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ALEXANDER'S LAST CAROUSE*

ABSTRACT

The drinking party at Medius' in Babylon on 31 May 323 B.C., marking the onset of Alexander's terminal illness, is explored from contemporary and later texts. Close reading of fragments by Nicobule and Aristobulus, set beside the reticence of the court daybooks (Ephemerides) *and the studied vagueness of secondary sources, clarifies in detail the sequence of events. Justin, Plutarch and the author of the* Liber de morte Alexandri *cast light on the silence imposed by the King's successors. A narrative emerges of the day itself, the spread of rumour, the two false explanations for Alexander's death that were successively propagated, and the third explanation, most probably correct, that Aristobulus was first to publish.*

Keywords: Alexander the Great; death; Babylon; Nicobule; Aristobulus; Eumenes; Arrian; Plutarch

> . . . πίνειν παρὰ Μηδίῳ αὐτὸν κωμάσαντα . . .
> . . . that after carousing he drank with Medius . . .

The last carouse marks the onset of Alexander's terminal illness; it was seen in some way to have brought about his death. This article examines how those few hours were transformed in memory and written text. It may be read as a commentary on the five words quoted above (from Arrian's rephrasing of the *Ephemerides*), on what they fail to say, and on why there was so little to say.

Certain earlier banquets at Alexander's court have become set-pieces in ancient and modern narratives: this one, more consequential than any other, usually slips by in a few words. The silence has been occasionally broken. Fifty years ago Schachermeyr, in *Alexander in Babylon*, gave a bird's-eye view of Alexander's movements on this day, while Bosworth's 'The death of Alexander the Great' focussed on the rumours that followed. In 1988 Heckel explored the origins of the *Liber de morte Alexandri Magni*; Bosworth again, in a chapter in *From Arrian to Alexander*, redirected attention to the *Ephemerides*, and in the same year his *Conquest and Empire* allowed more space to this incident than any other recent Alexander biography.[1] Since then much has been written about the historical context and about each of the sources, and a new analysis is needed.

* I am grateful to Typhaine Haziza, who, by requesting a paper for the round table *Regards grecs antiques sur le fait alimentaire* in summer 2023 at Caen, impelled me to reread Athenaeus in search of Alexander; and to *CQ*'s anonymous reader.

[1] Named here: F. Schachermeyr, *Alexander in Babylon* (Vienna, 1970); A.B. Bosworth, 'The death of Alexander the Great: rumour and propaganda', *CQ* 21 (1971), 112–36 ('Death'); A.B. Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander* (Oxford, 1988: '*From Arrian*'), at 157–84; A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire* (Cambridge, 1988: '*Conquest*'), at 171–3; W. Heckel, *The Last Days and Testament of Alexander the Great* (Stuttgart, 1988).

Cited frequently below: J. Atkinson, E. Truter and E. Truter, 'Alexander's last days: malaria and mind games?', *AClass* 52 (2009), 23–46; E.J. Baynham, 'A baleful birth in Babylon', in A.B. Bosworth, E.J. Baynham (edd.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), 242–62; A.B. Bosworth, 'Ptolemy and the will of Alexander', in A.B. Bosworth, E.J. Baynham (edd.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), 207–41 ('Ptolemy'); P.A. Brunt, 'Notes on Aristobulus of Cassandria', *CQ* 24 (1974), 65–9; E.D. Carney, 'Symposia and the Macedonian elite', *SyllClass* 18

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THE NARRATIVE SOURCES

Sources listed in this initial paragraph will reappear below with precise references. Several surviving narratives, written long after Alexander's time, are of use: through them primary sources are fitfully visible. Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.) named no source here. Quintus Curtius' narrative of this event (first century A.D.) is lost in a lacuna, though his discussion of the question whether Alexander was poisoned survives. Both authors cited Cleitarchus (third century B.C.) elsewhere, and almost certainly used him here.[2] Justin (second/fourth century A.D.) abbreviated Trogus' *Philippic Histories* (first century B.C.), whose ultimate sources are not named. Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* (*c.* 100 A.D.) cites Aristobulus and the *Ephemerides*, and implies knowledge of other accounts. Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* (mid second century A.D.) generally relies on the memoirs of Ptolemy and Aristobulus, contemporaries of Alexander, but on this event cites only the *Ephemerides*, alluding to other unnamed authors. The *Itinerarium Alexandri* (fourth century A.D.), largely based on Arrian, adds details from some other source. The *Liber de morte Alexandri Magni* and *Alexander Romance* insert into their narratives a list of those who drank with Alexander; the former enigmatically mentions Onesicritus, early author of an Alexander memoir. Additionally two passages in the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus (third century A.D.) quote Nicobule, an almost unknown writer, on Alexander's last dinner and last carouse.

Texts quoted in this section are numbered [1] to [11] for quick reference. All translations are mine. First, narratives written soon after the event.

[1] καὶ αἱ βασίλειοι ἐφημερίδες ὧδε ἔχουσιν· πίνειν παρὰ Μηδίῳ αὐτὸν κωμάσαντα· ἔπειτα ἐξαναστάντα καὶ λουσάμενον καθεύδειν τε καὶ αὖθις δειπνεῖν παρὰ Μηδίῳ καὶ αὖθις πίνειν πόρρω τῶν νυκτῶν· ἀπαλλαχθέντα δὲ τοῦ πότου λούσασθαι· καὶ λουσάμενον ὀλίγον τι ἐμφαγεῖν καὶ καθεύδειν αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἤδη ἐπύρεσσεν.

And the royal *Ephemerides* have it thus: that after carousing he drank with Medius; then, withdrawing and bathing, slept, and again dined with Medius, and again drank the nights through; after leaving the drinking party took a bath; after the bath ate a little and slept there, because he was already feverish. (Arr. 7.25.1 = *BNJ* 117 F 3a)

Arrian never quoted verbatim: we have what he chose to give us, rephrased here in *oratio obliqua*.[3] His use of the *Ephemerides* on Alexander's last days can usefully be compared

(2007), 129–80; J.R. Hamilton, *Plutarch. Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969); N.G.L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1983); F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*: *Teil 2, Zeitgeschichte* (Berlin, 1926–30), 'Texte' (*FGrHist*), 'Kommentar' (*FGrHist 2D*); L. O'Sullivan, 'Court intrigue and the death of Callisthenes', *GRBS* 59 (2019), 596–620; L. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York, 1960); F. Pownall, 'The symposia of Philip II and Alexander III of Macedon', in E. Carney, D. Ogden (edd.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great* (New York, 2010), 55–65; W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great: Sources and Studies* (Cambridge, 1948); I. Worthington (ed.), *Brill's New Jacoby*, online at Brill Scholarly Editions (*BNJ*: fragment numbering applies also to *FGrHist*).

[2] Pearson (n. 1), 212–42; Bosworth, *From Arrian* (n. 1), 10–11.

[3] 'We can never be sure how true Arrian is to the wording of his original', said Bosworth (*A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* [Oxford, 1980], 1.19), citing Arrian's rendering (3.30.8) in *oratio obliqua* of Herodotus (4.57); Arrian 'is unlikely to have transcribed his sources without reshaping them and adding his own comments' (Bosworth, *From Arrian* [n. 1], 14). D.W. Leon, *Arrian the Historian* (Austin, 2021), 90 wrote of Arrian 'deliberately crafting' his prose, to which C. Baron, 'An historiographical study of Arrian's *Anabasis*', *Histos* 16 (2022), vii added the gloss 'rather than simply lifting it from his sources'.

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with that of Plutarch (*Alex.* 76 = *BNJ* 117 F 3b), who quoted selected extracts verbatim, but beginning on the following day. The expression translated 'drank the nights through' was surely not in the original: it was inserted here by Arrian to recall his own previous use of this Platonic phrase (see [10]).

Working from Plutarch's quotation it is seen that Alexander's last carouse and the drinking with Medius occurred on the night of 17th/18th Daesius.[4]

Each scholar takes a view on whether daybooks were kept at Alexander's court, whether the surviving *Ephemerides* fragments stem from a genuine document or from forgery, and why the text was published. Eumenes of Cardia, named as author, served as Alexander's secretary and kept his archives; he fought among the Successors, though despised as the only Greek; he forged documents.[5] He could have published the text after Alexander's death; he could have made a selection; he could have falsified it.[6]

Plutarch elsewhere alluded to 'the royal *Ephemerides*, in which is written repetitiously and very frequently that "this day [Alexander] slept after the drinking party", sometimes "and the next"'.[7] It has been argued that a genuine daybook would not insist on drinking parties, but this argument is weak. In the fragments that survive there are records of sacrifices and of discussions with commanders, as would be expected. If the king dined ceremonially, or dined out, that fact required recording. As to sleeping it off, if the irregularity of the king's daily life affected the conducting of court events it would have been reasonable to note this.[8]

In any government that keeps records a daybook will eventually be wanted as *aide-memoire* and key to the archives. This text is in the style of such a document, and the few words directly relevant here represent what a secretary would record. If something is lost in Eumenes' editing and Arrian's rewriting, if the text therefore embodies a point of view, it remains an early source on the same footing as the others. They contribute to our understanding of it; it contributes to our understanding of them.

