

WERE THERE GREEK FEDERAL STATES?

It appears to be very difficult to get an acceptable definition of a federal state. The one thing that most authorities seem agreed on is that it represents some sort of a compromise. Freeman, in his unfinished *History of Federal Government*, of which the first and only volume appeared in 1863,¹ saw the federal state as a compromise between a system of large states and a system of small states, and also from another aspect as a compromise between absolute independence and absolute subjection. More recently, Sir Kenneth Wheare² has defined a federal government as one in which there is a co-ordinate division of powers between the central government and the member states, so that both operate in their respective spheres directly and independently upon the individual citizen. A state of this sort — and Wheare admits that his definition is formulated primarily with the example of the United States in mind³ — is a compromise between a unitary state like Great Britain or France and a confederation like the original American Confederation of 1777 (in which the central government was subordinate to those of the regions).

Wheare's definition seems to rule out nearly all federal experiments before 1787 — which may be why his book on *Federal Government* ignores the ancient world almost completely: the word 'Achaea' does not figure in the index, and he accuses Freeman of using the term 'federal government' too loosely 'even for a historian'.⁴ Yet states like Achaea and Aetolia contained both central and city governments and have generally been held to fall within a history of federalism. The bulk of Freeman's work, even in the expanded edition which Bury brought out in 1893,⁵ is concerned with the ancient world; and in recent years

¹ E.A. Freeman, *History of federal government from the foundation of the Achaian League to the disruption of the United States*, vol. 1 (London 1863).

² K.C. Wheare, *Federal Government* (London 1946), I have used ed. 3, London 1953.

³ *Op. cit.* 1.

⁴ *Op. cit.* 16 n.2.

⁵ *History of federal government in Greece and Italy*, ed. J.B. Bury (London 1893).

the subject has received an impetus from J.A.O. Larsen's comprehensive study of *Greek Federal States*⁶ which demonstrates a growing knowledge of the working of those states and of the cities comprising them since the time of Freeman. There are still serious gaps; and we must always bear in mind a point stressed by Wheare, that a federal constitution and a federal government are not necessarily the same thing. What one wants to know is how things worked in practice; and for that our evidence is not always adequate. Discussion, therefore, still goes on about whether the Achaean federation, for example, embodied anything like Wheare's co-ordinate division of power, and to what extent the cities were subordinate to the centre. In this paper I am raising this question afresh, because a striking new work has recently appeared, in which it is argued that the Greek federal states (so-called) were neither federal states nor confederacies — neither *Bundesstaat* nor *Staatenbund* — but quite simply unitary states.

The book in which Dr. Adalberto Giovannini argues this case⁷ is, I believe, important. It contains a clear and plausible statement of a paradoxical and heretical point of view. It is most readable, indeed exciting; and it underlines several undoubted truths that have gone either unnoticed or at least without clear formulation. It is to Giovannini's arguments that I propose to direct this paper, and I hope that, though I shall end up disagreeing with him, I shall not be unfair to his argument, and to a work from which I have learnt a great deal. One difficulty in such a discussion is verbal. What are we to call states like Aetolia and Achaea while actually arguing about their definition? Giovannini uses the Greek term *sympoliteia*, though in fact he subsequently concludes that this is an improper use of the word.⁸ I propose to call them simply 'federal states', but since I hope to show that that is what they were, the difficulty is perhaps less serious for me than it was for him.

⁶ J.A.O. Larsen, *Greek federal states* (Oxford 1968).

⁷ A. Giovannini, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der Bundesstaatlichen Sympoliteie in Griechenland* (Hypomnemata, Heft 33, Göttingen, 1971). Giovannini is here reviving a view advanced eighty years ago by E. Szanto, *Das griechische Bürgerrecht* (Freiburg/Breisgau, 1892).

⁸ *Op. cit.* 24.

I

Giovannini begins his argument by discussing terminology.⁹ There is, he says, no Greek word for ‘a federal state’. It is of course true that Greek has no word meaning ‘a federal state’ and nothing else. But words can, and do, change their meaning, and it is rare in any language to find a complete correspondence between any name and one particular institution. The city-state itself had not the exclusive use of the word *polis*, for this also means a citadel or fortress or even the rights of citizenship. Several words — including *politeuma*, which is used in the treaty sworn between Rome and Aetolia in autumn 211¹⁰ — appear to be used to mean ‘a federal state’; but the three commonest are *koinon* (literally meaning ‘common thing’), *ethnos* (literally ‘people’) and *sympoliteia* (literally ‘shared citizenship or constitution’). Giovannini argues that in all the passages where these words appear to be so used, the meaning is in fact a different one; I shall consider his arguments one by one. First, *koinon*; and here he makes an important point. *Koinon* is never used in Greek (as it almost always is by modern historians of Greece) to mean ‘federal states’ in the plural. In the singular it means the central authority as distinct from the member-cities. But since the central authority of a *polis* was more commonly referred to as the *demos*, the people, the word *koinon* tended to be associated more specifically with federal states or such political organisations as alliances or religious amphictyonies. The word, therefore, acquired a close connection with composite bodies, and when the *koinon* of the Achaeans makes a dedication to the statesman Aristaenus,¹¹ it seems likely that to those reading it the phrase meant ‘the federal authority of the Achaeans’; clearly the difference between this and ‘the Achaean Federation’ is little more than a nuance. Next comes *ethnos*, which Larsen translates ‘nation’ (he renders *koinon* ‘commonwealth’).¹² *Ethnos*

⁹ *Op. cit.* 14–24.

¹⁰ H.H. Schmitt, *Staatsverträge des Altertums* (SVA), Vol. 3 (Munich 1969) no. 536 line 20, τοῖς Αἰτωλοῖς [εἰς τὸ αὐτῶν] πολίτευμα ποτιλαμβάνειν [ἐξέστω...].

¹¹ *Syll.*³ 702 note; here τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν honours Aristaenus for his goodwill εἰς τὸ ἔθνος καὶ τοὺς συμμάχους καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Ἕλληνας.

¹² *CP* 57 (1962) 250–1 (quoted also by Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 19 n. 41); *Greek federal states*, xiv.

is frequently used both of tribal communities, like the Molossians or the Macedonians, and of developed federal states, like the Achaeans or the Aetolians; and it is frequently contrasted with *poleis* — ‘cities’ — indeed the phrase πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη cities and *ethne*, is often employed to mean ‘states of every kind’ (in the Hellenistic period the word δυνάσται, ‘princes’, is sometimes added).¹³ The people in an *ethnos*, it is widely believed, were conscious of a shared origin and held cults and customs in common; and the use of this word to describe a federal state has been taken to indicate that such a state had evolved out of a tribal community and still kept its ‘ethnic’ character. Giovannini, however, rejects this view.¹⁴ The word *ethnos*, he argues, originally meant nothing more than ‘a group’. He points out, quite correctly, that in Homer the phrase ἔθνος Ἀχαιῶν does not mean ‘the Achaean people’, it means ‘a band of Achaeans’;¹⁵ and in later authors we meet an *ethnos* of workers, peasants or serfs, of priests, money-changers and merchants, of thieves, rhapsodes, heralds and catamites, while the male and female sexes can constitute an *ethnos*.¹⁶ *Ethnos*, he argues, is a vague word; and in the phrase ‘cities and *ethne*’, the second word is purely negative — what is left in the ‘political spectrum’ when you have taken away the cities.

