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## ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE ACHAIAN *SYNODOS* IN POLYBIOS' TIME\*

**Summary:** The question of who attended the regular assemblies (*synodoi*) of the Achaian *koinon* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE is still a subject of discussion. Two main theories prevail: the *synodos* either was a primary assembly of all citizens or a meeting of the federal council. However, the very existence of an elected council in the *koinon* can be doubted, since no trace of activity of this federal body in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE can be found, either in literary, or epigraphic sources. The only evidence supposedly proving the existence of an Achaian council is the frequent mention of the word *boule* in Polybios' accounts of the federal assembly meetings. Attentive consideration of these passages leads to the conclusion that, in the lexicon of the Achaian historian, *boule* is not the official name of a state institution and does not necessarily mean "a council."

Of the two theories, seeing the *synodos* as a meeting of the primary assembly seems to be the most compatible with the evidence. However, in light of the recently found inscription SEG LVIII 370, we may be certain that in Polybios' time the *synodos* was a representative body – and therefore not a people's assembly in the strict sense of the word. The only reasonable interpretation of this contradictory evidence appears to be the following: the *synodos* was a meeting of several thousand delegates representing all the Achaian *poleis*, the size of each delegation being determined in proportion to the population of the community. The list of these delegates varied from meeting to meeting, and therefore the *synodos* should not be regarded as a body with permanent membership, such as a state council. This kind of assembly also might have served as a model for the *archairesiake ekklesia* of the Lykians.

**Key words:** Ancient Greek federalism, representative government, Achaian *koinon*, *synodos*, popular assembly, federal council, voting, *polis*, Polybios

### 1. "ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY"

In the Achaian *koinon* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE, as in other Greek federations of the Hellenistic period, the highest authority was the federal assembly, which

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convened four times a year for regular meetings (*synodoi*). When necessary, the Achaeans could call for an extraordinary meeting of the assembly (*synkletos*). In epigraphic documents, the assembly is named either *synodos* or *synkletos* (*Syll*<sup>3</sup>. 675; *IOlympia* 46; *SEG* LVIII 370), and the inscriptions do not clarify its composition. At the *synodos* the current issues of federal policy were discussed with the appropriate decisions being made; once a year the *synodos* also elected the Achaean *strategos*, as well as other federal officials. It was necessary, at least in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, to summon the *synkletos* in order to resolve the most urgent and important matters: declarations of war and peace, approval of military alliance treaties, as well as responding to written appeals addressed to the Achaeans by the Roman senate (Polyb. XXII 10. 12; 12. 6; Liv. XXXIX 33. 7; Paus. VI 9. 1). Despite the fact that more than seventy meetings of the Achaean assembly are described or mentioned by Polybios and other sources, it is not easy to determine who attended its regular sessions: either all of the interested citizens, or strictly the council members. This question still remains “one of the most difficult problems in Greek history”.<sup>1</sup> It applies only to the composition of the *synodos*, since there is no doubt that the *synkletos* was a meeting of the primary assembly.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulties involved with this question stem from the fact that Polybios’ terminology allows different interpretations and, at times, appears to be inconsistent.<sup>3</sup> On

<sup>1</sup> TARN, W.: The Greek Leagues and Macedonia. In *The Cambridge Ancient History* VII. Cambridge 1928, 732–768, here 737.

<sup>2</sup> This conclusion follows directly from Polyb. XXIX 24. 6 and is accepted by all the scholars with the exception of A. Giovannini, who has supposed that the composition of the *synkletos* varied from time to time in accordance with the decision of the preceding *synodos*, such that the *synkletos* is considered to be a kind of *senatus amplior*, i.e. an extraordinary meeting of the federal council together with some part of the citizenry (GIOVANNINI, A.: Polybe et les assemblées achéennes. *Museum Helveticum* 26 [1969] 1–17, here 6–17). This suggestion has not elicited the support of other scholars due to very controversial interpretations of particular passages of Polybios in Giovannini’s work, as well as to the absolute lack of examples of such an unusual procedure in other Greek states (LARSEN, J.: A Recent Interpretation of the Achaean Assemblies, *Classical Philology* 67 [1972] 178–185, here 182–183; LEHMANN, G. A.: *Untersuchungen zur historischen Glaubwürdigkeit des Polybios*. Münster 1967, 252–255; WALBANK, F.: *A Historical Commentary on Polybios*. V. 3. Oxford 1979, 409–410).

<sup>3</sup> Other sources can be of little help in solving the problem. In the inscriptions, the participants of a *synodos* are simply referred to as οἱ Ἀχαιοί (*IOlympia* 46; *Syll*<sup>3</sup>. 675; *SEG* LVIII 370). The narrative tradition ascending to Polybios (Livy, Plutarch, Pausanias) is very unreliable, since these later authors did not distinguish between *synkletos* and *synodos*, and perhaps were not even aware of the distinction. Some of the Achaean meetings mentioned by these sources seem strongly reminiscent of a *synodos*, but the participants are again called οἱ Ἀχαιοί (Plut. *Philop.* 18. 6) or *Achaei* (Liv. XXVIII 7. 17; XXXVI 35. 7; XXXIX 35. 6; XLI 23. 6). At one point Plutarch (*Cleom.* 25. 2) refers to one and the same meeting as *synodos* and *boule*; however, we cannot rely on the accuracy of his terminology, especially since the biography of Cleomenes III was based not on Polybios’ narrative, but on the work of Phylarchus, an author inclined to the “dramatic” style of historical writing and presumably not very competent in the details of the Achaean constitution. Contrarily, in his biography of Philopoimen Plutarch uses the information given by Polybios as his main source, and one passage of this work (21. 1) describes the composition of the Achaean assembly, which should have been a *synodos*, since it elected the federal *strategos*, in a rather unusual way: οἱ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ μετὰ τῶν προβούλων. In this phrase οἱ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ certainly means “those of military age”, because immediately after the elections, those Achaeans who attended the assembly invaded Messenia in order to avenge the death of Philopoimen, and therefore, the *synodos* was necessarily an army-meeting. In this respect Plutarch seems to be reproducing the information taken from Polybios accurately enough. The expression οἱ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ μετὰ τῶν προβούλων, however, might not be a literal quotation from Polybios,

the one hand, the historian gives a strong reason to believe that the *synodos* was a meeting of the federal council. In the narrative of the assembly held in autumn 220 BCE, Polybios (IV 26. 7–8) defines the meeting as a *synodos* and the participants as a *boule*. In 185 BCE, Eumenes II – the king of Pergamum – offered to give the Achaians 120 talents, intending the money to be invested and the interest to be used to pay the Achaian *boule* at the time of the regular federal assemblies (μισθοδοθεῖσθαι τὴν βουλὴν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς κοιναῖς συνόδοις; Polyb. XXII 7. 3). The *synodos* of spring 168 BCE considered the request of Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, the co-ruler kings of Egypt, who asked for military assistance in the war against Antiochus IV. The discussion was interrupted, however, by Callicrates, who cited a law forbidding the making of decisions concerning military aid at such a meeting (ἐν ἀγορᾷ βουλευέσθαι περὶ βοηθείας; Polyb. XXIX 24. 5).<sup>4</sup> “A short time afterwards”, says Polybios (XXIX 24. 6), “a *synkletos* was summoned at Sicyon, which was attended not only by the *boule*, but by all those over thirty years of age (ἐν ἣ συνέβαινε μὴ μόνον συμπορεύεσθαι τὴν βουλὴν, ἀλλὰ πάντα τοὺς ἀπὸ τριάκοντα ἐτῶν)”. At this meeting, the question of sending troops to help the Ptolemies was taken up again, in strict compliance with the procedures, and – under pressure from the Romans – was resolved against the wishes of the Egyptian kings (Polyb. XXIX 24. 6–25. 6). The most obvious interpretation of the words “not only by the *boule*, but by all those over thirty years of age” is that Polybios is here clarifying the difference between the composition of the *synodos* (the *boule*) and that of the subsequent *synkletos* (all citizens over thirty years of age).<sup>5</sup> The meeting place of a *synodos* is repeatedly referred to as βουλευτήριον (Polyb. II 50. 10; XXII 9. 6; perhaps also XI 9. 8).

but rather a creation of Plutarch himself. As for the πρόβουλοι, some scholars believe that this mysterious term could designate the federal officials (SCHWAHN, W.: Συμπολιτεία. In *RE* IV A, [1931] 1171–1266, here 1257; AYMARD, A.: Les assemblées de la confédération achaienne. Bordeaux 1938, 213, n. 5), while others suppose it to mean “the members of the council” (LARSEN, J.: *Representative Government in Greek and Roman History*. Berkeley – Los Angeles 1955, 178; WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary* V. 3. [n. 2] 408, 410). In any case, the term πρόβουλοι cannot be used as reliable evidence in answering the question of who attended the Achaian assemblies.

<sup>4</sup> The word ἀγορά in this context is obviously a synonym for σύνδοξ, since the first regular meeting of the preceding Achaian year is named by Polybios ἡ πρώτη ἀγορά (XXVIII 7. 3).

<sup>5</sup> All the other interpretations are hard to accept. D. Musti has suggested that Polybios was attempting to explain to a Roman reader the difference between the Achaian *synkletos* and the senate of Rome which was also called *synkletos* by the Greeks (MUSTI, D.: Polibio e la democrazia. *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Classe di Lettere, Storia e Filosofia* 36 [1967] 155–207, here 156). This conjecture has been challenged by F. Walbank with a reasonable objection: “Polybios is generally more concerned with explaining Roman institutions to Greek readers than the reverse” (WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary* V. 3. [n. 2] 410). Walbank’s own interpretation, however, appears to be too complicated. In his view, Polybios here is not comparing the composition of one assembly to another, but rather emphasizing the unusual character of the *synkletos* at Sicyon, which was attended only by those over thirty, whereas normally the extraordinary assembly was accessible to all adult citizens. The *boule* is mentioned because thirty years was the age limit for the members of the federal council, and therefore the historian found it necessary to specify that the assembly was attended by all the citizens over thirty, not only the council members (WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary* V. 3. [n. 2] 411). It seems plausible that such a high age limit for the participants of the meeting should have been an exceptional case, and not a permanent rule. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, Aratos – at the age of 28 – was elected Achaian *strategos* for the second time (Polyb. II 43. 3–4), and the army-meeting, which, of course, included many citizens

On the other hand, on at least one occasion (Polyb. IV 7. 1–2) the Achaian historian calls the same meeting σύνοδος and ἐκκλησία, i.e. the primary assembly. In the summer of 217 BCE, at the end of the Social War, an Achaian *synodos* was held in Aigion. The Aitolian commander Euripides awaited the moment when the Achaians were engaged in their meeting, at which time he invaded Achaia and was subsequently attacked by only the mercenaries (Polyb. V 94. 1–5), though according to the plan of the campaign, which was developed by the Achaian *strategos*, the area should have been protected by the Achaian troops too (Polyb. V 92. 10). Shortly thereafter, after the end of the *synodos*, the next attack of Euripides was fended off with the help of local militia, which had been recruited from a few cities of Western Achaia (Polyb. V 95. 7). Hence it follows that the Aitolians postponed their first incursion until the moment when most citizens of these communities would be attending the assembly and therefore could not participate in the defense of their own cities.

These findings certainly prove that before the end of the Social War (217 BCE), the meetings of the *synodos* were attended by a large mass of citizens. What is more, additional evidence can indirectly confirm that this conclusion is likewise valid for the later period as well. A significant number of participants are designated by the terms: οἱ πολλοί, τὸ πλῆθος,<sup>6</sup> and sometimes even ὄχλος.<sup>7</sup> These words can hardly denote the members of the council, even if it consisted of several hundred persons. Narrat-

under thirty years of age, acted on several occasions as an extraordinary assembly (Polyb. IV 7. 10; 9. 1; 72. 5–7). The Achaian *hipparchoi* used to ingratiate themselves with young (νέοι) cavalrymen in order to get their votes in the elections of the *strategos* (Polyb. X 22. 9). The age limit does not seem to have changed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, since the army-meeting continued to act as a substitute for the assembly (Plut. *Philop.* 21. 1, see n. 3). In 181 BCE, Polybios – still a very young man (in the narrative of the events of the previous year Plutarch calls him παῖς; Plut. *Philop.* 21. 3) – was elected a member of the embassy to Egypt by the federal assembly, “though he has not yet reached the age required by law” (Polyb. XXIV 6. 5). The age mentioned here is that required for ambassadors, but such an appointment could hardly have been possible if Polybios had not had even the right to attend the meeting. Therefore it appears almost certain that the *synkletos* of 168 BCE had an unusual age composition, perhaps because the youth under 30 years were left at home in readiness for mobilization in case the Romans demanded military assistance in the decisive campaign against king Perseus (GIOVANNINI: Polybe [n. 2] 16, n. 90; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2] 400, 413; O’NEIL, J. L.: Who Attended Achaian Assemblies? *Museum Helveticum* 37 [1980] 41–49, here 49). Nevertheless, the phrase “not only by the *boule*, but by all those over thirty years of age” does not seem to emphasize the age limit for those eligible to attend the assembly. The key word is πάντας, i.e. “all the citizens”, and the age limit appears to be merely a detail. The main purpose of the long account Polyb. XXIX 23–25 is to demonstrate that the party led by Lykortas and Polybios at both meetings gained the support of a vast majority of the Achaians despite the stubborn resistance of Callicrates, who resorted to all possible means, including references to procedural rules, in order to prevent the adoption of their proposal. Two assemblies of different compositions were inclined to support Lykortas’ resolution, and only a message from the Roman consul changed the situation. This is the most natural interpretation of the passage (see also AYMARD: Les assemblées [n. 3] 73–75; LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 87–88).

<sup>6</sup> Before 217 BCE: Polyb. II 50. 11; IV 14. 1–2; 14. 8. After 217 BCE: Polyb. XXII 8. 13; 9. 10; XXVIII 7. 14; XXIX 23. 9; 24. 1; 24. 5; XXXIII 16. 3; 16. 7; XXXVIII 17. 1. Though these terms are not equivalent to δῆμος in most cases, they always relate to a very large group of people (*Polybios-Lexikon*. 2. Aufl. bearbeitet von A. MAUERSBERGER, C.-F. COLLATZ et al. Bd. 1–3. Berlin 1998–2006, II 356–367, 490–498).

<sup>7</sup> Polyb. XXVIII 7. 4 (170/69 BCE); XXXVIII 13. 6 (146 BCE, see n. 9).

ing the events of his own time, the Achaian historian refers to the regular meeting as ἀγορά (Polyb. XXVIII 7. 3; XXIX 24. 5), a word that is much more appropriately used to describe a primary assembly than a session of the council.<sup>8</sup> Finally, a very indicative piece of evidence is contained in Polybios' account of the last Achaian assembly before the war with Rome, which was convened in the spring of 146 BCE at Corinth. Given the historical context, the meeting should be considered to have been a regular one, i.e. a *synodos*.<sup>9</sup> According to Polybios, the assembly was crowded by an unprecedented number of craftsmen and other working people (πλήθος ἐργαστηριακῶν καὶ βαναύσων ἀνθρώπων: XXXVIII 12. 5).<sup>10</sup> It is hard to believe that all those present

<sup>8</sup> In other passages of Polybios, ἀγορά means "a market", "a market-place", the word is also used to designate the Forum in Rome, as well as a space for the soldiers' meetings in a Roman military camp. For references, see *Polybios-Lexikon* (n. 6) I 6–7. In Greek epigraphy, there is some evidence for ἀγορά as a term referring to the popular assembly (AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 77, n. 3).