[2] Νικοβούλη δέ φησιν ὅτι παρὰ τὸ δεῖπνον πάντες οἱ ἀγωνισταὶ ἐσπούδαζον τέρπειν τὸν βασιλέα· καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ τελευταίῳ δείπνῳ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐπεισόδιόν τι μνημονεύσας ἐκ τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀνδρομέδας ἠγωνίσατο καὶ τὸν ἄκρατον προθύμως προπίνων καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἠνάγκαζεν.

[4] 31 May/1 June 323 B.C. On Plutarch's quotation cf. Bosworth, *From Arrian* (n. 1), 159. For parallel Greek texts of the *Ephemerides* as quoted by Arrian and Plutarch see *FGrHist* 117 F 3.

[5] Diod. Sic. 19.23; Polyaenus, *Strat.* 4.8.3; E.M. Anson, *Eumenes of Cardia* (Boston, 2004), 172–4, cf. 142 n. 84.

[6] The first known comment on these issues is by Aelian (early third century) whose conclusion is typically banal but faultless: 'One thing or the other, therefore: either Alexander was punishing himself severely by taking wine so many days in the month, or those who compiled this are lying, including Eumenes of Cardia and the other man: it can be taken from this passage that they wrote the remainder similarly' (*VH* 3.23 = *BNJ* 117 F 2a). Bosworth at first agreed ('Either the testimonia are to be rejected out of hand or we must face the conclusion that the *Ephemerides* recorded a drinking marathon unique in history': 'Death' [n. 1], 122).

[7] *Quaest. conv.* 623E = *BNJ* 117 F 2c. Athenaeus remarked on the same detail and named two compilers: 'Alexander … after the bout would sleep continuously for two days and two nights: this is made clear in his *Ephemerides* as written by Eumenes of Cardia and Diodotus of Erythrae' (*Deipn.* 434b = *BNJ* 117 F 2b). Diodotus is unknown and plays varied roles in modern hypotheses of the origin of the *Ephemerides*.

[8] N.G.L. Hammond, 'The royal journal of Alexander', *Historia* 37 (1988), 129–50, at 131–2 outlined what topics were included in the *Ephemerides*. See in general Bosworth, *From Arrian* (n. 1), 157–84, citing earlier work: he judged that 'the facts as they stand are probably correct' (183). Atkinson et al. (n. 1), 26–7 commented sensibly.

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Nicobule says that during dinner all the performers strove to amuse the king, and that at the last dinner Alexander himself, recalling an episode from Euripides' *Andromeda*, performed it and, pledging eagerly in unmixed wine, compelled the others [to reciprocate].

(Ath. *Deipn.* 537d = *BNJ* 127 F 2)

[3] Νικοβούλη δὲ ἢ ὁ ἀναθεὶς ταύτῃ τὰ συγγράμματά φησιν ὅτι παρὰ Μηδείῳ τῷ Θεσσαλῷ δειπνῶν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος εἴκοσιν οὖσιν ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ πᾶσι προὔπιε, παρὰ πάντων τὰ ἴσα λαμβάνων, καὶ ἀναστὰς (ἐκ) τοῦ συμποσίου μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ ἀνεπαύετο.

Nicobule, or the one who ascribed that text to her,[9] says that Alexander, when he dined with Medius of Thessaly, pledged every one of the twenty in the symposium, received the same from each, and, having risen from the symposium, soon afterwards went to sleep.

(Ath. *Deipn.* 434c = *BNJ* 127 F 1)[10]

In addition to these citations by Athenaeus Nicobule is mentioned once by Pliny.[11] Nothing else can be said of her. Many scholars have imagined that her work was an attack on Alexander: Gregor Weber's view, that 'in reports such as those of Nicobule one can discern the essence of royal daily life', is closer to reality.[12] The two fragments are not phrased as verbatim quotations; it has been plausibly suggested that Athenaeus is summarizing a longer text.[13]

A fragment by Ephippus of Olynthus,[14] placed just before Nicobule [3] by Athenaeus, is often drawn into modern narratives: 'Alexander once asked for a two-*chous* cup [ποτήριον δίχουν] and drank from it, pledging Proteas, who took the cup, praised the king fulsomely

[9] Jacoby (*FGrHist 2D*, 440) insisted that 'the author hid his identity behind a woman's name'. We cannot know this. The doubt expressed by Athenaeus's speaker 'Democritus' at 434c was not repeated by Athenaeus himself at 537d: B. Sheridan, 'Finding the narrative in a lost historian: the case of the Alexander historian Nicobule' (2011 conference paper) noted the discrepancy but not the dialogue context. Speakers in the *Deipnosophists* often disagree on bibliographical details. I.M. Plant, *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome* (Norman, OK, 2004), 67 and Sheridan (*BNJ* 127 [2012]) accept Nicobule as author. The speech of 'Democritus' begins at Athenaeus 426c; he pauses for a drink at 429f and continues to 443c. In Book 12 (510a–554f), an essay on luxury, the speaker throughout is Athenaeus.

[10] 'Go to sleep' is a common meaning of ἀναπαύομαι. The word occasionally means 'die', which is why Hammond classed Nicobule with Ephippus as having 'attributed A[lexander]'s death to excessive drinking' (*Three Historians* [n. 1], 78). With Pearson (n. 1), 67 n. 26, against Jacoby, *FGrHist 2D* (440), I reject the translation 'die', and for additional reasons: Alexander died not at once but about eleven days later; and the *Alexander Romance* uses ἀναπαύομαι in the sense 'go to sleep' in this very context. Sheridan (*BNJ* 127 F 1), while agreeing with Pearson, reasonably followed Plant (n. 9) in choosing the translation 'passed out': 'that would be the expected result following such a drinking session'.

[11] Pliny listed her among sources for his survey of trees (*HN* 1.12.13 = *BNJ* 127 T 2). Most names in the prefatory lists do not recur in the main text of the *Natural History* and it is hard to know what Pliny got from each; in this case, possibly, Nicobule said that 'Alexander and his troops returned from India garlanded with ivy' (*HN* 16.144).

[12] G. Weber, 'Alexander's court as social system', in W. Heckel, L.A. Tritle (edd.), *Alexander the Great: a New History* (Chichester, 2009), 95; likewise Sheridan, neatly observing that 'she did not seek to dilute the excessive nature of Alexander's drinking' (*BNJ* 127 'Biographical essay'). By contrast: 'Scheint ein zeitgenössisches pamphlet von der art des Ephippos gewesen zu sein': Jacoby, *FGrHist 2D*, 440, followed by Bosworth, 'Death' (n. 1), 114 and *From Arrian* (n. 1), 174–5; F. Schachermeyr, *Alexander der Grosse: das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens* (Vienna, 1973), 557; Pownall (n. 1), 60.

[13] Plant (n. 9).

[14] Ephippus is named several times by Athenaeus, once by Pliny. He must have been born before 348 (when Philip destroyed Olynthus) and must have remarked the Olynthian Callisthenes' fate, as observed by A.J.S. Spawforth ('The pamphleteer Ephippus, King Alexander and the Persian royal hunt', *Histos* 6 [2012], 169–213, at 176) and Pearson. The latter's discussion ([n. 1], 64–7) of a ceremony narrated by Ephippus (*BNJ* 126 F 5, see L. Prandi's commentary) suggests that Ephippus was selecting incidents to suit an agenda: his perspective on Alexander would have been appreciated in Athens. Spawforth argues that Ephippus' preceding description of Alexander's divine costumes is

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and drank it off. A little later Proteas asked for the same cup and drank from it, pledging the king. Alexander took it and drank bravely, but could not finish and lay back on the pillow, letting the cup fall from his hands, and, sickening thenceforth, he died, because, says [Ephippus], Dionysus was angry with him for having captured and destroyed Thebes, his native city'.[15] The pace has suddenly changed: this last sentence is a summary by Athenaeus of Ephippus' theme.[16] Lionel Pearson saw[17] what others have missed,[18] that this is an undated anecdote (ποτέ 'once upon a time') not connected to the last carouse.[19] Proteas is not otherwise listed as present at Medius' party. The competitive pledging or toasting described by Nicobule is not easily combined with Ephippus' anecdote into a single event, although, placed side by side in the *Deipnosophists*, they illustrate one another.[20]

[4] Ἀριστόβουλος δέ φησιν αὐτὸν πυρέττοντα μανικῶς, διψήσαντα δὲ σφόδρα, πιεῖν οἶνον· ἐκ τούτου δὲ φρενιτιᾶσαι καὶ τελευτῆσαι τριακάδι αἰσίου μηνός.

Aristobulus says that he had a raging fever, became extremely thirsty, drank wine, hence suffered a frenzy, and died on the last day of Daesius. (Plut. *Alex.* 75.6 = *BNJ* 139 F 59)

Plutarch's citation of Aristobulus, like Arrian's of the *Ephemerides* [1], is rewritten in *oratio obliqua*: the original might have employed the same words, but we cannot know whether it was longer and more informative.

deliberately slanted, a 'controlled misreading'; yet Prandi finds 'no real negative judgments' on Alexander in the fragments (*BNJ* 126 'Biographical essay').

