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AMYNTAS III, ILLYRIA AND OLYNTHOS

393/2 - 380/79

The subject of Amyntas III's struggles against Illyrian invaders and against his south - eastern neighbour Olynthos has been the centre of considerable controversy¹. Geyer² has done much to unscramble something of an unnecessary tangle created by Beloch, Swoboda, Costanzi, Casson and others, but while his reconstruction of events is basically convincing some further attempt at elucidation seems called for.

Our main evidence is provided by Diodoros, in two sections under the years 393/2 and 383/2:

XIV 92, 3 (393/2)

Κατὰ δὲ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Ἀμύντας ὁ Φιλίππου πατήρ Ἰλλυριῶν ἐμβαλόντων εἰς Μακεδονίαν ἐξέπιπτεν ἐκ τῆς χώρας (MSS: πόλεως)· ἀπογνοὺς δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν Ὁλυνθίοις μὲν τὴν σύνεγγυς χώραν ἐδωρήσατο, αὐτὸς δὲ τότε μὲν ἀπέβαλε τὴν βασιλείαν, μετ' ὀλίγον δὲ χρόνον ὑπὸ Θετταλῶν καταχθεὶς ἀνεκτήσατο τὴν ἀρχὴν, καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἔτη εἴκοσι καὶ τέτταρα. ἔνιοι δέ φασι μετὰ τὴν ἔκπτωσιν τὴν Ἀμύντου διετῇ χρόνον Ἀργαῖον βασιλεῦσαι τῶν Μακεδόνων, καὶ τότε τὸν Ἀμύνταν ἀνακτήσασθαι τὴν βασιλείαν.

XV 19, 2 - 3 (383/2) (NB: for ease of discussion I have divided this passage into its component parts.)

(§2a) κατὰ δὲ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Ἀμύντου τοῦ βασιλέως ἡττηθέντος ὑπὸ Ἰλλυριῶν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπογνόντος,

(§2b) πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τῷ δῆμῳ τῶν Ὁλυνθίων δωρησαμένου πολλὴν τῆς ὁμόρου χώρας διὰ τὴν ἀπόγνωσιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυναστείας,

(§2c) τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ δῆμος ὁ τῶν Ὁλυνθίων τὰς προσόδους ἐλάμβανε τὰς ἐκ τῆς δοθείσης χώρας,

1. Swoboda, *Arch.-epigr. Mitt. aus Österreich* VII, pp. 1 ff., Beloch III 2, 57-58, Costanzi, *Klio* VI, pp. 298-300, Casson, *Mac.*, *Thrace and Illyria*, pp. 187-190, Cloché, *Hist. de la Mac.* pp. 107-116; also Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, Chap. 76 (1869 ed., Vol. IX, pp. 264 ff.), Tod, *Gk. Hist. Inscr.*, Vol. II, pp. 30 - 34. These works are referred to below by the authors' names.

2. pp. 111-119, followed in large measure by Cloché.

(§2d) μετὰ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀνελπίστως τοῦ βασιλέως ἀναλαβόντος ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὴν δῆλην ἀρχὴν ἀνακτησαμένου οἱ μὲν Ὀλυνθίοι τὴν χώραν ἀπαιτηθέντες οὐχ οἷοι ἦσαν ἀποδιδόναι.

(§3) διόπερ Ἀμύντας ιδίαν τε δύναμιν συνεστήσατο καὶ τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ποιησάμενος συμμάχους ἔπεισεν ἐξαποστεῖλαι στρατηγὸν καὶ δύναμιν ἀξιόλογον ἐπὶ τοὺς Ὀλυνθίους.

First we may dispose of the doublet theory of Beloch¹ and Swoboda². Both claim that the second mention of the Illyrian invasion and the land-grant to the Olynthians is simply a duplicate of the first, repeated by this careless author either unintentionally or, on the second occasion, to explain the Spartan intervention of 382 - 379. Costanzi³ believes the references to the Illyrian invasion to be a doublet, but not that to the danger of Amyntas' twice losing his throne. A careful examination of the second passage, however, indicates that there is no doublet at all. In the first place, section § 2c makes it quite clear that Diodoros realized and intended us to realize that a certain amount of time elapsed between the events of § 2a (the invasion and Amyntas' relinquishment of his authority) and § 2b (the land - grant to the Olynthians) and those of § 2d (the revival of Amyntas' power and his vain request for the return of his territory). The *τὸ μὲν πρῶτον..... μετὰ ταῦτα* construction makes this clear grammatically; common sense suggests that the revenues of the land would require some time for determination and collection, quite apart from the time needed to draw produce from it. It is pointless, admittedly, to speculate on the form taken by these revenues; what matters is that Diodoros is explaining that the Olynthian exploitation of them is a result of the events of §§ 2a and 2b, an exploitation challenged by the unexpected revival of Amyntas' power and his request for the return of the land. The consequence of this request and the Olynthian refusal was the Spartan alliance. That is, Diodoros has repeated the earlier information to explain the Spartan intervention that followed, but as explanatory matter, not as a doublet.

