

The First Illyrian War: A Study in Roman Imperialism

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Abstract

This paper presents a detailed case study in early Roman imperialism in the Greek East: the First Illyrian War (229/8 B.C.), Rome's first military engagement across the Adriatic. It places Roman decision-making and action within its proper context by emphasizing the role that Greek polities and Illyrian tribes played in both the outbreak and conclusion of the war. It argues that the primary motivation behind the Roman decision to declare war against the Ardiaei in 229 was to secure the very profitable trade routes linking Brundisium to the eastern shore of the Adriatic. It was in fact the failure of the major Greek powers to limit Ardiaean piracy that led directly to Roman intervention. In the earliest phase of trans-Adriatic engagement Rome was essentially uninterested in expansion or establishing a formal hegemony in the Greek East and maintained only very loose ties to the polities of the eastern Adriatic coast. However, Rome did exercise a certain influence in the decision-making processes of these polities in the decades following the war. Nonetheless, the absence of a Roman presence in the region following the war led directly to further intervention in the region a decade later.

Abrégé

Ce mémoire se veut être une étude de cas approfondie de l'impérialisme romain naissant dans l'Orient grec : le cas de la Première Guerre illyrienne (229/8 av. J.C.), la première entreprise militaire romaine de l'autre côté de l'Adriatique.

L'approche choisie situe le processus décisionnel et les actions de Rome dans leur contexte propre en insistant sur le rôle que les communautés grecques et illyriennes eurent à jouer à la fois dans le déclenchement et dans la conclusion de la guerre. Cette étude soutient que la déclaration de guerre de Rome contre les Vardéens en 229 fut principalement motivée par le désir de s'assurer le contrôle des lucratives routes de commerce reliant Brundisium à la côte orientale de l'Adriatique. Ce fut en fait l'incapacité des principales puissances grecques à mettre un frein à la piraterie vardéenne qui mena directement à l'intervention romaine. Rome ne montra d'abord que peu d'intérêt envers une expansion ou l'établissement d'une quelconque hégémonie dans l'Orient grec. Elle ne maintint que de vagues relations avec les communautés de la côte est de l'Adriatique.

Rome exerça cependant une certaine influence sur le processus de décision de ces communautés au cours des décennies qui suivirent la guerre. Malgré cela, c'était en effet l'absence des romains dans cette région qui mena directement à l'intervention romaine dans la région dix ans plus tard.

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Introduction

Polybius set the stage for a discussion of Roman imperialism in the mid-Republic. In his opening paragraph he famously asked,

can anyone be so indifferent or idle as not to care to know by what means, and under what kind of polity, almost the whole inhabited world was conquered and brought under the dominion of the single city of Rome, and that too within a period of not quite fifty-three years?¹

Polybius believed that the First Illyrian War was a critical event in this process, writing “this is a matter not to be lightly passed over, but deserving the serious attention of those who wish to gain a true view of the purpose of this work and of the formation and growth of the Roman dominion.”² The First Illyrian War was Rome’s first military engagement across the Adriatic. It therefore has significant implications for our understanding of the aims and outcomes of early Roman expansion in the East. Sharp disagreement persists among scholars over both the cause of this war and the nature and extent of control which Rome gained along the eastern Adriatic coast following its victory. On one reconstruction, the Romans advanced purposefully into a powerful and entrenched position in the east in 229 B.C. On another, the Romans acted energetically to protect their

¹ Polyb. 1.1.5.

² Polyb. 2.2.2.

interests, but their political aims and gains in the region were quite limited.³ This study will provide a defense of the latter view.

In the first chapter, I give an overview of modern approaches to Roman imperialism in the east, highlighting some of the most influential views which have been put forward on this topic. I argue that the traditional debate between ‘defensive’ and ‘aggressive’ imperialism constitutes an outdated and one-sided dichotomy which fails to emphasize the complexity of Roman motives and aims as well as the very crucial role played by the polities across the Adriatic within this process. I then give an outline of the state of the evidence for this period. I will show that the Illyrians themselves remain to a large extent trapped within Graeco-Roman narratives of power and civilization, especially as archaeological excavation in this region is still quite limited. The most detailed piece of evidence regarding affairs on both the eastern and western shore of the Adriatic is the account of Polybius, supplemented by a handful of later sources and epitomes. Polybius and Appian present very different, perhaps even contradictory, accounts of the outbreak of the war. I will argue that although these two sources can in fact be reconciled, that of Polybius is ultimately the more accurate.

In the second chapter, I examine the nature of Illyria and the Illyrian kingdoms. I argue that Illyria was a Graeco-Roman construct that served to conceptualize an unknown region and its barbaric inhabitants. I illustrate that

³ See, for example, Harris 1979 and Derow 1991 for the former view; Eckstein 2008 and Walbank 1985 for the latter.

coastal tribes such as the Ardiaei coexisted in an intensely competitive and volatile environment in which the influence and territorial gains of tribal leaders were constantly under threat. Further, I argue that despite the pejorative stereotyping of Graeco-Roman sources, endemic ‘Illyrian’ piracy did not exist; in fact, such activity flourished only in the late 230s as a result of the rapid expansion of the Ardiaei down the eastern Adriatic coast and the inability of Macedon, Epirus and the allied Aetolian-Achaean Leagues, the traditionally dominant powers in the region, to limit or prevent it.

In the third chapter, I provide an outline of the political and military state of affairs in north-western Greece prior to the outbreak of war. This narrative has not been fully drawn out by scholars, and has significant implications for Roman action and intervention across the Adriatic. I will illustrate that the traditional power dynamic in the region was destabilized in the second half of the third century. Both Macedon and Epirus were greatly weakened, creating a power vacuum in the region. This provided the immediate opportunity for the Ardiaei, a tribe located on the Gulf of Rhizon, to expand southward. Victories over the allied Aetolian and Achaean Leagues solidified their presence in Greek affairs and illustrated that the allied leagues, the most dominant force in the region at this time, were unable to contain the Ardiaean threat.

In the fourth chapter, I examine Roman interests in the years just preceding the war and their motivations for intervening across the Adriatic. I

argue that in the 230s the Romans subordinated almost all foreign policy interests to the Gallic frontier while largely ignoring Ardiaean expansion. I illustrate that the Romans' chief concern was the disruption of cross-Adriatic trade routes by Ardiaean piracy, both private and 'state'-sanctioned, and the negative impact this had on Roman and Latin merchants trading out of Brundisium. I then discuss the important part that this conflict played in Rome's transition into the role of naval *prostates* in the Mediterranean, which served to further Roman influence in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean world more broadly.

In the final chapter, I discuss the peace treaty drawn up between Rome and the Ardiaei in 228 and the nature of Roman ties to the eastern Adriatic coast following the war. I will argue that the Romans did not establish a formal protectorate or a rigid system of alliances in coastal Illyria. Rather, Rome maintained a series of informal friendships (*amicitiae*) with a number of coastal colonies and tribal groups. Despite the informal nature of these ties, the Romans still exercised a certain influence on the eastern Adriatic coast in the decades following the war. However, the absence of the Romans along the eastern Adriatic coast as a result of growing conflicts with both the Gauls and the Carthaginians resulted in further conflicts in the region, particularly the Second Illyrian War of 220/19 B.C.

Chapter One

Roman Imperialism and the First Illyrian War: Sources and Approaches

The topic of Roman imperialism has been the focus of much scholarly attention for over a century. However, the motives and mechanisms of Roman expansion are hardly a dead letter; in fact, the topic remains among the most studied and highly controversial within the vast landscape of Graeco-Roman history. Over the years, a number of very different and often conflicting positions have been put forward regarding the nature of Roman expansion in the East. I will give a brief overview of the views which have been most influential in this field and discuss some of their shortcomings. In particular, I will argue that the debate between ‘defensive’ and ‘aggressive’ imperialism presents an outdated dichotomy which only hinders further progress in this field. This overview will serve to place my study of the First Illyrian War within a greater scholarly debate.

Following this, I will outline the nature and extent of the literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence relating to the First Illyrian War and some of its shortcomings. Polybius wrote that this conflict was “a matter not to be lightly passed over, but deserving the serious attention of those who wish to gain a true view of the purpose of this work and of the formation and growth of the

Roman dominion.”⁴ Despite this view, both ancient and modern scholars have often sidelined this event in favour of Rome’s more well-known conflicts with the major Hellenistic powers in the East such as the Macedonian and Seleucid kingdoms. This is in part due to the scant and conflicting nature of the evidence regarding ancient Illyria and the Illyrian Wars. However, it is also due to the view inherited from the earliest Greek writers that the Illyrians were uncivilized barbarians and pirates, hardly worthy of detailed study.

Modern Approaches to Roman Imperialism

For a very long time the dominant view among scholars who studied Roman imperialism was that Rome’s expansion was essentially defensive in nature, motivated primarily by fear of strong neighbours. It was argued that wars were fought because of the Romans’ perception, whether accurate or not, of threats to their own security. One of the earliest proponents of this view was Holleaux, following in the footsteps of Theodor Mommsen.⁵ Holleaux argued that the Romans had neither the desire nor a long-term plan for permanent expansion in the East and that they had little interest in this area until the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War in 200 B.C.

While a few dissented from this view, it was only with the publication of Harris’ *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* that this position came under

⁴ Polyb. 2.2.2.

⁵ Holleaux 1921; Mommsen 1854; Frank 1914. Among those who supported his view were Badian 1958, Walbank 1963, Errington 1971 and Veyne 1975.

sustained attack.⁶ In brief, Harris maintained that Rome's frequent military engagements throughout the Republican period were motivated by the Romans' intense desire for glory and economic benefit.⁷ In direct opposition to Holleaux's thesis, Harris argued that expansion was a definite Roman aim; according to him, the "rulers of the Roman state wished to increase the empire, and this was one of the overriding and persistent aims of their external policy."⁸ Harris maintained that all of the underlying structures of Roman society worked in the same direction, towards continuing war and expansion, and in this he was supported by a great number of scholars.⁹

Although a handful of scholars have attempted to uphold some form of 'defensive imperialism', this position has been largely crushed by Harris and his followers.¹⁰ Indeed, the notion of defensive imperialism was somewhat of a paradox. As Rich notes,

the Romans valued military achievements above all others and their strongly militaristic culture was displayed in such institutions as the triumph. They fought wars almost continuously and on the whole successfully, and as a result acquired both empire and great economic gains. Yet the 'defensive

⁶ Harris 1979.

⁷ The notion that Roman imperialism was driven by the desire for economic gain was championed earlier in the century by scholars such as Colin (1905), Rostovtzeff (1926) and Cassola (1962).

⁸ Harris 1979: 105. This view does not, according to Harris, imply that any long-term strategy existed. In fact, the notion of any form of long-term planning or 'foreign policy' in Roman decision-making has been discarded by scholars. Indeed, the structures of the Roman state militated against any long-term decision-making (see, for example, Eckstein: 2008: 19; Dzino 2010: 20).

⁹ See Harris 1979 Chapters One and Two; Rosenstein; 1990, 1999; Derow 2003. As a result of Harris' work, scholars have increasingly focused on the structural role of warfare in Roman society instead of the specific motivations and decision-making processes of each case.

¹⁰ See most notably Gruen 1984. See North's remarks (1981: 9).

imperialism' doctrine requires us to believe that this warfare and expanding was not of the Romans' seeking, and was the product largely of fear.¹¹

However, the concepts of both 'defensive' and 'aggressive' imperialism suffer from a similar and quite damaging defect. As Rich points out, these views are essentially monocausal in nature, and as such cannot provide a complete or realistic portrait of the motives and mechanisms of Roman expansion. In reality, the determining factors of Roman warfare, whether at the level of conscious decision-making or underlying structures, were numerous and multifaceted and did not, as Harris argues, all point in the same direction. Thus, fear, glory and economic benefit all played a role in Roman expansion, along with numerous other factors.¹² Further, scholars emphasize that the character and goals of expansion were quite dynamic and changed significantly over time; for example, it has been argued that both the Second Punic War and Second Macedonian War marked significant turning points in the way in which Roman warfare was conducted and concluded.¹³ The way in which Roman expansion unfolded varied considerably from one region to another, thus scholars often differentiate between the intensity and mechanisms of western versus eastern expansion. Generalizations regarding the nature of Roman imperialism over time and space are not valid. The debate between 'defensive' and 'aggressive' imperialism is, in my view, outdated and overly simplistic.

¹¹ Rich 1993: 48.

¹² See especially Rich 1993, who provides a nuanced view of the driving forces of Roman expansion.

¹³ See, for example, Rich 1993 and Eckstein 2008.

A further drawback of both of these positions is their tendency to espouse a ‘Romanocentric’ approach; in other words, to focus solely on Roman interests, aims and means during the process of eastward expansion. This has sometimes been achieved to the point of making all other political players mere passive participants in this process. However, Roman expansion in the East involved a number of Hellenistic states, both small and large, each with their own aims and interests to defend and advance.¹⁴ The Romans were in no way entering into neutral or inactive territory; rather, their actions must be placed into the context of Greek affairs. There were in fact many intersecting narratives to the process of conflict and expansion. To focus solely on that of the Roman is to provide only half of the picture.

One example of a more nuanced and comprehensive view of Roman expansion is that provided by Eckstein, who presents a fresh defense of Holleaux’s thesis with a number of significant modifications. According to Eckstein, “Rome certainly was a ferociously aggressive and militarized state – but so were all large states in the Classical and then Hellenistic Mediterranean, so were all medium-sized states, and so were even most small states.”¹⁵ Eckstein therefore agrees with Harris’ view of Rome as an aggressively militaristic state, however he rejects the claim that Rome was exceptional in this regard. According

¹⁴ Gruen focuses on the Greek experience of Roman expansion, reversing the traditional question of Roman imperialism by asking “what were the circumstances that the Romans encountered in the East and how did they adapt to them?” (Gruen 1984: 3).

¹⁵ Eckstein 2008: 9, 15; see Eckstein 2006 Chapters Three to Six.

to him, Rome's exceptionalism, and the source of her success, lay in her unique skill in conciliation, assimilation and alliance-management.¹⁶

Eckstein seeks to place Roman action within the theoretical framework of Realism, which has been traditionally employed by scholars in the field of modern international relations. This framework focuses on the "harsh and competitive nature of interactions among states under conditions of international anarchy."¹⁷ An anarchic, or multipolar, system encourages assertive and aggressive conduct by all states in order to advance their own interests, economic or otherwise. Thus war, or the threat of war, is always present. However, "the inherent fragility of ancient states made the ferocity of their mutual competition a truly life and death struggle," thus making fear of strong neighbours an important factor in Roman decision-making.¹⁸ Eckstein presents a new and multidimensional view of Roman expansion, however, his position, which is in many ways returns to that of 'defensive imperialism', as well as his use of a modern theoretical framework within an ancient world context, has drawn much criticism from scholars. Despite this opposition, Eckstein's view has much to offer a study of the First Illyrian

¹⁶ Eckstein 2008: 15-20, *contra* Harris 1979, Rosenstein 1999; Derow 2003.

¹⁷ Eckstein 2008: 7.

¹⁸ Eckstein 2008: 12; see Eckstein 2006: Chapter Seven. According to Rich (1993: 61), "the Romans' possession of a magnificent fighting machine, their habituation to war and their extraordinary record of success in it, the benefits that that success brought them and the continuing demand for more of the same that it generated... made the Romans so ready to discern and take up occasions for war," however, "the Romans were not always successful in their wars and some enemies – the Gauls, Pyrrhus, Hannibal – threatened the very survival of the Republic. Memories of those dangers were real enough," and, according to Rich, "the fear of powerful neighbours, although not, as used to be supposed, the key to Roman imperialism, must remain an important factor in accounting for it."

War, although he is not entirely accurate in his assessment of the causes and consequences of this conflict.

Illyrian Studies

A detailed study of the First Illyrian War would only be partially complete without a proper understanding of the political and military framework of the region known as Illyria. Illyrian history is a comparatively new field of study, emerging only in the mid-twentieth century. It has been relatively neglected in English, French and German historiography, and although a large corpus of Albanian and former Yugoslav scholarship has been published in this field, it remains generally unavailable and unknown to scholars. Many of these modern studies of Illyria have been heavily influenced by political and ethnic tensions in the Balkan region which stretch back to the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Research on ancient Illyria as of the 1980s has often been shaped by nationalist aims, especially those of Albania, Serbia and Kosovo.²⁰ Albanian scholars in particular sought to illustrate continuity of descent (autochthony) from the ancient Illyrians, which had important territorial implications within the conflicts of the late

¹⁹ Several excellent studies regarding the impact of the nineteenth and twentieth century political environment and ideology on Illyrian studies have been published: see Wilkes 1992 Chapter One; Wallace 1998: 219-23; Cabanes 2004; Dzino 2008b. This is well illustrated by the fact that Appian's *Illyrike*, the only specialized ancient work on the Illyrians, was translated into Serbo-Croatian as early as the mid-nineteenth century, as it had important implications for the cultural ideology and political agenda of Balkan ethnic groups (see Šasel Kos 2005a: 95-6).

²⁰ For example, regional political conflicts, such as that between Serbia and Albania over Kosovo, were projected into the past through the debate over the ethnic origins of the Dardani, an Illyrian tribe which inhabited the area of modern Kosovo in antiquity. Wilkes 1992: 10-12, 26-7; Cabanes 2004: 117-20; Dzino 2008a: 45.

twentieth century.²¹ In an article written in 2004, Pierre Cabanes, one of the foremost scholars of ancient Illyria and founder of the Mission archéologique et épigraphique française en Albanie, wrote that “l’avenir de l’archéologie, en Albanie, comme dans les États voisins, doit aller vers une recherche scientifique rigoureuse, qui conduira à faire apparaître de grands ensembles culturels plus larges que les États restreints mis en place au XX^{ième} siècle.”²²

Illyrian studies are hampered by a treacherous source tradition. The Illyrians did not produce any literary or epigraphic texts; it is primarily from Greek and Roman material that their history must be drawn. This has important consequences. The topic is trapped within Graeco-Roman narratives of identity and power; as Dzino notes, “the narratives of the indigenous population of Illyricum remain hidden and are only told in the language and system of cultural values of their conquerors.”²³ Further, most ancient Greek and Roman authors were, on the whole, little interested in Illyria, a region on the fringes of their world which they perceived as wild, rough and isolated.²⁴ The Illyrians were an

²¹ Wilkes 1992: 67, 69; Cabanes 2004: 118. E. Hoxha, the Albanian dictator of 1945-85, himself said that “Nos recherches archéologiques doivent mieux et davantage se consacrer à des fouilles susceptibles de certifier la genèse et l’ethnogenèse de notre peuple plutôt que de porter leurs efforts sur les vestiges de l’Antiquité gréco-romaine” (quote in Cabanes 2004: 119). On the other hand, Slovenian scholars denied Illyrian influence in pre-historic Slovenia, reflecting a strong sense of Slovenian identity within Yugoslavia (Dzino 2008b: 45).

²² Cabanes 2004: 122. Šasel Kos notes that “at present, less is known of the ‘Illyrians’ than had recently been believed” (Šasel Kos 2005a: 231). Of course, the link between nationalist aims and archaeological research is not unique to the Balkans.

²³ Dzino 2010: 7.

²⁴ See, for example, Plin. *HN* 3.25: “But few of the names of these nations are worthy of mention, or indeed very easy of pronunciation;” Cass. Dio 49.36.2-4: “The Pannonians dwell in Dalmatia along the very bank of the Ister from Noricum to Moesia and lead the most miserable existence of all mankind. For they are not well off as regards either soil or climate; they cultivate no olives and

excellent example of the barbarian ‘other’ which could be placed in opposition to the civilized world of the Greeks and Romans.²⁵ Barbarity versus civilization was indeed a central theme in Strabo’s discussion of the Illyrians.²⁶ In the vast majority of the Graeco-Roman sources, the Illyrians are only mentioned when they appear in connection (or confrontation) with the Greeks or Romans. Thus, few attempts were made by ancient authors to correctly or thoroughly assess the culture, history or political framework of the Illyrians on their own terms.

