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Edited by:

Timothy Howe ✦ Edward Anson ✦ Michael Fronda
David Hollander ✦ Joseph Roisman ✦ John Vanderspoel
Pat Wheatley ✦ Sabine Müller ✦ Alex McAuley
Catalina Balmaceda ✦ Charlotte Dunn



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Senior Editor: Timothy Howe

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The Great King, his god(s) and intimations of divinity. The Achaemenid hinterland of ruler cult?*

Christopher Tuplin

Abstract

Intimations of living royal divinity in Persian sources are indirect and fall short of a plain king-god equation. At best the king's divine election enabled hints that there was a more-than-human flavour about him. But these are visual or verbal rhetorical tropes, and major uncertainties (e.g. about the winged disk figure) have a troubling impact. Classical Greek assertions of Persian royal divinity are rare: there is little sign Greeks thought Persians saw the living king as god, let alone worshipped him. Since Persian sources offer no unequivocal indications and since one expects Greeks to be wary about the idea of a divine Persian king (divinization of humans was supposed to reflect unusual excellence), the presence of any Greek assertions of Persian royal divinity is striking. But such assertions are not necessarily valid: for there remains a strong connection with misinterpretation of *proskunēsis*. These considerations accentuate three Greek ideas that deviate from simple king-god identification: the king as "image" of god, the king's *daimon*, and Ahuramazda making the king's light shine. These are not products of a Greek environment intemperately addicted to the idea of Persian royal divinity, so should perhaps be taken seriously. Individually all could be Greek tropes, but some have thought that *daimōn* and light evoke the royal *khvarenah* (a quasi-personal *daimōn*, evocative of sun-light). This evidence for a rhetoric of divine aura shadows that in Persian sources. The Persian situation was no disincentive to Alexander's propensity to assign himself divine qualities; and promoting court *proskunēsis* among Greco-Macedonians invited a divine interpretation—and trouble.

Alexander eventually asked to be a god and attended dinner parties dressed as one—or so we are told by hostile sources. In the background are: Egyptian and Anatolian addresses to him as son of Zeus; Olympias' alleged stories; existing Greek examples; Greek willingness to speak metaphorically in these terms; and the extraordinary nature of his achievements: the very presence of other Macedonians (generally seen as impeding deification or Persification) will have reminded him how far, in every sense, he had come as he sat on Darius' throne, contemplated Darius' body, or entered the Indus Valley. It may be that these are adequate explanations of the eventual phenomenon and we do not need views about Persian kings to be part of the mix. But it is still worth considering whether they might have been. Recent scholarly flirtations with Achaemenid divine kingship are another reason to open the question,¹ as is Hugh Bowden's important discussion of *proskunēsis*

* This essay was originally written for a symposium on Alexander the Great at the University of Utah in October 2014. Plans for publication of that excellent event having failed, I am grateful for the opportunity to present it in *AHB*. In due course it can be read alongside a companion piece from a 2017 conference in Potchefstroom (Tuplin n.d.).

(2013).² This essay has three unequal sections: Achaemenid era Greek ideas of non-mythological human divinity; non-Greek evidence about possible Persian divine kingship; Greek evidence about possible Persian divine kingship. Exposition will be brusque, annotation inexhaustive and uneven.

1. Greek ideas of non-mythological human divinity.

The evidence about men becoming more than men is not negligible.³ Posthumous heroization has some purchase, and not only for a few exceptional individuals but also perhaps the war-dead. In writing that the components of honour are “*sacrifices*, memorials in verse and prose, privileges, grants of land, front seats, public burial, state maintenance, and among the barbarians, prostration and giving place, and all gifts which are highly prized in each country”, Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1361b) perhaps assumes posthumous heroic honours as a general category. Actual lifetime heroization occurs occasionally, lifetime deification rarely (Lysander being the first and only certain pre-Hellenistic case)—except in the special case of self-deificatory performances, whose association with real cult is debatable and which evoke ideas of madness. There are possible marginal cases of quasi-religious treatment: Brasidas was honoured “like an athlete” in Scione. The Marathon monument at Delphi associated a life-size statue of Miltiades with Athena, Apollo, Theseus and the tribal heroes.⁴ Currie 2005 argues that Pindaric *Odes* intimate the future heroic status of *laudandi*, a future status that means they are already “special”, and constitute a species of religious honour. At the same

¹ Root 2010, Root 2013, Rollinger 2011, Wiesehöfer 2014.

² Other recent treatments include Vössing 2013, Matarese 2013, Matarese 2014. All insist on the distinction between *proskunēsis* (a hand-kiss gesture) and prostration, Matarese 2013 discusses Alexander’s attempt to generalize kissing rituals in his court, and Vössing 2013 reaffirms a long-neglected view that Alexander’s banquet guests did *proskunēsis*, not to Alexander, but to the hearth-fire (symbolizing the royal *daimōn*), thus honouring the king’s transcendent quality without directly treating him as a divine being.

³ Alleged divine or heroic honours in the (Achaemenid era) Greek world include the following. *Posthumous divine* Pythagoras (Just. 20.4.18), Empedocles (Herac. Pont. 83 Wehrli), philosopher-rulers (Plat. *Rep.* 540C: *daimōn*), dead warriors (id. *ibid.* 469A: *daimōn*). *Posthumous isoheroic and isotheic* Harmodius, Aristogeiton (Dem. 19.280, Ps.-Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 58.1; see recently Shear 2012). *Posthumous uncertain* Hecatomnus, Aba (Mylasa: Descat 2011: *agathoi daimones*), Mausolus (Halicarnassus: if the Mausoleum is a heroon), Mausolus (Labraunda: SEG 58.1200, Ameling 2013), Idrieus, Hecatomnus, Aba (Iasus: Nafissi 2015, superseding Nafissi 2013). *Posthumous heroic war dead* (Lys. 2.80; Currie 2005, 96), Brasidas (Thuc. 5.11), Miltiades (Hdt. 6.38 presumably heroic), Theagenes, (Paus. 6.11.2-9: presumably heroic, though *theos* is used), Gelon (Diod. 11.38; earlier acclaimed as *euergetēs* and *sōtēr*: Diod. 11.26), Hieron (11.49, 66), Theron (11.53), Diocles (13.35), Spartan kings (Xen. *RL* 15.8-9), Battiads (Pi.P.5.96-103, Currie 2005, 236-246), Chilon (Paus. 3.16.4), Euphron (Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.12), Ameinias (Sotion fr. 27 Wehrli), Philippus of Croton (Hdt. 5.47.1). *Uncertain divine* Amyntas (Aristid. 9.14: Pydna temple). *Uncertain uncertain* Philip II (SEG 38.658: Philippi. *Temenē* of Ares, Poseidon, heroes and Philip). *Lifetime informal religious honours* Brasidas (Thuc. 4.121: “like an athlete”). *Lifetime heroization* Euthymus (Currie 2002), Hagnon (Thuc. 5.11), Dion (Plut. *Dion.* 29, Diod. 16.20.6; informally saviour and god: Plut. *Dion.* 46), Timoleon (Diod. 16.90.1; also consecrated house to *hieros daimōn*: Plut. *Tim.* 36, *Mor.* 542E). *Lifetime divine* Lysander (Duris FF26, 71, IG xii.6.334), Philip (Aristid. 9.14: Amphipolis). *Lifetime uncertain* Agesilaus (Plut. *Mor.* 210d), Ada (Iasus: Nafissi 2015). *Self-deification* Nicostratus (Diod. 16.44.2f, Athen. 298A), Nicagoras (Clem. Alex. 4.54.3-4, Athen. 298A, Alexinus SSR IIC 114, Schorn 2014), Clearchus (Ael. fr. 86, Just. 16.5.8-11, Memn. 434 F1, Plut. 338B: cult only in Aelian), Menecrates (Athen. 298A-F, Clem. Alex. 4.54.3-4), Empedocles (31B112.4-5, Diog. L. 8.70, Suda).

