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A NEW MACEDONIAN PRINCE

One of the more intriguing figures of the first period of the Successors is Nicanor, the lieutenant and admiral of Cassander.[1] He came into prominence when he assumed command of the Macedonian garrison at Athens, late in 319 B.C. After distinguishing himself there he took a fleet to the Bosporus, where with Antigonus' collaboration he won a decisive victory over Polyperchon's royal navy. Subsequently his aspirations became sufficiently lofty to threaten his patron's security, and Cassander took elaborate precautions to ensure his arrest and condemnation. Nicanor was clearly a figure of considerable importance; yet no source even hints at his origins and family background. Can conjecture go any way to filling the gaps?

There is a canonical answer and an easy equation. Nicanor, it is assumed, was the adopted son and destined son-in-law of Aristotle and confidential agent of Alexander the Great.[2] This Nicanor is a familiar figure. He is named several times in Aristotle's will, as one of its chief executors and the intended husband of the philosopher's daughter, Pythais.[3] The late neoplatonic *Lives* of Aristotle add that Nicanor was the son of the philosopher's benefactor, Proxenus of Atarneus, educated by Aristotle and subsequently adopted as his own son.[4] This late and intrinsically suspect testimony is underpinned by a hellenistic proxeny decree from Ephesus, which honours Nicanor, son of Aristotle, of Stageira.[5] Nicanor, then, was officially styled son of Aristotle and had the philosopher's domicile. Indeed Aristotle's will mentions offerings to Zeus Soter and Athene, which are to be dedicated at Stageira in the event of Nicanor's safe return.[6] Nicanor was away from Greece at the time Aristotle drafted his will, and there can be no doubt that he was at the court of Alexander. He was certainly the Nicanor commissioned to make public the Exiles' Decree at the Olympic Games of 324, when his advent caused considerable interest and agitation.[7] He was not merely

[1] The standard treatment is that of H. Berve, *RE* xvii.267–8 (Nikanor [4]), a conservative compendium of accepted views. General accounts of the period of the Successors deal with Nicanor's activities to some degree (see most recently R. A. Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed* [Berkeley, 1990] 86–8), but there is as yet no formal study of him in his own right.

[2] This is a time-hallowed theory, stated without argument by J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte der Hellenismus* ii².1 [Gotha, 1878] 186 and reiterated by R. Heberdey, '*Νικάνωρ Ἀριστοτέλους Σταγειρίτης*', in *Festschrift Th. Gomperz* (Vienna, 1902) 412–16. See also K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* iv² (Berlin, 1925–7) 1.100, 2.457; H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Munich, 1926) ii.277, n. 557; *RE* xvii.267; G. T. Griffith in *OCD*² Nicanor (1); G. Wirth, *Kl.P.* iv.98, Nikanor (5); N. G. L. Hammond and F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia* iii (Oxford, 1988) 209.

[3] Diog. Laert. 5.12–16. For discussion see I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg, 1957), 61–5).

[4] *Vit. Marciana* 3 (Düring pp. 96–7); Usaibia 3 (Düring, p. 214).

[5] *Inschr. Ephes.* 2011. The inscription was first published by Heberdey (above, n. 2), who saw that it confirmed the tradition of adoption. His views have been largely accepted by historians (cf. Berve, *RE* xvii.267), though students of philosophy have been surprisingly cautious (Düring, 63–4; A. H. Chroust, *Aristotle* [London, 1973] i.196).

[6] Diog. Laert. 5.16: *ἀναθεῖναι δὲ καὶ Νικάνορα σωθέντα ἣν εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ηὐξάμην. ζῶα λίθινα τετραπήχη Διὶ σωτῆρι καὶ Ἀθηνᾷ σωτείρᾳ ἐν Σταγείροις.*

[7] Diod. 18.8.3 (*Νικάνορα τὸν Σταγειρίτην*); Hypereid. *c. Dem.* col. 18; Din. 1.81–2, 103; cf. Berve (above, n. 2) ii.276, n. 557.

a courier but negotiated with interested statesmen, notably Demosthenes;[8] and he must have reported back to Alexander in Asia. This Nicanor is repeatedly described as a native of Stageira. His presence in Alexander's entourage is a perfect explanation of Aristotle's vows for his safe return and his absence from Greece at the time of Aristotle's death.[9]

