

*F*ROM IASOS TO THE COURT OF A 'DIVINE' KING. GORGOS SON OF THEODOTOS BETWEEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE GREEKS¹

Abstract:

Gorgos son of Theodotos was a prominent citizen of the *polis* of Iasos in Karia who came to enjoy a close relationship with Alexander the Great and to hold an office at his court. Even though he is completely absent in the major narratives of Alexander's life, Gorgos is mentioned in a fragment of the first-generation Alexander historian Ephippos of Olynthos and in four inscriptions stemming from Iasos, Samos and Epidauros. By re-examining this evidence, the paper aims at providing an overall assessment of this individual. It is argued that Gorgos was a markedly political figure, who exploited his proximity to Alexander to favour the interests of the communities he had relations with. Furthermore, Gorgos actively promoted Alexander's policies and his self-presentation as a superhuman being both at court and in the wider Greek world. The paper deals also with the recently discovered Iasian joint cult of Alexander and his mother Olympias, arguing that it was likely established during the king's reign and that Gorgos might have been instrumental in promoting this initiative among his fellow-citizens.

Keywords:

Gorgos son of Theodotos, Alexander the Great, Iasos, Samos, Epidauros, Olympias, ruler cult

¹ I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. I. Tantillo for giving me the opportunity to take part in the panel he organised at the *XXIII International Congress of Historical Sciences* in Poznań, and for his patience with my slowness in submitting this paper. The first time I encountered Gorgos of Iasos, I was writing my master thesis under the supervision of Prof. M. Faraguna; there could be no better occasion, then, to thank him for everything he taught me, for his (likely undeserved) faith in me and of course for his remarks on this paper. The talk I gave in Poznań was prepared during a research stay at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik of Heidelberg University; I would like to thank the colleagues and friends I met there for their hospitality and Prof. K. Trampedach for treating me as one of his own students and for the precious advice he gave me regarding (among other things) this paper. I am grateful to A. Perucca for being the first reader of the paper and to W. Piemonte and J. Badawi-Crook for helping me improve my English.

Gorgos son of Theodotos, a prominent citizen of the *polis* of Iasos in Karia, is completely absent in the major narratives of Alexander's life. The only literary source mentioning him is a fragment of the first-generation Alexander historian Ephippos of Olynthos (*FGrHist* 126 F 5 = Ath. 12.53.537e–538b), who attests his presence at the king's court in autumn 324.² When looking at the epigraphic evidence, however, Gorgos stands out as a relatively well-attested individual. Two civic decrees record the honours granted to him and his brother Minnion by their hometown Iasos (*SEG* 57.1085) and by Samos (Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 90B; cf. *IG* XII 6.1.17).³ Furthermore, Gorgos is referred to in two poetic dedications originally engraved on as many statue bases in Epidauros (Hansen, *CEG* 817 and *I.Iasos* T 52).⁴ His brother Minnion is in turn mentioned as the eponymous *stephanephoros* in two further Iasian decrees passed in the same year (*I.Iasos* 27 and *SEG* 63.877).⁵

Consequently, Gorgos is well represented in studies dealing with both Iasian history and Alexander's reign, and A. J. Heisserer's 1980 monograph on *Alexander the Great and the Greeks* contains a detailed discussion of the role this individual played in the relationships between the king and the above-mentioned *poleis*.⁶ Heisserer's conclusions have (sometimes rightly) not gone unchallenged, and different views have in any case been put forward regarding the origin and nature of the relationship of Gorgos with Alexander, his position at court and his dealings with the Greeks. By (unevenly) re-examining the available evidence, this paper aims at addressing such issues and at providing an overall assessment of Gorgos. In particular, it will be shown that he was not a 'shameless flatterer'⁷ of the king but rather a markedly political figure, who exploited his relationship with Alexander to advocate the interests of the Greek communities he was related to. Furthermore, Gorgos actively promoted Alexander's policies and self-presentation as a superhuman being both at court and in the wider Greek world.

Taking a cue from the latter remark, and momentarily straying from the main topic of discussion, the last part of the paper will deal with the Iasian joint cult

² Where not otherwise stated, all dates are BCE.

³ The text of *SEG* 57.1085 has been reconstructed by Fabiani 2007, who identified *I.Iasos* 24 (cf. *SEG* 57.1085, ll. 2–9) and *I.Iasos* 30 (cf. *SEG* 57.1085, ll. 13–22) as non-contiguous fragments of the same decree.

⁴ These fragmentary dedications have been subject to heavy restitution attempts (see below), which both originated from and further encouraged arbitrary historical speculations. Such restorations have generally not been taken into account in this discussion, and the reference editions of the texts have been chosen accordingly.

⁵ In *SEG* 63.877, ll. 1–2 the name of Minnion has been convincingly restored by Fabiani 2015c: 164–169. On Minnion see Fabiani 2015a: 219.

⁶ Heisserer 1980: 169–203. The figure of Gorgos has been discussed from an 'Iasian' point of view, e.g., by Delrieux 2001: 169–178; Franco 2004: 384–389; Fabiani 2015b: 60–63. In studies on Alexander cf., e.g., Berve 1926: II.114, no. 236; Tritle 2009: 125; Heckel 2021: 204, no. 485.

⁷ Heckel 2021: 204, no. 485.

of Alexander and his mother Olympias, whose existence is attested by a recently discovered altar (*SEG* 65.989). It will be argued that this cult was in all likelihood instituted during (and towards the end of) the king's reign, as a response to his superhuman pretensions and as a means of strengthening the ties of the Iasians with him. Then, the suggestion will be put forward that Gorgos might have been instrumental in promoting this initiative among his fellow-citizens.

Gorgos (and Minnion) in Iasos. From his Background to his First Encounter with Alexander

All the evidence related to Gorgos is contemporary or later than Alexander's reign, and therefore offers only limited insight into his life prior to his entry into the king's court. As suggested by its employment of the verb *θρέψατο* ('nourished', l. 4), the only source that includes a reference to his youth is one of the Epidaurian inscriptions mentioned above. This inscription is a dedicatory epigram, which in its current state reads as follows (Hansen, *CEG* 817):

Ἀγτί τοι ἐσθλῶν, Γόργε, θεοκ . [~ ~ ~ ~ ~]
 νιώι τε ἄθναγάν τάν[δ]ε ἐπο[~ ~ ~]·
 ἀμπελόεσσα Ἐπίδαυρο[ς ~ ~ ~ ~ ~]
 4 θρέψατο κυδαλίμου τε ἔ[ρ]γα [~ ~ ~ ~ ~]
 Κῶς πολυαῖνητος, Μερόπων ξ[δος ~ ~ ~ ~ ~]
 ἀντιθέωι βασιλεῖ πιστο[~ ~ ~ ~ ~]·

In return for good, Gorgos ... to your son this everlasting ... offered (?) ... vine-clad Epidaurus ... nourished and the deeds of glorious ... much-praised Kos, seat of the Meropes ... to a god-like king faith- ... [My transl.; cf. Heisserer 1980: 196]

The fragmentary conditions of the text prevent a full understanding of how *θρέψατο* is grammatically related to the nominative *Κῶς πολυαῖνητος* which occurs at the beginning of the following line. W. Peek and R. Herzog regarded *Κῶς πολυαῖνητος* as the subject of *θρέψατο*; they speculated that Gorgos might have spent part of his early years on the island and received his military training there, and they restored the text accordingly.⁸ Other scholars, however, have pointed out that

⁸ Peek 1932: 52–54, followed e.g. by Delrieux 2001: 174–176. In his (and Herzog's) edition the whole text of the dedication has been massively restored: Ἀγτί τοι ἐσθλῶν, Γόργε, θεοκ[ράτων] τε θεμίστων | νιώι τε ἀθανάταν τάν[δ]ε ἐπο[ρεν] χάριτα | ἀμπελόεσσα Ἐπίδαυρο[ς, ὃν Ἰασοῦ ἐκγεγάατα] | ⁴ θρέψατο κυδαλίμου τε ἔ[ρ]γα [ἐδίδαξε Ἄρεος] | Κῶς πολυαῖνητος, Μερόπων ξ[δος οἶον ἔφηνεν] | ἀντιθέωι βασιλεῖ πιστ[ὸν αἰεὶ θέραπα] ('O Gorgos, for the sake of noble and god-wrought ordinances, vine-clad Epidaurus gave this deathless thanks for your son (and you), whom, sprung from Iasos, much-praised Kos, seat of the Meropes, nourished and taught the deeds of renowned Ares; it revealed a servant always faithful to the godlike king'; transl. by Heisserer; cf. *SEG* 11.435 and *I.Iasos* T 51).

θρέψατο might have had a different subject, now lost in the lacuna at the end of line 3, and that this might have been Iasos, since the Greek verb τρέφω is particularly suited to express the relationship between an individual and his homeland. According to this view, Κῶς πολυαῖνητος would in turn have been related to another verb, possibly located in the remainder of line 4 and coordinated with θρέψατο through the particle τε.⁹ Alternative hypotheses have consequently been put forward to explain the mention of Kos in the dedication, for instance that Gorgos might have taken part in the Macedonian efforts to gain control of the island between 333 and 332.¹⁰ Unfortunately, no other source contributes to settling this issue and therefore, provided that Gorgos must have entertained some kind of relationship with Kos, it seems advisable to avoid any further speculation on the matter.

Some clues on the standing of Gorgos in his hometown before Alexander's campaign in Asia Minor are provided by the Iasian decree honouring him and Minnion (SEG 57.1085).¹¹ The primary aim of the Iasians in passing this resolution was to reward the two brothers for persuading Alexander to return a body of water known as the Little Sea to the city (cf. ll. 15–18). However, the text also states that Gorgos and Minnion had already acted as benefactors towards the *polis* and many of their fellow-citizens (cf. ll. 11–15); furthermore, at the time the decree was passed Gorgos was the *stephanephoros*, one of the leading civic officials (cf. ll. 2–3). Given the convincing arguments that R. Fabiani has recently put forward for dating the decree to 334/3 – or in any case very shortly afterwards¹² – all these remarks attest that the prominence of the sons of Theodotos in Iasos predated their involvement with Alexander. Furthermore, it seems now ascertained that the Macedonian conquest did not determine any significant changes in the Iasian

⁹ Heisserer 1980: 196–198, who suggests for ll. 3–4: [ὄν ἐσθλὸν πέτρινος Ἰασός] | θρέψατο or [ὄν ὀρθῶς πέτρινος Ἰασός] | θρέψατο ('whom [*scil.* Gorgos] rocky Iasos raised brave / rightly'; my transl.); Fabiani 2015b: 61–62.

¹⁰ See Franco 2004: 386 and above all Fabiani 2015b: 62, recanting her previous acceptance of the stay of Gorgos as a young man in Kos (cf. Fabiani 2013: 327). Heisserer 1980: 198 speculates that Gorgos might have assisted some alleged anti-Persian exiles from Kos, who had possibly found shelter in Iasos and returned home after the Macedonian conquest of the island in 332.

¹¹ See n. 3.

¹² Fabiani 2015a: 254–255 and 287–288. Particularly compelling is an argument she derives directly from the layout of the text, namely that it begins with the enactment formula, according to a habit which was customary before Alexander's conquest but was abandoned thereafter. Other arguments are circumstantial and result from combining the information provided by SEG 57.1085 with a general assessment of the biographies of Gorgos and Minnion. Firstly, when SEG 57.1085 was passed, Gorgos held the *stephanephoria*, which required him to be in Iasos at that time: since he left the city at the same time as or shortly after Alexander's passage through Karia in 334, the decree should be placed in this chronological context. Secondly, according to SEG 57.1085, Gorgos and Minnion were involved in equal terms in the negotiations with the king: since there is no clue that Minnion ever left Iasos, this could have hardly happened later than the very beginning of Alexander's campaign.

political regime and ruling class.¹³ In light of such continuity, it is likely that previous generations of the family of Gorgos were well integrated into the oligarchic elite which governed Iasos under the Hekatomnids and in allegiance with them.¹⁴

The first known contact of Gorgos with Alexander occurred in connection with the above-mentioned issue of the Little Sea.¹⁵ During his campaign in Asia Minor, the king famously adopted a favourable policy towards the Greek cities in the region, which at the very least entailed, for those that submitted promptly, their liberation and the exemption from the tribute they had paid to the Persians.¹⁶ For these communities, the Macedonian conquest also represented an opportunity to submit requests concerning local issues to Alexander, which they clearly expected to be – and as a rule apparently were – satisfied by the king.¹⁷ The case of Iasos fits this pattern well. No source provides a specific account of how and

¹³ In some recent studies (see above all Fabiani 2015b), R. Fabiani has convincingly advocated the view that after Alexander's conquest Iasos retained an oligarchic regime which had been ruling the city since the repression of a conspiracy against Mausolos in the 350s (see below). Such oligarchic continuity is consistent with the fact that, unlike in the case of Aeolis and Ionia (cf. Arr. *An.* 1.18.1–2), literary accounts of the conquest of Karia do not report any general policy by Alexander of overthrowing previous regimes and establishing democracies in Greek *poleis* (cf. esp. Diod. Sic. 17.24.1). In earlier studies, it was commonly held that under Alexander Iasos was a democracy; this regime would either have been in place already in the Hekatomnid period (see, e.g., Nawotka 2003: 24–25, who however believes in its radicalisation after 334) or would have been established as a consequence of the Macedonian conquest (see, e.g., Heisserer 1980: 178 and Franco 2004: 384). Developing this last view, Delrieux 2001 has speculated that Gorgos and Minnion played a major role in the democratisation of their hometown, and that the distribution of the *ekklesiastikon* regulated by the Iasian decree SEG 40.959 was made possible precisely by the revenues deriving from the exploitation of the newly returned Little Sea; see also Vacante 2011. However, Fabiani 2015a: 255–259 and 289–291 has convincingly lowered the date of SEG 40.959 from the reign of Alexander to the beginning of the third century, further suggesting that the democratisation of Iasos took place in the same period.

¹⁴ See again Fabiani 2015b: 59–64 with previous references. On the contrary, Delrieux 2001: 169–178 suggested that Theodotos, Gorgos and Minnion's father, had been among those Iasians who in the 350s had conspired against Mausolos (see previous note) and had been punished with exile and confiscation of properties after the failure of the plot (cf. *I.Iasos* 1; see below); the alleged stay of Gorgos as a young man in Kos would have been a consequence of the exile of Theodotos, which would have kept the latter's sons away from Iasos until they joined Alexander and were able to return to their hometown in the wake of the Macedonian conquest. However, not only it is uncertain whether Gorgos really spent (part of) his youth on Kos, but even if he did this would not indicate any anti-Hekatomnid affiliation for his family since at that time the island was under Hekatomnid control; cf. Fabiani 2013: 327.

¹⁵ Before R. Fabiani identified 334/3 as the date of SEG 57.1085, the return of the Little Sea to Iasos had been dated to the 330s, e.g., by Heisserer 1980: 177–179 (but he ruled 334 out, since he thought that Alexander would have not favoured a *polis* that had fought against him at Miletos; see below) and Franco 2004: 385; *contra* Debord 1999: 446–448.

¹⁶ On Alexander's policy towards the Greek cities of Asia Minor see Bosworth 1988: 250–258 and the overviews provided by Faraguna 2003: 107–115 and Faraguna 2020.

¹⁷ See most recently Faraguna 2020, discussing the cases of Ilion, Priene and indeed Iasos.

precisely when the city committed to Alexander. In summer 334 the king marched from Miletos – where an Iasian crew fought on the Persian side and was captured after the surrender of the city¹⁸ – into Karia, heading for Halikarnassos.¹⁹ He took control of all the *poleis* lying along his path, apparently without meeting any resistance; indeed, according to Diodoros these cities willingly went over to Alexander thanks to the concessions he made to them.²⁰ If, as it is usually assumed, the king marched along the coast,²¹ then he passed near Iasos and it was most likely on this occasion that Gorgos and Minnion ὑπὲρ τῆς μικρῆς | θαλάσσης διαλεχθέντες Ἀλεξάνδρῳ βασιλεῖ ἐκομίσαντο | [κ]αὶ ἀπέδωσαν τῷ δήμῳ ('concerning the Little Sea talked to king Alexander and conveyed it and gave it back to the people'; SEG 57.1085, ll. 15–18; transl. by Rhodes and Osborne). Alternatively, Alexander might have followed an inland route,²² and in this case Iasos would have probably been among the *poleis* which pledged allegiance to him as a consequence of his adoption by the Hekatomnid princess Ada and of his recognition of the latter's authority over Karia.²³ If so, the sons of Theodotos might have been members of the embassy which conveyed the Iasian pledge to the king, and they might have seized the opportunity to discuss with him the issue of the Little Sea. In both scenarios, however, there is also a possibility that the matter was not addressed precisely when the city committed to Alexander, but through a specific embassy dispatched shortly afterwards, for example at the time of the siege of Halikarnassos.

¹⁸ Cf. Arr. An. 1.19.11.

¹⁹ For an account of Alexander's conquest of Asia Minor see Bosworth 1988: 35–55.

