

Letter of Alexander to Aristotle

Her is seo gesetenis Alexandres epistles þæs miclan kyninges ond þæs mæran Macedoniscan, þone he wrat ond sende to Aristotile his magistre be gesetenisse Indie þære miclan þeode, ond be þære wid-galnisse his siðfato ond his fora þe he geond middan-geard ferde. Cwæp he þus sona ærest in fruman þæs epistles:

“Simle ic beo gemindig þin, ge efne betweoh tweondan frecennisse ura gefeohta, þu min se leofesta lareow, ond efne to minre meder ond geswystrum þu me eart se leofesta freond; ond forþon þe ic þe wiste wel getyðne in wisdom, þa geþohte ic forþon to þe to writanne be þæm þeod-londe Indie ond be heofenes gesetenissum ond be þæm unarimum cynnum nædrena ond monna ond wildeora, to þon þæt hwæthwygo to þære ongietenisse þissa niura þinga þin gelis ond gleawnis to geþeode. Þeoh to þe seo gefylde gleawnis ond snyttro, ond naniges fultumes abædeð sio lar þæs rihtes, hwæþere ic wolde þæt þu mine dæde ongeate, þa þu lufast, ond þa þing þe ungesewene mid þe siond, þa ic in Indie geseah þurh monigfeald gewin ond þurh micle frecennisse mid Greca herige.

5 “Þa ic þe write ond cyþe, ond æghwylc þara is wyrðe synderlice in gemyndum to habbanne æfter þære wisan þe ic hit oferseah. Ne gelyfde ic æniges monnes gesegenum swa fela

Here is the text of the letter of Alexander, the great and renowned Macedonian king, which he composed and sent to his teacher Aristotle concerning the composition of the great nation of India, and about the extensiveness of his experiences and his expeditions that he undertook throughout the world. Thus he said immediately at the very outset of the letter:

“I am always thinking of you, even amidst the uncertain risks of our combats, my dearest instructor, and next to my mother and sisters you are my dearest friend; and since I knew you to be well endowed with wisdom, I thought on that account to write to you about the land of India and about the constellations of the firmament and about the countless varieties of snakes and humans and wild animals, so that your learning and acuity might add somewhat to the understanding of these novel things. Although you have consummate intellect and prudence, and the teaching of what is right requires no aid, still I wanted that you should know of my accomplishments, which you love, and of those things that are unseen where you are, which I saw in India in the course of numerous engagements and amidst great danger with my army of Greeks.

“I shall write to you and describe them, and each of them is worth keeping specially in mind according to the manner that I observed it. I would not have believed anyone’s asser-

wundrolicra þinga þæt hit swa beon mihte ær ic hit self minum eagum ne gesawe. Seo eorðe is to wundrienne, hwæt heo ærest of þe godra þinga cenne, oððe eft þara yfelra, þe heo þæm sceawigendum is æteowed. Hio is cennende þa ful-cuþan wildru ond wæstmæs ond weega oran ond wunderlice wyhta, þa þing eall, þæm monnum þe hit geseod ond sceawigad, wæron uncepe to gewitanne for þære missenlicnisse þara hiowa.

10 "Ac þa ðing þe me nu in gemynd cumað ærest, þa ic þe write, þy læs on me mæge idel spellung of þe scodlic leasung beon gestæled. Hwæt, þu eac sylfa const þa gecynd mines modes, mec a gewunelice healdon þæt gemerce soðes ond rihtes, ond ic sperlicor mid wordum sægde þonne hie mid dædum gedon wærun. Nu ic hwæpre gehyhte ond gelyfe þæt þu þas þing ongete swa þu me ne talige owiht gelpan ond secgan be þære micelnisse ures gewinnes ond compes, forðon ic oft wiscte ond wolde þæt hyra læs wære swa gewinfulra.

"Ic ðæs þoncunge do Greca herige ond swyðost þæm mægene þære iugube ond þæm unforswyþdum urum weorode, forþon on iepum þingum hie me mid wæron ond on þæm earfeðum no from bugon, ac hie on þære gepylde mid me a wunedon þæt ic wæs nemned ealra kyninga kyning. Para weorð-mynta blissa þu min se leofa lareow. Ond ic nu þas þing write to þe gemænelice ond to Olimphiade minre meder ond minum geswustrum, forþon incer lufu sceal beon somod gemæne; ond gif hit of þor bið, þonne æteawest þu læsson þonne ic nu ær to þe gelyfde.

15 "On þæm ærrum gewritum þe ic þe sende, ic þe cypde

tion about so many miraculous things that it could be so before I saw it with my own eyes. The world is to be wondered at, what it first produces either of good things or in turn of bad, by which it is revealed to observers. It continually produces those well-known wild animals and plants and ores of metals and amazing creatures, all which things would be, for people who witness and observe it, difficult to understand on account of the variety of their forms.

"But the things that come to my mind first, those I shall write you about, so that idle hearsay or shameless fabrication cannot be imputed to me. Now, you yourself know, too, 10 that characteristic of my mind, as a constant practice to confine myself to the bounds of truth and uprightness, and I have described things more sparingly with words than they were done in deeds. Now, however, I hope and trust that you will understand these matters in such a way that you will not assume me to be boasting at all and dwelling on the magnitude of our struggles and combat, for I would often have wished and preferred that fewer of them were so hard-won.

"I give thanks to the Greek army, and most of all to the force of young recruits and our indomitable troop of veterans, since they were with me in easy circumstances, and in straits they did not desert, but with patience they remained with me all along until I was named king of all kings. For these marks of distinction, be glad, my dear instructor. And now I am writing about these matters jointly to you and to my mother Olimphias and my sisters, since your affection ought to be shared on both sides; and if it is otherwise, then you show yourself to be less than I have all along expected of you.

"In the earlier messages that I sent you, I related and ex- 15

ond getacnode be þære asprungnisse sunnan ond monan
 ond be tungla rynum ond gesetenissum ond be lyfte tacnun-
 gum. Ða ðing eall ne magon elcor beon buton micelre ge-
 mynde swa geendebyrded ond forestihtod. Ond nu þas
 niwan spel ic þe ealle in cartan awrite. Ðonne þu hie ræde,
 þonne wite þu þæt hie ealle swylce wæron swa þam gemyn-
 dum gedafenode þines Alexandres þe to sendanne.

20 “On Maius þæm monþe Persea se kyning Dariun æt
 Gande þære ea we hine oforcwomon ond oferswyðdon ond
 us þær in onweald geslogon eal his lond-rice. Ond we þær
 settan ond geendebyrdedon ure gerefan þæm east-þeodum,
 ond monegum cynelicum weorð-myndum we wæron gewel-
 gode. On þæm ærron epistole ic þe þæt sægde, ond þy læs
 þæt eow seo sægen monifealdlicor bi þon þuhte to writanne,
 ic þa wille swa lætan, ond þa secgon þe nu ðær gewurdon.
 On Iulius monðe on þæm ytemestum dagum þæs monðes
 we cwomon in Indie lond in Fasiacen þa stowe. Ond we þa
 mid wunderlicre hreðnisse Porrum þone cyning ofercwo-
 mon ond oferswyðdon, ond we ealle his þeode on onwald
 onfengon, ond on þæm londe we wæron monegum cyneli-
 cum weolum geweorðode.

25 “Ac ic wolde þæt þu þa ðing ongeate þa ðe weorðe sindon
 in gemyndum to habbanne. Ærest ic þe write be þære unari-
 medlican mengeo his weoredes, þæs wæs buton unarimedli-
 can feþum sixtene þusend monna ond eahta hund eored-
 manna, ealle mid here-geatwum gegerede. Ond we þa þær
 genoman feower hund elpenda, ond on þam ufan stodon
 gewærnode scyttan, ond þa torras ond þa scylfas on him
 bæron þa elpendas þe ða byrn-wigon on stodon. Æfter þon
 we ða cynelican burh Porres mid urum wæpnum in eodon
 ond his healle ond þa cynelican geseto his sceawedon. Þær

plained the eclipses of the sun and moon and the courses
 and constellations of the stars and signs in the atmosphere.
 All these things cannot otherwise be so arranged and fore-
 ordained without a great purpose. And now I shall write you
 all these new observations in a scroll. When you read them,
 understand that they are all just as seemed right to the pur-
 poses of your Alexander to send you.

“In the month of May we fell upon and defeated Darius,
 the king of the Persians, at the river Gande and there
 brought under our control his entire empire. And there we 20
 established and ordained our viceroys over the Asian peo-
 ples, and we were enriched with many regal dignities. In
 the earlier letter I told you about that, and lest the matter
 thereby seem to you too repetitious to write about, I shall
 thus leave off, and narrate those things that have since taken
 place there. In the month of July, during the last days of the
 month, we arrived in the country of India, in the place Fasi-
 acen. And then with amazing swiftness we fell upon and de-
 feated Porus, the king, and we gained control of his entire
 nation, and in that country we were dignified with many re-
 gal riches.

“But I wanted you to know about those things that are
 worth keeping in mind. First I shall write to you about the 25
 numberless multitude of his forces, of which there were,
 aside from countless infantry, sixteen thousand men and
 eight hundred cavalry, all equipped with full battle gear. And
 there we captured four hundred elephants, and on top of
 them stood armed archers, and the elephants carried on
 them the turrets and platforms that the fighters in chain
 mail stood on. After that we entered Porus’s capital with our
 weapons and explored his hall and the royal palace. There

wæron gyldene columnan swiðe micle ond trumlice ond fæste, ða wæron unmetlice greate heanisse upp, ðara wæs þe we gerimdon be þæm gemete .cccc. Þa wagas wæron eac
 30 gyldne mid gyldnum þelum anæglede fingres þicce. Mid þy ic ða wolde geornlicor þa þing geseon ond furðor eode, þa geseah ic gyldenne win-geard trumlicne ond fæstlicne, ond þa twigo his hongodon geond þa columnan. Ða wundrode ic þæs swiðe. Wæron in þæm win-gearde gyldenu leaf, ond his hon ond his wæstmas wæron cristallum ond smaragdus, eac þæt gim-cyn mid þæm cristallum ingemong hongode. His bryd-buras ond his heah-cleofan ealle wæron eorcnanstanum *unionibus* ond *carbunculis* þæm gim-cynnum swiðast gefræt wode. Uton hie wæron elpend-banum geworhte þa wæron wunderlice hwite ond fægere, ond cypressus styde ond laurisce hie utan wreþedon, ond gyldne styþeo ond aprawene ðær ingemong stodon, ond unarimedlicu goldhord þær wæron inne ond ute, ond monifealdlicu hie wæron ond missenlicra cynna, ond monig fatu gimmiscu ond cristallisce drync-fatu ond gyldne sestras ðær wæron forð borenne. Seldon we þær ænig seolfor fundon.
 35

