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## THE AETOLIAN-ACHAEAN ALLIANCE OF *CA.* 238–220 B.C.*

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THE purpose of this article is largely to carry further than has been done the proof that the guilt and responsibility for the hostility between the Aetolians and the Achaeans in the Social War of 220–217 B.C. belongs more to the Achaeans than to the Aetolians. This argument is not entirely new. J. V. A. Fine in his article, "The Background of the Social War of 220–217 B.C.,"[1] emphasizes the provocative nature of the Achaean interference in the southwestern Peloponnese but does not go so far as I do in *Greek Federal States* in placing the responsibility for the breach between the two confederacies on the Achaeans. Another important article on the period is "Aratus and the Achaean Alliance with Macedon," *Historia*, XXI (1972), 609–25, by E. S. Gruen. It correctly emphasizes the influence of Megalopolis in the effort of the Achaeans to expand westward in the southern Peloponnese. In dealing with the appeal to Doson by the Megalopolitans, Gruen correctly points out that the proceedings were not secret (p. 611), but he seems to consider that the appeal was due to the Megalopolitans themselves and was not inspired by Aratus: he may possibly be right, though I am inclined to doubt it. The alliance between the two confederacies is mentioned (p. 611) but given no serious consideration. In my opinion Aratus is represented as almost too fanatically hostile to Macedon. After all, in 224 he chose Doson in preference to Cleomenes. While arguing for the desire of Aratus to get along with Sparta, Gruen seems to have made one actual mistake, namely the statement that in 220 Aratus "persuaded Philip to spare Sparta" (p. 615, n. 21). Polybius merely states (4. 24. 1–3) that it is unlikely that a boy of seventeen should be able to decide such a matter. Of those present, "Aratus is the one to whom we may most plausibly attribute the opinion delivered by the king." In other words, Polybius appears to be guessing, and is it likely that Aratus would recommend a policy favorable to those Spartans who were plotting with the Aetolians? Plutarch *Aratus* 48. 3, cited in the same note, has no bearing on the question.

The purpose of the present article is first to try to establish the guilt of the Achaeans more clearly by emphasizing that they sought the favor of Antigonus Doson shortly after he had inflicted a serious defeat on the Aetolians and that, according to the standards of the time, they had no justification for denying the Aetolian troops the right of passage

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1. *AJP*, LXI (1940), 129–65, an article on which I drew heavily in "The Aetolians and the Cleomenic War," my contribution to *Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan* (Ithaca, 1966).

through Achaean territory. The problem of *diodos* has not received the attention it deserves. Finally, an attempt will be made to determine the nature of the alliance between the two confederacies, though it may be impossible to determine its status after 229. In any case, the conclusions reached will imply criticism of Aratus and Polybius for distorting history, criticism greater than any yet published, so far as I know. Nevertheless, on the whole, my respect for Polybius as a historian is not reduced. As is well known, Polybius allows historians to stretch the truth a bit where their own countries are concerned. He himself has shown bias more extensively than is usually recognized. While passing judgment on him for this, we do well to remember that nothing would be harder for him than to admit that the Aetolians in some respects might have been superior to the Achaeans. It goes without saying that I have received much help from Professor F. W. Walbank, not only from his published works, but also from discussion in our letters. References to him by name alone are to his *Historical Commentary on Polybius*.

Since this article is in part a supplement to *Greek Federal States*, I shall not always cite the evidence when the subject is fully treated there. In the book I have made some effort to analyze the constitution of the Aetolians and particularly the relation of cities joined to them by *sympoliteia* or *isopoliteia*, terms not always used precisely by Polybius. Thus I maintain that the Arcadian cities said by him to be joined to the Aetolians by *sympoliteia* cannot have been full-fledged members of the Aetolian Confederacy as Polybius implies.

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that Greek political and cultural developments owed much to the fact that the country was divided into a mass of small states. Even the larger states were small. But if the smallness of the communities stimulated local development, it also caused endless conflict. It seems that the only Greek states that did not seek to dominate others were those that had no neighbor small enough or weak enough for them to bully.[2] To be sure, alongside the desire for one's own freedom and for domination over others, there was also from time to time, the evidence suggests, an effort at Panhellenic peace and co-operation, and it is startling at times to find old enemies co-operating apparently cordially in warfare against a common enemy. An excellent example is the battle of Salamis, in which Athenian, Aeginetan, and Corinthian ships fought side by side; yet all Greece was far from united in the operations of 480 and 479, and there was no shortage of clashes of interest even between the powers that fought at Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea. After over two centuries of failure to produce a peacefully united Greece, the co-operation of the late enemies, the Achaeans and Aetolians, about 240 B.C., is fully as startling as the co-operation of Athens and Aegina at Salamis. The plan adopted only a few years after the Achaeans had fought as allies of the Spartans against the Aetolians seems to have been to co-operate in putting an end to the Macedonian supremacy in Greece. Whether as part of the original plan or not, it soon developed into co-operation against other enemies and apparently into an effort to direct the affairs of Greece. The Aetolians extended their influence also beyond Greece to Greek communities on the Aegean Sea.[3] It was probably in part for the sake of com-

