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Michael Van Ginkel April 11, 2016

Alexander's Balkan Campaign of 335 BCE

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Abstract

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Alexander's Balkan campaign, initiated in the Spring of 335 BCE, reveals Alexander's military potential and aptitude for command. While the subjugation of the tribes involved in the Balkan uprising remained Alexander's foremost objective, the campaign proved instrumental in establishing lasting supremacy in his European territories, cementing his military reputation, and ensuring the martial competence of his armed forces. A successful conclusion to the campaign allowed Alexander to leave for his Persian expedition knowing his kingdom and supply lines remained secure from rebellion. Alexander additionally increased the stamina and toughness of his inexperienced troops and field commanders through the unforgiving mountains of modern Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania.

The detailed reconstruction and analysis of Alexander's Thracian campaign reveals the important role Alexander's Balkan expedition played in his later successes. For instance, the tactics used against the rolling carts at Mount Haemus are seen against Darius' chariots at the battle of Gaugamela, the maneuvering of armies before the battle of Lyginus River at the prelude to the battle of Issus, and the use of leather tents filled with hay to cross the Ister at the crossing of the Oxus River. The lessons Alexander, his new cadre of commanders, and the Macedonian army at large learned during the hard fought Balkan campaign prepared them for difficulties ahead. The Balkan campaign therefore had a significant impact on Alexander's future wars and remain essential to understanding his abilities and strategies.

The minimal textual evidence on the campaign necessitated a reliance on different fields of inquiry to substantiate otherwise tenuous claims. Through engaging the topic of military history from more numerous angles researchers can acquire information from several different perspectives. Multiple viewpoints allow researchers to verify solitary evidence, circumvent biased material, and fill textual or material lacunae. I therefore incorporate a historical, archaeological, and digital approach to my project.

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Introduction

My project focuses on Alexander's campaign into Thrace, initiated in the Spring of 335 BCE. The Balkan campaign, including the battles of Mount Haemus, Lyginus River, and the Danube Crossing, reveals Alexander's military potential and aptitude for command. While the subjugation of the tribes involved in the Balkan uprising remained Alexander's foremost objective, the campaign proved instrumental in establishing lasting supremacy in his European territories, cementing his military reputation, and ensuring the martial competence of his armed forces. A successful conclusion to the campaign allowed Alexander to leave for his Persian expedition knowing his kingdom and supply lines remained secure from rebellion. Alexander additionally increased the stamina and toughness of his inexperienced troops and field commanders through the unforgiving mountains of modern Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. Lastly, Alexander developed tactics and strategies that would later be used in the more famous battles of his Persian campaigns, including major battles such as Gaugamela and Issus as well as minor engagements against independent hill tribes. The Balkan campaigns therefore had a significant impact on Alexander's future wars and remain essential to understanding his abilities and strategies.

Accurate reconstruction and appreciation of Alexander's campaigns have major ramifications for research in military history. Subsequent students of warfare lauded the achievements of Alexander and studied his battles. According to the ancient author Diodorus Sicilus, the Roman emperor Caracalla, for instance, even trained and armored a specially recruited infantry unit in Macedonian fashion (Diodorus 78.7.1-2). Modern military institutions such as the US military academy at West Point, dedicated to training military officers, likewise

regularly educate their students on Alexander's campaigns. In addition to military accomplishments, Alexander's policies and attitude toward foreign peoples, both through his Hellenization of the Near East and his own "medizing" in his court, impart useful lessons in cross-cultural exchanges and ruler-subject relationships.

The minimal textual evidence on the campaign necessitates a reliance on different fields of inquiry to substantiate otherwise tenuous claims. Through engaging the topic of military history from more numerous angles researchers can acquire information from several different perspectives. Multiple viewpoints allow researchers to verify solitary evidence, circumvent biased material, and fill textual or material lacunae. I therefore incorporate a historical, archaeological, and digital approach to my project. The various newer methods of tackling the topic will remain, however, supplementary to more traditional historical and literary approach for reconstructing the conflict. Without situating further research within the basic framework provided by primary and secondary accounts, the data and conclusions quickly lose credibility and applicability.

I first analyze modern translations of Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* and consult the ancient Greek to clarify ambiguities. Identifying patterns in troop movements and descriptions of terrain morphology aids in reconstructing the battle's environment and identifying their potential locations. Additionally, I attempt to recognize where Arrian's preconceptions have distorted his version of events. Identifying the cultural, personal, and literary influences affecting Arrian's writing allows researchers to separate primary accounts from secondary interpretations. The material identified as primary, and therefore unaltered by Roman construal, then provides the foundation for reconstructing the campaign.

An investigation of the validity between claims made by secondary sources follows. Published scholarship on the Balkan campaign, such as the work of Nicholas Hammond, Brian Bosworth, Stephan English, and John Fuller, require thorough reading and their arguments and counter-arguments evaluated in light of recent archaeological discoveries.[1] Understanding, for instance, the size and importance of Greek colonies along the Black Sea Coast provides useful information on the strategic considerations faced by Alexander.[2]

One method of researching the most efficient marching routes is through Geographical Information Systems (GIS). In this project ArcGIS software, with data sets attained from online open sources, create a digital representation of the Balkan landscape. GIS provides a platform to generate user specific and aesthetically pleasing maps. The resulting images create visual references that situate the discussed routes into the larger geographical area. In addition, the program gives user the ability to compare spatially terrain attributes through geo-referenced map overlays and other geo-processing tools. Finally, through using the spatial analyst ArcGIS extension, users can conduct Least Cost Pathway Analysis (LCPA) on the virtual landscape to deduce the most efficient routes. By uploading elevation raster datasets, LCPA plots the fastest route across a landscape based on changes of elevation. Raster datasets consist of a matrix of cells, with each cell denoting a given elevation value. Detailed raster elevation data is attainable through a satellite sensor, ASTER, which produces Global Digital Elevation Modals (GDEM). A partnership between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (METI) and the

[1] Brian Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander, Vol 1*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980; John Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great*, New Jersey: De Capo, 1960; Nicholas Hammond *Kind, Commander and Statemen,* London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1980. Stephan English, *The Field Campaigns of Alexander the Great,* Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011.

[2] John Karavas, interview by author, personal interview, Athens, Greece, April 30, 2015.

American National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has made the data available online.[3]

A physical reconnaissance of the landscape ensures the accurate conceptualization of terrain morphology and spatial positioning. To identify and avoid the effects of projection distortions, unforeseen natural obstacles, and hidden local geology a personal investigation must occur. Subsequently, the identification of a terrain features mentioned in Arrian's account, such as Mount Haemus, Peuce Island, or Mount Orbelus, requires a personal reconnaissance over the area of interest. In regards to Mount Haemus in particular, modern interpretations of Arrian's account, proposed primarily by Hammond and Bosworth, has resulted in the detection of several plausible conflict sites. A reconnaissance of the hypothesized locations identifies correlations between physical terrain characteristics, veiled from cartographic or even photographic evidence, and Arrian's writing.

[3] "ASTER GDEM." ASTER GDEM. Last modified October 17, 2011. Accessed September 8, 2015. http://gdem.ersdac.jspacesystems.or.jp/login.jsp.

Chapter 1: Interpretations of Alexander's Balkan Campaign

Only fragments of literary sources on Alexander's campaigns contemporary to his lifetime survive. The ancient literature available to modern researchers belong to Roman period authors and consist of Diodorus Siculus' (1st century BCE) *Bibliotheca Historia*, Quintius Curtius Rufus' (1st century CE) *Histories of Alexander the Great*, Plutarch's (early 2ndst century CE) *Life of Alexander* Lucius Flavius Arrianus' (2nd century CE) *Anabasis of Alexander*, and Junianus Justinus' (3rd century CE) *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*.[4] Unfortunately, aside from a few sentences in Plutarch, Diodorus, and Justin, only Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* dedicates a substantial section to the Balkan campaign. Arrian, like the other Roman period historians and biographers, mainly based his work on sources contemporary to Alexander's lifetime. Although writing roughly 400 years after Alexander's death, Arrian had at his disposal a variety of primary sources on Alexander's campaigns.

Arrian begins by proclaiming that he relies mainly on Aristobulus and Ptolemy for information, a statement supported by his sporadic source citations (Arrian 1.1.3).[5] He continues his introduction by announcing his intention to insert subsidiary sources where he "thought them worth mentioning and not entirely untrustworthy, but only as tales told of Alexander" (Arrian 1.1.3). These sources included the navel admiral Nearchus, the geographer Eratosthenes and the three historians Megasthenes, Chares, and Cleitarchus. In addition, Arrian supplemented his narrative with information attained from the *Bematists*, professional surveyors employed by the Macedonians; *The Ephemerides*, the king's official daily reports; and *The Epistles;* Alexander's official letters of correspondence. Unfortunately, instead of citing his sources directly Arrian

[4] All the listed works are written in Greek except for Diodorus and Justin, which are written in Latin.
[5] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, Trans P.A Burnt, London: Harvard University Press, 1976.

oftentimes uses anonymous references and a distinctive grammatical structure, usually indirect speech, to signify a reliance on subsidiary sources. Scholars, notably Robert Steele, have determined the identities of these sources by conducting phylogenic comparisons.[6] For instance, occasionally other extant Roman works with a greater propensity toward citing sources then Arrian, such as Strabo, contain passages with similar information and descriptions. Consequently, scholars deductively reason that Strabo and Arrian created their parallel accounts by extracting information from the same source.

Writing after Alexander's death, Nearchus of Crete, son of Androtimus, focuses his writings on expeditions conducted in India. Appointed both admiral and satrap of Lycia and Pamphylia under Alexander's patronage, Nearchus played a prominent role in Alexander's later campaigns.[7] The Greek historian, geographer, and ethnographer Megasthenes, the author of the *Indica,* helped supply Arrian with information specifically on Indian topography.[8] Although, according to Arrian, Megasthenes lived in the satrap of Arachosia he had extensive personal experience in India, greatly increasing the trustworthiness of his accounts (Arrian 5.5.1).

In reconstructing the geographical context of Alexander's wider campaign, Arrian relied on the Alexandrian geographer Eratosthenes. Although most famous in modernity for his calculation of the earth's circumference, Eratosthenes wrote on a variety of subjects including mathematics, poetry, astronomy, music theory, and geography. Arrian supplemented Eratosthenes' geographic descriptions with the writings of the *Bematists*, or professional

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[6] Robert Steele, "The Method of Arrian in the Anabasis," *Classical Philology* 14, no.2 (April 1919): 147-157, accessed September 21, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/263079.
[7] Waldemar Heckel, *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 171.
[8] Heckel, *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great,* 159

surveyors, who allegedly provided the *stathmoi,* or stages, of Alexander's marches and provided rich accounts on flora and fauna.[9]

Arrian often refers indirectly to Cleitarchus, son of Deinon, a Greek from Alexandria and the author of the *History of Alexander.* Although probably not present during Alexander's campaigns, Cleitarchus wrote c.310 BCE and probably had access to firsthand reports.[10] Chares of Mytilene provided another substantial source of information through his *History of Alexander*. Chares held a civilian position within Alexander's court and eventually obtained the position of Royal Usher; this high ranking position may have provided special insights into Alexander's personal relationship with his Macedonian officers.[11]

Scholars refer to Alexander's personal letters of correspondence as *The Epistles,* although by the Hellenistic period many versions of the letters, often apocryphal, circulated. The Hellenistic letters, while based on the authentic originals, were most likely edited and embellished by later writers.[12] Similarly, scholars still debate the authenticity, and very existence, of the *Ephemerides.* The *Ephemerides* reportedly consisted of daily official reports on the Macedonian king's proceedings, including his battlefield orders, military maneuvers, and diplomatic relations. The citations of ancient authors such Philinus, Arrian, Plutarch, Athenaeus, and Aelian imply the existence of a body of literature known as the *Ephemerides*. According to Athenaeus, Eumenes of Cardia, Alexander's chief secretary, and another otherwise unmentioned character Diodotus of Erythrae compiled the account.[13] While Nicholas Hammond, Ulrich Wilcken, and Charles Robinson firmly accept the existence and authenticity of kings' daily

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[9] Bosworth, *Conquest and empire*, 299.
[10] Heckel, *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great,* 86.
[11] Ibid.*,* 83.
[12] Bosworth, *Conquest and empire*, 299.
[13] Nicholas Hammond, "The Royal Journal of Alexander," *Historia: Zeitchrift fur Atle Geschichte* (1988): 130**,** accessed September 27, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436045.

record, others like Lionel Pearson and Brian Bosworth remain convinced that the Roman authors had consulted counterfeits created after Alexander's death. Yet another theory put forth by A. E Samuel suggest the *Ephemerides* actually belong to the Babylonian chronicle, since ancient authors only directly cite the *Ephemerides* for events surrounding Alexander's illness in Babylon.[14] The *Ephemerides*, or other variations of official records, was introduced into the Macedonian royal courts as early as Alexander I's rule in 498 BCE and Alexander almost certainly continued the practice in 336 BCE. [15] Scholarship, however, remains divided on whether or not the Romans had access to the original.