The sources which discuss the Illyrians and their interactions with the Greek world in the third century B.C. are removed by many centuries from the events they describe. The major sources are the histories of Appian, Cassius Dio/Zonaras and Trogus/Justin, as well as the geographies of Strabo and Pliny the Elder.²⁷ The latter accounts took a geographical and ethnological approach rather

produce no wine except to a very slight extent and a wretched quality at that, since the winter is very rigorous and occupies the greater part of their year, but drink as well as eat both barley and millet. For all that they are considered the bravest of all men of whom we have knowledge; for they are very high-spirited and bloodthirsty, as men who possess nothing that makes an honourable life worthwhile;” Str. 7.5.7: “The Dardanians are so utterly wild that they dig caves beneath their dung-hills and live there.”

²⁵ A very good example of this contrast is found in Thuc. 4.126. See Salmon 1986; Wilkes 1992: 3-4; Wallace 1998: 214-6; Dzino 2008b: 47; Dzino 2010: 6.

²⁶ Although both elements are present in his description of the Illyrians, the true catalyst of civilization in the region was the Roman conquest under Augustus. See Dzino 2006; Alamagor 2005; Van der Vliet 2002.

²⁷ Appian’s history of Rome was written in the mid-second century A.D.; his section on Illyrian affairs (the *Illyrike*) is the only existing specialized study of the Illyrians. On Appian’s career and history in general, see Šasel Kos 2005a: 19-51; on the *Illyrike*, 83-96. Dio’s history was written in the mid-third century A.D. He served as governor of Dalmatia and Upper Pannonia, which gave him a certain insight into the region most other authors did not have (Cass. Dio 49.36.4, 80.1.2-3; see also 72.23.5 on his extensive research prior to writing). However, his account of the third century has been transmitted only through the very brief Byzantine epitome of Zonaras, composed in the first half of the twelfth century. Trogus’ history, written in the Augustan period, survives only through the epitome of Justin, which most scholars date to the late fourth century A.D. Strabo and Pliny the Elder wrote in the first century A.D.

than a historical one, and while this has some advantages, it has left their accounts chronologically vague. Strabo's sources, for example, span a period of six centuries; his description of Illyria, as Dzino notes, "produces an unreal picture of the area that never existed in time or space."²⁸ Since these authors rarely discuss their sources, it is often very difficult to assess their historical authenticity. Other accounts exist only in fragments (such as that of Diodorus Siculus) or have been lost completely (that of Livy). Polybius, one of the most detailed sources for mid-Republican history and the least chronologically removed, evinces very little interest in Illyrian affairs.

Modern scholars have been forced to approach the Illyrians through the lens of Graeco-Roman interaction instead of on their own terms. However, an upsurge in archaeological excavation and survey in this region in recent decades has proven very profitable in escaping the limited narratives and pejorative constructions of classical sources. The lack of indigenous narratives can in many ways be compensated for by the increasing amount of archaeological evidence from ancient Illyria at scholars' disposal.²⁹ This evidence is, however, limited in the kind of information it offers; in other words, while it can reveal much about cultural trends, the economy or settlement patterns, for example, it has little to contribute to a discussion of the political framework and foreign relations of the Illyrians, which is the focus of much of this study.

²⁸ Dzino 2006: 119, 2007, 2008a: 174. See also Baladié 1989.

²⁹ See, for example, the work of Cabanes, founder of the Mission archéologique et épigraphique française en Albanie.

The Adriatic World in the Late Third Century

Although the source material for Illyrian studies is quite poor, a workable amount of material is available regarding the Adriatic world of the late third century. Unfortunately, no coherent history of this region was recorded in the ancient sources. Polybius provides the bulk of our evidence for this period, supplemented by a handful of other literary sources, as well as some epigraphic and archaeological material. He provides a detailed account of affairs in north-western Greece, which is complemented by the epitome of Justin. He is also our main source for Roman foreign affairs in the second half of the third century, as Livy's account of this period has been lost. In this he is supplemented only by very late and summarizing sources: Livy's *Periochae* and the epitome of Zonaras. The sources for Roman Italy in the third century (from around 270 to 220 in particular) are extremely scarce. Polybius does not discuss Roman-Italian affairs until the outbreak of the Second Punic War in 218, and Livy's account, as already mentioned, is not extant.³⁰ Dio/Zonaras however provides important information regarding Roman activity in Brundisium in the mid-third century, which is critical to our understanding of the motivations behind the war.

The nature and extent of cross-Adriatic trade is a matter which is central to this study. This is a relatively new field of study which relies almost exclusively

³⁰ See Fronda 2010: 5-13 for a detailed discussion of the source material regarding Roman-Italian relations in the third century.

on archaeological evidence published in the past twenty to thirty years. The breadth and diffusion of commercial contacts and goods throughout the Adriatic and hinterland, however, remains largely unknown as excavation and survey work in this region has been limited to a very small number of locations.³¹ The discovery of valuable archaeological material is often hindered by the presence of modern towns and cities on important ancient sites, such as Epidamnus and Brundisium; however, much research has been conducted on the island of Issa on the eastern Adriatic coast.

The First Illyrian War: Polybius and Appian

The ancient sources which record the outbreak of the First Illyrian War seem to contradict each other quite significantly in their basic assessment of the motivations behind the conflict. Two main sources record this event: Polybius and Appian.³² Dio/Zonaras also provides a very brief account of the war. It is possible that two separate source traditions existed on this subject, although it also is quite conceivable that Appian misinterpreted earlier accounts of the war. This disagreement in the sources has led to an intense debate among scholars over the true causes of the war as well as a broader discussion on the historical value and reliability of these two authors. I will argue that these two accounts are not

³¹ See, for example, Cabanes 1983: 194.

³² Some extremely brief references to this period exist in Livy's *Periochae* and the much later condensed works of epitomes such as Florus (early second century A.D.) and Orosius (early fifth century A.D.), however these give little valuable historical information. Further, see Brunt 1980 on the problematic nature of epitomes.

necessarily contradictory, but can in fact be reconciled, although Polybius ultimately provides the more accurate account of the outbreak and conclusion of the First Illyrian War. The specific discrepancies between the accounts of Polybius and Appian will be addressed throughout the paper. However, it will be beneficial to address here some of the broader differences between these two sources as they apply to the First Illyrian War.

The accounts of Appian and Dio/Zonaras are not only chronologically removed from the First Illyrian War by several centuries, but are also extremely compressed, such that details are regularly omitted and the basic chronology is often inaccurate.³³ In comparison, Polybius offers a very detailed and relatively lengthy account of the events leading up to the outbreak of the war. Further, his history was written in the mid-second century; he was thus separated by only a generation or two from the war.³⁴ He also had extensive knowledge of the political affairs in both Greece and Rome at this time.³⁵ Appian, on the other

³³ This is well illustrated by Derow 1973: 120-1.

³⁴ Polybius' history began in 220, as this period "would fall partly in the life of my father, and partly in my own; and thus I should be able to speak as eye-witness of some of the events, and from the information of eye-witnesses of others." He notes that "to go further back and write the report of a report, traditions at second or third hand, seemed to me unsatisfactory either with a view to giving clear impressions or making sound statements." This is cited by Derow as an argument against accepting Polybius' account of this event, however it seems clear that Polybius is here referring to his brief account of earlier events such as the First Punic War, and not the First Illyrian War, which began in 229. Cf. Polyb. 2.2.2, where he states how important a full understanding of the First Illyrian War is to his history.

³⁵ Polybius was a high-ranking member of the Achaean League. In 168 he was brought to Italy as a political hostage after the Third Macedonian War (Paus. 7.10-12). In Italy, he circulated among several high ranking Roman families, including that of the famous Scipio Aemilianus, who he accompanied on a number of campaigns and who allowed him access to valuable archives and inscriptions. He returned to Achaea in 150 (Polyb. 35.6).

hand, admits that he lacked accurate information on this subject. In his introduction to the Illyrian Wars, he wrote

why the Romans subjugated [the Illyrians], and what were the real causes or pretexts of the wars, I acknowledged, when writing of Crete, that I had not discovered, and I exhorted those who were able to tell more, to do so. I shall write down only what I know.³⁶

As a result of these differences, Polybius' account has tended to be the preferred piece of evidence employed by scholars who study this period.

However, several scholars have argued that Appian's account should be favoured over that of Polybius, and indeed no one would argue that Polybius' account is without error or bias.³⁷ Recent research has served to diminish to some extent the reputation Polybius had enjoyed among scholars for a long time.³⁸ It is therefore important to discuss some of the more broad criticisms levelled at Polybius' account of the First Illyrian War.³⁹

First, Polybius demonstrates a lack of knowledge of, or interest in, Illyrian internal affairs.⁴⁰ In this, however, he is by no means alone; as discussed above, Greek and Roman authors knew very little of the Illyrians, especially prior to the creation of the province of Illyricum under Augustus. Second, he evinces a strong

³⁶ App. *Ill.* 6.

³⁷ The most thorough defence of Appian was put forward by Derow 1973. See also Levi 1973; Errington 1989: 86-9; Šasel Kos 2002a, 2005a.

³⁸ See, for example, Champion 2004.

³⁹ Indeed, many scholars have claimed *a priori* that Polybius' account on this subject is to be preferred simply based on the factors listed above and on his reputation as a more thorough historian, without giving a detailed defense of his account of this period over that of Appian (see, for example, Holleaux 1928: 822; Hammond 1968: 5, n. 16; Eckstein 2008: 32).

⁴⁰ He does not discuss the Illyrians themselves in any detail. For example, he fails to mention that Agron was in fact succeeded by his young son Pinnes, for whom his wife Teuta acted as regent (this detail is mentioned in App. *Ill.* 8 and Zon. 8.19). Derow 1973: 123

anti-Illyrian bias, painting the Illyrians as a barbaric people whose leaders were greedy, arrogant, volatile and irrational. His characterization of Queen Teuta in particular has been criticized.⁴¹ Again, a similar depiction is found in almost all ancient sources which discuss the Illyrians; the ‘othering’ of an unknown enemy was very characteristic of ancient sources in general. Appian alone seems to remain relatively free of such statements. Third, Polybius’ account revolves around a fabricated interview between Queen Teuta and the Roman envoys.⁴² Once again, however, Polybius is not unique in this regard; ancient sources are rife with speeches and interviews which were by necessity fabricated to a greater or lesser degree. Polybius certainly sought to produce a striking narrative effect in his account by creating an opposition between the civilized and reasonable Romans and the barbaric and arrogant Illyrians, as many other ancient authors did both before and after him. The criticisms levelled at Polybius by Derow and others are ones that are regularly applied to ancient sources as a whole. These flaws demonstrate that one should be cautious when using Polybius’ account, not that it should be discarded wholesale.

Conclusion

The study of Roman expansion has in many ways been stifled by the outdated and inaccurate dichotomy presented by the debate between ‘defensive’

⁴¹ See Polyb. 2.4.8, 2.8.7, 12-13.

⁴² Polyb. 2.8.6-13.

and ‘aggressive’ imperialism. In reality, the motives and mechanisms of Roman expansion were numerous and differed greatly over space and time. This will be aptly demonstrated by a broader study of the context and outcomes of the First Illyrian War.

Illyria itself remains largely trapped within Graeco-Roman narratives of power, especially as archaeological excavation along the eastern Adriatic coast is limited to a small handful of sites. A study of Greek and Roman affairs in the later third century relies predominantly on Polybius and a handful of later summarizing sources. Some areas, such as Roman-Italian relations, remain quite unclear. Polybius and Appian give seemingly contradictory accounts of the First Illyrian War, and although it will be demonstrated that these can in fact be reconciled, Polybius’ account is on the whole more reliable.

Chapter Two

Illyria and the Illyrians

Before embarking on an analysis of the First Illyrian War, it will be constructive to shed some light on the geography and political framework of the region known as Illyria and the so-called Illyrian Kingdom, entities often misunderstood by both ancient and modern historians. I will show that Illyria was primarily a construction of the Graeco-Roman sources, and, far from being a unified political entity, was in fact a conglomeration of numerous independent tribal and ethnic groups, some of which rose to particular prominence through the conquest of neighbouring regions. Although there is evidence for the existence of a political-military hierarchy within these tribal groups, the competitive and volatile environment in which they thrived meant that there was little opportunity for stable state structures or long-term diplomacy to evolve.

Further, the Illyrians were often associated with endemic and highly disruptive piracy. Livy, for example, writes that the Illyrians, Liburnians and Histrians were “savage tribes chiefly notorious for their acts of piracy.”⁴³ Such claims must be assessed with caution; the reality of Illyrian piracy should be separated from the pejorative stereotype employed by Greek and Roman authors. I will argue that Illyrian piracy flourished only in the 230s in conjunction with the

⁴³ Liv. 10.2.4. See also, for example, Polyb. 2.5.1-2, 2.8.1; App. *Ill.* 3; Str. 7.5.6, 7.5.10.

rapid expansion of the Ardiaei, a tribal group inhabiting a small region on the central Adriatic coast. As a result of the destabilization of the two previously dominant powers in the region, Epirus and Macedon, as well as the Ardiaean victory over the Aetolian League at Medion, their piracy continued unimpeded.

The ‘Illyrians’: Tribes and Kingdoms

‘Illyria’, ‘Illyrians’ and the ‘Illyrian kingdom’ are terms that have generated many misconceptions among both ancient and modern historians. *Illyrioi* was a name given by the Greeks to their non-Greek neighbours to the north-west. It was adopted by Greek and Roman authors to describe a people whose culture, language and political organization they little understood.⁴⁴ Those designated by the Greeks as ‘Illyrians’ never termed themselves as such.⁴⁵ Pliny the Elder refers to the *Illyrii proprie dicti*, or the ‘Illyrians properly so-called’, which he claims inhabited a very small area on the central Adriatic coast.⁴⁶ Based on archaeological evidence, scholars have posited that the Illyrii were likely a Bronze Age tribe or community, and that the label ‘Illyrians’ was later applied by Greeks as a general term encompassing peoples they viewed as sharing similar customs.⁴⁷ ‘Illyria’ was thus an invented term, applied by the Greeks and

⁴⁴ Appian, for example, writes that “the Greeks call those people Illyrians who occupy the region beyond Macedonia and Thrace” (*Ill.* 1), and refers to “...the peoples whom the Greeks called Illyrians” (*Ill.* 5).

⁴⁵ Hammond 1966: 239-42; Wilkes 1992: 3; Dzino 2010: 3.

⁴⁶ Plin. *HN* 3.144; Pompeius Mela 2.55.

⁴⁷ Similarly, the term ‘Hellenes’ had its origin in a small Bronze Age tribe located in Thessaly. Hammond 1966: 241; Wilkes 1992: 92; Šasel Kos 2005a: 231-3.

Romans in order to create the semblance of a more coherent geographical and political unit.⁴⁸ The ‘construction’ of Illyria was not intentional or premeditated, but rather an instinctive means for Greeks, and later Romans, to conceptualize the region and its inhabitants.

The geographical scope of Illyria grew as Greek and Roman contact with the area increased rather than with the actual expansion or contraction of the territory inhabited or controlled by those defined as Illyrians. Thus, almost every ancient author gives a different definition of the region associated with the *Illyrioi*.⁴⁹ In the Roman period, the term Illyria came increasingly to refer to all of the territory between the Adriatic and the Danube, a change which was linked to the provincialization of the region.⁵⁰ The many diverse groups who inhabited this increasingly broad territory came therefore to be designated as ‘Illyrians’ even though they had few cultural or ethnic ties to each other or to the original Illyrians, if such a people ever existed.

Although often used as a blanket term for the peoples living north of Epirus and Macedon, *Illyrioi* referred not to a single politically unified people, but

⁴⁸ Well illustrated by Dzino 2008b: 47-8, 2010: 3. See Woolf 1998 on the application of this same concept by the Romans in Gaul. The terms ‘Illyria’ and ‘Illyrians’ will occasionally be used as a convenience to refer generally to the region and its inhabitants, however it must be understood that these terms are not native but Graeco-Roman.

⁴⁹ As Dio/Zonaras notes, “the name Illyricum was anciently applied to different regions” (Zon. 8.19). For instance, compare Hecat. *FGrH* 1 F 98-101, the *Periplus* of Pseudo-Scylax 22-7, the fragmented *Periegesis* of Scymnus, Hdt. 1.196, 4.49.2, 9.43 and Str. C 206.

⁵⁰ This new definition was in use as early as 167 BC, and was clearly in place by the Augustan period when the entire region was designated as a single administrative unit, the province of Illyricum. See App. *Ill.* 1; Str. 7.5; Zon. 8.19. Hammond 1966; Wilkes 1992: 96-7; Šasel Kos 2005a: 239-44; Dzino 2008a, esp. 178. For the geography of Illyria as defined by Roman sources, see Šasel Kos 2005a: 97-114.

was in fact a term applied to numerous independent tribes or kinship groups.⁵¹ Greek and Roman sources assumed that these tribes shared many cultural features, and perhaps even a distinct ethnic identity. Although modern scholars often point to a number of shared cultural and linguistic features among these tribes, there were in fact significant differences in their material culture, toponymy and onomastics.⁵² Indeed, scholars have identified at least five distinct cultural-ethnic groups in the region, each with their own sub-divisions.⁵³ It appears that the various tribes of this broader region had no shared ethnic identity, but rather that the concept of ‘Illyrian ethnicity’ was entirely a Graeco-Roman construction.⁵⁴ Appian writes for example that

These peoples [the Illyrians], and also the Pannonians, the Rhærtians, the Noricans, the Mysians of Europe, and the other neighbouring tribes who inhabited the right bank of the Danube, the Romans distinguished from one another just as the various Greek peoples are distinguished from each other, and they call each by its own name, but they consider the whole of Illyria as embraced under a common designation.⁵⁵

This is not in fact a valid comparison, although quite common to many Graeco-Roman authors. The Greeks were united by the sense of belonging to a common culture, with shared language, religion and foundation myths, whereas it is not at all clear whether this was the case for Illyria.⁵⁶ As Šasel

⁵¹See, for example, App. *Ill.* 3, 6; Str. 7.5; Plin. *HN* 3.25-6.

⁵²Šasel Kos 2005a: 228.

⁵³Dzino 2007: 112; Dzino 2010: 3, 34-7, 45; Wilkes 1992: 3; Šasel Kos 2002a: 110; Šasel Kos 2005a: 226.

⁵⁴This is of course based on the assumption that material and onomastic evidence is a reliable indicator of ethnic identity.

⁵⁵App. *Ill.* 6.

⁵⁶Šasel Kos 2005a: 223.

Kos notes, “we only have an external opinion of [Illyrian] ‘ethnicity’ (through Graeco-Roman sources) that ultimately has little to do with ethnicity in the proper sense of the word.”⁵⁷

Greek and Roman sources often described the political organization of Illyria as that of a kingdom. The precise nature of the ‘Illyrian kingdom’ has been the subject of debate among a number of scholars, who tend to fall into one of two camps. Certain historians, most notably Papazoglou, have argued for the existence of a geographically unified kingdom that retained uninterrupted power from the fourth to the second century and was ruled by an unbroken dynasty of kings.⁵⁸ Others have argued that the Illyrian kingdom was not a unified political entity which existed over several centuries. Rather, they claim that the various Illyrian kings to whom we have reference in our sources originated from different tribes and ruled separate kingdoms at different times throughout the Classical and Hellenistic period.⁵⁹ The ambiguous language generally employed by ancient authors makes this debate very difficult to resolve. For instance, Polybius writes that Agron was “master of stronger land and sea forces than any of the kings of Illyria before him,” a passage which could be interpreted in either direction.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Šasel Kos 2005a: 223. She later writes that “to seek any kind of ethnic identity formation bearing the name Illyris/Illyria seems uncertain... at most we can speak of ethnic affinities” (238). Illyrian ethnogenesis is in fact one of the most cloudy and disputed topics in Illyrian studies, its progress having been limited to a great extent by modern political aims.

⁵⁸ This view was first put forward by Droysen in the late nineteenth century, and later propounded in greater detail and with slight modifications by Papazoglou 1965.

⁵⁹ First advanced by Zippel and subsequently taken up by Hammond 1966, Carlier 1987, Cabanes 1988b, Šasel Kos 2002a, 2005a, among others.

⁶⁰ Polyb. 2.2.4.

