INTRODUCTION
I. THE LIFE OF NICANDER

A. Vita Nicandri in Σ. Th.: Νικάνδρον τὸν ποιητὴν Διονύσιος ὁ Φαστιλίς ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς Ἀντιμάχου ποιήσεως Αἰτωλὸν εἶναι φησὶ τὸ γένος· ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ποιητῶν ἱερὰ φησιν αὐτὸν τοῦ Κλαρίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκ προγόνων τὴν ιερωσύνην δεδέμενον. καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ τέλει τῆς βιβλίου φησὶ (Th. 958)

τὸν ἔθρεψεν Κλάρου νιφάδος πολύχνη.

Κλάρος δὲ τόπος ἐστὶν Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερός. ὄλον δὲ φησιν αὐτὸν Δαμαίου ὀστῶ λέγων (fr. 110):

αἵρεσις υἱᾶ πολυμηνήστου Δαμαίου.

χρόνω δὲ ἔγενετο κατὰ Ἀτταλοῦ τὸν τελευταίον ἄρχαντα Περγάμου ὁς κατελύθη ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων, ὃς προσφορεῖ λέγων ὀστός (fr. 104):

Τευθρανίδης ὁ κλήρον ἄει πατρώων ἰθανοῦ,

κέκλυθα μηδ’ ἀμηντοὶ ἄτπ’ πότε ὕμνοι ἐρύχες,

“Ατταλ” ἐπεὶ σεο ρίζαν ἐπέκλυμι Ήρακλῆος,

ἐξείτι λυσίδικη τε περὶ πρόφοροι, ἢν Πελοπῆς

‘Ηπποδάμου ἐφύτευσεν ὃν Ἀτόπος ἦρατο τιμήν.

διέτριψε δ’ ἐν Ἀττωλίᾳ τοῖς πλέον χρόνοις, ὡς φανερὸν ἐκ τῶν περὶ Ἀττωλίας συγγραμμάτων καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ποιήσεως ποταμῶν τῶν τῶν περὶ Ἀττωλίας καὶ τῶν τῶν ἐκείθε τε καὶ ἄλλων διαφόρους διηγήσεως, ἐτι δὲ καὶ φυτῶν ἱδίοτης.

B. Suidas: Νικάνδρος, Ζευσφάνους, Κολοφώνιος, κατὰ δὲ τινὸς Ἀττωλός: ὁμα γραμματικὸς τε καὶ ποιητὴς καὶ λατρεύς, γεγονὸς κατὰ τὸν νέον Ἀτταλοῦ, ἢγουν τῶν τελευταίων, τῶν Γαλατανίκην, ἤν Ῥωμαιοὶ κατέλυσαν. ἔγραψε Θηριακά, Ἀλεξιφάρμακα, Γεωργικά,

Ἐπερισμένων βιβλία ε’, ἱάσεων συναγωγήν, Προγνωστικὰ δι’ ἡτῶν· μεταπέφρασται δὲ ἐκ τῶν Ἰπποκράτους Προγνωστικῶν· περὶ χρηστηρίων πάντων βιβλία τρία· καὶ ἄλλα πλεῖστα ἐπικός.

C. (i) Γένος Ἰσκρίτου (p. 2 Wendel): ἰστεν ὃτι ὁ Θεοκρίτος ἐγένετο Ἰσχρόνος τοῦ τοῦ Ἀράτου καὶ τοῦ Καλλίμαχου καὶ τοῦ Νικάνδρου· ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν χρόνων Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου.

(ii) Γένος Ἀράτου (p. 325 Maass): ἢν δὲ Ἀντίγονος υἱὸς Δημητρίου τοῦ Πολιορκητοῦ, καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν ἀρχὴν περὶ
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ἐκατοστη'ν καὶ πέμπτην ὄλμηπιάδα, καθ' ἐν Πτολεμαίος ὁ Φιλάδελφος Ἀλύπττου ἔβασιλευεν. ὡστε καὶ ἄρουλομενον ἔστιν ὑπὸ τινον ὡς ἐν [sce. "Ἀρατος] κατὰ τον αὐτὸν χρόνου Νικανδρὸ τῷ Ἐλεόντα ἡ πολιομοιοστηρίου τῷ τὰ Θηρικα ὁράσιος.