One of Arrian's self-avowed main sources, Aristobulus, son of Aristobulus, published his *History* on Alexander's campaigns (Arrian 1.1.3). Aristobulus served in Macedonian engineer corps until Alexander's death, a position supported by his supposed restoration of Cyrus' tomb.[16] Arrian's confidence in Aristobulus' credibility derived mostly from his direct participation in Alexander's campaigns. Arrian informs his readers that Aristobulus wrote after Alexander' death, thereby increasing his trustworthiness by removing the temptation for flattery (Arrian 1.1.3). Aristobulus, however, seems to adopt an apologetic stance towards Alexander. For instance, according to Arrian, Aristobulus excuses Alexander's murder of Cleitus by blaming the victim's behavior (Arrian 4.8.8).

Arrian's second main source, Ptolemy, son of Lagus, also wrote a *History of Alexander*. Ptolemy published the book after Alexander's death and, as noted by Bosworth, seems favorably inclined towards Alexander's exploits.[17] Having fought for Alexander since the outset of his

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[14] Alan Samuel, "Alexander's Royal Jounrals'," *Historia: Zeitchrift fur Atle Geschichte* (January 1965): 11**,** accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4434864.
[15] Hammond, "The Royal Journal of Alexander," 4.
[16] Nicholas Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 200; Heckel, *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great,* 46.
[17] Bosworth, *Conquest and empire*, 297.

campaigns, Alexander promoted Ptolemy to a position of prominence and independent command around 330 BCE after the downfall of Philotas.[18] His presence on Alexander's high command, especially during Alexander's later reign, gave Ptolemy insights into Alexander's strategies and tactics. Ptolemy took control of Egypt during the wars of Alexander's successors and later proclaimed himself king. Arrian declares that Ptolemy's claim to nobility increased his reliability because "mendacity would have been more dishonorable for him than for anyone else" (Arrian 1.1.2). Although following a questionable line of reasoning, Ptolemy's accounts provide a realistic and often detailed portrayal of events. Hammond interprets the thoroughness of Ptolemy's writing as confirmation for his hypothesis that Ptolemy had regular excess to the *Ephemerides* while writing his *History of Alexander*.[19] Ptolemy, Hammond proposes, would have intercepted the *Ephemerides* along with Alexander's corpse and brought them to Alexandria for consultation.[20]

A close scrutiny of the grammatical patterns employed by Arrian to recount the Balkan engagements points towards an exclusive reliance on Aristobulus and Ptolemy, and thus perhaps the *Ephemerides,* for the duration of the campaign. As noted by Hammond, the plural 'they say' used by Arrian to begin his narrative of the Balkans most likely refers to his main sources, Aristobulus and Ptolemy. Peter Brunt supports this view by pointing out the "seamless narrative" throughout Arrian's description of the Balkan campaign (Arrian 1.1.5).[21] The uniform usage of direct speech, beginning with "they say", therefore implies the consistent use of sources throughout the section, namely Aristobulus and Ptolemy. The similarities in descriptions between Strabo's account of the Danube meeting between Alexander the Celtic embassies,

[18] Heckel, *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great, 236.*
[19] Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great,* 157-162.
[20] Hammond, "The Royal Journal of Alexander," 7.
[21] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander,* trans, Peter Burnt, (London: Harvard university Press, 1976), 5.

derived from Ptolemy, and Arrian's rendition of the Danube meeting lead scholars to believe that Arrian used Ptolemy as his source (Arrian 1.4.8). In addition, as highlighted by V. Ehrenberg, the notion of 'longing' that seizes Alexander at the Danube conforms to language use employed by Aristobulus elsewhere (Arrian 1.3.5). Lastly, Arrian directly attributes his information on casualties at Lyginus River to Ptolemy, following his original statement that "where the sources differed I would provide the more credible version" (Arrian 1.2.7; 1.1.1).

Having identified Arrian's primary sources, scholars must recognize the cultural, professional, literary, and personal influences affecting Arrian's writing in order to distinguish the primary accounts from later Roman interpretations. The material identified as primary, and therefore unaltered by Roman construal, then provides the foundation for further research. To understand the factors affecting Arrian's work scholars reconstruct Arrian's background and life. Scholars extract most of their knowledge on Arrian's personal life through a close scrutiny of his written works. An avid writer, Arrian produced several books during his lifetime. Although only the *Indica* and *Anabasis* survive in entirety, excerpts and citations exist from writings on hunting (*Cynegeticus*), geography (*Periplus*)**,** warfare (*Tactica*), Philosophy (*Discourses of Epictetus* and *Enchiridion of Epictetus*), and history (*Parthica*, *Bithyniaca*, *The Order of Battle Against the Alans* and *Affairs After Alexander*). Combined, the works supply details on Arrian's career path and worldviews.

Although born and raised as a Greek in the province of Nicomedia in Bithynia, Arrian was a Roman citizen. Born around 84 CE, Arrian entered the Roman senate and held consulship, and then proconsulship, in Baetica.[22] He continued his political career by holding governorship over Cappadocia and, according to G.A. Harrer and Ronald Syme, eventually receiving the

[22] Jasper Carlsen, "Greek History in a Roman context: Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander," In *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing: Double Vision,* Ed Jesper Majbom, Roger Rees, (Leiden: Konilklijke Brill NV, 2014), 210.

appointment of governor over Syria before retiring to Athens. [23] Arrian's attention to battlefield tactics, campaigning strategies, and logistical difficulties points to a mind well versed in military affairs.[24] Arrian himself states in the *Cynegeticus* that as a youth he gained experience in both literature and soldiery and Bosworth suggests that Arrian may have accumulated the military experience at the command level, potentially as a Military Tribune in the Balkans (Arrian 1.4).[25] Arrian's military successes in Cappadocia against the Alani and his service under Trajan and Hadrian highlight his overall aptitude for military affairs.[26] Eduard Schwartz argues that Arrian began writing the *Anabasis of Alexander* after retiring from his military career. [27] Although still contested by Bosworth, the argument remains persuasive to many modern scholars such as Jasper Carlson and Hammond.

The cultural context of Arrian's writing remains essential to identifying potential bias. Arrian published the *Anabasis of Alexander* during an era of sustained Roman imperialism and cultural expansion. He therefore interpreted primary sources through an Imperial and Roman lens, which affected his understandings and reconstruction of events.[28] According to Mary Beard, for instance, authors writing within an imperialistic Roman context could unconsciously project predetermined mindsets, developed from their experiences with provincial auxiliaries,

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[23] Ronald Syme, "The Career of Arrian," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 86 (1982): 203-204, accessed September 13, 2015, accessed September 28, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/311194; G.A. Harrer "Was Arrian Governor of Syria?," *Classical Philology* 11, no.3 (July 1916): 338-339, accessed September 28, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/261859.

[24] Brian Bosworth, "Arrian's Literary Development," *The Classical Quarterly* 22, no.1 (May 1972): 19, accessed September 13, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/637903.

[25] Brian Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 17-20.

[26] Brian Bosworth, "Arrian and the Alani," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 81 (1977): 2, accessed September 8, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/311121.

[27] Eduard Schwartz, *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber,* (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1957) quoted in Bosworth, "Arrian's Literary Development," 163.

[28] Carlsen, "Greek History in a Roman context: Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander," 217.

into descriptions of Macedonian interactions with foreign allied troops.[29] Arrian's cultural background consequently increased the potential for misrepresenting the thinking and sentiments of Alexander's high command.

During instances of informational lacuna in the *Anabasis of Alexander*, Arrian relies on his existing knowledge of the Roman military to address the issue. Since his principal sources, Aristobulus and Ptolemy, fail to describe how the Macedonians forces crossed the Indus River, Arrian himself proposes an explanation derived from Roman practice. Arrian explains that "the quickest way of bridging I know, at least, is the Roman use of boats, and I shall here describe it, for it merits description" (5.7.2-3). When confronted with vague or incomplete sources, Arrian explicitly relies on Roman solutions to address obstacles faced by Macedonians. Indeed Carlson suggests the episode refers to a specific crossing known to Arrian, namely the Roman bridging of the Euphrates and Tigris during Hadrian's campaigns.[30]

The *Anabasis of Alexander* contains more subtle indications of Arrian's Roman perspective. When describing the Siege of Pelium during Alexander's campaign against the revolting Illyrian Tribes, Arrian claims that the Macedonians commenced the final engagement after "Alexander learned that Clitus and Glaucias' troops were carelessly bivouacked, no sentry posts in due order, no palisade, no trench in front of them" (1.6.9-10). Arrian's assertion that Alexander deemed the Illyrian camp 'carelessly bivouacked' implies that Alexander's army regularly implemented the precautions found lacking in Clitus and Glaucias' forces. Since Roman military protocol demanded the nightly construction of fortified base camps, Arrian's familiarity with the routine procedure caused him overlook the novelty of this practice for the Macedonian. Arrian's use of juxtaposition to comment on the construction of night camps,

[29]Mary Beard, *Confronting the Classics: Traditions, Adventures and Innovations,* (London: Profile Books LTD, 2014), 52.
[30] Carlsen, "Greek History in a Roman context: Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander," 214.

indirectly providing the first documented instance of Macedonians using fortified night camps, fails to convey the significance of the defensive innovation.

Literary influences, most importantly the work of Xenophon, also shaped Arrian's work. Indeed, the weight of scholarly opinion supports the view that Alexander himself read Xenophon's *Anabasis* during his adolescent studies or in preparation for campaigning. For instance, Alexander's use of leather tent covers packed with hay to cross the Ister recalls the Greek crossing of the Euphrates under Xenophon's command (Xenophon 1.3.6-7). Arrian noticed the similarities between the two campaigns and, already an admirer of Xenophon's work, modeled his writing around his predecessor's *Anabasis*, as reflected in his choice of title. Arrian directly compares himself to Xenophon in *Cynegeticus* and refers to Xenophon on multiple occasions in the *Anabasis of Alexander*. James Oliver's identification of a 2nd or 3rd century double herm as Arrian and Xenophon, confirms that subsequent generations created the comparison.[31] Even scholars such as Kieren McGrourty, who remain skeptical of Xenophon's influence on Alexander, continue to confidently present Arrian as a devotee of Xenophon.[32]

Herodotus and Thucydides also influenced Arrian's writing and approach. Bosworth, for instance, highlights Arrian's self-proclaimed decision to include events "worth mentioning and not entirely untrustworthy" (1.1.3) as recalling the historical approach of Herodotus.[33] Similar to Herodotus, Arrian inserts extravagant and occasionally unbelievable tales into his writings. Likewise, Arrian often reflects Thucydides' structure and language. For example, as Bosworth remarks, Arrian mirrors Thucydides in critiquing the general public's unquestioned acceptance

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[31] James Oliver, "Arrian in Two Roles," *Hesperia Supplements* 19 (1982): 128, accessed September 9, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1353978.

[32] Kieran McGroarty, "Did Alexander the Great Read Xenophon," *Hermathena*, no.181 (2006): 107, accessed September 22, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23041624.

[33] Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation,* 61.

of popular opinion.[34] Like his predecessor, Arrian instead encourages the careful assessment of the authenticity behind claims before taking them as truths.

By studying Arrian's *Ars Tactica* scholars can identify his methods for transmitting information attained from primary sources. According to Philip Stadter both Arrian and Aelian, a Roman author and teacher, created their tactical manuals from a close reading of Posidonius *Art of War*.[35] Arrian's military background allowed him to correct inaccuracies in Posidonius' work that Aelian as a citizen could not detect. Stadter consequently deduces that any anomalies between Arrian and Aelian writing reflect Arrian's application of "traditional knowledge with original intelligence" to modify and update Posidonius' work.[36] Accordingly, although chiefly following the works of Ptolemy and Aristobulus, Arrian may have modified passages where he identified inconsistencies or falsifications.

Throughout his narration of Alexander's campaigns, Arrian portrays Alexander as a praiseworthy individual. Although Alexander possesses human flaws, their presence neither limit nor define his character. The negative, and occasionally detrimental, character traits attributed to Alexander in the *Anabasis of Alexander* instead expose his human imperfection. For instance, Arrian openly proclaims that he cannot commend Alexander's arrogant introduction of *Proskynesis*, or ceremonial prostration, which directly contributed to internal discord within the Macedonian ranks (Arrian 4.12.6). Yet despite Alexander's failings Arrian announces that "though I have myself had occasion to find fault with some of Alexander's deeds in the course of my history of them, I am not ashamed to admire Alexander himself" (Arrian 7.30.3). Arrian

[34] Ibid., *76.*
[35] Philip Stadter, "The Ars Tactica of Arrian: Tradition and Originality," *Classical Philology* 73, no.2, (April 1978): 118, accessed September 8, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/268990.
[36] Ibid., 128.

portrays Alexander as a praiseworthy individual but stresses his humanity by highlighting his imperfections.

