

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST PHILOTAS¹

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FEW PROBLEMS in the history of Alexander the Great have been a greater vexation to the historian than the execution of Philotas and the murder of his father, Parmenion, events that shed an unfavourable light on Alexander's character and on the relationships of his younger Macedonian generals.² For scholars such as W. W. Tarn and C. A. Robinson Jr., the Philotas-affair became a moral issue, its discussion, ultimately, a conscious effort to exculpate Alexander.³ So it is with understandable regret that Tarn concludes that Parmenion's death was "plain murder and leaves a deep stain on Alexander's reputation" (1.64). But in the last two decades the gentleman scholar and the gentleman conqueror have fallen out of favour, yielding to a new breed of sceptics. From this group E. Badian emerges as one of the most sound but, as I think, unduly suspicious in the case of the Philotas-affair.

Badian's persuasive thesis, although many of its details have met with objections,⁴ has had a marked effect upon subsequent scholarship—as indeed has his entire characterization of Alexander as the ruthless, calculating opportunist⁵—and, since it is the most recent specialized study,

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²F. Cauer, "Philotas, Kleitos, Kallisthenes," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Supplbd 20 (1894) 8–38; C. A. Robinson Jr., "Alexander the Great and Parmenio," *AJA* 49 (1945) 422 ff.; W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1948) esp. 2.270–272, App. 12, "The Murder of Parmenion"; E. Badian, "The Death of Parmenio," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 324–338; J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford 1969) 134–135; F. Schachermeyr, *Alexander der Grosse: Das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens* (Vienna 1973) 326–336; J. Rufus Fears, "Pausanias, The Assassin of Philip II," *Athenaeum* 53 (1975) 111–135, esp. 132–134; and, for a survey of the major views, J. Seibert, *Alexander der Grosse: Erträge der Forschung* (Darmstadt 1972) 140–141. These works will be referred to by author's name alone.

³In the case of Parmenion, a valiant defense is attempted by Robinson (*AJP* 58 [1937] 109) on the basis of Curtius 6.11.20: . . . *legem Macedonum veriti, qua cautum erat ut propinqui eorum qui regi insidiati essent cum ipsis necarentur*. . . Not even Tarn found this acceptable but Robinson reiterated this view in "Alexander's Brutality," *AJA* 56 (1952) 169–170.

⁴These are collected and discussed by Hamilton, where special attention is given to Badian's "fabricated conspiracy" and his misleading discussion of Plut. *Alex.* 49.1 (ἐπιβουλεύόμενος).

⁵See particularly "Alexander the Great and the Loneliness of Power," *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford 1964) 192–205.

it warrants a detailed examination. In Badian's view, the murder of Parmenion was not the result of the Philotas-affair in that it was a reaction to it, but the "culmination" of a greater scheme aimed at the destruction of Parmenion's house. Furthermore, it represented the continuation of the "reign of terror" that followed Philip's assassination,⁶ after a lengthy period of calm. Parmenion and his associates, lulled into a false sense of security by the intervening tranquillity, were taken completely by surprise "when the thunderbolt struck them" (326). It was the Philotas-affair that provided Alexander with the means of eliminating Parmenion, and Badian argues that, with Parmenion's death in mind, Alexander was party to a "fabricated conspiracy" *against* Philotas. The view presupposes that Alexander had long desired the destruction of Parmenion and his adherents, that Parmenion was the ultimate target of the Philotas-affair, that the actual conspiracy *of* Philotas did not exist,⁷ and that the conspiracy of Dimnos was a fabrication.⁸

I propose to show that Badian's treatment of the affair is unsatisfactory on the matters of Alexander's motives and methods; that a study of the careers of Alexander's younger generals will show that they (Hephaistion not the least of these), and not Alexander, were primarily responsible for the fall of Philotas; that the latter's own position of prominence and arrogant nature gave rise to the ill-feeling against him; and that, far from being victimized by a "fabricated conspiracy" in the Dimnos-affair, Philotas, through his foolish handling of the matter—for it did in fact exist—gave his enemies the perfect opportunity to move against him. Consequently, this view precludes the theory that the murder of Parmenion was the culmination of Alexander's "reign of terror," which began after Philip's assassination, and that Philotas was the object of a protracted conspiracy, contrived by Alexander himself.

Let us begin with Parmenion, allegedly the target of Alexander's smouldering hostility. It is true that Parmenion recognized the growing power of Attalos and his faction and, in an effort to bring himself into closer alliance with Philip (as was only fitting for the foremost commander of the army to do), married one of his daughters to Attalos. But we should not read too much into Parmenion's relationship with him; political marriages are not made in heaven.⁹ Nor was Parmenion so great

⁶For this see E. Badian, "The Death of Philip II," *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 244-250.

⁷So Badian (332) comments: "[*sc.* Tarn] having introduced the story of the 'conspiracy of Philotas' (which he is the only reputable recent scholar to believe). . . ."

