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Alexander's Court

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***Proskynēsis* and Kiss at Alexander's Court**

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Abstract

Persians did the *proskynēsis*, the gesture of sending a kiss with the hand, in front of their king. As literary sources and archeological material show, the kiss was a crucial element of many ancient Near Eastern court ceremonials and was performed differently, according to the social *status* of the person acting it: the kiss, the *proskynēsis*, *proskynēsis* plus prostration, the kiss of the king's feet, the kiss of the ground in front of the king.

After Darius' death Alexander had become the king of Asia; he could bring finally his project to completion: to create a personal power based on the collaboration between extremely trusted Macedonians/Greeks and Persians. A necessary step was the introduction of the *proskynēsis* among his Companions. The decision is far from being related to Alexander's desire of being honored as a god, as some sources state and many scholars have thought. It responded to the political purpose of being considered the legitimate king by his Persian subjects, for which the *proskynēsis* was an essential part of the court ceremonial. And was also the tangible sign that the *status* of *hetairos* could not be granted any more. The Macedonian monarchy ceased to exist: thus, king Alexander would have granted the privilege of kissing him just to the new selected élite. No matter the origin, the condition *sine qua non* to be part of it was just the devotion to Alexander.

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The introduction of the Achaemenid *proskynēsis* at Alexander's court or the attempt to do that is a very famous episode of the Alexander history among the ancient scholars. The debates the possibility that the Companions did *proskynein* in front of Alexander caused, which we can read in the Classical sources, as in the so called Vulgate tradition (in this case Plutarch and Curtius), as in Arrian has found a place in many papers and all the monographs on Alexander. As for many other aspects related to Alexander to separate the legend and the differently biased interpretations from what may have happened is not an easy task. In any case, it is not my task to deal with the historiography in the sense of understanding why any *milieu* influenced the picture and the interpretation of the *proskynēsis affair* that the different authors gave. If it is true, 'scholars (...) have viewed the subject only in "Alexander-centered" ways'¹ without taking into consideration when and where, to what a purpose and for which public ancient authors wrote, it is also true that, aware of these elements, we can come back to the History with a clearer and more critical approach to what happened. Therefore, I will focus at most on two aspects: what kind of gesture Alexander's Companions were asked for and how it relates to the new condition Alexander set for them in the second phase of the expedition.

At first, it must be clearly explain what *proskynēsis* was². As for the etymology, the ancient Greek *kynein* means 'to kiss'³ and the pre-verb *pros* indicates the kiss is directed towards somebody in front of. Greek sources used the term *proskynēsis* to indicate a gesture performed by people in front of the Persian king, before approaching him⁴. Gadatas the eunuch could greet the king Cyrus just after observing the mandatory court protocol: 'after setting things in order within the fort, came out and did the *proskynēsis* according to the custom and said: "Joy be with you, Cyrus!"' (X. Cyr. 5.3.18). The expression *proskyneuein toi nomoi* indicates that the Greeks considered the gesture as a 'usual habit', which had become a rule because of its repetitiveness⁵. Someone will be surprised that the gesture Greeks called *proskynēsis* is already to be found in the ancient Near East at least in the III millennium BCE⁶. It is documented by Old Babylonian presentation scenes¹

¹ Howe (forthcoming 2012).

² For this first part, s. Matarese (forthcoming), where I furnished a complete picture of the *proskynēsis*.

³ *Kynein* is used at most in poetry (Frisk 1960, II, 49-50). The same theme in other Indo-European languages: got. kukjan; skt. cumbati; ted. küssen; ingl. kissen; s. Boisaq 1938, 535.

⁴ Some relevant evidence of the *proskynēsis* addressed to the Achaemenid king: Hdt. 1.134; Id. 7.136; X. Cyr. 1.3.2; 5.3.18; 8.3.13-4; Id. An. 2.5.23; III 2, 13; Plut. Them. 27; Id. Artax. 15.7; Id. Arist. 5.7; [Plut]. Mor. 488d; Arr. An. 8.3.

⁵ This is the meaning of the Greek *nomos*; s. Chantraine 1968-80, II; LSJ s. v.; Tarn 1956, 350. Far from getting behind the historical validity of Xenophon's work as a source of Achaemenid history (s. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1993 with bibliography; Nadon 2001, passim), what we are referring to it is just the Greek perception.

