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## WHY PERSEUS? THE NAME OF THE LAST MACEDONIAN KING AND ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

**ABSTRACT:** The paper discusses the historical significance of the personal name Perseus borne by the last Macedonian king of the Antigonid dynasty. It is argued that giving that name, which coincides, directly or indirectly, with issuing a new coin series of Philip V bearing an image of the great hero Perseus, is related to plans and political aspirations of king Philip V in the West. Using myth about Perseus for political reasons, most clearly expressed in the Medusa episode, shows intentions of Philip V in the First Macedonian War. The ambitious Macedonian king, like his famous heroic ancestor who beheaded Medusa, the only mortal Gorgon, had to deal with the Romans as with the Gorgon of the West. Because of its symbolism, the name Perseus, which constantly reminded the contemporaries of slaying the horrible Gorgon Medusa, is chosen as a name that will be given to Philip's son (and the heir, as it turned out) at the very moment (213 or 212 B.C.) when Philip is fighting a great battle against a horrible beast now threatening to conquer Greece.

**KEY WORDS:** Perseus, Philip V of Macedon, Romans and West, Polybius, Greek heroic and personal names, myth and politics, coins and propaganda, First Macedonian War.

One of the most interesting personal names of the ancient Macedonian kings certainly is the heroic name Perseus (Περσεύς), borne by the last Macedonian king of the Antigonid dynasty (born ca. 213 BC, ruled as king of Macedonia from 179 to 168 BC). That is also the only attestation of this name in the Antigonid royal house, where for generations names like *Antigonos*, *Demetrios* and *Philippos* occurred. Considering what is known about king Philip V and his propaganda and political activities, there is enough evidence to believe that in the case

of the name Perseus we are dealing with deliberately and for political reasons chosen name. Indeed, the personal name Perseus and others of the same family and of similar formations attested also later as anthroponyms,<sup>1</sup> but it seems that nowhere, like in the case of the name Perseus, the son of Philip V, the message has been so clearly sent to the contemporaries and the political content of the name so emphasized.

Perseus (Περσεύς), the last Macedonian king, was Philip's son most probably from his relationship with Polykrateia (Πολυκράτεια), who is said to have been from Argos or from Sikyon. Polykrateia was daughter-in-law of the Achaean statesman Aratos of Sikyon, before Philip seduced her and took from her first husband, the younger Aratos, and made her Macedonian queen. This marriage produced a son and heir Perseus, born in 213 or 212 BC.<sup>2</sup> In ancient times there was, understandably, an extremely hostile tradition about Perseus, the last Macedonian king, which implied that he was illegitimate son of Philip, even that his mother was a sempstress or concubine.<sup>3</sup> Scholars, however, assumed that Perseus' mother was Polykrateia the Argive, probably a member of the distinguished house of Polykrates of Argos, or perhaps born in Sykion, since the feminine name Polykrateia was well attested in this city, where the Achaean statesman Aratos and his family derived from.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At Rome, for example, H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch*, Vol. I, Berlin, New York 1982, p. 512, lists in total 18 attestations of the personal name Perseus, all from the time of the Roman Empire when some of the heroic names became fashionable again. The heroic name Perseus has vague etymology; it could be pre-Greek, just like the name Περσεφόνη, but even since the time of ancient lexicographers it had been assumed that it could derive from Homeric Greek πέρθω, πέρσαι ("desolate, destroy, plunder, ravage, sack"), cf. περσέ-π(τ)ολις. See H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I–III, Heidelberg 1960–1972, 512, 517; H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen: sprachwissenschaftliche und historische Klassifikation*, Göttingen 1982, 361; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étimologique de la langue Grecque. Histoire des mots*, I–IV, Paris 1968–1980, 889.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* IV 2, Berlin und Leipzig 1927<sup>2</sup>, 140, who suggests the year 213, which is accepted, for example, by F. W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedonia*, Cambridge 1940, p. 261 n. 3; p. 300 n. 5. That Perseus could have been born a year later in 212 BC, cf. F. Geyer, *RE* XIX, 1937, 996, s.v. Perseus (5); D. Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: the Hellenistic Dynasties*, London 1999, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> See Plut. *Aral* 54, 3; Liv. XXXIX 53, 3–4. Cf. E. Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, pp. 193–94, on hostile tradition about Philip, Polykrateia and Perseus as well as misunderstanding of Macedonian royal polygamy.

