

*Public Finance and War in Ancient Greece***6.1 Overview**

Before the Persian Wars the Greeks did not rely on public finance to fight each other. Their hoplites armed and fed themselves. But in the confrontation with Persia this private funding of war proved to be inadequate. The liberation of the Greek states beyond the Balkans required the destruction of Persia's seapower. In 478 Athens agreed to lead an alliance to do just this. Already it had Greece's largest fleet. Yet, each campaign of this ongoing war would need tens of thousands of sailors and to go for months. No single Greek state could pay for such campaigns. Therefore the alliance agreed to adopt the Persian method for funding war: alliance members would pay annually a fixed amount of tribute. This enabled Athens to force Persia out of the Dardanelles and the Anatolian seaboard. Nevertheless the Athenians also realised that their military might depended on tribute and so tightened their control of its payers. In so doing they turned the alliance into an empire.

By 450 Athens had become a threat to Greece's other dominant power. Sparta, however, struggled to meet this threat effectively. In the Peloponnesian War the Spartans realised that they could only do so if they too became a seapower. But their state's weak finances ruled this out. All changed in 412, when Persia's Great King decided to give it the necessary funds. In exchange for the right to levy tribute again on Anatolia's Greeks, he helped the Spartans to acquire a large fleet. In 405 this fleet captured the last warships of Athens. Sparta could now dismantle the Athenian empire and force Athens to surrender by a land and sea blockade.

In the Corinthian War the Persians initially funded the anti-Spartan alliance, because the Spartans had decided to fight them for control of Anatolia's Greek states. The Athenians used Persia's gold to rebuild their fleet. With these warships they set out to re-establish the Athenian empire. But this represented a still bigger threat to Persia. Consequently the Great King switched his funding to the Spartans. They quickly assembled a fleet

in the Dardanelles where they stopped the grain ships sailing for Athens. The Athenians feared that they would be starved into submission once again and so accepted the King's Peace. This treaty of 386 scuttled their attempt to re-establish their empire. In order to keep waging wars, they now had to develop different funding sources. In this the Athenian state was reasonably successful. It was thus able to keep Sparta at bay and quickly became a major regional power. But it was not successful enough to stop the rise of Philip II. By 338 this king had defeated Greece's other regional powers and so had made Macedonia the new Greek hegemon. This success rested largely on his public-finance reforms. His son became less concerned about public finance as he conquered the Persian empire, for plunder easily paid for his army. But the hellenistic kingdoms that arose out of his conquests managed their public finances carefully. With vastly larger tax bases, they fielded armies several times larger than those of classical Athens or Sparta. War for dominance among the Greeks had now moved well beyond their city-states.

6.2 The Persian Wars

Archaic Greeks did not depend on public finance for waging war. They fought wars infrequently and usually only over contested land between *poleis* ('city-states').¹ Typically wars were initiated not by the state's basic political institutions but by elite individuals in a private capacity.² These leaders raised volunteers by promising them a share of the booty and the land that could be won in battle (e.g. Plut. *Vit. Sol.* 9). The hoplites who volunteered usually only numbered in the hundreds (e.g. Thuc. 6.56–8). They came along with their own armour, weapons and food supplies. They too were drawn mainly from the elite.³ Archaic wars went for days or weeks and were typically settled by a solitary battle. Because of the winning side's lack of military capacity, they generally did not result in the subjugation, occupation or taxation of the other side's *polis* ('city-state').⁴ This meant that in the archaic period war was a predominantly private activity whose participants financed it themselves. Even after the sixth century Greek *poleis* that did not aspire to be major or dominant military powers,

¹ Pritchard 2010a: 7–15.

² E.g. Hdt. 6.34–7; Frost 1984: 283–94.

³ See p. 6.

