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ALEXANDER, MIDAS, AND THE ORACLE AT GORDIUM¹

ERNEST A. FREDRICKSMEYER

IN THE spring of 333 B.C., at Gordium, the capital of Phrygia, an oracle identified Alexander as the destined ruler over Asia. The purpose of this study is to examine this incident and to appraise the importance which it had for Alexander.

Alexander arrived at Gordium in the spring of 333. On the acropolis, in the temple of Zeus Basileus, stood an ancient wagon dedicated to this god. An old oracle was known to the Phrygian people that the man who would undo the knot attached to the yoke of this wagon would become lord over Asia. The knot was formed by the cord which latched the yoke to the pole of the wagon. Alexander drew out the wooden pole pin, the end (or ends) of the cord thereby became exposed, and he was able to untie the knot.²

W. W. Tarn (*Alexander the Great*, II [Cambridge, 1948], 262ff.) has shown that this version of how Alexander dealt with the knot, reported by Aristobulus,³ is probably the correct one, not the vulgate account which has him cut the knot with his sword.⁴

In either case, so the historian Arrian (2. 3. 8) reports, on leaving the wagon Alexander apparently believed that he had duly met the condition of the oracle; he regarded a thunderstorm which occurred that night as divine confirmation, and on the following day he performed a sacrifice in thanksgiving.

Arrian (2. 3. 2-6; cf. 2. 3. 1) and Justin-Trogus (11. 7. 5-14) relate this legend about the earlier history of the wagon: The Phrygians, during a revolu-

tion, had been told by an oracle that they stood in need of a king and that they should acclaim as such the man they first found driving up in a wagon. There arrived a Phrygian peasant riding in a wagon; they made him king; and he dedicated the wagon as thank offering to Zeus the King.

The accounts of the two writers differ in several details. The main disagreement, however, is on the name of the man who became king and dedicated the wagon to Zeus: according to Justin it was Gordius the father of Midas, according to Arrian (cf. *Plut. Alex.* 18. 1; *Curt.* 3. 1. 11 and 14; *Aelian. NA* 13. 1) it was Midas himself.⁵ It is impossible to determine which version is older. This much is certain: there existed a Phrygian legend which regarded Midas as the first king in Phrygia and as the dedicator of the wagon.⁶ Alexander, too, believed, as we shall see, that the man was Midas, not Gordius.

Now, in Macedonia there existed some traditions relevant to the Phrygian tradition. The Phrygians apparently considered themselves autochthonous, and they believed the founder of the Phrygian dynasty was a native of Phrygia, the peasant who had arrived in the wagon. But in Macedonia, Herodotus (7. 73) reports, there was the tradition that the Phrygians had once been neighbors of the Macedonians, that they later emigrated to Asia and changed their name from Brigians to Phrygians. Strabo (7. Frag. 25) says that these Brigians, before crossing to Asia, occupied the area of Mount Bermium

(actually, the Bermium was a mountain range).⁷

We further learn from Herodotus (8. 138) that Macedonian legend told of an ancient king in Macedonia named "Midas son of Gordias [Gordius]"⁸ whose famous rose gardens were situated at the foot of Mount Bermium. Obviously, Midas was the king of the Brigians.

Possibly there was even then a Macedonian tradition, which Herodotus knew, that Midas joined his people in their migration from Macedonia to Asia. Describing the conquest of Macedonia by Perdiccas and his brothers, Herodotus (*loc. cit.*) says that "they came to another part of Macedonia and settled near the gardens said to be those of Midas son of Gordias" (οἴκησαν πέλας τῶν κήπων τῶν λεγομένων εἶναι Μίδεω τοῦ Γορδίεω) and that "after winning that part of the country they went forth and subdued also the rest of Macedonia." As the tense of λεγομένων shows, the gardens apparently were said to belong to Midas at the time when Perdiccas and his brothers settled near them.⁹ Perhaps Herodotus in speaking of the Phrygians as "neighbors of the Macedonians" was not thinking of the "Macedonians" in the strict sense, as the conquerors from Argos, but in a general sense, as the people already dwelling in the area. If so, it is possible that Macedonian tradition at Herodotus' time had it that Midas and the Brigians moved to Asia when they were dislodged from Macedonia by the Argead conqueror.¹⁰

