

Round Table 5: Army and Power in the Ancient World

Subject: Foreign occupation troops as instrument of power

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Foreign soldiers - native girls? Constructing and crossing boundaries in Hellenistic cities with foreign garrisons

1 Introduction

The maintenance of a garrison in a city or a region was for many a Hellenistic power a comfortable alternative to conquest and direct administration. Every major power held garrisons in dependent settlements of various legal statuses, usually in dependent poleis (Launey 1987: 633-675). The establishment of garrisons, the duration of their presence, and their removal was a major topic in negotiations between poleis and kings or military leaders. However, when we raise the question about the ways in which the officers and the soldiers of foreign garrisons interacted with the native population, our sources often let us down. Equally scanty is the evidence for the everyday life of the soldiers, with the exception of a few Ptolemaic garrisons, in Cyprus and Thera in particular (Bagnall 1976: 38-79, 123-134). Although the title of this paper points to the most intimate of all possible relations between foreign soldiers and natives, it explores various aspects of interaction. When we consider foreign garrisons in the Hellenistic world, we should bear in mind that (i) in the Hellenistic period garrisons were usually manned with mercenaries of many different origins; the Attalid garrison at Lilaia (208 B.C.), e.g., brought together soldiers from the Peloponnese, Euboia, Lokris, Phokis, the ethnos of the Ainianes, Aitolia, Thessaly, Kalymnos, Crete, Macedonia, Thrace, various regions of Asia Minor (esp. Mysia), Sicily, and Massalia (Launey 1987: 71-73). (ii) There is a substantial difference between persons hired by a power to serve in a foreign place for money and the soldiers of a polis serving in a controlled or subordinated area. The form of the interaction between native population and foreign troops could easily be influenced by this distinction, as indeed it was (iii) by the exact conditions under which a garrison was established (capitulation, negotiations, defeat in a war, invitation by the entire community or by a particular group). (iv) A fourth important factor is the duration of the

service of the foreign troops and their commanders. A man who served for 42 years in a garrison in a relatively peaceful area (a commander at Philai: *SEG XXVIII 1479*) has little in common with a soldier sent by a Macedonian king to his garrison in Athens and facing an Athenian revolt a few months after his transfer.

2 Foreign garrisons and the amputation of autonomy

An Athenian decree concerning the so-called ‘Second Athenian League (387/77 B.C.) gives a clear definition of autonomy: the members of this League should be “free and autonomous, living under whatever constitution they choose, *admitting no garrison*, submitting to no governor and paying no tribute” (*SV 257*). If the freedom from foreign troops appears here as one of the fundamentals of autonomy, this can be explained by what the Greeks had experienced under the Athenian and the Spartan Empire. From 378/77 onwards the term *aphrouretos*, i.e., ‘ungarrisoned’, is almost a synonym for *autonomos* in the diplomatic language of the Greeks (e.g., *SV 442, 489, I.Illion 45 = SEG XXXVIII 1252*). *Aphrouresia* was a privilege no less eagerly desired than exemption from the payment of tribute (e.g., Polyb. 15.24.2; *I.Iasos 2; Sardis VII.1 2 = SEG XXXVII 1003*). The violent or peaceful removal of a foreign garrison was one of the most common occasions for the establishment of a commemorative anniversary (Chaniotis 1991: 125). Hellenistic orators and historians never tire of emphasising the slavish element inherent in the presence of a garrison; for Plutarch’s Hellenistic source (Aratos 38.10) the Achaeans were ‘bridled like a horse’ (*hosper chalinoumenous*), when they accepted a Macedonian garrison and delivered hostages to king Antigonos Doseon. An Athenian honorific decree honoring Euphron of Sikyon for fighting against the Macedonian garrison in his city in 322 B.C. (*IG II² 448*) gives us a vivid impression of how people thought and talked about foreign garrisons (ll. 43-56): “during the Greek War, which the people of Athens started for the sake of the Greeks, Euphron returned from exile, expelled the garrison from the citadel with the concurrence of the Sikyonians, liberated the city and made it — first among all the Peloponnesian cities — a friend and an ally of the Athenians; as long as the people continued the war, he participated in it and he contributed soldiers and whatever is necessary in a war; when, however, Greece was befallen by misfortune, and garrisons were sent to those cities which had previously expelled them, he chose to be killed

