



## Demetrius, *Dux Philippi*: a Macedonian commander of Philip II in Thrace (according to the inscribed sling bullets)

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this communication is to briefly discuss the role of a little-known military commander of Philip II's army in the context of the Macedonian expansion in Thrace. Demetrius is mentioned as Philip's admiral during the siege of Byzantium in 340 BC by Dionysius of Byzantium (*Anaplus of the Bosphorus* 65). The lead sling bullets published here, bearing the name Demetrius and originating from the villages of Zhelad, Shumen district, the regions of Pavlikeni and Razgrad-Omurtag, as well as from Selymbria (modern Silivri), strongly confirm his participation in the campaigns of Philip II not only in the Propontis region, but also in the West Black sea coast and in Northeastern Thrace. Thus Demetrius would become the second Macedonian commander, together with the well-known Hipponikos, who are securely attested in a combination of historical, epigraphic and archaeological data. Future discoveries of sling bullets with Demetrius' name could also serve as a reliable benchmark for identifying other historically unknown Macedonian commanders who took part in Philip II's military campaigns.

### KEYWORDS

Inscribed sling bullets, Thrace, Macedonian commanders, sieges, Philip II of Macedon

For a long time the only military commander, expressly attested in the written sources as serving under Philip II of Macedon, was Hipponikos. In 341 BC Demosthenes recounted how Philip II sent a contingent of 1,000 mercenaries to Eretria led by Hipponikos and another regiment under Eurylochus and Parmenio in order to thwart the creation of the Euboean League (Worthington 2008, 125; Knoepfler 2015; Laursen 2019).<sup>1</sup> Demosthenes' statement that Hipponikos was a commander serving under Philip II has been increasingly supported by archaeological evidence from the Chalcidice region and the middle reaches of Strumeshnica River. For example, the discovery of 16 sling bullets inscribed ΠΙΠΟΛΝΙΚΟΥ confirmed his presence at the siege of Olynthus in 348 BC (Robinson 1941, 426, cat. nos. 2186–2201). In addition, two examples belonging to the Hilprecht Collection most likely originate from Olynthus as well (Warden 1997, 17, cat. nos. 16–17; cf. Robinson 1941, 426, n. 168). A set of three sling bullets with the name of Hipponikos were found during excavations of the acropolis of Tsarevi Kuli near Strumica (Angelovski 2012, 261, figs. 1–2; cf. Nankov 2015a, 25). Most recently, an unspecified number belonging to Hipponikos and Kleoboulos was also discovered along the city walls of Apollonia in Mygdonia (site of Μπουντρούμια) south of Lake Bolbe (*SEG*

<sup>1</sup> Dem. 9.58.: “καὶ γὰρ τοὶ πέμψας Ἴππώνικον ὁ σύμμαχος αὐτοῖς Φίλιππος καὶ ξένους χιλίους, τὰ τεῖχη περιεῖλε τοῦ Πορθμοῦ καὶ τρεῖς κατέστησε τυράννους, Ἴππαρχον, Αὐτομέδοντα, Κλείταρχον· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐξελέλακεν ἐκ τῆς χώρας δις ἤδη βουλομένους σφάζεσθαι, τότε μὲν πέμψας τοὺς μετ' Εὐρυλόχου ξένους, πάλιν δὲ τοὺς μετὰ Παρμενίωνος.”



Fig. 1. 1. Lead sling bullet inscribed ΔΗΜ[Η]ΤΡΙΟΥ. Regional Museum of History, Shumen, Inv. No. 12955.; 2 – Lead sling bullet inscribed ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ. Museum of History, Pavlikeni, Inv. No. 671; 3. Lead sling bullet inscribed Δ[ΗΜΗ]ΤΡΙΟΥ. Collection “Vatevi”, Inv. No. 2996 (photos by E. Nankov)

Обр. 1. 1. Оловна тежест за прашка с надпис ΔΗΜ[Η]ΤΡΙΟΥ. Регионален исторически музей Шумен, Инв. №12955; 2. Оловна тежест за прашка с надпис ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ. Исторически музей Павликени, Инв. №671; 3. Оловна тежест за прашка с надпис Δ[ΗΜΗ]ΤΡΙΟΥ. Колекция „Ватеви“, Инв. №2996 (снимки Е. Нанков)

59. 650bis; Hatzopoulos 1994, 177–178). The sling bullets testify to Demosthenes’ account (Dem. 9. 26; cf. 7. 28) who mentioned that the town was destroyed by Philip II (cf. Hatzopoulos 1994, 161; Flensted-Jensen 2004, 816, no. 545). The examples from the collection of sling bullets at Basel (Vischer 1878, 263, no. 34), as well as the Canelopoulos and Froehner Collections have no provenance (Empereur 1981, 559–560, nos. 16–17; Hellmann 1982, 83, no. 35). In short, the sling bullets of Hipponikos are now firmly established as a reliable benchmark by which other Macedonian commanders, most notably Kleoboulos and Anaxandros, for whom no historical accounts exist, could be connected with the military campaigns of Philip II in inland Thrace during 342–340 BC (Hristov, Manov 2011; Avram et al. 2013, 261–262, 277; Nankov 2015b, 3–4).