⁸Badian (333): "Moreover, since Philotas' 'treason' was a transparent fabrication, the assassination of his father was not a panic-stricken reaction to an unforeseen emergency; it must be regarded as an integral part of the same scheme, and indeed, in view of Parmenio's position, as its culmination."

⁹Fears (133, n. 77) believes that "the alleged marriage of Philotas' sister to Attalus,

a fool as to fail to realize that, when Philip's assassination had brought about the fall of Kleopatra and her adherents, it was politically expedient to sacrifice his new son-in-law to Alexander's vengeance.¹⁰ This was Parmenion's token of loyalty to the new King and there is no reason to doubt that Alexander was satisfied.¹¹ Hostile factions remained within the army, but assassination had been an all too common means of deposing Macedonian kings and nothing could ensure perfect security for the new monarch. Alexander secured his power by a combination of liquidation and conciliation, preferring the latter when possible.

What we know of Parmenion's actions after Alexander's accession to the throne (Berve, no. 606) suggests that he had opted for conciliation with the King, nor is there any evidence that, before the Philotas-affair, Alexander had viewed him with greater distrust than any other of Philip's generals. Certainly there are stories that cast Parmenion in an unfavourable light,¹² but they do so for two obvious reasons: pro-Alexander propaganda and *apologia*. But to say (Badian 328) that some of these stories "go back to good sources (Ptolemy or even Callisthenes)" does not mean that they are true and, unless they can be proved to derive from Kallisthenes, they were surely written after Parmenion's death. Furthermore, any such story that derives from Kallisthenes (and only one can be assigned to him with certainty¹³) need not be attributed to a

found in no other source [than Curtius], is . . . an invention." I find this piece of information more likely to be true than not. The extensive system of political alliance through marriage is aptly demonstrated by A. B. Bosworth ("Philip II and Upper Macedonia," *CQ* 21 [1971] 93–105) for the period immediately preceding Alexander's reign (though admittedly for the royal house in particular). But cf. the marriage of Koinos, son of Polemokrates, to one of Parmenion's daughters (Curtius 6.9.30; Arr. 1.24.1; 1.29.4 and supported by epigraphic evidence, Dittenberger, *Syll.*³ 332). For the political significance of such unions in the Hellenistic period (though also applicable in Alexander's lifetime) see J. Seibert, "Historische Beiträge zu den dynastischen Verbindungen in hellenistischer Zeit," *Historia, Einzelschrift* 10 (1967).

¹⁰For a slightly different approach consider Curtius 7.1.3: [sc. *Parmenio*] . . . *amicus et ipsi Alexandro tam fidus, ut occidendi Attalum non alio ministro uti mallet* [sc. *Alexander*]. Diod. 17.2.5–6; 5.2 says that Attalos was killed by an agent named Hekataios. See Berve, no. 292. This must have been done with Parmenion's knowledge and approval.

¹¹Diodoros (17.5.2) suggests that the murder of Attalos had two functions: the elimination of Attalos and the proof of Parmenion's loyalty. Cf. L. Edmonds, "The Religiosity of Alexander," *GRBS* 12 (1971) 367; Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Loneliness of Power" (above, n. 4) 194.

¹²Arr. 1.13.2 ff.; Plut. *Alex.* 16.3; Curt. 3.5.1 ff. and 6.10.34 f.; Plut. *Alex.* 19; Arr. 2.4.9–10; Diod. 17.54.4; Arr. 2.25.2; Plut. *Alex.* 33; Arr. 3.18.11. There are cases in which Parmenion's advice is accepted, or in which Parmenion gives good advice: Diod. 17.16; Curt. 3.7.8–10; Plut. *Alex.* 21.9; Curt. 4.10.16–17; Arr. 3.18.11; or cases in which Parmenion performs loyal service: Arr. 1.25.4 ff.; Curt. 7.1.3.

¹³Plut. *Alex.* 33 = *FGrHist* 124 F 37. Kallisthenes charges that Parmenion managed affairs badly (deliberately) at Gaugamela. On this see Hamilton (89) and Jacoby

deliberate attempt to undermine Parmenion's reputation. Kallisthenes, as official historian of the crusade (Alexander's salesman to the League of Korinth, as many suggest¹⁴), wrote with aim of enhancing the reputation of a young and ambitious king who was eager to win credit for himself and not appear to be winning battles through the skill of his father's general. Thus it was Kallisthenes' function to impress the brilliance of Alexander's personality and military skill upon the *Greeks*; in order to undermine the reputation of Parmenion, he ought to have been writing for the Macedonian soldiery, to whom alone this will have been a major concern. More likely, any notable anti-Parmenion propaganda was written after Parmenion's death. *Apologia* and the history of Alexander are inseparable; what greater need than to justify the murder of Parmenion?