Having ascertained the cultural, personal, and literary forces exerted on Arrian, researchers can begin analyzing the Roman author's account for information pertinent to reconstructing the Balkan campaign. Since Arrian's brevity fails to deliver a comprehensive rendition of events the task of rounding out his account falls to subsequent scholars. The final section of this chapter will address the major modern works contributing to our understanding of the Balkan campaign.

Modern scholars usually overlook Alexander's Thracian and Illyrian expeditions in favor of his later campaigns in the Middle East. When modern researchers deign to address the Balkan conflict they only provide a skeletal structure of events, limiting their narrative to briefly summarizing Arrian's account and occasionally hazarding unsubstantiated speculations. Scholars recognizing the far reaching impacts of Alexander's early campaigns, however, have gradually conducted more systematic studies by adapting their research methods to take advantage of circumstantial evidence and personal experience.

Modern reconstructions of Alexander's Balkan campaign face numerous difficulties, including the challenge of accurately situating the engagements and marching routes in altered, modern landscapes. Arrian includes the names of major natural obstacles encountered by the Macedonians but only provides brief descriptions of relevant topography. Consequently, modern scholars still debate the locations of the named sites now lost in the folds of time, a task made more difficult by the succinctness of Arrian's reports on terrain morphology. Without knowledge of the limitations imposed by terrain, difficulties emerge in explaining Alexander's motives for troop deployment and battlefield maneuvers. Yet careful scholarship has managed to advance

our understanding of the campaign beyond the basic structure presented by Arrian. With the *Anabasis of Alexander* providing a framework for subsequent research, scholarship addressing Alexander's Balkan campaign has attempted to situate the Macedonian troop movements within the modern landscape.

The first researchers, beginning with W.W Tarn's *Alexander the Great*, attempted to expand on Arrian's passages on Thrace and Illyria by approaching Alexander's Balkan campaign from a textual standpoint.[37] This approach employed by many prominent Alexandrian authors including Peter Green and Robert Lane Fox, relies on second hand geographical and topographical knowledge to substantiate any explication of Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander*.[38] The literary approach divulges useful information through a narrow and focused scrutiny on Arrian's passages in Greek. Bosworth in particular proves a worthy proponent of textual explication, expanding on Arrian's writing through his commentary in *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander, Vol 1* by developing convincing arguments regarding battlefield maneuvers and marching routes.

More thorough scholars addressing Alexander's Balkan campaign supplement their textual research with a personal reconnaissance of the relevant topography. Hammond's frequent personal visits into the Balkans, both as a Special Operations Officer and a civilian, allowed him to find firsthand correlations between topography described by Arrian and terrain features still evident in the modern landscape. In particular, Hammond's meticulous reconstruction of Alexander's Illyrian Campaign, presented in "Alexander's Campaign in Illyria", accurately connects ancient landscape characteristics with contemporary equivalents in the area around

[37] Wilson Tarn, *Alexander the Great: Volume 1, Narrative,* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948).
[38] Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C: A historical Biography,* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1991); Robert Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great,* (London: Penguin 1973).

upper Devoll and the plain of Poloske in modern Albania.[39] The personal knowledge of topography provides Hammond with local intelligence generally unobtainable from secondary literature and maps.

Scholars, however, still contest the reconstructions and recent developments demand a reexamination of the evidence. For instance, geophysical surveys of the Danube Delta have expanded on research aimed at definitively locating Peuce Island, a key topographical feature in the Thracian campaign.[40] By attempting to digitally recreate areas of the Danube Delta, researches have pinpointed the position of this crucial landscape feature mentioned by Arrian. Archaeological work in Bulgaria and Romania has supplemented our knowledge on Greek colonization and the impact of Greek cities on local trade and hierarchies of power. The excavations of these Greek cities, along with Macedonian colonies such as Philippoupolis and Philippi, provide material confirmation on local factors influencing Alexander's actions. A clear image of the environment, both natural and artificial, highlights the strategic and logistical necessities of Alexander's campaign and contributes to accurate route identification.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has recently developed as a method of inquiry in historical studies. GIS allows for the creating, editing, and storing of geographic data to thoroughly analyze, realistically model, and accurately visualize a spatial environment. Combined with a physical reconnaissance of the Balkans, the emphasis on Alexander's environment provide new ways to analyze the campaign. Elevation data for this project was attained through the Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) mission Digital Elevation Models (DEM) found on the USGS Earth Explorer website.

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[39] Nicholas Hammond, "Alexander's Campaign in Illyria," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 94, (1974): 66-87, accessed September 8, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/630420.

[40] Gheorghe Romanescu et al, "The Ancient Legendary Island of Peuce – Myth or Reality," *Journal of Archaeological Science 53,* (2015): 521 -535, accessed September 10, 2015, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S030544031400421X.

The elevation data, imported in raster datasets, models real world topography attained through satellite imagery. The American School for Classical Studies in Athens and Ancient World Mapping Center websites provided data pinpointing the locations of ancient cities, sites, and roads on the maps. The open source MapCruzin was used to download the remainder of the datasets on bodies of waters, roads, cities, railroads and general places of interest.

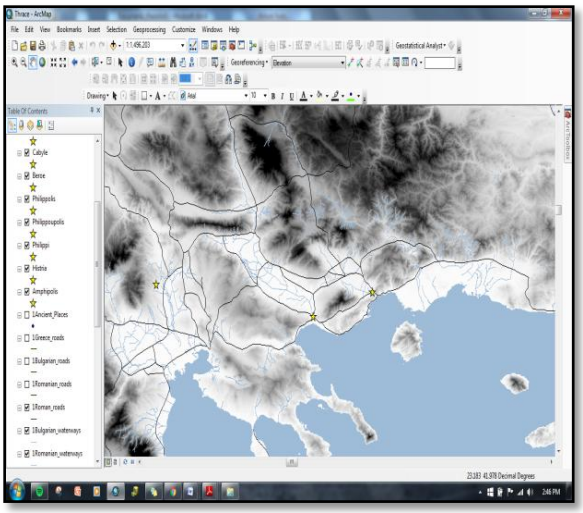

Figure 1: ArcGIS platform used to generate maps

After downloading the data shapfiles, which store the location, shape, and attributes of geographic features, the information was inserted into ArcMap 10.3, the newest version. The data was projected to GCS WGS 1984. Projections are a warping technology process that systematically transforms the latitudes and longitudes of curved surface onto a plane. Locations of interest were isolated and converted into independent features, which could then be analyzed and represented on maps separately from their source file. The clip geoprocessing tool trimmed the remaining data to manageable sizes. Classification and coloring were adjusted to ensure aesthetic appeal and matched with general coloration protocol. A north arrow, legend, labels, and scale bar in the layout view further facilitate interpretation of results. The various resulting map overlays provided detailed visualizations for analyzing specific sectors of interest.

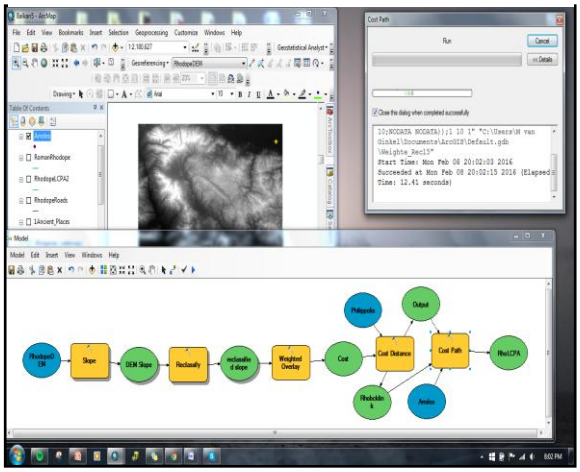

Figure 2: LCPA model used to determine routes

The ArcGIS 10.3 spatial analyst extension was used to run a Least Cost Pathway Analysis (LCPA). When applied to a raster DEM the LCPA, based on Dijkstra's algorithm, finds the route where elevation causes the least resistance. Dijkstra's algorithm was originally designed to find the shortest distance between two nodes in a graph. The LCPA substitutes the nodes of a graph with the cell matrix found in raster datasets. Each cell is given a value based on the elevation data it represents. The cumulative value of the cells crossed in traveling from the origin to destination determines the path's cost, the lowest of which forms the Least Cost Pathway. A model, used for geoprocessing workflow, automated and documented the spatial analysis and data management processes. After defining and area under scrutiny, the ArcGIS LCPA was run and a viable pathway identified. Future research results would benefit from incorporating variables into the LCPA. For instance, incorporating proximity to fresh water, caloric output, and deferential cost based on travel direction could influence route choice.

2: The Thracian Campaign

Figure 1: Theater of Aegae

In the wake of Philip II's assassination in the theater of Aegae in 336 BCE, Alexander ascended the throne. While Alexander dealt with familial contenders for the kingship, the surrounding factions cast off the Macedonian shackles and prepared to fight. Showing confidence and daring, Alexander immediately marched south to bring Thessaly and Greece back into the Macedonian fold. Through skillful maneuvering Alexander managed to subdue the rebelling cities and become both Archon of Thessaly and leader of the Pan-Hellenic league. After returning from southern Greece, however, Alexander learned the Triballi and Illyrians had become restless" (Arrian 1.1.4). Rising to the challenge, Alexander spent the winter months preparing for war.

Since Parmenio had taken the veterans of the Macedonian army to secure a beachhead for the Persian invasion, Alexander forces consisted of mostly untried warriors. Various mentions of specific military units and commanders throughout the campaign allow scholars to create rough estimations of troop numbers. Four squadrons of cavalry, for instance, and the *agema*, *hypaspists*, and *pezhetairoi* receive sporadic mention. 2000 archers and Argrianians, supported by the first documented use of field artillery, complete the force composition. Altogether the force numbered around 12,000 infantry, 8,000 light infantry, and 3,000 cavalry.[41] Since Philip

[41] Karavas, interview by author.

had forbidden the use of wagons and the accompaniment of wives the army traveled relatively unencumbered.[42] Philip institutionalized the organizational changes specifically to minimize vulnerability throughout his mountain campaigns in the Balkans.[43] The commanders that accompanied Alexander into Thrace and Illyria, such as Koinos, Perdikkas, Amyntas, Meleagros, and a young officer bearing the name of Alexander's father, Philip, formed a new cadre of commanders. The veteran officers of the Macedonian army, including prominent figures such as Antipater, Antigonus, and Cleitus the black, remained behind or joined Parmenio's forces in holding the Macedonian beachhead in Asia Minor. The campaign would instead serve to integrate the new generation of younger commanders into the Macedonian army.

Having assembled his forces Alexander began appraising the logistics of his enterprise. Although anecdotal in nature, Plutarch's description in *The Life of Alexander* (Plutarch 5) of seven-year-old Alexander interrogating Persian envoys for topographical information draws upon a common military practice. Before planning out his route, Alexander intelligence system procured information on climate, geography, and agricultural production in Thrace.[44] The emissaries, local guides, deserters, and mounted skirmishers under Alexander's command ensured the success of his military operations through their detailed reports on natural obstacles and the enemy's disposition and numbers.[45] In addition to the topographical and geographical information attained through his own intelligence system at the campaigns outset, Alexander had access to information collected by Philip and Parmenio during their past campaigns in the Balkans (Plutarch 1**;** Diodorus 16.22). Alexander's subsequent choices' in route reflected conscious and informed decision-making. A heavy reliance on advance intelligence was of

[42] Donald Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army,* (London*:* University of California Press, 1987), 12.
[43] Ibid., 23.
[44] Ibid., 329.
[45] Ibid; John Fuller, "Alexander as General", 186.

particular importance in the Balkans, where the rugged terrain created a naturally treacherous environment for military operations. Alexander's army spent two grueling months traversing the mountainous interior of Thrace alone, constantly exposed to harsh wilderness landscapes and the ever-present possibility of an ambuscade.[46] Only after thorough preparations for the hardships ahead did Alexander embark on his Balkan campaign. Arrian recounts the campaign as follows:

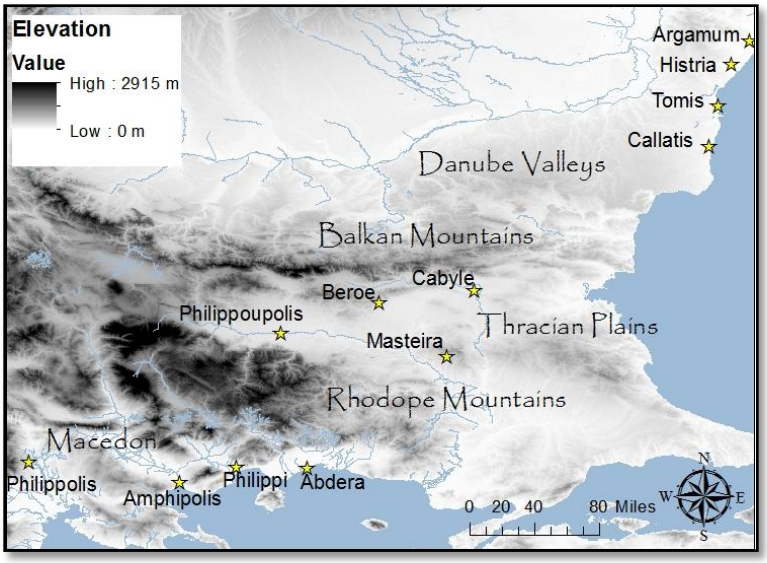

Figure 2: Map of Ancient Thrace

Alexander's first task, after wintering in Amphipolis, lay in navigating the Rhodope Mountains to reach the central plains of Thrace. Firm control of the central Thracians plains held several strategic advantages: The fortifications and settlements founded by Philip, such as Philippoupolis, Drongylos, Cabyle, Masteira, and Beroe, provided military staging points and allayed any logistical concerns Alexander may have faced. After Philip's earlier Thracian campaign in 353 and 343 BCE a fixed tribute, manpower, labor, and an acceptance of Macedonian foreign policy ensued (Diodorus 16.71.1, Demosthenes 8.44).[47] Alexander's march into Thrace insured the continuation of the Macedonian-Thracian relationship installed by Philip.

