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HONOUR IN THE RANKS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT’S ARMY*

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ABSTRACT

In the field of Alexander studies honour is generally considered as what is accorded to Alexander, or whoever else, for some action or quality that marks the individual out as exceptional or unusually meritorious. In F.H. Stewart’s scheme this is honour on the vertical axis, but this paper deals rather with honour on the horizontal axis, that is an individual’s sense of entitlement to respect as a member of a group or stratum in society, or, as is more relevant here, in the army. The individual claims the right to respect by adhering to a basic, generally unwritten, code of conduct. The professionalisation of the Macedonian army helped to develop the type of group solidarity that surfaced, for example, in the mutinies at the Hyphasis and Opis, and a sense of entitlement to respect that was manifested in numerous episodes concerning individuals and groups, as in the conspiracy of the Pages.

Introduction

In his study of the meaning of honour in Alexander’s campaigns, Roisman concludes that Alexander strove to remove ‘any sense of equality between himself and others in his camp or empire’, and did this by claiming ‘superior honor and rank on the basis of his personal wealth, his office, and his ultimate control over the resources and symbols of his empire.’ Holt similarly writes, ‘others aspired to greatness, Alexander to greatestness’. This is an allusion to the instruction which Glaucus received from his father ‘always to be the best and to tower above the rest for ever’ (Homer, Iliad

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1 Roisman 2003b:321.
2 Holt 2003:162.
Alexander reputedly considered this his favourite Homeric tag. The cluster of strengths and principles by which one might claim greatness is variously styled the Homeric code, the Heroic code, or as Cartledge would have it, ‘the moral code of honour’.

In this presentation of the heroic code, the focus is on competitiveness and securing honour as recognition of one’s superiority or as a reward; hence Agamemnon’s initial refusal to surrender his war bride, Chryseis, for to do so would mean the loss of prestige (Iliad 1.118-19 and 131-39). Shay would emphasise that Homeric warriors were not out for material rewards per se, but rather for ‘social honour and avoidance of social shame’. But the case of Chryseis here illustrates the tendency in competitive systems to attach a physical definition to the term honour, and it becomes a common noun denoting a medal, prize money, promotion, or whatever, and loses its force as an abstract noun.

It is not surprising that in Alexander studies the focus is on the competitive model of honour, and Alexander’s campaign for the recognition of his ‘greatestness’. F.H. Stewart, in his general study of the concept of honour, would label this model honour on the ‘vertical’ axis. But in this paper the focus is rather on what Stewart labels honour on the ‘horizontal’

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3 So, for example, Lane Fox 1973:66.
4 Cartledge 2004:308. In her study of the Iliad, Wilson 2002:36 sees the élite in warrior society engaging in ‘ritualized conflict, either among themselves – in public speeches, gift exchanges, and athletic competition – or with the enemy in battle.’ Carney 1996:21 uses the expression ‘competitive excellence’. But Cartledge’s introduction of the term ‘moral’ seems even more inappropriate if one follows Holt in his reference to the Macedonians of Philip’s day as holding fast ‘to the heroic warrior code of Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey’, for he goes on to say (2003:7): ‘In battles, brawls and drinking bouts, the Macedonians measured a man from king to commoner by the implacable standards of Achilles and Agamemnon.’ One thinks of the drinking competition in Susa in 324 that led to the deaths of the winner, Promachus, and 41 others (Plut. Alex. 70.1-2).
5 Not for discussion here is the debate on the precedence of competitive over cooperative values in the Homeric scheme. This interpretation was championed by Adkins, summarizing his position in Adkins 1972:14-15; but a powerful critique of this model is offered by Margalit Finkelberg 1998, noting especially Iliad 23.884-97, and a string of other passages listed at p. 17, n. 23.
7 Sherman 2005: esp. 68-69. But Redfield 1994:129, like Cartledge, argues that in the Homeric order, the most effective route to honour lay in honourable acts. Wilson’s study of the Iliad is much concerned with ‘the material basis of timē’ (20), and the tension between the fluid agonistic model and the ‘relatively fixed system represented by Agamemnon’s scepter’ (20).
axis, which has more to do with an entitlement to respect as a member of a
group at whatever level, and is linked with conformity with a generally
accepted code of conduct. While the members of the group may obviously
assert their claim to respect from those of lower status, they may also
demand respect for their assumed rights from their superiors.