Badian charges (329) that Alexander, while he was steadily "undermining Parmenion's reputation, had also made considerable progress in extricating himself from the stranglehold of Parmenion's family and adherents." The decline in power of Parmenion's house in the years that followed the crossing into Asia is evident. But is it fair to attach the blame for this to Alexander? Parmenion's sons, Hektor and Nikanor (Berve, nos. 295, 554), had died of natural causes, while a third member of the family, Asandros, Parmenion's brother, had received the honour of the satrapy of Sardeis.¹⁵ Can this really have been part of a scheme to weaken Parmenion's power in the army? If Berve is correct (2.393), all this occurred after Alexander had strengthened the family's position by appointing Philotas commander of the Companion cavalry. Asandros was replaced in his satrapy by Menandros (no. 501), under what circumstances we do not know.¹⁶ But how could Alexander have known that Parmenion's

(*FGrHist* IID, 429–430) who assert, quite rightly as I think, that this passage (indeed the entire hostile portrait of Parmenion) was written after Parmenion's death. Note also Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York 1960) 47, who suggests that the evidence that links Kallisthenes to this hostile portrait is questionable. Undoubtedly he is correct to assume that the stories were "elaborated by later writers."

¹⁴W. K. Prentice, "Callisthenes, the Original Historian of Alexander," *TAPA* 54 (1923) 74 ff.; T. S. Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander," *AJP* 70 (1949) 233 f. on the importance of Greek public opinion; L. Pearson (n. 13 above) 22 ff.; Jacoby, *FGrHist* IID, 411.

¹⁵Badian and Schachermeyr tend to view such appointments as *Kaltstellung*, a concept somewhat similar to the Tacitean notion of *honor exilii* (cf. *Hist.* 1.21.1). In view of Asandros' career (Berve, no. 165), his appointment to the rich satrapy of Sardeis cannot be considered in this light; certainly it was not a demotion. I see no evidence for C. Bradford Welles' suggestion (*Alexander and the Hellenistic World* [Toronto 1970] 39) that Parmenion and Asandros were cousins.

¹⁶A certain Asandros (without patronymic) appears at Zariaspa-Baktra (Arr. 4.7.2; Curt. 7.10.12) with reinforcements from Lykia. Berve (2.87) offers several explanations for his disappearance thereafter. If this is the brother of Parmenion, Alexander's act of

sons would die of natural causes? It is useless to speculate what he would have done had they not met such ends.

So, while fortune had taken two of Parmenion's sons, the most devastating move, as far as Philotas was concerned, was dictated by military sense. The events that followed Gaugamela made it clear that the nature of the war was to take a drastic change: the pursuit of Dareios and Bessos would require vigour and mobility. Since Parmenion's seventy years made him ill-suited for this type of warfare and since the young, and extremely capable, Krateros had been groomed by a series of commands of ever-increasing importance as Parmenion's eventual successor, the latter was sent to Ekbatana with the imperial treasures.¹⁷ On account of the nature of the campaign, he was never recalled and took what we might today call a "desk job" at Ekbatana, entrusted with the securing of east-west communications.¹⁸ The appointment, while not a demotion, meant a considerable "loss of *power*"¹⁹ in relation to the army, but at Parmenion's age such a change of position was inevitable. While he may have resented the change, just as any commander, after a lifetime of service, resents removal from active duty, it was his son, Philotas, who was to suffer most from it.

With Parmenion at Ekbatana, Philotas found himself isolated within the Macedonian army; this proved disastrous. As a young man he had risen to his position of prominence, no doubt, through the influence of his father.²⁰ His prestige, coupled with his friendship with Alexander,

recalling him from Sardeis to the main camp in order to have him eliminated (so Badian 329) can not have been politically astute. This could only have revived unpleasant memories of the Philotas-affair and accentuated the sufferings of the house of Parmenion. Perhaps the man in question is Berve's no. 164, the later satrap of Karia (323 B.C.).

¹⁷Arr. 3.19.7; J. R. Hamilton, *Alexander the Great* (London 1973) 90 is one of the few writers to point out this obvious reason for Parmenion's removal from the army. For his age (70 years), Curt. 6.11.32. With the end of the "Panhellenic" phase of the war, many of Parmenion's troops were sent back to Greece. This is a factor, of course, but it can hardly have been Alexander's reason for removing Parmenion.

¹⁸Alexander may have wished to keep a watchful eye on his perfidious treasurer, Harpalos, who had earlier (before the battle of Issos) fled to the Megarid, undoubtedly after pilfering the treasury. He had, however, been reinstated. For a different view on the cause of his departure in 333 see E. Badian, "The First Flight of Harpalus," *Historia* 9 (1960) 246.

¹⁹Badian acknowledges this "loss of *power*" (his phrase, 329 n. 16) and yet maintains that 330 was a critical year in which Parmenion represented a threat to Alexander's security. In truth, his relegation to Ekbatana was proof that Parmenion's family had already suffered a great decline. Only if, as in the case of Philotas' execution, Alexander gave Parmenion a compelling reason to rebel, was the latter's position at Ekbatana a threat to the King.