Was Nicanor of Stageira also Cassander's lieutenant? That has hitherto been an almost universal assumption, but the assumption is rarely defended. Other than the identity of name there is the fact that Antipater is named in Aristotle's will as senior executor and an arbitrator of last resort,[10] and Aristotle's heir might be expected to have been on terms of intimacy with Antipater's son. What is more, Nicanor could have been soon dead. He apparently married Pythais, but his wife was presently free to marry Procles, scion of the long-standing ruling house of Teuthrania and descendant of Damaratus of Sparta, and sometime before 300 took her third husband, the distinguished physician Metrodorus.[11] Whether Pythais was widowed or divorced by Nicanor we do not know, but the facts are consistent with his dying around 317 B.C. However, doubts immediately supervene. Pythais' second marriage seems an abrupt decline. First married to the victor of the Bosporus, the ally of Antigonus, she then took the hand of a local dignitary of philosophical inclination, a petty dynast within the expanding empire of Antigonus.

Misalliances, we may concede, do occur,[12] but there are far more perturbing anomalies to explain. The role Cassander assigned to Nicanor was a particularly delicate one. He had to establish himself at Athens without the mandate of the regent Polyperchon and persuade Menyllus, the previous garrison commander, to surrender office. Not only that. Once Cassander had declared himself against Polyperchon, Nicanor's loyalty needed to be above suspicion, if he was to hold Athens against the inevitable pressures from the regent—and the Queen Mother.[13] It is hard to see how Aristotle's adopted son could fulfil such demands. An agent of Alexander, high in the king's favour and ten years separated from Macedonia, he is hardly likely to have been intimate with Cassander. It is also difficult to understand how a Greek of Nicanor's background was able to command the loyalty of a Macedonian garrison, to such a degree that even Cassander had difficulty removing him.[14] It was an achievement (on a smaller scale) to rank with that of Eumenes of Cardia, yet there

[8] Din. 1.82, 103. On the background see E. Badian, 'Harpalus', *JHS* 81 (1961) 32–3; N. G. Ashton, 'The Lamian War – A False Start?', *Antichthon* 17 (1983) 50–2; A. B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire* (Cambridge, 1988) 220–2.

[9] There has been a tendency to argue for some specific 'dangerous mission' (cf. Düring [above, n. 3] 62, 271), but the general hazards of life around Alexander will have been great enough to justify vows for Nicanor's safe return. Particularly so after the fall of Callisthenes, which seems to have had no impact upon Nicanor but cannot have left Aristotle free of anxiety.

[10] Diog. Laert. 5.11,13; cf. Düring (above, n. 3) 62.

[11] The details are provided by Sextus Empiricus, *adv. math.* 1.258 (Düring [above, n. 3] 268, T 11b). Pythais had two offspring from her second marriage, Procles and Demaratus, who studied with Theophrastus; and Aristoteles, her child by Metrodorus, is named in Theophrastus' will (Diog. Laert. 5.53) as a potential student of philosophy. He was, then, a youth but not adult by the time of Theophrastus' death (c. 286), and his parents must have been married by 300.

[12] Cf. D. M. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia* (Leiden, 1977) 54 n. 30 'a shocking mésalliance', implying (I think) that the condescension was on the Teuthranian side.

[13] Diod. 18.65.1 documents Olympias' intervention in favour of her ally, Polyperchon. She had earlier made representations to Athens in the hope of having Harpalus extradited (Diod. 17.108.7) and was popular there (Diod. 18.65.2). But as wife of Philip and mother of Alexander she also would have had considerable moral influence upon Nicanor's Macedonians (cf. Diod. 19.11.2; Justin 14.5.9–10), and Nicanor obviously had some difficulty retaining their allegiance to Cassander.

[14] Polyaen. 4.11.2; see below, pp. 64–5.

is no reference in the sources to the origins of Nicanor the garrison commander (whereas Alexander's agent in 324 is explicitly identified as Stageirite). It is far more likely that our Nicanor was a native Macedonian, closely attached to Cassander and already acquainted with the troops who comprised the garrison of Athens. The command was of crucial importance, comparable to that of the garrison at Corinth, which Antigonus Gonatas was to place in the hands of his half-brother, Craterus, son of a Macedonian princess and a marshal of Alexander.[15] Craterus was one of the leading figures of the age, and one would expect Cassander's man in the Peiraeus to have enjoyed similar status. That cannot be said of Aristotle's adoptive son. The Ephesian proxeny decree in his honour hardly proves that his distinction continued after Alexander's death. The most likely date for its enactment is 324, when the Exiles' Decree was the most debated contemporary issue and Nicanor of Stageira was the cynosure of the Greek world.[16] There is no reason for it to be connected (as Heberdey assumed)[17] with the victory in the Bosporus.