<sup>4</sup> For arguments that Polykrateia was Argive, see K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* IV 2, Berlin und Leipzig 1927<sup>2</sup>, pp. 139–140, which is accepted by many scholars, for example, G. H. Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens. A Study of Woman-power in Macedonia, Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt*, Baltimore 1932, 72–73; P. Meloni, *Perseo e la fine della monarchia macedone*, Roma 1953, 13–14; J. Seibert, *Historische Beiträge zu den dynastischen Verbindungen in hellenistischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1967, p. 39; N. G. L. Hammond in N. G. L. Hammond, F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. HI, Oxford 1988, p. 490. But see *LGPN* III A, s.v. Polykrateia (4), citing C. H. Skalet, *Ancient Sicyon, with a Prosopographia Sicyonia*, Baltimore 1928, n. 267 on page 206, where Polykrateia was placed among native Sikyonians.

If we accept the suggestion that Polykrateia was from Argos, then the choice of name for her son could remind us of the great Argive hero Perseus, that is, the name Perseus as a personal name itself reflects Argive descent. The name Perseus might have been a very appropriate name for a son of a distinguished Argive woman.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the name Perseus, attested as a personal name within the royal Macedonian family, could rather indicate that the Antigonids traced their descent from the hero Perseus; hence, through Perseus, they tended to be linked with the greatest Greek hero Herakles. And Herakles himself was actually *Perseides* (Περσεΐδης), the descendant of Perseus (Περσεύς), the great hero, who had been, since Homer and Hesiod, celebrated as the son of Zeus and Danae.<sup>6</sup> Even though the Antigonids, unlike the old Argead kings, were not formally the Heraklids, the Heraklid propaganda was certainly familiar to them.<sup>7</sup> Common Heraklid ancestry was one of the ways of the Antigonid kings to achieve connection with the older Argead or Temenid dynasty. In his propaganda, Philip V could emulate his famous predecessor on the Macedonian throne and his namesake Philip II. According to Polybius, he tried very hard to prove that he is related (συγγενής) to Alexander the Great and Philip II.<sup>8</sup> There are also certain indications pointing towards special family relationship of the Antigonids with Herakles.<sup>9</sup> All those proclaimed Heraklid connections could reflect in the choice of name for the son of Philip V. But why Perseus and why then? The answer could be found, first of all, in plans and propaganda of Philip V, Perseus' father and the great Antigonid king on the Macedonian throne, in a policy that would involve him in the great Hannibalic War.

That crucial moment happened at the beginning of the so-called First Macedonian War, when Philip decided to interfere with the events in the West, the decisive conflict between Rome and Carthage, and even made an alliance with the greatest enemy of Rome, Hannibal. Keeping track of the events in the First Macedonian War (lasted from 215 to 205 BC) from the most important literary source, the text of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* IV 2, Berlin u. Leipzig 1927<sup>2</sup>, 139–140. See also L.-M. Günther, *DNP* 10, 2001, 69, s.v. Polykrateia: “Perseus, in dessen Namen sind die argivische Abkunft spiegelt.”

<sup>6</sup> For early literary and artistic sources on Perseus, cf. T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, Baltimore 1993, 300–311. See now also D. Ogden, *Perseus*, Oxford and New York 2008.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, U. Huttner, *Die politische Rolle der Heraklesgestalt im griechischen Herrschertum* (*Historia Einzelschriften* 112), Stuttgart 1997, 163–173.

<sup>8</sup> Polyb. V 10, 10. See also three epigrams by the poet Samos, a close friend of the Macedonian king Philip, in the Greek anthology (*Anth. Pal.* VI 114–116) where Philip V is openly praised as a follower and descendant of Herakles.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. C. F. Edson, The Antigonids, Heracles, and Beroea, *HSCPh* 45, 1934, 226ff.

Polybius' *Histories*, is to a large degree hampered on account of its fragmentary state (from Book VII onward). But from Polybius' point of view main causes of war and the events in connection with the background of this conflict, can be analyzed in detail.

