

CHAPTER NINE

Macedon and the Mainland, 280–221

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1 On the Eve of the Gauls: a Political Topography of the Southern Balkans

The third-century Balkans offer an opportunity not only to follow the development of political events but also the changing character of Greek political organization. This chapter takes as its focal point the political travails of Macedonia, especially the Antigonid regime and its attempts to control the behaviour of various immediate neighbours. The final failure of the independent city-states of the Greek mainland, particularly Athens and Sparta, as effective points of resistance to Macedonian hegemony emerges as a major theme, as does the increasing success of regional states/governments (*sympoliteiai/koina*) in this same capacity. The Aitolian and Achaian commonwealths dominate the latter discussion.

If we were to transport a party of State Formation theorists to this region in early 280 (just ahead of an only slightly less fractious group of Celts) they probably would share at least one fundamental observation: the farther south they ventured, the more sophisticated and complex the political institutions of the human communities that they encountered. As seekers after the truth about how it is that humans form 'states', they would also note, however, that wherever they wandered across the southern Balkans of the third, and indeed the fourth, century, they came across peoples struggling with (or against) the process of creating regional identities and governmental institutions (Cabanis 1993a).

Farthest north and west they would find Celts and Illyrians in the earliest stages of this process. The fundamental socio-economic building block of these peoples was similar to that of their more southerly neighbours: an extended family of farmers/stockbreeders gathered with close neighbours into villages (Halstead 1987). The latter supplemented their livelihood by trading with and raiding against neighbouring communities; and these families/settlements identified and co-operated with others in both immediate and more remote proximity to form ever larger, albeit ever more fragile, political communities. Two Illyrian coalitions achieved a measure of stability, and so regional importance: the Ardiaioi along the Adriatic coast between Skodra and

the river Neretva; and the Dardanians who inhabited, roughly, modern Kosovo (Hammond 1966; Cabanes 1988; 1993a).

Thracian speakers to the east and south had forged more durable regional coalitions. Those inhabiting the Danubian foothills of the Star Planina range (anc. Haemos) that divides modern Bulgaria had come together as the powerful Triballi. Between the Haemos and Rhodope ranges, stretching east from the headwaters of the Hebros river to the Black Sea coast, an 'Odrysian' state had emerged, governed from the urbanized settlement of Seuthopolis (Archibald 1998). Further south and east, in European Turkey, were additional, although less stable, Thracian coalitions (Papazoglou 1978; Hoddinott 1981).

The regional state formation trend would be clearest, for our itinerant theorists, among the southernmost, Greek-speaking peoples of the Balkans. Here, the fundamental socio-economic unit, the extended family and its dependents (Gk: *oikos*/pl. *oikoi*), had long since become the building block of ever larger, and increasingly formalized local and district groups such as the clan (*genos*) and the tribe (*phyle*). And while settlement patterns for most remained rooted in the village (*kome*) and their livelihood tied to agriculture, stockbreeding and its close derivatives, local settlement and status hierarchies also arose early on.

In the lands furthest south, certain of these populations had achieved a degree of nucleation, and often even of urbanization, to establish what our experts would identify as 'central places' controlling and exploiting surrounding 'hinterlands'. The Greeks called this consolidation of a territory (*chora*) around a central site (*astu*) *synoikismos*, that is to say 'the coming together of *oikoi*' and their dependents. This was often achieved by means of a cult or sanctuary at the central site frequented by the residents of the *chora*. The result was that most familiar of Mediterranean state forms: the independent city-state (Snodgrass 1980; 1993).

Greeks, however, dubbed their version a *polis*, and distinguished it from those of neighbouring peoples by its extension of formalized responsibilities and rights, particularly in the area of self-governance, to a relatively broader segment of its population, typically to adult males who possessed a certain level of wealth. Contemporary classical scholarship recognizes this distinction by designating the *polis* not simply as a city-state, but rather as a 'citizen-state' (M. Hansen 1993).

Yet not all, and perhaps not even most, mainland Greek speakers of the early third century BC resided in villages that were part of a *polis*. North of an imaginary line stretching from the Gulf of Corinth to the pass at Thermopylai, any additional level of identity and loyalty beyond family, clan and tribe came more commonly in the form of the *ethnos* ('people' or 'nation'; pl. *ethné*). Although focused, as the *polis* was, around a common cult/sanctuary and, again like the *polis*, bolstered by a unifying body of kinship myth, an *ethnos* was physically much more extensive than a typical *polis*. For that reason it was both potentially much more powerful and in practice much less internally cohesive than a *polis*, except when threatened from outside (Hall 1997).

Nonetheless, the *ethnos* does appear early on as the fundamental unit in even greater entities, such as the *Amphiktyoníai* ('dwellers round about') that form in the late Archaic era to regulate regional sanctuaries of growing panhellenic importance, such as those of Demeter at Anthela, Apollo at Delphi, Poseidon at Kalauria, and Zeus at Olympia or Dodona (Tausend 1992). Some *ethné*, in particular that of the Thessalians, were prominent political actors in this earlier period. Indeed, even



Figure 9.1 Map of Greece and Asia Minor

citizens of the independent *poleis* eventually came to see themselves as members of some *ethnos*. Particularly during the fourth century, many of these *ethné* attempted to bridge the gap between the local and the regional by developing stronger, federal political institutions, based upon a varying mix of direct democracy and proportional representation (Larsen 1968: 173–302; Beck 1997).

Yet a tension always remained between regional and local identity, interests and loyalty, even in areas where local settlements had not coalesced into *poleis* (Cabanes 1985). Whether these regional polities could be transformed into stable regional states capable of routinely marshalling their resources for common purposes, in particular for war, was a question which had animated the history of the southern Balkans for the preceding century (Cabanes 1989; 1993a). It would continue to underpin events and developments in the area between 280 and 221.

2 The Arrival of the ‘Others’

The seminal event for this area and era occurred at the outset. In the late 280s and early 270s a series of Celtic war parties arrived on the scene. The movement of these ‘Gauls’ into the southern Balkans set off shock waves that reverberated into the farthest corners of the Hellenistic world. In summer 280 separate bands approached via each of the three major routes into the southern Balkans from the Danube bend (Paus. 10.19.4–7; cf. Hammond 1982: 619–24; Garaöanin 1982: 75–8).

The population they encountered comprised the most powerful and institutionally stable Hellenic regional state of the day: the *ethnos* of the Macedonians. It had not always been so, of course. Local interests, particularly those of the populations of highland districts in the Pindos foothills – Pelagonia, Lynkos, Eordaia, and farther out, along the upper Haliakmon, Orestis, Tymphaia, and Elimeia – long resisted attempts by clans of the fertile plain between the Haliakmon and Axios, under the leadership of the Argead clan based at Aigai, to forge a more perfect union. The lowlanders’ efforts were both helped and hindered by external pressures. One source was in the north and west. Regular incursions by Illyrian neighbours allowed Argead leaders to foster Macedonian identity and their own legitimacy. That is, if the Argead in question survived the campaign. Those that did still had to face trouble from the opposite quarter. Macedonia’s Aigaian coastline was dotted with *poleis* whose leaders constantly resisted the Argeads’ state-building activities (and fomented further resistance among the Macedonian elite). The *metropoleis* further south that had dispatched these colonies played the same game (Hammond and Griffith 1979; Borza 1990; Errington 1990; Hatzopoulos 1996).

Philip II’s ability to transform Pella into the focal point of a monarchic state commanding the allegiance of all the various Macedonians, and to use the region’s abundant resources to crush its various antagonists – Illyrian, Thracian and Hellenic – is a tribute, of course, to his own talents (Borza 1990: 198–230). The subsequent military achievements of Alexander and his various marshals likewise reflect the genius of their authors. But all also reflect the latent power of a unified Greek *ethnos*, albeit the most populous among them. And none could have happened without the efforts of earlier Argeads, who built first Aigai and then Pella, and nurtured regional identity and solidarity via common institutions, such as the cult and sanctuary of Zeus at Dion, in the shadow of Mount Olympos (Borza 1990: 167, 172–4). Fortunately for

the Celts approaching from the west, their own timing was impeccable. In 280 the Macedonian *ethnos* remained a stable and potentially powerful monarchic state (Billows 1995: 183–220). In preceding years, for example, it had continued to suppress any re-emergence of central authority among the Dardanians, thus, ironically, clearing the way for the Gauls.

Of late, however, the kingship of the Macedonians had been the object of contention between several post-Argead pretenders. The current ruler was a newcomer to the scene: Ptolemy Keraunos, a disinherited son of Ptolemy I of Egypt. Keraunos had only gained the kingship within the previous year, and then through the murder of his erstwhile patron Seleukos I, in the aftermath of the battle of Koroupedion. Eager to establish his legitimacy, Keraunos declined an offer of alliance and assistance from the Dardanians, and refused to bribe the Gallic intruders into a change of course. Confronting them with only a scratch force, he met defeat and death. As Celts paraded his head on the point of a spear, the Macedonian army evaporated, leaving the Gauls to run amok among Macedonia's communities and cantons.

