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SŁAWOMIR SPRAWSKI*

Merchants of Pherae The role of maritime trade in relations between the Thessalian tyrants and Athens in the 4th century B.C.

Kupcy z Feraj Rola handlu morskiego w stosunkach między tyranami tesalskimi a Atenami w IV w. p.n.e.

Streszczenie: Według Plutarcha Aleksander z Feraj został uhonorowany przez Ateńczyków posągiem z brązu. Przyznanie tak wysokiego wyróżnienia trudno jednak uzasadnić efemeryczną współpracą polityczną między Feraj a Atenami. Autor stara się wykazać, że ten honor mógł być rezultatem zaangażowania rodziny ferajskich tyranów w handel morski z tym miastem. By uwiarygodnić tę tezę, Autor zbiera argumenty wskazujące na istnienie powiązań handlowych między Pagasai a Pireusem oraz na zaangażowanie Ferajczyków w handel morski.

* The Institute of History of the Jagiellonian University, ul. Gołębia 13, 31-007 Kraków, slawomir.sprawski@uj.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-6904-5544.

Abstract: According to Plutarch, the Athenians honoured Alexander of Pherae with a bronze statute. It is difficult to explain such a high award with the ephemeral political cooperation between Pherae and Athens. The author aims to show that the honour could have resulted from the involvement of the family of the Pheraean tyrants in maritime trade with Athens. To substantiate this thesis, the author collects arguments showing the existence of trade relations between Pagasae and Piraeus and the Pheraeans' involvement in maritime trade.

Słowa kluczowe: starożytna Grecja, Ateny, Tesalia, Aleksander z Feraj, tyrania, handel

Keywords: ancient Greece, Athens, Thessaly, Alexander of Pherae, tyranny, trade

In the context of our rather modest sources about the political and military cooperation between the Pheraean tyrants and the Athenians, information about their personal ties to Athens seems rather surprising.¹ Jason, who was opposed to forming an alliance, was probably already the *tagos* of the Thessalians when he came to Athens to participate in the trial of the famous strategos Timotheus. Alexander, who made a short-lived alliance with the Athenians, was so highly-regarded by them that they reportedly honoured him with a statue. Finally, Lycophron and Peitholaos, stripped of power and banished from Pherae, were honoured by being granted Athenian citizenship. The maritime policy of the Pheraean tyrants and their relations with Athens have already been the topic of my reflections.² This article aims to show that their involvement in maritime trade could have been the reason for their good personal relations with this city. The key role in this analysis is played by Alexander of Pherae, who evoked strong emotions among the Athenians, first as their friend and then as their foe.

¹ The paper was completed thanks to support from the Polish National Science Centre (2012/07/B/HS3/03455).

² See S. Sprawski, *The maritime policy of the tyrants of Pherae*, "Electrum" 2020, vol. 27, pp. 89–115.

Alexander's alliance with Athens

Before we address the main problem, we should briefly characterise Alexander's political relations with Athens. Having murdered his paternal uncle in 369, he took over Jason's heritage and for over ten years fought for the dominant position in Thessaly. He already gained notoriety as a cruel tyrant during his lifetime. A number of crimes were attributed to him, which he allegedly committed both during war and peace, in Thessaly and abroad. His contemporary Xenophon recorded: "when Alexander had himself succeeded to the position of ruler, he proved a cruel *tagos* to the Thessalians, a cruel enemy to the Thebans and Athenians, and an unjust robber both by land and by sea."³ When he was murdered by his own wife and her brothers, Demosthenes lamented that the Athenians had not openly called for the tyrant to be removed. His life and unusual death probably became the topic of Moschion's drama *The Men of Pherae*, which has survived only in short fragments. His acts of cruelty were also remembered, and written about by Plutarch, Pausanias and Constantine Porphyrogenites. He was also probably the Alexander whom Dante, in his *Inferno*, placed along with Dionysius of Syracuse among the tyrants who "took to blood and plunder."⁴

Contrary to Xenophon's words, Alexander had not always been Athens' mortal enemy. Quite the reverse, in 367 he formed an alliance with the city, which marked a change in the policy pursued by Jason and his direct successors. Jason had been allied to Thebes and, although he had good personal relations with the Athenians, he probably avoided entering into a formal coalition with them. Alexander's efforts to keep control of entire Thessaly should be seen as the genesis of the alliance. His actions were strongly opposed by the other Thessalian cities and resulted in a Theban intervention. However, Pelopidas, sent by the Thebans, did not clearly

³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.35 (trans. L. Brownson).

⁴ Dem. 23.120; Plut. *De Alex. Fort.* 334 A 3; *Pel.* 26.2; 29.3–6; Origen. *C. Cels.* 4.67.13; 5.20.37; Const. Porph. *Exc. de Virt.* 1.240; Dante *Inf.* 12.100–108 (trans. Robert and Jane Hollander); more about Alexander cf. S. Sprawski, *Alexander of Pherae: Infelix tyrant*, in: *Ancient tyranny*, ed. S. Lewis, Edinburgh 2006, pp. 134–147.

back Alexander who, disappointed with his position, decided to change allies. By arresting Pelopidas, he provoked a conflict with the Thebans and then, faced with the risk of their invasion, in 367 turned to Athens with the proposal to form an alliance. The offer was accepted and, with the Athenians' help, Alexander successfully resisted the Theban intervention. The campaign was a qualified success, however, because a few months later the Boeotians sent their army to Thessaly again. The commander-in-chief, Epaminondas, avoided a general battle, but conducted a limited campaign until he achieved the release of Pelopidas, at the low price of thirty days of ceasefire. Alexander withstood this confrontation and was given de facto freedom of action in Thessaly for three years. However, we hear no mention of the Athenians' involvement in these events or further cooperation with them, either political or military. This is puzzling, especially in the context of the Boeotians becoming increasingly active in the region. In 366, they took over control of Oropos, which had previously belonged to Athens, and built a fleet, challenging the Athenian hegemony at sea. With Athens remaining passive, in 364 the Boeotians intervened in Thessaly and defeated Alexander, forcing him into an alliance with them. As a Theban ally, Alexander made another political turnabout, undertaking sea expeditions against Athens and its partners. The campaigns culminated in the defeat of a squadron of Athenian ships in the Battle of Panormos in 361 and in a bold attack on Piraeus. Alexander's irksome activity in 361/0 forced the Athenians to sign an alliance with the cities of the Thessalian League. In the agreement, the two sides pledged that they would not end the war against Alexander separately and that they would not make peace with him. However, we hear of no more fighting against Alexander. He probably remained an ally of Thebes until the end of his life. The coalition was continued by Tisiphone, Lycophon and Peitholaos, Jason's sons, who assumed power in Pherae in 358 after assassinating Alexander. Together with other Thessalians, supporting the Thebans, they joined the war against the Phocians, known as the Third Sacred War. It was not until the defeat of the Thessalian army that Jason's sons decided to reverse the alliances. In 354, contrary to the traditional Thessalian policy, they opted to form a coalition with the Phocians, assisted by the Athenians. Supported by this alliance, they returned to their attempts to fight for power over entire Thessaly. Their plans

were foiled by Philip II of Macedon who, intervening in Thessaly in 353, thrashed the coalition of the Phocians and the Pheraeans in the Battle of Crocus Field. The lost battle sealed the fate of Jason's sons who were forced by Philip to surrender Pherae and leave the city. It was probably at that time that Lycophron and Peitholaos received Athenian citizenship.⁵

The events summarised above lead us to conclude that the period of Alexander's political cooperation with the Athenians was very short and probably lasted no longer than three years. Our sources confirm that at that time the allies conducted one joint campaign, which ended with the Boeotian army being forced to retreat from Thessaly. The cooperation between Alexander and the Athenians could have been regarded as an insignificant episode if it had not been for the information recorded by Plutarch:

ἐπεὶ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Φεραίων τύραννον πολέμιον ὄντα Θηβαίων Ἀθηναῖοι φίλον ἐποίησαντο καὶ σύμμαχον ὑποσχόμενον αὐτοῖς ἡμιβολίου τὴν μνᾶν κρεῶν ὄνιον παρέξειν, 'ἡμεῖς δέ,' ἔφη ὁ Ἐπαμεινώνδας, 'ξύλα προῖκα παρέξομεν Ἀθηναίοις ἐπὶ τὰ κρέα ταῦτα: τὴν γὰρ χώραν αὐτῶν τεμοῦμεν, ἂν πολυπραγμονῶσι.'