It turned out that Hipponikos was not the only Macedonian commander whose actions had

resonated in the Greek historical tradition. Recently, O. Gabelko has argued quite convincingly about the identity of a little-known Macedonian fleet commander, named Demetrius, who apparently took part in the unsuccessful siege of Byzantium by Philip II in 340–339 BC (Gabelko 2015; cf. Ellis 1976, 182, n. 6; Dumitru 2006, 141–142; Gyuzelev 2015, 28; Ellis 1976, 174–180; Hammond, Griffith 1979, 566–581; Delev 1997, 23–25)<sup>2</sup>. The sole reference to his actions in the context of a fierce naval battle, after which the besieged emerged victorious, comes from Dionysius of Byzantium’s *Anaplois Bosporou*. There Demetrius is clearly described as a commander of Philip’s army, “..Demetrium, Philippi ducem exercitus..”<sup>3</sup>

Another remnant of Demetrius’ involvement during the sieges of Perinthus and Byzantium, which was not discussed by O. Gabelko, is a lead sling bullet inscribed ΔΗΜΗΙΤΡΙΟ allegedly originating from Selymbria (Cat. no. 4), now in the Anastasios Stamoulis Collection<sup>4</sup>, which was ravaged by Philip II as well en route to Byzantium in 340 BC (Isaac 1986, 208–211; Hammond, Griffith 1979, 574, n. 2; Loukopoulou, Laitar 2004, 922; Sarakinski, Panovski 2012, 74–79). The proposed date of the inscription (a shortened genitive ending in “O” rather than “OY”) in the middle or the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC has made the association of the bullet with the reign of Philip II more likely (Avram et al. 2013, 268).<sup>5</sup> In antiquity the use of slingers during naval battles was more common than one might expect, as is evident from the numerous historical references which mention the employment of slingers on shipboards (Pritchett 1991, 60–61). Conceivably, this practice or a land siege may account for the presence of sling bullets inscribed with Demetrius’ name in the region of Selymbria.

Archaeological excavations of the acropolis of Heraion Teikhos (mod. Karaevliati) and at Hieron Oros (mod. Kartaltepe/Bakacaktepe) have recently brought to light further evidence for the movement of Macedonian troops in the Propontis region during the 340s BC. Among the finds reported from destruction strata at Karaevliati are sling bullets, arrowheads and spearheads, which the excavators associate with the siege laid by Philip II in 352 BC (Atik 2017, 59; Karaca 2019, 138–141; Loukopoulou, Laitar 2004, 918–919). Similar items, including stone projectiles and sling bullets, have been found during rescue excavations at Kartaltepe/Bakacaktepe. The material, however, still remains unpublished (Koçel Edem 2010, 310, n. 13; Karaca 2019, 130–132, Fig. 27).

O. Gabelko’s hypothesis may be strengthened even further by putting forward new archaeological data from Northeastern Bulgaria, which I have already mentioned in passing elsewhere (Nankov 2016, 285, n. 21). Here they are presented in more detail. Stray finds of three lead sling bullets inscribed ΔΗΜΗΙΤΡΙΟ, virtually identical to the example reported from Selymbria, have become known from the village of Zhelad, Shumen district (Cat. no. 1), and from unspecified locations in

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2 Diod. Sic. 16.74.2–16.77.3.

3 Dionysius Byzantius, *Per Bosporum* navigatio 65: “Post Comarodes consequitur littus editum, asperum, cautesque concavae ex mari eminentes, quas antique Bacchias nominarunt ex eo, quod circum ipsas concitato motu fluctus furere et bacchari videntur. Hic Demetrium, Philippi ducem exercitus, quum vicissent Byzantii, Θερμηυερίαν nominarunt locum a re ipsa quae contigerat. “ The text in paragraphs 58 to 95 has survived only in the Latin translation by Pierre Gilles who lived during the XVI century, cf. Gabelko 2015, 28; Gyuzelev 2015, 8–10.

