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# Alexander, Agathoi Daimones, Argives and Armenians

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**ABSTRACT** Intriguing and complex traditions are preserved about Alexander and the *agathos daimon* house-snakes of Alexandria by Phylarchus, the *Alexander Romance*, ps.-Epiphanius and the *Chronicon Paschale*. These bear upon both a foundational myth and upon a related cultural practice. New light is shed on these traditions by some striking comparative folkloric evidence gathered in Armenia at the end of the nineteenth century. In primis, the Armenians' practice of addressing their friendly house snakes as 'Armenians' suggests that the Alexandrians' practice of addressing their own friendly house snakes as 'Argives' entailed a notion that they were themselves, somehow, 'Argive' in origin, a notion that can be evidenced in several further ways.

**KEYWORDS** Alexander; Ptolemy I; Alexandria; Argives; Argos; Argeads; Armenians; Agathos Daimon; house snakes; *Alexander Romance*; Phylarchus; ps.-Epiphanius; *Chronicon Paschale*; Abeghian; Inachus.

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The present essay serves as a gloss to Ogden's recent discussion of the *agathoi daimones* house-snakes of Alexandria<sup>1</sup>. The principal evidence for them is found in three texts. The first of these is the alpha recension of the *Alexander Romance*, probably produced in the third-century AD in the form in which we know it, although parts of it, including the one in question, are almost certainly early Ptolemaic in origin. This tells how Alexander's (remote) killing of a miraculous serpent that has been manifesting itself at the site of Alexandria as it is first being constructed results in the appearance of a host of *agathoi daimones* snakes. The recension is reconstructed from a single, poor Greek manuscript (A) and the Armenian translation of what was evidently a rather

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<sup>1</sup> OGDEN 2013a, 286-309. For *Agathos Daimon* and *agathos daimones* in general see also NILSSON 1967-74, ii, 213-18; BERNAND 1970, i, 82-99; FRASER 1972, i, 209-11 (with notes); QUAEGBEUR 1975, 170-6 and *passim*; DUNAND 1981 and, most recently now, BARBANTANI 2014 esp. 224-8; further bibliography at OGDEN 2013a, 286. Barbantani's extensive article offers much of interest on the subject of *drakontes* in connection with North Africa, but its central hypothesis is precarious to say the least: it is entirely speculative to suppose that Apollonius' reference to Medusa's snake-children in the sole surviving fragment of his lost *Foundation of Alexandria* (Apollonius F4 Powell = schol. Nicander *Theriaca* 12a) had anything whatsoever to do with either Alexander or Ptolemy.

better account of the same Greek text. We offer a translation of the A text with important supplements from the Armenian translation indicated by arrow-brackets (the emboldened alphabetic tags will be explained below)<sup>2</sup>:

“When the foundations of the heroon [sc. for the slain Agathos Daimon serpent] had been laid down <he set it [i.e. the stele on which he had inscribed the letters] on a pillar>. There leaped out from it a large host <of snakes>, and, crawling off, they ran into the four [?] houses that were already there. Alexander, who was still present, founded the city and the heroon itself on the 25<sup>th</sup> Tybi. **[a]** From that point the doorkeepers admitted these snakes [*opheis*] to the houses as **[b]** *agathoi daimones* [‘good spirits’]. **[c]** These snakes are not venomous, **[d]** but they do ward off those snakes that do seem to be venomous, and sacrifices are given to the hero himself <, as snake-born>... **[e]** Alexander ordered that the guardians of the houses be given wheat. They took it and milled it and made porridge [?] and gave it to the snakes in the houses. The Alexandrians preserve this custom until today. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Tybi they... **[f]** make sacrifice to the *agathoi daimones* that look after their houses and make them gifts of porridge”.

(*Alexander Romance* (A) 1.32.10-13 ≈ (Arm.) §§ 87 WOLOHOJIAN)<sup>3</sup>.