The Athenians made friendship and alliance with Alexander the tyrant of Pherae, who was an enemy to the Thebans, and who had promised to furnish them with flesh at half an obol a pound. And we, said Epaminondas, will supply them with wood to that flesh gratis; for if they grow meddlesome, we will make bold to cut all the wood in their country for them.⁶

Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ μισθοδότην Ἀλέξανδρον εἶχον καὶ χαλκοῦν ἵστασαν ὡς εὐεργέτην, τότε τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐπιδείξαι Θηβαίους μόνους ὑπὲρ τῶν τυραννουμένων στρατευομένων καὶ καταλύοντας ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τὰς παρανόμους καὶ βιαίους δυναστείας.

The Athenians were taking Alexander's pay and erecting a bronze statue of him as their benefactor, to show the Greeks that the Thebans alone were making expeditions for the relief of those whom tyrants oppressed,

⁵ See S. Sprawski, *The maritime policy...*, pp. 105–109.

⁶ Plut. *Reg. Et Imp. Apoph.* 193 D–E (trans. W. W. Goodwin).

and were overthrowing in Greece those ruling houses which rested on violence and were contrary to the laws.⁷

Plutarch mentions that the Athenians made Alexander their friend and ally. This is certainly an allusion to the treaty signed in 367. Diodorus, describing the circumstances of signing this agreement, only reveals the motives of the Pheraean tyrant. Fearing the size of the Theban forces sent against him, he decided to ask the Athenians for help. Plutarch presents this event from a different point of view, concentrating on the Athenians' motives. In both fragments, he tries to emphasise that the Athenians made the alliance as they wanted to oppose the policy of Thebes, which from his point of view was driven by the noble intent to fight against tyranny. The quoted words of Epaminondas are a warning for the Athenians not to meddle in other people's affairs. The accounts of the two authors seem to complement each other. From them, it follows that Alexander, threatened by the Thebans, managed to obtain the Athenians' assistance. The latter decided to form the alliance because they wanted to damage the Thebans' image as leaders in the fight against tyranny in the Greek world.

Although Alexander seems to be the main beneficiary of the alliance formed in 367, Plutarch mentions that it was the Athenians who honoured him with a statue as their benefactor. At the same time, he provides information which reveals his deeper knowledge of their mutual relations. He mentions payment made to the Athenians and an offer to sell them meat. The question arises as to whether the facts he lists are merely a result of forming the military alliance or whether they followed from cooperation in other fields. Especially intriguing is the question of Alexander being honoured with a statue, which no other primary source mentions. Meanwhile, such an honour was reserved to very few citizens and to foreigners who made special benefactions to Athens.

⁷ Plut. *Pelop.* 31.4 (trans. B. Perrin).

A statue for Alexander

According to Aeschines, a bronze statue was an honour given to victorious generals. They were the ones mainly mentioned as great benefactors of the city. This was the highest honour given by the Athenians, apart from a seat of honour in the theatre (proedria), a crown and meals at the state's expense (sitiesis).⁸ The custom of putting up public statues to meritorious generals started in the early 4th century and echoed the honour which the Athenians awarded posthumously to the Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Demosthenes mentions that Conon was the first to receive this honour. He was rewarded for victory in the Battle of Knidos in 394 and for ending the tyranny of the Lacedaemonians. Isocrates supplements Demosthenes' information, adding that, for providing the equipment necessary to achieve this success, Euagoras, the ruler of Cyprian Salamina, was also rewarded. Isocrates explains the great significance of the Battle of Knidos for the Athenians, emphasising that thanks to him the Lacedaemonians lost their hegemony, the Hellenes regained their freedom, and Athens recovered some of its former glory and became the leader of the allies. For these victories, Conon and Euagoras were awarded bronze statues put up on the agora near the statue of Zeus the Saviour.⁹ In later years, the honour of being awarded a bronze statue was given to the authors of the greatest military successes remembered by the Athenians. In 330 Aeschines referred to these facts as to widely-known events:

Pray ask the jury whether they knew Chabrias and Iphicrates and Timotheus, and inquire why they gave them those rewards and set up their statues. All will answer with one voice, that they honored Chabrias for the battle of Naxos, and Iphicrates because he destroyed a regiment of the Lacedaemonians, and Timotheus because of his voyage to Corcyra, and other men, each because of many a glorious deed in war.¹⁰

⁸ Aeschin. 2.80; cf. Dem. 20.120–124.

⁹ Isoc. 9.56–57; Dem. 19.280; 20.70.

¹⁰ Aeschin. 3.243 (trans. Ch. D. Adams).

It seems that Demades was the first person to be honoured with a statue and free food at public expense not for being a victorious general, but for his diplomatic mission with Alexander in 335 BC. During the Lycurgan period there are other mentions of non-military benefactions, but it was still a very special honour.¹¹

In the second half of the 4th century, it became more common to put up statues of foreign benefactors of the city. In 352 Demosthenes pointed out that to honour them it was not sufficient, as previously, to grant them Athenian citizenship.¹² After Euagoras, mentioned above, in the second half of the 4th century this honour was awarded to the Bosporan king Pairisades I and his sons, Satyros and Gorgippos. The Bosporan king won the honour for restoring the privileges of Athenian merchants. Apart from the statue, the Athenians pledged to give him military assistance whenever he turned to them for help. This example illustrates that the Athenians were ready to award a bronze statue not only for military contributions but also for those actions which had a significant influence on supplying their city. This is confirmed by two cases known from the 3rd century. Philippides and Kallias were honoured for contributing to the Athenians obtaining gifts (grain) from Lysimachus and Ptolemy II, respectively. It seems, however, that these were still exceptional cases, and the honoured men belonged to the highest classes.¹³

The cost of putting up a bronze statue was not low. According to the information included in an inscription from the end of the 5th century, the statue to Aesclepiades of Byzantion cost 3,000 drachmas.¹⁴ For

¹¹ Din. 1.101; P. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*, Paris 1985, p. 112; M. Domingo Gygax, *Benefaction and rewards in the ancient Greek city. The origins of euergetism*, Cambridge 2016, pp. 228–229.

¹² Dem. 23.196–200.

¹³ *IG II² 212 = R²O 64 l. 8–32* (with commentary); *IG II² 450b* (Assandros); *IG II² 457 + 513* (Lykourgos); *IG II² 657* (Philippides); Kallias (*SEG 28.60*); Din. 1.43 and 101 (Pairisades and his sons); S. M. Burstein, *I.G. II² 653: Demosthenes and Athenian relations with Bosporus in the fourth century BC*, “*Historia*” 1978, vol. 27, pp. 428–436; D. T. Engen, *Honor and profit: Athenian trade policy and the economy and society of Greece, 415–307 B.C.E.*, Ann Arbor 2010, pp. 164–168 (does not mention Alexander of Pherae).

¹⁴ *IG II² 555 l. 14*.

comparison, in 347/6, the Bosporan kings Spartokos and Pairisades were awarded gold crowns worth 1,000 drachmas each for their contribution to the grain trade with Athens; they were to be presented during the Great Panathenaea.¹⁵

In view of the above reflections, we should consider what might have merited Alexander receiving a bronze statue in his honour. Plutarch stresses that the Athenians made Alexander their friend and ally. His words seem to repeat the phrase *philos kai symmachos*, known from epigraphy and from literary texts. It is assumed that the term *symmachos* refers to military cooperation, while the term *philos* emphasises the friendliness of mutual relations, refraining from actions detrimental to the other party, and a readiness to collaborate and offer all kinds of assistance.¹⁶ We cannot be completely sure whether the phrase *philos kai symmachos* was used in the treaty between the Athenians and Alexander. It has been noted that the phrase was regularly used in documents from Plutarch's times, but it was not too common in Athenian inscriptions from the 4th century.¹⁷ For instance, it was not present in the text of the alliance between the Athenians and the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius, formed in 368/7, that is around the same time as the treaty with Alexander. However, Aeschines twice calls the Thracian king Kersobleptes "a friend and ally of the city" (*ἄνδρα φίλον καὶ σύμμαχον τῆς πόλεως*).¹⁸

Plutarch, while mentioning the statue of Alexander, also informs us that the Athenians "erected a bronze statue of him as their benefactor" (*καὶ χαλκοῦν ἴστασαν ὡς εὐεργέτην*).¹⁹ This may mean that he was awarded the title

¹⁵ *R&O* 64 l. 23–26.

