

Exploring the Development of Representative Institutions in Greek Federal States: The Council as a Key Institution in Representative Governments

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ABSTRACT:

This paper investigates the concept of political representation within Greek federal states, with a focus on the council as a pivotal institution in ancient representative governments. It challenges the common reluctance to recognise the existence of political representation in ancient Greece by establishing a definition that aligns with the institutional realities of the Greek world. It argues that representation constitutes the political space in which federal citizenship was exercised. Furthermore, it examines the cases of Boeotia, Aetolia, and Phokis, highlighting the distinctive nature of federal representation and revealing the complexities of a system that integrated both elements of representation and direct democracy.

KEYWORDS: Political representation; Greek federal states; democracy; council; sortition.

1. Political Representation in Ancient Greece: Bridging Historical Gaps and Contemporary Understandings

Defining the concept of political representation is a daunting task not only for the ancient historian.¹ This complexity is highlighted by the persistent efforts made by political scientists, sociologists, and historians of ideas throughout the centuries to formulate a mutually accepted working definition. As Fisichella aptly observes, while we can delineate with reasonable accuracy what representation is not, after centuries of theoretical exploration, we still find it difficult

1 Classical works about representation include Pitkin 1967; Manin 1997; Ankersmit 2002. For some recent summaries see Fisichella 1996; Duso 2003; Cedroni 2004. On the relation between democracy and representation see Urbinati 2006, 17-59 and Campati 2022.

to articulate what representation actually is.² Linguistic analysis within scholarly discourse defines the term “representation” as the act of making something absent present, regardless of the reasons for its absence in time and space. Based on this fundamental function, scholars generally agree on four distinct meanings of the representation as the act of reproducing, symbolising, manifesting, and substituting what is absent.³ The commonality among these interpretations lies in their operation within a monistic framework of presence and absence, where only one subject, the representative, is deemed “present”. Each of the four forms of representation entails a specific relationship between the represented (whether an individual, an object, or an idea) and the representative (be it a person or an entity). Nevertheless, the concept of representation cannot be confined solely to this relationship; it encompasses something more profound, derived from the representational context.⁴ In this perspective, the representative is defined externally by virtue of their role, and thus by their function of standing in for the represented. Ultimately, the interpretation hinges on the nuance that the verb “to represent” seeks to convey, whether it should place greater emphasis on the mere situation of the representative or the relationship between the representative and the represented. Regardless of the type of representation being referenced, the dual components of the concept—namely the situational aspect and the relational aspect—are invariably implicit. This is particularly evident in descriptive and symbolic representations, while the relational aspect is more discernible in interest representation and ascriptive representation.

Starting from Pitkin’s treatment of political representation, scholarship has emphasized the epistemological gap underlying representation and the gap between the form and substance of representation.⁵ The act of representation, in fact, implies the dependency of the one exercising power on those from whom he has received the mandate for his political actions, with the clarification that such actions find their foundation only in those who are represented. It follows that the institutions of a state are representative when the representatives obtain their mandate through popular election and the represented retain the ability to oversee the actions of the representatives. But the representative must base his political action on the will of the voters; this is why it is said that the representative “acts for” or “stands in place of” their constituencies. This is what Pitkin has defined “descriptive representation”.⁶ The dilemmas inherent in the study

2 Fisichella 1996, 6.

3 On the types of political representation see Pitkin 1967.

4 Nocilla, Ciaurro 1987, 545-47.

5 The conceptual analysis of representation by Pitkin 1967 distinguishes between formalistic representation, descriptive representation, symbolic representation, and substantive representation.

6 Pitkin 1967, 60-91.

of political representation, particularly those articulated by Pitkin, centre on the independence of the representative in contrast to their dependence on the mandate.⁷ The crux of the issue lies in the concept of a “free mandate”, which posits that the representative is not beholden to the interests of their constituent group. This notion implies that modern representation does not conform to a singular archetype and allows for a degree of political initiative on the part of the representative. Consequently, this leads to both formal and substantive distinctions between the represented and their representatives.

These dilemmas extend beyond mere variations in the interpretation of representation; they highlight a logical challenge that also encompasses constitutional frameworks. On one hand, representation is regarded as a fundamental function for articulating the collective will, which must be coherent and attributed to the collective entity. On the other hand, representation serves as a mechanism through which citizens, each with their unique perspectives and particularities, can articulate their individual wills and contribute to the formation of the common will. This duality generates tensions between the concept of a singular collective will and the necessity of acknowledging the plurality of voices within society. Thus, the question of representation emerges as both complex and essential for contemporary democracies.

The challenge of establishing a common definition of political representation in political theory is accompanied by the recognition that the contemporary interpretation of representation obscures its historical context, particularly its historical antecedents. The concept of representation is inherently linked to that of sovereignty, particularly in relation to the modern understanding of power, which is rational and legitimate, founded upon the collective will of the people. The difficulty in grasping this concept, which has manifested in various theoretical constructs, may be attributed to the close relationship observed throughout the history of thought, where representation is viewed (albeit with a misinterpretation of its significance) as a support and instrument of sovereignty. Scholarship increasingly underscores that representation during the Middle Ages was fundamentally distinct from that of the modern era.⁸ Ankersmit, in discussing representative democracy, refers to the medieval origins of the concept of political representation; however, he does so to argue that representation should be decoupled from democracy.⁹ In medieval Europe representation was seen as the transmission of will from various estates, with the sovereign mediating and harmonising interests for the common good. The sovereign thus symbolised the identity and aspirations of the people, embodying their values. Moreover, in feudal societies where the sovereign embodied the totality of the subjects, the corporate assemblies that provided counsel represented the estate

7 Pitkin 1967, 144-67.

8 Mansfield 1968; Fletcher 2015.

9 Ankersmit 2002, 107-8.

to which they belonged or the sphere in which they exercised power, bound by an imperative mandate that significantly constrained their actions.

For historians of antiquity, this challenge is complicated by the widespread reluctance among scholars of political sciences and political philosophers to recognise the existence of representation in ancient Greece, even in terms of its historical antecedence. As Frank Ankersmit states, “classical democracy was founded in Classical Athens as direct democracy, and direct democracy left no space for political representation”.¹⁰ Ankersmit further posits that the concept of representation itself is a creation of the Middle Ages. This perspective suggests a fundamental disconnect between ancient practices and modern interpretations of political representation, highlighting a tendency to overlook the complexities of the democratic processes that characterised ancient Greece. However, is the claim to reject any applicability of the concept of political representation to ancient Greece well-founded? In the next section, I will endeavour to formulate a definition of political representation that aligns with the institutional realities of the Greek world, commencing with an exploration of previous attempts to articulate the concept of political representation in Greece.

2. The Dynamics of Political Representation in the Athenian Democracy

The investigation into political representation has encompassed Athenian democracy, particularly concerning the relationship between the people and its institutional representations. In challenging Hansen’s interpretation of the superiority of the popular courts over the assembly, Ober contended that the idea of the people (*dēmos*) encompasses its institutional manifestations in a symbolic manner that can be articulated through the rhetorical device of synecdoche.¹¹ This means that the assembly, the council, and the lawcourts can be viewed as a *pars pro toto*. In response, Hansen has argued that the opposite is actually the case, asserting that for the Athenians a meeting of the assembly was perceived as a gathering of the entire people. He suggested that if we were to apply the reasoning based on synecdoche, it is indeed the whole that represents the part.¹² More recently, Daniela Cammack posits that few political actions in Athens were genuinely executed by the entire *dēmos*; rather, they were authored by fragments of the citizenry. Cammack concludes that almost all Greek political actors can be considered representative agents in the sense that they act on behalf of others

10 Ankersmit 2002, 107.

11 Hansen 1983, 139–60; Ober 1996, 118–19. The latter subsequently invoked the concept of (synecdochical) representation (Ober 2017, 19).

12 Hansen 2010, 510–14.

who are absent.¹³ Conversely, in constructivist terms, political representation is understood as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a static fact tied solely to the election of representatives. This perspective shifts the focus from traditional electoral mechanisms that legitimate representation to the interactions and performances that shape political claims within a democratic context. Drawing on the work of Michael Saward, Matt Simonton has investigated the concept of the representative claim as it manifests in the relation between speakers and people in the Athenian assembly. In this framework, speakers engage with the assembly not merely as representatives of their constituents but as active participants in constructing a dynamic representation of the idea of *demos*, an idea negotiated each time in the Assembly through participation.¹⁴

When discussing democracy and representation, it is imperative to mention the council of 500, the governing body that engaged with the assembly, responsible for preparing the agenda and overseeing governmental functions.¹⁵ During the classical period, the council comprised 500 members selected by lot—50 from each of Athens' ten *phylai*—serving as councillors for a term of one year. This council represented a cross-section of the civic body, ensuring equitable representation across all ten political segments into which the territory was divided, thereby adhering to a principle of proportionality.¹⁶ The council, in its structure, is closely linked to the demes and larger territorial divisions (*trittyes*) of Attica. Local identities reflect a characteristic spirit of autonomy in the region, where democratic political forms are inherently tied to a relatively equal relationship between the urban centre and the surrounding territory. This connection is socioeconomically supported by widespread private land ownership and the absence of rural servitude. In this perspective, the council, with its territorial foundation, is not merely a technical institution; rather, it serves a significant ideological role in the exercise of political power, representing the interests of small and medium landowners from the countryside. Domenico Musti has emphasised that the roles of the council and the assembly as democratic institutions should not be viewed solely from a hierarchical standpoint; they also embody representation (“rappresentatività” in Musti’s words), thereby addressing the typical *aporia* of the *polis*, where delegating political functions to the urban centre complicates the ability of rural inhabitants to assert their will, as expressed through their physical presence in the assembly.¹⁷ Thus, the

13 Cammack 2021, 567-601.

14 Simonton 2021, 129-44.

15 The reference study on the representation mechanisms of the Athenian council is that of Traill 1975. See also Rhodes 1972, 1-16 and Musti 1995, 148-162. On the representative nature of other democratic Greek councils like that of Mytilene and Megalopolis see Esu 2024, 109 and 114-19.