We have to do, then, with two distinct Nicanors, the agent of Alexander and the intimate of Cassander. The most prudent course might be to leave the latter as an unknown, one of the many Macedonian Nicanors who elude further identification.[18] But there is a promising avenue of speculation. A neglected lexicographical entry, common to Harpocration and the 'Suda', lists three individuals named Nicanor: 'the son of Balacrus, another, the son of Parmenion, and another, originating from Stageira, who is mentioned by Hypereides in his speech against Demosthenes'.[19] There is no problem with the last names. The Stageirite is clearly Alexander's agent, named in the extant papyrus of Hypereides as responsible for the promulgation of the Exiles' Decree; and the son of Parmenion is Alexander's hypaspist commander, who fell victim to illness in Parthyaea shortly before the downfall of his brother, Philotas (autumn 330).[20] However, Nicanor, son of Balacrus, is not mentioned elsewhere and has not intruded into the history of the period, except as a marginal note.[21] But he is clearly a figure of some importance and featured in the historical sources used by Harpocration. The patronymic moreover is evocative. One of the men of prominence in the early years of Alexander's reign was Balacrus, son of Nicanor. A royal Bodyguard in 333, he was appointed satrap of Cilicia after Issus and died in battle during Alexander's reign.[22] Nicanor, son of Balacrus, must surely be his son, named after the paternal grandfather.

[15] Hammond and Walbank (above, n. 2) 270. For Craterus' pedigree see Moretti, *ISE* 73; Billows (above, n. 1) 396. I am grateful to a referee for pointing out the parallel.

[16] Cf. Hyp. *c. Dem.* col. 18. Given that Nicanor had some powers of negotiation and would report back to Alexander, it was wise to offer him diplomatic honours, even if one's city was not drastically affected by the Exiles' Decree.

[17] Heberdey (above, n. 2) 415–16, accepted by the editors of *Inschr. Ephes.* 2011.

[18] This is the tendency in more recent work; cf. L. A. Tritle, *Phocion the Good* (London, New York, Sydney, 1988), 53 (explicitly separated in the index from the agent of Alexander); Billows (above, n. 1) 86.

[19] 'Suda' s.v. *Νικάνωρ*, a virtual transcription of Harpocrat. s.v. *Νικάνωρ*. There is apparently no textual variation.

[20] Arr. 3.25.4; Curt. 6.6.18–19; cf. Berve (above, n. 2) ii.275, n. 554.

[21] There is no article in *RE*. The only reference I have as yet found to Nicanor, son of Balacrus, is Berve (above n. 2) ii.100, n. 200, who suggests that he was the son of Balacrus the Bodyguard. But he does not pursue the suggestion and he gives no separate listing to this Nicanor.

[22] Arr. 2.12.2 (appointment to Cilicia); Diod. 18.22.1 (death). For Balacrus' coinage, including a unique stater with his name (*BAΛAKPOY*) in full, see H. von Aulock, 'Die Prägung des Balakros in Kilikien', *JNG* 14 (1964) 79–82; M. J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus* (London, Zurich, 1991) 370.

Balacrus' wife is on attestation, though in a very questionable source. Antonius Diogenes, a novelist of the second century A.D., told of a letter by Balacrus to his wife, reporting a picturesque discovery after the fall of Tyre. The wife's name is given: Phila, daughter of Antipater.[23] This is material difficult to handle. The content of the letter is quite clearly fiction, but it is presented in a historical context. Hephaestion and Parmenion, both historical personages and present at the siege, are mentioned by name in the letter; and the letter itself purports to come from Balacrus, who might well have been represented writing to his wife about events in Tyre.[24] But is the wife's name authentic? *Prima facie* it would seem so. Phila is a known figure, and it is hardly likely that a novelist would invent a fictitious marriage between individuals not otherwise associated. For the reader to suspend belief it is necessary that the setting be readily credible. If, then, a wife needed to be provided for Balacrus, it was easiest to give her a fictitious name. The reader should not have been confronted with an otherwise unknown first husband for the wife of Craterus and Demetrius Poliorcetes. It looks as though a pearl of historical truth is embedded in the dross of Antonius' fiction.[25]

