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## BRASIDAS IN THE MEGARIAN OPERATION OF 424 BC IN THE ACCOUNTS OF THUCYDIDES AND DIODORUS SICULUS

**Keywords:** Peloponnesian War, Thucydides, Diodorus, Brasidas, Hippocrates, Demosthenes, Megara, Nisaea, *stasis*, Helots

### Introduction

In the summer of 424 BC, a στάσις<sup>1</sup> engulfed a major part of Megaris stretching from Nisaea and Megara in the south of the region to Pegae on the coast in the north, where the Megarian exiles had found their haven.<sup>2</sup> As K.-W. Welwei notes,

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<sup>1</sup> On στάσις in the classical period of Greek history, see Bertelli 1989, 53–96 and Fisher 2000, 83–123, as well as the spacious work Gehrke 1985. In terms of politology, the issue of antique “stasiology” is considered in recent paper Vardoulakis 2009, 125–147 and Garland 2014, 12, 79–81, 89, 139. About various aspects of the notion of στάσις used by Thucydides, see Sancho Rocher 1990, 195–215. Rechenauer 1993, 238–244; Cagnetta 2001; see also studies of various particular *stasis*-episodes in *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides: Barnard 1980; Fuks 1971; 1984, 190–197; Lintott 1982, 103–105; Manicas 1982; Loraux 1986, 95–134; 1995, 299–326; Orwin 1988, 831–847; Bleckmann 1998, 251–257; 330–332, 384–385; Leppin 1999; Price 2001; Morrison 2002; Thomas 2006, 89–92; Tsakmakis 2006, 172–173, 177–178; Raaflaub 2006; Kallet 2006, 335–336, 353–355; Paradiso, Roy 2008, 33–34; Lateiner 2012, 170–172; Bakker 2013, 38; Christodoulou 2013, 235–240, 245–254; Marcaccini 2013, 405–428; Visvardi 2015, 47, 48–49, 55, 60, 62–68, 69–71; Ambühl 2015, 41–45; Osmers 2015, 32–33, 38–40, 49–50.

<sup>2</sup> See the historical accounts of Thuc. 3.68.3; 4.66.1; 74.2; Diod. 12.66.1; and the commentaries: Dindorfius 1828, 614–616, *ad loc.* Diod. 12.66–67; Classen, Steup 1963, 132–151; Gomme 1956, 528–536, *ad loc.* Thuc. 4.66–74; Bengtson, Werner 1975, 99–100, № 180 (treaty between Nisaea and Athens); Strassler 1996, 258–263 (+ maps); Hornblower 1991, 463–464, *ad loc.* Thuc. 3.68.3; Hornblower 1996, 229–244, *ad loc.* Thuc. 4.66–74; Veh, Will 1998, *ad loc.* Diod. 12.66–67; Green 2010, 146–148, *ad loc.* Diod. 12.66–67.

this time the Athenians availed themselves of the opportunity to capture Megara “durch Kooperation mit einer ‘fünften Kolonne’ in dieser Polis.”<sup>3</sup> The major actors of the Archidamian war became engaged in the Megarian strife. Leaders of the democratic faction in Megaris turned to the Athenian generals Hippocrates and Demosthenes for help,<sup>4</sup> while the Megarian oligarchs and the Peloponnesians in Nisaea called to the Spartan general Brasidas and the Boeotian allies for support.<sup>5</sup>

Brasidas, the “Protagonist” in the “Megarian drama,” is portrayed in the records as an ambitious commander, the intrepid savior of Megara. Thucydides and Diodorus Siculus give different versions of the Megarian conflict involving the Spartan general. While drawing upon the authentic records, this article investigates the causes that prompted Brasidas’ immediate response to the Athenians’ attempt to exploit the στάσις in Megaris to their own advantage; it analyzes the conduct of the Spartan general in holding the position, ascertains the numerical strength of the army engaged in this operation, and discusses the issue of the location of the Helots that Brasidas “mustered” as hoplites to give urgent assistance to the Megarians.

### I. Diodorus’ “clipped” version: omissions and probable motives

In analyzing the available evidence, we shall proceed from a later, secondary, source.

Prior to the Megarian events of 424 BC, Book XII of *The Library of History* describes in good detail the acts of Nicias, son of Niceratus (Diod. 12.65.1–9). The Sicilian historian shows the Athenian *strategos* as a successful general who had won a number of victories at Boeotia, Locris, the Corinthian region, Kythera, Peloponnesus, and other places.<sup>6</sup> Diodorus, when relating chapters

<sup>3</sup> Welwei 2007, 225.

<sup>4</sup> See Thuc. 4.66.3 and Diod. 12.66.2.

<sup>5</sup> This is pointed out by Thucydides (4.70 and 72.1–2). Selected literature discussing these events: Busolt 1904, 1137–1141; Beloch 1927, 331–333; Adcock 1927, 239–240; Hammond 1954, 112–114, 116; Hammond 1967, 369–370; Westlake 1968, 111–115, 150; Legon 1968, 200–225; Kagan 1974, 270–272, 275–276, 278; Holladay 1978, 399–401; Wick 1979; Legon 1981; Gehrke 1985, 106–110, 264; Rigsby 1987, 93–102; Lewis 1992, 387–388, 424–425; Wylie 1992, 78; Heitsch 1996, 31–33; Boëldieu-Trevet 1997, 147–158; Badian 1999, 8–11; Price 2001, 251–253, 291–292; Kagan 2003, 162–164; Legon 2004, 464–465; Lazenby 2004, 85–87; Bagnall 2004; Howie 2005, 231–260; Romilly 2005, 119–120; Rengakos 2006, 289–290; Funke, Haake 2006, 379–380; Hunt 2006, 385–413; Ray 2009, 181–182; Taylor 2010, 124–125; Tritle 2010, 95–97; Grissom 2012, 147–149, 159–160, 263–264; Rubincam 2012, 102–103; Lateiner 2012, 175–176; Tamiolaki 2013, 48; Garland 2014, 92–93; Ferrario 2014, 230–232.

<sup>6</sup> See Diod. 12.65.3–9. Indeed, at the beginning of the Nician Logos, Diodorus (12.65.2–3) says that the Athenian *strategos* failed in his attempts to capture the besieged polis of Melos. But

from Thucydides, “packs down” the chronological events of the other campaigns of 426–424 BC that Nicias took part in,<sup>7</sup> resulting in a chaotic and faulty account.<sup>8</sup> Owing to this incongruous factual “compactness” of Diodorus’ condensed text, the reader of *The Library of History* gets the impression that Nicias must have been an efficient and successful general, a super-strategos of sorts.<sup>9</sup>

The account of the exploits of Nicias is followed by a short Megarian episode (see Diod. 12.66), after which comes the “Brasida,” a detailed narration of the Thracian campaign led by the Spartan general, interspersed with three short digressions.<sup>10</sup>

Diodorus confines himself literally to one sentence to describe Brasidas’ engagement in the Megarian conflict:

Diod. 12.67.1: Βρασίδας δὲ δύναμιν ἰκανὴν ἀναλαβὼν ἔκ τε Λακεδαιμόνος καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων Πελοποννησίων ἀνέζευξεν ἐπὶ Μέγαρα. καταπληξάμενος δὲ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, τούτους μὲν ἐξέβαλεν ἔκ τῆς Νισαίας, τὴν δὲ πόλιν τῶν Μεγαρέων ἐλευθέρωσας ἀποκατέστησεν εἰς τὴν τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων συμμαχίαν. αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως διὰ Θετταλίας τὴν πορείαν ποιησάμενος ἦκεν εἰς Δίον τῆς Μακεδονίας.

Brasidas, taking an adequate force from Lacedaemon and the other Peloponnesian states, advanced against Megara. And striking terror into the Athenians he

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here the historian says that the army of Nicias devastated the territory of the island of Melos, an ally of Lacedaemonia and a colony of Sparta (ἡ πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους συμμαχία, ἄποικος οὕσα τῆς Σπάρτης, Diod. 12.65.3); cf. Thuc. 3.91.1–3.

