

ALEXANDER AT PEUCELAOTIS*

In an excellent survey of Alexander's campaign in western Pakistan, P. H. L. Eggermont has done a great deal to clarify local topography and toponymy and Alexander's movements, and has improved on Sir Aurel Stein's classic investigations and on the work of Sir Olaf Caroe on which he chiefly bases himself.¹ However, he is less familiar with the critical use of Greek and Roman sources, and of Arrian in particular [henceforth cited as A.],² than he so admirably is with the Indian sources. This has led to one or two errors in interpretation and especially in chronology, some of which are due to his following what specialists working on Alexander would regard as outdated scholarship. Since his work has opened up sources, and a point of view, hitherto unfamiliar to standard Alexander scholarship, and will remain of basic importance to our interpretation of Alexander, the chronology of this brief campaign, which has not received much attention from Alexander specialists, and the events surrounding the city of Peucelaotis³ are worth a more detailed investigation in the light of his discussion.

I

Peucelaotis stands at the centre of the whole story, and although the first part of this investigation will be devoted to the chronology of the campaign, we must start by giving an outline of the facts concerning it as reported by A.

* The map (based on that of Eggermont in *OLP* 1) was drawn by Mr. A. Newman of the Department of Geography, University College London.

¹ P. H. L. Eggermont, 'Alexander's Campaign in Gandhara and Ptolemy's List of Indo-Scythian Towns', *Orientalia Lovanensia Periodica* 1 (1970), 63–123, followed by an excellent map. [Cited 'Eggermont 1'.] All geographical identifications in the present article follow his work, and the map accompanying this article is based on his map. The only exception is in the case of the 'Aornus' rock, where he has himself since changed his view: see *OLP* 15 (1984), 191–233 [cited 'Eggermont 2'], where his map will again be found (following p. 230), but where he rejects Stein's identification of Aornus with Pir-sar, which Stein was specially proud of as one of his principal topographical achievements, and instead accepts the identification with Mt Ilam revived by Sir Olaf Caroe. (It is not yet in Caroe's book, *The Pathans 550 BC – AD 1957* [1965].) On geographical and historical grounds, Pir-Sar seems too far out of the way (as Eggermont now points out) to be the *πέτρα ἣ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ* (A. 4.28.1) of the tribesmen around Bazira, whereas Mt Ilam ('dividing Swāt from Bunēr': Caroe, *op. cit.* p. 499) seems suitable in location.

² To illustrate his lack of familiarity with modern scholarship on Arrian, and on the Alexander sources in general, see (e.g.) Eggermont 2, 194: 'Arrianus is regarded by classic scholars as a primary source [*sic*] because he based his story on Ptolemy's Royal Diaries.' I doubt if anyone apart from N. G. L. Hammond would nowadays maintain this. And compare his dating of Cleitarchus after 258 B.C., and probably in the second century, on the strength of a complex and confused argument involving Pliny's *Natural History* and the Aśoka Edicts (*Alexander's Campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan* [1975], p. 67 n. 262; repeated Eggermont 2, 193, as a basis for further argument about the Alexander sources). I hope that this traditional gap between experts on India and Alexander scholars can now be overcome.

³ For the various spellings of the name, see Roos *ad* Arrian vol. 1, p. 216, with Wirth's additional note p. 444; and cf. *RE* s.v. *Πευκελαώτις*. No consistent differences (e.g. between town and region, or between different periods) can be disengaged. Arrian is the main source for events here discussed. Curtius and Diodorus add one or two items, which will be noted in their place.

After crossing the pass from Afghanistan, Alexander divided his forces. The greater part of the army, under Hephaestion and Perdiccas, was sent ahead, roughly along the Kabul route, to reach the Indus and prepare for the crossing of the whole army when Alexander rejoined them. Taxiles 'and the other hyparchs' (A.'s term for local rulers, in this context⁴) went along with them. No details of what happened to them during their march are given at this point: they merely arrive at the Indus and carry out their orders.⁵ We next hear that one Astis, 'hyparch' of Peucelaotis (here taken as a region), rebelled and thus ended up by destroying both himself and the town to which he had fled.⁶ (The identity of the town is not mentioned by A.; that question will occupy us in the second part of this study.) Hephaestion besieged the town for thirty days and then captured it. In fact, despite what A. had said about its being 'destroyed' along with the rebel, it does not seem to have suffered any serious harm after its capture. It is said to have received an Indian governor loyal to Alexander, a man named Sangaeus, and this implies that it was at least left standing and worth governing.