⁴ The exception is the archaic Spartans who enslaved the Messenians and turned themselves into full-time hoplites in order to maintain their enslavement; see especially Cartledge 2001a: 299–307.

such as Athens, Sparta and Thebes, persisted with this small-scale fighting on land.⁵

War changed in two big ways in the classical period. Both can be seen most clearly in the *polis* of Athens. In the fifth century this state quickly became one of Greece's dominant military powers. Athens was largely responsible for making the wars of the Greeks reliant on public finance. The first change was that war became a fully public activity. In Athens this was a result of the democratic reforms that the elite leader, Cleisthenes, sponsored after 508.⁶ These reforms gave the Athenian *dēmos* ('people') sole responsibility for initiating wars and a new public army of hoplites for waging them.⁷ The second change was naval warfare: Persia had forced the Greeks to get serious about fighting at sea. The Athenians knew that the Ionian Revolt of 499 to 494 had failed because of Persia's superior fleet. They knew too that it was Persian triremes that had transported the Great King's army to Marathon in 490. Persia financed its navy through a unique feature of its empire: it required each of its subject states to pay an annual tax which was based on an assessment of what it could afford.⁸ There was no parallel for this financing of war in archaic Greece. Persia's Great King, Darius I, introduced this system of *phoros* ('tribute') in 518 (Hdt. 3.89–97).

In order to get ready for Persia's next attempt to subjugate them, the Athenian *dēmos* decided, in 483, massively to expand and to upgrade their public navy.⁹ As it cost about 1 talent ('t'), that is, 26 kilograms of silver, to build a trireme,¹⁰ they could only afford this expansion because of the unexpectedly high income that they had recently earned from Attica's silver mines ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7; Hdt. 7.144). The 200 triremes which they had at the end of this shipbuilding was the largest *polis*-owned fleet yet seen. So that there were enough captains for this fleet, the Athenian *dēmos* formalised the liturgy of the trierarchy.¹¹ This public service required an elite citizen to command a trireme for one year and to pay for its running costs over and above the *misthos* ('pay') of its crew.¹² A trierarchy cost about 1 t.¹³

⁵ Connor 1988: 6–8.

⁶ See pp. 2–3.

⁷ Hdt. 5.96–7; Pritchard 2010a: 15–16.

⁸ Raaflaub 2009: 98–9.

⁹ See pp. 67–8.

¹⁰ E.g. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7; *IG ii²* 1628.339–68; Pritchard 2015d: 105–6.

¹¹ Gabrielsen 1994: 19–104.

¹² See pp. 88–92.

¹³ See pp. 165–6.

The payment of trireme crews was the responsibility of the state. Their *misthos* was a logical necessity: because the trireme lacked the space for the stowing of food supplies, a trireme crew had to purchase food, each day, from local markets or private houses.¹⁴ In addition there was no guarantee that sailors would remain with their ships if they were not paid. Athenian trierarchs usually hired their sailors from those volunteering their services in the Piraeus, the port of Athens, or in other ports along the way (e.g. [Dem.] 50.7–8, 12–13, 18–19). Because volunteers faced no sanction against desertion and could find employers elsewhere, they could, and sometimes did, desert if they were not paid (e.g. 11–12, 14–16, 25, 36).

6.3 The Athenian Empire

Athens therefore had to pay its sailors. Yet, doing so proved to be hugely expensive.¹⁵ A sailor was normally paid 1 drachma ('dr.') per day (e.g. Thuc. 3.14; 6.8, 31; 7.27). This was the same as the *misthos* of a skilled labourer or a hoplite.¹⁶ There were 200 sailors on a trireme and so it cost 6,000 dr., that is, 1 t. per month in order to keep it at sea (e.g. Thuc. 6.8). This meant that Athens had to spend hundreds of talents to send out even a fraction of its fleet for the regular sailing season of 8 months. In the Second Persian War of 480 to 479, the Athenians resorted to emergency measures to pay for their fleet (e.g. Plut. *Vit. Them.* 10). In order, however, to keep on using it they had to find an adequate source of public finance. This they did in 478, when Anatolia's Greeks invited them to lead the ongoing war against Persia (Thuc. 1.94–7). The multilateral alliance that Athens subsequently established is often now called the Delian League.¹⁷ So that it could finance their naval operations league members adopted the Persian method for funding war: most league members promised to pay an agreed amount of *phoros* each year. In most cases what each *polis* paid was the same as the annual tax that it had paid Persia.¹⁸ These tribute payments added up to 460 talents per year.¹⁹

In its first few decades the Delian League campaigned non-stop to expel Persians from harbours across the Aegean Sea, to destroy Persia's fleet and to liberate Anatolia's *poleis* (Thuc. 1.97–8). At the same time Athens started

¹⁴ E.g. [Dem.] 50.22, 53–5; Pritchard 2012c: 47–8.

¹⁵ Gabrielsen 2008: 46–73.

¹⁶ Loomis 1998: 32–61, 97–120.

¹⁷ Rhodes 2006: 14–21.