⁴ Walker 1995: 58f.

time, as Pindar tells Psauimis, “if a man fosters sound prosperity by having sufficient possession and adding praise thereto, let him not seek to become a god” (*Olympian* 5.24). In the world of more explicit metaphor and simile Eupolis can write “we used to pray [to generals] *hōsperei theoisin*” (fr. 384 K.A.). It is hard to tell whether that statement invites a sympathetic response or how it relates to the way comic poets (following the *vox populi*?) equated Pericles and Olympian Zeus (Brock 2013: 13). But the inclination to associate power (mostly political) and metaphorical divinity recurs in various late-fifth and fourth century texts.⁵ Often, if not always, there is idealization: isotheic quality is not just a reflex of power or wealth, but an earnest of virtue.

In these terms something in another culture looking like posthumous heroization might not be shocking to Greeks. Posthumous deification is less clear in the absence of reliable historical examples or metaphorical ones until Isocrates *Letter* 3—if that is posthumous. In any case, the hero/god distinction is arguably only one of degree and does not entail radically different cult practices. Actual lifetime heroization or deification is perhaps another matter. Still, to ascribe to Persians an inclination to treat living kings as gods or *daimones* is to ascribe them an inclination not *wholly* foreign to Greek thought, where there are powerful reasons for admiration or gratitude.⁶ But inventing such a thing out of absolutely nothing as a way of “othering” the Persians is not an obvious gambit, since acknowledgment that the king might be thought special (even by Persians) would be arguably more offensive to Greek sentiment, than the complaint at the putative Persian reaction to that specialness would be pleasing to it. Traducing Persians as king-worshippers might simply not be worth the candle.

2. Non-Greek evidence for Persian divine kingship

Outside the Persian heartland the King *can* be god or god-like. Posthumous offerings were made in Sippar before a statue of Darius in 485 (Waerzeggers 2014). Such things perhaps happened in a king’s lifetime in Neo-Babylonian times;⁷ perhaps that had been true of Darius. (I wonder incidentally if the *andrias* that Xerxes allegedly removed from the Bel temple was a royal statue, repatriated after revolt like the Egyptian Darius statue.⁸) Egyptian pharaohs, including Persian ones, were, of course, in some sense gods and sons of gods.⁹

⁵ Ar. *NE* 1145a22f, *Pol.* 1284a10f, 1284b25-34, 1332b16-27; Isoc. 2.5, 5.134, 141, 9.39, 72, *ep.* 3.5; Xen. *Hier.* 8.5, *Oec.* 21.5, 11-12. *Isotheos/isodaimōn* used of exceptional power: Eur. *Tro.* 1169, Isoc. 13.4, Ariphton fr.1, Plat. *Rep.* 360C, *Phdr.* 255A, Alcidas. fr.1 (l.54), Speusipp. (AP 16.31). More generally on “kings as gods” in Greek literature see Brock 2013: 10-14, 21-24.

⁶ Homeric leaders could be honoured or looked upon as gods, while being indisputably mortal (Brock 2013: 11, 21 n.81).

⁷ Kleber 2008, 271. But Waerzeggers advises caution (2014: 327) and sees the Sippar cult as a potentially disquieting innovation in a Babylonian context (2015: 198). For some of the deep background see Winter 1992, Holloway 2002: 184-187. For the Neo-Assyrian precedent (in which the statue was held to be divine) see Cole & Machinist 1998: xiii-xv, xxii-xxiii, Machinist 2006: 179-182. Non-Assyrian subjects were also expected to see the statue as divine: Tadmor 1994: 138-140 (10'-11'), 176-178 (16'-17'), 188 (r.14-15).

⁸ Babylon: Hdt.1.183. Darius Statue: Kuhrt 2007: 477-482.

⁹ The Egyptian text on Darius’ Susa statue makes him Atum’s son and calls him “son of Re, engendered by Atum”, “perfect god”, and “son of the god’s father Hystaspes”. Egyptian divine sonship, now attested epigraphically (Bosche-Puche 2008), came to have great resonance in Alexander’s case. (A recent treatment of the Siwah episode discerns a “sincere quest by a man whose religious convictions were beyond question”: Collins 2014a: 74).