“Siðþan ic þa me hæfde þas þing eall be gewealdum, þa wilnode ic Indeum innanwearde to geseonne. Ða becwom ic on Caspian þæt lond mid ealle mine herige. Þa wæs ðær seo wæstm-berendeste eorþe ðæs þeod-londes, ond ic swiðe wundrade þa gesælignessse þære eorðan, ond ic efne gefeonde in minum mode geornlicor ða lond sceawigean wolde. Þa sægdon us ða bigengean þæs londes þæt we us warnigan scoldon wið þa missenlican cynd nædrena ond
 40 hrifra wildeora þy læs we on ða becwomon. Þæra mænego in ðissum dunum ond denum ond on wudum ond on feldum eardigeað, ond in stan-holum hie selfe digliað. Ac hwæpre

were very large and firm and immovable golden columns that were immensely tall, of which we counted a quantity of four hundred. The interior walls were also golden, paneled with golden planks the thickness of a finger. When I wished
 30 to examine these things in more detail and moved further, I saw a golden vine, firm and immovable, and its branches hung among the columns. I was quite amazed at that. There were on the vine golden leaves, and its clusters and its fruits were of crystal and emerald, in addition to which gems hung among the crystals. His women's chambers and upper galleries were all profusely decorated with the precious stones known as pearls and with the gemstones known as carbuncles. On the exterior they were fashioned with ivories that were amazingly white and beautiful, and posts of cypress and laurel supported them on the outside, and golden Solomonic columns stood among them, and there were countless caches of gold inside and out, and they were abundant and of various kinds, and many jeweled vessels and crystal goblets and golden pitchers were brought forth there. Seldon
 35 did we find any silver there.

“After I had all these things under my control, I desired to see the interior of India. I then entered the region Caspia with my entire army. There was the most fertile soil of the country, and I was quite amazed at the productivity of the earth, and, exulting inwardly, I wanted to explore those regions in even greater detail. The inhabitants of the region told us that we should take precautions against the various species of snakes and predatory wild animals in case we encountered them. An abundance of them live in these hills
 40 and dales and in jungles and in plains, and they conceal themselves in gaps in the rocks. Nonetheless, I wanted to

ma ic wolde þæm frecnan wege ond siðfatum foeran ðonne þæm gehyldrum wegum, to ðon þæt ðone fleondon Porrum of þæm gefeohte þæt ic hine gemette ær he on þa westenu middan-geardes gefluge. Ic me ða mid genom .cc. lad-þeowa ond eac .i. þe ða genran wegas cuðan þara siðfato.

“Ða ferde we in Agustes monþe þurh þa weallendan sond ond þurh þa wædlan stowe wætres ond ælcere wætan; ond ic mede gehet þæm us cuplice gelæddon þurh þa uncuðan land Indie ond mec woldon mid mine herige onsund gelædon in Patriacen þæt lond. Ond swiðast ic wilnade þæt hie me gelæddon to þæm dioglum god-web-wyrhtum ða þone þræd wunderlice of sumum treow-cynne ond of his leafum ond of his flyse þæs treowes spunnon, ond swa eac to gode-webbe
45 wæfon ond worhtan. Ac hie þa lond-liode tiolodon ma ussa feonda willan to gefremmanne þonne urne, forþon þe hie us gelæddon þurh þa lond þe þa unarefnedlican cyn nædrena ond hrifra wildeora in wæron. Ða ongeat ic selfa ond geseah of dæle þæt me þa earfeðu becwoman, forþon ic ær forlet ond ne gymde þara nytlicra geþeahta minra freonda ond heded þara monna þe me þæt logon þæt ic þæm wegum ferde. Ða beþeod ic minum þegnum ond hie het þæt hie hie mid heora wæpnum gereden ond mid þy herige forðferdon. Ond hie eac swylce þæt min weorod ond þa mine þegnas ond eal min here, goldes ond eorcnan-stana þæt hie gehergad ond genumen hæfdon micel gemet, mid him wægon ond læddon, forþon hie wendon ond ondredon gif hie hit behindon forleton þæt hiora fynd hit þonne deagollice genomon ond onweg aledon.

“Ond efne swiðe þa mine þegnas ond eal min weorod wæs

travel that perilous way and on those ventures even more than on the more secure ways, for the purpose of meeting up with Porus, who was avoiding confrontation, before he should escape into the wilds of the world. I took with me two hundred fifty guides who were familiar with the more direct routes for those travels.

“Then in the month of August we passed through the boiling sands and through those places poor in water and any kind of moisture; and I promised payment for those who would lead us expertly through the *terrae incognitae* of India and were willing to lead me with my army safely into the region Patriacen. And most of all I wanted them to bring me to those obscure makers of fine cloth who amazingly spun thread from a certain species of tree and from its leaves and from the fleecy growth of the tree, and likewise wove
45 and worked it into fine cloth. But they, the natives, aimed more to cultivate our enemies' good will than ours, since they led us through those regions in which the intolerable species of snakes and ferocious wild animals were. Then I perceived and understood for my own part that these difficulties were befalling me because I had abandoned and ignored the profitable advice of my friends and listened to those people who misadvised me that I should go that way. Then I enjoined my officers and commanded that they arm themselves with their weapons and set out with the army. And likewise my veterans and my officers and my entire army, since they had seized a large quantity of gold and precious stones, transported and brought it with them, because they suspected and feared that if they left it behind, their enemies would get hold of it by stealth and carry it away.

“And my officers and likewise all my veterans were so very

gewelgod þæt hie unede ealle þa byrðene þæs goldes mid
 50 him aberan ond alædan meahton. Swelce eac heora wæpena
 noht lytel byrðen wæs, forþon eal heora wæpenu þæra minra
 þegna ond ealles mines weoredes ond heriges ic het mid gyl-
 denum þelum bewyrcean. Ond eall min weorod wæs on þa
 gelicnesse tungles oððe ligite for þære micelnisse þæs gol-
 des. Hit scan ond berhte foran swa ymb me uton mid
 þrymme, ond here-beacen ond segnas beforan me læddon,
 ond swa micel wundor ond wæfer-sien wæs þæs mines weo-
 redes on fægernisse ofer ealle oþre þeod-kyningas þe in
 middan-gearde wæron. Ða sceawede ic seolfa ond geseah
 mine gesæliness ond min wuldor ond þa fromnisse minre
 iuguðe ond gesælignisse mines lifes, þa wæs ic hwæthwugo
 in gefean in minum mode ahafen.

“Ac swa hit oft gesæled on þæm selran þingum ond on
 þæm gesundrum þæt seo wyrd ond sio hiow hie oft oncyrred
 ond on oþer hworfeð, þa gelomp us þæt we wurdon ear-
 55 foðlice mid þurste geswencte ond gewæcte. Ðone þurst we
 þonne earfoðlice abæron ond aræfndon. Ða wæs haten Sefe-
 rus min þegn funde þa wæter in anum holan stane ond þa
 mid ane helme hlod hit ond me to brohte, ond he sylfa þursti
 wæs se min þegn, ond hwæpre he swiðor mines feores ond
 gesynto wilnade þonne his selfes. Ða he þa þæt wæter me to
 brohte swa ic ær sægde, þa het ic min weorod ond ealle mine
 duguþe tosomne, ond hit þa beforan heora ealra onsyne
 niðer ageat, þy læs ic drunce ond þone minne þegn þyrste
 ond minne here ond ealne þe mid me wæs. Ond ic þa befo-
 ran him eallum herede Seferes dæde þæs mines þegnes, ond
 hine beforan hiora ealra onsione mid deor-weorðum gyfum
 gegeafede for ðære dæde. Ond þa mid þy þe þæt min werod
 gehyrtd ond gestilled wæs, þa ferdon we forð þy wege þe

enriched that only with difficulty could they carry off and
 bring along the entire burden of gold. Likewise there was no
 50 small encumbrance of weapons, since I had ordered that all
 the weapons of my officers and of all my veterans and army
 be embellished with gold plate. And my entire force resem-
 bled a constellation or lightning on account of the volume
 of that gold. It shone and gleamed in front of me and around
 me with majesty, and they carried standards and ensigns be-
 fore me, and such a great wonder and spectacle there was of
 my army in its splendor over all other emperors who have
 been on earth. When I myself observed and perceived my
 own felicity and my glory and the vigor of my youth and the
 excellent condition of my life, I was somewhat pleasurably
 exalted in my spirits.

“But as it often turns out in better and more secure cir-
 cumstances that events and one’s condition often change
 and go awry, it then happened to us that we were painfully
 afflicted and weakened by thirst. We bore and suffered that
 55 thirst oppressively all the while. Then an officer of mine
 named Severus found water in a hollow stone and drew it
 with a helmet and brought it to me, and my officer was him-
 self thirsty, and yet he cared more for my life and well-being
 than his own. When he brought that water to me, as I said
 before, I called my veterans and all my recruits together, and
 then in the sight of them all I poured it on the ground, lest
 I drink and my officer and my army and all who were with
 me should go thirsty. And then before them all I praised my
 officer Severus’s action, and in the sight of them all I re-
 warded him with valuable gifts for that deed. And now that
 my troop was heartened and calmed, we proceeded the way

60 we ær ongunnon. Ða næs long to þon in þæm westenne þæt we to sumre ea cwoman. On þære ea ofre stod hreod ond pin-treow, ond *abies* þæt treow-cyn ungemetlicre gryto ond micelnysse þy clyfe weox ond wridode.

“Ða we to þære ea cwoman, ða het ic for ðæm unarefnedlican þurste þe me selfum getenge wæs ond eac eallum minum herige ond þæm nytenum þe us mid wæron mine fyrd restan ond wician. Mid þy we ða gewicod hæfdon, ða wolde ic minne þurst lehtan ond celan. Ða ic þæt wæter bergde, ða wæs hit bittere ond grimre to drincanne þonne ic æfre ænig oðer bergde, ond nowþer ne hit se mon drincan meahte ne
65 his ænig neat onbitan ne meahte. Ða wæs ic swiðe on minum mode generwed for ðæm dumbum nytenum, forþon ic wiste þæt men yþelicor meahton þone þurst arefnan þonne þa nietenu. Wæs þæra feðer-fota nietena micel mænigeo mid me ond micel mænigeo elpenda þa þe gold wægon ond læddon, ungemetlicre micelnisse ðusend, ond twa þusenda horsa ond .cccc. buton þæm eoreda, ond .xx. þusenda feþena. Þonne wæs þridde healf þusend mula ðe þa seamas wægon, ond .xxx. þusenda ealfarena ond oxna þa ðe hwæte bæron, twa þusenda olfenda, fif hund hryðra þara þe mon dæg-hwamlice to mete dyde. Wæs unrim getæl eac þon on horsum ond on mulum ond on olfendum ond on elpendum ungemetlicu mængeo us æfter ferde. Ealle þa wæron
70 mid unarefnedlice þurste geswencte ond gewæcte. Ða men þonne hwilum hie þa iren-geloman liccodan; hwilum hie ele byrgdon ond on þon þone grimman þurst celdon. Sume men ðonne of hiora scome þa wætan for þæm nyde þigdon.