<sup>9</sup> In the autumn of 147 BCE, during the negotiations at Tegea – which were aimed at settling the conflict between the Achaians and Sparta – the *strategos* Critolaos told the Roman envoy Sextus Julius Caesar that he was unable to make decisions without the approval of the assembly, the next regular meeting of which (σύνοδος) was to be held no earlier than six months later (Polyb. XXVIII 11. 5; cf. Paus. VIII 14. 5). The assembly at Corinth is certainly the *synodos* referred to by Critolaos. Some scholars assume that this meeting was an extraordinary one (BELOCH, K.: *Griechische Geschichte*. 2. Aufl., Bd. IV 2. Berlin – Leipzig 1927, 234; BUSOLT, G.: *Griechische Staatskunde*. 3. Aufl., Hft. 2. München 1926, 1557; SCHWAHN [n. 3] 1252; LEHMANN, G. A.: *Erwägungen zur Struktur des Achaischen Bundesstaates*. ZPE 51 [1983] 237–261, here 255–257; BASTINI, A.: *Der achäische Bund als hellenische Mittelmacht*. Frankfurt am Main 1987, 277–278, Anm. 83), but this is highly improbable for the following reasons. Firstly, the urgent convening of a *synkletos* did not comply with the intentions of Critolaos, who needed the six-month abeyance in the negotiations with the Romans to conduct an agitation campaign and to implement certain social measures in the cities of the Peloponnese in order to increase his own popularity and to prepare for war (Polyb. XXXVIII 11. 7–11, on the objectives of Critolaos see DEININGER, J.: *Der politische Widerstand gegen Rom in Griechenland 217–86 v. Chr.* Berlin – New York 1971, 228–230; FUKS, A.: *Social Conflict in Ancient Greece*. Leiden 1984, 271–273; BASTINI 273–275; NOTTMAYER, H.: *Polybios und das Ende des Achäerbundes: Untersuchungen zu den römisch-achaischen Beziehungen, ausgehend von der Mission des Kallikrates bis zur Zerstörung Korinths*. München 1995, 141–142). Secondly, the extraordinary meetings of the Achaians, unlike the regular ones, were summoned to discuss and resolve only one issue announced in advance and were conducted in conformity with a specific procedure that took three days (Polyb. XXII 12. 6; XXIX 24. 10; Liv. XXXI 25. 9; XXXII 19. 6–23. 3). The meeting of the Achaians in 146 BCE, as described by Polybios (XXXVIII 12. 1–13. 7), could hardly have lasted for more than one day. Moreover, the assembly made not one, but two important decisions: to resume the war against Sparta and to confer dictatorial powers to any elected Achaian *strategos*. The latter involved a significant change in the laws regulating the governmental system of the Achaian *koinon*, which was beyond the competence of a *synkletos*, which had to be convened to address nothing else but issues of foreign policy (Polyb. XXII 12. 6). As to the first decree adopted by the assembly, the declaration of war could actually have been a reason to convene an extraordinary meeting, but at Corinth, the Achaians did not decide to go to war with a foreign state; they simply ordered to resume a military action against a rebellious city within the federation, a campaign which had begun prior to the meeting in question ("voted for the war again": πάλιν ψηφίσασθαι <...> πόλεμον – Polyb. XXXVIII 13. 6). All these considerations lead to the conclusion that the meeting at Corinth was a regular *synodos*. For detailed argumentation on this matter see AYMARD: *Les assemblées* (n. 3) 121–131; WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary V*. 3. (n. 2) 705–706; O'NEIL: *Who Attended* (n. 5) 45–46. Larsen has also had to agree with these arguments, but since the conclusion does not fit his view of the composition of the Achaian *synodoi*, he has been forced to attempt to avoid the contradiction by conjecturing that the meeting at Corinth was an irregular combination of a *synodos* and a *synkletos* (LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 188), which does not seem to be a convincing interpretation of the evidence.

<sup>10</sup> On the meaning of these terms, see FUKS (n. 9) 276–277.



at the *synodos*, later called ὄχλος (XXXVIII 13. 6), were actually members of a permanent federal council.

This controversial evidence has led to the development of two different theories, both of which have been expressed – with various amendments – in the scholarly literature for a very long time. According to the first one, the Achaian *synodos* was a popular assembly throughout the history of the Achaian *koinon* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE. This theory prevailed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is substantiated at length by A. Aymard in his monograph devoted to the Achaian assemblies.<sup>11</sup> Aymard does not consider the word βουλή in Polybios' narrative as an official term designating a government body, and, furthermore, doubts the very existence of a federal council in the Achaian *koinon*. He argues that the *synodos* was *de jure* open to all citizens, although most of them did not attend the regular assemblies. In fact, on Aymard's view, the *synodos* essentially became a meeting of the political elite, a group of wealthy and politically active Achaians, which was unofficially nicknamed *boule*.

The second theory is that the Achaian *synodos* was a meeting of the federal council (*boule*), a body with such a large number of members that in Polybios' narrative it seems to have been a popular meeting.<sup>12</sup> The argumentation in favor of this point of view is based on the following postulate: βουλή in Greek must mean "a council" and nothing else. This theory is substantiated in detail by J. Larsen, who makes, however, a significant reservation, supposing that for the most part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, the *synodos* had been the meeting of the primary assembly, but as a result of a reform – undertaken probably in 217 BCE – it became a council meeting, with the people from time to time continuing to decide the most important issues whilst attending the *synkletos*. According to Larsen, the fact that the federal council of the Achaians actually existed must be confirmed by the inscription SEG XIV 375, dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE and mentioning "βουλ[ᾶ] τῶν Ἀχα[ιῶν]" (the document was published after the work of Aymard).<sup>13</sup>

More recently, scholars have made efforts to reconcile the two theories, claiming that the *synodos* was a combined meeting of the popular assembly and the council (*boule*).<sup>14</sup> This tendency in the scholarship suggests that the problem might be solved

<sup>11</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 42–64. For references to the earlier works, see *ibid.* 49, n. 3.

<sup>12</sup> DE SANCTIS, G.: Le assemblee federali degli Achei. *RFIC* 36 (1908) 252–260, here 255; SWOBODA, H.: *Lehrbuch der griechischen Staatsaltertümer*. Tübingen 1913, 388–390; NICCOLINI, G.: *La confederazione Achea*. Pavia 1914, 216–221; BUSOLT (n. 9) 1555–1558; BELOCH (n. 9) 230–233; TARN (n. 1) 737–739; SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1254–1255.

<sup>13</sup> LARSEN: Representative Government (n. 3) 75–99, 165–188. This view has been accepted by a number of scholars (EHRENBERG, V.: *Der Staat der Griechen*. 1. Teil: Der Hellenische Staat. Leipzig 1957, 99; LEHMANN: Erwägungen [n. 9] 240–242; BASTINI [n. 9] 28–30; FUNKE, P.: Die staatliche Neuformierung Griechenlands. Staatenbünde und Bundesstaaten. In WEBER, G. [Hrsg.]: *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus. Von Alexander dem Großen bis Kleopatra*. Stuttgart 2007, 78–98, here 97; RIZAKIS, A. D.: The Achaian League. In BECK, H. – FUNKE, P. [eds]: *Federalism in Greek Antiquity*. Cambridge 2015, 118–131, here 124–125).

<sup>14</sup> WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 406–414; O'NEIL: Who Attended (n. 5) 41–49; RÉMY, A.: Polybe et le Πολίτευμα de la Confédération achéenne. *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 1 (2008) 101–125, here 110–111; MACKIL, E.: *Creating a Common Polity. Religion, Economy, and Politics in Making a Greek Koinon*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2013, 348, n. 86. According to

if one is willing to go beyond the traditional choice between two theories (i.e. the *synodos* being either a meeting of the council vs. that of the popular assembly). The purpose of this work is to re-examine the evidence, following these recent efforts of searching for a "third solution," as well as to adduce some new arguments, especially those derived from the recently discovered decree of Messene (*SEG* LVIII 370).

## 2. WAS THERE A FEDERAL COUNCIL IN THE ACHAIAAN KOINON IN POLYBIOS' TIME?

Almost all scholars, as shown above, proceed from the presumption that the Achaian *koinon* had the same decision-making bodies as did an ordinary Greek *polis*, as well as most federations: the *ekklesia* and the *boule*. Following the publication of Larsen's work, it is generally accepted that the Achaians, like the other Greeks, elected a federal council each year, the permanent members of which met in regular sessions. Nevertheless, the doubts raised on this subject by Aymard have not been convincingly disproved. The reference to the βουλὰ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν in the inscription *SEG* XIV 375 dated to the Classical period cannot dispel these doubts. First of all, in the course of a century and a half the political lexicon of the Achaians could very well have changed, and thus the word βουλή might not have the same meaning in Polybios' work as in the document recorded on stone in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. For instance, there exist reasons to suppose that the inscription belongs to the period in which the Achaians still retained an oligarchic regime, which was established in 417 BCE (Thuc. V 82. 1), and consequently the βουλὰ could have been an assembly of those citizens who met the property requirements.<sup>15</sup> Such a meaning of the term could hardly have outlived the oligarchy itself.

Secondly, the public institutions of the *koinon* could not have remained the same for such a long period of time. It is often admitted that the rapid growth of the federation in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE must have led to substantial difficulties in the organization of the popular assemblies, since most citizens living beyond Achaia found it impossible to attend the meetings of the assembly due to the very long distances between their home cities and Aigion, which served as the meeting place of the Achaians until 188 BCE. But this same difficulty could impede the regular sessions of

A. Rémy, the council consisted of city officials, who were obliged to attend the federal assemblies. This supposition, however, cannot be confirmed by the evidence, for only one account (Paus. VII 14. 1) mentions a meeting attended by the magistrates of the Achaian *poleis* (τούς τε ἐν ἐκάστη πόλει ἔχοντες τὰς ἀρχάς), but it was not a *synodos*. If Pausanias is correct in relating these events, the Roman envoy summoned those whom he himself had chosen to be the representatives of the Achaian *koinon* to Corinth in order to make an important announcement. It seems probable that the Perieget confused the federal officials with magistrates of the cities (NICCOLINI [n. 12] 191, n. 1; LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 186; DEININGER [n. 9] 223, n. 2; BASTINI [n. 9] 271, n. 42).

<sup>15</sup> "Es ist dann durchaus vertretbar, die <...> βουλ[ά] τῶν Ἀχαιῶν mit der oligarchischen Bundesversammlung in Verbindung zu bringen" (BECK, H.: *Polis und Koinon. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Struktur der griechischen Bundesstaaten im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Stuttgart 1997, 64). The date of the inscription is uncertain; it may be attributed even to the first half of the century (RIZAKIS, A. D.: *Achaïe III. Les cités achéennes : épigraphie et histoire.* Athènes 2008, 178).

the council too. Although Aymard and Larsen support different views on the composition of *synodos* after 217 BCE, they both agree that within the last two decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE the Achaians carried out a fundamental reform of the decision-making process, having reserved discussions of the most important issues to the extraordinary assembly (*synkletos*). On this view, all remaining matters could have been resolved at a regular *synodos*, attended either by the members of the council (Larsen) or by all interested citizens (Aymard).<sup>16</sup> If the βουλὰ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν was restored after the reunification of Achaia in the 270s BCE, then its composition, competence and frequency of meetings could have undergone significant changes in the course of the aforementioned reform. Therefore, the question of whether there was a permanent federal council in the heyday of the Achaian *koinon* remains unresolved, although it has not been the subject of debate for a long time.

If in Polybios' narrative, the word βουλή is indeed used in accordance with its traditional meaning, as suggested by most scholars, it should be assumed that the Achaian council of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE in many respects resembled either a similar elected body in a particular *polis*, or the known federal councils in some *koina* of the same period. It must have consisted of a few dozen – or perhaps several hundred – members,<sup>17</sup> met in sessions more or less regularly, prepared preliminary decisions as recommendations for the primary assembly,<sup>18</sup> and carried out monitoring, administrative, judicial and some other functions.

Neither recommendations to the assembly, nor any other decisions of the supposed Achaian βουλή have left traces in epigraphy, while the activities of the federal council and related officials (council secretaries, *boularchoi*) in the Aitolian and Akarnanian *koina* are attested by many inscriptions; the Boiotian *synedrion* is also mentioned in the epigraphic documents. At numerous meetings of the Achaian assem-

<sup>16</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 411–420; LARSEN: Representative Government (n. 3) 85–86, 92–94.

<sup>17</sup> The federal council of the Aitolians, συνέδριον (Syll<sup>3</sup>. 479; 546; 598 E; SEG XXXVIII 1476) or βουλὰ (Syll<sup>3</sup>. 546; 622; IG IX<sup>2</sup> 1. 34; 137 b), as some scholars have supposed, numbered up to a thousand members (TARN [n. 1] 209; SCHWAHN [n. 3] 1210; LARSEN, J.: *Greek Federal States*. Oxford 1968, 199–200; FUNKE, P.: Aitolia and the Aitolian League. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* [n. 13] 86–117, here 112). According to Livy (XLV 28. 7), in 167 BCE 550 Aitolian “senators” were killed and many others exiled. The meaning of *senatus* in this account, however, is not clear, and the figure of 1,000 seems in fact to be too high for a council. The actual size of the Aitolian *synedrion* could have been much smaller (DEININGER [n. 9] 192; WALBANK, F.: *The Hellenistic World*. Brighton 1981, 153; GRAINGER, J.: *The League of the Aitolians*. Leiden 1999, 179). The *synedrion* of the Boiotian *koinon* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE was not large in size, since as important a city as Thespiiai annually delegated only three representatives to it (IThesp. 84, ll. 64–66). Hence, the total number of councilors could hardly have exceeded seventy (ROESCH, P.: *Thespies et la Confédération béotienne*. Paris 1965, 133). The quantitative composition of the συνέδριον or βουλὰ of the Akarnanian *koinon* (Syll<sup>3</sup>. 421; IG IX<sup>2</sup> 1. 208; 209; 582; 583; 588; SEG XLIII 227) remains unknown.

<sup>18</sup> The probouleutic function of the Akarnanian council is reflected in the resolute formula of federal decrees: ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ κοινῷ τῶν Ἀκαρνάνων or δεδῶχθαι τῇ βουλῇ τῶν Ἀκαρνάνων καὶ τοῖς χιλίοις (IG IX<sup>2</sup> 1. 208; 209; 582; 583; 588; SEG XLIII 227). The decrees of the Aitolians do not mention the joint decisions of the council and the people, but since the *boularchoi* presided over the assembly, the *synedrion* should have been responsible for some preparatory deliberations before the popular meetings (FUNKE: Aitolia [n. 17] 110–111).



bly – described in detail by Polybios, Livy, and other authors – not a single preliminary decision of the council was ever announced; on the contrary, from time to time the federal authorities would in fact submit some impromptu questions, which had obviously not passed a preliminary discussion, to the assembly.<sup>19</sup> The judicial power in the Aitolian *koinon* belonged to the council, which, in particular, had the right to impose fines on violators of the federal laws,<sup>20</sup> whereas the Achaiaans entrusted these powers to the *synodos* as well as the federal officials.<sup>21</sup> All political decisions of any significance in the Achaiaan *koinon* were made either by the assembly or by the federal magistrates. In this system, there simply was no place for a council working on a permanent basis.

