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*The Invisible Fleet:
Antigonid naval operations in the Khremonidean war*

Stefan PANOVSKI
Independent Researcher
Skopje, Macedonia

Abstract. – The subject of this paper is the role that the Antigonid fleet might have had during the Khremonidean war. Although mentioned only twice, considering the fragmentary state of the sources for this period, that may be enough as a starting point for a further analysis. However, because of the state of the sources the only way to reconstruct the activities of the fleet is to attempt to establish the consequences of its presence, which leads to the problem of Patroklos' activities during the war. The usual explanations for his inactivity, that Ptolemaios II pursued the war only halfheartedly after the death of Arsinoe II, or that part of the fleet was engaged in the eastern Aegean and subsequently was unable to lend a more effective support, seem problematic and unconvincing. Arsinoe's abilities seem exaggerated while at the same time Ptolemaios' influence on the foreign policy is underestimated. On the other hand, the evidence for the presence of the Antigonid fleet in Asia Minor is inconclusive and could be more easily interpreted in a different manner. Further more, the events from the initial phase of the war, when the Ptolemaic fleet could have played a decisive role, are neglected. That is the time when the Spartan ruler Areios was trying to break the Antigonid defenses on the Isthmos and merge with the Ptolemaic forces in Attika. The failure on Patroklos' part to transport the Spartan army in Attika could most easily be explained with the nearby presence of the Antigonid fleet, whose potential action during the transportation of the Spartan army could be disastrous for the Ptolemaic fleet. If this hypothesis is accepted, than the inactivity of Patroklos, but also the silence of the sources, could be reasonable explained. On the one hand, the presence of the Antigonid fleet deterred Patroklos from attempting to transport the Spartan army. On the other, the sources do not mention the Antigonid fleet simply because there were no major naval activities - its role was confined to a fleet in being. As long as Antigonos was able to win the war on land and the fleet could prevent the merging of the allied forces simply by being stationed in the surrounding area, there was no need for a major naval engagement. Therefore the Antigonid fleet was an almost invisible element in the war, yet played a crucial role since its mere existence prevented the merging of the allied forces and allowed Antigonos to defeat his enemies one by one.

One of the most important events in the Hellenistic world, and certainly in the Aegean, in the 260s was the Khremonidean war. Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary state of the sources, this war, like most of the other important events at the time, is enveloped in a lasting mist; and even the general course of the war can not be reconstructed without serious difficulties.¹ Therefore, it must be noted that any attempt to elucidate some aspect of this war, must be treated as a more or less likely hypothesis at best. One of these problems is the possible role of the Macedonian fleet, i.e. whether the fleet took part in the operations, and if so, where and in what capacity. The possible activities of the Macedonian fleet are the main subject of this paper.

1. That Antigonos was not only in possession of a fleet, but actually used it during the war, can be deduced from two statements in Pausanias: Ἀρέως δὲ ἐν Σπάρτῃ τοῦ Ἀκροτάτου βασιλεύοντος Ἀντίγονος ὁ Δημητρίου πεζῶν τε καὶ ναυσὶν ἐπὶ Ἀθήνας στρατεύει;² and... Ἀντίγονος ὁ Δημητρίου στρατιᾶ τε αὐτὸς ἐσβεβληκῶς ἔφθειρε τὴν χώραν καὶ ναυσὶν ἅμα ἐκ θαλάσσης κατεῖργεν.³ W. Tarn believed that Pausanias' statements prove not that the fleet participated in the military actions. According to Tarn's interpretation, in his first statement Pausanias is simply referring to a transport fleet; while the second, is quite pointless, since Antigonos controlled the Piraeus, and therefore was in no need to invest the port.⁴

Indeed, the statements in Pausanias are quite vague, and tell us nothing specific about the possible actions of the Macedonian fleet. However, that does not mean they should be rejected *prima facie*, simply because they are vague or implausible.

As far as the first statement goes, it should immediately be noted that στρατεύει, although not conclusively, yet quite strongly implies that the fleet participated in the military operations. Of course, this does not mean that there were no transport ships in the fleet. However, it should not be forgotten that in antiquity the distinction between the transport and war-

¹ A review of the most important problems concerning the duration and the course of the war can be found in O'NEIL 2008.

² Paus., iii.6.4.

³ Paus., i.1.1.

⁴ TARN 1913, 300 n.69.

ships was not as great as it is in modern times. Plainly put, under specific circumstances, one ship could simultaneously be used as a transport and warship, the clearest example being the battle of Ecnomus in 256 BC, fought between the Roman and the Carthaginian fleets. For, although loaded with provisions necessary for the impending invasion of Africa, the Roman ships did not desist from battle with the Carthaginian fleet,⁵ which was prepared specifically for military operations. Not only did the Roman ships, loaded with provisions, engage the Carthaginian fleet, but they even managed to come out victorious from the engagement.⁶ Thus, Tarn's interpretation which was not supported by Pausanias' words can be safely rejected.

Tarn's second argument however, seems very logical. Why and what would the Macedonian fleet have blocked, in a situation where the Piraeus was under Antigonos' control, while the Macedonian field army was in Attika? And yet, this objection is viable only if we presume that the term *κατείργω* bears exclusively the meaning "besiege/shut in" or something similar. However, it has been pointed out that *κατείργω* could also mean "he threatened them".⁷ If that is the case, then Pausanias' statement is quite logical and plausible, and Tarn's criticism therefore not as strong as it might seem.⁸ Unfortunately, concerning the activities of the Macedonian fleet, this is all that we can derive from the sources.

According to some scholars, there are indications that during the war, Antigonos managed to attract to his cause some pirates.⁹ This assumption is based on the inscription in honour of Epikhares. To be precise, among other things he is merited for successfully negotiating ransom of prisoners, who were captured by some *οἱ πειραταί*.¹⁰ Hiring pirates not only by the Antigonids,¹¹ but by the other powers as well, was nothing unusual

⁵ The only exception being the ships transporting the horses.

⁶ Polyb., i.25.5-29.1. *v.* WALBANK 1957, 82-8; STEINBY 2007, 94-6. *cf.* WALBANK 1950.

⁷ HEINEN 1972, 190 n.303 apud WALBANK 1982, 219 n.29; *LSJ*⁹, s.v. *κατείργω*.

⁸ *cf.* WALBANK 1982, 219.

⁹ HEINEN 1972, 157 apud GABBERT 1986, 163; WALBANK 1982, 219-20; WILL 1979, 226; HABICHT 1997, 144; PRITCHETT 1991, 342; HÖLBL 2001, 42. DE SOUZA 1999, 3-4, 65-6, leaves the question open.

¹⁰ *SEG* XXIV. 154, 19-23.