²⁰So R. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London 1973) 287. One wonders whether the death of Attalos and the promotion of Philotas were in any way related.

gave rise in turn to arrogance and licence in speech. It is difficult to determine the precise nature of his relationship with Alexander, for, while the two are portrayed as boyhood friends by Plutarch (*Alex.* 10.3), Philotas' role in the Pixodaros-affair and his outspoken opposition to Alexander's orientalisms could not have raised him in the King's estimation. Nevertheless, both Ptolemy and Aristoboulos (*FGrHist* 138 F13; 139 F22) reported that the friendship and honour in which he held both Philotas and Parmenion at the time of the ἐπιβουλή in Egypt (332/1 B.C.) induced Alexander to overlook the former's sins.

The existence of this so-called conspiracy has not been seriously questioned. The ἐπιβουλή, related by Arrian (3.26.1), must certainly be the subject of the first part of Plutarch's account of the Philotas-affair (*Alex.* 48.4–49.2). At this point Plutarch speaks of a "conspiracy *against* Philotas," but our correct interpretation of this remark is vital to our understanding of the true nature of the conspiracy. Badian, admittedly, does not openly state that Plutarch's "conspiracy *against* Philotas" was anything more than the activity of Krateros and Antigone (the "prolonged espionage" [331] against Philotas) but his remark that "Plutarch . . . very justly speaks of a conspiracy *against* Philotas" (326) immediately precedes a long digression that is followed by an account of the events almost two years later (the conspiracy of Dimnos) and the words: "It seems to have been during this time [*i.e.*, during Philotas' absence in Areia] that *the plot* [my emphasis] against Philotas was hatched."²¹ Now it becomes clear that Badian believes in a protracted conspiracy against Philotas, during which time a "file" was compiled against him. But the resulting ambiguity in Badian's discussion can only mislead the reader,²² for it appears that, on account of Plutarch's remark, we ought to look for a "fabricated conspiracy" in the Dimnos-affair; Badian's proposal thus wins credibility. The argument is delusive.

Plutarch's account deserves closer attention. Krateros (no. 446) had suborned Philotas' mistress, Antigone (no. 86), to inform against her lover and had reported the latest developments to Alexander. He was motivated by his strong sense of loyalty to the King, for which characteristic he won the label φιλοβασιλεύς,²³ and by his own personal ambition. Perhaps his zeal had brought him into open conflict with Philotas, just as it did on later occasions with Hephaestion.²⁴ But this "prolonged espionage" revealed little that was not already known: that Philotas

²¹Badian (330); but Plutarch (*Alex.* 49.3: ἐν δὲ τῷ τότε χρόνῳ) is also vague.

²²Hamilton (135) clarifies this ambiguity.

²³Plut. *Alex.* 47.10; Diod. 17.114.1–2.

²⁴Plut. *Alex.* 47.9 ff., esp. 47.11. Much of this may have been due to Hephaestion's nature but, as both Badian and Schachermeyr demonstrate, such conflicts among the young nobles were common and indeed natural.

had been voicing his objections to Alexander's orientalisms, particularly the recent *Ammonssohnschaft*, and that he claimed a greater share of the credit for his own military achievements and those of his father. There is no question that, when Plutarch speaks of Philotas as being ignorant of the conspiracy against him, he is referring to the activities of Krateros and Antigone and not the Dimnos-affair that immediately follows in chapter 49.3–12.

The details of Dimnos' conspiracy can be briefly stated. Dimnos (Berve, no. 269), for an unknown reason, had plotted with several others against Alexander; Arrian relates that Demetrios (no. 260) and the sons of Andromenes (Amyntas, Attalos, Polemon, and Simmias)²⁵ were suspected of complicity, Curtius gives a suspicious list of otherwise unknown fellow-conspirators (6.7.15). Dimnos divulged the details of the conspiracy to his lover Nikomachos, who, in alarm, reported all he had heard to his brother, Kebalinos. The latter, in turn, attempted to inform Alexander through the agency of Philotas, who was in the habit of visiting the King twice daily. But Philotas, whether privy to the plot or merely favouring it,²⁶ failed to pass on the information. Kebalinos, perceiving that his words had fallen on deaf ears, resolved to bring the matter to Alexander's attention himself. In his second attempt, he found a more receptive ear.²⁷ Philotas and the conspirators were subsequently arrested.²⁸

Because Dimnos "conveniently killed himself (or was killed while resisting arrest)" (Badian 331) and because Philotas' guilt could not be proved,²⁹ Badian concludes that the Dimnos-affair was actually a "fabrication" aimed at implicating Philotas, a plot that was hatched while he was attending to the funeral rites of his brother. I consider Hamilton's refutation (134–135) simple and adequate: "how could Alexander *know*

²⁵Arr. 3.27.1–5. See my discussion of these individuals in "Amyntas, Son of Andromenes," *GRBS* 16 (1975) 393–398.