[46] By the time Alexander reached the Danube the wheat had reached a man's height, an occurrence commonly associated with the end of May, two months after Alexander began the campaign in spring. (Johann Droysen, *History of Alexander the Great,* Trans Flora Kimmich, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2012), 452: Benjamin Wheeler, *Alexander the Great: The Merging of East and West in Universal History,* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1900), 163).

[47] See Nicholas Hammond, *The Genius of Alexander the Great*, (London: Gerald Duckworth & co.Ltd), 1997.

The fields cultivated by the local Thracian population also, it should be noted, provided a substantial portion of the Athenian grain supply**.** By cementing the Macedonian presence Alexander exerted pressure on the Athenian economy and provided leverage in political negotiations.

Figure 5: Kazanlak Valley, central plains of Thrace

Arrian recounts Alexander preliminary marching route succinctly. "Leaving Amphipolis he invaded the part of Thrace that belongs to the independent Thracians, with Philippi and Mount Orbelus on his left. Then he crossed the river Nestus and is said in ten days to have reached Mount Haemus" (Arrian 1.1.5). Two main routes allow an army marching from Amphipolis to pass into Thrace. The coastal road from Amphipolis along the Aegean seaboard travels through the low-laying plains on either side of Mount Pangaeus before passing through the Acontisma Pass, a route proclaimed by Hammond as "the gateway between Thrace and Macedonia".[48] To keep Mount Belasitsa (ancient Mount Orbelus) and Philippi on his left, Alexander would have taken the southerly route around Mount Pangaeus and then used the Acontisma Pass to enter the valley of the Mesta (ancient Nestus).[49] Past the Nestus river mouth a series of passes penetrate the permeable Balkan Mountain range to reach the Thracian valleys of the interior. The second

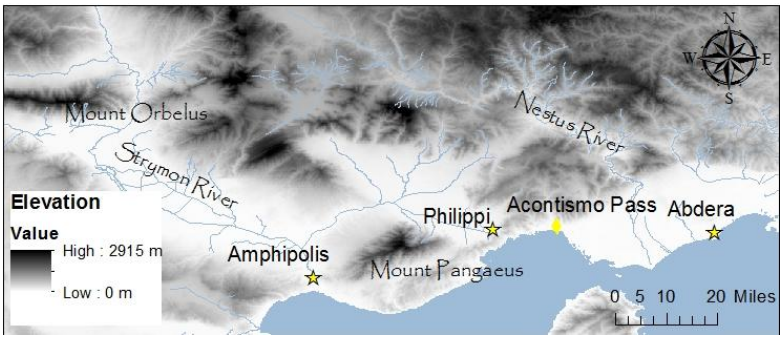

Figure 6: Aegean Sea coastline of south-western Thrace

[48] Nicholas Hammond, *Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas,* (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1976), 20.
[49] Ibid.

possibility is an inland route. The interpretation first merited consideration when Hammond suggested an alternate reading of φιλιππου πολιν as 'Philippolis' instead of 'city of Philippi'.[50] Strabo mentions a city of Philippolis, as one of the four cities of Pararbelia, in his description of a rift running from Eidomene to Heraclea Sintica along Mount Orbelus (Strabo 7.36). By placing the city in the modern Kumli valley south of Mount Belasitsa, Hammond reconciles an inland route with Arrian's description. Heading inland Alexander would have headed north first and entered the eastern Rhodope Mountain range before exiting around the south-western corner of the Thracian plains.

Although archaeological evidence has yet to uncover a settlement identifiable with Philippolis, the inland route aligns more closely with the temporal and topographical constraints imposed by Arrian's description. Alexander's own campaign against the Maedi tribe living along the valley of the central Strymon River between Kresna Pass and Rupel Pass in 336 BCE, his first independent command, would have insured personal, regional familiarity (Plutarch 9).[51] The inland route, Alexander knew, proved the most direct way of reaching the Thracian plains and had the advantage of

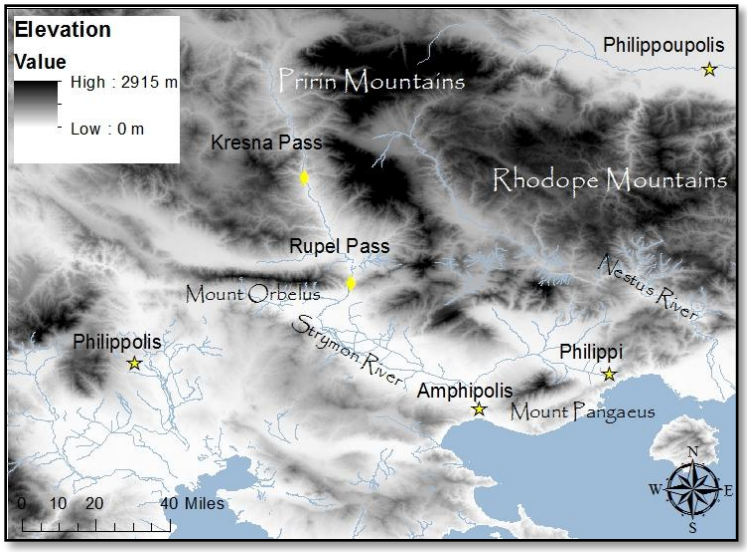

Figure 3: Mountains of south-western Thrace

[50] Nicholas Hammond, "Some passages in Arrian Concerning Alexander" *The Classical Quarterly* 30, No 2. (1980): 456, accessed, January 20, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/638515.

[51] John Boardman, *The Cambridge Ancient History: pt. 1. The prehistory of the Balkans; and the Middle East and the Aegean world, tenth to eighth centuries B.C,* (Madison: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 601.

crossing the Nestus River further inland away from its mouth. Spring rain and melted snow made fording the swollen river near the coast more difficult and treacherous.[52] Hammond furthers the argument for the inland route by hypothesizing a connection between Arrians' 'Independent Thracians' and the tribes described by Thucydides as residing in the proximity of Pirin and Rhodope Mountains (Thucydides 2.96.2). Lastly, Arrian describes Alexander's route to the Bosporus straits prior to his invasion of Persia as "passing Mt. Pangaeus in the direction of Abdera and Maronea" (Arrian 1.2.4). The passage, unmistakably referencing the costal route, notably differs from Arrian's description of Alexander's route leading to Mount Haemus.[53]

Local topography detracts from the likelihood of costal routes still further. The routes envisioned by supporters of the costal route diverge after reaching the mouth of the Nestus. But each path, made with an insufficient knowledge of the area's geographical constraints, has its weakness. Ulrich Wilken's route following the course of the Nestus inland, for instance, takes Alexander through a series of impassable gorges, which the current railway must tunnel to avoid.[54] On the other hand, the route, supported by Philip Freeman, that continues along the costal route as far as Adbera after crossing the Nestus cover too much ground for a ten day march.[55] On all accounts the inland route seems more probable. Why then did Arrian fail to specify which city of Philip he meant? Arrian's main sources for the Balkan campaigns, Aristobulus and Ptolemy, both wrote shortly after the founding of Philippi before it gained preeminence. Hence, the earlier Philippolis came more readily to mind as reference point then the newer, smaller Philippi for individuals contemporary to Alexander's lifetime.

[52] Hammond, "Some passages in Arrian Concerning Alexander," 456.
[53] Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great,* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate, 1993), 198.
[54] Hammond, "Some passages in Arrian Concerning Alexander," 455.
[55] Philip Freeman, *Alexander the Great,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 50.

According to Hammond, who was the first to propose an inland route from Amphipolis, Alexander passed through the Rupel Pass of the Strymon River to Sandanski on the side of the Pirin Mountains.[56] From there he would have followed the river to Predela Pass, exiting the pass near the Nestus valley around Razlog.[57] On exiting the pass near the Nestus River and crossing its right bank above Jakoruda, he would have marched through the Vaklinsku pass over a tributary of the Maritsa (ancient Hebrus) to enter the central plain of Thrace near Pazardzik, roughly 23 miles west of Plodiv (ancient Philippoupolis).[58] This route would easily have allowed Alexander to reach the Haemus pass on the tenth day as Arrian recounts.

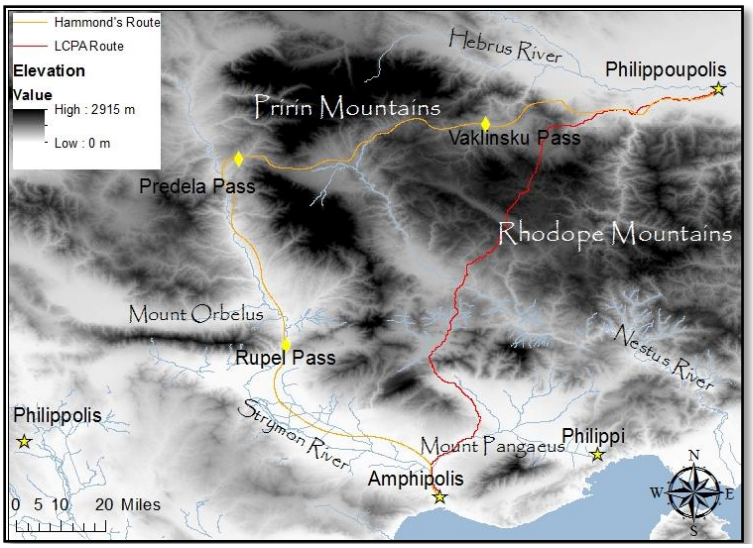

Figure 8: Hammond's route and LCPA route through Rhodope Mountains

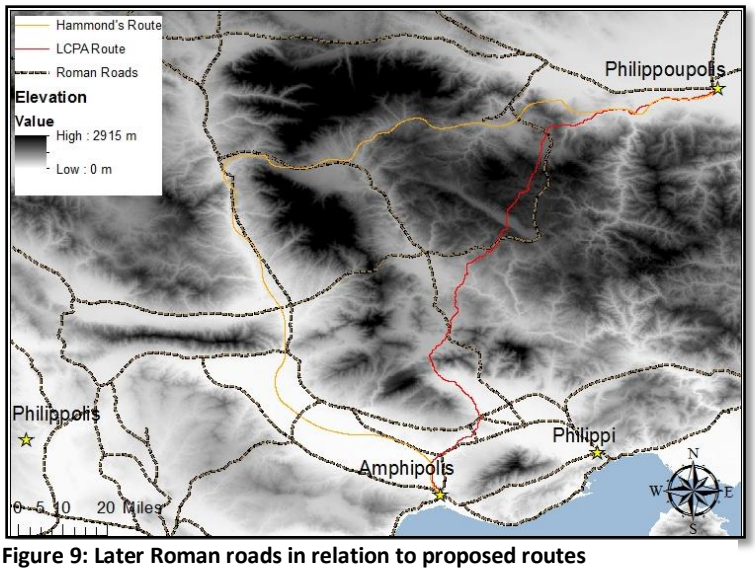

Figure 9: Later Roman roads in relation to proposed routes

A GIS driven LCPA, however, provides an alternative route through the mountains. The LCPA's area of study incorporated the Rhodope Mountain range west of the Mesta river mouth and East of the Strymon valley. The

[56] Nicholas Hammond, *Alexander the Great: King, commander, statesmen*, (London: Bristtol Classical Press, 1980), 46.
[57] Hammond, "Some passages in Arrian Concerning Alexander", 456.
[58] Ibid.

route of least resistance, based on elevation, trails north between Mount Pangaeus and the town of Stathmos Lefkotheas before entering the Rhodope Mountains proper via the town of Panorma. The Nestus River is crossed toward the center of the mountain range between the towns of Teplen and Blatska. The trail reaches the Thracian valley, as on Hammond's trail, near modern Pazardzik. Confirmation of the route's viability in ancient times comes from evidence of a Roman Road following roughly the same north-south trajectory as the LCPA results. A route directly over the Rhodope Mountains provides precedence, perhaps an early experimentation, for Alexander future success in marching his forces across treacherous terrain even when an easier alternative existed.

