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THE MILITARY-POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OF SITALCES AGAINST PERDICCAS II AND THE CHALCIDIANS (431–429 BC)

Abstract: The article deals with the foreign policy of the Odrysian king Sitalces in the period from 431 to 429 BC. The negotiations in the summer of 431 BC between Sitalces, Perdiccas II and the Athenians have been examined in the beginning. The conclusion is that the Macedonian king did not promise any territorial gains to Sitalces. On his part Sitalces pursued only his own interests, which required that he should not get involved in the war against the Chalcidians at this stage. Primary sources, which provide information of the territorial range of the Odrysian kingdom and of the tribes, which were subject to the Odrysians, are also analyzed in the article. The route of the Odrysian army toward Doberos and Sitalces' pressure against Perdiccas II and the Chalcidians are investigated too. Special attention has been paid to the negotiations between the Macedonian king and Seuthes. The conclusion follows that not only did Sitalces know about them, but he was their initiator. In the end it has been concluded, that Sitalces' campaign was unsuccessful, but this fact did not undermine his prestige among the subordinated tribes and the Greek cities.

I

In the summer of 431 BC Athenian domination over the Chalcidice peninsula was endangered. At this time Athens was already in conflict with the Peloponnesian League and – because of her inability to mobilize considerable military contingents for several fronts – she was in desperate need of a powerful ally to scare her enemies in the region: the Macedonian king Perdiccas, the rebelling Chalcidian poleis, the Bottiaei and the Corinthian colony Potidaea. The Athenians decided that the Odrysian king Sitalces would be the most suitable candidate for this task. In order to bring him into the war on their side, the Athenians appointed a former enemy, Nymphodoros of Abdera, as proxenos. This turned out to be an intelligent move, as Nymphodoros was influential at the Odrysian royal court because of his sister's marriage to Sitalces.¹ By means of his mediation Athens managed

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to form the desired alliance with Sitalces. In addition to the agreement between the two states, the Athenians granted Athenian citizenship to Sadocus, the son of the Odrysian king. Their main objective, however – the involvement of Sitalces in the war – was not achieved. The assistance Sitalces was supposed to render to the Athenians is twice mentioned in Thucydides' work, from two different points of view. In the first passage Nymphodoros is said to have committed himself to persuading the Odrysian king to send cavalry and peltasts to support the Athenians.² In the second, Thucydides maintains that Sitalces had promised in the negotiations to put an end to the war with the Chalcidians.³

From the quoted passages we may conclude that Nymphodoros was requesting part of Sitalces' forces⁴, whereas the Odrysian king – following his own interests – instead of complying with Athenian expectations, promised to intervene in the war personally.⁵ It seems that an intervention from Sitalces in the Chalcidice and Macedonia would have brought more harm than good to the Athenians, i.e. if Sitalces managed to eliminate the Chalcidians and to conquer eastern parts of Perdiccas' lands, Athens would have had to have shared her income from the *phoros* of the local poleis with him, and also accede to his increased power and sphere of influence between the Axios and the Pontos. In the event, however, the Athenians could only accept the offer and hope that the Odrysian king would give up his intentions and send only the ancillary forces requested.

From Thucydides' account we may infer that Sitalces received absolutely nothing in return for his commitment to attack the Chalcidians. In fact, his sole gain from the arrangement was the granting of Athenian citizenship to his son Sadocus – an act which was not of major importance in the context of the considered events and did not bring any real benefits to the policy he was pursuing. This has been pointed out by Tačeva⁶ and Mihailov⁷ –

¹ Thuc. 2.29.1.

² Thuc. 2.29.5.

³ Thuc. 2.95.2.

⁴ Thuc. 2.29.5.: "πεισειεν γὰρ Σιτάλκην πέμπειν στρατιὰν Θρακίαν Ἀθηναίων ἰπέων τε καὶ πελταστῶν".

⁵ Thuc. 2.95.2.: "τοῖς τε Ἀθηναίοις αὐτὸς ὁμολογῆκει, ὅτε τὴν ξυμμαχίαν ἐποιεῖτο, τὸν ἐπὶ Θράκης Χαλκιδικὸν πόλεμον καταλύσειν".

⁶ M. Tačeva, "Die politische Dezentralisierung im Odrysenreich vom letzten Viertel des 5. Jh. bis zur Thronbesteigung Kotys' I. 383 v. u. Z.", *Klio* 72/2, 1990, p. 381–382.

⁷ G. Mihailov, "La Légende de Térée", *Annual of University of Sofia* 50/2, Faculty of History 1955, p. 91.

according to the latter, Nymphodoros as proxenos bestowed citizenship not so much on the son of Sitalces, but rather to his own nephew, Sadocus; i.e. Mihailov supposes that Sadocus was the son of Sitalces and Nymphodoros' sister.

This presumption seems logical. On the other hand, however, one senses in Mihailov's explanation the suggestion that the Athenian proxenos was playing a game of his own, in which Sitalces possibly came to harm on account of his own son, Sadocus. In this case, however, we can hardly talk of harm since, if the Athenians really needed the alliance with Sitalces at any cost (as it is usually assumed) they would have simply granted him citizenship (and they did to the Odrysian king Cotys several decades later).⁸ The fact that Athenian citizenship was conferred on Sadocus – regardless of who was his mother – and not on Sitalces himself should probably be taken to mean that the Odrysian king simply did not demand it.

Study of the Athenian tribute lists shows that in the period 432/1–430/29 BC, as compared to previous years, some of the poleis subject to taxation paid less tax to the Athenians or even did not pay at all.⁹ This fact, along with Thucydides' account of the taxes paid to the Odrysian kings¹⁰, may confirm, although indirectly, that at the time of the negotiations with Athens Sitalces was promised to receive tribute from some of the poleis on the Aegean coast and the Propontis.

The agreement reached must have been mutually beneficial. Although the talks did not result in Sitalces' direct involvement in the war at that particular moment, the Athenians might have been satisfied with the alliance itself, because this was at least a guarantee of his neutrality and a good sign that Sitalces might eventually participate in the war on the Athenian side (if necessary). One should also not ignore the fact here that the treaty with Sitalces presumably scared Perdiccas who, in view of the new realities, soon agreed to become an Athenian ally again.

Sitalces, for his part, entered into personal commitment to put an end to the war in the Chalcidice in exchange for promises of financial benefit. Yet, as it was not in his own interests to intervene in the conflict immediately, he did not undertake the intended military campaign against the Chalcidians, planned to take place in 431 BC.

⁸ Val. Max. III. 7. ext.7.