Till the beginning of the fourth century, the Macedonian tradition was that the name of this conqueror was Perdiccas; then the name Caranus supplanted Perdiccas.¹¹ Justin-Trogus (7. 1. 11) states that Caranus gained possession of Macedonia after driving

off Midas and other kings who had held parts of the country. In speaking of Caranus, then, as the Argead conqueror of Macedonia, Trogus¹² is giving us genuine Macedonian tradition. It is first reported by Theopompus (*FGrH*, No. 115, Frag. 393). What Theopompus said about Caranus can be inferred from the parallels of Justin 7. 1. 7ff. with Euphorion Frag. 30 Scheidw. (schol. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 8. 11.).¹³ Since Euphorion (*loc. cit.*) also mentions Midas in connection with Caranus' settlement of Macedonia, we may infer that Theopompus did the same. But Euphorion, as cited, differs greatly from Trogus in what he has to say about Midas. After stating that Caranus changed the name of Edessa to Aegae he says that Edessa was inhabited of old by Phrygians and Lydians and those who had crossed over to Europe with Midas. Thus according to Euphorion the migration of Midas took place in the direction opposite to that indicated by Trogus. But this notion, that Midas moved from Asia to Europe, is found only in a few late and secondary accounts (see Eitrem, *RE*, XV [1932], 1526). The information of Trogus, on the other hand, harmonizes with the old established Macedonian tradition that the Phrygians migrated from Macedonia to Asia (Herodotus). It is obvious, therefore, that it is not Euphorion who reflects what Theopompus had to say about Midas, but rather Trogus.¹⁴ It is extremely probable, then, that Trogus' statement that Midas was ejected from Macedonia belongs to an old Macedonian tradition that Midas together with his Brigians migrated from Macedonia to Asia.¹⁵

The mythographer Conon (*fl.* 36 B.C.—A.D. 17), so Photius tells us,¹⁶ narrated how Midas ruled over the Brigians, and how this people lived in

great numbers at the foot of Mount Bermium, and how, during Midas' reign, Silenus was seen near the Bermium range, and how, when everything turned to gold for Midas, he persuaded his subjects to cross the Hellespont to Asia, and how then their name changed from Brigians to Phrygians.

The reason given here for the migration is a late invention (see Eitrem, *op. cit.*, 1530). As for the rest, the parallels with what is expressly reported by Herodotus as Macedonian legend are striking: King Midas, the Brigians, the migration of the Brigians from Europe to Asia, the change of their name from Brigians to Phrygians. Herodotus, too, speaks of Silenus in connection with Midas. He reports it as an explicit Macedonian legend that Silenus was captured in the gardens of Midas which were located at the foot of Mount Bermium (8. 138). There can be little doubt, then, that Midas' migration from Macedonia to Asia belongs to an old Macedonian tradition.

There is other important evidence. The scholiast to Euripides (*Hipp.* 671, Schwartz) states that an oracle was given to the Phrygians that the man who would undo the knot on the wagon that conveyed Midas to Phrygia would be king over Asia, that Alexander was said to have untied this knot, but that Marsyas the Younger, in the first book of his Macedonian history, pointed out that the yoke was said to have been tied to the pole of the wagon with a vine twig. (The dominant version was that the cord was made of cornel bark.)

Jacoby is surely right in giving this whole passage to Marsyas (of Philippi), whose *floruit* was probably before 168 B.C.¹⁷ His History of Macedonia consisted of at least six books.¹⁸ Certainly he did not treat Alexander's career in the first of these. Why, then,

did he discuss, in the first book, the knot which Alexander undid at Gordium? Clearly because in treating early Macedonian history he described the career of King Midas and his journey from Macedonia to Phrygia; this gave him occasion to touch on Alexander's undoing of the knot since it was attached to the wagon which had served Midas on his journey. Thus, Marsyas knew the Macedonian tradition about the journey of Midas from Macedonia to Asia; he also believed that the wagon referred to in the oracle about the rule over Asia was the same which Midas had used on his journey.

The combined evidence obtained from Marsyas, Conon, Trogus, and Herodotus proves the existence of a Macedonian tradition about the journey of Midas from Macedonia to Asia.