Figure 10: View from Balkan Mountains southwards

After pacifying the Thracian plains, Alexander needed to cross the formidable Balkan mountain range to enter northern Thrace and Triballi territory. Dense woodland covers the flanks of the modern Balkan Mountains before thinning towards the summit. At the higher elevations grassland fauna and rocky outcrops replace the foliage, offering panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Of the perhaps twenty passes crossing the Balkan Mountains, modern scholarship favors the Troyan Pass and Shipka Pass for the location of Alexander's crossing. Evidence of the Roman road built via Trayana through the Troyan pass, also known as Beklemeto pass, stands in testimony to its consistent use in later antiquity.

Figure 11: Shipka Memorial on Stoletov Peak

Beginning around the modern town of Hristo Danovo, Troyan pass trails through the Balkan Mountains for roughly 70 km before reaching the lower elevations of the Danube valley around the town of Lemeto, passing through the town of Troyan at 380 meters of elevation. To the east Shipka Pass, another large passageway across the Balkan watershed, forms the second well known route. After passing through the small town of Shipka modern travelers ascend a winding road through densely wooded slops. The Shipka Memorial on Stoletov Peak, a 31.5 meter high rectangular tower, currently overlooks the pass. Erected in honor of the Bulgarian liberation fighters in the 1880's Turkish-Russian war, the tower commemorates the four separate engagements fought for control of the pass. After roughly 36 km the road reaches the low ground around the town of Garbovo and the Danube valley.

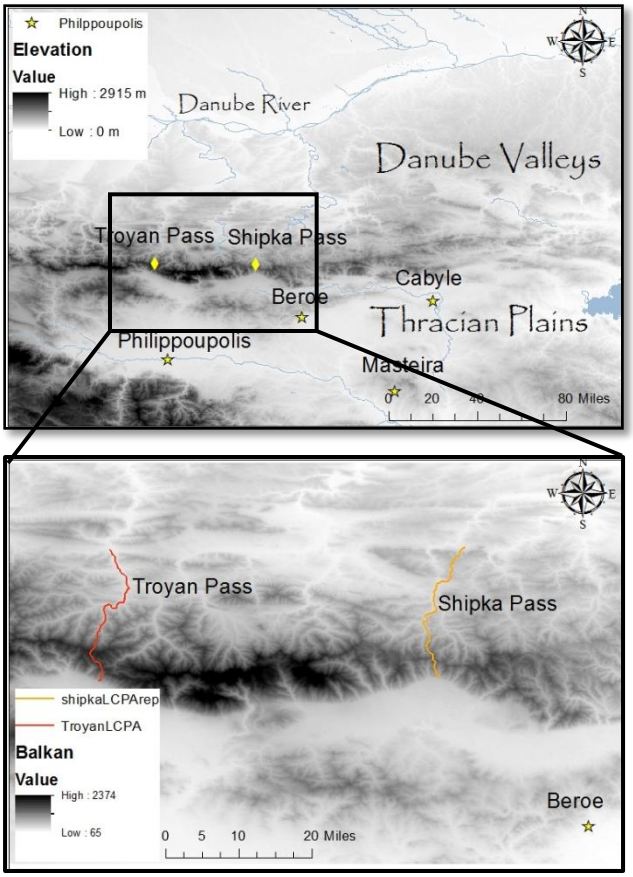

Figure 4: The Balkan Mountains and central Thrace

English, placing the initiative in the hands of Thracians, claims the more defensible position afforded by the Shipka pass' narrowness and higher altitude incentivized the Thracians to entrench themselves there rather than at Troyan.[59] The initiative, however, lay with Alexander. The scenario mirrors Pompeius Trogus' account narrating the earlier Triballi interception of Philip II's army after returning from his battle against the Scythians (9.3). Hearing of his approach, the Triballi blocked his route through the Balkan Mountains and forced a confrontation. Similarly,

[59] Stephan English, *The field Campaigns of Alexander the Great,* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2011), 23.

Alexander attempted to cross the Balkan watershed into Triballi territory and found his route barred by armed tribesmen forewarned of his movements. The Triballi had neither the organization nor manpower to create an effective defensive perimeter, by defending all feasible passes, along the entirety of the Balkan mountain range. Instead, the Triballi remained informed of Alexander movements and impeded his progress when the opportunity presented itself. From a Macedonian perspective the lower elevations and shorter marching duration for armies crossing Shipka pass meant less opportunity for an ambuscade. The proximity of Shipka to the Macedonian garrisoned city of Beroe also factors in favorably. Alexander chose to cross the Balkan Mountains through the easier-to-traverse Shipka pass and the Triballi reacted by sending a sizable force to defend the pass at Mount Haemus.

Alexander's first military encounter took place in the defile at the base of Mount Haemus, where the Thracians awaited his approach (Arrian 1.1.5). As an additional defensive measure the tribesmen had created a stockade of carts, which doubled as an offensive weapon when rolled downhill towards the densely packed advancing Macedonian forces (Arrian 1.1.7). Stephen English's believes the carts "must have been manned" because "if they had not been then they would have veered off course and straight into the walls of the pass long before reaching the Macedonians".[60] The assertion, however, illustrates English's lack of knowledge on the region's topography. Both passes considered by English as a potential location for the battle, namely Shipka and Troyan Pass, are formed by slopping depressions. By failing to personally reconnaissance the ground, English's reconstruction erroneously assumes that the pass conforms to a stereotypical passageway lined with vertically inclined walls.

The army confronting Alexander consisted of independent Thracians and "many of the merchants in arms" (ἐμπόρων πολλοὶ ὡπλισμένοι) (Arrian 1.1.6). The mention of merchants

[60] Ibid, 24

either reveals a mistake in ancient transmission or a deliberate indication that the Thracians had enlisted the aid non-combatants. If the latter proposition is entertained, the presence of merchants suggests an impromptu collaboration between merchants traveling with a trading caravan and Thracian warriors, which would also explain the presence of the numerous carts. Alternatively, the Thracians procured the assistance of local contingents, rather than specifically merchants, and used carts from the baggage train to raise the barricade. In either scenario the Independent Thracians relayed upon makeshift barricades and militia troops to bolster their hasty defenses. The "Independent Thracians" Arrian mentions most likely differ from the tribesmen encountered by Alexander before crossing the Nestus, a claim supported by their apparent knowledge of the local area (Arrian 1.1.13).[61]

After informing his infantry on ways to counter the carts Alexander prepared to dislodge the opposition from its commanding position overlooking the pass. Having observed the Thracian disposition and guessed at their intentions, Alexander next devised ways to negate the damaging effects of the rolling carts. Depending on the availability of maneuvering space; the Macedonians subsequently handled the threat by either breaking formation and forming a corridor for the carts to pass through; crouching together and redirecting the incoming carts at an angle; or lying on the ground with interlocked shields and permitting the carts to pass overhead (Arrian 1.1.8, Polyaenus 4.3.11). In the ensuing assault the Macedonian troops successfully executed the counter measures without suffering a single casualty (Arrian 1.1.10). Notably, ancient casualty accounts usually fail to inform readers about men injured or considered lost during an engagement.

Having bypassed the first obstacle, Alexander decided to quickly reposition certain units in his line of battle before establishing contact with the enemy. Alexander had begun the attack by

[61] Hammond, "Some Passages in Arrian concerning Alexander," 457.

adopting a standard Macedonian battle formation, with heavy phalanx infantry in the center and lighter infantry protecting the flanks. Drawing on Asclepiodotus's *Tactics*, Aelian's *On Tactical Arrays of the Greeks* and Arrian's *Tactics* tactical, Hammond convincingly interprets Arrian description of the phalanx formation at its most compact to mean it adopted an individual frontage of 18 inches (Asclepiodotus 4.3; Aelian, 11.5; Arrian 11.4).[62] The mountainous terrain rendered the Macedonian cavalry contingents unusable as mounted warriors, but, since attendants presumably accompanied horsemen on campaign to carry additional weaponry and tend the mounts, the cavalry may have dismounted, left their horses to the attendants, and fought as infantrymen. Alexander placed these additional troops along his flanks to bolster his fighting numbers. After avoiding the carts Alexander ordered his archers to abandon their position on the right flank and redeploy in front of the phalanx "as it was easier to shoot at the Thracians wherever they attacked" (Arrian 1.1.11). The redeployment may denote an alteration in terrain as the Macedonians advanced, the resulting wider range of vision provided by the center prompting Alexander, despite the risk of distorting his line of battle, to capitalize on the changing details of the topography. Alternatively, Alexander planned the maneuver in advance and originally used the extended front, created by positioning his archers on his right flank, to ensure his units remained disentangled while avoiding the careening carts. After they had successfully exploited the additional space afforded by the elongated formation, the archers moved to their prearranged position in front of the central phalanx where they could direct their enfilading fire wherever necessary. In either instance Alexander gave the order after the army had already surged forward in their eagerness to engage the opposition; that he did this successfully in the midst of a charge stands testament to the discipline already installed in the Macedonian troops (Arrian 1.1.10).

[62] Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, 55;

Alexander himself took the Agema, Hypaspists, and Agrianians to deliver the finishing blow from the left while his center held the Thracian warriors in place. (Arrian 1.1.11) The Thracians, however, after having their own countercharge falter under a storm of arrows, broke under the onslaught of the Macedonian's central phalanx before Alexander could charge from the left (Arrian 1.1.12). Despite the advantages offered by occupying rough terrain, which inevitably disrupted the cohesion of the Macedonian phalanx and thus created exploitable breaches in their formation, the inferior arms and armor of the tribesmen proved their downfall and resulted in a headlong flight from the mountain ridge (Arrian 1.1.12). 15,000 of the tribesmen died while the remainder of the tribesmen, through their speed and intimate knowledge of the countryside, managed to escape (Arrian 1.1.13). Alexander captured the women, children, and equipment within the enemy camp and appointed Lysanius and Philotas to guarantee their safe conveyance to the coastal cities (Arrian 1.1.13). These cities might refer to Abdera and Maroneia, which were located within easy marching distance from Mount Haemus and passed through secured territory.[63] Alternatively, the Greek ports on the eastern coast could have provided an outlet.[64] Arrian fails to mention the number of casualties inflicted on the Macedonians during the battle, but they most likely suffered minimal losses given the brevity of the conflict and the decisiveness of its conclusion. The claim of 15,000 Thracian dead likewise indicates a one-sided affair instead of an evenly matched, equally costly battle. From the beginning Alexander's imaginative solutions to dangerous circumstances and his willingness to risk personal injury by leading from the front endeared him to his army.

After the battle of Mount Haemus the Macedonians crossed the mountain range and descended into the Danube plains. Only ten days had passed since Alexander had left

[63] Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, 56.
[64] Arthur Weigall, *Alexander the Great*, (New York: Van Rees press, 1933), 106.

Amphipolis and, even allowing for a considerably reduced marching rate for the remaining duration of the expedition, a substantial amount of the two month Thracian campaign still remains unaccounted for. Alexander most likely used these first few weeks in northern Thrace to attack the Triballi tribes directly and crush the tribal strongholds. Meanwhile, "Syrmus, king of the Triballi, learning some time before of Alexander's march, sent on the women and children to the Ister, ordering them to cross the island in the river called Peuce" (Arrian 1.2.2). The neighboring Thracians had already occupied the island and the Triballi refugees joined them (Arrian 1.2.3). Discovering Syrmus had withdrawn to Peuce Island, Alexander set off in pursuit.

Where is Peuce Island? Two main hypotheses exist: In the middle of the Danube significantly upriver from the black sea or within the Danube Delta. Considerable evidence points to the Dunavat peninsula on the Danube Delta as the modern counterpoint for Peuce Island. Ancient literature provides an abundance of connections between a Peuce Island and the mouth of the Danube. The general area surrounding the Danube Delta was well known by ancient world since the Persian expedition against the Scythians, recounted by Herodotus in the 5th century BCE (Herodotus 4.83). Strabo, for instance, plainly further states that "near the mouths of the Danube is the large island called Peuce" (Strabo 7.3.8). Similarly, Pliny the Elder further places Peuce Island in the direct vicinity of the Greek colony Istria, a settlement identified by archaeologist as adjacent to the Danube Delta (Pliny 4.27.1). Additional literary sources from the third century BCE to the third century CE confirm its costal placement, including Valerius Flaccus, Lucan, Skimnos of Chios, Eratosthenes, Polybius, Seneca, Pomponius Mela, Ptolemy, Marinus, Casotrius, and Apollonius of Rhodes.[65]

[65] Romanescu et al, "The Ancient Legendary Island of Peuce – Myth or Reality," 521.

