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The Aetolian Elite Warriors
and Fifth-Century Roots
of the Hellenistic Confederacy

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Contents

Foreword	5
I. Were there Greek federal states?	7
II. Early Aetolian Confederacy – acknowledged ancient evidence and modern interpretations	9
III. The first appearance of Aetolian elite units	18
IV. Hellenistic mobilisations	20

Foreword

The present booklet arises from a rather lengthy digression I had included in my paper on the Aetolian objectors in the war between Rome and Antiochus III delivered at the Second Hellenistic Warfare Conference in Valencia (October 2005). Two years later in Tours at the Third Hellenistic Warfare Conference, in a discussion of my paper on the military clauses of a *sympoliteia* treaty between Myania and Hypnia the problem of Aetolian armies came back and I repeated a lot of I had presented before a different audience in Valencia. Since this digression went far beyond we can consider the chronological borders of Hellenistic Age, and since I gradually developed my argumentation (what was originally a digression is now much bigger than the original paper on an episode of the Antiochic war), an idea emerged to clear my positions and to devote a separate study to the beginnings of the Aetolian military system.

I decided first to publish this work in Polish, and then to present its English version (since Polonica non leguntur or are hardly read). Thus, at the same time it appears in a bit shorter form in the Festschrift of my teacher Professor Włodzimierz Lengauer, (*Armia i narodziny greckiego państwa związkowego: przypadek etolski*, in: A. Wolicki (ed.), *Timai. Studia poświęcone profesorowi Włodzimierzowi Lengauerowi przez uczniów i młodszych kolegów z okazji Jego 60 urodzin*). It would be a great honour for me if Professor Lengauer would be kind to accept also this booklet.

It is my great pleasure to thank people who helped to make this work better or just possible. I would like to express my gratitude Professor Ryszard Kulesza, the Editor of *Akme. Studia Historica* for his readiness to include this text into his series as well as for all his help and advice. Dr. Aleksander Wolicki, the editor of the volume that comprises the Polish version of these considerations was a careful reader, and his critical eye saved me from not a one mistake. I tried to have his comments on the Polish article in mind, while working on the English version. From the audience of both Hellenistic Warfare meetings (Valencia 2005 and Tours 2007) many important questions had been asked - special thanks shall go to Dr. Alejandro Noguera Borel from the Instituto Valenciano des Estudios Classicos y Orientales and Professor Nicholas V. Sekunda from Gdansk University. I profited much also from the advice and critics, both detailed and general, by Dr. Sławomir Sprawski from the Jagiellonian University, Cracow. The English idiom of this book would be much worse without a help from Dr. Robin Crellin, who saved me from numerous flaws.

Needless to say I am sole responsible for all errors and flaws, both factual and linguistic, that remained as well as for all opinions expressed on the following pages*.

* Translations of Greek and Latin authors are usually borrowed from Loeb Classical Library (with adjustments when needed). I am responsible alone, however, for translated quotations from inscriptions.

All three-digit dates, unless stated otherwise, are B.C. ones.

The Aetolian Elite Warriors and Fifth-Century Roots of the Hellenistic Confederacy

I. Were there Greek federal states?

In spite of changing trends and fluctuating fashions in the scholarship, so-called Greek federal states are generally less-known than the world of *poleis*. Our knowledge of these organisations is so fragile that it was possible once for no less eminent a scholar than Adalberto Giovannini to deny the existence of the Greek federalism¹. Giovannini underscored similarities between the Macedonian monarchy and the Greek *ethne* and stressed that the ancient Greeks used word *ethnos* that among others designated the leagues rather imprecisely. This radical view was convincingly rejected by a leading specialist in the field, whose incomparable expertise of the Hellenistic world arose from the study of Polybius, himself the only ancient theorist of *synedriake politeia*². Later critics of Giovannini focused on terminology, and stressed a close relation between the terms *ethnos* and *koinon* in the constitutional context on the one hand and an

¹ A. Giovannini, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sympolitie*, Göttingen 1971, 80-92.

² F.W. Walbank, *Were there Greek federal states*, SCI 3 (1976-77) 27-51, and esp. 29-36 (the present section of my paper owes its name to Walbank's article, of course)

opposition between the terms *basileis* (or *dynastai*) and *ethnos* in popular ancient clichés depicting the world of states on the other hand³. Thus, the post-Giovannini research faced a problem concerning how to define a Greek federal state and to distinguish between true federal organisms and less developed tribal leagues. Thomas Corsten suggested that the most important distinction between Greek tribes and federal states was that the latter were given the rational structure: mainly the division into districts of military importance⁴ - as a consequence Corsten understood the federal state as an upgrade of the tribal state⁵. In most cases we cannot, however, indicate the exact moment of transformation. It seems that very early *ethne* often show some traces of rational structure, too. However, the main problem is with sources: most classical authors focused on Athens, the Aegeans, and on the never-ending struggle for hegemony. From this point of view important changes and transformations in the most areas of Greece dominated by *ethne* are almost non-existent.

³ See: J. Rzepka, *Ethnos, Koinon, Sympoliteia and Greek Federal States*, in: T. Derda, J. Urbanik, M. Węcowski, (eds.), *Euergesias Charin: Studies presented to Ewa Wipszycka and Benedetto Bravo by their Disciples*. JJP Suppl. 1, Warszawa 2002, 225-247; E. Vimercati, *Il concetto di 'ethnos' nella terminologia politica ellenistica*, in: C. Bearzot, F. Landucci, G. Zecchini (eds.), *Gli stati territoriali nel mondo antico*. Contributi di storia antica 1, Milano 2003, 111-126.

⁴ T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund. Gründung und territoriale Organisation griechischer Bundestaaten*, Würzburg 1999, 241.

⁵ This relation is underscored by the title of Corsten's book. Of course, the idea of the Greek federal states developing from the tribal unions is not new, and had numerous eminent advocates including H. Swoboda (*i.a.* in his edited second volume of G. Busolt & H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* (HdA IV 1.1), München 1926, 1313, J.A.O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States. Their Institutions and History*, Oxford 1968, xiii-xvi and F.W. Walbank, *Were there Greek federal states*, 36.

II. Early Aetolian Confederacy – acknowledged ancient evidence and modern interpretations

This explains why the Aetolian Confederacy, which later became a principal player in the struggle for leadership in Hellenistic Greece, reached a status of intermediary power of fourth-century Greece in so silent a manner. We know some major steps of Aetolian expansion, that is true: in the earlier part of the fourth century the Aetolians were first able to recover Calydon and Pleuron, cities of the coastal region that lived independently for a long time, and then to enlarge the state beyond old tribal boundaries⁶. The most important episode of this stage of Aetolian history was, perhaps, a take-over of Naupactus in 338⁷. In the remaining part of the fourth century and in the two first decades of the third the Aetolians continued to annex many North-Western Greek peoples into their state. However, we do not have sufficient evidence to indicate milestones of this phase of Aetolian expansion. To Diodorus of Sicily, the author of *Library of History*, which is the only preserved continuous record of late fourth century events, the North-Western theatre of Greek interstate politics was rather peripheral, and we can hardly say if this was his conscious choice, or he simply followed his source, the *History* of Hieronymus of Cardia⁸. The sources for *c.a.* 281

⁶ S. Bommélje, *Aeolis in Aetolia. Thuc. III 102, 5 and the origins of the Aetolian ethnos*, *Historia* 37 (1988), 297–316.