While it is perhaps probable that this tradition existed in Macedonia at the time of Herodotus, we cannot prove that this is the case. But we can show that it almost certainly was established by the time of the historian Theopompus. We have seen that Theopompus probably mentioned the expulsion of Midas from Macedonia by Caranus and that this view very probably was part of an old Macedonian tradition about the migration of Midas and the Brigians from Macedonia to Phrygia. Herodotus says that the gardens of Midas were situated at the foot of Mount Bermium and that according to Macedonian legend Silenus was captured in these gardens. Theopompus wrote about the appearance of Silenus in Macedonia (*FGrH*, No. 115, Frag. 74b; cf. 74a) and his capture by King Midas or, according to another version, by Midas' shepherds (Frag. 75a, b, c; cf. 75e). Certainly he placed the meeting of Midas and Silenus in Macedonia. Yet he twice calls this same Midas a "Phrygian"

(Frag. 75a and c), and once he describes Midas as a "powerful king in Phrygia" (Frag. 260). This makes it almost certain, I believe, that Theopompus knew the Macedonian tradition that Midas (and the Brigians) moved from Macedonia to Phrygia. Furthermore, Theopompus apparently believed that Midas continued to rule as king in his new homeland.

Thus, the Macedonian tradition of the migration of Midas almost certainly predates Theopompus, and probably Herodotus. We can quite readily assume that as an educated Macedonian Alexander knew this tradition; his extraordinarily great interest in the mythical past is well known.¹⁹ The legend of the conquest of Macedonia by the Argead Caranus was the official tradition at the Argead court no later than the reign of Philip II.²⁰

But we have more specific evidence that Alexander knew the tradition of the migration of Midas from Macedonia to Phrygia. Callisthenes (*FGrH*, No. 124, Frag. 54) mentions that the wealth of Midas derived from mines round Mount Bermium. Herodotus says that the gardens of Midas lay at the foot of Mount Bermium. These gardens covered the Verria-Naoussa-Vodena area.²¹ For several years (343/2-340), Alexander resided at the *nymphaeum* (the sanctuary of the Nymphs) near Mieza (Plutarch 7. 4). Mieza lay on the eastern foothills of the Bermium range to the north of Beroea (Verria).²² These facts in combination surely place the *nymphaeum* in or very near the gardens of Midas. (Plutarch [*loc. cit.*] comments on the natural beauty of the *nymphaeum*; Herodotus describes the natural splendor of the gardens [8. 138. Cf. Nicander in Athen. 15. 683B]).

In these gardens Macedonian legend had it that Silenus was captured. The

association between *sileni* and nymphs was very close, particularly in the North Aegean area; the *sileni* were the nymphs' natural companions and suitors, eager and persistent; they haunted the same localities.²³ A likely spot, therefore, to look for and find Silenus was at the abode of the nymphs. Now there was at the *nymphaeum* a cave and near by a spring. This cave was well known down into Christian times.²⁴ According to Virgil (*Buc.* 6. 13) the capture of Silenus took place in a cave, and (6. 20f.) a water nymph then came upon the scene of the capture. The scholiast (Serv. *Comm. in Verg. Buc.*) comments (on 6. 13) that this story about Silenus was said not to have been invented by Virgil, but to have been taken from Theopompus. It is evident, therefore, that, according to Theopompus, Silenus was captured in a cave. But the historian also has the capture take place by a spring (Frag. 75a), and he actually calls (Frag. 75c) Silenus "the son of a nymph." These facts in combination, while not amounting to definitive proof, do at least create the very real possibility that the *nymphaeum* where Alexander studied was the very spot where legend had it that Midas, or his shepherds, captured Silenus. In this connection it is noteworthy that Aristotle, who was with Alexander at the *nymphaeum* (Plutarch, *loc. cit.*), wrote a long account of the conversation which supposedly took place between Midas and Silenus after the latter's capture (Frag. 44 R.). But even if the supposed spot of Silenus' capture by Midas was not identical with Alexander's residence, it was certainly in the vicinity, and therefore Alexander, with his pronounced interest in heroes and myths, surely came to know the legend well during the course of his protracted stay in the area.

It is reasonably certain, then, that Alexander not merely knew of, but was in fact intimately acquainted with, the Macedonian tradition about Midas son of Gordius, and his migration, along with his people, from Macedonia to Phrygia.

