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Money Makes the World Go Round? Financial Resources as Instruments of Power in the Macedonia of Philip V

by *Monica D'Agostini*

Some time has passed since Arthur Eckstein effectively applied international relations theories to ancient politics, highlighting the sophistication of the Roman intervention in the Mediterranean¹. However, the scholar dismissed the Hellenistic political system as anarchic, considering it mainly based on military power used in a Hobbesian way to serve a “perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death”². Building on the idea that the desire to dominate others is, in some way, grounded in human nature, Eckstein presents the Hellenistic rulers as able and willing to exercise power in an unregulated and mainly violent manner in both home and foreign affairs³.

The rich scholarly research on Hellenistic epigraphy of the past few decades already speaks loudly of the complex and sophisticated web of legal, economic, and administrative interactions that shaped Hellenistic rulers’ “power over something/someone,” i.e. the capacity to attain the desired outcome by consensually grounded institutionalization of authority⁴. However, the Hellenistic art of statecraft still remains in the dark, hidden under the assumption that there was none, since it was not needed in a violence-based monarchy, nor in home or foreign affairs.

To challenge such a view, I analyzed an instance from the reign of Philip V: the 218 BC mutiny of Philip’s Macedonian army. The king resorted to diverse instruments of power, and, above all, to a strategic use of finances, to impose his will without hopelessly compromising his relationship with the army. I followed Eckstein’s example⁵, and used theoretical instruments borrowed from modern political science to identify and analyze the instruments of power.

In a recent publication devoted to the instruments of “national power” for the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, Craig Nation⁶ states, “Power is the measure of a relationship” and “the capacity to impose

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¹ Eckstein, 2006, and 2008.

² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1.11 (ed. Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 161)

³ Eckstein 2008, p. 143.

⁴ To name some, Hatzopoulos 1996 and 2001; Magnetto 1997; Ma 1999; Virgilio 2003; Mari 2006, pp. 209–225 and 2018, pp. 283–311.

⁵ See also recently Brisson 2023.

⁶ Nation 2012, pp. 117–158.

the desired outcome in the face of resistance". He distances himself from the idea of power as an absolute entity, since it has no objective status in and of itself, and elaborates on the model derived from Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane. They argue that where there is a situation of interdependence, the use of force is "irrelevant or unimportant as an instrument of policy"⁷.

In the late 1980s, Nye coined the term Soft Power and, in 1990, published a crucial article: "Soft Power," which later became a book⁸. The article mainly concerned the decline of the United States' influence due to a general diffusion of power. It argued that, in a system with strong economic interdependence and a high presence of transnational actors, rather than violence, another means becomes crucial to control others: Soft Power. With Soft Power, Nye defined the capacity of a political unit to influence and compete with others by means of the affiliation and adhesion it induces in the other actors – the ability to co-opt others without resorting to brute force.

Nye's study produced rich scholarly debate among political analysts. One of them, Susan Strange, suggested a structural model of power in her later work. She identified four power sectors: productive, fiscal military, and informational⁹. In official US documents, this concept of instruments of power has been introduced as Diplomacy, Information (which can be divided into cultural and intelligence), Military (actual or potential), and Economy. The acronym is DIME, and the concept highlights that military force is not the *ultima ratio* of statecraft¹⁰.

The Context

Although the theoretical framework I apply comes from modern political studies, it can offer a methodological base to highlight the policy in place in antiquity to overcome incompatibility and secure compliance among political actors. I identified a case of conflict and goal incompatibility in the Macedonian monarchy between the king and the army, where the king resorted to a purposeful and multifaceted exercise of power to resolve the conflict.

Around 218 Philip V, new king of Macedonia, clashed with his elite light-armed troops, the Peltasts and the Agema¹¹. The dispute with the soldiers was not a sudden event but the outcome of a series of tensions that occurred during Philip V's 219/218 campaign. Our source on these events, Polybius, records frictions that occurred after successful major enterprises involving high officers and soldiers: in 219 at Olympia after the seizing of Psophis and Thalamai in Elis, and again in 218 in Limnaia after the sack of Thermos in Aetolia¹².

⁷ Nye and Keohane 1977, p. 27.

⁸ Nye 1990 pp. 153-171 and 2004.

⁹ Strange 1994.

¹⁰ Nation 2012, pp. 117-158.

¹¹ On the Peltasts and the Agema, see Foulon, 1996a, pp. 53-63 and 1996b, 17-31; Juhel and Sekunda, 2009, pp. 104-108, and recently Juhel 2017, pp. 113-125. See also Fisher Bovet 2014, pp. 135-138.

¹² 219 riot: Polyb. 4.73.1-77.5; 218 riots: Polyb. 5.15.1-16.10.

These had been Philip's greatest victories in his war against the Aetolians, the so-called "Social War". Philip V engaged in the conflict as king of the Macedonians and also as leader of Hellenic Symmarchy, which comprised almost all of the Greek political communities, excepting the Athenians and the Aetolians with their Peloponnesian allies, the Eleians, and the Messenians¹³.

