

***Reading History Ethically:
Plutarch on Alexander's Murder of Cleitus (Alex. 50-52.2)****

*[Leer la Historia Moralmente: Plutarco a propósito del Asesinato de Clito
por Alejandro (Alex. 50-52.2)]*

from

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Abstract

This paper offers a close reading of Plutarch's treatment of Alexander's murder of Cleitus in the Life of Alexander (50-52.2), analyzing the specific narrative techniques that Plutarch employs to draw his readers to reflect on several aspects of Alexander's character and actively engage them with the complexities involved in the process of moral evaluation. Though Alexander's murder of Cleitus constitutes a pure stain on Alexander's moral record, I argue that Plutarch's narrative offers a repertoire of thought-prompts that further readers' understanding of Alexander's character and morally disconcerting actions.

Key-Words: Plutarch, Biography, Narrative technique, Moral reflection, Characterization.

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece una lectura estricta del tratamiento que da Plutarco al asesinato de Clito por Alejandro en la *Vida de Alejandro* (50-52.2), analizando las técnicas narrativas concretas que utiliza Plutarco para invitar a sus lectores a reflexionar sobre diferentes aspectos del carácter de Alejandro e involucrarlos activamente en las complejidades que rodean el proceso de valoración moral. Aunque el asesinato de Clito constituye una mancha negativa en el registro moral de Alejandro, defiendo que el relato de Plutarco ofrece un repertorio de sugerencias que permiten a los lectores entender el carácter y acciones desconcertantes de Alejandro.

Palabras clave: Plutarco, Biografía, Técnica narrativa, Reflexión moral, Caracterización.

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Over the last few decades, scholars have decisively called attention to the challenging and interrogatory nature of the moralism of Plutarch's biographies as well as their narrative sophistication, an important aspect of which is how they produce an active, committed sort of reader response¹. It has already been observed that in the *Lives* Plutarch is not simply concerned with 'protreptic' and 'expository' moralism—in the form of "do that" or "do not do that", "this is what is good" or "this is what is bad"—but rather with 'descriptive' and 'exploratory' moralism, which points towards, and prompts reflection on, ethical "truths about human behaviour and shared human experience"². It has also been noticed that Plutarch "assumes a mature, discerning reader able to grapple with the moral challenges" presented by the characters of the *Lives*³; and that in the *Lives* he develops and employs a wide range of narrative techniques in order to encourage his readers to assume a special sort of empathetic picture of

historical agents and their character as well as actively engage them with the complexities involved in the process of moral evaluation⁴.

In this paper I will focus on a paradigmatic episode from Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, Alexander's murder of Cleitus (*Alex.* 50-52.2), and analyze some of the narrative strategies that Plutarch uses to encourage readerly reflection and engagement. Though Alexander's killing of Cleitus might be taken as a stain that mars Alexander's moral record⁵, in Plutarch's *Life* it offers, as we shall see, much opportunity for ethico-political reflection that advances readers' understanding of Alexander's character and morally disconcerting action.

Plutarch introduces the story about Alexander's killing of Cleitus with a striking distinction between two kinds of readers: those 'casual readers' who are satisfied with being simply informed about what had happened (cf. ἄπλῶς πυθομένοις) and those 'serious readers' who are willing to get involved

¹ See esp. C. PELLING, 1988, pp. 10-18; C. PELLING, 1995, pp. 206-208 (= repr. 2002, pp. 237-239); P. STADTER, 1997 (= repr. 2015, pp. 215-230); T. DUFF, 1999; P. STADTER, 2000 (= repr. 2015, pp. 231-245); P. STADTER, 2003 (= repr. 2015, pp. 331-340); T. DUFF, 2004; D. LARMOUR, 2005; T. DUFF, 2011; C. CHRYSANTHOU, 2018.

² C. PELLING, 1995, p. 208 (= repr. 2002, p. 239).

³ T. DUFF, 2004, p. 285.

