

SOFIA UNIVERSITY „ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”  
FACULTY OF HISTORY

NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE WITH MUSEUM  
BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

**ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΟΣ**  
**VOLUME IN HONOUR**  
**OF PROFESSOR PETER DELEV**



1892 - 1921 - 1948

SOFIA 2017

СУ „СВ. КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“  
ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ

НАЦИОНАЛЕН АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИ ИНСТИТУТ С МУЗЕЙ  
БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ

**ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΟΣ**  
**СБОРНИК В ЧЕСТ**  
**НА ПРОФЕСОР ПЕТЪР ДЕЛЕВ**



1892 - 1921 - 1948

СОФИЯ 2017

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Исторически факултет

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„Св. Климент Охридски“

ISBN 978-954-07-4309-7

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## РАЗДЕЛ СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА И НОВА ИСТОРИЯ

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# COMFORTABLY SUNK: PHILIP, THE BATTLE OF CHIOS AND THE LIST OF LOSSES IN POLYBIUS

*Stefan Panovski, Vojislav Sarakinski*

0. Philip's operations in Asia Minor consist of two main phases: the confrontation with Pergamum and Rhodes and the conquests in Caria, which concluded the battle campaign of 201 BC. In all probability, these operations were described in detail in the 16th book of Polybius' *Histories*; unfortunately, this book survives in fragments only. The descriptions of a number of important operations – the ravaging of Pergamene territory, the Battle of Chios, a part of the operations in Caria, indirectly the Battle of Lade – are partly preserved; however, their context is, for the most part, lost. Because of this, it is very hard to determine even the basic sequence of events – the battles of Chios and Lade and the attack on Pergamum – a fact which, in consequence, makes it practically impossible to discern the motives and goals of Philip in this phase of his campaign.

## 1. Wherefore Chios?

Our extant sources make it more likely that, after the conquest of Samos, Philip set sail towards Chios, though it should be stressed that this sequence is by no means certain. There are opinions that Philip was driven north by his intention to prevent the merger of the Rhodian fleet, at the time positioned south of Chios, with the fleet of Attalus and the other allies, positioned north of Chios (Berthold 1984, 117; Hammond 1988, 414). Two main reasons, however, make this assumption unconvincing. First, since Philip was stationed on Samos, had he really intended to prevent the merger of the fleets, he could have achieved this without any exertion by moving either against Attalus in the north, or against the Rhodians in the south, instead of undertaking a siege which not only could not guarantee quick success, but also meant that he would lose all

mobility – and, of course, the initiative – in the forthcoming operations. Second, and even more important, if Philip had already been fully aware of the hostile aims of Rhodes and Attalus, the biggest blunder he could make was to undertake a siege of a city, as this would force him to use a portion of his crews in ground operations – which would, in turn, reduce the effectiveness of his fleet. In other words, because of a potential conquest of Chios, he risked exposing his precious fleet, which at that moment, considering the siege, would not be fully equipped and would come to be quite vulnerable. On the contrary, the narrative of Polybius gives the impression that Philip was surprised by the unfolding of the events and tried by all means to avoid a direct naval encounter with the allied fleet of his enemies. Consequently, it seems more probable that, at the time when Philip laid the siege of Chios, he was unaware that Rhodes and Pergamum were planning to join forces so as to oppose him.

In fact, the goal in attempting to take Chios appears to be the intention to open a logistic line towards the northern Aegean littoral, also opening an alternative route towards Asia Minor, as the control of Samos allowed Philip to approach Asia Minor only through the island route from the west, but not from the north. The Chians, however, offered much fiercer resistance than expected, so the siege seems to have protracted (Polyb. 16.2.1-2; Plut. *Mor.* 245C).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The view that the siege had been protracted for quite some time stems from the narrative of Polybius, according to whom ἔτι γὰρ αὐτὸν ἠλπίζον οἱ περὶ τὸν Ἄτταλον προσκαρτερήσεν τῇ τῶν μετάλλων κατασκευῇ. Plutarch mentions that Philip promised freedom to all Chian slaves who would betray their masters; however, Walbank (1967, 504) thinks that the story is apocryphal. It is unclear whether Front. *Strat.* 3.9.8. refers to the siege of Chios; however, considering the general impression that stems from the narrative – that the siege was successful – one would say that it does not.

To make things even worse, the allied fleet of Pergamum, Rhodes and Byzantium, including Cyzicus and Cos as Rhodian allies, soon entered the scene (Walbank 1967, 505). Bearing in mind the traditional antagonism between Pergamum and Rhodes, it is fairly understandable why this sequence of events took Philip by surprise. It seems that Attalus finally grasped the gravity of the situation and, incited by Theophiliscus, decided to take part in the confrontation with Philip without further delay.