Rather strikingly Diodorus (1.95) declared that Darius alone of all Egyptians kings was addressed as *theos*.¹⁰ But it is hard to figure out what (if any) real world phenomenon prompted this assertion.¹¹

More purely Persian evidence is less accommodating. There are no explicit assertions of royal divinity, living or dead.¹² There is no Achaemenid use of the Near Eastern royal shepherd imagery that marked the king as a different species.¹³ Putative unfamiliarity with anthropomorphic cult-statues might tell against picturing a man as a god. But Herodotus' blanket statement about *agalmata* (1.131)¹⁴ is probably as misleading as his accompanying statement about altars and temples. The latter are mentioned in the Behistun text and Persepolis Fortification documents;¹⁵ we have what are probably sanctuary-type buildings at Pasargadae (Zendan-e Soleyman) and Naqš-i Rostam (Ka'ba-ye Zardošt); altars are shown on tomb-facades at Naqš-i Rostam and on plenty of seal-images (unless, as Mark Garrison has suggested, some are meant to represent sanctuaries);¹⁶ and anthropomorphic deities have also been identified on seal-images.¹⁷ Artaxerxes erected images of Anahita in various cities—and it is not proved that this was a fundamental innovation.¹⁸ So the *possibility* of man-like gods and god-like men remains. For actual Persian evidence we must look to iconography and texts.¹⁹

Placed at a sacred spot in the Median Zagros in such a way that Darius' figure will dominate—though mostly in the eyes of the gods (unless one has scaffolding)—the Behistun monument has a larger-than-life Darius (which can be a marker of divine status²⁰), and Root 2013 claims he is enacting the role of the sun-god, because his crown has Shamash stars and he faces east. (She also notes that the shape of the scene resembles a seal-rolling and cites *Job* for the idea that rolling a seal is like the illumination of the earth at dawn.) Behistun also introduces the question of the winged-disk figure—an image that in Assyrian contexts evoked the sun god Shamash,²¹ but is also a major interpretative problem which I return to later.

At Persepolis the palace had foundation deposits (like a temple) and perhaps ritual

¹⁰ Contrast the view in 1.90.2-3 (Hecat.Abd.264 F25): below n.66.

¹¹ For further discussion of these Babylonian and Egyptian items (including in the latter case the interpretation of Ladynin 2011) see Tuplin n.d., section 1.

¹² Being *marta artāvā*, "blessed when dead", in XPh §6 is a universal aspiration like being happy when alive – something earned by loyalty to the King.

¹³ The ploughing Persian image (Briant 2003) is quite another matter.

¹⁴ cf. Dinon F28, Clitarch. ap. DL 1.6, Strab. 15.3.13 (732C).

¹⁵ DB §14. Henkelman 2008: 469-473.

¹⁶ Garrison 2011: 53f.

¹⁷ Garrison 2009: §4.4.

¹⁸ Berossus 680 F11; Jacobs 2013.

¹⁹ For a general survey of the history and components of Achaemenid iconography see Garrison 2013. Persian royal inscriptions are identified with *sigla* such as DB, XPh etc. For these see Kent 1953, Schmitt 2009 (texts and translations of the OP versions), Lecoq 1997 (translation covering OP, Akkadian, Elamite and Aramaic versions), Stève 1987 (Susa inscriptions), Grillot-Susini, Herrenschildt & Malbran-Labat 1993 (Elamite version of DB), Malbran-Labat 1994 (Akkadian version of DB), TADAE C2.1 (Aramaic version of DB). Items salient here can all be found in Kuhrt 2007.

²⁰ Garrison 2013: 575 speaks slightly more neutrally of the "hieratic" scale of the figure.

²¹ Reade 1977, Dalley 1986, Holloway 2002: 170, Lauber 2008: 94. (Lauber 2008 provides a useful brief overview of the symbol's appearance in the ancient Near East.)

areas (*hadish*, *tachara*) serviced by priests.²² Texts represented the Susa palace (at least) symbolically as a perfect cosmos (*fraša*),²³ making one wonder how in that case to characterize the King, its creator. The combat of lion with bull and hero with monsters on the walls of Persepolis is doubtless a symbolic representation of the triumph of good over evil, mundane victory turned into something on a cosmic plane.²⁴ Whatever we make of the lion (and lions are sometimes killed by kings²⁵), these images figure the king in transcendent fashion—though still do not quite *identify* king and transcendent being. The Apadana composition (Kuhrt 2007, fig.11.12) places a larger-than-life king right at the centre of a human universe and with no other divine symbols present: that is remarkable, though its force *might* be mitigated if the palace itself is seen as a quasi-religious *locus*. The way that subjects are led-by-the-hand into the presence of the king is a trope appropriate to a deity; and the incense burners evoke a similar idea.²⁶ Meanwhile the leading dignitary bows slightly. Rollinger (2011, 23-40) has sought to re-interpret this. He argues that full-scale prostration by courtiers (not just subjects) perhaps occurred in Assyro-Babylonian contexts²⁷ and would have marked the king as more-than-human. Of course, the (Greek) written evidence does not affirm this of the Persian context—and the *monumental* evidence does not show it. So Rollinger maintains that the modest gesture of the Apadana dignitary is only part of the total spectrum of court-*proskunēsis*—i.e. the iconography is deliberately misleading: indeed, it is effectively muting the overtones of royal divinity. It is hard for such an argument to carry conviction—hard, but not quite impossible, since there are other respects in which monumental royal iconography is very selective, notably in the exclusion of military activity. As positive evidence one *might* adduce an unpublished Persepolis seal, PFUTS 305:²⁸ but the putatively kneeling figure cannot be assumed to be a Persian courtier—and the feature hanging from the back of the head rather tells against it.

Mark Garrison (2011) seeks divine overtones in Darius' tomb-monument in the quasi-equality/mirroring of King and the winged-disk figure—to which I return later—and the elevation of the king on a platform (also seen in Persepolis). The latter (it is now firmly asserted) derives from Elamite procession-rituals in which the King was *actually* so transported (Henkelman 2011: 128-133). In both Elam and Persia, we may conclude, the king is symbolically placed nearer the divine sphere than is normal for a mortal—but still precisely not *in* that sphere because the flaming altar and transcendent symbols (winged-disk figure; sun/moon symbol) remain separate and (sometimes) higher.

²² Razmjou 2010: 233-242.

²³ DSf, DSz, DSaa. *Fraša*: Lincoln 2012: 50, 51, 191-194, 200, 204, 369-372.

²⁴ Root 1979: 236 n.14, 303-308.

²⁵ e.g. the famous British Museum Darius seal: Collon 1987: no.558, Kuhrt 2007: 237 (fig.6.4).

²⁶ If we accept that the king was generally invisible (Llewellyn-Jones 2013: 44-48), we can see that formal occasions of general access to his presence could readily take on a quasi-religious character. Incidentally, since the crown-prince is also larger-than-life on the Apadana, albeit less so than the king, do we have two putative deities present?

²⁷ Balawat (Curtis & Tallis 2008). Nabonidus' Babylon stele (V 1'-6') speaks of officials kissing his feet (Schaudig 2001: 517-518, 525). Compare also the Cyrus Cylinder: (a) all the inhabitants of Babylon, the whole land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors knelt before him, kissed his feet, rejoiced at his kingship; their faces shone. 'The lord who through his help has brought the dead to life, who in (a time of) disaster and oppression has benefited all' – thus they joyfully celebrated him, honoured his name. (b) All the kings who sit on thrones from all the parts of the world, from the Upper to the Lower Sea, who dwell in distant regions, all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents, brought their heavy tribute to me and kissed my feet.

