropped quite early by Darius, is picked up by Porus; the similarity in outlook between Porus and Alexander's earlier opponent is thereby underscored. The author of the Prose Life, in fact, stresses the likenesses between Porus and Darius more than the other romancers. Darius insists more emphatically on his own divinity in this work,²⁴ while Porus follows the traditional pattern in constantly asserting his divine powers. Darius and Porus are thus brought closer together by their demonstrations of vain pride. Since the difference between them in terms of their opposition to Alexander--respectively philosophical and physical--is maintained, this tightening of the parallelism is quite effective.

Structural continuity, coupling repetition with variation, is thus not the least virtue of the Prose Life. Whether we ultimately classify it as romance or biography-history, the author manages to construct, upon this framework, a well-paced narrative in clear and straight-forward prose. While the relation of the deeds of Alexander must, in the last analysis, remain episodic, the Prose Life counters the sprawling tendencies of its material by viewing Alexander's career from a single vantage point, not unconnected with its structural movement of father-son relationships: a humanistic and practical presentation of the qualities which made Alexander the Great first a leader of men and, consequently, conqueror of the world.

Alexander meet at the time of Darius' death, and they embrace as father and son. This is the last scene of the larger structure of father-son relationship. The third metaphor, though a minor one, is that of the family. The similarity in outline between the two earlier opponent is thereby underlined. In fact, between the likeness between the two other characters. Darius follows Alexander's lead in this work, while Porus follows Alexander's lead in his constantly seeking his divine father. The two are brought closer together by their common search for the difference between them is a kind of self-opposed, respectively philosophical and physical--is maintained, the relationship of the parallelism is quite effective.

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FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹ Deposited in the Cathedral Library at Lincoln, England; for a history of the MS and its ownership by the Thornton family see Marjorie Neeson, pp. 19-26.

² Neeson, pp. 90-91; Magoun, p. 56, and Ross, Alexander Historiatus, p. 65, date it only as from the fifteenth century and Cary, Alexander, p. 56, places it in the first half of that century.

³ See above, p. 4.

⁴ The exact MS or version has not been found.

⁵ See below, p. 211.

⁶ Neeson points out most of the alterations in her notes, pp. 344-499 passim.

⁷ Cary, Alexander, pp. 56, 243.

⁸ Neeson, pp. 48-68.

⁹ Neeson, p. 68.

¹⁰ For a complete list see Neeson, pp. 1-17.

¹¹ Although Neeson provides a better text, all citations, for reasons of accessibility, will be taken from J. S. Westlake's The Prose Life of Alexander.

¹² Everett, pp. 98-121 passim.

¹³ The conclusion to Wars is no longer extant; thus no real judgment can be made for this portion.

¹⁴ See above, pp. 120-121.

¹⁵ Cf. Wars, l. 5513.

¹⁶ Flynn, p. 106.

¹⁷ Neeson, p. 28.

¹⁸ For example, p. 89.

¹⁹ For example, p. 49.

- 1⁹For example, p. 49.
- 1⁸For example, p. 89.
- 1⁷Neeson, p. 58.
- 1⁶Ryan, p. 108.
- 1⁵Cf. Ware, I, 2513.
- 1⁴See above, pp. 150-151.
- 1³The conclusion to Ware is no longer extant; thus no real judgment can be made for this portion.
- 1²Everett, pp. 98-101 passim.
- 1¹Life of Alexander.
- 1⁰Although Neeson provides a better text, all citations, for reasons of accessibility, will be taken from J. B. Westlake's The House of Alexander.
- 9⁹Neeson, p. 68.
- 9⁸Neeson, pp. 48-66.
- 9⁷Carly, Alexander, pp. 36, 351.
- 9⁶Neeson points out most of the alterations in 9⁵ passim, pp. 344-469.
- 9⁵See below, p. 511.
- 9⁴The exact MS or version has not been identified.
- 9³See above, p. 41.
- 9²Alexander, p. 56, places it in the 11th century.
- 9¹Neeson, pp. 96-97; passim, p. 52, and passim.
- 1⁰Deposited in the Cathedral Library at York, and used for a history of the MS and its ownership by J. B. Westlake, see Marjorie Neeson, pp. 19-20.

²⁰For example, p. 64.

²¹For example, pp. 70, 91, 104.

²²Neeson, p. 36.

²³For the "thief" metaphor see pp. 21, 36, 61. For the "child" metaphor see pp. 21, 25, 36, 53.

²⁴See especially pp. 21, 26.

50 For example, p. 64.

51 For example, pp. 70, 61, 100.

52 Nelson, p. 36.

53 For the "trial" metaphor see pp. 21, 22, 23.

54 See especially pp. 21-22.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Any attempt, however tentative, at an evaluation of the Middle English Alexander romances must acknowledge certain general problems. No matter how deeply we submerge ourselves in medieval life and thought, we cannot escape the fact that the approaches and concentrations of modern literature have conditioned the taste of at least the sophisticated reader. The situation is further complicated because the matter dealt with in these romances takes us into the realm of history and historical biography. Here, too, modern preoccupations and theory influence our expectations of these genres.

The medieval approach to history, often emphasizing the role of Divine Providence in human affairs and concomitantly relying on the "supernatural" as an explanation for the ways of the world--even the juggling or insertion of "facts" to support the principle of a divine plan--actually offers only a momentary stumbling block, at least in the abstract. In fact, we can find ourselves intrigued by this very attitude and its philosophical implications. But once we extract ourselves from a consideration of medieval historical theory and begin to focus on a medieval work which, whether it purports to be history, historical biography, or romance, deals with a historical personage, our modern expectations intervene. Yet the falsification of facts still proves to be the least bothersome problem.

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the matter dealt with in these romances takes us into the realm of the

the sophisticated reader. The situation is further complicated by the

centrations of modern literature (and, doubtless, the reader's) to focus

life and thought, we cannot escape the fact that the very words and their

problems. No matter how deeply we understand what we are reading

the English Alexander romances that were written in the twelfth

Any attempt, however tentative, to understand the world as it is

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Without attempting to be exhaustive, it seems worthwhile to note the most fundamental, and most bothersome, of these modern expectations. Even a cursory examination of the criticism of medieval literature demonstrates that we ultimately fall back, consciously or unconsciously, on modern predilections in discussing and assessing these works. Our expectations of literature, moreover, have parallels with those of history and historical biography so that we can for practical purposes view the two areas together. (History, unlike literature, of course, demands precise and accurate data upon which to build, but only on the most elementary level do we pursue history or historical biography solely for the unadulterated facts they offer).