⁹ ATL I. p. 216–217 – Abdera; p. 220–221 – Aenus; p. 338–339 – Maroneia.

¹⁰ Thuc. 2.97.3; Diod. 12.50.2.

Also at this time Nymphodoros was holding talks with Perdikkas.¹¹ The Macedonian king, alarmed by the alliance between Athens and Sitalces, rapidly yielded and agreed to make it up with the Athenians. The initiative came on his own behalf, as mediator acting not only Nymphodoros, but presumably and Sitalces. Besides, strictly following Thucydides' words (II. 95. 2...εἰ Ἀθηναίοις τε διαλλάξειεν ἑαυτὸν κατ' ἀρχὰς τῷ πολέμῳ πιεζόμενον...), one inevitably arrives at the conclusion that Perdikkas must first have approached Sitalces, who, in turn, then approached Nymphodoros and the Athenians. Hence the negotiations between Perdikkas and Sitalces will have preceded the talks between Perdikkas and the Athenians; for the sake of convenience, however, they are considered at the end of this article.

Thucydides is very laconic in regard to the agreement: Athens returned (ἀποδοῦναι) to the Macedonian king the polis of Therme which they had occupied a year before¹², and Perdikkas undertook to support the Athenians in their war against the Chalcidians.¹³

Even though it is not mentioned by Thucydides, we can assume with good reason that the agreement between Perdikkas and the Athenians also dealt with the relations between Athens and Philip, the brother of Perdikkas, who was his most important enemy at this time. Athens had supported Philip in his fight against Perdikkas the previous year.¹⁴ In this period Philip might have already lost control of his own ἀρχή.¹⁵ Furthermore, after the battle at the isthmus in front of Potidaea¹⁶, under pressure from his more powerful brother he was forced to flee together with his son Amyntas to Sitalces.¹⁷ It must have been vitally important to Perdikkas that Philip be deprived of the support of Athens, and thus very probable that he raised this issue in during the talks with the Athenians and that his demands in this respect were met.

The alliance between Perdikkas and Athens was mutually beneficial.¹⁸ The Athenians relinquished control over Therme; as

¹¹ Thuc. 2.29.6.

¹² Thuc. 1.61.2.

¹³ Thuc. 2.29.6.

¹⁴ Thuc. 1.57.3.

¹⁵ See E. Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea. Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia*, Berkeley 1993, p. 173.

¹⁶ Thuc. 1.62.3–64.3.

¹⁷ *Schol. Thuc.* 2.95.

¹⁸ R. Hoffman ("Perdikkas and the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War", *GRBS* 16, 1975, 359–377) relates the inscription *IG* I³ 89 to the negotiations of

a result they were relieved of Perdiccas' machinations of the Macedonian king and thus could concentrate their efforts on the war against Potidaea.¹⁹ Of no less importance was the fact that, thanks to the friendly relationship with Perdiccas, they could now obtain again Macedonian timber. The Macedonian king, for his part, managed to neutralize the threat coming from Athens and stop the aid to his brother Philip; in addition, he also succeeded in regaining full control over the strategically important polis of Therme.

The talks between Perdiccas and Sitalces proceeded differently. The initiative here came again from the Macedonian side, the reason being Perdiccas' fear of the Athenian-Odryisian alliance and particularly the fact that his brother Philip and his son Amyntas were at the Odryisian court.²⁰ As per Thucydides' account, Perdiccas was in a difficult position during the talks and gave Sitalces certain promises, receiving in return the word of the Odryisian king firstly to enter into a commitment to reconcile him with the Athenians; and secondly not to help his brother Philip accede to the Macedonian throne.²¹

Interestingly, Thucydides, although touching on the problem several times, did not consider it necessary to specify what exactly Perdiccas' promise to Sitalces was. The lack of information has given rise to much modern speculation on the nature of the promise. Scholars have thought that the Macedonian king may possibly have made no promises at all²², or consented to give his sister to be the wife of Sitalces²³, or may have promised a lot of

summer 431 BC. The inscription concerns the king of the Lyncestis, Arrhabaeus, and there is not even a mention of Iolaus (Thuc. 1.62.2) who had a strong position at the Macedonian court at that time; this is an indication that this inscription should be dated to 423 BC and seen as a product of the failure of Perdiccas' and Brasidas' campaign against Lyncestis.

¹⁹ As a result of this agreement the Macedonian king joined immediately his forces to the Athenian attack against the Chalcidians (Thuc. 2.29.6–7). Despite this assistance, he proved not to be a reliable ally again, since he did not take part in any of the Athenian campaigns in the Chalkidiki peninsula in the following two years – Hagnonos' campaign against Potidaea in the summer of 430 BC (Thuc. 2.70), the capture of Potidaea in the summer of 430/29 BC (Thuc. 2.70) and the battle at Spartolos against the Bottiaeans and the Chalkidians in the summer of 429 BC (Thuc. II. 79). Furthermore, in the summer of 429 BC, aiming at reinforcing Spartans' efforts in Acarnania, Perdiccas sent 1000 men in this region secretly from the Athenians. His intention, however, was not successful because of the late arriving of the troops, which were sent.

²⁰ Thuc. 2.95.3; 2.100.3; *Schol. Thuc.* 2.95; Diod. 12.50.4.

²¹ Thuc. 2.95.2.

²² Badian 1993, p. 179–180; Z. Archibald, *The Odryisian Kingdom of Thrace. Orpheus Unmasked*, Clarendon Press: Oxford 1998, p. 118.

²³ G. Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. VI, London 1851², p. 287.

money²⁴ or territorial acquisitions²⁵, or promised not to embark on campaigns against the new allies of the Odrysian king²⁶, or even agreed to a reconciliation with Philip, along with return of the lands taken away from him in the past.²⁷

M. Tačeva's hypothesis appears particularly interesting; she advances the view that the talks between Perdiccas and Sitalces may have been related to events that occurred more than 30 years previously.²⁸ According to Tačeva, the Odrysian king Sparadokos – as leader of the anti-Athenian alliance at the battle by Drabescus in 465 BC – made the most of the defeat of Athens by undertaking successful military campaigns against Alexander I, as a result of which the Bisaltian lands, rich in gold and silver, came under his control. Approximately 20 years later (ca. 444 BC), the Odrysians lost these territories to Perdiccas. According to Tačeva, Perdiccas – forced by the circumstances in 431 BC – promised to return them to the Odrysian king—it was the failure to keep this promise that led to the military campaign of Sitalces two years later. In support of her hypothesis Tačeva presents her the results of her research on the coinage of Sparadokos and concludes that the occurrence of two parallel spears and the symbol of the helm on the coins of his emissions must have been related to the conquest of the Bisaltian lands abounding in silver (for Tačeva, this fact is indirectly confirmed by the absence of the two spears on the Macedonian coins from 464–444 BC).

