ALEXANDRE LE GRAND À LA LUMIÈRE
DES MANUSCRITS ET DES PREMIERS IMPRIMÉS
EN EUROPE (XII^e - XVI^e SIÈCLE)

ALEXANDER REDIVIVUS

Collection dirigée par
Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas
Margaret Bridges
Corinne Jouanno
Jean-Yves Tilliette

Alexandre le Grand à la
lumière des manuscrits et des
premiers imprimés en Europe
(XII^e - XVI^e siècle)

Matérialité des textes, contextes et
paratextes : des lectures originales

Sous la direction de
Catherine GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS

BREPOLS

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Table des matières

<i>Les livres d'Alexandre</i>	5
par Catherine GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS Université de Lille 3, Institut universitaire de France	
Œuvres plurielles et livres singuliers, manuscrits et imprimés	
<i>Avatars du Roman d'Alexandre à l'époque tardo- et post-byzantine : réflexions sur la recension ζ et la polymorphie de la tradition pseudo- callisthénienne</i>	33
par Corinne JOUANNO Université de Caen – CRAHAM	
<i>Les manuscrits italiens des Romans d'Alexandre français en vers et de l'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César (XIII^e et XIV^e siècles) : lectures originales et créations inédites</i>	49
par Catherine GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS Université de Lille 3, Institut universitaire de France	
<i>À propos de l'Istoria di Alessandro Magno de Domenico Scolari et d'un volgarizzamento enluminé de l'Historia de preliis J^o</i>	81
par Corrado BOLOGNA Università de Roma Tre	
<i>Notes sur la « matière d'Alexandre » en Italie et sur le manuscrit d'une version en prose du Liber Allexandri (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II I 363)</i>	101
par Giovanni BORRIERO Università degli Studi di Padova	
<i>Les enseignements d'Aristote à Alexandre d'après le manuscrit 6545 de la Biblioteca Nacional de España : un manuscrit pour la noblesse</i>	117
par Hugo O. BIZZARRI Université de Fribourg	

Paratexte : gloses, rubriques, prologue et épilogue

- L'Alexandréide de Gautier de Châtillon dans son contexte : les manuscrits et leur(s) usage(s)* 135
par Jean-Yves TILLIETTE
Université de Genève
- Quelques particularités inédites de la tradition manuscrite de l'Historia de preliis J³* 153
par Alexandru CIZEK
Université de Münster
- Un puer senex dans la famille des manuscrits des Vœux du Paon : le manuscrit de Paris, BnF, fr. 12565* 171
par Hélène BELLON-MÉGUELLE
Université de Genève
- For the Exercise of the Mind and the Pleasure of Reading: the 1550 Polish Translation of Historia de preliis in its Cultural Context* 191
par Aleksandra KLĘCZAR
Jagiellonian University, Krakow
- Les légendes bilingues du Rrekontamiento del rrey Ališand^{re} : vestiges de miniatures issues d'un manuscrit arabe d'Occident ?* 201
par Émilie PICHEROT
Université de Lille 3

Ateliers, copistes, peintres et mécènes : la lecture des images

- La portée politique de l'illustration des manuscrits du Roman d'Alexandre arménien* 223
par Edda VARDANYAN
Matenadaran-Erevan, UMR 8167, Orient et Méditerranée, Paris
- Le manuscrit O du Libro de Alexandre dans son contexte littéraire et artistique : l'activation d'un réseau de signes* 251
par Amaia ARIZALETA et Rosa María RODRÍGUEZ PORTO
Université de Toulouse II, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

<i>Les manuscrits du Roman d'Alexandre en vers français et leurs contextes artistiques</i>	269
par Alison STONES University of Pittsburgh	
<i>Deux façons de raconter la même histoire : deux manuscrits jumeaux du Roman d'Alexandre d'Alexandre de Paris (BnF, fr. 790 et 1590)</i>	285
par Maud PÉREZ-SIMON Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris 3	
<i>Du livre-monde au héros-animal : enluminer le non humain dans un manuscrit du Roman d'Alexandre (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 264)</i>	317
par Mark CRUSE Arizona State University	
<i>D'Isabelle de Portugal à Marguerite d'Autriche : les Faicts et Gestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Vasque de Lucène à la cour de Bourgogne – le manuscrit de Paris, BnF, fr. 6440</i>	335
par Anne-Marie LEGARÉ Université de Lille 3	
<i>L'« atelier de 1418 », l'atelier alsacien de Diebold Lauber et les manuscrits B et M de l'Alexander de Rudolf von Ems</i>	361
par Christophe THIERRY Université Lumière Lyon 2	
<i>Texte et image dans la vie d'Alexandre de la Chronique enluminée d'Ivan le Terrible</i>	389
par Elena KOROLEVA Université de Lille 3	
Alexandre à la conquête de nouveaux espaces textuels : relectures et réinterprétations	
<i>Imagining Alexander the Great in Fifteenth-century Utrecht History Bibles</i>	411
par Klara H. BROEKHUIJSEN Universiteit van Amsterdam	

