POLYBIUS, DEMETRIUS OF PHARUS, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND ILLYRIAN WAR

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IN THE EARLY SUMMER of 219 B.C., the Roman Republic went to war against the Illyrian dynast Demetrius of Pharus.[1] Scholars have long been puzzled as to the causes and purpose of this conflict (the Second Illyrian War). It seems to come at an odd time—just as the dispute with Carthage over Saguntum in Spain was developing into a very serious crisis for Rome.[2] Our main source for the origins and course of the Roman expedition against Demetrius is Polybius 3.16 and 18–19. The purpose of the present paper is to delineate in a new fashion the roots of Polybius' understanding of the war. The result will provide insight into Polybius' manner of researching his *Histories;* perhaps some new light will also be shed on the character of the Illyrian events of 219 themselves.

Polybius' account of the origins of the Second Illyrian War is quite detailed, the reconstruction he offers quite complex. On the one hand, he presents the war as a calculated security action on the part of the Romans: the Senate, convinced that war with Carthage was inevitable following the failure of diplomatic protests to Hannibal over his pressure on Rome's friend Saguntum, decided to secure the Roman position in Illyria in the face of the coming war by eliminating the power of Demetrius of Pharus (3.16.1, cf. 15.12). On the other hand, the Greek historian then lays out a whole series of delicts on Demetrius' part that go far to explain Rome's concern about him in 219—that is, why the Romans chose to act against this particular man at this particular time. The Romans themselves had set Demetrius up as a power in the Adriatic in 228—mostly at the expense of Queen Teuta of the Illyrian Ardiaei.[3] But, according to Polybius, Demetrius had now "forgotten the benefits the Romans had bestowed upon him" (3.16.2). He had become contemptuous of the Romans (καταπεφρονηκότα,

1. On the chronology of events in 219 in Illyria, see J. W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion* (Brussels, 1976), pp. 41–42.

2. On the place of the Illyrian campaign within the developing crisis for Rome in Spain, and its negative impact on the ability of the Romans to react militarily to the news of Hannibal's siege of Saguntum, see especially Rich, *Declaring War,* pp. 42–43.

3. On the Roman political settlement in 228 after the First Illyrian War, see especially N. G. L. Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon in 229–205 B.C.," *JRS* 58 (1968): 7–9 (crucial for understanding the geography involved). Rome's principles appear to have been to create a series of relatively small and hence unthreatening states on the Adriatic coast, with a principality under Demetrius acting as a buffer zone between the Greek cities of Apollonia and Epidamnus (and their hinterlands) on the one hand, and a weakened realm of the Illyrian Ardiaei (the old kingdom of Agron and Teuta) on the other.

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ibid.), first because of the Celtic peril and now because of the peril they faced from Carthage; he now placed all his hopes instead in the House of Macedon, owing to his having fought beside Antigonus III Doson against Cleomenes of Sparta (16.3); he was sacking and destroying cities in Illyria subject to Rome (ibid.); and he had sailed on a plundering expedition far beyond the Lissus River, violating the peace treaty of 228 (ibid.). The Romans, Polybius continues, seeing Demetrius' behavior and observing the flourishing fortunes of the House of Macedon, were therefore eager to secure their position in the lands east of Italy (16.4). They believed that they would have time to correct the folly (ἄγνοια) of the Illyrians (ibid.), and punish the ingratitude and recklessness of Demetrius (ἀχαριστία, προπετεία, ibid.), before the war with Carthage burst upon them. But in this calculation, they were wrong (16.5).

Many scholars have found serious fault with this reconstruction of the causes of the war. How could Demetrius have conceived a contempt for Roman power as a result of the Celtic War of the 220s, when Rome had—in the end—defeated the Celts? As for the Carthaginian peril, its true extent was certainly not foreseen even in 219, let alone in the years before. Moreover, if the Romans were angered with Demetrius for his having broken the Lissus Treaty of 228, why did they not also punish the Illyrian dynast Scerdilaidas? This man had crossed the Lissus boundary in arms at the same time as Demetrius, with almost the same number of warships (cf. Polyb. 4.16.6 and 9); in addition, he was probably the brother-in-law of Rome's old enemy Queen Teuta. Yet he escaped. As for Macedon, in 220/19 its redoubtable king Antigonus III had just died, replaced on the throne by the young Philip V, who was an unknown quantity; Demetrius could hardly have looked in that direction with confidence. Meanwhile, the Romans had demonstrated their own continued interest in Adriatic affairs by a war against the Istrians in 221. All in all, prominent scholars conclude, Demetrius could hardly have picked a worse time than 219 to provoke a quarrel with Rome. The story in Polybius 3.16 is thus highly implausible.[4]

The hypothesis that Polybius' narrative of the events leading to the war is implausible carries with it three equally disturbing corollaries. First, it is suggested that this implausible version of events derives mainly from a propagandistic account of the war put forth by Fabius Pictor, the earliest Roman historian—a man concerned to provide justification for every Roman policy. Second, the reality—hidden by Fabius—may then be that Demetrius of Pharus was the victim of Roman aggression, having done little or nothing consciously to provoke Rome before he was attacked (since

4. E. Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy in Illyria (230–201 B.C.)," in *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 12–16 (= *PBSR* 20 [1952]), gives the most forceful and influential exposition of this view. See also K. F. Eisen, *Polybiosinterpretationen* (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 108–9; R. M. Errington, *The Dawn of Empire* (London, 1971), pp. 106–8, and now (with some modification) in *The Cambridge Ancient History*^{2}, vol. 7.2 (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 91–92; E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome,* vol. 2 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), p. 370. Cf. also M. Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques au III^e siècle avant J.-C. (273–205)* (Paris, 1935), pp. 132–34.