In looking for the reasons which brought about the first confrontation and war between the Romans and Philip V, Polybius goes a few years back, in the time of peace negotiations in Naupaktos (217 BC), which ended the so-called Social War in Greece. That is also a key event in Polybius' *Histories*, because from that time on, according to Polybius, the affairs of East and West became definitely and inextricably intertwined and mutually conditional. During those summer months, news of the affairs in Italy started to arrive in Greece, and the Hannibal's great victory over Rome in the battle at Lake Trasimene in Italy, according to Polybius, made such a strong impression on the Macedonian king Philip, that it provoked a strong wish in him to join the conflict in the West for the purpose of conquering the whole world. That is why he decides to make peace with the Aitolian League immediately and end the Social War in Greece to have a free hand for operations in the West.<sup>10</sup>

Of speeches given at the peace conference in Naupaktos, Polybius singled out just one, the speech by Agelaos (Ἀγέλαος) of Naupaktos, the Aitolian ambassador. In the Agelaos' speech, how Polybius sees it,<sup>11</sup> an appeal is made in favour of Greek unity. Agealos talks about "the cloud from the West" threatening to loom over Greece, and expresses concern that the ultimate victor in the war being fought in Italy, will definitely see Greece as the next prey. That is why Agelaos advises Philip not to wage war with the Greeks any more, but to turn to the other side and join the war in the West on time. The words of the Aitolian ambassador sound prophetic indeed, as if they were uttered with profound wisdom, and the question is whether they reflect a single person's opinion or they reflect the general attitude in Greece of that time.<sup>12</sup> To

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<sup>10</sup> In the summer of 217 BC, while attending the Nemean Games, cf. N.G.L. Hammond in N. G. L. Hammond, F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. III, Oxford 1988, 387–88. See Polyb. V 101–102.

<sup>11</sup> Polyb. V 104, 1–11.

<sup>12</sup> Scholars are divided on authenticity and historicity of Agelaos' speech; it is almost generally assumed that Polybius paraphrased the speech on the basis of the contemporary source, cf. e.g. K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* IV 1, Berlin u. Leipzig 1925<sup>2</sup>, 733–34; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, Oxford 1957, p. 629. Authenticity and historicity of Agelaos' speech and his proposal for immediate peace is also defended by J. Deineinger, *Bemerkungen zur Historizität der Rede des Agelaos*, 217 v.Chr. (Polyb. 5, 104), *Chiron* 3, 1973, 103–108, and contested by O. Morkholm, *The Speech of Agelaos again*, *Chiron* 4, 1974, 127–132, considering the speech as a Polybian fabrication. See also C. Champion, *The Nature of Authoritative Evidence in Polybius and Agelaos' Speech at Naupactos*, *TAPhA* 127, 1997, 111–128, for moderate and broader view on this problem.

what extent the Greeks generally were, at that moment, aware of the significance and dimensions of the conflict happening in the West, we cannot determine with certainty nowadays. It can, however, with large certainty, be supposed that one man assessed the situation quite correctly. It was the Macedonian king, who reacted quickly, opened negotiations and offered alliance to Hannibal, thus interfering in the great war being fought in the West. According to Polybius,<sup>13</sup> Philip had been advised earlier to turn to the West by his friend Demetrios of Pharos, who had taken the place of the king's most important advisor. Even Philip himself knew very well that the Roman army, busy fighting war against the exceptionally talented Carthaginian general, was not ready to launch an open conflict with him. Upon making alliance with Hannibal, he achieved certain successes in Illyria in the course of the years 213 and 212 BC, but he did not join the war in Italy directly.<sup>14</sup> Only then did the Romans react more seriously, and by making alliance with the Aitolians in 212 or 211 BC, they made a great diplomatic and political achievement, because they transferred the war on the Greek mainland. Military operations now tied Philip's hands in Greece, which he certainly did not wish or predict.<sup>15</sup> There is, however, no doubt that Philip kept on insisting that the danger for the Greeks was coming from the West and the Romans. The echo of the same propaganda which pointed to the danger of the barbarians from the West, now in somewhat changed political circumstances, we see again in 210 BC in Polybius' account on delegations of Aitolians (Philip's enemies) and Akarnanians (Philip's allies) in Sparta.<sup>16</sup> In the speech of the Akarnanian ambassador Lykiskos in Sparta, it is clearly pointed to the danger from the Romans as the barbarians from the West.<sup>17</sup> That is why Lykiskos appeals to the Spartans, reminding them of Xerxes and the great war of the Hellenic League against Persia, and how their ancestors rose to fame in the battle with the barbarians, and that they should

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<sup>13</sup> Polyb. V 101, 7–10.

