

POLIS, ETHNOS AND KINGSHIP IN NORTHERN GREECE *

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GREECE IS A VERY ELUSIVE notion. 'Ελλάς has designated successively or simultaneously the region around Dodona in Epirus, or part of Phthiotis in southern Thessaly, or Greek lands north of the Isthmus as opposed to the Peloponnese, or peninsular Greece from the Peloponnese northwards, and even all lands inhabited by Greeks, including Ionia or even southern Italy, termed Μεγάλη 'Ελλάς.¹ Although of northern — Epirote or Thessalian — origin, in the course of history the term was usurped by the Southerners, Strabo calling the Peloponnese 'the citadel of Hellas'² and the Athenians styling themselves 'the Greece of Greece'.³ Conversely, most authors excluded Epirus⁴ and Macedonia⁵ and some even Thessaly⁶ — or at least parts of it —⁷ from Greece, its usual boundaries being the Ambracian Gulf on the Ionian coast and the mouth of the Peneios river on the Aegean coast, while the interior was left in the deepest uncertainty. Thus the Macedonian king Philip V, even after his defeat by the Romans and the Aitolians at Cynoscephalae, could not only half-jokingly claim that Amphilochia and northern Aitolia lay outside Greece and should rightfully be his,⁸ but also effectively be allowed, despite his formal exclusion from 'Greece', to reannex the Thessalian districts of Dolopia, Perrhaibian Tripolis and Magnesia in 189

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1. Cf. *LSJ*, s.v. 'Ελλάς.

2. Strab. 8.1.3: σχεδὸν δέ τι καὶ ἀκρόπολις ἐστὶν ἡ Πελοπόννησος τῆς συμπάσης 'Ελλάδος.

3. *Anthol. Pal.* 7.45 (Thucydides).

4. Ephoros, *FGrHist* 70, F 143; Pseudo-Skylax 33; Dionysios Calliphon. 24 and 31-37; Strab. 8.1.3. *Contra* Dionys. Perieg. 398-99 and Plut., *Phoc.* 29, consider Epirus as far north as the Keraunian Mountains as part of Greece.

5. Isoc., *Phil.* 107; Pseudo-Skylax 65; Dikaiarchos III; but Strabo (7.7.1.; 7, frg. 9) insists several times that Macedonia is an integral part of Greece.

6. Cf. Dikaiarchos III.

7. Cf. Dionys. Calliphon. 35-37.

8. Pol. 18.5.8-9.

B.C.⁹ This uncertain and disputed Greece north of the Ambracian and the Malian Gulfs is the subject of the present paper.

The first question which arises when we study the northern regions of Greece concerns the elements which differentiated them from the 'Greece above suspicion' south of Thermopylae.

Of Thessaly H.D. Westlake writes in his excellent little book: 'Geographical conditions were largely responsible for the distinctive characteristics of political and social life which obtained in ancient Thessaly. Thanks to its physical conformation and climate, which were in marked contrast to those of other districts of Greece, Thessaly followed a development strangely remote from the main channel of Greek civilization'.¹⁰ These remarks find an echo in J. Pouilloux's introductory observations to the first round table on Thessaly: '... another Greece, sometimes forgotten, that of horsemen and not of sailors ... the most Balkan of Greek lands, the most continental too ... the wealth of its plains, its self-centredness, the character of its rural communities kept her away from the movement of social and political ideas, and sheltered her from the economic constraints which encumbered life in the cities of southern Greece and of the islands'.¹¹ This cultural isolation and seclusion earned Thessalians a solid reputation for Philistinism and, as late as in the fourth century B.C., southern Greeks might wonder whether they were not barbarians.¹²

In a similar way P. Cabanes stresses the differences between Epirus and southern Greece: a higher rainfall (almost three times higher at Ioannina than in Athens), lower mean temperatures (by almost three degrees at Ioannina in comparison with Athens), and greater thermic variations as one moves away from the coast, displace Mediterranean cultures such as the olive and the vine, in favour of forestry and, especially, stock breeding, which takes the form of transhumant pastoralism between mountain and plain. It is with some reason that according to N.G.L. Hammond modern Greeks have called Epirus 'the Helvetia of Hellas'.¹³

Such an environment produced a society of free men and women practi-

9. Cf. F.W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon*, Cambridge 1940, 218-19 and 232.

10. H.D. Westlake, *Thessaly in the Fourth Century B.C.* (1935).

11. J. Pouilloux, 'Avant-propos', *La Thessalie. Actes de la Table-Ronde, 21-24 juillet 1975*, Lyon, Lyon and Paris 1979, 7-8.