it would have been foolhardy of him to do so). Third, if Polybius in 3.16 has allowed his *Histories* to be so contaminated by Roman propaganda, this raises serious questions about his use of his sources—a use that in this case seems to be shallow at best. A whole range of first-rank scholars have presented variations on such an interpretation of Polybius 3.16, and it is fair to say that this interpretation now dominates the field.[5]

Yet, as is well known, Polybius at the beginning of his *Histories* issued a warning to his audience about the character of Fabius Pictor's work: Fabius was not overtly false as to specific facts, but his interpretation of events was a patriotic one, depicting everything the Romans did in a good light, and everything their enemies did in a poor one (1.14).[6] Moreover, just a few chapters before 3.16 itself, Polybius had given his audience a much harsher attack on Fabius, accusing him of an illogical and implausible presentation of the events leading to the outbreak of the Hannibalic War (3.8.1–9.5); and Polybius' criticism here ends with the warning not to believe everything Fabius says just because he was a Roman senator and a contemporary of the events he describes (3.9.4–5).[7] It is difficult to believe that the sophisticated and independent thinker of 1.14, and the man who in 3.8–9 accused Fabius of an illogical and implausible interpretation of the Hannibalic War, would then at 3.16 blithely repeat from Fabius an obviously illogical and implausible interpretation of the war against Demetrius just because Fabius said so.

This does not mean that Polybius did not base part of his depiction of the outbreak of the Second Illyrian War on Fabius' work. Two elements in 3.16 seem good candidates for Fabian origin. First, there is the charge of ingratitude (ἀχαριστία) that Polybius levels against Demetrius for (allegedly) turning against the Romans despite the favors Rome had done him (3.16.2). This sounds like an accusation informed by the Roman concept of patron-client relations; and indeed, it has sometimes been argued that the main problem in 220/19 was that Demetrius had little understanding of the obligations—informal but nonetheless binding—that the Romans believed were owed to them on the basis of their having greatly enhanced his power in 228.[8] Still, relations similar to those of patron and

5. That Polybius' account of the origins of the Second Illyrian War is merely a repetition of the propagandistic views of Fabius Pictor is the position taken by M. Gelzer, "Römische Politik bei Fabius Pictor," *Hermes* 68 (1933): 147; Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," pp. 13, 15 ("the Fabio-Polybian picture"); Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 10, n. 36 ("the Roman annalists"); K.-E. Petzold, "Rom und Illyrien: Ein Beitrag zur römische Aussenpolitik im 3. Jahrhundert," *Historia* 20 (1971): 212, 213; Errington, *Dawn of Empire,* p. 106, cf. *CAH*^{2}, p. 91; Gruen, *Coming of Rome,* 2:370 ("Roman apologists"); cf. Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce,* p. 138, n. 2. More willing to posit a complex picture of Polybius' sources on Demetrius and the war, and a complex Polybian use of them: F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius,* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1957), p. 325 (a variety of sources, including Fabius and perhaps a Greek source); and especially P. Bung, *Fabius Pictor, der erste römische Annalist* (diss., Cologne, 1950), pp. 190–93 (a variety of sources, Roman and Greek, and probably not Fabius, with the result being strongly shaped by Polybius himself). The arguments of Walbank and Bung, however, have had little impact.

6. For discussion of this passage, see K. Meister, *Historische Kritik bei Polybios* (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 129–34.

7. For discussion of this passage, see ibid., pp. 142–47. On its harsh tone, cf. also P. S. Derow, "Kleemporos," *Phoenix* 27 (1973): 123.

8. So Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," pp. 15–16 and n. 67; Petzold, "Rom und Illyrien," p. 212; Errington, *Dawn of Empire,* pp. 107–8, cf. *CAH*^{2}, p. 93; cf. already Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce,* p. 132.

client were hardly unknown in the Greek world,[9] and Polybius later presents Demetrius as ungrateful toward a benefactor in a context that is totally Greek (5.106.6—see below). What one may therefore say is that if (as seems likely) Polybius found an accusation of ingratitude raised against Demetrius by his Roman source, it was a concept he well understood—and an attitude he personally found characteristic of Demetrius.[10]

Even more likely to be Fabian in origin are the remarks in Polybius 3.16 about the growing power of Macedon, since Polybius not only says that this was a perception of Demetrius (16.3), but a perception of the Romans themselves (16.4). The obvious source for this latter information is Fabius.[11] Now, if one considers the narrow political situation of spring 219, an assertion about the growing power of Macedon may seem exaggerated.[12] But it is also undeniable that Macedonian power had greatly grown during the 220s, a resurgence capped by Antigonus Doson's victory over the Spartans at Sellasia in 222 (which Polybius knows Demetrius had witnessed: 2.65.4, 66.5—and 3.16.3). Indeed, Sellasia had led to the establishment of a Macedonian hegemony in the Peloponnese more powerful than at any time since the wars of the Successors.[13] And while the new king Philip V was still very young and inexperienced in 220/19, he would in the immediately succeeding years increase Macedonian power still further.[14] Perhaps Polybius' remarks about Macedonian power in 3.16 reflect, via Fabius, the experience of the threat to Rome that Philip V later posed; but surely Polybius, as an Achaean, did not need too much convincing from Fabius about the growing power of Macedon in this period.[15] The fact is that the judgment on the growth of Macedonian power found in 3.16, even if incorrect in positing a direct relationship to the Second Illyrian War, is not itself fictional or ahistorical.[16]

The situation is different regarding Demetrius' alleged perceptions of Roman vulnerability in the middle and late 220s (Polyb. 3.16.2): such vulnerability (unlike the growth of Macedonian power) has little basis in historical fact. But here what is important is that Polybius does not find 3.16.2 a convincing depiction of the balance of power facing Demetrius

9. See now the comments of P. Millet, "Patronage and its Avoidance in Classical Athens," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1989), especially pp. 15–20.

