

《Review》

Joseph B. Scholten, *The Politics of Plunder :  
Aitolians and Their Koinon in the  
Early Hellenistic Era, ca. 279–217 B. C.*

(University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles,  
London, 2000, xxvi+339 頁.)

John D. Grainger, *The League of the Aitolians*

(Brill, Leiden, Boston, Köln, 1999, xvii+585 頁.)

John D. Grainger, *Aitolian Prosopographical Studies*

(Brill, Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2000, xii+339 頁.)

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The history of the Aitolian League is a subject which has long been neglected, and there has till now been no recent comprehensive study of this highly interesting, but at the same time controversial, state. There are some rather old and in parts outdated accounts, but, as Grainger (*League* xv) rightly states, most of them approach the subject from a wider or different angle — either as part of the history of federalism in Greece or from the point of view of those who had to deal with the Aitolians, like the Delphians (cf. Scholten xi and 6–8). The few books devoted solely or at least largely to the Aitolian League are more than 100 years old<sup>1)</sup>, and the need for a new study is obvious. In the last few decades, however, archaeological and topographical excavations and surveys have taken place, and have resulted in a new interest in Aitolian matters<sup>2)</sup>. Hence two substantial books and, besides, an Aitolian prosopography have now appeared simultaneously. I shall begin with some general remarks about the two historical studies together; then have a closer look at each one separately and — briefly — at the Prosopography; and finally I shall attempt to compare them and draw some conclusions.

One major difference between the two books is obvious from their size: G.'s study has almost 600 pages, whereas S.'s, with about 340 pages, is only a little more than half as long as the former. The reason lies not only in G.'s more extensive narrative tendency, but, more importantly, in his wider chronological scope. Both authors

give an outline of the history of Aitolia in the 5th and (early) 4th centuries B. C. (G. 29–53, S. 9–25) before the starting points of their main studies — the year 335 B. C. for G. and 279 B. C. for S. G. then continues to what he calls the end of the League in 167 with even a brief overview of developments in the early imperial period; S. stops after the Social War, where he sees a sharp decline of the League, the beginnings of which he detects already in 229/8 B. C. However, they both give neither an explanation as to what they consider to be a „League“, nor a definition of the federal structure of Aitolia as opposed to the earlier tribal structure (if there is such a difference — which they seem to assume<sup>3</sup>). Therefore they speak of the Aitolian League already in connection with the events of 367 B. C. (on which see *infra*).

Since the territorial development of the League is crucial for the understanding of its politics as well as for that of its internal structure, both G. and S. provide the reader with a range of maps. S.'s also emphasize the physical features and, on the whole, one gets a clearer picture of the expansion of the League via his maps, because the three main stages of territorial development are represented in one map each (map 4: about 270 B. C.; 5: about 245 B. C.; 8: 229/8 B. C.). G.'s map II, in contrast, shows the growth in more detail (ten stages), but without dating the acquisition of new territory.

S. has divided his book into six chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by an epilogue and some useful appendices, where he discusses various problems including those of chronology, on the results of which the chronological framework for his reconstruction of Aitolian history is built. In the introduction (1–28), some important questions and problems are addressed. Among these are the image of the Aitolians with their contemporaries, the early history of Aitolia, the emergence of the League and the possible reasons for its eventual failure. In the 5th and early 4th centuries, the Aitolians were still rather a „backward people“, living without an overall political organisation and uniting only to defend themselves against external enemies. But by the end of the 4th century, things had changed, and the Aitolian communities had formed a federal state. S., apparently because he takes the word *κοινόν* to mean „federal state“, opts for its existence already in 367 B. C., when the Athenians complained to the *κοινόν* about the behaviour of Aitolians breaking the Eleusinian truce even though it was recognised by their government. However, the word *κοινόν* is not necessarily a proof of federalism, as A. Giovannini has shown<sup>4</sup>, and it is far from certain that Aitolia was a federal state at that time<sup>5</sup>. Be that as it may — whenever the League came into being, it showed itself to be innovative by in-

corporating regions with an ethnically different population, who received the same rights as the Aitolians themselves. The reason for its eventual failure in the end despite this sound basis is seen in the Aitolians' „continuing adherence to archaic political and socioeconomic conceptions“ (8–9).

The high point for the Aitolians came when they succeeded in defending Delphi and the whole of Greece against the invading Gauls in 279/8 B.C. Their reputation reached its apogee, and with it came the incorporation of eastern foreign territories. Some of these had already been conquered before the Gaulish invasion, but their status now seems to have changed. Their citizens were given the same rights as the Aitolians and they could become officials of the Aitolian League, as many inscriptions show. This was certainly not an act of altruism, and S. may be right in assuming that the Aitolians intended to keep the newly acquired lands safely at their side as a „buffer“ (52). Unusually, some neighbouring countries may have placed themselves under the protection of the Aitolians by joining their League voluntarily. In this way, Aitolia gained the seats in the Delphic Amphiktyony which their new members had held previously. This was the „Birth of Greater Aitolia“ (the title of the first chapter, 29–58), which was accompanied also by the first minting of gold coinage. However, times became dangerous again with the accession of Antigonos Gonatas to the Macedonian throne, whereas relations with the Epeirote king Pyrrhos were rather friendly. These two monarchs would in the future influence the politics of the Aitolians considerably.