Secondly, we have a fragment of Phylarchus, whose history finished in 219 BC with the death of Cleomenes III of Sparta, preserved by Aelian:

“In his twelfth book Phylarchus says as follows about the asps [*aspides*] of Egypt. **[g]** He tells that they are strongly honoured, and as a result of this honour they become very gentle and tame. They are reared alongside children and do them no harm. When called they slither out of their holes and come. Calling them consists of clicking the fingers. **[h]** The Egyptians lay out gifts of guest-friendship for them. For whenever they have finished their meal they moisten barley in wine and honey and lay it out on the table on which they happen to have been dining. Then clicking their fingers they call their ‘guests’. And they present themselves as if by prior arrangement. Rampant around the table, they leave the rest of their coils on the floor, but lift up their heads and lick at the food. Slowly and bit by bit they take their fill of the barley, and eat it all up. **[i]** If some need presses upon the Egyptians in the course of the night they click their fingers again. This noise gives them the signal to retreat and withdraw. Accordingly, they understand the difference in the sound and why this is done, and immediately retreat and disappear, sliding back into their nests and holes. A man who has risen does not tread on any of them or even meet them”.

(Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F27 = Aelian *Nature of Animals* 17.5)<sup>4</sup>.

The fragment begins in a slightly misleadingly fashion in the way it talks about the snakes, but by the end it becomes clear that the snakes are never actually seen by anyone. The family finishes their meal and as they withdraw to bed they click their fingers to tell the snakes that the coast is clear and that they may emerge. Should an individual have to rise unexpectedly in the night he clicks his fingers and the snakes tactfully withdraw. Nor, indeed, could they ever have been witnessed in the course of slurping their potage: no snake can eat barley, wine or honey. In this respect, these asps should be compared to the serpent of Egyptian Metelis described by Aelian elsewhere

<sup>2</sup> For the A text see KROLL 1926, with commentary at STONEMAN 2007. For an English translation of the Armenian text see WOLOHOJIAN 1969.

<sup>3</sup> This translation is taken over from OGDEN 2013a, 286-7.

<sup>4</sup> This translation is taken over from OGDEN 2013a, 306.

in the same work: a sacred serpent to which offerings are made, but which may never be looked upon<sup>5</sup>.

And, thirdly, we have a fifth-century (?) AD Christian narrative pseudonymously attributed to Epiphanius. Like the *Alexander Romance* account, this one offers an aetiology for Alexandrian house-snakes. The narrative survives in two recensions of its own, but it is reflected, in on the whole better, though not perfect, condition, in the seventh-century AD *Chronicon Paschale*. As Ogden has noted previously, the three texts differ from each other only by variation in omission, but none of them is independently intelligible. When all three congruent texts are overlapped, however, we do obtain an intelligible narrative:

“We heard from some old men, descendants of Antigonus and Ptolemy, that Alexander the Macedonian visited the tomb of the prophet [sc. that of the snake-averting prophet Jeremiah] and learned the mysteries pertaining to him. He transferred his remains to Alexandria, and arranged them, with all due honour, in a circle.<sup>6</sup> [j] The race of asps was thus averted from that land, as similarly were the creatures from the river. And so he threw in [sc. inside the circle] the snakes called *argolaoi*, that is ‘snake-fighters’ [*ophiomachoi*], [k] which he had brought from Peloponnesian Argos, whence they are called *argolaoi*, that is, ‘right-hand-side men [*dexioi*] of Argos’. The sound they make is very sweet and of all good omen”.

([Epiphanius] *De prophetarum ortu et obitu* first recension p.9 Schermann.

~ second recension pp.62 Schermann; ~ *Chronicon Paschale* p.293 Dindorf<sup>7</sup>).