16 Larsen 1955, 5.

17 Musti 1995, 151-52.

council plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between the urban centre and the periphery, ensuring that the political life of the territory is represented within the broader democratic framework.

The representative nature of the council does not imply that this representation is categorical. In fact, it does not represent specific social or professional categories to the extent that councillors are not required to act and decide according to predetermined instructions that would restrict their actions. Therefore, the purpose is not to bring pre-formed issues and demands from the local level into the council, but rather to give voice to the collective will of the people.

To capture the uniqueness of Greek representation, it should be situated within its specific context—a system that lacks a professional political class and where there is no clear distinction between politicians and ordinary citizens as the “electorate”. This apparent *aporia* is resolved by the idea of political alternation, the commitment to govern and be governed in turn (*archein kai archesthai*).¹⁸ This rotation, which in some cases involved sortition for some *archai*, is perceived in democratic ideology as a means to achieve good governance while also reflecting democratic justice.¹⁹ Insofar as those in power have previously been in positions of obedience, it becomes possible for them to take into account the perspectives of the governed when making decisions. This way of conceiving political alternation is based on a shared system of beliefs and values and presupposes the idea of the *demos* as a unity, even when it convenes in assemblies that involve or represent only a portion of the people. This is a foundational principle of democratic ideology which can be found both in theoretical reflection and in Athenian public discourse. In Plato’s *Laws*, the Athenian asserts that education should be considered positive if it instils in the individual the desire to become an exemplary citizen, capable of commanding and obeying justly (ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἐπιστάμενον μετὰ δίκης).²⁰ Similarly, when Aristotle identifies freedom as the principle of democratic constitution, he argues that a characteristic of freedom is that the same individual alternately commands and is commanded²¹. A similar concept can be found in certain Thessalian decrees, specifically in the formula καὶ παθόντεσσι καὶ δρασάντεσσι. This expression, which is sometimes combined with *isotimia*, refers to the ability to hold public

18 Arist. *Pol.* 6.2.1317a 40-b 3. On the concept of political alternation see Hansen 1991, 74-75; McAuley 2013; Bertelli 2018a, 83-89. On the relation among political alternation, lot and representation in Athenian direct democracy see Manin 1997, 27-33.

19 While Aristotle asserts in several passages that random selection is inherently democratic and that election is typical of aristocracies, other authors contest the equation between random selection and democracy. For example, in the *Dissoi Logoi* the author argues that the tool of lottery can lead to the selection of individuals who despise the people and can ultimately ruin democracies (DK 90 B 7.5-6 with Simonton 2017, 31-32).

20 Pl. *Leg.* 643d-e.

21 Arist. *Pol.* 6.2.1317a 40-b 3.

office and to be subject to it, and, in technical terms, to possess equal rights in the exercise (both active and passive) of power.²² If conceived in these terms, representation in ancient Greek democracy seems to have implicitly overcome the modern gap between representation as autonomous action and representation as action conditioned by mandate, as it does not recognize any qualitative distinction between those who represent and those who are represented.

As this quick overview has shown, the endeavour to identify the presence of representative claims within the Greek world and to define them in relation to contemporary understandings of political representation fundamentally pertains to the reality of the *poleis*. But what can be said about political representation in Greek federal states?

3. The Interplay of Political Representation and Proportionality in Greek Federal States

Greek federalism, characterised by its confederative structures, presents a unique landscape for understanding ancient political representation. Unlike modern nation-states, where centralised governance often prevails, Greek confederations such as the Achaean and the Boeotian *koine* exemplified a system where local autonomy coexisted with federal decision-making.

Systematic attempts to study political representation have been undertaken by J.A.O. Larsen. Following a series of preparatory works on the concept of representation in the Panhellenic leagues and various federal contexts, in 1958 Larsen published a monograph addressing the existence of representative governments in the Greco-Roman world, with particular emphasis on Greek federal states and *symmachiai*.²³ Larsen adopted a rather narrow concept of representation, characterising representative government as that “in which the ultimate decisions on important questions are made by representatives acting for their constituents and having authority to make such decisions according to their own best judgment”.²⁴ His analysis rests on three fundamental presuppositions: that agents free from accountability are true representatives; that representative governments cannot exist alongside primary assemblies; and that oligarchies were more inclined to delegate authority than democracies.²⁵

However, there are significant critiques to be made regarding Larsen’s approach. Firstly, his definition of representative government is both imprecise and overly restrictive. A distinctive characteristic of Greek regimes lies in their ability to blend representation with direct governance, a feature evident in both

22 *SEG* 48.660, ll. 17-18. Cf. Loddó 2024.

23 Larsen 1925; 1926; 1949; 1955.

24 Larsen 1955, 1.

25 Larsen 1955, 1-4. For the opposite view see Esu 2024.

the *poleis* and the *koina* well before the third century BCE. Thus, it is arguably more fruitful to explore how the Greeks conceptualised representation by examining not only entirely representative governments but also the common instances of representation that existed between city-states and federal states. Secondly, representation is no more common in oligarchies than it is in democracies. In fact, representation is not inherently more prevalent in oligarchies than in democracies; rather, it applies to both forms of governance. This is particularly evident in federal states, where both oligarchic and democratic *koina* employed representative structures.

Despite his contributions, Larsen did not engage with the broader discourse surrounding the definition of representation, nor did he investigate the specificity of the Greek representative model in relation to various historical manifestations of representation. His significant synthesis on Greek federalism, published approximately a decade later, added little to the discourse on the topic.²⁶ Nevertheless, Larsen's work merits recognition for drawing attention to the existence of representation within the federal context and for paving the way for further reflections. Larsen's model illustrates that representative governments in Greek federal states followed a distinct trajectory: representative councils initially held sovereignty, which subsequently shifted to primary assemblies, before a return to councils in the early second century BCE. Notably, pure representative government existed in the Boeotian *koinon*, foreshadowing modern representation. These experiments spread from the late third century BCE in developed federal states such as the Achaean Confederation, although direct governance remained dominant. The resurgence of representative systems from the second century can be attributed to Roman interactions and reforms, marking a significant evolution in the landscape of political representation.

What was the nature of representation in federal states? In addressing this question, Corsten's contribution explores the foundational and territorial structures of Greek confederations, identifying the establishment of a proportional district structure as a defining principle of these federal entities.²⁷ While several scholars have challenged his idea that the division of the territory into districts cannot be regarded as a definitive criterion for the characterization of the Greek federal state, Corsten's contribution warrants recognition for the significance he attributed to representation within the federal context.²⁸ In fact, significant progress has been made in our understanding of the application of political representation, especially within individual *koina*. This surely applies to the Achaean *koinon* as well as to the Boeotian and Arkadian confederations. Concerning the Achaean *sympoliteia*, to employ the expression of Polybius, the discussion has encompassed not only the *vexata quaestio* surrounding the

26 Larsen 1968.

27 Corsten 1999.

28 For a commendable examination of Corsten's thesis, see Beck 2001.

terminology utilised by the historian of Megalopolis to denote the institutional organs of the confederation (*synklētos/synodos*, as well as *boulē* and *ekklesia*), but also the representative nature of such organs. As is well known, Aymard, doubting that the Achaean confederation had a federal council, argued that the *synodos* was a primary assembly open to all citizens.²⁹ In contrast, Larsen suggested an evolution in the nature of the Achaean federal organs following a reform that occurred in 217 BCE, which redesigned the institutional framework of the *koinon*. Originally, the regular primary assembly, the *synodos*, was complemented by exceptional assemblies convened to deliberate on matters of great importance (the *synklētoi*); however, after 217, the term *synodos* came to denote a federal council, while the people continued to decide on the most significant issues gathered in the *synklētos*.³⁰ While these theories have been embraced with minor variations in subsequent scholarship, there have been efforts to reconcile the two viewpoints. For instance, it has been posited that the *synodos* functioned as a combined assembly comprising both the popular assembly and the federal council.³¹ One of the most compelling hypotheses is that proposed by Sizov, who interprets the *synodos* as a hybrid institution comprising delegations from the cities of the *koinon*. These delegations voted *kata poleis* and were selected in proportion to the demographic potential of the *polis* they represented. This conclusion is supported by the argument that the criterion of proportional representation is operative in the selection of the *nomographoi*, magistrates responsible for drafting legislative proposals and incorporating the resolutions of the League assembly into the corpus of federal laws.³² This is evident both in the list of *nomographoi* from Epidaurus (IG IV² 1 73), which attests to the activity of 24 *nomographoi* and a secretary within a federal context, originating from 17 cities of the league, and in an inscription from Aigion (Rizakis 2008 no. 116 = SEG 58.417), which Rizakis has interpreted as a federal law followed by a list of the *nomographoi* who drafted it.³³ In both cases, the principle of proportional representation operates according to the scheme 3.2.1, whereby the more populous cities send three *nomographoi*, while the less densely populated ones

29 Aymard 1938, 42-64.

30 Larsen 1955, 75-105.

31 See Walbank 1979, 406-15, who partially revised his earlier arguments made in Walbank 1957, 219-220.

32 Lehmann 1983 builds upon Swoboda's theory by introducing the hypothesis of city rotation, including larger cities, and posits that *nomographoi* were elected by the federal council from its own members. Conversely, Gschnitzer 1985 advocates for a proportional criterion, explaining the absence of certain *poleis* through a precise chronological framework. Corsten 1999, 166-177 has argued that the territory of the Achaean *koinon* was divided into five administrative districts; however, this theory has largely been dismissed. For the views expressed by Rizakis 2003 and 2008 and Sizov 2016 see *ultra*.