The first point to observe is that the revolt of Astis comes after (we are not told how long after) the army corps had reached the Indus.⁷ Not only is the story told after their arrival there has been mentioned, and after the remark that they were carrying out their orders at the Indus, but it is Hephaestion alone who conducts the operation against Astis; Perdiccas is not mentioned. He no doubt remained behind to guard the crossing at Und and complete preparations for it, while the commander-in-chief took on the more exacting and more responsible task of dealing with the rebellion by a native prince.⁸ Recognition of this basic fact regarding the chronology of the revolt, which is made quite clear in A.'s account, is important. Eggermont, failing to see it, was led to develop a hypothesis that Astis' rebellion must have been against Taxiles (i.e. the younger king of that title, who is named for us as Omphis); from this (and from an attempt at finding an etymology for Omphis' name, which in itself would not be worth much as an argument) he arrived at the conclusion that Omphis controlled Gandhara, west of the Indus, at the time of Alexander's arrival.⁹ In fact, in A. the revolt is clearly against Alexander: to be precise, against the generals to whom Astis must have submitted as, on their way to the Indus, they were carrying out their orders to take over all the cities on their route. There is nothing anywhere in A.'s text that gives us any grounds for believing that Omphis ruled any territory west of the Indus.

Having briefly dealt with this important rebellion. A. next turns his attention to what was of far greater interest to him and to his sources: the actions of Alexander

⁴ Eggermont (2, 205 n. 53, with a reference to a Dutch dissertation of 1930) seems unaware of A.'s carelessness and inconsistency regarding technical terms and is puzzled by the term: 'It is unknown what power the hyparchos has.'

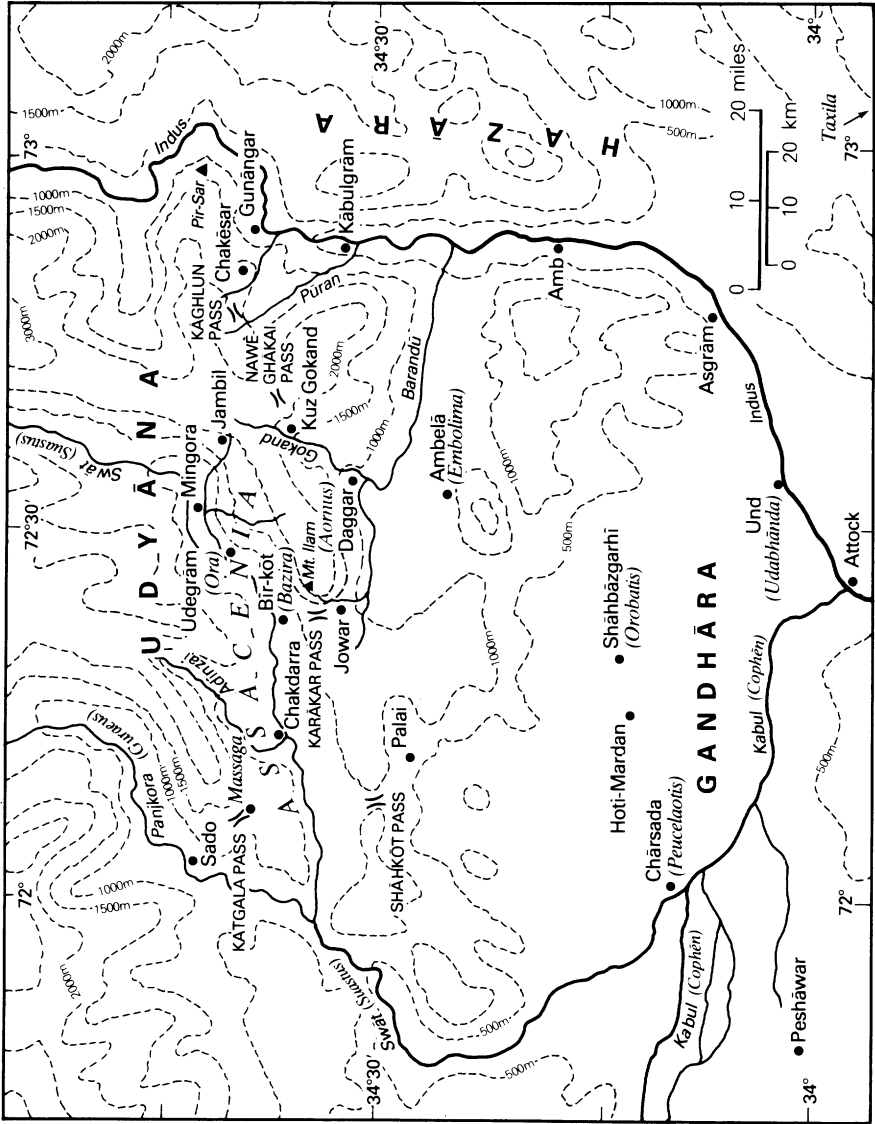
⁵ A. 4.22.8: καὶ οὗτοι ὡς ἀφίκοντο πρὸς τὸν Ἰνδὸν ποταμόν, ἐπρασσον ὅσα ἐξ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἦν τεταγμένα.