⁶ As Bickerman points out, the cuneiform ideogram *KARABU* is formed by the symbols of a hand and a mouth. It means 'to approach', usually divinities, as to say that doing the *proskynēsis* was the usual way of greeting gods (1963, passim).

and Syrian and Mesopotamian cylinder seals² as a gesture to greet gods or god-kings. In the I millennium BCE *proskynēsis* appeared to be used for no divine kings, as the Elamite, the Neo Assyrian and the Achaemenid ones were³. The relief IV of the series at Kūl-e Farah⁴ near the city of Izeh in Khuzestan, southwest Iran, even though not well preserved, it depicts an animal sacrifice on six different registers, at the presence of a priest, the enthroned king and prayers: on the 3rd, the 4th and the 5th registers, many people taking part in a procession, bring the right hand to the mouth performing the gesture of sending a kiss.

In the wall paintings of the palace of Tiglatpileser III (745 to 727 BCE) at Til Barsip, Syria, the enthroned king receives a tribute procession⁵. Two court dignitaries in front of the throne: one prostrates himself, the other raises his hand, palm and fingers turned toward the face, doing a *proskynēsis*. Another man involved in the procession sends a kiss with the hand to the king: there can be no doubt about the movement of his lips and the left hand, even though with a clear error of perspective in the painting.

In the Treasury reliefs⁶ from the northern stairs of the so called Apadana at Persepolis, we find the king Darius on the throne and his son Xerxes behind him. In front of, a dignitary, dressed in the Persian style, brings the right hand at his mouth, making a little bow. A detail of the procession of people and products from the eastern stairs of the Apadana shows a man, probably a Median because of his dress, which is sending a kiss to the king⁷. I think that the figurative sources exhaustively clarify that *proskynēsis* was not one of the gestures of self-humiliation, which were yet very common in the ancient Near East, as prostration, kissing (*proskynēsis*) with prostration, kissing the king's feet⁸, kissing the ground in front of the king⁹ (the two last ones can be considered the most extreme forms of *proskynēsis* plus prostration). It is not a

¹ As in a bronze statuette dedicated to the gods for the life of the King Hammurabi (1792 to 1750 BCE): s. Amiet 1980, pl. 433.

² S. Teissier 1984, xxi; Porada 1993.

³ S. Rölling 1981 122 ff.. S. also Chosky 1990b, 206; Wiesehöfer 2003, passim. Particularly on the human nature of the Achaemenid king s. at last: Wiesehöfer 2005, 55; Brosius 2006, 32f.. Rollinger (2011) considers possible a cult of the king after his death.

⁴ Main bibliography: Layard 1846, 75-78; 1887, II, 12-14; Vanden Berghe 1983, 113; Calmeyer /Stolper 1988; Seidl 1997; Potts 1999, 253-5; Sane/Koch 2001; Álvarez-Mon 2010.

⁵ S. Thureau-Dangin/Dunand 1936, pl. XLVII abc; Parrot 1961, pls. 112-13.

⁶ Shahbazi 1976; S. Root 1979, 125-40; Cahill 1985; Kuhrt 2007, 536-8.

⁷ S. Root 1979, 227-84; Stronach 1985; Hachmann 1995. Other dignitaries like these can be seen in the main scene of the staircase. At the center of the panel we find something alike the Treasure relief: an officer standing before the king (Darius? Xerxes?; Frye 1974; Porada 1985), with his hand raised to the mouth, palm toward the face, standing and making just a little bow (Allen 2005, 46-50, 60-2). Also in the reliefs of the tomb of Artaxerxes III (358-338 BCE) we find the same gesture: on the right side of the edge, in the higher register, six mourners, with the hand at the mouth, send the last kiss to the king (S. Schmidt 1970, 95-101 & pl. 70-75).

⁸ Examples are to be found in the Assyrian (s. Müller 1937, 13; 15; Borger 1996, 284; 294; Lang/Rollinger 2010, 251f.) and Babylonian (Schaudig 2001, 494; 525; Rollinger 2011, 14 n. 57) court protocol.

⁹ In the literary text 'The poor Man of Nippur' (s. Gurney 1956, 152); other examples in the Assyrian ceremonial: Gurney 1960, 110; Talon 2005, 59;.

case that we have so many examples of enemies, which were always obliged to prostrate to the winner, as in the East, as in the West: who had been defeated on the battlefield had to be humiliated too¹. The *proskynēsis* must be understood, on the contrary, just as a more deferential kiss than a kiss, which sometimes went together with a prostration. Extremely explicative is the passage by Herodotus (1.134). He tells that the form of greeting on the street among people in the Persian empire was to kiss each other and that the *proskynēsis* was acted in case of social gap between the person acting and the person receiving it: they did *proskynēsis* instead of giving a kiss because the different social status did not allow the physical contact between them.

