

STRABO 10.2.4 AND THE SYNOECISM OF “NEWER” PLEURON

ABSTRACT

In the absence of archaeological or epigraphic evidence, most scholars have taken Strabo’s short passage on Pleuron as proof that Old Pleuron was sacked by Demetrios II and that, as a result, New Pleuron was rebuilt on higher and more secure ground. A close examination of the historical context and the language of Strabo suggests, however, that Old Pleuron was never sacked. New Pleuron was planned and built from a position of strength as a preventative measure to withstand an anticipated period of warfare. The communities formerly surrounding the low-lying city of Old Pleuron then synoecized around the fortified urban center of New Pleuron.

Ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἡ Αἰτωλία ὄρος μέγιστον μὲν τὸν Κόρακα, συνάπτοντα τῇ Οἴτῃ, τῶν δ’ ἄλλων ἐν μέσῳ μὲν μᾶλλον τὸν Ἀράκυνθον, περὶ ὃν τὴν νεωτέραν Πλευρῶνα συνώκισαν ἀφέντες τὴν παλαιάν, ἐγγὺς κειμένην Καλυδῶνος, οἱ οἰκήτορες, εὐκαρπον οὔσαν καὶ πεδιάδα, πορθοῦντος τὴν χώραν Δημητρίου τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Αἰτωλικοῦ.

—Strabo 10.2.4

In the absence of significant excavation at the Aitolian city of New Pleuron, scholars have long relied on the single short passage in Strabo, cited above, as the sole source for its foundation.¹ Most interpret this passage as proof of Old Pleuron’s destruction and an explanation for the subsequent relocation of its denizens.² Although the identity of Δημήτριος ὁ Αἰτωλικός

1. This paper originated as a site report prepared for the American School of Classical Studies trip to northern Greece in 2001 led by Mellon Professor Merle Langdon. I would like particularly to thank Whitehead Professor Pierre MacKay, who first encouraged me to pursue this issue, and John Bauschatz, Judith Binder, William Caraher, Diskin Clay, Nigel Kennel,

and Peter Schultz, who all contributed many useful suggestions. I am also grateful to the anonymous *Hesperia* reviewers for their helpful comments.

2. For typical examples that show this *communis opinio*, see Woodhouse 1897, p. 124: “Demetrios of Macedon, about 235 B.C., made an expedition into Aetolia and sacked Old Pleuron; its inhabitants guarded against the recur-

rence of the mishap by establishing themselves in a less exposed situation”; Fiechter 1931, p. 24: “Die Gründig der Stadt Neu-Pleuron wird in die Zeit um 234 v. Chr. gesetzt. Sie erfolgte durch Demetrios Aitolikos auf dem sicheren Felsberge, nach der Zerstörung von Alt-Pleuron”; Flacelière 1937, p. 7, n. 3: “L’ancienne Pleuron fut détruite par Démétrios ‘l’Aitolique’ . . . la nouvelle

remains debatable, this figure is most often identified as Demetrios II, son of Antigonos Gonatas.³ The story of his sack of Old Pleuron originates from a loose translation of the participial phrase in the genitive absolute, *πορθοῦντος τὴν χώραν*. The sack described in the genitive absolute has then been interpreted as the cause for the action of the main verb. Thus, the citizens of the defeated city of Old Pleuron abandoned their former domiciles and prevented further attacks by building the well-fortified city of New Pleuron.

Historical information about the reign and campaigns of Demetrios II suggests a rough date between 235 and 231 B.C. for this “sack,” which in turn suggests a terminus post quem for New Pleuron’s foundation.⁴ Strabo’s account of New Pleuron has been used to date the city’s walls and buildings or to bolster accounts of the enigmatic strategies of the Demetrian War or third-century Aitolian history. Most interpretations, however, rest on an incorrect reading of the text. Even without an archaeological study, a closer look at Strabo’s actual words sheds new light on the possible circumstances surrounding the foundation of New Pleuron.

Since few diagnostic finds or inscriptions have been uncovered at the site, any interpretation regarding the foundation of New Pleuron must depend on extant building remains and on Strabo’s account.⁵ The location of the site, about a mile from Old Pleuron on the steep slopes of Mt. Arakynthos, was undoubtedly chosen to withstand siege warfare (Figs. 1, 2). In addition to natural defenses, the city has an extensive, well-constructed fortification system, complete with seven gates and 31 towers built of trapezoidal pseudo-isometric masonry (Fig. 3). All the structures necessary for normal day-to-day existence during a lengthy siege exist within the city walls: a small theater (which may also have served as a bouleuterion), an agora, stoa, and gymnasium, plus an unusually deep cistern and reservoir

Figure 1 (opposite). Map of Aitolia.

Detail from Talbert 2000, map 55,
© Princeton University Press

Figure 2 (opposite, below). A view of New Pleuron from the acropolis.

Below, the flat and level plain of Old Pleuron. Photo W. Caraher

Pleuron fut construite à côté du site de l’ancienne”; *RE XXI*, 1951, cols. 242–243, s.v. Pleuron [2] (E. Kirsten): “die Zerstörung der Altstadt”; *PECS*, p. 717, s.v. Pleuron (N. Bonacasa): “When Demetrios II of Macedonia destroyed Pleuron the inhabitants founded a new city”; Antonetti 1990, p. 281: “la ville fut détruite: les habitants la bâtirent à nouveau”; *OCD*³, p. 1197, s.v. Pleuron (W. M. Murray): “When Demetrios II of Macedonia destroyed the city c. 230 B.C., the inhabitants moved”; *Der Neue Pauly IX*, 2000, col. 1134, s.v. Pleuron (K. Freitag): “Nach der Zerstörung durch Demetrios . . . wurde Neu-P. an höher gelegenen Ort errichtet”; Scholten 2000, pp. 145–146: “In discussing the history of Pleuron, Strabo says that its old site on the plain [of Aiolis] was destroyed by a certain Demetrios ó Αἰτωλικός. In the aftermath of this

disaster, the local population synoikized at a new site.” See Hammond and Walbank 1988, p. 323, for a more cautious reading.