by the enemies, fighting for the democracy, so that he might not see his own country and the rest of Greece enslaved.” The Greeks were conscious of the incompatibility of freedom and autonomy and the presence of foreign troops. Foreign troops were an instrument of subordination: they implemented a more or less direct control over the political institutions of a community; they occupied its military facilities; and to some extent they controlled or exploited its economic resources, e.g., through the control of harbors or through the confiscation of land; the Ptolemaic garrisons in particular also contributed to the creation of a Ptolemaic monetary zone (Bagnall 1976: 176-212). Our information on exactly how a foreign garrison served as an instrument of control and subordination is limited to reports concerning the most violent aspect of its presence: its establishment and its direct confrontation with rebellious citizens. But what happened between the violent beginning and the bloody end? That a foreign garrison had a deterrent effect on the population is sometimes explicitly stated: after the capitulation of Athens to Antipatros in 322 the Athenians had to accept a garrison, as Diodoros (18.18.3) reports, so that they would not make revolutionary movements (*neoterizein*); and if there is some truth in a report of Apollodoros (*FGrHist* 244 F 44; cf. Dreyer 1999: 167 note 224), Antigonos Gonatas’ measures in Athens after 260 B.C. combined the establishment of a garrison with infringement upon the constitutional order. But as will become clear from the next examples, there are several other possibilities which range between the extremes of blind terror mentioned so far and the love pleasures promised by the title of my paper.

3 Fears and expectations

One of the most common sources for foreign garrisons are honorific decrees for their commanders (*phourarchoi*) issued by the communities where the garrisons served (Launey 1987: 642-651). Despite their formulaic language these inscriptions do indicate some kind of interaction. A characteristic example is an honorific decree of Xanthos for Pandaros, commander of the garrison sent by Ptolemy II (*SEG* XXXV 1183). “Pandaros, son of Nikias from Herakleia, was sent by king Ptolemy as commander of the garrison at Xanthos; he has shown good and meritorious behaviour, worthy of the king, providing no reasons for complaint to the polis of the Xanthians and doing many and great services both to the entire community and to each one

individually.” To say that a commander had not given reasons for complaints (*anenkletos*, a formulaic expression often attested in such decrees) can be understood as a praise only if commanders of garrisons often *did* behave in a way that provoked negative reactions. Of course it lies in the nature of the honorific decrees that we only hear of commanders who have been righteous and disciplined; but even this trivial phraseology reveals that some commanders were better than others; otherwise it would be difficult to understand why the Aiginetans repeatedly sent envoys to the Attalid kings asking them to maintain Kleon of Pergamon as the commander of their island (*OGIS* 329). Similarly, the phrase “services, both to the entire community and to each one individually” implies relations between the phourarchos and individual Xanthians; such relations are sometimes directly attested, e.g., in the case of Hieron of Syracuse, commander of the Ptolemaic troops on Keos; in a decree of Karthaia to his honor (*IG* XII 5, 1061) the common vague and formulaic phrases (ll. 5-7) are followed by a narrative of his zealous intervention to save the property of a citizen (ll. 8-11).

The allusions to complaints remind us that foreign soldiers were a burden on a community, an element of disorder, even of insecurity. A treaty between Iasos, Ptolemy I, and the commanders of his (?) garrison (*I.Iasos* 2, ca. 309 B.C.) includes an amnesty clause for legal disputes between the foreign troops and the Iaseis; the charter of the shopkeepers in the Heraion of Samos (*SEG* XXVII 545, late 3rd cent.) refers to four potential violators of order: *stratiotai* (Ptolemaic soldiers), unemployed mercenaries (*apergoi*), suppliants, and runaway slaves. A preoccupation with discipline, order, and good behavior is also clear in the few surviving military regulations (Fernández Nieto 1997) and in the honorific decrees for troops and their commanders (Launey 1987: 692f.). A treaty between Teos and Kirbyssos points to further problems (*SEG* XXVI 1306; Robert 1976: 188-228): In the 3rd cent. Teos absorbed Kyrbissos, granting its inhabitants Teian citizenship. The treaty stipulates that Kyrbissos was to be retained as a fort under the command of a phourarchos sent by Teos. A certain maturity was required for this office, since its holder should be older than thirty; one of his first duties was to establish discipline. But the real fears are revealed by the treaty oath. The “citizens in the polis” (the Teians) swore that they would not destroy the settlement at Kirbyssos; and “the citizens who