⁷ J. Rzepka, *Philip II of Macedon and 'The Garrison in Naupactus' A Re-Interpretation of Theopompus FGrHist 115F 235*, *Tyche* 19 (2004), 157–166.

⁸ I would say that in spite of this prevailing opinion Hieronymus had an interest in this part of Greek world, and some traces of this attitude may be found in Proclus (*In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, vol. II, p. 115 [Kroll]) and Phlegon of Tralles (*FGrHist* 257 F 36) repeating a freaky story of how the ghost of freshly deceased *strategos* Polycritus showed himself to the *koine ekklesia* of the Aetolians – it is due to this cliché used in Phlegon's variant I dared to suggest that this *miraculum* comes from Hieronymus. The cliché *koine ekklesia* may be a proof that Hieronymus had more understanding for Greek federal states than we, modern scholars, were ready to admit,

– *c.a.* 221 are only slightly better; and much more can be said about 221-189: Polybius, a native of rival Achaea⁹, provides more information on Aetolia's wars; his interests being reflected in his followers, including Livy; and –no surprise - the Confederacy, being that time a principal power of mainland Greece, is frequently alluded to by other writers dealing with the events of the third century B.C. (e.g. by much later on by Pausanias).

Enmity of most ancient authors cannot conceal that the Aetolian Confederacy belonged to the most successful states of Hellenistic Greece. In the third century the Aetolians were able to build the largest “federal” state in Greek history. Modern historians perhaps influenced by the ancient authorities that were rather hostile to the Aetolians, do not dare to speak about the Aetolian Empire openly¹⁰, yet silently agree that the Aetolian politics was imperialistic and – for a Greek state- enormously aggressive¹¹. On the other hand, the ancient historians, and in their number Polybius particularly, were inclined to explain the rise and fall of states and empires by good or bad traits of constitution (admittedly these were considered closely linked to the “ethnic character”). Polybius did not find anything valuable in the Aetolian constitution, he suggested

see: J. Rzepka, *Koine ekklesia in Diodorus Siculus and the general assemblies of the Macedonians*, *Tyche* 20 (2005), 119-142, and esp. 131-132, 140-142.

⁹ In spite of arguments of Kenneth Sacks (*Polybius' Other View of Aetolia*, *JHS* 95 (1975), 92-106) that the Polybian narrative of early second century is free of his usual enmity towards Aetolians a prevailing view of scholarship remains that Polybius was invariably inimical to Aetolians (D. Mendels, *Did Polybius have another view of the Aetolian League? A note*, *AncSoc* 15-17 (1984-86), 63-73; C. Antonetti, *Les Étoliens. Image et religion*, Paris 1990, 133-134; C. Champion, *Cultural Politics in Polybius's Histories*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 2004, 19, 151-152; G.F. Franko, *Fides, Aetolia, and Plautus' Captivi*, *TAPhA* 125 (1995), 155-176.

¹⁰ This cliché was used half-seriously by K.J. Rigsby, *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World*, Berkeley 1996, 17.

¹¹ J.B. Scholten, *The Politics of Plunder. Aitolians and their Koinon in the Early Hellenistic Era, 279-217B.C.*, Berkeley 2000.

to the contrary that shortcomings of the Aetolian political arrangement while linked with the enormous greed of Aetolian people could not produce anything but lasting *stasis*¹².

The Polybian general criticisms of the Aetolian political system are probably undeserved, since – except for his account of the late third-century troubles in the country – it is difficult to hint on any other sign of long-lasting civil strife in Aetolia. On the contrary, scholars seem to agree tacitly that during the third century the Aetolians enjoyed constitutional stability rarely met in the Greek world, although at the same time the same people are aware that the system was not eternal¹³. There can be hardly a doubt that the constitution of the Hellenistic Aetolian Confederacy could not be identical with the Aetolians' political organisation in the fifth century, i.e. from a period before the Aetolians started to enlarge their state. The date, at which the Aetolian Confederacy of earlier times was transformed into a “modern” Greek federal state, as well as the character of this process, remains less clear. Most students are inclined to date this event to the second half of the fourth century, and explain it as a result of a sudden breach of Aetolia's constitutional development¹⁴.

¹² On the isolation of Polybius' overt critics of the Aetolian constitution (Plb. 13,1,1a), see F.W. Walbank, *Commentary to Polybius* vol. 2, Oxford 1970, 413.

¹³ H. Swoboda, *Lehrbuch der Griechischen Staatsaltertümer* (K. F. Hermann's *Lehrbuch der Griechischen Antiquitäten. Erster Band: Staatsaltertümer Teil. 3 neu bearbeitet von...*), Tübingen 1913, 354-370, H. Swoboda in G. Busolt & H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, vol. 2, 1509-1527; J.A.O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States: Their Institutions and History*, 195-215.

¹⁴ For many decades the most widespread view was that this alleged transformation into the „modern”, rational structure should be linked to the confusion in Greece during the Alexander's absence and the wars of *Diadochi*, see: G. Busolt & H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, vol. 2, 1509 (a date between 322 and 314); W. Schwann, *RE* II 4 (1931), cols. 1171-1172, *s. v. Sympolitēia* (between 322 and 304). The editor of the Aetolian fascicle of *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Guenther Klaffenbach, as well as Robert Flacelière, for some sixty years considered the author of the most plausible Delphic chronology under the Aetolian domination, suggested the reign of Alexander, see: G. Klaffenbach, *IG IX² 1*, p. xiii (c. 334); R. Flacelière, *Les Aitoliens à Delphes. Contribu-*

I would agree that such a reform corresponded well with the spirit of the times, and that the late fourth century saw the transformation of many loosely organised *ethne* into more complex federal organisms – Philip II, while inviting the Greeks to join him in a Pan-Hellenic crusade against Persia was able to build his new Hellenic Alliance of *ethne*, not of *poleis*¹⁵. He actively supported the making of new federal states¹⁶, and perhaps gave Macedonia herself a quasi-federal (or at least very rational, modeled after Greek federalist patterns) territorial structure¹⁷.

If such a change of constitution really took place, it did not mean the reconstruction of social order and civic life in the constituents of the Confederacy. Diversity of political arrangements in the cities of Hellenistic Aetolia unmistakably hints at the survival of old local constitutions in those communities – certainly there was no attempt to reduce *poleis* to mere administrative units or subunits of the federal state¹⁸.

There are also a number of scholars who think that Aetolia was organised as a more developed federal state much earlier. Their main proof is an Athenian inscription containing a decree by the Athenian *boule* and *demos* that resolved to send a herald to *koinon* of the Aetolians (Rhodes & Osborne, *GHI* 35 from 367/6). He was to make a formal demand for the release of Athenian envoys announcing the holy truce of the Eleusinian mysteries who had been arrested by *Trichonieis* (i.e. the city of Trichonion or simply people from Trichonion)¹⁹. In spite of

tion à l'histoire de la Grèce centrale au III^e siècle av. J.-C., Paris 1937, 42 (before 326).

