

What May Philip Have Learnt as a Hostage in Thebes?

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THE BELIEF that Philip did learn some lessons in Thebes was clearly stated in three passages.¹ After denouncing the sluggishness of the Athenians, Justin (6.9.7) wrote that Philip "having been held hostage in Thebes for three years and having been instructed in the fine qualities of Epaminondas and Pelopidas" was enabled by the inactivity of the Greeks to impose on them the yoke of servitude. The source of this passage was clearly Theopompus.² Justin wrote further as follows: "This thing [peace with Thebes] gave very great promotion to the outstanding natural ability of Philip" (7.5.2: *quae res Philippo maxima incrementa egregiae indolis dedit*), "seeing that Philip laid the first foundations of boyhood as a hostage for three

¹ The following abbreviations are used: Anderson=J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley 1970); Aymard=A. Aymard, "Philippe de Macédoine, otage à Thèbes," *REA* 56 (1954) 15–26; Buckler=J. Buckler, "Plutarch on Leuktra," *SymbOslo* 55 (1980) 75–93; Ellis=J. R. Ellis, *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism* (London 1976); Ferrill=A. Ferrill, *The Origins of War from the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (London 1985); Geyer=F. Geyer, *Makedonien bis zur Thronbesteigung Philippe II* (Munich 1939); Hammond, *Coll. St.*—N. G. L. Hammond, *Collected Studies I–IV* (Amsterdam 1993–97); Hammond, *Philip*=*id.*, *Philip of Macedon* (London 1994); Hammond, "Training"=*id.*, "Training in the Use of the Sarissa and its Effect in Battle," *Antichthon* 14 (1980) 53–63; Hatzopoulos,=M. B. Hatzopoulos, "La Béotie et la Macédoine à l'époque de l'hégémonie Thébaine," in *La Béotie antique, Lyon-Saint-Étienne, 16–20 mai 1983* (Paris 1985) 247–57; *HM*=N. G. L. Hammond and G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia II* (Oxford 1979); Markle 1977=M. Markle III, "The Macedonian Sarissa, Spear and Related Armor," *AJA* 81 (1977) 328–31; Markle 1978=*id.*, "The Use of the Sarissa by Philip and Alexander of Macedon," *AJA* 82 (1978) 483–97; Roesch=P. Roesch, "Un nouveau décret de la Ligue thébaine," *REG* 97 (1984) 45–60.

² The censuring of the Greek city-states recurs more fully in Justin 8.1.4, a passage also to be attributed to Theopompus as source, as I argued at "The Sources of Justin on Macedonia to the Death of Philip," *CQ* n.s. 41 (1991) 498, 503=*Coll. St.* IV 101, 106.

years in Thebes, a city of traditional austerity, and in the home of Epaminondas, the greatest philosopher and commander." The probable source of this passage was Marsyas the Macedonian.³ Then in his *Life of Pelopidas* (26.5) Plutarch wrote that Philip as a boy at Thebes was thought to have become "an emulator" (ζηλωτής) of Epaminondas, "perhaps because Philip understood well the effectiveness of Epaminondas in warfare and in the exercise of his commands." The sources mainly followed by Plutarch in this *Life* were Ephorus and Callisthenes.⁴ Thus we can trace back to three contemporaries of Philip—Theopompus, Marsyas, and Ephorus or Callisthenes—the belief, expressed independently of one another, that Philip learned many lessons in Thebes. The ancient testimony could hardly be stronger. I find it entirely acceptable.

In 1954 Aymard (21f) denied the truth of this belief. One of his arguments was that Philip had been held hostage from 369 to 367 (*triennium* reckoned inclusively), and that he was therefore too young at the age of fourteen or fifteen in 367 to have understood the reason for the success of Epaminondas. Some scholars have supported this view. In 1976 J. R. Ellis wrote that Philip "had been in Thebes between 369 and 367," and that we can therefore "scarcely credit the stories circulated by some ancient and modern authors"; and in 1985 M. B. Hatzopoulos placed the taking of Philip hostage in the reign of Alexander II in 369, and his return to Macedonia in 367.⁵ In 1939 F. Geyer (133) advanced the rival view, that Philip was taken as hostage in 367 and returned in 365, and it has had many adherents, for instance *HM* 186, 205, where G. T. Griffith and I independently argued for his exile ending in 365. This view has been reinforced by the publication in 1983 of a Boeotian decree in honour of a Macedonian called Athenaeus (Roesch 45ff). For the commencement of friendly relations between Boeotia and Macedonia is likely to have been due to Epaminondas' need for timber from Macedonia in 365. One consequence of such friendly relations was the release of Philip and no doubt the other eighty Macedonian hostages.

³ See Hammond (*supra* n.2) 505=*Coll. St.* IV 108.

⁴ Plutarch cites them both at 17.2; for a full study see H. D. Westlake, "The Sources of Plutarch's *Pelopidas*," *CQ* 33 (1939) 11–22. Buckler (75f) and A. Georgiadou, *Plutarch's Pelopidas* (Stuttgart 1997) 15–29, favour Callisthenes.

⁵ Ellis (43) gives references only, not citations of the ancient sources; Hatzopoulos 252f with a good discussion of the sources.