The approach taken here has been partly prompted by recent studies of
various African societies recording manifestations of concern by ordinary
people to protect or recover their honour. For example, in the Cape Colony
of South Africa in the period 1850 and 1901 some 236 actions were initiated
in magistrates’ courts by Xhosa men and women who sought redress for
defamation, with some 85% of these cases relating to defamatory allegations
against the plaintiffs of theft, witchcraft or sexual immorality. As Iliffe
notes, none of these actions related to ‘the two main components of heroic
honour: physical courage and male virility’; and significantly these actions
were launched in defiance of reluctance on the part of the colonial power to
accept that African customary law could tolerate a civil action for defa-
mation. Should the South African phenomenon seem too remote geo-
graphically and chronologically from Alexander’s empire, one might look
instead at J.K. Campbell’s study of the Sarakatsani of north western
Greece. He describes a society reminiscent of the Homeric model, and,
with regard to sheep-rustling prior to 1937, he provides an illustration of the
overlap between the vertical and horizontal fields of honour, as raiding might
be for a mix of competitive advantage (simple theft) and retaliation for sheep
stolen. Of immediate relevance is Campbell’s line that the Sarakatsani
generally assumed that most men possessed ‘the quality of being honourable’
and did not have to compete for it, but were obliged to act to protect their
honour, for if outsiders ‘gratuitously commit an outrage against a family, …
the outraged family must answer at once, and with violence, if its reputation
is to survive’. Honour is thus in this case not an inner quality, but a
birthright whose continuance depends upon its recognition by the
community.

8 Stewart 1994. Iliffe 2005:155 suggests that in Xhosa the two concepts may be
differentiated, at least in older texts, as *indumo* and *imbeko*.
11 Campbell 1964: esp. 268-97. My references reflect the fact that Campbell’s book
was based on field-work done way back in the early 1950s.
12 Campbell 1964:206-10; Jackson 1993: esp. 75 deals with the Homeric parallel.
14 Campbell 1964:269.
But the situations illustrated by Iliffe and Campbell have to be seen in their historical contexts, for honour, as the respect which each head of family, or more generally each adult, might claim as an entitlement within his or her society, or more narrowly within the person’s social class or group, is not a given. This entitlement may arise from the gradual development of a consensus that the socio-political order will be unstable if the code of honour is limited to an ideal for the élite, and the system is seen as repressive by the majority. A citizen’s entitlement to some measure of basic rights is, though not exclusively, a necessary by-product of the generation of democracy. The same progression towards structured respect for the individual at the lower levels in the hierarchy has also been a feature of military history, as might happen with the transition from private armies to citizen forces.

Attainment of the right to respect in the social, political or military spheres may well be the result of collective action or pressure at whatever level, and its preservation may likewise require determined collective vigilance, if not defensive action. And, of course, protection of one’s honour can also be an issue for the individual. Hence, honour in this sense is vulnerable, and can be taken away.

As for Macedonia, while there may have been isolated communities that operated like the Sarakatsani, the notion of a common entitlement to respect among ordinary Macedonians presumably arose with the development, first, of the Companion Cavalry, and then, and of more importance to this study, with the remodelling of the infantry as the Companion Infantry (Pezhetairoi), apparently by Philip II. In the earlier undifferentiated soldiery, the individual probably lacked any defined status that provided the basis for any defensible claim to a right to respect. This probability is posited because of the lack of evidence that the Macedonian king and his ‘barons’ or ‘warlords’ operated with anything like a clear legal or juridical system. But the situation must have changed sociologically when

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16 As in Thucydides’s description of the infantrymen of Upper Macedonia (4.124.1; 125.1; 126.3-5, noted by Hammond 1989:96-97).
17 Errington 1978:77-133 offers a powerful refutation of earlier attempts to identify and delineate Macedonian Staatsrecht; cf. Anson 1985 and 1991. Adams 1986:44-46 finds even Errington’s case too legalistic in conception, and would rather appeal to the paradigms of customary law. Hatzopoulos 1996:41 says that ‘the political horizon of most Macedonians was almost exclusively limited to their village or city’; cf. Hammond 1989, esp. 9-12, of Pieria, Bottiaea and Almopia. But Hatzopoulos’s focus is more on the Hellenistic period, while my comment is more about ‘tribal’
Philip II addressed the consequences of his expansion of the Macedonian kingdom in the period 359-56, and developed civil and military administrative systems to meet the requirements of the incorporation of the erstwhile semi-autonomous principalities.¹⁸ For he reconstituted the court with seven Bodyguards (Somatophylakes), and an élite corps of Companions (Hetairoi), whose number rose to not fewer than 90, and possibly many more, under Alexander; and he restructured the army with squadrons of cavalry, styled the Companions (the term Hetairoi used here with a different definition), and territorially organised battalions of infantry, styled the Companion Infantry (Pezhetairoi), both cavalry and infantry including élite units, known respectively as the Agema and the Hypaspists.

It was presumably Philip’s intention to systematise the stratification of his officers and men to promote at each level an *esprit de corps* and peer pressure to conform, pull together and succeed.¹⁹ In these circumstances one might expect Macedonians to have developed a concept of honour as an individual’s right to respect. In other words we have to do with what Stewart terms honour on the horizontal plane. The history of Alexander’s campaigns shows how he had at various times to switch between promoting competitiveness and recognising group solidarity.