## 2. The Battle

The involvement of Attalus, as well as the arrival of the combined fleet at Chios, had thoroughly changed the prospects for Philip. Facing an enemy fleet superior in number to his own, the beseiger slowly became the besieged (Polyb. 16.2.1). Knowing that he had a lesser number of cataphracts,<sup>2</sup> Philip unexpectedly decided to retreat all the way to Samos. Although taken by momentary surprise, Theophiliscus and Attalus engaged in pursuit and soon managed to reach Philip. Realising that he could not escape his enemies, Philip ordered the fleet to turn around and engage in battle.

As Attalus and Theophiliscus did not set out to sea at the same time, a rather chaotic battle ensued, in two separate zones – the right wing of the Macedonians<sup>3</sup> clashed with Attalus, the left with the Rhodian fleet, while Philip took a few ships and retreated to the small islands positioned in the middle between the two wings (Polyb. 16.2-6; v. Walbank 1940, 122 *sqq.*; Walbank 1967, 503 *sqq.*; Murray 2012, 209 *sqq.*; cf. Roussel 1969, 339 *sqq.*; Hammond 1988, 414 *sqq.*). Though evenly matched for a while, as time passed, it became increasingly obvious that the Macedonian fleet would lose on both wings. Fortunately for Philip, at the very moment when the situation on his right

wing turned critical, elated with success, Attalus engaged in pursuit of a Macedonian ship. Philip noticed that Attalus had broken too far from the core of the fleet, so after taking four quinqueremes, three hemioliai and every lembus he could muster, he set sail against Attalus and his three ships. On realising that he has been cut off from his fleet, Attalus fled, landed on shore and left for Erythrae. This stinging reversal resulted in the withdrawal of the Pergamene fleet from the battle (Polyb. 16.6.1-11). Simultaneously, despite the resistance, the left Macedonian wing slowly cracked under the incursions of the Rhodian fleet and the unrivalled skill of the Rhodians. But thanks to the withdrawal of the Pergamene fleet, the Macedonian ships gradually and one by one began to disengage from the battle and to join ranks with the rest of the warships. After capturing as many ships as they could, the Rhodians retreated towards Chios (Polyb. 16.6.12-13), thus practically ending the naval battle.

As expected, both sides proclaimed victory: Philip on the grounds that he had curbed Attalus and because, by anchoring at nearby Argennus, he practically stayed at the scene of the battle; Rhodes, on the grounds that the Macedonians suffered incomparably heavier losses (Polyb. 16.8.1-2; cf. Dittenberger 1905, no. 283). Polybius would have us believe that Philip was well-aware that he had been defeated. The next day, the combined Pergamene and Rhodian fleet set sail in order to continue the battle; however, the Macedonian fleet did not accept the challenge, so the Allies withdrew towards Chios (Polyb. 16.8.4-5). Nevertheless, the assessment of Polybius cannot, or rather should not, be accepted without reservation. The outcome of this battle can be evaluated according to two criteria – the losses on both sides and the tactical situation after the battle, wherein in both cases the analysis of Polybius is subject to serious objections.

## 3. The losses

According to Polybius, the Macedonian losses amounted to 28 cataphracts, three aphracts, as well as almost half of the lembi; the combined Pergamene and Rhodian fleet lost only eight cataphracts and a trihemiolia (Polyb.

2 Philip's fleet consisted of 53 cataphracts, a small number of aphracts and approximately 150 lembi and pristeis; the combined fleet of Pergamum and Rhodes consisted of 65 cataphracts, nine trihemioliai and three triremes (Polyb. 16.2.9-10). In addition, Philip had at his disposal a deceres, at least one enneres, septireme and hexareme, and at least two octeres; nonetheless, the main body of the fleet was made up of quadriremes and quinqueremes. The combined fleet of Pergamum and Rhodes had quadriremes and quinqueremes; v. Walbank 1967, 505.

3 For the confusion arising from Polybius' account concerning the Macedonian left and right wings, v. Walbank 1967, 504; Roussel 1969, 340 *sqq.*

16.7.1-4).<sup>4</sup> As for the losses in men, Rhodes lost 60, Attalus 70, while Philip allegedly lost 3000 Macedonians and 6000 oarsmen;<sup>5</sup> additionally, 2000 Macedonians and allies were captured, as well as 600 Egyptians (Polyb. 16.7.5-6).

If these figures are credible, then Philip truly suffered a devastating defeat. Yet, there are several elements that cast serious doubt on the list of losses in Polybius.

To begin with, if the Allied fleet truly lost but a few polyremes, then the reported losses in men are mismatched by a long shot. Polybius informs us that a Rhodian quinquereme sank with the entire crew on board; that most of the crewmen of the flagship of Theophiliscus suffered a similar fate; and finally, that all Pergamene epibatae on the quinquereme of Dionisodorus drowned (Walbank 1967, 509). Now, Polybius maintains that the Roman quinquereme held approximately 300 oarsmen and 120 epibatae (Polyb. 1.26.7); even if we allow for slight differences in design, it seems unlikely that the capacity would be radically smaller.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, if what Polybius writes is true, the combined Pergamene and Rhodian losses should amount to at least 1000 epibatae and oarsmen – significantly more than the 130 fatalities that he records.