The role of the prophet Jeremiah here is presumably a relatively late addition to the tradition, and presumably too a Christian one rather than a Jewish one (though the latter possibility cannot be excluded); he perhaps supplanted another venerable figure. The key to the final baffling assertion lies in the *Suda*’s preservation of a folk etymology that construes the term *argolaoi* to mean ‘left-hand-side men of Argos’ as if it were built upon *laios*, ‘left’<sup>8</sup>. The original author or a subsequent editor of the Epiphanian text evidently had this same notion before him, but found it counter-intuitive that such good-omened snakes should be associated with the ill-omened left-hand side as opposed to the well-omened right-hand side, and so made the appropriate adjustment. A more natural etymology of the term *argolaoi* might be ‘Peoples of Argos’ (cf. *lāos*). However, it is important to note also that the *Suda* itself cites the term in the form *argolai*, which is simply construable as ‘Argives’, the form being used in this sense already by Euripides<sup>9</sup>.

It is clear that the three texts (or rather groups of texts) quoted are seeking to speak about the same phenomenon, despite their differences in the matters of origin-story, the species of the snakes concerned and the nature of the offerings made to them. Beyond the material supplied in these texts, we should note that, more generally, Agathos Daimon, in a more abstract, singular form, was conceived of and worshipped as bringer

<sup>5</sup> Aelian *Nature of Animals* 11.17; for the Metelis serpent and the wider Greek phenomenon of the never-seen sacred snake, see OGDEN 2013a, 347-50.

<sup>6</sup> An alternative tradition, preserved at John Moschus *Pratum Spirituale* 77 (ca. AD 600), has it that Alexander rather buried Jeremiah’s bones at Alexandria’s Tetrapylum (four-column colonnade).

<sup>7</sup> For the two Epiphanian recensions see SCHERMANN 1907; SCHWEMER 1995. Discussion at OGDEN 2013a, 293-5; 2013c, from which the merged translation given here is taken over. The relevant portions of all three constituent texts are now reprinted, also with helpful further discussion, at BARBANTANI 2014, 228-32.

<sup>8</sup> *Suda* s.v. ἀργόλαι.

<sup>9</sup> Euripides FF41, 630 *TrGF*.

of wealth and good luck, a role in which he was often given a female consort, Agathe Tyche (‘Good Luck’), as is richly attested in epigraphy and iconography (‘Good Luck’)<sup>10</sup>.

Further light is shed upon the phenomenon of the house-snakes by a summary of Armenian folk beliefs first published by the distinguished Armenian folklorist Manuk Abeghian in an 1899 German dissertation, the relevance of which for the *agathoi daimones* was first seen by Djurslev. Abeghian makes the following observations, which we correlate with the emboldened alphabetic tags inserted into the quotations above:

“Die Überreste einer Schlangenverehrung, die wir für die alten Armenier bezeugt finden, haben sich bis auf die Gegenwart in dem armenischen Volksglauben erhalten. [**f, g**] Eine Art von Vergötterung geniessen aber nur die [**c**] unschädlichen Hausschlangen, *lortuk*, *lok* genannt; [**d, j**] diese, glaubt man, sind die Beschützer der Armenier gegen schädliche insbesondere gegen giftige Schlangen; letztere verfolgen sie sogar. Sie werden infolgedessen von den Armeniern für unverletzlich gehalten, [**a**] und man lässt sie als Beschützer des Hauses ruhig in den Wohnstätten sich einnisten. [**i**] Man glaubt, dass ein jedes Haus seine unsichtbare Schlange habe, die die bösen Geister vertreibt. [**b**] Sie ist das Glück des Heims und tritt zuweilen in Erscheinung. [**e, h**] Diesen Schlangen wird Milch vorgesetzt, [**b**] damit sie nach dem Trinken derselben Goldstücke in dem Gefässe zurücklassen. Man erzählt in einer Sage, wie eine solche Glücksschlange, weil sie schlecht behandelt wurde, sich von dem Hause entfernte und das ganze Hausglück mitnahm... [**k**] Die Schlangenart *lortuk* aber, sagt man sind “Armenier”, darum sind sie gegen die Armenier freundschaftlich gesinnt”<sup>11</sup>.  
(Abeghian 1899:74-6)<sup>12</sup>.