2. On this point, cf. my note, "Freedom and its Obstacles in Ancient Greece," *CP*, LVII (1962), 230–34.

3. On the difficult problems connected with Aetolian control of subject or allied states, I can only refer to the account in *Greek Federal States*, esp. pp. 202–12.

munication by sea with these states that the Aetolians put so much emphasis on the control of the west coast of the Peloponnese. The various states, both near and far, seem to have been given some feeling of being a part of the Aetolian state, and yet they were not regular members and the control of policy remained largely in the hands of the Aetolians themselves. Yet, though the Aetolians were not so piratical and tyrannical as pictured by their enemies, they were not angels. Probably no Greek state was in a worse state of subjection than Elis in the very period we are considering. Elis may well have been in theory an independent state, but in 219, when its general attempted to negotiate a treaty of peace with Philip V, the plan was vetoed by the Aetolians[4] and the Eleans in general were treated as subjects.

The Achaeans, on the other hand, at this period tended to make Achaeans out of all citizens of communities absorbed. This difference in approach to the extension of their power may have made cooperation a little difficult. Nevertheless, at one point they seemed on the way to constructing as successful an organization of Greece as any constructed by the Greeks themselves. This organization probably would have been unable to absorb Sparta, and it would have been somewhat dependent on subsidies from one of the Hellenistic monarchies, probably that of the Ptolemies, which in return would expect to engage mercenary troops in the country. Yet, in spite of the promising nature of the organization, it actually caused more suffering than good.

In fact there were probably sufferings and difficulties in Greece in this period as severe as at any time in its history. To illustrate, let us take a look at the fate of Mantinea and Orchomenus. In this period, Mantinea is first noticed in 240, when it arbitrated a case of the tyrant of Argos against the Achaeans, after one of the most flagrant peacetime actions of Aratus against the tyrant, and fined the Achaean Confederacy thirty minas.[5] A few years later, probably about 235,[6] the city joined the Achaean Confederacy. In all likelihood Mantinea, which does not seem to have been governed by a tyrant, joined voluntarily. To be sure, this was a period in which certain tyrants voluntarily gave up their power and brought their cities into the Confederacy, the most famous example being Lydiades of Megalopolis, who later served as general of the Achaean Confederacy for three years. Thus at this time the Mantineans apparently suffered no hardships. Nor did they when their city was transferred a couple of years later, along with Tegea and Orchomenus, to the Aetolian Confederacy.[7] This transfer was made at a time when the Achaeans and Aetolians were allies, and probably the purpose was to have the aid of the Aetolians in a possible defense of these cities against Macedonia and pro-Macedonian tyrants. In spite of the language of Polybius, the cities apparently were not full-fledged members of the Aetolian Confederacy but enjoyed certain privileges in it. Almost conclusive proof is the manner in which the Aetolians attached to themselves numerous non-Aetolian groups but kept the control of politics in their own hands.[8] In this respect the Aetolian was

4. Cf. *Gk. Fed. States*, pp. 342 f.

5. Plut. *Aratus* 25. 5, undoubtedly derived from the memoirs of Aratus.

6. The decree concerning the admission of Orchomenus (*SIG*$^3$, 490) implies that Megalopolis, which joined in 235, already was a member. Apparently a group of Arcadian cities joined about this time.

7. Polyb. 2. 57. 1 states that the transfer to the Aetolians was voluntary, apparently meaning on the part of both the Achaeans and Mantinea. It is something quite different when, in the same sentence, he implies that the Mantineans later also voluntarily turned their city over to Cleomenes.

8. Cf. *Gk. Fed. States*, pp. 206 f.

quite different from the Achaean Confederacy, in which all citizens of annexed communities became, in a sense, Achaeans—so much so that the control largely passed to Arcadians and Dorians.

Real trouble apparently began when Cleomenes in 229 took over Mantinea. Probably many or most of the citizens preferred the ties with Sparta to those with the Aetolian-Achaean combination; but those opposed to ties with Sparta may well have suffered in some way, though it is not known just how.[9] Polybius, of course, blames the Aetolians for not interceding, but Mantinea was so located that if either confederacy was to intervene, the Achaeans could have done so more easily than their allies. As a matter of fact, the Achaean leaders are reported to have considered the matter, but to have decided against going to war at the time and in favor of a policy of resisting Spartan aggression.[10] Apparently the pro-Spartan element in Mantinea was large, and Cleomenes seems to have secured its loyalty by the grant of Spartan citizenship. A couple of years later Aratus captured the city, he too using some sort of treachery or surprise attack. Nevertheless, he ordered the troops not to plunder and promised the Mantineans immunity as Achaean citizens. He may have thought that this measure would secure their allegiance. The pro-Achaean Mantineans were not so sanguine. Fearing civil strife, they sent an embassy to the Achaeans appealing for protection, and the Achaeans sent three hundred of their citizens chosen by lot and an additional two hundred mercenary soldiers. The language of Polybius in this connection may easily mislead modern readers. The sending of an embassy may suggest communication with a foreign power and thus imply that Mantinea was not considered a member of the Achaean Confederacy. However, the envoys from a member of a confederacy to the central government were called by the same title as envoys to foreign states. Moreover, the sending of an embassy suggests an official action on the part of the city. The pro-Spartan element probably did not openly oppose this action but was strong enough to inspire fear among the pro-Achaeans. The three hundred Achaeans left their homes and possessions and remained in Mantinea. Thus, even if they may not have lived in a fort or barracks, they were not settlers but practically a garrison aided by the two hundred mercenary soldiers. When Cleomenes in 226 recovered the city, the three hundred Achaeans were put to death, while the mercenary soldiers probably were allowed to depart.[11] Polybius places the blame for the atrocity on the Mantineans.