According to the picture we have retraced, the kiss had an important place in greeting in the ancient Near East. It was performed in different ways according to the social gap between the people involved: a kiss given, *proskynēsis*, *prosynesis* plus prostration, the kiss of the feet, the kiss of the ground in front of. A self humiliation element joins in case of a gap of great importance. Now, it will be interesting to notice that different ways of performing the kiss (and the *proskynēsis*) were also to be found at the Alexander court in Asia.

There are two main traditions as to what happened when the Persian king Alexander decided to introduce the *proskynēsis* among his Companions. The first one is given by Arrian (4.12.1-2) and Curtius (8.5): It reports Callisthenes' speech about the opportunity of performing the Persian custom in front Alexander and its implications. I put aside this one for now and turn to the other one, referred by Arrian as a alternative version (4.12.3-5), and Plutarch (FrHistGr 125 F 14=Alex. 54.4-5), which already Eduard Meyer considered the most reliable account of the *proskynēsis affair*². Plutarch named as his source Chares of Mytilene, supposed to be an eye-witness at the scene. In the spring of 327 BCE when Alexander's army was most probably staying in Bactra, a usual banquet took place. The plan was that Alexander would hand his cup to the person next to him, after drinking from it. The Companions in turn were to rise the cup so as to face the *hestia*, to drink and to do *proskynēsis* to Alexander, then to kiss him (so tells Plutarch) or to receive a kiss from him (so tells

¹ JUST SOME EXAMPLES: RELIEF OF THE KING ANNUBANINI FROM SAR-I-PUL (2000 (2000 C. A. BC, S. SOLLBERGER/KUPPER 1971, IIIIG1; FRAYNE 1990, 704-6); RELIEFS OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT'S EXPEDITION TO PUNT (EGYPT, 1400S BCE, S. NAVILLE 1907, PL. LXXXVI); THE 'BROKEN OBELISK' OF ASSUR-BEL-KALA (ASSYRIA, 1060 C. A. BC, S. JARITZ 1959); SELF-HUMILIATION FORMULAS IN THE LETTERS FROM EL-AMARNA (1400S BC, S. LIVERANI 2001; ROLLINGER 2011); LUCIUS EMILIUS PAULUS TO THE MACEDONIAN KING PERSEUS (168 BC, S. LIV. 45.7); FOR OTHER EXAMPLES, S. ROLLINGER (IN PRINTING), *PASSIM*. ALSO *PROSKYNĒSIS* HAS BEEN MISTAKENLY INTERPRETED AS AN ACT OF HUMILIATION: S. ASHERI ET A. 2007, 169. THE HEBREW WORD FOR THE GESTURE IS השתחווה ("TO PROSTRATE ONESELF"), USUALLY COMBINED WITH נפל ("TO FALL DOWN IN SURPRISE"; S. JOSH. 5.14; JOB. 1.20); AT OTHER TIMES PRECEDED BY SOME FORM OF THE ROOT קרע ("TO BEND THE KNEE"). THE OLD TESTAMENT MENTIONS THE SEMITIC PRACTICE OF SETTING ONE'S FOOT UPON THE NECK OF THE CONQUERED FOE (JOSH. 10.24, PS. 90.1), A CUSTOM ALSO MENTIONED IN THE ASSYRIAN INSCRIPTIONS (RIEHM² 2012, 889).

² Badian 2000, 65 n. 27.

Arrian) and, finally, to resume place on the couch. Everybody did the same thing until it was Callisthenes's turn. He took the cup and drank without performing the *proskynēsis*, and then tried to kiss Alexander, who had not noticed his omission of the act. But one of the guests called the king's attention to it, and so Alexander refused Callisthenes's kiss.

The procedure consists of two phases: to do *proskynēsis* to Alexander (first phase), to kiss or to receive a kiss from him (second phase). The difference between giving a kiss or receiving a kiss is not of great importance here: what both formulas indicate is the right to kiss the king.