Into the next period (270–245 B.C.) falls the „Expansion and Consolidation“ of the Aitolian League (59–95). Unfortunately, the chronology is quite difficult because of the lack of literary sources, and the inscriptions are not always very helpful in this respect. S. sees the actual development of federal structures at this time, but also the emergence of a system of far-reaching alliances. The political ranks were opened by enlarging the council, so that councillors from the acquired regions could also attend (61–62). Moreover, the entire organisation seems to have been restructured: the representation in the council became proportional (a very important feature in Greek federalism!), and districts (τέλη) were introduced, from each of which the same number of officers for the central government was sent, as S. rightly infers from the mention of seven treasurers and military commanders each in the treaty with the Akarnanian League from the 260s (62–64)<sup>6</sup>.

The external policy was in part defined by the rivalry between the Epeirote and Macedonian kings. This makes it all the more surprising that the Aitolians did not

join in the Chremonidean War to help Athens against Antigonos Gonatas. S. gives two reasons to explain this (70–77): first, the Aitolians might have not been asked to join the coalition and they did not do so of their own will, because they would be fighting under the leadership of one of their enemies, king Areus of Sparta: secondly, they might have been lured into neutrality because Antigonos ignored the expansion of the League into Doris, which was of vital importance for Aitolian security. For the following events, S. (80) subscribes to the view, put forward by G. Klaffenbach and followed by P. Cabanes<sup>7</sup>), that an agreement between Alexander (the son of Pyrrhos) and the Akarnanian and Aitolian Leagues might have been reached in order to create a defence system against Antigonos Gonatas. Although it proved quite successful, the alliance with the Akarnanians was brutally betrayed when Alexander and the Aitolians divided the territory of the Akarnanian League among themselves. The Aitolians were similarly unscrupulous towards Boiotia (83–89 and 91–93), which was attacked while a sacred festival was being celebrated. On the other hand, they were again on good terms shortly afterwards with both the Akarnanians and the Boiotians, accepting the Akarnanians as members of their League with equal rights and restoring friendly ties with the Boiotians. They even gave up their reservations towards Antigonos, so that at around 245 B. C. the Aitolian League was comparatively stable and the strongest state in Central Greece.

S. then interrupts the chronological sequence and inserts a chapter in which he looks back at the achievements of the Aitolians so far, and also at their behaviour in international matters other than war („Aitolians abroad“, 96–130). The influence on, or rather control of, Delphi and the Amphiktyony is clearly shown by the dating of documents after an Aitolian official instead of one from Delphi itself. Another result of the successful preceding years was the growing wealth of many Aitolians, so that they could even erect representative buildings in the League's sanctuary at Thermos. However, their wealth might have had rather disconcerting grounds, i. e. piracy, for which the Aitolians were widely known in ancient times. But the fact that the League had no fleet must mean that the acts of piracy were committed by individuals on their own account. In this way, and despite the humorous title of his book, S. defends his „heroes“ against their contemporaneous (and modern) reputation — but he is no match for G. in this respect, as we shall see shortly. The same circumstances seem to have prevailed in the Peloponnese, at least at first: only when two raids with small bands ended in losses did the League become involved in full force. On the more peaceful side, the same individuals might have mediated grants of

asylia between Aitolia and many cities throughout the Greek world.

In the years following 245 B. C., the Aitolians made an astonishing alliance with their very arch-enemies, the Achaians (131–163). The reason was that the Aitolians' former allies, the Epeirotes<sup>8</sup>), chose to change sides to the Macedonians, and so the north-western frontier of the League was threatened. The nature of this new alliance is not known, and S. tries to reconstruct it from events following the treaty, by comparison with the treaty between Aitolia and Akarnania, and from the significance of the change to the Attic standard used for the federal coinage (139–144). The events show, in more general terms, a shift from *poleis* to leagues as the major powers in Greece (140). The war with Antigonos' successor, Demetrios II, finally led Aitolia to the „crossroads“ in 229 B. C. After successfully fighting on three fronts (northwest: 145–153; eastern central Greece: 153–157; the Peloponnese: 157–162) and gaining territory as well as influence, a comparison of the situation in 239 and 229 B. C. respectively indicates that Greater Aitolia had reached a remarkable peak, being able to defend itself even against the might of Macedon. Now the question was whether to be content with what had been achieved or to attack Macedon and challenge its hegemony over Greece (162–163).