¹⁶ R. A. Bauslaugh, *The concept of neutrality in classical Greece*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–Oxford 1991, pp. 62–63; M. Giangulio, *La ΦΙΛΟΤΗΣ tra Sibariti e Serdaioi (Meiggs–Lewis, 10)*, *ZPE* 1992, vol. 93, p. 40, note 37; M. Intrieri, *Philoî kai xeinoî. Sui rapporti tra tiranni e basileis in Erodoto*, in: *Tyrannis, Basileia, Imperium: forme, prassi e simboli del potere politico nel mondo greco e romano. Atti delle Giornate seminariali in onore di S. Nerina Consolo Langher*, Messina, 17–19 dicembre 2007, (Pelorias 18), eds. M. Caccamo Caltabiano, C. Raccuia, E. Santagati, Messina 2010, pp. 131–135.

¹⁷ M. Intrieri, *Intessere relazioni. Osservazioni sull'itinerario di philia (I. dalle origini al V sec. a.C.)*, "Historika" 2013, vol. 3, p. 259 with note 249.

¹⁸ *IG* II² 105 + 523 = *R&O* 34; Aeschin. 2.9; 3.61.

¹⁹ *Plut. Pel.* 31.4; *Reg. Et Imp. Apoph.* 193 D–E.

of *euergetes*, as a benefactor of the polis. It is also possible that this term was used only to describe the character of his actions, which merited honouring him with a statue.²⁰ In either case, this means that his actions were interpreted as special benefactions to the Athenians.

If statues were awarded mainly to victorious generals, then we should look for the source of Alexander's special benefactions to the Athenians in his success in the fight against the Thebans. The fact that at least some of them saw him as a talented general is shown in the letter from Speusippos to Philip II, probably written in 343. The author criticised Isocrates' actions, reminding the king that the latter had sent him a speech which he had previously sent to Agesilaos, Dionysius and Alexander of Thessaly. The allusion probably refers to the speech entitled *Philip*, in which Isocrates urged the Macedonian king to take leadership of the Panhellenic campaign against Persia. This information indicates that for a while Isocrates may have seen Alexander as the appropriate candidate for the commander of the Panhellenic war campaign. Since the rest of Isocrates' writings do not mention Alexander, it has been suggested that Speusippos made a mistake and the speech was, in fact, addressed to Jason. However, in the light of the above reflections, there is no need to make such an emendation. Even if, contrary to Speusippos' words, Isocrates did not address such a letter to the tyrant, the suggestion that he did so in itself must have sounded credible.²¹ In other words, there was a period in Alexander's life when at least some of the Athenians felt very positively about him.

Alexander's popularity with the Athenians is indicated by Demosthenes' words from the speech *Against Aristocrates*, written in 352. The orator reproached the Athenians, reminding them of the time not so long before, when Alexander:

[...] ἐχθρὸς δ' ὡς οὐδείς ἦν Θηβαίοις, ὑμῖν δ' οικείως διέκειθ' οὕτως ὥστε παρ' ὑμῶν στρατηγὸν αἰτεῖν, ἐβροηθεῖτε δ' αὐτῷ καὶ πάντ' ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος...

²⁰ P. Gauthier, op. cit., p. 112; M. Domingo Gygax, op. cit., pp. 109–112.

²¹ *Ep. Socr.* 30.13; A. F. Natoli, *The letter of Speusippus to Philip II. Introduction, text, translation and commentary* (Historia Einzelschriften 176), Stuttgart 2004, pp. 157–158; C. Bearzot, *Isocrate et Phères: Jason et ses successeurs*, "Ktèma" 2016, vol. 41, p. 7.

[...] was the most bitter enemy of the Thebans, when his feelings towards you were so fraternal that he applied to you for a commander, when you gave aid to his arms, when it was Alexander here and Alexander there...²²

With hindsight, Demosthenes lamented that no one had come forward with the proposition to guarantee the safety of someone who would have killed the tyrant. At the same time, however, he confirms that there had been a time when Alexander was well and often talked about in Athens. It seems that Demosthenes most probably meant the year 367, when an alliance was formed and the Theban army was forced to retreat from Thessaly. The success against the Athenians' enemies at that time must have been significant enough that it was widely admired. They could also have been sympathetic to the fact that, as the assassin of his paternal uncle Polyphron, Alexander could still have been enjoying his fame as a Tyrannicide, which is indicated by Xenophon's words.²³ As a victorious general, Athens' benefactor and a Tyrannicide, Alexander could have met the criteria of someone who merited a statue. However, it is difficult to resist the impression that for the Athenians, the question of military and political results in Thessaly was not as significant. This is supported by the fact that sending Autocles' contingent in 367 was the only sign known to us of their military involvement in the region over a few decades.

One more piece of information draws our attention in Plutarch's mention about Alexander being awarded a bronze statue. He refers to the Thessalian tyrant as Ἀθηναῖοι μισθοδότης. In *Anabasis* Xenophon uses the term μισθοδότης in reference to Cyrus the Younger as the person who paid the salary of Greek mercenaries. If, writing about Alexander, Plutarch indeed meant paying the salary, perhaps this refers to the Athenian soldiers commanded by Autocles, sent to Thessaly to assist in 367. They were most likely mercenaries, and Alexander could have covered the cost of their participation in this campaign. However, we might also consider the possibility of a different meaning of this term. Aeschines accused Demosthenes of

²² Dem. 23.120 (trans. A. T. Murray); see I. Worthington, *Demosthenes of Athens and the fall of classical Greece*, Oxford 2013, pp. 110–114.

²³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.33–34 (trans. L. Brownson).

taking money from men whom he refers to as *μισθοδοῦται*. In this context, the money does not mean soldiers' salary but a political bribe.²⁴ Perhaps Plutarch, who shows Alexander in a very negative light, wanted to present the information from the above anecdote about the offer to sell meat to the Athenians as a form of bribery. This information has survived because the Athenian appetite for Thessalian meat was given an ironic commentary by Epaminondas. However, this is not the only information presenting Alexander as a supplier of foodstuffs to Athens. A surviving fragment of the comedy *Artemis*, written by Ehippos, a poet of Middle Comedy, talks about a bread kiln sent by Alexander of Thessaly (*παρ' Ἀλεξάνδρου δ' ἐκ Θεσσαλίας κολλικοφάγε κριβανος ἄρτων*). Athenaeus, who cites this fragment, explains that it refers to *kollikioi*, i.e. rolls or loafs of coarse bread. Although we do not know the context in which this information appeared in the comedy, when coupled with the mention of meat export, it is quite likely that the remark refers to Alexander of Pherae.

It seems quite surprising that two sources independently confirm the involvement of the Thessalian tyrant in supplying food to Athens. The question is whether this involvement was significant enough that it was rewarded with the greatest honours. It is worth noting here that Xenophon refers to merchants as Athens' benefactors, who deserve special awards, such as seats of honour in the theatre. The earlier example of the Bosporan king Pairisades shows that contributions to supplying food could have been valued so highly that they merited the honour of a bronze statue.²⁵ The above information draws our attention to the issue of the significance of trade relations between Athens and Pherae and the role which Alexander and his family could have played.

Trade between Pagasae and Piraeus

The Pheraeans controlled Pagasae, a settlement whose name was associated with the myth about the building of the *Argo*, the ship on which

²⁴ Xen. *Anab.* 1.3.9; Aeschin. 3.218.

²⁵ Xen. *Vect.* 3.4; L. Casson, *Ancient trade and society*, Detroit 1984, p. 33.