The knowledge of this tradition Alexander then brought to bear upon the legend he learned at Gordium²⁵ about the dedication of the wagon to Zeus Basileus. It is now clear that what Alexander had learned in Macedonia about the migration of Midas from Macedonia to Phrygia made him consider Midas, and not Gordius, the dedicator of the wagon. The importance of the wagon to the founder of the Phrygian monarchy, particularly his reason for dedicating it to Zeus, had not been satisfactorily explained in the Phrygian legend; there was etiology and contrivance, surely as obvious to Alexander as it is to us. The significance of the wagon was now satisfactorily explained to Alexander: it had served Midas on his successful journey from Macedonia to Phrygia (cf. the evidence of Marsyas, above).²⁶

At this point it is apropos to observe that if one were to assume that the tradition about Midas' journey did not yet exist before Alexander's arrival at Gordium, there would be no satisfactory explanation of its origin other than that it derived from conclusions reached by Alexander himself during his stay at Gordium. Since the tradition was established by the time of Marsyas, it could not have originated much later than 200 B.C., if it is correct that he wrote before 168 B.C. A priori, it would be extremely likely that it resulted from Alexander's famous act at Gordium (Marsyas connects the journey of Midas with the wagon and Alexander's undoing of the knot). Further, we would

expect the originator to have been a Macedonian. The Greeks did not know of the Macedonian Midas (see n. 41), and their tradition (Arrian and Justin) about the dedicator of the wagon knew this man only as a native Phrygian. Thus, the originator of the tradition about the journey of Midas would almost certainly be a Macedonian who was present at the historic undoing of the knot. And this man would most likely be Alexander himself. Because of the oracle, he was more interested than anyone else in the history of the wagon; because of his former residence at the *nymphaeum* in (or very near) the "gardens of Midas," he was interested more than anyone else in Midas. He would compare the Macedonian and the Phrygian traditions. The former told of the Brigians, who once lived in Macedonia and then moved to Asia, and of a king of the Brigians named Midas. The latter, or a version of the latter, told of Midas' arrival at the site of Gordium in a wagon (though he was believed a native of Phrygia); it also told of a civil war which preceded the establishment of the monarchy. The wagon meant travel; the revolution could suggest that the arrival of the Brigians was opposed by the autochthonous tribe(s). Macedonian tradition, if we may believe Herodotus, knew Midas as "the son of Gordius," Hellenic-Phrygian tradition knew the Phrygian Midas as "son of Gordius"; in both traditions, Midas was known for his great wealth and for his capture of Silenus.²⁷ It may well be that already by Alexander's time both traditions regarded Midas as a pupil of Orpheus.²⁸ But a native Phrygian Midas as pupil of Orpheus made no sense; Orpheus was believed almost unanimously to have been born, to have lived, and died, in Thrace, specifically Pieria.²⁹ Both traditions made good sense,

however, if it was believed that Midas had received his instruction while still in Europe, before moving to Phrygia (so Conon, *loc. cit.*). Finally, there were some striking similarities between Thraco-Macedonian and Phrygian customs (Friedrich, *RE*, XX [1941], 878 and 883f.) which may have been noticed by Alexander.

There can be no reasonable doubt, however, that Alexander came to Gordium already knowing a Macedonian tradition about the migration of Midas and the Brigians from Macedonia to Phrygia, and at Gordium, we may be sure, he concluded that the wagon which Midas dedicated to Zeus Basileus had served him on his journey from Macedonia.

How did this view affect Alexander's attitude toward the oracle? Arrian's word for this oracle is *λόγιον*; he describes it as "a widespread tradition among the people living near" (2. 3. 2), and he adds that "it was said about the wagon that the man who would undo the knot... would rule Asia" (2. 3. 6).³⁰ But the wagon, and of course the knot, were the property of Zeus Basileus and stood in his temple. Surely Alexander believed that this god, who established for Midas the rule over Phrygia, now guaranteed to him the fulfilment of the promise of rule over Asia.

Arrian has told us that when Alexander walked away from the wagon he apparently believed the oracle about the undoing of the knot to have been duly fulfilled, that there were that night thunder and lightning which verified this fulfilment, and that therefore Alexander on the next day offered a thanksgiving sacrifice "to the gods (*τοῖς θεοῖς*) who had sent the signs and certified the undoing of the knot."