It seems, however, that this reconstruction of events hardly withstands a serious analysis, both in regards to the early chronological layer it implies, and the conclusions it reaches concerning the negotiations between Perdiccas and Sitalces. The assertion that Sparadokos was the leader of the anti-Athenian alliance at Drabescus does not find support in the sources: the ancient authors reporting this important event do not allude to an Odrysian

²⁴ J. Cole, "Perdiccas and Athens", *Phoenix* 28, 1974, p. 65, n. 35.

²⁵ G. Mihailov, "La Thrace et la Macédoine jusqu'à l'invasion des Celtes", *Ancient Macedonia I*, 1970, p. 79; C. Danov, *Althtrakien*, Berlin 1976, p. 302, n. 76; M. Tačeva, "On the Problems of the Coinages of Alexander I Sparadokos and the So-Called Thracian-Macedonian Tribes", *Historia* 41, 1992, p. 69–74; M. Tačeva, "Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Thrakien und Makedonien im 5 JHD. v. u. Z. und der Feldzug des Sitalkes im Jahr 429 v. u. Z." *Ancient Macedonia V*, vol. III 1993, p. 1441–1443.

²⁶ J. Chambers, "Perdiccas, Sitalces, and Athens", *Ancient Macedonia*, vol. VI, 1999, p. 220–221.

²⁷ I. Papastavrou, "The Foreign Policy of Perdiccas II", *Hellenika* 15, 1957, p. 261.

²⁸ Tačeva 1992, p. 69–74 and 1993, 1441–1443.

participation, in any form.²⁹ On the contrary, it is clear that the leading power in the anti-Athenian coalition were the Edones,³⁰ it seems probable, then, that the leader of the coalition may have been Getas, known for his coinage, or perhaps some other Edonian king, but he should not be identified in any way as the Odrysian ruler Sparadokos.

Still less credible appears Tačeva's supposition regarding a military conflict between Sparadokos and Alexander I in 464 BC, which she thinks resulted in the imposition of Odrysian control over the Bisaltian lands, appears to be not quite trustworthy. The study of the Bisaltian octadrachms from the Decadrachm Hoard proves with that they were issued in the period 480/75–460 BC.³¹ Given this, we should take it that the Bisaltae must have been independent in this period, neither under the control of the Argeadae nor in the power of the Odrysian kings. It was only after 460 BC that their lands were seized by Alexander I and became an integral part of the Macedonian Kingdom.³² After the death of Alexander, the area of the Lower Strymon is supposed to have come under Athenian control for a period of at least five years (452/1–447/6 BC), the Athenians supposedly receiving a tribute from the local city of Berga.³³

It is obvious, therefore, that in the period 465–447/6 BC the Odrysian kings did not undertake any military actions against the lands west of the Strymon. This should mean, in turn, that the promises made by Perdikkas in the negotiations with Sitalces in 431 BC were not related to events that occurred a couple of decades earlier (because these events had not taken place). Keeping in mind the difficult situation of the Macedonian king in 431 BC, it does not seem probable that this fact could have hindered him from giving Sitalces promises about territorial gains which he later might not keep after stabilizing his position.

All of this may seem logical but such a reconstruction of event can only be possible if the negotiating parties had a common border, the only possible candidate in this case being the line running along the lower or the middle course of the river Strymon. As one can see from the available evidence in the period un-

²⁹ Hdt. 9.75; Thuc. 1.100; 4.102; Diod. 11.70.5; 12.68.2; Paus. 1.29.4-5.

³⁰ Hdt. 9.75; Diod. 11.70.5.

³¹ S. Fried, "The Decadrachm Hoard: an introduction", *BAR* 343, 1987, p. 9; see also Kagan, J., "The Decadrachm Hoard: Chronology and Consequences", *BAR* 343, 1987, p. 23, dating the Bisaltian coins to 470–460 BC.

³² Hdt. 5.17.2; Thuc. 2.99.6.

³³ *ATL I*, p. 244.

der consideration the eastern border of the Argead Kingdom followed the lower course of the Strymon³⁴, whereas, at its western most point, the kingdom of Sitalces south of the Rhodope Mountain barely reached the city of Abdera³⁵ and the river Nestos. Moreover, if we follow Thucydides, the lands east of the Strymon were settled by Panaeans, Odomanti, Droi and Dersaeans—he explicitly observes that all of these tribes were independent³⁶, i.e. subject neither to the Macedonian nor to the Odrysian king. In addition, we should also take into account the Athenian presence in the area of the Lower Strymon through the garrison in Amphipolis, the Greek poleis situated between Strymon and Abdera; and the presence of the Edones, most likely an independent tribe, should be taken into account, too (despite the fact they are not mentioned by Thucydides). Based on these considerations, we can maintain with certainty that in 431 the Argead and Odrysian kingdoms did not have a common border running along the lower course of the Strymon, or anywhere else in the lands east or west of it.

Neither did the two kingdoms share a border along the middle course of the Strymon. The evidence of Thucydides is again decisive in this case. The only territories under Perdiccas' control in proximity to this area were Crestonia and Bisaltia, which had been conquered by Alexander I.³⁷ Unfortunately, Thucydides does not specify how far north these possessions of the Macedonian king stretched. Herodotus, whose work reflects the reality and the events of his lifetime, and thus remains chronologically close to Thucydides³⁸, is a little more precise on this question. Herodotus states that the city of Argilus and the areas north of it were part of Bisaltia³⁹, specifying that the river Echeidorus rose in the lands of the Crestones.⁴⁰ He also mentions that during the invasion of Xerxes the Bisaltian king also controlled the lands of the Crestones;⁴¹

³⁴ Thuc. 2.99.4.

³⁵ Thuc. 2.97.1.

³⁶ Thuc. 2.101.3: "ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ καὶ οἱ πέραν Στρυμόνος πρὸς βορέαν Θραῦκες, ὅσοι πεδία εἶχον, Παναῖοι καὶ Ὀδόμαντοι καὶ Δραῶιοι καὶ Δερσαῖοι: αὐτόνομοι δ' εἰσὶ πάντες".

³⁷ Thuc. 2.99.6.

³⁸ The only author who precisely defines the northern border of Bisaltian lands is Strabo (VII. fr. 36): "ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς Ἀμφιπόλεως Βισάλται καὶ μέχρι πόλεως Ἡρακλείας...". However, his evidence describes a later state of affairs and therefore it cannot be used for specifying the location of the northern Bisaltian lands during the period, which is of interest to us.