²⁰ Diod. Sic. 17.24.1–3, who distinguishes between two groups of cities: those lying along Alexander's route, which he won over through concessions entailing, in the case of the Greek cities, the grant of *autonomia* and *aphorologesia*; and all the others, whose allegiance was gained later, thanks to the king's alliance with Ada (see below), and was conveyed to him by means of embassies. Much less informative is Arr. An. 1.20.5, who merely says that Alexander marched into Karia and took all the cities between Miletos and Halikarnassos.

²¹ See above all Seibert 1985: 46 with n. 54; of the same opinion are, e.g., Heisserer 1980: 178; Bosworth 1988: 48; Debord 1999: 446.

²² This was advocated by Stark 1958: 104–106, whose view was however mainly grounded in the erroneous assumption that Alexander visited Ada in the fortress of Alinda, in interior Karia; on the contrary, our sources explicitly state that it was she who approached the king when he entered Karia (cf. Diod. Sic. 17.24.2; Arr. An. 1.23.8; Str. 14.2.17) and in recounting the story of Alexander's refusal of the delicacies Ada allegedly sent him day by day Plutarch never locates it in Alinda (cf. Plut. Alex. 22.7–9 and Mor. 127b, 180a, 1099c). In favour of an inland route is also Capdetrey 2012: 230–231.

²³ The relevant sources are given in the previous notes. For Alexander, this was a way to legitimise his takeover in Karia by means of a reconnection with its Hekatomnid past; moreover, within the Hekatomnids Ada represented a philhellenic counterpart to her younger brother Pixodaros, who in the late 340s had deposed her as reigning sovereign of Karia and had subsequently adopted a particularly accommodating attitude towards Persia. See Capdetrey 2012: 230–232 and Sears 2014. Alexander's alliance with Ada certainly contributed to ensuring the above-discussed political continuity in the *poleis* of Karia.

The Little Sea is commonly identified with what is now a marshy plain at the mouth of the Sarı Çay river, to the southeast of Iasos.²⁴ It was probably an economically important area, which could be exploited in several different ways, ranging from fishing and pasture to salt production and commerce.²⁵ Its assignment to the Iasians is referred to as an *apodosis*, implying that in the past the Little Sea had belonged to and later been taken from them, possibly to the advantage of the nearby Mylasa.²⁶ This *apodosis* was a major diplomatic achievement for Gorgos and Minnion, which was duly rewarded through the grant of *ateleia* and *proedria* to them and their descendants and surely enhanced their already prominent position in Iasos even further. In the following years, Minnion seems to have remained in Iasos, where he went on with his political career: as already mentioned, he held the office of *stephanephoros* at least once, probably in the 320s.²⁷ As emerges clearly from the remaining sources related to him, Gorgos made a very different choice.

Away from Home. The Entry of Gorgos into Alexander's Court and his Position there

It is impossible to exactly determine when Gorgos left his hometown to join Alexander's expedition. His presence at court is not positively attested earlier than autumn 324, when, as we learn from Ehippos, he attended the great celebrations hosted in Ekbatana on the king's march towards the west. However, our sources are consistent in conveying the impression that by the last year of Alexander's life Gorgos enjoyed a considerable familiarity with the king, which could have resulted only from a prolonged proximity between the two of them. One quite explicit clue in this direction is to be found in the decree under which the Samians granted citizenship to Gorgos and Minnion because of the assistance and support for the two brothers had given them during the exile into which they had been forced since the establishment of an Athenian cleruchy on their island in 365/4

²⁴ It was L. and J. Robert who first suggested this in *BE* 1973.419; cf. *BA*, map 61 F3.

²⁵ On this see Vacante 2011 and Lytle 2012: 16–19. Vacante follows Delrieux 2001 in connecting the return of the Little Sea to Iasos with the regulation on the *ekklesiastikon* payment (*SEG* 40.959), which Fabiani 2015a has however demonstrated to belong to a later time period (see above, n. 13). Furthermore, provided that Alexander's decision most likely determined an improvement of the Iasian economy, this should not be exaggerated to the point of assuming that in the following years the *polis* was able to pay its citizens an *ekklesiastikon* of the same amount as the Athenian one at the end of the fourth century. See Perucca 2023.

²⁶ Cf. Heisserer 1980: 177, followed e.g. by Debord 1999: 447. *Contra* Vacante 2011: 324–325.

²⁷ Cf. *I.Iasos* 27 and *SEG* 63.877, with Fabiani 2015a: 219 and 254–255. Heckel 2021: 312, no. 736 does not justify his assertion that '[l]ike his brother, Minnion appears to have served with Alexander'.

(Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 90B).²⁸ The decree was passed towards the end of the 320s, when Perdikkas implemented Alexander's decision to give Samos back to the exiles, which in turn was most likely taken in 324.²⁹ Among other things, Gorgos is credited with having continuously advocated the Samian cause διατρίβων [...] παρὰ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ('in spending time with Alexander'; ll. 7–8; transl. by Rhodes and Osborne). The verb employed in this passage is not a neutral one, but denotes, on the contrary, the continuing presence of Gorgos at the king's side and the closeness of their relationship: as correctly pointed out by I. Savalli-Lestrade, this may even be considered the first occurrence of the expression διατρίβειν παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ in its technical meaning of 'être engagé auprès du roi', which later became current when referring to the *philoi* of the Hellenistic kings.³⁰ Besides, the attempt of Gorgos to influence the king's decisions on the sensitive issue of Samos – which, as discussed below, entailed the risk of triggering, and indeed triggered, a conflict with Athens – was probably made possible precisely by the fact that he enjoyed the long-standing confidence of Alexander.³¹ Gorgos was, it seems, part of Alexander's inner court, and he had probably been since immediately or shortly after their first meeting, at the beginning of the Macedonian campaign in Asia.³²

A central piece of information for assessing the position of Gorgos as a courtier is provided by the account by Ehippos of the Ekbatana celebrations of autumn 324 (*FGrHist* 126 F 5 = Ath. 12.53.537e–538b, esp. 538a–b).³³

²⁸ For an overview of the history of the Athenian cleruchy on Samos and the ensuing Samian diaspora see Shipley 1987: 155–168 and Habicht 1996; specific attention is given to the establishment of the cleruchy by Landucci Gattinoni 2010.

²⁹ The question of the date and context of Alexander's decision to return Samos to the Samians is discussed below. On Perdikkas ending the exile of the Samians cf. Diod. Sic. 18.18.9. The decree honouring Gorgos and Minnion is one of the earliest among the resolutions that the Samians passed over the last two decades of the fourth century for individuals who had helped them during the exile, the so-called *Decreta* φυγῆς, now grouped in *IG* XII 6.1.17–41.

³⁰ Savalli-Lestrade 1998: 256–258. On *philoi* in general see below.

³¹ Cf. Roisman 2021: 168 who regards Gorgos as 'a friend of the king in all but name'. Tritle 2009: 135 lists the Iasian among Alexander's friends, even though he is never explicitly characterised as such in the extant sources. As Roisman emphasises at the beginning of his paper, with reference to Alexander's reign the term *philos* should be intended in a general sense, without the technical meaning of 'someone belonging socially to a royal circle' (Strootman 2014: 118), which came into use later.

³² On the contrary, Spawforth 2007: 84 does not think that the presence of Gorgos at the king's court was stable: he would have been a 'visitor of standing' instead, and therefore a member of Alexander's outer court.

³³ This fragment is tripartite: the account of the Ekbatana celebrations takes up its last section, while the previous ones (both referred to below) deal respectively with Alexander's attire and the use of incenses at court. For extensive commentaries see Gadaleta 2001: 108–119 and 123–130; Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5; Ravazzolo 2017: 84–111. On Alexander's stay in Ekbatana between autumn 324 and spring 323 see Bosworth 1988: 163–165.

Ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις δὲ ποιήσας τῷ Διονύσῳ θυσίαν καὶ πάντων δαψιλῶς ἐν τῇ θοίνῃ παρασκευασθέντων, καὶ Σατραβάτης ὁ σατράπης τοὺς στρατιώτας εἰστίασε πάντας. Ἀθροισθέντων δὲ πολλῶν ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν, φησὶν ὁ Ἐπιππος, κηρύγματα ἐγένετο ὑπερήφανα καὶ τῆς Περσικῆς ὑπεροψίας αὐθαδέστερα. Ἄλλων γὰρ ἄλλο τι ἀνακηρυττόντων καὶ στεφανούντων τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, εἷς τις τῶν ὀπλοφυλάκων ὑπερπεπαικῶς πᾶσαν κολακειάν κοινωσάμενος τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐκέλευσε τὸν κήρυκα ἀνειπεῖν ὅτι Γόργος ὁ ὀπλοφύλαξ Ἀλέξανδρον Ἄμμωνος υἱὸν στεφανοῖ χρυσοῖς τρισχλίοις· καὶ ὅταν Αἰθῆνας πολιορκῇ, μυρίαὶ πανοπλίας καὶ τοῖς ἴσοις καταπέλταις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις βέλεσιν εἰς τὸν πόλεμον ἱκανοῖς.

In Ekbatana he [*scil.* Alexander] made a sacrifice to Dionysos, and the arrangements for the feast were all lavish, and the satrap Satrabates hosted a dinner for all the soldiers. Large crowds gathered to watch, according to Ehippos, and arrogant proclamations were made that were even more misguided than the insolence typical of the Persians; indeed, as various people were making this and that proclamation and crowning Alexander, one of the weapon keepers, going beyond all normal flattery, with Alexander's complicity ordered the herald to announce: 'Gorgos the weapon keeper crowns Alexander the son of Ammon with 3000 gold coins; and whenever he besieges Athens, (Gorgos promises to crown him) with 10000 complete suits of armour, and an equal number of catapults, and with all the other missiles he needs for the war'. [transl. by Douglas Olson, with modifications]

Ehippos is a first-generation Alexander historian and the author of a work dealing with the deaths and burials of the king and his favourite Hephaestion.³⁴ Our sole source for all five surviving fragments of Ehippos are the *Deipnosophists* by Athenaios, which urges caution when attempting an overall assessment of the historian's work.³⁵ The fact that the fragments by Ehippos focus on drinking, banquets and the luxuries of court life is for instance likely to reflect more the interests of Athenaios than the importance of such topics in the original work. As a consequence, some scholars have recently suggested that the long-held notion of a markedly negative attitude of Ehippos towards Alexander should be at least partly reconsidered.³⁶ In any case, the historian is extremely well informed about

³⁴ Three recent, comprehensive discussions of the work of Ehippos are Gadaleta 2001; Prandi 2016; Ravazzolo 2017 (esp. 17–28 on the historian's choice of topic and 125–130 for some general conclusions). A more concise introduction is provided by Gilhaus 2017: 91–95. It has been suggested, e.g. by Pearson 1960: 61–62, that the historian Ehippos might be the same as the Ehippos 'son of Chalkideus' – which is the reading of all manuscripts – or 'of Chalkis' – as sometimes emended by editors – to whom Alexander entrusted an official post in Egypt in 331 (cf. Arr. *An.* 3.5.3); however, the most recent studies agree in treating this assumption with particular caution or in rejecting it altogether.

³⁵ On the selection by Athenaios biasing our picture of Ehippos see above all Ravazzolo 2017: 12–16.

³⁶ In addition to Ravazzolo 2017 (cf. previous note), see on this the *Biographical Essay* by Prandi 2016. The traditional view of Ehippos being hostile to the king is advocated, e.g., by Pearson 1960: 61–68 and Wiemer 2011: 190–192, both of them speculating that his work might have been conceived as an anti-Macedonian pamphlet at the time of the Lamian War.

Alexander's court and daily life with regard at least to the last year of the king's reign, leading to the likely assumption that he personally witnessed the recounted events.³⁷ While this cannot be demonstrated, there is little doubt that Ehippos had access to first-hand sources and his account of the Ekbatana celebrations therefore has a high degree of reliability.³⁸

Ehippos introduces Gorgos as one of the *hoplophylakes*, apparently the same term with which he was referred to by the herald when announcing his offer of gold and weapons to Alexander.³⁹ Its repetition, as well as its employment in a public proclamation, suggests that *hoplophylax* was the formal designation of a specific office held by Gorgos,⁴⁰ or at the very least that Ehippos perceived it as such. The occurrence of the unfortunately incomplete word ὄπλοφορ[in the second of the above-mentioned Epidaurian dedications (*I.Iasos* T 52, l. 4) points clearly in the same direction.⁴¹ Because of its desperately fragmentary conditions and of the relatively late date – around the turn of the third and second centuries – suggested by its palaeography, this piece of evidence is particularly difficult to assess. However, the mention of one Gorgos – or the employment of a word derived from this name⁴² – and one Alexander (cf. respectively ll. 3 and 5), together with the string ὄπλοφορ[– which does not correspond exactly but is nevertheless akin to *hoplophylax* – makes it virtually certain that the inscription somehow relates to the Iasian. Being recalled

³⁷ See, e.g., Gadaleta 2001: 101–102 and the *Biographical Essay* by Prandi 2016. Cautiousness about this is recommended by Gilhaus 2017: 92.

³⁸ See Ravazzolo 2017: 126–127; *contra* Pearson 1960: 64–65, who expresses doubts about the historian's general trustworthiness, even though precisely with regard to the proclamation of Gorgos in Ekbatana he admits that the account of Ehippos was based on 'certain well-attested facts'.

³⁹ The manuscript tradition reads εἷς τις τῶν ὀπισθοφυλάκων ('one of the rearward soldiers'); the emendation εἷς τις τῶν ὄπλοφυλάκων is consistent with the following Γόργος ὁ ὄπλοφύλαξ and is unanimously accepted in the studies.

⁴⁰ This view is widespread (cf., e.g., Heisserer 1980: 169–171; Fabiani 2015a: 2; Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5), but given the existence of different opinions (see below) it should be discussed thoroughly.

⁴¹ The dedication, in epic hexameters, was engraved on a limestone base of which two contiguous fragments survive; these were recognised as such by Peek 1962: 1006–1008, who massively restored the text. *I.Iasos* T 52 is rightly more conservative and reads as follows: [Λεῦ]σσε τὸν ἐξ ἀβάτοιο πελώριον ὦδε [--- | δαί]μονος ἀπλάτ[ου κα]δεμόνα κτεάνω[ν | ---] τε Γόργει[--- | ---] ὄν ὄπλοφορ[--- | ---] π[α]ρ' Ἀλεξάν[δροιο --- | ---] ὁ ἀρόστ[--- | ---] συνῶ[---] ('Look here the mighty from the sanctuary ... guardian of the possessions of the unreachable *daimon* ... weapon-bear- ... from Alexander ...'; my transl.). See also Heisserer 1980: 198–199 (who however is not aware of Peek's re-joining of the two fragments and therefore takes into consideration just one of these, namely *IG* IV² 617) and below.

⁴² The string ΓΟΡΓΕΙ in l. 3 may have pertained: 1) to a form of the word γόργειος, used either as an adjective ('of the Gorgon'), in which case the author of the text would have played on its assonance with the name of Gorgos, or because it was the (otherwise unattested) name of a descendant of Gorgos, as supposed by Peek 1962: 1007; 2) to the sequence Γόργε ι[(before changing his mind, Peek 1932: 54, n. 1 suggested Γόργε Ἰ[ασός?]; cf. also Heisserer 1980: 199), with Gorgos in the vocative.

in the dedication of a statue in Epidauros, the connection of Gorgos with Alexander's weaponry must have been stable and important enough to become a prestigious hallmark of his in the eyes of the Greeks. Apart from the Ehippos fragment, the term *hoplophylax* is not further attested in literary sources, but it occurs four times in Greek inscriptions, always pertaining to the Imperial period: twice in Smyrna as an epiclesis of Herakles (cf. *I.Smyrna* 770 and 771) and twice in Eumeneia, in Phrygia, as a translation of the Roman military office of *custos armorum* (cf. *MAMA* IX 33 and *IGR* IV 736).⁴³ Albeit much later than the period we are dealing with and pertaining to a different context, the latter documents provide a loose parallel to Ehippos, once again suggesting that the designation of Gorgos as *hoplophylax* reflected his official post in Alexander's army. On the contrary, the alternative assumption that he was an 'arms merchant' has seemingly nothing to support it.⁴⁴ As depicted by Ehippos, for instance, the provision of weapons announced by Gorgos does not resemble a business transaction at all. Furthermore, neither *hoplophylax*, literally meaning 'weapon keeper', nor *ὄπλοφορ*[, which conveys the idea of 'bearing arms', have any semantic connection with trade.

