

# THE BOUNDARIES OF HELLENISM IN EPIRUS DURING ANTIQUITY

There are two aspects to the question of the boundaries of Hellenism in Epirus during Classical Antiquity. The first is the question of the Greek or non-Greek character of the Epirote tribes, and the second that of the boundaries between these tribes and their northern neighbours.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the question of the Greekness of the ancient Epirotes would not have arisen, if it had not been posed by the ancient Greek writers themselves, who sometimes explicitly referred to the Epirotes as barbarians, and sometimes placed Epirus outside the boundaries of Greece. Categorical testimony as to the barbarian character of the Epirotes is to be found in Thucydides and Strabo. During his account of the events of the Peloponnesian War<sup>1</sup>, the former clearly distinguishes between the "Greek" Ambrakiotes, Leukadians, Anaktorians and Peloponnesians, and the "barbarian" Chaones, Thesproti, Molossoi, Atintanes, Parauaioi and Orestai. At another point of his narrative<sup>2</sup>, the same author contrasts the "Greek" Ambrakiotes with the "barbarian" Amphilocheians, and leaves no doubt that the criterion on which the distinction is based is language, for he says explicitly of the inhabitants of Amphilocheian Argos that they "first became Hellenes and adopted their present dialect in consequence of their union with the Ambrakiots". In the same way Strabo<sup>3</sup>, probably following Ephoros, states that the Greeks were surrounded "until the present time" by the barbarian Thracians, Illyrians and Epirotes; and a little further on he explains that these barbarian Epirote tribes, which occupied a large part of Greece, were the Thesprotians, Kassopaians, Amphilocheians, Molossians, and Athamanians. Again, for Strabo as for almost all the ancient geographers<sup>4</sup>, the Ambrakian Gulf was the north-west limit of Greece.

The exclusion of Epirus from the geographical concept of Greece might not have been of decisive importance. The term "Hellas" evolved in meaning and was gradually extended from the narrow region of Phthia to the entire southern part of the Balkan peninsula<sup>5</sup>. Even in the second century B.C., the larger part of Aitolia was reckoned, geograph-

ically, at least, to be outside Greece<sup>6</sup>. The use of the word "barbarians" to describe the Epirotes may also refer to purely cultural criteria. Euripides, for example, does not hesitate to describe the Aitolian hero Tydeus as semi-barbarian<sup>7</sup>, and the second century writer Hegesander portrays the kithara-player Stratonikos, who was famous for his witticisms, on being asked "whether the Boiotians were more barbarian than the Thessalians", as replying that the more barbarian were the Eleans<sup>8</sup>! In neither of these cases, however, is it certain that the criteria were purely cultural, for we know that Thucydides had reservations as to the Greekness of the language of a large part of the Aitolians, the Eurytians: "the Eurytians, who form a large part of the Aitolians, speak an incomprehensible language and are eaters of raw meat, so it is said". While Hesychios describes the Eleans, along with the Karians, as "speakers of a barbarian tongue"<sup>9</sup>.

These statements by the ancient authors are rather surprising. In fact, although it is beyond dispute that the Karians were speakers of a barbarian language until they were gradually Hellenized during the Hellenistic period, it is equally beyond doubt that the Eleans and the Aitolians had always been Greek-speaking; this is clear from by inscriptions discovered in these two areas, the earliest of which go back almost to the seventh century B.C. It would moreover be paradoxical, to say the least, to dispute the Greekness of the founders and organizers of the Olympic games, in which, of course, only Greeks could take part<sup>10</sup>. These astonishing inaccuracies encourage reservation when dealing with information in the ancient authors that is openly in conflict with other information, both of a literary and –especially– epigraphical nature. Ephoros, for example, includes the Pamphylians amongst the barbarian peoples of Asia Minor<sup>11</sup>. Other evidence, however, particularly studies of the epigraphic remains of the Pamphylian dialect, demonstrate the falsity of this statement by an otherwise reliable historian<sup>12</sup>. The classification of the Pamphylians as barbarians is probably not unconnected with the difficulty experienced by

