

DIODORUS SICULUS AND HEPHAESTION'S PYRE¹

Chapters 114 and 115 of Diodorus Siculus Book 17 give rise to impressive difficulties, considering their relative brevity. At the beginning of Chapter 113 Diodorus has announced the opening of the year 324/3 (Athenian archon, Roman consuls, 114th Olympic Games)—the last year of Alexander the Great's life. Alexander by then has already, at the end of the previous year (112.5), taken the fateful step of entering Babylon: wounded in his soul by Chaldaean prophecy, Diodorus says, but healed by Anaxarchus and the philosophical corps of the Macedonian army. The new year, 324/3, begins with Alexander dealing with diplomatic missions from three continents; and then, at the beginning of Chapter 114, Diodorus brings in the funeral of Hephaestion.

The story of his death had come in earlier (110.7–8), and had ended with his remains being entrusted to Perdikkas, the man to whom Alexander on his deathbed gave his ring; Perdikkas was to take the body from Ecbatana, where Hephaestion died, to Babylon for the funeral. There will be more to say of Ecbatana and Hephaestion's actual death below; but for now notice how the funeral fits into the plot of the book. After Hephaestion's death nobody is in a hurry to get the funeral done: Alexander fights a mountain war against the Cossaeans (111.4–6), starts a slow march to Babylon (112.1) and then is faced with the crisis of belief in which the Chaldaeans and the Greek philosophers compete for his soul. The obligation to Hephaestion's memory hangs over the narrative, but matters are not pushed to a resolution. It is only when Alexander has given out his replies to subjects' petitions (i.e. set his affairs in order), that the question of the funeral is brought up again.

Chapter 114 begins as follows:²

(1) 'When he had sent the diplomatic missions on their way, he turned to Hephaestion's funeral. He took so much trouble over the funeral ceremony that he did not only excel all funerals which had previously taken place in the world, but also left future generations no chance of doing more. For of all the Friends who were thought to have a share of his affections, he loved him [Hephaestion] the most; and after his death he honoured him unsurpassably. While he lived, he had honoured him above all his Friends—except that Craterus had a comparable place in his heart. (2) When one of the Companions said that Craterus was no less beloved than Hephaestion, Alexander pronounced that Craterus was king-loving, but Hephaestion was Alexander-loving. And when he met Darius' mother for the first time and she made a mistake and fell at Hephaestion's feet as if he were the king, and then was upset when she realised her error, he said: 'Don't worry, mother: he too is Alexander.'

In these sections the important place to be taken by the story of Hephaestion's funeral in the narrative of Book 17 is made evident. It was the greatest funeral ever, which by itself would make the story worth telling, but there is more: Hephaestion was not only Alexander's best friend; he was in fact so close a friend that he was the proverbial

¹ I wish to thank Mr R. J. Lane Fox, who as referee for the *Classical Quarterly* has waived anonymity and allowed me to acknowledge his suggestions—both those I have accepted and those I have persisted in questioning. A draft of this paper was presented to the University of Auckland Department of Classics and Ancient History Staff-Student Research Seminar in April 1994: I wish to thank those present on that occasion and particularly Dr W. R. Barnes, Prof. V. J. Gray and Miss L. Bligh for their comments and suggestions. None of the above is responsible for any errors which remain in this paper.

² In these translated sections I shall give 'funeral' for *taphe* and 'funeral ceremony' for *epphora*.

second self. Hephaestion was also Alexander. The story about Darius' mother features here for the second time in Diodorus' book: it was mentioned before at 17.37.5–6. The effect of repeating it is to make the equation explicit: in putting on the funeral that his affection for Hephaestion demands, Alexander cannot avoid acting out a scene which presages his own death. Hephaestion is also Alexander: Hephaestion's funeral is also an omen of Alexander's death: all the more so because it is an event on a scale only Alexander the Great himself could devise.

After the story of Darius' mother, there is a piece about Hephaestion's prickly relations with Alexander's mother Olympias (114.3). Then the idea of Hephaestion's funeral presaging Alexander's death, already implicit in 'he too is Alexander', is taken further:

(4) 'As the king made the preparations for the funeral ceremony, he commanded the nearby cities to contribute for the funeral ceremony to the best of their ability; and he commanded all the dwellers in Asia to be sure to put out the Sacred Fire, as the Persians call it, until such time as the funeral ceremony should be completed. It is the custom of the Persians to do this at the deaths of their kings. (5) The people believed that this command was a bad omen, and they came to suspect that the divine power was foretelling the death of the king. And there were other strange signs which indicated Alexander's death, which we will speak of a little later, when we have finished the account of the funeral ceremony.'

This acts as a bridging section between the reminiscences of Hephaestion and the description of the funeral. A Persian omen is added to earlier Chaldaean predictions about entering Babylon. There is irony, in that Alexander cannot see that his intention is escaping from the metaphorical domain to the literal—a real king's death (his own), as well as the courteous equating of Hephaestion with a king. Thus the 'Hephaestion is Alexander' theme is reiterated with its implications spelt out. The final note about 'other strange signs' smooths continuity and alerts the reader not to treat the coming account of the funeral as merely a self-contained tale: its place in the development towards Alexander's own decease has been defined.

Then comes the ceremony itself, in Chapter 115:³

(1) 'Each of the Generals and the Friends aimed at pleasing the king by making ready likenesses of Hephaestion in ivory and gold and all other media which people value highly; and he himself gathered together building-foremen and a crowd of skilled craftsmen, then demolished a total of ten stades of the city wall. He collected up the burnt brick, prepared the place which was to receive the pyre to make it level, and built a four-sided pyre, with each of its sides a stade long. (2) Dividing the place up into thirty rooms (*domoi*), and laying out the roofs with trunks of palm trees, he made the whole construction (*kataskeuasma*) square. After this he began to decorate the outside with a complete scheme of ornamentation. Golden prows of quinqueremes, two hundred and forty in number, filled the bottom layer, and on the cat-heads⁴ there were two archers kneeling on one knee, each four cubits high; and there were armoured statues five cubits high, and in between there were red banners made of felt. (3) Above these things, torches fifteen feet high filled the second layer, with golden wreaths on their handles, and at their fiery ends eagles with their wings spread out, looking downward; round the bases of the torches were serpents looking up at the eagles. On the third level had been devised a multitude of animals of all kinds being hunted. (4) Then the fourth layer had a golden centaureomachy, and the fifth had alternating lions and bulls, made of gold. The next part up was filled with Macedonian and barbarian weapons, signifying the deeds of valour of the former, and the defeats of the latter. And over all had been set up hollow Sirens which could conceal people inside them who would sing a mourning dirge for the deceased. (5) The height of the whole construction was more than one hundred and thirty cubits. In sum, since the officers and all the soldiers and the ambassadors, and even the local people, were rivalling each other to beautify the funeral, they say that the total amount of money that was spent came to more than twelve thousand talents. (6) In keeping with this majestic display (*megaloprepeia*) and the other honours that were accorded to Hephaestion at the funeral, he [Alexander] finally commanded everybody to

³ At present I shall translate *pyra* as 'pyre'; this will be discussed below.