¹¹ *cf.* WALBANK 1957, 154.

indeed.¹² However, as J. Gabbert points out, if these οἱ πειραταί were in the service of Antigonos, it probably would have been mentioned in the inscription in honour of Epikhares, dating from the time of the Khremonidean war.¹³ If this was the only argument, then perhaps we would have been satisfied with the explanation of F. de Souza, who supposes that Antigonos is not mentioned simply because even the prisoners were not aware that the pirates were in the service of the Macedonian king.¹⁴ Yet, the fact that ransom was indeed agreed, rather points out that these πειραταί were acting rather independently. This interpretation might be supplemented with the fact that Epikhares captured and interrogated their accomplices in Athens.¹⁵ Hence, the explanation that these πειραταί were acting on their own, simply taking advantage of the confusion produced by the beginning of the hostilities seems more probable.¹⁶ In the end, it should also be pointed out that, since the word πειρατής does not denote exclusively pirates but any sort of brigand,¹⁷ we can not be certain that the πειραταί mentioned in the inscription were indeed sea-robbers. Consequently, as far as the operations of the fleet goes, we remain in the dark, limited to the two statements of Pausanias.

2. It may seem that this state of the evidence lends support to the conclusion of those scholars who believe that the Macedonian fleet at the beginning of the war was relatively negligible.¹⁸ However, this conclusion is

¹² GABBERT 1986.

¹³ GABBERT 1986, 160-1.

¹⁴ DE SOUZA 1999, 4.

¹⁵ Therefore, de Souza's argument does not seem very probable. Heinen's opinion that they were acting as a "fifth column", i.e. they were Athenian supporters of Antigonos does not sound very convincing. Why would they collaborate with some *peiratai* and not with Antigonos directly?

¹⁶ O'NEIL 2008, 76; GABBERT 1986, 161.

¹⁷ e.g. Polyb., iv.3.8. cf. LSJ⁹, s.v. *πεῖρασις*.

¹⁸ BELOCH 1925, 587; HEINEN 1972, 190 apud WALBANK 1982, 119; TARN 1913, 300. According to Tarn, the fact that Nikaia – the future bride of Alexander the son of Krateros – was captured by the Akhaians, who did not possess a significant fleet, is proof that the fleet of Antigonos was at that time negligible. However, from Livius' description it is clear that in this particular case there was only one quadrireme (I. Liv., xxxv.26.5-6.). On the other hand, even the mightiest of fleets could sometimes fall as a pray to this sort

rather arbitrary and not supported by any argument. In fact, from the sources, fragmentary as they are, we can deduce that in the years prior to the Khremonidean war Antigonos had a fleet at his disposal; and it was mainly due to this fleet that he was able to survive the dark decade following the failure of Demetrios' Asian campaign, to challenge Ptolemaios Keraunos, to intervene in the war against Antiokhos I, and finally to take the Macedonian throne and resist the onslaught of Pyrrhos. On the other hand, we know almost nothing of Antigonos' actions in the interval between the death of Pyrrhos and the beginning of the Khremonidean war, so it may be that in those years, among other things he devoted himself to strengthening his fleet.¹⁹ If this were the only arguments for the existence of a numerous and relatively strong Macedonian fleet, than this assumption would certainly be as arbitrary as the one mentioned above. However, I do believe that there is one argument of singular importance that confirms the existence of quite a strong Macedonian fleet at the beginning of the war; and that is the first great naval battle between the Antigonid and Ptolemaic fleet, which was probably fought c. 261 BC.²⁰ If at the commencement of the hostilities Antigonos did not possess a strong fleet, we would have to assume that this fleet was build during the war. Although this assumption is not impossible, it is however not very probable. Indeed, during this war Antigonos was faced with numerous enemies on multiple fronts, so it is questionable whether he was in a position to allocate additional funds for the construction of a new fleet and the training of inexperienced crew that were destined to en-

of almost pirate attacks. For example, while Demetrios Poliorketes was besieging Rhodes, the ship that was bringing letters and other necessities send from his wife Phila was captured by the rhodian fleet (Plut., *Dem.*, 22.1). If we are to apply Tarn's logic, then we would have to suppose that Demetrios, only after a year since the battle of Salamis, at the height of his power and glory was already deprived of his mighty fleet.

¹⁹ cf. WILL 1979, 219-221.

²⁰ The dating of the battles of Andros and Kos is a well known problem. Although there has been a tendency in recent decades to date the battle of Kos in 255 BC, it is my belief that the traditional dating of the battle in 261 BC should be preferred. I will focus on this problem in an upcoming paper. For the purpose of this paper I would point the reader to the article of REGGER [1985] 1993, where all the important works on the subject are cited.

gage the Ptolemaic fleet in 261 BC.²¹ Therefore, it is my belief that the fleet destined to engage the Ptolemaic soon after the fall of Athens, had been prepared prior to the beginning of the Khremonidean war.

Unfortunately, now we are faced with an exasperating situation: on the one hand we may assume that Antigonos already had a significant fleet, and yet on the other, due to the fragmentary state of the sources we can say absolutely nothing about its actions during the Khremonidean war. Therefore it seems that only one road is opened for further inquiry: if we are unable to reconstruct the activities of the fleet, then we must try to establish the possible consequences of its actions.

3. This line of thought leads to the problem of Patroklos' (in)activity. Pausanias states that *this Ptolemaios sent a fleet to help the Athenians against Antigonos and the Macedonians, but it did very little to save Athens*.²² Indeed, the help sent by Ptolemaios II was greater than we are led to believe from Pausanias' statement. Yet, as S. Ager observes, despite these corrections to Pausanias' description, Areios was killed, Athens fell, and in the end the Ptolemaic intervention led to nothing remarkable indeed.²³

One of the widespread opinions is that the war against Antigonos was actually instigated by Arsinoe, who wished to place her son on the Macedonian throne. After her death, Ptolemaios II continued her policy, but only halfheartedly; and this is why the help he send was substandard and inefficient.²⁴ This view is based on several arguments: her remarkable abilities, vigor and ambitions; the way she is mentioned on the decree of Khremoni-

²¹ It may seem that a possible counterargument for this interpretation could be the fact that towards the end of 207 BC, i.e. during the I Macedonian war, Philippos V begun constructing a new fleet in Kassandreia (T. Liv., xxviii.8.14.). However, there is a crucial difference between the two wars. For while Antigonos during the Khremonidean war was faced with numerous enemies, the main enemy of Philippos V and the Hellenic alliance was the Aitolian symmarchy. And it was exactly during that fighting season that Philippos V has dealt such heavy blows to the Aitolians, that they started contemplating a peaceful resolution of the war (v. HAMMOND 1988, 405-7).

²² Paus., i.7.3. Translation by W. H. S. Jones & H. A. Ormerod (Loeb edition, 1918).

²³ AGER 2003, 40.

²⁴ TARN in *CAH* VII., 705-6; FERGUSON 1911, 69-71, 175; BEVAN 1927, 65-9; BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903, 188; cf. HABICHT 1997, 142-3.

des; and the fact that Ptolemaios II adopted Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos and made him a co-ruler. An additional argument could be made if Arsinoe died not in 270 BC as it is widely held, but in 268 BC, only few weeks before the beginning of the Khremonidean war.²⁵

As far as the dependence of the “mediocre”²⁶ Ptolemaios II on the counsel and forcefulness of Arsinoe II goes, it should be noted that this ruler was successful in some of his enterprises before her arrival in Alexandria, as well as after her death.²⁷ Furthermore, since in her life Arsinoe made some calamitous decisions, such as the maladroit assassination of Agathokles or the naïve faith in Ptolemaios Keraunos, it seems that her remarkable abilities are too highly valued.²⁸

Regarding the way she is mentioned on the decree of Khremonides, E. Will has rightly observed that it was simply a formule de courtoisie, inspired by the cult of the *Theoi Adelphoi* and Arsinoe.²⁹ Indeed, as R. Hazzard pointed out, the close relations between Ptolemaios II and Athens predated the arrival of Arsinoe to Alexandria,³⁰ and therefore it would only be appropriate to speak of continuation of the politics of Ptolemaios I.

