

Homage to Alexander!

Encomium for a World Hero!

420 - 453 **AO** = After the **O**lympics of 776 BC; [356 to 323 BC]

Afterthoughts at an exhibition by international artist Warlámis

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The Warlámis exhibition “*Alexander*” came to Crete after successful tours in Thessaloniki, Alexandria of Egypt, Cyprus, Europe, etc. Reverently I tip-toed into the exhibition halls created in the old Venetian fort by the quaint harbor of Hania. Laurel leaves were strewn onto the floor. The background music was haunting. 300 of the **1000 portraits** by Mákis Warlámis [*E. ΒΑΡΛΑΜΗΣ*] were exhibited. They were so evocative that powerful emotions surged through me, and I could no longer hold back putting in writing my euphoria for Alexander whom we both idolize.



Gallery guide Asteris told me that it was by Alexander that peaches from China were brought to my hometown Veria. Peaches = *ΡΟΔΑΚΙΝΑ*, means “*Roses from China*” in Greek. This was an epiphany for me. For centuries now, Veria has been a center of peach production, thanks to the scientists who accompanied protean Alexander to Asia, bringing back to Greece new plants, new foods, spices, ideas, oriental philosophies, new religions, cultures, **therapeutic herbs!**



Most of what we know of Alexander was done or written after his death. There is a figurine of his face that was made when Alexander was still alive in the tombs of his father **Philip the Great** at the **Vergina** [*ΑΙΓΑΙ* = *Goats*] near Veria, the best little tomb museum outside of **China**. Having been guided officially through the **Xian** and the Beijing **Ming** tomb mounts, I rank them No.1, based on their enormous size and imperial self-indulgence.

I read the whole series of novels written by the South African writer **M. Renault** on Alexander, which bring to life his days as a precocious youth to the **scuffles** of his generals for the rights to his dead body. Nikos **Kazantzakis** authored an intriguing novelette on Alexander for school age children. I watched many times the fantastic 4-hour **PBS-TV** program of M. **Wood** “*In the Footsteps of Alexander*”. “*Αλεξάνδρος ο Μεγάλος*” by Cypriot Minister of Education /OSU graduate **C. Sofianos** is the most eloquent book as it is written by a philologist in the **Greek language**, an idiom that is rich in epithets befitting the triumphs, gallant deeds, brilliant hegemony of Alexander.

The most humorous and yet very informative novel is by **Tom Holt**, “*Alexander at the World’s End*”. The movie “*Alexander*” by **O. Stone** was long; too long on sex! Pressfield’s novel “*Virtues of War*” is worth reading. Fascinating are the 3 novels by the Italian scholar **Manfredi**. The main sources are the 3 tomes of *Αρριανός*, [**Arrian**, 400 years after Alexander]. What rhapsodist **Homer** [000 **AO**] was for Achilles and Pátroklos [-400 **AO**] is Arrian for Alexander and his childhood friend and logistics engineer **Hephaestion** [*Ηφαιστίων*], who like Pátroclus, died suddenly at the consternation of Alexander.

Alexander marched his army from Greece to Anatolia, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Russia, the “*-stan*” republics of the former USSR, the Himalayas, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan,

India, back to Babylon through the inhospitable deserts of SE Persia, **40,000 km** in all [map]. Can you imagine doing such long and arduous marches in between tumultuous battles with **thousands of soldiers** plus their families, cooks, doctors, hospitals, nurses, horse trainers, veterinarians, scientists, supply wagons, engineers, armament makers, bridge makers, carts, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, etc **without** today's warfare logistics? Even an airplane trip was a logistics nightmare when I took my family to Asia 2300 years later.



While working in Punjab in NW **India** in **1966** on a Ford Foundation /OSU mission, we visited villages that had been there at the time of Alexander. The villagers could not figure out where we were from. When I would say “*the hometown of Sikandar e Azam*”, their eyes would light up; they would break into a smile, and hug our children. They would speak of **Sikandar-e-Azam**, [*Alexander the Great in Urdu & Hindi languages*], as a beloved uncle who departed long ago, a guru with mythical powers. The aristocratic families of the East, the **Maharajas** of India, the **Sultans** of Indonesia and of Malaysia claim to be descendants of Alexander, the **2-horned one**, from whom they claim they had inherited their **mandate to rule**. They have European features and light skin color. The Sultan of Johore and former King of Malaysia is named Alexander.