<sup>7</sup> Miscellanea occur not only in the order of events and their diversification – with the “time luff” of two years (*sic!*) – but also in numbers; thus, for example, while Thucydides (3.91.1) estimates the strength of the army engaged under Nicias at Melos to be 2,000 hoplites, Diodorus (12.65.1) makes it 3,000. On unbelievably large round numbers in *The Library of History* (through different examples, however), see Karpīuk 2015, 30–31.

<sup>8</sup> Amazing for the reader familiar with Thucydides’ *History*. See Green’s commentary: “Diodorus, still chronologically ahead of Thucydides, not only dates both of them at 424/3 but runs the two campaigns together into a single sequence” (Green 2010, 145, n. 97, *ad loc.* Diod. 12.65.1).

<sup>9</sup> Nicias is mainly judged as a politician, just and peaceful, pious and superstitious, and frequently belittled for being commander. About Nicias as commander, see Rood 1998, 168–176, 179, 183–185, 190, 199; Hamel 1998, *passim*; Geske 2005 (especially Chapter 2.4.1 “Nikias als idealer Feldherr und Politiker,” pp. 71–76; about Nicias’ military operations of 426–424 BC: pp. 45–71, 100–126). Selected recent literature about Nicias: Tsakmakis 2006; Gribble 2006, 448–451, 458–460; Burns 2012; 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Diod. 12.67; 68.3–6; 72.7; 74.1–4. Before the Thracian Logos, Brasidas appears in two cursory (but very important) episodes: Diod. 12.43.2–3 and 12.62.1–6; each case is “loosely based” on Thucydides, though abridged. Yet, when describing the battle of Pylos in 425 BC, Diodorus still more extols Brasidas, who, in his opinion, deserves the highest praise, for this time he surpassed other men in bravery (μεγίστης δὲ ἀποδοχῆς ἔτυχε Βρασίδας, 12.62.1; τοὺς ἄλλους ὑπερβαλλόμενος ἀνδρεία, 12.62.5).

expelled them from Nisaea, and then he set free the city of the Megarians and brought it back into the alliance of the Lacedaemonians. After this he made his way with his army through Thessaly and came to Diium in Macedonia.<sup>11</sup>

Diodorus' account of the events at Megaris is a "synopsis" of several chapters from *The History* by Thucydides, and it contains "errors" which are easy to detect.<sup>12</sup>

*Casus I.* Brasidas arrived at Megara with an *adequate force* (δύναμιν ἰκανὴν [ἀναλαβῶν]),<sup>13</sup> which consisted of soldiers levied *only* in Peloponnesus (ἐκ τε Λακεδαιμόνος καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων Πελοποννησίων κτλ., *loc. cit.*). The source does not specify the exact strength of this *force / army* (δύναμις), nor does it tell what lands the Peloponnesian hoplites came from to form the army. Featuring the Megarian episode as one of Brasidas' feats, Diodorus never mentions the Boeotian corps<sup>14</sup> engaged in this campaign, though its timely support not only proved decisive in the resolution of the Megarian conflict, but also exemplified the concerted and efficient assistance of the allies (Thucydides' mention of the assistance provided by the Boeotians is of fundamental importance in his next narrative of the speed march led by Brasidas across Boeotia and Thessaly).<sup>15</sup> The Sicilian historian keeps quiet about the unusual contingent of the Peloponnesian corps, initially composed of mercenaries and Helots "mustered" by Brasidas to take part in the military campaign on the Thracian coast.

*Casus II.* At Megaris, Brasidas disposed of the Athenians occupying the area, dislodged the enemy from Nisaea (καταπληξάμενος δὲ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, τοὺτους μὲν ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τῆς Νισαίας, *loc. cit.*), and, liberating the Megarian *polis*, returned it to the Lacedaemonian *symmachia* (τὴν δὲ πόλιν τῶν Μεγαρέων ἐλευθερώσας ἀποκατέστησεν εἰς τὴν τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων συμμαχίαν, *loc. cit.*). Also, Diodorus must have deliberately hyperbolized the merits of the Spartan

<sup>11</sup> Here and elsewhere, Diodorus Siculus is cited after the English translation by C.H. Oldfather (1989, here p. 69).

<sup>12</sup> Such a manner of describing historical events (by abridging his sources and using their information in another context) is typical of the Sicilian historian. On Diodorus' method: Mandes 1901; Palm 1955; Drews 1962; Strogetskiĭ 1986; Pesely 1985, 320–321; Sacks 1990; Rubincam 1998a; 1998b; 2003; Rood 2004; Wiater 2006; Nevin 2008; Hau 2009, 192–193; Sheridan 2010; Osipova 2011; Sulimani 2011, 57–59, 109–111; Hajdú 2014, 27–29.

<sup>13</sup> Compare: translation by Peter Green: "Brasidas, after levying a reasonable force..." (Green 2010, 147).

<sup>14</sup> According to Thucydides (4.72.1, 2), the Boeotian corps constituted over one-third of the total strength of the allied army that converged on Megara. For a review of the Athenian historian's account of the strength of the allied force, see below, part 4.

<sup>15</sup> For further details, see Heitsch 1996, 32–34; Badian 1999; Sinitsyn 2009.

general. According to Thucydides, Brasidas neither defeated the Athenians nor drove them from Nisaea, which had been captured the night before. The Athenian garrison was still stationed at the Megarian harbor, and even according to the Peace Treaty of 421 BC, Nisaea remained under Athenian control.<sup>16</sup> As for Megara, contrary to what Diodorus says,<sup>17</sup> Brasidas never “liberated” it (and never attempted to); rather, he managed to win Megara over. Now Brasidas, *for the first time*, was able to achieve his goal without resorting to “force”:<sup>18</sup> he not only prevented the strategically important town from succumbing to the enemy, but also succeeded in winning it over to the Peloponnesians. But Diodorus’ narrative does emphasize the resoluteness and strength of the Spartan commander: he came, he defeated the enemy, and set the town free.

*Casus III.* After the victories in Megaris, the general headed for the north of Hellas and, having crossed Thessaly, arrived at the town of Dium. It is noteworthy that, following Thucydides, Diodorus also mentions Dium, the destination of Brasidas’ march across Thessaly. This polis was nestled at the bottom of Olympus, in the domain of Perdiccas II.<sup>19</sup> However, Diodorus’ narrative speaks neither of Thessalian guides, nor Perrhaebians, nor the Macedonian King Perdiccas, who assisted Brasidas in his difficult and dangerous expedition. It is significant that Perdiccas II is never mentioned in Diodorus’ Thracian Logos.<sup>20</sup> The Chalcidian allies of the Spartans, that is, the Greek *poleis* that had seceded from the Athenian *arche* and summoned the Peloponnesian army, were not engaged in the northern campaign of 424–422 BC as active forces.<sup>21</sup> Apart from Brasidas, only Cleon appears to be of crucial importance to Diodorus in this context (see Diod. 12.73.2–74.2). But the Sicilian historian portrays the Athenian strategos as an antagonist of the Spartan general:<sup>22</sup> in the battle of Amphipolis in 422 BC, the deaths of both generals – Cleon and Brasidas – result in the conciliation of the

<sup>16</sup> Cf., for example, Thuc. 4.73.4; 118.4; 5.17.2.

<sup>17</sup> Diod. *loc. cit.*: τὴν δὲ πόλιν τῶν Μεγαρέων ἐλευθερώσας (“then he set free the city of the Megarians”).

<sup>18</sup> At Chalcidice, Brasidas excels in persuasion. See the literature below (note 46) on the Spartan general’s rhetoric.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the conclusions of the two stories about Brasidas’ forced march: ἐς Δῖον τῆς Περγίκκου ἀρχῆς (Thuc. 4.78.6) and εἰς Δῖον τῆς Μακεδονίας (Diod. 12.67.1).

<sup>20</sup> Diodorus mentions the Macedonian king three times in connection with the problems the Athenians faced in the north of Hellas before and during the first years of the Peloponnesian War: Diod. 12.34.2; 50.4; 51. About Perdiccas II, see the essay in Eugene Borza’s book: Borza 1992, 132–160. From recent literature: Chambers 1999; Psoma 1999; 2011, 113–119, 128–129; Zahrtnt 2006, 590–597, 601–603, 609–610; Roisman 2010, 145–154 (with literature review, pp. 164–165); King 2010, 373–391; Mari 2011, 88–90; Sinitsyn 2013.