On the other hand, the identification of the co-ruler of Ptolemaios II is a well known and vexing problem. Between 267 and 259 BC, on more than one documents³¹ a co-ruler by the name of Ptolemaios emerges. This Ptolemaios is named by modern scholars as Ptolemaios “the Son”,³² and is sometimes identified with the son of Lysimakhos.³³ However, it is obvious that since c. 258 BC Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos was present in Ly-

²⁵ GRZYBEK 1990, 103-12 apud HABICHT 1992, 72. cf. HAZZARD 2000, 50, 55, 99.

However see HÖLBL 2001, 40, 69 n.29.

²⁶ e.g. TARN 1928, 250.

²⁷ BURSTEIN 1982, 205; HAZZARD 2000, 85.

²⁸ On the influence and the abilities of Arsinoe II, v. POMEROY 1984, 17-20; HAZZARD 2000, 81-100 (особено 93-100).

²⁹ WILL 1979, 222; BURSTEIN 1982, 208; WALBANK in *CAH*² VII.1, 236-7; HAZZARD 2000, 95-6. *contra* HABICHT 1997, 143

³⁰ *SEG* XXVIII 60, 44-70. cf. SHEAR 1978, 25-6; HAZZARD 2000, 85.

³¹ The documents are collected in HUB 1998, 229-36.

³² For Ptolemaios “the son” v. ΔΕΛΑΕΒ 2004, 326-8; WALBANK 1988, 589-90; H. VOLKMANN *RE* XXIII.2. (1959), s.v. Ptolemaios der Sohn, coll.1666-7.

³³ e.g. ΔΕΛΑΕΒ 2004, 327; HUB 1998.

kia, although it is not certain in what capacity;³⁴ and later he was placed in charge of Telmessos,³⁵ in a position that could probably be described as semi-autonomous to the court of Alexandria.³⁶ Hence, if Ptolemaios “the Son” is identical with the son of Lysimakhos, it is doubtful that after the failed coup he was not only spared, but actually was appointed as an official in Lykia.

W. Huß believes that Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos received the district around Telmessos as a *dorea*, after his reconciliation with Ptolemaios II.³⁷ This explanation is rather dubious. Ptolemaios II certainly did not deter from reckoning with his rivals in a rather brutal fashion.³⁸ Why would the son of Lysimakhos receive a better treatment than the others, especially since his mother was already dead? And what is even more important, why would Ptolemaios II take the son of Lysimakhos as his co-ruler? According to W. Huß, Ptolemaios II never intended to leave the empire in the hands of Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos; the sole purpose of this act was to present him in public as a suitable candidate to the Macedonian throne.³⁹ However, if that was the case, why is the son of Lysimakhos not mentioned in the decree of Khremonides; why didn’t he take an active role in the operations, but quite on the contrary, if he is to be identified with Ptolemaios “the Son”, he was present and active on the other side of the Aegean in Ephesos? But this is one more conjecture that proves little.

Far more serious is J. Tunny’s objection, who points out that regardless of the possible motives, by adopting and appointing Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos as his co-ruler, Ptolemaios II was creating a dangerous situation in his own family. For if he was to suddenly die, he would not be succeeded by one of his sons, but by Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos. On top of it, even if this measure was conceived as temporary, there was no guarantee that the son of Lysimakhos would concede his position peaceful-

³⁴ v. BILLOWS 1995, 101.

³⁵ HOLLEAUX 1921; BAGNALL 1976, 106-9; WÖRRLE 1978.

³⁶ v. BILLOWS 1995, 101-4.

³⁷ HUB 1998, 247; ΔΕΛΕΒ 2004, 327.

³⁸ cf. HAZZARD 2000, 97. Magas indeed continued to rule in Kyrene even after his rebellion, but that was only because Ptolemaios II was not able to suppress him.

³⁹ HUB 1998, 238.

ly.⁴⁰ In other words, no matter what the expected benefits of the temporary appointing would be, the act was plainly too hazardous. Therefore, it seems that the identification of Ptolemaios the son of Lysimakhos with Ptolemaios “the Son” is not very plausible.⁴¹

Consequently, it seems that regardless of the aptitude of Arsinoe II, her influence should not be overestimated, and there is no need all of Ptolemaios’ II accomplishments to be associated with her personality and ambitions.⁴² After all, despite the failures in the Khremonidean war and the II Syrian war, Ptolemaios II successfully ruled for almost two more decades. Therefore, the question when Arsinoe II died is of no consequence.

4. Obviously the answer to Patroklos’ ineffectiveness should be sought elsewhere. As it was already mentioned, the archaeological sources modify the statements of Pausanias. For Patroklos disembarked in Attika and established a number of bases: at Heliupolis, Vuliagmeni, Koroni, while his main base of operations was the small island of Gaidhouronisi (4.5 km west of Cape Sunion), later known as Patroklou Kharax.⁴³ On the inscription in honour of Epikhares it is also mentioned that Patroklos send part of his army to Rhamnus.⁴⁴ The presence of these forces in Rhamnus and Heliupolis undeniably points to the conclusion that the Ptolemaic admiral was not trying to avoid a battle with Antigonos’ troops at any cost.⁴⁵

Patroklos’ activities do not end here. It was probably during the Khremonidean war that a garrison was installed in Methana in Argolis, which was refounded as Arsinoe.⁴⁶ That Patroklos was active in the Saronic Gulf

⁴⁰ TUNNY 2000, 88-9.

⁴¹ It should be pointed out that this does not solve the problem with Ptolemaios “the Son”. Yet it does show, I believe, that it would be prudent to differentiate Ptolemaios “the Son” from the son of Lysimakhos.

⁴² *cf.* GABBERT 1997, 51; AGER 2003, 40.

⁴³ For these fortifications see MCCREDIE 1966, 1-25, 30-2, 46-8. Patroklou Kharax is mentioned in the sources: Paus., i.1.1; Strabo, ix.1.21.

⁴⁴ *SEG* XXIV. 154, 23-4.

⁴⁵ Yet the importance of these bases should not be overestimated, since Patroklos’ expeditionary force was mainly prepared for a naval engagement. *cf.* GABBERT 1997, 47.