An unyielding antagonist of **xenophobia**, Alexander had his Greek officers marry **Asian women**. He himself married 2 Asian princesses and fathered boys, and must have produced **Amazonian** female warriors who rode their horses from Pontos to the Caspian Sea to mate with King Alexander.

How did he endure the pace of the long march to the end of the world [map]? I cannot fathom how Alexander survived. He was always at the **front** line of all those gory battles galloping on his

beloved warhorse **Boukephalas** [*whose battling of elephants in the Punjab region of NW India Alexander honored by founding the city of Bucephala; see map; His dog Peritas, see cover art by Evangelia, he, like Odysseus, left behind in Pella*]! His whole body from his toes to his head was scarred. At a battle on the Indus River, when an arrowhead was withdrawn at his insistence from his chest, not only blood but also water squirted out indicating that his lungs had been pierced. He lived thanks to the Greek medical team and local oriental **herbal medicines**.

His army was made up of Greeks [*no Spartans*], Anatolians, Pontians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, *et al.* In his "**Pledge of Allegiance**", at **Opis**, by the Tigris River, [*where Baghdad is now; see map*] Alexander asked his officers to pledge allegiance to the **Universality of Man**, and to judge a virtuous man by his contribution to society **not** by his **race**, **ethnicity**, or **religion**. This was a radical, pioneering concept that transcended not only the beliefs of common

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

"Now that the wars have ended, I wish everyone to live happy in peace. From now on, live as one people united for the common good. Let the World be your fatherland with common laws, governed by those who excel irrespective of their race. Let achievement be the criterion of a good citizen not the color of his skin or his origin. Everyone is equal. Solve your problems through diplomacy, not through war! Respect God not as a dictator but as a kind and compassionate father, common to all! Do not feel as subjects of the Commonwealth but rather as share holders, as partners. The oath that you give, let be known as the Covenant of Love".

Alexander III

OPIS, Mesopotamia, 452 AO

people but also those of his famous teacher, the great philosopher **Aristotle**. By globalizing the Greek language, Alexander paved the way for the revolutionary message of **Christian Love** by **Apostle Paul** who in 50 AD toured Greece, and wrote his epistles in Greek. Deeply religious, pious Alexander prayed daily. Alexander recognized that global issues needed global governance, prophesizing the **UN** concept that all people and all nations, **big** and **small**, are equal under **a loving, universal God!**

His multiple festering wounds affected his defenses against infections, triggering his premature demise on **10 June 323 BC [453 AO]** at the youthful age of only **33** at the apogee of ecumenical fame and aeonian glory. He died in Babylon of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River [*where 2330 years later the West is mired in hegemony entanglements*]. As his corps was carried to Macedonia, King **Ptolemy** [Πτολεμαίος] intercepted the phalanx, took the body and buried it in Alexandria, Egypt.

My indefatigable Veria schoolmate **Warlámis** took **10 years** to try to capture the essence of charismatic Alexander;

a conqueror of armies many times larger than his; climber of inhospitable snow-capped Himalayas and survivor of treeless-waterless sand deserts; vanquisher of fortified cities and of inaccessible hideaways of brazen foes; a champion of science; genius strategist; a **Homeric scholar**; creator of 70 cities like Alexandria on the delta of the Nile River that became the epicenter of literature, culture and commerce [*see article by Prof Jusdanis*]; ecumenical celebrity; unquestionably the preeminent military and political **star** in the world; unselfishly generous to friends and even defeated brave foes but ruthless against malfeasance; bold in **war**, magnanimous in **peace!**

In the pantheon of non-religious leaders who made magnificent impact on the history of the world, Alexander has no human equal!

The **eyes**, the most **divine part of man**, are the focus in the Warlámis paintings of our **hometown hero**. You feel his presence as you feast your own **eyes** on Alexander's! Warlámis painted Alexander's eyes as they might have looked at critical moments such as when entering a bloody battle or the chambers of a princess. It is through the eyes that witnessed **unknown lands** and **events of historic significance** that we see Alexander as an **oecumenical man**, an eidolon of catholic interests, **apostle of Hellenism**; chivalrous to women, knightly to his men; icon of grace and majesty under stress, **Alexander the Magnificent**.

ZEI KAI BASILEYEI KAI TON KOΣMO KYPIEYEI
is what Aegean Sea sailors must sing, if they do not want rough seas, when enquired by mermaid sister **Gorgona**:
“*Alexander lives, reigns, and leads cosmos*” into **fusion**
of the **West** with the **rising East**!