Jason and his companions supposedly set off from neighbouring Iolkos on his quest for the Golden Fleece. Writing in the mid-4th century BC, Theopompos called the settlement an *epineion*, i.e. port, of Pherae. It was convenient enough that Xerxes' fleet found shelter there. It was also where the Greek fleet wintered after the victorious Battle of Salamina. Although we hear of other places on the Thessalian coast, such as Pyrasos and Halos, which served as harbours, they did not have natural features comparable to Pagasae and played a much smaller role.²⁶ The fleet kept by the Pheraeans must have stationed in Pagasae. It was, most importantly, the main commercial port of Thessaly, which brought in significant profits for the power that controlled it. It was not by chance that Thessalian cities fought with Philip II for the control over those profits.²⁷

Pagasae's commercial relations with Athens are clearly implied by a fragment of Hermippus' comedy *The Porters*, probably played shortly before 424. The fragment, preserved in a quotation in Athenaeus, includes a catalogue of commodities from various parts of the world, which were shipped into Piraeus. It mentions the *douloi* and *stigmatias* brought in from Pagasae (αἱ Παγασαὶ δούλους καὶ στιγματίας παρέχουσι). In the translation of J. M. Edmonds, who edited fragments of Attic comedies, both terms refer to one category – slaves who were branded to prevent them from escaping: "Pagasae, bondsmen branded to keep them from running away."²⁸ Accepting this translation of the term *stigmatiai*, many believe that both tattooed

²⁶ Hdt. 7.193. Theopompos *BNJ* 115 F 53; Strab. 9.5.15. Plut. *Them.* 20.1; Ch. In-tzesiloglou, *Ιστορική Τοπογραφία της Περιοχής του Κόλπου του Βόλου*, in: *La Thessalie: quinze années de recherches archéologiques, 1975–1990 : bilans et perspectives : Actes du colloque international, Lyon, 17–22 Avril 1990*, Athens 1994, pp. 31–56; H. R. Reinders, *New Halos in Achaia Phthiotis*, in: *Housing in New Halos: A hellenistic town in Thessaly, Greece*, eds. H. R. Reinders, W. Prummel, Lisse 2003, pp. 17–19; J.-C. Decourt et al., *Pagasai*, in: *An inventory of archaic and classical poleis*, eds. M. H. Hansen, T. H. Nielsen, Oxford 2004, pp. 699–700; K. Liampi, *Iolkos and Pagasai: Two new Thessalian mints*, NC 2005, vol. 165, pp. 30–31.

²⁷ On the fleet of Pherae see S. Sprawski, *The maritime policy...*, pp. 109–112. On the dispute between the Thessalians and Philip about Pagasai see Dem. 1.22.

²⁸ Ath. 1.49 27 e = Hermippus fr. 78 (Edmonds) cf. F. Gschnitzer, *Studien zur griechischen Terminologie der Sklaverei, I. Grundzüge der vorhellenistischen Sprachgebrauchs*, Wiesbaden 1963, p. 5.

and untattooed slaves were brought in from Pagasae. The fact that Pagasae was the source of slave import to Athens is indirectly confirmed by Aristophanes in his comedy *Plutos*, mentioning a merchant from Thessaly as the most obvious slave dealer.²⁹ The Thessalians, as the scholiasts noted, were accused of being slave-dealers and faithless men. The term used for this occupation, *andrapodistés*, is explained by the *Liber Suda*: “the term slave-dealer [comes] from trading men, that is, selling [them]; he who is enslaving free men” (the Suda online translation).³⁰ The accusations levelled at the Thessalians were probably due to the fact that they were thought to enslave free people of Greek origin.

The question is where the slaves sold in Pagasae came from. According to E. Meyer, they were brought in from the Thessalian interior. Indeed, a number of manumission inscriptions comes from this region, which confirm that chattel slavery was an important institution there. However, the inscriptions do not come from the discussed period, and the oldest of them are dated to as late as the beginning of the 2nd century BC. They can hardly be treated as testimony of a significant presence of slaves in Thessaly in the Classical Period. This seems even less likely in view of the fact that this country had a large group of *penestai* performing jobs which slaves were employed to do elsewhere. In the opinion of J. Ducat, chattel slaves did not appear more commonly there until the second half of the 4th century BC,

²⁹ Ar. *Plut.* 520–524; J. M. Edmonds, *The fragments of attic comedy*, vol. 1, Leden 1957, p. 307; see M.-M. Mactoux, *Douleia : esclavage et pratiques discursives dans l'Athènes classique*, Paris 1980, p. 129; R. Garland, *The Piraeus: From the fifth to the first century B.C.*, London 1987, p. 91; W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek state at war. Part V*, Berkeley 1991, p. 238, note 338; J. Ducat, *Les Pénestes de Thessalie*, Paris 1994, p. 87; D. Gilula, *Hermippus and his catalogue of Goods (fr. 63)*, in: *The rivals of Aristophanes. Studies in Athenian old comedy*, eds. D. Harvey, J. Wilkins, London 2000, pp. 79–80. However, E. M. Harris' translation of a fragment of Hermippus, frequently quoted in works published in English, reads: “Pagasae sends slaves and branded scoundrels” (*Workshop, marketplace and household. The nature of technical specialization in classical Athens and its influence on economy and society*, in: *Money, labour and land. Approaches to the economies of ancient Greece*, eds. P. Cartledge, E. E. Cohen, L. Foxhall, London–New York 2002, p. 78).

³⁰ *Liber Suda* α 2154, Θ 291; cf. *Schol. in Ar. Plut.* 521b; *Schol. in Eur. Phoen.* 1408; K. Holzinger, *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar zu Aristophanes' Plutos*, Wien–Leipzig 1940, p. 521.

and were more often performers of specialised services. However, he agrees with the opinion that the quoted fragments of the comedy indicate that Pagasae was an important centre for slave trading. This contributed to the Athenians developing a negative stereotype of Thessaly as a country of greedy slave dealers.³¹ Regardless of the demand for slaves in Thessaly itself, Hermippus seems to testify that merchants from this state came to Piraeus where he mentions that Alexander of Pherae had a bodyguard who was a barbarian with slaves for sale.

It is not easy to determine the origin of the slaves sold in Pagasae. It is presumed that the local merchants acted as agents in the sale of people brought in from Thrace or other more remote regions. The Thracian origin of the slaves may be implied by Hermippus using the term *stigmatiai*, which may refer to people with tattoos. Herodotus confirms that this was a practice known among the Thracians, although he notes that for them it was a symbol of belonging to the upper class.³² In this context, it is interesting that Cicero slave with a Thracian tattoo.³³ The slaves could also have been members of other barbarian peoples, such as the Illyrians who, according to Strabo's account, like the Thracians, also wore tattoos. If we regard the tradition about the Thessalians selling Greeks into slavery as reliable, then there also must have been another source of the slaves sold in Pagasae. Perhaps they included people kidnapped by pirates, who were active even during the peak of Athens' hegemony at sea.³⁴ We could also analyse Diodorus' information that Alexander sent pirate ships against the

³¹ E. Meyer, *Theopomps Hellenika*, Halle 1909, p. 282, note 1; J. Ducat, *Les Pénestes de Thessalie*, p. 87; R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Taxing freedom in Thessalian Manumission inscriptions* (Mnemosyne, Supplements vol. 361), Leiden 2013, p. 8, 30.

³² D. Braund, *The slave supply in classical Greece*, in: *Cambridge world history of slavery. Volume I: The ancient Mediterranean world*, eds. K. Bradley, P. Cartledge, Cambridge 2011, pp. 127–128.

³³ Cic. *De off.* 2.25.

³⁴ Ph. De Souza, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman world*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 28–30; V. Gabrielsen, *Economic activity, maritime trade and piracy in the Hellenistic Aegean*, REA 2001, vol. 103, pp. 229–230; B. Rutishauser, *Athens and the Cyclades. Economic strategies 540–314 BC*, Oxford 2012, pp. 16–17, 101–102.