The many and striking parallels between the two cultures described largely speak for themselves, but for convenience we summarize them here in tabular form:

	<i>Agathoi daimones</i>	Armenian <i>lortuk</i> (green-snakes, adders)
<b>a</b>	Doorkeepers admit the snakes to houses.	The snakes are regarded as protectors of the house and allowed to make their nests in the home.
<b>b</b>	They are <i>agathoi daimones</i> , ‘good spirits.’	They are the ‘luck of the house’ and can leave behind gifts of gold in them; if they leave, they take the house’s luck with them.
<b>c</b>	They are not venomous.	They are harmless.
<b>d, j</b>	They ward off venomous asps.	They chase away poisonous snakes.
<b>e, h</b>	They are fed in the houses with wine-based porridge.	They are fed in the houses with milk.
<b>f, g</b>	They receive sacrifices and are honoured.	They are revered.
<b>i</b>	They withdraw before clicking fingers, and so are never seen.	They are normally invisible, though they manifest themselves occasionally.
<b>k</b>	They are called ‘Argives.’	They are called ‘Armenians’ as being friendly to Armenians.

<sup>10</sup> OGDEN 2013a, 297-302 and index s.v. “Agathe Tyche”.

<sup>11</sup> Abeghian supposes that a belief that the souls of ancestors were incorporated into the snakes lurks here. The question does not concern us at this point, but for what it is worth the Greeks and Romans too could imagine that the dead could return in the form of snakes: see OGDEN 2013a, 247-54.

<sup>12</sup> Abeghian’s dissertation has recently been translated into English by Robert Bedrosian (a sign of its continuing currency).

By what model are we to understand the relationship between the two cultures? We must not be misled by the Armenian connection. It is not, surely, credible that the Armenian folk customs should have been created by the Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance*. That is simply not the way in which folk customs develop. And in any case the Armenian customs encompass beliefs that correspond tightly with those unmentioned in the *Romance*, but celebrated in the Phylarchan and Epiphanian texts. We must look, then, to one of two possibilities<sup>13</sup>. First, to that of a coherent set of ancient folk customs shared and preserved between places remote from each other in time and space. Or, secondly, to the independent but convergent development of folk customs in the two societies, perhaps under the pressure of partly similar faunal environments. House-snake cultures of some sort at any rate have been widespread across the world until relatively recently<sup>14</sup>. Whichever of these models is the right one, the *agathoi daimones* of Alexandria suddenly emerge from a fog of seemingly confused and fantastical literary projection to become rather more tangible.

Furthermore, the general cogency of the comparison prompts us to look again at the one pair of terms that seems to correspond a little less well than it might. There is indeed a correspondence between the Alexandrians calling their house-snakes ‘Argives’ and the Armenians calling theirs ‘Armenians’, but the correspondence would be stronger if the Alexandrians considered themselves, somehow or other, to be ‘Argives.’ Ogden has previously suggested that the significance of the Alexandrian snakes being tied to Argos lay in the claims of Alexander’s Argead dynasty to descent from Argos (via Temenus), and indeed in the Ptolemaic dynasty’s own claim to be itself Argead and ultimately from Argos<sup>15</sup>. This is not a view from which we entirely resile, and so we take the opportunity to offer the evidence for it in more detail.

The notion that the Argead dynasty derived from Argos is first found, famously, in Herodotus’ account of the Macedonian foundation myth: here its founder, Perdicas I, is said to have travelled to Macedonia with his two brothers from Argos, before overthrowing the previous (unnamed) king of the place. He then gave the name Argaeus (*Argaios*) to his son and successor on the Macedonian throne<sup>16</sup>. The context indicates that the name was being read to signify ‘Argive’, as did *Argeios*, although in origin it may have signified ‘White’ or ‘Splendid’<sup>17</sup>. The name was to be a frequent one in the Argead onomasticon, being borne by, inter alios, Argaeus ‘II,’ who enjoyed a perhaps disputed period of rule between 393 and 391 BC and then challenged Philip II for the throne at the beginning of his reign in 359 BC. Herodotus further tells that Alexander I proved his Greekness to the satisfaction of the Hellenodicae on the basis that he drew his ancestry from Argos, and so gained entrance to the Olympic Games<sup>18</sup>. In the prologue to Euripides’ *Archelaus* Archelaus tells of his glorious series of Argive

<sup>13</sup> A third model is theoretically possible, but surely not contingently so: that Abeghian was familiar with all three of the Greek texts we have quoted and extracted from them a model of his own to impose upon the Armenian customs of which he treated.