<i>La représentation d'Alexandre le Grand dans les manuscrits à peintures de la Cité de Dieu, traduction de Raoul de Presles</i>	431
par Valérie RUF-FRAISSINET Université Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense	
<i>Spaces for Alexander in Book I of the Fifteenth-century English Polychronicon, British Library, Harley MS 2261</i>	451
par Margaret BRIDGES University of Bern	
<i>La mise en prose et en biographie des vers du Libro de Alexandre dans les manuscrits du XV^e siècle du Victorial</i>	475
par Rafael BELTRÁN Université de València, Espagne	
<i>Alexandre parmi les Neuf Preux : portraits et vie en images</i>	485
par Anne SALAMON Université Laval	
<i>Un poème et son manuscrit au XVI^e siècle : lecture d'un poème épique sur Alexandre le Grand dans la Renaissance italienne</i>	507
par Michele CAMPOPIANO Université de York, Université d'Amsterdam	
<i>Planches en couleur</i>	517
<i>Index</i>	549
Index des noms propres	549
Index des manuscrits	568
Index des imprimés	580
Index des scènes et épisodes	582
<i>Table des illustrations</i>	595
<i>Table des matières</i>	605

Alexandre à la conquête de nouveaux espaces textuels : relectures et réinterprétations

Imagining Alexander the Great in Fifteenth-century Utrecht History Bibles

That Alexander the Great was a celebrity in the Middle Ages, whose historical and legendary exploits were the focus of immense interest, appears from the large number of texts, illustrated or unillustrated, which have been preserved in numerous languages.¹ Among them is the Book of Alexander, which is included in the Middle Dutch History Bible, a compilation of especially the “historical” biblical books, supplemented with stories from secular history. The History Bible originated in the Southern Netherlands, possibly in the Carthusian monastery of Herne (southeast of Brussels), in the fourteenth century.² Because of the time of origin, this Bible text is also referred to as the History Bible of 1360 and its translator as the Translator of 1360, possibly to be identified as Petrus Naghel. He translated the historical books of the Old Testament and also compiled a gospel harmony on the basis of the four canonical gospels. The explanation and commentary on the Old Testament books were derived from the *Historia scolastica* by Petrus Comestor (1169-1275), as was the case for all History Bibles that were translated into the vernacular. The History Bible in the vernacular was intended for pious people who had no knowledge of Latin. These may have been lay brothers and sisters living in conventual communities, but also “ordinary” laymen who preferred to read the Bible rather than indulge in all sorts of worldly pleasures.³ That the text was also popular in the Northern Netherlands appears from the fact that c. 20

1. For a survey of the Alexander texts, see G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, Cambridge, 1956 (repr. New York and London 1987); D. J. A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus. A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature*, London, 1963 and D. J. A. Ross, “Alexander Historiatus: a Supplement”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 30 (1967), p. 383-388. A more recent initiative, focussing on the role played by the legendary Alexander in medieval texts, is the vast Alexander project headed by Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas. The seat of the project is the Université de Lille, from where annual conference proceedings are published. See also <http://mythalexandre.meshs.fr>.

2. It is likely that this translation was commissioned by Jan Taye, a Brussels patrician who served as alderman of his city in 1394 and 1399. M. Kors, *De bijbel voor leken. Studies over Petrus Naghel en de historiebijbel van 1361*, Turnhout, 2007, p. 17-31 and M. Kors, “De Historiebijbel van 1361. Leken en bijbellectuur in de veertiende eeuw”, in *Middel nederlandse bijbelvertalingen*, ed. A. den Hollander e.a., Hilversum, 2007, p. 49-58.

3. Kors, “De Historiebijbel van 1361”, p. 52.

complete or partial copies have been preserved, no less than thirteen of which are illuminated.⁴

Relatively little attention has been paid to the illumination of the Dutch History Bibles and their decoration. In *Text and Image*, Sandra Hindman discussed the more general problems of History Bibles from the Northern Netherlands, such as the method of illustration, the selection of narrative details from the Bible and from Petrus Comestor's *Historia scolastica*, the disposition of the images, the nature of pictorial realism, etc.⁵ Given the focus of her book, she obviously did not pay any specific attention to Alexander the Great, but David Ross, who published a survey of the Dutch and German Alexander texts and their decoration in 1971, did deal with the topic.⁶ In this work, he offered a brief description of the representations, aimed at the identification of the figures and the scenes, together with quotations from the relevant text passages, though he did not address any of the underlying ideas and meanings.