⁴ See esp. T. DUFF, 2011; C. CHRYSANTHOU, 2018.

⁵ Cf. A. WARDMAN, 1955, p. 101: "The events which most perplexed him (i.e. Plutarch) were the destruction of Thebes and the murder of Cleitus. The latter has disturbed everyone, whether he admires Alexander or not".

in an investigation (cf. λόγῳ μέντοι συντιθέντες) of the reasons (cf. τὴν αἰτίαν) and the circumstances (cf. τὸν καιρὸν) of Cleitus' murder (50.1)⁶. The former, Plutarch says, will find that the affair of Cleitus was just more savage than that of Philotas (50.1)—recounted in the preceding chapters, cf. *Alex.* 48-49—while the latter (to whom Plutarch appears to include himself through the use of the first-person plural) will find (cf. εὐρίσκομεν) that “it was some misfortune (cf. δυστυχία τινί) rather than a deliberate act (cf. οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης), and that it was Cleitus' evil genius (cf. τῷ Κλείτου δαίμονι) which took advantage of Alexander's anger and intoxication to destroy him” (50.2)⁷. Plutarch signals here the importance of the following episode as well as its exploratory and interrogatory character: it is one on which his ideal reader should spend time, joining Plutarch in a serious investigation of the reasons and the circumstances of Alexander's action. To this end, as we shall see, Plutarch uses multiple narrative means of arousing readers' interest and engaging them further.

Plutarch begins with a depiction of the background of the drinking party, offering his reader an insight into the

events surrounding and preceding the conflict between Alexander and Cleitus. We are told that some people came to bring Alexander a gift of Greek fruit; that Alexander was impressed by its beauty and perfection and thus called Cleitus to see and have a share in it too (50.3). Cleitus, Plutarch proceeds to tell, left the sacrifice he offered at the time and came, while three of the sheep on which libations had already been poured came after him (50.4). Alexander asked the advice of his soothsayers on this incident, who interpreted it as a bad omen. Accordingly, Alexander ordered that a sacrifice should be offered quickly for the safety of Cleitus (50.5), especially as two days before he saw a portentous dream about Cleitus (50.6). Before the completion of the sacrifice, nevertheless, Cleitus hastened to dine with Alexander (50.7).

It is worth noticing that Plutarch's account lavishes too much attention on the presence and workings of superhuman forces (omens, dreams, and other divine signs) on Alexander and Cleitus, giving the scene a tragic ring and allowing the two men to emerge as tragic figures or at least to have tragic potentialities. The idea of divine inevitability and human futility that resonates in Plutarch's

⁶ On similar distinctions in Plutarch's *Lives*, see C. PELLING, 2002, pp. 272, 276. Cf. T. DUFF, 2004, pp. 278-279 who draws a distinction between 'casual' (aligned with the physical senses) and 'ideal', 'serious' readers (aligned with reason) in the *Demetrius–Antony* prologue. See also *Alex.* 35.16; *Tim.* 15.11; *Tim.* 36.4.

⁷ For the translation of Plutarch's *Alexander*, I follow that of I. SCOTT-KILVERT & T. DUFF, 2012, adapted at some points. For the translations of other texts, I adopt, with some alterations, those of the Loeb editions.

account is uppermost in tragedy—one might think, for example, of Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Dionysus' control over Pentheus in the *Bacchae*—or even historiography (cf. Adrastus' story in Herodotus 1.35ff.)⁸. Arrian's corresponding account (*An.* 4.8.1-9.6) gives little stress to the workings of divine forces (e.g. at 4.9.5-6)⁹; and Justin has nothing of this theme (*Epit.* 12.6.1-4).