Philip campaigned in the Peloponnese one year after the beginning of the war, in 219/8. He led his offensive against the Eleians, whose region he conquered after seizing the city of Psophis between Elis and Arcadia thanks to his Macedonian troops. He granted to the Achaeans the control of the city and carried on the conquest of Elis and Tryphilia¹⁴. During the campaign, Philip acquired an uncommonly large and various booty after seizing Thalamai; although it was an impregnable stronghold, the city was momentarily overpopulated because many inhabitants of the area had sought refuge and could not withstand a siege. Philip, thinking that they would have fought strenuously, left the main army in his entrenched camp and himself led the Peltasts and light-armed troops through the gorge, arriving directly under the fortress. The refugees and the mercenaries were scared at Philip's approach. Thus, the mercenaries commanded by the Eleian *strategòs* Amphidamos surrendered Thalamai to the king, allowing the Macedonian army to acquire 5000 prisoners, goods, and livestock. The king went back and camped in Olympia, then headed to Heraea to sell off prisoners and booty¹⁵. While the king was in Olympia, Polybius¹⁶ records the first riot occurring in the camp. Although the historian focuses on the rivalry between the Achaean commander, Aratus of Sicyon, and Apelles, the Macedonian general and friend of the king, the clash built on the tension between the Achaean and Macedonian troops on several issues, including the management of the booty, the location of the quarters for each, and the authority of the Macedonian officers¹⁷. After summoning Apelles and Aratus as the commanders of the two groups of soldiers involved in the incident, Philip resolved the predicament by granting to the Achaeans some independence in the military management¹⁸.

The Fine

Later in 218 BC, Philip brought the war to the Aetolian homeland. He landed his troops from the sea and attacked the sacred shrine of the Aetolian

¹³ Scholten 2000, pp. 194-214 and Polyb. 4.5.2-10. Worthington 2023, pp. 47.

¹⁴ Polyb. 4.63.1-82.1: Hammond and Walbank 1988, pp. 374-377; Scholten 2000, pp. 218-220; Worthington 2023, pp. 53-54.

¹⁵ See Polyb. 4.75.1-8 and 77.5. See Kralli 2017, pp. 275-276 and 288-289.

¹⁶ Polyb. 4.76.1-7.

¹⁷ On the episode, see D'Agostini 2019, pp. 46-57 and Nicholson 2023, pp. 59-61.

¹⁸ According to Loreto 1990, pp. 331-366, based on Polybius himself, the expectation to receive an equal part of the booty is fundamental for the army: Philip's decision to apply two different criteria to his army, one for Macedonians, Thessalians, and the other armies allied of the king, and another for the Achaeans, undermined the solidity of his troops. See also Juhel 2002, pp. 401-412.

League, Thermos. The raid was a great victory for the king, who returned to the Peloponnese with an impressive booty. On the way back from the Aetolian raid, the Aetolians repeatedly hit the king's army. Still, the Macedonian elite unit of the Peltasts succeeded in driving them away from the main column¹⁹. The light infantry, the Peltasts, and their elite unit, the Agema, were much better suited than the heavy infantry for the war against the Aetolians since the tactics were based on forays rather than on open battle. This corps, in combination with the Illyrians, had become, by this time, the shock forces most appreciated by the king. In the Eleian campaign, the Peltasts had already demonstrated their value as the missile troops under the direct command of Philip. In the Aetolian expedition, they proved themselves as the best choice to embark on missions of guerrilla warfare and set the ambush for the enemy. According to Foulon, "Philippe a sans cesse encouru aux services de ce corps qui, par l'excellent compromis qu'il représente entre armement et mobilité, constitue sinon l'arme absolue, qui n'existe pas, du moins l'arme à tout faire"²⁰.

According to Polybius²¹, during the celebrations in Limnaia following the campaign, the Peltasts and their commander, Leontios, fomented trouble within the encampment. Leontios attended the victory banquet together with Megaleas and Crinon, two chief Macedonian officers close to him. Polybius asserts that they were displeased and disgruntled by the king's triumph, as they had been conspiring to hinder Philip's achievements. Polybius claims that they were acting in concert with Apelles, the highest-ranking officer in the monarchy and former guardian of Philip, and identifies the following events as a conspiracy by Apelles against Aratus²². Rather than investigating Apelles' purported involvement in the tensions between Philip and his army,

¹⁹ Polyb. 5.13.1-6 and 5.14.1-7. On the Polybian account and bias on Thermos see Nicholson 2023, pp. 61-81.

²⁰ Foulon 1996a, pp. 53-63 on the role of the Peltasts in the guerrilla warfare. According to Foulon, the Peltasts were constantly in service, and therefore grew better trained and more experienced than the infantry of the phalanx. See also Sekunda 2010, pp. 446-471, on the phalanx and its limits.

²¹ Polyb. 5.15.1-7.