⁴⁶ Although it is uncertain when exactly Methana was refounded as Arsinoe, most of the scholars relate it with Patroklos’ activities during the Khremonidean

can be deduced from the fact that a group of small islands in the Gulf were named Pelops' Islands after another officer in the army of Ptolemaios II.⁴⁷ This information is consistent with the archaeological sources, which seem to imply that Antigonos was taking precautions from a possible sea attack in that region. For part of the Isthmian defence system of Antigonos was the fortified complex on the eastern parts of Mt. Oneion. As R. Stroud points out, while these fortifications blocked Areios' approaches, in the same time offered excellent overview of the Isthmos and the Saronic Gulf and protected Kenkhreai from a possible naval attack.⁴⁸

On the other hand, P. Rodriguez ascertains that the Ptolemaic coins issued in 266/5 BC are more numerous in Hellas in comparison with the ones in Asia Minor and the Levant.⁴⁹ If to this conclusion we add the fact that the attack of Alexander of Epeiros was probably instigated by Ptolemaios II,⁵⁰ it becomes obvious that Patroklos, i.e. Ptolemaios II did not abandon their allies, nor was their effort negligible.⁵¹ Yet, Athens yielded while Patroklos' activities left no lasting impression in the sources.

5. Some scholars believe that the reason for this failure is the problems Patroklos, i.e. the Ptolemies faced in Asia Minor. Problems that were caused from the sudden appearance of the Macedonian fleet in Asia Minor. In order to protect the Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor Patroklos was forced to detach part of his fleet, and therefore was unable to provide a

war. For a review of the conclusions and list of the most important works, see COHEN 1995, 124-6; cf. BAGNALL 1976, 135-6.

⁴⁷ Paus., ii.34.3; R. HERBST, *RE* XIX.1 (1937), s.v. *Pelopsinselnchen*, coll. 392-3; HABICHT 1997, 147 n.89.

⁴⁸ STROUD 1971, 143-4; cf. WALBANK 1988, 282-3.

⁴⁹ RODRIGUEZ 2000, 18-23.

⁵⁰ Although there is no agreement among the scholars for the motives of Alexander's attack on Macedon, the theory that he was instigated by Ptolemaios II seems most probable to me. This does not mean that he had no ambitions and motives of his own, but simply that the initial impetus came from Alexandria. cf. HAMMOND 1967, 588; BEVAN 1927, 67. *Contra* WALBANK 1988, 285.

⁵¹ This is another indication that the theory that the war was not fought with enough vigour because of Arsinoe's death is wholly unconvincing.

more efficient help to Athens and Sparta.⁵² This theory is based on two arguments: a series of inscriptions from Miletos and one inscription from Samos.

The inscriptions from Miletos represent a thematic whole: the first inscription is a letter from Ptolemaios II to the citizens of Miletos in which he expresses his gratitude for the loyalty of the city;⁵³ the second in a ruling of the citizens that the emissaries of Ptolemaios II should be brought before the assembly;⁵⁴ and the third a decision of the assembly to bestow honours upon Ptolemaios II.⁵⁵

At this instance, two pieces of information are important. From the first inscription it is obvious that Miletos remained loyal to Ptolemaios II, although it seems that the city was in some kind of turmoil for some time.⁵⁶ The presence of high Ptolemaic officials in the city – including Ptolemaios “the Son” by now a co-ruler, Kallikrates and Hegestratos, points to a conclusion that something extraordinary was going on in Miletos.⁵⁷ This can be supplemented with the fact that for several years in a row (266/5-263/2 BC) stephanephoros of the city was the god Apollo.⁵⁸ The situation was obviously so grievous, that no one could assume this function.⁵⁹ The third inscription illustrates that Miletos was under attack by land and sea.⁶⁰ Some scholars think that the attack by sea was undertaken by Antigonos’ fleet, during the same campaign when the battle of Kos was fought.⁶¹

The inscription from Samos is a decree in honour of Pelops the son of Alexander, who was φίλος ὦν τοῦ βασιλέως Πτολ[εμ]αίου τεταγμέ-

⁵² RODRIGUEZ 2000, 27-8. *cf.* WALBANK 1982, 217-21; ID. 1988, 290.

⁵³ *Miletos* 62.

⁵⁴ *Miletos* 52.

⁵⁵ *Miletos* 34.

⁵⁶ *Miletos* 34.

⁵⁷ *cf.* SHIPLEY 1987, 186; AUSTIN 2006, 456.

⁵⁸ REHM & KAWERAU 1914, no. 123.

⁵⁹ BAGNALL & DEROW 2004, 42-3.

⁶⁰ καὶ νῦμ πολέμων καταλαβόντων πολλῶ[ν] καὶ μεγάλων ἡμᾶς καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν καὶ τῶν [ἐ]ναγντίων ἐ[πι]πλευσάντων ἐπὶ τῆμ πόλιν (*Miletos* 34, 32-4).

⁶¹ RODRIGUEZ 2000, 28; WALBANK 1982, 219; BAGNALL & DEROW 2004, 42-3; HÖLBL 2001, 42.

νο[ς] ἐπὶ δυνάμειω[ς].⁶² Although some scholars think that Pelops was the commander of the garrison on Samos, M. Holleaux showed long ago that in this period, δύνάμις denotes not a garrison but rather an active military force.⁶³

Therefore, P. Rodriguez concludes that the problems in Miletos were caused by the fleet of Antigonos, and that Pelops was the commander of the garrison temporarily stationed on Samos and was charged to defend the coastal regions of Asia Minor.⁶⁴ Admittedly this reconstruction seems quite attractive, since it solves two problems in the same time. On one hand it explains why Patroklos was unable to help his allies in a more efficient way, and on the other why the Macedonian fleet is barely even mentioned. For, stationed in Asia Minor, its actions made no impression on the sources who were mainly interested with the situation in Hellas.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, no matter how attractive, this reconstruction seems improbable. As far as Pelops goes, it was already mentioned that during the Khremonidean war he was active in the Saronic Gulf. Therefore, the theory of P. Rodriguez that he was stationed in Asia Minor can not be accepted without hesitation. Of course, this does not mean that Pelops could not operate on the other side of the Aegean coast, however, what were the reasons and when did this happened could not be ascertained. On top of it, we must take into account the explanation of R. Bagnall, who observes that Pelops might have stayed on Samos only for a short time; i.e. that τεταγμένος ἐπὶ δυνάμειω[ς] does not necessarily means that the army was stationed on Samos, but rather could be explained as a description of his status, that is his function in the Ptolemaic military hierarchy.⁶⁶

Things are different as far as the inscriptions from Miletos are concerned; for there is no doubt that there were some sort of military activities. However, the first problem we are faced with is the dating of the inscripti-

⁶² *Samos* 52.

⁶³ HOLLEAUX 1905.

⁶⁴ RODRIGUEZ 2000, 27-8.

⁶⁵ Already Walbank assumed that the explanation for the omission of the fleet from the sources could be that it was active in some other theatre of war. (WALBANK 1982, 219).

⁶⁶ BAGNALL 1976, 83-4.

ons. Although Tarn's opinion that these inscriptions should be dated during the I Syrian war⁶⁷ is rejected, the exact year still remains unknown. The proposed date is c. 262 BC,⁶⁸ but c. 262 could also mean one or two years before or after 262 BC. Indeed, it is not impossible to relate the attack on Miletos with the naval battle between the Antigonid and the Ptolemaic fleets if this engagement was fought in 261 BC. Yet, that this reconstruction seems improbable can be deduced from the information preserved on the third inscription from Miletos. For the assembly mentions that it was a matter of many great wars that beset the city, wars that have only started.⁶⁹ First of all, it is extremely unlikely that a single attack by the Macedonian fleet could be described as "great many wars", and secondly if Miletos was harassed by Antigonos' fleet for a longer period of time (as the theory of Rodriguez would imply), why is it emphasized that the wars have only started (*vōv*)?