This initial tragic sense in Plutarch deepens in the following chapters of Plutarch's narrative of Cleitus' murder, where several Dionysiac themes, theatrical motifs and imagery come together to sketch the heated quarrel between Alexander and Cleitus and offer a detailed reconstruction of the onlookers' reactions¹⁰. The latter constitutes a favourable technique of Plutarch in the *Lives* of making his story more engaging; it re-enacts the climate of the times and draws readers into the atmosphere of the

actions, comments, thoughts and feelings of contemporary observers, which on occasions are used to guide, or at least problematize, the readers' moral response and characterize historical agents¹¹. Here we are told, on the one hand, of the annoyance and railing of the elder Macedonians (cf. τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων δυσχεραίνοντων καὶ λοιδορούντων) at those who shamed and ridiculed with their songs the people who had recently been defeated by the Barbarians (50.8-9); and on the other hand, of the delight and enthusiasm (cf. ἡδέως ἀκροωμένων καὶ λέγειν κελεύοντων) of Alexander and his circle (50.9).

Amidst such contrasting responses, Plutarch introduces a brief sketch of Cleitus. He makes some general remarks about his natural harshness in respect of his anger (cf. φύσει τραχὺς ὦν πρὸς ὀργήν) and stubbornness (cf. ἀθάδης), bringing into relief his current state of

⁸ See J. MOSSMAN, 1988, pp. 88-89 (= repr. 1995, pp. 219-220); D. PAPADI, 2007, p. 171 with nn. 33 and 34 also referring to the same theme in epic poetry. Cf. R. LIPAROTTI (2014) 184-185.

⁹ See J. MOSSMAN, 1988, p. 89 (= repr. 1995, p. 220). Cf. Curt. 8.2.6.

¹⁰ See C. PELLING, 1999 (= repr. 2002, pp. 197-206) on how Dionysus is used in Plutarch's biographies to prompt the readers' reflection on people and their complex character. He notices that Plutarch's more thought-provoking and morally problematic biographical narratives are rich in Dionysiac allusions and imagery. Cf. A. GEORGIADOU, 2014, p. 262 on Plutarch's use of Dionysiac vocabulary for the exploration of "moments of collective madness or extreme sorrow".

¹¹ On this technique, see C. PELLING, 1988, p. 335 (index 2. subjects, s.v. characterization by reaction); T. DUFF, 1999, p. 421 (index of themes, s.v. onlookers as mouthpiece for author); T. DUFF, 2011, pp. 65-67, 71-72; A. NIKOLAIDIS, 2014, p. 361; M. DE POURCQ & G. ROSKAM, 2016, pp. 168-170; C. CHRYSANTHOU, 2018, pp. 66-102.

intoxication (cf. ἤδη μεθύων) and strong anger (cf. ἠγανάκτει μάλιστα), which foments Alexander's passion (50.9). While Cleitus supports, as Plutarch tells us, those Macedonians who fell, suggesting that they were far better than those who laughed at them (50.9), Alexander accuses Cleitus of pleading his own case by misleadingly presenting cowardice as misfortune (50.10). Then Cleitus, so Plutarch says, rose and spoke:

Yes, it was my cowardice that saved your life, you who are the son of the gods (cf. τὸν ἐκ θεῶν), when you were turning your back to Spithridates' sword. And it is the blood of these Macedonians and their wounds which have made you so great that you disown your father, Philip, and claim to be the son of Ammon! (50.11).

Cleitus' emphasis on Alexander's divinity prompts the readers to look back to Plutarch's narrative of Alexander's life in order to understand what exactly provokes Alexander's anger here. In the preceding chapters Plutarch has many times referred to Alexander's divine origin (2.6-3.6; 27.5-11; 33.1), but he also stressed that Alexander "was not at all vain or deluded but rather used belief in his divinity to enslave others" (28.6); "in general, Alexander adopted a haughty and majestic bearing towards the barbarians, as a man who was fully convinced of his divine birth and pa-

rentage, but towards the Greeks he was more restrained, and it was only on rare occasions that he assumed the manner of divinity" (28.1). It is no wonder that Cleitus' one-sided, bold assertion about Alexander's conception of divinity infuriates Alexander. Closely relevant to this is also Cleitus' highly ironical stance towards Alexander here, calling attention to Alexander's "god-born nature" (cf. τὸν ἐκ θεῶν) in order to bring all the more sharply into relief his own contribution to Alexander's salvation in the Battle of the Granicus.