<sup>14</sup> See OGDEN 2013a, 303 n.162.

<sup>15</sup> OGDEN 2013a, 295.

<sup>16</sup> Herodotus 8.137, 139. On this and the remainder of the material in this paragraph, see HAMMOND – GRIFFITH 1979, 3-115; BORZA 1990, 80-4. For Argaeus II see Demosthenes 23.121, Diodorus 14.92, 16.2-3.

<sup>17</sup> See PAPE – BENSLE 1911 s.v. Ἀργαῖος (‘Weisser’); cf. ἀργός. On one occasion the text of Syncellus actually gives us a Macedonian king Ἀργεῖος instead of an Ἀργαῖος: *Chronicle* p.316 Mosshammer.

<sup>18</sup> Herodotus 5.22.

ancestors going back beyond his father Temenus, and of how he came to Macedon<sup>19</sup>. Thucydides tells that the ancestors of Alexander I and Perdikkas II were Temenidae, descendants of Temenos, who had come to Macedon from Argos<sup>20</sup>. In the *Philip* of 346 BC Isocrates told Philip II that Argos was his fatherland (*patris*), and that he should take as much care for it as he did for his ancestors<sup>21</sup>. A supposed Delphic oracle preserved by a scholium to Clement of Alexandria directs a third founder-figure, Caranus (for whom this wonderful new journal is named!), to quit Argos and Greece of the beautiful ladies for the waters of the Haliacmon<sup>22</sup>.

The Ptolemies could also boast Argive descent by virtue of the fact that they claimed descent in turn from the Argeads<sup>23</sup>. The claim was made in two ways. First, they claimed it through Soter's obscure mother, Arsinoe, as we learn from an important fragment of the second-century BC Satyrus of Alexandria preserved by Theophilus:

“Now Satyrus too, in the course of supplying a history of the demes of the Alexandrians, making Philopator, also called Ptolemy, his starting point, indicates that Dionysus was the founder of his family. It was in accordance with this that Ptolemy established his first tribe [i.e., one named for Dionysus]. At any rate Satyrus says as follows: ‘Deianeira was born of Dionysus and Althaea the daughter of Thestius; Hyllus was born from Deianeira and Heracles, the son of Zeus; from Hyllus was born Cleodaeus; from Cleodaeus Aristomachus; from Aristomachus Temenus; from Temenus Cibus; from Cibus Maron; from Maron Thestius; from Thestius Acous; from Acous Aristodamidas; from Aristodamidas Caranus; from Caranus Coenus; from Coenus Tyrimmas; from Tyrimmas Perdikkas [sc. I]; from Perdikkas Philip [sc. I]; from Philip Aeropus; from Aeropus Alcetas; from Alcetas Amyntas [sc. I]; from Amyntas Bocer [sc. a brother to Alexander I]; from Bocer Meleager; from Meleager Arsinoe; from Arsinoe Ptolemy also called Soter, the son of Lagus; from Soter and Berenice Ptolemy Philadelphus; from Philadelphus and Arsinoe Ptolemy Euergetes; from Euergetes and Berenice the daughter of the Magas that was king in Cyrene Ptolemy Philopator. This then is the way in which those who were kings in Alexandria were related to Dionysus”.

(Satyrus of Alexandria *FGrH* 631 F1 *apud* Theophilus *To Autolykus* 2.7)<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Euripides *Archelaus* F228 *TrGF*; cf. Collard *et al.* 2004 *ad loc.* We need to supply the full details of Archelaus' arrival in Macedon from Hyginus *Fabulae* 219, a summary of the lost play; cf. HAMMOND – GRIFFITH 1979, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Thucydides 2.99; cf. 5.80, where Perdikkas II is said to develop his foreign policy on the basis of his kinship with Argos.