10. Cf., rightly, Bung, *Fabius Pictor*, p. 190. Bung, however, does not believe that even if Polybius did rework such elements in 3.16 from a Roman source, the source was Fabius; this is because of the divergence of the "annalistic" tradition on the war from Polybius' account (p. 191). But there is no good Roman candidate for the details of the origins of the war in 3.16 other than Fabius. We know Fabius attempted detailed political analyses of the origins of Roman wars (cf. Polyb. 3.8 passim); most early Roman writers did not, concentrating instead on the *res gestae*, the deeds of war themselves (cf. the complaints of Sempronius Asellio [90 B.C.?], at Gell. 5.18.9).

11. Contra: Bung, *Fabius Pictor*, p. 190, cf. 191. But see above, n. 10.

12. See Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," pp. 15–16; Errington, *Dawn of Empire*, p. 103, cf. *CAH*^{2}, p. 93; Gruen, *Coming of Rome*, 2:370.

13. On the resulting situation in Greece, see especially the remarks of A. Aymard, *Les Premiers rapports de Rome et de la confédération achaïenne (198–189 av. J.-C.)* (Bordeaux–Paris, 1938), pp. 50–57.

14. For convenient discussion, see F. W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon* (Cambridge, 1939), chap. 2.

15. Polyb. 3.16.3–4 derives from Fabius, via the later Roman experience of Philip: so Errington, *Dawn of Empire*, p. 106. Confirmed by Polybius' own independent judgment (and sources): so Bung, *Fabius Pictor*, pp. 190–91.

16. Cf. Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 11, n. 42.

any more than modern scholars do. This is why he goes on to speak of Demetrius' "recklessness" and "folly" with regard to the Romans (προπετεία, cf. ἄγνοια: 16.4). In other words: if many modern scholars argue that Demetrius would have to have been highly irrational to believe in important elements in the depiction of the world in 3.16, that is exactly Polybius' point.[17]

But why should Polybius have believed that Demetrius of Pharus was a reckless person, and so lacking in judgment as to be contemptuous of Roman power? Forceful arguments can in fact be marshalled to show that whatever Fabius Pictor said or implied about Demetrius' personality (and it is not likely to have been complimentary), this was Polybius' own judgment, based on his own independent and varied research. The evidence on the intellectual process in which Polybius engaged here is abundant within the text of *The Histories*—yet it has been consistently overlooked.[18]

First, one should note Polybius' depiction of Demetrius in the detailed account of the battle of Pharus—the decisive battle of the war. Demetrius had gathered the cream of his army within the fortified city (3.18.2). L. Aemilius Paullus, the consul of 219, attacked Pharus by laying a trap for Demetrius—into which Demetrius immediately fell. The consul disembarked the majority of his forces at night at one spot on the island, then sailed at daybreak into Pharus harbor with only 20 ships. Demetrius "was contemptuous" of the smallness of the Roman forces (καταφρονοῦντες, 3.18.12), and ordered his men to sally from the city fortifications and destroy the Romans. The outnumbered Romans put up a good fight, however, and eventually Demetrius' entire garrison sallied from the city to join in the combat (19.1). At this point the major part of the Roman force, landed secretly earlier, arrived on the scene and caught Demetrius' troops from behind (19.2). The result was the total destruction of the Illyrians (19.3–7), although Demetrius himself escaped (19.5).[19]

In this account we find recapitulated the very themes Polybius highlighted in 3.16 in depicting the origins of the war itself: Demetrius' disastrous underestimation of the Romans and overestimation of his own power, combined with recklessness and ill-considered action. Polybius got the outline of the Pharus battle from somewhere: perhaps from Fabius Pictor, perhaps (it is sometimes suggested) from some sort of pro-Aemilian tradition to which Polybius had special access.[20] Wherever he got it from,

17. Thus Holleaux thinks that Demetrius would have had to be in a "bizarre" state of mind to believe what Polybius alleges he believes in 3.16—and therefore Holleaux tends to dismiss the passage (*Rome, la Grèce*, pp. 132–33). By contrast, Hammond finds Demetrius justified in just about everything Polybius says he believed in 3.16—and therefore he tends to dismiss Polybius' view of Demetrius in 3.16 as a reckless and irrational man ("Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 11, n. 39).

18. An exception is (again) the discussion of Bung, *Fabius Pictor*, pp. 190–93; but it is both brief and almost totally lacking in detail.

19. Other versions of the battle: Dio frag. 53, cf. Zonar. 8.20 (somewhat distorted, and beginning with an obviously ahistorical "interview" between Demetrius and the Roman commanders); App. *Ill.* 8 (vague as well as distorted).

20. On this latter possibility, see Bung, *Fabius Pictor*, pp. 191–92; cf. Walbank, *Commentary*, 1:327.

however, the story of this battle would only have confirmed—in specific detail—the general opinion of Demetrius' personality expressed in 3.16.