<sup>14</sup> On Philip's alliance with Hannibal and military achievements on the Adriatic coast, see N. G. L. Hammond in N. G. L. Hammond, F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. III, Oxford 1988, 391–399; R. M. Errington, *Rome and Greece to 205 B.C.*, *CAH<sup>2</sup>* Vol. VIII, Cambridge 1989, 95–99.

<sup>15</sup> On the terms of the Roman-Aitolian alliance, cf. H. H. Schmitt, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums III. Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 338 bis 200 v. Chr.*, München 1969, Nr. 536, pp. 258–266; See now also A. M. Eckstein, *Rome Enters the Greek East: From Anarchy to Hierarchy in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, 230–170 B.C.*, Maiden MA and Oxford 2008, 88–91.

<sup>16</sup> Polyb. IX 28–39.

<sup>17</sup> Polyb. IX 37–38. Polybius quotes here the words of Lykiskos the Akarnanian, since he himself never refers to the Romans as barbarians. Cf. F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. II, Oxford 1967, 269.

not turn against the Greeks now (also including among Greeks, without a doubt, Philip's Macedonians).<sup>18</sup>

The question, however, could arise as to what all of this have to do with the name of Perseus, the son of Philip, who will be welcomed to the world in the first years of the First Macedonian War (213 or 212 BC) and who bears the name of the great hero Perseus. We think that Philip chose this name for his son aiming at this "cloud from the West". He, actually, in a symbolic way, identified himself with the hero Perseus and his greatest heroic exploit. On the other hand, just the mention of the hero Perseus' name, probably immediately associated the Greeks with Medusa, the only mortal Gorgon, who Perseus slew and decapitated, and gave her head to the goddess Athena to put it on her goatskin (*aegis*). The Greeks could see her hideous face on the severed head with bulging eyes and protruding tongue almost every day on friezes of their temples, works of art and everyday objects, weapons and alike.<sup>19</sup> Even though Medusa's face, in time, especially from the Hellenistic period onward, has been more and more humanised, and originally monstrous image has given place to an artistic presentation of a beautiful woman with voluminous hair with entwined serpents, this only mortal Gorgon remains the symbol of mortal danger and fear for mankind. Thus Perseus' act of slaying Medusa, with the help of goddess Athena, represents the victory of wisdom over fear and evil forces, which dangerously defies not only people, but even gods themselves.

Likewise, the setting of this and some other Greek myths has been moving from one part of the world to the other, which often correlates with newly acquired geography knowledge of foreign and previously unknown countries. Nevertheless, the earliest extant literary sources undoubtedly place the Gorgons in the far West and somewhere in Okeanos and they, originally, symbolize the West. That is quite clear in Hesiod's *Theogony* as the earliest preserved literary reference to Perseus and the Gorgons, where it is said that three sisters Gorgons Sthenno (Σθεννώ), Euryale (Εὐρύαλη) and Medusa (Μέδουσα) dwell somewhere

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<sup>18</sup> Polyb. IX 38, 2–5. The similar idea was expressed probably even better in an honest warning which the delegate from Rhodes, as a mediator in peace negotiations, issued to the Aitolians. Cf. Polyb. XI 5. On Greek mediators in the First Macedonian War generally, see M. Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques aux Hie siècles av. J.-C. (273–205)*, Paris 1935, 35–38, 74–5; A. M. Eckstein, Greek Mediation in the First Macedonian War (209–205 B.C.), *Historia* 52, 2002, 268–297.