3. Ehrhardt (1978, p. 252) summarizes the arguments surrounding the identification of Demetrios ó Αἰτωλικός. Other options have included Demetrios Poliorketes (Beloch 1927, p. 136) and Demetrios of Pharos (Kirsten, in *RE XXI*, 1951, col. 243, s.v. Pleuron [2]), but neither of these theories has gained much support.

4. Dinsmoor (1950, p. 299), Winter (1971, p. 97), and Lawrence (1979, pp. 315, 394) propose a fixed dating of the city walls, although each offers a different date. Kirsten (*RE XXI*, 1951, col. 243, s.v. Pleuron [2]), however, despairs of finding a date within the period of a decade, much less an exact year: “Ein sicheres Indiz für den Ansatz

der Bauten von P. in ein bestimmtes Jahrzehnt des 3. Jhdts. fehlt.” All subsequent dates are B.C.

5. Woodhouse (1897, pp. 115–127) provides the most accessible description of the site. There is no single source for New Pleuron, but Kirsten’s study (*RE XXI*, 1951, cols. 239–268, s.v. Pleuron [2]) provides the most detail. Bommeljé and Doorn (1987) carried out a survey of the region and have compiled a bibliography for each site; Fiechter (1931) has studied the theater, and Weissl (1999) has analyzed the fortification walls. The most recent work on the site is described by Pariente (1994), French (1994), and Touchais (1999). On a recent visit to the site in late October 2002, Bill Caraher and I witnessed further excavations taking place.



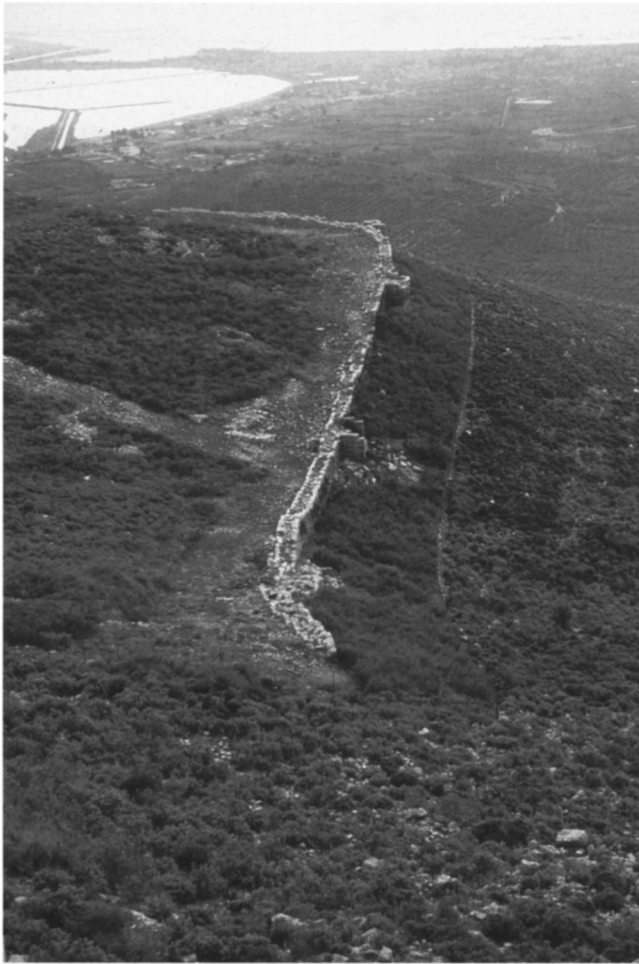


Figure 3 (*left*). Defensive wall, with towers. Photo W. Caraher

Figure 4 (*below*). Cisterns. Photo W. Caraher





Figure 5. A view from the acropolis of the city wall connected to the theater. Photo W. Caraher

system (Fig. 4). On the acropolis is a smaller walled-in area where a ruined Byzantine chapel lies over the foundations of the Temple of Athena. Almost every one of these buildings was constructed with an eye toward defense.⁶ Even the small theater has its proscenium built directly against the city wall, with a tower serving as either a portion of the stage or a dressing room, a constant reminder to the spectators of the strength of the fortifications (Fig. 5). The noteworthy preservation of the physical evidence (until recent destruction by modern hands) implies that the city was well able to resist attack. There is no evidence, either literary or archaeological, to indicate that New Pleuron ever was sacked.⁷ If we imagine that the new city was constructed as a result of the sack of the earlier city, it would appear that the citizens of Pleuron learned only after devastating defeat how to avoid destruction in the future. If, however, Old Pleuron never was destroyed, the founding of New Pleuron would appear to be a precautionary measure designed to withstand an anticipated period of long and difficult warfare.⁸

6. Weiszl (1999, p. 146) describes New Pleuron as one of the most impressive examples of the art of fortification in Greece.

7. See Snodgrass's warnings (1987, pp. 40–56) concerning the interpretation of wartime destruction on the basis of archaeological evidence.