33 Rizakis 2008.

send only one *nomographos*.³⁴ Even the contributions of individual cities to the Achaean federal coinage were organised according to a proportional principle based on the population of the cities *koinon*.³⁵ The structure of the Achaean Confederation likely served as an inspiration for the adoption of proportional representation within the Lycian Confederation. This influence underscores the significance of Achaean political models in shaping the governance frameworks of contemporary federations.³⁶

The criterion of proportional representation may be cautiously invoked in the selection of *damiorgoi* within a decree preserving the text of a late fourth-century treaty between the Achaean confederation and the *polis* of Coronea.³⁷ The text contains a list of names of *damiorgoi*, followed by their ethnics in the plural form referring to Achaean cities that are members of the *koinon*. However, the extremely fragmentary nature of the decree does not allow for a definitive assessment of how the principle of representation operated. More interesting in this regard is the territorial dispute between Messene and Megalopolis concerning the possession of the territories of Andania and Pylana, in which the Achaean confederation was called upon to act as an arbiter.³⁸ At lines 16-29, the document references 17 anthroponyms, accompanied by patronymics, who act as *hagemones*; these individuals came from 7 different cities within the Achaean *koinon* and were likely part of an *ad hoc* commission constituted by members of the political elite of the confederation, as suggested by Thür and Rizakis.³⁹ It cannot be excluded that the commission of *hagemones* was selected according to a proportional criterion, but that it also took into account contingent political factors, as evidenced by the fact that no *hagemon* originated from either Arcadia or Messenia.

It is striking that one of the historical regions that was part of the Achaean confederation, Arcadia, employed a criterion of proportional representation in the selection of certain magistracies. A proxeny decree from Tegea, now lost, likely contained a complete list of federal magistrates, dating from after the synoecism of Mantinea (370 BCE) and before the confederation's split in 363 BCE.⁴⁰ The decree honours the Athenian Philarchus, an otherwise unrecord-

34 Rizakis 2008. Cf. Sizov 2016 who has argued that the list of *nomographoi* from Epidauros does not encompass all the magistrates who served as *nomographoi* in that year, but only those involved in drafting the specific law in question.

35 Warren 2008.

36 On the functioning of the Lycian *koinon*, see Strabo 14.3.3. Behrwald (2000 and 2015) provides an in-depth analysis of its governance. A comparative evaluation of the Achaean and Lycian confederations is presented in Rizakis 2019.

37 Rizakis 2008 no. 120.

38 *JEG* 58.370 with the commentaries of Arnaoutoglou 2009/10 and Luraghi, Magnetto 2012.

39 Thür 2013, 131-32; Rizakis 2015, 130 and n. 78, who refers to the parallel expression *principes Achaeorum* in Liv. 32.21.1.

40 *IG V* 2 1.

ed figure, by granting him the titles of proxenus and benefactor, with similar honours extended to his descendants. Following this, a list is presented (ll. 9-69), enumerating 50 magistrates known as *damiorgoi*. The precise identity of the *damiorgoi* has been subject to scholarly debate, with the prevailing hypothesis suggesting that they constituted a commission of the council, akin to the *prytaneis* in the council of a *polis*.⁴¹ The catalogue is systematically organised according to geographical principles, with the ethnics of each of the ten *poleis* followed by the names of the magistrates appointed by each city. Consistently, the number of *damiorgoi* varies in accordance with the population of the confederate cities.⁴² It naturally raises the question of whether the principle of proportional representation was derived by the Achaeans from the model of the Arcadian confederation. However, this remains a mere hypothesis that, given the current state of evidence, cannot be conclusively verified.

Even more intriguing is the application of the criterion of proportional representation in the composition of councils within federal states such as Aetolia, Boeotia, and Phokis. A detailed analysis of these federal contexts allows for a deeper understanding of two key aspects. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, it elucidates how political representation is conceptualised within a federal framework. Secondly, it prompts reflection on the centrality of the federal council in facilitating the connection between local and federal levels of governance. This examination not only highlights the mechanisms of representation but also underscores the significance of the council as a pivotal institution in the broader political landscape of these federations.

4. Political Representation in the Aetolian Confederation

The assembly of the Aetolian Confederation convened two regular sessions each year. In the spring, the *koinon* gathered during the *Panaitolika*, a festival held at a different location each year; in the autumn, the principal meeting took place during the *Thermika* in Thermos, where the officials of the *koinon* were also elected. Extraordinary sessions could be convened as necessary. All Aetolians of military age were entitled to vote, with votes counted individually rather than by city. Alongside the assembly operated a council, which met more frequently than the assembly. As we will see, its members were elected from the cities of the *koinon*, which were represented in proportion to their population. The head

41 Cf. Sizov 2017.

42 Among the cities of the confederation, Megalopolis contributes the highest number of magistrates, with a total of 10; while seven cities (Tegea, Mantinea, Kynouria, Orchomenos, Kleitor, Heraia, Thelphousa) each provide 5 *damiorgoi*, Mainalos and Lepreion contribute 3 and 2, respectively.

of the confederation of the Aetolians was the *stratēgos*, who typically also held the title of eponymous *archōn*.⁴³

We can see an institutional architecture comprising three levels, in which sovereignty resided with the assembly, open to all citizens without census requirements.⁴⁴ However, the territorial expansion of the *koinon*, which significantly increased during the third century due to substantial territorial annexations, combined with the fact that the assembly typically convened only twice a year, rendered the institution of the council central to the political and administrative functioning of the *koinon*. The council represented a sort of second level within the institutional architecture of the *koinon*, as the assembly not only collaborated with it but also delegated a range of tasks for which it retained sovereignty. Finally, a third level is constituted by a commission of *apoklētoi*, literally “those who are elected”, which served as a sort of smaller council within the council, but always acted together with the *stratēgos* and were a separate body from the *synedrion*.⁴⁵ The representative nature of the Aetolian council is evidenced by very few attestations. In discussing the conclusion of the Macedonian War, Justin mentions the dispatch of members of the Aetolian council, specifying that this council (*senatus*) was composed of representatives from all Aetolian cities.⁴⁶ However, he does not clarify how the councillors were selected.

The only known document that provides insights into the composition of the Aetolian *synedrion* is the arbitration between the *poleis* of Achaia Phthiotis, Melitaia and Perea.⁴⁷ At the time of the arbitrate (213/212 BCE), these *poleis* were merged by a *sympoliteia* agreement, possibly dating back to the first half of the third century.⁴⁸ What concerns our discussion are the clauses found at the lines 16-21 regarding the potential rescission of the *sympoliteia* agreements.⁴⁹

43 An overview of the Aetolian constitution is in Grainger 1999, 169-87.

44 I will not address the issue of the administrative districts into which Aetolia appears to have been divided, as evidenced by a few inscriptions—a topic that remains disputed to this day. For the idea of political representation of districts within the Aetolian *koinon*, see Sordi 1953, 53-54, although this view has been rejected. For an accurate assessment of the matter, see Lasagni 2019, 147-59 and Funke 2024.

45 Iust. 33.2.8. For consultative powers of the *apoklētoi*, see Polyb. 4.5.9. According to Funke 2015, 114, the *apoklētoi* were a board elected by the *synedroi* from among themselves.

46 Iust. 33.2.8.

47 On the inclusion of Achaia Phthiotis in the Aetolian league see Magnetto 1997, 184 n. 8 with discussion of previous scholarship. For the value of this document as evidence of the use of proportional representation in the Aetolian Council see Corsten 1999; Lasagni 2019, 160.

48 IG IX 1².1, 188 (= Ager, *Arbitrations* 56; Magnetto, *Arbitrati* 55). On the date of the *sympoliteia* agreement, see Magnetto 1997, 343. Cf. Grainger 1999, 304 and n. 37. See also Lasagni 2019, 141-47.

49 IG IX 1².1, 188, ll. 16-21: εἰ δέ κα ἀποπολιτεύωντι Πηρεῖς ἀπὸ Μελ[ι]- | τᾶων, περὶ μὲν τὰς χώρας ὁροῖς χρήσθων τοῖς γεγραμμένοις καὶ ἔ- | χοντες ἀποπορευέσθων βουλευτὰν ἕνα καὶ τὰ δάνεια συναπτο- | τινόντω, ὅσα κα ἁ πόλις ὀφείλη, κατὰ τὸ ἐπιβάλλον μέρος | τοῦ βουλευτᾶ καὶ ἐμπεφρόντω τὰ ἐ[ν] τοὺς Αἰτωλοὺς γινόμε- | να κατὰ τὸν βουλευτὰν (“But if Perea becomes independent of Melitaia, concerning their territory they shall use the

Perea would maintain a representative in the Aetolian *synedrion*—here designated as βουλευτάς instead of the more common *synedros*—, contribute to paying the debts incurred during the period when the *sympoliteia* was in effect, and pay federal contributions to the league in proportion to its representation. If, as it appears, the number of representatives does not change over time, it must have been regulated at the moment of the communities' entry into the Aetolian League.⁵⁰ This principle of proportionality ensured that the diverse sizes of the *poleis* were recognized, while still upholding their right to fair political representation at the federal level—even for the less prominent members of the league.⁵¹ As Lasagni has stressed, the fact that the council was composed *kata poleis* rather than by districts is consistent with the urbanization process that characterized the Aetolian confederation.⁵² Its development during the fourth century BCE, indeed, followed a clear transition from a local tribal structure to a more *polis*-centred framework. It is not improbable that the model adopted by the Aetolian League was derived from the Delphic Amphictyony, in which member communities sent a fixed number of delegates to participate in the meetings of the sacred league.⁵³

This arbitration shows significant involvement from the federal authorities. It is the council that selects the citizens who acted as arbitrators from a member city of the confederation; and it is again the council, along with the federal magistrates (the secretary, the hipparch, the *prostatai* of the *synedrion*) that guarantees the agreement (ll. 32-37).⁵⁴ It would be tempting to view this involvement as a recurring mechanism, if not even a mandatory procedure in cases of arbitration among the members of the confederation.⁵⁵

stated boundaries, and they shall separate with one councillor; and they shall pay the joint debts that the city owes in proportion to the number of councillors of each city; and they shall make contributions to the Aetolians according to the number of councillors”).