¹⁵ C. Roebuck, *The Settlement of Philip II with the Greek States in 338 B.C.*, *Classical Philology* 43 (1948) 73-92, esp. 90.

¹⁶ In this place I can only send the Readers to a study *The League of Achaia Phthiotis*, which I am preparing together with Nicholas V. Sekunda.

¹⁷ J. Rzepka, *Koine ekklesia*, 140-2; *idem*, *The Units in the Army of Alexander the Great and the District Division of Late Argead Macedonia*, *GRBS* 48 (2008), 39-56.

¹⁸ H. Swoboda, *Lehrbuch der Griechischen Staatsaltertümer*, 354-356; J. Rzepka, *The Rights of Cities within the Aitolian Confederacy*, Valencia 2006, *passim*.

¹⁹ Already the first editor has suggested that this document is a proof of federalist transformation in Aetolia shortly before 367/6, see: H. Schweigert, *A Decree Concern-*

the unfounded doubts of a recent student of Aetolian history²⁰, the text makes clear that the Athenians were convinced that there is kind of the Athenian authority over the city of Trichonion.

Let us stress that so far nobody proved that the territorial constitution of the Hellenistic Aetolian Confederacy did not result from a long lasting process, but rather was created *uno actu*. Marta Sordi, who authored perhaps the best study of Aetolian early history, even maintained that it would be vain to look for such an event, which – according to her – had not left any trace²¹. Whereas I do not accept this conclusion, I am inclined to accept that *koinon* mentioned in the Athenian protest to the Aetolians (Rhodes & Osborne, *GHI* 35) need not necessarily mean the Aetolian Confederacy – this term more often denotes the assembly in a non-polis state²².

ing the Aetolian League, 367/6 B.C., *Hesperia* 7 (1939), 5-12, esp. 8-10; the most influential scholars in the field followed him, see: J.A.O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States, 195-197* (he speaks more cautiously about the first decades of the fourth century); F.W. Walbank, *Macedonia and the Greek Leagues*, in: F.W. Walbank (ed.), *Cambridge Ancient History VII 1*², Cambridge 1984, 232.

²⁰ J.D. Grainger, *The League of the Aitolians*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999, 35.

²¹ M. Sordi, *Le origini del koinon etolico*, in: *eadem, Scritti di storia greca*, Milano 2002, 31-55, esp. 55 (the original publication in *Acme* 6 (1953), 419-445). The conclusion by Sordi was followed by many later students of the ancient Greek federalism, including A. Giovannini, *Sympolitie*, 60-3; H. Beck, *Polis und Koinon. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Struktur der griechischen Bundesstaaten im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Stuttgart 1997, 51; P. Funke, *Polisgenese und Urbanisierung in Aitolien im 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr.*, in: M. H. Hansen (ed.), *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community*, CPC Acts 4, Copenhagen 1997, 145-188, 154-155. The author of the most recent study of the Aetolian Confederacy seems to hesitate between the evolutionary approach of Sordi and the belief in a change that excluded many earlier constituents of the *ethnos* from the political community, see: J.B. Scholten, *The Politics of Plunder*, 2: “By the late fourth century, however, contacts with the larger Greek world had progressively increased, transforming this Aitolian political community in the process. In place of the old *ethnos*, which had been loosely organized around clans and tribes, an association (τὸ κοινὸν) emerged, based on urban or proto-urban settlements (πόλεις)”.
²² J. Rzepka, *Ethnos, Koinon, Sympoliteia*, 226-232.

In Aetolia such an assembly must have met earlier on many occasions. The oldest known assembly of the Aetolians met in the face of an Athenian invasion in 426 to send ambassadors to Sparta, Athens' main enemy at the time (Thuc. 3,100,1). According to Thucydides each of the envoys was also a representative of one of Aetolia's *mere* - constituent parts (Ophioneis, Eurytanes and Apodotoi). These original *mere*, however, were not monolithic in the later fifth century, and the Ophioneis split into the Bomieis and the (*polis* of) Kallieis. It should be recalled here that a significant fragment of the country, so-called Old Aetolia, with Calydon and Pleuron was at the time an independent political entity known as Aeolis, and probably also far from being a centralised entity (Thuc. 3,102,5)²³.

That there were many local communities in Classical Aetolia, may be inferred from a treaty between the Lacedaemonians and the Erxadieis concluded most likely in the 420s (*SEG* 26, 461²⁴). The existing text has the heading [συνθεκ]αι Αιτωλοῖς, and it was almost unanimously accepted that the Aetolians alluded to in the text must be the people from the northern side of the Gulf of Corinth²⁵. Since the Aetolians were included in the heading of the treaty, it is also likely that the stele, which is broken to the bottom, had also a list of other Aetolian communities that signed the same treaty as the Erxadieis (καθάπερ τοῖς Ερξადίευσι)²⁶.

²³ S. Bommélje, *Aeolis in Aetolia*, 297–316.

²⁴ *Editio princeps*: W. Peek, *Ein neuer spartanischer Staatsvertrag*, *ASAW* 65 (3), 1974; reprinted in the revised edition of Meiggs & Lewis, *GHI* (Oxford 1989, 312).

²⁵ There was also a distinct opinion of Fritz Gschnitzer, who saw in the treaty's Aetolians one of the perioecic communities of Lacedaemon, see: F. Gschnitzer, *Ein neuer spartanischer Staatsvertrag*, Meisenheim am Glan 1978, 22-26. This view was with right criticised by all other readers of the Erxadieis treaty, with the most systematic refutation in Wolfgang Schuller's review of Gschnitzer's book (W. Schuller, *Anzeiger für die Altertumswissenschaft* 34-35 (1981-82), 257-259).

²⁶ D.H. Kelly *The new Spartan treaty*, *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 3 (1978) 133-141, 141.

The treaty is an example of unequal alliance, in which a weaker partner (Aetolian communities in this particular case) is obliged to support actions and plans of a stronger one with no sign of hesitation. In the latter part of the fifth century the Athenian Alliance as the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League evolved in this direction²⁷. Admittedly, so clear a statement of the Spartan superiority as well as a division of Aetolia into a number of sovereign entities does not correspond well with the Aetolian success in 426. Rather, the Aetolians' situation resembles that of a loser in war forced to accept the friendship and alliance of a winner. We do not possess a full coverage, year by year, of the Aetolian wars in the fifth and fourth centuries, still the only piece of information we have refers to another great success of the Aetolian forces against the Spartan military under the walls of Elis in 402 (Diod. 14,17,9) – which hardly could result in a disbandment of the tribe's unity. The Aetolian historical tradition preserved, too, memories of successful wars against Sparta only²⁸. The latter, however, could be interested in presenting herself as the true champion of the liberty of Greek *polis*, large or small, and thus insisted on signing treaties with constituents of leagues, rather than with leagues themselves. It was perhaps a Spartan traditional policy, since it is more than likely that in the fifth century the Achaeans being all members of the league were represented in the councils of the allied by representatives of cities²⁹. Sparta's generally idiosyncratic policy toward Greek federations in the fourth century may be therefore more than a purely contemporary attitude conditioned by enmity towards Thebes and the Chalcidians³⁰. In any case, the Aetolians felt it advantageous to

²⁷ T. Pistorius, *Hegemoniestreben und Autonomiesicherung in der griechischen Vertragspolitik klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit*, Frankfurt/Main 1985, 88-90.