Of course, it may be assumed that the βουλή was elected with the sole purpose of obliging its members to attend the meetings of the *synodos*, thereby ensuring the representative character of this assembly at a time in which the overwhelming majority of citizens, particularly those living far from the meeting place, could not afford to make a long trip four times a year, nor could they spend several days participating in the assembly held in another city. If this is correct, the Polybian term βουλή does

<sup>19</sup> In 185 BCE, the Achaiaan *synodos* discussed the question of whether to renew the treaty of alliance between the *koinon* and the kingdom of the Ptolemies. The Achaiaan ambassadors who had returned from Egypt advocated the renewal of the treaty, but then the *strategos* Aristainos delivered a speech, listing several agreements – concluded at different times – between the Achaiaans and the Ptolemies, and asking which of them was to be resumed. Neither the Achaiaan ambassadors, nor the envoys of Ptolemy V were able to give an answer, and so the decision on this matter was postponed (Polyb. XXII 9. 1–12). If the meeting of the *synodos* was preceded by a preliminary discussion in the council, such confusion would not have occurred. Nor did the *synkletos* receive any recommendations (προβούλευμα) from the council. The supposition offered by A. Giovannini, according to which the *synkletos* could not take decisions on issues not previously considered at a regular meeting of the assembly (GIOVANNINI: Polybe [n. 2] 6–8), has been categorically rejected by scholars (WALBANK, F.: The Achaean Assemblies Again. *Museum Helveticum* 27 [1970] 129–143; LARSEN: A Recent Interpretation [n. 2] 178–185; LEHMANN: Erwägungen [n. 9] 252–254), with good reason. Each of the participants could make proposals (Polyb. XXIX 24. 10; Liv. XXXII 20. 1), and when no one dared to take over such an initiative at the session of the *synkletos* in 198 BCE, “there was silence for a long time, the meeting participants looking at each other” (Liv. XXXII 20. 1). If there was a preliminary decision made by the council, such a pause would not have arisen. At the same time, F. Walbank has suggested that “the often extensive agenda at a *synodos* must have required preliminary consideration, and this would naturally be a job for the *boule*” (WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2] 187), but the Polybian passage quoted above seems to prove the opposite.

<sup>20</sup> Syll<sup>3</sup> 522 I, ll. 6–8; 563, ll. 13–15; 629, ll. 20–25; IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>. 4 c, ll. 22–25; 189, l. 10; XII. 2. 15, ll. 6–9; SEG XVIII 245, ll. 6–7.

<sup>21</sup> In the narrative sources, there are numerous indications of judicial decisions concerning the infringement of Achaiaan federal laws (Polyb. XXIII 4. 5; XXX 32. 5; XXXVIII 18. 2–4; Liv. XXXVIII 33. 11; XXXIX 35. 8; 36. 2; XLII 51. 8; Paus. VII 9. 2; 10. 8; 12. 2; 13. 4–5). In most cases, a particular judicial authority is not named, but rather decisions and verdicts are rendered as being made by “the Achaiaans” or “the assembly” (*concilium* in Livy’s vocabulary, συνέδριον in that of Pausanias; this word is used by the Perieget to designate both the Achaiaan assembly and the Achaiaan *koinon* itself). At times, “the assembly” clearly means *synodos* (*damnatu frequenti concilio Achaeorum*: Liv. XLII 51. 8). In cases of emergency, the *strategos autocrator* could establish a sort of military tribunal on charges of treason (Polyb. XXXVIII 18. 2–4; Plut. *Arat.* 44. 6), which probably was not foreseen by the law, but in fact such a court took place, although rarely. The recently discovered inscription from Messene demonstrates that the board of *damiourgoi* was empowered to impose fines on those communities failing to comply with the requirements of the federal law (SEG LVIII 370, ll. 75–79), while in the Aitolian *koinon*, decisions to fine persons or communities were made by the federal council.

not designate a state council of a usual Greek type. Even after the suggested reform, the *synodos* remained a meeting of a large mass of people (οἱ πολλοί, τὸ πλῆθος, ὁ ὄχλος).<sup>22</sup> A very rough estimate of how many citizens usually attended the *synodos* can be derived from the sum of money (120 talents) offered to the Achaians by Eumenes II. The interest on this amount should have been used to pay the participants of the regular assemblies (Polyb. XXII 7. 3). Of course, it is impossible to calculate on this basis the exact number of those usually attending the *synodos*, since the requisite equation contains too many unknown variables (the interest rate, the amount of daily salary, the duration of sessions). However, we should not completely reject the possibility to extract from this figure a general idea of the numerical size of the assembly, as some scholars have done.<sup>23</sup> Long ago, several attempts were made to approximate the number of potential recipients of salaries, and two of them appear to be based on quite plausible assumptions. G. De Sanctis has suggested that the sum would have been given on loan at 12% per annum, and that the participants would have received 1 drachma per day for 10 days in the course of a year. Under these conditions, the recipients of salaries should have numbered 8,640 people.<sup>24</sup> W. Tarn has based his calculation on roughly the same prerequisites, but has reduced the interest rate to 8% and as a result has arrived at a number of 6,000.<sup>25</sup> Contrarily, the estimate offered by W. Schwahn (8%, 1.5 drachmas, 30 days a year – 1,280 persons)<sup>26</sup> seems to be significantly undervalued, since the sessions of the *synodos* as described by Polybios could not have lasted for 7 or 8 days each,<sup>27</sup> and the payment of 1.5 drachmas per day appears to be too generous, as it exceeds even the salary of a mercenary by half.<sup>28</sup> Although the figures proposed by G. De Sanctis and W. Tarn seem to be underestimated rather than exaggerated, the number of the Achaians that usually attended the *synodos* may be roughly assessed to be greater than 6,000. This is far too great a number for a council.

Moreover, there is ample evidence revealing a rather elastic meaning of the word βουλή in Polybios' lexicon. In a number of passages, the term can designate nothing else than a primary assembly. The meeting of the Achaians that declared war on Sparta in 229/8 BCE is referred to as βουλή, although a decision of such importance should have

<sup>22</sup> Polyb. XXII 8. 13; 9. 10; XXVIII 7. 4; 7. 14; XXIX 23. 9; 24. 1; 24. 5; XXXIII 16. 3; 16. 7; XXXVIII 13. 6; 17. 1.

<sup>23</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 81; LARSEN: Greek Federal States (n. 17) 226; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 187; RIZAKIS: The Achaian League (n. 13) 128, n. 59.

<sup>24</sup> DE SANCTIS (n. 12) 257, n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> TARN (n. 1) 737.

<sup>26</sup> SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1256.

<sup>27</sup> On the possible duration of the *synodos*' meetings, see AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 342–346. At any rate, it is hard to believe that even the wealthy citizens could have afforded to spend one month a year away from home in order to attend the sessions of the federal assembly.

<sup>28</sup> LAUNEY, M.: *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*. Paris 1987, 763–764. These obvious exaggerations could perhaps be intended to support the theory accepted by SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1254–1255, according to which the *synodos* was a meeting of the federal council. The figure 1,280 corresponds more to the number of the council's members than to that of the popular assembly's participants. LEHMANN: Erwägungen [n. 9] 244), also a supporter of the view of *synodos* as a meeting of the council, quotes the calculations of Schwahn in order to confirm his own evaluation (around 1,000 men).

been taken by the people, not by the council.<sup>29</sup> Another Achaian assembly convened in 226 BCE is called *σύνδοδος* as well as *τὸ κοινὸν βουλευτήριον* (Polyb. II 50. 4 and 10). Whatever the meaning of the word *βουλευτήριον*, whether the meeting-place,<sup>30</sup> or the meeting itself,<sup>31</sup> it is certainly derived from the term *βουλή*, although this *synodos* is more reminiscent of a primary assembly, for it was attended by a large crowd of people (*οἱ πολλοί, τὸ πλῆθος* – Polyb. II 50. 10–11). In 220 BCE, the Achaians at a *σύνδοδος* (Polyb. IV 26. 7) decided to declare war on the Aitolian *koinon*. King Philip V also came to Aigion to attend the meeting (*προσελθόντος δὲ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν ἐν Αἰγίῳ* – IV 26. 8). Here again the terms *σύνδοδος* and *βουλή* appear to be synonymous, designating the assembly of the people.<sup>32</sup> Most importantly, all the passages cited above relate to the period when, as is commonly believed, both the *synkletos* and *synodos* were meetings of the primary assembly.

Describing the events of his own time, Polybios continued to use the term *βουλή* in the sense of a citizen assembly. When the envoys of the Roman proconsul Aulus Hostilius Mancinus arrived in the Peloponnese in 170 BCE, they were supposed to make accusations against Archon, Lykortas and Polybios “upon a popular assembly of the Achaians having been summoned (*συναχθείσης τῆς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἐκκλησίας*)”, but the envoys could not find any pretext to charge these men with anti-Roman activities, so “when a *boule* was summoned in Aigion to meet them (*συναχθείσης αὐτοῖς τῆς βουλῆς εἰς Αἰγίον*)”, the Romans delivered a speech of mingled compliments and exhortations, while refraining from making accusations against the Achaian politicians (Polyb. XXVIII 3. 7–9). This assembly certainly must have been a *synkletos*, not a *synodos*, because it had to be convened not on a regular basis, but on the occasion of the Romans' arrival. It is significant that the expected assembly is called *ἐκκλησία*, but the meeting actually held is designated as that of the *βουλή*. According to Larsen and some

<sup>29</sup> Polyb. II 46. 4–6: *οἱ προεστῶτες τοῦ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν πολιτεύματος < ... > συναθροίσαντες τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς ἔκριναν μετὰ τῆς βουλῆς ἀναλαμβάνειν φανερώς τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ἀπέχθειαν*. Larsen, in whose view *βουλή* always means “a council”, has tried to interpret this passage by suggesting that the assembly in question might have been an extraordinary joint meeting of the council and the people, the council making a preliminary decision and the people approving it (LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 78–79, 217; see also WALBANK, F.: *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*. V. 1. Oxford 1957, 244). However, the subject in the sentence in question is *οἱ προεστῶτες*, not *οἱ Ἀχαιοί*. Therefore, according to Polybios, the Achaian leaders, not “the Achaians”, made the decision together with the *βουλή*. In this context, the word *βουλή* cannot have any other meaning than “the assembly” (AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 68–75). Besides, the procedure supposed by Larsen (a people's decision preceded by a federal council's recommendation), as noted previously, is not attested by the evidence on other occasions.

<sup>30</sup> LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 77.

<sup>31</sup> AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 66.

<sup>32</sup> The primary assembly was the only one with the competence to declare war. Moreover, since another *synodos* held in 220 BCE is called *ἐκκλησία* (Polyb. IV 7. 2), the meeting in question should have been a citizen assembly as well. Larsen has come to the same conclusion, and therefore has had to explain why Polybios used in this phrase the word *βουλή*, which means, according to Larsen, the federal council. The interpretation proposed by Larsen is a very complicated and artificial one: when Philip V arrived in Aigion, the popular assembly had already been dissolved, so the Achaian authorities had to summon only the members of the council to meet the king. However, the sentence mentioning the king's arrival is just a part of the story of the *synodos* and its decisions, not an account of a subsequent event. The connecting word *καὶ* demonstrates the integrity of the passage: “And the king came to the meeting at Aigion too.”

other scholars who consider the word βουλή to be a precise term meaning “a council”, the Achaians were expected to summon a *synkletos*, but instead the audience that had to listen to the Romans’ speeches consisted of only the federal council members.<sup>33</sup>

This interpretation is hardly acceptable, if we take into account not only the terminology, but also the historical context. The main purpose of the Roman embassy was to bring to the Greeks’ attention the resolution of the senate prescribing the fulfillment of only those demands of the Roman commanders that corresponded to the senate’s decisions (Polyb. XXVIII 13. 11; 16. 2; Liv. XLIII 17. 2). At the same time, the envoys had to evaluate what kind of attitudes prevailed in the Greek states after the beginning of the Third Makedonian War, and to influence these attitudes in a way favorable for the Romans, resorting, if necessary, to making explicit threats against the “unreliable” Greek politicians. At this time, the slightest sign of disloyalty to Rome could entail serious troubles for any Greek statesman, some of them having already been sent to Italy as hostages (Polyb. XXVII 15. 14; XXVIII 4. 6; Liv. XLII 60. 8–9). The supposed refusal of the Achaian authorities to convene the *synkletos* and the alleged decision to substitute the primary assembly with a meeting of the council not only contradicted the federal law which required the summoning of the people immediately after receiving a written address from the Roman senate (Polyb. XXII 12. 6), but also could have caused serious suspicions on the part of the Romans.

Besides, the disputed passage has a continuation. The leaders of the adjacent states, namely the Aitolian and the Akarnanian *koina*, hastened to convene popular assemblies (ἐκκλησία: Polyb. XXVIII 4. 1; 5. 1) upon the arrival of the same embassy, and in the beginning of the passage related to Aitolia Polybios says: καὶ πάλιν ἐκεῖ συναχθείσης αὐτοῖς τῆς ἐκκλησίας “and when an assembly was *again* summoned to meet them there...” (Polyb. XXVIII 4. 1). The envoys came to Aitolia directly from Aigion, so the preceding primary assembly implied in this sentence must have been that of the Achaians previously mentioned under the name of βουλή.

In the narrative of the events of the same Third Makedonian War, Polybios tells a story detailing a joint Illyrian–Makedonian embassy that arrived in Rhodes at the beginning of 168 BCE. When the ambassadors came to Rhodes, and a *boule* was summoned, the assembly proved very turbulent: παραγενομένων εἰς τὴν Ῥόδον, καὶ συναχθείσης τῆς βουλῆς, παντάπασιν θορυβώδης ἦν ἐκκλησία (Polyb. XXIX 11. 1–2). This passage has a clear meaning only if the words βουλή and ἐκκλησία refer to the same meeting, and this is precisely the way in which the translators of Polybios interpret this sentence.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, Walbank has tried to preserve the traditional difference

<sup>33</sup> LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 88, 94, 182; DEININGER (n. 9) 178; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2] 331; LEHMANN: Erwägungen (n. 9) 243, n. 15; BASTINI (n. 9) 139.