50 Grainger 1999, 174.

51 I do not consider here the case of the arbitration connected with the *sympoliteia* of Myania and Hypnia in West Lokris (FD III 4 352 = Ager, *Arbitrations* 89), which contains several references to the criterion of proportionality, particularly the expression κατὰ τὸ μέρος. Doubts regarding the possibility of considering the agreement a genuine *sympoliteia* (as Bousquet 1965 has argued) have been expressed by Jacquemin *et al.* 2012, 222. This is, in fact, an agreement between *poleis* that does not contemplate the federal level, perhaps because the *sympoliteia* is a consequence of the weakening of the Aetolian League following its defeat by the Romans. Cf. Bousquet 1965; Schmitt 1994, 39-44; Ager 1996, 248-50; Chandezon 2013, 57-61.

52 Lasagni 2012, 191-93.

53 Grainger 1999, 174.

54 Ager 1996, 19.

55 The issue hinges on the interpretation of the expression αὐτῶν ἐπιχωρησάντων ἐξ ὁμολόγων (ll. 2-3), cf. Magnetto 1997, 343-44; however, there is insufficient evidence to unequivocally demonstrate that recourse to arbitration was mandatory and that the involvement of the federal authorities was obligatory.

A similar involvement of the federal institutions appears in the arbitration between Melitaia and Xyniai (214/213 BCE).⁵⁶ In this context, the federal authorities are engaged in the process to the extent that they appointed judges tasked with resolving the dispute in question.⁵⁷ In this respect, the involvement of federal institutions could be considered a distinctive feature of the Aetolian confederation that sets it apart from other *koina*, such as the Achaean (see the territorial dispute between Hermion and Epidauros)⁵⁸, or Phokian confederations (the arbitration between Phanoteus and Stiris;⁵⁹ the agreement of *sympoliteia* between Medeion and Stiris).⁶⁰

The dimensions of the Aetolian council are unknown. However, since even the smaller communities were represented by at least one councillor, the total number of *synedroi* must have been quite large. There is no consensus among scholars on this point. Typically, reference is made to an episode described by Livy concerning the massacre of anti-Roman council members in 168/7 BCE, when 550 *boulentai* were killed.⁶¹ The *synedrion* likely had more than 550 members due to the presence of many Roman supporters in the federal council. Estimates range from 1,000 to 1,500 councillors.⁶² A larger council may have been necessary for effective administration, given that the assembly met only twice a year.⁶³

This *synedrion* was indeed tasked with many responsibilities.⁶⁴ It was involved in the mechanism for granting honours to foreign benefactors, as evidenced by various honorific decrees.⁶⁵ However, there is no explicit evidence of the federal

56 IG IX 1².1, 177 (= Ager, *Arbitrations* 55; Magnetto, *Arbitrati* 54). On the date see Grainger 1999, 304 and n. 36. This arbitration should be understood in close relation to that between Melitaia and Perea, cf. Magnetto 1997, 346.

57 ll. 5-6: ἔκρι[να]ν οἱ δικαστ[αῖ] οἱ αἰρεθέν[τ]ε[ς] ὑπὸ τῶν / [{τῶν} Αἰτωλ]ῶν τῶν [...]. Furthermore, it is evident that the involvement of the confederation is also highlighted by the dating of the document, which is indicated by the mention of a federal magistrate (l. 1: [στραταγέ]ο[γ]τος Πανταλέονος τὸ πέμπτον). Cf. Larsen 1968, 209-10; Ager 1996, 24, 152.

58 Moretti ISE 43 (= Ager, *Arbitrations* 63; Magnetto, *Arbitrati* 69): the arbiters are from Miletos and Rhodes. It is evident that the parties have the freedom to choose the arbitration route. Cf. Magnetto 1997, 410.

59 Rousset-Katzouros 1992 (= Ager, *Arbitrations* 20; Magnetto, *Arbitrati* 68), where the arbitrators originate from Elis.

60 IG IX 1, 32 (= *Syll.*³ 647).

61 Liv. 45.28.7.

62 Larsen 1968, 199-200 argued that approximately 1,000 representatives from the member states remained in the council until 167 BCE. According to Funke 2015, during the period of greatest expansion of the league—in the years 230 and 220, and again from 196 to 189 BCE—there may have been as many as 1,500 representatives. Cf. Scholten 2000, 27. Grainger 1999, 176-79, for his part, advises caution in considering this episode as indicative of the size of the council, suggesting instead that its normal dimensions were smaller.

63 Regarding the frequency with which the council convened, see Scholten 2000, 27.

64 Grainger 1999, 176-78.

65 See for example see the decree for Athanion from Delphi granting him *asphaleia*, *asylia* and *ateleia pantōn*, IG IX 1².1, 172 (= *Syll.*³ 479); the decree for Sosikles and Aristodamos of Magnesia, IG IX 1².1, 187 (= *Syll.*³ 598DE).

council's involvement in the activities of the assembly, as the mention of the *boulē* is notably absent in the formula for the deliberation of federal decrees. Although joint decisions between the federal council and the *koinon* are not mentioned in the decrees of the Aetolian League, it is commonly believed that the two institutions interacted in some way and that the council prepared the assembly's activities and served a probouleutic function. The council's participation in overseeing the federal assembly may be inferred from the fact that a variable number of *boularchoi* are listed in the dating formulas of several league decrees instead of the *stratēgos*.⁶⁶ However, the Aetolian *boularchoi* did not serve as presidents of the federal *synedrion* in the same manner as the Athenian *prytaneis*. Rather, they appear to function as executive magistrates who act on behalf of the federal *stratēgos* as eponymous officials when the latter is not present.⁶⁷ More relevant is the mention of the secretary of the council in some third-century inscriptions—both in the form *grammateus tōn synedrōn*, as in the Decree of the Aetolian League for Damon from Dyme, and in the form *grammateus tēs boulēs*, as in the decree for Epikles of (V)Axos—alongside the secretary of the league (*grammateus tōn Aitolōn*).⁶⁸

A form of interaction between the federal council and the assembly is evident in the dossier concerning the Kytenians' embassy to Xanthos in Lycia, published by Jean Bousquet.⁶⁹ Here the members of the Aetolian council, along with the supreme federal magistrates, address the assembly and council of Xanthos, presenting the Dorian ambassadors as envoys of the Aetolians and urging their interlocutors to be favourable towards their request, in the name of the kinship which exists with the Dorians (ll. 79-88). Before the delegation was sent, there was a decree from the Aetolians, most likely issued by the assembly, granting the Dorians a delegation to present their requests for aid in the reconstruction of the walls of Kytenion to the inhabitants of Xanthos.⁷⁰ The preparation of the documentation for the delegates, as well as the relations between the confederation and the recipients of the embassy, is entrusted to the councillors and federal magistrates.

66 E.g. *IG IX* 1².1, 6; *IG IX* 1².1, 7; *IG IX* 1².1, 8; *IG IX* 1².1 136.

67 Lasagni 2012 contends that it is untenable to assert that the *boularchoi* functioned as representatives of the various *telē* within the Aetolian *synedrion*. This conclusion is supported by the observation that the ethnics recorded in the pertinent inscriptions do not indicate a distribution of the *boularchoi* by districts. Furthermore, the lack of ethnic designations in some inscriptions would be entirely unjustifiable. Cf. Lasagni 2019, 159ff.

68 E.g. *SEG* 44.438 (decree for Damon from Dyme): γραμμ[α]τεύοντος τοῖς Αἰτωλοῖς Π[ο]-λυκλείτου Ὑαίου; [τῶν δ]᾽ ἐσυνέδρων Ἀρχιδάμου ΚΑΝΤΑΝΟΥ; *Syll.*³ 622A (= *IG IX* 1².1, 178): γραμματεύοντος δ᾽ ἐβουλᾶς.

69 *SEG* 38.1476C (= Bousquet 1988). Date: 205 BCE.

70 *SEG* 38.1476B, ll. 73-79. On the possibility of interpreting the emphasis by the citizens of Xanthos on the Dorian element as an indication of the existence of a *telos Dorikon*, see Funke 2024, 205-206. *Contra* Lasagni 2019, 147-59.

A similar interaction between the assembly and the council can be found in an epigraphic dossier concerning the determination of the status of *isopolitēs* for a foreign resident in Amphissa, a Locrian *polis* that was then part of the *koinon*.⁷¹ The dossier consists of a decree from the Aetolian assembly (A1) and a letter from the *kosmoi* of the city of (V)Axos to the authorities of the Aetolian *koinon*. These documents hold significant interest for many reasons.⁷² However, I wish to underscore that the response from the magistrates of (V)Axos is directed not to the assembly, but rather to the federal magistrates and members of the *synedrion*. The inclusion of the councillors as recipients of the letter evokes the previously discussed example regarding Kytēnion. It is noteworthy that the councillors are the ones informed about the status of a foreign resident who has requested a special status, that of *isopolitēs*, and who subsequently relays a report to the assembly, which then issues a decree to register the status of *isopolitēs* for Epikles.