“Seo wise wæs þa in me on twa healfa uneþe, seo ærest be minre seolfre ned-þearfe, ond mines weorodes. Het ic þa

we had begun. It was not long then in the desert till we came
60 to a certain river. On the bank of the river stood rushes and pine trees, and trees of the species silver fir of immense height and girth grew and flourished on the incline.

“When we came to the river, on account of the unendurable thirst that was oppressing me, for my own part, as well as my entire army and the animals that were with us, I called for my troops to rest and pitch camp. When we had made camp, I wished to slake and cool my thirst. When I tasted the water, it was more bitter and acrid to drink than any other I had ever tasted, and neither could any human drink
65 it nor could any animal consume it. Then I was sorely concerned at heart for the dumb animals, because I knew that men could more easily endure that thirst than the animals. There was a great multitude of four-footed animals with me and a great multitude of elephants that carried and transported the gold, a thousand of immense size, and two thousand four hundred horses, excluding the cavalry, and twenty thousand infantry. Then there were two and a half thousand mules that transported the packs, and thirty thousand pack-horses and oxen that carried wheat, two thousand camels, five hundred cattle that were made into food daily. There was an untold number in addition to that of horses and of mules, and of camels and of elephants an immense multitude traveled behind us. All these were oppressed and weakened by unendurable thirst. The men then sometimes licked
70 the iron implements; sometimes they tasted oil and thereby cooled the harsh thirst. Some men then in their need consumed the liquid from their private parts.

“The matter was disturbing to me on two counts, the first in regard to my own need, and that of my troops. Then I di-

ælcne mon hine mid his wæpnum gegerwan ond faran forð,
 ond þæt eac fæstlice behead ðæt se mon se ne wære mid his
 wæpnum æfter fyrd-wison gegered, þæt hine mon scolde
 mid wæpnum acwellan. Ða wundredon hie swiðe for hwon
 hie þa hefignesse ond micelnisse ðara wæpna in swa miclum
 75 þurste beran scoldon þær nænig feond ne æteowde. Ac ic
 wiste hwæpre þæt ure for ond sidfæt wæs þurh þa lond
 ond stowe þe missenlicra cynna eardung in wæs, nædrena
 ond rifra wildeora, ond we ðe þæs londes ungleawe ond
 unwise wæron, þæt usic ðonne semninga hwele earfedo on
 becwome.

“Ferdon we þa forð be þære ea ofre. Ða wæs seo eatoðe
 tid dæges, þa cwoman we to sumre byrig; seo burh wæs on
 midre þære ea in anum eglonde getimbred. Wæs seo burh
 mid þy hreode ond treow-cynne þe on þære ea ofre weox
 ond we ær bi writon ond sægdon asett ond geworht. Ða ge-
 sawon we in þære byrig ond ongeaton Indisce men fea healf
 80 nacode eardigende. Ða hie þa us gesawon, hie selfe sona
 in heora husum deagollice hie miþan. Ða wilnade ic þara
 monna onsyne to geseonne, þæt hie us fersc wæter ond
 swete getæhton. Mid þy we ða longe bidon ond us nænig
 mon to wolde, þa het ic fea stræla sendan in þa burh innan,
 to þon gif hie hiera willum us to noldon, þæt hie for þæm
 ege þæs gefeohtes nede scoldon. Ða wæron hie þy swyðor
 afyrhte ond hie fæstor hyddan. Þa het ic .cc. minra þegna of
 greca herige leohtum wæpnum hie gegyrwan, ond hie on
 85 sunde to þære byrig foron ond swumman ofer æfter þære ea
 to þæm eg-lande. Þa hie ða hæfdon feorðan dæl þære ea
 geswummen, ða becwom sum ongrislic wise on hie. Þæt wæs

rected everyone to equip himself with his weapons and set
 out, and also I strictly demanded that the man who was not
 equipped with his weapons in military fashion should be
 killed with weapons. They wondered very much why they
 had to bear the weight and bulk of the weapons in so great
 thirst where no enemy was to be seen. However, I knew that
 75 our direction and route were through those regions and
 places in which was the habitat of various species of snakes
 and ferocious wild animals, and we were so ignorant of and
 unfamiliar with that region that some trouble might there-
 fore overtake us suddenly.

“Then we proceeded along the river bank. When it was
 the eighth hour of the day, we came to a certain town; the
 town was built on an island in the middle of the river. The
 town was made up and constructed of the reeds and spe-
 cies of trees that grew on the river bank and which we have
 already written about and described. Then we looked and
 noticed a few half-naked Indian people living in the town.
 When they saw us, they immediately concealed themselves
 80 furtively in their houses. I desired to get a close look at those
 people then, so that they could direct us to fresh and sweet
 water. Since we waited a long time and no one was willing to
 come to us, I had a few arrows launched into the town, so
 that if they would not come to us willingly, they should out
 of necessity, for fear of a fight. Then they were all the more
 afraid and hid themselves more securely. Then I had two
 hundred of my officers from the Greek army equip them-
 selves with light weapons, and they set out for the town
 by swimming, and swam over across the river to the island.
 When they had swum a quarter of the river, a certain grisly
 85 circumstance overtook them. It was a multitude of water-

þonne nicra mengeo on onsione maran ond unhyrlicran
þonne ða elpendas, in ðone grund þære ea ond betweoh ða
yða þæs wæteres þa men besencte, ond mid heora muðe hie
sliton ond blodgodon ond hie ealle swa fornamon, þæt ure
nænig wiste hwær hiora æni cwom. Ða wæs ic swiðe yre
þæm minum lad-þeowum, þa us on swylce frecennissa
gelæddon. Het hiera ða bescufan in þa ea .l. ond .c., ond sona
þæs ðe hie inne wæron, swa wæron þa nicoras gearwe, to-
brudon hie swa hie þa oðre ær dydon, ond swa þicce hie in
þære ea aweollon swa æmettan ða nicras, ond swile unrim
heora wæs.

“Ða het ic blawan mine byman ond þa fyrd faran, þa hit ða
90 wæs sio endlefte tid dæges, ond we forð ferdon. Ða gesawon
we men æfter þære ea feran, hæfdon of þæm hreode ond of
þæm treow-cynne þe in ðære ea ofre stodon on scip-wisan
geworht þæt hie onufan sæton. Ða men þa mid þy we æfter
ferscum wætre hie frunon, þa onswaredon hie us ond sædon
hwær we hit findan mehton in hiora gereorde ond cwædon
þæt we fundon sumne swiðe micelne mere in þæm wære
fersc wæter ond swete genog, ond þæt we genog raðe to
þæm becwoman gif we geornfulle wæron. Ond þa for þæm
þingum swa monigra geswencnissa wæs þæt we ealle þa niht
ferdon mid þurste gewæcte ond mid ura wæpna byrþenum
swiðe geswencte. Ond ofer ealle þa niht ðe we ferdon þus,
symle leon ond beran ond tigris ond pardus ond wulfas ure
ehtan, ond we þæm wiðstodon. Ða ðy æftran dæge ða hit
wæs seo eahtoðe tid dæges, þa cwomon we to þæm mere ðe
95 us mon ær foresæde. Ða wæs he eall mid wudu beweaxen
mile brædo, wæs hwæpre weg to ðæm wætre. Ða wæs ic ge-
feonde þæs swetan wætres ond þæs ferscan, ond þa sona

monsters, larger and fiercer in appearance than the ele-
phants, sank the men to the river bed and between the waves
of the water, and with their mouths they lacerated and
bloodied them and thus carried all of them off, so that none
of us knew where any of them had gone. Then I was ex-
tremely angry with my guides, who had led us into such
jeopardy. I ordered that one hundred fifty of them be tossed
into the river, and as soon as they were in it, the water-
monsters were ready and tore them apart the way they had
done the others, and the water-monsters swarmed in the
river as thick as ants, there was such a countless number of
them.

“Then I directed that my trumpets be blown and the
troops depart, when it was the eleventh hour of the day, and
we set out. We then saw people traveling along the river who 90
had made of the reeds and species of trees that stood on the
river bank a kind of vessel that they sat on top of. When we
asked them about fresh water, they answered us and said in
their language where we could find it, and said that we
should come upon a certain very large lake in which there
was plenty of fresh and sweet water, and that we should
reach it quickly enough if we were diligent. And then it was
on account of so many threats that we traveled all that night
weakened with thirst and sorely troubled by the weight of
our weapons. And through the whole night that we traveled
thus, lions and bears and tigers and panthers and wolves
continually attacked us, and we fended them off. Then the
next day, when it was the eighth hour of the day, we arrived 95
at the lake that we had been told about. It was hemmed
about with jungle the breadth of a mile, but there was a path
to the water. I reveled in that sweet and fresh water, and

minne þurst ærest gelehte ond þa eal min weored, ða het ic wætrian sona ure hors ond ure nieteno; eall wæron hie swiðe mid þurste fornumene. Ða het ic sioððan sona þa fyrd wic-ian. Wæs seo wic-stow ða on lengo .xx.es furlonga long, ond swa eac in brædo. Sioðþan hie þa gewicod hæfdon, þa het ic ceorfan ða bearwas ond þone wudu fyllan þæt monnum wære þy epre to þæm wæterscipe to ganganne, ond to þæm
 100 mere þe we bi gewicod hæfdon. Ða het ic ða gesamnian eall þa ure hors ond nietenu ond elpendas ond hie het gebringan on middum þæm urum wicum, ond betwih þæm geteldum, þy læs hiora ænig to lore wurde, forþon us wæs uncuð hwæt us on nihtlicum fyrste gesælde. Ond þa het ic eac of þæm wudo þe ðær gefylled wæs þæt mon fyr onælde. Sio fyrd þe mid me wæs, þa didon hie swa, ond þa ðær onældon þusend fyra ond eac fif hund. Forþon ic þæt dyde, gif us on niht uncuðes hwæt on becwome, þæt we hæfdon æt þæm fyre leoht ond fullaste.