12. Athen. VIII 350 a (= *FHG* IV 415); cf. Westlake, *Thessaly* 44-46.

13. See P. Cabanes, 'Frontière et rencontre de civilisations dans la Grèce du Nord-Ouest', *Ktéma* 4 (1979) 192-93; id., 'Société et institutions dans les monarchies de Grèce septen-

cing family co-ownership of stock and land and living in open villages.¹⁴ No wonder that historians and geographers from the south and the east would unhesitatingly qualify them as barbarians.¹⁵

As for Macedonia, it was, to the Greeks of the south, an exotic country. 'The traveller who penetrates the Valley of Tempe to enter Pieria discovers a land the scale, if not the nature, of which is completely different. He is greeted by the permanent snows of Mount Olympos, the highest mountain in Greece (2.917 m). Straight roads, bordered by tall poplars, lead him across vast grass-lands, watered by perennial rivers, whose banks are grazed not only by goats and sheep, but also by cows and — not so long ago — buffalo. Except for a strip along the coast he does not see any olive trees. As he ascends once more to the high plateaux, he encounters forests of oak, beech and even birch. Although the lion and the wild ox, once the favourite trophies of royal hunts, no longer frequent the hills and valleys, the deer, the lynx, the wolf and the bear still resist the attacks of hunters. Over the vast stretches of lakes Prespa and Vegorritis fly swans, storks and pelicans, while in their depth swarm freshwater fish'.¹⁶

Thucydides gives a colourful description, reflecting Athenian prejudices about northern Greece as a whole, where people 'spoke an uncouth tongue and ate raw meat':¹⁷ 'Up to this date', he writes, 'the people in many parts of Greece, the Ozolian Lokrians, the Aitolians, the Akarnanians and those of the neighbouring mainland, live in the ancient manner. The habit of carrying weapons has remained with these mainlanders as a vestige of antique brigandry. For the whole of Greece used to carry weapons, because the settlements were unfortified and the encounters insecure; so they used to live in arms just as the barbarians'.¹⁸

The fact that the Greek lands north of a notional line stretching from the Ambracian to the Malian Gulf form a distinctive unit which can be legitimately called 'Northern Greece' should not obliterate another division, perhaps of equal importance, between western and eastern (or Aegean) Greece cutting

trionale au IV^e siècle', *REG* 93 (1980) 328, and N.G.L. Hammond, *Epirus*, Oxford 1967, 7 and 16-18.

14. Cf. Cabanes, 'Monarchies' 334.

15. Thuc. 2.68.3-5; 2.80.5-6; Strab. 7.7.1 (probably after Ephoros); cf. Hatzopoulos, 'Boundaries' 140.

16. M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'The Natural and Human Resources', *Macedonia from Philip II to the Roman Conquest*, Athens 1993, 19-20.

17. Thuc. 3.94.5.

18. Thuc. 1.5.3-6.1; cf. Hatzopoulos, 'Villages' 151-52.

down the peninsula along the Pindos range from the lake district to the north as far south as the Gulf of Corinth. Lower Macedonia shares with Thessaly the vast plains and the wide thermic variations, with Perrhaibia bridging the two regions as a transitional zone. On the other hand, they both contrast with the strongly folded limestone mountain ranges of Epirus between which the valleys are tightly squeezed. However, in this case too, the Upper Macedonian districts of Orestis and Tymphaia formed — respectively — transitional areas between Epirus on the one hand and Lower Macedonia and Thessaly on the other. In this respect Macedonia with its twin constituent parts occupies an intermediate position between Epirus and Thessaly. This is reflected in its dialect as well as in its economic and social life and its political institutions.¹⁹ Epirus was a land of herdsmen, largely transhumant, and of small farmers tilling their land on a family basis with very limited servile help.²⁰ At the opposite end Thessaly was proverbial for the wealth of its big land-owners, which, enabled them ‘to live a life of almost oriental splendour’,²¹ lavishly entertaining their guests and recruiting private militias among their numerous serfs.²² Macedonia, which also offers little evidence for the existence of a servile population, falls between the Epirote and the Thessalian model, with an important pastoral economy in the uplands and extensive farming in the plains. Significantly, there is no trace either of aristocrats of baronial status comparable to the Thessalian ones, or of serfs attached to the soil.²³ Large domains did exist in the conquered territories especially outside Macedonia proper, but it seems that they were lend-leased to members of the owner’s family,²⁴ or let out to tenants,²⁵ rather than being directly exploited with the help of servile or helotic manpower. In both Epirus and Macedonia — where from its transhumant past it retains the name of *πυρόκαυσις* (‘camp fire’) ²⁶

19. M.B. Hatzopoulos, ‘Thessalie et Macédoine: affinités et convergences’, *La Thessalie. Quinze années de recherches archéologiques; 1975-1990: bilans et perspectives*, Athens 1994, II 249-54; *id.*, ‘La position dialectale du macédonien à la lumière des découvertes épigraphiques récentes’ (communication to a congress on Greek dialectology, forthcoming).