³⁹ Hdt. 7.115.1.

⁴⁰ Hdt. 7.124.1; 7.127.2.

⁴¹ Hdt. 8.116.

this suggests that the realms of the two tribes must have been adjacent. This information, though not very precise, still allows us to infer that Crestonian territory stretched no farther than the Doiran Lake and the Krousia Mountain in the north⁴², and those of the Bisaltae up to the Rupel Pass at most, or, as Hammond has it.⁴³

The information of Thucydides concerning the Odrysian border running along the course of the Strymon is as scarce, and also does not permit its precise localization. According to Thucydides, the territory of the Odrysian Kingdom in this area reached up to the river Strymon and to the lands of the Agrianes⁴⁴ and the Laeaei (who were also both subject to Sitalces).⁴⁵ The extent of the territories of the Agrianes and the Laeaei is still the subject of a lively debate, and scholars have not arrived at unanimous agreement regarding their precise geographical location; the most common view, however, has the territories of the two tribes spread along the upper course of the Strymon.⁴⁶

It is clear, then, that during the negotiations in 431 BC the Odrysian and the Argead Kingdoms had no common border running along the middle course of the Strymon. In addition other tribes like the Maedi and the Sinti lived between the realms of Perdiccas and Sitalces; neither of these latter tribes were subject to either king, although they are not explicitly pointed out by Thucydides as independent.

The absence of a common border, and the conflicts between the two kingdoms in the period preceding the agreement, suggests that the promise given by Perdiccas did not imply an agreement on territorial gains in favor of Sitalces. Of course, this should not

⁴² On the borders of Crestonia see N. G. L. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. I, Oxford 1972, p. 179–182.

⁴³ *Ibidem* p. 192–193.

⁴⁴ In some of the codices occurs the name Graaioi.

⁴⁵ Thuc. 2.96.3; 2.97.2.

⁴⁶ The Agrianes are also mentioned in relation to areas located in a more southerly direction; this fact, however, does not affect the matter under consideration here. Herodotus (5.16.1), for example, mentions Agrianes settled close to Mount Pangaeum. Strabo (VII. fr. 41), presumably following Herodotus, indicates that the Paeonians had conquered the lands of the Agrianes as far as Pangaeum. W. Tomaschek (*Die alten Thraker*, (1893–94), Wien 1980², p. 21–22) maintains that the ethnonym Agrianes appears here as a parenthetic ‘eingeschobenen Stelle’, and N. G. L. Hammond (“The Extent of Persian Occupation in Thrace”, *Chiron* 10, 1980, p. 57) supposes that these are Agrianes inhabiting the territories along the upper course of the Strymon. The existence of Agrianes, and also of Doberes, in this region might possibly have been the result of some expansion towards the Strymon which went unmentioned in the sources.

be taken to mean that Perdiccas did not enter into any engagements at all, for Sitalces would hardly have consented to withdraw his support for Philip if he had not received anything in return.

The only evidence directly attesting to certain engagements entered into by Perdiccas comes from a mention in a scholiast to Thucydides, according to which the Macedonian king, pressed by circumstances, promised Sitalces a large amount of money if the latter stopped his brother Philip from returning to Macedonia.⁴⁷ This information, though from an uncertain source, seems very plausible in view of Thucydides' statement that the Odrysians did not undertake anything without receiving gifts, among others also things a great deal of gold and silver.⁴⁸ Hence we can assert that Sitalces received an amount of money already during the negotiations, and also a promise of considerably more later, if he would stop his assistance for Philip and if he would cooperated in an alliance with the Athenians.

From Thucydides' account⁴⁹ it is usually presumed that Sitalces invaded Macedonia because Perdiccas did not keep his promises; so for this reason some scholars have attempted to find something enticing which could have motivated the organization of such a large military campaign—i.e., territorial acquisitions. As I will try to make clear in section III, however, the promises of the Macedonian king do not seem to have been of particular importance, and, accordingly, they have no relation to the causes of the subsequent campaign of the Odrysian king; they were rather used simply as a convenient pretext for undertaking the campaign.

The treaty of 431 BC brought Sitalces certain financial gains resulting from the promise of increased income from taxes received from the Greek poleis which were members of the Athenian empire and, to a lesser extent, from gifts from Perdiccas and the Athenians during the talks. Pursuing his own interests, however, the Odrysian king did not fulfill any of his allies' demands in return for the gains he had obtained. Sitalces did indeed undertake a campaign against the Chalcidians, but, as already mentioned, his personal intervention was not welcomed by the Athenians, as they had expected him to send only ancillary forces. The situation with Perdiccas was similar: Sitalces promised to end his support for his brother Philip, but he did not kill him, or at least not his son Amyntas, thus managing to keep the option open of

⁴⁷ *Schol. Thuc.* 2. 95.

⁴⁸ *Thuc.* 2.97.3–4.

⁴⁹ *Thuc.* 2.95.1–2.

exerting pressure on the Macedonian king, when and if he felt it necessary, and therefore of influencing the political situation in the Argead Kingdom.

With all of this in mind, we may conclude that Sitalces had not been misled by his allies during the negotiations in the summer of 431 BC; on the contrary, he seems to have deceived them, as subsequent events clearly show.

II

In the following year (430 BC) Sparta sent envoys to the Great King with the idea of persuading him to take part with troops and money in the war against the Athenians. Before fulfilling their principal mission the emissaries stopped by in Thrace with the intention of drawing Sitalces away from his alliance with Athens and winning him over to the Spartan cause, and also to request his help in crossing the Hellespont. Interestingly, the fact that both Herodotus⁵⁰ and Thucydides⁵¹ works describe this episode affords us the opportunity of comparing their accounts, and how these mutually complement each other.

Herodotus' account is briefer. In his version of events, the envoys were captured in Bisanthe and delivered to the Athenians by Sitalces and Nymphodoros. Thucydides, on the other hand, after mentioning that the actual objective of the envoys had been to win Sitalces over to the side of the Spartans, adds that the Athenians Learchus and Ameiniades were staying at the Odrysian court at this time, and these two managed to persuade the king's son (and their fellow citizen) Sadocus to hand the Peloponnesians over to them by stating bringing that they might do harm to Athens, which was his country, too. Sadocus consented, so the Spartans were arrested before boarding the ship supposed to take them over the Hellespont.