<sup>21</sup> For further details, see Sinitsyn 2002a; 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Here, Diodorus begins his story about Cleon when the demagogue was voted strategos and sent with the army in his command to the Thracian coast to fight Brasidas (Diod. 12.73.2–3).

warring sides, the conclusion of the peace treaty between Athens and Sparta, and the end of the first period of war.<sup>23</sup>

*Conclusion (A).* Similar to the Nisaeon Logos, Diodorus not only substantially “reduces” Thucydides’ narrative here, disregarding the details that are crucial for the “authentic source,” but he also, seemingly deliberately, distorts it. Diodorus is reticent about the vicissitudes of the Peloponnesian army in Thessaly: the Brasideans marched across middle and northern Greece and reached Macedonia without hindrances or perturbations.<sup>24</sup> It should be presumed that Brasidas embarked on the expedition with the same δύναμις ἰκανή, consisting of the same Peloponnesians who were with him to “defend” Megara.<sup>25</sup> On the whole, the impression is that the Peloponnesians won a sweeping victory at Megaris, costing the Spartan general little effort as the whole operation was sustained by Brasidas, in passing, on the way to Chalcidice.<sup>26</sup> As in many other cases,<sup>27</sup> Diodorus’ “laconic” narrative leaves much to doubt since it makes a mess of Thucydides’ evidence. The latter, by the way, demands further elucidation.

## 2. Thucydides’ “full” version: the allied forces and Brasidas’ vicissitudes at Megaris

Now we shall discuss the information concerning these events as it appears in the authentic text.

*Brasidas in the Megarian operation and the military successes of the warring parties.* When introducing the hero in this episode, Thucydides mentions that the Spartan general just happened<sup>28</sup> to be in the vicinity.

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<sup>23</sup> Diod. 12.74.2, 5–6. Thucydides provides a detailed account of the battle (5.10); see commentaries on this passage by A. Gomme (1956, 635–637) and S. Hornblower (1996, 435–438), and see the discussion in Anderson 1965.

<sup>24</sup> Thucydides (4.78–79.1) on the problems the Brasideans had when crossing Thessaly; see works by Busolt 1904, 1141–1143; Kagan 1974, 287–290; Rechenauer 1993, 240–242; Badian 1999, 9–11; Sinitzyn 2002, 69–71; 2009, 37–38, 50–67 (the first stage of the march).

<sup>25</sup> αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως, as mentioned by Diodorus (*loc. cit.*).

<sup>26</sup> Diodorus draws upon Thucydides when speaking about Brasidas’ further successes in the Chalcidian campaign (12.67.2–68), but, as always, he “filters out” the evidence in the authentic source.

<sup>27</sup> See also Wiater 2006, 248–271.

<sup>28</sup> The liberation of Megara was a fortuitous affair for the Spartans in the sense that according to Thucydides, Brasidas here again “concurrent with the event”: the Spartan general happened to find himself in the right place at the right time; cf. Niese 1897, 815–816; Westlake 1968, 148–150; Connor 1984, 128–129; Rood 1998, 69–70. On the role of *chance* (τύχη) with Thucydides, see Cornford 1907, 88–90, 97–99; Müri 1968, 139–141; Edmunds 1975, *passim*; Hunter 1982, 333–

Thuc. 4.70.1: Βρασίδης δὲ ὁ Τέλλιδος Λακεδαιμόνιος κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανε περὶ Σικυῶνα καὶ Κόρινθον ὄν, ἐπὶ Θράκης στρατεῖαν παρασκευαζόμενος.

At this time Brasidas son of Tellis, a Lacedaemonian, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Sicyon and Corinth, preparing a force for use in the region of Thrace.<sup>29</sup>

The account shows that no sooner had Brasidas learned about the capture of the long walls than he immediately responded to this news, for he feared for both the Peloponnesians in Nisaea and the fate of Megara, threatened with its capture by the enemy.<sup>30</sup> Then, the historian confirms the intentions of the hero: “[Brasidas] thinking that he would arrive before Nisaea had been taken (by the Athenians – *A. S.*). But when he learned the truth [that Nisaea had already been taken], ... reached the city of Megara” (Thuc. 4.70.1, 2). An army of the Boeotian allies was already on its way to join him. Messengers from Megara must have been sent with a request for help to Corinth in the west, where Brasidas had been mustering his corps for the march, and to Boeotia in the northeast of Megara.

Brasidas was aware that a messenger had been dispatched to the allied Boeotians, and he expected them to respond to his request for help. This means he had to make haste. He probably did not know about the actual state of affairs; he did not know how strong the enemy was or where could he get this information from. He had no time to learn about this, and time was pressing. The Spartan decided to head for Tripodiscus, where he was to meet the Boeotians. It is significant that he levied his army in a matter of hours.

The Peloponnesians were the first to reach Tripodiscus (a small settlement several kilometers away from Megara). Brasidas did not take any decisive steps before the arrival of the Boeotian army. At night, fearing the enemy would learn of his approach,<sup>31</sup> the Spartan general refrained from using force and tried to persuade the Megarians to come over to his side (Thuc. 4.70.2–71.1). Seven hours later, when the Boeotian army approached Tripodiscus early in the morning, the allies proceeded to act.

In response to the charge of the cavalry, the Athenians launched a counterattack (Thuc. 4.72.2–3). Judging from the outcome, the mounted action ended in

335; Rood 1998, 27–28; Sinitsyn 1998; 2002a, 61–62; 2002b, 469–481; Shanske 2007; Pothou 2011, 266–268; Murray 2013, 33–34; Che 2015, 77–79.

<sup>29</sup> Here and elsewhere, Thucydides is cited after the translation by Charles F. Smith 1920 (here p. 331).

<sup>30</sup> Thuc. 4.70.1. See the discussion in Hornblower 1996, 238, *ad loc.*

<sup>31</sup> Thuc. 4.70.2: “before his (Brasidas’ – *A. S.*) approach was known he reached the city of Megara unobserved by the Athenians, who were down by the sea.”

Athenian victory.<sup>32</sup> Although Thucydides points out in his conclusion that “in the action as a whole, however, neither side finally gained a decisive advantage, and so they separated, the Boeotians going to their own army, the Athenians to Nisaea,”<sup>33</sup> the historian (as usual, very particular about details) reports the deaths of the Boeotian *hipparch* and several horsemen, who had already been stripped of their armor by the Athenians. Thucydides writes about the trophy – a symbol of victory – that was set up by the Athenians.<sup>34</sup> Diodorus, as we have seen, never mentions this Athenian victory or the battle itself. In the middle of the same day, the rivals concluded a truce under which the Athenians returned the bodies of the dead Theban horsemen.<sup>35</sup>

During the second part of the day, a large hoplite army moved to the Megarian polis (Thuc. 4.73.1). Here, Brasidas chose a convenient position and put his army on full combat alert. Yet even then, the Spartan general did not take any decisive steps. He took his time, watching out for the enemy.<sup>36</sup> The Athenian commanders, having weighed all the options, decided against the attack (*ibid.* § 4). They were not sure whether they could defeat the stronger allies and take Megara. They decided not to take the risk because, as Thucydides notes, they would lose their best men in the case of defeat.<sup>37</sup> These arguments should not be regarded as his personal “justification” of the hesitance shown by his fellow generals; they must be a rendering of the account Demosthenes and Hippocrates made before the peoples’ assembly in Athens when they returned from Megaris. The Athenian generals did not take the risk, and by evening both armies left their positions. Some researchers believe that the Athenians had a chance to win the battle at Megara and take the desired town, but the Athenian commanders did not deign to engage in battle. In this situation, Brasidas faced a certain risk, too.<sup>38</sup> As a result, the polis came over to the side of the Peloponnesians, and the Athenians lost their chance. Thus, the Peloponnesians and their allies were not victorious in the battle of Megara (this is how Diodorus narrates it), for this time there was no battle.

When speaking of Brasidas’ initiative, Thucydides shows that not all his enterprises were successful. The historian does not conceal and does not justify the

<sup>32</sup> Discussion of the event: Hornblower 1996, 241.