In 365 Philip became seventeen. He was certainly of an age to have understood fully the reason for the success of Epaminondas, for Macedonian princes matured early and shouldered responsibility early. Alexander, for example, was left in charge of Macedonia and founded a city at the age of sixteen, and he commanded the cavalry at Chaeronea at the age of eighteen. Philip too was entrusted with the control of a district within Macedonia and with the command of an armed force there probably in 364, when he came of age at eighteen, and he then "began his career as a ruler" according to a contemporary writer, Speusippus.⁶

I. Military Matters: The Slanting Phalanx

Of the lessons learnt by Philip the first to be mentioned is "the effectiveness of Epaminondas in his campaigns and in his tactics" (Plut. *Pelop.* 26.5: τὸ περὶ τοὺς πολέμους καὶ τὰς στρατηγίας δραστήριον). Scholars have accepted that Philip did learn some military lessons in a general way.⁷ But Plutarch was specific. One original feature of Epaminondas' campaigns was the co-ordination of his own forces and those of his allies, and another was his ability to carry out campaign after campaign even in winter. Both these features characterised Philip's campaigns from the outset, as Demosthenes remarked (1.12-13; 9.50: "summer and winter are alike for him"). The tactics of Epaminondas were exemplified most strikingly in the Battle of Leuctra in 371. Everything then favoured the Spartans and their allies. They outnumbered the Boeotians by almost two to one (11,000 against "not more than 6,000": Plut. *Pel.* 20.1; Diod. 15.52.2);⁸ they fought on their favourite ground, a flat plain (Diod. 15.53.2: τὸ Λευκτρικὸν πεδίων) in their preferred formation, a crescent-shaped phalanx; and they expected to be invincible, as they had been for centuries. Athens was not alone in expecting that the Thebans would be in the proverbial phrase "decimated" (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.20).

⁶ *Epist. Socrat.* 30.12, in Hercher, *Epistolog. Graec.*; see *HM* 207, 514.

⁷ E.g. A. M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (New York 1967) 116: "Philip himself learned the arts of war under the most masterly of all hoplite commanders, Epaminondas of Thebes."

⁸ Anderson (198) watered the sum down to "something like three to two."

In recent years the course of the Battle of Leuctra has been interpreted in various ways.⁹ I therefore set forth the ancient evidence in detail. The best introduction is that of Diodorus: “Epaminondas achieved the famous victory through his particular tactics in employing a particular and extraordinary formation (15.55.1: *ἰδίᾳ τινὶ καὶ περιττῇ τάξει χρησάμενος διὰ τῆς ἰδίας στρατηγίας περιεποιήσατο τὴν περιβόητον νίκην*). He then described this extraordinary formation as “the slanting phalanx” (15.55.2: *λοξὴν ποιήσας τὴν φάλαγγα*).¹⁰ Plutarch too wrote of “the slanting phalanx” in this battle (*Pel.* 23.1: *τὴν φάλαγγα λοξήν*). We need therefore to know that the normal disposition of two armies of hoplites for battle was in two phalanxes, facing one another, each phalanx consisting of men shoulder to shoulder in close order and eight or more men deep. A variation was the crescent-shaped phalanx, in which the central part of the phalanx was concave (*Asclep. Tact.* 11.1: *κοίλη*).¹¹ At Leuctra “the Lacedaemonians, having made the formation of the phalanx crescent-shaped, were advancing with both wings” (*Diod.* 15.55.3: *τοῖς κέρασιν ἀμφοτέροις ἐπῆγον μνηοειδὲς τὸ σχῆμα τῆς φάλαγγος πεποιηκότες*), presumably in the expectation that their wings would outflank the wings of the much shorter enemy phalanx (which they assumed would be a straight phalanx).¹² By approaching with a slanting phalanx Epaminondas was able to deliver his best troops at the head of his column at the point of attack that he had chosen. Diodorus (15.81.2) and Plutarch (*Pel.* 23.2) reported that these best troops, being the Sacred Band “in close formation” went into action “at the double” (15.55.3f: *δρόμῳ ... πυκνότητα; Pel.* 23.2: *δρόμῳ*). Both authors drew upon a source or sources who were inter-

⁹ W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* IV (Berkeley 1985) 54 n.159, remarked that there are “more reconstructions of Leuktra than of any other battle”; Buckler has given a useful summary of pre-1980 reconstructions.

¹⁰ It is neatly defined at *Arr. Tact.* 26.3 (ed. Roos) as a formation in which one wing is brought close to the enemy (*πελάζων*) and is alone engaged in the fighting, and the other wing is kept safe by being held back (*δι’ ὑποστολής*).

¹¹ The reader will be helped by the diagrams reconstructed by H. Köchy and W. Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller* (Leipzig 1853–55) II.1 and reproduced in the Loeb edition of Asclepiodotus (1923) 315. The crescent-shaped phalanx is shown at Fig. 8.

¹² Onasander (21.5) explains that this is the purpose of the crescent-shaped formation when a general has a large and numerous army (*μεγάλη καὶ πολυάνδρω*) and engages a less numerous enemy.

ested primarily in the tactics and the triumph of Epaminondas and the Boeotians.