20. Cf. Cabanes, *Épire* 479-533; *id.*, ‘Monarchies’ 327-31.

21. Westlake, *Thessaly* 40-41.

22. Cf. Sordi, *Lega* 325-27.

23. Cf. P. Cabanes, ‘Société et institutions dans les monarchies de la Grèce septentrionale au IV^e siècle’, *REG* 93 (1980) 329, n. 17; M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Une donation du roi Lysimaque* (‘*ΜΕΛΕΘΜΑΤΑ*’ 5; Athens 1988) 49-54.

24. Cf. M.B. Hatzopoulos, ‘Le lac Pyrrholia en Macédoine’, *Τεκμήρια* 5 (2000) 63, n. 3.

25. Cf. *Syll*³ 302.

26. M.B. Hatzopoulos, *L’organisation de l’armée macédonienne sous les Antigonides* (‘*ΜΕΛΕΘΜΑΤΑ*’ 30; Athens 2001) 91-98.

the hearth, the family, composed of a couple with their unmarried children and, possibly, some poor relations and servants, is the basic economic, social and political unit. From the Epirote and Macedonian deeds of manumission it appears that ownership of landed property or slaves belonged collectively to the family rather than to individuals²⁷ and that slavery, to the extent that it existed, was of the Homeric rather than of the chattel type. Manumitted slaves stayed on with the family of their ex-owners, or were given assistance to have their own establishment.²⁸ Another consequence of transhumant pastoralism (or a vestige of that past) was that women, who had to fend for themselves during their menfolk's prolonged absences, had acquired the possibility to engage in legal transactions by themselves without the presence of a *kyrios*, and, when widowed, to act as heads of family and guardians of their under-age children and, within the royal family, as regents.²⁹

Geographic conditions and economic activities determined to a large extent the pattern of settlement on the land. The uplands of Epirus and Upper Macedonia, like most of western Greece, remained until the fourth century essentially faithful to the *κώμη*, the open, unfortified village, whereas the plains of Thessaly and Lower Macedonia experienced urban life from the end of the sixth century at the latest.³⁰

These regional differences between economic and social systems are reflected in political institutions as well. Transhumant pastoralism is incompatible with the autarky and self-centredness of the Greek *polis*.³¹ As until a few decades ago, herdsmen and herds, before moving over great distances from plain to mountain in spring and/or upon their return from mountain to plain in autumn, used to hold gatherings and celebrate cults which maintained a sense of community over vast distances between the inhabitants of dispersed open

27. Cf. Cabanes, 'Monarchies' 322.

28. Cf. *EM I* 45-46.

29. Cf. Cabanes, 'Monarchies' 333-34; M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Actes de vente d'Amphipolis* ('ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ' 14; Athens 1991) 24-28, no III; 49-52, no XI; P. Chrysostomou, 'Βασιλικοί δικασταὶ καὶ ταγοὶ σὲ μία νέα ἐπιγραφή μὲ ὠνὲς ἀπὸ τὴν κεντρικὴ Μακεδονία', *TEKMHPIA* 3 (1997) 24; *BullEpigr* 2002 254. Macurdy 1 and passim; N.G.L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State*, Oxford 1989, 31-36, with the reservation that 'polygamy' should be understood as a succession of unions rather than cohabitation with several wives under the same roof in the oriental fashion.

30. Sordi, *Lega* 313-14; M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Épigraphie et villages en Grèce du Nord: *ethnos, polis* et *kome* en Macédoine', *L'épigraphie del villaggio*, Faenza 1993, 151-71; id., *Institutions I* 464-65; id., 'Cités' (lecture at the École Pratique des Hautes Études to be published soon).