We prefer, if not expect, that history, historical biography, and narrative fiction which revolve around a single character will provide something of internal analysis. The medieval writer, when concerned with character at all, approaches it abstractly by noting the presence or absence of a virtue or vice, often assigning a label such as "noble," "courteous," or "proud." To the modern reader this is overly simplistic labeling. We shy away from the broad sketch and look for the detailed etching: a delineation of the attitudes, beliefs, desires, and conflicts which make up the naturally complex man. Of course, in a work--historical or fictional--where the intellectual framework assumes utmost importance, detailed character portrayal may be disregarded. We are satisfied that characters and events function as vehicles for philosophical observations, for the presentation of a complex or challenging view of life and the forces involved in human existence.

In another category, while the modern reader perhaps prefers a unified plot based on the causal connection between events, the episodic

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coerly simplistic labeling. We are away from the human element and

an "nobles", "courtiers", or "peasants". To the modern reader this is

presence or absence of a virtue or vice, often involving a label such

earned with character in all, apply it not necessarily to character

vide something of internal analysis. The traditional writer, who is

and narrative technique which took, requiring a single, direct, and

We prefer, it not appear that we are, however, in the

biography solely for the manipulation of

only on the most elementary level, and even so, the

of course, demands practice and a great deal

their purposes view the two ways of

with those of history and literary

these works. Our expectations of the

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literature demonstrates that we

expectations. Even a cursory ex

into the most fundamental, and

Without attempting to be

is acceptable, provided some unifying force, framework, or "theme" exists. The comparable provision in history is the hypothesis which attempts to unify or clarify a chain of events. The historical biography, in modern times, can hardly escape from a reliance on personality as the unifying element. We demand a continuity of traits or, if change is evident, some underlying consistent force, internal or external.

Given an adequate style, the modern reader derives emotional and/or intellectual enjoyment from works which follow these patterns and fulfill these expectations. And, in fact, it is upon such bases or presuppositions that the modern critic approaches and judges medieval literature. We enjoy and praise the finely textured portraits of The Canterbury Tales, are engaged by the philosophical implications--as well as the complexity of characterization--in Troilus and Criseyde, find ourselves intrigued by the humanistic debate of The Owl and the Nightingale, question the guilt and humanity of Sir Gawain's struggle with himself, honor, and the Green Knight, attempt to define the conflict of Arthur's Round Table as Malory follows it to its inexorable tragedy, puzzle over the theological implications and structure of Piers Plowman or The Pearl. Interestingly, in none of these are we confronted with a truly historical figure, as we are with Alexander; but that does not necessarily simplify the issue, as the continuing enjoyment of Shakespeare's history plays makes clear.

If we face the situation realistically, we find it difficult to enjoy--emotionally or intellectually--the Alexander romances. They do not contain the qualities we expect from modern literature, history, or historical biography, the qualities we also discover in the other medieval works noted above. The Prose Life of Alexander, most

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with himself, honor, and the Green Knight, attempt to deal the end
King Lear, question the faith and humanity of the Christian world
find ourselves intrigued by the dramatic shift in the quality of the
well as the complexity of characterization. The Taming of the Shrew
Gastbury Tales, are unique in the way in which they deal with
val literature. We enjoy the way in which they deal with the
or prepositions that the world is made of. The world is made of
terms and terms those expectations. The world is made of terms and
those and/or intellectual expectations. The world is made of terms and

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is acceptable, provided

historical in approach, also provides the most internalized portrait of Alexander. The author conveys, in more than a few places, the humanity of the conqueror through his relationships with his "fathers," his wife, and his "sons"--his peers, knights, and foot soldiers. Further, the author provides a structuring theoretical principle based on this humanity: Alexander's abilities and accomplishments as a leader, a continuing theme that has served well in modern historical biography. Consequently, the Prose Life, the most neglected of all the major medieval Alexander romances, proves to be quite successful in engaging the reader emotionally and intellectually.

Kyng Alisaunder, while restricting itself to the external portraiture of Alexander and thereby never eliciting an emotional response, provides a certain philosophical complexity. In viewing Alexander as both ideal and human, inhabiting a world which exhibits the same duality, but eventually doomed to be destroyed by the laws of mutability which govern everything which participates in the natural, the poem evokes something of an intellectual response. Yet because Alexander remains so distant and because the poet's sens, a basically simple one, is not developed, except in the headpieces, with the vigor and sensitivity such a theme requires, we appreciate his well-structured, stylistically adept poem more than we become involved in it. The technique is there--thus an aesthetic response--but the profundity and humanity are lacking--thus no deep emotional or intellectual enjoyment.

The Wars of Alexander elicits only grudging aesthetic approval as we watch the poet gradually master the quatrain form and, secondarily, the alliterative line, putting them at the service of his narrative rather than vice versa. Appreciation of his possible skills as a poet and

rather than vice versa. Appreciation of his possible skills as a poet and artist, the alliterative line, putting them at the service of his exaltation as we watch the poet gradually master the quatrains form and, second-

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both ideal and human, inhabiting a world which would be the eternal

provides a certain philosophical consistency in seeing them both as

features of Alexander and finally human consistency in seeing them both

as the reader emotionally and intellectually

Consequently, the Prose Life of Alexander, the

sometimes of his ability to present ironic parallels between characters and episodes is all we can muster.

Even such half-hearted appreciation must be denied the two alliterative fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B. One even doubts that something might have been achieved in the complete poem or poems. There exists a kind of unity in each of the fragments: the heroic mode of Alexander A and the thematic contrast and juxtaposition of the natural and supernatural in Alexander B. But we find ourselves grasping for glimmers of talent in poets who never seem to have mastered the alliterative line. In desperation we note a metaphor or successful interlacing of sources in Alexander A, the ability to present a balanced debate in Alexander B.