In favor of Polybius' source in 3.18–19 being some sort of "pro-Aemilian" tradition is the striking fact that the role in Illyria of L. Aemilius Paullus' co-consul in 219, M. Livius Salinator, goes unmentioned; yet Livius, like Aemilius, seems to have been awarded a triumph by the Senate.[21] Moreover, Polybius' account of the campaign of 219 ends with a passage of hearty praise for the cleverness and especially the bravery of Aemilius' generalship (3.19.12–13). The Greek historian, of course, had close ties in the house of the Aemilii, and especially to P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, grandson of the consul of 219; his decision to give a detailed account of the battle of Pharus in his *Histories,* stressing L. Aemilius Paullus' courage and intelligence, may therefore have been a pleasant choice indeed. But it would be simplistic to suggest that Polybius included a depiction of the battle of Pharus merely as a piece of pro-Aemilian *Tendenz.*[22] The fact is that the strategem employed by the Romans at Pharus in 219 was the sort of thing that appealed to Polybius as a military man; he offers praise of Hannibal's similar trap set for the Romans at the Trebia in 218 (cf. 3.70.9–71.11). Conversely, Polybius never hesitates to chastise what he views as recklessness—and it is important to note that this includes harsh criticism of M. Aemilius Paullus, the father of L. Aemilius the consul of 219 (see Polyb. 1.36.10), and criticism of both P. and Cn. Cornelius Scipio, the father and uncle of Scipio Africanus (10.6.2). In other words, Polybius chose to depict the battle of Pharus in detail in good part because he truly thought it would be instructive to his aristocratic audience—in terms of a pragmatic lesson in generalship, but also in terms of an edifying distinction between courageous but carefully controlled conduct on the one side, and destructive impulsiveness on the other.[23]

Polybius' depiction of the battle of Pharus is not the only passage where the destructive impulsiveness of Demetrius—the cause of the Roman decision to move against him, according to Polyb. 3.16—reappears in the Polybian text. Indeed, in a crucial passage at the end of the narrative of the campaign of 219—a passage that has been neglected in this context—Polybius reveals exactly why he believes Demetrius of Pharus to have been an impulsive and reckless man. The reason has nothing to do with Fabius Pictor, let alone with some special "pro-Aemilian" source. Rather, in describing Demetrius' arrival at the court of the young Philip V

21. Livius' triumph: *De Vir. Ill.* 50, cf. perhaps Suet. *Tib.* 3.2. This tradition is dismissed as apocryphal by Holleaux (*Rome, la Grèce,* p. 138, n. 2)—probably unfairly, for Livius' later exile as a result of a scandal involving allegedly unfair division of spoils (Front. *Strat.* 4.1.45) presupposes an active participation in the campaign (cf. Bung, *Fabius Pictor,* p. 191). Livius' presence with Paullus at the battle of Pharus: Dio frag. 53, cf. Zonar. 8.20 (for what it is worth: they place the battle at Issa!).

22. Contra: Walbank, *Commentary,* 1:327; J. de Foucault, *Polybe: "Histoires": Livre III: Texte établi et traduit* (Paris, 1971), p. 196.

23. Bung, *Fabius Pictor,* pp. 191–92, suggests that Polybius was honestly misled into ignoring M. Livius by the nature of the information supplied him by the Aemilian family. But in view of the confusion and even ahistorical elements within Dio/Zonaras' account of the campaign of 219, can we really be sure that Livius actually accompanied Aemilius in the specific attack on Pharus? In 228, during the first Illyrian expedition, the consuls often operated independently of each other (cf. Polyb. 2.11.1–6, 10, 13–14).

of Macedon after his flight from Illyria (3.19.10–11), Polybius remarks that Demetrius

> was, to be sure, a man of courage and boldness (θράσος, τόλμαν), but extremely irrational, and totally lacking in judgment (ἀλόγιστον, τελέως ἄκριτον), and as a result of these defects his death was similar in pattern to his entire life. For having made a reckless and careless attempt upon Messene (εἰκῇ καὶ παραβόλως), he perished in this attack.

Polybius goes on to promise that he will relate the Messene incident in detail when he arrives at the proper chronological point in *The Histories* (19.11).

Polybius' account of Demetrius' death at Messene (Autumn 214?) has unfortunately been lost.[24] But the statement in Polybius 3.19.10–11 is enough, by itself, to show that in his presentation of the outbreak of the Second Illyrian War Polybius' view of the conduct and personality of Demetrius was established primarily by the historian's preexisting knowledge of the pattern of Demetrius' conduct in a purely Greek context (up to and including his death). And this hypothesis is amply confirmed by the passages in *The Histories* that do survive in which Demetrius' behavior in Greece after 219 is depicted.

Before an examination of those passages can begin, however, the question of Polybius' source or sources of information on Demetrius' actions after 219 must be addressed. Much, of course, is unknown, but at least one source of information can be named: Aratus of Sicyon, the man who can be considered the true founder of Polybius' Achaean League. Polybius naturally tended to view Aratus as an impressive figure (more impressive, surely, than Fabius Pictor);[25] moreover, in the last stages of Aratus' political career he came into sharp conflict with Demetrius of Pharus, as Demetrius began to gain more and more influence over Philip V. The differences, as Polybius presents them, were over the morally and pragmatically proper way for Philip to manage Macedon's increasingly dominant position in European Greece (see below); but Polybius is explicit that Aratus also disagreed with Demetrius over the proper policy Macedon should adopt toward Rome, and viewed Demetrius' policy of Macedonian expansion in the West at Rome's expense as dangerous and reckless (7.13.1). The accusation of reckless provocation and underestimation of Rome (7.13.1) is, of course, an accusation against Demetrius we have come across before: it is the central theme of Polybius 3.16.