⁶ Ibid.: αὐτὸς τε ἀπόλλυται καὶ τὴν πόλιν προσαπώλεσεν ἐς ἣντινα ξυμπεφεύγει.

⁷ Thus already A. E. Anspach, *De Alexandri Magni Expeditione Indica* (1903), p. 13, not known to Eggermont. More recent scholars, where they mention Astis, also tend to be unaware of Anspach and get the time of the revolt wrong; thus N. G. L. Hammond, *Alexander the Great* (1980), p. 200 (also ignorant of Eggermont's work). The basic facts therefore need restating.

⁸ Contrast the operation at Orobatis (4.28.5), where A. mentions both the commanders and where, after completing its task, the army departs for its appointed duties on the Indus bank (cf. below).

⁹ Although Eggermont 2 gives a slightly different account of Omphis' accession and early relations with Alexander, the author maintains his contention (originally argued 1, 102ff.) that Omphis ruled on the west bank of the Indus as well as east of it (2, 204f.).



himself and the part of the army with him. During all this time, Alexander was conducting a campaign in the northern mountains, capturing various towns. As so often, we are not given any precise indication of how long this took, and not enough detailed information to be able to work it out for ourselves with any real assurance. Eggermont followed Sir Aurel Stein's view, which has won wide acceptance, that it took 'half a year...at least'.¹⁰ I think it can be shown with some probability that this view considerably exaggerates the time the operation will have taken.

We must start with what was in fact the second part of the campaign, the invasion of Assacenia. Our evidence is much better here, and modern scholars seem to have reached valid topographical conclusions on the basis of it. Chronology can probably follow.

The first city captured was Massaga (in the Katgala pass, as Caroe has shown¹¹), 'the largest of the cities there'; it fell in four days, and the garrison was massacred after a promise of safety, for reasons which A.'s sources do not seem to have succeeded in making fully acceptable (4.26.1–27.4). Next, two detachments were sent against two smaller cities, Bazira and Ora, at the same time, no doubt in the hope that what had happened at Massaga would terrify them into surrender. It turned out to be a mistake (27.5–8), obviously wasting some time. Alexander himself had to intervene, and he captured Ora ἐξ ἐφόδου, whereupon Bazira was at once abandoned to him. We are not told how many days all this took. But the distance from the Katgala pass to Ora (Udegram) which is the distance Alexander actually marched (without meeting any opposition on the march), appears on the map to be about 60 km: surely no more than five days' march, even in winter, especially since it was important that the initial defeat should be quickly avenged. If we assume that the unsuccessful first march and the attempt to mount a siege had taken about as long, we should allow (perhaps) two weeks for the whole of this little campaign, from the crossing of the Guraeus, just before the ascent to Massaga, to the surrender of Bazira as soon as Ora was taken.

After this success, Alexander decided to attack 'Aornus'; but before he could attempt this major operation, a proper settlement of the conquered area was necessary. The first part of this was the decision to make Bazira into a fortified city and Massaga and Ora into forts (φρούρια: 28.4), if A. has got it right.¹² Obviously, this was done by means of instructions which were implemented after he had moved on. It is difficult to see how even a generous estimate of the time taken by this part of the campaign can go beyond adding another week for these decisions and preparations, i.e. a total of three weeks for the whole of the Assacenic campaign to this point.

If we can (fortunately) work out a reasonably secure upper limit for this part of the Assacenic campaign, there are not enough data to enable us to arrive at a reasonable figure for the whole of the first part of the campaign in the north. There are fewer indications of time, and the topographical data are also less precise, so that the actual

¹⁰ Eggermont 1, 74. Cf. (e.g.) P. A. Brunt in vol. 1 of his Loeb edition of Arrian, pp. 507f.; also 2, 455. The anecdote related by Chares (*FGrHist* 125 F 16), which Brunt cites (p. 439 n. 1) as perhaps confirming April 326, is irrelevant. If it refers to this operation at all, it merely shows that it took place in winter, which we already know from Aristobulus. There is no trace of any more specific information.

¹¹ Caroe, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 51–3, also showing the importance of the site, which controls the entrance to the whole plain; cf. πόλις μεγάλη, ἵνα περ καὶ τὸ κράτος τῆς γῆς ἐστὶ τῆς Ἀσσηκίης (A. *Ind.* 1.8).