Furthermore, the description of the battle implies that Philip held neither Rhodian nor Pergamene prisoners of war. Later, however, while describing the negotiations in 198 BC – and, obviously, following another source – Polybius notes that, among other things, Attalus requested the return of the captives from the battle of Chios (Polyb. 18.2.2; 6.3; 8.10). Philip would hardly waste time in saving Pergamene crewmen; consequently, Walbank concludes that the

mere fact that Philip held captives from the battle of Chios shows that he managed to capture more than the three empty ships of Attalus (Walbank 1967, 510).

There is no doubt, then, that the combined Pergamene and Rhodian fleet suffered far heavier losses than the account of Polybius shows. A matter hardly surprising, given that the main sources of Polybius were Rhodian historians (Ulrich 1898, 36 *sqq.*). In fact, even Polybius was well aware of the shortcomings of Zeno and Antisthenes; not only were they unreasonably subjective with respect to Rhodes – even portraying the defeat in the Battle of Lade as a Rhodian victory – but they also made serious mistakes and oversights in the description of events that had nothing to do with Rhodes.<sup>7</sup>

However, the fact that the combined fleet suffered far more serious losses than reported does not inevitably mean that the Macedonian losses were not that devastating. Berthold, for example, thinks that although the Allied losses were certainly minimised, the Macedonian losses appear reasonably accurate (Berthold 1975, 158 *sqq.*, 162). This conclusion is based on the fact that Polybius repeatedly criticises the views of Zeno and Antisthenes, a fact which allegedly asserts that he had been very much aware of their shortcomings and used them with exceptional caution. In other words, according to Berthold, Polybius would not have permitted to be seduced by the distortions of Zeno and Antisthenes; Philip's losses are quite probable given the undisputed skill of the Rhodian marines, reflected in the fact that Philip suffered double the losses when fighting the smaller Rhodian fleet, than when fighting the Pergamene.

This argument is not entirely convincing. Berthold acknowledges that the losses of the Allies are minimised, but he seemingly fails to realise that it is precisely this fact that disproves his main argument. It is clear that Polybius knew of the shortcomings of Zeno and Antisthenes; however, his account of the losses shows that, despite this fact, at times he still follows their biased descriptions of the events. What is more,

4 Of the larger polyremes, Philip lost his flagship deceres, one enneres, two octereis (of which one sunk, and the other one was captured), one septireme and one hexareme. v. Walbank 1967, ad loc.

5 The distinction between „Macedonians“ and „oarsmen“ seems to imply that the Macedonians fought as naval infantry, but were not used as oarsmen.

6 Coates (2004, 138 *sqq.*) assumes that, depending on the design, the quinquireme had a capacity of 70 to 120 epibatae, while the quadrireme held around 75. If the Roman hexareme was similar in design to the Hellenistic quinquireme, as Coates supposes, then we could assume that the Hellenistic quinquireme actually had a greater capacity – the hexareme of Caligula had about 400 oarsmen (Plin. Nat. Hist. 32.4). It is true that, according to Pliny, this ship was a quinquireme, but Murray (2012, 265) is probably right in that it was a hexareme.

7 Polyb. 16.14-15 (excessive partiality in the description of the Battle of Lade); 16.16-17 (Zeno's errors in the description of the campaign of Nabis in Messenia); 16.18-20 (contradictions in the description of the Battle of Panium). See Lenfant 2005; Wiemer 2012.

he follows the Rhodian historians in depicting not two unrelated topics, but one and the same – that is, the casualty list on both sides; otherwise, we would have to assume that the Macedonian losses were taken from a different source, which would be far-fetched. Thus, there is still room for doubt, and a further analysis of the question of Philip's losses is required.

The key element in the Rhodian tactics was the famous *diekplous* (Tarn 1930, 146), a manoeuvre that did not always imply a coordinated action of the entire fleet, but could also be undertaken by individual ships (Lazenby 1987). Fully aware of the superior skills of the Rhodians, Philip managed to restrict the effect of this manoeuvre by placing numerous lembi between the polyremes; the lembi prevented the full implementation of the *diekplous*, especially in the second and crucial phase of the manoeuvre, when the enemy ship is supposed to suffer the main blow (Polyb. 16.4.4-15). The effectiveness of this defensive method is witnessed by the fact that, from this period onwards, smaller vessels became an integral part of all ancient fleets (Tarn 1930, 147 sqq.; cf. de Souza, 435-6).

It was by performing the *diekplous* and, most probably, the *periplous*, that the Allied commanders inflicted the heaviest losses to Philip (Polyb. 16.4.13-15). There is, however, another problem, apparently not taken into consideration in the analysis of the Battle of Chios; in order to illustrate it, we will leave Chios for the moment and move to the battle between the fleets of Ptolemy I of Egypt and Demetrius Poliorcetes, that took place near Salamis in Cyprus.