Polybius did not derive his information on Aratus' conflicts with Demetrius, and Demetrius' eventual fate, directly from Aratus' *Memoirs;* he used the *Memoirs* extensively (especially in Book 2), but they ended in 220.[26] Rather, Polybius' knowledge about Aratus and Demetrius will have derived in part from inspection of Achaean records existing in

24. For the probable date of Demetrius' abortive attack on Messene, see Walbank, *Philip V,* p. 300; cf. idem, *Commentary,* 1:331.

25. On Aratus as one of Polybius' special heroes, see R. Urban, *Wachstum und Krise des achäischen Bundes* (Wiesbaden, 1979). Still useful is F. W. Walbank, *Aratos of Sicyon* (Cambridge, 1933).

26. See Walbank, *Aratos,* pp. 11–14.

Megalopolis and other towns in the Peloponnese, and perhaps primarily from the oral traditions about Aratus that existed in the circle of powerful Achaean politicians into which Polybius himself was born—aristocrats who idolized Aratus and viewed themselves as the heirs of his policies.[27] These stories, with their highly moralizing and didactic contrast between Aratus and Demetrius, may well have made a significant impression upon Polybius early on.[28]

It must be pointed out, however, that as an adult Polybius did not accept even this material uncritically. Thus he was well aware of the occasionally self-serving character of Aratus' *Memoirs,* warned his audience about this, and sought to supplement the *Memoirs* with information from additional sources (see 2.47.10–11).[29] If Polybius himself believed that Demetrius' policy for Philip's Macedon had been reckless and destructive—which is clearly the case[30]—this is therefore not simply because such an opinion bore Aratus' own firm imprimatur. Rather, from Polybius' perspective in the 160s and 150s, such a conclusion must have seemed all too obvious. But then, Polybius viewed Aratus as a wise man precisely because of Aratus' ability to foresee the consequences of political trends and actions when the outcome was not yet clear, and opinion could not yet be informed by hindsight.[31]

Polybius' depiction of Demetrius in Greece—and again, it is worth repeating that this picture cannot have been drawn from Roman sources—in fact consistently accuses Demetrius of an inability to foresee the negative consequences of his reckless actions and policies. This theme first appears with great emphasis in Polybius' discussion of whether Aratus or Demetrius had been responsible for advising Philip V to pillage and burn the temple-complex at Thermum in Aetolia in 218—an act that Polybius views as both politically counterproductive and also an atrocity (5.9–12). The historian says that the answer here is obvious. First, there is the entire pattern of these two men's lives (τῆς κατὰ τὸν ὅλον βίον προαιρέσεως, 5.12.7), in which we never find Aratus guilty of reckless behavior or lack of judgment (προπετές, ἄκριτον), while the opposite is true of Demetrius (ibid.). The language in 5.12 directly parallels Polybius' summary of Demetrius' personality at the end of the account of the Second Illyrian War in 3.19.10 (τῇ κατὰ τὸν ὅλον βίον προαιρέσει . . . ἄκριτον; and cf. προπέτεια

27. Cf. idem, p. 13. Note Polybius' own remark that for the period after 220 he no longer had to rely purely on written sources, since he had entered a time when he could personally question eye-witnesses (4.2.1–3).

28. A good example is the detailed account of Aratus' confrontation with Demetrius on Mt. Ithome in 215, which must have ultimately derived from remarks of Aratus himself, though not from the *Memoirs:* see F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius,* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1967), p. 59.

29. On this passage, and the supplementary material (probably Megalopolitan) that Polybius found available, see E. S. Gruen, "Aratus and the Achaean Alliance with Macedon," *Historia* 21 (1972): 620–25, and Urban, *Wachstum und Krise,* pp. 120–33.

30. See the comments of A. M. Eckstein, "Hannibal at New Carthage: Polybius 3.15 and the Power of Irrationality," *CP* 84 (1989): 10–12.

31. That, of course, is the whole thrust of Polybius' depiction of Aratus in 2.47–51. Indeed, Polybius viewed this ability to foresee the consequences of present trends and actions as one of the central qualifications (and duties) of a statesman: see the emphatic and generalizing pronouncement at 3.7.3–7.

at 16.4). Second, Polybius promises to prove his point about Demetrius to his audience by means of a depiction of a specific later action of Demetrius at Messene (5.12.7–8). This, too, parallels the passage in 3.19, the only difference being that this time the reference is to an incident of 215 rather than 214, and Polybius' account of the incident is preserved (7.12–14, see below). Polybius 5.12 therefore strongly confirms the hypothesis that when Polybius sat down to write about Demetrius of Pharus early in *The Histories,* his conception of the man's recklessness and lack of judgment was already well established in his mind by his detailed knowledge of the course of Demetrius' entire career—knowledge that focused especially on his career in Greece.[32]

The theme of a Demetrius who was impetuous, reckless, and lacking in political-strategic judgment recurs later in Book 5 itself—in Polybius' description of how Philip V came to adopt an anti-Roman policy. When Philip received news of Hannibal's defeat of the Romans at Lake Trasimene (summer 217), at first he informed only Demetrius (Polyb. 5.101.7). Polybius says that Demetrius immediately "seized the moment" (101.8), urging Philip to end the current war against Aetolia "as soon as possible" (ibid.), in order to devote himself to expansion in the West and an invasion of Italy. Demetrius argued that all of Greece was already securely in Macedon's power (101.9), and that the invasion of Italy would in fact be the first step to Philip's conquest of the entire world (101.10). This was the time to act, Demetrius said (τὸν δὲ καιρὸν εἶναι νῦν, 101.10)—when the Romans were in the midst of disaster (ἐπταικότων Ῥωμαίων, ibid.). Thus Demetrius "enflamed" Philip to act (παρώρμησε, 102.1; ἐξέκαιε, 108.5). But the result of this new policy, as Polybius well knew, would be the disastrous growth of Roman power over the Macedonians and Greeks.[33] Moreover, Polybius says, the central reason for Demetrius' urging Philip onto an ultimately catastrophic course of action was not even that he had the king's best interests at heart—"for this was certainly only of third-place importance to him"—but rather a hatred of Rome, combined with a desire to win back his dominion at Pharus with Macedonian help (5.108.6–7).