⁴ *Epotides*: beams projecting like ears on each side of a ship's bows (*LSJ*, s.v.).

sacrifice to Hephaestion as a presiding god.⁵ And it chanced that Philippos, one of the Friends, arrived bringing from Ammon an oracle saying that sacrifice should be made to Hephaestion as a god. So he was overjoyed that the god also had confirmed his own idea, and he was first to carry out the sacrifice, and then he gave a feast to the crowd on a grand scale, sacrificing victims of all kinds to a total number of ten thousand.'

Nearly all the material in this account is unique to Diodorus. Later sources allude more or less indirectly to parts of the story, and their evidence will be discussed below, but none uses the episode as a structural element in the lead-up to Alexander's death in anything like a similar way. Plutarch and Justin do not even put Hephaestion's funeral in Babylon (though Plutarch is ambiguous about whether the tomb and funeral he speaks of were in Ecbatana or not);⁶ Arrian, writing later, does site the pyre in Babylon, but builds his account round a different theme, that of Alexander's excessive grief—how he would not eat for two days, and lay moaning, and so on.⁷ Diodorus' Alexander responds to Hephaestion's death with extravagant activity, whereas Arrian's responds depressively, with inability (at first) to do anything. The detail of the pyre in the account in Diodorus fits in with choices made for plotting and characterization.

Whether Diodorus himself was capable of making and implementing a coherent set of choices in relation to plotting and characterization I leave as an open question. While accepting that ineptitude was more than an occasional companion to Diodorus in his composition of the *Library of History*, I myself am persuaded at least in part by Kenneth S. Sacks' argument that Diodorus himself decided on the overall shape and main themes of his work.⁸ However, a more conventional view of Diodorus simply pushes the issue back one stage. P. J. Stylianou, reviewing Sacks' book, concludes that 'study of the ways of D[iodorus] is of value only because it helps to establish the nature and worth of the sources which underlie the Bibliothēke.'⁹ If this is right, then the inference from the well organized narrative will be that Diodorus took the final section of Book 17 from a source in which themes and detail had been chosen to support a carefully worked out version of events leading up to Alexander's death.

Regrettably, the death and burial of Hephaestion fall within a lacuna in Quintus Curtius Rufus. Therefore the only vulgate-based versions which can be compared with Diodorus are those of Plutarch and Justin. I have already noted that neither of these sets the funeral in Babylon.¹⁰ Judgement should be suspended for the time being on whether Diodorus at this point represents a better reflection of the version of Cleitarchus, the father of the vulgate tradition, than Plutarch or Justin. More consideration must first be given to the chapter about the funeral, because although the story has its own importance in the buildup to the death of Alexander, modern discussion of it has not treated it on its own terms. Distortion has arisen from the fact

⁵ Reading *proedros* with the MSS. Lucian, *Calumniae non temere credendum* 17, referring to sacrifices to Hephaestion, uses *paredros*, which would mean 'an assistant god', cf. *LSJ* s.v. *paredros* III. Editors of Diodorus have emended to follow Lucian.

⁶ Justin (12.12.11–12.13.1) puts his whole brief note on Hephaestion's death before the journey to Babylon; Plutarch, *Alexander* 72.3 to 73.1 has the Cossaeon war after Hephaestion's death, then deals with the tomb and the funeral, then moves on to the journey to Babylon.

⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.8–10.

⁸ Kenneth S. Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton, 1990). For my (qualified) positive view of Sacks' position see my review at *Prudentia* 24.2 (1992), pp. 72–5.

⁹ P. J. Stylianou, review of Kenneth S. Sacks, *Diodorus and the First Century*, *BMC R* 2 (1991), pp. 388–95 at p. 395. Note also that W. Spoerri in a recent discussion ('Diodorea', *MH* 48 (1991), pp. 310–19) gives little attention to Sacks and applies the usual model.

¹⁰ Arrian will be considered below.

that Hephaestion's pyre is recalled by Diodorus only a few pages later, in the story of the Last Plans of Alexander at the beginning of Book 18.¹¹ What is said there complicates the issue. The relevant passage goes as follows:¹²

'...when Alexander had passed away, the Successors decided not to bring to completion the things he had planned. For when Perdikkas found, contained in the King's notebooks, both the completion of Hephaestion's pyre, which required a great deal of money, and also Alexander's many other designs, which were on a grand scale and called for the hugest expenditures imaginable, he decided that it was best to cancel them. However, so that it would not seem that he was wiping out a part of Alexander's glory by his own decision, he referred consideration of these things to the common assembly of the Macedonians.

In the notebooks the greatest things and the ones most worthy of remembrance were the following: to build a thousand warships, larger than triremes, in Phoenicia and Syria and Cilicia and Cyprus for the expedition against the Carthaginians... (etc.)'

The appearance of Hephaestion's pyre in the list of Last Plans is puzzling. It should certainly have puzzled any reader who simply read through the dozen pages from the funeral to the Last Plans. Diodorus had told the funeral story to a conclusion. There was no hint of anything incomplete. Russel M. Geer, Loeb translator of Book 18, was sensitive to the difficulty and put in a footnote to 18.4.2 saying that 'since the pyre had already been completed (Book 17.114–15), the reference here appears to be to the tomb planned by Alexander (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 72.3).'¹³ Geer believed in two pyres, then, or rather a pyre (for burning) and a permanent monument, the latter referred to with the Greek word *pyra* at 18.4.2.

A *pyra* can indeed be a permanent monument, as more than one scholar has pointed out. This is the starting-point in Fritz Schachermeyr's discussion of D.S. 17.115.¹⁴ Robin Lane Fox in his *Alexander the Great*, on the other hand, while drawing attention in main text to the possibility that a *pyra* might be a monument, adds in the notes 'I am quite prepared to believe that Alex. planned an inflammable pyre'.¹⁵ The meaning of the word *pyra* by itself will not provide a definite answer. There are instances in *LSJ* of *pyra* as a burial-mound, from tragedy;¹⁶ it was not the ordinary word for a burial-mound, but it could be used when an elevated style was required. The easiest way to understand *pyra* in the Last Plans passage is as a burial mound:¹⁷ first because none of the historians (Arrian, Justin, Plutarch and Diodorus in Book 17) gives any hint that funeral ceremonies were incomplete and Hephaestion's remains actually unburied at the time of Alexander's death; then because the idea of a monument for Hephaestion would fit in well with Alexander's project to build a pyramid for his father Philip II (whose remains had by then already been at rest for many years at Aegae),¹⁸ and finally because the criminal Harpalus had already used

¹¹ The phrase 'a few pages later' may be misleading: Books 17 and 18 as published by Diodorus would have been separate scrolls. ¹² D.S. 18.4.1–4.