However, a closer look at some other passages speaks against Papazoglou's argument. For example, Appian writes that Agron was "king of that part of Illyria which borders the Adriatic Sea."⁶¹ Cassius Dio calls Agron "the king of the Ardiaeans and of Illyrian stock."⁶²

Intertribal relations in the region shed further light on the nature of the Illyrian kingdoms. Intertribal warfare was constant and stemmed from two main causes. The first was competition over resources, as the Illyrian coastline and hinterland had little agricultural wealth.⁶³ Second, as in many ancient societies, the power and authority of tribal leaders rested upon military strength and success; these leaders therefore constantly sought to expand their territory and incorporate other tribes.⁶⁴ It was within this competitive environment that the various 'kingdoms' seem to have emerged. The Ardiaei, for example, became very powerful under their leader Agron, who in the 230s extended his territory, centered on the Gulf of Rhizon, southward down the coast to include a number of other tribes, several nearby Greek colonies and even parts of the former Epirote kingdom.⁶⁵ This Ardiaean territory was eventually referred to by Graeco-Roman sources as a kingdom. However, other kingdoms, located in different regions, had emerged under Bardylis of the Dardanii (385-358) and Glaukias of the Taulantii

⁶¹ App. *Ill.* 7.

⁶² Zon. 8.19.

⁶³ Wilkes 1992: 13-5. See Str. 7.5.6.

⁶⁴ Hammond 1966: 239-53; Dell 1967: 97; Dell 1970: 116-7.

⁶⁵ Polyb. 2.2-9; App. *Ill.* 7; Zon. 8.19.

(c. 335-302), among others.⁶⁶ Thus, when ancient sources referred to the ‘king of the Illyrians’ or the ‘kingdom of the Illyrians’, ‘Illyrians’ was being used broadly to indicate a number of Illyrian tribes, and not the entire region designated as Illyria.

Scattered literary evidence points to the existence of a system similar to that of serfdom which appears to have been applied to conquered tribes.⁶⁷ Theopompus writes that “the Ardiaei had three hundred thousand *prospelatae* who were like helots.”⁶⁸ In Dardania, these ‘serfs’ farmed the land of politically and militarily prominent tribal members, and in wartime fought under the command of these men. Agatharchides of Cnidus notes that some Dardanians owned up to a thousand such labourers.⁶⁹ Papazoglou argues that these men were free Dardanians “with limited political rights or no rights at all, and with definite obligations towards the members of the aristocratic class” who owned the land.⁷⁰ These passages imply the existence of a politically and militarily hierarchized society.

⁶⁶ Theopomp. *FGrH* 35 (Bardylis); Diod. Sic. 19.67.6-7, 78.1 and Just. 17.3 (Glaukias).

⁶⁷ This was often in addition to imposed tribute (see, for example, Polyb. 32.9.4).

⁶⁸ Theopomp. *FGrH* 115 F 40=Ath. 6.27; *FGrH* 86 F 17. The extent to which these *prospelatae* were in fact in a similar position to the Messenian helots is debated. See Hammond 1966: 242; Papazoglou 1978: 483-8.

⁶⁹ Agatharch. Frg. 17 J=Athen. 6.103 D 98. Cf. the Thessalian *penestae* (Demosth. *C. Arist.* 13.23, 23.199).

⁷⁰ Papazoglou 1978: 488.

Tribal leaders generally ruled through a system of dynasts. These were nominal subjects who governed over conquered territories.⁷¹ Leaders often had great difficulty in retaining authority and control over both their dynasts and subjects.⁷² As of the third century, the leaders of ascendant tribes such as the Ardiaei increasingly sought to create more powerful centralized kingdoms like that of Macedon, with which they were in close contact.⁷³ However, the rapid rise and fall of tribes and dominant tribal rulers meant that no state structures truly had time to evolve. This made long-term compacts with other polities, such as the Epirotes or Macedonians, difficult to construct and maintain.⁷⁴

Pirates and Barbarians

The association between the Illyrians and endemic piracy was a natural one to draw for Graeco-Roman authors, who generally viewed these people as uncivilized barbarians. Indeed, barbarianism and piracy are attributes almost always found together in the literary sources, and both were highly charged labels which did not necessarily reflect reality. As Gabrielsen notes, there has been a growing recognition among scholars that the terms ‘pirate’ and ‘piracy’

⁷¹ Dell 1967: 97; Šasel Kos 2002a: 110-1. See, for example, Polyb. 2.8.8, 5.4.3-4; Eutrop. 3.4; Trog. *Prol.* 8; Just. 9.7.5; Cass. Dio 40.3; Eum. 21.21.3-4.

⁷² Dzino 2010: 38, 45; Cabanes 1988b; Šasel Kos 2002. A perfect example is the dynast Demetrius of Pharos, who in 229 betrayed Agron’s wife and successor Queen Teuta in order to collaborate with the Romans (Polyb. 2.11.4). See as well the large revolt of several tribes from the Ardiaei led by the Dardani in 230 (Polyb. 2.6.4).

⁷³ Dzino 2010: 38-9.

⁷⁴ Hammond 1966: 239-53; Dell 1967: 97-8; Dell 1970: 116-7.

contributed greatly to creating stereotyped images of marginal peoples, whether Greek or non-Greek.⁷⁵ The Aetolians, for example, were similarly labelled as both barbarians and pirates by their Graeco-Roman contemporaries.⁷⁶ Those characterized as pirates in the sources tended to share a number of traits, all of which apply very well to the picture painted by Graeco-Roman sources of Illyria. They generally inhabited regions described as wild and inhospitable, unsuitable for agriculture.⁷⁷ This forced them, according to these authors, to rely on piracy to sustain themselves. Strabo, for example, writes of Illyria that “the country is rough and poor and not suited to a farming population,” but that the coastline is “sunny and good for fruits, for the olive and the vine, except, perhaps, in places here or there that are utterly rugged.”⁷⁸ However, the Illyrians “in earlier times made but small account of it — perhaps in part owing to their ignorance of its fertility, though mostly because of the wildness of the inhabitants and their piratical habits.”⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Gabrielsen 2001: 222. See also Perlman 1999 (Cretans); Scholten 2000: 4-6, 21-2 (Aetolians); De Souza 1999: 73-6; Dell 1967 (Illyrians).

⁷⁶ See, for example, the association between the ‘barbaric’ Aetolians and piracy in Polyb. 4.16.4, as well as the stereotyping effect in 4.3.1 and 18.5.8. Thucydides writes of the largest Aetolian tribe that they “speak a language exceedingly difficult to understand, and eat their flesh raw” (3.94.4); Euripides referred to the Aetolians as “interbred with barbarians” (Eur. *Phoen.* 138). See Thuc. 1.5.3 on Aetolian piracy.

⁷⁷ Regarding Aetolia, for example, see Ephor. *FGrH* 70 F 122; Polyb. 5.8, 13-4; Thuc. 3.98; Diod. Sic. 18.24.2-25.2; Str. 10.2.3, 22; Hom. *Il.* 2.640, 13.217; Xen. *Hell.* 4.6.14; Scholten 2000: 1.

⁷⁸ Str. 7.5.6, 10.

⁷⁹ Str. 7.5.10.

Further, those classified as pirates were said to inhabit scattered and often isolated settlements rather than urban centers.⁸⁰ This claim was, however, often inaccurate, as archaeological and literary evidence illustrates that both the Aetolians and the Illyrians inhabited several urban centers.⁸¹ Most importantly, they retained tribal or ethnic political structures instead of adopting a *polis*-based framework. In ancient sources, *ethne* represented the primitive form of the ‘true’ and civilized Greek state, the *polis*, and thus it would not be surprising to discover that peoples who retained traditional ethnic-political structures would also continue to practice what was considered to be an outdated and indeed uncivilized means of economic advancement.⁸²

The terms ‘pirate’ and ‘piracy’ were often applied, especially as of the fourth century, as pejorative labels to enemies and their acts. As Gabrielsen notes, this was a “convenient tool by means of which a dominant power, often assisted by ancient authors, sought to construct a specific image of its political opponents.”⁸³ The use of these terms served as an effective stereotyping mechanism which marked the enemy’s actions as both uncivilized and

⁸⁰ Thucydides writes, for example, that the Aetolians “dwelt in unwalled villages scattered far apart” (3.94.4, see also 3.97.1).

⁸¹ For Illyria, see Ps.-Scyl. 24f; Polyb. 2.11.16; Str. 7.5.5-8; App. *Ill.* 16, 19-25; Just. 8.5.7-8, 8.6.1-2, Front. *Strat.* 3.6.3. See also Wilkes 1969; Cabanes 1988c, 1989; Ceka 1985 (with archaeological evidence). The Ardiaei, for example, were centered on the well-fortified settlement of Rhizon (Ps.-Scyl. 24 f.; Pol. 2.11.16; Str. 7.5.7; Plin. *HN* 3.144; Ptol. 2.17.5, 12).

⁸² Thucydides writes that “in early times the Hellenes and the barbarians of the coast and islands, as communication by sea became more common, were tempted to turn pirates... Indeed, this came to be the main source of their livelihood, no disgrace being yet attached to such an achievement, but even some glory... and even at the present day many parts of Hellas still follow the old fashion” (1.5.1-3).

⁸³ Gabrielsen 2003: 390-1. See also Pritchett 1991: 317.

illegitimate. In the Hellenistic period piracy was increasingly viewed as contrary to common and acceptable pan-Hellenic modes of interaction.⁸⁴ It was precisely because of this understanding and the condemnation of piracy by major Hellenistic powers that the Ardiaean queen Teuta's response to the Roman ambassadors in 229 was so offensive: "she would see to it that Rome suffered no public wrong from Illyria, but that, as for private wrongs, it was contrary to the custom of the Illyrian kings to hinder their subjects from winning booty from the sea."⁸⁵ From the fourth to the second century, two opposing and incompatible notions had developed in the Greek world regarding what constituted legitimate violence at sea, making communication between those on opposite ends of this discourse very difficult.⁸⁶

Given the scarcity of agricultural resources and arable land on the eastern Adriatic coast, piracy was likely seen as both a reasonable and profitable means to earn a livelihood. Some scholars argue that this practice was primarily aimed at plundering agricultural produce.⁸⁷ Both Plutarch and Polybius suggest that Illyrian raids targeted rural rather than urban environments.⁸⁸ However, Hammond argues that the Illyrian *lembus*, a small and fast light-armed ship, was not able to hold large quantities of agricultural produce, and that the Illyrians

⁸⁴ There is now a large body of modern research on this subject. See, for example, Gabbert 1986; Gabrielsen 2001, 2003; De Souza 1999; Scholten 2000.

⁸⁵ Polyb. 2.8.8. See Gabrielsen 2001: 227.

⁸⁶ See, e.g. Polyb. 18.4.8-5.4. Gabrielsen 2001: 227.

⁸⁷ Dell 1967: 356-7; Šasel Kos 2002: 140

⁸⁸ Plut. *Cleo.* 10.6. Polyb. 2.5.1-2, 2.6.8. Polybius writes that in 230 the Greeks "began to be anxious not, as in former times, for their agricultural produce, but for the safety of themselves and their cities" (2.6.8).

sought more valuable goods such as slaves which could later be traded for produce.⁸⁹ That this was the case is suggested by passages in Polybius and Pausanias which describe specific raids by the Ardiaei in which a large number of prisoners were captured.⁹⁰ Both agricultural produce and local populations may in fact have been targeted, however the quite scarce evidence on this issue does not lend itself to any firm conclusions.

Holleaux maintained, based on the very ambiguous and heavily biased claims of ancient authors, that the Adriatic was from a very early date a den of vicious Illyrian pirates who caused much disruption to commerce and colonization in the Adriatic.⁹¹ However, he had little concrete evidence upon which to base his claim. Rather, it appears that widespread Illyrian piracy emerged only in the mid-third century with the expansion of the Ardiaei.⁹² Piracy was certainly practiced in the Adriatic prior to the mid-third century. However, this activity is attributed by the literary sources to peoples other than the Illyrians, notably those living along the Adriatic coast in Apulia (the Iapygians, among others).⁹³ The Etruscans (*Tyrrhenoi*) also practiced piracy extensively in both the Adriatic and the Aegean at this time.⁹⁴ Evidence for Illyrian piracy prior to the mid-third century is tenuous at best. In fact, archaeological and literary evidence

⁸⁹ Hammond 1968: 4.

⁹⁰ Polyb. 2.8.2; Paus. 4.35.7.

⁹¹ Holleaux 1928.

⁹² See Beaumont 1936; Dell 1967; Šasel Kos 2002.

⁹³ Diod. Sic. 16.5.3 (359/8), 21.4 (295).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Tod 200; *IG XI* 2, 73, 148; *Syll.*³ 1225; Str. 5.2.2, 10.4.9; Ormerod 1924: 127-30, 138, 152-60.

suggests that Illyrian tribes were primarily land-based until this time.⁹⁵ Further, most Graeco-Roman authors who discuss Illyrian piracy link this practice to the Ardiaei. However, the Ardiaei lived in the interior of the peninsula until the mid-third century, when they were forced to migrate as a result of Gallic incursions from the north. It was at this time that they settled on the coast around the Gulf of Rhizon. Ardiaean piracy therefore cannot be dated any earlier than the mid-third century.⁹⁶

The claims of ancient authors regarding the timeframe and scope of Illyrian piracy are very ambiguous. The vast majority of statements concerning Illyrian piracy have no chronological markers; in other words, they are very similar to the passage from Livy mentioned above.⁹⁷ For example, Appian writes that some of the Illyrian tribes (notably the Ardiaei) “committed piracy in the Adriatic Sea.”⁹⁸ Strabo mentions the Illyrians’ “piratical habits” and writes that the Ardiaei “pestered the sea through their piratical bands.”⁹⁹ Polybius, the source most frequently cited when discussing Illyrian piracy, is similarly vague. He writes in a discussion of the events of 230 that the Illyrians “had always been in the habit of pillaging” the coasts of Elis and Messenia, and that “for a long time

⁹⁵ Dell 1967: 345-7.

⁹⁶ Dell 1970: 122; Šasel Kos 2005a: 170-1. Evidence for the Ardiaean migration relies for the most part on archaeological evidence (for which see Šasel Kos 2005a: 170-1), as well as on the tribe’s absence from Graeco-Roman sources until they arrived on the coast (and thus came into greater contact with the Hellenic world) in the mid-third century.

⁹⁷ Liv. 10.2.4.

⁹⁸ App. *Ill.* 3

⁹⁹ Str. 7.5.6, 10.

previously they had been in the habit of maltreating vessels sailing from Italy.”¹⁰⁰ No definite raids or actions are mentioned in any of these passages; thus, as Dell notes, “the charge against [the Illyrians] is not supported by a direct attestation of specific piratical attacks.”¹⁰¹ Such broad and chronologically ambiguous statements cannot be taken as concrete evidence for early Illyrian piracy, although they do not exclude this possibility. However, the lack of precision and specific examples in all of the sources argues against its widespread and destructive nature until the mid-third century.

The only existing accounts of specific Illyrian raids date to the years just before the outbreak of the First Illyrian War and apply solely to the Ardiaei. These raids appear to have been prompted particularly by the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Epirote kingdom in 234/3 and the Illyrian victory over the Aetolian League at Medion in 231. It was only after these events that Ardiaean piracy became widespread and destructive; that is, once the two most powerful polities in the region, Epirus and the Aetolian League, had suffered significant setbacks. Polybius states that, upon becoming queen following the victory at Medion, Teuta “granted letters of marque to privateers, authorising them to plunder all whom they fell in with.”¹⁰² Although the authenticity of this passage is suspect given Polybius’ negative characterization of the queen (and of the Illyrians in general), the core of the statement is likely accurate as there

¹⁰⁰ Polyb. 2.5.1-2, 2.8.1.

¹⁰¹ Dell 1967: 352.

¹⁰² Polyb. 2.4.8-9.

followed a number of raids targeting the Epirote capital of Phoenice as well as Mothone on the Messenian coast.¹⁰³ The attack of Phoenice led to particularly destructive raids against merchant ships crossing the Adriatic. According to Polybius, “while [the Ardiaei] were at Phoenice, a number of them detached themselves from the fleet and robbed or killed many Italian traders, capturing and carrying off no small number of prisoners.”¹⁰⁴ This passage, if accurate, confirms the introduction of state-sanctioned, and not simply private, piracy.

It should be emphasized that apart from Polybius, the only authors which connect the Illyrians with piracy are later sources in the Roman tradition (Livy, Strabo and Appian, for example), who were clearly influenced by Illyrian piracy in the later third century during the First and Second Illyrian Wars, and were therefore tempted to point to the endemic nature of Illyrian piracy. No Greek sources written earlier than the second century B.C. associate the Illyrians with any kind of piracy. By the late first century B.C., however, the Illyrians had acquired a long-standing reputation for piracy, which explains the vague references to endemic piracy in these sources. Due to the problematic and often disinterested nature of our sources for Illyrian history, it is possible that Greek authors failed to take note of such activity. Their silence however is a likely

¹⁰³ See Polyb. 2.4.8, 2.8.7, 2.8.12-13 regarding his characterization of Queen Teuta. See Polyb. 2.5.3-4, 2.6.5-6, 2.8.2 (Phoenice); Paus. 4.35.5-7 (Mothone) for later raids. Pausanias’ report gives some credence to Polybius’ rather vague statement regarding Illyrian raids on the coast of Elis and Messenia. Similarly, Plut. *Cleo.* 10.6 and Zon. 8.19 suggest that the Lacedaemonian coast was the target of Ardiaean raids. Both of these raids (at Phoenice and Mothone) were achieved through a ruse, which likely contributed to the bias exhibited by many Graeco-Roman authors towards the Illyrians.

¹⁰⁴ Polyb. 2.8.2.

indicator that such piracy cannot have been practiced on any truly damaging or widespread scale until the 230s.

Conclusion

‘Illyria’ and the ‘Illyrians’ were constructions of the Graeco-Roman sources. In reality, the region known as Illyria was inhabited by a number of independent tribes, often with few cultural-ethnic ties to each other. These tribes coexisted in an intensely competitive environment in which those who succeeded were able to extend their control and influence over surrounding regions. The very limited resources of the eastern Adriatic coast led many to engage in piracy. Although the sources often associate the Illyrians with endemic piracy, this correlation is the result of pejorative stereotyping by Graeco-Roman authors. In actual fact, endemic ‘Illyrian’ piracy did not exist; the Ardiaei were arguably the first tribe to practice disruptive piracy in the Adriatic, and this only as of the late 230s B.C.

Chapter Three

North-Western Greece in the Later Third Century

The history of north-western Greece in the third century, as of many regions in the Hellenistic period, is notoriously complex. During this time, the power and influence exerted by Macedon, Epirus and the various Illyrian tribes oscillated significantly and relatively frequently.¹⁰⁵ Critical to an analysis of the First Illyrian War is an understanding of the political and military state of affairs in north-western Greece prior to the outbreak of war. Only in this way can the context for Roman intervention in Illyrian affairs be fully understood. This narrative, and the implications which the context of Greek affairs had on Roman decision-making, has not been fully drawn out by scholars.

A number of Greek colonies established along the eastern Adriatic coast had developed into very wealthy commercial centers which were heavily involved in cross-Adriatic trade. These played an important role in the competition for power and authority in the region, and were therefore often targeted by Epirote, Macedonian and Illyrian forces. By the late 230s, however, both Macedon and Epirus were politically and militarily weakened. This provided the immediate context for Ardiaean expansion, as the forces led by Agron and later Teuta were

¹⁰⁵ For example, Illyrian tribal rulers such as Bardylis, Glaucias and Agron were able to exploit periods of political and military weakness in Macedon and Epirus in order to expand their holdings and influence to the south, however the tide was often reversed under powerful monarchs such as Phillip II of Macedon or Pyrrhus of Epirus, under whom many Illyrian tribes were reduced to subject status. See Wilkes 1992 Chapter Five; Dell 1967b, 1970; Greenwalt 2011 for more detail.

able to step into the power vacuum which emerged in north-western Greece. In this, they were in competition with the expanding Aetolian League. However an important victory over the latter at Medion solidified the entry of the Ardiaei into Greek affairs. Ardiaean expansion and piracy were thus allowed to continue unimpeded, and a major naval victory against the allied Aetolian and Achaean leagues in 229 off the island of Paxos illustrated forcefully to all observers that the major Greek powers in the region were unable to put a stop to this process.