[15] Ath. *Deipn.* 434a–b; *BNJ* 126 F 3. To take the last sentence as meaning that Alexander sickened and died immediately after the reciprocal pledging of Proteas is to use Ephippus and Athenaeus unguardedly. Hard though it is to know when Athenaeus was quoting and when he was introducing or epitomizing, we cannot assume that his text mirrors his sources end to end. See L. Romeri, *Philosophes entre mots et mets* (Grenoble, 2002), 268–76; D. Lenfant (ed.), *Athénée et les historiens* (Paris, 2007); J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts* (Cambridge, 2012), 112–19; L.I. Hau, 'The fragments of Polybius compared with those of the "tragic" historians Duris and Phylarchus', *Histos* 15 (2021), 238–82. On Athenaeus' use of Ephippus see J.-C. Carrière, 'Athénée dans son temps', in S. Rougier-Blanc (ed.), *Athénée de Naucratis: Le banquet des savants, livre XIV* (Bordeaux, 2018), 449–605, at 500–8.

[16] *On the Passing of Hephaestion and Alexander* (the title varies). Alexander and Hephaestion were intimate friends; Alexander was prostrated by grief at Hephaestion's death; excessive drinking was adduced in both cases; the deaths come together in a book title because (to judge by the quoted text) the anger of Dionysus caused both. P. McKechnie, 'Diodorus Siculus and Hephaestion's pyre', *CQ* 45 (1995), 418–32, at 429–31, argues that 'Alexander's friendship with Hephaestion as the key to his ultimate downfall' was Ephippus' theme.

[17] Pearson (n. 1), 62.

[18] E.g. Bosworth, *Conquest* (n. 1), ch. 21; J.M. O'Brien, *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy* (London, 1992), 225–6; Atkinson et al. (n. 1), 25; likewise in the clinicopathological conference reported by E.N. Borza, J. Reames-Zimmerman, 'Some new thoughts on the death of Alexander the Great', *AncW* 21 (2000), 22–30, at 26–7. Prandi (*BNJ* 126 F 3 'Commentary') observes that the juxtaposition in Athenaeus 'leads to think' that the Proteas anecdote belongs to the 'banquet organized by Medios', but it is wiser not to follow Athenaeus' lead: here as elsewhere he was not constructing a historical narrative.

[19] On the anecdote genre or subgenre see A. Dalby, 'Lynceus and the anecdotists', in D. Braund, J. Wilkins (edd.), *Athenaeus and His World* (Exeter, 2000), 372–94; on the vagueness with which anecdotes were linked to real events and names, Carney (n. 1), 136 n. 17; on the difficulty in dating the anecdote of Callisthenes refusing Alexander's cup, O'Sullivan (n. 1), 608; on the merging of the present Alexander anecdote with the narrative of his last days, A. Dalby, 'De Philippe II à Ptolémée II', in A. Heller, C. Grandjean, J. Peigney (edd.), *À la table des rois* (Rennes, 2013), 129–47, at 136–7.

[20] This feature of Athenaeus' work, allowing neighbouring quotations to illustrate one another without comment, was highlighted by C. Jacob, 'Ateneo, o il dedalo delle parole', in L. Canfora et al. (edd.), *Ateneo: I deipnosofisti*, vol. 1 (Rome, 2001), xi–cxvi, now revised in C. Jacob, *Faut-il prendre les Deipnosophistes au sérieux?* (Paris, 2020); cf. J. Paulas, 'How to read Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*', *AJPh* 133 (2012), 403–39.

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After Alexander's death Aristobulus became a citizen of Cassandreia, the city founded in 316 by Antipater's son Cassander (to whom Alexander was anathema).[21] It has been suggested that Aristobulus served with Antipater and his son, helping to plan the new city:[22] in any case he was freer to honour Alexander's memory after Cassander's death.[23] His memoir, reflecting scientific interests, was indeed written in old age, after about 295,[24] probably using the already-published work of Chares (see below) as a source on court events.

Although Aristobulus' Alexander narrative and Ptolemy's are lost, they can be compared in those few cases where Arrian chose to cite both by name. Aristobulus, against both Plutarch's source and Ptolemy, briefly told a third version of the court historian Callisthenes' death, distasteful but not to be dismissed—the same version that Chares told more fully.[25] To Alexander's sudden illness in Cilicia Ptolemy and others assigned a romantic cause (he swam in the ice-cold river Cydnus); Aristobulus diagnosed exhaustion.[26] At Gordium how did Alexander unfasten the historic cart? Ptolemy is not cited, but according to others Alexander drew his sword and, famously, cut the Gordian knot; according to Aristobulus he pulled out the pin.[27] There is a pattern: Aristobulus 'did not indulge in rhetoric or exaggeration and did not aim at sensation'.[28] Quite the contrary: if he saw a heroic story approaching he walked the other way; yet his hero was Alexander.

[5] As he left, intending to sleep, Medius approached him, inviting him to join his own friends, who were, he said, the king's closest friends. Persuaded by Medius' invitation Alexander went to the symposium. Those present numbered twenty: Perdiccas, Meleager, Python, Leonnatus, Cassander [Asander?], Peucestes, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Philip the doctor, Nearchus of Crete,[29] Stasanor, Heracleides of Thrace, Europius [Seleucus?], Ariston of Pharsalus, Philip the engineer, Philotas, Menander. Of these Perdiccas, Ptolemy, Olcias, Lysimachus, Eumenes and Asander did not know what was to happen. All the others were part of the plot, had conferred with Cassander and Iollas and exchanged oaths [. . .]. Alexander reclined and Iollas brought him a cup [. . .]. Suddenly Alexander gave a loud cry as if an arrow had pierced his liver.

(*Historia Alexandri Magni* 3.31)[30]

[6] *eum diem festum agentem amicorum conuentum habere uellet. iam non alienum uidetur qui fuerint demonstrare, quorum Onesicritus fugiens simultatem mentionem facere noluit. fuit Perdiccas, Medius, Leonnatus* [. . .] *quorum quid ageretur nemo fuit ignarus praeter Eumenem et Perdiccam et Ptolemaeum et Lysimachum et Asandrum et Holciam.*

[Medius], celebrating a festival, wanted to gather his friends. Thus it seems not irrelevant to list those whom Onesicritus, fearing enmity, chose not to name: Perdiccas, Medius, Leonnatus [. . .].

[21] Diod. Sic. 19.52.2, 19.61.2.

[22] Jacoby, *FGrHist 2D*, 508; Pearson (n. 1), 151 with further references.

[23] A. Zambrini, 'The historians of Alexander the Great', in J. Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Malden, MA, 2011), 210–20, at 218.

[24] J.R. Hamilton, 'The letters in Plutarch's *Alexander*', *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 4 (1961), 9–20; Hamilton (n. 1), liv–lvi; Brunt (n. 1), 65–9; Bosworth, *From Arrian* (n. 1), 46–60.

[25] *BNJ* 139 F 33; cf. 125 F 15 (Chares), 138 F 17 (Ptolemy); Plut. *Alex.* 55.

[26] *BNJ* 139 F 8, cf. Curt. 3.4–5, Arr. 2.4.5–11. D. Engels, 'A note on Alexander's death', *CPh* 73 (1978), 224–8 interpreted this as the first attack of the malaria from which Alexander was to die.

[27] *BNJ* 139 F 7, cf. Plut. *Alex.* 18, Arr. 2.3; Tarn (n. 1), 262–5.

[28] Hamilton (n. 1), lv.

[29] Nearchus is implied by Plutarch [9] to have been present at the dinner that Alexander had just left: this would add a complication to any reconstructed narrative, but does not invalidate either source.

[30] Greek text and apparatus: W. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni: recensio vetusta* (Berlin, 1926), 134–5.

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Of these none was ignorant of what would happen except Eumenes, Perdiccas, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Asander and Holcias. (*Liber de morte* 97 = *BNJ* 134 F 37[31])

In the case of the *Alexander Romance* (the tradition to which both texts are assigned) it is even more delicate to extract early material from its later context than it is with the preceding citations transmitted by classical authors. The *Romance* was already coalescing in the third century B.C.,[32] though surviving recensions were written many centuries later; details of the present episode originated earlier still, very soon after Alexander's death.[33] Quoted above is the Greek manuscript A with a variant from the Latin *Liber de morte*. A story had been told, in preceding sections of both, of a conspiracy to poison Alexander: its protagonists were Cassander, his brother Iollas who was Alexander's cupbearer, and Medius of Thessaly who was Iollas' lover. A theatrical competition was described; then follow the quoted texts. With help from other recensions the list of names can be rendered coherent, as reflected in my translation: the validity of the list will be discussed below.

Now come the surviving historical narratives.