inhabit Kirbyssos” swore that they would not abandon the phourarchos, follow his commands, defend the fort, and reveal any plans against the garrison. These mutual oaths suggest that one could anticipate tensions between the two groups. The Teians were also concerned that the garrison might revolt against the polis; the fear of mutiny was not only felt in Teos, but in every power which kept garrisons (Launey 1987: 671-674; Robert 1976: 199, 210-214; cf. *SV* 481 and 492).

More unusual is the co-operation between a foreign garrison and the natives against the power which had established the garrison. Strombichos, an officer in the service of Demetrios Poliorketes when the Athenians revolted against the Macedonian garrison in 282/81 B.C., took the side of the Athenians (*IG II²* 666): “when the people took up the weapons to fight for freedom and asked the (garrison) soldiers to take the part of the polis, he accepted the call of the demos for freedom and he placed his arms in the service of the polis, in the belief that he should not oppose the polis’ benefit, but that he should contribute to its rescue.” A dossier of letters of Eumenes II concerning the grant of a polis constitution to the inhabitants of Tyriaion (Jonnes and Riel 1997) possibly presents another example of co-operation between garrison and natives: Tyriaion did not have polis status; its population consisted both of natives and soldiers, either military settlers or more probably soldiers of garrisons. The Tyriaieis sent several embassies to the king expressing the wish to organize themselves as a demos with their own laws, a council, and a gymnasium. The names of the envoys are so untypical for this region (one of them is Gaulish), that we may assume that the contribution of the foreign soldiers (whether retired military settlers or active troops) in this development was crucial.

4 Garrisons and the ideology of Hellenistic monarchy

Hellenistic kings founded the legitimacy of their rule not only on dynastical principles, but also to a great extent on military victories, on a privileged relationship to the divine, and on their role as benefactors. That the beneficent nature of Hellenistic kingship could be propagated through its most hated instrument of control sounds paradoxical; but the sending of a garrison by a king was often explained as an act of benefaction which aimed at protecting the place in question. The aversion of the Greeks to garrisons could then be compensated through rhetorical

devices, i.e., through the replacement of the discredited word *phroura* with a derivative of the verb *phylatto* ('to protect'). When king Philip V was asked by the Aitolian statesman Alexandros why he kept a garrison at Lysimacheia (198 B.C.) undermining the city's freedom, he pointed to the distinction between *phrourein* and *phylattein*: his troops were present there not as a garrison, but as protectors of the city against the Thracians (Polyb. 18.4.5). Similarly, the Ptolemaic garrison at Itanos on Crete, established at the initiative of the Itanians, but also very advantageous for the Ptolemaic control of the sea routes (Kreuter 1992: 18-34), was officially declared as aiming to help and protect the Itanians (*I.Cret.* III iv 9 ll. 40 and 97). Foreign garrisons are known to have defended the local population from the raids of pirates or enemies (e.g., Launey 1987: 644f., 654f.; Bagnall 1976: 128, 132f., 160, 221). By rendering such services, a Hellenistic monarch could justify his claim to the title of *Soter* (Savior). Through their dedications addressed to or in honor of the royal house the phourarchoi became bearers of the dynastic ideology. In Thera all dedications addressed to the deified Ptolemaic kings, in which the names of the dedicators are known to us, were initiated by members of the garrison (*IG XII 3*, 464, 1390, 1391; cf. Bagnall 1976: 124-126); gymnastic contests were held in honor of the king in the local gymnasium during the tenure of the office of the gymnasiarchos by Baton, a member of the garrison (*IG XII 3*, 331; Bagnall 1976: 129). The role of garrisons in the promulgation of the royal cult can be seen best in Itanos on Crete: a Ptolemaic garrison was established there probably during the reign of Ptolemy III (Kreuter 1992: 18-34); during his reign the Itanians dedicated a temenos to the king, who is praised for protecting the city and its laws, and to queen Berenike and established annual sacrifices (ca. 246?; *I.Cret.* III iv 4; Habicht 1970: 120-122). Once established, the dynastic cult could be continued, often under the care of the phourarchoi. It is the commander of the garrison who made a dedication to Ptolemy IV Philopator and queen Arsinoe (ca. 217-209; *I.Cret.* III iv 18). With such actions — whether guided by the royal administration or not — the garrisons reminded the local population that there was a divine element inherent in kingship and made the presence of the king felt in the city.