Philip, to be sure, is no mere victim of Demetrius' machinations here. Polybius' psychological perspective is more complex than that: he implies that Philip's attention was already turning to the West even before the talk with Demetrius (5.101.6); and he explicitly says that Philip himself was young, warlike, extremely self-confident, and ambitious (102.1).[34]

32. It seems that Aratus' reputation was called deeply into question by his association with Philip between 220 and 215, and that Polybius' insistence in 5.12 upon Aratus' innocence of the Thermum atrocity is a direct response to attacks made upon him: see Walbank, *Commentary,* 2:61. But if so, then the controversy over Thermum (and the defense of Aratus via an attack upon Demetrius) would have been a controversy of which Polybius had probably long been aware when he began to write *The Histories.*

33. Polybius believed that the "unification" of the Mediterranean world under Roman domination began to come about precisely in 217, with these events: see F. W. Walbank, "*Symploké:* Its Role in Polybius' *Histories,*" *YCS* 24 (1975): 199–200.

34. On the implications of Polyb. 5.101.6, see Walbank, *Philip V,* p. 64; on the depiction of Philip in 5.102.1, see Eckstein, "Power of Irrationality," pp. 10–11.

Nevertheless, in these passages late in Book 5 we still find recapitulated—and in great detail—every single one of the themes Polybius brought to bear in his description of Demetrius' personality and behavior in relation to the outbreak of the Second Illyrian War: impetuosity and recklessness ("now is the moment . . ."); mistaken exaggeration of Macedonian power and resources; mistaken contempt for the power and resources of Rome; and finally ingratitude, even betrayal, regarding a benefactor (in this case Philip, who deserved better and less self-serving advice from a man to whom he had given refuge). Now, we do not know the source of information upon which Polybius has constructed the scene in 5.101–2 (cf. 108); but it was certainly Greek, not Roman.[35] And as we have already noted, Polybius knows that Aratus strongly disapproved of Demetrius' Roman policy (7.13.1).[36]

The last major appearance of Demetrius of Pharus in the extant Polybian text is in 7.12–14, where Polybius fulfills his promise to present proof that it was Demetrius, not Aratus, who stood behind Philip's atrocity at Thermum in 218. When civil conflict broke out in 215 at Messene (a Macedonian ally), Philip intervened on the side of one of the factions. Aratus and his son accused Philip of having helped instigate the resulting massacre;[37] and Polybius directly accuses Demetrius of having egged Philip on (7.13.6 and 14.5; cf. 9.23.9). Immediately after the massacre, Philip was tempted to seize by surprise the great Messenian fortress on Mt. Ithome. Demetrius, Polybius says, impulsively urged Philip to do it (αὐτόθεν . . . ἐκ τοῦ προβεβηκότος), on the grounds that it would greatly strengthen Macedonian control in the Peloponnese (7.12.2–3). But Aratus advocated maintaining good faith with the Messenians instead, primarily because of the long-term political wisdom of acting in a trustworthy manner (which would encourage Greek acceptance and support of Philip's power), but also on grounds of simple morality (12.5–7, note παρασπονδῆσαι at 12.5 and πίστιν at 12.7, twice). Philip's personal inclination was to betray the Messenians and seize the fortress (παρασπονδεῖν, 12.8); but, Polybius says, he was shamed by Aratus' words (ἐνετράπη, 12.9). Philip thus relinquished Ithome reluctantly to the Messenians (12.10); but the incident was in fact a crucial step in the souring of his relationship with Aratus.[38]

35. The negative picture of Philip in 5.102 is clearly the result of Polybius' personal ruminations on the weaknesses of young men, and not those of a source, as a comparison with Polybius' parallel description of Hannibal in 3.15 immediately shows: see Eckstein, "Power of Irrationality," pp. 10–12, cf. p. 15, n. 50. On the other hand, Polyb. 5.101–2 is part of a very detailed account of the negotiations that ended the Social War of 220–217 (Polyb. 5.101.6–8.10), on which Polybius obviously had very good information that can only have been Greek in origin.

36. Note also that Polybius knows that Aratus did not oppose the quick ending of the war against Aetolia (5.102.3). As Walbank points out (*Philip V*, p. 65), it makes sense that Philip would have consulted Demetrius first and foremost about anything concerning the West; one may add that this would naturally have created rancor among Philip's other advisors—especially among those who strongly disagreed with Demetrius' advice.

37. Polyb. 7.12.9, cf. 13.4–6 and 14.4, remarks clarified by Plut. *Arat.* 49–50.

38. For detailed discussion of the political background and impact of the Mt. Ithome incident, see Walbank, *Philip V*, pp. 72–74.