<sup>34</sup> “When the embassy <...> arrived in Rhodes, the assembly summoned to meet them proved very turbulent” (*The Histories of Polybios*. Trans. by E. S. SHUCKBURGH. V. 2. London – New York 1889, 395); “when the envoys <...> reached Rhodes, and the Rhodian senate met, the sitting was a very stormy one” (Polybios, *The Histories*. With an English Translation by W. R. PATON. V. 6. Cambridge, MA – London 1968, 65). In the new edition of the *Polybios-Lexikon* this passage is referred to demonstrate the meaning of βουλή as a “beratende Körperschaft”, while the same term – when related to the Achaian assemblies – is translated as “Rat, Ratsversammlung” (*Polybios-Lexikon* [n. 6] I 330).

between the two terms, explaining the passage in the following way: the embassy initially appeared before the council, and only thereafter did the embassy come to the assembly of the people.<sup>35</sup> A state council called βουλή did in fact exist in Rhodes, playing an important role in foreign affairs,<sup>36</sup> but, of course, it was the popular assembly, not “a senate”, as translated by W. Paton, that had to decide the question of which side Rhodes will take in the Roman–Makedonian War.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, both parts of the phrase καὶ συναχθείσης τῆς βουλῆς, παντάπασιν θορυβώδης ἣν ἐκκλησίᾳ should relate to the meeting of the people. It is hard to believe that Polybios would use so few words to describe a long and complex procedure of convening the council, discussing the issue at hand, making a preliminary decision and only then bringing the matter before the popular assembly, the meeting of which was a stormy one. There is no possibility of translating this phrase such that the traditional interpretation of the term βουλή is retained, unless we assume that the compiler of the *Excerpta de legationibus*<sup>38</sup> significantly reduced the original text of Polybios' passage and thereby distorted its meaning. But if the excerptor has reproduced the historian's words literally, as he usually does, then the phrase in question is another example of a very vague meaning of the term βουλή in the lexicon of Polybios.

Therefore, the fact that Polybios frequently uses the word βουλή as a synonym for σύνοδος should not be taken as a sufficient proof of the widespread theory that these regular meetings of the Achaians were sessions of the federal council. This theory appears to be quite refutable indeed: first of all, the mere existence of this council in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE is highly doubtful since no trace of its activities can be found in the sources, and furthermore, the term βουλή in the vocabulary of the Achaian historian does not necessarily mean “a council”.

### 3. HOW DID THE SYNODOS VOTE?

As already mentioned, the *synodos* prior to 217 BCE was certainly a primary assembly, this conclusion having been unanimously accepted by the scholars since the publication of Larsen's work. Soon after the end of the Social War, the Achaians should have carried out a reform of their federal political institutions dividing the decision-making competence between the *synodos* and the *synkletos*.<sup>39</sup> According to the view defended by Aymard, in the following period the *synodos* continued to be open to all citizens,

<sup>35</sup> WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 372 followed by BERTHOLD, R. M.: *Rhodes in the Hellenistic Age*. Ithaca – New York 1984, 38, n. 2; 191; GABRIELSEN, V.: *The Naval Aristocracy of Hellenistic Rhodes*. Aarhus–Oxford 1997, 158, n. 43.

<sup>36</sup> VAN GELDER, H.: *Geschichte der alten Rhodier*. Haag 1900, 242–245; BERTHOLD (n. 35) 38–40; GRIEB, V.: *Hellenistische Demokratie: politische Organisation und Struktur in freien griechischen Poleis nach Alexander dem Grossen*. Stuttgart 2008, 289–292.

<sup>37</sup> Scholars agree that the meeting described in this passage was that of the primary assembly (VAN GELDER [n. 36] 150; BERTHOLD [n. 35] 191; GABRIELSEN [n. 35] 158).

<sup>38</sup> On this collection of Polybian and other fragments, see MOORE, J. M.: *The Manuscript Tradition of Polybius*. Cambridge 1965, 137–167.

<sup>39</sup> AYMARD: *Les assemblées* (n. 3) 411–420; LARSEN: *Representative Government* (n. 3) 85–86, 92–94.



although in actuality it became a meeting of the political elite, which is why the most important matters were withdrawn from its competence.<sup>40</sup> Given the imprecise nature of the word βουλή in Polybios' lexicon, Aymard's theory is generally consistent with the evidence, in particular, with the constant references to large crowds of people attending the *synodoi*.

However, scholars supporting this point of view must find an answer to a very important question. If any Achaian citizen had access to the meeting, and each of those present could cast one vote in conformity with the usual Greek practice,<sup>41</sup> the assembly should have inevitably been dominated by local residents: by the citizens of Aigion and adjacent cities of Achaia until 188 BCE, and thereafter by the inhabitants of any city chosen to become the meeting-place. According to Rémy, the members of the federal council who represented all the cities were obliged to attend the *synodos* and their votes served as a counterweight to those of the local residents.<sup>42</sup> This supposition is based on the view that the regular assembly was a combined meeting of the council and the people, which has likewise been expressed by other scholars.<sup>43</sup> Leaving aside the question of whether a federal council existed in Polybios' time, it must be noted that this opinion comes into conflict with the passage Polyb. XXIX 24. 6 that explains the difference between the extraordinary assembly at Sikyon and the preceding *synodos*: "a *synkletos* was summoned at Sikyon, which was attended not only by the *boule*, but by all those over thirty years of age".<sup>44</sup> If βουλή should mean "a council", then it is certainly the *synkletos*, not the *synodos*, that could be called a joint meeting of the council and the people. Besides, the number of members of the supposed council should have numbered in the hundreds, not thousands, and Rémy himself has been forced to admit that the local residents made up the majority of any regular assembly.<sup>45</sup> It follows, therefore, that the decisions made at a *synodos*, whether it was a primary assembly or a joint session of the people and the council, always depended on where the meeting was held.

This *a priori* conclusion could also be confirmed, J. O'Neil claims, by Polybios' account of the *synodos* held in Corinth in the spring of 146 BCE, which was dominated by an unprecedented number of craftsmen and other working people (XXXVIII 12. 5). The Roman envoys were forced to leave the meeting-place "amid tumult and shouts" (XXXVIII 12. 4), and finally the crowd – at the influence of Critolaos – made a fateful decision to declare war on Sparta, which inevitably led to the clash with Rome (XXXVIII 13. 6). According to O'Neil, the result of the voting was predeter-

<sup>40</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 147–148, 162–163, 411–412.

<sup>41</sup> Most scholars who consider the *synodoi* to be meetings of the primary assembly, whether together with the council or not, agree that the voting was conducted on the principle of "one person – one vote": GIOVANNINI: Polybe (n. 2) 37; O'NEIL: Who Attended (n. 5) 46–47; WALBANK, F.: *Selected Papers*. Cambridge 1985, 30, n. 60 ("it is possible that in Achaea <...> *synodoi* employed voting by individuals"); RÉMY (n. 14) 111.

<sup>42</sup> RÉMY (n. 14) 111.

<sup>43</sup> WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 406–414; O'NEIL: Who Attended (n. 5) 41–49.

<sup>44</sup> For the interpretation of the passage, see above, n. 5.

<sup>45</sup> "Il s'y trouve en effet nécessairement plus de citoyens de la cité qui accueille l'assemblée que de citoyens des autres cités" (RÉMY [n. 14] 111).

mined by the fact that the assembly took place in Corinth, where the local workingmen – together with similar elements from some neighboring cities – could outnumber the representatives of rural regions, who were not so radically-minded.<sup>46</sup> This assertion can be challenged, however, because it would be hasty to consider the assembly held at Corinth to be an example of an ordinary *synodos* having been conducted strictly by the rules. Polybios' statement that the decisions made in Corinth were "illegal" (ψήφισμα παράνομον: XXXVIII 13. 7) may relate not only to their content, but also to the form of their approval by the meeting. In such an atmosphere of mass hysteria, neither a normal discussion of the arguments *pro* and *contra*,<sup>47</sup> nor the observance of the usual voting order were possible.

Besides, Polybios' account of the *synodos* does not imply that the pressure of the aggressive Corinthian crowd was opposed by any significant opposition representing the agricultural areas of the Peloponnese. On the contrary, as Polybios himself writes, "this mental illness infected all the cities" (πάσαι μὲν γὰρ ἐκορύζον αἱ πόλεις – XXXVIII 12. 5). His account of the Achaian War provides ample evidence that the anti-Roman sentiment encompassed all segments of society, whereas the opposition was weak and small in numbers.<sup>48</sup> Hence it follows that Polybios' reference to the unprecedented representation of lower classes at the meeting should be seen as explaining not so much the results of the vote, as the crowd's defiant behavior against the Roman embassy. The war could hardly have been avoided in the spring of 146 BCE, even if the assembly was convened not at Corinth, but at Aigion or elsewhere. In any case, the account of this meeting in Corinth cannot serve as proof that the decisions of the Achaian *synodos* crucially depended upon where it was held. A recently published document from Messene, in fact, provides evidence that is much more convincing to the contrary.

The Messenian decree *SEG* LVIII 370<sup>49</sup> is, for the most part, a long story recounting a territorial dispute between Messene and Megalopolis. The conflict over a few bor-

<sup>46</sup> O'NEIL: Who Attended (n. 5) 46.

<sup>47</sup> When the opposition tried to make a protest, Critolaos surrounded himself with armed guards and accused his opponents of treason (Polyb. XXXVIII 13. 1–4).

<sup>48</sup> "The overwhelming majority of the Achaians, disregarding class differences, went along with the independence movement, and only a small and insignificant minority was against it" (FUKS [n. 9] 281). See also GRUEN, E. S.: The Origins of the Achaian War. *JHS* 96 (1976) 46–69, here 64; BASTINI (n. 9) 208–212; DIDU, I.: *La fine della confederazione achea. Lotta politica e rapporti con Roma dal 180 al 146 a.C.* Cagliari 1993, 112–132; NOTTMAYER (n. 9) 121–145.

<sup>49</sup> The text of the *psephisma* has been published by P. THEMELIS (Κόμμα περὶ χώρας Μεσσηνίων καὶ Μεγαλοπολιτῶν. In ΠΙΚΟΥΛΑΣ, I. [ed.]: *Ιστορίες για την Αρκαδία*. Proceedings of the International Symposium in Honour of James Roy. Στεμνίτσα [Αρκαδίας] 2008, 211–221, here 212–214). For comments and interpretations, see THEMELIS 214–221; ARNAOUTOGLU, I.: Dispute Settlement between Poleis-members in the Achaian League. A New Source. *Dike. Rivista di storia del diritto greco ed ellenistico* 12/13 (2009/2010) 181–201; LURAGHI, N. – MAGNETTO, A.: The Controversy between Megalopolis and Messene in a New Inscription from Messene. *Chiron* 42 (2012) 509–548; THÜR, G.: Dispute over Ownership in Greek Law: Preliminary Thoughts about a New Inscription from Messene (*SEG* LVIII 370). In *Symposion 2011. Akten der Gesellschaft für griechische und hellenistische Rechtsgeschichte*. Bd. 23. Wien 2013, 293–316. The second part of the inscription containing other documents related to the arbitration still remains unpublished.

der areas, although apparently having a long history, resumed with greater force after the tragic events of 183 and 182 BCE, when the Messenians attempted to secede from the Achaian *koinon* and as a result, became involved in a war with the entire federation. In the spring of 182 BCE, Philopoimen, the *strategos* of the Achaians, was captured by the Messenians and died – allegedly being murdered – in prison. Soon thereafter, the Achaian army, under the leadership of the new *strategos* Lykortas, invaded Messenia and suppressed the uprising. The instigators of the rebellion – and those responsible for Philopoimen's death – either committed suicide or were executed, and Messenia was brought back to the federation.<sup>50</sup> The first lines of the new document record some important information related to the events that followed thereafter. Immediately after the defeat of the rebels, when the Achaian troops were still occupying the border areas of Messenia, the Megalopolitans approached the Achaians, demanding to tear away a part of the Messenian territory, which included the towns Endania (Andania) and Pylana, and to hand it over to Megalopolis, but they were refused.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, the Megalopolitans presented their territorial claims yet again, this time at an Achaian *synodos* held in Elis. The Megalopolitans extended the scope of their demands, having added two more areas to Endania and Pylana. Both sides then agreed to undergo an arbitration and the settlement process was begun (ll. 11–29). Now that Messenia has become again a member-state of the *koinon*, an arbitration remained the only way to resolve border disputes between this *polis* and other Achaian cities.<sup>52</sup> The Megalopolitans had no choice other than to call the Messenians to court, since their previous attempt to annex the disputed areas without any arbitration failed.

The episode in which “the Achaians” rejected the demand made by Megalopolis seems to be the most implicative for our purposes. What authority was competent enough to deal with such a request? The decision “not to transfer the Messenian land to the Megalopolitans” obviously went beyond the competence of the federal magistrates. The only body possessing the right to consider issues of such importance as territorial changes after the war should have been the federal assembly. A few years earlier – in 188 BCE – a perfectly analogous situation arose after the suppression of the rebellion

<sup>50</sup> The sources: Polyb. XXIII 9. 9–14; 12. 1–3; 16. 1–13; Liv. XXXIX 48. 5–50. 9; Plut. *Philop.* 18–21; Paus. IV 29. 11–12; VIII 51. 5–8. On the Messenian uprising and the chronology of events, see: AYMARD, A.: *Les premiers rapports de Rome et de la confédération achaienne*. Paris 1938, 274–275; ROEBUCK, C. A.: *A History of Messenia from 369 to 146 BC*. Chicago 1941, 98–100; ERRINGTON, R. M.: *Philopoemen*. Oxford 1969, 125–131, 189–190, 241–245; WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary V*. 3. (n. 2) 239–241; BASTINI (n. 9) 107–109; GRANDJEAN, C.: *Les Messéniens de 369 au Ier siècle de notre ère. Monnayages et histoire*. Athènes 2003, 227–228; LURAGHI–MAGNETTO (n. 49) 518–520; KRAALI, I. *The Hellenistic Peloponnese: Interstate Relations. A Narrative and Analytic History, from the Fourth Century to 146 BC*. Swansea 2017, 359–363.

<sup>51</sup> SEG LVIII 370, ll. 2–11: ἐπειδὴ κατασχόντων τῶν Ἀχαιῶν Ἐνδανίαν καὶ [Πυλ]άναν, τὰς δὲ πόλεος ἀποκατασ[ταθεῖ]ας εἰς τὴν συνπολιτείαν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἠθέλησαν Μεγ[αλοπολι]ταὶ διὰ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἀφελέ[σθαι] ἅμιν τάς τε πόλεις καὶ τὰν χώραν τὰν Ἐνδανίαν καὶ Πυλάναν πᾶσαν αἴτημα [--- c.10 ---] οὗ τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς, τῶν δὲ Ἀχαιῶν αὐτοῖς [ἀντ]ειπάντων μὴ κα περιθέμεν [Με]γαλοπολίταις τὰν Μεσσηνίων.

<sup>52</sup> On the procedures for settling territorial disputes within the Achaian *koinon*, see HARTER-UIBOPUU, K.: *Das zwischenstaatliche Schiedsverfahren im achäischen Koinon. Zur friedlichen Streitbeilegung nach den epigraphischen Quellen*. Köln 1998.

of Sparta. The Spartans were compelled to return to the Achaian *koinon*, and simultaneously, the Megalopolitans claimed their rights to Belbinatis, the border area which at that time belonged to Sparta. The problem was discussed in a federal assembly at Tegea and the decision fell to the favor of Megalopolis (Liv. XXXVIII 34. 5–8).<sup>53</sup> It was supposedly this precedent that encouraged the Megalopolitans to present similar claims on the border areas of Messenia, and again their request was to be brought before the assembly.

