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Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind

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to another), opinion the number of the plane, sensation the number of the solid. . . .

I thus conclude that the Demiurge is to be seen as a mythical personification of the Form of the Good, because it is its own model. In the *Timaeus* myth, two functions of the Form of the Good usually left undifferentiated are distinguished: the Good as Cause (Demiurge) and the Good as overarching order (Model).

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## ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE UNITY OF MANKIND

IN AN ADMIRABLE article,<sup>1</sup> Ernst Badian has shown conclusively that W. W. Tarn's figure of Alexander the Dreamer was never a thing of flesh and blood; that it is a phantom which, rightfully, should be laid to rest.

Tarn's first criterion for Alexander the Great dreaming of the unity of mankind—"the fatherhood of God"—can be dismissed as Badian has done effectively and simply. It is certainly true that this "first [criterion] is not logically relevant to the other two: it is only by playing with imagery that we arrive from the idea of God as 'the common Father of mankind' at that of the 'brotherhood of man' in any ethically important sense."<sup>2</sup>

We can also, with Badian, dismiss the second facet of "Alexander's dream of the various races of mankind, so far as known to him, becoming of one mind together and living in unity and concord, which may be called the unity of mankind."<sup>3</sup> Badian's

treatment of the source material used by Tarn clearly indicates that Tarn became prepossessed with his conception of Alexander the Dreamer, to the point that he manipulated his sources.

The third aspect of the "idea" which Tarn attributes to Alexander—that "the various peoples of his Empire might be partners in the realm rather than subjects"<sup>4</sup>—can likewise be rejected. As Badian indicates, "if there is . . . a sense in which Macedonians and Persians might perhaps be said to 'rule' his Empire, there is none in which they might be said to be his 'partners' in it: they were his subjects. . . . That man certainly did not intend to become the figure-head of a free Commonwealth of Nations."<sup>5</sup>

As should be evident, I have no quarrel with Badian on his re-evaluation. On the contrary, his article is a necessary corrective in methodology. Yet, while I agree with Badian fully, I do not believe that Alexander the Dreamer can be dismissed entirely: Alexander never envisioned a unity of mankind, but his actions were immediately understood in this sense. As a consequence, Alexander the Great was viewed by his successors, as well as by Tarn, as the Dreamer and did, indirectly, cause "one of the supreme revolutions in the world's outlook."

My reasons for this view are twofold. First, Alexander envisioned a fusion of races, more specifically of Greek-Macedonians and Persians. Badian does not argue with this. Second, the concept of the unity of mankind becomes a commonplace in Greek thought after the death of Alexander and, quite particularly, in the circle of Cassander.

That Alexander intended a fusion of his Greek and Persian subjects can not be doubted. One need consider only the marriage of 10,000 of his troops to native women, his own marriage to Roxane, the training of Persian youths in the Mace-

<sup>1</sup> E. Badian, "Alexander the Great and the unity of mankind," *Historia* 7 (1958) 425-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 426.

<sup>3</sup> W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (1948) vol.2, 400.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Badian 431-2.

donian fashion, and his foundation of cities to serve as links in a common economic chain and as centers for the diffusion of culture. It is a fair assumption to add to this evidence the deaths of Philotas, Parmenion, Cleitus the Black and Callisthenes;<sup>6</sup> it is likely that these four men represented the conservative Macedonian tradition and hence offered major opposition to Alexander's policy of fusion.

My second reason for not dismissing entirely the figure of Alexander the Dreamer derives, in large part, from Tarn's discussion presented in 1933.<sup>7</sup> There Tarn emphasized not so much source materials which would support his thesis as the mere fact of the development of the concept of Homonoia, or the unity of mankind, in the years following Alexander's death. In this area, and rightly understood, Tarn's contribution has considerable merit for an appreciation of the early Hellenistic period.

During the lifetime of Philip the Second, a concept of Homonoia did exist, but it was confined to relations between Greek and Greek. After 323 B.C., Homonoia became, at least in theory, the recognized business of monarchs. And a mere consideration of the composition of the Hellenistic kingdoms shows that it would be foolish to suggest that Homonoia was still confined to Greek subjects.

In addition, the idea of the unity of mankind was expressed by members of the circle of Cassander early in the third century. Alexarchus, Cassander's brother and the founder of Ouranopolis, addressed citizens of his "world-state in miniature"

as "the Brethren."<sup>8</sup> The same concept of brotherhood is visible in the fragments of Euhemerus' *Utopia*. For example, Ouranos was considered the first ruler to unite the whole human race.<sup>9</sup>

There is another circle in which the concept of Homonoia appears to have become current even during Alexander's lifetime: the Peripatetic school during the last years of Aristotle and under Theophrastus. Badian has shown that Aristotle's position on the correct treatment of barbarians changed from the view that all barbarians should be ruled as slaves to the view that certain barbarians can be regarded as "civilized" and are thus deserving of something other than despotic control.<sup>10</sup> This is indeed an important development in Aristotelian thought, but by no means is it the concept of Homonoia.