[7] *reuersus igitur Babyloniam multis diebus otio datis intermissum olim conuiuium sollemniter instituit; totusque in laetitiam effusus cum diei noctem peruigilem iunxisset, recedentem iam e conuiuio Medius Thessalus instaurata comisatione et ipsum et sodales eius inuitat. accepto poculo media potione repente uelut telo confixus ingemuit elatusque conuiuio semianimis tanto dolore cruciatus est, ut ferrum in remedia posceret.*

He returned to Babylon and passed many days in amusements: he reverted to his interrupted habit of a regular banquet. Full of happiness he prolonged this into a wakeful night. He was already returning from the banquet when Medius the Thessalian, a carouse having begun, invited him and his friends. He was given a cup. While drinking he suddenly groaned, as if pierced by a spear; carried from the party half conscious, he was tortured by such severe pain that he demanded a sword to end it. (Just. 12.13.6–9)

[8] τούτων δὲ παρακελευομένων θυσίας ἐπιτελεῖν τοῖς θεοῖς μεγαλοπρεπεῖς μετὰ πάσης σπουδῆς παρεκλήθη πρός τινα τῶν φίλων Μήδιον τὸν Θετταλὸν ἐπὶ κῶμον ἐλθεῖν· κἀκεῖ πολὺν ἄκρατον ἐμφορηθεὶς ἐπὶ τελευτῆς Ἡρακλέους μέγα ποτήριον πληρώσας ἐξέπιεν. ἄφνω δὲ ὥσπερ ὑπό τινος πληγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς πεπληγμένος ἀνεστέναξε μέγα βοήσας καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων ἀπηλλάττετο χειραγωγούμενος.

They advised him to make generous sacrifices to the gods with all speed. He was then invited by one of his friends, Medius the Thessalian, to come to a carouse. There, having already drunk much unmixed wine in honour of the death of Heracles he filled a large cup and drained it.[34] Suddenly he gave a great cry, as if struck by a violent blow, and his friends led him away by the hand. (Diod. Sic. 17.117.1–2)

[9] ἀποθέμενος τὸ πένθος αὖθις ἦν ἐν θυσίαις καὶ πότοις. ἑστιάσας δὲ λαμπρῶς τοὺς περὶ Νέαρχον, εἶτα λουσάμενος ὥσπερ εἰώθει μέλλων καθεύδειν, Μηδίου δεηθέντος ᾤχετο κωμασόμενος πρὸς αὐτόν· κἀκεῖ πιὼν ὅλην τὴν ἐπιοῦσαν ἡμέραν, ἤρξατο πυρέττειν, οὔτε σκύφον Ἡρακλέους ἐκπιὼν οὔτ' ἄφνω διαλγὴς γενόμενος τὸ μετάφρενον ὥσπερ λόγχῃ πεπληγώς ...

[31] P.H. Thomas, *Incerti auctoris Epitoma rerum gestarum Alexandri Magni cum Libro de morte eius* (Leipzig, 1960), 34–5.

[32] R. Jasnow, 'The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian literature', *JNES* 56 (1997), 95–103.

[33] Heckel (n. 1); Bosworth, 'Ptolemy' (n. 1); Baynham, 'Baleful birth' (n. 1).

[34] It is not clear to me whether ἐπὶ τελευτῆς Ἡρακλέους is to be read with the preceding or the following clause.

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Putting grief aside he was at sacrifices and drinking parties again. But after feasting Nearchus' people splendidly, then bathing as usual before going to sleep, he went at Medius' invitation to carouse with him, and there, drinking all the next day, he became feverish. So it was not that he drank dry the bowl of Heracles, nor that he suddenly felt pain in his back as if pierced by a spear … (Plut. *Alex.* 75.3–76.1)

[10] καὶ τεθυκὼς τοῖς θεοῖς τάς τε νομιζομένας θυσίας [. . .] εὐωχεῖτο ἅμα τοῖς φίλοις καὶ ἔπινε πόρρω τῶν νυκτῶν [. . .]. ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ πότου αὐτὸν μὲν ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἐθέλειν ἐπὶ κοιτῶνα εἰσὶν οἳ ἀνέγραψαν· Μήδιον δὲ αὐτῷ ἐντυχόντα, τῶν ἑταίρων ἐν τῷ τότε τὸν πιθανώτατον, δεηθῆναι κωμάσαι παρὰ οἷ· γενέσθαι γὰρ ἂν ἡδὺν τὸν κῶμον.

Having made the usual sacrifices to the gods [. . .] Alexander was celebrating alongside his friends and drank the nights through [. . .]. There are those who write that he himself wanted to leave the drinking party for his bedroom, but that Medius, at that time the most trusted of his Companions, met him and asked him to carouse with him, saying that it would be a good party. (Arr. 7.24.4–25.1)

[11] *morem sibi proceres exercitus fecerant, uti mutuo sese conuiuiis acciperent. enim cum forte apud Medium conuiuarent, comesatione sese illis conuiuam Alexander facit. statim denique Herculis Medius scyphum offert ad uina, neque is honorem dei nomine aspernatus poculum complet stringitque continuum*.

The army commanders had made a habit of reciprocal invitations to banquets. On one occasion when they were banqueting at Medius' Alexander joined them at the carouse. There suddenly Medius offered him the bowl of Hercules for his wine. Accepting the honour in the god's name, he filled the vessel and drank it off. (*It. Alex.* 118)[35]

Justin's narrative [7] is in this episode not very different from the *Romance* [5, 6]. He went on to develop the poison story, taking it as true, and attributing the plot to Antipater and his sons Cassander and Iollas, who trusted no one else in Babylon but Medius. This, Justin explained, was why 'the party was revived at the Thessalian's' (12.14.6–8). By Diodorus [8], Plutarch [9] and Arrian [10] the story was narrated without mention of poison, but all three authors discussed and rejected the poisoning story later. Plutarch's quoted text is followed directly by the citation of Aristobulus [4], then by an extract of the *Ephemerides* that takes the story to Alexander's death. Arrian's quoted text leads into the citation of the *Ephemerides* [1]. The brief *Itinerarium Alexandri* [11] is not based on Arrian here, and its version of the bowl of Heracles story cannot derive from any text cited above.

THE COMMENTARY

κωμάσαντα: 'having caroused'

The verb κωμάζω is a technical term of classical conviviality: in the austere style in which the *Ephemerides* were written it was used here in its technical sense. A κῶμος '*kômos,* carouse, serenade' was a release from the formality of a dinner and symposium. One set out, perhaps in a group, for home or some other haven, as, famously, in the case of Alcibiades (Pl. *Symp.* 212c–223d) whose carouse brought him and a flute-player to Agathon's symposium, where he was to stay all night: a fictionalized occasion, unique and in some sense typical.

[35] This use of *stringo* has parallels elsewhere in the *Itinerarium* and in the Latin *Alexander Romance*: Julius Valerius may well be the author of both. See R. Tabacco (ed.), *Itinerarium Alexandri* (Florence, 2000), 66–7, 247–8.

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A Macedonian drinking party, πότος, might transform in the Greek way into a κῶμος. Philip's carouse after the battle of Chaeronea is an example;[36] Alexander's most famous carouse was at Persepolis, during which the palace of the Persian kings was destroyed by fire.[37] On the present occasion (the sources are unanimous) the κῶμος began simply: Alexander set off for bed.

ἐν τῷ τελευταίῳ δείπνῳ: 'at the last dinner'

Before considering how the last carouse ended we must know where it began. The *Ephemerides* do not help: whatever they reported is lost.

Each surviving narrative offers an answer. Plutarch (*Alex.* 75.3–4) has Alexander recovering slowly from the loss of Hephaestion: eventually returning to sacrifices and drinking parties, on one occasion he feasted Nearchus' men and Medius met him on his way to bed [9]. Justin's immediate context (12.13.6) makes no reference to Hephaestion: there were days of amusement and a revival of the custom of a formal dinner; Medius caught him as he was leaving this [7]. Diodorus has 'amusements and a life of festivity'; portents were offset by sacrifices (17.116.1, 117.1), after which came Medius' invitation [8]. Arrian (7.24.4) is close to Justin and Diodorus: after sacrifices Alexander celebrated with friends and drank late; some wrote of a meeting with Medius [10]. There is a common story: sacrifices and drinking parties in Plutarch and Diodorus; a dinner for Justin, a celebration with friends for Arrian; on the way to bed, a chance meeting.

The text of the *Alexander Romance* is prone to disturbance at this point, the *Liber de morte* also, but recension A tells of Alexander enjoying himself among friends and with the 'artists of Dionysus', of whom many were holidaying in Babylon: they had 'wreathed Alexander and competed against one another' (3.31.6): on leaving this celebration Alexander encountered Medius [5, 6]. Nicobule [2] said of a dinner or series of dinners that 'the performers strove to amuse the king' and that at 'the last dinner' Alexander himself performed a piece from Euripides:[38] this focus on performers fits the context in the *Deipnosophists* and must represent something real in Nicobule's text, else Athenaeus would not have cited it.

The absence of the 'artists of Dionysus' in certain sources might represent the plain truth, but it seems more likely that the Alexander imagined by Diodorus, Plutarch and Arrian had no time for undignified pleasures (*uoluptatibus comioribus*: *It. Alex.* 118) and certainly no time to perform himself: hence those authors give us dinners with friends unspecified and divine observances without Dionysus, while the *Romance* and Nicobule have him performing, competing and wreathed.[39] Several authors concur that this 'last dinner', as Nicobule called it, morphed into a πότος (Arrian), a *nox peruigilis* (Justin) and a κῶμος in fourth-century Greek usage (*Ephemerides*). If we may thus harmonize dissonant sources, Nicobule, the *Romance*, the *Itinerarium* and Justin allow partial reconstruction of an event to which no surviving text gives more than a few words. Modern biographies, if mentioning this occasion at all, generally select details from either Arrian or Plutarch exclusively.

[36] E.g. Plut. *Dem.* 20.3. On the dissonant sources see Dalby (n. 19), 138–9.