In a more or less coherent narrative of the events of the summer and early autumn of 182 BCE in the Peloponnese (Polyb. XXIII 16–18: two adjacent fragments of the manuscript *De legationibus*), Polybios mentions two Achaian assembly meetings held shortly after the suppression of the Messenian uprising. The first one had to answer the general question of what was to be done in Messenia (ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν ὅλων διάληψις), “and, as if on purpose, the Achaians just then assembled again for the second *synodos* at Megalopolis” (καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες συνέβαινε τότε πάλιν συνάγεσθαι τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς εἰς Μεγάλην πόλιν ἐπὶ τὴν δευτέραν σύνοδον – Polyb. XXIII 16. 12). Later, “when an embassy from Rome arrived in Lakedaimon with the answer of the Romans, the Achaian *strategos*, as soon as he had settled all the affairs related to Messenia, immediately summoned the people in Sikyon” (Polyb. XXIII 17. 5). This latter meeting, which was to decide on the question of the readmission of Sparta into the Achaian federation (Polyb. XXIII 17. 5–18. 3), was by all signs a *synkletos*.<sup>54</sup> Both meetings took place when Lykortas was still the Achaian *strategos*. It was previously assumed that Lykortas held this position until the fall of the next year (181 BCE),<sup>55</sup> but since the discovery of the Messenian inscription, it is known that in September or October 182 BCE, the Achaians elected a new *strategos*,<sup>56</sup> Apollonidas from Sikyon (*SEG* LVIII 370, ll. 30–31).

Thus, in the period from June to October 182 BCE, the Achaians held four meetings of the assembly:

- 1) The *synodos* at Megalopolis – probably conducted in May or June – that elected Lykortas *strategos* in place of Philopoimen (Plut. *Philop.* 21. 1).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Most scholars believe that the assembly at Tegea was a *synkletos* (LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 175; ERRINGTON [n. 51] 138; BRISCOE, J.: *A Commentary on Livy. Books 38–40*. Oxford 2008, 117). However, there are sufficient grounds to oppose this view. The agenda of the meeting consisted of several issues, not only one as at a *synkletos*. None of these questions was so urgent as to convene an extraordinary meeting, so the assembly at Tegea should have been a *synodos*.

<sup>54</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 205, 236; LARSEN: Representative Government (n. 3) 177; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2], 200; RÉMY (n. 14) 111.

<sup>55</sup> AYMARD, A.: *Études d'histoire ancienne*. Paris 1967, 39–42; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 248, 258–259.

<sup>56</sup> The date of the Achaian elections in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE varied within the period from late September to early November (AYMARD: Les assemblées [n. 3] 261–262).

<sup>57</sup> Philopoimen died in May or June, “when the corn was ripe” (Paus. IV 29. 11). As already noted (n. 3), the fact that the purpose of the assembly was the holding of elections – although ahead of time – indicates that it was a *synodos* (LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 178; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary [n. 2], 241, 408, 410). It seems much less plausible that the extraordinary circumstances (the

- 2) The “second *synodos*”<sup>58</sup> at Megalopolis, in which the issues concerning Messenia had been discussed “in general” (Polyb. XXIII 16. 12–17. 2).
- 3) The *synkletos* at Sikyon summoned to consider the Roman proposals regarding Sparta (Polyb. XXIII 17. 5–18. 3).
- 4) The *synodos* that elected Apollonidas *strategos* in September or October.

Since the Achaians came together for regular meetings four times a year, there should have been one more *synodos* in 183/2 BCE, not recorded in the extant part of the 23<sup>rd</sup> book of Polybios. The most appropriate time for this *synodos* would have been one of the spring months,<sup>59</sup> while Philopoimen was still alive.

To which of these assemblies was addressed the demand to annex Messenian territories for the benefit of Megalopolis? The Messenian decree specifies that by this time, Messenia had already been brought back to the federation, and that the Achaian troops now occupied the disputed border areas (*SEG* LVIII 370, ll. 2–5). The *synodos* that elected Lykortas was summoned before the end of the campaign, and therefore could not have been the assembly in question. The *synkletos* at Sikyon, according to the Achaian laws, had to deal with only one matter, due to which it was convened (*Liv.* XXXI 25. 9), and it was related to Sparta, not Messenia. The *synodos* of September or October which elected the new *strategos* is not mentioned in the sources, but the probability that the Megalopolitans raised the issue of disputed territories in this meeting seems to be negligible. Firstly, in the *Histories* of Polybios, there are many accounts of Achaian assemblies electing a *strategos*, but the agenda of this kind of *synodos* never included any subjects other than elections. Secondly, with the advent of autumn it was too late to demand the annexation of Messenian territories: the uprising had been suppressed two or three months before the meeting took place, the Achaian troops should have been withdrawn from the disputed areas, the general indignation at the tragic death of Philopoimen was not so acute and the Messenian problems had already been settled by Lykortas. Therefore, one can hardly imagine that the Megalopolitans did not raise their territorial claims immediately after the end of the campaign, in hot pursuit, instead postponing their appeal to the Achaians before the day of elections.

Thus, by elimination we are led to the following obvious conclusion: the request of Megalopolis was addressed to the “second *synodos*” which met shortly after the end of hostilities and had to elaborate general regulations concerning Messenia. It was at this meeting that the readmission of Messenia to the federation was essentially approved; moreover, at the same time (κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον) three towns – namely Abia, Thuria and Pharai – seceded from Messenia and joined the Achaian *koinon* as autonomous *poleis* (Polyb. XXIII 17. 1–2). There can be no doubt that the secession

death of Philopoimen) would have caused an unprecedented violation of the usual order of elections and the convening of a *synkletos* (so AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 213, 234; RÉMY [n. 14] 113).

<sup>58</sup> The assembly was the second regular meeting in the Achaian year 183/2 BCE, and the second consecutive one held at Megalopolis (AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3], 274; LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 178–179; WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary* [n. 2] 248–249).

<sup>59</sup> Every year one of the *synodoi* was definitely held in the period from February to April (AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 275).



of these communities and their admission to the *koinon* was sanctioned by the same assembly. The fundamental question of whether to preserve the territorial integrity of Messenia, therefore, was resolved negatively. Could the Megalopolitans have found a better moment to present territorial claims to Messenia? The annexation of some border areas could be justified as yet another punishment for the revolt and for the alleged murder of Philopoimen, who had been buried with great honors not long before. Moreover, the federal *strategos* who presided over the assembly was a Megalopolitan, and, most important of all, the meeting itself was held at Megalopolis. These facts leave no room for any doubt that the demand recorded in the inscription was announced by the Megalopolitans at the "second *synodos*" in their own city.<sup>60</sup>

The identification of the place in which the request presented by the Megalopolitans was rejected can provide the grounding for a new approach to the question of the Achaian *synodos*' composition. If the meeting at Megalopolis were a primary assembly accessible to any adult citizen, the majority of participants would certainly have represented Megalopolis, a city of considerable size,<sup>61</sup> as well as other communities of the southwestern part of Arkadia. Their opponents, the Messenians, could also have attended the meeting in large numbers at nearby Megalopolis, but they did not have the right to vote before their formal readmission to the *koinon* confirmed by an agreement which was approved by the Achaian *synodos* much later, probably in the spring of 181 BCE (Polyb. XXIV 2. 3).<sup>62</sup> The citizens of the other Achaian *poleis* had to make a long and difficult journey to Megalopolis from the Eastern and Northern Peloponnese,<sup>63</sup> and those of them who came to the assembly obviously could not have outnumbered the Megalopolitans and their supporters from the neighboring Arkadian cities. Nevertheless, the *synodos* decreed that the Messenian land would not be transferred to the Megalopolitans (*SEG* LVIII 370, ll. 9–11).

Hence follows an important conclusion: the meeting-place of a *synodos* did not have a significant impact on its decisions. The same inference may be drawn from the results of elections that were held annually at one of the *synodoi*. If the electoral meeting were a popular assembly accessible to all citizens, then the candidates from Aigion – the meeting place of all the *synodoi* until 188 BCE (Liv. XXXVIII 30. 2–3) – should have had a major advantage over the rest of the competitors. However, in the list of the Achaian *strategoi* who held the office from 255 to 189 BCE, not a single representative

<sup>60</sup> Those scholars who have commented on the inscription have likewise come to the same conclusion (LURAGHI–MAGNETTO [n. 49] 524; THÜR [n. 49] 301; KRAALI [n. 50] 364).

<sup>61</sup> In 217 BCE, the Megalopolitans constituted about a sixth of all the Achaeans liable for military service (Polyb. V 91. 7). With the growth of the federation, this share has decreased, but it was still a considerable one in the summer of 182 BCE, at which time neither Sparta nor Messenia were members of the *koinon*.

<sup>62</sup> For the date, see WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2] 17, 255.

<sup>63</sup> For example, a journey on foot from Aigion to Megalopolis took three days (Polyb. II 55. 1). The citizens of Sikyon, Argos or Corinth had to cover a much longer distance. For the time needed in antiquity for walking between the main cities of the Peloponnese, see the table in: SHIPLEY, G.: Approaching the Macedonian Peloponnese. In GRANDJEAN, C. (éd.): *Le Péloponnèse d'Épaminondas à Hadrien*. Bordeaux 2008, 53–68, here 59, fig. 1.

of Aigion is to be found.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the procedure of voting at the *synodos* had to differ from the order adopted in Greek primary assemblies, in which decisions were taken by a simple majority of all those present. In the past, some proponents of the idea that the *synodos* was a popular assembly<sup>65</sup> have expressed the same view on the basis of the following *a priori* considerations: in determining the course of the Achaian policy, the communities poorly represented at the meeting because of their small size, or because of their distant location, or likewise due to a lack of habits of active participation in the political life of the federation, should also have possessed the opportunity to influence the outcome of the voting. Therefore, these scholars have supposed that the procedure adopted at a *synodos* was that of voting “by cities”, not by individuals.

This is the way in which the voting was organized at an extraordinary meeting of the Achaians, i.e. a *synkletos*. This kind of procedure follows from a long account of the assembly at Sikyon in 198 BCE, which Livy (XXXII 19. 5–23. 3) borrowed from a lost part of Polybios’ *Histories*. At that extraordinary meeting, the Achaians had to make the vital decision of whether or not to break the alliance with Makedonia, moving instead to the side of Rome. The *synkletos*, according to the Achaian laws, lasted three days: the first day was reserved for the submission of proposals, the second for discussion,<sup>66</sup> and the third for voting.<sup>67</sup> Even before the casting of votes, the delegations of all the *poleis* (*universi populi*: Liv. XXXII 22. 2) had each determined its common opinion and had begun to argue with each other. The vast majority of communities (*omnibus fere populis*: XXII 22. 8) was inclined to approve of the alliance with Rome, so all the delegates from Dyme, Megalopolis and some from Argos left the meeting (XXXII 22. 8–11); the remaining *poleis*, when they were called on to vote (*ceteri populi, cum sententias perrogarentur*), agreed to the proposed resolution (XXXII 23. 1). Later, at an extraordinary meeting in 189 BCE, the war against Sparta was declared “with the approval of all communities” (*omnium civitatum consensu*: Liv. XXXVIII 32. 1). These remarks of Livy clearly demonstrate that at a *synkletos*, the votes were cast and counted “by cities”,<sup>68</sup> and the only subject of dispute is how many votes belonged to each city. Some scholars favor the simple scheme of “one city

<sup>64</sup> A long time ago, this argument was already adduced by AYMARD: *Les assemblées* (n. 3) 386–387.

<sup>65</sup> SZANTO, E.: *Das griechische Bürgerrecht*. Freiburg 1892, 122–123; FRANCOIS, H.: *La polis grecque*. Paderborn 1907, 158; AYMARD: *Les assemblées* (n. 3) 393.

<sup>66</sup> Polybios (XXIX 24. 10) also confirms that at a *synkletos*, the speeches *pro* and *contra* were to be delivered on the second day.

<sup>67</sup> *Superaret unus iusti concilii dies; tertio enim lex iubebat decretum fieri* (Liv. XXXII 22. 4).

<sup>68</sup> This is the *communis opinio* among the scholars, with the only exception of A. GIOVANNINI (*Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sympolitie in Griechenland*. Göttingen 1971, 37, n. 31), in whose opinion the voting system “by cities” should have been a violation of the general principles of Greek democracy. Against this view, it may be argued that the mechanisms of democracy in a single polis vs. in a large federal state could not be identical.

– one vote”,<sup>69</sup> while the others believe that the votes were distributed among the cities on a *pro rata* basis, so that the number of votes depended on the size of each *polis*.<sup>70</sup>

The assumption that the same voting system was employed at the meetings of the *synodos* helps to explain how the decisions of a popular assembly could be contrary to the will of its majority which consisted of local residents. But at the same time, this assumption creates new difficulties. Unlike the *synkletos* which had to discuss only one subject and to make only one decision,<sup>71</sup> the agenda of a regular assembly, perhaps excepting electoral meetings, could include a vast array of issues, each of which, furthermore, had to be discussed and resolved separately. For instance, the *synodos* held in the spring of 185 BCE had at least four different items on its agenda: (1) the report of the embassy that came back from Rome; (2) the proposal to renew the alliance with Egypt; (3) the promise of a large monetary gift from Eumenes II announced by his envoys; (4) the proposal to resume the alliance with Seleucos IV coupled with his offer to supply the federation with a number of warships. Each of these issues was considered in turn – each causing their own debate –, the ambassadors and others delivered long speeches, and once the decision was made, the assembly moved on to the next question (Polyb. XXII 7. 1–9. 14). Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that the same *synodos* additionally had to deal with issues not considered important enough as to warrant being recorded by the historian. This process took place in the same order (the proposal and subsequent discussion, followed by a decision and immediately thereafter the posing of the next question) at the regular assemblies in 181 and 169 BCE (Polyb. XXIV 2. 1–5; XXVIII 12. 1–9).

At the aforementioned meeting of 185 BCE, when two orators persuaded the assembly not to accept Eumenes' gift, the Achaians rejected the offer unanimously “with clamor” (πάντας δὲ μετὰ κραυγῆς ἐκβαλεῖν τὴν προτεινομένην δωρεάν – Polyb. XXII 8. 13). This phrase is hardly appropriate to describe a long and complex procedure of voting “by cities”. Aymard rightly points out that this case should not be taken as a typical sample of voting: all the speakers suggested the same resolution, no one spoke against it, and thus the counting of votes was not required since there was consensus among the participants. However, Aymard is forced to admit that in the opposite situation, i.e. one in which various points of view were expressed in speeches, the procedure should have been different.<sup>72</sup> The debates between the representatives of adversarial political groups at the Achaian *synodoi* are quite often mentioned by

<sup>69</sup> SZANTO (n. 65) 122; FRANCOTTE (n. 65) 242; SWOBODA (n. 12) 398; BUSOLT (n. 9) 1559; WALBANK, F.: *Aratus of Sicyon*. Cambridge 1933, 37; BRISCOE, J.: *A Commentary on Livy. Books 31–33*. Oxford 1973, 211.

<sup>70</sup> SWOBODA, H.: Die neuen Urkunden aus Epidauros. *Hermes* 57 (1922) 518–533, here 521–522; SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1253; LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 96; LEHMANN: Erwägungen (n. 9) 258. Other scholars leave this question open: TARN (n. 1) 739; AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 381–386; ROY, J.: The Achaian League. In BURASELIS, K. – ZOUMBOULAKIS, K. (eds): *The Idea of European Community in History. Aspects of Connecting Poleis and Ethne in Ancient Greece*. Vol. 2. Athens 2003, 81–96, here 87.

<sup>71</sup> Liv. XXXI 25. 9: *non licere legibus Achaeorum de aliis rebus referre, quam propter quas convocati essent* (see AYMARD: Les assemblées [n. 3], 347; LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 94).