Tribes along the eastern Adriatic coast had long-standing ties to the Hellenic world via the trade networks of the Adriatic and the Greek colonies founded on the eastern and western shores of this sea.¹⁰⁶ While most of these colonies left little trace of their activities even in the archaeological record, a few played a prominent role in the political and economic affairs of north-western Greece. An important motivation for colonization in the Adriatic was to extend commercial networks, although this was not the only driving force behind this process. To the south, the wealthy cities of Corcyra, Apollonia and Epidamnus were actively engaged in trade throughout the Greek world and with the

¹⁰⁶ Wilkes 1969: 1-12; Cabanes 2006. See Beaumont 1936 for a full discussion of all the colonies established on both sides of the Adriatic. The close interaction between Illyrian tribes and Greeks in this region led to the development of a Graeco-Illyrian culture as of the late sixth century. The process of acculturation between the Greeks and Illyrians was of course highly nuanced. On this topic, see Beaumont 1936; Hammond 1966: 241-2; Woodhead 1970: 509-11; Kirigin 1990: 299, 305-10; Kirigin 1996: 67-70; Cabanes 1989: 62; Cabanes 2002: 59-62; Bracessi 1979; Wilkes 1992: 104-12; Dzino 2008b: 49; Dzino 2010: 33; Šasel Kos 2005a: 234-5. See also Str. C327, who claims that many Illyrians were bilingual.

indigenous tribes of the coast.¹⁰⁷ As of the late fourth century they served as the main ports of entry for ships sailing across the Adriatic from Magna Graecia.¹⁰⁸ Also commercially active were the colonies of Pharos and Issa further north.¹⁰⁹ Issa gained influence throughout the third century by founding a number of secondary colonies along the coast and incorporating other nearby coastal settlements, leading to the creation of the Issaeian League.¹¹⁰ The commercial importance of these cities gave them great influence with the polities of north-western and mainland Greece. With the exception of Issa, they were intermittently controlled by Illyrian, Epirote and Macedonian forces. In the 230s the Ardiaei embarked upon a process of rapid expansion during which time they attempted to take control of these colonies as well as a number of other Illyrian tribes.¹¹¹ The Ardiaei are first mentioned in the literary record in the late 230s, at which point they had already expanded southward, establishing control over Pharos and several other tribes.¹¹²

The expansion of Illyrian tribes had customarily been impeded by either Macedon or Epirus. In the late third century, however, both kingdoms were in

¹⁰⁷ See Hdt. 9.93-95; Paus. 5.22. 3, 6.19.8; Plut. *Quest. Graec.* 29. Kirigin et al. 2005 (English summary); Wilkes 1992: 113; Beaumont 1936: 170-1.

¹⁰⁸ Hammond 1968: 4; Wilkes 1992: 110; Gruen 1984: 362.

¹⁰⁹ Scymn. 413f; Ephor. *FGrH* 70 F 89; Diod. Sic. 15.13.4, 15.14.2; Str. 2.5.20, 7.5.5; cf. Plin. *HN* 3.152.

¹¹⁰ *Syll.*³ 141; *SEG* 43.348; Str. 7.5.5; Polyb. 32.9. See Kirigin 1990: 311; Šasel Kos 2005b: 626; Dzino 2010: 34.

¹¹¹ Almost nothing is known of the activity of these tribes between 280 and 230 B.C. due to the fragmentary and scarce nature of the evidence. Similarly, the progression of Ardiaean expansion up to 231 is not recorded in any of the extant sources.

¹¹² Polyb. 2.2.4; App. *Ill.* 7; Zon. 8.19.

decline, and unable to serve as a counter-balance to Ardiaean expansion. In Macedon, Demetrius II (r. 239-229) was occupied by hostilities on two fronts. He was at war throughout his reign with the allied Achaean and Aetolian leagues, against whom he fought with mixed success.¹¹³ He was also engaged in defending the northern frontier of Macedon against the Dardanians, a powerful independent tribe which had been in conflict with Macedon since the 280s.¹¹⁴ Demetrius had formed a marriage alliance with the kingdom of Epirus in 239, and helped defend it against the incursions of the Aetolians into northern Acarnania throughout the 230s.¹¹⁵ Despite the fact that Epirus was greatly weakened at this time, this alliance played an important role in defending part of the Dardanian-Macedonian frontier and in providing an ally in the conflict against the Achaean-Aetolian alliance.

The Epirote monarchy had lost much strength and influence following the death of Pyrrhus in 272. Long-lasting hostilities had erupted with both the southern Illyrian tribes and the Macedonians until the formation of the alliance with Demetrius in 239.¹¹⁶ Pyrrhus' successors were unable to retain his influence in these regions, and this weakness appears to have led to disaffection among the

¹¹³ Polyb. 2.44, 20.5.3; Plut. *Arat.* 18-24, 30-33; Str. 10.2.4. Only several years previously, Macedon had been allied to the Aetolian League. See Grainger 1999: 157-6, 217-43; Scholten 2000: 131-162.

¹¹⁴ Just. 28.3-4.

¹¹⁵ Just. 28.1. In the 250s, Alexander II of Epirus had divided Acarnania with the Aetolians (Polyb. 2.45.11, 9.34.2; Just. *Epit.* 28.1.1, Str. C485). This alliance was an about-face from previous Macedonian-Epirote relations, as these two states had previously been at war with each other (see Just. 26.2).

¹¹⁶ Trog. *Prol.* 25; Front. *Strat.* 2.5.10; Just. 26.1-3.

other Epirote tribes. In 234/3, the Epirote monarchy collapsed following the deaths of all of the successors to the throne. As a result, several Epirote tribes rose up and overthrew the Molossian dynasty.¹¹⁷ In its place a fragile and militarily weak federal league was subsequently established, although the league was unable to maintain control of all the previous possessions of the Epirote kingdom. Northern Acarnania, for example, which had been under the control of Epirus, claimed independence.¹¹⁸ This collapse further weakened Demetrius' position in Macedon and created a significant power vacuum in north-western Greece. The Aetolian League, which had been expanding fairly continuously since the 280s, quickly seized the opportunity presented by the collapse of the monarchy to occupy the Epirote capital of Ambracia in 233/2, forcing the league to establish a new capital at Phoenice.¹¹⁹

In 231, the Aetolians again invaded northern Acarnania, laying siege to Medion. According to Polybius, Demetrius felt obliged to relieve the city, although the reasoning behind this decision is unclear; it may have been because he believed the terms of the alliance between Epirus and Macedon were still in effect, because an appeal was sent directly from Medion, or because he wanted to prevent another Aetolian victory in the region. However, the Dardanian threat to

¹¹⁷ Just. 28.1-3; Polyæn. 8.52; Paus. 4.35.3.

¹¹⁸ Just. 28.3.1-8; Polyæn. 8.52; Paus. 4.35.3. See Cabanes 1976: 198-202; Hammond 1967: 648; Grainger 1999: 227.

¹¹⁹ See Grainger 1995 for earlier Aetolian expansion. Scholten 2000: 96-163; Grainger 1999: 105-65.

the Macedonian border at that time was quite severe.¹²⁰ As a result, Demetrius paid Agron, the ruler of the Ardiaei, to come to the aid of Medion, thus drawing the Ardiaei into Greek affairs. Agron's forces subsequently won a significant victory over the Aetolians.¹²¹

At this point, the political and military state of affairs in north-western Greece was distinctly in the Ardiaei's favour. The Macedonians were distracted by the Dardanians to the north and the Aetolians and Achaeans to the south, while the collapse of the Epirote monarchy left a power vacuum in the region into which the Ardiaei were able to step following their victory over the Aetolians at Medion. Polybius writes that Agron died after this victory and was succeeded by his wife Teuta, although there is some debate over the timing of this event in the sources.¹²² Teuta appears to have been determined to pursue a policy of

¹²⁰ In fact, Demetrius died in 229 while fighting the Dardanians, leaving his nine-year old son Phillip V on the throne (Just. 28.3-4). Antigonos Dason, acting as regent, struggled not only against the incursions of the Dardani into Macedon and the Aetolians into Thessaly, but also to retain the loyalty of various cities and peoples which had revolted against Macedonian rule. His power and influence in the early years of his regency seem to have been tenuous; further, he suffered a number of losses to the Aetolian League early in the first year or two of his reign. See Just. 28.3; Errington 1990: 175-6; Grainger 1999: 234-5.

¹²¹ Polyb. 2.2.2-3. See Dell 1970: 123; Scholten 2000: 139. This agreement between Demetrius and Agron has led some scholars to argue that a formal treaty of alliance was drawn up between Macedon and the Ardiaei: see primarily Holleaux 1928: 828-33, 837-47, also Badian 1952a: 81 n. 44; Hammond 1968: 4, 7; more recently Šasel Kos 2002a: 104, 2005a: 262. These scholars provide no concrete evidence to back up this claim. Clearly the two were in contact with each other and some form of agreement was made, however there is no evidence in our sources for the existence of a treaty. Indeed, that Agron was paid to rescue Medion likely argues against this point. See Dell 1967b: 95, 1970: 120; Gruen 1984: 366 n.38; Hammond/Walbank 1988: 336, who all reject the idea that a formal alliance existed between these two polities. Illyrian mercenaries had on numerous occasions been employed by Macedonian kings in times of difficulty without any reliance on a treaty of alliance (see, for example, Thuc. 4.124-8; Plut. *Arat.* 38.6).

¹²² Polyb. 2.4.6; cf. App. *Ill.* 7, Zon. 8.19. Appian places the death of Agron later, following the Roman declaration of war. According to Dio-Zonaras, Teuta acted as regent for the king's young son Pinnes.

expansion and plunder.¹²³ Thus, in 230, Ardiaean forces attacked the Epirote capital of Phoenice.¹²⁴ When the army sent to relieve Phoenice was destroyed by Ardiaean forces, the Epirotes appealed to the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues, both of whom sent forces against the Ardiaei. However, the conflict ended in a stalemate, as the Ardiaei were forced to return home in order to suppress a revolt of certain subject tribes which had recently erupted upon the provocation of the Dardanians. Teuta thus returned Phoenice to the Epirotes, for a price.¹²⁵ According to Polybius, the wealth accrued from the capture of this city was substantial.¹²⁶ Following the withdrawal of the Illyrian troops, both Epirus and Acarnania established treaties of alliance with the Ardiaei, in which they “engaged henceforth to co-operate with [the Ardiaei] and against the Achaean and Aetolian leagues.”¹²⁷ Clearly, the strength of the Ardiaei had made an impact on Epirote and Acarnanian leaders.

Ardiaean strength and influence along the Adriatic coast increased dramatically in a short period. Their victory at Medion over the Aetolians, the most powerful player in north-western Greece at the time, was an important indication of this change.¹²⁸ The capture of Phoenice, perhaps the wealthiest *polis*

¹²³ Polyb. 2.4.8-9.

¹²⁴ Polyb. 2.5.3-4.

¹²⁵ The terms of this truce, according to Polybius, were that the Ardiaei “gave up to them the city and its free population on payment of a ransom; the slaves and other goods and chattels they put on board their boats” (2.6.5-6).

¹²⁶ Polyb. 2.8.4.

¹²⁷ Polyb. 2.6.9-10. Walbank and others argue that Epirus and Acarnania may even have ceded territory to the Ardiaei (Walbank 1957: 158).

¹²⁸ See Polyb. 2.4.6.

in the region, as well as the noticeable increase in destructive piracy which accompanied this event, sent shockwaves throughout the Greek world. As a result of this event, Polybius writes that

[The Ardiaei] had caused the Greek inhabitants of the coast no little consternation and alarm; for, seeing the most strongly situated and most powerful city in Epirus thus suddenly taken and its population enslaved, they all began to be anxious... for the safety of themselves and their cities.¹²⁹

The alliances established with the Epirotes and Acarnanians, although both weakened states, legitimized the Ardiaei as a political and military force within the Greek world; no longer were they simply raiding barbarians from the far north. Indeed, Demetrius II of Macedon had sworn an identical alliance less than a decade earlier. This illustrates forcefully that the weaker polities in the region sensed that a shift in power was taking place, and that they would likely be safest allied to the Ardiaei rather than to the leagues of mainland Greece.

In the campaign season following the capture of Phoenice, Teuta lay siege to Issa and sent two separate forces to besiege the colonies of Corcyra and Epidamnus. The latter was very nearly captured, however the Ardiaei were ultimately driven out and joined the forces at Corcyra. The Corcyrans, Apollonians and Epidamnians subsequently sent envoys to the Aetolian and Achaean leagues requesting military aid. A naval battle was fought off the island of Paxos between the allied Aetolian-Achaean and Ardiaean-Acarnanian forces,

¹²⁹ Polyb. 2.6.7-8.

aided by their Acarnanian allies, in which the latter won a significant victory.¹³⁰ The Corcyrans were forced to come to terms with the Ardiaei, and received a garrison under the command of Demetrius of Pharos, a prominent dynast who was also in command of Teuta's forces on Pharos.¹³¹ The victory at Paxos had significant implications for those observing Adriatic affairs, including the Romans. It illustrated forcefully that the advance of the Ardiaei and their piracy could not be checked by the major powers in Greece at this time.

Conclusion

By the late 230s Macedon and Epirus were greatly weakened both militarily and politically. The Epirote kingdom had collapsed, leaving a fragile federal league in its place which was unable to defend itself against Aetolian expansion. Macedon was engaged in hostilities on several fronts to the extent that it was incapable of coming to the aid of Medion in 231. The most politically and militarily dominant powers in the region at this time were the expanding Aetolian League and their allies the Achaeans. This is illustrated by the fact that every polity which was threatened or attacked by the Ardiaei between 231 and 229 appealed immediately to these two leagues and no one else.¹³² The events at Medion, Phoenice and Paxos plainly and forcefully illustrated that a potentially

¹³⁰ Polyb. 2.9.8-10.1, 7.

¹³¹ Polyb. 2.10.8.

¹³² Polyb. 2.6.1-2, 2.9.8, with the possible exception of Issa (*App. III. 7*), which will be discussed in the following chapter.

major shift in the configuration of power was taking place along the eastern Adriatic coast. Agron and Teuta not only possessed “the most powerful force, both by land and sea, of any of the kings who had ruled among the Illyrians before [them],” but possibly the most powerful force on the Adriatic seaboard, at least while they remained internally secure.¹³³

It should be emphasized that Ardiaean expansion in the 230s fits a pattern going back at least two centuries, in which tribal leaders took advantage of periods of military or political weakness in surrounding tribes or states to expand.¹³⁴ The Ardiaei were not alone among these tribes to pursue an expansionist agenda at this time; the Dardanians were actively involved in pushing back the northern Macedonian frontier and in undermining the Ardiaei by inciting revolts within their territory. The weakened condition of surrounding states provided a unique opportunity for the Ardiaei to expand unimpeded. As a result, they were able to integrate themselves into the Greek military and political landscape to an extent never achieved before by any Illyrian tribe. At the same time, instances of destructive piratical raids became both more frequent and more damaging.

¹³³ Polyb. 2.2.4.

¹³⁴ See Hammond 1966; Wilkes 1992 Chapter Five.

Chapter Four

Rome and the Outbreak of the First Illyrian War

In this chapter I will examine Roman interests in the years just preceding the war and their motivations for intervening across the Adriatic. I will argue that the primary concern of the Romans in the decade or so leading up to the outbreak of war against the Ardiaei was the threat posed by the Cisalpine Gauls. They were also wary of the tension gradually developing between themselves and the Carthaginians. The Ardiaei are nowhere mentioned in the sources as a matter of consideration to the Romans until 230, when their expansion and piracy were brought to the attention of the Senate by others. In other words, in the 230s the Romans subordinated almost all foreign policy interests to the Gallic frontier and remained wary of Carthaginian advancement, while largely ignoring Ardiaean expansion.

The two main sources that document the First Illyrian War, Polybius and Appian, give very different explanations for the causes of Roman intervention across the Adriatic. Although scholars have argued that these accounts are mutually contradictory, they can in fact be reconciled. Nevertheless, the explanation provided by Polybius is the more compelling of the two. The Romans' chief concern was the disruption of cross-Adriatic trade routes by Ardiaean pirates, both private and 'state'-sanctioned, and the negative impact this

had on merchants trading out of southern Italy. Although the identity of these merchants is not specified by the sources, it will be shown that they were most likely to have been either Roman citizens or Latin colonists trading out of Brundisium. The strong economic ties that linked both shores of the Adriatic, and the political ties binding Rome to the interests of these merchants, set the stage for a conflict with the Ardiaei. In conclusion, I will discuss the important part that this conflict played in Rome's transition into the role of naval *prostates* in the Mediterranean, which served to further Roman influence in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean world more broadly.

Romans, Gauls and Carthaginians, 241-230 B.C.

In the early 230s, after almost fifty years of peace, the Gallic tribes of the Po Valley mustered a force whose goal was the invasion of the northernmost end of the *ager Romanus*. In 237, the Romans sent an army north against this force, assembled near the colony of Ariminum. However, disagreement amongst the various tribes over whether or not to go to attack the Romans culminated in the assassination of several Gallic commanders and the dispersal of their forces the following year.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, Roman interference in northern Italy in the latter half of the decade, both in Liguria and Picenum, increasingly threatened the Gauls

¹³⁵ Polyb. 2.21.5-6; Zon. 8.18. Polybius writes that when the Transalpine Gauls crossed into the Transpadane the local Gauls (the Boii) were suspicious of the newcomers and their intentions, killed their leaders and fought them in pitched battle.

and incited them once again to war.¹³⁶ In 231, several Gallic tribes led by the Insubres and Boii joined forces. The result appears to have been quite a large assembly of warriors.¹³⁷ According to Polybius, the Romans were greatly alarmed by these events:

the Romans, informed of what was coming, partly by report and partly by conjecture, were in such a state of constant alarm and excitement, that they hurriedly enrolled legions, collected supplies, and sent out their forces to the frontier, as though the enemy were already in their territory, before the Gauls had stirred from their own lands.¹³⁸

The proximity of the Gauls to Roman territory was a major source of anxiety to the Romans; Polybius writes, “they were convinced that, with such enemies on their flank, they would not only be unable to keep their hold over the rest of Italy, but even to reckon on safety in their own city.”¹³⁹ Rome’s previous military encounters with the Gauls in the fourth and early third centuries would undoubtedly have accentuated these fears, inflating the real threat that the Gauls posed at this time.¹⁴⁰ Tensions remained high until a major battle was fought in 225 in which the Romans were victorious.¹⁴¹ However, even this and subsequent victories in the area throughout the 220s did not consolidate Roman influence or control over the region. This is well illustrated by the Gallic attack in 218 on the

¹³⁶ Throughout the 230s the Romans fought and eventually defeated the Ligurians to the north-west of the peninsula (see Plut. *Fab.* 2.1, 29.1; Zon. 8.18). In 232, the *ager Gallicus* in Gallic Picenum was divided amongst Roman settlers and the indigenous Senones driven out as the result of a very controversial law of G. Flaminius (Polyb. 2.21.7-8; Cic. *Cato* 11, *Brut.* 57).

¹³⁷ Polyb. 2.22.1-6; Zon. 8.18.

¹³⁸ Polyb. 2.22.7-8.

¹³⁹ Polyb. 2.13.6.

¹⁴⁰ The Gallic sack of Rome in 390 particularly heightened later Roman fears (whether well-founded or not) of another invasion (see Eutr. 1.20; Diod. Sic. 14.114.1-7, 115.1; Plut. *Cam.* 18.4-7, 19.1).

¹⁴¹ Polyb. 2.23.1; Zon. 8.19.

newly-founded colonies of Placentia and Cremona, as well as by the alliances formed between several Gallic tribes and Hannibal during the course of the Second Punic War.¹⁴² Rome's attention was thus very much diverted by the activities of the Gauls to the north in the years leading up to and during their conflict with the Ardiaei.

According to Polybius, the Romans were also concerned by the activities of the Carthaginians at this time.¹⁴³ Tension between Rome and Carthage grew steadily throughout the 230s. The peace treaty of 241 that concluded the First Punic War forced the Carthaginians to evacuate Sicily and imposed a heavy indemnity upon them.¹⁴⁴ Several modifications were made to the original agreement in the following year, increasing the indemnity by one thousand talents and reducing the amount of time Carthage had to pay it by half. In addition, the Carthaginians were forced to cede the islands between Italy and Sicily to Rome.¹⁴⁵ As a result of such severe demands, the Carthaginians were unable to pay the mercenary armies which they had employed throughout the course of the war, leading to a number of revolts in northern Africa and later Sardinia.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Polyb. 3.40.3-14, Liv. *Per.* 20; Liv. 31.10.2, 33.23.2 (Placentia and Cremona); Polyb. 3.34 (alliances with Hannibal).