Perhaps the plural "the gods" is merely a vague and hence inaccurate manner of expression on the part of Arrian. Possibly it is due to the frequent reluctance among the ancients to name the author of a divine manifestation even when there was no doubt as to his identity,³¹ and thus Arrian may have found the expression in his source. On the other hand, it may be that Alexander sacrificed to some other gods besides Zeus. Athena would be most likely: it seems probable that Alexander placed the invasion of Asia under the special tutelage of this goddess along with Zeus and Heracles;³² he frequently worshiped her and Zeus jointly.³³ But most probably the correct meaning of the plural is that Alexander thought of Zeus in terms of two (possibly more) functions and forms of appearance: as Basileus (certainly) and, probably, as the god of the thunderstorm.³⁴ At any rate, Zeus was the god of the thunderstorm,³⁵ and it was a thunderstorm which certified to Alexander the undoing of the knot.

Surely, then, G. Kleiner (*Abh. Berl. Ak., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, No. 5 [1947] p. 13) is correct when he refers to Zeus Basileus as the god "der Alexander die Herrschaft über Asien in Aussicht stellt." G. Radet (*Alexandre le Grand* [Paris, 1931], p. 66) says that Alexander "s'est révélé comme le héros à qui les destins réservent l'Empire de l'Asie. Zeus, en terre phrygienne, . . . l'a manifestement indiqué."

The god, then, who promised the fulfilment of the oracle was Zeus Basileus. Now, even if Alexander had thought that the dedicator of the wagon was a native Phrygian, he still would have very likely regarded the god at Gordium as Zeus or identified him with Zeus—as did our Greek authorities. Nonetheless, to Alexander or anyone

else the authority of the oracle would have been no greater than the prestige of the local cult of the deity that owned the wagon. As we have seen, however, Alexander believed that the dedicator of the wagon came from Macedonia; this *ipso facto* implied to Alexander, as it would have implied to any other Greek or Macedonian, that Midas brought his cults and his gods with him from Macedonia. Thus, the provenance of the god at Gordium was, to Alexander, Macedonia. Surely this realization must have made a deep impression on him. The cult of Zeus was vigorous in Macedonia, particularly with the royal family, and with no one more than with Alexander himself.³⁶

The fact, therefore, that the promise of lordship over Asia was made not by some Phrygian deity identified with Zeus, but by the very Zeus of Alexander's homeland may well have been decisive for the faith which Alexander put in the promise of the oracle. This we can say on the basis of the evidence—abundant and persuasive—that Alexander was a sincere and devout believer in the traditional Hellenic-Macedonian religion.³⁷

It is likely that Alexander's discovery at Gordium of his destiny to be the ruler over Asia did immediately bring

about his personal resolution to meet and realize this destiny. If this is correct, Alexander's decision to conquer Asia, which in his time was probably synonymous with "the Persian Empire,"³⁸ should be dated not later than the spring of 333.

Finally, it is possible that there is an important connection between the oracle at Gordium and Alexander's journey to Ammon at Siwa. Ammon gave Alexander instructions about certain sacrifices to be performed, and there is reason to think that these instructions were given for the time when he would have completed his conquest of Asia and thus in fact become "the ruler over Asia."³⁹ Perhaps Alexander went to the oasis to ask for reassurance of the promise made to him by Zeus Basileus at Gordium. We know that at Memphis, after his return from Siwa and shortly before his departure to meet Darius for the battle which he hoped would decide the contest for the rule over Asia, Alexander performed a great sacrifice to Zeus Basileus.⁴⁰ It may be that the reassurance he received from Ammon provided the reason for the sacrifice to the god who had first promised him the rule over Asia.⁴¹

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NOTES

1. This study was composed at Dartmouth College during the autumn term of 1959. A shorter version was read at the meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in New York City, December 1959. I am grateful to Professor Charles Edson of the University of Wisconsin, who suggested this study, and whose interest and encouragement were invaluable. I also wish to thank Professor Norman Doenges of Dartmouth College for reading the first draft.