My research into the illustration of the Book of Alexander in Dutch History Bibles arose more or less incidentally as a spin-off from a much wider research project into the book illumination in Utrecht in the period of c. 1450 to c. 1475.⁷ What is so special about this last flowering of book illumination in Utrecht is that relatively many prestigious works were commissioned by the nobility, the upper bourgeoisie and the clergy, of whom we know the names, and that book illuminators collaborated on these ambitious projects such as Bibles and lavishly illuminated books of hours. Naturally they also continued to work individually on various manuscripts, usually more modest books of hours. My corpus of illuminated Utrecht manuscripts consists of c. 50 manuscripts, including two History Bibles, both showing a completely different decoration.

One of these two History Bibles is such a prestigious manuscript on which several illuminators were employed, while we also know who the patron of the book was. This large two-volume History Bible, now in Vienna, was made in Utrecht between 1460 and 1465 for Evert Zoudenbalch, canon (later deacon) of the cathedral of Utrecht, as appears from his "portrait" and the family

4. For a survey of the Utrecht Bibles, see J. A. A. M. Biemans, *Middel nederlandse Bijbelhandschriften*, Leiden, 1984, p. 250-290.

5. S. Hindman, *Text and Image in Fifteenth-century Illustrated Dutch Bibles*, Leiden, 1977.

6. D. J. A. Ross, *Illustrated Medieval Alexander-Books in Germany and the Netherlands*, Cambridge, 1971.

7. Working title: *Manuscript Painting and Workshop Practices after the Master of Catherine of Cleves, Utrecht, ca. 1450-ca. 1475. The Master of Evert Zoudenbalch and his Circle.*

coat-of-arms.⁸ In all, this Bible contains more than 275 illustrations in the form of miniatures and historiated initials, which were painted by five separate illuminators. Three of them were among the most outstanding Utrecht miniaturists of the third quarter of the fifteenth century, who all worked together very regularly.⁹ These factors combined, have made this Bible one of the core pieces of my project.

The second History Bible from that period, which can be dated to 1468, is much more modestly executed; it is written on paper and was mainly decorated by one of the masters belonging to this same group of Utrecht miniaturists. He painted 27 miniatures for this Bible, one miniature is by another master.¹⁰

While examining these History Bibles, especially the one in Vienna, I was at first struck by the fact that a text full of legends and miraculous tales dealing with Alexander the Great was included among the biblical books of the Old Testament. The reason, however, soon became obvious. The emphasis on the historical books of the Old Testament, focussing as they do on the history of the Jewish people, their vicissitudes and their sufferings, is characteristic of the contents of a History Bible. In History Bibles, each man is a link in the divine plan of salvation between the Creation and the Last Judgement, between Genesis and the Apocalypse. The historical figure of Alexander the Great, therefore, is one such link. He is regarded as a biblical person because the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8: 5) foretold that the He-goat with the “great horn”, which refers to Alexander, would overthrow the Ram, by which Darius is meant.¹¹ The Books of Maccabees, which often immediately follow the Book of Alexander in the Dutch History Bibles, also mention his name and include a brief account of his conquests and early death, so that the occurrence of the Book of Alexander in between Esther and Maccabees may also be viewed as an explanation or elaboration of the first ten verses of Maccabees.¹²

8. H. L. M. Defoer, A. S. Korteweg and W. C. M. Wüstefeld, *The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting*, Stuttgart, 1989, p. 199, fig. 101.

9. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2771-2772. O. Pächt and U. Jenni, *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek III. Holländische Schule*, Vienna, 1975, vol. 1, p. 43-85 and vol. 2, plates IV-VII and figs. 80-261.

10. See www.kb.nl/manuscripts.

11. *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* I, cols. 94-95, entry on “Alexander der Grosse” and Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, p. 119-121.

12. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, p. 121-125. In the Bible in Vienna, the Book of Alexander precedes Maccabees, but is inserted in between Esther and Alexander are a number of Wisdom books.

Of the illuminated Dutch History Bibles, there are in all four copies which contain a miniature cycle in the Book of Alexander: the two dating from the 1460s which are already mentioned, and another two dating from c. 1430, which were also produced in Utrecht.¹³

That no more copies of the over twenty preserved History Bibles contain an Alexander cycle does not mean that the text was optional, it merely goes to show that not all History Bibles have survived intact or were illuminated.