Namely, in the Battle of Salamis,

[...] τῶν δὲ μακρῶν αὐτανδροὶ μὲν ἐλήφθησαν τεσσαράκοντα, διεφθάρησαν δὲ περὶ ὄγδοήκοντα, ἅς πλήρεις οὖσας θαλάττης κατήγαγον οἱ κρατήσαντες εἰς τὴν πρὸς τῇ πόλει στρατοπεδεῖαν. διεφθάρη δὲ καὶ τῶν Δημητρίου σκαφῶν εἴκοσι· πάντα δὲ τῆς προσηκούσης ἐπιμελείας τυχόντα παρείχετο τὰς ἀρμοζούσας χρεῖας (Diod. 20.52.6).

The Loeb translation by Russel M. Geer reads as follows:

“[...] of the warships forty were captured with their crews and about eighty were disabled, which the victors towed, full of sea water, to the camp before the city. Twenty of Demetrius’

ships were disabled, but all of these, after receiving proper care, continued to perform the services for which they were suited.”

For the sake of comparison, the Russian translation of this passage reads:

“[...] было захвачено сорок боевых кораблей с экипажами и около восьмидесяти были выведены из строя, которые были наполненные морской водой и победители отбуксировали их в лагерь перед городом. Двадцать кораблей Деметрия были повреждены, но все они, получив надлежащий уход, продолжали выполнять свою службу для которой предназначались.”

The bulk of the fleet of both Ptolemy and Demetrius consisted of quadriremes and quinqueremes (Diod. 20.49.2; 50.2). On the basis of this, Murray deduces that, even when disabled and filled with water, the quadriremes and the quinqueremes remained floating on the surface (Murray 2012, 254). The quadriremes and the quinqueremes were certainly not indestructible, but even when incapacitated, it took considerable time for them to sink.<sup>8</sup>

This conclusion raises a sequence of questions, which could profoundly change the usual image of the Battle of Chios. Most of all, it indicates that the Macedonian death toll is doubtful; for even on a disabled polyreme, the epibatae were apparently still able to give resistance. Polybius admits that the Rhodian ships tended to avoid a head-on collision with the Macedonians, as they were afraid to engage in quarter combat against the Macedonian soldiers, who were usually superior in this type of battle (Polyb. 16.4.13). In other words, the impairment of a polyreme did not routinely imply that the entire crew was lost. On the contrary, even Polybius mentions cases when other ships came to assist the damaged vessels, a fact which often changed the course of the battle. Of course, drawing from Rhodian sources, Polybius is primarily focused on the fighting from the side of the Allies, so most examples relate to the achievements of the Rhodian and the Pergamene commanders; but

<sup>8</sup> Clear proof that the polyremes did not sink that easily is the battle of Attalus against a Macedonian octeres. Namely, even after the ship of Attalus hit the Macedonian ship in the part of the hull that was under water, a long and fierce battle ensued; the ship was finally sunk after the troops of Attalus managed to overcome the Macedonian crew (Polyb. 16.3.1-2).

there is no real reason why this should not be applicable to the Macedonian ships. Be that as it may, the fact that the polyremes were sinking for quite a long time shows that the crews, if anything, had plenty of time to abandon their ships.

Furthermore, a crucial matter following a naval battle was the ability of either side to remain at the place of the battle, primarily in order to recover the crewmen that had abandoned the impaired vessels.<sup>9</sup> After the Battle of Chios, it was Philip, not the Allies, that remained at the place of the battle; furthermore, the next day it was Philip, not his enemies, who took the opportunity to sail through the wreckage of the ships, looking for survivors; and, if one can judge by the events after the Battle of the Arginusae, the number of survivors could be quite considerable. The words of Polybius add credibility to this view; following his Rhodian sources, he reports that the following day Philip sailed through the wreckage and collected the bodies of the Macedonians, but not those of his enemies – a fact which underlines once again the importance of remaining at the battle scene after the battle.

According to Polybius – or rather to Zeno and Antisthenes – Philip did so in order to portray the battle of Chios as a Macedonian victory and thus lift the spirits of his soldiers, utterly demoralised after the disastrous events of the previous day (Polyb. 16.8.1-4). But there is hardly any logic in this story; would Philip really lift the spirits of his soldiers by sailing through the wreckage and the bodies of their fallen shipmates? Quite the contrary, this would be completely detrimental to his cause. In the words of Polybius, „the state of things after the battle could not fail to strike all who witnessed it with horror. There had been such a destruction of life that during the actual battle the whole strait was filled with corpses, blood, arms, and wreckage, and on the days which followed quantities of all were to be seen lying in confused heaps on the neighbouring beaches. This created a spirit of no ordinary dejection not only in Philip, but in all the Macedonians“ (Polyb. 16.8. 6-9). Now, one can hardly contend that Philip was an aspiring

and boastful ruler; nevertheless, he was much too experienced a soldier as to assess the situation so incorrectly and cause even greater discouragement by sailing through the wreckage of his own ships. Let us recall that after the debacle at Cynoscephalae, not only did he not seek permission to collect the bodies of the dead, but he left them on the battlefield for years, until one of his rivals, years later, in an attempt to gain the favour of the Macedonians, gave them a proper burial, bringing about – much to his dismay – anger and contempt by the people (Liv. 36.8.3-5). It is rather obvious that what we have here is a fine piece of Rhodian propaganda, and an attempt to assert that, after the battle, the Macedonian army was in disastrous shape. It would make far more sense to assume that Philip returned to the place of the battle in order to look for survivors. It is true that Polybius only speaks of dead bodies; this, however, does not mean that there were no survivors whatsoever, which would be unreasonable. Unfortunately, the question as to their number is a matter which is impossible to answer.