One is tempted to believe that a sophisticated audience of the Middle Ages would react not so very differently. The Alexander romances and other works indicate that they enjoyed certain elements we no longer find intriguing, such as descriptions of marvels and the allegorical cataloguing of precious stones or pagan gods, for they seem to have expected a more "encyclopedic" approach in the narrative, at least as embellishment. But it is difficult to believe that, fundamentally, they would assess the works of Chaucer, Malory, Langland, and the Pearl-poet on principles totally foreign to us. Two implications suggest themselves. First, that the authors of the Prose Life, Kyng Alisaunder, and--primarily because of his attempt at a somewhat complex poetic form--Wars intended their works for a sophisticated audience. Secondly, that Alexander A and Alexander B were composed for a much less critical audience or are simply the fumbling attempts of inept poets.

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sometimes of his ability to present them, but that is not the point. The point is that the poems are so good that they are worth reading, and episodes is all we can make of them.

Even such half-hearted opposition as this is not enough to prevent the alternative fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B, from being read. There exists a kind of unity in our knowledge of the poems, and it is this unity that something might have been expected to find in the narrative, at least as embodied in the poems. But it is difficult to believe that, in the poems, they would assess the works of Chaucer, Malory, Langland, and the Pearl-poet on principles totally foreign to us. The implications suggest themselves. First, that the authors of the Prose Tale, Kyng Alexander, and epitaphs because of his attempt at a somewhat complex poetic form. Wals intended their works for a sophisticated audience. Secondly, that Alexander A and Alexander B were composed for a much less critical audience or are simply the lumping attempts of inept poets.

But whatever might have been the judgment of the medieval audience, re-examination of the Middle English Alexander romances suggests that while none of them ranks with the great literature of the middle ages, Kyng Alisaunder and The Prose Life of Alexander deserve recognition as well-structured, unified, stylistically competent, sophisticated treatments of the Alexander legend. The rest, for the modern audience at least, are best forgotten.

But whatever might have been the

audience, re-examination of the book

suggests that while none of them

middle ages, King Alphonse and

series recognition as well-studied

sophisticated treatment of the

modern audience at least, are best

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

Below are printed, in interlinear fashion, transcriptions of the life of Alexander in prose from the Dublin MS. (D) as edited by Skeat in The Wars of Alexander and the corresponding portion of Anthony Woodvile, Earl Rivers' The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers taken from a facsimile reproduction of Caxton's first edition (R).

(D) Alexander the grete, þe sone of philip king of

(R) Alexander the grete was sone to phelip king of

(D) macedon, which philip regned vij 3ere, and þe said

(R) macedone which Phelip regned vii year And the said

(D) alexander began to regne in the xviiij 3ere of hys age.

(R) Alexander began to regne in the xviiij yer of his eage

(D) And he said to hys peple in þis wise: "Fair lordez, I

(R) And he said to his peple in this wyse fayr lordes I

(D) will in no wise be contrarye to your willes, ne to your

(R) will in no wyse be contrarye to your wylles ne to your

(D) dedes. But I schewe to you þat I hate frawdez &

(R) dedes But I sheue to you that I hate fraudes &

(D) maleces, & as I haue loued you durying my faders lyff,

(R) malices & as I have lould you durying my faders lyf

- (R) malices & as I have loud you denying my labors yd
 (D) malices, & as I have loud you denying my labors yd.

- (R) dashes that I shame to you shall hate troubles &
 (D) dashes, that I shew to you hat I hate troubles &

- (R) will in no wyse be contrarye to your wylles, no to your
 (D) will in no wise be contrarye to your wylles, no to your
 (R) And he said to his people in this wyse, (your lordes)
 (D) And he said to yee people in his wylle, (that lordes)

- (R) Alexander began to reigne in the xviii. yere of his fathers
 (D) Alexander began to reigne in the xviii. yere of his fathers
 (R) macedons which Philip reigned xii. yeres, and the xviii.
 (D) macedon, which Philip reigned xii. yeres, and the xviii.

- (R) Alexander the grete was thus in Philip's tyme
 (D) Alexander the grete, he was in Philip's tyme

opiers taken from a lacanian manuscript, written in the
 Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, the Wife of Richard
Spent in The Wars of Alexander the first of the ancient
 the life of Alexander in prose taken from the

Below are printed, in the

- (D) so will I do in tyme Commyng. And I bothe counsell
 (R) so wil I doo in tyme comyng And I bothe counceylle
- (D) & pray you that 3e drede god, obeye hym as souerayn
 (R) & pray you that ye drede god obeye him as souerayn
- (D) of all, And chese hym for king; & be most obeyssiant
 (R) of all And chese him for king & be most obeyssant
- (D) to hym þat shall best purvay for þe gude astate of hys
 (R) to him that shal best pouruye for the good astate of his
- (D) people, & þat shall be most debonar & mercifull to
 (R) peple & that shal be most debonayr & mercyful to
- (D) pure folkez þat beste woll kepe iustice & þe right of
 (R) poure folkes that beste shal kepe Justice & the right of
- (D) þe feble ayenst the mighty; hym also that shall best
 (R) the feble ayenst the myghty him also that shal best
- (D) dispoyse for þe publyke wele & for no dilectacion of
 (R) dispose for the publyke wele & for no delectacion of
- (D) wordly plesaunce shall not be slowefull to kepe &
 (R) worldly plesances shal not be slowfull to kepe &
- (D) defende you, and by whom 3e shall be defendytt, & all
 (R) defende you and by whom ye shal be defended & all
- (D) euell & harmez by þe meane of hys goode dedes shall
 (R) evill & harmed by the meane of his good dedes shal

- (12) as will I do in tyme coming, and I will
- (11) as will I do in tyme coming, and I will
- (10) & pray you that ye drede god, and ye
- (9) & pray you that ye drede god, and ye
- (8) of all, And chere myn, the drede of god, and ye
- (7) of all, And chere myn, the drede of god, and ye
- (6) to hym that shall best perryce, & to hym
- (5) to him that shall best perryce, & to him
- (4) people, & that shall be most calyfyng, & to
- (3) people, & that shall be most calyfyng, & to
- (2) have folkes that beste will hope, & the right of
- (1) have folkes that beste will hope, & the right of
- (12) be tyme against the myghty, & to all that
- (11) the tyme against the myghty, & to all that
- (10) dyspayre for the people, & for the dysfection of
- (9) dyspayre for the people, & for the dysfection of
- (8) worthy plesance, shall not be slowdly to kepe &
- (7) worthy plesance, shall not be slowdly to kepe &
- (6) defende you, and by whom ye shall be defendyd, & all
- (5) defende you, and by whom ye shall be defendyd, & all
- (4) shall & harmes by the meane of his good dedes shall
- (3) shall & harmes by the meane of his good dedes shall

(D) be distroyed; And he þat most hardly shall put hym

(R) be destroyed and him that most hardly shal put him

(D) in devour to distroy your enmys; for suche ought to

(R) forth for to destroye your ennemies for suche ought to

(D) be chosen kyng and none other."