[37] E.g. Diod. Sic. 17.72. C.B. Welles (ed.), *Diodorus of Sicily*, vol. 8 (London, 1963), 325, 473; H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Alexander and Persepolis', *ARID* Suppl. 20 (1993), 177–88.

[38] Weber (n. 12), 95. Sheridan may not agree (*BNJ* 127 F 2 'Commentary'), but with the admittedly pliable support of the *Romance* I can only take this 'last dinner' as the one that immediately preceded Medius' invitation.

[39] Sheridan (*FGrHist* 127 F 2 'Translation') rightly insisted on the sense of ἠγωνίσατο, 'recited it as if he were contending for a prize'. For analogous scenes at Macedonian symposia see Carney (n. 1), 146, 152.

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πίνειν παρὰ Μηδίῳ: 'he drank with Medius'

The last carouse led Alexander to his meeting with Medius. The terminology is variable for the event that now followed and the variation is informative. πίνειν 'drink' is the simple verb chosen in the *Ephemerides* [1]. Nicobule [3] had συμπόσιον 'symposium' twice (perhaps recalling the symposium which Alcibiades interrupted), but why, in this same fragment, do we find the participle δειπνῶν 'dining'? The *Itinerarium* [11] suggests that this would have been an easy term to choose, albeit misleading: there had indeed been a dinner at Medius' and Alexander arrived as it ended.

Meanwhile Arrian's reader [10] might want to know why Alexander accepted the invitation. The claim that Medius[40] was currently the most trusted Companion appears to be an improvised response: nothing supports it. Medius according to Plutarch (*Quomodo adul.* 65C) by spreading rumours about Callisthenes, Parmenion and Philotas had some responsibility for the deaths of all three.[41]

Arrian (7.24.4, 7.27.2) and Diodorus (17.117.1) called the event at Medius' a κῶμος; Arrian (7.24.4) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 75.4) used the verb κωμάζω: Justin (12.13.7) and the *Itinerarium* [11] offer *comisatio*, the same term as a loanword in Latin. Cleitarchus, a source for Diodorus and potentially for others, perhaps employed this word. It would be a natural usage for an author distant from the event, since a κῶμος was what classically followed a δεῖπνον and συμπόσιον. This word choice differs sharply from that of the *Ephemerides*, conceivably drafted on the day after the event: in its author's mind κωμάζειν was what Alexander began to do when he set off for bed and ceased to do when he accepted Medius' invitation.

The claim that there were twenty guests is made by Nicobule [3] and, with a list of names added, in the *Romance* [5].[42] Twenty meant little in a Greek context but was appropriate in Macedonian conviviality, given that there are said to have been twenty guests at the dinner that celebrated the marriage of Caranus (Hippolochus at Ath. *Deipn.* 128c); the number twenty has archaeological support in Macedonia, as Carney observes.[43]

Another reason for Nicobule to have mentioned this number emerges in the light of the extract from Ephippus (Ath. *Deipn.* 434a–b = *BNJ* 126 F 3) quoted above. In Macedonian usage, when one pledged or toasted another, the other drank off the wine in the cup, and, sooner or later, returned the pledge: thus Alexander 'compelled' the twenty guests to drink (ἠνάγκαζεν: the word is Nicobule's from another context [2]), not as an absolute monarch but as a well-brought-up member of the Macedonian court. Under the same rule the twenty guests in turn would have compelled Alexander to drink off twenty cups, as he of course foresaw.[44]

σκύφον Ἡρακλέους ἐκπιών: 'draining the bowl of Heracles'

Aristobulus promoted a viewpoint on such events: 'Those drinking parties [πότοι], so Aristobulus says, were prolonged not for the sake of the wine but out of affability to his

[40] H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Munich, 1926), 2.261 (no. 521).

[41] See O'Sullivan (n. 1).

[42] R. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great*, rev. ed. (London, 2004), ch. 32 notes the agreement between Nicobule and the *Romance*.

[43] Carney (n. 1), 150–1, n. 86.

[44] Pledging of this kind is illustrated in the letter of Hippolochus (Ath. *Deipn.* 129a); A. Dalby, 'Hippolochus: The wedding feast of Caranus the Macedonian', *Petits propos culinaires* 29 (1988), 37–45; B. Tripodi, 'Il banchetto di nozze del Macedone Karanos (Athen., 4, 128a–130d)', in *Ancient Macedonia* 6.2 (1999), 1219–26.

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companions' (Arr. 7.29.4 = *BNJ* 139 F 62). Aristobulus' readers dismiss this impatiently, but it may have been true at first: as Badian observed, Alexander as a new monarch 'would dine, drink and hunt with his *hetairoi* … this was how he would earn the confidence of his men'.[45] The young Alexander's diplomacy was conducted παρὰ πότον 'over a drink', said Ptolemy (*BNJ* 138 F 2), as his father's had been.

Aristobulus was certainly responding to common opinion: Alexander drank too much, as hinted by Menander below; it disordered his life, as seen in the *Ephemerides*; it contributed to his last illness, as diagnosed by Aristobulus [4], and led to his death, as Ephippus said (*BNJ* 126 F 3). However keen to dismiss the wine question, Aristobulus could not ignore it. Elsewhere he told of a Syrian soothsayer who advised Alexander to drink through the night (*BNJ* 139 F 30); he retailed Callisthenes' famous joke when refusing wine (οὐδὲν δέομαι [. . .] Ἀλεξάνδρου πιὼν τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δεῖσθαι 'after drinking Alexander's I don't want to have to call for Asclepius'': *BNJ* 139 F 32).[46]

The use of the bowl of Heracles on this occasion is clearly attested in Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius* (83.23), in the *Itinerarium* [11],[47] and in Plutarch's dismissal [9]; it is noticed allusively in Diodorus [8]. Since all these knew of it we may suggest Cleitarchus as source.

Diodorus' μέγα ποτήριον 'big cup' was evidently Plutarch's σκύφος Ἡρακλέους 'bowl of Heracles', a particular specimen of the σκύφος 'bowl',[48] fundamentally different from the modest, polite κύλιξ 'goblet'. Pownall reasonably identifies the ποτήριον δίχουν 'three-litre cup' from which Proteas and Alexander pledged one another (*BNJ* 126 F 3) with the bowl of Heracles at Medius' party.[49] She finds awareness of it in a play of Menander performed soon afterwards: κοτύλας χωροῦν δέκα ἐν Καππαδοκίᾳ κόνδυ χρυσοῦν, Στρουθία, τρὶς ἐξέπιον μεστόν γ'. – Ἀλεξάνδρου πλέον τοῦ βασιλέως πέπωκας. – οὐκ ἔλαττον, οὐ μὰ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν. – μέγα γε ('In Cappadocia I drank off three times a full gold *kondy* of ten pints.' 'You drank more than King Alexander!' 'As much, by Athena.' 'That's mega!', *Kolax* fr. 3).[50]

Having already compelled himself to drink more than any of his companions, Alexander thus drank dry the bowl of Heracles, a challenge he could scarcely refuse: it

[45] E. Badian, 'Alexander the Great between two thrones and heaven', in A. Small (ed.), *Subject and Ruler* (*JRA*, Suppl. 17, 1996), 11–26; reprinted in his *Collected Papers* (Abingdon and New York, 2012), 365–85, at 370. On the culture of the Macedonian symposium, discussed by E.N. Borza, 'The symposium at Alexander's court', *Ancient Macedonia* 3 (1983), 45–55 and K. Vössing, *Mensa regia* (Munich, 2004), see now Carney (n. 1); Pownall (n. 1); A. Kottaridi, 'The royal banquet: a capital institution', in A. Kottaridi, S. Walker (edd.), *Heracles to Alexander the Great* (Oxford, 2011), 167–80. Cf. F. Pownall, *BNJ* 139 F 62 'Commentary'.

[46] Brunt (n. 1), 67 thought Athenaeus mistaken in citing Aristobulus here because the anecdote 'shows Alexander encouraging unmixed potations', contradicting Aristobulus elsewhere. Brunt was mistaken: Aristobulus is never quoted as saying that Alexander discouraged others from drinking. Since Aristobulus borrowed from Chares he might have borrowed this. The plain anecdote is not a criticism of Alexander's drinking but of excessive drinking at his symposia: yet all depends on implications, and if the remark was reported to Alexander, as Plutarch says, it did Callisthenes no good (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 623F; O'Sullivan [n. 1], 606–8).

[47] J. Zacher, *Pseudocallisthenes* (Halle, 1867), 78–9; R. Lane Fox, 'The Itinerary of Alexander: Constantius to Julian', *CQ* 47 (1997), 239–52, at 248 n. 65; Tabacco (n. 35), 248, who rightly concludes not that the *Itinerarium* necessarily drew on Seneca, but that the σκύφος of Heracles belonged to Graeco-Roman Alexander tradition.

[48] For the σκύφος in general and that of Heracles in particular see Ath. *Deipn.* 498a–500c.

[49] Pownall (n. 1), 64.

[50] On variants in the text (quoted twice by Athenaeus, once by Plutarch) see R. Kassel and S. Schröder, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, vol. VI 1 (Berlin and Boston, 2022), 257 with references. Two χόες equal twelve *kotylai*.