In recent years Waldemar Heckel has argued that the marriage is historical, and has found corroboration in the temple inventories of third century Delos, which record a dedication made by Antipater, son of Balagrus.[26] Who other, it might be thought, than the son of Balacrus and Phila, named after his maternal grandfather? Even more attractive is the form of the patronymic: Balagrus, exactly the spelling found in Antonius Diogenes.[27] But this thread may be delusive. Another son of Balagrus is attested at Delos in the early third century B.C.: Thraseas, son of Balagrus, a Macedonian, honoured for his services to the temple and city of Delos.[28] What is more, Balagrus himself makes an appearance. His arrival at Delos is noted briefly and enigmatically in a record of payments dated to 297/6 B.C., and a dedication by Balagrus features in an inventory of 240.[29] The father, then, appears to have been

[23] Preserved only in Photius, *Bibl.* cod. 166, 111 b 2–31: cf. 2–3: *ἀλλ' οὖν εἰσάγει Βάλαγρον πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν γυναῖκα Φίλαν τοὔνομα γράφοντα (θυγατὴρ δ' ἦν Ἀντιπάτρου αὕτη).*

[24] Antonius does not state that Balacrus was satrap of Cilicia, nor for that matter does he explicitly make him an eye-witness of the events at Tyre (so Badian, 'Two Postscripts on the Marriage of Phila and Balacrus', *ZPE* 72 [1988] 116). Antonius' 'Balagrus' is able to send his wife transcripts of tablets discovered at Tyre (Photius 111 b 26), which tells in favour of Antonius having given him some role at the siege, but that could still have been as satrap of Cilicia (possibly in command of troops from his satrapy).

[25] Accepted as such, though without great conviction, by Berve (above, n. 2) ii.100; Cl. Wehrli, 'Phila, fille d' Antipater et épouse de Démétrius', *Historia* 13 (1964) 140–6, esp. 141. Other scholars have been agnostic or negative; cf. Droysen (above, n. 2) ii.^{2}.1.86, n. 1; Kaerst, *RE* ii.2816; Beloch (above, n. 2) iv^2.2.127, n. 1. However, there is now an increasing awareness of the authentic, if capricious, historical detail contained in the Greek novels. See the recent article of C. P. Jones, 'Hellenistic History in Chariton of Aphrodisias', *Chiron* 22 (1992) 91–102.

[26] W. Heckel, 'A Grandson of Antipatros at Delos', *ZPE* 70 (1987) 161–2 (accepted and refined by Badian, above, n. 24), quoting *IG* xi.2.287 B57 (c. 250: cf. 161 B85 [278 B.C.], 203 B49 [269]), a dedication of a gold *stephanos* by *Ἀντίπατρος Βαλάγρου*.

[27] Balacrus and Balagrus appear variants of the same name. For copious examples see J. and L. Robert, *Fouilles d' Amyzon en Carie* i (Paris, 1985) 232–3, n. 34. It is probably coincidence that 'Balagrus' is the preferred form in both Antonius and the Delian records. The coinage of the satrap of Cilicia (above, n. 21) proves conclusively that the contemporary spelling of his name was Balacrus.

[28] *IG* xi.4.585 (300–250 B.C.): *Θρασέας Βαλάγρου Μακεδὼν ἀνήρ*.

[29] *IG* xi.2.154 A40 (296 B.C.): *τότε Βάλαγρος ἦλθεν* (such an entry is apparently unique in the inventories). For his dedication see *ID* 1.298 A178 (240 B.C.).

active shortly after 300, and two at least of his sons were involved with Delos. All *may* be descendants of Alexander's Bodyguard, but the name Balacrus is too common to justify any confidence.

It is perhaps more profitable to focus on Nicanor, son of Balacrus. Given that he was an individual of some eminence, it is a reasonable working hypothesis that he was the Nicanor who served as Cassander's garrison commander and as admiral at the Bosporus. If he was also the son of Balacrus and Phila, he was a grandson of Antipater and nephew of Cassander. That background would explain his appointment by Cassander to the garrison of Athens and give some reason for Cassander's distrust of his ambitions after his triumphal return. Now, if the identification is correct, Nicanor must have been born in the reign of Philip II, shortly before 340 B.C., and his mother's birth must be taken back to 360, at least a decade before the conventionally accepted date. However, the conventional date rests on prejudice rather than evidence.[30] We are informed explicitly that Phila was Antipater's eldest daughter, and Antipater himself was born as early as 398/7.[31] It is hardly credible that he sired his first daughter in his late forties. Another daughter, younger than Phila, was married to Alexander the Lyncestian by 336,[32] and one would expect that the older sister took her first husband somewhat earlier. What is more, Phila was relatively old when she married her last husband, the young Demetrius Poliorcetes, in 321/20.[33] Plutarch gives an entertaining picture of the prince, disconcerted by his elderly bride, receiving an admonition from his father in the shape of a clever perversion of Euripides: 'where there is profit, one must marry against one's nature'.[34] The disparate ages of the couple are a theme for recurrent comment.[35] It is perfectly possible that Phila was forty by the time of her last marriage. She remained Demetrius' consort for some thirty-four years, an enormous asset because of the popularity of her father and her