¹⁴³ Polyb. 2.13.3-6, see also 2.22.9-11.

¹⁴⁴ The treaty is recorded by Polybius (1.62): "Friendship is established between the Carthaginians and Romans on the following terms, provided always that they are ratified by the Roman people. The Carthaginians shall evacuate the whole of Sicily: they shall not make war upon Hieron, nor bear arms against the Syracusans or their allies. The Carthaginians shall give up to the Romans all prisoners without ransom. The Carthaginians shall pay to the Romans in twenty years 2200 talents of silver." See also Polyb. 3.27.1-6; App. *Sic.* 3; Zon 8.17.

¹⁴⁵ Polyb. 1.63.1-3, 3.27.1-6.

¹⁴⁶ Polyb. 1.65.3-4. See 1.66-88 for an account of Carthage's 'Mercenary War'.

In 238, the Romans seized the island of Sardinia, which had previously been under Carthaginian control. A force of mercenaries stationed on Sardinia, dissatisfied by Carthage's inability to repay them for their services, invited the Romans to take control of the island with their help. When the Carthaginians protested and began preparations to attack the Sardinian mercenaries, Rome claimed that they were in fact preparing to go to war against Rome rather than the mercenaries, and declared war on Carthage. Unable to resume hostilities on such a scale, Carthage not only relinquished Sardinia to the Romans but was forced to pay another twelve hundred talents in indemnities to Rome.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, the Romans also took possession of Corsica.¹⁴⁸ As Polybius notes, the Carthaginians on this front were "deeply aggrieved but powerless."¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the native Sardinians and Corsicans fiercely resisted Roman rule, and the Romans were required to send forces to suppress numerous revolts between 236 and 231.¹⁵⁰

Polybius was forced to admit that the Roman seizure of Sardinia was achieved without "any reasonable pretext or cause."¹⁵¹ He notes that "in this case everyone would agree that the Carthaginians, contrary to all justice, and merely because the occasion permitted it, were forced to evacuate Sardinia and pay the

¹⁴⁷ The Romans also claimed that during the Mercenary War, the Carthaginians had harassed Roman commercial vessels and disrupted their trade, and that as a result they would be forced to cede the island to Rome. See Polyb. 1.88.8-12, 3.10.3-4, 3.27.7-8, 3.28.3; App. *Hisp.* 4, *Pun.* 5, 86; Zon. 8.18.

¹⁴⁸ Zon. 8.18.

¹⁴⁹ Polyb. 3.10.3.

¹⁵⁰ Liv. 23.34, *Per.* 20; Zon. 8.18.

¹⁵¹ Polyb. 3.28.1.

additional sum I mentioned.”¹⁵² Roman writers sought to devise such pretexts for this event as they could, however these were tenuous at best. This act inflamed Carthaginian hostility against Rome, and both Polybius and Livy cite it as a major source of tension and an important motivation behind the outbreak of the Second Punic War in 218.¹⁵³

In the latter half of the 230s, Carthage consolidated its power in Spain as a means of both expanding and paying off its indemnity to Rome. This policy, according to Polybius, concerned the Romans greatly. He writes that

Seeing [Hasdrubal] strengthening the Carthaginian influence in Spain, and rendering it continually more formidable, the Romans were anxious to interfere in the politics of that country. They discovered, as they thought, that they had allowed their suspicions to be lulled to sleep, and had meanwhile given the Carthaginians the opportunity of augmenting their power.¹⁵⁴

Carthaginian power and influence in the region increased throughout the 230s.¹⁵⁵

Though the Romans were forced to focus on affairs in northern Italy during this time, Polybius indicates that they were very attentive to the activities of the Carthaginians in Spain.¹⁵⁶

The Ardiaei are nowhere mentioned in the sources as a matter of concern to the Romans until 230, when their expansion and piracy were brought to the

¹⁵² Polyb. 3.28.2; see also Liv. 21.1.

¹⁵³ Polyb. 3.103-4, 3.30.4; Liv. 21.1.

¹⁵⁴ Polyb. 2.13.3-4.

¹⁵⁵ Polyb. 2.13.7, 3.27.9.

¹⁵⁶ Polyb. 2.13.3-7, 2.22.9-11: “This movement of the Gauls contributed in no small measure to the rapid and unimpeded subjugation of Spain by the Carthaginians; for the Romans, as I said above, regarded this matter as of more urgency, since the danger was on their flank, and were compelled to neglect the affairs of Spain until they had dealt with the Gauls.” In the 220s, the Romans imposed a further clause to the original treaty in which the Carthaginians were forbidden from crossing the Ebro, a major river to the north-west of the peninsula.

attention of the Senate by others. They appear to have posed no threat to Roman interests until this time. Despite their rapid and perhaps alarming rise and its impact on the Greek world, the Romans do not seem to have been concerned by their expansion and did not seek to limit it. While some scholars emphasize the sudden rise of the Ardiaei and the increasing political influence they exercised in the central and southern Adriatic as the catalyst of conflict with the Romans, I will argue that there is little evidence for such claims.¹⁵⁷ If Rome was concerned by Ardiaean expansion southward, it was primarily to the extent that it disrupted the trade routes of the Adriatic by making piratical raids easier to conduct. The immediate threat of a Gallic invasion made the outbreak of war against the Ardiaei generally undesirable to the Romans. Further, Polybius seems to indicate that the Senate remained wary regarding Carthaginian expansion in Spain and the possibility of future conflict.

The Declaration of War

According to Appian, Roman intervention in Illyria was prompted by an appeal of the Issaeian League in 230. The Issaeans felt threatened by the

¹⁵⁷ See Gruen 1984: 363; Dzino 2006: 125; Derow 2003: 52-3; De Souza 1999: 79-80; Errington 1972: 36; Badian 1952a. Scholars had suggested that the Romans feared, whether reasonably or not, that Ardiaean forces would cross the Adriatic and invade Italy or threaten the Roman colonies on the east coast of Italy. This was most prominently argued by Badian 1952a: 77, who writes that the cause of the war “was the usual Roman fear of strong neighbours and was (as so often) based on a misapprehension.” See also Hammond 1968: 6; cf. Errington 1989: 83-5, Harris 1979: 196. Even more remote is the claim that “the beginnings of the Roman advance into the area... were bound up with the prolonged struggle against the kingdom of Macedon” or were the result of a fear of the formation of an anti-Roman Illyrian-Macedonian alliance (Wilkes 1969: 13; cf. Dzino 2010: 44-5).

expansion of the Ardiaei, fearing that they, like other Greek colonies in the region, would be forced to submit to Ardiaean control.¹⁵⁸ Dio/Zonaras gives a slightly different account of this appeal. He implies that the Issaeans had already come under the control of the Ardiaei, but “of their own free will surrendered themselves to the Romans” due to some unmentioned grievance against Agron.¹⁵⁹ His is the only source in which Issa submitted to the Ardiaei, however this claim is likely based on a conflation of events occurring between 230 and 228 B.C., during which time Issa was besieged and nearly fell to the Ardiaei according to other sources.¹⁶⁰ Whether Issa had fallen under Ardiaean control by 230 or not is ultimately of little importance; rather, it should be emphasized that both accounts claim that Roman intervention was prompted by the appeal of the Issaeans against the interference of the Ardiaei.

According to Polybius, Roman intervention was motivated by the disruption of cross-Adriatic trade by Ardiaean pirates. The Roman Senate had been approached on several occasions by certain parties who expressed their concern over this issue. In 230, following the Ardiaean attack of Phoenice and the subsequent plunder of merchant vessels originating from Italy, the intensity of

¹⁵⁸ App. III. 7.

¹⁵⁹ Zon.8.19. Scholars have argued that this passage illustrates the establishment of some kind of formal political agreement between Rome and Issa, however Dio/Zonaras’ language here is very vague, and need not imply such an agreement: he writes that the Issaeans “had of their own free will surrendered themselves to the Romans because they were angry with their ruler Agron.” There is no extant evidence, whether literary or epigraphic, to support this claim. Dio/Zonaras may simply be implying that the Issaeans very informally submitted themselves to Roman protection or *amicitia*, as did many other colonies in the region during the course of the war (see Polyb. 2.11; App. III. 7). Further, see Chapter One for Dio’s reliability as a source for Republican Rome.

¹⁶⁰ Polyb. 2.11.11; App. III. 7.

these appeals to the Senate increased.¹⁶¹ Clearly, the episode at Phoenice and the force of the attacks on merchant vessels altered the Senate's previous (arguably non-existent) position on Ardiaean expansion and piracy. Polybius does not disclose the precise identity or origin of these appellants; in other words, he does not specify whether they were Roman citizens, Latin colonists, Italians such as the Apulians, or Greeks such as the Syracusans or Issaeans.¹⁶²

According to both Polybius and Appian, the Senate decided to send envoys to the Ardiaei, although the authors differ as to the reasons behind this.¹⁶³ Although in both cases the envoys were sent to complain of abuses, these embassies were purely investigative; that is, there was as yet no discussion of war by the Romans. This changed when one of the envoys was killed at sea. The death of a Roman envoy is the only detail common to all the sources which discuss the outbreak of First Illyrian War and is cited by each source as the immediate cause of the conflict. According to Polybius, Queen Teuta had an envoy assassinated on his return journey to Rome as a result of his censure of her response to Roman demands.¹⁶⁴ However, his characterization of Teuta in this

¹⁶¹ Polyb. 2.8.2.

¹⁶² "The Romans had hitherto turned a deaf ear to the complaints made against the Illyrians, but now when *a number of persons* approached the Senate on the subject, they appointed two envoys, Gaius and Lucius Coruncanus, to proceed to Illyria, and investigate the matter" (Polyb. 2.8.3). Just preceding this, he had mentioned that "for a long time previously [the Ardiaei] had been in the habit of maltreating *vessels sailing from Italy*, and now while they were at Phoenice, a number of them detached themselves from the fleet and robbed or killed many *Italian traders*, capturing and carrying off no small number of prisoners" (2.8.1-2).

¹⁶³ Polyb. 2.8.3; App. *Ill.* 7.

¹⁶⁴ Polyb. 2.8.9-13: "the younger of the ambassadors was very indignant at these words of hers, and spoke out with a frankness most proper indeed, but highly inopportune... Giving way to her

passage is highly suspect, and his interpretation of her response to the envoys has been widely, and rightly, dismissed by scholars. Polybius' portrayal of the Illyrians reflects a stereotypical Greek view of the barbarian 'other'; Ardiaean actors, notably Queen Teuta, are shown as impulsive, treacherous, unpredictable and greedy.¹⁶⁵ The claim that Teuta ordered the envoy's murder is thus very likely an invention.

It seems highly unlikely that Teuta would have deliberately sought to provoke a war with the Romans by having one of their ambassadors killed, a circumstance which further refutes Polybius' claim. First, despite the recent success of the Ardiaei, they were in no position to fight a major power such as Rome (as the events of the war illustrate quite starkly).¹⁶⁶ This claim rests upon the assumption that the Ardiaei understood how powerful Rome was at this time. Due to the lack of interaction between these two polities, however, this is not entirely certain. Second, Rome was hardly interfering with the expansion of the Ardiaei, although they did seek to limit Ardiaean piracy. Perhaps more concretely, Teuta was clearly unaware that she was at war with Rome at the beginning of the campaigning season following her interview with the Roman ambassadors. At this time her forces were attempting, with mixed success, to take

temper like a woman and heedless of the consequences, she took this frankness ill, and was so enraged at the speech that, defying the law of nations, when the ambassadors were leaving in their ship, she sent emissaries to assassinate the one who had been so bold of speech.”

¹⁶⁵ See Dzino 2010: 11, 47; Champion 2004, esp. 111-4; Walbank 2002.

¹⁶⁶ Polyb. 2.11.9-16.

control of Epidamnus, Corcyra and Issa.¹⁶⁷ During the course of these activities, the Ardiaean fleet also fought a major naval battle against the allied Aitolian and Achaean Leagues off the island of Paxos.¹⁶⁸ The Roman attack seems to have come as somewhat of a surprise; Polybius writes that “on hearing of the approach of the Romans, [the Ardiaei] hastily broke up the siege [of Epidamnus] and fled.”¹⁶⁹ Teuta clearly was not seeking a formal confrontation with the Romans.

Appian, on the other hand, is quite vague regarding the circumstances of the envoy’s death. His account suggests that the aggressors, possibly pirates, attacked the embassy’s ship without knowing who was on board. If so, then the attack was not intentionally aimed against either Issa or Rome.¹⁷⁰ As was discussed earlier, Illyrian naval and pirate vessels were very active in this region in 230, and had been given free reign by Queen Teuta to attack foreign ships. It seems reasonable to conclude that a Roman envoy did die during the course of the embassy to Teuta. The Ardiaean ships may or may not have known whom they had attacked, however there is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the attack came at the request of the queen. This event was likely later interpreted by the sources as an assassination which led to the outbreak of war.

¹⁶⁷ Badian’s argument that Teuta “attempted to forestall the Roman attack by seizing the landing places along the Illyrian coast which were not yet under her control” (1952a: 77) may not be plausible and is not supported by the sources. If anything, she would have sought to consolidate her forces, not separate them, in order to have any chance of victory in battle against the Romans.

¹⁶⁸ Polyb. 2.9-10.

¹⁶⁹ Polyb. 2.11.9

¹⁷⁰ App. *Ill.* 7: “Illyrian vessels attacked the ambassadors on their voyage and slew Clemporus, the envoy of Issa, and the Roman Coruncanus; the remainder escaped by flight.”

Clearly a more significant cause lay behind the Romans' decision to declare war. This was the refusal of Ardiaean leadership to suppress their piracy in the Adriatic. In Polybius' account of the interview between Teuta and the Roman ambassadors, the queen claimed that she would ensure that Rome would suffer no "public wrong" from the Ardiaei, but she could not prevent attacks from private pirate ships. In other words, she ultimately refused to accede to the demands of the envoys sent to negotiate a solution to the disruption of cross-Adriatic trade.¹⁷¹ In order to illustrate that this was in fact the underlying cause of the Roman declaration of war, Appian's account, which provides a very different justification for this event, must first be examined. Although his explanation of the events leading up to the First Illyrian War may be historically authentic, it is unlikely that the reason he provided for Roman intervention was the motivating factor behind the declaration of war.

¹⁷¹ "She said she would see to it that Rome suffered no public wrong from Illyria, but that, as for private wrongs, it was contrary to the custom of the Illyrian kings to hinder their subjects from winning booty from the sea" (Polyb. 2.8.8). This episode has drawn much criticism from scholars who argue in favour of Appian's account (see especially Derow 1973). However, it seems clear that the contents of this interview were largely fabricated by Polybius, as it is extremely unlikely that he would have had accurate information regarding this discussion. Polybius' account should not be discarded simply because he inserted a fictitious dialogue into his explanation of the outbreak of war; such insertions were very common to ancient sources when recording speeches, interviews or private discussions. In other words, the meeting between Teuta and the Roman ambassadors and the gist of their exchange is probably historically authentic, while the dialogue which Polybius attributes to both parties during the interview may be fictitious. Eckstein (2008: 12-5) provides a useful framework for such interactions, known to political scientists as 'compellance diplomacy'. He argues that the primitive character of diplomatic interaction among ancient polities contributed significantly to a state of constant warfare. Ambassadors were employed only on an ad hoc basis, generally at points where sharp conflicts had already arisen, the language used often brutal and blunt. "When the governing elites of states are unsure what the intentions of their neighbours are (because of lack of information), and inherently view them (correctly) as bitter competitors for scarce materials and security reasons, and have few contacts with them, they naturally tend towards assuming them worst about them" (Eckstein 2008: 13). Such diplomacy was always backed by a willingness to use violence to enforce demands.

Many scholars have rejected the explanation for Roman intervention given by Appian and Dio/Zonaras by arguing that it fits a very typical trope regarding the mechanisms of Roman expansion. In other words, the claim that Rome interfered (to her own advantage) in a foreign conflict on behalf of a weakened city or state was a common pro-Roman justification for the outbreak of war in the sources.¹⁷² Several scholars have argued that Appian was part of the annalistic tradition that invented the Issaeian appeal in order to justify Roman intervention in the east.¹⁷³ It should be pointed out, however, that the only sources to mention the appeal of Issa are Appian and Dio/Zonaras; the Roman annalists do not record this event, but rather seem to follow Polybius.¹⁷⁴ In Appian's account, Rome does not go to war on behalf of Issa, although she does appear willing to intervene in Illyrian affairs on its behalf. The Romans sent ambassadors on a purely diplomatic mission "to accompany the Issii and to ascertain what offences Agron imputed to them."¹⁷⁵ It was only when this embassy was attacked at sea by Illyrian ships and both a Roman and Issaeian envoy killed that Rome was provoked into declaring war against the Ardiaei. Thus, Appian should not be immediately dismissed for this reason.

¹⁷² See, for example, the appeal of the Mamertines which had an important impact on the outbreak of the First Punic War. Eckstein, for example, describes Appian's version as a "very pro-Roman account, with Rome depicted as coming to the aid of a civilized Greek city under siege by barbarians" (2008: 36).

¹⁷³ See, for example, Holleaux 1928: 23; Walbank 1957: 159; Hammond 1968: 5; Harris 1979: 195-6.

¹⁷⁴ Derow 1973: 122-5.

¹⁷⁵ App. *Ill.* 7. One of the reasons that scholars dismiss Appian's account is because they take appeal from Issa as the cause of the outbreak of war, which Appian does not in fact state to be the case.

Despite the scholarly criticism levelled at Appian as a source, there are important reasons not to reject his account out of hand. Issa had important (though indirect) links to Rome through the trade routes it maintained with various cities throughout Sicily and the Italian peninsula, especially via Syracuse and Brundisium.¹⁷⁶ Further, Issa's location further north in the Adriatic linked it more closely to the Italian shore than to the polities of mainland Greece. These factors justify its plea to the Romans rather than the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues, to whom the Epirotes, Apollonians, Epidamnians and Corcyrans appealed when threatened by the Ardiaei.¹⁷⁷ Appian's account of an Issaeian appeal to Rome is therefore a plausible one. However, there are important reasons to doubt that such an embassy could have served as the primary cause of Roman intervention in Illyria.

First, the complete absence of the Issaeian appeal from Polybius' more contemporary account must be explained. A number of suggestions have been made on this issue. Polybius may have drawn his account of the First Illyrian War from Fabius Pictor, who did not mention the appeal from Issa "concerned as he was to refute the notion that the Romans meddled in affairs that did not concern them."¹⁷⁸ However, Polybius was generally very critical of Fabius' method and work. Derow therefore speculates that he could also have relied upon

¹⁷⁶ These will be discussed in depth below.

¹⁷⁷ It should be pointed out, however, that the polities further south, such as Apollonia, Epidamnus and Corcyra also maintained strong trade connections with Brundisium although they did not appeal to Rome when threatened by the Ardiaei.

¹⁷⁸ Derow 1973: 128-9.

the remarks of the Roman ambassadors to the Greek mainland following the war which may have been recorded by Greek politicians such as Aratus (though no such source is known to exist). These ambassadors would probably not have mentioned an appeal from Issa, especially as the city was left for almost a year without Roman aid. As the two accounts corroborated each other, Polybius may have felt no need to question that of Fabius Pictor. Further, Polybius himself claims to be less critical regarding the earlier events of his history, including the First Illyrian War. He writes,

to recount all these events in detail is neither incumbent on me nor would it be useful to my readers; for it is not my purpose to write their history but to mention them summarily as introductory to the events which are my real theme.¹⁷⁹

This is of course quite a damaging statement to make regarding the accuracy or authenticity of his account of the outbreak of the war. However, it is contradicted by the detail of his record of the war and by his claim regarding its significance: “[The First Illyrian War] is a matter not to be lightly passed over, but deserving the serious attention of those who wish to gain a true view of the purpose of this work and of the formation and growth of the Roman dominion.”¹⁸⁰

One way to explain the absence of the Issaeian appeal from Polybius’ account is to argue that he believed the episode was not directly linked to the outbreak of war. In other words, an embassy from Issa may have presented its complaints to the Roman Senate, however it had little, or at least secondary,

¹⁷⁹ Polyb. 1.13.6-7.