What type of representation are we discussing in relation to the Aetolian council? If we consider the distinction made in modern political theory between metaphorical and synecdochical representation, it is evident that the representation within the federal council is of the synecdochical type. This is because the councillors “stand for” or “refer to” the entire citizenry. This exemplifies the same form of political representation observable in the deliberative institutions of the *poleis*, specifically the council and the assembly, where participants constituted a segment of the eligible citizenry, yet were not distinguished from the broader population in terms of their inherent nature. From this perspective, the councils of both *poleis* and *koina* exhibit similar mechanisms of identification between representatives and those they represent.

In relation to the Aetolian federal council, this point is clearly exemplified by several decrees of *asylia* that mention both the assembly, which decrees the grant of *asylia*, and the federal council, to which the assembly delegates specific responsibilities. Notably, these decrees highlight that the council is empowered by the assembly to act independently and to make sovereign decisions on certain matters.

For example, consider the decree of *asylia* issued by the Aetolian confederation for the community of Magnesia on the Meander.⁷³ The decree stipulates that neither Aetolians nor those residing in Aetolia are permitted to seize anyone from Magnesian territory. If such an act occurs, the current *stratēgos* is to confiscate any visible property, while for property that is not visible (*i.e.*, already disposed of), the councillors are empowered to impose fines and ensure that these are paid to the victims. This form of empowerment is expressed through

71 *Syll.*³ 622A (= *IG* IX².1, 178) + *Syll.*³ 622B (= *IC* II V, 19), which is nearly contemporaneous with the dossier regarding the Kytēnians’ embassy to Xanthos.

72 Chaniotis 2004b; Roy 2020; Thomsen 2023, 465; Müller 2023b, 179–83.

73 *IG* IX 1².1, 4c, ll. 21–25 (= Rigsby, *Asylia* 67).

the term *kyrios*, which denotes the concept of legal authority, thereby conferring legal validity to the actions of the Council. It is a term rich in institutional significance, also found in reference to the council of the *polis*. With regard to Athens, Esu has demonstrated that in the documentation of the fourth century, the term *kyrios* serves as a synonym for *autokrator*, a term more commonly used in fifth-century inscriptions, indicating the council's capacity to act autonomously rather than merely implementing or enforcing the decisions of the assembly.⁷⁴ Esu has argued that this represents a “delegation clause”, through which the assembly delegated certain decision-making functions to the council within a constitutional framework characterised by flexibility and shared sovereignty.⁷⁵ In the case of the Aetolian council, we are not dealing with delegations related to decision-making but rather with functions that are judicial in nature. In this context, the council has the discretion to impose economic sanctions, and its decisions are not *ephesimoi*, subject to appeal. Moreover, this kind of authority is consistent with the judicial functions of the councillors, which are clearly evidenced by various decrees that document judicial proceedings before the federal council.⁷⁶

Ultimately, participation in a council that convened more frequently than the primary assembly, and which was constituted according to the principle of proportional representation derived from local elections, afforded communities that joined the league during the third century BCE an opportunity for political integration and shared governance within the federal framework.⁷⁷ The activities of the federal *synedria* in the documentation from the third and second centuries BCE are well-documented.⁷⁸ However, it is plausible that the delegations participating in the council predominantly comprised individuals from the economic elite of their respective cities.⁷⁹ This assumption is supported by the fact that council meetings often required considerable travel, and there is

74 See, for example, *IG* II² 127 (= RO 53), ll. 35-36 (alliance between Athens and some Thracian Kings, where the council was empowered to make additions to the decree); *IG* II³.1 404, ll. 5-9 (Athenian decree for exiles from Neapolis, where the exiles are to be looked after by the council and the *strategos* and the council is empowered to vote whatever seems the best for the exiles). Cf. Esu 2024, 70-74.

75 Esu 2024, 70-92.

76 *FD* III 3 214 (= *Choix Delphes* 77), ll. 6-7 (Aetolian *koinon*/Chios): εἰ δὲ μή, ὑποδίκους εἶναι ἐν τοῖς συνέδροις / ὥς τὰ κοινὰ βλέποντας τ[ᾶ] τῶν Αἰτωλῶν; *FD* III 3, 240, ll. 21-22 (decree for Eumenes of Pergamos): εἰ δὲ τίς κα ἄγῃ ἢ ῥυσιάξῃ ἢ ἀποβιάξαιτο ἢ διεγγυάσῃ, ὑπόδικον εἶμεν ἐν τοῖς / [συνέδροις] τῶι ἀδικηθέντι καὶ ἄλλῳι τῶι θέλοντι ἐν ταῖς ἐκ ποτιστάσιος δίκαις.

77 Scholten 2000, 53-54.

78 *Συνέδριον*: *IG* IX 1².1, 188, ll. 32-33. *Σύνεδροι*: *IG* IX 1².1, 4, l. 22; 15, l. 8; 48, l. 2 (integrated); 69, l. 4; 74, l. 1 (almost totally integrated); 169A, l. 7; 169B, l. 6; 172, ll. 2, 8, 10; 176, l. 11 (integrated); 187, l. 19; 189, l. 9; 190, ll. 7, 9 (partially integrated); 192, l. 13; 195A, ll. 3-4; *FD* III 3 214, ll. 6-7; *FD* III 3 240, ll. 21-22 (= *IG* IX 1².1, 179).

79 A point already made by Hamon 2005 for the Hellenistic councils.

no record of remuneration for the federal councillors. Thus, the composition and dynamics of the council reflect both the socio-economic structures of the period and the complexities of governance within the league.

5. Political Representation, Proportionality and Sortition: The Boeotian Model

When considering representation in relation to the Greek federal states, the first example that comes to mind is the Boeotian confederation of the classical period.⁸⁰ The functioning of the Boeotian constitution is described in a well-known passage from the *Hellenica* of Oxyrhynchus, which captures the situation of the Boeotian federal state as it appeared in 395 BCE.⁸¹ The Anonymus historian accounts for a system whose introduction scholars date to 446 BCE, when the Boeotians established a federal structure that remained in place until the dissolution of the league following the conclusion of the Peace of Antalkidas (387/6 BCE).⁸² All of Boeotia was divided into parts known as *merē*, which were foundational to proportional representation within the federal bodies.

The passage on the working of Boeotian federal constitution opens with a description of the local councils. Citizens were divided into 4 councils or *boulai*, each of which took turns examining the affairs of the confederation, effectively exercising a probouleutic function over the other councils; the decisions of the sitting council became executive only if unanimously approved by the other *boulai*. It should be noted that not all citizens were allowed to participate in the local councils; rather, participation was contingent upon property qualifications, the specifics of which remain unknown. The system, therefore, excludes from the exercise of political functions those who, although citizens by birth, are not so by property qualifications. It is unclear whether this exclusion also applied to the election to higher offices. This description echoes what Aristotle states in the *Politics* in two different passages: first, when he mentions a Theban law that prohibited access to public offices for those who had not stayed away from the *agora* for ten years; and then when he notes that access to the population in Thebes is regulated in such a way that political rights are granted to those who have abstained from manual labour for a certain period.⁸³

At the local level, there was no primary assembly. Dušanić's hypothesis that the Boeotian constitution also included a primary assembly has been convincingly rejected by Pierre Salmon, who demonstrated that it refers to the general

80 This council has often been compared to the Athenian regime of the Five Thousand, as described in *Ath. Pol.* 29-30. Cf. Bearzot 1985b. For the relationship between the Theban constitution and Solon's *politeia*, see Scévola 2018, 99-118.

81 *Hell. Oxy.* 16.3-4 (McKechnie-Kern).

82 Salmon 1978; Beck 1997; Corsten 1999; Beck, Ganter 2015, 140-46; Müller 2025, 264-68.

83 *Arist. Pol.* 3.5.1278a 25-26; 6.7.1321a 26-31.

assemblies of the federal *boule* that convened on the Cadmea, and that the term *synedrion* is synonymous with the federal council.⁸⁴ The lacking of the primary assembly was only partially mitigated by the existence of the 4 *boulai*, which, despite the property threshold for access to the *politeuma* likely not being set at a high level, did not facilitate extensive participation among the citizenry. It is difficult to envision how these *boulai* interacted, as well as to quantify participation in these political bodies. We may suppose that the annual number of *boulentai* could vary depending on the size of the city and its demographic potential.

The anonymous provides further information regarding the Boeotian federal organisation, especially concerning the subdivision of the territory into districts. Boeotia was divided into 11 districts with Thebes occupying 4 districts. In the absence of a primary assembly, the most important institution was the federal council, composed of 660 members, where the principle of representation was upheld; each district provided 60 *boulentai* regardless of the population of the district and appointed a boeotarch, contributing to the board of the 11 boeotarchs. Participation in the federal council was contingent upon property qualifications; however, we know little about the method of election for the *boulentai*. According to an old hypothesis by Swoboda, the *boulentai* may have been selected by lot from local councils. This hypothesis is compelling, especially in light of the fact that the Anonymous of Oxyrhynchus mentions the remuneration of the *boulentai*, possibly in the form of expense reimbursements from local authorities. Remuneration represents a balancing factor within the Boeotian timocracy and allows us to classify it as a moderate oligarchy.