As the next chapter („Defeat and Recovery, 229–221 B. C.“, 164–199) shows, the inevitable happened: the Aitolians must have overestimated their power and inevitably lost in the end. However, matters started quite promisingly, since the death of Demetrios II threw the Macedonian kingdom into turmoil — from which the Aitolian League was able to profit. But the new king, Antigonos Doson, proved himself to be an able military leader and diplomat. The consequence was a decisive defeat of Greater Aitolia and a peace treaty which left the League considerably weakened, but not destroyed. The chance to join with Achaia in order to lead a united Greece against Macedon was not taken, but quite the contrary: rather, the alliance with Achaia ended at that time for reasons unknown to us. To make matters worse, the first signs of an economic crisis became visible. But despite everything, Greater Aitolia recovered, and while her sphere of action in the Peloponnese was nearly annihilated following the foundation of the Hellenic Alliance by Antigonos and its subsequent victory over Kleomenes of Sparta, the Aitolians gained ground in the Aegean (friendship with Pergamon, asylia with numerous cities in Asia Minor) and in the north-west (as a defensive measure against the Illyrians).

The following period is marked by an unsuccessful attempt by the Aitolians to regain their former power (200–228). Our sources are heavily biased, as it is to Poly-

bius that we owe the bulk of our information. That is why it is difficult for historians to have an accurate picture of the true causes of Aitolian decisions and actions. Therefore S. rejects the notion that the Aitolian League prepared for a war on a huge scale after the death of Antigonos Doseon. Rather, they resumed their raids and incursions, some of which S. explains as private enterprises (e. g. the occupation of Kynaitha in Arkadia, 205). While not excluding this possibility or trusting Polybius too much, one could nevertheless imagine that many of the raids by individual Aitolians with „private armies“ were undertaken with the tacit support of the League, which did not want to commit itself openly to this kind of warfare. Tactics and diplomacy are always difficult to interpret, particularly after a lapse of more than 2000 years and with insufficient sources. Allegedly private enterprises of this sort would be more understandable at that time, since the reputation of the Aitolian League had reached its lowest ever point. This is also shown by the decision of the Hellenic League to wage war against Aitolia in order to liberate Delphi from its control. Philip's offer of negotiations was rejected at the instigation of Skopas, one of the foremost representatives of the Aitolian war faction, which in the end proved fateful for the League. The war with Philip (the so-called „Social War“) turned out to be indecisive; both parties suffered and became exhausted. Therefore the peace of Naupaktos in 217 B. C. marked only „a pause on the downhill slope“ for the Aitolians, but „the heyday of Greater Aitolia had passed“ (227–228).

The „Epilogue“ (229–233) sums up. The period considered (c. 279–217 B. C.) was, despite its brevity, the crucial period of the history of Aitolia. The League was at its height and, at times, Greater Aitolia almost equalled the Delphic Amphiktyony. The turning point was 229/8 B. C., when Aitolia entered a destructive war with Macedon, and the decline began, even before the arrival of the Romans. In this context, the opportunity of an alliance with the Achaian League to unite all of Greece was missed and this, in combination with growing economic and social problems, as well as failed reforms, towards the end of the 3rd century led to the decline of the Aitolian League. The richer sources for the period thereafter show that the Aitolians were no longer able to dominate politics in Greece — rather, they reacted to the threats of their enemies.

The book ends with some appendices (235–295), a bibliography (297–310) and detailed indices (ancient authors: 311–314; inscriptions: 315–318; subjects: 319–339).

G.'s book about the League is divided into six parts, which in turn consist of two to seven chapters each (numbered continuously across the six parts). This main por-

tion is preceded by an introduction and a prologue, and an appendix follows at the end, comprising a list of the main magistrates of the Aitolian League (555–558), followed by abbreviations (561–562), bibliography (563–568), and an index (569–585). The introduction (xv–xvii) and the prologue (1–25) combined can serve as a statement of the author's approach to his subject. He first examines the reputation of the Aitolians with their fellow Greeks, and concludes that they were the victims of great powers, which resulted in their being demonised as backward, primitive people, and as pirates. In this context, the Aitolians clearly suffer from the disadvantage that they never produced an historian of their own who could have done them justice, and who could have countered the accusations which were especially raised by the Achaian Polybius. Therefore G. himself assumes the rôle of an Anti-Polybius, examines the alleged cases of piracy and — not surprisingly — dismisses them as mere exaggerations by Aitolia's enemies; by his account, the Aitolian League was a rather normal state using normal methods of warfare. And, in fact, Aitolia was more important than Achaia, judging from the „deeds and events and consequences“ of its history (xvi). By critically examining the extant sources and the modern scholarship on them, he questions the view that the numerous *asylia* decrees for foreign states were a means of protection from Aitolian pirates (17). Other states came to the same kind of agreement, and in those cases a protection against normal warfare is assumed. G., therefore, suggests that we should interpret the Aitolian *asylia* decrees in the same way. While this is certainly a reasonable thought, he then, however, embarks on a crusade to defend his badly misunderstood heroes throughout the book until he reaches the conclusion on p. 552: „To have created an island of peace which lasted two generations in the violent land of Greece in the violent third century (...) was as remarkable an achievement as Alexander's conquest of Asia, and conduced more to the sum of human happiness than all of Hannibal's victories“! Leaving aside the fact that I am not quite sure about the extent of „human happiness“ created by Hannibal's victories, we will follow the author's lead and, among other details, examine by which remarkable achievements the Aitolians, in G.'s view, contributed to the sum of human happiness. I am afraid, however, that we will rather be disappointed.