Xenophon did not give a detailed account of the battle. He reported what "they said" (*Hell.* 6.4.3: ἔλεγον; 6.4.12, 14: ἔφασαν). The unnamed "they" were certainly Spartans, for their report was intended to excuse the defeat. Thus for the enemy "everything was brought also to a successful issue by chance" (6.4.8: ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης. Preliminary skirmishes went well for the enemy, this being due in part to the most worthless condition (πονηρότατον) of the Lacedaemonian cavalry, of which the horses were ridden by men of feeble physique and temperament (6.4.11). Then of the hoplites the Thebans were concentrated fifty shields deep, whereas the Lacedaemonians, "they said," were not more than twelve men deep. When the Theban companies attacked, the Spartans were in some confusion due to the defeated cavalry falling back on the hoplites; and the Lacedaemonians were then pushed back "by the mob" (ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου ὠθούμενοι).¹³ Having withdrawn to their original camp, some of the Lacedaemonians, "they said," wanted to renew the battle (6.4.14). Names were given for five Spartans, but not for any Boeotians. It is obvious that Xenophon's account is a one-sided apologia and not, as Buckler (86) said, "the most reliable source for the battle."

Epaminondas invented the slanting phalanx in order that its advanced wing should approach the enemy first, and that the other wing should either avoid entirely or at least delay contact with the enemy. That this was his intention at Leuctra is made clear by Diodorus (15.55.2):

Epaminondas placed on the one part his best men with whom he himself intended to decide the contest (αὐτὸς ἔμελλε διαγωνίζεσθαι), and the weakest men he placed on the other wing and ordered them to avoid action (φυγομαχεῖν), and in the event of the enemy attacking them to give ground little by little (ἐκ τοῦ κατ' ὀλίγον ὑποχωρεῖν).

In the event, as Plutarch noted, "the phalanx of Epaminondas was charging them [the Spartans on the right wing] and was bypassing the others" (*Pel.* 23.4: ἐπιφερομένη μόνοις ἐκείνοις καὶ παραλλάττουσα τοὺς ἄλλους). The result was expressed by Polyaeus: "The Thebans by their eager charge upon the

¹³ A derogatory description of the massed Theban formation fifty shields deep.

Laconian phalanx routed it, and the mass of their allies fled" (2.3.15; Paus. 9.13.9 noted the flight of the allies).

There were two ways of using a slanting phalanx against a phalanx in the normal line formation. Asclepiodotus described a slanting phalanx with diagrams, in which it is shown directly opposite the line-phalanx and about to advance straight forward, the men of its front line all facing the enemy (*Tact.* 11.1, p.315 Loeb, Figg. 1-2). Epaminondas used his slanting phalanx differently at Leuctra; for according to Plutarch "he was drawing the phalanx slanting towards the left" (23.1: τὴν φάλαγγα λοξὴν ἐπὶ τὸ εὐώνυμον ἔλκοντος). In other words Epaminondas, having drawn up his men in a slanting formation directly opposite the the line-phalanx, advanced not straight forward but led it slanting at the same angle towards his left front.¹⁴ The men who followed him leftwards did not face the enemy but turned into a column, which could move quickly. His aim was, as Plutarch explained, "to strike the right wing [of the enemy with his own men] in close order in column and overpower it" (23.1: τὸ δεξιὸν ... προσπεσὼν ἀθρόως κατὰ κέρασ καὶ βιασάμενος).¹⁵ So it proved; for the Sacred Band, his best troops, at the head of the column charged at the double and shattered the elite Spartan force (23.2, 4).¹⁶

¹⁴ Onasander describes the slanting phalanx as a way of opposing a crescent-shaped formation. One advanced with the whole of one's phalanx in the slanting formation to engage one wing of the enemy (21.8: λοξῆ πάση τῆ ἰδία φάλαγγι προσβάλλει κατὰ θάτερον κέρασ τῶν πολεμίων). Ferrill (169) showed in his plan only the left-hand part of the straight phalanx inclining towards the left. That misinterprets the Greek.

¹⁵ So too B. Perrin in the Loeb edition translates as follows: "That he might thrust back Cleombrotus by a fierce charge in column with all his men-at-arms." The Greek κατὰ κέρασ show that that the phalanx was in column: LSJ *s.v.* κέρασ V.3.c, as opposed to ἐπὶ φάλαγγος, citing Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.23, in which only two men led the column. The alternative, to stay in line and shuffle sideways while still facing the enemy, would obviously be disastrous. ἀθρόως means "in close formation" (LSJ *s.v.* ἀθρόος I), rather than with Perrin "with all his men-at-arms." These words go with the subject of προσπεσὼν, Epaminondas, pace C. J. Tuplin, "The Leuktra Campaign: Some Outstanding Problems," *Klio* 69 (1987) 85 n.45, who prefers two other interpretations.

¹⁶ If we accept the statement of Xenophon's Spartan informants, that the Thebans were fifty shields deep (*Hell.* 6.4.12), their front in the charge was six men (the total of the Sacred Band being 300 men in *Pel.* 23.2). Thus the Boeotian phalanx in line formation was six men deep, and 1,000 metres long (allowing one metre for each of its 6,000 men). The Boeotian phalanx was then of almost the same length as the Lacedaemonian phalanx of 11,000 men at depth of twelve men (*Xen. Hell.* 6.4.12). See the preceding note for a front