I find this hypothesis unacceptable. It is true that in the Hellenistic age *ethnos* is used to describe states that are not cities, *poleis*.¹⁷ But nearly all *ethne* are ‘peoples’ with a tribal or kinship basis, and if *ethnos* originally signified simply ‘a group’, then it is an odd word for the Greeks to have adopted to describe a people which felt itself to be something like what we mean by a ‘nation’. Since the groups themselves go back to ancient times, it would seem more likely that it is the other

¹³ See Walbank, *Commentary on Polybius*, 2 (Oxford 1967), 117 on Plb. 9.1.4; R. Weil, *Aristote et l'histoire: essai sur la 'Politique'* (Paris 1960), 376 ff.

¹⁴ For the view of an *ethnos* as a community conscious of its common origin, cults and customs see Weil, *op. cit.* (n. 13), 380 ff.; for the rejection of this see Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 15.

¹⁵ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 17.552.

¹⁶ Plato, *Gorg.* 455 b (workers); Demosth. 23.146 (peasants); Plato, *Legg.* 776 d (serfs); Arist. *Met.* 1.981 b 25 (priests); Demosth. 23.146 (merchants and money-changers); Plato, *Pol.* 351 c (thieves); Xen. *Symp.* 3.6 (rhapsodes); Plato, *Pol.* 290 b (heralds); Demosth. 61.4 (catamites); Xen. *Oecon.* 7.26 (the sexes). I take these references from Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 15.

¹⁷ See above, n. 13; cf. Larsen, *CP* 57 (1962) 250.

uses of *ethnos* that are derivative. In English we use the word ‘tribe’ in the same way. Giovannini argues that an *ethnos* need not have ‘ethnic’ origins (in the modern sense) and quotes the example of the Epirotes¹⁸ — whose name means ‘the people of the mainland (*epirus*)’. But the Epirote federation is exceptional in having developed out of the Molossian tribal state (as Giovannini himself emphasises a few pages earlier)¹⁹ and consequently cannot be used in support of the view that an *ethnos* is simply a group. But in any case I doubt if the origins of a particular name are very important; in Italy the Latins certainly felt themselves to be a *gens* or *natio*, although the word *Latini* means simply ‘men of the flat country’.²⁰ In fact, Aristotle, who has a good deal to say about *ethne*, clearly gave the word a positive content and meaning. In a passage in the *Politics*²¹ he remarks that a city with too big a population becomes more like an *ethnos*. Here, clearly, *ethnos* cannot just mean ‘not a city’, for this would make the remark repetitious. It must mean a political body with its own characteristics, which differ from those of a *polis* in a positive way. So even if the ‘group’ meaning came first (which I find highly improbable), it is clear that the ‘ethnic’ meaning was firmly established by the time of Aristotle and before the hey-day of the federal states. This seems to me to be an important point. The argument that federal states like Achaea were called *ethne* merely because they were not cities, neglects what was clearly the predominant meaning of the word *ethnos* in classical times. Whether military or religious factors played the greater role in the origins of federal states is a question which cannot yet be answered;²² but it seems clear that the political organisation of the *ethnos* took place within a context of kinship and tribal cohesion — as indeed one would expect in early society.

There is a further point. Not only does Aristotle show that he has a positive concept of an *ethnos*; he also distinguishes an *ethnos* that is still purely tribal from one organised on federal lines. In a passage in the *Politics* (2.1261 a.27), where he is concerned with defining the city, he remarks that a *polis* differs from an alliance, because whereas a *polis*

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 16 n. 25.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 11 n. 7.

²⁰ Cf. Walbank, HSCP 76 (1972) 149.

²¹ *Pol.* 7.4.1326 b 2f.

²² Cf. Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 13.

needs the greatest amount of variety and differentiation, an alliance benefits from a mere extension in the number of its members, since its usefulness depends upon *quantity*. He then remarks, almost incidentally, that a *polis* also differs from an *ethnos*, where the people are not scattered in villages, but are like the Arcadians. The passage has been much discussed;²³ but clearly it differentiates between two kinds of *ethne* — those in which the people live in villages and those in which they live like the Arcadians — and this appears to mean that (like the fourth-century Arcadians) they are organised in cities within a federal state. Such a federal state, then, differs from a city because, like an alliance, it can benefit simply from territorial expansion.

Now if Aristotle draws this clear and positive distinction between cities and *ethne*, and if in discussing *ethne* he distinguishes between those organised like the Arcadians (i.e. federally) and those not so organised, then it becomes rather difficult to accept the view that *ethne* are so called in the Hellenistic age solely because they are not cities.

The third word frequently used of federal states in Hellenistic times is *sympoliteia*.²⁴ It crops up on inscriptions and in Polybius, and can refer to several complex political structures, in which cities were incorporated in one or other of a variety of ways, for example unions of two or more cities, such as that between Plarasa and Aphrodisias in Caria,²⁵ cities which have *absorbed* other cities, as Miletus absorbed Pidasas or Myus,²⁶ and of course federal states.²⁷ It is also used to describe the relationship of two states linked by *isopoliteia* (literally 'equality of citizenship')²⁸,

²³ See Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, 2 (Oxford 1887) 231–3 commenting on the passage; Weil, *op. cit.* (n. 13), 269–72.

²⁴ See Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 20–24.

²⁵ Cf. *OGIS* 453 lines 5 ff.; for a full discussion of this kind of *sympoliteia* with examples taken especially from Asia Minor see L. Robert, *Villes d'Asie mineure: études de géographie ancienne*², (Paris 1962) 54 ff. For evidence for such a *sympoliteia* between Oricus and Corcyra see H.W. Parke, *Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Oxford, 1967), 261 n. 6 (cf. Robert, *Bull. épig.* 1971, no. 382).

²⁶ Strabo 14.636 (Myus); G. Kawerau and A. Rehm, *Das Delphinion in Milet* (Berlin 1914; vol. 1.3 of Th. Weigand, *Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899*, 149 (Pidasas).

²⁷ E.g. *Plb.* 2.41.12 (of the Achaean federation); see below, nn. 33–40.