That they were able to do so, and for an extended period, was a further consequence of the troubles that had immediately preceded their arrival. When the Gauls severed Keraunos' connection to his cranium, they also metaphorically decapitated the *ethnos* of the Macedonians. Local communities and their institutions, no doubt, continued to function, and district/cantonal ties and government probably did as well. But the Macedonians as an *ethnos* did not. Between the internecine bloodletting of the 280s, and the handiwork of Celtic broadswords, the leadership cadre that had been the key element of the Macedonian state temporarily disintegrated (Borza 1990: 230–52; Errington 1990: 5). Successive pretenders to the throne were unable to rally the *ethnos*. Enough gathered under the leadership of a certain Sosthenes to expel the initial invaders, but Sosthenes' forces were soon brushed aside by yet another Gallic coalition that arrived in the late summer via the third route (the Vardar/Axios corridor) bent on pushing further south (Euseb. *Chron.* 1.235; Diod. 22.4; Just. 24.6.1–2; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 253–4). At least two individuals, Pyrrhos and Antigonos Gonatas, may have possessed the combination of prestige and ability needed to bring order to Macedonia. But, having lost out in the earlier struggles, both were preoccupied and far from the scene. The absence of Pyrrhos was particularly unfortunate for the Macedonians. A charismatic military leader, he had already ruled them for at least a brief period, despite the fact that by birth he was a member of the Aiakid clan that led another *ethnos*: the Molossians. In the recent past Pyrrhos' origins had worked against his attempts to assert authority among the Macedonians. In this instance they may well have helped, for Pyrrhos now would have brought the Molossians into the fray on behalf of the Macedonians.

Molossis lay south and west of the Lakes District in the Pindos mountains. The heart of this region was the highland plain of Lake Ioannina that links two central places – Passaron, the region's political seat, with its cult of Zeus Areios, and the pan-hellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, with its oracle. The peoples and settlements of Molossis had formalized their identity through the adoption of regional governmental institutions that may have been even more complex than those of the Macedonians (Cabanes 1993a). Their Aiakid 'king' led the *ethnos* in war and cult. But alongside him the Molossians collectively elected an annual board of officials to deal with daily and internal affairs, assisted by a council of representatives from Molossis'

various districts. And king and people swore a mutual oath to respect the rules of governance established by custom (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 5; Hammond 1967: 487–524).

This Molossian government (*koinon*: Hammond 1967: 528), in turn, had under its control the Ionic coastal districts of Elinia and Kassopia, between the Thyamis river delta and the later site of Nikopolis on the Ambrakian Gulf. Pyrrhos had also gained control of the powerful *polis* east of Kassopia that gave that Gulf its name, transforming the eponymous central place of that one-time Corinthian colony (mod. Arta) into his answer to Pella. At the same time Pyrrhos had managed to pry the peoples of Parauaia and Tymphaia, which lay between Molossis and the upland cantons of western Macedonia, out of the orbit of the *ethnos* to their east (Hammond 1967: 525–54). Furthermore, as ‘king’ of the Molossians Pyrrhos was also ‘general’ of an even larger regional entity: the ‘alliance of the mainlanders’ (*symmachia* of the Epeirotes). Two other tribal groups to the west had co-operated in the creation of this alliance, if only to check the further westward expansion of the Molossian state. The Chaonians’ lands began south and just inland of the colonial *polis* Apollonia on the Adriatic, straddling the Aous river valley and the plain of Phoinike in southern Albania. Their neighbours, the Thesproti, controlled the succeeding mountains, along with the portions of the Thyamis and Acheron river valleys inland of Elinia and Kassopia (Hammond 1967: 557–94).

While the precise degree of Pyrrhos’ control over this Epeirote alliance remains unclear, when he did manage to rally it to the side of his own Molossian state, the combination could be a match for whatever resources the current ruler of the Macedonians could muster. Presumably the Gallic incursions of 280 would have offered incentive for Epeirote unity, and there seems little reason to doubt that the defeated Macedonians would have rallied around Pyrrhos, recent antagonisms notwithstanding. In the current circumstances, it seems clear whom the Macedonians would have viewed as ‘us’ and whom as ‘them’.

But Pyrrhos was away, and so the Gauls did play. After some additional, leisurely months of pillaging the communities of the Macedonian lowlands, the fourth wave headed south around Mount Olympos and into the second largest plain (after central Macedonia) of the Greek-speaking southlands: that of Thessaly (Diod. 22.9; Paus. 10.19.12; Just. 24.6.2–4).

Bounded on the south by the low Othrys range, the west by the Pindos, and the east by Ossa-Pelion, Thessaly was both watered and united by the river Peneios and its tributaries. This watershed also made the plain ideal for agriculture, which in turn produced a large population. As noted above, the various communities of the plain developed a common identity, and effective regional governance, at a remarkably early date. Local clans and settlements coalesced into four regional polities, the ‘tetrads’ of Hestiaiotes in the northwest, Pelasgiotes in the northeast, Phthiotis in the southeast, and Thessaliotes in the southwest. The common sanctuary of the *ethnos* was that of Athena Itonia, in Thessaliotes. In addition to leaders for each of these regions (‘tetrarchs’), the Thessalians also chose a common leader (*archon*) whose primary duties seem to have been military and cultic (Helly 1995). As time passed, however, the early unity of the Thessalians, which was reflected in their place of honour at the head of the various *ethné* of the Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia* that controlled the sanctuary at Delphi, gradually dissipated in the face of internal rivalries. As in the lands further south, certain settlements among the Thessalian tetrads began

to dominate their neighbours and adopt the institutions and behaviours of independent citizen-states. At sites such as Larisa, Pherai and Pharsalos, clans such as the Aleuadai asserted control over surrounding territories, often reducing part of the nearby population to a dependent status (the *penestai*: Ducat 1994). As these *poleis* grew in size and complexity, so did the rivalry between them within the *ethnos*. As a consequence, for long stretches the archonship went unfilled. When some individual did achieve the status to assume it, as Jason and Alexander of Pherai did in the 370s and 360s, internal opposition, whether local or regional, soon surfaced to thwart (i.e., eliminate) him. Fearful neighbours were only too happy to encourage such Thessalian fratricide (Larsen 1968: 12–26).

It took an outsider to reunite the Thessalians. Rather than face the prospect of the rise of another Jason to threaten all he had accomplished in Macedonia, Philip II decided to impose order in Thessaly, and then assumed the archonship himself. He thereby not only stabilized his own hold on power in the north, but also added greatly to his ability to control the affairs of the southern Greeks. As *archon* of Thessaly, Philip could command quick access to central and western Greece, and add the considerable manpower of Thessaly to the even greater pool he had in Macedonia. His son continued this custom, and the Thessalian cavalry played a key role in Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid empire (Westlake 1935; Sordi 1958).

All successful rulers of Macedon after Alexander followed this lead with regard to Thessaly. Demetrios Poliorketes went so far as to place an eponymous stronghold, Demetrias, on the Gulf of Pagasai. It served as his capital, linking his Macedonian holdings to those in the south. Demetrios' successors maintained Demetrias, because of its easy access to Pelasgiotis and Phthiotis, as one of the key links in a chain of bases from which they projected their power throughout the southern mainland, the infamous 'fetters of Greece' (Polyb. 18.11.5; Walbank 1967: 563; Errington 1990: 151, 155, 162).

Their care was clearly born of experience. Any weakening in the stability of the Macedonian state invariably tipped the balance in Thessaly between those who supported (and were supported by) Philip's arrangement, and those who opposed it. The Thessalian cavalry that earlier had fought alongside Alexander turned and fought against his regent, Antipater, during the Lamian War that broke out upon news of Alexander's death. Keraunos' demise seems to have had a similar liberating effect. When the Gauls were finally ejected from Greece, a Thessalian delegation reappears at the head of the list of participants at the next meeting of the Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia*. When the Macedonian king was their *archon*, the Thessalian delegation yielded this position to his personal delegation (Lefèvre 1998a).

At the time of the Gauls' arrival in their lands, however, the communities of Thessaly seem to have been more concerned with pragmatic matters. Most appear to have presented a matador's defence, waving the invaders on towards the south (Paus. 10.19.12). Some may even have joined the newcomers' excursion (Just. 24.7.2), an early example of the contingency of Celtic otherness in the eyes of the Hellenistic world (cf. Mitchell, this volume).

As this swelling band descended into the plain south of Mt. Othrys inhabited by the small *ethnos* of the Malians and commanded by their central site, Lamia, the invaders finally found their way blocked. An immediate hurdle was the river Spercheios, which emptied into the sea not far to the east (Béquignon 1937). Just

beyond it, another mountain barrier loomed: the Oita-Knemis range. Two routes crossed it most directly: one, the Duo Vouna pass west of Mt. Knemis (mod. Kallidromos) and east of Mt. Oita, past the *polis* Herakleia Trachis; the other, the more usual and famous pass of Thermopylai between the Malian Gulf and the north face of Knemis/Kallidromos (Pritchett 1985: 190–216; 1989: 118–22). Both routes, however, were guarded by a combined force of at least 26,000 infantry and 1500 cavalry, drawn from the polities of central and southern Greece (Paus. 10.20.3–5).

Many of the states contributing to this blocking force were familiar players in Greek politics: the small *ethnos* of the east Lokrians, on whose western border Thermopylai lay; that of the Phokians, west and south of the Lokrians; that of the Boiotians, beyond Phokis, and presumably led by its dominant member state, the *polis* of Thebes; the great *polis* of Athens, and its smaller neighbour and rival Megara. Not coincidentally, these polities lay along the normal overland route between Thermopylai and the Isthmus of Corinth. All, however, were also members of the council of the old Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia*. This organization had served as a rallying point for common resistance to threats to central Greece often in the past, and so may also have done so on this occasion.