²⁸ I owe knowledge of this seal image to Mark Garrison.

One approach to darics/*sigloi* is to stress that in early coinage anthropomorphic figures are divine or at any rate non-human: so the *siglos*/daric image admits a quasi-divine reading and this might receive extra support from the *Knielauf* posture in Types III/IV which evokes the figure of Heracles with whom it is associated in Greek art (Tuplin 2014a: 139-147). Perhaps those responsible for replacing the lion + bull image of Croeseid coins understood the semantics of Greek numismatic imagery and were tacitly acknowledging that the king had a divine aura. A less extreme view would be that they had no such intention but that Greek viewers were nonetheless vulnerable to such a reading—so the coinage could be an incitement for them to believe in a quasi-divine king.

In textual sources the primary discourse distinguishes Ahuramazda, the god, from the king, his human agent. In the texts of Darius and Xerxes it also privileges Ahuramazda over other anonymous gods inasmuch as he alone is named and called the source of the favour (*vašna*) of which the king is beneficiary; other gods can merely help or protect (and are rarely mentioned).²⁹ The privileged position of Ahuramazda and his responsibility for the king's election and actions as king belong to a special religious discourse, distinct from that of a general environment that was vigorously polytheistic.³⁰ Ahuramazda's election of Darius is matched by Darius' election of Ahuramazda.³¹ Against the general religious background this makes Darius *qua* king very special—something also symbolized by the use of throne-names—but whether it gives him an aura of the other-than-ordinarily-human is debatable.³² Some would reckon Ahuramazda to be a typical Ancient Near Eastern royal god (Henkelman 2011: 126), rightly I think. And that would be no different if one believed that Darius *really felt* a peculiar personal debt to Ahuramazda as opposed to other deities. The King is occasionally specially closely interlinked with Ahuramazda in tropes evoking partnership or substitution.³³

²⁹ In Artaxerxes II's reign Mithra and Anahita are also named, and once (A²Sa3) they are alongside Ahuramazda as a source of *vašna*.

³⁰ For further comment on this see Tuplin n.d., section 2.

³¹ Ahn 1992: 182 notes that Darius is Great King in DB line 1, but Ahuramazda is not Great God, a description only appearing in later texts. He infers that “great” was transferred from king to god (and further claims “greatest of the gods” was formed by analogy with “king of kings”).

³² Royal inscriptions use different words to describe Ahuramazda (a) making (*kar-*) Darius king and (b) creating (*dā-*) earth, sky, mankind and happiness for mankind (Lincoln 2012: 10). But, although the making of Darius king has eschatological significance, the first word is lexically nondescript and there is no explicit suggestion of the idea of the king being of superior substance to ordinary men that has been detected in the Neo-Assyrian environment (Radner 2010: 26-27, citing VAT 17019 = VS 24.92, on which see Mayer 1987, Cancik-Kirschbaum 1995). Neo-Babylonian kings are often said to be “created” by Marduk or other deities. For comparable Assyrian phenomena see Machinist 2006: 161, 163, 166-167. In VAT 13831 = SAA 3.11 = Livingstone 1989: 26-27 Ashurbanipal is “the creation of his [Assur's] hands”.

³³ DSk: “Ahuramazda is mine, I am Ahuramazda's. I worshipped Ahuramazda. May Ahuramazda bear me aid”. In DPd the will (*vašna*) of Ahuramazda and of Darius results in the land/people of Persia fearing no one. Such things perhaps recall the talk of the king as god's beloved or favourite that occurs in Mesopotamian contexts and has been read as an expression of partnership: Jacques 2006: 123-145, cited by Winter 2008: 83. The Neo-Babylonian ruler (who could be compared with Marduk: Waerzeggers 2011: 730) was “an earthly counterpart of the supreme god, especially in his role as maintainer of order” (Beaulieu 1993), the Assyrian one an “image” or “perfect likeness” of god (see n.53 below) or specifically of the sun-god Shamash (Maul 1999: 206-207) and sometimes iconographically assimilated to the divine (Dalley 2013: 103). Frahm 2013: 102-105 has stressed that calling the king the image of god is not merely a metaphor: an image “serves as medium not so much of likeness but rather of presence... [and] a *šalmu* contained, in an (almost) physical sense, at least some of the qualities that characterized its model”. Such views sat in different practical environments: the Assyrian king could perform priestly ritual acts, the Babylonian one could not (Waerzeggers 2011: 737, 741). See also at n.50.

DSk is not really divergent from the impression created by the normal Ahuramazda rhetoric of royal inscriptions. But DPd does assimilate King and Ahuramazda rather strikingly, given the immense frequency with which the will (*vašna*) of Ahuramazda (alone) is invoked as what enables the king's successful actions:³⁴ there is more at stake here than in the phrase “may your wishes be fulfilled by the gods and the king”, a piece of epistolary *politesse* encountered in Persepolitan letter orders.³⁵

Claims are sometimes made that other royal inscription terminology implies that the king is divine. Kellens (2002) says that *xšaça (kingship) is really “a force that the sacrificer confers on the gods and the gods confer on any and all of the faithful” and that the Achaemenid king is defined by his title as “participating in divine power”. Pirart (2002) claims that the word used for “obey” in DB §6-8 really means “present oneself before the divinity bringing the offerings needed to render him cult”, though also (not quite consonantly) that the Apadana gift-carriers bring Darius gifts as *honoraria* for his sacerdotal office (not, apparently, in recognition of his being a god). I confess that I do not know how much weight to attach to such etymological assertions as indicators of conscious Achaemenid era ideology. These particular ones do not figure in the comparatively sober discussion of cosmic kingship in Bruce Lincoln's writings (Lincoln 2012). Such discussion has its own relevance, of course. Lincoln seeks to persuade us that royal texts presuppose an eschatological discourse in which mundane politics and warfare are enfolded in the larger agenda of restoring a perfect world-order in a fractured cosmos. If that were so, Ahuramazda's premier agent (the king) might in any case be thought to have some of the colour of a superhuman hero.