²⁸ J. Rzepka, *Principes Semper Graeciae: Pompeius Trogus/Justinus and the Aetolian Politics of History*, in: J. Pigoń (ed.), *The Children of Herodotus: Greek and Roman Historiography and Related Genres*, Cambridge – Newcastle upon Tyne 2008, 218-229.

²⁹ J.A.O. Larsen, *The Early Achaean League*, in: G. Mylonas (ed.), *Studies Presented to D.M. Robinson*, vol. 2, Saint Louis 1953, 797-815, esp. 809-810.

³⁰ Hans Beck argued that Sparta's interest was the decisive factor determining her

them to sign the treaty as written by the Spartans. Who were then the Erxadieis that signed the treaty, which was the model of the remaining Sparta's Aetolian agreements? The most obvious answer is that they were one of *unwalled villages*, in which –according to Thucydides- most Aetolians lived in his lifetime (Thuc. 3,94,4: *κατὰ κώμας ἀτειχίστους*). And there can be no doubt that these *unwalled villages* of Book III were the same as *unwalled poleis* mentioned in passage of the Thucydidean *Archaeology* commenting on a semi-barbarian way of life of North-Western Greeks (Thuc. 1,5,1). Thus, the Erxadieis might have been one of these *poleis*. Due to the decades of archeological activity in the area we are now able to say that Thucydides' picture of backwater Aetolia was far from being true, since already in fifth-century Aetolia there were cities that did not differ too much from the architectural patterns of the *polis* known from the Aegeans³¹.

The rise of Aetolian cities did not result in a decline of the common politics, and Aetolians, now citizens of the numerous *poleis* in the country, felt loyalty to the *ethnos*. In any case, while being abroad they presented themselves with the double ethnic formula – the foreign epigraphic documents concerning or just mentioning Aetolians usually repeat a way they had introduced themselves. The oldest example is admittedly very late (Αἰτωλος ἐκ Μακυνέας presented himself at Delphi in 329/8)³², but it is also one of the earliest mentions of any Aetolian city ethnic in the inscriptions³³. Although there was no strict rule, in

policies toward Greek leagues. It compelled her to destroy the Boeotian and the Chalcidian Confederacies on the pretext of struggle for freedom and autonomy of *poleis*, whereas her federal friends were not just allowed to exist, but often found support in Sparta: “*Ein gravierender Unterschied liegt zunächst in der Tatsache, daß die Akarnanen, Phoker, Aitolier, und Achaier zum Zeitpunkt des Königsfriedens mit, die Boioter und Chalkidier indessen gegen Sparta verbündet waren*”, see: H. Beck, *Polis und Koinon*, 245.

³¹ P. Funke, *Polisgenese und Urbanisierung in Aitolien*, 169-172.

³² E. Bourget, *Inscriptions de Delphes II*, BCH 23 (1899) 356-357.

³³ Even in the literary texts Aetolian city ethnics are extremely rare (a Pleuronian in Hom., *Il.* 23, 635 and a Calydonian in Lysias 13, 71). Thus, the only older inscriptions

the Hellenistic Age the Aetolians seem to use simple city ethnics inside Aetolia or in Aetolian-ruled Delphi, whereas further abroad they were more inclined to use double ethnics or simple tribal ethnics³⁴.

Moreover, the growth of cities did not affect the common foreign policy of the *ethnos*. Facts of Aetolian history preserved by Classical authors, fragmentary and very rare though they are, enable us to say that the Aetolian *ethnos* pursued the stable and coherent foreign policy over many decades from the last years of the fifth century to the early Hellenistic Age. Thus, it was a stable policy first to regain access to the Gulf of Corinth through the *reconquista* of Pleuron and Calydon, and then to secure and enlarge maritime borders through annexations in Acarnania and Western Locris. Another traditional Aetolian policy was to support Elis in her Peloponnesian conflicts. The Greeks believed that Elis was colonized by the Aetolians, and although a current prevailing view that most ancient Greek blood relationships between peoples and cities were invented in the Hellenistic Age to serve contemporary politics is generally correct³⁵, this particular tradition seems to be well known in Archaic Greece³⁶ and to influence pan-Aetolian policies in the Classical period.

mentioning an individual Aetolian are two early fourth-century private monuments from Athens commemorating Τιτυρμος Φολαιεύς (IG II² 10036 and 10482).

³⁴ Thus the appendix *Unidentified Ethnics Attested in Hellenistic Sources* (to K. Freitag – P. Funke – N. Moustakis, *Aitolia*, in: M.H. Hansen & T.H. Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, Oxford 2004, 379-390, on 386-387) contains nothing but the city ethnics attested in inscriptions found on the territory of the Aetolian Confederacy (37 examples) or in Delphi (14 examples). Of course, even in Delphi the simple tribal ethnics as well as the double ethnics of the Aetolians are more common.

³⁵ O. Curty, *Les parentés légendaires entre cités grecques: catalogue raisonnée des inscriptions contenant le term συγγενεία et analyse critique*, Geneve 1995, 215-241.

³⁶ In the early fifth century the Aetolian name was one of the appellations of referees in the Olympics (Pind., *Ol.* 3, 10: Αἰτωλὸς ἀνὴρ).

III. The first appearance of Aetolian elite units

By chance, we owe to this traditional friendship between the Aetolians and the Eleans one of the most important testimonies of the early Aetolian confederacy. In the Book XIV of *Library of History* Diodorus of Sicily recounts some episodes of the Spartan-Elean War that followed the victory of Spartans in the Peloponnesian War (chapters 17.4-17.12). Sparta after the defeat of Athens was unquestionable the leader in the Greek world, and tried also to settle the Peloponnesian affairs after her own plans. Elis found herself in a precarious situation, yet still was able to find an ally in Aetolia. Despite provoking Sparta, which must have been extremely risky in the circumstances of the time, in 402 the Aetolians decided to send 1 000 picked or elite warriors (*epilektoi*) as an aid to the Eleans³⁷. In what follows I will argue that it is the *terminus ante quem* of a military reform in Aetolia, which reform must be an element of federalist transformation of the earlier tribal league.