8. Kirsten (*RE* XXI, 1951, col. 243, s.v. Pleuron [2]) alone suggests that

“Strab. X 451 bezeichnet sie als Schutzmaßnahme gegen die Verheerung der Küstenebene durch Truppen Δημητρίου τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Αἰτωλικοῦ,” but he does not pursue this thought further. One must remember that for Kirsten, Old Pleuron was attacked by the Demetrios he believed to be Demetrios of Pharos. See Ehrhardt 1978, p. 252.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Old Pleuron was supposedly sacked during the Demetrian War of 239–229 between Macedon and an alliance of the Aitolian and Achaean Leagues. Although we know little about this war, it is reasonable to assume that the citizens of Pleuron would have been able to foresee its coming and have adequate time to prepare for a possible invasion.⁹ The Aitolians, whose power had been steadily rising since their triumph over the Gauls at Delphi in 279, were an obvious threat to Macedonian hegemony. Demetrios's marriage to the princess Phthia of Epirus (which may have taken place in 239) created an alliance that made the situation more ominous for the Aitolians.¹⁰ Although there is no specific evidence, Demetrios is likely to have provided military aid to Epirus; the very fact that the Aitolians did not successfully invade Epirus during this period may be evidence of Demetrios's protective presence.¹¹ The Aitolians, in response, made peace with their former enemy the Achaean League in order to present a united front against Akarnania, Epirus, and Macedon.¹² A key negotiator of this defensive treaty was Pantaleon of Pleuron, who may have then been *strategos* of the Aitolian League.¹³ The citizens of Pleuron, therefore, must have been aware of repercussions inherent in an alliance with Achaea and would have been anticipating war.

The ambiguous evidence for the fighting in the Demetrian War does not allow a reasonable strategy to be detected for either side.¹⁴ Polybios (20.5.3) relates that Demetrios (in 236) invaded Boiotia, which had been under Aitolian control at the start of the war.¹⁵ Once Boiotia was secure, an attack on Aitolian land would have been Demetrios's next logical step, although there is no evidence other than Strabo's passage that he did so. The fall in 236 of Boiotia, which would have been Demetrios's base of attack, is the primary factor in dating the "sack" of Old Pleuron between 235 and 230. In another passage, Polybios (2.2.4–5) describes how Demetrios (in 231) sent a band of Illyrian mercenaries to stop the Aitolians from besieging the city of Medeon in Akarnania.¹⁶ Demetrios's forces staged a surprise raid, drove away the Aitolians, and promptly began to ravage Epirote land (Epirus having since abandoned the alliance with Macedon that had sparked the current conflict). Eventually, the Aitolians had to be recalled to help their former enemies in Epirus against Demetrios's savage Illyrian raiders. Polybios (2.3.3) depicts the Aitolians as having been confident in their strength and power for a number of years prior to this surprise attack in 231, implying that they had not been surprised often or defeated beforehand. This minor setback for the Aitolians (which ended in their favor, as it encouraged the Epirotes to ally with them, albeit temporarily) is their only recorded land defeat during the Demetrian War, aside from the alleged sack of Old Pleuron.¹⁷

All other evidence for this period suggests that Aitolia had not only been successful in resisting the Macedonians but had been expanding their power.¹⁸ Sometime during the Demetrian War, Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenos, and perhaps Ambrakia and Amphiloikia, had all joined the Aitolian League.¹⁹ Furthermore, Aitolia continued to strengthen its influence over the Delphic Amphictiony, steadily increasing the number of their repre-

9. See Ehrhardt 1975, pp. 208–222, and Scholten 2000, pp. 131–163, for examination of the evidence on the Demetrian War. Scholten (2000, p. 82) specifically mentions Pleuron as the sort of coastal area that would be threatened by possible warfare with Macedon.

10. Just. *Epit.* 28.1.1–4. This marriage/alliance may be an Epirote response to aggressive Aitolian raids and is also difficult to date. See Hammond and Walbank 1988, pp. 322–323; Demetrios's marriage, according to them, "was clearly bound to lead to a breach with Aetolia."

11. Hammond and Walbank 1988, p. 324.

12. The dating and circumstances surrounding this alliance are unclear. Scholten (2000, pp. 268–271) discusses the evidence and argues that events progressed rapidly within the short period from 240 to 239.

13. Plut. *Arat.* 33.1; Scholten 2000, p. 136.

14. Ehrhardt 1975, pp. 213–214.

15. Hammond and Walbank 1988, pp. 326–329.

16. Hammond and Walbank 1988, p. 333.

17. Hammond and Walbank 1988, p. 335.

18. See Scholten 2000, pp. 145–163.

19. Polyb. 2.46.2, 2.57.1. See Hammond and Walbank 1988, pp. 331–333; Ehrhardt 1975, pp. 218–219; Scholten 2000, pp. 150–151.

sentatives during the years of the war.²⁰ Aitolian resistance was effective enough that Demetrios was forced to abandon the offensive and retreat to the north, possibly in order to deal with Dardanian invasions.²¹ The Macedonians were so weakened after this war that, immediately upon the death of Demetrios, the Aitolians felt sufficiently secure to attempt to wrestle Thessaly away from Macedonian control.²² In short, the Demetrian War against the Aitolian and Achaean Leagues accomplished little for Macedon and may even have been deemed an outright failure.²³

The sack of the relatively important Aitolian city of Pleuron, a deed that Strabo mentions only in passing, stands out, therefore, as somewhat of an anomaly. Christopher Ehrhardt, one of the few scholars who has questioned the story of Pleuron's sack, objects to its validity on grounds other than a close reading of Strabo.²⁴ He argues that Polybios's account (5.7–8) of Philip V's surprise attack on Thermon suggests that no previous Macedonian force had made such an attempt from the northeast.²⁵ Ehrhardt believes that, although the sack of Old Pleuron did occur, it was instead a sea raid from a Macedonian base in either Boiotia or Megara.²⁶ Few have followed Ehrhardt's lead to doubt Demetrios's land assault on Old Pleuron, and no one has previously doubted that he sacked the city.