Cleitus' mention of the Battle of the Granicus¹², in fact, may bear further implications than simply reminding Alexander of Cleitus' previous service. There Plutarch stresses that Alexander "seemed to be acting like a desperate madman rather than a prudent commander" (cf. 16.4: ἔδοξε μανικῶς καὶ πρὸς ἀπόνοιαν μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμη στρατηγεῖν. Cf. 16.14: ὁ δὲ θυμῷ μᾶλλον ἢ λογισμῷ πρῶτος ἐμβαλῶν). Plutarch's account of the Battle of the Granicus may also have some interesting reminders of Xerxes' building of the two bridges across the Hellespont. In both instances Hellespont is personified: Xerxes reviles and punishes Hellespont for having wronged its master (Hdt., VII 35), while Alexander rejects Parmenion's opposition to the crossing of the river, highlighting that "the Hellespont would blush for shame if, once he had

¹² Cf. Arr., *An.* 4.8.6-7; Curt., 8.1.41.

crossed it, he should shrink back from the Granicus” (*Alex.* 16.3)¹³. Xerxes’ neglect of Artabanus’ cautious advice (Hdt., VII 46–52) and the foreboding signs (Hdt., VII 57) might be called to mind in parallel as well. In Aeschylus’ *Persae*, moreover, Darius’ ghost maintains focus on the madness and youthful recklessness of Xerxes (719; 744; 750–751). If such a link between Xerxes and Alexander is activated in readers’ minds, then Xerxes provides a useful comparandum for Alexander’s demeanour of derangement and insanity. Xerxes’ paradigm might cast a shadow over readers’ attitude to Alexander’s character and morality, thereby asking probing questions of them: Will Alexander be able to avoid a Xerxes-like fate? Will he be able to comport with his superior ethical standards? In fact, as the *Life* progresses and Alexander moves eastwards, a clear-cut polarity between Alexander and barbarian rulers is profoundly challenged and qualified¹⁴.

Plutarch proceeds to narrate that Alexander was incensed (παροξυνθείς) at Cleitus:

You scum (ὄ κακή κεφαλή), do you think that you can keep on speaking of me like this, and stir up trouble among the Macedonians and not pay for it? (51.1).

A reminder of Xerxes earlier may be especially apt considering that Cleitus in his subsequent reply to Alexander gives much stress on Alexander’s barbarity:

It is the dead ones [i.e. the Macedonians] who are happy, because they never lived to see Macedonians being beaten with Median rods, or begging the Persians for an audience with our own king (51.1–2).

And later on Cleitus, so Plutarch says, insisted on his position and “challenged Alexander to speak out whatever he wished to say in front of the company, or else not invite to his table free-born men who spoke their minds (cf. ἄνδραç

¹³ Cf. Arr., *An.* 1.13.6 where it is Alexander who feels ashamed, not the Hellespont. Cf. J. HAMILTON, 1969, p. 39 ad loc.

¹⁴ See T. SCHMIDT, 1999, p. 297; T. WHITMARSH, 2002, pp. 182–191; J. BENEKER, 2012, pp. 136–139; C. CHRYSANTHOU, forthcoming. It is highly suggestive that at *Alex.* 37.5 we hear that Alexander stops before a gigantic statue of Xerxes and talks to it: “Shall I pass by and leave you lying there because of the expedition you led against Greece, or shall I set you up again because of your magnanimity and your virtues in other respects?”. Plutarch goes on to mention that Alexander passed on, after he communed with himself for a long time in silence (*Alex.* 37.5). At this point Xerxes’ example is used to illuminate Alexander’s philhellenism and philosophical *paideia*—see J. MOSSMAN, 2006, p. 291; C. PELLING, 2017, pp. 22–23; C. CHRYSANTHOU, 2018, pp. 73–74. Keeping that in mind, a reminder of Xerxes in Plutarch’s account of Alexander’s crossing of the Granicus might be used to reveal Alexander’s multifarious and contradictory moral character in the *Life of Alexander*. On Plutarch’s portrayal of Alexander’s complex character in the *Life*, see R. LIPAROTTI (2014), esp. pp. 179–187 on the Cleitus’ episode.