Before introducing other relevant matter, then, we may reconstruct the following events purely on the basis of Diodoros' account:

- 1) Amyntas was driven from his country by the Illyrians.
- 2) Despairing of his crown he granted (had already granted?) to the Olynthians some of his border - territory.

1. *loc. cit.*

2. pp. 14-15.

3. p. 298.

- 3) Then he lost his kingdom, but after a short time the Thessalians restored him and he recovered his crown
[«and ruled for 24 years» (thereafter! This is the implication, as Cloché rightly notes¹⁾). For convenience I shall ignore for the moment the reference to Argaios' two - year reign].
- 4) The Olynthians enjoyed the revenues from the territory granted to them.
- 5) Amyntas' power having unexpectedly revived, he recovered the whole of his kingdom and demanded the return of the border - territory.
- 6) The Olynthians refused.
- 7) Amyntas mobilized Macedonian forces and sought and obtained Spartan aid. This is straightforward. There is no question of a doublet, intentional or otherwise.

Three other items appear to bear directly on some of these events. The first is the remaining portion of a treaty between Amyntas, son of Erridaios (Arridaios), and «the Chalkidians»². As has been realized³, the alliance here recorded must belong to the beginning of the reign. After the Spartan and allied defeat of the Olynthians in 380/79 there was for the time being no Chalkidian league to act as signatory, and if Diodoros is right then relations between Olynthos must have been too strained during the 380s for such a treaty in that period. We may safely accept the date given by Geyer and Tod of 393/2, since, once we agree that it must fall early in the reign, then it is almost certainly connected with the notice of Diodoros under that year. Thus far, at least, Diodoros' account seems based on fact.

The second item is from Isokrates' *Archidamos* (§ 46): [Αμύντας ὁ Μακεδών βασιλεὺς] ἡττηθεὶς γάρ ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων τῶν προσοικούντων μάχῃ καὶ πάσης Μακεδονίας ἀποστερηθεὶς τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐκλιπεῖν τὴν χώραν διενοήθη καὶ τὸ σῶμα διασώζειν..... χωρίον μικρὸν καταλαβόν καὶ βοήθειαν ἐνθένδε μεταπεμψάμενος ἐντὸς μὲν τριῶν μηνῶν κατέσχεν ἄπασαν Μακεδονίαν, τὸν δ' ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον βασιλεύων γῆρᾳ τὸν βίον ἐτελεύτησεν.

Although we must doubtless allow for rhetorical embroidery here (Isokrates is drawing a comparison between this action and a similar one of Dionysios of Syracuse; in fact the latter's resolution is supposed to be Amyntas' inspiration for his change of heart), several points attract our attention: neighbouring barbarians are involved; Amyntas is robbed of all Macedonia;

1. pp. 108 - 109.

2. Tod No. 111 (=S.I.G. 135).

3. See especially Geyer, p. 112.

he recovers within a short time. Clearly Isokrates knows and is speaking of the events Diodoros place under the year 393/2. Two factors however demand special attention. First: this author sets the length of Amyntas' exile - or at least of his recovery (and Isokrates may mean only that) - at less than three months. This confirms Diodoros' μετ' ὀλίγον χρόνον and strengthens his doubts as to the two - year reign of Argaios. Either, that is, the ἔντοι are wrong and Argaios did not rule for two years or they (or Diodoros) have misplaced Argaios' reign. To this question we shall return. Second: although πάσης Μακεδονίας ἀποστερηθεὶς Amyntas seized a χωρίον μικρόν, whence he sent out for reinforcements. It is obviously impossible to fix the location of this place, save to say that if Isokrates is accurate when he says that Amyntas lost *all* of Macedonia (and Diodoros' ἔξεπιπτεν ἐκ τῆς χώρας supports him) then it is presumably outside the country. Geyer wonders: "Kann man vielleicht an Aigai denken?"¹; the answer must be negative. Cloché² suggests that the appeal addressed from this small place might have been the one to the Thessalians. There is no reason to doubt this; indeed since this location seems to be outside Macedonia, it might well have been *in* Thessaly. But we may do no more than speculate. At any rate, we may note that thus far Diodoros' account stands up to the other evidence very well. It seems there was an Illyrian invasion; there was a treaty with Olynthos and this may well have included - though there is no reference in what remains of the charter - a land-grant; Amyntas was forced from the country; he was able, with (external, Thessalian - perhaps!) aid, to recover his crown within a short time.