(iii) Γένος Λυκόφρονος (p. 4 Scheer): εἰς δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἐπτά τοις ποιητῶν ὀςτίνα διὰ τὸ τίς Πλείαδος ἔλεγγον: ὡν τὰ ἀνάμαστα θεόκριτος τὸ βασκολικά ὁράμας, "Ἀρατος ὁ τὰ Φαινόμενα ὁράμας καὶ ἐτέρα, Νικανδρὸς Ἀλαντίθης ἢ Ἀπολλώνιος τὸ τὰ Ἀργοναυτικά, Φιλίκος, ὁμηρὸς τὸς πρώτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὡς ἄλλο ἀνάμαστα ὑποίκειν νεότυρον τῷ Νικανδρῷ, καὶ ἑτέρῳ μὲ εἰδότες ἀλλούς χρόνον τὴς Πλείαδος. ἦσαν δὲ οὕτως ἐν χρόνον Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου καὶ Βερενίκης.

(iv) Γένος Ἀρατος (p. 326 Maass): λέγονται τε προτεῖνων ἀλλήλοις ὁ μὲν Νικανδρὸς σκέψασαι τὰ Φαἰνόμενα, ὁ δὲ Ἀρατος τὰ Θηρικα. τοῦτο δὲ κατασφάνος ἐστι πειδαις, ὁ γὰρ Νικανδρὸς δώδεκα ὄλμηπιάσα στελεχοφόρος φαίνεται.

(v) ib. (p. 78): οἱ δὲ λέγοντες Νικανδρὸν τὸν Κολοφωνίων μετὰ Ἀρατος "Ἀντίγόνῳ συγκεκριμένοι καὶ Ἀρατος μὲ εἶναι ἐπιστήμων τῶν ὑφασθῶν μῆτε Νικανδρον τῶν Ἰατρικῶν (λέγουσι χρόνος ὁς ἀρα ὁ Ἀντίγονος Ἀρατος μὲν ὑπὲρ ἰατρῶν ἐπέταξε τὰ Φαἰνόμενα ὁράμα, ἔμενει Νικανδρός δὲ άστορολάγω υπάρχοντι τὰ Θηρικα καὶ τὰ Ἀλεξιφάρμακα, ὅθεν καὶ ἐκάτερον ωςόλους ἐσφάλμαντα κατολοιποῦντα ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα τής τέχνης) πειδαιοῦν: ἀγνοοῦσι γὰρ ως οὐ συνήκαμες τῷ Ἀρατος Νικανδρος, άλλα ἐστιν αὐτοῦ πολυ νεότυρος. Ἀντίγονος γὰρ ὁ συνεγένετο Ἀρατος, κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον καὶ δεύτερον γέγονε τὸν Πτολεμαίον, Νικανδρὸς δὲ κατὰ τὸ πέμπτον.

D. Dittenberger Syll. Inscr. Gr. 452 (Delphi): ἄγαβες τύχας. Δελφοὶ ἐδώκαν Νικανδρός ὁ Ανάσταγγαρός Κολοφωνιών ἐπέταξε στιγμῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγγύνοις προσενίας, προμαντείας, ἀσύλλευσις, προδικίας, ἀπελευθέρωσις πάντων, προεδρίαν ἐν πάντῃ τοῖς ἀγώνοις οἷς ἄθλησεν τίθητι, καὶ τάλλα ὁσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις προξένους καὶ εὐρεγέταις τὸς πόλις τῶν Δελφῶν. ἄρσαι τοὺς Νικοδάμους, Βουλευτῶν Ἀρίστας, Νικοδάμους, Πλείστωνος, Ζένωνος, Ἐπιχαρίδης.

From Nicander himself we learn, in the fragment cited in A, that his father was named Damæus, and from other passages that Clarus

1 Presumably καὶ εἰκοστὴν has here dropped out. Ol. 105 is 360–357 b.c.; Ol. 125, 280–277. Demetrius in fact died in 263 b.c.

2 Th. 958, Al. 9: cf. fr. 31.
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was his home. Clarus was the seat of an immemorial cult of Apollo, and of an oracle, of which we know something since Germanicus’s visit to it is described by Tacitus.¹ It is close to Colophon, and was perhaps little more than a temple-precinct with attached houses for those connected with the cult,² and Nicander’s common designation, ὁ Κολοφῶνιος, involves no contradiction.³ He was not the only poet of Colophon, which laid claim to Homer and could boast without dispute of Mimnermus and Xenophanes, Antimachus, Hermesianax, and Phoenix.⁴ The statement of Dionysius of Phaselis cited in A and echoed in B that Nicander was Aetolian by origin is probably an addition to his family history rather than a rival theory of his birth, for Dionysius can hardly have been unaware of Nicander’s references to Clarus, and in fact himself asserts that the poet held a hereditary priesthood at that shrine, perhaps an inference, though not an unpleasing one, from Al. 11.⁵ The statement, whether true or not, that he spent much time in Aetolia is also plausible, for the works ascribed to him show a marked interest in that country, nor need his duties at the temple, if he had any, have prevented him from absenting himself from Clarus—as may be seen from the epitaph of a certain Gorgus, who is described as Κλαρίου προτάθουν Λητοθέω θέρσης but was nevertheless buried in Athens.⁶