Apart from the fact that the *hoplophylakes* were more than one, Ehippos does not provide much information regarding the practicalities of their office. The quite obvious inference that these weapon keepers were in charge of the weapons depot is indirectly confirmed by the roughly contemporary Megasthenes, who in his *Indika* refers to the royal armoury of the Mauryan capital with the cognate term *hoplophylakion* (cf. *BNJ*² 715 F 31 = Str. 15.1.50–52). If, as seems natural to assume, the pledge by Gorgos to provide Alexander with weaponry was directly related to his official responsibilities as *hoplophylax*, these must have consisted in the general management of the Macedonian military assets. It is more uncertain whether his promise of money would have been fulfilled by resources he had access to because of his office or by private means, but the remarkable figure of three thousand gold pieces, though possibly hyperbolic, recommends the first option.⁴⁵ In any case, there is little doubt that the office of *hoplophylax*, while

⁴³ On the office of *armorum custos* in the Roman army see Speidel 1992; it is obviously impossible to infer the duties of the Macedonian *oplophylakes* from those of the Roman weapon keepers, whose function to provide soldiers with state-funded military equipment seems in any case much less prominent than that of Gorgos.

⁴⁴ For the interpretation of Gorgos as an arms merchant see Spawforth 2007: 84 – where it complements the idea that he was not a member of the king's inner court – and Tritle 2009: 125.

⁴⁵ See on this Heisserer 1980: 170, followed e.g. by Delrieux 2001: 170 and Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5. Spawforth 2007: 84, n. 5 is persuaded that both promises made by Gorgos – that of weapons and that of money – would have been fulfilled thanks to his own resources, whose hugeness 'obviously reflects the vast fortunes to be made from supplying Alexander's war-machine'. Also Vacante 2011: 330–331 does not rule out the possibility of a private funding, but unlike Spawforth he regards the position of Gorgos at court as a stable and official one.

being shared with others, had a significant importance, which perfectly suits the above-outlined picture of Gorgos as a close acquaintance of Alexander who clearly enjoyed the king's full trust.

The Ekbatana Proclamation as a Political Act (1). Gorgos and the Issue of Samos

In the previous discussion the widely held assumption that Gorgos the *hoplophylax* and the homonymous Iasian were indeed one and the same person has been implicitly accepted.⁴⁶ However, it should be stressed that in the Ephippos fragment the personal name of the *hoplophylax* is complemented by no ethnic or patronymic confirming such an identification.⁴⁷ While being perfectly consistent with what we know of both individuals and hence likely *a priori*, the identification therefore rests mainly on the comparison between the testimony of Ephippos and some lines of the Samian decree for Gorgos and Minnion, where it is recalled that ἀ|ναγγε|ιλαντος Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐν τῷ[ι] | στρατοπέδῳ, ὅτι Σάμον ἀποδίδοι | Σαμίοις, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα αὐτὸν τῶν Ἑλλήνων στεφανώσαντων ἐστ|εφάνωσε καὶ Γόργος ('when Alexander proclaimed in the camp that he was restoring Samos to the Samians, and the Greeks crowned him because of this, Gorgos crowned him'; Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 90B, ll. 11–16). Scholarly opinion is divided between those who consider the two sources to refer to the same episode and others who, while implicitly or explicitly retaining the idea that the individual involved is in both cases Gorgos of Iasos, dissociate the recounted events.⁴⁸ The main argument supporting the latter view is, of course, that Ephippos does not mention Alexander's decision about Samos and the inscription in turn makes no hint to a promise of military assets for a possible war against Athens. That these came to pass on the same occasion

⁴⁶ This notion, which was already established at the time of Berve 1926: II.114, no. 236, has never been seriously questioned.

⁴⁷ It should be briefly mentioned that Berve 1926: II.114–115, no. 237 has suggested that also Gorgos the *metalleutes* ('mining expert'), an individual mentioned by Str. 15.1.30 as his source on gold and silver mines in the land of the Indian king Sopeithes, might have taken part in Alexander's campaign. Berve ruled out any possibility that Gorgos the *metalleutes* and Gorgos the *hoplophylax* from Iasos were the same person, and this view has been widely accepted. Cf. however Heckel 2021: 204, no. 486: 'Gorgos the *hoplophylax* [...] was clearly wealthy and may have made his fortune in the mining business'. In fact, there is no certainty that Gorgos the *metalleutes* really took part in the expedition and the name Gorgos was in any case not rare (the *LGPN* online, last consulted on 28.03.2023, records 130 individuals named Gorgos): in absence of further clues, there is no reason to suggest that the two men were the same person.

⁴⁸ Among those who advocate the identity of these episodes are, e.g., Rosen 1978: 34 with n. 96; Dmitriev 2004: 366–370; Fabiani 2013: 328–329. For the opposite view see e.g. Errington 1975; Heisserer 1980: 186–190; Zahrt 2003: 425–431. Without taking a strong stance, Shipley 1987: 297 favours the latter possibility and Landucci Gattinoni 2008: 62–64 the first.

is, however, entirely plausible, as results from looking at the evidence against the backdrop of Alexander's policy towards the Greeks in 324 and of the concomitant development of his relationship with Athens.

Between late July and early August of that year, at the Olympics, a letter by the king was publicly read in which he announced his will that the Greek exiles be readmitted to their hometowns.⁴⁹ News of the so-called Exiles Decree had clearly already spread, since thousands of exiles had rushed to Olympia to hear its formal proclamation. The decision was met with widespread concern, as witnessed by the embassies that the Greek cities sent to Alexander in the following months.⁵⁰ At the very least, the repatriation of large numbers of citizens involved serious problems related to the return of their previous properties and consequently entailed the risk of generating disruptive social conflict.⁵¹ According to Diodoros (18.8.6–7), it was already at this point that the Athenians started to fear for the fate of their numerous cleruchs on Samos, whose displacement from the island was a necessary condition for the Samian exiles to return home.⁵² This is perfectly reasonable and not necessarily at odds with the possibility that the Exiles Decree did not include any specific decision concerning Samos.⁵³ The issue was likely to be the

⁴⁹ The most informative source on the Exiles Decree and its proclamation is Diod. Sic. 18.8, who introduces the issue in order to explain the causes of the Lamian War; see the extensive commentary by Landucci Gattinoni 2008: 56–64, discussing the main problems related to the Exiles Decree. Besides Bosworth 1988: 220–228, among the recent discussions on the Exiles Decree see Zahrnt 2003; Dmitriev 2004; Worthington 2015.

⁵⁰ Cf. Hyp. *Dem.* 19 and Diod. Sic. 17.113.3, cited below with reference to Gorgos and his relationship with Epidauros. Based on Diod. Sic. 18.8.6–7, Dmitriev 2004: esp. 372–379 greatly downplays the Greeks' negative response to the Exiles Decree; the only exceptions would have been the Athenians and the Aetolians, whose opposition is explicitly mentioned by Diodoros as the result of their unwillingness to give up respectively Samos and Oiniadai in Acarnania; *contra*, e.g., Worthington 2015: 98–99.

⁵¹ This is well exemplified by the regulations set out in a decree under which the city of Tegea in Arkadia implemented Alexander's decision (Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 101). See Bencivenni 2003: 79–103; Loddo 2016 does not rule out the possibility that the inscription might have been related not to Alexander's Exiles Decree, but to a similar order issued by Philip III in 319.

⁵² On the significant number of Athenian cleruchs residing on Samos see Landucci Gattinoni 2010: 428–429.

⁵³ This issue is intertwined with that of the identity between the two crowning episodes involving Gorgos. The advocates of the latter obviously regard Alexander's decision about Samos (autumn of 324 in Ekbatana) as later than the Exiles Decree (spring of 324 in Susa). On the contrary, the scholars who differentiate the two episodes are divided among those who postulate at least a rough coincidence in time (spring of 324 in Susa) between the Exiles Decree and Alexander's official ruling on Samos (e.g. Heisserer 1980: 186–190 and Zahrnt 2003: esp. 427–428) and others who deny it (e.g. Errington 1975, who dates the decision about Samos to early 323, when Alexander was in Babylon). The question is left open by Faraguna 2003: 125. Bosworth 1988: 221–222 believes a specific ruling about Samos to have been issued before the Exiles Decree was announced in Greece but does not explicitly retract his previous conviction that the Samian decree and the Ephippas fragment refer to the same initiative by Gorgos (cf. Bosworth 1977: 65–66 with n. 85).

main item which Demosthenes, who led the Athenian *theoria* at the 324 Olympics, strived to address with Nikanor of Stageira, the man entrusted by Alexander to announce the Decree.⁵⁴ Another, and quite sensitive problem to be dealt with was that of Alexander's treasurer Harpalos, who had recently found shelter in Athens after taking flight from Babylon with a huge amount of talents and mercenaries and whose extradition had been demanded by Olympias, Antipatros and Philoxenos, the satrap of Karia.⁵⁵ Given all this, in the second half of 324 the risk of a clash with Alexander felt so real that the Athenians apparently started preparing for the eventuality of war, their main aim being to hinder the Exiles Decree from being implemented on Samos.⁵⁶

Justin (13.5.7) states that when Alexander became aware of the Athenian opposition to the Exiles Decree, he ordered an imposing fleet to be levied against Athens. Curtius (10.2.2) reports a similar order but explains it as a consequence of the Harpalos Affair.⁵⁷ Such pieces of information should perhaps not be taken literally but are ultimately consistent both with the content of the proclamation by Gorgos as reported by Ehippos and with the latter's remark that this had been previously agreed on with the king; theoretically speaking, one might not even rule out that one of the *κηρύγματα ὑπερήφανα* ('arrogant proclamations') mentioned in the fragment expressed Alexander's openness to the idea of a war against Athens. Since the essence of the Exiles Decree was already known among the Greeks before its formal announcement at the Olympics, it seems entirely possible that by autumn 324 some rumours about the negative response it received in Athens

⁵⁴ Cf. *Din. Dem.* 81–82.

⁵⁵ On the so-called Harpalos Affair see Bosworth 1988: 215–220. Its interplay with the issues of Samos and of Alexander's 'divinity' (see below) in shaping the relationship between the king and Athens at this time is well illustrated by Faraguna 2003: 124–130; see also Wallace 2016: 34–40. Harpalos had surely reached Athens by late July, after Nikanor's arrival in Greece (cf. *Hyp. Dem.* 18) but before the proclamation of the Exiles Decree. Howe 2021 has unconvincingly interpreted the flight of Harpalos to Athens as an attempt at pursuing Alexander's interests by causing an internal struggle in the city, so that the king would have not been displeased with his initiative. For Olympias, Antipater and Philoxenos demanding Harpalos' extradition cf. *Diod. Sic.* 17.108.7; *Hyp. Dem.* 8; *Plut. Mor.* 531a; *Paus.* 2.33.4.

⁵⁶ *Diod. Sic.* 18.8.6–7 states that at this point the Athenians were just waiting for the right time to revolt against Alexander; in two other passages (17.111.1–4 and 18.9.2–5) he further reports that the Athenian mercenary commander Leosthenes, who would later play a central role in the Lamian War, was secretly making preparations for war on behalf of the civic authorities, *inter alia* by brokering an alliance with the Aetolians, who were equally disaffected with the king. Similarly, *Curt.* 10.2.6–7 and *Iust.* 13.5.1–6 speak of the Athenians' (and Aetolians') intention to wage war as a consequence of the Exiles Decree.

⁵⁷ However, the chronology of these events by Curtius is mistaken, because he states that the Exiles Decree was issued after Harpalos had escaped from Athens, which is in contradiction with *Hyp. Dem.* 18 (see above, n. 55); cf. Atkinson, Yardley 2009: 114–115.

might have reached the court in Ekbatana.⁵⁸ At roughly the same time, Alexander must also have learned that the Athenians had accepted Harpalos into their city and were reluctant to turn him over to the king's representatives in the west.⁵⁹ The resulting disaffection of Alexander with the Athenians, combined with the lobbying of Gorgos and surely other advocates of the Samians' return home,⁶⁰ might then have prompted him to take and publicly announce – or, if it had already been taken, to emphatically reaffirm – his decision on the matter. Concurrently, the king would have made it clear – whether indirectly through the proclamation made by Gorgos or directly, as suggested by Justin and Curtius – that he was determined to implement his will by force if necessary. A similar reconstruction might stand even without assuming that any concrete news had arrived from Greece:⁶¹ when asked for clarification about the intended effects of the Exiles Decree on the issue of Samos, Alexander might have not only provided it, but also disclosed how any eventual, and indeed quite predictable Athenian opposition would have been dealt with. Besides, he had already resorted to pre-emptive threats in his first communication regarding the Exiles Decree, where he had specified that γεγράφαμεν δὲ Ἀντιπάτρῳ περὶ τούτων, ὅπως τὰς μὴ βουλομένας τῶν πόλεων καταγεῖν ἀναγκάσῃ ('We have written to Antipatros about this to the end that he may constrain the unwilling cities to restore you [*scil.* the exiles]'; Diod. Sic. 18.8.4; transl. by Geer, with modifications).

⁵⁸ This same turn of events is suggested, e.g., by Landucci Gattinoni 2008: 64. Wallace 2016: 18–19 points out how fast information could travel in Alexander's empire, thanks mainly to the use of the Persian road infrastructure. An interesting figure is provided by Colburn 2013: 41–47, who estimates that the *pirradazish* service – i.e. the postal relay system of the Persian empire – could cover the distance between Sardis and Susa in about twelve days and that between Sardis and Persepolis in about two weeks. Even though this estimate represents a maximum speed, it corroborates the idea that news spreading from Greece in mid-summer 324 could have reached Ekbatana by autumn of the same year.

⁵⁹ According to Errington 1975: 55 – followed e.g. by Franco 2004: 388 – it would have been precisely the arrival of such news that caused the anti-Athenian sentiment pervading the events in Ekbatana in autumn 324. It is probably at the festivities in Ekbatana that was staged the *Agenn*, a satyr play mocking Harpalos and his relations with Athens; cf. Wallace 2016: 37 and n. 70 for references.

⁶⁰ This is for instance the case of the man honoured in the Samian decree *IG* XII 6.1.28, of whom we know that, [σ]τρατευόμενός τε μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀλεξ[άνδρου] ('when fighting with king Alexander'; ll. 2–3; my transl.), he made every effort to support the exiles' cause. The same might well have been done by Agathokles, a Samian taxiarch in Alexander's army whom Shipley 1987: 161 counts among the exiles from the island; on him see Heckel 2021: 9, no. 17.

⁶¹ Cf. Bosworth 1977: 65–66, n. 85. Similarly, Zahrnt 2003: 430–431 rules out the possibility that by autumn 324 news of the Athenian negative response to the Exiles Decree – and, in his view, the already announced decision of Alexander about Samos – could have already reached Ekbatana: the possibility of a military confrontation with Athens would have been pre-emptively discussed at court, which would also lead to the conclusion that the aim of these rulings had been precisely to weaken the *polis* or even to come to a showdown with it.

In the end, then, it seems extremely likely that the Ekbatana celebrations of autumn 324 were the scene not only of the anti-Athenian initiative of Gorgos recounted by Ehippos, but also of the formal announcement of Alexander's decision to return Samos to the Samians. Alternative settings for this second event cannot be definitely ruled out, but are in principle dubious, because they would require an unnecessary duplication of a crowning scene which the sources describe in broadly similar terms. The main discrepancy between the account by Ehippos and the Samian decree is the result of their different perspectives, leading the historian to highlight that aspect – i.e. Alexander's deteriorating relationship with Athens in the last year of his reign – which was the most striking and the most significant for the events that were to follow in the Greek world, and the Samians to focus instead on the royal decision which marked a turning point in the history of their community.⁶² It entails no difficulties to assume that the sacrifice to Dionysos providing the context of the proclamation by Gorgos in Ekbatana took place in the military camp, as explicitly indicated by the Samian decree with regard to the announcement of the repatriation of the Samians. The absence of any mention of a *thysia* in the concise phrasing of the decree seems in turn hardly compelling against the possibility that this announcement was given on such an occasion. It has been argued that the initiatives by Gorgos as described in the inscription and in the Ehippos fragment are fundamentally different in nature, looking at the one case a somehow more official act and at the other 'un gesto individuale, adulatorio e cortigiano'.⁶³ However, the decree does not necessarily place Alexander's announcement and his consequent crowning by Gorgos within the framework of a formal diplomatic exchange. Furthermore, the devaluation of the anti-Athenian proclamation by Gorgos is largely a product of the way Ehippos – or Athenaios in his reworking of the account by Ehippos – depicts it and seems untenable when one looks at it in the historical context outlined above. The authors of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods tend to characterise the kings' *philoï* as flatterers, thus degrading their key role as royal advisors and agents.⁶⁴

⁶² Cf. Fabiani 2013: 328–329, n. 101, who however retains the traditional view of Ehippos as hostile to Alexander and therefore motivates his selection of topic with the intent to give an insight into the flattery of Alexander's courtiers.

⁶³ Franco 2004: 387–388, who follows Errington 1975 in placing the crowning scene referred to by the Samian decree in Babylon, and precisely in the context of Alexander's reception of the embassies from the Greek world (see below).

⁶⁴ On this approach see Savalli-Lestrade 1998: 347–350, who considers it more representative of the intellectual thinking of the Imperial than the Hellenistic period, while during the latter the charge of *kolakeia* was often employed as a political tool in the struggle between civic factions. Strootman 2014: 27 and 174–175 regards the stereotype description of flattering courtiers as 'characteristic of outside views of court societies' and emphasises that a source where it occurs may still provide us with valuable information on court practices and institutions. On flattery at Alexander's court see Pownall 2021.