The reaction of the enemy to the threat of an approaching slanting phalanx was either to strengthen its own threatened wing or to extend that wing and attack the left flank of the column. At Leuctra the Spartans were attempting the latter course (23.2: τὸ δεξιὸν ἀνέπτυσσον καὶ περιήγον ὡς κυκλωσόμενοι καὶ περιβαλοῦντες ὑπὸ πλήθους τὸν Ἐπαμεινῶδαν), when the Sacred Band charged and caught them in confusion.¹⁷ Something similar happened at Gaugamela in 331. At the start the phalanx of Darius was in line formation. The phalanx of Alexander, inferior in numbers, was ordered to advance in slanting formation (Curt. 4.15.1: *agmen obliquum incedere iubet*; Diod. 17.57.6: λοξὴν τὴν τάξιν). Alexander himself led the forward (right) wing towards the right in column for a time (Arr. *Anab.* 3.13.2: ἦγε ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ δεξιὸν τὸ αὐτοῦ; 3.14.2: τέως μὲν ἐπὶ κέρως τοὺς ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἦγε). Darius tried with cavalry detachments to stop Alexander's approach and to outflank his column, while extending his own phalanx to the left. When Alexander completed his approach, he turned the head of his column and some Companion Cavalry into a wedge formation and broke through the enemy phalanx (Arr. *Anab.* 3.14.2).¹⁸

Despite the brilliant success of the slanting phalanx at Leuctra the Greek commanders at Mantinea in 362 and at Chaeronea in 338 did not employ it, but posted their men in the orthodox line-phalanx. It is therefore the more remarkable that in his first

of two men. Anderson (217) noted that "most scholars" held that the Sacred Band did not here operate as a single unit—despite *Pel.* 23.2 and *Nepos Pel.* 4.2. The charge by the Sacred Band was a direct head-on attack in order to break through the Spartan line, as at Tegyra (*Plut. Pel.* 17.2: ἐλπίζων ... διακόπειν). It was not "an oblique charge" (Ferrill 168) or "an oblique attack" (V. D. Hanson, Epameinondas, the Battle of Leuctra [371 B.C.], and the 'Revolution' in Greek Battle Tactics," *CLAnt* 7 [1988] 205–206) during which the attackers moving leftwards would have exposed their unshielded side to the Spartans.

¹⁷ For the meaning of ἀνέπτυσσον see Buckler 85. Although the original right wing of the phalanx continued to face the enemy, Cleombrotus was moving men behind it from rear ranks elsewhere to the right, in order to form a new extended right wing. During this awkward manoeuvre Pelopidas made his charge and caught the enemy in confusion. The Spartan apologists in *Xen. Hell.* 6.4.13 attributed the confusion not to the decision of Cleombrotus but to the miserable Spartan cavalrymen falling back onto the Spartan phalanx, which could in practice have opened gaps to let cavalrymen in flight pass through and then have closed the gaps.

¹⁸ My account of the Battle of Gaugamela is in *Alexander the Great: King, Commander and Statesman*² (Bristol 1989) 138ff with Fig. 14, and is reproduced in my *The Genius of Alexander the Great* (London 1997) 103ff.

great set battle in 358 against Bardylis Philip used the slanting phalanx. His enemy had been invincible for more than a generation in Northern Greece. In 385 they had killed 15,000 Molossians in Epirus, and in 359 4,000 Macedonians and the Macedonian king. In 358 the Illyrian army of 10,000 picked hoplites and 500 cavalry had occupied some Macedonian territory, and Bardylis had large forces farther north. Philip took the initiative by advancing with his army of 10,000 hoplites and 600 cavalry into the occupied territory and engaged the army of Bardylis there.

Frontinus was interested in the ensuing battle as an example "of organising the phalanx" (*De acie ordinanda*). He gave three occasions on which the slanting phalanx was used (2.3.1ff). On the first Cn. Scipio drew back his left wing, and "with a slanting phalanx" (*obliqua acie*) engaged the enemy with his right wing, which he had built up with his strongest soldiers. On the second occasion Philip, seeing the front of the enemy to be packed with picked men from the whole of the army and the flanks to be weaker (*frontem stipatam ... latera autem infirmiora*), placed the bravest of his own men on his right wing, attacked the left flank of the enemy and threw their whole phalanx into confusion (*sinistrum latus hostium invasit, turbataque tota acie*). On the third occasion Pammenes with the best of his infantry and all his cavalry on the right wing enveloped the enemy phalanx and routed it. On these occasions the retarded wing was inactive. Thus at some stage in the battle against Bardylis Philip formed his men in a slanting phalanx with an advanced right wing.¹⁹

Diodorus' account of the battle is not complete. We have to assume a preliminary battle between the cavalry forces. This presumably took place in the space between the two infantry phalanxes, which were still some hundreds of metres apart and were advancing slowly towards one another.²⁰ The Illyrian cavalry were driven from the battlefield. The Macedonian cavalry came back to be under Philip's personal command. It is at this point, "when the armies were approaching one another" (16.4.5: ὡς δ' ἤγγιζον ἀλλήλοις), that Diodorus' account begins.

¹⁹ Frontinus chose famous examples of the slanting phalanx and in the next section famous examples of the "crescent-shaped formation" (*lunata acies*). Thus there is no doubt that he believed the slanting phalanx to have been crucial in the battle against Bardylis.

²⁰ Philip was advancing into enemy-held territory, and Bardylis was "coming to meet him" (Diod. 16.4.4: ἀπήντα; see LSJ s.v. 1.6: "move ... to meet").