The main emphasis in modern discussions of these events is usually placed on the question of whether Sitalces knew about the actions of his son Sadocus or not. The explicit remark of Herodotus that the Spartan envoys were delivered to the Athenians by Sitalces and Nymphodoros indicates that the Odrysian king was not merely informed about the handing over of the ambassadors, but that he had actually been its initiator and personally involved in it. Herodotus does not even mention Sadocus' participation, most

⁵⁰ Hdt. 7.137.1–3.

⁵¹ Thuc. 2.67.1–3.

likely due to the fact that he was simply obeying his father's orders and therefore played only a minor role.

Thucydides, for his part, points out Sadocus as the main instigators of these events, but does not mention anything of Nymphodoros. What appears certain is that the Spartan emissaries managed to reach Sitalces and presumably hold talks with him; one can say this because, as per Thucydides, the Spartans were captured on their way through Thrace to the ship supposed to take them over to Asia – i.e. their seizure must have happened at the very end of their mission.⁵² What exactly happened after the meeting between Sitalces and the Spartans is difficult to ascertain; based on the evidence of Herodotus (no matter how incomplete), however, it seems more probable that the handing over of the envoys – whether out of loyalty to the Athenians⁵³ or for some other reason – was conducted with the consent, and even by the order, of the Odrysian king.

III

At the end of 429 BC Sitalces finally decided to organize a military campaign against Macedonia and the Chalcidians. Thucydides considers the causes for this operation to have been most likely related to the striving of the Odrysian ruler to obtain what he had been promised by Perdiccas, and, in addition, to meet his commitment to the Athenians.⁵⁴ The Odrysian king brought along on the campaign Amyntas, the son of Philip, the now deceased brother of Perdiccas, with the plan to put him on the Argead throne. In view of the above-mentioned inferences (see section I), the considerations raised by Thucydides hardly seem urgent as to push Sitalces into such a risky undertaking.

We should recall here that only a year prior to the invasion⁵⁵ the Athenians were in desperate need of Odrysian assistance but did not receive it—whereas at this moment, although having lost about 430 hoplites in the battle of Spartolus,⁵⁶ their situation

⁵² Thuc 2.67.3: "...ὁ δὲ πεισθεὶς πορευομένος αὐτοὺς διὰ τῆς Θράκης ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον ὧ ἔμελλον τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον περαιώσῃν...".

⁵³ Zahrnt 2006: p. 612.

⁵⁴ Thuc. 2.95.1–2.

⁵⁵ As already mentioned, in 430 BC the Athenian envoys Learchus and Ameiniades were staying at the Odrysian court (Thuc. 2.67.2–3). Since at this time Potidaea was still under siege, it seems very likely that the presence of the emissaries was related to a new Athenian attempt to persuade her ally Sitalces to send military assistance.

⁵⁶ Thuc. 2.79.7.

was considerably better, with their main goal in this theater of operations, the conquest of Potidaea⁵⁷, having been achieved. Against this background, Sitalces' decision to offer his allies support at this moment appears strange. It is true that exactly in this period the Athenian Hagnon was at the Odrysian court.⁵⁸ Hagnon is often said by scholars to have encouraged the actions of Sitalces, and to have functioned as a kind of coordinator between the allies.⁵⁹ What seems decisive here, however, is, that at this crucial point the Athenians refused to support their ally for some absolutely irrelevant reason – not believing that he would come, they did not appear with their fleet.⁶⁰ No matter what the role of Hagnon at the Odrysian court might have been, it seems that he could have easily notified the Athenians about the upcoming campaign and that they could have easily assisted Sitalces' army by sending their fleet, if they had wished so, since they actually had the time to do this. The fact that the Athenian fleet did not appear to support Sitalces suggests that at this moment the Athenians were not interested in the presence of the Odrysian army in the Chalcidice.

It follows therefore that Sitalces in his campaign against Perdiccas pursued only his own interests and was not complying with the wishes and plans of his allies. Indicative in this respect is Diodorus, who ascribes the reasons for Sitalces' campaign to the striving of the king to conquer the Chalcidians with the support of the Athenians, as well as to remove Perdiccas from power to the benefit of Amyntas.⁶¹ Diodorus' account differs from Thucydides' on one major point—the intention of Sitalces to subdue the Chalcidians with the help of Athens. Sitalces' goal was probably the conquest of Bisaltia, Crestonia and Mygdonia, all of them Thracian, and then, as soon as the opportunity arose, to subject the Chalcidians, or at least to impose upon them taxes. In view of this, it seems logical to suppose that on his return to his kingdom Sitalces may have intended to conquer the Maedi and the Sinti and to connect the newly-annexed lands to the territory of his kingdom. This goal, together with the placing of a new puppet-king in the person of Amyntas on the throne of the Argeadae⁶², or perhaps the

⁵⁷ Thuc. 2.70.1–5.

⁵⁸ Thuc. 2.95.3.

⁵⁹ Cole 1974, p. 65; Hoffman 1975, p. 375; E. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus. The Emergence of Macedon*, Princeton 1992², p. 145.

⁶⁰ Thuc. 2.101.1.

⁶¹ Diod. 12.50.3–4.

⁶² Thuc. 2.95.3.; S. Casson, *Macedonia, Thrace and Illyria*, Oxford 1926, p. 183; F. Geyer, *Makedonien bis zur Thronbesteigung Philipps II*, München-Berlin 1930, p. 62; Cole 1974, p. 65; N. G. L. Hammond, G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. II, Oxford 1979, p. 127–128.

attempt to split the Macedonian Kingdom in two⁶³, probably seemed quite attainable to the Odrysian king and could have been the main reason for his launching of the campaign.⁶⁴

The time the campaign was launched does not seem unimportant either, given the inappropriate season in which it was carried out, i.e. the beginning of the winter of 429 BC. It suggests that Sitalces probably had not planned the action, but must rather have acted spontaneously and rapidly for some reason (since his decision brought about a number of problems, related mostly to the provisioning of the army). His haste in acting may have been related to his intention to undertake a surprise attack against the enemy, as far as this was at all possible; or, what seems more probable, it might also be in some way connected to certain events at the Argead court, unknown to us, which required Sitalces' intervention just at this moment. In any case, the late launch of the campaign is another indication that Sitalces' actions should not be linked to the promises given by Perdikkas two years earlier.

IV

In spite of the unfavorable time of year and the spontaneity of his decision, Sitalces managed to levy a considerable army. According to Thucydides, the total strength of the force that invaded Macedonia amounted to 150 000 warriors, two thirds of this force being infantry, and one third cavalry.⁶⁵ This large number is confirmed by Diodorus; in his account, Sitalces' forces consisted of 120 000 infantry and 50 000 cavalrymen, i.e. 170 000 soldiers altogether.⁶⁶ These figures may certainly appear somewhat exaggerated, but they show at least that the army of Sitalces considerably exceeded in number the human potential of smaller Greek armies, which presumably must have led to the exaggerated data supplied by the ancient authors. Unlike the figures for Sitalces'

⁶³ Badian 1993, p. 180.