²⁸ Cf. *Syll.*³ 472, for a Messenian decree establishing *ισπολιτεία* between Messene and Phigaleia.

that is the mutual grant of the potential rights of citizenship, which became actual only if and when the citizen of one city took up residence in the other — a relationship which existed for example between Cydonia and Apollonia in Crete,²⁹ or between Cius and Lysimacheia and the Aetolian federation.³⁰ In fact Aetolia made substantial use of *isopoliteia*,³¹ under that name, both within the federation and with outside states; among the latter known to us are Messene and Phigaleia in the Peloponnese, Ceos (which was linked to Naupactus), Tricca in Thessaly, Heraclea (probably Heraclea-by-Latmos), Vaxos in Crete, Acarnania and perhaps such states as Phocis and Boeotia and (for a time) the cities of eastern Arcadia. Polybius generally chose to neglect *isopoliteia* and to include examples of it under the more general term *sympoliteia*.³²

Clearly then a great variety of political patterns can be covered by 'sympoliteia', which is a word by no means restricted to any one meaning, nor indeed very sharply defined. But among its various meanings, so it has usually been assumed, are 'an act of union' in one of the compound political organisations I have mentioned, and 'the union itself' which results from that act. 'To share in the *sympoliteia*' of the Achaeans, μετέχειν τῆς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν συμπολιτείας, was taken to mean 'to join the federation'; 'to withdraw from the *sympoliteia* of the Achaeans', ἀφίστασθαι τῆς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν συμπολιτείας, was 'to leave the Achaean federation'.³³ Giovannini denies this.³⁴ *Sympoliteia*, he insists, is an activity, not an institution; it means 'a sharing of political

²⁹ Cf. Plb. 28.14.3; Polybius uses the word συμπολιτεία, but if this is Apollonia πρὸς Κνωσῶ, the relationship will be ἰσοπολιτεία (cf. Guarducci, *IC* 1, p. 3). In other respects too Polybius' phraseology here recalls that found in other ἰσοπολιτεία agreements from Crete (cf. van Effenterre, *La Crète et le monde grec de Platon à Polybe* (Paris 1948) 288–9).

³⁰ Cf. Plb. 18.3.12; here too Polybius says συμπολιτευομένους, but ἰσοπολιτεία is probably meant. See Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* 2 (Munich 1926) 1511 n. 3.

³¹ On this see Larsen, *Greek federal states*, 202–7.

³² *Syll.*¹ 472 (Messene and Phigaleia); *SVA* 3.508 (*isopoliteia* decree of Naupactus for Ceos and of Ceos for the Aetolian Federation); *IG* 9².1.178; *Syll.*³ 622; *IC* 2.p. 64 no. 18, p. 65 no. 19 (Vaxos); *IG* 9².1.3 A (Acarnania); Plut. *Arat.* 16.1 (with Porter's note); Plb. 20.4–5 (Boeotia); for Phocis see Larsen, *Greek federal states*, 206–7; for the Arcadian cities cf. Plb. 2.46.2, with Larsen, *The classical tradition; literary and historical: studies in honor of H. Caplan* (Ithaca 1967) 52–3.

³³ E.g. Plb. 2.44.5; 23.9.14.

³⁴ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 22–4.

life'. It is a sort of symbiosis, something that is happening within a state that is a going concern. You do not create a *sympoliteia*, you share in (or cease to share in) *the sympoliteia* of an existing state.

Giovannini deduces this meaning from the verb *sympoliteuein*, 'to have a share in political life', and he may well be right in regarding it as the original one. But — as in his discussion of the word *ethnos* — he does not seem to me to make sufficient allowance for the natural development in word-usage. In 280/79 the four Achaean cities of Dyme, Patrae, Tritaea and Pharae came together;³⁵ five years later (Polybius tells us) the people of Aegium expelled its tyrant and 'began to share in their *sympoliteia*'.³⁶ After the death of Demetrius of Macedon, many Peloponnesian tyrants yielded to Aratus' threats, laid down their power and 'shared in the Achaean *sympoliteia*'.³⁷ In 182, after their revolt, the Messenians were restored to their original position in the *sympoliteia*; and various cities were separated from Messenia and, having set up inscriptions (to mark their adherence) began to share in 'the common *sympoliteia*'.³⁸ About the same time the Achaean general announced at an assembly that the Spartan leaders were anxious 'to share in the *sympoliteia*'.³⁹ I need not quote further examples. My point is that in all these passages the phrase which I translate 'to share in the *sympoliteia*' clearly implies 'to join the federation'; and I believe that to Polybius' readers the word *sympoliteia* conveyed the sense of 'federation'. This view is confirmed by a passage in book 2,⁴⁰ in which Polybius remarks that Lydiades, the tyrant of Megalopolis, with greater foresight than his fellow-tyrants, without waiting for the death of Demetrius of Macedon had laid down his tyranny and 'had shared in the ethnic *sympoliteia*' i.e. he had joined the Achaean federation. The use of the pluperfect tense 'had shared' underlines what is implicit in the other passages I have quoted, namely that Polybius is thinking far more of the *act* of union

³⁵ Plb. 2.41.11.

³⁶ *id.* 2.41.13.

³⁷ *id.* 2.44.4.

³⁸ *id.* 23.17.2.

³⁹ *id.* 23.17.8.

⁴⁰ *id.* 2.44.3; Polybius here uses the phrase τῆς ἐθνικῆς συμπολιτείας, perhaps because Megalopolis was not part of the Achaean *ethnos*.

than of the shared political life that ensued from it; and what one joins is an organisation, not the communal activity that characterises it.

So, to sum up my argument so far, I can find no evidence in the vocabulary used in relation to federal states for the view that the Greeks did not distinguish them from unitary states. My reasons are: first that that view does not distinguish between the original meanings of *koinon*, *ethnos* and *sympoliteia* and the developed meanings which those words acquired when used in reference to federal states; secondly, that the negative definition of an *ethnos* as simply what is not a *polis* takes no account of the normal later meaning of the word, nor of Aristotle's distinction between *ethne* that are federally organised and those that are not, nor of the social conditions of early Greece when the later *ethne* first arose; and thirdly, that it is wrong to assume that because the Greeks had no word which they used exclusively to denote a federal state, they had therefore no concept of that institution.

Thus, the first argument against the existence of federal states in Greece, that from terminology, does not seem to be made out. We may now consider the arguments drawn from the supposed political behaviour of the federal states and their component cities, and the way the Greeks regarded both of these.

II

I will begin with a paradoxical aspect of Giovannini's argument, which becomes clear if we consider the situation in the United States of America. It usually comes as a surprise to anyone visiting the United States for the first time from a country like England or France to discover that this great power, which presents a single diplomatic front to the outside world, proves at closer quarters to be made up of a large number of separate and in many respects independent sovereign states, each exceedingly jealous of its own rights, but with no existence at all at the international level. No ambassadors travel abroad from Pennsylvania, Wyoming signs no treaties; yet there is a whole range of political and judicial activities, in which the states are sovereign and in which no appeal lies from state decisions.