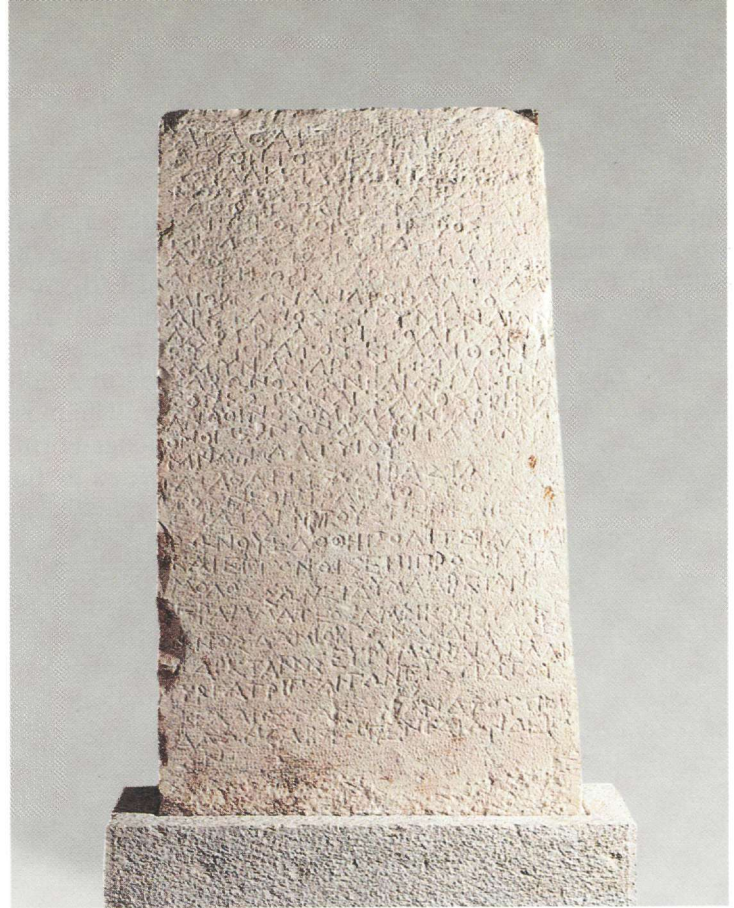


other Greeks in understanding their dialect<sup>13</sup>, though its Greek character is beyond dispute.

It should be emphasized at this point that ancient historians and geographers did not follow the scientific methods of modern linguists, who make detailed descriptions of the speech of the groups that they are studying. The information contained in the ancient writers is based very occasionally on personal experience, and mainly on impressions gathered from their various informants, who were normally not trained philologists, of course, and had no particular interest in language. Consequently the description of ethnic groups as barbarians (or as Greek<sup>14</sup>) by ancient writers can never be regarded as sufficient proof of their ethnic identity. It is certain that the Karians, for example, were, barbarians not –or rather not only– because it is asserted by Ephoros or any ancient historian or geographer, but because we have at our disposal dozens of inscriptions in the Karian language and we know hundreds of Karian names which are not Greek in form or etymology. The ethnic identity of the ancient Epirote tribes –to the degree that this concept corresponds to the reality of the period, of course– should therefore be sought mainly in those elements defined by the objective criteria set forth which such clarity by Herodotus: “...the kinship of all Greeks in blood and speech, and the shrines of the gods and the sacrifices that we have in common, and the likeness of our way of life”<sup>15</sup>.

Then again, for the ancient Greeks, who were not acquainted with modern anthropology, “community of blood” does not imply a biological relationship, but an appeal to a common descent (real or fictive), as is clear from the participation of Alexander I of Macedon in the Olympic Games. Common descent was not demonstrated by anthropometric research or blood analysis, but by recourse to genealogies and the foundation-legends of cities and tribes. And it is known that not only the royal households but also the tribes and cities of Epirus traced their origins or their foundation to Achaian heroes of the Mycenaean period<sup>16</sup>. These genealogies were known and accepted as early as the end of the Archaic period at the latest, and are projected in the work of Pindar as fully established and beyond dispute<sup>17</sup>.