[30] The authorised version is that of Beloch (above, n. 2) iv^2.2.126–7, who dates Phila's birth 'bald nach 350'; but he is constrained to disregard the evidence that Phila was Antipater's eldest daughter (see below) and dismisses the explicit statement of Antipater's age (125). Berve (above, n. 2) ii.46 n. 2, 382 (n. 772) pointed out the fallacies in the argument, but even he was not prepared to go back much beyond 350 ('selbst vor 350 geboren'). That has remained orthodoxy: cf. W. Hoffmann, *RE* xix.2987–8; Wehrli (above, n. 25) 141; Heckel (above, n. 26) 161.

[31] Diod. 18.18.7 (*τὴν πρεσβυτάτην Φίλαν*). The figure of 79 for Antipater's age at death is provided by 'Suda' s.v. *Ἀντίπατρος*. It may be added that the conventional birth date of 355 for Antipater's eldest (?) son Cassander is totally without foundation. Hegesander (*ap.* Athen 1.18 A) states that Cassander at the age of thirty-five had not won the right to recline and participated sitting at his father's table. That proves that Cassander reached the age of thirty-five in his father's lifetime and had not speared his boar by that age. He may, however, have qualified subsequently and earned the right to recline before Antipater's death. That would make 355 merely a *terminus ante quem*.

[32] Curt. 7.1.7; Justin 11.7.1, 12.14.1; cf. Berve (above, n. 2) ii.17–18, n. 37; Chr. Habicht, 'Zwei Angehörige des lynkestischen Königshauses', in *Ancient Macedonia* ii (Thessaloniki, 1977) 511–16.

[33] The date is determined by the age of their first child Antigonus Gonatas. Antigonus died in early 239 (Hammond and Walbank [above, n. 2] 313, 581–2) after a reign of 44 years, dated from 283/2. His age at death is variously given as 80 ([Luc.] *Macrob.* 11) or 83 (Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 3[12]). To have reached the age of 80+ in 239 (the figure in the *Macrobii* seems a scaling down) he can hardly have been born any later than 320, and his parents' marriage belongs in 321/20. The corollary is that the death of Phila's second husband, Craterus, must be placed in the early summer of 321. These chronological facts virtually exclude a lower dating. See the discussion of Billows (above, n. 1) 368, which ignores the evidence of Porphyry and places the marriage of Demetrius and Phila in 'mid-320', almost synchronous with the death of Craterus which he dates to May 320 (66).

[34] Plut. *Demetr.* 14.3, adapting Eur. *Phoen.* 395 – a memorably amoral sentiment, also adduced by Luc. *Apol.* 3 (*τὸ ἀγεννέστατον ἐκεῖνο ἰαμβεῖον*).

[35] Cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 27.8 (*τὸ μὴ καθ' ἡλικίαν*); *Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 1.5 (*παρ' ἡλικίαν*).

second husband, Craterus. Thanks to her he won the throne of Macedon in 294, and she took poison when he was expelled in 287.[36] The marriage was dictated by urgent political factors, and everything suggests that Phila was approaching the end of child-bearing when she took Demetrius as husband. The two children (Antigonus and Stratonice) she bore him were presumably her last.

Nothing excludes Nicanor the garrison commander having been Phila's son. If so, much that is otherwise mysterious fits into place. He was (presumably) the first son of Antipater's eldest and favourite daughter, the regent's habitual confidante in high matters of state.[37] Before his grandfather's death he must have been prominent at his court in Pella and inherited his guest relationships with leading statesmen in southern Greece. He obviously knew Phocion well and enjoyed the old general's confidence when he assumed command at Munychia.[38] In his turn he entrusted his safety to Phocion at a critical moment and was not disappointed.[39] Phocion was not his only friend in Athens. After he occupied Peiraeus, the Athenians sent an embassy to remonstrate with him, comprising Phocion and two of their wealthiest and best connected citizens: Conon, son of Timotheus, and Clearchus, son of Nausicles. Both are stated to have been friends of Nicanor,[40] and it looks as though he had a significant circle of Athenian contacts, familiar to him through their dealings with Antipater and prepared to collaborate with him in his role as garrison commander.