The text of the Book of Alexander in these History Bibles was largely adapted from Book IV of Jacob van Maerlant's *Spiegel historiael*, supplemented with some passages from Petrus Comestor's *Historia scolastica*. For some of the episodes from the life of Alexander parts of another book by Maerlant were used, namely *Alexanders geesten* [*The Deeds of Alexander*], an adaptation of the twelfth-century *Alexandreis* by Gauthier de Châtillon.¹⁴

What is very remarkable about the two Bibles dating from the 1460s is that the Book of Alexander is more profusely illustrated in comparison to the other biblical books of the Old Testament. In the Vienna Bible, the books of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth are distinguished at the beginning of each of these texts by a miniature of varying dimensions and a decorated initial with elaborate border decoration.¹⁵ It is only in the four books of Kings (or 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings) that we do not only find a miniature at the beginning of each biblical book, but also a constantly varying number of miniatures distributed over the text, while the illustrations are placed in close proximity to the textual episodes they illustrate.¹⁶

The Book of Alexander, too, which is included in the first of this two-volume Bible, has been illuminated in a similar manner. With an extra 20 miniatures in the text, it is more abundantly decorated than all the other books of the Old Testament. In this Bible in Vienna, the Old Testament was illuminated by two of the five miniaturists to have worked on this Bible, the other

13. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 9018-9023 and The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 38^{I-II}.

14. W. P. Gerritsen, "Gheraert Leeu's *Historie van Alexander* en handschrift Utrecht, U.B., 1006", in *Uit Bibliotheektuin en Informatieveld. Opstellen aangeboden aan dr. D. Grosheide bij zijn afscheid als bibliothecaris van de Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht*, ed. H. F. Hofman, K. van der Horst and A. H. H. M. Mathijssen, Utrecht, 1978, p. 139-163, who based himself on S. S. Hoogstra, *Proza-Bewerkingen van het leven van Alexander den Groote in het Middelnederlandsch*, 's-Gravenhage, 1898, p. LXXXV-CXI. The complete text of this thesis, which also offers a transcription of the texts, can be accessed at http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/hoogo24prozo1_01/colofon.htm.

15. An exception is the book of Deuteronomy, which also has a miniature at the end of the text.

16. Pächt and Jenni, *Holländische Schule*, p. 43-64.

three illuminators worked on the second volume. The two who worked on the first part are the so-called Master of Evert Zoudenbalch and the so-called Master of the Feathery Clouds. The anonymous miniaturist who supplied the Book of Alexander with miniatures is the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch, an artist who is named after this Bible. Characteristic for the oeuvre of this artist are his elaborate landscapes, his extraordinary colour palette, his inventiveness and his psychological acumen.¹⁷

The second Bible to have been produced in the 1460s consists of two volumes, one of which is in The Hague and the other one in Ghent. The volume now in Ghent is dated 1468, which makes it likely that the Old Testament volume with the Book of Alexander in The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 39 also dates from that period.¹⁸ Overall, this Bible is far more modestly executed in that it is not written on parchment but on paper, and it does not have illuminated initials with painted borders but is decorated with penwork instead: simple penwork initials with pen-flourishes in the margin in various colours of ink. In this Bible, too, in which each biblical book opens with a miniature placed at the beginning of the text, the Book of Alexander is also more lavishly illuminated than the other books of the Old Testament. With three miniatures in the Book of Alexander, it is only fair to speak of a mini cycle, but compared to the other biblical books it is certainly true that Alexander is relatively well looked after. With the exception of only one miniature, the illumination of this Bible can be attributed to the Master of the Feathery Clouds, who is named after the fluffy clouds he painted in his skies. As has been mentioned earlier, he collaborated with the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch on the Vienna Bible, though he was clearly not as talented as his colleague. His are simple compositions, with hardly naturalistic landscapes and rather one-dimensional figures.

The Alexander cycles in these Bibles produced in the 1460s, especially the one in the Bible of Evert Zoudenbalch in Vienna, led me to examine the way in which the Book of Alexander was decorated in the oldest History Bibles dating from the third decade of the fifteenth century. I had several questions when I began studying the decoration: how does the number of miniatures of the Alexander cycles relate to the series of illustrations in the other books of the Old Testament, in particular the historical books? Does the Book of Alexander in the early History Bibles also contain more miniatures compared

17. Defoer, Korteweg and Wüstefeld, *The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting*, p. 202, fig. 106 and plate VIII 61.

18. Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 632; dated 1468 on fol. 248 v.

to the other biblical books? Which events from the life of Alexander are depicted? Are they identical in the early and in the later Bibles? What is the relationship between text and image? Where did the iconography derive from? Were the illuminators of the later Bibles aware of the Bibles that had been produced more than three decades earlier? And in what respect does the decoration programme in the Dutch History Bible differ from that of other Alexander texts?