A second criterion that is of primary importance for moderns but of only secondary significance for the ancients is that of language. In the absence of adequate epigraphic testimony, it was asserted as late as the first decades of the present century that except at Dodona, which was a Greek-speaking island in the midst of barbarians, the Greek language was introduced into Epirus at the end of the fourth century B.C. by the –mainly Corinthian– colonies on the coast<sup>18</sup>. This hypothesis is absurd, because it does not account for the fact that while the inaccessible Epirote hinterland was supposedly Hellenized, at an early date, moreover, by remote colonies mainly of minor importance, the Illyrian populations of the open plains around Apollonia and Dyrrachion were unaffected linguistically by their proximity to these two important cultural centres<sup>19</sup>; the theory collapsed completely in the face of the steadily increasing epigraphic material. In fact, it was observed, first, that the earliest epigraphic texts from Epirus, with the exception, of course, of



118. An inscribed limestone stele from Dodona bearing two honorary decrees of the Koinon of the Molossians in the time of Neoptolemos, son of Alketas (370-368 B.C.). The inscriptions are proof that the Epirote tribes of the Koinon recorded their resolutions in the Greek language and used Greek technical terms. The dialect is of the north-west type. The inscriptions also show that the tribal and personal names of Epirus were Greek since at least 420 B.C. Ioannina, Archaeological Museum.

Dodona and the south Greek colonies, date not from the end but from the beginning of the fourth century B.C.<sup>20</sup>. And it is clear that the composers of the Molossian decrees incised “in the reign of Neoptolemos son of Alketas” between 370 and 368 B.C.<sup>21</sup>, already had considerable experience in the use of Greek. Second, it was established that the dialect in which they are written is not, as was believed, the Doric of Corinth, but a north-west dialect, akin to others of the same family (Akarnanian, Aitolian, Lokrian etc.), but exhibiting several distinctive features that preclude the possibility of its being borrowed<sup>22</sup>.

The epigraphic evidence of recent decades has also yielded a vast number of personal names. These are not only purely Greek from the very start, but also have a distinct local character which precludes the possibility of their being borrowed from the colonies on the coast. Indeed, the affinities they reveal are not with the onomasticon of the Corinthian colonies, but with those of Macedonia and Thessaly<sup>23</sup>. There is thus no longer any doubt that the ancestral speech of the inhabitants of Epirus was Greek.

It is equally incontestable that the Epirote tribes practised the same religion as the other Greeks<sup>24</sup>. The supreme god of the Epirotes was Zeus and his sanctuary at Dodona attracted believers from all over the Greek world. Foreign deities are not attested before the spread of eastern cults



throughout the whole of Greece in the Hellenistic period. It has been asserted, on the strength of a gloss on Plutarch, that the Epirotes worshipped a barbarian god, Aspetos, who, it is claimed, was later identified with Achilles<sup>25</sup>. This is a misinterpretation. Aspetos is a well-known, impeccably Greek adjective, and is simply an epithet applied to Achilles, the mythical founder of the Aiakid dynasty. The most convincing proof, however, that the Epirotes belonged firmly within the religious body of Greece, is provided by the catalogues of *theorodokoi* listing the Greek cities and tribes to which the major pan-hellenic sanctuaries sent *theoroi* to announce an impending sacred truce and the performance of sacrifices and contests. The tribes and cities of Epirus, both the south Greek colonies and the purely Epirote cities, are recorded in the most completely preserved lists (those of Epidaurus, Argos, and Delphi) from as early as the first half of the fourth century B.C.<sup>26</sup>. The weight of this evidence is decisive because, as is well known, only Greeks were allowed to, participate in the pan-hellenic games and festivals.

