The Medieval French Alexander

Edited by
Donald Maddox and
Sara Sturm-Maddox

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Abbreviations

Editions and Translations

AdeP	Albéric de Pisançon. See *MFRA III*, pp. 37–60.
Alexandreis	*Galteri de Castellione "Alexandreis,"* ed. M. L. Colker (Padova: Antenore, 1978).
AetP	*Li Romanz d'Athis et Prophilias (L'Estoire d'Athenes)*, ed. Alfons Hilka [Gesellschaft für romanische Literatur, 29 and 40] (Halle: Niemeyer, 1912; 1916).
Fais	*"Les Fais et Concquestes du Noble Roy Alexandre," Edition du manuscrit 836 de la Bibliothèque Municipale de Besançon*, ed. R. Nicolet-Licinsky (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980).
FG	*"Le Roman du Fuerre de Gadres" d'Eustache* (see *MFRA IV*).
MFRA I	*The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. I: *Text of the Arsenal and Venice Versions*, ed. Milan S. La Du [Elliott Monographs 36] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).
MFRA II	*The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. II: *Version of Alexandre de Paris*, ed. Edward C. Armstrong, Douglas L. Buffum, Bateman Edwards, L. F. H. Lowe [Elliott Monographs 37] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).
MFRA III	*The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. III: *Version of Alexandre de Paris: Variants and Notes to Branch I*, ed. Alfred Foulet [Elliott Monographs 38] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).
MFRA IV	*The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. IV: *"Le Roman du Fuerre de Gadres" d'Eustache*, ed. Edward C. Armstrong and Alfred Foulet [Eliott Monographs 39] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).

MFRA V — *The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. V: *Version of Alexandre de Paris. Variants and Notes to Branch II, with an Introduction*, ed. Frederick B. Agard [Elliott Monographs 40] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).

MFRA VI — *The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. VI: *Version of Alexandre de Paris: Variants and Notes to Branch III*, ed. Alfred Foulet [Elliott Monographs 42] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

MFRA VII — *The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre,"* vol. VII: *Version of Alexandre de Paris: Variants and Notes to Branch IV*, ed. Bateman Edwards and Alfred Foulet [Elliott Monographs 41] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).

Parfait — Carey, R. J., ed., *Jean de la Mote. Le Parfait du Paon* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

Prise — *La Prise de Defur and Le Voyage d'Alexandre au Paradis terrestre*, ed. Lawton P. G. Peckham and Milan S. La Du [Elliott Monographs 35] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935; New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).

Prosa — *Der Altfranzösische Prosa-Alexanderroman*, ed. Alfons Hilka (Halle: Niemeyer, 1920; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1974).

RA — *Le Roman d'Alexandre*, ed. (from the text of *MFRA II*) and trans. Laurence Harf-Lancner [Livre de Poche, "Lettres Gothiques" 4542] (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1994).

Restor — *Jean le Court dit Brisebare, "Le Restor du Paon,"* ed. R. J. Carey (Geneva: Droz, 1966).

RTC — *The Anglo-Norman Alexander: "Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie" by Thomas of Kent*, ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short. 2 vols. (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1976–1977).

Voeux — *Les "Voeux du Paon" by Jacques de Longuyon: An Edition of the Manuscripts of the P Redaction*, ed. Camillus Casey (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1965).

Studies

AGMA — *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writing*, ed. W. J.

	Aerts, Jos. M. M. Hermans, and Elizabeth Visser (Niemeyer: Alfa, 1978).
Alessandro	*Alessandro nel Medioevo Occidentale*, ed. Mariantonia Liborio, Piero Boitani, Corrado Bologna, and Adele Cipolla; intro. Peter Dronke (Verona: Mondadori, 1997).
Alexandre	*Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures Occidentales et Proche-Orientales: Actes du Colloque de Paris, 27–29 novembre 1997*, ed. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Claire Kappler, and François Suard [*Littérales* Hors Série—1999] (Paris: Centre des Sciences de la Littérature, Université de Paris X, Nanterre, 1999).
Cary	Cary, George, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).
Frontières	Gaullier-Bougassas, Catherine, *Les Romans d'Alexandre. Frontières de l'épique et du romanesque* (Paris: Champion, 1998).
Ross	Ross, David J. A., *Alexander Historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illuminated Alexander Literature* (London: Warburg Institute, 1963).
Légende	Gosman, Martin, *La Légende d'Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature française du 12e siècle. Une réécriture permanente* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997).
Studies	Ross, D. J. A., *Studies in the Alexander Romance* (London: Pindar, 1985).

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Introduction: Alexander the Great in the French Middle Ages

Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox

The figure of Alexander "the Great" is extraordinary on any terms. The global dimensions of that "greatness" are aptly summed up by Laurence Harf-Lancner, a contributor to this volume:

> On June 13 in the year 323 B.C., Alexander died in Babylon at the age of thirty-three. He had conquered a great part of the known world and had, by advancing through India as far as the Ganges basin, pushed back the eastern limits of the universe. His accomplishments were also to give rise to a myth about his own person that after his death would proliferate and endure to our own time.[1]

The awesome magnitude of Alexander the Great thus obtains in two spheres that are in most contexts inextricably interrelated: in ancient history, but also in the expansive mythic strands that proliferate outward from the historical record. The powerful legendary matrix resulting from this blend of history and myth is by no means an ideological monolith, however, for over the *longue durée* it retains a remarkable elasticity, capable of accommodating an astonishing variety of contrastive, and sometimes contradictory, worldviews. As David Williams has observed, Alexander is the only hero whose appeal seems truly multicultural and transhistorical.[2] Indeed, across a vast expanse of space and time, throughout Europe and the Near East and from Alexander's own century through the Middle Ages and beyond, his adventures continued to yield rich veins that generations of writers exploited in a strikingly diverse array of literary and didactic texts. For a schematic overview of the medieval French Alexander texts and their principal antecedents, see the Chronology at the end of this introduction.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Alexander's adventures found prominence in a wide variety of historical and literary settings. The medieval European

tradition originates in the third century A.D. with a Greek romance known as the "Pseudo-Callisthenes," which brought together history and legend in a combination that was to have enormous influence. Translated into Latin in the fourth century and abridged in the ninth,[3] it affords the essential elements of the vernacular image of Alexander that emerges shortly after 1100 and thereafter looms large in both Latin and vernacular texts. In influential works like the Latin *Alexandreis* of Gautier de Châtillon (ca. 1170, extant in some 200 manuscripts), depictions of Alexander helped to shape medieval attitudes toward history. He figures among the legendary Nine Worthies in the late medieval canon of heroes—a theme of long duration that was itself introduced in an Alexander romance;[4] Chaucer's Monk proclaims that "The storie of Alisaundre is so commune/ That every wight that hath discrecioun/ Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune."[5] By the end of the Middle Ages his importance had by no means diminished; of particular interest in this regard is the popularity of Alexander texts in fifteenth-century Burgundy, where he "plays a key role in the rich political reflections of the theoreticians of power" connected with Philippe le Bon and Charles le Téméraire.[6]

