

Colloquia Ceranea VI

Abstracts of plenary lectures

A last dinner with Alexander

Andrew Dalby

The drinking party at Medius's, marking the onset of Alexander the Great's terminal illness, will be re-examined from contemporary and later texts. Close reading of fragments by Nicobule and Aristobulus, set beside the reticence of the court daybooks (Ephemerides) and the studied vagueness of secondary sources, will clarify the sequence of events. That will be the basis for a necessarily speculative narrative of the days that immediately preceded, about which Arrian and Plutarch preferred to say as little as possible. A sequence of feasts and festivals will emerge, culminating in the "last dinner" (as Nicobule calls it), shedding new light on Alexander's last days in Babylon in May 323 b.c.

"So that those who are searching can find them easily": Crito's Cosmetics table of contents in Galen's Compound drugs according to places; how Galen's censoring marked the success of a work.

Alessia Guardasole

The pharmacological works in Galen's corpus deserve a chapter of their own in the study of ancient medicine, given their specific literary characteristics and the remarkable wealth of information they provide. In them, Galen both summarised the history of centuries of research - in particular, by recording thousands of recipes from his predecessors "in their exact words" - and perfected the science through the constant use of his experience in practice and in the field. I propose to present the exceptional case of Crito's Cosmetics, a physician active in Rome under Trajan (98-117 AD), which Galen censures as part of his famous critique of cosmetics, but from which he quotes one by one the chapter titles "so that those who are searching can find them easily" (ὅπως οὖν ῥαδίως εὕρισκοιεν οἱ ζητοῦντες, Galen Compound drugs according to places I 3, Kühn XII 446, 10). A project I am carrying out for the next four years proposes to follow the impact of this censorship on medical authors after Galen (mainly Oribasius, Aëtius, Paul of Aegina).