¹⁸ Kallet 2013: 56; Raaflaub 2009: 100–1.

¹⁹ Thuc. 1.96, 99. See also Phillips 2010.

to undermine the independence of league members, who, by 450, were subject to laws of the Athenian *dēmos* and had long been prevented from seceding from what was now the Athenian empire.²⁰ Imperial income allowed Athens to employ thousands of elite and non-elite Athenians as sailors and hoplites.²¹ It could now run campaigns that lasted months or, in the case of sieges, up to a few years. With *phoros* the Athenians could wage war more frequently than ever before and pioneer new forms of warfare on land and at sea.²² Athens became, for example, the Greek world's leading seapower and leading besieger of cities. Now it was widely recognised that war relied on public finance.²³ Athenian politicians argued that their state's *dunamis* ('military might') depended on warships, fortifications and especially money.²⁴ They even argued that Athens would win the Peloponnesian War of 431 to 404, because its public finances were so much stronger than Sparta's (e.g. Thuc. 1.142–3; 2.13, 65).

6.4 The Peloponnesian War

In spite of this financial strength, Athens still found the Peloponnesian War ruinously expensive. This war's first 10 years were called the Archidamian War. On it the Athenian *dēmos* spent on average 1,500 t. per year.²⁵ This was 15 times more than what they spent on state religion and 10 times more than on running their democracy.²⁶ Because it also exceeded their state's annual income of 1,000 t. (Xen. *An.* 7.1.27), the *dēmos* had to find extra funds urgently. In 428 the *eisphora* that they levied raised the unprecedented sum of 200 t. (Thuc. 3.19).²⁷ The *eisphora* was an intermittent tax on the elite's property to pay for a war.²⁸ In 425 the Athenians trebled the *phoros* of their imperial subjects to 1,200 t.²⁹ Despite these public-finance measures, by 421, when Athens won the Archidamian War, it had exhausted its cash reserves of 6,000 t. (Thuc. 2.13; *IG* i³ 369).

²⁰ Meiggs 1972: 152–74; Rhodes 2006: 20–1, 41–51.

²¹ Pritchard 2010a: 17–21.

²² See pp. 8–9.

²³ Pritchard 1998: 55.

²⁴ See pp. 126–9.

²⁵ See pp. 165–6.

²⁶ For the cost of state religion, see Pritchard 2015d: 27–51. For the cost of democracy, see Pritchard 2015d: 52–90.

²⁷ Samons 2000: 205.

²⁸ Gabrielsen 2013: 342.

²⁹ See p. 161.

The Peace of Nicias of 421 to 414 saw these cash reserves quickly restored (Aeschin. 2.175; Andoc. 3.8–9; Thuc. 6.26). Sparta had long been Greece's dominant land power, because its hoplites, as full-time professionals, fought much better than its enemies and it could force its allies to provide further hoplites for its wars without the need to pay them. In spite of all this, the enormous army that Sparta could raise proved ineffective against Athens, for whenever, in the course of the Peloponnesian War, it entered Athenian territory, the Athenians simply withdrew within their fortifications, imported food supplies by sea and waited for their enemies to leave (e.g. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 2.16). Now Sparta realised that they could only defeat Athens if they became a major seapower (Thuc. 8.2–5). Yet, in order to become one, it too had to find a way to meet a fleet's astronomical costs. Sparta found a way in 412, after the destruction of the enormous expedition that Athens had sent to conquer Sicily. Persia saw this destruction as the best opportunity in decades to get rid of the Athenian empire. In exchange for regaining the right to levy *phoros* on Anatolia's Greeks, it provided Sparta with enough gold to build and to maintain a fleet (Thuc. 8.18, 37, 58).

In the course of the Ionian War, which is the name of the Peloponnesian War's last phase, this Spartan fleet came in time to surpass what was left of the Athenian fleet.³⁰ In 405 Sparta easily destroyed the last of the Athenian triremes in the Dardanelles and so was able to force the surrender of Athens by a land and sea blockade (Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.27–2.9). With full control of the Aegean Sea, Sparta subjugated the last of the *poleis* that supported Athens and so brought the Athenian empire to an end.