On the other hand, it was approximately at the same time that the II Syrian war begun and this time Rhodes sided with the enemy of Ptolemaios II, i.e. Antiokhos II. It was precisely the Rhodian fleet that defeated the Ptolemaic one at the battle of Ephesos (c. 258 BC).⁷⁰ The phrasing of the inscription ("great many war"), in my opinion seems more appropriate as an allusion of the activities during the II Syrian war, not as a description of a single attack by the Macedonian fleet. In a word, I would prefer to identify the attacker by sea with Rhodes and not Antigonos. Therefore, instead the final activities during the Khremonidean war, the third inscription could just

⁶⁷ TARN 1930, 448-51.

⁶⁸ BAGNALL & DEROW 2004, 42.

⁶⁹ *Miletos* 34, 32-4.

⁷⁰ For the battle of Ephesos see MOMIGLIANO 1950, 113; F. H. VON GAERTRINGEN, *RE* Supp. V (1931), s.v. Rhodos, 783; FRASER 1972, 163; HEINEN 1984, 419, 433; WILL 1979, 237. Only Seibert dates the battle few years later, c. 252 towards the end of the II Syrian war (SEIBERT 1976). The hostilities between the Ptolemies and Rhodes may be referred in a papyrus where it is mentioned that Ptolemaios Andromakh(os?) managed to seize the city of Ainos (*P.Haum.* 6, fr.1, l.7.). If this episode is to be dated during this period, than the city mentioned could not be the one on the Thraco-macedonian coast, but the one in the vicinity of Rhodes. (BÜLOW-JACOBSEN 1979, 94.) However, as long as the problem with the identification of Ptolemaios Andromakhos remains unsolved, this argument could not be pressed too hard.

as well depict the opening hostilities during the II Syrian war, which since it is plainly put that the war had only recently begun, would make more sense.

The fact that several years in a row the eponymous magistrate of Miletos was the god Apollo is seen by some scholars as another argument that the Macedonian fleet was operating in Asia Minor during the Khremonidean war.⁷¹ Nonetheless, a closer examination of the situation seems to imply quite the contrary. The situation obviously became so grave that there was no citizen able to take over the function. This sort of critical state of affairs not only implies hostilities that lasted over a longer period of time, but also that the surrounding territory of the city was under attack by a field army. For a fleet could certainly blockade a port for a certain amount of time, and even raid the coastal area, but it is almost impossible to envisage that these activities could threaten the city to such an extent, that there would be no one left to take the position of eponymous magistrate. Unfortunately, because of the fragmentary state of the sources, the situation in Asia Minor at this time is so ambiguous that it is hard to ascertain who was behind these attacks.⁷²

In fact, it may be that this situation has been unnecessarily and in fact erroneously used as an indication that the city was under attack. For exactly in 261/60 BC, just as the II Syrian war was about to begin, there is a *stephanephoros* in Miletos.⁷³ This detail inevitably leads to a greater reservation regarding the situation in the previous years. Indeed, even in Athens during the Khremonidean war the officials were regularly elected. Hence the absence of the *stephanephoroi* does not unconditionally imply an attack on the city. In fact, the same absence of *stephanephoroi* in Miletos could be observed in the 4th century in the years prior to the Asian campaign of Alexander. It is important to note that in that case the sources show that this absence of *stephanephoros* was the result of an internal strife. Therefore it

⁷¹ BAGNALL & DEROW 2004, 42-3.

⁷² A clear illustration of how obscure is the situation in Asia Minor during this period is the assumption of W. Tarn, who in his analysis of the troubles that befell Miletos, supposes that either Antiochos I was trying to take over the city from Ptolemaios II, or that Ptolemaios II was trying to take it from Antiochos I.

⁷³ BAGNALL & DEROW 2004, 42.

might be better to assume that the city was embroiled in an internal strife once again.

On the whole, the theory that the Macedonian fleet was active in Asia Minor seems unconvincing and problematic at best, while the accounts of which it is based could be analysed and explained in a different fashion. However if this was all that could be said, it is my belief that although improbable, this theory could not be ruled out with certainty. That is why few more deficiencies in this theory should be mentioned. Indeed, one look of the map of the Aegean seems to imply that the reconstruction does not seem impossible, for one fleet could relatively fast traverse from Euboeia to Asia Minor. Yet it seems that this possibility is sometimes exaggerated, while in the process the limitations of the ancient ships are disregarded. Indeed in the last century for the modern fleets it was enough to control only few key harbours in order to be able to control and intervene in a large area. But it would be superfluous to even mention that there could be no comparison between the modern ships of the last few centuries and those from the antiquity.

On the other hand, the fleets of antiquity endeavored to sail close to the shore as often as possible. The crewmen had to rest; occasionally it was necessary for the ships to be pulled out on land; they were in need of constant flow of supplies and resources for repairs; and probably most important of all, needed a shelter from the tempests. In a word, for a fleet to operate effectively, it was necessary to control quite a few bases and harbours. Few examples will suffice to illustrate the point.

After the victory in the battle against Nikanor, Kleitos had to withdraw his ships on the shore in order for the crewmen to recuperate. This was utilized by Antigonos Monophthalmos who gathered his remaining ships, crossed the Hellespont and in a surprise attack defeated the victorious fleet on land.⁷⁴

Even more telling is the case with the capture of the Athenian grain fleet by Philippos II. For although the naval attack by Philippos II ended in

⁷⁴ Diod., xviii.72. Indeed, this case could rather be understood as a stratagem by Antigonos Monophthalmos, or as an example of negligence by Kleitos. This however does not change the fact that even a victorious fleet needed time to rest after a battle.

failure, he transported some of his troops on the shore of Asia Minor, and it was this ground force that managed to capture the Athenian fleet.⁷⁵

During the march through Gedrosia, even though the army was facing with severe lack of supplies, Alexander was forced to leave part of what he had and store it in certain places, for on these provisions rested the fate of the fleet that commanded by Nearchos was to sail few months later.⁷⁶

During the siege or rather the attempted siege of Syrakousai, since the Athenian ships were too long in action, without temporarily being transferred on land, they began to rot and the efficiency of the fleet was severely diminished.⁷⁷

In 255 BC the roman fleet suffered heavy loses due to a storm near Kamarina.⁷⁸ Though Polybios blames the roman admirals for this calamity, since it was their decision to sail through that dangerous route, it has been shown that his critique is unfounded; for the Romans were forced to take that route since the main harbours along the safer route were under Carthaginian control.⁷⁹

I hope that these few examples illustrate plainly enough just how much the effectiveness of a fleet was conditioned by the situation on the land.⁸⁰ What is important here is that there is no indication that Antigonos, at the time, had at his disposal naval bases in the eastern part of the Aegean.⁸¹ Therefore, taking into account the limitations of the ships in antiquity, it is hard to imagine how the Macedonian fleet was able to operate in the eastern Aegean, when the closest bases were on Euboa. Yet, even if we allow that Antigonos had some forward base of operations, which considering the

⁷⁵ *n.* GRIFFITH 1979, 574-7.