The "similar customs" of Herodotus cover a very wide spectrum, from political institutions to daily life. With regard to the former, it should be stressed that neither the political organization by tribes and villages, which is local to north-west Greece, nor the political terminology (*prostatas*, *damiorgoi*, *synarchontes*, *hieromnamones*), which is a feature peculiar to the Epirote tribes, can be regarded as loans from the south Greek colonies, which were organized on the pattern of the Classical *polis* and whose officials had different names<sup>27</sup>. At the other end of the spectrum, many examples could be cited of features of daily life common to both the Epirotes and the other Greeks, especially the neighbouring tribes of Upper Macedonia<sup>28</sup>. Suffice it here to mention the earliest evidence, from the marriage of Agariste described by Herodotus<sup>29</sup>. Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon in the first half of the sixth century B.C. "desired to wed her to the best man he could find in Hellas". The announcement was made during the Olympic Games, in which only Greeks participated, and the Molossian Alkon is mentioned amongst the suitors who presented themselves 60 days later. As P. Cabanes properly observes, "the tyrant Kleisthenes of Sikyon would certainly not wish to marry his daughter to a non-Greek"<sup>30</sup>. And since the marriage would be contracted according to the "laws", that is the customs, of the native land of the bridegroom, Kleisthenes was obviously aware that customs of Molossis did not differ in any radical way from the marriage "laws" of Sikyon or the native lands of the other suitors. It should be stressed, finally, that the recognition of Alkon as a Greek is completely unrelated to the genealogical claims of the royal house of the Aiakids.

Since, on the criteria of the period, the ancient Epirotes must be accounted Greeks, the question of the boundaries of Hellenism in Epirus is simply that of the boundaries between the Epirote tribes and their northern neighbours. Even in Antiquity there were some writers who placed the north-east and north-west boundaries of Greece not on the river Peneios and the Ambrakian Gulf respectively, but on the frontiers between Macedonia and Thrace on the one hand and Illyria and Epirus on the other<sup>31</sup>. Plutarch, refer-

ring to events in the fourth century B.C., places the boundaries of Greece at the Akrokeraunian Mountains<sup>32</sup>. These are precisely the borders separating the Illyrians from the Epirotes, according to Pseudo-Skylax<sup>33</sup>, who is describing the condition of the region about the middle of the fourth century B.C., and Strabo<sup>34</sup>, who at this point is using earlier sources<sup>35</sup>. The ethnic boundaries in the interior are as confused as those on the coast are clear, at least at first sight. Strabo returns at least three times to the ethnic composition of this region. On the first occasion he writes<sup>36</sup>: "in travelling this road from the region of Epidamnus and Apollonia, one has on the right the Epirotic tribes... and on the left the mountains of Illyria". On the second occasion<sup>37</sup>, having listed the main Epirote tribes of the interior ("The Amphilocheians are Epirotes; and so are the peoples who are situated above them and border on the Illyrian Mountains, inhabiting a rough country -I mean the Molossoi, the Athamanes, the Aithikes, the Tymphaioi, the Orestai and also the Paroraioi and the Atintanes, some of them being nearer to the Macedonians and others to the Ionian Gulf"), he adds that their boundaries with the Illyrians were unclear<sup>38</sup>: "some speak both languages".

The impression of confusion is dispelled somewhat, when one realizes that Strabo is following strict geographical order in his enumeration. From the Molossians he moves eastward to the Aithikes, and then, following a northerly direction, to the Tymphaioi and Orestai, after which he moves westwards to the Parauaioi (Paroraioi) and north-westwards to the Atintanes, thus arriving at the central reaches of the Aoos, to the north of the Molossoi, having completed a full circle. His enumeration of the Illyrians follows a similar method. He first mentions the coastal cities from north to south, Epidamnus and Apollonia, "as far as the Keraunians", and then the Illyrian tribes from south to north, the Bylliones in the hinterland of Apollonia, and the Taulantioi in the hinterland of Epidamnus. After this Strabo moves further inland and lists from north to south the Parthinoi, the Bryges and the Dassaretioi.