ἐλευθέρους καὶ παρρησίαν ἔχοντας): it would be better for him to spend his time among barbarians and slaves, who would prostrate themselves before his white tunic and his Persian belt" (51.5)—notice here the striking contrast between ἐλευθερία/παρρησία and barbarism.

Alexander, so Plutarch moves on to tell, was unable to control his anger anymore and so threw an apple at Cleitus, hit him, and looked around for his sword (51.5). While the rest of his comrades were trying to restrain him, Alexander "leapt to his feet (cf. ἀναπηδήσας) and shouted out in Macedonian (ἀνεβόα Μακεδονιστί) for his corps of guards, a signal that this was an extreme emergency" (51.6). "Shouting out in Macedonian" has been rightly stressed as a significant marker of Alexander's temperament: "when in the grip of emotion he is portrayed as reverting to a less sophisticated self"¹⁵.

It has long been recognized that Plutarch's description of Alexander's enraged reaction includes an accumulation of echoes of Plutarch's earlier account of Alexander's conduct at the drinking party of Philip's wedding to a new wife (9.5-10)¹⁶. Just as there Alexander is incensed (cf. παροξυνθεὶς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος) at Attalus "who had drunk too much at the banquet"

(cf. ἐν τῷ πότῳ μεθύων) and "urged the Macedonians to pray that a legitimate successor should be born from Philip and Cleopatra" (9.7-8), so here Alexander is furious (cf. 51.1: παροξυνθεὶς οὖν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος) at the drunken Cleitus (cf. 50.9: ὁ Κλεῖτος ἤδη μεθύων). In both instances, moreover, Alexander responds in similar ways (consider the very close verbal cross-echoes): "Villain, do you take me for a bastard, then?" (cf. 9.8: "ἡμεῖς δέ σοι κακὴ κεφαλὴ νόθοι δοκοῦμεν;") ~ "You scum," he cried out, "do you think that you can keep on speaking of me like this?" (Cf. 51.1: "ἢ ταῦτ' " εἶπεν "ὦ κακὴ κεφαλὴ σὺ περὶ ἡμῶν ἐκάστοτε λέγων... νομίζεις;"). Alexander, in addition, throws a cup at Attalus (cf. 9.9: ἔβαλε σκύφον ἐπ' αὐτόν), just as later he throws an apple at Cleitus (cf. 51.5: μήλων παρακειμένων ἐν βαλῶν ἔπαισεν αὐτόν)¹⁷.

Strikingly, Alexander's reaction in the Cleitus' episode recalls not only his own attitude in the wedding party but also Philip's own response¹⁸:

At this Philip lurched to his feet against him (i.e. his son) (ἐπ' ἐκεῖνον ἐξανέστη) with drawn sword (cf. σπασάμενος τὸ ξίφος), but fortunately for them both he was so overcome with drink and with rage that he tripped and fell headlong (9.9).

¹⁵ T. DUFF, 2012, p. 596 n. 130. Cf. T. WHITMARSH, 2002, p. 183.

¹⁶ J. O'BRIEN, 1992, p. 139; J. MOSSMAN, 1995, p. 215; P. STADTER, 1996, p. 302; T. WHITMARSH, 2002, p. 187; J. BENEKER, 2009; J. BENEKER, 2012, pp. 135-136.