Diod. 14, 17, 9: Ἡλεῖοι δὲ μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν ἦσαν παρ' Αἰτωλῶν εἰληφότες συμμάχους ἐπιλέκτους ἄνδρας χιλίους, οἷς τὸν περὶ τὸ γυμνάσιον τόπον δεδώκεισαν φυλάττειν. τοῦ δὲ Πausανίου τοῦτου

³⁷ It is also the very likely first occurrence of the term as an official name for a unit. Admittedly, Diodorus describes in this way the Theban Sacred Band at Delium (Diod. 12, 70, 1) as well as some Athenian units (Diod. 11,30,4; 11,31,2; 12,79,1). In the former case, however, it was not the actual name of the unit, whereas the latter case is even more complex. Diodorus tends to describe as *epilektoi* various types of the elite troops (including the Arcadian *eparittoi*, on which cf. below n. 40), still other authors speak about fifth-century Athenian *epilektoi* (e.g. Aeschin., *de fals. leg.* 75.8; Paus. 1,29,8). Fifth-century authors (Herodotus, Thucydides) never mention *epilektoi*, and invariably speak about *logades*, in the same sense. Therefore, I presume that the later author's use of *epilektoi* in regard of the elite units, of which we do know different names, may be anachronistic; see: L. Trittle, *Epilektoi at Athens*, AHB 3 (1989) 54-59; V. Alonso - K. Freitag, *Prolegomena zu Erforschung der Bedeutung der Eliteeinheiten im archaischen und klassischen Griechenland*, *Gerion* 19 (2001), 199-219, esp. 206-208 and 216-217.

τὸν τόπον πρῶτον ἐπιχειρήσαντος πολιορκεῖν καταπεφρονηκότως, ὡς οὐδέποτ' ἂν τολμησάντων Ἑλείων ἐπεξέλθεῖν, ἐξαίφνης οἱ τε Αἰτωλοὶ καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν πολιτῶν ἐκχυθέντες ἐκ τῆς πόλεως κατεπλήξαντο τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους, καὶ σχεδὸν τριάκοντα αὐτῶν κατέβαλον. "A short time before this the Eleans had got from the Aetolians a thousand elite allied troops to help them, to whom they had given the region about the gymnasium to guard. When Pausanias first of all started to lay siege to this place, and in a careless manner, not supposing that the Eleans would ever dare to make sortie against him, suddenly both the Aetolians and many of the citizens, pouring forth from the city, struck terror into the Lacedaemonians and slew some thirty of them."

An incitement of fear³⁸ in fearless Spartans and a subsequent butchery of thirty of them in a sudden sortie, being a very achievement of this unit, may suggest that the *epilektoi* were a well-trained hoplite force. This contradicts, of course, a widespread opinion that the Aetolian military was mostly light infantry. Let us note, however, that also in Classical sources we see the same *hiatus* between generalizing statements about the light-armed warfare of the Aetolians and the actual numbers and types of Aetolian troops recorded by the ancient historians³⁹ - the armies fighting in the Lamian War or against the Celts were predominantly hoplite or phalanx ones.

³⁸ On this war see recently: J. Roy, *The Spartan-Elean War of c. 400*, Athenaeum 97 (2009), 69-86, 80. The verb κατεπλήξαντο used by Diodorus (or his source) fits well into the conventional picture of a clash of phalanxes and their face-to-face combat, in which losers are often frightened or shocked, see (with all natural weaknesses and limited historicity of the face-of-the-battle approach) V.D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War. Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2000, 96-104, 185-193.

³⁹ Cf. below, p. 24-27.

IV. Hellenistic mobilisations

Admittedly, we cannot find a lot about the Aetolian *epilektoi* in literary sources of the Hellenistic period, except for one single mention in Polybius, which is non-technical: Polybius reports that *the (hundred) picked Aetolians were captured* (οἱ μὲν ἐπιλεκτοὶ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν ἐάλωσαν) by Iason, an Antigonid garrison commander at Panopeus (Plb. 5,96,8). A bit earlier, however, Polybius represents this army as a general national levy brought together in order to attack Acarnania (Ἀγήτας ὁ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν στρατηγὸς συναγαγὼν πανδημεὶ τοὺς Αἰτωλοὺς - *Agetas, the general of the Aetolians was gathering the Aetolians in full strength*, Plb. 5,96,1). It seems that Agetas, having received a deceiving letter, switched from Acarnania to Phocis with a part of the army at least. Then *having selected the hundred most suitable men, he sent them to the Acropolis* (τοὺς δ' ἐπιτηδαιοτάτους ἑκατὸν ἐπιλέξας ἀπέστειλε πρὸς τὴν ἄκραν, Plb. 5,96,6). Accordingly, the hundred Aetolians captured at Panopeus were not regular *epilektoi*, but an *ad hoc* unit⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Sometimes it is not easy to distinguish between standing formations and ones created *ad hoc*. Not a one improvised detachment may transform into or be replaced by a permanent unit. The 300 *epilektoi* of Phlius may be a good example: – Xen., Hell., 5,3,22 (300 men chosen by Delphion to strengthen Phlius' resistance to Agesilaus in 381) and 7,2,10 and 12 (*epilektoi* well-established in the years 371-369). Although the 300 of Delphion waged war against Sparta and the later *epilektoi* fought for her, we should notice that both episodes are parts of what we can call – after Christopher Tuplin – the encomium of Phlius (and of her small, but valiant army). I would presume that the interest in these two episodes might be borrowed by Xenophon from the Phleians themselves. I would say, too, that there might be a one consistent tradition of military prowess in this city, which saw the beginnings of the Phleian *epilektoi* in the unit of Delphion and stressed the continuity of city's development in spite of a change of constitution and an escape of Delphion himself. On the encomium of Phlius, see: C. Tuplin, *Failings of Empire: A Reading of Xenophon Hellenica 2.3.10 - 7.5.27*, Wiesbaden 1993, 145 (Tuplin, however, refers to the stories told in Book VII only) and J. Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, London and New York 1995, 131-133 (who considers episodes from Books V and VII incompatible).

Yet, we can say with certainty that this force continued well into the high Hellenistic Age, and still was basically divided into infantry units of 1 000 men. The survival of *epilektoi* into the era of great expansion of the Confederacy finds the obvious confirmation in an Aetolian – Acarnanian treaty of alliance and sympolity (*IG IX 1² 3a*), which names seven *epilektarcheontes*, so commanders of *epilektoi*. The document contains, too, detailed military obligations of allies, probably the most complete military provisos we can find in ancient Greek treaties of alliance. The treaty was the bilateral pact, and provisos were fitted to the potential of both sides, it is true. Since, however, the Aetolians seem to have been a senior partner and originator of the alliance⁴¹, the obligations in case of war, same for both sides, must have responded better to the Aetolian military organisation.

