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THE THRACIAN EXILE OF PERSEUS IN 179 BC

Abstract. – This article investigates the mysterious withdrawal of Perseus in Thrace, which occurred in the context of the dramatic events in the Macedonian royal court at the end of Philip V's reign. The available sources of information on this issue, limited to a few short references of Titus Livy, are presented and analyzed, as well as the available comments of contemporary scholars; in result, several questions are raised and addressed. The presented facts and circumstances suggest that the Thracian exile of Perseus followed the revelations about his role in the discrediting of Demetrius, i.e., it happened in the late 180 or early 179 BC. This indicates his stay in Thrace for several months. Considered are the hypotheses for residence of Perseus by the Bastarnae or by the Odryssians, as the former is categorically rejected and the latter is questioned. The state of the sources allows to assume only that the mysterious place, where Perseus resided, must be sought somewhere in Southwestern Thrace. Only with such a decision it is possible maintaining of a permanent secret channel of communication between Perseus and at least one person from the Macedonian royal court. It is more likely that he chooses to stay in a Macedonian garrison in Thrace (by the Bisaltians or rather by unknown by name their immediate neighbors). Moreover, the garrisons undoubtedly maintained communication channels with the Macedonian royal court; so, Perseus could have modified these communications for his own purposes.

Key words. – Hellenistic Age, Antigonids, Thrace.

Introduction

One of the mysterious episodes in the biography of Perseus (179–168 BC), the last king of Ancient Macedonia, was his exile in Thrace immediately before and until the death of his father, Philip V (221–179 BC). The entire knowledge on this issue is formed by a few laconic references of Titus Livy and were part of the dramatic events in the Macedonian royal court at the end of Philip V's reign.¹ Summari-

¹ They are examined in detail by the researchers, see Кацаров 1936, 1280-1288; Walbank 2014, 246 sq.; Gruen 1974, 221-246; Hammond & Walbank 2001, 409; Burton 2017, 39-55; Worthington 2023, 169-175; Nicholson 2023, 229-265; Filias 2023, 92-106.

zed very briefly, these events had the following sequence:² in the winter of 181/180 BC Demetrius was killed, maybe in Heraclea Sintica³, by order of Philip V⁴ as a result of the intrigues of Perseus; later the Macedonian king learned that Demetrius was unjustly accused and until the end of his days he regretted the loss of his son, blaming Perseus, having even intended to leave the kingdom to Antigonos, his nephew.⁵ Perseus, to escape his father's wrath, as Livy writes, went to Thrace and remained there until his death, dated to the summer or autumn of 179 BC.⁶

The ancient sources on this Thracian episode have not been sufficiently examined in the available studies and have rarely been carefully analyzed and commented⁷; they are discussed in studies on various issues of Thracian history⁸ or was merely noted as a fact in the publications tracing Perseus's accession to the Macedonian throne.⁹ Therefore, the following lines represent an attempt to fill the gaps in the historiography, as the known ancient information about the Thracian exile of Perseus in 179 BC is collected and interpreted.

The information of Livy

It is thought that the available account of Livy on the circumstances surrounding the death of Philip V and the succession of Perseus to the throne was based on the lost text of the events in Macedonia from Book XXV (this book covered 180 – 179 BC) of Polybius' Histories.¹⁰ This position at the moment remains only a possible assumption for two reasons: the lack of direct reference and the loss of Polybius' text.

Livy began his narrative as follows:

„Perseus certior factus omnia detecta esse, potentior quidem erat, quam ut fugam necessariam duceret; tantum ut procul abesset, curabat, interim velut ab incendio flagrantis irae, dum Philippus viveret, se defensurus / On being informed that everything had been disclosed, Perseus, whilst feeling himself strong

² These events spanned the time from the spring of 181 BC to the summer of 180 BC; it is claimed that Livy traced these events in his book for 181 BC so as not to interrupt his exposition, see Briscoe 2008, 21.

³ Митрев 2012, 104-105. For the identification of the city, see also Briscoe 2008, 470-471 with references.

⁴ Hammond & Walbank 2001, 409 with sources.

⁵ Burton 2017, 39-55; for the possibility that this was an attempt by pro-Roman circles to discredit Perseus, see Worthington 2023, 182.

⁶ Burton 2017, 54; Worthington 2023, 175.

⁷ An overview of the opinions expressed, see in Briscoe 2008, 558 with literature.