One possible proof of Demetrios's victory would seem to be his nickname in Strabo, ὁ Αἰτωλικός. Unlike a Roman honorific, this title was not an additional name granted Demetrios after his successful defeat of the Aitolians. William Woodhouse has proposed that the title was an ironic mockery by those who considered Demetrios's Aitolian exploit futile.²⁷ If one credits Demetrios's sack of Old Pleuron, however, it is difficult to dismiss the expedition as a failure and the theory of a mocking nickname makes less sense. If the sack never occurred, however, nor any other major Aitolian defeat, the suggestion of a mocking title would be more feasible. Ehrhardt strengthened Woodhouse's suggestion by demonstrating that a Roman-style honorific title taken from a defeated nation would have been anachronistic, furthermore asserting that it would be inappropriate, as Demetrios never successfully conquered the Aitolians.²⁸ Although honorific epithets were commonplace for the Seleucids and Ptolemies, the nicknames of all other members of the Antigonid family were either uncertain or insulting.²⁹ The one apparent exception, Demetrios Poliorketes, received his nickname as a result of his lengthy, and ultimately unsuccessful, siege of Rhodes.³⁰ If one accepts that the nickname ὁ Αἰτωλικός is a mocking reference to Demetrios's futile attempt to conquer Aitolia, it is all the more reason to question whether he ever sacked the city of Old Pleuron.

20. Ehrhardt 1975, pp. 134–139, 220; Scholten 2000, pp. 153–154.

21. Livy 31.28.1–2; Plut. *Arat.* 34.5; Just. *Epit.* 28.3.14. See Hammond and Walbank 1988, p. 335; Ehrhardt 1975, pp. 224–226.

22. Scholten 2000, pp. 132, 145, 165–170.

23. Ehrhardt (1975, pp. 222–224) concludes that the war's outcome was indecisive and describes the balance

of forces as "fairly even." Hammond and Walbank (1988, p. 336) say that for Macedon the Demetrian War "must in retrospect have seemed a disaster." Scholten (2000, pp. 162–163) deems the war a conclusive Aitolian victory.

24. Ehrhardt 1975, p. 207.

25. See also Scholten (2000, pp. 221–223), who discusses the Aitolian trust in their defensive system and

their subsequent surprise at Philip's sack of Thermon.

26. Hammond and Walbank (1988, p. 324, n. 2) doubt the likelihood of Demetrios's attack having been a sea raid. But see n. 33, below.

27. Woodhouse 1897, p. 127, n. 3.

28. Ehrhardt 1978, p. 252.

29. Plut. *Aem.* 8.2 and *Cor.* 11.2–3. See Ehrhardt 1978, p. 253.

30. Ehrhardt 1978, p. 253.

STRABO'S ACCOUNT OF THE "SACK" OF NEW PLEURON

Doubts concerning whether Demetrios sacked Old Pleuron in no way contradict any statements made by Strabo. The assumption that Old Pleuron was sacked comes entirely from a misinterpretation of Strabo's participial phrase in the genitive absolute: πορθοῦντος τὴν χώραν Δημητρίου τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Αἰτωλικοῦ. The present participle πορθοῦντος does not normally indicate completed action. It should be read as imperfective; had he meant to specify otherwise, Strabo would have chosen the aorist participle πορθήσαντος. If one translates the passage taking the participle to be contemporaneous with the main verb, the genitive absolute reads "when (or since) Demetrios was ravaging." Thus, the citizens did not relocate as a *result* of an earlier assault, but rather *during* a current one. One might argue that Strabo's loose grammar allows us to ignore a strict translation of the sequence of tenses and consider alternatives. Strabo does not, however, explicitly refer to the sack of the *city* of Old Pleuron. Instead, the direct object of the participle πορθοῦντος is χώραν, a word that typically refers either to the land or territory of a people, sometimes indicating a direct contrast to the city.³¹ We need not assume that the ravaging of land necessarily implies that the city was sacked.³² Indeed, Strabo's deliberate choice of the word χώραν indicates that he is drawing attention to Demetrios's ravaging of the land rather than the city.³³

Devastating or plundering land without sacking a city was a regular tactic at the time and one that, as long as people had a secure place of retreat, was not particularly fearsome.³⁴ Polybios's account (2.5–6) of the appeal by Epirus to the Aitolian and Achaean Leagues for defense against Demetrios's Illyrian raiders (see above, p. 502) provides an important insight on contemporary warfare. Polybios tells us (2.6.8) that after the most powerful town in Epirus had been captured and its population enslaved, Greeks living on the coast began to worry about their own safety and that of their cities instead of merely fearing for their crops, as they previously had done.³⁵ Demetrios's attack on Pleuron, dated a few years earlier, would have taken place during the time when Polybios describes the people on the coast as being concerned primarily about their fields. Had Old Pleuron already been sacked, the citizens of the coastal cities would not have been so startled to hear of a city being overrun and enslaved.

31. See Strab. 8.3.2. He explicitly contrasts cities (πόλεις) with territories comprised of many villages (χώρας).

32. See Hdt. 3.58, and Plut. *Arat.* 51.2 for examples of πορθέω with χώρα that support the distinction between sacking a city and ravaging their land. See also Plut. *Arat.* 41.4, where Kleomenes τὴν Σικυωνίαν ἐπόρθει καὶ κατέφθειρε, but remained encamped in front of the city of Sikyon itself for a few months without taking it. See Hanson's appendix (1998, pp. 185–194) for a discussion of πορθέω. Although its "spe-

cialized use" is for the sacking of a city, the verb may also be used to denote the devastation or plundering of the land.

33. This wording may also indicate that Demetrios was doing no more than raiding the coastal area from the sea, as per Ehrhardt (n. 24, above). See Hanson 1998, p. 189.

34. See Hanson 1998 for the regularity of land devastation and its effects. He concludes (pp. 174–175) that his findings "cast doubt on the usual assumption that Greek city-states suffered near ruin when an enemy is

described in our sources as 'ravaging their land.' Not surprisingly, there are sometimes general indications in our sources that cropland was only haphazardly devastated by the enemy. . . . We also hear of cities that were apparently unaffected by enemy ravaging."