ll. 26-41: συμμαχία Αἰτωλοῖς καὶ Ἀκαρνανίοις ἅματα τὸμ πάντα χρόνον. εἴ τις κα ἐμβάλλῃ εἰς τὰν Αἰτωλίαν ἐπὶ πολέμῳ, βοαθοεῖν τοὺς Ἀκαρνανὰς πεζοῖς μὲν χιλίοις, ἰππεῦσι δὲ ἑκατόν, οὓς κα τοὶ ἄρχοντες πέμπωντι, ἐν ἀμέραις ἕξ. καὶ εἴ τις ἐν Ἀκαρνανίαν ἐμβάλλῃ ἐπὶ πολέμῳ, βοαθοεῖν Αἰτωλοὺς πεζοῖς μὲν χιλίοις, ἰππέοις δὲ ἑκατόν ἐν ἀμέραις ἕξ, οὓς κα τοὶ ἄρχοντες πέμπωντι. εἰ δὲ πλείονων χρεῖαν ἔχοιεν ἄτεροι πότεροι, βοαθοοῦντω τρισχιλίους ἑκάτεροι ἑκατέροις ἐν ἀμέραις δέκα. τὰς δὲ βοαθοῖας τὰς ἀποστελλομένας ἔστω τὸ τρίτομ μέρος ὀπλίται. πεμπόντω δὲ τὰμ βοαθοῖαν ἐγ μὲν Ἀκαρνανίας οἱ στραταγοὶ τῶν Ἀκαρνανῶν καὶ οἱ σύνοδροι, ἐγ δὲ Αἰτωλίας οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν Αἰτωλῶν. σιταρχοῦντω δὲ τοὺς [ἀπ]οστελλομένους στρατιώτας ἑκάτεροι τοὺς αὐτῶν ἀμερᾶν τριάκοντ[α. εἰ δὲ πλεί]ονα χρόνον ἔχοιεν τὰς βοαθοῖας χρεῖαν οἱ μεταπειψάμενοι τ[ἀμ βοαθοῖα]ν, διδόντω τὰς σιταρχίας, ἔστω κα

⁴¹ Olivier Dany speaks for the equality of contracting sides, and considers the treaty as a success of the Acarnanians securing themselves against the famous Aetolian greed, see: O. Dany, *Akarnanien im Hellenismus. Geschichte und Völkerrecht in Nordwestgriechenland*, München 1999, 85-86. I think that the treaty was a transitional success of the Aetolians, who tried to extend their protectorate over whole of Acarnania, and then to annex the country peacefully. First after a failure of this plan the Confederacy decided for a partition of the Acarnanian territory with Epirus (Plb. 2,45,1; 9,34,7).

ἐν οἶκον ἀποστελῶντι τοὺς [στρατιώ]τας. σιταρχία δ' ἔστω τοῦ πλείονος χρόνου τῶ[ι ἰππεῖ στα]τήρ Κορίν[θιος τᾶς] ἀμέρας ἑκάστας, τῶι δὲ τὰμ πανοπλίαν ἔχο[ντι δύο δραχμαί], τῶι δὲ τὸ [ἡμιθωρ]άκιον ἐννέ' ὀβολοί, ψιλῶι ἔπτ' ὀβολοί. ἀγείσθων [δὲ ἐμ μὲν Αἰτω]λί<α>ι οἱ Αἰ[τωλο]ί, ἐν δὲ Ἀκαρνανία οἱ Ἀκαργᾶνε[ς]

“If someone comes against Aetolia for the purpose of war the Acarnanians will assist them with one thousand infantrymen and one hundred cavalrymen which the magistrates will send within six days, and if someone comes against Acarnania for the purpose of war the Aetolians will assist them with one thousand infantrymen and one hundred cavalrymen which the magistrates, too, will send within six days. If either have a need of more, let the other assist with three thousand, each to the other, within ten days. The aid dispatched will be in the third part hoplites. The *strategoí* and *synedrion* of the Acarnanians will send for the aid from Acarnania and the *archontes* of the Aetolians from Aetolia. Let those of the dispatched expedition be provisioned by senders, each of them for thirty days. If the aid is needed for a greater time, let those who sent for the aid give provisions, until such time as the force shall be sent home. If the provisions are needed for a greater time [a cavalryman] shall receive one Corinthian stater each day, a heavy infantryman [two drachmae], a light infantryman nine obols, a skirmisher – seven obols. The commanders will be [in Aeto]lia the Aetolians and in Acarnania the Acarnanians [...].”

Certainly, the exactness of stipulations was to exclude freedom of interpretation. The alliance did not survive too long, since the Acarnanians must have realized how dangerous to them it was. We do not know whether the treaty was ever implemented, and thus, we cannot say whether the meticulousness of the treaty's negotiators could save the momentary allies from procedural misunderstandings. As already said, the treaty provides us with invaluable data on the composition of Greek armies in the Hellenistic age. Still, it is widely misunderstood.

Alongside a stress on the treaty's payment clauses the scholarly attention focuses on a demand to send the expeditionary army being in one third hoplite force. The obligation to send a contingent consisting in one third of the hoplites is often taken as a proof that the Aetolian army was predominantly a light force; and that the Aetolian tactics can be understood as different from the *polis* model. Such a view bases partly on an assumption that Aetolia was a backwater with no major urban centers. Now we can safely say that Aetolia's urbanisation began earlier than we used to believe, and that the *polis* was the basic unit of political organisation of the country. Hence, it seems to me disputable whether the Aetolian army from late Classical period onwards was lighter-armed than most contemporary Greek armies. I would rather think that the clause defining a minimum share of hoplites was intended to assure a participation of the elite units in the expeditionary forces. This interpretation finds support in the extraordinary inclusion of the names of seven treasurers (*tamieuontes*) and seven elitemen's commanders (*epilektarcheontes*) in the treaty. Both magistratures rarely appear in the Aetolian documents. Their equal number clearly indicates that there was a close relation between the elite units and the state's treasury: in 260s the Aetolian *epilektoi* were recruited in seven districts, and were paid for their service by seven financial officials based in these districts. In this respect, the Aetolian Confederacy resembles better-known Greek federal states, in which the military was based on elite, semi-professional warriors. An army of this type could be a heavy burden for public finances, yet it was an irreplaceable tool of government and politics in the Greek federal states reorganised during the fourth century B.C. – the Arcadian *eparittoi* numbering 5 000 foot and loosely classified as *epilektoi* are perhaps the best known example⁴².

⁴² The name of *eparittoi* recurs in Xenophon (Xen., *Hell.* 7,4,22; 7,4,33-4; 7,4,36; 7,5,3) it was also known to Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 215), but was completely misunderstood as a subtribe's name or city ethnic in Aelius Herodianus (*De prosodia catholica* 3.1. p. 76, l. 27) and Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Ἐπαρίται (ἔθνος Ἀρκαδίας). The

The *eparittoi* were considered as a highly efficient instrument of war, although their number was small in comparison with armies raised by fifth-century intermediate powers in Greece. It would be interesting, therefore to compare with them the Aetolian *epilektoi* to assess the military potential of the freshly rearranged Confederacy.