Now if Giovannini is right, the situation in a Greek federal state like Achaëa is the exact opposite of this. There, he argues, we have a state

made up of a large number of cities, which can be seen, from literary texts and inscriptions alike, engaging in a constant exchange of envoys, sacred missions, arbitrations, delegates to games, with cities and states outside Achaea, granting freedom from plunder, passing honorary decrees for foreigners, in short indulging in a full round of intensive interstate activity; and yet, he tells us, these same cities lack all political identity, and from that point of view constitute mere bricks in a unitary structure.⁴¹ If this were true, it would be very remarkable, and would certainly show that in calling bodies like the Achaean federation 'federal states' we should be using the word 'federal' in a very different sense from any that we might give that word today.

Giovannini's account of the status of the constituent cities in the Greek federal states is basic to his argument. If Achaea and Aetolia, to mention two examples, are to merit the name of 'federal states', then it must be possible to show that the cities no less than the central government exercised some autonomous powers within their own sphere. It is both interesting and relevant to consider whether — and to what extent — the cities within the various federal states had to ratify federal decisions, how far they shared, as cities, in the taking of such decisions, and what was the character of the manifold relations which the cities enjoyed with the outside world. But the answer to the question whether Achaea was or was not a federal state does not depend upon these questions or the answers they receive — though naturally activity by the cities of the kind I have mentioned underlines their importance in the state as a whole. The essential thing, if one is to disprove the allegation that Achaea was a unitary state, is to demonstrate that there existed an area of autonomous city activity.

Before coming to that, however, I must make one more point. I have already mentioned the distinction which Sir Kenneth Wheare has drawn between constitutions and governments. In the same way we should be careful not to confuse the *theoretical* relationship of *polis* and federal centre with the kaleidoscopic relationships which can be seen existing in real historical situations. To take one example, a second century

⁴¹ Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 93, 'Die Ethne...sind Einheitsstaaten wie Athen oder Sparta gewesen'.

inscription, discovered in 1946, tells how Araxa in Caria,⁴² a small city belonging to the Lycian federation, fought wars against nearby Bubon and Cibyra, sent a prominent citizen Orthagoras on embassies to Cibyra and only in the last resort appealed for help to the central government (the *koinon* of the Lycians). Or again, according to Polybius, the western Achaean cities of Dyme, Pharae, Tritaea and Patrae, which were somewhat isolated geographically from the rest of the federation, possessed some kind of separate organisation, since we hear, at the time of the Social War of 220–217, of a subdivision (*synteleia*) of Patrae under the command of a sub-general (*hypostrategos*).⁴³ This body acts, in practice, with some independence — the cities even withholding federal taxes to pay for regional forces — and its existence is not easily reconciled with the concept of Achaea as a unitary state. Similar district sub-divisions are also to be found in Aetolia, and though less is known about them, their existence points in the same direction.⁴⁴ In fact, one may say, the bonds between the separate parts — cities and groups of cities — and the federal centre seem to tighten and slacken with the increase or decrease in outside pressures; and this *real* relationship between them is one of the factors that must be taken into account in any assessment of the role of the cities, no less than their ‘constitutional position’.

We can now turn to Giovannini’s main argument, which is designed to minimise the political aspect of the cities. The federal states, he declares, were, with the exception of Arcadia, ancient unified political structures, and not created at some late date by a union of the cities composing them. It is, he adds, the fallacy of this second view that has landed scholars in the embarrassing position of having to keep moving the supposed date of the foundation of the Aetolian Federation further and further back, to keep up with the discovery of new evidence for its

⁴² Cf. Bean, *JHS* 68 (1948) 46–56, no. 3; cf. Moretti, *Riv. fil.* 78 (1950) 326–50; Larsen, *CP* 51 (1956) 151–68.

⁴³ Plb. 5.94.1, reading Πατρικῆς for πατρικῆς; on the *synteleia* of the western cities see Larsen, *CP* 66 (1971) 84–6.

⁴⁴ For Aetolian *tele* see Walbank, *Commentary on Polybius* 1, 623–4 on 5.92.7; Larsen, *Greek federal states*, 197 ff.

earlier existence.⁴⁵ Achaea too, he argues, is not represented by Polybius as a late creation. On the contrary, his account of its early history goes back to legendary times and the rule of the kings. It was after the despotical rule of Ogygus' sons that the Achaeans changed their government to a democracy, and after that, right down to the time of Philip and Alexander, they kept their common state, τὸ κοινὸν πολίτευμα — which consisted of twelve cities — a democracy.⁴⁶ He makes a further point. Such federations, *ethne*, with cities embedded in their structure, are not, he says, unique in the Greek world. They find a close parallel in Hellenistic Macedonia, which was also an *ethnos* with cities — the only difference being that Macedonia was a monarchy.⁴⁷ But in both the monarchy and the federal state the central power completely predominates. How then are we to define the relationship of the cities to the central government? It is comparable, we are told, with the relationship of demes (virtually parishes) to the city which they compose, demes such as we find at Athens, Rhodes, Cos and many other cities.⁴⁸ Evidence apparently to the contrary is discarded. For example, we possess the text of a treaty from about 216 B.C. between Anactorium and the federal Acarnanian state of which it was a member, on the subject of the control of the shrine and festival of Actian Apollo. This treaty has been interpreted by Habicht, who first published the inscription, and by Schmitt, who reprinted it in *Staatsverträge des Altertums*, as an indication of the degree of independence enjoyed by a federal city relative to its central body.⁴⁹ Giovannini rejects this interpretation since, he says, the situation depicted in the treaty can be paralleled at Cos, where the city borrowed money from one of its demes

⁴⁵ Cf. Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 74–5; the decisive evidence which caused the date for the 'founding' of the federal state to be pushed back was the discovery of the Athenian inscription of 367 (Schweigert, *Hesperia* 8 (1939) 5 ff.=Tod, 2.137), which contained a reference to the *koinon* of the Aetolians.

⁴⁶ Plb. 2.41.3–8; but Polybius' account of a continuous democracy from the time that Ogygus' sons were expelled is certainly untrue, for not only do we know that Achaea was oligarchic throughout most of the fourth century, but a direct adoption of democracy, following upon monarchy, is contrary to all political experience (see my *Commentary* 1.229–30 *ad. loc.*).

⁴⁷ Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 76–80.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 81–2.