The Achaeans had their revenge on Mantinea in 223 when Antigonus Doson captured the city. At that time, Mantinea was looted and the free inhabitants sold into slavery, except that some leading men may have been executed or deported.[12] In any case, the old inhabitants were cleaned out so completely that Antigonus

9. Polyb. 2. 57. 1 implies that the Mantineans voluntarily went over to Cleomenes, but in 2. 46. 2 is found the expression *Κλεομένους πεπραξικοπηκότος* in connection with the acquisition of Tegea, Mantinea, and Orchomenus. This implies treachery or trickery, probably a surprise attack in which the attackers were admitted into the city by traitors.

10. Polyb. 2. 46. 4.

11. Polyb. 2. 57–58; Plut. *Cleom.* 14. 1, undoubtedly following Phylarchus, states that the Mantineans dismissed the guard of the Achaeans. Most likely the reference is to the mercenaries; cf. Walbank on Polyb. 2. 58. 4. Here it is best to follow the account of Polybius, which is undoubtedly based on the memoirs of Aratus. In *Gk. Fed. States*, p. 316, n. 2 (cf. p. 322, n. 2), I state that the three hundred Achaeans were "settlers rather than a garrison proper." Real settlers might have done more to secure loyalty than troops of occupation, but the statement of Polybius that, when they moved to the city, they abandoned their homes and possessions implies that they hardly were real settlers. Their homes were not in Mantinea.

12. Polyb. 2. 58. 12; Plut. *Aratus* 45. 6. For a discussion of the evidence, see *Gk. Fed. States*, p. 322, n. 2.

turned the site over to the Achaeans, who founded a new city there and called it Antigonea. Of the other Arcadian cities which had been Achaean and Aetolian and later were conquered by Cleomenes, Orchomenus too was plundered; but it was later garrisoned by the Macedonians. It was thus not added again to the Achaean Confederacy but became one of the Macedonian holdings in the Peloponnese.[13] Whether it was treated as harshly as Mantinea is not known. If we look at the more northerly city of Cynaetha, it, too, suffered. Thus the union of the eastern Arcadian cities with the Achaeans hardly marked the beginning of a period of peace and happiness. The fate and attitude of these cities seem far removed from the fate and attitude of Megalopolis.

And now at last the Aetolian-Achaean alliance. The exact date of the negotiating of the alliance is not known. It was negotiated by Aratus and the Aetolian leader Pantaleon and had as its chief purpose co-operation against Demetrius II of Macedonia, who reigned from 239 to 229. Hence the date of the treaty was probably 239 or soon after. Now as recently as 241 the Achaeans had been allied with the Spartans against the Aetolians. And at that time the Spartans under their king, Agis, and the Achaeans under Aratus had held the frontier of the Megarid against the Aetolians. Aratus, however, had argued that the Aetolians should be allowed to pass. The crops had been reaped, he said, and they could do little damage. Aratus' plan had been adopted. When the Aetolians were allowed to pass, they had captured Pellene, the most easterly of the old Achaean cities. Then, when the Aetolians were disorganized, Aratus had attacked and had inflicted a defeat upon them.[14] Even if the Aetolian losses were not so great as Aratus claimed, namely seven hundred, it is strange to find the two confederacies allied a couple of years later. But such sudden shifts in policies are not unique in ancient Greece.

At the time of the negotiating of the alliance, the Achaean Confederacy was just beginning to emerge from its old role of participation in policy and measures connected with the Corinthian Gulf and with western trade and colonization. Its old role naturally involved it in the conflicts between Athens and Sparta for control of the gulf. As far as expansion was concerned, the Achaean Confederacy had been more interested in extending its influence north of the gulf than south of the mountains that formed a natural boundary south of the Achaean shore districts. This interest is illustrated by the expedition of the Spartans under Agesilaus in 389 to co-operate with the Achaeans against the Acarnanians.[15]

The first step in extending Achaean power in the Peloponnese came when Aratus brought Sicyon into the Confederacy in 251 and began to work for further Achaean expansion there. The liberation of Sicyon from the tyrant who had murdered the father of Aratus was in the first instance purely a Sicyonian affair. But once it was accomplished, since so much of Greece was governed by monarchs supported by Antigonus Gonatas (monarchs called tyrants by their enemies), the choice probably lay between subjection to Antigonus and affiliation with the Achaeans. After the latter choice had been made, Aratus became a great advocate of further expansion in the Peloponnese.

13. Polyb. 4. 6. 5–6 emphasizes that the city was not turned over to the Achaeans but served as a Macedonian base in the middle of the Peloponnese. Plut. *Aratus* 45. 1 also mentions the plundering.