4 Seure 1912, 534 mentions that all items from the Stamoulis Collection, which was donated to the Numismatic Museum at Athens in 1924, originated either from Silivri (ancient Selymbria) or the immediate surroundings.

5 On the same grounds the identification of the legend ΔΗΜΗΙΤΡΙΟ with Demetrios Poliorketes (so Ikonou, Varoukha-Khristodoulou 1955, 147, n. 2) has already been rejected, cf. Avram et al. 2013, 236, n. 25–26; Nankov 2016, 285.

the regions of Pavlikeni<sup>6</sup> and Razgrad-Omurtag<sup>7</sup> (Cat. nos. 2–3). Although none comes from a secure archaeological context, their nearly identical metrology, weight and inscriptions indicate a serial output of sling ammunition manufactured for Demetrius' troops. The sling bullets illustrate further the movement of Philip's soldiers in the region of Northeastern Bulgaria, following a retreat along the Greek *apoikiai* on the West Black Sea coast, after Philip's unsuccessful sieges at Perinthus and Byzantium (Nankov 2016, 286–287). It is thus reasonable to expect that future discoveries may increase the number of sling bullets inscribed with Demetrius' name.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, they could serve as reliable benchmarks, as in the case of Hiponnikos' bullets, for identifying other historically unknown Macedonian commanders of slingers in Thrace.

## CATALOGUE

1. Regional Museum of History – Shumen, Inv. No. 12955. Village of Zhelad, Shumen district; **L 29 W 16 Th 12 Wt: 29,76 g**. Cast in a bivalve mold, almond-shaped, good condition, two scratches; casting sprues from mold. ΔΗΜ[Η]ΤΡΙΟ. Reading: Δημήτριο(υ) (fig. 1.1).  
Publication: Nankov 2016, cat. no. 4.
2. Museum of History – Pavlikeni, Inv. No. 671. Region of Pavlikeni, Veliko Tarnovo district; **L 30 W 16 Th 13 Wt: 30,13 g**. Cast in a bivalve mold, almond-shaped, well preserved, casting sprues from mold, several deep linear cuts from tool (knife?). ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟ. Reading: Δημήτριο(υ) (fig.1.2).  
Unpublished.
3. Collection “Vatevi”, Inv. No. 2996. Region of Razgrad-Omurtag; **L 29 W 16 Th 12 Wt: 29,88 g**. Cast in a bivalve mold, almond-shaped, intact, small linear scratch, letters worn on front side. Δ[ΗΜΗ]ΤΡΙΟ. Reading: Δημήτριο(υ) (fig. 1.3).  
Unpublished.
4. Numismatic Collection “Anastasios Stamoulis”. Selymbria or vicinity; **L 27 W 15 Th not reported Wt: 27,64 g**. Cast in a bivalve mold, almond-shaped. ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟ. Reading: Δημήτριο(υ).  
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<sup>6</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Kalin Chakarov and Rositsa Mitkova for providing information and allowing access to study the sling bullets at the Museum of History in Pavlikeni and the Regional Museum of Archaeology in Plovdiv.

<sup>7</sup> I owe this information to Rositsa Mitkova.

<sup>8</sup> Several identical examples inscribed ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟ have been sold on auctions on the web, e.g. <http://www.antiquesnavigator.com/d-2034707/antiques-roman-lead-sling-shot-bullet-found-with-metal-detector.html>

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## Demetrius, Dux Philippi: един македонски командир на Филип II в Тракия (по данни от тежестите за бойна прашка с надписи)

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Емил Нанков

(резюме)

Целта на това съобщение е да дискутира накратко ролята на един малко известен военен командир от армията на Филип II в контекста на македонската експанзия в Тракия. Деметрий е споменат в историческите извори като Филипков пълководец при обсадата на Бизантион през 340 г. пр. Хр. единствено от Дионисий Бизантийски (*Анаплус на Боспора* 65). Публикуваните тук оловни тежести за бойна прашка, носещи името Деметрий и произхождащи от с. Желъд, Шуменско, района на Павлиkenско и Разградско, както и от *Селимбрия*, потвърждават категорично неговото участие в походите на Филип II не само в Пропонтида, но и по Западния Понт и в Североизточна Тракия. Така той се превръща във втория македонски пълководец, заедно с добреизвестния Хипоник, който е засвидетелстван в комбинация от исторически, епиграфски и археологически данни. Така бъдещи находки на тежести с името на Деметрий биха могли да послужат и като сигурни репери за идентифициране на други исторически неизвестни командири на прашкари, взели участие във военните кампании на Филип II.