35. Polyb. 2.6.8: ἕκαστοι γὰρ θεωροῦντες τὴν ὀχυρωτάτην ἅμα καὶ δυνατάτην πόλιν τῶν ἐν Ἠπείρῳ παραλόγως οὕτως ἐξηνδραποδισμένην, οὐκέτι περὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας ἡγωνίων, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν χρόνοις, ἀλλὰ περὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν πόλεων.

Strabo’s participial phrase, therefore, need not be interpreted as describing a sack of Old Pleuron. The passage describes instead the circumstances under which the citizens moved, as a preemptive defensive measure, to the better-fortified mountain site of New Pleuron. Although Demetrios may have been attacking their lands, he need not have destroyed their city to force them to build in a new place. If they moved while Demetrios was attacking Aitolia, as Strabo suggests, the countryside around the newly fortified Pleuron may have been ravaged but, with no significant effect, Demetrios would presumably have returned home. Such an interpretation explains the lack of any other mention of Demetrios’s destruction of Pleuron (or any significant defeat over Aitolia) and further supports the mocking aspect of Demetrios’s epithet. Even if Demetrios ὁ Αἰτωλικός is proven not to be Demetrios II, this reading of Strabo’s passage must cast doubt on claims that Old Pleuron was ever sacked.

THE SYNOECISM OF NEW PLEURON

A further issue concerns the reading of the word συνώκισαν. Most interpretations and many translations ignore the prefix συν-, treating the word as a synonym for οἰκίζω, as if it meant “settle,” “found,” or sometimes “re-found.”³⁶ Such a reading, in part, rests on the assumption that Strabo’s Hellenistic Greek writing style would have employed a compound form of the verb, without necessarily creating any change in meaning. I argue here that this is not the case. The term synoecism is relatively ill defined. There have been few recent treatments that focus exclusively on the subject, and the two most comprehensive studies extend only until shortly after the death of Alexander.³⁷ Other discussions of synoecisms during the Hellenistic period function as preliminary introductions to broader or more site-specific arguments.³⁸ This is not to say, of course, that these studies have not made important inroads. A crucial distinction has been drawn between a physical synoecism, which involves the transfer of populations to a new urban center, and a political synoecism, which reorganizes the government of a region, but does not necessarily require the building of a new polis.³⁹ Often, but not always, both may occur simultaneously. Strabo may be describing a synoecism at New Pleuron that is both political and physical.

Rather than rely upon other definitions and interpretations of συνοικίζω drawn from a multitude of sources, I consider first and foremost Strabo’s use of the word and what it appears to have meant to him. In an appendix to this article, I have assembled all instances where Strabo uses some form of the word συνοικίζω in reference to city foundation. Although at times context might allow one to translate συνοικίζω as synonymous with οἰκίζω, most often its prefix demands a separate translation of the term. Strabo’s use of the word συνοικίζω presumably indicates a deliberate choice on his part, which we must bear in mind in our translation and interpretation. I have noted five usages in Strabo for συνοικίζω that are distinguishable from other forms of οἰκίζω.⁴⁰ Not all fit the context of New Pleuron. Many Hellenistic synoecisms took place under the guidance of a powerful foreign entity (king or polis) offering aid to a weaker

36. See n. 2, above. Scholten (2000, p. 146) alone translates the verb as “synoikized,” but does not explore this meaning further.

37. Moggi 1976; Demand 1990.

38. Robert and Robert 1983, pp. 188–191; Hornblower 1982, pp. 81–84; Reger 2001, pp. 161–162.

39. Hornblower 1982, p. 81; Reger 2001, pp. 161–162.

40. See appendix. When Strabo describes the refoundation of a city, which is how some have interpreted συνοικίζω, he uses ἀνοικίζω (13.1.42, for Ilion).

polity. These outsiders would revitalize a defeated or depopulated region or city-state with colonists or with an influx of money and other resources to build a better-fortified town.⁴¹ All five uses of the word could indicate foreign influence, but Strabo mentions no other city-state or ethnic group participating in the foundation of New Pleuron. He emphasizes that it is the inhabitants themselves, οἱ οἰκήτορες, who abandoned Old Pleuron to synoecize New Pleuron. The most common use of συνοικίζω in Strabo, one that allows for the lack of outsiders and most likely applies to the case of New Pleuron, signifies the combination of a number of smaller cities and towns into a larger and more organized city center, often accompanied by a building and fortification program.

It is important to decide whether the synoecism of New Pleuron occurred from a position of strength or weakness. Since Strabo tells us that the citizens of Pleuron initiated their own synoecism, and since there is no strong evidence to suggest either depopulation or defeat in battle, it is likely that the synoecism of New Pleuron was undertaken as a preventative measure in order to solidify its strength to deal with an incoming invasion. Nancy Demand argues that synoecism from the seventh to the fourth century was a commonplace and effective method of forming a more powerful and defensible union in order to better resist foreign invasion.⁴² Simon Hornblower earlier said that “the maxim, *synoikism* is strength, will explain both the classical *synoikisms* . . . and the great Hellenistic *synoikisms*.”⁴³ Even if the synoecisms that took place in Hellenistic times were not all primarily for defense against invasion, they were designed to consolidate power.⁴⁴ In response to the threat of invasion by a strong external force, it is very possible that scattered villages on the plain formerly connected with Old Pleuron reorganized themselves, both politically and physically, around a new center that was easier to defend and far better equipped to withstand a prolonged siege.