It is now obvious that there are strong reasons to assume that Philip's losses were smaller than whatever Polybius would have us believe. There is no question that his losses were serious; contrary to traditional naval warfare, where the main objective is to disable the enemy ship, the Macedonians preferred to climb on the enemy deck and engage in direct battle with the rival epibatae, which all but warranted bigger losses.<sup>10</sup> One can assume that the crews of the lembi experienced the heaviest losses, as they appear to have been deliberately put at risk in order to protect the bulky polyremes; the oarsmen of the polyremes must have been falling by the numbers as well.<sup>11</sup> However, this way of fighting also implied heavier losses for the Rhodian and the Pergamene fleet, all the more so because the fol-

9 The most famous example of this would certainly be the trial of the Athenian commanders who failed to rescue their marines after the Battle of the Arginusae.

10 Murray (2012, 168 sqq), however, warns that this conclusion should not be taken too far, that is, be simplified to the point of assuming that the Macedonians and the Romans were only able to conquer the enemy ships with a direct attack. Contra Tarn 1930, 145.

11 In the list of Polybius, the ratio of dead Macedonians vis-à-vis oarsmen is approximately 1:2. Neither he nor the Rhodian historians could reliably determine the extent of enemy losses, even less – how many of them were Macedonians, and how many were oarsmen. Rather, this seems to be a broad generalization, based on the traditional ratio of losses in sea battles. Given that the ratio of marines vis-à-vis oarsmen on a standard quinquereme was 1:3, the assumption that the oarsmen suffered heavier losses seems logical.

lowing day the Allies were unable to search for survivors. Accordingly, although heavy, Philip's losses in men were smaller than it would seem *prima facie*; on the other hand, the allied losses were far greater than Polybius wishes to admit. Thus, the proportion of losses between the belligerents was smaller than can be concluded from the list in Polybius.

Things are similar as regards the losses in vessels. On the word of Polybius, Philip lost 24 polyremes, three trihemioliae and close to 65 lembi (Polyb. 16.7.1-2); furthermore, the Rhodian fleet captured two of his quadriremes and seven lembi.<sup>12</sup> According to this, after the battle of Chios, Philip had at his disposal 28 cataphracts (including those he captured from Attalus), the majority of the aphracts and just about 75 lembi. If the numbers put forth by Polybius are reliable, Philip had lost nearly a half of his fleet, a disaster indeed; still, we have strong reasons to contest the reliability of this account. The arguments from above apply, so there is no need to list them once more.

#### 4. Uncertainty by translation

The biggest faux pas, however, seems to be that, in analysing the losses, modern historians fail to take into consideration an important aspect of the problem, which is the choice of words of Polybius. He almost exclusively uses the verb (δια)φθείρω, usually translated as „to destroy utterly“, „to do away with“, „to kill“, „destroy“, or „ruin“. Let us now recall that Diodorus, in the above-mentioned excerpt, uses exactly the same verb (διεφθάρησαν/διεφθάρη), which the translators chose to translate as „were disabled“ and, respectively, „были выведены из строя/были повреждены“ obviously choosing the secondary meaning of (δια)φθείρω – „to weaken“, „to slacken one's hand“ and, pertaining to ships, „to disable“.

Let us now proceed with Polybius' passage:

[...] ἐφθάρησαν δὲ τοῦ μὲν Φιλίππου ναῦς ἐν μὲν τῇ πρὸς Ἄτταλον ναυμαχίᾳ δεκῆρης, ἐννήρης, ἐπτήρης, ἐξήρης, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν κατάφρακτοι μὲν δέκα καὶ τριημιολίαι

τρεῖς, λέμβοι δὲ πέντε καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ τὰ τούτων πληρώματα: ἐν δὲ τῇ πρὸς Ῥοδίου διεφθάρησαν κατάφρακτοι μὲν δέκα, λέμβοι δὲ περὶ τετταράκοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν: ἤλωσαν δὲ δύο τετρήρεις καὶ λέμβοι σὺν τοῖς πληρώμασιν ἑπτὰ. τῶν δὲ παρ' Ἀττάλου κατέδυσαν μὲν τριημιολία μία καὶ δύο πεντήρεις, ἤλωσαν δὲ δύο τετρήρεις καὶ τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως σκάφος. τῶν δὲ Ῥοδίων διεφθάρησαν μὲν δύο πεντήρεις καὶ τριήρης, ἤλω δ' οὐδέν.