6.5 The Corinthian War

In Greece's next 10-year war Persia's financial support was again decisive. The Corinthian War, which started in 395, got its name from the battles that were fought about Corinth. This war pitted Sparta against two of its former long-standing allies, Corinth and Thebes, which were now allied with Argos and Athens. Initially the Great King, Artaxerxes II, funded this anti-Spartan alliance (e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.1–2; 4.8.9–11), because the Spartans had abandoned the treaty which they had struck with him during the Ionian War.³¹ Instead of letting him levy *phoros* on Anatolia's Greeks, the Spartans were now fighting him for control of them. Athens used

³⁰ Rhodes 2006: 142–54.

³¹ Seager 1994: 100–6.

Persia's gold to rebuild its fortifications and its fleet (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.9–10). With these triremes it attempted to re-establish the Athenian empire.³² Athens was now forcing Greek *poleis* in Anatolia and the Dardanelles to be its subjects again (e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.27–30). On them Athens re-imposed the 5 per cent tax on their maritime trade (e.g. *IG* ii² 24), which it had first introduced in 413 (Thuc. 7.28). It re-imposed another public-finance measure which dated back to the Ionian War: the 10 per cent tax on merchant ships through the Dardanelles (Dem. 20.60).³³ It also authorised Athenian generals to extort money from neutral states or to plunder enemy territory (e.g. Lys. 28.5; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.30, 35). These measures too had come to the fore in the Ionian War.³⁴

These Athenian actions were manifestly at Persia's expense. By the early 380s Athens was even backing revolts against the Persian empire in Cyprus and Egypt (Ar. *Plut.* 178; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.24; 5.1.10). Artaxerxes II belatedly realised that by helping Athens to fight Sparta he was fighting fire with fire. The Athenians now appeared to be a bigger threat to his empire than the Spartans would ever be. Therefore the Great King agreed to support Sparta financially as long as he got complete control of Anatolia's Greeks (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.25). With Persia's renewed financial support, the Spartans assembled and quickly manned eighty warships and sailed to the Dardanelles where they stopped the grain ships sailing to Athens (5.1.28). This action brought the Corinthian War to a speedy end, for the Athenian *dēmos* feared being starved into submission as they had been in 405. Consequently, when Persia summoned to Sardis all those who wished to hear the general peace treaty that the Great King wanted, the ambassadors of Sparta and the anti-Spartan alliance arrived with flattering speed (5.1.30).

6.6 The Second Athenian League

The King's Peace of 386 ended the attempt of Athens to rebuild its empire. Anatolia's *poleis*, which had been this empire's largest group, were again, after a century, Persian subjects (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.31). The peace treaty also stipulated that the other Greek *poleis* must be autonomous. This meant that the Athenian *dēmos* could no longer force other states into dependent international relations. Against any *polis* which broke these terms Artaxerxes

³² See pp. 29–31.

³³ Flament 2007: 191–200.

³⁴ Flament 2007: 179–89.

promised that he 'would make war both by land and sea, and with ships and with money'. Worse still he let Sparta use the autonomy clause as an excuse to attack other *poleis* or to ignore it altogether.³⁵ In the face of this resurgent Sparta, Athens had to find new allies as a matter of urgency. It took the Athenian *dēmos* several years to work out just how to do this: they would invite other states to join a multilateral alliance that respected the King's Peace.³⁶ This alliance is often called today the second Athenian league. Athens promised league members that it would not interfere in their politics nor make them pay *phoros*.³⁷ By 378 the Athenians judged that this league was sufficiently large to resume full-scale war against Sparta.

In the fifth century Athens had largely paid for its armed forces out of imperial income. But the King's Peace now ruled this funding source out.³⁸ In order to fund this new war, the Athenian *dēmos* thus needed to reform public finances. In 378 they changed how the intermittent tax for war on elite property was collected.³⁹ *Eisphora*-payers no longer paid individually. Instead they were placed into groups and the wealthiest three members of each paid for the whole group before collecting the tax from the other group members (e.g. Dem. 2.24, 30; 22.44; [Dem.] 50.8; Isaeus 6.60). This reform helped to ensure that some funds for an expedition were always on hand for its departure. For the same end the *dēmos* had, by 373, established a dedicated fund to pay for war.⁴⁰ Before 350 any surplus of public income at the year's end was deposited into this *stratiōtika* or military fund.⁴¹

By 373, finally, Athens had started asking league members to make *suntaxeis* ('contributions') to their joint expeditions.⁴² During the Athenian empire, the Athenians alone had complete control over the amount of *phoros* to be collected and how it was to be spent (e.g. *IG* i³ 71). These *suntaxeis* were quite different. The second Athenian league had an independent council of its members.⁴³ This council authorised the contribution amount that each *polis* paid and how the collected *suntaxeis* could be spent.⁴⁴ In the 340s these contributions came to around 60 t. per year (e.g. Aeschin. 2.71; Dem. 18.234).