We can now add depth to Nicanor's short and spectacular career. He first appears after Antipater's death (late summer/autumn 319),[41] when he was sent to Athens to assume command at Munychia. Cassander had sent him on his own initiative[42] and will have claimed that he had Antipater's mandate. If so, Nicanor was an ideal agent. His status as Antipater's grandson made his credentials safe from challenge by the retiring commandant, Menyllus, and he enjoyed the collusion of Phocion. As a result he was installed in command of the garrison before Antipater's death was announced at Athens. He then consolidated his position with Phocion's assistance and apparently acted as unofficial agonothete, subsidising at least one of the Athenian festivals at his own expense.[43] When the rift between Cassander and Polyperchon became public (in winter 319/18), he continued to work on Cassander's behalf, attempting to counter the heady effects of Polyperchon's democratic propaganda. He tried to address a council meeting in Peiraeus but narrowly avoided arrest, thanks to the cooperation of Phocion. When the position of the ruling regime was becoming untenable, he took Peiraeus by a *coup de main* and made the harbour area of Athens his bastion.[44] That gave him a position of strength from which to negotiate with Polyperchon's son,

[36] Plut. *Demetr.* 14.2, 37.4, 45.1; cf. Wehrli (above, n. 25) 144–6.

[37] Diod. 19.59.5, reported as hearsay (λέγεται) but presumably hearsay which Hieronymus, the servant of the Antigonids, found credible (cf. J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* [Oxford, 1981] 226–7).

[38] Plut. *Phoc.* 31.2. The passage reads as though Phocion had foreknowledge of Nicanor's arrival and a preexisting friendship (χάριτι τοῦ Νικάνορος). In the same way the incumbent commander, Menyllus, is said to have been a friend of Phocion, obviously of long standing (Plut. *Phoc.* 28.1).

[39] Plut. *Phoc.* 32.4–6.

[40] Diod. 18.64.5 (τῶν ἐπιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ φιλίαν ἐχόντων πρὸς Νικάνορα). For their background (and record of liturgies under the democracy) see J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford, 1971) 397, 510–12.

[41] For the chronology adopted here, which is essentially the traditional 'high' system see my article 'Philip III Arrhidaeus and the Chronology of the Successors', *Chiron* 22 (1992) 55–81, esp. 66–74.

[42] Plut. *Phoc.* 31.1 (διαναστὰς ὁ Κάσσανδρος καὶ προκαταλαμβάνων τὰ πράγματα).

[43] Plut. *Phoc.* 31.3; cf. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*[2] (Oxford, 1968) 92 n. 2.

[44] Diod. 18.64.4–6; Plut. *Phoc.* 32.9–10; Nep. *Phoc.* 2.4–5, 3.4.

Alexander, who led an invasion force into Attica early in the spring of 318.[45] While the oligarchy ended at Athens and Phocion and his associates were voted out of office, Nicanor kept his forces unmoved in Peiraeus without suffering any direct attack. At this juncture Cassander entered Peiraeus at the head of a flotilla supplied by Antigonus.[46] He arrived at roughly the time of Phocion's arrest and condemnation (May 318) and inherited a strong position, thanks to Nicanor's skilful manoeuvring. There had been no attack on Peiraeus. Even when Polyperchon joined his son in Attica with the royal army, nothing serious eventuated. Shortages of supply, prior to the Attic harvest, drove Polyperchon into the Peloponnese with the bulk of his army,[47] leaving Cassander with a secure toehold in Peiraeus. This he rapidly enlarged, annexing Aegina and attacking Salamis, and within a year Athens itself surrendered to him.[48] His success was largely due to the earlier collaboration between Nicanor and Phocion which saved the Macedonian garrison and extended its control to the entire harbour area. Elsewhere Polyperchon's invocation of autonomy had seen the partisans of Antipater expelled,[49] and Cassander might well have been left without a single base in Greece.

Nicanor's next appointment was to command the fleet which Cassander dispatched to the Propontis in summer 318. This expedition was commissioned in the interests of Antigonus, threatened by the substantial fleet which Polyperchon had sent to impede his designs in northern Asia Minor and collaborate with his enemy, Arrhidaeus, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia.[50] Nicanor had impeccable qualifications for the command. His mother had married Antigonus' heir late in 321 and had given Antigonus two grandchildren. Phila's eldest son could expect warm cooperation, and indeed Antigonus placed his own fleet under his command.[51] The sequel was somewhat unfortunate. Nicanor was outmatched by the experience and expertise of Polyperchon's general, Cleitus the White, naval victor in the Lamian War. The first battle off Byzantium cost him seventy ships, the majority of his fleet.[52] However, the disaster was retrieved by the energies of Antigonus, who engineered a dawn attack on Cleitus' naval base and with typical ruthlessness coerced Nicanor's demoralised fleet into taking to the water again.[53] Consequently Nicanor was in a position to intercept Cleitus' ships as they fled their base in confusion in the wake of Antigonus' morning raid. The victory which ensued was total. Cleitus' flagship alone escaped, and Cleitus

[45] Diod. 18.65.5 and Plut. *Phoc.* 33.3 agree that Alexander and Nicanor held repeated parleys at the walls of Peiraeus, and so restrained the excesses of the restored democracy. They clearly understood each other and had a working relationship.