31. Cf. Cabanes, 'Cité' 74-75:

settlements. These gatherings gradually created common religious centres, as was the case with Itonos in Thessaly, Dodona in Epirus and Dion in Macedonia, which developed respectively around the cult of Athena Itonia, Zeus Naios and Zeus Olympios. Regular assemblies came to be held on these occasions, which among other things designated the part hereditary, part elective Head of State, *tagos* in Thessaly, *basileus* in Macedonia and Epirus.³² This sense of community was enhanced by the partly real and partly constructed memory of the common origin of the group, of the *ethnos*, which at the collapse of the Mycenaean world had conquered and appropriated the land.³³

From the end of the sixth century the development of sedentary life and the rise of urban centres, soon to become focal points not only of economic and social but also of political activity in Thessaly and Macedonia, altered to a large extent the traditional relations between local institutions and those common to the whole *ethnos*. The cities acquired elaborate institutions, and in particular a board of magistrates called *tagoi* both in Thessaly and Macedonia, where the also dialectal term *peliganes* attests the existence of Councils (*boulai*), besides the popular assemblies.³⁴ By the last years of the fifth century there are clear signs of conflict between the king and the cities of Lower Macedonia, which in the eighties of the fourth century nearly lead to the disintegration of the common institutions of the Macedonian ethnic state, and of strife between princely families and mounting rivalries between hegemonic cities in Thessaly contending for complete emancipation, which in the absence of a prestigious dynasty shook even deeper the foundations of 'national unity' and the authority of the Head of State.³⁵ During the same period, on the other side of the Pindos range, an enlightened king of the Molossians, Tharypas, introduced reforms, which in an age of rising republicanism ensured the survival of kingship in his country for nearly two more centuries.³⁶

32. Cf. N.G.L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State*, Oxford 1989, 1-4; Hatzopoulos, 'Herodotos' (communication to a symposium on Herodotos, forthcoming); Hatzopoulos-Mari, 'Dodone' (communication to a conference on south Illyria and Epirus, forthcoming).

33. Cf. J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, Cambridge 1997, 40-51.

34. Cf. Marta Sordi, *La lega tessala fin ad Alessandro Magno*, Rome 1958, 313-16; M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Épigraphie et philologie: récentes découvertes épigraphiques et gloses macédoniennes d'Hésychius', *CRAI* 1998, 1189-98; *id.*, 'Cités en Macédoine' (see n. 29, above).

35. See Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 463-86; cf. Aikaterini Liampi, 'Das Corpus der Obolen und Hemiobolen des thessalischen Bundes und die politische Geschichte Thessaliens im 2. Viertel des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.', *Hellas und der griechische Osten*, Saarbrücken 1996, 119-26.

36. Cf. Cabanes, 'Monarchies' 337-38.

As Aristotle observed ‘royalties are preserved by bringing them into a more moderate form; for the fewer powers the kings have, the longer time the office in its entirety must last, for they themselves become less despotic and more equal to their subjects in temper, and their subjects envy them less.’³⁷ Indeed, epigraphic discoveries have informed us about the precise way in which this contractual kingship, based on the mutual observance of the traditional *nomos*, functioned. The state consisted of two constituent elements, the king and the *ethnos*. The latter expressed its political will through two organs, the *ekklesia*, the common assembly, which had a couple of regular meetings each year, and a restricted board, called *senatus* by Justin,³⁸ consisting of the representatives (*damiorgoi* or *hieromnamones*) of the local communities, the constituent smaller *ethne* which composed the Molossian group, headed on a rotating base by a president (*prostatas*), usually assisted by a secretary belonging to the same lesser *ethnos*.³⁹

The parallel reforms undertaken by Archelaos, Tharypas’ contemporary king of the Macedonians, were cut short by the former’s assassination. There ensued a period of great instability punctuated by civil wars and foreign invasions, and it was left to another reformer king, Philip II, to carry out the reorganisation of the kingdom. The presence in the Old Kingdom of cities, such as Pydna and Pella, each jealous of its autonomy and ready to rebel and secede, along with the annexation of former independent city-states in the New Territories east of the Axios, such as Amphipolis or Apollonia, imposed a reorganisation of the Macedonian state on the basis of the *polis*. The autonomy of the existing cities was formally recognised. In the indigenous hinterland of the New Territories, new cities were founded by Macedonian colonists or created by the federation of villages round a market town called *metropolis*. In Upper Macedonia the former semi-independent *ethne* of the Elemiotai, the Orestai, the Lynkestai and the Tymphaioi-Parauaioi were granted *polis* status. Thus in Macedonia proper each local political unit had its own citizenship (*πολιτεία*), legislation (*νόμοι*) and government bodies (*ἐκκλησία*, *βουλή*, *ἄρχοντες*, variously called *ταγοί*, *δικασταί* etc. headed by an *ἐπιστάτης* and an eponymous magistrate, the priest of Asklepios).⁴⁰

Early in his reign Philip was elected hereditary Head of State in Thessaly, curbed the centrifugal tendencies of the hegemonic cities and restored the