⁴⁹ Ch. Habicht, *Hermes* 85 (1957) 87–9=SVA 3.523.

and paid it back by instalments.⁵⁰ The comparison between federal cities and demes is pressed further. If a double citizenship — that of the city and that of the federation — is characteristic of a federal state, that too, it is argued, can be paralleled in the normal *polis*, where every citizen is a member both of the city and of his own deme, which he names on formal occasions, just as an Achaean citizen calls himself an Achaean from such-and-such a city.⁵¹ The only difference is that the federal cities, unlike demes and unlike the member states of a modern federation, have an international role to play. But this, we are told, is not of a political character. It is something that happens because the only form of real community which a Greek could envisage was the *polis*, the city. Only a *polis* could be a living community, a *Lebensgemeinschaft* — certainly not an *ethnos* such as the Aetolians or the Macedonians.⁵² A state of that kind was adapted to the relationships established by international law, but not to the cultural and social relationships essential to the lives of free men in the Greek world. For social relationships the only vehicle was the *polis*, and that is why a Greek living in a federal state called himself ‘an Achaean from Aegium’ or whatever it might be. In short, for Giovannini the ‘international’ aspect of the cities which form part of federal bodies is simply an aspect of their function as Greek living communities and has nothing to do with political powers: these are wholly reserved to the central government, which in consequence is as much a unitary state as a city like Athens or Rhodes.⁵³

III

That is the argument: and now I want to examine it a little more closely. We can start, I think, by allowing Giovannini his point⁵⁴ that many of the *ethne*, states like Achaea and Aetolia, go back to early

⁵⁰ Paton-Hicks, *The inscriptions of Cos* (Oxford 1891), no. 383 lines 7 ff.; this arrangement is not however a treaty.

⁵¹ E.g. *Syll.*³ 380, Αἰτωλὸς ἐκ Ναυπάκτου; *Syll.*³ 492, Ἀχαιοὺς ἐξ Αἰγίρας; *Syll.*³ 60, Βοιότιος ἐχς Ἐρχυμενῶ.

⁵² Cf. Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 86–7.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 92; Giovannini quotes E. Szanto, *op. cit.* (n. 7) 119 for this view.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 74 ff.

times — though indeed their political organisation before the growth of the cities must remain conjectural. But not all *ethne* had an uninterrupted political development from early times. Whatever the early history of Arcadia, the federal Arcadian state was a fourth century creation.⁵⁵ Moreover, the antiquity of the *ethnos* does not in itself tell us anything about the role of the cities which in later times at any rate compose it; and this is crucial to the argument. Whether voting in federal assemblies was by cities or by individuals is a matter about which we are uncertain. Giovannini denies that voting was by cities, and also that the cities had any share in the ratification of federal decisions.⁵⁶ But there is sufficient evidence to render that hypothesis at any rate doubtful. Take, for example the Acarnanian inscription⁵⁷ which records a federal decree recognising the festival of Artemis Leucophryene at Magnesia, granting freedom from plunder to the temple and requiring the federal cities to provide *theorodokoi* — hosts for the sacred delegates who came to announce the festival;⁵⁸ there follow the names of a number of Acarnanian cities which ‘voted in the same terms’. Giovannini declares that their vote was merely in relation to the provision of *theorodokoi*; but that is not a natural interpretation of the wording, which certainly implies that the federal vote was ratified (or echoed) by the cities named.⁵⁹ If that is so, such ratification was clearly possible, in Acarnania at any rate (though of course it does not follow that all such decrees needed to be or were so ratified). Similarly in the matter of federal voting. Several passages of Livy, for which the source is Polybius, and especially several referring to an Achaean federal assembly of 198, speak of the participation, and some specifically of the voting, of *populi*, ‘peoples’. The speech delivered in 198 by the Achaean

⁵⁵ On the founding of the fourth-century federations see Larsen, *Greek federal states*, 183 ff. It is clear that in Arcadia federal union was a conscious political movement, strongly supported and contested.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 28 f; 37 f.

⁵⁷ *IG* 9².1.582.

⁵⁸ Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 28 n. 23, erroneously states that the names of the towns ‘beziehen sich auf den Beschluss dieser Städte, sich an den Festspielen *durch eigene Theorie* vertreten zu lassen’. There is no reference in the decree to sending *theoroi*, but only to the appointing of *theorodokoi*.

⁵⁹ The Greek words are κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ ἐψηφίσαντο Θυρρεῖα κτλ.

leader Aristaenus in favour of abandoning the Macedonian alliance for an alliance with Rome, aroused no murmur of opposition, Livy tells us, *ex tot populis*, ‘from so many peoples’.⁶⁰ When it was over, not merely individuals but *universi populi* began to argue about it.⁶¹ Eventually, those from the cities of Dyme, Megalopolis and Argos left the meeting, whereupon the alliance with Rome was confirmed by ‘the remaining peoples of Achaëa’, *ceteri populi Achaëorum*.⁶² Similarly in 189 war was declared on Sparta ‘by the agreement of all the states, *omnium civitatum*, ‘which were attending the Achaean meeting.’⁶³ In Boeotia, in 197, a motion to join Rome was approved by the votes of all the Boeotian states, *omnium Boeotiae civitatum*,⁶⁴ and in the same year, though not all the *populi* of Acarnania were present or agreed with the proposal, the magistrates of that federation put through a motion to join Rome.⁶⁵ The evidence comes from Livy, and it is easy to argue, with Giovannini,⁶⁶ that voting by cities is a cumbersome method, alien to the practice of Greek democracies, and one which does not leave its mark elsewhere in our records of federal constitutional practice, and consequently that in each of the above passages Livy must somehow have misunderstood or misrepresented what Polybius said.^{66a} Well, if he did, he did it pretty consistently and in a wide variety of passages. The evidence may be indecisive, but it suggests that voting in federal bodies — or in some federal bodies — was by cities; and many scholars in fact

⁶⁰ Livy, 32.20.7. Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), discusses this and the following passages on pp. 37–8 n. 31. Both the Achaean meeting of 198 and that of 189 were in fact *syncretoi*, and it is possible that in Achaëa voting by cities (perhaps with some sort of proportional representation) was restricted to these meetings, where there was only one item on the agenda, and that *synodoi* employed voting by individuals (a point made by J.L. O’Neill in an unpublished Cambridge thesis). What word *populi* will have translated is not clear; perhaps πόλεις or even δῆμοι (cf. 30.32.9, though the emended ὑμετέροις makes this parallel a little dubious).

⁶¹ Livy 32.22.8.

⁶² *id.* 32.23.1.

⁶³ *id.* 38.32.1.

⁶⁴ *id.* 33.2.6.

⁶⁵ *id.* 33.16.3.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 38 n. 31.

^{66a} It could be argued that voting units were a Roman concept; but Rome offers no parallel for a body in which voting is by cities or peoples.

believe that this was the method used.^{66b} However, as I have said, this is not an issue that is decisive one way or the other, for the constitutional position of the cities.