**Remuneration and pay differentials**

Philip’s creation of a new ‘Macedonian’ army and formalization of the command structure clearly required that the opportunities and rewards should be hierarchical and proportional, which in turn would have nurtured the sense that the obligations and rights should be proportional and hierarchic.²⁰ All this went with the professionalisation of the army, which was effectively advanced under Alexander by the simple fact that the troops were engaged in an unending war. Of course, there was some turn-over with the arrival of conscripts as reinforcements,²¹ and the return of some men to

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¹⁸ Cf. Hammond 1989:52 of the Lyncestae, Elimiotae and other tribes of Upper Macedonia – ‘semi-independent, but “a part of the Macedonians”, as Thucydides 2.99.2 understood it.’
¹⁹ Cf. Roisman 2005:122 on the Athenian army and ‘collective masculine effort’.
Macedon on leave, or after honourable discharge, or for action elsewhere. But for all practical purposes the Macedonians with Alexander were locked into military life. The remuneration of troops had to be put on a more contractual basis, especially as Macedonian troops were now serving alongside large units of mercenaries, of whom some had started out as mercenaries, and others had first served as allies before being released and promptly re-employed as mercenaries. Furthermore, agreements with Greek states on the provision of troops, triremes for naval support, and financial support for the war in Asia clearly involved tariffs that reflected the rates of remuneration for different categories of troops, including Macedonian phalangites.

The regularization of remuneration with well defined differentials is further indicated by what Curtius reports of Alexander's distribution of bonuses after the capture of Babylon: 'the Macedonian cavalry were each given 600 denarii, while the foreign cavalry received 500, the Macedonian infantry 200, and the others three months' pay' (Curt. 5.1.45). Then in the context of Alexander's assault on the city of the Malli, Arrian refers to Abreas as a dimoerites (6.9.3 and 10.1), one on double pay, but clearly of lower rank, and less well paid, than Leonnatus, the Bodyguard, just mentioned. Thus Brunt labels Abreas an NCO. Later, in the final reorganization of the army, in 323, Arrian refers to the basic infantry file (decad) as made up of a Macedonian decadarch, with a dimoerites next in rank, and then a 'ten stater' NCO, 'earning less than the dimoerites, but more than the rank and file', with twelve Persian rank and file soldiers, and another 'ten stater' Macedonian in

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23 As at Arr. Anab. 7.12.1-4; and the veterans discharged in 329 (Arr. Anab. 3.29.5; Curt. 7.5.27).
24 Including garrison duty: Curt. 5.6.11.
25 Arr. Anab. 3.19.5-6.
26 Such as the Peloponnesian and other allied cavalry units mentioned by Arr. Anab. 2.8.9 and 9.1; Diod. Sic. 17.17.4; Curtius 3.9.8 and 4.13.29. Allied troops released and re-employed as mercenaries: Arr. Anab. 3.19.6; Diod. Sic. 17.74.4.
29 Presumably drawn from either the 30 000 Epigonoi (Arr. Anab. 7.6.1), or the 20 000 Persians who arrived with Peucetas (Arr. Anab. 7.23.1); Milns 1976:93.
the rear (Anab. 7.23.3-4). Thus there were three pay grades for Macedonians in each such unit, with the Persians presumably on a lower level of pay. It would therefore have been a matter of honour for each Macedonian to see that he was duly paid at his grade.

The process was no doubt complicated by the periods in which the troops could not be paid directly in coined money, and, when the veterans were sent home from Opis, they received back pay due to them (Anab. 7.12.1), but the idea that the troops existed on only ‘paper’ credits until they were sent back to Macedon does not seem plausible, and, on the incident of the settlement of the soldiers’ debts in Susa in 324, Arrian (7.5.1) clearly indicates that the men had been paid and had had some discretionary use of money.

Appointments and promotions

Pay differentials and stratification in the army created opportunities for personal advancement and promotion. The army afforded the prospect of what in civil society might be termed social mobility. This was designed to encourage a striving for competitive advantage, which we have referred to as

30 Launey 1949-50: esp. 750-51 and 757, takes the coupling of ‘hypaspist’ and ‘one drachm per day’ in IG ii2, 329 to mean that the ordinary Macedonian foot-soldier got 1 drachm (6 obols), the ‘ten stater’ man received 8 obols, and the dimoirties earned 12 obols or 2 drachmas. But this equates the ordinary phalangite with the more prestigious hypaspist, and ignores the time gap between that legal agreement and the situation in Arr. Anab. 7.23.3-4. Berve 1926: I, 194 explains that the ten staters must refer to silver staters, representing ten Athenian tetradrachms (thus 40 drachms) – per month, and not ten Macedonian staters, which would have been worth 24 drachms. Milns 1987:247, in the course of his lengthy discussion of the range of issues, suggests that the dimoiirties may have received ten drachmas per day.

Pritchett 1971:138 argues that the file was originally of ten men, as the name indicates (and as might be intelligible with the reported depth of phalanx as 120 men at Pelion in 335: Arr. Anab. 1.6.1). But his suggestion that the ten-man file was made up of six common soldiers and four ‘officers’ seems improbable.