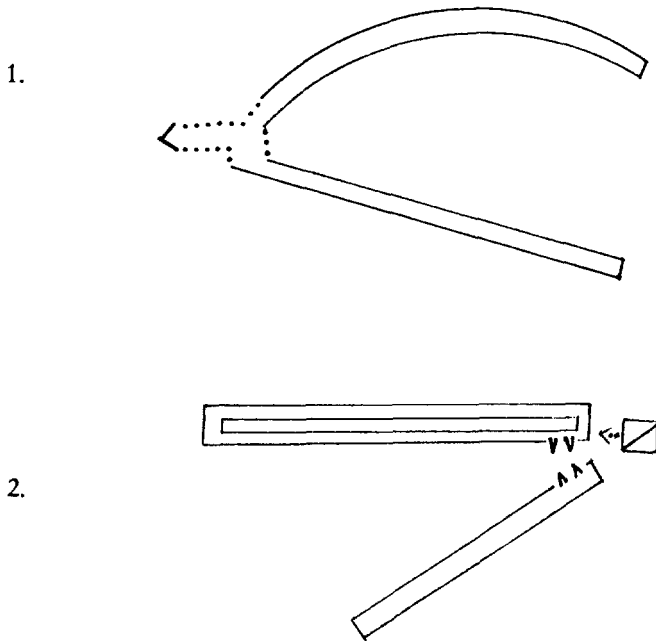


Figure 1. The Battles of Leuctra and against Bardylis

1. Leuctra. The Lacedaemonian crescent-shaped phalanx was almost 1,000 m. long. The men were twelve deep; Cleombrotus commanded the Spartans who were on the right wing.

The Boeotian slanting phalanx was almost 1,000 m. long. The width of the marching column was six men. It was led by the Sacred Band.

The dotted lines show the Spartans extending their right wing (by drawing men from the rear ranks) and the Sacred Band charging in column.

2. Battle against Bardylis. In the Illyrian formation the front line was held by 8,000 chosen men in a line ten men deep, and the short sides and the rear line were held by 2,000 men. All were facing outwards.

In the Macedonian formation the pike-men column had a width of sixteen men.

The dotted lines show the Macedonians turning from column into line and their right wing attacking the Illyrian rectangle.

The Illyrians were then apparently in their usual phalanx-formation in line facing the enemy, but in response presumably to the defeat of their cavalry “they formed themselves into a hollow rectangle” (16.4.6: συντάξαντες ἑαυτοὺς εἰς πλινθίον).²¹ The long side facing the enemy was manned by the picked men, and the short sides were weaker according to Frontinus. Meanwhile Philip with the best of his Macedonians was approaching at the head of the slanting column’s right wing (16.4.5: ὁ μὲν Φίλιππος ἔχων τὸ δεξιὸν κέρασ). His attack, being both on the front (κατὰ στόμα) and on the flank (πλαγίους and *sinistrum latus hostium*), was delivered against the left-hand corner of the enemy rectangle by the Macedonian infantry with his cavalry alongside.²² The picked Illyrian infantry fought magnificently; but Philip broke his way through the Illyrian flank to open a gap and let the Macedonian cavalry charge through it and attack the Illyrians from the flank and rear. Under this assault the Illyrian formation broke up in disorder, and in their flight 7,000 Illyrians were slain.

That Philip’s use of the slanting phalanx in approaching the Illyrians was due to his appreciation of the importance of the Battle of Leuctra can hardly be doubted. It enabled him to have under his own command at the head of the column his best infantry and on the outer flank of his column his best cavalry. But this tactic alone does not account for his victory. The Illyrian infantry were as formidable as ever. In their rectangular formation they could not be attacked by the Macedonian cavalry, for they could present a solid hedge of spear-points on all sides of the rectangle. The front of the rectangle facing the Macedonians was “packed with Illyrians chosen from the

²¹ πλινθίον (“little brick”) indicates a narrow rectangle. Thucydides uses the term “rectangular formation” (τετράγωνον τάξι), when it was adopted by Brasidas’ hoplites who were exposed to attacks by light-armed infantry and cavalry and intended to withdraw (4.125.2). Bardylis adopted this formation as a defence against the Macedonian cavalry and not, as Griffith argued (*HM* 213), against the pike-phalanx.

²² Philip ordered his cavalry “to ride alongside and charge the barbarians in their flank” (παριππεύσαι καὶ πλαγίους ἐμβαλεῖν τοῖς βαρβάροις); for this meaning of παριππεύω see e.g. Plb. 5.83.7: παριππευον. As I said in my earlier account of this battle, “the massed cavalry rode alongside Philip, who was at the head of the right wing, and it had orders to charge at the appropriate moment” (“The Battle between Philip and Bardylis,” *Antichthon* 23 [1989] 5=*Coll. St.* II 217). The Loeb translation, “to ride past the ranks of the barbarians,” is incorrect, as παριππεύσαι is used absolutely and ἐμβαλεῖν governs τοῖς βαρβάροις.

whole army" (Frontin. *Strat.* 2.3.2: *stipatam electis de toto exercitu viris*); they were "packed" in the sense that they were stationed in unusual depth, so that the rear ranks could reinforce any side under attack. When Philip turned the head of his column against the front and the flank of the enemy's left-hand angle, his infantry had to fight against a concentration of the best Illyrian infantry. A bitter battle ensued. Over some forty years the Illyrians had always been the winners. Why did the Macedonians now prove superior?