5 Loci of interaction: sanctuary and gymnasium

In the epigraphic material the foreign soldiers are present primarily in two civic areas: in sanctuaries and gymnasia. Since access to both areas was subject to restrictions, the participation of foreign soldiers in the religious life and in the life of the gymnasium should be seen as an important indication of their integration. But the limits of this integration become obvious when one takes a closer look at the evidence. The foreign soldiers in Greek cities did make dedications in important sanctuaries of their place of service (e.g., *IG IV* 769, 852, 1352), but the overall impression is that they preferred to worship deities of their own city, deities particularly popular among military personnel, and deities of the kingdom which had recruited them. The cult of the Egyptian deities in Ptolemaic Thera, attested in numerous dedications from the early 3rd cent. onwards, is the best documented case (Vidman 1969: 88-91); the earliest dedication was made by a member of the garrison and the association of the Basilistai which was devoted to the Ptolemaic dynastic cult; the sanctuary of the Egyptian deities was restored by a former Ptolemaic officer for the well-being of king Ptolemy III and his deified ancestors, who were probably worshipped in the same temenos ; another member of the garrison — a man from Myndos — made a dedication there for the well-being of Ptolemy IV and queen Arsinoe. Some soldiers in Thera seem to have been organised in a religious association dedicated to the cult of Dionysos Thrax (*SEG VIII* 714; Bagnall 1976: 129), a patron god of the Ptolemies. Similarly, the Attalid garrisons in Aigina and in Panion in Thrace worshipped Zeus Soter and Athena Nikephoros, deities particularly associated with Pergamon (Launey 1987: 956). It is not necessary to assume that the promotion of these cults was guided by the royal administration; personal idiosyncracies were often the decisive factor, as in the case of Philotas from Epidamnos, known from dedication he made during his service in the Ptolemaic garrisons in Itanos on Crete and at Philai in Egypt (ca. 150-140; *I.Épidamne* p. 155). The barriers between the foreign soldiers and the native population were surmounted when commanders or soldiers distinguished themselves as benefactors, e.g., by erecting or restoring buildings in local sanctuaries. A phourarchos, because of his position and means, had many opportunities to distinguish himself as a benefactor, especially when he was stationed in a less wealthy and prominent city. This explains why Delphi appointed as its theorodokoi in three rather small poleis of Cyprus (Lapethos, Karpasia, Tamassos) the foreign

commanders of the local garrisons (Bagnall 1976: 65f.). Another area suitable for interaction was the gymnasium, one of the most characteristic features of civic life and a place of great importance for military training. In Tyrhiaion (see above) one of the major concerns of the soldiers was the foundation of a gymnasium. The integration of the foreign soldiers in the life of the local gymnasium is best attested in Thera and Paphos, where even common soldiers contributed from their pay to help ensure the supply of oil (Bagnall 1976: 68 and 128f.). Generalisations from these cases are not permissible, since Thera and Cyprus were under continual Ptolemaic control for long periods of time; the establishment of more permanent relations with the natives was facilitated by long-term service.