<sup>21</sup> Isocrates 5.32.

<sup>22</sup> Schol. Clement *Protrepticus* 2.11; cf. Justin 7.1.7; Eusebius *Chron. Arm.* 107 KARST; Syncellus *Chronicle* p.234 MOSSHAMMER.

<sup>23</sup> For discussion see BELOCH 1927, 176-7; TARN 1933, FRASER 1972, i, 44-5; BULLOCH 1995, 12-13; COLLINS 1997; LIANOU 2010, 128-30; OGDEN 2011, 80-8; 2013b.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. JACOBY *ad loc.* and GAMBETTI at *BNJ* *ad loc.* With the Satyrus book fragment should be compared the lacunary papyrus fragment *P.Oxy.* xxvii 2465, with a congruent but not identical text that, interestingly, names more of the mothers. The Oxyrhynchus text supplies Argaeus I between Perdikkas I and Philip I, as does Herodotus 8.139, and seemingly indicates, accordingly, that Theophilus has omitted this generation from his own version of the list by accident. For the Oxyrhynchus text see TURNER *et al.* 1962 *ad loc.* and FRASER 1972, ii, 120 n.48; Gambetti disputes that the Oxyrhynchus text is actually Satyran.

Secondly, they claimed it by the expedient of making Ptolemy himself the illegitimate son of Philip II:

“In particular Ptolemy... drew the king’s [Alexander’s] concerned attention. He was a blood-relative, and some believe he had been born of Philip. At any rate it was established that he was the son of a concubine of his”.  
(Curtius 9.8.22)

“The Macedonians hold that Ptolemy is the son of Philip the son of Amyntas, although nominally the son of Lagus. For they say that his mother was given to Lagus by Philip with him already in her belly”.  
(Pausanias 1.6.2)

“If this Ptolemy truly was the son of Philip, the son of Amyntas, he should know that he inherited his craziness about women from his father...”.  
(Pausanias 1.6.8)

“Perdiccas suspected that Alexander had bequeathed the succession to Ptolemy, since he had often spoken to him about Ptolemy’s birth, and since Olympias had made it clear that Ptolemy was born of Philip. So he took Ptolemy aside and made him swear that if he was made Alexander’s successor, he would divide the succession with him and share it. Ptolemy took the oath without any inkling of Perdiccas’ suspicions, for he himself believed that Perdiccas would be the successor ...”.  
(*Alexander Romance* (A) 3.32)<sup>25</sup>.

“*Lagus*, proper name. He married Arsinoe the mother of Ptolemy Soter. Lagus exposed this Ptolemy in a bronze shield as having no relationship with him. A tradition comes down from Macedonia to the effect that an eagle visited him and stretched its wings over him and, hovering over him, shielded him from the direct rays of the sun, and from excessive rain, whenever it rained. It frightened off the flock-birds, tore up quails, and provided him with their blood as nourishment in place of milk”.  
(*Suda* s.v. Λάγος = Aelian F283 Domingo-Forasté).

Several more generalized claims to Argead descent on the part of Ptolemies are compatible with either of these two notions. So it is, for instance, with an unpublished inscription that refers to the Ptolemies as ‘Heraclid Argeads’.<sup>26</sup> In an elaborate 20-line passage of his *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* Theocritus constructs an emphatic parallel between Alexander and Ptolemy Soter as descendants of Heracles, whilst yet leaving the actual mechanism of these descents unspecified; but, inevitably, these descents must have come through Argos and in the latter case through the Argeads<sup>27</sup>. And as with the Argeads, Ptolemy Soter at any rate advertised his claim to Argive descent by incorporating ‘Argaeus’ into his family onomasticon, giving the name to one of his sons, probably by Eurydice; this was the son that was given the honour of escorting Alexander’s body from Memphis to its new permanent home in Alexandria<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. also *AR Arm.* §269 WOLOHOJIAN.

<sup>26</sup> Unpublished Ptolemaic inscription at ERRINGTON 1990, 265 n.6: Ἡρακλείδης Ἀργεάδας.