An important overlooked factor when considering Peuce Island's location is Arrian's statement that "there at the mouth of the river warships come to join him" (Arrian 1.3.3). The fleet at Alexander's disposal was the same fleet Philip used to besiege the cities of Perinthus and Byzantium and consisted mostly of Triremes. John Karavas, a military archaeologist specializing on the Roman Danube fortifications, has stressed the impracticality of navigating the Danube with a trireme's deep keel.[66] W.G. East's survey of the Danube supports Karavas' theory, claiming the river "is generally navigable to flat-bottomed craft: there were places where at low water the river was occasionally fordable."[67] Only, East continues, the "last reach of the river below Braila had a special function, since it was commonly navigated by sea going vessels".[68] Beyond Braila Danube travel was limited to ships designed for river navigation.

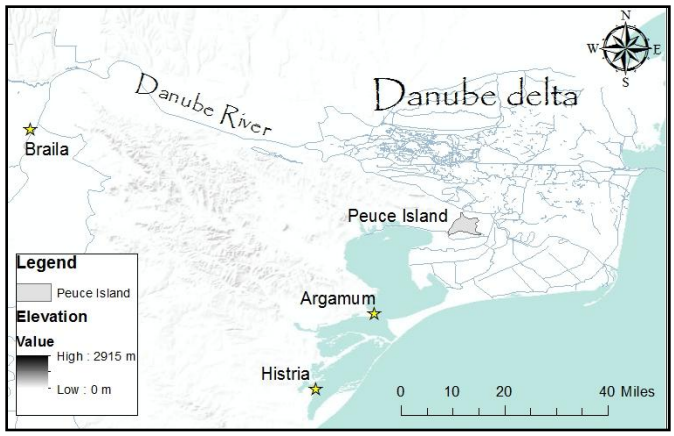

Figure 5: The lower Danube River and the Danube Delta

The later adaptations made by the Romans to their Danube fleet proves only certain vessels could navigate the lower Danube. Instead of employing, for instance, the mainstay heavy *Dromon* warships and Triremes, the Romans relied on low-keeled or flat-bottomed variations.[69] Both archaeological and textual evidence points to the employment of smaller craft for Roman river fleets. Two ships discovered at the Roman fort at Oberstimm near Ingolstadt in Baveria, for

[66] Karavas, interview by author.
[67] W.G. East, "The Danube Route-Way in history" *Economica* 37, (August 1932): 326, accessed January 30, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2548593.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Karavas, Interview by author.

instance, were roughly 51 feet long and only contained 16-20 one man oars.[70] The shallow hulls, 3 feet 3 inches from keel to bulwark, draw no more than a foot.[71] Tacitus in *The Histories,* writing on the revolt of the Civilis on the Rhine, only notes the use of Biremes, single banked vessels, and smaller craft fitted out similarly to the sleek liburnians for river operations (Tacticus 5.23). Unlike the Roman Danube fleet, Alexander's ships consisted of Triremes that could only navigate a short section of the upper maritime Danube. Consequently, since Arrian describes Alexander using his fleet for an amphibious landing on Peuce Island, Peuce Island must be located at the Danube Delta.

Geophysical surveys have attempted to pinpoint the Peuce Island's exact location within the Danube Delta. The most recent study focused on the eastern extremity of the Tulcea Hills called the Dunavat Peninsula. Unlike areas in the Danube Delta studied in the past, the autochthonous Dunavat Peninsula forms a rocky promontory and retains morphometrics comparable to the island of Rhodes, thereby conforming to descriptions supplied by Arrian and Apollonius of Rhodes respectively. The rocky Dunavat Hills are currently separated from the Danube's Saint George Arm, visible to the north, by sections of wild prairie and agricultural fields. The excavations conducted at the nearby Roman port of Halmyrus, however, prove that in antiquity the Danube River reached the Dunavat foothills. Although sparsely wooded in comparison to thickly forested embankments of

Figure 6: Roman port of Halmyris

[70] Michael Pitassi, *Roman Warships,* (New York: Boydell Press, 2011), 129.
[71] Ibid.

the Saint George Arm, the rendzina soil combined with colder climates during antiquity makes the presence of pine forests, the islands namesake, plausible.[72]. To the east wetlands, emerging in the wake of the Black Sea's retraction, border the Dunavat Hills while Lake Razim delineates the southern border. Three smaller bodies of water, Murighiol Lake, Saratura Lake, and Beidugeac Lake, lay in the lowlands to the west. These lowlands between the Dunavat hills and the opposing Bestepe Hills form the Beidugeac corridor; the only land connection attaching the Dunavat peninsula to the mainland.

By creating four geologic boreholes in the Beibugeac corridor, Gheorghe Romanescu and his colleagues attempted to determine whether the corridor formed an ancient fluvial arm or sea channel. The presence of a submerged corridor separating the Dunavat hills from the mainland would prove the existence of large island. The bedrock depths reached by the boreholes, after taking into consideration marine transgressions, reached altitudes higher than the Blacksea level.[73] Consequently, seawater could not have completely submerged the Beibugeac corridor and isolated the Dunavat Peninsula. Geologic data extrapolated from the boreholes supports the geometric analysis. Geophysicists tested the origin of the alluvia material extracted from the boreholes through dry sieving granulometry. While sandy accumulation formed the majority fraction, the lack of fossils point to continental erosion rather than Danube river depositories.[74] Gheorghe Romanescu, however, maintains that "the most plausible localization remains the hill area of the Dunavat."[75] The team therefore concludes the elongation of the Dunavat hills and the

[72] Romanescu et al,, "The Ancient Legendary Island of Peuce – Myth or Reality," 528.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 532.
[75] Ibid., 528.

presence of small gulfs penetrating deeply into the Doroudjan inland lead maritime travelers to erroneously identify the peninsula as an island.[76]

The main issue with the Danube Delta location is the lack of connection with the territories commonly recognized as belonging to the Triballi. Ancient authors specifically attribute the upraising to the Triballi, a tribe from Northern Thrace singled out by Isocrates in *Panathenaicus* and Aristophanes in *Birds* for their uncivilized and belligerent nature (Panathenaicus 227, Birds 1565-1693). The question of their territory not only affects the possible location of Peuce Island but also the direction of Alexander's Balkan campaign at large. Without creating a rough geographical constraint for the Triballi during the time of Alexander's invasion an analysis of his campaign objectives, strategic mindset, and the battlefield locations remain difficult to conduct.

The minimal primary evidence, however, referencing the Triballi makes outlining their territory complicated. Thucydides helps delineate the western border of the Triballi territory in his description of the Odrysian lands held by Sitalces by stating "in the direction of the Triballi, who were autonomous, the Treres and the Tilataeans formed his boundary. These tribes dwell to the north of Mount Scombrus and reach westward as far as the Oskius" (Thucydides 2.96). The river Oskius therefore formed the Eastern frontier of the Triballi. Mount Scombrus, placed by Pliny between the Rhodope Mountain range and Mt. Orbelus, refers to mount Vitosha near Sofia. Papazoglu further proposes the Oskius mentioned by Thucydides refers to the Isker, a tributary of the Danube. Thucydides therefore places the Triballi lands within north-western Thrace.

Herodotus supports Thucydides account in his statement that the Angrus River flowed through the Triballian plain before converging with the Brongus River, a tributary of the Skius (Herodotus 4.49). The Southren Morava, Western Morava, or Ibar and Western Morava together

[76] Ibid., 533.

have been identified as potential candidates for the ancient Angrus.[77] The Brongus, according to Papazolgu, refers to the Great Morava River and the Skius River, relatable to Thucydides' Oskius River, again identifies with the Isker River.[78] Yet scholars have failed to identify any sizable 'Traiballi' plain at the relevant river junctures. Consequently, either drastic changes in terrain morphology have hindered proper identification or Herodotus' text needs to be reexamined. Thus, Papazoglu reinterprets the passage as "the Angrus flows into the Brogus, which flows into the Triballian plain" rather than the Angrus River flowed through the Triballian plain before converging with the Brongus River.[79] The valley of the Great Morava, which the Great Morava River flows through, would then fit Herodotus' description of the Triballia plain.[80] Alternatively, Herodotus may have referred to the confluence of the Brogus and the Ister and scholars should situate the Triballian plain around the Danube basin.[81] On the whole, however, Herodotus' passages agree with Thucydides' in placing the Triballi territory in North-Western Thrace.

While post-classical writers are silent on Triballi territory holdings, the tribe reemerged in Roman literature. The Roman historian Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, for instance, mentions the Triballi in conjunction with the Oescus River, possibly a later derivation of the Oskius and Skius Rivers described by Thucydides and Herodotus respectively (Pliny 3.29). Pliny places both the river and the Triballi within the Roman Moesia province in Northern Thrace and emphasizes the presence of the Paeonia and Pelogonia directly south of the Triballi, ostensibly acting as a buffer between Macedon and the volatile Triballi tribes (Pliny 4.17). The Brongus River is also associated with the Triballi by Strabo who included "the Margus, or, as some call it,

[77] Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan Tribes in Pre-Roman Times*, 58.
[78] Ibid., 60.
[79] Ibid., 59.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

Bargus" in his description of the Little Scordisci tribe, which "lived beyond this river close to the Triballi" (Strabo 7).[82] The Bargus likely derived from the Brongus of Herodotus. In addition, Strabo observed that the Triballi "occupied the territory as far as the Ister and the island Peuce, which is in it, and that the Getæ possessed the country beyond that river" (Strabo 7). The similarity between landmarks used by 5th century BCE and 1st century CE authors on Triballi territory has led scholars to attribute the same boundaries to the Triballi contemporary with Alexander's lifetime in the 3rd century BCE. Scholars therefore commonly describe the center of Triballi territory as concentrated between the Morava in the West, the Isker in the East, the Rhodope and Balkan Mountains in the South, and probably the Danube River in the North.

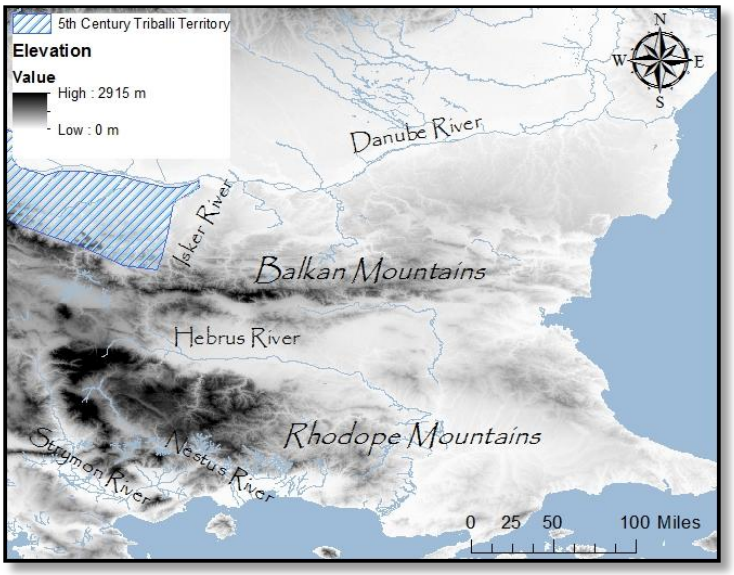

Figure 7: Known Triballi Territory

Mentions of Triballi forces well beyond these boundaries, however, place the territorial delineations into question. In Arrian's description of Alexander's speech at Opis, the young king impassionedly describes the lives of the Macedonians before Philip's reign as mired by constant fighting "with the Illyrians, Triballi, and neighboring Thracians" (Arrian 7.9.2). The passage implies consistent incursions into Macedonian territory. The two 4th century Triballi mass invasions, recounted by Diodorus Sicilus, create an early precedence for far-ranging military exploits (Diodorus 15.36). According to Diodorus, these invasions ravaged the territory belonging to the Abderains along the Aegean Sea coastline and only the appearance of the

[82] Ibid.

Athenian fleet led by Chabrias convinced the Triballi to withdraw without besieging the city of Abdera itself around 376 BCE.

Primary sources associate the Triballi with events along the Danube Delta specifically. Polyaenus and Frontinus, for example, both describe the Triballi attacks on Scythian lands held by the aged king Ataias (Polyaenus 7.44.1, Frontinus 2.4.20). The conflict presumably refers to the fighting around the Danube Delta that Philip joined at Ataias' behest in 339 BCE.[83] Upon the Macedonian arrival, however, Ataias had already driven off his opposition and refused to compensate Philip for his march. In the ensuing fight the Macedonians proved victorious. Philip, laden with spoils of war, choose the shortest possible return route through the Balkan Mountains, and therefore east of the established 5th century Triballi boundaries, only to find his path blocked by the Triballi demanding a share of the plunder. Plutarch and Didymus, a commentator on Demosthenes' speeches, both place this easterly location within Triballi territory. (Plutarch 1.9, Didymus 13.3). The migration theory forms the most popular explanation for the presence of the Triballi in the lower extremities of the Danube.