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was the annual festival of the death of Heracles on Mount Oeta in Thessaly;[51] Medius was a Thessalian and was celebrating, as the *Liber de morte* [6] says; Alexander himself was the descendant of Heracles.

μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ ἀνεπαύετο: 'soon afterwards he went to sleep'

Plutarch again denied [9], as did Arrian (7.27.2), that immediately after drinking Alexander cried aloud and was carried or led away. The detail of the 'great cry' might have originated in the same reality as Aristobulus' statement that Alexander φρενιτιᾶσαι 'suffered a frenzy' [4], or it might have arisen long after the event. It is mentioned by the authors of all surviving narratives except the two texts conceivably written by eye-witnesses: it would be out of scope for the *Ephemerides*; Nicobule said nothing of it, offering the less exciting fact that Alexander 'left the symposium' [3].

In the *Ephemerides* [1] 'withdrawing and bathing [he] slept'. To this Nicobule added an unexpected scrap of knowledge: how long it took Alexander to go to sleep [3]. How could she know that? An answer is suggested by a citation that follows closely in Athenaeus: 'Polycleitus of Larissa in Book 8 of his *Histories* says that Alexander slept on a gold couch, and that flute-players female and male always followed him to camp and drank till dawn' (*Deipn.* 539a = *FGrHist* 128 F 1). If Nicobule had been one of the artistes at court during these last days,[52] she could indeed have observed, or learned from colleagues on κῶμος duty, how long it was before Alexander fell asleep.

There may seem to be a timeslip dividing the *Ephemerides* from other sources as regards the day following the last carouse: Alexander again dined with Medius, again drank, and, now feverish, slept in the bathhouse. Was there, then, a dinner and drinking party on the next day? A report compiled day by day of the king's *acta* differs from screenshots of rumour that show a semi-conscious Alexander, helped to bed, never to recover. It made no difference if he took some food and drank with his host on the next day: to Nicobule [2] his 'last dinner' was his recital from the *Andromeda* and celebration with the artistes on the day before.

πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα οἶδα ἀναγεγραμμένα: 'I know that much else has been written'

This was the last day on which Alexander played the normal part of a Macedonian monarch; after about eleven days he died.[53]

There was a silence: Justin (13.1.1) and Curtius (10.5.7) said exactly that; it may have been Arrian who called it 'a silence deeper than any desert' (*Suda* s.v. σιγηλός; Arrian, τὰ μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρον fr. 9 Roos). Yet the silence was broken and the causes of Alexander's death were discussed. Justin alone, rarely credited, states that two explanations were in

[51] Welles (n. 37), 466 n. 1: 'There was an annual festival of the death of Heracles on Mt. Oeta, with which Medius, as a Thessalian, was familiar.' On this festival see M. Finkelberg, 'The second stasimon of the *Trachiniae* and Heracles' festival on Mount Oeta', *Mnemosyne* 49 (1996), 129–43 with references to work by Nilsson, Burkert and others.

[52] The suggestion may recall Olson's, though he decided that the ascription to Nicobule is false: she was 'presumably a famous courtesan known to have associated with Alexander, and who could therefore be presented as an eye-witness of his final hours' (S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters*, vol. V [Cambridge, MA, 2009], 75 n. 97). Sheridan (*BNJ* 127 'Biographical essay') comments that, if Nicobule was indeed a courtesan, she would count as a reliable witness.

[53] On the afternoon of 28th Daesius according to the *Ephemerides*; on the last day of that month according to Aristobulus, both sources quoted by Plutarch (*Alex.* 75.6 = *FGrHist* 117 F 3b; 76.9 = *FGrHist* 139 F 59). See L. Depuydt, 'The time of death of Alexander the Great', *WO* 28 (1997), 117–35.

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play: 'His friends put it about that his immoderate drunkenness was the cause, but in fact there was treachery, covered up by the power of the Successors' (12.13.10, cf. 12.16.12).[54]

As to immoderate drinking, Ephippus indeed wrote of the revenge of Dionysus, but he is not numbered among Alexander's friends. If Justin is to be taken at his word, we must rather look to Nicobule and to Eumenes. The latter, secretary and friend, might have published the *Ephemerides* soon after the king's death.[55] In this apparently official text evidence is offered that would support the claim of excessive drinking,[56] also of death from fever; but additionally a handle is given to possible rumours of 'treachery', that is, of poisoning. A time and place are offered—a private party, a night of heavy drinking—where poisoning could have occurred; it is placed on record that thenceforth the king lay at Medius' or in a temple or a bath-house, increasingly ill, eventually unable to speak, soon to die (*BNJ* 117 F 2–3).[57]

Plutarch said that 'no one was suspected of poisoning at the time' (*Alex.* 77.2).[58] That was certainly not true. 'A great many believed that he was killed by poison [. . .]. Believed or not, the story was soon extinguished by the power of those whom it implicated' (Curtius 10.10.14–18); '[Some of the writers say] that after [Alexander's] death, [Antipater] being all-powerful in Europe and after him his son Cassander, many authors did not dare to write about the poison' (Diod. Sic. 17.117.7–118.2). Now it is asserted by an unnamed but often reliable author that the Athenian orator Hypereides proposed a decree honouring Iollas 'who was thought to have given Alexander the poison' ([Plut.] *X orat.* 849F);[59] this would have occurred in late summer 323 and would help to explain the special enthusiasm shown by Iollas' father Antipater in tracking down, torturing and killing Hypereides late in the following year (admittedly he had other reasons for revenging himself on Hypereides).[60] All this reinforces the impression that Plutarch was wrong and that Justin, Diodorus and Curtius were right: there were rumours of poison and they were silenced.[61]

[54] B. Bartlett, 'Justin's *Epitome*', *Histos* 8 (2014), 246–83, at 258–63. Other witnesses to the text of Trogus exist at this point (O. Seel, *Pompei Trogi fragmenta* [Leipzig, 1956], fr. 101). All but one agree with Justin's general assertion that poison was the cause. The exception, Ampelius, reports uncertainty whether Alexander died 'from heavy drinking or by poison' (*Liber memorialis* 16): this could be taken to agree with the specific sentence quoted above. Overall Justin is justified.

[55] Nicobule perhaps chimed with the narrative that heavy drinking caused Alexander's death (Sheridan, *BNJ* 127 F 1 'Commentary'); the *Ephemerides* 'may have been produced at Babylon in the months before [Eumenes] moved to Asia Minor to assume his satrapy' (Bosworth, *From Arrian* [n. 1], 182).

[56] 'If the *King's Journal* was forged, as some have held, it is worth noting *en passant* that it was forged by those who wished to represent Alexander as a drunkard', yet 'On the matter of forgery is it likely that a forger, aiming to prove Alexander a drunkard, would have produced such a feeble case as the two citations from the *King's Journal* provide?' Thus N.G.L. Hammond, *Alexander the Great: King, Commander and Statesman* (Bristol, 1989^3), 279, 280.

[57] Bosworth nonetheless thought that details were 'carefully selected to exclude suspicions of foul play' (*Conquest* [n. 1], ch. 21); cf. *From Arrian* (n. 1), 182–3.

[58] Thus Hamilton (n. 1), 213; an alternative translation is 'There was no suspicion of poison at the time'.

[59] Bosworth ('Death' [n. 1]; 'Ptolemy' [n. 1], 208; *From Arrian* [n. 1], 175) took this seriously; so did Badian, for good reasons ('The ring and the book', in W. Will, J. Heinrichs [edd.], *Zu Alexander d. Gr.: Festschrift G. Wirth* 1 [Amsterdam, 1987], 605–25; reprinted in his *Collected papers* [Abingdon and New York, 2012], 325–37, at 333 and n. 9). Hamilton (n. 1), 214 and Hammond, *Three Historians* (n. 1), 187–8 n. 55 dismissed the story.

[60] See J. Walsh ('Antipater and early Hellenistic literature', *AHB* 26 [2012], 149–62, at 154–8) on Antipater at this period.

[61] See, however, the comments of G.T. Griffith, 'Alexander and Antipater in 323 B.C.', *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 8 (1965), 12–17, at 16–17.

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The statement of the *Liber de morte* [6] that Onesicritus abstained from listing those who were at the last carouse offers further support. Onesicritus wrote one of the earliest accounts of Alexander's adventures: native of Astypalaea, well within reach of Antipater and Cassander, it is likely enough that he feared reprisal.[62]

Ephippus, too, wrote very soon after Alexander's death. Given his title, one would have expected him to say much more than that (as quoted above) Alexander 'sickened and died'. To Nicobule no word on the days following Medius' party is attributed. These points may, however, mean nothing: both authors were little read and rarely quoted.

μηνύσεως γενομένης: 'when information was revealed'

The presence at Medius' of Alexander's personal cupbearer, Iollas, is well attested. Olympias thought he was there (Plut. *Alex.* 77.2); he was there according to Justin (12.14.6) and the *Romance* [5]. Arrian outlined the story clearly, disbelievingly, in indirect speech: 'I know that much else has been written about Alexander's death: that Antipater sent him a drug and that he took it and died; that Aristotle, already fearing Alexander because of Callisthenes,[63] had created the drug for Antipater and that it was given him by Cassander's younger brother Iollas; that Iollas was the royal cupbearer and had been in some way abused by [Alexander] shortly before his death; and others say that Medius, who was Iollas' lover, had a part in it—for it was he who brought Alexander into the *kômos*' (7.27.1–2).