From the above analysis of the information contained in Strabo, combined with the statement of the same author.<sup>39</sup> "Now the Chaones and the Thesprotoi and next in order after them the Kassopaioi (these too are Thesprotoi) inhabit the seaboard which extends from the Keraunian Mountains as far as the Ambrakian Gulf" it emerges that the northernmost Epirote tribes were, from west to east, the Chaones and the Atintanes (apart from a short interval, the Parauaioi and Orestai belonged to Macedonia from the period of Philip until the second Macedonian War). The southernmost tribes of the Illyrians were, according to Strabo, the Bylliones and the Dassaretioi.

This classification does not remove all the points of obscurity. To the north of the Akrokeraunian Mountains, beyond the colonies of Apollonia and Epidamnus, a series of cities (or tribes) are attested whose Illyrian character is beyond doubt. In the southernmost zone, from west to east, are Orikos, Olympe and Amantia, and in the zone immediately to the north of that the Balaiitai, Nikaia and Byllis. Further north still, at the latitude of Apollonia, Dimale was





119. The stadium of Amantia founded in the third century B.C. on a striking site, had skilfully made rows of stone seats in its

cavea, of which 17 survive on the north part. The stadium attests the Greek customs, practices, and culture of the local population.

in contact with the Parthinoi, while Antipatreia was a Macedonian colony in Illyrian Dassaretis.

Of the above, Orikos was a Greek city of Epirus, founded by the Euboians according to tradition<sup>40</sup>, which no-one has seen fit to describe as Illyrian. With regard to its institutions we have only contradictory references by Albanian archaeologists to unpublished inscriptions discovered there, which name as the supreme official, according to S. Anamali the *prytanis*, and according to H. Çeka, the *strategos*<sup>41</sup>. If the former is correct this will be a further indication of Kerkyraean influence, which can be detected in other features<sup>42</sup>, while if the latter is correct it will have been an institution of Epirote origin. In the case of Amantia, the evidence may appear at first sight to be contradictory. Pausanias places the territory of Abantis in Thesprotia “by the Keraunian Mountains” and attributes its colonization to Lokrians from Thronion and Abantes from Euboea<sup>43</sup>. Stephen of Byzantium places it in Illyria, but he too attributes its foundation to the Euboian Abantes<sup>44</sup>. Pliny calls the Abantes “barbarians”<sup>45</sup>, but the third century B.C. historian Proxenos regards them as Epirotes<sup>46</sup>, an opinion repeated by Hesychios<sup>47</sup>. The language of the inscriptions is undoubtedly Greek and, in particular, all the known citizens have Greek names<sup>48</sup>. The cults of Amantia are typically Greek (Zeus, Aphrodite, Pandemos, Pan and the Nymphs). Its political institutions, too, are Greek (*prytanis*, *grammateus*, *toxarches*, *agonothetes*, *boule*, etc.) as were its customs, which can be seen, for example, in the existence of a stadium<sup>49</sup>.

No literary evidence is preserved referring to the de-

scent of the founder of neighbouring Olympe. The name of the city, however, is Greek, its citizens wrote Greek, their dedications bear exclusively Greek names, they worshipped Greek gods (Zeus Megistos) and their political institutions were Greek (*politarches*, *synarchontes*, *grammateus*), bearing the clear stamp of Macedonia and Epirus rather than of the Corinthian colonies<sup>50</sup>.