Polybius ends this story by reasserting that he has now shown who is likely to have advised Philip to commit the atrocity at Thermum (7.13.3–8). The confrontation on Mt. Ithome demonstrated "the wicked principles" of Demetrius of Pharus (μοχθηρόν . . . προαίρεσιν, 13.4), while Aratus' contrary principles stand fully revealed. The picture of Demetrius here—an amoral advocate of betrayal of an ally for the sake of immediate political gain, blind to the long-term deleterious effects of such a policy—is, of course, perfectly familiar. Polybius' ultimate source of information on the Mt. Ithome incident is likely, Walbank suggests, to have been Aratus himself.[39]

Demetrius' negative image for Polybius' audience will have received a final powerful reinforcement in the historian's account of Demetrius' death during an abortive surprise attack on Messene in 214. The account itself is lost, but at 3.19.10–11 (in the context of the Second Illyrian War) Polybius already tells us what he intended to say: the attack was reckless and careless, a typical action of Demetrius.[40] Given what is known of the political circumstances immediately surrounding the attack,[41] it may well be that Polybius also depicted it as a signal act of treachery—one that Demetrius urged upon Philip (cf. 3.19.11 μετὰ τῆς Φιλίππου γνώμης).

Two conclusions derive from the above discussion. One concerns the nature of Polybius' use of his sources in regard to his interpretation of the war of 219; the other concerns our own efforts to understand what actually happened between Demetrius and the Romans in that year.

First, it is now apparent that in the universe of sources available to Polybius concerning Demetrius of Pharus, the assessment of Demetrius' personality and behavior (from Fabius Pictor, and perhaps from a "pro-Aemilian" account of the campaign of 219; from Aratus, and perhaps from other Achaean information) was all of a piece. In all these sources Demetrius was portrayed as reckless, impulsive, treacherous, and completely lacking in political judgment and foresight. Moreover, it is very likely that Polybius was already well aware of the bulk of this information—the purely Greek side of it, dealing in detail with Demetrius' actions between 219 and 214—before he ever sat down and read whatever Fabius Pictor had to say about Demetrius' personality and actions in regard to the outbreak of the Second Illyrian War. Most important here was that Demetrius had been a major political rival of Aratus of Sicyon, that Aratus had despised him (and had disagreed strongly with him about provoking Rome in 217 and after), and that Polybius had grown up within a circle of men for whom Aratus was a hero. This means that Polybius' depiction of Demetrius' personality and actions in the narrative of the origins of the Second Illyrian War should not be seen as simply Polybius' repetition of the (presumably) propagandistic account of events he found in Fabius Pictor—although this is the current scholarly *communis opinio*.

39. *Commentary*, 2:59.
40. See above, p. 52.
41. For detailed discussion, see Walbank, *Philip V*, pp. 77–79.

On the contrary, Polybius approached Fabius Pictor with caution, precisely because of the Roman's propagandistic tone (see Polyb. 1.14 and 3.8–9); if the Greek historian took Fabius more seriously on the events of 219, it was because the picture there conformed to what he already believed about Demetrius of Pharus based upon his knowledge of much other information. In other words, Polybius approached the problem of evaluating Demetrius of Pharus in 219 with far more sources available, and in a far more sophisticated manner, than most scholars presently believe.[42]

But this first conclusion then raises a new question: granted that with regard to the war of 219 Polybius has developed his own (perhaps idiosyncratic) understanding of events, based on multiple sources as well as his own (pre)conceptions and (didactic) purposes, how close is the resulting text to historical reality? After all, Polybius' sources may have been multiple, but they were all, for various reasons, biased against Demetrius.

A good test case here is the issue of whether Demetrius in fact broke the Lissus Treaty of 228. It has sometimes been alleged that this accusation, evidently deriving from Fabius Pictor, should never have been accepted by Polybius (3.16.3), and thus reveals Polybius' rather naive use of his Roman source. One argument has been that the treaty of 228 applied only to Queen Teuta herself, or at most to the Illyrian monarchy, but not specifically to Demetrius—with whom the treaty had in any case never been renewed, which would have been the proper Hellenistic practice.[43] Alternatively, it has been suggested that Demetrius' devastating raids south of the Lissus in 220 were "unofficial," carried out merely in his private capacity as dynast of Pharus, and therefore not covered by the treaty.[44]

The implication is that Polybius has allowed himself to be misled on a vital question about the events of 220/19; but in fact neither of the above arguments should be accepted. Demetrius was no ordinary Illyrian warlord: sometime in the 220s he had replaced Teuta as regent for Pinnes, the heir-apparent to the monarchy of the Illyrian Ardiaei, by marrying Pinnes' biological mother Triteuta (Dio frag. 53). Not only had this greatly increased Demetrius' power along the Illyrian coast (thereby upsetting the Roman settlement of 228), but this change in Demetrius' status means that to argue that the treaty of 228 had not been sworn personally with him would render the treaty a farce.[45] The same holds true for the distinction made between Demetrius conducting raids in his "private" capacity

42. P. S. Derow has suggested a rather similar intellectual process went into Polybius' reconstruction of the origins of the First Illyrian War of 229/28: Polybius combined Fabius Pictor with various Greek information in order to produce a picture that was also heavily influenced by Polybius' own historiographical predilections (a didactic emphasis on moderation in behavior, as well as—in the case of Queen Teuta—traditional Greek misogyny). See "Kleemporos," pp. 129–32.

43. Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," p. 14; Errington, *Dawn of Empire*, p. 108; Gruen, *Coming of Rome*, 2:371.

44. Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," p. 14; Errington, *Dawn of Empire*, p. 108.