⁸ Тодоров 1998, 51; Петков 2011, 68; Койчев 2022, 16

⁹ Burton 2017, 58; Worthington 2023, 182.

¹⁰ Walbank 1979, 274.

enough to avoid the necessity of running, took care, nevertheless, to keep well out of the way, and prepared to protect himself from his father's fiery anger, as long as he was alive".¹¹

A little later, in the same chapter of his work, the ancient writer made a clarification important for the present work:

„cum in Thracia Perseus abesset, circumire Macedoniae urbes principibusque Antigonum commendare; et si vita longior suppetisset, haud dubium fuit, quin eum in possessione regni relicturus fuerit / Whilst Perseus was away in Thrace, Philip was passing through the cities of Macedonia, and recommended Antigonus to their leaders, and if had he lived longer he would undoubtedly have left him in possession of the royal power".¹²

In presenting the situation surrounding the death of Philip V at Amphipolis, Livy added the following:

„medicus Calligenes, qui curationi praeerat, non exspectata morte regis, a primis desperationis notis nuntios per dispositos <equos>, ita ut convenerat, misit ad Perseum, et mortem regis in adventum eius omnes, qui extra regiam erant, celavit / Calligenes, the physician, who had the charge of his treatment, without waiting for the king's death, on the first appearance of desperate symptoms, sent messengers <on horses> to Perseus, as it was previously agreed. Until his arrival he concealed the death of the king from all but those who were in the palace".¹³

The quoted passages have no significant differences in the manuscript tradition.¹⁴ They all form the following information: Perseus, to avoid Philip V's anger, retreated to somewhere in Thrace. The exact location was known to the physician Calligenes¹⁵, who informed him by messengers of the death of Philip V. The latter shows that there was a permanent channel of communication established to the mysterious place in Thrace. Thus, Perseus was able to quickly receive the news of his father's death, to arrive at the palace, surprising everyone, and to take the Macedonian throne without any problem.¹⁶

Modern interpretations and more questions

It is important to note that even if some researchers have expressed doubts about the reliability of Livy's account of the intrigues in the Macedonian royal court,¹⁷ in the context of which the quoted texts were

¹¹ Liv. 40.56.1-2.

¹² Liv. 40.56.7.

¹³ Liv. 40.56.11.

¹⁴ See a comprehensive analysis at Briscoe 2008, 554-565.

¹⁵ This person is unknown from other sources, see Briscoe 2008, 560.

¹⁶ Liv. 40.57.1.

¹⁷ Edson 1935, 191-202; Кацаров 1936, 1280-1288; Hammond & Walbank 2001, 472.

presented, no one has questioned the residence of Perseus in Thrace at the time when Philip V died.¹⁸ Skepticism is noted only about Livy's reported reason for Perseus' absence: it is explained by the ancient writer as the crown prince's desire to be at a safe distance from his father. Without formulating direct arguments against this thesis, modern scholars have proposed alternative explanations.

Piero Meloni explained the situation of Perseus with another testimony of Livy, according to which Philip V sent him to Amphipolis in 180 BC¹⁹ to get some hostages from the Thracians.²⁰ The same author admitted that the task dragged on and was completed only in 179 BC.²¹ The conjecture does not literally follow Livy's text, which expressly states that Perseus must have received the hostages at Amphipolis; nothing suggests his movement beyond the Macedonian borders.

According to Nicholas Hammond, Philip V, just before his death, had full confidence in Perseus. The residence of the heir to the throne in Thrace is explained by an important mission to the Bastarnae, assigned by his father.²² Specific arguments in support of such a thesis are not indicated.

John Briscoe accepted that Perseus may have been sent on a mission by Philip V, drawing attention to the lack of basis for Hammond's suggestion that the mission was by the Bastarnae.²³

Ian Worthington has also recently placed the presence of Perseus in Thrace as part of the preparations for the campaign of the Bastarnae. The scholar assumed that Perseus went with the vanguard of the Macedonian army to Thrace, while Philip led the main army from Amphipolis.²⁴ However, this hypothesis is not supported in any way by data from the available ancient texts.

These four hypotheses suggest possible identifications of the purpose of Perseus's stay in Thrace. Their authors definitely doubted

¹⁸ The death of Philip V and the accession of Perseus are presented – in much less detail – by Diod. 29.25; Plut., Paul., 8.9; Iust. 32.3.1-5.

¹⁹ In the past, the record was dated to 180 BC, and this is the year wrote down by Piero Meloni; today it is accepted that the event took place in 181 BC, see Briscoe 2008, 470.