It is far more important to ascertain the powers of the cities to manage their own affairs independently of the government. In 1912 Swoboda published a long article analysing the powers of the Achaean cities,⁶⁷ and since then inscriptions⁶⁸ have made more evidence available — not all of which Giovannini has used. Swoboda's material will not always support the conclusions he drew from it, but it provides a clear indication that the cities of Achaëa enjoyed considerable independence in spheres which may not necessarily in each instance be definable as 'political', but which were of vital importance to the Greeks living in them. Thus in the third century we find Dyme⁶⁹ granting its citizenship to groups of foreigners; and in the early second century Stymphalus grants its citizenship to refugees from Elatea and sends embassies to the Achaean Confederation (to which it belonged) on their behalf.^{69a} The federal government may have given its approval,⁷⁰ but there is no evidence of that. The cities had their own laws, and their own judicial sanctions, involving fines, imprisonment, banishment or execution; there is some evidence that the federal government interested itself in sentences of banishment, but none of a general right of appeal from the city courts.⁷¹ Furthermore the cities retained a substantial degree of

^{66b} It is the usual view; cf. A. Aymard, *Les Assemblées de la confédération achaienne* (Bordeaux 1938) 377 ff.; Larsen, *Greek federal states*, 230; and other authorities quoted by Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 37 n. 31. For a possible compromise, which would deal with Giovannini's objection that voting by cities was a long and clumsy procedure see above, n. 60.

⁶⁷ *Klio* 12 (1912) 17–50.

⁶⁸ See for instance Larsen, *CP* 66 (1971) 81–6.

⁶⁹ *Syll.*³ 531.

^{69a} *SEG* 11.1107.

⁷⁰ As was the case when Naupactus in Aetolia granted citizenship to Ceos (*Syll.*³ 522). Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 40, argues that in many instances what looks like an action taken on the independent responsibility of a city may have had the backing of the central government or may even have been instigated by it.

⁷¹ Cf. Swoboda *Klio* 12 (1912) 28–9, quoting Plb. 4.17.6 ff., for Achaean intervention in a matter concerning exiles at Cynaëtha; however, there is no evidence in this passage that the Achaean authorities had any *right* to intervene.

variety in their constitutions.^{71a} Megara, for example,⁷² continued to have a ‘king’ (*basileus*) as eponymous magistrate, whereas Argos had a general (*strategos*),⁷³ along with an assembly called the ἀλλοία,⁷⁴ found also at Epidaurus.⁷⁵ The existence of ‘law-writers’, *nomographoi*,⁷⁶ in many cities also underlines their powers to make their own laws.

A long treaty between two Achaean cities, Aegeira and Stymphalus,⁷⁷ dating to the late third century, makes no reference to the federal body to which both belonged. The two cities negotiate details for the management of law-suits involving citizens of both, virtually as if they were independent states. The same document also throws light on the question of citizenship, since it lays down that certain citizens of Ceryneia, another Achaean city, who are for some unmentioned reason resident in Stymphalus, shall be treated for the purpose of the arrangements made with Aegeira as if they were citizens of Stymphalus. This, as Larsen has pointed out,⁷⁸ confirms the picture given by an inscription of Epidaurus,⁷⁹ a casualty list of 146, which shows more than half of the fallen to be non-Epidaurians. These casualties are apparently Achaeans from other cities permanently resident in Epidaurus, yet not citizens of that city — and this fact, like the treaty between Stymphalus and Aegeira, shows that in Achaea, far from citizenship being universal or interchangeable between city and city, there was not even the kind of reciprocal arrangement implied by *isopoliteia*, which we find enjoyed in cities in and connected with Aetolia.⁸⁰

^{71a} This is true also of Aetolia. The chief magistrates in the Aetolian cities were usually *archontes*, but Naupactus had a board of *theoroi*; for references see J. Touloumakos, *Der Einfluss Roms auf die Staatsform der griechischen Stadtstaaten des Festlandes und der Inseln im ersten und zweiten Jhd.v.Chr.* (Göttingen 1967) 34 n. 4, 35 nn. 1–2.

⁷² See the inscription republished by L. Robert, *Rev. Phil* 13 (1939) 107–8 with commentary; the article is reprinted in *Opera selecta* 2.1250–75.

⁷³ For the Argive *strategia* see Plut. *Arat.* 44; *SEG* 14.255; *IG* 4.357, line 9.

⁷⁴ For the ἀλλοία in Argos cf. *IG* 4.557 line 1; also *IG* 4.479 line 1 (from Nemea), 497 line 2 (from Mycenae=*Syll.* 594); cf. Swoboda, *Klio* 12 (1912) 37 n. 6.

⁷⁵ *IG* 4² 1.60.

⁷⁶ See Swoboda, *Klio* 12 (1912) 27 n. 2, for evidence from Sicyon, Troezen, Hermione, Megalopolis, Tegea.

⁷⁷ *SVA* 3 567 (not mentioned by Giovannini); on this see Larsen, *CP* (1971) 81–4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 83–4.

⁷⁹ *IG* 4².1.28.

⁸⁰ See above, nn. 28–30.

Taken together this evidence suggests that the cities of Achaëa had a considerable sphere of activity in which they exercised both theoretical and practical independence. Similarly, the vast network of intercity intercourse, to which I have already drawn attention, implies the possession of real powers by the cities. Quite apart from the voting of honorific titles and similar gestures of slight import, we find cities settling frontier disputes — such as that between the Acarnanian town of Stratus and the Aetolian town of Agrinium,⁸¹ or arbitrating on differences like those between the Achaean town of Pagae and the Boeotian town of Aegosthena.⁸² Cities negotiate with outside powers for loans and subventions: Cytenium, a Doric city of the Aetolian federation, for instance, collects from various other cities and rulers to finance the rebuilding of its walls, going as far abroad as Xanthus in Lycia, with which it claims distant relations of kinship.⁸³ True, a letter from the Aetolians went in support; but Cytenium was acting like any Greek city in sending out such an embassy. So too was Megalopolis when, with Achaean approval, she dispatched envoys to Antigonos Doson, the king of Macedon, to sound him about the possibility of his helping the federation against Cleomenes of Sparta, a mission of great delicacy;⁸⁴ and we have already seen Lycian Araxa sending an embassy to the town of Cibyra.⁸⁵ A treaty made in 196 between the cities of Miletus and Magnesia contains the names of several ambassadors who were involved in the settlement.⁸⁶ They included Damoxenus from the *koinon* of the the Achaëans, and others from Megalopolis, Patrae and another Achaean city, the name of which can no longer be read. It is interesting to find the *koinon* and the separate cities acting alongside each other in a matter which, since it involved a treaty, was clearly of some political substance. Of course, the federal body usually exercised

⁸¹ IG 9².1.3A.

⁸² See the inscription quoted in n. 72 above.

⁸³ For the unpublished inscription see Mellink, *AJA* 70 (1966) 155.

⁸⁴ *Plb.* 2.48.6–8.

⁸⁵ See above, n. 42.