45. See, rightly, Petzold, "Rom und Illyrien," p. 212. Hammond seems unaware that the application of the Lissus Treaty to Demetrius is even controversial: "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 11.

and Demetrius conducting raids as regent of the Ardiaei: this is much too subtle; after all, he *was* regent of the Ardiaei.[46] All this explains why Errington, for one, has now reversed his previous position and argues that the treaty of 228 did indeed in all probability apply to Demetrius, and that the Romans therefore had good grounds for believing he had broken it.[47]

Such a conclusion might well suggest that Demetrius had recklessly tempted fate by his actions in 220 (and perhaps by other actions before). But Errington, still wishing to maintain the picture of a fundamentally rational Demetrius (and in this he is hardly alone among modern scholars), contends that while Demetrius may have broken the Lissus Treaty, he simultaneously went out of his way to avoid provoking Rome—by raiding the southern Peloponnese and the Cyclades; what really happened in 219 was that Demetrius fell foul of two consuls who basically had nothing else to do.[48] But once one accepts as a fact that Demetrius had broken the treaty of 228, the impressive display of Illyrian naval power by which he did so (sailing and raiding into the Aegean, where no Illyrians had ever been active before) is hardly likely to have been reassuring to the Senate. The same holds true for Demetrius' steadily advancing power and influence over the states and tribes in the Adriatic coastal regions south of the Lissus itself, a process that we cannot follow in detail but that was probably under way by ca. 225. Demetrius in the late 220s was becoming, so it appears, a powerful, independent, undependable, and potentially dangerous force in the seas just to the east of Italy.[49]

It may well be that Petzold is correct that once Demetrius had succeeded in uniting his own principality with the old kingdom of the Ardiaei, thereby disrupting the system of small and thus unthreatening political units that the Romans had set up on the Adriatic coast in 228, some sort of confrontation between Demetrius and Rome was inevitable.[50] But one can also now easily see how Demetrius' conduct in the period immediately preceding 219 made such a confrontation much more likely. Not only were the Illyrians united under one ruler again, from Pharus almost to Epidamnus, but Illyrian soldiers under the command of that ruler were making

46. Rightly, again, Petzold, "Rom und Illyrien," p. 212.

47. *CAH*^{2}, p. 93. Contrast *Dawn of Empire*, p. 108.

48. *CAH*^{2}, pp. 92–93. The latter argument clearly reflects the ideas on the mechanisms behind Roman aggressiveness advanced by W. V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1979), passim; but see A. N. Sherwin-White, "Rome the Aggressor?," *JRS* 70 (1980): 177–81. Other scholars who wish to posit a "rational" Demetrius: Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce*, pp. 132–34; Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," pp. 12–15; Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 11, n. 39; Gruen, *Coming of Rome* 2:369–71.

49. Polybius' charge that Demetrius was "pillaging and destroying Illyrian cities subject to Rome" (3.16.3) is clearly exaggerated—but this does not mean that the other references to Demetrius' activities on the Adriatic coast south of the Lissus are ahistorical. Demetrius' influence in these cities is testified to by the more restrained wording of Polyb. 3.18.1, where he has factions in his favor everywhere (this was not the result of one summer's work: pointed out by Badian, "Notes on Roman Policy," p. 15), as well as by his possession of the strategic town of Dimallum (Polyb. 3.18.1 and 3–4), which lay far south of the Lissus, in the hinterland of Apollonia (for its location and history, see Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," pp. 12–15: definitive). Appian adds interference with the Atintani (*Ill.* 8, cf. Dio frag. 53—which no one doubts), and—for what it is worth—increased piratical raiding in the Adriatic itself after 225.

50. "Rom und Illyrien," p. 212.

their presence felt from the Adriatic coast itself as far south as the Peloponnese and as far east as the Aegean. Moreover, the new ruler was a man who gave every evidence of paying no attention to treaties, let alone to the informal obligations that the Romans probably believed he owed them. And meanwhile a crisis was brewing with Carthage.

As we survey the nature of Demetrius' actions in these years, it will not do to argue that, after all, he did not know the future history of Rome's remorseless success.[51] This was a man who had personally witnessed the huge warfleet that the Romans had sent into the Adriatic in 229/28; a truly rational ruler would have been much more cautious.[52] Thus one must canvass the possibility that Polybius' sources were all united in presenting a picture of a reckless and untrustworthy Demetrius, a man who never foresaw the backlash created by his own impetuous actions (not only in the 220s, but later too, as an advisor to Philip V), because that picture did in fact correspond fairly well to a historical reality. Such men, who miscalculate their own power and misread the power raised up against them by their own actions, are not, after all, unknown to history. Perhaps Walbank is therefore correct (though he has not often been followed here) when he remarks that if the Romans hurried to slam their back door in 219, it was because they feared what stood outside it.[53]

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51. Contra: Hammond, "Illyris, Rome and Macedon," p. 11, n. 39.

52. Even Hammond (ibid.) finds Demetrius' raid into the Aegean and the Cyclades an irrational act.

53. *Commentary,* 1:325; cf. Petzold, "Rome und Illyrien," pp. 211–12. Another scholar willing to entertain the notion that Demetrius' personality was indeed a crucial factor in precipitating the war is S. I. Oost, *Roman Policy in Epirus and Acarnania* (Dallas, 1954), p. 22; but Oost attributes Demetrius' behavior merely to his being a "barbarian" Illyrian, and Demetrius may well have been a Greek (cf. Walbank, *Commentary,* 1:161; Polybius certainly thinks of him as one).