Already in the mid-tenth century, the legend of Alexander was recognized by clerical authors as an apt vehicle for addressing a wide range of contemporary concerns. A telling example of this is examined in this volume by Michel Zink, who explores the ways in which the author of the Prologue to the Latin translation of the Pseudo-Callisthenes sets forth the combats and victories of the great pagan heroes as models for emulation by Christians, but models nonetheless to be transcended through the exercise of Christian virtues.[7] Here a figurative implementation of the legend of Alexander transforms chivalric combat into spiritual *agon*, casting clerics as "officers" and the lay public as "simple soldiers" in a striking metaphor whose repercussions will be evident in numerous texts, including Saint Bernard's *Praise of the New Militia*. The potential of the Macedonian's heroic legend for development in positive or negative didactic commentary was to have a long posterity in secular texts as well, and Zink discusses one early vernacular example of its prominent reappearance, in the prologue to the late-twelfth-century *Conte du Graal* of Chrétien de Troyes in which the poet's patron, Philip of Flanders, is favorably compared to Alexander in terms of the practice of largesse.

Almost half a century ago, the substantial corpus of medieval texts devoted to Alexander was surveyed by George Cary; in 1963, D. J. A. Ross assessed the illustrated Alexander manuscripts.[8] Subsequently, a few sporadic contributions addressed specific features of the legend in medieval contexts.[9] In recent years, a quickening of scholarly interest has produced much new work on the figure of Alexander as represented both in the ancient world and thereafter.[10] The present volume partakes of this renewal. As the first systematic collective study of the medieval French Alexander tradition and its background, it provides an essential complement to comparative study of the larger

textual archive in the comprehensive medieval Alexandrian tradition that includes, for example, the Castilian adaptations of the legend[11] and its avatars in medieval Britain, Persia, and elsewhere.[12] And a substantial inquiry devoted exclusively to the medieval French corpus of works dealing with Alexander the Great is fully justified: within the richly variegated plurality of Latin and vernacular texts that comprise the Alexandrian tradition from late antiquity through the later Middle Ages, the corpus of French texts that engage the Macedonian's legend is unique in terms of both its amplitude and its diachronic scope. It involves a substantial number of works that together span nearly the entire period of medieval French literary production, from the early-twelfth century through the late fifteenth—hence a thread whose multiple strands are intricately woven into the fabric of medieval literary history.

This volume is the product of an international initiative, and its contributors include many of the major participants in the recent renewal of scholarly attention to the medieval Alexander. Most of the essays are revised contributions to an international colloquium held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. That gathering provided a provocative forum for collaborative rethinking of how the classical legacy was repeatedly renewed and transformed in a corpus of narratives spanning four centuries. The contributions subject the various types of medieval writing exemplified, in this substantial and important group of works, to sensitive textual analyses informed by a variety of methodological perspectives: anthropology, art history, codicology, the history of mentalities, postcolonial theory, and sociology are among the disciplines represented. The topics addressed include the generic interplay between romance and epic conventions; the ideological implications of successive rewritings of ancient history; the composition of a "mirror for the prince" in the accounts of the hero's education and accomplishments; the thirteenth-century *mise en prose* of the heroic story; the fourteenth-century cyclification of the legend's components; the use of a legendary hero as warrant for the historicity of a character in later Arthurian romance, notably the monumental *Roman de Perceforest*; and medieval beliefs and phantasms concerning the fabulous and exotic Orient. We also see how legend was tendentiously recast in particular episodes, such as Alexander's visit to Jerusalem and his battles against Persians assimilated to Saracens, so as to appropriate the classical hero's engagements as a prefiguration of the conflicts of the Crusade era.

Within the full context of the medieval French Alexander, the twelfth century stands out as the powerfully formative period. From the beginning to the end of the century, a number of texts in verse develop the basic elements of the legend and add new ones. The earliest of these, dating from near the beginning of the century, is a Franco-Provençal work by Albéric de Pisançon of which only the opening survives, a fragment of 105 octosyllables in fifteen monorhymed *laisses* depicting the hero's *enfances*.[13] Albéric's poem was subsequently adapted in a decasyllabic Poitevin *Roman d'Alexandre*, also portraying

only the *enfances* (ca. 1160),[14] followed, during the 1170s, by three dodecasyllabic works unknown in their original states: *Le Roman du Fuerre de Gadres*, an account, attributed to Eustache, of a raid on Gaza (*MFRA IV* and *MFRA V*); an *Alixandre en Orient* by Lambert le Tort of Châteaudun; and an anonymous *Mort Alixandre*. The Poitevin *enfances* and the latter two works were amalgamated into a composite *Roman d'Alixandre*.[15] Late in the century, Alexandre de Paris drew substantially upon these earlier works in order to elaborate a massive dodecasyllabic poem of some 16,000 verses in monorhymed laisses treating the comprehensive biography of the hero in four "branches."[16] The enormous success of this so-called "Vulgate" version is evident in the number of interpolations and continuations by poets, moralists and historians that appear throughout the Middle Ages. It is reflected too in the designation of the French twelve-syllable verse in which it is cast as "alexandrine"—a designation dating from the fifteenth century.[17]

This twelfth-century corpus as synthesized in the monumental achievement of Alexandre de Paris comprises the dense and intricate "core" that has received the lion's share of the textual scholarship devoted to the medieval French Alexander during the twentieth century. Much of this emerged from a single project with multiple editors, *MFRA I-VII* published in the Elliott Monograph Series between 1927 and 1976, an achievement that provides an invaluable frame of reference for study of the entire tradition.[18] Despite the seminal vitality of that editorial project, however, scholarship on the French Alexander material during the twentieth century is relatively modest compared to that devoted to other areas of medieval French narrative.