In his first chapter (27–84), G. scrutinises the origins of the Aitolian League, i. e. the time of and the reasons for its foundation. The basis for what was later to be the League were the Aitolian tribes. Still in 367 B. C., he sees a rather loose tribal organisation in place, most probably correctly (see *supra*), while, however, he is mistaken in arguing that the Athenians dealt directly with the city of the culprits

and not with a central government (32–35)<sup>9</sup>. He envisages the early history of the League rather as a constant and complicated series of reversals, so complicated that he himself gets confused. On p. 36 he says that a league did not yet exist when Philip of Macedon conquered Naupaktos and gave it to the Aitolians in 338 B. C.; however, it existed in 330 when the Aitolians were capable of taking Oiniadai. From this follows that the League was founded between 338 and 330 B. C., perhaps immediately after the incorporation of Naupaktos, as this was „decisive for the formation of the league“ (44). However, on pp. 49–51 he reconstructs events as follows: there was a league before 338, which was dissolved by Philip in the following year, but refounded before 335, then dissolved again, this time by Alexander the Great, and it was in existence again in 330. His arguments for the existence or the non-existence of a league are rather strange: when the Aitolians were strong, they must have had a state-like, i. e. federal, organisation; and when they were able to expand, likewise. However, when they were weak, or when they could not expand, they merely had a defensive and loose alliance. Thus, when the Aitolians were unable to take Naupaktos from the Achaians on their own in 338, there can hardly have been a political organisation (or if there was, it was a rather weak one). However, when they were able to conquer Oiniadai in 330, they must have done this as a league. Much sounder, however, is G.'s assumption that no league can have existed when an embassy to Alexander which consisted of representatives of each of the tribes was sent in 335 B. C. Apart from this evidently correct conclusion, the remaining assertions appear, frankly, quite unbelievable, and it should hardly be necessary to point out that the conquest of Oiniadai is most probably to be dated to 325 rather than 330<sup>10</sup>.

After this complicated account, G. turns to the time of „Survival (330–300)“ (54–84), so called because neither Antipatros, nor the conflict with its neighbour Akarnania succeeded in breaking up the League. It was at this time that the Aitolians changed from a defensive federation to a state with the intention to expand to become a major power in Greece.

In the second part of his book, G. deals with the period of „Growth and Power“ (85–194), divided into two phases, followed by a time of peace. Before the first phase of expansion (300–278 B. C., 87–104), a setback for the Aitolians had occurred when the Akarnanians reconquered Oiniadai and then retained it for a long time. The Akarnanian League was quite strong at that time, and the Aitolians did not succeed in gaining territory on this front, but rather started to expand to the east and the

north from about 290–280 onwards. It is possible that most of the new acquisitions, such as the Lokrian cities, joined the League voluntarily, which is — for G. at least — a sign of the peaceful politics of the Aitolians. In any case, the citizens of the new territories became involved in the administration of the Aitolian League from then on, as the provenance of numerous officials indicates. But the greatest chance for the Aitolians came when they repelled the Gauls, who invaded Greece and attacked Delphi in 278 B. C. This was an accomplishment that the Aitolians knew how to put to their own use by never ceasing to mention it, and upon which they build their reputation as the liberators of Greece.

In the beginning of his chapter on the second phase of expansion (278–260 B. C., 105–129), G. doubts the validity of the list of hieromnemes of the Delphic Amphiktyony as indicative of the growth of the Aitolian League. He argues that it is not as clear as is generally assumed that the number of seats the Aitolians claimed was directly dependent on the seats which the absorbed new members had held before. Instead, he prefers to take more evidence into account and, if necessary, correct the picture derived from the Amphiktyonic lists — not all of which, moreover, are securely dated. In this way he sometimes arrives at slightly different dates, but the overall impression of the Aitolian expansion is not much altered.