37. Arist., *Pol.* 5. 1313 a (H. Rockham’s translation in the Loeb series).

38. Just. 17.3.12.

39. Cabanes, ‘Monarchies’ 343-45; Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 323-24.

40. Cf. Sordi, *Lega* 275-93; Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 125-65.

ancient order. Recognising the advantages of the regional organisation of the Thessalian cities into four districts Histiaiotis, Thessaliotis, Pelasgiotis and Phthia, headed by an equal number of tetrarchs, he introduced it also in Macedonia. In effect, the creation of districts with local capitals (Amphipolis, Thessalonike, Pella, Herakleia?), where assemblies could be held and taxes collected, combined the advantages of decentralisation in a country which Philip's conquests had more than trebled, with a better control of the autonomous cities through the *strategoi* who were probably appointed to head each district.⁴¹ Thus in Thessaly and Macedonia too, by the third quarter of the fourth century, besides the Head of State and the Common Assembly, the two traditional organs of the 'ethnic' state, there existed scores of autonomous communities which sent their delegates to the festivals that coincided with the meetings of the Common Assembly, but without being organically integrated into them.

The reorganisation of Molossia initiated by Tharypas was not basically altered by the extension of the state first to Thesprotia under Alexander I and then to Chaonia and other lesser regions under Pyrrhos, and its transformation into Epirus.⁴² Similarly Thessaly and Macedonia, after the troubled period of the late fourth and early third century, returned to the order installed by Philip, which lasted until the Roman interventions that 'liberated' them in 197 and 167 respectively.

The constitutions of the three northern Greek 'ethnic' states which we have outlined above possess unmistakable federal features which, however, as A. Giovannini has convincingly argued, do not make them federal states in the modern sense of the term.⁴³ Does this mean that they are directly comparable to the better known Greek 'ethnic' states improperly called *koina*,⁴⁴ such as the Achaian or the Aitolian? In fact the three northern states shared some features which set them apart from the 'bundesstaatlichen Sympolitien' of the south.

41. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 469-86.

42. Cf. P. Cabanes, *L'Épire de la mort de Pyrrhos à la conquête romaine* (Paris 1976) 151-95; *id.*, 'Problèmes de géographie administrative et politique dans l'Épire du IV^e siècle avant J.-C.', *La géographie administrative et politique d'Alexandre à Mahomet* (Strasbourg 1979) 19-38; *id.*, 'Remarques sur la géographie historique des villes épirotes et sur la notion politique d'Épire dans l'Antiquité', *Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Ν.Γ.Λ. Hammond*, Thessalonike 1997, 101-104.

43. A. Giovannini, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sympolitie in Griechenland* ('Hypomnemata' 33; Göttingen 1971) 81 and 88-90; cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 487-88.

44. Cf. Giovannini, *Sympolitie* 88-93; M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'State and Government in Classical and Hellenistic Greece', *Unity and Units of Antiquity*, Athens 1994, 163-64.

First and foremost the paramount position of a Head of State not with a one year mandate, but life tenure — theoretically elective, but in practice hereditary. In internal matters the local communities were usually left to their own devices once the Common Assembly had appointed or — more usually — simply acclaimed the head of state. This implied conferral on him of the traditional prerogatives to mobilise and command the army and freely to dispose of the ‘federal’ revenues, so that he was in effect free to pursue the foreign policy of his choice. The control of war and diplomacy (through the declaration of war and the ratification of treaties), usually listed among the traditional rights of the Common Assembly, inevitably became illusory. Once the army was mobilised under the orders of a prestigious commander-in-chief, the actual decision on the declaration of war was bound to be a mere formality, whereas no assembly would challenge an advantageous treaty contracted by a victorious chief. In case of failure, of course, the Head of State could always be deposed, as it happened several times, but this hardly constituted a means of regular democratic control.⁴⁵

No wonder that a Macedonian king would appear to an Athenian politician not only as a supreme commander in war, master of all sacrifices that were not reserved to the priests, and (appellate) judge in law-suits, according to the classical definition of heroic kingship by Aristotle,⁴⁶ but also indeed as ‘sole master of his own policy, open or secret, at once general, absolute ruler and treasurer’.⁴⁷

Another shared feature of the three northern monarchical *ethne* in contradistinction to the southern republican ones was the absence of a *synedrion*, of a standing organ of representative government reflecting the relative importance of the constituent local communities and enabling them to make their voice heard *as such*. The only *synedria* attested in Macedonia and Epirus are not proper organs of the *ethnos* but consultative bodies composed of the king’s Companions and Friends.⁴⁸ It is true that this court nobility was recruited among the city élites, as a prosopographical study of Beroia, the city about which we are best informed during the Hellenistic period, makes abundantly clear. Among other similar cases we can follow the saga of Harpalos and his descendents: chief magistrate (*epistates*) himself under Antigonos Gonatas, he had a son, Polemaios, who was a high ranking infantry

45. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 481.