Cyclades in the same context. Their crews reportedly kidnapped many of the islanders and forced them into slavery.³⁵

The *stigmatiai* mentioned by Hermippus could also have been free people referred to by this term. This is supported by the fact that, like Hermippus, Aristophanes mentions them alongside slaves. They could be seen as immigrants who joined the large group of *metoikoi*. The presence of Thessalian immigrants in Athens is indicated by Andocides, who warned the Athenians not to give rights to the inhabitants of Thessaly and Andros due to a shortage of citizens.³⁶

Apart from slaves, grain was also traded in Pagasae. Xenophon twice mentions grain export from Thessaly. The first account is when he describes the expedition of Boeotian ships to Thessaly in 377. The Thebans, who had been withstanding Spartan attacks for two years, had a shortage of grain and, to replenish their supply, they sent their ships to Pagasae. Xenophon mentions two *trieres* but they were probably only an escort for merchant ships. The purchase must have been quite large, since 10 talents of silver were allocated for this purpose. For such a sum in Piraeus, where the usual price was 5 drachmas for a *medimnos* of wheat, one could buy approximately 12,000 *medimnoi*. Xenophon's second mention about the export of Thessalian grain comes in Polydamas' speech to the Spartans, where he cites the words of Jason of Pherae about Thessaly's potential. Jason noted that the Thessalians had so much wheat that they were exporting it, while the Athenians "have not even enough for themselves unless they buy it elsewhere". The Thessalians must have been regarded as experts in growing grain, as indicated by Theophrastus' remarks.³⁷

Our sources do not testify to Thessalian grain being exported to Athens in the Classical Period. However, it does seem very likely considering that there are accounts confirming such imports from the end of the

³⁵ Diod. 15.95.1.

³⁶ Ar. *Lys.* 330–331; Andoc. 1.149. At least a few of such residents are mentioned in inscriptions, see M. J. Osborne, S. G. Byrne, *The foreign residents of Athens. An annex to the lexicon of Greek personal names: Attica* (Studia Hellenistica 33), Lovanii 1996, pp. 100–101.

³⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56; 6.1.11; Theoph. *C.P.* 3.20.8; *H.P.* 8.7.4.

3rd century until the mid-1st century, as well as the Roman times.³⁸ We also have information about the presence of Thessalian cereal products on the Athenian market. Apart from the *kollikioi* mentioned above, which J. M. Edmond compares to scones, in the mid-4th century at least one more type of Thessalian baked product was popular. In *The Gastronomers*, Archestratos mentions the round Thessalian bread called *krimnites*, elsewhere referred to as *chondrinos*, among the best types of bread. The name *chondrinos* suggests that it must have been produced from roughly-milled flour.³⁹ Unfortunately, we have no confirmation that it was exported to Athens. It is equally likely that only Thessalian flour or the recipe came from Thessaly. The Thessalians were known for their love of luxury both in attire and food. The fact that the Thessalian cuisine could have had an impact on the Athenian one is attested to by the luxurious dish called *mattyē*, which gained popularity in Athens during the Macedonian domination and which, according to Athenaeus, had a Thessalian origin.⁴⁰ This region was also associated with *chondros*, a kind of special fine flour produced, according to Theophrastus, from various grains (mainly emmer or barley), from which porridge was made.⁴¹ In the fragment of Antiphanes' comedy *Anteia* quoted by Athenaeus, one of the conversationalists, probably a merchant, praises the *chondros* from Megara, which he has in his baskets. The other person questions his opinion, suggesting that the one from Thessaly is the best.⁴² Thessalian *chondros* also appears in the conversation between

³⁸ SEG 58: 525; Philostr. VS 1.23.1; see H. Michell, *The economics of ancient Greece*, Cambridge 1940, p. 260; A. Bresson, *The making of the ancient Greek economy: institutions, markets, and growth in the city-states*, Princeton 2016, p. 410 with note 115; cf. B. Helly, *Encore le blé thessalien. Trois décrets de Larisa (IG IX 2, 506) accordant aux Athéniens licence d'exportation et réduction des droits de douane sur leurs achats de blé*, "Studi ellenistici" 2008, vol. 20, pp. 25–108.

³⁹ Ath. 3.77 112a–b.

⁴⁰ Ath. 14.83 662f–663d.

⁴¹ Theopr. HP 4.4.9; A. Dalby, *Food in the ancient world. From A to Z*, London–New York 2003, p. 132.

⁴² Ath. 127b = Antiphanes fr. 34, *Comicorum atticorum fragmenta*, vol. II, ed. Th. Kock, Leipzig 1884, p. 24; see J. Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef: The discourse of food in ancient Greek comedy*, Oxford 2000, p. 157, note 3; M. Mili, *Religion and society in ancient Thessaly*, Oxford 2015, pp. 260–261 with note 8.

a character of Alexis' comedy *The Love-lorn Lass* with the cook hired to prepare a banquet. The context in which this quote appears in Athenaeus suggests that both Thessaly and Megara were famous as this product's places of origin.⁴³

An interesting testimony regarding the import of *chondros* to Athens is the already mentioned fragment of Hermippus' comedy. In it, we read that beef ribs and *chondros* were brought in from Italy. This mention confirms that these commodities were imported from parts of the world as distant as Italy. Theodor Kock, citing the above mentions about the origin of *chondros*, proposed an emendation of the form *Italias* attested in the manuscripts to *Thettalias*.⁴⁴ He based this on that fact that Thessalian *chondros* was mentioned as being popular in Athens, as cited above.

If we accept Kock's emendation, the extant fragment of Hermippus' comedy shows that Athens imported beef ribs from Thessaly. This mention, coupled with the information about Alexander's offer, is a serious indication that meat was one of the commodities sent to Athens. This is interesting because it is usually accepted that slaughtering cattle for consumption was relatively rare, although it was known to happen in large cities.⁴⁵ This was related to a growing demand for meat. The Athenians could have received it at the time of making sacrifices during various festivals. According to M. H. Jameson's cautious estimates, it could have amounted to as much as two kilograms per citizen annually. Apart from the meat of sacrificial animals being distributed, the market for meat produced for non-religious purposes was also developing. To satisfy these demands, it was necessary to import cattle from outside Attica. Our primary sources lack clear information about the places from which cattle arrived to Athens, but it is thought that its main sources were Boeotia, Euboea, Megara and the Peloponnese,

⁴³ Ath. 3.101 126f–127c = Alexis fr. 196 with the commentary by G. Arnott.

⁴⁴ Ath. 27e = Hermippus fr 63, p. 244. The emendation has been accepted, although not universally, see e.g. D. Gilula, op. cit. p. 80 with note 14.

⁴⁵ Ch. Chandezon, *L'élevage en Grèce : fin Ve-fin Ier s. a.C. : l'apport des sources épigraphiques* (Scripta antiqua 5), Bordeaux 2003, pp. 99–100, 281–283.

as well as the Pontus.⁴⁶ Thessaly is not listed among these suggestions, but Hermippus' testimony may indicate that it was also an exporter.

The image of Thessaly as a state where cattle were raised was recorded by the poet Theocritus, who mentions in *Idyll* 16 "many the calves that went lowing with the horned kine home to the byres of the Scopads."⁴⁷ The region had favourable conditions for animal husbandry thanks to the wetland which was unsuitable for growing grain but could be used as pastureland.⁴⁸ Large agricultural estates liked to keep herds of cattle to increase their income. There are also epigraphic sources of privileges given by cities to use pastureland on their territory, although most of them come from the 3rd century BC.⁴⁹ Xenophon recorded that when Jason, as *tagos*, ordered the Thessalian cities to supply animals for a sacrifice to Apollo, he collected no fewer than a thousand cows and over ten thousand sheep, goats and swine. He also promised a golden crown to reward the city which would raise and supply the best bull. The quoted number of sacrificial animals gives an idea about the scale of animal husbandry in Thessaly.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ M. H. Jameson, *Sacrifice and animal husbandry in classical Greece*, in C.R. Whittaker (ed.) *Pastoral economies in classical antiquity*, Cambridge 1988, p. 97, 105–106; J. McInerney, *The cattle of the Sun: Cows and culture in the world of the ancient Greeks*, Princeton, NJ 2010, pp. 175–182.

⁴⁷ Theoc. *Id.* 16.36–39 (trans. J. M. Edmonds).

⁴⁸ Bone remains from New Halos show that the cattle raised there in the 3rd century BC was smaller than the cattle from Kassope in Epirus from the period between the 4th and 1st century BC. Evidently the conditions in Epirus must have been better for animal husbandry than near New Halos. See W. Prummel, *Animal husbandry and mollusc gathering*, in: H. R. Reinders, W. Prummel, *Housing in New Halos: A hellenistic town in Thessaly, Greece*, Lisse 2003, p. 191.