⁸⁶ *Syll.*³ 588.

overriding control over the cities, or tried to.⁸⁷ But this does not alter the fact that the cities of a Greek federation give every appearance of enjoying, on the international stage, a far greater degree of independence, and of exercising a much higher degree of political and even military autonomy than the units making up a modern federal state; it is a situation which is not at all easily reconciled with the definition of the central body as a unitary state.

IV

We may now turn to the suggested resemblance between federal states and a monarchy such as Macedonia, with its Greek cities, some of which were originally colonies and others royal foundations. There is of course a difference between the two categories, but in practice both, like many Hellenistic foundations, were alike controlled by the king through his officials. It is this fact that seems to me to invalidate the comparison, for there is surely all the difference in the world in reality between a city dominated (or founded and dominated) by a king, and a free city which has voluntarily joined a federal state, as Megalopolis or Argos joined Achaëa. What Macedon and the federal *ethne* have in common is perhaps an origin in tribal conditions. In the *Politics* Aristotle remarked⁸⁸ that an *ethnos* can have a king, and Epirus down to 232 furnishes an example of an organisation with a king at its head, which should probably be described as an alliance, yet clearly possesses many of the characteristics of a federation.⁸⁹ But the comparison carries no implications for the federal cities, and it ignores the capacity of a federation to absorb cities more or less with their consent and without the implications of conquest or injury to the identity of the new number.

⁸⁷ See Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 76 ff. On the control of the cities of Macedonia by the king see Bengtson *Historia* 4 (1955) 462–3. Here Bengtson seeks, on the basis of the phraseology used, to divide the cities granting *asylia* to the Asclepieum at Cos in 242 into two groups, one containing Cassandreia and Philippi, the other Amphipolis and Pella; but his argument is invalidated by the fact that Amphipolis (line 31) uses the phrase *καθ' ἄπερ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀντίγονος προαιρεῖται*, just like Philippi.

⁸⁸ *Pol.* 3.14.1285 b 31 f.

⁸⁹ See N.G.L. Hammond, *Epirus* (Oxford 1967) 557 ff., and P.G. Franke, *Alt-Epirus and das Königtum der Molosser* (Kallmünz-Opf. 1954) 30 f.

Megara could leave Achaëa (in special circumstances) to join Boeotia and several years later return to Achaëa; throughout these manoeuvres it remained undoubtedly, in its own consciousness, Megara, a free Greek city.

The further suggestion that federal cities are simply comparable to demes in an ordinary *polis* is ingenious but cannot, I think, be taken very seriously. It is true that an Achaean calls himself 'an Achaean from Aegium' or whatever city he hails from, and that an Athenian mentions his deme on official occasions within the city. But if the Achaean mentions Aegium because it is only the city that constitutes a real vehicle of Greek culture — I do not myself believe that, but it is Giovannini's view⁹⁰ — that is certainly not why the Athenian mentions his deme. Moreover, cities in federal states also possessed demes. Each of the twelve cities of Achaëa consisted of seven or eight demes, out of which they were originally constituted (though at what date the synoecism took place we do not know).⁹¹ In this they are precisely like cities without federal connections; and that fact militates against a facile comparison of demes to cities, since if demes provide Athens with a two-tier structure, demes and cities must provide Achaëa (and doubtless other federal states) with a three-tier structure. Demes in fact are a normal feature of Greek cities and must be regarded as irrelevant to the question of whether federal cities are real *poleis* or not. In view of this it seems to me that the fact that Cos makes financial arrangements with one of its demes provides no real parallel to the treaty between Acarnania and its constituent city of Anactorium.⁹² Equally unconvincing, I suggest, is the argument that the vast network of activity between cities, much of it — though by no means all — non-political, exists only because the cities are the sole and essential instruments of Greek social life.⁹³ For this is simply not so, and I will quote one or two examples to prove it. An inscription from Aegium,⁹⁴ dating to the 220's, contains an

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 87.

⁹¹ Cf. Strabo, 8.337, for the demes of Patrae; 8.386 for seven or eight demes in each of the Achaean cities; see Freeman, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 192–3; Ernst Meyer, *RE*, 'Patrai', cols. 2203–4.

⁹² See above, nn. 49–50.

⁹³ See above, n. 52.

⁹⁴ *Syll.*:519.

Achaean decree honouring Phocian and Boeotian hostages, who had been lodged in Achaëa, awarding them *proxenia* — an honorary position as foreign representative of Achaëa — freedom from taxation, freedom from plunder and several other honours normally included in such grants. The recipients' cities are mentioned, but it is the Achaean federal body that confers the honour. Elsewhere the reverse situation can be found. In 276, to celebrate the preservation of Delphi from the Galatians, the city of Chios passed a decree⁹⁵ praising the Aetolian *koinon* and crowning it with a golden crown for its services to the gods and its successful efforts against the barbarians; the same decree approves the recognition of the Aetolian festival of the *Soteria*, commemorating those events, and the appointment of sacred delegates (*theoroi*) to it. There is no question here of a *koinon* not being a 'living community' for purposes of Greek intercourse! From 197 onwards we have a list of Delphic *proxenoi*, representatives abroad, a document of importance for Delphic chronology.⁹⁶ These *proxenoi* are usually given the names of their cities; but under the year 194/3 we find several Acarnanians not further distinguished: clearly it was not essential to name a man's city any more than it was a hundred years earlier when Delphic *proxenia*⁹⁷ was accorded to several Aetolians (not further qualified). This list of examples could easily be extended; and indeed Giovannini is himself elsewhere⁹⁸ perfectly aware that the *koinon* of a federal state can give and receive honours. Since so much of Greek life within a federal state (as elsewhere) was lived within the confines of a city, it is natural that much of the social and political intercourse was at the city level. But the examples I have quoted show that the distinction between cities as 'living Greek communities' and federal states, *ethne*, as a kind of political machinery, is quite 'artificial and not borne out in real life. Equally untrue is the hypothesis that the units making up a federal state had to be cities because only cities could act as vehicles of social and cultural exchange. It is contradicted by the situation in the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 402.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 585.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 383; Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 36 n. 21, admits that the name of the city was often omitted — which is odd if it is only through the city that one's Greekness is made evident.

⁹⁸ *Op. cit.* (n. 7), 19.

Molossian *ethnos*, the lineal precursor of the Epirote federal state, which developed out of the Epirote alliance; which in turn arose as the Molossians absorbed other tribes, the Thesprotians and later the Chaonians, towards the end of the fourth century.⁹⁹ Now the units of the Molossian *ethnos*, like those of the Epirote federation (which was formed in 232),¹⁰⁰ were not cities but tribal subdivisions; and it is by means of these tribal subdivisions that Molossians and Epirotes describe themselves or are described on extant inscriptions. Yet no one has questioned the Greekness of Epirus (whatever the ultimate racial origins of its people, which may well have contained Illyrian elements). Towards the end of the third century Epirus was one of the federations included in Antigonos Doson's Hellenic Alliance.¹⁰¹ Yet an Epirote usually mentioned not his city (if he had one) but his tribe or sub-tribe; and others referred to him in the same way. A third-century inscription from Epidaurus records fines of 1000 staters imposed upon unruly athletes for brawling at the festival of Asclepius. Two of these are Philistus, the son of Callisthenes, an Argive from Achaea,¹⁰² a contestant in the pentathlon, and Simacus, the son of Phalacrion, an Epirote from the Thesproti, a pancratiast. In this context of games at a panhellenic festival both men are unquestionably Greeks; yet the Epirote is described by tribe, not by city. There could hardly be a clearer indication that one need not belong to a *polis* to be a Greek.