Presenting the proclamation by Gorgos as (nothing more than) outright *kolakeia*, our source puts in place a misrepresentation of the same kind. In fact, the Iasian carried out a markedly political act, which had been previously arranged with Alexander and was hence perfectly aligned with the latter's own views: the proclamation had been specifically designed to serve Alexander's political purposes and in particular to endorse his decision about Samos and his determination to see it enforced at any cost.

This move was surely entrusted to Gorgos because of his steadfast advocacy of the Samian cause. However, there may be more. As mentioned above, the family of Gorgos was part of the Iasian governing elite well before Alexander's campaign, when the city was under Hekatomnid influence. It had been the failure of a plot against Mausolos which had taken place in the mid-350s that had sanctioned, in R. Fabiani's words, 'the definitive Hekatomnid embrace':⁶⁵ the punishment of the conspirers had been followed by an apparently unswerving loyalty to the Karian dynasts, and it had furthermore probably been at this point that the Iasian regime had taken an oligarchic turn, which was not reversed in the wake of the Macedonian conquest. Until then, the anti-Hekatomnid faction behind the conspiracy must have enjoyed considerable weight in Iasos, as attested by a decree passed in honour of three Mylasians who would have later vandalised a statue of Hekatomnos in their hometown.⁶⁶ The proposer of this resolution had strong ties with Athens,⁶⁷ and Fabiani has suggested that such a pro-Athenian affiliation might have been a common feature of the Iasian faction which had opposed the Hekatomnids and schemed against Mausolos and had been crushed after failing in this endeavour. If so, those favouring the Hekatomnids might on the contrary have taken an anti-Athenian stance, presumably strengthened over time by the presence in Iasos of the Samians whom Gorgos and Minnion assisted during their exile. Therefore, the support given by Gorgos to Alexander's hostile policy towards

⁶⁵ Fabiani 2013: 329. It is precisely this scholar who has proposed and convincingly argued for the here summarised reconstruction, which is laid out in-depth in Fabiani 2015b; see also above, n. 13 and below, n. 124 for the honours enjoyed in Iasos by members of the Hekatomnid dynasty.

⁶⁶ Both the Iasian decree honouring these men (*SEG* 36.983, published again at the turn of the third and second centuries; cf. *SEG* 38.1059 with Fabiani 2013: 319–322) and the Mylasian one punishing them for vandalising the statue of Hekatomnos (*LMylasa* 2, which the mention in its dating formula of Artaxerxes II's regnal year places precisely in 361/0) refer to them as 'sons of Peldemis', which their identification is based on. *SEG* 36.983 probably – but not surely – predated the sons of Peldemis' anti-Hekatomnid action; cf. also Fabiani 2015a: 13–14 and 252–253.

⁶⁷ These are documented by the Athenian proxy decree *IG* II² 3 + 165 (cf. *SEG* 54.5 C), whose text is mainly known from a Iasian copy engraved towards the end of the third century (*SEG* 51.1506; cf. Fabiani 2015a: 265 with n. 83). Among the three Iasians honoured in this decree there is an Anaxagoras son of Apoll-, most likely an homonymous of the Anaxagoras son of Apollonides who proposed *SEG* 36.983: depending on the date assigned to *IG* II² 3 (412 or ca. 390) the latter should be either the nephew of the first or the same individual.

Athens in late 324 might have resulted not only from his proximity to the king and sympathy with the Samian exiles, but also from a deep-rooted attitude of his family. In the end, Gorgos appears to have been much less a flatterer than an individual with his own agenda, which had taken shape within the framework of local politics and which he consistently pursued even after leaving Iasos, exploiting his position at court to bring it to a whole new level.

The Ekbatana Proclamation as a Political Act (2). Gorgos and Alexander's 'Divinity'

The misrepresentation of Gorgos as a flatterer may owe much to the fact that in the Ekbatana proclamation he apparently instructed the herald to address Alexander as the son of Ammon. Early in 331, the king's divine sonship had been famously sanctioned on the occasion of his visit to Ammon's sanctuary in Siwah and confirmed by analogous pronouncements by the oracle of Apollo in Didyma, near Miletos, and by the prophetess Athenais of Erythrai.⁶⁸ These responses were presumably interpreted by Alexander in the sense of him having a dual paternity, in which both Philip and Zeus Ammon – the latter being considered one and the same god in two different guises – could coexist as his earthly and divine father.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ While Alexander's visit to Siwah is reported by all major narratives of his life, the oracular responses from Asia Minor are only mentioned by Str. 17.1.43, quoting Kallisthenes of Olynthos (*FGH Hist* 124 F 14); this is not reason enough to doubt their widely accepted historicity, as recently done by Nudell 2018 at least with regard to the pronouncement by Apollo's oracle, but contrasts with the idea of Sekunda 2014 that precisely the latter would be the principal underpinning of Alexander's claim to divine sonship. The news from Didyma was conveyed to Alexander when he was in Memphis, in early 331, and the same is usually assumed with regard to the pronouncement by Athenais: as demonstrated by Bosworth 1977: 73–75, given such a chronology these oracles could not have been a reaction to what happened in Siwah, but rather originated from an earlier awareness of the king's (consequently pre-existing) convictions about his birth. For a reading of all three oracular pronouncements against the backdrop of Alexander's use of divination for self-presentation purposes see Trampedach 2020: 55–56.

⁶⁹ See Bosworth 1977: esp. 62–65; the following discussion largely relies on this fundamental paper. Plut. *Alex.* 28.2 (which Bosworth mentions only briefly on p. 66, n. 89) preserves part of a letter Alexander allegedly sent to the Athenians regarding the issue of Samos, where the king refers to Philip as 'he [...] who is called my father' (τοῦ [...] πατρὸς ἐμοῦ προσαγορευομένου; my transl.), apparently implying that, as a result of the recognition of his birth from Ammon, such a designation was not appropriate anymore. However, since the authenticity and implications of this document – as well as its possible date – are debated, it seems advisable not to regard it as a strong argument against the dual paternity theory. On this issue see Hamilton 1953 (in favour of the authenticity and suggesting 323 as the most likely date for the letter), Rosen 1978 (who considers the letter to be a forgery) and Hammond 1993 (who assumes the authenticity of the letter and dates it between 334 and 332, but denies that its phrasing implies a disowning of Philip on Alexander's part); even though the document is not dealt with at length

Curtius Rufus reports that after 331 Alexander ordered to be called 'son of Iupiter', which, if true, would ascribe the way Gorgos designated the king in his proclamation to a formalised practice.⁷⁰ However, the silence of all other major narratives of Alexander's life on such a significant order makes it legitimate to distrust the accuracy of this piece of information.⁷¹ On the contrary, there should be no doubt that the king's divine sonship quickly became a regular feature of his self-presentation.⁷² This had already come to pass at the very beginning of the autumn of 331, when, according to Kallisthenes, Alexander delivered a long speech to the Greek troops before the battle of Gaugamela and concluded it by praying the gods to support his cause *εἴπερ ὄντως Διόθεν ἐστὶν γεγονώς* ('if he was really sprung from Zeus'; *FGrHist* 124 F 36 = *Plut. Alex.* 33.1; transl. by Perrin).

The centrality of divine sonship in Alexander's self-presentation emerges clearly from it being consistently recalled by literary sources – especially but not exclusively Curtius – among the criticisms levelled at him whenever significant opposition broke out from Macedonian nobles or soldiers. Suffice it to mention,

in G. Monti's brand-new collection of Alexander's letters – which I was able to consult only rapidly while reviewing the proofs of this paper –, the scholar seems to accept its authenticity and a date between 332 and 326 (cf. Monti 2023: 26–27, n. 118). In any case, incidents such as Alexander's clash with Kleitos (see below) show that the king's claim to divine sonship lent itself to be interpreted (or consciously misrepresented) by his critics as a disowning of Philip. Kienast 1987–1988 argued that Alexander considered Zeus and Ammon two different deities and traced his birth back to the first only, being instead referred to as the son of Ammon by those who ridiculed his divine sonship. However, the idea that Ammon was an Egyptian manifestation of Zeus has been well attested in the Greek world since the fifth century; see Caneva 2012. Furthermore, the reconstruction by Kienast is at odds with the account by Ephippus of the Ekbatana celebrations, unless one speculates – as the scholar indeed does – that the historian rephrased the proclamation made by Gorgos according to the slogans of the Macedonian opposition.

⁷⁰ Curt. 4.7.30 (*Iovis igitur filium se non solum appellari passus est, sed etiam iussit*) and 6.11.23 (*cum primum Iovis filium se salutari iussit rex*). It should be stressed that in both passages Curtius seems to consider the affirmation of Alexander's divine sonship as tantamount to a claim to fully-fledged divinity.

⁷¹ This is however not completely ruled out by Bosworth 1977: 60. The only possible parallel to Curtius, albeit denied by Heckel, Yardley 1997: 155, is apparently provided by Iust. 11.11.8 (*Ille laetus dei adoptione hoc se patre censeri iubet*), but this author's report of Alexander's visit to Siwah includes blatant inaccuracies, such as the claim that Philip had repudiated Olympias on charges of adultery.

⁷² In addition to previous references, see also Caneva 2016: 11–28, who emphasises how the motif of Alexander's divine sonship was directed at multiple audiences, including the Egyptian elite. A particularly intriguing Egyptian piece of evidence is a bilingual dedication from the Bahariya oasis whose Greek text reads: *Βασίλειος | Ἀλέξανδρος | Ἀμμωνι | τ[ῷ] πατρί* (*SEG* 59.1764; cf. Wallace 2018: 166 for doubts about its authenticity). It seems likely that divine sonship – and possibly other aspects of Alexander's image as more than human (see below) – also became a constituent of the king's self-understanding, as supposed, e.g., by Edmunds 1971; however, the point here is not what the king believed but how he publicly represented himself. On this, see Trampedach 2020: 47 with n. 12.

for instance, the rebuke by Kleitos to the king for having disowned Philip and having had himself adopted by Ammon or the sharp irony of the mutineers of Opis, who encouraged him to discharge them all and continue campaigning with his divine father.⁷³ Indeed, in explaining the reasons why Alexander set up the Persian unit of the so-called *Epigonoí* as a counterbalance to the *phalanx* of the Macedonians, Diodoros (17.108.3) claims that the mockery by the latter of the king's alleged birth from Ammon occurred often during the assemblies of the army.⁷⁴ Even though on most occasions the discontent with Alexander did not originate solely or primarily from his claim to divine sonship,⁷⁵ the fact remains that this was a sensitive matter, and the choice made by Gorgos to evoke it during the Ekbatana celebrations was therefore not neutral. There is no way to assess whether this was previously agreed upon with Alexander, as was the overall content of the proclamation, or whether Gorgos acted on his own initiative. In any case, given the above-discussed political value of the stance taken by Gorgos, it would be once again wrong to label his addressing Alexander as the son of Ammon as flattery. This was rather a means of publicly upholding a specific aspect of the king's self-presentation, namely the projection of his person into a superhuman dimension, often referred to by scholars as 'Alexander's divinity'.⁷⁶

Albeit extremely relevant, divine sonship was but one of many complementary strategies which fostered the image of Alexander as more than purely mortal:⁷⁷ in portraits, and most likely in actual life, the king modelled his physical appearance on that of youthful gods and heroes; throughout his campaign, he consistently emulated mythical figures, in particular his heroic ancestors Achilles and Herakles and the god Dionysos, even entering – to paraphrase L. Edmunds –

⁷³ Rebuke by Kleitos: Curt. 8.1.42 and Plut. *Alex.* 50.11. Opis mutiny: Arr. *An.* 7.8.3 and Iust. 12.11.6. These and other episodes are analysed in Bosworth 1977. An overview of the episodes of dissent and conspiracies against Alexander is provided by Heckel 2003: 210–225, interpreting them as a consequence of both the changing balance of power among the aristocratic factions at court and the king's orientalising attitudes. See also Heckel 2009.

⁷⁴ On the incorporation of oriental troops into the army see Bosworth 1988: 271–273, according to whom such changes reflected 'Alexander's own transition from king of Macedon to king of Asia'. This notion is developed e.g. by Olbrycht 2017, while Anson 2021a interprets this policy mainly as a reaction to the Macedonians' growing disaffection with the king.

⁷⁵ This might however have happened in the case of the proposed (and never acted upon) plot of Parmenion's affiliate Hegelochos in Egypt; cf. Curt. 6.11.22–29. Hegelochos' disaffection with the king seems to have been shared by Philotas: according to Arr. *An.* 3.26.1, who relies on Ptolemy and Aristoboulos, it was precisely at this time that he started conspiring against Alexander. On these episodes, and on the so-called conspiracy of Philotas, see Heckel 2003: 215–219 and Heckel 2009: 74–77.

⁷⁶ Alexander's 'divinity' is the expression employed, e.g., by Bosworth 1988: 278–290 and Fredricksmeyer 2003: esp. 270–278. Cf. also Prandi 2014.

⁷⁷ On what follows see in general Hölscher 2020 and Anson 2021b, with Trampedach 2020 for Alexander exploiting divination as an instrument to 'stage his charisma'.

into a sort of pious competition with their deeds;⁷⁸ he carried out acts, for instance the cutting of the Gordian knot or his almost solitary assault on the Mallians' city walls, which had a mythopoetic potential of their own;⁷⁹ divination was consistently exploited to stress the gods' support of his endeavours and provide motifs such as his invincibility with divine confirmation. Needless to say, the unprecedented scale of the king's achievements represented a central factor as well and was in a sense the precondition for the outlined narrative to develop and take root. Just like Alexander's claim to be the son of Ammon, other aspects of his projection into the divine were also staged at court. This might have happened on the initiative either of particularly receptive courtiers, echoing for example the comparison between the king and mythical heroes,⁸⁰ or of Alexander himself. An intriguing piece of information is provided in this regard by Ephippos (*FGrHist* 126 F 5 = *Ath.* 12.53.537e–538b, esp. 537e–f), who reports that on some, informal occasions Alexander used to wear τὰς ἱερὰς ἐσθῆτας ('the sacred garments'), that is the attributes of various gods – Ammon, Artemis, Hermes – and of Herakles.⁸¹ The account is not without problems. On the one hand, Ephippos includes in it information about the king's adoption of (elements of) Persian clothing, which have nothing to do with him imitating any god;⁸² on the other, at least the idea that Alexander dressed up as Artemis while driving his chariot may be a misinterpretation, whether intentional or not, of his hunting attire.⁸³ However, the use of

⁷⁸ In a landmark study on Alexander's religiosity, Edmunds 1971: esp. 372–378 termed 'pious envy' the king's yearn to surpass the deeds of Achilles, Herakles and Dionysos, which in turn resulted from his belief that he could attain divinity by demonstrating heroic *arete*. While the emulation of Herakles is commonly assumed, that of Achilles (and Dionysos) has been recently deemed by Heckel 2015 as a creation of later authors; *contra* Anson 2021b: 16 with n. 13.

⁷⁹ Gordian knot: *Arr. An.* 2.3; *Curt.* 3.1.14–18; *Plut. Alex.* 18.1–4; *Iust.* 11.7.3–16. Assault on the Mallians' city: *Diod.* 17.98.4–99.4; *Arr. An.* 6.7.4–6; *Curt.* 9.4.30–5.20; *Plut. Alex.* 63.2–9; *Iust.* 12.9.

⁸⁰ According for instance to *Arr. An.* 4.8.3, this is exactly what happened in the prelude to the murder of Kleitos; cf. Bosworth 1977: 62–63.

⁸¹ References to recent commentaries of this fragment are given above, n. 33. The account by Ephippos has been sometimes dismissed as unreliable (cf., e.g., Pearson 1960: 65–67 and Anson 2021b: 17), above all because, of the absence of parallels and of the historian's alleged hostility towards Alexander. Even though he doubts the accuracy of Ephippos, Fredricksmeyer 2003: 278, n. 113 provides a balanced assessment of the significance of such divinising costumes in stating that Alexander 'wished to suggest his affinity to the gods rather than somehow identify himself with them'; cf. Prandi 2014: 62 and Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5. Bosworth 1988: 287 believes that the king intended to propound his own divinity.

⁸² On Alexander mixing Persian and Macedonian costume and selectively adopting some eastern royal garments see Collins 2012a.