³⁵ E.g. Diod. Sic. 15.5.3–5; Xen. *Hell.* 5.2–3; Rhodes 2006: 212–13.

³⁶ Diod. Sic. 15.28–9; Cargill 1981.

³⁷ *IG* ii² 43.15–45; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 92–113.

³⁸ Flament 2007: 199.

³⁹ Christ 2007: 53–69.

⁴⁰ E.g. RO 26.53–5; Rhodes 2013: 219.

⁴¹ E.g. Dem. 1.19–20; 3.11–13; Cawkwell 1962; 1963: 55–6; Flament 2007: 206–7; Rhodes 1981: 513–15.

⁴² E.g. Dem. 18.234; [Dem.] 49.49; *IG* ii² 43.23; Brun 1983: 91–3.

⁴³ Rhodes 2006: 232–3.

⁴⁴ E.g. *IG* ii² 233; Gabrielsen 2007: 267–8; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 358–61 *pace* Flament 2007: 213.

In the 370s and the 360s Athens spent on average 500 t. per year on its armed forces.⁴⁵ In spite of these public-finance reforms, this was often a struggle. Fourth-century *stratēgoi* ('generals') regularly found that the internal funds that the *dēmos* had given them as well as the allied *suntaxeis* fell short of what they needed to pay their forces.⁴⁶ All too often they were thus required to be 'entrepreneurs of war'.⁴⁷ The results of military success went some way to cover their shortfalls.⁴⁸ For his victory at Naxos, in 376, for example, Chabrias secured 110 t. in booty and 3,000 captives, whose sale, as slaves, would have realised up to 100 t. more.⁴⁹ In 373 Iphicrates made 60 t. for his sailors by ransoming prisoners of war.⁵⁰ Those generals that sold into slavery captured *poleis* in their entirety would have realised still more (e.g. Dem. 2.28; Diod. Sic. 16.34.3–4).

Another external *prosodos* ('income stream') that was no less lucrative for them was merchant shipping.⁵¹ Early on, *stratēgoi* took money directly from 'ship-owners and merchants'. By the 340s, however, *poleis* were paying them on behalf of their own merchant ships (Dem. 8.24–5). In what was a classic protection racket Athenian fleets sometimes protected such ships from third parties (e.g. [Dem.] 50.6, 17–22). But all understood that the money was mainly to protect them from the Athenians themselves (Dem. 8.24–5), for their *stratēgoi*, if they could, simply did not let pass those who had not paid or, alternatively, plundered their cargoes (e.g. 28; Aeschin. 2.71–2).

On campaign fourth-century generals also raised funds by plundering the enemy's *khōra* ('countryside') and merchant shipping.⁵² If they still needed another external *prosodos*, there was always the extortion of neutral states outside the second Athenian league.⁵³ In such *argurologoi* ('money-raising') operations, generals, it seems, threatened to plunder a state's *khōra* unless it handed over sufficient money.⁵⁴ In the fourth century Athenian generals were renowned across the eastern Mediterranean for their ability to raise external funds on campaign.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ Pritchard 2015d: 99–113.

⁴⁶ E.g. Dem. 2.28; 8.21, 23, 24–6; Isoc. 15.108–9, 111–13, 120.

⁴⁷ The phrase is C. Flament's (2007: 209).

⁴⁸ Gabrielsen 2007: 26–72.

⁴⁹ Diod. Sic. 15.35.2; Dem. 20.77. The average retail price of a slave in classical Athens was 200 dr. (p. 39).

⁵⁰ Diod. Sic. 15.47.7; Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.33, 35–6; Flament 2007: 207–8.

⁵¹ Lys. 19.50; Flament 2007: 209, 213.

⁵² E.g. Dem. 24.11–13; Diod. Sic. 16.57.2–3; Isoc. 15.111–12; Polyæn. 3.9.55, 10.9.

⁵³ E.g. Isoc. 15.113; Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.33, 38; Flament 2007: 209.

⁵⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.30; Meiggs 1972: 254.