Why, in view of the impressive size of the medieval French Alexander corpus, did it not command considerably more attention until near the end of the century? One reason may be that the twelfth-century *Alexandre* is a *roman* that embodies many formal and thematic features of Old French epic, such as monorhyming *laisses* and lengthy segments devoted to collective combat.[19] The coexistence of epic and romance elements throughout the poem precludes any uncomplicated identification with a single genre.[20] In recent decades, an intensified scholarly interest in questions relating to medieval genres has disclosed the myriad ways in which the fluidity of *matières* in medieval vernacular writing persistently defies modern textbook notions of generic purity, prompting a new interest in Alexander de Paris's composite poem.

Mindful of this generic lability, Emmanuèle Baumgartner turns her attention to the vast epic canvas of the Gadres episode, which Alexandre de Paris extensively reworks into the second branch of his narrative. Her interest is kindled precisely by the fact that, even though this lengthy episode redolent of Old French epic enjoyed considerable popularity in the Middle Ages, it has generally been overshadowed by modern readings centered on the poem's affinities with romance. Baumgartner shows that, while in terms of its generic properties the episode in many ways compares favorably with the *chansons de*

geste, it conveys a didactic and ideological perspective that is fundamentally at odds with an epic worldview. Here we discover many subtle, though powerful, intimations of a cautionary perspective on the unbridled fervor of conquest for its own sake. According to Alexander's rewriting, the exercise of individual and collective prowess to win personal glory and to benefit from the conquerer's legendary largesse untimately proves vain in the absence of transcendental ideals. To provide an effective vehicle for this lesson, in Baumgartner's view, the extensive recourse to the technical and thematic elements of epic would most likely have maximized the appeal of this episode to a chivalric public.

Thus we see that the values represented by this colossal—and in some respects monstrous—story from the ancient world were to find an accommodation through medieval epic discourse that was procrustean at best. This generic incommensurability partakes of a larger tendency apparent in the medieval reception of the Alexandrian legend, whose inherent ambiguities were sometimes met with ambivalence on the part of medieval authors.[21] At first glance, Alexander's most fundamental traits would seem to be relatively stable, whether he be considered an "epic" or a "romance" hero: a largesse deemed exemplary in texts ranging from epic and troubadour lyric to romance;[22] an indomitable drive to conquer; and an equally insatiable desire for knowledge. From the earliest accounts of his life and adventures, however, the story of this "greatest of rulers" is rich in ambiguities, some of them profoundly disquieting. First there is the question of his birth: was Alexander the son of the mighty conqueror Philip of Macedonia, and thus his legitimate heir, or was he the son of the Egyptian Pharaoh and magician-astrologer Nectanabus, who seduced Alexander's mother in the guise of Ammon—a divinity with whom Alexander himself often proclaimed his filiation?[23] Or again, were his temperament and his inclinations shaped by that eminent philosopher Aristotle, who served as his tutor and later as his advisor, or were they formed by Nectanabus's pretensions to all-embracing knowledge? Was his largesse a primordial trait of his character, as Aristotle affirms—"Largesse estoit ta mere et tu ieres ses fis:/ En doner iert ta gloire, ta joie et tes delis" (br. IV, 51, 1032–33: Largesse was your mother, and you were her son. In giving was your glory, joy, and delight)—or was it the calculated gesture later held up as an example for the Prince by a cynical Machiavelli?[24]

It is of course true that we also find ambiguities in some representations of the two other rulers, Charlemagne and Arthur, whose legends were tributary to major medieval French narrative traditions. In some poems Charles is the object of mild humor, or subject to lapses of temper or judgment, or even, according to one legendary current, guilty of incest; Arthur's fortunes in the hands of medieval authors are also variable, and include moments of weakness, lethargy, and, again, the shadow of incest. But these ambiguities are far less culturally remote than those of a colossal hero who could be portrayed, on the one hand, as representative of the best of the pagan past and a *figura Christi*,[25]

and on the other, as at the hands of a twelfth-century clerical writer expanding upon Old Testament implications, as a figure of the Antichrist.[26] Unlike the more "exotic" Macedonian, Charlemagne and Arthur were both readily perceived in proximity to medieval religious and social institutions: in terms of values, Charlemagne is most often depicted as the Christian Emperor who through both piety and conquest represents God and France; Arthur is characteristically portrayed as a monarch whose *regnum*, however problematic politically and socially, was impelled by, and in many ways exemplified, ideals of chivalry, courtliness and social order. Thus the fact that twentieth-century scholarship devoted to medieval French narrative traditions accorded considerably more attention to the Carolingian and Arthurian material than to the Alexandrian legacy may to some degree be attributable to the latter's greater originary remoteness from medieval institutions and values, rendering its reception more difficult to apprehend and interpret.[27] It is worthy of note that that remoteness would finally be mitigated, in the fourteenth-century *Roman de Perceforest*, by making Alexander Arthur's ancestor, a development that Michelle Szkilnik explores in this volume.

Branch III of the Vulgate *Alexandre* offers a particularly interesting example of the difficulties involved in interpreting medieval perceptions of Alexander's story. In an extensive rewriting of the *Alixandre en Orient* of Lambert le Tort, Alexandre de Paris variously illustrates the question of Alexander's relentless curiosity about the universe in terms of his oriental adventures. Here, descriptions of the farthest known reaches of civilization are, as Emmanuèle Baumgartner points out, "designed to awaken, as well as to satisfy, the medieval public's curiosity and in this regard are among the very first instances of literary exoticism in the vernacular."[28] The conqueror and his forces encounter widespread evidence of supernatural influences. Among them are three fountains: one that restores youth, one that revives the dead, and one that confers immortality. This romance, which in the expansive adaptation from Lambert le Tort introduces the theme of the "Fountain of Youth" into vernacular literature, makes of this triad of fountains a special case, a triple adventure considerably amplified with regard to earlier versions, to become "the very symbol of Alexander's quest, and of that obsession with transcending the human condition the Greeks called *hybris* and the French of the twelfth century *outrage*, hence a symbol of Alexander's excess."[29] Or we may consider the introduction, in his Eastward itinerary, of the "bornes Artu" which he has sought to reach, a name suggestively introducing the prestige of Arthur while evoking the pillars of Hercules set in place by that hero to mark the limits beyond which man should not pass.[30] Dante was to render memorably in the *Commedia* the fateful consequences of willfully passing that limit.[31] His Ulysses, whose affinities with Alexander have been observed,[32] embodies that type of hunger for knowledge—that "turpis curiositas"—condemned by Saint Bernard as "the first degree of pride."[33]