A crucial piece of evidence in this period is the treaty between the Aitolian and the Akarnanian Leagues (117–121), which G. dates to the year 270 (in opposition to the widely accepted date of ca. 263/2, cf. 120 n. 57<sup>11</sup>). He uses it mainly to demonstrate how wrong the perception of the Aitolians as „brigands, pirates and insatiable aggressors“ is, since in this treaty they regarded the Akarnanians as equal, and did not force the alliance on the Akarnanians against their will. This fits the policy of the Aitolians, as G. sees it, rather well, who hardly ever subjected any of their neighbours by using force (121). He even expects some of the Akarnanians to have awaited their final incorporation into the Aitolian League — which might, however, be a bit over-optimistic. Besides this alliance, the Aitolians took over numerous other regions around their heartland and established relations with many more cities all over the Greek world.

The next chapter („A Generation of Peace (270–245)“, 130–146) intends to convince the reader again that Aitolian policy was peaceful and only for Greece's best interest. To this end, the author even manages to turn the brutal partition of Akarnania between Epeiros and Aitolia into the Akarnanians voluntarily joining the neighbouring states. We are thus asked to believe that the Akarnanians who had

always fought hard against the Aitolians to maintain their independence and integrity as a state saw their interests as best served by dividing themselves up and delivering themselves to their enemies. Opinion as to which state to join was divided between the cities and, therefore, they split up, each part joining its closest neighbour. A first step in this direction is supposedly the treaty between Aitolia and Akarnania, although G. himself had characterised it only shortly before as a treaty between equal partners. But there is a great difference between an alliance of equal partners and loss of independence by voluntarily joining a neighbouring state, let alone by being subjected. G. explains his astonishing theory by trying to show us the Akarnanian League as a frightened state of minor importance between two great powers, which had to choose one of them as a protector. The reason for this qualification of the Akarnanians seems to be his misunderstanding of their political organisation: by his account, the Akarnanian League was far less strictly organised than the Aitolian League, as it consisted of cities, each of which elected a general to make up the federal government (133 n. 13). However, in the treaty he cites as evidence for the loose organisation of Akarnania (which is the treaty between Akarnania and Aitolia, cf. supra), generals from seven cities are mentioned — but there were many more cities in Akarnania at that time. So — where were the others? It is much better to assume that each of the cities represented a district<sup>12)</sup> and that the Akarnanian League was a rather well organised and stable federal state. Therefore, the *communis opinio*, namely that the Akarnanians were conquered by their neighbours against their will, must be true; witness for this may also be a group of statues erected by the Aitolians in Delphi to commemorate a victory over the Akarnanians<sup>13)</sup>. Thus G.'s friendly Aitolians seem rather to be a product of wishful thinking.

In his final chapter of part II („The Challenge from Achaia (245–238)“, 147–164), G. puts the blame for the Aitolians' change to an aggressive policy on Aratos' tendency to violence (p. 147), and it was only the need on the part of the Aitolians to create an alliance of the states around Achaia in order to defend themselves which led to Polybios' complaint „that Achaia was surrounded by enemies“ (164).

At this point, G. turns to three studies on the organisation of the Aitolian League (Part III, 165–214). In the chapter on the constitution (169–187) he points rightly to the lack of evidence, but tries to make the best of it. He believes the *hipparchos* to be a later institution, although he acknowledges the possibility that he is merely not previously mentioned, although the office could have existed earlier (170). He then summarises what we know about the assemblies and various institutions of

the government (171–180). When he comes to the seven *ταμίαι* (treasurers) and seven *ἐπιλεκτάρχαι* mentioned in the treaty with the Akarnanians, and subsequently to the two occurrences of the term *τέλος* in several inscriptions, he does not make a connection between them; he refuses to see something like „districts“ in the *τέλη* and takes them as „either terms surfacing in emergencies or unusually difficult situations, or as occasional informal terms of no real official significance“ (181). However, in my opinion the hypothesis is not to be excluded that the territory of the Aitolian League might have been divided into seven districts (*τέλη*), each of which provided a *ταμίαι* and an *ἐπιλεκτάρχης*<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, he feels uncomfortable with the notion of representation in Greek federal states in general, as was (rightly, it seems) suggested by J. A. O. Larsen and many other scholars (182). He is equally uncertain about the existence of a proportional principle which is (again rightly, it seems) supposed to have been applied to the constitution of the league council (174). G. is, of course, correct to state that such a principle requires a mechanism to adjust the numbers constantly to the changing size of the communities, but this is exactly what he objects to. However, he seems to be the only scholar to do so, and, so far as I can see, nobody has yet brought forward any evidence that Greek (federal) states were not flexible enough<sup>15</sup>. G.'s reasoning, though clearly justified, does not accomplish this either, and J. A. O. Larsen's important study on „Representative Government in Greek and Roman History“ (Berkeley, Los Angeles 1955) is still valid. Finally (182–186), G. addresses the question of democracy and oligarchy in the Aitolian League. He rules out democracy as impracticable in a state the size of Aitolia, and assigns all real power to aristocrats from a rather limited number of cities.