²⁶Perhaps Philotas foolishly hoped to protect the conspirators from prosecution (especially if Amyntas, whom he considered a personal friend, was included) and thus failed to pass on the information.

²⁷Diod. 17.79.4 says "a royal page;" Curt. 6.7.22 names him Metron; see Berve, no. 520.

²⁸Curtius' account of the arrest of Philotas and the conspirators (6.7.31 ff.) is overdramatized and is strongly influenced by the writer's Roman background (*i.e.*, not to be traced to Kleitarchos). See Badian (331–332) and R. Lane Fox ([above, n. 21] 283–284).

²⁹R. Lane Fox is indecisive on the extent of Philotas' guilt, supposing (288) that Philotas may have planned the conspiracy while he was returning from his brother's funeral (completely opposite to Badian [330], who supposes that he was plotted against in his absence). Then, after suggesting that Philotas' guilt consisted of negligence, Fox concludes (289): "Nobody believed that Philotas was innocent and it is absurd to idealize him as a martyr to Alexander's ruthlessness simply because the histories explain so little."

that Philotas would fail to pass on the information?" There are, of course, other almost equally devastating objections: the complexity of the plot would have made its successful execution extremely difficult.³⁰ But the strongest argument against the "fabricated conspiracy" is the understanding of the true conspiracy *against* Philotas.

As we have seen, Philotas was reported to have been one of Alexander's boyhood friends. Yet it appears that he was somewhat of an outsider to this inner group, the very people who were later to rise to prominence through their jealous rivalry with one another for Alexander's affection. Perhaps Philotas' alienation from the group was due to the difference in age that, although it may not have been great,³¹ was sufficient to separate him "from the boys" at a critical time. Certainly his devotion to his father and his military position made it neither necessary nor desirable for him to go into exile when Olympias and her children fell out of favour. At that point he very likely incurred the enmity of those companions of Alexander who had.³²

It does not appear that Alexander himself bore Philotas a grudge, for at the outset of the expedition he either retained him as commander of the Companions or promoted him to the post. But what Philotas had not done as a youth to alienate several of Alexander's young companions, he did in the early years of the campaign. His prestigious command was coveted by the younger commanders, while his arrogance (Themistios, *Or.* 19.229c-d, uses him as an exemplum of αἰθάρδεια) fanned the flames of their jealousies, giving rise to a "conspiracy" against him. Now the irony of the situation becomes apparent. For, while Parmenion, through the rejection of the party of Attalos—and this will have included the arrest of Alexandros of Lynkestis—and his loyalty, had won a reprieve from Alexander, his son, Philotas, through his own folly and unpopularity, was to bring about their downfall. Opposition was to come from another quarter. When the news of Dimnos' conspiracy broke, the cards were stacked against Philotas; his licence in speech and the suspicion of earlier treason made his complicity in the affair all the more credible. It appears that Philotas himself did not fully understand his own predicament at the time when the events of what we call the "Philotas affair" began to unfold. Certainly, his foolish disregard of his father's advice,³³ his arrogance,

³⁰Also the news of Dimnos' plot, had Philotas not favoured it, would have given Philotas the perfect opportunity to prove his loyalty and win honour. Cf. R. Lane Fox (289) and Hamilton (135).

³¹Berve (2.393) estimates that he was not much more than four years older. He may have been older still, although it appears that Philotas owed his rapid advancement more to his father's influence than to his age.

³²Plut. *Alex.* 10.4 names Harpalos, Nearchos, Erigyios and Ptolemy. Arr. 3.6.5 adds Laomedon, the brother of Erigyios. Hephaistion is curiously absent. See n. 37 below.

³³Plut. *Alex.* 48.3: ὑποψίαν (εἶχε) καὶ φθόνον, ὥστε καὶ Παρμενίωνά ποτ' εἰπεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν, "ὦ παῖ, χεῖρων μοι γίγνυ."

and his general unpopularity made his ultimate deposition only a matter of time. His political enemies, who had long before begun to work for his elimination, seized the opportunity presented by the Dimnos-affair. Deep-rooted animosities manifested themselves in the form of vigorous prosecution and, in the face of adversity, Parmenion, through whose influence Philotas had escaped an earlier charge of treason, was no longer present to help him.

When Philotas was confronted with the charge of complicity in Dimnos' conspiracy, he replied that he had not passed on the information because he had not taken it seriously, a peculiar attitude in a court where intrigues were common and always potentially dangerous. At another time Parmenion's mere presence might have commuted the charge from treason to excusable negligence. In the present circumstances, the implication of Philotas in the conspiracy provided his enemies with the best and, in their minds, possibly the only opportunity for securing his elimination.