<sup>27</sup> Theocritus 17.13-33; cf. GOW 1950 and HUNTER 2003 *ad loc.* (esp. pp.107-8, 116-17, 120-1). Cf. *OGIS* 54.4-5, where Ptolemy Euergetes claims descent from Heracles, son of Zeus, on his father’s side, and from Dionysus on his mother’s.

<sup>28</sup> Pausanias 1.7.1; cf. OGDEN 1999, 68-73.

However, to move beyond Ogden's initial conjecture, the Armenian model strongly invites us to consider whether the snakes may have been designated Argive more particularly so as also to express and celebrate a deep and ancient relationship with Argos for people of Alexandria as a whole, not just for the presiding royal family. The circumstantial case for this is a good one.

Insofar as it was felt desirable to identify an ideal, unitary and unifying *polis* of origin for the diverse hodge-podge of Greek settlers in the new Alexandria, nowhere was better suited to the role than Argos<sup>29</sup>. Already in Homer, as is well known, the massed Greek forces could all alike be badged as 'Argives' (*Argeioi*)<sup>30</sup>.

But in Greek thought the city of Argos also boasted a hallowed and ancient relationship of its own with the land of Egypt, a relationship that enabled it to serve as an original homeland for Alexandria's ethnically Egyptian settlers as well as its Greek ones. For the founder of the Egyptian nation was none other than the eponymous Aegyptus. He drew his descent from Inachus via the latter's daughter (or remoter descendant) Io, whose wanderings, in the form of a cow, culminated in Egypt. The link was then reinforced when the Egyptian Danaus, brother to Aegyptus, returned to settle in Argos with his daughters, the Danaids, where they were joined by Aegyptus' sons. Henceforth the Argives had also been *Danaoi* ('Danaans'), a term which, from Homer onwards again, was deployed expansively, precisely like *Argeioi*, to refer to the Greek peoples as a whole<sup>31</sup>. It is noteworthy that this link between Egypt and Argos had seemed an important one to the Macedonians specifically from long before the age of Alexander. In Euripides' *Archelaus* again, when the founder Archelaus derives his descent from Argos for us, he in fact starts further back, with none other than the Egyptian Danaus, who, he tells, came from Egypt to found 'the city of Inachus', ordaining that those that had formerly been known as Pelasgians should henceforth be called 'Danaans' throughout Greece<sup>32</sup>.

Argos' mythical link with Egypt was a subject of recurrent interest for the Ptolemies' own Callimachus. A lost poem of his was actually devoted to the foundation of Argos<sup>33</sup>. His fifth hymn, *On the Baths of Pallas*, takes Argos as its setting, and significantly so.

<sup>29</sup> The Greek and Greek-aspirant settlers in Alexandria will have laid claim to a vast array of ethnics derived from the cities of old Greece, as can be detected in the cases of the Greek settlers outside in the Egyptian *chora*, but it is likely that few of these ethnics, even amongst settlers of the first generation, bore witness to genuine citizenship rights in the cities denoted: see OGDEN 1996, 343-7. Cf. also FRASER 1972, i, 38.

<sup>30</sup> *Argeioi* for Greeks in general: Homer *Iliad* 2.159 etc.

<sup>31</sup> Hesiod *Catalogue of Women* FF124-8 M.-W.; Aeschylus *Supplikes* 289-324, 538-89; *Prometheus Bound* 589-608, 790-815, 846-86; Herodotus 1.1, 2.153, 3.27; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.567-779; Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 2.1.3-5; Plutarch *De malignitate Herodoti* 11; Zenobius *Proverbs* 2.6; Lucian *Dialogues of the Gods* 3; *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* 7; Pausanias 2.16.1, 2.19.3, 3.18.13, 7.1.7; Hyginus *Fabulae* 145, 168, 170; schol. Homer *Iliad* 1.42, 4.171; schol. Euripides *Hecuba* 886; schol. Euripides *Orestes* 872; Servius on Virgil *Aeneid* 10.497 etc. See HALL 1997, 77-89; VASUNIA 2001, 41-3; STEPHENS 2003, 8-9, 25-7; STEPHENS – ACOSTA-HUGHES 2012, 68-96; DEPEW 2013, 337-8; FOWLER 2013, 235-6. *Danaoi* for Greeks in general: Homer *Iliad* 1.42, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Euripides *Archelaus* F228 TrGF; cf. COLLARD *et al.* 2004 *ad loc.*