2. Arr. *Anab.* 2. 3; Plut. *Alex.* 18. 1-2; Curt. 3. 1. 11-17; Just. 11. 7. 3-16. Just. 11. 7. 4 makes the oracle Alexander's motive for coming to Gordium. But we infer from Arr. 1. 24. 1-4, 1. 29. 3-4, 2. 3. 1, and Curt. 3. 1. 14-16, that his reasons for going to Phrygia and Gordium were strategic, and that he had not heard of the oracle prior to his arrival at Gordium.

Plut. 18. 1 makes the prediction refer to the rule of the world.

On the location of the wagon in the temple of Zeus, see E. Mederer, "Die Alexanderlegenden bei den ältesten Alexanderhistorikern," *Würzb. St. z. Altertumswissenschaft*, VIII (Stuttgart, 1936), 9 and n. 2.

3. *FGrH*, No. 139, Frag. 7a (Arr. 2. 3. 7) and Frag. 7b (Plut. 18. 2). Cf. W. Reichel, *Homeric Weapons* (Vienna, 1901), pp. 129f.

4. Curt. 3. 1. 18; Just. 11. 7. 16; Arr. 2. 3. 7 (*legomenon*); Plut. 18. 2. From Clitarchus, according to F. Jacoby, *FGrH*, II D, No. 139, Frag. 7, and R. Schubert, *Beiträge zur Kritik der Alexanderhistoriker* (Leipzig, 1922), p. 7. The story is much embellished with rhetoric.

L. Pearson (*The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* [New York, 1960], p. 157) thinks we cannot hope to know what actually happened.

5. Though according to Arr. the wagon belonged to Midas's father Gordius, Midas was driving it, and his father and mother were riding with him. In a number of versions,

Gordius is not mentioned at all. See A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, III (Leipzig, 1892), 459.

6. See F. Rühl, *Zeitschr. f. d. österr. Gymn.*, XXXIII (1882), 813. Cf. Von Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 459 and 464, and Schubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 ff.

7. Cf. Friedrich, *RE*, XX (1941), 883f. Remnants of the Brigians survived in the Macedonian area in historical times. See Oberhummer, *RE*, III (1900), 920f.

8. Hdt. consistently uses "Gordias" (I. 14 and 35) for the more correct form "Gordius." See A. Körte, *Jahrb. d. k. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Ergänzungsheft V (1904), 21, n. 113. Hdt. in I. 14 is following the Hellenic tradition which knew of Midas only as a king in Phrygia.

9. H. W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar* (New York, 1916), 1159a 2.

10. How and Wells *ad* Hdt. 7. 73 and 8. 138. 2 state, in effect, that the Brigians left for Asia as a result of the Macedonian conquest. However, the source passages cited by them do not bear this out. The evidence considered in this paper is only for the Macedonian tradition about the migration; I am not concerned here with the question of historicity.

11. O. Hoffmann, *Die Makedonen, ihre Sprache und ihr Volkstum* (Göttingen, 1906), pp. 123 and 128. F. Geyer, *Makedonien bis zur Thronbesteigung Philipps II* (Munich and Berlin, 1930), p. 99.

12. That this is Trogus is shown by his prologue to Book 7.

13. Jacoby, *FGrH*, II D, No. 115, Frag. 393.

14. See also Klotz, *RE*, XXI (1952), 2307.

15. A. Reinach, *REG*, XXVI [1913], 350, with n. 3, and 374) accepted, though solely on the basis of Justin-Trogus 7. 1. 11, that there existed a Macedonian tradition that Midas moved from Macedonia to Phrygia when ejected by Caranus.

16. *Bibl.* 186, p. 130b 25 (*FGrH*, No. 26, Frag. 1 narr. 1).
17. *FGrH*, II D, No. 135-36. So also C. Müller on Marsyas Frag. 1. Tarn (*op. cit.*, p. 263, n. 1) mistakes Marsyas of Philippi for Marsyas of Pella.

18. *FGrH*, *loc. cit.*

19. See n. 37, below.

20. See O. Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, p. 123; cf. p. 128.

21. S. Casson, *Macedonia, Thrace and Illyria* (Oxford, 1926), p. 55.

22. C. F. Edson, *CP*, L (1955), 187, n. 66.

23. See Kuhnert in Roscher's *Myth. Lex.*, IV (1915), 446ff. and Hartmann, *RE*, 2. Reihe, III (1927), 41f.

24. Edson, *loc. cit.* The cult of the nymphs, which was limited almost exclusively to the naiads, was usually located at their springs and at or in their caves. Heichelheim, *RE*, XVII (1937), 1554.