The third item of evidence is supplementary rather than complementary. Xenophon (*HG* V 2, llff) recounts the details of an embassy from two Chalcidian cities, Akanthos and Apollonia, to the Spartans with a request for aid against Olynthian expansion. Akanthos, significantly, was one of the four cities or peoples expressly excluded from the Macedonian/Chalcidian treaty and with whom neither party could unilaterally "make friendship"; it was clearly in 393/2 and perhaps still in 383/2 (under which year this information appears) not a member of the league, though probably the Olynthian demand to both these cities to furnish troops³ is a sign that they are by 383/2 unwilling members. Apollonia, situated in Mygdonia on the southern coastline of Lake Bolbe, may well have been among those towns granted to Olynthos by Amyntas⁴. One of the envoys, Kleigenes of Akanthos, warns of the Olynthian

1. p. 115, n. 3.

2. p. 110

3. Xen. *HG* V 2, 13.

4. The area was a σύνεγγυς χώρα (DS XIV 92, 3), a δημορος χώρα (DS XV 19, 2); Geyer (p. 115) suggests Anthemous and the territory around Lakes Koroneia and Bolbe.

threat. First of all they built a league in their own area, introducing common laws and citizenship for all members¹. ἐκ δὲ τούτου ἐπεχείρησαν καὶ τὰς τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλεις ἐλευθεροῦν ἀπὸ Ἀμύντου τοῦ Μακεδόνων βασιλέως (§ 12). Startling success followed this claim: ἐπειδὴ δὲ εἰσήκουσαν αἱ ἔγγυτατα αὐτῶν, ταχὺ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς πόρρω καὶ μείζους ἐπορεύοντο· καὶ κατελίπομεν ἡμεῖς ἔχοντας ἥδη ἄλλας τε πολλὰς καὶ Πέλλαν, ἥπερ μεγίστη τῶν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ πόλεων. Faced with this south-eastern invasion Amyntas ἀποχωροῦντά τε ἐκ τῶν πόλεων καὶ δσον οὐκ ἐκπεπτώκατα ἥδη ἐκ πάσης Μακεδονίας (§ 13).

Here is added to the Isokrates passage a second reference to Amyntas' being driven out - or nearly so - of his country. But if we are to take Isokrates at his word (ἡττηθεὶς γάρ ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων τῶν προσοικούντων) this is a different occasion; those facing Amyntas now were no "neighbouring barbarians" but the highly organized and civilized Olynthians. Moreover, the earlier expulsion, if we are to believe our sources, was complete; Amyntas was "expelled from the country, robbed of all Macedonia". But on this occasion, at least at the time Kleigenes left Chalkidike, Amyntas was "in the process of withdrawing from his cities and had all but been driven out of all Macedonia". That he was not driven out completely is suggested also by Diodorus, who notes that on the occasion of the Olynthian advance Amyntas was nevertheless able to mobilize his own army (*ἰδίαν δύναμιν*)².

Thus, although Diodorus' account, especially of the second defeat, has important gaps, it is confirmed in its essentials by the other evidence and is expanded by Xenophon's testimony. Xenophon may also be incomplete: he ignores the appeal to the Spartans that Diodorus says Amyntas issued; but it may be, of course, that Amyntas made no appeal but that Diodorus interpreted the Spartan intervention which resulted in benefit to Amyntas as inspired by that king's initiative.

Before attempting to supplement the reconstruction of events already made on the basis of Diodorus' account it would be well to consider the question of Argaios' reign. Three questions arise. Did Argaios reign, and, if so, when? Whence came his support? How was he displaced? First we may note Diodorus' words: "Some say, however, that after the expulsion of Amyntas (IE, in 393/2) the Macedonians were ruled by Argaios for a period of two years,

1. § 12. Casson (p. 189, following Grote, pp. 264-265) misreads this making it apply to the Macedonian towns taken over Olynthos, thus miscalling this action "a practical experiment in proselytising Hellenism", a "protectorate", "in many ways one of the most important events in Greek history".