(R) be chosen kyng and none other

(D) And whan hys people had herd hys reasons aboue-

(R) & whan his people had herd the reasons aboue -

(D) said, & knowen his grete discrecion, witte, & under-

(R) sayd and knowen his grete discrecion wytte and under -

(D) stondyng, thei wer gretly amerveld, and answered to

(R) standing they were gretly ameruaylled and answered to

(D) hym þus: "We haue herd & vnderstand thy grete

(R) him thus we haue herde and understand thy grete

(D) reasons, And haue resseyued & resseyue thy good

(R) reasons and have resseyued and resseyve thy good

(D) Councell, and theirfor we will & byseche the that þou

(R) cunceyll and therfor we wole and byseche the that thou

(D) regne vppon vs & haue þe lordship vppon vs. Duryng

(R) reygne and haue the lordship upon us duryng

(D) þi lyf we hope þer is none that hase so wele

(R) thy lyf We hope that ther is none that hath so wele

(D) but yet we hope but is none that hath no wife
(R) thy yet We hope that there is none that hath no wife

(D) we have the lordship upon us during
(R) we have the lordship upon us during

(D) counsel, and therefore we will & beseech the that you
(R) counsel, and therefore we will & beseech the that you

(D) reason, and have reason, and reason, the good
(R) reason, and have reason, and reason, the good

(D) that you, we have heard & understand the good
(R) that you, we have heard & understand the good

(D) standing, that we are greatly surprised, and surprised
(R) standing, that we are greatly surprised, and surprised

(D) said, & knoweth his truth, & knoweth his truth
(R) said, & knoweth his truth, & knoweth his truth

(D) & when his people have heard, & when his people have heard
(R) & when his people have heard, & when his people have heard

(D) be chosen king and none other
(R) be chosen king and none other

(D) let us to destroy your king, & let us to destroy your king
(R) let us to destroy your king, & let us to destroy your king

(D) be destroyed, and he be destroyed, and he be destroyed
(R) be destroyed, and he be destroyed, and he be destroyed

(D) deseruyd to be our kyng." And þus þai chese hym to

(R) deseruid to be our kyng And thus they chese him to

(D) be þair king, Coroned hym, & yaff

(R) ther king and to their lord and coroned him & yaf

(D) hym þair blessyngez, And prayd to god that he wold

(R) him their blessinges and praid to god that he wold

(D) blesse & mayntene hym. To whom he said: "I herd

(R) blesse & mayntene him To whom he sayd I haue herde

(D) þe prayer that 3e haue made for me, besechyng

(R) the prayer that ye haue made for me beseching to god

(D) þat he wol stedfast þe loue of me in your hertes

(R) that he wol stedefaste the loue of me in your hertes

(D) & coragez, And þat by no maner of the delectacion

(R) & corages And that by no maner of the delectacion

(D) he suffre me do þat thyng þat is ayen your profectez

(R) he suffre me to do thing ayen your proffites

(D) ne to my disworship."

(R) ne to my disworship

(D) And sone after he send letters to all hys princez &

(R) & sone after he sente lettres to all the princes and

(D) good townez of all hys Royaume. And when he hed

(R) good townes of his royaume and when he had

(R) thy Iyl We hope that there is none that hath so well

(D) bi Iyl we hope but is none that hath so well

(R) saye and have the lordship open as during

(D) saye ypon vs & have the lordship ypon vs. During

(R) counsell and therfor we wyl and bysche the that thou

(D) Counsell, and therfor we wyl & bysche the that thou

(K) reasons and have requered and receyved the good

(D) reasons, And have requered & receyved the good

(R) thus true we have herde and understode thy saye

(D) thus true: "We have herde & understode thy saye

(R) standing they were greatly amirred, and therfor

(D) standing, they were greatly amirred, and therfor

(R) saye and knowe his wysdom, and therfor

(D) saye & knowe his wysdom, and therfor

(R) & when his people sawe

(D) And when his people sawe

(R) be chosen king and none other

(D) be chosen king and none other

(R) forth for to destroye your

(D) in devot to destroye your

(R) be destroyed and thus that was the

(D) be destroyed And he felt that was the

(D) deseruyd to be our kyng." And þus þai chese hym to

(R) deseruid to be our kyng And thus they chese him to

(D) be þair king, Coroned hym, & yaff

(R) ther king and to their lord and coroned him & yaf

(D) hym þair blessynges, And prayd to god that he wold

(R) him their blessinges and praid to god that he wold

(D) blesse & mayntene hym. To whom he said: "I herd

(R) blesse & mayntene him To whom he sayd I haue herde

(D) þe prayer that 3e haue made for me, besechyng

(R) the prayer that ye haue made for me beseching to god

(D) þat he wol stedfast þe loue of me in your hertes

(R) that he wol stedefaste the loue of me in your hertes

(D) & coragez, And þat by no maner of the delectacion

(R) & corages And that by no maner of the delectacion

(D) he suffre me do þat thyng þat is ayen your profectez

(R) he suffre me to do thing ayen your proffites

(D) ne to my disworship."