¹⁷ J. BENEKER, 2012, p. 135.

¹⁸ J. BENEKER, *ibidem*.

We may remember and compare here Alexander who out of anger at Cleitus “looked around for his sword” (51.5) and “leapt to his feet and shouted for his corps of guards” (51.6). Moreover, it was due to good fortune for both (cf. εὐτυχία δ’ ἑκατέρου) that Philip tripped and fell when he drew his sword against his son (9.9). Compare Plutarch’s mention that the affair of Cleitus happened through some misfortune (δυστυχία τινί) of Alexander (50.2)¹⁹. J. Beneker rightly notes that the association of Alexander with Philip in the episode of Cleitus’ murder may be hinting at the fact that Alexander becomes at this point more like his father, a “more ordinary king”²⁰. Here there is a revelation of Alexander’s spasmodic mental derangement, “the concomitant rejection of philosophical ideals”, which “vividly illustrates the power of Alexander’s θυμός and also marks the beginning of his decline as king”²¹.

The rest of the scene encourages further reflection on Alexander’s character. Cleitus’ friends, as Plutarch relates, try to push him out of the banqueting room, but he does not give in (51.8). Rather, he tries to come in again and recites “in a loud and contemptuous voice this line from Euripides’ *Andromache* (693): ‘Alas, what evil customs reign in Greece’” (51.8). Here

as elsewhere in Plutarch quotations from tragedy (and intertextuality in general) are significant bearers of characterization through encouraging comparison and contrast. Euripides’ *Andromache* is a play particularly apposite to mark, intensify, and enrich Plutarch’s account at this point: the constant accusations heaped upon Andromache of Eastern habits²², the anger, jealousy, brutality, and treachery that prevail throughout the play suggest a wider tragic framework within which we can think again more profoundly about the character and actions of Cleitus and Alexander.

Readers who know of the context of the quotation from the *Andromache* may recall that in these lines Peleus talks to Menelaus and expresses his displeasure with the fact that a general receives the greatest honour for a military success, although he does no more than a single warrior (*Andr.* 694-698)²³. The quotation from the *Andromache*, thus, attributed to Cleitus sets up a tragic link between Cleitus and Peleus and Alexander and Menelaus. Both Peleus and Cleitus appear to devalue Menelaus’ and Alexander’s conducts accordingly. It is worthy to remember that earlier in the *Life of Alexander* Peleus has been associated with Philip by one of Alexander’s teachers, who also linked

¹⁹ See J. BENEKER, 2009, pp. 193–194, 198.

²⁰ See J. BENEKER, 2012, pp. 136-137.

²¹ J. BENEKER, 2009, p. 200.

²² By Hermione (e.g. 155-160; 168-180) and Menelaus (e.g. 645-671).

²³ See also Curt., 8.1.28–29. Cf. Arr., *An.* 4.8.5 (the same meaning but without the quotation).

Alexander with Achilles and himself with Phoenix (5.8). Such an epic tone has been especially appropriate for the early chapters of the *Life* where Alexander's distinguished self-restraint, seriousness of purpose and ambition are heavily brought out²⁴. In Plutarch's account of Cleitus' murder, on the other hand, the tragic tone is a fine touch to flag Alexander's departure from those earlier high-minded thoughts. His association with Menelaus is by no means complimentary²⁵.

Plutarch narrates next Alexander's murder of Cleitus in a highly vivid manner—notice the use of present tense (cf. 51.9: ἀπαντῶντα τὸν Κλεῖτον αὐτῷ καὶ παράγοντα τὸ πρὸ τῆς θύρας παρακάλυμμα διελαύνει)—and details his reactions:

With a roar of pain and a groan (cf. μετὰ στεναγμοῦ καὶ βρυχήματος), Cleitus fell, and immediately the king's anger left him. When he [i.e. Alexander] came to himself and saw his friends standing around him speechless, he snatched the weapon out of the dead body and would have plunged it into his own throat if his bodyguards had not forestalled him by seizing his hands and carrying him by force into his chamber (51.10-11).