¹² It is possible that he has, since Bazira was more centrally placed for this particular campaign. On the other hand, Massaga was strategically much the more important place, both when Alexander arrived (as A. makes clear) and for the future protection of his conquests (see last note). It is therefore possible that A. has got it wrong, misinterpreting his source as he demonstrably does in some other cases.

routes of the army's marches have not been established with any confidence. Although the actual distances seem to have been even shorter, the terrain was rough and there was some fierce fighting, far more of it than we hear of in Assacenia. On the other hand, what time intervals are mentioned are very short – perhaps chiefly because the sources picked out precisely the parts where they could stress Alexander's speed. After crossing a river, Alexander engaged in his first action, moving ahead *σπουδῇ* (23.2), with mounted forces, in order to surprise the barbarians who had scattered to various mountain strongholds. The force holding the first of them he attacked *ὥς εἶχεν ἐξ ἐφόδου*, and it fell on the next day. No prisoners were taken. He proceeded to take over the next stronghold by surrender, presumably at once. (There is no indication of distance.) Craterus was installed there, with orders to mop up the rest and take over the whole area: we may gather that it was a small one, with not many barbarians left to be rounded up. Alexander himself, after crossing another river (so it seems: the text is defective), took a town 'on the second day', killing most of its inhabitants.

There followed a more protracted march, for which no indication of time is given. We can form some idea of time from the fact that at the end of it he was joined by Craterus, who had in the meantime completed his commission in the first area invaded. Presumably, however small that area, we must allow a week for this. He was now told to fortify and settle a place recently captured by Alexander. Next (we do not know when, but it looks like a matter of several days) Alexander caught up with a larger barbarian force and defeated it.

It is clear that this kind of information does not allow us to form a reasoned estimate of time. Yet in view of the indications we have, and of the apparently much smaller size of this whole area, we ought hardly to allow a significantly greater amount of time than for the Assacenic campaign where we have better evidence. We must make allowance for a period of rest, which would obviously be needed at some stage, in the course of a strenuous campaign in difficult terrain.¹³ But I cannot see that more than two months can be allowed for the whole of the northern campaign up to this point, i.e. to the completion of the conquest of Assacenia to where we have followed it.

The next part of the campaign clearly took some time. First, there were administrative arrangements to be made (which we shall note below). Then came the siege of Aornus; and although it did not take as long as Alexander had expected, the account

¹³ My suggested calculations allow for the ten days specified by Curt. 8.10.17 as devoted to Bacchic revels at Nysa: whatever the facts about the latter, Curtius often gives precise day counts (e.g. for the stay in Babylon, or, in our own context, for the march from Embolima to the Indus crossing: see below), which we ought not to reject. A. adds the story of Nysa from Vulgate sources in Book 5 (1.1; cf. 2.5f.), for compositional reasons, after completing his account of the conquest of the country up to the Indus from his main sources in Book 4. As regards Nysa and Dionysus, he expresses pious unwillingness to disbelieve, no doubt modelled on Herodotus' attitude to things divine and stories about them, but (2.6) he tones down Curtius' revels.

I am not convinced by Brunt's suggestion that the story must come from Aristobulus (op. cit. [n. 10], 2, 435ff.), including even Acuphis' lecture on the basis and the excellence of aristocratic government (cf. also 2, 531). The very fact that A. adds the story at the beginning of a new book serves to show that his ascription of it to a *logos* (i.e. not one of his two main sources) must be taken strictly. That Nysa as a town was mentioned by one of his two main sources, we cannot tell which (Berve, *Alexanderreich* 2, 17 suggests Ptolemy, while Brunt prefers Aristobulus – neither gives any reason that might help us decide), is shown by the reference to its cavalry force at 6.2.3. But we do not know that that source had mentioned more than the capture of the place and the demand for that force. In any case, A., already planning his long appendix on the *logos* for the beginning of his next book (for his composition was never hand-to-mouth), decided to omit any reference to Nysa in his main account of the campaign in Book 4, in order to give it self-contained prominence there. Whatever his main source(s) said about the town thus dropped by the wayside.

we have in A. allots ten or eleven days to the siege itself, not including the marches.¹⁴ This was followed by renewed fighting in Assacenia and the need to build a road for the army's march (4.30.7). Curtius, who gives more details of the fighting (though little that is precise and looks reliable), provides an actual figure for the march during which this road-building was necessary, that from Embolima to the Indus crossing (8.12.4): it took sixteen days. Diodorus (17.86.3) adds a stay of thirty days before the crossing of the Indus. That is improbable, and perhaps due to confusion with the lengthy stay at Taxila that followed the crossing. Such confusion would be easy if his account was based on one that did not distinguish the two; and indeed, it seems that Aristobulus failed to do so.