(R) ne to my disworship

(D) And sone after he send letters to all hys princez &

(R) & sone after he sente lettres to all the princes and

(D) good townez of all hys Royaume. And when he hed

(R) good townes of his royaume and when he had

- (D) dæstærd to be our kyng. And þat þæt dæstærd to be our kyng.
- (R) dæstærd to be our kyng. And þæt dæstærd to be our kyng.
- (D) þe þæt kyng, And þæt þæt kyng.
- (R) þæt kyng and to their lord and kyng.
- (D) hym þæt dæstærd, And þæt dæstærd.
- (R) hym þæt dæstærd and þæt dæstærd.
- (D) please & maystene hym, To whom he please.
- (R) please & maystene hym, To whom he please.
- (D) þe þæt dæstærd to be our kyng.
- (R) the þæt dæstærd to be our kyng.
- (D) þæt he wol stedeþæt þe þæt he wol stedeþæt.
- (R) þæt he wol stedeþæt the þæt he wol stedeþæt.
- (D) & corgeþ, And þæt þæt no maner of the dæstærd.
- (R) & corgeþ, And þæt þæt no maner of the dæstærd.
- (D) he wille me do þæt þæt he wille me do þæt.
- (R) he wille me do þæt þæt he wille me do þæt.
- (D) no to my dæstærd.
- (R) no to my dæstærd.
- (D) And some after he send letters to all þæt prince &
- (R) & some after he send letters to all þæt prince and
- (D) good townes of all þæt Roymme, And when he had
- (R) good townes of his roymme and when he had

(D) sent hys letters, one Dary, king of perce & of medy,

(R) sent his lettres One daire king of perce and of mede,

(D) sent to alexander for tribute like as he hed of hys

(R) sente to Alexandre for tribute like as he had of his

(D) fadre. And he sent hym word at þe henne þat layde

(R) fader And he sente him word that the henne that leyde

(D) þe gret egge was deyde. And after þis alexandre

(R) that egge is dede And after this Alexander

(D) made grette conquestes, And conquerd Inde,

(R) made grete conquestis and whan he had conquered Inde

(D) he went to a cuntree called Bragman; the which when

(R) he wente to a contre callid bragman the whyche whan

(D) þai wist of hys Comyng, þai sent mony wise men to

(R) they wiste his coming they sente many wyse men to

(D) hym, whiche salute hym & sayd: "Sir alexander, þou

(R) him which salewed him & saide sir alexander thou

(D) hast no cause to werre vppon us, ne to euill willyng;

(R) hast no cause to werre upon us ne to be evil willing

(D) For we be both meke & poure, & we haue no-þing bott

(R) for we ben both poure & meke & we haue nothing but

(D) sapience, the which if you will haue, pray

(R) only sapience the which if thou wolt haue pray to

(R) only aspiencie the which if thou wilt have pray to

(D) aspiencie, the which if you will have, pray

(R) for we ben both poure & meke & we have nothing but

(D) For we be both meke & poure, & we have no-þing but

(R) hast no cause to wette vpon us ne to be evill willing

(D) hast no cause to wette vpon us, ne to evill willing;

(R) him which sawed him & saide sir alexander thou

(D) hym, which saide hym & sayd: "sir alexander, þou

(R) they wiste his coming they sente many wyse men to

(D) þat wist of þys comynge, þat sent many wise men to

(R) he wente to a countrie called Bithunian the which when

(D) made grete conquestes, and when he had conquered the

(R) that egge is dede And after that he was

(D) þe grete egge was dede, And after that he was

(R) later And he sente him word that he was dede

(D) later And he sente hym word that he was dede

(R) sente to alexander for tribuloun the which when he

(D) sent to alexander for tribuloun the which when he

(R) sent his letter O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(D) sent his letter, O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(R) sent his letter, O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(D) sent his letter, O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(R) sent his letter, O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(D) sent his letter, O myghty lord of heven sende thy

(D) god þat he wyll gyff hir the; for by batayll þou

(R) god that he wol yeue her to the for by batayll thou

(D) shalt neuer haue hir." And when alexander herd hym

(R) shalt not haue her And whan alexander herd hem

(D) say so, he made all hys oste to tarye, & with few

(R) saye so he made al his oste to tarye & with fewe

(D) of hys knyghtez went within þe sayd cuntree, for to

(R) of his knyghtes wente within the said contre for ten

(D) enquere further of þe trouth. And when he entred

(R) quere further of the trouthe And whan he entred

(D) within þe same ground he found mony poore folkez,

(R) within the same ground he fond many poure folkes

(D) women & chylde all naked, gadderyng herbis in þe

(R) women & chylderen al naked gadring herbes in the

(D) feldez. And he asked of þaim mony questions, to whiche

(R) feldes And he askid of them many questions to whiche

(D) þai answerd wisely. And þan he bad þaim aske

(R) they ansuerd right wysely and than he bad hem ask

(D) of hym some þing þat might do þaim good & to all

(R) of him somme thing that myght doo hem good & to alle

(D) þair people, and he wold gyff þaim it gladly. And

(R) their peple & he wolde yeuen it hem gladdy And

(D) þeir þjóðir, and he wold gyll þeim it gladly. And
(R) their people & he wolde yeven it hem gladly. And

(D) of þis some þing þat might do þaim good & to all
(R) of this some thing that myght doo þem good & to alle

(D) þat answerd wisely. And þan he bad þaim aske
(R) they answerd right wisely and that he bad þem aske

(D) leides. And he asked of þaim many questions, to which
(R) leides. And he asked of þem many questions to which

(D) women & chydre all naked, gaderyng herþis in þe
(R) women & chydren all naked gadring herþes in the

(D) within þe same ground he found many poore folk.
(R) within the same ground he fond many poore folk.

(D) gadere further of þe trooten. And when he asked
(R) gadere further of the trooten. And when he asked

(D) of his knyghtes wente within þe trooten. And the
(R) of his knyghtes wente within the trooten. And the

(D) say no, he made all his othe to laste. & he said
(R) saye so he made al his othe to laste. & he said

(D) shalt never make hit. And when she sawe that he
(R) shalt not make her. And when she sawe that he

(D) God þat he wylt gyff hit. And the lady sawe that
(R) God that he wol yeven hit to his for þis lady sake.