46. Arist., *Pol.* 3.1285 b.

47. Dem. 1.4.1; cf. 18.235.

48. Cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 327-30.

officer of the Beroian levy under Antigonos Doson, while his homonymous grandson was Macedonian delegate to the Delphic Amphictiony and ambassador to Rome under Perseus. Pantauchos was eponymous priest in Beroia under Demetrios II or Antigonos Doson and his homonymous grandson from his son Balakros First Friend of Perseus, while his great-grandson Balakros was prominent enough to be sent as hostage to Illyria in order to guarantee the Macedonian king's treaty with Genthios.⁴⁹ Such interpenetration of the political personnel at the central and the local level made up to a large extent for the absence of genuine representative *synedria*. It is also true that delegates from the local communities might join this Privy Council on certain solemn occasions, and from the two surviving decrees of the pre-republican Thessalian *koinon* it has been deduced that there existed a board acting as a probouleutic body *vis-à-vis* the Common Assembly and providing the presidents and the secretary of the *koinon*,⁵⁰ but even this did not make such bodies equivalent to the genuine republican *synedria* with proportional representation, which were eventually established in the northern states too, but only after the abolition of the monarchical constitution. It is thus not an accident that Polybios associates *δημοκρατική* with *συνεδριακή πολιτεία*.⁵¹

In the absence of a genuine *synedrion* integrating the local political units into the central government of the monarchical states, what were the relations between central and local governments? The first principle that must be stressed is that the Thessalian or the Macedonian Commonwealth was nothing else than the totality of the Thessalian or the Macedonian cities, the terms *Θεσσαλοί*, *τὸ ἔθνος τὸ Θεσσαλῶν*, *τὸ κοινὸν Θεσσαλῶν*, *αἱ πόλεις αἱ ἐν Θεσσαλίαι* being strictly equivalent, as were equivalent the terms *Μακεδόνες*, *τὸ Μακεδόνων ἔθνος*, *αἱ πόλεις Μακεδόνων* or *αἱ κατὰ Μακεδονίαν πόλεις*.⁵² Although equivalent documents are lacking, we have no reason to doubt that in Epirus too the totality of the lesser *ethne* composing the three major ones of the Molossoi, the Thesprotoi and the Chaones were the strict equivalent of the *ἸΠειρωῶται* or *τὸ ἔθνος* or *τὸ κοινὸν τὸ ἸΠειρωτῶν*.

The evidence concerning the respective attributions of the central and the local governments in Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia is very unequally

49. Cf. Argyro Tataki, 'New elements for the Society of Beroia', *Ancient Macedonia VI*, Thessalonike 1999, 1115-18.

50. Cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 324.

51. Pol. 31.2.12; cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 492-95.

52. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 219; 324.

distributed. It is scanty for Epirus, less scarce for Thessaly and more and more abundant for Macedonia, keeping in mind what we stressed above, to wit that the so called Greek federal states were in fact unitary states, for the cities or lesser *ethne*, into which they were subdivided, were treated by the central authorities as if they possessed no sovereign rights.

P. Cabanes in an article devoted to the local and 'federal' authorities in north-western Greece showed that in Epirus foreign relations, fell within the competence of the central authorities, essentially the king.⁵³ The Common Assembly could confer proxeny, civic rights or exemption from taxes. The single surviving document passed by a local political unit, the *koinon* of the Aterargoi, simply renewed their traditional good relations (in the form of 'friendship' and 'proxeny') with the Pergamioi, another local political unit.⁵⁴

We possess a number of civic decrees from pre-republican Thessaly, mostly honorary for strangers, some concerning internal matters,⁵⁵ but only two of the Common Assembly, both of them honorary, showing that both the single cities and collectively the *koinon* were empowered to entertain 'social' relations with foreign states and individuals.⁵⁶ However, the evidence which enables us to apprehend in action the relations between the local political units and the central government is the letters and ordinances (*diagrammata*) emanating from the Head of State, the real holder of the central authority, or from his representatives at the central or the regional level. A traditional attribution of the king is to arbitrate between local communities over territorial disputes, as did Demetrios Poliorketes between Pherai and Demetrias⁵⁷ or Philip V between Gonnoi and its neighbours.⁵⁸ More surprising is the letter of a certain Antipatros to an unnamed recipient, perhaps the authorities of Demetrias or the local chapter of the royal hunters of Herakles, informing them what the appropriate colour of their uniforms should be according to a

53. P. Cabanes, 'Les États fédéraux de Grèce du Nord-Ouest: pouvoirs locaux et pouvoir fédéral', *Annuaire Scientifique de la Faculté Autonome des Sciences Politiques d'Athènes 'Panteios'*, 1981, 99-111; id., 'Le pouvoir local au sein des États fédéraux: Épire, Acarnanie, Étolie', *La Béotie antique*, Paris 1985, 343-57.