His time-table is summarised for us by Strabo 15.1.17. He put the departure from Paropamisadae for India after the (cosmical) setting of the Pleiades, i.e. in the first half of November.¹⁵ He reports that the army spent the winter in the mountains on campaign and arrived 'in the plains and the city of Taxila' (as quoted by Strabo, who himself seems well aware of the location of Taxila) 'at the beginning of spring'. Diodorus' amalgamation of the arrival at the Indus crossing and that at Taxila, a few days later, is likely to go back to Aristobulus. However, *some* time must be allowed for a rest and some festivities when the Indus crossing was reached, for this is reported by A. (5.3.6): presumably a few days, as on similar occasions. A difficult campaign had been completed, yet there was no real cause for major celebration. Perhaps Alexander used the time to begin reconnaissance beyond the Indus (for the bridge had long been finished when he arrived: A. 4.30.9) and discover Taxiles' intentions. However, an important corollary follows from the siting of the celebration before the crossing: the river itself cannot have been giving cause for hurry by showing obvious signs of the spring rising. This is welcome confirmation of Aristobulus' time-table, which puts these events 'at the beginning of spring'. In the Punjab, this can hardly be later than early March, and is probably earlier. If this was the time when the Indus was crossed and Taxila reached, then Aornus must have been captured in early February and the settlement of Assacenia should be assigned to mid-January. Our evaluation of the inadequate data for the campaign seems to be confirmed by Aristobulus' statement.¹⁶

II

The fortification of the three towns in Assacenia leads A. back, by association of topic, to the army that had been sent to the Indus under Hephaestion and Perdikkas. We now learn (4.28.5) an important item that he had not told us in his earlier, entirely general, account of their mission, when (as we saw) he and probably his sources must have been eager to get on to Alexander's own actions: we now hear that, on their way, they had fortified and garrisoned the town of Orobatis, which (as Eggermont has shown) lay well away from the Kabul route to the Indus: in fact, well north of the Kabul, at a point about half-way between Peucelaotis and the Indus crossing at Und. We cannot tell whether they had to besiege the town and capture it, and if so, how long that operation took. But their decision to fortify it as a bastion for Alexander, which is nowhere mentioned in his earlier instructions to Hephaestion, and which is

¹⁴ On the identification of Aornus see n. 1. It is clear that, if Mt Ilam is correct, the marches would be much shorter than they would be in the case of Pir-sar.

¹⁵ See E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*² (1980), p. 112.

¹⁶ Aristobulus is cited as reporting that he saw only snow in the mountains and saw rain for the first time at Taxila. On the extended time-table usually proposed for the whole campaign, this does not seem conceivable.

what causes A. to relate the story at this point, straight after the fortification of the three Assacanian towns by Alexander's own order, must surely, together with the very fact that the army corps went so far out of its way to take the city over, suggest opposition and fighting, perhaps quite serious. But this kind of thing, when not done by Alexander himself, was not of sufficient importance for Alexander historians to make clear for us. In this instance, the fact that both A.'s main sources were with Alexander provides a more acceptable reason why Orobatis is mentioned only at this point and without details of what had happened there: that it had been made into a fortress for the King was, of course, precisely what Alexander and his army (including the two later historians) found out when, straight after the order to fortify the Assacanian towns, they arrived at Orobatis. In any case, the item is here added as a flashback: we are not told any more than that the whole army corps apparently stayed until the place had been fortified and then continued its march to the Indus, to carry out its instructions there.¹⁷

Having thus repaired his earlier omission, A. continues to pursue the same topic of Alexander's network of strongpoints in the area with a reference to the most important of all the towns there, Peucelaotis. (The appointment of a satrap for the whole area intervenes.) Before undertaking the siege of Aornus, expected to be long and difficult, Alexander (28.6) *τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰνδὸν ποταμὸν ἦγε καὶ πόλιν τε Πευκελαώτιν, οὐ πόρρω τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ ὤκισμένην, ὁμολογία παρεστήσατο* and put a Macedonian commander and garrison in it, before moving on to take some (unnamed) smaller places by the Indus. A. at this point makes no mention of the revolt of Astis.

This is certainly puzzling.¹⁸ At 22.7 Hephaestion and Perdiccas had been sent 'into the region of Peucelaotis towards the river Indus', with instructions to bring all the places on their route under their control. As we have seen, we hear no details of what they did, not even their long detour to capture and fortify Orobatis. But since we are told that they reached the Indus and there carried out their instructions, it seems to be implied that they had done so along the way as well. The later flashback about Orobatis fits in with this, showing us the care taken over establishing control, presumably even in the face of difficulties. At some time after they reached the Indus, Astis rebelled. It is clearly implied that he had earlier submitted. The city into which he threw himself was (as we have seen) taken after a siege of thirty days by Hephaestion, and a governor called Sangaeus was installed. Since Astis was described as prince of Peucelaotis, the city would naturally be taken to be Peucelaotis, the city homonymous with the district already mentioned by A. Yet A. not only shows no

¹⁷ Eggermont's identification of Orobatis (1, 71–4) is erudite and entirely convincing. However, he is confused about the chronology, suggesting that Alexander there 'first joined the army of Hephaestion and Perdiccas'. This is impossible, for according to A. that army, after fortifying Orobatis, had long ago departed to carry out its instructions on the bank of the Indus. Alexander did not rejoin it until he reached the Indus crossing. Brunt appears to miss the fact that the account of Orobatis is a flashback: his translation, at any rate, suggests that the action takes place at the point where it is narrated. A.'s wording, where he describes the task of the army corps at the Indus, which it was 'now engaged' (*ἐπρασσον ἤδη*) in completing when Alexander reached Orobatis, carefully echoes the instructions he had reported them as receiving (22.8).