⁵⁵ E.g. [Arist.] *Oec.* 1350b–1a, 1353a; Polyæn. 3.11.5; Davies 2004: 491–512; 2016: 389.

Significantly Athenian *stratēgoi* could not treat the external funds that they raised as their own private property as the *imperatores* ('commanders') of the Roman Republic would come to do.⁵⁶ Money raised by these measures was still judged to be public property.⁵⁷ The *dēmos* authorised its collection and usage either before a general departed or during his campaign.⁵⁸ On his return he had to submit an account of what he had raised in the field and to hand over any surplus to the state.⁵⁹

6.7 The Rise of the Hellenistic Kingdoms

These different funding sources enabled the Athenians to become a major regional power.⁶⁰ They could thus continue fighting Sparta successfully until the Thebans ended Spartan hegemony at the battle of Leuctra in 371. For the next three decades the Athenians were able to keep enemies well away from their territory and to launch the fleets that were required to protect their vital shipping lines through the Dardanelles. Athens was once again recognised as Greece's leading seapower.⁶¹ Yet, in spite of this renewed military success, public finances would never be strong enough to stop the rise of Philip II. In only 20 years this king turned Macedonia into a major regional power and then, with his victory at the battle of Chaeronea in 338, into Greece's new hegemon.⁶²

Certainly this rise had a lot to do with the Macedonian king's military innovations. Philip II introduced an unrivalled training programme for the Macedonian army.⁶³ He employed vast numbers of non-Macedonian hoplites, horsemen and peltasts as mercenaries (e.g. Dem. 9.58). By investing in siege engines this king came to surpass Athens as a besieger of cities (e.g. Dem. 9.48–50; Diod. Sic. 16.8.2). Nevertheless what made this military pioneering possible was his careful building up of Macedonia's public finances.⁶⁴ Philip II fully exploited the mineral resources of his expanding state.⁶⁵ When he captured, for example, Mount Pangaeum in 356, he massively expanded its gold mines (Diod. Sic. 16.8.6). This mining

⁵⁶ Hamel 1998a: 158; Pritchard 2015d: 70 *pace* Taylor 2001: 61.

⁵⁷ E.g. Dem. 24.11–14; Lys. 28.1–4, 6, 10; 29.2, 5, 8–11, 14; Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.4–5.

⁵⁸ E.g. Dem. 8.9; 21.3; Diod. Sic. 16.57.2–3; Lys. 28.5–6; Burckhardt 1995: 115, 130; Millett 2009: 475.

⁵⁹ E.g. Dem. 20.17–80; Lys. 28.6; Fröhlich 2000: 81–111.

⁶⁰ See pp. 17–19.

⁶¹ E.g. Dem. 6.12; 8.45; Diod. Sic. 15.78.4; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.1.

⁶² Rhodes 2006: 296–322.

⁶³ E.g. Dem. 9.47–52; Diod. Sic. 16.3.1; Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.6; Polyaeus 4.2.10.

⁶⁴ Serrati 2007: 462–4.

⁶⁵ Bosworth 1988: 8–9.

alone earned him 1,000 t. per year. As he incorporated new territories into Macedonia he also broadened its tax base by requiring their elites to pay *eisphorai* on their private property.⁶⁶

His son, Alexander the Great, by contrast, grew less concerned about public finances as he conquered the Persian empire, for plunder, he found, easily paid for his army.⁶⁷ Initially the *diadochoi* ('successors'), who, after Alexander III's death in 323, fought over his conquests, found the same. But in time they too had to manage carefully their public finances.⁶⁸ Consequently the Ptolemies introduced a 10 per cent tax on Egyptian agriculture. In Anatolia and beyond, the Seleucids maintained the *phoros* of the Persians, while the Antigonids built on what Philip II had done in Macedonia. Such public-finance reforms enabled the hellenistic kingdoms to raise significantly the scale of Greek warfare.⁶⁹ At the battle of Gaza, for example, in 217, the armies of Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV, which were mainly composed of mercenaries, totalled 140,000 (Polyb. 5.65, 79–87). This was several times more than the armies that Athens and Sparta had ever put into field against each other. War for dominance in the ancient Greek world had now moved decisively beyond its *poleis*.

⁶⁶ Bosworth 1988: 8.

⁶⁷ E.g. Diod. Sic. 7.80.13; Bosworth 1988: 241–5.

⁶⁸ Serrati 2007: 470–9.

⁶⁹ Chaniotis 2005: 1–17.