<sup>19</sup> On Medusa generally see S. R. Wilk, *Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon*, Oxford 2000. Those artistic presentations of Perseus slaying Medusa were made according to the Near-eastern model, that is, they had their archetype in the Mesopotamian art of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, and, especially in an episode from *the Epic of Gilgamesh*, cf. M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, Oxford 1997, 453–54. See also D. Ogden, *Perseus*, Oxford and New York 2008, 38–40, on Mesopotamian and Near-Eastern influences on Perseus and Medusa tale.



in the extreme West toward the edge of Night, beyond Okeanos near the Hesperides.<sup>20</sup> The later tradition placed them in Libya (Africa).<sup>21</sup> In further rationalisation of the Gorgons' myth, which characterised, first of all, the Hellenistic period, the Gorgons are belligerent female tribe who are brought in connection with the Amazons and populate the western parts of Libya, and who Perseus, and after him Herakles, eradicated going through Libya.<sup>22</sup> On the other side, in Philip's "view" of the myth, a Gorgon could represent a beast from the West, namely Rome which symbolises Agelaos' "cloud from the West", hovering over Greece and the East as a threat. What makes this perception easier is that the Gorgons, like other "related" monsters and dangerous freaks, namely female groups the Graiai, the Hesperides, Scylla, Charybdis and similar creatures, all live in the West<sup>23</sup> and it could be assumed that even the contemporaries were familiar with Philip's symbolism and that they could understand it.<sup>24</sup> The name Perseus which is associated with the killing of the Gorgon from the West, was chosen as a name for the son (and as it turned out, the heir) in the very moment when the father Philip fights a great battle against that terrible beast threatening to conquer Greece. The mentioned Heraklid connections of the Macedonian kings' could also play their role here, because some of Herakles' exploits are placed in the West, in Sicily and southern Italy. The possible king's campaign into the West and in Italy, which never happened for different reasons, but which Philip seriously considered, could have been presented as a campaign following the footsteps of his famous predecessors Perseus and Herakles.

Thus it is not unusual that on Philip's coins of that time (silver tetradrachms, but also gold staters and a number of smaller denominations in bronze), on the obverse this type bears the head of the hero Perseus with winged helmet, and on the reverse, along with the king's name (*ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ*), the club of Herakles, immediately obvious

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<sup>20</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 274–276. Some relevant literary sources, like poet Pindar (cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 10, 46–49 and *Pyth.* 12, 6–17) do not state specifically the place where Perseus killed Medusa; they only speak about his return to the island Seriphos, after he accomplished the mission. On Perseus and the Gorgons see E. Phinney Jr., *Perseus' Battle With the Gorgons*, *TAPhA* 102, 1971, 445–463; T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, Baltimore 1993, 20–22, 304–307; D. Ogden, *Perseus*, Oxford and New York 2008, 38–40.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hdt. 1191,6; Paus. 1121, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Diod. III 52, 4–55.

<sup>23</sup> Many of them are actually the children and descendents of Phorkys and Keto, cf. Hes. *Theog.* 270ff. See D. Ogden, *Perseus*, Oxford and New York 2008, 56–60.

<sup>24</sup> For opinion that symbolism associated with Perseus, appearing also on coins, tended to emphasize the Antigonids aspirations towards both the West and the East on the line Rome-Troy, cf. S. Dušanić, *The ΚΤΙΣΙΣ ΜΑΓΝΗΣΙΑΣ*, Philip V and the Panhellenic Leukophrayena, *Epigraphica* 45, 1983, 28.

and recognizable symbol of Herakles.<sup>25</sup> Dating these coins has presented a problem to the scholars for a long time. The silver, which was struck from nineteen obverse dies, was for a long time attributed to Philippos Andriskos, the Macedonian usurper of 149–148 BC, but has, undoubtedly, proved that it belongs to Philip V and the time of his wars with the Romans.<sup>26</sup> Thus, presumably, the naming of the son Perseus and the appearance of this type of coins are closely connected with plans of Philip V in the West. Similarly, Philip's aspirations towards the West in the region of the Adriatic Sea are also reflected in Philip's bronze coins from the same time, with the image of Zeus wearing the wreath of oak leaves, representing Zeus from Dodona in Epirus. Naval aspirations of the Macedonian king are also shown on coins with the image of Poseidon and the prow, which as a rule appear exclusively in the period of maritime ambitions of the Antigonids (Poseidon, the god of the sea, as patron deity attested on coins since the time of Demetrios Poliorketes).<sup>27</sup>