¹³ Russel M. Geer, *Diodorus of Sicily* ix (Loeb ed., London and Cambridge, MA, 1947), p. 21, n. 1.

¹⁴ Fritz Schachermeyr, 'Die letzten Pläne Alexanders des Grossen', *JÖAI* 41 (1954), pp. 118–40, at p. 127. This paper reprinted at G. T. Griffith, *Alexander the Great: the Main Problems* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 322–44. Schachermeyr's comments will be examined more fully below.

¹⁵ Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London, 1973), pp. 457 (main text) and 547 (notes).

¹⁶ Sophocles, *Electra* 901; Euripides, *Hecuba* 386 and *Iphigenia in Tauris* 26. *LSJ* also offers Pindar, *Isthmian* 8.63, which speaks of the Muses standing by the 'pyra and grave' of Achilles; rendering *pyra* as 'burial-mound' here depends on reading the phrase as a hendiadys, which is not necessary: translators including J. E. Sandys (Loeb ed., 1927) and Geoffrey S. Conway (*The Odes of Pindar* [London, 1972]) give 'pyre and grave' or similar phrases.

¹⁷ Mr. Lane Fox points out to me that this does not have to be so, but the difficulties involved in thinking of the 'pyra' in the Last Plans as an inflammable pyre are great.

¹⁸ D.S. 18.4.5.

Alexander's money to set up two monuments to his mistress Pythionice.¹⁹ A wish on Alexander's part to eclipse Harpalus would be understandable. If it is granted that the Last Plans do have a monument in view, the question arises whether that passage should be used to gloss the earlier one.

The weight of modern scholarship has favoured reading the two passages of Diodorus synoptically. Synoptic readings have encouraged the view that a permanent monument, and only one, should be envisaged from a reading of Diodorus. Malcolm Colledge's summary in his 1987 paper 'Greek and non-Greek Interaction in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East' is representative of this dominant view:²⁰

'A physical expression of [harmony and partnership in rule between Macedonians and Persians] may have been the gigantic memorial he [= Alexander] is said to have raised at Babylon for his deceased Companion Hephaestion, comprising a towering five-storey platform, probably evoking the Mesopotamian ziggurats, with both Greek and Persian weapons placed at the top; it suggests a building of Babylonian type decorated with Greek and Persian weaponry.'

Colledge exempts himself from discussion of the relation between the funeral passage and the Last Plans with the phrase 'is said to have raised'. The virtual consensus since Schachermeyr's time²¹ is, however, only a partial justification for the short cut he takes, since there have been voices of doubt: Lane Fox, as noted above, and now Waldemar Heckel.²² A new examination of the issue will show that the funeral passage cannot be corrected from the Last Plans.

Such an examination must begin from Schachermeyr. He believed that the genuineness of the Last Plans was the most important problem in the history of Alexander the Great,²³ so that he analysed the funeral passage from the Last Plans passage, rather than attempt to give equal weight to both.²⁴ Schachermeyr's discussion is worth quoting *in extenso*, because it proves that its author had misread Diodorus at several points. He says:²⁵

'If the expression *pyra* is used in relation to the tomb of Hephaestion ("the completion of the *pyra* of Hephaestion, which required a lot of money"—D.S. XVIII.4.2), then it must be borne in mind that this word, while it can mean "pyre", can also mean "sacrificial altar" and "tomb". Arrian VII.14.8 reports Alexander giving orders: "...and he commanded that a *pyra* should be prepared for him in Babylon at a cost of 10000 talents..." This can only refer to the permanent funerary monument which is described in such detail at D.S. XVII.115. In Diodorus the object

¹⁹ Theopompus (F. Jacoby *FGrHist* 115 F 253): one at Athens and the other at Babylon, and all for just 200 talents—an outlay which is modest by comparison with what Alexander had in mind.

²⁰ Malcolm Colledge, 'Greek and non-Greek Interaction in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East' in Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, *Hellenism in the East* (London, 1987), pp. 134–62, at p. 140.

²¹ But see F. R. Wüst, 'Zu den Hypomnematen Alexanders: das Grabmal Hephaistions', *JÖAI* 44 (1959), pp. 147–57 arguing (at pp. 149–151) against the step pyramid shape. A. B. Bosworth follows Wüst, describing the edifice as a 'huge brick cube': *From Arrian to Alexander* (Oxford, 1988), p. 206.

²² Waldemar Heckel, *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire* (London and New York, 1992), p. 89 n. 145, briefly reasserts a distinction in Geor's terms between a cancelled monument and a completed pyre.

²³ Schachermeyr, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

²⁴ Contrast W. W. Tarn's approach six years earlier (*Alexander the Great* ii (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 381–2). He comments: 'Diodorus... in XVII had made use of some work, perhaps a monograph, perhaps a *Life*, which "featured" Hephaestion and gave several things about him which are quite untrue (Arrian perhaps used it also), and Diodorus may have taken his description of the pyre from this work. No one can say how the matter of the pyre really stands; in any case (1) [i.e. the plan to complete the *pyra* at D.S. 18.4.2] 'can hardly be called a plan, and is quite immaterial.' This angle of attack is the opposite of Schachermeyr's: it focuses on the funeral passage and is dismissive about the Last Plans passage.

²⁵ Schachermeyr, *op. cit.*, p. 127 (my English translation).

under discussion was a five-storey (*fünfgeschlossiges*) square building with sides almost 200 metres in length ("each side being a stade long"—D.S. XVII.115.1) and about 60 metres in height ("more than 130 cubits"—D.S. XVII.115.5). To erect this, a section of the Babylonian city wall almost two kilometres long had to be demolished, to get the necessary building-material (D.S. XVII.115.1). It is self-evident from this that there can be no question of such an enormous requirement for non-inflammable mud bricks [*Lehmziegeln*] for a pyre which was destined for burning.²⁶

This is the beginning of a discussion which goes on to argue that there were never two structures, real or intended, and that D.S. 17.115 describes a permanent monument which may have been started but was never completed.