Once he had taken control in Egypt, Ptolemy had no reprisals to fear. Yet Arrian observes at the moment of Alexander's death that 'neither Aristobulus nor Ptolemy narrates otherwise than this' (7.26.3), meaning that he found nothing in them to contradict the *Ephemerides*.[64] Now Aristobulus is quoted by Plutarch [4] for an account so brief that a dispute between him and the *Ephemerides* can scarcely arise: we may gather from Arrian's cryptic statement that Ptolemy was similarly brief.[65] In general

[62] *FGrHist* 134 F 37. Onesicritus 'appears to have condemned the guests at Medios' dinner-party without naming them' (Heckel [n. 1], 2).

[63] Such a collaboration might easily have arisen if Alexander's letter to Antipater, quoted by Plutarch (*Alex.* 55), were genuine (which is possible: Hamilton, 'Letters' [n. 24], 16; Hamilton [n. 1], 214) and if Antipater had transmitted its contents to Aristotle. The letter accused Callisthenes ('the sophist') of participating in the Pages' Conspiracy and continued: 'I shall punish the sophist and those who sent him.' That meant Callisthenes and Aristotle. On the relations between Aristotle and Antipater see Walsh (n. 60), 150–1.

[64] Thus Hammond (n. 8), 144 and others. An alternative translation is 'The accounts of both Aristobulus and Ptolemy end at this point' (Pearson [n. 1], 260; Bosworth [n. 3], 1.23–4). J. Roisman ('Ptolemy and his rivals in his history of Alexander', *CQ* 34 [1984], 373–85, at 379) concluded that Arrian in Book 7 (covering Alexander's last months in Babylon) used Ptolemy very little; K. Nawotka, 'Arrian on the last days and the death of Alexander', in R. Rollinger, J. Degen (edd.), *The World of Alexander in Perspective* (Wiesbaden, 2022), 13–24, at 18, likewise stated that 'in the account of [Alexander's] last days [Arrian's] principal source is Aristobulus', who is much more frequently named in Arrian's Book 7 than in preceding books.

[65] Hammond (n. 8), following predecessors, wished to show from Arrian that Ptolemy based his work on the *Ephemerides.* This is 'impossible to sustain', Bosworth (n. 3), 23 rightly concluded. It is unknown whether Ptolemy ever read or cited the *Ephemerides* (L. Pearson, 'The diary and the letters of Alexander the Great', *Historia* 3 [1955], 429–55; id. [n. 1], 194–6), still less whether he cited them at this point. If Ptolemy had been present during the last days, and chose, as he sometimes did, not to tell his story, why, in this solitary case, would he borrow another's? On the other hand, if Ptolemy habitually fell back on the *Ephemerides* and did so here, why would Arrian cite them and not Ptolemy here, citing Ptolemy without mention of the *Ephemerides* elsewhere?

Bosworth later returned to the old theory (*From Arrian* [n. 1], 159–67), additionally proposing that Arrian took the *Ephemerides* extract from Ptolemy while silently intercalating three passages from

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Ptolemy (as reported by Arrian) gave few insights into events at court, unlikely as they were to contribute to his own credit or to Alexander's.[66] If he was present on this occasion (as claimed in the *Romance*) it was nothing to be proud of, and he let the incident drop from his memoir.

Yet it was in Egypt, in Ptolemy's time and after, that the silence would be breached. Estimates of the date of Cleitarchus' *Histories of Alexander* (*BNJ* 134) have varied greatly. Early dates, before 300, have been widely accepted,[67] although according to Diogenes Laertius (2.113) 'Cleitarchus', not further identified, was a student of Stilpo the Megarian philosopher, who was contemporary with Ptolemy I and may have taught at Alexandria.[68] It now appears that W.W. Tarn and others were right to place Cleitarchus' work later,[69] if, as *P.Oxy.* 4808 affirms, he was in government service in Alexandria and was tutor to the future Ptolemy IV Philopator: he would then have died not before 235;[70] the sensational material that Cleitarchus offered, disdained by Arrian (who never named him) and Plutarch, but enjoyed by others, was not after all owed to his presence on Alexander's expedition but to his access to memoirs and documents. Plutarch cited him once (*Alex.* 46 = *BNJ* 137 F 15) and probably used him more often.[71] As noted at the outset, Cleitarchus' work probably underlies the narratives of Diodorus and Curtius. If so, it would then be Cleitarchus' version of the drinking at Medius', featuring the bowl of Heracles, that Plutarch knew [9] and Diodorus accepted [8].[72]

It would be through another source, not Cleitarchus, that Trogus heard of the story circulated by 'Alexander's friends' that excessive drinking caused the king's death. Through this source Trogus learned that Medius was the only man in Babylon that the poisoners could trust (Just. 12.13.10, 12.14.7). This source asserted that the poisoning story was true, and Trogus and the compiler of the *Liber de morte* accepted it. Iollas, Alexander's cupbearer beloved by Medius, plays no part in the narratives that mention the bowl of Heracles: he is in the *Romance* [5], the *Liber de morte* (96–9), Justin (12.14.6, 9) and Arrian (7.27.2).[73]

Aristobulus; reviewers were unconvinced (notably F.W. Walbank in *JHS* 110 [1990], 255–6). Why would Arrian, in this solitary case, thus mislead the reader? If the *Ephemerides* were available to Plutarch and Aelian, why would Arrian go to Ptolemy for them?

[66] Pearson (n. 1), 210–11; R.M. Errington, 'Bias in Ptolemy's history of Alexander', *CQ* 19 (1969), 233–42; Roisman (n. 64).

[67] '*c.* 310': J.R. Hamilton, 'Cleitarchus and Aristobulus', *Historia* 10 (1961), 448–58, at 450–1; similarly E. Baynham, 'The ancient evidence for Alexander the Great', in J. Roisman (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden, 2003), 3–29, at 10–11. L. Prandi, *Fortuna e realtà dell'opera di Clitarco* (Stuttgart, 1996) likewise favoured an early date, and continued to do so in later work. R. Lane Fox ('P.Oxy. 4808 and historians', in K. Nawotka et al. [edd.], *The Historiography of Alexander the Great* [Wiesbaden, 2018], 91–104) considered the mention of Ptolemy IV an error: indeed, if Pliny can be accused of error on the date of Cleitarchus, so can the author of *P.Oxy.* 4808.

[68] T.S. Brown, 'Clitarchus', *AJPh* 71 (1950), 134–55, at 135–7.

[69] 'After 280, perhaps as late as 260': this is Hamilton's (n. 67), 448 summary of Tarn (n. 1), 5–43 and it would agree with Brown's conclusions (n. 68), but Hamilton himself was not persuaded. 'In or after 273': R.A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda* (Toronto, 2000), 7–17, for good reasons.

[70] C.S. Chrysanthou, 'P. Oxy. LXXI 4808: *bios*, character, and literary criticism', *ZPE* 193 (2015), 25–38, nn. 8–13 for earlier views on the date of Cleitarchus.

[71] Hamilton (n. 1), 208–9.

[72] Cf. Hammond (n. 1), 108–9.

[73] The two most eclectic authors must be noticed separately. Plutarch indeed named Iollas, but only in the context of Olympias' revenge (*Alex.* 77.2). Arrian (7.27.1–2) mentioned him more fully, noting that he was, or was said to be, Medius' lover and had recently been injured by Alexander, an incident recounted less vaguely in the *Romance* (3.31.5). Parallels between Arrian and the *Romance* are seldom discussed, but see Nawotka (n. 64), 18–20.

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εἴκοσιν οὖσιν ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ: 'there being twenty at the symposium'

'Trogus' source' (if I may usurp that term),[74] or at least Justin, by asserting that Medius, alone of those in Babylon, was told of the poisoning plot (12.14.7), contradicts the claim in the *Romance* [5, 6] that it was known to fourteen of the twenty men at the party.

Of the alleged symposiasts a few recur in the 'Testament of Alexander', a few in other episodes of the *Romance*, but the majority occur there only once; yet all can be identified, confidently or doubtfully, in historical sources. A list of real names most of which would mean nothing to the intended reader suggests, not necessarily that the list was valid, but that it originated at an early date when those names had relevance. 'All twenty men are known independently to have had reason to be at Babylon', wrote Lane Fox; Samuel rightly jibbed at this,[75] but none of them can be shown not to have been in Babylon. To create even such a credible list as that was a rare achievement.[76]

In considering the question whether the list is valid we can observe what the twenty men have in common. There is no justification for a general claim that they were Alexander's closest friends or particular friends of Medius. They appear to be a random sample of Companions and others who were in Babylon—until one looks forward, with Heckel, at what they would be doing in 317/315.

Among those who 'did not know', Perdiccas is dead; the fate of Olcias is unknown. Still alive are Ptolemy, Lysimachus and Asander, relatively unattached. Eumenes, fighting for the legitimate succession, close to Olympias, opposed to Antigonus Monophthalmus and Demetrius Poliorcetes, is to die in 315.