¹⁸ Eggermont (1, 69) at least notes the puzzle, even though his explanation – that the 'so-called "surrender" of that town to Alexander cannot have meant any more than an official act' – seems to me unacceptable, if (as he in fact knows) the town had earlier been taken over by Hephaestion and had received a governor: no such official act would be needed, or could even be reported. We certainly have no parallel for such a situation. However, not all recent historians of Alexander have even commented on the puzzle.

awareness of what had gone before, reporting that Alexander took it over by surrender and put a garrison in it, but – more surprising still – the manner in which he introduces the city implies that it is not yet known to the reader. It is introduced by means of the phrase οὐ πόρρω τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ ῥκισμένην, and Alexander leads his army towards it ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰνδὸν ποταμὸν – a phrase repeated almost *verbatim* from the instructions to Hephaestion and Perdikkas at 22.7, when they were first sent into the *region* of Peucelaotis. But that phrase, correct in the earlier context where the army was at the head of the pass from Afghanistan and just entering ‘India’, is now wrong, since Alexander was now *between* Peucelaotis and the Indus, and he would in fact have to march away from the river, from Orobatis, in order to reach the city.

Before we try to sort this out, it is worth mentioning that the usual favourite explanation of such cases by the *Quellenforscher* – the hypothesis of a change of source – will not do in this instance. Indeed, it is one of the most instructive features of this puzzle, whatever the correct answer, that it shows the inadequacy of that facile device, which most of the time cannot be strictly disproved, however uneasy we may feel about it. A. nowhere gives any indication that he has followed anything other than his two main sources for any part of this story. Yet Ptolemy and Aristobulus cannot be responsible for this confusion, for both of them can be documented as being with Alexander during the mountain campaign. Aristobulus, as we saw, is cited as saying so and commenting on the chronology of the campaign and its natural phenomena, while Ptolemy appears in several of the actions during the campaign (e.g. 4.24.3ff.; 25.8ff.). Moreover, Aristobulus, with his special interest in geography, and Ptolemy, with the resources of Alexandria available to him in addition to his own soldier’s memory and notes, are most unlikely to have made this error, even years later. Nor is it plausible to assume that one of them discovered the facts about Astis’ revolt and wrote about it, while the other never found out, and that each of them had a detailed account, incompatible with the other’s, of how the city was actually secured. No change of source from one of these participants in the action to the other can have produced A.’s manifest confusion.

This is precisely the puzzle: the basic facts, coming from one or other of these participants, must be assumed to be correct, since they had no motive for falsifying. We ought therefore to accept *both* Astis’ revolt, with its defeat and the appointment of Sangaeus, *and* Alexander’s appointment of a Macedonian commander named Philip (whoever he was) to command a garrison at Peucelaotis. How is this to be done?

Berve (*Alexanderreich* 2, no. 174) followed Droysen and Anspach in assuming that the town in which Astis was besieged was not Peucelaotis: they made it Orobatis, which is about the only alternative and which, *prima facie*, can be fitted into the narrative. Although none of them discusses the point in detail, assuming rather than arguing, this hypothesis offers some advantages. At least Peucelaotis need not be assumed to have been taken twice over, and differently treated on each occasion, without any comment on this in our source; moreover, it is worth noting that A. leaves the town in which Astis was besieged anonymous: if he did not think it was Peucelaotis, that would at once explain why he later felt it necessary to introduce the city to the reader.

Yet against this there arise insuperable difficulties. First, the chronology. As we have seen, the capture and fortification of Orobatis by Hephaestion’s army corps precedes the arrival of that force at the Indus, to which it proceeds after that event; whereas it is clear that Astis’ revolt follows their arrival at the Indus. In each case, the account is coherent, and there is no reason to assume any error by A. in either. So the explanation adopted by Berve would mean that Astis seized Orobatis after it had been

fortified and garrisoned by Hephaestion, and that Hephaestion had to return with part of his army in order to drive him out – all this without A.'s being aware of it. And if this seems implausible, it is surely much more so that, whatever had happened at Orobatis, Peucelaotis had been left untouched, to be taken over only when Alexander appeared there after the Assacenic campaign. For that would mean either that it had not been taken on Hephaestion's march to the Indus (which would not only be contrary to the explicit instructions he had received, but would be an action inconceivable, even without instructions, in any experienced commander), or that it had rebelled at some later time (not under Astis, *ex hypothesi*) and had not been retaken until Alexander appeared; which would present us with a rebellion by the prince of Peucelaotis in a minor place, duly defeated by Hephaestion, and a rebellion in Peucelaotis by someone else, apparently not opposed by any army until the city voluntarily surrendered to Alexander himself. The initial puzzle would be replaced by a much more insoluble one, both in the facts constituting it and in the further fact that A. did not find (or at least did not transmit) any reference to these complexities in either of his sources. These difficulties seem so insurmountable that we are driven to abandon the hypothesis of Orobatis as the city seized by Astis and to see if the more obvious interpretation – that the ruler of Peucelaotis based his rebellion on Peucelaotis – can work.