²² The events following the looting of Thermos are often labelled by modern scholars as the "Conspiracy of Apelles", due to Polybius' comprehensive interpretation, also clearly reflected in Plutarch. The conspiracy is named after Philip's friend and first advisor, Apelles, who allegedly wanted to overthrow Philip and eliminate Aratus, who was greatly favored by Polybius. Apelles was aided in this plot by a group of Macedonians: Leontios, Megaleas, Ptolemy, and Crinon, who reportedly disapproved of Philip's relationship with Aratus and his treatment of the Achaean League. However, rather than focusing on the personal rivalries in Philip's court, this paper is concerned with the king's relationship with the Peltasts, and the threat they came to pose to the Macedonian throne under their commander Leontios. The Conspiracy of Apelles was discussed in Walbank 1940, pp. 48-52 and pp. 56-61, and 1957-1967, I, pp. 538-562, Errington 1967, pp. 19-36, and Hammond and Walbank 1988, pp. 382-383, who think this a Polybian construction. On Polybius' bias in the account of the conflict between Philip, his elder officers and part of the army see D'Agostini 2019, pp. 95-115, Worthington 2023, pp. 59-60, who suggests that Philip purged his Court to assess his kingship, and Nicholson 2023, pp. 60-61 and note 6.

this study focuses on the king's strategy to assert his authority over the rebellious actors within his *basileia*.

When the feast was over, Leontios, Megaleas and Crinon, together with some soldiers, all allegedly intoxicated, found the Achaean commander, Aratus²³, on his way home, then proceeded to insult and throw stones at him. The fight attracted many people who came to the assistance of both parties, causing a riot in the camp among the soldiers. Eventually Philip sent some officers to ascertain the cause of the fight, and to put an end to the disturbance. Leontios, says Polybios, left without attracting any attention, whereas Aratus openly denounced the assailants. Megaleas and Crinon were identified as the instigators of the attack and admonished directly by the monarch. Philip summoned them to resolve the situation through his personal relationship with his officers, as he had done in Olympia. However, according to Polybios, Megaleas and Crinon defied Philip and stood by their positions, confirming their rage against Aratus and their intention to retaliate against him. Philip, infuriated by their defiance, levied a fine of 20 talents on each of them and ordered them to remain imprisoned until payment was made²⁴.

The use of fines for military sanctioning was prescribed by the so-called Army Code, the Amphipolis inscription considered a royal *diagramma*²⁵ preserving the late Antigonid disciplinary military code²⁶. This (fragmentary) document is composed of at least three columns and divided into thematic sections that have been identified as the general regulation of the Macedonian army²⁷. The Code prescribed military procedures and fines faced by the

²³ See the recent remarks on Aratus' role in Polybios' *Histories* in Nicholson 2023, pp. 42-48.

²⁴ Polyb. 5.15.7-9.

²⁵ Hatzopoulos 1996, II (nr. 12) and plates XII-XVI and 2001, 161-164. It was discovered on two marble stones between January and April of 1934 in the Strymon (modern Struma) River. The first thin and long stone delivers only sections of three inscription columns (A 1, A 2, A 3), and was immediately published with pictures by Roussel 1934, pp. 39-47; the other two (incomplete) columns (B 1, B 2) from the second damaged marble were studied by Feyel 1935, pp. 29-68 (with French translation of B1 and B2). See also De Sanctis 1934, pp. 515-52. Fragments preserved in the Amphipolis museum inventory Λ 905 and 908. See also ISE 114=Moretti, 1967-1976, II, pp. 108-114 (with Italian translation); and Jehel 2002, pp. 401-412, only on fragment B1 ll. 10-18 (with English translation). Other English translation: Austin 2006, nr. 90. Recently, Hatzopoulos 2016, pp. 203-216, published a fragment of a second copy of the document found in Amphipolis. After several attempts to combine the two stones in order to relate the fragments into congruous columns, Hatzopoulos has convincingly argued that it is not possible, given the current status of the evidence, to combine the fragments.

²⁶ On Hellenistic written communication see Mari 2006, pp. 209-225, and Virgilio 2010, pp. 101-122 and 2011; Bencivenni 2014, pp. 311-330.

²⁷ Specifically, the surviving part of the document gives instructions about the establishment of the camp and the distribution of quarters (A 2.5-8), the watchwords (A 3.5-7), the appropriate military gear for the soldiers and officers (B 1.1-9), the collection and division of war booty (B 1.10-18), and foraging duties (B 2.14-18). Hatzopoulos 2001, pp. 23-26, connects it to other documents: two copies of the same inscription, from Chalcis and Kynos, delivering the regulation of all the Antigonid garrisons (Hatzopoulos 2001 nr. 1.I and 1.II [pl. VII and VIII]); Nankov 2009, pp. 104-108 and pp. 137-150. It also links to this

transgressors. For instance, the fines concerning military equipment and the watchwords were paid to officers and secretaries of the army itself. Some of them were managed by the Hypaspists and the *tetrarchai*, and automatically delivered to the Hypaspists themselves, who acted as a sort of military police for significant infractions (A 2.3-4). Also the secretaries, *oi grammateis* (οἱ γραμματεῖς) (A1.7 and B1.8-9), and the *archyperetai* (B1.8-9) could collect the payment, after the *tetrarchai* fined the offenders²⁸. The king very rarely intervened in sanctioning. Among the transgressions reported to the king were those committed by officers (B1.9)²⁹. Indeed, officers appear to receive specific treatment in the Code: they were to be punished for any transgression that happened under their responsibility, as, for example, with booty (B1.10-17)³⁰; moreover, they were charged with fines higher than the soldiers' (B1.1-10). The officers were expected to set an example for their soldiers, so they had to pay for the men's wrongdoing. The higher the officer's rank, the higher the penalty he was charged.