As we have said, the kiss was the form of salutation *inter pares* and fit to the relation which Alexander as the Macedonian king had with his Companions¹. Introducing the Persian ceremonial, Alexander asked the *hetairoi*, at first, to take distance from him and not to give a kiss but to send it. And just after that they were allowed to kiss him. I think that Alexander had planned to preserve the kiss, the real one, just to throw a sop to the *hetairoi*. The kiss is the (false) pledge to have their privileges granted. The *conditio sine qua non* is to accept what the king was asking for. Some elements indicate it was an extremely rational plan. In the account Alexander sent round the cup passing it first to those who were privy to the plan about *proskynēsis*. It means that they were just asked to follow an agreement already made with the king and convince through their compliance the others to do the same. It was not accidental, as well, that the banqueters at first did not face to Alexander but to the altar of the household gods (*hestia*) The *proskynēsis* (lat. *adoratio*) was a gesture served for gods or heroes in the West: Greeks and Romans commonly performed the custom of bringing the hand to the mouth and wafting a kiss towards the images of gods or the Sun². Therefore I suggest that Alexander hoped that the Companions would have done some confusion between the altar and him and thought they were asked to do *proskynēsis* in front of the *hestia*, as it was usual for them. Ross Taylor went too far: thinking that Alexander had planned the *proskynēsis* as directed to a supposed statue of himself located on the altar is a flight of fancy³. Finally, it was not accidental that the attempt of introducing the *proskynēsis* was made when some of the most traditionalist military leaders, who for sure wouldn't have loved to do the *proskynēsis*, were absent.

The gesture Alexander's Companions were asked to do was for sure that of *proskynēsis*, which was something traditional in the ancient Near East court protocol. The *proskynēsis* is a kiss without any contact, reminds Callisthenes, in the passage reported by Arrian (An. 4.11): 'You greet men with a kiss, but since a god is placed higher up and it is sacrilege to touch him, you honor him in this way with *proskynēsis*.' As for the context of the cited passage, what Callisthenes is stating here is that *proskynēsis* implies the divinity of the recipient. And it is true that the request to *proskynein* was used as by Classical

¹ Arr. An. 7.11.1; *ibid.* 6-7; cf. Hdt. 1.134.

² Some examples: Pl. RP. 469; Maen. 609 Kock. S. also Soph. fr. 738 Radt; Aristoph. Plut. 771-773; Plut. Artax. 11.4-12.5; NH 28.2.25. S. Matarese (forthcoming).

³ 1927, 58-9.

sources as by many modern historians to show Alexander's engagement with divine kingship¹. Actually, the *proskynēsis affair* fit in with two questions, which were of great importance for the ancient writes: that Alexander's court from 330 BC onwards was becoming a byword for consumption²; that Alexander wanted to be recognized as a divine being. In any case, this was not Alexander's point³, as it had not been his point sometime before in the discussion which had brought to Cleitus' murder⁴. On one hand, it has been clearly proved how Alexander's living divinity was a product of the agendas as of the Diadochi⁵ as of the Roman Era⁶. On the other hand, it is clear that Alexander's priority, even more after Darius' death, was to increase the strategy of collaboration between Macedonians and Persians⁷, which had been his effort since the beginning of the expedition. Well known cases are those of Mithrenes, the [Armenian](#) commander of the [Persian](#) at [Sardis](#) which in 334 BCE after the [battle of the Granicus](#) voluntarily surrendered to [Alexander the Great](#) (s. Arr. An. 1.17.3f.; Diod. 17.21.7) and became member of his retinue (Curt. 3.12.6) and of Ada⁸. We have to imagine that for Iranians to perform *proskynēsis* in front of their king was quite normal and that they probably regarded that as a purely secular act of royal protocol. Why should they have changed it, as Alexander became their new king?⁹. As concern Alexander, he

¹ Arr. An. 4.10f.; Curt. 8.5.5: "With all the preparations made, Alexander now believed that the time was ripe for the depraved idea he had conceived some time before, and he began to consider how he could appropriate divine honors to himself. He wished to be believed, not just called, the son of Jupiter (...)"

² It is clearly shown by the long section concerning the *thryphe*, included by the third century AD Greek author Atheneus of Naukratis in his *Deipnosophists* (537d-540a). But at first Alexander was the well-behaved Athenian gentlemen, who resisted to sensory temptation such as Darius' beautiful wife or Asian gastronomy (especially in Plutarch: e. g. Alex. 20.8; 21.4; 22.4; s. Spawforth 2007, 88-9). According to the "western" point of view, the reason of such degeneracy must be seen in Alexander's contact with the East (sources: Arr. An. 4.7.4; Diod. Sic. 17.77.4; Curt. 6.6.1; Just. 12.3.8-12).

³ Of a connection between Alexander's request and the desire of being recognized as a god: Baldson 1950; Edmund 1971; Fredricksmeier 1991; Tarn 2003.