II. The Recovery of Morale through Oratory and Training

Another question has also to be asked. The morale of the Illyrian army was excellent; for Bardylis and his men were confident in their record of victories (Diod. 16.4.4: *ταῖς τε προγεγενημέναις νίκαις καὶ ταῖς τῶν Ἰλλυριῶν ἀνδραγαθίαις*). In 359 the Macedonians were in the slough of despond (16.3.1: *ἐν ἀπορίᾳ τῇ μεγίστῃ*). After previous defeats they had submitted to the rule of a puppet-king, had paid tribute to Bardylis, and had regained their liberty mainly through foreign aid. Yet in 358 the morale of the hitherto defeated Macedonians was such that they took the offensive and fought magnificently. How did this come about?

The answers to these two questions are in fact provided by the ancient evidence if it is interpreted literally and accepted rather than rejected or weakened by criticism. Let us begin with the matter of morale. What might Philip have learnt about morale during his time in Thebes?

Epaminondas excelled as an orator; for he had to persuade not only the Boeotians but also his numerous allies to accept his policies. The most critical occasion was in 371, when adverse omens were reported. "Epaminondas convened an assembly and exhorted the soldiers by his own words to undertake the fight; they all changed their minds, dismissed their superstitious fears and were ready for battle with confident courage in their hearts" (Diod. 15.54.4).²³ Philip had an even stiffer task. After the loss of 4,000 men "the rest of the Macedonians were overcome with exceeding fear of the Illyrian forces and had no heart for continuing the war" (Diod. 16.2.5). Moreover, danger threat-

²³ So also Nep. *Epam.* 5.1: *fuit etiam disertus, ut nemo Thebanus ei par esset eloquentia.*

ened also from the Athenians, Paeonians, and Thracians. "But Philip was not panic-stricken." "He convened the Macedonians in a series of assemblies, and by the power of his words inspired them with courage and with confidence" (16.3.1: ἐθαρσείζ ἐποίησε). Philip's personality and his oratory evidently rivalled that of Churchill after the flight from Dunkirk.

Next, Epaminondas was innovative in the great stress he laid on physical training and on constant practice in manoeuvres and in actions (Plut. *Pel.* 7.3, 15.1f). Philip followed that example. Immediately after the death of Perdiccas he imposed a system of rigorous training on the Macedonian infantry. It was described by three authors who were, it seems, drawing on a contemporary writer, probably Ephorus.²⁴ According to Diodorus, Philip, "undaunted by the great dangers impending ... held continuous manoeuvres under arms and training under combat conditions" (16.3.1). According to Polyaeus (4.2.10) "Philip was training the Macedonians before the dangers (πρὸ τῶν κινδύνων) to march thirty-five miles a day in full armour," carrying their rations and their gear. According to Frontinus (*Strat.* 4.1.6) "when Philip was first putting his army together (*cum primum exercitum constitueret*) ... he made the infantry carry flour for thirty days." This rigorous training was enforced from the time of Philip's first formation of his army until he faced the great dangers of the wars that culminated in the battle against Bardylis (Justin's *graviora bella*: 7.5.10).²⁵

III. The Macedonian Phalanx

During this period of training the infantry were taught to use a new weapon and to fight in a new formation, both of which were Philip's inventions. In the year of Perdiccas' death, 360/359, Diodorus (16.3.2) reports that "Philip equipped his men appropriately with weapons of war ... he devised the close order and the equipment of the phalanx ... and he first organised the Macedonian phalanx." Of the equipment Polyaeus (4.2.10) informs us that during their training marches the soldiers carried "helmets, peltas, greaves, and sarissas." The

²⁴ As I argued in "Training," 53ff.

²⁵ That is for some twelve months between the death of Perdiccas in 359 and the battle against Bardylis in 358.

pelta was a small wicker shield, coated with metal,²⁶ which was suspended from the neck; and it enabled the Macedonians to fight "in close order." The sarissa was a pike of cornel-wood, some sixteen feet long with a heavy butt-end.²⁷ Philip was able to provide his men with this equipment, because he owned all good timber and all mineral deposits in his kingdom.²⁸ The 'Macedonian phalanx' differed from the traditional phalanx, which Philip will have studied during his time in Thebes, in the following ways. The pelta was contrasted with the traditional aspis, a large shield carried on the left forearm, and the pike with the traditional spear some six or seven feet long according to the taste of the individual phalangite, who provided his own equipment. Because of the pelta the Macedonian phalangites could form a much closer order than the traditional phalangites; and they could present to an enemy four or five pike-points in close order, as compared with the single spear-point of the traditional phalangite. This Macedonian equipment was for use only in their phalanx formation.

For the men of the 'Macedonian phalanx' constant practice and physical strength were needed; for in close order the men of the first four or five ranks had to present their pike-points ahead of the first men.²⁹ When the Macedonian phalanx charged a traditional phalanx, its frontal attack could not be withstood, as Polybius stated (18.29.1). It was the charge of Philip and his best men on the right wing of the Macedonian pike-phalanx that overwhelmed the picked Illyrian hoplites in 358.³⁰

The evidence that we have cited from Diodorus, Polyaeus, and Frontinus has often been rejected or re-interpreted. Beloch, as we have seen, substituted Parmenio for Philip and

²⁶ For the pelta see P. Adam-Veleni, in *Ancient Macedonia VI* (Thessaloniki 1993) 17-28; and my "A Macedonian Shield and Macedonian Measures," *BSA* 91 (1996) 365ff = *Coll. St.* IV 273ff.