It thus follows that Megaleas and Crinon, the officers involved in the fight in Limnaia, were reported directly to the king and sentenced by him. It is noteworthy that Philip built upon the Army Code penalty system, opting for a financial instrument over capital punishment as a means of disciplining Megaleas and Crinon for their misconduct and defiance of the royal authority. The king might have considered the potential risks of inciting discontent among the troops with a punitive measure that was perceived as violent, rather than

same codification all regulation of the recruitment and military service preserved in the fragments of two copies of the document found in Drama and Nea Potidaia (Cassandraia), Niglédís, Sismanidès, 1999, pp. 807-822; Hatzopoulos 2000, pp. 825-840 and 2001, p. 24 and nr. 2.I and 2.II (pl. IX-XIV). On the military regulation, see also Noguera Borel 2006, pp. 227-237.

²⁸ According to Hatzopoulos 2001, pp. 76-80 the army was organised in *lochoi* (16 men), grouped by four in *tetrarchai* commanded each by a tetrarches. Four *tetrarchai* answered to a *speirarches* and were considered a *speira* (256 phalangites). Four *speirai* were a *chiliarchia* (1024 fighters) and four *chiliarchiai* were a *strategia* of 4096 men under a *strategos*. Each section had its management officers appointed for the administration: the *hyperetes* was the secretary of the *speira*, the *chiliarchia* had the *archyperetes* and the *strategos* was assisted by a *grammateus*. The *grammateus* and the *archyperetai* reported to the king. On the hierarchy in the camp see Moretti 1967-1975, II, pp. 108-114; Le Bohec 1993, pp. 289-320; Juhel 2002, pp. 401-412.

²⁹ A 1.5-8: "the *tetrarchai* must go the rounds in turn without any light and anyone who is sitting down or [sleeping] while on guard duty the *tetrarchai* shall fine one drachma for every offence and the secretaries (*grammateis*) shall obtain the payment [of the fine...]" A 2.1-4 "[...if they do not report] the offenders [to the king] they shall be fined three twelfths (?)⁵¹ which shall be given to the hypaspists in the event of their being first to send in a written denunciation of the offenders".

³⁰ B1.10-17: "Concerning discipline over war booty. [if] anyone brings booty to the camp, [the] *strategoi* taking with them the *speirarchai* and the *tetrarchai* [and] the other officers, and together with these the atten[dants] in sufficient numbers shall go to meet them at a distance of three stades in front of the camp, [and they shall not allow] those who captured the booty to keep it. And should any insubordination [of this kind] take place, the [strategoi] and *speirarchai* and *tetrarchai* and *archyperetai* shall pay a sum equivalent [to what each of them owes?] *vacat*".

employing a strategy that would de-escalate the situation. The financial instrument enabled Philip to diminish the influence of the rebellious officers within the military, both among their subordinates and among higher-ranking officers, without resorting to a death sentence that might have provoked the ire of their supporters.

Nevertheless, the usual amount for ordinary sanctions was usually obols and drachmas. The penalties were all pre-established, based on written rules³¹. Therefore, the twenty talents Philip V sanctioned his officers were certainly an impressive sum and must have appeared uncommon to the Macedonian army, even for high-ranking officers³². We can find mention in Polybius of similar amounts in economic transactions involving communities of people or institutions: for example Philip paid an yearly subsidy of twenty talents to hire of 30 Illyrian galleys, and the Achaeans paid 17 talents to the Macedonian army for every month of war they spent campaigning in the Peloponnese³³. Moreover, 50 talents was the yearly sum that Macedonia had to pay after the second Macedonian war to Rome for ten years as part of the war indemnity³⁴. The fine was thus commensurate to the enormous amounts exchanged in “interstate” financial transaction and sustained by communities of people rather than private individuals.

Hearing of the abnormal fine, Leontios, who had so far avoided being involved in the dispute, challenged the king, coming to Philip’s tent with the Peltasts to question the king about the arrests. He was a member of the Council, and Antigonus Doson, the late predecessor and tutor of Philip V³⁵, had made him captain of the Peltasts to ensure his support for the new king³⁶. Maybe Leontios thought he could influence the king’s decision, also using his troops’ privileged role in the Macedonian army. Philip refused to discuss the royal verdict and confirmed his decision. However, after he anchored at Leucas and distributed the spoils to the army, he summoned his Friends to a council to try Megaleas’ case³⁷.

³¹ B 1.1-9: “... they shall punish according to the written rules (ζημιούτωσαν κατὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα) those who are not bearing the arms appropriate to them: two obols for the *kotthybos* (cloth cuirass), the same amount for the *konos* (helmet), three obols for the sarissa, the same amount for the dagger, two obols for the greaves, a drachma for the shield. *Vacat* In the case of officers double the fine for the weapons mentioned, and two drachmas for the cuirass and one drachma for the half-cuirass. The *grammateis* and the *archyperetai* shall receive the fines after reporting the offenders to the king”. Translation adapted from Hatzopoulos 1996 nr. 12=2001 nr.3. On the hierarchy in the camp see Moretti 1967-1976, II, pp. 108-114; Le Bohec 1993, pp. 289-320; Juhel 2002, pp. 401-412.