[46] Diod. 18.68.1; Cassander was duly welcomed by Nicanor and installed himself in Peiraeus, while Nicanor himself retained control in Munychia. Even now he seems treated as a colleague rather than a subordinate of Cassander.

[47] Diod. 18.68.3. On the background see my article (above, n. 41) 69–70.

[48] Diod. 18.69.1–2 (Aegina and Salamis). For the fall of Athens see Diod. 18.74.1–3; Paus. 1.25.6; Parian Marble, *FGrH* 239 B 13; *IG* ii^2.1201. The last extant decree of the democracy is *IG* ii^2.350 + *add.* p. 659, dated to the seventh prytany 318/17 (cf. M. J. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens* ii [Brussels, 1982], 108–11, D39). Athens was surrendered in spring 317.

[49] Diod. 18.68.3–4; cf. Moretti, *ISE* 52, lines 15–25.

[50] Diod. 18.72.2–3. On the background see Billows (above, n. 1) 82–3, 86, dating the campaign to summer 317 (see, however, my article [above, n. 41] 68, 74).

[51] Diod. 18.72.3; Polyaen. 4.6.8.

[52] Polyaen. 4.6.8, stressing Nicanor's ἀπειρία. Diodorus 18.72.4 records seventeen ships sunk and forty captured with their crews. If an extra thirteen were irretrievably disabled, it would match the seventy of Polyaenus. See Billows (above, n. 1) 87 n. 12, *contra* R. Engel, 'Polyains Stratagem IV 6,8 zur Seeschlacht am Hellespont', *Klio* 55 (1973) 141–5.

[53] According to Polyaenus loc. cit. (cf. Diod. 18.72.8) he provided marines from his hypaspist corps (cf. Arr. 2.20.6) commissioned to threaten with death any crews which refused action.

himself met his death in Thrace. Nothing now stood between Antigonus and an invasion of Europe. Only the growing power of Eumenes in Cilicia and the danger that he might intervene with a new fleet turned the Antigonid army eastwards.[54]

Nicanor had played a secondary role in the victory, but it was a critically important campaign which left Antigonus practically unchallenged in Asia Minor. Not surprisingly Nicanor basked in reflected glory, and, when he re-entered Peiraeus, his fleet was bedecked with the *akrostolia* of Cleitus' captured ships.[55] His own aspirations had apparently increased, and after the surrender of Athens he began to transform the garrison centre at Munychia into a small private citadel, manned exclusively by troops loyal to himself.[56] He was repeating in his own interests the exercise he had performed for Cassander a year before. Cassander predictably felt threatened and in Diodorus' blunt words 'had him assassinated' (ἐδολοφόνησεν).

Diodorus has no more on the incident, but Polyaenus (4.11.2) fills in the details with a curious yet circumstantial story. Cassander organised an elaborate charade. He appeared to be on the point of sailing from Attica, but at the moment of embarcation he contrived to have a letter delivered which invited him to Macedon to lead a movement against Polyperchon.[57] That gave him the pretext to decoy Nicanor into a nearby building for a private conference, and Nicanor was immediately arrested by the picked hypaspists whom Cassander had secreted there. It was clearly a sensitive moment. Nicanor could not be arrested openly for fear of his troops mutinying, and the intricate deception was designed to allay suspicion and isolate him from his entourage in a place of Cassander's choosing. The sequel is also of interest. Nicanor was put on trial by an army assembly.[58] It was, we may add, a highly selective assembly, for Cassander had apparently walled off Nicanor's own men in Munychia.[59] Accusations were invited, and Nicanor was condemned for (unspecified) unlawful

[54] Diod. 18.63.6, 73.1; cf. Polyaen. 4.6.9.