²⁰ Liv. 40.24.4.

²¹ Briscoe 2008, 558 with references – „[...] Meloni 65 n. 1 thinks he was still dealing with Thracian hostages, a mission with which he had earlier been entrusted (24.3); that, however, was the previous year (cf. p. 21) and would, one imagines, have been completed by now“.

²² Hammond & Walbank 2001, 472 – „[...] For when Philip died in summer 179 he had full confidence in his surviving son, Perseus, whom he had sent ahead on an important mission to the Bastarnae“.

²³ Briscoe 2008, 558 – „[...] It may well be that he was in fact sent on a mission by Philip, whose confidence he had not lost [...] but there is no warrant for Hammond's view [...]“.

²⁴ Worthington 2023, 174 – „Perseus went with the vanguard into Thrace, with Philip leading the main army from Amphipolis“.

the relationships between father and son, as they were presented by Livy; this must have prompted them to seek an alternative purpose for the Thracian exile.

However, where in Thrace could Perseus have retreated? Two scholars put forward arguments that he found acceptance in the Odrysian royal house: one of them apparently found a basis in the documented excellent relations of Perseus with the Odrysian king Cotys during the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC),²⁵ while the other one supposes a stay by the Odrysians as the most logical, due to the known fragmentary information about the relations of the Macedonians with the Thracian tribes.²⁶

Identifying the target and the possible host are just two of the questions that the ancient information raises; several more can be formulated:

- Why Perseus choose to go in Thrace?
- When did he leave Macedonia?
- How long did he stay with the Thracians?
- Where in the Thracian lands he found hospitality?
- Did he perform any tasks?
- Is there anything deliberately left out by Livy and/or his primary source?

The available sources do not provide direct answers to the indicated questions; something more, the very limited information about the political map of Thrace in 179 BC makes it even difficult to substantiate conjectures.

Some new observations

There is no doubt that Thrace was in the focus of Philip V's foreign policy since the end of the 3rd century BC.²⁷ Perseus, on the other hand, accompanied his father in at least one of the documented Thracian campaigns, that one to the summit of Haemus in 181 BC,²⁸ as sometimes he himself performed tasks, assigned to him by the king.²⁹ These fragmentary facts presuppose geographical, ethnographic and political knowledge of the Thracian lands, as well as network of contacts among the Thracians. Without any doubt these circumstances were reasons for Perseus to choose voluntary exile in Thrace.

²⁵ Петков 2011, 68 accepts, that Perseus, to avoid his father's anger and revenge, leaves for Thrace and probably found reception in the Odrysian royal court.

²⁶ Койчев 2022, 16 states, that it is most logical for this to happen by the Odrysians of Seuthes IV and his son Cotys, because the Sapaeans and the tribes to the west of them were enemies of Macedonia, while the tribes near Byzantium were too far away.

²⁷ Илиев 2023, 49 sq.

²⁸ Liv. 40.22.1–14.

²⁹ Liv. 40.24.4; see also Илиев 2023, 163–198.

It is not explicitly stated when the Macedonian crown prince arrived in Thrace. His previous mention in Livy's work was in connection with the events of 181 BC, when the assassination of Demetrius was ordered, and Perseus was sent to Amphipolis to obtain hostages from the Thracians.³⁰ The Livy's text quoted above³¹ cannot confirm an exile of Perseus in Thrace since 181 BC; the implication is rather that he withdrew following the revelations made by Philip V, i.e. in the winter of 180–179 BC. This indicates a possible stay of several months.

In the available ancient evidences there is no direct information that Perseus had an army at his disposal; it is only noted that he felt „strong enough“, so that he not have to run from his father, which allows an interpretation in the sense of military forces available under his command.³² It is not known while he led some military actions in Thrace before the death of Philip V in 179 BC; Livy's text implies rather that he was in a state akin to voluntary exile.

It is not possible to formulate a sufficiently well-grounded suggestion where Perseus resides in Thrace, due to the available incomplete fragments on this issue and the absence of direct evidence on the political situation in the Thracian lands in 179 BC.

Livy himself did not consider it important to specify where the Macedonian heir to the throne found a place to stay for a while. No time frames are given for his movement to Amphipolis, nor how long Philip V's death was kept a secret; such clues would provide grounds for possible suggestions.