³² Worthington 2023, p. 59 argues that these circumstances were exceptional, and Philip wanted to make a point.

³³ Polyb. 4.29.7 on the Illyrian galleys; Polyb. 5.1.11-12 on the Achaean payment to the Macedonians.

³⁴ Liv. 33.30.6-7. Philip had to pay a war indemnity of 1,000 talents - half paid immediately and the rest in ten annual instalments of 50 talents.

³⁵ D’Agostini 2019, pp. 22-28.

³⁶ Polyb. 4.87.7-8.

³⁷ Polyb. 5.16.2-10.

The Council of Friends was involved in military discipline as a sanctioning college, which would intervene only under exceptional circumstances, such as those related to the division of the booty (A 3.2-4). The decision of Philip to summon the Council to re-evaluate (Polyb. 5.16.5: αὐτὸς δὲ συναγαγὼν τοὺς φίλους ἀπέδωκε κρίσιν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Μεγαλέαν) the fine he had given Megaleas appears uncommon. On the one hand the penalties were all pre-established, on the other hand, in Olympia and Limnaia, the king had resolved the conflict after listening to the people involved. He had acted as judge without debating the situation with his Council. Therefore, it apparently was not necessary to re-try a case after the king had already delivered his verdict, but, after Leontios challenged him over it, Philip sought the support of the Council to shore up his decision ³⁸.

At the hearing, when witnesses came forward, Crinon and Megaleas were not able to refute the accusations and the Council confirmed the fine of twenty talents. Although the Council did not change the penalty, they mitigated the king's decision, granting Leontios permission to bail out Megaleas, while Crinon, condemned by the king's Friends, remained under arrest. The trial thus caused no apparent opposition between the king and the Council. The king flexed his judicial authority, likely counting on having the loyalty of the majority of the officers, who confirmed their support to him despite Leontios' opposition. Nevertheless, while acknowledging the legitimacy of Philip's claim to twenty talents, the Council also facilitated dialogue between the king and Leontios, thereby contributing to the de-escalation of the conflict affecting the Macedonian leadership.

The option of imposing a fine allowed the Council greater latitude within the royal juridical process. Although the members of the Council were free to express their opinions, as Leontios did, a capital sentence would have left them with no alternative but to confirm Philip's judgment because rejecting the royal decision would have been tantamount to mutiny. Conversely, the fine allowed for the possibility of releasing the offenders on bail, as Leontios did with Megaleas. It also allowed Megaleas' and Leontios' affiliates and subordinates to pay the debt owed to the king. Moreover, the financial instrument afforded the potential for subsequent clemency toward the recalcitrant officers. A pardon could be granted at a later date, contingent upon a change in attitude or circumstances. Therefore, money proved a more flexible and versatile instrument than brute force for managing the *basileia* and opposition to Philip because it afforded the king and the Council greater freedom of action in accordance with circumstances.

³⁸ Polybius is the only extant source on these events, and unfortunately his pro-Arasteian bias affects his account and his reading of the Macedonian political system. He interpreted the hearing of the Council of Friends not as a meeting concerning the riot and its punishment, but a trial for the far-reaching political intrigue of Apelles against Aratus, the so-called "Conspiracy of Apelles": Errington 1967, pp. 19-36, and recently Worthington 2023, pp. 59-60. Hatzopoulos 1996, pp. 298-303 expands the Apelles affair to investigate the judicial authority of the army: concerning the Council hearing, he convincingly states that Philip had to summon it in order to strengthen its position; see also Anson 2008, pp. 135-149.

The Mutiny

The conflict within the army was exacerbated at Corinth later that year, 218. Philip arrived there with his whole force right after selling, in Tegea, all the booty of the triumphant expedition in Laconia and, in particular, against Sparta. The king had again accomplished victory thanks to the Peltasts, whom he had personally led into battle, in conjunction with the Illyrian and mercenary contingents³⁹. After leaving his forces in Corinth to rest and celebrate, he left for Lechaëum,⁴⁰ but, after his departure, the whole camp erupted in a tumult. The Peltasts and the Agema felt they were being treated unfairly, and were unhappy with their share of the booty. They argued that their portion of the spoils was not commensurate with their duties on the battlefield⁴¹. In protest, they pulled down the doors and broke through the roof of the royal apartments, and the uproar shattered the quarters closest to the king's friends and those of the king himself⁴².

Despite Philip's ostensible moderation in the punishment of Megaleas and Crinon, a sense of discontent had begun to emerge among the troops. This was presumably due to the fact that the king had not yet addressed the underlying cause of the soldiers' discontent, namely the unequal distribution of the spoils⁴³. Indeed, during the Social War, Philip's tactics and strategy were primarily reliant on the Peltasts. The king himself had often led these sections into battle: they, together with the Illyrians and the mercenaries, were the most militarily active in the expedition and responsible for the successes in Aetolia and Laconia⁴⁴. Noticeably, the mentioned riots happened after the acquisition of large war prizes. The tensions in the camp over the division of the booty after the expedition in Elis and the conquest of Thalamai only worsened after the tours in Aetolia and Laconia.