¹⁸⁰ Polyb. 2.2.2.

influence on Rome's decision to intervene. A number of less speculative arguments illustrate that this may have been the case. First, the Romans only relieved the city of Issa at the end of the war, after having liberated Corcyra, Apollonia, Epidamnus and several coastal tribes, and subdued the Ardiaei; the city was obviously not their primary concern, despite the fact that an Ardiaean army held it under siege.¹⁸¹ Indeed, according to Polybius, the consul Gn. Fulvius' "first intention had been to make for Corcyra."¹⁸²

Second, the terms of the peace treaty concluded between Rome and the Ardiaei in 228 cast doubt upon the notion that Rome sought to protect Issa from Ardiaean encroachment. A key clause in this agreement was that the Illyrians "agreed not to sail beyond Lissus with more than two galleys, and those unarmed."¹⁸³ Thus, the Ardiaean fleet was prevented from engaging in any activity to the south of Lissus. This prevented them from coming into contact with the most important cross-Adriatic trade routes, which linked Brundisium to Apollonia, Epidamnus, Corcyra and Phoenice. However, both Issa and Pharos were located to the north of Lissus, and were thus seemingly not included in the protection offered by the treaty. These arguments are not meant to reject the Issaean appeal to Rome, but only to point out that their embassy does not seem to have played a major role in the Roman decision to go to war. In fact, it is possible

¹⁸¹ Polyb. 2.11.2-12.

¹⁸² Polyb. 2.11.2.

¹⁸³ Polyb. 2.12.3; App. *Ill.* 7.

that the Issaeans were among those unnamed appellants who, according to Polybius, approached the Senate in 230.¹⁸⁴

It should also be noted that in Polybius' account, the Roman envoys met Teuta on the island of Issa, as she was engaged in besieging the city at that time. Thus, it is possible that Appian misinterpreted earlier accounts; the fact that the Romans met Teuta at Issa under such conditions may have led later sources to claim that the ambassadors had been sent as a result of an Issaeian appeal against Ardiaean encroachment.¹⁸⁵

Let us return to Polybius' claim that Roman interest in affairs across the Adriatic was provoked by Ardiaean disruption of cross-Adriatic trade. Archaeological evidence illustrates that both shores of this sea were closely connected through trade and migration from a very early date.¹⁸⁶ Syracuse, for instance, was actively involved in the Adriatic throughout the fourth century, during which time it founded a number of colonies, including Issa, and established important trade routes linking Sicily to the eastern coastline.¹⁸⁷ Material evidence points to the existence of continued commercial links between

¹⁸⁴ Based on the sequence of events in both Polybius and Appian, it seems that the appeal from Issa may have occurred at about the same time as the Ardiaean capture of Phoenice and subsequent increase in piratical raids; both events occurred in late 230 (see Derow 1973: 128). See Cabanes 1983: 197 and Šasel Kos 2002a: 104, who writes that "Issa's appeal alone would perhaps not have been weighty enough to compel the Senate to a military campaign, although the city had a most important strategic and commercial position for all those who navigated in the Adriatic, and consequently must have carried at least some political influence."

¹⁸⁵ Suggested by Gruen 1984: 361-2.

¹⁸⁶ See especially Lamboley 1987; D'Andria 1985: 282-3.

¹⁸⁷ See Diod. Sic. 15.13-4; Woodhead 1970; Cabanes 2006: 175-7.

Syracuse and the Greek colonies of the Adriatic in the third century.¹⁸⁸ Migration between these areas appears also to have continued; a mid-third century tombstone from Pharos reads “tombstone of Aristophanes, son of Aristophanes, from Syracuse.”¹⁸⁹ Syracuse thus appears to have maintained close connections to the eastern Adriatic seaboard. In the second half of the third century, Hieron II, ruler of Syracuse, maintained very friendly relations with Rome as the result of two treaties signed between the two during the First Punic War (in 263 and 248).¹⁹⁰ It is possible that the Syracusans were among the appellants to the Senate in 230, although again there is no concrete evidence for this. However, Syracuse appears to have provided aid voluntarily to the Romans during the First Illyrian War, as is illustrated by the dedication of spoils from the war at the temple of Olympian Zeus in Syracuse.¹⁹¹ Syracusan aid, however, need not necessarily demonstrate that piracy was the sole or primary motivation behind Roman interference; indeed, Syracuse may have also been interested in protecting its colonies or simply in currying favour with the Romans, independent of its interest in Adriatic affairs.

¹⁸⁸ Pottery of Syracusan origin as well as local imitations of these have been uncovered at a number of sites, including Epidamnus and Issa. Some Syracusan coinage was also discovered. See Beaumont 1936; D’Andria 1990: 287-90; Kirigin 1990; Lambole 1987; Cabanes 1978: 334; Cabanes 1973, 1983; Wilkes 1992: 107; Petrić 1980; Glogović 1979; Šasel Kos 2002a: 104; Fraser 1993: 170-3.

¹⁸⁹ AMS inv. no. A5528. See Kirigin 1990: 301-2.

¹⁹⁰ See Eckstein 1980 for a detailed examination of the friendly relationship between Rome and Syracuse in this period.

¹⁹¹ Liv. 24.21.9: “the spoils of the Gauls and Illyrians which the Roman people had given to Hieron and which he had hung up in the temple of Olympian Jupiter.” See Eckstein 1980: 196 and fn. 42; Marasco 1986: 68. This is not to say that Rome would have engaged in a war against the Ardiaei in order to defend Syracusan interests, rather that both Rome and Syracuse may have had similar interests in this regard.

The colonies of the eastern Adriatic coast were also closely connected to southern Italy, and particularly Apulia, through trade. Many Apulian vases from Paestum and Gnathia were found at these locations. Further, local pottery production in the third century illustrates imitation of Apulian vases, and quite a large number of such imitations have been discovered.¹⁹² Some Campanian pottery was also uncovered, although it is in the minority compared to Apulian ware.¹⁹³

What is missing in Polybius' account, and is of fundamental importance to the argument that Rome intervened in Illyria on account of Ardiaean disruption to cross-Adriatic trade, is an explanation of how Rome itself was linked to these trade routes. This is why the fact that Polybius does not specify the identity of the appellants to the Senate is so crucial. Indeed, given the Romans' preoccupation with the Gallic tribes to the north at this time, there must have been a significant motivating factor behind their intervention across the Adriatic. The conquest and colonization of the Apulian city of Brundisium, in conjunction with the extension of the *via Appia*, provides a plausible framework for explaining Rome's more direct involvement in these commercial networks.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Cabanes 1973,1983: 194, 2006: 182; Mano 202-207; D'Andria 1990: 287-9.

¹⁹³ Cabanes 1983: 195-6; D'Andria 1990: 287-9; Parovic-Pesikan 1982: 74.

¹⁹⁴ This is not to say that the establishment of a colony and the extension of the *via Appia* were undertaken for purely mercantile purposes. It should also be noted that it is quite possible that Rome's earlier conflicts with Gallic tribes such as the Sesones acted as a catalyst for increased awareness or knowledge of the Illyrian coast. Derow notes that "the role of Roman activity in northeastern Italy and Cisalpine Gaul in generating Roman concern with the Adriatic can scarcely be overestimated," however he does not explore this in more detail (Derow 1991: 268). In the first half of the third century, Rome founded a number of Latin colonies throughout the northern half of

Brundisium was the most important commercial port of entry on the western Adriatic seaboard; almost all trade departed from or arrived at this port as it provided the shortest and most direct route to the eastern Adriatic coast.¹⁹⁵ The Romans appear to have been well-aware of its commercial importance.

Dio/Zonaras writes of their conquest of the city in 266 that

their excuse was that the people [of Brundisium] had received Pyrrhus and were overrunning their allied territory, but in reality they wished to get possession of Brundisium; for the place had a fine harbour, and for the traffic with Illyricum and Greece there was an approach and landing-place of such a character that vessels would sometimes come to land and put out to sea wafted by the same wind.¹⁹⁶

That Rome became involved in or at least linked to these trade routes as a result of this event is strongly implied by the Apollonian embassy which was received by the Romans in the late 260s. Although mentioned by several sources, very few concrete details regarding this event are known.¹⁹⁷ It may be suggested that Apollonian interest in Rome had been aroused by the conquest of Brundisium in 266, given the importance of cross-Adriatic trade to both cities. The Apollonian

the Adriatic coast, including Sena Gallia, Hadria, Catrum Novum, Ariminum and Firmum . See Vell. Pat. 1.14. Polyb. 2.19.12; Liv. *Per.* 11; Str. 5.2.10 (Sena Gallia). P. Mela 2.72; Plin. *HN* 3.51 (Castrum Novum). Polyb. 3.61.11; Str. 5.2.9; Eutr.2.16 (Arminum). These colonies were located in areas that were likely in contact with the eastern Adriatic coast (particularly via Issa) through trade. However, little archaeological evidence has been unearthed to corroborate this claim, as survey and excavation along the eastern Adriatic coast has so far been confined to a very limited number of locations.

¹⁹⁵See Hdt. 4.99; Liv. *Per.* 15, 19; Vell. Pat. 1.14.8; Zon. 8.19. Polybius writes that “since, from the Iapygian promontory as far as Sipontum, every one coming from the other side and dropping anchor at Italy always crossed to Tarentum, and used that city for his mercantile transactions as an emporium; for the town of Brundisium had not yet been founded in these times” (Polyb. 10.1.8-9).

¹⁹⁶Zon. 8.7.

¹⁹⁷It appears that some of the Apollonian envoys were mistreated by a Roman senator, whom the Senate subsequently turned over to the Apollonians. Liv. *Per.* 15; Zon. 8.7; Val. Max. 6.6.5. Dio/Zonaras writes, “[the Romans] surrendered to the people of Apollonia Quintus Fabius, a senator, because he had insulted some of their envoys. The people there, however, did him no injury, but actually sent him home.”

embassy thus served as a formal introduction between two parties who now had very close economic interests and concerns.¹⁹⁸ Further, at some point in the early to mid-third century, the *via Appia*, which originally connected Rome to Capua, was extended via Beneventum, Venusia and Tarentum to Brundisium, thus linking Rome directly to this port.¹⁹⁹

Several motives have been attributed to the Roman decision to colonize Brundisium in 244. These need not be exclusive of each other. Marasco suggested that the location of the colony was chosen to keep a close eye on the piratical activities of the Illyrians in the Straits of Otranto which had begun to interfere in the cross-Adriatic trade of Italian communities. However, as discussed above, it is doubtful that Ardiaean piracy had taken off as early as the mid-240s.²⁰⁰ Doubtless the Romans were well aware of the strategic advantage of Brundisium as a naval base in addition to its commercial importance; this is aptly demonstrated by the events of the First Illyrian War.²⁰¹ Others have proposed that the foundation of this colony illustrates that the surrounding region was still vulnerable more than twenty years after it had been conquered.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ See Cabanes 1995: 38, 2006: 181; Gruen 1984: 64.

¹⁹⁹ Str. 5.3.6, 6.3.7; *It. Ant.* 111.6, 120.1-121.7; *It. Burd.* 610.11-14. See also *CIL* I² 620. An alternative route between Beneventum and Brundisium existed (the *via Canusium* or *Minucia*: Str. 6.3.7, Cic. *Att.* 9.6.1; Hor. *Epist.* 1.18.20).

²⁰⁰ Marasco 1986: 42-4.

²⁰¹ Polyb. 2.11.7, where Rome's naval forces sail from Brundisium. Some have argued that the decision to found a colony at Brundisium indicated the beginnings of the Roman desire to expand eastwards (see Harris 1979; Derow 2003). However, this is based on modern theories of long-term or entrenched Roman plans of expansion and has little basis in the ancient evidence.

²⁰² La Bua 1992: 44-51; Fronda 2010: 26, 199.

Some scholars have suggested that the partial annexation and colonization of southern Italy throughout the third century drove Rome to adopt and protect the various interests of the inhabitants of this region.²⁰³ Eckstein further argued that “senatorial action on the allies’ behalf [in protecting their trade interests] would fortify Rome’s position in southern Italy.”²⁰⁴ However, there is very little evidence that Rome was concerned with maintaining or advancing the interests of local populations at this time. In fact, there are several examples in which the imposition of a colony disrupted local life and angered the locals, thus leading to more conflict.²⁰⁵ These colonies could cause substantial economic and demographic upheaval in the surrounding territory, as in the case of Buxentum in southern Lucania.²⁰⁶ It should also be noted that a significant number of Apulian cities, including Arpi, revolted during the Second Punic War.²⁰⁷ The Romans thus cannot have been very successful in defending Apulian interests and maintaining their support, if this had even been their aim.

It seems highly unlikely that the Romans would engage in a war in which they enlisted such a large number of troops at a time when they were very much concerned by the Gallic threat to the north, all on behalf of Apulian interests, especially as there is little evidence that they ever had the interests of this people in mind. Thus, Eckstein cannot be correct when he argues that the merchants

²⁰³ See, for example, Cabanes 1983.

²⁰⁴ Eckstein 2008: 33.

²⁰⁵ See, for example, the foundation of Placentia and Cremona mentioned above.

²⁰⁶ Lomas 1993: 87-9; Fronda 2010: 208.

²⁰⁷ See Fronda 2010: 53-84.

upon whose behalf Rome fought must have originated from the Greek *poleis* of southern Italy and Sicily which had become Rome's allies in the first half of the third century, or that Rome sought to fortify her position in southern Italy by attacking the Ardiaei.²⁰⁸ It seems much more realistic to argue that Rome intervened on behalf of the Latin colonists, or perhaps even Roman citizens, trading out of Brundisium. Although the evidence is very scarce, the Romans must have benefitted greatly from these trade networks. It may therefore be suggested that the decision to colonize Brundisium in 244 could have resulted in part from the Romans' desire to increase their control of cross-Adriatic trade routes and the profit which they generated from them.

Scholars have attempted variously to explain the reasons for the very large Roman force which was sent against the Ardiaei.²⁰⁹ The decision may speak to the fact that the Romans had more pressing concerns (regarding the Gauls) and wanted their conflict with the Ardiaei to be resolved quickly. It should be recalled, however, that on the eve of Roman military intervention on the eastern Adriatic seaboard, envoys had been sent to the Aetolians and Achaeans from certain Greek colonies, a circumstance which triggered a larger regional war that culminated in the battle at Paxos. The Romans were thus drawn into a much broader conflict in 230, which could explain why they sent such a large force. In fact, it may have been the Ardiaean victory at Paxos which triggered the Roman

²⁰⁸ Eckstein 2008: 33.

²⁰⁹ Polyb. 2.11.1, 7. See, for example, Gruen 1984: 367 and Hammond 1968: 6.

decision to send an army across the Adriatic. As discussed earlier, this event was very significant, in that it illustrated that the major Greek powers in the region were incapable of preventing or limiting Ardiaean piracy in the Adriatic, thus compelling the Romans to intervene.²¹⁰

Conclusion

It has been argued that the Roman decision to intervene across the Adriatic and ultimately to declare war against the Ardiaei resulted from the latter's disruption of very profitable cross-Adriatic trade routes and the inability of the major powers of mainland Greece to suppress this activity. In conclusion, it would be worthwhile to note the importance of the precedent set by the Romans and the role they subsequently began to take on following their victory over the Ardiaei. The First Illyrian War illustrates the early stages of Rome's very influential position as naval *prostates* in the Mediterranean.

The development of opposing and indeed incompatible views on legitimate forms of violence at sea discussed earlier significantly raised the value of maritime violence as a means of providing protection to weaker polities, the principal task of the Hellenistic naval *prostates*.²¹¹ In other words, the more

²¹⁰ Although the precise timing of the Roman declaration of war is very difficult to decipher, it was unlikely to have occurred just following the return of the embassy from the Ardiaei, but may conceivably have occurred following the battle at Paxos, based on the timing of the mobilization of Roman forces.

²¹¹ Gabrielsen 2001: 227. Excellent examples of these are Athens in the fifth century, Rhodes in the third century and Rome in the first century. Gabrielsen does not discuss the importance of the First Illyrian War for the development of Rome's role as naval *prostates*.

piratical raids grew in scope and intensity, as in the case of Ardiaean naval activity, the greater the justification for producing violence in order to suppress it.

As Gabrielsen notes,

Once 'legitimate' maritime force and protection had become highly priced commodities in the political economy, a fierce competition ensued among those powers which sought to dominate the protection market, a competition that was inseparable from the pursuit of hegemonic ambitions. The quality and effectiveness of the protection offered decided the issue of who ultimately won recognition as the leading naval *prostates*.²¹²

This is demonstrated very effectively by the attempts made by the allied Achaean and Aetolian Leagues as well as the Romans to suppress Ardiaean piracy in 230/29.

Piracy had an immense impact on both the political influence and economy of the *prostates*, as is very well illustrated by the First Illyrian War. As a result of this conflict, the Romans not only benefitted greatly economically, but also significantly increased their influence along the eastern Adriatic coast.²¹³

The following quote of Hegesippos from the mid-fourth century regarding Phillip II and the Athenians reveals the function of naval protection within the political economy:

Regarding the *leistai*, Phillip says it is only fair that you and he should join in guarding against wrongdoers at sea. But in fact his aim is to be established on the sea with your support, and to have you admit that without Phillip you do not really have the strength to mount guard at sea, and, furthermore, by your granting him that license, to sail around the islands, putting in at each of them on the pretext of guarding against *leistai*, but in reality corrupting the islanders and taking them away from you.²¹⁴

²¹² Gabrielsen 2001: 227.

²¹³ This will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

²¹⁴ [Dem.] 7.14-5. .

This illustrates that competitors for the position of *prostates* were generally more concerned with their reputation as naval protectors than the complete suppression of piracy.²¹⁵ This is very aptly demonstrated by the Roman embassies which were sent to the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues, as well as Athens and Corinth, following Rome's victory over the Ardiaei. Polybius writes that

When this treaty had been concluded Postumius sent legates to the Aetolian and Achaean leagues. On their arrival they first explained the causes of the war and their reason for crossing the Adriatic, and next gave an account of what they had accomplished, reading the treaty they had made with the Illyrians. After meeting with all due courtesy from both the leagues, they returned by sea to Corcyra, having by the communication of this treaty, delivered the Greeks from no inconsiderable dread; for the Illyrians were not then the enemies of this people or that, but the common enemies of all.²¹⁶

Although the Romans had not fully assumed this position in the late third century, the First Illyrian War marked an important step in the development of Rome's role as a naval *prostates* in the Mediterranean, a role which culminated in the first century B.C. in the conflict against the Cilicians.

²¹⁵ See De Souza 1999: 38-9; Gabrielsen 2001: 232.

²¹⁶ Polyb. 2.12.4-6.

Chapter Five

The Conclusion of the First Illyrian War

I have argued that the goal of intervention across the Adriatic was inherently limited, in that the primary aim of Roman involvement was to secure the trade routes linking Brundisium to the eastern Adriatic coast. The decision to intervene however was quite separate from the decision-making process during and after the war, during which time the character of Roman ties to be established in coastal Illyria was being shaped. An understanding of the nature of the treaty drawn up between Rome and the Ardiaei and of post-war Roman influence in this region is crucial to drawing broader conclusions regarding the mechanisms and goals of early Roman expansion in the east. As Eckstein notes, “differing visions of Roman expansion emerge depending on the intensity, formality, and geographical extent of postwar Roman control.”²¹⁷

Several views have been forwarded on this issue, ranging from those who see an almost total lack of Roman interest in expansion to those who argue that the Romans had strong hegemonic and imperialist aims in the area. These extremes are perhaps best represented by the work of two scholars in particular. On the one hand, Eckstein has argued that the consequences of Roman intervention in Illyria were minimal. He writes, “victory allowed Rome to

²¹⁷ Eckstein 2008: 32, with additional bibliography.

rearrange the geopolitical situation in maritime Illyris to suit herself, but the result was merely the creation of informal friendships between Rome and a few scattered cities and tribes.”²¹⁸ He sees little evidence that Rome sought to expand its power and influence east of the Adriatic in the aftermath of the First Illyrian War. On the other hand, Harris argues that although the decision to go to war stemmed from the Senate’s desire to protect Italian merchants, “the way in which the expedition was conducted suggests that the aim was to establish Roman power in Illyria.”²¹⁹ This position has gained support from Derow’s more recent argument that formal treaties of alliance were drawn up with a number of polities on the Adriatic coast in the aftermath of the war.²²⁰

I will argue that the Romans did not establish a formal protectorate or a rigid system of alliances in coastal Illyria. While they did oversee the division of previously Ardiaean territory between Queen Teuta and the dynast Demetrius of Pharos, no alliances or formal connections were made with these two independent rulers. Rather, Rome instead maintained a series of informal friendships (*philia/amicitia*) with a number of coastal colonies and tribal groups. Such informal associations predominated in Roman relationships with Greek polities; in comparison, formal treaties played a much smaller role, especially in the earlier phases of Rome’s eastern expansion.²²¹ The nature of these relationships and

²¹⁸ Eckstein 2008: 30.