²⁷ For the sarissa see M. Andronikos, "Sarissa," *BCH* 94 (1970) 91ff for excavated examples; Markle (1977: 324) put its weight at 12 lbs., as compared with a hoplite spear just over 2 lbs.

²⁸ R. D. Milns overlooked this fact when he wrote that "the Macedonian treasury in the early years of Philip's reign did not have the money to provide the phalangites with such armour": "Philip II and the Hypaspists," *Historia* 16 (1967) 511.

²⁹ The extraordinary skill of these trained pikemen in changing their formation was shown by Alexander's men in Illyria in 335: Arr. *Anab.* 1.6.1-4.

³⁰ As I argued in my earlier study of this battle: *supra* n.22: 5. Recently A. B. Bosworth expressed the same view, that Philip invented the sarissa and the invention "bore fruit: *OCD*³ s.v. "Philip II," 1161.

made the sarissa derive simply from peltast equipment (III.1 454).³¹ Ellis, referring only to Diodorus, wrote as follows: "When Philip is credited, therefore, with the virtual creation of the Macedonian phalanx, we are presumably to take this as an allusion to remarkable advances in size, training and technical sophistication" (53). His conclusion, that the army of 358 "as regards its numbers and mode of fighting was hardly different from its predecessors" (58), leaves Philip's victory entirely unexplained. In 1978 Markle, writing of the passage in Diodorus, maintained that "this statement is vague and needs to be interpreted skeptically" (1978: 484).³²

In fact Diodorus' words are crystal-clear: ἐπενόησε δὲ καὶ τῆς φάλαγγος πυκνότητα καὶ κατασκευὴν ... καὶ πρῶτος συνεστήσατο τὴν Μακεδονικὴν φάλαγγα. I translate, with references to LSJ: "he invented (LSJ II) the close formation (I.4) and the fitting out (I.1) of the phalanx ... and he first organised (III.1) the Macedonian phalanx." The need to interpret the passage "skeptically" is peculiar to Markle, for to accept the clear meaning would have upset his own prejudgement. Moreover, he did not mention Polyaeus' inclusion of the sarissa among the equipment that had to be carried during the training "before the dangers." He concluded that the sarissa was introduced as an infantry weapon by Philip "between September 338 and late summer 336 or by Alexander" (1978: 483). His deduction from the absence of sarissa heads or butts from the interior of Olynthus at the time of the siege, that the sarissa was not then in use (1978: 488), overlooks his own statement that "the sarissa was a useless weapon outside the light (a slip for "tight"?) formation" (1977: 331). No one would use it in siege warfare or in street-fighting.

³¹ Followed by e.g. J. G. P. Best, *Thracian Peltasts and their Influence on Greek Warfare* (Groningen 1969) 139, who held that there was no difference between the equipment of the Thracian peltast and the Macedonian phalangite. "Their equipment," he wrote, "is characterized by the long thrusting spear (sarissa) and the pelte." In fact the long thrusting spear and the sarissa are entirely different: the spear was held at its middle by one hand, whereas the sarissa was held at a point near the weighted butt-end by two hands (Plb. 18.29.3: τοῖν χερσίν), and the spear was used for skirmishing, whereas the sarissa was suitable only for the Macedonian phalanx (Plb. 18.32.9) See the illustrations in Best's book.

³² Of the battle against Bardylis he wrote that "there seems to be no surprise ... certainly no indication of the use of any new infantry tactics": 1978: 486. Frontinus (*Strat.* 2.3.2) thought differently.

In 1979 Griffith treated Diod. 16.3.1f much as Ellis and Markle had done. He proposed in effect "to spread these processes over a number of years beginning with the year 359, and indeed most probably over all Philip's years up to his death."³³ But here too Diodorus was clear: for he placed the organisation of "the Macedonian phalanx" under the year 360/359, and the battle against Bardylis under the next year, 359/358. As regards Philip "equipping his men appropriately with weapons of war," Griffith held that "Diodorus meant the Philip saw to it that the soldiers equipped themselves with what was necessary." If that is the case, why did Diodorus not say so? In his account of the battle in 358 Griffith wrote somewhat differently. "It seems possible that it was not until he [Bardylis] saw the Macedonians, their sarissas displayed now for the first time, that he realized that this would be no mere encore of the previous action" (*HM* 213). Yet the sarissa was the central feature of "the Macedonian phalanx," the invention of which cannot then be spread "over a number of years." Writing in 1990 Borza went along with "Griffith's suggestion that Philip's reorganization of the army occurred over a long period of time," but without citing the ancient evidence of Diodorus, Polyaeus, and Frontinus.³⁴

IV. Personal Leadership and Policy

When Epaminondas acted in battle as commander-in-chief, he always fought at the head of his troops. He shows exceptional courage and fought "heroically" (Diod. 15.39.2: πολὺ προέσχευ ἀνδρείᾳ; 56.2f, 86.4 and 87.1: ἠρωικῶς ἀγωνισάμενος). In the battle against Bardylis in 358 Philip led the charge and he himself fought "heroically" (Diod. 16.4.6: ἠρωικῶς). He must have known that this had resulted in the death of Epaminondas (Diod. 15.79.2: ἠρωικῶς ἐτελεύτησεν) and also of Pelopidas

³³ *HM* 407; see also his remarks at 211ff, 418–21. It was certainly not the intention of Diodorus, for he placed his account of the military reforms inside the same phrase at the beginning and at the end of the passage (16.3.1 and 3: τῶν ἐπιφερομένων κινδύνων).