“Ða we þara fyra hæfdon onæled swa fela swa us þa ðuhte, þa bleow man mine byman ond ic mete þigde ond eall min
 105 fyrd swa dyde. Wæs hit þa an tid to æfenes, ond þa het ic onbærnan ðara gyldenra leoht-fato þe ic mid me hæfde twa þusendo. Ða toforan monan upgonge, þa cwomon þær *scorpiones* þæt wyrm-cyn swa hie ær gewunlice wæron toward þæs wætersciepes. Wæs þæra wyrma micel mænegeo ond heora wæs unrim, ond hie swiðe on þa ure wic onetton ond in þa feollon. Ða æfter þon cwoman þær hornede nædran *carastis* þæt næder-cyn. Ða wæron ealle missenlices hiwes,
 110 forþon hie wæron sume reode, sume blace, sume hwite. Sumum þonne scinan þa scilla ond lixtan swylce hie wæron gyldne þonne mon onlocode. Eall þæt lond hleoðrade for þara wyrma hwistlunge, ond us eac noht lytel ege from him

then as soon as I had slaked my thirst and then my whole troop theirs, I had our horses and livestock watered; they were all devastated by thirst. Then right away I told the troops to pitch camp. The encampment was twenty furlongs in length and likewise in breadth. After they had made camp, I ordered that the groves be cut and the jungle felled, so that it would be easier for the men to get to the water source, and to the lake that we had camped by. Then I had all our
 100 horses and livestock and elephants assembled and placed in the midst of our camp, and among the tents, lest any of them go missing, since it was not plain to us what might happen to us over the course of the night. And then I ordered also that fires be kindled from the wood that had been felled. The troops that were with me did so, and there they kindled one thousand five hundred fires. I did this so that if anything unanticipated happened to us during the night, we should have light and the benefit of the fire.

“When we had kindled as many fires as we intended, there was a blast of my trumpets and I took a meal, and all my troops did likewise. It was then one hour till evening,
 105 and I directed that two thousand of the golden lamps that I had with me be lighted. Then before moonrise those vermin called scorpions came, as they were accustomed, toward the water source. There was a great multitude of the vermin and their number was countless, and they rushed in force upon our camp and fell upon it. Then after that there came horned snakes, the kind of snake called *cerastes*. They were all of various colors, for some of them were red, some black, some white. When observed, the scales of some shone and
 110 gleamed as if they were made of gold. All that region buzzed with the hissing of those pests, and we also had no little

wæs, ac we þa mid scyldum us scyldan, ond eac mid long-scaftum sperum hie slogan ond cwealdon, monige eac in fyre forburnon. Þas ðing we þus drugon þæt we swa wið þam wyrnum fuhtan ond wunnan huru twa tida þære nihte.

“Sioðþan hie þa wyrmas hæfdon ondruncen þæs wætres, þa gewiton hie þonon ond ure no ne ehton. Ða wæs seo
 115 þridde tid þære nihte; þa wolde we us gerestan. Ða cwoman þær nædran eft wunderlicran þonne ða oþre wæron ond egeslicran, þa hæfdon tu heafdo ond eac sume hæfdon þreo. Wæron hie wunderlicre micelnisse: wæron hie swa greate swa columnan ge eac sume uphyrran ond gryttran. Cwoman þa wyrmas of þæm neah-dunum ond scrafum þider to þon þæt hie þæt wæter drincan woldon. Eodon þa wyrmas ond scluncon wundorlice: wæron him þa breost upgewende ond on ðæm hricge eodon, ond a swa hie hit geforan gelice mid þæm scillum gelice mid ðe muþe ða eorþan sliton ond tæron. Hæfdon hie þa wyrmas þrie slite tungan, ond þonne hie eðe-
 120 nende þecelle. Wæs þæra wyrma oroð ond eþung swiðe deað-berende ond æterne, ond for hiora þæm wol-beorendan oroðe monige men swulton. Wið þissum wyrnum we fuhton leng þonne ane tide þære nihte, ond hie þa wyrmas acwealdon .xxx.tig monna þære fyrde, ond minra agenra þegna .xx.

“Ða bæd ic þa fyrde hwæpre þæt hie hæfdon god ellen þara þinga þe us on becwomon, swa monigra geswencnissa ond earfeðo. Ða hit wæs seo fifte tid þære nihte, þa mynton we us gerestan, ac þa cwoman þær hwite leon in fearra gelicnisse swa micle, ond hie ealle swiðe grymetende ferdon. Mid þy ða leon þyder cwoman, þa ræsdon hie sona on us, ond we us wið him sceldan þæs ðe we mihton, ond us wæs swælc

dread on their account, but we shielded ourselves from them with our shields, and also with long-shafted spears we struck and killed them, as well as burned many in the fire. We thus endured these conditions so that we fought with those vermin and struggled as much as two hours of the night.

“After the pests had drunk the water, they departed and did not attack us. Then it was the third hour of the night; we wanted to rest then. Then there came again snakes more
 115 amazing than the others had been, and more dreadful, which had two heads, and some even had three. They were of amazing size: they were as large as columns, and some were even taller and thicker. The vermin came there from the neighboring hills and caves because they wanted to drink the water. The pests moved and slithered in amazing fashion: their breasts were turned up, and they went on their backs, and ever as they moved they slit and tore the earth as much with their scales as with their mouths. Those vermin had three slits of the tongue, and when they exhaled, out of their mouths with their breath came something like a burning torch. The breath and exhalations of the pests were very
 120 deadly and venomous, and on account of their pestilential breath, many men died. With these pests we fought longer than one hour in the night, and the vermin killed thirty men of the troops, and twenty of my own officers.

“I told the troops, though, to have good courage in the face of those conditions that had affected us, so many trials and difficulties. When it was the fifth hour of the night, we intended to get some rest, but then there came white lions the likes of bulls for size, and they all came roaring fiercely. When the lions came there, they immediately rushed at us, and we shielded ourselves against them as we could, and

geswencnis ond swilc earfeþo mid deorum becymen in þære
 125 sweartan niht ond in þære þystran. Swelce eac eoforas þær
 cwoman unmætlicre micelnisse, ond monig oþer wildeor,
 ond eac tigris us on þære nihte þar abisgodon. Swelce þær
 eac cwoman hreape-mys þa wæron in culefrena gelicnesse
 swa micle, ond þa on ure ondwilitan sperdon ond us pulle-
 don. Hæfdon hie eac þa hreape-mys teð in monna gelicnisse,
 ond hie mid þæm þa men wundodon ond tæron.

“Eac ðæm oþrum bisgum ond geswencnissum þe us on
 becwomm, þa cwom semninga swiðe micel deor sum mare
 þonne þara oðra ænig. Hæfde þæt deor þrie hornas on foran-
 130 heafde, ond mid þæm hornum wæs egeslice gewæpnod. Þæt
 deor *Indeos hatað dentes tyrannum*. Hæfde þæt deor horse
 gelic heafod, ond wæs blæces heowes. Ðis deor mid þy ðe
 hit þæs wætres ondronc, þa beheold hit þa ure wic-stowe,
 ond þa semninga on us ond on ure wic-stowe ræsdæ. Ne hit
 for þæm bryne wandode þæs hatan leges ond fyres þe him
 wæs ongean, ac hit ofer eall wod ond eode. Mid þy ic þa
 getrymede þæt mægen *Greca* heriges, ond we us wið him
 scyldan woldon, þa hit ofsloh sona minra þegna .xxvi. ane
 135 ræse, ond .lii. hit oftræd ond hie to loman gerenode, þæt hie
 mec nænigre note nytte beon meahton. Ond we hit þa un-
 softe mid strælum ond eac mid long-sceaftum sperum of
 scotadon ond hit ofslogon ond acwealdon.

“Þa hit wæs foran to uhtes, þa æteowde þær wol-berende
 lyft hwites hiowes, ond eac missenlices wæs heo on hring-
 wisan fag, ond monige men for heora þæm wol-berendan
 stence swulton mid þære wol-beorendan lyfte þe þær swelc
 æteowde. Þa ðær cwoman eac *Indisce* mys in þa fyrd in foxa
 gelicnisse ond in heora micle, ða þonne ure feþer-fot-nietenu

such trials and difficulties were visited on us with animals in
 the black night and in the dark. So, too, there came boars of
 125 immense size, and many other wild animals, and also tigers
 kept us busy there during the night. Likewise there came
 bats that were the likes of doves for size, and they struck us
 in the face and plucked out our hair. The bats also had teeth
 like humans', and with them they wounded and lacerated
 the men.

“In addition to the other trials and afflictions that hap-
 pened to us, there came suddenly a certain very large animal,
 greater than any of the others. That animal had three horns
 on its forehead, and it was dauntingly armed with those
 horns. Indians call that animal ‘teeth-despot’. The animal
 130 had a head like a horse, and it was of black color. When this
 animal had drunk the water, it noticed our encampment,
 and then suddenly it rushed upon us and our camp. It did
 not hesitate on account of the burning of the hot flame and
 fire that it faced, but it moved along and walked over every-
 thing. While I was positioning the force of the Greek army,
 and we intended to shield ourselves against it, it at once
 killed twenty-six of my officers in a single onslaught, and it
 trampled fifty-two and made cripples of them, so that they
 135 could be of no use to me. And then we fiercely shot it with
 arrows and also with long-shafted spears and felled and
 killed it.

“When it was before daybreak, a poisonous vapor ap-
 peared, of white color and also marked here and there by
 whorls, and many men died on account of the poisonous
 odor with the noxious vapor wherever such appeared. Then
 there came also Indian mice into the army similar to foxes
 and of their size, which bit and wounded our livestock, and

bitan ond wundedon, ond monige for hiora wundum swul-
 tan. Para monna hit þonne ælc gedigde, þeah hie heora
 hwelcne gewundodan. Ða hit wæs toforan dæges, þa cwo-
 man þær þa fugelas, *nocticoraces* hatton; wæron in wealh-
 140 hafoces gelicnesse. Wæron hie þa fugelas brunes hiowes,
 ond him wæron þa nebb ond þa clea ealle blace. Ða fuglas
 ybsæton eallne þone ofer þæs meres, ond þa fuglas us næ-
 nige laðe ne yfle ne wæron, ac hie þa gewunelican fixas þe in
 þæm mere wæron mid hiora cleum uptugon ond þa tæron.
 Ða fuglas þa we hie ne onweg flegdon ne him lað dydon, ac
 hi him selfe eft gewiton þonon.

“Ða hit ða on morgen dæg wæs, ða het ic ealle mine lad-
 þeowas þe mec on swelc earfeðo gelæddon, het hie þa gebin-
 dan ond him þa ban ond sconcan forbrecan, ðæt hie on niht
 wæron from þæm wrymum asogone þe þæt wæter sohton.
 Ond ic him het eac þa honda of aheawan, þæt hie be gewyrh-
 tum þes wites wite drugon, þe hie ær hiora þonces us on
 gelæddon ond gebrohton.