Returning to vocabulary one may note deployment of the concept *kiten* in the Elamite version of Xerxes' *daiva* inscription.³⁶ *Kiten* is a quality that belongs to the king (and which he deploys) by virtue of divine empowerment (Henkelman 2008: 364-371). One might say it instantiates a more-than-simply-human royal capacity to control one's environment and makes the king slightly more autonomously quasi-superhuman than the simple tropes of divine agency. But the Old Persian version of the text has no trace of the idea.³⁷ Does one conclude that it is a purely Elamite take on the king's power and, more importantly, of no more significance than e.g. an Egyptian take on the same issue? To do so would contradict current scholarly stress on the importance of the Elamite component in the genesis of imperial Persia. But to take the opposite line entails that the normally rather bland terminology of the texts potentially conceals much more complicated ideas that were in royal

³⁴ The precise force of *vašna* (here rendered “will”) is a matter of debate (Lincoln 2012: 135: its semantics can embrace grace, will or power), but the issue is immaterial here.—Another interesting terminological interchange occurs in XPh, where the *dāta* (law) of Ahuramazda uniquely echoes the more frequently mentioned *dāta* of the king. (Compare n.33 above.)

³⁵ PF 1832, 1857-1860, 2079, PFNN 0394, PFNN 0702, PFNN 2544: “may your *širi* be made [i.e. may your wishes be fulfilled] by the gods and the King”. See Henkelman 2010: 670.

³⁶ XPh (Elamite): “And among the lands there was (a place) where formerly (the people) made (for) their *daivā* their sacrificial feast (*šip*). Then by the effort of Ahuramazda I devastated that place of worship of *daivā* and I placed *kiten* upon them, lest the *daivā* their sacrificial feast be celebrated.” (He then made *šip* for Ahuramazda.)

³⁷ XPh (OP) “And among these lands was one where previously *daivā* were worshipped. Then by the will of Ahuramazda I destroyed these *daivā*-sites and ordered ‘The *daivā* shall no longer be worshipped’. Wherever previously the *daivā* were worshipped, there I have worshipped Ahuramazda at the correct time and with correct ceremonial.” Although *kiten* is absent, the word translated as “ordered” (*patiyazbayam*) is a *hapax* and may conceivably have had special overtones: see Tuplin n.d.

and non-royal minds: it makes it mostly impossible to know what they were, but (methodologically speaking) gives some comfort to the process of inference from scant indications. Perhaps we have to accept that the texts do not openly tell the whole story.

In Sasanian times the king could be called god (*bay* or *theos*) and “born from divine family”, though he was never called *yazad*. Suggestions that the same was true much earlier have been made on the basis of (a) “*frataraka* of the gods” on Hellenistic coins from Persis, (b) a reference to gladdening “the gods and Arshama” in TADAE A6. 16: 2 (“gods” in both these Aramaic texts being allegedly a metonym for king), and (c) the claim that two Akkadian phrases conveying a threat of royal punishment designate the majesty of King Darius with a word derived from *baga-* = god.³⁸ The Aramaic cases lack force; but the Babylonian ones (from Darius’ reign) remain intriguing—though next to unique.³⁹ Once again one may wonder if the extant text-base is systematically misleading.

I began this section with cult in Sippar; I end with cult in Persia.

Several Persepolis texts record resources for offerings at funerary monuments of Hystaspes, Cambyses and other (putative) royal family members (Henkelman 2003). There is an apparent resonance with Greek sources on the tomb of Cyrus.⁴⁰ But the cult is posthumous, of course, and there is a problem of scope: Greeks thought the magi sacrificed to Cyrus; if so, and if the Persepolis texts and Arrian refer to similar things, Persians sacrificed to Darius’ father and the otherwise unidentified Upanduš and Zišunduš (as well as to Cambyses), and we are not dealing just with posthumously deified *kings*. Alternatively, *either* this is not about sacrifices to deceased humans but sacrifices in honour of their memory (so no-one is deified), or the case of Cyrus is different: his sacrifices involve horses and are much grander than the other ones, and he alone (in *this* evidence) is a posthumously divine figure—and only so attested in a Greek source.

Certainly unique to the king is the royal fire, only extinguished at his death (Diodorus 17.114). This is only directly attested for the Achaemenid era by Alexander’s procedurally improper extinction of the royal fire at the death of Hephaestion, but some believe the Ka’ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam and Zandān-e Soleyman at Pasargadae are *loci* for the guarding of the royal fire, and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 8.3.12) and Curtius (3.3.9) speaks of fire (though not specifically royal fire) carried before the King in procession.⁴¹ Developing these data further for the present purposes does depend on how one pictures the role of fire-worship in Achaemenid times and the degree (if any) to which any worship of a royal fire amounts to worship of the king. These are hard issues, and even the presence of an apparent fire-altar on the tomb-facade has not settled them.

I return now to another feature of Darius’ tomb, the winged-disk figure. This is also an unsettled matter. One problem is a mixture of diversity and parallelism—diversity in that we are dealing with (at least) three things: winged disk/ring plus bust figure, winged

³⁸ *bagani’ Dariamuš šarru ina muhika* (CT 22.74); *bagani Darimuš šarru ina muhikunu* (CT 22.244).

³⁹ See Tuplin 2014b: 124–126. But the view (CAD s.v.) that *bagani* means “curse” (cf. *bgn* in Hatran Aramaic: Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995: 143–144) is probably the most rational explanation. Hackl *et al.* 2014: 268 claim the phrase’s literal meaning is “der Ruf von Darius ist gegen euch ergangen”. A suggestion (Eilers 1969: 11) that *baga vazraka* (“great god”) on a dagger-handle refers to the King has no independent force.

⁴⁰ Aristob. 139 F51 (Arr. 6.29.4–7, Strab. 15.3.7).

⁴¹ Curtius says that the fire was called sacred and eternal. Xenophon simply speaks of men carrying fire on an *eskhara*.

disk/ring without bust figure, and bust figure in crescent or circle—and parallelism in that the salient iconographic contexts overlap for winged symbols with or without bust figure, and the bust in circle/crescent often appears along with the winged disk symbols.

A full explanation of the semantics of these images is still some way off—if indeed attainable. For present purposes our primary concern is with the winged disk/ring plus bust figure because that appears in specifically royal images at Behistun and Naqš-e Rostam—though not (as we have noticed) on the Persepolis Apadana. (It is also not particularly common in Persepolitan seal imagery—fewer than 50 items out of the thousands known.)