<sup>33</sup> See Thuc. 4.72.4 + commentaries.

<sup>34</sup> Thuc. 4.72.4: οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ... τροπαῖον ἔστησαν.

<sup>35</sup> The fact that the trophy was set up and the dead were returned is proof of the outright Athenian victory; about the rite of setting up trophies, see (with many examples) Reinach 1892; Woelcke 1911; Lammert 1939; Anderson 1970, 4–5, 148, 164. About trophies in the Hellenic age, see Chaniotis 2005, 233–235, 239–241.

<sup>36</sup> See Thucydides’ account (4.73.1–2).

<sup>37</sup> “If defeated, have the flower of their hoplite force damaged” (Thuc. 4.73.4).

<sup>38</sup> See Wylie 1992, 79; Badian 1999, 9.



general's failures,<sup>39</sup> despite his apparent admiration for Brasidas' bravery and military talent.<sup>40</sup> He failed to "save" Nisaea from being captured by the Athenians, for he did not learn that it was in danger until he arrived in Megaris. He failed to win back the harbor, which remained under enemy control (Thuc. 4.69.4; 70; 73.4).

*About Brasidas' "rhetoric of compromise."* Brasidas was determined to recover Nisaea; this was one of the tasks he told the Megarians about. This is how the account renders the speech he made by the gates of the polis on the night of his return to Megaris:

Thuc. 4.70.2: βουλόμενος μὲν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ ἅμα εἰ δύναίτο ἔργῳ τῆς Νισαίας περᾶσαι, τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, τὴν τῶν Μεγαρέων πόλιν ἐσελθὼν βεβαιώσασθαι. καὶ ἠξίου δέξασθαι σφᾶς λέγων ἐν ἐλπίδι εἶναι ἀναλαβεῖν Νίσαιαν.

His (Brasidas' – A. S.) plan was, ostensibly – and really, too, if it should prove possible – to make an attempt upon Nisaea, but most of all to get into the city of Megara and secure it. And he demanded that they should receive him, saying that he was in hopes of recovering Nisaea.<sup>41</sup>

In the end, the citizens of Megara opened the gates and let the allies in. However, they took their time and did not open the gates immediately after Brasidas asked them to; rather, they waited until the end of the next day (twenty four hours after the Spartans put forward their demands), after the Athenians, deciding against the battle, retreated to Nisaea, "yielding" the polis to the enemy.<sup>42</sup>

When describing the brightest heroes of Thucydides' *History*, Geoffrey Hawthorn concisely characterizes Brasidas as an "effective diplomat and rhetorician, a remarkable military leader, a liar and insubordinate."<sup>43</sup> Indeed, this is a good description of the most important features of the enterprising Spartan; as for Brasidas' rhetoric, one cannot deny that it was effective, if we trust the image created by Thucydides. However, not everything is clear in this regard.

The oratory of the eloquent Spartan did not have an immediate effect,<sup>44</sup> and Brasidas failed in his attempt to talk the Megarians into letting him and his army

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Westlake 1968, 150.

<sup>40</sup> On Thucydides' attitude towards his hero: Westlake 1962, 276–287; 1968, 148–150; 1980, 333–339; Boegenhold 1979, 148–152; Connor 1984, 131–133; Rocchi 1985; Wylie 1992, 77–79, 93; Hornblower 1996, 38–60, 228; Will 2003, 10–22; Sonnabend 2004, 77–78; Howie 2005; Rood 2006, 231; Shanske 2007, 55–56; Sinitsyn 2009, 37–39; Burns 2011, 510–512; Rutherford 2012, 34; de Bakker 2013, 23–24, 26–27.

<sup>41</sup> Smith 1920, 333.

<sup>42</sup> Thuc. 4.73.4; cf. Green 2010, 147, n. 101.

<sup>43</sup> Hawthorn 2015, 583.

<sup>44</sup> Researchers usually speak of Brasidas as a skillful orator, a quality that differentiated the general from the rest of his fellow citizens; this is how Thucydides portrays the renowned Spartan – eloquent in the Athenian style (literature below, note 46).

in. E. Badian<sup>45</sup> notes that Brasidas “we might say, was defeated by common sense” of the Megarians, who at that moment united their forces against the two warring parties. It is the first example in the Peloponnesian War of a situation in which the forceful general tried to impose his rules on the rival polis that found itself a prisoner of the situation.

Here is yet another observation about Brasidas’ assurances of “compromise.” Later, during his northern campaign, the Spartan general presented the Athenian’s hesitancy at Megara as their fear of being unable to match his strength; this characterization of the situation was a form of propaganda aimed to win over the Greek cities in the Athenian *arche*.<sup>46</sup> However, this “agitation” was largely instrumental in making some Athenian allied poleis along the Thracian coast of the Aegean Sea side with the Lacedaemonians.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the Megarian operation took two and a half days. The council of the Megarians and the generals of the allies met, as Thucydides specifies (Thuc. 4.73.4), late in the afternoon or, more likely, on the day after the citizens opened the city gates. On the second day, having rested and conducted the talks with the Megarians, the allies were to ensure that the major forces of the enemy had retreated from Megaris to Attica. After that, they left. Brasidas returned to Isthmus with the Peloponnesian army (Thuc. 4.74.1); from there, the hoplites from Corinth, Phlius, and Sicyon left for their poleis, and Brasidas carried on his preparations for the Thracian campaign.

*The return of Brasidas to Corinthia and the outcome of the operation.* Thucydides’ account of the return of the Spartan general rounds out the story of the “liberation” of Megara and makes the episode complete in the general narrative of the Thracian expedition. It may be regarded as an introduction to the Thracian Logos. The historian’s observation about the return of Brasidas to the disposition

<sup>45</sup> Badian 1999, 9.

<sup>46</sup> See Thuc. 4.85.7 and commentaries on this point: Gomme 1956, 553; Hornblower 1996, 277, 280. The historian characterizes the Spartan’s speeches as “alluring yarns”: “Furthermore, because of the recent defeat of the Athenians in Boeotia and the *enticing but untrue statements of Brasidas*, that the Athenians had been unwilling to engage him when he came to the relief of Nisaea with *only his own army*, they grew bold, and believed that nobody would come against them (*italics mine – A. S.*)” (Thuc. 4.108.5, transl.: Smith 1920, 397). On characteristics of Brasidas’ speech: Classen/Steup 1963, 296, 304, n. *ad loc.* 4.85.7 and 4.108.5; Gomme 1956, 583, *ad loc.* 4.108.5; Leimbach 1985, 77–91; Hornblower 1996, 86–89, 344–345, *ad loc.* 4.108.5; Chambers 1998, 466–467; Rood 1998, 74; Price 2001, 251–253; Debnar 2001, 173–175, 188–189, 192; Will 2003, 15; Tsakmakis 2006, 165; Cartledge/Debnar 2006, 574–575; Schmitz 2006, 103 and Anm. 59; Shanske 2007, 55–57; Lang 2011, 117–125; Lateiner 2012, 175; Tamiolaki 2010; Tamiolaki 2013, 56–57; Tsakmakis/Themistokleous 2013, 391–408 (on the style and character of the hero of *The History*, first and foremost, of Nicias and Brasidas).

<sup>47</sup> Diodorus leaves out all Brasidas’ speeches from this episode; only once does he recall the λόγος of the Spartan general: Diod. 12.67.2; *cf.* Thuc. 4.85–87 (this and other speeches of the general in Thrace).

of his camp is important for understanding the motivation of the Spartan general.<sup>48</sup> Let us consider this issue. According to Thucydides, Brasidas feared for the Peloponnesians in Nisaea and worried that the Athenians would take Megara.<sup>49</sup> However, despite his fears, Brasidas focused on the principal task before him. Under the agreement with the Macedonian King Perdiccas II and the allied polis in Chalcidice, Sparta was to redeploy a detached unit to the northern part of Greece. This responsibility was placed on Brasidas.

Thucydides points out (4.69.3) that the Nisaeans capitulated because the Lacedaemonians who were in the town did not expect such prompt assistance from the Peloponnesians. All the preparations were carried out in secret,<sup>50</sup> but the Megarians undoubtedly learned about the dislocation of Brasidas' army in Corinthia at the beginning or middle of the summer, since the messenger arrived from there as soon as the Athenians began to attack Megara and the long walls. It is quite another matter that the besieged Nisaeans did not rely on the immediate support from Brasidas and the Boeotians, but rather surrendered to the Athenians. This is what our source says.