⁶⁴ Chambers (1999, p. 223–224) assumes that the main cause for the campaign of Sitalces may have possibly been related to the fact that a large number of belligerent Thracian tribes were under his control. This seems to have been the reason pushing him to periodically organize large-scale military campaigns, in order to scare them and consolidate his prestige, and – last but not least – to sate their lust for plunder. This hypothesis is interesting; yet, as shown in the discussion to this point, the foreign policy moves of Sitalces – against Scythians, Macedonians, Chalcidians and Triballi – were not random but were undertaken at the appropriate moment in specific political situations.

⁶⁵ Thuc. 2.98.3–4.

⁶⁶ Diod. 12.50.3.

army, which have aroused justified suspicion, the information provided by Thucydides for the structure of Sitalces' army seems fully realistic.⁶⁷

Sitalces led out his Odrysian tribesmen, and also mobilized the Thracians subject to him in the territories between the Haemus, Mount Rhodopes, the Black Sea and the Hellespont, as well as the Getae and other tribes from the areas south of the Danube close to the sea. To strengthen his forces, the Odrysian king also hired an army of mercenaries, consisting mainly of sword-bearing Dii, an independent tribe living in the vicinity of Mount Rhodope. Some members of this tribe followed the army voluntarily, hoping that the upcoming campaign might offer opportunities for plunder. In addition, the Agrianes and the Laeaei were also called to join the invading force, for they were also subject to the Odrysian king, taking up the western most areas of his realm. Finally, some anonymous independent Thracians accompanied this multitude—like the Dii just mentioned – in the hope of plunder.⁶⁸

This passage of Thucydides, completed by an account of the actual campaign, represents an extremely valuable, if not very detailed, source of information on the army of Sitalces. In this context, the relatively strong contingent of the horsemen, making up nearly one third of the whole army, cannot go unmentioned. The cavalry was for the most part Odrysian, but also Getic, who were known as mounted archers, and thus constituted the light cavalry of the force. Thucydides does not mention any heavy cavalry; he only specifies that in the direct combat the Thracians barely resisted the Macedonian armored cavalry, and only managed to get the upper hand because of their vast numerical advantage.⁶⁹ This evidence does not prove the absence of such Odrysian forces. It should be regarded as an indication of their smaller number or, perhaps, their more poor equipment as compared to the Macedonian heavy cavalry.

Still scarcer and more insufficient is the information about Sitalces' infantry, the only valuable data related concerning the Dii, described by Thucydides as *μαχαιροφόροι*, and singled out by him as the most belligerent in the entire army.⁷⁰ All of Sitalces' infantry were probably lightly armed, the greatest part consisting of peltasts, armed with two spears and a shield. Yet, as it turned out subsequently, the lack of heavy infantry and the insuf-

⁶⁷ Thuc. 2.96.1–3.

⁶⁸ Thuc. 2.98.3.

⁶⁹ Thuc. 2.100.5.

⁷⁰ Thuc. 2.98.4.

ficient heavy cavalry did not turn out to be decisive, since it was compensated for by the numerousness by the huge numbers of the army in general.

V

Thucydides' account of Sitalces' campaign against Perdiccas provides valuable information not just about the army of Sitalces, but also about the location of particular tribes, and, above all, about the territorial extent of his kingdom. Combining the latter with another passage from Thucydides⁷¹, we gain quite a clear picture of the total area subject to Sitalces. The southern border may conditionally be divided into two. Firstly, the southeast sector covering the coast-line between the poleis of Abdera and Byzantion; it is not clear whether the Thracian Chersonese was at least partly under his control as well. In this area (from Abdera to Byzantion) were situated the Greek poleis paying tribute to the Odrysian king. Secondly, Mount Rhodope formed part of the southern boundary; in Thucydides view, this was supposed to have been inhabited by the independent tribe of the Dii.

To the east and to the north the realm of Sitalces had as its natural boundaries the Black Sea and the Danube. Thucydides does not specify the line of the entire northern border, but in view of the indirect data he does provide – on the border at the mouth of the Danube and on the mobilization of the tribes south of it – it appears logical to assume that in this period the whole northern Odrysian frontier ran along this river.

In the northwest the kingdom of Sitalces bordered the lands of the Treres and the Tilataei, whose territories spread north of the Scombrus and east of the Oskius, the latter eventually indicating that the bounds of the kingdom did not reach as far as the mentioned river. Beyond the Oskius were the possessions of the independent Triballi, who obviously had no common border with Odrysians. During his campaign against them Sitalces may possibly have crossed the lands of the Treres and the Tilataei. It is not clear, however, if he conquered them, or, whether they, being allies of the Triballi, defeated him, inflicting considerable casualties.⁷²

Finally, the west part of the realm, the hardest to delineate, probably stretched to the upper course of the Strymon, where the settlements of the Agrianes and the Leei were situated.

⁷¹ Thuc. 2.97.1–2.

⁷² Thuc. 4.101.5.

The total area of the Odrysian Kingdom specified by Thucydides seems impressive. A considerable number of Thracian tribes were under the scepter of Sitalces. This only increased the demographic and also the military potential of his kingdom, and allowed him to undertake, when necessary, large-scale military campaigns against his enemies. This fact certainly did not remain unnoticed by the Greeks and made of the Odrysian ruler a welcome ally to the leading Greek powers, Athens and Sparta.

VI

After levying the soldiers needed to undertake the campaign Sitalces set out for Macedonia.⁷³ From Thucydides we can state with certainty that the Odrysian ruler did not use the convenient coastal route from Abdera to the Strymon but invaded the realm of Perdiccas from the north, from the valley of the river Axios. Of course, the choice of this route was influenced by the presence of Amyntas in the Odrysian army: his father Philip's former possessions were situated along the Axios.⁷⁴ In this case the plan must presumably have implied going through friendly Paeonian territory and then attempting to subject Philip's ἀρχή bloodlessly; this would allow Sitalces to reach the heart of the Argead Kingdom without any casualties. This plan turned out to be successful.