Equally likely as organizer of this coalition, however, is also its most unlikely member. Pausanias tells us that the largest contingent among the Greek forces along the Thermopylai–Herakleia front was supplied by another *ethnos*: that of the Aitolians. This polity was an outgrowth of an older cultic community centred on the sanctuary of Apollo at Thermon, at the east end of Lake Trichonis (Antonetti 1990a). East and north of the Trichonis basin, including the central course of the Acheloos river, Aitolians also dwelt in the mountainous regions drained by the rivers Evenos, Mornos and Karpenesiotis, and their tributaries. Settlements in this rugged region were numerous, and in its latest, most complex form the Aitolian state referred to its fundamental constituent units as '*poleis*' (Funke 1985; Bommelle et al. 1987). With the possible exception of Kallion in the east, however, none achieved the degree of complexity modern scholars tend to associate with the term *polis*. Most *poleis* of Aitolia proper remained of the rudimentary kind: looser, canton-like collections of scattered villages (cf. Funke 1997).

Outsiders recognized the existence of an Aitolian *ethnos* by the outbreak of the great Peloponnesian Wars of the later fifth century. The subsequent, negative image of Aitolians as semi-feral brigands whose Hellenism was in doubt dates from this period, promoted by Athenian writers upset at the Aitolians' slaughter of an Athenian-led incursion up the Mornos valley in 426 (Antonetti 1990b: 43–143). Yet these same writers' claim that the Aitolians and their neighbours clung to an antiquated, more Homeric set of interpersonal conventions and social structures cannot be totally dismissed, as it squares with the limited archaeological data currently at our disposal.

Such conditions would also explain the Aitolian inability to rally for common actions other than self-defence. Across the fourth century the base of the triangle-shaped lands of the Aitolian *ethnos* edged southward, to the north coast of the Gulf of Corinth between the mouth of the Acheloos in the west and Tol(o)phon in the east. During the same years Aitolians developed their common political structures enough that their government, termed the '*koinon* of the Aitolians' (Tod 2.137), was deemed worthy of study by Greek political philosophers (Arist. frag. 473 Rose). Yet these coastal districts, Aiolis, the Naupaktia and the lands of the small *ethnos* of the West

(Ozolian) Lokrians, did not come under Aitolian control through communal action by their *ethnos/koinon*, but rather through the good offices of powerful third parties, such as the Boiotian *koinon* during the Theban hegemony, or the Macedonians under Philip. The direct threat of Macedonian imperialism prompted increasing Aitolian involvement in regional affairs, particularly in the early stages of the Lamian/Hellenic war. But the Aitolians quit that contest half way through, and were feckless allies to various of the Diadochoi, particularly the Antigonids (Scholten 2000: 13–19; cf. Grainger 1999: 54–86).

Only at the outset of the third century did the Aitolians as a polity begin to play a regular, active role in the affairs of mainland Greece. Their most important act was assuming control over the Parnassos massif, probably as a buffer for communities of eastern Aitolia. As the new territories included Delphi, however, the Aitolians' move earned them only further grief. In 289 the Antigonid master of Macedonia, Demetrios I Poliorketes, declared a Sacred War and attacked (Plut. *Demetr.* 40–1: Athen. 6.253b–f; Lefèvre 1998b); eight years later the Spartan king Areus assembled a Peloponnesian coalition and did the same (Just. 24.1.1–7). Aitolian tradition would have dictated withdrawal back into their rough hinterlands in reaction to these two experiences; instead, a new generation of leaders led their fellows into further engagement. In the year following Areus' (unsuccessful) attack, Aitolian forces seized control of the old Spartan stronghold at Herakleia Trachis, commanding both Duo Vouna and Thermopylai (Paus. 10.20.9). When the Celts came calling the year after that, the Aitolian *ethnos* was waiting for them (Scholten 2000: 19–25).

There were some notable absences from the Greek defenders at Thermopylai in 279/78. The Akarnanians, the Aitolians' western neighbours, stayed home. They were no friends of the Aitolians, having fought them for generations over control of the central and lower Acheloos river valley that stretched between Akarnania's two most advanced settlements, Stratos and Oiniadai (Schoch 1997: 1–72; Dany 1999: 1–61). More surprising as absentees were the peoples of the Peloponnesian peninsula in general, and in particular the Spartans, who had anchored an earlier, epic defence of that pass against a barbarian horde. The easiest explanations for this circumstance are proximity and topography. Between Thermopylai and the Peloponnese lay the lands of the Lokrians (east and west), Phokians, Boiotians and Megarians, to say nothing of the allure of Attika. And any raiders who might persevere would then confront two formidable natural obstacles: the Isthmus of Corinth in the east, and the Rhion–Antirrhion strait to the west. It is no coincidence that the only Peloponnesian polity to attempt to send a contingent north were the Patraians (Paus. 7.18.5, 20.3; 10.22.4): theirs is the closest *polis* on the south side of the latter waterway.

The Patraians' actions, however, may also signal another reason for the Peloponnesian abstention: regional political chaos. Patrai was a key community within one of the oldest of the *ethné* of the Peloponnese: that of the Achaians. Their lands comprised a series of small alluvial plains that open onto the Corinthian Gulf coast from the mountains of the northern Peloponnese. At least a dozen settlement areas – some with a central site of sufficient complexity and hinterlands to behave as a *polis* – arose there along the stretch running west from modern Xylokastro to past Dyme: Pellene, Aigira, Aigai, Bura, Helike, Aigion, Rhypes, Patrai, Pharai, Olenos, Dyme and Tritaia (but cf. Walbank 1957: 230–2). The members of these communities had forged a common regional identity in the Archaic and Classical eras around the cult and

sanctuary of Zeus Homarios, near Aigion (Larsen 1968: 80–9). In the earlier fourth century the Achaians had been sufficiently ambitious and cohesive to lay hold of the coastal plain of Aiolis along the north shore of the Gulf – including the Homeric-vintage settlements at Pleuron and Kalydon – as well as the Naupaktia. They had also been advanced and flexible enough in their thinking about their common identity to extend its bounds across the Rhion–Antirrhion strait, offering full membership in the *ethnos* to the populations of these two communities (Bommeljé 1988; Merker 1989).

In the second book of his history the Achaian statesman Polybios presents an account of the growth of his own *koinon* in the Peloponnese, as a parallel to that of Rome in the Mediterranean. Immodest as this decision may seem, it does shine a few points of light into the historiographical gloom that otherwise obscures developments on the mainland and elsewhere prior to events of the 220s. For present purposes it is noteworthy that Polybios indicates that, by the early third century, Macedonian interventions (most likely Antigonid, in the main) had not merely ended the Achaians' extramural experimentation; they had caused the *ethnos* itself to dissolve (Polyb. 2.40.5–6). At the time of the Celtic invasions, the four westernmost communities of Dyme, Patrai, Tritaia and Pharai had only just re-established their ethnic federation, probably taking advantage of the decline in Antigonid fortunes in preceding years (Walbank 1957: 233). The Patraians' dispatching of a force in 279/78 may thus also represent an act of renewed Achaian self-assertion across the Corinthian Gulf. It would require a further generation, however, for the other surviving communities to reforge their lost links to each other (cf. Urban 1979: 1–12).

To the south of Achaia, conditions in the Peloponnese in 279 are more obscure. In Lakonia, the Spartan king, Areus I, had only recently rallied the region in defence of Delphi – but against the Aitolians, and unsuccessfully. Consequently, whatever aspirations he harboured now had to confront two obstacles: a) a manpower shortage among the Lakedaimonians perpetuated by the refusal of their richest citizens to adjust a severe imbalance in individual landed wealth to the needs of Sparta's age-old socio-political regimen or vice versa; b) the revived suspicions of Sparta's Peloponnesian neighbours (Just. 24.1.7; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 31–3, 41–3). Not that the Argives to the north and east, the Messenians to the west, or the Megalopolitans to the west and north ever doubted the Spartans' bad intentions. But other communities – the eastern Arkadian *poleis* of Tegea, Mantinea and Orchomenos; the plutocratic oligarchy that controlled Elis; the Achaian *ethnos*, Corinth – were historically more willing to follow a Spartan lead. This difference in opinion about Sparta in fact helped keep the Megalopolitans from uniting with their fellow Arkadians to form a cohesive *ethnos* (Larsen 1968: 180–95). Instead, the anti-Spartan *poleis* were tailor-made friends to Macedonia, and the entire region a paradise for the recruiting agents of the mercenary armies of the Hellenistic age. Except for Corinth. Its wealth and location had made it a key prize in the contests of the Diadochoi; currently, Antigonos Gonatas held the keys to its lofty citadel, and so to the rest of the Peloponnese (Paus. 10.20.5; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 250–1).

In the event, the general absence of Peloponnesians from the anti-Gaulish coalition was not critical. The Aitolian-dominated force held the Herakleia–Thermopylai line so capably that a Gaulish flying column chose to make a difficult countermarch around Mt. Oita and into eastern Aitolia (Pritchett 1996: 173–90), in order to draw off the keystone of the Greek coalition. This move, including the sack of

underdefended Kallion, had the desired effect: the Aitolians at Thermopylai headed home to help, their allies scattered, and the rest of the Celtic force headed for Delphi (Paus. 10.20–2).