⁷⁶ Detailed review and analysis of this campaign in BOSWORTH 1996, 166-185.

⁷⁷ Thuc., vii.12.2-3.

⁷⁸ Polyb., i.37.

⁷⁹ WALBANK 1957, 96.

⁸⁰ *cf.* STEINBY 2007, 94 n.32.

⁸¹ Some scholars believe that Samos was temporarily under Macedonian control, however this assumption does not seem very probable to me. Regardless, even if we accept this theory, the inscription in honour of Pelops quite clearly shows that the eventual Macedonian occupation of Samos could have happened only after the Khremonidean war.

fragmentary state of the sources could not be ruled out for certain, this fleet would still be in a constant need of supplies, as well as timber for repair of the damaged ships. If this was the case we would have to assume that there was a continuous link between this assumed base and the bases in Euboea or Macedonia, which the mighty Ptolemaic fleet did not try to disrupt.

This brings us to the second weak point in the theory that the operations of the Macedonian fleet in Asia Minor was the main cause why Patroklos could not take a more active part in the Khremonidean war. For if we are to accept this view, then we have to assume that at this point Ptolemaios II, due to lack of military and financial resources, was not in a position to defend the Aegean coast of Asia Minor and to lend a more substantial help to Athens and Sparta. However, the impression that we get from the sources tells quite a different story. The final part of the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios II was the military parade, which included approximately 57.000 foot soldiers and 23.000 horsemen.⁸² Furthermore, if R. Hazzard is correct in his assumption that these were only the troops from Alexandria and the khora,⁸³ this would mean that Ptolemaios II had at his disposal an even greater army. To this numerous field army we must affix the enormous fleet of Ptolemaios II, whose scale was never surpassed.⁸⁴

Now, if we are to recall that Antigonos, whose military and financial resources were by far smaller in comparison to those of Ptolemaios II, during the Khremonidean war, was forced to intervene in multiple fronts against more than one enemy, it becomes clear how untenable the proposed

⁸² Athen., v.202f-203a. As for the date and the context of the great pompe there is no agreement among the scholars. *v.* FRASER 1972, 230-3; FOERTMEYER 1988; WALBANK 1996, 121-5; HAZZARD 2000, 59-79; H. VOLKMANN, *RE* XXIII.2 (1959), s.v. Ptolemaia, col. 1579. The dating varies from 279/8 BC up to 262 BC. Such a disagreement does not affect my conclusion, since there is no reason to assume that in the next decade (if the pompe was in the 270's) there was a sharp decline in the military capabilities of the army of Ptolemaios II.

⁸³ HAZZARD 2000, 73.

⁸⁴ From the list of the fleet of Ptolemaios II, W. Tarn concludes that because of the presence of numerous large ships, the average power of this fleet of roughly 300 ships might have been a penteres. Such an average was never achieved neither by Demetrios Poliorketes nor by Rome. (TARN *in* *CAH* VII, 711).

theory is. On the one side, there was Ptolemaios II who had vast resources and at that point was engaged only with a part of his fleet in Attika could not protect Asia Minor simultaneously; and on the other, there was Antigonos, who although with incomparably lesser resources, was able to leave a substantial part of his army in Macedonia,⁸⁵ and yet at the same time to besiege Eretria, to deploy the main body of his army in Attika and Korinthos and still have enough forces to attack Asia Minor.⁸⁶

Bottom line, the fact that Patroklos was in a position to install garrisons in number of places in the Aegean⁸⁷ clearly shows that the assumed weakness of the Ptolemaic army could not be accepted. Furthermore there is no indication that the Ptolemaic forces in the eastern part of the Aegean was insufficient, for it was in 262 BC that Ptolemaios II got hold of Ephesos, and maybe Lesbos.⁸⁸ This shows rather clearly that there is no room for the assumption that because of the problems caused by the Macedonian fleet in Asia Minor, Ptolemaios II was unable to intervene in Attika.

6. The question of the passivity of Patroklos is solved by J. Gabbert in a different manner. In her opinion, Patroklos could do nothing remarkable because Antigonos was keeping his fleet in the harbours and avoided a confrontation with the Ptolemaic fleet. As we shall see, this theory is not inapplicable to the operations of the Macedonian fleet. However, it is her explanation of the reasons behind this strategy that is problematic. For she thinks that the most important effect from a naval victory is primarily the psychological effect; therefore in the case of the Khremonidean war, the

⁸⁵ That a substantial part of the army remained in Macedonia can be inferred from two facts. First, it was this part of the army that withstood the invasion of Alexander of Epeiros and later took the offensive; and second, we ought to assume that even after the counter-attack in Epeiros part of that army must have stayed in Macedonia for the protection of the northern frontier, which had a disproportionately greater significance than it might be inferred on the basis of the sources.

⁸⁶ Rodriguez marginalizes this obvious difficulty in his theory with a single sentence: *En l'état des sources, on ne sait comment Antigone s'y prit pour être présent sur les deux fronts* (RODRIGUEZ 2000, 28).

⁸⁷ On Itanos (and maybe Olos), Thera, Koresia and Arsinoe-Methana. *v.* HÖLBL 2001, 42-3.

⁸⁸ PIEJKO 1991, 147. *cf.* BRUN 1991.

fleet could not play a more significant role.⁸⁹ As G. Reger observes, this conclusion would sound strange indeed to the defeated at the battle of Salamis in 480 BC, or at the battle of Cyprian Salamis,⁹⁰ not to mention the Athenians after Aigospotamoi. In fact only two decades later, the I Punic war was decided in a naval battle. For although inferior in forces, Hamilcar Barca managed to entrench in few fortified positions in Sicily and impose a stalemate on the Romans. It is important to note that his forces, as well as the besieged Carthaginian towns were supplied by sea, just as the expeditionary force of Patroklos' probably was. It was only after the naval defeat at the Aegates in 241 BC, that the Carthaginian commander, although undefeated on land, had to surrender.⁹¹ Obviously a single naval victory could have a great impact on the further course of a war. The advantages from a possible naval victory would be considerable indeed for Antigonos; as G. Reger points out, Patroklos' lines of communication, not only with his allies but also with the Ptolemaic strongholds in Attika, depended on the ability of the fleet to keep them opened. If Antigonos managed to neutralize the Ptolemaic fleet, the war would certainly be over much sooner.⁹²

On the other hand, if Patroklos insisted on a naval engagement, at least he could have tried to lure the Macedonian fleet to sail out of its harbours: the attack on Salamis, the blocking of Piraeus, and a possible attempt to deblockade Eretria, could have forced the Macedonian fleet to action. This I believe is especially true in the case of Eretria, for if Patroklos succeeded in lifting the siege of Eretria and strengthened the garrison with part of his fleet, Antigonos' lines of communication with Macedonia would be in serious danger; and that sort of development would be all the more perilous since Boiotia at the time was in the Aitolian sphere of influence, and therefore Antigonos' logistics relied completely on the line Euboia-Oropos.⁹³ As we can see, the prospective naval victory would have greatly improved the strategic position of the victor, and this is why Gabbert's theory that the fle-

⁸⁹ GABBERT 1997, 48-9.