Due to the brevity of Thucydides' account, the route of Sitalces' march to the Paeonian settlement of Doberus cannot be precisely charted. The first part of the march from the lands of the Odrysian king was to the uninhabited mountain of Cercine, which at that time serving as a border between the territories of the Sinti and the Paeonians.⁷⁵ Cercine is usually identified with the Ogražden⁷⁶ and the surrounding mountains of Vlahina, but it has also been identified with Malaševska, the west slopes of the Belasica⁷⁷, and with Belasica itself⁷⁸; none of this is very helpful for a precise tracing of the route used by the army of Sitalces.

Provided that Doberus must have been situated somewhere between modern Marvinci and Strumica, we may presume that Sitalces, after leaving his territory, marched down the course of

⁷³ Thuc. 2.98.1–3.

⁷⁴ Thuc. 2.100.3.

⁷⁵ Thuc. 2.98.1.

⁷⁶ Hammond 1972, p. 197.

⁷⁷ Tačeva 1992, p. 71–72; 1993, p. 1449.

⁷⁸ Geyer 1930, p. 62.

the Strymon to the present-day city of Kresna, or even to Sandanski, and then, passing over the Ogražden Mountain and the west slopes of Belasica, arrived at Doberus. Thucydides explicitly states that the Odrysian ruler crossed this mountain using a road first opened by him and his army during an earlier campaign against the Paeonians. It seems logical to assume that during this earlier march the crossing of the wild mountain and the opening of a route over it was meant to lead to a surprise attack on the Paeonians, a plan that obviously did not turn out to be successful, for the local Paeonians remained independent after the campaign. They were, however, allies to Sitalces – a fact that indicates that this campaign should not be regarded as a failure. The alliance with the local Paeonians proved useful in another way, too: on the way to Doberus the Odrysian army not only did not lose any forces, but, on the contrary, increased in strength due to the many independent Thracians who joined the march as volunteers, eager for loot from the upcoming opportunities for plunder.

VII

From Doberus the many troops marched into territory previously controlled by the now deceased Philip. Here they managed to take Eidomene by assault, unsuccessfully besiege Europos, whereas Gortynia, Atalante and some other settlements voluntarily surrendered on hearing of the presence of Philip's son Amyntas in the Odrysian camp. The lands specified by Thucydides as part of Philip's ἀρχή apparently covered at least the narrow strip of Paeonian land mentioned by the historian; it stretched along the west shore of the Axios as far as Pella, and the sea and had earlier been conquered by the ancestors of Perdiccas.⁷⁹

For reasons unclear to us, Sitalces did not plan to invade Bottiaea and Pieria, and did not even attempt to seize the nearby

⁷⁹ Thuc. 2.99.4. As per M. Hatzopoulos ("Macedonian Institutions under the Kings. A Historical and Epigraphic Study", *MEATHMATA* 22, Athens 1996, p. 174–175), Philip's ἀρχή embraced not only the territories along the river Axios, but also the lands of Mygdonia, Crestonia and Anthemus. The author thinks that Sitalces' intention to restore Philip's ἀρχή determined the line of his advance toward these districts (and not toward Pella). In this case Thucydides only mentions the lands along the Axios as part of Philip's ἀρχή, as noticed by Hatzopoulos; in Thucydides's account of the military operations, however, they are marked off from Mygdonia, Crestonia and Anthemus, where Sitalces is said to have striven for other goals, having nothing to do with the claims of Philip's son Amyntas. It is possible that these lands had been part of Philip's ἀρχή, but it was likely that Sitalces intended to conquer them rather than to give them back to Amyntas (see section III).

city of Pella. If he had had the idea of dethroning Perdiccas, this would have been the right moment to take action, all the more so since the Macedonians had ceased their open resistance, and withdrawn behind their fortifications.⁸⁰ The fact that Sitalces did not even make this attempt suggests that his intentions were aimed instead at weakening the might of the Argead Kingdom by splitting it into two; Amyntas was probably restored in his father's ἀρχή, or at least in part of it, in return to the engagement to be loyal to his Odrysian benefactor.⁸¹ If this was not the case, there is also the possibility that the Odrysian ruler either feared the inland allies of Perdiccas⁸² or he was simply content with what he had attained to this point, and was aiming his efforts at the realization of his next objective, i.e. Chalcidice.

Regardless of the reason for Sitalces' decision in this case, it is apparent that Sitalces must have been satisfied with the devastation of Mygdonia, Crestonia and Anthemus, and so did not launch his army against the heart of the Macedonian state.⁸³ Instead, the two states started talks, undoubtedly accepted by the Macedonian king with relief.⁸⁴ At that time the huge Odrysian army had presumably already been deployed at the coast by the estuary of the Axios⁸⁵, for Sitalces had to receive Athenian envoys, who – instead of announcing the arrival of the allied fleet – tried to excuse its absence by stressing their disbelief that his troops would really arrive.

Until this moment Sitalces may possibly have cherished hopes of the arrival of the Athenian fleet, as Athens must have been informed by her envoy to the Odrysian court, Hagnon, about the beginning of the campaign. Yet, the fleet did not arrive, which presumably indicates that the Athenians considered the campaign

⁸⁰ Thuc. 2.100.1.

⁸¹ Diodorus (12.50.6) mentions about coronation of Amyntas by the Thracians, but his evidence has no confirmation in Thucydides' text. As professor Hatzopoulos drew my attention, Diodorus' phrase: "οἱ δὲ Θραῖκες καταγαγόντες τὸν Ἀμύνταν ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν..." is merely a paraphrase of Thucydides': "τὸν τε Φιλίππου υἱὸν Ἀμύνταν ὡς ἐπὶ βασιλείᾳ τῶν Μακεδόνων ἦγε..." and so it has no independent value.

⁸² Borza 1992, p. 147.

⁸³ Thuc. 2.100.4.

⁸⁴ Thuc. 2.101.1.

⁸⁵ Hammond 1979, p. 128–129, followed by Borza 1992, p. 146, n. 38. Although not mentioned by Thucydides an eventual advance of Sitalces along the valley of the Axios seems entirely logical considering the route his army was taking. Grote (1851, p. 290) already had the idea that Sitalces might have moved to the mouth of the Axios.

of no advantage to them; being unable to prevent it, however, they preferred to remain and watch it as passive observers, standing aloof and hoping that the upcoming events would exhaust the participants in the conflict.

