

Alexander the Great | Sample answer

2010 Higher Level Exam Question

Outline the events which led to the deaths of Philotas and Parmenio.

The events which led to the deaths of Philotas and Parmenio are Referred to in both are in both Arrian and Plutarch; however, Plutarch provides a more colourful and detailed series of events so I refer mostly to Plutarch in this account.

The first event which led to the deaths of these two men is when Alexander orders Philotas' mistress, Antigone, to spy on him and report back to the King. Philotas was quite an arrogant character according to Plutarch. Accusations against Philotas had been read reaching Alexander for many years. Arrian agrees with this claiming he had previously been told of it in Egypt but he had thought it impossible. Philotas often spoke freely to Antigone about how all the greatest achievements in the campaign had been the work of his father Parmenio and himself. He gave no credit to Alexander.

After being informed of these mighty accusations Alexander ordered Antigone to continue seeing Philotas but to come back and tell the king of what she had learnt. Being the self-centred man he was "Philotas had no suspicion of the trap that was being set for him." Antigone reported that Philotas said many nasty and disloyal things about Alexander. Some were even spoken in anger and boastfulness. Upon hearing this Alexander held his tongue as he feared the strength of father and son and what they might do. This was the first event which caused out and Alexander's mind and ultimately led to the two men's' deaths.

The second event which led to their deaths is when news reaches Philotas of the conspiracy against Alexander. Dimnus a Macedonian from Chalaestra organised this conspiracy against Alexander. He invited his lover Nicomachus to join him in the plot. Nicomachus had no desire to get involved but shared the news with his brother Cebalinus. Hearing this Cebalinus raced to Philotas and demanded he be taken to Alexander to inform him of what may happen.

Philotas' response was very unusual. He claimed that the king was engaged in more important business. Philotas failed to arrange an interview; he did this not once but twice. This disloyal behaviour caused great suspicion and so Nicomachus and Cebalinus decided to turn to Alexander. They revealed that

Dimnus was planning a conspiracy and made many insinuations against Philotas. This was another event which led to the deaths of Parmenio and Philotas.

The news enraged Alexander. "he felt bitter resentment against Philotas and became all the readier to listen to those who had long hated his friend." The next event which led to their deaths was when Alexander decided to investigate the accusations made against Philotas and try to uncover the plot. Alexander had Philotas arrested and tortured while being interrogated. Alexander hid behind the curtain to hear the interrogation carried out by the Kings companions. When Alexander heard Philotas' pitiful cries and please for mercy he emerged and exclaimed "ah Philotas, if you are so weak and unmanly is this how could you involve yourself in such a dangerous business." after this event Alexander had Philotas executed. He also sent messengers to media to have Parmenio executed as well. These were the events that led to the deaths of Philotas and Parmenio.