To recover from such a hazardous predicament, Philip returned from Lechaëum to Corinth and gathered the Macedonians in assembly in the theatre. He did not privately summon the officers but directly addressed the whole army. The troops divided themselves into those who protested the partition of the booty and those who defended the king's position. Philip spoke to them, exhorting them to return to discipline and rebuking them severely for their conduct. The content of this speech is lost; it might have addressed the shared experience and cultural identity of the king and his troops, pointing

³⁹ Polyb. 5.22.1-23.10. Walbank 1940, pp. 57-58; Coppola 1993, pp. 144-146; D'Agostini 2019, pp. 101-103.

⁴⁰ Polyb. 5.24.10-12.

⁴¹ Worthington 2023, p. 61 argues that Philip V diverted his liquid money to running his costs.

⁴² Polyb. 5.25.1-3. See also Foulon 1996a, pp. 53-63.

⁴³ Polyb. 5.25.1. asserts that the Peltasts and the Agema's allegations were baseless. He claims that the true motivation behind the complaint was to disguise an alleged secret conspiracy involving Leontios, his protégé Megaleas, and Ptolemy, who was collaborating with Apelles to impede Philip's kingship. See note above on the Conspiracy of Apelles.

⁴⁴ D'Agostini 2019, pp. 68-91.

out their betrayal and appealing to them to return to the Macedonian codes. Philip gave priority to re-establishing his relationship with the forces and securing the troops' commitment to him and to the campaigns⁴⁵. However, great turmoil and protest followed because some wanted the ringleaders to be arrested and interrogated, while others asked for a peaceful resolution and an indemnity request.

The conflict between Philip and the Peltasts bears resemblance to the dispute between Alexander and his troops at Opis in August 324⁴⁶. Similarly, Alexander addressed the troops with a speech, emphasizing the shared experience and the reciprocity of their relationship. However, in contrast to Philip V, Alexander directed the Hypaspists to apprehend the ringleaders, who were subsequently sentenced to death⁴⁷. Alexander's authority and position were markedly superior to those of Philip V. Furthermore, Alexander's vast, predominantly Asian empire offered a distinct historical context in comparison to Philip's Macedonian *basileia*. It is, however, noteworthy that Philip's actions diverged significantly from those of his Macedonian predecessor. Philip did not pursue legal action against the perpetrators of the assault on his council and his tent, despite the fact that it constituted a clear act of insubordination by a portion of the military forces. He knew who the leaders were, but he pretended not to. Polybius asserts that Philip did not prosecute the offenders for political reasons⁴⁸. Similarly, as in the case of Megaleas and Crinon, he was concerned that the situation might escalate further, and therefore sought to avoid any violent means in favour of pursuing a political solution. He thus prioritized the restoration of his authority, issuing a direct appeal to his soldiers rather than punishing the Peltasts. He concealed his sentiments and gave the impression of satisfaction.

Despite Philip V's avoidance of direct confrontation with the rebellious Peltasts, the prevailing atmosphere of tension within the army persisted⁴⁹. Not long after the riot, while the king was in Phocis, Megaleas evaded the conditions of his bail and subsequently sought refuge in Athens and then Thebes. This resulted in a further deterioration of the situation. Leontios, the commander of the Peltasts, was obliged to provide bail for Megaleas, but Philip did

⁴⁵ Anson 2008, pp. 135-149.

⁴⁶ On Opis, see Carney 1996, pp. 19-44. The episode was delivered by several ancient sources, Arrian 7.8.1-12.4 is the richest version, Diodorus 17.108.2-3 and 17.109.2-3, and Plutarch Alex. 71.1-5 summarize the episode, whereas the Latin accounts of both Justin (12.11.5-12.10) and Curtius Rufus (10.2.8-4.2) suffer from lacunae, and are both influenced, according to Carney, by the Roman military experience – although Justin's Trojan version is similar to Arrian's. See also Prandi 2013, pp. 181-183 and 186-188.

⁴⁷ The violent action, arrest, and punishment of the most blameworthy, are present in all the sources except Plutarch. Arrian says he sentenced them to be executed right away, as does Justin, maybe reporting the same tradition (Arr. *Anab.* 7.8.3; Just. 12.11.8-9). Diodorus (17.109.2) does not mention Alexander's order to kill them. And Curtius (10.2.30 and 10.4.2) reports that they were arrested but sentenced to death later.

⁴⁸ Polyb. 5.25.5-7.

⁴⁹ Especially after the king recalled Apelles to Corinth from Chalcis but treated him coldly.

not act with immediate haste. Before taking any action against Leontios for his role in Megaleas' misconduct, the king dispatched the Peltasts to Triphylia with another *philos*, Taurion, on the pretext of some urgent service. Once the Peltasts had departed, Philip ordered the arrest of Leontios with the intention of putting him on trial and holding him accountable for the actions of Megaleas.