Shuckburgh's translation, published by Mc-Millan, has:

[...] In the battle with Attalus Philip had had destroyed a ten-banked, a nine-banked, a seven-banked, and a six-banked ship, ten other decked vessels, three triemioliae, twenty-five galleys and their crews. In the battle with the Rhodians ten decked vessels and about forty galleys. While two quadriremes and seven galleys with their crews were captured. In the fleet of Attalus one triemiolia and two quinqueremes were sunk, while two quadriremes besides that of the king were captured. Of the Rhodian fleet two quinqueremes and a trireme were destroyed, but no ship was taken.

Patton's Loeb translation reads as follows:

[...] Of Philip's ships there were sunk in the battle with Attalus one ship of ten banks of oars, one of nine, one of seven, and one of six, and of the rest of his fleet ten decked ships, three trihemioliae, and twenty-five galleys with their crews. In his battle with the Rhodians he lost ten decked ships and about forty galleys sunk and two quadriremes and seven galleys with their crews captured. Out of Attalus's fleet one trihemiolia and two quinqueremes were sunk, two quadriremes and the royal ship were taken. Of the Rhodian fleet two quinqueremes and a trireme were sunk, but not a single ship captured.

Finally, Mishchenko's Russian translation reads:

[...] В битве с Атталом Филипп потерял по одному кораблю десятипалубному, девяти-, семи- и шестипалубному, кроме того, десять крытых судов и три триемиолии, наконец, двадцать пять челнов вместе с командою. В сражении с родосцами потеряно крытых судов десять и около сорока челнов; два четырехпалубника и семь челнов с

<sup>12</sup> It was already noted by Ulrich (1898, 39) that, in comparison with the depiction of the battle itself, the list in Polybius is incomplete, and a number of ships that were obviously captured are not included in the final enumeration. Cf. Walbank 1967, ad loc.

командою уведены неприятелем. У Аттала затоплены были одна триемиолия и два пятипалубника, и неприятелем захвачены два четырехпалубника и судно самого царя. Родосцы потеряли два пятипалубника и один трупалубник, но ни одно судно их не попало в руки неприятеля.

Contrary to the translators of Diodorus, who translate (δι)έφθάρησαν as „were disabled/ были выведены из строя/ были повреждены“, the translators of Polybius, for no apparent reason, translate the same verb as „were sunk/lost/destroyed“, i.e. „потерянные“. However, we have seen above that, in the case of ships, especially in the passive form (as is often the case in Diodorus and Polybius), the verb should be translated with „disable“ (cf. LSJ<sup>9</sup>, s.v.). Taking into account the narratives of Diodorus and Polybius, it is very probable that in this specific case one should prefer precisely this meaning of the verb.

There are many arguments in favour of this. Firstly, in contrast, the definite losses suffered by Attalus are marked by the verb καταδύω. Then, this unfortunate translation practice forced, for example, Murray to reach a contradictory conclusion that „... ‘fours’ were lightly ballasted (as were ‘fives’) and floated when ‘sunk’.“ (Murray 2012, 254). Finally, this translation would be more fitting to the narrative in Diodorus; instead of presuming destroyed or sunken ships that Demetrius towed away and repaired for future use, it would be much simpler – and quite more logical – to assume that the ships were merely damaged and/or disabled.

Of course, this does not mean that the use of the verb should be limited to this meaning; in fact, when listing Rhodian losses, Polybius uses the same verb, the previous description of the battle clearly showing that they were, indeed, sunk. But the mere fact that διαφθείρω can signify both „destroy“ and „incapacitate“ opens an entirely new dimension in the problem of Philip’s losses in the Battle of Chios. Quite simply, the ambiguity of the meaning does not allow anyone to reliably specify how many of Philip’s ships were indeed sunk, how many were disabled, and least of all, how many of them could be repaired and re-used.

This, in turn, brings us back to the fact that

it was Philip, rather than the Pergamene and the Rhodian fleet, that sailed the following day amidst the wreckage. Given what Demetrius did after the battle of Salamis, it is not difficult to realise that, besides looking for survivors, Philip sought to tow away the incapacitated ships, which were subject to eventual repair and could be once again put to good use. Still bearing in mind that Polybius used Rhodian sources, one could very much doubt that Philip did indeed lose that many ships; and, even if the numbers were correct, considering the ambiguity of διαφθείρω, this would not necessarily mean that they were all sunk or lost forever.<sup>13</sup>

### 5. The tactical situation

Thus, it turns out that Philip’s losses in the Battle of Chios, in both men and vessels, may very well be significantly smaller than stated by Polybius. Unfortunately, there is no ground for a game of assumptions, which, in turn, leads us to the second part of the problem: the extent and the relation of the losses between the belligerents. Before the battle, the forces were roughly equal; the allies had marginally more polyremes, while Philip had far more aphracts and lembi. Polybius’ list indicates that, after the battle, the balance of power had dramatically and decisively swayed towards the Allies, now possessing 60 polyremes as compared to Philip’s 28 (Walbank 1967, 509). The preceding argument, however, makes it clear that the list that Polybius gives us is flawed, even though there is no way to tell to what extent it deviates from the real numbers. In other words, Philip suffered smaller losses than reported, but we cannot tell how much smaller; the allied fleet suffered heavier losses than reported, but we cannot tell how much heavier.