⁹⁰ REGER 1998.

⁹¹ *v.* HOYOS 2003, 11-20.

⁹² REGER 1998.

⁹³ For the importance of this line see Thuc., viii.60, 95-6. It seems that Antigonos struck some sort of a deal with the Boiotians and was permitted to use Oropos. *v.* KNOEPFLER 1993, 340; *cf.* REGER 1992, 374-7.

et could achieve nothing in particular in the Khremonidean war should be rejected. Yet, this does not change the fact that there were no major naval operations during the war.

7. Indeed, the key weakness in both theories is that the events from the first years of the war is mainly neglected; after the death of Areios and the quelling of the rebellion in Eretria, for Patroklos' fleet there was little left to achieve. However, during the first period of the war, the activities of the Ptolemaic fleet could have been of vital importance. This brings us to Areios' failed attempt to merge his army with the one of Patroklos.

As it was mentioned before, the disposition of the Ptolemaic strongholds in Attika shows that Patroklos was not trying to avoid a confrontation with Antigonos at all cost. Nonetheless, when Areios managed to fight his way to Attika,⁹⁴ Patroklos urged him to commence the attack first, since "it was not fair for Egyptian sailors to attack Macedonians on land".⁹⁵ This interesting piece of information shows that Patroklos did not bring with him a corps of elite ground troops; his army was mainly composed of *makhimoi*⁹⁶ and we may assume, based on the information preserved in Pausanias, part of the crewmen who were disembarked. Obviously this army was unable to cope with the Macedonian forces on its own; the only hope for success rested in the merging of the Ptolemaic and Spartan armies.

Now, it seems probable that Areios undertook three campaigns against Antigonos. In his first attempt he reached Attika indeed,⁹⁷ but when

⁹⁴ I accept the reconstruction of McCredie who thinks that Areios managed in his first attempt to reach Attika, although I do not agree that there was only one campaign (McCredie 1966, 110-2) and prefer the theory that Areios undertook three successive campaigns in 267, 266 and 265 BC (WALBANK 1988, 280 nn. 2-3).

⁹⁵ Paus., iii.6.5.

⁹⁶ RODRIGUEZ 2000, 25-6. For *makhimoi* see SERRATI 2007, 473-4; LLOYD 2002, 121-2; cf. POLLARD 2010, 448, 451.

⁹⁷ Stroud believes that during the first fighting season Patroklos indeed managed to transport the Spartan army in Attika (STROUD 1971, 143 n.34). Although McCredie prefers the reconstruction that the Spartan army came by land, still does not completely exclude the possibility that it came by sea (MCCREDIE 1966, 111). However I believe that there are strong indications that the army came by land. First of all, if Patroklos indeed transported the

he used up his provisions retreated; during the following campaigns obviously he was unable to break Antigonos' defense lines around Korinthos, that were now strengthened with the control of Megara. Therefore the main question is why Patroklos did not try to circumvent Antigonos' defenses and transport the Spartan army by sea. The actions of Agesilaos and later Kassander show that this was not an impossible feat;⁹⁸ and Patroklos certainly controlled few suitable landing points where the Spartan army could have disembarked.⁹⁹

This question brings us back to the statement of Pausanias that Antigonos attacked Attika not only by land but also by sea. Obviously the Macedonian fleet was somewhere near. If that was so, then the attempt to transport the Spartan army by sea would have been much more dangerous.¹⁰⁰ The possible defeat of the Ptolemaic fleet in this case would have meant not only breaking of the lines of communication between Patroklos and his allies, but also a disaster for the Spartan army. It would have been a move of folly to put the outcome of the war in a single naval engagement, especially with the Spartan army, which had no experience in naval combat for more than a century, onboard. Therefore it is my belief that the most reasonable explanation why Areios so tenaciously had to assail the Macedonian defenses on the Isthmos, is the nearby presence of the Macedonian fleet. This sort of operation is complicated even today, and it must have been even

Spartan army, then it is incomprehensible why the Spartans disembarked in northern Attika and by doing so they were effectively preventing the cooperation between the two armies. Secondly, if Areios was constantly in touch with Patroklos, why the Ptolemaic fleet did not supply the Spartan army? This certainly would have enabled the Spartans to maintain the pressure on Antigonos. Thirdly, from the sources it is quite clear that Areios retreated by land. If his army came to Attika by sea, why would he now try a dangerous retreat by land through the Korinthian defenses of Antigonos?

⁹⁸ Xen., *Hell.*, iv.4.1. Although it should be noted that Agesilaos circumvented Korinth through the Korinthian Gulf, which was not an option for Areios and Patroklos. For Kassander's action see Diod., xix.54.3-4.

⁹⁹ MCCREDIE 1966, 110.

¹⁰⁰ cf. O'NEIL 2008, 84.

more dangerous in antiquity, especially if the fleet of the enemy was somewhere near.¹⁰¹

8. This reconstruction enables us to comprehend the role of the Macedonian fleet in a rather different way. As long as Antigonos was able to prevent the merging of the Ptolemaic and the Spartan field armies, the main task of the fleet, except maybe for occasional raids on Attika (which would justify Pausanias' use of *κατεῖργεν*), was to keep the Ptolemaic fleet in a stalemate. Simply put the Macedonian fleet had the function of a fleet in being.¹⁰² According to this concept, by remaining anchored in the harbours and strategically deployed given the circumstances, a numerically weaker fleet could tactically neutralize the opposing fleet, which would always have to take into account the potential actions of the fleet in being.¹⁰³ This tactic was certainly not spectacular or glorious, yet in the case of Antigonos it was essential if he was to win in the war. For as long as Antigonos was able to deal with his enemies piecemeal and to decide the war of land where his troops were undoubtedly superior, the only thing the fleet would had to do was keep the Ptolemaic fleet at bay, and by its mere presence to prevent the potential transport of the Spartan army by sea. If this was the role that the Macedonian fleet played in the Khremonidean war, than it is not surprising that there is no mention of naval operations in the sources; for no major operations were conducted indeed.

9. Still, if this theory is to be accepted, then one question must be answered: Why Patroklos did not try to force a naval engagement? He certainly had few options if he was determined to do so. As J. O'Neil points out, if necessary, Ptolemaios II surely could have sent additional ships.¹⁰⁴ It is my belief that this reservation on part of Patroklos, i.e. Ptolemaios II is due to number of factors.

¹⁰¹ Indeed, the crossing of Caesar of the Adriatic (*Caes., Bell. Civ., iii.7-9*) could be seen as an example proving the contrary. However, neither Patroklos was Caesar nor Antigonos Bibulus. And even if they were, the stakes in that case were incomparably higher than in the case of Ptolemaios II and Antigonos.

¹⁰² Examples for the use of this tactic in the 17th and 18th century in REYNOLDS 1998, 62-8.

¹⁰³ For an analysis of this concept see CORBETT 1911, 210-227; VEGO 2003, 207-13.

¹⁰⁴ O'NEIL 2008, 84.