In the joint Megarian operation, Brasidas and the Boeotians were to speak with the leaders of the Theban army in great secrecy about the details of the progress of their force near the borders of Attica in the coming month. The assistance of the Boeotian allies was necessary to afford protection to the Brasideans when crossing the territory of Boeotia.

According to E. Badian, Brasidas may have left a small force in Megara<sup>51</sup> to help the Spartan associates in the town establish the rule of the oligarchs (Thuc. 4.74.2–3) and inflict punishment on citizens who collaborated with the Athenians. In other words, if Brasidas stationed his garrison here, he did so in order to establish control over the situation in the polis, with the ultimate aim of retaining control of the routes across Megara, thereby securing the progress of his army on the Thracian coast.<sup>52</sup>

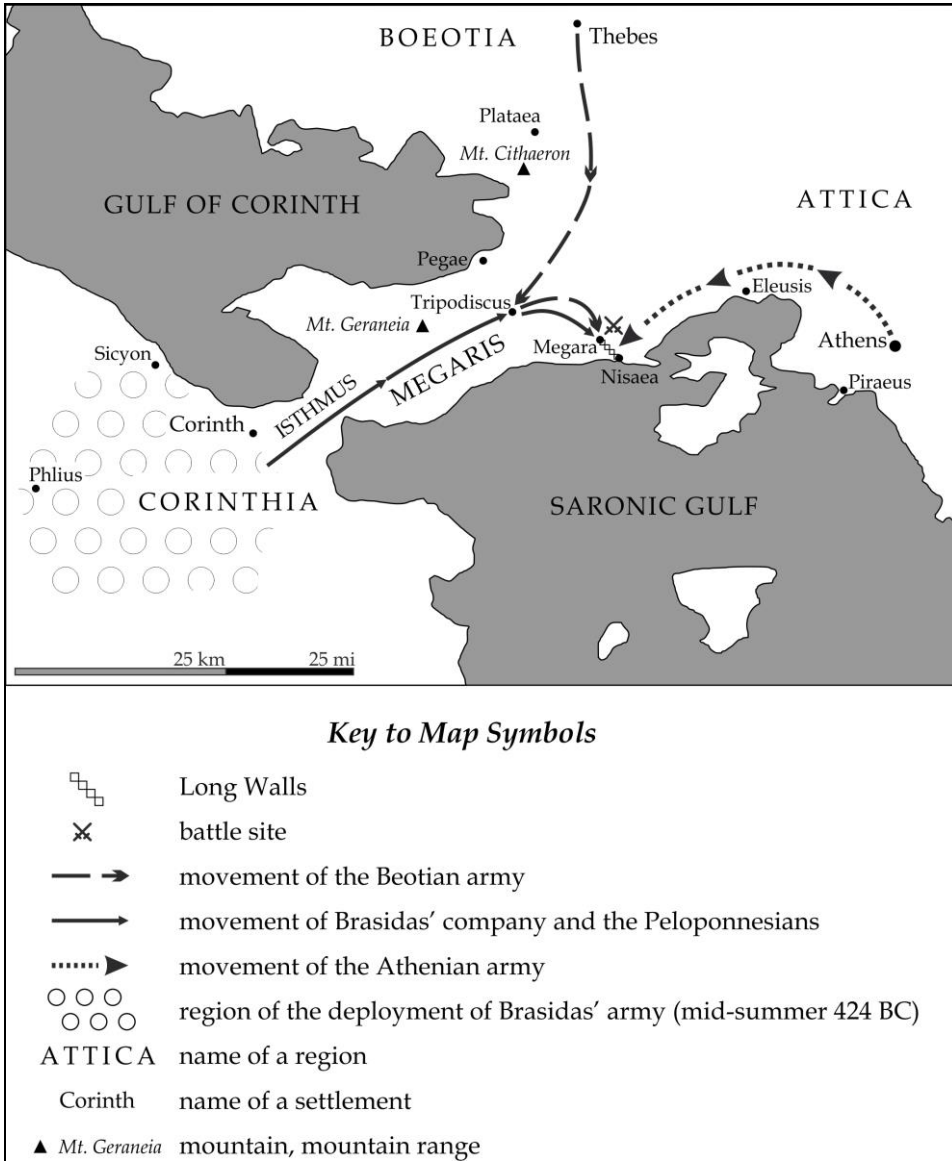
<sup>48</sup> Cf. Rengakos 2006, 289.

<sup>49</sup> Thuc. 4.70.1. Until this time, Megara and Nisaea had been under Lacedaemonian control, which allowed the latter to freely move from Peloponnesus to Boeotia via Megaris. But during the last seven years of the war, the Athenians kept invading the Megarian region until they secured their position at Nisaea. At one point, Thucydides says that the Athenians invaded Megaris every year with the horse or all of their army (Thuc. 2.31.3); at another, he says that the Athenian army invaded the territory twice a year (Thuc. 4.66.1).

<sup>50</sup> See Sinitsyn 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Badian 1999, 9–10.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Lewis 1992, 387; Hornblower 1996, 240, *ad loc.* 4.72.1; Konecny 2014, 7–10. When relating the events of the Minor Peloponnesian War, Thucydides points out (1.107.3) that in 457 BC, the Athenians, having taken Megara and Pegae, controlled the passage through Geraneia, so the Lacedaemonian army could not return from Boeotia to Peloponnesus. For discussion of this episode, see Gomme 1945, 314–315; Holladay 1977, 60–61; Hornblower 1991, 167–169;



**Map 1. The events in Megaris in August 424 BC**

*Conclusion (B).* Thucydides shows that Brasidas only partially succeeded in effectuating his intentions in Megaris. Furthermore, his account does not speak of the liberation of Megara (as Diodorus imagines). Our “authentic source” says

Strogetskiĭ 2008, 177, 181–183. On the foreign policy of Megara in the mid-fifth century BC, see Legon 1981, 174–199; 2004.

that the Spartan general “secured” the polis, but, as we can see, this did not happen without effort. Many points in the Megarian Logos convince us that the historian was fully aware of the events at Megaris.

### 3. Thucydides’ presumable informers

Thucydides himself did not take part in this operation. As is well known, Thucydides was voted strategos in the spring of 424 BC, and in the summer he took charge;<sup>53</sup> if he, together with Hippodamus and Demosthenes, had been engaged in the campaign as a general, the historian certainly would have mentioned it. Of course, this is a circumstantial argument, but without any other concrete evidence, we should consider and draw upon it.

It was the first month of the first strategy for Thucydides, son of Olorus, and, considering the close ties between his family and the region of the northern Aegean (in particular, Thasos), strategos Thucydides’ terms of reference may have included control over the situation on the Thracian coast of the Aegean Sea,<sup>54</sup> where the influence of the Athenian *arche* had considerably wavered by the 420s BC.<sup>55</sup> Yet again, the major default argument is as follows: if Thucydides had been sent to Megaris as an official at this time, then it must be assumed that he would have called himself a participant of the July military operation.

The Athenian historian may have started to collect information about the 424 BC campaign in Megaris without delay, taking notes in the aftermath of the events on the narratives provided by their participants, which would later constitute his Megarian Logos. It is not difficult to determine his sources in this case. They may have been his fellow citizens who were involved in the operation – one of many during this summer campaign. The historian may have asked Demosthenes and Hippodamus, his fellows in office in the year 424/3 BC. Of all the Athenian generals who appear in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides favored Demosthenes the most.<sup>56</sup> He could have learned many things about the military campaigns of 426–424 BC directly from Demosthenes, who took part in these events. As for the operation in Megaris, Thucydides could have learned about it either from the official account made by both of the generals or

<sup>53</sup> Yet the historian elaborately describes the events, with minute details of the plan and course of the military operation, as well as (partially) of the allied troops, and even their intentions.

<sup>54</sup> On the interest Thucydides had in Thracian affairs as a politician and historian, see the comprehensive essay Zahrnt 2006.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Zahrnt 1971; Kondratīuk 1983; Svetilova 1985.