Among those who 'knew', Leonnatus has turned against Perdiccas and Eumenes and is now dead, as is Meleager, executed long ago by Perdiccas. Peithon, having abandoned Eumenes, is soon to die. Alive are Medius, Philotas, Nearchus and Menander, certainly attached to Antigonus; Ariston, Philip the engineer and Heracleides the Thracian, attached to Antigonus if they have been correctly identified. Seleucus (tentatively restored to the list), Stasanor and Peucestas, unattached in 317, are destined to submit to Antigonus in 316.[77]

On this basis Heckel dated to the years 317/316 the construction of the list, testament and letter to the Rhodians that are combined in the *Liber de morte*, proposing that its purpose was to support the Polyperchon faction:[78] in 318/317 Polyperchon, newly in power, recalled Olympias to Macedon (Diod. Sic. 18.57.2), whereupon 'information was revealed', said Plutarch cryptically, and Olympias, among other acts of retribution, desecrated the grave of Iollas 'who had served the poison' to Alexander, thus 'avenging his death' (Plut. *Alex.* 77.2;

[74] Employed by Tarn in a different context (*The Greeks in Bactria and India* [Cambridge, 1938], 45).

[75] Lane Fox (n. 42), ch. 32 (and already in the 1973 edition); A.E. Samuel, 'The earliest elements in the Alexander Romance', *Historia* 35 (1986), 427–37.

[76] Heckel (n. 1), 31 noted that in the testament 'the greatest care was taken to create verisimilitude by including only known, historical figures'.

[77] Authorities for this brief survey, apart from Heckel (n. 1), 35–47, are: Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander* (Oxford, 2002), 1–28; Berve (n. 40); R.A. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State* (Berkeley, 1990), 361–444. Philip the doctor could have been present, but he 'had form' (having previously been accused of poisoning) and might be listed for that reason. Some recensions list Cassander, a copyist's error for Asander.

[78] Heckel (n. 1), 79–81; he suggested that the document was created by Olcias, following R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans* (Munich, 1977^2), 171–3. Olcias is said in the *Romance* (3.33.1) and *Liber de morte* (106) to have guarded Alexander's testament: after an adventure in 319 (Polyaenus 4.6.6) no more is heard of him (Billows [n. 77], 412–13). On Polyperchon see W. Heckel, *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire* (London, 1992), 173–89.

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Diod. Sic. 19.11).[79] So the same political intrigue entailed the stirring of Olympias, the 'revealing of information' to her and, if Heckel was right, the circulation of a document that would become the *Liber de morte* and would form part of the *Romance*.

For reasons deriving from the associated texts Bosworth preferred to date that document to 309/308 and to name Ptolemy as responsible. Baynham, writing in the same volume, agreed, starting from an analysis of the gruesome portent also described in the *Liber de morte*. If this dating is accepted then Ptolemy inspired the adoption of the poison story and the forging of the 'Testament' in what I may call an unattributable appendix to his memoir.[80]

Samuel had argued that the list of those who drank with Medius was a separate document in origin, 'independent of politics', 'going back to accurate knowledge of those present';[81] we know that the poison story was already spreading as Olympias returned to Macedon; the longer the time lapse between Alexander's last carouse and the creation of the list, the more difficult its creation would have been. We may postulate that if a list existed in memory from the beginning, it was radically revised to become part of the poison story in a document of about 317/315; a few years later this was attached, with Ptolemy's approval, to the forged testament of Alexander. Heckel has shown, more fully than others, that the list as we have it is weighted with later significance. Too many of the guests who 'knew', scarcely linked together in 323, are aligned with Antigonus or against Olympias and Eumenes in 317/316. Medius can hardly have been so prescient.

The question whether there was poison in 323, and whether at least Medius knew of it, is not my subject:[82] I add only that any who knew of it would have laid plans for a future beyond the king's death. There is little sign that anyone had.

πυρέττοντα μανικῶς: 'with a raging fever'

It is probable that Aristobulus used Chares of Mitylene (*FGrHist* 125) as a source on events at Alexander's court:[83] on several occasions the two agreed, and Chares was among the earlier of Alexander's contemporaries to publish a memoir, while Aristobulus was among the latest. Yet no one quoted Chares on the last days. A native of Mytilene, within reach of Antipater and his son, perhaps Chares was one of those who decided to say nothing.

As for Aristobulus [4], it cannot be certain that he was describing an incident of the day in question, but it hardly mattered. The connection would be made, since the party at Medius' was already prominent in the record and linked with Alexander's terminal illness. Admittedly the *Ephemerides* [1] first noted Alexander's fever on the following day, but this is because the fever first affected his movements on that day. Feverishness at a drinking party would have been out of scope.

[79] Cf. Diod. Sic. 17.118; Pausanias 1.11.4, 8.7.7; Hamilton (n. 1), 214. For discussion see Bosworth, 'Death' (n. 1); E.D. Carney, *Olympias, Mother of Alexander the Great* (London, 2006), 62–4, 74–9.

[80] Bosworth, 'Ptolemy' (n. 1); Baynham, 'Baleful birth' (n. 1).

[81] Samuel (n. 75), 435–7.

[82] Bosworth in 1971 ('Death' [n. 1]) took Ephippus, Nicobule and the *Ephemerides* to be propaganda in opposition to the poison story, which he thought likely to be true. If the thesis of its truth were admitted, the next step would be to identify the poison. Among those who have proceeded on this basis, see L.J. Schep et al., 'Was the death of Alexander the Great due to poisoning? Was it *Veratrum album*?', *Clinical Toxicology* 52 (2013), 72–7, giving reasons for their choice of white hellebore.

[83] Tarn (n. 1), 272; Pearson (n. 1), 54; E. Badian, 'Conspiracies', in A.B. Bosworth, E.J. Baynham (edd.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), 50–95, at 72; reprinted in his *Collected Papers* (Abingdon and New York, 2012), 420–56.

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Alexander's pathological thirst was not plucked out of the air: Aristobulus had used it to explain an immediately preceding incident (Arr. 7.24.1–3 = *FGrHist* 139 F 58).[84] A physician would probably have employed the expression 'raging fever' of a later stage in an illness, after the 'frenzy', closer to coma and death;[85] but much depends on the cause of fever, and Aristobulus was not a physician. None the less he was right in humoral theory: however thirsty, a feverish patient must not assuage that thirst with wine.

The writers of the surviving narratives, three to four centuries later, were at a loss. Arrian had based himself throughout on Aristobulus and Ptolemy, but Ptolemy, though often an eye-witness, wrote of court events only what was public knowledge, while Aristobulus, probably not present, swept them aside. Here Arrian did not trouble to cite Aristobulus, who apparently covered the last days in sixteen words, or Ptolemy, who apparently had nothing to add. Diodorus, alone, gives us [8] the probable Cleitarchus version, including a couple of details that Plutarch had read and explicitly rejected [9]. Another source, reflected in Justin [7] and in the *Romance* [5, 6], was known to Arrian (7.27.1–2), but he did not trust it. Onesicritus, Ephippus and Chares were apparently unhelpful. Perhaps no later writers except Pliny and Athenaeus ran Nicobule [2, 3] to earth. Plutarch fortunately cited Aristobulus [4]; beyond him, distrusting Cleitarchus and disliking the poisoning narrative, Plutarch and Arrian were left with no source worth naming except the *Ephemerides* [1].

Excessive drinking and poison having been the popular theories at first, Aristobulus has the honour of being the earliest writer to state plainly a third cause of death: a fever to which ill-considered drinking contributed. The fever is now identified most often as *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria,[86] though *Salmonella typhi* is a serious contender.[87] If Aristobulus is right, the last carouse was not the underlying cause of anything, but it was the moment at which Alexander himself, a courtly Macedonian monarch who had become too divine to listen to reason,[88] was encouraged to bring about his own death.

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[84] Zambrini (n. 23), 219.

[85] For example, Hippocratic corpus, *Epidemics* 7.1.11. A 'raging thirst' is described at 7.1.20. It is easy to overlook the use of μανικῶς in a medical context by non-medical authors. I missed it here at first, being slow to realize that K. Ziegler emended the text in Plutarch to νεανικῶς (*Plutarchi Vitae parallelae*, vol. II, fasc. 2 [Leipzig, 1968], 251).

[86] Engels (n. 26) named *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria as the underlying cause of Alexander's death, tracing the suggestion to E. Littré, *Médecine et médecins* (Paris, 1872), 406–15.

[87] *Salmonella typhi* enteritis, complicated by bowel perforation and ascending paralysis, was the diagnosis of D.W. Oldach and colleagues, reported by Borza and Reames-Zimmerman (n. 18) at 24–6; the latter proposed bereavement (Hephaestion's death) and alcohol abuse as contributing factors (27–9). Atkinson et al. (n. 1) consider several alternatives, including malaria, noting counter-indications in each case.

Oldach's team was, I think, unaware of the Aristobulus fragment, which is often dismissed as an attempt to 'absolve Alexander of the charge of excessive drinking': thus Pownall (*BNJ* 139 F 59 'Commentary') following Brunt ([n. 1], 65), Bosworth (*From Arrian* [n. 1], 183) and others.

[88] J.R. Hamilton, 'Alexander and his "so-called" father', *CQ* 3 (1953), 151–7, at 156. Hamilton, dating Alexander's letter to the Athenians (Plut. *Alex.* 28) to the last months of his life, found him 'in a very queer state of mind' concerning his divine filiation.

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