Although there is no direct indication – and therefore no chance to answer this question with comfortable certainty – we must consider two important facts that show that even after the battle of Chios, Philip had enough forces at his disposal in order to compete against the combined Pergamene and Rhodian fleet. His actions in Apollonia in 214 BC, as well as in Thessaly in 198 BC, clearly show that, boastful or not, he was by no means incapable of recognising

<sup>13</sup> This, of course, applies to the polyremes only; the small and fragile lembi certainly sunk right away.



a forlorn situation. However, after the Battle of Chios, Philip anchored at nearby Argennus, the next day even daring to set sail again and cruise through the wreckage. This indicates that, at least to his mind, there was still hope in this matter. Moreover, if the balance of power after the battle was really one to two, then one could reasonably say that Philip's decision was extremely brave, even reckless. Indeed, according to Polybius, the next day, when the combined fleet set sail for repeated conflict, Philip refrained – allegedly, an indication that he really lost the battle (Polyb. 16.8.4-5). However, this conclusion is not only deceiving, but essentially confirms the opposite. One should bear in mind that the battle developed after Philip retreated while trying to reach Samos, in which he was prevented by the combined fleet of Pergamum and Rhodes, who managed to catch up; if Philip did not seek battle the previous day, he had no need whatsoever to seek it the following day either – especially with the road to Samos wide open, since the combined fleet had in the end retreated towards Chios. On the other hand, the fact that the allied fleet did not insist on battle either, not even trying to blockade Philip at Argennus, shows that the Rhodian and the Pergamene commanders were not entirely convinced that they had the upper hand in the matter; and this would be perplexing indeed, if they really had at their disposal twice the number of polyremes that Philip had. The actions of both sides after the battle clearly shows that, if anything, the allied commanders still regarded Philip as an equal adversary.

Another thing that deserves mention is the further course of operations in Asia Minor. Putting aside the problem of the order of the battles of Lade, Chios and the attack on Pergamum, it is an undisputed fact that, in the end, Philip set his sights on Caria. If he had met disaster at Chios – as one must conclude when following the text of Polybius without reservations – this would be highly unreasonable and incomprehensible behaviour. Nearing the end of the year, he would indeed be blockaded in Bargylia, but it seems that this fact is often misinterpreted. Until that moment, Philip's fleet had been active without rest for nearly the whole year; in such conditions, it is clear that at least some of the ships had lost their readiness for battle and

needed repairs, especially as the white fir – the main natural shipbuilding resource in Macedonia – is notably susceptible to leaking and insect damage (Meiggs 1982, 424; *cf.* Hammond 1988, 416 n. 2). On top of that, we must take into consideration the eventual losses during the land campaign, and most importantly, the fact that Philip left a sizeable part of the army in Caria, strong enough to resist the Rhodian attacks up until the end of the Second Macedonian War; consequently, even if he had enough ships at his disposal, Philip now lacked enough men to have every ship fully equipped. Even if the blockade in Bargylia has no bearing in the analysis of the losses in the battle of Chios, the fact remains that Philip estimated that, even after Chios, he was strong enough not only to continue his operations in Asia Minor, but even, in the end, to open hostilities in Caria, so his losses in the battle may not have been so devastating after all. In fact, if we bear in mind the losses in the Battle of Chios, as well as the losses endured during the entire campaign in general, it is surprising that the Allied fleet made no attempt to destroy the Macedonian fleet during the retreat in 200 BC.<sup>14</sup> Although we may never know the exact extent of Philip's losses, all of the arguments above indicate that even after the battle of Chios, the balance of power had not radically changed. It is probable that Philip suffered heavier losses – and that his lembi were especially affected – however, not so heavy that the allies would now have uncontested superiority (*contra* Walbank 1967, 509). In terms of losses suffered, the battle essentially ended in a draw: Philip suffered a defeat, but not a crushing one.<sup>15</sup>

It is quite difficult to determine the winner in terms of strategy. It is true that the Allied fleet forced Philip to lift the siege of Chios, which was undoubtedly a success; however, the Allies not only failed to cut off his retreat toward Samos, but despite all the damage they inflicted, they ultimately failed to destroy the Macedonian fleet. Philip was hugely surprised by the ar-

14 *cf.* Tarn 1941, 172: „Philip was not blockaded at Bargylia; the allies dared not attack his fleet in its winter quarters; they watched him, but when navigation reopened, he just sailed out at his pleasure”.