145 “Het ða blawan mine byman ond þa fyrd faran forð þy
 wege þe we ær ongunnen hæfdon. Foran we ða þurh ða fæst-
 lond ond þurh þa ungeferenlican eorþan. Ða wæs þær eft ge-
 somnad micel fyrd Indiscra monna ond þæra el-reordigra þe
 ða lond budon, ond we þa wið þæm gefuhton. Mid þy we þa
 us eft ongeaton maran gefeoht toward ond mare gewin,
 ða forleton we þa frecnan wegas ond siðfato, ond þa þæm
 selran we ferdon. Ond swa mid mine werode onsunde in
 Patriacen þæt lond we becwoman mid golde ond oþrum
 150 wolum swiðe gewelgode, ond hie us þær fremsumlice ond
 luflice onfengon. Mid þy we þa eft of þæm londe foron of
 Patriacen, ða becwoman we on þa lond-gemæro Medo ond

many died on account of their wounds. Each of the men sur-
 vived it, though they wounded all of them. When it was be-
 fore sunrise, there came those birds called ‘night-ravens’;
 they resembled falcons. The birds were of a glossy appear-
 140 ance, and their beaks and claws were all black. The birds en-
 circled the entire shore of the lake, and none of the birds
 were hostile or harmful to us, but with their claws they
 snatched up and lacerated the native fish that were in the
 lake. We did not drive the birds away or do them harm, but
 they themselves at length departed.

“In the morning when it was day, I commanded that all
 the guides who had led me into such straits be bound, and
 that their thighbones and shanks be broken, so that during
 the night they would be consumed by the vermin that came
 looking for water. And I also commanded that their hands
 be cut off, so that by virtue of that torment they would suf-
 fer the torment that they had willingly invited and brought
 upon us.

145 “Then I had my trumpets sounded and the troops set out
 the way we had started. We traveled then through rough ter-
 rain and trackless expanses. A large force of Indian men and
 of the gibberish-speaking people who inhabited those re-
 gions was assembled there anew, and we fought against
 them. Thereupon, when we perceived fiercer combat and a
 greater struggle impending for us, we abandoned those per-
 ilous routes and avenues, and we traveled on better ones.
 And so with my forces intact, handsomely endowed with
 gold and other riches, we entered the province Patriacen,
 and there they received us graciously and gladly. Thereafter
 150 when we departed from the province of Patriacen, we came

Persa. Ða we ðær eft edniowunga hæfdon micle gefeoht, ond .xx. daga ic þær mid minre fyrde wið him wicode.

“Sioðþan we þa þonon ferdon, þa wæs hit on seofon-nihta fæce þæt we to þæm londe ond to þære stowe becwo- man þær Porrus se cyning mid his fyrde wicode. Ond he swiðor þæs londes fæstenum truwode þonne his gefeohte ond gewinne. Ða wilnade he þæt he me cuðe ond mine þeg- nas, þa he þæs frægen ond axsode from þæm ferendum
155 minra wic-stowa. Ða wæs þæt me gesæd þæt he wilnade mec to cunnenne ond min werod. Ða alede ic minne kyne-gyrylan ond me mid uncuþe hrægle ond mid lyþerlice gerelan me gegerede, swelce ic wære hwelc folclic mon ond me wære metes ond wines þearf. Ða ic wæs in þæm wicum Porres, swa ic ær sæde, ða sona swa he me þær geahsode ond him mon sægde þæt þær mon cymen wæs of Alexandres here-wicum, þa het he me sona to him lædan. Mid þy ic þa wæs to him gelæded, þa frægn he me ond ahsode hwæt Alexander se cyning dyde ond hulic mon he wære ond in hwylcere yldo. Ða bysmrode ic hine mid minum ondswarum ond him sæde
160 þæt he forealdod wære ond to þæs eald wære þæt he ne mihte elcor gewearmigan buton æt fyre ond æt gledum. Ða wæs he sona swiðe glæd ond gefeonde þara minra ondswaro ond worda, forþon ic him sæde þæt he swa forealdod wære. Ond ða cwæð he eac, ‘Hu mæg he la ænige gewinne wið me spowan swa forealdod mon, forþon ic eom me self geong ond hwæt?’ Ða he ða geornlicor me frægn be his þingum, ða sæde ic þæt ic his þinga feola ne cuþe ond hine seldon gesawe ðone cyning, forþon þe ic wære his þegnes mon ond his ceapes heorde ond wære his feoh-bigenga. Ða he ðas word ge- hyrde, ða sealde he me an gewrit ond ænne epistolān ond me

to the frontiers of the Medes and Persians. There again we had pitched battles, and twenty days I was encamped with my troops opposite them.

“After we had departed from there, it was the space of seven nights till we came to the region and to the place where King Porus was encamped with his forces. And he trusted more in the defenses of the region than in his fighting ability and prowess. Then he desired to be acquainted with me and my officers, when he heard of and received intelligence from travelers about my camp. I was told then
155 that he desired to be acquainted with me and my corps. I then put aside my royal robes and dressed myself in rough clothing and humble garb, as if I were a plebeian man and I had need of food and wine. When I was in Porus’s camp, as I said before, as soon as he learned of me there and he was told that someone had arrived from Alexander’s camp, he demanded that I be brought to him at once. When I was brought to him, he questioned me and asked what King Alexander was doing and what sort of man he was and of what age. Then I mocked him with my answers and told him that he (Alexander) was decrepit with age and was so old that he could not stay warm otherwise than at a fire and at coals. Straightway he was very pleased and delighted at my re-
160 sponses and my remarks, because I had said that he was so decrepit with age. And then he said also, ‘How in the world can a man so decrepit with age prevail against me in any combat, since I am myself young and vigorous?’ When he asked me more particularly about his affairs, I said that I did not know much about his affairs and seldom saw the king, because I was his officer’s man and his herdsman and tender of his cattle. When he heard these remarks, he gave me a

bæd þæt ic hine Alexandre þæm kyninge ageafe, ond me eac mede gehet gif ic hit him agyfan wolde, ond ic him gehet þæt ic swa don wolde swa he me bæd. Swa sona ic ða þonon gewiten wæs ond eft cwom to minum here-wicum, þa ægþer ge ær ðon þe ic þæt gewrit rædde ge eac æfter þon þæt
 165 ic wæs swiðe mid hleahre onstýred. Ðas þing ic forþon þe secge, *magister*, ond Olimphiade minre meder ond minum geswustrum, þæt ge gehyrdon ond ongeaton þa oferhygdlican gedyrstignes þæs el-reordgan kyninges.

“Hæfde ic þa þæs kyniges wic ond his fæstenu gesceawod þe he mid his fyrde in gefaren hæfde. Ða sona on morgne þæs ða eode Porrus se kyning me on hond mid ealle his ferde ond dugoþe þa he hæfde ongieten þæt he wið me gewinnan ne meahte. Ond of þæm feondscipe þe us ær betweonum wæs, þæt gesælde þæt he seoðþan wæs me freond ond eallum greca herige ond min gefera ond gefylcea. Ond ic him ða eft his rice ageaf, ond þa wæs he swa gefeonde for ðære unwendan are þæs rices, þe he him seolfa næniges rices ne wende, þæt he ða me eall his gold-hord æteowde, ond he þa ægþer ge mec ge eac eall min werod mid golde
 170 gewelgode. Ond Herculis gelicnisse ond Libri ðara twegea goda, he buta of golde gegeat ond geworhte ond hie butu asette in þæm east-dæle middan-geardes. Ða wolde ic witan hwæþer ða gelicnissa wæron gegotene ealle swa he sæde; het hie þa þurhborian. Þa wæron hie buta of golde gegotene. Ða het ic eft þa ðyrela þe hiora mon þurh cunnode mid golde forwyrcean ond afyllon ond het þa ðæm godum bæm onsægdnisse onsecgan.

“Þa ferdon we forð ond woldan ma wunderlicra þinga ge-
 175 seon ond sceawian ond mærlícra. Ac þa ne gesawon we swa swa we þa geferdon noht elles buton þa westan feldas ond

letter and a missive and asked that I give it to King Alexander, and he promised me a reward if I should give it to him, and I promised that I would do as he asked me. As soon as I had departed from there and I came back to my encampment, both before I read the letter and after, I was overcome with laughter. I am telling these things to you, teacher, and
 165 to my mother Olimphias and my sisters, so that you may hear and comprehend the arrogant presumption of that gibberish-speaking king.

“I had then studied the king’s camp and the fortifications into which he had gone with his troops. Then at once the next day King Porus submitted to me with all his force and troops when he had perceived that he could not fight against me. And out of the enmity that had been between us, it happened that he afterward was a friend to me and to the entire Greek army, and my comrade and ally. And then I gave his kingdom back to him, and he was so happy about the unexpected favor of his kingdom, since he himself had not expected any kingdom, that he showed me his entire treasury, and he endowed both me and all my troops with gold. And
 170 he cast and formed images of the two gods Hercules and Liber, both of gold, and he erected both on the eastern edge of the world. Then I wanted to know whether the statues were cast just the way he had said; I ordered that they be drilled into. They were both cast of solid gold. I then directed that the holes by which they had been tested be done away with and filled with gold again and commanded that sacrifices be offered to both gods.

“Then we went on our way and wanted to see and explore more wonderful and more splendid things. But as we traveled we saw nothing else but the uncultivated plains and
 175

wudu ond duna be þæm garsecg, ða wæron monnum ungeferde for wildeorum ond wýrmum. Þa ferde ic hwæpre be þæm sæ to þon þæt ic wolde cunnian meahte ic ealne middan-geard ybferan swa garsecg beligeð. Ac þa sægdon me þa lond-bigengan þæt se sæ wære to þon þiostre ond se garsecg eall, þæt hine nænig mon mid scipe geferan ne meahte. Ond ic þa ða wynstran dælas Indie wolde geondferan þy læs me owiht in þæm londe beholen oððe bedegled wære.

180 “Ða wæs þæt lond eall swa we geferdon adrugad ond fen, ond cannon ond hreod weoxan. Ða cwom þær semninga sum deor of þæm fenne ond of ðæm fæstene. Wæs þæm deore eall se hrycg acæglod. Swelce snoda hæfde þæt deor, seono-wealt heafod swelce mona, ond þæt deor hatte *quasi caput luna*, ond him wæron þa breost gelice niccres breastum ond heardum toðum ond miclum hit wæs gegyred ond geteþed. Ond hit þa þæt deor ofsloh mine þegnas twegen. Ond we þa þæt deor nowper ne mid spere gewundigan ne meahte ne mid nænige wæpne, ac we hit uneaþe mid isernum hame-
rum ond slegcum gefylton ond hit ofbeoton.