Coins were not the only proof of Philip as a great master of propaganda. How wide Philip's views and his ingenuity were could also be seen observing, for example, political background of so-called Leukophryenian inscriptions from Magnesia on the Maeander, and the announcement of the festival of Artemis Leukophryene to the Greeks for the purpose of propaganda based on "distant" Aeolian kinship.<sup>28</sup> The picture of the great army organizer and legislator can also be complete on the basis of recently published inscriptions from Macedonia, testifying about military organization of the Antigonid kingdom.<sup>29</sup> These

<sup>25</sup> Cf. B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, Oxford 1912, p. 233; H. Gaebler, *Die antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands*, III 2: *Makedonia und Paionia*, Berlin 1935, 189–194 + Tafeln XXXIV–XXXV; N. G. L. Hammond in N. G. L. Hammond, F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. III, Oxford 1988, 461–464; O. Morkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage. From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 B.C.)*, Cambridge 1991, 135–36, Plate XXIX, nos. 439–440.

<sup>26</sup> P. A. MacKay, Macedonian tetradrachms of 148–147 B.C., *ANSMN* 14, 1968, 15–40; C. Boehringer, *Zur Chronologie mittelhellenistischer Munzserien 220–160 v. Chr.*, Berlin 1972, 107–110, 116–118. Cf. O. Morkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 B.C.)*, Cambridge 1991, 135–36. On the connection of the image of Perseus' head as an obverse type and personification of the head of Roma on the earliest *denarii* see also W. E. Stokli, *Bemerkungen zur Chronologie von Victoriat, Denar, Quinar und Sesterz*, *JNG* 25, 1973, 84–86.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. O. Morkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 B.C.)*, Cambridge 1991, p. 136 + Plate XXIX, nos. 443–444: »A new variant as obverse type (443) is the head of Zeus, wearing a wreath of oak leaves. This must be a representation of the famous Zeus of Dodona in Epirus, showing Philip's interest in his western neighbour and in the Adriatic Sea, an interest that was obvious during his early operations in the first war with Rome... An issue with head of Poseidon/prow shows that Philip also had naval ambitions (444)».

<sup>28</sup> *I. Magnesia* 16–87. Cf. S. Dušanić, *The ΚΤΙΣΙΣ ΜΑΓΝΗΣΙΑΣ*, Philip V and the Panhellenic Leukophryena, *Epigraphica* 45, 1983, 11–48.

<sup>29</sup> M. B. Hatzopoulos, *L'organisation de l'armée macedonienne sous les Antigonides. Problemes anciens et documents nouveaux (MEAEΘHMATA 30)*, Athenes 2001.



documentary sources change the traditional image and evaluation of Philip's deeds, originally given by Polybius,<sup>30</sup> and show the next-to-last Macedonian king as a great reformer and legislator, almost as the third founder of the Macedonian state.<sup>31</sup> In that way, the choice of the name Perseus for the son should be looked upon as a deliberate move in accordance with the king's ambitions and aspirations at the time.

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## ЗАШТО ПЕРСЕЈ? ИМЕ ПОСЛЕДЊЕГ МАКЕДОНСКОГ КРАЉА И ЊЕГОВ ИСТОРИЈСКИ ЗНАЧАЈ

### Резиме

У раду се расправља о историјском значају имена Персеј које је носио последњи македонски краљ из династије Антигониди. С обзиром на све оно што се зна о краљу Филипу V, Персејевом оцу, и његовим државничким активностима и пропагандној делатности, има довољно разлога да се верује да је реч о смишљено одабраном и програмском имену. Име Персеј као име великог грчког хероја и легендарног краља када се јави као лично име у оквиру једне краљевске породице могло би можда да укаже да је та породица (Антигониди) изводила своје порекло од хероја Персеја, или да је, опет, преко Персеја настојала да се повеже са највећим грчким херојем Хераклом. И сам Херакле је *Персеид*, потомак хероја Персеја, а добро је познато да Антигонидима није била страна хераклидска пропаганда. Указивање на заједничко херојско и хераклидско порекло био је управо добар начин да се успостави веза са старом македонском династијом и краљевском кућом Аргеада/Теменида, а извори наводе и да се Филип V веома трудио да покаже да је у родству са Филипом II и Александром Великим. Мислимо, међутим, да је у избору имена за свог првог сина (и показатеља се наследника), Филип имао на уму и друге ствари.