⁴ Also in this case the divinity was not the point, but, as Cleitus tells, that Alexander was orientalizing his court, surrounding himself by barbarians "because he could no longer stand to be among free men. (...) But what proved to be the last straw was a song sung by some third-rate poet by the name of Phranichus or Pierion which mocked those Macedonians who had recently been defeated by the Sogdians." On Cleitus' episode s. Bosworth 1996.

⁵ Howe (forthcoming 2012).

⁶ Spencer 2009, 251f..

⁷ It was not to unite *romantically* the Persian and the Macedonian cultures that Alexander took a Persian wife himself and celebrated a mass wedding with Persian ceremony along with his officers (sources: Arr. 7.4.4-8; Plut. Alex. 70.2; Diod. 17.107.6; Just. 12.10; Athen. 12.538B; Aelian Var. Hist. 8.7, which gives a detailed description of the marriage feast; s. also [Plut.] *Mor.* 329D-F). Actually, the weddings of Susa (324 BCE) were a logistic decision. The aim was to create a new leadership, which could be recognize as from the Greeks as from Alexander's Oriental subjects; s. infra.

⁸The daughter of Hecatomnus was in possession of [Alinda](#), when Alexander entered Caria (s. Ruzicka 1992, 30-9); she surrendered the fortress to the Macedonian, who committed the government of Caria to her, She, in turn, formally adopted Alexander as her son, ensuring that the rule of Caria would have automatically passed to him (s. Carney 2005).

⁹S. Bosworth 1995, II, 68-70.

thought that just adopting the Persian ceremonial he could put himself in the tradition of the Achaemenid dynasty's power¹, especially in the spring of 327: after another wave of capitulations among the eastern Iranian lords and Alexander's marriage to Rhoxane, the king's entourage must have included an unprecedented number of Iranian aristocrats.

As we all know, the usual closeness between the king of Macedonia and his aristocrats is apparent in the name, *hetairoi*, which just means Companions. The lack of an administrative or court hierarchy in Macedonia meant that the king ruled with the aid of their closest *entourage*². The introduction of the *proskynēsis* among the Companions was the indication that according to Alexander's plan the position of the *hetairoi* at court was going to change profoundly. At this stage of the expedition, the Companions' *status* could not be that of *pares* any more. The introduction of the *proskynēsis* must be considered indicative of this change. Thus, the most interesting part of Callisthenes' discourse is not that about the supposed divinity of Alexander but where he claimed that by introducing *proskynēsis* Alexander was breaking an unwritten *nomos* of the Macedonian monarchy which was not to make decisions without previously obtaining the assent of its (privileged) subjects (Arr. An. 4.11). That was a true observation in the sense I tried to explain: the monarchy of the *primus inter pares* was going to cease to exist.

Curtius (8.5.5), referring to the *proskynēsis* affair tells that Alexander "gave orders for the Macedonians to follow the Persian custom in doing homage to him by prostrating themselves on the ground." In addition to the motif according to which Alexander claimed to be honored as god³, the confusion between Leonattos and Polyperchon⁴, it is also quite questionable that the Companions were asked to prostrate themselves, as Curtius states. It is the classical confusion between *proskynein* and *prospiptein*, which is to be found as in the sources as among ancient scholars⁵. And, even more, it also quite

¹ Well aware of how this mechanism works are as the Classical fellows as the Oriental ones. The scholars who have dealt with the time of the Diadochi observed how through imitation, political propaganda and invented traditions they strove to surpass each other in being connected to Alexander. The similarity between the Achaemenid and neo-Assyrian audience scenes follow a general pattern in the sourcing of legitimacy in both textual history and imaginary by the Persian kings beginning with Cyrus II. A diachronic exchange of legitimacy was created by the similarity of the new enthronement to those surviving in seals or local rock reliefs and palace ruins in the landscape (Allen 2005, 44). The additions at Persepolis, Susa and Hamadan operated by the later kings of the Achaemenid dynasty had to speak in favor of their ability of maintaining the order established by their predecessors.

² Especially the *somatophulakes*, the "personal guards: s. Billows 1994, 9-10. The king, who wore no unique garments or head covering distinguishing him from his wellborn subjects, was probably addressed by name (s. Nawotka 2010, 10-1 with the previous literature).

³ S. supra.

⁴ Just Curt. (8.5.5) tells: "(...) he gave orders for the Macedonians to follow the Persian custom in doing homage to him by prostrating themselves on the ground." But the passage cannot be taken as genuine evidence. Just some present mistakes are: the false question of Alexander's claim of being considered a god; confusion between Leonattos and Polyperchon (s. Heckel 1978).