<sup>56</sup> By the way, some researchers believe that the historian’s attitude towards Demosthenes was reserved and even disapprobative; see Woodcock 1928, 93–108; Westlake 1968, 97–121; Wylie 1993, 20 (with reference to the opinion of Woodcock and Westlake); cf. Swoboda 1905; Roisman 1993; Will 2003, 67–68; Stahl 2003, 129–131, 139; 2006, 321–323.

(specifically) from the personal questioning of the generals and the rank and file. He could only have asked questions after the army's return to Athens, for strategos Thucydides was seconded to the Thracian region to defend Amphipolis in the autumn of the year 424 BC, and, having suffered a defeat, he found himself isolated from his native polis.

E. Badian highlights the *casus unicus*, pointing out that the generals, who returned from Megaris after failing in their duty to capture Megara and keep it under Athenian control, were not condemned by the citizens.<sup>57</sup> Even though the account presented by Demosthenes and Hippocrates referred to the unpredictable turn of events (the sudden appearance of considerable numbers of Peloponnesians and Boeotians), it could hardly have satisfied the Athenian *demos*. However, Demosthenes was entrusted with command of the ships going to Naupactus at the end of the summer, and Hippocrates was to oversee the preparations for the Athenian army's invasion into Boeotia from the southeast.<sup>58</sup>

The Megarian operation was of paramount importance to the Athenians: the capture of the polis could have been the major success of their whole summer campaign. The former merits attributed to the generals would not have saved the situation. The reason they managed to get away with this failure was that both generals were involved in the all-Boeotian plot.<sup>59</sup> They must have played the role of (co)authors and orchestrators (in any case, one of the "generators" of the project was Demosthenes, the brightest of all the Athenian generals of the time and a pioneer in the military affairs of the Athenians<sup>60</sup>). Thucydides shows that this plot was accorded with the supporters of Athens from various Boeotian poleis. Demosthenes and Hippocrates' attempt to capture Megara must have been part of the "blockade" of Boeotia, since they were the ones with whom the "Boeotians had negotiated the Boeotian affairs, aspiring for a change in the system of state, to be further converted to democracy" (Thuc. 4.76.2).

Thucydides knew about the Boeotian plot.<sup>61</sup> It is likely that he took part in mapping it out since, as one of the ten generals in Athens, he did significant ad-

<sup>57</sup> "And the Athenian *demos*, quick to punish generals of whose actions it disapproved, certainly did not disapprove (of Hippocrates and Demosthenes – *A. S.*) in this case. Not only do we not hear of any punishment, but the same two generals were at once sent out to implement the Boeotian plan" (Badian 1999, 9). Badian's surprise is reasonable, considering the usual classical Athenian practice of giving democratic short shrift to leaders (including generals) who failed the public trust.

<sup>58</sup> Thuc. 4.76.1; 77.1, 2; cf. Thuc. 4.89.1; see also Nevin 2008.

<sup>59</sup> For further details, see Sinitsyn 2009, 54–56.

<sup>60</sup> Roisman 1993 and Wylie 1993 argue that he was a better commander than the Spartan general Brasidas. On Demosthenes the strategos, see Treu 1956, 420–447; Schmitz 1997; Konecny 2014, 40, 42; and the above-mentioned works in note 56.

<sup>61</sup> Thucydides describes the preparations for the Boeotian revolt in Chapters 76–77, 89, and the following chapters of *Book Four*. He provides numerous details and envisages probable perspectives (in case the Boeotians and their Athenian associates succeeded in accomplishing this design).

ministrative and military work in the state; hence, *ex officio*, he was privy to the military designs of the polis. Thucydides himself must have been engaged in drafting the 424/3 BC military strategy. As the general in charge of the state of affairs in the north of Hellas (where, together with commander Eucles, he was seconded in mid-autumn of that year), he was the executor of this military strategy. Thus, Thucydides, who was greatly interested in all the events of the war, could have learned about the clash between the Athenians and Brasidas in Megaris from his colleagues either during the second half of the summer or the first half of the autumn of 424 BC, before he was sent to the “northern front” to defend Amphipolis.

#### **4. On the contingent and strength of the allied army in the Megarian operation**

According to Diodorus, the army, which Brasidas brought to Megaris and then led on along the Thracian coast to accomplish the intended plan, consisted of Lacedaemonians and soldiers from other poleis of Peloponnesus (without concretizing). Thucydides, however, is very accurate here; he reports that in the “defense” of Megara from the Athenian attack, there were hoplites from Corinth, Sicyon, and Phlius, as well as the forces from the Boeotian Alliance. The Athenian historian gives the numbers of the warriors placed under Brasidas by allies from northern parts of Peloponnesus; he also specifies the strength of the Theban army.<sup>62</sup>

Thucydides could have gotten the data about the contingent of the allied army from the Corinthian and/or Boeotian hoplites, who were participants of this operation; it is highly possible that these informants (unmediated or secondhand) could have been some of the Peloponnesians who were with Brasidas’ expedition. But the historian could only have questioned the Boeotian and Peloponnesian “veterans” or some of the Brasideans years after the Megarian operation.

It is clear that the above evidence (numbers, dates, etc.) was of principal importance to him. Furthermore, this evidence agrees with the evidence contained in the accounts of the Megarian and consequent episodes which constitute a single Logos of the Thracian march led by Brasidas.

The large Peloponnesian army – the majority of it consisting of Corinthians (2,700 hoplites), as well as Sicyonians (600) and Phliusians (400) – was raised so quickly that it is reasonable to assume that these forces were assembled in the allied poleis of northeastern Peloponnesus long before, in preparation for unfore-

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<sup>62</sup> Thuc. 4.70.1; 4.72.1; Busolt 1904, 1138–1139; Rubincam 1979, 84, n. 29; Morpeth 2006, 285–286; Rubincam 2012, 102–103.

seen military actions. According to Thucydides, a considerable force of the Boeotian Alliance also took part in this operation.<sup>63</sup> The Thebans were no less worried about the events in Megaris than their allied Peloponnesians, as Boeotia would be cut off from Peloponnesus if this territory happened to fall under Athenian control.<sup>64</sup> In this case, considering the unrest in many Boeotian poleis (see Thuc. 4.76; 89–91), Boeotia would be facing its southern neighbor – Athens, its old rival. That is why the Thebans immediately responded to the request of the Megarian oligarchs. The Boeotian Alliance dispatched a force of 2,200 hoplites and 600 horse to Megaris.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, according to Thucydides, the total number of hoplites in Brasidas' army after the Peloponnesians joined the allies at Megara amounted to 6,000 hoplites (4.72.2)<sup>66</sup>, 2,000 of which were sent by the Boeotians (*ibid.* § 1), and 3,700 of which were brought from Peloponnesus by the general himself. The record indicates that the soldiers that had been mustered for the oncoming Thracian march also came to Megaris with Brasidas. As for their number, in Thuc. 4.70.1 we find: ... καὶ τοὺς μεθ' αὐτοῦ ὅσοι ἤδη ξυνειλεγμένοι ἦσαν (“together with the those (soldiers) who had been mustered”).<sup>67</sup> They must have been mercenaries. It is easy to find out if the account made by Thucydides<sup>68</sup> is correct in passages

<sup>63</sup> As was noted above, Diodorus never mentions them.

<sup>64</sup> See above and the literature in note 52.

<sup>65</sup> As has already been noted in the literature, during the classical period, the Boeotians boasted powerful infantry and cavalry; see, for example, Worley 1994, 60–63; Hornblower 1996, 241, *ad loc.* Thuc. 4.72.4.

<sup>66</sup> Gomme's commentary on Thuc. 4.70.1 contains *lapsus calami*: instead of 6,000, it gives 5,000 hoplites; Gomme 1956, 532: “5,000 hoplites in all.” This mistake is noticed in J. Larsen 1958, 124; *cf.* Hornblower 1996, 241, *ad loc.*, with reference to Larsen's review). As to the total strength of the allied army, Gomme gives 7,000 hoplites (*sic!*): “but his total force at Megara, one would think, would have been over 7,000 hoplites, together with the 600 horse.”