185 “Ða becwoman we syðþan to þæm wudum Indie ond to þæm ytemestum gemærum þæs londes, ond ic þa het þa fyrd þær wician be þære ea þe Biswicmon hatte. Wæron þa wic on lengo .i. furlanga long ond swa eac in brædo. Woldon we þa to urum swæsendum sittan; wæs hit þa seo endlefte tid dæges. Þa wæs semninga geboden þæt we wæpenu noman ond hie tioloden, ond us wære micel þearf þæt we us scyldan. Þa dydon we swa, fengon to ussum wæpnum swa us be-
190 boden wæs. Ða cwom þær micel mængeo elpenda of þæm wudo, ungemetlic weorod þara diora. Cwومان hie to þon þyder þæt hie on ða ure wic feohtan. Þa het ic sona þa hors

jungles and hills by the sea, which were inaccessible on account of wild animals and vermin. I traveled nonetheless beside the sea because I wanted to test whether I could circle the entire earth that the ocean surrounds. But then the inhabitants told me that the sea was so dark, and all the ocean, that no one could navigate it by ship. And then I wanted to explore the left-hand parts of India, lest anything in that country be concealed or withheld from me.

180 “That entire region which we visited was parched and marshy, and cane and reeds grew. Then there suddenly appeared a certain animal from the fen and from the wilderness. The animal’s entire back was serrated. The animal had something like head-dresses, a head round like the moon, and the animal was called ‘head-like-moon’, and its chest was like the chest of a sea-serpent, and it was equipped and toothed with hard, large teeth. And the animal killed two of my officers. And we could wound that animal neither with a spear nor with any weapon, but with effort we felled it with hammers and mallets and beat it to death.

185 “Then afterward we came to the jungles of India and to the remotest borders of the country, and I directed the troops then to make camp there by the river called Biswicmon. The encampment was fifty furlongs in length and likewise in breadth. We wanted then to sit down to our dinner; it was the eleventh hour of the day. Then suddenly word came that we were to go for our weapons and grab them, and it was a dire necessity that we protect ourselves. We did so, seized our weapons as we were told. There came then a vast
190 herd of elephants out of the jungle, an immense army of the beasts. They had come there for the purpose of attacking our camp. I then immediately ordered that the horses be

gerwan ond cored-men hleapan up, ond het geniman swina micelne wræd ond drifan on horsum ongean þæm elpendum, forþon ic wiste þæt swin wæron ðæm deorum laðe, ond hiora rying hie meahte afyrhton. Ond þa sona þæs þa elpendas ða swin gesawon, þa wæron hie afyrhte ond sona on þone wudu gewiton. Ond we þa niht on þære wic-stowegesundlice wicodon, ond ic hæfde hie mid fæstene gefæstnad, þæt us nowþer ne deor ne oðer earfeðo sceððan meahten.

195 “Ða hit þa on morgen dæg wæs, þa ferdon we on oþer þeod-lond India; ða cwoman we on sumne micelne feld. Ða gesawe we þær ruge wif-men ond wæpned-men; wæron hie swa ruwe ond swa gehære swa wildeor. Wæron hie nigon fota uplonge, ond hie wæron þa men nacod, ond hie næniges hrægles ne gimdon. Ðas men Indeos hatað *ictifafonas*, ond hie of ðæm neaheum ond merum þa hron-fiscas up tugon ond þa æton ond be þæm lifdon ond þæt wæter æfter druncon. Mid þy ic þa wolde near þa men geseon ond sceawigon, ða flugon hie sona in þa wæter ond hie þær in þæm
200 stan-holum hyddon. Þa æfter þon gesawon we betweoh þa wudu-bearwas ond þa treo healf-hundinga micle mængeo, ða cwoman to þon þæt hie woldon us wundigan. Ond we þa mid strælum hie scotodon ond hie sona onweg aflymdon, ða hie eft on þone wudu gewiton. Þa syððan geferdon we in þa westenn India, ond we þa þær noht wunderlices ne mærlices gesawon.

“Ond we þa eft in Fasiacen þæt lond becwoman þanan we ær ferdon, ond we þær gewicodon be þæm neah-wætrum, ond we þær ure geteld bræddon ealle on æfen, ond þær wæron eac fyr wel monigo onæled. Ða cwom þær semninga swiðe micel wind ond gebræc, ond to þæs unheorlic se wind geweox þæt he þara ura getelda monige afylde, ond he ða eac

prepared and the cavalry mount them, and I ordered that a large herd of swine be taken and driven by cavalry toward the elephants, because I knew that swine were noxious to those animals, and their grunting could frighten them. And then as soon as the elephants saw the swine, they were abashed and immediately departed into the jungle. And that night we camped safely in that encampment, and I had it reinforced with fortifications, so that neither animals nor other annoyances could visit us.

“When it was daylight on the next day, we traveled to another province of India; then we came into a certain large plain. There we saw shaggy women and men; they were as shaggy and hairy as wild animals. They were nine feet tall, and the people were naked, and they did not bother with clothing. Indians call those people ‘fish-fauns’, and they swept up the whales from the nearby rivers and lakes and ate them and lived on them and afterward drank the water. When I wished to see and examine them more closely, they fled abruptly into the water and hid themselves in gaps in the rocks. After that we saw among the groves and the trees a large group of cynocephali, which came with the intention of wounding us. And when we shot at them with arrows and immediately drove them off, they went back into the jungle. Afterward we traveled into the wastes of India, and we saw nothing there of a marvelous or memorable nature.

“And then we went back to the region Fasiacen from which we had set out, and we made camp there by the neighboring waters, and there we erected all our tents in the evening, and there were also quite a few fires lighted. Then suddenly there came a very strong wind and a blast, and the wind grew so fierce that it leveled many of our tents, and

205 usse feþer-fot-nietenu swiðe swencte. Ða het ic gesomnigan eft þa geteld ond seamas ealle tosomne, ond hie mon þa seamas ond þa þing ðara ura wic-stowa earfoðlice tosomne for þæm winde gesomnode. Ond ða on gehliuran dene ond on wearman we gewicodan. Mid þy we gewicod hæfdon ond ure þing eall gearo, þa het ic eallne þone here þæt he to swæsendum sæte ond mete þigde, ond hie þa swa dydon. Mid þy hit æfenne nealehte, ða ongunnon þa windas eft weaxan ond þæt weder hreogan, ond ungemetlic cele geweoþ on þone æfen. Ða cwom þær micel snaw, ond swa miclum sniwe
 210 swelce micel flys feolle. Ða ic þa unmætnisse ond micelnisse ðæs snawes geseah, ða þuhte me þæt ic wiste þæt he wolde ealle þa wic-stowe forfeallan. Ða het ic þone here þæt hie mid fotum þone snaw trædon, ond þa fyr eall wæron forneah for þære micelnisse þæs snawes adwæscte ond acwencte. Hwæþere us þær wæs anes þinges eþnes, þæt se snaw ðær leng ne wunede þonne ane tide. Ða sona wæs æfter þon swiðe sweart wolcen ond genip, ond þa eac cwoman of þæm sweartan wolcne byrnende fyr. Þa fyr ðonne feollon on þa eorþan swelce byrnende þecelle, ond for þæs fyres bryne eall
 215 se feld born. Ða cwædon men þætte hie wendon þæt þæt wære goda eorre þæt usic þær on becwome. Ða het ic eald hrægl toslitan ond habban wið þæm fyre ond sceldan mid. Þa seoððan æfter þon we hæfdon smolte niht ond gode siðþan usic þa earfeðo forleton, ond we ða siðþan butan orenum þingum mete þigdon ond usic restan.

“Ond ic þær þa bebyrgde minra þegna .v. hund þe ðær betweoh ða snawas ond earfeþo ond þa fyr þe us þær in þæm wicum on becwoman þæt hie forwurdon ond deade wæron. Ond þa het ic of þære wic-stowe siððan þa ferd faran forð,

likewise it took a heavy toll of our livestock. I then ordered 205 that the tents be assembled again and the bags all brought together, and the bags and gear of our encampment were gathered with difficulty on account of the wind. And then we camped in a milder and warmer valley. When we had encamped and put all our things in order, I told the whole army to sit down to dinner and have a meal, and they did so. When it came near to evening, the winds began to rise again and the weather to grow rough, and an intense chill developed in the evening. Then there came a heavy snow, and it snowed as much as if a thick fleece had descended. When I 210 saw the magnitude and thickness of the snow, it appeared such that I realized it would overwhelm the encampment. I then directed the troops to tread the snow with their feet, and the fires were all nearly smothered and extinguished on account of the depth of the snow. However, we were fortunate in one respect, that the snow did not remain there longer than one hour. Then immediately after that there was a very dark cloud and gloom, and also there came from the dark cloud consuming fires. The fires fell on the earth like burning torches, and due to the burning of the fire, the entire plain was ablaze. People said then that they expected 215 that it was the gods' anger that had visited us there. Then I ordered that old clothing be torn up and used against the fire as protection. After that we had a calm and a fine night when those hardships had passed us by, and then afterward we took a meal without harmful incidents and rested ourselves.

“And there I buried five hundred of my officers who had perished there and lay dead between the snows and mishaps and the fires that had visited us in that camp. And I

220 ond we þa foron forð be þæm sæ, ond þær ða hean hos ond dene ond garsecg ðone Æthiopia we gesawon. Swelce eac þa miclan ond þa mæron dune we gesawon þa mon hateð *Enesios* ond þæt scræf Libri þæs godes. Ða het ic þær in bescu-fan forworhte men, þæt ic wolde gewitan hweþer sio segen soð wære þe me mon ær be þon sægde, þæt þær nænig mon in gan mehte ond eft gesund æfter þon beon nymþe he mid asegendnisseum in eode in þæt scræf. Ond þæt wæs eac æfter þon gecyðed in þara monna deaðe, forþon ðy þridan dæge hie swulton ðæs þe hie in þæt scræf eodon. Ond ic eap-modlice ond geornlice bæd þa god-mægen þæt hie mec ealles middan-geardes kyning ond hlaford mid hean sigum geweorþeden, ond in Macedoniam ic eft gelæded wære to Olimphiade minre meder ond to minum geswustrum ond gesibbum. Ða wolde ic eft in Fasiacen þæt lond feran.