Curtius' lengthy discussion of the proceedings that followed Philotas' arrest is often tiresome, offering little in the way of new details. Yet Curtius is by far our most valuable source for the Philotas-affair; it is unfortunate that his imaginative speeches and the reputation of his source, Kleitarchos, have detracted from the quality of Curtius' history.³⁴ Kleitarchos drew his information mainly from eye-witness reports, and this will explain some of the confused details in Curtius' narrative.³⁵ But Curtius was more than a skilful rhetorician: he understood the inner workings of the Philotas-affair, relating what the other *vulgate* writers did not perceive and what Ptolemy and Aristoboulos would not disclose. Curtius' Roman background had educated him in the ways of court intrigue and factional politics. One remark strikes to the heart of the matter: Philotas pronounces that the bitterness of his enemies has overcome Alexander's goodwill (*vicit . . . bonitatem tuam, rex, inimicorum meorum acerbitas*, Curt. 6.8.22). Furthermore, Curtius portrays Krateros and Koinos as Philotas' chief opponents, Krateros thinking that no better opportunity would present itself for destroying a detested rival and Koinos, although married to Philotas' sister, being his most outspoken assailant (6.8.4; 6.9.30). The latter, for his involvement in the affair, has been stigmatized by modern scholars as one of the most unsavory characters in the history of this period.³⁶ Yet it is likely that the most serious blows to Philotas' hopes of acquittal were struck behind the scenes.

³⁴On Kleitarchos see Jacoby *FGrHist* 137; T. S. Brown, "Clitarchus," *AJP* 71 (1950) 134-155; L. Pearson (above, n. 13) 212-242.

³⁵F. Schachermeyr, *Alexander in Babylon und die Reichsordnung nach seinem Tode* (Vienna 1970) 81-92.

³⁶For Koinos see Berve, no. 439. Schachermeyr (327) serves as an example: "Koinos, der beidere Haudegen. . . . Zwar Schwiegersohn des Parmenion, jedoch von betonter Loyalität."

The years that intervened between the beginning of the expedition and the Philotas-affair were marked by a conspicuous lack of achievement on the part of Alexander's dearest friend, Hephaistion. Whether Hephaistion was in fact Alexander's boyhood friend is open to doubt; certainly Plutarch does not mention him among the list of friends who were exiled on account of the Pixodarus-affair.³⁷ Nevertheless, it is clear that at some time very early in the campaign Hephaistion began to exert an increasingly great influence upon Alexander.³⁸ Certainly it would be naïve to believe that Hephaistion's sudden rise from relative obscurity to command of one-half of the Companions was not in some way related to his role in the Philotas-affair.

What we know of Hephaistion's later relationships with Alexander's commanders reveals that he was of a particularly quarrelsome nature and not reluctant to malign others to Alexander.³⁹ His influence is evinced by his contribution to the fall of Kallisthenes⁴⁰ and the great alarm that Eumenes felt at Hephaistion's death, lest his former enmity toward him should bring about serious consequences.⁴¹ If any man had the power to persuade Alexander that Philotas was expendable, that man was Hephaistion. But Hephaistion's own military record provides an even greater cause for suspicion. As we have seen, his contribution to the war effort before 330 had been almost negligible; we know of only one minor naval command, in which he took the fleet from Tyre to Gaza, and of his wounding at Gaugamela.⁴² Polyainos' remark (4.3.27) that Hephaistion commanded a cavalry division against Phrasaortes (a mistake for Ariobarzanes) finds no parallel in another extant account. More

³⁷Plut. *Alex.* 10.4. Tarn 2.57 believes that they were not boyhood friends and that the Hephaistion-Patroklos parallel (which many interpret as indicative of an early intimate relationship) is the work of the poetasters. The evidence for Hephaistion's early relationship with Alexander is scanty and of questionable quality. Only Curtius (3.12.15: *cum ipso pariter educatus*) deserves serious consideration. Compare this with Diog. Laert. 5.1.27 (misprinted by Berve 2.169, n. 3), where a letter from Aristotle to Hephaistion is mentioned. Ps.-Kallisthenes 1.18 and Jul. Valer. 1.10 mention Hephaistion and Alexander sailing together as youths; admittedly an unreliable source. The evidence is at best inconclusive.

³⁸Two famous anecdotes attest to their close relationship during the early years of the campaign: Arr. 2.12.6 f.; Diod. 17.37.5; 17.114.2; Curt. 3.12.15 ff.; Val. Max. 4.7 ext. 2; *Itiner.* 37; *Suda* s.v. 'Ηφαιστίων. Also Curt. 4.1.15–25; Plut. *de fort. Al.* 2.340c–d; Diod. 17.47 ff. It was also through the agency of Hephaistion that Demosthenes sent Aristion to Alexander in 331 (Marsyas of Pella, *FGrHist* 135 F 2; Jacoby IID, 482).