31 Berve 1926: I, 194. Le Rider 2003:88-101 is surely right to reject the idea that Alexander’s troops only physically received any pay when they were discharged or redeployed back to Macedonia. Holt 2003:139-50 argues that the elephant medallions were just that, and not coins; and he dates them to the period 326-5, produced for an awards ceremony after the victory over Porus.

32 Thus Le Rider 2003:88-97, arguing against Margaret Thompson 1984, who contends, with regard to the mercenaries, that the men were only paid out their wages after return to their homelands, and took while in service only the proceeds of ‘booty and loot’.
the pursuit of honour on the vertical axis at the expense of satisfaction with
group solidarity, or honour on the horizontal axis.

The arrival in Babylon in late 331 of reinforcements from Macedon
allowed Alexander to modify and augment the command structure, and so
reward excellence and offer the prospect of advancement. As Curtius tells
the story at 5.2.1-5, Alexander experimented with a novel way of selecting
middle-ranking infantry officers. For he organised games with the prizes for
bravery to be appointment to the newly created rank of chiliarch. As Curtius
presents it, the new units of 1000 men were apparently constituted by
combining in pairs the existing smaller units of 500 men. Judges were
appointed to select the winners, but the process was transparent as the
troopers were there to witness the spectacle and to give their opinions to the
judges and to see that the results were unbiased and fair (Curt. 5.2.4). This is
consistent with his account of the trial of Philotas, when Alexander
summoned a mass meeting of troops to hear the case: Curtius carefully labels
this judicial assembly a contio, the Latin term for a deliberative assembly that
was not empowered to take a decision.

To edge closer to the historical realities one has to relate Curtius’s version
to the complementary account in Arrian of Alexander’s restructuring of the
Macedonian Companion Cavalry in the same historical context: he divided
each cavalry squadron into two companies (lochoi), and chose as the new
company commanders members of the Companion Cavalry who had
distinguished themselves for bravery (Anab. 3.16.11). The latter point indica-
tes that the contest was not a reality-show style of physical competition, or
at least not just games, as Curtius might suggest, but rather an adjudication
of claims presented by contestants.

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33 As at 6.9.1, 11.8 and 9; cf. 7.1.5. This is in line with Curtius’s introductory
comment that in accordance with the ancient tradition of the Macedonians the army
inquirebat (‘was involved in hearings’; Errington 1978:89 paraphrases it as ‘used to
inform itself about serious capital cases’) in capital cases. This is the manuscript
reading and it should be retained, despite the fashion of following Hedicke’s
eademption, which produces the line that the king conducted the enquiry, but the
army passed judgement. The manuscript reading is defended by Errington 1978:85-
91 and Atkinson 1994:226-28 and 2009:101-02. The following narrative shows that
troops were called in to observe the trial, but were not asked to participate in the
judgement.

34 Alexander did on several occasions organise athletic and musical competitions, as
at Soli (Arr. Anab. 2.5.8) and Ecbatana (Arr. Anab. 7.14.1); cf. Xen. Cyr. 2.1.23-24.

35 Rather in the way that Athenian soldiers could present themselves as candidates
for prizes (aristeia) after a campaign; cf. Hamel 1998:64-70, who suggests that the
model described by Plato, Leg. 943b-c, though fictional, may help flesh out the
references in the historical texts. Hamel also (14-23) reviews the case for believing
The precise details of the reform affecting the infantry are much debated. Curtius indicates, if the text is sound, that nine appointments were made, but he gives only eight names. He says that the new element was the post of *chiliarch* with command over two pre-existing units of 500 men, whereas Arrian states that for the cavalry the innovation was at the junior level, with each squadron divided into two companies. The mode of selection favours Arrian’s picture, and may suggest that Curtius was confused and should have marked the rank of commander of 500 men as the new development, and not the rank of *chiliarch*. Then there is the problem whether, and if so how, the reform mentioned by Curtius affected the regular Companion Infantry, or concerned rather the three élite battalions of the Hypaspists.

Despite the difficulty of accepting Curtius’s account as it stands, it seems clear that in both the Companion Cavalry and the Companion Infantry, or at least with the Hypaspists, a new tier of command was introduced. Alexander clearly wished to increase the number of officer posts, as Diodorus Siculus (17.65.2) says. The new tier of command provided scope for promotion of NCOs at a lower level in the army, but the evidence does not suggest that Alexander was yet ready to make tenure of one of these new commands a requirement for consideration for appointment to the next higher rank. Possibly, Alexander took a decision on pragmatic grounds not to progress to that next level in developing a professional officer corps, or the exercise in open competition threw up as winners men who soon demonstrated that they had reached their level of incompetence. The mode of selection, combining a test of merit and some open competition, no doubt meant that ethnic affiliation played a lesser role, as a straight ranking of contestants would not guarantee that each regional group was represented. And, as

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37 Curtius’s version is accepted by Hatzopoulos 1996:447; Berve 1926: I, 127.
38 I have argued the case for referring the reform to the regular Companion Infantry battalions (Atkinson 1987), but most scholars relate the reform to the Hypaspists: so Berve 1926: I, 126-27; Bosworth 1980:148-49 and 320-21; Milns 1971; and Heckel 1992:304.
40 Cf. Roisman 2003b:295-96. Indeed, Curtius goes on to say that with regard to the cavalry Alexander gave up assigning men to units strictly according to their 'national' affiliations and now might put them rather under commanders of his choice (5.2.6). Rzepka 2008 argues that by Alexander’s day the Macedonian recruitment regions.
Alexander took the final decision, if it strengthened anyone’s power of patronage, it was his.