2. XV 19, 3.

and that it was after that time that Amyntas recovered the kingship"¹. Now, as we have already seen, the interpolation of this two - year rule into the period of the Illyrian invasion and Amyntas' subsequent recovery clashes violently with the stress by Diodoros and Isokrates on the brevity of the affair. Further, it is significant that the Argaios reference comes immediately after the statement in Diodoros that Amyntas ruled for 24 years. That is, clearly the author on consulting his chronographic source for the length of the reign also found there the reference to Argaios. So that, if Argaios' reign is misplaced in the narrative, this is probably because having found the two items together in the one source Diodoros (incorrectly) associated them in his own account, even though he expressed his doubt as to the inconsistency of what he took to be his information. We are consequently entitled to ask, then, where this reign really belongs. There is no shadow of evidence to suggest that it falls after the defeat of Olynthos in 380/79, a period in which Amyntas cultivated ties with the rejuvenated Athenian power². Further, it must have been finished before the Spartan intervention in 383/2 or we should surely expect some reference to it in Xenophon. We are left with the period between about 390 and 383. Beloch details the chronographic sources³ and adopts the figures of Synkellos⁴, that Amyntas ruled for 12 years after his restoration, thus placing Argaios at 384 - 382. To do this he dismisses all the other chronographers, who give Amyntas another 18 years, on the grounds that they "die 6 Jahre, die er nach ihnen vor seiner Vertreibung geherrscht hätte, noch einmal gezählt" — a possible but surely dubious error. On the other hand, if we adopt their figures we divide Amyntas' reign into two parts of 6 and 18 years. Since they all agree that he ruled 24 years in toto⁵, we must subtract Argaios' two years; that is, according to them, Argaios would have ruled for two years during the period 389/8 and 385/4. Against Beloch it should be pointed out that Synkellos allows only 19 years (or 17 if we subtract Argaios') for the whole of Amyntas' reign, whereas all the others allow the now generally accepted 24 (inclusive of Argaios' 2; IE, 393/2 - 370/69). Geyer⁶ wants to place Argaios between 385 and 382, "nicht allzu lange vor der Expedition Spartas gegen Olynthos". That is, he is not satisfied either with Synkellos or with the other chronographers. And since the reign of Argaios is very likely connected with

1. XIV 92, 3.

2. Tod No. 129 (=I.G. II² 102), Ais II.28 ff, Marshall, *The Second Ath. Confed.*, p. 73, n.1.

3. pp. 49 - 51.

4. p. 500.

5. See Beloch's table of chronographers, p. 51.

6. pp. 116-117, 118.

the near expulsion of Amyntas, we must agree, *faute de mieux*, that a date shortly before the Spartan intervention is most likely. Therefore, within the termini suggested by this consideration and by the chronographers (389/8 - 383/2), the most likely dating, I suggest, is 385/4 to early 383/2.

Geyer¹ suggests that Argaios was a puppet of the Olynthians, established as part of a campaign to foment civil disorder in Macedonia in response to Amyntas' demand for the return of his territory. This seems a likely explanation of his support. But this point raises the insurmountable difficulty in establishing the chronology of 393/2 - 383/2 firmly. We do not know how long the Olynthians had been intriguing in Macedonia or indeed how long they had been expanding into Macedonia by the time of Kleigenes' appeal in 383/2. But if Argaios was a puppet set up in response to Amyntas' demand and if he ruled for two years and was disposed of before this appeal, then Amyntas must have rebuilt his power sufficiently to make the demand by about 386.

What happened to Argaios? If he and the pretender of 360/59² are the same man then he was not killed. Geyer³ makes an attractive suggestion that may be related to this problem. He notes that Aischines⁴ refers to the adoption by Amyntas of the Athenian freebooter Iphikrates as his son. As Kahrstedt⁵ shows, this latter was in the service of the Thracian king Kotys between 386 and 375, and the adoption would therefore seem to fall within this period. Perhaps Amyntas was able to form some alliance with Kotys and this general in his service. Diodoros⁶, as we have noted, points out that Amyntas was able to raise an army of Macedonians. Could it have been that the Macedonian army was able, with the help of Kotys and Iphikrates, to force Argaios from the throne. It may indeed have been this expulsion of their puppet-king that led the Olynthians to take the direct action of extending their control over Lower Macedonia.

Thus, in my opinion, the best reconstruction of the events of 393/2 would run somewhat as follows :

- 393/2 Accesion of Amyntas III
 Signs of impending Illyrian invasion.
 Macedonian/Chalkidian alliance (including cession of land)

1. p. 118.

2. DS XVI. 2.6.

3. pp. 118-119.

4. II. 28.

5. RE IX, pp. 2019 f.

6. XV. 19.3.

- 392 Illyrian invasion. Expulsion of Amyntas, then recovery with Thessalian help.
- 391 - 386 Reestablishment of the kingdom and the army. Closer bonds with Upper Macedonia (EG, marriage with Eurydike), perhaps at price of tribute to Illyrians (DS XVI 2, 2).
- c.386 Demand for return of border - territories; Olynthian refusal.
- 385 - 383 Olynthians set up and support Argaios as rival king.
Amyntas, with Kotys and Iphikrates, expels Argaios.
Olynthos begins to "free the Macedonian cities from Amyntas"
- 383/2 Akanthos and Apollonia appeal to Sparta.
- 382 Beginning of Spartan intervention. The Olynthians though not yet defeated are confined to their own territory (Xen. HG V 2, 40 - 43), thus allowing Amyntas to recover his territory.
- 380/79 The Olynthians finally capitulate (*ibid.* 3, 26).

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