The modern researchers, driven by the ambition to overcome the serious inadequacies of the source base, combined data from accounts of chronologically close events, in order to achieve a convincing historical narrative. Undoubtedly, this is how the aforementioned assumptions about Perseus's exile by the Bastarnae or the Odrussians arose. However, both have serious drawbacks.

Indeed, the available ancient information clearly shows that Philip V, just before his death, had had a personal commitment to the movement of the Bastarnae. It is highly likely that at this point his Thracian policy was entirely focused on this work, and perhaps this is why Nicholas Hammond explained Perseus's residence in Thrace with a mission to the Bastarnae. This assumption seems also to be based on the

³⁰ Liv. 40.24.4. The name of the city can be read as Philippopolis in some manuscripts; see on this matter Briscoe 2008, 470.

³¹ Liv. 40.56.1-2.

³² According to Hammond & Walbank, on his return from Thrace, Perseus was followed by his army, see Hammond & Walbank 2001, 491 – „[...] The doctor attending Philip concealed the news of the death from other people, but told Perseus so that he could return post-haste from Thrace, followed evidently by his army“. After Burton 2017, 58 – „[...] Perseus himself quit Thrace at the same time [when Philip died], taking his troops with him“.

premise that in 182 BC a dynastic marriage of Perseus to an unnamed Bastarnian princess was concluded.³³

The main problem with such a solution is the distance: it is difficult to accept establishment of regular communication between Amphipolis and the region of the North-Eastern Balkans, where the Bastarnae were located at that time.³⁴ According to Philip V's plan, who in the fall of 179 BC was in process of execution, the Macedonian king undertook to ensure the safe passage of the Bastarnae through Thrace, by securing the necessary provisions and bribing the chiefs of the districts through which they were to pass.³⁵ Perseus is not mentioned to have been tasked in this project. Later, already as king, he definitely did not fulfill his father's commitments regarding their movement through the Thracian lands. Due to these considerations, an exile of Perseus by the Bastarnae seems completely out of the question.

It has already been noted that, according to some scholars, it is possible that Perseus took refuge with the Odryssians.³⁶ This hypothesis is obviously based on the excellent relationships between Perseus and Cotys, documented during the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC). Another argument is the Macedonian king's attempt to escape precisely to Thrace by Cotys after the defeat suffered in the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC.³⁷ Within the development of this hypothesis several weaknesses can be found.

The state of the sources does not allow to definitively determine whether in 180–179 BC the relations between Macedonians and Odryssians were at a similarly high level as in the years since 171 BC. Two documented facts should not be overlooked in clarification of this matter: in 183 BC Philip V fought against the Odryssians, but in 171 BC they were already faithful allies of Perseus.³⁸ Allied relations seem to have been established between 182–179 BC. The basis for this assumption is the planned and realized passage of the Bastarnae through the Upper Thracian lowland, including through the probable Odryssian domains, which undoubtedly must have been preceded by the necessary agreements. Due to a lack of direct information, it stays unclear

³³ Hammond & Walbank 2001, 469, 493; Čašule 2012, 1; Burton 2017, 58, not. 10.

³⁴ Starting point of their movement in Thrace in 179 BC was the region to the north of the Danube River; having reached the Black Sea coast south of Stara Planina and then crossed the Upper Thracian Lowland; on their return by the same route Apollonia is mentioned (Liv. 40.58.7).

³⁵ Liv. 40.57.4.

³⁶ Петков 2011, 68; Койчев 2022, 16.

³⁷ Liv. 45.6.2.

³⁸ Another, more uncertain basis for setting up alliance between Macedonians and Odryssians before 179 BC is found in a short notice by Diodorus Siculus (Diod. 32.15.5) about a concluded dynastic marriage between Teres and an anonymous daughter of Philip V, see Илиев 2023, 84–85.

whether the agreements in question were reached with Cotys³⁹ or with his predecessor.⁴⁰