15 Tarn (1941, 172) is certainly taking things too far by pronouncing Macedonian victory: „there is little doubt that Philip knocked Attalus right out for the time being and handled the Rhodians so roughly that at Lade most of their ships ran away (the official report)”.

rival of this combined fleet, a fact which put him in very dire straits; however, though bruised, he was not utterly beaten – and, what is more important, he managed to keep a big enough part of his fleet intact,<sup>16</sup> so that he could retake the initiative in due time. Thus, whichever aspect one chooses with the intention of scrutinising the outcome of the Battle of Chios, the impending conclusion is that – all the ferocity and the serious losses on both sides set aside – in essence, the Battle ended in a draw.

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<sup>16</sup> In this context, it is interesting to note that the description of the battle gives the impression that, among the Macedonian ships, the larger polyremes suffered the most – the flagship deceres, the ennerais, the octereis and the septiremes. The combat value of the large polyremes has long been a major issue of contention in modern scholarship – were they intended for maritime actions, or primarily for sieges? Although these ships were undoubtedly used in naval battles when the need arose, it seems that, with some exceptions, they were primarily intended for sieges (Murray 2012, chs. 3–5). That Philip used a part of the fleet for sieges is shown by a strategem in Frontinus (3.9.8). Therefore, if it was the larger polyremes that suffered the most, then the fleet’s ability to play a significant role in sieges was greatly diminished, but its backbone – the quadriremes and the quinqueremes – was saved. This strengthens the impression that, even after Chios, the Macedonian fleet was still capable of naval actions on a larger scale. Unfortunately, since we cannot determine what exactly befell the quadriremes and the quinqueremes, this argument must be regarded as no more than a conjecture.

## УДОБНО ПОТЪНАЛ: ФИЛИП, БИТКАТА ПРИ ХИОС И СПИСЪКЪТ НА ЗАГУБИТЕ У ПОЛИБИЙ

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### *Резюме*

Сред многобройните проблеми около Егейската кампания на Филип V през 201 г. пр. Хр. битката при Хиос е от съществено значение. Мястото ѝ в последователността на събитията, обстоятелствата, които водят до нея, както и последствията, отдавна предизвикват спорове сред учените. Повечето изследователи изказват предположения, че в запазеня у Полибий списък на загубите има грешки. Все пак почти единодушно се приема, че битката представлява съкрушителна победа на обединената флота на Родос и Пергам.

Основната цел на настоящето изследване е евентуално ревизиране на списъка на загубите. Ние смятаме, че има достатъчно данни, колкото и да са обстоятелствени, че представената картина от Полибий има нужда да бъде модифицирана. Като оставим настрана пропагандата на воюващите страни и причините за техните противоречащи си претенции, ние се фокусираме върху няколко причини, поради които списъкът на загубите изглежда съмнителен. Някои от тях произтичат от изворите, използвани от Полибий. Други, според нас, са резултат от погрешно тълкуване на съвременните историци. Тъй като отдавна е установено, че загубите на съюзниците са занижени, надеждността на македонските загуби също би трябвало да се оспори. Това заключение се основава отчасти върху хода на самата битка; чрез защитната си позиция Филип успява да осуети пълното разгръщане на превъзхождащия го родоски флот, чиито командващи, от друга страна, предпочитат да се въздържат доколкото е възможно от близка битка с македонските моряци. Освен това най-големите полиреми, дори и повредени, не са потъвали веднага и често можело да бъдат спасени чрез навременни мерки от приятелските кораби. Често е обръщано внима-

ние, че не съюзниците, а Филип е този, който плава сред останките от корабокруширалите кораби на следващия ден. Ние предпочитаме да разглеждаме това като спасителна операция.

Специално внимание е отделено на глагола (δια)φθειρω, обикновено разбран като „унищожавам“, „потопявам“ и др. В контекста на морското дело обаче, би трябвало да се предпочете значението „правя неспособен“ или „повреждам“. В редица случаи не може да сме сигурни дали става въпрос за унищожен или просто изваден извън строя кораб, поради което трябва да сме предпазливи при превода и интерпретацията на този израз и съответно – при преценката на македонските загуби. При всички положения заключението е въпрос на нюанси: Филип със сигурно е загубил повече кораби и хора отколкото съюзниците, но загубите му са били доста под предполагаемите според описанието на Полибий. Фактът че Филип успява да продължи с офанзивата си и в крайна сметка да акостира в Кария, показва, че поне за него битката при Хиос не е смятана за определяща – впечатление, което се подсилва и от нежеланието на съюзниците да настояват за решителна развръзка на следващия ден.

До същото заключение се достига и при разбора на тактическата ситуация след битката. Въпреки че плановите на Филип биват провалени, той все още е достатъчно силен, за да продължи операцията, а когато сезонът приключва с донякъде неудобната блокада в Баргилия, това не би трябвало да се отдава изключително на претърпените загуби в битката при Хиос. В заключение, въпреки ожесточеността на сражението и понесените загуби от двете страни, макар да няма никакво съмнение, че Филип е губещата страна, резултатът от битката остава неубедителен.