54. P. Cabanes, *Épire* 561-62, no 35.

55. Particularly the concession of civic rights; cf. L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche* II, Florence 1976, nos 96; 97; 108.

56. W. Peek, 'Griechische Inschriften', *AM* 59 (1934) 57, no 15; K. Gallis, 'Επιγραφὰὶ ἐκ Λαρίσης', *AAA* 5 (1972) 275-79, with *BullEpigr* 1973, 240; cf. M. Segre, 'Grano di Tessaglia a Coo', *RFIC* 62 (1934) 169-93.

57. D. Pandermalis, *Δίον*, Athens 1999, 57, with *BullEpigr* 2000, 453.

58. B. Helly, *Gonnoi* II, Amsterdam 1973, 100-115, nos 93-105.

enquiry (*ἱστορία*) carried out by Philip V himself.⁵⁹ However the most revealing evidence about the finely balanced relations between central and local authorities is the two letters sent by the same king to Larissa, together with the city's corresponding decrees.

Larissa solicits Philip's advice in order to increase its number of citizens. The king makes known by a letter to the city that he deems advisable that it pass a decree conferring civic rights on the resident Thessalians and other Greeks, and announcing that he may in the future suggest additional measures. The decree of the Larissaeans is practically a carbon copy of the royal letter. This did not stop them, some two years later, from changing their mind and rescinding the decree. The king sent a new letter, very tactfully evoking this unfortunate development and courteously arguing in favour of the readmission of the expurgated new citizens to the civic community, but at the same time conceding to the city the right to withhold the reintegration of those suspected of misdeeds, at least until he might come to examine their case himself. The new Larissaeian decree looks once again like a carbon copy of the second royal letter; only from the appended lists it seems that the local authorities settled the matter by themselves without further intervention from the Head of State. It is a perfect illustration of the respective rights of each party, of the limits that each one recognised to its freedom of action and even more of the forms (formal respect of civic autonomy — formal respect of royal authority) that each one was expected to observe.⁶⁰

Thanks to the intensive investigations carried out in Macedonia some thirty letters and ordinances (*diagrammata*)⁶¹ emanating from the central Macedonian authorities offer us a varied and instructive picture of relations between the Head of State and the local authorities in that northern Greek

59. Unpublished, kindly communicated to me by my colleague Charalambos Intzesiloglou.

60. *Syll*³ 543, with Chr. Habicht, 'Epigraphische Zeugnisse zur Geschichte Thessaliens unter der makedonischen Herrschaft', *Ancient Macedonia* I, Thessalonike 1970, 273-79; cf. J.M. Hannick, 'Remarques sur les lettres de Philippe V de Macédoine à la cité de Larissa', *Antidoron Peremans* (Louvain 1968) 97-104; M.B. Hatzopoulos, *L'organisation de l'armée macédonienne sous les Antigonides* ('MEΛETHMATA' 30; Athènes 2001) 139-40.

61. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II 23-46, nos 4-22; Hatzopoulos, *Organisation* 153-60, nos 1 II-2 II; *BullEpigr* 2000, 453, 1-2; 4-5. To these documents one should add a letter of Philip V to Pella (P. Chrysostomou, 'Νέες ἐπιγραφές ἀπὸ τὴν Πέλλα καὶ τὴν περιοχὴ τῆς', *Μνείας χάριν. Τόμος στὴ μνήμη Μαίρης Σιγανίδου* [Thessalonike 1998] 356-60), and four royal letters discovered at Pythion and Azoros, then part of the Upper Macedonian *ethnos* of the Elemiotai, which remain unpublished.

state, which amply confirms and at the same time completes the one that we have composed from the Thessalian documents.