NEWER PLEURON

Strabo uses the comparative νεώτερος to describe New Pleuron instead of the regular adjective νέος, which he does for no other city in the Greek or Roman world. The translation of τὴν νεωτέραν Πλευρώνα as “New Pleuron” implies that New Pleuron was built as a replacement for the former (and now lost) Old Pleuron, but this need not be the case. Strabo often refers to New Pleuron merely as “Pleuron,” unless he is specifically contrasting it with the older city.⁴⁵ The word νεώτερος may have been used simply to separate the former location of Pleuron from the newer one, and should not indicate a name change initiated by the Aitolians.⁴⁶ Strabo may be indicating that for a time there were two coexisting settlements, the older on the plain and the “newer” one, an extension of the town gradually for-

41. See Robert and Robert 1983, pp. 188–191.

42. Demand 1990.

43. Hornblower 1982, p. 81.

44. For a possible similar structure in the Cyclades, see Reger 2001, pp. 170–177. For Halikarnassos, see Hornblower 1982, pp. 84–88.

45. See Strab. 10.2.21–22.

46. See as contrast Strab. 5.1.6 on Comum. New citizens were called Νεοκωμίται.

tified in case of war, which eventually became the permanent seat of local government.⁴⁷ Both may have coexisted until the threat of Demetrios’s invasion, at which point the citizens responded by abandoning the older and more exposed settlement to reorganize themselves around the newer, more defensible site.

Even if one doubts that Strabo refers to coexisting cities, it is difficult to believe that the population of a defeated and sacked city either went homeless or dwelt in the ashes of Old Pleuron while the impressive defense system of New Pleuron was being built. The walls indicate careful planning and construction, suggesting a project that would have taken considerable time and money to execute.⁴⁸ The walls are not clearly datable, and they could have been constructed at any time before Demetrios’s invasion.⁴⁹ In any case, they must have taken a significant number of years to construct, especially if the walls reached all the way to the sea (as they no longer do today).⁵⁰ Recent studies suggest that the Aitolians at this time were wealthier and more economically advanced than was previously believed and would have been able to construct elaborate fortifications without undue financial stress.⁵¹ Given their aggressive foreign policy in the volatile political climate of the third century, it is reasonable to assume that they would have forged a strong home defense.

Such a pattern of city organization focused primarily on defense and fortification is typically Aitolian.⁵² The region of Aitolia was divided geographically into three units, with each unit subdivided into smaller tribes.⁵³ The pyramidal structure of government extended to the local level. Each tribe encompassed a number of neighboring villages, most of which during the fifth century were unfortified.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that Aitolia did not formally constitute a league until the fourth century, the Aitolians’ efficiency against the Athenian expedition of 426 suggests that some form of centralized government existed that was capable of organizing them for

47. Woodhouse (1897, pp. 125–127) speculates, based in part on a reading of Stat. *Theb.* 2.726–743, that the Temple of Athena on the acropolis may have predated the foundation of New Pleuron and may be a reason for this particular location. For parallels where older cities still remained populated after a physical synoecism, see Hornblower 1982, pp. 88–89; Gabrielsen 2000, p. 189; and Reger 2001, pp. 162–163. Furthermore, Old Pleuron, if identified correctly, may still have had a settlement on it as late as the Middle Ages. The citizens may have abandoned Old Pleuron while Demetrios was devastating the land, but may have continued to use the site. See *RE* XXI, 1951, col. 251, s.v. Pleuron [2] (E. Kirsten).

48. Scholten (2000, p. 146) refers to the walls as built “clearly at no small expense.” See, however, Weissl

1999, pp. 114–115 and his conclusion (p. 146): “die beschränkten finanziellen Möglichkeiten der Stadt sehr ökonomisch vorgegangen wurde.”

49. See Scranton 1941, pp. 74–76, 174. Out of the 12 different examples of walls in this style, half are dated to around the third century. Scholten (2000, p. 65) refers to dating by masonry styles as “a notoriously bad chronological indicator” for Aitolian fortifications. Still, it seems likely that the walls of New Pleuron were built in the third century, but not necessarily a specific date in the 230s. The question is whether the walls, in their current state, predate the synoecism, since strengthening defenses and synoecisms usually occur together.

50. Scholten (2000, p. 193) surmises that the nearby and roughly contemporary fortification at Elaos would have

taken at least five years to build. For evidence that the walls originally stretched to the sea, see Bommeljé and Doorn 1987, p. 104.

51. Larsen 1968, p. 213; Scholten 2000, pp. 103–105.

52. Bommeljé and Doorn (1983, p. 32; 1984, p. 47) suggest that defense was a primary motivational factor for the Aitolian trend to form larger units based around an urban center. See also Scholten 2000, p. 63: “the essential purpose of the original Aitolian polity—and the main attraction of the expanded one—was territorial defense.”

53. Bommeljé and Doorn 1987, p. 15.

54. See Thuc. 3.39.3 and 3.102.5. For the region in the fifth century, see Bommeljé 1988.

war.⁵⁵ From the fourth century on, the separate villages began to group together into loose political entities centered around single defensible locations.⁵⁶

Following this model, the synoecism described by Strabo may refer not only to the reorganization of the city of Pleuron, but also to the political reorganization of surrounding smaller villages around a more defensible urban center that had previously existed as a separate entity. Political synoecisms often accompanied physical ones. This scenario seems particularly likely in Aitolia, considering Polybios's description (13.1.2) of the Aitolians as naturally disposed toward governmental innovation and change. Kallipolis, a nearby polis that also has extensive fortifications, is believed to have undergone a parallel synoecism. Surface survey has discovered evidence for older Greek villages that would have been incorporated into the new urban center.⁵⁷ As at Pleuron, fortification probably began before synoecism took place. The location of Kallipolis was also chosen for its advantages in withstanding a siege, and the site was used as a fortress before it became a fully fledged polis. Despite the fact that the city entered historical records only around 279, the walls of Kallipolis appear to date to the fourth century, with still older walls beneath them.⁵⁸ Pleuron probably followed the same pattern as its neighbor, whereby a highly defensible location experienced a synoecism when its fortress was transformed into the urban center for the region.