³⁹Plut. *Alex.* 55.1; 47.9–11; *Eumenes* 2.2; Arr. 7.12.7 f.; 7.14.9.

⁴⁰Plut. *Alex.* 55.1. Hephaistion told Alexander that Kallisthenes had promised to do *proskynesis* but had gone back on his word.

⁴¹Arr. 7.14.9. Eumenes was the first to pay honour to the dead Hephaistion, fearing that their former quarrels (Arr. 7.12.7; Plut. *Eumenes* 2) would make Alexander suspect that he welcomed Hephaistion's death.

⁴²Curt. 4.5.10 (Tyre to Gaza); Diod. 17.61.3, Arr. 3.15.2, Curt. 4.16.32 (Gaugamela).

important, however, is Hephaistion's failure to display, during the remainder of the campaign, those qualities of military skill and leadership that would warrant his unprecedented promotion. In fact, he is never reported exercising that command. Instead he appears to have been tactfully demoted whenever the actual command of military units was concerned.⁴³

We must therefore view Hephaistion's rise with suspicion. This is especially true in view of his vehement advocacy of the use of torture against Philotas, behaviour that is not out of character and that reflects a rivalry with Philotas on both a personal and official level (Curt. 6.11.10). Not only did he advocate torture but he took a personal lead in the act itself; Plutarch (*Alex.* 49.12) speaks of Philotas' tormentors as τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἡφαίστιωνα. Even more suspicious is the nature of Arrian's account (3.26.2 ff.), which derives from Ptolemy.⁴⁴ Here we are told of Hephaistion's promotion and of Ptolemy's own replacement of Demetrios the bodyguard, yet the account of the actual *Philotasprozess* is abbreviated to the point of uselessness. The Arrian-Ptolemy tradition has often been interpreted as official *apologia* for Alexander, but, as Schwahn and Errington have pointed out,⁴⁵ it protected on numerous occasions Ptolemy's own interests and, very likely, those of his friends.

The accounts of the execution of Philotas are, for the most part, brief⁴⁶ and concur in stating that Philotas was "judicially executed"; Curtius' version is, predictably, more elaborate. Here again, while the tedious rhetoric and needless expansion of events give rise to particulars that can be dismissed as inventions, there is the important ring of verisimilitude,⁴⁷ often the best that the historian can hope for. If Plutarch's remark, ὁ μὲν οὖν Φιλώτας ἐπιβουλευόμενος οὕτως ἡγγύει (*Alex.* 49.1), leads us to suspect a conspiracy against Philotas at the time of Dimnos' treason, Curtius' account is most useful for the interpretation of it. The conspiracy *against* Philotas was not a "transparent fabrication," an invented conspiracy by

⁴³So P. A. Brunt, "Alexander's Macedonian Cavalry," *JHS* 83 (1963) 27-46; cf. G. T. Griffith, "A Note on the Hippiarchies of Alexander," *JHS* 83 (1963) 68-76. I do not subscribe to R. Lane Fox's view ([above, n. 21] 535) that Hephaistion became Chiliarch shortly afterward (i.e., in Sogdiana).

⁴⁴C. A. Robinson Jr., *AJP* (1937) 109, argues against the accounts of Demetrios' arrest and Hephaistion and Ptolemy's promotions deriving from Ptolemy ("the difficulty is to decide where a quotation begins and ends"). But see my remarks, *GRBS* 16 (1975) 393, n. 5.

⁴⁵W. Schwahn, "Die Nachfolge Alexanders des Grossen," *Klio* 23 (1930) 211-238; R. M. Errington, "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander," *CQ* 19 (1969) 233-242.

⁴⁶Arr. 3.26.2; Diod. 17.80.1-2; Plut. *Alex.* 49.

⁴⁷On the verisimilitude of Curtius: T. S. Brown ([above, n. 35] 148) says of Curtius' source that "verisimilitude seems to be his chief aim as a historian." For Curtius' style and attitude to history see E. I. McQueen, "Quintus Curtius Rufus," in *Latin Biography*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London 1967) 17-43.

an obscure individual named Dimnos, Alexander's means of trapping Philotas and eliminating Parmenion. It was, in fact, the Macedonian court at work, the struggle for power among Alexander's young and ambitious commanders. It entailed the undermining of Philotas' character and reputation by his most dangerous enemies: Hephaistion, Krateros, Koinos, Ptolemy, Erigyios, and others. These men realized that Philotas' isolation and his failure to pass on the information of Kebalinos presented the best opportunity for his destruction. Alexander had to be convinced that Philotas' involvement could not be overlooked or excused. When Alexander personally called for the death sentence before the Macedonian soldiers, the enemies of Philotas won the day.⁴⁸ Their efforts had secured for them commands of major importance, positions that were to bring them into conflict with one another shortly afterward. The success of their conspiracy against Philotas only helped to encourage this factional rivalry and no other individual was more prone or better able to seek promotion by winning Alexander's ear than Hephaistion. It becomes clear that Alexander has been too much the centre of the history of his period, with the result that a hybrid, biographical-historical literature has developed. It is all too easy to view the Philotas-affair and similar events from Alexander's vantage-point, to assume that all things were initiated by Alexander. Should it be unreasonable to expect that Alexander was himself influenced, even manipulated at times, by those people who were closely associated with him?