That was the extent of the Gauls' success. A Phokian-led force stopped the Gauls before Delphi. In gratitude, the Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia* returned to the Phokians the two votes on the council the latter had lost as a result of their sacrilegious behaviour during the Third Sacred War. Meanwhile, the Patraians, at great cost, kept the Celts from reaching the Peloponnese. As both Gaulish bands attempted to withdraw, they found their return routes lined with Aitolians and other Hellenic ill-wishers; few Celts made it back (Scholten 2000: 31–7).

While the eradication of Brennos' Gallic coalition ended the Celtic threat to the southern mainland, it did not end Celtic mischief in the southern Balkans. In Macedonia, confusion reigned for several more years (Hammond and Walbank 1988: 253–8); in Thracian lands trouble lasted even longer. The various raiding bands that beset the region were anything but stable. Brennos' band, most notably, had reached a parting of the ways ere it even got to Macedonia. The defectors led by a certain Leonnorios and a certain Luturios preferred to take the southeasterly route, into Thrace. Some made it as far as Lysimacheia on the Gallipoli peninsula, others would eventually cross over into Asia Minor (Mitchell, this volume).

3 Antigonos Takes Charge

The presence of these Celts at Lysimacheia gave Antigonos Gonatas, son of Macedon's former king, Demetrios Poliorketes, an excuse to intervene. His forces crushed them, a success that in turn vaulted him, however precariously, into the leadership of the Macedonian *ethnos* (D.L. 2.141; Just. 25.1–2). Given the chaos that preceded his return, Antigonos' ability in the aftermath of the battle of Lysimacheia a) to re-establish order in Macedonia, b) to reassert Macedonian control over the Thessalian *ethnos*, c) to reconstruct Macedonia's hegemony in the southern mainland, and d) to survive as king to a ripe old age before succumbing to nature, must be considered among the more remarkable political achievements of the third-century Greek world. His career, therefore, and those of his successors, Demetrios II (Gonatas' son, regn. 240/39–230/29), and Antigonos III Doson (Gonatas' nephew, regn. 229–222/1), offer a suitable framework for the following narrative of political developments in the southern Balkans down to 221.

The study of the Antigonids is handicapped by evidence that is limited and often biased, concentrating on failure rather than success. As a consequence, the Antigonid regime gives the appearance of lurching from crisis to crisis. Obviously we cannot ignore the evidence we do have. But its nature should also not blind us to the long stretches of peace that the Antigonids brought to their homeland, years that allowed the Macedonian *ethnos* to recover from the Gallic disaster, to return to its previous prosperity, and so to participate in the larger institutional developments that were sweeping across neighbouring lands in the mid-to-late third century.

The first challenge to Gonatas' position was the return in 275 to Epeiros, and then Macedonia, of the (briefly) once and future king, Pyrrhos. The seeming effortlessness of Pyrrhos' march into Upper Macedonia, his defeat there of Gonatas, and his subsequent seizure of the central Macedonian plain, might easily mislead us into

ignoring Antigonos' accomplishments in the preceding two years. The equal ease with which Gonatas re-established his dominance once Pyrrhos' attention wandered indicates that Gonatas had already done much to erase any doubts left by his father's mis-reign. A major step was his quick reassertion of Macedonian control over Thessaly, evidenced by Pyrrhos' attention to that region (Diod. 22.11; Just. 25.3.5–8; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 26; Paus. 1.13.2; Walbank 1984a: 230).

By 272 Gonatas was in a position to shadow Pyrrhos when the latter led his forces south to the Peloponnese. And he contributed in no small way to the failure of Pyrrhos' serial attacks there against Sparta and Argos. When the man whom Gonatas himself likened to a talented but undisciplined craps-shooter met his end during an ill-advised nocturnal sneak attack against Argos, Gonatas himself moved aggressively to assure friendly regimes in as many Peloponnesian polities as possible (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 26–34; Paus. 1.13.6–7; Just. 25–6; Fellman 1930; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 259–66).

4 The Last Stand of the *Polis*

Gonatas' bold steps into the political vacuum left by Pyrrhos' death may have helped to spark the second apparent threat to Antigonos' regime: the so-called Chremonidean War of the 260s. While some of the roots of this conflict may be found in broader struggles between the major Hellenistic regimes (Ager, this volume), fundamentally it was simply a renewal, albeit the final one, of the long-running twilight struggle of the *poleis* of southern Greece against Macedonian hegemony (Heinen 1972; Habicht 1997: 142–9).

Fittingly, the list of participants in the anti-Antigonid coalition is headed by the Athenians and the Spartans. Areus, apparently reinvigorated after the repulse of Pyrrhos, was a prime mover, intent as ever on establishing himself among the great kings of his day (Heinen 1972: 117–39; Will 1979: 223; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 35–6). The motion by the Athenian statesman Chremonides contains a ringing call to the defence of Greek freedom; the fact that this slogan had long since become a mainstay of anti-Macedonian rhetoric does not necessarily mean that its use here is purely formulaic (Austin 49; Lehmann 1988). Gonatas seems to have moved in the early 260s to expand his influence in Euboia from his base at Chalkis (Knoepfler 1993: 338–9; 1995: 141–4). For an Attic population already outraged by his continuing occupation of the Piraeus (Habicht 1979: 102–7), Gonatas' activism on the other side of the Euboian channel must have been alarming indeed.

The extent of the coalition (which also included the *poleis* of eastern Arkadia, the Achaians, Eleians, Phigaleians and unnamed Cretan allies), its backing by the Ptolemaic regime, the apparent length of the struggle, and the likelihood that at one point during its course Pyrrhos' son and successor, Alexander II, emulated his father by driving Gonatas from central Macedonia, together leave the impression that the Chremonidean coalition posed a grave threat to Gonatas' regime. Once again, however, it is important to keep matters in perspective. Alexander's campaign, whose precise date and relationship to the struggle in the south remain unclear, was the only genuine setback Gonatas experienced during these years, and seems to have had even less impact than had Pyrrhos' raid in the previous decade (Just. 26.2). Otherwise, the Macedonian fetters served Gonatas well. His base at Corinth kept

Areus and his Peloponnesian allies from coming to the Athenians' aid, indeed Areus was killed in one of the attempts to break through (Trogus *Prol.* 26; Plut. *Agis* 3; Paus. 3.6.5–6). Gonatas was thus free to strangle Attika from Piraeus and Chalkis. Ptolemaic forces countered by establishing a base at Koroni on the east Attic coast, but that measure, or any other they undertook, was ineffective (Paus. 1.1.1, 1.7.3, 3.6.4–6; Caskey 1982). Whatever was the precise relationship of the enigmatic naval battle of Kos to this struggle on the mainland, the result was the same: Sparta's quest for revival died with Areus at Corinth, and Athens was forced to surrender. Gonatas' dominance over mainland Greek affairs was even greater than before.

It was an epochal moment, particularly for Athenians, as exemplified by the fate of the statesman and writer Philochoros (*FGrH* 328). Unable (or unwilling) to go flee into exile (and Ptolemaic service), as did so many other members of Athens' anti-Macedonian leadership (Étienne and Piérart 1975), Philochoros was captured and executed by Antigonid forces. With him died the long tradition of Attidography; never again was Athens' history and lore the recipient of such single-minded investigation and glorification (Jacoby 1949). Sparta had lost one king and some of his followers, but little else. A generation later it would produce a new group ready to make yet another run at revival. Athenians lost their independence. Gonatas installed a governor and garrison at Athens, and occupied the various forts of Attika (Habicht 1997: 146). Athenians' will to power was so shattered that Gonatas could loosen his grip after only a few years (Paus. 3.6.6). Moreover, when the Antigonids' opponents liberated Athens in 229 by buying out Attika's remaining Antigonid garrisons, the Athenians responded by adopting a policy of strict neutrality (Habicht 1997: 173–8).

Antigonos Gonatas' victory in the Chremonidean War was not entirely without cost to him. It was probably no accident that one major mainland coalition was conspicuous by its absence from the (admittedly scanty) historical record for Gonatas' struggles both with Pyrrhos and also with the Spartan–Athenian alliance: the Aitolians, and their Boiotian and Phokian friends. Aitolians, of course, probably had little love for Areus after his antics of the late 280s (section 2 above). But their experience with Gonatas' father in the early 280s had been even less pleasant, and could have been disastrous had not Pyrrhos come to their rescue (Lefèvre 1998b). Further, when Gonatas tried to assure a friendly regime in Elis in the aftermath of Pyrrhos' death, Aitolians played no small part in helping their old friends to thwart him (Gómez Espelosín 1991; Scholten 1990). Yet neither do Aitolians (nor their allies) seem to have played an active role in support of Pyrrhos' last campaign. Evidently some Aitolians were hesitant to boost further the fortunes even of an old friend and benefactor (Scholten 2000: 49–51). Inaction was, of course, hardly unprecedented Aitolian communal behaviour (Scholten 2000: 13–25). And in the aftermath of Kallion it would not be surprising had many Aitolian leaders and their followers preferred to stay home and tend to their own troubles rather than sallying forth again to seek new ones.

Other developments during the same years, however, suggest that not all Aitolians were eager to melt back into the hills. Inscriptions at Delphi recording the activities of the Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia* reveal a new member-*ethnos* in the early 270s: the Aitolians (*CID* 4.12). Whatever had been the relationship between these two communities previously (Arnusch 2000), in the wake of the Gauls the legitimacy of the Aitolians' control over Apollo's oracle was less easily questioned. Lest any visitor

forget their sacrifices, and particularly the suffering of Kallion, the Aitolian community (and individual Aitolians) bedecked the sanctuary with memorials to their heroism (Reinach 1911; Jacquemin 1985; Scholten 2000: 37–45).