Arrian is used misleadingly in this discussion. Mention of his name carries conviction because he was a better historian than Diodorus or any of the other authors of extant books about Alexander. Just before this point in his narrative, however, Arrian has referred several times over to differences among his sources in their accounts of Alexander's mourning for Hephaestion. 'Here different people have written different things about Alexander's grief,'²⁶ he says, and goes on to pick out which brief stories he thinks 'not unlikely' on the basis of Alexander's character and his position as a king.²⁷ Then, coming to main narrative, he proceeds as follows:²⁸

(8) 'The following things are agreed by all: that until the third day after the death of Hephaestion Alexander neither tasted food nor took any other care of his body, but lay down either groaning or in the silence of grief; and that he ordered a pyre to be prepared in Babylon at a cost of 10,000 talents (and some say more); (9) and that an announcement was made that there should be mourning throughout the whole land of the barbarians; and that many of the Companions of Alexander dedicated themselves and their weapons to the late Hephaestion out of respect for him; and that Eumenes was the first to put this scheme into action—the same Eumenes who as mentioned above had had a disagreement with Hephaestion—and that he did this so that Alexander would not think he was glad at Hephaestion's death. (10) Alexander did not appoint anyone else in Hephaestion's place as chiliarch of the Companion Cavalry, but the chiliarchy was called "Hephaestion's", and the standard which had been made at his order was carried in front of it. Alexander had in mind to organize an athletic and musical contest which would be far more splendid than any previous event, in the number of competitors and the expenditure made on it. He lined up a total of three thousand contestants, and they say that these people a little later competed at Alexander's funeral.'

Arrian's claim that the list of facts given in these sections (and particularly the order to build a *pyra* at Babylon) are 'agreed by all' previous writers is a cornerstone on which Schachermeyr's and later attempts²⁹ to construct synthetic accounts harmonizing the funeral passage and the Last Plans passage have been based.³⁰ Yet there are two reasons to treat the claim with reserve. The first is that, as comparison shows, it is factually incorrect: Plutarch, as noted above, had not said anything about Babylon in his account of the death and memorial of Hephaestion. Arrian may not have read Plutarch, and for that matter Plutarch could possibly have dropped something about Babylon which his source had included—but the existence of an exception makes one wonder. The second reason for reserve is that (if P. A. Brunt is right) Arrian may also not have read Cleitarchus.³¹ The phrase 'agreed by all' begins

²⁶ Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.2.

²⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.2–7.

²⁸ Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.8–10.

²⁹ As at Bosworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 204–5. Bosworth accepts with Arrian and his sources that the order was given for a pyre to be constructed, but concludes that Diodorus 'reported a project which was merely anticipated as completely finished, a blunder only too characteristic of his work...'

³⁰ I am grateful to Mr. Lane Fox for drawing my attention to the importance of this phrase.

³¹ P. A. Brunt (ed.), *Arrian* i (Loeb ed., Cambridge, MA. and London, 1976), p. xxi n. 12. In a footnote to the passage about Alexander's alleged bacchanalian procession through Carmania (Arr. *Anab.* 6.28.2; ii p. 187 n. 1) Brunt argues that Arrian 'is...citing a late version of the "vulgate" (not Cleitarchus)'.

to seem a less than secure basis on which to build a synoptic model purporting to reconcile D.S. 17.114–15 and 18.4: Arrian, as good a scholar as he was, was apparently making use of a quite narrow range of accounts here. With contradictory sources, he faced a difficulty comparable to that which faces modern scholars. If he read Diodorus, which he may not have bothered to do, he faced the same difficulty between 17.114–15 and 18.4 which we face. He wrote 175 years or so after Diodorus, so the opinion he reached was one based wholly on his evaluation of his particular selection of texts. He decided to refer in his own book to a permanent monument, but this does not prove that Diodorus at 17.115 was intending to do the same.

If Schachermeyr's use of Arrian is disregarded, his description of the *pyra* is left; and that description is deficient in two significant respects. The first, a matter of the difference between five and seven, obscures a significant point about the description Diodorus gives. Schachermeyr says that the *pyra* as described is five storeys high, but in fact it has seven storeys. Consider the wording again:³²

'Golden prows of quinqueremes, two hundred and forty in number, filled the bottom layer ... above these things, torches fifteen cubits high filled the second layer ... on the third level had been devised a multitude of animals of all kinds being hunted ... the fourth layer had a golden centauromachy, and the fifth had alternating lions and bulls, made of gold. The next part up was filled with Macedonian and barbarian weapons ... and over all had been set up hollow Sirens which could conceal people inside them who would sing a mourning dirge for the deceased.'

As a matter of literary variation, Diodorus stops giving numbers after the fifth storey (this is presumably the origin of the misconception)—but that should not stop the reader from counting.³³ He follows on with 'the next part up', plus 'and over all'. A structure five storeys high would have been short on meaning, in an age when numerological symbolism was fashionable. Hence an account describing a five-storey structure is more convincing to the modern mind as speaking of something that existed in the real world than an account describing a seven-storey structure. Seven storeys sound like an idealization or even a fabrication.

The second difficulty in Schachermeyr's version of Diodorus concerns the bricks. Here he has misread the source. He speaks of mud bricks (*Lehmziegeln*), whereas Diodorus refers explicitly to burnt bricks (*ten...opten plinthon*).³⁴ This makes a difference. In Babylonian ziggurats mud bricks formed the fill in the solid platforms, and fired bricks were used for facings. Similarly with a fortification wall there would be no point in using mud brick which a besieger could dig through. Thus if a section of city wall was demolished (which I doubt, for reasons suggested below) a large number of fired bricks would be obtained, and their natural use would not be in fill but in facings. By referring to mud bricks Schachermeyr makes it sound as if the point of the demolition of the city wall was to provide fill—and hence makes it sound as if the building under construction was a permanent monument.

Thinking specifically of fired bricks makes it easier to interpret what Diodorus means in speaking of the stade-long sides of the *pyra* and the thirty 'rooms' into which it was divided. He seems to envisage a grid-pattern of intersecting walls, each a stade long, five in one direction and six in the other, leaving between them thirty

³² D.S. 17.115.2–4.

³³ Indeed, it did not stop Wüst, *op. cit.*, pp. 150–51, or Lane Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 457. Yet Schachermeyr has claimed more attention, e.g. from Colledge (*cf. above*).

³⁴ D.S. 17.115.1.

rectangular gaps each very roughly thirty metres by twenty-five.³⁵ This would require a total of eleven stades' distance of brick walls, presumably not as tall as the cannibalized city wall had been in the beginning. I may add the observation that fill from a ten-stade-long wall, even a thick one, would not go far in filling up a square structure a stade by a stade.³⁶ Therefore the structure makes some sense in Diodorus' explicit terms (burnt bricks used to make a hollow bottom layer), but is more difficult to understand when the statement about the burnt bricks is rejected in favour of the assumption that mud bricks and solid platforms are meant.