14. The chief source is Plut. *Aratus* 31–32, based on the memoirs of Aratus.

15. Xen. *Hell.* 4. 6–7.

His single most important act was the liberation of Corinth in 243, an act which made it almost impossible for the Macedonian king to maintain adequate contact with the "monarchs" in the Peloponnese and thus prepared the way for the dismissal or resignation of Peloponnesian tyrants and the adhesion of the cities to the Achaean Confederacy. As a result, it was possible for the Achaean Confederacy to become something of a Peloponnesian power and to rival the Aetolians in that respect.

It is something of a shock to find that, when the two confederacies formed their alliance, the Aetolians were more of a Peloponnesian power than the Achaeans. The latter, of course, controlled their own coastline, but they did not begin extending their influence further south to any extent before the liberation of Corinth. The admission of Sicyon to the Achaean Confederacy in 251 had begun the expansion, but only further east along the coast. Meanwhile the Aetolians controlled, or at least exercised influence over, the entire west coast of the Peloponnese. The best evidence is an invasion of Laconia as far as Cape Taenarum about 240 B.C. The invaders failed to capture Sparta but, according to Plutarch, carried off fifty thousand prisoners. No full account of the invasion has been preserved, but the brief references to it in the sources show that it was an event which made a great impression and was well remembered.[16] It is almost self-evident that the Aetolians must have advanced through Triphylia and by Phigalea and Messene, and in turn, that they must have controlled the west coast for some time. To this period, too, belongs a treaty of *isopoliteia* between Phigalea and Messene negotiated by the Aetolians.[17] Apparently Phigalea already was an ally of the Aetolians, while Messene was brought by the treaty into the Aetolian sphere of influence and was probably made an ally. At any rate, the Aetolians later claimed Messene as an ally, and this was the most likely time for the origin of the alliance. Certainly it would not be unnatural for the Messenians to ally themselves with a power striking at Sparta.

For the Aetolians to extend their influence to these cities, it was necessary to have good relations with Elis. Aetolian relations with Elis probably began in 267 or thereabouts.[18] Just what the relations were at the time of the expedition into Laconia it is impossible to say. My guess is that the Eleans took part in the invasion as willing allies. Later, though they were apparently free in theory, the Eleans were in practice much-abused subjects of the Aetolians. As a palliative for their domination of Elis, the Aetolians seem to have allowed the Eleans to control certain Arcadian cities. It is impossible to know how long the Eleans had held Psophis and Lasion in western Arcadia before Philip captured these cities in his winter campaign of 219–18, but presumably the Eleans' occupation was earlier than their wise refusal to take over Cynaetha, which the Aetolians seized in the late summer of 220 and offered to turn over to the Eleans before they ultimately destroyed it. By permitting the Eleans to exploit parts of Arcadia, the Aetolians compensated them

16. Polyb. 4. 34. 9, 9. 34. 9; Plut. *Cleom.* 18. On the question of date, I can add nothing to the brief statement in *Gk. Fed. States*, p. 307, n. 2.

17. *SIG*$^3$, 472. The approximate date is fixed by the fact that one of the Aetolian negotiators was one of the commanders of the expedition against Sparta.

18. Cf. B. Niese, *Geschichte der griechischen und makedonischen Staaten* (Gotha, 1893–1911), II, 227–29; E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, I (Nancy, 1966), 292 f.

in some measure for their own heavy exploitation of Elis itself and thus maintained a certain amount of good will.

At the time of their invasion of Laconia from the west, the Aetolians were also trying to invade the Peloponnese from the north, as is shown by the expedition of 241 (see p. 163). When Aratus by liberating Corinth brought on a state of war between Antigonus Gonatas and the Achaeans, the Aetolians apparently thought this an opportunity to secure control of most of Greece with the blessings or co-operation of Antigonus—a partnership something like the later partnership of the Achaeans with Antigonus Doson. Hence the reported alliance[19] is probably authentic. Then, after their failure at Pellene, the Aetolians shifted and allied themselves with the Achaeans.

It has already been noted that the alliance functioned at first as an alliance against Demetrius II of Macedonia. At this stage there may have been little cause for disagreement in connection with joint undertakings. The same is true of some of the other operations, including the famous naval battle of 229, in which the Aetolians and Achaeans were defeated by the Illyrians. But there must have been some understanding about spheres of influence. The Aetolians must have expected their interests in the western Peloponnese to be recognized and not infringed upon, while the Achaeans must have expected that the Aetolians would refrain from invading the Peloponnese from the northeast. That this limitation was observed by the Aetolians is not disproved (but rather corroborated) by the fact that, a few years after the formation of the alliance, the leading cities of eastern Arcadia were affiliated with the Aetolians, apparently with the full approval of the Achaeans. It was not this connection with Aetolia which caused trouble, but the later seizure of the cities by Cleomenes of Sparta. Of course, the prejudices of Aratus were such that his account and that of Polybius, which is derived from Aratus, obscure rather than clarify the situation.