<sup>33</sup> *Suda* s.v. Καλλιμάχος = Callimachus T1.11 Pf. It is not clear whether it was part of the *Aetia*.

The poem's final lines read:

“Hail goddess, and look after Inachian Argos! Hail as you drive out your horses, and may you drive them back again! Preserve the lot/estate (*klaros*) of the Danaans!”

(Callimachus *Hymn* 5.140-2)<sup>34</sup>.

The final phrase is surely evocative of Alexandria itself. Argive Io in particular was a highly significant figure for the poet. In the *Victory of Berenice* Callimachus applies to Argos the phrase, ‘the land of Danaus, born of the cow [i.e. Io]’<sup>35</sup>. Another of his lost works was devoted to Io’s arrival in Egypt, *The Arrival of Io*<sup>36</sup>. And one of his epigrams celebrates the dedication of a statue in the Alexandrian temple of ‘Inachian Isis’<sup>37</sup>, Io, Inachus’ daughter, having been identified with the Egyptian goddess from at least the time of Herodotus<sup>38</sup>.

This group of myths was celebrated in the names of some of the Alexandrian demes, as we learn from the Petrie papyri: *Autodikeios* saluted Autodice, daughter of Danaus; *Andromacheios* saluted Andromachus, son of Aegyptus; and, most importantly, *Inacheios* saluted Inachus himself<sup>39</sup>. There can be no better indication than this that Argos was held to be a city of significance for the common people of Alexandria. Let us not forget, either, the ‘daughter of the Argive woman’ that is chosen to sing the all-important lament for Adonis on behalf of all the Alexandrians in Theocritus’ *Idyll* 15, *Adoniazusae*<sup>40</sup>.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BNJ</i>	Worthington 2012-
<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby <i>et al.</i> 1923–
<i>LIMC</i>	Kahil <i>et al.</i> 1981-99
<i>OGIS</i>	Dittenberger 1903-5
<i>P.Petr.</i>	Mahaffy and Smyly 1891-1905
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Papiri greci e latini</i> 1912-
<i>TrGF</i>	Snell <i>et al.</i> 1971-2004

<sup>34</sup> For the particular significance of Argos in this poem, see BULLOCH 1995, 12-13, 247; DEPEW 2013, 337. Note also Callimachus *Aetia* FF65-6 Pf. and *PSI* xv.1500, on Danaus and the ‘Inachid’ springs of Argos; cf. Stephens and ACOSTA-HUGHES 2012, 185-8.

<sup>35</sup> Callimachus F383 Pf.

<sup>36</sup> *Suda* s.v. Καλλιμάχος = Callimachus T1.11 Pf. Again, it is not clear whether this poem either was part of the *Aetia*.

<sup>37</sup> Callimachus *Epigrams* 58.

<sup>38</sup> Herodotus 2.59, 156; cf. Diodorus 1.13.5, 1.25.1, 1.96.5.

<sup>39</sup> *P.Petr.* iii.1 col. 2 lines 19-20, iii.14 lines 1 and 8, iii.19 line 12, ii.21d line 6. See FRASER 1972, i, 45, ii, 121-2 n.54 and 122 n.56

<sup>40</sup> Theocritus 15.97; cf. Gow 1950 *ad loc.* The girl’s description as the ‘daughter of an Argive woman’ does not indicate that her father is not Argive; it is merely a function of the female-centred discourse of the gossiping interlocutors, Praxinoa and Gorgo. The notes of GOW 1950 and DOVER 1971 *ad loc.* do not seem to me to be to the point.

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