I make these calculations with reluctance, because although Diodorus' description can be made plausible up to a point I do not think he was dealing with a structure that was really built, or even begun and left unfinished. The argument that Alexander made a ziggurat-style monument for Hephaestion is seductive granted the Babylonian context in which the whole thing is supposed to have happened, and Schachermeyr's development of that idea has commanded the assent of influential scholars,³⁷ but it is based on a faulty reading of Diodorus. What Diodorus thought he was describing at 17.115 (leaving 18.4 out of the discussion for a moment) was not a solid mud-brick ziggurat plus friezes: it was a hollow construction with palm-trunks roofing a fire-brick bottom layer. There is no reason why this could not be a good way of building a world-record pyre: the brick walls would restrict the tendency a wooden structure would have to collapse sideways on to spectators at the funeral.

This reading resolves certain problems. A point used by proponents of synoptic readings has been the claim that the edifice in 17.115 cannot have been built in the eight months available, and that therefore Diodorus' claim that it was done and finished, his 'uncompromising indicatives' (in Bosworth's words),³⁸ represents a mistake actively introduced by his misinterpretation of a source in which all that was said was that such a thing was planned. If, on the other hand, the thing under discussion is a pyre, which is essentially only a heap of firewood, it ceases to be axiomatic that a long time would be required to set it up. The decorative work would require some time, but if it was all for burning, compromises could be made: it would not need the attention to basic quality of workmanship over some years which a thing like the Mausoleum would demand. There is in Aelian an echo of a tradition to the effect that Hephaestion had had a pyre on which gold and silver were 'melted, together with his corpse':³⁹ a pyre decorated with precious metals was a plausible artefact.

By itself, however, the greater plausibility of the pyre-reading of 17.115 as compared to the monument-reading would not be conclusive. It is important to take a broader view and acknowledge that the difficulty with a synoptic reading of 17.115

³⁵ Wüst's argument (op. cit., p. 150) that *domoi* ('rooms') should be read as meaning 'courses/layers of stones' (*Steinlage, Steinschicht*) cannot be regarded as persuasive. In any case it requires acceptance of D. T. Fischer's drastic emendation (Teubner ed., 1905) of *ton topon* 'the place' to *tous toichous* 'the walls' at 17.115.2.

³⁶ Assume a uniform thickness of 10 m for the wall (a generous assumption). A stade is 182 m, near enough. Thus the ground area of wall demolished would be $(182.10.10) = 18,200$ square metres. The ground area of the *pyra* would be $182.182 = 33,124$ square metres. Thus by using all the demolition material one could build a solid structure roughly 55% of the height of the city wall. Quintus Curtius Rufus 5.1.26 says the wall was 50 cubits high (22.5 metres), which if correct would not imply a very tall resultant edifice. Diodorus by contrast posits for the *pyra* a height, in a stepped structure, of 130 cubits (58.5 metres, roughly). This is far higher than a city wall.

³⁷ See in addition to Colledge e.g. Donna C. Kurtz and John Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London, 1971), p. 305, and S. Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford, 1982), p. 238 and n. 125.

³⁸ Bosworth, op. cit., p. 205.

³⁹ Aelian *V.H.* 7.8.

and 18.4 is that the passages are not closely related. They are only in a qualified sense separate reflections on the same set of events. Diodorus is inconsistent: that is, he has put contradictory and irreconcilable statements into his account. Since the pyre in the funeral passage can only be made into a monument by misreading what he says, the only hope of saving the phenomena and believing both stories as given would be to adopt Geer's solution and assume that there was a highly-decorated pyre and also a permanent monument, which both for some reason got referred to with the same word. A. B. Bosworth has put forward a modified Geer scheme, arguing that 'obviously the great monument was not designed to be consigned to the flames, but it could have formed the base of a pyre and, after the cremation, a permanent *heroon* for Hephaestion',⁴⁰ but this, though it offers an ingenious way of believing both passages, is problematic because it depends on a 'lost key' assumption—the suggestion being that 17.115 and 18.4 could be reconciled if we knew one vital thing which both accounts inexplicably omit to tell us.⁴¹ Such desperate manoeuvres are not needed.

Part of the answer is provided by *Quellenforschung*. E. Badian in his article about the Last Plans was dismissive about the application of the technique, specially in connection with the early chapters of Book 18 of Diodorus;⁴² but it is evident at least that Diodorus must have got the Last Plans passage and the funeral passage from different places. A complicating factor is that there is no agreement on where Diodorus got the early chapters of Book 18. Jane Hornblower in her book on Hieronymus of Cardia backs away from W. W. Tarn's description of that opening section as a 'patchwork' (a word noted with implicit disapproval by both Schachermeyr and Badian),⁴³ but draws attention to the uneven texture of Diodorus' material: 'In Chapters 2 and 3 Diodorus' narrative is concise and clear and confined to the facts: at 4.2 the train of thought suddenly becomes obscure, the style is clumsy and long-winded, and in his specification of the Plans Diodorus becomes involved in parentheses and repetitions.'⁴⁴ Her solution is to ascribe 18.4 to the vulgate tradition, instead of Hieronymus, on the ground that the extravagant nature of the Last Plans marks them out as a *thauma*, a marvel. The contrast with the opinion of Badian, who described the story of the Last Plans as 'wholly credible', is clear.

For the present purpose, however, it is not necessary to adjudicate between these two views of the Last Plans passage and its provenance. The nature and source of 17.115 are more important. Note how the story progresses. At the beginning of Chapter 115 there is the item about the Generals and Friends having gold and ivory likenesses of Hephaestion made;⁴⁵ then the focus shifts to Alexander recruiting

⁴⁰ Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p. 204 n. 76.

⁴¹ Hence Bosworth's strictures in this note against Schachermeyr and Wüst: 'both scholars unnecessarily stress the distinction between pyre and tomb'. The distinction is in fact sensible and fundamental.

⁴² E. Badian, 'A King's Notebooks', *HSCP* 72 (1968), pp. 183–204, at p. 189: 'it is the frequent penalty of excessive concentration on *Quellenforschung*—the importance of which study, of course, no one will deny—that it can become the aim of scholarship to find out what was said by whom rather than what in fact happened'. Badian's premise in this article is that (p. 190) 'Diodorus' account, in outline (though not necessarily in detail) is wholly credible'. Therefore Badian, convinced by the Last Plans passage at least as a description of what was read out to the army by Perdikkas, is with Schachermeyr in wishing to correct 17.115 from 18.4.

⁴³ The word 'patchwork' used in W. W. Tarn, 'Alexander's *hypomnemata* and the "World-Kingdom"', *JHS* 41 (1921), pp. 1–21 at p. 13. Cf. Schachermeyr, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Badian, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁴⁴ Jane Hornblower, *Hieronimus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981), p. 94.