How can this form of representation be interpreted? Political scientists have often discussed the relationship between representation and the method of selecting representatives. Bernard Manin has long emphasized the importance of sortition in relation to representation, highlighting how, in the context of the Athenian democracy, sortition was regarded as a democratic tool, while election was seen as typically aristocratic.⁸⁵ This perspective is quite prevalent in the modern scholarship on political representation. In this regard, McCormick has stated that “election is a magistrate selection method that directly and indirectly favours the wealthy and keeps political offices from being distributed widely among citizens of all socioeconomic backgrounds”.⁸⁶ In my opinion, the distinction lies in the potential inherent in sortition. While elections, which select candidates based on merit and social class, often fail to provide a descriptive representation of the constituents, sortition possesses the advantage of greater

84 Salmon 1978, 167. The hypothesis regarding the existence of a federal assembly is based on a questionable interpretation of a passage and the preservation of a *καὶ* between τὰ συνέδρια and τὰ κοινά, which most editors expunge—τὸ μὲν οὖν ἔθνος ὅλον οὕτως ἐπολιτεύετο, καὶ τὰ συνέδρια | {καὶ} τὰ κοινὰ τῶν Βοιωτῶν ἐν τῇ Καδμείᾳ συνεκάθιζεν.

85 Manin 1997, 27–33.

86 McCormick 2006, 148.

representational potential. In other words, representatives chosen through this method should be regarded as more reflective of the *politeuma*, encompassing both political beliefs and social background. There is, moreover, another reason why sortition might be adopted in oligarchic regimes. Matt Simonton has rightly emphasised the highly competitive nature of ancient elections.⁸⁷ Election was not an automatic mechanism whereby the people always chose based on merit, prominence, or social standing; rather, candidates could campaign on electoral promises, appealing to particular interests and even employing populist or demagogic strategies. Such a mechanism could be potentially more dangerous in an oligarchy, where internal competition among the elite could be more intense. This is consistent with what Cairns, Canevaro, and Mantzouranis have argued regarding the relationship between conceptions of political justice, *stasis*, and constitutional change in Aristotle's thought.⁸⁸ Ancient theoretical reflection, indeed, has often highlighted the oligarchic claim to inequality as a value, as well as the assertion that economic superiority should translate into superiority in all respects.⁸⁹ At least on one occasion, in the oligarchic constitution of Heraia in Arcadia, the transition from election to sortition was justified by the fact that the same individuals were always elected.⁹⁰ In an oligarchic context, therefore, sortition, which selected the *bouleutai* from a group of individuals who put themselves forward, served as a means to balance the competitiveness of the elites.⁹¹ It essentially left the outcome of the selection to chance rather than to a merit-based evaluation.⁹²

The system of *merē* observed in the classical Boeotian constitution vanished with the establishment of the so-called Theban League. The new confederation solidified its structural framework in 372 BCE, establishing a democratic system predominantly led by Thebes.⁹³ In a departure from the previously dominant timocratic model, the entire apparatus of federal institutions was dismantled in favour of a system inspired by the Athenian model. This new arrangement included an assembly of adult males, a council composed of members selected by lot with probouleutic functions, and the delegation of executive authority to

87 Simonton 2025a.

88 Cairns *et al.* 2020 and 2022.

89 Arist. *Pol.* 5.1.1301a 33-35; 5.6.1305b 22-34; Arist. *Rh.* 1390b 32-1391a 2 (cf. Cairns 2020, 166-67).

90 Arist. *Pol.* 5.3.1303a 13-16.

91 Cf. Malkin, Blok 2024, 334-36. This is the same point of view of Anaximenes of Lampsacos (*Rh. Al.* 2.14.3; 2.18.4).

92 It may be a logic akin to that operating within the Solonian *politeia*, which is also of a timocratic nature, concerning the selection by lot among pre-selected candidates. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 8.1 refers to this as *klerosis ek prokeriton*, while *Pol.* 2.12.1274a 2-3, 15-21 and 3.11.1281b 32-34 attest to election as a method for the selection of the *archai*. Cf. Loddo 2018b, 118-19.

93 Bakhuizen 1994; Beck, Ganter 2015; Müller 2025, 261-64.

the boeotarchs, who were elected by the assembly.⁹⁴ Diodorus frequently characterises this new system as a *synteleia* imposed by Thebes upon the Boeotians.⁹⁵ Under this framework, each member was required to contribute a quota, referred to as the *telos*, to the league. The notion of district sometimes associated with the *tele*, which might imply a significant continuity in the district organisation characteristic of the first confederation, is, in fact, misleading. Despite the democratisation of institutions, the *synteleia* system largely undermines the principle of proportional representation, resulting in a structure of cities that are dependent on the hegemon. While the concept of a “territorial whole” remains essential, the “syntelical” cities emerge as subordinate components of the Theban territory.⁹⁶

In a system that no longer adhered to representative principles, how were the boeotarchs selected? A series of seven decrees from the period of the Theban League illustrates the existence of seven boeotarchs who lack ethnic designations, a detail that has invited speculation.⁹⁷ One such decree pertains to an honorific recognition for a Carthaginian citizen acknowledged as a *proxenos* and benefactor of the Boeotians, to whom were granted *enketēsis*, tax exemption, and *asylia*.⁹⁸ According to the traditional interpretation, of the seven boeotarchs, four hailed from Thebes, while the remaining three were presumably distributed among the other member states in proportion to their respective sizes. Conversely, the absence of ethnic designations, which precludes the identification of the elected representatives’ origins, has led to the assumption that all boeotarchs were from Thebes. Nevertheless, a proportional electoral system cannot be entirely discounted. Denis Knoepfler, in particular, has posited that, given the existence of seven *tele* into which Boeotia was divided, the boeotarchs were representative of these *tele*.⁹⁹

Research conducted over recent decades on Boeotia has significantly transformed our understanding of the federal institutions of the Hellenistic *koinon*. For an extended period, it was believed that the Hellenistic *koinon* lacked districts, which were thought to be characteristic solely of the Classical period. Paul Roesch proposed the hypothesis that districts existed within the Hellenistic confederation and were particularly dominated by the major cities of the *koinon*.¹⁰⁰ However, it is through the work of Knoepfler that the identification of the seven Hellenistic districts has been achieved.¹⁰¹

94 Diod. Sic. 16.25.1; *IG* VII 2407 and 8; Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.5.

95 On the meaning of *synteleia* see Bakhuizen 1994.

96 Bakhuizen 1994, 318.

97 Müller 2025, 262 n. 46.

98 *IG* VII 2407.

99 Knoepfler 1999, 354.

100 Roesch 1965, 46-47, 138 ff.

101 Knoepfler 1999.

Such identification fundamentally relies on the analysis of specific inscriptions that are particularly pertinent to our discourse on the principle of representation. In particular, an Oropian honorary decree bestowing some honours upon Ophelas of Amphipolis, mentions a college of boeotarchs, whose names, unlike those observed in the Theban League, are accompanied by their ethnic designations.¹⁰² By comparing this list with the composition of the districts, we can ascertain that the boeotarchs were representative of the districts, albeit with the qualification that when a district encompassed multiple cities, the boeotarch was appointed in rotation by the cities constituting that district. The list of boeotarchs from the proxeny decree for Ophelas of Amphipolis indicates that districts in the Hellenistic Boeotia facilitated coordination among smaller *poleis*, promoting equitable power distribution and enabling resource pooling for military contributions to the *koinon*, thus enhancing administrative efficiency.¹⁰³

Something similar can be observed in an Achaean decree which honours ten foreign hostages (*homeroi*).¹⁰⁴ These individuals are, in fact, “guarantors” among whom eight Boeotians and two Phokians are recognised, at a time when the Achaeans were allied with them. As Knoepfler has demonstrated, the Boeotian hostages originated from seven cities representing their respective districts; notably, with the exception of Plataia and Oropos, no two *poleis* from the same district are included. The precise institutional roles held by the honoured individuals remain unclear. They could have served as ambassadors or federal magistrates accompanied by a secretary, or, following Knoepfler’s hypothesis, as a college of seven federal hipparchs with a secretary. However, it is more likely that Müller is correct in suggesting that this refers to a college of former magistrates, as handing over an entire board of serving magistrates would have jeopardised the existing alliance.¹⁰⁵

A comparable discussion can be undertaken concerning another magistracy, namely that of the *aphedriateuontes*, federal magistrates tasked with overseeing federal cults. These magistrates are mentioned in some federal dedications made at various sanctuaries in Boeotia, particularly at Plataea at the sanctuary of Zeus Eleutherios and at Akraiphia at the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios.¹⁰⁶ A comparison between the ethnics of the *aphedriateuontes* and the Hellenistic districts shows that these magistrates were selected from the *tele*.¹⁰⁷

The Hellenistic *synedrion* serves as the central federal institution of the *koinon*, although evidence regarding its functions and structure is notably scarce. In the two lists of magistrates from Thespies three *synedroi* are mentioned, indicating

102 *I.Oropos* 21.

103 Mackil 2013, 375–76.

104 Rizakis, *Achaïe* III 118 = *Syll.*³ 519. See *ultra* n. 127.

105 Müller 2025, 258.

106 *IG* VII 2724; 2724a; 2724b; 2723.

107 *IG* VII 2724. Cf. Knoepfler 2001b, 354–55.

that these were likely the representatives for the *telos* of Thespies during this period.¹⁰⁸ From this, we can infer that the federal *synedrion* probably comprised a total of 21 *synedroi*, a figure that appears plausible within the context of Boeotian governance. The *synedroi* represented each *telos*, rather than the individual *poleis*, which underscores the federal nature of the *koinon*.

The comparison between the Boeotian *koinon* of the Classical age and that of the Hellenistic age reveals significant changes in the conception of political representation. First, whereas in the former case representation operates from the *poleis*, the Hellenistic *koinon* organises representation based on its *telē*. Secondly, the Hellenistic *synedrion* was characterised by its relatively small size, contrasting with the more significant participation and representation suggested by the account of the Anonymus of Oxyrhynchus. Despite this difference, a consistent feature emerges between the two models under examination. In both instances, there is a shared understanding of representation, where no distinction exists between representatives and the represented. This observation leads to the conclusion that, similar to the cases of Athens and Aetolia, the nature of political representation expressed by the Boeotian *koinon* is synecdochical. This form of representation appears to be emblematic of the Greek approach to political representation, irrespective of the prevailing regime. The matter of representation should therefore be disentangled from the categorisation of the governing system as either democratic or oligarchic. This indicates a more sophisticated comprehension of political representation that surpasses conventional classifications.