225 “Mid þy ic þa ferde mid mine weorede, ða cwoman us þær on ðæm wege twegen ealde men togeanes. Ða frægn ic hie ond ahsode hwæþer hie owiht mærlíc in þæm londum wisten. Ða ondsworadon hie mec ond sægdon þæt nære mara weg þonne ic meahte on tyn dagum geferan. Hwæþre mid ealle mine weorede somod ic hit geferan ne mehte for ðara wega nerwette, ac mid feower þusendum monna ic hit geferan meahte, þæt ic mærlíces hwæthwugo gesawe. Ða wæs ic 230 swiðe bliðe ond gefeonde for þæm hiora wordum. Ða cwæð ic eft to him ond him spræc liðum wordum to: ‘Secgað, la, mec, git ealdon, hwæt þæt sie mærlíces ond micellices þæt git mec gehatað þæt ic þær geseon mæge.’ Ða ondswarode me hiora oðer ond cwæð: ‘Þu gesiehist, kyning, gif þu hit gefereest, þa tu trio sunnan ond monan on Indisc ond on Gre-cisc sprecende. Oþer þara is wæpned-cynnes, sunnan trio, oþer wif-kynnes, þæt monan trio, ond hie geseccað þæm

then ordered the army to set out from that encampment, and we made our way along the sea, and there we saw the steep promontories and valley and the ocean of Ethiopia. Likewise we saw the great and famous mountains that are 220 called *Enesii*, and the cave of the god Liber. I ordered then that condemned men be thrown in there, since I wanted to know whether the report was true that I had been given, that no one could go in there and be fit again after that, unless he went into the cave with offerings. And that was also shown thereafter by the death of those men, because on the third day after they had gone into that cave they died. And I humbly and earnestly prayed of the divine powers that they would exalt me with high victories as king and ruler of the entire world, and that I would be guided back to Macedonia to my mother Olimphias and to my sisters and kin. Then I wanted to return to the region Fasiacen.

225 “As I was en route with my troops, two old men came toward us on the road. I questioned them and asked whether they knew of anything extraordinary in that region. They answered me that it was no greater distance than could be covered in ten days. However, I could not cover it with all my assembled army on account of the narrowness of the paths, but I could cover it with four thousand men, in which case I might see something extraordinary. I was very happy and elated at their report. I then said in turn to them, speak- 230 ing with mild words, ‘So, tell me, you old men, what sort of extraordinary and great thing it is that you promise me I can see there.’ One of them answered me then and said, ‘You will see, your majesty, if you traverse it, the two trees of the sun and moon speaking in Indic and in Greek. One of them is male, the tree of the sun, the other female, the tree of the

men þe hie frineð, hwæt godes oþðe yfles him becuman sceal.' Ða ne gelyfde ic him ac wende þæt hi mec on hyscte ond on bismersægdon, ond ic swa cwæð to minum geferan: 'Min þrym is from eastewearde middan-gearde oþ þæt westanweardne, ond mec þas forealdodan el-reordegan nu her bysmergeað.'

235 "Mynte ic hie haton yflian; ða sworan hie swiðe þæt hie soð sægdon ond noht lugen þara þinga. Ða wolde ic gecun- nian hwæþer hie mec soð sægdon, ond mec mine geferan bædon þæt hie swelcra merþo bescereðe ne wæron, ac ðæt we his gecunnedon, hwæþer hit swelc wære, ða hit næs micel to geferanne. Genom þa mid mec þreo þusendo ond forlet mine fyrd elcor in Fasiacen under Pore þæm kyninge ond under minum gerefum ðær abidon. Ða foran we, ond usic þa lad-teowas læddon þurh þa wædlan stowe wætres ond þurh þa unarefdon lond wildeora ond wyrma, þa wæron wunderlicum nomum on Indisc geceged.

240 "Mid þy we þa nealehtan ðæm þeod-londe, þa gesawon we ægþer ge wif ge wæpned-men mid panthera fellum ond tigriscum þara deora hydum gegryde ond nanes oðres brucon. Mid þy ic þa frægn hie ond ahsode hwelcre ðeode kynnes hie wæron, ða ondswarodon hie mec ond sægdon on hiora geþeode þæt hie wæran Indos. Wæs seo stow rum ond wynsumo, ond balzamum ond recels ðær wæs genihtsumnis, ond þæt eac of þæra treowa telgan weol, ond þa men þæs londes bi ðy lifdon ond þæt æton.

"Mid þy we ða geornlicor þa stowe sceawodon ond betwih þa bearwas eodon, ond ic ða wynsumnesse ond fægernesse þæs londes wundrade, ða cwom se bisceop þære stowe us togeanes. Wæs he se bisceop .x. fota upheah, ond eall him wæs

moon, and they tell whoever asks them what of good or bad will happen to them.' I did not believe them but supposed that they were speaking to me in derision and mockery, and so I said to my companions, 'My might extends from the East of the world to the West, and these old and decrepit gibberish-speakers here are now jeering.'

"I intended to order that they be done some harm; then they swore up and down that they were speaking the truth and were not fabricating these matters. I wanted to test 235 whether they were telling me the truth, and my companions implored me that they not be deprived of the glory of such exploits, but that we try out whether it was so, now that it was not far to go. I took with me three thousand and left the rest of my army to wait in Fasiacen under King Porus and under my viceroys. Then we left, and the guides led us through the place poor in water and through the intolerable regions of wild animals and vermin, which were called by remarkable names in Indic.

"As we were nearing the inhabited region, we saw both women and men dressed in panther pelts and the hides of those animals called tigers, and they made do with nothing else. When I questioned them and asked what nationality they were, they answered me and said in their language that they were Indians. The place was spacious and pleasant, and 240 there was an abundance of balsam and incense, and it also oozed from the branches of the trees, and the people of that region lived on it and ate it.

"While we were investigating the place in greater detail and walking among the groves, and I was marveling at the delightfulness and beauty of the region, the bishop of the place came toward us. The bishop was ten feet tall, and his

se lic-homa sweart buton þæm toþum, ða wæron hwite, ond
 þa earan him þurh þyrelode, ond ear-hringas onhongedon of
 mænigfealdan gim-cynne geworhte, ond he wæs mid wil-
 deora fellum gegerwed. Ða he se bisceop to me cwom, ða
 grette he me sona ond halette his leod-þeawe. Frægn he eac
 245 me to hwon ic þider cwome ond hwæt ic þær wolde. Ða
 ondswarode ic him þæt mec lyste geseon þa halgan trio sun-
 nan ond monan. Ða ondswarode he, 'Gif þine geferan beoð
 clæne from wif-gehrine, þonne moton hie gongan in þone
 godcundan bearo.' Wæs minra geferana mid me þrio hund
 monna. Ða het se bisceop mine geferan þæt hie hiora gescie
 ond ealne heora gerelan him of adyden, ond het ic æghwæt
 swa don swa he us bebead. Wæs hit þa sio endlefte tid dæges.
 250 Ða bad se socerd sunnan setl-gonges, forþon sunnan trio
 agefeð ondsware æt þæm up-gonge ond eft æt setl-gonge,
 ond þæt monan triow gelice swa on niht dyde.

"Ða ongon ic geornlicor þa stowe sceawigan ond geond
 þa bearwas ond treowu gongan. Ða geseah ic þær balzamu
 þæs betstan stences genoh of þæm treowum ut weallan. Þæt
 balzamu ægþer ge ic ge mine geferan þær betwih þæm rin-
 dum noman þæra trio. Þonne wæron ða halgan trio sunnan
 ond monan on middum þæm oðrum treowum; meahton hie
 beon hunteontiges fota upheah, ond eac þær wæron oþre
 255 treow wunderlicre heanisse ða hatað *Indeos bebronas*. Ða
 triowa heanisse ic wundrade ond cwæð þæt ic wende þæt
 hie for miclum wætan ond regnum swa hea geweoxon. Ða
 sægde se bisceop þæt þær næfre in þæm londum regnes
 dropa ne cwome ne fugel ne wildeor, ne nænig ætern wyrm,
 þæt her dorste gesecean ða halgan gemæro sunnan ond
 monan. Eac þonne he sægde se bisceop þonne þæt *eclipsis*
 wære, þæt is þonne ðæs sunnan asprungnis oðþe þære mo-

entire body was black except for the teeth, which were
 white, and his ears pierced through, and earrings made of
 various gemstones hung down, and he was clothed in the
 skins of wild animals. When the bishop came to me, he ap-
 proached me at once and greeted me after the local custom.
 He asked me why I had come there and what I wanted there.
 I answered him that it would please me to see the sacred
 245 trees of the sun and moon. Then he answered, 'If your com-
 panions are undefiled by intimacy with women, they are
 permitted to go into the divine grove.' Of my comrades,
 three hundred of my men were with me. Then the bishop
 told my companions to take off their shoes and all their
 clothing, and I ordered that everything be done as he asked
 us. It was then the eleventh hour of the day. The priest then
 250 waited for the setting of the sun, because the tree of the sun
 gives answers at sunrise and again at sunset, and the tree of
 the moon likewise did so at night.

"I began then to explore the place more thoroughly and
 to walk among the groves and trees. Then I saw there plenty
 of balsam of the best fragrance oozing out of the trees. Both
 my companions and I gathered the balsam between the bark
 of the trees. The sacred trees of the sun and moon were
 amidst the other trees; they could have been a hundred feet
 tall, and also there were other trees of amazing height that
 255 Indians call *bebronas*. I marveled at the height of the trees
 and said that I supposed they grew so tall on account of
 plenty of moisture and rain. The bishop said then that in
 those regions there came not a drop of rain nor a bird or
 beast, nor any poisonous vermin, such that it dared visit the
 sacred precincts of the sun and moon. The bishop also said
 that when there was an eclipse, that is, extinction of the sun

nan, þæt ðe halgan triow swiðe weopen ond mid micle sare instyred wæron, forþon hie ondredon þæt hie hiora godmægne sceoldon beon benumene. Ða þohte ic," sægde Alexander, "þæt ic wolde onsægdnisse þær onsecgan, ac þa forbead me se bisceop ond sægde þæt ðæt nære alyfed ænigum men þæt he þær ænig nyten cwealde oþþe blod-gyte worhte, ac mec het þæt ic me to þara triowa fotum gebæde, þæt sunna ond mone me soþe ondswarege ondwyrdum þara þinga ðe ic frune siodðan þas þing þus gedon wæron. Ða gesawon we westan þone leoman sunnan, ond se leoma gehran
 260 þæm treowum ufonweardum. Ða cwæð se sacerd, 'Lociað nu ealle up, ond be swa hwylcum þingum swa ge willon fri- nan, þence on his heortan deagollice, ond nænig mon his geþoht openum wordum ut ne cyðe.'