У времену када се краљу родио син Персеј (213. или 212. година пре н.е.), Филип се већ био умешао у велики рат (Други пунски) који је вођен на западу између Римљана и Картагињана. Још 215. године он је начинио споразум о савезу са највећим римским супарником Ханибалом и повео против Римљана рат који је познат као Први македонски рат (вођен између 215. и 205. године). Добро је знао да римска војска, заузета ратом са генијалним картагинским вој-

<sup>30</sup> This is not the place to consider the quite complex relationship of Polybius towards Philip, but Polybius' critique of Philip, based mostly on criteria of success in pursuing policies, where Philip failed in the final outcome, necessarily predetermined modern scholars' opinion. Cf. F. W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon*, Cambridge 1940, 260–275.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. M. B. Hatzopoulos, *L'organisation de l'armée macédonienne sous les Antigonides. Problèmes anciens et documents nouveaux (МЕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ 30)*, Athènes 2001, p. 148: "...Philippe V émerge comme un grand législateur, un grand réformateur, voire le troisième ktistes, après Perdikkas I et Philippe II, de l'Etat macédonien".

сковођом, није спремна да уђе с њим у отворени сукоб, па је постигао одређене успехе у Илирији. Није, међутим, извео планирани поход у Италију, јер су Римљани постигли велики политички и дипломатски успех склапајући 212. или 211. године савез са Етолцима. Тако су ратне операције успели да пренесу на грчко копно и да вежу Филипу руке у Хелади. Филипово ангажовање на западу пратила је, нема сумње, одговарајућа пропаганда. Своју глад за освајањем и велике личне амбиције на западу он је дуго прикривао позивајући се управо на опасност која је по Грчку долазила са тог запада. Ова „неман са запада“ коју су представљали Римљани претила је да се као облак надвије над Хеладом и пороби је. У тој вештој пропагандној игри веома се добро уклапа и „персејски“ симболизам. Сам помен хероја Персеја и његовог имена код Хелена је одмах будио асоцијације на лик Медузе, једине смртне Горгоне, коју је Персеј убио, а њену одсечену главу предао богињи Атини да је стави на своју егиду. Медузин грозни лик са исколаченим очима и исплаженим језиком као симбол смртне опасности и страха за људски нараштај Хелени су могли видети свакодневно на фризовима својих храмова, уметничким предметима и предметима за свакодневну употребу, на оружју и слично. Персејев чин убиства Медузе, уз помоћ богиње Атине, представља зато и победу мудрости над страхом и злим силама које су опасно пркосиле не само људима, него и боговима. Бора-виште Горгона и других сродних створења се још код старих песника ставља далеко на запад и оне, као и Хеспериде или Граје, првобитно и симболизују запад. Зато је и у Филиповом виђењу мита о Персеју и Медузи, Рим симболично могао да представља ту неман, Горгону са запада. Одатле је и херојско име Персеј које је савременике највише подсећало на убиство Горгоне Медузе, изабрано као име за Филиповог сина баш у тренутку када Филип бије битку против те страшне немани која прети да пороби целу Хеладу.

Овај се „персејски“ симболизам на занимљив начин јавља и на новцу краља Филипа V, кованом управо у периоду његових ратова са Римљанима (између 215. и 197. године пре н.е.). На аверсима Филипових сребрних тетрадрахми, као и на златним статерима и бронзаним деноминацијама, налазимо карактеристичне представе хероја Персеја са крилатим шлемом. Ковани новац био је само један од начина да нам се Филип покаже као велики мајстор пропаганде и вероватно је и преко новца могао да изрази своје амбиције на западу. У том светлу треба гледати и на давање имена Персеј сину као на промишљен потез који је био у складу са тадашњом краљевом политиком и стремљењима.