³⁴ E. N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedonia* (Princeton 1990) 202. He considered it "unlikely that Philip would have been able to reform the army within a brief six or seven months over the winter of 358/357" (a slip for 359/358); and he therefore postulated in Philip's army that defeated Bardylis "only the first tentative attempts at reform." He had no regard for the ancient evidence and reduced the interval between the two battles, which was more than a year.

(15.80.5). But he continued on this course even in the Battle of Chaeronea, by which time he was blind in one eye and lame in one leg. He knew that this example fired his men with courage.³⁵

In foreign policy Epaminondas initiated a new policy. As Plutarch noted, "When Epaminondas and Pelopidas prevailed, they did not kill anyone, nor did they enslave cities" (*Comp. Pel. and Marc.* 1.1). His aim was not subjugation but co-operation. Although Orchomenus had fought on the side of Sparta against the Boeotians, Epaminondas persuaded the Thebans to spare the Orchomenians and admit them as members of the Boeotian association (Diod. 15.57.1; Paus. 9.15.3) When he captured Boeotian exiles in the Peloponnese, he let them go free and obtain citizenship there (Paus. 9.15.4). He treated his numerous allies in Central Greece and in the Peloponnese as equals. He conferred with their commanders on an appropriate strategy and reached a joint decision (Diod. 15.62.5, 63.4). He did not seek to impose a Boeotian form of government but left oligarchic governments in power in Achaia. In all these respects he differed from the Thebans and the Boeotians. Later, as opportunities arose, they reversed his decisions. For instance, they destroyed Orchomenus utterly (Diod. 15.79.5f; Paus. 9.15.3).

When Philip became regent in 359, the Macedonian kingdom was one of several kingdoms in what is now called "West Macedonia." Its territory consisted of coastal Macedonia and of Eordaea inland. The other kingdoms inland had been described as "allied and subject" in the fifth century (Thuc. 2.99.2). But in the early part of the fourth century they were no longer subject to the Macedonian kingdom. Indeed the Orestae were allies not of Macedonia but of the Molossians; Pelagonia made an alliance with Athens, which controlled some cities on the Macedonian coast; and Demosthenes (4.4f) described the kingdoms of Upper Macedonia as "independent and free." They all had a common enemy, the dreaded Illyrians of Bardylis. In 359 the Illyrians had overrun Upper Macedonia and had captured "some Macedonian cities" (Diod. 16.4.4). In 358 Philip won his decisive victory and drove the Illyrians out of Upper Macedonia.

³⁵ So too Alexander was first in action (Arr. *Anab.* 1.15.7; 2.10.3; 4.30.3; 6.9.3; Plut. *Alex.* 63.5), despite the fact that Philip had been wounded seven times in action.

He was in a position to impose the traditional policy and to make the weakened kingdoms of Upper Macedonia "subject" to the Macedonian kingdom. But instead he incorporated the peoples of Upper Macedonia as equals in a greater Macedonian kingdom. His army was thereby almost doubled within one year (Polyaen. *Strat.* 4.2.17). The administration of the cantons was left in the hands of the local peoples, except that their royal families were accepted into Philip's court or went elsewhere. Philip was able as king to carry out the policy of co-operation that Epaminondas had advocated and in part implemented.³⁶

V. Summary

The conclusion, that as a hostage Philip learned many lessons in Thebes, appreciated the achievements of Epaminondas, and put his admiration into effect in his actions in 359-358, rests entirely upon the ancient evidence. It is true that the evidence is in bits and pieces; but those bits and pieces, so far from being incompatible with one another, provide a consistent picture. It may be objected that they are preserved for us in late authors. But, as we have shown, they come probably from the works of contemporaries of Philip and Alexander—namely Ephorus, Theopompus, Callisthenes, and Marsyas Macedon—who were in a position to have known the facts of Philip's first year in power. The previous relations between the Illyrians of Bardylis and the Macedonians had been disastrous. In 392 the Illyrians expelled Amyntas III from his kingdom and replaced him with a pretender, Argaeus; in 383 Bardylis defeated Amyntas so decisively that he had to seek help from the Chalcidians. The successor of Amyntas, Alexander II, paid danegeld to the Illyrians and surrendered Philip as a hostage in 369. Then in some year after 365 Perdiccas lost many men who were taken captive by the Illyrians, and he only persuaded the rest of his army to fight on by asserting that the Illyrians were intending to kill all prisoners (Polyaen. *Strat.* 4.10.1). The ultimate disaster came in 359, when Perdiccas and 4,000 men were killed and Bardylis occupied some Macedonian cities. A year later Philip, fighting

³⁶ The incorporation of the peoples of Upper Macedonia has not always been appreciated. Griffith, for instance, was more concerned with the marriages that Philip contracted in and after 358 (*HM* 214ff). In Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace Philip let the tribes govern themselves in their traditional manner.

his first major battle, reversed the record completely. The explanation is given by Diodorus, drawing probably on the work of Ephorus, namely that Philip had invented "the Macedonian phalanx," trained his men in the use of the sarissa, and employed the tactics that he had learned from Epaminondas. Above all, by his personality and his oratory he changed the despair of the Macedonians into courage and confidence.

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