- (D) þen þai said: "Sir, we aixe þe none other þing
 (R) thenne they saide Sir we ask the none other thing
- (D) bot at þou wol gyff vs euerlasting lyfe." Thenne
 (R) but that thou wilt gyve us euerlasting lyf Thenne
- (D) alexander answerd & said: "howe might a man make other
 (R) Alexander ansuerd & said how might aman make other
- (D) mennes liues euerlastyng whan he may not lennthe hys
 (R) mennes liues euerlasting whan he maye not lengthe his
- (D) awne life one houre? And þat 3e axie of me is in no
 (R) owen lyf an oure And that ye aske of me is in no
- (D) mannez power þat leueth." Thenne þai said to hym:
 (R) mannes power that lyueth Than they said to hym
- (D) "Seth þou hase good knowleghe therof, wher
 (R) Syth thou hast goode knowleche therof wherfore
- (D) trayvelles þou þi-self to distroye all the worlde
 (R) trauayllest thou thy self to destroye all the world
- (D) and gadre all þe wordly tresours, And wotte not
 (R) and to gadre alle the worldly tresours and wost not
- (D) when þou must lefe þaim?" Then Alexander said to
 (R) whan thou must leue hem Thenne Alexander said to
- (D) hym: "I do nott all þis at 3e saye as of
 (R) hem I do not alle these thinges that ye saye of

(A) hem I do not all these things that ye saye of

(D) phur I do nott all ple at ye saye as of

(R) when thou must leue hem Then Alexander said to

(D) when pou must lele paine? Then Alexander said to

(R) and to gadre alle the worldly treasure and weat not

(D) and gadre all be worldly treasure And wolte not

(R) transyllest thou thy self to destroye all the world

(D) trayvellest thou for sell to destroye all the world

(R) syn thou hast good knowledge there wherefore

(D) syn thou hast good knowledge there where

(R) manner power that I synth Then Alexander sayde

(D) manner power that I synth Then Alexander sayde

(R) owne iyt as a core And thus he sayde to alexander

(D) wante lile one houre? And he answered to alexander

(R) mannes liues wretchedlyng wher I am I am wretched

(D) mannes liues wretchedlyng wher I am I am wretched

(R) Alexander answered & said I am wretched

(D) Alexander answered & said I am wretched

(R) but that thou wilt give us more power

(D) but at þou wilt give us more power

(R) thanne they sayde & he sayde to alexander

(D) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(R) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(D) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(R) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(D) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(R) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(D) þan þou sayd I saye to alexander

(D) my-self. Butt god hath sent me thurgh all þe

(R) myself But god hath sente me thurgh alle the

(D) world for texalte and magnifye hys lawe and

(R) worlde for texalte and magnifye hys lawe and to

(D) distroy all þem þat beleue not in hym"

(R) destroye them that bileue not in hym

(D) And some tyme Alexander wente disgysed visityng

(R) And somtyme Alexander wente dysguysed visyting

(D) hys lordez & enquiryng of þair dedes. And on

(R) his lordes and enqueryng of her dedes And upon

(D) a tyme he Come in-to a towne of his awne, And sawe

(R) atyme he came in to a towne of his owne And saw

(D) two men of þe same towne bifore a iuge pletyng, of

(R) two men of the same toune bifore a Juge pleting of

(D) on said to þe Iuge: "Sir, I haue boght on house

(R) one said to the juge Sir Juge I haue bought an hous

(D) of thys man; And, long after, I haue founde in it

(R) of this man And longe after I haue founde within

(D) a tresour vnder þe erthe, which is nott myne.

(R) the same a tresour within therthe whiche is not myn

(D) And I haue offerd to deliuer it to hym: And he hath

(R) And I haue offred to diliuere it to hym And he hath

(D) And I have offered to deliver it to hymn: And he hath
(R) And I have offered to deliver it to hymn: And he hath

(D) the same a treasure within therthe which is not myne,
(R) a treasure vnder þe erthe, which is not myne.

(D) of this man: And longe after I have founde within
(R) of this man: And longe after I have founde within

(D) one said to the iuge: Sir Iuge I have bought an house
(R) one said to the iuge: Sir Iuge I have bought an house

(D) two men of the same towne blyve a iuge pleying of
(R) two men of the same towne blyve a iuge pleying of

(D) a tyme he come in-to a towne of his owne, and saw
(R) a tyme he came in to a towne of his owne, and saw

(D) his lordes and epueryng of her lordes, and upon
(R) his lordes and epueryng of her lordes, and upon

(D) And somtyme Alexander wasse vnder the wynde
(R) And somtyme Alexander wasse vnder the wynde

(D) destroye all þen þat holden not a tyme
(R) destroye them that holden not a tyme

(D) worldes for texelle and magnyfic þis tyme
(R) worldes for texelle and magnyfic þis tyme

(D) myself
(R) myself
But god hath sente me to deliver it
But god hath sente me to deliver it

- (D) refusyd it; wherfore, Sir, I beseche the he be
 (R) refused it wherfor Sir I biseche the that he be
- (D) compellyd to take it, for also moche as he knoweth it
 (R) compelled to take it for as moche as he knoweth it
- (D) is not myne; for I haue no right perto." Thenne the
 (R) is not myne for I haue no right therto Thenne the
- (D) Iuge commaund hys aduersarie parte to answer to pe
 (R) Juge comanded his aduerse partie tansuere to the
- (D) same. And pen he sayd: "sir Iuge, that same tresour
 (R) same and thenne he said Sir Juge that same tresour
- (D) was neuer myne; but he hath edyfyed in pat place that
 (R) was neuer myn but he hath edyfyed in that place that
- (D) was byfore comyn to all poo that wold haue edyfyed
 (R) was byfore comyn to alle tho that wolde haue edyfyed
- (D) ther-in. And perfore I haue no right to take it."
 (R) therin And therfore I haue no right to take it
- (D) And pen pai both required pe Iuge that he wold
 (R) And thenne they both required the Juge that he wolde
- (D) take it to hym-self; to qwom he answerd & sayd:
 (R) take it to him self to whom he answered and said
- (D) "sithen it is so that ye say that ye haue no right
 (R) sithen it is so that ye saye that ye haue no right

(R) eithen it is so that ye saye that ye have no right

(D) "eithen it is so that ye say that ye have no right

(R) take it to him sell to whom he answered and said

(D) take it to hym-self; to whom he answered & sayd;

(R) And thence they both requied the Iuge that he wolde

(D) And þen þai both requied þe Iuge that he wold

(R) thein And thefore I haue no right to take it

(D) thein. And þefore I haue no right to take it."