Schachermeyr argues that after Parmenion was left behind in Ecbatana, and certainly after his death, Alexander dispensed with the position of overall commander of the Pezhetairoi, and likewise did not replace Philotas with a single supreme commander of the Companion Cavalry. Thus the infantry battalions not only operated independently, when so required by tactical needs, as before, but were now organisationally separate entities. Thus it might be said that with the high command of the infantry Alexander switched from a hierarchical to a flat structure, with battalion commanders of equal rank. Similarly, the command of the Companion Cavalry, previously held by Philotas was split between Hephaestion and Cleitus, son of Dropides the Black (Arr. Anab. 3.27.4). Then Alexander made the command structure more complicated in 328, after Hephaestion was honoured with an eponymous chiliarchy (mentioned in later contexts by Arr. Anab. 7.14.10 and Diod. Sic. 18.3.4), and Cleitus was commissioned to take over the satrapy of Bactria-Sogdiana (Curt. 8.1.19). The taxiarchs Perdiccas, Coenus and Craterus were redeployed as hippocars, and at least three new taxiarchs were appointed. It is in the nature of autocrats to create divisions in authority and complexities of structures that keep the ambitious in confused, stressful competition; and a major reform of the command structure is a convenient way of depersonalising the effective side-lining of a troublesome officer. Cleitus paid the price for showing that he took his reassignment to Bactria-Sogdiana as a personal slight.

were more artificial than before, and more like the ‘tribal’ clusters used to recruit men for the Athenian army.

41 Schachermeyr 1973:358. Milns 1976:125 doubts the existence of the post of overall commander of the infantry as envisaged by Schachermeyr for Parmenion, but he readily accepts that from 330 the phalanx commanders spent a greater percentage of their time operating independently of each other.

42 Heckel 2003:220-21 summarises the stages in the reorganisation as a simple, tidy progression. Berve 1926: I, 108-10 offers more on the complexity of the sequence, and notes that there is no further reference to the Companion Cavalry as a whole after gaps in the cavalry squadrons were made good in 329 with local horses (Arr. Anab. 3.30.6), and Berve assumes this meant also Asian cavalymen.

Incidentally, Coenus is mentioned towards the end of 328 as in overall command of a force that included his own infantry taxis, as well as Meleager’s, and some 400 Companion Cavalry (A. 4.17.3). His battalion had been taken over by Gorgias, but it appears that it was still known by his name, as a mark of honour for Coenus.

43 So the commentators noted by Heckel 2003:221; but Badian 2000:69-70 sees in Alexander’s killing of Cleitus evidence of a genuine suspicion on his part that Cleitus was involved in a conspiracy, a suspicion that he quickly realised was unfounded.
The reorganisation of the infantry in Babylon in 323 carried the process of stratification further, when, as noted above, the basic unit of 16 soldiers (but still referred to as the *decad*) provided posts for Macedonians at three different ranks. Whatever its tactical significance, this reform was presumably intended to counter the negative effects of the mutiny at Opis. Then the catalogue of grievances had produced a demonstration of group solidarity, but the stratification of the junior command structure at Babylon was surely designed to strengthen the competitive element among the Macedonians and to direct their sense of a common identity towards pride in being superior in rank to the Persian foot-soldiers.

**Honor/infamia**

There are several episodes which illustrate a concern among sections or groups in Alexander’s court, administration or army to defend their honour. After the judicial murder of Parmenion, Alexander transferred to a separate cohort all those who had openly denounced the murder, and he dealt likewise with those whose intercepted mail had similarly expressed dissatisfaction with their conditions of military service.44 As Curtius presents the story, this action was a form of disgrace (*ignominia*) and Alexander’s purpose was to motivate the men in such a punishment cohort to exert themselves to cancel their disgrace.45 Of course, Curtius may be writing into the story a concept of honour closer to that of his own day, and Curtius may have in mind the Roman notion of *infamia.*46

In Bactria, in 327, Alexander uncovered a conspiracy among the Pages, which Badian controversially labels ‘perhaps the first genuine conspiracy of the reign’,47 thus distinguishing it from the conspiracies which Alexander laid to the charge of the Lyncestian Alexander, Philotas and Parmenion, Cleitus and others.48 The story of the conspiracy of the Pages begins with the grievance of Hermolaus, son of Sopolis. These Macedonian cadets used to accompany Alexander in hunts and engaged in friendly rivalry, but on this occasion Hermolaus intervened to cut down a charging boar before it could reach the king. He was angry with Hermolaus for not allowing him to kill the animal himself, and so had Hermolaus whipped in front of the other Pages.