This means that, since we must take the basic facts as authentic, the confusion is due to our source. Scrutiny reveals that there are two elements of confusion: the direction of the march and the surrender of the city to Alexander. All the rest, without these two items, would make good sense. Now, the first of these elements turns out to be positively helpful, since it can be assigned to A. himself. Not only is it inconceivable (as we saw) that either of his sources should be guilty of this error regarding the direction of the march, but the phrase he uses to 'introduce' the city of Peucelaotis at this point is close to one that he was to use in describing the city in a different context, and probably from a different basic source, in the *Indica* (1.8), which shows that it must be taken to be his own; and the phrase he uses to indicate the direction of the march is a precise repetition of one he had used – correctly, at that stage, as we pointed out – when he first mentioned the region of Peucelaotis. His whole comment on Peucelaotis must therefore be taken to be his own, and it obviously cannot be argued (e.g.) that he had merely forgotten what he had written: indeed, he remembered it all too well, at the wrong time.

It thus becomes probable that the other constituent of our confusion, the surrender of the city to Alexander, is also due to A. How he came to foist this on the reader can hardly be known with any real certainty. But a suggestion is possible. We start from the obvious fact that he did not understand the implication of his source (and in fact, it would quite reasonably be taken for granted rather than made explicit) that the city seized by Astis was his own capital of Peucelaotis. Since he was not very familiar with the geography of the area, he would have no idea what the city was, except that he probably did not identify it as Orobatis, which he soon found mentioned. In fact, he had not at this point properly understood that Peucelaotis was the name of a city as well as of a region (he uses it, initially, only for the latter); and it was perhaps this that helped to obscure the identity of the city held by Astis for him. When the city was finally named in his source, in connection with Alexander himself, he may have thought that this was its first appearance and that it needed introducing to the reader; and, remembering his identification of the region by that name somewhat earlier (and, once more, not at all familiar with the geography of the area), he decided to use the phrase he had used for the direction of the *region*, thinking

it would clearly apply to the city as well. In his actual introduction of the city, he no doubt felt quite entitled, from the general context as he understood it, to assume that the city was not far from the Indus; and having once thus described it, he found the phrase stored in his memory (or perhaps by re-reading his earlier work) when he needed it again in the *Indica*.

However, he would also now notice that he had not told the reader how the city came into Alexander's possession – an omission that had to be made up at this first mention. Since he clearly did not in fact know, he contended himself with a vague phrase indicating surrender: that much could be deduced from the fact that he had not found any fighting over it mentioned in his sources. Whether he thought (and whether the reader was to think) that the city had surrendered at some previous time, or perhaps that it surrendered at this precise point, we cannot tell: the Greek aorist was a convenient tense to use if one did not know the precise facts regarding a time sequence.¹⁹

III

Once we recognise that the confusion must be due to A. (whether or not the explanation attempted above is thought to be on the right lines), Alexander's actions at this point become readily intelligible. We can in any case be sure of the direction of the march from Orobatis to Peucelaotis; and we now need not try to account for a surrender by the city to him at this point. He had decided to mount an attack on the supposedly impregnable rock of Aornus – not a mere piece of bravado, but a strategic and political necessity if the tribes were to be persuaded to allow his settlement to survive – and, before he could do so, had to complete the political settlement of the rest of the area. The fortification and garrisoning of a few well-chosen strongpoints was well in hand. Sheer terror, almost unprecedented so far (though there was to be much more of it, later in the Indian campaign), had been used to impress the tribesmen with Alexander's power and determination. A political organisation could now be set up. Alexander appointed a satrap for the whole area (to include, in due course, the territory he was about to invade – a common pattern in his organisation of his conquests) and a Macedonian commander for the garrison in the satrapal capital. Both these actions had become normal over the course of his victorious progress. He must certainly have marched in the direction of the Indus (and perhaps a mention of this in A.'s source contributed to A.'s confusion over the direction of Alexander's march), in the first place to get to Embolima, the city that was to be his base for the attack on Aornus and that provides the natural base for the invasion of Buner,²⁰ and then in order to complete the mopping up of various places in the Indus–Kabul area that had not been on the route of Hephaestion's army corps and had not yet surrendered.