What varies, however, is the extent of representativeness that each regime elects to implement. This flexibility allows for a broader interpretation of how representation functions within different political contexts. Ultimately, the underlying principles of representation remain consistent, while the specific applications may differ according to the nature of the governing body. By recognising this distinction, we gain insight into the complexities of political representation in ancient Greece, where the mechanisms of representation were not strictly tied to the type of governance but instead reflected a deeper understanding of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

6. Institutional Representation in Ancient Phokis

In a well-known passage, Pausanias acknowledges the Phokian city of Panopeus as a *polis*, as evidenced by its clearly defined boundaries, marked by substantial fortifications, and its practice of sending delegates to the common council of the Phokians.¹⁰⁹ This observation, albeit brief, is significant in relation to the dis-

108 *I. Thespies* 84, ll. 1-2, 64-66.

109 Paus. 10.4.1.

course on proportional representation within federal political bodies. However, Pausanias' assertion invites a series of complex questions that warrant thorough examination. Firstly, which common institution of the Phokians is he referring to? Is it a federal assembly, as some translators interpret Pausanias' text, or does it denote a more restricted body, akin to a federal council?¹¹⁰ Secondly, aside from Panopeus, what other evidence exists regarding the presence of a representative federal body in Phokis? Lastly, considering that Pausanias' statement undoubtedly pertains to the period in which he lived, when can we trace the introduction of a representative system in Phokis?

The first two questions are intricately linked. To comprehend Pausanias' reference to the common institution of the Phokians, it is essential to compare it with similar passages that employ analogous technical expressions. When discussing Panopeus, Pausanias asserts that the inhabitants of Panopeus also send delegates (συνέδρους) to the assembly (ἐς τὸν σύλλογον) known as the *Phōkikon* (τὸν Φωκικόν). The term *syllogos* can indeed refer to an assembly, such as the gatherings of the *ekklesia* in Athens.¹¹¹ However, the implication that Pausanias intends *syllogos* to denote the building where the Phokians convened is reinforced by the specification of the name of the structure in question.

Pausanias mentions the *Phōkikon* again shortly thereafter while describing the road from Daulis to Delphi. He notes that on the left side of this road stands a structure (οἰκοδόμημα) called *Phōkikon*, where delegates from each city belonging to the confederation gather (συνίασιν). Later, he describes it as a large building equipped with tiered seating, where the assembled Phokian delegates (οἱ συνιόντες τῶν Φωκέων) would sit. It is probable that the building referred to by Pausanias is not the structure where the *koinon* convened during the classical period. Rather, it has been identified with the Roman-era building where the reconstituted *koinon* likely met. Monumental remains have also been discovered in a different area at the top of a hill at Kato-Tseresi, previously identified by archaeologists as the remnants of a sanctuary dedicated to the hero *archēgetēs*.¹¹² McInerney's hypothesis, which considers the sanctuary as the site of the earlier meeting place of the *koinon*—abandoned after the defeat in the Sacred War or alternatively during the Roman period—although appealing, has been convincingly challenged by Denis Rousset.¹¹³ Recent excavations have, in fact, interpreted the remains at Kato-Tseresi not as a Hellenistic public building but as a private structure from the Imperial age that reused older stones.¹¹⁴

110 Assembly with a representative nature: Larsen 1968, 301-302; Pascual González 2017a, 23.

111 Thuc. 2.22.

112 Paus. 10.4.10: Xantippos or Phokos.

113 McInerney 1999; 2015, 211ff., 218. *Contra* Rousset 2024, 48.

114 SEG 42.479, l. 5 (= Magnetto, *Arbitrati* 68) On the role of *Phōkikon* as starting point for territorial delimitation see Rousset, Katzourous 1992, 208-10. For a discussion on the ways of defining space in territorial disputes, see Matijašić 2022, 397-401. Knoepfler 1999 argued that

An uncertain yet plausible reference to the *Phōkikon* can be found in a third-century inscription related to a territorial dispute between Panopeus and Stiris. If we accept Rousset's suggestion that *Phōkion* and *Phōkikon* are two different toponyms pointing to the same building, we may infer that *Phōkikon* was included within the territory of Panopeus.¹¹⁵ While it might be tempting to conclude that the *Phōkikon* was still functioning as a meeting place for the Phokians in the third century, when the boundary arbitration was inscribed, such a conclusion would be speculative. Nevertheless, it must have been a well-known structure among the Phokians if it was employed as a reference point for territorial delimitation.

Although the *Phōkikon* is not mentioned elsewhere in conjunction with other Phokian cities, we find two cross-references with the passage on Panopeus that are helpful for our argument. Firstly, Pausanias introduces the *polis* of Ledon, noting that it was once regarded as a *polis*, but by his time, the inhabitants had abandoned the settlement due to its decline and moved to Cephysus.¹¹⁶ The new site, also named Ledon, had only 70 residents, yet despite its small size, its inhabitants were deemed worthy of participating in the common assembly of the Phokians, similar to Panopeus. The connection between this passage and the discussion regarding Panopeus is quite evident. Despite the decline of the *polis*, it still exhibits signs of its urban identity by retaining the authority to send delegates to the confederacy's decision-making body. Once again, the choice of vocabulary is significant. The act of participating in the common deliberation space is expressed by the verb τελέω used with εἰς plus the accusative (τὸν σύλλογον κοινόν). This construction conveys the notion of engaging in an activity as a member of a group. Its meaning derives from the expression τελέω εἰς τὸ κοινόν τινων, which translates to "to pay into the treasury of a community", and τελέω εἷς τινας, meaning "to belong to a community or a group".¹¹⁷ The underlying concept is that the entitlement to a substantive right arises from a contributory duty. The same designation found in the passage regarding Panopeus reappears for the assembly of the Phokians, referred to as τὸν Φωκέων σύλλογον κοινόν. While the inclusion of the adjective κοινόν may appear redundant, it emphasises the federal nature of the meeting place.

The final reference to a common institution where the Phokians convened appears to be associated with the city of Boulis.¹¹⁸ Here, the challenges are two-

the dispute concerned Panopeus and Stiris on the one hand against a third party on the basis of the wording Φανοτέοις Στειρίοις without a conjunction (l. 3), but see Rousset's objections in *BE* 2001 no. 243, p. 529.

115 Rousset, Katzouros 1992, 208-10.

116 Paus. 10.33.1.

117 Waanders 1983, 230. *Syntelein*, in the context of Boeotia, refers to the "contribution of taxes and soldiers", cf. Bakhuizen 1994. Cf. above n. 95.

118 Paus. 10.37.2.

fold. Firstly, Pausanias describes the *polis* of Boulis as a non-Phokian settlement, originating from the synoecism of two Doris *poleis*. Although it was geographically situated within Phokis, it remains ambiguous whether Boulis was considered part of Phokis and its confederation. Secondly, due to the corruption of the passage, its meaning is not entirely clear. What can be discerned is a connection between Boulis, Philomelos, and the common assembly of the Phokians. The reference to Philomelos necessitates further clarification. It has been suggested that the mention of the *stratēgos* of Ledon indicates Boulis' participation in the Phokian assembly during the years 356-354. This element may be corroborated by the absence of expressions employed elsewhere by Pausanias that would contextualize the statement concerning the time he was writing (e.g., κατ' ἐμὲ in Paus. 10.33.1). However, it is also possible that the two are unrelated and that the *koinos syllogos* is identical to that referenced for Panopeus and Ledon.

The analysis of the passages in which the federal meeting place of the Phokians is mentioned reveals that the *syllogos* Pausanias discusses takes the form of a council composed of delegates from the confederate cities rather than a primary assembly open to all eligible participants. Only in the case of Panopeus do we have an explicit mention of delegates sent from the city to the *syllogos*; however, the intertextuality between the passage on Panopeus and that on Ledon suggests that the same system likely applied to Ledon as well. Further conclusions regarding Boulis remain elusive due to the corruption of the passage. The principle governing the *koinos syllogos* referenced by Pausanias remains unknown. It has been proposed that the contribution and significance of each *polis* within the confederation dictated the number of delegates to be sent to the *syllogos*.¹¹⁹ Alternatively, one might consider a proportionality based on the population of the *poleis*.

This can, however, only be regarded as probable for the period in which Pausanias wrote. What can be said regarding the preceding period? It is necessary to assert that the evidence regarding this matter is quite limited. Terms such as *synedroi* and *synedrion* are indeed attested, but only at a local level, as evidenced by the epigraphic dossier from Elateia, Daulis, and Antycira.¹²⁰ Likewise, evidence regarding the functioning of the *Phōkikon* as a place of deliberation is scant. However, a second-century BCE inscription could be useful for our argument. In 1963, French and Vanderpool published several epigraphic findings from the *Phōkikon*, including a list of approximately 120 names accompanied by patronymics but lacking indications of origin.¹²¹ The early editors, while emphasising the challenges of providing a definitive interpretation of the document, proposed the integration of the term *politeia* in the initial part

119 Beck 1997, 114.

120 Elateia (the 2nd century BCE): *IG IX 1*, 120-127; Daulis (2nd century BCE): *IG IX 1*, 115; Antycira (2nd century BCE): *IG IX 1*, 1-3.