The migration theory claims the Triballi, under pressure from Celts or the Autariatae, migrated eastward toward the lower Danube in the early fourth century.[84] While a migration would explain the Triballi presence in North-Eastern Thrace, Papazoglu convincingly points out the territorial divisions after Alexander's death, extrapolated from Arrian and Dexippus, follow the Isker-Nestus east-west boundary.[85] Since Antipater commanded the Illyrians, Agrianes, and Macedonians, all west of the Isker River, along with Triballi, the Triballi heartland must still have been located west of the Isker.[86] While failing to categorically refute Triballi presence in

[83] Ibid., 21.
[84] Ibid., 13.
[85] Arrian. Succ. Frg. 1 J (FGrH 156); Dexippi succ. Frg 8 J (FGrH 100).
[86] Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan Tribes in Pre-Roman Times*, 51.

North-Eastern Thrace, the evidence points to their continued existence in North-Western Thrace during the Hellenistic period and certainly the Roman period.

A Triballi hegemony of north-eastern Thrace, however, could explain the inconsistencies with source tradition. The argument becomes more persuasive if the possibility of political, not simply ethno-geographical, connotations behind the term 'Triballi' is considered. 'Triballi', Papazoglu notes, "probably covered a group of related tribes, without constant and fixed frontiers".[87] Fluctuations in tribal strength and territory seize occurred regularly over the centuries, along with shifts in alliances and loyalties. The consistent appearances of Triballi forces in North-Eastern Thrace illustrate the Triballi's extending range of influence over tribes in the Triballi vicinity as far as Dabrodja and the Danube Delta. By accepting this argument for the Triballi presence beyond their traditional boundaries, the largest counter argument against the Danube Delta location for Peuce Island is countered and the scope of Alexander's campaign redefined to include most of northern Thrace.

To reach Peuce Island Alexander first turned east to the coastline. Following the Black Sea coast, and therefore intercepting the Danube at its delta, provided strategic and logistical advantages. Firstly, the coastal route allowed the ships summoned from Byzantium to rendezvous with the Alexander's army to serve as mobile supply depots for the Macedonians marching along the coast. The presence of several major Greek cities provided access to further supplies and an additional source of revenue for Alexander's notoriously empty coffers. Between the Balkan mountain range and Danube Delta, in the fertile area known as Dobrudja, the Greeks founded the major settlements of Callatis, Tomis, Argamum, and Histria, each an autonomous power controlling a limited sphere of influence. Archaeological evidence, in form of vases,

[87] Ibid., 60.

pottery sherds, and grave goods, point to mostly 6th century BCE founding.[88] Many minor colonies and satellite communities emerged along the coast as well, including Anchialos, Aquae Calidae, Sladkite Kladenci, Naulochus, Dionyspolis, Bizone, Aphrodisias, Sumenia Herakleia, and Karon Limen. Similar to the Greek City-states along the Ionian coast, the colonies maintained a fluid relationship and hierarchy with the local communities. Regardless of their enmity or friendliness with the local Thracians, 'liberating' these Greek colonies from Thracian hostilities suited Alexander's pan-Hellenic image and formed a precedent for his later conduct along the Ionian Coast in Asia Minor during his Persian campaigns.

Figure 8: Dobruja region and Black Sea coastline

Upon reaching the Danube, however, Alexander realized an enemy army had marched behind him, which English presents as "a testimony to "barbarian" intelligence gathering systems".[89] Fearing an outright battle, the Triballi hid in the woods and waited for the Macedonian army to pass by northwards, thereby placing themselves over Alexander's supply and communication lines and trapping him in enemy territory.[90] R.D. Milns concurs with English, believing it likely that the Thracians attempted to blockade the passes behind Alexander and sever his lines of retreat.[91] Alexander's quick backtracking march, however, reached the

[88] See Benjamin Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace Until the Macedonian Conquest* (Lieden: Brill Academic Publishing, 1997); John Boardman, *The Greeks Oversea: Their Early Colonies and Trade*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).
[89] English, *The field Campaigns of Alexander the Great*, 25.
[90] Ibid., 26.
[91] R.D. Milns, *Alexander the Great,* (Exter: A. Wheaton And Co., 1968), 36.

Triballi before they completed their defensive preparation at the Lyginus River.[92] The Macedonian own intelligence system again proved its use by allowing Alexander to respond to the stolen march before the tribesmen could effectively capitalize on their maneuver. The Lyginus River, otherwise not mentioned in ancient literature, remains difficult to identify. A three days march from the Danube Delta places the Lyginus River somewhere in the Dobrudja valley.

Arriving at the Lyginus River, Alexander chose his deployment carefully. Philotas commanded the cavalry of upper Macedonia on the right wing, while Heracleides and Sopolis lead the Cavalry from Bottiaea and Amphipolis on the left (Arrian 1.2.5). The Tribilli would find themselves hard-pressed to hold their lines when the Macedonian cavalry charge, deployed in their typical wedge formation, connected. The remainder of the cavalry, under Alexander's direct command, held the ground in front of his infantry phalanx (Arrian 1.2.6). Since Alexander placed the heavy cavalry from Bottiaean, Amphipolis and Upper Macedonia on his flanks, the cavalry commanded by him in the center consisted of the light cavalry, most likely the Prodromoi. Armed mainly with projectile weapons, the light cavalry formed a mobile screen for the heavily infantry.[93]

Once in position the phalanx adopted a formation midway between its normal and most compact configurations by maintaining, according to Hammond by again consulting Asclepiodtus' *Tactics'* Aelian's *On Tactical Arrays of the Greeks,* and Arrian's *Tactics,* an individual frontage of three feet (Asclepiodtus 4.3; Aelian 11.6; Arrian 11.4).[94] Deviating from his customary battle arrangement Alexander also "threw his phalanx into deep formation" (Arrian 1.2.6). Several lines of reasoning explain the increased depth. Perhaps the length of the

[92] English, *The field Campaigns of Alexander the Great,* 26.
[93] Hammond, *Alexander the Great, 47.*
[94] Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, 59.

glen provided limited space for deployment and, by increasing the phalanx files, Alexander intended to maximize the amount of space available for his cavalry posted on the wings. By giving the cavalry ample maneuvering space, Alexander effectively capitalized on the enemy's lack of mounted contingents and his own superior mobility. Although the topographical variables could affect Alexander's choice of formation, the deeper phalanx undoubtedly held additional tactical and psychological benefits. From a tactical perspective the deeper phalanx ensured the Macedonian center held against any sudden tribal charge erupting from the tree line. Alexander's superiority in cavalry, in turn, forestalled any vulnerability to enveloping maneuvers created by the reduced battle line frontage. The scenario also illustrates Alexander's early experimentation in psychological warfare. English hypothesized that Alexander "probably intended not to strike fear into the light-armed Triballi, so as to ensure they would not retreat before they were defeated in battle." [95] The reduced frontage, on a level battlefield, concealed the true extant of Macedonian numbers and worked in conjunction with Alexander light infantry baiting strategy to entice a headlong Triballi charge.

Alexander next positioned his light infantry far ahead of his main force, intending to lure the Triballi from the narrow confines of the glen into the open through unrelenting volleys of missile fire (Arrian 1.2.4). The Triballi complied, charging after of the lightly armored archers and slingers to end the infuriating barrage of projectiles (Arrian 1.2.4). While in headlong pursuit the Triballi left emerged ahead of the main force and Alexander immediately ordered Philotas and his cavalry to smash into their disorganized ranks (Arrian 1.2.5). Heracleides and Sopolis mirrored the attack by engaging the Triballi right flank while Alexander himself led the central components of his army in a frontal assault (Arrian 1.2.6). The synchronized, three-pronged attack broke the Triballian lines, forcing the tribesmen to flee back through the glen towards the

[95] English, *The field Campaigns of Alexander the Great,* 26.

Lyginus River (Arrian 1.2.6). Encroaching darkness coupled with the dense foliage, which separated the glen from the river, allowed the majority of Triballi to escape capture (Arrian 1.2.7). The dead numbered 3,000 Triballi and some 51 Macedonians, including 11 cavalrymen (Arrian 1.2.7).

Alexander's heavy reliance on mounted troops, both to envelope the enemy flanks and cover his infantry charge, further developed a new method of waging war, where cavalry, instead of playing a supporting role to infantry, became the commander's foremost asset in securing victory. Philip II had pioneered the Macedonian integration of cavalry into battle lines previously dominated by heavily infantry; and his earlier successes, including against an Illyrian army, undoubtedly led to Alexander's liberal employment of cavalry. [96] The pivotal role played by the cavalry at Lyginus River underscores the early confidence Alexander placed in their abilities and foreshadowed their importance in his future campaigns.

The victorious Macedonians next continued their march northwards and in three days reached the Danube. The third incident of local resistance occurred during Alexander's attempts to force a crossing against the Triballi and Thracian refugees on Peuce Island. After marching back to the Danube Delta Alexander ordered a force of hoplites and archers to embark on the fleet ships to conduct an amphibious assault (Arrian 1.2.7). When direct attacks on the available island coastline failed, however, Alexander instead concentrated his efforts on engaging the Getae on far bank of the Danube. As long the Getae remained they could resupply and reinforce the refugees while biding their time and capitalizing on any weakness shown by Alexander. Karavas suggests that Alexander crossed directly in front of the Getae's position just to the west of a Danube tributary, which splits off northwards.[97] If Alexander attempted to traverse the

[96] Fuller "Alexander as General", 187.
[97] Karavas, interview by author.

narrowest section of the river length between Peuce Island and the tributary, the Macedonians would approach the opposite bank from a south-east to north-west slant across from the city of Tulcea.[98] This configuration would allow Alexander to cross the Danube close to Peuce Island and, advancing northward away from the main river, maintain contact with the Danube tributary to protect his left flank as he advanced on the Getae.

Roughly 4,000 mounted men and over 10,000 infantrymen encamped out of direct eyesight, inland from the river's opposite embankment (Arrian 1.3.5). By filling leather tent covers with hay and collecting local boats carved from felled tree-trunks, Alexander managed to ferry 1,500 cavalry and 4,000 infantry across the river under the cover of darkness (Arrian 1.2.6). Xenophon's description in his *Anabasis* of leather tent covers filled with hay to cross the Euphrates River most likely served as the inspiration for this particular ploy (Xenophon 1.5.10). Navigating across the 40 meter wide Danube with makeshift flotation devices and narrow dugout boats, still used by local inhabitants of the Danube area today, required a substantial amount of time and effort but Alexander managed to complete the task without detection.

Landing behind raised ground crowned with a wheat field, which provided additional concealment, the Macedonians waited for morning. At first light Alexander advanced northward, infantry first, into the wheat field towards untilled ground (Arrian 1.4.1). Alexander purposefully ordered his men to march with spears held parallel to the ground at an oblique angle to smooth down the wheat and allow the cavalry to easily follow in their wake (Arrian 1.4.2). Once the Macedonians successfully navigated the wheat field, Alexander "in person took off the cavalry to the right wing" (Arrian 1.4.2). The cavalry, upon reaching the Getae, formed wedge formations and prepared to attack. Alexander's decision to post all his available cavalry on the right wing

[98] Karavas, interview by author.

meant he intended for a Danube tributary, or the Danube itself if he were to advance down upriver, to protect the vulnerable left flank of the Macedonian phalanx.

Nicanor, meanwhile, lead the phalanx forward in a rectangular formation (Arrian 1.4.2). Hammond suggests a hollow rectangle formation for the infantry, presumably to ward off attacks from an unexpected angle by the superior numbers of enemy cavalry.[99] The defensive employment of a hollow formation in a pitched battle relinquishes the initiative to the enemy. In an operation where mobility and speed was crucial for delivering an unexpected blow, the hollow formation would only detract from the effective delivery of Alexander's sudden crossing. Subsequent ancient authorities writing on Macedonian battle formations, such as Arrian himself in his *Tactics* and Aelian in *On Tactical Arrays of the Greeks*, only mention the use of hollow rectangles in regard to marching formations, not in preparation for pitched battles (Arrian 29.7; Aelian 37.8). The inevitable battle of attrition following Alexander's choice to deploy in a hollow square or rectangle, and thereby forcing his army to be on the defensive, could easily have resulted in defeats similar to the decisive trouncing Crassus' Roman army at Carrhae, recorded by Plutarch's *Life of Crassus*, and, as Alexander would have known, the Illyrians at the hands of Philip II, as recounted by Diodorus Siculus in his *Universal history* (Plutarch 23.2; Diodorus Siculus 16.4).

Since, however, the river and Macedonian cavalry protected Alexander's flanks the formations only appreciable threat lay to the rear of his advance, a danger easily countered, with minimal forewarning, by about-facing the rearward half of his phalanx. The intricate maneuvers performed by the Macedonian troops in the subsequent months during the Siege of Pelium confirm their ability to execute such movements without hesitation (Arrian 1.6.2). A solid rectangular formation, as suggested by Bosworth, with the phalanx adopting a greater depth then

[99] Hammond, *The Genius of Alexander the Great,* 34.

width, in a manner similar to Alexander's deployment at Lyginus River, seems more probable than Hammond's reconstruction.[100] The deployment of a greater number of ranks in relation to files could again reflect the limited amount of level terrain available along the tributary. Adopting fewer files facilitated quicker movement.