⁴⁵ Mr Lane Fox points out to me the possible relevance of the carved ivory portraits found in the Vergina tomb. Traces of gold on the surviving ivory portions hint that the perished parts

craftsmen, demolishing the wall, preparing the site and starting to build the *kataskeuasma*. After this, in the middle of Section 2, the author changes point of view, switching from saying what Alexander did to describing what the pyre was like.⁴⁶ This stance is maintained up to the point where the description ends in Section 5 with the height of the pyre, and there the focus shifts back to the supporting cast—the officers, soldiers, ambassadors, local people—and the author gives his hearsay estimate of the cost of the whole thing, an estimate which supposedly includes what those individuals spent as well as Alexander's costs. Finally in Section 6 the author shows Alexander himself at the focal point of the funeral ceremony he had planned: in the midst of all the *megaloprepeia* he gives the command to sacrifice to Hephaestion as a presiding god. A point of tension: would his people do what he said? In the lead-up Diodorus has only spoken of this being a funeral, but here Alexander reveals that it is actually a deification ceremony.⁴⁷ For a moment his leadership is on the line, and then the messenger from Ammon arrives and brings the oracle commanding sacrifice to Hephaestion as a god. The suspense is over: the sacrifices go ahead. It is important to the story that Alexander gives his command before the oracle reaches him: if he waited for instructions he would not be Alexander the Great.

Thus the chapter begins and ends by telling the story of the ceremony held at the pyre. Like Alexander, the Generals and the Friends make preparations; like him, they do not hesitate to spend money. Momentary uncertainty is resolved by Ammon's oracle: relations between the king and his people, instead of being disrupted by Alexander's decision to make Hephaestion into a god, have been reaffirmed and strengthened.⁴⁸ He is right again. A feast follows. In the middle of the narrative, however, the author has stood back and described the pyre less personally, as a work of art looked at from the outside, rather than as a thing Alexander made.

The description itself, then, an account in words of a physical object, is an *ecphrasis*. Students of rhetoric in the Hellenistic period practised writing such descriptions, both as exercises on their own and as parts of larger-scale compositions. In the present context consideration of the way the narrative develops shows how the author has created space in which to fit the description of the work of art without inappropriateness. An *ecphrasis* was not by definition a fanciful description, but in of these might have been made in rich materials. See Manolis Andronicos, *Vergina: the Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens, 1991), pp. 129–32 with plates 76–86. Despite the reconstruction drawings (plates 76 and 80), these were not necessarily portrait heads in the round: the flat backs of the ivory (see plate 77) might suggest a sort of high-relief portrait head as part of a composition built up on a back board. The writer could be referring to something like this.

⁴⁶ 'After this he began to decorate the outside with a complete scheme of ornamentation. Golden prows of quinqueremes, two hundred and forty in number, filled the bottom layer...'

⁴⁷ In reality Alexander established hero-cult, not divine worship, for Hephaestion: a fact which emerges, as Mr Lane Fox reminds me, from Hyperides 6 (*Epitaphios*). 21 (322 B.C.). This evidence is conclusive, and is borne out by what Arrian (*Anab.* 7.14.7) describes as the majority view among writers: the story given by Arrian that the oracle of Ammon expressly refused permission to sacrifice to Hephaestion as a god may perfectly well also be true. All the same, it would not be satisfactory to regard as a blunder the presentation of this occasion as a deification (not heroization) ceremony: it is obviously deliberate, and intended to suit the scale of the occasion. A branch of the tradition latched on to the 'god-version', which occurs in Justin 12.12.12 and (with a moral point) in Lucian, *Calumniae non temere credendum* 17; in theory, a widely-read author had the choice.

⁴⁸ The moral point in Lucian is different from this and involves the decision to appoint (*cheirotonesai*) Hephaestion a god being divisive: 'if anyone either smiled at what was going on or appeared less than totally reverent, the penalty established was death'. In the Diodorus passage the possible conflict between common sense and loyalty is resolved by the messenger from Ammon.

this case there is not much restraint. The account of the 'complete scheme of ornamentation' conveys ideas of scale, sumptuousness, inventiveness and significance in relation to the pyre. Scale is evoked with numbers and measurements: two hundred and forty quinquereme prows; archers four cubits high⁴⁹ and five-cubit armoured statues; fifteen-foot torches; total height of a hundred and thirty cubits. Gold, more than anything else, is the device suggesting sumptuousness: golden quinquereme prows; golden wreaths; lions and bulls made of gold. Inventiveness comes across in the whole account of the pyre level by level, which is itself a *tour de force*, and the trickiest parts of the pyre are the hollow sirens which would astonish the crowd on the day of the ceremony by beginning to sing funeral songs. As to meaning, the lower levels reflect on Hephaestion as a man of action and prowess (the red banners,⁵⁰ the hunt) who is now taking his place among the great men of legend (the centauromachy), while the sixth level makes his place in history explicit—it shows Alexander allowing his friend credit for the Macedonians' victory in their war against the Persians.

Thus the pyre described is an artefact which both amazes and instructs the reader. It is not only a *thauma*, though the dazzle of gold and the size of the structure are both intended to impress. It is also a commentary on the situation at the time of Hephaestion's death, summing up the combination of practical attributes and inner qualities which have taken the Macedonians to where they are, at the high point of Alexander's reign when he has conquered the empire of the East and made Babylon into his capital. Besides this, the representation of Macedonian arms defeating Persian arms implicitly reiterates the theme of Chapter 114: Hephaestion's funeral is death for Alexander. In giving Hephaestion the credit for his victory over the Persians, Alexander makes the same ill-omened move which he made earlier in telling the Persians to put out the Sacred Fire.

This use of description both as entertainment and as comment is familiar in the Hellenistic period. Callixeinus' description of the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II works in a similar way to this passage in several respects. As it is much longer it will not be possible to quote it all, but the themes of scale and sumptuousness, inventiveness and significance are there throughout. For example:⁵¹

'...statues of Alexander and Ptolemy wreathed with ivy crowns of gold. The statue of Arete beside Ptolemy had a golden crown of olive. Priapus, having an ivy crown of gold, was also present with them. The city of Corinth standing by Ptolemy was crowned with a golden diadem. Adjacent to all these figures were a cup-stand full of golden vessels and a golden krater of five measures. This cart was followed by women wearing very costly himatia and jewelry. They were called by the names of cities of Ionia and the rest of the Greek cities which, situated in Asia and the Islands, had been subdued by the Persians. All wore golden crowns.