¹⁹ Compare the way in which modern readers can be misled even where A. is at pains to make the sequence clear (cf. n. 17). The aorist is, of course, the normal way of expressing either action at the particular point in the narrative or action at some earlier point (since the pluperfect is rarely used): the 'past definite' use and the 'pluperfective' (or 'past anterior') use are not technically distinguished, and are occasionally difficult for the modern reader to distinguish, whether or not the author has deliberately taken advantage of the ambiguity. Diodorus provides a long list of obvious examples. Where the author wants to establish the 'past anterior' use, he can, of course, use various stylistic devices, as A. does in the Orobatis affair.

²⁰ See Eggermont 2, 198. His identification of that town (1, 91–4) is again a masterpiece of scholarly argument, based (like that of Orobatis) on knowledge of both the actual topography and the Indian sources.

What A.'s confusion does not allow us to see with any approach to certainty is whether Alexander in fact marched to Peuceलाotis before turning towards the Indus. But the mention of the city at this point suggests that Alexander thought it worth his while to go out of his way in order to make a ceremonial entrance into the capital of the area – of course, *before* marching 'in the direction of the Indus'. The ride, through country already pacified, would take him only a day each way, and his personal appearance might have a healthy political effect. It had always been his custom to put in a personal appearance in satrapal capitals; and although Peuceलाotis was not a traditional satrapal capital of the Achaemenid kingdom, he had marked it out as the only possible place to be the seat of his own newly-appointed satrap. If he thus assimilated the city to traditional satrapal capitals, it would be a further obvious suggestion that the appointment of the satrap and of the garrison commander took place in the city itself. That further slight correction to A.'s totally confused account would bring Alexander's actions into line with what had become his customary behaviour in such cases. If indeed he took the time and trouble to go to Peuceलाotis, we may regard it as almost certain that he waited to announce his appointments there. As for the Indian Sangaeus, put in by Hephaestion after Astis' revolt, he presumably stayed there, but his retention was not important enough to appear in A.'s sources. There is no need to think that Philip would be expected to look after the civil administration of the city: this, under the satrap, no doubt remained in native hands.

I hope that this investigation has helped to bring Alexander's campaign on the 'Northwest Frontier' into sharper focus. Even the revolt of Astis and the march of the army corps under Hephaestion assume firmer outlines – especially in chronology, once the chronology of the campaign as a whole has been more accurately established. A.'s account makes it clear that there was no Macedonian commander in Peuceलाotis when Astis revolted. Had there been one, the city would clearly not have provided such a ready base for him; and had a Macedonian commander been killed, it is inconceivable that A. would not have seen it mentioned and reported it, as he does on several similar occasions. Moreover, whether a Macedonian commander was killed or survived, it is hard to imagine that Hephaestion would not have appointed him or a successor after defeating the rebellion.

As regards chronology, Astis' revolt certainly precedes Alexander's completion of his main Assacanian campaign: there is no mention of Alexander in connection with Hephaestion's defeating it in thirty days and appointing Sangaeus to take charge of the city. As for the army corps, since it did not take the direct route to the Indus crossing, but turned off to take Orobatis, we cannot tell how long it actually took to reach the Indus – a march which, along the Kabul route, would have taken a week or so. We do not know how long it took to overcome the resistance at Orobatis, which we must allow for, and to fortify the place after the resistance had been overcome. Even if we think it unlikely that this took a long time – nothing like the thirty days needed against Astis – the army corps, which left by about the middle of November, is unlikely to have reached the Indus before the end of the month, and more probably arrived early in December. On the other hand, Alexander's main Assacanian campaign was over, as we saw, by about mid-January (p. 122 above); this means that Astis' revolt must have been defeated by early January; and since it started thirty days earlier, that must have been some time in early December. As we saw, it started after the army corps had reached the Indus, and that gives us a reasonably clear picture of the chronology of these events, which fit together as well as could be expected: Astis' revolt must have followed closely on the arrival of Hephaestion's force at the Indus crossing,

early in December; it was over early in January; and Alexander reached Orobatis, and perhaps visited Peucelaotis, in the middle of January, shortly after it had been pacified. We may guess that the season will have had something to do with Hephaestion's apparent difficulty in overcoming the revolt.

IV

What the unravelling of this story does to A.'s credibility as a historian, in cases where he does not alert us by actually producing nonsense, is another question. We must clearly accept the possibility (perhaps probability) that there are other cases, not so easy to diagnose, where he has added 'helpful' explanatory comments, as he did in the case of Peucelaotis; and that he may in some of those cases also have misunderstood his sources, though less obviously so, and have ended by misleading us. At least recent work, especially by A. B. Bosworth, has made this a much less shocking possibility than it would have been to scholars based on the traditional German school a generation ago.²¹

Harvard University

E. BADIAN

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