6 Foreign soldiers and native girls: legal boundaries and mixed marriages

Soldiers must have been attracted by the beauty or the dowry of women in their place of service (cf. Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, act IV). They had left behind their native city, but neither their sexual desires nor the hope of marital life. The first could be satisfied through visits to the local brothel (cf., Plautus' *Bacchides*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Pseudolus*, and *Truculentus*), but the obligation to produce legitimate heirs required a legitimate marriage. Mixed marriages are common in garrisoned sites in Egypt (Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1984), but in the world of the Greek cities the legal barriers were often stronger than the wish to create a family. In many cities the legitimacy of the marriage required citizenship from both man and wife or was allowed on the basis of an interstate agreement. In some cities these restrictions were loosened (Ogden 1996), but in many others (e.g., in Crete) they remained valid. We may see how they affected the marriage patterns, if we concentrate on particular ethnic groups, e.g., the Cretans. Hellenistic Crete was one of the main sources of mercenaries, and consequently the Cretans attested in garrisoned areas can be easily identified as soldiers. In the late 3rd cent. Miletos enfranchised more than 1000 Cretans and settled them on the newly acquired territory of Hybandis (Brulé 1990: 238-242; Herrmann 1997: 160-164). These mercenaries migrated with their families, retained their original civic identity, and attempted to return to their native cities sometime later. We observe the same pattern, i.e., the presence of Cretan women, in the Antigonid garrisons of Attika, Euboia, and Thessaly (Chaniotis 1996: 27 note 118). More interesting are the examples of

mixed marriages of Cretans with other ethnic groups in garrisoned places (outside Egypt). In two cases we can determine the origin of the non-Cretan partner; in both cases it is Aitolia, a region with which treaties which allow mixed marriages with Cretans are attested (Chanotis 1996: 16f., 36f.): The daughter of Charmadas from Anopolis, who served in a Ptolemaic garrison in Koile Syria, married his fellow soldier Machaios, an Aitolian (*SEG VIII 269*, 3rd/2nd cent.). In the Ptolemaic garrison at Kition Aristo, daughter of the Cretan soldier Dion, married Melankomas, an Aitolian highly-ranked officer of the garrison (*OGIS 134*, ca. 146-116). This preference for Aitolians is striking. Did the legal relationships of Cretan cities with Aitolia in the 3rd cent. influence the marriage patterns of Cretans as late as the mid 2nd cent.? A contemporary letter sent by the Cretan city of Axos to the Aitolians (early 2nd cent. B.C.; *I.Cret. II v 19*) seems to confirm this: Axos, whose citizens had citizenship in Aitolia on the basis of a treaty, wanted to secure these rights for a certain Epikles. His father, Eraton, a citizen of Axos, had come as a mercenary to Cyprus; there he married a woman of unknown name and origin; she gave birth to two sons, Epikles and Euagoras. After Eraton's death in Cyprus, his widow and Epikles were captured and Epikles was sold as a slave in the Aitolian city Amphissa. He was able to pay the ransom and settled = in Amphissa where he took a wife. The letter of the Axians, written more than 30 years after Eraton's departure for Cyprus, shows the strength of the legal ties of Epikles to his father's city which he probably had never visited.

7 Hellenistic garrisons: creating and crossing boundaries

Foreign troops of occupation and garrisons are unanimously condemned by Hellenistic sources, and yet they were ubiquitous. Although the evidence for the life of the soldiers and their interaction with the natives is not abundant, it still shows how multifaceted this phenomenon is. On the one hand, political motives, legal factors (citizenship), and to some extent religious practices separated the foreign soldiers from the native population they were sent to subordinate. The garrisons were a burden on the society and the economy, an element of disorder, whose departure could only be greeted with joy; very often the foreign soldiers remained within their own group, socialized with other soldiers, and avoided marriages with the natives. On the other hand through the real or imaginary protection they offered to the garrisoned community and

through the promotion of the dynastic cult they familiarised the native population with elements of the Hellenistic monarchical ideology. Depending on the place, the conditions, and the duration of their service, even a solidarity with the natives could come about. Individual members of the garrison could distinguish themselves as benefactors of the foreign community; the garrison could even initiate the creation of a new civic community together with the native population.

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SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.

SV = *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*.