[55] Diod. 18.75.1. Antigonus also decorated his warships with spoils to increase their propaganda effect in the Levant (Polyaen. 4.6.9). His fleet was active in Cilicia by the autumn of 318 (see my article [above, n. 41] 65–6, 68, 80–1), and Nicanor had presumably returned to Athens by that time. Diodorus apparently dates Nicanor's arrival after the fall of Athens (spring 317: see above, n. 48); but the passage is contracted and prospective, and it is not easy to deduce what was his primary point of reference. It could well have been the death of Nicanor which came after the fall of Athens, and Diodorus may have given a compressed retrospective summary of the preceding events. There was probably an interval of months between Nicanor's return and death.

[56] Diod. 18.75.1; Polyaen. 4.11.2.

[57] This clearly belongs to the context of Cassander's first invasion of Macedonia (summer 317), which Diodorus (18.75.1) places immediately after the death of Nicanor. For dating and background see my article (above, n. 40) 17–18.

[58] *Κάσσανδρος δὲ παραχρῆμα συνήγαγεν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τοῖς βουλομένοις κατηγορῆσαι Νικάνορος ἐπέτρεψεν.* This *ecclesia* is surely an assembly of Cassander's troops, as is generally assumed (cf. F. Granier, *Die makedonische Heeresversammlung* [Munich, 1931], 85–6; R. M. Errington, 'The Nature of the Macedonian State under the Monarchy', *Chiron* 8 (1978) 119; P. Goukowsky, *Diodore xviii* 102, n. 1). Hammond and Walbank (above, n. 2) 137 suggest that the trial took place before the Athenian Assembly. But, even if Nicanor were alleged to have injured Athenians, it was a remarkable anomaly to have a non-Athenian tried in an Athenian forum, strange enough if one accepts that he was the adoptive son of Aristotle, inexplicable if he was the son of Phila and Balacrus. Polyaenus admittedly uses the term *κατεψηφίσαντο* which is indeed 'appropriate to an Athenian Assembly'. It is also appropriate to *any* assembly whatsoever.

[59] Wölfflin's Teubner text reads *τὴν Μουνυχίαν ἀνεχειρώσατο*, meaning (I presume) 'gained mastery of Munychia'. The manuscripts vary between *ἐχειρώσατο* (K), *ἀνωχυρώσατο* (F) and *ὠχυρώσατο*. The *lectio difficilior* appears to be *ἀνωχυρώσατο* 'fortified', which is tentatively accepted in *LSJ*[2]. If that is read, one must assume that Cassander blocked access between Peiraeus and Munychia while the trial took place. It clearly took some effort on his part to regain the old garrison centre (cf. Trogus, *Prol.* 14: *receptaque a defectore Nicanore Munychia*).

actions. Nicanor could not simply be killed as, for instance, was Aristonous, the ex-Bodyguard of Alexander the Great, whom Cassander had assassinated without trial immediately after his surrender of Amphipolis.[60] His death needed some justification, not to the troops, who could recognise the show trial for what it was, but to the Macedonian world at large. Cassander was not only eliminating his nephew; he was executing the son of Phila, the partner in Antigonus' naval victory. A trial before the army at Athens was a necessary display of legality, in which Nicanor's 'guilt' could be publicly demonstrated. It was a technique later used by Cassander against Olympias, whom he had condemned *in absentia* by a Macedonian assembly, using hand-picked accusers.[61] Polyaenus does not state whether Nicanor was present at his trial, but otherwise the similarities are very clear. In both cases the executions needed formal justification and general complicity, and the trials are a measure of the status of the condemned.

The family details sketched out in this essay are, it must be repeated, conjectural and speculative. However, the strands of the argument cohere with satisfying precision. Nicanor, son of Balacrus, is a figure of distinguished pedigree who lacks a history and Nicanor the garrison commander is a personage of historical importance who lacks a pedigree. Other Nicanors might arguably come into consideration, for example Antigonus' general in the upper satrapies from 315;[62] but in the case of Nicanor the garrison commander the hypothesised family background adds depth and meaning to his career. The identification is beyond formal proof, but it is clearly well within the bounds of probability and, if accepted, sheds much needed light on the dark story of Cassander's occupation of Athens.[63]

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[60] Diod. 19.51.3. Aristonous was killed by the relatives of Crateuas, whom he had defeated (and spared) a few days previously. For his career under Alexander see Berve (above, n. 2) ii.69, n. 133.

[61] Diod. 19.51.2–4; Justin 14.6.6–7.

[62] Evidence and bibliography in Billows (above, n. 1) 409–11.

[63] I am grateful to Norman Ashton for reading and improving an earlier draft of this article. The imperfections which remain are, as always, my own.