⁴⁹ S. Hodkinson, *Animal husbandry in the Greek polis*, in: *Pastoral economies in classical antiquity*, ed. C. R. Whittaker, Cambridge 1988, pp. 37–49; S. Isager, J. E. Skydsgaard, *Ancient Greek agriculture: An introduction*, London 1992, pp. 98–99; Ch. Chandezon, op. cit., nos. 17–19, 97–137; see also H. Reinder Reinders, W. Prummel, *Transhumance in hellenistic Thessaly*, "Environmental Archaeology" 1998, vol. 3, pp. 81–95.

⁵⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.29; M. H. Jameson, *Sacrifice and animal husbandry in classical Greece*, in: C. R. Whittaker, op. cit., p. 95. Jason's competition for the finest sacrificial bovine specimen finds its equivalent in competitions held in other regions of Greece, such as Kos and Bargylia in Caria, see S. Georgoudi, *Des chevaux et des bœufs dans les pratiques culturelles grecques : bref retour sur un dossier*, in: *Equides et bovines de la Méditerranée antique. Rites*

Both of these mentions indicate that meat, rather than alive animals, was sent to Athens. Meat is a more problematic produce to store long-term. Prior to being sent, it had to be properly conserved, either by drying or salting. It is difficult to imagine that animal husbandry and slaughter were not accompanied by an appropriately high demand for meat. Raising cattle for sale was impossible without securing the proper amount of feed and the right care.⁵¹ For this reason, we can assume that, in order to ensure the profitability of the enterprise, a system of regular relations must have developed between the breeders, butchers and traders who supplied meat to the Athenian market. We know that the market was very receptive. For instance, cow hides were imported to Athens from regions as distant as Kyrene and the Pontus. They could just as easily have been brought in from much closer Thessaly.⁵²

Thessalian traders

The above testimonies indicate that Pagasae could have been a lively centre of maritime trade. According to Eduard Meyer, merchants from Pherae were involved in this activity. He came to this conclusion by analysing the speech *Peri Politeias*, which is difficult to interpret and which has survived under Herodes' name. Although we do not know who wrote the speech or when, the issues it addresses are related to the situation in Larissa in the late 5th century BC.⁵³ The author, among others, draws attention to the

et combats, jeux et savoirs, Actes du colloque organisé par l'axe Animal et sociétés méditerranéennes, Réseau interdisciplinaire d'études diachroniques sur l'animal (AniMed), UMR 5140 Archéologie des sociétés méditerranéennes, Espace Van Gogh, Arles, 26 au 28 avril 2012, eds. A. Gardeisen, Ch. Chandezon, Lattes 2014, pp. 35–36.

⁵¹ V. J. Rosivach (*The system of public sacrifice in fourth-century Athens*, Atlanta, GA 1994, pp. 85–86) doubts the profitability of sending salted ribs from Thessaly to Athens. On the methods of curing meat by ancient Greeks see G. Ekroth, *Man, meat and god: On the division of the animal victim at Greek sacrifices*, in: *Μικρός Ιερομνήμων: μελέτες εις μνήμην Michael H. Jameson*, eds. A. Matthaïou, I. Polinskaya, Athens 2008, pp. 278–279.

⁵² [Dem.] 34.10; Hermippus 243 [Kock] = Ath. 1.49 27e; Jameson, op. cit., p. 108.

⁵³ K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* III.2, Berlin–Leipzig 1923, p. 16–18. For a discussion see S. Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae*, Kraków 1999, pp. 34–38.

fact that the Larissans do not profit optimally from their land because a significant amount was seized by foreigners who export its produce. He accuses his compatriots of gifting privileges to those foreigners for their own personal gain, to the detriment of the state's interests. Meyer is convinced that the author meant traders from Pherae who exported grain from Larissa.⁵⁴ Building on this thought, H. D. Westlake noted that it was income from exporting grain from the eastern Thessalian plain that was supposedly the source of prominence of Lycophron and his successors, who took tyrannical power in Pherae and attempted to impose their authority over the whole state. Lycophron was supposedly a merchant who bought grain and shipped it to various buyers via the port of Pagasae, controlled by the Pheraeans. Similar factors contributing to the city's growth were pointed out by Plato, who wrote that access to sea and a convenient harbour gave the city an opportunity to attract overseas trade and to grow rich thanks to small trade.⁵⁵

We have another testimony which may indicate that the citizens of Pherae were involved in maritime trade. This is a *passus*, so far overlooked in the discussion, from Isocrates' speech *Trapezikos*, in which he mentions Pyron of Pherae. This figure appears in the context of the lawsuit of a son (unknown by name) of Sopaïos, a minister to the Bosporan king Satyros. Sopaïos' son, who was visiting Athens, demanded that the Athenian banker Pasion repay him a large sum of money which he had supposedly deposited in his bank. The banker not only refused to return the deposit but also demanded interest on the payment. After an open conflict broke out, Pasion changed his position and secretly came to an agreement with Sopaïos' son. During a secret meeting on the Acropolis, he explained he was short of funds and trying to conceal his own financial problems. He pledged to return his money but would only do so in the Pontus and very discreetly. If this obligation had not been fulfilled, Pasion agreed that the matter would be arbitrated by King Satyros, who could order him to repay the whole original sum and half as much in addition. When the agreement had been

⁵⁴ E. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 281–283.

⁵⁵ Plato *Leg.* 4.705a; H. D. Westlake, *Thessaly in the fourth century BC*, London 1935, pp. 48–49.

written down, Pyron of Pherae was brought to the Acropolis. It was into his hands that the two parties entrusted the document, tasking him with burning it if the agreement were kept, or with delivering it to King Satyros should it be broken. Later in the speech we find out that Pasion delayed repaying the money and even falsified the contract. On his orders, one Pythodoros bribed Pyron's slave to gain access to the document. Then, confident of the outcome, the banker demanded that the document be opened in the presence of witnesses. When this was done, the contract turned out to state that Pasion had been freed of any obligations towards Sopiaios' son. The trial continued, but Pyron did not play a further role in it.⁵⁶

Isocrates' speech is the only source of information about Pyron. The disagreement must have taken place before the year 393, which is accepted as the date of King Satyros' death. This was during the Corinthian War, and in Thessaly a civil war was raging between Medius of Larissa and Lycophron of Pherae. Isocrates refers to Pyron as a man from Pherae and a *xenos*, so he was not an Athenian *metoikos*.⁵⁷ He presents him as a man who regularly travelled to the Pontus (καὶ ἀναγ εἰς ἀκρόπολιν Παγόντεςύρωνα Φεραῖον ἄνδρα, εἰθισμένον εἰσπλεῖν εἰς τὸν Πόντον).⁵⁸ We can assume that he visited Piraeus just as frequently, since he was well known and trusted both by Pasion and Sopiaios' son. Information from the 4th century tells us that many traders delivering goods to Athens were foreigners. According to Lionel Casson, most of the ships which brought commodities to Piraeus did not belong to the Athenians, but to the inhabitants of other poleis. The Athenians readily granted them loans to finance maritime trade. This was a serious incentive to undertake the long and risky voyage Pontus.⁵⁹ On the basis of Isocrates'

⁵⁶ Isoc. 17.1–23, 33–34; G. M. Calhoun, *Documentary frauds and litigation at Athens*, CPh 1914, vol. 9, pp. 137–138; L. Casson, *The ancient mariners seafarers and sea fighters of the Mediterranean in ancient Times*, Princeton 1991, pp. 97–112; A. H. Sommerstein, *Oaths in business*, in: A. H. Sommerstein, I. C. Torrance, *Oaths and swearing in ancient Greece*, Berlin–Boston 2014, pp. 73–75.

⁵⁷ Isoc. 17.20 and 23; see R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Settlers and dispossessed in the Athenian empire*, “Mneomosyne” 2004, vol. 57, p. 333, note 23. On the situation in Thessaly at that time: Diod. 14.82.5; S. Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae*, pp. 42–48.

⁵⁸ Isoc. 17.20.