By deploying the Peltasts, Philip was able to physically separate Leontios from his support base. This serves to corroborate Philip's concern for the allegiance of the troops, most notably those who had been followers of Leontios and his subordinates, namely Megaleas and Crinon. Moreover, Leontios had previously demonstrated his value as a military commander. His military charisma and competence had been an asset in Philip's campaigns. It is possible that the king may have attempted one final mediation before relinquishing such a valuable resource.

By withholding information from the Peltasts, the king demonstrated an understanding of the significance of information and intelligence as tools, and the potential consequences of their mishandling. Indeed, the situation deteriorated further when the Peltasts were made aware of Leontios' arrest. They sent a delegation to the monarch, requesting that the Leontios case not proceed in their absence. They even threatened the king, indicating that they would view his disregard as a form of disrespect, and offered to post bail for Megaleas on behalf of Leontios. They proposed a joint subscription for the payment, suggesting that they would assume financial responsibility⁵⁰.

The Peltasts' proposal confirmed that twenty talents was beyond the economic capacity of even Council members like Leontios. Philip had deliberately set fines at a level that exceeded the capacity of the officers to pay: when he applied them in accordance with the established code of conduct, he imposed a penalty that was effectively impossible for the offender to discharge. The imposition of the fine had the effect of neutralizing Megaleas and might have had the same result for Leontios; however, it did not affect the Peltasts. The fine could be paid by a joint effort of the elite corps. Collectively, the Peltasts demonstrated the capacity to mobilize financial resources on a scale comparable to that of federations like the Achaeans and communities of people like the Illyrians. Consequently, the tension between Philip and the Peltasts was not solely a matter of military discipline; it also pertained to financial support and political authority for the Antigonid monarchy. The intervention of the elite corps served to weaken the effect of the fine and to demonstrate the power and resources of the Peltasts, as well as their influence within the army and on the monarchy.

Faced with a direct confrontation with the elite corps, the king moved toward a more definitive solution. Polybius reports that the king resolved to execute Leontios at an earlier date than he had initially planned, in order to ensure the absence of the Peltasts⁵¹. It is uncertain whether the trial took place, although the Peltasts appear to have been aware that a hearing for Leontios was scheduled or imminent. In the previous trial of Megaleas, the Peltasts had

⁵⁰ Polyb. 5.27.1-8.

⁵¹ Polyb. 5.27.8.

expressed their objections via Leontios. In this instance, however, the king proceeded with the condemnation and execution, not only disregarding the pleas of the Peltasts, but deliberately choosing to act without them. Consequently, when the financial penalty proved ineffective, Philip resorted to violence and killed Leontios, but even then, he sought a way to do so that would minimize the negative reaction of the army. It is notable that, as a final act, Philip apparently did not replace Leontios with another officer, but rather bound the Peltasts to himself and personally led the corps in the following campaigns.

The Roman Parallel

The economic instrument could create interdependence, as with the distribution of booty. It could also help manage the relationship between king and army, as with a common set of rules and punishments found in the army code. The twenty talents demanded by Philip from Leontios not only deprived Leontios of the means to influence the political scene, but also deprived his party of its financial resources. This fine was closely linked to a death sentence, as two stages, one financial and one violent, were used to weaken the political opponent.

Similar cases in the Hellenistic world are hard to identify. Recently, however, fines in the military sphere of the Roman Republic, during the same era of Philip V, have been studied and can offer some material, despite the two very different political systems⁵². Apparently, in the Roman Republic the financial penalties were mostly attested as imposed on soldiers reluctant to submit to the levy, or to draft dodgers. The punishments were excessive fines or confiscation of property. Generals may have been blamed harshly for their military failures, but were very rarely threatened with full confiscations, great fines, and capital charges. However, in the Roman political arena, we do find some cases of prosecutions of generals accused of misappropriation of booty⁵³, which then allowed their enemies to use monetary sanctions to hinder their political careers. One case stands out due to the high profile of the accused: Marcus Livius Salinator and Lucius Aemilius Paullus, consuls in 219, accused of unfair division of the booty in connection with the war against Demetrius of Pharos. After their campaign against the Illyrians and their triumph, on the expiration of their term of office, the People condemned the former and acquitted the latter.⁵⁴ The effect of the trial and fine was such that Livius Salinator retired from Rome and lived in political isolation for more than seven years⁵⁵.

⁵² Piacentin 2022, pp. 79-93.

⁵³ It seemed to be distributed as a reward to whoever helped to win the battle. Piacentin 2022, pp. 97-100. Kay 2014, p. 31.

⁵⁴ Liv. 22.35.3 (on the repercussions for L. Aemilius Paullus); 27.34.3-7; 29.37.4; 29.37.13-15; Val. Max. 4.2.2; [Aur. Vict.] *De vir. Ill.* 50; Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.45. *De vir. Ill.* 50 says Livius was tried for *peculatus*, Frontinus *Str.* 4.1.45 claims it was because of the mismanagement of the spoils. See Piacentin 2022, p. 100.