<sup>67</sup> That is, all the hoplites he had managed to muster by this time. Stratanovskii translates this in the following way: “а также с некоторым числом ранее завербованных наемников” (“also with a certain number of previously levied mercenaries”; Stratanovskii 1981, 191). This passage allows us to see that by that time Brasidas' force had already been formed (*sic!*), and the general took only *a part* (the smaller one) to Megaris (?). In Mishchenko's translation, “и со всем своим войском, которое он уже собрал” (“and with all his troops that he had mustered [by that time – *A. S.*]; Mishchenko, Zhebelev, Frolov 1999, 200); *cf.* other translations: “und allen eigenen Truppen, so viele bereits versammelt waren” (Boehme 1852, 89); “and such troops of his own as had already been levied” (Smith 1920, 331, 333); and *cf.* the translation by Crawley (Strassler 1996, 261: “and such troops of his own as he had already levied”; and Hornblower: “as well as the troops he had previously collected”; Hornblower 1996, 239, *ad loc.* 4.70.1).

<sup>68</sup> See critical notes by C. Rubincam on Thucydides' evidence: “...but the historian appears to have remembered that he was unable to get a precise number for the contingent of Brasidas' own men, and so he rounds up 5,900 to 6,000 and qualifies this total with an expression of the kind that the actual total, which he cannot give precisely, was somewhat above that” (Rubincam 2012, 102–103).



Thuc. 4.70.1 and 4.72.1, 2: 6,000 (the total number of allied hoplites) minus 5,900 (the number of hoplites, apart from those recruited by Brasidas at Peloponnesus) equals 100 soldiers.<sup>69</sup>

Then, Thucydides (4.81.1) estimates the total number of Brasideans at 1,700 hoplites. Under the agreement with the Lacedaemonians, the northern allies – the Greek poleis in Chalcidice and of Perdiccas II – were to supply Brasidas with the means to prepare the expedition (Thuc. 4.80.1). However, Brasidas must have failed to bring his army to full strength before the unexpected Megarian events. Thus, among all the Peloponnesian hoplites who came with him to Megaris ( $\approx$  3,800 men),<sup>70</sup> only 100 of them<sup>71</sup> had been recruited before the march to Chalcidice. Brasidas initially expected to have a greater strength, but he did not manage to recruit and equip as many men as he intended before the Megarian events occurred.

## 5. Where were Brasidas' Helots?

In his brief account of the  $\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  in Megaris and the quick march across Thessaly, Diodorus does not mention the Helots who were recruited as hoplites by Brasidas. According to Diodorus (12.67.3–5), the general did not bring the Helot army from Peloponnesus; it was sent by the Spartans in response to the request of Brasidas, who had long been in the north of Hellas (*ibid.* § 2). The historian specifies the number of Helots sent to render assistance to Brasidas – 1,000 men (see *ibid.* §§ 3 and 5); compare this number with the 700 Helots of Thuc. 4.80.5. We shall not discuss in detail why Diodorus chose to inflate the number of this corps of Helots sent to assist Brasidas (Is it a mistake, or does he deliberately round the number off?).<sup>72</sup> It is significant that he waits to introduce

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Classen, Steup 1963, 143, *ad. loc.*: “etwa 100 an der Zahl”; Gomme 1956, 532: “apparently not more than one hundred *or two* (italics mine – A. S.)”.

<sup>70</sup> Some scholars believe that Brasidas came with all the Helots and mercenaries that had been fully mustered by that time (i.e., + 1,700 hoplites). Cf., for example, Beloch 1927, 332: “Sofort bot er (Brasidas – A. S.) aus den benachbarten Städten Korinth, Sikyon, Phleius 3,700 Hopliten auf und führte diese Truppen und was er von seinen eigenen Leuten beisammen hatte, über die Geraneaia. Gleichzeitig stiegen von Norden her 2,200 beotische Hopliten mit 600 Reitern über den Kithaeron und vereinigten sich vor Megara mit Brasidas, der somit gegen 8,000 Mann unter seinem Befehle hatte... (sic! italics mine – A. S.)”.

<sup>71</sup> See Classen, Steup 1963, 143–144, 149, Anm.; Busolt 1904, 1138 and Anm. 3, 1141; Kagan 1974, 275, 276; Ray 2009, 181. Cf. the statistics in the table by Morpeth 2006, 285–286, Tabl. IV, col. IV, as well calculations by Keyser 2006, 338–339 and Rubincam 1979, 84; 2012, 100, n. 13, 102–103 (here with references to Keyser), 114, App. 5. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the above (notes 6 and 7) with the example of Diodorus' unaccountable “exaggeration” of the strength of Nicias' force and of the number of casualties in the “Great Earthquake” in Spar-

them into the narrative about Brasidas until the middle of the Thracian campaign, after the Spartan general had managed, by threats and persuasion, to entice the citizens of Akanthos and other Greek poleis on the Thracian coast.<sup>73</sup>

Diodorus does not specify who then brought the Helots to Chalcidice (it would have taken a real hero to match Brasidas). Thucydides highlights that this endeavor (undoubtedly very dangerous) was undertaken by the general who led the small army of mercenaries and Helots. But the Sicilian historian neglected this “insignificant detail,” for he did not realize this innovation’s revolutionary importance for the Spartan state.

According to the “authentic source,” Helots were initially part of Brasidas’ army, constituting over a third of his force. This expeditionary corps did not seem to be manned to its full potential. Even when the Macedonian king and the Greek poleis that aspired to secede from the Athenian *arche* succeeded in winning Sparta over and had it take part in the campaign in the north<sup>74</sup> by dividing the Peloponnesian army expenditures, the Lacedaemonians still showed their indifference towards the Thracian march.<sup>75</sup>

According to Thucydides, 700 hoplites of emancipated Helots were sent with Brasidas.<sup>76</sup> Sparta must have provided (fully or in part) the unheard-of “recruits” with the equipment. But Brasidas could not expect any other subsidies from the state to be forthcoming. The historian first mentions the Helots recruited by the Spartan general to serve as hoplites in the Thracian campaign only

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ta, which “cannot be taken seriously” (Karpīuk 2015, 31; Karpīuk also cites other examples of Diodorus’ exaggerated rounded numbers). On the exaggerated proportion of numbers in *The Library of History*, see specifically Rubincam 2012, 121–122: “As for Diodorus, the relatively high frequency of numbers in his historical narrative is a symptom of his interest in numbers as an impressive type of detail that enhances his account of events” (see also 2003, 452–453). By analyzing the frequency of numbers in the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Diodorus, the Canadian scholar arrives at the conclusion that “numbers constitute a higher proportion of the text of Diodorus than of any of the other three historians” (Rubincam 2012, 122, n. 4).

<sup>73</sup> Suppose we correlate Diodorus’ evidence with Thucydides’ account of Brasidas’ actions in Chalcidice: the “recruiting of the Helots” (according to Herodotus) could have taken place on the cusp of the autumn/winter of 424 BC (before the Peloponnesians’ siege and seizure of Amphipolis in December 424 BC). Then again, it is hardly possible at all to coordinate such discrepancies in our sources. By all appearances, Diodorus himself was not bothered with how much his evidence corresponded to the evidence in the “authentic source.”

<sup>74</sup> For this, see, for example, Busolt 1904, 1134–1135; Hoffman 1975; Borza 1992, 150; Sinitsyn 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Kiechle 1979, 939; Errington 1990, 21; Cartledge, Debnar 2006, 567, 573; otherwise: Schulz 2005, 101.