Similar observations may be made also of the cities in the zone immediately to the north. The Ballaiitai belonged to a city that appears in the literary sources as Balliake, Baiake or Balake<sup>51</sup>. Its site is made clear by a passage in Strabo<sup>52</sup> (“After Apollonia comes Balaiake – clearly Balake – and Orikon.”) and by the statement in Stephen of Byzantium that the city belonged to Chaonia<sup>53</sup>. Cabanes proposes that it should be placed at the inland archaeological site of Gurtsetse, but Hammond’s suggestion<sup>54</sup> seems more probable: he prefers another important site, at Treporti, on the Gulf of Aulon, since the passage in Strabo derives from an ancient periploous that listed coastal cities<sup>55</sup>. The lemma in Stephen of Byzantium is of particular interest, since it hints that Chaonia also extended to the north of the Akrokeraunian Mountains almost to Apollonia. The sole, and highly important, text of the Ballaiitai, a recently discovered honorific decree<sup>56</sup>, reveals a blending of Epirote and Corinthian colonial elements, which are probably to be attributed to the influence and prestige of neighbouring Apollonia. The onomasticon contains names characteristic of the Corinthian colonies (e.g. Parmen), and the calendar includes a month also known from the Corinthian colonies (Psydreus) and from



Bouthrotos in Chaonia<sup>57</sup>. Its political institutions, finally, have a mixed character. The *prytanis* is the eponymous official of the Corinthian colonies, though it spread at an early date beyond them to Amantia, Byllis, Nikaia, Kassope<sup>58</sup> and possibly also to Orikos<sup>59</sup>. The “elders”, who replaced the council, recall the Epirote *peleioi* and the Macedonian *peliganes*, rather than the *bouleutai* of the Corinthian colonies<sup>60</sup>. As for the term *koinon*, this can refer equally to the political form of *polis* or *ethnos*<sup>61</sup>.

Further inland, Byllis and Nikaia pose more difficult problems. The Bylliones are referred to explicitly by Strabo as one of the south Illyrian tribes<sup>62</sup>. Stephaen of Byzantium states that Byllis was a “coastal” Illyrian city, but excavations have brought it to light a distance of about 25 km. from the sea<sup>63</sup>. The foundation of Byllis is attributed to Neoptolemos and the Myrmidons. The numismatic types of the city confirm this tradition<sup>64</sup>, though the archaeological evidence does not allow its foundation to be set further back than the second half of the fourth century B.C.<sup>65</sup>. The first epigraphic testimony is earlier than this, however, and is placed in the middle of this century<sup>66</sup>. In contrast, the foundation of Nikaia, a mere 1,500 metres south of Byllis, is earlier by almost a century: Byllis went into decline somewhat after the foundation of Nikaia, though it was not totally abandoned<sup>67</sup>. What was the precise relationship between these two closely neighbouring cities, each of which had its own officials, its own agora and its own theatre? Nikaia is mentioned by Stephen of Byzantium as a city “in Illyria”<sup>68</sup>, but its name is Greek, as Robert<sup>69</sup> has properly emphasized. An athlete from the city, however, is cited in a catalogue of victors at Oropos in the first century B.C. as “Byllion from Nikaia”<sup>70</sup>. The texts of the inscriptions of these two cities, which begin very early, in the middle of the fourth century B.C., are impeccably Greek, and reveal the typical features of the north-west dialects<sup>71</sup>. The cults of the cities are Greek (Zeus Tropaios<sup>72</sup>, Hera Teleia<sup>73</sup>, Poseidon<sup>74</sup>, Parthenos<sup>75</sup> etc.), as are the political institutions, though it is difficult to clarify their precise content. In the inscriptions of Byllis, the eponymous official is the *prytanis*<sup>76</sup>, who is followed in one votive inscription by the *strategos*<sup>77</sup> and in another by the *strategos*, *hipparchos* and the *damiourgoi*<sup>78</sup>. In the inscriptions of Nikaia the eponym is again the *prytanis*<sup>79</sup>, followed in one case by the *strategos*<sup>80</sup> and the *gymnasiarchos*<sup>81</sup>. The question that arises is whether these officials were common to the two cities, or whether each had its own. The matter is complicated even further by the fact that in inscriptions discovered in other parts of Greece, mention is sometimes made of “the *koinon* of the Bylliones”<sup>82</sup> and sometimes of “the *demos* of the Bylliones”<sup>83</sup>, that some numismatic issues bear the inscription “Byllionon” and others the inscription “Byllis”<sup>84</sup>, and that, finally, as we have seen, a citizen of Nikaia is described as “Byllion from Nikaia”. Various hypotheses have been formed to reconcile the contradictory statements in the sources. H. and N. Çeka, for example, consider Byllis and Nikaia to be part of the great Illyrian tribe of the Atintanes, which also included Amantia, Olympe, and even Antigoneia<sup>85</sup>. This theory is accepted with some reservations by Cabanes<sup>86</sup>. L. Robert restricts the