⁵⁵ Salinator's fine is recorded by Suetonius *Tib.* 3. On the effect of the trial: Liv. 27.34.3-7.

The close timing of the episode with Megaleas, Crinon, and Leontios and the Roman case of Salinator should not be overlooked. In 218 BC, both Salinator and Leontios, victorious generals and high-profile political actors, were neutralized through a fine related to their supposed military conduct. It is unlikely that Philip was not aware of Salinator vicissitudes, if not directly, then at least through his advisor, Demetrius of Pharos, whom Salinator had defeated in Illyria⁵⁶. Indeed, Philip's awareness of and curiosity about the Romans is attested in the 217-15 epigraphic dossier from Larisa⁵⁷. The report collects two letters from Philip to the local *tagoi*, and two decrees from the Thessalian city of Larisa. It was depopulated because of the Aetolian incursions and the last months of the war, when Thessaly had taken the worst of it. Therefore, as the city needed new citizens for husbandry, Philip pressured the Larisians to extend their citizenship to a number of resident Thessalians or other Greeks. In the second letter, from 215, Philip described the Roman practice as an example to follow for the citizens of Larisa⁵⁸. Philip's information on the Romans was neither precise nor entirely correct, but he thought emulating Roman administrative procedures could improve the Greek and Macedonian ones. In light of the Larisian epigraphic reference to Roman administration, I deem it possible that Philip's political use of a fine to sideline Leontios and avert the threat of a mutiny by the Peltasts might have been influenced by his awareness of the Roman practice (however indirect and imprecise) of preferring fining to capital execution of a citizen.

Conclusions

In managing his army, Philip used four instruments of power: negotiations with high-ranking officers as a diplomatic strategy, the reinforcement or weakening of the interdependence between the king and the army as an economic strategy, cultural and ideological strategies enacted through public meetings, and finally the decision to eliminate those who publicly opposed the king's will. Notably, the use of financial leverage to influence officers and soldiers represents a novel approach. Although the Army Code established a system of fines to regulate the conduct of the troops, Philip further refined this instrument and employed money as a means of diminishing the influence of his opponents, thereby circumventing the use of lethal force. By replacing capital trials and punishments with monetary penalties, Philip was able to prevent the discontent of the army's elite corps from escalating. This was made possible by the fact that even when they did not rely on mercenaries, Hellenistic militaries were composed of professional soldiers who were not only socially, politically, and culturally aligned with their leadership, but also financially invested. The considerable resources and influence wielded by these professional corps

⁵⁶ On Demetrius see Coppola 1993.

⁵⁷ *Syll.*³ 543; IG IX 2.517. See recently Hannick 1968, pp. 97-104; Mari and Thornton 2016, pp. 139-195 and D'Agostini 2019, pp. 147-151.

⁵⁸ *Syll.*³ 543 ll. 26-39.

eventually posed a threat to Philip's leadership. Such groups were evidently the most invested in the war effort and demanded to be entitled to a substantial portion of the spoils. Collectively, they were capable of competing financially with the king. The role these groups played in the war effort and their access to resources gave them a significant degree of political influence within the monarchy, which Philip was unable to ignore or openly challenge.

The sources offer a multifaceted and dynamic portrayal of the Macedonian monarchy, wherein the king employed diverse strategies to impose his will or to co-opt other agents. It would appear that he was not always at liberty to deploy the instruments of power that he desired. Rather, he was compelled to engage in a process of negotiation and interaction with a diverse array of political actors, including military personnel, elite corps, foreign troops, officers, and the *philoï*. These actors were not to be overlooked, as they constituted the very foundation upon which the monarchy was built. Moreover, economic and resource considerations were of paramount importance in the Macedonian Hellenistic political system, influencing the distribution of political authority and power.

Ultimately, the parallels between the cases of Leontios and the Peltasts and that of Salinator lead us to consider the impact of alternative political paradigms and practices on Hellenistic monarchies. Such practices may have been derived from both eastern and western interactions, indicating that political and administrative strategies transcended the boundaries of ancient military institutions and were a constant factor in the reshaping of power in the Hellenistic Mediterranean.

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Abstract

In 218, Philip V, King of Macedonia, faced a dangerous mutiny. His elite corps, the Peltasts and Agema, felt they were being treated unfairly and were unhappy with their share of the spoils. In protest, they pulled down the doors and broke through the roof of the royal apartments, and the riot destroyed the quarters closest to the king's friends and the king himself, according to Polybius 5.25.1-3. The episode was the latest in a series of riots and acts of insubordination in the Macedonian army involving soldiers and some senior officers, Megaleas and Crinon, protected by Philip's *philos*, Leontios. In order to manage the growing tensions, Philip used various instruments of power. This paper is an analysis of these instruments, and in particular of the financial one. Philip used it in accordance with the common military code of the Macedonian army. However, he deliberately took it to an extreme. By applying to the episode theoretical instruments borrowed from modern political studies, the paper shows that the king resorted to a purposeful and multifaceted exercise of power to overcome incompatibility and secure compliance among the political actors involved.

Keywords: Antigonid, Macedonia, fine, military police, elite corps, Peltasts.

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