In addition to the war against Demetrius, the two confederacies co-operated also in other undertakings and received joint appeals from other states. In 230, when the Epirotes were unable to hold their own against the Illyrians, they appealed to the two confederacies and the two came to their aid. Nevertheless, later in the year, the Epirotes entered into an alliance with the Illyrians against the Aetolians and Achaeans.[20] Both the appeal to the two confederacies and the later alliance against them indicate that the alliance was well known to other Greeks and apparently was considered the one Greek organization best able to help. It may seem strange to have Achaean troops operating in Epirus. Undoubtedly they were ferried across the Gulf of Corinth and proceeded north through Aetolian territory. The Epirote alliance with the Illyrians might be expected to discourage further adventures in the northeast. But the next year, acting on appeals from Corcyra and from the two Greek cities on the coast of Illyria, Epidamnus and Apollonia, the confederacies manned the ten decked ships of the Achaeans, the Aetolians helping to man them and serving on Achaean ships, thus indicating cordial co-operation. The result was the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Illyrians and their Acarnanian allies in which the elder Achaean statesman,

19. Mentioned briefly in Polyb. 2. 43. 10 and 45. 1, 9. 34. 6 and 38. 9.

20. Polyb. 2. 6.

Margos of Cerynea, lost his life.[21] Strange to say, these seem to be the only acts of co-operation between the two confederacies concerning which any account has been preserved, though Polybius (2. 46. 1) states that the Achaeans supported the Aetolians ungrudgingly in their war against Demetrius. But Polybius' statement raises puzzling questions about Achaean comportment at the time when the Aetolians invaded Thessaly and were expelled by Doson. Most likely the peace was negotiated by the Macedonians with both confederacies at the same time, but it is possible that the Achaeans took no part in the Aetolian invasion of Thessaly late in the reign of Demetrius and that they later gave no help against Doson. Even with the fragmentary state of the text of Polybius, it seems strange that the Aetolian defeat is mentioned neither there nor in Plutarch's *Aratus*. It certainly seems that Aratus and Polybius were not proud of Achaean action or lack of action at the time. The explanation is probably that the two confederacies did not have a treaty providing that they were to have the same friends and enemies. In addition to their co-operation in certain cases, each confederacy conducted some operations which were entirely its own. Apparently the Aetolians received no help from the Achaeans in their operations against the Acarnanians. Thus there is no hint in the account of Polybius (2. 2–3) that the Achaeans had any part in the famous siege of Medeon in 231, though this came at a time when the alliance was functioning well. Similarly the Aetolians may not have been expected to support the Achaeans in operations in the Peloponnese. In spite of earlier co-operation against Macedonia, the Aetolian expansion into Thessaly may have been regarded as purely an Aetolian affair. Even so, when attacked by Doson, the Aetolians might well have welcomed aid from their allies and may even have asked for it.

Aetolian-Achaean co-operation appears to have been cordial in the north at least down to 229 but may not have been equally cordial in all parts of Greece. It seems that the Achaeans were beginning to encroach on the Aetolian sphere of influence in the western Peloponnese. In 220, as will be seen below, they claimed Pylos as their own. It is virtually certain that it had been acquired before the beginning of the Cleomenic War, that is, before 229. On the other hand, it can hardly have been acquired before Megalopolis joined the Achaean Confederacy. The Achaean expansion toward the southwest apparently was largely prompted by its ties with Megalopolis. The one other town which it is reasonably certain was Achaean by this time is Cyparissia. A glance at the map will indicate that the Achaean corridor to Cyparissia and Pylos must have extended west from Megalopolis and cut through between Messene and Phigalea. The acquisition of this corridor would obviously be considered a hostile act by the Aetolians.

If the Achaeans' expansion in the southwestern Peloponnese was a betrayal of their allies, it is tempting to see in their appeal to Antigonus Doson an even greater betrayal. The Aetolian-Achaean alliance was an effort to control Greece through the co-operation of the two leading Greek states. They had co-operated at first against Demetrius II. Peace was arranged with his successor, Antigonus Doson, but before it could be concluded, Doson inflicted a serious defeat on the Aetolians

21. Polyb. 2. 9–10. The affair is puzzling in several respects. We are apt to think of the Aetolians as more active at sea than the Achaeans, but their ships may have been more like the Illyrian *lemboi*.

and drove them out of Thessaly.[22] Most likely, as I have already suggested, the Aetolian invasion of Thessaly was exclusively an Aetolian affair. Nonetheless, it may well be that, when Doson attacked and besieged the Aetolian garrison, the Aetolians appealed to their allies but received no help. Be that as it may, when the Achaeans could not hold their own against Cleomenes, they appealed not to their Aetolian allies but to the Macedonian king who had trounced the Aetolians so thoroughly. Apparently the hope was that with his aid the Achaeans could control Greece. And, since Aratus had no mean opinion of his own abilities, he probably thought of himself in the future as the greatest statesman of Greece, with the Macedonians to help him when necessary. Naturally, Doson soon made it clear that he was primarily interested in the restoration of Macedonian power in Greece.