We do not have any data on the Aetolian armies of the Classical period. For the first time, our sources specify the numbers of Aetolian forces used during the Lamian war. These numbers confirm our guess that 1 000 *epilektoi* were mustered by one of the seven districts of the Confederacy, moreover this conclusion is valid not only for the third century, but also for the 320s. Thus, during the crisis of 322 the Aetolians sent 7 000 of probably hoplite⁴³ infantry to face the Macedonians at Thermopylae (Diod. 18,9,5). In the same way, the heavy infantry numbering 7 000 men was sent in 279/8 to Thermopylae to face a Celtic invasion (Paus. 10, 20, 4). Pausanias, who underscores that the Aetolian contingent was also the biggest of all Greek armies fighting Celts, seems to have done his best to give as many details as possible, but felt obliged to confess his inability to provide exact data:

high value of *eparittoi* in Hesychios, s.v. (ἐπάριτοι· τάγμα Ἀρκαδικὸν μαχιμώτατον). The number of *eparittoi* and their alternative name – Diod. 15,62,2 and 15,67,2. The older theories that the Arcadian constitution was written by the Thebans or answered the Platonic ideal of the state are rejected nowadays, rather one stresses lack of wise alternatives to the solutions accepted by the Arcadians in 370; see: K. Trampedach, *Platon, die Akademie und die zeitgenössische Politik*, Stuttgart 1994, 34-36. Trampedach is highly convincing in rejection of direct stimuli from Thebes or Academy, and his argument (with right on his side) does not exclude possible borrowings and inspirations from other efficient systems.

⁴³ In the precedent sentence of chapter 18,9,5 Diodorus stresses that Leosthenes' Athenian contingent was all hoplite (even if a significant part of his soldiers got their armours from the Athenian state only recently – this is also underscored by the historian). Since Diodorus does not say anything about a composition of the Aetolian contingent, it is likely that the latter consisted of regular hoplites.

Αἰτωλῶν δὲ πλείστη τε ἐγένετο στρατιὰ καὶ ἐς πᾶσαν μάχης ἰδέαν, ἢ μὲν ἵππος οὐ λέγουσιν ὀπόση, ψιλοὶ δὲ ἐνενήκοντα καὶ <ἐπτακόσιοι, πλέονες δὲ> ἐπτακισχιλίων ἀριθμὸν ἦσαν οἱ ὀπλιτεύοντες.

“An army of the Aetolians was the greatest and provided with all arms. One does not report the number of horse, but there were 790? skirmishers and more than 7000 in number served as hoplites”.

The text is corrupted, restored by Schubarth (his correction was rejected in the most recent Teubner’s Pausanias by Rocha-Pereira), so we cannot be certain of the number of light troops, but the size of heavy infantry is certain. Pausanias, however, refers to the Aetolian heavy infantry as ὀπλιτεύοντες “acting as hoplites”, not mere hoplites. The participle used here to describe the Aetolian infantry is rather rare in the Greek literature, still quite often in Pausanias, who may have used this form for stylistic reasons. It is also attractive that the participle was used with an intention to stress that the Aetolian seven thousand were a flexible force of professional warriors able to fight as hoplites or as light infantry (the verb ὀπλιτεύω may be juxtaposed with other verbs denoting service in cavalry, light forces or fleet⁴⁴ or just contrasted with inability to fight⁴⁵).

As I have already pointed out, the Aetolian forces gathered after the first, quick and restricted mobilisations were much bigger. Thus, during a Macedonian invasion of Aetolia in 322 the Confederacy mustered 10 000 warriors, and those being not a whole levy, but actually men “flourishing by youth” (Diod. 18,24,2: ἀκμάζοντας). The two passages in Diodorus concerning the Aetolian manpower during the Lamian War allow a conclusion that the *epilektoi* (7 000 of them) were generally a group narrower than the “flourishing by youth” (most likely young men under 30). The next logical conclusion is that at the time of the Lamian

⁴⁴ Thuc. 8,73,4; Ps.-Lysias, *Pro Polystrato* 25.

⁴⁵ Paus. 10,22,6.

War the *epilektoi* were probably a selection from (actually, a majority of) all Aetolians in their twenties⁴⁶.

Slightly afterwards the Aetolians were able to have 12 000 infantry and 400 cavalry to invade Amphissa and Thessaly (Diod. 18,38,1), but one should underscore that in the early phase of any conflict the Aetolians were unable or unwilling to send quickly a greater army. The greatest recorded number of the Aetolian troops is more than 20 000 foot and no less than 1 000 horse, ready to join Polyperchon against Cassander in 310 (Diod. 20,20,3)⁴⁷. Modern scholars tend to take literally the latter passage and to think that these numbers were impossible without many individual foreigners having entered the Aetolian ranks or simply without allied foreign units having been attached to the bulk of the Aetolian troops, and an extreme proposal was made that the army of 12 000 foot and no less than 400 cavalry, which invaded Amphissa and Thessaly in 322/1, was not purely Aetolian, either⁴⁸. The former is – admittedly – not unlikely⁴⁹, yet the latter seems totally excluded. An

⁴⁶ The Neocretans are now proved to be elite units of the Cretan youth, see: N.V. Sekunda, *Neocretans*, in S. Crouzet - J.-C. Couvenhes (eds.), *Pratiques et identités culturelles des armées hellénistiques du monde méditerranéen. Actes du colloque de Tours, 23-24 mars 2007*, Paris – Tours, in print.

⁴⁷ προθύμως θ' ὑπακούοντων τῶν Αἰτωλῶν καὶ πολλῶν ἄλλων συντρεχόντων ἐπὶ τὴν κάθοδον τοῦ βασιλέως οἱ σύμπαντες ἠθροίσθησαν πᾶσι μὲν ὑπὲρ τοὺς δισμυρίους, ἰππεῖς δ' οὐκ ἐλάττους χιλίων - “*Since the Aetolians willigly listened to Polyperchon’s appeal and many other joined in order to re-establish the king, there were in all assembled more than twenty thousand infantry and at least one thousand horsemen*”.

⁴⁸ It is implied by whether omission of this event in K.-J. Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt*, Leipzig 1886, 186-187 or by a simple ascribing all these forces to Polyperchon (e.g. R. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1992, 140-141); explicitly, it is not stated anywhere, but in J.D. Grainger, *The League of the Aitolians*, 203. The latter does not believe in the purely Aetolian character of the army that invaded Amphissa and Thessaly in 321, either.

⁴⁹ On the other hand, we should note an overrepresentation of cavalry in the army that supported Polyperchon. Perhaps, there were more people of high social status able

army entrusted to the general Alexander was precisely four times as big as contingents, which the Aetolians were to send to the Acarnanians in fulfillment of the treaty of IG IX 1² 1, 3. Apparently, in the treaty the Aetolians obliged themselves to send a whole contingent of one unit (consisting of 1 000 *epilektoi*, 2 000 other foot, 100 cavalry), and in 321 they mustered for an action in Locris and Thessaly four of the seven districts of the Confederacy existing at that time (12 000 infantry and 400 cavalry).