We are lucky to have two complete History Bibles with Alexander cycles, both of which were produced in the 1430s. One of them is kept in The Hague and is made up of two volumes, the other one is bound in three volumes. Two volumes of this latter Bible are in Brussels, the third one is in London.¹⁹ These Utrecht History Bibles from the third decade of the fifteenth century, named after the city where they were written and decorated, each contain more than 500 miniatures and historiated initials, which means that they are far more elaborately illuminated than the later History Bibles. As is the case with the later Bibles, a team of artists collaborated on these early Bibles as well.

When we examine the relationship between the number of miniatures in the Book of Alexander and those in the other books of the Old Testament in the early Bibles, it appears that the illumination is absolutely in keeping with that of the other biblical books, in which virtually all of the major events are illustrated. This means that lengthy texts, such as Genesis and Exodus, are accompanied by a great number of miniatures, while shorter texts such as Leviticus or Ruth have significantly fewer miniatures. Practically every page, however, features an illustration, so that the ratio between the text portions and the number of images is more or less constant. The Book of Alexander in the History Bibles of the 1430s contains one historiated initial at the beginning of the text and 24 miniatures, as opposed to 21 miniatures in the Vienna Bible and three in the 1468 Bible in The Hague.

To be able to answer the question which events in the Book of Alexander were illustrated and whether the same episodes were illustrated in the early and in the later History Bibles, I first of all divided the life of Alexander into separate sections. These are respectively the events surrounding his conception and his youth, his campaigns, his extraordinary adventures and finally the end of his life. This yields the following picture with respect to the number of illustrations in each section: in the early Bibles six illustrations are devoted to

19. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 38^{I-II}, www.kb.nl/manuscripts; Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 9018-9023 and London, British Library, MS Add. 10043.

Alexander's conception and early years; in the later Bibles four respectively one. There is a great deal of attention for the military campaigns, namely fifteen and fourteen miniatures in the Bibles dating from c. 1430, eight and one respectively in the Bibles dating from the 1460s. The miraculous adventures are the theme of one respectively two illustrations in the early Bibles, and three respectively one in the later Bibles from the 1460s. The events around the end of Alexander's life are the subject of three miniatures in the early Bibles, likewise three in the Vienna Bible, or six if the events following his death are also included. The Bible of 1468, which contains the mini cycle of three miniatures, does not have a miniature on this theme. The conclusion which may be drawn is that there is much emphasis on the extraordinary events surrounding the conception of Alexander both around 1430 and in the 1460s; furthermore that the focus on the campaigns and the battle against Darius in the early Bibles, which are profusely illustrated, shifts to his miraculous exploits in the later Bibles. There is attention for the end of Alexander's life both in the early Bibles as well as in the later Vienna Bible. The 1468 Bible does not illustrate this episode (for a complete survey of all Alexander images in Dutch History Bibles see the Appendix).

As for the relationship between text and image, that is to say in how far does the miniature accurately reflect the text, or in how far did the illuminator allow himself leeway to illustrate the text in hand, I would first of all like to look at the early History Bibles. As mentioned before, the Alexander cycles in these Bibles consist of one historiated initial at the beginning and 24 miniatures distributed over the text. In both Bibles of the 1430s, the Book of Alexander contains the same number of miniatures, but in either cycle there is one theme which is absent in the other Bible. When comparing the cycles, it is immediately obvious that the two Bibles are closely related. The affinity between these two Bibles is so great that it was long thought that the miniatures in either Bible must have been made by the same master using two distinct techniques: the miniatures in The Hague have been executed in drawing; the miniatures in Brussels have been painted. It has now been established that there were two separate hands, though the similarities with respect to the iconography are so close that one must have served as the model for the other, or else both series have a common ancestor which, however, has not survived. Even the layout of the two Bibles is largely identical.

A good example of the great similarities between the miniatures in the Bibles in The Hague and Brussels, are the miniatures illustrating two moments from the legend surrounding the conception of Alexander. These miniatures have been placed close to the text describing the events and are accurate

Fig. 11.1: History Bible, Nectanabus beguiles Olympias, Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 38^{II}, fol. 69 r, © The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

illustrations of the text. The encounter between Nectanabus and Olympias can be seen in the foreground, while the seduction scene has been relegated to the background, with Olympias sitting in a window with the dragon (fig. 11.1 and pl. XXVII). There is an obvious similarity in the iconography of the miniatures in these two early History Bibles, which only differ in minute details.