44 Diod. Sic. 17.80.4; J. 12.5.6; cf. Polyaeus 4.3.19, but setting the episode in Hyrcania.
45 Curt. 7.2.35–38.
46 Roisman 2003b:280. But Curtius avoids any direct association of ideas by avoiding the term *infamia*, and using instead *ignominia*.
47 Badian 2000:70.
48 Heckel 2009:72-80 can be taken as a rebuttal of Badian’s line of argument.
The young man was bitterly upset by this outrage – *hybris* (Arr. *Anab*. 4.13.3), and so began to plot his revenge. For Hermolaus it might have been a matter of personal honour, but that does not explain why a number of Pages chose to face death by joining a conspiracy against Alexander. There may be some truth in the line that they were concerned about the way Alexander betrayed traditional Macedonian values. Another possibility is that they were moved by the indignities inflicted on their fathers or their lack of preferment. Either way, it would seem that for the conspirators the issue was a matter of honour, not in the competitive sense, but in defence of what was due to them or their families as individuals, or more broadly as Macedonians.

The issue of personal honour in Alexander’s army came up again when in 324 he proposed to send home the veterans who were no longer ‘fit for purpose’. Their reaction was that it would be humiliating to be sent back to Macedon, while others continued to serve, so the troops then demanded that they should *all* be discharged and return home together (Plut. *Alex*. 71.2-3).

Curtius prepared for this scene at Opis with his account of Alexander’s encounter with the Greek prisoners-of-war at Persepolis in early 330. These men had all been mutilated in various ways by the Persians and employed as slave labour. Alexander offered to have them repatriated back to Greece, and according to Curtius they then debated whether to accept the offer. The argument for staying put in Persia prevailed, as they anticipated that their return in their sorry condition might be met with revulsion and that they would be better off staying together and supporting one another rather than dispersing and not being reintegrated into their home communities. Thus, too, in Opis the Macedonians who faced discharge because of age or incapacity might have felt apprehensive about how they would be received; and those selected to stay with Alexander might have been worried that the Macedonian element in the army was to be drastically reduced, quite apart from any negative feelings they may have had about Alexander’s plans for further campaigns.

For veterans and the war-wounded who stayed in Asia, Alexander no doubt had to establish new paradigms of honour in the numerous cities which he founded, with their mix of veterans and people recruited from the native population in the area. These cities would have had elements typical of the Greek democratic *polis*, in which rights were hierarchic and propor-

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50 *Arr. Anab*. 7.8.2 gives as the cause of their demand for mass discharge their disillusionment with Alexander because of his adoption of Persian dress, recruitment of the Epigonoi into his army and his appointment of Persian cavalrymen into the ranks of the Companion Cavalry.
Here, in particular, the starting point would have been that each Greek or Macedonian settler had a measure of respect and honour as a matter of right. Apart from these examples of group action, the history of Alexander's campaigns is dotted with cases where individuals sought to defend their honour, in some instances by suicide. Indeed, Alexander came to power because Philip was assassinated by a man who was mortally offended by the way he had been humiliated. The trouble began when Philip switched his affection from one of the Pages, his bodyguard the Orestian Pausanias, to another young man of the same name. The new favourite could not endure the abuse heaped on him by the Orestian and acted to show that he was not just a pretty profligate, by taking on his body blows aimed at the king when Philip engaged in battle Pleurias the Illyrian. This brave, but potentially suicidal, action aroused Attalus’s disgust for the Orestian Pausanias, and Attalus set him up to be gang-raped. Philip dismissed Pausanias’s complaint against Attalus, who was related to his wife Cleopatra, and Pausanias then saw a suicidal act of regicide as the only way of defending his honour. Attalus’s attack on Pausanias brings us back to the Greek concept of *hybris*, which in a definition offered by Aristotle meant doing or saying something to bring shame on the victim, not for any material benefit, nor because of something that had been done, but just for the pleasure of it (Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1378b23-25; 1379a32-33). *Hybris* was a gratuitous demonstration of disrespect, a wilful attack on a man’s social status. This Greek term occurs three times in the account of Philip’s assassination in Diodorus Siculus 16.93-94.52

In the aftermath of the trial of Philotas, Amyntas, son of Andromenes, faced a similar fate, as his younger brother, Polemon, had run away when Philotas was being interrogated under torture. A secondary charge brought in against Amyntas was that he had resisted a directive from the *grammateus* Antiphanes to hand over his horses for reallocation to cavalrymen who had lost theirs (Curt. 7.1.15-17 and 32-35). Amyntas had a case, as he had already been obliged to hand over eight of his horses, and Antiphanes was demanding his remaining two, which would have left Amyntas without a mount (Curt. 7.1.34). As Curtius tells the story, Amyntas expected Alexander to understand that by virtue of his status he was entitled to address a non-combatant in what we might call ‘basic Macedonian’. This was a classic case of status dissonance: Amyntas had social status as a nobleman, but

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51 Though Fraser 1996:188 considers it unlikely that Alexander created functional democracies in these settlements for mercenaries and veterans.
52 Probably based on what he read in Theopompus’s *Philippica*.
53 Cf. the posts held by Eugnostus in Egypt (Arr. *Anab.* 3.5.3), and Euagoras with the fleet on the Indus in 326 (Arr. *Ind.* 18.9).
Antiphanes had the authority that went with his administrative responsibilities. Amyntas was defending the respect which he thought he was entitled to as a member of his social class. Amyntas was let off, but the case did not hinge on his exchange with Antiphanes. In any case, soon afterwards Amyntas died from an arrow wound while besieging a village (Arr. Anab. 3.27.3).