Another unclear point is the territorial scope of the Odryssian kingdom at that time. It must have been of considerable size, because military operations of the Odryssians to the north and south of the Rhodope Mountains are known: soon after 183 BC they drove a Macedonian garrison from Philippopolis⁴¹ and in 166–165 BC there was a complaint from Abdera against actions of king Cotys.⁴² However, it is not certain how relevant the information about Odryssian presence near Abdera is in relation to the situation of 179 BC. In this regard, an indicative fact is that in 190 BC Roman troops passed through Southern Thrace on their way to Asia Minor, and in 188 BC they returned by the same route, without in either case any mention being made of the Odryssians.⁴³ Furthermore, by 179 BC in the Rhodopes and south of them, the possessions of Abrupolis are sought; immediately after the death of Philip V he attacked the Macedonian territories and reached as far as Amphipolis.⁴⁴ These fragmentary facts allow the neighborhood of the Odryssians with Abdera in 166–165 BC to be explained by their seizure of part of the lands of Abrupolis.⁴⁵ In any case, taking into account all the circumstances considered, it is doubtful whether Perseus would have been able to maintain constant communication with the Macedonian royal court if he had been among the Odryssians, as far as nothing suggests that Macedonians and Odryssians had a common border in 179 BC. The distance and the presence of hostile elements along the eastern border of Macedonia (for example, in the face of Abrupolis) would be a serious obstacle.

It is also very important to note that the two withdrawals of Perseus in Thrace – the carried out in 179 BC and the failed one of 168 BC – were fundamentally different in nature: in the first case it is undoubtedly about movement by land, while the second escape was planned by sea.

Considering the maintenance of a constant channel of communication between at least one person from the Macedonian royal court

³⁹ The reign of Cotys is placed in the period 183 – 166 BC by Тодоров 1998, 43-59.

⁴⁰ Койчев 2022, 16.

⁴¹ Polyb. 23.8.7; Liv. 39.53.14; see also Илиев 2023, 183 sq.

⁴² The source is an Abderan decree from Teos; in the past there has been a discussion about the dating of the monument, but recently it is accepted that it should be referred to the date indicated, see Adak & Thonemann 2022, 173-200. See also Ito 2021, 136-152 with the older literature.

⁴³ Илиев 2023, 109-162.

⁴⁴ The available ancient information about Abrupolis is collected by Boshnakov 2021, 36-41.

⁴⁵ It has been suggested that the Odryssians conquered the lands of the Sapaeans even before the Third Macedonian War (171 – 168 BC), see Petkov 2022, 256. It is more likely that one part was acquired by Perseus and another by Cotys.

and Perseus, it is more likely that the crown prince was somewhere in Southwestern Thrace; more specifically, in any of the areas where no anti-Macedonian actions have been registered. The presence of a safe environment from the borders of Macedonia to the unknown place in Thrace is also an indication of its search because it is hardly possible for messengers to pass unhindered through the territories of various Thracian tribes. This condition to a certain extent narrows the possibilities of identifying the place where Perseus resided: it must be in an area controlled by a trusted Macedonian ally or even directly by Perseus.

Interesting in this regard is Livy's narrative, dating after the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC⁴⁶:

*„Perseus una tantum spe Bisaltarum auxilii temptata, ad quos nequiquam miserat legatos [...] / Perseus, after making a last effort to procure the assistance of the Bisaltians, to whom he had sent ambassadors in vain [...]“.*⁴⁷

Nothing is known about the background of this contact between Perseus and the Bisaltians, but the initiation of a delegation at an extremely difficult moment for the Macedonian state can be interpreted as an indicator of good relations maintained in the previous years.

Elsewhere Livy presented the lands, included from 167 BC in the First Macedonian Region, with an accent on the Bisaltians:

*„pars prima Bisaltia habet, fortissimos viros – trans Nessum amnem incolunt et circa Strymonem –, et multas frugum proprietates et metalla et opportunitatem Amphipolis, quae obiecta claudit omnes ab oriente sole in Macedoniam aditus / The first region contains the Bisaltians, men of the greatest courage (residing beyond the river Nessus, and on both sides of the Strymon); it has many peculiar productions of the vegetable kingdom, and mines also, and the advantages derived from the city of Amphipolis, which, standing just in the way, shuts up every passage into Macedonia from the east“.*⁴⁸

Information about Macedonian possessions in Thrace during the reign of Perseus has also been preserved in the ancient tradition. Livy described the division of Macedonia by the Romans after the end of the war into four regions, and when presenting the first he reported:

„[...] primam partem quod agri inter Strymonem et Nessum sit amnem; accessurum huic parti trans Nessum ad orientem versum qua Perseus tenuisset, vicos, castella, oppida, praeter Aenum et Maroneam et Abdera / that the region which should be deemed

⁴⁶ See the commentary on the text in Briscoe 2012, 604.

⁴⁷ Liv. 44.45.8-9.