The remaining statements contained in the passages set out above involve us in immediate difficulties. B calls Nicander’s father not Damaeus but Xenophanes, and marked disagreement is shown as to the poet’s date. C i–iii⁷ disclose a belief that he was a contemporary of the first generation of Hellenistic poets, i.e. that he lived in the

¹ Ann. 2.54. ² For excavations on the site see Jahresh. 15.41, B.C.H. 39.33. ³ Antimachus of Colophon is similarly called CLARUS POETAE in Ov. Tr. 1.6.1. ⁴ Also of an unknown Cleander, described as ἐπί τοιαύτης, who received a decree of προσφορά at Delphi in the 2nd century B.C. (B.C.H. 18.269). ⁵ It is more plausible if the less well-attested reading ξήμανος is accepted. ⁶ Ath. Mitt. 11.427, Wilamowitz Hell. Dicht. 1.106. Gorgus was apparently the compiler of a poetical anthology. In the cult of Clarus, at any rate at a later date, the priest who received the responses of the god was ignoras plerunque litterarum et carminum (Tac. Ann. 2.54), though the oracles were issued in verse. Hymns also played a large part in the ritual (Rev. Phil. 22.269; cf. Jahresh. 15.46, inscr. no. 2, 3, 5, 8–12, 18, 25, 27–9). Possibly Nicander and Gorgus, when at home, assisted in these poetical exercises. Nicander’s style would be a godsend to any oracle. ⁷ i–iii may be discounted. Lists of the Pleiad vary, but nobody else names Nicander, and in this aberrant list he is only one of three competitors for a place to which Aenides has a better-supported claim. See generally Susenbühl Gr. Lit. d. Alexandrinerei zeit 1.269.
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first half of the third century; C iv and v combat this belief and are roughly in agreement, the first dating him half a century later than Aratus, the second assigning him to the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205–181 B.C.), but A asserts confidently that a poem there cited was addressed to Attalus III Philometor (138–133 B.C.), and B seems, though confusedly, to assign him to that date. The language of the fragment would suit Attalus II Philadelphus (159–138 B.C.), who succeeded his brother on the throne, equally well, and perhaps even Attalus I (241–197 B.C.), for though he succeeded not his father but a cousin, πατρίταιοι might in this context mean Τεθραυστοι. We have therefore as approximate dates 270 (C i–iii), 200 (C iv, v) and 135 (A, B) B.C. The dates are flexible, and it would have been possible for a friend of Aratus to survive into the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes; possible also for one born in that reign to celebrate Attalus III. But neither contingency offers a plausible solution of the inconsistencies, and we are left with the one certainty that fr. 104 addressed to an Attalus must have been written between 241 and 133 B.C.

Further uncertainty is imported by D, a Delphian decree conferring προσφώνεις on Nicander, an epic poet of Colephon whose father was named Anaxagoras. The dating of this inscription on the evidence so far available is a highly complex problem, and the principal authorities on Delphian chronology are not in agreement. It must suffice to say here that G. Daux (Chron. Delph. 38: G 24) favours 254/3 B.C., and that R. Flacelière (B.C.H. 59.22, Les Aitoliens à Delphes 458: 44) a date about 220 B.C. It is thus plain that if it was the third Attalus whom the author of the Theriaca addressed, the inscription must refer to an earlier namesake and compatriot. If however he was a contemporary of Aratus an inscription of 254 B.C. might, so far as the chronology is concerned, refer to him; and again if he was a contemporary of Ptolemy Epiphanes, so might an inscription of 220 B.C. His father’s name however presents an obstacle, for he calls himself son of Damaeus, whereas the poet of the inscription is described as son of Anaxagoras. This difficulty is best met by those who accept the identification with the supposition that Damaeus was his father by adoption. 1

1 It was the first Attalus who defeated the Gauls, the third who bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, and τὸν Γαλατοφόρον seems to be a mistaken addition.