Given the lack of any significant archaeological or epigraphic evidence, it is difficult to reconstruct the exact circumstances surrounding the synoecism of New Pleuron. A careful study of Strabo's text, however, yields a more sophisticated understanding and dispels unlikely suppositions. Neither historical testimony nor archaeological remains suggest, let alone prove, that the city of Old Pleuron was ever sacked by Demetrios ὁ Αἰτωλικός. Nor should we believe that New Pleuron was founded as the result of such a defeat. Instead, Strabo describes a city-state responding to the threat of invasion in an orderly fashion, by creating through a synoecism a well-fortified urban center for both the governance and defense of the surrounding communities.

55. Larsen 1968, p. 79; Bommelé and Doorn 1985, p. 42.

56. Larsen 1968, p. 80; Bommelé and Doorn 1983, p. 32; Scholten 2000, pp. 12–15.

57. Bommelé and Doorn 1983, p. 30.

58. Bommelé and Doorn 1983, p. 30.

APPENDIX

STRABO'S USE OF συνοικίζω

Each occasion for which Strabo uses a form of συνοικίζω can be assigned to one of five categories, although these categories are not mutually exclusive and, in some cases, more than one category can apply. Sometimes the use of συνοικίζω is unrelated to the establishment of cities (see, e.g., Strab. 13.1.57, where the term refers to marriage); I ignore such instances as being irrelevant for the present discussion. For each category I give a few examples with a brief discussion paraphrasing Strabo's context, followed by a list of other passages in Strabo that can be assigned to the same category.

For Strabo, συνοικίζω can signify the following:

1. The political and/or physical combination of a number of small settlements and towns of a particular region into a single large city center. Sometimes Strabo's context suggests that the synoecism was accompanied by a building program, often including new defenses and city walls. The city center may or may not occupy a previously uninhabited site. This is the most common use of the term, which also best applies to the passage on Pleuron (Strab. 10.2.4).

Examples

8.3.2: Elis was not a city in Homer's time. Instead, it consisted of a number of separate smaller communities that later merged into one city. Most places in the Peloponnese that Homer mentions were not cities (πόλεις) but regions (χώρας) of separate settlements (δήμων) that only later were synoecized (συνωκίσθησαν). For example, Mantinea was synoecized (συνωκίσθη) from five settlements; Tegea from nine; Herea also from nine; Aigion from seven or eight; Patras from seven; Dyme from eight.

9.5.15: Demetrios Poliorketes founded Demetrias near Iolkos, synoecizing (συνωκίσας) the surrounding towns (πολίχνας) into it. All are now villages (κῶμαι) of Demetrias.

14.2.6: Homer, when describing Tlepolemos's wanderings to Rhodes, describes the island as having three cities at the time, Lindos, Ialysos, and Kameiros. The city of Rhodes was not yet synoecized (συνωκισμένης).

See also 14.2.10: The Rhodians had been fortunate at sea not only since they had synoecized (συνώκισαν) the present city, but even before the first Olympiad they had sailed far away from their home to protect their people. Here, the synoecism is contrasted with the foundation (κτίσεως) of the three original cities.

See also Strab. 8.3.11, 8.3.15, 8.3.30, 8.7.4, 9.1.15, 9.5.17, 9.5.18, 10.2.13, 10.3.2, 11.8.4, 12.2.7, 12.3.10, 12.3.26, 12.3.37, 13.1.26, 13.1.33, 13.1.47, 14.1.46, 14.2.19, 14.5.6, 16.2.23, 17.1.32, 17.3.13; and possibly also 8.3.33, 8.7.1, 10.2.8, 10.4.8, 10.4.14.

2. The addition of colonists to swell an existing native population. This process may occur either forcibly, following an invasion, or peacefully and voluntarily. It may or may not indicate a physical or political alteration of the site.

Examples

5.1.6: Comum was a relatively small town until Pompey Strabo synoecized (συνώκισεν) it. Gaius Scipio added 3,000 colonists, and Caesar synoecized it further (ἐπισυνώκισεν) with 5,000 more settlers.

12.6.5: Sulpicius Quirinus, governor of Syria, overtook the country of the Homonadeis, captured 4,000 of them, and synoecized (συνώκισεν) them into nearby cities.

16.2.4: Antiocheia has four separate cities and is thus a tetrapolis. The first of these, Nicator, synoecized (συνώκισε) by transferring settlers from nearby Antigonia. See also 16.2.5: In Antiocheia, Nicator also synoecized (συνώκισε) the descendants of Triptolemos. Some of his descendants had emigrated, but the rest became cohabitants (συνοίκους) with the Antiocheians.

See also Strab. 3.2.15, 4.6.7, 8.3.30, 10.1.8, 10.3.2, 11.2.17, 12.3.17, 13.1.12, 17.1.32, 17.3.13; and possibly also 5.4.6, 6.1.15, 6.2.4, 8.3.33, 14.1.6.

3. The fortification of a site, as opposed to its original foundation. The addition of the prefix συν- changes the meaning of the verb from “build” or “establish” to “encircle” or “fortify.” The context in these cases usually suggests that Strabo’s primary focus is defense. All may accompany a political synoecism, categories 1 and 4 (see below), or an influx of settlers as in category 2. Since this distinction is not always clear, I have created a separate category pertaining to fortification. This use of the term does not necessarily imply that the location of a site has changed. New Pleuron, like many other examples, was fortified at the time of its physical and political synoecism, and thus fits this category as well as category 1.

Examples

11.8.4: Pompey synoecized (συνοικήσας) the city of Zela, a small city consisting mostly of temple slaves, by expanding its territory and moving the inhabitants within a wall.