25. A. Weigall (*Alexander the Great* [New York and London, 1933], p. 152) sensed that Alexander was deeply impressed when he recognized the connection, through Midas, between traditions at Gordium and in Macedonia. However, W. was confused on the state of the evidence and thus did not see its true significance.

26. Körte (*op. cit.*, p. 16) notes that the use of a wagon as means of transportation for humans was an exclusive privilege of the warlike ruling classes. Gordius and Midas, however, were poor peasants.

27. It is not mandatory to explain away "the son of Gordias" in Hdt. 8. 138 as an error of the historian. Cf. Reinach, *op. cit.*, pp. 374 and 375, n. 1. But Kuhnert (*op. cit.*, col. 2955; cf. How and Wells *ad* Hdt. 8. 138. 2) believes that Hdt. in 8. 138 is thinking of the famous Phrygian Midas of whom he reports in I. 14 that he was the first barbarian king to consult the Delphic oracle and to dedicate his throne to Apollo. However, K. does not say whether he thinks Hdt. was confused, or, if not, how the historian could have thought it possible that the Midas in I. 14 and the one in 8. 138 were identical.

Wealth of the Phrygian M.: Tyrtaeus, *PLG*, II (4th ed.),

Frag. 12. 6 Bergk; Aristoph. *Plut.* 287; Plato *Rep.* 3. 408B, *Leg.* 2. 660E. Wealth of the Macedonian M.: Callisth., *loc. cit.* Capture of Silenus in Phrygia: Xen. *Anab.* 1. 2. 13. Capture in Macedonia: Hdt., *loc. cit.*; Arist., *loc. cit.*; Theop., *loc. cit.*

28. Our authorities for this relationship postdate Alexander: Just. 11. 7. 14 and Ovid *Met.* 11. 92 for the Phrygian M. (cf. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2. 13), Conon, *loc. cit.*, for the Macedonian.

29. See Ziegler, *RE*, XVIII (1939), 1228ff. and Edson, *HThR*, XLI (1948), 202.

30. Cf. Curt. 3. 1. 16 (*oraculum*) and Just. 11. 7. 4 (*antiqua oracula*).

31. A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II (Cambridge, 1925), 1ff.

32. Arr. 1. 11. 7 tells us that Alexander erected altars to Zeus Apobaterios, Athena, and Heracles, both on the European and the Asiatic shores of the Hellespont. Obviously, he placed his crossing under the special tutelage of these three divinities. But for the mere physical crossing, he turned to Poseidon and the Nereids (Arr. 1. 11. 6). Thus it seems likely that the altars were intended to invest the crossing with a wider and more symbolic meaning, that is, the invasion of Asia was placed under the special aegis of these divinities. Apobaterios is probably a special form of Soter.

33. Arr. 1. 11. 7; Curt. 3. 12. 27, 4. 13. 15.

34. Cf. Kleiner, *Abh. Berl. Ak., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, No. 5 (1947), p. 13.

35. See Cook, *loc. cit.*

36. On Zeus as worshiped in Macedonia and by the Argaeids, see W. Baege, "De Macedonum sacris," *Diss. Phil. Hal.*, XXII (1913), 1ff.; Hoffmann, *RE*, XIV (1928), 690; Edson, *OCD*, s.v. "Macedonian Cults," p. 526.

Alexander and Zeus (exclusive of evidence dealing with Ammon and Alexander's divine descent): Arr. 1. 4. 5, 1. 11. 1, 1. 11. 7, 1. 17. 5-6, 3. 5. 2, *Ind.* 35. 8, *Ind.* 36. 3; Diod. 17. 16. 3, 17. 113. 3-4, 18. 4. 5; Curt. 3. 12. 27, 4. 13. 15. Cf. Arr. 1. 18. 6 and 9, and 1. 20. 1; Plut. 33. 2; Curt. 4. 15. 26-28. See also the following note.