The final break between the Aetolians and Achaeans came with the outbreak of the Social War in 220. At that time the Aetolians, according to Polybius (4. 15. 19), claimed to be allies both of the Achaeans and of the Messenians, and the complicated series of negotiations which then took place suits admirably the continued existence of the old treaties of alliance, even if those treaties had not been observed and had not led to co-operation in the period from 229 to 220. Yet it should not be too difficult to reconstruct the relations between the Achaeans and Aetolians. As I have already argued, their treaty obviously did not call for co-operation in all military undertakings. However, an analysis of the situation will explain why Polybius, no doubt following Aratus, goes to such lengths to prove the guilt of the Aetolians, producing an account so full of absurdities that it is strange that it has ever been taken seriously. An analysis of what happened will show that the real sinners were the Achaeans and Aratus himself. Early in his reign, apparently in 228, Antigonus Doson had inflicted a serious defeat on the Aetolians. Yet when the Achaeans were in difficulties with Cleomenes, they turned to Doson, taking the first step in 227, the year of the embassy of the Megalopolitans to him.[23] In spite of a favorable reception, the Achaeans decided to try to carry on by themselves, but it is clear that Aratus preferred the help of Doson to that of the Aetolians. There can be little doubt that this preference was connected with the Achaean encroachment on the Aetolian sphere of influence in the southwestern Peloponnese. As already noted (p. 159), the appeal to Doson was public and not secret. The Megalopolitans had to secure the consent of the Achaean Confederacy before their embassy departed for Macedonia, and the reply of Doson was submitted to the assembly of the Confederacy. Moreover, an appeal from Megalopolis for military aid must have involved the Confederacy. What is less certain is the story about the secret plotting of Aratus. The truth may well be that he knew that, as the man who had expelled the Macedonian garrison from Acrocorinthus, he was not popular with the Macedonian king. Consequently he asked for action by the more popular Megalopolitans. What is strange is that, after help was offered, he persuaded the Achaeans to try to go it alone—but who can fathom the mind of Aratus? Three years later came the final agreement and the surrender of

22. The subject is treated briefly in *Gk. Fed. States*, p. 314 and n. 1. There are difficulties involved, but these have been cleared up by S. Dow and C. F. Edson in *HSCP*, XLVIII (1937), 165–68 and M. Feyel, *Polybe et l'histoire de Béotie* (Paris, 1942), p. 115. Frontin. *Str.* 2. 6. 5 reports a serious defeat of the Aetolians by Antigonus; Justin 28. 3. 11–16 refers to expulsion of enemies from Thessaly by Doson. Frontinus also indicates that the defeat came at the end of a long siege. The date is almost certainly 228.

23. Polyb. 2. 47–51; Plut. *Aratus* 38. 11–12.

Acrocorinthus to the Macedonians, followed by Doson's invasion of the Peloponnese and the formation of the Hellenic League, an organization which included most of Greece except Messene, Elis, and Aetolia.

The quarrel between the two confederacies involved an old problem of international law, namely *diodos*, or the right of a belligerent on the way to attack an enemy or to aid an ally to cross the territory of a third state. This third state was normally, though not necessarily, neutral. Even if it was the ally of one of the belligerents, the force in question might be allowed to pass unhindered. As late as 431 it appears that Thessalian cavalry going to the aid of Athens passed through Phocis and Boeotia and, after the arrival in Attica, actually co-operated with the Athenians against the Boeotians.[24] An armed force certainly could not have passed through Boeotia unnoticed. Thus it obviously was not considered the duty of the Boeotians to prevent the passing of any troops hostile to Sparta. Undoubtedly it was also considered the duty of the troops passing through to be on their good behavior. A somewhat later example is the crossing of Thessaly by Brasidas. At that time one Thessalian party wished to deny the right of passage, and Brasidas is said to have remarked that he knew of no hostility between the Lacedaemonians and Thessalians of such a nature that they should deny each other the use of their land. Thus, though the objection to such passage may have been on the increase, the party denied the right of passage considered the denial a hostile act. Moreover, in the case of Brasidas, the Thessalians allowed troops hostile to their Athenian allies to pass. However, there was no generally accepted rule on the subject. This apparently was the reason why treaties of alliance began to include a clause by which the contracting parties pledged themselves to prevent hostile troops from crossing their territory in order to attack their allies. The earliest such clause known to me is contained in the treaty of 420 of the Athenians with the Argives, Mantineans, and Eleans.[25]

To return to the quarrel of the two confederacies preceding the Social War, it is clear that it involved the right of passage, the Aetolians claiming the right to cross Achaean territory in order to reach their allies or subjects in the southwestern Peloponnese. Behind this dispute is a decided change from the early days of the alliance. Originally, the Aetolians were allies or protectors of Phigalea and Messene and, with their supremacy over Elis, undoubtedly had unbroken control of the west coast of the Peloponnese; the Achaeans had no control of any territory approaching the west coast of the peninsula. By 229 the Achaeans had acquired Pylos and undoubtedly some intervening territory, and by 220 they were ready to help Messene against the Aetolians. Judging by the events of 220, it seems that the Aetolians were prepared to put up with the results of this Achaean advance, provided the Achaeans would grant them the right to cross Achaean territory with troops on their way to Phigalea and Messene.