Yet despite the Macedonian's ironclad will, the marvelous Orient refuses to yield, and finally closes back upon its own enigmas; soon thereafter, Alexander will learn of his impending death from another marvel, the Trees of the Sun and the Moon.[34] If Chaucer's Monk finds Alexander's insatiable ambition a sign of his greatness, demanding "Who shal me yeven teeris to compleyne/ The death of gentillesse and of franchise,/ That all the world weelded in his demeyne,/ And yet hym thoughte it myghte nat suffise?" (1663–66), two Latin Alexander texts draw different conclusions. The twelfth-century *Iter Alexandri ad Paradisum*, which will appear with some variation in two Old French versions, is a prime example.[35] Reaching a reputed Paradise of Delights at the source of the Ganges, Alexander learns from an aged Jew that his boundless ambition can never be satisfied, whereupon he renounces all forms of greed and ambition.[36] We find a more somber moment in the Latin *Alexandreis* of Gautier de Châtillon, which otherwise tends to exalt the Macedonian hero: after a triumphant Alexander at last declares himself eager to conquer other worlds, since all the earth is subject to his power, Nature herself conspires with Leviathan to exact vengeance.[37]

It is hardly surprising, then, that even Alexander's splendid education, which had already earned special praise from the earliest of the French authors, Albéric de Pisançon, frequently comes under unfavorable scrutiny. As might be expected, the reservations have less to do with its substance than with the values reflected in its applications by Alexander. Douglas Kelly examines this question in the Vulgate *Alexandre* and the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, specifically in terms of the interplay of ideals of *chevalerie* and *clergie* as they inform the motivation and implementation of the Macedonian's conquests. He begins with a lesser-known romance also attributed to Alexandre de Paris, *Athis et Prophilias*, in which the "humanistic" view of *clergie* proves less than ideal for the formation of the knight or nobleman. In both the Vulgate *Alexandre* and Thomas's *Roman*, although *clergie* is indeed vital to the hero's brilliant education as well as to his active life, the intellectual component ultimately facilitates and glorifies the vast agenda of militant conquest. In terms of what motivates Alexander and what he accomplishes, Kelly concludes that in these two late-twelfth-century works it is *chevalerie*, not *clergie*, that prevails as an ideal.

Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas also considers the question of Alexander's education, with emphasis on the role of Aristotle, in a selection of texts from the twelfth to the fifteenth century.[38] Whereas in numerous didactic texts the complementarity of monarch and philosopher is more consistently praised, these literary works show a greater diversity of attitudes and tend to take more nuanced—and often far less optimistic—positions. At times, Aristotle does serve to project a favorable view of the influence of clerics on rulers, as is initially the case in the Vulgate *Alexandre* in which his functions as Alexander's tutor, and later as his advisor, are crucial. Yet in due course he acquires dubious associations with the magician Nectanabus, while in the final branch his image

undergoes "symbolic destruction" when his idolatrous panegyric of the late ruler reveals how extensively his wisdom has been corrupted by the latter's excesses. An ambivalent image of the philosopher also features in the later *Voyage d'Alexandre au Paradis terrestre*, while in the *Lai d'Aristote* Henri d'Andeli subjects him to pitiless ridicule.

In general, then, valorizations of the conqueror's education range between two extremes, the one demonstrating how it enhances the learned king's profile and furthers his achievements, the other condemning his rampant ambition and lack of restraint. Here again, we see the persistence of ambiguity and ambivalence in these medieval literary reconfigurations of ancient traditions. Despite the continued emphasis in French texts on Alexander's acquired learning, these texts also accord considerable attention to his innate gifts—to his *nature* as well as to his *noreture*—as manifested in the inexhaustible curiosity that motivates his explorations but also in the cleverness he displays in his dealings with others. François Suard focuses on this aspect of his character. We see how Alexandre de Paris individualizes and nuances the traditional image of the omnipotent conqueror in his adaptation of two scenes, inspired by classical sources, in which the hero presents himself to an adversary in disguise. The medieval author's rewriting of each of these otherwise quite different scenes introduces the humorous vein of the *gab* found in the early epico-romanesque tradition. His aim in depicting the disguised Alexander as both learned and clever, associating his mastery of ruse and of language with his mastery of prowess, is, Suard suggests, not only literary but didactic, and deliberately enigmatic, so as to heighten the exemplary nature of the scenes by suggesting them to the reader as instructive.

In the social and political spheres too, the portrait is ambiguous. Is Alexander the embodiment of prideful ambition and an agent of destruction, as the Old Testament depicts him[39]—a role that seems to find an echo in Gautier de Châtillon's designation as "that bloody sword of the Fates"?[40] Or is he a civilizing hero whose extraordinary military and intellectual accomplishments are due to Providence? For Dante, his was the closest approximation before the Roman Empire to a universal monarchy (*De Monarchia* II, 8. 8). But was he conquering hero, or conquering oppressor?[41] Fashioned by the courtly French tradition as the embodiment of *courtoisie* and held up by some authors as a model for princes because of his celebrated largesse and learning, Alexander was identified by others as a cautionary figure because of his insatiable hunger for both knowledge and power.

Medieval implementations of his legend also transformed it into a powerful medium for direct expression or symbolic representation of contemporary social and political aspirations and—more commonly—anxieties. Alexandre de Paris, in his prologue, presents Alexander—his "riche estoire"—to those who would "prendre bon essample" with regard not only to prowess but to what to love and to hate, and how to keep one's friends and do harm to one's

enemies (br. I, vv. 1–8). In the twelfth-century vernacular romances, subtle semantic changes detectible within a modest, though culturally charged, lexicon inherited from early epic discourse provide valuable indices of social change, as Rupert T. Pickens demonstrates in his examination of how terms relating to *vasselage* and *cortoisie* are variably semanticized as we move from the decasyllabic texts to the Vulgate *Alexandre*. His inquiry discloses a major transition from the epic celebration, typical of the early *chansons de geste*, of *vasselage*—a feudal value centered in male strength and loyalty to the overlord—to a more "courtly" concept in which *vasselage* is subsumed into elegant speech and refined manners, in a form of *courtoisie* strongly identified with women. On the ideological plane, Pickens proposes, we may also discern an attempt to revitalize a conservative ethos.