In military matters the king as commander-in-chief had a direct relationship with the Macedonians under his orders, paid and, in some instances, equipped by him. Thus the army regulations were decided, probably in Council, but by the king's sole authority, and they acquired force of law as soon as they were promulgated in the residence of their author, without any intervention by the local authorities.⁶² The king could require from the latter the publication of all sorts of information or of rulings made by him.⁶³ He could also address orders by letter to the *epistatai* on matters of direct royal jurisdiction such as religious affairs⁶⁴ or arbitrations between local political units.⁶⁵ However, other orders in the form of ordinances (*diagrammata*) were enforceable only after a formal legislative decision by the local civic authorities.⁶⁶ Finally the king could address recommendations in the form of letters, also enforceable only after a decision of the local civic authorities. In such instances, the letter was addressed not just to the *epistates* for execution, but to all the deliberative organs (magistrates, Council, Assembly) of the local authorities.⁶⁷

On the other hand, as we learn from more than twenty-five civic legislative

62. On *diagramma* see Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 405-411.

63. As, for instance, grants of royal land (cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II nos 17; 20; 22), exemption from taxes and other obligations (cf. Hatzopoulos, *Organisation* 165-66, no 5; *id.*, *Institutions* II no 9; no 14 = Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, 'Fragments of inscriptions of Philip V from Amphipolis', *Inscriptions of Macedonia* [Thessalonike 1996] 42-71; Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 21 = Julia Vokotopoulou, "Ο Κάσσανδρος, ἡ Κασσάνδρεια καὶ ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη", *Μνήμη Μανόλη Ἀνδρόνικου* [Θεσσαλονίκη 1997] 39-50) for notices concerning private properties, such as that the domain that somebody's sons were exploiting was still owned by him and therefore could not become, without his knowledge, the object of commercial transactions (*BullEpigr* 2000, 454, 2), or that the validity of a will favouring the widow at the expense of the deceased's son was dependent on the lady's honourable behaviour (unpublished) etc.

64. As, for instance the letters of the future Demetrius II to Beroia on the sanctuary of Herakles Kynagidas (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 8), or of Philip V to Thessalonike on the sanctuary of Sarapis (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 15) or of Perseus on the celebration of the Daisia (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 19) etc.

65. As, for example the Mygdonian *horothesia* of Philip II (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 4).

66. As for instance the insertion of the clauses concerning the *stephanitai agones* into the gymnasiarchical law of Amphipolis (Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II no 16).

67. This is the case of Philip V's recommendation in favour of the acceptance of Kyzikos's inviolability by the city of Dion (*BullEpigr* 2000, 453, 4).

documents discovered up to now, local legislation and decisions on local matters (laws concerning education or taxation, decrees honouring citizens and strangers etc.)⁶⁸ lay entirely within the competence of the local authorities, even if we sometimes suspect that there was a royal initiative behind them.⁶⁹ The local authorities could even take decisions theoretically having a bearing on foreign affairs, such as the granting of citizenship, proxeny and security in time of war and peace to foreigners.⁷⁰

If we disposed of a comparable volume of information from Thessaly and Epirus, we should probably find that only nuances separated the ‘constitutions’ of these three ‘national monarchies’, fundamentally belonging to the same species of kingly rule according to the *νόμος*. In order to last, the unstable equilibrium between the Head of State, the *ethnos* as a whole and the local political units which composed it, required all the prestige of heroic dynasties and exceptionally capable personalities, such as both the Temenids and the Antigonids succeeded in providing in Macedonia. This was not the case with the princely houses of Larissa, Krannon, Pherai or Pharsalos in Thessaly and the late Aiakids in Epirus, who failed to do the same. No wonder that the system collapsed in Epirus in the third quarter of the third century, and that if it artificially survived in Thessaly for another thirty years, it was only through the strenuous exertions of foreign dynasties which had supplied the failings of the local ones.⁷¹ But in Macedonia it would have lived on, had it not been brutally destroyed by the Romans, for in its own way it had kept pace with the times. The last reforms of Philip V and Perseus granting more autonomy to districts and to the local political units, as witness the replacement of the single *epistates* by boards of politarchs in the cities and the parallel coinage of the cities, the districts and the *ethnos*, proclaimed the creation of a political system both more integrated and more respectful of the composite nature of the state. The Macedonian kingdom could indeed claim its place among ‘the autonomous peoples and the democratic cities’ of Greece.⁷²

68. Cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* II 54-83, nos 36-60.

69. Cf. Ph. Gauthier-M.B. Hatzopoulos, *La loi gymnasiarchique de Béroia* (‘ΜΕΛΕΘΜΑΤΑ’ 16; Athens 1993) 59 and 176; Hatzopoulos, *Organisation* 139-40.

70. As, for example, in the decree of Pydna in honour of Karponidas and Alexiphaes.

71. Cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 494-96.

72. Cf. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions* I 223; *id.*, ‘L’État macédonien antique: un nouveau visage’, *CRAI*, 1997, 25.