2 Damaeus, not Anaxagoras, since Delphian inscriptions add the words καθ’ ύποκλητον in such cases (Dittenberger ad loc.), Suemühl (Gr. Lit. d. Alexandrinerzeit 1.891) said that Damaeus must be corrupt, whereupon E. Maas (Aratea 311) proposed to write Ανάξιος. It is unlikely that he will have many followers.
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As between the three dates for the didactic poet, that which makes him a contemporary of Aratus is, apart from any question of style, hard to credit. The anecdote in C iv and v is plainly fictitious, and the authors who give it the lie do so with a confidence which suggests some positive and adverse information. That dating would also oblige us to suppose that the Attalus addressed in fr. 104 was the first of the name, whereas the third, or possibly the second, seems much more probable. And, finally, Nicander appears to borrow from Numenius, who was a pupil of the physician Dicæus and cannot well have written before the middle of the third century; and from Euphorion, of whom much the same may be said since, according to Suidas, he was born in Ol. 126 (276–3 B.C.)—roughly a generation later than Aratus and his contemporaries.¹

If the early date is mistaken, there are reasons which might account for or contribute to the mistake. In the first place the Theriaca is addressed to one Hermesianax,² and it appears that some took him for the poet of that name, though this view is combated by the scholia, which say that Nicander elsewhere refers to the poet as older than himself (fr. 12); in the second, C iv, after refuting the view that Nicander the poet was Aratus’s contemporary, goes on to mention a Nicander of Colophon, a μαθηματικός, who really was so; and this Nicander may have been mistaken for the poet. And if the Delphian decree belongs to 254 B.C., there was a poet of Colophon named Nicander and in fact contemporary with Aratus to encourage confusion.

If on the other hand the decree belongs to the last quarter of the century it is similarly evidence for a Nicander of Colophon at that date, who, if he was not the author of the Theriaca, might have been taken for him and have led to the dating given in C iv and v, to which the address to Attalus, if believed to refer to the first king of that name, might possibly contribute. The case against this date is however less strong than against the earlier, and it may be that the

¹ For these borrowings see Th. 237, 236, 406, Al. 433 nn.; cf. Al. 13, 161 nn. Our notes record also apparent debts to Aratus (Th. 456; cf. 10, 469, 620), Callimachus (Th. 109, 457, Al. 62, 99, 403, 618), Theocritus (Al. 185, fr. 74.24; cf. Th. 697), and possibly to Apollonius (Al. 13). Minuter scrutiny would no doubt disclose more, but neither they nor the bizarre vocabulary which Nicander shares with Lycothron (e.g. σπλήθος, τρώμη),似乎 to throw light on Nicander’s date.
² The name is quite common (see Stud. It. 20.74), but Nicander’s friend was presumably a connexion of the poet.
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extant poems were in fact written at the end of the third century. Those who take this view would then, if they accept 220 B.C. as an approximate date for the inscription, be free to suppose that it refers to their author. They would not however be compelled to do so and might hesitate over the discrepancy in the father’s name.

The problem hardly admits of final solution, but on the whole the statements in the Life and in Suidas seem to deserve more credence than the others, and we incline to the view that the Attalus addressed was the third, and that this poet flourished, not in the third, but in the mid-second century or somewhat later, and was thus roughly a contemporary of Moschus. If so, he must, whichever date we choose for the inscription, be distinguished from an earlier namesake, who is likely to have been either his grandfather or his uncle. Nicander is indeed a common name, but poets in more than one generation of a Greek family are also common, and the very rare name Damaeus of the second Nicander’s father occurs more than once at Delphi but apparently nowhere else.¹

Of the elder poet there are no certified fragments, but since he also was of Colophon it is obvious that some may be mistakenly credited to the younger. Of the poetical works of which appreciable fragments remain all seem likely to belong to the younger man, unless indeed the combination of a repulsive style with considerable metrical accomplishment which links them to the Theriaca and Alexipharmaca was hereditary in the family. There are other recorded works however of which we know next to nothing, and it is possible that some of these were by the Nicander of the inscription. The Aetolica, and perhaps the Evropa and Ophiaca, might be so ascribed,² but though there is nothing against such an ascription there is no evidence in its favour.

A picture of Nicander conversing with a snake appears with those of other ancient physicians on f. 3v. of the Vienna Dioscorides. No other representation of him exists.

¹ Stud. It. 20.65. The third name, Xenophanes (in B), may be a figment, but one may wonder whether Anaxagoras, the philosophically-named father of the elder poet, is not in some way connected with it.