When comparing the seduction scene in the early Bibles with the way in which it is handled in the Bibles produced in the 1460s, a completely different picture emerges. In the Vienna Bible, the seduction of Olympias is the first miniature, placed at the beginning of the first chapter of the Book of Alexander (pl. XXVIII). It is far removed, therefore, from the actual description of the event in chapter 2. The encounter between Olympias and Nectanabus is not shown, but the seduction of Olympias however, receives great emphasis. The scene shown is altogether different from the one in the early History Bibles and has acquired erotic overtones, with Olympias willingly turning back the sheet to allow the god Amon, in the guise of a dragon, into her bed. The far less accomplished artist working on the 1468 Bible in The Hague, the Master of the Feathery Clouds, also painted the seduction of Olympias by the dragon as the opening miniature of the Book of Alexander,

Fig. 11.2: History Bible, Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 39, fol. 364 r, © The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

Fig. 11.3: History Bible, Nectanabus in the guise of a dragon at the banquet, the meaning of the prophetic bird's egg is explained to Philip; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 38^{II}, fol. 69 v, © The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

where the dragon can be seen with Olympias standing in Olympias' room in front of her bed (fig. 11.2).

Another example from the legend also demonstrates the great similarities between the two early Bibles. In this scene we see Nectanabus transformed into a dragon to the horror of the guests at a banquet, altogether in line with the narrative. Placed next to this scene with Olympias extending her hand to the dragon, is the one with the prophetic bird's egg and the interpretation of its meaning as the second scene (fig. 11.3 and 11.4).

The prophetic bird's egg has also been depicted in the Vienna Bible in a miniature which is placed next to the text describing this event (fig. 11.5). This scene does not show a banquet with Olympias and her guests seated at a table. Instead, what we see is a very liberal artist's impression of a shocked Olympias and Philip when the little serpent unsuccessfully tries to return into the egg. A curious element in the scene is the deer flying out of the window, where the text itself speaks of an eagle. Clearly, however, the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch chose to follow his own individual interpretation of the episode of the prophetic bird's egg by mysteriously adding a fleeing deer, possibly to depict the terror that seized Olympias and Philip.

Fig. 11.4: History Bible, Nectanabus in the guise of a dragon at the banquet, the meaning of the prophetic bird's egg is explained to Philip; Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 9018-19, fol. 1 v, © Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

Fig. 11.5: History Bible, Philip and Olympias with the prophetic bird's egg; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2771, fol. 325 r, © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

The main principle of illustration of inserting a miniature at the beginning of a Bible book, which does not necessarily reflect a nearby text passage, but which instead is meant to cover or represent a larger text portion, is combined in the Vienna Bible with miniatures placed in the text close to the episode they are illustrating. In none of these cases is there an exact and detailed rendition of the text. Therefore, although in the Vienna Bible some of the same events have been illustrated which also occur in the early History Bibles, the miniatures do not accurately reflect the text they are meant to illustrate. Instead, the text provides a basis for the artist to work with, and the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch interpreted the story in his own way, as could be seen in the miniatures of the seduction of Olympias and in the prophetic bird's egg. The major differences to be found in the depiction of identical themes in the early and later Bibles also strongly suggest that the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch and the Master of the Feathery Clouds were not familiar with the History Bibles which had come into existence roughly thirty years before in the same city. Only incidentally do we find a corresponding iconography, for instance in the duel between Alexander and Porus. Although the composition is similar, it is at the same time a kind of stock-in-trade representation of a single combat.²⁰

There are likewise great differences in the images showing Alexander consulting the Trees of the Sun and Moon, a scene occurring in all four Bibles (and one which of course plays a significant part in the life of Alexander). In this scene, the priest of the Trees of the Sun and Moon is depicted in the early Bibles with pointed teeth like a dog's, altogether in accordance with the text.²¹ The Master of Evert Zoudenbalch, however, does not depict this detail, portraying the priest instead like an ordinary man.²² The Master of the Feathery Clouds, on the other hand, presents a completely different iconography by painting the priest with a dog's head instead of dog's teeth.²³

It can also be concluded on the basis of the great differences between the early and the later Bibles, that apparently there was no fixed decoration programme for the Book of Alexander and there is likewise no indication of any iconographic parallels for most of the scenes. The absence of models or sources of inspiration applies to both the early Bibles from the 1430s and to those of the 1460s, which raises a new question: what in fact inspired the

20. Ross, *Illustrated Medieval Alexander-Books*, figs. 300, 324 and 342.

21. Ross, *ibidem*, figs. 302 and 327.

22. Ross, *ibid.*, fig. 344.

23. Ross, *ibid.*, fig. 352.

artists working on these Bibles? Did the artists of the early Bibles use an existing Alexander cycle as a model or are we here dealing with new inventions on the basis of close reading of the text? I am inclined to think the latter. Although it is true that in some places directions for the miniaturist are found in the margins and in the fold of the manuscript, they are for the larger part very terse and limited to such instructions as “here one must paint a king” and the like. Only in the early Bibles do we find in the case of the miniatures of one particular miniaturist directions as to the way in which a scene had to be painted and which actions had to be depicted. Apparently this illuminator needed very precise instructions. In most cases these directions were written underneath the miniature, which means that only a thorough examination using infrared reflectography can make them visible.²⁴ In the Vienna Bible we also occasionally find directions for the miniaturist. The images in question show that these instructions were often followed more faithfully than the biblical text itself. In the Book of Alexander, however, there are no instructions for the miniaturist in either the early or the later Bibles, and in some cases it is possible to establish that here, too, close reading of the text played a role, as is witnessed by the inclusion of certain details from the text.