"Mid þy we þa wel neah stodaþ þam bearwum ond þæm god-sprecum, þa ðohte ic on minum mode hwæþer ic meahte ealne middan-geard me on onweald geslean, ond þonne siopþan mid þæm siogorum geweorþað, ic eft meahte becuman in Macedoniam to Olimphiade minre meder, ond minum geswustrum. Ða ondswarode me þæt triow Indiscum wordum ond þus cwæd: 'Ðu unoferswyðða Alexander in gefeohtum, þu weorðest cyning ond hlaford ealles middan-geardes, ac hwæþre ne cymst þu on þinne eþel ðonan þu ferdest ær, forþon ðin gesceaft hit swa be þinum heafde ond fore hafað aræded.' Ða wæs ic ungleaw þæs geþeodes þara Indiscra worda þe þæt triow me to spræc; ða rehte hit me se bisceop ond sægde. Mid þy hit mine geferan gehyrdon þæt ic eft cwic ne moste in minne eþel becuman, ða wæron hie
 265 swiðe unrote forþon. Ða wolde ic eft on þa æfen-tid ma ahsian, ac þa næs se mona þa gyt uppe. Mid þy we þa eft eodon in þone halgan bearo ond we þa eft be þæm treowum sto-

or of the moon, the sacred trees wept profusely and were moved by great pain, because they feared that they would be deprived of their divine power. Then I thought," said Alexander, "that I would offer a sacrifice there, but the bishop forbade me and said that it was not permitted anyone to kill any animal or cause bloodshed there, but he told me to pray at the foot of the trees, that the sun and moon would answer me truthfully with responses about the things I asked after these matters were done that way. We then saw the radiance of the sun in the west, and the radiance touched the tops of the trees. Then the priest said, 'Now everyone look up, and
 260 whatever matters that you wish to ask about, think about it privately in the heart, and let no one reveal his thoughts in open speech.'

"While we were standing quite near the groves and the oracles, I thought to myself whether I could force the entire world into subjugation to me, and then afterward, exalted by those victories, whether I could return to Macedonia to my mother Olimphias and my sisters. The tree then answered me with words in Indic and spoke thus: 'Alexander, undefeated in battles, you will be king and lord of the entire world, but still you will not come to your own country from which you first set out, because your fate has decreed it thus ahead of you and beforehand.' I was ignorant of the meaning of the words in Indic that the tree had spoken to me; the bishop then explained it and told me. When my companions heard that I would not be allowed to return alive to my own country, they were very disturbed about it. I
 265 wanted to ask yet more in the evening hours, but the moon was not up yet. When we re-entered the sacred grove and we stood again by the trees, we immediately made requests

dan, gebædon us þa sona to þæm treowum swa we ær dydon. Ond ic eac in mid mec gelædde mine þrie ða getreowestan frynd, ða wæron mine syndrige treow-geþoftan—þæt wæs ærest Perticam ond Clitomum ond Pilotan—forþon ic me ne ondred þæt me þæra ænig beswice, forþon þær næs riht on þære stowe ænigne to acwellanne for þære stowe weorþunge.

“Ða þohte ic on minum mode ond on minum geþohte on hwelcre stowe ic sweltan scolde. Mid þy ða ærest se mona upeode, þa gehran he mid his sciman þæm triowum ufewardum ond þæt triow ondswarode þæm minum geþohte ond þus cwæð: ‘Alexander, fulne ende þines lifes þu hæfst gelifd, ac þys æftran geare þu swyltst on Babilone on Maius monðe
270 from þæm þu læst wenst from þæm þu bist beswicen.’ Ða wæs ic swiðe sariges modes, ond þa mine frynd swa eac þa me þær mid wæron, ond hie weopon swiðe, forþon him wære min gesynto leofre þonne hiora seolfra hælo. Ða gewiton we to urum geferum eft, ond hie woldon to hiora swæsendum sittan, ond ic wolde for þæm bysegum mines modes me gerestan. Ac þa bædon mec mine geferan þæt ic on swa micelre modes unreto ond nearonisse mec selfne mid fæstenne ne swencte. Ðigde ða tela medmicelne mete wið mines modes willan, ond þa tidlice to minre reste eode, forþon ic wolde beon gearo æt sunnan up-gonge þæt ic eft in geeode.

“Ða on morgne mid þy hit dagode, þa onbræd ic ond þa mine getreowestan frynd aweahte, þæt ic wolde in þa halgan
275 stowe gan. Ac þa reste hine se bisceop þa giet, ond mid wildeora fellum wæs gegerwed ond bewrigen. Ond irenes ond leades þa men on þæm londum wædliað ond goldes genihtsumiað, ond be ðæm balzamum þa men in þæm londe lifgeað, ond of ðæm neah-munte wealleð hluter wæter ond

of the trees as we had done earlier. And I also took in with me my three truest friends, who were my particular loyal comrades—that was first Perticas and Clitomus and Pilotas—because I was not worried that any of them would betray me, since it was not lawful to kill anyone in that spot on account of respect for the place.

“I then thought to myself and in my mind in what place I should die. At the first rising of the moon, it touched the tops of the trees with its light, and the tree answered my thoughts and spoke thus: ‘Alexander, you have lived your life to its full term, but this coming year in Babylon in the month of May you will die of what you least expect you will be overcome by.’ Then I was in depressed spirits, and my friends
270 likewise who were there with me, and they wept a great deal, because my security meant more to them than their own well-being. Then we returned to our comrades, and they wanted to sit down to their dinner, and I wanted to get some rest on account of the troubles on my mind. But my comrades asked me not to distress myself with fasting in so much disturbance and anxiety of mind. I partook of a very slender meal against my heart’s desire, and then I went to bed early, since I wanted to be ready at sunrise to go in again.

“When it dawned the next day, I got up and wakened my truest friends, since I wanted to enter the sacred place. But
275 the bishop was still in bed, and he was outfitted and covered with the skins of wild animals. And the people of that region lack iron and lead and have plenty of gold, and the people in that region live on the balsam, and from the neighboring mountain there flows water clear and fine and very sweet. The people are accustomed to drinking that and living on it.

fæger ond þæt swiðe swete. Þonne drincað þa men þæt ond
 by lifgeað. Ond þonne hie restað, þonne restað hie buton
 bedde ond bolstre, ac on wildeora fellum heora bedding bið.
 280 Ða awehte ic þone bisceop. Hæfde se bisceop þreo hund
 wintra on yldo.

“Mid þy he þa se bisceop aras, ða eode ic on þa god-
 cundan stowe ond þa þridan siðe þæt sunnan treow ongon
 frinan þurh hwelces monnes hond min ende wære getiod,
 oððe hwelcne ende-dæg min modor oþðe min geswuster nu
 gebidan scoldon. Þa ondswarede me þæt treow on grecisc
 ond þus cwæð: ‘Gif ic þe þone syrere gesecge þines feores,
 yþelice þu ða wyrde oncyrrest ond his hond befehst. Ac soð
 ic þe secge þæt yb anes geares fyrst ond eahta monað þu
 swyltst in Babilone, nalles mid iserne acweald swa ðu wenst,
 ac mid atre. Ðin modor gewiteð of weorulde þurh scond-
 licne deað ond unarlicne, ond heo ligeð unbebyrged in wege
 285 fuglum to mete ond wildeorum. Þine sweostor beoð longe
 gesæliges lifes. Ðu þonne ðeah þu lytle hwile lifge, hwepre
 ðu geweorðest an cyning ond hlaford ealles middan-geardes.
 Ac ne frign ðu unc nohtes ma ne ne axa, forþon wit habbað
 oferhleodred þæt gemære unces leohtes, ac to Fasiacen ond
 Porre þæm cyninge eft gehworf þu.’ Ond fer ðy þa weopon
 mine geferan, forþon ic swa lytle hwile lyfigan moste. Ac þa
 forbead hit se bisceop þæt hi ne weopon, þy læs þa halgan
 treow þurh heora wop ond tearas abulgen.

290 “Ond ne geherde ða ondsware þara treowa ma manna
 þonne þa mine getreowestan freond, ond hit nænig mon ut
 cypan ne moste, þy læs þa el-reordegan kyningas ðe ic ær
 mid nede to hyrsumnesse gedyde, þæt hie on þæt fægong þæt
 ic swa lytle hwile lifgean moste. Ne hit eac ænig mon þære
 ferde ðon ma ut mæran moste, þy læs hie forðon ormode

And when they go to sleep, they lie down without bed or pil-
 low, but their bedding is of the skins of wild animals. Then I
 wakened the bishop. The bishop was three hundred years of
 280 age.

“When the bishop got up, I entered the divine precinct
 and for the third time began to ask the tree of the sun
 through which man’s hand my end was ordained, or what fi-
 nal day my mother or my sisters should now expect. Then
 the tree answered me in Greek and spoke thus: ‘If I reveal to
 you the plotter against your life, you will easily turn aside
 that event and stay his hand. But I tell you the truth that in
 the space of one year and eight months you will die in Baby-
 lon, killed not by a weapon, as you expect, but by poison.
 Your mother will depart from the world by a humiliating
 and dishonorable death, and she will lie unburied on the
 road as a meal for birds and wild animals. Your sisters will
 285 live long and happy lives. You, then, although you will live
 just a little while, nonetheless will become sole king and lord
 of the entire world. But do not question us or ask us any
 more, for we have talked beyond the limit of our light, but
 turn back to Fasiacen and King Porus.’ And therefore my
 comrades wept, because I should be allowed to live so short
 a while. But the bishop forbade it that they should weep,
 lest they offend the sacred trees with their cries and tears.

“And no one other than my truest friends heard the an- 290
 swer of the trees, and no one was permitted to reveal it, lest
 the barbarian kings I had brought into subjection by force
 should take heart that I should be allowed to live so short a
 while. Neither was anyone allowed to report it any more
 widely within the army, lest the men become despondent on

wæron ond þy sænran mines willan ond weorð-myndo, ðæs hie mid mec to fromscipe geferan scoldon. Ond me næs se hrædlica ende mines lifes swa miclum weorce swa me wæs þæt ic læs mærdō gefremed hæfde þonne min willa wære. Ðas þing ic write to þon, min se leofa *magister*, þæt þu ærest gefeo in þæm fromscipe mines lifes ond eac blissige in þæm weorð-myndum. Ond eac swelce ecelice min gemynd stonde ond hleouige oðrum eorð-cyningum to bysne, ðæt hie witen þy gearwor þæt min þrym ond min weorð-mynd maran wæron þonne ealra oþra kyninga þe in middan-gearde æfre wæron.”

Finit.

that account and more negligent of my will and my honor, since they were expected to travel the route to success with me. And the approaching end of my life was not so very distressing to me as was the thought that I had achieved less glory than I had intended. I am writing these things, my dear teacher, so that you before all may rejoice in the success of my life and also revel in the honors. And likewise may my memory stand eternally and tower as an example to other earthly kings, so that they may know for certain that my glory and my honor were greater than those of all other kings who were ever on earth.”

The end.