More significantly, the *ethnos* also seems to have resorted to a tactic it had employed episodically in the past: territorial expansion. The same Amphiktyonic inscriptions that record the Aitolians' acquisition of their first seats at the Delphic–Anthelic table also seem to reveal subsequent increases in the size of the Aitolian delegation. By the conclusion of the Chremonidean War, six or seven Aitolian delegates were voting at council meetings (*CID* 4.38, 4.43). At the same time, some traditional delegations were not doing so: Dolopians, Ainianes, Metropolitan Dorians, East Lokrians (Scholten 2000: 240–9). The obvious inference is that the Aitolians' new votes were those of these smaller *ethné*.

Less clear is the process by which these switches occurred. Again, one explanation seems obvious: the Aitolians' simply seized the votes, in order to convert the council into an instrument of Aitolian propaganda. Yet, if such was their goal, the Aitolians pursued it at a surprisingly dilatory rate: it is not until the later 240s that Aitolians clearly use the Amphiktyonic council to bolster their own agendas, and not until the 230s that Aitolians have an absolute majority of Amphiktyonic votes. Epigraphic evidence from Thermon suggests an alternative explanation. They document the fitful but steadily growing election of individuals from many of the effected *ethné* to the executive board of the Aitolian association. The Aitolians may not, therefore, have brazenly occupied these neighbouring lands, but rather absorbed them, through extension to the residents of these territories of full rights in the Aitolian political community. The change in the ethnic identification of the Amphiktyonic votes controlled by these lands was, in this scenario, simply a reflection of the acquisition of an additional political identity, of membership in a Greater Aitolia.

Self-redefinition is a constant feature of human history, and the ancient Greeks were skilled practitioners of the art. For Aitolians, the experience of 279/8, to say nothing of the turmoil surrounding the final struggle of Pyrrhos and Gonatas, provides a reasonable context for a reconsideration of the human boundaries of their political identity, particularly when an expansion of their conceptual horizons could solidify the loyalty of neighbours whose lands could act as a buffer against the outside for the communities of the old *ethnos*. New adherents too could benefit. Membership in Greater Aitolia not only freed neighbouring *ethné* from the age-old threat of Aitolian raiding, it also offered protection against the perhaps more frightening prospect of a resurgent, Antigonid Macedonia. Dolopians, Dorians of the Metropolis, Lokrians east and west, may all in fact have sought admission to the Aitolians' polity (Scholten 2000: 45–70).

Nor was the Aitolian *ethnos* the only member state of the Delphic–Anthelic *Amphiktyonia* engaged in such vote swapping during these years. Documents dating to the later 270s and 260s show first the Boiotian and then the Phokian delegations growing from two to three, and then back to two votes, in short succession, while the single vote of the East Lokrian *ethnos* disappears, reappears, and then re-disappears. At the end of the chain, the Aitolian delegation rises by one (Lefèvre 1995: 169–80; Scholten 2000: 245–6). It looks as though two age-old rivals within the Amphiktyonic coalition got into a tussle about territory, and not necessarily with the approval of the object of their contention. The Aitolians apparently settled the issue by bringing

the communities of Epiknemedian Lokris into Greater Aitolia, along with the pass at Thermopylai which lay within these lands (Scholten 2000: 68–70).

This seeming instability within their own alliance would certainly help to explain the Aitolians' abstention from the Chremonidean War. For Gonatas, at least, keeping the Aitolian community (and its military and strategic resources) on the sideline was perhaps an acceptable outcome. Indeed he may have encouraged it by declining to contest Aitolian influence at Delphi, and the creeping growth of Greater Aitolia (Errington 1990: 170; Knoepfler 1995: 156; but Hammond and Walbank 1988: 289). Whether he connived at the Boiotian–Phokian rivalry is unknowable at present, but certainly he would have been glad at least to keep them out of action, as much as their Aitolian allies.

If Antigonos hoped that this policy might win the Aitolians and their associates to his side, he was probably disappointed. True, the admittedly slim record of Alexander's II's foray into Macedonia offers no sign that the Molossian received any help from his once and future allies. But when Alexander was himself, in turn, driven from his realm by a Macedonian counter-attack (Just. 26.2.11–12), Aitolians undoubtedly offered Alexander comfort and support for his own return to power. Moreover, the period of Gonatas' triumph also witnessed a much belated Amphiktyonic recognition of the Lagid *Prolemaieia* festival. An attempt to curry favour with Philadelphos in the face of Antigonos' crushing of Ptolemy's erstwhile allies? Another and less ambiguously self-defensive action probably also belongs to these years: an alliance between the Aitolians and their long-time nemesis to the west, the *ethnos* of the Akarnanians (IG 9 1².1, 3). The terms of the treaty hint at a larger coalition of the polities of western Greece, from Olympia (Elis) in the south to Dodona (Molossis) in the north (Scholten 2000: 77–83; cf. Grainger 1995a: 328).

The Chremonidean War thus left the Greek mainland in something of a cold peace. Gonatas was clearly the dominant player, with the resources of Macedonia and Thessaly at his disposal, while two of the three greatest traditional powers of the south, Athens and Sparta, were broken or neutralized. The network of bases and friendly regimes by which Antigonos had choked off the recent threat was intact, and even enhanced. The third older power, Thebes and the Boiotian *ethnos*, was allied with the greatest potential threat to Gonatas' position, the Aitolian *koinon*, but was increasingly subordinate to its erstwhile protégés. And the wandering of the East Lokrian Amphiktyonic vote (to say nothing of the anomaly of the Akarnanian alliance) indicates that there were tensions within the Aitolian alliance that Gonatas could exploit, if need be.

5 The Emergence of Achaia

By about 255 Gonatas felt secure enough to lift his foot a bit from the neck of the Athenians (Paus. 3.6.6; Habicht 1997: 152). Victory at the naval battle of Kos may have added to his confidence. These same years, however, may also have seen actual fracturing within the Aitolian coalition. Boiotian and Phokian attendance at Amphiktyonic gatherings is sporadic across the 250s, and these same years seem the best location for an Aitolian–Epeirote agreement to partition Akarnania (Scholten 2000: 83–91). If Antigonos had any thoughts of trying to exploit the Aitolians' preoccupations, however, another pair of interrelated events late in the decade quelled them.

The first was the emergence at Sikyon in the northeast Peloponnese of an ambitious and energetic young leader: Aratos, son of an assassinated tyrant of the city. In 251 Aratos brought an end to more than a decade of tumult there by driving out the latest tyrant, recalling Sikyon's many exiles, and then aligning his *polis* with the Achaian *ethnos* to the west (Plut. *Arat.* 2–9). In preceding years the latter had reacquired all of its traditional member-communities; Doric Sikyon, however, had never been among them. Whether the parties to this new breach of old ethnic boundaries were acting under the influence of their Aitolian neighbours across the gulf or were simply harking back to Achaian actions of the early fourth century, the addition of Sikyon immediately raised Greater Achaia to a prominent power in the Peloponnese and, potentially, beyond (Urban 1979: 9–37; Walbank 1984a: 243–6). There was a problem, however: what sort of relationship did the members of this association want with the Antigonids? It seems clear that the communities of the old Achaian *ethnos* had expelled many an Antigonid garrison or Antigonid-friendly regime in the process of reconstructing their political community after 281 (Walbank 1957: 233–4). But Sikyon's recent leadership, Aratos' father included, had had a much warmer relationship with Gonatas.

This potential source of internal tension was to be resolved by a second development. Antigonos governed his holdings in southern Greece through a viceroy, who handled the bases at Chalkis, Piraeus and Corinth. By the later 250s Gonatas' half-brother, Krateros, had been succeeded in this post by his own son, Alexander. At some point, but probably before Aratos' coup, Alexander rebelled against Gonatas (Orsi 1987; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 296–303). For Achaians, Alexander's action was a godsend, and they quickly threw their support to him. Aratos and the Sikyonians then had to change their allegiance (Plut. *Arat.* 18; Trogus *Prok.* 26; Urban 1979: 38–45).

The loss of his bastions at Corinth and Chalkis was a severe blow to Gonatas' carefully constructed control mechanism in the southern mainland, although with garrisons in Attika and friends such as Aristomachos at Argos he still retained enough resources to contain his nephew (*SIG*³ 454, *ISE* 1.23). It is probably no coincidence that in the following years Aratos and the Achaians convinced the Boiotians to break from the Aitolian coalition. A failed Aitolian coup at Sikyon just prior to Aratos' successful one certainly gave this *nouveau* Achaian reason to acquire his adoptive *ethnos*' old animosity towards Aitolians (Polyb. 20.4–5; Plut. *Arat.* 4, 16).

The attempt against Sikyon in fact signals the emergence in these same years of a new generation of Aitolian leaders who were ready and willing to exploit more fully their polity's expanding power and influence. A less belligerent move in the same direction was the Aitolians' decision, probably in the late 250s, to reorganize a local festival they had founded in commemoration of the deliverance of Delphi into a Panhellenic affair intended to equal the greatest such traditional gatherings (*SIG*³ 408; Nachtergaele 1977: 209–390; Elwyn 1990; Champion 1995; Scholten 2000: 237–8). It is easy to imagine that this development might have symbolized to uneasy Boiotians the final reversal of the power dynamic in their century-old relationship with the Aitolians, and thus opened them to Achaian approaches. It must also be noted, however, that the Boiotian alliance with his own Achaian allies opened for Alexander an overland connection between his otherwise isolated bases at Chalkis and

Corinth. It therefore seems reasonable to guess that Alexander was somehow involved in the Achaian–Boiotian alliance (Scholten 2000: 85–8).