<sup>72</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 391–393.

Polybios, but Aymard does not specify how the counting of votes was organized in such a case.

If the *synodos* was a meeting of the primary assembly, then any procedure of voting “by cities” would have been a long and complicated process. At a *synkletos*, this process took an entire day. During the regular session of the assembly, this manner of voting should have required a number of long breaks in the meeting. Each time when one or another item of the agenda provoked a debate and different proposals were offered, the meeting would have had to be interrupted, the delegates representing each polis having to hold their own meetings in order to identify the opinion of the majority, and only after this would the cities be able to cast their votes. If the voting procedure at a *synodos* was similar to the way of counting votes in the Roman *comitia centuriata* and *comitia tributa* of the time, and representatives of the Achaian authorities interrogated the delegations in turn, with each citizen expressing his personal opinion, the voting process would have taken an even longer time. The expenses of time could have been reduced by a secret ballot (ψηφοφορία), but in the Greek states, as a rule, such a procedure was used to resolve questions related to individuals, but not those relating to issues of public policy.<sup>73</sup> In any case, the decision-making procedure at a *synodos* – as described by Polybios – appears much more dynamic.

In the time of Polybios, the popular assemblies in Greek states like Rhodes approved the political decisions by a vote taken by hands (χειροτονία: Polyb. XXIX 10. 1). The historian does not mention “raising hands” in his accounts of the Achaian assemblies, but in Plutarch’s biographies of Aratos (35. 7) and Philopoimen (12. 5), the voting procedure in the elections of the Achaian *strategos* is called χειροτονία. Aymard does not attach much importance to this piece of evidence and confines himself to a remark that Plutarch could not be aware of the detailed rules under which the Achaian meetings were held, further arguing that the word χειροτονία itself should not necessarily be understood literally.<sup>74</sup> It is true, the Greek authors in the time of the Roman Empire could have used the term χειροτονία in the sense of “elections”

<sup>73</sup> In the Athenian *ekklesia* the ψηφοφορία, in addition to the procedure of ostracism, was used for granting individual privileges, and the secret ballot, so as not to interrupt the course of the session, was held just before the beginning of the next meeting (Andoc. I 87; [Demosth]. LIX 89–90). In the collection of inscriptions from Magnesia on the Maeander, only three of the many decrees issued by the popular assembly contain information on the number of votes cast for and against the proposal (i.e. on the outcome of the secret ballot), and in all three cases it comes to the granting of individual honors (IMagnesia. 92a, 92b, 94). For other sources, see GAUTHIER, PH.: Les cités hellénistiques: épigraphie et histoire des institutions et des régimes politiques. In PELEKIDES, C. – PEPPAS-DELMOUSOU, D. – PETRAKOS, B. (eds): *Proceedings of the VIII International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*. Athens 1984, 82–107, here 95–99. The Greeks apparently followed the principle according to which a citizen of the democratic state could keep secret his opinion regarding this or that person, but had to express openly his position on public affairs (HALL, U.: Greeks and Romans and the Secret Ballot. In CRAIK, E. M. [ed.]: *Owls to Athens: Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover*. Oxford 1990, 191–199, here 192–193). Therefore, it is not possible to share the view of Aymard who argues that the Achaians used a secret ballot for counting votes at a *synkletos*, having based his supposition solely on the reasoning that such voting would have been more convenient. Aymard, however, rejects the possibility that the ψηφοφορία was used at a *synodos* (AYMARD: Les assemblées [n. 3] 380, 389, 403).

<sup>74</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 390–391.

in general, no matter the way in which the vote was carried out. However, in the *Lives* of his Athenian heroes, Plutarch mentions χειροτονία only in those cases when the Athenians voted by show of hands (*Themist.* 6. 1; *Nic.* 12. 4; *Phoc.* 35. 2). In the biography of Marcellus (24. 7), the term is also used in its literal sense, when Plutarch says that under the dictatorship there is no possibility for the citizens to express their will either by ψηφοφορία, or by χειροτονία. The only phrase in which the word χειροτονία stands for “elections” in general and not for “show of hands”, can be found in *Parallela minora* (12), which is included in some editions of Plutarch (this passage as *Mor.* 308E), but the attribution of this work to Plutarch is extremely doubtful. There is a large probability that in the *Lives* of Aratos and Philopoimen, χειροτονία also carries the literal meaning of “voting by show of hands”, since this procedure could accurately be so called, or even described in the sources, which served as a basis for the biographies of the Achaian *strategoi* (Aratos' memoirs, Polybios's essay on Philopoimen or the lost parts of his *Histories*). An indirect evidence in favor of this view has been discovered by D. Orsi: in Plutarch's account based entirely on Polyb. IV 82. 6–7 (since these events were not recorded in Aratos' memoirs), the biographer employs a participle συναρχαιρεσιάζας (helping for canvassing in elections) derived from ἀρχαιρεσιάζειν – the word designating elections that he had found in this passage of Polybios (*Arat.* 48. 1). Therefore, according to Orsi, the word χειροτονία in Plut. *Arat.* 35. 7 may also have been borrowed from the primary source, this time the memoirs of the Achaian statesman.<sup>75</sup> Summing up, the most probable kind of voting procedure exercised at a *synodos* must have been the show of hands.

#### 4. THE SYNODOS AS AN ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATIONS

Thus the Achaian *synodos* – in some respects – looked like a primary assembly of a large *polis*. It was a vivacious – at times likely quite noisy – meeting of several thousand people that observed various reports and proposals made by the federal officials, ambassadors, prominent politicians and other speakers. Some questions the assembly was able to resolve at once, approving or rejecting the proposal with a clamor, while others required a voting by show of hands, which likewise did not take much time; most likely, in many cases the precise count of votes was not carried out at all, with the officials presiding over the assembly simply assessing the majority on a rough estimate of the raised hands, as probably was done in the Athenian *ekklesia*.<sup>76</sup> In the case of an emergency the *synodos*, like the popular assembly in a city-state, could be substituted by an army-meeting.<sup>77</sup> However, the Achaian *synodos* was not a primary assembly in the strict sense. Given the conclusion that the outcome of the voting at a *synodos* did

<sup>75</sup> ORSI D. P.: Commento. In MANFREDINI, M. – ORSI D. P. (edd): *Plutarco. Le Vite di Arato e di Artaserse*. Milano 1987, 228–229.

<sup>76</sup> HANSEN, M. H.: How did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote? In HANSEN, M. H.: *The Athenian Ecclesia: A Collection of Articles 1976–1983*. Copenhagen 1983, 103–121, here 107–108.

<sup>77</sup> Plut. *Philop.* 21. 1. On the interpretation of this passage, see n. 3 above.



not depend on its location, and further that the local residents could not dominate the assembly, then the only solution to the problem of who attended the regular Achaian assemblies can be the following: the *synodos* was a meeting of delegations representing all the communities of the *koinon*, each delegation consisting of a strictly defined number of members. This is the only way in which the principle of people's rule, together with the representative character of the assembly, as well as the necessity to make the decision-making process quick and efficient, could have been combined.

Within the numerical limit established by the federation, each *polis* had to create its list of delegates at its own discretion. Since the number of citizens in attendance at a regular federal assembly, as mentioned above, could well exceed six thousand, and further considering that in the period from 182 to 146 BCE the *koinon* comprised about 60 autonomous communities,<sup>78</sup> the average delegation should have numbered approximately 100 men. However, the number of representatives of each city could hardly have been the same. The necessity to break away from everyday activities in order to send a hundred citizens four times a year to another city – in some cases, on the other side of the Peloponnese – would have been a heavy burden for the towns like those that seceded from Messenia (Korone, Kolonides, Asine, Abia, Thuria and Pharai), as well as for small communities of Pagai and Aigosthena – the former *komai* of Megara – since the citizens enjoying full rights in these *poleis* numbered in the hundreds, not the thousands. In small towns located in Southern Arkadia, like Asea or Thisoa, it would have been quite difficult to find a hundred wealthy and politically active citizens who could spend seven or eight days (including travel time) to attend a *synodos* in Corinth or Sicyon without any serious detriment to the household economy. Therefore, the theory that at a *synodos*, the number of representatives of each Achaian *polis* should have been proportional to its population, seems to be the most probable.<sup>79</sup> It is tempting to suggest that the size of delegations could have varied in the same ratio of 3:2:1 that served as the basis for the formation of the federal board of *nomographoi*, in which major *poleis* were represented by three “law-givers”, the middle-size cities by two members, the small communities by one, with some of the latter sending a representative to the board in turn, one after another,<sup>80</sup> but this conjecture cannot be confirmed by the evidence

<sup>78</sup> The member-states are listed in a number of inscriptions; see the collection of documents in WARREN, J.: *The Bronze Coinage of the Achaian Koinon. The Currency of a Federal Ideal*. London 2007, 152–154; for an overview of all sources demonstrating which cities participated in the *koinon*, see LÖBEL, Y.: *Die Poleis der bundesstaatlichen Gemeinwesen im antiken Griechenland: Untersuchungen zum Machtverhältnis zwischen Poleis und Zentralgewalt bis 167 v. Chr.* Alessandria 2014, 43–79. The exact figure cannot be determined because some small communities, for instance, several towns of Triphylia, were of uncertain status within the *koinon*. However, the general impression is that the total number of autonomous *poleis* that made up the federation, could not have been much greater than sixty.

<sup>79</sup> The supposition that the Achaian cities had different numbers of votes at the assembly was expressed long ago by those scholars believing that the *synodos* was a meeting of the council (SWOBODA: *Die neuen Urkunden* [n. 70] 521–522; SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1253; LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 96; LEHMANN: *Erwägungen* [n. 9] 258).

<sup>80</sup> This assumption made by A. D. RIZAKIS (*L'expérience de l'organisation inter civique et supra civique dans la confédération achéenne*. In LOMBARDO, M. – FRISONE, F. [eds.]: *Forme sovrapoleiche e interpoleiche di organizzazione nel mondo greco antico. Atti del convegno internazionale, Lecce 17-20 settembre 2008*. Galatina 2010, 274–292, here 278, n. 138; RIZAKIS: *The Achaian League* [n. 13] 127)

in its present state. In any case, the smaller communities may well have delegated a few dozen people to the *synodos*, with the larger cities being represented by several hundred.

If this supposition is correct, the *synodos* resembled a popular assembly more than a state council not only due to the number of participants.<sup>81</sup> Unlike the council of a Greek state, the *synodos* did not work on a permanent basis, being summoned for a few days four times a year,<sup>82</sup> and it did not perform the functions of a *probouleutic* body. Furthermore, the *synodos* made ultimate decisions on those matters that in democratic states fell under the exclusive competence of the people's assembly, for instance, the election of state officials. Besides, the very fact that the *synodos* was attended by so large a mass of people suggests that the list of participants did not remain fixed each year. For example, citizens unable to represent their community at a spring meeting could be substituted by others, instead attending the summer assembly. In contrast, the list of the council members in a Greek state could not vary from one meeting to another. Nevertheless, the meeting of the *synodos*, unlike that of a primary assembly, was not open to all citizens wishing to attend it.

The proposed suggestion may help to explain why the regular assembly of the Achaians in the epigraphic documents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE is called neither ἐκκλησία nor βουλή, but is designated officially only as σύνοδος (Syll.<sup>3</sup> 675; *IOLympia* 46; *SEG* LVIII 370). The Achaians could nonetheless have referred to the *synodos* using other – not so official – terms, such as ἀγορά and βουλή. Polybios tried to alternate these terms for stylistic reasons, as he did likewise in the 6<sup>th</sup> book, in which the Roman senate is sometimes referred to as σύγκλητος, sometimes συνέδριον, while the title of the consul is either ὑπάτος or στρατηγός (Polyb. VI 11. 11 – 18. 9). The generally accepted Greek terms for “senate” and “consul” in Polybios' time were σύγκλητος and στρατηγός ὑπάτος, but in a literary narrative, the author had to diversify his vocabulary, not simply using the official names of institutions, but also their synonyms. In like manner, Polybios alternates the words σύνοδος, βουλή and ἀγορά, when he mentions

is applied to the distribution of seats in the alleged federal council. For the composition of the board of nomographoi, see *IG* IV 1<sup>2</sup>. 73; *SEG* LVIII 417; LEHMANN: Erwägungen (n. 9) 245–248; GSCHNITZER, F.: Die Nomographenliste von Epidauros (*IG* IV 1<sup>2</sup>. 73) und das Achäische Bund im späten 3. Jh. v. Chr. *ZPE* 58 (1985) 103–116; RIZAKIS, A. D.: Le collège des nomographes et le système de représentation dans le koinon achéen. In BURASELIS, K. – ZOUMBOULAKIS, K. (eds): *The Idea of European Community in History. Aspects of Connecting Poleis and Ethne in Ancient Greece*, V. 2. Athens 2003, 97–109; SIZOV, S.: Two Lists of the Achaian *Nomographoi*. *ZPE* 198 (2016) 101–109.

<sup>81</sup> The average number of citizens who attended the Athenian *ekklesia* was about 6,000 (HANSEN, M. H.: How Many Athenians Attended the Ecclesia? In: HANSEN The Athenian Ecclesia [n. 76] 1–20). As mentioned above, almost the same figure can be deduced from indirect evidence of the size of the Achaian *synodos*.

<sup>82</sup> In contrast, at least some of the federal councils that existed in other *koina* were occupied with continuous work. An implicative evidence on this matter can be found in the treaty between the Aitolians and the Akarnanians (probably 271 or 270 BCE; DANY, O.: *Akarnanien in Hellenismus. Geschichte und Völkerrecht in Nordwestgriechenland*. München 1999, 70–80). The *synedroi* of the Akarnanian *koinon*, together with the *strategoí* and other officials, were declared responsible for sending troops to the aid of the Aitolians in case of war. This means that not only the magistrates, but also the Akarnanian *synedrion* was involved in the current administrative work.

the regular assembly of the Achaians. It has been convincingly demonstrated that Polybios used to avoid official bureaucratic style of wording (*Kanzleistil*) referring to state institutions and procedures,<sup>83</sup> and his terminology applied to the Achaian assemblies is just another illustration of this habit.<sup>84</sup>

Since the Achaians in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE supposedly did not elect a federal council like that of the Akarnanians or Aitolians, the word βουλή came to be associated with the meeting of delegations summoned four times a year, which was officially called σύννοδος, although before the reform, this institution was a people's assembly in the strict sense and even in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE still showed many signs of it. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why in Polybios' *Histories*, the word βουλή very rarely, if ever, stands for "council" and generally has a vague meaning,<sup>85</sup> whereas a state council is usually referred to as συνέδριον. Since βουλή became a synonym for σύννοδος, the meeting-place of the regular assembly could well be called βουλευτήριον (Polyb. II 50. 10; XXII 9. 6) and its participants βουλευταί.<sup>86</sup> The word βουλή seems to be used in precisely this sense in a much-discussed passage, Polyb. XXIX 24. 6: in the *synkletos*, in contrast to the preceding *synodos*, συνέβαινε μὴ μόνον συμπορεύεσθαι τὴν βουλήν, ἀλλὰ πάντας τοὺς ἀπὸ τριάκοντα ἐτών.<sup>87</sup> If βουλή here refers to the

<sup>83</sup> PALM, J.: Polybios und der Kanzleistil. *Årsberättelse. Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet* [Bulletin de la Société Royal des Lettres de Lund] 1956/57, 63–93; LEHMANN: Untersuchungen (n. 2) 349–351; KOEHN, C.: Polybios und die Inschriften: Zum Sprachgebrauch des Historikers. In GRIEB, V. – KOEHN, C. (Hrsg.): *Polybios und seine Historien*. Stuttgart 2013, 159–182. The only official Achaian term employed exactly and invariably throughout Polybios' work is στήλη – the inscription on stone commemorating the accession of one or another city to the *koinon* (KOEHN 181).