There were carried in other carts a golden thyrsos which was 135 feet long, and a ninety-foot silver spear. In another cart was borne a golden phallos, measuring 180 feet in length, painted all over and bound with golden fillets, having at the end a gold star whose circumference was 9 feet...

And after these things came the processions of Zeus and of all the other gods, and after all of them, the procession of Alexander, whose golden statue was borne upon a quadriga of real elephants with Nike and Athena on either side. In the procession were also led along many thrones constructed from ivory and gold; on one of these lay a golden stephane, on another a gold horn, on another a golden crown, and on still another a horn of pure gold. On the throne of Ptolemy Soter lay a crown made from 10000 pieces of gold.' [etc.]

⁴⁹ On the assumption that this means 'four-cubits-high-when-kneeling', the archers are of superhuman height, like the armoured statues.

⁵⁰ Cf. use of a red banner as a signal for action in a sea battle by Conon at D.S. 13.77.4. A line of red banners celebrates a man who was ready to go into battle.

⁵¹ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 201D–E; 202A–B. Translation from E. E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 21–3.

Measurements are given (the hundred and eighty foot phallus) and there is gold everywhere. For cleverness consider the crown made of ten thousand pieces of gold, and though there are snippets of mythological meaning all over the place one of the easiest items to spot is the statue of Arete (goddess of excellence) placed next to the statue of Ptolemy. That is a comment on Ptolemy, whether by the designer of the procession or by the composer of the *ecphrasis*.

E. E. Rice in her book on the Grand Procession discusses what relation Callixeinus' account of the procession bears to the procession as it actually happened,⁵² but for purposes of comparison the literary parallel is of primary importance. This demonstrates that the description of the pyre in Diodorus' account is a Hellenistic *ecphrasis* constructed on conventional lines and intended to comment on the action of the story as well as astonishing the reader. That such a description should have originated in free composition rather than in documentary or oral records of what actually happened is the most economical explanation of its existence and of the fact that it cannot be made to fit in with the Last Plans passage except either by making unwarranted assumptions (Geer, Bosworth, Wüst) or by actually misreading it (Schachermeyr). Interpreting the description at D.S. 17.115 by comparing it with references from other sources to Hephaestion's pyre or his tomb involves supposing that the description is in some sense derived from events in the real world, rather than solely from thoughts in the original composer's mind. I suggest that it is a mistake to make that supposition. The story of the pyre has no necessary relationship with any piece of evidence about what happened in 324/3.

It is possible to offer a more detailed account of where the pyre story came from. Careful reading of chapter 115 suggests that the description is not a pointless *thauma* of the sort that could best be viewed as typifying the unsatisfactory vulgate tradition on Alexander.⁵³ It functions coherently as reflection on the narrative and has a correlation with the way in which the author has told the story of the funeral/deification ceremony. N. G. L. Hammond in *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* posited Ehippus of Olynthus as Diodorus' source for Chapter 115, ascribing 112–14 to Diyllus and 116–17 to Cleitarchus.⁵⁴ If Hammond were right, the thematic continuity through chapters 114–15 would have to be ascribed either to Diodorus himself or to an intermediate source who drew on the earlier writers.

Hammond's book took a battering from reviewers,⁵⁵ and I express no opinion about his ideas on Diyllus. That there is plenty in Diodorus 17 which was first said by Cleitarchus I suppose nobody would doubt. It is, however, unfair (*pace* Bosworth)⁵⁶ to think that Hammond's suggestion that the pyre description is drawn from Ehippus is without merit. Ehippus of Olynthus (*FGrHist* 126) wrote a book whose title is variously given in Athenaeus (the source of all the extant quotes) as *The Funeral of Alexander and Hephaestion*,⁵⁷ *The Passing of Alexander and Hephaestion*,⁵⁸

⁵² Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 1 and pp. 138–50. Her focus is on whether the artefacts described are plausible for the period under discussion, and she concludes that they are. This approach is open to question: describing something which could, technically and artistically, be done is not the same thing as describing something which has actually been done.

⁵³ This is essentially the view taken by Hornblower in *Hieronymus of Cardia*: she argues (p. 94) for Cleitarchus as the writer of the original of the pyre passage.

⁵⁴ N. G. L. Hammond, *Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 74–9.

⁵⁵ No punches pulled in the review by P. A. Brunt at *Times Literary Supplement* 83 (1984), p. 597. Measured discussion by Malcolm Errington at *Gnomon* 66 (1984), pp. 779–81, and by Simon Hornblower at *CR* 34 (1984), pp. 261–4. Perhaps least critical was N. R. E. Fisher at *Greece and Rome* 31 (1984), p. 216.

⁵⁶ Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p. 207 n. 89.

⁵⁷ 'Burial': *taphe*. *FGrHist* 126 F 1 and 3.

⁵⁸ 'Passing': *metallage*. *FGrHist* 126 F 2.

and *The Decease of Alexander and Hephaestion*.⁵⁹ The quotes which survive relate well to Athenaeus' characteristic interests in food and drink: F1 is about the alleged inability of Macedonians to drink moderately; F2 is about how much Alexander spent (100 minas a day) on dinners for his friends; F3 is about how a drinking-competition between Alexander and Proteas resulted in Alexander's death; F4 is about the luxurious furniture (golden throne, silver-footed couches) in Alexander's *paradeisos*; and F5 is about Alexander's extravagant clothes and his susceptibility to flattery.

The story of the pyre would (in terms of scale, immoderateness etc.) fit into the ambience of this work, but that is not all. The title shows that Ephippus' book centred on the burial (or the death) of Alexander and Hephaestion. Though the wording of the title is quoted inconsistently, the use of the singular subsists in all versions: the [one] funeral, or passing, or decease, of [both] Alexander and Hephaestion. This hints that the point implied by Diodorus in 114, that Hephaestion's funeral foreshadows Alexander's funeral, was a theme in Ephippus' treatment—or even its main theme. In preparing to bury Hephaestion, Alexander was unwittingly preparing to die himself (Hephaestion was also Alexander).

This theme would give Ephippus a strong motive for bringing the body of Hephaestion to Babylon. The location was necessitated by the dynamic of the work he had set himself to write: Babylon was where Alexander died. Because the point of Ephippus' whole book was the idea of a connection between Alexander's death and Hephaestion's death, he could not weaken his case by placing Hephaestion's funeral at Ecbatana where he died. So although the book also had in it the peripheral detail (food, drink, furniture, clothes) picked out by Athenaeus, it reached its climax in the moment when preparations for a funeral of Hephaestion at Babylon conveyed to the reader Ephippus' special insight on Alexander: that his most flamboyant moment, the creation of the pyre, was also the moment which defined him most exactly. His friendship with Hephaestion ended up leading him to his fate, and his creative energy, at the finish, focused on a death that spoke of his own death.