²¹⁹ Harris 1979: 196, with additional bibliography.

²²⁰ Derow 1991.

²²¹ Gruen 1984 Chapter One.

their role in establishing Roman control in the east is heavily debated by scholars; their informal and dynamic nature makes this question difficult to resolve. It is well established that *philia/amicitia* represented an informal and extra-legal relationship, not requiring a treaty or any official engagements, however, no fixed formula for such relationships seems to have existed.²²² Despite the informal nature of these ties, the Romans still exercised a certain influence on the eastern Adriatic coast in the decades following the conclusion of the war. In fact, several polities in this region acted as allies of Rome (*socii*), even though they were not bound to her through formal treaties. The Romans could have established more formal control in coastal Illyria, or chosen to exercise her influence over a larger amount of territory, but they did not. In fact, the absence of the Romans from the scene, as a result of growing conflicts with both the Gauls and the Carthaginians, resulted in further conflicts in the region, particularly the Second Illyrian War of 220/19 B.C.

The treaty signed between Rome and the Ardiaei in 228 B.C. is recorded by both Polybius and Appian.²²³ Though the two accounts differ somewhat in

²²² See especially Heuss 1933: 12-59.

²²³ Polyb. 2.12.3: "In the early spring Teuta sent an embassy to the Romans and made a treaty, by which she consented to pay any tribute they imposed, to relinquish all Illyria except a few places, and, what mostly concerned the Greeks, undertook not to sail beyond Lissus with more than two hundred vessels"; App. *Ill.* 7-8: "After these events the widow of Agron sent ambassadors to Rome to surrender the prisoners and deserters into their hands. She begged pardon also for what had been done, not by herself, but by Agron. [She] received for answer that Corcyra, Pharos, Issa, Epidamnus, and the Illyrian Atintani were already Roman subjects, that Pinnes might have the remainder of Agron's kingdom and be a friend of the Roman people if he would keep hands off the

detail, Appian's account is generally less reliable than that of Polybius regarding the mechanisms and goals of Roman expansion during the Republican period, as he was working within an imperial framework. This agreement had several stipulations. Polybius makes a vague reference to the imposition of tribute.²²⁴ Many scholars argue that this took the form of an indemnity to be paid in installments, though the precise nature of the payment and the amount demanded of the Ardiaei is unclear as there is little evidence for this arrangement.²²⁵ In addition to this payment, the Romans reaped several further economic benefits from this war. The sources note that the Romans captured a number of Ardiaean pirate ships which were returning home from successful raids and seized their plunder.²²⁶ Further, Roman forces plundered a number of indigenous coastal settlements.²²⁷ The Romans thus benefitted significantly from an economic perspective as a result of this conflict.

In addition, the Ardiaei were forbidden from sailing south of Lissus, a fortified indigenous settlement situated near the Adriatic coast.²²⁸ The reason for the choice of Lissus as a boundary marker is unclear. The settlement may have

aforesaid territory, and agree not to sail beyond Lissus nor to keep more than two Illyrian pinnaces, both to be unarmed.”

²²⁴ Teuta “consented to pay any tribute they imposed” (Polyb. 2.12.3). Appian does not mention this, perhaps because some form of payment following Rome's victory was assumed.

²²⁵ Scholars point to a passage from Livy (22.33.5) discussing the events of 215 B.C. to indicate that this payment took the form of an indemnity: “Officials were also sent to Pineus, King of Illyria, to demand payment of the tribute which was now in arrears, or, if he wished for an extension of time, to accept personal securities for its payment.” See Badian 1952a: 78; Gruen 1984: 367; Harris 1979: 64.

²²⁶ Polyb. 2.11.14; Zon. 8.19.

²²⁷ Polyb. 2.11.13; Zon. 8.19.

²²⁸ Polyb. 2.12.3, 3.16.3, 4.16.6; App. *Ill.* 7.

marked the southernmost border of Ardiaean territory prior to their expansion southward. More importantly, however, the Lissus boundary protected the very profitable trade routes connecting Brundisium with Apollonia, Epidamnus, Corcyra and Phoenice. According to Polybius, the Ardiaei could not sail beyond Lissus with more than two unarmed vessels, thus ensuring the safety of merchant vessels and coastal cities against Illyrian depredations.²²⁹ However, Polybius says nothing of Ardiaean rights in the waters to the north of Lissus. Appian, on the other hand, claims that the Illyrians were prohibited from sailing south of Lissus with any ships whatsoever, and that the Ardiaei were forbidden from keeping more than two unarmed vessels in the water at any location to the north.²³⁰

Scholars have generally tended to ignore Appian's version and accept that of Polybius, which fits well with the view that Illyrian piracy was the primary concern of the Romans. Appian's account, on the other hand, could indicate that the Romans not only sought to protect a greater area from Illyrian attack, but also sought to stifle the Ardiaei and prevent any expansion, at least by sea. However, it is entirely possible that Appian misinterpreted the terms of the treaty as recorded by earlier sources. Such a severe clause was not necessary, as Ardiaean resources and forces were exhausted and their territory greatly diminished; in fact,

²²⁹ Teuta "agreed not to sail beyond Lissus with more than two galleys, and those unarmed" (Polyb. 2.12.3).

²³⁰ Teuta "agreed not to sail beyond Lissus nor to keep more than two Illyrian pinnaces, both to be unarmed" (App. *Ill.* 7).

it seems likely that their access to the coast was largely curtailed by the treaty of 228. Thus, Ardiaean expansion was not likely to have been a concern.

Finally, the treaty outlined a new division of Ardiaean territory. The precise boundaries of this agreement are quite vague. The Ardiaei appear to have been stripped of the majority of their territory; according to Polybius, they were forced “to relinquish all of Illyria except a few places.”²³¹ Appian is no more specific.²³² The majority of this territory was given over to the dynast Demetrius of Pharos to rule. The Ardiaei were left with very little territory or room to expand overland, as their holdings in the interior were limited by the Dardani and Dassaretai to the east and by Demetrius towards the coast.²³³

In 229 Demetrius of Pharos, a dynast placed in charge of Corcyra following its capture by Ardiaean forces, transferred his allegiance to the Romans.²³⁴ Polybius writes that “accusations had been brought against [Demetrius], and being in fear of Teuta he sent messages to the Romans undertaking to hand over to them [Corcyra] and whatever else was under his charge.”²³⁵ Demetrius’ later conflict with the Romans and his interactions with Macedon illustrate that he was well attuned to changes in the power dynamic of the region and continuously sought to increase his authority and influence along

²³¹ Polyb. 2.12.3. At the end of the war, Polybius writes that some of the Ardiaei fled to Arbo, while Teuta and the majority of the remaining forces under her command took refuge at Rhizon. These settlements appear to have remained in Ardiaean hands following the war.

²³² App. *Ill.* 7.

²³³ See Cabanes 1988b: 277.

²³⁴ Polyb. 2.11.3-5; App. *Ill.* 7; Zon.8.19.

²³⁵ Polyb. 2.11.4. Appian does not give a reason for Demetrius’ defection.

the eastern Adriatic coast.²³⁶ It is possible that he displayed too much independence or seemed to constitute a threat to Teuta during his governorship of Corcyra and Pharos. He may very well have judged that the Romans would be victorious in the upcoming conflict, and so transferred his allegiance to them in order to reap the benefits of their victory. Indeed, in 229 the consuls established Demetrius as ruler of much of the previously Ardiaean territory.²³⁷

During the course of the war, the consuls established ties with various Greek *poleis*, including Corcyra, Epidamnus, Apollonia, Issa and Pharos, as well as two indigenous tribal groups, the Parthini and Atintanes.²³⁸ Polybius uses two terms to describe these relationships: he writes that these polities ‘placed themselves under Roman protection (*in pistis*)’ and that they were ‘admitted into Roman friendship (*philia*)’.²³⁹ He writes that the Corcyrans did so because they “considered this the sole means of assuring for the future their safety from the violence of the Illyrians.”²⁴⁰ While the motives behind the decision of other polities to establish ties with Rome are not stated in the sources, it is likely that they were similar to those ascribed to Corcyra. Indeed, after the Ardiaean victory at Paxos, and the inability of Macedon, Epirus or the Aetolian League to limit Ardiaean expansion or prevent destructive piratical attacks, it may be inferred that

²³⁶ See, for example, App. *Ill.* 8; Polyb. 3.16, 18.

²³⁷ These boundaries are only vaguely outlined by the sources; Polybius writes that the consuls placed “the greater part of Illyria under the rule of Demetrius” (Polyb. 2.11.17). Appian is no more specific, writing that “to Demetrius they gave certain castles as a reward for his treason to his own people” (App. *Ill.* 8).

²³⁸ Polyb. 2.11.5-6, 8, 10-12; App. *Ill.* 7 includes all of these except Apollonia and the Parthini.

²³⁹ Polyb. 2.11 *passim*.

²⁴⁰ Polyb. 2.11.5.

the polities of the Illyrian coast looked to the Romans, who were now at their doorstep with a very large army, for protection.

The nature and intensity of the bonds formed between Rome and these various polities is a matter of intense debate. In the first half of the century, scholars referred to the establishment of a Roman protectorate in coastal Illyria.²⁴¹ However, the notion of a ‘protectorate’ is anachronistic: the term is derived from nineteenth century colonial language, and refers to a bordered political space whose sovereignty and administration rests in the hands of an outside power.²⁴² This description clearly does not apply to coastal Illyria in 228. All scholars would agree that the polities that linked themselves to Rome retained their sovereignty and administrative structures. Additionally, they did not form a contiguous strip of territory, but consisted in a handful of geographically scattered communities.²⁴³ The ancient sources that discuss the post-war situation refer consistently to a list of separate polities, and in no way give the impression of a coherent entity under direct Roman control.²⁴⁴

Scholars subsequently proposed a number of alternative theories regarding the nature of the connection linking Rome to coastal Illyria. Scholarly opinion on this matter ranges from the establishment of a very loose and informal to a direct and formal hegemony in coastal Illyria. Early on, Badian argued that the

²⁴¹ See especially Holleaux 1928: 836; Walbank 1957: 12.

²⁴² Cabanes 1988b: 278; Eckstein 2008: 51.

²⁴³ *Contra* Holleaux 1921: 105; Walbank 1957: 12.

²⁴⁴ See especially Polyb. 2.11 *passim*, 7.9.13; App. *Ill.* 7-8; Zon. 8.19.

relationship between Rome and these various polities was in essence one of *clientela*, such that their freedom of action in interstate decision-making became informally limited by Rome's interests.²⁴⁵ He concluded that the First Illyrian War thus marked "an important step in the substitution of extra-legal for legal forms of dependence as the favourite method of Roman diplomacy."²⁴⁶ Badian's argument was part of a larger and very influential view on the way in which the Romans exercised power in the east over the next century and a half. However, a number of scholars have rejected his thesis regarding the nature of Roman influence across the Adriatic. Many point out that the language of patron-client relationships is completely lacking from the ancient evidence.²⁴⁷ Rather, the sources continuously refer to the establishment of relationships of *philia/amicitia*, and there seems to be no evidence that *amicitia* was understood in this way by the Romans or others.²⁴⁸

In opposition to Badian's thesis, Gruen argued that "there is no evidence and no reason to see [the treaty of 228] as a contrived plan by Rome to employ *amicitia* as a springboard for suzerainty or a device to guarantee control."²⁴⁹ He maintained that this bond did not involve explicit obligations; in other words, it

²⁴⁵ Badian 1952a: 80-1.

²⁴⁶ Badian 1952a: 81.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, Gruen 1984: 158-200; Burton 2003: 334, 354-7, 363-5; Eckstein 2008: 44.

²⁴⁸ See Cic. *De Off.* 2.69; Burton 2003: 342. Badian argued that *amicitia* was a euphemism for a patron-client relationship (Badian 1958: 7, 12-3).

²⁴⁹ Gruen 1984: 76. He argues that *philia/amicitia* was a familiar and widespread institution among Greeks in the Hellenistic period: "there can be little question that the *amicitiae* which emerged in the Illyrian wars reflected Greek practice, not Roman policy."

was not “an instrument of imperialism.”²⁵⁰ Petzold claimed that these polities remained free to act as they had before the outbreak of hostilities, although Roman power and interests became a significant factor in their decision-making.²⁵¹ On the other hand, some scholars argued that despite the informal nature of the ties linking these polities to Rome, they were viewed and treated by others as subjects of the Romans, or under the Romans’ direct control.²⁵² According to Derow, however, these polities were not linked to Rome merely by informal *amicitia* (no matter how this was interpreted in reality); rather they had become tied to Roman interests in 228 by formal treaties of alliance.²⁵³

Derow’s thesis regarding the nature of Roman control in coastal Illyria in the aftermath of the First Illyrian War has become very influential among scholars.²⁵⁴ His view lends strong support to Harris’ theory regarding Rome’s goals across the Adriatic, as it suggests that Rome was early on pursuing a diplomatically aggressive and interventionist policy in the Greek world. If accurate, this position would have enormous implications for our understanding of the mechanisms and aims of early Roman expansion. Although Derow’s argument has gained many supporters, it cannot stand up to a systematic examination. It will be argued that Rome did not in fact establish formal treaties

²⁵⁰ Gruen 1984: 76.

²⁵¹ Petzold 1971: 214-5.

²⁵² See especially Ferrary 1988: 24-33, based on Polyb. 7.9.13 and the apparent absence of these polities from the peace treaty between Rome and Phillip V in 205; Hammond 1968: 7-9, 1989: 23. Hammond (1968: 9), for example, called the bonds of *amicitia* established by Rome a “vaguely benevolent and flattering euphemism for an extremely shrewd extension of Roman power.”

²⁵³ Derow 1991.

²⁵⁴ See Coppola 1993: 105-27; Heftner 1997: 186; Habicht 1997: 185.

of alliance following the war, but rather maintained informal bonds of *amicitia* along the lines proposed by Petzold.

Derow's primary piece of evidence is a two-part inscription from Pharos that he argues illustrates that Rome and Pharos formed an alliance in 228.²⁵⁵ He dates this inscription to 219, immediately following the conclusion of the Second Illyrian War (220-219 B.C.). The inscription seems to mention the renewal of an alliance between Rome and Pharos, which would thus indicate that an alliance was drawn up in the aftermath of the first war.²⁵⁶ Derow goes on to argue that the other polities that tied themselves to the Romans in 229/8 also drew up treaties of alliance with Rome.

A key element of Derow's argument is the dating of the inscription, which provides only a small handful of chronological indicators, none of which are absolutely secure. The second half of the document records the destruction of the city and their request for help from their mother city of Paros, to which they received a positive response.²⁵⁷ The first half indicates that the Romans were involved in the events leading to the destruction of the city (although the nature of their involvement is not made clear). The inscription implies that the Pharians offered *deditio* to the Romans, as it records that the Senate and people of Rome

²⁵⁵ Inscription first published by Robert 1960. See Derow 1990 for a full transcription of the text of the inscription.

²⁵⁶ Part A ll. 8-9.

²⁵⁷ Part A ll. 3-10.

restored legal independence to Pharos.²⁵⁸ In 219, at the end of the Second Illyrian War, the Romans razed Pharos to the ground, but the city was quickly rebuilt in two or three years.²⁵⁹ There is thus a close parallel between these events and the two parts of the Pharos inscription, in which Pharos was destroyed and subsequently restored to its previous status by the Romans.²⁶⁰ Despite some disagreement, the dating of the Pharos inscription to 219 remains the best fit in light of the evidence we possess concerning Roman-Pharian relations from the late third to mid-second century, and has been widely accepted by scholars.²⁶¹

A number of scholars have argued that Pharos could not have formed an alliance with Rome in 228 as it was not an independent polity, but rather under the control of Demetrius of Pharos.²⁶² Derow maintains that Pharos was not in Demetrius' possession during or after the war although there is little concrete

²⁵⁸ Part A ll. 5-10.

²⁵⁹ Polyb. 3.19.12, 7.9.13; App. *Ill.* 8.

²⁶⁰ First argued by Robert 1960: 537-8.

²⁶¹ Despite this close historical correspondence, Robert (1960: 539-40), who first published the inscription, ultimately rejected the dating of 219. He argued that the letter forms and usage in the inscription precluded a date in the late third century. He maintained that, based on these factors, the inscription must date to between 170 and 150 B.C. During this time the relationship between Pharos and Rome appears to have been somewhat troubled, although there is very little documentation of this in the sources. Robert suggested that the deterioration in their relationship may have been connected to the anti-Roman activities of the Illyrian king Genthius during the Third Macedonian War or those of the Illyrian warlord Ballaios, who exercised some power over Pharos during this period (1960: 540-1). However, Derow (1991: 261, 266) pointed out correctly that attempts to date the inscription based on letter forms and usage cannot be pressed very far, especially when discussing a difference of only seventy years or so. Further, he was able to look at the inscriptions in person and illustrated that Robert's arguments on this front did not stand. Derow's argument however does not prove that the inscription should be dated to the late third century, rather it illustrates that letter forms and usage cannot firmly place the document at any point between the late third and mid-second century. The problem is complicated by the fact that few datable Greek inscriptions from the Illyrian region have been discovered with which to compare the Pharos inscription. Further, the writing on the inscription is, as Robert notes, "assez rapide et negligé" (Robert 1935: 505, to which Derow agrees 1991: 266). See Eckstein 1999: 417.

²⁶² First argued by Robert 1960: 539.

evidence to back up this claim.²⁶³ Both Appian and Polybius imply that Pharos was in fact in Demetrius' possession, though the evidence is somewhat ambiguous. Polybius writes that "of the besiegers of Issa, those who fled to the city of Pharos [in 228] remained there by permission of Demetrius."²⁶⁴ Just following this, he claims that "after accomplishing so much and placing the greater part of Illyria under the rule of Demetrius, thus making him an important potentate, the Consuls returned to Epidamnus."²⁶⁵ This passage may imply that Demetrius remained in control of Pharos after the war was concluded. More significantly, while discussing the events of the Second Macedonian War (200-197), Polybius refers to Pharos as under Demetrius' control: Demetrius was "actuated by his hostility to Rome and most of all for the sake of himself and his own prospects, as he was convinced that this was the only way by which he could recover his principality of Pharos."²⁶⁶

Appian, on the other hand, writes that "Demetrius, who was Agron's governor of Pharos and who held Corcyra also, surrendered both places to the invading Romans by treachery."²⁶⁷ He claims that during the treaty negotiations, "[Teuta] received for answer that Corcyra, Pharos, Issa, Epidamnus, and the Illyrian Atintani were already Roman subjects," however, he follows this up by noting that "thereupon the Romans made Corcyra and Apollonia free. To

²⁶³ Derow 1991: 265; App. *Ill.* 7.

²⁶⁴ Polyb. 2.11.15.

²⁶⁵ Polyb. 2.11.17.

²⁶⁶ Polyb. 5.108.6-7.

²⁶⁷ App. *Ill.* 7 [229 B.C.].

Demetrius they gave certain castles as a reward.”²⁶⁸ Again, this may imply that Demetrius received Pharos from the Romans in 228. Appian’s discussion of the Second Illyrian War provides slightly firmer evidence that he considered Pharos to be in Demetrius’ possession. He writes,

the following year [the Romans] marched against Demetrius and his Illyrian fellow-culprits. Demetrius fled to Phillip, king of Macedon, but when he returned and resumed his piratical career in the Adriatic they slew him and utterly demolished his native town of Pharos, which was associated with him in crime.²⁶⁹

This evidence seems to illustrate that Demetrius remained in possession of Pharos in the years between the First and Second Illyrian Wars, although it is not altogether conclusive. If such was the case, then the city would not have been in a position to form a treaty of alliance with Rome.