Plutarch moves on to stress Alexander's terrible remorse and deep groans and the fact that he was unable to say a word, being exhausted by his cries and lamentation:

He paid no attention to what any of them (i.e. his friends) said, except that when Aristander the diviner reminded him of the dream he had had concerning Cleitus, and its significance, and told him that these events had long ago been ordained by fate, he seemed to accept this assurance (52.2).

We end, then, where we began, and all of these themes (lamentations, cries and wailings, attempt at suicide and divine inevitability) bring the tragic ring of the scene to full circle²⁶.

A thing that is worthy to note in conclusion is Alexander's 'speechlessness' (cf. ἄναυδος ἔκειτο) and 'silence' (cf. τὴν ἀποσιώπησιν) that come in for special attention in Plutarch's account (*Alex.* 52.1). In Justin (*Epit.* 12.6.5-14), Alexander contemplates the character of the dead, the occasion of his death, his own unbridled agitation, and feels shame towards his nurse, the sister of Cleitus. He also considers what remarks and

²⁴ See J. MOSSMAN, 1995, pp. 214-215.

²⁵ On Euripides' negative characterization of Menelaus in the *Andromache*, see e.g. P. STEVENS, 1971, pp. 13-14; D. KOVACS, 1995, pp. 270-271.

²⁶ Cf. J. MOSSMAN, 1995, pp. 219-220. See also *Alex.* 13.4 on the role of the divine in Cleitus' murder: "Certainly he [i.e. Alexander] used to claim that the murder of Cleitus, which he committed when he was drunk, and the cowardly refusal of the Macedonians to cross the Ganges...were both caused by the anger and revenge of the god Dionysus".

odium he must have caused among his army and conquered nations, what fear and dislike of himself among his friends, also remembering several murdered Macedonian nobles. In Curtius we similarly hear, amidst a very tragic atmosphere (cf. 8.2.3-9), of Alexander's lament about the dead Cleitus (8.2.2) and his nurse (8.2.8-9) as well as his wondering whether the crime was committed due to the anger of the gods (8.2.6). Similar things are mentioned in Arrian (4.9.3-4).

Plutarch, then, although he has an excellent opportunity to disclose the internal struggle that Alexander has plausibly experienced at the time²⁷, prefers Alexander to keep silence. Plutarch's choice, I suggest, might be designed to activate the reflection of the readers by implanting in them the desire to fill up the hidden mind by extrapolation from the wider and preceding narrative as well as from Alexander's overall behaviour²⁸. After all, as we saw throughout this paper, Plutarch used a wide range of narrative devices in the earlier scene of Cleitus' murder, which have been highly effective in putting us empathetically in Alexander's shoes and making us think about the cause (τὴν αἰτίαν) and the circumstances (τὸν καὶρόν) of the murder (cf. *Alex.* 50.1-2)

as well as about the bitter consequences of Alexander's anger and propensity for drinking in the way in which Alexander himself might now have been thinking or talking about them²⁹. This is precisely the sort of active, engaging and reflective reading that Plutarch, as noted at the very outset of Cleitus episode (*Alex.* 50.2), appropriates for himself and his serious, ideal reader.

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²⁷ L. FULKERSON, 2013, pp. 98-113 argues that Cleitus' death and Alexander's remorse do not result in any real change in Alexander's behaviour.

²⁸ On Plutarch's use of this technique in the *Lives*, see C. CHRYSANTHOU, 2018, pp. 72-74.

²⁹ Cf. Arrian's explicit judgement (*Anab.* 4.9.1): "I myself strongly blame Cleitus for his insolence towards his king, and pity Alexander for his misfortune, since he then showed himself the slave of two vices, by neither of which is it fitting for a man of sense to be overcome, namely, anger and drunkenness".

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