12.3.39: Amaseia, Strabo’s hometown, is well situated and naturally fortified, being on a steep rock. The city was synoecized (συνώκισται) on

one side with a wall on the edge of the river, and on the other with a wall extending up to the peaks.

13.1.42: The Astypalaeans, who held Rhoeteion, first synoecized (συνώκισαν) Polion on the Simoeis, but the fortifications were poor and it was consequently destroyed.

See also Strab. 9.1.15, 11.8.4, 11.14.6, 12.6.1, 14.2.19, 17.3.16; and possibly also 2.3.5, 5.4.6, 6.1.15, 6.2.4, 8.3.33, 8.7.1, 9.1.20, 10.2.8, 10.4.8, 10.4.14, 14.1.6.

4. The establishment of a new city-state from the populations of a number of previous (usually depopulated or defeated) city-states. The meaning is distinct from that of category 1 in that a completely new site is chosen and built to accommodate pilgrims from once geographically separate cities, rather than small neighboring villages being drawn into one.

Examples

7.7.6: Ambrakia and the other cities of Epirus were so depopulated by constant warfare with Rome and Macedonia that Augustus synoecized (συνώκισε) the remaining cities into one. He called this new city Nikopolis from his victory over Antony and Cleopatra.

8.8.1: The population of smaller Arcadian cities has been disappearing since the times when most cities were synoecized (συνωκίσθησαν) into Megalopolis.

See also Strab. 12.2.9, 13.1.26, 13.1.33, 13.1.47.

5. A mixed native ethnic population.

Examples

3.3.5: The Artabrians live near the cape of Nerium in northwest Iberia. The surrounding area is also inhabited by Celts, relatives of those on the Anas. They, along with the Turdulians, made an expedition into Iberia. After the death of their chief, they remained. The Artabrians have many thickly populated cities where both people dwell together (συνοικοῦμέναι) in the area around the gulf.

3.5.4: On the islands off Spain where Geryon kept his cattle, the entire coast is held together in common (κοινῇ συνώκισται). This means that, unlike the interior of the island, which is populated only by Tyrians, the coast is held by both the Tyrians and the Iberians.

See also Strab. 17.1.32.

REFERENCES

- Antonetti, C. 1990. *Les Eoliens: Image et religion*, Paris.
- Beloch, J. 1927. *Griechische Geschichte* IV.2, Berlin.
- Bommeljé, S. 1988. "Aeolis in Aetolia: Thuc. 3.102.5 and the Origins of the Aetolian *ethnos*," *Historia* 37, pp. 297–316.
- Bommeljé, S., and P. K. Doorn. 1983. *Strouza Region Project (First Interim Report)*, Utrecht.
- . 1984. *Strouza Region Project (Second Interim Report)*, Utrecht.
- . 1985. *Strouza Region Project (Third Interim Report)*, Utrecht.
- . 1987. *Aetolia and the Aetolians: Towards the Interdisciplinary Study of a Greek Region* (Studia Aetolica 1), Utrecht.
- Demand, N. H. 1990. *Urban Relocation in Archaic and Classical Greece: Flight and Consolidation*, Norman.
- Dinsmoor, W. B. 1950. *The Architecture of Ancient Greece*, 3rd ed., New York.
- Ehrhardt, C. 1975. "Studies in the Reigns of Demetrius II and Antigonos Doson" (diss. State Univ. of New York at Buffalo).
- . 1978. "Demetrius ὁ Αἰτωλικός and Antigonid Nicknames," *Hermes* 106, pp. 251–253.
- Fiechter, E. R. 1931. *Die Theater von Oiniadai und Neupleuron*, Stuttgart.
- Flacelière, R. 1937. *Les Aitoliens à Delphes: Contribution à l'histoire de la Grèce centrale au III^e siècle av. J.-C.*, Paris.
- French, E. 1994. "Archaeology in Greece, 1993–94," *AR* 40, pp. 3–48.
- Gabrielsen, V. 2000. "The Synoikized polis of Rhodos," in *Polis and Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History*, ed. P. Flensted-Jensen, T. H. Nielsen, and L. Rubenstein, Copenhagen, pp. 177–206.
- Hammond, N. G. L., and F. W. Walbank. 1988. *A History of Macedonia 3: 336–167 B.C.*, Oxford.
- Hanson, V. D. 1998. *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece*, rev. ed., Berkeley.
- Hornblower, S. 1982. *Mausolus*, Oxford.
- Larsen, J. A. O. 1968. *Greek Federal States: Their Institutions and History*, Oxford.
- Lawrence, A. W. 1979. *Greek Aims in Fortification*, Oxford.
- Moggi, M., ed. 1976. *I sinecismi interstatali greci* 1, Pisa.
- Pariente, A. 1994. "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1993," *BCH* 118, pp. 695–866.
- Reger, G. 2001. "The Mykonian synoikismos," *REA* 103, pp. 157–181.
- Robert, J., and L. Robert. 1983. *Fouilles d'Amyzon en Carie* 1, Paris.
- Scholten, J. B. 2000. *The Politics of Plunder: Aitolians and Their Koinon in the Early Hellenistic Era, 279–217 B.C.*, Berkeley.
- Scranton, R. L. 1941. *Greek Walls*, Cambridge.
- Snodgrass, A. M. 1987. *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*, Berkeley.
- Talbert, R. J. A., ed. 2000. *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Princeton.
- Touchais, G. 1999. "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1998," *BCH* 123, pp. 635–848.
- Weissl, M. 1999. "Die Befestigung der jüngeren Stadanlage von Pleuron in Aitolien," *ÖJh* 68, pp. 105–146.
- Winter, F. E. 1971. *Greek Fortifications*, Toronto.
- Woodhouse, W. J. 1897. *Aetolia: Its Geography, Topography, and Antiquities*, Oxford.

Michael B. Lippman

EMORY UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30322

mlippma@emory.edu