Yet, while probably a greater threat to Gonatas' position than the Chremonidean uprising, Alexander's revolt brought no direct long-term consequence. Greater Aitolia played the part of ally, whether officially or as mere enemies of enemies, crushing the Boiotians in 245 at Chaironeia (Scholten 2000: 93, 123–7). The Boiotians then returned to the Aitolian fold. More importantly, at about this same time Alexander himself died, leaving his rump kingdom to his widow Nikaia. By 243 Gonatas was able to trick her into surrendering to him the keys to Acrocorinth (as well as Chalkis?), thereby re-establishing the dominant position he had held in the later 260s and 250s (Plut. *Arat.* 17; Polyæn. 6.5; Picard 1979: 274–8).

Tyche, however, had one more reversal to inflict upon the ageing Antigonos. In 243, during his second term as governor-general (*strategos*) of Greater Achaia, the still-young Aratos achieved his most famous exploit: the seizure of Acrocorinth by a daring night assault. In its immediate aftermath, the Corinthians followed their Sikyonian neighbours across the ethnic divide and into Achaian-ness (Polyb. 2.43.4–6; Plut. *Arat.* 18–24; Polyæn. 4.3.6; Urban 1979: 48–53). Greater Achaia thereby raised its importance in Greek politics by yet another order of magnitude. Furthermore, soon afterwards the Achaians secured an alliance with the Spartans, reviving (yet again) under a new, reformist Eurypontid king: Agis IV (Plut. *Arat.* 31, *Agis* 13).

These final indignities tempt us to conclude that, at the time of his death (early 239?: Ehrhardt 1975: 140), Antigonos II Gonatas left to his son, Demetrios II, a regime in decline. Once again, however, some perspective is needed. As far as concerns Aratos, the Achaians and the Spartans, it is important to note that in 241 they were unwilling (or unable?) to confront a relatively small Aitolian raiding party as it crossed the isthmus into the Peloponnese. Aratos eventually eliminated this band, but only after sending Agis and his Spartans home out of fear for their progressive agenda, and as the Aitolians were in the process of sacking the important eastern Achaian settlement at Pellene (Plut. *Arat.* 31–2, *Agis* 14–15; Scholten 2000: 123–7). Furthermore, whatever the nature of his relationship with the Aitolians, Antigonos certainly bequeathed to Demetrios a healthy string of client regimes in key Peloponnesian *poleis* such as Argos and Megalopolis. More importantly, however, and from a broader perspective, any troubles Gonatas left to his son were in the south. There is no hint of upheaval in Thessaly after the late 270s, and with the exception of the two brief Epeirote forays Macedonia itself seems to have enjoyed a period of tranquillity equal to that of the halcyon days of Philip II and Alexander III. For a Macedonian monarch of any era, that was a remarkable accomplishment (Will 1979: 338–43).

6 Demetrios II (“The Aitolian?”)

If the realm which Antigonos II Gonatas bequeathed to his son, Demetrios II, was secure and healthy, that which Demetrios left to his young son Philip V a decade later was anything but. Our historical tradition for third-century Greece is always spotty, at best, but it becomes particularly thin for Demetrios' reign. What does seem clear is that Demetrios spent much of his kingship battling an unusual southern alliance, and

ended it – suddenly – while fighting a new wave of invasions from Macedonia's Illyrian neighbours (Ehrhardt 1975: 198–223).

What was unusual about Demetrios' southern opponents was not only their identity – those age-old adversaries, the Aitolians and the Achaians – but the nature of their politics. For the first time, resistance to Macedonian domination over southern Greece was not being led by a coalition of independent *poleis*, but rather by an alliance of regional states, and a close one, at that (Scholten 2000: 139–44). Furthermore, Demetrios may have prompted this coalition of two of the largest Greek *koina* by his own dealings with another such entity: the Epeirote state. Our sources indicate that, after recovering his throne in the late 260s, Alexander II had continued his family tradition of friendship with the Aitolian state. Indeed, as noted above, at some point in the 250s or, perhaps, early 240s Alexander II had joined the Aitolians in partitioning Akarnania. According to Justin the assertiveness implicit in the Aitolians' participation in this pact led to the troubles of the 230s (28.1.1). When Alexander died, probably in the late 240s, his widow Olympias came to fear the growing power and ambitions of Aitolians, individually and collectively. Accordingly, she abandoned the Aiakid–Antigonid rivalry and instead offered her daughter to Demetrios in marriage; Demetrios accepted. It was, most likely, in reaction to this turn of events that Aitolian–Achaian relations began to warm, leading to friendship and then alliance. By spring 238 the Aitolians and Achaians, together with the Boiotian *koinon*, were at war with the Macedonian–Epeirote axis that also included the Thessalian *ethnos* (Plut. *Arat.* 33; Polyb. 2.44; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 317–23; Scholten 2000: 132–9).

At least during its early course, this conflict was no particular disaster for Demetrios. If he, rather than his grandfather, is the Demetrios nicknamed 'Aitolikos' mentioned by Strabo (10.2.4), then Gonatas' son in fact raided the south Aitolian coastal plain of Aiolis, destroying the venerable settlement at Pleuron in the process (Ehrhardt 1978). Moreover, by 235, if not before, Demetrios seems to have struck at the Aitolians' Achilles' heel, boldly marching into Boiotia. Once again, enough Boiotians were conflicted about Aitolian power that the region defected to Demetrios (Scholten 2000: 153–7). Furthermore, at some point one of Demetrios' generals inflicted a serious defeat upon Achaian forces in the Peloponnese (Plut. *Arat.* 34).

If Demetrios is indeed 'Aitolikos', it is also possible that this nickname was no compliment. For while he was pressuring his enemies' weak spots, the Achaian–Aitolian alliance was pushing back, and with greater effect the longer the war continued. Already by 235, Aratos and his Peloponnesian cohorts convinced one of Demetrios' most important Peloponnesian supporters, the tyrant Lydiades of Megalopolis, to defect. Other Arkadian communities and regimes followed Lydiades' lead into Greater Achaia. By the late 230s, Antigonid influence in the Peloponnese had essentially evaporated (Urban 1979: 88–96; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 329–31; Scholten 2000: 157–62).

More seriously, these same years saw similar developments along the western, southern and northern frontiers of Macedonia itself. In Epeiros, fate (aided, in all likelihood, by Aitolian pressure) led to the extinction of the Aiakid dynasty. Those members who did not succumb to nature were exterminated by rebellions in the capital, Ambrakia. That southern region, along with the adjoining land of the Amphilochians, then became part of Greater Aitolia. The more northerly and westerly

portions of Epeiros reconstituted themselves as a democratic regional state, the *koinon* of the Epeirotes, with its central site at Phoinike in Chaonia (Cabanès 1976: 97–100, 198–200).

The allegiance of this new state, however, remained very much in play due to developments further up the Adriatic coastline. There, among the Illyrian population, new regional coalitions and leadership were emerging and putting pressure on neighbouring communities. Eventually their activities would lead to the first of the great Roman military interventions in eastern Mediterranean matters, the First Illyrian War of 229. Before then, however, Demetrios was able to transform the westernmost of these Illyrian groups, led by Agron, from a threat into an ally. Most famously, in 231 he arranged for an Illyrian force to sail to the relief of Medeon in Akarnania, which Aitolian forces had under siege. In the following year, Agron's widow independently turned the attention of her followers to the Epeirote *koinon*. In response to an Epeirote appeal, an Aitolian–Achaian relief force stopped the Illyrians, but the Epeirotes nonetheless opted to sign a pact with their attackers (as well as independent Akarnania) to oppose the Achaian–Aitolian coalition. Finally, in spring 229, yet another Illyrian force set out, this time against Epidamnus, Apollonia and Kerkyra. The Aitolian–Achaian alliance once again demonstrated remarkable internal cohesion and organizational skill in responding to this renewed threat, but failed to stop it at a naval battle off the Pachoi islands. In the end, Epeiros remained hostile, but also weakened (Hammond and Walbank 1988: 332–5; Scholten 2000: 145–53).

Demetrios' greater failures, however, occurred simultaneously, along the northern and southern frontiers of the heartland of his realm. To the south, it appears that Aitolians made concerted and at least partially successful efforts to revive old anti-Macedonian feelings in Thessaly. Amphiktyonic documents indicate that by the late 230s the Aitolians were seating at least 11 delegates at the Delphic–Anthellic council. According to the interpretative approach adopted above, these votes reflect the addition of further Amphiktyonic lands to Greater Aitolia, most likely the remaining small *ethnê* of east central Greece, followed by the western portion of Phthiotic Achaia (Scholten 2000: 250–1). A more direct danger to Macedonia, however, arose in the later 230s in the form of a resurgent Dardanian kingdom. Demetrios' preoccupation with this threat may, in fact, have forced him to buy Agron's assistance, and prompted opportunistic action by his opponents to the south. Worse, his campaign against the Dardanians proved to be Demetrios' swan song, and a disastrous one at that. Whether or not Demetrios actually died in the course of being routed by the Dardanians, the fact remains that by early 229 Macedonia's army had been shattered, and its king was dead (Polyb. 2.44). As Demetrios' son, Philip V, was not even ten years old (Tarn 1940), the Macedonian *ethnos* was again effectively leaderless. The situation that Demetrios II left was thus as precarious as that of 280/79, or 360/59 (Hammond and Walbank 1988: 335–6; Errington 1990: 173–5).