If the above considerations are true, it has to be asked whether the Aetolians in the period of the league's expansion in the third century did not create new districts. Thomas Corsten has made an intelligent plea against this idea, and shown that the districts were enlarged following the conquests, no one, however, can overcome easily a problem of the Stratian district known due to its arbitration between Oeniadae and Matropolis (IG IX 1² 1, 3b)⁵⁰. Moreover, *boularchoi*, being most likely the chief representatives of the districts in the federal council, cease to act as eponymous officials recorded in the Aetolian inscriptions in mid-third century. On the one hand, this change might be ascribed to the growth of districts' number, and the following erosion of the district division within the council. On the other hand, the quick enlargement of already existing districts (through the addition of new and – as Corsten suggests - diverse territories) may have the same effect, the units

to serve as cavalrymen among guest friends of the Aetolian Confederacy who joined this army (e.g. exiled Thessalian aristocrats, many of them must have been based in Aetolia or Delphi, and sided with the Confederacy). A contrast between the Companion Cavalry and the Companion Infantry of the Macedonian kings may be an analogy, whereas the footmen were all considered – irrespective of their true ethnic origin – Macedonians, many of the Horse Companions remained foreigners to the Macedonian commonwealth, cf. J. Rzepka, *Monarchia macedońska. Zgromadzenie i obywatelstwo u schyłku epoki klasycznej i w okresie hellenistycznym* [in Polish: *The Macedonian Monarchy: the Assembly and the Citizenship in Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods*], Warszawa 2006, 48-63.

⁵⁰ T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund*, 153-157.

that were originally quite consistent, lost a lot of their initial homogeneity, and in consequence – their importance in the policy-making of the Confederacy. Likewise, Corsten’s argument that the number of districts remained unaltered, and only their names changed is ingenious indeed. Still, it cannot be excluded that the non-Aetolian names of the districts⁵¹ were introduced in the very beginning, and as the names of military units they originally underscored the frontiers, which the districts forces were initially designed to defend. I believe that six days for sending the first *epilektoi* section of allied help in *IG IX 1² 1, 3* (an unduly long time, indeed⁵²) may reflect the fact that in 260s the districts were not any longer cohesive territorial entities, and people from more remote *poleis* needed more time to join their units. Also the fact that in 322 no more than two third of the Aetolian youth were mustered as *epilektoi* seems to indicate that the initial number of districts at the time of the system’s creation was seven – originally almost all young men between 20 and 30 were intended to serve as the Confederacy’s semi-professional warriors.

Our evidence on Aetolian armies in the high Hellenistic Age is surprisingly scarce. Polybius does not say a lot about the Aetolian potential (perhaps he was unwilling to do so because of his enmity towards the Aetolians⁵³). He and other authors, partly depending on him, do not have overall numbers, they occasionally give sizes of some

⁵¹ Alongside with Stratian district known due to *IG IX 1² 1, 3b* (from late 230s), there was also the Locrian district recorded in *SGDI 2070* and *2139* (both from the year 189/8); on these regions and their composition covering mixed areas (the only known by name *boularchos* of the Locrian district came from Agrinion in the heart of historical Aetolia), see T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund*, 148-152.

⁵² The Aetolian *epilektoi* as elite troops were certainly easy to gather and equally easy to dispatch. Thus, six days for gathering a unit of *epilektoi* would certainly have been superfluous if an average district had covered one seventh of the Aetolian territory (roughly 15 000 square kilometer in the peak of the Confederacy’s successes), i.e. ca. 2 000 square kilometer.

⁵³ See n. 9.

units and contingents, which confirm our preliminary conclusions concerning the size, the structure, and the age character of elite forces. The strongest indication that the *epilektoi* survived with major features as number, units, a way of recruitment unchanged until the second century is provided by Livy, who not without *Schadenfreude* inherited from Polybius, his chief authority on Greek affairs, gives an account of a manpower shortage in Aetolia ascribed to the notorious greed of the people.

Liv. 31,43,5-7: *Scopas princeps gentis ab Alexandria magno cum pondere auri ab rege Ptolomaeo missus sex milia peditum et quingentos equites mercede conductos Aegyptum auexit; nec ex iuuentute Aetolorum quemquam reliquisset, ni Damocritus nunc belli quod instaret, nunc futurae solitudinis admonens, incertum cura gentis an ut aduersaretur Scopae parum donis cultus, partem iuniorum castigando domi continuisset.*

“Scopas a prominent man among the tribe, sent by King Ptolemy from Alexandria with a great quantity of gold, had transported to Egypt six thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry whom he had hired; nor would he have left a single fighting-man of the Aetolians, if Damocritus, now warning them of the present war, now of the future depopulation of the state, had not by his reproofs kept at home a part of the younger men, though it is uncertain whether his action was due to concern for the state or a desire to thwart Scopas, who had not been generous with gifts to him.”

Livy's 6 000 foot and 500 cavalry that chose the Ptolemaic service belong to the age group classified as *iuventus* or *iuniores*. In the Roman military language both terms refer to the young people under arms, expected to fight heroically, but at the same time less disciplined⁵⁴. Livy's *iuniores* must have been *epilektoi*. Finally, Livy's general estimate of the proportions between a major part of *iuniores* enrolled in the

⁵⁴ J.-P. Morel, *Sur quelques aspects de la jeunesse à Rome*, in: *Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon: L'Italie préromaine et la Rome républicaine*, Roma 1976, 663-683, esp. 674-681.

Ptolemaic army and those, who stayed home, fits well into the general reconstructions of the Aetolian elite forces and manpower.

It should not be overlooked that the organisation of the Aetolian *epilektoi* forces bears resemblances to the numbers known from the fifth-century Boeotian Confederacy. In the latter each of eleven districts at least theoretically mustered 1 000 heavy infantry and 100 cavalry (*Hell. Oxy.* 16,4). It is tempting to assume that the Aetolians adopted (or rather adapted) the Boeotian military arrangements, which must have seemed especially attractive after the battle of Delium. Moreover, Boeotia was a more natural pattern to follow for a Greek *ethnos* than any polis (including Athens) could be⁵⁵. The number of districts in fifth-century Boeotia indicates, however, that the federal infantry was not an elite arm, but rather based on a system of broader conscription, similar to the Athenian one. According to the above reconstruction an Aetolian innovation would be basically a division of citizen forces into three groups: the elite infantry, the remaining infantry, and the cavalry. The latter was generally considered an elite arm, and was expected to be one tenth of the whole infantry of a Greek state. The Aetolian innovation that reduced a postulated number of horsemen, hardly achievable in Greek conditions out of Thessaly, was a realistic solution to the horsepower shortages. Let us note that the Boeotian Confederacy re-created in the fourth century was based on the reduced number of districts (now seven of them) – since there is no sign of a dramatic collapse of Boeotian manpower (infantry) and wealth (horse), it must be understood as a clear sign of a shift towards the well-trained, semi-professional military. If the above considerations are accurate, it may be an irony of history that the Aetolian military and federal reform of the

⁵⁵ It is likely, too, that the earlier Boeotian arrangements could be attractive for a big *polis*, and were a source of inspiration (one of numerous sources, that is true) for an Athenian reformer Cleisthenes; see: P. Siewert, *Die Drittelgliederung der elf Boiotischen militärdistrikte im Vergleich mit der Kleisthenischen Trittyenordnung Attikas*, in: *La Béotie antique*, Paris 1985, 297-300.

late fifth century, itself modeled on the successful Boeotian example, inspired the Boeotian reformers, who organised the new Confederacy, which for a while gained hegemony in Greece.

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