So far as this goes, the prevalent interpretations are that the icon is *either* Ahuramazda or the royal *khvarenah*—the royal version of the spiritual force that motivates every category of being to fulfil its appropriate *raison d'être*.⁴²

A strength of the first interpretation is that the similar Assyrian icon is arguably an image of a god (viz. Shamash). One may add that (i) in the Sar-i Pol icon (an undoubted iconographic source for Behistun) the king is invested by the goddess Ishtar⁴³ and (ii) on a Babylonian stela reproducing the Behistun image the winged disk/ring plus bust was apparently replaced by symbols of gods.⁴⁴ A strength of the second interpretation is that it might explain the co-existence of winged disk with figure and winged disk without such a figure—the explanation being that the former is royal *khvarenah*, the latter Aryan *khvarenah* i.e. one is personal, the other ethnic—and that, if the disk is solar, that fits the link between *khvarenah* and *khvar-* = sun. (On the alternative view one must say either that the image means the same whether or not the bust-figure is present or that, when the bust is present, Ahuramazda is being added to a basic solar disk.)

A weakness of the first interpretation is that it may beg the question to assume that an icon was adopted to express an exactly parallel idea (i.e. representation of a canonical pantheon-deity). A weakness of the second is the absence of firm *Persian* evidence that the concept of royal *khvarenah* had the potency in the Achaemenid era that it had in the Sasanian one.⁴⁵ (This consideration has tempted some to replace *khvarenah* by Elamite *kiten*, which has the merit of actually appearing in one Achaemenid era text.⁴⁶)

I cannot resolve the issue here.⁴⁷ But I can try to define its bearing on our principal

⁴² A compromise view, that the bust is Ahuramazda, the winged disk *khvarenah* is sometimes advanced (Balzer 2007, 130; Ehrenberg 2008: 111; Battesti 2011: 180; Almagor 2017, 37). I discuss this further in Tuplin n.d. section 3. It does not make a significant difference to the argument here about the king's divine status.

⁴³ Potts 1999: 318-319 (fig.9.3).

⁴⁴ Kuhrt 2007: 158 (fig.5.4).

⁴⁵ For possible Greek allusion to royal *khvarenah* cf. pp. 103-104. Claims that *tukhē* can stand for *khvarenah* are unconvincing (Tuplin 2014c: 275-276). Associations of light and kingship in e.g. Hdt. 8.137, Verg. *Aen.* 2.682-4, Liv. 1.39 (but not Simonid. 543. 11P where Nietzsche's conjecture is far from inevitable *pace* Adorjányi 2011) involve an idea resembling *khvarenah* but establish nothing about *khvarenah*'s currency in Achaemenid Persia. Dinon 690 F10 (Cyrus' dream about the sun) is more telling. (But the association of kings and the sun is not peculiarly Iranian. It also appears in Egypt and Mesopotamia.)

⁴⁶ Garrison (cited by Henkelman 2008: 371). See also Rollinger 2011: 20-22. Jacobs 2017: 256-257 is sceptical.

⁴⁷ I discuss it further in Tuplin n.d., section 3. For Garrison 2017: 199-200 the "exact semantic referent" of the symbol remains elusive, and he is inclined to think it was "open to a range of meanings depending upon its

interest. If the winged disk/ring plus bust represents Ahuramazda, it reinforces the sense of interaction between king and god and (therefore) makes the king quite separate from the divine. One *might* mitigate this by stressing the resemblance between bust-figure and king-figure as a sign of quasi-identification.⁴⁸ But this need entail nothing more than a claim of ancestral-descent-from-god;⁴⁹ and the phenomenon might be no more than a visual equivalent of “I am Ahuramazda’s, he is mine”.⁵⁰

If the winged disk/ring plus bust represents royal *khvarenah*, there is frequent visual allusion to something numinous that is peculiarly the king’s: the king is not literally deified, but there is a transcendent power associated with him. (Some speak of *khvarenah* as the king’s second-self: if so, it would be a transcendent one.) Rollinger (2011) reckons that on this second view we are not far from the Sasanid world of kings being called god (*baga* or *theos*). The argument would be that visualizing the distinctive quality of the king in a form that others used for gods amounts to deifying his spirit—or, as Greeks might say, making it *isotheos*. Indeed, all considerations—especially intimations of worship—that make the icon look divine (and might favour identification with Ahuramazda) on *this* view reinforce the divine quality of the king *qua* king. But it does have the odd consequence that among those shown worshipping the king’s divine quality is the king himself; and it does not make him a god.

In the end, the *indicia* from non-Greek material are elusive compared even with the little that is available for Neo-Assyrian kings:⁵¹ we do not know if there is an equivalent to Akkadian *melammu*, a quasi-divine brightness bestowed by the gods (Elamite *kiten* is perhaps not quite the same),⁵² the king is not called an “image” of a god (though we *shall* see this idea later: p. 103),⁵³ there is no other discursive equation of king with specific deities and the existence of iconographic assimilation is contentious; the trope of divine parentage/upbringing is absent and there is no analogue to Assurbanipal’s affirmation that “I knew no father or mother, and

visual context”. (This from an essay designed to “move discussion of divine and numinous imagery beyond the winged symbol” (193).

⁴⁸ The resemblance is more marked after Behistun, where king and figure have markedly different head-dresses: Garrison 2013: 577, Jacobs 2017: 249-250, 271-272, figs 5-7.

⁴⁹ Jacobs 2017: 258-262 articulates this idea, Darius’ ultimate ancestor Achaemenes being the actual divine offspring. (For a possible Greek reflection of this see Ael. NA 12.21.) See also Henkelman 2017: 299-301.

⁵⁰ Llewellyn-Jones 2015: 215: the king “encodes in his appearance the best physical attributes of the anthropomorphic divinity”. King and god are “one another’s doppelganger”. Root 1979: 171 speaks of a “symbiotic relationship”. (The same word is used by Podella 1996: 140 of the relationship between the Assyrian king and the winged-disk representation of Shamash.) Kienast 1996 reckons that the chariots of “Zeus” (Ahuramazda?) and the king in royal processions bespeak a ritual in which the King performs as the god’s representative or substitute (*Stellvertreter*). See also at n.33.

⁵¹ Quasi-deification of the *adē*-oath of loyalty to the king (Fales 2012: 151-153) and a conception of kingship itself as divine (Machinist 2006: 185, 187-188) are other examples of the unpredictably varied ways in which a divine aura can attach to the figure of the king, even if he is not unambiguously a god himself: the divine logogram does not precede his name (contrast much earlier Mesopotamian contexts: Hallo 1992: 388-389) but Marti suggests that he was assimilated to an individual’s personal protective deity (2012: 575), for which cf. also the king as “shadow [protector] of man” (Machinist 2006: 173-175, interpreting Parpola 1993: no. 207, edge 18-rev 13).

⁵² Machinist 2006: 163, 169-170.