A first comparison of the Alexander illustrations in Dutch History Bibles with those in the Alexander romances of which the illustrations have been published or are available via the internet, shows that there are hardly or no similarities. This is true both for the number of images and the themes selected, as well as for the way in which the relevant themes have been depicted. When there are similarities, these usually concern standard representations of a duel or a banquet. To answer the question whether a cycle from an Alexander romance lies at the basis of the decoration programme of these Bibles, further research would have to be done on the programmes of the various Alexander romances, which incidentally also differ strongly from romance to romance. There are likewise no correspondences between the illustrations of the Dutch and the German History Bibles.²⁵

The conclusion for the time being would seem to be that the decoration programmes of the Dutch History Bibles were based on *close reading* of the text. Specifically in the case of the early Bibles, various details from the text have been depicted with great accuracy. It has also been established that one

24. A. S. Korteweg, “Aanwijzingen voor de schilder in Noordnederlandse Historiebijbels”, in *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden 1988. Verslag van de Groningse Codicologendagen 28-29 april 1988*, ed. J. M. M. Hermans, Grave, 1989, p. 153-161.

25. Ross, *Illustrated Medieval Alexander-Books*.

of these early Bibles served as the model for the other one, or else both relied on a common, now lost, exemplar. The later Bible illustrated by the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch, too, occasionally has details that were clearly taken from the text, but here the text generally served as the basis for the artist's own interpretations and additions, which resulted in a few highly idiosyncratic scenes. The three miniatures from the Bible of 1468 also have an iconography of their own, and one which does not show any similarities with the miniatures occurring in the Bible made for Evert Zoudenbalch, in spite of the fact that the two miniaturists collaborated on a number of projects, even on the Zoudenbalch Bible. Both in the early and the later Bibles, therefore, we appear to be dealing with the individual inventions of two generations of Utrecht illuminators, and the choice of certain themes shows that Alexander is presented as a Christian hero, acting according to God's will and performing, with God's help, his role in the history of salvation.

Klara H. Broekhuijsen
Universiteit van Amsterdam

Appendix

Imagining Alexander the Great in Utrecht History Bibles

Alexander's conception and youth

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 78 D 38 ^{II} Utrecht, ca. 1430	Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 9018-19 Utrecht, ca. 1430	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 2771 Utrecht, ca. 1460-1465	The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 78 D 39 Utrecht, ca. 1468
<i>Cap. 1</i>	<i>Cap. 1</i>	<i>Cap. 1</i>	<i>Cap. 1</i>
69 r Nectanabus has his head shaved; Nectanabus flees to Macedonia	1 r Nectanabus has his head shaved; Nectanabus flees to Macedonia	324 v Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon	364 r Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon
69 r Nectanabus destroys his enemies by magic	1 r Nectanabus destroys his enemies by magic		
<i>Cap. 2</i>	<i>Cap. 2</i>		
69 r Nectanabus beguiles Olympias; Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon	1 r Nectanabus beguiles Olympias; Nectanabus seduces Olympias in the guise of a dragon		

<i>Cap. 3</i> 69 v Nectanabus in the guise of a dragon at the banquet; the meaning of the prophetic bird's egg is explained to Philip	<i>Cap. 3</i> 1 v Nectanabus in the guise of a dragon at the banquet; the meaning of the prophetic bird's egg is explained to Philip	<i>Cap. 3</i> 325 r Philip and Olympias with the prophetic bird's egg	
<i>Cap. 5</i> 70 r Death of Nectanabus	<i>Cap. 5</i> 2 r Death of Nectanabus	<i>Cap. 5</i> 325 v Death of Nectanabus	
<i>Cap. 11</i> 70 v Pausanias carries off Olympias; Philip kills Pausanias	<i>Cap. 11</i> 2 v Pausanias carries off Olympias; Philip kills Pausanias	<i>Cap. 11</i> 326 v Philip kills Pausanias	