⁵ Also recently: Zgoll 2003, 193 ff.; Bichler 2010, 169 ff.. According to Börn (2008, 437 and n. 106) it was a leichte 'rituelle Verbeugung'. Some other prefers to leave the question opened (a

improbable that the Companions were asked to prostrate doing the *proskynēsis*. A passage of Arrian (An. 4.12.2) reads as follow: ‘the eldest of the Persians came forward to perform *proskynēsis* one after the other. [Leonnatus](#), one of the Companions¹, thought that one of the Persians had not do *proskynēsis* properly (*ouk en kosmo proskynesai*) and made fun of the Persian's air of submissiveness. Alexander was angry with him at the time, though later he was reconciled. It is clear that what the Macedonian found funny was that the Persian prostrated in front of the king doing *proskynēsis*. It explains this air of submissiveness the Persian is told to have because the gesture of prostrating, as we said, was a gesture of self-humiliation. It proves, once more, that the Companions were asked to do *proskynēsis* without prostrating. Thus they accused the Persians, who did *proskynēsis* and prostration together² slaves, according to the well known *Leitmotiv*³.

The privilege to kiss the king must have been granted by Alexander, and this time was not a joke, to some Persians some time after the *proskynēsis* affair took place. And also at least for several Companions the kiss in Bactra was not the last one they gave to Alexander. In regards to that a passage from the seven book of the Anabasis by Arrian is really interesting. The context is the Macedonian mutiny at Opis in 324 BCE⁴. When the Macedonians quickly submitted, one of the officers told Alexander that he had now made some of the Persians his Kinsmen with the permission to kiss him, while none of the Macedonians had yet enjoyed this privilege. Then Alexander interrupting him, said, "But all of you without exception I consider my kinsmen, and so from this time I shall call you." (An. 7. 11.6-7).

It is relevant for us neither how many exaggerations and rhetorical elements are present in the passage nor if the permission of kissing the king had connection with what happened in Opis⁵. But this is the general situation we can figure. Greek and Macedonian leaders at Bactra had been asked for sending a kiss from distance to Alexander. This meant they had been integrated, at least according to Alexander's plan, among the subjects of the king. After that, both several Persians and Greeks got the permission to kiss the king. The marriage

‘Verbeugung’, a ‘Knifall’ or a ‘Niederwerfen’ according to Brosius 2010, 461 ff.; s. also Allen 2005, 41-5).

¹ For Curt. 8.5.2 was Polyperchon but this is impossible: he was not present when the *proskynēsis* affaire took place (s. Heckel 1978). Plutarch refers a similar and unlikely episode but relating to Kassandros in Babylon (Alex. 74.2-5).

² The acting of a prostration as complement of the *proskynēsis* must be quite possible in case of a deep social gap between the Achaemenid king and the person performing, as to say in case of normal subjects (not dignitaries!) or strangers (for example, Greeks!); s. Matarese (forthcoming).

³ S. Walser 1984, *passim*, partic. 22-34; some evidence: Aesch. Pers. 272 and 402-5; s. also Arist. Pol. 1252 b5 & 1285 a20; Persians were considered more trained to slavery than the slaves among the Greeks: Arist. Pol. 1252 b5; the same concept is expressed in Isocr. Paneg. 150, even though the rethoricised nature of the work is undeniable (for a first bibliography, s. Flower 2000; Worthington 2003).

⁴ Sources: Arr. An. 7.8.1-12.4; Diod. 17.108.3; IBID. 109.1-3; Plut. Alex. 71.1-5; Just. 12.11.5-12; Curt. 10.2.8-4.2).

⁵ S. also Plut. Al. 71.3.

of Susa had been the last step of the strategy of collaboration between Macedonians and Greeks, on one hand, and Persians, on the other one. The king laid the foundation of the *elite* of his kingdom: Greeks and Macedonians, who had accepted and integrated the Persian element and would have remained loyal to their king and Persians who could maintain the condition they had under the Achaemenid dynasty. To kiss the king was of course not just a gesture but the indication the selected people enjoyed a privileged condition. In any case, a privileged condition *a la persienne*, very different from the status which the *hetairoi* had used to enjoy at the Macedonian court. It is evident that the king Alexander is deciding which status each of his subject of his kingdom has: this is the reason why to be a kinsman was quite different than to be a Companion.

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