In the next chapter on „Aitolian Wealth“ (188–201), G. has the Aitolian aristocrats derive their wealth not from piracy, but from commerce and agriculture; and in „The Armed Forces“ (202–214) he estimates the Aitolian army in its heyday at a maximum of 10,000–15,000 infantry (mostly hoplites!) and at most 500 cavalry, whereas a fleet did not exist at all, for G. naturally also an argument against Aitolian piracy.

One of the main subjects dealt with throughout the following part IV, on the Macedonian Wars (seven chapters, 215–404), is — no surprise — the defence of the Aitolians against false accusations in ancient and modern literature. It was e.g. Demetrios II who was responsible for the war between himself and the Aitolian League (217–218), and the Aitolians fought wars either solely defensively or on demand from allies (232). Otherwise they were a peace-loving people — in contrast to the

Achaians (245). When G. has to admit that there were cases when the Aitolians used force or were abandoned by allies or members of their league, he declares these as exceptions, for instance, when the Aitolians attacked Medeon in 231 B.C. (229 and 241), or when the city of Xyniai rebelled and was „punished“ (378–379). And when, in the last case, he has a full list of atrocities committed by the Aitolians, he tries hard, but usually successfully, to find a justification for them. However, despite his efforts, he has to admit that the Aitolians adopted a new policy by changing from persuasion to force at the end of the 3rd century, but identifies the Romans as the real villains behind all this (316–317).

Otherwise, the granting of proxeny to people from abroad and asyilia to foreign states continued over a wide geographical range (298–299), and allies were made even as far away as in the Propontis towards the end of the 3rd century (Lysimacheia, Kalchedon, Kios; 349–350). Additionally to these connections with Greek states, there was now also Rome to consider. In the beginning, Aitolia displayed caution and tried to be on good terms with the emerging power, which G. explains by means of Aitolian trade interests (300–301). However, they were reluctant to commit themselves by making a treaty with Rome in 211 in preparation for a war with Philip V of Macedon (306–308). But, in the end, they were realistic enough to understand the distribution of power and, not least, to sense a chance for their own expansion. But by the end of the First Macedonian War<sup>16)</sup> and their separate peace with Philip, their attempts had failed almost completely, and they were worse off than before. According to G., the Aitolians must have felt betrayed by the Romans, their first ever allies who were stronger than themselves (337).

One of the results of this unhappy outcome were social problems within the Aitolian League, caused in a considerable part by the widening gap between the rich and the poor. G. rightly devotes an entire chapter to this important question, and puts the problems Aitolia encountered in the wider context of Greece (339–362). The Second Macedonian War (or, following G., the fourth; 363–404) did nothing to improve the situation — in fact, quite the contrary: the Aitolians realised more than ever that they were being used by the Romans, whose only intention was to keep them under control. Moreover, their reputation was ruined in the meantime — nothing was left from the glory which they had acquired when they saved Greece from the Gauls only two generations before.

The Romans had become a problem, and this is the subject of the last part of the book (405–545). But there was soon a problem for both sides: the Romans ignored

Aitolian claims and drove them into joining Antiochos — who, however, turned out not to be the best choice. Everything went wrong, especially because the Aitolians could not find sufficient allies for their fight against Rome since they were unable to persuade the Achaians to join them; and, when Antiochos was defeated, the Aitolians found themselves alone in opposing Rome — which they did bravely, but in vain. This was the end of what was once the most powerful state in Central Greece, and this is, after an overview of the later history of Aitolia (after 189 B. C., 499–545), also the end of the main part of G.'s book. In his „Conclusion“ (547–552), he repeats his main arguments, focusing on the achievements of the Aitolian League which are 1) their peaceful policy, and 2) their stable but adaptable constitution, which enabled the Aitolians to use „persuasion and participation instead of force and domination“ (549). Also, they were great diplomats — the only asset they did not have was that they were lacking a sense of the arts (550–551).

As a supplement to and in support of his study of the League, G.'s second book is a prosopography of all Aitolians known to him. The first part („Studies“, 3–73) contains remarks and investigations about Aitolian families, the rôle of women and slaves, naming practice, the origins of the League officials, external relations, and a list of magistrates (repeated from his „League“ 555–558). G. is aware that the reconstruction of families is partly hypothetical but, bearing this in mind, his attempt is quite useful. Only a few notes: p. 9 under „Bouttos B“, two numbers seem to be confused; pp. 10–11 no. 9 is rather a weak case; p. 45: *στρατός* does not mean „soldier“, but, among other meanings, „army“; p. 73: how are we to understand the remark about Teisippos? The following prosopographical list (77–339) is presented in a clear and understandable way, but has its flaws, which have already been pointed out by D. Rousset in *Bull. ép.* 2000, 374.