Arrian is the only one of the extant sources besides Diodorus to put Hephaestion's funeral at Babylon. The idea that the funeral was held there and not at Ecbatana is unlikely in itself on several counts: not only because of the delay, but because Lucian speaks of there being a monument in existence to Hephaestion in Alexander's lifetime,⁶⁰ and because Aelian, in his story of gold and silver being melted together with the corpse on Hephaestion's pyre, speaks of Alexander's having demolished the walls of the acropolis of Ecbatana—and gives no hint of the pyre's being supposed to have been in Babylon.⁶¹ Above all, there is the Lion of Hamadan (= Ecbatana), a Macedonian monument of the right date which would have made a very suitable memorial to Hephaestion⁶²—perhaps all the more appropriate in view of the apparent association of the Lion of Chaeronea with the burials of the Theban Sacred Band.

None of Plutarch, Justin and Aelian envisages Babylon as the scene of the funeral; and Lucian writes of a monument existing in Alexander's lifetime. They have the

⁵⁹ 'Decease': *teleute*. *FGrHist* 126 F 4.

⁶⁰ This would have been in Ecbatana: as the Last Plans passage shows, no *monument* was set up at Babylon.

⁶¹ Aelian *V.H.* 7.8. I am not in agreement with Bosworth's suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 204) that in this brief story (seventeen lines in the Teubner text) Aelian records two traditions according to one of which Hephaestion's funeral was not completed.

⁶² This suggestion was put forward in a lecture by Prof. H. Luschey: cf. Lane Fox, *op. cit.*, pp. 434–5 and 544.

numbers and it is a reasonable inference that their outlook represents the majority strand of the vulgate tradition. This, together with the fact that Cleitarchus is the most likely source of D.S. 18.4 (and so not responsible for 17.115), leads me not to accept an otherwise perhaps attractive alternative which Mr. Lane Fox offers. He notes that Cleitarchus used accounts by Nearchus and Onesicritus in producing his book, and suggests that Onesicritus might be seen as a possible source for the pyre description, giving as a parallel Onesicritus' utterly misleading description of the tomb of Cyrus which still stands at Pasargadae.⁶³

It may well seem odd that on this point, the Babylonian location of the funeral, Arrian and Diodorus should be combined against the massed ranks of vulgate writers. Hammond has certainly smelt a rat, but his explanation involves important difficulties. In his recent book *Sources for Alexander the Great*, he argues that Arrian's account of the aftermath of the death of Hephaestion follows the vulgate tradition drawn from Cleitarchus and Ephippus.⁶⁴ The insuperable problem with this is Arrian's claim at *Anab.* 7.14.8 that 'the following things are agreed by all':⁶⁵ 'all' has to include Ptolemy and Aristobulus, even if Cleitarchus did not feature on Arrian's reading list. Preparation of a pyre at Babylon did not reach Arrian's text from the main stream of the vulgate, but I suggest that Hammond could be right about Ephippus, whose work could (scandalously) have reached Arrian via Ptolemy.

Ephippus was alive in Alexander's own lifetime. Felix Jacoby hesitates to identify him with the Ephippus appointed as an inspector of mercenaries in Egypt by Alexander,⁶⁶ but even if he were not the same man the likelihood is overwhelming that he was of the same generation, since Olynthus had been destroyed by Philip II.⁶⁷ His book, if he was the Egypt-based Ephippus (or even if not), would probably have been written before Ptolemy I's history of Alexander, and available to Ptolemy; and despite Arrian's ideas on Ptolemy's kingly veracity,⁶⁸ it is not necessary to assume that Ptolemy (though an eyewitness) could not adopt an idea of Ephippus' if he thought it a good one.⁶⁹ If he repeated, contrary to fact, the story that Hephaestion's body was taken to Babylon, his motive would have been to strengthen the explanations he himself had to give for bringing Alexander's body to Alexandria: he could retrospectively claim precedent for his move in Alexander's own actions.

This, I suggest, is a credible explanation for the extravagant pyre in Diodorus and for the contradiction between his funeral chapter and the Last Plans. The story goes back to a man who wrote a book to commend a view of Alexander's friendship with Hephaestion as the key to his eventual downfall. The book, available in Egypt, induced Ptolemy I to concur with the story of a funeral at Babylon for Hephaestion—thus initiating a tradition which convinced Arrian about the

⁶³ Strabo, *Geog.* 15.3.7, stating that the tomb is a tower with ten stories, and that the remains of Cyrus lie in the top storey. The tomb is in fact a stone chamber on a stepped plinth: see D. Stronach, *Pasargadae* (Oxford, 1978), esp. at pp. 24–5.

⁶⁴ N. G. L. Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 296.

⁶⁵ This is another point at which I am in debt to Mr Lane Fox's suggestions—all the more so because I have profited from them without coming round to his way of thinking.

⁶⁶ Arr. *Anab.* 3.5.3, = *FGrHist* 126 T 2, with commentary ad loc.

⁶⁷ As Hammond points out in 'The Royal Journal of Alexander' (*Hist.* 37 [1988], pp. 129–50 at p. 142), an 'Olynthian' cavalryman does appear in Egypt on a Petrie papyrus dating from about 240 (J. P. Mahaffy and Gilbert Smyly *Flinders Petrie Papyri* (Dublin, 1905), p. 115 col. 1.15, = Br. Lib. Pap. 573 [2] verso). The possibility that Ephippus was of a later generation than Alexander's is still remote.

⁶⁸ Arr. *Anab.* preface 2.

⁶⁹ T. P. Wiseman's article 'Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity' in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter, 1993) at pp. 122–46, is a reminder that historians in the ancient world did not always even try to tell the truth.

Babylonian setting. In fact Hephaestion's funeral was at Ecbatana, and D.S. 17.115 is fiction,⁷⁰ describing a pyre which was not built⁷¹—only the monument was *planned* for Babylon, and that, thanks to Perdiccas, was eventually not built either.

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⁷⁰ Shrewdly, Wüst (op. cit., pp. 156–7) figures that one could not have built the edifice described in D.S. 17.115 for 12,000 talents. His answer is to say that the figure of 12,000 comes from a different source. An unnecessary complication. As with the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II, one can describe on paper as much gold as one likes.

⁷¹ It was in any case never plausible to think that Alexander, basing his empire at Babylon, would pull down a whole section of wall. Note that Babylon was besieged by Eumenes in 317/6: see John D. Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator* (London, 1990), pp. 38–9. Its walls had not become redundant. Perhaps the detail about demolition of walls had an origin in Alexander demolishing the walls of the acropolis of Ecbatana (so Aelian), and Ehippus moved the action, along with the body of Hephaestion, to Babylon?