*koinon* of the Bylliones to Byllis and Nikaia<sup>87</sup>. Hammond asserts that Byllis was a Greek colony founded in the chora of the Illyrian Bylliones, which was originally built on the coast and later transferred inland. Of the two series of coins, the one with the inscription “Byllis” belonged to the Greek colony, and the other with the inscription “Bylliones” to the Illyrian tribe<sup>88</sup>. Fanoula Papazoglou also speaks of “Greek foundations on barbarian territory”<sup>89</sup>. The theory of greater Atintania has been rebutted<sup>90</sup>. At this stage it is wisest to confine ourselves to noting the very close relations between Byllis and Nikaia which were stressed by Robert. The theory of two cities of the same name, one on the coast and one inland, cannot be accepted, and the passage of Hekataios on which it is partly based refers, as we have seen, not to Byllis but to the Balaitai. It might have been hoped that study of the personal names of both Byllis and Nikaia would have supplied an answer to the question of the origins of their inhabitants<sup>91</sup>. Far from clarifying the situation, however, they complicate it even further. By far the larger part of the onomasticon of Byllis, Nikaia and their regions consists of Greek names local not to the Corinthian colonies but to the tribes of northern Greece, that is of Epirus and Macedonia (Alexandros, Andriskos, Archelaos, Kebbas, Maketa, Machatas, Nikanor, Peukolaos, Phalakros, Philotas, Drimakos and Alexommas). This important testimony to the basically Greek character of the inhabitants is not invalidated by the presence of a few Illyrian names (Preuratos, Triteutas and Trasos), though it should be stressed that two of the bearers of these names occupied the supreme and eponymous office of *prytanis*. In contrast, there is an impressively wide distribution of a small number of personal names which cannot be regarded as Illyrian, since they are not found in the rest of Illyria outside Byllis and its chora and the immediately neighbouring cities of Amantia and Dimale, but whose etymology is not Greek (Praugos three times, Praugissos four times, and Praugimmas twice). To these may be added other names of doubtful etymology, such as Aspimmas, Paton and others. The names in this category, too, frequently belong to distinguished citizens who occupy important offices. Names like these, neither Illyrian nor Greek, which also occur further south at earlier periods (e.g. Tharyps and Arrybas in Molossia, Sabylinthos, possibly in Atintania, Oroidos in Parauaia, and Saminthos in Aitolia), give a new dimension to statements about mixed tribes and bilingual populations, amongst whom Strabo includes not only the Bylliones, but also the Taulantioi, the Parthinoi, the Bryges and the Encheleis and, all probability, the Dassaretioi.

The intermingling of Greeks and Taulantioi, who dwelt on the coast to the north of Genousos, is undoubtedly connected with the presence of the large, important colony of Dyrrachion in their area<sup>92</sup>. The situation in the land of the Parthinoi can be traced only at Dimale, which, though never explicitly stated to be a city of the Parthinoi, is frequently linked with them in the sources<sup>93</sup>. At this city, Greek inscriptions have been found, written in a north-west Greek or Doric dialect, the institutions mentioned in them are Greek (*prytanis*, *phylarchos*?), and Greek monumental structures



have come to light (a stoa). The onomasticon appears to be mixed, however, with Greek names typical of both Epirus and the Corinthian colonies, and with non-Greek personal names<sup>94</sup>. The very late appearance of Greek elements, combined with the fact that the city does not have a Greek name and there is no tradition ascribing its foundation to Greeks, gives the impression that Dimale did not have a Greek character from the beginning, but was rather a centre of the Parthinoi that was hellenized late under the influence of Apollonia on the one hand and the kingdom of Epirus on the other.