⁵³ Cole & Machinist 1998: xiii, xxii n.12; Machinist 2006: 162-3, 170-173, 175-182, SAA 10.196, 228. Since “image” and “statue” are both *šalmu*, the king’s being a “statue of god” may cast light on treatment of a statue of the king as divine (see above p.94 and n.33). In Parpola 1993: no. 207, rev 12-13 the king is the perfect likeness (*šukal muššuli*) of god.

I grew up in the lap of the goddesses”;⁵⁴ and there are no properly Persian cultic images of the king.

In short, any intimations of living royal divinity in Persian sources are indirect, and persistently fall short of plain equation of king and god. At best the king’s divinely elect status makes it possible to hint that there is a flavour of the more-than-human about him. Even so we are only dealing with iconographic or verbal rhetorical tropes—and perhaps deliberately guarded ones.

3. Greek evidence about possible Persian divine kingship

If the Persian evidence for Persian divine kingship is elusive, the Greek evidence is not much better.

There is no *certain* sign in Aeschylus’ *Persae* of the *living* king as a god,⁵⁵ though that depends on a particular reading of line 157 (where the queen is mother of a god) and on allowing that Greeks believed Persians might think a dead king to have become a god. Interestingly it is only the chorus that directly calls either king a *theos* (157, 634, 651, 654); for the Queen he is at best a man who lived prosperously “like a god” (711). So even the idea of dead-king-as-god is perhaps marked as a matter of court flattery rather than institutional religion. Debates about the nature of the invocation of Darius reflect this: crudely he is a ghost (and acts as one) whom the *chorus* want to believe is a god.⁵⁶ The description of Atossa as like light from the eyes of gods (150-154) is also a trope of court-flattery.

In Isocrates (4.151), Xenophon (*Agesilaus* 1.34, *Anabasis* 3.2.13) and Curtius (5.12.16, 6.6.2-3, 8.5.5.11) the only unambiguous claim that the king is worshiped as god is Curtius 8.5.11, in the mouth of the Alexander-flatterer Cleon. (Other Alexander historians avoid such claims.) There is linkage with *proskunēsis* throughout, one assertion (Isocrates) that the king is *addressed* (not worshipped) as *daimōn* (not *theos*)—and a dilution of any king-as-god claims in Xenophon’s *Agesilaus*: in context Xenophon is referring to Persians in Sardis (who do not include the King); he provides strong evidence for *proskunēsis* as a potential sign of isotheic honour but not strong evidence for a belief that Persians saw their king specifically as a god: putative royal divinity is diluted in the putative divinity of *any* Persian grandee.⁵⁷

So Greeks could imagine Persian kings as descendants of a god (like Spartan kings),⁵⁸ but there is little sign that they thought that Persians thought living kings to be gods, let alone offered cult to them. When the divine Persian king turns up in pre-Hellenistic texts it is in the

⁵⁴ See also Parpola 2010: 36 for the idea of king as consubstantial with (even implicitly the son of) god. – Gaspa 2017 provides an important broader discussion of Assyro-Achaemenid continuities within which to place the matters touched on here at nn. 7, 21, 27, 32, 33, 50-53.

⁵⁵ Salient passages are 74-80, 150-154, 157, 620, 634-654, 711, 853.

⁵⁶ cf. Munz 2011. Bakola 2014 explores his specifically chthonic character and its implications from a Greek perspective. Her stress on the earth momentarily evokes the *būmi* of Persian royal inscriptions, but the theme should probably be seen in purely Greek terms.

⁵⁷ It is also possible that Persian-king-as-*daimōn* appeared in Antisthenes (Tuplin 1996: 158).

⁵⁸ Hdt. 7.30, Xen. Cyr. 1.2.1, Plat. *Alcib.* I 120E. They could also imagine Persian royal women hailing Alexander as a god on discovering his philanthropic intentions towards them (Diod. 17.37). It is hard to say how reliable an indicator of the Persian mind-set this is.

context of posthumous honours and/or court flattery and/or *proskunēsis*.⁵⁹ One sees the link between *proskunēsis* and divine aura also in *Cyropaedia* 8.3.14, where Xenophon represents Persian adoption of *proskunēsis* as the reaction to a quasi-epiphany of Cyrus.⁶⁰

More generally, my view about *proskunēsis* in this context is that, whatever the truth about its regular use in Greek religious ritual (and Plato *Laws* 887E treats it as part of the normal religious experience observed by a child—though the gods are undefined and the remarks cover barbarians as well as Greeks), the way the word is used outside specifically oriental contexts shows that it was perceived as appropriate to human-divine interaction and, although the word *may* first have appeared in Greek with purely interhuman social reference, it acquired religious overtones that could then be turned back against the oriental environment where the practice it described belonged.⁶¹ I suspect it got those overtones because Greeks *did* sometimes—in special circumstances—bow to gods (van Straten 1974). The fact that the earliest surviving Greek use of the term refers to a Greek god should not be overlooked;⁶² nor should the fact that the next earliest—and the only time the word is used in *Persae* (499)—also involves divine recipients. Meanwhile the act—between humans—is already put critically into a religious context in *Agamemnon*.⁶³ So, *pace* Bowden 2013, it does seem to be precisely *proskunēsis* that prompts Greek ideas of Persian deification of living king.

Nonetheless it is not a very strong theme. The number of salient texts is very small. There is no very strong tendency to make a distinctive metaphorical linkage of Persian king and god.⁶⁴ Ctesias' idea (688 F1b = Diodorus 2.21.7) of the secluded and unseen god-king—in an Assyrian context, but perhaps reflecting his experience of a Persian court—finds no analogue in Xenophon's denunciation of royal seclusion in *Agesilaus* 9. There is no habit in tragic discourse of “deifying” oriental or “bad” kings. That Astyanax could have had *tyrannis isotheos* had he lived is an *exceptio qua probat regulam*, as it exemplifies a generic attitude to autocratic kings. It is a long shot that description of Perramos (that is, Priam) as *bagatas*

⁵⁹ An interesting post-classical item is Ps.-Arist. *Mund.* 398a: the king is said to be “called Master and God” in a passage comparing him with the god who rules the cosmos, because both avoid direct interaction with their respective realms. (That *de Mundo* purports to be addressed to Alexander is perhaps not unimportant: cf. Sider 2015). Also indirectly interesting is Hecat. 264 F25 (Diod. 1.90.2-3): Egyptians do *proskunēsis* to their kings and honour them as truly being gods. Once again *proskunēsis* and divine status go together.