(R) was þyfore comyn to alle the that wolde haue edgyed

(D) was þyfore comyn to all þos that wold haue edgyed

(R) was neuer myn but he hath edgyed in that place that

(D) was neuer myne; but he hath edgyed in that place that

(R) same and thence he said. But Iuge. that same tresson

(D) same. And þen he sayd; "the Iuge that same tresson

(R) Iuge commanded his aduocates þat he shoulde saye

(D) Iuge command his aduocates þat he shoulde saye

(R) is not myne for I haue no right therin. That is it

(D) is not myne; for I haue no right therin. That is it

(R) compelled to take it for as I haue no right therin

(D) compelled to take it for as I haue no right therin

(R) refused it wherfor. Sir. I blesse the that ye do

(D) refused it wherfor. Sir. I blesse the that ye do

(D) herto, ne he hath no right to whom þe herytage hath

(R) to whom the heretage hath

(D) longed and yet bylongeth whar þe tresour was founden,

(R) longed and yet longeth where the tresour was founde

(D) how shuld I haue ony right þerto, that am bot a

(R) hou sholde I haue ony right therto that am but a

(D) straunger in that caas, And neuer afore herd speke

(R) strannger in that caas and neuer a fore herde speke

(D) þerof? And ye wold excuse yow þerof & yeue me

(R) therof ye wolde excuse you therof and giue me

(D) þe charge of þe tresoure; which is euill done."

(R) the charge of the tresour that is euill doo

(D) Thenne he askyd of þaim þat hed founde þe tresour,

(R) Thenne he axid of him that had founde the tresour

(D) whether thay had ony children? and þe tone answerd

(R) whether he had ony childeren which ansuerd

(D) & sayd, he hed a son; and he asked þat other in

(R) he had a sone and he axide that other in

(D) like wyse, & he sayd, he hed a doghter. And þen

(R) like wise & he said he had a doughter Thenne

(D) þe Iuge comaundyd to make a maryage

(R) the Juge said & Jugged that a mariage sholde be made

(C) the judge said & judged that a marriage should be made
(R) be judge commandyd to make a marriage

(C) like wise & he said he had a daughter
(R) like wyse & he sayd he had a daughter. And þen

(C) he had a sone and he axide that other in
(R) & sayd he had a sone and he asked þat other in

(C) whether he had any children which
(R) whether thay had any children? and þe tone answered

(C) Thanne he axide al him that had founde the treasure
(R) Thanne he axide al him that had founde þe treasure

(C) the charge of the treasure that la nulli doe
(R) be charge of þe treasure; which is small damage

(C) they wolde excuse you shewen and than me
(R) þerof? And ye wolde excuse you þerof. It is now

(C) stranger in that case and now it is the same
(R) stranger in that case and now it is the same

(C) now shold I have any right there
(R) now shold I have any right þere

(C) longed and yet I longed where the treasure was
(R) longed and yet I longed where the treasure was

(C) to where the treasure was
(R) þerto, we be þat no right to where the treasure was

(D) bitwene þaim two, And at þai shuld haue þe

(R) bitwene them and that they shold haue the

(D) tresour by þat meane. And when Alexander herd þis

(R) tresour by that meane And whan Alexandre herde this

(D) Iugement, he hed gret mervayle therof, and sayd þus

(R) Jugement he had grete meruayll therof and said thus

(D) to þe Iuge: "I trowe þer is nott in all þe

(R) to the Juge I trowe that ther is not in al the

(D) world so rightwise a Iuge as þou art."

(R) world so rightwise ne so trewe a Juge as thou art

(D) And the Iuge, þat knew hym nott, sayd & asked of

(R) And the Juge that knewe him not saide and axid of

(D) hym whether ony Iuge in hys cuntree wold haue done

(R) him whether ony Juge wold have don

(D) otherwyse: "ye, certanly," sayd alexander, "in many

(R) other wyse Ye certaynly said Alexander in many

(D) landez." Thenne þe Iuge, hauyng grete mervayll

(R) londes Thenne the Juge hauyng grete meruayll

(D) þerof, asked of hym whether it rayned and þe sone

(R) therof axid of him whether it rayned and the sonne

(D) dyd shyne in tho landez; as he wold haue sayd

(R) dide shyne in tho landes as though he wold haue sayd

(R) dide rhyme in the landes as though he wold haue sayd
(D) dyd rhyme in the landes; as he wold haue sayd

(R) dedit axid of him whether it rayned and the sonne
(D) dedit, asked of hym whether it rayned and þe sonne

(R) landes Thanne the luge haueþ grete merweyl
(D) landes "Thanne þe luge, haueþ grete merweyl"

(R) oþer wyse Ye certaynly said Alexander in many
(D) oþerwyse: "ye, certaynly," said alexander, "in many

(R) him whether any luge wold haue don

(D) hym whether any luge in his countrey wold haue don

(R) And the luge that knewe him not, axide and axide of

(D) And the luge, þat knewe hyrname, axide of

(R) world so rightheise no so trowe a luge as thou art

(D) world so rightheise

(R) to the luge I trowe that thou art not in the

(D) to þe luge: "I trowe þat thou art not þe"

(R) legement he had grete merweyl þat he wold sayd
(D) legement, he had grete merweyl þat he wold sayd

(R) tressour by that meene And when alexander was to the

(D) tressour by þat meene And when alexander was to the

(R) bifwene them and that they bifwene was

(D) bifwene þaim two And as þat bifwene was

(D) that it was mervayll þat god shuld send ony light

(R) that it was meruayll that god shuld sende ony light

(D) or rayne or other goode thynges to them that do nott

(R) or rayne or other good thinges to them that doo not

(D) right & trew Iugement. And therfore Alexander had

(R) ryght & trewe Justice And therof Alexander had

(D) gretter meruayll than byfore, And said, þer

(R) gretter meruaylle than byfore and said that ther

(D) was bott few suche people vpon erth as þai were

(R) were but fewe suche peple upon erthe as they were

(D) in þat land.