⁵⁹ L. Casson, *Ancient trade and society*, p. 30.

information, it can be concluded that Pyron was a merchant trading grain between Athens and the Pontus. This would explain his frequent journeys to the Pontus, his acquaintance with those mentioned in the speech and the fact that they trusted him. As a trader and probably ship owner he could have made a considerable profit from maritime trade. How profitable the grain trade was is shown by the information given by the author of the speech against Phormion, who mentions a transport of 10,000 *medimnoi* of wheat. In Piraeus, grain could usually be sold for 5 drachmas per *medimnos*, while in the Pontus 2 drachmas were paid. According to Bresson's estimates, a merchant who took a loan of 3,000 drachmas for a trade expedition could make a profit of approximately 4,800 drachmas, after deducting the costs. The profit could rise to 7,800 drachmas if, on the way to the Pontus, the trader took an additional cargo of wine. The profit could also be much higher in times of grain shortage, when a *medimnos* of grain cost as much as 16 drachmas in Athens.⁶⁰

If Pyron was a trader, as we can suspect, he was the only one from Thessaly whom we know by name. However, we should keep in mind that we know few traders' names and places of origin in general. In the primary sources which refer to Athenian trade, only 29 figures have been identified, half of whom were Athenians.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Pyron certainly was not the only Thessalian involved in maritime trade. An interesting mention can be found in Plutarch's account about the circumstances of Kimon capturing the island of Skyros. Its inhabitants, known as the Dolopes, are reported to have long supplemented their modest income from cultivating their rather infertile land by taking up piracy. They did not even hesitate to plunder

⁶⁰ [Dem.] 34.39; A. Bresson, *Merchants and politics in ancient Greece: Social and economic aspects*, in: *Mercanti e politica nel mondo antico*, ed. C. Zaccagnini, Roma 2003, pp. 148–149; cf. Ch. M. Reed, *Maritime traders in the ancient Greek world*, Cambridge 2003, p. 24. A ship from the end of the 5th century, whose wreck was found off the coast of Alonisos (ancient Ikos), transported approximately 4,200 amphoras and was capable of carrying a load of around 126 tons. See E. Hadjidaki, *Underwater excavations of a late fifth century merchant ship at Alonnesos, Greece: the 1991–1993 seasons*, BCH 1996, vol. 120, p. 588.

⁶¹ A. Moreno, *Feeding the democracy: The Athenian grain supply in the fifth and fourth century BC.*, Oxford 2007, pp. 285–286.

merchant ships that visited their port. During one of such operations, they captured and imprisoned some Thessalian merchants (*emporoi*), whose ships were anchored in Ktesion. That this event was not an insignificant episode is reflected in the fact that the imprisoned traders, who managed to escape, made a complaint against the city to the Amphictyonic tribunal. A verdict was passed and Skyros had to pay a fine.⁶²

Pyron's example shows that there were traders involved in maritime trade among the citizens of Pherae. Pyron was part of a network of connections between grain producers in the Pontus, grain buyers in Athens and bankers who gave the loans which made risky but very profitable sea expeditions possible. It seems likely, therefore, that he would have been involved in the maritime trade with Athens, which was interested in importing foodstuffs. Piraeus, even during the period right after the end of the Peloponnesian War, which was difficult for Athens, was a very busy port, which generated enormous sales, as is indicated by the sum, mentioned by Andocides, of 36 talents of annual income from the 2% customs duty on imports and exports.⁶³ It should also be noted that Pyron's involvement does not seem to have a direct connection to the political relations between Athens and Pherae. According to Diodorus, Medius of Larissa, who fought against Lycophron of Pherae, in 395 received the military support of the anti-Spartan coalition in which Athens participated.⁶⁴

Good contacts with the Athenians opened the door to making a profit from their maritime trade with the Pontus. The character of wealthy Thessalians' involvement in the Black Sea trade may be indicated by the situation described in the speech *Against Lacritus*, preserved in the *Corpus Demosthenicum*. The Athenian Androcles of Sphettos filed a lawsuit against Lacritus of Phasela, an Athenian *metoikos*, to reclaim the invested money. Androcles, persuaded by Lacritus, gave his brother Artemos a loan

⁶² Plut. *Cim.* 8.3–4; see: Thuc. 1.98; Diod. 11.60.2; Nep. *Cim.* 2.5; Plut. *Thes.* 36.1; D. Hamel, *Athenian generals: Military authority in the classical period*, Leiden–New York 1998, pp. 181–182; cf. Ph. de Souza, *Greek piracy*, in: *Greek world*, ed. A. Powell, London 1995, p. 189 with note 71; idem, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman world*, pp. 29–30; F. Lefèvre, *L'Amphictionie Pyléo-Delphique : histoire et institutions*, Athènes 1999, pp. 244–245.

⁶³ Andocides 1.133–4.

⁶⁴ Diod. 14.82.5–6; S. Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae*, pp. 38–39.

of 3,000 drachmas for a trading enterprise. The loan was expected to bring an interest at the rate of 225 drachmas on the thousand, and to reach 300 drachmas if the traders set off on the return trip after the rising of the star Arcturus, i.e. around mid-September, when the weather conditions worsened and navigation became riskier. The written contract stipulated that the traders would call at Mende or Skione on the Chalcidice Peninsula, and then at Hieron in the Bosporus, from where they would sail to Borysthenes on the Black Sea. Androcles did not grant the loan by himself, but together with Nausicrates of Carystos. The loan involved the risk of losing the capital if the ship was wrecked or in the case of the debtor's dishonesty, which was the case here. However, if the operation had been successful, it would have brought a considerable profit. From our perspective, it is interesting that the creditors included foreigners, such as Nausicrates of Carystos on Euboea, or the citizen of Chios mentioned in the speech.⁶⁵

It cannot be ruled out that rich Pheraeans also invested their capital in crediting maritime trade with the Pontus, and personal relations, such as the ones Pyron had, could have made it possible. At this point it is worth noting the figure of Merion, the rich brother of Jason of Pherae, who reportedly lived in Pagasae. According to Polyaeus, Jason underhandedly appropriated 20 talents of silver which Merion kept at home. The anecdote does not mention trade at all, but the very fact that Merion lived in Pagasae gives us reason to suppose that maritime trade and granting loans were the source of his wealth.⁶⁶

Tyrants and maritime trade

The trade with Athens must have given Jason and his successors the very tangible advantage of access to silver, either in the form of coins or raw material. For Thessaly, which did not have its own sources of this metal, trade was the main way to obtain it. The inflow of silver allowed the Thesalians to mint their own coins, to fund ambitious political plans and, most

⁶⁵ Dem. 35, 6–11 and 52; A. Moreno, *op. cit.*, pp. 290–291.

⁶⁶ Polyaeus. 6.1.6; S. Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae*, p. 52.

importantly, to keep a mercenary army and fleet.⁶⁷ In this case as well, Alexander draws our attention, because his coinage was particularly rich. He minted coins of various denominations, including ones which had previously not been encountered in Thessaly.⁶⁸

Alexander's offer to sell meat to the Athenians, mentioned above several times, may indicate the tyrant's personal involvement in the trade. Even without such an involvement, Jason and Alexander, who were formally Thessaly's political leaders, could have profited from the development of trade. First of all, they could have received profits from port and marketplace fees collected in Pagasae. The fact that these charges were an important source of income is confirmed by the later dispute between Philip II and the Thessalians about control over these fees. According to Demosthenes' words, Philip allocated this money to maintaining a mercenary army and the previous Pheraeans could have done likewise.⁶⁹

Exercising formal political leadership enabled the tyrants to use other instruments that could have impacted the level of trade exchange, and consequently the size of income from the collected fees. Examples of other Greek cities give us an idea what these instruments could have been. Dionysius, a contemporary of Jason, exempted the citizens of Syracuse from the tax on the number of heads of cattle they owned (*boskemata*), which resulted in an increase of livestock. When he reinstated the tax, the citizens decided to slaughter their stock and sell the meat.⁷⁰ The example of Selymbria, described by Pseudo-Aristotle, shows how the state could have organised the grain trade by mediating between the producers and the traders operating on the local market, and foreign traders. In this case, in order

⁶⁷ Th. R. Martin, *Sovereignty and coinage in classical Greece*, Princeton, New Jersey 1985, pp. 153–155; Th. Figueira, *The power of money: Coinage and politics in the Athenian empire*, Philadelphia 1998, pp. 234–235; A. Bresson, *The making of the ancient Greek economy...*, pp. 265–266.