To sum up my argument, it seems to me that the theory that a Greek federal state was really a unitary state, in which the cities are merely

⁹⁹ Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 11 n. 7, 'der epeirotische Bund [ist] der direkte Nachfolger des vom Stamm der Molosser gebildeten Staates'.

¹⁰⁰ See Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 94–8, and independently Hammond, *op. cit.* (n. 88), 528 ff. The same is true of the Epirote federation; cf. *SGDI*, 1339, a resolution of the Epirotes, in which everyone mentioned appends his tribal ethnic (Hammond, *op. cit.* 653 quoting further evidence). For the same practice among the Chaonians and Thesprotians see Habicht, *Archeologia classica*, 25–6 (1973–4), 316 and n. 20.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Plb.* 4.9.4.

¹⁰² Cf. *Syll.*³ 1076. The phrase Φίλιστος Καλλισθένους Ἀργεῖος ἄπ' Ἀχαΐας, instead of the usual Ἀχαῖος ἄπ' (or ἐξ) Ἀργούς. Hiller von Gaertringen in *Syll.*³ 1076 suggests that Achaea is 'oppidulum ... ignotum agri Argivi'; but no such *oppidulum* is known, nor is it clear why the authorities at Epidaurus should have chosen to specify from what hamlet in Argive territory Philistus came. Perhaps the meaning is 'an Argive i.e. from Achaean (rather than Amphilocheian) Argos'. But one's impression is that the unusual order is not a matter of any consequence.

vehicles of social intercourse and the *ethnos* is the sole political body,¹⁰³ arrogating complete political power to itself, breaks down, and for these reasons:-

1. The cities, as I have shown, were by no means powerless, but were substantially concerned in a wide range of activities, some clearly political, in which the city exercised real sovereignty.
2. The position of cities within a federal body was not substantially different from that of cities elsewhere, for they too were exposed to the erosion or loss of their independence, and that not through a voluntary action, but more often by force; but despite subjection these cities maintained a consciousness of their identity as separate bodies. Similarly, it is *prima facie* absurd to suppose that cities like Argos, Corinth, Sicyon and Megara surrendered their political identity and felt themselves to be diminished because they had joined the Achaean federation.
3. The supposed parallel between cities in a federal state and demes in an independent city is superficial and unconvincing. In fact federal cities themselves possess demes, and in this as in other respects are comparable to Greek cities elsewhere. Nor is the suggested parallel between federal cities and cities inside a Hellenistic monarchy a significant one.
4. The definition of federal cities as 'cultural units', indispensable for Greek life but without political power, breaks down because on the one hand cities and *ethne* are found engaging, side by side, in identical cultural and political activities, and on the other hand it is quite possible to be a Greek within the Molossian or Epirote *ethnos* without, apparently, belonging to a city at all.

V

We must therefore reject this new theory, which involves drawing an artificial distinction between one kind of *polis* and another, which a

¹⁰³ A point worth noting is that Polybius (2.37.11) remarks that under the Achaean Federation the Peloponnese 'falls short of being a single city in the fact that its inhabitants do not possess a single fortified refuge (*περίβολος*), all other things both as regards the whole and as regards each city being very nearly similar'. Here Polybius is stressing the concord existing in Achaea and making a rhetorical point rather than delivering a juridical statement. Even so, his remark concedes that Achaea merely *resembles* a unitary state.

Greek would have found it hard to comprehend. On the other hand, perhaps we ought not to try to force Greek federal states into a category defined in the light of institutions which originated two thousand years later. As we saw, the absence of words meaning 'federal state' and nothing else need not imply that the institution itself did not exist. Aristotle's political thought was deeply rooted in the experience of the *polis*. Yet in his late collection of constitutions,¹⁰⁴ he included Arcadia, Thessaly, and probably Lycia, Achaëa and Epirus. Such states were not *poleis* — though, as Larsen has pointed out,¹⁰⁵ there was a short period in the fourth century when it looked as if the word *polis* was about to be extended to cover federal bodies; and indeed the word *politai* was commonly used to refer to their citizens.¹⁰⁶ Neither were such states identical with primitive *ethne* where the people lived in villages (though villages will have continued to exist, no doubt, just as the tribal divisions persisted in Epirus). There was in fact development, and that is why one has to discuss Greek federal states historically as well as analytically.

It is true that we are not always able in every case to declare how far city rights were held autonomously, how far they were conceded by the central power, and how far they were exercised *de facto* either by tradition or to meet the current situation without any real definition of the constitutional issue. The situation may have varied from one federal body to another. Swoboda assumed¹⁰⁷ that federations had a written constitution. Polybius does indeed refer to 'the oaths, laws and inscribed pillars which hold together our common federation (*sympoliteia*)';¹⁰⁸ but we do not know how far these defined the points that interest us. We hear of the 'agreement', *homologia*, when a new state entered the federation;¹⁰⁹ but the treaty between Orchomenus and the Achaean federation which mentions this is mainly concerned with the regulation of immediate problems and not with general constitutional principles.¹¹⁰ In fact, we are not in a position to define the juridical basis of the rights

¹⁰⁴ See Weil, *op. cit.* (n. 13), 309, 383, for the evidence.

¹⁰⁵ *Greek federal states*, 280 n. 3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 85 n. 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Klio*. 12 (1912) 23.

¹⁰⁸ *Plb.* 24.8.4.

¹⁰⁹ *Syll.*³ 490 line 9.

¹¹⁰ So correctly Giovannini, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 33.

of *koinon* and *polis* in each case; but those rights were none the less real and none the less independently exercised from time to time, as I hope to have shown. It is not the first nor the only example of a political institution which is fully operative for a considerable time before political theorists get round to telling us what it is.

The federal states made a valuable contribution to the political life of the Greek world, especially in the Hellenistic period. They developed out of the older *ethne* in a way which we cannot always trace in detail, and were based primarily on peoples conscious of a tribal or ethnic unity; but by incorporating other cities of different ethnic origins, they came to represent something quite new. At a time when large territorial kingdoms were dominating the political scene, they enabled small and weak states to play a significant role. For that reason they merit the place which Freeman and Larsen assigned to them in the history of federalism, and their exclusion would be an unnecessary impoverishment of that history.