There is no doubt that Alexander was not acting against his will when he allowed himself to be persuaded that Philotas must be removed. Schachermeyr is quite right to point out that the drastic steps that followed Philotas' arrest need not have been taken.⁴⁹ But Alexander, had he not been strongly influenced by his group of companions, might well have been content to take less stringent measures and to allow the house of Parmenion to lapse into the state of obscurity for which it was already destined.

We need not belabour the fate of Parmenion, nor indeed ought we to take into consideration its moral implications. Parmenion's death was

⁴⁸The persuasion apparently took place over an extended period (note that Plutarch, *Alex.* 49.8, calls them τοὺς πάλαι μισοῦντας αὐτόν) but it appears that Alexander was convinced on the night when Philotas' enemies visited his (A.'s) tent; Curt. 6.8.17: *Secunda deinde vigilia, luminibus extinctis, cum paucis in regiam coeunt Hephaestio et Craterus et Coenus et Erigyius, hi ex amicis, ex armigeris autem Perdiccas et Leonnatus.*

⁴⁹Schachermeyr (334–335): "Keineswegs wäre der König genötigt gewesen, alles zum Äussersten zu treiben. . . . Die Schlüsse, welche der Herrscher zog, man musste sie nicht ziehen." Both Badian and Schachermeyr develop the portrait of rivalry among the leading individuals in Alexander's camp and yet are reluctant to reach any other conclusion than that Alexander himself perpetrated the conspiracy *against* Philotas for personal, albeit politically motivated, reasons.

outright murder, quite conceivably a "regrettable necessity,"⁵⁰ which not even Arrian-Ptolemy attempted to disguise.⁵¹ Alexander realized that, once Philotas' death had been demanded, Parmenion's murder was inevitable: the father would not endure the son's execution. It became apparent that Parmenion must die before the news of his son's death reached him and that the murder must in some way be justified. For the immediate purpose, the alleged confession of Philotas under torture proved adequate.⁵² The army, indignant at the audacity of the proposed crime, remained loyal; disciplinary measures were taken against a small dissident faction.⁵³ Polydamas was sent with all haste to Sitalkes, Kleandros, and Menidas, who struck Parmenion down as he read the news of his son's execution and the charges against himself. It was an act of fearful desperation. The process had advanced to the point of no return.

The fates of the "fellow-conspirators" need be treated only briefly. They are, in fact, not a part of the conspiracy *against* Philotas but of the Dimnos-affair, the catalyst that brought about the destruction of Philotas and the subsequent murder of Parmenion. Demetrios the bodyguard remains an obscure figure; Curtius is certainly incorrect in claiming that he was executed together with Philotas and those named by Dimnos and Nikomachos (6.7.15; 11.38). Alexander of Lynkestis ended his imprisonment as the victim of a lynching, a thing characteristic of the mob when passions are aroused.⁵⁴ Amyntas and his brothers were reprieved and, despite Amyntas' death shortly afterward, their futures cannot be linked with their roles in the Philotas-affair with any certainty.⁵⁵ As for the other conspirators (Peukolaos, Nikanor, Aphobetos, Theoxenes, Iolaos and Archepolis), their existence and identities, owing to their obscurity, cannot be determined. It is true that, at that time, Alexander could ill afford a "wholesale slaughter of the Macedonian nobility," but it is also doubtful that he wished even as much as actually came about.

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⁵⁰Badian (332), paraphrasing Tarn.

⁵¹Arr. 3.26.4. The remark that Alexander could not believe that Philotas plotted without Parmenion's complicity is feeble and could not have expected to convince. Arrian admits that fear of retaliation motivated Alexander to murder Parmenion.

⁵²Whether Philotas admitted to anything or not. The Hegelochos-story remains a mystery. It is generally held that the story is an invention, *apologia* written after Parmenion's death (cf. Badian 332; Fears 133, n. 77). There may be some basis for the charges, the clue to which lies in the identity of Hegelochos. I intend to argue this elsewhere.

⁵³Diod. 17.80.4; Justin. 12.5.4 ff.; Curt. 7.2.35 ff.

⁵⁴Berve, no. 37. On his death, Diod. 17.80.2; Curt. 7.1.8-9; Justin. 12.14.1; Arrian does not mention it.

⁵⁵Amyntas' death creates the same suspicions as does the death of Koinos shortly after his opposition to Alexander at the Hyphasis. One can not hope to determine the truth behind it. See *GRBS* 16 (1975) 393-398, cited above, n. 26.