Alexander's campaigns

<i>Cap. 13</i> 71 v God appears to Alexander in a dream	<i>Cap. 13</i> 3 r God appears to Alexander in a dream	<i>Cap. 13</i> 327 r God appears to Alexander in a dream	
<i>Cap. 15</i> 72 r Darius sends derisive gifts to Alexander		<i>Cap. 15</i> 327 v Darius sends derisive gifts to Alexander	
<i>Cap. 17</i> 72 v Battle between Alexander and Darius	<i>Cap. 17</i> 4 r Battle between Alexander and Darius		

<i>Cap. 19</i> 72 v Alexander's ruse to conceal his army from Darius	<i>Cap. 19</i> 4 v Alexander's ruse to conceal his army from Darius		
		<i>Cap. 20</i> 328 v Alexander captures Darius' women and treasures	
<i>Cap. 21</i> 73 r Saraballa builds his temple on Mount Gerizim	<i>Cap. 21</i> 5 v Saraballa builds his temple on Mount Gerizim		
<i>Cap. 23</i> 73 v Alexander honours the Jewish high-priest	<i>Cap. 23</i> 5 r Alexander honours the Jewish high-priest	<i>Cap. 23</i> 329 r Alexander honours the Jewish high-priest; the high-priest holds up the book of Daniel for Alexander	
<i>Cap. 26</i> 74 r Alexander visits the temple of Ammon	<i>Cap. 26</i> 5 v Alexander visits the temple of Ammon		
<i>Cap. 26</i> 74 v Alexander visits Darius in disguise and flees with his golden cup	<i>Cap. 26</i> 6 r Alexander visits Darius in disguise and flees with his golden cup		
		<i>Cap. 27</i> 330 r Darius crosses a bridge to meet Alexander in battle	

<i>Cap. 29</i>	<i>Cap. 29</i>		
75 r Alexander manages to cross the Pamphylian sea dryshod	6 v Alexander manages to cross the Pamphylian sea dryshod		
<i>Cap. 31</i>	<i>Cap. 31</i>	<i>Cap. 31</i>	<i>Cap. 31</i>
75 v The tomb of Darius	7 r The tomb of Darius	331 r The tomb of Darius	370 r The three parts of the world on Darius tomb
<i>Cap. 34</i>	<i>Cap. 34</i>		
76 r Alexander captures the ten exiled tribes of Israel with God's help	7 v Alexander captures the ten exiled tribes of Israel with God's help		
<i>Cap. 36</i>	<i>Cap. 36</i>	<i>Cap. 36</i>	
76 r Alexander has the murderers of Darius hanged	7 v Alexander has the murderers of Darius hanged	332 r Alexander has the murderers of Darius hanged	
<i>Cap. 37</i>	<i>Cap. 37</i>		
76 v Alexander kills Clitus	8 r Alexander kills Clitus		
<i>Cap. 41</i>	<i>Cap. 41</i>	<i>Cap. 41</i>	
77 r Alexander defeats Porus in single combat	8 v Alexander defeats Porus in single combat	333 r Alexander defeats Porus in single combat	
<i>Cap. 45</i>	<i>Cap. 45</i>		
78 r Alexander and queen Candace	9 v Alexander and queen Candace		

Alexander's miraculous adventures

	<i>Cap. 47</i> 10 r Alexander fights the monsters of the freshwater lake	<i>Cap. 47</i> 334 r Alexander fights the monsters of the freshwater lake	
<i>Cap. 50</i> 79 r Alexander consults the Trees of the Sun and Moon	<i>Cap. 50</i> 10 v Alexander consults the Trees of the Sun and Moon	<i>Cap. 50</i> 335 r Alexander consults the Trees of the Sun and Moon	<i>Cap. 50</i> 374 v Alexander consults the Trees of the Sun and Moon
		<i>Cap. 54</i> 335 v Alexander finds the water nymphs of the dangerous embraces and saw-horned unicorns	

Alexander's death

<i>Cap. 58</i> 80 v The poisoning of Alexander	<i>Cap. 58</i> 12 r The poisoning of Alexander		
		<i>Cap. 59</i> 337 r Alexander on his deathbed	

<i>Cap. 61</i>	<i>Cap. 61</i>		
82 v Ptolemy mourning over Alexander's tomb	12 v Ptolemy mourning over Alexander's tomb		
<i>Cap. 69</i>	<i>Cap. 69</i>	<i>Cap. 69</i>	
83 r Death of Olympias	14 r Death of Olympias	339 r Death of Olympias	
		<i>Cap. 70</i>	
		340 r Ptolemy Philadelphus receives the text of the Septuagint from the seventy translators	
		<i>"Another book of Alexander"</i> [parts of Maccabees]	
		341 r Expulsion of Heliodorus from the temple	
		341 v Heliodorus trampled by a horse and smashed by two men	
		341 v The priest Onias meets Antiochus Epiphanes	