<sup>76</sup> On Helots in the military campaign in Chalcidice and their new status: Thuc. 4.80.5; cf. Thuc. 5.34.1; 67.1; Oehler 1912, 205–206; Welwei 1974, 108–111; Pechatnova 2001, 239, 309–310, 312–314; Jordan 2005, 55–56; Cartledge, Debnar 2006, 559–587; Welwei 2007, 225–226; Paradiso, Roy 2008, 28–29, 34; Zaïkov 2013, 80, 101–102, 104–105.

when he writes that Brasidas' army completed the dangerous passage from Isthmus to Dium and reached the lands of allied Macedonia. Before this, Thucydides says nothing of the Spartan's intention to send Helots with Brasidas; he says nothing about them when he describes the Megarian conflict, either. The author seems to be keeping the reader in the dark. The use of the dependent population as *a substitute for the hoplite army* must have been nonsense at that time.<sup>77</sup> Thucydides testifies to the untrustworthiness of Helots on many occasions;<sup>78</sup> he points out the fact that the Spartans, fearing insurrections, wanted to remove some of them from the country (4.80.2).<sup>79</sup> The Spartans must have taken the Helots not just as a chaotic (though explosive-prone) mass, both dependent on and opposed to the organized community of free warrior-*homoioi*, but also as a political community<sup>80</sup> with leaders and chiefs, the strongest and proudest of whom were capable of stirring up trouble and turning against their masters. Andreev<sup>81</sup> connected "constant fear and nervous tension" caused by neighboring Helots with the emergence of a new form of battle-order – the hoplite phalange.<sup>82</sup>

In his account of the *στάσις* in Megaris, Thucydides says nothing of the Helots trained to be engaged in the forthcoming expedition. This omission in the source can be accounted for by the fact that at that time there were no Helots serving as hoplites in the Corinthian area where Brasidas was mustering the mercenary army; the Helots must have been expected to come at a later time before the beginning of

<sup>77</sup> Later on, Sparta often used libertine Helots and mercenaries whenever it needed hoplites. On mercenaries with the Hellenes during the Classical Age: Parke 1933, 83–85; Anderson 1970, 132–133, 150–151; Marinovich 1968; 1975, 21, 23–24, 34–36, 52–53 and others; Lazenby 1985; Burckhardt 1995, 107–133; Trundle, 2004; Connolly 2006; Zaïkov 2013, 96, 99–107; Sekunda 2014, 49. On soldiers of fortune in the Hellenic Age, see Chapter 5 in the book by Angelos Chaniotis 2005, 79–88, 91–92, 94–97.

<sup>78</sup> See Thuc. 4.41.3; 5.14.3; 35.7; 56; 7.26.2.

<sup>79</sup> Thus, "fearing the impudence and multitude of Helots," the Lacedaemonians sought to lessen the topical "Helots problem" (Thuc. 4.80.2–81); see Jordan 1990, 37–69; Pechatnova 2001, 309–310, 314, 390–391; Jordan 2005, 56; Zaïkov 2013, 80–81, 96–97; Andreev 2014, 82–83). A.V. Zaïkov (2013, 97), referring to Plutarch, regards the Spartiates' massacre of 2,000 Helots, who had been set free, as an "extraordinary form of *crypteia*" (Plut. *Lyc.* 28; cf. Thuc. 4.80.3–4 and Diod. 12.68).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Andreev's view (with reference to Aristotle's fragment which says the Spartiates annually declared a war against the Helots): "The Spartans took their slaves as a kind of a political community or a complex of such communities" (Andreev 1983, 203; 2010, 425, n. 33). On the legal status of Helots and the collective nature of the Helots dependence, see Lotze 1959; Welwei 1974, 115–117; 1998, 102–107; 2006, 29–40; Zaïkov 2013, 91–99, 112–113, 117–118; Andreev 2014, 80–87, 124–126 and others.

<sup>81</sup> Andreev 2010.

<sup>82</sup> "The Spartans just did not dare leave without due control their rebellious Helots, always ready to revolt. Therefore, the Helotage was the main factor that determined Sparta's priority in developing a new army" (Andreev 2010, 480; see also Andreev 2014, 262–263, 268–269).

the march. Otherwise, Brasidas would have risked getting them involved in the Megarian operation, which would have proven a very suitable “trial of strength” for *the new army*. In addition, if the Helots had been there, the Athenian historian would undoubtedly have mentioned them in this Megarian episode.

At the end of the spring or the beginning of the summer in the year 424 BC, Brasidas must have selected a force from the libertine Helots for the forthcoming march to Chalcidice. Then, these “recruits,” still remaining in their lands, were to have military training as hoplites (probably under Brasidas and his close associates from Spartiates or Mothakes), and only after that were they to be sent to the area of Isthmus to join the army of mercenaries. It also took time<sup>83</sup> to recruit 1,000 mercenaries, and the Helots serving as hoplites remained in the “rears” in Laconia, receiving training and awaiting the order to march off.

## 6. Conclusion

Thucydides takes great pains to dramatically describe the στάσις in Megaris, with all its problems.

He is well aware of the strife in the polis;<sup>84</sup> he gives a detailed account of the Athenians taking the long walls and Nisaea (Thuc. 4.66.4–69), the construction of the circular wall to besiege the city (4.69), and the confrontation between Brasidas and the Athenian generals in the valley near Megara (4.72.2–73), prudently summarizing the events (4.74.2–3). Thucydides knows about the designs cherished by the Megarian plotters, the time spent by the Athenians on constructing the circular wall and their engineering schemes (4.69.2, 3), their Boeotian allies, and the army contingents on both sides.<sup>85</sup> The Athenian historian points out that Brasidas’ immediate response to the events in Megaris was not a reckless urge felt by the audacious commander in his wild desire to counter the enemy; rather, Brasidas proceeded from strategic considerations in this case. The capture of Megara by the Athenians would cast doubt on the feasibility of the Thracian expedition and subvert the purpose of all the previous preparations: the protracted negotiations with the allies in the north of Hellas and the arrangements with the guides in Thessaly, the training of Helots for the military march and the recruitment of mercenaries. For the Peloponnesians, holding this polis meant retaining control over the passage across Megara and the uninhibited link with Boeotia. As an experienced commander, Brasidas had to be fully aware that “relieving” Megara was a crucial part of putting the intended plan into operation.

<sup>83</sup> For more detail, see also Sinitsyn 2002a, 56–57, 59–61.

<sup>84</sup> See Thuc. 4.66–69; 71, 74.2–4.

<sup>85</sup> See Thuc. 4.67.1; 68.5; 70.1,2; 72.1,2.

Diodorus Siculus provides us with evidence that occasionally makes things clearer, but as often as not, it only complicates things. The analysis of the Megarian episode in *The Library of History* is a telling example of how he simplifies matters and distorts certain facts presented in his account. When relating the events at Megaris, he mentions neither the Boeotians, nor the strength of Brasidas' force, nor the return of the Spartan commander to Corinth, nor any successes at Megaris. The Sicilian historian, in contrast, skips<sup>86</sup> these “trifles” based on a strong belief that they are not important for the reader and can only distract from the main point – the impression of the sweeping onslaught and the military success of the hero.<sup>87</sup>

Diodorus rules out the element of chance in the Megarian episode.<sup>88</sup> He presents this military operation as one of the many endless feats of Brasidas, who found it easy to rectify the complex situation.<sup>89</sup> However, Thucydides shows that certain unsuspected events at Megaris nearly frustrated the Spartan's audacious plan. Yet, the fickle τύχη was again merciful to Brasidas.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Like the previous Nician Logos, the Megarian episode in Diodorus' work is characterized by the unreasonable concentration of evidence (see *Conclusion A*).

<sup>87</sup> On heroes and the heroic in Diodorus (mainly based on his first, “mythographic,” books), see Sulimani 2011, especially Part II “Myth and History in Diodorus' First Five Books,” and “Conclusions,” 165–347.

<sup>88</sup> See the work by L.I. Hau on the role of chance in the war events in Diodorus' *The Library of History*: Hau 2009, 171–197, especially 188–190.

<sup>89</sup> L.A. Tritle names Brasidas “A Spartan Napoleon”: Tritle 2010, 95–97.

<sup>90</sup> The author is grateful to Vladimir A. Leus (Saratow, Russia) for his technical support in the preparation of the map.

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## Abstract

By collating the accounts given by Thucydides and Diodorus of the στάσις in Megaris in the summer of 424 BC, the article analyses Brasidas's actions during the frustrated attack on Megara; it specifies the strength of the defence put up by the Spartan general in this operation, attempts to explain the causes of his return to the Corinthian area after he had helped the Megarians out of their predicament. Loosely based on Thucydides' account of these events, Diodorus' account contains digressions from the original text. Diodorus must have upheld the established tradition associated with the legendary Spartan general, so the victory at Megaris, according to Diodorus, was easily won. The article discusses the question of the whereabouts of the Helots, mustered by Brasidas for the already planned march on Chalcidice.