Things turned out differently when an Athenian athlete, Dioxippus, was challenged to single combat by a Macedonian, Coragus, who had been newly promoted to the rank of Companion. Dioxippus, unarmed except for a club, swiftly got the better of the fully armed Coragus, but on a signal from Alexander Dioxippus stopped short of inflicting a final fatal blow. A Macedonian had been humiliated, and the Greek was in trouble, and then framed for the theft of a golden cup. Faced with this shame and dishonour, Dioxippus committed suicide and Alexander professed anger at his death (Diod. Sic. 17.100-01; Curt. 9.7.16-26; Ael. VH 10.22). One might add that his reaction was true to type; and Curtius adds a comment of immediate relevance, that Alexander was angry because he took the suicide as evidence, not of repentance, but of indignation at the way he had been palpably framed (Curt. 9.7.26) and thus dishonoured.

Then there is the case of Antigone, who took advantage of Alexander’s offer in Susa to settle the personal debts of his (presumably Macedonian and Greek) troops. Antigone was found to have submitted a fraudulent claim, but when Alexander learnt that he was about to commit suicide because he could not face the dishonour (atimia) of his exposure and expulsion from the court, Alexander decided to allow Antigone to keep the money as a mark of respect for his prior exemplary record as a soldier (Plut. Alex. 70.4-6).

In these cases relating to individuals we are dealing with honour on the horizontal axis, as respect which one may expect as a member of a social or, more relevantly, military class by conducting one’s life in conformity with the generally accepted code of conduct.

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54 Curtius’s presentation of the story would have resonated with readers of his social class who resented having to deal with the emperor’s freedman bureaucrats.
55 In the absence of any evidence we cannot unfortunately do more than insinuate that in Alexander’s campaigns there may have been some deaths from ‘friendly fire’ or even ‘fragging’.
57 Cf. Roisman 2003b:320-21. Bosworth 1996:116-17 has no doubt that Alexander had Dioxippus taken out for attacking the myth of Macedonian invincibility, and doing so while posing as Heracles before a Heralcid, and while the spectators included Indians (Curt. 9.7.23).
Group identity and collective action

As we have noted, the Macedonians were serving alongside Greek mercenaries, and, as Anson observes, they ‘increasingly behaved like mercenaries’ in their ‘fidelity to self-interest’.\textsuperscript{58} The trouble for Alexander really began after the death of Darius, as the troops grew restless and looked to return home (Diod. Sic. 17.74.3; Curt. 6.2.3-4 on the start of mutinous behaviour, and 15-17; Plut. \textit{Alex}. 47.1 and Just. \textit{Epit}. 12.3.2-3). Alexander addressed them in a mass meeting, which Curtius sets at Hecatompylus, and Anson would see this as the start of the evolution of the Macedonian army assembly.\textsuperscript{59} Later, with the trial of Philotas, Alexander felt the need to let the troops hear the case, and in this context Curtius tells how one Bolon, a veteran, now an NCO, appealed to class solidarity to turn the troops against Philotas, by attacking him for his ostentatious wealth and insistence on deference to his slaves.\textsuperscript{60} This episode, if it is indeed historical, might have suited Alexander’s immediate purpose, but such an expression of class solidarity was potentially damaging, and indeed in Curtius’s narrative Bolon attacks Philotas in a way that foreshadows Meleager’s attack on Perdiccas after Alexander’s death (Curt. 10.6.20-24), to which we shall return.

After Alexander’s confrontation with his troops at Hecatompylus, the next major assertion of the Macedonians’ claim to be heard came at the Hyphasis, when Alexander was confronted with their opposition to any further advance into India. They were asserting their self-interest, as Alexander’s plans seemed even further removed from reality and whatever the war was supposed to be about when the army first crossed into Asia. A key phrase in Arrian’s account of this mutiny is that the troops held meetings in the camp, with speakers ranging from self-pity to outright advocacy of refusal to follow orders from Alexander (Arr. \textit{Anab}. 5.25.2)\textsuperscript{61} Much had changed since the death of Darius. Alexander had encouraged the troops to take captive women as their wives and produce sons for future service in the army (Just. \textit{Epit}. 12.4.2-10, with Heckel’s commentary);\textsuperscript{62} and the army was removed by