<sup>84</sup> This imprecise Polybios' terminology for the Achaian assemblies may have a political dimension as well (I am grateful to Dr. Craig Champion for suggesting me this idea). In fact, the historian often praises the "true democracy" peculiar to the Achaian state (II 38. 6 and elsewhere), but in his accounts of the federal assemblies he never mentions the Achaian δῆμος as a ruling body. In two passages (XXVIII 7. 4; XXXVIII 13. 6), the mass of people attending a *synodos* is called ὄχλος, and it seems important that in both cases the Achaians were inclined to follow the demagogic appeals. In all the other accounts of the assembly meetings of his own time, Polybios prefers to use rather vague terms like βουλή, βουλευταί, ἀγορά, οἱ πολλοί, τὸ πλῆθος, instead of δῆμος or ἐκκλησία, and it cannot be ruled out that this was a deliberate choice. Even the terminology may have contributed to creating in the reader's mind the impression that the Achaian *koinon* was by no means a state ruled by the mob.

<sup>85</sup> See *Polybios-Lexikon* (n. 6) I 330. The word is translated here either as "Beratschlagung", "Überlegung", "Beschluss" or as "beratende Körperschaft"; the third meaning is "Rat, Ratsversammlung der Achaier". No one passage in which βουλή is a precise term applied to a state council somewhere outside the Achaian *koinon* is cited in the *Lexikon*.

<sup>86</sup> Polyb. II 37. 10. Here Polybios lists those signs of political unity of the Achaian *koinon* that allow it to be likened to a large *polis*: the Achaians have the same laws, weights and measures, coins, officials, "councilors" and judges. The phrase contains obvious exaggerations: in addition to the federal laws, each *polis* possessed its own legislation, coins were minted by separate cities, although certain issues were consistent with the same standard and bore some federal symbols, a permanent federal court (such as the δικαστήριον of the Akarnanian *koinon*: IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>. 583, l. 74) is not attested by the sources, and in all known cases the judicial decisions were made by other authorities. The mention of "the same councilors" should likewise be considered a similar exaggeration: as we have seen, in the heyday of the Achaian *koinon*, the supposed federal council left no traces of its activities, and therefore the Polybian βουλευταί could be a denomination of a large group of citizens that attended the regular assemblies (see also AYMARD: Les assemblées [n. 3] 157–159).

<sup>87</sup> On the interpretation of the phrase, see note 5 above.

assembly of delegations, then the sentence must mean: “the *synkletos* was attended not only by those who had participated in the meeting of the *synodos*, but by all citizens over thirty years of age.”

## 5. THE SYNODOS AND DEMOCRACY

The suggestion offered in this study is not incompatible with those passages of Polybios where the historian praises the principle of “true democracy” (δημοκρατία ἀληθινή: Polyb. II 38. 6) as one of the most important foundations on which the Achaian political organization was based.<sup>88</sup> Discussing the character of two political and military leaders who died in the same year, Philopoimen and Scipio, Polybios points out that the former made his way to glory in a democratic state (ἐν δημοκρατικῷ πολιτεύματι: XXIII 12. 8), while the latter pursued fame in a state ruled by aristocracy (ἐν ἀριστοκρατικῷ πολιτεύματι: XXIII 14. 1). Here the historian recedes from his theory of the mixed constitution of the Roman republic, calling it “an aristocratic state”, with the purpose of emphasizing once again the democratic nature of the Achaian polity. As far as political institutions are concerned, the most obvious implication of this contrast is that the Achaians were not subject to the authority of a powerful council which consisted of life-members and was controlled by noble families. However, this does not mean that the Achaian people exercised direct power through a primary assembly for all important matters. As is well known, the idea of “true democracy” in Polybios' mind had nothing in common with the Athenian form of government that he likened to “an ungovernable ship” (Polyb. VI 44. 3). For him, democracy is not the limitless power of the mob, but above all the adherence of the people to traditional values – such as religion and respect for one's elders – as well as obedience to the laws and finally the decision-making by majority (Polyb. VI 4. 4–5).<sup>89</sup> The latter feature of democracy – ὅταν τὸ τοῖς πλείοσι δόξαν νικᾷ – appears to be worded with some uncertainty, because the historian does not specify whether decisions should be taken by the majority of the people or by that of a representative body, since a state ruled not by a citizen assembly, but by an elected council, may at times likewise be called democratic.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the

<sup>88</sup> See also Polyb. II 41. 5–6; 44. 6; IV 1. 5; XXII 8. 6; XXIII 12. 8. Democracy and concord were proclaimed the most important foundations of the *koinon* in the document *IOLympia* 46, l. 17–18: δα[μ]οκρατούμενοι καὶ τὰ ποθ' αὐτοὺς ὁμονοοῦντες οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ διατε[λ]ώντι εἰς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον.

<sup>89</sup> On this passage, see CHAMPION, C.: Polybian Demagogues in Political Context. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 102 (2004) 199–212 with earlier bibliography.

<sup>90</sup> In each of the four separate *merides* of Makedonia, which were declared independent states by the Romans after 168 BCE, the main power belonged to a *synedrion* (Liv. XLV 32. 2), and Polybios considered this political organization as a kind of democracy (δημοκρατικὴ καὶ συνεδριακὴ πολιτεία: Polyb. XXXI 2. 12). What συνεδριακὴ πολιτεία means is not certain. Larsen translates this phrase as “representative government” (LARSEN: Representative Government [n. 3] 104), but literally it means “a government based on a council” (WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. [n. 2] 467). M. PIÉRART (Penser Rome en Grec... Penser Rome en grec. In CURTY, O. [éd.]: *Epigraphie romaine et historiographie antique et modern*. Fribourg 2013, 21–34, here 29) interprets δημοκρατικὴ καὶ συνεδριακὴ πολιτεία as a Greek equivalent of Latin *populus senatusque*. Some scholars assume that the *merides* were ruled

arguments of Aymard – who cites Polybian statements related to the Achaian “true democracy” in an attempt to prove that every citizen should have had free access to the meetings of the *synodos*<sup>91</sup> – do not seem very convincing.

Nevertheless, the praising of the Achaian *koinon* as a model of democracy in Polybios’ work, as historical evidence, should not be rejected as a massive exaggeration motivated by patriotism. It is not by accident that Polybios found it possible to contrast Achaian democracy with the aristocratic nature of the Roman republic, even if the phrase was “an isolated comment apparently inserted in order to create a rhetorical antithesis”.<sup>92</sup> The historian certainly would not have made such a comparison if the political role of the Achaian *demos* did not in fact differ significantly from that of the *plebs Romana*. However, the assumption that after 217 BCE the Achaian *synodos* became a meeting of the federal council gives reason to believe that in both states the involvement of the people in political affairs was limited to almost the same extent. From this point of view, the Achaian federation was more democratic than the Roman republic in only one respect: the all-powerful state council had to pass an annual reelection in the *koinon*, whereas this was not the case in the *res publica*.<sup>93</sup> But the alleged elections of the councilors should have been held in the cities, so the federal primary assembly (*synkletos*) could be summoned only to discuss the most important matters of foreign policy. Moreover, the adoption of laws and even the election of the magistrates in the Achaian *koinon* – which fell within the competence of the Roman *comitia* – should have been the council’s business. If so, the antithesis offered by Polybios lacks almost any ground.

On the contrary, if the *synodos* was attended by thousands of people delegated by all the communities, then Polybios has good reason to insist on the democratic nature of the Achaian constitution. In his view, this large mass of people (οἱ πολλοί, τὸ πλῆθος, ὁ ὄχλος) constituted in fact a democratic assembly, regardless of whether or not the number of citizens representing each *polis* was limited. The federation did not establish any requirements, except for age and citizenship, to the participants of the assemblies, since it was the task of the cities, not federal authorities, to nominate their own delegates and send them to the meeting. If some citizens of the communities situated near the meeting-place were denied free access to the *synodos*, this could not be considered an anti-democratic measure, because these limitations were introduced to prevent the prevalence of local interests over those of the Achaian people in general.

by primary assemblies and that the *synedrion* could have been a representative council of Makedonia as a whole. On this discussion, see FEYEL, M.: Paul Émile et le synédriion macédonien. *BCH* 70 (1946) 187–198; AYMARD: *Études* (n. 55) 164–177; MUSTI (n. 5) 184–186; LARSEN: *Greek Federal States* (n. 17) 296–297; PAPAZOGLU, F.: *Les villes de la Macédoine à l’époque romaine*. Paris 1988, 55–64; TUCI, P.: La democrazia di Polibio tra eredità classica e federalismo. In BEARZOT, C. – LANDUCCI, F. – ZECCHINI, G. (edd): *Gli stati territoriali nel mondo antico. Contributi di storia antica I*. Milano 2003, 45–86, here 51–58.

<sup>91</sup> AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 137–138.

<sup>92</sup> WALBANK, F.: *Polybios, Rome and the Hellenistic World*. Cambridge 2002, 225.

<sup>93</sup> So GRIEB, V.: Polybios’ Wahre Demokratie und die Politeia von Poleis und Koina in den Historien. In GRIEB, V. – KOEHN, C. (Hrsg.): *Polybios und seine Historien*. Stuttgart 2013, 183–218, here 216.



As for the social aspect of the Achaian “true democracy”, it is impossible to argue against the assessment which has become a *communis opinio* in the scholarship, namely that most of those who attended the federal assembly belonged to the wealthy upper class.<sup>94</sup> Three pieces of evidence are the most indicative in this respect. Firstly, the Achaian politicians aimed at being elected *strategos* had to secure the favor of the *hippeis* (horsemen), i.e. the citizens of the upper property class, since their votes could play a decisive role (Polyb. X 22. 9; Plut. *Philop.* 7. 4). Secondly, the participants of the aforementioned *synodos* held in 185 BCE unanimously rejected the gift of 120 talents offered by Eumenes II and thus deprived themselves of the opportunity to receive salaries for attending the federal assembly (Polyb. XXII 7. 3–8. 13). Of course, they took such a decision due to patriotic motives, but it is easily noticeable that the people attending the meeting did not have much need for money.<sup>95</sup> Thirdly, the *synodos* of 146 BCE was attended by a large mass of working men, something “that had never happened before” (Polyb. XXXVIII 12. 5). Hence it follows that the people of lower classes made an attempt to dominate the assembly only once.<sup>96</sup> Thus the Achaian *koinon* was in fact ruled by the propertied elite. Nevertheless, there are no grounds to suppose that this distribution of power was granted by the constitution itself. A property qualification for enjoyment of full political rights could hardly have been prescribed by the federal laws and those of the city-states,<sup>97</sup> but *de facto* the people of modest means could not have afforded to leave their households and workshops for several days and cover long distances on foot four times a year. Thus the territorial dimensions of the *koinon* hindered the participation of the poor in the political life of the federation and provided great advantages to the well-off, especially those citizens who could travel on horseback (e.g. the aforementioned *hippeis*). The same delegates attended the federal assemblies time after time – whether consistently or taking turns – and they must have expected nothing but gratitude from their fellow citizens for fulfilling such a burden-

<sup>94</sup> NICCOLINI (n. 12) 216, 262; AYMARD: Les premiers rapports (n. 50) 30–32; WELWEI, K.-W.: Demokratie und Masse bei Polybios. *Historia* 15 (1966) 282–301, here 284–288; MUSTI (n. 5) 198–199; LEHMANN: Untersuchungen (n. 2) 377–386; LARSEN: Greek Federal States (n. 17) 232; OLIVA, P.: Die soziale Frage im hellenistischen Griechenland. *Eirene* 12 (1974) 47–62, here 56; MENDELS, D.: Polybios and the Constitution of the Achaian League: a Note. *Scripta classica israelica* 5 (1979/80) 85–93; WALBANK: The Hellenistic World (n. 17) 157; O’NEIL, J. L.: The Political Elite of the Achaian and Aitolian Leagues. *Ancient Society* 15/17 (1984/86) 33–61, here 42; SCHOLZ, P.: Demokratie in hellenistischer Zeit im Licht der literarischen Überlieferung. In MANN, CHR. – SCHOLZ, P. (Hrsg.): “Demokratie” im Hellenismus: von der Herrschaft des Volkes zur Herrschaft der Honoratioren? Mainz 2012, 28–55, here 34–36; GRIEB: Polybios’ Wahre Demokratie (n. 93) 215–217.

<sup>95</sup> See the comments of SCHWAHN (n. 3) 1256; WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 187–188.

<sup>96</sup> This could have occurred either because on this occasion the whole delegation of Corinth and those of some neighboring cities consisted of people from workshops who had pushed aside their wealthier fellow citizens, or because Critolao allowed free entry to the meeting for all the comers.

<sup>97</sup> See the convincing argumentation of AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 136–139. In more recent scholarship, the idea of *census* limitations in the Achaian *koinon* is supported only by LARSEN: Greek Federal States (n. 17) 232, n. 3 in a rather cautious manner; *contra*: WALBANK: A Historical Commentary V. 3. (n. 2) 401. The decisive evidence is Paus. VII 16. 9 (the *census* system instead of democracy in the Peloponnesian cities as a part of the Roman regulations worked out in 146 BCE).

some duty of representing their communities and defending the interests of their hometowns in the federal assembly. Such reasoning might indeed have inspired Polybios to praise the “true democracy” of the Achaians, ever the more so as the historian himself belonged to the Achaian elite since birth.<sup>98</sup>

## 6. THE BACKGROUND OF THE REFORM

The discussion related to the composition of the Achaian *synodos* did not, as a rule, go beyond the traditional choice between the primary assembly and the council, an alternative corresponding to the general idea of the political institutions of a Greek federal state as fundamentally modeled upon those of a single *polis*. This idea seems to be firmly established in the scholarship,<sup>99</sup> and cannot be doubted when applied to the majority of the Greek *koina*. However, some federal states of the Classical age (the Boiotians after 379 BCE and presumably the Chalkidians) could dispense with councils, the functions of which were performed either by the federal officials, or alternatively by the city councils of the predominant *poleis* (Thebes and Olynthos, respectively).<sup>100</sup> Contrariwise, several federations replaced the primary assembly with a representative council. This replacement was due either to the oligarchic nature of the constitution, as for example that of the Boiotian *koinon* of the early fourth century BCE as depicted by the Oxyrhynchos historian (XIX 2–4), or to the influence of a foreign power, such as the federation of the Thessalians organized by Flamininus after the Second Makedonian War (Liv. XXXIV 51. 4–6).<sup>101</sup> None of these two prerequisites could have affected the Achaian institutions before the Roman conquest. A reorganization of this kind might have been carried out in Achaia as late as 146 BCE, when Lucius Mummius

<sup>98</sup> For prosopography of the Achaian elite, see O'NEIL: *The Political Elite* (n. 94) 33–57. The question of what reasons Polybios had to believe in the democratic nature of the Achaian state is discussed at length in the following works: LEHMANN: *Untersuchungen* (n. 2) 382–385; MUSTI (n. 5) 167–170, 195–199; TUCI (n. 90) 58–75; VIRGILIO, B.: Polibio, il mondo ellenistico e Roma. *Studi ellenistici* 20 (2008) 315–346, here 324–329; SCHOLZ (n. 94) 34–36; GRIEB: Polybios' Wahre Demokratie (n. 93) 212–217.