⁸³ Spawforth 2012 has extensively argued that Ephippos was consciously misrepresenting (and not misinterpreting) the king's adoption of the Achaemenid chariot-hunting style, which could have made him resemble Artemis. This reading is based on the likely mistaken premise that Ephippos sought to attack Alexander's memory, but could provide a plausible explanation for

Ammon's horns, Hermes' caduceus and Herakles' *leonte* and club are unequivocal, and, since Alexander was indeed represented with Zeus' thunderbolt by his 'official' painter Apelles, there should be no difficulty in admitting that towards the end of his life – the period that the work of Ehippos refers to – the king might have adopted similar habits at banquets and other social occasions.⁸⁴ What about actual court ceremonial? In the debate reported by Arrian and Curtius regarding Alexander's attempt to extend *proskynesis* to Macedonians and Greeks, this is famously characterised in a religious sense.⁸⁵ However, the debate as such is probably a later fabrication, and it seems likely that Alexander's initiative stemmed more from his desire to standardise court etiquette than from his superhuman pretensions.⁸⁶ Similarly, while Ehippos (*FGrHist* 126 F 5 = *Ath.* 12.53.537e–538b, esp. 538a) to some extent represents it as a form of worship, the burning of incense in Alexander's presence has been alternatively explained in the framework of the king's giving audience in the Persian manner.⁸⁷ In the current state of knowledge,

the king's otherwise unattested employment of the attributes of a female deity. However, as Prof. K. Trampedach pointed out to me via e-mail (13.05.2023), there is further evidence suggesting that an association between Alexander and Artemis was in place and consequently recommending caution in dismissing even this detail of the account by Ehippos as unreliable. Indeed, on the occasion of the taking of Ephesos in 334 the king showed great devotion towards the goddess (cf. *Arr. An.* 1.17.10 and 18.2); furthermore, it seems likely that the story connecting the burning of the Artemision of Ephesos on the day of Alexander's birth to the assistance Artemis was allegedly giving to Olympias and to her consequent absence from the city (cf. Hegesias, *FGrHist* 142 F 3 = *Plut. Alex.* 3 and Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566 F 150a = *Cic. Nat. D.* 2.69) was conceived already in king's lifetime; cf. Trampedach 2020: 54. On this section of the Ehippos fragment see in general Ravazzolo 2017: 84–94, stressing that its inconsistencies could be ascribed not directly to Ehippos, but to our secondary source Athenaios.

⁸⁴ On Apelle's Alexander *keranophoros* see Stewart 1993: 191–198, who dates it to 331. It seems better not to recall here the so-called 'Poros dechadrams', where a warrior identified with Alexander is equally depicted wielding the thunderbolt, because both their date and the authority under which they were issued are disputed; see Dahmen 2007: 6–9.

⁸⁵ *Arr. An.* 4.10.5–12.2 and *Curt.* 8.5. The debate is absent in another version of the episode – reported by *Arr. An.* 4.12.3–6 and *Plut. Alex.* 54 – which ultimately derives from Alexander's *eisangeleus* Chares of Mytilene (cf. *FGrHist* 125 F 14). See Bosworth 1988: 284–287.

⁸⁶ On the debate as a later fabrication see, e.g., Bowden 2013: 72–76, whose denying that Alexander ever engaged in any 'experiment with *proskynesis*' is however unconvincing. On Alexander aiming at standardising court etiquette see, e.g., Spawforth 2007: 102–106, who explains the opposition raised by the king's initiative as a consequence of it implying equality between Graeco-Macedonians and Persians. Its religious significance is upheld by Bosworth 1988: 286–287 and esp. Fredrickmeyer 2003: 274–275. For overviews on the many problems related with this issue see Muccioli 2016 and Müller 2017 *ad BNJ* 125 F 14a.

⁸⁷ Cf. Spawforth 2007: 99. Ehippos states that incenses were burnt to Alexander, as though in some kind of fumigation, and that the king was surrounded by a religious silence (*euphemia*), which is however explained as a consequence of the king's wrathful temperament. An interpretation of this passage in terms of actual worship is usually rejected (cf., e.g., Prandi 2014: 62; Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5; Ravazzolo 2017: 99, who speculates that the fumigations might have been connected with a specific ritual in honour of the deceased Hephaistion) but

it seems difficult to argue that Alexander's projection into the divine ever took an official form in court ceremonies. However, this does not call into question its emerging in more informal moments and enjoying significant visibility in the social environment surrounding the king.

Beyond the King's Court (1). Gorgos, Epidauros and Alexander the *Antitheos Basileus*

Ephippos attests that Gorgos was among those courtiers who embraced Alexander's superhuman pretensions and actively supported them at the central level of the king's court. The Epidaurian dedication whose text has been quoted above (Hansen, *CEG* 817) suggests in turn that this course of action extended to Gorgos' dealings with the wider Greek world. Based on its palaeography, the inscription belongs to the late fourth century and such a date, together with the mention of the personal name of Gorgos and of an *antitheos basileus* (l. 6) whom it seems natural to identify with Alexander, assures beyond reasonable doubt that it relates to the Iasian.⁸⁸ What remains of the opening lines of the text suffices for understanding that this offering was an initiative of the *polis* of Epidauros, because the nominative ἀμπελόεσσα Ἐπίδauρο[ς] ('vine-clad Epidauros') in line 3 is the only possible subject for the dedicatory formula in the preceding line. Why did the Epidaurians honour Gorgos? To answer this question, A.J. Heisserer recalled two passages from Arrian and Diodoros mentioning an Epidaurian embassy that reached Alexander in 323.⁸⁹ According to Arrian (7.14.6), the envoys approached the king along his way from Ekbatana to Babylon; the goal of their mission is not specified, but they succeeded in achieving it and Alexander sent them back with an offering to Asklepios. In the account by Diodoros (17.113.3–4), the Epidaurian embassy is listed among those received by Alexander when already in Babylon and whose petitions were heard in an order based on their respective content:

Καὶ πρότοις μὲν ἐ χρημάτισε τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶν παραγεγενημένοις, δευτέροις δὲ τοῖς περὶ τῶν δωρεῶν ἦκουσιν, ἐξῆς δὲ τοῖς ἀμφισβητήσεις ἔχουσι πρὸς τοὺς ὁμόρους, τετάρτοις δὲ τοῖς περὶ τῶν ἰδιωτικῶν ἦκουσι, πέμπτοις δὲ τοῖς ἀντιλέγουσι περὶ τῆς καθόδου τῶν φυγάδων. Τοῖς μὲν οὖν Ἡλείοις πρώτοις ἐ χρημάτισεν, εἴτα Ἀμμωνιεῦσι καὶ

Bosworth 1988: 287 infers from it that Alexander was treated 'with all the reference due to a god'.

⁸⁸ Cf. already the *ed. pr.* M. Fränkel in *IG* IV 1370. On the vicissitudes of the stone and the palaeography of the inscription see Heisserer 1980: 194–195.

⁸⁹ Heisserer 1980: 200–202, followed e.g. by Delrieux 2001: 173–174. More cautious are Franco 2004: 386 and Heckel 2021: 204, no. 485. Heisserer's reconstruction of the relationship Gorgos had with Epidauros has been questioned by Dmitriev 2004: 370–372.

Δελφοῖς καὶ Κορινθίοις, ἔτι δὲ Ἐπιδαυρίοις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, κατὰ τὴν δόξαν τῶν ἱερῶν προκρίναν τὰς ἐντεύξεις. Πάσαις δὲ ταῖς πρεσβείαις φιλοτιμηθεὶς κεχαρισμένας δοῦναι τὰς ἀποκρίσεις εὐαρεστούμενας ἀπέλυσε κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν.

First he heard those who came on matters concerning religion; second, those who brought gifts; next, those who had disputes with their neighbours; fourth, those who had problems concerning themselves alone; and fifth, those who wished to present arguments against receiving back their exiles. He dealt with the Eleians first, then with the Ammonians and the Delphians and the Corinthians, as well as with the Epidaurians and the rest, receiving their petitions in the order of importance of the sanctuaries. In all cases he made every effort to deliver replies which would be gratifying and sent everyone away content so far as he was able. [transl. by Bradford Welles]

Diodoros lists five categories of embassies, the last consisting in those whose scope was to oppose the Exiles Decree. Subsequently, he gives the names of five communities among which the Epidaurians are placed as fifth. Taking a cue from this, Heisserer assumes that the Epidaurian embassy dealt precisely with the exiles' repatriation, in which Gorgos might have been involved.⁹⁰ In particular, given his previous lobbying on behalf of the Samians, Gorgos might have also facilitated the Epidaurian exiles' return home, possibly being even dispatched to Greece for this purpose.⁹¹ The offering in his honour would have then been dedicated on the initiative of the repatriated exiles, possibly after the Lamian War.⁹²

This whole reconstruction is, however, doubtful from the very start. In fact, the passage by Diodoros does not at all imply that the five embassies whose provenance is made explicit were representative of the categories he previously listed; on the contrary, they all fit well the first category, namely that of the embassies related to religious matters.⁹³ Furthermore, Arrian – and Diodoros as well, even if less directly – attests that Alexander satisfied the request of the Epidaurians: if they had requested to be exempted from their exiles' repatriation, than the alleged

⁹⁰ This had been already suggested by Peek 1932: 52–54 without referring to the Diodoros passage.

⁹¹ Even if Gorgos ever travelled to Greece – and we have no reason to assume that he did (see below) – it seems difficult that this happened according to Heisserer's reconstruction. The scholar suggests that Gorgos might have accompanied Nikanor on his mission to announce the Exiles Decree in order to implement it in troublesome cities; he would have been present in Olympia when the Decree was proclaimed and he would have then travelled to Epidauros; the Epidaurians would have refused him entry into the city because of their opposition to the Decree, so that he would have proceeded to Tegea (!) and Samos. However, Nikanor accomplished his mission in mid-summer 324 and in the autumn of that year Gorgos was by Alexander in Ekbatana: in such a short period, he would have hardly had time enough to visit three *poleis* (cf. Delrieux 2001: 174, n. 43 and Dmitriev 2004: 371). Furthermore, had he visited Samos this would have probably been recalled in the Samian decree honouring him and his brother.

⁹² As attested by Paus. 1.25.4 (cf. Diod. Sic. 18.11.2, where the Epidaurians are referred to as 'those who dwell on Akte'), during this conflict Epidauros lined up against the Macedonians.

⁹³ Cf. Prandi 2013: 196.

advocacy of the latter's cause by Gorgos would have been unsuccessful, unless of course one postulates further developments in the issue which are not reported by our sources. Finally, we have no clue that between autumn 324 – when he was surely in Ekbatana – and Alexander's death Gorgos ever left the king's side: the Samian decree in his honour reports that after the royal decision about Samos was announced he ἐπέστειλε εἰς Ἰάσον πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντα|ς ('wrote to the *archontes* in Iasos'; Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 90B, ll. 16–17) in order to instruct them how to handle the departure of the exiles, implying that he was still away from his hometown but giving no further clues about his location.

What we know for certain is that in 323 a diplomatic exchange took place between Epidauros and Alexander which worked out successfully for the city. This might have been somehow related to the Exiles Decree, but it seems equally possible that it dealt with religious issues pertaining to the Epidaurian sanctuary of Asklepios. Whatever the answer, it is possible that the offering in honour of Gorgos was motivated by his supporting the *polis* in these circumstances. The mention of the *antitheos basileus* in the dedication may indeed suggest that the merits of Gorgos towards Epidauros consisted in an intercession with Alexander on behalf of the city. However, it should not be ruled out that his proximity to the king was recalled as a mark of honour, independently of the nature of the services to the city which the offering was meant to reward.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the dedication cannot be dated precisely, so that its connection with the Epidaurian embassies delivered to Alexander in the last year of his reign remains a (likely) possibility among others.

The dedication characterises Alexander as *antitheos*, an adjective which occurs frequently in Homer with reference to the heroes of his poems. Given the poetic nature of this inscription, it does not come in itself as a surprise to find a Homeric reminiscence therein. Apart from Homer, however, *antitheos* is quite uncommon in literary as well as epigraphic texts of the Archaic and Classical periods, so that its employment in the Epidaurian dedication appears meaningful.⁹⁵ In particular, the choice of this specific adjective might have been a conscious poetic

⁹⁴ A personal connection with Alexander obviously represented something anyone would have been proud of: Theophr. *Char.* 23.3 depicts his boastful man flaunting an alleged comradeship with Alexander, and both personal connections with the king and the fact of having taken part in his campaign are emphasised in private dedications and public honours. Cf. Wallace 2018: 165; the same scholar discusses some such dedications – including that for Gorgos in Epidauros – in Wallace 2020: 132–143.

⁹⁵ According to *TLG* online, last consulted on 24.03.2023, *antitheos* occurs 62 times in Homer, 11 times in Hesiod, 11 times in lyrics, only once in tragedy. Regarding epigraphic sources, *PHI Greek Inscriptions* – last consulted on the same date – is a less accurate tool, but the search result is so clear-cut that it should not be doubted; indeed, before the Hellenistic period *antitheos* seems to be surely attested only once, in a fourth-century dedicatory epigram, with reference to Kekrops (*IG* II² 4321, l. 2).

device to suggest an equation of Alexander with mythical heroes. An interesting parallel to the Epidaurian case is provided by a monument honouring Archon of Pella, a high-ranking Macedonian who took part in Alexander's campaign and was appointed satrap of Babylon in 323. The monument was erected in Delphi by Archon's hometown after his death, and its dedicatory inscription qualifies Alexander as *dios* (Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 92 I, esp. ll. 3–4), once again a Homeric term that usually refers to heroes.⁹⁶ In both instances, we are confronted with a positive response and a promulgation by local communities of Alexander's self-constructed image as a superhuman individual.⁹⁷ Its dissemination throughout the Greek world was surely achieved through diverse channels, which were subject to various degrees of royal control and are unevenly documented by the sources. They ranged from artistic works enjoying a more or less official sanction by the king – the history of his campaign by Kallisthenes, the representations of Alexander by Lysippos, Apelles and Pyrgoteles, possibly also the completely lost contemporary poetic production about his deeds – to the multitude of informal stories told by the many people – soldiers, traders, ambassadors and so on – who travelled back and forth between Alexander's itinerant court and the provinces of the empire.⁹⁸ In this process, an important role must have also been played by courtiers, especially those like Gorgos, who acted as intermediaries between Alexander and the Greek *poleis*. Indeed, the fact that this aspect of the king's self-presentation emerges in a civic dedication honouring one of his associates who publicly supported it at court may hardly be a coincidence. On the contrary, it likely shows that Alexander's heroic characterisation was an integral part of his image as conveyed to the Epidaurians surely not only, but also by Gorgos himself.

⁹⁶ On this monument see Wallace 2020: 137–139, emphasising the choice to refer to Alexander not as the Greeks' *hegemon* or the Macedonians' *basileus*, but as 'divine'. Obviously, a fundamental difference between Epidauros and Pella is that the latter was the Macedonian capital city. A form of non-institutionalised religious devotion towards the Argead kings seems to have developed early in Hellenistic Macedonia: Iust. 24.5.9–11 reports that when in 279 Ptolemy Keraunos was defeated by the Gauls, the terrified Macedonians addressed prayers to Philip and Alexander. See Mari 2008: 229–230.

⁹⁷ Cf. on the Epidaurian dedication Wallace 2020: 142: 'The honours for Gorgos of Iasos were dedicated and inscribed by the city of Epidauros or some group within it, but they represented the elite ideology of Alexander's court [...] accepted, refashioned, and promulgated anew by the subject state'. The scholar regards the Epidaurians' adoption of Alexander's superhuman image as a way to naturalise royal power.

⁹⁸ On the communication channels between Alexander's court and the Greeks see Wallace 2016. Wallace 2020 focuses on the role of such channels in spreading the multifaceted representation of the king and his campaign. In addition to the references given above, see: on Kallisthenes Heckel 2020, who argues for the historian's work to have been made known among the Greeks in yearly instalments; on poets at Alexander's court Pownall 2021: 253–255; on the king's predilection for Lysippos, Apelles and Pyrgoteles Stewart 2003: 31–40, emphasising how Apelles' depictions of Alexander were bolder and more markedly divinising than those of Lysippos.

Beyond the King's Court (2). The Iasian Cult of Alexander and Olympias

In the current state of knowledge, there is no way to assess whether in Epidauros the local receptivity to Alexander's superhuman pretensions resulted in the bestowal upon the king of actual cultic honours. The existence of a cult of the king is instead positively attested in the hometown of Gorgos, Iasos, by the above-mentioned marble altar whose dedicatory inscription reads Ἀλεξάνδρου | *vac.* καὶ *vac.* | Ὀλυμπιάδος ('[Altar] of Alexander and Olympias'; *SEG* 65.989).⁹⁹ As indicated by its palaeography, this inscription was engraved at the turn of the first century BCE and the first century CE or slightly earlier, which raises the question of the date when Alexander's cult in Iasos was instituted. Should it be likened to the king's cults which were already existing earlier in the Hellenistic period and are usually considered to have been established in their recipient's lifetime (see below)? Or was it established at the same time as the engraving of the altar inscription, so that the cult should be regarded as a product of the dramatic increase in Alexander's popularity driven by the more and more pronounced *imitatio Alexandri* of the Roman emperors and sometimes resulting in the local introduction of religious practices in the Macedonian's honour? While none of these possibilities can be conclusively proved or disproved, the latter should be considered far less likely, because the development of Alexander's popularity into proper cults seems to have generally not occurred earlier than the Severans and to have been concentrated in Macedonia and the neighbouring territories.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere, the local communities apparently limited themselves to establishing fictitious links with Alexander, for example by tracing their foundation

⁹⁹ On the altar, its dedicatory inscription and the palaeography of the latter see Maddoli 2010: 129–131 (inscription not earlier than the second half of the third century BCE, possibly to be dated to the first century CE) and Maddoli 2015 (inscription likely engraved between the first century BCE and the first century CE, but some characters consistent with a date in the second century BCE).