Firstly, if deemed necessary, Ptolemaios II could no doubt dispatch additional troops and ships. However, for this additional force to be effective it would have to be constantly supplied with all the necessities, primarily food; and exactly food is something that Attika was always lacking.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, to supply a larger force would be a logistical nightmare, even for the Ptolemaic fleet.¹⁰⁶

Secondly, as it was already mentioned Patroklos disembarked part of his army in Attika where he controlled some strongholds. Since these were probably makhimoi, we may conjecture that at least some of his ships were undermanned, which decreased the effectiveness of his fleet. In such a situation it would have been unwise to force a naval confrontation.¹⁰⁷

Thirdly, in the upcoming naval confrontation, the stake was not only the fate of Athens, but also the security of the Ptolemaic possessions in the Aegean.¹⁰⁸ If Patroklos was defeated that would mean, at least temporarily, that the Ptolemaic possessions in the western Aegean would be left without protection and would be an easy prey to the victorious fleet of Antigonos.¹⁰⁹

Additional feature that might have carried some weight on Ptolemaios' II decision not to engage the fleet of Antigonos is the possible psychological scar caused by the crushing defeat at Cyprian Salamis. For in this clash with the fleet of Demetrios Poliorketes (the father of Antigonos), his father Ptolemaios I was not only defeated, but barely escaped with his life.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ A detailed analysis of the food potential of Attika and the Athenian reliance on grain import in GARNSEY 1988, 89-164.

¹⁰⁶ cf. ERRINGTON 2008, 89. Also, it should be remembered that this sort of grain fleet was always in a dire need of a military protection, which would mean that Patroklos' fleet would have yet another assignment on its hands.

¹⁰⁷ If he was to retreat these soldiers to the ships, then he was leaving Attika on the mercy of Antigonos.

¹⁰⁸ Gabbert underestimates the effects of the possible defeat of the Ptolemaic fleet. In her opinion the only loss for Ptolemaios II would be "some ships and men". (GABBERT 1997, 48-9).

¹⁰⁹ cf. O'NEIL 2008, 84-5, who thinks that Ptolemaios II was not so much in fear for the Kyklades, as for the possessions in Asia Minor, which could immediately come under pressure from the Seleukids.

¹¹⁰ *v.* BILLOWS 1990, 152-5.

The significance and effect of such crushing defeats should not be underestimated.¹¹¹ This does not imply that Ptolemaios II was trying to evade the fleet of Antigonos at all cost; indeed, neither of them was to wait long for the first showdown of the fleets. However in that particular situation, the risk was simply too great. It was one thing to fight for the control of Kypros, whose strategic importance for the Ptolemaic empire was enormous, but quite another to tempt the gods and risk a battle for the sake of Athens.

All of these factors alone might not have had a decisive character, but cumulatively they represented a serious argument against the prospective confrontation with the Antigonid fleet. After the death of Areios, there was no sense in investing additional resources for the sake of Athens; while after the unsuccessful diversion by Alexander of Epeiros, the only way the war could have been won, was if Ptolemaios II decided to dispatch additional and numerous force in Attika, something that he was not prepared to do. Actually, the main war effort undertaken by Ptolemaios II was the sending of a part of the fleet. The burden of the fight on land was to fall on Sparta and her allies and Athens.¹¹² Therefore, after 256 BC the fleet of Patroklos was unable to achieve anything that could have changed the course of the war.

It may seem that this course of action was pretty naïve and inappropriate. Was Sparta alone to defeat Antigonos and the Macedonian army; could a detachment of the Ptolemaic fleet to neutralize the whole fleet of Antigonos; and what exactly was Athens trying to achieve when her military potential, especially for a war on land, had always limited? If we are to give an objective answer to these questions, we must ignore for a moment the course and outcome of the Khremonidean war, and the later battles of Andros and Kos. Simply put, we have to try to imagine how the estimated strength of the combatants seemed, at least on paper.

¹¹¹ *e.g.* When Justinian I decided to attack the Vandal kingdom in Africa, his decision caused fear and faltering among some of his advisors since the catastrophic outcome of the expedition in the time of Leo I was not forgotten. Similarly, if we are to trust Prokopios, on one occasion the Slavs were preparing to attack the southern part of the Balkan peninsula, but when they heard that Germanus was nearby with an army decided to alter their destination and attacked Dalmatia; for they have not forgotten that years before Germanus inflicted a heavy defeat on the Antae.

¹¹² *cf.* GABBERT 1997, 47-8.

On the one side stood Antigonos, who up until that point had not shown any extraordinary capabilities as a commander. Until 277 BC he barely managed to hold his possessions in Hellas; previously had been defeated by Ptolemaios Keraunos, and some time later probably by Sosthenes as well; in the war against Antiokhos I achieved nothing noteworthy; had been relatively easy by Pyrrhos and almost lost the Macedonian throne. Indeed, he played a major role during the finishing operations against Pyrrhos, however that was only after the failed attack on Sparta, which managed to push back the Epeirote even though Areios with part of the army was absent at the time.¹¹³ The only success he could boast with was the victory at Lysimakheia; and even there he defeated only one segment numbering approximately 18.000 Celts,¹¹⁴ at a time when the main Celtic onslaught on the Balkan Peninsula was losing the impetus. Hellas owed its deliverance to the heroic defense of Delphi lead by the Aitolians; while Macedon was saved from a total disaster mainly to the mysterious, but obviously capable Sosthenes. All in all, up to that point the military feats of Antigonos suggested that he was a mediocre commander at best. On top of it, at the time Antigonos was facing with problems on Euboia, whose strategic importance for the Macedonian strongholds in Hellas must not be underestimated.

On the other side, he was faced with a seemingly formidable alliance. For twenty years the Ptolemaic fleet ruled the eastern Mediterranean uncontested and there was no indication that Antigonos could pose a threat to its dominance. With the victory over Pyrrhos, not only did Sparta regain at least a part of the former glory, but due to the energetic ruler Areios managed to increase the influence on some parts of the Peloponnesos. As for Athens, although unable after the Lamian war to start a war against Macedon by herself, the partial success in the rebellion of 287 BC showed that with external help was still able to prove problematic for Antigonos.

If we look at the situation from this perspective, then the strategy of the allies is not only unsurprising but it is actually quite reasonable. If Sparta was able to defeat Pyrrhos, she could certainly handle Antigonos, who at the same time would have to keep an eye on the situation on Euboia and in

¹¹³ For the operations on Peloponnesos see TARN 1913, 269-74; WALBANK 1988, 265-7; WILL 1979, 214-6.

¹¹⁴ *v.* ΔΕΛΑΕΒ 2004, 275; WALBANK 1988, 255-7.

Attika; while the Ptolemaic fleet was a guarantee that the control of the sea will be firmly in the hands of the allies. The development of the situation shows how mistaken these calculations were. Still despite of it all, if Patroklos succeeded to transport the Spartan army in Attika, Antigonos would have been forced to a pitched battle, a battle whose outcome would have been hard to predict. This demonstrates once more how important was the role played by the Macedonian fleet. By its presence near Attika prevented the joining of the allied forces, which essentially secured Antigonos' victory in the war. As I already mentioned, although the activities of the fleet were certainly not spectacular, they were of decisive importance nonetheless.



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