To be fair to Demetrios, he had more than his unfair share of bad fortune. His opponents to the south, the Achaian and Aitolian *koina*, had blazed new trails in mainland Greek political thinking and behaviour by the remarkable degree of co-operation and co-ordination that they achieved. It is typical of their performance against Demetrios, and their potential as a counterweight against Macedonia, that at the same time they were sallying forth against an Illyrian fleet, Aitolians and Achaians

also moved aggressively to exploit the Macedonian king's death. In the Peloponnese, the tyranny at Argos finally gave way and joined its *polis* into Greater Achaia. Aratos also turned his people's attention eastward, bringing Megara and Aigina into their association, and brokering the buyout of the Antigonid garrisons in Attika. Athenian gratitude, however, did not extend to joining the Achaian association (Plut. *Arat.* 34; Paus. 2.8.6; Urban 1979: 63–70; Habicht 1997: 173–6). Aitolians seem to have scored coups whose potential was even greater. In Boiotia, at the very least pro-Antigonids lost their recent ascendancy. More importantly, significant portions of Thessaly openly rebelled against Macedonian control, and may even have joined the Aitolian association (Scholten 2000: 165–70).

7 The Kleomenian Crisis (229–222)

As in the other major crises noted above, however, so too in this one the Macedonian *ethnos* found an extraordinary leader to turn the tide. Antigonos III 'Doson' was Demetrios II's cousin; having survived the debacle of the assassination of his father, he had achieved sufficient stature in Macedonia to be designated guardian of Philip and commander of Macedonian forces (Ehrhardt 1975: 224–40; le Bohec 1993). His performance fully justified his peers' judgement. After rallying the *ethnos* to drive back the Dardanian threat, Doson then aimed a bold stroke, not at the Thessalian rebels, but rather at their Aitolian sponsors. Most likely moving from Chalkis, Doson led an army through east-central Greece, detaching Opous from Boiotia (as punishment for fecklessness? Scholten 2000: 259–60), 'liberating' Phokis from Aitolian domination, sacking Kytinion in Doris, and trapping an emergency Aitolian levy near Delphi. The revolt in Thessaly collapsed along with Aitolian resistance. By spring 227 Doson was 'king' in his own right, and secure enough to embark on a venture to Karia. He returned after only one campaign season, however, perhaps because events in southern Greece had taken an unexpectedly promising turn (Bousquet 1988; Hammond and Walbank 1988: 337–45; Walbank 1989).

The Spartans had stayed out of Macedon's war with the Achaian–Aitolian alliance, but can hardly have been disinterested in its later course. For while the additions of Megalopolis and Argos to Greater Achaia lessened the danger to Lakonia from the hated Macedonians, they also threatened to transform the Achaian association itself into an even greater nightmare: a Peloponnesian regional state dominated by Sparta's traditional enemies. The prospect of such a turn of events may have played some part in the Spartan alliance with the Achaians in the late 240s, and a contemporaneous attempt by Agis IV to address the stark socio-economic inequities at Sparta that crippled her ability to defend herself (Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 38–46). Aratos' fear of that programme's regional potential, both political and social, led to him to snub Agis, thus opening the door for the powers that were in Sparta to eliminate Agis and suppress his supporters (Plut. *Agis* 13–16; *Arat.* 31–2). Yet the ability of a massive Aitolian raid (launched on the convenient pretext of aiding Agis' party?) to plunder Lakonia soon afterwards must have brought home to all Sparta's pathetic weakness (Polyb. 4.34.9; 9.34.9; Plut. *Cleom.* 10; 18; Scholten 2000: 264–8). Thus in 229, while Aitolians and Achaians were busy fending off Illyrians and courting the Macedon's allies, the Agiad Kleomenes III led an army out of Lakonia and into eastern Arkadia, perhaps not so much out of delusions of lost grandeur as of fear of

encirclement (Polyb. 2.46.2–3, 57.1–2; Plut. *Cleom.* 5, 14; Walbank 1984b: 456; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 46–50).

The objects of Kleomenes' first campaign, Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenos and Kaphyai, were probably carefully chosen. At that time these *poleis* were not part of Greater Achaia, but rather in some sort of alliance with Greater Aitolia (Polyb. 2.46.2). Aitolia had long had interests in the western Peloponnese centred on Elis, but these were eastern Arkadian communities which had only come to the Aitolians to avoid being Achaian, most likely because their long-time adversaries within Arkadia, the Megalopolitans, were exercising growing influence within Greater Achaia (Will 1979: 371–4). Thus, Kleomenes' attack was not random, but aimed at a political fault-line – both within Greater Achaia, and also between the Aitolian and Achaian associations. It succeeded on both scores, perhaps even better than some in Sparta would have wished. Achaians faulted Aitolians for Sparta's acquisition of eastern Arkadia, Aitolian preoccupations in 229 notwithstanding, and the productive (and promising) union between the two *koine* began to deteriorate. Achaians did not help matters by meddling in the following years in Elis and other areas of Aitolian interest in the western Peloponnese (Scholten 2000: 186) But it is just as clear that the members of the Achaian association were equally at odds with each other over what to do about Sparta. Aratos seems to have tried to avoid open war, while others such as Lydiades of Megalopolis favoured a more aggressive approach.

Yet the thinking in Sparta was no more unified. Indeed, the *status quo* group there began to fear the prestige Kleomenes was accruing by his success. Kleomenes, for his part, was preparing to force Spartans to grasp its opportunity. Late in 227, having left Sparta's citizen army on manoeuvres, Kleomenes with the assistance of mercenaries carried out a purge in Sparta that drove away 80 or so of the wealthiest residents of Lakonia (Plut. *Cleom.* 7–11). The connection to Agis IV's early reform programme of what Kleomenes did next, as well as his overall goal, is much debated. What seems clear is that land was confiscated, and then distributed to a Spartiate population whose ranks had swelled to near 5000 by the enrolment of select resident aliens (*metoikoi*) and tributary Lakonians (*perioikoi*). These men were to resume the ancient Spartan way of life, and their sons were enrolled in a revived *agoge*. While this programme was carried out under the guise of returning to the ancestral, 'Lykourgan' constitution, at least one facet suggests a less idealistic agenda: the army of this new Sparta was to fight, not as hoplites, but as Macedonian-style phalangites (Will 1979: 374–5; Walbank 1984: 458–9; Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 50–3; Erskine 1990: 123–49)

Freed in the same process from oversight by traditional bodies such as the board of ephors or the council of elders (*gerousia*), Kleomenes proceeded in the next two years (226–225) to fracture the Achaian association (Plut. *Arat.* 39; *Cleom.* 12–16; Polyb. 2.51–2). Greater Achaia's disintegration is certainly attributable, on some level, to Aratos' singlemindedly rapid expansion of his *koinon*, a policy which stands in contrast to Greater Aitolia's more fitful but durable growth. He may well deserve less blame (or credit) for what ensued. For Kleomenes, too, had been in too great a hurry. Already in late 227, Megalopolitans began to approach their old Macedonian masters for relief against the even more hated Lakedaimonians. Our sources see Aratos' hand behind this appeal and subsequent ones; it is just as likely, however, to reflect the disintegration of Achaian unity. Certainly, the end point of this tiger-ride

cannot have appealed to Aratos, his family's history notwithstanding (Polyb. 2.47–51; Plut. *Arat.* 38.11–12; *Cleom.* 16; Gruen 1972; cf. Urban 1979: 117–58; Walbank 1984: 461–5).

In spring 224, with Argos having gone over to Sparta and Kleomenes besieging Acrocorinth and Sikyon, the Achaian assembly voted to ask Antigonos Doson to come to the rescue. His price: the surrender of Acrocorinth to his control and the transfer of Megara to the Boiotian association. The Achaians agreed; by autumn Argos had switched sides again, Kleomenes had withdrawn to Sparta, and Doson was at Corinth, with even bigger plans (Plut. *Arat.* 41–4; *Cleom.* 17–21; Polyb. 2.52–4). Following in the footsteps of Philip II and his own great-grandfather (and namesake), Antigonos organized yet another 'League of Corinth', although this third version is better known as the 'Hellenic Alliance' (Larsen 1968: 325–6; Walbank 1988: 345–53).

Like its predecessors, Doson's creation was clearly an instrument of Macedonian diplomacy, yet one equally designed to take account of the mainlanders' sensibilities. While its constitutional details are vague, it had the customary *syndrion* of allies, and a leader or *hegemon*: Doson, of course. Unlike previous Macedonian-sponsored alliances of Greek states, however, Doson's *symmachia* was not made up of *poleis*; rather, its constituents were all regional entities: the Achaians, Thessalians, Macedonians, Boiotians, Phokians, Akarnanians and Epeirotes (Walbank 1984b: 468–9). As we have seen, the coalitions of the war of Demetrios II had already anticipated this shift; Doson's alliance simply confirmed that the days of the *polis* as a primary agent in Hellenic military affairs were at an end. It is also important to keep in mind, however, that the powers of this new organization, and particularly of its *hegemon*, were limited. Decisions were taken by the syndrion, but even then were not binding on a member state unless ratified by that state's citizenry. While this provision might seem to be self-defeating, it in fact was quite ingenious. Doson and his successors thereby would be able to gain sanction for police actions without risking driving unenthusiastic allies into opposing arms.