Evidence of such a tendency is also apparent in William W. Kibler's study of the Vulgate *Alexandre*, which was the first to introduce the legend to the economically volatile Paris region. In Alexandre's poem Kibler identifies striking reflections of the profound institutional changes taking place on the French political horizon. While the text can be categorized as one of the many "mirrors for the prince" written during the medieval period, it also reflects the anxieties of the French aristocracy, which in the latter decades of the twelfth century was progressively being displaced by a rising monied class elevated by the Capetian monarchy to the status of administrators and advisors. In response to this major economic shift, the romance tenders a conservative ideal of kingship valorizing traditional forms of largesse while also repeatedly emphasizing the perils of reliance on low-born men rather than on the higher aristocracy.

Institutionalized largesse is addressed by Stephen D. White, who considers the *Roman d'Alexandre* in the light of current theoretical discussions of models for the study of feudal society. He examines in particular the lengthy deathbed scene in Branch IV of the Vulgate, where Alexander makes generous gifts of land, as promised, to each of his twelve peers. White suggests ways in which, by holding up Alexander's fief-giving as an example of largesse and contrasting it with the bribe-like gifts of avaricious lords, Alexandre de Paris draws on a long-standing and complex feudal discourse. In this text the Eastern potentates encountered by Alexander are generally framed not only as his opposites but as counterexamples to his own exemplary conduct.[42] White shows how the Vulgate *Alexandre*, by radically dichotomizing Alexander's expansive largesse and Darius's avaricious use of bribes to procure selfish ends, oversimplifies and moralizes real political experience. He concludes that the romance reproduces and mystifies, but fails to resolve, a fundamental underlying ambiguity between honorable fief-giving and bribery camouflaged as largesse.

Together, then, the late-twelfth-century corpus reflects acutely felt tensions engendered by accelerated social change, as these found expression within a conceptual sphere encompassing such basic yet mutable notions as *clergie*, *chevalerie*, *vasselage*, *courtoisie*, and *largesse*. And while the early Alexander texts

afford considerable insight into the definition of an ethos, the texts that derive from that fertile legacy and focus on this same gigantic figure during the three ensuing centuries offer equally suggestive views of its metamorphosis over time.

We begin to note new attitudes toward the Alexandrian legend early in the next century. According to Michelle R. Warren, the political preoccupations apparent in the twelfth-century verse romance shift in the thirteenth-century prose version, adaptively translated from the tenth-century Latin prose *Historia de Preliis*. In essence, Warren suggests, the prose *Alexandre* moves significantly away from courtly concerns toward embodiment of a more resolutely expansionist ideology. Her essay on relations of unequal power and the coercive dynamics that sustain them is usefully informed by contemporary postcolonial studies. She argues, moreover, that prose is particularly well suited to the kind of totalizing effects cultivated in this thirteenth-century text's representation of imperial desire and colonial ambition.

Much recent scholarship has disclosed that the emergence of French prose around the turn of the thirteenth century owes a great deal to increasing concern with the writing of history in the vernacular. Catherine Croizy-Naquet shows how the figure of Alexander comes into prominence in this regard, as Roman history enters upon the French historiographic horizon with the *Faits des Romains* at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The compiler of this text attaches the Roman material to elements of ancient story that were already well-known, notably the legend of Troy and the great deeds of Alexander. Although Alexander's presence in the text is limited, evocations of his heroic career in the account of the life of Caesar enable the compiler to redefine the contours of both exemplary figures. This essay demonstrates that the thirteenth-century reconfiguration of Alexander also played an important role in the development of medieval historiography.

The late medieval "epigones," works that derive from the earlier French tradition while also modifying it in multiple ways, comprise an important subset of texts which Martin Gosman addresses.[43] While retaining the basic legendary *fabula*, these epigonic writers, who for the most part nourish an optimistic view of the tradition's political implications, variously reinvest it with illustrations of social order founded on the principle of *utilitas regis*. Hence a corpus of late-medieval narratives that resonate profoundly with a period in which monarchy definitively transforms itself from a weak feudal institution into a highly theorized sociopolitical machine. In literary and pseudohistoriographical texts from across this period, Gosman discloses the conservative as well as the innovative functions of works that produce idealized images of monarchy, operative within a courtly framework emphasizing political cohesiveness sustained by protocol, ritual, and pageant. These works are thus indicative of how major political transformations in late-medieval France were conspicuously valorized in its cultural productions.

Among these epigones, three of the works in Gosman's corpus, composed in the fourteenth century, form an ensemble inserted into Branch II of the *Roman d'Alexandre* and generally referred to as the "Cycle du Paon." While in general they are marked by a "spirit of idyllic courtesy which pervades the knightly atmosphere," as John L. Grigsby observed,[44] the last of the three, Jean de la Mote's *Parfait du Paon* (1340), reintroduces elements that underline the ambiguous traits of the hero.[45] Here Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski looks closely at the nature of the poetic project involved in the *Parfait*, which in its network of references to earlier Alexander texts in many ways represents the endpoint of the tradition. In the episode of the *chambre amoureuse*, she suggests, the description of the elaborate murals provides through *ekphrasis*—word painting—a reading of both the Alexander and the related *Paon* cycles, while also configuring a legendary memory inviting readers to reflect on the tradition in new ways. Though they are part of only one interlude in a larger canvas of bloodshed and destruction, these highly allusive figural reminiscences also allow the temporary emergence of a different figure of Alexander: now himself engaged in poetic creation, he is dramatically transformed into a dynamic artificer commemorating, and consecrating, the sort of culture represented in the chamber itself, thus investing a role that in turn generates new texts.

Two other contributions focus on one monumental fourteenth-century text, the *Roman de Perceforest*, which is progressively becoming available in modern editions. Michelle Szkilnik considers how in the *Perceforest* Alexander is at last integrated into the Arthurian tradition: here he becomes not only Arthur's ancestor, but the founder of the rites of Arthurian society. Not only does he institute an illustrious lineage and establish a brilliant civilization; he initiates the recording of events that constitute the very material of romance. It is in this linkage and through its demonstration of Alexander's adoption of Arthurian values, Szkilnik argues, that the Macedonian hero's name and enterprise are saved for the Western legacy.