⁶⁰ Xenophon's Cyrus is also a sort of incarnate law (*blepōn nomos*: 8.1.22) but, although law played an important role in the construction of Achaemenid kingship (Tuplin 2015), the reasoning that (Mitchell 2013 argues) might make it theoretically desirable for a Greek or Macedonian king ruling Greeks to be deemed a god (in order to defuse the conflict between monarchy and rule of law) cannot be assumed to apply (or have been thought to apply) in a Persian context or to have any bearing on the king's supposed ontological status.

⁶¹ Pre-hellenistic uses of the word can be classified in terms of the recipient of the gesture as follows. Humans, Persian/Median contexts: Hdt. 1.119, 3.86, 7.14, 8.118, Xen. *An.* 1.6.10, 8.21, 3.2.13, *Hell.* 4.1.35, *Ages.* 1.34, *Cyr.* 4.4.13, 5.3.18, 8.3.14, Dinon F27. Humans, other barbarian contexts: Hdt. 2.121, Dem. 21.106, Eur. *Tro.* 1021, *Or.* 1507, tr. fr. adesp. 118, 664 K.-S. Humans, non-barbarian contexts: Soph. *OT* 327, fr. 738 Radt, Plat. *Rep.* 398A, Aeschin. 2.150, Ar. *Vesp.* 515-517. Inanimate objects, non-oriental contexts: Soph. *Phil.* 534, Dem. 19.314. Gods or other divine forces/entities: Hippon. 47W, Aesch. *Pers.* 499, [Aesch.] PV 936, Soph. *Phil.* 657, 776, *El.* 1374, OC 1645, Ar. *Plut.* 771, Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.19, 7.5.32, *An.* 3.2.9, 13, Dem. 25.37, Plat. *Rep.* 451A, 469B, *Leg.* 887E. (In the last category the only items where Persians perform *proskunēsis* are Aesch. *Pers.* 499, Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.19, 7.5.32.)

⁶² Hippon. 47W (Hermes).

⁶³ Aesch. *Ag.* 918-930. The passage does not require (or preclude) that barbarian *proskunēsis* be worship of a god, but certainly treats it as analogous (cf. Fraenkel 1950: 416-417).

⁶⁴ cf. Hdt. 7.56, 203, Gorg. 82B5, Isoc. 2.5, 4.179, Plat. *Phdr.* 258C.

uses a (pseudo-)Iranian loanword based on *baga-* = “god”.⁶⁵

What are we to make of this thematic weakness? We can see in Persian sources no strong and unequivocal reasons for believing that Persian kings were regarded as gods. General grounds for Greeks to invent or develop the idea were also lacking, as I observed at the start of this essay; the rarity of passages asserting (in whatever form) the divinity of the Great King is striking, given the general Greek environment.

There is an interesting parallel. Greeks did not think Egyptian kings divine, though in that case there were definitely reasons they might have done.⁶⁶ That attests *either* a disinclination to see such things or ethnographic blindness.⁶⁷ Perhaps the fact that it was not a matter of cult is pertinent. In any event: (a) the degree (however small) of acknowledgement of Persian deification of kings becomes remarkable by contrast, but might still be largely due to *proskunēsis*, as well as reflecting the fact that Persian kings were a more powerful threat to and object of interest for classical Greeks; and (b) if there were any *real* reasons to perceive a divine aura in the Persian king, we could not perhaps rely on Greeks being aware of them.

These considerations throw into relief the existence in Greek sources of two ideas that deviate from simple identification of king and god: the king as *eikōn* of god and the king’s *daimōn*.⁶⁸ The four relevant texts are (as now preserved) from late authors (Athenaeus and Plutarch), but one certainly comes from Theopompus (a late classical author who displayed some knowledge of Persian religion and eschatology),⁶⁹ another comes from the early Hellenistic Peripatetic philosopher Phantias, and a third seems very likely to reflect Ctesias or Dinon.⁷⁰ Because one cannot simply say that they are the product of a Greek environment intemperately addicted to postulating Persian royal divinity, I am tempted to think that these are items to be taken seriously, especially as the first has a clear Neo-Assyrian analogue. And one might add a fifth (again from Plutarch⁷¹) in which a slave anticipates that Ahuramazda will make the light (*phōs*) of the King shine again. Individually all of these *could* perhaps be Greek tropes, but it is not surprising that some have thought that *daimōn* and *phōs* evoke the *khvarenah* (a sort of personal *daimōn*, etymologically linked to sun-light). I am not sure about that, but we do perhaps have further evidence here about a rhetoric of divine aura that might slightly recall (while being more explicit than) the one in Persian sources.⁷² In that sense Greek and Persian sources come together.

⁶⁵ tr. fr. adesp. 120 K.-Sn.; Dettori 2005.

⁶⁶ Hdt. 2.142, 144. (Plat. *Polit.* 290DE noted that Egyptian kings had to be priests.) A rare, post-classical, exception is Hecat. Abd. 264 F25 (Diod. 1.90.2-3): see above nn. 10, 59.

⁶⁷ Collins 2014b sees Hecataeus’ typically Hellenistic (and Euhemerist) comment (previous note) as the product of belated Greek discovery of the phenomenon.

⁶⁸ *Eikōn*: Phantias fr.26W = Plut. *Them.* 27. *Daimōn*: Plut. *Artox.* 15, Theopompus 115 F124 = Athen. 252AC, Plut. *Them.* 29 The *daimōn* figures in Vössing’s interpretation of Alexander’s *proskunēsis* banquet (see above n.2).

⁶⁹ Theopomp. 115 F64.

⁷⁰ The source of Plut. *Them.* 29 is unclear. Theoretically it could still Phantias (a reference to Eratosthenes at the end of 27 being a mere parenthesis). But there are good reasons to doubt this: see Keaveney 2003: 56-57, Charles 2015: 288.

⁷¹ *Alex.*30.

⁷² *Phōs* might also evoke Mesopotamian *melammu* (above p. 101). For a different light trope cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 150-154 (above p. 101). The four passages are discussed at greater length in Tuplin n.d., section 3.

Conclusion

And where does this leave Alexander? There was certainly no excuse for him to feel that, on becoming Darius III's successor, he was automatically in line to receive actual divine honours from (at least) his Persian subjects. But, granted any existing propensity to contemplate his own divine quality in informal terms, the situation of the Persian king (whether as viewed by Persians or Greeks) was only a disincentive inasmuch as he was a *Persian* king; and (where Greeks or Macedonians were concerned) bringing up the question of courtier-*proskunēsis* was asking for trouble.

CHRISTOPHER TUPLIN

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

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