It would hardly clarify the issue to review all the complications of the year 220,[26] but some points must be considered. It has already been noted in the sketch of

24. Thuc. 2. 22. 2–3 reports the presence of Thessalian cavalry in Attica and its participation in an action against the Boeotians but tells nothing about the route by which it had arrived and by which it later returned home. However, it must have passed through Phocis and Boeotia. The other route once thought to have been used, across Euboea from the north to the Euripus, is out of the question. There was no passable road. Cf. "Phocis in the Social War of 220–217 B.C.," *Phoenix*, XIX (1965), 116–28, esp. n. 4.

25. The clause given in Thuc. 5. 47. 5, but not preserved on the stone, undoubtedly is authentic, even if it is not letter perfect.

26. For an account of the so-called Social War, see *Gk. Fed. States*, pp. 326 ff., with the events of 220 on pp. 330–37.

the history of the alliance that the Achaeans had encroached on territory allied to the Aetolians or lying in the Aetolian sphere of influence at the time the alliance was formed. Thus the Aetolians had a grievance which they naturally might wish to have adjusted. Yet in the negotiations reported they seem not to have demanded restitution, but only noninterference with the maintenance of their interests as they were at the time. To be sure, this is not the impression one receives on reading the account of Polybius in the first part of Book 4, and it is possible that the Aetolians had more aggressive plans at the outset. Raids on estates in Messenia are reported, followed by the seizure in a surprise attack of Clarium, a fort in the territory of Megalopolis, which, it is said, the Aetolians used as a center for raids and the sale of booty. Most likely the Aetolians considered this act a legitimate effort to break the Achaean barrier between Phigalea and Messene. The fort was soon retaken by the joint action of Timoxenus, the Achaean general, and Taurion, the Macedonian commander in the Peloponnese. After the recapture of Clarium, the Aetolians abandoned this particular undertaking but persisted in claiming the right to have their troops pass through Achaean territory. As to chronology, my guess is that the aggression in Messenia came in 221 and the affair of Clarium early in 220, though it too is commonly placed in 221. Polybius' account is puzzling in more than one respect. The Aetolians are said to have lacked a normal source of income on account of the general peace in Greece, a statement which has been used to prove that Aetolian piracy and privateering were not so unbridled as often represented. In the present case, however, having no legitimate sphere of action open to them, the Aetolians are said to have sent raiders against their own allies, the Messenians. Moreover, after giving up their action against the Achaeans, the Aetolians apparently continued to plan action against Messene and in that connection claimed the right to pass through Achaean territory.

Thus the question at issue between the two confederacies was the old one of the right of passage. The difficulty was that it involved a problem of international law or interstate relations of a kind which there was no legislative body or power to decide. The fact that one power forbade another's troops to cross its territory did not make such a prohibition law. Nor did the claim by the other to the right to cross necessarily have legal standing. It is tempting to say that there was no international law. Yet at times there emerged generally accepted—or at least widely accepted—rules. This was the case with *diodos*. The rights and duties were clearly defined only when treaties of alliance provided that one of the contracting parties was not to allow troops to cross its territory in order to attack its allies, and even then a third party might deny the force of such a proviso. A treaty of alliance denying the right of passage to one's own allies is almost unthinkable. Thus there can hardly have been any clause of the kind in the treaty between the Aetolians and Achaeans. The treaty seems to have been negotiated primarily to arrange for co-operation against Macedonia. The crossing of the territory of the one confederacy by the troops of the other may well have been taken for granted. However, the question of the right of passage concerned others than the two confederacies, and there may well have been some development of public opinion since the time when Brasidas had crossed Thessaly. The only way to learn the status of public opinion at the time seems to be through the reaction of the Macedonians and members of the Hellenic League after the battle of

Caphyae. At that time they refused to act and thus decided the issue in a manner favorable to the Aetolians, whose crossing of Achaean territory in spite of Achaean protests and prohibitions was not ruled a crime.

Before taking up the events of 220 again, it may be well to recall the changes in the relations of the two confederacies to each other after the formation of the alliance. When the alliance was first formed, it seems that the Aetolians controlled the entire west coast of the Peloponnese. The center of their strength in the southern part of the district appears to have been Phigalea, their concern for which is indicated in part by the treaty of *isopoliteia* which they negotiated between Phigalea and Messene. Sometime before 220 the Achaeans had absorbed Pylos and no doubt other territory belonging to the Aetolian sphere of influence. Moreover, in 220 the Achaeans were intriguing with the Messenians for Messenian admission, not into the Achaean Confederacy, but into the Hellenic League. What the Aetolians insisted on at the time was the right of Aetolian troops going south—or returning north—to pass through Achaean territory. A glance at the map is enough to show that, in spite of Aetolian control of Elis, the most convenient route involved crossing the strait by Cape Rhium and proceeding south from there through Achaean territory. The rights and wrongs of the Aetolian demand on Messene cannot be determined, but it is safe to conclude that Polybius has placed everything in a light as unfavorable to the Aetolians as possible.