Implementing methodologies of sociology and feminist theory, Jane H. M. Taylor examines an episode in the *Perceforest* that is new in the tradition and represents Alexander as lover: the account of his clandestine, idyllic love affair in England with Sibille. In earlier Alexander texts, Taylor points out, women were perceived either as marginal or as dangerous distractions to male autonomy in an ideal social order based on masculine chivalric identity. The *Perceforest* makes the tensions between public and private spheres, between eros and empire-building, even more explicit. It also brings more fully into prominence a dichotomous universe, one in which the bond of "brotherliness" is ultimately incompatible with erotic love. Yet here again the male, homosocial ethos prevails, with the systematic exclusion of the lady from the public arena. Taylor situates this eventuality within the context of a much larger assortment of medieval French narratives that show similar tendencies.

The *Perceforest* is one example of how, during the later Middle Ages, the Alexandrian material continued to offer writers, as it had to Lambert le Tort, Alexandre de Paris, and the anonymous architect of the prose *Alexandre*, a powerful vehicle for depicting engagements with geographical and cultural alterities. "Alterity," writes Corrado Bologna, "is the measure of Alexander. Bent upon knowing and on conquering, on taking the measure of reality, Alexander is one of the most extraordinary mediators of alterity for the ancient and medieval West" (*Alessandro*, p. 167). Eventually, the legend's luxuriant "exotic" landscape began to intersect, often contrastively, with later medieval eyewitness descriptions of travel to remote lands. Developing a comparative perspective on one of the most important of these accounts, the *Devisement du monde* of Marco Polo, Laurence Harf-Lancner discovers two quite distinct approaches to the marvels of the Orient and to that which is, more generally, "other." The Alexander romances magnify the emblematic, often exemplary or cautionary figure of the discoverer avid for knowledge, who enters marvelous worlds that ultimately escape his capacity to master them fully. In contrast, the originality of the *Devisement* lies in its tendency to classify, and thus to demystify, the Oriental *merveilleux*, though without in any way diminishing the sense of wonder and awesome strangeness that prevails throughout. The intricate and arresting manuscript illustrations of the two works also show contrasts. While Marco Polo's text tends to reduce the marvelous to the exotic—the never-before-seen, the unheard-of—his imagers, recurring to earlier practices reflected in many *Alexandre* manuscripts, sometimes contradict his text so as to remain faithful to the traditional iconography of *mirabilia*, marvelous objects and events. Hence, in this essay, we find many detailed examples of the frequently subtle interplay between texts and their manuscript illuminations.

Like Harf-Lancner, Keith Busby is attentive to the evidence afforded by manuscripts, and in addressing the complex textual history of the *Roman d'Alexandre* he makes the codex containing each known version of a work the central object of study. The threads of his wide-ranging inquiry converge in a typology of the French *Alexandre* manuscripts, and he offers many suggestive comments on codicological features that might cast light on the reception of the legend within the historical context that produced a given manuscript. For manuscripts in which the *Roman d'Alexandre* figures among other works, Busby argues that close scrutiny of the manuscript's material properties and the way it contextualizes a given work may be required in order to apprehend the latter's intrinsic significance and larger implications.

In sum, these essays invite us to rethink medieval literary history and the norms of medieval culture from the multiple vantage points offered by the medieval French Alexander. As an ensemble, these works enable us to revisit, by working through one of its richest veins, the entire opening period of French literary history, from its inception near the beginning of the twelfth century to its glorious late-medieval expansion and diversification and its

anticipation of early modern syntheses and transformations. The medieval French engagement with the legend of Alexander the Great, as it moves us in successive phases across the medieval centuries, emerges as a barometer of social and political change; as a measure of the complex coherence of mentalities and even a few pockets of local knowledge; and, on occasion, as a skeleton key for gaining access to contradictions within the social formation. The object of both adulation and censure even in his own time, Alexander emerges from these depictions as a figure about whom crystallize configurations, variously valorized, of an ideal whose ramifications are both political and personal. For it is Alexander—more than Charlemagne, more than Arthur, despite the celebrity of both of these rulers—who serves as a mirror, or perhaps better, as a prism, in which both the ancient world and the medieval are refracted in multiple and monumental ways.

Notes

1. *RA*, p. 5; translation by the editors.

2. David Williams, "Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature anglaise médiévale. De l'ambivalence à la polyvalence," in *Alexandre*, p. 356.

3. Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Romance of Alexander the Great*, trans. A. M. Wolohojian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969); *Julii Valerii Epitomè*, ed. J. Zacher (Halle, 1867).

4. See Laurence Harf-Lancner on Jacques de Longuyon's *Voeux du paon* (1312) in "Alexandre et l'Occident médiéval," in *Alexandre*, p. 19. The Nine Worthies are Hector, Alexander, and Caesar; Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus; Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godefroy de Bouillon.

5. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Monk's Tale" (vv. 743–45), *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987).

6. Christine Raynaud, "Alexandre dans les bibliothèques bourguignonnes," in *Alexandre*, p. 187.

7. On the prologue see also A. Frugoni, "La biblioteca di Giovanni III duca di Napoli (Dal *Prologus* dell'arciprete Leone al *Romanzo di Alessandro*)," in C. Settis Frugoni, *La fortuna di Alessandro Magno dall'antichità al Medioevo* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1978), pp. 133–41.

8. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*; Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*. See also idem., "Alexander historiatus: A Supplement," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967), 383–88.

9. These concern specific matters such as his extraterrestrial voyages; the eulogies spoken in his memory; his horse Bucephalus; or his tent. On the latter, see Aimé Petit, "Le pavillon d'Alexandre dans le *Roman d'Alexandre* (ms. B. Venise, Museo Civico VI, 665)," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* 6 (1988), 77–96.

10. The scope of this tradition is illustrated in *Alexandre*; see the introductory essays by Claire Kappler and Laurence Harf-Lancner.

11. See Christine Abril, "Les Enfances d'Alexandre: Essai de comparaison entre le *Roman d'Alexandre* et le *Libro de Alexandre*," *PRIS-MA* 13 (1997), 1–12; Amaia Arizaleta, "La figure d'Alexandre comme modèle d'écriture dans la littérature médiévale castillane," in *Alexandre*, pp. 173–86, and her *La Translation d'Alexandre. Recherches sur la genèse et signification du "Libro de Alexandre"* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1999).