While negotiating with Perdiccas, Sitalces sent a major part of his troops against the Chalcidians and the Bottiaei, who – not withstanding this pressure – withdrew behind their fortifications.⁸⁶ Thucydides states that this action panicked the Thessalians, the Magnesians and all the other Greeks settled north of Thermopylae, as well as the independent Thracians beyond the Strymon, i.e. the Panaeans, Odomanti, Droii and Dersai.⁸⁷ However, Sitalces' undertaking also proved unsuccessful in view of its goals – the troops he sent did not manage to take even a single settlement, contenting themselves with the devastation of the area.⁸⁸

VIII

The approaching winter, the shortage of supplies, and the lack of decisive success placed the Odrysian king in an extremely difficult tactical position, which he managed to escape in the safest possible way by withdrawing from the occupied areas and returning to his subject lands. According to Thucydides, the major reason for Sitalces' retreat – along with provisioning problems and the bitterly cold weather – was the plots and machinations of Perdiccas, who even managed to secretly win over the Odrysian king's nephew Seuthes.⁸⁹ In these clandestine talks Seuthes was promised a considerable amount of money as well as marriage to the Macedonian princess Stratonice, Perdiccas' sister. In return – obviously through his own standing as second in command to the king in army and state – Seuthes committed himself to arrange the withdrawal of the Odrysian army from the occupied Macedonian lands. In the end the plan did succeed: Sitalces withdrew his army from Macedonia and Stratonice became the wife of Seuthes. The fact that the marriage came into effect indicates that there must really have been active negotiations between Perdiccas and Seuthes, though it is hard to determine, whether the Sitalces was unaware of these, or if he was in control of the ongoing talks.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Thuc. 2.101.1.

⁸⁷ Thuc. 2.101.2–3.

⁸⁸ Thuc. 2.101.5.

⁸⁹ Thuc. 2.101.5–6.

⁹⁰ Thucydides presents Sitalces as a ruler whose decision were dependent on the demands of the Athenians (Thuc. 2.95), and whose closest relatives

In modern scholarship on this issue, one often meets the view that Seuthes, in pursuit of his own interests, negotiated with Perdiccas behind the back of Sitalces⁹¹; this is, in a way, understandable, given the fact that the information for these negotiations comes from such an authoritative source as Thucydides. It appears certain, however, that the clue to the resolution of this problem is related to Stratonice or, more precisely, to the dating of her arrival at the Odrysian court. If the agreement between Seuthes and Perdiccas really was concluded without Sitalces' knowledge, we will have to admit that the marriage to the Macedonian princess must have been contracted after the death of the Odrysian king (424 BC), so that the plot remain unrevealed and, correspondingly, Seuthes went unpunished.

Such an outline of events does not appear very plausible, since it is hard to believe that five, or even more, years after the campaign of Sitalces, the Macedonian king – known for his inconsistency as regards his engagements and liabilities – would send his sister to the Odrysian court at a time when he would have gained no benefit from such an action. If this presumption proves true, and the marriage was actually contracted prior to the death of Sitalces, it will indicate that Seuthes' participation in the talks with Perdiccas must have been initiated by the Odrysian king himself. In that case Seuthes may have acted as official representative of the Odrysian king, or he could have been part of some other plan, with the negotiations being controlled by Sitalces on the Odrysian side, but this fact somehow remaining unknown to Perdiccas. Some evidence provided by Diodorus seems to support the first presumption: according to Diodorus, Sitalces – having heard that the Greeks levying a strong army against him, and taking into account the fact, too, that his soldiers were suffering from the cold weather – decided to make peace with Perdiccas, and also arranged the dynastic marriage discussed above.⁹²

In view of the arguments adduced so far, this evidence – no matter how insecure because of the sources Diodorus was basing his account on – completely coheres with the overall background of the campaign in 429 BC. Having achieved almost nothing of his objectives, and also taking into account the difficult situation he found himself in, Sitalces agreed to pull out his troops from the

constantly acted behind his back (Thuc. 2.67; 2.101.5–6.). This description is in complete contrast to Thucydides' depiction of Perdiccas.

⁹¹ A. Höck, "Das Odrysenreich in Thrakien: Im fünften und vierten Jahrhundert v. Chr.", *Hermes* 26/1, 1891, p. 81; Cole 1974, p. 65; Hammond 1979, p. 129; Borza 1992, p. 147; Tačeva 1993, p. 1451.

⁹² Diod. 12.51.2.

occupied areas in exchange for a considerable amount of money and a dynastic marriage, which seems to have been a prerequisite for the warming of bilateral relations. The conclusion of this agreement presumably indicates that the Odrysian king withdrew his support for Amyntas; the latter – from this point on – is not mentioned again in our literary sources. The agreement proved favourable to Perdikkas, for it seemed to neutralize the threat to his position as ruler and finally eliminated the threat of his brother Philip's successors – and all of this without him having to give up even an inch of the lands under his rule. Yet in spite of his sly and calculating nature the Macedonian king did not dare to break his promise – something he had repeatedly done before during his reign. Thus, probably very soon after the withdrawal of Sitalces, or, maybe even immediately afterwards, Perdikkas sent his sister Stratonice to the Odrysian court hoping that this move could prevent another Odrysian invasion of Macedonian territory.

IX

According to Thucydides the military campaign of Sitalces continued for 30 days, of which eight were spent in the Chalcidice.⁹³ In spite of the large scale of the campaign, it seems that Sitalces could not manage to achieve the expected results. For this reason, M. Tačeva judges the operations of Sitalces in winter 429 BC as a failure, even maintaining that the campaign exhausted the Odrysian Kingdom financially and undermined the Odrysian royal authority, leading to the non-participation of the independent Thracians from the ensuing campaign against the Triballi.⁹⁴

Such conclusions appear exaggerated. Under the rule of Sitalces the Odrysian royal treasury was being continuously filled by the annual influx of large amounts of money coming from taxes and gifts, a fact suggesting the impossibility of a financial exhaustion of the kingdom even after the undertaking of this kind of large-scale operations. As regards Odrysian political prestige and the presumed retreat of the independent Thracians, one should note that for those taking part in Sitalces' campaigns as mercenaries the most important thing was to receive proper financial reward – regardless of the final result of the campaign – whereas the others, who had voluntarily joined the army, the only thing that mattered, was the opportunity for plunder, and thus it did not make a difference which Thracian army they followed. Hence, we can assert with good reason that the military campaign against Perdikkas

⁹³ Thuc. 2.101.6.

⁹⁴ Tačeva 1990, p. 382.

cas and the Chalcidians – although unsuccessful in achieving the intended goals – did not negatively impact the Odrysian Kingdom. Moreover, it seems very likely that in the period after the campaign Sitalces could have increased his influence, or even temporarily imposed his rule over the Paeonians, neighbors of the Agrianes and the Laeaei subject to him, and perhaps also over the Maedi and Sinti, if he marched through their lands on his way back from Macedonia. Unfortunately, the scarce information we possess for this campaign does not offer us the possibility of arriving at reliable conclusions on this issue either.

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