<sup>99</sup> See, for instance, BUSOLT (n. 9) 1318; EHRENBERG (n. 13) 96; LARSEN: *Representative Government* (n. 3) 66; BECK H. – FUNKE, P.: *An Introduction*. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* (n. 13) 1–29, here 14.

<sup>100</sup> Most scholars agree that the government bodies of the Boiotian *koinon* in the time of Pelopidas and Epaminondas did not include a federal council (BUSOLT [n. 9] 1428; LARSEN: *Greek Federal States* (n. 17) 178; BUCKLER, J.: *The Theban Hegemony, 371 – 362 BC*. Cambridge, MA. 1980, 24; BECK: *Polis* (n. 15) 104, 170; BECK, H. – GANTER, A.: Boiotia and the Boiotian Leagues. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* (n. 13) 132–157, here 148; *contra*: BUCK, R. J.: *Boiotia and the Boiotian League, 432–371 BC*. Edmonton 1994, 106 (with some reservations in n. 19). The βουλὴ mentioned by Xen. *Hell.* VII 3. 5 is most likely the city council of Thebes (for discussion on this subject, see ORSI, D. P.: *La boule dei Thebani*. *Quaderni di Storia* 25 [1987] 125–144). The federal institutions of the Chalkidians remain obscure (see ZÄHRNT, M.: *The Chalkidike and the Chalkidians*. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* [n. 13] 341–357, here 355–356), but by analogy, in comparison with Boiotia – also a highly centralized state which was dominated by the main *polis* – it can be supposed that the Chalkidian *koinon* likewise had no federal council (so BECK: *Polis* [n. 15] 170).

<sup>101</sup> For other sources and a bibliography, see LARSEN: *Greek Federal States* (n. 17) 284–293; BOUCHON, R. – HELLY, B.: *The Thessalian League*. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* (n. 13) 231–249, here 240–247.

and the *decem legati* – according to Pausanias (VII 16. 9) – abolished democracies in Achaian cities and in their place established new governments based on property requirements.<sup>102</sup> Since the epigraphic documents confirm that the Achaian *koinon* – although considerably reduced in size – continued to exist under the Romans or, more probably, was revived soon after 146 BCE,<sup>103</sup> it seems plausible that the federal institutions had undergone the same changes as had the cities, and the constitution of the *koinon* was perhaps made similar to that of Thessalia, which was established half a century earlier.<sup>104</sup>

In contrast, when the Achaians undertook the reform of federal assemblies in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, they did it on their own accord, without any interference from abroad. What reason could they have had to discontinue the regular sessions of the primary assembly and to transfer the legislative and electoral powers to the alleged federal council? Larsen argues that the Achaians transferred these important powers from the primary assembly to the council because they were the first to realize the advantages of representative government in a large federation,<sup>105</sup> but he does not specify what particular political events or circumstances of that time could have suggested this idea to the Achaians. Larsen simply supposes that the reform had some connection with the transfer of the federal elections from spring to autumn in 217 BCE,<sup>106</sup> and consequently, might have been initiated by Aratos – a respected and influential leader – who presumably was the last *strategos* elected in the spring.<sup>107</sup> But what might have moti-

<sup>102</sup> For some doubts about the existence of *census* limitations after 146 BCE, see TOULOU MAKOS, J.: *Der Einfluss Roms auf die Staatsform der griechischen Stadtstaaten des Festlandes und der Inseln im ersten und zweiten Jhd. v. Chr.* Göttingen 1967, 11–13; GRUEN, E. S.: *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*. Berkeley 1984, 525; *contra*: SCHWERTFEGER, T.: *Der Achaische Bund von 146 bis 27 v. Chr.* München 1974, 65–66, n. 8; FERRARY, J.-L.: *Philhellénisme et impérialisme. Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique*. Roma 1988, 192–194; BARONOWSKI, D. W.: *Polybius and Roman Imperialism*. London – New York 2011, 143–144. R. M. KALLET-MARX (*Hegemony to Empire. The Development of the Roman Imperium in the East from 148 to 62 B.C.* Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford 1995, 65–74) supposed that the establishment of property requirements may have been a temporary measure.

<sup>103</sup> For the discussion on this matter, see SCHWERTFEGER (n. 102); WALBANK: *A Historical Commentary V. 3*. (n. 2), 734–735; KALLET-MARX (n. 102) 76–82. The existence of the Achaian *koinon* under the Roman rule is confirmed by a number of inscriptions dating from the first century BCE and later on.

<sup>104</sup> The sources fail to consider the constitutional framework of the Achaian *koinon* after 146 BCE, although some details might be revealed with the help of indirect evidence (SCHWERTFEGER [n. 102] 73–76). Since a *synedrion* seems to have been the key institution in the city of Dyme under the Roman rule (Syll<sup>3</sup>. 684), the *συνεδριακὴ πολιτεία* might have been established in the federation as a whole. For obvious parallels between the settlement undertaken by the Romans in Makedonia after 168 BCE and the regulations worked out by the commission headed by Mummius in 146 BCE, see SCHWERTFEGER (n. 102) 71–72; PIÉART (n. 90) 28–31.

<sup>105</sup> LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 85 (“It apparently was the Achaean Confederacy which first found government by primary assembly unsatisfactory and consequently for all intents and purposes adopted representative government”); LARSEN: *Greek Federal States* (n. 17) 223.

<sup>106</sup> However, it remains uncertain whether the elections mentioned in Polyb. V 106. 1 were held in the autumn of 217 and not in the spring of 216 BCE (AYMARD: *Les assemblées* [n. 3] 241–243; WALBANK, F.: *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*. V. 1. Oxford 1957, 630). The earliest reliably attested case that the elections were held in autumn is dated to 208 BCE (Polyb. XI 10. 9).

<sup>107</sup> LARSEN: *Representative Government* [n. 3] 92–93. Extending this idea, BASTINI (n. 9) 29–30 conjectured that in any case the reform took place before the death of Aratos.

vated him? In fact, during the Social War – as in earlier times – the decision-making system worked as usual; the regular assemblies of the people continued to uphold the policy of Aratos and the ruling group as a whole, and this support could be largely explained by the predominance of local residents in the meetings held in Aigion, which always remained a stronghold of federalism. Aratos and his associates simply had no political reasons to abolish the traditional prerogatives of the *ekklesia* only to arrange an experiment of introducing a more progressive form of government in the *koinon*. The theory that the *synodos* was transformed into a meeting of the council does not, therefore, seem plausible not only in view of the evidence, but also from a historical perspective.

Aymard – in whose opinion the reform of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE did not change the composition of the *synodos*, but withdrew the most important issues of foreign policy from its competence – emphasizes the need to reduce the negative effects of mass absenteeism by increasing the attendance of some meetings (the *synkletoi*), the agenda of which must have been so important as to attract a lot of ordinary citizens to the assembly.<sup>108</sup> This explanation makes sense, but the political background of the reform remains unclear, given that Aratos and his followers should have been quite satisfied with the *status quo*. The group of politicians headed by Aratos counted on the support of Sikyon and the cities of Achaia, i.e. the communities situated not very far from the meeting-place of the *synodoi*. The political elite of the other, more distant *poleis*, such as Megalopolis and Argos, should be expected to have had much greater interest in the reorganization of the assemblies. It seems most likely that the reform was carried out under pressure from this latter part of the Achaian political establishment. The peaceful period following two dangerous wars might have been the most suitable moment to demand a more equitable representation of cities in the federal assemblies. The most probable purpose of the reform was to eliminate the huge disproportions within the *synodos*, so that the residents of Aigion and nearby cities could not outnumber the rest of the participants.

However, the restrictions related to the number of representatives of each city appear to have been contrary to one of the main principles of Greek democracy: no citizen of appropriate age should have been deprived of his right to attend the assembly and to vote, no matter his place of living. Therefore, the most important issues were withdrawn from the competence of the *synodos* and reserved for the extraordinary assembly that was accessible to all. In both kinds of assemblies, the outcome of the voting did not depend on where the meeting was held, this aim being achieved by different means: at a *synkletos* by a long and complicated procedure of voting “by cities”, while at a *synodos* by the limitation imposed on the number of representatives from each *polis*. The exact date of the reform cannot be confirmed. Most likely, the events conjectured here might have taken place after Aratos’ death (213 BCE). As for the *terminus ante quem*, the new laws related to the division of competence between *synodos* and *synkletos* were already in force in 200 BCE (Liv. XXXI 25. 2–10).

<sup>108</sup> AYMARD: Les assemblées (n. 3) 412, 417.

## 7. THE ACHAIAN AND THE LYKIAN ASSEMBLIES

The Achaians did not invent the very system of representative government, but they probably were the first to apply the principle of proportional representation to a large assembly of citizens. Unfortunately, this innovation was implemented into the constitutional framework too late to be imitated by other Greek federations. Soon most of the *koina* fell under control of the Romans, who preferred to deal with councils rather than popular meetings and therefore introduced a *συνεδριακή πολιτεία* to Thessalia, Makedonia and some other regions. The only *koinon* that could have benefited from the Achaian experience was that of the Lykians, whose acquisition of independence and organization of a federal state is dated as late as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. Thus the Lykians might have patterned their federal institutions on those of the Achaian *koinon*, as suggested by recent works.<sup>109</sup> In the famous account of the Lykian constitution written by Strabo (XIV 3. 3) and probably derived from the work of Artemidoros (*ca.* 100 BCE), the institution that served as the highest authority in the Hellenistic Lykian *koinon* is called *κοινὸν συνέδριον*, but the abundant epigraphic material from Lykia proves that in this passage *συνέδριον* is not a *terminus technicus*. The official name of the institution was *ἀρχαιρεσιακή ἐκκλησία* (the popular electoral assembly), a term that cannot refer to a compact council. The recently excavated building in Patara – which can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and identified as a federal assembly hall – could have offered enough space for more than a thousand participants.<sup>110</sup> This means that the average size of a delegation sent by each of the twenty three *poleis* of Lykia might have been about 40 or 50 men. However, since the largest cities (six in number) controlled three votes each, the medium-sized *poleis* two and the smaller communities one (Strabo XIV 3. 3), it was nonsensical for a small town to compete with Patara or Xanthos in their respective number of delegates. Most likely, the size of the delegations varied in the same proportion as did the votes they could cast, so that the decisions could be determined by a simple show of hands. It is also noteworthy that the existence of a federal council – along with the representative assembly – in the Hellenistic *koinon* cannot be proved via direct evidence, although under the Roman Empire, the Lykian

<sup>109</sup> MORETTI, L.: *Ricerche sulle leghe greche (Peloponnesiaca – Beotica – Licia)*. Roma 1962, 206–207; LEHMANN: *Erwägungen* (n. 9) 250; BEHRWALD, R.: *Der Lykische Bund. Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Verfassung*. Bonn 2000, 163–165; BEHRWALD, R.: The Lykian League. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* (n. 13) 403–418, here 406; RIZAKIS: *L'expérience* (n. 80) 278, n. 38; KNOEPFLER, D.: “Un modèle de belle république fédérative”? Montesquieu et le système politique des Lyciens, de la genèse de l'Esprit des Lois aux découvertes épigraphiques les plus récentes en Asie Mineure méridionale. *Journal des Savants* 1 (2013) 115–154, here 151–153. The most striking resemblances may be found, firstly, in the number of votes assigned to the large, mid-size and small cities of federal bodies: the proportion 3:2:1 in the Achaian college of *nomographoi* (IG IV 1<sup>2</sup>. 73; SEG LVIII 417) corresponds to the distribution of votes in the representative assembly of the Lykians (Strabo XIV 3. 3). Secondly, the local military commanders in the rank of *ἀποτέλειος* are attested only in Lykia (SEG XVIII 570), in the Achaian federation (Syll<sup>3</sup>. 600; Polyb. X 23. 9; XVI 36. 3; XXXVIII 15. 7; perhaps also Suidas s.v. ἀποτέλειοι), but nowhere else.

<sup>110</sup> BEHRWALD: The Lykian League (n. 109) 412. The meetings of the Lykians were held, according to Strabo (XIV. 3. 3) at different cities in turn, but the Patara building is the sole one that may be identified as a meeting-place of the *ἀρχαιρεσιακή ἐκκλησία*.



*boule* is well-attested epigraphically.<sup>111</sup> In any case, the ἀρχαιρεσιακὴ ἐκκλησία was most likely a meeting of delegations, the size of which was determined by proportional representation. Behrwald admits that such a system “apparently is unique for the principal assembly”,<sup>112</sup> not for a council, but if the Lykians actually used the Achaian institutions as a model, they were not the first to shape the primary assembly like a representative body.

To summarize, it may be doubted that the transition from the direct rule of the people to the representative government in the Greek *koina* of the Hellenistic age necessarily resulted in the abolition of the regular meetings of popular assemblies, as Larsen believes. The federations ruled by a representative council were those founded by the Romans,<sup>113</sup> while the independent Greek *koina* either continued to convene regular sessions of the “old style” primary assembly – like the Aitolians did<sup>114</sup> – or else introduced a more complicated system of composing the popular assembly – such as the *ekklesia* of the Lykians – on a proportional basis, so that they could maintain an equitable representation of cities, while at the same time not abandoning the principle of direct democracy. If the argumentation adduced here is correct, the Achaian *koinon* belonged to the latter category of federations.

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<sup>111</sup> For the representative institutions of the Lykian *koinon*, see BEHRWALD: Der Lykische Bund (n. 109) 190–209; BEHRWALD: The Lykian League (n. 109) 408–409. Larsen interprets the Lykian material in accordance with his theory of the development of the representative government in Greek federations, and therefore suggests that in the Hellenistic period, the main representative body of the Lykian *koinon* would have been the council, the electoral assembly being just “an expansion of or an appendix to a meeting of the *boule*” (LARSEN: Greek Federal States [n. 17] 250). This conclusion is based on a number of controversial premises, such as the assumptions that the ἀρχαιρεσιακὴ ἐκκλησία met only once a year, or that the replacement of one representative body with two (the assembly and the council) in Roman times could have hardly been possible, since “in the period of question the government of a federal state would tend to become less rather than more complicated” (LARSEN: Greek Federal States [n. 17] 249).

<sup>112</sup> BEHRWALD: The Lykian League (n. 109) 409.

<sup>113</sup> Or influenced by another foreign power, like the *Koinon* of the Islanders headed by a *synedrion* in the period of the Ptolemaic control (REGER, G. L.: *Regionalism and Change in the Economy of Independent Delos*. Berkeley 1994, 32–34; BURASELIS, K.: Federalism and the Sea. The *Koina* of the Aegean Islands. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity* [n. 13] 358–376, here 361–362).

<sup>114</sup> However, in the course of time the Aitolians could have made efforts to enhance the competence of the representative council and thereby compensate for the imbalances in the composition of the assembly (so FUNKE: Aitolia [n. 17] 115–117).