In the spring of 220 an Aetolian force crossed the strait at Cape Rhium and proceeded south across the territories of the Achaean cities, Patrae, Pharae, and Tritaea, on the way to Phigalea. After an ultimatum to the effect that they return home without touching Achaean territory had been transmitted to them by Aratus, and after the Aetolians apparently had made some deceptive moves while Aratus with his Achaean troops kept an eye on them, an Aetolian contingent of unknown size under the command of Dorimachus struck across Arcadia for the Isthmus of Corinth. At Caphyae, near Orchomenus, the Achaeans under Aratus attacked them and suffered a severe defeat.[27]

These events, according to Polybius, were the cause and pretext for the Social War, while the beginning of the war was the decree later passed at the meeting of the *synedrion* of the Hellenic League at Corinth.[28] In a sense Polybius is right, and, if one recalls the crossing of Achaean territory by Aetolian troops and the many acts of aggression after the battle of Caphyae, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that the Aetolians brought on the war. However, if the degree of guilt is to be assessed, it must be done on the basis of events that preceded the break and on the basis of the judgment passed by contemporaries immediately after Caphyae on the actions of the Aetolians and Achaeans. These events and contemporary judgments are almost obscured in the narrative of Polybius, who puts emphasis on the official beginning of the war through the decree of the *synedrion* passed at Corinth later in the year. Even so, it is clear that after Caphyae the Achaeans appealed to Philip and the allies—the Epirotes, Boeotians, Phocians,

27. Polyb. 4. 10–11. This is one of the least satisfactory accounts ever written by Polybius. It represents Dorimachus as avoiding battle with Taurion, the Macedonian commander, and his troops, but eager to provoke battle with the Achaeans. The Aetolians, it seems clear, did not want a battle but did insist on their right to cross Achaean territory. To avoid Taurion they avoided Cleitor. But the Achaeans also must have been at Cleitor: in 4. 11. 2, it is reported that they turned back from there and encamped near Caphyae. Apparently Taurion was averse to engaging the Aetolians in battle; not so Aratus. For a fuller discussion, cf. Walbank, esp. on 4. 10. 5.

28. Polyb. 4. 13. 6–7.

and Acarnanians are specifically mentioned —and asked for help in accordance with their agreements. The answer the Achaeans received was that the conduct of the Aetolians was no worse than normal. This cannot possibly be the wording of the official answer, but rather a distortion of the official response by Polybius. The ruling must have been that the crossing of Achaean territory by the Aetolians was not a crime. At any rate Philip and the allies decided to maintain peace with them.[29] Thus it seems clear that, according to the standards of the time, the crossing of Achaean territory was not in itself considered a crime. It looks as if the Achaeans themselves practically admitted as much later, at the meeting of the *synedrion* at Corinth, when, in stating their grievances against the Aetolians, they complained of the excesses committed by the Aetolians during the crossing. The complaint implies that the Achaeans realized that the crossing of their territory, even after they had issued their prohibition, was not in itself a crime. Probably the judgment of the other Greeks was rather that the Achaeans had committed a crime when they attacked the Aetolians.

After Caphyae the war was under way even though Polybius does not say so, and even though the Aetolian general (president) claimed that his state was not at war. The various Aetolian offensives could be justified as retaliation for the Achaean attack upon the Aetolians in time of peace. In any case, after Caphyae the Aetolians could hardly rely on diplomacy. And on the other hand, with the Aetolians turning to armed intervention, even to the extent of invading Achaean territory, the allies of the Achaeans had to recognize that the war was under way. Accordingly, Philip's first intervention in the Peloponnese came before the meeting at Corinth which passed the decree which Polybius characterizes as the beginning of the war. To be sure, the individual Greek states belonging to the Hellenic League were not at war until they had ratified the decree of the *synedrion*. Nevertheless, the battle of Caphyae started the chain of events which inevitably led to war. Therefore the confederacy which had the greatest responsibility for bringing on the battle had also the greatest responsibility for bringing on the war, and this, Polybius notwithstanding, was the Achaean Confederacy. Insofar as responsibility can be attached to a single individual, that individual was Aratus. His greatest mistake apparently was the belief that he would be able to influence, not to say guide, the Macedonian king. Thus his most important decision, the one which led to the later decisions, was made long before 220, probably in 227, when the Achaeans approached Antigonus Doson for the first time and decided that, if Cleomenes of Sparta should prove too difficult, they would turn to Macedonia for help.[30]

Thus ended the most hopeful Greek alignment of Hellenistic times, a victim of the desire of practically every Greek state to dominate others if possible. The alliance was probably never formally canceled, but for all practical purposes it had come to an end. When it was formed, both confederacies were expanding. In the period between 238 and 229 they seem to have demonstrated that their combined strength was enough to control Greece and even to check Macedonia, but obviously, except for the Achaean control of Corinth, the position of the Aetolians was the stronger. So it might have continued, if the Achaeans had allowed free passage of Aetolian troops and had not

29 Polyb. 4. 15. 1–2: the appeal of the Achaeans; 4. 16. 1–3: the reaction of Philip and the allies.

30. Cf. *Gk. Fed. States*, pp. 238, 316 f.

interfered with the Aetolian control of Messene. Even so, the negotiations in 220 give the impression that the Aetolians did not ask the Achaeans to give up their acquisitions in the southwest Peloponnese. Yet the Aetolians might well have remained the strongest power in the western Peloponnese. The reaction of readers may be that all this does not matter. The Romans were coming. True, but the ultimate decision had not yet been made.

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