12. For recent syntheses on the comprehensive Alexandrian tradition, with special emphases on the medieval heritage, see *Alessandro*; *Alexandre*; and the article "Alessandro Magno" in *Miti e personaggi del Medioevo: Dizionario di storia, letteratura, arte, musica*, ed. Willem P. Gerritsen and Anthony G. van Melle; Italian ed. Gabriella Agrati and Maria Letizia Magini (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), pp. 4–16. On the British Alexander, see Gerrit H. V. Bunt, *Alexander the Great in the Literature of Medieval Britain* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994).

13. See *MFRA III*, pp. 37–60, for the text, along with a French translation of Lamprecht's Middle High German adaptation, the *Alexanderlied* (ca. 1155).

14. Only the beginning of this poem survives, in two manuscripts: Arsenal 3472 and Venice, Museo Civico, VI, 665. For a reconstruction of the decasyllabic archetype see *MFRA III*, pp. 61–100. In ms. BNF fr. 789, components of the decasyllabic poem and Alexandre de Paris's Branch I are combined with new material. See *MFRA III*, pp. 101–54, and *RA*, pp. 20–21.

15. Evidence of this "archetype" is found in three manuscripts. See *MFRA I* for the texts of mss. Arsenal 3472 and Venice, Museo Civico, VI, 665 (which also recounts the "Fuerre de Gadres" episode). For the first 72 laisses of ms. BN fr. 789, see *MFRA III*, pp. 101–54. For a fac-simile of the Venice ms.: *Le Roman d'Alexandre: Riproduzione del ms. Venezia Biblioteca Museo Correr 1493*, ed. Roberto Benedetti (Udine: Roberto Vattori, 1998), with an introduction by Emmanuèle Baumgartner.

16. The four components of Alexandre de Paris's poem were identified as "branches" by Paul Meyer, "Etude sur les manuscrits du *Roman d'Alexandre*," *Romania* 11 (1882), 213–332. Each branch is clearly representative of antecedent works: Br. I, the *enfances*, reflects the decasyllabic *Alexandre*; Br. II draws on the "Fuerre de Gadres" episode by Eustache; Br. III, on the expedition to the Orient, extensively reworks Lambert le Tort; and Br. IV, on the death of Alexander, is a rewriting of the anonymous *Mort Alixandre*. *MFRA II* gives the text of BN fr. 24365 for Branch I, and of BN fr. 25517 for Branches II–IV. *RA* follows the text of BN fr. 25517 exclusively, giving substantial excerpts from branches I, II, and III and all of Branch IV. See *RA*, pp. 59–61.

17. See Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, "Jean Wauquelin et Vasque de Lucène: le 'roman familial' d'Alexandre et l'écriture de l'histoire au XVe siècle," in *Cahiers de Recherches médiévales (XIIIe–XVe siècle)*, 5 (1998), 125–38.

18. In addition to *MFRA I–VII*, other works in the French Alexander tradition appear in the Elliott Monograph Series (Princeton: Princeton University Press): Gui de Cambrai, *Le Vengement Alixandre*, ed. Bateman Edwards (23, 1928); Jean le Nevelon,

Venjance Alexandre, ed. Edward Billings Ham (37, 1931); *La Prise de Defur* and *Le Voyage d'Alexandre au Paradis Terrestre*, ed. Lawton P. G. Peckham and Milan S. La Du (35, 1935). All except *MFRA VI* (1976) were subsequently reprinted (New York: Kraus Reprints, 1965).

19. See Harf-Lancner's discussion of "Chanson de geste ou roman?" in *RA*, pp. 27–43.

20. For a sensitive discussion of the question of genre, see François Suard, "Alexandre est-il un personnage de roman?" *Bien dire et bien aprandre*, 7 (1989), 77–87, esp. p. 79.

21. On the legend's ambiguities see also, in *Alessandro*, Peter Dronke's "Introduzione" (pp. xv–lxxv).

22. See Corrado Bologna, "La generosità cavalleresca di Alessandro Magno," *L'Immagine riflessa* 12 (1989), 367–404.

23. See Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, "Nectanabus et la singularité d'Alexandre dans les *Romans d'Alexandre* français," in *Alexandre*, pp. 303–19.

24. "And to that prince who marches with his troops, who lives by plundering, sacking and ransom, who controls what belongs to others, such generosity is essential; otherwise, his soldiers would not follow him. And with that which does not belong to you or to your subjects you can be a more liberal giver as was Cyrus, Caesar or Alexander, because spending what belongs to others does not detract from your reputation, rather it enhances it; only spending your own is what will hurt you." Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Mark Musa (New York: St Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 133–35.

25. See Piero Boitani, "L'aura e le ombre di Alessandro" in *Alessandro*, pp. 441–43.

26. Hugh (or Richard?) of Saint Victor, *Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum* (*PL* CLXXV). See Dronke, *Alessandro*, p. li, and for other examples see Cary, pp. 118–42.

27. For the Vulgate *Alexandre*'s contrast to the texts with which it is frequently associated in literary history, the so-called *romans antiques* of *Thèbes*, *Enéas*, and *Troie*, see Aimé Petit, "Les romans antiques et Alexandre," in *Alexandre*, pp. 289–302.

28. See Emmanuèle Baumgartner, "L'Orient d'Alexandre," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* 6 (1988), p. 9, our translation.

29. Laurence Harf-Lancner, "La quête de l'immortalité: les fontaines merveilleuses du *Roman d'Alexandre* d'Alexandre de Paris," in *Sources et fontaines du Moyen Age à l'Age baroque* (Paris: Champion, 1998), p. 39, our translation.

30. For discussion of the name see Shigemi Sasaki, "'E si veira les bones, (...) / Que artus aveit faites en Orïent fichier'," in *Studi di storia della civiltà letteraria francese: Mélanges offerts à Lionello Sozzi* (Paris: Champion, 1996), pp. 1–20.

31. *Inferno* XXVI, in Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970): "dov' Ercule segnò li suoi riguardi

/ acciò che l'uom più oltre non si metta" (108–109) [where Hercules set out his marks, that no man should venture beyond them]; our translation.

32. For the parallels between Dante's Ulysses and Alexander, see D'Arco Silvio Avalle, *Modelli semiologici nella Commedia di Dante* (Milan: Bompiani, 1975), pp. 33–63.

33. Saint Bernard, "De Gradius humilitatis et superbiae," in Etienne Gilson, *La Théologie mystique de Saint Bernard* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1969), pp. 181–82, 85. See Sasaki, "'E si veira les bones...'," pp. 18–19.