A comparison of both books on the League shows the same basic tendency — an attempt to clear the Aitolians of many of the accusations brought forward against them. This undertaking is, in general, highly reasonable, given the fact that our main source for the history of the League is Polybios, a member of a leading family of the Aitolians' (almost) eternal enemy, the Achaian League. Therefore a correction of his depiction of the Aitolians is certainly most welcome. However, this results all too often in a complete and therefore excessive reversal. This is the danger which G. has apparently not seen, whereas S. remains more realistic in his approach (although he seems to come at times quite close to falling into the same trap, e. g. 278). Over-

all, in the reconstruction of historical events, G. uses his imagination more widely than S., but not always with better results. Whereas S. is in this way much more sober, his style of writing is, however, more engaging, more interesting, and in parts even amusing<sup>17</sup>). On one point they both agree, and rightly so: on the importance of the rôle of individuals and/or the importance of the provenance of the League officers from certain cities to better understand their policy. Besides this detail, they have something more important in common, i. e. both authors concentrate on political history, in the sense of history of events. What they do not attempt, however, is a thorough investigation of the institutional history of the Aitolian League, i. e. starting from the question, mentioned already above, as to whether there was a difference in organisation between the Aitolian tribes before the League and the organisation of the League itself; and if there was, at what time this came about. And although they clearly see a difference, this is nowhere expressly stated. Both G. and S. have therefore no chapter on the inner organisation of the Aitolian League, where they could have attempted a structural analysis of the workings of the government and the administration. For a study in this direction we will still have to wait for the publication of P. Funke's book on Aitolia, which S. has apparently been able to use in manuscript form, as he quotes it several times; until then, we will have to make do with Funke's preliminary, but important, shorter studies about this subject<sup>18</sup>).

Despite this shortcoming, given the deplorable lack of studies on the Aitolian League mentioned in the beginning of this review, these three books have remedied the situation considerably and have improved our knowledge about one of the most important states in Greece during the Hellenistic Age in the course of just two years<sup>19</sup>).

#### notes

- 1) F. A. Brandstätter, *Die Geschichte des aetolischen Landes, Volkes und Bundes in drei Büchern nach den Quellen dargestellt nebst einer historiographischen Abhandlung über Polybios* (Berlin 1844). W. J. Woodhouse, *Aetolia: Its Geography, Topography, and Antiquities* (Oxford 1897). W. Hohmann, *Aitolien und die Aitoler bis zum Lamischen Kriege* (Diss. Halle 1908). In M. Dubois, *Les ligues étolienne et achéenne* (Paris 1885), the unevenness of the sources has understandably resulted in devoting more space to the Achaian than the Aitolian League.
- 2) Besides excavations of single sites like Thermos and Kallion, a wider survey has been carried out: L. S. Bommelje, P. K. Doorn et al., *Aetolia and the Aetolians* (Studia Aetolica 1, Utrecht 1987).
- 3) I certainly believe there to be a difference between a tribe or tribal state and a federal state; cf. my *Vom Stamm zum Bund* (Munich 1999), esp. 133–159 on Aitolia.