It has been suggested that the reference to the renewal of an alliance between Rome and Pharos was purely honorific. First, the Romans are referred to as the friends and not the allies of Pharos in the opening lines of the inscription.²⁷⁰ Second, Eckstein points to the diplomatic vagueness of the term *philia kai summachia* which appears to have been used on the Pharian inscription.²⁷¹ He identifies similar documents from the mid-second century which employ the same language but do not in fact refer to an existing treaty of alliance.²⁷² For instance, a *senatus consultum* from Narthacium in Thessaly from around 140 B.C. records

²⁶⁸ App. III. 8.

²⁶⁹ App. III. 8.

²⁷⁰ Part A ll. 3-4.

²⁷¹ Only part of the word *summachia* remains on the inscription, however this reconstruction has been accepted by most scholars (Eckstein 1999: 399-400, 406).

²⁷² Eckstein 1999: 406-7.

that the “goodwill, friendship and alliance” of the city was being renewed, however its relationship to Rome is described simply as one of *amicitia*.²⁷³ Thus the phrasing of the Pharos inscription cannot be taken as solid evidence that a formal treaty of alliance existed between Pharos and Rome, however it does not necessarily disprove the existence of such an alliance.²⁷⁴ The vagueness of the terminology employed in the text, combined with the fact that Demetrius appears to have remained in possession of Pharos following the war argue against Derow’s position.

The Pharos inscription itself provides strong counterevidence to the claim that Pharos lost her independence and became an ally of Rome in the late third century. The interactions between Pharos and the other Greek polities of Paros and Athens recorded in this document are those of an independent state. For example, the Pharians make their own decision, independent of the Romans, to ask the Parians and Athenians for help. The Parians treat the Pharian ambassadors as envoys from a respected and free city, and when the Parians

²⁷³ *SIG*³ 674, ll. 16-8, 21, 42, 47. See also *SIG*³ 679.2B ll. 41-4, 54; *SEG* 9.7, ll. 16-7, 20-4 with *Liv.* 44.19.10; *OGI* 441 ll. 45, 69-72. See Ager 1996: 425-9, 321-7; Gruen 1984: 47, 675-7; Eckstein 1999: 407-8. For further examples from literary sources, see Eckstein 1999: 409-10.

²⁷⁴ See, for example, *SIG*³ 694 ll. 13, 21-2, 47-8; *IG* 12.3.173 ll. 3-4, 28-50 which illustrate examples of other treaties which do refer to the existence of a formal treaty of alliance. Eckstein concludes, “perhaps this phraseology is merely an honorific way of referring to informal *amicitia*, a way of emphasizing a *de facto* closeness – or hoped-for closeness – between Pharos and Rome; there seem to be many parallels. But perhaps this phraseology really does refer to a formal treaty of alliance; there seem to be a few parallels for that usage as well. We cannot be sure” (1999: 411).

decide to help Pharos, they use the same decision-making formula as the one used by the Pharians in deciding to ask for help.²⁷⁵

Derow further maintains that several formal and legally binding treaties were established between Rome and the polities of the Adriatic coast in 228. However, the evidence which he provides to support this claim is quite ambiguous, and does not point certainly, or even probably, to a late third century date for the formation of alliances. First, he argues that the military actions of several *poleis* in support of Rome should be taken as evidence for the existence of formal treaties of alliance. Apollonia, Corcyra and Epidamnus were used as landing stages during Rome's conflicts with Macedonian and the Seleucid Empire, and Apollonia, Epidamnus and Issa all contributed either ships or auxiliary units to these expeditions.²⁷⁶ Derow argues that these actions likely point to the existence of formal alliances: he writes, "they may not be called allies on these occasions, but it is surely worth asking whether anyone who was not allied to Rome so participated in these wars."²⁷⁷ However, as Derow himself notes, the Rhodians had cooperated with the Romans in this fashion for a long time but did not have an alliance with the Romans until 166.²⁷⁸ In fact, scholars have illustrated that from the late third to mid-second century the Romans often

²⁷⁵ Part A ll. 9-41, Part B. ll. 3-12.

²⁷⁶ Derow points to numerous references in Liv. 24-40, for instance, Liv. 33.3.10, 42.55.9, 44.30.10 (Apollonia), 42.48.8, 44.30.10 (Epidamnus), 31.45.10, 32.21.27, 37.16.8, 43.9.5 (Issa).

²⁷⁷ Derow 1991: 267.

²⁷⁸ Derow 1991: 267. See Polyb. 30.5.6: "For the policy of Rhodes had been so little by sentiment, that although that state had from nearly a hundred and forty years taken part in the most glorious and finest achievements of the Romans, they had never made an alliance with Rome."

fought wars in the Greek East alongside ‘allies’ who were not in fact in possession of formal treaties of alliance.²⁷⁹ A good example of this was the kingdom of Pergamum, who fought alongside Rome without any formal treaty in all of the Macedonian Wars, as well as the war against Nabis of Sparta, the Syrian War and the Achaean War.²⁸⁰ Athens, the Achaean League and the Aetolian League all supported Rome in many of the same conflicts without treaties of alliance.²⁸¹ Derow’s argument is not supported by comparative evidence. As Eckstein points out, “rather than actions mandated by treaty, the minor Illyriote contributions to Roman war efforts could simply be the politically and/or strategically wise actions of polities that were merely informal *amici* of Rome,” a phenomenon which was clearly quite common.²⁸²

Derow points to a number of passages in the literary sources to show that Rome established alliances with Corcyra, Apollonia and Issa in 228. While discussing the events of 215, Appian refers to an alliance between Rome and Corcyra.²⁸³ Walbank and Eckstein both dismiss this passage as the incident it describes is fictitious, although a misinterpretation on the part of Appian may be

²⁷⁹ As Eckstein notes (1999: 403), “the motivations behind the energetic conduct of these polities in fighting on the side of the Romans varied according to circumstances, strategic concerns, and pragmatic self-interest (including greed for territory, fear of Rome's current enemy, and fear of Rome itself.”

²⁸⁰ McShane 1964: 105-9, 123-4, 138-9, 142-46, 178-83, 192.

²⁸¹ Gruen 1984: 23-4; Badian 1952b: 76-80; Eckstein 1999: 403-4, with further examples.

²⁸² Eckstein 1999: 404. See especially Sall. *Iug.* 14.12-3, who points to precisely this phenomenon.

²⁸³ App. *Mac.* 1.3: “Thereupon Phillip in his anger attacked Corcyra, which was in alliance with Rome.”

more likely.²⁸⁴ Zonaras mentions an alliance between Apollonia and Rome in the same year.²⁸⁵ The legal exactitude of this passage, like that of Appian, is suspect, especially as Zonaras is both a late and summarizing source. Livy, who records the same event, does not cite any treaty rights, which he was generally in the habit of mentioning.²⁸⁶ Appian himself claims that both Corcyra and Apollonia were freed by the Romans after the war, and does not mention the formation of any alliances in his discussion of the post-war settlement.²⁸⁷

Livy notes that in 172, envoys from Issa appealed to the Senate regarding the actions of the Illyrian king Genthius against themselves.²⁸⁸ Derow takes this passage as evidence for an earlier alliance with Rome, however many polities approached the Senate without necessarily relying on a formal treaty.²⁸⁹ Further, Issa clearly remained in control of her dependent *poleis* throughout the second and first centuries.²⁹⁰ Only a much later inscription, dated to 56 B.C., refers directly to an alliance between Rome and Issa.²⁹¹ Derow admits that there is no evidence linking Epidamnus to Rome apart from their military assistance in the

²⁸⁴ Walbank 1940: 299; Eckstein 1999: 405.

²⁸⁵ Zon. 9.4.4: "Phillip advanced as far as Corcyra with the intention of sailing to Italy, but on learning that Laevinus was already at Brundisium, he returned home. When Laevinus had sailed as far as Corcyra, Phillip set out against the Roman allies; he captured Oricum and proceeded to besiege Apollonia. But Laevinus once more made an expedition against him, recovered Oricum, and rescued Apollonia."

²⁸⁶ Liv. 24.40.2, 7. Walbank 1940: 299; Eckstein 1999: 405.

²⁸⁷ App. *Ill.* 8. Appian may be referring to a process of voluntary *deditio* which these communities performed in order to protect themselves against the Ardiaei and which were transformed into bonds of informal *amicitia* (see Eckstein 2008: 55; Heuss 1933: 78-83).

²⁸⁸ See Liv. 42.26.2-7

²⁸⁹ See, for example, the earlier appeal of Issa (App. *Ill.* 7).

²⁹⁰ Polyb. 32.9; Liv. 45.26.13; Sherk 1969 24A-B.

²⁹¹ Sherk 1969 24 B.

wars listed above.²⁹² In fact, in the mid-first century Epidamnus is described by Cicero as a *civitas libera* and not a *civitas foederata*.²⁹³ Thus, there is little evidence that Corcyra, Apollonia, Issa or Epidamnus established treaties of alliance with Rome in 229. Derow's conclusion therefore cannot be accepted.²⁹⁴

The best literary source to look to for evidence of the nature of post-war Roman influence along the eastern Adriatic coast in the late third century is Polybius. He certainly provides evidence that the Romans exercised some authority in this region at this time. In his discussion of the outbreak of the Second Illyrian War in 220, Polybius refers to the "Illyrian cities drawn up under [or subject to] the Romans."²⁹⁵ Eckstein compares this passage to Diodorus Siculus' use of the same terminology regarding Punic hegemony in western Sicily in the early fourth century.²⁹⁶ He points out that Punic hegemony in this region was in fact quite loose, "the towns having significant independence, there being no Punic administrative apparatus, though the towns depended on Punic military power for survival, and viewed Carthage as their champion against local threats from the Greeks."²⁹⁷ However, throughout the fourth century, the Carthaginians continued to have to curry the support of their inhabitants. Diodorus writes that

²⁹² Derow 1991: 268.

²⁹³ Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.7.

²⁹⁴ He claims based on the evidence listed above that "of all this there is one straightforward reading: a sequel of the Roman campaign in the Adriatic in 229/8 was the conclusion of alliances between Rome and Pharos, Issa, Epidamnus, Corcyra, and Apollonia" (1991: 268).

²⁹⁵ Polyb. 3.16.3.

²⁹⁶ Diod. Sic. 15.15.1; Eckstein 2008: 55. See also Whittaker 1978: 67-8.

²⁹⁷ Eckstein 2008: 55; see Diod. Sic. 13.43.3.

the Carthaginians on their part had come to see that there would be a serious war in Sicily and began making friendly representations to the cities in the island which were their allies. Renouncing their opposition to the tyrants throughout the island, they established friendship with them, and particularly they addressed themselves to Hicetas, the most powerful of these, because he had the Syracusans under his control.²⁹⁸

Eckstein suggests that a similar situation may have existed in the regions of coastal Illyria linked to the Romans. However there is very little evidence regarding Rome's relationship to this region in the decade following the war, making it difficult to make such a comparison with any certainty.

In Polybius' outline of the treaty signed between Hannibal and Phillip V in 215, he includes the following clause: "the Romans shall no longer be masters of Corcyra, Apollonia, Epidamnus, Pharos, Dimale, Parthini, or Atitania, and they shall return to Demetrius of Pharos all his friends who are in the dominion of Rome."²⁹⁹ Gruen suggested that this phraseology was simply anti-Roman propaganda.³⁰⁰ There was clearly a sense however in which Polybius recognized that the Romans exercised some form of power or held sway over the coastal polities of Illyria. Due to the lack of evidence, we cannot know the precise nature or extent of this influence. It must be emphasized that in his discussion of the conclusion of the war, Polybius refers to these polities only as the friends and never the allies of Rome.³⁰¹ It seems unlikely that he would fail to mention that

²⁹⁸ Diod. Sic. 16.67.1.

²⁹⁹ Polyb. 7.9.13-14.

³⁰⁰ Gruen 1984: 386.

³⁰¹ Polyb. 2.11.5-6, 10-11.

these informal friendships led to the establishment of treaties of alliance shortly after the war.

Following the conclusion of the treaty in 228, Roman legates met formally with the leaders of the Achaean and Aetolian Leagues, and subsequently with those of Athens and Corinth. This was Rome's first formal diplomatic encounter with the polities of mainland Greece. According to Polybius the legates "first explained the causes of the war and their reason for crossing the Adriatic, and next gave an account of what they had accomplished, reading the treaty they had made with the Illyrians."³⁰² During their meeting with the Corinthians, the latter admitted the Romans to the Isthmian Games.³⁰³

The diplomatic encounters of 229/8 seem to illustrate a senatorial interest in affecting public opinion among the major states in mainland Greece and defending Roman intervention.³⁰⁴ As Dzino points out, the Romans had just begun to develop a diplomatic-propagandistic discourse in which they presented themselves as the protectors of the Greeks against Illyrian barbarians.³⁰⁵ Polybius claims that the Romans "by the communication of this treaty, delivered the

³⁰² Polyb. 2.12.4.

³⁰³ Polyb. 2.12.8; Zon. 8.19.

³⁰⁴ Some scholars argue that the warm reception given the Romans by the Greeks may derive from a propagandistic account given by Fabius Pictor who sought to depict Rome as a civilized power in his Greek history (Eckstein 2008: 41; Dillery 2002).

³⁰⁵ Dzino 2010: 51.

Greeks from no inconsiderable dread; for the Illyrians were not then the enemies of this people or that, but the common enemies of all.”³⁰⁶

These embassies certainly illustrate that the Romans were well aware of the involvement of the Achaean and Aetolian leagues in attempting to suppress the Ardiaean threat, and were familiar with the regional power dynamic in mainland Greece. However, it is important to note that formal interaction between Rome and the states of mainland Greece was practically non-existent for over a decade.³⁰⁷ Although these embassies are significant in that they point to increased involvement in and interaction with the Greek world, the lack of any other diplomatic or military contact with Greece for over a decade illustrates that the Romans were not pursuing a policy of expansion to the east at this time. Indeed, mainland Greece only re-entered the Roman sphere of interest as a result of the alliance formed between Phillip V of Macedon and Hannibal in 215 B.C.

Some scholars have tried to link Rome’s actions during the conclusion of the First Illyrian War to an anti-Macedonian policy. Holleaux argued that the Roman ‘protectorate’ was viewed by the Macedonians as a threat to themselves. He believed that it was established out of fear of Macedonian reprisal.³⁰⁸

Hammond argued that the Roman embassies to the Greek states constituted “a

³⁰⁶ Polyb. 2.12.4-6.

³⁰⁷ The only official interaction occurred in 222/1, during the dedication of a golden bowl at Delphi as an offering to Apollo following the Roman victory over the Celts in the mid-220s (Plut. *Marc.* 8.6). As Eckstein notes, this dedication conveys the same anti-barbarian theme as the Roman embassy to mainland Greece following the First Illyrian War. Badian 1952a: 81; Gruen 1984: 368; Eckstein 2008: 41-2.

³⁰⁸ Holleaux 1921: 109-20; Holleaux 1928: 828-33, 837-47; See also Hammond 1968: 9.

deliberate and public move by Rome [which] made it clear to Macedon and the Greeks that in any war in the southern Balkans Rome's sympathies would lie initially with Aetolia and Achaëa and against Macedon, Epirus and Acarnania."³⁰⁹ These views have rightly been dismissed by scholars as they are not supported by the evidence.³¹⁰ In fact, Dell suggests that Roman intervention inadvertently helped advance Macedonian interests and encouraged their recovery under Antigonus Doson by securing their western flank. Most importantly, however, the state of affairs in Macedon in 229/8 as discussed earlier was one of great political and military weakness, and thus Rome could hardly have felt threatened by it at this time. From a Macedonian perspective, however, Rome's actions in Illyria in 229/8 may have seemed like an aggressive encroachment upon one of its traditional spheres of influence. There is, however, little concrete evidence for this claim.³¹¹

Contrary to the view that Rome established formal control over the polities of coastal Illyria or demonstrated hegemonic aspirations in the east, it was in fact the absence of the Romans which led to the deterioration of Roman relations in coastal Illyria in the decade following the conclusion of the First Illyrian War. These polities had tied themselves to Rome "in the hope that Rome would provide a continual balance of power against threats from the Ardiaei or

³⁰⁹ Hammond 1968: 9; followed by Harris 1979: 138.

³¹⁰ See for example Dell 1967b.

³¹¹ It should be pointed out however that the treaty between Phillip and Hannibal (Polyb. 7.9.13) granted Illyria to Phillip as his share of the spoils of war.

Demetrius... from their perspective the problem in maritime Illyris was not too much Roman control, but too little.”³¹² *Amicitia* was a very dynamic and unstable relationship which had to be maintained over time to retain its effectiveness as a diplomatic and hegemonic tool.³¹³ The Romans allowed Demetrius’ power and influence in coastal Illyria to grow unchecked throughout the 220s, while pro-Demetrian factions arose in several cities.³¹⁴

Conclusion

The treaty drawn up between Rome and the Ardiaei and the nature of the bonds created with a number of coastal polities following the war illustrate that the main goal of this conflict was the suppression of piracy, and that the Romans did not harbour any wide-ranging hegemonic ambitions in the East at this time. This conflict led to increased Roman influence along the Adriatic coast, however the polities that linked themselves to the Romans remained legally free, bound to Rome only by the informal bonds of *amicitia*. The nature of these relationships and their role in establishing Roman control in the east is unclear, their informal and dynamic nature making this question difficult to resolve. In the case of Illyria, there is some evidence that the Romans wielded some influence over these *amici*; Livy’s claims regarding the participation of coastal polities in Rome’s wars

³¹² Eckstein 2008: 57; see also Badian 1952a: 82; Petzold 1971: 215; Gruen 1984: 368. See Polyb. 2.11.5.

³¹³ Burton 2003: 338-9; Eckstein 2008: 57.

³¹⁴ Polyb. 3.16.2, 3.18.1.

in the east discussed above is a clear indication of this. Further, the Romans now had substantial sway (if they desired or needed to use it) over all of the major commercial ports of the Adriatic. It is important to emphasize that the Romans certainly had the power to establish firmer, more direct, or formal control in coastal Illyria, however they did not choose to exercise it.³¹⁵ In fact, it was the absence of the Romans from the scene, as a result of growing conflicts with both the Gauls and the Carthaginians, which led to further conflicts in the region, particularly the Second Illyrian War of 220/19 B.C.

³¹⁵ See for example Polyb. 2.11.11, in which Polybius claims that many tribes approached the Romans during the course of the war, but only the Atintanes and the Parthini were accepted into the friendship of Rome.

Conclusion

I have argued that the traditional debate between ‘defensive’ and ‘aggressive’ imperialism constitutes an outdated and one-sided dichotomy which fails to emphasize the complexity of Roman motives and aims as well as the very crucial role played by the polities across the Adriatic within these conflicts. I illustrated that Ardiaean expansion and piracy in the 230s was allowed to progress unchecked as a result of the destabilization of the two previously dominant powers in the region, Epirus and Macedon. Further victories over the Aetolian League solidified the presence of the Ardiaei in the Greek world and illustrated to those on both shores of the Adriatic that the major forces of mainland Greece were unable to prevent or limit Ardiaean advances.

This thesis challenges the quite widespread position that Rome pursued an aggressive policy of expansion in the earliest phases of trans-Adriatic military engagement. I have argued that the Romans acted energetically to protect their interests, but their political aims and gains in the region were relatively limited. The primary motivation behind the Roman decision to declare war against the Ardiaei in 229 was to secure the very profitable trade routes linking Brundisium to the eastern shore of the Adriatic. It was in fact the failure of the major Greek powers to limit Ardiaean piracy that led directly to Roman intervention.

I have argued that the Romans did not establish a formal protectorate or a rigid system of alliances in coastal Illyria. Rather, they maintained a series of informal friendships with a number of coastal colonies and tribal groups. Despite the informal nature of these ties, the Romans still exercised a certain influence on the eastern Adriatic coast in the decades following the conclusion of the war. However, the absence of the Romans along the eastern Adriatic coast as a result of growing conflicts with both the Gauls and the Carthaginians resulted in further conflicts in the region, particularly the Second Illyrian War of 220/19 B.C.

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