34. See Baumgartner, "L'Orient d'Alexandre": "A la différence peut-être de l'autre monde celte, l'Orient d'Alexandre ne paraît ainsi prodiguer ses merveilles que pour mieux en montrer le caractère déceptif. Il ne s'offre que pour mieux se reprendre," (p. 13).

35. For the texts see *Prise*, pp. xlii–xlviii, xlix–lii, and 73–90.

36. For the relation of this text to the "horizontal" conception of a dialectic between this world and the Christian Otherworld, see Maria Luisa Meneghetti, "Cieli e terre nei secoli XI–XII: Orizzonti, percezioni, rapporti," in *Miscellanea del Centro di studi medioevali* (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1998), pp. 184–85.

37. See Marylène Perez, "Alexandre le Grand dans l'Alexandréide," *Bien dire et bien aprandre* 6 (1988), pp. 73–76. Jean-Yves Tilliette argues that the hero of the Latin poem is essentially ambiguous and discloses the limitations of the character made popular by the *Roman d'Alexandre*; see "L'*Alexandréide* de Gautier de Châtillon: Enéide médiévale ou 'Virgile travesti'?" in *Alexandre*, pp. 275–86 (here p. 286).

38. Her vernacular corpus includes *MFRA II*; *RTC*; *Prosa*; Rutebeuf, *Dit d'Aristote*; Henri d'Andeli, *Lai d'Aristote*; and *Prise*.

39. See the *Book of Daniel* VIII, 5–8 and 11; the *Book of Maccabees* I, 1, 3–5.

40. VIII, 492–94: "ille cruentus/ Fatorum gladius, terrarum publica pestis."

41. See Pierre Briant, "Alexandre à Babylone: images grecques, images babyloniennes," in *Alexandre*, pp. 23–32.

42. See Catherine Croizy-Naquet, "Darius ou l'image du potentat perse dans le *Roman d'Alexandre*," in *Alexandre*, pp. 161–72 (here p. 164).

43. Gosman's corpus includes: *Prise*, from the second half of the thirteenth century; the three works—*Voeux* (1313–14), *Restor* (before 1338), and *Parfait* (before 1348)—comprising the so-called Paon Cycle; and two fifteenth-century prose compilations, the *Historia du bon roy Alixandre* by Jean Wauquelin (ca. 1448), and the anonymous *Fais et Concquestes du Noble roy Alexandre* (1450–70).

44. John L. Grigsby, "Courtesy in the *Voeux du Paon*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 86 (1985), p. 568.

45. See also Michelle Szkilnik, "Courtoisie et violence: Alexandre dans le *Cycle du Paon*," in *Alexandre*, pp. 321–39.

Chronology

356–323 B.C.	Alexander III, king of Macedon, called "the Great" on account of his conquest of Persia.

Major Works from Antiquity

ca. 40 A.D.	Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Historia Alexandri Magni*, an influential Latin history in ten volumes, the first two of which are lost.
1st century A.D.?	An apocryphal letter from Alexander to Aristotle concerning the marvels of India; may have originated in a Greek epistolary romance, a version of which figures in the Alpha version of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. Numerous Latin versions of the letter circulated independently. The *Epistola Alexandri Magni ad Aristotelem* was well known during the Middle Ages.
ca. 200 A.D.	The *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, or Greek Alexander romance, written in Alexandria and falsely attributed to the Greek historian and nephew of Aristotle. A seminal work for the medieval Alexander tradition, it was translated into numerous languages.
ca. 320–30 A.D.	Julius Valerius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, a Latin translation of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.
9th century A.D.	The *Epitomè Julii Valerii*, an important abridgement of the *Res gestae* of Julius Valerius.
ca. 953 A.D.	Archpriest Leo of Naples, *Nativitas et victoria Alexandri Magni regis*, a Latin adaptation of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.
10th century A.D.	*Historia de Preliis*, an adaptation of the *Nativitas et victoria* of Archpriest Leo.

The Medieval French Tradition

ca. 1110–25	Fragment of a Franco-Provençal *Roman d'Alexandre* by Alberic de Pisançon, of which 105 octosyllabic verses

	survive, in monorhymed *laisses*. Evokes the hero's birth and education.
ca. 1155	Lamprecht, *Alexanderlied*, a Middle High German adaptation of Alberic's poem.
ca. 1160	The *Roman d'Alexandre* in decasyllabic laisses, adapted from Alberic by a Poitevin poet, depicts the hero's *enfances* and early exploits.
ca. 1170	Eustache, *Le Roman du Fuerre de Gadres*, recounts a raid undertaken by Alexander's forces during the siege of Tyr. This work has not survived in the original.
ca. 1170	Lambert le Tort, *Alexandre en Orient,* a lost dodecasyllabic account of the Macedonian's adventures in India; draws on the *Epitomè* of Julius Valerius and the *Epistola Alexandri Magni*.
ca. 1170	The first eight laisses (159 verses) are all that survive of a fragmentary *Mort Alixandre*, on the death of the hero (ms. Arsenal 3472).
ca. 1175–80	Thomas de Kent, *Le Roman de toute Chevalerie* (over 12,000 verses) gives a synoptic account of the heroic biography, elaborated in monorhyming dodecasyllabic laisses; shows considerable independence from continental French antecedents.
ca. 1180	Jehan le Nevelon, *La Venjance Alixandre*, a continuation on the avenging of Alexander's death.
ca. 1185	Alexandre de Paris (also known as Alexandre de Bernay), *Roman d'Alexandre.* A composite synoptic romance of some 16,000 verses in monorhyming dodecasyllabic *laisses*, this reworking of earlier Old French poems, known generally as the "Vulgate" *Alexandre*, is comprised of four parts, known as "branches": a twelve-syllable version of the anonymous decasyllabic poem depicting the birth, childhood and youth of Alexander; an augmented rewriting of the *Fuerre de Gadres* of Eustache; a vast remodeling of Lambert le Tort's account of Alexander's oriental exploits; and an expansive renovation of the *Mort Alixandre*.
1184–87	Gautier de Châtillon, *Alexandreïs*, a Latin epic based largely on Quintus Curtius.
ca. 1191	Gui de Cambrai, *Le Vengement Alixandre*, another continuation detailing the vengeance exacted following the death of the hero.
ca. 1213–14	The *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* contains a life of Alexander reflecting the author's familiarity with the *Epitomè* of Julius Valerius and the *Epistola Alexandri Magni*.