¹⁰⁰ With the Severans, the Roman *imitatio Alexandri* evolved into a form of idolatry which has been termed, e.g. by Stewart 2003: 61–66, 'Alexander-mania'; see further Kühnen 2008: 175–193. On the Macedonian cults of Alexander instituted in this period see Gagé 1975. Wallace 2018: 186–187 discusses together cults of Alexander that were first established in the second or third century CE (e.g. that of Thessalonike; cf. Mari 2021: 117 with n. 4, justifying the choice not to insert the evidence stemming from this city in her *Catalogue of Sources* on the ruler cult in Hellenistic Macedonia) and that of Bargylia in Karia, which is also attested by a first-century CE inscription (*I.Iasos* 616) and may have been established in the king's lifetime (*contra* Chankowski 2010: 285; on this cult see Habicht 1970²: 21 and Kholod 2016: 501).

back to him, without this leading to bestow upon him concrete cultic honours.¹⁰¹ Most likely, then, in the case of the Iasian altar we are dealing with the renovation of a structure connected with a pre-existing cult of Alexander, as with the *Alexandreion* of Priene, which was restored around the end of the second century after having fallen in decay.¹⁰² This view is furthermore consistent with the presence above the three lines of the dedication of a fourth, now illegible line, which, as cautiously suggested by the altar editor G. Maddoli, ‘peut-être [...] avait-elle aussi contenu les noms des mêmes destinataires, repropoés à une époque postérieure sous une forme et avec une graphie différentes’.¹⁰³

While mainland Greece has yielded no conclusive evidence in this regard,¹⁰⁴ the number of *poleis* of Asia Minor (and the Aegean) where a civic cult of Alexander

¹⁰¹ A list is in Wallace 2018: 167–168, n. 18. To the references given there, add Stewart 1993: 307–312, discussing the cases of Smyrna in Ionia, Apollonia Mordiaion in Pisidia, Gerasa in Syria. It is true, as noted by Kholod 2016: 508, n. 48, that we are not in a position to completely rule out that such foundation legends might have resulted in local cults of Alexander as *kistes*, but this seems unattested so far.

¹⁰² That the cult was established during Alexander’s reign is accepted by Maddoli 2010: 129–131; Maddoli 2015; Biraschi 2015 (less explicitly). *Contra* Kholod 2016: 507. Biraschi and (to a lesser extent) Maddoli discuss the possible reasons why the joint cult of Alexander and Olympias was revitalised in the early Imperial period (see below). Even though this matter is not addressed in the present paper, it should be stressed that the engraving of SEG 65.989 does not need to be necessarily interpreted as a political act but could have been determined simply by the deterioration over time of the structures connected to a cult which never ceased to be practiced. Indeed, a peculiarity of the civic cults of Alexander, above all in Asia Minor, is represented precisely by their prolonged existence (cf. Kholod 2016: 519–520; discussing the survival of the cults of Hellenistic rulers after the disappearance of the dynasties, Chankowski 2010: 279 notes that ‘les témoignages les plus nombreux concernent, dans la catégorie des personnes, Alexandre le Grand’).

¹⁰³ Maddoli 2010: 129, suggesting also the alternative possibility that ‘le monument avait peut-être à l’origine au moins un autre destinataire’ (see below).

¹⁰⁴ Scholarly discussion of Alexander’s ‘divinisation’ in mainland Greece mainly focuses on the cases of Athens and to a much lesser extent Sparta, the two *poleis* where we know the issue of bestowing cultic honours upon the king to have been at least debated in 324/3 (see below). As for the rest of Greece, Paus. 8.32.1 reports the existence in Megalopolis of a house (*oikia*) built for Alexander and near which there was a cult statue (*agalma*) of Ammon; Fredricksmeyer 1979: 1–3 regarded it as ‘a shrine dedicated to Alexander as son of Ammon’, but this is not necessarily implied by Pausanias and the whole story was probably a local fabrication; cf. Wallace 2018: 172–173. According to Arr. *An.* 7.23.2 in 323 envoys came to Babylon from Greece who approached Alexander ὡς θεοῖσι δῆθεν ἐς τιμὴν θεοῦ ἀφικόμενοι (‘as if they were the *theoroi* who came to honour a god’; my transl.); taken literally, the passage could indicate that the *poleis* which had dispatched such embassies had instituted cults of Alexander (cf. Fredricksmeyer’s discussion in the above-mentioned paper), but the phrasing of Arrian could simply aim at conveying ‘l’atmosfera di impressionante soggezione del momento’ (Prandi 2014: 63). See also Habicht 1970²: 247–249 and Badian 1981: 54–59. Despite the absence of undisputed evidence, it seems likely that cults of Alexander were instituted in at least some cities of mainland Greece towards the end of his reign but were possibly promptly abolished after his death; cf., e.g., Kholod 2016: 519; *contra*, cautiously, Siekierka 2016: 271. See also Stewart 1993: 100–102.

is surely attested to have been in place in the Hellenistic period is relatively high.¹⁰⁵ Since no institution decree of any of these cults survives, the time when they were established cannot be conclusively determined; however, most scholars seem to agree that in Asia Minor this came to pass in Alexander's lifetime, a view recently reiterated and extensively argued for by M.M. Kholod.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, had Alexander's cults been established posthumously, they would represent an apparently isolated exception to the general pattern followed by both previous and subsequent occurrences of a ruler cult.¹⁰⁷ In a nutshell, *poleis* usually bestowed cultic honours upon powerful individuals by whom they had been benefited in order to express their gratitude but also to encourage an ongoing patronage which could result in future services and was made possible precisely by these individuals being still alive.¹⁰⁸ It was apparently applying this *do ut des* principle that between 324 and 323 the official recognition of Alexander's divinity was proposed in Athens, in the hope to avert the much-feared loss of Samos.¹⁰⁹ It is debated whether the Athenians did in

¹⁰⁵ Apart from Badian 1981: 59–63 (cf. also Badian 1996: 24–25), studies dealing generally with 'Alexander's divinity' do not devote much space to discussing the positively attested cults of the king; cf., e.g., Bosworth 1988: 289–290 and Fredricksmeyer 2003: 276. These are dealt with individually in Habicht 1970²: 17–28; 245–246; 251–252, to be consulted together with the (updated) English edition Habicht 2017 (esp. 183 for Alexander's cult in Kos). Habicht's views are largely adopted by Dreyer 2009. At present, the earliest known evidence of a cult of Alexander is a late fourth-century sacred regulation from Thasos mentioning an *Alexandreia* festival (*I.Thasos* III 9, l. 2); see Mari 2021: 110–111.

¹⁰⁶ Kholod 2016: esp. 503–508, who systematically discusses the most relevant previous assessments of Alexander's cults in Asia Minor. See also Stewart 1993: 98–102.

¹⁰⁷ On cultic honours for prominent political figures of the Classical period whose institution is explicitly dated by our sources to their recipients' lifetimes see, e.g., Mari 2004: 177–183 (Lysander's cult in Samos; cf. Plut. *Lys.* 18.5–8) and Mari 2008: 237–239 (the cults of Amyntas III and Philip II, respectively in Pydna nad Amphipolis; cf. *Schol. ad Dem.* 1.5, p. 26, 41a Dils and Aristid. 38, p. 480 Dindorf). Badian 1981: 33–44 hypercritically denies that any cult was instituted for a living individual before Alexander. After the latter's reign, Philip III and Alexander IV were the first to be granted a cult when alive, as attested by the mention of an *agon* dedicated to them in a Samian decree honouring Antileon of Chalkis (*IG* XII 6.1.42, ll. 64–65), which dates between 321 and 319; see Mari 2004: 184–185.

¹⁰⁸ While emphasising above all the first of these aspects, in what is still the reference study on civic ruler cult C. Habicht acknowledged the close link between the bestowal of cultic honours upon an individual (as well as their persistence over time) and the latter's ability to constantly act as a patron to the community honouring him; cf. Habicht 1970²: esp. 160–165 and 185–192. On later developments in the studies about Hellenistic ruler cults see Chankowski 2021: 49–52. On the phenomenon in general see Chaniotis 2003.

¹⁰⁹ This is quite explicitly suggested by the remark allegedly addressed by Demades to his fellow-citizens when they proved reluctant to grant cultic honours to Alexander: '*Videte inquit ne, dum caelum custoditis, terram amittatis*' ('Take care,' he said, 'that in guarding the heavens you don't lose the earth'; Val. Max. 7.2 ext. 13; transl. by Shackleton Bailey; cf. Demades F 11 De Falco with, e.g., Faraguna 2003: 128). Demades did indeed put forward a motion proposing to 'deify' Alexander, and was fined because of it (cf. Ael. *VH* 5.12 and Ath. 6.251b). The heated debate about instituting a cult of Alexander has left some traces in the extant speeches of

fact put these proposals into practice, but it would be in any case natural for the positively attested cults of Alexander to have been instituted as an instrument of negotiation with the (obviously living) king. Towards the end of Alexander's reign the (probably correct¹¹⁰) notion of his superhuman pretensions having made a step forward, so that he aspired to receiving actual worship, was surely widespread throughout the Greek world: in a letter addressed to the king at the time of the Harpalos Affair, for instance, Theopompos of Chios (*FGrHist* 115 F 253 = *Ath.* 13.595b–c) characterises cultic honours as entirely appropriate for him.¹¹¹ Moreover, in his *Funeral Speech* for the fallen of the Lamian War, delivered in early 322, Hypereides (*Epit.* 21) refers to cults of Alexander in unspecified cities other than Athens.¹¹² There is no reason not to link this information also (but probably not exclusively) to Asia Minor, the region where cults of the king are attested in the greatest number. If so, since these honours were in place just a few months after

Hypereides (*Dem.* 31–32) and Deinarchos (*Dem.* 94). On this see Cawkwell 1994 and Siekierka 2016, both denying that such a cult was actually introduced. For a different view see, e.g., Habicht 1970²: 29–30 and 246–250 (rightly revising his earlier idea that Alexander and Hephaistion were worshipped jointly in Athens); Badian 1981: 54–55 (but he is more doubtful in Badian 1996: 25–26); Palagia 2021.

¹¹⁰ This is hardly demonstrable, especially since even Alexander's most radical strategies of projection into the divine do not appear to have entailed proper worship. However, Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (*FGrHist* 139 F 55 = *Arr. An.* 7.19.3–22.5; cf. also F 56 = *Str.* 16.1.9–11) reports the king's conviction, apparently expressed in 323 when he was planning the invasion of Arabia, that it would have been appropriate for the Arabs to worship him as a god. Albeit sometimes disregarded (cf., e.g., Cawkwell 1994: 296–297), this passage shows at the very least that a well-informed contemporary of the king was convinced of the latter's wish to be honoured as a god; cf. Pownall 2013 *ad BNJ* 139 F 56. The same idea emerges from Theopompos' letter to Alexander mentioned below. On the possibility that in 324/3 Alexander more or less officially demanded cultic honours from the Greeks see below.

¹¹¹ In particular, Theopompos denounces the cultic honours – namely an altar, a sacred precinct and a temple – bestowed by Harpalos upon his deceased lover Pythionike: in doing so, he writes to the king, Harpalos τὰς οὐς τιμὰς προπηλακίζειν ἐπιχειρῶν ('is attempting to trample your [*scil.* Alexander's] honours'; my transl.). The letter has sometimes been considered proof that at the time it was written Alexander was receiving cultic honours, but this may be an overinterpretation. See Morison 2014 *ad BNJ* 115 F 253.

¹¹² Cawkwell 1994: 297–300 translates (and interprets) the Hypereides passage as follows: 'This [*scil.* what would happen if the Macedonians were to prevail in the war] is clear from what we are compelled to put up with even now: to stand by and watch sacrifices being made to men, statues, altars and temples completed carelessly for the gods but meticulously for men, and ourselves being forced to honour these men's servants as heroes' (Φανερόν δ' ἐξ ὧν ἀναγκαζόμεθα καὶ νῦν ἔ[στ]ι· θυσίας μὲν ἀνθρώποις γ[ιγνο]μένας ἐφορᾶν, ἀγάλμ[ατα δὲ] καὶ βωμοὺς καὶ ναοὺς τοῖς μὲν θεοῖς ἀμελῶς, τοῖς δὲ ἀνθρώ[ποις] ἐπιμελῶς συντελούμενα, καὶ [τ]οὺς <τού>των οἰκέτας ὥσπερ ἥρωας τιμᾶν ἡμᾶς ἀναγκαζομένους). The orator differentiates between the divine honours for Alexander, which the Athenians witnessed but did not perform, and Hephaistion's heroic cult, which was also celebrated by them. This understanding of the passage was also upheld by Habicht 1970²: 246, who reconsidered his previous views on the matter. *Contra*, e.g., Palagia 2021: 269. On Hephaistion's heroisation see below.

Alexander's death, their having been instituted in his lifetime turns out to be all the more likely.

Besides these general arguments, a more specific one regarding the Iasian case may be inferred from the inclusion of Olympias in her son's cult. One of the primary functions of civic ruler cult was to establish a positive and advantageous relationship between local communities and powerful individuals who could influence their destiny. Consequently, a necessary condition for Iasos to bestow cultic honours upon Olympias was that this would have been welcomed or at the very least not resented by the regional power under whose sphere of influence the city belonged when such a choice was made. This could however hardly have happened after Alexander's death, since in the following period, and at least until the assassination of the king's mother at the hands of Kassandros, Karia was never under the control either of Olympias or of her allies in the Wars of the Diadochi.¹¹³ During the Third War of the Diadochi, the assassination of Olympias was apparently exploited by Antigonos the One-Eyed in his propaganda against Kassandros.¹¹⁴ At the end of this conflict, the whole of Asia Minor fell under the control of Antigonos, and one might speculate that the Iasians introduced the dual cult of Alexander and Olympias then, in order to publicly align with him. However, at a time when at least another *polis* of Asia Minor, Skepsis in Troas, celebrated the One-Eyed's victory by bestowing cultic honours directly upon him – or more

¹¹³ Before Olympias' murder in 315, Karia was firmly in the hands of Asandros (cf. Mastrocinque 1979: 15–17), to whom it had been assigned on the occasion of the redistribution of the Asian satrapies carried out in Babylon after Alexander's death and whose position was confirmed in Triparadeisos in 320 (dates are given according to the 'mixed' chronology adopted by Landucci 2021: XXII–XXXV and XLII–XLIV). An overview of the alliances of Asandros between 323 and 315 will show that even without ever entering into direct conflict with Olympias, he consistently sided against her allies in Asia. During the First War of the Diadochi Asandros sided with the enemies of Perdikkas; albeit not involved in the conflict, Olympias may however be to some extent regarded as an ally of Perdikkas, since at that time arrangements were being made for a marriage between him and her daughter Kleopatra. Nothing is known of the activity of Asandros during the Second War of the Diadochi, but he probably remained loyal to Antigonos, who at Triparadeisos had been made *strategos* of Asia and encharged with continuing the war against the ally of the late Perdikkas, Eumenes of Kardia; the latter formed an alliance with Polyperchon, who on the European front fought with Olympias against Kassandros. We have no specific information regarding Iasos in this period. On Asandros and Olympias see respectively Heckel 2021: 108–109, no. 233 and Carney 2006: 64–82. Capdetrey 2022: 86–90 argues that Asandros became increasingly emancipated from the authority of Antigonos; however, this needs not have favoured the institution of the cult of Olympias in Iasos.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Diod. Sic. 19.61.1–3, quoting the speech Antigonos addressed to his troops in Tyre at the very beginning of the war. He emphasised the crimes of Kassandros against the Argeads, including the assassination of Olympias. See Landucci 2021: 109–111. During this conflict Asandros sided against Antigonos and was repeatedly defeated by the latter's forces, until in 312 he had to give up his claims to the satrapy of Karia, which passed into the hands of Antigonos; in this context, Diod. Sic. 19.75.5 makes an explicit mention of Iasos. See Mastrocinque 1979: 17–25.

precisely by augmenting some pre-existing honours – the Iasians' initiative would have been quite an oblique way to embrace his cause.¹¹⁵ All in all, everything seems to concur with the assumption that the cult attested by the Iasian altar was instituted during Alexander's reign.