(R) in that lande

(D) And as Alexander went owt of þat land, he passyd

(R) And as Alexander wente out of that lande he passed

(D) thurgh a cite in þe which all þe housez of þat Cyte

(R) thurgh a cite in whiche all the houses of that cyte

(D) were of one hight, & byfore þe dure of euery hous

(R) were of one heighte & byfore the dore of euery hous

(D) was a grete pitte or graue; in which cite þer was no

(R) was a grete pytte or graue in whiche cyte ther was no

(D) Iuge, wherof he had gret mervayll; and asked of

(R) Juge wherof he had grete meruaylle And axed of

- (D) that it was meravigl þat god shold send such a knyght
(R) that it was meravigl þat god shold send such a knyght
- (D) of thyng or other good thynges in that land to be
(R) of thyng or other good thynges in that land to be
- (D) right & trowe in myght And he shold be a knyght
(R) right & trowe Justice And he shold be a knyght
- (D) greater meravigl than þat of god and of his
(R) greater meravigl than þat of god and of his
- (D) was þat lowe such people shold be in that land
(R) were þat lowe such people shold be in that land
- (D) in þat land
(R) in that land
- (D) And as Alexander went out of þat land, he passed
(R) And as Alexander went out of that land he passed
- (D) though a cite in þe which all þe houses of þat cite
(R) though a cite in which all the houses of that cite
- (D) were of one height, & þatore þe dure of every hous
(R) were of one height & þatore the dure of every hous
- (D) was a grete pitte or grave; in which cite þer was no
(R) was a grete pitte or grave in which cite that was no
- (D) luge, wherof he had grete meravigl; and asked of
(R) luge wherof he had grete meravigl And asked of

(D) þe inhabitantis therin wherof such thynges shuld

(R) the inhabytauntis therin wherfore suche thingis shold

(D) serue. The which answerd hym & sayd: "First, for þe

(R) serue The whiche ansuerd him & sayd first for the

(D) outragez hight of housez, loue & Iustice can nott

(R) outrageous height of houses loue & Justice can not

(D) be long a towne emong þe people." And þai sayd,

(R) be longe in a town among the peple And they sayde that

(D) þe pittez & grauez wer þair awne housez, to þe

(R) the pittes or graues were their owne houses to

(D) whiche þat þai shuld sone go to, & þer dwelle vnto

(R) which they shold sone go to & there dwelle until

(D) þe day of Iugement. And as tochyng that thai hed no

(R) the day of Jugement And as touching that they had no

(D) Iuge, þai sayd, þai made good Iustice of þem-self,

(R) Juge they saide that they made good Justice of them self

(D) wherfore þai nede no Iuge. Thenne Alexander departed

(R) wherfore they neded no Juge Thenne Alexander departed

(D) from þaim right well pleasyd.

(R) from them right wel plesed

(D) And afore hys deth, he wrote a letter vnto hys

(R) And afore his deth he wrote a lettre unto his

(7) And store his deeth, he wrote a letter unto his

(10) And store his deeth, he wrote a letter unto his

(12) from them right wel pleased

(13) from him right well pleased

(14) therefore they neded no Iuge Thanne Alexander departed

(15) wherfore pai neded no Iuge, Thanne Alexander departed

(16) Iuge they seide that they made good Justice of them self

(17) Iuge, pai sayd, pai made good Justice of hem self

(18) the day of Igement And as touching that they had no

(19) pe day of Igement And as touching that they had no

(20) which they shold come to the Iment day

(21) which pai pai shold come to the Iment day

(22) the pities on groves were the groves of the

(23) pe pities & groves were the groves of the

(24) he Ioke in a Ioke, wherfore he Ioke in a Ioke

(25) he Ioke in a Ioke, wherfore he Ioke in a Ioke

(26) outrageous height of Ioke, wherfore he Ioke in a Ioke

(27) outrageous height of Ioke, wherfore he Ioke in a Ioke

(28) The which answerd the

(29) The which answerd the

(30) the Iohannismite thein seide that

(D) moder, desering hir to make no sorow for hym. And

(R) moder desiring her to make no sorowe for him And

(D) sone aftir Alexander died & was putt in a coffre of gold,

(R) sone after Alexander died & was put in a Coffre of gold

(D) & buried in alexandria with grete

(R) and buried in Alisaundre & he was born theder with grete

(D) reuerence by princez & oþer grete lordez that

(R) reuerence by kinges princes & other grete lordes that

(D) keped & fulfillyd hys testament as he had ordeigned:

(R) kept & fulfilled his testament as he had ordeigned

(D) thenne stert vp one of þe grettest lordez of þaim

(R) Thenn stert up one of the gretest lordes of them

(D) that kept hym, and sayd þus: "Thay þat neuer

(R) that kept him & said thus They that neuer

- (Q) ~~model~~ entering air to make no noise, that is, ~~model~~ entering her to make no noise, that is, ~~model~~
- (R) ~~some after~~ Alexander died & was put in a coffin, ~~some after~~ Alexander died & was put in a coffin, ~~some after~~
- (D) ~~is buried~~ in Alexandria ~~is buried~~ in Alexandria ~~is buried~~ in Alexandria
- (R) ~~and buried~~ in Alexandria & he was the ~~and buried~~ in Alexandria & he was the ~~and buried~~ in Alexandria & he was the
- (D) ~~reference by~~ prince's ~~reference by~~ prince's ~~reference by~~ prince's
- (R) ~~reference by~~ king's prince's & ~~reference by~~ king's prince's & ~~reference by~~ king's prince's
- (D) ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony, ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony, ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony
- (R) ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony, ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony, ~~kept & fulfilled~~ his testimony
- (D) ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris, ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris, ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris
- (R) ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris, ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris, ~~themselves~~ start up one of the greatest lords of Paris
- (D) ~~that kept~~ him, and said that, "That he, ~~that kept~~ him, and said that, "That he, ~~that kept~~ him, and said that, "That he,
- (R) ~~that kept~~ him & said that, "That he, ~~that kept~~ him & said that, "That he, ~~that kept~~ him & said that, "That he,

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