The phenomenon of the intermingling of Greek and non-Greek elements, with latter on occasion not being Illyrian but belonging to earlier population strata, is even more pronounced in the regions assigned by Strabo to the Illyrian *ethne* of the Bryges, Encheleis and Dassaretioi. In a recent study, Nade Proeva has advanced the view that these *ethne* were not Illyrian<sup>95</sup>. This is undoubtedly true of the Bryges; these were a remnant of the Phrygian peoples of Europe, who can be called an Illyrian or Macedonian *ethnos* only from a geographical point of view. The Illyrian origins of the Encheleis, too, are debatable, but the question is of a rather academic character, since in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, they were rather a historical memory than a contemporary ethnic group. The fragmentary nature, obscurity and corruption of the manuscript tradition of the available sources makes it impossible to clarify the relations between the Dassaretioi and the Encheleis. Study of the personal names of these regions might help to resolve the matter. Unfortunately, only the names from the areas in the former Yugoslavia have been collected together: and although these exhibit the expected intermingling of a clear majority of Greek, and indeed Macedonian, names with a few Illyrian ones (Annia, Genthios, Dazos, Epikados, Plator), especially in the south, and also with a few other, probably Phrygian names (Ameilos, Ammia, Getas) in the north, they do not permit the drawing of any clear conclusions. Proeva's attempt to dispute the Illyrian character of the Illyrian names and to overemphasize the importance of the Brygian element is unconvincing. In the intermediate zone of the Taulantioi, Parthinoi, Bryges, Encheleis and Dassaretioi, described by Strabo, we must accept the presence of all three elements: Greeks, Illyrians, and pre-Greek, pre-Illyrian peoples. These last may have been either genuine pockets of population rather like the Vlachs of modern times amongst the Greeks and Albanians or simply the cultural relics – mainly in the form of traditional personal names – of peoples who had been assimilated, linguistically at least, into the predominant ethnic groups. The linguistic and ethnic borders that we are attempting to define should not be thought of as impenetrable boundaries, but rather as zones of contact, in which there was interpenetration and intermingling, and also some bilingualism; nevertheless, the presence of the pre-Greek element in the cities in the intermediate zone should be perceived as simply a cultural relic. Greek and non-Greek names are interchangeable within the same families, and people bearing a non-Greek name frequently have a Greek patronymic (Paton Anthropiskou, Tra-



120. A bronze pedimental inscribed stele with a honorary decree of the Balaiitai, the only official document by that tribe to have survived; from the Fier area (late third century B.C.). The personal names, calendar and political institutions mentioned in the inscription – which is in the Greek language and uses Greek technical terms – present a mixture of Epirote and Corinthian elements, possibly under the influence of the nearby Corinthian colony of Apollonia. Tirana, Archaeological Museum.

sos Hieronos, Praugimmas Nika, Praugimmas Boiskou), a sure indication that these non-Greek names had lost their foreign character and had become part of the common heritage of names of the population group in question. It is even more indicative that non-Greek roots are compounded with Greek ones to form true hybrids (Praugimmas, Aspimmas). The most unequivocal testimony to the Greek nature of these cities to the north of the Akrokeraunian Mountains is given by the Epirote section of the long list of Delphic *thearodokoi* in the early second century B.C. In addition to Kassope, Dodona, Phoinike, Kemarai, Apollonia and Dyrachion, this mentions Orikos, Abantia (Amantia) and Byllis<sup>96</sup>, the northernmost Greek city in this region that was not a colonial foundation.

The above review suggests that the northern boundaries of Hellenism in Epirus during Classical Antiquity lay in the valley of the Aoos. Is it purely chance that at the present day, the northernmost Greek-speaking villages are Arta and Svernitsa in the Gulf of Aulon – isolated relics of the ancient Horikioi and Balaiitai<sup>97</sup>?