A few decades ago, C. Habicht demonstrated that at least in the early Hellenistic period cults for living sovereigns were normally instituted in response to the services they had rendered to civic communities. This would suggest linking the bestowal of cultic honours upon Alexander in Iasos with the return of the Little Sea in 334, the very period that Habicht identified as the most likely chronological context for the institution of all the king's cults in Asia Minor, interpreted by him as a way to express the Greeks' gratitude for their liberation from the Persian yoke.¹¹⁶ However, since Habicht's discussion strong arguments have been put forward against his view. One of these focuses on the fact that the Alexander historians make no mention of the king's cults in Asia Minor: had these been instituted in the wake of the Macedonian conquest of the region, whose accounts devote considerable attention to Alexander's relationship with the Greek *poleis*, such silence would be particularly difficult to explain.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, two years later the Milesian oracle of Apollo and the prophetess Athenais of Erythrai proclaimed that Alexander was the son of a god, but not a god himself. Had Alexander already been the recipient of fully-fledged cults in Asia Minor when the two oracular responses were delivered to him, one would expect these not to have limited themselves to asserting the king's divine sonship, which on its own would have entailed the risk to be perceived as a step backwards compared with such pre-ex-

¹¹⁵ The institution decree of this cult mentions some pre-existing cultic honours for Antigonos (cf. *OGIS* 6, ll. 22–26) that might have been established after the 315 Tyre proclamation (see previous note), on which occasion he first presented himself as champion of the freedom of the Greeks. At present, this is the earliest known occurrence of cultic honours bestowed upon one of the Diadochi. See Erskine 2014: 584–587 and Capdetrey 2022: 318–320.

¹¹⁶ Habicht 1970²: 22–25; cf. Dreyer 2009: esp. 222–223. Similarly, Erskine 2014: esp. 589–590, based on the view that in the early history of the civic ruler cult democratic regimes – such as those established by Alexander in Asia Minor in 334 – were particularly inclined to resort to it. Mentioning the still unpublished dedicatory inscription of the altar of Alexander and Olympias – which he however regarded as a statue base – Franco 2004: 388 cautiously linked it to the gratitude of the Iasians for the return of the Little Sea, which he dated between 334 and 332. Roughly the same chronological context is suggested by Maddoli 2015: 140 (see below).

¹¹⁷ See Kholod 2016: 511–513, who argues that the 'almost complete lack of direct evidence of the existence of Alexander's cult in the Greek cities of Asia Minor is very well explicable, in contrast to the earlier time, exactly for the end of his reign', when the attention of the ancient historians focuses elsewhere, namely on the king's movements and actions in the east. Given our limited knowledge of the Athenian debate about 'deifying' Alexander, it is however impossible, as Kholod does (cf. also Stewart 1993: 99), to draw a further argument from the fact that the king's cults in Asia Minor are not 'referred to as a precedent' on that occasion.

isting honours.¹¹⁸ It should also be kept in mind that even though at the beginning of Alexander's reign the Greek world had already experienced some occurrences of ruler cult, this practice was still far from customary in the relations between *poleis* and powerful individuals.¹¹⁹ Therefore, it seems doubtful that in 334, when the Macedonian campaign was still at the start, many *poleis* of Asia Minor would have at once resorted to cultic honours to celebrate Alexander's first victories, whose stability must have appeared furthermore far from certain, given the very real possibility of a Persian recovery.¹²⁰ In general, the institution of Alexander's local cults is probably better understood as a gradual phenomenon, whose most likely chronological context is represented by the late years of his reign, when the issue of his divinity became topical in regions other than Asia Minor.¹²¹ Some of the attested cults might have been established earlier, but they should probably be regarded as a minority and it seems in any case legitimate to regard 332/1, the year of the oracular pronouncements on Alexander's divine sonship, as a *terminus ante quem non*.¹²²

What, then, of Alexander's cult in Iasos? Besides the return of the Little Sea, we do not know of any other royal service which might have been conducive to its establishment and could help us to determine its date. Furthermore, no relationship is positively attested between the *polis* and Olympias which might

¹¹⁸ Cf. Badian 1981: 62 and Kholod 2016: 510–511. *Contra* Caneva 2016: 27–28, who argues that the recognition of divine sonship and the bestowal of cultic honours by civic communities might have proceeded in parallel because they pertained to two different 'geopolitical levels': on the one case that of Alexander's self-presentation, on the other that of the relationships between local communities and the king.

¹¹⁹ Some early occurrences of ruler cult have been mentioned above, n. 107; on other cults of Philipp II see Mari 2008: 241–242 (Philippoi and Philippopolis) and Mari 2021: 108–111 (Thasos and Maroneia).

¹²⁰ Indeed, when Alexander left Western Asia Minor in autumn 334 the great victory at Issos had yet to come, the Persians still controlled the citadel of Halikarnassos, and the war in the Aegean was at its height (on the latter see Ruzicka 1988). The expeditionary corps dispatched by Philip II in Asia Minor in 336 had initially obtained significant military successes, but these had been promptly reversed by the Persians the following year (see Kholod 2018): in 334 could it really be ruled out that Alexander's victories would have proved equally ephemeral? In 336/5 the *polis* of Eresos on Lesbos had reacted to the Macedonian successes by dedicating altars to Zeus *Philippios* (cf. Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 83, ll. 4–5γ), that is of Zeus 'in his special quality of Philip's protector' (Badian 1981: 40–41) and the Ephesians had erected an honorific statue of the king in the *Artemision* (cf. *Arr. An.* 1.17.11). However, there is no clue that any cult was instituted for him and no cogent reason to assume that the *poleis* of Asia Minor would have behaved differently in 334 with regard to his son.

¹²¹ For the institution of Alexander's cults in Asia Minor as a gradual phenomenon cf. Badian 1981: 61. Such a graduality would possibly explain why these initiatives fail to be reported by the Alexander historians.

¹²² Badian's idea that, based on the debate about *proskynesis* reported by Arrian and Curtius (see above), this *terminus* might be lowered to 327 has been rightly rejected by Kholod 2016: 508–509.

explain the latter's inclusion in the honours bestowed upon her son. This stands out as a unique peculiarity of Alexander's cult in Iasos, and represents a novelty with regard to the civic ruler cult in general, being the only known occurrence of worship for Olympias and the first ever for any living royal woman.¹²³ While the political prominence enjoyed in Karia over the fourth century by female members of the Hekatomnid dynasty may have paved the way for such an innovation, it could of course not have caused it.¹²⁴

G. Maddoli has dated the institution of the Iasian cult of Alexander to the years between 334 and 331, regarding these honours as a way to express the citizens' gratitude for their liberation from Persia.¹²⁵ As for the cultic association of Olympias with her son, this would have been a way on the one hand to reaffirm Alexander's biological descent following his adoption by Ada, and on the other to recall his divine sonship. While the establishment of the cult in 331 – but not before this date – may be consistent with the chronological comments made above, the proposed interpretation of the inclusion of Olympias in these honours is not convincing. First, had the Iasians wanted to emphasise Alexander's divine

¹²³ Until the discovery of the Iasian altar, the first royal woman who was known to have been the recipient of a public cult in her lifetime was the daughter of Antipatros Eurydike, in Kassandreia (early 270s; cf. Polyæn. 6.7.2 with Habicht 1970²: 253–254; Mari 2008: 250–251; Mari 2021: 118–119). A private cult of Eurydike's sister Phila had already been established in Athens by Adeimantos of Lampsakos, a *philos* of her husband Demetrios Poliorketes, probably between 307 and 305 (Ath. 6.255c); in roughly the same period the Athenians bestowed cultic honours upon two courtesans of the king's (cf. Demochares, *FGrHist* 75 F 1 = *BNJ* 75 F 8 = Ath. 6.252f–253b); see Wallace 2013: 143–147. The queen Phila who was honoured with a sacred precinct on Samos may be the wife either of Demetrios or of Antigonos Gonatas (cf. *IG* XII 6.150, ll. 23–24 with Habicht 2017: 192–193).

¹²⁴ Some members of the Hekatomnid dynasty may have been the recipients of religious honours in Iasos, which could to some extent be regarded as a precedent for the joint cult of Alexander and Olympias. This may be inferred from the existence in the city of a *Maussolleion* (cf. *SEG* 57.1056–1058) and possibly from the dedicatory inscription of a monument displaying statues of Hekatomnos, Idrieus and their respective sibling wives Aba and Ada (*SEG* 63.876). Discussing the employment in the latter document of the expression *ἐπ'εὐτυχίας* ('for good fortune'; l. 2), Nafissi 2015: esp. 81–88 has put forward the idea that this might have referred to the Hekatomnids being 'destinatari di sacrifici o di rituali "per la buona sorte"'. However, the inscription makes no explicit mention of sacrifices and even if these were celebrated there is no way to conclusively assess whether they were directed to the Hekatomnids or to the gods for the Hekatomnids' good fortune. To be mentioned is also the decree *SEG* 63.877, passed under Minnion's *stephanephoria* and related to a priesthood of Zeus *Idrieus* and Hera. While W. Blümel's restitution of the lines where the priesthood is mentioned (cf. *I.Iasos* 52, ll. 7–8: [ἱερωσύνην (?) | Διὸς Ἰδριέως καὶ Ἡ[ρας] Ἀδᾶς (?)· εἶναι]) had in the past paved the way to the hypothesis of the existence in Iasos of a close association of the Hekatomnid pair with Zeus and Hera, Fabiani 2015c has convincingly demonstrated that this is not the case: Ada's name should not be restored, and the epiclesis *Idrieus* did not refer to the Hekatomnid dynast, but to the innermost part of Karia, named Idrias.

¹²⁵ Maddoli 2010: 129–131; Maddoli 2015: 138–140.

sonship, Zeus Ammon would have probably been mentioned in the dedication.¹²⁶ One could guess that the now illegible line which preceded the names of Alexander and Olympias mentioned a third cult recipient¹²⁷ and that this was precisely the king's divine father. However, this would be pure speculation, and it would in any case require an explanation of why the god's name was erased from or not (re-)engraved with the dedication. Furthermore, Alexander's adoption by Ada was a constituent of the king's legitimisation strategy at the regional level, which appears to have been generally appreciated by the civic communities of Karia and with which the Iasians had no reason to interfere.¹²⁸

In what is at present the only other major discussion of Alexander's Iasian cult, A.M. Biraschi mainly focuses on the reasons behind its (alleged) revitalisation in the early Imperial period, whose assessment goes far beyond the scope of the this paper.¹²⁹ However, in drawing attention to the descent of Olympias from both Priam and Achilles, the scholar emphasises that this Graeco-Trojan genealogy made of the queen mother the perfect embodiment of the ideal of a peaceful re-union between Greeks of Europe and Asia.¹³⁰ at the root of her inclusion in Alexander's honours there might have been the wish to convey to the king a message

¹²⁶ Collins 2012b regards Olympias as the ultimate source not only of Alexander's ideas regarding his divine sonship, but also of their circulating among the Greeks before her son's visit to Siwah (see above, n. 68). If this were correct, it would perhaps appear more plausible that the queen mother's inclusion in a cult of Alexander could have been a way to emphasise the latter's birth from Zeus Ammon. A completely different view has been advocated by Carney 2006: 102–103, according to whom 'Olympias doubtless supported Alexander's claims of divine sonship and divinity, but she was not their inventor'. Even though the queen mother may indeed have played some role in shaping Alexander's convictions in this regard (if nothing else, because she was already credited with one by Eratosth., *FGrHist* 241 F 28 = Plut. *Alex.* 3.3) there is no reason to believe that it was she who spread them: this is more likely to have been Alexander's own doing, given how decisively he promulgated the notion of his divine sonship from 331 onwards.

¹²⁷ Maddoli 2010: 129 has indeed put forward this suggestion – albeit without any reference to Zeus Ammon –, but it is not repeated in Maddoli 2015.

¹²⁸ As seen above, it is precisely through his alliance with Ada that Alexander won over many *poleis* of the region. There is no doubt that the pro-Hekatomnid faction that continued to rule Iasos after the Macedonian conquest looked with favour at the king's adoption by Ada and felt no need to counterbalance it by bestowing cultic honours upon his biological mother.

¹²⁹ Biraschi 2015, whose view on the renovation of the cult (see the following notes) is shared by Maddoli 2015: 141. Above, n. 102, it has been suggested that the re-engraving of the altar dedication might have been simply made necessary by its deterioration over time, so that we should not speak of a renovation of the cult, but rather of a structure connected with it.

¹³⁰ Biraschi 2015: esp. 145–147; 153; 159. To be sure, in Biraschi's paper the genealogy of Olympias represents the core of a much more complex reconstruction, which would be impossible to properly summarise here. Biraschi refers to Theopomp., *FGrHist* 115 F 335 = Schol. *ad* Lyk. 1439 Scheer as the earliest authority mentioning the queen mother's descent from both Priam and Achilles. On the genealogy of the Aeacids, see Carney 2006: 5.

of unity.¹³¹ If so, however, the Iasians would have expressed this message in a way which was both oblique and in some ways redundant, since the king obviously shared his mother's genealogy. Furthermore, on the occasion of his visit to Ilion in 334 Alexander had already to some extent presented himself as the champion of a new concord in the Greek world – because he had both paid homage to the tomb of Achilles and sacrificed to Priam asking forgiveness for the crimes of his ancestor Neoptolemos – apparently without making any explicit reference to Olympias.¹³²

The explanation of the joint cult of Alexander and Olympias is probably simpler. Its ultimate aim was to serve the interests of the *polis*, which by worshipping Alexander urged future services on his part. Given this framework, Olympias was included in her son's cult probably because the Iasians believed that their gesture would have thereby proven more effective for strengthening their relationship with the king. They believed, in other words, that Alexander would have welcomed their choice. Such an interpretation may indeed be backed by two passages in Curtius. The first one (Curt. 9.6.4–26) relates to the events of winter 326/5, when Alexander was campaigning against the Mallians in India.¹³³ After the king had been seriously wounded during the assault on the enemy capital, his closest companions (*principes amicorum et custodes corporis*) are said to have urged him to be more cautious about his life. Moved by such concerns, Alexander replied with a long speech, where he went through his achievements and vindicated his boldness in battle, even if this might cost him his life. The king would have concluded his speech as follows (Curt. 9.6.26):

Ceterum, quoniam olim rei agitatae in animo meo nunc promendae occasio oblata est, mihi maximus laborum atque operum meorum erit fructus, si Olympias mater immortalitati consecratur, quandoque excesserit vita. Hoc, si licuerit, ipse praestabo; hoc, si me praeceperit fatum, vos mandasse mementote.

Anyway, since I have now been given the opportunity to express an idea I have long been considering, the greatest reward for my efforts and my labours will be if my mother Olympias be granted immortality on her departure from life. I shall see to this personally, if I am allowed to do so, but, if destiny forestalls me, remember that I have entrusted it to you. [transl. by Yardley]

¹³¹ In a nutshell, the renovation of the cult would have been intended to convey a similar message to Augustus: 'nuovo Alessandro [...], egli può ancora realizzare quella fusione e pacificazione fra Europa ed Asia, fra Oriente ed Occidente, voluta dal Macedone e simboleggiata dalla genealogia materna' (Biraschi 2015: 159).

¹³² Homage to the tomb of Achilles: Plut. *Alex.* 15.8. Sacrifice to Priam: Arr. *An.* 1.11.8. For a detailed discussion of all the relevant sources on Alexander's visit to Ilion see Courtieu 2004, who refers to Strabo's (13.1.27) comment that the king was well disposed towards the city because of his love for Homer and his Aeacid descent. A cult of Alexander is possibly attested in Ilion by an inscription mentioning the *phyle Alexandris* (*I. Ilion* 122, l. 1); cf. Kholod 2016: 499, n. 13.

¹³³ The relevant sources have been given above. On this phase of the Indian campaign see Bosworth 1988: 135–137.

The issue is then resumed in the final assessment of the king by Curtius (10.5.30), when recalling his *pietas erga parentes, quorum Olympiada immortalitati consecrare decreverat, Philippum ultus erat* ('devotion to his parents, of whom he had taken the decision to deify Olympias and he had avenged Philip'; transl. by Yardley). In absence of parallels in other sources, Alexander's interest in his mother's *immortalitati consecratio* has been regarded as a fabrication based on Roman cults for female members of the imperial family.¹³⁴ What is described in the first passage, namely the project of an inclusion among the gods on the initiative of central power, does indeed resemble the state deification of *Divi* and *Divae*.¹³⁵ However, in 324 Alexander famously reacted to the death of his favourite Hephaestion by directly promoting the latter's heroization, and it seems perfectly conceivable that in roughly the same chronological context he might have come to cherish the idea that once deceased Olympias should have been worshipped as well.¹³⁶ The passages by Curtius could preserve a kernel of truth, even though their Roman tone advises against taking them too literally. After his victory at Chaironeia, Philip II had erected a *tholos*-shaped building within the sacred precinct of the sanctuary of Olympia and had displayed there the chryselephantine statues of himself, his parents, Olympias, and Alexander, thus suggesting their proximity to the gods.¹³⁷ Was Alexander considering following his example and somehow involving the queen

¹³⁴ Cf. Atkinson, Yardley 2009: 163, mentioning the hypothesis that Curtius may be echoing the apotheosis of the former empress Livia Drusilla, which occurred in 42 CE on the initiative of Claudius. Carney 2006: 101–102 is reluctant to accept the reliability of Curtius, but states that 'in the light of Philip's posthumous cults, Alexander's hope for the deification of Hephaestion, and his own lifetime cult, the notion [that he wished for his mother to be 'deified' after death] is unsurprising'. She also suggests that the 'deification' of Olympias would have strengthened Alexander's own claims to divinity.