⁶⁸ U. Wartenberg, *The history and coinage of Alexander of Pherae*, in: UPERIA 2 (Praktika B/ Sunedriou <Fera-Belestino-Rhgaj> Meroj A/, Athens 1994, p. 153; T. R. Martin, *The chronology of the fourth-century B.C. facing-head silver coinage of Larissa*, ANSMN 1983, vol. 28, p. 28.

⁶⁹ Dem. 1.22; 2.11.

⁷⁰ Xenoph. *Hell.* 6.4.29; [Arist.] *Oec.* 2.1349b; cf. McInerney, op. cit., pp. 179–180.

to find money to cover public expenses, it was decided to introduce the obligatory purchase of grain at fixed prices, which was then resold abroad for a high profit. An inscription from the 2nd century BC provides another example of the state authorities' involvement in purchasing grain. In this case, the Thessalian *koinon*, supplying grain in answer to the Romans' demand, fixed the size of the contribution and the ports to which it was to be delivered, as well as the dates of delivery, different for two regions of the state.⁷¹ The fact that Jason of Pherae, as the *tagos* of the Thessalians, could also have given similar tasks to cities, is attested to by the above mention in Xenophon. This case did not involve grain trading but preparing sacrificial animals for Apollo.⁷² Wielding political control over Thessaly or in part, Jason and then Alexander could have undertaken such projects in order to create more favourable conditions for the traders operating in Pagasae. We know that the kings of the Pontus aimed to ensure that the merchants carrying grain to Athens would have been able to purchase it, and at attractive prices. According to Bresson, this was an example of more stable connections forming between sellers and buyers in the 4th century.⁷³ We can view Alexander's offer to deliver meat to the Athenians at fixed prices in these categories.

Focusing our attention on maritime trade may offer an explanation for the existence of the Pheraean fleet. Despite the high cost of maintenance, the tyrants kept one, even though we do not hear of them attempting to achieve specific political goals with its help. Perhaps it was needed to create safe conditions for trade. It could have served to protect the harbour in Pagasae and to escort merchant ships. Escorting was necessary due to the constant threat posed by pirates. It could also have been a source of income.

⁷¹ [Arist.] *Oec.* 1348b; P. Garnsey, T. Gallant, D. Rathbone, *Thessaly and the grain supply of Rome during the second century B.C.*, JRS 1984, vol. 74, pp. 36–37, 42–43; A. Bresson, *The making of the ancient Greek economy...*, pp. 395–398.

⁷² Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.29.

⁷³ Dem. 20.31; S. Burstein, *I.G. II2 653: Demosthenes and Athenian relations with Bosphorus in the fourth century BC*, "Historia" 1978, vol. 27, p. 428; D. Braund, *Black Sea grain for Athens? From Herodotus to Demosthenes*, in: *The Black Sea in antiquity: Regional and interregional economic exchanges*, eds. V. Gabrielsen, J. Lund, Aarhus 2007, p. 63; A. Bresson, *The making of the ancient Greek economy...*, pp. 381–414.

Such services, as we know from Athenian sources, were a profitable business, because traders had to pay to be escorted.⁷⁴

The few existing testimonies of the use of the Pheraean fleet include the information about raids on the Cyclades undertaken on Alexander's orders in 362–361. However, these operations could also have been related to trading activity to some extent. The most important operation of that time was an attack on the island of Peparethos, located off the coast of Magnesia. Alexander decided to block its harbour in Panormos and to lay siege to the city. His fleet also fought a victorious battle off the island's coast.⁷⁵ Alexander's quite considerable involvement in this conflict may indicate that his goal was not just to plunder the island, but to take control of it. It might have caught his eye because it was located in close proximity to Thessaly. However, the thesis that Alexander was attracted by its natural resources also seems attractive. Peparethos, although not very large, was rich enough that in the 5th century it contributed 3 talents annually to the treasury of the Delian League. For comparison, the two nearby islands of Ikos and Skiathos paid much less – 500 and 300 drachmas respectively. Peparethos was famous for its wine, which is mentioned by Sophocles in the tragedy *Philoctetes*. The wine produced on the island was frequently taken onboard by ships sailing to the Pontus to carry grain. The author of the speech *Against Lacritus*, written in the 350s, mentioning the places from which wine was exported to the Black Sea, lists Peparethos in the first place, followed by Kos, Thasos and Mende. Alexander's attack on the island and the blockade of its harbour may have been connected to an attempt to seize control over profits from the wine trade.⁷⁶

Although exporting foodstuffs to Athens may have brought the Thesalians tangible benefits, from the Athenian point of view Thessaly was not among the most important food suppliers. If Thessalian grain was indeed imported to Athens in the 4th century, the volume of this import was much

⁷⁴ Dem. 8.24–25; V. Gabrielsen, op. cit., pp. 232–235. It is noteworthy that the islet of Myonessos located near the mouth of the Pagasean Gulf was known as a pirate's nest: Aeschin. 2.72; *Schol. Aeschin.* ad loc.; Strabo 9.5.14.

⁷⁵ Dem. 50.4–5; Diod. 15.95.1–2; Polyaeus 6.2.

⁷⁶ Soph. *Phil.* 547–549; [Dem.] 35.35; A. Doulgéri-Intzessiloglou, Y. Garlan, *Vin et amphores de Péparèthos et d'Ikos*, BCH 1990, vol. 114, pp. 361–389.

smaller in comparison to grain deliveries from the Pontus, Imbros and Skyros, Egypt and Cyrene. Perhaps the Thessalians reached the Athenian markets with just a selection of commodities such as meat, *chondros* and slaves.⁷⁷ With regard to Thessaly, we should also take into account the large fluctuation in annual production, which in the case of grain is confirmed by modern research. There were years of bumper crops and poor ones, when even this region experienced a shortage of grain. Such a situation occurred in the early 320s, when many cities in the Aegean world experienced a poor grain harvest. That crisis also afflicted Thessalian cities, such as Larissa, Atrax and Meliboea, which found themselves on a list of buyers of grain sent from Cyrene. The fluctuating volume of production must also have been affected by the unstable political situation, which frequently led to outbreaks of infighting, mainly between Larissa and Pherae, as well as to foreign interventions. In these circumstances, we can presume that it was the Thessalians that sought to secure the Athenian market, which offered an opportunity to sell various products. It is worth noting here that Alexander's openly hostile actions against the Athenians took place in 362, when we hear about problems with grain supply and about the Byzantines forcibly intercepting ships carrying grain from the Black Sea to Piraeus. If Alexander had decided to engage in a conflict with Athens in this situation, he himself could not have offered them anything. Perhaps this was the beginning of lean years and small crops for Thessaly as well, which negatively impacted its trade with Athens. It is not without reason that Isocrates, in the speech *On the Peace*, written around 355, described Thessaly as an impoverished state, even though it had experienced relative peace from 364.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ On sources of grain supplies to Athens see A. Bresson, *The making of the ancient Greek economy...*, p. 411.

⁷⁸ [Dem.] 50.6; Isoc. 8.117. On fluctuations of crop yield in Thessaly see P. Garnsey, Th. Gallant, D. Rathbone, op. cit., pp. 30–35; see also H. Michell, op. cit., p. 47; P. Garnsey, *Famine and food supply in the Graeco-Roman world: Responses to risk and crisis*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 10–11, 142–148.

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If, on the basis of the above reflections, we allow the possibility that trade exchange with the participation of the Pheraeans took place between Pagasae and Piraeus, Westlake's assumption that the Pheraean tyrants were involved in maritime trade becomes more probable.⁷⁹ Such an involvement could explain not only their wealth but also accounts of their personal relations with Athens. In this context, the offer to supply meat, made by Alexander to the Athenians, would not have necessarily been a one-time political gesture, as Plutarch presents it, but a measure aimed at stimulating the preexisting trade exchange. Honouring Alexander with a bronze statue could testify to the fact that, in the Athenians' estimation, this exchange was particularly advantageous for them. Jason's visit to Athens and his participation in Timotheus' trial also may have been an effect of his political connections just as well as business ones. Perhaps business relations also led to Jason's sons being honoured by the Athenian demos with citizenship.

⁷⁹ H. D. Westlake, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–50. In his opinion, Lycophron “was evidently no aristocrat”, but profiting from trade does not necessarily prove this, see A. Bresson, *Merchants and politics...*, pp. 139–163.