\textsuperscript{58} Anson 1991:230.
\textsuperscript{59} By contrast, Adams 1986:51-52 with regard to the mutiny at Opis argues that the Macedonians had always had ‘the right to speak to their kings’, but he would concede that it was a right that they had to assert.
\textsuperscript{60} Curtius 6.11.1-4, referring to the \textit{purgamenta servorum} (the scum of the slave population).
\textsuperscript{61} Cf. Xen. \textit{Anab}. 5.7.2; Tac. \textit{Ann}. 1.16.3 and 17.1.
\textsuperscript{62} The historicity of this detail receives some support from the reference to the casualty rate in the Gedrosian desert of the soldiers’ wives and children (Arr. \textit{Anab}. 6.25.5) and the formalisation of these marriages at Susa in 324.
distance from the social parameters governing relationships in Macedonia. The distances had also prevented any steady rotation of the troops. Hence at the Hyphasis and again in Opis, men complained of their battle scars and expressed war-weariness, and from what sports scientists tell us about the physiological effects of endurance sports, we should be better able to appreciate the levelling effect of cumulative fatigue; and then there was the problem of what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder. The Macedonians were now thinking like mercenaries, and, as Parke observes, ‘all mercenaries in an emergency [become] a democracy’.63

Perhaps the term mutiny is inappropriate for the trouble Alexander faced on the Hyphasis,65 but this was a new situation, as can be judged by the story that sometime before the mass meeting, Alexander sought to renew the spirit of the troops by sending them on a looting spree, while he addressed a meeting of their women and children (Diod. Sic. 17.94.4). If we take Arrian’s account at face value, Alexander allowed himself to be persuaded by Coenus’s case for advancing no further, but he still managed to keep the upper hand by keeping the men waiting two days for his decision, by presenting unfavourable omens as the clinching argument, and by celebrating the turning point with the construction of giant altars, sacrifices and games as thank-offerings to the gods for his conquests (Arr. Anab. 5.28.4-29.2). Beyond that, Alexander needed to get his troops out of their comfort zone, and back into a more anarchic competitive mode. He encouraged them into acts of recklessness, setting a model in his reckless action at the city of the Malli (Arr. Anab. 6.9.5-6), which Shay might describe as berserking. Another tactic was to involve them in greater blood-guilt. The pattern had been set at Persepolis, and was now followed along the Indus valley and in the Makran with a series of massacres.66

The Gedrosian disaster, the arrival of the Epigonoi and other Persians who were to be incorporated into the Macedonian army, resistance to Alexander’s plans for further campaigns, and the idea that all should return to Macedon at the same time all contributed to the mutiny at Opis. The Macedonians made it a matter of honour to stand together in demanding that all be treated the same, which was a display of group solidarity Alexander did not need. After staring them down and imposing his will, and

64 Parke 1933:119.
65 Carney 1996: esp. 31-33 discusses the appropriateness or otherwise of the term.
66 As in Mallian territory: Arr. Anab. 6.6.3 and 5, with Bosworth 1996:136-37; and in the kingdom of the Sambi: Curt. 9.8.15 and 19 with Diod. Sic. 17.102.6 and 103.3; and then Gedrosia: Diod. Sic. 17.104.6-7.
ruthlessly executing the ringleaders,\(^{67}\) he humoured them with the famous banquet, when he gave them precedence for simply being Macedonians. But in the following months he worked to counter their model of group identity. The massacre of the Cossaean males, particularly as it is described by Plutarch (\textit{Alex}. 72.4),\(^{68}\) might be seen as another example of brutalising team-building. Then, in Babylon came the restructuring of the Companion Infantry, which, as has been suggested above, was designed to strengthen the competitive element among the Macedonians.

But the damage had been done and group solidarity took over again after the death of Alexander. The absence of a succession plan created a political crisis, and there was a protracted sequence of meetings and confrontations, in the course of which Meleager urged the troops to join him in seizing the treasury, and the mass meeting turned to sedition (Curt. 10.7.10). But Curtius introduces a nice irony as a Macedonian soldier of the lowest ‘plebeian’ order urges the meeting to consider the appointment of Philip Arrhidaeus as king: a constitutional compromise is reached. Meleager engages in further demagogic behaviour and, as an inversion of the Roman tradition, Curtius introduces the \textit{secessio} of the Macedonian cavalry and officer class. Despite all the Roman colouring and creative reworking, the essentials of this story appear to be confirmed by the other sources. Subsequent events confirm the impression that Alexander’s army had developed a democratic tendency,\(^{69}\) and there had indeed been a paradigm shift away from the sense of a Macedonian army guided by the ‘heroic code’.

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\(^{67}\) Arr. \textit{Anab.} 7.8.3; Diod. Sic. 17.109.2; Curt. 10.3.4; Just. \textit{Epit.} 12.11.8.
\(^{68}\) Cf. Diod. Sic. 17.111.4-6; Arr. \textit{Anab.} 7.15.1-3 and \textit{Ind.} 40.6-8, toned down as reflecting Ptolemy’s involvement in the campaign.
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