121 French, Vanderpool 1963, n. 5.

of the inscription.¹²² This suggestion implies that the inscription may contain a list of individuals to whom the Phokian confederation granted citizenship. Nevertheless, this interpretation appears unlikely given that the supposed recipients of naturalisation do not have their ethnics specified. Consequently, it is difficult to regard them as naturalised foreigners. An alternative interpretation posits that the enrolment represents a list of Phokian citizens. Could the document, as Rousset cautiously suggested, attest to a list of councillors who served in the *Phōkikon*?¹²³ One supporting element for this hypothesis is the number of names recorded, as 120 is a figure consistent with a limited council that one might expect to operate in Phokis. The headings explaining the nature of the list are indeed missing, but in light of the fragmentary state of the decree, it cannot be ruled out that they were included.

Furthermore, the participation of delegates from the *poleis* in the federal council can be inferred from a trade agreement between the Phokian and Boeotian confederations.¹²⁴ The discussion surrounding this treaty has primarily focused on the issue of dating, which seems to be quite contentious. While the first editor of the inscription dated it to the second half of the third century based on palaeographic evidence, subsequent scholars have suggested progressively earlier dates, largely based on the content of the text.¹²⁵ The chronology suggested by Roesch, who has undertaken the most comprehensive historical analysis of the text, seems to me to be the most fitting.¹²⁶ He has provided compelling arguments for placing the treaty in 228 or 227 BCE, based on the observation that the aim of the alliance between the Phokians and Boeotians was to protect their assets and ensure the safe circulation of goods between Boeotia and Phokis during a time of perceived external threat. The common adversary was likely the Aetolian confederation. To counter this threat, an alliance was established during the same period between Achaia, Boeotia, and Phokis.¹²⁷ Roesch concludes that the commercial alliance with Boeotia must have represented an initial step for the Phokians to defend themselves against the perilous Aetolian neighbours, shortly after regaining their independence from Aetolia, and that this agreement likely preceded the alliance with Achaia.¹²⁸ Establishing the date of the treaty between Boeotia and Phokis is significant not only in its

122 L. 3: -ιτεῖται has been integrated as πολιτεῖται; it is unclear whether it is a plural nominative or a singular dative. Cf. French, Vanderpool 1963, 222.

123 Rousset 2024, 52.

124 IG IX 1, 98.

125 An overview of the debate can be found in Roesch 1982, 359–60. Cf., also, Mackil 2013, 442–43 (T 28) for comparison.

126 Roesch 1982, 359–64.

127 This alliance is known solely through a passage by Polyb. 2.49.6 and a proxeny decree from the Achaean confederation concerning eight Boeotian and two Phokian “hostages” (Rizakis, *Achaïe* III 118 = *Syll.*³ 519). Cf. above n. 104.

128 Roesch 1982, 360–61.

own right but also for our discourse on Phokian representative institutions. In particular, lines 9-19 of the treaty, which contain specifications regarding the procedures for taking the oath, are of particular interest.

It is asserted that the entry into force of the treaty is contingent upon an oath from the contracting parties; however, with respect to the Phokians, it is mandatory that both federal and local magistrates must take the oath, while in Boeotia only the boeotarchs are required to swear. The distinction between federal and local magistrates is articulated through the opposition between ἀρχεῖα τὰ τε κοινά on one side and τὰ κατὰ πόλεις on the other. However, what is meant by (ἀρχεῖα) τὰ κατὰ πόλεις, which is repeated twice in the text (ll. 9-10, 13-14)? It is significant that the text of the treaty, after stating that the boeotarchs must take their oath in their “federal capital” at Onchestos and that the Phokian *stratēgoi* must take their oath in Elateia—serving as the location of one of the Phokian federal assemblies—specifies that the boeotarchs are obligated to ensure that both the *stratēgos* and *ta kata poleis* take the oath.

Two possible explanations arise. The first is that, due to the commercial nature of the agreement, it was essential for the magistrates in office at different times in the Phokian *poleis* to be required to take an oath to uphold the terms of the treaty, particularly by refraining from imposing civic taxes on goods imported by the Boeotians into Phokis. Accordingly, these *archeia ta kata poleis* would refer to local magistrates. Moretti concludes that the federal ties were relatively weak in both leagues.¹²⁹ However, this explanation overlooks the fact that, in the case of Phokis, only local magistrates are referenced, while the treaty concerning Boeotia mentions only the boeotarchs. The second explanation, suggested by Roesch, posits that the *archeia ta kata poleis* served as representatives of the cities, specifically as delegates from the cities within the federal council who took the oath in conjunction with the federal *stratēgoi*.¹³⁰ This explanation offers the considerable advantage of providing a coherent rationale for the differing procedures regarding the oaths of Boeotian and Phokian magistrates, especially in light of the stipulation that the oath was to be renewed annually. While the boeotarchs, elected in the Boeotian federal assembly, could take their oath immediately following their election, this would only be feasible for the federal *stratēgoi* in the case of the Phokians. It is likely that, conversely, the delegates of the *poleis* were elected during local assemblies and subsequently sent to the federal *synedrion* or *syllagos*. Consequently, the oath of the Phokian local magistrates before the Boeotarchs would only be possible for them in Elateia, alongside the federal *stratēgoi*.

The relative scarcity of institutional documents hinders our ability to draw definitive conclusions about the presence of representative institutions in

129 Moretti 1976, 36.

130 Roesch 1965, 130-31. This perspective has been recently embraced by Rousset 2024, 52.

Hellenistic Phokis. It is plausible that there was a transition from a primary assembly to a representative council of cities.¹³¹ However, ascertaining the precise date of this transition remains problematic. Several potential junctures for this change can be identified. For instance, it is conceivable that the reorganisation of the *koinon* following the defeat in the Sacred War provided a context for re-evaluating federal structures.¹³² Alternatively, some scholars have proposed that the establishment of a representative *synedrion* occurred concurrently with the Roman reorganisation of the *koinon*. Larsen believed that this change took place around 190 BCE, coinciding with the cessation of activities of the primary assembly.¹³³ In contrast, Martin has argued that the presence of representative structures in Phokis emerged after 130 BCE, following the Roman victory in the Achaean War and the subsequent reorganisation of Greece by Mummius.¹³⁴ Among the measures mentioned was the dissolution of ethnic-based confederations, a measure that, according to Pausanias, would have affected the Achaean, Phokian, and Boeotian confederations, as well as any others that existed in Greece—an exaggeration, as only those that participated in the Achaean War were abolished.¹³⁵ A few years later, moved by compassion, the Romans permitted the Greeks to reconstitute the leagues.¹³⁶

The term employed by Pausanias is noteworthy. He does not primarily reference confederations but rather councils (συνέδρια κατὰ ἔθνος). If this is not an anachronistic interpretation of the political-institutional context of 146 BCE, it may provide evidence that representative *synedria* had been functioning within the mentioned confederations for some time. The compassion that Pausanias attributes as the rationale for the abrogation of Lucius Mummius' measures could be interpreted as a response to the requests of the Greeks accustomed to federal organisation. In any case, the documents we have analysed can confirm that traces of "representativity" date back to a period well before not only the time of Pausanias but also the reorganisation of the Phokian *koinon* by the Romans. In the same vein, traces of "representativity" in the selection of magistrates have emerged from the analysis of certain inscriptions from the final decades of the fourth century BCE. In this sense, although one may not wish to extend the argument too far by identifying the events post-346 BCE as the moment when the shift toward representative institutions occurred, it can be suggested that such a change had already taken place in the last quarter of

131 An assembly of all the Phokians is mentioned in the sources concerning the war against the Thessalians in the Archaic period (Plut. *De mul. vir.* 244CD; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 8.65; Paus. 10.2.3) as well as the period of the Sacred War (Diod. Sic. 16.27.2; 32.2; 56-57).

132 Daverio Rocchi 1994, 182 ff. identifies centralism as a defining characteristic of the *koinon* prior to 346 BCE.

133 Larsen 1968, 302.

134 Martin 1975, 550.

135 Paus. 7.16.9.

136 Paus. 7.16.10.

the third century. This finding is, in fact, unsurprising. It is quite conceivable that the example of more developed *koina*, such as the Aetolian and Achaean leagues, provided a model of representation in the full Hellenic tradition for the more modest Phokian *koinon* to follow.

7. Conclusions: Understanding Representation in Ancient Greek Political Systems

Let us draw some conclusions from the discussion. First, although the Greek public discourse is permeated with the lexicon of representation, the Greeks never arrived at a clear definition of the concept. This does not preclude the possibility that the Greeks thought in terms of representation; indeed, whenever they presented a political act as being in favour of the *dēmos*, they rendered a metaphor of representation. The issue is that this type of evidence pertains more to Athenian democracy than to federal states, particularly since we possess only scant traces of reflection on Greek federalism. Nevertheless, federal councillors acted without a mandate, understood in modern terms, but were legitimised by a constituent body through election or sortition. In this sense, the image of synecdochical representation is particularly useful, as the councillors represent the part acting for the whole. Representation is not merely the link between the local and federal levels; it is primarily the political space in which federal citizenship is exercised.

A second aspect to consider is that not only the decisions of the councillors are binding for the federal state, but we also lack any record of accountability for the federal councillors, which renders them *kyrioi* of their actions. The examples discussed regarding the Aetolian, Boeotian and Phokian confederations illustrate that representation is not confined to a specific regime; both oligarchic and democratic systems could make recourse to representation. Boeotia serves as a prime example of a proto-representative government, as it lacked a primary assembly and where the councils played a fundamental role. In contrast, Aetolia represents a democratic structure with a direct assembly that made crucial decisions while heavily relying on the work of a representative council. Thus, we are referring to representative institutions within a direct system. Finally, Phokis does not exhibit a system of districts; rather, it likely features a *synedrion* with representation organised *kata poleis*. The cases discussed highlight the unique nature of representation in ancient Greece, which does not neatly align with any contemporary definitions of representation. They also reveal the complexity of a system capable of integrating elements of both representation and direct democracy.