Under Aristotle's successor Theophrastus, however, we do find the concept of Homonoia: οὕτως δὲ καὶ τοὺς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἀλλήλοις τίθεμεν οἰκείους καὶ συγγενεῖς.<sup>11</sup>

The question then is: is there any common influence on Euhemerus, Alexarchus and Theophrastus as well as, rather more indirectly, the Successor Kings? Taking into account the lack of knowledge concerning Euhemerus and Alexarchus as well as Theophrastus' connection with his predecessor, one might conjecture that the common denominator was Aristotle.

Yet does this not seem the less likely of the alternatives? Aristotle did not himself espouse Homonoia; there is no certain connection with Euhemerus or Alexarchus. But in the civilized world of 323 B.C., with the exception only of China, the career of Alexander was far more significant than any other event. He had begun a fusion of Persians and Greeks. This "fusion of races," as almost every other facet of

<sup>6</sup> See O. W. Reinmuth, "Alexander and the world-state," in *The Greek political experience, studies in honor of William Kelly Prentice* (Princeton 1941) 109-24. Reinmuth suggests (p.113) that "our sources plainly indicate that Parmenio and Philotas represented a conservative group in the Macedonian command, a group in sympathy neither with a continuance of the campaign beyond the defeat of Darius nor with Alexander's intentions, as they interpreted them, with regard to the conquered peoples." Reinmuth sees (p.114) "at the bottom of the Cleitus episode . . . dissatisfaction with the new order of things under Alexander." The same inference can safely be drawn from the circumstances of the death of Callisthenes.

<sup>7</sup> W. W. Tarn, "Alexander the Great and the unity of mankind," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1933) 123-66.

<sup>8</sup> In Athenaeus 3.98E. See Tarn's discussion, *ibid.* 261-3.

<sup>9</sup> Euhemerus, *Reliquiae* ed. G. Nemethy (Budapest 1889), Fr.6-8 on Uranus.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Aristotle *Pol.*1.2.4: 1252b with *Pol.*7.7.1f.: 1327b.

<sup>11</sup> Stobaeus 2.7.13.

Alexander's life and work, could be interpreted in various ways. I suggest that Alexander's "fusion" was understood far differently from what he himself intended to do with it. It became the Hellenistic concept of *Homonoia*. His actions seemed to give credence to the concept.

Thus Alexander the Great may not have been a "dreamer" of the brotherhood of man or the unity of mankind. Indeed, Badian's examination of materials utilized by Tarn to substantiate his theory virtually proves that this was not the case. Yet the more important point, that Alexander was *understood* to have initiated "one of the supreme revolutions in the world's outlook," cannot and should not be dismissed out of hand. Alexander the Dreamer did not exist, but an image of Alexander the Dreamer was painted before or soon after his death. It was this image, not the man, which gave rise to the concept of the unity of mankind.

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## LUCRETIUS AND THE FOOLS

ALTHOUGH THE 'brooding seriousness' of Lucretius has acquired all but canonical acceptance in the scholarly literature, the occasional reference to the poet's 'satiric vein' is also encountered.<sup>1</sup> In this note I call attention to an instance of positive or tongue-in-cheek humor.

The first 634 lines of the *De rerum natura* have unfolded the basic postulates of the physical system, the existence of body (*corpus*) and void (*inane*). At the conclusion of this exposition Lucretius digresses for some three hundred lines

(635-920), in which he presents the views of earlier thinkers with whom he ultimately disagrees. In connection with Heraclitus, singled out as representative of the monists, the most errant of these thinkers (cf. 711; 734: *inferiores*; 735: *minores*), Lucretius makes the following derogatory remarks (1.639-42):

clarus (ob) obscuram linguam magis inter inanis  
quamde gravis inter Graios qui vera requirunt.  
omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,  
inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt.

The words of interest are *inanis* (639) and *stolidi* (641). *Inanis* occurs 34 times in the preceding lines as a technical term for void, and it occupies seven different metrical positions in the line: in the first two metra, 1) u|-uu (356) and 2) u|-u (514); in the second and third metra, 3) u|-u (399, 445, 517); in the third and fourth metra, 4) u|- (396, 510, 532, 538) and 5) u|-uu (223); in the fourth and fifth metra, 6) u|-u (334, 369, 426, 439, 444, 507, 520); and in the last two metra, 7) u|-x (330, 342, 363, 365, 382, 386, 420, 431, 454, 480, 509, 511, 523, 524, 527, 536, 569). Half (17) of the instances are in end position, as in line 639; it is, then, difficult not to sense the metrical echo of the technical term in the characterization of those who hold to monism, the *inanis* or 'empty-headed.' What about *stolidi*? In the lines preceding 635ff. Lucretius has reiterated again and again that *corpus* is by nature *solidum*. The adjective, occurring sixteen times, enjoys two different metrical positions: In the second and third metra, 1) uu|- (486, 488, 500, 510, 521, 538, 548, 574, 609); and in the third and fourth metra, 2) uu|- (346, 497, 512, 515, 518, 565, 627). Over half (9) of these occurrences are in the identical position of *stolidi* in line 641; again, one hears in *stolidi* the punning echo of *solidum*.

What conclusions emerge? Bailey reasonably comments that *inanis* (639) and *stolidi* (641) refer to the Stoics.<sup>2</sup> Yet the

<sup>1</sup> The views are recapitulated by Cyril Bailey, *Titi Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Oxford 1947), vol. 1.8ff.; and see vol. 1.18.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 2.711, and *ad* 1.639 and 641.