⁴⁸ Liv. 45.30.3.

the first, should comprehend the lands between the rivers Strymon and Nessus: to this territory should be added the territory beyond the Nessus, towards the east, wherein Perseus had possessed villages, castles, or towns, excepting Aenus, Maronea, and Abdera“.⁴⁹

It is not known when and under what circumstances these possessions were acquired.⁵⁰ It is assumed that this must have happened before the outbreak of the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC).⁵¹ It is possible that Macedonian control over the territory in question was established as early as the time of Philip V, in one of his campaigns in Thrace, but Perseus also undertakes such campaigns.⁵²

An exile of Perseus in this area, from the point of view of distances, will provide him opportunity to keep an eye on the situation in Macedonia. However, the status of these possessions in 179 BC remains unclear and whether then the Macedonian crown prince could dispose of them independently of his father. It is not explicitly stated whether the territories of the Bisaltians overlapped with the lands in question. It is also possible that they formed part of the possessions of Amphipolis, whom Perseus expelled from his kingdom.

Whatever was the real situation, if the Bisaltians really had their own separate administrative territory, as is admitted in the historiography,⁵³ then possible residence of Perseus in their subordinate lands or rather by their immediate neighbors, looks a lot more realistic, compared to the more remote Odryssians. In such a decision, the distance to Amphipolis would allow regular and secure secret communications with the royal court, as far as they passed through lands, controlled by the Macedonians. Perseus himself would have greater guarantees of his personal security, than if he had to pass through the territories of different Thracian tribes and rulers, to reach the Odryssians.

No data are found to formulate assumptions how Perseus spent his several months stay in Thrace. About the hypotheses expressed in historiography regarding the fulfillment of a mission or the conduct of military operations, no direct evidence can be found. As far as the residence of Perseus in Thrace was not in the focus of Livy's story, rather it seems, that the ancient author hardly kept silent about his deeds at that time.

⁴⁹ Liv. 45.29.6.

⁵⁰ The same information is reported – in less detail – by Diodorus Siculus: „τὰ πρὸς ἀνατολὴν τοῦ Νέστου ἐρύματα καὶ τὰ πρὸς Ἀβδηρα καὶ Μαρώνειαν καὶ Αἶνον πόλεις / the fortifications to the east of Nestos River, excluding the cities of Abdera, Maroneia and Aenos“ (Diod. 31.8.8).

⁵¹ Hammond & Walbank 2001, 611; cf. Danov 1979, 99.

⁵² An inscription from Amphipolis mentions Thracian campaigns of Perseus, see Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1981, 229–241.

⁵³ Делев 2014, 209.

Conclusions

The overview of the ancient sources and their interpretations makes it possible to formulate several conclusions about the Thracian exile of Perseus in 179 BC. It is important once again to highlight the scarce and incomplete nature of all the available source data, which do not allow the substantiation of definite answers; only more or less likely assumptions are possible.

It can be confidently argued, that in the end of 180 BC, or rather, at the beginning of 179 BC Perseus withdraw somewhere in Southwestern Thrace. Livy himself did not consider it necessary to specify where exactly in Thrace the Macedonian crown prince found hospitality. However, from his text is delivered the information about the maintenance of a permanent secret channel of communication by land between Perseus and Calligenes. An emphasis here is placed on the presumption, that the provision of regular and secure communications through messengers requires control over the territory, through which they pass. In result, the mysterious place must be sought somewhere in Southwestern Thrace. A possible identification may be the lands of the Bisaltians or these of their immediate neighbors. Such a decision would allow Perseus to closely watch the situation in the Macedonian royal court and to react quickly if necessary.

The imposition of Macedonian garrisons in Thrace⁵⁴ provide even more food for thought. In 183 BC a garrison was placed in Philippopolis.⁵⁵ The remoteness of this city from the borders of the Macedonian kingdom implies the presence of similar garrisons at other points as well. Moreover, there must undoubtedly have been some established form of communication between the garrisons and the Macedonian royal court. Taking into account these considerations, it is logical to suggest, that Perseus would rely on the greatest guarantees for his safety, if he withdraws to one of the unknown Macedonian garrisons in Thrace, located in the immediate vicinity of the lands of the Bisaltians. So, he could modify for its purposes an already established channel of communication between the garrison in question and the Macedonian royal court, without arousing any suspicion.

All observations formulated here, however, are based solely on interpretations of literary evidence. It is likely that future archaeological and numismatic studies would complement knowledge of this age, by contributing and to clarify the issues raised in the present work.

⁵⁴ Иллев 2023, 163-198.

⁵⁵ Polyb. 23.8.3-7; Liv. 39.53.12-14.

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