- 4) A. Giovannini, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sym-  
politie in Griechenland* (Göttingen 1971) 16–20. S. himself refers to Giovannini (2) and to  
an opinion contrary to his own by quoting the (unpublished) German „Habilitation-  
schrift“ by P. Funke (15 n. 58).
- 5) Cf. T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund* 133–159.
- 6) H. H. Schmitt, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums* III (Munich 1969) no. 480 II. 16–22.
- 7) G. Klaffenbach, *Historia* 4, 1955, 46–51; P. Cabanes, *L'Épire de la mort de Pyrrhos à la con-  
quête romaine* (Paris 1976) 90–91.
- 8) According to S. 135, the good relations with Epeirus led also to Thyreion in Epeirote  
Akarnania acting as arbitrator in a boundary dispute between Oiniadai and Matropolis in  
Aitolian Akarnania (*IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>*, 3B). However, the inscription describes the arbitration as a  
„decision of the district of Stratos regarding territory“ (*κρίμα γαϊκὸν Στρατικού τέλεος*).  
This should mean that Thyreion was part of the district of Stratos and therefore a  
member city of the Aitolian League; cf. in this sense J. A. O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States*  
(Oxford 1968) 267 with n. 3; M. Schoch, *Beiträge zur Topographie Akarnaniens in klas-  
sischer und hellenistischer Zeit* (Würzburg 1997) 79–80; T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund*  
155–156.
- 9) In addition, the theory that Epameinondas after his victory over the Spartans at  
Leuktra in 371 B. C. founded or helped found the Arkadian League (mentioned by G. 34–  
35, but ruled out as a parallel for Aitolia) is ill-founded; cf. H. Schäfer, *Historia* 10, 1961,  
313; J. Roy, *Historia* 21, 1971, 572; H. Beck, *Polis und Koinon* (Stuttgart 1997) 219–220.
- 10) M. Jehne, *Koine Eirene* (Stuttgart 1994) 241–243 (with the relevant literature).
- 11) Cf. however O. Dany, *Akarnanien im Hellenismus* (Munich 1999) 69–86, who also dates  
the treaty to 270 B. C.
- 12) Cf. already e. g. E. Kirsten, *Der Kleine Pauly* I (Munich 1975) 1525 s. v. Akarnania; J. A.  
O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States* 94 with n. 1; P. Cabanes, *L'Épire* 166; T. Corsten, *Vom  
Stamm zum Bund* 67–132.
- 13) Mentioned by Pausanias X 16, 6; fragments of the inscription have possibly been found:  
*IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>* 1, 480, cf. B. Hintzen-Bohlen, *Herrscherrepräsentation im Hellenismus* (Köln,  
Weimar, Wien 1992) 85–86.
- 14) Cf. T. Corsten, *Vom Stamm zum Bund* 133–159.
- 15) The Boiotian League seems to me to be a good example of flexibility and constant adap-  
tation, as there is enough evidence e. g. for the changing number of their districts, cf. now  
D. Knoepfler, in: P. A. Bernardini, *Presenza e funzione della città di Tebe nella cultura greca*  
(Pisa, Rome 2000) 345–366 and in: D. Knoepfler, M. Piérart, *Éditer, traduire, commenter  
Pausanias en l'an 2000* (Geneva 2001) 343–374 (with earlier literature).
- 16) It should be noted that G. calls this war the Third Macedonian War, the first two being  
the war against Demetrios II and the Social War, as he explains on p. 309.
- 17) I especially liked his titles, starting with the title of the entire book, but also the head-  
ings of sub-chapters, e. g. word-plays such as „Greater Aitolia and Great Aitolians ...“ (97),  
or the „Strange Bedfellows“ (83), or the title of the Epilogue (229), and so on. This is not  
just fun for the reader, but can also serve as an aid to memory and understanding.
- 18) „Zur Datierung befestigter Stadtanlagen in Aitolien. Historisch-philologische Anmer-  
kungen zu einem Wechselverhältnis zwischen Siedlungsstruktur und politischer Orga-  
nisation“, in: *Boreas* 10 (1987) 87–97; „Zur Ausbildung städtischer Siedlungszentren in  
Aitolien“, in: E. Olshausen/H. Sonnabend (Ed.), *Stuttgarter Kolloquium zur historischen Geo-  
graphie des Altertums* 2, 1984 und 3, 1987 (*Geographica Historica* 5; Bonn 1991) 313–332;  
„Strabone, la geografia storica e la struttura etnica della Grecia nord-occidentale“, in: F.

Prontera (Ed.), *Geografia storica della Grecia Antica* (Rom/Bari 1991) 174–193; „Stamm und Polis“, in: J. Bleicken (Ed.), *Colloquium aus Anlaß des 80. Geburtstages von Alfred Heuß* (*Frankfurter Althistorische Studien*, Heft 13; Kallmünz 1993) 29–48; „Staatenbünde und Bundesstaaten. Polis-übergreifende Herrschaftsorganisationen in Griechenland und Rom“, in: K. Buraselis (Ed.), *Unity and Units in Antiquity. Papers from a Colloquium held at Delphi* (Athens 1994) 125–136; „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* (*Symposium August, 29–31, 1996; Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre* vol. 4; Kopenhagen 1997) 145–188; „Die Bedeutung der griechischen Bundesstaaten in der politischen Theorie und Praxis des 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr. (Auch eine Anmerkung zu Aristot. pol. 1261a 22–29)“, in: W. Schuller (Ed.), *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1998) 59–71.

- 19) Although it is not always necessary to point out misspellings, printing errors and the like, the reader of G.'s book on the League should be warned that, as soon as it comes to quoting titles of German books and articles, he can be sure to find the wildest mistakes (e. g., in the bibliography, hardly a single German title is without a mistake; on p. 120 no. 57, G. quotes two articles by G. Klaffenbach with the same title in two different ways, but does not get it right once), whereas G. seems to be more at home with French. There are also, besides numerous printing errors in the English text, some strange forms of names for people and places etc. To cite only a few, the city of Trichonion is throughout called „Trichonos“. The envoy to Sparta is on p. 303 rightly called „Chlaineas“, but on p. 318 his name has twice been distorted to „Chleinius“; and for *κοινόν*, G. invents the plural *koinoi* on p. 534. — Finally, on p. 344, G. writes „... *strategos* ... was Dorimachos, though he is called *boularchos* in the inscription“ (*IG IX 1<sup>2</sup> 1, 31 k, l. 74*). Although the parallel parts of the same inscription do indeed have the *strategos* in this place (ll. 28, 60, 99, 106, 118, 137, 144, 182), both offices are not identical. The case is interesting but unexplained so far, especially since the office is mentioned in the plural (l. 74), but then only one person is named; cf. G. Klaffenbach's comment in *IG*.