¹³⁵ See Gradel 2004. On the use of the term *consecratio*, 'che indicava il trasferimento di una cosa dall'ambito del diritto umano a quello del diritto divino' to designate state deification of *Divi* and *Divae* cf. Letta 2020: 28–30. On the habit of Curtius to translate into Roman terms not only single words or expressions (e.g. the use of *praetor* for 'satrap'), but even whole scenes (e.g. Curt. 3.2.13–14 describes the Macedonian *phalanx* in a way that makes it closely resemble a Roman legion) see Pausch 2016 with previous bibliography.

¹³⁶ Literary tradition agrees on Alexander's desire for the deceased Hephaestion to receive a cult, which was apparently sanctioned by the oracle of Siwah. According to Diod. Sic. 17.105.6 the king even issued an order enforcing his favourite's cult on all his subjects. Diodoros is surely incorrect in describing this cult as divine (cf. also Iust. 12.12.12 and Luc. *Cal.* 17), since its heroic nature (cf. Arr. *An.* 7.14.7 and 7.23.6; Plut. *Alex.* 72.3) is confirmed by epigraphic evidence (cf. SEG 40.547). On Hephaestion's heroization see Prandi 2014: 63–64 and Anson 2021b: 23–24, who follows Bosworth 1988: 288 in regarding it as a catalyst for Alexander's superhuman pretensions to evolve into desire for actual worship.

¹³⁷ Cf. Paus. 1.20.9–10 and 5.17.4. Even though the material of the statues and the location and shape of the building may theoretically imply that it had a proper cultic function, the designation by Pausanias of the statues as *eikones* (and not *agalmata*) and the absence of an altar suggest otherwise. See Carney 2007: esp. 34–39 and Mari 2008: 233–236.

mother in his own projection into the divine? If, as the Greeks thought and as does not appear unlikely, around the mid-320s he came to wish to be honoured as a god, did he contemplate something similar for Olympias? It is admittedly impossible to know for certain, but the inclusion of Olympias in the king's Iasian cult – provided that its institution in Alexander's lifetime is accepted – hints in this direction.

While the notion that Alexander aspired to be worshipped as a god seems to have circulated widely among the Greeks in the late years of his reign, nothing like this can be stated with regard to his supposed interest in the *consecratio* of Olympias, possibly because it never amounted to much more than a vague idea. Even so, if we are to trust Curtius, this was shared at least with the king's inner circle and could have enjoyed some publicity at court, where there were no less than two Iasians. One of them, the poet Choirilos, is a quite shadowy figure, mostly recalled by ancient authors as an example of bad writing.¹³⁸ He authored an epic on Alexander's deeds, in which the king might have been juxtaposed to his heroic ancestor Achilles.¹³⁹ It seems, therefore, that Choirilos was sensitive to Alexander's superhuman pretensions, and he might therefore have contributed to promote them in his hometown. However, given that nothing is known of his actual relations with Iasos during the Alexander's reign, there is no way to assess whether he was in the position to exercise any influence on its politics.¹⁴⁰ The second Iasian courtier of Alexander we have knowledge of is Gorgos of course, who was a close acquaintance of the king, publicly supported his projection into the divine at court and possibly promulgated it while interacting with Epidauros. This being the case, it might well have been through the agency of Gorgos – or at least mainly through the agency of Gorgos – that the joint cult of Alexander and Olympias was devised

¹³⁸ A most recent work on Choirilos is Pelucchi 2022, which I was only able to consult a few days before the deadline for the submission of this paper. For a briefer discussion see Franco 2004: 389–390.

¹³⁹ See Pelucchi 2022: 147–157 on the epic production by Choirilos. Apart from the poem on Alexander, this included apparently the *Lamiaka*, a piece about the Lamian War which the *Suda* (s.v. Χοιρίλος, Σάμιος) erroneously lists among the works of a homonymous fifth-century author from Samos (cf. also Walsh 2011). Alexander's reception of the poem that Choirilos devoted to him was positive according to Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.232, but extremely negative according to the latter's commentators; Pelucchi (104–111) argues in favour of the accuracy of Horatius, which would indeed be consistent with the continuation of the poetic career of Choirilos at the service of Antipatros possibly attested by him authoring the *Lamiaka*.

¹⁴⁰ Maddoli 2010: 128 cautiously suggested that Choirilos might have authored the dedicatory epigram of the Iasian monument for the Hekatomnids discussed above, n. 124. If so, this would mean that his work was appreciated in Iasos and that he might have therefore exerted at least some form of cultural influence on his fellow-citizens. However, the hypothesis is impossible to demonstrate; cf. Nafissi 2015: 88; Pelucchi 2022: 162–164.

and instituted in Iasos.¹⁴¹ After all, he was in a position to know the developments of Alexander's self-presentation as well as to convey them to the *polis* and urge his fellow-citizens to act accordingly. Indeed, in the late 320s Gorgos liaised closely with his hometown and was able to influence its policies, as attested by the Samian decree honouring him and Minnion when it refers to the instructions he delivered via letter to the Iasian *archontes* regarding the fiscal exemptions and financial and logistical support to be granted to the exiles on their return home.¹⁴² Minnion's presence and political influence in Iasos – surely strengthened by his brother's proximity to Alexander – might have done the rest in ensuring that the advice by Gorgos with regard to both the Samian issue and the cult of Alexander and Olympias were implemented.¹⁴³ The two were a direct line of communication between the royal court and their city and could therefore boost the latter's receptivity towards Alexander's self-presentation, knowing that this would have eventually benefited the Iasians.

Even though it cannot be conclusively proven, the proposed reconstruction seems fully plausible. If accepted, it would point to approximately the last two or at most three years of Alexander's reign as the most likely time period for the institution of his Iasian cult, possibly exempting us from the need to postulate an unattested royal service to the city which would have been conducive to such an initiative.¹⁴⁴ More generally, it would provide an insight into the dynamics underlying the bestowal of cultic honours upon the king by the Greek *poleis*, which have long been and still are a matter of scholarly debate. This mainly focuses on the question of whether we should regard the phenomenon as the result of an official request to be honoured as a god that Alexander would have addressed to

¹⁴¹ Interestingly, even without referring to the Iasian altar of Alexander and Olympias Prandi 2016 *ad BNJ* 124 F 5 linked the designation of the king as the son of Ammon by Gorgos to the 'general tendency of various Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor to acknowledge Alexander's divine status and to grant him god-like honors'.

¹⁴² Cf. Rhodes–Osborne, *GHI* 90B, ll. 16–23: ἐπέσται|λε εἰς Ἴασον πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας, ὅπως οἱ κατοικοῦντες Σαμίων | ἐν Ἰάσῳ, ὅταν εἰς τὴν πατρίδα κατ'ῶσιν, ἀτελῇ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἐξάξον|ται καὶ πορεία αὐτοῖς δοθήσεται, τὸ ἀνάλωμα τῆς πόλεως τῆς Ἰασέων | παρεχούσης ('[Gorgos] wrote to the *archontes* in Iasos that the Samians living in Iasos, when they returned to their fatherland, should export their belongings with immunity from duty and that transport should be provided for them, the city of Iasos bearing the cost'; transl. by Rhodes and Osborne).

¹⁴³ On the complementarity between the role of Gorgos as a courtier of Alexander and the political activity of Minnion in Iasos cf., e.g., Delrieux 2001: 172–173 and Franco 2004: 388.

¹⁴⁴ This admittedly contrasts to some extent with Habicht 1970²: 160–165, according to whom the institution of a cult of a living ruler 'trägt somit stets den Charakter einer Danksagung, und zwar stellt [...] den Dank der Gemeinde für ganz handgreifliche Wohltaten dar, die sie empfangen hat'. However, given the Greeks' widespread conviction that Alexander wished to be honoured as a god and the way he directly promoted Hephaistion's heroization, Habicht himself regarded the cults of the king which were instituted in 324/3 – and which in his view, as seen above, did not include those of Asia Minor – as a special case (cf. p. 250).

the Greeks around 324.¹⁴⁵ Such a demand is however more or less directly referred to only in two late and anecdotal passages of Plutarch (*Mor.* 219e) and Aelian (*VH* 2.19) about the Spartans' alleged response to it, while not being mentioned in the (albeit only partially preserved) Athenian contemporary sources. The Iasian case would indeed concur with Athenian evidence in suggesting a different pattern, enhancing the interaction between court society and civic society or, in the words of S. Wallace, 'the diplomacy of the courtiers and the agency of the subjects'.¹⁴⁶

Gorgos after Alexander, and a Final Assessment

The discussion of Alexander's Iasian cult has brought us to the very last period of his reign. With the current state of our sources, it is hardly possible to follow the fortunes of Gorgos after the king's death. For a time, he surely remained politically active, since the Samian decree for him and his brother states that καὶ νῦν ἐπαγγέλλον|ται Γόργος καὶ Μινίων ποιήσιν ὃ τι | ἂν δύνωνται ἀγαθὸν τὸν δῆμον τὸ|ν Σαμίων ('and now Gorgos and Minnion offer to do whatever good they can to the people of Samos'; Rhodes – Osborne, *GHI* 90B, ll. 23–26). That Gorgos had returned to Iasos by this time seems plausible but cannot be demonstrated.¹⁴⁷ The second Epidaurian inscription mentioning him (*I.Iasos* T 52) dates to the late third or early second century, but its condition prevents any certainty even about on whose initiative the offering it referred to was dedicated, let alone about the reasons behind it.¹⁴⁸ The only piece of information that is reliable to some extent which we may draw from this offering and its dedicatory inscription, whether it

¹⁴⁵ The question was left open by Habicht 1970²: 250, who abandoned his previous, more sceptical view. Opinions on this issue differ significantly and cannot be summarised here. Prandi 2014: 64–68 provides a well-balanced discussion of the relevant sources, showing that they hardly support the idea of a direct and explicit request of worship on Alexander's part. This is instead assumed, e.g., by Edmunds 1971: 381 and Fredricksmeyer 2003: 276. *Contra*, e.g., Badian 1981: 55 and Cawkwell 1994, who advocates the view that 'Alexander communicated no such desire, neither directly nor by anyone acting on his behalf'.

¹⁴⁶ Wallace 2020: 143. Cf. also Anson 2021b: 23–24: 'Alexander likely did request that cult be initiated for him through surrogates'. Dreyer 2009: 231–234 discusses the possibility that the official recognition of Alexander's divinity was a way to provide the Exiles Decree with legal basis (*contra*, e.g., Habicht 1970²: 228–229), and gives previous references on this issue.

¹⁴⁷ The return of Gorgos to Iasos is regarded as likely by Franco 2004: 388.

¹⁴⁸ On this text see the comments made above. Peek 1962: 1006–1008 believed that the offering was dedicated by the son of Gorgos mentioned in the other Epidaurian inscription (cf. Herman, *CEG* 817, l. 2); in Peek's reconstruction, the latter would indeed be referred to by name (Gorgeios) in *I.Iasos* T 52, l. 3. However, it should be reiterated that the fragmentary conditions of both inscriptions discourage any attempt to get from them any information which cannot be inferred from the surviving text. Heisserer 1980: 198 puts forward a reconstruction of the reasons behind the erection of the statue the dedication referred to – it would have replaced the

originated from the family of Gorgos or from Epidauros, is that the relationship between them lasted for generations and was consistently informed by the memory of Gorgos.

The time has then come to draw some conclusions. Gorgos joined Alexander's court after having established a positive relationship with the king in the wake of the Macedonian conquest of Asia Minor, when he and his brother Minnion managed to obtain an important territorial concession for their hometown. At court, the Iasian was assigned a place among the *hoplophylakes*, an office which allowed him to mobilise great resources and must have been vital in the context of the campaign. His bond with the king seems to have been strong and found expression in his public support of Alexander's choices and self-presentation strategies, most notably with regard to the divisive issue of divine sonship. It also enabled the Iasian to lobby the king on behalf of civic communities which were (or precisely thanks to such support became) part of his network of relationships, consequently being greatly honoured by them. At the same time, Gorgos may have managed to shape their perception and reception of Alexander according to the king's self-presentation, in particular by encouraging them to accept his image as being more than a human in their public discourses. This was surely a way not only to gain the king's favour for these communities, but also to strengthen the latter's relationship with Gorgos himself.

Albeit on a smaller scale, the conduct of Gorgos closely resembles that of the *philoi* of the Hellenistic kings. These powerful figures, the true ruling class of the kingdoms, not only held important positions as state officials or generals in the kings' armies, but also represented a direct link between the royal court and their cities of origin, as well as other local communities.¹⁴⁹ They embodied royal authority before the *poleis* and were in a position to steer local politics in a direction favourable to the kings; at the same time, their proximity to the kings enabled the *philoi* to obtain advantages for the cities they were linked to, as we learn mainly from the civic decrees that were consequently issued in their honour.¹⁵⁰ Obviously, this in-between role also acted in favour of the *philoi* themselves: at the local level, their being part of the court increased the prestige and political power of their families or adherents; at the central level, their ties with civic communities made

earlier offering to which the other Epidaurian dedication (Herman, *CEG* 817) was related after its overturning 'either by accident or through political turmoil' – but this is entirely speculative.

¹⁴⁹ See Strootman 2014: 118–121 and 145–147. Paschidis 2019 (see also Paschidis 2008: 469–505) provides an overview on the relationship between courts and cities in the Hellenistic period and the role played by *philoi* in shaping it.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Paschidis 2019: 152, who emphasises that literary sources 'rendono scarsa giustizia al ruolo dei *philoi* nella formazione e nello sviluppo del mondo ellenistico'.

them valuable for the kings and helped to ensure them a share of power. The similarities with Gorgos stand out clearly.

The most prominent among the Greeks at Alexander's court were certainly those who were included in the circle of the king's closest *hetairoi*.¹⁵¹ Their number was apparently limited, and most of them seem to have been close acquaintances of Alexander since his youth.¹⁵² It seems doubtful that Gorgos ever became part of this group, since the king's closest *hetairoi* are usually mentioned in the works of the Alexander historians. Even so, he should probably not be likened to the bulk of the less prominent Greek courtiers.¹⁵³ How many of them held at the same time a position at court that enabled them to influence the king's policies and an authority in any city so significant that they could direct how it interacted with Alexander? The network of relations of Gorgos and the way he exploited them was surely not unique, but possibly not so ordinary either.¹⁵⁴ His case is notable above all in that the activity of an individual who is completely absent in the major narratives of Alexander's life is so well illustrated by epigraphic evidence and a fragment from a largely lost historical work. Other comparable figures have probably not been so lucky.

¹⁵¹ The most relevant, recent discussions of Alexander's court are Spawforth 2007 and Weber 2009; see also F. Pownall's introductory essay in Pownall, Asirvatham, Müller 2022: 1–14. Even though it predates the developments of court studies occurred in the last century, Berve 1926: I.25–84 remains a fundamental reference, especially in the light of the amount of data it provides. In Philip and Alexander's reign, the term *hetairoi* designates two different groups of individuals (cf. King 2011: 382–384): on the one hand the (relatively numerous) elite Macedonian cavalry, on the other – and this is the sense in which the term is used here – the king's closest acquaintances.

¹⁵² Cf. Berve 1926: I.31 for a list of the individuals who are referred to as *hetairoi* (in the narrow sense; see previous note) in our sources. Only ten out of sixty-one individuals are of Greek origin (cf. also Tritle 2009: 135, who adds Kyrsilos), and of these five (Demaratos, Erigyios, Eumenes, Laomedon, Nearchos) had surely been part of Alexander's social environment since before the beginning of the campaign, which seems likely also for other two (Ariston, Medeios). Cf. their biographies in Heckel 2021 (respectively nos. 199, 350, 425, 443, 645, 690, 765). As Berve emphasises, his list cannot be considered exhaustive, because there were surely *hetairoi* who are not designated as such in our sources; however, it may illustrate well the typical profile of the Greeks who belonged to Alexander's closest circle.

¹⁵³ On the various categories of Greeks at Alexander's court and in his army see Tritle 2009: esp. 129–136 for 'soldiers and bureaucrats'.

¹⁵⁴ A figure similar to Gorgos is Thersippos of Nesos, a small island near Lesbos. He served under Alexander and in 332, after the victory at Issos, was charged by the king with delivering to Darius III the letter that rejected the Great King's offer of peace (cf. Arr. *An.* 2.14.4; Curt. 4.1.14). After Alexander's death he maintained close relations with the Macedonian court and various Diadochi, exploiting them to obtain advantages for his fellow-citizens, as we learn from a decree that they passed in his honour (cf. *I. Adramytteion* 34). See Paschidis 2008: 408–413 (esp. 409, n. 1 for a discussion of the use of the term *philos* in the decree honouring Thersippos) and Heckel 2021: 486–487, no. 1119.

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