In this first instance, not surprisingly, most allies were on board. When Doson and Kleomenes finally came face to face at Sellasia in 222, the Macedonian's army included contingents from Achaia, Akarnania, Boiotia and far off Epeiros (Polyb. 2.65). The core of his army, however, was Macedonian or mercenary, and its superb training prevailed: Kleomenes' phalangites were slaughtered, he himself fled (ultimately, to Alexandria, and a futile end: Polyb. 2.69.10–11, 5.35–9; Plut. *Cleom.* 29–37; Just. 28.4.9–12), and Doson became the first conqueror ever to enter Sparta. There, following the example of his uncle at Athens decades earlier, he installed a governor. Perhaps because he had ready at hand a body of supporters in Kleomenes' exiled opponents, Doson also left the Spartans a good deal of autonomy. Once again appealing to the 'Lykourgan' past, the ephorate was re-established; but, for the moment, no kings were installed. Nor is it clear whether Sparta joined the Hellenic alliance immediately. In fact, Doson's treatment was lenient, perhaps to maintain the Spartans as a counterweight to other Peloponnesian powers.

Just as likely, however, any mercy in Doson's clean-up after Sellasia was a matter of haste. For no sooner had he begun to settle matters in Sparta than messengers arrived announcing that Macedonia was awash once again with Illyrians. Doson therefore departed for the north, and upon arrival drove off the invaders. But, as in the case of

his cousin in 230/29, so too Doson fell ill during the campaign, and presently died (Polyb. 2.70, Plut. *Cleom.* 30; date of death: Walbank 1957: 290 vs. Walbank 1984b: 472).

Doson left the now-adolescent Philip a much stronger realm than had Demetrios. The homeland was secure, and its military as well-trained and formidable as it had been in memory. Thessaly was quiet; both the Aitolian and Achaian associations had been humbled, and their alliance shattered; Sparta's ability to make mischief in the southern mainland had been broken; the other major (and minor) regional states of Greece were united in a Macedonian-led mutual defence organization centred at Corinth, whose acropolis Antigoniid troops once again held. Only Athens and Attika remained beyond Doson's grasp, and their population had forsworn further adventures on behalf of ideals and slogans. Unfortunately for the tranquillity of the neighbourhood, the stability of Doson's settlement depended upon the reputation he had achieved across his brief reign. That was one item that he could not pass along to his stepson, Philip V.

8 A Theoretical Retrospective

The preceding narrative, focused on macropolitical events, leaves the impression that the southern Balkans of the third century BC were the scene of continuous bloodletting and destruction. Yet a different focus would bring other, more heartening developments into the foreground. Were we to ask our time-travelling theoreticians to compare the situation at Doson's death to that they had found in 280, they would undoubtedly note a remarkable consensus among at least the Greek communities of this area. Across these same years, the vast majority seem to have come to the conclusion that their interests were best served by membership in a regional political community. The two most notable exceptions, Sparta and Athens, are also notable for the unusually large size of their territory. Part of their disinterest/resistance may stem from the fact that each already *was* a regional state. The case for Athens is all the stronger as one of the fundamental characteristics of the third-century regional states was a common citizenship shared by all citizens of member-communities (*sympoliteia*). The demesmen of Attika had adopted such a regional identity and loyalty already by the end of the sixth century BC, if not earlier.

Elsewhere, however, existing regional identities and entities took on greater salience and substance. Central institutions and offices began to proliferate, and the constitutional prerogatives of the various levels of governance – the details of *sympoliteia* – were worked out. These details varied, of course: the powers and nature of the Aitolian assembly, council and executive differed from those of the Achaian union. But they – and other sympolities – shared a common set of institutions. Even the old Macedonian *ethnos* was part of this general trend. The precise nature of the Macedonian monarchy remains a matter of heated debate among scholars, as does the relationship of that executive to other levels of governance. But recent work has made it clear that, by the later portion of the third century at the latest, Macedonians had elaborated their local and intermediate layers of authority and – like their neighbours to the south – were involved in an ongoing process of refining the rules of their *sympoliteia*. The fact that their chief executive office was held for life and was hereditary, rather than elected annually and not open to consecutive terms by a single

individual (as was true for the Achaian and Aitolian *koina*) meant that capable and ambitious occupants could enhance its status and power within the Macedonian *koinon*, and relative to that of the *strategoi* in more republican regional states (Hatzopoulos 1996: 487–96). The Epeirote peoples reacted against that concentration of powers by replacing their monarchic executive – the Aiakid dynasty – in the 230s (Larsen 1968: 279; does the case of Sosthenes, *strategos* in Macedonia during the Gallic incursions, represent a similar movement, albeit one aborted by the arrival of Antigonos Gonatas? Cf. Hammond and Walbank 1988: 254). Yet all alike remained regional states, nonetheless (Cabanes 1993a). This rough uniformity would hardly surprise our observers, who have long since noted the tendency of polities to adopt and adapt the characteristics of their regional peers (Renfrew 1986). The Epeirote evolution also reflects the general third-century trend toward more thoroughly sympolitical regional states.

As inveterate model-makers, our consultants would also inevitably test the question of ‘What If?’ They would hardly be pathbreakers here: mainland Greece’s likely future development if Romans had never arrived is a venerable topic. More hopeful analyses might note the trajectory of the third century, and imagine yet a fourth level of identity and governance emerging in subsequent decades and centuries, perhaps even a United States of Greece. There are signs that political loyalties and boundaries were indeed becoming increasingly complex, malleable and situational in this area and era: the Akarnanian–Aitolian isopoliteia (*IG* 9 1².1.3), or the embassy to Xanthos of 206/5, in which the participants present themselves by local, area and regional identities, at once Kytiniotes, Metropolitan Dorians, and Aitolians (Bousquet 1988). Cynics would point to the subsequent reversion of the Aitolian–Akarnanian relationship to its traditional violence as well as that of the Achaian–Aitolian alliance of the 230s, or to the turmoil experienced by the Achaian union when it attempted to absorb the communities of Arkadia.

These conflicts and rivalries, which continued after the arrival of the Romans, at the very least suggest that in the late third century the peoples of the southern Balkans were still some way from that next step, a union of the unions, that could have produced a superstate capable of keeping the area out from under the looming shadow of the ‘Clouds arising in the West’ (Polyb. 5.104). Yet it is also true that many of the regional identities and institutions that emerged in the third century continued to thrive for centuries after their political eclipse by Rome. Certainly, one can only agree with F. W. Walbank’s view that their development reflects ‘the continuing ability of the Greeks to respond to a new political challenge with new solutions’ (1992: 157).

FURTHER READING

Ancient literary sources (and other documents then known) for nearly every matter discussed here may be found in Will 1979–82, along with sensible interpretations thereof. On the nature of Greek regional states, see Gschnitzer 1955, Giovaninni 1971; Walbank 1976–77; Hatzopoulos 1996: 487–96; Hall 1997. Works on specific regions and *poleis* are proliferating: for Achaia, also Rizakis 1991, 1995, 1998,

Harter-Uibopuu 1998, Ossana 1999, Dixon 2000; for Aitolia, Antonetti 1987, Ager 1989; Bakhuizen 1987, Bommeljé and Doorn 1991 (and volumes 2 and 3 of the series *Studia Aetolica* [Amsterdam, forthcoming]), Dietz et al. 1998, Pantos 1985, Papapostolou 1987–90, 1983–98, Pritchett 1991a; 1992; Themelis 1979, and D. Rousset's forthcoming publication of the inscriptions found by the French excavations at Kallion; for Akarnania, also Habicht 1957, Lang 1994, and forthcoming reports from recent work in and around Stratos (led by P. Funke, H-J. Gerhke, and L. Kolonas); for Arkadia, Jost 1985, Nielsen 1996, Nielsen and Roy 1999; for Boiotia, Feyel 1942, Étienne and Knoepfler 1976, Roesch 1982, Schachter 1981–86, Buck 1993, Nafissi 1995; for Doris, Rousset 1989, 1990; for eastern Lokris, Fossey 1990; for western Lokris, Lerat 1952; for Phokis, Fossey 1986, McInerney 2000; for Thessaly, Decourt 1990, Decourt et al. 1995; for Makedonia, Errington 1978, Buraselis 1982, plus the summaries of finds from ongoing excavations at Amphipolis, Dion, Pella, Vergina – and a myriad of other sites – in the annual *Archaeological Reports*; on Athens, in addition to the works of Habicht see also Frösén 1997, Dreyer 2000 (challenging); on Delphi and the Amphiktyonia, see also Flacelière 1937, Bousquet 1989, Sánchez 2001; on Sparta, Africa 1961, Oliva 1971, Marasco 1980. Up-to-date biographical studies of players in this chapter's events are in short supply. On Antigonos Gonatas, Gabbert 1997 (a bit slender, perhaps in reaction to the always overimaginative Tarn 1913); for Demetrios II, Ehrhardt 1975; on Doson, le Bohec 1993; on the women of the Makedonian court (neglected here), Carney 2000 (a *tour de force*); for Pyrrhos, Lévêque 1957; for Aratos, Walbank 1933. Finally, on Doson's Hellenic Alliance, Scherberich 2001.