37. See, e.g., O. Kern, "Der Glaube Alexanders des Großen" (chap. iii), in *Die Religion der Griechen*, III (Berlin, 1938), 38-57; U. Wilcken, *Alex. the Gr.* (New York, 1932. Engl. tr.), pp. 95f., 127, 239; F. Taeger, *Charisma: Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Herrscherkultes*, I (Stuttgart, 1957), 179-90. Cf. Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, II (Berlin, 1932), 265. See also Baege, *loc. cit.* (incomplete list of references), and E. Kornemann, *Die Alexandergeschichte des Königs Ptolemaios I. von Aegypten* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1935), pp. 220-32.

It has been argued (F. Pfister, *Philol.*, LXXXII [1927], 359ff.) that Alexander as late as 333 probably believed, on the basis of the Ionian world map, that Gordium was the center of the earth (cf. E. Mederer, *op. cit.*, p. 13, with references). If so, this view surely served to support his faith in the promise made by the oracle.

38. See Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*³ (Cambridge, 1951), p. 153 and n. 1.

39. In August 325, Alexander performed two sets of sacrifices, each to different gods and with different rites, both, according to Alexander, on the instructions of Ammon (Nearchus, *FGrH*, No. 133, Frag. 33 [Arr. 6. 19. 4]). Never before this event had Alexander, as far as we know, performed any sacred acts on the instructions of this god. These two sets of sacrifices were performed on separate islands in one of the mouths of the Indus river, when Alexander reached the southern ocean. At this point Alexander probably considered the conquest of Asia completed; the return march began, with Babylon as destination. Thus it may well be that Ammon gave Alexander instructions for sacrifices to be performed at the time when he would have completed the conquest of "Asia."

Actually, Alexander had called himself "King of Asia" long before this. In a letter to Darius, in Dec. 333/Jan. 332,

he called himself "King of Asia" and "Lord of all Asia" (Arr. 2. 14. 8-9). The early date of his claim to this title must be understood, I believe, in the light of the promise made at Gordium. See, however, Diod. 17. 17. 2. According to Plut. 34. 1 Alexander was proclaimed (by the army assembly?) "King of Asia" after the battle at Gaugamela, in October 331, and in a votive offering to Athena at Lindus, dating probably to about the same time, Alexander called himself "Lord of Asia" (Jacoby, *FGrII*, No. 532, "Anagraphe von Lindos" 38). But only now, in August 325, could he regard the conquest of Asia as completed; only now was he in any real sense lord of Asia.

40. Arr. 3. 5. 2. According to Arr. 3. 9. 6 Alexander told his officers before the battle of Gaugamela that in this battle they would fight for the sovereignty over "the whole of Asia."

41. I wish to anticipate a possible objection to the conclusions reached in this paper, namely, Arrian and Justin, who report the Phrygian tradition about the wagon, regard the dedicator of the wagon as a native Phrygian; they seem to know nothing of the Macedonian origin of Midas. It is to be observed that the history of Alexander was written almost exclusively by Greeks. One look at the names of Macedonians in Jacoby's *Fragmente* bears out this statement: No. 138 Ptolemy; No. 122 (Amyntas?);

No. 133 (Nearchus, originally of Crete); No. 135-36 Marsyas of Pella, Marsyas of Philippi. The Greeks knew of Midas only as a king (or kings) in Phrygia; they did not know of the Macedonian Midas (see Kuhnert in Roscher's *Myth. Lex.*, II [1897], 2955). But Callisthenes knew of the Macedonian Midas (No. 124, Frag. 54), and thus he may have known Alexander's views on the dedicator of the wagon. He may have mentioned them in his History. But it is more likely that he did not; he wrote for a purely Greek audience. Ptolemy, too, may have known Alexander's views. But he left out the Gordian episode altogether (as is clear from Arrian), though surely not for the reason suggested by Tarn—namely, that he considered the incident not worth recording (*Alex.*, II, 263). After all, Alexander, the subject of his History, had been identified as the destined ruler over Asia! Could it be that Ptolemy left out the incident because he did not wish to remind his readers of the Macedonian connections which might be appealed to, or of claims to comprehensive rule which might be raised, by a successor of Alexander in territory not under his, Ptolemy's, control? It is significant that of the handful of Macedonian writers on Alexander one did know and write about the Macedonian origin of Midas the dedicator of the wagon at Gordium: Marsyas of Philippi.