II. THE TEXT

It is needless to trace editions of Nicander beyond the year 1856 for O. Schneider’s *Nicandra* of that date at once superseded its two predecessors—those of J. G. Schneider (*Alexipharmaca* 1792, *Theriaca* 1816) and F. S. Lehrs (1843, printed in the Didot *Poetae Bucolici et Didactici* of 1851 and reprinted in 1862). O. Schneider’s was the first respectable text of the poems. It is also the last, for they have not been edited since 1856.

O. Schneider’s principal service was to bring into use the ms which he called Π, to which attention had already been drawn by Bussemaker in his edition of the scholia, for Π presents a text noticeably different from, and in general much superior to, that of all other mss at present known. Schneider also obtained collations of some other fresh mss, though these are not of the first importance, made many corrections in the text himself, and equipped it with an elaborate *apparatus criticus*, which, if not always a model of tidiness, contains all the information as to variants which a reader can require. Nicander’s chief need at present is another ms of the same family as Π but without Π’s extensive lacunae.

The mss used by Schneider were the following:

Π Parisinus Suppl. 247, s. x vel xi.

This remarkable ms, acquired by the Abbey of St Germain des Prés in 1748, was dated by K. Weitzmann (*Byz. Buchmalerei* 33) from the style of the miniatures in the mid-tenth century, by H. Bordier (*Descr. des Peintures . . . dans les mss grecs de la Bibl. Nat. 175*) and by H. Omont (*Inv. Somm. des mss du Suppl. gr., 1883, 31*) in the eleventh. Its leaves number 48 and measure up to 148 × 118 mm., and when devoted solely to text usually contain 22 lines to the page. On many pages however the text is curtailed or ousted by miniatures depicting creatures, plants, or scenes suggested by the poet. Their style is peculiar, and they would seem to echo, if somewhat distantly, illustrations of much earlier date.¹

¹ Or from *Al.* 249–549 with blank spaces for miniatures unexecuted.

² Terrullian (*Scorp. 1*), writing of scorpions, says *Nicander scribit et pingit*, and may be supposed to have possessed or seen an illustrated ms. Wellmann (*Herm. 43.379*) supposed the works of Apollodorus, Nicander’s main source (see p. 18), to have been illustrated.
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Ten of the most important miniatures were reproduced in colour by F. Lenormant and E. de Chanot in Gaz. Arch. 1. Pls. 18, 32, and 2. Pls. 11, 24. In black and white all appear in H. Omont Miniatures des plus anc. mss grecs de la Bibl. Nat. (1929)² Pls. 65–72; specimens in E. Bethe Buch u. Bild figs. 2, 42, C. Diehl Manuel d’Art Byz. 2. 605, P. Lemerle Le Style Byz. Pl. 39, J.H.S. 47.4, Weitzmann op. cit. fig. 228, Bordier op. cit. 176. The last work, and Omont Miniatures etc. p. 34, contain the most detailed accounts of the ms yet published. The frontispiece to this edition shows, together with some lines of text, one of the minor figure-scenes, and drawings of a caterpillar and three plants. We have discussed the plant-drawings in Appendix I and have given reasons for thinking them valueless to students of ancient botany.

In addition to Π Schneider made use of the following mss:

A. Monacensis 494, s. xv vel xvi. Contains among miscellaneous prose and verse Th. 1–178. Schneider used a collation by Hermann.
H. Vaticano-Palatinus 139, s. xv vel xvi. Contains much other Greek poetry. Al. and Th. 1–132 collated for Schneider by H. Keil.
K. Vaticanus 305, s. xiii. Contains Th. only. Collated for Schneider by H. Keil—badly according to S. P. Peppink Observ. in Ath. 9.
L. Lorrianus. An unidentified ms of which J. G. Schneider had a collation by a doctor in Paris named Lorry.³ What he collated it with is unknown and the readings of the ms are constantly in doubt.
M. Laurentianus xxxii. 16, A.D. 1280. A large collection of Greek poetry. The portion of the ms containing Nicander is, according to C.

¹ Al. 537–49, reported missing by Omont, are 616–28 as transposed by J. G. Schneider.
² The earlier edition of his book, entitled Fac-similés des miniatures etc. (1902), reproduces, on Pls. 65–68, sixteen pages only.
³ Possibly Anne-Charles Lorry (1726–83), a distinguished physician who attended Louis XV. The collation was sent to Schneider in 1775 by ‘Liber Baro de Sancta Croce’, perhaps G. E. J. Guillaume de Clermont-Lodève, baron de Sainte-Croix (1746–1809), the author of works on ancient history and religion.