Terrified at his sudden appearance and the apparent effortlessness of Alexander river crossing, the Getae fled first to a nearby city for refuge after a brief clash with the Macedonian cavalry (Arrian 1.4.3) Alexander's decision to begin the battle with a cavalry charge, instead of first pinning the enemy formation in place with his phalanx, speaks to the disarray and confusion within the enemy's ranks. Similar to the battle of Lyginus River, Alexander capitalized on the confusion produced by his sudden appearance by immediately employing his cavalry to disperse any coordinated resistance. Alexander rapidly followed in pursuit with his cavalry in the lead his phalanx still hugging the riverside to guard against an ambuscade (Arrian 1.4.4). Noting the implacable, controlled Macedonian advance, the Getae abandoned all hope of mounting a successful defense and quickly fled in the direction of the desert (Arrian 1.4.4). While the majority of women and children evacuated the area with their men folk Alexander still captured a vast amount of plunder from the forsaken city, which he entrusted to Meleager and Philip for transportation (Arrian 1.4.5). Soon thereafter Syrmus, king of the Triballi, and the independent tribes of the surrounding area offered submission (Arrian 1.4.6).

[100] Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, 63.

Conclusion

Alexander's overcame substantial obstacles in his Balkan campaign. Starting in Amphipolis, Alexander headed north-east directly through the formidable Rhodope Mountains before entering the Thracian Plains. After ensuring continued Macedonian control of the central plains by visiting Philippoupolis and Beroe, Alexander continued northwards through the Balkan Mountains via Shipka pass. The Thracian force blocking Shipka pass was routed and Alexander entered Triballi territory and devastated their settlements and lands. Hearing of King Syrmus' retreat to the Danube Delta, Alexander struck eastward until he reached the Black Sea and then followed the coastline northwards until he reached the Danube's mouth. An intelligence report, however, forewarned Alexander of a sizeable Triballi force marching across his supply lines and the young king backtracked to engage the force at Lyginus River in the Dobrudja area. Victorious, Alexander next marched back to the Danube Delta. After a failed assault on the enemy refugees defending the Dunavat hills peninsula, Alexander crossed the Danube and assaulted the Getae on the opposite bank. The enemy routed and the surrounding tribes, including king Syrmus, sent delegates to sue for peace.

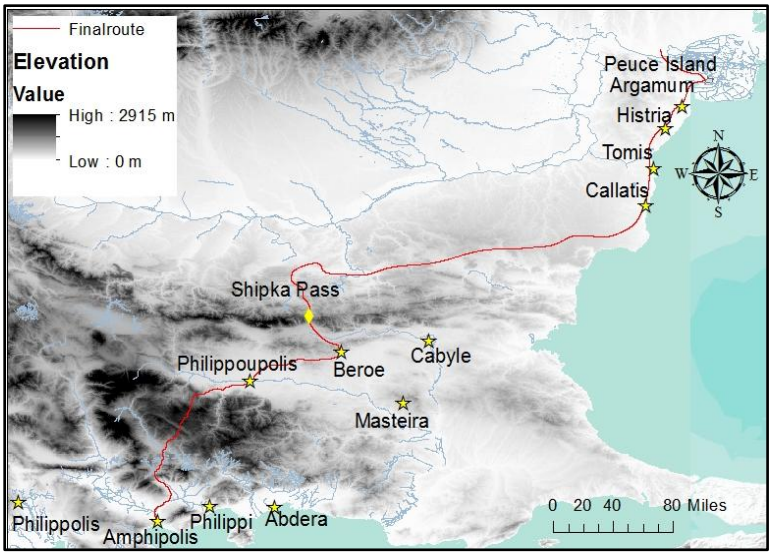

Figure 9: Alexander's Thracian campaign route

The multiple fields of inquiry, including historical, archaeological, and digital, verified solitary evidence, circumvented bias material, and filled textual or material lacunae to reconstruct the campaign accurately. Where possible literary descriptions and geophysical research results were checked for inconsistencies through a physical reconnaissance of the relevant terrain features. The maps created in ArcGIS 10.3 provided visual references and a platform for LCPA application, which provided new insights into viable routes through the Rhodope Mountains.

A detailed reconstruction and analysis of Alexander's Thracian campaign reveals the important role Alexander's Balkan expedition played in his later successes. For instance, the tactics used against the rolling carts at Mount Haemus are seen against Darius' chariots at the battle of Gaugamela, the maneuvering of armies before the battle of Lyginus River at the prelude to the battle of Issus, and the use of leather tents filled with hay to cross the Ister at the crossing of the Oxus River. The lessons Alexander, his new cadre of commanders, and the Macedonian army at large learned during the hard fought Balkan campaign prepared them for difficulties ahead.

Was Alexander great? In Alexander's case his military achievements clearly played a decisive role in earning his famed epithet. Controversy, however, still surrounds Alexander's victories in Asia Minor. Philip II, Alexander's father, not only introduced the innovative battlefield tactics and campaign strategies that defined fourth century BCE warfare, but reformed, reorganized, and retrained the Macedonian army. When Philip died he left Alexander in command of an experienced and efficient military machine led by tried and proven field commanders. These numerous advantages, mostly the product of Philip's brilliance, place into question Alexander's own claim to military genius. During the Balkan campaign, however,

Alexander had neither an experienced force nor veteran commanders. Moreover the rugged and mountainous Balkan terrain and fierce native populations created unique problems for Alexander's unwieldy phalanx. Yet in spite of the difficulties Alexander managed to utterly defeat his opposition and achieve his objectives with minimal losses. While Alexander claim to greatness remains debatable, the Balkan campaign clearly conveys his talent for waging war.

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Appendix

"At the advent of spring he marched towards (4) Thrace against the Triballi and Illyrians, since he learned that they were restless; moreover, as they marched with his borders, he did not think it well to leave them behind him, when going on an expedition so far from home, unless they had been thoroughly humbled. Starting from Amphipolis, he invaded (5) the part of Thrace that belongs to the independent Thracians, with Philippi and Mount Orbelus on his left. Then he crossed the river Nestus and is said in ten days to have reached Mount Haemus, where he was met in the (6) defile of the approach to the mountains by many of the merchants in arms and by the independent Thracians; prepared to bar his advance, they had occupied the height of Haemus on the line of the army's march. They collected carts and set them up in their front as (7) a stockade from which to put up a defense, if they were pressed; but it was also in their mind to launch the carts at the Macedonian phalanx as the troops mounted the slope just where the mountain was most precipitous. Their idea was that the closer packed the phalanx when the descending carts charged it, the more their violent descent would scatter it.

Alexander consulted how he could most safely (8) cross the ridge; and since he saw that the risk must be run, for there was no way round, he sent orders to his hoplites that whenever the carts tumbled down the slope, those who were on level ground and could break formation were to part to right and left, leaving an avenue for the carts; those caught in the (9) narrows were to crouch close together; and some were actually to fall to the ground and link their shields closely together so that when the carts came at them they were likely to bound over them by their gathered impetus and pass without doing harm. The event corresponded to Alexander's advice and conjecture. Part of the phalanx divided, while the (10) carts sliding over the shields of the others did little harm; not one man perished beneath them. The Macedonians now took heart, finding that the carts they had most dreaded proved harmless, and they charged the Thracians, shouting as they did so. Alexander ordered the archers from the right wing (11) to the front of the phalanx as on that side it was easier to shoot at the Thracians wherever they attacked. He himself took the agema, the hypaspists and the Agrianians and led them on the left. Then (12) by their volleys the archers held back those Thracians who were rushing forward and the phalanx, coming to close quarters, easily drove from their position men who were lightly clad and ill-armed barbarians; so they did not await the charge of Alexander on the left, but casting away their arms as best they could fled down the mountain-side. Some fifteen hundred (13) perished;

few were captured alive, by reason of their speed and their knowledge of the country; the women, however, who followed them were all taken, with the children and all their impedimenta.

2. Alexander sent the booty back to the cities on the coast, appointing Lysanias and Philotas to deal with it; he himself crossed the ridge, marched over Haemus against the Triballians, and arrived at the river Lyginus; as you approach the Haemus, it is three days' march from the Ister. Syrmus, (2) King of the Triballians, learning some time before of Alexander's march, sent on the women and children to the Ister, ordering them to cross to an island in the river called Peuce. To this island the (3) Thracians who are neighbours to the Triballians had also fled some time before on Alexander's approach, and Syrmus and his men now joined them there; but the mass of the Triballians fled back to the river from which Alexander had started out the day before.

Hearing of their move, Alexander turned back in (4) person to attack the Triballians, and found them already encamping. Caught as they were, they formed line near the glen by the river; but Alexander threw his phalanx into deep formation and led it against them in person, ordering the bowmen and slingers to run out ahead and discharge their arrows and stones on the barbarians, to see if he could provoke them into the open out of the glen. When (5) they were in range and came under fire, they ran out against the bowmen to come to grips with them, unarmed as bowmen are. But having drawn them out of the glen, Alexander ordered Philotas to take the cavalry of upper Macedonia and charge their right wing, where they had advanced farthest in their outward rush. Heracleides and Sopolis were ordered to lead the cavalry from Bottiaea and Amphipolis against the left wing. The infantry phalanx and (6) the remaining cavalry, which he deployed in advance of the phalanx, he led against the centre. While the battle was still at long range, the Triballians did not have the worst of it, but when the phalanx in close formation charged them in full force and the cavalry, no longer shooting, but actually thrusting them with their horses, fell on them here, there and everywhere, they turned in flight through the glen to the river. Three thousand perished in the flight, but (7) only a few were captured alive, as the wood in front of the river was dense, and as nightfall prevented the Macedonians from any thorough pursuit. Of the Macedonians, according to Ptolemy, eleven cavalrymen and about forty foot-soldiers were killed.

3. On the third day after the battle Alexander reached the Ister, the greatest river of Europe, traversing the greatest tract of country and acting as a barrier to the most warlike tribes, Celts for the most

part—its springs rising in Celtic territory; the farthest of these peoples are the Quadi and Marcomanni; then it passes the Iazyges, a branch of (2) the Sauromatae, the Getae who call themselves immortals, most of the Sauromatae, and the Scythians down to the outlets, where it runs through five mouths into the Black Sea. There Alexander (3) found at the mouth of the river warships come to join him from Byzantium through the Black Sea. He manned them with archers and hoplites and sailed against the island where the Triballians and Thracians had taken refuge, and attempted to force a landing. The barbarians, however, came down to (4) the river-side wherever the ships touched land; these were few in number, and carried only a small force; the island was for the most part steep for landing; and the current past the island, as was natural in a narrow strait, was swift and difficult to contend with.

Thereupon Alexander withdrew his ships and decided (5) to cross the Ister to attack the Getae settled on the farther side, both because he saw a large force of them gathered on the bank, to repel him, should he cross—there were about four thousand mounted men, and more than ten thousand on foot—and also because he had been seized with a longing to go beyond the river. He himself embarked in the fleet; (6) he filled the leather tent covers with hay, collected as many as possible of the boats from the countryside made from single tree trunks (they were plentiful, for the river-side dwellers use them for fishing, at times for river expeditions among themselves, and even more for thieving), and ferried across as much of his force as he could in this way. About fifteen hundred cavalry and four thousand foot-soldiers crossed with him.

4. The crossing was made at night where there was a deep cornfield, and this concealed them more, as they reached the bank. About dawn, Alexander led the troops through the field, ordering the infantry to smooth down the corn with their spears, held obliquely, and so advance to untilled ground. As long as the phalanx was marching through the corn the cavalry followed; but when they emerged (2) from the tilled land, Alexander in person took off the the cavalry to the right wing, ordering Nicanor to lead the phalanx in rectangular formation. The (3) Getae did not even withstand the first charge of the cavalry; for Alexander's bold stroke came as a great shock to them, in crossing the Ister, the greatest of rivers, so easily in one night without bridging the stream; the solidity of the phalanx was terrifying, and the onslaught of the cavalry violent. They first took refuge in the city, about a parasang (4) away from the Ister; then, seeing that Alexander was rapidly bringing up his phalanx along the river, so that the infantry might not be encircled by

an ambush of the Getae, with the cavalry on the front, the Getae in their turn deserted their city, which was feebly fortified, taking up on horseback as many of the women and children as the horses could carry; and then marched as far as possible away from the (5) river towards the desert. Alexander captured the city and all the plunder the Getae left behind. This plunder he ordered Meleager and Philip to take to the base; he himself razed the city and sacrificed on the bank of the Ister to Zeus the Preserver and Heracles and Ister himself, for permitting the passage. Then the same day he took all his force safe and sound back to the camp.

At this juncture ambassadors came to Alexander (6) from Syrmus, King of the Triballi and from the other self-governing tribes near the Ister; others from the Celts settled on the Ionian gulf" (Arrian *anabasis of Alexander* 1.1.5-1.4.7).